

Baseball Cap Emoji Proposal



Authors: Eric Dash (ericdash@gmail.com), Jennifer 8. Lee (jenny@emojicon.co)

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Abstract

We propose the addition of a BASEBALL CAP —also known as BALL CAP or CAP — emoji to augment the existing set of emoji headwear. The baseball cap is the most popular headwear in the United States, accounting for 80 percent of all hat sales.¹ Although it was originally adopted by baseball players to shield their eyes from the sun, the BALL CAP has become an important symbol of community identity, a ubiquitous accessory for both men and women, an icon of hip-hop culture, and even an indicator of status and rank among police and military units. As the *The New York Times* observed: “The cap is not a fashion item, but something larger and more primal: the headpiece of the American folk costume..”²

Of course, the BALL CAP is something more than just another article of Americana. As both the game of baseball and American popular culture have spread throughout the world, the BALL CAP has moved well beyond the ballpark. Today, the BALL CAP is as likely to be worn by a teenager in Berlin, Havana, and Tokyo as a kid in Brooklyn, Hartford or Tulsa. It is used as head covering by rabbis and rap stars, farm hands and fashionistas, and just about everyone in between. And its popularity is only even more likely to increase in the years ahead.

Introduction

¹ Lilliefors, Jim. *Ball Cap Nation: A Journey Through the World of America's National Hat*. Clerisy Press, September 2009.

² Patterson, Troy. "The Common Man's Crown." *The New York Times*. April 1, 2015

As of 2016, the options for emoji headwear are an eclectic and erratic set. They include a HELMET WITH WHITE CROSS, TOP HAT, WOMAN'S HAT, GRADUATION CAP and CROWN. They do not, generally, reflect the headwear that is now popularly worn around the world. Thus we aim to remedy that by filling out the available options. High up on our list is the BASEBALL CAP emoji, which we submit alongside the HIJAB emoji.

The BASEBALL CAP, with its rounded crown and small brim, was first sported by the Brooklyn Excelsiors in 1859. It had a functional purpose: to help ballplayers avoid glare from the sun. But it also had a symbolic one — its fabrication in the team's colors and the inclusion of a logo, mascot, or initial helped engender a sense of loyalty to both the ballclub and the broader community that the team represented.

As the sport of baseball grew in the early 20th century, and legions of fans adopted a favorite ballclub, the BALL CAP was gradually adopted by younger fans as a popular and relatively inexpensive way to show their support. But it wasn't until the early 1950s that the modern baseball BALL CAP adopted its iconic form. In 1954, the New Era Company issued the so-called wool "59Fifty" — a model that comprised of six panels fit around a piece of stiff cotton, with the frontmost two stitched to a small brim. Within two decades, all but four Major League Baseball teams wore this version of the cap.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the BALL CAP began to gain traction outside the ballpark. In his book *Ball Cap Nation*, James Lilliefors points to eight major factors that lent the BALL CAP cultural cache—and spurred its adoption as a fashion symbol. Among them: the growth of televised sports; increased participation in Little League baseball, and its adoption by celebrities, like Tom Selleck on *Magnum PI*.

By 1991, The New York Times observed in a piece, "Far From Home Plate, Baseball Caps Take Over," that "baseball caps are the new T-shirts."³ And by the mid-1990s, the BALL CAP became a standard part of hip-hop culture, catalyzed by Spike Lee's custom-designed Yankees cap in the 1996 World Series, which was red rather than the team's trademark navy blue. Soon, caps were available in every conceivable color — and with logos and designs unaffiliated with baseball. Non-profits manufactured BALL CAPs so that supporters could show their affinity for a cause; corporations incorporated them into uniforms and used them as promotional giveaways. What's more, some police forces used them to replace much clunkier sheriff's hats. Even military units, have used them to signify status or a particular job. In the US Navy's submarine force, for example, red baseball caps are worn by drill monitors, while U.S. Army parachute instructors wear black baseball caps as part of their uniforms.

What's more, the globalization of American culture in general and baseball in particular has led to the explosive growth of the CAP overseas. As baseball has spread throughout the world, the

³ Dullea, Georgia. "Far From Home Plate, Baseball Caps Take Over." The New York Times. July 10, 1991.

BALL CAP has become an increasingly common head covering -- not just in ballparks but in the most rural corners of the Caribbean, the farmlands of Latin America, refugee camps in Europe and the Middle East, and the streets of major urban centers from Seoul to San Diego. Likewise, it is not just U.S. police and military officers that have made the CAP a part of the standard issue uniform. The CAP is worn by police officers in Slovenia as well as naval officers in Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, to name a few. In other words, the BALL CAP, while invented in the United States, is no longer just an American fashion accessory. It is now a global icon.

