

## Names Teacher's Notes – by Lindsay Clandfield

**Level:** Elementary/Pre-Intermediate

**Aims:** Students learn the vocabulary in English for names and some typical first names in English; see some American Slang connected to first names and do some research about the origins and meaning of their own name. This could make an idea first class for an intensive summer course or at the beginning of a school year.

**Warmer:**

Write the following names on the board: Jean, Giovanni, Johannes, Jan, Juan. Ask the students what this name is in English (John). Do the students have an English first name? If not, does their name have an equivalent in English? You could ask the students find out this information on the internet. The website <http://www8.informatik.uni-erlangen.de/html/www/engl/entr/trans.html> can translate first names into English, French, Spanish, Italian, German and Dutch.

**Stage One:**

**What's Your Name?**

Ask students to fill this in individually. Circulate and help with new vocabulary. When they have finished, instruct them to sit in pairs and ask the questions. Draw attention to two things:

- 1) the two different ways of asking someone's name (What's your... ? and What do ... call you? The second is slightly more informal)
- 2) The cultural note regarding a woman's family name. It could be interesting to find out what the custom is in your students' countries.

**Stage Two:**

**Abbreviations and Names**

Tell students to do this exercise in pairs. Feedback as a class and check pronunciation. Do your students know any other abbreviations for names in English? Do their own names have an abbreviated form? Do they like it?

Answers: Christine, William, Jennifer, Richard, David, Robert, Charles, Matthew, Elizabeth, James

**Stage Three:**

**Names and Slang**

Tell the students that first names are used in many imaginative expressions in American English. Write on the board the following:

A: Can you work on Saturday morning?

B: **No way, José!** I've got a baseball practise!

What does the expression mean? *absolutely not*

Students can now do exercise three, which involves matching the expression to its meaning.

Answers:

a)8    b)1    c)5    d)6    e)3    f)7    g)2

**Stage Four: Project - Your Name**

You can set class time for this, or ask the students to do it at home. If you have a computer room with Internet access, or the students have access to the Internet, they can use the websites listed to help answer some of the questions. To follow up, ask students to get into groups of four or five and present their findings to each other orally. They could make a poster about their name, answering all the questions and put this on the classroom wall for others to see.