What's in a Name?

Look at the names in the article. Do you know any people with these names? What are they like?

Your name is very important. When you think of yourself, you probably think of your name first. It is an important part of your identity.

Right now, the two most popular names for babies in the United States are "Jacob" for boys and "Emma" for girls. Why are these names popular? And why are other names unpopular?

Names can become popular because of famous actors, TV or book characters, or athletes. Popular names suggest very positive things. Unpopular names suggest negative things. Surprisingly, people generally agree on the way they feel about names. Here are some common opinions about names from a recent survey.

Boys' names	Girls' names
George: average, boring	**Betty:** old-fashioned, average
Jacob: creative, friendly	**Emma:** independent, adventurous
Michael: good-looking, athletic	**Jane:** plain, ordinary
Stanley: nerdy, serious	**Nicole:** beautiful, intelligent

So why do parents give their children unpopular names? One reason is tradition. Many people are named after a family member. Of course, opinions can change over time. A name that is unpopular now may become popular in the future. That's good news for all the Georges and Bettys out there!

A Read the article. Then check (✓) the statements that are true.

- ☐ 1. Your name is part of your identity.
- ☐ 2. People often feel the same way about a particular name.
- ☐ 3. Boys' names are more popular than girls' names.
- ☐ 4. People are often named after family members.
- ☐ 5. Opinions about names can change.

B According to the article, which names suggest positive things? Which suggest negative things? Complete the chart.

Positive names		Negative names	
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