

What's in a name? – Stage names



These individuals adopted stage names or pseudonyms that became much more famous than their original names. These individuals adopted their stage names or pseudonyms for a variety of reasons, including the desire to stand out, create a particular image, or simply to craft a more memorable, distinct or marketable identity in the public eye.

Musicians:

- **Freddie Mercury** - Farrokh Bulsara
- **Elton John** - Reginald Kenneth Dwight
- **Lady Gaga** - Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta
- **David Bowie** - David Robert Jones
- **Stevie Wonder** - Stevland Hardaway Judkins
- **Cher** - Cherilyn Sarkisian
- **Bob Dylan** - Robert Allen Zimmerman
- **Lana Del Rey** - Elizabeth Woolridge Grant
- **Alice Cooper** - Vincent Damon Furnier

- **Gene Simmons** - Chaim Witz
- **Iggy Pop** - James Newell Osterberg Jr.
- **P!nk** - Alecia Beth Moore
- **Axl Rose** - William Bruce Rose Jr.
- **Chuck Berry** - Charles Edward Anderson Berry
- **Moby** - Richard Melville Hall
- **Jay-Z** - Shawn Corey Carter
- **Drake** - Aubrey Drake Graham
- **The Weeknd** - Abel Makkonen Tesfaye
- **Slash** - Saul Hudson
- **Ringo Starr** - Richard Starkey
- **Debbie Harry** – Angela Tremble
- **Stevie Ray Vaughan** - Stephen Ray Vaughan
- **Bono** - Paul David Hewson
- **Sid Vicious** - John Simon Ritchie
- **Sting** - Gordon Matthew Thomas Sumner
- **Lorde** - Ella Marija Lani Yelich-O'Connor
- **Meat Loaf** - Marvin Lee Aday
- **Lil Nas X** - Montero Lamar Hill
- **Snoop Dogg** - Calvin Cordozar Broadus Jr.
- **Busta Rhymes** - Trevor George Smith Jr.
- **Marilyn Manson** - Brian Hugh Warner
- **Alicia Keys** - Alicia Augello Cook
- **Lemmy Kilmister** - Ian Fraser Kilmister
- **Nicki Minaj** - Onika Tanya Maraj
- **Kid Rock** - Robert James Ritchie
- **Shania Twain** - Eillean Regina Edwards
- **Tina Turner** - Anna Mae Bullock
- **Ice-T** - Tracy Lauren Marrow
- **Freddie Prinze Jr.** - Frederick James Prinze
- **Bonnie Tyler** - Gaynor Hopkins
- **Avril Lavigne** - Avril Ramona Lavigne
- **Eric Clapton** - Eric Patrick Clapp
- **Garth Brooks** - Troyal Garth Brooks
- **Annie Lennox** - Ann Griselda Lennox
- **Buddy Holly** - Charles Hardin Holley
- **Billy Idol** - William Michael Albert Broad
- **Mick Jagger** - Michael Philip Jagger
- **Fergie** - Stacy Ann Ferguson
- **Elvis Costello** - Declan Patrick MacManus
- **Pat Benatar** - Patricia Mae Andrzejewski

- **Prince** - Prince Rogers Nelson (real name but initially changed to a symbol)

Actors/Actresses:

- **Marilyn Monroe** - Norma Jeane Mortenson
- **Michael Caine** - Maurice Joseph Micklewhite Jr.
- **Natalie Portman** - Neta-Lee Hershlag
- **Judy Garland** - Frances Ethel Gumm
- **Kirk Douglas** - Issur Danielovitch Demsky
- **Jamie Foxx** - Eric Marlon Bishop
- **Whoopi Goldberg** - Caryn Elaine Johnson
- **Helen Mirren** - Ilyena Lydia Vasilievna Mironoff
- **Audrey Hepburn** - Audrey Kathleen Ruston
- **Meg Ryan** - Margaret Mary Emily Anne Hyra
- **Natalie Wood** - Natalia Nikolaevna Zakharenko
- **Greta Garbo** - Greta Lovisa Gustafsson
- **Vivien Leigh** - Vivian Mary Hartley
- **Jane Seymour** - Joyce Penelope Wilhelmina Frankenberg
- **Jean-Claude Van Damme** - Jean-Claude Camille François Van Varenberg
- **Michael B. Jordan** - Michael Bakari Jordan
- **Jonah Hill** - Jonah Hill Feldstein
- **Milla Jovovich** - Milica Bogdanovna Jovovich
- **Joan Rivers** - Joan Alexandra Molinsky
- **Sophia Loren** - Sofia Villani Scicolone
- **Emma Stone** - Emily Jean Stone
- **Demi Moore** - Demetria Gene Guynes
- **Martin Sheen** - Ramón Antonio Gerardo Estévez
- **Natalie Wood** - Natalia Nikolaevna Zakharenko
- **Ben Kingsley** - Krishna Pandit Bhanji
- **Winona Ryder** - Winona Laura Horowitz
- **Joan Crawford** - Lucille Fay LeSueur
- **Rock Hudson** - Roy Harold Scherer Jr.
- **Julie Andrews** - Julia Elizabeth Wells
- **Garry Shandling** - Garry Emmanuel Shandling
- **Alan Alda** - Alphonso Joseph D'Abruzzo
- **Carmen Electra** - Tara Leigh Patrick

