**False Friends**

Sometimes English words look like French words, but the meanings are different. They are false friends. Translate the underlined false friends into French.

Example: William’s army met King Harold’s soldiers near Hastings.
Translation: _a rencontré_

Answers:
1. William and his men cut Harold’s soldiers into pieces!
   *morceaux* (French _pièce_ = English _coin, dollar_)
2. Harold’s soldiers threw _axes_ and other objects down at them.
   *des haches* (French _axe_ = English _axis, line_)
3. Guillaume de Normandie didn’t actually speak English.
   *vraiment* (French _actuellement_ = English _now, currently_)
4. The farmer _gave_ the king a chicken.
   *a donné* (French _gaver_ = English _stuff, force feed_)
5. There are some books about the battle in the _library._
   *bibliothèque* (French _librairie_ = English _bookstore_)
6. I think you dropped a _coin._
   *une pièce de monnaie* (French _coin_ = English _corner_)
7. I can see it under your _chair._
   *chaise* (French _chair_ = English _flesh_)
8. I know a _song* about William the Conqueror.
   *chanson* (French _songer_ = English _think, dream_)

*There is a song available at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmjiZ_isso](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmjiZ_isso). See the Supplemental Activities file for a cloze version of the song text.

**Good friend or false friend?**

Draw ☀ or ☹ to show whether the word is a good friend or a false friend.
Example: ☀ William the Conqueror won his _crown_ at the battle.

1. ☀ King Harold had a big _advantage_ over the Normans.
2. ☹ Harold’s army was bigger _but_ they could only fight on foot.
3. ☹ He _commanded_ his soldiers to fight hard.
4. ☀ His _spouse_ and his children were sad when he died.
5. ☁ The victorious Normans had a big _feast_ in London.
6. ☁ The cooks put _herbs_ on the beef.
7. ☀ The cooks and the servants liked to _chat_ in the kitchen.

Note: Students can be asked to translate the underlined words into French, as in the first exercise. This highlights the falseness of the false friends.

*Although English _spouse_ and French _époux/épouse_ may not look so similar, they are cognates.*
Justin’s story

This story was written by a Quebec intensive learner of English in Year 6. It is a good story but it has too many French cognates and false friends. Can you replace the underlined words to make the English sound more natural?

Note: French-speaking learners of English sometimes use cognates that are actually correct in terms of meaning but are stylistically inappropriate (too formal). This activity using a real learner text highlights the problem.

Once upon a time, a boy named Justin wanted to be a policeman. He wanted to see some policeman at work, so he asked his mother, “Can I go to the police station and watch?” His mother always (1) responded, "No, Justin. We can't do that.” He asked his mother many times and but she always (2) refused. (3)“Excuse me,” she said, “but it’s not (4) correct. The police don’t have time to show little boys their work.”

One month later, it was Justin's birthday. Justin's mother secretly phoned two policemen that were her old friends. When they (5) arrived, she told the policemen to (6) enter. Then she called Justin. "I have a surprise for you, Justin!" When Justin saw the policemen, he was scared. He thought something (7) grave had (8) arrived. But the policemen were (9) gentle. One said, "Hi Justin! Do you want to come with us?" Justin said "Of course!" He was (10) ecstatic. Fifteen years later, Justin became a policeman himself.

Suggested answers:

1. answered
2. said no
3. I’m sorry
4. right
5. came /came to the door
6. come in
7. bad
8. happened
9. nice, friendly
10. very happy

Can you think of any other examples of false friends?