

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Who would have thought your parents could have had such an influence on your understanding of Greek? But if you are lucky enough to be called Ella, Sue or Lenny [German translation: Boris or Stephanie] they have given you a head start. Daphne, Sophia and Zoe are indeed Greek names and mean laurel, wisdom and life respectively. But your name may also just happen to mean something in Greek.

I know it is not much of a start, but it will be the one word you will remember long after your holiday is over.

Whenever you been on the beach you must have thought every young girl was called Ella, as mothers try frantically to control their female offspring. Things don't seem that different from home when you realise that "ela" is the informal way to say (or shout) "come here!" But at least you didn't embarrass yourself by showing your ignorance in writing, as one couple did at the holiday apartments where we were staying.

"We had a wonderful time here," they wrote in the guest book, "and we would like to say a special thank you to our maid Ella, who worked so hard." Poor 'Ella' was in fact called Vasso, and she spent every day running around obeying the proprietor's barked commands.

Sue is another popular 'name' in Greek but it is spelt "sou" and means "to you" as in "yeia sou" an informal greeting that literally means "health to you". But if you are greeting more than one person or anyone older than you, you should use "yeia sas", to avoid any unhealthy glances.

As for the men, I had often wondered why Lenny was not a popular name in Greece – until my first Greek lesson when my teacher asked me my name. "Pos se lene?" (or literally "How do they call you) she said. Now, it could have been rather a long-winded exchange had I answered "Me lene Lenny". You see what I mean?

Other examples include Kathy (kathe: every), Nicky (niki: victory), Emma (ema: blood), Mary (mehri: until), Timmy (timi: price), Boris (boreis: you are able), Harry (hari: charm) and Andy (ande: go!)

Now if you see a couple wandering around your resort in total confusion that will be Ella and Andy not knowing whether they are coming or going!