

# VIVA VOCABULARY!

## Practical Ways to Promote Word Consciousness

By Lois E. Huffman, Ph.D.

Each edition of “Viva Vocabulary!” focuses on different word genres. The goal is to help students (re)discover the joy of language and the expressive power of vocabulary.

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### A Follow-Up to Becoming More *Nym*-ble:\* Part Two of Two

In Part [One](#), we looked again at the Big Three *-nyms*: Synonyms, Antonyms, and Homonyms. Now let’s check out other *-nyms* that today’s students are likely to encounter: **Acronyms, Aptonyms, Contronyms, Demonyms, Eponyms, Hypernyms, Hyponyms, Metonyms, Pseudonyms, and Uninyms.**

(You will find additional information, including teaching ideas, about these *-nyms* and many others in “Jack and Jill Can Be Even More *Nym*-ble” Parts [One](#), [Two](#), and [Three](#) and “New Words: Here Today, Gone Tomorrow?” Part [Two](#).)

**Acronyms** - abbreviations made from the first letters of other words and pronounced as a word (e.g., *NASA* - **N**ational **A**eronautics and **S**pace **A**dministration)

Remind students that acronyms are a common way to form new words in our modern world. For example, in an episode of the TV show *Designated Survivor*, Chief of Staff Emily Rhodes tells Political Director Lyor Boone, “Look, we have the *CDC, HHS, NIH, FEMA,...*” Boone responds, “I don’t think we can contain this with acronyms, Emily.” (Technically, only *FEMA* is an acronym. The others are initialisms.)

Consider having an “Acronym of the Day” to review common acronyms and initialisms and introduce students to unfamiliar but useful ones (e.g., *ETA* - **E**stimated **T**ime of **A**rrival, *AWOL* - **A**bsent **W**ithout **L**eave, *SEO* - **S**earch **E**ngine **O**ptimization, *TBA* - **T**o **B**e **A**nnounced) to your students. Invite students to develop activities that will help their peers use and master the acronyms.

More information, examples, and teaching ideas related to acronyms are in the Viva Vocabulary! post “Word Formation Revisited: Part [Two](#) of Two.”

**Aptonyms** (a.k.a. Apronyms, Namephreaks) - names that are appropriate for a person’s occupation or character ([grammar.about.com](http://grammar.about.com))

### More Teaching Ideas:

1. Share Seth Godin's post "[Calling Your Finding](#)," which includes examples of aptonyms but also questions whether anyone has a calling. Ask students if they agree or disagree and then have them explain their position. Mr. Godin, who is a marketer and author, contends that "our culture creates situations where passionate people find a place where they can make an impact. When what you do is something that you make important, it doesn't matter so much what you do."
2. Encourage your class to keep a running list of aptonyms found in their environment, academic texts, and pleasure reading. Have students analyze the list to determine if aptonyms are more common in a certain context (e.g., literary genre, line of work, locale). Here are examples to get students started:



<b>Aptonym</b>	<b>Occupation or Character</b>	<b>Where Encountered</b>
Marshall <i>Brain</i>	Founder of <a href="#">How Stuff Works</a> website	Internet
Ruth <i>Buzzard</i>	Attorney	Law office sign
Winthrop <i>Cashdollar</i>	Disability insurance expert	AARP magazine
Nathan <i>Green</i>	Professional golfer	Facebook
Tammy <i>Grubb</i>	Food writer	<i>The News and Observer</i>
Jon <i>Hamm</i>	Actor and producer	<i>Mad Men</i> TV Show
Kathie <i>Justice</i>	Cold Case Detective	<i>Cold Case Files</i> TV Show
Tim <i>Story</i>	Director, producer, and writer	<i>Shaft</i> movie

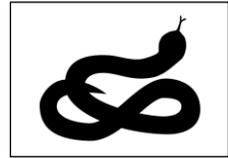
**Contranym** (a.k.a. Autoantonyms) - words that are the opposites of themselves

### More Teaching Ideas:

1. Have older students read the article "[Contranym: To Sanction or To Sanction?](#)" to learn or review how contranym come about. Ask students to work in pairs and take notes on the piece using a digital graphic organizer tool (e.g., [Bubbl.us](#)) or a notetaking strategy, such as [Cornell Two-Column Notes](#). Students should compare their products with another pair and discuss any confusing or discrepant information.
2. Share the Grammarbook article "[Autoantonyms Speak With Forked Tongue](#)" with older learners. Prompt them to think about the statement: "The hipster culture devises auto-antonyms to confound society's mainstream." Is the alteration of word meanings intentional? If so, are the speakers wanting to confuse others? What is the impact of the

change in word meaning on communication across generations? Encourage students to share specific examples from games, social media, movies, or TV programs.

- Present contranymic words and phrases and challenge students to supply the opposite meanings of each. For instance: "When the snake got loose, the teacher *carried on*. When the snake got loose, the students *carried on*." In the first sentence, *carried on* means "to continue a task or activity." The meaning in the second sentence is just the opposite: "to behave differently, usually in a bad way." (Adapted from [people.sc.fsu.edu](http://people.sc.fsu.edu))



Here is a sampling of contranymy which you might ask middle- or high-school students to define in various contexts of use:

Contranym	One Meaning	Opposite Meaning
<i>bolt</i>	to secure	to flee
<i>bound</i>	tied up	headed toward
<i>left</i>	have gone	still here
<i>oversight</i>	watching out for mistakes	failing to see an error
<i>peer</i>	a person of the nobility	an equal
<i>strike</i>	to hit	to miss
<i>trim</i>	to remove excess	to add decorations

(Many thanks to the Robeson County Reading Council for inspiring me to extend this activity.)

- Invite each class member to select a different contranym and then make a poster to illustrate its contrasting meanings. To illustrate: For the word *fast*, a picture of a person running (i.e., moving rapidly) could be contrasted with an image of something nailed in place (i.e., fixed in position). Lists of contranymy are at [Grammarly.com](http://Grammarly.com), [Birdgei.com](http://Birdgei.com), [Mentalfloss.com](http://Mentalfloss.com), and [Mnn.com](http://Mnn.com).
- As a class, put together a physical or digital bulletin board titled I'M MY OWN OPPOSITE. Near the title of the board, include a picture of Janus (the two-headed Roman god) to reinforce that contranymy are also called Janus words. Each week ask a group of students to display the contrasting meanings of a different mystery word and include images that illustrate each meaning. The challenge for class members is to earn bragging rights for correctly identifying the mystery word.

**Demonyms** - names given to people from particular places

**More Teaching Ideas:**

- Make your school or class WORD OF THE DAY activity more *nym*-ble by featuring a different *-nym* each month. When the focus is on demonymy, present ones that relate to

your area and students' lives. Raise questions about the origin of the demonyms and survey the school community. For example: As a resident of North Carolina would you rather be called a *North Carolinian* or a *Tarheel*? Why? What is the history of the term *Tarheel* that is used to refer to person from NC? What are people who live in your city, town, or rural area called? Which of these demonyms might be confusing to outsiders?

(Thanks to the Moore County Reading Council members whose responses to an earlier version of these questions inspired this activity.)

2. Invite students to read Grammar Girl's post on food names that appear to be demonyms but are not: "[Food Names That Are Totally Fake.](#)" Examples are Danishes, French fries, and Swiss steak. Have student pairs pick one of the names and plan how they will use social media to "(re)educate" their friends and followers about the true origins of the label. Also have students propose metrics for determining the success of their campaign. 
3. Challenge older students to reflect on the role of language in the insider/outsider tension that may result from our modern geographical mobility.
  - What is the interpersonal and intrapersonal impact of language differences that can be seen when people move to a town or city that differs from their place of origin?
  - How does this tension manifest in a school or academic environment?
  - How long does it take for a person to be considered a full-fledged member of a community, meaning he or she might be called by the demonym used for residents of that place? (For example: Qualifying for in-state college tuition in NC requires a residency of only 12 months. In contrast, being viewed as a *North Carolinian* may take much longer. The reality is that some people will never see themselves as such or be perceived by others as such.)

