



The Baby Name Wizard: A Magical Method for Finding the Perfect Name for Your Baby

Laura Wattenberg

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Yes, your baby's perfect name is out there.

The trick is finding it.

The perfect baby name will speak to your heart, give your child a great start in life--and maybe even satisfy your relatives. But you can't expect to just stumble on a name like that in an A to Z dictionary or on a trendy list.

That's why you need "The Baby Name Wizard." Created by a name-searching mom, it uses groundbreaking research and computer generated models to pinpoint each name's image, examine its usage and popularity over the last 100 years, and suggest other promising ideas. A perfect guide to the modern world of names, "The Baby Name Wizard" will engage you from the first name you look up and keep you enchanted through your journey to the just-right name for your baby.

The Baby Name Wizard: A Magical Method for Finding the Perfect Name for Your Baby Details

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From Reader Review The Baby Name Wizard: A Magical Method for Finding the Perfect Name for Your Baby for online ebook

Kendra says

This book takes a unique and almost scientific approach to names. It was really interesting! I enjoyed it a lot. It groups names into different categories and then uses these categories to essentially help you find your name style. Also if you find a name that you like, it will suggest 5 boys names that are similar in style and 5 girls names that are similar in style to it. It was fun. It doesn't have a billion names in it - but it was helpful and creative and a different take on naming your baby than I have seen in other "baby name" books. I recommend it.

Anna (Bananas!) says

Jackpot.

Best baby name book I've encountered. I especially like the sibling suggestions, which groups names with a similar feel.

The lists at the back of the book are fun too. I found some great names under Exotic Traditionals, Saints, Why Not?, Androgynous, and Mythological.

Overall there seems to be a focus on unique and unusual names which is important to me.

Mirian says

This was the first naming book I found to be very readable; my husband even picked it up for about four minutes. (While I stared in shock with my mouth hanging open for an additional thirty seconds after he put it down.)

The first twenty pages were written by Captain Obvious with advice such as, "don't pick first/last names which rhyme." As if you would do that unknowingly... But there were some examples worth a snicker when considering variations of a name; Benjamin Dover will inevitably be called Ben Dover - a timeless joke for his future buddies.

The "Name Snapshots" were great. Beside each name, you could see common sibling names which were creepily accurate. These often lead to new favorites or mentioned names which were already favorites. There was also a line graph showing the name's popularity over the past century. (i.e. my parents' breaking the top 100 of the 60's then nearly disappearing in the 70's.) The other cool thing about the graphs was recognizing oncoming trends. Maybe my favorite names aren't very popular today, but the graphs show some of them increasing quickly.

The lists of "style families" were another good resource. You could look for names by geography, history, religion with lists such as ladies and gentlemen, brisk and breezy, celtic, bell tones, jewish, last names first,

porch sitters, mythological, and even one called "why not?". Hubby vetoed my favorites from that list, Pinkie and Thor. (He said we're talking a person, not a dog.)

Still, I think the best thing you can do when picking a name is keep a fairly long list in a place where you'll see it every day. I've found some of my long-time favorites have lost their appeal just from seeing them daily and others have grown on me tremendously. Now I just need a book on how to get hubby liking something more interesting than John, Bob, Ann or Mary.

Kristen says

I really liked this book. So far it's been the best name book I've gone through. It gave me a lot of information in one place about each name. And it didn't like all the different spellings of the same name - it would list variants. Since we're not sure what we're having yet, I did actually go through all the names and read over 90% of the book. And it didn't list really random names from other cultures that we wouldn't use in America - that was the hardest thing about looking for names online - it lists names like "Aadf" where I swear someone just hit letters on a keyboard blindfolded! I think if anyone needs a good start for figuring out the type of names you like, this is a great book.

Nicola says

In *The Baby Name Wizard*, Laura Wattenberg uses computer modelling, historical/social research and good old-fashioned critical thinking to analyze baby naming trends and sort names into 'types'. Evelyn is 'antique'; Finn is 'brisk and breezy'; Hayden is 'androgynous'.

Wattenberg's advice on naming is thoughtful and perceptive; she doesn't disparage any names, but she does give food for thought. For parents-to-be, the main draw is the ability to assess the popularity of your favoured name (whadaya mean, my rare name choice is actually a rising star?), and the ability to find names that are "sorta like X, but not so well-known".

However, I don't use this book as a parenting reference; I use it as a writing tool.

I was sorting through some old notebooks recently and I found in one of them pages and pages of names. I must have compiled this list of names when I was about 12. It's not because I was baby-crazy or desperate to be on '16 and Pregnant'. I was just a budding writer with lots of characters to name.

