

Hi! Hello! [B1]

La lingua continua a trasformarsi e adattarsi ai tempi. La tecnologia, ad esempio, ha influenzato il nostro modo di salutare.

Hello!' is a common way to [greet](#) someone, and for many of us is the first word that we learned in English. In fact, 'Hello' didn't start out as a [greeting at all](#): in the early 1800s, the word was used to call attention to something or to express surprise (or some other emotion) such as in the phrase, "Hello, what's going on here?" 'Hello' was related to older words, such as 'holla' or 'holà' from the French phrase meaning something like '[Whoa there!](#)' or to Germanic terms like 'halōn' or 'halen' meaning 'to [fetch](#)' or 'call'.

TECHNOLOGY

Until well into the 19th century, common [greetings](#) in English were the formal-sounding 'Good day' or 'How do you do?' But such phrasing was too slow for the speed of technological change that was taking place in the late 19th century. When US inventor Alexander Graham Bell patented his telephone in 1876, he suggested using '[Ahoy!](#)', from the Middle English 'Hoy!', a cry for attention commonly used by [sailors](#). However, his rival, Thomas Edison, proposed 'Hello!' instead. The word [caught on](#), and Edison's 'Hello!' became the international way to answer a phone call.

HOW DO YOU SAY...?

Saluta la tua famiglia da parte mia. Give my regards to your family.

HI THERE!

The [peppy](#) word 'Hi' is American English and for a long time many British people declined to use it. In fact, it likely evolved from '[Heigh](#)' or 'Hy', Middle English terms, again used to [shout out](#) to people. First appearing in written English in the 1860s, over time the meaning of 'Hi' evolved from being

an **attention-seeking** term to one of **greeting**. It appears in phrases such as 'Hi there!', **slightly warmer**, common in emails and in spoken language. Variants include 'Hey!', frequent in emails and text messages, and 'Hiya!' popular in the north of England, in Scotland and across Ireland.

DIFFERENT USES

By the mid-20th century, US culture, which **vies** with Australian for its love of brevity and informality, helped make 'Hi' the standard casual **greeting**. The term **spread** worldwide through US pop culture and later, social media. The British, however, (and Europeans) remained resilient, finding it **brash** and **showy**. For a while, then, 'Hi' was more often used among friends, while 'Hello' appeared to work well in **polite settings**, business communication and formal conversation.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

In 1984, then-alternative technology company Apple unveiled the 'Hello icon', a simple cursive 'hello' **overlaid** onto a white background that appeared on the Macintosh computer when you **switched it on**. This not only introduced something extremely new and high-tech to the market, but **acknowledged** a certain type of cool clientele, **drawing on** a US perception of British culture as being **quaint** but 'retro', and reiterating the computer's role as a world-changing communication tool — like Bell's telephone. In fact, the success of the iPhone has revived the fortunes of 'Hello!' and the word has arguably **knocked 'Hi!' off its pedestal** as the world's most used form of **greeting**.

Glossary

- **greet** = salutare
- **sailors** = marinai
- **peppy** = vivace
- **shout out** = mandare un saluto
- **spread** = diffondersi
- **drawing on** = basarsi su
- **Heigh** = ehi
- **attention-seeking** = per richiamare l'attenzione
- **polite settings** = contesti formali, educati
- **acknowledged** = riconoscere
- **knocked 'Hi!' off its pedestal** = far abbassare la cresta
- **fetch** = andare a prendere, recuperare
- **slightly warmer** = leggermente più caloroso
- **vies** = competere
- **brash** = sfacciato
- **showy** = vistoso
- **switched it on** = accendere
- **at all** = affatto
- **Whoa there!** = fermo lì!
- **Ahoy!** = ehi
- **caught on** = prendere piede
- **overlaid** = sovrapposto
- **quaint** = pittoresca, caratteristica