- **Channing Tatum** - Channing Matthew Tatum
- **Woody Harrelson** - Woodrow Tracy Harrelson
- **Marion Cotillard** - Marion Cotillard (real name, but slightly altered for stage)
- **Meg Ryan** - Margaret Mary Emily Anne Hyra
- **Toni Collette** - Antonia Collette
- **Michael Keaton** - Michael John Douglas
- **Diane Lane** - Diane Colleen Lane
- **Faye Dunaway** - Dorothy Faye Dunaway
- **Cary Grant** - Archibald Alec Leach
- **Gene Wilder** - Jerome Silberman
- **John Wayne** - Marion Robert Morrison
- **Sophia Loren** - Sofia Villani Scicolone
- **Jamie Lee Curtis** - Jamie Lee Haden-Guest
- **John Legend** - John Roger Stephens
- **Halle Berry** - Maria Halle Berry
- **Keanu Reeves** - Keanu Charles Reeves
- **Christopher Walken** - Ronald Walken
- **Tom Hardy** - Edward Thomas Hardy

Celebrities/Other:

- **John Wayne** - Marion Robert Morrison
- **Stevie Nicks** - Stephanie Lynn Nicks
- **Tom Cruise** - Thomas Cruise Mapother IV
- **Vin Diesel** - Mark Sinclair
- **Tiger Woods** - Eldrick Tont Woods
- **Bruno Mars** - Peter Gene Hernandez
- **Gigi Hadid** - Jelena Noura Hadid
- **Brad Pitt** - William Bradley Pitt
- **Larry King** - Lawrence Harvey Zeiger
- **Ricky Martin** - Enrique Martín Morales
- **Larry David** - Lawrence Gene David
- **Mandy Moore** - Amanda Leigh Moore
- **Jackie Chan** - Chan Kong-sang
- **Anne Hathaway** - Anne Jacqueline Hathaway
- **George Michael** - Georgios Kyriacos Panayiotou

- **Betty White** - Betty Marion White (full name rather than a stage name)
- **Madonna** - Madonna Louise Ciccone
- **Joaquin Phoenix** - Joaquín Rafael Bottom
- **Tilda Swinton** - Katherine Matilda Swinton
- **Tiger Woods** - Eldrick Tont Woods
- **Ice Cube** - O'Shea Jackson Sr.
- **Whoopi Goldberg** - Caryn Elaine Johnson
- **Reese Witherspoon** - Laura Jeanne Reese Witherspoon
- **Hulk Hogan** - Terry Gene Bollea
- **Bo Derek** - Mary Cathleen Collins
- **Diane Keaton** - Diane Hall
- **Hulk Hogan** - Terry Gene Bollea
- **Jamie Lee Curtis** - Jamie Lee Haden-Guest
- **Charlie Sheen** - Carlos Irwin Estévez
- **Portia de Rossi** - Amanda Lee Rogers
- **Tina Fey** - Elizabeth Stamatina Fey
- **Sigourney Weaver** - Susan Alexandra Weaver
- **Spike Lee** - Shelton Jackson Lee
- **Heywood "Woody" Allen** - Allan Stewart Konigsberg
- **Miley Cyrus** - Destiny Hope Cyrus
- **Olivia Wilde** - Olivia Jane Cockburn
- **Oprah Winfrey** - Orpah Gail Winfrey
- **Hulk Hogan** - Terry Gene Bollea
- **Shaquille O'Neal** - Shaquille Rashaun O'Neal
- **Michael Kors** - Karl Anderson Jr.
- **Joan Collins** - Joan Henrietta Collins
- **Larry King** - Lawrence Harvey Zeiger
- **Calvin Klein** - Richard Klein (changed first name, family name stayed the same)
- **Marlon Brando** - Marlon Brando Jr.
- **Greer Garson** - Eileen Evelyn Greer Garson
- **Boris Karloff** - William Henry Pratt

Source: Chat GPT