

Proposal to Add Grave and Incense Characters

To: Unicode Consortium

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Abstract

This submission is a request to add a grave/tombstone and incense character to the Unicode emoji set. The tombstone for the West, and incense for the East, are common symbols to respect dead relatives and there is no current emoji that conveys such emotion. The author proposes converting U+26FC to an emoji symbol as it is currently unimplemented across devices (and perhaps forgotten?), and for the creation of a new incense emoji.

Introduction

The core of the human experience revolves around birth and death. Since the first human tribes or civilizations were developed these two core facets of human life have been celebrated, feared, and intertwined through religion, cuisine, literature, and many other factors of human civilization. Death is a part of every person's life, and it is only appropriate that we have a character to represent the idea and experience of death.

In addition to the heavy-handed tone, death has also made itself part of pop culture in a jovial fashion such as the phrase "I'm dead" or "I'm dying of laughter". RIP is a common response to such jokes and also a common lament to deaths. "As dead as a doornail", "dead air", "Over my dead body", a multitude of phrases exist using death as a theme.

Names

CLDR short name: grave

CLDR keywords: grave | tombstone | rip

CLDR short name: incense

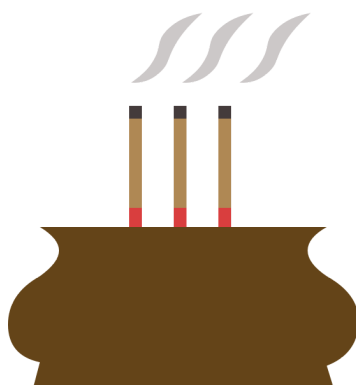
CLDR keywords: incense

Images



Artwork by Philippe Kimura-Thollander. Licensed for noncommercial use: free to share and use.





Two potential representations of incense.

Artwork by Philippe Kimura-Thollander. Licensed for noncommercial use: free to share and use.

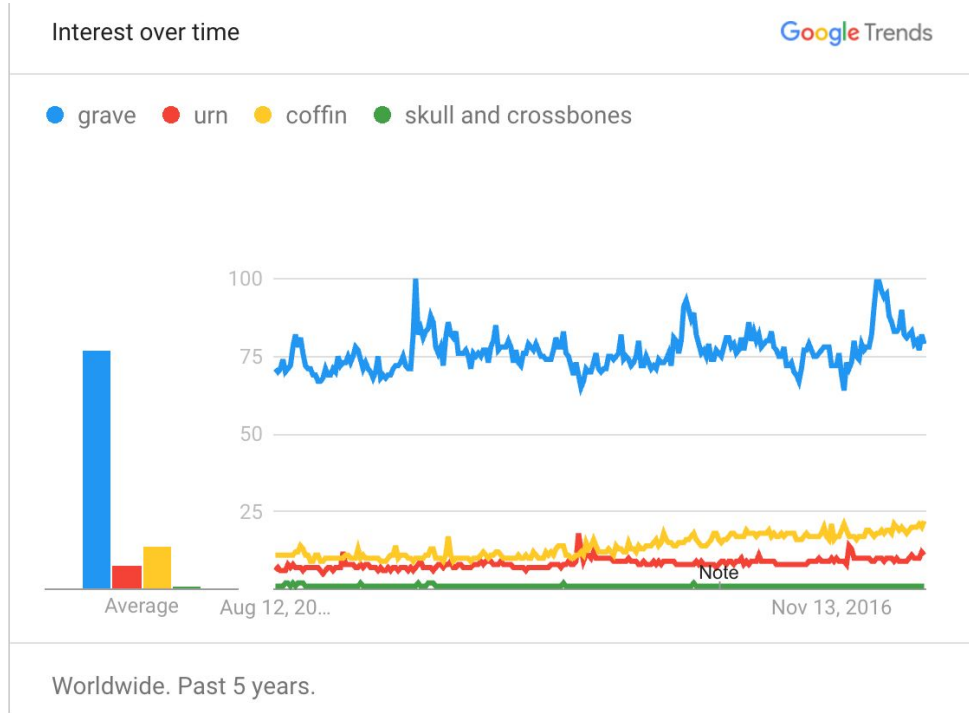
Compatibility

The author is unaware of any grave or incense images used in any major platform (Google, Apple, Snapchat, Facebook). A tombstone and incense emoji provides an opportunity to respectfully represent the dead, and compliment the urn emoji. However, it is important to note that U+26FC, is supposed to represent a headstone, however no vendor currently implements this symbol and thus it could be converted to an emoji.

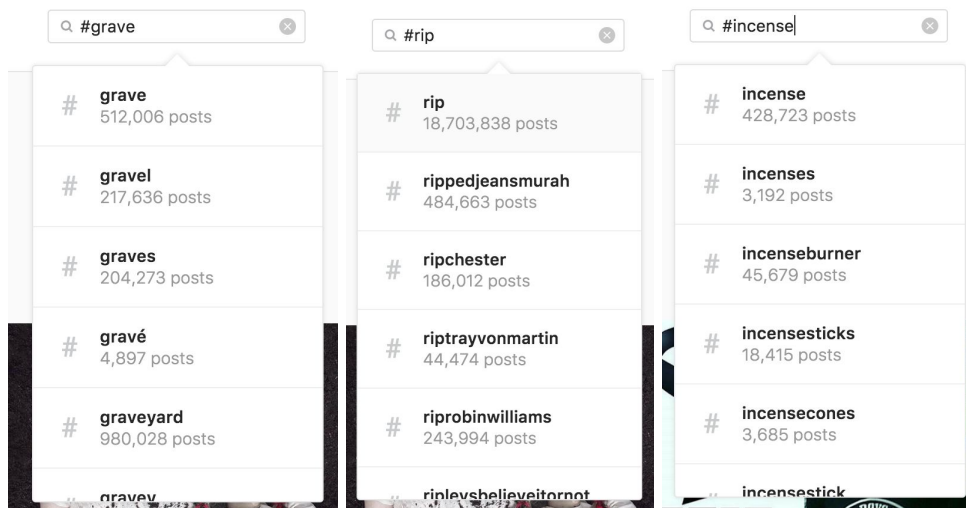
Expected Usage

A. Frequency

The expected usage of a grave emoji is high. Compared to its contemporaries, such as coffin, urn, or skull and crossbones, the grave term highly outranks them.



