

## 为什么X的意思是亲吻？ Why does 'x' mean 'kiss'?

Hello, and welcome to 6 Minute English, I'm Neil.

大家好，欢迎收听六分钟英语，我是内尔，

And I'm Rob.

我是罗伯。

We're going to be looking at a letter from the English alphabet.

我们要关注一个英语字母表中的字母。

It's a letter which has a particular meaning when used at the end of a piece of informal writing such as letters, emails, texts, and messages.

这个字母被用在非正式文体，例如信件、邮件、短信和信息的末尾时具有一个特殊的意义。

Oh, I'm very EXcited.

我非常兴奋。

Haha, very good, very good, Rob!

哈哈，非常好，很好，罗伯！

My EXpectations are really high.

我有很高的期望。

Yeah, that's another good one.

好的，这个也不错。

Is it an EXtraordinary letter?

这是个不同寻常的字母吗？

OK, thank you, Rob, that's enough of your jokes.

好了，谢谢你，罗伯，你的玩笑可以结束了。

I'm getting EXasperated!

我很生气！

Oh, now you've got me at it!

哦，被你捉到我了！

Well, no prizes for guessing what letter we're focussing on today?

嗯，猜出我们今天要关注的字母没有奖品吗？

Why?

为什么？

No, it's not Y. No, no, I didn't mean the letter 'y', I meant the word 'why', as in-why are there no prizes?

不，不是字母Y。不，我不是说字母Y，我是说为什么，我想说为什么没有奖品？

Because of all the not so subtle clues you've been giving.

因为你一直在给出的不那么隐晦的提示。

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The letter is X. Yes. Exactly.

这个字母是X。是的，确实。

Alright, I think we get the idea!

好的，我想我们明白了。

Before we go much further, let's have a question.

在我们进一步探讨之前，我们来回答一个问题吧。

English has 26 letters.

英语中有26个字母。

Which language has 74 letters?

哪种语言有74个字母呢？

Is it a) Khmer, b) Hindi, or c) Armenian?

是 A. 高棉语，B. 印度语，还是 C. 亚美尼亚语？

Any ideas, Rob?

知道答案吗，罗伯？

An excellent question but quite obscure, I'm going to say b) Hindi.

问题非常棒，不过答案不明确，我要选B. 印度语。

Well, I'll have the answer later on.

好的，我稍后会揭晓答案。

Now, Rob, what does the letter X all by itself at the end of a message mean?

那么，罗伯，如果X单独放在一条信息的末尾的话，那是什么意思呢？

Well, it means a kiss.

嗯，意思是亲吻。

The more kisses, the more affection you are showing.

亲吻越多，你所表示的爱意就越浓。

Where does this concept of putting an X to mean a kiss come from?

这种赋予X亲吻的意思的概念是来自于哪里呢？

Dr Laura Wright is from the Faculty of English at Cambridge University and she appeared on the BBC Radio 4 programme Word of Mouth.

劳拉·怀特博士来自剑桥大学英语系，她出演了BBC电台4频道的节目《Word of Mouth》。

When does she say this practice started and where does it come from?

她说这个习惯是何时开始的，它又是从何而来的呢？

Well, we've been adding Xs for kisses at the bottom of letters since at least 1763. So the very first one we know of had seven Xs.

嗯，我们从1763年就开始在信件的末尾加上X来表示亲吻了。我们知道的第一例用了七个X。

I have to say, I haven't gone to seven ever.

老实说，我从来没用过7个那么多。

We get X from the Roman alphabet which got it from the Greek alphabet, pronounced /ks/ and the Romans...

我们从罗马字母表中借来的X，而罗马字母表又是从希腊字母表中借来的，发音是/ks/，并且罗马人.....

That's nearly a kiss, isn't it?

这几乎就是亲吻的发音了，不是吗？

Yeah, it is, isn't it?

是的，不是吗？

I think a penny's just dropped there.

我想你恍然大悟了。

It has, clunk.

是的，咚地一响。

What do we learn about the origins of the X for kisses?

我们对于X表示亲吻的起源学到了什么？

Well, it's been used since at least 1763, and it comes from the Roman alphabet and they got it from the Greeks.

嗯，它从1763年就开始被使用了，并且它来自于罗马字母表，而它们又是从希腊人那里借来的。

And why did this come to mean a kiss?

那么为什么这个会变成亲吻的意思呢？

Well, Dr Wright suggests it's because of the original pronunciation—/ks/.

嗯，怀特博士表示这是因为最初的发音——/ks/。

And at the point, the presenter made the connection, didn't he?

并且这个时候主持人明白了这之中的联系，对吗？

Yes, he did.

是的，他明白了。

And Dr Wright used a phrase for when someone suddenly understands something, particularly something that is obvious to others.

怀特博士用了一个短语表示某人突然明白了某事，尤其是这件事情对其他人来说是显而易见的。

She said the penny has just dropped.

