



## Name Games

Match the following famous names with its owner's original name:

- |                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| ___ Sojourner Truth    | a. Theodore Geisel       |
| ___ Dr. Seuss          | b. Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu |
| ___ Babyface           | c. Esther Friedman       |
| ___ Mother Teresa      | d. Isabella van Wagener  |
| ___ Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf | e. Kenneth Edmonds       |
| ___ Ann Landers        | f. Chris Jackson         |

Identify each person and speculate as to why he or she adopted a new name. What other life events might prompt a name change (examples: marriage, adoption, witness protection program)? If you could choose any name for yourself, what would it be? Explain your selection.

Naming practices vary widely among cultures. For example, Puerto Ricans often have many names, while Mongolians customarily have only one. Children in many Jewish families are not named after living relatives, but Icelanders often are. Many African American parents create unique names for their children at birth, while some Native Americans “earn” their names later in life. Research a cultural naming practice and report it to the class.

Names often signify character traits — for example, the Spanish Fidel (Faithful), the Yoruba Nilaja (Brings Peace), and the Hebrew Isaac (Laughter). With a partner, use the letters of your names to create colorful acrostics that display qualities of your character. For example, Tina might choose Trustful Imaginative Nurturing Artistic. (Use specific rather than generic descriptors, such as “Easygoing” instead of “Excellent.”) As a class, identify the traits cited most frequently, those shared by a few students, and those that stand alone.

