

Forms and Personal Information

Intermediate English, Week 7, Spring 2021

English names

- In English-speaking countries, most people have three names: a *first name*, *middle name*, and *last name*
- Your last name is your family name. Many people in your family will have the same last name
 - Sometimes, a person will have two last names, but they are usually combined with a hyphen (for example, “Smith-Williams”)
- Your first name and middle name are given to you by your parents. Some people will have the same names as someone in their family, but usually they are unique
 - Some people don’t have a middle name
- People usually use their first name with friends, family, and coworkers

English names (cont.)

- On a form, you might also see *MI*. This means Middle Initial – the first letter of your middle name
- In the USA, it is common for a woman to change her last name when she gets married, so she will have the same name as her husband. Her previous last name is her *maiden name*

Nicknames

- In English, we like to use short versions of words
 - Refrigerator → fridge ; bicycle → bike
- We do the same thing with names! A short version of a name is called a *nickname*
- Some nicknames are easy to use. They are just part of the full name
 - Matthew → Matt ; Valerie → Val
- Other nicknames aren't obvious. They might come from an old version of a name, or have a sound or letter changed
 - James → Jim ; Elizabeth → Liz
- On an official form, use your full name. Don't use a nickname

Match the full name with the nickname



Race and ethnicity

- These words talk about where your family is from
- Race –
 - White – people with family from Europe or North Africa
 - Black or African American – from Africa (Nigeria, Somalia, Ethiopia, etc.)
 - Asian – from Asia (China, Japan, Thailand, etc.)
 - American Indian – original people from the Americas
 - Two or more races / multiracial – if you fit more than one category
- Ethnicity – Hispanic or not Hispanic
 - *Hispanic* means you come from a country that speaks Spanish, like Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia, etc.
 - *Not Hispanic* is for everyone else – people from Africa, Asia, most of Europe, and most of North America

Social security number

- A *social security number* (SSN) is an identification number that the government gives you
- It is nine numbers 123-45-6789
- Your social security number lets you get a job, register for a university, get government benefits, and more. It is very important.
- Be careful who you give your social security number to! Never give it to someone who asks for it on the phone or in a text or email

Date of birth and sex/gender

- Your *date of birth* is your birthday. Usually, you will write it with numbers
 - In the United States, we use month-day-year
 - September 7, 1930 = 09/07/1930
- On a form, *sex* and *gender* usually mean the same thing
 - Male – a man
 - Female – a woman
 - Other

Marital status

- *Marital status* is asking if you are married or not
- You will usually have these options –
 - Single – you are not married
 - Married – you have a husband or wife
 - Divorced – you were married before, but the marriage ended
 - Widowed – you were married, but your husband or wife died
- If you have a boyfriend or girlfriend but are not married, choose *single*