

the ARTICLE (for teachers)

What's In a Name?

In many countries, the woman takes her husband's family name when they get married. Long, long ago, this meant that the woman had become the property of her husband. Times have definitely changed.

Thankfully, the original purpose of the tradition has lost all of its meaning in most countries. What's more, with greater independence and the pursuit of careers, more and more women select to keep their pre-marriage identity. They either keep their maiden name or use a hyphen to add their husband's name to theirs. However, what options does a man have if he wants to take his wife's name instead?

Back in 2005, Michael Buday found the answer. He discovered that it's ridiculously time-consuming and troublesome to change his name. He would have to pay more than \$300 in licensing fees, and also need to place an advertisement in a newspaper for four weeks to announce the change. And that's not all because he would also need to attain a judge's approval too. Forty-three other states in the U.S. have similar, old-fashioned policies on the books. And although Buday decided to sue the state of California only, it may impact other states too. The lawsuit challenges the longstanding and outdated belief that a "proper man" doesn't take his wife's name.

Michael Buday had never really thought about a name change before he met Diana Bijon. But she raised the idea while they were dating. She had no brothers, and wanted to preserve her family name. Buday didn't know his father, and the first real father figure in his life was his fiancée's dad. As a result, he wholeheartedly agreed.

Teacher's Notes:

* Underlined words in red typeface may be vocabulary unfamiliar to the students.

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Notes:

STEP ONE

Brainstorm: Brainstorm with a partner(s) words and ideas associated with "maiden name" for 2 minutes. Spend another 5 minutes or less discussing the words and ideas together.

STEP TWO

Discuss: Do you agree or disagree? Why?

- | | |
|----|---|
| a. | Your name is your identity. |
| b. | Your name isn't as important as your character. |
| c. | It's important for a woman to change her last name when she gets married. |
| d. | Men should change their last name when they get married. |
| e. | Anyone should be able to change their name anytime they want. |

STEP THREE

The Article: Read the article, and work with a partner to understand it. Lastly, summarize in your own words.

STEP FOUR

Discuss: Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

- | | |
|----|---|
| a. | What was your general impression after reading this article? |
| b. | Is it easy to change your name in your country? Why/not? |
| c. | Would you expect your fiancée to change his/her name (or would you change your name)? |
| d. | Have you ever thought about changing your name? Why/not? |
| e. | For what reasons might you change your name? Do you think they are good reasons? |
| f. | Do you agree or disagree? Your name is part of your identity, so changing it changes you. |

STEP FIVE

Discuss: Discuss these other traditions. Decide if they are old fashioned, or are still important in some way.

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|----|---|
| a. | The newly married couple lived with or near the husband's family. |
| b. | The man traditionally was the breadwinner, while the wife stayed home to take care of the children. |
| c. | Choose one from your culture to discuss! |