

Portuguese, Step by Step, Root by Root

An etymology-driven curriculum, built one word at a time

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This edition compiled incrementally — new chapters added as they
are written.

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Preface

This book teaches Portuguese one word at a time, and it teaches each word by taking it apart — traced back to its root (usually Latin), then forward to the English cousins you already own. It is written for someone starting from zero, whose only shared language is English. *obrigado* (“thanks”) turns out to be English *obligated*; *tarde* (“afternoon”) is *tardy*; *noite* (“night”) is the *noct-* of *nocturnal*.

Portuguese is a daughter of Latin, and often the one that wore its words down *most*: the article *ille* eroded all the way to a single letter, *o*. Where a sister language (Spanish, French, Italian) makes a contrast vivid, the book supplies it in full — no prior knowledge of them assumed.

How to use this book

Every numbered section is one word, or one small phrase, and takes a few minutes — the length of a queue, an errand, or the walk to the bus. Read them in order the first time through: each section stands on the ones before it, and nothing is used before it has been taught. After that the book becomes reference, and you can open it anywhere.

Say the Portuguese out loud wherever you can. The prompts under *Your turn* are written to be spoken, and saying a word is most of what makes it stay. The questions under *Before you move on* carry their own answers in brackets: cover them, answer from memory, then look.

Nothing here is gated behind pronunciation. Each lesson names the one or two sounds its own word needs, exactly where they are needed. The whole system is gathered in a reference at the back of the book — somewhere to look things up when you are curious, never a chapter to sit through first.

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Chapter 1

Greetings

Modes: 🗣️ voice (8) ✍️ pen (4) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 1 of 12 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can greet someone in Portuguese, recognize the reply, and choose an appropriate response.

Complete PT-C01-practice, the canonical closing checkpoint, and demonstrate the chapter promise: greet someone in Portuguese, recognize the reply, and choose an appropriate response.

1.1 olá — “hi”

The friendly Portuguese “hi” — one of the few words with no clean Latin root.

Sounds you’ll need

- **olá** = *oh-LAH* — stress on the second syllable (the accent on *á* marks it); clear *l*, open *a*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

olá is a friendly interjection of uncertain birth — probably a natural call for attention (like English *hello/hallo*), perhaps reinforced by Arabic *w-Allāh* (“by God”) in the centuries of Moorish Iberia. Unlike most Portuguese words, it has *no* clean Latin root: some greetings are just sounds. Spanish, its close sibling, has the near-identical *hola*.

Why it's said this way

olá is friendly and fairly neutral — fine for most people; for real formality you add *bom dia* / *boa tarde* (built next). In Brazil you'll also hear *oi* for a casual “hi.”

Writing — follow the greeting you can see

Keep **olá** visible. Point to the acute accent over **á**; it marks the stressed last syllable. Trace the word once from **o** to **á**, then say *oh-LAH*.

This is not a spelling test. Your eye and hand are only following one greeting whose sound and meaning are still on the page.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “olá” (*oh-LAH*)
- the casual Brazilian alternative — “oi”

Before you move on

Does **olá** have a Latin root, and what Spanish word is its twin? (No — it's a natural interjection; Spanish *hola*.)

1.2 olá — copy one greeting with help

Point to **olá** and say it once: *oh-LAH*. The model stays on the page.

Writing — one guided copy

Copy **olá** once on the line below it. Write **ola** first, then add the short acute accent over the final **a**. Look back at the model whenever you want.

Say the word as you finish. The accent records the stress you already heard; it is not a new letter and not something to guess.

Before you move on

Compare your copy with the model. If one mark differs, repair only that mark. No hiding, no spelling from memory, and no second word today.

1.3 olá — write it with the model covered

Look at **olá** once and say it: *oh-LAH*. Then cover it.

Writing — delayed copy

With the model covered, wait ten seconds, then write **olá** once from memory.

Ten seconds is not a long time and it is not meant to be. It is long enough that your hand cannot be copying a shape it can still see, and short enough that a word you met a minute ago is still there to be found.

Only after the word is finished, uncover the model. Compare, and repair **one** mark — the first that differs and no others.

Before you move on

If the accent was the mark that differed, that is the expected miss. The accent is the part of **olá** that carries no sound of its own, so it is the part a hand drops first when it stops copying and starts remembering.

1.4 olá — write it from the sound

Close the book on every page that has **olá** written on it. Nothing to copy and nothing to uncover this time.

Writing — dictation

Say *oh-LAH* aloud, or play it, and write what you hear. Once.

This is a different job from the last lesson, even though the word is the same. A delayed copy asks your hand to remember a shape. Dictation asks it to turn a **sound** into a shape, which is the thing reading and writing are actually for, and the two do not always arrive together.

Before you move on

Uncover the model and compare.

The accent is the interesting part again, and for the opposite reason. From a sound you can *hear* where the stress falls — *oh-LAH*, not *OH-lah* — so the accent is no longer a mark to remember. It is a mark you can work out. That is what the written accent is for: it records a stress the ear already knows.

1.5 bom / boa — “good”

The word that starts *bom dia*, *boa tarde*, *boa noite*.

Sounds you’ll need

- **bom** is **nasal**: *bõ*, the *m* not fully closed, the vowel through the nose. **boa** (feminine) is a clear *BOH-ah*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

bom / boa (“good”) ← Latin **bonus / bona** → English **bonus**, **bonanza**. Spanish, another daughter of Latin, made *bueno / buena*; Portuguese wore *bonus* down further, to the little nasal *bom*.

Grammar Lens: it agrees with the noun

bom / boa changes to match its noun: *bom* (m.), *boa* (f.), *bons / boas* (pl.) — Latin’s adjective agreement, alive across the Romance family. So it’s *bom dia* (m.) but *boa tarde* (f.).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “bom” (nasal *bõ*), “boa” (*BOH-ah*)
- why *bom dia* but *boa tarde* (gender)

Before you move on

What Latin word is **bom** from, and why *bom dia* but *boa tarde*? (*bonus*; *dia* is masculine, *tarde* feminine.)

1.6 o / a — “the,” an article worn to a single letter

Before your first noun: “the.” Portuguese wore it down further than any of its sisters.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

o (masculine “the”) and **a** (feminine) ← Latin **ille** / **illa** (“that one”). Portuguese did something striking — it eroded the word *further than any sibling*:

Latin **ille** → Italian **il** → Spanish **el** → Portuguese just **o**.

The whole pointing-word has worn down to a single vowel. (English “the” is Germanic, unrelated.)

Grammar Lens: two genders

Every Portuguese noun is **masculine or feminine** — Latin’s genders collapsed to two. Learn each noun *with* its article: **o** (m.), **a** (f.). Watch the trap next: *o dia* (“the day”) is masculine even though it ends in *-a*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o”, “a”
- the erosion — *ille* → *il* → *el* → *o*

Before you move on

What Latin word gave Portuguese **o**, and how is it unusual among its sisters? (*ille*; Portuguese wore it down to a single letter, more than *il/el*.)

1.7 dia — “day”

Your first noun — and a gender trap.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

o **dia** (masc.) ← Latin **dies** (“day”), taken almost straight, like Spanish *día*. Cousins from *dies*: **diurnal**, **diary**; and, through the derived *diurnum*, English **journal** and **journey** (which is why Italian *giorno* and French *jour* look so different — they took the longer road, Portuguese and Spanish the short one).

Grammar Lens: a gender trap

dia ends in *-a* — the usual **feminine** signal — yet it is **masculine**: o *dia*. A fossil of its Latin origin (*dies* was masculine), and a reminder to learn each noun *with its article* rather than guessing gender from the ending.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o dia” (masculine, despite the *-a*)
- cousins — *diary*, *diurnal*, *journal*

Before you move on

What Latin word gave **dia**, and why is o *dia* a trap? (*dies*; it’s masculine even though it ends in *-a*.)

1.8 bom dia — “good morning,” assembled

Put the pieces together into the polite morning hello.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

- bom (“good”) + dia (“day”).

bom dia = “good day” → in practice, “**good morning**” (used until noon).

Why it's said this way

bom dia is the polite, all-purpose morning hello — safe with anyone. After midday it gives way to *boa tarde*, and after dark to *boa noite*. (Spanish pluralises the blessing — *buenos días* — where Portuguese keeps it singular, *bom dia*.)

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “bom dia” (nasal *bõ* + *dia*)
- the day’s arc — bom dia → boa tarde → boa noite

Before you move on

What two words make **bom dia**, and when is it used? (*bom* + *dia*; morning, until noon.)

1.9 tarde / boa tarde — “afternoon” and “good afternoon”

The afternoon greeting — named, like its Spanish twin, after *lateness*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

a tarde (fem.) ← Latin **tardus** (“slow, late”) — the same *tardus* behind English **tardy** and **retard** (“to slow”). Portuguese named the afternoon after its *lateness*, exactly as Spanish did with the identical *tarde*. **boa tarde** = “good afternoon” (*boa*, feminine, because *tarde* is feminine).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “boa tarde”
- the cousin — English *tardy* (late)

Before you move on

What Latin word gave **tarde**, and what English word shares it?
(*tardus*, “late”; *tardy*.)

1.10 noite / boa noite — “night,” and the *-ct-* → *-it-* rule

“Night” — and a sound-rule shared with French.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

a **noite** (fem.) ← Latin **noctem** (*noct-*) → English **nocturnal**, **equinox**. Portuguese turned Latin *-ct-* into **-it-** (*noite*) — the same change French made (*nuit*), while Spanish went *-ch-* (*noche*) and Italian *-tt-* (*notte*):

The same change, twice over:

- Latin *noctem* → Portuguese **noite**, French *nuit*; Spanish *noche*, Italian *notte*
- Latin *factum* → Portuguese **feito**, French *fait*; Spanish *hecho*, Italian *fatto*

boa noite = “good night” — used both as an evening greeting and the farewell for bed.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “boa noite”
- the rule — Latin *-ct-* → Portuguese *-it-* (*noite*, *feito*)

Before you move on

What Latin word gave **noite**, and what sound-change does it show?
(*noctem*; *-ct-* → *-it-*, like French *nuit*.)

1.11 obrigado / obrigada — “thank you,” i.e. “[I am] obliged”

“Thanks” — and, uniquely, the word changes with *who is speaking*.

Sounds you’ll need

- **obrigado** $\approx$ *oh-bree-GAH-doo* — the final *-o* sounds like *u*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

obrigado / obrigada (“thanks”) $\leftarrow$ Latin **obligātus** (“bound, obliged”), from *ob-* (“to”) + *ligāre* (“to bind”). It is the *same* word as English **obligated**, and shares its root with **oblige**, **obligation**, and (via *ligare*) **ligament** and **liable**. To say *obrigado* is to say “I am **bound** to you” — indebted by your kindness.

Grammar Lens: it agrees with the *speaker*

Because *obrigado* literally means “[I am] obliged,” it takes the gender of **whoever is speaking**: a man says **obrigado**, a woman says **obrigada** — no matter who they’re thanking. This is unlike ordinary adjectives (which match their noun); here the adjective matches *you*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “obrigado” (if you’re male) / “obrigada” (if female)
- the meaning — “I am obliged / bound to you”
- the cousin — English *obligated*

Before you move on

What does **obrigado** literally mean, and how does a woman say it? (“I am obliged” $\leftarrow$ *obligātus*; *obrigada* — it agrees with the speaker.)

1.12 Chapter 1 — the day of greetings

No new words today. Everything below is something you have already met, said once, and can now put in one place.

What you’ve built — the day of greetings

Portuguese	English
<i>olá</i>	hi
<i>bom dia</i>	good morning
<i>boa tarde</i>	good afternoon
<i>boa noite</i>	good night
<i>obrigado / obrigada</i>	thank you

Every piece traced:

- **bom** ← *bonus*
- **dia** ← *dies* (masculine, despite the *-a*)
- **tarde** ← *tardus* (“late”; English *tardy*)
- **noite** ← *noctem*, via *-ct-* → *-it-* (like French *nuit*)
- **obrigado** ← *obligātus* (“obliged”; English *obligated*)

And two Portuguese habits: the article eroded to a single vowel (**o** / **a**), and “thank you” agrees with the **speaker** (*obrigado* m. / *obrigada* f.).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- all five greetings
- greet and thank — “bom dia!” ... “obrigado/obrigada.”
- why a woman says *obrigada*

Before you move on

Say all five greetings. Why does “thank you” have two forms? (It means “[I am] obliged,” so it matches the speaker: *obrigado* / *obrigada*.) What did the Latin article *ille* erode to in Portuguese? (A single letter, *o*.)

Next chapter: introducing yourself — *o meu nome é...* / *chamo-me...* — and Portuguese’s *tu* vs. *você* (familiar / polite “you”).

Chapter 2

How Are You?

Modes: 🗣️ voice (8) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 8 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask a Portuguese speaker how they are, casually or respectfully, and answer for myself.

The full Chapter 2 exchange: greet, ask Tudo bem?, answer for yourself, and hand the question back. PT-C02-formal-practice then rebuilds the same exchange for respect (Como está o senhor?), so the chapter's canDo covers both registers.

2.1 de nada — “you’re welcome,” or “it was nothing”

You already say **obrigado** / **obrigada** (“I am obliged”). The reply that closes the exchange is **de nada** — “of nothing” — the very same phrase, word for word, as Spanish.

Sounds you’ll need

- **final-a-reduces** — **de nada** $\approx$ *dee NAH-duh*: unstressed final *-a* softens toward *uh*; the *d* is soft.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

- **de** = “of / from” (Latin **dē**).
- **nada** = “nothing” — and it has the same buried story as its Spanish twin.

nada comes from Latin (**rēs**) **nāta**, “a born thing” — from *nāscī*, “to be born” (English **native**, **nature**, **natal**, re-**nais-sance**). Latin *nōn ... rēs nāta*, “not a single born thing,” wore down until the “born thing” word, **nada**, came to mean **nothing** by itself.

Portuguese and Spanish inherited the identical word and the identical courtesy:

language	“you’re welcome”	the “nothing” word
Portuguese	<i>de nada</i>	<i>nada</i> ← <i>nāta</i> , “a born thing”
Spanish	<i>de nada</i>	<i>nada</i> ← <i>nāta</i> , “a born thing”
French	<i>de rien</i>	<i>rien</i> ← <i>rem</i> , “a thing”

So Iberia says “of no *born-thing*”; France says “of no *thing*.” Same shrug of the shoulders, one Latin idea.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “obrigado / obrigada” ... “de nada” — the full exchange
- “de nada” then English “native, nature” — nada’s true family

Before you move on

What did *nada* originally mean in Latin? (A *born thing* — *nāta*.) Which language shares *de nada* exactly, and which uses *de rien* instead? (Spanish; French.) Next: **como**, “how.”

2.2 como — “how,” the fourth *quomodo* cousin

One of two everyday ways to ask *how are you?* in Portuguese starts with **como**, “how.” It’s the same word you’ve met (or will meet) across the Romance family.

Sounds you'll need

- **final-o-is-u** — **como** = *KOH-moo*: the final unstressed *-o* is said like *u*. (Portuguese does this to nearly every final *-o*: *obrigado* → *-doo*.)

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

como = “how / like / as.” Root: Latin **quōmodo**, “in what manner” — *quō* (“in what way”) + *modo* (“manner”). It is the **same source** as its siblings:

- Spanish **cómo**, Italian **come**, French **comment** — all “how.”
- Doubling as “like/as,” it matches Spanish *como*, Italian *come*.

Notice Portuguese and Spanish look almost identical here — *como* vs *cómo* — the only visible difference is the Spanish written accent that marks the *question*. Portuguese leans on context and the question mark instead. The *modo* piece lives on in English **mode**, **model**, **moderate**.

Grammar Lens: the two Portuguese “how are you”s

Portuguese asks after you **two** ways, and you'll assemble both next lesson:

- **Como vai?** — “how do you **go**?” (verb *ir*, “to go” — like French/German).
- **Como está?** — “how do you **stand/are**?” (verb *estar* — like Spanish).

Plus a third, verb-free favourite — **Tudo bem?** — coming up.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “como” — *KOH-moo*
- *como* / *cómo* / *come* / *comment* — the four *quomodo* siblings
- “Como vai?” and “Como está?” — go, and stand

Before you move on

What Latin word gives *como*, and name two siblings. (*quōmodo* → *cómo*, *come*, *comment*.) What's the only written difference between Portuguese *como* and Spanish *cómo*? (The Spanish accent that marks a question.) Next: the word behind Portuguese's favourite greeting — **tudo**.

2.3 tudo — “everything,” the heart of *Tudo bem?*

The most Brazilian way to greet someone doesn't use a “you” or a “to be” at all — it just asks **Tudo bem?**, “everything well?” To own it, learn its first word: **tudo**, “everything.”

Sounds you'll need

- final-o-is-u — **tudo** = *TOO-doo*: final -o → u, and the d is soft.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

tudo = “everything, all,” from Latin **tōtus**, “*whole, entire*.” You ask whether the **whole** of someone's life is going well — *is everything OK?* That root **tōtus** is completely at home in English:

- **total, totally, totality** — the whole amount.
- **teetotal** — “**totally**” abstaining (a playful reduplication of *total*).
- Italian **tutto**, Spanish **todo**, French **tout** — the same *tōtus* across the family (you'll hear Spanish *todo* echoing this).

Grammar Lens: pairing it with “well”

Portuguese “well” is **bem** (← Latin *bene*, “well” — the *bene* of *benefit*, *benevolent*; cousin of Spanish *bien*, French *bien*). Put them together:

Tudo bem? = “Everything well?” → “How are you? / You OK?”

The magic: **no pronoun, no verb**. You skip the whole *você / tu / o*

senhor tangle. That’s why *Tudo bem?* is the friendliest, safest opener in Brazilian Portuguese — and you can answer with the very same two words: **Tudo bem.** (“Everything’s well.”) Or just **Tudo bom.**

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “tudo” — *TOO-doo*
- “Tudo bem?” — everything well?
- “tudo” then English “total, totally” — one family

Before you move on

What Latin word gives *tudo*, and its English cousins? (*tōtus* → total, totally, teetotal.) Why is *Tudo bem?* so easy to use? (No pronoun, no verb — it dodges the *você/tu/senhor* choice.) What’s Portuguese for “well”? (*bem* ← *bene*.) Next: assemble all three “how are you”s.

2.4 Tudo bem? — “everything well?”

You know **tudo**, “everything.” Add **bem**, “well,” and Portuguese gives you an everyday check-in with no verb at all.

Tudo bem? — “Everything well?” / “How are you?”

The friendly answer can be identical:

Tudo bem. — “Everything’s well.”

Because the question contains no “you” and no verb, it avoids choosing a social register. That simplicity is exactly why it is everywhere.

Grammar Lens: Add the listener only when useful

To bounce the question back, say:

Tudo bem, e você? — “All well, and you?”

Everyday **você** comes from *vossa mercê*, “your mercy.” Centuries of fast speech wore a respectful title into the ordinary pronoun “you,” much as Spanish *usted* grew from a form meaning “your grace.” For more explicit respect, Portuguese can use **o senhor** / **a senhora**, “the gentleman / the lady.”

You do not need either pronoun for the basic pair: **Tudo bem?** — **Tudo bem.**

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “Tudo bem?”
- the answer — “Tudo bem.”
- “Tudo bem, e você?”

Twice through: “Tudo bem? — Tudo bem!”

Before you move on

What does *Tudo bem?* literally ask? (“Everything well?”) Why can it fit almost any listener? (It has **no verb and no pronoun.**) How do you bounce it back? (**E você?**) Where did *você* come from? (*Vossa mercê*, “your mercy.”) Next: two questions that do use verbs.

2.5 Como vai? / Como está? — go and stand

Tudo bem? needs no verb. **Como** (“how”) also builds two familiar metaphors.

question	literally	verb
Como vai?	“How does it go ?”	<i>ir</i> , to go
Como está?	“How do you stand ?”	<i>estar</i> , to be / stand

Vai comes from *ir*, whose Latin ancestor *īre* also sits inside English *exit* and *transit*. **Está** comes from Latin *stāre*, “to stand.”

Portuguese therefore keeps both pictures:

- the “go” family, like French and German;
- the “stand” family, like Spanish and Italian.

Italian also keeps both. You do not need those languages to speak Portuguese; the map simply makes the two metaphors memorable.

Tudo bem? remains the easiest default because it skips the verb and register choice altogether.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the verb-free question — “Tudo bem?”
- the “go” question — “Como vai?”
- the “stand” question — “Como está?”

Twice through: “Tudo bem? — Como vai? — Como está?”

Before you move on

Which question has no verb? (**Tudo bem?**) Which uses “go”? (**Como vai?**, from *ir*.) Which uses “stand”? (**Como está?**, from *estar*.) Portuguese keeps how many metaphors? (**Both**.) Next: the “more or less” answer.

2.6 mais ou menos — the “more or less” shrug

Someone asks *Tudo bem?* You’re okay-ish. The Portuguese shrug is **mais ou menos** — “more or less” — the same words, root for root, that Spanish uses.

Sounds you’ll need

- nasal-ai — **mais** $\approx$ *mais* with a nasal glide (*maish* in Brazil, the *s* a soft *sh*).
- final-o-is-u — **menos** $\approx$ *MEH-noos*; **ou** = a closed *oh*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

mais ou menos = literally “**more or less.**” Every piece is Latin at heart:

- **mais** = “more,” from Latin **magis** (“more”) — cousin of *major*, *master*, *maximum*, *mayor*.
- **ou** = “or,” from Latin **aut**.
- **menos** = “less,” from Latin **minus** — the very word English borrowed for *minus*, *minor*, *minimum*, *minuscule*.

So *mais ou menos* is a **word-for-word twin of Spanish *más o menos*** — Iberia’s shared shrug. (Portuguese *mais* and Spanish *más* are the same *magis*; the nasal *-ais* is just Portuguese’s accent.)

Grammar Lens: your answer ladder for *Tudo bem?*

answer	sense
Tudo bem / Tudo ótimo	all well / all great
Mais ou menos	so-so
Mais ou menos + a hand-wobble	“eh, could be better”
The five-language shrug set is now complete: Portuguese/Spanish mais/más o menos (“more or less”), Italian così così (“so, so”), French comme ci comme ça (“like this, like that”), German es geht (“it goes”).	

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “mais ou menos” — with a little wobble
- answer “Tudo bem?” two ways — “Tudo bem!” / “Mais ou menos”
- Portuguese *mais ou menos* = Spanish *más o menos*, same Latin *magis/minus*

Before you move on

What does *mais ou menos* literally mean? (“More or less.”) What Latin words are *mais* and *menos* from, and their English cousins? (*magis* → major/ maximum; *minus* → minor/minus.) Which language’s shrug is its exact twin? (Spanish *más o menos*.) Next: put the whole exchange together.

2.7 Practice — Tudo bem?, start to finish

No new words. Assemble the chapter’s atoms into one casual exchange before adding the formal version.

The exchange

— Olá! **Tudo bem?** — **Tudo bem, e você?** — **Mais ou menos.** — [after a small favour] Obrigado! — **De nada.**

The glue is **e você?**, “and you?”: **e** continues Latin *et*, while *você* grew from the respectful title *vossa mercê*.

What you’ve built: What you are retrieving

- **de nada** — “of nothing,” you’re welcome;
- **tudo bem?** — the verb-free check-in;
- **como vai?** / **como está?** — “go” and “stand” alternatives;
- **mais ou menos** — “more or less,” so-so.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the whole exchange, both voices
- answer with “Tudo bem”
- answer with “Mais ou menos”

Twice through: “Tudo bem? — Tudo bem, e você?”

Before you move on

Run the casual exchange without looking. Which phrase answers a small favour? (**De nada.**) Which answer means “so-so”? (**Mais ou menos.**) Which question is safest before choosing a register? (**Tudo bem?**) Next: rebuild the exchange with **o senhor** / **a senhora**.

2.8 Formal practice — Como está o senhor?

The casual exchange is secure. Now replace ordinary *você* with the respectful title **o senhor** or **a senhora**.

The exchange

— Bom dia. **Como está o senhor?** — Bem, obrigado. **E o senhor?** — Tudo bem.

For a woman, use **a senhora**. The words continue Latin *senior*, “older,” the same root as English **senior** and Spanish *señor*.

The verb stays **está** because the title is grammatically third person: “How is the gentleman/lady?” That respectful grammar is already packed into the phrase; do not switch it to informal second-person *estás* here.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- to a man — “Como está o senhor?”
- to a woman — “Como está a senhora?”
- “Bem, obrigado. E o senhor?”

Twice through: “Como está o senhor? — Bem, obrigado.”

Before you move on

Which titles mean a respectful “you”? (**O senhor** / **a senhora**.) Which verb form follows them? (**Está**, third person.) Where does *senhor* come from? (Latin *senior*, “older.”) You can now run the Chapter 2 exchange casually or formally.

Chapter 3

Introducing Yourself

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can give my name in Portuguese, ask for someone else's, and say that it is a pleasure.

A whole first meeting: Olá, me chamo ..., Como se chama?, prazer — then the same exchange again with o senhor and a senhora.

3.1 eu — “I,” often dropped in Portuguese

Before introducing yourself, meet **eu** — “I.” Famous English cousin, and the same habit as its Romance sisters: Portuguese usually **leaves it out**.

Sounds you'll need

- nasal-**eu** — **eu** = *EH-oo*, a gliding vowel with a light nasal colour, one syllable.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

eu = “I,” from Latin **ego** — the same *ego* English borrowed outright:

- **ego**, **egoist**, **egocentric** — all Latin “I.”
- Romance siblings, all from *ego*: Spanish **yo**, Italian **io**, French **je**.

Grammar Lens: the dropped subject (pro-drop)

The verb ending already names the speaker, so Portuguese usually **omits** the pronoun: *chamo-me* (“I call myself”) needs no *eu* — the *-o* of *chamo* is “I.” You add **eu** for **emphasis** or **contrast**:

Eu estou bem, e você? — “I’m fine, and you?”

Spanish (*yo*) and Italian (*io*) do the same. It’s one of the first real habits of a Romance language: trust the verb ending, drop the pronoun.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “eu” — *EH-oo*
- “eu” then English “ego, egoist” — the same Latin “I”
- eu / yo / io / je — four children of *ego*

Before you move on

What Latin word is *eu* from? (*Ego* — ego, egoist.) Why does Portuguese usually drop it? (The verb ending already says “I.”) When do you keep it? (Emphasis / contrast.) Next: introduce yourself — **me chamo**.

3.2 me chamo — “I call myself”

Like its Iberian and Italian sisters, Portuguese introduces you as what you **call yourself** — **me chamo** — from the very same Latin *clāmāre* that gave Spanish *me llamo* and Italian *mi chiamo*.

Sounds you’ll need

- **ch-is-sh** — Portuguese **ch** = “**sh**”: **chamo** = *SHAH-moo*. (A neat three-way split from one Latin *cl-*: Spanish *ll* = *y* (*llamo*), Italian *ch* = hard *k* (*chiamo*), Portuguese *ch* = *sh* (*chamo*).)
- **final-o-is-u** — final *-o* → *u*: *SHAH-moo*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

me chamo = **me** (“myself”) + **chamo** (“I call”) → “**I call myself.**”

Brazilians often say **eu me chamo**; European Portuguese prefers **chamo-me** (same words, pronoun clipped to the back) — both fine.

Then the name: *Me chamo Ana* — “I call myself Ana.”

The verb **chamar-se** (“to call oneself”) is from Latin **clāmāre**, “to cry out, to call” — shouting through English as **claim**, **exclaim**,

proclaim, **clamor**. Three Romance naming verbs, one Latin call:

language	“I call myself”	<i>cl-</i> became
Portuguese	<i>me chamo</i>	<i>ch</i> (= <i>sh</i>)
Spanish	<i>me llamo</i>	<i>ll</i> (= <i>y</i>)
Italian	<i>mi chiamo</i>	<i>ch</i> (= hard <i>k</i>)

Another way to say it: *o meu nome é ...* (“my name is ...”), where **nome** ← Latin **nōmen**, “name” — the root of English **noun**, **nominal**, **nomenclature**, **nominate**. Two routes to the same introduction: the *verb* (call myself) or the *noun* (my name is).

Grammar Lens: the reflexive

chamo alone = “I call [someone]”; **me chamo** = “I call **myself**” — reflexive. The pronoun shifts with the person: **me** chamo (I) → **se** chama (he/she/você). And *eu* is dropped — the *-o* ending already says “I.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “me chamo” — *muh SHAH-moo*, *ch* = *sh*
- “Me chamo ...” with your own name
- *me chamo* / *me llamo* / *mi chiamo* — one *clāmāre*, three sounds

Before you move on

What does *me chamo* literally mean, and its Latin root? (“I call myself”; *clāmāre* — claim/clamor.) How is Portuguese *ch* pronounced, vs Italian *ch*? (Portuguese *sh*; Italian hard *k*.) What’s the noun-route alternative? (*O meu nome é ...*, *nome* ← *nōmen*.)

Next: ask it back — **Como se chama?**

3.3 Como se chama? — “what’s your name?”

Both pieces are yours: **como** (“how,” from your *Tudo bem?* chapter) and **chamar-se** (“to call oneself”). Portuguese, like all its sisters, asks the name with “**how**”: *how do you call yourself?*

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Como se chama? = “What’s your name?” literally:
“How do you call yourself?”

- **como** = “how” (← *quōmodo*).
- **se** = “yourself” (the reflexive; *me* → *se*).
- **chama** = “calls” (*você*/he-she form of *chamar-se*).

Portuguese register is friendly here — the everyday polite form uses **você**:

form	question
polite / neutral (<i>você</i>)	Como (você) se chama?
very formal	Como se chama o senhor / a senhora?
familiar (<i>tu</i> , more in Portugal)	Como te chamas?

The reply loops right back: *Me chamo Ana. E você?* And just like Spanish *¿cómo se llama?* and Italian *come ti chiami?*, the name is a matter of **how** you’re called — never *what*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “Como se chama?” — *KOH-moo suh SHAH-mah*
- the whole loop — “Como se chama? — Me chamo ... E você?”
- *como se chama* / *cómo se llama* / *come ti chiami* — the same question, three sisters

Before you move on

What does *Como se chama?* literally ask? (“How do you call yourself?”) Which everyday pronoun does the polite form use? (*Você*.) What “how” word is it built on? (*Como* ← *quōmodo*.) Next: the warm reply — **prazer**.

3.4 **prazer** — “pleased to meet you,” i.e. “a pleasure”

Names traded, you close with **prazer** — “a pleasure.” It’s the twin of Italian *piacere*, and, like it, straight from Latin *please*.

Sounds you’ll need

- **pr-cluster** — **prazer** = *prah-ZEHR*: the *z* is a true *z*; stress the end. (The *pr-* shows a Portuguese sound-law: Latin *pl-* often became *pr-* — *placēre* → *prazer*, *plūs* → ...)

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

prazer = “pleasure” (and, as a verb, “to please”), from Latin **placēre**, “to please.” On meeting someone it’s short for “[it’s] a pleasure.” That *placēre* root is deep in English — **please**, **pleasure**, **pleasant**, **complacent**, **placid** — and it names this courtesy across the family:

- Italian **piacere** — its exact twin (same *placēre*).
- Spanish **mucho gusto** — “much pleasure,” but from *gustus* (“taste”), a different root.
- French **enchanté** — a different picture again (“enchanted”).

Portuguese took *placēre*’s *pl-* to *pr-* (a regular shift — compare *branco* “white” ← Germanic *blank*, *praia* “beach” ← *plagia*), so *piacere* and *prazer* look a little different but are the very same word.

Grammar Lens: a one-word courtesy

Prazer stands alone, with a nod or handshake. Fuller forms: **muito prazer** (“much pleasure”), or **prazer em conhecê-lo/-la** (“a

pleasure to know you”).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “prazer” — *prah-ZEHR*
- “prazer” then English “please, pleasure, placid” — the *placēre* root
- Portuguese *prazer* and Italian *piacere* — twins from *placēre*

Before you move on

What does *prazer* mean, and from what Latin verb? (“A pleasure,” ← *placēre*.) Its Italian twin? (*Piacere*.) What sound-shift turned *pl-* into *pr-*? (The Portuguese *placēre* → *prazer* change.) Next: put the whole introduction together.

3.5 Practice — introducing yourself in Portuguese

No new words. *eu, me chamo, como se chama, prazer* assemble into a real first meeting. This slots between your greetings (Ch. 1–2) and farewells (Ch. 4), so Portuguese now runs a whole conversation.

The exchange

Casual (*ocê*):

— Olá! **Como você se chama?** — **Me chamo** Ana. E você?
 — João. **Prazer!** — Prazer!

More formal (o senhor / a senhora):

— Bom dia. **Como se chama a senhora?** — Chamo-me Ana Costa. E o senhor? — Costa. **Muito prazer.**

What you've built this chapter

- **eu** — “I” (← *ego*), usually **dropped** — the verb ending carries it.
- **me chamo / chamo-me** — “I call myself” (*chamar-se* ← *clāmāre*; *ch* = *sh*; kin of *me llamo, mi chiamo*). Alt: *o meu nome é* (*nome* ← *nōmen*).
- **Como se chama?** — “how do you call yourself?” (polite *você*).
- **prazer** — “a pleasure” (← *placēre*; twin of Italian *piacere*).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the full casual meeting, both voices
- the same formally — with *o senhor / a senhora*
- chain it all — greet, name, ask, how-are-you, goodbye: “Olá! Me chamo ... Como se chama? ... Tudo bem? ... Até logo!”

Twice through: Run a whole first meeting start to finish.

Before you move on

Why does Portuguese usually drop *eu*? (The verb ending says who.) What does *me chamo* literally mean, and its root? (“I call myself”; *clāmāre*.) What does *prazer* mean, and its Italian twin? (“A pleasure”; *piacere*.) Portuguese now runs greet → introduce → how-are-you → goodbye, end to end — the loop is closed.

Chapter 4

Farewells

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can close a Portuguese conversation and pick the goodbye that matches when I will next see the person.

Open with Olá, ask Tudo bem?, then choose the exit — até logo, até amanhã, até breve, or adeus, to God, for the one that means for good.

4.1 adeus — “goodbye,” i.e. “to God”

You can greet, ask *tudo bem?*, and reply. Now close the conversation. The Portuguese goodbye is **adeus** — and it’s a tiny prayer: “**to God.**”

Sounds you’ll need

- nasal-eu — **adeus** $\approx$ *ah-DEH-oosh*: the *eu* is a gliding vowel; final *-s* is a soft *sh* in Portugal (*-s* $\rightarrow$ *ss* in Brazil). Stress the *-deus*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

adeus = **a** (“to”) + **Deus** (“God”), from Latin **ad Deum**, “to God.” It’s the fossil of a blessing — “[I commend you] to God” — said at parting, exactly like the English **goodbye**, which is a worn-down “God be with ye.”

This is one of the most beautiful family resemblances anywhere — five languages, one farewell prayer:

language	goodbye	=
Portuguese	<i>adeus</i>	a + Deus
Spanish	<i>adiós</i>	a + Dios
French	<i>adieu</i>	à + Dieu
Italian	<i>addio</i>	a + Dio
English	<i>goodbye</i>	“God be with ye”

The *Deus* here is the same one in English **deity**, **divine**, **adieu**, and Spanish *Dios*. When you say *adeus*, you’re handing someone to God for safekeeping until next time.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “adeus” — *ah-DEH-oosh*
- *adeus* / *adiós* / *adieu* / *addio* — one “to God” across four languages
- even English “goodbye” = “God be with ye”

Before you move on

What does *adeus* literally mean, and from what? (“To God,” ← *ad Deum*.) Name two sister-language goodbyes with the same “to God” origin. (*adiós*, *adieu*, *addio*.) What English goodbye hides “God be with ye”? (*Goodbye*.) Next: the softer “see you” goodbyes — starting with **até logo**.

4.2 até logo — “see you later,” and a word straight from Arabic

The everyday Portuguese goodbye isn’t *adeus* (that’s a bit final) — it’s **até logo**, “until soon.” And its first word carries the same surprise Spanish’s *hasta* does: it came from **Arabic**.

Sounds you’ll need

- **até** = *ah-TEH*, stress the end (the accent on *é*).

- final-o-is-u — **logo** = *LOH-goo*, final -o → u.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

- **até** = “until, up to.” Like Spanish **hasta**, it comes from **Arabic** *ḥattā* (حتى), “until” — carried into Iberian speech across the **800 years of al-Andalus**. Both Iberian languages borrowed the *same* Arabic word for this everyday preposition. That’s remarkable: languages freely borrow *nouns* (Portuguese has thousands from Arabic — *almofada*, *açúcar*, *azeite*), but a **function word** like “until” almost never crosses. *até* and *hasta* are twin survivors of that deep Arabic layer under Iberian Romance.
- **logo** = “soon, right away, then,” from Latin **locō**, “in [that] place” → “on the spot” → “soon.” (Spanish did the identical thing: **luego** ← *locō*, and *hasta luego* is the word-for-word twin of *até logo*.)

So **até logo** = “until soon” — the exact mirror of Spanish **hasta luego**, Arabic preposition and all.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “até logo” — *ah-TEH LOH-goo*
- Portuguese *até* and Spanish *hasta* — both from Arabic *ḥattā*
- *até logo* = *hasta luego*, twin for twin

Before you move on

Where does *até* come from, and which Spanish word is its twin? (Arabic *ḥattā* — Spanish *hasta*.) Why is borrowing it surprising? (It’s a *function word*; languages rarely borrow those.) What does *logo* share with Spanish *luego*? (Both ← Latin *locō*, “in place” → “soon”.) Next: **até amanhã**.

4.3 até amanhã — “see you tomorrow”

Same frame — *até* + a “when.” **Até amanhã** means “until tomorrow.” Its second word is the Portuguese cousin of a Spanish word you already know, wearing a heavy nasal ending.

Sounds you’ll need

- **nasal-anha** — **amanhã** = *ah-mah-NYÃ*: the **nh** is the *ny* of “canyon” (Portuguese spells the *ñ* sound as *nh*), and the final **-ã** is a strong **nasal a** — air through the nose, no hard consonant. Stress the end.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

- **até** = “until” (← Arabic *ḥattā*, from the last lesson).
- **amanhã** = “tomorrow,” from Latin **ad māneāna**, “to the morning [hour].”

That **māne** (“morning”) root is shared right across Romance — you’ve now met three of its children:

- Portuguese **amanhã** (“tomorrow”) ← *ad māneāna*.
- Spanish **mañana** — morning *and* tomorrow (the *ñ* spelled with the tilde).
- Italian **domani** (“tomorrow”) ← *dē māne*.

Same idea everywhere: tomorrow is “**the morning to come.**”

Portuguese writes the *ny* sound as **nh** (*amanhã*), where Spanish uses **ñ** (*mañana*) — two spellings, one sound, both from that doubled-*n*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “até amanhã” — *ah-TEH ah-mah-NYÃ*, nasal ending
- amanhã / mañana / domani — three children of *māne*, “morning”
- Portuguese *nh* = Spanish *ñ* = the *ny* sound

Before you move on

What does *amanhã* come from, and literally mean? (*Ad m̃aneãna* — “to the morning.”) How does Portuguese spell the *ny* sound that Spanish writes as *ñ*? (As *nh*.) Next: “see you soon” — **até breve**.

4.4 até breve — “see you soon”

The last of the *até* goodbyes: **até breve**, “until soon” — literally “until [a] *short* [while].” *Breve* is a word English wears in several coats.

Sounds you’ll need

- **até breve** = *ah-TEH BREH-vee*: open *e* in *breve*, final *-e* softens toward *ee*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

- **até** = “until” (← Arabic *ḥattā*).
- **breve** = “short, brief,” from Latin **brevis**, “*short*.”

You already own *brevis* in English, several times over:

- **brief** — short (a *brief* meeting; a legal *brief*).
- **brevity** — shortness (“brevity is the soul of wit”).
- **abbreviate**, **abridge** — to make short.
- even the musical **breve** and the little **breve** mark [˘] over a short vowel.

So *até breve* is “**until** [a] **short** [while]” — see you before long. It’s a touch warmer and less fixed than *até logo*; both mean “see you soon.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “até breve” — *ah-TEH BREH-vee*

- “breve” then English “brief, brevity, abbreviate” — one root
- the three *até* goodbyes — até logo / até amanhã / até breve

Before you move on

What does *breve* mean, and its English cousins? (“Short” — brief, brevity, abbreviate.) So *até breve* literally says? (“Until a short while” → see you soon.) Next: put the Portuguese goodbyes together.

4.5 Practice — saying goodbye in Portuguese

No new words. You can now greet, ask *tudo bem?*, and **close** the conversation. Run the goodbyes until the right one is automatic.

You’ll want to know: The closings

Final / formal — the “to God” goodbye:

— Foi um prazer. **Adeus!**

Everyday “see you” — pick the *até* that fits:

— **Até logo!** (see you later / soon) — **Até amanhã!** (see you tomorrow) — **Até breve!** (see you soon)

Casual chain — greet and part:

— Olá! Tudo bem? ... **Até logo!** — **Até!** (Brazilians often clip it to just “*até!*”)

What you’ve built this chapter

- **adeus** — goodbye (“to God”; the *adiós* / *adieu* / *addio* family, and English *goodbye* = “God be with ye”).
- **até logo** — see you later (*até* ← **Arabic** *ḥattā*, twin of Spanish *hasta*; *logo* ← *locō*, kin of *luego*). *Até logo* = *hasta luego*.
- **até amanhã** — see you tomorrow (*amanhã* ← *ad mānēāna*, kin of *mañana*; the *nh* = Spanish *ñ*).

- **até breve** — see you soon (*breve* ← *brevis*, “short” — brief/brevity).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- greet, ask, and close — “Olá! Tudo bem? ... Até amanhã!”
- choose the right goodbye — leaving for good / till tomorrow / soon
- *até logo* and Spanish *hasta luego* — twins, Arabic *até/hasta* and all

Twice through: Open and close a whole tiny exchange without stopping.

Before you move on

Which Portuguese goodbye means “to God”? (*Adeus*.) Which word inside the *até* goodbyes came from Arabic, and what’s its Spanish twin? (*Até* ← *ḥattā* — Spanish *hasta*.) You can now run a Portuguese conversation start to finish — the full greet-to-goodbye arc.

Chapter 5

The First Verbs

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

***By the end of this chapter:** I can build my own Portuguese sentences with -ar verbs and say what I speak, where I live and where I work.*

Conjugate falar, morar and trabalhar across eu, tu and você with the pronoun dropped, then answer Você fala português? and Onde você mora? about yourself.

5.1 falar — “to speak,” and the *f* that Spanish lost

Until now you’ve assembled fixed phrases. **Falar** (“to speak”) is your first real **verb** and the model for the large **-ar** family. Its first letter also hides a beautiful contrast with Spanish.

Sounds you’ll need

- **final-r** — **falar** = *fah-LAR*, tapped final *r*. The stem is *fal-*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

falar comes from Latin **fabulārī**, “to chat, to tell tales” — from **fābula**, “a story” (→ English **fable**, **fabulous**, **confabulate**). The same Latin verb as Spanish **hablar** — but here’s the twist: **Portuguese kept the Latin *f*-; Spanish turned *f*- into *h*-**. So the two “speak” verbs diverge at letter one, and the pattern runs through

the whole vocabulary:

Latin (f-)	Portuguese (f-)	Spanish (h-, silent)
<i>fabulārī</i>	falar	hablar
<i>farīna</i>	farinha (flour)	harina
<i>filīus</i>	filho (son)	hijo
<i>facere</i>	fazer (to do)	hacer
<i>ferrum</i>	ferro (iron)	hierro

So when a Spanish word starts with a silent *h*, its Portuguese twin usually still has the honest Latin *f* — *hijo/filho*, *hacer/fazer*. Portuguese is the more conservative sister here.

Grammar Lens: the -ar present tense (pro-drop)

Drop **-ar** to get *fal-*, then add the endings:

person	ending	<i>falar</i> →
(eu)	-o	falo (I speak)
(tu)	-as	falas (you speak)
(você/ele/ela)	-a	fala
(nós)	-amos	falamos
(vocês/eles)	-am	falam

Like Spanish and Italian, **Portuguese drops the subject pronoun** — *falo* already says “I,” so no *eu* needed. (Portuguese joins the *drop* camp: ES, PT, IT drop; FR, DE keep.)

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “falar” — *fah-LAR*
- “falo, falas, fala” — no *eu* needed
- *falar* ↔ *hablar*, *filho* ↔ *hijo* — Portuguese keeps the *f*, Spanish drops it to silent *h*

Before you move on

What Latin verb is *falar* from, and which Spanish verb is its twin? (*fabulārī* — Spanish *hablar*.) What sound-law separates them?

(Portuguese kept *f*-; Spanish shifted *f*- → *h*-: *filho/hijo*.) Does Portuguese keep or drop the pronoun? (Drops it.) Next: **morar**, “to live.”

5.2 **morar** — “to live,” i.e. to *linger* somewhere

A second **-ar** verb — and a distinctive Portuguese choice. Where its sisters say “live” with *habitāre* (“keep having a place”), everyday Portuguese uses **morar** — from a verb that means to **linger**.

Sounds you’ll need

- **morar** = *moh-RAR*, tapped final *r*, clean vowels.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

morar comes from Latin **morārī**, “to delay, to linger, to tarry, to stay a while.” To *dwell* somewhere is, in Portuguese, to *linger* there — a softer, more temporary image than “keeping” a place. That *morārī* root survives in English in a couple of unexpected words:

- **moratorium** — an official *delay* (a pause on payments or actions).
- **demur** — to *linger* / *hesitate*, to raise an objection (*without demur*).

(Portuguese does also have *habitar* — the *habitāre* verb its sisters use — but it’s formal; **morar** is what you actually say: *Onde você mora?*, “Where do you live?”)

Grammar Lens: same -ar template

| (eu) moro · (tu) moras · (você) mora | (-o / -as / -a) |
 | moramos · moram | |

Moro em Lisboa. — “I live in Lisbon.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “morar” — *moh-RAR*
- “moro, moras, mora”
- “Onde você mora?” — “Where do you live?”; “morar” ↔ *moratorium*

Before you move on

What Latin verb is *morar* from, and what did it mean? (*morārī* — “to delay / linger.”) English cousins? (*Moratorium*, *demur*.) Say “I live in Lisbon.” (*Moro em Lisboa*.) Next: **trabalhar**, “to work.”

5.3 trabalhar — “to work,” and the torture returns

A third **-ar** verb — and Portuguese rejoins its Iberian sister on one of the darkest etymologies anywhere. **trabalhar** (“to work”), like Spanish *trabajar*, began as a word for **torture**.

Sounds you’ll need

- nasal-anha — the **-lh-** is a *ly* glide (as in Spanish *ll*):
trabalhar = *tra-ba-LYAR*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

trabalhar comes from Vulgar Latin **tripaliāre**, “to torture” — from **tripalium**, a Roman instrument of torture made of **three stakes** (*tri-* “three” + *pālus* “stake” → English *pale*, *impale*). *Torture* → *toil* → *work*, and English took the same road: **travail** (painful effort) → **travel** (a journey was an ordeal).

So Portuguese and Spanish are **twins** here — *trabalhar* and *trabajar*, both from *tripaliāre*. Only the middle consonant differs: Latin *-li-* became Portuguese **-lh-** (*trabalhar*) and Spanish **-j-** (*trabajar*). And this puts the “work” verbs of the five languages into two neat camps:

- **Torture** (*tripalium*): Portuguese *trabalhar*, Spanish *trabajar*, French *travailler*.

- **Labour** (*labor*): Italian *lavorare*.

Three languages remember work as *torture*; only Italy remembers it as *labour*.

Grammar Lens: same -ar template

| (eu) trabalho · (tu) trabalhas · (você) trabalha | (-o / -as / -a) |

Trabalho no Porto. — “I work in Porto.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “trabalhar” — *tra-ba-LYAR*
- “trabalho, trabalhas, trabalha”
- trabalhar ↔ trabajar (twins) → travail → travel — torture to journey

Before you move on

What did *trabalhar* originally mean, and from what device? (“To torture,” ← *tripalium*, three stakes.) Its Spanish twin, and the one difference? (*trabajar*; Latin *-li-* → PT *-lh-* / ES *-j-*.) Which language uses “labour” instead? (Italian, *lavorare*.) Next: your first sentence — **Falo português**.

5.4 Falo português — your first real sentence

The payoff: you take a **verb** you conjugated and a **noun**, and build a sentence no one handed you — *Falo português*, “I speak Portuguese.” (*Falo* covers both “I speak” and “I’m speaking.”)

You’ll want to know: The new word: português

português = “Portuguese,” from **Portus Cale** — a Roman-era port at the mouth of the **Douro** river (today’s **Porto** / **Oporto**). *Portus* is Latin “port, harbour” (→ English **port**, **portal**, **import**); **Cale** is older and debated —

perhaps Celtic for “harbour/shelter,” or Latin *cālidus* “warm.” So *Portugal* began as a single **harbour town**, whose name spread to the whole country and its language. Say it *por-too-**GESH*** (final *-s* = *sh* in Portugal).

You’ll want to know: The sentence, assembled

Falo (I speak, from *falar*) + **português** = **Falo português**.

A complete, grammatical Portuguese sentence. As before:

- **No *eu*.** The *-o* of *falo* says “I” — Portuguese drops the pronoun (like Spanish and Italian).
- **No article** on the language: *falo português*.

With this, **all five languages** you’ve been building now cross the same line — from reciting phrases to **making sentences**:

	“I speak/learn [language]”
Spanish	Hablo español
Portuguese	Falo português
Italian	Parlo italiano
French	Je parle français
German	Ich lerne Deutsch

Swap the pieces: **Moro em Lisboa. · Trabalho no Porto. · Você fala português?**

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “Falo português” — *FAH-loo por-too-GESH*
- drop the *eu* — Portuguese doesn’t need it
- “português” ← *Portus Cale*, a single harbour town that named a nation

Before you move on

Where does *português* come from? (*Portus Cale*, a port at the Douro’s mouth → Porto.) In *Falo português*, why no *eu* and no

article? (The *-o* is “I”; languages take no article.) Which three of the five languages drop the pronoun? (Spanish, Portuguese, Italian.) Next: practice.

5.5 Practice — making sentences with -ar verbs

For the first time you’re **building** Portuguese sentences from a pattern. Drill the three verbs until the endings are automatic — and remember, Portuguese drops the *eu*.

Your turn: conjugate on command

Run each through *eu* / *tu* / *você* (pronoun dropped in speech):

- **falar**: falo · falas · fala
- **morar**: moro · moras · mora
- **trabalhar**: trabalho · trabalhas · trabalha

Same endings every time (**-o** / **-as** / **-a**), no pronoun needed.

Your turn: say something real

— **Você fala** português? — **Falo** um pouco. E você? — Também. **Onde** você **mora**? — **Moro** em Lisboa, e **trabalho** no Porto. — Obrigado! — De nada.

What you’ve built this chapter

- the regular **-ar present tense** — drop *-ar*, add *-o/-as/-a/-amos/-am*; pronoun **dropped** (like Spanish, Italian).
- **falar** (← *fabulārī* → fable; twin of Spanish *hablar* but with the *f* kept), **morar** (← *morārī* “to linger” → moratorium — a root no sibling uses), **trabalhar** (← *tripalium* “torture”; twin of *trabajar*).
- **Falo português** (← *Portus Cale*, a harbour town) — first self-assembled sentence, and the **fifth language** to cross from phrases into sentences.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- conjugate all three verbs, eu/tu/você — no pronoun spoken
- answer about yourself — what you speak, where you live, where you work
- chain it — “Olá! Falo português. Você fala português? ... Até logo!”

Twice through: “Você fala português? — Falo um pouco.”

Before you move on

What are the three singular *-ar* endings? (*-o* / *-as* / *-a*.) Give the “I” forms of the three verbs. (*Falo, moro, trabalho.*) *falar* vs Spanish *hablar* — what’s the sound-law difference? (Portuguese kept *f*; Spanish shifted *f*→*h*.) Portuguese now moves in real sentences — this book has handed over rules, not phrases.

Chapter 6

Numbers One to Ten

Modes: 👁 eyes (2) ⇄ Hands-free start: none of the 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can count from one to ten in Portuguese and hear the old numbers still sitting inside setembro and dezembro.

Count um to dez, pair sete, oito, nove and dez with setembro, outubro, novembro and dezembro, and hear Latin's -ct- become the -it- of oito, noite and leite.

6.1 um, dois, três, quatro, cinco — counting to five

Portuguese counts almost like its sister Spanish — but with two signature Portuguese twists: heavy **nasal vowels**, and a number that still **changes for gender** where Spanish long stopped. Spanish twins are beside each.

Sounds you'll need

- **nasal-um** — **um** is nasal: *oong* said softly through the nose, no real *m*. (The *-m* is just the spelling for nasality, as in *sim*, *bom*.)
- **open-e** — **três** = *trehs* with an open *e* and the circumflex marking it.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Portuguese	← Latin	Spanish twin	English cousins
um (1)	<i>ūnus</i>	<i>uno</i>	unit, union, unique (and <i>a/an, one</i>)
dois (2)	<i>duo</i>	<i>dos</i>	duo, dual, double
três (3)	<i>trēs</i>	<i>tres</i>	trio, triple, triangle
quatro (4)	<i>quattuor</i>	<i>cuatro</i>	quart, quarter, quadrant
cinco (5)	<i>quīnque</i>	<i>cinco</i>	quintet, quintessence

Cinco is spelled **identically** to Spanish — the two closest sisters. But watch *two*.

Grammar Lens: um/uma and the gendered “two” (dois/duas)

um is also “a/an,” gendered **um** (masc.) / **uma** (fem.): *um café, uma cerveja*. That much matches Spanish. The surprise is **two**: Portuguese still inflects it — **dois** (masc.) / **duas** (fem.) — a direct survival of Latin *duo* (masc.) / *duae* (fem.). So it’s *dois cafés* but *duas cervejas*. Spanish levelled this to a single *dos* centuries ago; Portuguese kept the old split. The rest (*três, quatro, cinco*) don’t change.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “um, dois, três, quatro, cinco” — count up
- the gendered two — “dois cafés” (masc.) / “duas cervejas” (fem.)
- each with its English cousin — “dois/duo, três/trio, cinco/quintet”

Before you move on

Give 1–5 in Portuguese. (*Um, dois, três, quatro, cinco.*) Which number still changes for gender, and how? (*Two — dois / duas*, ← Latin *duo/duae*.) What does *um/uma* mean besides “one”? (“A/an.”) Next: **6–10**, where a Portuguese sound-shift is on full display.

6.2 seis, sete, oito, nove, dez — and the calendar’s secret

The rest of the way to ten. Like Spanish, Portuguese hides the calendar fact — **setembro–dezembro are Latin for 7, 8, 9, 10** — and one number, *oito*, puts a signature Portuguese sound-shift on full display.

Sounds you’ll need

- diphthong-oi — **oito** = *OY-too*, **dois** rhymes with it: the *oi* glide.
- **dez** = *dehs* (open *e*); the final -z is a soft “sh”/“s” in Portugal, “s” in Brazil.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Portuguese	← Latin	Spanish twin	English cousins
seis (6)	<i>sex</i>	<i>seis</i>	sextet, sextant
sete (7)	<i>septem</i>	<i>siete</i>	setembro (the 7th month!), septet
oito (8)	<i>octō</i>	<i>ocho</i>	outubro (8th), octave, octopus
nove (9)	<i>novem</i>	<i>nueve</i>	novembro (9th), novena
dez (10)	<i>decem</i>	<i>diez</i>	dezembro (10th), decimal, dízimo

The star is **oito**. Latin *octō* had a *-ct-* cluster, and Portuguese turned every Latin *-ct-* into **-it-**: *octō* → *oito*, *noctem* → *noite* (“night”), *lactem* → *leite* (“milk”), *factum* → *feito* (“done”). So *oito*, *noite*, and *leite* all carry the same fingerprint — once you spot the *-it-*, you can often guess the Latin word had a *-ct-*. (Spanish took a different path: *octō* → *ocho*, with *-ct-* → *-ch-*. Same cluster, two sisters, two solutions — *oito* vs *ocho*.)

Grammar Lens: why the months are “off by two”

Setembro means “7th,” yet sits **9th**. The old **Roman year began in March**, so *September* really was the seventh; *julho* and *agosto* (July, August) were inserted later and shoved the counting months down. The Latin numbers stuck to the month names. Every *dezembro*, you’re saying Roman “**ten**” — and *dez* also gave Portuguese *dízimo*, a “tithe” (a tenth), the twin of English *dime*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “seis, sete, oito, nove, dez” — finish the count

- “sete/setembro, oito/outubro, nove/novembro, dez/dezembro”
- the *-ct-* → *-it-* set — “oito, noite, leite” — then Spanish “ocho”

Before you move on

Give 6–10 in Portuguese. (*Seis, sete, oito, nove, dez.*) What Latin cluster became *-it-* in *oito*, and one more example? (*-ct-*; *noite* ← *noctem* / *leite* ← *lactem.*) Why is *dezembro* Latin for “ten”? (The Roman year began in March.) Next chapter builds on this toward time and days.

Chapter 7

Days of the Week

Modes: 👁 eyes (2) ⇌ Hands-free start: none of the 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name all seven Portuguese days and count the weekdays from domingo the way Portuguese does.

Run domingo, segunda, terça, quarta, quinta, sexta, sábado, and explain why Monday is the second day: domingo, the Lord's day, is counted first.

7.1 segunda to sexta — the week that got numbered

Here Portuguese does something **no other Romance language does**. French, Italian, and Spanish all name their weekdays for planet-gods (*lundi, lunedì, lunes* = the Moon). Portuguese threw the pagan gods out and **numbered** the days instead — and the numbers are the very ones you just learned.

Why it's said this way

In the 6th century, **Martinho de Braga**, a bishop in what is now northern Portugal, refused to let Christians name days after *Mars* and *Jupiter*. Borrowing the Church's word for the numbered holy days of Easter week, he called them **feiras** — and Portuguese alone kept the system for **every** week.

feira ← Latin *fēria*, “a feast-day / a day free of work.” (The same *fēria* drifted, elsewhere, into “market/fair” — English **fair** is its cousin, because markets were held on feast-days.)

Grammar Lens: The pattern: [ordinal] + feira

Portuguese	means	← ordinal of	(cardinal you learned)
segunda -feira (Mon)	“2nd feast-day”	<i>secundus</i> “second”	<i>dois</i> (2)
terça -feira (Tue)	“3rd”	<i>tertius</i> “third”	<i>três</i> (3)
quarta -feira (Wed)	“4th”	<i>quartus</i> “fourth”	<i>quatro</i> (4)
quinta -feira (Thu)	“5th”	<i>quintus</i> “fifth”	<i>cinco</i> (5)
sexta -feira (Fri)	“6th”	<i>sextus</i> “sixth”	<i>seis</i> (6)

So *quarta-feira* is literally “**fourth** feast-day,” and you can hear *quatro* (4) inside *quarta*. In everyday speech the “-feira” is often dropped: “*Até segunda!*” — “See you Monday!” (Why does Monday start at **two**, not one? Because Sunday is counted as the *first* day — the next lesson closes that loop.)

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “segunda, terça, quarta, quinta, sexta” — Monday through Friday
- hear the number in each — “quarta ← quatro (4), quinta ← cinco (5), sexta ← seis (6)”
- drop the tail — “Até sexta!” (“See you Friday!”)

Before you move on

How is Portuguese unique among Romance languages here? (It **numbers** its weekdays — *feiras* — instead of naming planet-gods.) What does *feira* mean, and its English cousin? (“Feast-day,” ← *fēria*; English *fair*.) What number hides in *quinta-feira*? (Five — *quinta* ← *quintus*, cousin of *cinco*.) Next: the two days that **kept** their old names — *sábado* and *domingo*.

7.2 sábado and domingo — and why Monday is “the second”

Five weekdays got numbered — but two kept their names. *Sábado* and *domingo* are the **religious anchors** of the Portuguese week, and *domingo* is the key that explains why the counting started where it did.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Portuguese	← Latin	meaning	shared with
sábado	<i>Sabbatum</i> ← Hebrew <i>shabbāt</i>	the “ Sabbath ,” rest-day	Spanish <i>sábado</i> , Italian <i>sabato</i> , French <i>samedi</i>
domingo	<i>(diēs)</i> <i>Dominica</i> ← <i>Dominus</i>	“the Lord’s day”	Spanish <i>domingo</i> , Italian <i>domenica</i>

- **sábado** is the **Sabbath**, from Hebrew *shabbāt* “to rest” — the one weekend name every Romance language shares (even numbering-mad Portuguese kept it).
- **domingo** is “the **Lord’s** day,” *diēs Dominica*, from *Dominus* “lord, master” (→ English *dominion*, *dominate*, *dame*).

Grammar Lens: domingo is “day one” — so Monday is “day two”

Now the loop closes. The Church counted **domingo (Sunday)** as the **first day** of the week — *prima feria*, the Lord’s day, the start. That’s why:

domingo = 1st → **segunda**-feira (Monday) = **2nd** → terça (3rd) → ... → sexta (Friday) = 6th → sábado (Saturday) = 7th.

Monday isn’t the first weekday in this system — it’s the day **after** the Lord’s day, the *second*. So *segunda-feira* (“second feast-day”) makes perfect sense once you know Sunday was counted first. The whole week is a countdown anchored on *domingo*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the full week — “domingo, segunda, terça, quarta, quinta, sexta, sábado”
- the anchors — “sábado = Sabbath, domingo = the Lord’s day”
- the logic — “domingo is 1st, so segunda (Monday) is 2nd”

Before you move on

Give all seven Portuguese days. (*Domingo, segunda ... sábado.*) What does *domingo* mean, and why does that make Monday “*segunda*”? (“The **Lord’s** day”; Sunday is counted **first**, so Monday is the **second**.) Which weekend name do all the Romance languages share? (*Sábado* — the Sabbath.) Next chapter builds on this toward telling the time.

Chapter 8

Telling Time

Modes:  voice (1)  eyes (1)  Hands-free start: first 1 of 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can tell the time in Portuguese and use meio-dia and meia-noite for the two hours that take no number.

Say meio-dia and meia-noite, split each into meio or meia plus dia or noite, and catch noctem → noite as the same shift that gave oito.

8.1 hora — the hour, said in full

Portuguese “hour” is **hora**, from Latin **hōra** (← Greek *hōrā*) — the same word behind Spanish *hora*, French *heure*, and English *hour*. And unlike Italian, which hides the word, Portuguese keeps **horas** right out loud.

Sounds you’ll need

- **silent-h** — the **h** of *hora* is silent (as everywhere in Portuguese): say *OH-ra*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

hora ← Latin **hōra** ← Greek **hōrā**, “a time of day.” Portuguese kept the Latin spelling’s silent *h*-, exactly as English *hour* does. Line the sisters up: *hora* / *hora* / *heure* / *Uhr* / *hour* — one Roman word (itself Greek-born) fanned across five languages.

Grammar Lens: “é uma hora” but “são duas horas”

Portuguese states the word **horas** in full, and the verb agrees with the number:

É uma hora. — “It is one o’clock.” (singular: *é* “it is” + *uma hora*) **São duas horas.** — “It is two o’clock.” (plural: *são* “they are” + *duas horas*) **São dez horas.** — “It is ten o’clock.”

Literally “**they are** two **hours**.” Two things to notice, both from earlier chapters: the verb is **é** (one) vs **são** (two or more), like Italian *è/sono*; and **two** still shows gender — *duas horas* (feminine, agreeing with *horas*), the *dois/duas* split you met in the numbers.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “hora” — *OH-ra*, silent h
- “é uma hora ... são duas horas, são três horas”
- “duas horas” — feminine *duas*, not *dois*

Before you move on

What word is *hora* from, and its Spanish twin? (Latin *hōra* ← Greek *hōrā*; Spanish *hora*.) Why “*são duas horas*” but “*é uma hora*”? (Plural takes *são*; one o’clock is singular *é*.) Why *duas* and not *dois*? (*Horas* is feminine — the *dois/duas* gender split.) Next: **meio-dia** and **meia-noite** — noon and midnight.

8.2 meio-dia and meia-noite — noon and midnight

Two named hours: **meio-dia** is noon; **meia-noite** is midnight. Each names the **middle** of the day or night, and *meia-noite* hides a sound-shift you already met in the numbers.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Both phrases begin with **meio/meia**, “half, middle.” It comes from Latin **medius/media**, cousin of English *mid*, *medium* and Spanish *medio*:

Portuguese	=	← Latin	literally
meio-dia	<i>meio + dia</i>	<i>medius + diēs</i>	“ mid-day ” (noon)
meia-noite	<i>meia + noite</i>	<i>media + noctem</i>	“ mid-night ” (midnight)

- **meio-dia** = “mid-day.” *dia* (“day”) ← *diēs*; *meio* is masculine (agreeing with the masculine *dia*).
- **meia-noite** = “mid-night.” *meia* is **feminine** (for the feminine *noite*) — the *meio/meia* gender pair, like the *dois/duas* you know. And look at **noite**: it comes from Latin **noctem**, and the *-ct-* became *-it-* — *noctem* → *noite* — the **very same ct→it shift** that turned *octō* into *oito* (“8”) in the numbers chapter. Spot *-it-* and you can often guess a Latin *-ct-* underneath.

To use them, they *are* the hour:

É meio-dia. — “It is noon.” **É meia-noite.** — “It is midnight.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “meio-dia” (noon), “meia-noite” (midnight)
- break them — “meio (middle) + dia (day)”, “meia + noite (night)”
- the shift — “noite ← noctem, like oito ← octō”

Before you move on

What do *meio-dia* and *meia-noite* literally mean? (“Mid-day” and “mid-night.”) Why *meia-noite* but *meio-dia*? (*meia* feminine for *noite*, *meio* masculine for *dia*.) What earlier sound-shift is inside

noite? (*ct*→*it*: *noctem* → *noite*, like *octō* → *oito*.) Next chapter builds on this toward months and family.

Chapter 9

Months and Seasons

Modes:  voice (1)  eyes (1)  Hands-free start: none of the 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the Portuguese months and seasons and explain how verão grew out of a word for spring.

Give a primavera, o verão, o outono, o inverno, then trace verão back through vēranum to vēr, spring — the summer word grown out of the spring one.

9.1 os meses — the gods and numbers of the calendar

The Portuguese months are the Roman procession of gods and Caesars, worn down the Portuguese way. And two things you know pay off: *março* is the war-god, and *setembro–dezembro* are the Latin numbers 7–10.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Portuguese	← Latin	who / what	Spanish twin
janeiro	<i>Januarius</i>	Janus , god of beginnings	<i>enero</i>
fevereiro	<i>Februarius</i>	the <i>Februa</i> purification	<i>febrero</i>
março	<i>Martius</i>	Mars , the war-god	<i>marzo</i>
abril	<i>Aprilis</i>	<i>aperire</i> “to open”	<i>abril</i>
maio	<i>Maius</i>	Maia , growth-goddess	<i>mayo</i>
junho	<i>Junius</i>	Juno , queen of gods	<i>junio</i>
julho	<i>Julius</i>	Julius Caesar	<i>julio</i>
agosto	<i>Augustus</i>	emperor Augustus	<i>agosto</i>
setembro	<i>september</i>	“ 7th ” (<i>septem</i>)	<i>septiembre</i>
outubro	<i>october</i>	“ 8th ” (<i>octo</i>)	<i>octubre</i>
novembro	<i>november</i>	“ 9th ” (<i>novem</i>)	<i>noviembre</i>
dezembro	<i>december</i>	“ 10th ” (<i>decem</i>)	<i>diciembre</i>

Portuguese tells: *janeiro/fevereiro* kept the *-eiro* ending (← *-arius*, the same suffix in *feira*), and *setembro/dezembro* echo the numbers *sete/dez* you learned. Two payoffs:

- **março = Mars.** The war-god’s month, the same Mars behind English *March*.
- **setembro...dezembro = 7...10.** Still the Latin numbers, because the Roman year began in **March**; then *julho* (Julius) and *agosto* (Augustus) were inserted and pushed the count down two.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the twelve — “janeiro, fevereiro, março ... novembro, dezembro”
- “março = Mars, the war-god”

- “setembro = 7 (sete), dezembro = 10 (dez)”

Before you move on

Which god is *março* named for? (**Mars**, the war-god.) Why is *dezembro* Latin for “ten”? (The Roman year began in March.) Which two months honour real **people**? (*Julho* — Julius; *agosto* — Augustus.) Next: the **estações**, the seasons.

9.2 as estações — the seasons, and a shifting summer

Four seasons — and a small mystery in one of them. Portuguese’s word for **summer**, *verão*, didn’t come from a “heat” word like French *été*. It grew out of the word for **spring**. Here’s how.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Portuguese	← Latin	literally
a primavera (spring)	<i>prīma vēra</i>	“ first spring / first green ” (<i>prima</i> + <i>ver</i> “spring”)
o verão (summer)	<i>vēranum (tempus)</i>	“the spring-like / warm season” (← <i>vēr</i> “spring”!)
o outono (autumn)	<i>autumnus</i>	“autumn” (<i>ct/tumn</i> → <i>ut</i> : <i>autumnus</i> → <i>outono</i>)
o inverno (winter)	<i>hibernum</i>	“the wintry season” (cousin of <i>hibernate</i>)

The twist is in the first two, both born from Latin **vēr**, “spring”:

- **primavera** = *prima* + *ver*: “the **first** spring / first green” — the year’s opening season (shared with Spanish and Italian).
- **verão** ← *vēranum*, which meant “**spring-like**, of the growing season.” Warmth crept forward on the calendar, and the word slid with it — so Portuguese’s “summer” literally *grew out of* “spring.” (Spanish did the same: *verano*.)

And **outono** ← *autumnus* shows a familiar Portuguese move: the *au...t* smoothed to **ou**, the same softening you saw in *oito* and *noite*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “a primavera, o verão, o outono, o inverno”
- the twist — “verão ← veranum ← ver (spring): summer from spring”
- “inverno ~ hibernate”; “outono ← autumnus”

Before you move on

Name the four Portuguese seasons. (*Primavera, verão, outono, inverno*.) What’s surprising about *verão*’s origin? (It comes from *vēr* “**spring**” — the summer-word grew out of the spring-word.) What does *primavera* literally mean? (“**First spring / first green**.”) Next chapter builds on this toward family and food.

Chapter 10

Family

Modes: ⇄ voice (2) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name my parents and my siblings in Portuguese and say why irmão is not built on Latin's frater.

Say *o pai*, *a mãe*, *o irmão*, *a irmã* with their nasal endings, then cut *frāter germānus* down to *germānus* alone and land on *irmão*, twin of Spanish *hermano*.

10.1 o pai, a mãe — the family words worn to the bone

Every Romance sister descends from *pater* and *māter*, but **Portuguese wore them down the furthest**. Italian kept *padre/madre*; French *père/mère*; Portuguese dissolved the middle consonant entirely, leaving the one-syllable **pai** and the nasal **mãe**.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

- **o pai** (“father”) ← Latin **pater**. Portuguese dropped the intervocalic **-t-** completely: *pater* → *pae* → *pai*. The same disappearing--*t-* you saw in Ch.1’s *noite* is here taken all the way to a bare diphthong.
- **a mãe** (“mother”) ← Latin **māter**. Same loss of *-t-*, and the *a* soaked up a nasal from the lost *-n/-m-* environment → the tilde vowel **ã** (*mãe* = “mahng-ee,” nasal).

Articles: *o* pai (masculine), *a* mãe (feminine).

Grammar Lens: The plural trick — os pais

Portuguese says **os pais** for “**the parents**” — but literally it is “**the fathers**.” Like Spanish *los padres*, the masculine plural **covers a mixed group**: one father + one mother = *os pais*. (And mind the spelling twin: **o país** — with an accent — means “**the country**”; *os pais* / *os países* are a classic pair to keep straight.)

The learned adjectives, borrowed back from Latin, still show the old root: **paternal**, **maternal** — so *pai* and *paternal* are the worn-down and the dressed-up versions of the same word.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*o pai, a mãe*” — *mãe* fully nasal
- the erosion — “*pater* → *pae* → **pai**; the *-t-* vanished”
- “*os pais* = the parents (lit. ‘the fathers’); mind *o país* = country”

Before you move on

Give “father” and “mother” with articles. (***o pai, a mãe***.) What happened to the *-t-* of *pater/māter* in Portuguese? (It **vanished** — *pater* → *pae* → *pai*.) What does **os pais** mean literally and in use? (Literally “the fathers”; in use, “**the parents**.”) What word does *o país* (accented) mean? (The **country** — a spelling trap.) Next: ***o irmão, a irmã*** — and a surprise about where “brother” comes from.

10.2 *o irmão, a irmã* — the brother who isn’t a “frater”

French and Italian build “brother” from Latin *frāter* (*frère*, *fratello*). Portuguese — and Spanish with it — does something completely different, and it is one of the best etymologies in the whole language.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

- **o irmão** (“brother”) and **a irmã** (“sister”) come **not** from *frāter* but from Latin **germānus**, meaning “**genuine, of the same stock, born of the same parents.**”
- The Romans said **frāter germānus** — a “**full** brother,” one sharing both parents, as opposed to a half-brother. Over time Iberian speakers **dropped the *frāter*** and kept the adjective: (*frāter*) *germānus* → *irmão*. So a Portuguese brother is literally a “**full-blood** one.”

Articles: *o* irmão (masc.), *a* irmã (fem.); the masculine plural **os irmãos** covers a mixed set (“siblings”), exactly as *os pais* did for parents.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

That same *germānus* “of the same stock” fans out in English:

- **germane** — “relevant, closely related” (originally “having the same parents”).
- **German** — the **people-name!** The Romans called the tribes across the Rhine *Germani*, plausibly “the genuine/kindred ones.” So *irmão* (“brother”) and *German* (the nation) spring from one Latin word for **kinship**.

Spanish made the **identical** swap — *hermano* / *hermana* — so Portuguese *irmão* and Spanish *hermano* are twins, both meaning “full-blood brother,” both leaving *frāter* behind (kept only in bookish *fraternal* / *fraterno*).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o irmão, a irmã” — both nasal endings
- the origin — “*frāter germānus* → drop *frāter* → **irmão**, ‘full brother’”
- the cousins — “*germano* → *germane*, and *German* the people”

- the twin — “Portuguese *irmão* = Spanish *hermano*”

Before you move on

Give “brother” and “sister” with articles. (**o irmão, a irmã.**) What Latin word are they from — and what did it mean? (**germānus** — “genuine, of the same parents”; from *frāter germānus*, “full brother.”) Name two English cousins of *germānus*. (**germane**; **German**, the people-name.) What is the Spanish twin of *irmão*? (*hermano*.) Next chapter: sentences about the whole family.

Chapter 11

Bread, Water, and Wine

Modes: ⇄ voice (2) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name bread, water and wine in Portuguese and hear the -nh- of vinho as Spanish’s ñ.

Say o pão, a água and o vinho, hold água against French’s worn-down eau, and pronounce the palatal -nh- of vinho, already met in amanhã.

11.1 o pão — bread, worn down to a hum

o pão (“bread”) — and Portuguese does to it exactly what it did to “father.” Just as *pater* eroded to the one-syllable **pai**, Latin *pānis* wore down to the single **nasal** syllable **pão** (“**powng**”). Same word as French *pain* and Italian *pane*, taken furthest.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

- **o pão** (“bread”) ← Latin **pānis**. The intervocalic -n- dissolved and left its **nasality** behind on the vowel: *pānis* → *pāe* → *pão*, the tilde marking the hum — the identical process behind **pai** (← *pater*) and **mãe** (← *māter*) from the family chapter. Masculine: *o* pão; the plural is the tricky **pães**.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Even worn to a hum, the root keeps its English relatives: **companion** / **company** (*com-* + *pānis*, “one you **share bread with**”), **pantry**, **pannier**. So *pão* and *companion* are the near-vanished and the

well-preserved ends of one Latin word.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o pão” — fully nasal, “powng”; plural “pães”
- the parallel — “*pater* → **pai**, *pānis* → **pão** — same nasal erosion”
- “pão → companion, pantry”

Before you move on

Give “bread” with its article. (**o pão**.) What Latin word is it from, and what happened to it? (*pānis* — worn to a single **nasal** syllable, *pānis* → *pão*.) Which family word followed the *same* erosion? (**pai**, ← *pater* — and *mãe* ← *māter*.) Next: **a água** and **o vinho** — water and wine.

11.2 a água, o vinho — water and wine

Two drinks, two more sound-stories. Portuguese kept **água** close to Latin *aqua* (unlike French, which dissolved it to *eau*), and it stamps **vinho** with its signature spelling — the **-nh-**.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

- **a água** (“water”) ← Latin **aqua**. Portuguese held its body — *aqua* → *água* — where French wore it down to a single vowel (*eau*). The accent on **á** marks the stress. It’s **feminine**: *a água*. English kept the loud original in **aquatic**, **aquarium**, **aqueduct**.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

- **o vinho** (“wine”) ← Latin **vīnum**. The **-nh-** is Portuguese’s palatal *ny* sound — the **same sound** as Spanish **ñ** (*viño* → *vinho*), French/Italian **gn**, and the *nh* you already met in *amanhã* (“tomorrow”). One sound, four spellings across the sisters. The word still gives English **wine**, **vine**, **vinegar**,

vintage. Masculine: *o* vinho.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “a água, o vinho” — stress the *á*; *-nh-* = palatal *ny*
- the contrast — “*aqua* → **água** (kept), French **eau** (worn away)”
- “the *nh* of *vinho* = Spanish *ñ*, met before in *amanhã*”

Before you move on

Give “water” and “wine” with articles. (**a água, o vinho.**) How does *água* compare with French *eau*, from the same *aqua*? (Portuguese **kept** the body; French wore it to a vowel.) What sound is the **-nh-** in *vinho*, and its Spanish twin? (A palatal *ny* — Spanish **ñ**.) Next chapter: asking for these at a table.

Chapter 12

Numbers Eleven to Twenty

Modes: 👁 eyes (2) ⇌ Hands-free start: none of the 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can count from eleven to twenty in Portuguese and read dezesseis as the little sentence ten-and-six that it is.

Run onze to vinte, hear dez e seis inside dezesseis, and note that Portuguese breaks from the fused teens at 16, a number earlier than French or Italian.

12.1 onze → quinze — the short list

Portuguese inherited the same welded Latin teens as its sisters — but it kept **fewer of them than anyone**. Just **five**. After *quinze* (15), it starts over with a completely different, much plainer method.

Grammar Lens: The five fusions

	Portuguese	← Latin	build
11	onze	<i>ūndecim</i>	“one-ten”
12	doze	<i>duodecim</i>	“two-ten”
13	treze	<i>trēdecim</i>	“three-ten”
14	catorze	<i>quattuordecim</i>	“four-ten”
15	quinze	<i>quīndecim</i>	“five-ten”

The shared **-ze** is Latin **decem** (“ten”) worn thin — the same ten inside **dez** (10) and **dezembro** (the old 10th month, from Chapter 9).

The digit sits at the front: *dois*→*do-*, *três*→*tre-*, *quatro*→*cator-*, *cinco*→*quin-*.

Note **catorze** — Portuguese kept the *c-* where Spanish says *catorce* and French *quatorze*; three worn-down versions of one Latin *quattuordecim*.

What you've built: And that's where it stops

Quinze is the **last** fused number. From **16** Portuguese does something none of its sisters do so early — the next lesson.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “onze, doze, treze, catorze, quinze”
- the ten inside — “-ze = *decem* = **dez**”
- the digit inside — “**três** → **treze**, **cinco** → **quinze**”

Before you move on

Count 11 to 15. (*Onze, doze, treze, catorze, quinze*.) What is the **-ze**? (Latin **decem**, “ten” — as in *dez, dezembro*.) How many fused teens does Portuguese keep, and is that more or fewer than its sisters? (**Five** — **fewer**; French and Italian keep six.) Next: **16**, where Portuguese starts building numbers a brand-new way.

12.2 dezesseis → vinte — built from scratch, with the “and” still showing

At **16**, Portuguese stops inheriting and starts **building**. And it does it more openly than any sister: it glues together the living words for “ten,” “and,” and the digit — and leaves the **and** right there in the middle where you can hear it.

Grammar Lens: Ten AND six

	Portuguese	build	literally
15	quinze	(fused, inherited)	“five-ten”
16	dezesseis	dez + e + seis	“ten and six”
17	dezessete	dez + e + sete	“ten and seven”
18	dezoito	dez + oito	“ten eight”
19	dezenove	dez + e + nove	“ten and nine”
20	vinte	← <i>vīgintī</i>	—

Every one begins with **dez** (“ten,” Chapter 6) and most keep **e** (“and”) — so *dezesseis* is transparently a little sentence: *ten-and-six*. (*Dezoito* swallows the *e* before the vowel of *oito*.) You already know every ingredient; nothing here needs memorising, only assembling.

What you’ve built: Portuguese breaks earliest

All three Romance sisters give up fusing partway through the teens — but Portuguese gives up **first**:

language	last fused	goes transparent at
Portuguese	<i>quinze</i> (15)	16 — <i>dezesseis</i>
French	<i>seize</i> (16)	17 — <i>dix-sept</i>
Italian	<i>sedici</i> (16)	17 — <i>diciassette</i>

One inherited Latin system, three different breaking points — and Portuguese is the boldest rebuilders. (German, by contrast, never breaks at all.)

vinte (20) ← *vīgintī*, the same root as French *vingt*, Italian *venti*, and English **vigesimal**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- 15→20 — “quinze, dezesseis, dezessete, dezoito, dezenove, vinte”
- hear the sentence — “*dez e seis* — ten AND six”
- the whole run, onze to vinte

Before you move on

What does **dezesseis** literally spell out? (“**Ten and six**” — *dez* + *e* + *seis*.) At which number does Portuguese break, and how does that compare with French and Italian? (At **16** — **earlier**; they break at 17.) Why does *dezoito* have no *e*? (It’s **swallowed** before the vowel of *oito*.) Next chapter: numbers in use.

Chapter 13

Colours

Modes: 🗣️ voice (2) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name black, white, red and blue in Portuguese and say why not one of the four is a plain inherited Latin colour word.

Say preto, branco, vermelho and azul, take vermelho back to vermiculus, the little worm crushed for dye, and azul back to Arabic lāzaward.

13.1 preto, branco — two blacks and a borrowed white

Portuguese does something the other Romance languages don't: it keeps **two words for black**, and the everyday one isn't the Latin one at all.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

word	source	use
negro	Latin <i>niger</i>	literary, formal, fixed phrases
preto	Latin <i>pressus</i> “pressed, dense”	the everyday colour word

Negro is the expected inheritance — the same *niger* that gave French *noir* and Italian *nero*. But day to day, Portuguese reaches for **preto**, from *pressus* (“pressed together, compact”). Dense → thick → **dark**: a

colour named for how **packed** it is, not for its shade.
 You already know *pressus*’s English children: *press*, *pressure*, *compress*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Latin’s white, **albus**, lost here too. Portuguese says **branco**, from Germanic **blank** (“shining”) — the same loan that gave French *blanc* and Italian *bianco*, arriving with the Suevi and Visigoths who settled Iberia.

Notice what Portuguese did to the shape: *blanc-* → **branc-**. The **l** → **r** swap is a Portuguese signature (compare *plaza* → **praça**, *blando* → *brando*).

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

word	meaning
alvorada	dawn (the sky going white)
alva	white, dawn (poetic)
<i>albumina, álbum</i>	(technical borrowings)

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “preto, branco”
- “o vinho branco” — Chapter 11’s wine
- “o pão é branco” — Chapter 11’s bread
- the l→r swap — “blanc → **branco**”

Before you move on

What are Portuguese’s two blacks? (**Negro** ← *niger*, literary; and **preto** ← *pressus* “pressed/dense,” the everyday one.) Why would “pressed” mean black? (**Dense** → **thick** → **dark**.) Where does **branco** come from? (**Germanic blank**, “shining” — borrowed **into** Romance.) What sound change shows in *branco*? (**l** → **r**, as in *praça*.) Next: **vermelho**, the strangest colour word in the language.

13.2 vermelho, azul — a worm and a stone

These two are the best etymologies in the whole chapter. Portuguese named its red after an **insect** and its blue after a **rock**.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Every other Romance language builds “red” on the ancient root *h₁rewd^h*- (*rouge*, *rosso*, Spanish *rojo*, and English *red*, German *rot*). Portuguese went its own way.

vermelho ← Latin *vermiculus*, “**little worm**” — the diminutive of *vermis*, “worm.”

Why? Because the finest red dye in the ancient Mediterranean came from **kermes**, a scale insect harvested off oak trees and crushed for its pigment. Dyers called the creature a “little worm,” and eventually the **dye’s name became the colour’s name**.

The same word gave English **vermilion**. And *vermis* gave English **vermin**.

Portuguese does still keep the old root — in **rubro** (literary “red”) and **ruivo** (“red-haired”) — but the everyday word for red is a bug.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

azul ← Arabic *lāzaward* ← Persian *lāžward*: **lapis lazuli**, the deep-blue stone mined for millennia in Afghanistan and ground into the most expensive pigment in the medieval world.

The initial **l-** was lost — Spanish and Portuguese ears took it for the article *l’* and dropped it — leaving *azul*. The same journey produced French **azur**, Italian **azzurro**, and English **azure**.

This is the **al-Andalus** thread again: eight centuries of Arabic in Iberia left Portuguese and Spanish thousands of words, and one of them is a basic colour.

What you’ve built: The chapter in one table

Portuguese	source
preto	Latin <i>pressus</i> “pressed”
branco	Germanic <i>blank</i> “shining”
vermelho	Latin <i>vermiculus</i> “ little worm ”
azul	Arabic <i>lāzaward</i> “ lapis lazuli ”

Not one of Portuguese's four basic colours is a plain inherited Latin colour word.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “vermelho, azul”
- “o vinho é vermelho... o vinho tinto” — note: **wine** is *tinto*, “dyed”
- “vermelho — vermilion — vermin”
- all four — “preto, branco, vermelho, azul”

Before you move on

What does **vermelho** literally come from? (*Vermiculus*, “**little worm**” — the **kermes** insect crushed for dye.) Which English word is its sibling? (**Vermilion**.) Where does **azul** come from? (**Arabic** *lāzaward*, “**lapis lazuli**,” via Persian — the *l-* lost as if an article.) What's odd about all four Portuguese colours? (**None** is a plain inherited Latin colour word.) Next chapter: describing what you see.

Chapter 14

Having and Telling Your Age

Modes: ⇄ voice (2) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask a Portuguese speaker's age and give my own, holding my years with *ter* rather than being them.

Ask Quantos anos tens?, answer Tenho vinte anos — literally I hold twenty years — and set Portuguese's simplified ano against Spanish's palatalised año.

14.1 *ter* — “to have”

Every Romance language needs a word for “have.” French and Italian took one from Latin; **Portuguese and Spanish took a different one entirely** — and it didn't originally mean “have” at all.

You'll want to know: The forms

(eu)	tenho
(tu)	tens
(ele/ela/você)	tem
(nós)	temos
(vocês/eles)	têm

Two things to watch:

- **tenho** — the **-nh-** (Portuguese's palatal *ny*, = Spanish **ñ**), already met in *vinho* (Ch. 11) and *amanhã*.

- **tem** vs **têm** — “he has” vs “**they** have”. They sound nearly alike; the **circumflex** marks the plural. An accent doing grammar, not sound.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ter ← Latin *tenēre*, “to hold” — not “to have.”

language	“to have”	← Latin
French	<i>avoir</i>	<i>habēre</i>
Italian	<i>avere</i>	<i>habēre</i>
Portuguese	ter	<i>tenēre</i> “to hold”
Spanish	tener	<i>tenēre</i> “to hold”

Portuguese *does* still have **haver** (← *habēre*) — but it got demoted to an auxiliary and to *há* (“there is”). So on the Iberian peninsula the two verbs **swapped jobs**: “hold” moved up to mean *have*, and “have” moved down to a grammar word.

English kept the *tenēre* family as borrowings: **tenant** (one who *holds* land), **retain**, **maintain**, **tenacious**, **tenure**, **contain**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “tenho, tens, tem, temos, têm”
- the **-nh-** — “tenho”, like *vinho*
- “Tenho um irmão” (“I have a brother”) — Ch. 10’s family
- the hold-family — “ter · tenant · retain · tenacious”

Before you move on

What did *ter*’s Latin source mean? (***Tenēre*** — “to hold”.) Which other language made the same swap? (**Spanish**, *tener*.) What happened to Portuguese’s *habēre* verb? (It became **haver** — an auxiliary, and *há* “there is”.) What separates *tem* from *têm*? (The **circumflex** — singular vs plural.) Next: the question *ter* is used for that English would never use “have” for.

14.2 tenho vinte anos — holding your years

Portuguese states age with **ter**. And since *ter* came from “to hold,” the sentence is, at the root, “**I hold twenty years**” — the most physical version of this idea in any of the five languages.

You’ll want to know: The phrase

Quantos anos tens? — “How many years do you **have**?”
Tenho vinte anos. — “I **have** twenty years.”

Ser is wrong here. And **anos** can’t be dropped, unlike English “I’m twenty.”

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ano (“year”) ← Latin *annus* → English **annual**, **anniversary**, **annals**.

Now compare the two Iberian sisters:

Latin	Portuguese	Spanish
<i>annus</i>	ano	año

The Latin **-nn-** went two ways: Portuguese **simplified** it to a plain *n*, Spanish **palatalized** it into **ñ**. Same word, same peninsula, two outcomes — and this is exactly where Spanish’s *ñ* came from in the first place: doubled Latin *n*.

Careful: keep *ano* distinct from *ânus*. The stress and the circumflex do the work.

Grammar Lens: Who has, who is

language		literally
Portuguese	<i>tenho vinte anos</i>	I hold ...
Spanish	<i>tengo veinte años</i>	I hold ...
French	<i>j’ai vingt ans</i>	I have ...
Italian	<i>ho venti anni</i>	I have ...
German	<i>ich bin zwanzig Jahre alt</i>	I am ...
English	<i>I am twenty</i>	I am ...

Three layers: Germanic **is** its years, French and Italian **have** them, and Iberian Romance **holds** them.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “Quantos anos tens?”
- “Tenho vinte anos”
- your own age, using Ch. 12’s numbers
- the sister pair — “**ano** ... **año**” — one Latin *annus*

Before you move on

Which verb does Portuguese use for age? (***Ter***, never *ser*.) Given *ter*’s root, what does the sentence literally say? (“I **hold** twenty years.”) Where does *ano* come from? (Latin ***annus***.) What did Portuguese and Spanish each do with the **-nn-**? (PT **simplified** it to *n*; ES **palatalized** it to **ñ**.) Which two languages say “I **am**” instead? (**German and English**.)

Chapter 15

The Past Portuguese Kept

Modes: 🗣️ voice (2) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say in Portuguese what I did with the simple past, and avoid reading *tenho falado* as I have spoken.

Put falei com ele ontem, one finished act, beside tenho falado com ele, repeatedly and lately, and say out loud why the compound never took the simple past's job.

15.1 falei — the past Portuguese kept

Portuguese's everyday past tense. Its interest isn't its endings — it's that Portuguese still **has** it in daily speech, when several sisters do not.

You'll want to know: The forms

(eu)	falei
(tu)	falaste
(ele/ela/você)	falou
(nós)	falámos (Portugal) / falamos (Brazil)
(vocês/eles)	falaram

One word. No auxiliary, no participle — the verb carries the past by itself.

The *nós* form is worth a note: Portugal writes **falámos** with an accent to separate it from the present *falamos*, while Brazil writes both **falamos** and lets context decide. Same word, one accent, two spelling conventions.

falei ← Vulgar Latin perfect ***fabulāvī**, the same source as Spanish *hablé*. The Latin *-āv-* dissolved and left a **stressed final vowel** behind, which is why *falei* and *falou* end where they do.

Why it's said this way

Now the point of the chapter:

language	this tense	where it lives now
Portuguese	<i>falou</i>	everyday speech
Spanish	<i>habló</i>	everyday speech
Italian	<i>parlò</i>	south yes, north literary
German	<i>sagte</i>	retreating, standard in writing
French	<i>il parla</i>	literature only

All five inherited the same thing. French, German and northern Italy each built a compound past out of “have” and let it push the old simple past out of conversation. **Portuguese and Spanish, at the western edge of the map, didn't.**

Portuguese has all the parts to build a compound — *ter* from Chapter 14, and a participle (*falado*). It simply doesn't use them for this job. The next lesson shows what it uses them for instead.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “falei, falaste, falou, falámos, falaram”
- “Ontem falei com a minha mãe” (“Yesterday I spoke with my mother”)
- “Trabalhei” — Ch. 5's verb in the past
- the five fates — “falou · habló · parlò · sagte · il parla”

Before you move on

How many words does the Portuguese past need? (**One** — no auxiliary.) Where does *falei* come from? (Vulgar Latin perfect ***fabulāvī**, like Spanish *hablé*.) Which two languages kept this tense in everyday speech? (**Portuguese** and **Spanish**.) Which one exiled it to literature? (**French**.) Next: what Portuguese does with *ter* + participle, since it isn't this.

15.2 tenho falado — the compound that means something else

Portuguese **does** have *ter* + participle. It looks exactly like the French and Italian compound past, and it means **something different**. This is one of the most common mistakes English speakers make in Portuguese.

You'll want to know: The form

ter (conjugated) + **past participle**

infinitive	participle
falar	falado
comer	comido
partir	partido

→ **tenho falado, tens falado, tem falado...**

Grammar Lens: What it actually means

Portuguese	English
falei	"I spoke" — one finished event
tenho falado	"I have been speaking" — repeatedly, lately

Tenho falado com ele does **not** mean "I have spoken to him [once]." It means "I **have been** speaking to him" — **more than once, over a recent stretch of time, and it may still be going on**. For a single completed act, Portuguese uses the simple past from the last lesson:

Falei com ele ontem. — “I spoke with him yesterday.”

Why it’s said this way

French and Italian let their compound take over the plain past, so *j’ai parlé* and *ho parlato* now just mean “I spoke.”

Portuguese never did — **falei** was already occupying that slot and never left. So when Portuguese assembled the same *have* + participle machinery, there was **no vacancy**, and the construction drifted into a different job: **repeated or continuing** action.

Same parts, same era, same family. Different outcome, because of what was already in the way.

language	have + participle means
French	<i>j’ai parlé</i> — I spoke
Italian	<i>ho parlato</i> — I spoke
German	<i>ich habe gesagt</i> — I said
Portuguese	<i>tenho falado</i> — I have been speaking (repeatedly)

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the contrast — “**falei** I spoke · **tenho falado** I’ve been speaking”
- “Falei com ele ontem” — one event
- “Tenho falado com ele” — repeatedly, lately
- the warning — “*tenho falado* is **not** ‘I have spoken’”

Before you move on

What does *tenho falado* mean? (“I **have been** speaking” — **repeatedly**, over a recent stretch.) What do you use for one finished act? (The simple past — **falei**.) Why doesn’t Portuguese’s compound mean “I spoke”? (Because **falei** **never vacated** that slot, so the new construction took a different job.) Which languages let their compound take over the plain past? (**French, Italian, German.**)

Chapter 16

Ser and Estar

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can choose between *ser* and *estar* in Portuguese and change what an adjective means by switching them.

Say Ela é bonita and Ela está bonita back to back, then A sopa é boa and a sopa está boa, naming the quality against the current condition each time.

16.1 ser — “to be”

Portuguese has two verbs for “to be.” Begin with **ser**, used for identity and what something is; the choice against *estar* comes later.

You’ll want to know: Present

eu sou	nós somos
tu és	~~vós sois ~~
ele/ela/você é	eles/elas/vocês são

Tu és is live in European Portuguese. **Vós** survives mainly in northern dialect and church language; everyday “you all” is **vocês**, with **são**.

You’ll want to know: Two past rows

Preterite, the completed past from Chapter 15:

fui, foste, foi, fomos, foram

Imperfect, for background or ongoing past:

era, eras, era, éramos, eram

The three anchors **sou** — **fui** — **era** look unrelated. That is a clue that several historical pieces have been welded together, which the next lesson will unpack. For now, retrieve each row as a usable pattern.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “sou, és, é, somos, são”
- “Eu sou português. Ela é médica.”
- “fui, foste, foi, fomos, foram”
- “era, éramos, eram”

Before you move on

Give the present of *ser*. (**Sou, és, é, somos, são.**) Which form goes with *vocês*? (**São.**) Give the preterite row. (**Fui, foste, foi, fomos, foram.**) Which imperfect form means “I was”? (**Era.**) Next: why those rows look so different.

16.2 *ser* — two verbs, three stems

Sou, era, fui, ser do not resemble one another because the modern verb preserves several older roots.

Portuguese	source
sou, és, é, somos, são	Latin <i>esse</i> , “to be”
era, éramos, eram	<i>esse</i> ’s imperfect
fui, foi, foram	<i>esse</i> ’s ancient perfect <i>fuī</i>
infinitive ser	Latin <i>sedēre</i> , “to sit”

That is **two Latin verbs** but **three stems**: *esse* was already suppletive, using both its ordinary root and the older *fuī* perfect. *Sedēre* also gave English **sedentary** and **session**.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

The entire preterite is shared with **ir**, “to go”:

person	ser	ir
eu	fui	fui
tu	foste	foste
ele	foi	foi
nós	fomos	fomos
eles	foram	foram

Fui professor means “I was a teacher”; **fui ao Brasil** means “I went to Brazil.” What follows disambiguates them. *Fui* already belonged to *ser*’s ancestor; **ir** borrowed the row after Latin *īre*’s own perfect wore away. Spanish made the same Iberian choice.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “ser ← sedēre, to sit”
- “sou / era ← esse”
- “fui professor; fui ao Brasil”

Twice through: “Two verbs, three stems; *fui* has two meanings.”

Before you move on

Which Latin verb gives the infinitive? (**Sedēre**, “sit.”) Which gives *sou* and *era*? (**Esse**.) What two verbs share *fui*? (**Ser** and **ir**.) Which borrowed it? (**Ir**.) Next: put *ser* beside *estar*.

16.3 ser vs. estar — the core choice

Chapter 2 used **Como está?** Now learn *estar*’s forms and make the basic choice between Portuguese’s two verbs for “to be.”

eu estou	nós estamos
tu estás	~~vós estais ~~
ele/ela/você está	eles/elas/vocês estão

Say **vocês estão** in ordinary speech. You may hear shortened *tou* and *tá*; recognise them, but write the full forms.

Grammar Lens: What something is; how it is

ser = what something is **estar** = its location or the condition it is in

ser	estar
Ele é médico. — He is a doctor.	Ele está doente. — He is ill.
Sou português. — I'm Portuguese.	Estou em Lisboa. — I'm in Lisbon.
A neve é branca. — Snow is white.	O café está frio. — The coffee is cold.

Identity, origin, profession, and defining qualities use **ser**. Location, health, mood, weather, and resulting conditions use **estar**.

Do not reduce this to “permanent versus temporary”: **ele está morto**, “he is dead,” uses *estar*. Death is not temporary; it is a condition someone has ended up in.

What you've built: A mnemonic, not the cause

Ser contains forms from Latin *sedēre*, “sit”; *estar* continues *stāre*, “stand.” Picture **ser** as seated in identity and **estar** as standing in a condition. The history is a memory aid, not the cause: *esse* supplied *ser*'s identity meaning, while *stāre* pulled toward place and resulting state.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “estou, estás, está, estamos, estão”
- “Sou português; estou em Lisboa.”
- “Ele é médico; ele está doente.”

Before you move on

Which verb names identity? (**Ser**.) Which marks location or a resulting condition? (**Estar**.) How do you say “I’m in Lisbon”? (**Estou em Lisboa**.) Why does “he is dead” use *estar*? (It is a **resulting condition**, so permanence is not the real test.) Next: use the choice to change meaning.

16.4 é bonita / está bonita — a choice you can use

Ser and *estar* are not competing answers where one is always a mistake. With many adjectives, swapping the verb deliberately changes meaning.

with ser	with estar
Ela é bonita. — She is beautiful.	Ela está bonita. — She looks beautiful now.
A sopa é boa. — It is a good soup.	A sopa está boa. — This bowl tastes good.

Ser presents the quality as part of what the subject is. **Estar** presents the quality as the current condition or impression. Context, not a mechanical “permanent” rule, decides what you mean.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Portuguese and Spanish maintain this full two-verb choice. Italian keeps *essere* and *stare* but lets them overlap differently; French has one *être* that absorbed old *stāre* pieces. German *sein* is a separate Germanic cousin.

language	broad result
Portuguese / Spanish	two verbs, chosen by meaning
Italian	two verbs with overlap
French	one fused verb
German	one verb built from Germanic roots

The Romance rows started with the same Latin material and

reorganised it in three ways. That is why the Portuguese choice is systematic but not universal.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “Ela é bonita” — a quality
- “Ela está bonita” — right now
- “A sopa é boa; a sopa está boa.”

Twice through: “Ser: what it is. Estar: the condition it is in.”

Before you move on

What changes between *ela é bonita* and *ela está bonita*? (A defining quality versus a **current impression**.) Is *estar* automatically a mistake with *bonita*? (**No**; it says something different.) Which Romance languages keep the full two-verb choice? (**Portuguese and Spanish**.)

Chapter 17

Head and Hand

Modes: ⇄ voice (3) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the head and the hand in Portuguese and explain the nasal vowel that swallowed the *n* of *manus*.

*Say a cabeça and a mão, pluralise to as mãos, and follow the *n* of manus dissolving between vowels, as it did in lua, boa and pão.*

17.1 a cabeça — “the head”

Learn one body word and one reading rule together.

a cabeça — the head, feminine

Sounds you’ll need

The **ç** is a **cedilla**. It marks a *c* pronounced **s** before *a*, *o*, or *u*, where plain *c* would normally be hard **k**. So *cabeça* ends roughly “-essa,” not “-eka.”

The mark began as a tiny **z** under the letter: medieval scribes used ç as shorthand for *cz*. Treat that as a recognition hook; this track has not yet asked you to write the mark by hand.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Cabeça comes from Late Latin *capitia*, built from *caput*, “head.” Portuguese wore the word down in ordinary speech but kept the old root.

A useful sentence is:

Dói-me a cabeça. — “My head hurts.” (European Portuguese)

In Brazilian Portuguese you may hear **Minha cabeça está doendo.** Both begin with the same feminine noun **a cabeça**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “a cabeça” — make **ç** an **s**
- “Dói-me a cabeça.”
- “cabeça ← caput”

Twice through: “A cabeça — feminine; ç sounds s.”

Before you move on

Say “the head.” (**A cabeça**.) What does the cedilla do? (Marks *c* as *s* before *a/o/u*.) What is the Latin root? (**Caput**.) Next: compare the head-words and find that root a second time in learned vocabulary.

17.2 cabeça / capital — one root, two arrivals

Cabeça kept Latin *caput*, “head.” Other languages used container words instead. That contrast makes the Portuguese survival visible.

language	“head”	older picture
Portuguese	cabeça	Latin <i>caput</i> , head
Spanish	<i>cabeza</i>	Latin <i>caput</i> , head
French	<i>tête</i>	Latin <i>testa</i> , pot
Italian	<i>testa</i>	Latin <i>testa</i> , pot
German	<i>Kopf</i>	Germanic “cup” word

French/Italian and German independently replaced “head” with a vessel. Iberian Romance kept *caput*. Portuguese still has **testa**, but narrowed it to “forehead” instead of the whole head.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

The same *caput* later entered learned vocabulary again:

- **capital** — the head city or head sum;
- **capítulo** — a “little head” of a text;
- **capitão** — the head of a company.

Portuguese therefore holds a **doublet**: one word inherited through generations of speech (**cabeça**), another branch borrowed back from written Latin (**capital, capítulo, capitão**). One root can arrive twice and look different because each route changes it differently.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “cabeça — inherited”
- “capital — re-borrowed”
- “tête/testa: pot; Kopf: cup”

Twice through: “Cabeça and capital — two routes from *caput*.”

Before you move on

Which two languages kept *caput* as their everyday head-word? (**Portuguese and Spanish.**) What did French, Italian, and German use instead? (**Container words.**) Why do *cabeça* and *capital* look different? (One is **inherited**; one is **re-borrowed**.) Next: the hand and the disappearing *n*.

17.3 a mão — “the hand”

Two things in one short word: a sound change that shaped half of Portuguese, and a gender that is two thousand years old.

You'll want to know: The word

a mão — the hand. **Feminine**. Plural: as mãos.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Latin *manus* → Portuguese *mão*. The **-n-** vanished.

That is not a one-off. Portuguese systematically **dropped n between vowels**, nasalising the vowel in front of it. What happened next depends on the word: the nasality **stayed** where the result was a nasal diphthong, and **faded again** where it left a plain vowel. The **til** (~) marks the ones that kept it.

Latin	Portuguese	
<i>manus</i>	mão	hand — nasality kept
<i>lūna</i>	lua	moon — nasality faded
<i>bona</i>	boa	good (f.) — nasality faded
<i>pānis</i>	pão	bread — kept ; Chapter 11 told this one

Compare Spanish, which kept the **n** in all of them: *mano*, *luna*, *buena*, *pan*. This single change is a large part of why written Portuguese and Spanish look so similar and sound so different.

Say the pair aloud: *mano* ... *mão*. You can hear the *n* becoming the nasal.

Grammar Lens: Feminine, like Italian's

A **mão** is feminine — and so is Italian **la mano**, for the same reason. Latin *manus* belonged to the **fourth declension**, a class whose nouns ended in *-us* but could be feminine. The declension is long gone; the gender outlived it.

Portuguese is less startling about it than Italian, because *mão* doesn't end in a giveaway *-o*. But it is the same two-thousand-year-old fact underneath.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “a mão, as mãos”
- the change — “manus ... mão”
- the family — “lua, boa, pão — all lost an **n**”
- the contrast — “Spanish *mano*, Portuguese *mão*”

Before you move on

Say “the hand” and “the hands.” (*A mão / as mãos.*) What happened to the *n* of *manus*? (It **dissolved between vowels**, leaving a nasal vowel — which the **til** marks.) Name two other words that did the same. (*Lua* ← *lūna*, *boa* ← *bona*, *pão* — Ch. 11.) Did they all keep the nasality? (**No** — *mão* and *pão* did; *lua* and *boa* lost it again.) What did Spanish do? (**Kept the *n*** in all — *mano*, *luna*, *pan*.) Why is *mão* feminine? (Latin *manus* was **fourth-declension feminine** — the same reason Italian says *la mano*.) Next: the rest of the body.

Chapter 18

Verbs at the Core

Modes: 🔄 voice (9) 🔄 Hands-free start: all 9 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say I am, I have, I go, I come, I say, I see and I know in Portuguese, pick the right member of its two be-verbs and its two know-verbs, and name the English words each verb left behind.

The chapter's last lesson closes the set: after saber and conhecer the reader produces all nine first-person forms in one run - sou, estou, tenho, vou, venho, digo, vejo, sei, conheço - and re-derives the roots behind estar and ter.

18.1 ser / estar — one English verb, two Portuguese ones

English has one verb for “to be.” Portuguese answers it with two, and this lesson takes them as the single tool they are.

You'll want to know: The two-verb kit

ser — what it is	estar — how it is
sou, és, é, somos, são	estou, estás, está, estamos, estão
Sou médico. — I am a doctor.	Estou cansado. — I am tired.

One place Portuguese draws the line its own way: marriage. **Sou casado** — “I am married” — uses *ser*, because Portuguese files marital status under what you are. Spanish, the other Iberian daughter of Latin, standardly says

estoy casado with its *estar* instead. The two languages inherited the same pair of verbs and did not put the same things on each side.

There is even a third verb in the neighbourhood: **ficar**, “to stay, to end up,” which is how Portuguese normally places a town or a building. **Lisboa fica em Portugal.**

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ser ← Latin *esse*, “to be.” English **is** and **am** are not borrowings from it; they are inherited relatives, the same ancient word arriving by the Germanic road. From *esse* Latin built *essentia* → **essence**, **essential**; its participle supplies **present** and **absent**; and the phrase *inter est*, “it is between, it matters,” hardened into **interest**.

estar ← Latin *stāre*, “to stand” → **stand**, **state**, **status**, **statue**, **station**, **stable**, **estate**, **circumstance**, **obstacle**, **distant**. Every one of them is about standing somewhere, which is exactly what *estar* still reports.

Flag the false friend: *estar* has nothing to do with English **stare**, which is a Germanic word for gazing.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “sou, és, é” · “estou, estás, está”
- “Sou médico; estou cansado.”
- “Sou casado” — Portuguese puts this on the *ser* side
- the standing family — “estar · state · status · estate”

Before you move on

Which verb names what something is, and which its condition? (**Ser**; **estar**.) Which one does Portuguese use for “I am married”? (**Ser** — *sou casado*.) What did *estar*’s Latin source mean? (“To **stand**” — *stāre*.) Name two English words from it. (**State**, **status**, **estate**, **circumstance**.) Next: the verb for having.

18.2 ter and há — have, and there is

You already know **ter**, “to have.” Today you will add one small, high-frequency shape from **haver**: **há**, “there is” or “there are.”

You’ll want to know: Two short patterns

Tenho pão. — I have bread. **Há pão.** — There is bread.

Use **ter** when someone has something. Use **há** when something exists or is present. **Há** does not change before a plural:

Há um livro. — There is one book. **Há dois livros.** — There are two books.

That is enough for today: **tenho** points to an owner; **há** points to what is there.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Haver comes from Latin *habēre*, “to have.” English **habit**, **inhabit** and **habitat** belong to that family. Portuguese gradually gave most everyday “have” work to **ter**, but kept **há** for existence. English **have** only looks related to *habēre*: it comes from a different, Germanic family.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “I have bread” — **Tenho pão.**
- “There is bread” — **Há pão.**
- “There are two books” — **Há dois livros.**

Before you move on

Which verb says that someone has something? (**Ter**.) Which fixed shape says “there is” or “there are”? (**Há**.) Say “There are two books.” (**Há dois livros**.) Next, you will reuse **há** for one new meaning.

18.3 há três anos — three years ago

You know **há** as “there is.” Add one nearby meaning: before a length of time, **há** can mean “ago.”

You’ll want to know: One reusable frame

há três anos — three years ago **há dois dias** — two days ago

Build it as **há + amount of time**. Keep **há** fixed; the number and time word tell you how far back to look.

Say the frame slowly: **há ... três ... anos**. Then say it as one small unit: **há três anos**.

Your turn

- *Say it:* “two days ago” — **há dois dias**
- *Say it:* “three years ago” — **há três anos**
- *Choose:* Does **há** change? (No.)

Before you move on

What comes after **há** in this pattern? (**An amount of time.**) Say “three years ago.” (**Há três anos.**) You have added one meaning without mixing it into the earlier existence lesson.

18.4 ter que — to have to

You know **tenho**, “I have.” Add **que** and a verb to express one obligation.

You’ll want to know: One reusable frame

Tenho que falar. — I have to speak.

Build it in three pieces:

1. **tenho** — I have
2. **que** — the link

3. **falar** — to speak

Only **ter** changes with the person. The following action stays in its dictionary form: **temos que falar**, “we have to speak.”

Your turn

- *Say it:* “I have to speak” — **Tenho que falar.**
- *Say it:* “We have to speak” — **Temos que falar.**
- *Choose:* Does **falar** change here? (**No.**)

Before you move on

Complete the frame: **tenho ... falar.** (**Que.**) Say “We have to speak.” (**Temos que falar.**) One new construction, practised in one small step.

18.5 **ir** — two letters, three ancestors

Portuguese’s verb for “to go” is two letters long, and no two of its rows resemble one another. There is a reason for that.

You’ll want to know: The forms, and the future they build

eu vou	nós vamos
tu vais	vocês/eles vão
ele/ela/você vai	

Its preterite is **fui, foste, foi, fomos, foram** — the row Chapter 16 showed *ir* borrowing wholesale from *ser*.

The everyday future runs through this verb: **ir** plus an infinitive.

Vou falar com ele. — “I am going to speak with him.”

English builds its own casual future the very same way, out of its own verb for going. And **vamos** on its own is “let’s go.”

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

The infinitive **ir** comes from Latin *īre*, “to go.” The *vou* row comes from a different verb, *vādere*, “to advance.” The preterite comes from a third source entirely, the old perfect of *esse*.

From *īre* English holds a large family, all built by prefix: **exit** (*ex-itus*, “gone out”), **transit** (“gone across”), **initial** (*in-itus*, “a going in,” so a beginning), **itinerary**, **ambition** (*amb-īre*, “to go around” canvassing for votes), **perish** (*per-īre*, “to go all the way through”), and **obituary** (*ob-īre*, “to go to meet” death). Even the grammar word **preterite**, the tense of Chapter 15, is *praeter-itus*, “gone past.” From *vādere*: **evade**, **invade**, **pervade** — and English **wade**, which is not a borrowing at all but a Germanic cousin of the same ancient root.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “vou, vais, vai, vamos, vão”
- “Vou falar com ele”
- “Vamos!”
- the going family — “exit · transit · initial · ambition”

Before you move on

Give the present of *ir*. (**Vou, vais, vai, vamos, vão.**) How do you say “I am going to speak”? (**Vou falar.**) Which verb lends *ir* its preterite? (**Ser** — *fui, foste, foi.*) Which Latin verb gives the infinitive? (**īre.**) Name two English words from it. (**Exit, transit, initial, ambition, perish.**) Next: coming.

18.6 vir — coming, and the n that dissolved

The opposite of *ir* is **vir**, and it is short for exactly the reason *mão* is short.

You'll want to know: The forms, and two traps

eu venho	nós vimos
tu vens	vocês/eles vêm
ele/ela/você vem	

Two things to watch:

- **vem** (“he comes”) against **vêm** (“they come”). The circumflex marks the plural and the sound barely moves — the same trick *tem* and *têm* play in Chapter 14. Portuguese lets an accent carry grammar.
- **venho** has the *-nh-*, Portuguese’s palatal *ny*, met already in *vinho* and *tenho*.

Useful on day one: **Vem cá.** — “Come here.”

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

vir ← Latin *venīre*, “to come.” Take out the *-n-* between vowels and *venīre* collapses to *vir* — the same regular Portuguese change that turned *manus* into **mão** and *lūna* into **lua**. The *-nh-* forms are where the nasal survived instead of vanishing. English kept the whole verb, prefix by prefix. A **venue** is “a coming”; an **advent** and an **adventure** are things coming *toward* you (*ad-*); to **convene** is to come together (*con-*), which gives **convenient** and **convention**; to **intervene** is to come between; to **prevent** was to come *before* (*prae-*); to **invent** is to come upon something. **Revenue** is what comes back, an **avenue** is the way a thing comes in, an **event** is what comes out (*ex-*), and a **souvenir** is a memory coming up from below (*sub-*).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “venho, vens, vem, vimos, vêm”
- the accent pair — “ele **vem** · eles **vêm**”
- “Vem cá”
- the coming family — “venue · advent · convene · invent”

Before you move on

Give the present of *vir*. (**Venho, vens, vem, vimos, vêm.**) What separates *vem* from *vêm*? (The **circumflex** — singular against plural.) Why is the infinitive only three letters? (The **-n-** dissolved **between vowels**, as in *mão*.) Name two English words from *venīre*. (**Venue, advent, convene, prevent, event.**) Next: saying.

18.7 dizer — saying, and the verb that judges

Falar is to speak, in general. **Dizer** is to say a particular thing — and it hands you the most useful question a beginner owns.

You'll want to know: The forms, and the question

eu digo	nós dizemos
tu dizes	vocês/eles dizem
ele/ela/você diz	

The first person breaks ranks: **digo**, with a hard *g*, where every other form keeps a buzzing *z*. That swap is old and regular, and it recurs across this family of verbs.

Now the question. Chapter 2 gave you *como*, “how”:

Como se diz...? — “How does one say...?”

That one line will get you through a conversation you are not ready for. The past participle is **dito**, “said”, as in *dito e feito* — “said and done.”

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

dizer ← Latin *dīcere*, “to say, to point out.” Its participle stem *dict-* is scattered through English: **dictate, dictation, dictionary, diction, dictator; verdict**, which is *vērū dictum*, “a true saying”; **predict** (“say beforehand”), **contradict** (“say against”), **edict**, **benediction** (“a good saying”), and **addict**, from *ad-dictus*, “spoken over to” someone.

The older sense, “to point,” survives in **indicate** and **index** — *in-dicāre* is to point *at* a thing.

And the prize: a Roman *iūdex* was the man who *speaks the law* — *iūs*,

“law,” welded to *dīcere*. English took him as **judge**, and the family as **judicial**, **judgement**, and **prejudice**, a saying made in advance.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “digo, dizes, diz, dizemos, dizem”
- “Como se diz...?”
- “dito e feito”
- the saying family — “dictate · verdict · edict · judge”

Before you move on

Give the present of *dizer*. (**Digo, dizes, diz, dizemos, dizem.**) Which form breaks the pattern? (**Digo**, with a hard *g*.) How do you ask how something is said? (**Como se diz...?**) What is a *verdict*, taken apart? (*Vērum dictum* — “**a true saying**”). Where does **judge** come from? (*Iūs plus dīcere* — “**he who speaks the law**”). Next: seeing.

18.8 ver — seeing, and a form that means two things

Ver, “to see,” is short for the same reason *vir* is: a consonant wore away in the middle. It also produces Portuguese’s most confusable single form.

You’ll want to know: The forms, and the collision

eu vejo tu vês ele/ela/você vê	nós vemos vocês/eles veem
---	--

Vejo takes a *j* that no other form has. Its completed past is **vi, viste, viui, vimos, viram**, and the participle is **visto**, “seen” — the same word as the noun **vista**, “a view,” which English borrowed whole.

Now the collision. **Vimos** is “we saw” here, and “we come” for *vir*. Nothing in the form tells them apart; the sentence around it does.

Vimos o mar. — “We saw the sea.” **Vimos de Lisboa.** — “We come from Lisbon.”

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ver ← Latin *vidēre*, “to see.” The *-d-* between vowels wore away, as it did in dozens of Portuguese verbs, leaving three letters.

English owns the rest of the verb: **vision**, **visible**, **visit**, and **video**, which is simply Latin for “I see.” With prefixes: **evident** (*ex-*, “seen out in the open”), **provide** and **providence** (*prō-*, “to see ahead”) — and **prudent**, which is nothing but *providens* worn down. Also **survey** and **supervise** (*super-*, “to see over”), **review**, **interview**, and **advice** with **advise**, from *ad vīsum*, “according to what has been seen.” Even **envy** is here: *in-vidēre*, “to look upon” someone with ill will.

One false friend. English **very** is *not* from this verb; it comes from *vērus*, “true” — the same *vērum* sitting inside **verdict**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “vejo, vês, vê, vemos, veem”
- “vi, viste, viu, vimos, viram”
- the collision — “Vimos o mar · Vimos de Lisboa”
- the seeing family — “vision · evident · provide · survey”

Before you move on

Give the present of *ver*. (**Vejo, vês, vê, vemos, veem.**) What two things can *vimos* mean? (“**We saw**” and “**we come**”.) What happened to *vidēre*’s *-d-*? (It **wore away between vowels.**)

Which English word is *providens* worn down? (**Prudent.**) Is *very* part of this family? (**No** — that is *vērus*, “true”.) Next: knowing, in two flavours.

18.9 saber / conhecer — two ways to know

This chapter opened with one English verb answered by two Portuguese ones. It closes with the second such pair — and this one hides a flavour.

You'll want to know: Which knowing is which

saber — facts and skills	conhecer — people and places
sei, sabes, sabe, sabemos, sabem	conheço, conheces, conhece, conhecem
Sei a resposta. — I know the answer.	Conheço o Pedro. — I know Pedro.
Sei nadar. — I know how to swim.	Conheço Lisboa. — I know Lisbon.

Saber is knowing *that* something is so, or knowing *how* to do a thing. **Conhecer** is being acquainted with a person, a city, a book. French splits the idea the same way, with *savoir* and *connaître*; English merged the two and lost the distinction entirely.

Sei is worth its own breath: it is irregular, it is short, and **não sei**, “I don’t know,” is the sentence you will need first.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

saber ← Latin *sapere*, which meant “to taste” long before it meant “to have good taste, to be wise.” Portuguese kept both jobs in the one verb: **sabe bem** means “it tastes good,” and **sabor** is “flavour.” English split the halves between two borrowings — the taste half as **savour** and **savoury**, the wisdom half as **sapient**, the word inside *Homo sapiens*, and **sage**. Something **insipid** is *in-sapidus*, “without taste.”

conhecer ← Latin *cognōscere*, which is *co-* (“thoroughly”) plus *gnōscere* (“to get to know”). English holds the compound as **cognition**, **recognise**, **incognito**, **notice**, **notion**, and, through French, **connoisseur** — the very same verb. That second piece is also the root English **know** itself grew from, so *conhecer* and *know* are distant relatives after all.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “sei, sabes, sabe” · “conheço, conheces, conhece”
- “Não sei” · “Conheço Lisboa”
- the whole chapter, first person — “sou, estou, tenho, vou, venho, digo, vejo, sei, conheço”
- the taste still inside the verb — “sabe bem”

Before you move on

Which verb knows a fact, and which knows a person? (**Saber**; **conhecer**.) Say “I don’t know.” (**Não sei**.) What did *sapere* mean first? (“**To taste**” — still live in *sabe bem*.) Now the nine of this chapter, in the *eu* form. (**Sou, estou, tenho, vou, venho, digo, vejo, sei, conheço**.) And their roots: which one came from “to stand”? (**Estar**, from *stāre*.) Which from “to hold”? (**Ter**, from *tenēre*.)

Chapter 19

Verbs of the Mind

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say that I think, understand, read and write in Portuguese, produce the broken row ler shares with ver, and name the English words each of the four verbs left behind.

The chapter's last lesson closes the set: after escrever the reader produces all four first-person forms in one run - penso, entendo, leio, escrevo - names escrito as the Latin scriptum, and re-derives the propped-up e- that turned scribe into escrever and stare into estar.

19.1 pensar — thinking, and the scales it came from

The last chapter gave you the nine verbs Portuguese cannot do without. This one adds four that all happen inside your head — and the first of them weighs things.

You'll want to know: A plain -ar verb, and the small word after it

eu penso	nós pensamos
tu pensas	vocês/eles pensam
ele/ela/você pensa	

No surprises in the endings: *pensar* runs exactly like *falar*, the first verb you met. What has to be learned is the word that follows it. Portuguese thinks **in** a thing, not about it:

Penso em ti. — “I think of you.” **Penso que sim.** — “I think so.”

Pensar em for whatever you have in mind; *pensar que* for an opinion. In everyday Brazilian speech the opinion verb is more often **achar** — *acho que sim* — a verb whose plain meaning is “to find.”

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

pensar ← Latin *pēnsāre*, “to weigh out carefully,” built on *pendere*, “to hang” — because a Roman weighed a thing by **hanging** it from a balance. To think, on that picture, is to put two things on the scales. English owns the whole family. From the weighing half: **pensive**, and **ponder**, which is *ponderāre* from *pondus*, a weight. From the paying half — coins were weighed out before they were counted — **pension**, **compensate**, **dispense**, **expense** and **expend**, **stipend**, **recompense**. And from the hanging half: **pendulum**, **pendant**, **pending**, **depend** (“to hang from”), **suspend**, **append**, **impending**. Spanish, another daughter of Latin, put the same verb on its coin: a *peso* is a weight.

achar has its own history — Latin *afflāre*, “to breathe upon,” a hunter’s word for catching a scent on the air. So the everyday Brazilian “I think” is really “I find.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “penso, pensas, pensa, pensamos, pensam”
- “Penso em ti” · “Penso que sim”
- knowing beside thinking — “sei” · “penso”
- the weighing family — “pensive · ponder · pension · pendulum”

Before you move on

Give the present of *pensar*. (**Penso, pensas, pensa, pensamos, pensam.**) Which small word follows it when someone is on your mind? (*Em* — *penso em ti.*) What did *pēnsāre* mean? (“To **weigh out**.”) So what is a *pendulum* doing? (**Hanging** — from *pendere*.)

And which verb from the last chapter says “I know a fact”? (*Sei.*)
Next: understanding.

19.2 entender / compreender — reaching for it, or grabbing all of it

Weighing a thought was the last lesson. This one is the moment the thought lands — and Portuguese has two verbs for it, built on two pictures.

You’ll want to know: The everyday one, and the fuller one

entender — every day	compreender — a shade deeper
entendo, entendes, entende, entendemos, entendem	compreendo, compreendes, compreende, compreendem
Não entendo. — I don’t understand.	Compreendo a situação. — I grasp the situation.

Both are ordinary *-er* verbs, and in most sentences either one is correct. **Entender** is the workhorse: *Não entendo*, *Entendeu?*, *Entendes?* **Compreender** carries more weight — understanding a thing through, or taking someone’s side of it — and it does a second job English gives to another word entirely: *o preço compreende tudo*, “the price **includes** everything.”

If only one sticks, make it *entender*. **Não entendo** may be the single most useful sentence a beginner owns.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

entender ← Latin *intendere*: *in-* (“toward”) plus *tendere* (“to stretch”). To understand was to **stretch your attention toward** a thing. English keeps the family whole: **intend** and **intention** — the same verb, meaning barely moved — plus **intense**, **tend**, **tendency**, **tension**, **extend**, **pretend** (“to stretch in front”), **contend**, **attend**, **portend**. And the things that literally stretch: a **tent**, a **tendon**.
compreender ← *comprehendere*: *com-* (“together”) plus *prehendere* (“to seize”). Not reaching this time but **grabbing**, and grabbing all of it at once — **comprehend**, **comprehensive**, **apprehend**, **prehensile**. Worn down through French, that same *prehendere* also

gives **prison** (a “seizing”), **prize**, **enterprise**, and **surprise**, which is *super-prehendere*, “seized from above.”
 Flag the false friend: English **understand** belongs to neither family. It is Germanic, and its own picture is standing close among things.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “entendo, entendes, entende, entendemos, entendem”
- “Não entendo” · “Compreendo a situação”
- thinking, then understanding — “penso” · “entendo”
- the stretching family — “intend · intense · extend · tendon”

Before you move on

Say “I don’t understand.” (*Não entendo.*) Which of the two also means “to include”? (*Compreender.*) What does *tendere* mean, and what is *in-tendere* doing? (“To **stretch**”; stretching **toward** a thing.) Taken apart, what is a *surprise*? (*Super-prehendere* — “**seized from above**”). Is English *understand* a relative? (**No** — it is Germanic.) And *pensar*’s root meaning? (“To **weigh**”). Next: reading.

19.3 ler — a verb that gathers, worn down to three letters

Ver, “to see,” was three letters and irregular. **Ler**, “to read,” is three letters and irregular in exactly the same way — and for the same reason.

You’ll want to know: leio, lê, leem

eu **leio**
 tu **lês**
 ele/ela/você **lê**

nós **lemos**
 vocês/eles **leem**

Say them slowly. **Leio** has grown a *y*-glide in the middle. **Lê** is a single vowel held up by a circumflex. **Leem** is two *e*'s in a row, and Portuguese pronounces both of them. **Não leio muito** — “I don’t read much.”

This is not random damage. It is the very row *ver* uses — *vejo, vês, vê, vemos, veem* — and the one *crer*, “to believe,” uses too: *creio, crês, crê, cremos, creem*. Learn the row once and three verbs come with it.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ler ← Latin *legere*, whose first meaning was not reading at all. It was “**to gather, to pick, to choose.**” Reading was the metaphor — gathering letters up with the eye — and the metaphor won.

The shrinking is regular, and you have already met it. Latin *legere* lost its *-g-* between vowels, exactly as *manus* lost its *-n-* to give *mão*; that leaves *leer*, whose two vowels then collapse into one. **Ler** is what is left, and the circumflex on *lê* is the record of the collapse.

English took both halves of *legere*. The gathering half: **collect, select, elect** (“to pick out”), **intellect** (“to choose between”), **diligent, neglect** (“not to gather up”), and **elegant**, which first meant choosy.

The reading half: **legible, lecture, lectern, legend** (“things to be read”), and — through French *leçon* — the word **lesson** itself.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “leio, lê, lê, lemos, leem”
- the same row for seeing — “vejo, vês, vê, vemos, veem”
- “Não leio muito” · “Não entendo”
- the gathering family — “collect · select · elect · legend”

Before you move on

Give the present of *ler*, then the same row for *ver*. (**Leio, lê, lê, lemos, leem; vejo, vês, vê, vemos, veem.**) What did *legere* mean before it meant “to read”, and what went missing on the way to *ler*? (“**To gather, to pick, to choose**”; the *-g-*, between vowels, as in *mão* from *manus*.) Where is that root in English? (**Legible, lecture, legend, lesson.**) Next: writing.

19.4 **escrever** — scratching, and the e- that props up an s

Reading came last; writing is its partner. And this verb carries a spelling rule that will unlock dozens of other Portuguese words for you.

You’ll want to know: The forms, and a participle you already own

eu escrevo	nós escrevemos
tu escreves	vocês/eles escrevem
ele/ela/você escreve	

A plain *-er* verb, endings identical to *entender*. The irregularity sits elsewhere: the past participle is **escrito**, never *escrevido*.

Já escrevi a carta. — “I already wrote the letter.” **Está escrito.** — “It is written.”

Escrito is the Latin *scriptum* barely touched — which means **escrito** and English **script** are one word arriving twice.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

escrever ← Latin *scribere*, “to scratch, to incise,” because writing began as cutting marks into wax, clay, or bark. Its participle stem *script-* is among the most productive things English ever borrowed: **scribe**, **scribble**, **script**, **scripture**, **describe** and **description**, **prescribe**, **subscribe**, **transcribe**, **inscribe**, **ascribe**, **conscript**, **circumscribe**, **postscript** — and **manuscript**, which is *manus* plus *scriptum*, “written by the hand.” Old English borrowed the verb early and wore it down to **shrive** and **shrift**, the confession words behind *Shrove Tuesday*.

Now the rule. Latin *scribere* opens with *sc-*, and Iberian mouths would not start a word that way, so they propped a vowel in front of it. It happened without exception:

- *scribere* → **escrever**
- *schola* → **escola** (“school”)

- *stāre* → **estar** — the being-verb you already have
- *spērāre* → **esperar** (“to wait, to hope”)
- *spatium* → **espaço**

So when a Portuguese word opens with **es-** and the rest of it resembles an English word missing its *e*, it usually is one.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “escrevo, escreves, escreve, escrevemos, escrevem”
- “Já escrevi a carta” · “Está escrito”
- the chapter’s four, first person — “penso, entendo, leio, escrevo”
- the propped-up *e* — “escrever · escola · estar · esperar”

Before you move on

Give the present of *escrever*. (**Escrevo, escreves, escreve, escrevemos, escrevem.**) What is its past participle? (**Escrito** — Latin *scriptum*.) What did *scribere* mean literally? (“To **scratch**”.) Why *escola* and not *scola*? (Iberian Romance **propped an e-** in front of *sc-*, *sp-*, *st-*.) Which verb of being got the same treatment? (**Estar**, from *stāre*.) Now the four verbs of this chapter, in the *eu* form. (**Penso, entendo, leio, escrevo.**) Next: taking.

Chapter 20

Taking, Asking, Helping, Liking

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say that I take, ask, help and like in Portuguese, choose between its two verbs for taking, and keep *de* attached to *gostar*.

*The chapter's last lesson closes the set: after *gostar de* the reader produces the eight first-person forms of both verb chapters in one run - *penso, entendo, leio, escrevo, pego, pergunto, ajudo, gosto* - explains why the *de* cannot be dropped, and ties *gostar* back to *saber* as the second Portuguese verb that stopped meaning to taste.*

20.1 tomar / pegar — the two takings

English “take” does everything: take a bus, take a coffee, take a book, take a bath. Portuguese splits the work in two, and the line it draws is easy to feel.

You'll want to know: Into your hand, or into you

pegar — grasp, catch, grab	tomar — consume, take in
pego, pegas, pega, pegamos, pegam	tomo, tomas, toma, tomamos, tomam
Pego o livro. — I pick up the book.	Tomo um café. — I have a coffee.
Pegar um táxi. — To catch a taxi.	Tomar banho. — To take a bath.

The rule of thumb: if the thing ends up **in your hand**, it is *pegar*; if it ends up **inside you** — a drink, a medicine, a bath, a decision — it is *tomar*. Both are ordinary *-ar* verbs, so nothing in the endings is new.

One variety note: Portugal puts an *em* behind *pegar*, *pego no livro*, where Brazil says *pego o livro*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

pegar ← Latin *picāre*, “to coat with pitch,” from *pix*, *picis* — the black tar that sealed a ship’s hull. To *pegar* a thing was to make it **stick** to you, and Portuguese still uses that sense straight: **pegajoso** is “sticky,” and *a porta não pega* is a door that will not catch. English took the same *pix* as **pitch** — the tar, not the musical note, which is a different word altogether.

tomar is the honest gap in this chapter. Nobody has pinned its Latin source down: one proposal is *autumāre*, “to assert,” worn away to nothing, another an unrecorded *tumāre*, and neither is settled. A book that dressed a guess up as a root would be handing you a memory hook with nothing behind it. What is certain is that *tomar* is old and Iberian — Spanish carries the same verb with the same spread of senses, and no other Romance language has it at all.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “pego, pegas, pega” · “tomo, tomas, toma”
- “Tomo um café” · “Pegar um táxi”
- having and taking — “tenho um livro” · “pego o livro”
- the sticking family — “pegar · pegajoso · pitch”

Before you move on

Which verb takes a coffee, and which takes a book? (*Tomar*; *pegar*.) Say “I have a coffee.” (*Tomo um café*.) What did *picāre* mean, and what is *tomar*’s root? (To coat with **pitch**, so *pegar* is “to make stick”; *tomar*’s is **unknown** — disputed, and named as such.) Now “I have” and “I write”. (*Tenho*; *escrevo*.) Next: asking.

20.2 perguntar — asking, and the pole in the water

You have *dizer*, “to say.” Here is the verb that runs the other way — and a second one beside it, because Portuguese asks a **question** and asks **for** a thing with different verbs.

You’ll want to know: **perguntar**, and its neighbour **pedir**

eu pergunto	nós perguntamos
tu perguntas	vocês/eles perguntam
ele/ela/você pergunta	

An ordinary *-ar* verb, with its noun beside it: **uma pergunta**, “a question.”

Posso fazer uma pergunta? — “May I ask a question?” (Portuguese *makes* one.) **Perguntei pelo João.** — “I asked after João.”

Now the neighbour. **Pedir** is “to ask **for**” — to request, to order. *Pergunto a hora* is asking what the time is; *peço um café* is ordering one. English says “ask” for both and loses the difference; Portuguese never mixes them.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

perguntar ← Latin *percontārī*, “to inquire” — and the picture inside it is worth the whole lesson. It is *per-*, “through,” plus *contus*, “a punting pole.” To *percontārī* was to **push a pole through the water to find the bottom**. Asking is sounding the depth of something you cannot see into.

The road to *perguntar* runs through a hardened *c* and a wandering *r*: *percontare* → *pergontar* → *perguntar*. Spanish, another daughter of Latin, moved that *r* one step further forward and says *preguntar*. A warning about the cousins, because honesty beats a long list: this root left English almost nothing. *Per-* is everywhere — **perceive**, **perform**, **permit** — but *contus*, borrowed into Latin from Greek *kontos*, survives only in technical corners.

pedir does better: Latin *petere*, “to seek, to make for,” gives **petition**, **appetite**, **compete**, **impetus**, **perpetual**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “pergunto, perguntas, pergunta, perguntamos, perguntam”
- “Posso fazer uma pergunta?”
- saying against asking — “digo” · “pergunto”
- the asking-for family — “petition · appetite · compete · impetus”

Before you move on

Which verb asks a question, and which asks for a coffee? (*Perguntar*; *pedir*.) Say “May I ask a question.” (*Posso fazer uma pergunta?*) What is a *contus*, and what is asking on the Latin picture? (A **pole**; **probing the bottom** of something you cannot see into.) Where does *pedir* come from, and what court word did *dizer* leave English? (*Petere*, “to seek” → **appetite, compete; verdict.**) Next: helping.

20.3 ajudar — helping, and the j that used to be an i

Asking came last. This is the verb for when the answer is yes.

You’ll want to know: The forms, and the sentence to keep ready

eu ajudo	nós ajudamos
tu ajudas	vocês/eles ajudam
ele/ela/você ajuda	

An ordinary *-ar* verb. The sound to get right is the **j**, which is not the *j* of English *jam*: it is the soft buzz in the middle of *measure* and *pleasure*. Say *a-ZHU-dar*.

Pode ajudar-me? — “Can you help me?” **Preciso de ajuda.**
— “I need help.”

Where that little *me* stands is one of the live differences between the two great varieties: Portugal hangs it on the end with a hyphen, *ajudar-me*; Brazil puts it in front, *me ajudar*. Both are standard where they are spoken. For real trouble, though, the word is not this verb at all — it is **Socorro!**

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ajudar ← Latin **adiūtāre**, the repeating form of *adiuvāre*: *ad-* (“toward”) plus *iuvāre* (“to help, to gladden”). The picture is of coming toward someone, over and over.

Latin *i* before a vowel was said like English *y*, and that *y* is what hardened into the Portuguese *j*: *adiūtāre* → *aiudar* → **ajudar**. The same change gave *hoje*, *já*, and *janeiro*, the month you already know. English took the verb by two roads. Through French, where it wore down to *aider*, it arrived as **aid**, an **aide**, and **first aid**. Straight from Latin it also took **adjutant**, the officer who assists, and **adjuvant**, a medicine that helps another medicine work.

Four sisters, one verb: Portuguese *ajudar*, Spanish *ayudar*, French *aider*, Italian *aiutare* — all four *adiūtāre*, each worn down its own way.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “ajudo, ajudas, ajuda, ajudamos, ajudam”
- “Pode ajudar-me?” · “Preciso de ajuda”
- asking, then helping — “pergunto” · “ajudo”
- the soft j — “ajudar · hoje · já · janeiro”

Before you move on

Give the present of *ajudar*, and say how that *j* sounds. (**Ajudo, ajudas, ajuda, ajudamos, ajudam**; like the *s* in **measure**.) Ask someone for help. (**Pode ajudar-me?**) What is *adiūtāre* built from, and what did English take from it? (*Ad-*, “toward,” plus *iuvāre*, “to help”; **aid, aide, adjutant, adjuvant**.) And *contus*, in *perguntar*? (A **pole**.) Next: liking — and the one small word Portuguese insists on.

20.4 gostar de — liking, which in Portuguese is tasting

The last verb of the chapter, and the one that catches everybody out. In Portuguese you do not like a thing — you like **of** it.

You'll want to know: The forms

eu gosto	nós gostamos
tu gostas	vocês/eles gostam
ele/ela/você gosta	

An ordinary *-ar* verb. Everything hard about *gostar* is the word after it.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

gostar ← Latin *gustāre*, “to taste” — not to like, but to put a thing in your mouth and judge it. English took it as **gusto**, **gustatory**, a **degustation**, and its opposite **disgust**: *dis-* plus *gustus*, a bad taste. So Portuguese holds **two** verbs that once meant “to taste.” *Sapere* became *saber*, “to know,” and still tastes in *sabe bem*; *gustāre* became *gostar*. One language, one metaphor, taken twice.

Grammar Lens: why the *de* is not optional

Latin never said “taste a thing.” It said **taste of a thing** — *gustāre de* — because a sip comes **from** what is in front of you, not the whole of it. Portuguese inherited the preposition along with the verb:

Gosto de café. — “I like coffee.” (Word for word: “I taste of coffee.”) **Gosto de você.** — “I like you.” (Word for word: “I like of you.”) **Gostamos muito de Lisboa.** — “We like Lisbon very much.”

The *de* is fixed; dropping it is the mistake that marks a beginner fastest. And *de* fuses with any article it meets — *de + o* = **do**, *de + a* = **da**, *de + os* = **dos**, *de + as* = **das** — so “I like the wine” is *gosto do vinho*, never *de o vinho*.

Spanish, the other Iberian daughter of Latin, escaped the same problem the opposite way: it flips the sentence so the thing liked

becomes the subject — *me gusta el café*, “the coffee pleases me.” Portuguese keeps **you** as the subject and hangs the preposition on the object instead.
 For the stronger feeling: **adorar**, which needs no *de* (*adoro café*), and **amar**, kept mostly for people.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “gosto, gostas, gosta, gostamos, gostam”
- “Gosto de café” · “Gosto de você” · “Gosto do vinho”
- the two tasting verbs — “sabe bem” · “gosto de”
- both verb chapters, first person — “penso, entendo, leio, escrevo, pego, pergunto, ajudo, gosto”

Before you move on

Say “I like coffee,” then “I like the wine.” (***Gosto de café; gosto do vinho***, since *de + o* fuses to ***do***.) Why the *de*, what did *gustāre* mean, and which earlier verb has the same story? (You take a taste **of** a thing; “to **taste**”; ***saber***, from *sapere*.) Now the eight of these two chapters, in the *eu* form. (**Penso, entendo, leio, escrevo, pego, pergunto, ajudo, gosto.**)

Chapter 21

Bringing, Getting, Waiting, Buying

Modes: 🗣️ voice (6) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say that I bring, get, wait for and buy in Portuguese, use conseguir for managing to do a thing, let esperar carry waiting, hoping and expecting at once, and tell comprar's Latin root from the identically spelled one behind English compare.

The chapter's last lesson closes the set: after comprar the reader produces all four first-person forms in one run - trago, consigo, espero, compro - separates the comparare that gave comprar (com- + parare, 'to procure') from the identically spelled comparare that gave English compare (com- + par, 'equal'), and re-reads tenho comprado as 'I have been buying', not 'I have bought'.

21.1 trazer — bringing, and the dragging behind it

The last chapter split English “take” in two. Here is a third kind of handling: not grabbing a thing, not consuming it, but carrying it toward you.

You'll want to know: Two forms to learn whole

eu trago	nós trazemos
tu trazes	vocês/eles trazem
ele/ela/você traz	

Trazer is “to bring” — to carry something toward the speaker. Two forms cannot be worked out. The *eu* form is **trago**, with a hard *g* no other form has, and the *ele* form is bare **traz**, with nothing after the *z*.

Trago o pão. — “I bring the bread.” **Gosto de trazer o vinho.** — “I like to bring the wine.”

That second sentence keeps *gostar* welded to its **de**: *gosto de* and then a verb, never *gosto* alone. The past of *trazer* is **trouxe**, “I brought” — irregular, and learned as one whole word.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

trazer ← Latin *trahere*, “to **drag**, to pull,” which reached Portuguese through a worn-down *tragere*. To bring a thing was first of all to haul it.

English owns the family, nearly all of it through *tractus*, “dragged”: a **tractor** drags, **traction** is the grip that pulls, you **attract** by drawing toward, **subtract** by drawing away, **extract** by drawing out, and you are **distracted** when attention is drawn apart. A **contract** draws parties together; something **abstract** has been drawn off the thing itself.

Set that beside the last chapter’s two takings. **Pegar** came from *picāre*, “to coat with pitch,” so a thing sticks to your hand; **tomar** has no settled Latin root at all. Three verbs of handling — and only *trazer* has travel in it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “trago, trazes, traz, trazemos, trazem”
- “Trago o pão” · “Trouxe o pão”
- liking, once a tasting — “Gosto de trazer o vinho”

- grabbing, consuming, carrying — “pego · tomo · trago”
- the dragging family — “tractor · attract · subtract”

Before you move on

Give the present of *trazer*. (**Trago, trazes, traz, trazemos, trazem.**) Which two forms were learned whole? (**Trago**, with its *g*, and bare **traz**.) What did *trahere* mean? (“To **drag**” — so a *tractor* pulls.) Which small word does *gostar* keep before a verb, and what did its root *gustāre* mean? (*De*; “to **taste**”). Which verb of taking came from “to coat with pitch,” and which has no settled root at all? (*Pegar*, from *picāre*; *tomar*.)

21.2 conseguir / obter — getting, and managing to

English “get” is one of the vaguest verbs it owns. Portuguese answers it with a verb that also does a job English needs a whole phrase for.

You’ll want to know: Get a thing, or manage a deed

eu consigo	nós conseguimos
tu consegues	vocês/eles conseguem
ele/ela/você consegue	

Watch the *eu* form: the stem’s *e* becomes an **i** in **consigo**, and nowhere else.

Conseguir has two jobs. With a noun it is **to get, to obtain**. With another verb straight after it, it is **to manage to, to succeed in** — the sense English has no single word for:

Consigo trazer o pão. — “I can manage to bring the bread.”
Consigo ajudar. — “I manage to help.”

Its formal twin is **obter**, which belongs to paperwork rather than speech — and which you can already conjugate, because it is *ter* with **ob-** bolted on: **obtenho, obtém**, exactly as **tenho, tem**.

The polite address from the opening chapters still works: to a stranger,
o senhor consegue trazer o pão.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

conseguir ← Latin *cōnsequi*, “to follow right through to the end,” from *con-* (“all the way”) plus *sequi*, “to follow.” To *conseguir* is to have followed a thing to where it stops — which is why one verb covers both getting the object and pulling the deed off.

English took *sequi* everywhere: a **sequel** follows, a **sequence** is things in following order, a **consequence** is what follows from, and **pursue** is the same verb through French. Best of all, **second** is *secundus*, “the following one” — a number whose name means “next.”

obter ← *obtinēre*, whose *tinēre* is *tenēre*, “to hold” — the very verb behind **ter**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “consigo, consegue, consegue, conseguimos, conseguem”
- “Consigo trazer o pão” · “Consigo ajudar”
- holding and getting — “tenho · obtenho”
- politely — “O senhor consegue trazer o pão?”
- the following family — “sequel · sequence · second”

Before you move on

Say “I manage to help” and “I bring the bread.” (**Consigo ajudar; trago o pão.**) What did *sequi* mean, and which number is named from it? (“To **follow**” — **second**, *secundus*.) Which verb is *obter* built on, and what did that root mean? (**Ter**, from *tenēre*, “to **hold**”). Which verb came from *adiūtāre*, its *i* hardening into a *j*? (**Ajudar.**) And the polite address for a stranger? (**O senhor.**)

21.3 esperar — to wait

One ordinary **-ar** verb lets you say that you wait: **esperar**.

You'll want to know: The present tense

eu espero	nós esperamos
tu esperas	vocês/eles esperam
ele/ela/você espera	

The endings are familiar. Portuguese normally puts the thing or person waited for directly after the verb:

Espero o meu irmão. — I am waiting for my brother.

English needs “for”; Portuguese does not add a preposition here.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Esperar comes from Latin *spērāre*, “to hope.” Its front **e-** props up an older *sp-* beginning, in the same way that **escrever** grew from Latin *scrībere*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- **espero, esperas, espera, esperamos, esperam**
- “I am waiting for my brother” — **Espero o meu irmão.**

Before you move on

Say “I wait.” (**Espero.**) Say “We wait.” (**Esperamos.**) Does Portuguese add a word matching English “for” in **Espero o meu irmão?** (**No.**) Next, the same verb will take one carefully separated new meaning.

21.4 espero que sim — I hope so

Espero first meant “I hope.” Learn that meaning in one useful answer: **Espero que sim**, “I hope so.”

You'll want to know: Bank the whole answer

— Vai chover? — Is it going to rain? — **Espero que sim.** —
I hope so.

You do not need to take the answer apart yet. Hear and say the four beats: **es-pe-ro que sim.**

The earlier meaning, “wait,” is still available. The sentence around **esperar** selects the meaning.

Your turn

- *Say it:* “I hope so” — **Espero que sim.**
- *Choose:* In **Espero que sim**, does **espero** mean wait or hope? (**Hope.**)

Before you move on

Say “I hope so.” (**Espero que sim.**) Which meaning came first in the word’s Latin history? (**Hope.**)

21.5 esperar — to expect

You have used **esperar** for waiting and hoping. Its third common meaning gets its own short lesson: “to expect.”

Grammar Lens: Let the object choose the meaning

Espero um livro. — I expect a book.

Here **espero** is about what you think will arrive. Compare the three meanings:

- **Espero o meu irmão.** — I wait for my brother.
- **Espero que sim.** — I hope so.
- **Espero um livro.** — I expect a book.

Do not memorise three new verbs. Notice how the rest of the sentence guides you.

Your turn

- *Say it*: “I expect a book” — **Espero um livro.**
- *Choose*: In that sentence, wait, hope or expect? (**Expect.**)

Before you move on

Say “I expect a book.” (**Espero um livro.**) What helps you choose the English meaning? (**The rest of the sentence.**)

21.6 comprar — buying, and a Latin twin that is not a twin

The last verb of the chapter is the easiest to conjugate and hides the sharpest piece of etymology in it.

You’ll want to know: A plain -ar verb, and a past you already own

eu compro	nós compramos
tu compras	vocês/eles compram
ele/ela/você compra	

Compro o pão. — “I buy the bread.” **Tenho comprado pão.**
— “I have been buying bread lately.”

That second one is the trap English speakers walk into. *Tenho comprado* does **not** mean “I have bought.” It means the buying has gone on, repeatedly, over recent time. For the plain finished past, Portuguese uses **comprei**.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

comprar ← Latin *comparāre*, “to procure, to get ready, to obtain” — *com-* plus *parāre*, “to make ready.” Buying is procuring. Here is the sharp part. Latin had a **second** *comparāre*, spelled letter for letter the same, built instead on *pār*, “equal” — “to set side by side, to match.” That one is where English **compare** comes from. So *comprar* and *compare* look like an obvious pair and are not related at

all: same spelling in Latin, two different parents.

The real cousins of *comprar* are the *parāre* family: **prepare** (*prae-*, beforehand), **repair** (*re-*, made ready anew), **separate** (*sē-*, ready apart), **apparatus** — and even **emperor**, from *imperāre*.

Note what Portuguese did to the word on the way: *comparāre* lost a whole syllable to become *comprar*. It wore *annus* down too, dropping one of its two *n*'s to give **ano**, where Spanish instead pushed them together into *año*.

And the *com-* of *comprar* is the same *com-* as in **compreender**, from *comprehendere*, “to seize together.” One prefix, two very different grips.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the whole chapter, first person — “trago, consigo, espero, compro”
- “Compro o pão” · “Tenho comprado pão”
- holding your years — “Tenho vinte anos”
- the ready family — “prepare · repair · separate”
- one prefix, two grips — “comprar · compreender”

Before you move on

Give the chapter's four verbs in the *eu* form. (**Trago, consigo, espero, compro.**) Does *tenho comprado* mean “I have bought”? (**No** — “I have been buying, lately”; the finished past is *comprei*.) Is *comprar* related to English *compare*? (**No** — two Latin verbs spelled alike; *comprar* is the one from *parāre*, “to make ready,” which also gave *prepare* and *repair*.) Say “I am twenty.” (**Tenho vinte anos** — Portuguese **holds** its years.) Which verb means “to seize together”? (**Compreender**, from *comprehendere*.) And the three jobs of *esperar*? (**Wait, hope, expect.**)

Chapter 22

Answering, Meeting, and Three Ways to Play

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say that I answer and meet in Portuguese, split meeting between encontrar and conhecer, and choose among the three verbs Portuguese uses for playing — jogar, brincar and tocar.

The chapter's last lesson closes the set: after the three play verbs the reader produces all five first-person forms in one run - respondo, encontro, jogo, brinco, toco - chooses jogar, brincar or tocar by the kind of playing, and names brincar as the one root of the three that is genuinely unsettled.

22.1 responder — answering, and a promise given back

A chapter of verbs for dealing with other people opens with the one this book has been missing. You have been able to ask since the last chapter. Now you can answer.

You'll want to know: A plain -er verb

eu **respondo**

tu **respondes**

ele/ela/você **responde**

nós **respondemos**

vocês/eles **respondem**

Responder is regular all the way through — an ordinary *-er* verb, the same shape as the writing and reading verbs you already conjugate. It pairs with *perguntar* exactly as English “answer” pairs with “ask”:

Pergunto e tu respondes. — “I ask and you answer.” **Respondo que compro o pão.** — “I answer that I am buying the bread.”

The most everyday answer of all is one you have had since the third chapter. Asked **Como se chama?**, you *respond*: **Chamo-me...**, and then **muito prazer**.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

responder ← Latin *respondēre*: *re-*, “back,” plus *spondēre*, “to pledge, to promise solemnly.” A Roman answer was not information handed over — it was a **promise returned**. Somebody pledged, and you pledged back.

That old weight is still on the English side of the family. **Respond** and **response** are the plain ones, but a **responsible** person is one who can be called on to answer, and to be **despondent** is to have given the pledge away. A **sponsor** is literally one who pledges for you — and a **spouse** is *spōnsus*, “the one who has been promised.”

Set that against the verb it answers. **Perguntar** came from *percontārī*, from *contus*, a boatman’s pole: to ask was to sound the depth of the water in front of you. So Portuguese probes with a pole and pledges back with a promise.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “respondo, respondes, responde, respondemos, respondem”
- the pair — “Pergunto e tu respondes”
- answering the oldest question — “Chamo-me... muito prazer”
- “Respondo que compro o pão”
- the pledging family — “sponsor · spouse · responsible”

Before you move on

Give the present of *responder*. (**Respondo, respondes, responde, respondemos, respondem.**) What did *spondēre* mean, and which English word for a married person comes from it? (“To **pledge**” — *spouse*, *spōnsus*.) Now answer *Como se chama?* aloud. (**Chamo-me...**, then **muito prazer.**) What was the pole in *perguntar*? (*Contus* — asking as **sounding the depth.**) And is *comprar* related to *compare*? (**No** — *comprar* comes from *parāre*, “to make ready.”)

22.2 encontrar — to find

Today **encontrar** has one job: “to find.”

You’ll want to know: The present tense

eu encontro	nós encontramos
tu encontras	vocês/eles encontram
ele/ela/você encontra	

Encontro o livro. — I find the book. **Encontramos o café.**
— We find the café.

Keep the object directly after the verb, as in English.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Encontrar grew from *in* plus Latin *contrā*, “facing” or “opposite.” To find something is to come face to face with it. English **encounter** belongs to the same family.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- **encontro, encontras, encontra, encontramos, encontram**
- “I find the book” — **Encontro o livro.**

- “We find the café” — **Encontramos o café.**

Before you move on

Say “I find.” (**Encontro.**) Say “We find the café.” (**Encontramos o café.**) Which English word shares the same family? (**Encounter.**) Next, **encontrar** will gain one social meaning.

22.3 encontrar-se — to meet up

You know **encontrar**, “to find.” With people, it can also describe meeting up.

You’ll want to know: Make one plan

Encontramo-nos no sábado ao meio-dia. — We are meeting on Saturday at midday.

The little **nos** means “each other.” In much of Portugal it commonly attaches after the verb as shown. In Brazil, **nós nos encontramos** is more usual.

For a first introduction, keep using the **conhecer** family you already know: **Conheci o Pedro**, “I met Pedro for the first time.” Today’s **encontrar-se** is for meeting up.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **Encontramo-nos no sábado.**
- *Say it:* **Nós nos encontramos no sábado.**
- *Choose:* A first introduction uses **encontrar** or **conhecer**? (**Conhecer.**)

Before you move on

Say “We are meeting on Saturday” in the Portugal pattern. (**Encontramo-nos no sábado.**) Which pattern is common in Brazil? (**Nós nos encontramos.**) Which verb handles a first introduction? (**Conhecer.**)

22.4 jogar / brincar / tocar — the three ways to play

English plays chess, plays in the garden and plays the piano with one verb. Portuguese has three, and will not let you swap them.

You'll want to know: Which play is which

jogar — a game	brincar — a child, a joke	tocar — an instrument
jogo, jogas, joga	brinco, brincas, brinca	toco, tocas, toca
Jogo futebol.	O meu irmão brinca.	Toco piano.

All three are ordinary *-ar* verbs, endings exactly as in *falar*, *morar* and *trabalhar*. The work is choosing.

Jogar is a game with rules and a winner. **Brincar** is free play — a child with a toy, and from there joking, so *brincar com* someone is to tease them. **Tocar** is an instrument. *Brincar* is the one English cannot match: “play” is too wide, “mess about” too dismissive.

Grammar Lens: Two coasts, one preposition apart

Portugal commonly puts an *a* after *jogar*: **jogar à bola**, **jogar às cartas**. Brazil, and northern Portugal, take the thing straight: **jogar bola**.

Tocar also keeps its plainer meaning, **to touch**. You touch with a **mão** — and a piano wants **as duas mãos**, *duas* not *dois*, because *mão* is feminine.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

jogar ← Latin *iocārī*, “to jest,” from *iocus*, “a joke” → English **joke**, **jocular**, and **juggler**, a Latin *ioculātor* or jester. Portuguese plays its games with the Latin word for a gag.

tocar ← Vulgar Latin *toccāre*, “to knock, to strike,” most likely an imitation of the sound. Old French carried it into English as **touch** — a blow at its lightest is a touch. The striking sense stayed with music: a **toccata**, a **tocsin** or alarm bell. You *tocar* an instrument because you strike it.

brincar is the honest gap. The leading account runs through **brinco**,

today “an earring,” from Latin *vinculum*, “a bond” — a bound ornament, then a trinket, then playing with trinkets. A Germanic word for gleaming is the rival, and neither is settled. *Vinculum* survives plainly as **vínculo**, “a bond.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the whole chapter — “respondo, encontro, jogo, brinco, toco”
- “Jogo futebol” · “Toco piano” · “O meu irmão brinca”
- with both hands — “a mão, as duas mãos”
- the striking family — “tocar · touch · toccata”

Before you move on

Name the verb for a sport, the one for a child, the one for a piano. (**Jogar; brincar; tocar.**) Give this chapter’s five *eu* forms. (**Respondo, encontro, jogo, brinco, toco.**) Which of the three has no settled root? (**Brincar.**) What did *toccāre* mean, and which English word is it? (“To **strike**” — **touch.**) Why *as duas mãos*? (*Mão* is **feminine.**) And which verb meets a person for the first time? (**Conhecer.**)

Chapter 23

Asking for Something to Drink

Modes: 🗣️ voice (3) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask for coffee, tea or milk in Portuguese, name each one's gender, and say which of the three actually descends from Latin.

The chapter's last lesson closes the set with a one-table review of all three drinks' origins (Arabic/Turkish, Cantonese, Latin), then reaches back to Chapter 11's pao and agua/vinho and Chapter 5's trabalhar and Falo portugues to stock a full sentence: Trabalho no Porto e gosto de cafe.

23.1 o café — the word that isn't Latin at all

Every word this book has taken apart so far has led back to Latin. **café** is the first one that doesn't. Ask for it and you're speaking a word that travelled from Arabic to Turkish to nearly every language in Europe at once.

You'll want to know: The word

o café — coffee. **Masculine.** **Gosto de café.** — “I like coffee.”
(You already own *gostar de*, from Ch. 20.)

Sounds you'll need

Portuguese words default to stress on the **second-to-last** syllable — *falo, trabalho, cabeça*. **café** breaks that pattern: the stress falls on the **last** syllable, *ca-**FÊ***, and the acute accent is there for exactly one job

— to flag the exception. No accent, and a reader would guess *CA-fe* and say it wrong. You’ll meet this same accent-marks-an-exception rule again in this chapter.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

café ← Arabic *qahwa* ← passed into Ottoman **Turkish** as *kahve* — and from there it spread into Europe’s trading languages **together**, not one borrowing from another: Italian **caffè**, French **café**, Portuguese **café**, all landing within decades of each other as the coffee-house crossed the continent.

English took the same root by a different door — through **Dutch** *koffie* — which is why the English spelling, **coffee**, looks like a cousin rather than a twin. Compare that with *água* (Ch. 11), which **kept** its Latin body, or *pão*, worn down but still traceably *pānis*. **café** has no Latin ancestor to trace at all: this is the al-Andalus and Ottoman trade routes leaving their mark on the everyday table, the same kind of loan that gave Chapter 13’s *azul* its stone from Persia.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o café” — stress the last syllable, *ca-FÉ*
- “Gosto de café” — reusing *gostar de* from Chapter 20
- the route — “qahwa → kahve → café” — three languages, one word
- the contrast — “café has no Latin root at all, unlike água or pão”

Before you move on

Say “coffee” with its article, and “I like coffee.” (**O café**; **Gosto de café**.) Why does *café* carry a written accent? (Because it breaks the normal second-to-last-syllable stress pattern — the accent flags the exception.) Where does *café* actually come from? (**Arabic qahwa**, **via Turkish kahve** — not Latin at all.) Next: a second drink with an even stranger route to Portuguese.

23.2 o chá — the one Western language that took the other route

Another drink, another loanword — but this one has a map behind it. Nearly every Western European language calls this drink some version of *tea*. Portuguese alone says something else, and the reason is which port its ships used.

You'll want to know: The word

o chá — tea. **Masculine. Gosto de chá.** — “I like tea.”

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

China has two major words for tea, and which one a language ended up with depended entirely on **which port its traders used**.

- The **Dutch**, trading through the Hokkien-speaking port of **Xiamen** (Amoy), carried home the local word **te** — and it spread from Dutch into English **tea**, French **thé**, German **Tee**, Italian **tè**, Spanish **té**. This is the “maritime *te*” family, and it is nearly all of Western Europe.
- **Portuguese chá** is the exception. Portuguese traders worked out of **Macau**, a Cantonese- and Mandarin-speaking port, where the word is **chá**. So Portuguese took the **northern, overland-style** word instead of the maritime one its geographic neighbours took — the same **chá** family that reached Hindi (*chai*), Russian (*chai*), Persian, and Arabic by the overland Silk Road, even though Portugal reached it by sea.

One country, one word, and it splits **every** other Western language from Portuguese on this single everyday drink.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o chá” — a plain, short *ah*, no accent-marked stress exception like *café*’s
- “Gosto de chá” — “Gosto de café” — the same *gostar de* twice

- the split — “*te* went west by sea; *chá* went out through Macau and overland”
- café and chá together — one from Arabic/Turkish, one from Cantonese — neither from Latin

Before you move on

Say “tea” with its article, and “I like tea.” (**O chá; Gosto de chá.**) Which Chinese word do English, French and Spanish all share for tea? (***Te*** — from Hokkien, via Dutch trade at Xiamen.) Which word did Portuguese take instead, and why? (***Chá*** — because Portuguese traders worked out of **Macau**, a Cantonese-speaking port.) Name one other language that reached the *chá* family a completely different way. (**Hindi** or **Russian**, overland.) Next: a drink that, unlike these two, really is Latin.

23.3 o leite — the one that IS Latin

Two loanwords in a row — one from Arabic and Turkish, one from Cantonese. The third drink closes the pattern by breaking it: **leite** is where this chapter finally touches Latin.

You’ll want to know: The word

o leite — milk. **Masculine. Gosto de leite.** — “I like milk.”

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

leite ← Latin ***lac, lactis*** (“milk”), worn down the ordinary way — no borrowing, just sound change over centuries. English’s **learned** vocabulary keeps the root whole: **lactic, lactose, lactate**. Spanish *leche*, French *lait*, Italian *latte* show the same *-ct-* cluster eroding differently in each sister, the family Chapter 1’s *noite* belongs to as well (← *nox, noctis*).

What you've built: The chapter in one table

Portuguese	source
café	Arabic <i>qahwa</i> , via Turkish <i>kahve</i>
chá	Cantonese <i>chá</i> (via Macau — the Western exception)
leite	plain inherited Latin <i>lac</i> , <i>lactis</i>

Three drinks, three different pasts — the same “not one of them agrees” shape Chapter 13 found in Portuguese’s colours. Put them on Chapter 11’s table beside **o pão** and **a água**, and hand Chapter 5’s **Falo português** something to say: **Trabalho no Porto e gosto de café.**

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o leite” — the *ei* is a closed diphthong, “LAY-tchee” in Brazil
- “café, chá, leite” — remember café’s stress-accent, since it’s the only one of the three that needs it
- “Gosto de café, gosto de chá, gosto de leite”
- “Trabalho no Porto e gosto de café” — Chapter 5’s sentence, restocked

Before you move on

Say “milk” with its article. (**O leite.**) How is its origin different from *café*’s and *chá*’s? (Plain inherited **Latin**, not a loanword.) Which two Chapter 11 words belong on the same table? (**O pão, a água.**) Build one sentence with Chapter 5’s *Falo português* and this chapter’s coffee. (**Trabalho no Porto e gosto de café.**) Next chapter: three more things you might ask for — none of them a drink.

Chapter 24

Cheese, Egg, Rice, and Sugar

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask for cheese, egg, rice or sugar in Portuguese, name each one's gender, and split them into the two that are plain Latin and the two that crossed from Asia through Arabic.

The chapter's last lesson closes the set with a one-table review of all four foods' origins, ties acucar's cedilla back to Chapter 17's cabeça, and names acucar and arroz as cousins of English sugar and rice by the same Arabic doorway that gave Chapter 13 its azul.

24.1 o queijo — a cousin English didn't lose

New chapter, new table. This word is a rare thing in this book: an everyday Portuguese noun whose closest cousin is an everyday **English** one — not a “learned” borrowing like *aquatic* or *annual*, but the ordinary word you'd use every day.

You'll want to know: The word

o queijo — cheese. **Masculine.** **Gosto de queijo.** — “I like cheese.”

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

queijo ← Latin *cāseus*, “cheese.” English **cheese** comes from the **same** Latin word — Old English borrowed it early, from West Germanic *kāsī*, itself taken from *cāseus*. So *queijo* and *cheese* are not a

learned pair like *água/aquatic*; they are the ordinary, everyday word in both languages, from one Latin root.

Not every Romance sister agrees. Spanish kept *cāseus* too (*queso*). But French and Italian **replaced** it: French **fromage** and Italian **formaggio** both come from Latin *fōrmāticum*, “**something shaped in a mould**” (← *forma*, “shape, mould” — the same root as English **form** and **format**). So the Romance family splits on cheese exactly the way it split on “red” in Chapter 13: two sisters keep the old root, two sisters name the thing by how it’s made instead.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o queijo” — *KAY-zhoo*, the *j* a soft *zh*
- “Gosto de queijo” · “Gosto de leite” · “Gosto de chá” — all three drinks and this new food
- the cousin pair — “queijo — cheese — *cāseus*”
- the split — “PT/ES kept *cāseus*; FR/IT switched to *fōrmāticum*, ‘moulded’”

Before you move on

Say “cheese” with its article. (**O queijo.**) What Latin word is it from, and what everyday English word is its direct cousin? (***Cāseus*** — English **cheese**.) Which two Romance languages abandoned *cāseus* for a different root, and what does that root mean? (**French, Italian** — *fōrmāticum*, “something **moulded**.”) Say Chapter 5’s sentence with this new table in mind. (**Falo português, e gosto de queijo.**) Next: an even shorter word, from an even older root.

24.2 o ovo — barely touched in two thousand years

After *pão* worn to a nasal hum and *mão* losing its *-n-* entirely, here is the opposite case: a word Latin handed Portuguese almost **unchanged**.

You'll want to know: The word

o ovo — egg. **Masculine. Gosto de ovo.** — “I like egg.”
Plural: **os ovos.**

Note the pronunciation shift between singular and plural: the stressed *o* of **ovo** is open (like English “off”), and in the plural **ovos** it stays open too — a small, regular pattern Portuguese repairs are not needed for here, unlike some other *o*-final nouns.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ovo ← Latin *ōvum*. Compare *pão* (← *pānis*, worn to one syllable) or *mão* (← *manus*, its *-n-* dissolved): **ovo** shows none of that. Latin *ōvum* simply lost its long-vowel marking and became *ovo* — three sounds across two thousand years is about as little change as this book has shown.

English kept the same root **whole**, in its learned vocabulary: **oval** (“egg-shaped”), **ovum**, **ovary**, **ovulate**. So *ovo* is the everyday Portuguese word standing next to English words that only a biology class uses — the reverse of *queijo/cheese* last lesson, where **both** languages kept the everyday word.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o ovo, os ovos” — open *o* in both
- “Gosto de ovo” · “Gosto de queijo” · “Gosto de leite”
- “ovo — ovum — oval” — barely changed in two thousand years
- the contrast — “pão wore down hard; ovo barely wore down at all”

Before you move on

Say “egg” and “eggs.” (**O ovo, os ovos.**) What Latin word is it from, and how much did it change? (*Ōvum* — almost **not at all.**) Name two English words that keep the same root, and say whether they’re everyday or learned words. (**Oval, ovum, ovary** — all **learned**, unlike *queijo/cheese* which were both everyday.) Which of

this chapter's foods and the last chapter's drinks are plain Latin, and which are loans? (**Queijo, ovo, leite** are Latin; **café, chá** are loans.) Next: a word from further east than any in this book yet.

24.3 o arroz — the al-Andalus thread, keeping its article this time

Chapter 13 traced *azul* back through Arabic to a Persian mountain stone, and noted that eight centuries of Arabic in Iberia left Portuguese thousands of words. Here is another one — and this time you can still see the Arabic **article** sitting inside it.

You'll want to know: The word

o arroz — rice. **Masculine. Gosto de arroz.** — “I like rice.”

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

arroz ← Arabic ***al-ruzz*** — and unlike *azul* (Ch. 13), where Iberian ears mistook the Arabic article *al-* for their own and **dropped** it, *arroz* **kept** it: the doubled *rr* at the front of *arroz* **is** that fused-on *al-*. Compare Spanish *arroz*, doing the identical thing. Arabic itself didn't originate the word. *Al-ruzz* comes from Greek ***óryza***, and Greek had taken it from further east still, following the crop's own journey out of Asia. So the full route is: an Asian word → **Greek *óryza*** → **Arabic *al-ruzz*** → Portuguese ***arroz*** — three languages passing one grain of rice hand to hand, exactly the kind of layered loan Chapter 13 first showed you with *azul*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o arroz” — the doubled *rr* is a strong guttural sound
- “Gosto de arroz” · “Gosto de ovo”
- the hidden article — “*al-ruzz* → **arroz**, the *al-* fused on, not dropped”
- the contrast with Ch. 13 — “*azul* **lost** its *al-*; *arroz* **kept** it”

Before you move on

Say “rice” with its article. (**O arroz.**) What Arabic word is it from, and what is hiding inside its spelling? (**Al-ruzz** — the doubled *rr* is the fused Arabic article.) How does that compare to *azul* from Chapter 13? (*Azul* **dropped** its Arabic *al-*; *arroz* **kept** it.) Where did Arabic itself get the word? (**Greek** *óryza*.) Next: the sweetener that made the same al-Andalus crossing.

24.4 o açúcar — sugar’s own al- doorway

One more word through the same Arabic doorway as *arroz* — and this time English walked through it too, so the two languages end up cousins.

You’ll want to know: The word

o açúcar — sugar. **Masculine. Gosto de açúcar.** — “I like sugar.” (Said about a food it’s stirred into, not spooned alone.)

The **ç** is the cedilla you met on *cabeça* back in Chapter 17 — it marks *c* as **s**, not **k**, before *a*: *a-ÇÚ-car*, not *a-KOO-car*. The accent on **ú** does the same job you learned for *café*: it marks the stressed syllable where the default pattern wouldn’t predict it.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

açúcar ← Arabic **al-sukkar** — the same Arabic article you just met fused onto the front of *arroz*, here worn down further from *al-* to a plain **a-**. Arabic in turn took the word from **Persian** *shakar*, which traces back to **Sanskrit** *śarkarā*, “**gravel, grit**” — sugar named for its granules, long before refining made it fine.

English **sugar** walked through the **same** doorway — Arabic *al-sukkar* reached French as *sucre* and English borrowed it from there — so *açúcar* and *sugar* are cousins by the identical route that gave *arroz* its rice, not a coincidence but the same trade corridor moving two different goods.

What you've built: The chapter in one table

Portuguese	source
queijo	Latin <i>cāseus</i> — everyday cousin of English cheese
ovo	Latin <i>ōvum</i> — barely worn down at all
arroz	Arabic <i>al-ruzz</i> ← Greek <i>óryza</i>
açúcar	Arabic <i>al-sukkar</i> ← Persian <i>shakar</i> ← Sanskrit

Two words that are Latin all the way through, and two that crossed from Asia through Arabic — the same split this book has now drawn twice, once for colours (Ch. 13) and once for drinks (Ch. 23).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o açúcar” — cedilla makes the *c* an *s*, same rule as *cabeça*
- “Gosto de açúcar” · “Gosto de arroz”
- “queijo, ovo, arroz, açúcar” — the whole chapter, in order
- the pairing — “açúcar and sugar, arroz and rice — cousins by the same Arabic door”

Before you move on

Say “sugar” with its article. (**O açúcar.**) What does the cedilla do here, and where did you meet it before? (Marks *c* as **s** — Chapter 17's *cabeça*.) What is *açúcar*'s English cousin, and by what route? (**Sugar** — both through **Arabic** *al-sukkar*.) Which two of this chapter's four words are plain Latin, and which two crossed from Asia through Arabic? (**Queijo, ovo** are Latin; **arroz, açúcar** are Arabic loans.) Next chapter: the people you'd introduce over this same table.

Chapter 25

The People You Introduce

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a friend, a family, a man and a woman in Portuguese with the right gender, and say which Latin root each of the four Romance sisters picked for 'woman'.

The chapter's last lesson closes the set with a one-table review of all four people-words' Latin roots, shows mulher/mujer against femme (fēmina) and donna (domina) as a three-way Romance split, and reaches back to Chapter 3's introduction practice and Chapter 15's tenho falado to build Tenho falado com a minha família.

25.1 o amigo, a amiga — “one who is loved”

New chapter: the people you'd introduce, not the things you'd order. First up is the word for the person you say *prazer* to.

You'll want to know: The word

o amigo (a male friend) / **a amiga** (a female friend) **O meu amigo** / **a minha amiga** — “my friend.”

Like *obrigado/obrigada* in Chapter 1, the ending carries the gender: **-o** for a male friend, **-a** for a female one — but here, unlike *obrigado*, the *-o/-a* agrees with the **friend**, not the speaker.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

amigo ← Latin *amīcus* (“friend”), built directly on the verb *amāre*, “to love.” A friend, in Latin, is literally “**one who is loved.**” English kept the same root in **amicable**, **amiable**, and **amity** — all learned words for the everyday Portuguese one.

That closes a loop this book opened back in Chapter 3. You met **prazer** there — “pleasure,” from *placēre*, “to please” — as the word you say on **meeting** someone. Now you have the word for the person you’d still be saying it to once they’re no longer a stranger: *placēre* gets you through the door, *amāre* is what’s supposed to be on the other side of it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o amigo, a amiga” — the *-o/-a* names the friend’s gender
- “o meu amigo” · “a minha amiga”
- “amigo — amicable — amāre, to love”
- the pair — “prazer, from placēre, to please” · “amigo, from amāre, to love”

Before you move on

Say “a male friend” and “a female friend.” (**O amigo, a amiga.**) What Latin verb is *amigo* built on, and what does it mean? (Latin *amāre*, “**to love**” — a friend is “one who is loved.”) Name the two Chapter 24 foods that crossed from Asia through Arabic. (**Arroz, açúcar.**) Next: the word for everyone in that house together.

25.2 a família — a word that used to mean “the servants”

A word that looks like the easiest cognate in the whole book — and whose Latin meaning would surprise you.

You'll want to know: The word

a família — the family. **Feminine.** **A minha família** — “my family.”

Spelled almost exactly like English *family*, stressed almost the same way — one of the plainest true cognates this book teaches.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

família ← Latin **familia** — but Classical Latin *familia* did not mean quite what you'd guess. It named the whole **household** under one head (the *pater familias*), and that household's core members were the **famuli** — its **servants and slaves**. Blood relatives were part of a *familia* too, but the word's original centre of gravity was **who lived under one roof and one authority**, not **who you were related to**. Only over centuries did the sense narrow to the one you already know.

So when Chapter 10 taught you **o pai, a mãe** — “father, mother” — those two words named the *heads* of a *familia* in the Roman sense: the people in charge of the household, servants included. And Chapter 10's **os pais** (“the parents,” literally “the fathers”) and **os irmãos** (“brothers,” from *germānus*, “of the same stock”) are exactly the members a *familia* still holds onto now that the servants have left the word behind — the same household whose table Chapter 24 stocked with **arroz** and **açúcar**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “a família, a minha família”
- “família — a Roman household, servants included”
- the family words it holds — “os pais, os irmãos” — Chapter 10
- “o pai, a mãe” were the *heads* of a *familia*, not its whole definition

Before you move on

Say “the family” and “my family.” (**A família, a minha família.**) What did Latin *família* actually name, and who were its core members? (The whole **household**, headed by one person — its *famuli* were **servants**.) What does *os pais* mean literally, and what does *os irmãos* mean? (Literally “**the fathers**”; “**brothers**,” from *germānus*, Chapter 10.) Which Chapter 24 sweetener shares that same household table? (**Açúcar.**) Next: one of the two people who used to head that household.

25.3 o homem — “human being,” narrowed to half of one

A word that looks like it should mean “human” in general — and in its Latin root, it did.

You’ll want to know: The word

o homem — the man. **Masculine.** **O homem tem trinta anos.** — “The man is thirty.” (Reusing *ter* + *anos* from Chapter 14 — never *ser*.)

The **h** is silent, as in every Portuguese word that has one. The ending **-em** is a nasal, the same nasal sound you already own from *também* and *tem*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

homem ← Latin *homō, hominis* — and Classical Latin *homō* meant “**human being**,” with **no sex specified at all**. English kept that broad sense whole, in **human**, **humane**, and **hominid** — a *hominid* is any member of the human family, not “a member of the family who is male.”

Portuguese narrowed the word down to mean specifically **a man**, the way Spanish did with *hombre* and French did with *homme* — three sisters independently taking the same general Latin word and pointing it at one sex. So an English speaker’s instinct on first meeting *homem* is **half right**: the root really did mean “human,” but the Portuguese word in front of you no longer does.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o homem” — silent *h*, nasal *-em*
- “O homem tem trinta anos” — Chapter 14’s *ter* + *anos*, not *ser*
- “homo, hominis — human being” — then “homem — narrowed to man”
- the three sisters — “Portuguese homem, Spanish hombre, French homme”

Before you move on

Say “the man” and give him an age using Chapter 14’s pattern. (**O homem; o homem tem trinta anos** — *ter*, never *ser*.) What did Latin *homō* actually mean, with what English word keeping that sense whole? (“**Human being**,” sex unspecified — English **human, hominid**.) What happened to that sense in Portuguese, Spanish and French? (**Narrowed** to “man” in all three — *homem, hombre, homme*.) Next: the word Portuguese built from a completely different Latin root instead of narrowing this one.

25.4 a mulher — the fourth sister, a fourth root

The last person-word of the chapter — and the payoff of the whole set. Portuguese, Spanish, French and Italian each say “woman” with a **different** Latin word.

You’ll want to know: The word

a mulher — the woman. **Feminine. A mulher tem trinta anos.** — “The woman is thirty.”

The **-lh-** is the palatal *ly* sound you already own from *trabalhar* (Ch. 5) and *vinho* (Ch. 11).

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

mulher ← Latin *mulier*, *mulieris* — twin of Spanish **mujer**, both straight descendants of the same word.

French and Italian did not follow. **French femme** comes from a **different** Latin word, *fēmina* (the same root behind English *feminine*, *female*). **Italian donna** comes from a **third** Latin word again — *domina*, “**lady of the house, mistress**” (the same root as English *dominate* and *dame*). So the sisters split three ways on this one concept: Iberian Romance keeps *mulier*, French kept *fēmina*, Italian switched to *domina* entirely.

What you’ve built: The chapter in one table

Portuguese	English cousin	Latin root
amigo/amiga	amicable	<i>amīcus</i> , ← <i>amāre</i> “to love”
família	family	<i>famīlia</i> , “household”
homem	human, hominid	<i>homō</i> , “human being”
mulher	(none direct)	<i>mulier</i>

Not one Romance sister names “woman” the same way twice — the same “not one of them agrees” shape Chapter 13 found in Portuguese’s own colours. Hand Chapter 3’s *Prazer* to any of these four people (**Prazer, sou amigo da mulher**), and give Chapter 15’s **tenho falado** — “I’ve been speaking,” never “I have spoken” — someone to be about: *Tenho falado com a minha família*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “a mulher” — the *-lh-* from *trabalhar* and *vinho*
- “mulher — mujer” the Iberian twins
- “femme (*fēmina*), donna (*domina*), mulher (*mulier*)” — three Latin roots, three sisters
- “Tenho falado com a minha família” — Chapter 15’s compound, now with someone to say it about

Before you move on

Say “the woman.” (**A mulher.**) What Latin word is it from, and what’s its Spanish twin? (**Mulier** — Spanish **mujer.**) What two different Latin words did French and Italian pick instead, and what do they mean? (French **femme** ← *fēmina*, “female”; Italian **donna** ← *domina*, “lady of the house.”) What does *tenho falado com a minha família* mean, and why not “I have spoken”? (**“I’ve been talking with my family,”** repeatedly, since Chapter 15’s compound never took over the plain past the way Chapter 3’s introduction script eventually got a formal twin too.) Next chapter: parts of that same family’s bodies.

Chapter 26

The Body, Asking How You Are

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the eye, ear, mouth and heart in Portuguese with the right gender, and say what happened to each Latin root – kept whole, folded by a sound law, or grown with a suffix.

The chapter's last lesson closes the set with a one-table review of what happened to four body-part roots (kept, eroded, folded, grown), contrasts coracao's built nasal -ao against pao's and irmao's worn-down one, and reaches back to Chapter 2's Tudo bem/formal practice to give the wellbeing check-in something to answer with.

26.1 o olho — the sound law that already gave you a colour

New chapter: the body, extended past Chapter 17's *cabeça* and *mão*. The first word runs on a sound change you've already met — you just didn't know its name yet.

You'll want to know: The word

o olho — the eye. **Masculine.** **Dói-me o olho.** — “My eye hurts.” (Same *dói-me* pattern as Chapter 17's *cabeça*.)

The **-lh-** is the palatal *ly* glide you already own from *trabalhar*, *vinho*, and now *mulher*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

olho ← Latin *oculus* (“eye”). Spoken Latin dropped the unstressed middle vowel first — *oculus* → *oclu* — leaving a *-c-* jammed right against an *-l-*. That exact cluster, **-c’l-**, is what regularly folds into Portuguese **-lh-**: *oclu* → *olho*.

You have already seen this happen once, without the mechanism named: Chapter 13’s **vermelho** (“red”) comes from *vermiculus*, which loses its own unstressed vowel the same way — *vermiculu* → *vermelho* — the identical **-c’l-** → **-lh-** change, just on a different word. *Olho* and *vermelho* rhyme in Portuguese for a real historical reason, not by accident.

English kept the Latin shape whole, in the **learned** vocabulary: **ocular**, **oculist**. As with *ovo/ovum* two chapters back, the everyday Portuguese word and the everyday English word parted ways; only English’s technical register still shows the root.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o olho” — the same *-lh-* as *trabalhar*, *vinho*, *mulher*
- “Dói-me o olho” — reusing Chapter 17’s *cabeça* pattern
- “*oculus* → *oclu* → *olho*” — the same change as *vermiculus* → *vermelho*
- the body words so far — “a cabeça, a mão, o olho” — feminine, feminine, masculine

Before you move on

Say “the eye,” and “my eye hurts.” (**O olho; dói-me o olho.**) What Latin word is it from, and what sound law turns its *-c’l-* cluster into *-lh-*? (**Oculus** — the same **-c’l-** → **-lh-** change as Chapter 13’s *vermiculus* → *vermelho*.) Is *a cabeça* feminine or masculine, and how do you spell the *s*-sound in it? (**Feminine**; the **cedilla ç**.) Why is *a mão* feminine even though it doesn’t end in *-a*? (Latin *manus* was **fourth-declension feminine**.) Which Chapter 25 word named “human being” before Portuguese narrowed it to

“man”? (**Homem**, ← *homō*.) Next: a second body word built the exact same way.

26.2 a orelha — the same fold, a second time

The eye’s sound law strikes again, on a different word — and this one also reruns a split you already know from a verb, not a body part.

You’ll want to know: The word

a orelha — the (outer) ear. **Feminine.** **Dói-me a orelha.** — “My ear hurts.”

A note on scope: **orelha** names the visible, outer ear. For hearing itself, or an earache felt inside, Portuguese reaches for a different word, *ouvido* — not needed yet, but worth knowing the visible/inner split exists.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

orelha ← Latin *auricula*, literally “**little ear**” — a diminutive of *auris*, “ear.” Vulgar Latin dropped its own unstressed vowel — *auricula* → *orica* — *leaving a -c- jammed against an -l-, the very cluster that folds into Portuguese -lh-, exactly as oculus became olho last lesson.* Spanish took the **same** Latin word and folded the same cluster a **different** way: *auricula* → *oreja*. That is not a new pattern — it is the **identical** split Chapter 5 showed you with *trabalhar* and *trabajar*: one shared consonant cluster, Portuguese resolving it to **-lh-**, Spanish to **-j-**, twice now on two completely unrelated words. English’s *auricle* and *aural* keep the bare Latin root, the same “everyday word vs. learned word” split you’ve now seen several times.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “a orelha” — the same *-lh-* as *olho*
- “Dói-me a orelha” · “Dói-me o olho”

- “auricula → orelha (PT) / oreja (ES)” — the *traballar/trabajar* split again
- “orelha = outer ear; ouvido = hearing, not taught yet”

Before you move on

Say “the ear,” and “my ear hurts.” (**A orelha; dói-me a orelha.**) What Latin word is it from, and what does it literally mean? (**Auricula**, “little ear.”) What Chapter 5 verb pair already showed you this exact same Portuguese-*lh*/Spanish-*j* split? (**Traballar / trabajar.**) Which word does *orelha* NOT cover, and what does that word cover instead? (**Ouvido** — hearing and the inner ear.) Recall Chapter 25’s table: which Latin root did French pick for “woman” instead of *mulier*? (**Fēmina.**) Next: the part of the face this whole conversation comes out of.

26.3 a boca — the cheek that took over the mouth

The word for what all this talking has been coming out of — and it started life meaning something narrower.

You’ll want to know: The word

a boca — the mouth. **Feminine.** **Dói-me a boca.** — “My mouth hurts.”

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

boca ← Latin **bucca** — but Classical Latin *bucca* meant specifically “cheek,” especially a cheek puffed out, the way you’d blow out air. Latin’s actual word for “mouth” was **ōs, ōris**. Everyday spoken Latin generalised *bucca* from “cheek” to the whole **mouth**, and the old word *ōs* survived only in **learned** vocabulary — English **oral, orifice**. So Portuguese *boca*, Spanish *boca*, French *bouche* and Italian *bocca* all descend from what was once a word for one puffed-out cheek, while the original “mouth” word became a textbook term. English **buccal** (a dentist’s word for the cheek side of a tooth) is the one place the original, narrower sense survives. If someone asks *Tudo bem?* and you’re only **mais ou menos** —

Chapter 2's shrug — the reason might be sitting right here: *Dói-me a boca* — “my mouth hurts” — is exactly the kind of thing that turns a “so-so” into a “so-so.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “a boca” · “dói-me a boca”
- “bucca — cheek — promoted to mouth; *ōs* — the old word, now only ‘oral’”
- “Tudo bem? — Mais ou menos, dói-me a boca” — Chapter 2's shrug, explained
- the ear/mouth pair — “a orelha, a boca” — both feminine

Before you move on

Say “the mouth,” and “my mouth hurts.” (**A boca; dói-me a boca.**) What did Latin *bucca* originally mean, and what was the actual Latin word for “mouth”? (“**Cheek**”; the real word was *ōs*, *ōris*, which survives only in **oral**.) Give the Chapter 2 shrug, then a reason for it using this lesson's word. (**Mais ou menos** — e.g. *dói-me a boca*.) Next: the last body word, and where its ending really comes from.

26.4 o coração — a nasal ending that was BUILT, not worn away

The chapter's last word carries the same ending as *pão* and *irmão* — and gets there by the opposite process.

You'll want to know: The word

o coração — the heart. **Masculine.** **Como vai o seu coração?** — a gentle, half-figurative way to ask how someone's doing, alongside Chapter 2's *Tudo bem?*

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

coração is built on Latin *cor*, *cordis* (“heart”) plus an **augmentative ending**, from Vulgar Latin *-atiōne* — closer to “**big heart**” than a plain, unadorned one.

Compare Chapter 11’s **pão** and Chapter 10’s **irmão**: both reached their nasal **-ão** by **losing** sounds. *Coração* reaches the same ending by the **opposite** route — a suffix was **added**, and the suffix itself was nasal. Spanish did the identical building job, landing on *corazón*; French **coeur** and Italian **cuore** kept the bare root, no suffix at all. The bare root *cor*, *cordis* survives in English **cordial**, **courage**, and **record** — literally “to call back to **heart**.”

What you’ve built: The chapter in one table

Portuguese	what happened to the root
a cabeça (Ch. 17)	<i>capitia</i> kept, whole
a mão (Ch. 17)	<i>manus</i> lost its <i>-n-</i>
o olho / a orelha	<i>-c’l-</i> folded into <i>-lh-</i>
o coração	<i>cor</i> grew a suffix
Kept, eroded, folded, grown — the same “not one of them agrees” shape Chapter 13 found in Portuguese’s colours. Chapter 2’s <i>Tudo bem?</i> and its formal twin <i>Como está o senhor?</i> now have somewhere to go: Mais ou menos, dói-me a orelha , or formally, Estou bem — e o seu coração?	

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “o coração” — nasal *-ão*, cedilla *ç*
- “Como vai o seu coração?”
- “pão, irmão: nasal by LOSS; coração: nasal by GROWTH”
- “cabeça, mão, olho/orelha, coração” — kept, eroded, folded, grown

Before you move on

Say “the heart.” (**O coração.**) How does its *-ão* differ from *pão*’s? (That one **lost** a sound; *coração* **grew** a suffix.) Name one English word keeping the bare root *cor*. (**Cordial, courage, or record.**) What four things happened to this chapter’s four roots? (**Kept, eroded, folded, grown.**) That closes the body-and-wellbeing set begun in Chapter 2.

Chapter 27

Primeiro, Segundo, Terceiro

Modes: ⇐ voice (4) 👁 eyes (1) ⇐ Hands-free start: first 2 of 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say first to fifth in Portuguese with the right gender, and say why the week starts at the second day and why Tuesday is terça and not terceira.

The fifth ordinal said against the four before it, with the weekday it names and the farm that was named for the fifth of its harvest.

27.1 primeiro — first, and the day the week left out

A new kind of counting starts here, so the recalls come first, at the four growing distances this book measures.

- *Recall:* say *a boca e o coração* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *o café* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *o pão* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *a água e o vinho* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *olá* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall:* say *bom / boa* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: The word

primeiro (masculine) · **primeira** (feminine) — **first**. **o primeiro dia** — the first day. **a primeira vez** — the first time.

Um, dois, três answer **how many**. This word answers **which one in the line**, and Portuguese keeps a second series of words for that job. Like any describing word it changes its ending with what it counts.

Why it's said this way

The weekday chapter left a question open on purpose: why does *segunda-feira* mean “second feast-day” when it is the **first** day of the working week?

Because it is not the first day of the **week**. **Domingo** is — *diēs Dominica*, “the Lord’s day” — and it was counted as the first. So the numbering starts at *domingo*, Monday lands on **two**, and Portuguese never needed a *primeira-feira*. The one ordinal that is missing from the week is the one that explains it.

Primeiro itself comes not from Latin *prīmus* but from *prīmārius*, “of the first rank” — the same shape behind English **primary** and **premier**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *primeiro, primeira*
- *o primeiro dia* — the first day
- *domingo é o primeiro dia* — and that is why Monday is *segunda*

Before you move on

Say “the first time.” (**A primeira vez.**) Why is Monday *segunda-feira* and not the first? (**Domingo is counted first**, so the numbering starts there.) And which Latin word is *primeiro* built on? (*Prīmārius*, “of the first rank” — not *prīmus*.)

27.2 segundo — the word already in your week

Recalls before the second ordinal, at the four measured distances.

- *Recall*: say *primeiro* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *o chá* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *o olho* — **R2**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *onze a quinze* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *dezasseis a vinte* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *o / a* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *dia* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: The word

segundo (masculine) · **segunda** (feminine) — **second**. **o segundo andar** — the second floor. **a segunda vez** — the second time.

You have been saying the feminine every week without knowing it was a number word: **segunda-feira** is exactly this, with *feira* attached.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

There is no *dois* in *segundo*, and there was never meant to be. It comes from Latin *sequi*, “**to follow**” — so second place is named for what it does, the place that **comes after**, rather than for the count it sits at. English borrowed the whole family: **second** is this word; so are **sequel**, **sequence**, **consequence** and **subsequent**, and every one still has “follow” inside it.

And the *segundo* on a clock is the same word. The Romans cut the hour into a *pars minūta prīma*, “the first small part” — our **minute** — and cut that again into a *pars minūta secunda*. Portuguese kept the adjective and dropped the noun, so **um segundo** is literally “a

following one”.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *segundo, segunda*
- *segunda-feira* — the second feast-day
- *um segundo* — a second, the second cutting of the hour

Before you move on

What verb is *segundo* built on? (*Sequĩ*, to follow.) So what is second place, in Portuguese’s own terms? (**The place that comes after.**) And what is *um segundo* on a clock, taken apart? (**The second small part** of the hour, after the **minute.**)

27.3 terceiro — one Latin word, two Portuguese children

Recalls first, then the third ordinal — the one that does not match its weekday.

- *Recall:* say *segundo* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *o leite* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *a orelha* — **R2**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *preto e branco* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *vermelho e azul* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *bom dia* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall:* say *boa tarde* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: The word

terceiro (masculine) · **terceira** (feminine) — **third**. **o terceiro dia** — the third day. **a terceira vez** — the third time.

Now look at Tuesday. It is **terça-feira**, not **terceira-feira**.

Grammar Lens: two children of one word

Latin *tertius* left **two** descendants in Portuguese, and both survive:

form	where it lives
terça	frozen in <i>terça-feira</i> , and in um terço , “a third part”
terceiro	the ordinary counting word — <i>o terceiro andar</i>

Terça is the older, inherited shape, worn down in ordinary speech; *terceiro* was rebuilt later on the pattern of *primeiro*. The week was numbered in the sixth century and kept the shape that existed then, which is why Tuesday looks older than the word for “third” — it is. So *quarta* and *quinta* will match their ordinals exactly, and this one does not. Watch for it: it is the only weekday that disagrees.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *terceiro*, *terceira*
- the two children — *terça-feira* and *o terceiro andar*
- *um terço* — a third part

Before you move on

Which weekday is Tuesday, and why is it not *terceira-feira*? (***Terça-feira* — it kept the older, inherited shape.**) What does ***um terço*** mean? (A third part.) And which of the two forms would you use to say “the third floor”? (*O terceiro andar.*)

27.4 quarto — the ordinal that is also Wednesday, and also a bedroom

Recalls first, then the fourth — and the shape that carries the rest of the way.

- *Recall*: say *terceiro* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *o queijo* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *a boca* — **R2**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *ter* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *falei* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *boa noite* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *obrigado / obrigada* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: The word

quarto (masculine) · **quarta** (feminine) — **fourth**. **o quarto andar** — the fourth floor. **a quarta vez** — the fourth time.

And Wednesday is *quarta-feira* — the feminine of this word, unchanged. After *terça*'s split, the series settles: the number you already know, wearing an ending, agreeing with what it counts.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Quatro is four; *quarto* is four with the ordinal ending, and you can hear the cardinal inside it.

O quarto also means “a bedroom”, and that is the same word doing a second job: a *quarta parte*, a **fourth part** of a house, became the name for a room in it. English keeps exactly this in **quarters** — “the servants’ quarters”, “close quarters” — and in a **quart**, a fourth of a gallon.

So one Portuguese word covers “fourth”, “Wednesday” and “bedroom”, and all three are the same idea seen from different rooms.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *quarto, quarta*
- *quarta-feira* — Wednesday, the fourth feast-day
- *o meu quarto* — my bedroom, a fourth part of the house

Before you move on

Say “the fourth floor.” (**O quarto andar.**) What is *quarta-feira*, taken literally? (**The fourth feast-day** — Wednesday.) And why does *o quarto* mean a bedroom? (**A fourth part** of a house — English *quarters* does the same.)

27.5 quinto — the fifth, and the fifth of the harvest

Recalls first, then the fifth — and a word you will see on every wine label.

- *Recall*: say *quarto* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *o ovo* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *ser* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *sou, era, fui* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *de nada* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *como* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: The word

quinto (masculine) · **quinta** (feminine) — **fifth**. **o quinto andar** — the fifth floor. **a quinta vez** — the fifth time.

Thursday is **quinta-feira**, the feminine again unchanged. Note the vowel: *cinco* is five, but the ordinal keeps the older *qu-* of Latin *quīntus*, so the two do not rhyme.

Why it's said this way

A **quinta** is a country estate or farm, and it is on the label of half the port in Portugal — *Quinta do Noval*, *Quinta da Boeira*. It is this ordinal.

A tenant once paid the landowner a share of what the land produced, and in Portugal that share was the **quinta parte**, the **fifth part**. The land was named for its rent, the rent stopped being a fifth centuries ago, and the name stayed. So a Portuguese farm is a number, and the number is five.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *quinto*, *quinta*
- *quinta-feira* — Thursday, the fifth feast-day
- *a quinta* — the farm named for its fifth

Before you move on

Say “the fifth time.” (**A quinta vez**.) What is a *quinta*, and where does the name come from? (**A farm** — from the *quinta parte*, the **fifth** of the crop paid as rent.) And which day is *quinta-feira*? (**Thursday**.)

Chapter 28

Sexto ao Decimo

Modes: ⇐ voice (6) ⇐ Hands-free start: all 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can count in order all the way to tenth, say why oitavo and nono break the pattern in different ways, and read an ordinal written as a digit with a raised letter.

The written ordinal – digit plus a raised letter that agrees in gender – put against the ten spoken words the two chapters taught.

28.1 sexto — the sixth, and where the numbering stops

Recalls open the chapter, at the four measured distances.

- *Recall:* say *quinto* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *primeiro* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *o arroz* — **R2**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *ser contra estar* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *é bonita / está bonita* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *tudo* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall:* say *Tudo bem?* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: The word

sexto (masculine) · **sexta** (feminine) — **sixth**. **o sexto andar** — the sixth floor. **a sexta vez** — the sixth time.

Friday is *sexta-feira*, and **Sexta-feira Santa** is **Good Friday** — “holy sixth feast-day”, which is a striking thing to be able to read once you know the number is in there.

Why it's said this way

Count what the week actually numbers: *segunda, terça, quarta, quinta, sexta*. Five days, second through sixth. Then it stops.

Sábado is the Sabbath and **domingo** is the Lord's day; both were older and holier than the sixth-century renaming, and neither gave way to a number. So the Portuguese week is a numbered middle with a named weekend at each end — and the five numbers in it are five of the ten ordinals this chapter and the last are teaching.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *sexto, sexta*
- *sexta-feira* — Friday, the sixth feast-day
- the five numbered days — *segunda, terça, quarta, quinta, sexta*

Before you move on

Say “the sixth floor.” (**O sexto andar**.) How many days does the Portuguese week actually number, and which? (**Five** — *segunda* through *sexta*.) And why do *sábado* and *domingo* keep their names? (**They were older and holier** than the renaming.)

28.2 sétimo — the seventh, and the first with no day behind it

Recalls first, then the seventh.

- *Recall*: say *sexto* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays

- *Recall*: say *segundo* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *o açúcar* — **R2**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *a cabeça* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *cabeça e capital* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *Como vai?* / *Como está?* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *mais ou menos* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: The word

sétimo (masculine) · **sétima** (feminine) — **seventh**. **o sétimo andar** — the seventh floor. **a sétima vez** — the seventh time.