Factors for Inclusion

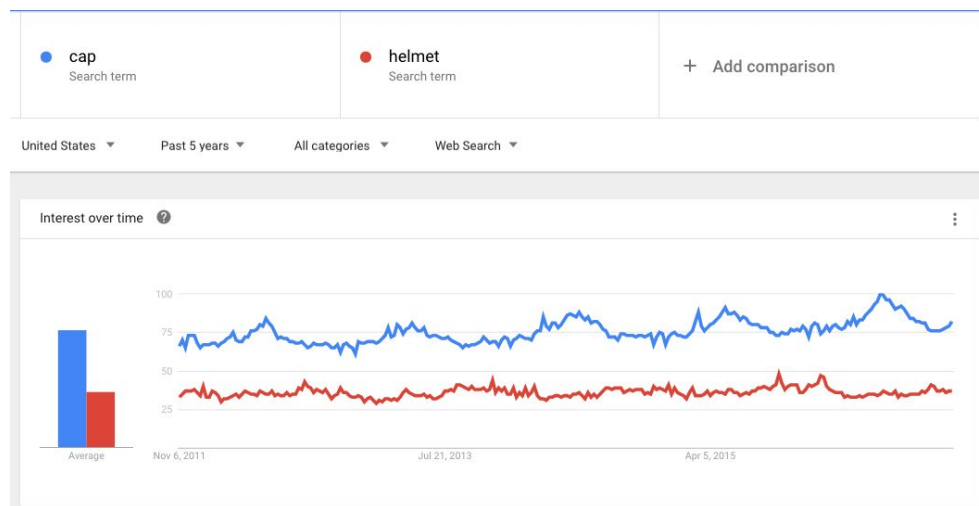
Compatibility

We are not aware of a baseball cap emoji or cap emoji in any of the major vendor platforms such as Google, Apple, Yahoo, Microsoft. However, the baseball cap is among the headwear options on the Bitmoji app.

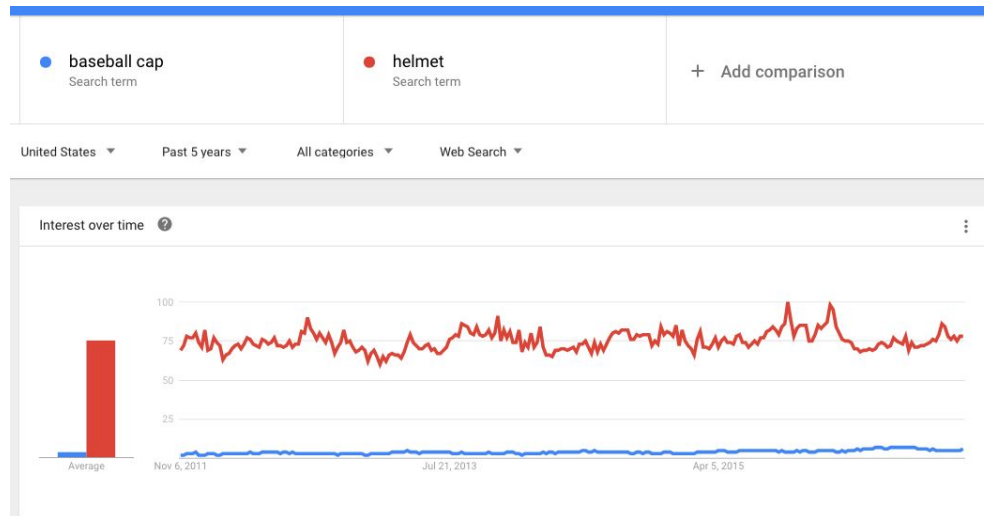
Expected Usage Level.

- Frequency

This is the Google Trends comparison of “cap” and “baseball cap” to “helmet” in the United States.



As “cap” may also include terms like “market cap”, we also provide this search.



On Instagram, the variations of #baseballcap gets around 500,000, but #cap has over 4.6 million uses, at least two-thirds of which refer to a baseball cap (vs. a pageboy cap or other uses)

Multiple Usages

CAP can have different meanings. At its most fundamental level, it can represent the sport of baseball. Yet, it also can be imbued with secondary meanings — including youth, a trucker/blue-collar worker or even a “player.” In the United Kingdom as well as Australia, India, New Zealand and other former British colonies, the CAP emoji might be associated with cricket. What’s more, how a cap is positioned can also create meaning. For example, a backwards cap may be associated with idea of “rally cap” — a baseball expression stemming from the idea that turning the the cap around would be a good luck omen for a team looking late-game surge. Likewise, a new cap worn straight-on or sideways might be associated with hip-hop culture.

There are other ways the BALL CAP emoji might be used. Paired with a symbol of a half-crescent, for example, it could indicate a “night cap.” Likewise, posting three caps in a row could be used to represent a “hat trick” in hockey — a ritual where fans throw their caps on the ice to salute a player who has scored three goals in a single game.

