

# The Story of Last Names

A long time ago, four men named Thomas lived in a little town. That was the only name any of them had. In those days, only kings and nobles had last names; most men and women had only first names.

Because the men had the same name, here's how people told them apart. One Thomas had a father named John, so he was called "Thomas, John's son." Another Thomas, a baker, was called "Thomas the Baker." The third Thomas had light-colored hair, so he was known as "Thomas the White." And the fourth Thomas lived next to the village green, so he was known to everyone as "Thomas of the Green."

Time went on. Thomas the Baker married a girl named Elaine. She became known as "Elaine, Thomas the Baker's wife." They had a little boy named John, and he was known as "John, Thomas the Baker's son." But after a while, people got tired of saying all those words. So they simply called Thomas the Baker, "Thomas Baker." His wife became Elaine Baker, and their son was John Baker.

That's how last names came to be. People took their fathers' first names, the names of their fathers' jobs, the names of the places where they lived, or names that told how they looked. They put these names after their first names. When a man married, his wife and children took his last name. Sometimes, a widow or single woman might adopt children and give them her last name. So, today, our last names can tell us something about the people we got them from long ago.

Is your last name on one of the following lists? Here are some examples of *patronymics*, last names that come from first names:

<b>Adding son or sen</b>	<b>Adding s</b>	<b>Adding es, ez, or is</b>
Andersen	Fredricks	Davis
Davidson	Matthews	Harris
Jackson	Phillips	Hernandez
Johnson	Roberts	Hughes
Robertson	Stephens	Jones
Wilson	Walters	Rodriguez

People who spoke different languages sometimes added *sohn*, *wicz*, *vich*, or *ak* to the end of a name. All of these mean "son." People from some countries put *son* in front of their fathers' names. *Mac*, *Mc*, and *Fitz* all mean "son of."

Here are examples of some last names that came from the jobs that people held:

<b>Blacksmith</b>	<b>Cart Driver</b>	<b>Making Bread</b>
Ferraro	Carter	Baker
Herrera	Porter	Baxter
Kovacs	Wagner	Fournier
Kowalski	<b>Grinding Wheat</b>	Shroeder
MacGowan	Miller	<b>Making Clothes</b>
Schmitt	Molinaro	Schneider
Schmitz	Mueller	Snider
Smith	Sarto	Taylor

# The Story of Last Names *(cont.)*

Here are some last names that were taken from the places where people lived:

<b>By a Hill</b>	Strass	<b>Near a Small Forest</b>
Barrows	Streeter	Atwood
Downing	<b>By a Stream</b>	DuBois
Downs	Arroyo	Holt
Hill	Beck	Hurst
Hillman	Brooks	Shaw
Hull	Burns	Silva
Knowles	Rivera	Wood and Woods
Law	<b>By a Grassy Field</b>	<b>By a Castle</b>
Lowe	Field and Fields	Borg
Peck	Lee	Burke
<b>By a Main Road</b>	Mead	Castello
Estrada	Meadows	Castillo
Lane	Vega	Zamechi

Here are some names that were taken from the way people looked:

<b>White Hair</b>	<b>New Person</b>	<b>Curly Hair</b>
Bannon	Doran	Cassidy
Blanchard	Dowell	Krause
Weiss	Doyle	Kruse
White	Newcomb	Rizzo
Whitehead	Newman	<b>Tall Person</b>
Whitlock	<b>Short Person</b>	Lang
Whitman	Bass	Long
Wise	Basset	Longfellow
<b>Red Hair</b>	Hoch	<b>Happy Person</b>
Flynn	Kline and Klein	Gay
Reed and Reid	Short	Merriman
Roth	Small	Murray
Russell		

Here are some names that described animal characteristics:

<b>Wolf</b>	<b>Fox</b>	<b>Kinds of Birds</b>
Lupo	Fox	Bird and Byrd
Wolf and Wolfe	Todd	Coe
<b>Deer</b>	Volpe	Cox
Buck	<b>Bear</b>	Crane
Hart	Baer	Crow and Crowe
Hirsh	<b>Lion</b>	Garza
Roe	Leon	Hahn
<b>Dragon</b>	Loewe	Ortega
Drake	Lyon and Lyons	Vogel

# What's in a Name?

During Middle Age times, most people did not have last names. Several people in a town might be known simply as “Richard” or “Mary.” As time went on, *surnames* (last names) were added to clear up the confusion. These original surnames came from descriptions of the persons, fathers’ or mothers’ first names, the places they lived, how they looked, or what occupations they had.

What surnames might these people have had?

1. Your first name is Elizabeth, and your father’s name is John.

Elizabeth \_\_\_\_\_

2. Your first name is John, and you tend sheep for the king.

John \_\_\_\_\_

3. Your first name is David, and you take care of the king’s hunting birds.

David \_\_\_\_\_

4. Your first name is Geoffrey. Your father is dead. Your mother’s name is Catherine, and she works as a cook at the castle.

