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## **The most unfortunate names in Britain**

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1002/100228-peoples\\_names.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1002/100228-peoples_names.html)

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28th February, 2010

# THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100228-peoples\\_names.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100228-peoples_names.html)

A website in Britain has just released a study into the strange names some people have. TheBabyWebsite.com created a list called 'The Most Unfortunate Names in Britain'. Some of the names have been with people from birth; others got the names after they married. The bizarre, unlucky names include Barb Dwyer, Hazel Nutt, Jo King, Justin Case, Barry Cade and Mary Christmas. A spokesperson for the website gave one reason for why people have these names, saying: "When the parents of some of those people named their children, many probably didn't even realise the implications at the time." He added: "Parents really do need to think carefully though when choosing names for their children."

The list is a wake-up call for today's parents to think more carefully about the names they give to their children. It is very common to name babies after pop stars and actors. Popular names for children today include Miley, Britney and Brad. TheBabyWebsite explained how difficult life must be with a strange name: "There must be tremendous embarrassment every time they have to introduce themselves to anyone, especially to a crowd. Even their teachers must have had to hold back their smiles sometimes." Americans also have some curious names, such as Carrie Oakey and Bill Board. We found the best married-couple names on the BBC's website; Mr and Mrs Mee – Rob's a banker and Sue's a lawyer.

# WARM-UPS

**1. NAMES:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about names. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*strange names / lists / bizarre / unlucky / children / implications / choosing names / wake-up calls / pop stars / difficult life / smiles / curious / married names*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. NAMES:** What are the best names in the world? Complete this table. Talk about what you wrote with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you heard.

Best name for...	Name	Why
an actor		
a singer		
a world leader		
a sports star		
a writer		
a celebrity		

**4. NAMES FOR LIFE:** Students A **strongly** believe parents should give children names that will help them in life; Students B **strongly** believe parents should give creative names to their children. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. GOOD NAMES:** What are good names for these people? You can choose names from your own language (but talk about them in English). Tell your partner(s). Change partners and share what you heard.

- a world leader
- a teen pop star
- a boxer
- a dentist
- a clown
- a soldier
- a ballerina
- an English teacher

**6. NAME:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'name'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100228-peoples\\_names.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100228-peoples_names.html)

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. People in Britain have the strangest names in the world.              | T / F |
| b. People were either born with strange names or married into them.      | T / F |
| c. One woman in a report was named Barbed Wire.                          | T / F |
| d. The report says parents need to think more carefully about names.     | T / F |
| e. The article says parents who wake up early choose better names.       | T / F |
| f. Lots of people name their children after movie stars and singers.     | T / F |
| g. The report suggested teachers have to try not to smile at some names. | T / F |
| h. The banker Rob Mee and the lawyer Sue Mee are married.                | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. released     | a. strange      |
| 2. unfortunate  | b. warning      |
| 3. bizarre      | c. well-liked   |
| 4. realized     | d. consequences |
| 5. implications | e. made public  |
| 6. wake-up call | f. fantastic    |
| 7. popular      | g. peculiar     |
| 8. tremendous   | h. unlucky      |
| 9. hold back    | i. understood   |
| 10. curious     | j. contain      |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. the strange names        | a. implications                |
| 2. the names have been with | b. couple names                |
| 3. one reason for           | c. people from birth           |
| 4. realise the              | d. call for today's parents    |
| 5. Parents really do need   | e. embarrassment               |
| 6. a wake-up                | f. why people have these names |
| 7. name babies              | g. some people have            |
| 8. tremendous               | h. their smiles                |
| 9. hold back                | i. after pop stars             |
| 10. the best married-       | j. to think carefully          |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100228-peoples\\_names.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100228-peoples_names.html)

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

A website in Britain has just \_\_\_\_\_ a study into the strange names some people \_\_\_\_\_. TheBabyWebsite.com created a list called 'The Most Unfortunate Names in Britain'. Some of the names have been with people \_\_\_\_\_ birth; others got the names after they \_\_\_\_\_. The bizarre, unlucky names include Barb Dwyer, Hazel Nutt, Jo King, Justin Case, Barry Cade and Mary Christmas. A spokesperson for the website gave one \_\_\_\_\_ for why people have these names, saying: "When the parents of some of those people \_\_\_\_\_ their children, many probably didn't even realise the implications at the \_\_\_\_\_." He added: "Parents really do need to think carefully \_\_\_\_\_ when choosing names for their children."

