

THE IMPORTANCE OF NAMES

- Names have power. They stick in readers' minds.
- Characters are the children of your mind. The names you choose help them come alive.
- Names must fit the characters, setting, and story.

GENRE

- Consider setting and time. Where and when does the story take place? (Or if set in an imaginary world, where and when would it be if it were real?)
- Does your story have a certain theme or atmosphere? Names of characters, settings, and things, and pseudonyms, can reflect it. They could have a theme of their own.
- A few exceptions to setting/time/theme are usually okay, but make sure they still fit.
- Wikipedia search can give you examples of people with a name, where they are from, and when they were born and/or died.

CHARACTER PROFILING

- Factors such as family and cultural traditions; ethnical ancestry, religion, social background, etc. How important are they to the character and/or story?
- Names can highlight a physical/personality trait or the opposite; profession; something about you; someone you know; or place—via meaning, how it sounds, anagram, etc.
- When checking a name's origin and/or meaning, check **MORE THAN ONE PRIMARY SOURCE** (name books and websites, **NOT** literature) to see what is consistent.
- Factors can influence name choice; name choice can influence factors.
- Sometimes no name is effective.

DISTINGUISHABLE

- Names help readers keep track of who is who, so it is important names are distinguishable (unless you want them similar for a reason, like a running gag).
- William M. Akers, in *Your Screenplay Sucks! 100 Ways to Make it Great*, recommends varying up these factors: 1) First Initial, 2) Letter Length, and 3) Rhyme.
- Other factors to strengthen variation: Second Letter and First Syllable.
- Some characters go by nicknames, last names, and/or titles.
- Alliteration

CREATING NEW NAMES

- Consider story and setting—will new names fit? How many?
- Consider character profiling—reference/tribute something.
- Variants—look at existing spellings and see if you want to create a new one.

PRONUNCIATION

- If a name has more than one pronunciation, people will say it different ways.
- Some names are harder to pronounce than others.
- As with name origin/meaning, check more than one primary source.
- If there are multiple names that can have pronunciation issues, have a pronunciation guide.
- If there are only a few, try incorporating them into the story—in text or dialogue.
- Make sure you clarify the pronunciation **YOU** want to use.

In the end, choose names YOU WANT.

RESOURCES

FIRST NAMES

- <http://www.behindthename.com/>
- <http://www.thinkbabynames.com/>
- <http://www.britishbabynames.com/> (British)
- <http://www.medievalists.net/2014/04/girls-names-medieval-london-usual-ones/> (Medieval English Girls)
- <https://www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/Irish-names.html> (Irish)
- <http://www.namenerds.com/irish/lists.html> (Irish)

LAST NAMES

- <http://surnames.behindthename.com/>
- <https://www.houseofnames.com/>
- <http://irishpenpals.org/irish-coat-of-arms.php> (Irish)
- <http://www.scottishpenpals.com/scottish-coat-of-arms.php> (Scottish)
- <http://www.scottishpenpals.com/dutch-coat-of-arms.php> (Dutch)
- <http://www.scottishpenpals.com/english-coat-of-arms.php> (English)
- <http://www.scottishpenpals.com/french-coat-of-arms.php> (French)
- <http://www.scottishpenpals.com/german-coat-of-arms.php> (German)
- <http://www.scottishpenpals.com/italian-coat-of-arms.php> (Italian)
- <http://www.scottishpenpals.com/polish-coat-of-arms.php> (Polish)
- <http://www.scottishpenpals.com/spanish-coat-of-arms.php> (Spanish)
- <http://www.scottishpenpals.com/portuguese-coat-of-arms.php> (Portuguese)
- <http://www.scottishpenpals.com/welsh-coat-of-arms.php> (Welsh)
- <http://www.surnameweb.org/>
- <http://www.searchforancestors.com/surnames/origin/>
- <https://www.ancestry.com/learn/facts>

BOTH

- <http://heraldry.sca.org/names/spanish/> (16th Century Spanish)
- <https://forebears.io/>

PRONUNCIATION

- <https://www.pronouncenames.com/>
- <https://forvo.com/>
- <https://inogolo.com/>
- <https://www.howtopronounce.com/>
- <http://www.howtosay.co.in/>

Gaelic Pronunciation

- <http://www.angaelmagazine.com/pronunciation/introduction.htm>
- <https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Irish/Pronunciation>
- <http://www.gaolnaofa.org/articles/a-beginners-guide-to-old-irish-pronunciation/>

RHYMES

- <https://www.whatrhymswith.info/>
- <https://findwords.info/rhyme>
- <http://www.visualrhymes.com/index.php>
- <https://rhymezone.com/>
- <https://www.wordhippo.com/>