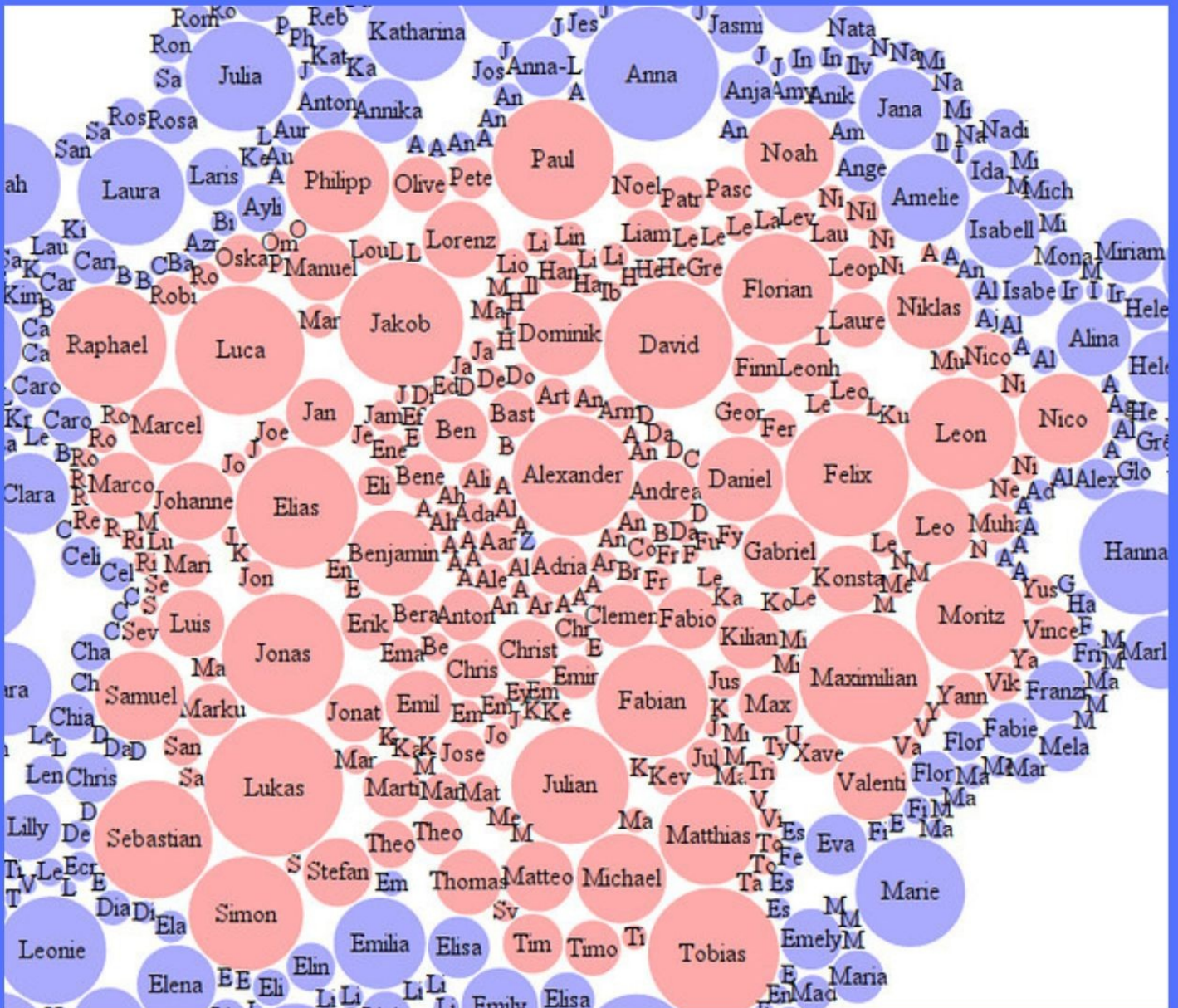


What's In A NAME?



a Talking Points English lesson for reading & speaking

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Introduction

Are names important?

Do names change every few years? Can certain names be fashionable?

Do you like the name your parents gave you? Why/why not?

Wayne Hates His Name

Read Wayne's account of his own name.

I never used to hate my name.

When I was a kid, I thought my name was cool. It was cool.

The name Wayne was very different back then. It had an American sound to it and I was the only Wayne in the school.

But then, in the next few years, the name started to sound terrible. The name Wayne very quickly became a joke.

I would tell people my name and they would give me a funny look. Or sometimes just laugh out loud in my face.

It got to a point where I wanted to change my name. I went to the local government office and picked up the forms.

But I didn't know what name to choose. Trying to pick a good name for yourself is very hard.