Current Instagram hashtags counts:



B. Multiple Uses

Graves are referenced in multiple idioms, such as You can “swear on your mother’s grave” to keep a secret, or perhaps “dig you own grave” by making a mistake, and people might be “spinning in their grave” if something happens that is against their beliefs or teachings. And of course, they can represent “Rest in Peace”, the common phrase of respect towards the dead.



Graves can also be used in phrases unrelated to death, such as “It’s a graveyard out here” indicating lack of people, or “graveyard shift” meaning working overnight shifts. Extending the meaning to death opens up many other idioms, like: “As dead as a doornail”, “dead air”, “Over my dead body”, “beat a dead horse”, etc.

Incense serves an important purpose in prayer for Eastern cultures, but are also casually used as room fresheners similar to scented candles. Burning incense is a common sign of respect and prayer in Buddhism, Hinduism, and is even used in Catholicism and Judaism, albeit to a lesser extent.



C. Demand

The demand and confusion of not having a grave, RIP, or incense emoji has been expressed across social media¹²³.

“i was thinking to add grave emoji but couldn't find soooo lol”

“Never let the kids carry the booze, they do not yet have the proper reverence for it. We lost the Triple Sec. 🍹 No RIP emoji? Wut?”

“@KathTheGinger responds to the fact there is no grave emoji, only this “

“add a goddamn grave emoji”

“🕯️ where's the incense emoji”

“@battleferrets *imagine a tombstone and incense emoji here since they don't appear to exist yet*”

¹ <https://twitter.com/search?q=%22grave%20emoji%22&src=typd>

² <https://twitter.com/search?q=%22rip%20emoji%22&src=typd>

³ <https://twitter.com/search?q=%22incense%20emoji%22&src=typd>

D. Anecdotal Support


 **judith** @tayslittlebird · Feb 20 ⌵
Replying to @EdsGingerCat
🍌 (why is there no **grave emoji**)
💬 1 ↻ 2 ❤️ 1 ✉️

 **Ross Hancock** @RossiHancock · Apr 30 ⌵
Replying to @neilhawkins87
no shovel or **grave emoji** 😞
💬 1 ↻ ❤️ ✉️

Q: why is there no tombstone emoji

i want one really bad
so does holly waite
pls add next update tyty xoxo

 **scary christian** @bitchassmoji · 1 Mar 2014 ⌵
All too often I find myself wishing there was an **incense emoji**.
💬 ↻ ❤️ ✉️

 **Tom Iarocci, MD** @TomIarocci · May 7 ⌵
Replying to @Trew1Trew
I was looking for an **incense emoji** but no such luck
💬 1 ↻ 1 ❤️ 1 ✉️

Visual Distinctiveness

A grave emoji would be visually distinct due to its rounded tombstone shape. The closest emoji in terms of shape might be mailbox, (depending on its depiction), but they are usually shown in a landscape form versus the portrait from a grave has. Although graves are usually just grey, the addition of grass or ground can be more colorful and provide more visual clarity.

As for incense, the most similar item is probably the firework sparkler emoji, however this emoji is exclusively in a box across all platforms while the proposed shape is in a saucer or pot, with more whitespace to allow its distinct form be noticeable. The addition of a potential smoke trail also helps convey the message of a burning stick, which could be similar to No Smoking but the trail goes in an opposite direction and from an object that is clearly not a cigarette.



Completeness

The grave and incense emojis would help round out the emojis that help convey death and prayer, which include skull, skull and crossbones, urn, hands together, and coffin. These emojis represent death at different stages, and grave and incense would help portray the time during which ancestors and ones who have passed away are remembered, respected, and not yet forgotten.

Factors for exclusion

A. Overly Specific

The grave and incense emoji would not be overly specific. Occasionally people will use the skull/coffin or candle emoji to represent the grave or incense respectively, but lament the fact that they cannot accurately portray their meaning.

B. Open Ended

N/A. Neither a grave nor incense have similar representations .

C. Already Representable

The grave and incense emojis cannot be represented with any other current emoji. The Dango emoji assistant⁴ (used in the prior Broccoli Emoji Proposal⁵) suggests 🍡🏠➡ for grave and 🍡🌀🕊️ which are both kind of off the mark in terms of tone for grave and meaning for incense.

⁴ <https://getdango.com/>

⁵ <http://www.unicode.org/L2/L2016/16375-broccoli-emoji.pdf>

D. Logos, brands, UI icons, etc

The grave and incense emojis are not associated with any brand.

E. Transient

As long humans live, they will die, and we have continued to honor our dead relatives through graves and incense for thousands of years. These practices will not change for the foreseeable future.

Sort Location

Category: Objects - Other

Emoji before: Coffin

The image I am submitting does not have any significance that would make it unsuitable for encoding as a character. There are no copyright, religious, or issues that reference anyone historic or living