Many names have special meaning or history. For example, the name Stephanie is the feminine form of Stephen and means “crowned one.” The name Robert is German and means “bright fame.” What about your name? What does your name mean? Does it have special ethnic or religious significance or meaning? Who named you? Are you named after someone in your family? If you could change your name, would you? Why or why not?

Do some research! Ask your parents or grandparents to tell you about your name and how/why they chose it. Look up its meaning in a book of names or on the internet.

Share the information you discover about your name in a well-written paragraph that helps us remember who you are.

Sample Student Passages

Chris’s example

I would never have a name that used to be my grandfather’s. I am not named after any of my relatives. In a Chinese family it is disrespectful to borrow a family member’s name. Because of this rule, parents consult a name giver or fortune teller who will consider many factors, such as day, month, and year of birth before recommending a name . . . .


Sarah’s example

In Hebrew my name means princess. In school, it means that a half dozen people answer whenever someone says my name. It means common, it means ordinary. It is like going to a back alley filled with cats and calling, “Here kitty.”

It was my great-grandmother’s name and now it is mine, as well as about one hundred people that I know. She was a woman who had the unfortunate luck of having parents who thought, isn’t Sarah a nice name?

I would’ve liked to know how the name began. Maybe God just reached into a sack and pulled a name out, just like that, as if it were as easy as deciding which pencil to write with.

And the name lives on. I could live my whole life and never be the only Sarah around. I may have inherited a name, but I am still my own person.

Sometimes I would like to baptize myself under a new name, a name unique to me. Then, whenever someone calls for me, I’ll know. Yes, I’ll know who they are talking to.

From Bonnie Molnar’s “The Last Nine Weeks: Helping Seniors Say Goodbye.”
English Journal 88.5 (May 1999): 53-57