False Friends at Home and in the Shops

Look-alike words for the kitchen, the table and the shops, and the words you really want, from A1 to C2.

A1–C2 · English Vocabulary, Lesson 9

a cup of tea · keep the receipt · best before

At home *A1–A2*

cup	wine glass
vase	glass
rope	clothes
jam	ham
recipe	prescription
costume	custom
camp	countryside

left: the English word · right: what the Spanish look-alike means

In the shops *A1–A2*

receipt	till
the sales	half price
grocer’s	rude
crisps	chips
biscuit	sponge cake
mascara	mask
bargain	refund

a grocer’s sells food: nobody is rude! · receipt: re-SEET

Shopping and mix-ups *B1–B2*

At the till: a receipt, a refund, exchange, a bargain, reduced, half price

Sale: the sales · for sale (the owner wants to sell) · on sale (UK: available)

Shops: the grocer’s, greengrocer’s, butcher’s, baker’s, chemist’s

UK and US: crisps = chips · chips = fries · biscuits = cookies

Parties: fancy dress, a costume, a mask · a custom, a habit

Partial friends: a cup of tea · the World Cup

*Keep the **receipt**: if it doesn’t fit, you can get a **refund** in the **sales**.*

A rope is for climbing; your clothes are in the wardrobe

Drift and labels *C1–C2*

Meaning change: cognate, semantic change, narrowing, widening, pejoration, amelioration

Half friends: sales (amount sold) · exquisite (beautiful; intense) · bizarre (very strange)

Labels: additive, preservative, colouring, sweetener, gelling agent, acidity regulator

Dates: best before (quality) · use by (safety) · once opened, consume within

Warnings: may contain traces of · keep refrigerated · store in a cool, dry place

*The only **preservative** is salt; eat it before the **use by** date.*

A word’s origin does not decide its meaning today

In the shop

- *Can I have a receipt, please?*
- *Is this coat in the sale?*
- *Can I exchange this, please?*
- *A jar of jam and some ham, please.*

Common mistakes

- ~~a vase of water~~ → a **glass** of water
- ~~Can I have the recipe?~~ (shop) → the **receipt**
- ~~my ropes are dirty~~ → my **clothes** are dirty
- ~~it’s our costume~~ → it’s our **custom**

Words with a past

- **biscuit**: Latin *bis coctus*, cooked twice
- **grocer**: first sold goods “in gross”
- **exquisite**: Latin for “searched out”
- **vase**: Latin *vas*, a vessel

My new words

© Trivium Home School · triviumhomeschool.com · Free to print and share in class