

Word Detective: Origins of Words

Etymology · Practice Test · 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