

1. Names

This week's lesson is on the subject of people's names. It reveals which is the most common name in the world, lists the most popular names for baby boys and girls in the United States and the United Kingdom, notes how the names of famous people can become popular, and gives a very rare example of a group of people who don't have individual names at all.

Level

Intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B1 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Ask your students what the most popular names (for boys and girls) are in their country. Do they have any friends or relatives with unusual names? Can they think of names that have become much more (or less) popular in their country? Do they have any idea what the most common male and female names in the world are? (It might be useful to introduce the expressions "given name" and "individual name," as used in the text. They are intended to mean the same thing as "first name" – a universal expression in English-speaking countries, but problematic in those parts of the world where a person's individual name is usually spoken/written *after* their family name.)
2. Hand out Worksheet A and ask the students to read through it, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. Before they see the text you could perhaps ask the students to guess what the most popular names for baby boys and girls in the USA/UK are.
3. Give each student a copy of Worksheet B, then divide the class into pairs and ask students to work together to complete the crossword.
4. Check answers in open class.
5. Ask the students to turn over their copies of Worksheets A and B, and their glossaries. Keeping the students in their pairs, hand out Worksheet C, which contains the text from Worksheet A with twelve incorrect words that the students have to identify and correct. The words containing the mistakes are all in bold, as are four other words that are correct. Point out that the mistakes are all grammatical or lexical, and that no correction requires them to write any additional words.
6. Check answers in open class.

Answers:

Exercise 1

1. popular 2. Lily 3. exception 4. variations 5. babies 6. named
7. male 8. popularity 9. female 10. Muslim

If the sentences have been completed correctly, *Olivia* and *Liam* will read from top to bottom.

Exercise 2

1. take 3. tribe 4. members 5. estimate 7. million 8. due
9. females 10. as 12. top 13. doubt 14. successful 15. rise

Words in bold that are correct:

2. anthropologists 6. enormous 11. born 16. sharing

2. Related websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://www.ssa.gov/oact/babynames/>

The US government's Social Security Administration website, with a list of the most popular baby names for each year. You can also search for a particular name and see how it ranks in popularity across different years. Accessible to Intermediate level.

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/dvc11/babynames.html>

The British government's Office of National Statistics' baby names comparison tool, which allows you to analyze changing trends in boys' and girls' names in England and Wales over a number of years. Accessible to Intermediate level.

<http://www.babycentre.co.uk/pregnancy/naming/top10namesaroundtheworld/>

A list of the most popular baby names in 2011 for Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, India, Russia, Spain, and the USA. Accessible to Intermediate level.