

TUNE INTO ENGLISH

Pharrell Williams' Happy



Il ricercato produttore delle celebrità pop e R&B indossa il suo cappello da cantante per questa accattivante ode alla positività.

Fresh from his **hugely**¹-successful collaborations as a musician with Daft Punk and as a producer with Madonna, American record producer, songwriter and rapper Pharrell Williams was asked to write a song for the animated film *Despicable*² *Me 2*. After the movie's producers **rejected**³ several⁴ versions, Pharrell says he asked himself "What does a **good mood**⁵ feel like?" The result was *Happy* and it became the biggest-selling single of 2014, winning two Grammys. It is the UK's best-selling song of the 21st century (so far).

Written completely in the present simple, the **upbeat**⁶ song opens with the singer **warning**⁷ listeners that some people **might**⁸ find it crazy that he is so happy. The **chorus**⁹ then **kicks in**¹⁰, consisting of four imperatives and if-clauses. In the second verse, Pharrell hears some bad news but it doesn't affect him because, as the **bridge**¹¹ repeats, nothing can bring him down. The chorus is sung six times and makes up most of the song, ensuring that the track **caught on**¹² with listeners. *Happy* also became a viral hit because of "the world's first 24-hour video", featuring celebrities and animated *Minions*¹³ dancing to the song throughout the course of a day in Los Angeles, leading to fans all over the world making imitation videos. ☒



Oscar-nominated US singer-songwriter and producer Pharrell Williams; his 2014 single *Happy* was featured on the soundtrack of the movie *Despicable Me 2*.



SCAN, READ & LISTEN
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LOWER INTERMEDIATE B1

GLOSSARY

- 1 **hugely:** enormemente
- 2 **despicable:** disprezzabile
- 3 **to reject:** rifiutare
- 4 **several:** diverse
- 5 **good mood:** buon umore
- 6 **upbeat:** allegra
- 7 **to warn:** avvertire
- 8 **might:** potere
- 9 **chorus:** ritornello
- 10 **to kick in:** scandire il ritmo
- 11 **bridge:** ponte
- 12 **to catch on:** prendere piede
- 13 **minions:** galoppino
- 14 **clap along:** applaudire
- 15 **filler:** tappabuchi
- 16 **nursery rhyme:** filastrocca
- 17 **vowel:** vocale
- 18 **to spell:** compitare
- 19 **to waste:** sprecare

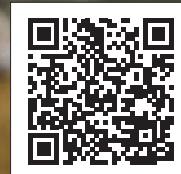
she's here: the sun does not have a gender but is usually referred to as masculine. The moon is usually referred to as feminine.

Here come: the final 's' for the third person of the verb ('here comes bad news') is incorrectly omitted here.

all you got: the possessive 'have' is incorrectly omitted here ('all you've got'). This is common in spoken English.

bring me down: this phrasal verb means 'to make someone feel unhappy'.

SCAN & WATCH



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

It might seem crazy what I'm **'bout** to say
Sunshine, **she's here**, you can take a break
I'm a hot-air balloon that could go to space
With the air like I don't care, baby **by the way**

Huh (Because I'm happy)
Clap along¹⁴ if you feel like a room without a **roof**
(Because I'm happy)
Clap along if you feel like happiness is the **truth**
(Because I'm happy)
Clap along if you know what happiness is to **you**
(Because I'm happy)
Clap along if you feel like that's what you wanna **do**

Here come bad news talking this and that (Yeah)
Well give me **all you got**, don't **hold back** (Yeah)
Well I should probably warn you I'll be just fine (Yeah)
No offense to you, don't **waste**¹⁹ your time
Here's why

(Because I'm happy)
Clap along if you feel like a room without a roof
(Because I'm happy)
Clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth
(Because I'm happy)
Clap along if you know what happiness is to you
(Because I'm happy)
Clap along if you feel like that's what you wanna do

Uh, **bring me down**
Can't nothing bring me down
My level's too high to bring me down
Can't nothing bring me down, I said
Bring me down, can't nothing
Bring me down
My level's too high to bring me down
Can't nothing bring me down, I said

(Because I'm happy)
Clap along if you feel like a room without a roof
(Because I'm happy)
Clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth
(Because I'm happy)
Clap along if you know what happiness is to you
(Because I'm happy)
Clap along if you feel like that's what you wanna do
(Because I'm happy)

Clap along if you feel like a room without a roof
(Because I'm happy)
Clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth
(Because I'm happy)
Clap along if you know what happiness is to you
(Because I'm happy)
Clap along if you feel like that's what you wanna do

[chorus]

'bout: an abbreviation of 'about'. Songs often shorten words to make them easier to sing.

by the way: this phrase is often used in English as a **filler**¹⁵.

roof, truth, you, do: the repetition of the /u:/ sound to end each line makes this song as simple as a **nursery rhyme**¹⁶. This is one of the first sounds babies make. Note how the **vowel**¹⁷ sound of each word is **spelled**¹⁸ differently.

hold back: this is a phrasal verb meaning to stop yourself from expressing how you really feel.

can't nothing: an incorrect double negative, with incorrect word order. The correct sentence would be "Nothing can bring me down."

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

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