



# BBC WORLD SERVICE LEARNING ENGLISH

What's in a name?



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## What's in a name?

Read the text below and do the activity that follows.

Recently, a couple in New Zealand were forbidden from naming their baby son 4Real. Even though New Zealand has quite liberal rules about naming children, names beginning with a number are not allowed. They decided to call him Superman instead.

In many countries around the world, unusual names for children are becoming more popular, especially since the increasing trend for celebrities to give their children wacky names. In Britain, you can call a child almost anything you like – the only restrictions on parents relate to offensive words such as swear words.

Some parents choose names which come from popular culture. For example, there have been six boys named Gandalf after the character in the Lord of the Rings novels and films. Equally, names relating to sport are fairly common – since 1984, 36 children have been called Arsenal after the football team.

Other parents like to make up names, or combine names to make their own unique version, a method demonstrated by Jordan, the British model, who recently invented the name Tiáamii for her daughter by combining the names Thea and Amy (the two grandmothers). She was quoted as saying that the accent and double letters were added to make the name 'more exotic'.

Other countries have much stricter rules when it comes to naming children. Countries including Japan, Denmark, Spain, Germany and Argentina have an approved list of names from which parents must choose. In China, there are some rules about what you may call a child – no foreign letters or symbols are allowed. As a result a couple were recently banned from calling their baby @.

In Britain, some names which were previously thought of as old-fashioned have become more popular again, such as Maisie or Ella for a girl, or Alfie or Noah for a boy.

But the most popular names are not the wacky ones. The top names are fairly traditional – Jack, Charlie and Thomas for boys and Grace, Ruby and Jessica for girls.



## Glossary

liberal - believing in and/or allowing more personal freedom	trend - a new development, fashion
wacky - unusual in a positive, exciting or silly way	restrictions - limits (especially established by laws or rules)
offensive - causing upset or hurt feelings	swear words - rude, offensive words
after - if you name someone after someone or something, you give them the same name as another person or thing	to make up - to invent
unique - the only one of the kind, very unusual	accent - a mark written or printed over a letter to show you how to pronounce it
exotic - unusual and often exciting	stricter - limiting further (someone's freedom to do as they wish)
when it comes to - as far as ... is concerned	banned - not allowed, not permitted
old-fashioned - not modern, belonging to the past	top - here, most popular
traditional - here, common, widely used	



## 1. Reading Quiz

Are these sentences true or false? Circle the correct answer.

1. There are no rules about what you can name your child in the UK. True / False
2. A New Zealand couple recently named their son 4Real. True / False
3. There are a number of children in the UK named Arsenal. True / False
4. Jordan made up the name Tiámii. True / False
5. The most popular boy's name in the UK is George. True / False



## 2. Adjectives

Choose which is the correct adjective from each noun.

1. offence
2. beauty
3. fashion
4. tradition

1.  
a) offensable      b) offensal      c) offensive      d) offenceful

2.  
a) beautiful      b) beatable      c) beautive      d) beautial

3.  
a) fashional      b) fashionable      c) fashionive      d) fashionful

4.  
a) traditionive      b) traditionful      c) traditional      d) traditionable



### 3. British names

Do you know if these names are used for boys or girls? Put each one into the right column.

Ben	Joanna	Megan	Paul
Charlotte	Lewis	Archie	Lucy

<u>BOYS</u>	<u>GIRLS</u>



#### 4. Wordsearch

Try to find the words associated with unusual names in the puzzle below.

There are ten words to find. Words can be written horizontally (g), vertically (i) or diagonally (m)

o	e	r	p	o	p	u	l	a	r	j	k
s	l	x	o	f	g	n	g	h	t	l	f
n	d	d	p	w	a	c	k	y	r	q	o
a	a	a	f	e	w	i	e	w	a	c	r
m	b	m	v	a	x	q	x	c	d	f	b
u	n	u	e	z	s	u	o	i	i	a	i
n	m	n	x	s	d	h	t	o	t	s	d
u	n	i	q	u	e	h	i	p	i	h	d
s	t	r	a	d	t	y	c	o	o	q	e
u	f	o	r	b	f	r	o	e	n	w	n
a	u	d	f	h	l	j	m	k	a	e	a
l	t	c	o	m	m	o	n	n	l	b	d

names	unusual	unique	exotic	old-fashioned
traditional	popular	common	forbidden	
	wacky			



# Answers

## 1. Reading Quiz

1. There are no rules about what you can name your child in the UK. **False**
2. A New Zealand couple recently named their son 4Real. **False**
3. There are a number of children in the UK named Arsenal. **True**
4. Jordan made up the name Tiáamii. **True**
5. The most popular boy's name in the UK is George. **False**

## 2. Adjectives

1. c) offensive
2. a) beautiful
3. b) fashionable
4. c) traditional

## 3. British names

BOYS	GIRLS
Ben	Joanna
Lewis	Megan
Archie	Charlotte
Paul	Lucy

## 4. Wordsearch

o			p	o	p	u	l	a	r		
	l								t		f
n		d		w	a	c	k	y	r		o
	a		f				e		a		r
		m		a			x		d		b
u			e		s		o		i		i
n				s		h	t		t		d
u	n	i	q	u	e		i		i		d
s							c	o	o		e
u									n		n
a									a	e	
l		c	o	m	m	o	n		l		d

