Troublesome Translations

For native German speakers, finding the right translation, from German to English or vice versa, can sometimes be a challenge. Here are some examples to help you figure out how to say certain words. And to make sure you keep yourself out of trouble.

Distinct or distinctive?

There is a *distinct* difference between *distinct* and *distinctive*, despite them often being confused.

Distinct means easily separable or distinguishable from other things, strong and definite, or easy to see. For instance, 'The book has three *distinct* parts.'

Something that is *distinctive* has a unique feature or a characteristic, typical quality. You could talk about, for example, the *distinctive* voice of Bob Dylan or the *distinctive* leaves of the oak tree.

1. This wine has a more _____ flavour than that one. (Dieser Wein hat einen ausgeprägteren Geschmack als jener.)

2. We had the _____ impression that they were lying to us about their intentions. (Wir hatten den deutlichen Eindruck, dass sie uns wegen ihrer Absichten angelogen haben.)

3. A flight cancellation is a _____ possibility in this stormy weather. (Eine Flugannullierung ist bei diesem stürmischen Wetter eine eindeutige Möglichkeit.)

4. Chickpeas have a _____, delicious, and nutty flavour. (Kichererbsen haben einen unverwechselbaren, köstlichen und nussigen Geschmack.)

The solutions are on page 35.

Clothes or cloths?

Don't confuse *clothes* with *cloths* when getting dressed in the morning!

Clothes are something you wear, such as jeans, shirts, and jumpers. For example, 'Just a moment, let me change my *clothes*.'

Cloths, meanwhile, are pieces of material used for cleaning or other purposes. For instance, 'I have a few pieces of *cloth* that I use to clean the kitchen.'

1. I see you've spilt some milk, Julia. Why don't you get a damp _____ from the kitchen and clear it up? (Ich sehe, du hast etwas Milch verschüttet, Julia. Warum holst du nicht ein feuchtes Tuch aus der Küche und wischst es weg?)

2. She placed a cool, damp _____ over her face to try to cool down. (Sie legte sich ein kühles, feuchtes Tuch über das Gesicht und versuchte so, sich abzukühlen.)

3. Her normally sleek hair was knotted and her _____ were wrinkled from a night of restless sleep. (Ihr, normalerweise, glattes Haar war verknotet und ihre Kleidung war zerknittert von einer Nacht mit unruhigem Schlaf.)

4. Pack some warm _____, a hat, and gloves for the walk tomorrow as the weather is meant to be bitterly cold. (Packen Sie für die morgige Wanderung warme Kleidung, eine Mütze und Handschuhe ein, da das Wetter bitterkalt werden soll.)