# What's in a name?

## ACTIVITIES

### Something Somethingsson?

In the Viking age, people were known by their first name and the first name of their father. Leif, son of Erik the Red, for instance, was known as Leif Eriksson – the son of Erik, while Erik was known as Erik Thorvaldsson – the son of Thorvald. If a man called Olaf had a daughter called Gudrid, she would become known as Gudrid Olafsdottir – the daughter of Olaf. This naming system is still in use today in Iceland. Perhaps because this produced many similar names, people were also known by a nickname that said something funny or terrifying about them: Erik the Red, Leif the Lucky, Aud the Wise, Ivar the Boneless or Eric Bloodaxe. Write up your proper Viking name, and think of a nickname that would be appropriate for you.

My Viking name is:

My nickname is:

### Your name in runes

In the Viking age, people wrote in runes, using a different alphabet than the one now in use in the western world. The main runic alphabet is known as the « futhark » alphabet, after its first six letters.

Use the grid below to write your real name, as well as your Viking name, in runic letters.

| a | b | c | d | e | f | g | h | i | j | k | l | m | n | o | p | q | r | s | t | u | v | w | x | y | z | th | ei | ng |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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My real name is:

My Viking name is:

## QUESTIONS

1. Do you know of any Viking words or names used in your region? Have you ever seen Viking names used on products or to name a place or company?
2. Which way of naming do you prefer: the one used for your name or the Viking way? Why?
3. Do you know words or names that are used in English today, but actually come from other languages? Can you name some examples?