

Word Detective: Origins of Words

Etymology · Answer Key · 20 Questions

1. The word 'alphabet' comes from the names of the first two letters of which ancient language?

- A) Greek**
- B) Latin
- C) Egyptian
- D) Hebrew

2. The word 'school' comes from a Greek word that originally meant what?

- A) Work
- B) Play
- C) Leisure time**
- D) Writing

3. The word 'dinosaur' means 'terrible lizard'. Which language do these root words come from?

- A) French
- B) Greek**
- C) Spanish
- D) German

4. The word 'sandwich' is named after an Earl who lived in which country?

- A) England**
- B) France
- C) Italy
- D) Canada

5. The word 'banana' is believed to have come from which language family?

- A) West African**
- B) Scandinavian
- C) Inuit
- D) Celtic

6. 'Robot' comes from a word that means what?

- A) Machine
- B) Friend
- C) Forced labor**
- D) Helper

7. The word 'pajamas' originally comes from a word in which language that means 'leg garment'?

A) Hindi/Persian

B) Latin

C) Japanese

D) Russian

8. The English word 'cookie' comes from a Dutch word that means what?

A) Sweet treat

B) Little cake

C) Baked good

D) Crispy snack

9. The word 'umbrella' comes from a Latin word meaning what?

A) Sunscreen

B) Rain protector

C) Little shade

D) Cloud

10. The word 'jungle' comes from a Sanskrit word that means what?

A) Rainforest

B) Wilderness

C) Tall trees

D) Greenery

11. The word 'ketchup' likely comes from a word in which language for a type of fish sauce?

A) Chinese

B) Arabic

C) Portuguese

D) Turkish

12. The word 'balloon' comes from an Italian word that means what?

A) Big air

B) Round toy

C) Big ball

D) Floating object

13. The word 'boss' comes from a Dutch word that means what?

- A) Leader
- B) Master**
- C) Teacher
- D) Strong one

14. The word 'shampoo' comes from a Hindi word that means what?

- A) To wash
- B) To press/massage**
- C) To foam
- D) To clean hair

15. The word 'cereal' is named after Ceres, who was a goddess of what in Roman mythology?

- A) Agriculture**
- B) The stars
- C) The ocean
- D) The moon

16. The word 'piano' is short for a longer Italian phrase meaning what?

- A) Soft and loud**
- B) Fast music
- C) Heavy keys
- D) Wooden instrument

17. The word 'vampire' is believed to have come from which part of the world?

- A) Eastern Europe**
- B) South America
- C) Australia
- D) Antarctica

18. The word 'avocado' comes from an Aztec word that means what?

- A) Green fruit
- B) Testicle**
- C) Soft skin
- D) Creamy food

19. The word 'candy' comes from a word meaning what?

- A) Sugar cane**
- B) Honey
- C) Sweet surprise
- D) Boiled fruit

20. The word 'safari' comes from an Arabic word that simply means what?

- A) Journey**
- B) Animal
- C) Adventure
- D) Heat