Cognates: Stolen Words

Over 2000 years ago in the Western part of the planet, a group of people called Romans became very powerful. They started in the city of Rome in the country we now call Italy, and conquered more and more and more and more of the lands around them. They ruled the world from the top of Africa up through England.



The Romans spoke Latin. In this map of the Roman Empire, the country names are written in Latin. What is the Latin word for Italy? _____
What is the Latin word for Germany? _____
What is the Latin word for Spain? _____

When the Romans defeated a country, they moved in and started speaking Latin. Soon the defeated groups started mixing Latin with their languages. However, the farther they were from Rome, the less their languages sounded like Latin. Which language do you think probably sounds most like Latin? _____ Why? _____

Today, Latin is dead, but many languages still use Latin words. For example, what was the Latin word for Africa? _____ What was the Latin word for Europe? _____ England was one of the last countries to develop its own language. Instead of making up totally new words for everything, they stole words from the languages around them, especially the Latin or Roman(ce) languages, like Spanish and French. Really, though, English stole from everyone: Germans, Mandarin Chinese, Native Americans. In fact, we still steal new words when we need them! Think about "avatar" from Sanskrit and "karaoke" from Japanese.

We call these stolen words **COGNATES**.

Here's the rule: If 2 words from different languages SOUND almost the same, they are probably cognates.

Are these pairs of words cognates?
Write "cognates" or "not cognates" next to each pair.

English friend/Spanish amigo _____
English chocolate/Korean chokollit _____
English music/Russian muzyka _____
English speak/Ukrainian hovoryty _____
English acid/Turkish asit _____
English school/Portuguese escola _____
English computer/Burmese kwanpyauutar _____
English helicopter/Arabic hilikubtar _____
English telephone/Somali telefoonka _____
English television/Hindi teleevijan _____

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THREE TYPES of cognates



Most cognates are not spelled the same. They **SOUND** the same. To decide if two words from different languages are cognates, you must listen to them.

What do you need to do if you want to tell if 2 words are cognates? You need to _____!

These words are cognates with English words. **Sort them into the correct categories.**

school/Spanish escuela action/Turkish aksyon jungle/Hindi jangal
president/Russian president humor/Ukrainian humor
map/Portuguese mapa line/Burmese line artist/French artiste
sandwich/Korean saendeuwichi captain/Arabic qob'tan
Africa/Somali Afrika coffee/Chinese kafei festival/Haitian festival
bread/Marathi breda mango/Kyrgyz mango

Spelled the Same	Spelled Slightly Differently	Spelled Very Differently
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

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