Credited to Lennon/McCartney, the song comprises distinct segments written independently by John Lennon and Paul McCartney, with orchestral additions.   
While Lennon's lyrics were inspired by contemporary newspaper articles, McCartney's were reminiscent of his youth. The decisions to link sections of the song with orchestral crescendos and to end the song with a sustained piano chord were made only after the rest of the song had been recorded.

The supposed drug reference in the line "I'd love to turn you on" resulted in the song initially being banned from broadcast by the BBC.   
In 2004, Rolling Stone ranked "A Day in the Life" at number 26 on the magazine's list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time.   
Since its original album release, "A Day in the Life" has been released as a B-side, and also on various compilation albums. It has been covered by other artists including Bobby Darin, Neil Young, Jeff Beck, The Bee Gees, Phish and since 2008, by McCartney in his live performances.  
There is some dispute about the inspiration for the first verse. Many believe that it was written with regard to the death of Tara Browne, the 21-year-old heir to the Guinness fortune and close friend of Lennon and McCartney, who had crashed his Lotus Elan on 18 December 1966 when a Volkswagen pulled out of a side street into his path in Redcliffe Gardens, Earls Court.   
In numerous interviews, Lennon claimed this was the verse's prime inspiration. However, George Martin believes that it is a drug reference (as is the line "I'd love to turn you on" and other passages from the song) and while writing the lyrics Lennon and McCartney were imagining a stoned politician who had stopped at a set of traffic lights.  
The description of the accident in "A Day in the Life" was not a literal description of Browne's fatal accident.   
Lennon said, "I didn't copy the accident. Tara didn't blow his mind out, but it was in my mind when I was writing that verse. The details of the accident in the song — not noticing traffic lights and a crowd forming at the scene — were similarly part of the fiction."  
The final verse was inspired by an article in the Daily Mail in January 1967 regarding a substantial number of potholes in Blackburn, a town in Lancashire.  
However, he had a problem with the words of the final verse, not being able to think of how to connect "Now they know how many holes it takes to" and "the Albert Hall". His friend Terry Doran suggested that they would "fill" the Albert Hall.  
McCartney provided the fourth verse of the song, a short piano piece he had been working on independently, with lyrics about a commuter whose uneventful morning routine leads him to drift off into a dream.  
He had written the piece as a wistful recollection of his younger years, which included riding the bus to school, smoking, and going to class.  
The line "I'd love to turn you on", which concludes both verse sections, was, according to Lennon, also contributed by McCartney; Lennon said "I had the bulk of the song and the words, but he contributed this little lick floating around in his head that he couldn't use for anything."

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| **The Beatles - A Day In The Life** | |
| I read the news today oh, boy  About a lucky man who made the grade  And though the news was rather sad  Well, I just had to laugh  I saw the photograph  He blew his mind out in a car  He didn't notice that the lights had changed  A crowd of people stood and stared  They'd seen his face before  Nobody was really sure if he was from the House of Lords   I saw a film today oh, boy  The English army had just won the war  A crowd of people turned away  But I just had to look  Having read the book  I'd love to turn you on.   Woke up, fell out of bed  Dragged a comb across my head  Found my way downstairs and drank a cup  And looking up, I noticed I was late  Found my coat and grabbed my hat  Made the bus in seconds flat  Found my way upstairs and had a smoke  And somebody spoke and I went into a dream  Ah  I read the news today oh, boy  Four thousand holes in Blackburn, Lancashire  And though the holes were rather small  They had to count them all  Now they know how many holes it takes to fill the Albert hall  I'd love to turn you on | J'ai lu les nouvelles aujourd'hui, ça alors  A propos d'un veinard qui avait réussi  Et même si l'article était plutôt triste  Je n'ai pas pu m'empêcher de rire.  J'ai vu la photo  Il s'est défoncé la tête en voiture  Il n'avait pas remarqué que le feu était passé au rouge.  Une foule de gens, plantés là, scrutait la scène,  Ils avaient déjà vu ce visage  Personne n'était vraiment sûr qu'il soit à la Chambre des Lords  J'ai vu un film aujourd'hui, ça alors,  L'armée anglaise venait juste de gagner la guerre.  Une foule de gens s'éloignait  Mais je n'ai pas pu m'empêcher de regarder  Car J'avais lu le livre  J’aimerais te faire vibrer...  Je me suis réveillé, j'ai sauté du lit,  Je me suis planté un peigne dans les cheveux J'ai réussi tant bien que mal à descendre les escaliers et j'ai bu une tasse [de thé]  Et en levant les yeux j'ai vu que j'étais en retard.  J'ai trouvé mon manteau et j'ai attrapé mon chapeau,  j'ai attrapé mon bus en quelques secondes. J’ai monté l’escalier et j'en ai grillé une  Et quelqu'un a parlé et je suis parti dans un rêve.  J'ai entendu les nouvelles aujourd'hui, ça alors,  4000 trous à Blackburn, dans le Lancashire.  Et même si les trous étaient petits  Ils ont dû tous les compter. Maintenant ils savent combien de trous il faut pour remplir l'Albert Hall.  J’aimerais te faire vibrer |

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the news today oh, boy

About a lucky man who \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the grade

And though the news \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_rather sad

Well, I just \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to laugh

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the photograph

He \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ his mind out in a car

He \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ notice that the lights had changed

A crowd of people \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and stared   
They'd seen his face before

Nobody \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ really sure if he was from the House of Lords   
  
I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a film today, oh boy

The English army had just \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_the war

A crowd of people \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ away

But I just had to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Having read the book

I'd love to turn you on.   
  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , fell out of bed

Dragged a comb across my \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ my way downstairs and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a cup

And looking up, I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I was late

Found my coat and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ my hat

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the bus in seconds flat

Found my way upstairs and had a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

And somebody \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I went into a dream   
  
I read the news today oh, boy

Four thousand holes in Blackburn, Lancashire

And though the holes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ rather small

They \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to count them all

Now they know how many holes it takes to fill the Albert hall   
I'd love to turn you on