*reason*  
*from*  
*though*  
*married*  
*released*  
*time*  
*have*  
*named*

The list is a wake-up \_\_\_\_\_ for today's parents to think more \_\_\_\_\_ about the names they give to their children. It is very \_\_\_\_\_ to name babies after pop stars and actors. Popular names for children today include Miley, Britney and Brad. TheBabyWebsite explained how difficult life \_\_\_\_\_ be with a strange name: "There must be tremendous embarrassment every time they have to \_\_\_\_\_ themselves to anyone, especially to a crowd. Even their teachers must have had to hold back their \_\_\_\_\_ sometimes." Americans also have some curious names, such as Carrie Oakey and Bill Board. We \_\_\_\_\_ the best married-couple names on the BBC's website; Mr and Mrs Mee – Rob's a banker and Sue's a \_\_\_\_\_.

*introduce*  
*common*  
*lawyer*  
*call*  
*smiles*  
*carefully*  
*found*  
*must*

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100228-peoples\\_names.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100228-peoples_names.html)

A website in Britain has just released a \_\_\_\_\_ names some people have. TheBabyWebsite.com created a list called 'The Most Unfortunate Names in Britain'. Some \_\_\_\_\_ been with people from birth; others got the names after they married. The \_\_\_\_\_ include Barb Dwyer, Hazel Nutt, Jo King, Justin Case, Barry Cade and Mary Christmas. A spokesperson for the website gave one \_\_\_\_\_ have these names, saying: "When the parents of some of those people named their children, many probably \_\_\_\_\_ the implications at the time." He added: "Parents really do need to think \_\_\_\_\_ choosing names for their children."

The list is \_\_\_\_\_ today's parents to think more carefully about the names they give to their children. It is very \_\_\_\_\_ babies after pop stars and actors. Popular names for children today include Miley, Britney and Brad. TheBabyWebsite explained \_\_\_\_\_ must be with a strange name: "There must be tremendous embarrassment every time they have to introduce themselves to anyone, \_\_\_\_\_. Even their teachers must have \_\_\_\_\_ their smiles sometimes." Americans also have some curious names, such as Carrie Oakey and Bill Board. We \_\_\_\_\_-couple names on the BBC's website; Mr and Mrs Mee – Rob's a banker and Sue's a lawyer.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100228-peoples\\_names.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100228-peoples_names.html)

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'baby' and 'name'.

<b>baby</b>	<b>name</b>
-------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• released</li><li>• birth</li><li>• include</li><li>• reason</li><li>• realise</li><li>• think</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• call</li><li>• common</li><li>• popular</li><li>• crowd</li><li>• smiles</li><li>• lawyer</li></ul>
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# STUDENT NAMES SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100228-peoples\\_names.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100228-peoples_names.html)

Write five GOOD questions about names in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

# NAMES DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'name'?
- c) What do you think of your name?
- d) If you changed your name, what would you change it to?
- e) Do you know anyone with a strange name?
- f) What names do you really dislike (and why)?
- g) What do you think of the names on the list in the article?
- h) Why do you think parents give children these bizarre names?
- i) What problems do you think people have in life with a bizarre name?
- j) Why did your parents choose the name they gave you?

*The most unfortunate names in Britain – 28th February, 2010*  
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# NAMES DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What would you name your son or daughter?
- c) Do you think children's names are becoming more unusual?
- d) What do you think of double-barreled names?
- e) Would you name your child after your favourite movie / sports / pop star?
- f) Do you fit the personality associated with your name?
- g) What's the coolest name in the world?
- h) Which countries have the best sounding names?
- i) What's unusual about the married couple at the end of the article?
- j) What questions would you like to ask an expert on names?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100228-peoples\\_names.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100228-peoples_names.html)

A website in Britain has just released a study (1) \_\_\_\_ the strange names some people have. TheBabyWebsite.com created a list called 'The Most Unfortunate Names in Britain'. Some of the names have been with people from (2) \_\_\_\_; others got the names after they married. The bizarre, unlucky names (3) \_\_\_\_ Barb Dwyer, Hazel Nutt, Jo King, Justin Case, Barry Cade and Mary Christmas. A spokesperson (4) \_\_\_\_ the website gave one reason for why people have these names, saying: "When the parents of some of those people (5) \_\_\_\_ their children, many probably didn't even realise the implications at the time." He added: "Parents really do need to think carefully (6) \_\_\_\_ when choosing names for their children."

