

## Ed Sheeran allegedly copies Marvin Gaye classic

Singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran faces a trial in court over claims he allegedly copied the Marvin Gaye classic from 1972 “Let’s Get It On”. Sheeran is up against an American jury on accusations that his 2014 song “Thinking Out Loud” is undoubtedly a copy of the famous R&B hit.

The lawsuit was started by the estate of Ed Townsend, who co-wrote the song with Gaye. Townsend’s family allege that Sheeran blatantly based his composition on the chord progression and the chord harmony of “Let’s Get It On”. They claim that these two parts of the song, when played seamlessly together, are exclusively Gaye’s intellectual property (IP). They demand a \$100 million settlement.

Sheeran’s legal team supposedly acknowledged the similarities of the two songs privately, but they have proposed that the musical parts are common and cannot be copyright. Sheeran has publicly acted dismissively of these lawsuits in the past, saying that coincidentally it is “bound to happen if 60,000 songs are being released every day on Spotify”.

Not all attorneys and lawyers agree with Sheeran, however. A civil rights attorney, Ben Crump, says Sheeran took the IP from a black artist whom he “doesn’t feel as worthy as compensation”. Music and entertainment lawyer Charlie Sanders adds that even if Sheeran copied it subconsciously, it is still plagiarism. But he says the music industry’s business model is partially to blame. He says musicians are issuing lawsuits more often now due to earning less income as a result of streaming music.

## Warm-up activities and vocabulary

Activities:

Finish the sentence – “Music streaming has affected...”

What does the phrase “thinking out loud” mean?

Write a fifteen word sentence about your favourite musician. Let others try to guess who it is.

Vocabulary:

1. Scan the text and find a word or phrase that means:

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| A. <i>case</i> (paragraph 1)               | t... |
| B. <i>certainly</i> (paragraph 1)          | u... |
| C. <i>song</i> (paragraph 2)               | c... |
| D. <i>fully</i> (paragraph 2)              | e... |
| E. <i>accepted</i> (paragraph 3)           | a... |
| F. <i>suggested</i> (paragraph 3)          | p... |
| G. <i>by chance</i> (paragraph 3)          | c... |
| H. <i>payment</i> (paragraph 4)            | c... |
| I. <i>copying</i> (paragraph 4)            | p... |
| J. <i>internet broadcast</i> (paragraph 4) | s... |

2. What does the italicised phrase below mean – *fully*, *slightly*, or *not*?

the music industry’s business model is *partially* to blame

3. Which word below doesn’t belong?

harmony – composition – settlement – chord

## Reading comprehension match-up

1. Singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran faces a trial in court over claims he allegedly...
2. Sheeran is up against an American jury on accusations that his...
3. The lawsuit was started by the estate of...
4. Townsend's family allege that Sheeran blatantly based his composition on the...
5. They claim that these two parts of the song, when...
6. They demand a...
7. Sheeran's legal team supposedly acknowledged the similarities of the two songs privately, but...
8. Sheeran has publicly acted dismissively of these lawsuits in the past, saying that coincidentally...
9. Not all attorneys and lawyers...
10. A civil rights attorney, Ben Crump, says Sheeran took the IP from...
11. Music and entertainment lawyer Charlie Sanders adds that even if...
12. But he says the music industry's...
13. He says musicians are issuing lawsuits more often now due to...

- A. \$100 million settlement.
- B. a black artist whom he "doesn't feel as worthy as compensation".
- C. Ed Townsend, who co-wrote the song with Gaye.
- D. copied the Marvin Gaye classic from 1972 "Let's Get It On".
- E. it is "bound to happen if 60,000 songs are being released every day on Spotify".
- F. they have proposed that the musical parts are common and cannot be copyright.
- G. 2014 song "Thinking Out Loud" is undoubtedly a copy of the famous R&B hit.
- H. played seamlessly together, are exclusively Gaye's intellectual property (IP).
- I. earning less income as a result of streaming music.
- J. Sheeran copied it subconsciously, it is still plagiarism.
- K. agree with Sheeran, however.
- L. chord progression and the chord harmony of "Let's Get It On".
- M. business model is partially to blame.

