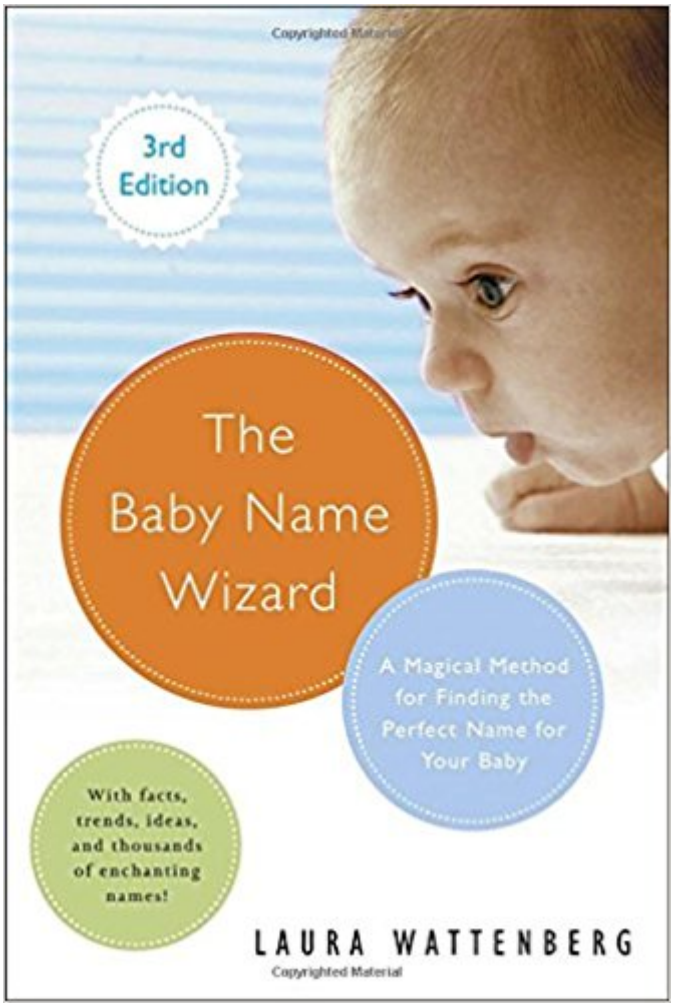
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The Baby Name Wizard, Revised 3rd Edition: A Magical Method For Finding The Perfect Name For Your Baby



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Synopsis

A fully revised and updated version of the classic baby name guideAfter the initial joy of discovering a pregnancy, the question every mom- or dad-to-be asks is inevitably: What will I name my baby? There's no shortage of names to choose from, and the task can be overwhelming. Enter The Baby Name Wizard. Since its original publication in 2005, The Baby Name Wizard has used groundbreaking research and computer-generated models to pinpoint each name's image, examine its usage and popularity over the last one hundred years, and suggest other promising ideas. A completely revised and updated guide to the modern world of names, The Baby Name Wizard is the only tool parents need to discover the perfect name.

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“Baby Name WizardÃ¢â ¬Â• Laura Wattenberg takes a unique research-driven, analyticalÃ Â approach to understanding names and style. Through her book and website, she hasÃ Â helped countless thousands of parents find the perfect names for their growing families.

In Search of the Perfect Name: A Peek Behind the Wizard's CurtainWhen my first daughter was a baby, I noticed a curious phenomenon. It seemed that every baby girl we met in Riverside Park in New York was named either Hannah or Olivia. But every one of their mothers said she had chosen the name to be unusual!That was my introduction to the mysterious landscape of modern names. Like hairstyles and hemlines, names have fashions that change with each generation. Each name