The list is a (7) \_\_\_\_ -up call for today's parents to think more carefully about the names they give to their children. It is very common to name babies (8) \_\_\_\_ pop stars and actors. Popular names for children today include Miley, Britney and Brad. TheBabyWebsite explained how difficult life (9) \_\_\_\_ be with a strange name: "There must be tremendous embarrassment every time they have to introduce themselves to anyone, especially to a (10) \_\_\_\_\_. Even their teachers must have had to hold (11) \_\_\_\_ their smiles sometimes." Americans also have some curious names, such as Carrie Oakey and Bill Board. We found the best married-couple names on the BBC's website; Mr and Mrs Mee – Rob's a (12) \_\_\_\_ and Sue's a lawyer.

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |              |                |               |              |
|-----|--------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1.  | (a) at       | (b) to         | (c) into      | (d) in       |
| 2.  | (a) birthday | (b) birth      | (c) born      | (d) births   |
| 3.  | (a) include  | (b) inclusive  | (c) including | (d) includes |
| 4.  | (a) in       | (b) to         | (c) by        | (d) for      |
| 5.  | (a) names    | (b) naming     | (c) named     | (d) namely   |
| 6.  | (a) through  | (b) thought    | (c) though    | (d) trough   |
| 7.  | (a) shake    | (b) wake       | (c) fake      | (d) take     |
| 8.  | (a) after    | (b) before     | (c) during    | (d) while    |
| 9.  | (a) should   | (b) must       | (c) needs to  | (d) shall    |
| 10. | (a) crowd    | (b) population | (c) gather    | (d) people   |
| 11. | (a) past     | (b) behind     | (c) ago       | (d) back     |
| 12. | (a) banked   | (b) banks      | (c) banking   | (d) banker   |



# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about your name. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. NAMES:** Make a poster about names. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. BIZARRE NAME:** Write a magazine article about someone with a bizarre name. Include imaginary interviews with that person and the parent who named him/her.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to someone who has the same name as you. Ask him/her three questions about your name. Tell him/her a funny story about your name. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

a. F      b. T      c. F      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. T      h. T

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. released     | a. made public  |
| 2. unfortunate  | b. unlucky      |
| 3. bizarre      | c. strange      |
| 4. realized     | d. understood   |
| 5. implications | e. consequences |
| 6. wake-up call | f. warning      |
| 7. popular      | g. well-liked   |
| 8. tremendous   | h. fantastic    |
| 9. hold back    | i. contain      |
| 10. curious     | j. peculiar     |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. the strange names        | a. some people have           |
| 2. the names have been with | b. people from birth          |
| 3. one reason for           | c. why people have these name |
| 4. realise the              | d. implications               |
| 5. Parents really do need   | e. to think carefully         |
| 6. a wake-up                | f. call for today's parents   |
| 7. name babies              | g. after pop stars            |
| 8. tremendous               | h. embarrassment              |
| 9. hold back                | i. their smiles               |
| 10. the best married-       | j. couple names               |

## GAP FILL:

### The most unfortunate names in Britain

A website in Britain has just **released** a study into the strange names some people **have**. TheBabyWebsite.com created a list called 'The Most Unfortunate Names in Britain'. Some of the names have been with people **from** birth; others got the names after they **married**. The bizarre, unlucky names include Barb Dwyer, Hazel Nutt, Jo King, Justin Case, Barry Cade and Mary Christmas. A spokesperson for the website gave one **reason** for why people have these names, saying: "When the parents of some of those people **named** their children, many probably didn't even realise the implications at the **time**." He added: "Parents really do need to think carefully **though** when choosing names for their children."

The list is a wake-up **call** for today's parents to think more **carefully** about the names they give to their children. It is very **common** to name babies after pop stars and actors. Popular names for children today include Miley, Britney and Brad. TheBabyWebsite explained how difficult life **must** be with a strange name: "There must be tremendous embarrassment every time they have to **introduce** themselves to anyone, especially to a crowd. Even their teachers must have had to hold back their **smiles** sometimes." Americans also have some curious names, such as Carrie Oakey and Bill Board. We **found** the best married-couple names on the BBC's website; Mr and Mrs Mee – Rob's a banker and Sue's a **lawyer**.

## LANGUAGE WORK

1 - c    2 - b    3 - a    4 - d    5 - c    6 - c    7 - b    8 - a    9 - b    10 - a    11 - d    12 - d