The hat has also come to represent Americana, in part with its association with the everyman. Bill Clinton became famous during the 1992 presidential campaign for wearing his various baseball caps while jogging. And in the 2016 campaign, Donald Trump’s signature red cap with the slogan “Make America Great Again” became a visual sensation. “The red baseball cap implies that it’s kind of an American staple,” observed George Lois, the advertising executive who came up with the “I Want My MTV” campaign during the 1980s.⁴

⁴ Miranda, Carolina A. "It's been worn, memed and burned: How Donald Trump's 'Make America Great Again' hat reflects a nation's anger." The Los Angeles Times. July 15, 2016.

Image Distinctiveness

The baseball cap is iconic. It features a rounded crown of soft fabric (usually wool or polyester) normally made from six small pieces of material and a short, stiff brim projecting in the front. The front of the cap typically contains designs or logos of a baseball team, company, or organization.

BALL CAP does not currently resemble anything else in the emoji keyboard, and is a visually distinctive form that is instantly recognizable.

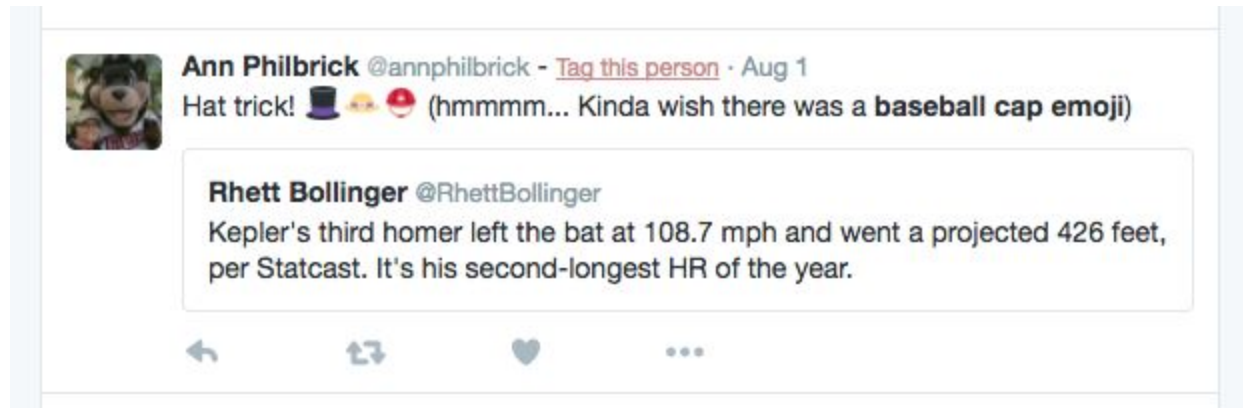
Completeness

As mentioned earlier, the choices of emoji headwear are erratic and eclectic, including HELMET WITH WHITE CROSS, TOP HAT, WOMAN'S HAT, GRADUATION CAP and CROWN. We also have people in TURBAN. They do not, generally, reflect the headwear that is now popularly worn around the world. We feel that BALL CAP and HIJAB move to close this gap.

Frequently Requested

There is a steady, though not overwhelming, pace of requests for BASEBALL CAP or BALL CAMP emoji on Twitter. Most notable is people's dissatisfaction with the existing hat options.





Factors for Exclusion

Overly Specific

The BASEBALL CAP as a concept is not overly specific. However as vendors create BASEBALL CAP designs, they do run the risk of being overly specific in their choice of color and logo. That being said, in the future, color modifiers may allow people to choose different colors of caps.

Open Ended

There are indeed many, many styles of hats out there, but only one represents 80 percent of all hat sales in the United States. This is a key reason why the BALL CAP rises in stature above other hats. Similarly, we think that other iconic and culturally pervasive headgear, such as the HIJAB, should also be elevated to emoji status.

Already Representable

The BASEBALL CAP is not currently representable. In theory, one could combine the BASEBALL emoji with a HAT emoji to mean BASEBALL CAP. That may get the literal meaning across, but we lose the iconic Americana shape.

Transient

An early version of the baseball cap was first introduced in 1858 by the Brooklyn Excelsiors, but the hat we now associate with modern-day baseball was not introduced by the New Era Company until 1954, making it just over six decades old. Furthermore, it did not gain its broader iconic meaning until the 1980s.

Thus, there is some risk of the BASEBALL CAP fading from popular culture. That being said, the original meaning of the BASEBALL CAP, as an accessory of a key sport, will still withstand the vagaries of fashion.

Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, deities

There are many logos that are put on the BASEBALL CAP, but the cap itself is not trademarked. Vendors will have to be thoughtful about how to portray the cap. We thought it was appropriate to chose red baseball cap given the timing of the UTC 146 with the 2016 election.

Other Character Properties

The other character properties are suggested to be defined as follows.

General Category: So

Canonical Combining Class: 0

Bidirectional Class: ON

Decomposition Type: Decomposition Mapping:

Numeric Type:

Numeric Value:

Bidirectional Mirrored: N Unicode 1 Name:

ISO Comment:

Simple Uppercase Mapping: Simple Lowercase Mapping: Simple Titlecase Mapping: