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Germany says two family names is enough

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0905/090507-family_names.html

Contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

THE ARTICLE

Germany's highest court has told a married couple they cannot combine their family names. Dentist Frieda Rosemarie Thalheim and her lawyer husband Hans-Peter Kunz-Hallstein wanted to join their surnames together. This would mean Frieda would have the triple-barrelled surname Thalheim-Kunz-Hallstein. The judge pointed to a 1993 law which says it is illegal for anyone to use more than two last names. The reason for this is that if a surname is made up of more than two family names, it becomes difficult to trace back someone's family history. After the decision, the couple said they were disappointed they could not link their names. Hans-Peter said: "We're married and we want to show it."

Double-barrelled names are very common in Germany. However, the country has very strict rules on family names. According to German law, married couples can choose to use their partner's surname, keep their own surname, or combine both names. If the couple decides to use both names, they must link them with a hyphen. Parents have a list of approved children's names to choose from. These names are in a guide book, the "International Handbook of Forenames". In this case, Frieda Rosemarie Thalheim argued the decision abused her personal rights. The judges said they wanted to stop a growing trend for "name chains". They said these lessened the impact of a name to do what it was supposed to do, which is to identify people.

WARM-UPS

1. FAMILY NAME: Walk around the class and talk to other students about family names. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

courts / married couples / surnames / tracing family history / being disappointed / strict rules / hyphens / guide books / personal rights / trends / identifying people

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. NAMES: Complete this table. Talk to your partner about what you wrote. Change partners and share what you heard.

Names	What you think of it / them and why
Your surname	
Your given name (s)	
Your country's name	
Your city's name	
Your car's name	
Your parents' names	

4. NAMES: Students A **strongly** believe people should be able to choose any name they want; Students B **strongly** believe there should be strict rules on names. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. NAMING THINGS: With your partner(s), agree on a new name for these things. Change partners and argue why your names are the best. Vote as a class on the best names.

- a new car
- a space rocket
- a new planet
- a new chocolate bar
- a new city in your country
- a new world language
- a new disease
- a new computer virus

6. SURNAME: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'surname'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. A German court stopped a couple's marriage because of their names. T / F
- b. Germany's laws forbid anyone to have more than two family names. T / F
- c. The reason for the law is to do with tracing family histories. T / F
- d. The couple totally understood the court's decision. T / F
- e. It is quite unusual for a German to have a double-barrelled name. T / F
- f. German law says a hyphen must link two linked surnames. T / F
- g. More and more people in Germany are choosing to have two surnames. T / F
- h. The judges said names are for people to express their creativity. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. combine | a. select |
| 2. husband | b. surnames |
| 3. last names | c. upset |
| 4. reasons | d. join |
| 5. disappointed | e. fashion |
| 6. strict | f. basis |
| 7. choose | g. tough |
| 8. approved | h. recognize |
| 9. trend | i. accepted |
| 10. identify | j. spouse |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Germany's highest | a. someone's family history |
| 2. triple-barrelled | b. a growing trend |
| 3. trace back | c. to show it |
| 4. the couple said they | d. rules on family names |
| 5. We're married and we want | e. with a hyphen |
| 6. Double-barrelled names are very | f. court |
| 7. the country has very strict | g. common in Germany |
| 8. they must link them | h. of a name |
| 9. they wanted to stop | i. surname |
| 10. lessened the impact | j. were disappointed |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Germany's _____ court has told a married couple they cannot combine their family names. Dentist Frieda Rosemarie Thalheim and her lawyer _____ Hans-Peter Kunz-Hallstein wanted to join their surnames together. This would mean Frieda would have the triple-barrelled _____ Thalheim-Kunz-Hallstein. The judge pointed to a 1993 law which says it is _____ for anyone to use more than two last names. The reason for this is that if a surname is _____ up of more than two family names, it becomes difficult to trace back someone's family history. After the _____, the couple said they were disappointed they could not _____ their names. Hans-Peter said: "We're married and we want to _____ it."

decision

illegal

husband

show

link

highest

surname

made

Double-barrelled names are very _____ in Germany. However, the country has very strict rules on family names. According to German law, married couples can _____ to use their partner's surname, keep their own surname, or _____ both names. If the couple decides to use both names, they must link them with a _____. Parents have a list of approved children's names to choose from. These names are in a guide book, the "International Handbook of Forenames". In this _____, Frieda Rosemarie Thalheim argued the decision abused her _____ rights. The judges said they wanted to stop a growing _____ for "name chains". They said these lessened the impact of a name to do what it was supposed to do, which is to _____ people.

case

trend

choose

identify

combine

common

personal

hyphen

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the gaps.

Germany's highest court has told a married couple _____ their family names. Dentist Frieda Rosemarie Thalheim and her lawyer husband Hans-Peter Kunz-Hallstein _____ surnames together. _____ Frieda would have the triple-barrelled surname Thalheim-Kunz-Hallstein. The judge pointed to a 1993 law which _____ anyone to use more than two last names. The reason for this is that if a surname is made _____ two family names, it becomes difficult to trace back someone's family history. After the decision, the couple said they were disappointed they could not link their names. Hans-Peter said: "We're married and _____."

Double-barrelled names _____ Germany. However, the country has very strict rules on family names. According to German law, married couples _____ their partner's surname, keep their own surname, or combine both names. If the couple decides to use both names, they _____ a hyphen. Parents have a list of approved children's names to choose from. These names are in a guide book, the "International Handbook of Forenames". In this case, Frieda Rosemarie Thalheim argued the _____ personal rights. The judges said they wanted to stop _____ for "name chains". They said these lessened the impact of a name to do what it was supposed to do, _____ people.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'family' and 'name'.

family	name
---------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• highest• join• pointed• trace• decision• show	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• common• choose• hyphen• case• trend• identify
--	--

STUDENT SURNAME SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about surnames in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

NAMES DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'surname'?
- c) What do you think about double-barrelled and triple-barrelled names?
- d) What do you think about your name?
- e) Do you agree with the German court's decision in this case?
- f) What do you know about the history of your family name?
- g) What happens if two people with double-barrelled names get married?
- h) Is it really a government's decision to decide on family names?
- i) Don't you think it's easier to stick to the traditional system of the woman taking the man's surname?
- j) How would you feel about giving up your surname after marriage?

