You are given two strings word1 and word2. Merge the strings by adding letters in alternating order, starting with word1. If a string is longer than the other, append the additional letters onto the end of the merged string.

Return *the merged string.*

**Example 1:**

Input: word1 = "abc", word2 = "pqr"  
Output: "apbqcr"  
Explanation: The merged string will be merged as so:  
word1: a b c  
word2: p q r  
merged: a p b q c r

**Example 2:**

Input: word1 = "ab", word2 = "pqrs"  
Output: "apbqrs"  
Explanation: Notice that as word2 is longer, "rs" is appended to the end.  
word1: a b   
word2: p q r s  
merged: a p b q r s

**Example 3:**

Input: word1 = "abcd", word2 = "pq"  
Output: "apbqcd"  
Explanation: Notice that as word1 is longer, "cd" is appended to the end.  
word1: a b c d  
word2: p q   
merged: a p b q c d

**Constraints:**

* 1 <= word1.length, word2.length <= 100
* word1 and word2 consist of lowercase English letters.