

SYSTEMATIC SOUND CORRESPONDENCES: ENGLISH AND GERMAN

German and English are both West Germanic languages, but they have undergone different sound changes. Below is a list of English words with their German counterparts. Most of them have the same or nearly same meaning in the two languages. Your task is to discover the systematic consonant correspondences between English & German that are found in this data. Look *only* at the first letter(s) in the word; disregard the rest of the word. To find the correspondences, look to see whether a particular pairing of an English sound with a German sound carries over a number of words.

Some very important notes:

- (i) Consider *th* to be a single consonant in English (that is, think of those words as beginning with *th*, not *t*).
- (ii) I have used the conventional spelling for both languages, and you need to know a few things about how German letters correspond to German speech sounds:
1. The letter < z > is pronounced *ts* in German, even at the beginning of the word. For instance, the word for *tooth* is pronounced *tsahn*. The sound is just like what you find in the middle of an English word like *patsy*.
 2. The letter combination < pf > in German reflects exactly that pronunciation: a [p] flowing right into a [f]. Again, this is true at the beginning of words.
 3. Nouns are capitalized in German spelling. This has nothing to do with their pronunciation or their meaning.

<u>English</u>	<u>German</u>		<u>English</u>	<u>German</u>
1. ten	zehn		17. path	Pfad
2. pepper	Pfeffer		18. three	drei
3. tide	Zeit		19. pound	Pfund
4. dove	Taube		20. think	denken
5. pole	Pfahl		21. twelve	zwölf
6. tap*	Zapf	*as in <i>faucet</i>	22. plant	Pflanze
7. thin	dünn		23. day	Tag
8. dance	Tanz		24. tongue	Zunge
9. paw	Pfote		25. pear	Pfirsich
10. door	Tür		26. thing	Ding
11. thumb	Daume		27. dry	trocken
12. dream	Traum		28. penny	Pfennig
13. two	zwei			
14. deer	Tier			
15. through*	durch	*in Old English, <i>through</i> was <i>thurh</i>		
16. deed*	Tat	*as in something done, an action		

Challenge question:

Given the results of Grimm's Law that we saw in class, which language, English or German, would you say is more conservative (that is, closer to the parent language than the other)? Why?