has a social meaning that evolves, shaped by the people who bear it and the world that surrounds it.When the time came to choose a name for my second child, I set out to find a map of the name landscape. Name dictionaries were an obvious place to start, but names are far more than words. Knowing that Olivia comes from the Latin word for "olive" doesn't tell you whether there will be three other Olivias on your block. And learning that Elmo has the same root as "helmet" doesn't clue you in that Elmo is a furry red Muppet. What I wanted wasn't a dictionary but a practical guide to name fashions, history, and style.Over the following years, I compiled a huge database of name information: Popularity data from cities and countries around the world. Birth announcements in Ivy League alumni magazines. Lists of Catholic saints. African-American sorority memberships. Soap opera cast lists. Colonial census records. Then I developed computer models to spot trends and identify style categories. My "Name Matchmaker," for instance, was a program designed to take any name and pinpoint others with a similar style and feeling. I knew I was on to something when I told the Matchmaker the names of my two daughters and the top boy's name match it suggested was the very name my husband and I had agreed on for a boy.Of course, it takes a human to interpret the data and make the final judgments. It's my own call to say that a boy named Romeo matches a girl named Valentine. In the end, the point of all the research and technology is to produce a real-world guide to names, with the kind of information that's worth kibitzing over. A hearty dinnertime debate over the merits of a name like Cabot or Clark is the best compliment this book could receive.Consider The Baby Name Wizard a field guide to American names. It's designed to help you understand what's out there, identify name styles, and spot trends. But above all, it's designed to guide you to the perfect fit for your own personal taste and style.Rules of Thumb for Choosing a NameRule #1: Personal taste isn't so personalNot long ago, I heard an expectant mother beside herself with outrage. She had just learned that another woman in her small town had "stolen" her baby name! No, she admitted, she had never met the woman. But for years now she had been planning to name a baby Keaton, a name she had personally invented, and now there was another little Keaton right across town. Someone must have told that other mother her own secret, special name. Thief!Chances are this was not really a case of name larceny. That mom had just run into a startling fact of baby name life: our tastes, which feel so personal, are communal creations. Keaton? Well, it's a surname ending in "-n," a style parents are flocking to for fresh ideas that sound like classic names. "K" in particular is a hot first letter. And don't forget that almost every parent today grew up watching Alex Keaton on Family Ties. So just like that outraged mom, thousands of parents across the country have independently "invented" the name for their kids.We live in a shared culture, with communities and experiences that shape our likes and dislikes. That

means overlapping taste--and as a rule, the closer two people are, the greater the overlap. Many of us have had a long-cherished name "stolen" by friends who had long cherished it themselves. It’s frankly unnerving to discover that the quirky name you’ve always just happened to like is now a chart topper. Whatever happened to individual style?Before you panic and name your son Aloysius, remember that communal taste is really a good thing. That shared perspective is exactly what gives names their style and nuance. It’s also the context that lets you define your own style, meaningfully. Use the backdrop of your social group, your community, and your generation to choose names that make the kind of statement you’re looking for. And if you do meet another Keaton, take it as a positive sign that your son will be fashionable. Parents are the ones who worry about a name standing out; kids are happy to fit in.Rule #2: Not all last names are created equalI can see a runway model wearing a sheath dress that’s so gorgeous, I could just melt looking at it. But I know perfectly well that the same dress on my real-world figure would be a train wreck. Similarly, I know that the stylish Irish name Kennedy, paired with my last name Wattenberg, would sound like someone falling down stairs.In names, as in clothes, the key is to choose the styles that flatter you. Run down this basic checklist before you make your final choice.Rhythm and rhyme: A full name is like a little line of poetry with rhyme and meter. You may choose a name you love, only to test it out with your surname and find that it falls flat. (Nope, you can’t "fix" it with a middle name. Soon enough that middle name will disappear from your daily usage, leaving the awkward combo to last a lifetime.) Watch out for singsong rhythms and tongue twisters. If your compositions aren’t working, try looking for names that echo one or more of the sounds in your surname. For example, the shared "uh" sound makes Hunter Sullivan sound more natural than, say, Hunter Flannigan.The "Justin Case" syndrome: A perfectly reasonable first name can meet a perfectly reasonable last name and create something perfectly ridiculous. When you have a candidate picked out, say the full name out loud repeatedly to look for hidden land mines. Include nicknames too--Benjamin Dover is one thing, Ben Dover quite another.Meeting in the middle: Look carefully where the end of one name meets the beginning of another. Jonas Sanders will be heard as Jonah Sanders or Jonas Anders. Alexander Anderson sounds like a stutter.Special cases: If your last name is a common word, it’s especially important to avoid alliteration. Jenny Jumps and Walter Wall sound like characters from a children’s picture book. If your last name is a common first name, take special care to choose first names that won’t make you sound inside out. Nicholson Thomas, for instance, is asking for trouble. And if your last name just is trouble (Rump, Hogg, etc.), you can use the rhythm of a long, rolling first name to draw the emphasis away from it.Rule #3: All naming is localAmerica is a sprawling, diverse country, and at any given time many different name trends are operating at

