

## #2: A friend by any other name



Because English is part of the Germanic family of languages, German>English translators are faced with a particularly high number of false cognates, i.e. words in one language that are identical or nearly identical to words in another language, but do not mean the same thing. We affectionately call them faux amis, false friends, or falsche Freunde. A few examples:

- aktuell/actual
- bekommen/become
- Labor/labor
- Rat/rat
- so /also

As any web search will demonstrate, the list goes on and on. The best advice for dealing with these “friends” is to be aware of them, know them, watch for them. Along the lines of: “Keep your friends close, but your false friends closer.”

Can you identify the correct translation for the false cognates below?

- |    |             |   |                    |
|----|-------------|---|--------------------|
| 1  | das Gift    | A | maybe, possibly    |
| 2  | mobben      | B | to touch           |
| 3  | tasten      | C | label              |
| 4  | der Smoking | D | up-to-date         |
| 5  | fast        | E | dinner jacket, tux |
| 6  | hissen      | F | to harass, bully   |
| 7  | aktuell     | G | brothel            |
| 8  | eventuell   | H | almost             |
| 9  | das Etikett | I | poison             |
| 10 | der Puff    | J | to hoist           |

Don't let all this falseness fool you; there are also a great number of true cognates:

- Aktiv/active
- Diskussion/discussion
- Hunger/hunger
- Modern/modern
- Populär/popular

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