

Listening skills practice: What's in a name? – transcript

Transcript for **What's in a name?**

- Presenter 1:** Today we are going to talk about names, particularly fashions in names, you know, the kind of names famous people use for their children. You've been looking into this recently, haven't you, Finn?
- Presenter 2:** I have indeed and it's a fascinating topic. The US leads here with new names and we in Britain follow sometimes, but we tend to go for the more traditional names. So, the big trend is using nouns as names.
- Presenter 1:** Nouns, what sort of nouns?
- Presenter 2:** Well they can be abstract qualities like Honor or Passion. There's a long tradition of this kind of name, like Faith or Charity, which used to be common names. A new name is Haven, that's growing in popularity. And similar names like Shelter, Harbor and Bay also convey feelings of safety and warmth.
- Presenter 1:** Mmm. I suppose Passion is used to mean 'extreme enthusiasm' nowadays, and people use the word a lot, so maybe it's a good choice for a modern name. Haven has a nice, safe feel to it.
- Presenter 2:** OK, then there are names which come from nature or animals, although with some of these it's hard to know whether they come from nature or a surname – that's another trend. Here we have Frost, Wolf, Fox, Bear, for boys, of course. And a new name: Ridge.
- Presenter 1:** Ridge, like a mountain ridge? The top of a mountain range?
- Presenter 2:** Yes, weird, huh? It's seen as a tough, outdoorsy name for a boy. OK, then there are musical names. Harmony and Melody have been around for ages, but Lyric is a new one.
- Presenter 1:** Lyric, wow!
- Presenter 2:** Yes, it came in at number 325 in the US a couple of years ago. That doesn't sound very popular, but there are so many different names being used at the moment that it means it isn't so unusual. Other noun categories are months – May, June and April are common, but January is uncommon and November very unusual. And then you have colours. Beyoncé and Jay-Z called their daughter Blue Ivy – a very distinctive name, a colour plus the name of a plant. Blue is very popular for girls right now, and Red or Grey for boys.
- Presenter 1:** I've just thought of another category. Food names, like Olive or Clementine.
- Presenter 2:** Yes, that's another one. Flower names are pretty common, but food names are unusual. Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin named their daughter Apple, of course.
- Presenter 1:** Yes, poor child.
- Presenter 2:** Actually, Apple is becoming more and more popular, although people think that's because of the technology connection, not the fruit. New names always seem strange at first, but you quickly get used to them, like all the names from places or jobs. Chelsea and Brooklyn seem like normal names now; they were strange when they were first

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used. Taylor, Mason, Cooper are all first names from jobs.

Presenter 1: And they are also surnames, I think that's how they started.

Presenter 2: You're probably right there.

Presenter 1: What about the Beckhams' daughter, Harper?

Presenter 2: She was named after Harper Lee, the American novelist who wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird*. That's another trend, naming children after famous writers, musicians – the British band One Direction have had an effect on names – or fictional characters, like Bella or Edward from the Twilight series, or Hermione from Harry Potter

Presenter 1: Sorry, can I just interrupt there. I've just has a message passed on by the producer. A listener has just phoned in with a very strange story about a family in Holland with six children. Their names are all anagrams of the letters: A, E, L and X.

Presenter 2: Ah yes, I've heard about this. This family are famous in the world of bloggers on names. Let me see if I remember the names ... Alex and Axel ... and Lexa – they're the easy ones – Xela ('Zela') and Xael ('Zay-el') and the last one is Xael ('Zeal') – I'm guessing about the pronunciations, by the way.

Presenter 1: You mean there are names X-E-L-A and X-A-E-L?

Presenter 2: Yes, but they are very unusual. I think the Dutch family are stopping at six children, but there are about eighteen more possible anagrams they could use.

Presenter 1: Nooo, you're kidding!

Presenter 2: All seem horrible to me, but all are possible names. This is similar to another trend of giving children names all starting with the same letter, like the Kardashian family, all beginning with K, Kim, Kourtney and so on.

Presenter 1: The Kardashians have had enough publicity, let's not talk about them. What about your name? Finn, that sounds like a good Irish name ...