# Proposal for Emoji: Whistle

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Incomplete: 6 of 7 required screenshots are still to be added (section 3E). Not ready to submit.

## 1. Identification

**CLDR short name:** whistle

**Keywords:** referee | coach | lifeguard | foul | timeout | stop | halt | signal | alarm | report

**Category:** Objects, sound, after 📣 megaphone. Activities, sport would also fit

## 2. Images

| | 72×72 | 18×18 |
|---|---|---|
| Color |  |  |
| Black & white |  |  |

**License:** The four images are original work, created for this proposal by the submitter with the assistance of an AI tool. The submitter owns the rights in them and licenses them to the Unicode Consortium under the Emoji Proposal Agreement & License.

## 3. Selection factors: inclusion

### A. Multiple meanings

Yes. The object itself, “whistle”: “a small wind instrument in which sound is produced by the forcible passage of breath through a slit in a short tube.” First known use: before the 12th century. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/whistle Beyond it, Merriam-Webster defines each of these senses.

- **A signal: play stops, time is up.** “whistle”: “a signal given by or as if by whistling.” https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/whistle

- **Someone has reported wrongdoing.** “blow the whistle”: “to call public or official attention to something (such as a wrongdoing) kept secret.” First known use: 1938. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/blow%20the%20whistle
- **The person who reports it.** “whistleblower”: “one who reveals something covert or who informs against another.” First known use: 1906. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/whistleblower
- **A coded message.** “dog whistle”: “an expression or statement that has a secondary meaning intended to be understood only by a particular group of people.” https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dog%20whistle
- **Frills.** “bells and whistles”: “items or features that are useful or decorative but not essential.” First known use: 1968. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bells%20and%20whistles
- **A quick campaign stop.** “whistle-stop”: “a brief personal appearance especially by a political candidate usually on the rear platform of a train during the course of a tour.” https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/whistle-stop
- **Spotless.** “clean as a whistle”: “very clean.” https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/clean%20as%20a%20whistle

The reporting sense is also law: Directive (EU) 2019/1937 protects people who report breaches of EU law and calls them whistleblowers https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1937/oj. Senses of whistling, the sound, such as “whistle past the graveyard,” are left out: this proposal is for the object.

#### B. Use in sequences

Yes. Each sense above has a sequence that says it.

🏊 🪇 a lifeguard’s call

⚽ 🪇 the final whistle

🏢 🪇 a report from inside a company

🙋 🪇 a whistleblower

🐕 🪇 a dog whistle

🔔 🪇 bells and whistles

🚂 🪇 a whistle-stop tour

🧼 🪇 clean as a whistle

#### C. Breaks new ground

Yes. In CLDR 49, which supplies the keywords for emoji search, no emoji has the word for a whistle, the object, among its keywords or in its name in 9 of the 12 languages checked (section 4). Unicode has nothing a person uses to stop play, and nothing for reporting wrongdoing.

#### D. Distinctiveness

A pea whistle has a simple, recognizable outline: a tapered mouthpiece, a round chamber, and the sound window between them. The example images add a ring for a lanyard and three sound lines.

The 18×18 images above show that the outline survives at that size.

### E. Usage level: frequency

“Whistle” is also a verb. As the guidelines ask where a word has another sense, the Google and Trends searches add a category term, [referee whistle], and the Ngram Viewer search draws the noun alone, whistle_NOUN, beside the bare word.

#### Google Search

**Screenshot needed: Google Search: referee whistle**

Open https://www.google.com/search?q=referee+whistle in a private browser window. Click Tools so the number of results shows.

Save it as `docs/emoji-proposals/whistle/google-search-whistle.png` and run `bun run emoji:pdf`.

**Screenshot needed: Google Search: elephant**

Open https://www.google.com/search?q=elephant in a private browser window. Click Tools so the number of results shows.

Save it as `docs/emoji-proposals/whistle/google-search-elephant.png` and run `bun run emoji:pdf`.

#### Google Video Search

**Screenshot needed: Google Video Search: referee whistle**

Open https://www.google.com/search?tbm=vid&q=referee+whistle in a private browser window. Click Tools so the number of results shows.

Save it as `docs/emoji-proposals/whistle/google-video-whistle.png` and run `bun run emoji:pdf`.