**Eponyms** - names taken from real or fictitious people

**More Teaching Ideas:**

1. Remind the class that "eponyms are everywhere" and that there are lots of words which few people realize are eponyms. Then present the Vocabulary.com list "[Some Obscure Eponyms.](#)" Ask students to do the activities for the list and share their results with peers. 
2. Encourage students to be on the lookout for eponyms in the things they read and watch. Here are eponyms my colleagues/friends and I have seen or heard:

Eponym in Context (Italics added.)	Source
Detective Laura Diamond says "way to <i>bogart</i> " to a colleague who has eaten the last of something. (Thanks, Bonnie!)	<i>Mysteries of Laura</i> TV show

Police consultant Shawn Spencer speculates, "I guess just injuring him would have been too . . . too <i>Tanya Hardingesque</i> for you." (Thanks, Cheryl!)	<i>Psych</i> TV show
Writer Amy Whitaker wonders, "And you're supposed to <i>Ernest-Hemingway</i> the question and explain how you write in the morning and drink with friends in the afternoon."	<a href="http://GretchenRubin.com">GretchenRubin.com</a>
Blogger Christina Pelligrini writes, "In the post- <i>Marie Kondo</i> era, clutter has become the enemy." (The eponym has also been shortened and verbified, as in "I'm not going to tell you to totally <i>Kondo</i> your kitchen,...." ( <a href="http://bonappetit.com">bonappetit.com</a> ))	<a href="http://Apartmenttherapy.com">Apartmenttherapy.com</a>
During a parent-kiddie swim class, Raphael Solano observes about his son, Mateo: "You're a little <i>Michael Phelps</i> ." (Thanks, Jo!)	<i>Jane the Virgin</i> TV show
In a civil lawsuit disposition, Sheriff Longmire's attorney says to another attorney: "You're kidding me. You're pulling a <i>Columbo</i> on me?" (Thanks, Tim!)	<i>Longmire</i> TV show
Stevie McCord tells her mother: "Oh, Hello Kitty is the <i>Chanel</i> of our time."	<i>Madam Secretary</i> TV show
"It's nothing like dealing with the real <i>Brock Turners</i> out there."	NPR <i>Weekend Edition Saturday</i> with Scott Simon
"Don't be the <i>Kobe Bryant</i> of your office."	<a href="http://Thesimpledollar.com">Thesimpledollar.com</a>
Detective Chief Inspector Tom Barnaby to Detective Sargent Dan Scott: "No flirting on duty, <i>Casanova</i> ."	BBC TV series <i>Midsomer Murders</i>
"He <i>Mike Tysoned</i> him." (Also a verbification) (Thanks, Casey!)	<i>Rosewood</i> TV show
"I immediately pictured her as the <i>Lesley Knope</i> of friend gift giving."	<i>Happier in Hollywood</i> podcast

- Who is the eponym's namesake? What did the individual do or what characteristic does the person have that gives the term its meaning?
- Does the eponym have a positive, negative, or neutral association?
- What is the impact of the eponym in the context of use? (Why might it be preferable to a direct statement or description of the phenomenon, situation, or person? How does it impact the meaning and effectiveness of the communication?)

To illustrate:

In a book review in <i>The New York Times</i> , Michiko Kakutani wrote, "...Butterfield's papers and reminiscences nonetheless yield granular details that slam home the <i>Machiavellian</i> scheming and shameless lack of accountability that permeated the Nixon White House."
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[\(“Review: ‘The Last of the President’s Men,’ Wading Back Into the Watergate”](#)) (Italics added.)

The eponym *Machiavellian* comes from Niccolò Machiavelli, an Italian historian, politician, and writer. Machiavelli wrote about unscrupulous politicians. Given what has been revealed about former President Richard Nixon’s actions, the term Machiavellian seems appropriate. Since the term has a negative connotation, it fits Nixon’s deviousness, duplicity, and eventual disgrace.

