

English-German Cognates

Many words in English, Spanish, French, and German have common roots in Latin. For example, the words father in English, padre in Spanish, pater in French, and vater in German are all descendants of the Latin word pater. Cognates are pairs of words from different languages that have similar spellings and meanings based on such a shared ancestry. Recognizing cognates can help students rapidly increase their understanding of English vocabulary. Not all word pairs that are spelled alike in two languages have the same or similar meaning. These 'false friends', or falsche Freunde, can lead the language learner astray. For example, in German fast means 'almost', fade is 'boring', Fabrik means 'factory', a Catcher is a 'wrestler', a Chef is the 'department head', and a billion is a 'trillion'.

To help with spelling, students should know some of the common equivalent suffixes and related spelling patterns. For example, a cognate that ends in -ct in English often ends in -kt in German, as in architect and architekt.

English	German	English	German
-y	-ie	-ct	-kt
-le	-el	-ive	-iv
-k	-ch	-d	-t
-ic	-isch	-sh	-sch
-y	-g	c- or ch-	k-
-mb	-mm	f-	v
gh	ch	th	d
f	b	v	b

English	German	English	German	English	German
acceptable	akzeptabel	emblem	Emblem	museum	Museum
active	aktiv	end	Ende	music	Musik
address	Adresse	energy	Energie	name	Name
affair	Affäre	Europe	Europa	nation	Nation
agent	Agent	exact	exakt	nature	Natur
alcohol	Alkohol	exclusive	exklusiv	new	neu
algebra	Algebra	experiment	Experiment	November	November
all	alle	explosion	Explosion	object	Objekt
allergy	Allergie	fable	Fabel	October	Oktober
alphabet	Alphabet	fact	Fakt	officer	Offizier
analysis	Analyse	factor	Faktor	often	oft
anatomy	Anatomie	false	falsch	omelet	Omelett
apple	Apfel	family	Familie	orchestra	Orchester
April	April	fan	Fan	organization	Organisation
aquarium	Aquarium	fan club	Fanklub	panic	Panik
archaeology	Archäologie	farmhouse	Farmhaus	paper	Papier
architect	Architekt	father	Vater	park	Park
argument	Argument	figure	Figur	partner	Partner
arm	Arm	finger	Finger	passive	passiv
astronaut	Astronaut	fish	Fisch	pause	Pause
athlete	Athlet	fitness	Fitness	person	Person
atlas	Atlas	fossil	Fossil	phonograph	Phonograph
August	August	friend	Freund	picnic	Picknick
auto	Auto	frost	Frost	plan	Plan
baby	Baby	gallon	Gallone	planet	Planet
bakery	Bäckerie	gang	Gang	popular	popular
ball	Ball	garage	Garage	press	Presse

balloon	Ballon	garden	Garten	professor	Professor
banana	Banane	general	generell	program	Programm
band	Band	generation	Generation	puzzle	Puzzle
bank	Bank	glass	Glas	quiz	Quiz
bar	Bar	God	Gott	regular	regulär
bar	Barre	gold	Gold	religion	Religion
barrier	Barriere	gymnastics	Gymnastik	respect	Respekt
beer	Bier	hamburger	Hamburger	result	Resultat
begin	beginnen	hand	Hand	rock concert	Rockkonzert
best	besten	hello	hallo	rock group	Rockgruppe
best	bester	here	hier	sandal	Sandale
biology	Biologie	hobby	Hobby	send	senden
blizzard	Blizzard	hotel	Hotel	sensation	Sensation
blond	blond	humor	Humor	September	September
book	Buch	hundred	hundert	shock	Schock
bus	Bus	idea	Idee	siren	Sirene
butter	Butter	ideal	ideal	sit	sitzen
cable	Kabel	idol	Idol	situation	Situation
cafe	Cafe	illustrate	illustrieren	social	sozial
calendar	Kalender	industry	Industrie	sock	Socke
camera	Kamera	instrument	Instrument	sofa	Sofa
canal	Kanal	intelligent	intelligent	sport	Sport
candidate	Kandidat	international	international	state	Staat
carrot	Karotte	January	Januar	talent	Talent
cat	Katze	jazz	Jazz	taxi	Taxi
centimeter	Zentimeter	jeans	Jeans	tea	Tee
chance	Chance	journalist	Journalist	telephone	Telefon
chocolate	Schokolade	justice	Justiz	test	Test
cigarette	Zigarette	ketchup	Ketchup	theater	Theater
clown	Clown	learn	lernen	theory	Theorie
club	Club	legal	legal	ton	Tonne
comedy	komödie	lemonade	Limonade	tourist	Tourist
computer	Computer	license	Lizenz	tunnel	Tunnel
concert	Konzert	local	lokal	unconventional	unkonventionell
conservative	konservativ	magazine	Magazin	under	unter
control	kontrolle	make	machen	uniform	Uniform
cost	kosten	manager	Manager	university	Universität
creative	kreativ	mango	Mango	vampire	Vampir
curve	Kurve	market	Markt	variable	variable
December	Dezember	maximum	Maximum	verb	Verb
decimal	Dezimal	medicine	Medizin	vibration	Vibration
design	Design	meter	Meter	video camera	Videokamera
diamond	Diamant	microscope	Mikroskop	vision	Vision
director	Direktor	million	Million	volleyball	Volleyball
discipline	Disziplin	minimum	Minimum	waltz	Walzer
discussion	Diskussion	minus	minus	warm	warm
dumb	dumm	minute	Minute	west	Westen
e-mail	E-Mail	mission	Mission	wild	wild
effective	effectiv	mobile	mobil	Winter	Winter
elastic	elastisch	moment	Moment	work	Werk
electron	Elektron	monster	Monster	yacht	Yacht
elegance	Eleganz	moral	Moral	zebra	Zebra
elegant	elegant	mother	Mutter	zenith	Zenit
element	Element	motor	Motor	zigzag	zickzack
elephant	Elefant				