Ella Fitzgerald was born Ella Jane Fitzgerald on April 25, 1917, in Newport News, Virginia. She was the only child of Temperance "Tempie" Fitzgerald, a laundress, and William Fitzgerald, a dockworker. When Ella was a young child, her father abandoned the family, and she was raised by her mother in Yonkers, New York.

Ella began singing in church at a young age, and she quickly developed a reputation for her powerful voice and wide vocal range. In 1934, at the age of 17, she won a talent contest at the Apollo Theater in Harlem. Her performance caught the attention of bandleader Chick Webb, who hired her to join his band, the Savoy Sultans.

Ella made her debut with the Savoy Sultans in 1935, and she quickly became one of the most popular singers in the band. Her recordings with Webb, such as "A-Tisket, A-Tasket" and "Undecided," were huge hits, and she helped to make the Savoy Sultans one of the most popular swing bands in the country.

In 1939, Chick Webb died of tuberculosis at the age of 34. Ella was devastated by his death, but she decided to continue her career as a solo artist. She signed with Decca Records, and she released her first solo album, "Ella Sings Gershwin," in 1939.

In the early 1940s, Ella Fitzgerald began to experiment with scat singing. Scat singing is a type of improvised singing that uses nonsense syllables. Ella was one of the first singers to popularize scat singing, and she became known for her mastery of the technique.

In 1945, Ella Fitzgerald signed with Verve Records. Verve Records was a new label at the time, but it quickly became one of the most important jazz labels in the world. Ella Fitzgerald recorded some of her most famous albums with Verve, including "Ella Sings Gershwin" (1956), "Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Cole Porter Songbook" (1956), and "Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Duke Ellington Songbook" (1957).

In the 1950s and 1960s, Ella Fitzgerald was one of the most popular singers in the world. She toured extensively and appeared on numerous television shows. She also won numerous awards, including 13 Grammy Awards. In 1958, she became the first African American woman to win a Grammy Award.

Ella Fitzgerald retired from performing in 1993 due to health problems. She died on June 15, 1996, at the age of 79. She is considered to be one of the greatest singers of all time.

Ella Fitzgerald was a pioneer in the world of jazz. She was one of the first female singers to be respected by male musicians, and she helped to break down barriers for other African American female singers. She was also a role model for many aspiring singers, including Sarah Vaughan and Billie Holiday.

Ella Fitzgerald was a generous philanthropist who donated millions of dollars to various charities throughout her life. She was particularly passionate about supporting children's education and HIV/AIDS awareness.