once. Money, geography, ethnicity, and education all swirl together to form "microclimates" of style, with local spikes in the use of particular names.You can look up Ezra and say, "Ah, popularity rank #342, I won't meet many Ezras." But if your friends have kids named Levi and Ezekiel, you should expect to see Ezras on your block. Not to say that's a bad thing. In that kind of community, Ezra won't risk teasing, whereas he might find it rough going in a sea of Kaydens and Madisyns. Use the Sister/Brother names, style categories, and maps in this book to help gauge how a name will fit into your social surroundings.Rule #4: Other people's opinions matterAs a parent, the choice of a baby name is entirely up to you. Why should you listen to what anybody else has to say, let alone your crazy friends and relatives?Some food for thought: the choice may be yours, but you are making it for someone else. You are just a trustee in this matter, assigned to handle the affairs of another person who is unable to act because he or she has not yet been born. And those crazy friends and relatives? They are going to be your baby's friends and relatives before long. Don't let them bully you, but don't completely ignore them either. As a group, they represent the society that's going to be hearing, and judging, your child's name for a lifetime. You don't have to flag down every passing car to ask for opinions, but it's worth choosing a few level-headed confidantes to air out your ideas.If you don't want to open the floodgates on a public name debate, this book gives you some middle ground. As you browse through the pages, think of it as a conversation with a friend who has thought an awful lot about names--and who will shut up when you're done with her. For a name you're seriously considering, try reading the listed Sister/Brother names out loud too. They'll give you the best sense of how the name you like will come across to others.Rule #5: Choose the name you would like to have yourselfThis is the top piece of advice I give expectant parents. We all have many factors in mind when we choose a name. We may want to honor our relatives or our ethnic heritage. We may see baby naming as an opportunity for personal expression. Use whatever criteria you like to narrow your name choices, but before you fill in the birth certificate, stop and give the name this final test: if you were starting life today, knowing everything you know about the world, is this the name you would want to represent you? If so, you can feel confident that you're giving your child the best birthday present possible, one that will last a lifetime.Family Matters: Namesakes, Traditions, and ConflictsYou're about to introduce a new member of your family. This is a special, magical time filled with special, magical dilemmas, conflicts, and frustrations.Names carry unique significance in a family setting, representing connections with the past as well as a glimpse into the future. We carry reflections of our families with us in our names, as surnames and often first and middle names as well. Even if you don't directly name your child after relatives, you can still be blindsided by family issues you never thought about before you contemplated parenthood. Here's a

