

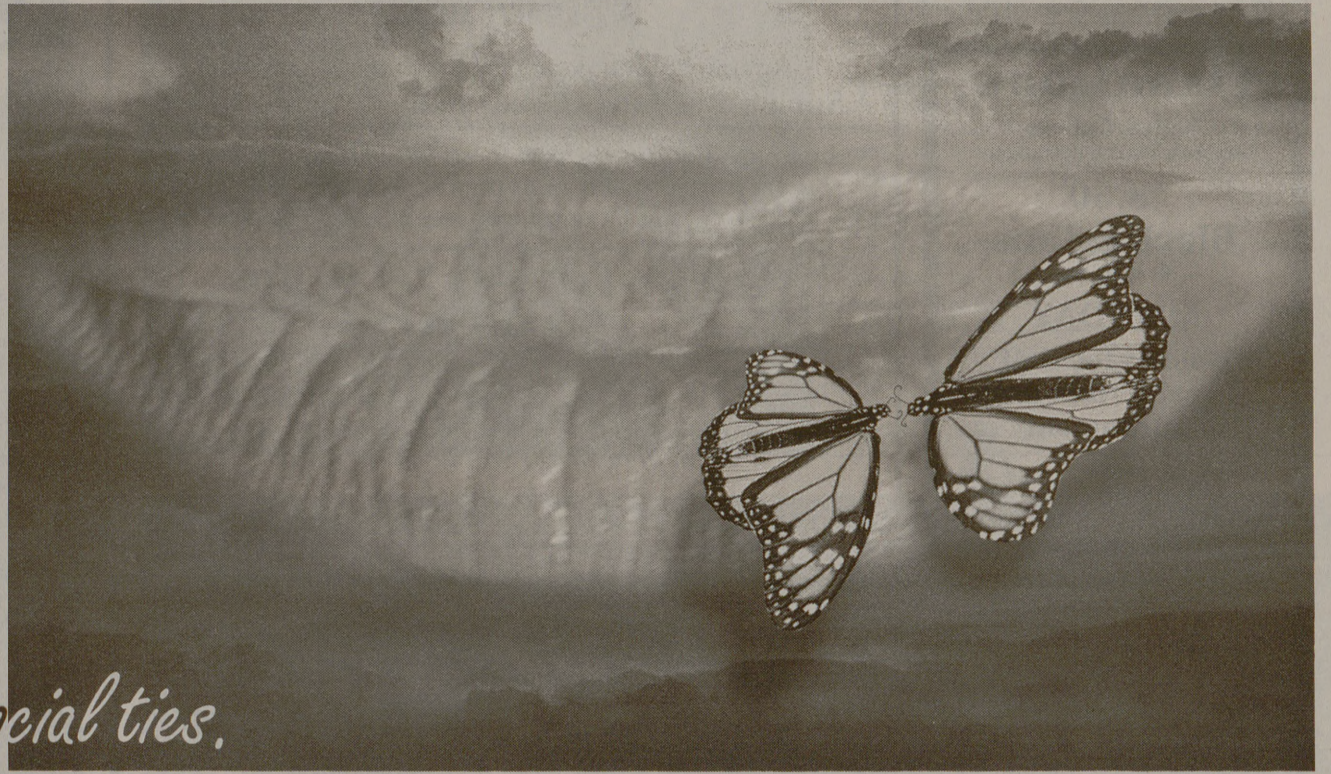
KISS

Me

BABY

Story by
Kiffin Collins

Photo Illustration by
Mike Fuentes



History of kissing reveals behavioral, social ties.

It's the end of the first date and as he is walking her to the door, the only thing on both their minds is what happens next. It is either dreaded or anticipated, depending on the person, but one thing is for certain — it is what keeps a relationship together or ends it forever.

The kiss is the universal display of affection shared between couples. It can represent a sign of romance, love, eroticism or even innocence.

Megan Kloppenburg, a freshman business major, said kissing is the best way to measure the substantial outcome of a relationship.

"Kissing tells a person whether the relationship is worth pursuing," she said. "A good kiss will usually lead to more romance, but a bad kiss will allow for good stories to share with friends."

