

How Did You Get Your Name?

Integration: Health (Mental/Emotional), Language Arts, Social Studies

Grade Levels: 3-6

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Investigate the origin of their name/ why they were given their particular name.
2. Write a short narrative about the origin of their name/ why they were given that name.
3. Explain the origin of the name “Antarctica”.

Time: 1-2 class periods

Materials:

- Construction paper
- Lined paper
- Baby naming books, internet, other research materials, etc.

Lesson:

Full group

1. Ask students for suggestions of the origin of the name “Antarctica.”
 - a. After allowing for suggestions tell the students that the ancient Greeks gave Antarctica its name. They knew that the Arctic existed and they believed that there must be a similar place on the bottom of the world.
 - b. They named the place at the bottom of the world the “opposite of the Arctic” or Antarctica (the “Ant” is the opposite).
2. Tell students that places can be given names that suggest where they are (Antarctica), who founded them (Pennsylvania—William Penn) or what they look like (Evergreen Street). Tell them that people are also given names for similar reasons.
 - a. Ask students to name reasons people receive their names.
 - Family member’s name
 - Parent likes the name
 - Name has a special origin or meaning
 - Etc.
 - b. Tell them that their names are a special part of who they are.
3. Tell students to ask their parents/caregivers why the student was given the name they have. They will write a short essay telling the story.

- The essay can be written at home or in class the following day, depending on teacher preference.
4. Have students copy the essay onto a piece of construction paper that has been cut out in the shape of their profile. The essay can be written directly on the silhouette or on a piece of lined paper, smaller than the silhouette, that can then be attached to the construction paper. Their first name should be clearly visible at the top.
 - a. The student should place their head on a piece of paper with their cheek touching the paper.
 - b. Another student or the teacher then traces their profile onto the paper in pencil.
 - c. Older children can cut out their own profiles.
 5. If students do not have a story to tell they can research the meaning and origin of their name. All students should do this if time permits.
 - a. Books and other resources on name origins, especially baby naming books will be useful.
 - b. The following web sites also have name origins for names of various ethnic origins:
 - www.first-names.com
 - www.behindthename.com
 - dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/town/plaza/ge75/names.htm
 6. Allow time for students to present their stories to their classmates. Display the name essays for others to enjoy.

EXTENSION #1: Have students predict the origin of the names of places where they live (e.g. towns, streets, bodies of water, etc.). Allow students to research the origin to find out if their prediction was correct.

EXTENSION #2: Have students research the origin of their last names through family interviews and research materials.

Assessment:

Teachers will assess:

1. Student's explanation of the origin of the word "Antarctica".
2. Student's ability to research the origin of their own name.
3. Student's writing skills.