Geoffrey \_\_\_\_\_

5. Your first name is Joshua, and people know you for your white hair and beard.

Joshua \_\_\_\_\_

6. Your first name is Elaine. Your father’s name is Paul, and he shoes horses.

Elaine \_\_\_\_\_

7. Your first name is Rachel. Your father is very tall and works doing odd jobs at the castle.

Rachel \_\_\_\_\_

8. Your first name is Mary. You live on the main road through the town.

Mary \_\_\_\_\_

9. Your first name is Harold, and you live close to the open field where you sell fruit on market days.

Harold \_\_\_\_\_

10. Pick a new surname for yourself based on where you live, what you like to do, or a parent’s name.

---

YOUR (REAL) FIRST NAME

---

YOUR NEW SURNAME

# Answer Key (cont.)

## Page 20 (cont.)

12. Their children were William, Henry, Matilda, Richard, Geoffrey, Eleanor, Joanna, and John.
13. Henry introduced trial by jury, allowed people to appeal directly to the king's court, and had clerks record what happened. This law became known as the English Common Law.
14. Matilda thinks that Thomas will choose to serve God rather than Henry.
15. Neck verses, according to Henry, were the six verses that you needed to recite to prove that you were a member of the clergy so you could "save your neck."
16. She went at Henry's request to help keep peace in the region. She also went because she was jealous of Henry's mistress, Rosamond Clifford.
17. The "Courts of Love" were rules for how men and women should behave toward one another. They were organized because the young people, who were guests at Eleanor's court, were getting out of hand.
18. Because he was the youngest son, he did not inherit any land. Henry asked each of the other children to give him a portion of their land.
19. She changed the histories to make them more interesting. She asked poets to rewrite the stories so that the knights were more interesting, the ladies more beautiful, and the court more noble.
20. Young Henry gave away his clothing and wore the ring his father sent to make peace.
21. Eleanor was 67 when she got out of prison. She felt that her real life began at that age after her husbands and two of her sons had already died.
22. She freed the monks from the responsibility of keeping the king's horses. She standardized the system of weights and measures. She standardized the system of coins and had Richard's face engraved on the coins. She finally gave a lavish festival celebrating Henry's coronation.
23. She granted charters to the towns to make the people more responsible for their own government and defense. By doing this, she hoped that they would support John.
24. John signed the Magna Carta, agreeing that he would treat his subjects fairly and deal with them according to the law. The lords forced John to sign it because of the heavy taxes that he had imposed and the lands he had lost in France.

## Page 22

- 1.-4. Answers will vary.

## Page 26



## Page 33

1. DAIS
2. JOUST
3. PALISADE
4. MAIL
5. GREAT HALL
10. KEEP
11. JESTER
12. BATTLEMENT
13. CRENELS
14. CATAPULT

Bonus Word: GUILD

Bonus Word: SLATE

6. WIMPLE
7. TOURNAMENT
8. BAILIFF
9. PORTCULLIS
15. MANOR
16. CHIVALRY
17. VILLEIN
18. CHAPEL
19. GARDEROBE

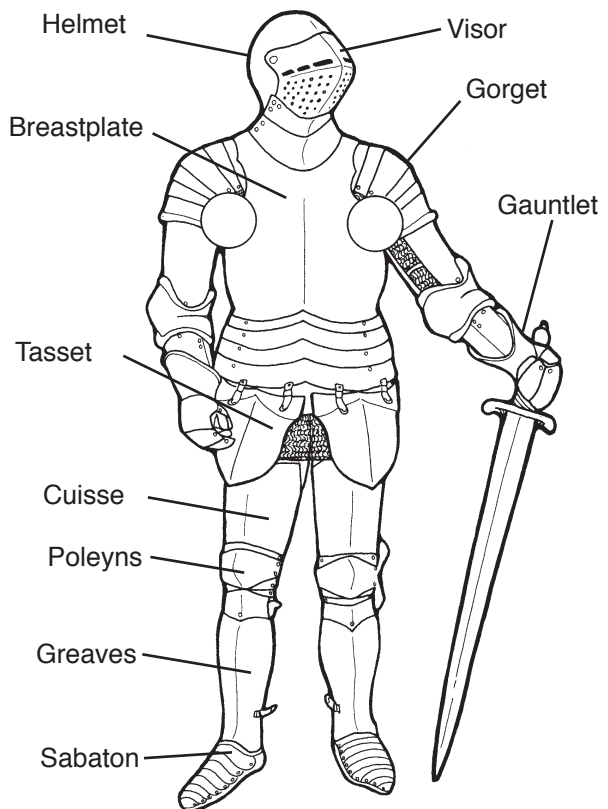
Bonus Word: MOAT

Bonus Words: CHAIN MAIL

## Page 47

Answers will vary.

## Page 51



## Page 65

- 1.-3. Answers will vary.

## Page 66

1. F
2. T
3. T
4. F
5. F
6. T
7. T
8. T
9. F
10. F
11. palisade
12. joust
13. chivalry
14. catapults
15. great hall
16. jester
17. Crusades
18. page/squire
19. keep
20. weapons