**Screenshot needed: Google Video Search: elephant**

Open https://www.google.com/search?tbm=vid&q=elephant in a private browser window. Click Tools so the number of results shows.

Save it as `docs/emoji-proposals/whistle/google-video-elephant.png` and run `bun run emoji:pdf`.

#### Google Trends: Web Search

**Screenshot needed: Google Trends, Web Search: elephant and referee whistle, 2004 to present, worldwide**

Open https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&q=elephant,referee%20whistle in a private browser window.

Save it as `docs/emoji-proposals/whistle/trends-web.png` and run `bun run emoji:pdf`.

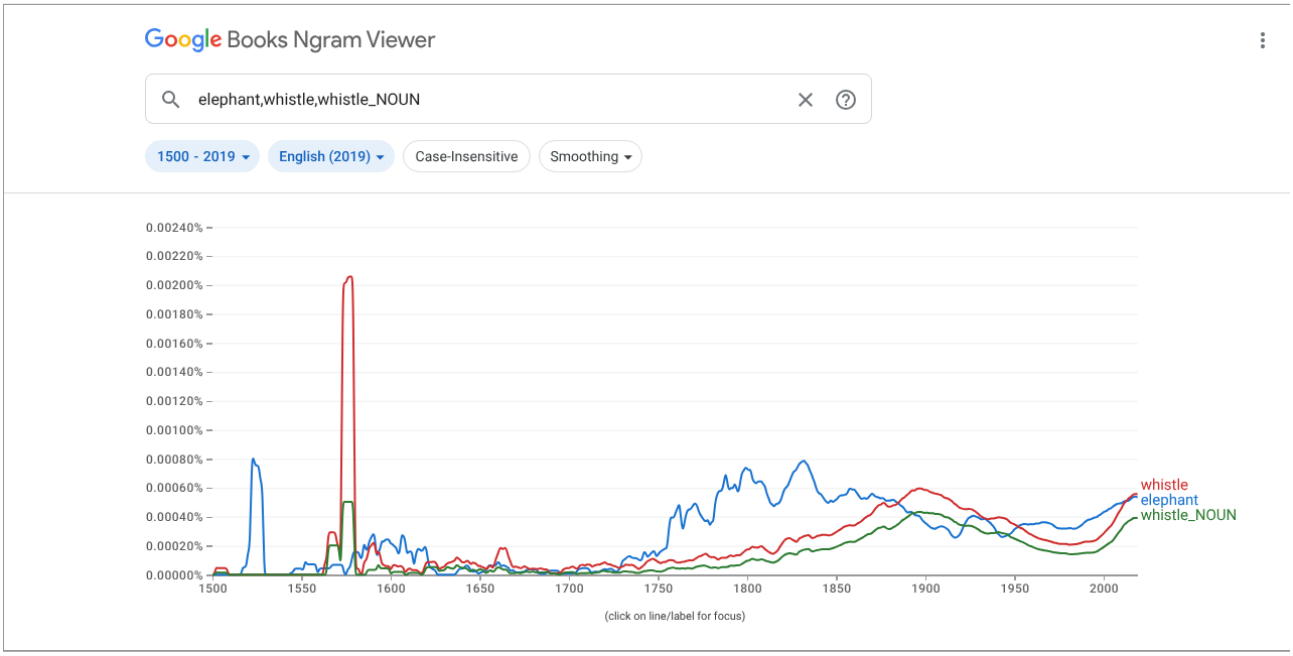
#### Google Trends: Image Search

**Screenshot needed: Google Trends, Image Search: elephant and referee whistle, 2008 to present, worldwide**

Open https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all_2008&gprop=images&q=elephant,referee%20whistle in a private browser window.

Save it as `docs/emoji-proposals/whistle/trends-images.png` and run `bun run emoji:pdf`.

### Google Books Ngram Viewer




Google Books Ngram Viewer: elephant, whistle, and whistle_NOUN, 1500 to 2019, English (2019). https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=elephant%2Cwhistle%2Cwhistle_NOUN&year_start=1500&year_end=2019&corpus=en-2019&smoothing=3. Captured 12 November 2026.

