

Wow! [A2]

Più che una parola, è un'onomatopea, un'espressione di ammirazione e sorpresa che trascende i confini linguistici e culturali. Qual è la sua origine?

The word 'wow' is used to express [surprise](#), excitement or admiration. It is a versatile term with a curious history. Even though it sounds like a modern word, its origins [date back](#) centuries. It was first recorded in writing in a 1513 English-language version of Virgil's Aeneid translated by a Scottish [bishop](#). It was originally used as an interjection to express [surprise](#) or [astonishment](#), and may be related to the old exclamation '[vow](#)', a shorter form of 'I [vow](#)!' (I promise), which was used to add emphasis to a [statement](#). [Over](#) the centuries, the meaning of 'wow' has evolved, and by the late 1800s it was in common use among English speakers.

VERSATILE

In the early 1920s the word 'wow' was used as a [noun](#), ("The show we saw was a real wow!"); as an adjective (meaning 'sensational', 'enjoyable'), as a verb ("They really wowed the audience"), and also in the exclamation 'Wowey!'. However, the popularity of 'wow' [soared](#) with the [rise](#) of mass media and popular culture when it began appearing in comic books, films and on TV shows, especially those [addressed](#) to a teenage public. It was also used in computer software and merchandising.

MARKETING TOOL

The use of 'wow' continued to evolve over time, and the word [found its way into](#) various aspects of modern communication. Today, it is a [staple](#) in text messages, on social media posts and in online interactions to react to pictures, videos or posts, where it often appears as an easy and quick way to show appreciation or [surprise](#) without having to write [lengthy](#) comments. The expressions 'wow factor' and 'wow effect', now [widely](#) used in everyday language to express a strong positive reaction, are [slang](#) terms in business to describe [features](#) that leave a [lasting](#) impression on customers.

QUITE CLEAR

'Wow' is definitely short and to the [point](#), and its meaning is quite clear. [Mind the context, though!](#) The term can also be used in critical or ironic [statements](#),

particularly online, for example, in response to something boring. It can also be used sarcastically, or perhaps in reply to someone who has said something [unpleasant](#) or [improper](#) ('Wow!', meaning: "That was a [lousy](#) thing to say!"). Wow, that's useful to know! **WAOUH!** The word 'wow' is very similar in a vast number of languages: the Spanish 'guau', the Russian 'bay' ([pronounced](#) 'vau'), the French 'waouh', the Portuguese 'uau', and the Dutch 'wauw' are all approximations of it.

Glossary

- **found its way into** = trovare spazio in
- **features** = caratteristiche
- **date back** = risalire
- **statement** = affermazione
- **addressed** = rivolgere
- **slang** = gergo
- **bishop** = vescovo
- **Over** = nel corso
- **rise** = aumento
- **improper** = inappropriato
- **noun** = sostantivo
- **staple** = di base
- **Mind the context, though!** = presta attenzione al contesto, però
- **lengthy** = lunghi
- **widely** = ampiamente
- **lasting** = duraturo
- **point** = diretto
- **unpleasant** = sgradevole
- **astonishment** = stupore
- **vow** = promettere
- **soared** = sollevarsi, andare in alto
- **lousy** = schifoso, disgustoso