Eventually, I got used to the jibes and the laughing every time I told people what my name was. I just thought, well, that's my name. It's part of who I am and that's just the way it is.

Now the really funny thing is my wife's name is Sharon. This is another name that has a bad reputation.

And when people find out we are called Wayne and Sharon,

you should see the look in their eyes.

When we were expecting our first daughter, Sharon said to me we must think of a really good name for her.

A name that is timeless and never goes out of fashion.

Someone told me that names from The Bible are good names to have.

I am not a religious person, but when I think of some of the names of the people in The Bible, they sound great.

None of them sounds naff or silly.

So when our first daughter was born, we named her Lydia.

We saw the name, and we instantly liked it. It has a classical sound to it.

Our second daughter came along and we named her Ruth.

Another name that we both love very much.

But both our girls hate their names.

“Why did you give us such terrible names!” they cry out.

They mention their friends’ names, but they don’t sound like real names at all. One of the girls has a friend called Sevyn.

It sounds so pretentious!

I imagine that name will not stand the test of time.

Just like Wayne and Sharon didn’t.

And the other daughter has a friend whose name I always forget because there seem to be so many vowels in it.

I just think it's a name the parents made up themselves...

I do think parents have a duty to consider suitable names for their kids. Names that sound timeless and classical.

Because that name will be with them for the rest of their life.

They are the ones that have to introduce themselves with that name.

Better to choose a name that doesn't sound like a recent fad or fashion.

And avoid Wayne at all costs!

Reading Comprehension Questions

What is the narrator's name?

Has he always hated his name?

When did he like his name?

Why did he like his name before?

How do people react when he tells people his name?

Did Wayne try to change his name? Why/why not?

How did Wayne accept his name later in life?

What is Wayne's wife's name?

What did Wayne's wife tell him when they were expecting their first daughter?

Where did Wayne look when choosing a name?

What is Wayne's first daughter called?

What is Wayne's second daughter called?

Do his daughters like their names?

What is the name of one of the girls' friends?

Why does Wayne dislike this name?

What does Wayne think parents should do for their children?

And why?

Essential Vocabulary

cool	terrible	a funny look
laugh out loud	local	forms
jibes	who I am	just the way it is
a bad reputation	expecting	timeless
out of fashion	The Bible	religious
naff	silly	instantly
classical	came along	mention
pretentious	imagine	vowels
made up	duty	consider
suitable	the rest of	(someone's) life
choose	fad	avoid (something) at

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Notebook—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

“I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class.”

Discussion Questions

What do you think of the name Wayne?

What do you think of the name Sharon?

What do you think of your own name? Is it considered a good name in your country/culture?

Give some examples of bad-sounding names in your country/culture.

Why are these names considered to be bad-sounding?

In your opinion, what is the most beautiful name in the world? Why?

What is a strong name for a boy? Why?

What is the perfect name for a girl? Why?

Are there any modern names in your country/culture? What do you think of these names?

How many names do people have in your country/culture? Their given name and family name? Or others?

Why do they have this number of names?

Do you have an English name? What is it?

Why did you choose this English name?

Is it common for people in your country to have English names?

Why/why not?

In England, when a couple gets married, the woman usually takes on the family name of her husband.

What about in your country? Why?

What is a nickname?

Do you have one? Why do people call you this?

Do people sometimes abbreviate names in your country?

What is the shortened version of your name?

Do you like the sound of this? Why/why not?

If you could change your name, what name would you choose?

What names would you like to give your children?

What's In A Name?

Look at these common names from around the world.

What do you think of them?

Do you like the sound of the names?

1. Nicole
2. Sebastian
3. Jerome
4. Nathan
5. Richard
6. Sarah
7. Molly
8. Kate
9. Charles
10. Desmond
11. Pierre
12. Gustav
13. Liam
14. Charlotte
15. Ethan

Get into groups of three or four students and go through all the names.

Decide which names sound good or bad and divide them into two groups — **Good Names and Bad Names.**

Then, you have to say why the names sound good or bad.

Maybe in your country, the name sounds like another word in your own language.

The meaning could be good or bad!

But maybe you think the name sounds like a certain kind of character.

The name could sound strong or reliable. Or honest and kind-hearted.

Or maybe it has the opposite meaning.

When you are ready, stand up in class and talk about your findings.

Writing

This is a writing exercise.

Write an introduction of your own name.

Maybe your name has a special meaning — if so, introduce what the meaning is in your writing.

You can talk about the origin of your name too.

Or maybe your parents or grandparents gave you this name for a very personal reason.

Talk about that in your writing.

When you have finished your writing, read it out loud in front of the class.

Or give it to your teacher for feedback.

Credits

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