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NAMES DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Are double-barrelled names common in your country?
- c) If you had to change your name, what new name would you choose?
- d) What names do you like and dislike and why?
- e) Are there any names you think should be banned?
- f) What do you think of people who choose strange names for their kids?
- g) Is the German court abusing Frieda's personal rights?
- h) Are you your name?
- i) What is a name supposed to do?
- j) What questions would you ask Frieda Rosemarie Thalheim?

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LANGUAGE

Germany's highest court has told a married couple they cannot (1) ____ their family names. Dentist Frieda Rosemarie Thalheim and her lawyer husband Hans-Peter Kunz-Hallstein wanted to join their surnames together. This would (2) ____ Frieda would have the triple-barrelled surname Thalheim-Kunz-Hallstein. The judge pointed (3) ____ a 1993 law which says it is illegal for anyone to use more than two last names. The reason for this is that if a surname is made (4) ____ of more than two family names, it becomes difficult to (5) ____ back someone's family history. After the decision, the couple said they were (6) ____ they could not link their names. Hans-Peter said: "We're married and we want to show it."

Double-barrelled names are very common in Germany. However, the country has very (7) ____ rules on family names. According to German law, married couples can choose to use their (8) ____ surname, keep their own surname, or combine both names. If the couple decides to use both names, they must link them with a hyphen. Parents have a list of (9) ____ children's names to choose from. These names are in a guide book, the "International Handbook of Forenames". In this case, Frieda Rosemarie Thalheim (10) ____ the decision abused her personal rights. The judges said they wanted to stop a growing (11) ____ for "name chains". They said these lessened the impact of a name to do what it was supposed to do, which is to (12) ____ people.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | (a) combines | (b) combined | (c) combination | (d) combine |
| 2. | (a) mean | (b) meaning | (c) meanie | (d) means |
| 3. | (a) on | (b) for | (c) to | (d) in |
| 4. | (a) with | (b) up | (c) on | (d) down |
| 5. | (a) traces | (b) trace | (c) traced | (d) tracing |
| 6. | (a) disappointment | (b) disappoints | (c) disappointed | (d) disappoint |
| 7. | (a) strict | (b) strictly | (c) stricter | (d) strictness |
| 8. | (a) partner | (b) partners' | (c) partners | (d) partner's |
| 9. | (a) approving | (b) approval | (c) approves | (d) approved |
| 10. | (a) argument | (b) argued | (c) arguing | (d) arguable |
| 11. | (a) trend | (b) trends | (c) trendy | (d) trendsetter |
| 12. | (a) identifies | (b) identification | (c) identify | (d) identified |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about your name. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. FAMILY NAMES: Make a poster about the traditional family names in your country. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. TRIPLE-BARRELLED: Write a magazine article about someone who wants a triple-barrelled name but is being stopped by their government. Include imaginary interviews with that person and the judge who made the decision not to allow a triple-barrelled name.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the German judges. Ask them three questions about their decision to ban triple-barrelled names. Give them three reasons why triple-barrelled names should be allowed. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F b. T c. T d. F e. F f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. combine | a. join |
| 2. husband | b. spouse |
| 3. last names | c. surnames |
| 4. reasons | d. basis |
| 5. disappointed | e. upset |
| 6. strict | f. tough |
| 7. choose | g. select |
| 8. approved | h. accepted |
| 9. trend | i. fashion |
| 10. identify | j. recognize |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Germany's highest | a. court |
| 2. triple-barrelled | b. surname |
| 3. trace back | c. someone's family history |
| 4. the couple said they | d. were disappointed |
| 5. We're married and we want | e. to show it |
| 6. Double-barrelled names are very | f. common in Germany |
| 7. the country has very strict | g. rules on family names |
| 8. they must link them | h. with a hyphen |
| 9. they wanted to stop | i. a growing trend |
| 10. lessened the impact | j. of a name |

GAP FILL:

Germany says 2 family names is enough

Germany's **highest** court has told a married couple they cannot combine their family names. Dentist Frieda Rosemarie Thalheim and her lawyer **husband** Hans-Peter Kunz-Hallstein wanted to join their surnames together. This would mean Frieda would have the triple-barrelled **surname** Thalheim-Kunz-Hallstein. The judge pointed to a 1993 law which says it is **illegal** for anyone to use more than two last names. The reason for this is that if a surname is **made** up of more than two family names, it becomes difficult to trace back someone's family history. After the **decision**, the couple said they were disappointed they could not **link** their names. Hans-Peter said: "We're married and we want to **show** it."

Double-barrelled names are very **common** in Germany. However, the country has very strict rules on family names. According to German law, married couples can **choose** to use their partner's surname, keep their own surname, or **combine** both names. If the couple decides to use both names, they must link them with a **hyphen**. Parents have a list of approved children's names to choose from. These names are in a guide book, the "International Handbook of Forenames". In this **case**, Frieda Rosemarie Thalheim argued the decision abused her **personal** rights. The judges said they wanted to stop a growing **trend** for "name chains". They said these lessened the impact of a name to do what it was supposed to do, which is to **identify** people.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d 2 - a 3 - c 4 - b 5 - b 6 - c 7 - a 8 - d 9 - d 10 - b 11 - a 12 - c