Truth: writers spend way more time obsessing over baby names than expectant parents, because parents might have 2, 3, 4 kids, but writers 'Christen' dozens of babies every year. So don't let the adorable baby on the cover put you off; this is an indispensable writing tool.

I can't count the number of times I've started a new writing project, begun to sketch out my characters and then got stuck on finding a name. The problem isn't solved by picking up a name dictionary and opening it on a random page. If my heroine is sharp and sarcastic, I can't call her 'Lucy'. This is the sort of situation where *Wizard* becomes indispensable. If you know you want a brisk, one-syllable name, just look up that 'type' and find a whole selection to choose from.

Wizard is also great for avoiding anachronisms, because it includes charts of each name's rising/falling popularity. If your hero was born in 1980, he shouldn't be called 'Braeden'. That's an obvious example, but a lot of names we assume were popular during a certain time period actually weren't.

The 'brother/sister' suggestions that come with each name are also incredibly useful – although not necessarily for brothers and sisters. If you're going to spend 100,000 words writing about best friends or lovers, it's helpful that their names "go together". Who wants to end up writing "Amethyst and Jack walked down the street... Amethyst and Jack went to the shops... Amethyst and Jack were in big trouble"?

You can access a lot of *Wizard*'s features (popularity charts, for example) from its accompanying website, but the book's more in-depth and it's a handy reference to have within easy reach when you're writing.

Sarah says

This was by far my favorite of the many, many baby name book options. For each name it gives popularity (with a graph), genre, nicknames, sister-names, and brother-names, along with the meaning and some commentary on the name's "feel". The sibling names feature is surprisingly useful. My only complaint is that this book doesn't contain as many names as many other options -- out of our 'long list' of 20ish names, I'd say at least 5 or more aren't even in this book. So, it might be best used in conjunction with another book (I liked *The Baby Names Almanac*).

Melissa says

Love the popularity stats, brother/sister trends, and the styles index at the back.... HUGE missing information: Origin/History and meanings.

Only a few names had that listed.

I personally would be more interested in the origin and meaning of my possible child's name then what baseball or movie star currently has it; Couldn't care less about that.

So I have to go online to now look up the ethnic/ historical origin and meanings of several names that I liked from this book. Seems like a huge flaw to me...

Catherine Gillespie says

Although it bears some similarities to *Bring Back Beatrice*, Laura Wattenberg's naming volume, *The Baby Name Wizard: A Magical Method for Finding the Perfect Name for Your Baby* draws on more of an algorithmic approach to finding names you like. Of course, there is nothing magical about algorithms, they are mathematical formulae, but we'll assume that the author was overruled by her editor when it came to the subtitle.

In a process similar to how Pandora decides what songs you might like based on your general music preferences, *The Baby Name Wizard* divides names into categories and subcategories, so that you can find names in the categories to which you are most drawn. Most of the names we like fall into the "antique," "ladies and gentlemen," "Biblical," and "timeless" categories. In addition to style, each name is shown with its popularity rank, a graph of historical usage, lists of brother and sister names that would match, and a

short paragraph about name, origin, meaning, or other considerations.

{Read my full review here}

Aimee says

Favorite baby name book

Amanda says

I'm only adding this book because I did actually go through over half of it (didn't bother with boy names) and I think it is the best baby name book I have seen. I love how it doesn't list the million ways to spell a single name. If there is a notable difference between spellings for one reason or another, it might have a different paragraph for that name, but for the most part, it just lists variants. Also, it isn't just a dictionary of names, with every unrelated name under the sun listed in alphabetical order. There are lots of lists name "categories", such as "Biblical", "Charms and Graces", "Guys and Dolls", "Macho Swagger", etc. This allows you to see lots of similar names without completely unrelated names mixed in. Then, the alphabetical section, each name has pronunciation, current popularity, peak popularity, nicknames, suggested sibling names, and a little paragraph of information. This book way by far the best way I have found to look through for name ideas. Great organization with lots of interesting information. The only thing I wish it had was meanings for every name, not just when it's included as an interesting bit of information in the name's paragraph. Still, this book is my favorite by far (and I'm working on naming my third girl).