In 2019, “whistle” was 0.000553% of the words in English books and “elephant” 0.000569%: 0.97× as frequent. That counts the verb. As a noun alone it was 0.000390%: 0.68×. The table adds the reporting sense on its own, and the noun for the object in four other languages, each beside that language’s word for elephant (year 2019, no smoothing, read on 11 November 2026 and 12 November 2026):

| Books | Term | Share | Reference | Share | Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | whistle | 0.000553% | elephant | 0.000569% | 0.97× |
| English | whistle_NOUN | 0.000390% | elephant | 0.000569% | 0.68× |
| English | whistleblower, whistleblowers, whistleblowing | 0.000116% | elephant | 0.000569% | 0.20× |
| French | sifflet | 0.000231% | éléphant | 0.000483% | 0.48× |
| Spanish | silbato | 0.000142% | elefante | 0.000505% | 0.28× |
| Italian | fischietto | 0.000102% | elefante | 0.000415% | 0.25× |
| German | Trillerpfeife | 0.0000317% | Elefant | 0.000219% | 0.14× |

### F. Completeness

n/a

### G. Compatibility

n/a

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## 4. Selection factors: exclusion

### Already representable

Only in part. 🛑 stop sign says stop, without saying that a person called it. 📣 megaphone and 🔔 bell say announcement and alert. 😗 kissing face is, in Emojipedia's words, "sometimes interpreted as whistling," which is a tune a person makes, not the object or its signals https://emojipedia.org/kissing-face. No emoji or sequence reads as a referee's call or as a report of wrongdoing.

Unicode's own keyword data separates the sound from the object. CLDR 49 lists whistling, the sound, under 😮‍💨 face exhaling in 8 of 12 languages: English, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Portuguese, Arabic, and Korean. For a whistle, the object, it gives no emoji in 9 of the 12 languages below. Where it gives one, it is a face: 😮‍💨 face exhaling in English, where the object and the act are one word, and 🥳 partying face, which blows a party horn, in French and Portuguese. This proposal is for the object. A language counts as giving an emoji when its word is one of that emoji's keywords or its name (read on 12 November 2026). https://github.com/unicode-org/cldr/tree/release-49/common/annotations

| Language | Word | What CLDR 49 gives |
|---|---|---|
| English | whistle | 😮‍💨 face exhaling, as one of its keywords, beside "sigh" and "exhale" |
| German | Trillerpfeife | No emoji |
| French | sifflet | 🥳 partying face, as one of its keywords: it blows a party horn |
| Spanish | silbato | No emoji |
| Italian | fischietto | No emoji |
| Japanese | ホイッスル | No emoji |
| Chinese | 哨子 | No emoji |
| Hindi | सीटी | No emoji |
| Russian | свисток | No emoji |
| Portuguese | apito | 🥳 partying face, as one of its keywords: it blows a party horn |
| Arabic | صافرة | No emoji |
| Korean | 호루라기 | No emoji |

### Overly specific

No. One plain pea whistle represents a referee's, a coach's, a lifeguard's, and a safety whistle.

**Open-ended**

No. A whistle is one object, not one of a family of whistles that would each want an emoji.

**Transient**

No. The reporting sense dates to 1906 and 1938. The word's share of English books has stayed between 0.000199% and 0.000590% in every year since 1900 (Google Books Ngram Viewer, English 2019, no smoothing).

**Faulty comparison**

This proposal does not rest on comparison with emoji that already exist.

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## 5. Other information

**Design.** The example shows a pea whistle with its mouthpiece up and to the left. The defining features are the tapered mouthpiece, the round chamber, and the sound window.

**Earlier proposals.** Unicode's Emoji Proposals Status list shows this emoji proposed twice and four neighbors. It gives the date each was submitted and its outcome, not the reason. https://unicode.org/emoji/emoji-proposals-status.html

| Proposal | Submitted | Outcome | Relation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Referee (A) | 24 April 2017 | Declined | A neighbor |
| Referee (B) | 21 November 2017 | Expired | A neighbor |
| Whistle | 19 February 2019 | Expired | This emoji |
| Whistling Face with Music Notes | 19 April 2021 | Declined | A neighbor |
| WHISTLE | 7 June 2021 | Declined | This emoji |
| Whistling | 2 April 2025 | Declined | A neighbor |

This proposal rests on the meanings in section 3A and the figures in section 3E. The list's rule is that declined emoji are not eligible to be resubmitted for four years. The list does not say what the 2025 "Whistling" proposal showed. If Unicode counts it as this emoji, that rule holds this proposal until 2029.