### Phrases, synonyms, and antonyms match-up

Match the words on the left to their endings to make phrases from the text.

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. bound        | A. team        |
| 2. intellectual | B. songwriter  |
| 3. a trial      | C. progression |
| 4. business     | D. property    |
| 5. singer-      | E. rights      |
| 6. legal        | F. in court    |
| 7. co-          | G. music       |
| 8. chord        | H. to happen   |
| 9. streaming    | I. model       |
| 10. civil       | J. wrote       |

Match the words on the left from the text to their synonyms.

- |               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| 1. settlement | A. obvious |
| 2. accusation | B. ignore  |
| 3. blatant    | C. believe |
| 4. suppose    | D. deal    |
| 5. dismiss    | E. claim   |

Match the words on the left from the text to their antonyms.

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. exclusive    | A. conscious   |
| 2. subconscious | B. shared      |
| 3. coincidence  | C. intentional |

**Grammar pairs cloze: adverbs of certainty and uncertainty**

- |                                       |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. A. exclusively / B. allegedly      | 6. A. subconsciously / B. supposedly  |
| 2. A. coincidentally / B. undoubtably | 7. A. dismissively / B. blatantly     |
| 3. A. blatantly / B. dismissively     | 8. A. coincidentally / B. allegedly   |
| 4. A. supposedly / B. seamlessly      | 9. A. subconsciously / B. undoubtably |
| 5. A. exclusively / B. partially      | 10. A. seamlessly / B. partially      |

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1. \_\_\_\_\_ copied the Marvin Gaye classic from 1972 “Let’s Get It On”.

Sheeran is up against an American jury on accusations that his 2014 song “Thinking Out Loud” is 2. \_\_\_\_\_ a copy of the famous R&B hit.

The lawsuit was started by the estate of Ed Townsend, who co-wrote the song with Gaye. Townsend’s family allege that Sheeran 3. \_\_\_\_\_ based his composition on the chord progression and the chord harmony of “Let’s Get It On”.

They claim that these two parts of the song, when played 4. \_\_\_\_\_ together, are 5. \_\_\_\_\_ Gaye’s intellectual property (IP). They demand a \$100 million settlement.

Sheeran’s legal team 6. \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledged the similarities of the two songs privately, but they have proposed that the musical parts are common and cannot be copyright. Sheeran has publicly acted 7. \_\_\_\_\_ of these lawsuits in the past, saying that 8. \_\_\_\_\_ it is “bound to happen if 60,000 songs are being released every day on Spotify”.

Not all attorneys and lawyers agree with Sheeran, however. A civil rights attorney, Ben Crump, says Sheeran took the IP from a black artist whom he “doesn’t feel as worthy as compensation”. Music and entertainment lawyer Charlie Sanders adds that even if Sheeran copied it 9. \_\_\_\_\_, it is still plagiarism. But he says the music industry’s business model is 10. \_\_\_\_\_ to blame. He says musicians are issuing lawsuits more often now due to earning less income as a result of streaming music.

**Vocabulary gap-fill cloze**

- A. proposed
- B. streaming
- C. harmony
- D. trial
- E. composition

- F. copyright
- G. issuing
- H. accusations
- I. acknowledged
- J. settlement

Singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran faces a 1.\_\_\_\_\_ in court over claims he allegedly copied the Marvin Gaye classic from 1972 “Let’s Get It On”. Sheeran is up against an American jury on 2.\_\_\_\_\_ that his 2014 song “Thinking Out Loud” is undoubtably a copy of the famous R&B hit.

The lawsuit was started by the estate of Ed Townsend, who co-wrote the song with Gaye. Townsend’s family allege that Sheeran blatantly based his 3.\_\_\_\_\_ on the chord progression and the chord 4.\_\_\_\_\_ of “Let’s Get It On”. They claim that these two parts of the song, when played seamlessly together, are exclusively Gaye’s intellectual property (IP). They demand a \$100 million 5.\_\_\_\_\_.