Elizabeth says

I have probably read and pondered every name in this book and I still have not settled on a name for my yet-to-be-born baby boy. It's not the book's fault, but I think the book has sort of made the job of naming feel more complex than it has to be. Or maybe it is just the way I'm looking at things. If I stumble across a name I like, like "Miles" for example, then I read the description of "Miles": "Miles is a terrific choice if you're drawn to "elegant gentleman" names." (which I am) "It sounds strong, smooth and unflappabable." (great, great and pretty good, except maybe in the toddler years) "In fact this name has been quietly cool for a thousand years, never too common but never disappearing. In the U.S. the name is associated with the Mayflower pilgrim Miles Standish, which adds a fashionable antique flavor." So, great, sounds like a winner to me. But then I look at the chart that depicts the name's popularity over the years. It looks like sort of a valley and then a very very steep mountain where it climbs sharply over the past few years to the number #231 spot. It looks like I'm not alone in my discovery of this great name. It looks like I'm just part of a big, faceless trend of pregnant people who all have the same ideas about things and the same vision of who their son is going to be. And maybe this is true. I realize Miles is not the most unique name on the planet. I even know of a few kids named Miles. But I hate the reminder that I am sort of a cliche, that my choices are not really my own, but a result of all these other cultural things that make up a big part of my identity. I also feel this way when I get really excited about a new drink at Starbucks.

So I don't know...this book has been really fun to read, but it has also sort of messed with my head and kind of ruined perfectly good names for me. I would recommend this book as a fun way to discover new names,

but I would also advise all of those in charge of naming other human beings to listen to your heart and not a book when it comes to choosing a name.

Alanna says

This is the best baby name book I've ever come across, not that I found my children's names in here (in fact, I've never seen either of my children's names in ANY baby name book). BUT it's a very effective system given that for today's parents, the popularity of a name is often just as much a consideration as its meaning or origin. Each main entry name is accompanied by a graph charting that name's popularity since its emergence. Very useful. The other very effective feature is the fact that the names have been categorised into thematic groups, so if you like the sounds of "Zoe" but you wouldn't quite want to call your child that, you just go to the categories that include Zoe and you find many other names that you are very likely to like. It's surprising, but it's actually very accurate. The only disadvantage to this book is it's very American (which I suppose is not a disadvantage if you're American). So it might list a name of French origin as being very uncommon, when in fact it's currently as common as John or Mary in France. I suppose there had to be a limitation somewhere.

Sh?kai Sinclair says

Not much variety in this set of names. The author's assumed audience is white cisgender women who are highly invested in the gender binary. Going cover to cover I did manage to find a couple of dozen names that my partner didn't immediately reject.

Christina says

The author's descriptions of names are quick and witty giving the reader an idea of how his/her chosen name might sound to others. She also provides popularity year and ratings, the style of the name (ie charms and grace, solid citizen, Biblical, surfer sixties...) , possible nicknames, and brother/sister names (if you like this one, you'll like these). It's on my "must" list every time I'm expecting.

Jen says

Naming a baby is hard. This book was fun, because it looks at the various cultural/regional differences in the US (northeastern names very different from southern, for example) and it tells you what celebrity/popular character/politician etc that the name you pick out might be connected to. Veronica was a close choice for us, and both Veronica Mars (yes!) and Veronica Lake were mentioned.

Our choices were pretty solid before we picked this up, but it was fun to browse and see what our name(s) mean.

Amy says

As great as its predecessor (the second edition), but with new and updated information. I like some of the new tools/graphics as well, like the map showing naming trends (it only talks about the USA here, but it's still interesting). Overall, this is the best baby naming book series I've come across! I love how it lists common sister/brother names along with each entry, shows a popularity graph over the past century+, and gives each name a 'style,' so you can see what you like and refer to the section on that style later in the book. Very helpful!!

Laura says

I loved using this book while my husband and I chose names for our babies. I also loaned this book out to numerous friends and they have all loved it too, in fact, some have asked to borrow it more than once:)

Amy says

I *loved* this book! It doesn't take up pages with 5 gazillion spelling variations of names (if you wanted to make up a new spelling, you could pretty much take it on as your own personal project, after all). Instead, it outlines the "personality" of a name as perceived by the author, graphs of the name's popularity in the past century, sister/brother names that people often link together (which are often spot on, I think), and lists in the back of types of names (Amy is a Surfer Sixties name; some of my favorites were the Porch Rockers, the old-fashioned ones like Evelyn, Eva, Harriet, etc.). LOVED it.

Bo says

Didnt help my name search.

Seth Jenson says

Another good resource. Yes, this is the third baby naming book I've read. Got a long list and still no clear winner. Maybe he'll just have to be No Name Jenson. Do they have a hospital in No Name, Colorado? You've seen the stop along the freeway on the way to Utah. That should be where they banish would-be parents who can't think of names for their children.
