Historical reflections in contemporary German: Some verbs and a few other things

At this point, you're in a good position to start seeing how today's language reflects history in ways big and small. Below are some questions that you might have asked as a learner or which students might ask you. (I asked a bunch of them back in the day.) These are not all things we've discussed and some are **really hard**. But if you understand these things, you're really on top of the history of the language.

1. Usually, where German has an *f* (sound, not spelling!), French or Spanish has a *p*, like these Spanish words*: Vater ~ padre, Fisch ~ pescado, Fuß ~ pie*, etc. If sound correspondences are systematic, how do we get *Person* but French *personne, Pause* but *pause*?

2. English nouns mostly just take *-s* to form plurals. Why does German have so many different plural forms for nouns? And if they are related languages, why doesn't English have any nouns with weird plurals like German?

3. Normally, different forms of a verb all have the same stem (*mach-* in *mache, machte, gemacht*) or shows differences in the stem vowel (*finden, fand, gefunden*). **But** the verb *sein* is just crazy*: bin, ist, sind, war* and *gewesen* don't look much alike or at all alike. What's going on here?

4. Most verbs have the same stem vowel at least in the present tense: *mach-* has *a* throughout and *find-* has *i* throughout. But in a set of strong verbs, the second and third person singular are weird in two different ways. What's going on with these two sets of verbs?

    a. *helfen ~ hilft, treffen ~ trifft, sehen ~ sieht*
    b. *tragen ~ trägt, fahren ~ fährt, fangen ~ fängt*

5. I can deal with vowels changing with verb tense — English kind of does that too*: singen, sang, gesungen* is a lot like *sing, sang, sung*. But why do the consonants change sometimes too? Things like *war ~ gewesen, ziehen ~ gezogen, schneiden ~ geschnitten* and less common ones liek *sieden ~ gesotten, kiesen ~ erkoren*.

6. A whole lot of negative words in German start with *n-*, like *nicht, niemand, nie*. Is that a coincidence? Are there more words like this?

7. I learned that past participles start with *ge-* (*gemacht, getan*, etc.) but there are a lot of nouns that start with *Ge-* that look like they're related to verbs: *Gespräch, Gebäude, Getue, Geschmack*, etc. Is there some reason?

8. A bunch of adverbs about time end in *-s*: *abends, nochmals, vormittags, montags*. They even seem to have some similarity in meaning. Why?