i love you hello im catherine hello im rob we both started with what is probably the best known greeting in english and one of the first words english language students learn and that is hello so today in 6 minute english were digging a little deeper into the world of greetings and the fascinating history of hello surprisingly the word hello is not as old as you might think but when did it first appear in print in english was it a in the 1890s b the 1950s or c the 1820s well i think english changes really quickly so im going to say b the 1950s and well say hello again to hello a little later in the programme first greetings they can be a bit of a minefield a subject full of unpredictable difficulties while in many places a handshake or bow is normal theres also the tricky question of kisses and hugs awkward should you kiss how many times and should your lips touch their cheek no rob definitely an air kiss close to the cheek but dont touch much safer greetings are the subject of a new book by former british diplomat andy scott called one kiss or two in search of the perfect greeting here he is on a bbc radio show word of mouth why are greetings so important these are the first moments of interaction we have with people and its in those first moments and using those verbal and physical rituals that we have and we can get in such a muddle about that were kind of recognising each other and reaffirming our bonds or even testing our bonds and our relationships with each other were signalling our intentions towards each other despite the fact we might not necessarily be conscious when were doing them scott says we need to communicate our intentions to each other and acknowledge our relationships well thats what greetings do one word he uses to mean relationship or connection is bond we can reaffirm our bonds which means we confirm them and make them stronger and we do it through rituals patterns of behaviour that we do for a particular purpose so there are the phrases such as hello good afternoon nice to meet you and as well as the physical rituals handshakes bows and kisses though he also said we sometimes want to test our bonds we might want to check if our friendship has grown by offering something warmer than usual like a hug instead of a handshake now scott acknowledges how difficult greetings can be using the very british slang phrase to get in a muddle if you get in a muddle you become confused or lost you might get in a muddle if one person expects two kisses and the other expects only one though scott does believe that the details dont really matter because another important purpose of greetings is to reduce tension so if you get it wrong just laugh about it ok lets get back to the one word we really shouldnt get in a muddle about hello lets listen to dr laura wright a linguist from cambridge university also speaking on the bbc word of mouth radio programme where does hello come from it starts as a distant hailing i see you miles over there and ive got to yell at you its not until the invention of telephones we really get to use hello as a greeting to each other and even then it wasnt initially used as a greeting it was used more as an attention grabbing device you are miles away the line is about to be cut i need to attract the attention of the operator as well and so everybody would call hello to each other as this long distance greeting form laura says hello hasnt always meant hello originally it was just a shout to attract someones attention and we call this kind of shouting hailing the shout would vary in form it could sound like a hollo or a hulloa we continued this kind of hailing when telephones first appeared people would keep repeating hello hello while they were waiting to be connected and before long this became the actual way to greet somebody on the telephone anyway before we say goodbye to hello lets have the answer to todays question i asked when the word first appeared in print in english according to the oxford english dictionary it was in 1826 other spellings appeared before that you see i was thinking english changes really quickly but not that quickly not that quickly so before we go lets have a look at todays vocabulary again a minefield is something that is full of uncertainty and even danger this sense comes from the literal meaning a field full of explosive landmines and then we had air kiss which is when you kiss the air beside someones face instead of the face itself like this mwah and we had bond a connection theres a close bond between us i think rob which is good because when i get in a muddle youre always very understanding yeah to get in a muddle means to become confused ritual was another word rituals are certain behaviours that people perform in certain contexts i have a morning ritual for example brush my teeth eat breakfast i didnt say it was an interesting ritual rob no thats true finally to hail its to greet someone loudly especially from a distance i hailed my friend when i saw her at the airport and thats it for this programme for more find us on facebook twitter instagram and youtube pages and of course our website bye bye i love you