There is **no sétima-feira**. Saturday is *sábado*, and the week's numbering stopped one day ago. From here the ordinals stand on their own.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Sete has two syllables and the stress on the first: **SE**-te. *Sétimo* has three — **SÉ**-ti-mo — and the stress stays where it was, on the syllable that already had it, while a new one is added behind.

Portuguese writes that down. The acute accent on **é** is not decoration: it says “the stress is here, not on the second-to-last syllable where you would otherwise put it.” Without it a reader would say *se-TI-mo*, and the word would be wrong.

Décimo, three lessons ahead, carries the accent for the same reason.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *sétimo, sétima* — **SÉ**-ti-mo
- the join — *sete* → *sétimo*
- there is no *sétima-feira* — Saturday is *sábado*

Before you move on

Where is the stress in *sétimo*? (**On the first syllable** — *SÉ-ti-mo*.) What is the accent doing? (**Marking that stress**, against the default.) And why is there no *sétima-feira*? (**Sábado kept its own name.**)

28.3 oitavo — the odd ending that became the fraction ending

Recalls first, then the eighth — the one that does not do what the last four did.

- *Recall*: say *sétimo* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *terceiro* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *o amigo* — **R2**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *a mão* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *ser e estar* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *eu* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *chamo-me* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: The word

oitavo (masculine) · **oitava** (feminine) — **eighth**. **o oitavo andar** — the eighth floor. **a oitava vez** — the eighth time.

Oito is eight, and by now you would expect something like *oito* plus the ending the last four took. It is not that. This one ends in **-avo**, and it is the only ordinal in the ten that does.

Grammar Lens: the ending got a second job

Latin *octāvus* already had that odd **-āvus**, and Portuguese inherited the oddity rather than tidying it away. What happened next is the interesting part.

Portuguese names small fractions with ordinals: *um terço* (a third), *um quarto* (a quarter), *um quinto*, *um sexto*. Above ten there are no ordinals in ordinary use, so the language needed something — and it took the ending from **oitavo** and used it on the plain cardinal:

fraction	Portuguese
one twelfth	um doze avos
one twentieth	um vinte avos

An ending that was an exception in one word became the regular machinery for everything above ten. That happens more often than you would think.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *oitavo*, *oitava*
- the odd ending — **-avo**, not the ending the last four took
- *um doze avos* — one twelfth, built on that same ending

Before you move on

What ending does *oitavo* take, and how many of the ten take it? (**-avo**, and **only this one**.) How does Portuguese say “one twelfth”? (**Um doze avos**.) And where did that *-avos* come from? (**From *oitavo*’s exceptional ending**.)

28.4 nono — the ninth, squeezed shut

Recalls first, then the ninth — and the best word-history in the chapter.

- *Recall*: say *oitavo* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays

- *Recall*: say *quarto* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *a família* — **R2**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *ter e haver* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *há três anos* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *Como se chama?* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *prazer* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: The word

nono (masculine) · **nona** (feminine) — **ninth**. **o nono andar** — the ninth floor. **a nona vez** — the ninth time.

Nove is nine. This time nothing is added: the word is **shorter** than the cardinal, not longer. Latin had *novēnus* and squeezed it into *nōnus*, and Portuguese inherited the squeezed form. Two ordinals running have now bent the shape in two different directions — *oitavo* by taking an odd ending, *nono* by losing sound.

Why it's said this way

Rome counted its hours from sunrise, so the **ninth hour** fell in the middle of the afternoon, and *nōna hōra* was the hour of a fixed prayer. Over centuries the prayer crept earlier and earlier until it was being said at midday — and the **name went with it**.

English **noon** is that *nōna*: a word still meaning “ninth”, attached now to an hour three hours from the one it was named for. The word stayed put and the clock moved under it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *nono, nona*

- the squeeze — *nove* → *nono*, shorter, not longer
- *nona hora* — the ninth hour, which became **noon**

Before you move on

How is *nono* made out of *nove*? (**By squeezing it shut**, not by adding.) Which English word is the ninth hour? (**Noon.**) And what moved — the word or the hour? (**The hour**; the name stayed and the time it named drifted.)

28.5 décimo — the tenth, and how the counting goes on

Recalls first, then the tenth, which closes the series.

- *Recall*: say *nono* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *quinto* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *o homem* — **R2**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *ter que* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *ir* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *the third chapter's own recombining* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *adeus* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: The word

décimo (masculine) · **décima** (feminine) — **tenth. o décimo andar** — the tenth floor. **a décima vez** — the tenth time.

Dez is ten, and *décimo* carries the acute accent for exactly the reason *sétimo* did: the stress sits on the first syllable — **DÉ**-ci-mo — against where a reader would otherwise put it.

Grammar Lens: past ten, the words stack

Portuguese does not invent a new word for eleventh. It **stacks**:

number	ordinal
11th	décimo primeiro
12th	décimo segundo
20th	vigésimo

Both halves agree with what they count — *a décima primeira vez*, “the eleventh time” — so the two words move together.

That is the ten. Say them in order and you have something no cardinal count gives you: the place a thing holds, rather than how many of it there are.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *décimo*, *décima* — **DÉ**-ci-mo
- *décimo primeiro* — eleventh, two words stacked
- all ten in order, *primeiro* to *décimo*

Before you move on

Where is the stress in *décimo*, and what marks it? (**First syllable**, marked by the **acute accent**.) How does Portuguese say “eleventh”? (***Décimo primeiro*** — the words stack.) And how many of the ten have their cardinal visible inside them? (**Eight** — every one but *primeiro* and *segundo*.)

28.6 1.^o and 1.^a — the ordinal on a doorplate

Recalls first, and then the chapter’s last piece: what these words look like written down.

- *Recall*: say *décimo* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *sexto* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back

- *Recall: say a mulher* — **R2**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall: say vir* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall: say dizer* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall: say até logo* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall: say até amanhã* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: The written form

1.^o — *primeiro*. **1.^a** — *primeira*. **2.^o**, **3.^a**, **10.^o**. **o 1.^o andar** — the first floor. **a 2.^a vez** — the second time.

A lift panel, a doorplate and a date do not spell the word out. They write the digit and put a **raised letter** after it, and that letter is the last letter of the word you would have said: **o** for *primeiro*, **a** for *primeira*.

What you've built: the mark agrees, because it is a letter

This is why the mark comes in two shapes rather than one. It is not a symbol for “ordinal”; it is the tail of the word, left standing above the line. So it changes exactly when the word changes:

written	said	means
o 3.^o andar	<i>o terceiro andar</i>	the third floor
a 5.^a vez	<i>a quinta vez</i>	the fifth time

Read the panel in a Lisbon lift now — **1.^o**, **2.^o**, **3.^o** — and you are reading this chapter and the last one aloud. Ten ordinals, five of them already in your week before you met them, and a written form that tells you which one to say.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *o 1.^o andar* — the first floor
- *a 2.^a vez* — the second time

- the panel — 1.^o, 2.^o, 3.^o, 4.^o, 5.^o

Before you move on

What is the raised letter in **1.^ª**? (**The last letter of *primeira*** — the tail of the word.) Why are there two shapes? (**Because it agrees**, like the word it stands for.) Read *o 3.^o andar* aloud. (***O terceiro andar.***)

Chapter 29

Reading — Words, Lines, and a First Passage

Modes: 🗣️ voice (3) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can read a Portuguese word without its article, follow a line whose subject lives inside the verb, and hold a whole passage without translating it word by word.

Forty-two words of Portuguese held together by one joining word and the order of its sentences, because the track has not yet taught but or because.

29.1 (reading) — six words off a counter

Every word below you have met. Not one is new.

What is new is that nobody says them first.

Read this

água pão café leite livro amigo

Read down the list once, without stopping.

Again — and this time say the article you would put in front of each one. **A** água. **O** pão.

Why it's said this way

Portuguese hangs an article on nearly every noun, and the article is the gender said out loud.

That is why a written list like this one is harder than a real Portuguese page. On a page the article is already there, doing the remembering for you. Stripped of it, each word makes you do the work yourself.

Six words, and the hardest thing about them is what is missing.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the six words with their articles, once, without stopping

Twice through:

Before you move on

How many of the six were new? (**None.**)

What is missing from this list that a real page would have? (**The article** — and it carries the gender.)

29.2 (reading) — six lines, and one that depends on you

The last lesson gave you words. These are things you would say.

You have said every one of them.

Read this

Olá! Bom dia. Boa noite. Obrigado. Sim. Adeus!

Read down once, without stopping.

Again — and notice that **Bom dia** and **Boa noite** differ by one letter, and that the letter is doing grammar.

Why it's said this way

Bom and **Boa** are the same word agreeing with **dia** and **noite**. Read the two lines together and the agreement is visible without anybody naming it.

Obrigado is the strange one. It means *obliged*, and it is a participle,

so it agrees with the person SAYING it, not the person thanked. A woman writes **obrigada**.
That is the only line on this page whose spelling depends on who is reading it aloud.

Your turn

- *Say it*: the six lines, once, in order, without stopping

Twice through:

Before you move on

Why is it **Bom dia** but **Boa noite**? (**Agreement** — and you read it before it was explained.)
Who does **obrigado** agree with? (**The speaker.**)

29.3 (reading) — the first passage

Six words, then six lines. Now twelve of them together.

Forty-two words, and not one of them is new.

Read this

Olá! Bom dia. Eu tenho um livro. O livro é muito bom.
Eu leio e falo. Tenho um amigo. O amigo é o primeiro. A
família é boa. Hoje eu como pão. Tenho água e café.
Amanhã leio o livro. Obrigado. Adeus!

Read it once without stopping. Do not translate as you go — let the sentences arrive.

Now read it again, and count the joining words.

Why it's said this way

One. **E**, twice.

There is no *but* and no *because* here, and that is not a simplification — the book has not taught either yet. What holds the paragraph together instead is the order of the sentences: a thing, then what it is like; today, then tomorrow.

That is worth knowing before the joiners arrive. A paragraph can be held together by sequence alone, and every language lets you do it. Notice also that **eu** appears and then stops. Portuguese keeps the person in the verb, so **Tenho** on its own is already *I have*, and the paragraph drops the pronoun once it is established. This is the first whole passage the book has asked you to hold at once, and it works because everything in it was paid for.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the passage aloud, once, without stopping

Twice through:

Before you move on

What holds this paragraph together, if not joining words? (**The order of the sentences.**)

Why does **eu** disappear halfway? (**The verb already carries it.**)

Portuguese pronunciation — a reference

A **reference**, not a chapter — each lesson gives the sounds its word needs; this page gathers them. Portuguese spelling is fairly regular, but its **nasal vowels** and soft consonants surprise English speakers.

The traps for an English speaker

- **Nasal vowels.** A vowel before *m/n* (or under a tilde ~) goes through the nose: *bom* = *bõ*, *sim* (“yes”) = *sĩ*, *pão* (“bread”) = *pãw*. English has no exact match — hum the vowel.
- **Vowels reduce.** Unstressed *e* often fades to a whisper or *i*; final *o* sounds like *u* (*obrigado* ≈ “oh-bree-GAH-doo”).
- **s** between vowels = *z*; at a syllable’s end, often *sh* (European Portuguese) or *s* (most of Brazil).
- **lh** = the *lli* of *million*; **nh** = the *ny* of *canyon*; **ç** = *s*.
- **r/rr** at word-start or doubled is a strong guttural (like a Scottish/French *r* or even an *h*); a single *r* between vowels is a light tap.

Stress

Usually the second-to-last syllable; a written accent (*á, â, ã, é, ê*) marks any exception (*olá, café, avô*).

Portuguese in the Romance family

Portuguese, Spanish, French, and Italian are all worn-down Latin. Portuguese often eroded the most (the article *ille* → *o*); it turned Latin *-ct-* into *-it-* (*noite*, like French *nuit*); and it kept *dies* close (*o dia*, like Spanish *día*). The lessons draw these contrasts as they arise.

Glossary

This glossary collects every word and phrase taught in the book. Pronunciation appears when it differs from the written form; chapter numbers show where each entry is introduced.

a água, o vinho

water and wine — água keeps aqua’s shape; vinho shows the -nh- for Latin -n-
Introduced in Chapter 11.

a boca

mouth — Vulgar Latin’s word for “cheek,” promoted to cover the whole mouth
Introduced in Chapter 26.

a cabeça

the head — feminine, with cedilla ç pronounced s
Introduced in Chapter 17.

a família

family — a word that used to mean the household’s servants, not its blood relatives
Introduced in Chapter 25.

a mão

the hand — feminine, and a showcase of the -ão ending that swallowed three Latin endings
Introduced in Chapter 17.

a mulher

woman — the fourth Romance sister to pick a fourth different Latin word
Introduced in Chapter 25.

a orelha

ear — a second word built by the same -cl- to -lh- law, and the same PT/ES split as trabalhar
Introduced in Chapter 26.

adeus

goodbye (literally “to God”)
Introduced in Chapter 4.

ajudar

to help — and the Latin i that hardened into Portuguese j
Introduced in Chapter 20.

as estações

the seasons — and verão, a “summer” that came from “spring”
Introduced in Chapter 9.

até amanhã

see you tomorrow (literally “until tomorrow”)
Introduced in Chapter 4.

até breve

see you soon (literally “until [a] short [while]”)
Introduced in Chapter 4.

até logo

see you later (literally “until soon/then”)
Introduced in Chapter 4.

bom / boa

good (adjective)
Introduced in Chapter 1.

bom dia

good morning / good day
Introduced in Chapter 1.

como

how / like, as
Introduced in Chapter 2.

Como se chama?

what’s your name? (literally “how do you call yourself?”)
Introduced in Chapter 3.

Como vai? / Como está?

how are you? — the “go” and “stand” versions
Introduced in Chapter 2.

comprar

to buy — from a Latin verb spelled exactly like the one behind ‘compare’, and
not the same verb at all
Introduced in Chapter 21.

conseguir / obter

to get — the everyday verb that also means ‘to manage to’, and the formal twin
built on ter
Introduced in Chapter 21.

de nada

you’re welcome (literally “of nothing”)
Introduced in Chapter 2.

décimo / décima

tenth — and the word the whole series above ten is built on
Introduced in Chapter 28.

dezesseis — vinte

16–20 — Portuguese breaks earliest, and rebuilds numbers as “ten AND six”
Introduced in Chapter 12.

dia

day (masculine)
Introduced in Chapter 1.

dizer

to say — and the Latin verb that also produced the judge
Introduced in Chapter 18.

encontrar

to find
Introduced in Chapter 22.

encontrar-se

to meet up
Introduced in Chapter 22.

entender / compreender

to understand — one verb that stretches toward the thing, one that seizes it whole
Introduced in Chapter 19.

escrever

to write — to scratch, and the propped-up e- that decodes a hundred other words
Introduced in Chapter 19.

esperar

to expect
Introduced in Chapter 21.

esperar

to wait
Introduced in Chapter 21.

espero que sim

I hope so
Introduced in Chapter 21.

eu

I (first-person subject pronoun)
Introduced in Chapter 3.

falar

to speak / to talk (your first regular -ar verb)
Introduced in Chapter 5.

falei

the pretérito perfeito — Portuguese kept its simple past, where three sisters gave theirs up
Introduced in Chapter 15.

Falo português

“I speak Portuguese” — your first full sentence (português = Portuguese)
Introduced in Chapter 5.

gostar de

to like, to love — the verb that will not let go of its preposition
Introduced in Chapter 20.

há três anos

three years ago
Introduced in Chapter 18.

hora

hour / o'clock — telling the time
Introduced in Chapter 8.

ir

to go — two letters long, and welded together out of three separate Latin verbs
Introduced in Chapter 18.

jogar / brincar / tocar

to play — split three ways, by whether it is a game, a child at play, or an instrument
Introduced in Chapter 22.

ler

to read — three letters, irregular, and the same broken row as *ver*
Introduced in Chapter 19.

mais ou menos

so-so (literally “more or less”)
Introduced in Chapter 2.

me chamo / chamo-me

my name is (literally “I call myself”)
Introduced in Chapter 3.

meio-dia, meia-noite

noon and midnight — “mid-day” and “mid-night”
Introduced in Chapter 8.

morar

to live / to dwell (a second -ar verb — from “to linger”)
Introduced in Chapter 5.

noite / boa noite

night / good night
Introduced in Chapter 1.

nono / nona

ninth — squeezed shut rather than built up
Introduced in Chapter 28.

o / a

the (masculine / feminine)
Introduced in Chapter 1.

o açúcar

sugar — the same route as *arroz*, and the same cedilla as *cabeça*
Introduced in Chapter 24.

o amigo, a amiga

friend — from the verb “to love,” and the word you close an introduction with
Introduced in Chapter 25.

o arroz

rice — Greek by way of Arabic, the al-Andalus thread again
Introduced in Chapter 24.

o café

coffee — a word Portuguese never inherited from Latin at all
Introduced in Chapter 23.

o chá

tea — Portuguese is the ONE Western European exception in how it got this word
Introduced in Chapter 23.

o coração

heart — the same nasal -ão ending as pão, but GROWN rather than worn down
Introduced in Chapter 26.

o homem

man — from the Latin word for “human being,” narrowed to just one sex
Introduced in Chapter 25.

o irmão, a irmã

brother and sister — NOT from frater, but from germanus “of the same stock”
Introduced in Chapter 10.

o leite

milk — the one drink of the three that IS plain inherited Latin
Introduced in Chapter 23.

o olho

eye — the same -cl- to -lh- sound law that gave Chapter 13 its “worm” red
Introduced in Chapter 26.

o ovo

egg — three letters, unchanged for two thousand years
Introduced in Chapter 24.

o pai, a mãe

father and mother — the most worn-down of all: pater→pai, mater→mãe
Introduced in Chapter 10.

o pão

bread — pānis worn to a single nasal syllable, just like pai
Introduced in Chapter 11.

o queijo

cheese — the word English and Portuguese still share, though French and Italian moved on
Introduced in Chapter 24.

obrigado / obrigada

thank you
Introduced in Chapter 1.

oitavo / oitava

eighth — the ending that breaks step, and then becomes the way Portuguese says fractions

Introduced in Chapter 28.

olá

hi

Introduced in Chapter 1.

onze — quinze

11–15 — the only five teens Portuguese kept fused; it breaks earliest of all

Introduced in Chapter 12.

os meses

the months — Roman gods, emperors, and the numbers 7–10

Introduced in Chapter 9.

pensar

to think — from a Latin verb that meant to weigh a thing in a balance

Introduced in Chapter 19.

perguntar

to ask a question — and why it is not the verb for asking for a coffee

Introduced in Chapter 20.

prazer

pleased to meet you (literally “a pleasure”)

Introduced in Chapter 3.

preto, branco

black and white — Portuguese has TWO blacks, and its white is a Germanic loan

Introduced in Chapter 13.

primeiro / primeira

first — the ordinal the Portuguese week does NOT contain, and that absence is why Monday is the second day

Introduced in Chapter 27.

quarto / quarta

fourth — and here the ordinal and the weekday are the same word

Introduced in Chapter 27.

quinto / quinta

fifth — and the farm named after the rent it paid

Introduced in Chapter 27.

responder

to answer — literally to pledge something back, and the other half of asking

Introduced in Chapter 22.

sábado, domingo

the weekend (Saturday, Sunday) — the two days that kept their names

Introduced in Chapter 7.

saber / conhecer

to know — the second place Portuguese answers one English verb with two
Introduced in Chapter 18.

segunda, terça, quarta, quinta, sexta(-feira)

the weekdays (Mon–Fri) — Portuguese NUMBERS its days instead of naming
planets
Introduced in Chapter 7.

segundo / segunda

second — the word you have been saying every Monday, and the verb hiding
inside it
Introduced in Chapter 27.

seis, sete, oito, nove, dez

the numbers 6–10 (and the months hidden in them)
Introduced in Chapter 6.

ser

to be — present, imperfect, and preterite forms
Introduced in Chapter 16.

ser / estar

to be — the one English verb that Portuguese answers with two, and the line it
draws its own way
Introduced in Chapter 18.

ser vs. estar

identity or nature against location or resulting condition
Introduced in Chapter 16.

sétimo / sétima

seventh — the first ordinal with no weekday to lean on
Introduced in Chapter 28.

sexto / sexta

sixth — the last day the Portuguese week numbers
Introduced in Chapter 28.

tarde / boa tarde

afternoon / good afternoon
Introduced in Chapter 1.

tenho falado

ter + participle — which does NOT mean 'I have spoken', the trap English
speakers walk into
Introduced in Chapter 15.

tenho vinte anos

age — Portuguese HOLDS its years, and annus loses its double n
Introduced in Chapter 14.

ter

to have — where Portuguese and Spanish broke ranks with the rest of Romance
Introduced in Chapter 14.

ter / haver

to have, and there is
Introduced in Chapter 18.

ter que

to have to
Introduced in Chapter 18.

terceiro / terceira

third — where Portuguese kept TWO descendants of one Latin word, and the week has the other one
Introduced in Chapter 27.

tomar / pegar

to take — split by whether the thing ends up in your hand or inside you
Introduced in Chapter 20.

trabalhar

to work (a third -ar verb — back on the “torture” road)
Introduced in Chapter 5.

trazer

to bring — carrying a thing toward the person speaking, from a Latin verb that meant to drag
Introduced in Chapter 21.

tudo

everything / all
Introduced in Chapter 2.

Tudo bem?

everything well? — the verb-free everyday “how are you?”
Introduced in Chapter 2.

um, dois, três, quatro, cinco

the numbers 1–5
Introduced in Chapter 6.

ver

to see — and the one form that belongs to two different verbs at once
Introduced in Chapter 18.

vermelho, azul

red and blue — a red named after a worm, and a blue named after a stone
Introduced in Chapter 13.

vir

to come — and the missing n that explains why the infinitive is so short
Introduced in Chapter 18.

Review Questions

Try these without looking ahead. Every prompt comes from the same canonical lesson data as its chapter. Answers begin in the next section.

Chapter 2

2.1 *Practice — Tudo bem?, start to finish*

Which Portuguese phrase is the safest register-neutral wellbeing question?

Chapter 29

29.1 *(reading) — six words off a counter*

Which word is milk?

29.2 *(reading) — six lines, and one that depends on you*

Which line changes spelling depending on who says it?

29.3 *(reading) — the first passage*

How many different joining words are in the passage?

Answer Key

The first response is the canonical display answer. When a question accepts other authored forms, they appear underneath.

Chapter 2

2.1 *Practice* — *Tudo bem?, start to finish*

Answer: Tudo bem?

Also accepted: tudo bem

Chapter 29

29.1 *(reading)* — *six words off a counter*

Answer: leite

Also accepted: o leite; milk

29.2 *(reading)* — *six lines, and one that depends on you*

Answer: obrigado

Also accepted: obrigada; obrigado / obrigada

29.3 *(reading)* — *the first passage*

Answer: one

Also accepted: 1; e; only e

Index

Look up an English meaning, a dedicated language topic, or a chapter topic. Each linked reference opens the chapter where the material is introduced; the focus labels name only explicitly typed lesson sections.

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1.^o and 1.^a — the ordinal on a doorplate

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11–15 — the only five teens Portuguese kept fused; it breaks

earliest of all *onze — quinze*

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 12, p. 73

16–20 — Portuguese breaks earliest, and rebuilds numbers as

“ten AND six” *dezesseis — vinte*

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 12, p. 73

A

afternoon / good afternoon *tarde / boa tarde*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 1, p. 1

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explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 10, p. 65

fifth — and the farm named after the rent it paid *quinto / quinta*

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 27, p. 171

first — the ordinal the Portuguese week does NOT contain, and that absence is why Monday is the second day *primeiro / primeira*

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script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 1, p. 1

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chapter topic; Chapter 8, p. 57

tenth — and the word the whole series above ten is built

on *décimo / décima*

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 28, p. 179

ter + participle — which does NOT mean ‘I have spoken’, the

trap English speakers walk into *tenho falado*

explicit focus: grammar, usage and culture; Chapter 15, p. 85

thank you *obrigado / obrigada*

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 1, p. 1

The Body, Asking How You Are

chapter topic; Chapter 26, p. 163

The First Verbs

chapter topic; Chapter 5, p. 39

the hand — feminine, and a showcase of the -ão ending that

swallowed three Latin endings *a mão*

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 17, p. 95

the head — feminine, with cedilla ç pronounced s *a cabeça*

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 17, p. 95

the (masculine / feminine) *o / a*

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 1, p. 1

the months — Roman gods, emperors, and the numbers 7–10 *os*

meses

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 9, p. 61

the numbers 1–5 *um, dois, três, quatro, cinco*

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 6, p. 47

the numbers 6–10 (and the months hidden in them) *seis, sete,*

oito, nove, dez

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 6, p. 47

The Past Portuguese Kept

chapter topic; Chapter 15, p. 85

The People You Introduce

chapter topic; Chapter 25, p. 155

**the pretérito perfeito — Portuguese kept its simple past, where
three sisters gave theirs up** *falei*

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 15, p. 85

**the seasons — and verão, a “summer” that came from
“spring”** *as estações*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 9, p. 61

**the weekdays (Mon–Fri) — Portuguese NUMBERS its days
instead of naming planets** *segunda, terça, quarta, quinta, sexta(-feira)*

explicit focus: grammar, usage and culture; Chapter 7, p. 53

**the weekend (Saturday, Sunday) — the two days that kept their
names** *sábado, domingo*

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 53

**third — where Portuguese kept TWO descendants of one Latin
word, and the week has the other one** *terceiro / terceira*

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 27, p. 171

three years ago *há três anos*

Chapter 18, p. 101

**to answer — literally to pledge something back, and the other
half of asking** *responder*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 22, p. 137

**to ask a question — and why it is not the verb for asking for a
coffee** *perguntar*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 20, p. 121

to be — present, imperfect, and preterite forms *ser*

Chapter 16, p. 89

**to be — the one English verb that Portuguese answers with two,
and the line it draws its own way** *ser / estar*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 18, p. 101

**to bring — carrying a thing toward the person speaking, from a
Latin verb that meant to drag** *trazer*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 21, p. 129

**to buy — from a Latin verb spelled exactly like the one behind
‘compare’, and not the same verb at all** *comprar*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 21, p. 129

**to come — and the missing n that explains why the infinitive is
so short** *vir*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 18, p. 101

to expect *esperar*

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 21, p. 129

to find *encontrar*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 22, p. 137

to get — the everyday verb that also means 'to manage to', and the formal twin built on ter *conseguir / obter*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 21, p. 129

to go — two letters long, and welded together out of three separate Latin verbs *ir*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 18, p. 101

to have, and there is *ter / haver*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 18, p. 101

to have to *ter que*

Chapter 18, p. 101

to have — where Portuguese and Spanish broke ranks with the rest of Romance *ter*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 14, p. 81

to help — and the Latin i that hardened into Portuguese j *ajudar*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 20, p. 121

to know — the second place Portuguese answers one English verb with two *saber / conhecer*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 18, p. 101

to like, to love — the verb that will not let go of its preposition *gostar de*

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 20, p. 121

to live / to dwell (a second -ar verb — from “to linger”) *morar*

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 5, p. 39

to meet up *encontrar-se*

Chapter 22, p. 137

to play — split three ways, by whether it is a game, a child at play, or an instrument *jogar / brincar / tocar*

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 22, p. 137

to read — three letters, irregular, and the same broken row as ver *ler*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 19, p. 113

to say — and the Latin verb that also produced the judge *dizer*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 18, p. 101

to see — and the one form that belongs to two different verbs at once *ver*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 18, p. 101

to speak / to talk (your first regular -ar verb) *falar*

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 5, p. 39

to take — split by whether the thing ends up in your hand or inside you *tomar / pegar*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 20, p. 121

to think — from a Latin verb that meant to weigh a thing in a balance *pensar*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 19, p. 113

to understand — one verb that stretches toward the thing, one that seizes it whole *entender / compreender*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 19, p. 113

to wait *esperar*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 21, p. 129

to work (a third -ar verb — back on the “torture” road) *trabalhar*

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 5, p. 39

to write — to scratch, and the propped-up e- that decodes a hundred other words *escrever*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 19, p. 113

V

Verbs at the Core

chapter topic; Chapter 18, p. 101

Verbs of the Mind

chapter topic; Chapter 19, p. 113

W

water and wine — água keeps aqua’s shape; vinho shows the -nh- for Latin -n- *a água, o vinho*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 11, p. 69

what’s your name? (literally “how do you call yourself?”) *Como se chama?*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 3, p. 23

woman — the fourth Romance sister to pick a fourth different Latin word *a mulher*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 25, p. 155

Y

you’re welcome (literally “of nothing”) *de nada*

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 13