

What's in a name?

What's Your Name?

Can you answer all of these questions?

- What's your name?
- What's your full name?
- What's your surname?
- What's your first name?
- What's your last name?
- What's your nickname, if you have one?
- What's your family name?
- * What's your married name?
- * What's your maiden name?
- What do your colleagues call you at work/school?
- What do your parents call you?

* CULTURE NOTE

In the United States, when a woman gets married, she often takes her husband's last name and loses her own last name. Is this the same in your country? What is the custom?

Abbreviated names.

These are all short forms of English names. Do you know what the original name is?

Chrissy/Chris

Bill/Willy

Jen

Dick/Rich

Dave

Bob/Bobby

Chuck/Chucky/Charley

Matt

Liz/Libby

Jim/Jimmy

Names in American Slang

First names are used in many imaginative expressions in American English. Look at these sentences. Can you match the **words in bold** to the meanings below?

- a) We can pay you \$300 a week, minus 10% for **Uncle Sam** of course.
- b) When Amanda was younger, she was a **plain Jane**; now she's a beautiful woman.
- c) My mother bought me a **Lazy Susan** for the dining room table. Now we can all reach the salt and pepper without asking!
- d) We have a **John Doe** in the hospital. He has no identification and has lost his memory.
- e) I ate too many potato chips, I think I'm going to **ralph**.
- f) I need your **John Hancock** on this form here.
- g) Susan called the police because she saw a **Peeping Tom** in her garden.
- h) She thought her husband had a lover, so she called a **private dick** to follow him.

- 1) An ordinary-looking woman or girl.
- 2) A man who spies through windows at people.
- 3) To vomit.
- 4) A detective.
- 5) A revolving tray used for serving food or condiments.
- 6) A man with no identity.
- 7) A signature
- 8) The United States Government.

PROJECT: YOUR NAME

How much do you know about your name? Do a little research and try to answer the following questions:

- Why do you have your name?
- Is there anybody else in your family with the same name?
- What does your name mean?
- Where does your name come from?
- Is there an abbreviation for your name? Does anybody use it?
- Are there any famous people with the same name as you?
- How popular is your name today?

To help you, look at the following websites:

www.zelo.com/firstnames/index.asp

www.babynames.com

www.firstnamesfirst.com

www.behindthename.com