Sheeran’s legal team supposedly 6.\_\_\_\_\_ the similarities of the two songs privately, but they have 7.\_\_\_\_\_ that the musical parts are common and cannot be 8.\_\_\_\_\_. Sheeran has publicly acted dismissively of these lawsuits in the past, saying that coincidentally it is “bound to happen if 60,000 songs are being released every day on Spotify”.

Not all attorneys and lawyers agree with Sheeran, however. A civil rights attorney, Ben Crump, says Sheeran took the IP from a black artist whom he “doesn’t feel as worthy as compensation”. Music and entertainment lawyer Charlie Sanders adds that even if Sheeran copied it subconsciously, it is still plagiarism. But he says the music industry’s business model is partially to blame. He says musicians are 9.\_\_\_\_\_ lawsuits more often now due to earning less income as a result of 10.\_\_\_\_\_ music.

## Writing cloze

- |                |                 |              |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. rtali       | 6. mahroyn      | 11.yrocpithg |
| 2. nicutscaosa | 7. culseielvyx  | 12.ivcli     |
| 3. odnubytubal | 8. netseletmt   | 13.liayrtapl |
| 4. ausltiw     | 9. koldacnwedeg | 14.sgiunis   |
| 5. omncosipito | 10.orposdep     | 15.trasigmne |

Singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran faces a 1.\_\_\_\_\_ in court over claims he allegedly copied the Marvin Gaye classic from 1972 “Let’s Get It On”. Sheeran is up against an American jury on 2.\_\_\_\_\_ that his 2014 song “Thinking Out Loud” is 3.\_\_\_\_\_ a copy of the famous R&B hit.

The 4.\_\_\_\_\_ was started by the estate of Ed Townsend, who co-wrote the song with Gaye. Townsend’s family allege that Sheeran blatantly based his 5.\_\_\_\_\_ on the chord progression and the chord 6.\_\_\_\_\_ of “Let’s Get It On”. They claim that these two parts of the song, when played seamlessly together, are 7.\_\_\_\_\_ Gaye’s intellectual property (IP). They demand a \$100 million 8.\_\_\_\_\_.

Sheeran’s legal team supposedly 9.\_\_\_\_\_ the similarities of the two songs privately, but they have 10.\_\_\_\_\_ that the musical parts are common and cannot be 11.\_\_\_\_\_. Sheeran has publicly acted dismissively of these lawsuits in the past, saying that coincidentally it is “bound to happen if 60,000 songs are being released every day on Spotify”.

Not all attorneys and lawyers agree with Sheeran, however. A 12.\_\_\_\_\_ rights attorney, Ben Crump, says Sheeran took the IP from a black artist whom he “doesn’t feel as worthy as compensation”. Music and entertainment lawyer Charlie Sanders adds that even if Sheeran copied it subconsciously, it is still plagiarism. But he says the music industry’s business model is 13.\_\_\_\_\_ to blame. He says musicians are 14.\_\_\_\_\_ lawsuits more often now due to earning less income as a result of 15.\_\_\_\_\_ music.

## Fill-in consonants

Fill-in the missing letters *d, k, p, s, w*.

\_inger-\_ong\_riter Ed Sheeran face\_ a trial in court over claim\_ he allege\_ly co\_ie\_ the Marvin Gaye cla\_\_ic from 1972 "Let'\_ Get It On". Sheeran i\_ u\_ again\_t an American jury on accu\_ation\_ that hi\_ 2014 \_ong "Thin\_ing Out Lou\_" i\_ un\_oubtably a co\_y of the famou\_ R&B hit.

