

TUNE INTO ENGLISH

Frank Sinatra's My Way

SCAN, READ
& LISTEN
06

LOWER INTERMEDIATE B1

GLOSSARY

- 1 **signature song:** canzone simbolo
- 2 **break-up:** separazione
- 3 **to be on holiday:** essere in vacanza
- 4 **early fifties:** sulla cinquantina
- 5 **retirement:** pensionamento
- 6 **reportedly:** a quanto pare
- 7 **to quit:** lasciare
- 8 **sick:** stufo
- 9 **to get the hell out:** andarsene
- 10 **stay up:** stare sveglia
- 11 **swan song:** canto del cigno
- 12 **take:** registrazione
- 13 **demo:** dimostrazione audio
- 14 **ups and downs:** alti e bassi
- 15 **pride:** orgoglio
- 16 **charts:** classifiche
- 17 **to release:** pubblicare
- 18 **despite:** malgrado
- 19 **self-serving:** egoista
- 20 **certain:** sicuro
- 21 **regrets:** rimpianti
- 22 **charted-course:** percorso tracciato
- 23 **byway:** strada secondaria
- 24 **to eat up:** mangiare
- 25 **to subside:** placarsi
- 26 **amusing:** divertente
- 27 **shy:** timida
- 28 **truly:** davvero
- 29 **to kneel:** inginocchiarsi

Concepito come coronamento della brillante traiettoria del cantante di origini italiane, questo brano rivendicativo e pieno di orgoglio è diventato una specie di inno per ogni tipo di commiato.

Frank Sinatra's **signature song**¹ *My Way* began life as European hit *Comme d'habitude (As Usual)*, a 1967 **break-up**² song by French superstar Claude François, to music by Jacques Revaux. Canadian singer-songwriter Paul Anka heard the song while **holidaying**³ in Paris and acquired its rights. A few months on he had dinner with Sinatra in Florida.

The music legend, then in his early **fifties**⁴, announced that he was considering **retirement**⁵, **reportedly**⁶ telling Anka: "I'm **quitting**⁷ the business. I'm **sick**⁸ of it, I'm **getting the hell out**⁹." This inspired Anka to **stay up**¹⁰ all night adapting François' track about the death of love through routine into a celebratory **swan song**¹¹ for Sinatra. He did so by asking himself, "If Frank were writing this, what would he say?". The result was recorded by Sinatra in just one **take**¹² on 30 December 1968.

In fact, a different English version of the song already existed. Revaux had sent his melody to London, looking for someone to adapt it into an English-language song. A young David Bowie wrote and recorded a **demo**¹³, but it was rejected.

In *My Way*, Sinatra looks back on his life and all its **ups and downs**¹⁴. He declares **pride**¹⁵ in taking responsibility for all the decisions that he has made. *My Way* has spent more time on the UK charts¹⁶ than any other song (124 weeks), and Elvis Presley's live recording of the song was **released**¹⁷ in the weeks after his death. Other cover versions include those by Aretha Franklin and by Sid Vicious of The Sex Pistols. Donald Trump chose *My Way* as his first dance at his 2017 presidential inauguration, and it is also extremely popular at funerals. **Despite**¹⁸ its phenomenal success, Sinatra disliked the song, calling it "self-serving¹⁹ and self-indulgent". ☹

final curtain: this is when a performance ends and the theatre's curtains are drawn or lowered. It is used figuratively here to mean the end of something.

travelled: in the US this is often spelled with just one 'l': 'traveled'.

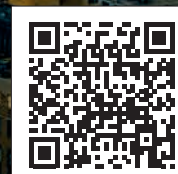
then again: on the other hand.

I bit off more than I could chew: this idiom means that you have taken on a task which is too difficult for you.

through it all: despite everything that has happened.

the record shows: what the documented evidence proves.

SCAN & WATCH



Scan this QR code with your smartphone or tablet and listen to the official song on YouTube while reading the lyrics.

And now, the end is near

And so I face the **final curtain**

My friend, I'll say it clear

I'll **state my case**, of which I'm **certain**²⁰

I've lived a life that's full

I **travelled** each and every **highway**

And more, much more than this

I did it my way

Regrets²¹, I've had a few

But **then again**, too few to mention

I did what I had to do

And **saw it through** without exemption

I planned each **charted course**²²

Each careful step along the **byway**²³

And more, much more than this

I did it my way

Yes, there were times, I'm sure you knew

When I **bit off more than I could chew**

But **through it all**, when there was doubt

I **ate it up**²⁴ and **spit it out**

I faced it all, and I **stood tall**

And did it my way

I've loved, I've laughed and cried

I've had my fill, my share of losing

And now, as tears **subside**²⁵

I find it all so **amusing**²⁶

To think I did all that

And may I say, not in a **shy**²⁷ way

Oh, no, oh, no, not me

I did it my way

For what is a man, what has he got?

If not himself, then he has **naught**

To say the things he truly²⁸ feels

And not the words of one who **kneels**²⁹

The record shows I **took the blows**

And did it my way

Yes, it was my way

state my case: this means to express your opinion and present the evidence in your favour, as if on a trial.

highway: this is American English for 'motorway', but can also refer to any public or private road.

saw it through: 'to see something through' is a phrasal verb meaning to complete something.

spit: this is the past simple of 'to spit' in American English. In British English it is 'spat'.

I stood tall: the idiom 'to stand tall' means to be proud of yourself.

I've had my fill, my share of losing: 'to have your fill' is to have enough of something, essentially the same as 'to have your share'.

naught: an archaic way of saying 'nothing'.

I took the blows: 'to take a blow' means to take a hit or a punch. Here it means that the speaker has accepted life's most difficult situations.

Fergal Kavanagh runs the website www.tuneintoenglish.com, the web's largest free resource for learning English through pop music.

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