



## Mini-lesson 45: Common False Friends & Confusing Words (English–Portuguese)

### Objective

To help students recognize and understand **false cognates**—words that look similar in English and Portuguese but have different meanings—and to distinguish them from true cognates.

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### Explanation

**False friends** (also known as **false cognates**) are words that appear similar in both English and Portuguese but have **different meanings**. These can cause confusion when learning or translating.

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## ⚠ 20 Common False Friends

Portuguese Word	Looks Like (in English)	But Actually Means
pasta	paste	folder / file
pretender	pretend	to intend
assistir	assist	to watch
colégio	college	high school
atualmente	actually	currently
enrolar	enroll	to stall / twist
parente	parent	relative
educado	educated	polite
recordar	record	to remember
responder	to respond	to answer
esquisito	exquisite	weird / strange
molestar	molest	to bother
oficina	office	workshop / garage
prevenir	to prevent	to warn / notify
salada	salad	correct (BUT: "salada de frutas" = fruit salad)
sopa	soap	soup
puxe	push	pull
balcão	balcony	counter
fabricar	fabricate	to manufacture
exposição	exposition	exhibit



## ? 10 Confusing Pairs (English ↔ Portuguese)

English Word	Often Confused With	Why It's Confusing
library	livraria	A library is for borrowing books; a <i>livraria</i> is a bookstore.
push	puxe	"Push" = empurrar; "Puxe" = pull
parents	parentes	"Parents" = pais; <i>Parentes</i> = relatives
realize	realizar	"Realize" = to become aware; <i>Realizar</i> = to carry out
actually	atualmente	"Actually" = na verdade; <i>Atualmente</i> = currently
sympathetic	simpático	"Sympathetic" = shows compassion; <i>Simpático</i> = nice
sensible	sensível	"Sensible" = practical; <i>Sensível</i> = sensitive
pushy	puxado	"Pushy" = aggressive; <i>Puxado</i> = heavy/demanding
eventually	eventualmente	"Eventually" = finally; <i>Eventualmente</i> = occasionally
lecture	leitura	"Lecture" = aula / palestra; <i>Leitura</i> = reading



## Practice Activity

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. Carla wants to **pretend** she's rich. What does she want to do?
  - a) Intend to be rich
  - b) Act like she's rich
  - c) Save money
2. "Atualmente, eu moro em Lisboa." → What's the correct translation?
  - a) Actually, I live in Lisbon.
  - b) Eventually, I live in Lisbon.
  - c) Currently, I live in Lisbon.
3. I bought this book at the **library**. Is that correct?
  - a) Yes, libraries sell books.
  - b) No, libraries lend books. You buy books at bookstores.
  - c) Yes, library means bookstore.
4. "Assistir TV" in English is:
  - a) To help TV
  - b) To watch TV
  - c) To fix TV
5. "Pretender" in Portuguese means:
  - a) To act
  - b) To fake something
  - c) To intend
6. Which is correct?
  - a) I **pulled** the door because it said "puxe."
  - b) I **pushed** the door because it said "puxe."
  - c) I **enrolled** the door because it said "puxe."
7. "Parents" are:
  - a) Your uncles and cousins
  - b) Your mother and father
  - c) Any relative
8. Which sentence is correct?
  - a) She is very **educated** and says "thank you" a lot.
  - b) She is very **polite** and says "thank you" a lot.
  - c) She is very **pretend** and says "thank you" a lot.
9. "Oficina" in Portuguese means:
  - a) An office
  - b) A workshop / repair shop
  - c) A lecture
10. "Sympathetic" means:
  - a) Showing understanding or compassion



b) Friendly and sociable

c) Funny

## Notes

- Don't rely only on word appearance—**check meaning and context.**
- Keep a notebook or digital list of **false friends and confusing words** you encounter.
- Practice these regularly to avoid errors.

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## ✓ Answer Key

1. b) Act like she's rich
2. c) Currently, I live in Lisbon.
3. b) No, libraries lend books.
4. b) To watch TV
5. c) To intend
6. a) I pulled the door because it said "puxe."
7. b) Your mother and father
8. b) She is very **polite** and says "thank you" a lot.
9. b) A workshop / repair shop
10. a) Showing understanding or compassion

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