primer on some of the top trouble spots:NamesakesThe simplest namesake is a Junior. Dad is Johann Schmidt, his son is Johann Schmidt Jr., and his grandson is Johann III. If that's your family tradition and everyone buys into it, you're golden. Skip this section and start concentrating on finding different nicknames to use in each generation.In most families, though, the ways we honor relatives are more fluid and up to individual discretion. We have first and middle names to play with, nicknames and variations. We may shy away from naming after living relatives, or we may have beloved relatives with atrocious names. Some common strategies for sticky situations:The middle name cure-all: Middle names are America's polite dumping ground for outmoded names. We use the middle name to honor Aunt Mildred without actually raising a little Millie. Best of all, as middle names, many of those quirky choices, especially foreign names, start to sound stylish and distinctive. Some parents are tempted to overdo it, stuffing two or three names in the middle to cover all their obligations. Resist this impulse if you can; this is a three-name-max society and extra names bring practical headaches.The not-quite namesake: If you don't want two Margarets to create confusion at family gatherings, or just can't bear to name your son after your husband's grandpa Selig, try echoing the namesake with a slightly different choice. Many families just follow the first letter of the name. For a closer match, consider alternative forms from different times and cultures. Margaret would probably be delighted to be honored with a little Margot or Margery. Digging even deeper, you can start with a name root or meaning and derive a new equivalent. Edna, for instance, is believed to come from the same root as Eden. And the Yiddish Selig means "happy," same as the Hebrew Asher. If you really want to go all out, consider an anagram. Baseball star Nomar Garciaparra was named for his father Ramon.The "nicknamesake": This favorite trick lets you name your son after great-grandpa Archie while sidestepping his given name Archibald. Many traditional nicknames can arise from multiple given names. So Uncle Don might be a Donald, but nephew Little Don is a Donovan. And Archie? Try the simple, uncommon choice Archer. The "Nicknames" style section in this book (on page 433) is a great source of ideas for alternative "nicknamesakes."That Name Is Mine!You and your siblings were raised together. You share the same heritage, traditions, and life-shaping experiences. Is it any surprise you share the same favorite names?So out of the thousands of names in the world, you and your sister have both zeroed in on Maeve as the one and only perfect choice for a little girl. The rule is simple here, gals: first come, first served. Unless some previous explicit agreement exists, whoever gives birth to a girl first has dibs on the name. In a small, close family, this dibs system might even extend to cousins or beyond.Some exceptions: in a really big family, something's gotta give. Among your 10 brothers and sisters and 30 nieces and nephews, you may have to accept an occasional duplicate name. Also,

try to stay flexible to respect the input of in-law families. Perhaps your husband and your sister's husband both have fathers named Charles. You can both use the name if it's important, but try to hammer out a deal to call one boy Charlie and the other Chaz.The Last Frontier: Last NamesIt's old news by now that many parents, married or not, have different last names. Even couples who share a name may choose a hyphenated or combined version or come up with other creative ways to incorporate the mother's birth name into their new family identity. More and more, those solutions have an impact on given names as well.The middle maiden name: This is a simple, tried-and-true method to incorporate the mom's family heritage into a child's name. Most any surname sounds fine as a middle name, and the full name spoken aloud will sound like a hyphenated surname.The last shall be first: Some families take a bolder step and use a family surname as the child's first name. With the current popularity of surname-style names, this option is more appealing than ever. Not that it's a new idea: family surnames are traditional choices in the South, and you can pick up an Edith Wharton novel to see the same trend in Gilded Age New York. But please do proceed with caution. Try to put aside your emotional attachments and realize that not every surname is destined for a first-name role. (Sorry, Fantuzis and Rosenblatts.)

My husband and I were having trouble deciding on potential girl names for our first baby. This book was really helpful in giving us narrow lists of possible options based on names that one or the other of us already liked -- both of us felt really overwhelmed by the more traditional baby name books which are just a huge list of names. Eventually we were able to find several names that we both like, which is a lucky thing since it turns out that our baby is a girl!

I checked out a lot of baby name books over the past nine months. Most of them I found to be thoughtlessly put together or with un-insightful commentary. With this one it was obvious that they did their homework. Under each name they give similar "brother or sister" names which I found to be dead on. I'll definitely be gifting this same book in the future.

Awesome book to help with names! Love how it is organized. Would love to see more meanings instead of origins. Loved that the book included "sister/brother" names to help out too! Major help with a torn couple who couldn't agree on anything.

Was nice in some ways to have an actual book, we really liked the groupings and "you may also like" suggestions. However, there are plenty of free apps and websites that do an equally sufficient

job.

All things I could have researched for free on the internet, and more current there. There were several names that I know are far more popular now than listed here. Didn't guide me much on how to actually choose.

Still haven't found a name but it was a cute book. I still look back to use it as reference for some names. It's worth a try! Easy read.

Different from many other baby name books on here. I like that each name comes with its meaning, nicknames, bother/sister names, popularity, and origin. I don't like that there are not a lot of names in the book. Overall, I found it useful but would not purchase it again.

Love the way the book organizes the names - doesn't seem so overwhelming. Would highly recommend!

Download to continue reading...

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