



Unit 2 Lesson 6

The Origin of Names

Names are either _____ or _____. The study of names and their origins is called onomastics (onoma meaning "name").

Forename – Given Name

Most given names have original meanings, although not everyone knows the meaning of their name.

Can you think of a name that was inspired by each of the following?

Name of a month: _____

Flowers: _____

Historical/mythical characters: _____

Surname – Inherited name.

Inherited names are given to show _____. The most common sort is the family name, also called surname, or last name, but there are other kinds.

Until about the 14th century most people had only one name. As towns and cities grew, it became necessary to identify individuals and families, so people started to be given a surname.

There were four main ways that surnames were given. Give examples of this type of surname.

Patronymic:

Place names:

Occupational Names:

Nicknames:

Names Around the World:



In China and Japan as well as among some Hindu families of southwest India, the family name appears first; so in Zhou Enlai, the family name is Zhou and the given name is Enlai.

Your name in this style: _____

- Among the ancient Romans, a person had three or four names; a praenomen, or forename; a nomen, or clan name; a cognomen, or family name; and sometimes an agnomen, or honorary name, as in Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus.

Your name in this style: _____

- The Anglo-Saxons favoured alliterative given names in a family, and the 7th-century Kentish nobleman Eormenred went even further, calling his three daughters Eormenbeorh, Eormenburh, and Eormengyth!

Your name in this style (make it start with the same letters as your parents or siblings):

- In Iceland, instead of a family name, people inherit their father's first name. A man named Harald might have as children Erik Haraldsson (his son) and Helga Haraldsdottir (his daughter).

Your name in this style: _____

- Every Russian name consists of three names: First, Patronymic and Surname. Each first name then has four forms: Full (for formal occasions), Short (for friends and family), Affectionate (used by parents, grandparents) and Rude (as an insult).

Your name in this style: (First name, one from your father, then your surname): _____

Formal first name: _____

Short first name: _____

Affectionate first name: _____

Insulting first name: _____

1. Do you know what your given name means?
2. Do you have a middle name? Do you know its meaning?
3. Do you know what your family name means?
4. Has your family got a different way of naming people?
5. Do you have a nickname or pet name?