

Pseudonyms

A pseudonym is a false name that a person adopts. The word comes from two Greek words, *pseud*, meaning “false” and *onyma*, meaning “name.” Can you match the pseudonyms in the left column with the person’s real name?

| Pseudonym | Real Name |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| ___ Jennifer Aniston | A. Marshall B. Mathers III |
| ___ Jay-Z | B. Katheryn Elizabeth Hudson |
| ___ Katy Perry | C. Audrey Faith Perry |
| ___ Tom Cruise | D. Tracy Morrow |
| ___ Eminem | E. Mary Ann Evans |
| ___ George Eliot | F. Winona Horowitz |
| ___ Gerald R. Ford | G. Daniel Lawrence Whitney |
| ___ Faith Hill | H. Stefani Germanotta |
| ___ Hulk Hogan | I. Shawn Corey Carter |
| ___ Ice-T | J. Thomas Mapother IV |
| ___ Queen Latifah | K. Terry Jean Bollette |
| ___ Demi Moore | L. Dana Owens |
| ___ Kid Rock | M. Christopher Bridges |
| ___ Ludacris | N. Robert Ritchie |
| ___ Lady Gaga | O. Annie Mae Bullock |
| ___ Winona Ryder | P. Daniel Handler |
| ___ Larry the Cable Guy | Q. Samuel L. Clemens |
| ___ Tina Turner | R. Demetria Guynes |
| ___ Mark Twain | S. Jennifer Anistopoulou |
| ___ Lemony Snicket | T. Leslie Lynch King, Jr. |

For Discussion

People choose pseudonyms for a variety of reasons. What advantages might some of the names above have over the person’s real name? (Hint: Consider each person’s profession and historical time.)

Writing Task

If you were to use a pseudonym, what might it be? Consider the sounds and meaning of a name as you choose a pseudonym for yourself. Write a paragraph explaining the advantages it might have over your real name.

Answers

- S Jennifer Aniston = Jennifer Anistopoulou
- I Jay-Z = Shawn Corey Carter
- B Katy Perry = Katheryn Elizabeth Hudson
- J Tom Cruise = Thomas Mapother IV
- A Eminem = Marshall B. Mathers III
- E George Eliot = Mary Ann Evans
Mary Ann Evans published *Silas Marner* and other novels at a time when women were not accepted as writers, so she used a masculine pseudonym.
- T Gerald R. Ford = Leslie Lynch King, Jr.
His mother left an abusive marriage when Ford was a baby. She renamed her son after his stepfather when she remarried, and he made the change permanent when he was 13.
- C Faith Hill = Audrey Faith Perry
- K Hulk Hogan = Terry Jean Bollette
- D Ice-T = Tracy Morrow
- L Queen Latifah = Dana Owens
- R Demi Moore = Demetria Guynes
- N Kid Rock = Robert Ritchie
- M Ludacris = Christopher Bridges
- H Lady Gaga = Stefani Germanotta
- F Winona Ryder = Winona Horowitz
- G Larry the Cable Guy = Daniel Lawrence Whitney
- O Tina Turner = Annie Mae Bullock
- Q Mark Twain = Samuel L. Clemens
Twain's pseudonym was based on a river term indicating the water was safe enough for steamboats to travel. Pseudonyms were common among writers in the American West in the last 1800s.
- P Lemony Snicket = Daniel Handler