There are several theories as to how the kiss originated and about the roots of kissing.

According to the Washington State University Website, the most popular theory of the kiss was hypothesized by anthropologists several years ago.

Kissing evolved from an ancient practice called 'pre-mastication,' which is when a mother chews food and then transfers it into the mouth of their child.

While most societies now manufacture baby food, this was probably a common practice in earlier times. It is not difficult to see how this activity could have eventually evolved into the modern kiss.

Another theory suggests kissing dates back as early as 2000 B.C. This hypothesis is of a more religious nature.

The Website said, "Individuals would bring their faces together in gestures of spiritual union and fusion."

This suggestion can also be related to the Eskimo nose rub, a sign of affection and acceptance in Alaskan society.

Cultural interpretations and meanings of kisses also exist. For example, there are certain types of kissing in American culture most people would understand and recognize.

In an Internet article titled "Different Types of Kisses," found on the "Art of Kissing" Website, three of the most common types of kisses are listed.

The social kiss is one shared between family members and friends.

The article said, "This kiss is probably the most varied between people, as it can occur most often or not at all. However, a quick kiss on the cheek or lips between family and friends is an easily recognized cultural sign, which conveys love and affection."

A second kiss easily recognized is the ceremonial kiss, common in most European countries as well as the United States.

The article describes this kiss as "an act of greeting among heads of state or other dignitaries upon meeting. This type of kiss, usually applied to each

side of the face, goes beyond social symbolism to political symbolism — it signifies goodwill on the part of both parties."

The third kiss is the most widely practiced form of intimate behavior — the romantic kiss.

"The romantic kiss was first adopted by the Romans and continues to be performed as a gesture of love and affection between couples," the Internet article said.

No two people kiss alike, and that is simply because every person has their own technique. Kissing is a learned behavior and therefore requires practice.

However, sometimes practicing in public is not always appreciated. Brian Blankenship, a junior business major, said public displays of affection (PDA) can often times be viewed as offensive or rude.

"I think there is a time and place for that (PDA) elsewhere," he said. "Kissing in public is tacky and rude and should be avoided in all public areas."

There are also other social ramifications associated with kissing. Infectious diseases can be contracted through saliva exchange.

Along with the common cold and fever blisters, herpes is easily contracted through kissing.

A virus marked by blisters on the mouth and lips, herpes can be treated with antibiotics and medication.

According to the Website "Health Answers," the most severe infectious disease contracted through kissing is mononucleosis. Mononucleosis is described as an "acute viral infection causing high temperature, sore throat and swollen lymph glands, especially in the neck."

Mononucleosis is very contagious, and can be contracted easily from close contact. Kissing should definitely be avoided.

Kissing has long been a favorite topic for magazines and tabloids. Tips and hints on how to give the perfect kiss and what to do circulate frequently.

Brenda Byers, a psychology professor at Texas A&M, said kissing does have some natural basis.

"Although there are biological and evolutionary explanations for the phenomenon of kissing, in our society, kissing is a part of our script for what love should be like," she said. "Scripts tell us how to act in specific situations. For example, our script for Valentine's Day includes flowers and candy. Kissing is one of the behaviors that occurs [when people] enact their scripts for loving."

R. J. Sternburg, a noted psychologist, said, "Love may involve various combinations of passion, intimacy and commitment. Although kissing may occur with several types of love, the more passion people experience in a relationship, the more erotic the behavior."

Buffy -
Sorry about
la

TAKE AMTRAK® HOME
LET AMTRAK®
TAKE YOU

Need a Ride?

Checking Out for Spring Break!

I'll do all the driving - Plenty of room.
Affordable - I'll even give **25% off**
to Student Advantage Card Members, or
10% off if you can show me your face on a Student I.D.
If you want more info, call me at **1-800-USA-Rail**
or hit my website at **www.amtrak.com**



800-333-2920



Offer shown is for coach class travel only and is subject to availability. Reservations are required. No multiple discounts. Fares, schedules and restrictions are subject to change without notice. Blackout dates may apply. Not valid for Autotrain, peak Metroliner or Canadian portion of ViaRail.