

Tekst 7

# How to put your name down for a better life



Alan Hamilton

(1) Oh Dad, how could you have called me what you did? I want to be a Jeremy. Mind you, there's no reason these days why I can't become one, and it will cost me less than £40. Changing the name given to us at baptism has suddenly become a trend. In 1996 only 270 people in Britain changed their name by deed poll. Now, according to the Deed Poll Service, the number has burgeoned to between 30,000 and 50,000 a year.

(2) Some of the reasons for changing verge on the eccentric, if not the impenetrable. John Anderson now walks the streets as Rolf Harris. Ian Roberts, an actor in *Casualty*, says that he is now more at peace with himself as Kwame-Kwei Armah in recognition of his African slave roots, but John Campbell, a bus driver, may have regretted changing his name to Ayrton Senna when he crashed his bus.

(3) My reason for wishing to become a Jeremy is far simpler: Jeremys seem to bask in a better life than Alans, according to *The Times Book Of Names*. We Alans have an average age of 54 (I wish), earn an average of £25,000 a year (dream on) and are most likely to live in the North East of England (I never have). Now take your Jeremys. Of all the common Christian names, your average Jeremy is likely to be a mere 41, the highest earner at £33,000 a year and the most likely to live in London, be self-employed, in social grade A, own stocks and shares and to have bought his car new. Not much in common with Alans there, then.

**(4)** For purposes more akin to entertainment than cutting-edge scientific research, *The Times* tipped up the contents of its databases — the names of five million of you who take us on subscription, visit Times Online or send us e-mails, and tick the boxes of those “tell us about yourself” questionnaires — and emptied them into an electronic mincing machine. The pudding that emerged may be a trifle of averages, but it is a multilayered potpourri of fascinating if frivolous titbits, one of which being that no Alan wants to be a Fred.

**(5)** Fred is the name most likely to live in a bungalow, probably in the South West. The true curse of the Fred, 36, is to be the lowest average earner, at a mere £15,000 a year. No Fred should pair up with a Dorothy, at £13,000 the lowest earner among female first names. Freds (and indeed Alans) should go for an Alison, Fiona, Sally or Suzanne, all of whom are in the £30,000-plus bracket. They might also consider a Susan; a 2005 survey by Barclays Bank found that Susan was the commonest name among customers who earn at least £100,000 a year.

**(6)** Dad, you’re forgiven; at least you didn’t call me Fred. But then that name fell from favour in the 1920s, when even this old Alan wasn’t born.

*The Times*

### Tekst 7 How to put your name down for a better life

---

- 1p 33 “Oh Dad, how could you have called me what you did?” (alinea 1)  
Waarom is de schrijver (Alan Hamilton) ontevreden over zijn naam volgens de tekst?
- 3p 34 Geef van elk van de volgende beweringen aan of deze wel of niet in overeenstemming is met de inhoud van de alinea's 1 en 2.
- 1 An increasing number of people officially change their names.
  - 2 Changing your name has become less expensive.
  - 3 Having a new name changes people's lifestyle permanently.
  - 4 It is difficult to understand some people's motives for a name change.
  - 5 The procedure for changing your name has become more bureaucratic.
- Noteer het nummer van elke bewering, gevolgd door “wel” of “niet”.
- 1p 35 What is the purpose of the three remarks in brackets in paragraph 3?
- A To illustrate that there is a lot of truth in what is claimed about names.
  - B To make clear that the statistical data do not apply to the writer.
  - C To show the writer's profound experience with surveys.
  - D To stress the negative influences of a specific name on a person's life.
- 1p 36 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 5?
- A however
  - B instead
  - C moreover
  - D therefore
- 1p 37 “How to put your name down for a better life” (titel)  
Waar komen de gegevens voor het onderzoek van *The Times* naar de relatie tussen namen en sociale positie vandaan?
- 1p 38 How does the author round off the article in the last paragraph?
- A By illustrating how unfortunate one's life can be if one has a socially less fortunate name.
  - B By implying that his life could have been better if his family had considered the importance of having the right name.
  - C By indicating that his father could have done a lot worse when giving him his name.