French, Portuguese and English

1. Look at the stories in French and Portuguese. Underline the similar words in the Portuguese version. The first one is done for you. How many cognates did you find?
   Answer: See underlined words below. There are 18 or more (depending on what you count as an easy-to-see cognate).

FRENCH

La semaine dernière, sur le chemin de l'école, j'ai rencontré une très grande tortue verte."Bonjour!", a déclaré la tortue. "Les tortues ne peuvent pas parler!" m'écriai-je. "Je le peux", répondit la tortue. "J'ai des pouvoirs spéciaux. Monte sur mon dos et nous volerons jusqu'à Paris. "O.K.", lui dis-je," mais nous devons être de retour à temps pour le dîner. "

PORTUGUESE

Na <u>semana</u> passada, a <u>caminho</u> da <u>escola</u>, eu conheci uma <u>grande</u> <u>tartaruga</u> <u>verde</u>. "<u>Bom</u> dia!", disse a tartaruga. "As tartarugas não podem falar!", exclamei. "Eu <u>posso</u>", <u>respondeu</u> a tartaruga. "Eu tenho <u>poderes</u> <u>especiais</u>. Suba nas minhas costas e vamos <u>voar</u> para <u>Paris</u>. "<u>Ok</u>", eu <u>disse</u>, "<u>mas</u> temos que <u>estar</u> de volta a <u>tempo</u> para o jantar."

ENGLISH

Last week on the way to <u>school</u>, I met a very <u>large</u> green <u>turtle</u>. "Good morning!" said the turtle. "Turtles can't talk!" I exclaimed. "I can," answered the turtle. "I have <u>special</u> <u>powers</u>. Get on my back and we'll fly to <u>Paris</u>." "<u>OK</u>," I said, "but we have to be back in time for <u>dinner</u>."

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2. Now look at the French and English versions. Can you find any cognates? Underline them in the English version.
   Answer: See underlined words above.
   Notes: Although French *école* and English *school* may not look so similar, they stem from the same Latin root. *OK* is really a borrowed Americanism, rather than a historical cognate. You can mention that languages continually borrow new words from other languages.

3. Which language do you think is easier for French speakers to read, Portuguese or English? Why?
   Answer: Opinions may vary but there are clearly more cognates in Portuguese (and other Latin-based languages like Spanish, Romanian, and Italian).

4. Can you find <u>two</u> words that are exactly the same in French, English and Portuguese?

   Answers: ......Paris.........   ....OK...........

5. Can you think of other French words that we use in English? The first one is an example.

    Given example : *orange*

    Some cognates match exactly (*orange, table, nation, page, sport*, many others).
    Point out that they need not be a perfect match. Words like *mustard* and *dinner* are cognates too.

    If students are having difficulty, give them a topic such as food, jobs, or school-related words. Some examples:
    Food : *dessert, restaurant, fruit, banana, mayonnaise, mango, spaghetti, chocolate, coffee*
    Jobs : *mechanic, musician, farmer, engineer, pilot, policeman, pharmacist, farmer, artist*
    School-related : *class, lesson, paper, verb, adjective, student, mathematics, history, professor*

6. Can you think of any English words that we use in French?

    Given example : *challenge*
    Other examples : *internet, fan, hockey, tennis* (and other sports), *cute, fun, chum, jeans, cowboy, star*

    Note : Sometimes the meanings of English words change when they are borrowed into French. For instance, *chum* means any friend in English (not boyfriend). French speakers may refer to *un parking*, but English speakers would call it a parking lot. Pointing this out to the students is an option, depending on their level and interest.

7. Why does English have lots of French words?

    Answer : Because of the Norman Conquest.

    Remind students of the William the Conqueror story. English speakers had to interact with the French-speaking Norman ruling class. This led to the borrowing of thousands of French words into English. There is also another reason : Both English and French have borrowed extensively from Latin.

8. Why does French have some English words?

    Answer : The influence of American culture – TV, movies, pop music, etc. -- is probably the main reason. *OK* is an example of an American borrowing that appears in many languages.

    Note : a useful resource for checking the origins of English words is the Online Etymology Dictionary at http://www.etymonline.com/