3. Remind the class that in gymnastics, the *Biles* is a “double half layout punctuated by a twist.’ The move is named for Simone Biles, the American gymnast [and Olympic medalist] who first performed it.” ([Parade Magazine](#))



Have each student then imagine something has been named after a famous or everyday person they know and that the word has been added to the English language. Students should share the word with their classmates and explain what it means and how it might take on such a meaning and become widely used, at least in certain circles. (Adapted from [wordsmith.org](#).)

**Hypernyms** (a.k.a. generic terms; superordinate terms; umbrella terms) - words with a broad meaning that more specific words fall under

**Hyponyms** (a.k.a. subordinate terms) - words that have more specific meaning than the superordinate term related to them

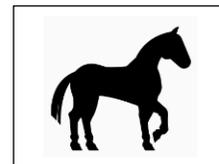
**Hypernym:** *beard*      **Hyponyms:** *full beard, goatee, chin strap, chin curtain, soul patch, 3-day stubble, ZZ Top*

**More Teaching Ideas:**

1. Remind students of some well-known words with the prefix *hyper-* (over) (e.g., *hyperactive, hyperalert, hypersensitive, hypervigilant*) to help them remember the difference between **hypernyms** and **hyponyms**. Also let students know that *hypo-* means “under,” thus a hyponym is “under” its hyponym.

(Parts [One](#), [Two](#), and [Three](#) of the Viva Vocabulary! article “Roots and Affixes Doing Their Part” offer more information on these and other prefixes.)

2. Help students further distinguish between hypernyms and hyponyms by looking at examples from the animal kingdom. If desired, begin with those in the following table. Then have students develop lists of hyponyms for other types of animals (hypernyms) that they like (e.g., horses, fish, primates).



<b>Hypernym</b> (broad category)	<b>Hyponyms</b> (specific examples)
<i>family pets*</i>	<i>bird, cat, chicken, dog, ferret, guinea pig, hermit crab, rabbit, raccoon,</i>

	<i>snake, turtle</i>
<i>dogs</i>	<i>Dachshund, Doberman Pinscher, German Shepherd, Great Dane, Poodle, Rottweiler, Schnauzer</i>
<i>feline</i>	<i>cat, cheetah, jaguar, leopard, lion, lynx, puma, tiger</i> ( <a href="#">Wikisaurus:feline</a> )

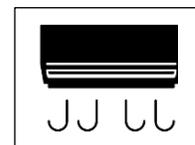
\*In some states, it is illegal for a private citizen to possess or harbor certain animals. It's probably best to only include examples that are permitted in your locale.

- Have “learners record words in hyponym groups in vocabulary banks and add new words to these groups. This can be a useful way to process new vocabulary and may mirror how English speakers organize words” in related groupings ([teachingenglish.org.uk/article/hyponyms](http://teachingenglish.org.uk/article/hyponyms)). These groupings are also known as **collocations** or words that are often heard or seen together. The following chart gives examples.

<b>Hyponyms (Collocations)</b>	<b>Hypernym (Category)</b>
<i>breakfast, lunch, and dinner</i>	<i>meals</i>
<i>head, shoulders, knees, and toes</i>	<i>body parts</i>
<i>healthy, wealthy, and wise</i>	<i>desirable personal attributes</i>
<i>men, women, and children</i>	<i>people</i>
<i>morning, noon, and night</i>	<i>times of day</i>
<i>red, white, and blue</i>	<i>patriotic colors in the U.S.</i>
<i>sun, moon, and stars</i>	<i>celestial bodies</i>

- As a class, explore the prevalence of hypernymic terms in today’s world. (e.g., *appliances, climate control, sanitize, voice devices, window treatments*) What are specific hyponyms related to the hypernym? Why do speakers and writers use the hypernym?

Here is a possible example to use with older students: The hypernym *climate control* refers to regulating the interior environmental comfort of structures and vehicles. Related hyponyms include *heating, cooling/air conditioning, humidity control, temperature control, and HVAC*. Knowing the hypernym allows people to communicate about the topic in more general terms and not get mired in details when they are unnecessary or irrelevant.



