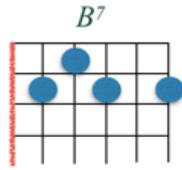


# Happy Birthday

The authorship of the lyrics and music of this song is much debated.

*E* *B7*  
Happy Birthday to you,  
*B7* *E*  
Happy Birthday to you,  
*E* *E7* *A*  
Happy Birthday dear \_\_\_\_\_,  
*E* *B7* *E*  
Happy Birthday to you!



*E* *B7*  
From good friends and true,  
*B7* *E*  
From old friends and new,  
*E* *E7* *A*  
May good luck go with you,  
*E* *B7* *E*  
And happiness too.

## History

"Happy Birthday to You" is also known more simply as "Happy Birthday". According to the 1998 Guinness Book of World Records, "Happy Birthday to You" is the most recognized song in the English language, followed by "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow". The song's base lyrics have been translated into at least 18 languages.

The melody of "Happy Birthday to You" comes from the song "Good Morning to All", which has been attributed to American siblings Patty Hill and Mildred J. Hill in 1893, although the claim that the sisters composed the tune is disputed. Patty was a kindergarten principal in Louisville, developing various teaching methods at what is now



Photo from [www.cmuse.org/](http://www.cmuse.org/)

the Little Loomhouse. Mildred was a pianist and composer. The sisters used "Good Morning to All" as a song that young children would find easy to sing.

The combination of melody and lyrics in "*Happy Birthday to You*" first appeared in print in 1912, and probably existed earlier. None of these early appearances included credits or copyright notices. The Summy Company registered for copyright in 1935, crediting authors Preston Ware Orem and Mrs. R.R. Forman.

In 1988, Warner / Chappell Music purchased the company owning the copyright for \$25 million, with the value of "*Happy Birthday*" estimated at \$5 million. Based on the 1935 copyright registration, Warner claims that the United States copyright will not expire until 2030, and that unauthorized public performances of the song are technically illegal unless royalties are paid to Warner. In one specific instance in February 2010, these royalties were said to amount to \$700. In the European Union, the copyright of the song expired on December 31, 2016.

The American copyright status of "*Happy Birthday to You*" began to draw more attention with the passage of the Copyright Term Extension Act in 1998. When the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Act in *Eldred v. Ashcroft* in 2003, Associate Justice Stephen Breyer specifically mentioned "*Happy Birthday to You*" in his dissenting opinion. American law professor Robert Brauneis, who extensively researched the song, has concluded that "It is almost certainly no longer under copyright." In 2013, based in large part on Brauneis' research, Good Morning to You Productions, a documentary film company, sued Warner / Chappell for falsely claiming copyright to the song.

*Wikipedia*

*Songs as you go*