

What's in a name?: Teaching suggestions

TEFL.NET/EnglishClub.com © Liz Regan 2007

(page 1 of 2)

Activity 1

TEFL.NET/EnglishClub.com

1. Get a student to read the instructions out loud and check that the students understand them.
2. Let the students brainstorm in pairs.
3. Stop the activity.
4. Elicit feedback.

Answers: a pseudonym is a false name, a stage name is the name an actor adopts, a nickname is an affectionate, funny or derogatory name for someone, a maiden name is the surname of a woman before she marries and officially takes her husband's surname, a household name is a name which is very well-known (this can be a person or a product etc.), a surname is a name which the whole family uses – the family name, a nom de plume is also known as a pen name – the name a writer adopts.

Activity 2

TEFL.NET/EnglishClub.com

1. Get a student to read the instructions out loud and check that the students understand them.
2. Let the students do the activity.
3. Monitor closely.
4. Stop the activity.
5. Elicit feedback.

Answers:

Bono = Paul Hewson (allegedly changed name to be more exciting)

Elton John = Reginald Dwight (allegedly changed name to be more exciting)

John Wayne = Marion Morrison (allegedly changed name because Marion is usually a woman's name)

Sting = Gordon Sumner (allegedly changed name to be more exciting)

Whoopi Goldberg = Caryn Johnson (allegedly changed name to be more exciting)

Nicholas Cage = Nicholas Coppola (allegedly changed name to avoid cashing in on associations with his relative – famous director Francis Ford Coppola)

Michael Keaton = Michael Douglas(!) (allegedly changed name because there already was a Michael Douglas!)

Marilyn Monroe = Norma Jean Baker (allegedly changed name to be more exciting)

Ricky Martin = Enrique Morales (allegedly changed name to be more acceptable to an English-speaking audience)

George Eliot = Mary Ann Evans (allegedly changed name to be taken more seriously in an age when men were considered to be superior to women)

Activity 3

TEFL.NET/EnglishClub.com

1. Get a student to read the instructions out loud and check that the students understand them.
2. Let the students do the activity.
3. Monitor closely.
4. Stop the activity.
5. Elicit feedback.

**Answers: 1. named the day 2. plain Jane 3. called him names 4. user name
5. name dropping 6. Tom, Dick and Harry**

What's in a name?: Teaching suggestions

TEFL.NET/EnglishClub.com © Liz Regan 2007

(page 2 of 2)

Activity 4

TEFL.NET/EnglishClub.com

1. Get a student to read the instructions out loud and check that the students understand them.
2. Let the students begin their conversation, in English, in pairs or small groups.
3. Monitor closely.
4. Stop the activity.
5. Elicit feedback.

Activity 5

TEFL.NET/EnglishClub.com

If your students don't have access to computers in the classroom, set this for homework.

Answers:

1. **Romeo and Juliet**
2. **Olivia**
3. **Jack**
4. **See below:**

Quick Quiz

Read the clues below and write the solutions on a piece of paper. Then take the first letter of each answer and rearrange them to find the **word** connected with this month's talking point subject, 'What's in a name?'.

1. In Britain girls' names such as Gertrude andETHEL..... have fallen out of favour.
2. Emily has been an extremely popular name in recent years and was one the top two most popular girls' name for the first five years of thisCENTURY.....
3. Olivia startedAPPEARING.....in the top five in 2005 and quickly jumped to the number one spot.
4. Possibly the popularity of Prince Charles' second son accounts for the riseIN..... popularity for this name.
5. Jack has been the most popular boys' name in Britain for several years ...NOW.....
6. It is possible that Angelina Jolie's sonMADDOX..... is responsible for the rise in popularity of that name.
7. One of the fastest rising names on the list isKEIRA..... which went straight into the top 100 at number 51.
8. However, the name of Keira Knightley's co-star Orlando Bloom is ...NOT..... enjoying the same success.

Answers: NICKNAME (N for Now [5], I for In [4], C for Century [2], K for Keira [7], N for Not [8], A for Appearing [3], M for Maddox [6], E for Ethel [1]).

Activity 7

TEFL.NET/EnglishClub.com

This activity can be set as homework to be followed up and consolidated in a future lesson generating more discussion. What did most students feel about the question? What reasons were put forward in each case? Did the students read anything which changed their minds on the topic? (etc.)

TEFL.NET/EnglishClub.com