Have fun compiling hypernyms and hyponyms in basic areas of life (e.g., food, clothing, shelter) and aspects of our contemporary culture that are of interest to class members (e.g., video games, technology, social media, sports, music). To illustrate: For the hypernym *boardsports*, hyponyms include *wakeboarding, surfing, snowboarding, skateboarding, sandboarding, and kiteboarding*. ([kidzworld.com](http://kidzworld.com), [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)) (Thanks, Evan!)

5. Play the hypernym-hyponym game described at [beatrizteachingportfolio.weebly.com](http://beatrizteachingportfolio.weebly.com). Provide an example to show students what to do. This game is especially useful with students who are learning English as a new language, but all students are likely to enjoy the challenge.

**Metonyms** - words that designate entities by referring to something associated with them

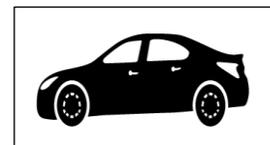
**More Teaching Ideas:**

1. Share a few metonyms (e.g., *badges* for police officers, *bench* for the judiciary, *crown* for a monarchy, *eyeballs* for readers or media viewers, *hashtag* for social media, *key* for hotel room, *keys* for electronic keyboard or piano, *plastic* for credit card, *ride* for car, *stick* for pool/billiards, *threads* for clothing) and remind students that a metonym is “a form of shorthand that allows us to use our shared knowledge to communicate with fewer words.” (Littlemore, 2015) Then ask:



- What are other examples of metonyms? How does each contribute to efficiency in communication?
- What happens to metonymic understanding when the nature of an activity or the objects used in it change? (For example: *Penciling in* someone or something may no longer make sense today because many people now use digital calendars instead of paper ones.)
- What challenges are metonyms likely to present for students learning English who do not know the English word used in the reference or are unfamiliar with the concept because it is not part of their culture of origin?

2. Have learners match common metonyms with the U.S. businesses they represent. (See below.) Explore the origins of any that are unfamiliar to class members. Be sure to let students know that traditional metonyms often persist (e.g., *Detroit*) despite changes in an industry.



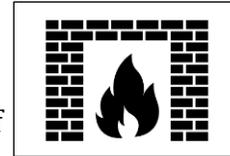
Metonym	American Industry
1. <i>Daytona</i>	a. advertising
2. <i>Detroit</i>	b. automobiles
3. <i>Hollywood</i>	c. car racing
4. <i>K Street</i>	d. country music
5. <i>Madison Avenue</i>	e. fashion
6. <i>Nashville</i>	f. finance
7. <i>Seventh Avenue</i>	g. high tech
8. <i>Silicon Valley</i>	h. lobbying
9. <i>Wall Street</i>	i. movies

KEY: 1 - c; 2 - b; 3 - i; 4 - h; 5 - a; 6 - d; 7 - e; 8 - g; 9 - f

3. Encourage students to report on metonyms they encounter in the media. To illustrate: I noticed this in the *Parade* magazine "[Veteran of the Month](#)" feature: "[Dan] Hampton has long since put aside the *sword* and taken up the *pen*." (Italics added.) This sentence conveys that Hampton has left the armed forces (*sword*) and become an author (*pen*) and is a play on the metonymic proverb, "The *pen* is mightier than the *sword*."

(More information and suggestions for teaching students about proverbs is in the Viva Vocabulary! article "[Proverbial Wisdom?](#)")

4. Make sure the class is aware that metonyms have been used for centuries but are also being generated by modern writers seeking to make their prose more interesting or concise. Offer the following: In the idiom "hearth and home," which evokes warmth and security, *hearth* is a metonym for family life. In bygone days, family life centered around the fireplace since it was used for cooking along with being a source of light and heat.



