

Portuguese Verbs Explained

– Start Here

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Support material for the YouTube video at the following URL:

<https://youtu.be/uqt9GVpkizs> .

YouTube Links by Chapter:

0:00 Ser – to be (identity)

8:27 Ir – to go

13:45 Ter – to have

17:59 Estar – to be (state/location)

22:15 Haver – to have (necessity/must).

Contents

Chapter 1 - Verb Ser – To Be (Something).....	3
Intro	3
Verb SER (to be something, someone) PRESENT TENSE	4
Examples – SER – Present Tense.....	5
Verb SER (to be something, someone) PAST TENSE.....	6
Present Past vs. Simple Past in Portuguese	7
Examples - SER - Past Tense.....	8
Chapter 2 Verb IR – To Go.....	9
Verb IR (to go) PRESENT TENSE.....	9
Examples – IR – Present Tense.....	10
Verb IR (to go) PAST TENSE (same as Ser Past Tense).....	11
Examples – IR/SER - Past Tense	12
Chapter 3 Verb Ter – To Have	13
Verb TER (to have) PRESENT TENSE	13
Examples – TER – Present Tense	14
Verb TER (to have - possession) PAST TENSE.....	15
Examples – TER - Past Tense	16
Chapter 4 Verb Estar – To Be	17

Verb ESTAR (to be somewhere) PRESENT TENSE	17
Examples – ESTAR – Present Tense.....	18
Verb ESTAR (to be somewhere) PAST TENSE	19
Examples – ESTAR - Past Tense	20
Chapter 5 Verb Haver – To Have	21
Verb HAVER (to have, to exist) PRESENT TENSE	21
Functional Differences between TER and HAVER	22
Examples – HAVER– Present Tense.....	23
Verb HAVER (to have, to exist) PAST TENSE (use Ter instead).....	24
Summary.....	25

Chapter 1 - Verb **Ser** – To **Be** (Something)

Intro

Hello and **bem vindo** to this Portuguese session.

My name is Tony de Araújo.

Today we will practice the following verbs in their infinitive, present, and simple past forms:

- **Ser** – to be something (essential nature)
- **Estar** – to be somewhere (state or location)
- **Ir** – to go
- **Haver** – to **have** (mostly archaic, but useful in set phrases)
- **Ter** – to **have** (commonly used)

Keep this lesson on file and revisit it often.

A *PDF* document is available on GitHub for download. Please see the video description for the URL.

Seja bem vindo/a, welcome!

Read it aloud, Repeat, Write it down. Rinse and Repeat. Quem faz, aprende.

Verb **SER** (to be something, someone) **PRESENT TENSE**

Presente do Indicativo	Present Tense
eu sou	I am
tu és	you are
ele/ela/você é	he/she is
nós somos	we are
vós sois	you are
eles/elas/vocês são	they are

"Você" is the formal singular "you"

—used with strangers, elders, and people of higher status, not close friends.

"Vocês" is the standard plural form, more common than "vós," though "vós" still appears in formal or literary contexts.

It's helpful to **learn both**... **vós** and **vocês**, but the verb conjugation is different. Context matters!

Examples – SER – Present Tense.

Portuguese	English
Eu sou carpinteiro.	I am a carpenter.
Tu és advogado.	You are a lawyer.
Ele é português.	He is Portuguese.
Ela é engenheira.	She is an engineer.
Você é muito inteligente.	You are very smart.
Elas são minhotas.	They are Minho-natives.
Vós sois grandes dançarinos.	You(s) are great dancers.
Vocês são grandes dançarinos.	You guys/girls are great dancers.

Verb SER (to be something, someone) PAST TENSE

Pretérito Perfeito	Past Tense*
eu fui	I was
tu foste	you were
ele/ela/você foi	he/she was
nós fomos	we were
vós fostes	you were
eles/elas/vocês foram	they were

(See note on the next page)

Present Past vs. Simple Past in Portuguese

* Portuguese does not distinguish between simple past (I was) and present perfect (I have been). It's all (I was, or I am), and **context fills the gap**.

Sometimes, however, a *pretérito perfeito composto* is used for ongoing or repeated actions up to present (eu **tenho sido** uma boa pessoa, **I have been** a good person), but it is less common than the English Present Perfect. I am, of course, talking about European Portuguese.

Examples - SER - Past Tense

Portuguese	English
Eu fui muito feliz em Portugal.	I was very happy in Portugal.
Eu sou muito feliz em Portugal.	I am very happy in Portugal.
Ele foi carpinteiro em França.	He was a carpenter in France.
Você foi muito inteligente na sua decisão.	You were very smart in your decision.
Vós fostes grandes dançarinos naquele tempo.	You were great dancers at that time.
Vocês foram grandes dançarinos naquele tempo.	You were great dancers at that time.

Chapter 2 Verb **IR** – To **Go**

Verb **IR** (to go) **PRESENT TENSE**

Presente do Indicativo	Present Tense
eu vou	I go
tu vais	you go
ele/ela/você vai	he/she goes
nós vamos	we go
vós ides	you go
eles/elas/vocês vão	they go

.

Examples – IR – Present Tense

Portuguese	English
Hoje, eu vou à praia.	I am going to the beach today.
E tu vais comigo à praia.	And you are going with me to the beach.
Ele e ela não vão à praia.	He and she don't go to the beach.
Vós ides (vocês vão) ao cinema.	You (all) are going to the cinema.
Vocês não vão a lado nenhum.	You (guys/girls) are not going anywhere.

Verb IR (to go) PAST TENSE (same as Ser Past Tense)

Pretérito Perfeito	Past Tense*
eu fui	I went
tu foste	you went
ele/ela/você foi	he/she went
nós fomos	we went
vós fostes	you went
eles/elas/vocês foram	They went

* Note that in Portuguese, the conjugation of *past tense* for **ser** and **ir** is the same.

