



# 50 False Friends

False friends are words in two languages that look or sound similar, but differ in meaning. To help you avoid common mistranslations we have selected 50 of the most common false friends.

| <b>You mean...</b>                 | <b>You should say...</b> | <b>Don't say...</b> | <b>because it means...</b> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| actual/actually                    | tatsächlich/eigentlich   | aktuell             | current                    |
| agent (comm.)                      | Vertreter                | Agent               | spy                        |
| also                               | auch                     | also                | so, therefore              |
| become                             | werden                   | bekommen            | to get/receive             |
| to be blue                         | traurig sein             | blau sein           | to be drunk                |
| boot (car, BE)/<br>boot (footwear) | Kofferraum/Stiefel       | Boot                | boat                       |
| brave                              | tapfer                   | brav                | To be well-behaved         |
| brief                              | kurz                     | Brief               | letter                     |
| caution                            | Vorsicht                 | Kaution             | deposit (payment)          |
| chips (BE)                         | Pommes Frites            | Chips               | crisps (BE)                |
| consequently                       | folglich                 | konsequent          | consistent/consistently    |
| craft                              | Handwerk                 | Kraft               | strength                   |
| critic                             | Kritiker                 | Kritik              | criticism                  |
| delicate                           | empfindlich              | delikat             | delicious                  |
| eventually                         | schließlich              | eventuell           | possible/possibly          |
| fart                               | Furz                     | Fahrt               | trip/journey               |
| fast                               | schnell                  | fast                | almost                     |
| form (to fill in)                  | Formular                 | Formel              | formula                    |
| gymnasium                          | Turnhalle/ Fitnessstudio | Gymnasium           | grammar school             |
| guilty                             | schuldig                 | gültig              | valid                      |
| half four (time/BE)                | halb fünf (Uhrzeit)      | halb vier           | half past three            |
| handy                              | praktisch/nützlich       | Handy               | mobile phone               |
| hardly                             | kaum                     | hart                | hard                       |
| interest (finan.)                  | Zinsen                   | Interesse           | interest in something      |
| lager                              | Bier                     | Lager               | warehouse/stockroom        |
| map                                | (Straßen/Land) Karte     | Mappe               | folder                     |
| meaning                            | Bedeutung                | Meinung             | opinion                    |
| menu                               | Speisekarte              | Menü                | set meal (but menu for PC) |
| murder                             | Mord                     | Mörder              | murderer                   |
| note                               | Notiz                    | Note                | mark/grade (school)        |
| To be patient                      | geduldig                 | Patient             | patient (in hospital)      |
| pension                            | Rente                    | Pension             | guesthouse                 |
| personal                           | persönlich               | Personal            | staff/personnel            |
| photograph                         | Foto/Bild                | Fotograf            | photographer               |
| Policy (insur.)                    | Police                   | Politik             | political policy           |
| receipt                            | Quittung                 | Rezept              | recipe/prescription        |
| rent                               | Miete                    | Rente               | pension                    |
| rock                               | Stein/Fels               | Rock                | skirt                      |
| sea                                | Meer                     | See                 | lake                       |
| self-conscious                     | schüchtern               | selbstbewusst       | self-confident             |
| sensible                           | Vernünftig               | sensibel            | sensitive                  |
| stock                              | Vorrat                   | Stock               | stick                      |
| wide                               | breit                    | weit                | far                        |
| while                              | während                  | weil                | because                    |
| Where?                             | Wo?                      | Wer?                | Who?                       |
| Who?                               | Wer?                     | Wo?                 | Where?                     |
| undertaker                         | Bestatter                | Unternehmer         | entrepreneur               |
| warehouse                          | Lager                    | Warenhaus           | department store           |
| zimmer frame                       | Rollator (Gehhilfe)      | Zimmer              | room                       |