



Family Words Across the World's Languages

KS2 MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Ages 9-12 ⌚ 3 min read

Why Family Words Matter

Every language in the world has **words for family members**. These are often the **first words children learn**, even before numbers or colours! Learning family words is a brilliant way to start speaking any **foreign language** because you'll use them all the time.

Think of it like learning the passwords to unlock a new language—family words are the master keys that work everywhere.

Spanish Family Words

Spanish is spoken by over **500 million people** worldwide. Here's how to say family words:

Mum = **Mamá** (pronounced "mah-MAH")

Dad = **Papá** (pronounced "pah-PAH")

Brother = **Hermano** (pronounced "air-MAH-no")

Sister = **Hermana** (pronounced "air-MAH-na")

French Family Words

French is spoken in **over 75 countries**. Notice how some words look similar to English!

Mum = **Mère** (pronounced "mare")

Dad = **Père** (pronounced "pair")

Brother = **Frère** (pronounced "frair")

Sister = **Sœur** (pronounced "sir")

Think of it like finding cousins in your own family tree—English borrowed words from French hundreds of years ago, so some words still look like distant relatives.

German Family Words

German uses a system where words often sound how they're spelled. Many German words are quite long because they combine smaller words together:

Mum = **Mutter** (pronounced "MOO-ter")

Dad = **Vater** (pronounced "FAH-ter")

Brother = **Bruder** (pronounced "BROO-der")

Sister = **Schwester** (pronounced "SHVES-ter")

Mandarin Chinese Family Words

Mandarin Chinese is spoken by over **1 billion people**—more than any other language! Chinese works completely differently from European languages because it uses **characters** instead of an alphabet:

Mum = 妈妈 (pronounced "mah-mah")

Dad = 爸爸 (pronounced "bah-bah")

Brother = 哥哥 (pronounced "go-go")

Sister = 姐姐 (pronounced "jyeh-jyeh")

Think of it like drawing pictures instead of writing letters—Chinese characters are tiny pictures that represent words and sounds.

Why This Matters

Learning family words opens doors to new languages and new friends around the world. Every language tells us something special about how that culture sees family. So next time you meet someone from another country, try saying their family words—they'll love your effort!