Some modern metonyms include *The Peacock* for NBC, *The Eye* for CBS, and *digits* for phone number. Other examples of metonyms used in hip-hop and in literature can be found at [Flocabulary.com](#). The class website or a designated site created with [Weebly](#) can be used to record old and new metonyms that students encounter.

5. Have students look for more metonyms that are part of idioms. Additional examples: "drop or make some serious *coin*," "spend (the) big *bucks*," and "pay a pretty *penny*." These idioms suggest that something is expensive. Encourage students to explore the history of the expressions and why a different aspect of the concept or object might be singled out via the metonym. More information on idioms is in the Viva Vocabulary! article "[Idio\(mat\)tic Expression: Go Figure!](#)"



6. Invite older, capable learners to investigate the difference between a metonym and a **synecdoche**. ([Webster.com](#) states that a **synecdoche** uses the name of a "part of something to refer the whole thing (or vice versa), as in "We hired extra *hands* (workers) to help us." or "Do you have your own *wheels* (car)? or "My high-school classmates thought I was a *brain* (smart person)." (Thanks, Mark!) In contrast, a metonym comes from something generally associated in meaning." Some consider a synecdoche a metonymic subtype ([en.wikipedia.org](#)) Which of the previous examples of metonyms are also synecdoches?)

**Pseudonyms** - fictitious or alternative names for people

### More Teaching Ideas:

1. Have students further investigate people's motives for not using their birth name in professional contexts. For example, Kalpen Suresh Modi, an actor on the TV show *Designated Survivor*, is probably better known as Kal Penn. Penn, who is of Asian Indian

descent, anglicized his name on a lark and found that his audition callbacks increased 50 percent ([wikipedia.org/](http://wikipedia.org/)).

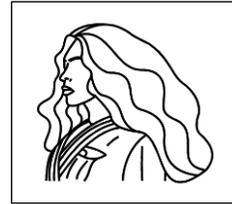
- Invite learners to also consider the criticism some contemporary people in the public eye have received for using a name which may mask their ethnic roots. One example is singer, Bruno Mars, whose birth name is Peter Hernandez. In response to critics, Mars said he is proud of his Puerto Rican heritage and is not trying to hide it. (For example, he assisted with efforts to raise funds to help Puerto Ricans affected by Hurricane Maria.) He has explained that Bruno is a nickname given to him by his father, and that “Mars just kind of came joking around because it sounds bigger than life.” ([huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com))

Ask students what they think about the criticism leveled at people who change their names or use names different from what is on their birth certificate. Should a person need to defend his or her name? What message does this send in our modern, multicultural society?

**Uninym** (a.k.a. Mononyms) - single names by which people or things are known. Some well-known people with uninym: *Adelle, Beyoncé (Bey), Cher, Liberace, Ludacris, Madonna, and Rhianna.*

**Teaching Ideas:**

- Have students develop a list of contemporary and historical people known by their uninym. Students should provide any information they can locate about the source of the uninym or reason the person goes or went by it. Here are examples:



Contemporary Person	Profession*	Source of Uninym*
<i>Ashanti</i>	Singer, songwriter, actor	First name
<i>Bono</i>	Singer-songwriter	Stage name
<i>Ciara</i>	Singer-songwriter	First name
<i>Common</i>	Hip-hop artist, actor	Stage name (shortened from <i>Common Sense</i> )
<i>Drake</i>	Rapper	Middle name
<i>Fergie</i>	Singer	Shortened form of last name Ferguson
<i>Kesha</i> or <i>Ke\$ha</i>	Rapper, songwriter	First name
<i>Lorde</i>	Singer	Stage name she chose because she was fascinated with royalty

<i>Moby</i> 	Musician, author	Nickname (He is a descendent of Herman Melville, author of <i>Moby-Dick</i> .)
<i>Pink</i>	Singer-songwriter	Nickname that became stage name
<i>Prince</i>	Singer-songwriter	First name
<i>Questlove</i>	Drummer, producer	Professional name
<i>Retta</i>	Comedian, actor	Shortened form of Marietta, her first name
<i>Sting</i>	Musician	Nickname based on his habit of wearing a black and yellow striped sweater in support of his favorite team
<i>Usher</i>	Singer-songwriter	First name

