



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.

You mean...	You should say...	Don't say...	because it means...
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)/ 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