

# STRANGE ORIGINS

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Etymologies are strange and uncertain things. Does the game of TENNIS get its name from the French tenez 'hold on', or from Tinnis, a place in Lower Egypt which makes cloth such as covers tennis balls? Nobody knows. (However, French did give us LOVE, from l'oeuf 'the egg', drawn like a zero.) With the examples that follow, you can be sure that the modern English word derives from the rather odd ball of thread I give you to trace the word back to its origin. How many of the 25 word origins can you decipher (another word related to zero)? Fifteen would be jolly (French joli 'pretty') good!

1. a residence, from the mask worn in the ancient Greek theatre
2. a servant, from the Arabic for a military chief
3. praise, from the Latin to grasp around the neck
4. a state name, from Ojibway for beaver's hole
5. a boat, from the Spanish and Latin for pine tree
6. to drink down quickly, from the old French for to throw up
7. a young gentleman, from the middle high German for a rogue
8. a coin, from the Sanskrit for shape
9. a careful collection of clothes, from the French for a bundle
10. a forerunner, from the old French for a foot soldier
11. a smile, from the old Norse to howl
12. U.S. blacks' ethnic food, from old English for womb
13. a noisy conference, from Amerindian for a dreamer
14. an enemy, from the Gothic for deception
15. musical form, from the Greek for revelation
16. wages, from the Latin for salty
17. a rodent, from the Norwegian for a field
18. an instrument, from the old French for to put in a case
19. sweetener, from the Sanskrit for gravel
20. illegal drink, from the Tlingit Great Bear Fort
21. church official, from the Greek I raise dust thoroughly
22. jelly, from French comparison with a serpent
23. a horse, from old Norse for a bull
24. fortitude, for the English for sword
25. broken down, from Latin for squander

Answers can be found in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.