Historical Figure	Profession*	Source of Uninym*
<i>Noah</i>	Preacher, ark-builder, and zookeeper	Uninymy were the norm in his day.
<i>Plato</i>	Philosopher and mathematician	May have been dubbed <i>Plato</i> by a coach
<i>Socrates</i>	Philosopher	Uninymy were the norm in his time.
<i>Virgil</i>	Poet	Shortened form of his middle name
<i>Voltaire</i>	Author	After imprisonment, he took the name to mark a change from his past.

\*Most of this information was obtained or verified in [Wikipedia.org](http://Wikipedia.org).

Students might also note which current well-known individuals have “**almost uninymy**” or “**sometime uninymy**” (When the person’s first or last name is used alone, it’s highly likely that many people will know who is being referred to.) Examples: *Ellen* (DeGeneres); *Elvis* (Presley); *Geraldo* (Rivera); *Hillary* (Clinton); *Oprah* (Winfrey), *Pharell* (Williams), *Rush* (Limbaugh), (Donald) *Trump*.



3. Have students analyze what kind of names seem to make good uninymy and find out what the legal process is for changing one’s name. Also have students research why uninymy come about. According to [Wikipedia.org](http://Wikipedia.org), “In some cases, that name has been

selected by the individual. In other cases, it has been determined by the custom of the country or by some interested segment. In the case of historical figures, it may be the only one of an individual's names that is still known today.”

4. Ask students to make a list of the problems or challenges in having only one name. For example, [Stilgherrian.com](http://Stilgherrian.com) states that mononyms are “not handled well by poorly-designed bureaucratic information systems.” Single names also violate the naming policies of many websites.
5. Remind students that most pet names are uninyms (e.g., *Duke, Felix, Fido, Fluffy, Frankie, Muttley, Rover, Spot, Tiger, Zip*) and ask them to speculate why this is the case. (Of course, veterinary records may be filed according to the human pet parent’s surname, as in “Huffman, Anastasia.”)



Challenge student pairs to find out what uninyms are popular for different species (e.g., horses - *Flicka, Misty, Scout, Silver, Trigger*). Lists of common names for pets can be found online. Two examples are [The Top 100 Boy Dog Names](#) and [The Top 100 Girl Dog Names](#). Interested students might also analyze what things influence the naming of pets and how pet names may have changed over the years.

6. Let your class know that the opposite of a uninym is a **polynym** (multiple name). Hold a discussion about the prevalence and reasons for having multiple names. Have small groups search online to learn about the history and custom of polynyms. For instance, Hispanic naming conventions, as seen in singer Gloria Estefan’s full name—Gloria Maria Milagrosa Fajardo Garcia de Estefan ([en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org))—might be new to some class members.
7. Engage in an ongoing “-Nym Hunt.” Have students record the -nyms that show up on social media or the movies and TV programs they watch. These are some of the -nyms I’ve noticed recently in digital communications and face-to-face venues:

Word	Type of -Nym	Part of Speech	Meaning/Significance
<i>Albanian</i>	Demonym	noun, adj.	Person who is a citizen of Albania or comes from there
<i>Biden</i>	Eponym	verb	To always be there (“I’m going to <i>Biden</i> him.”) Namesake: Former U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden
<i>Bork</i>	Eponym	verb	To attack or smear someone in an attempt to prevent an action Namesake: U.S. Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork
<i>Crefio Dollar</i>	Aptonym	noun	Televangelist who preaches the “prosperity gospel”
<i>Dodo</i>	Tautonym	noun	Extinct bird that could not fly

