

## Names of Ireland

**Introduction**

*Is there any particular reason why your parents chose your name?*

*Did your grandfather/grandmother have your name?*

*Does anyone have a name related to a flower, tree, jewellery or place?*

*Is your name based on the time of year in which you were born?*

*Does anyone have a name from the Bible?*

**Development**

Explain the meaning of the names Aonghus and Dougal.

Display the following list of names:

Aisling	Fearghus
Aoibhinn	Fionn
Caoilfhionn	Ríona
Caoimhe	Ruairí
Cillian	Saoirse
Darach	

Allow the children to try and figure out the meaning of the names, using a dictionary if desired. Remind them that it can sometimes be useful to break the name into two parts.

Ask the pupils to find out the meaning of their own names, using [www.behindthename.com](http://www.behindthename.com). They can then share their findings with their groups.

Discuss: *Imagine life without surnames.*

Explain: *Long ago people did not have surnames. To avoid confusion, they added their parents/grandparents' names to their own names. For example, Brian had a son called Seán. He was named Seán Mac Briain (Seán son of Brian). When Brian's grandson Peadar was born, he was named Peadar Ó Briain (Peadar from Brian).*

Ask pupils with 'Mac' or 'Ó' in their surnames to stand and call them out.

Ask pupils with 'de' or 'Fitz' in their surnames to stand. Explain that these mean 'son of' also. Ask these pupils to call out their surnames.

Show examples of coat of arms to the class. Explain that each family has a different coat of arms. Allow pupils to find their own online.

**End**

Pupils will explain the meaning of their own names in their copybooks and will draw their family's coat of arms.

## QUESTIONS

1. What does 'ainm baiste' mean? (*Christian name*)
2. Where did your surname come from?
3. What coat of arms does your family have?

## GLOSSARY

**Christian Name**  
**Surname**  
**Coat of Arms**

