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Flex

Many rappers today use the term “Flexing on you” in many of their songs. Even in sports when one player outdoes another in whatever the sport is, one might tell the player to flex on them as a way of intimidation. But what exactly does the word flex really mean? Today it might be used under different contexts through a sort of slang but it definitely had alternative, real meanings. According to the Urban Dictionary flex means “As far as urban slang, the definition is “to show off.” Used by many rappers, most notably Ice Cube and the Geto Boys. Originated in the urban community, and has been used for quite some time.” In correlation to flexing one's muscles, which would be associated with showing off, flexing now means showing off. But, flex really had a different meaning in the past and I'm sure people today may not really be using the word properly or understand what its true and original meaning really is.

Originally the word flex meant to bend especially again and again and to move or tighten a muscle, according to the Merriam Webster's dictionary. The Latin root of flex is *flectere*, meaning to bend or curve. When a part of the body or an object flexes, it is bending at some sort of joint or point of which created a bend. When somebody flexes their muscles usually a prime example would be one's arms, specifically their biceps. That is because when flexing a bicep, the arm bends at the elbow and the muscle is tensed, essentially flexed. But many people today now only associate flexing with the tensing of muscles rather than the bending or curve of an object. That is an appropriate definition but when used in the context of “flexing on someone” then the true meaning is lost.

Slang terms are becoming much more common and the true meaning of the words are being lost. Being told to flex on someone in sports is asking you to flex all your muscles at a

specific person in an intimidating way. But when it is used in some rap songs it means more specifically to show off. Showing off is now being associated with the act of bending or tensing ones muscles. Obviously somebody could try to show off by flexing there muscles at someone or in a picture, however, that shouldn't make the word flex have the meaning of showing off.

In the future I would like to see this word used the correct way. I feel like there are other means of intimidation or showing off rather then flexing. I also don't find it appropriate to yell flex on them when playing a sport and accomplishing some sort of feat. I believe in playing with intensity as well as integrity. Using a slang term as a way to intimidate another team and to rally yours together isn't ethical.

Overall the word flex should be used with its original meaning and through its correct context rather then being turned into slang. Sounding proper and correct to me is better then "hip" with today's musical terms. Flex originally meant to bend or curve and to tense a muscle, and that's how I believe it should be kept. The action of flexing a muscle can be correlated with showing off but that's not what flexing anything should generally mean.

Works cited

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