<i>Ferberizing</i>	Eponym	noun	Controversial infant self-soothing method Namesake: Pediatrician Richard Ferber who advocated this approach
<i>Gogo®</i>	Tautonym	noun	Company that provides media and internet entertainment for commercial and business aircraft
<i>Goldilocks principle/effect</i>	Eponym	noun (compound)	Preference for entity or action that is between two extremes Namesake: Goldilocks, the title character in <i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears</i> In this children’s story, Goldilocks favors the porridge and other items belonging to Baby Bear because they are “just right.”
<i>Hack-a-Shaq</i>	Eponym	noun (paired-word sound play)	Intentional personal foul of a basketball player with a low free-throw percentage. This strategy is used toward the end of a game to regain control of the ball. Namesake: Former professional basketball player Shaquille O’Neal (a.k.a. Shaq)
<i>Judas goat</i> 	Eponym	noun (compound)	Goat that is trained to lead sheep to slaughter; person who leads his or her friends astray or betrays them in some way Namesake: Judas Iscariot, the apostle who betrayed Jesus Christ to the Roman soldiers for 30 pieces of silver
<i>Lizzo</i>	Uninym	noun	American singer, songwriter, rapper, and actress whose given name is Melissa Viviane Jefferson
<i>Lana Del Rey</i>	Pseudonym	noun	American pop singer whose real name is Elizabeth “Lizzy” Grant
<i>Murphy bed</i>	Eponym	noun (compound)	Pull-down wall bed Namesake: John Murphy, the man who received a patent for the bed (More information on the history of the Murphy bed is in this <a href="#">Apartment Therapy</a> post “ <a href="#">The (Slightly Scandalous) Way Murphy Beds Got Their Name.</a> ”)
<i>Picasso OR Rembrandt</i>	Eponym	noun	Baseball pitcher who can throw pitches to the edge of the strike zone Namesakes: Artists Pablo Picasso and Rembrandt van Rijn
<i>Pottering</i> 	Eponym	verb (verbification)	Jumping off something high with a broom and snapping a picture of yourself in midair to make it appear that you’re flying Namesake: Fictional character Harry Potter who flew on a broomstick
<i>PSL</i>	Acronym	noun	<b>Pumpkin Spice Latte</b> (Does this drink help or harm people’s perceptions of the Starbucks brand?)
<i>Romanian</i>	Demonym	noun,	Person who is a citizen of Romania or comes from that

		adj.	country
<i>contract trigger</i>	Metonym	noun (compound)	Individual hired to shoot someone (A <i>trigger</i> is part of a gun.)
<i>Usain Bolt</i>	Aptonym	noun	Jamaican former sprinter and Olympic medalist who is considered the fastest person in history
<i>Ukranian</i>	Demonym	noun, adj.	Person who is a citizen of Ukraine or hails from there

7. Invite groups of students to create *-nym* quizzes, such as the matching exercise that follows, and administer them to the class. The group that develops the quiz should provide a key and rationale for the correct responses.

Common or Proper Noun	Type of -Nym
1. e-sports	a. backronym
2. in-person class	b. neonym
3. Jay-Z	c. pseudonym
4. pom-pom	d. retronym
5. SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder)	e. tautonym

(KEY: 1-b; 2-d; 3-c; 4-e; 5-a)

8. If you work with older or gifted learners, have them host a “-Nym Fair” for your school or grade level. Invite individual students or pairs to select a type of *-nyms* to investigate with the goal of teaching others about that *-nym* and how it relates to our modern world (Refer to the lists of *-nyms* at the beginning and end of Part [Three](#) of the Viva Vocabulary! article “Jack and Jill Can Be Even More *Nym-ble*.”).

Hold the fair in an open area at the school and have students set up *-nym* stations/booths that offer dramatic presentations, interactive activities, and games (hands-on or digital) for visitors. Also use costumes, signage, and lots of relevant images to reinforce visitors’ learning about the various types of *-nyms*. (Thanks to the Lee County Reading Association for inspiring this idea.)

I hope you find these additional examples and teaching ideas helpful. Being *nym-ble* is fun for students and teachers and contributes to the development of a full and rich vocabulary.

\*As with previous Viva Vocabulary! articles, inclusion of any word, entity, concept, or example does not imply endorsement. This descriptive (as opposed to prescriptive) stance is aligned with that of modern dictionaries.

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