The la\_\_uit \_a\_ \_tarte\_ by the e\_tate of Ed Townsend, \_ho co-\_rote the \_ong \_ith Gaye. Townsend'\_ family allege that Sheeran blatantly ba\_e\_ hi\_ com\_o\_ition on the chor\_ \_rogre\_\_ion an\_ the chor\_ harmony of "Let'\_ Get It On". They claim that the\_e t\_o \_art\_ of the \_ong, \_hen \_laye\_ \_eamle\_\_ly together, are exclu\_ively Gaye'\_ intellectual \_ro\_erty (I\_). They \_eman\_ a \$100 million \_ettlement.

Sheeran'\_ legal team \_u\_\_o\_e\_ly ac\_no\_le\_ge\_ the \_imilaritie\_ of the t\_o \_ong\_ \_rivate\_ly, but they have \_ro\_o\_e\_ that the mu\_ical \_art\_ are common an\_ cannot be co\_yright. Sheeran ha\_ \_ublicly acte\_ \_i\_mi\_\_ively of the\_e la\_\_uit\_ in the \_a\_t, \_aying that coinci\_entally it i\_ "boun\_ to ha\_\_en if 60,000 \_ong\_ are being relea\_e\_ every \_ay on Spotify".

Not all attorney\_ an\_ la\_yer\_ agree \_ith \_heeran, ho\_ever. A civil right\_ attorney, Ben Crump, \_ay\_ \_heeran too\_ the l\_ from a blac\_ arti\_t \_hom he "\_oe\_n't feel a\_ \_orthy a\_ com\_en\_ation". Mu\_ic an\_ entertainment la\_yer Charlie Sanders a\_\_ that even if \_heeran co\_ie\_ it \_ubcon\_ciou\_ly, it i\_ \_till \_lagiari\_m. But he \_ay\_ the mu\_ic in\_u\_try'\_ bu\_ine\_\_ mo\_el i\_ \_artially to blame. He \_ay\_ mu\_ician\_ are i\_\_uing la\_\_uit\_ more often no\_ \_ue to earning le\_\_ income a\_ a re\_ult of \_treaming mu\_ic.



## Cool-down discussion, keywords, and game

Discussion questions:

- Is it hard to earn a living from art?
- Why do musicians do cover songs? Do you have a favourite cover song?
- How do people become musicians in your country?
- What are the pros and cons of music streaming platforms?
- What parts of a song structure can you name?

CEFR C1 10 lesson keywords:

Nouns: accusation, composition, copyright, harmony, settlement, trial

Verbs: acknowledge, issue, propose, stream

Game:

Beginning with each letter below, think of a word to do with music.

A	J	S
B	K	T
C	L	U
D	M	V
E	N	W
F	O	X
G	P	Y
H	Q	Z
I	R	

## Answers

### Page 2 Warm-up activities and vocabulary

1. A. trial, B. undoubtably, C. composition, D. exclusively, E. acknowledged, F. proposed, G. coincidentally, H. compensation, I. plagiarism, J. streaming
2. slightly
3. settlement

### Page 3 Reading comprehension match-up

1D, 2G, 3C, 4L, 5H, 6A, 7F, 8E, 9K, 10B, 11J, 12M, 13I

### Page 4 Phrases, synonyms, and antonyms match-up

Phrases 1H, 2D, 3F, 4I, 5B, 6A, 7J, 8C, 9G, 10E

Synonyms 1D, 2E, 3A, 4C, 5B

Antonyms 1B, 2A, 3C

### Page 5 Grammar pairs cloze: adverbs of certainty and uncertainty

1B, 2B, 3A, 4B, 5A, 6B, 7A, 8A, 9A, 10B

### Page 6 Vocabulary gap-fill cloze

1D, 2H, 3E, 4C, 5J, 6I, 7A, 8F, 9G, 10B

### Page 7 Writing cloze

1. trial, 2. accusations, 3. undoubtably, 4. lawsuit, 5. composition, 6. harmony, 7. exclusively, 8. settlement, 9. acknowledged, 10. proposed, 11. copyright, 12. civil, 13. partially, 14. issuing, 15. streaming

For this lesson's interactive exercises, visit:

<https://www.everybitenglish.com/online-exercises-20230501-sheeran-copyright>

Thanks for using this lesson!