

Is your name helping or hurting you?

Most of us never think about our names. They're just names and they usually don't mean much – or do they? New research has come out which suggests that our names can affect everything from our emotional well-being to our career paths, and even how long we live.

1 A recent **survey** asked 6,000 people in the UK to **rank** common names for men and women in three categories: successful, lucky, and attractive. The results showed a strong preference for certain names. People called James and Elizabeth were seen as the most successful, Jack and Lucy were the luckiest, and Sophie and Ryan were the most attractive. **Overall**, it seems that the best name for men is James, which came near the top in all three categories. The least desirable ones were George and Ann, which ranked near the bottom in all categories.

2 The potential effects of your name go **beyond** perceptions. According to several studies, teachers give higher marks to children with attractive names. In the US, where grades are given on a **scale** from A (excellent) to D (poor), another study found that students with first names beginning with A or B received higher marks than students whose first names started with C or D.

3 Some experts also believe that people are attracted to jobs that sound like their names. One study found that people called Dennis and Denise are more **likely** to become dentists. There are hairdressers called Harry, artists called Art, and even a lawyer called Sue Yoo*. Even if your name and job don't match, your name could affect your job prospects. A study found that American employers were more likely to consider the CVs of applicants who have 'normal-sounding' names. **Researchers** also say that companies are more likely to promote people if their names sound successful.

4 It may seem incredible, but there is **evidence** that your name could affect how long you live. Researchers compared the death certificates of people with 'positive' initials (such as J.O.Y. or F.U.N.) and people with 'negative' ones (such as D.I.E. or S.A.D.). The results? People with positive initials live about four years longer than **the average**, while people with negative initials die about three years sooner.

So if you have an 'undesirable' name, should you change it to a new one? Most experts say no. For most people, having a positive attitude will help more than giving yourself a new name.

* The name Sue Yoo sounds like the phrase 'sue you', which means to make a claim against somebody in court.

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d Look at the **highlighted** words or phrases in the article which are related to research. Try to work out what they mean, and how they are pronounced.

e Now match them with 1–9.

- 1 _____ *noun* people who study something carefully to discover new facts about it
- 2 _____ *noun* the facts that make you believe something is true
- 3 _____ *noun* an investigation of the opinions of a particular group of people
- 4 _____ *noun* the number you get when you add two or more numbers and then divide the total by the number of figures you added
- 5 _____ *noun* different levels or numbers used for measuring something
- 6 _____ *verb* to put in order according to quality, importance, etc.
- 7 _____ *adjective* probable or expected
- 8 _____ *adverb* generally
- 9 _____ *preposition* further than

f **1.5** Listen and check. Underline the stressed syllable.

g Do you think *your* name is helping or hurting you? Why?