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Will your baby be one in a million or one of the crowd?

Choosing a name for bub will have a significant impact on his life. It's no wonder, then, that many parents find deciding on a moniker to be a stressful endeavour. After all, there are countless options and sometimes even family pressures, not to mention the influence of those in the spotlight.

Almost two years after Prince William and Duchess Catherine welcomed their

baby girl, it seems everyone still wants in on the royal action; the latest Baby Names report by McCrindle revealed 'Charlotte' is the most popular girls' name (a whopping 1737 mini humans were named after her).

Her father's name, meanwhile, has been in 'top 10' lists since 1911. Standing strong at the top of the latest list, however, is 'Oliver', which has been the most popular since 2013. In fact, in 2015 it was the top boys' name in every Aussie state but the Northern Territory (where 'Jack' took the reign).

So, would you like your bub to follow the crowd, or be at one in his own little world? Here are a few thoughts that could help make the decision a little easier.



In the know

Commonsense tips to help you create your shortlist

Keep it simple

It's great to be unique, but there's a lot to be said for names that are easy to spell and won't take too long to write.

Check the initials

Look out for combinations that form a word or acronym and avoid those that could attract attention from bullies.

Contemplate nicknames

If you'd like to call your baby 'William' but aren't keen on the nickname 'Will', you might want to reconsider.

Think of first impressions

Remember that your baby will one day be an adult, and while a name like 'Princess' may seem like a perfect fit now, it probably won't work in her favour when she's older and wants to be taken seriously by peers and employers.

#CELEBLIFE

For decades, Hollywood (or should that be 'Hollyweird'?) has had its influence on parents-to-be. Sienna (Miller), Ashton (Kutcher) and Mila (Kunis) have been some of the more tame name choices for us mere mortals, but Jagger (à la Mick), Oasis (after the British rock band) and Jedi (a *Star Wars* reference, FYI) have also had their moment in the name game.

And now that our fave members of the glitterati are having their own offspring, we're taking cues from their little ones, too. 'Penelope' rose in rank from 79 to 62 after Kourtney Kardashian's daughter was born, while 'Mason' (the name of the reality star's son) stood strong in rank at 14, and 'Harper' jumped from 24 to 19 in clear honour of David and Victoria's bub (because everyone wants a Beckham connection, right?).

Another trend among parents is naming bubs after characters in their all-time favourite TV shows ('Emily' and 'Jack', names of two main characters in popular television series *Revenge*, made the latest top 10 lists).

A PEEK INTO THE FUTURE

Already know that you'd like to give your little one a popular name? We've got great news: there are loads to choose from, and, in fact, they're some of the most beautiful, according to the McCrindle report.

"The rise of gentle, softer-sounding names for girls and firmer-sounding ones for boys is an ongoing trend in Australia," it reveals. For example, 90 per cent of the top 20 girls' names end in a vowel or a 'y', while the same number of boys' names end in a consonant sound. In addition, boys are almost three times more likely to have a single-syllable name than their counterparts.

So what does this mean for future monikers? Well, shorter names will win out for guys, and long, flowing ones will take charge among gals.

Australia's top 10 baby names

BOYS

Oliver
William
Jack
Noah
Thomas
James
Jackson/Jaxon
Ethan
Lucas
Lachlan

GIRLS

Charlotte
Olivia
Amelia
Ava
Mia
Sophia
Chloe
Emily
Sophie
Grace

CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

Opening your mind to the naming customs and traditions of other cultures can prove to be another fruitful source of fresh ideas.

Jeanine Cox, author of *The Perfect Name*, rounds up this idea quite easily. "Greeks have customarily named their babies after the fathers' parents," she explains. "The French often use a child's middle name to pay homage to a set of grandparents, using both grandmothers' first names for a girl and both grandfathers' names for a boy."

Meanwhile, over in Spain, "the first-born daughter is named after the father's mother, and the first son is named after the father's father", says Jeanine.

Who's who across the globe

The most popular names coming out of other countries

- ARGENTINA** Sofia and Thiago
- DENMARK** Emma and William
- ENGLAND** Amelia and Oliver
- IRELAND** Emily and Jack
- ITALY** Sofia and Francesco
- JAPAN** Yui and Haruto
- RUSSIA** Sofia and Aleksander
- SPAIN** Lucia and Hugo



Kourtney Kardashian and Penelope

David Beckham and Harper

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