

The High Five: Job Well Done! [A2]

Questo gesto, una via di mezzo fra una celebrazione e un saluto, sembra un'espressione naturale di esultanza e di spirito di squadra, ma fino a pochi decenni fa non lo faceva nessuno. Come e quando ha avuto origine?



Watch any sporting competition today and it's hard to believe that until about forty years ago the "high five" simply didn't exist! **Although** there are different versions of the origins of this instantly recognisable — but very American — gesture of **greeting** / celebration, many believe that the **first-ever** high five happened during a baseball game between the Los Angeles Dodgers and the Houston Astros.

BASEBALL

It was 2 October 1977 and the last game of the season. Dusty Baker, a star player for the Dodgers, had just **hit** a **home run**. To celebrate, he **rushed towards** his **teammates**, where the first person to meet him was player Glenn Burke, who **raised** his right arm with an open hand. Baker automatically **reached up** and **hit** Burke's hand: "It seemed like the thing to do", he commented **afterwards**. This gesture soon **spread** to other American

sports, and then around the world thanks to the TV coverage of major sporting events. As its popularity escalated, it **broke out** of the sporting **realm** and began to be used for any celebratory moment.

VIETNAM VETS

There is, of course, another story **related** to its origins. Lamont Sleets was a **high-profile college** basketball player who would often high five his **teammates**. When asked why, he explained that his father had served in the Vietnam War in a unit **nicknamed** The Five. When, years later, the veterans **met up**, they would always **stretch out** their arm, **spread** their five fingers and **slap** each other's hands, **yelling** "Five!". At the time, Lamont was a kid, but he loved the gesture of camaraderie and began to imitate it.

JAZZ CULTURE

Whichever story is true, today it is also commonly understood that the high five was an evolution of the **lesser-known** low five. This **nonchalant greeting** had been a part of African-American jazz culture since **at least** the 1920s, and consisted of two people **slapping** each other's lowered hands. The **noun** 'high five' entered the Oxford English Dictionary in 1980; and the verb 'to high five (someone)' was **added** the next year. No matter how and when this worldwide cultural phenomenon originated, nothing seems **to convey** the message "Job well done!" as perfectly as a **loud** and enthusiastic high five.

Glossary

- **broke out** = superare, sconfinare
- **nicknamed** = soprannominata
- **slap** = colpire a mano aperta
- **yelling** = gridare
- **Whichever** = qualunque
- **noun** = nome
- **to convey** = trasmettere, esprimere
- **greeting** = saluto
- **realm** = ambito
- **first-ever** = Il primo nella storia
- **rushed** = correre
- **lesser-known** = meno noto
- **hit** = battere
- **added** = aggiungere
- **related** = connessa, in relazione
- **reached up** = alzare il braccio
- **towards** = verso
- **home run** = fuoricampo (battuta fuori dai limiti)
- **spread** = diffondersi
- **college** = università
- **at least** = almeno
- **Although** = sebbene
- **afterwards** = in seguito
- **met up** = riunirsi, incontrarsi
- **stretch out** = allungare, tendere
- **nonchalant** = disinvolto
- **loud** = forte, sonoro
- **raised** = alzare
- **high-profile** = d'alto profilo, rinomata
- **teammates** = compagni di squadra