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 it. And to make sure you keep yourself out of trouble.

lassen

When it comes to useful verbs in German, *lassen* is at the top of the list. The question is, how do you translate it to English in its many different contexts: *have, make, let* or *leave/left*?

Use the exercises below to test your own knowledge.

1. Mutter ließ uns immer das Geschirr abwaschen.

Mother always_____ us do the dishes.

2. Lass mich bitte meinen Satz zu Ende bringen.

Please_____me finish my sentence.

3. Sie möchte einen Moment in Ruhe gelassen werden.

She wants to be_____ alone for a moment.

4. Wir sollten das Wohnzimmer streichen lassen.

We should_____the living room painted.

5. Sie können die Tür schon offen lassen.

You can_____the door open.

6. Sie sollten ihn den Bericht neu schreiben lassen.

You should_____him re-write the report.

lustig: to be fun or be funny?

It can be easy to incorrectly translate the German adjective *lustig* into English, as it basically has two forms: to be fun (enjoyable) or to be funny, (humorous/strange).

Test yourself with the sentences below to see if it's fun or funny.

1. Sometimes it's_____being the boss.

no fun / not funny

2. I hope you have a lot of_____ at the party.

fun / funny

3. No one thought his comment was very_____.

fun / funny.

4. That's a very_____way of looking at things.

fun / funny

5. Don't you think this beer tastes a bit_____?

fun / funny

6. We always have a lot of_____when we go out with Bob and Carol.

fun /funny