她说恍然大悟。

And this has got nothing to do with a penny, which is a small coin, actually dropping anywhere.

而这句话跟一便士，即一个小钱币掉到任何地方都没有任何关系。

But the presenter makes a joke by using a word we use for the noise of something falling, clunk.

但是主持人用一个我们用来表示东西掉落时发出的声响的词开了个玩笑，这个词是闷响。

Although, to be honest, a penny would never really clunk.

不过老实说，一便士永远不会发出沉闷的响声。

That's more like the noise two heavy metal objects would make—the clunk of a car door, for example.

这个更像是两个沉重的金属制品相撞所发出的声音——例如汽车车门的闷响。

Let's listen to that exchange again.

我们再听一遍他们的对话。

Well, we've been adding Xs for kisses at the bottom of letters since at least 1763. So the very first one we know of had seven Xs.

嗯，我们从1763年就开始在信件的末尾加上X来表示亲吻了。我们知道的第一例用了七个X。

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Yeah, it is, isn't it?

是的，不是吗？

I think a penny's just dropped there.

我想你恍然大悟了。

It has, clunk.

是的，咚地一响。

One thing to note about putting an X at the end of a communication is that it is not something you do for everyone.

关于在通信的末尾加上X有一点需要注意，那就是这不是对所有人都可以做的事情。

It's usually only to friends and family members, people you might kiss in real life.

它通常旨在朋友和家人之间使用，他们是你在现实生活中可能会亲吻的人。

Professor Nils Langer from the University of Bristol told a story about a colleague of his who wasn't too familiar with this convention.

来自布里斯托大学的尼尔斯·朗格教授讲述了一个跟他同事有关的故事，她不太熟悉这项传统。

What was her mistake?

她犯了什么错？

I've got a colleague of mine from Bristol, who...when she came over from Germany thought that X was just the normal way of closing a letter in England and so she would finish any letter with Xs, even a letter to the Inland Revenue.

我在布里斯托的一个同事，她.....当她从德国来的时候认为X在英国只是一种结束信件的常见方式，因此她所有的信件都是以X结尾，连写给税务局的信件也不例外。

We never heard, really, how the Inland Revenue responded to these letters with these Xs.

我们真的从来没有听说过税务局是如何回应这些带有X的信件的。

They docked her another 20 quid, I think!

我想他们可能少收了她20英镑吧！

What was her mistake, Rob?

她的错误是什么，罗伯？

She didn't realise that you don't put an X on every communication.

她没有意识到你不可在每次通信的过程中都加上X。

So she even put it on a business letter including one to the Inland Revenue, which is the government department in the UK that deals with tax.

所以她甚至在公务信件中加上了这个字母，包括给税务局的信件，税务局指的是英国处理税收的政府部门。

We don't know how the tax people felt about the letter with kisses.

我们不知道税务局的官员们如何看待带有吻的信件。

But the presenter joked about what their response would have been.

但是主持人调侃了一下他们可能有的反应。

Yes, he joked that they probably docked her another 20 quid.

是的，他开玩笑说他们可能少收她20英镑。

To dock money is to cut the amount of money you are expecting to receive and a quid is a slang word for a British pound.

缩减钱的意思是减少你预期会收到的钱数，而quid是英镑的俚语说法。

Now time for the answer to our question.

现在是时候揭晓我们问题的答案了。

English has 26 letters.

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But which language has 74 letters?

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I guessed b) Hindi.

我猜的是 B. 印度语。

Well, I suppose it was a one in three chance, but not correct this time.

嗯，我想你有三分之一的机会答对，但是这次没有答对。

The answer is a) Khmer.

答案是 A. 高棉语。

Very well done if you knew that.

如果你知道答案的话，你就太棒了。

Now on to the vocabulary we looked at in this programme.

现在该回顾我们在本期节目中谈到的词汇了。

We started with a penny.

我们从一便士开始。

A penny is an English coin.

一便士指的是一个英国硬币。

A hundred pennies make one pound sterling.

一百便士等于一英镑。

The phrase, the penny has dropped, means that someone has suddenly understood something.

短语恍然大悟的意思是某人突然明白某事。

A clunk is the noise of two heavy objects hitting each other.

闷响指的是两个重物互相撞击发出的声响。

The Inland Revenue is the UK's tax authority.

税务局指的是英国的税收机关。

And if you dock money from someone, you reduce the amount of money you pay them.

如果你缩减某人的钱，那么你减少支付给他们的钱。

For example, as an employee in the UK, your tax is automatically docked from your salary.

例如，作为在英国的一位雇员，你的税收会自动从你的薪水中扣除。

And finally, a quid, which is a slang term for one pound sterling.

最后是quid这个词，它是一英镑的俚语形式。

Right, before they start docking our pay for being late, it's time to say goodbye.

好的，在他们因为我们超时而缩减我们的收入之前，我们该说再见了。

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See you soon, goodbye.

再见。

Bye bye!

再见。

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