"*Eu fui*" could mean a state of being, like "*I was a student at that school,*"

or "*eu fui*" could also represent movement, like "*I went to that school when I was a child.*"

You will get used to it by practicing examples with context.

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Examples – **IR/SER** - Past Tense

Portuguese	English
Eu fui a Portugal em 2024.	I went to Portugal in 2024. (It refers to motion, so it is the verb ir).
Eu fui muito feliz naquele tempo.	I was very happy at that time. (state of being, verb ser)
Hoje eu fui ao banco.	Today I went to the bank.
Eles foram ao cinema.	They went to the cinema (movies).
Eu fui estudante naquela escola.	I was a student at that school. (State of being, verb ser).
Eu fui àquela escola quando era criança.	I went to that school when I was a child. (it refers to motion, verb ir).

Chapter 3 Verb **Ter** – To **Have**
(see also **Haver** later)

Verb **TER** (to have) **PRESENT TENSE**

Presente do Indicativo	Present Tense
eu tenho	I have
tu tens	you have
ele/ela/você tem	he/she has
nós temos	we have
vós tendes	you have
eles/elas/vocês têm	they have

Examples – TER – Present Tense

Portuguese	English
Eu tenho um carro vermelho.	I have a red car.
Tens uma caneta?	Do you have a pen?
Ele/ela tem fome.	He's hungry (he/she has hunger).
Sim, nós temos muita fome.	Yes, we are very hungry (we have much hunger)(we are starving!).
Eles têm um carro azul.	They have a blue car.

Verb TER (to have - possession) PAST TENSE

Pretérito Perfeito	Past Tense
eu tive	I had
tu tiveste	you had
ele/ela/você teve	he/she had
nós tivemos	we had
vós tivestes	you had
eles/elas/vocês tiveram	they had

Examples – TER - Past Tense

Portuguese	English
Eu tive um carro vermelho.	I had a red car.
Tu tiveste umas boas férias no Algarve.	You had a great vacation in the Algarve.
Ela teve uma boa viagem e <i>está</i> feliz.	She had a good trip and she is happy.
Nós tivemos três noites de festa.	We had three nights of partying.
Vocês tiveram de ir de comboio para Lisboa.	You (all) had to go to Lisbon by train.
Vós tivestes muita sorte!	You were very lucky.

Chapter 4 Verb **Estar** – To **Be**

(temporary states, locations, and conditions)

Verb **ESTAR** (to be somewhere) **PRESENT TENSE**

Presente do Indicativo	Present Tense
eu estou	I am (here)
tu estás	you are
ele/ela/você está	he/she is
nós estamos	we are
vós estais	you are
eles/elas/vocês estão	they are

Examples – ESTAR – Present Tense

Portuguese	English
Eu estou no restaurante. Eu <i>tenho</i> fome.	I am at the restaurant. I'm hungry.
Tu <i>tens</i> fome? Tu estás com fome?	Are you hungry? Are you hungry?
Não, eu não <i>tenho</i> fome. Não, eu não estou com fome.	No, I'm not hungry. No, I'm not hungry.
Nós hoje estamos com pressa. Até amanhã.	We're in a hurry today. See you tomorrow.

Verb **ESTAR** (to be somewhere) **PAST TENSE**

Pretérito Perfeito	Past Tense
eu estive	I was
tu estiveste	you were
ele/ela/você esteve	he/she was
nós estivemos	we were
vós estivestes	you were
eles/elas/vocês estiveram	you were

Examples – ESTAR - Past Tense

Portuguese	English
Eu estive em Lisboa ontem.	I was in Lisbon yesterday.
Tu estiveste no Porto domingo.	You were in Porto on Sunday.
Ela esteve doente, mas já está melhor.	She was sick but she's better now.
Nós estivemos quatro dias sem eletricidade.	We were without electricity for four days.
Vocês estiveram em Luanda de férias, não <i>foi</i> ?	You were in Luanda on vacation, weren't you?
Vós estivestes em Ponta Delgada, nos Açores.	You were in Ponta Delgada, in the Azores.

Chapter 5 Verb **Haver** – To Have

Used for **impersonal** statements.

For all the rest, the verb **Ter** is more common.

We will see examples.

Verb **HAVER** (to have, to exist) **PRESENT TENSE**

Presente do Indicativo	Present Tense
eu hei	I have
tu hás	you have
ele/ela/você há	he/she has
nós havemos	we have
vós haveis	you have
eles/elas/vocês hão	they have

Functional Differences between **TER** and **HAVER**

- **Ter** is used for **personal possession** and as an **auxiliary verb** in compound tenses:
 - *Eu **tenho** um livro.* → I have a book.
 - ***Tenho estudado** muito.* → I have been studying a lot.
- **Haver** is used to express **existence, impersonal statements**, or in **formal/literary contexts**:
 - ***Há** um problema aqui.* → There is a problem here.
 - ***Havia** muitas pessoas.* → There were many people.

Examples – **HAVER**– Present Tense

Portuguese	English
Havemos <i>de</i> ir a Lisboa.	We must go to Lisbon (wishful thinking).
Vocês hãõ <i>de</i> ir à serra do Gerês.	You must go to the Geres mountains. (suggestion).
Eles hãõ <i>de</i> ser felizes algum dia!	They will be happy someday. (wishful thinking).
Eles hãõ <i>de</i> ter dinheiro quando encontrarem um trabalho.	They will have money when they find a job. (Sense of expectation or confident prediction).
Há aqui um problema!	There is a problem here!
Há <i>que</i> resolver este assunto.	This matter must be resolved.
Eles hãõ <i>de</i> aparecer.	They will appear. (probably later but they will appear)

Verb HAVER (to have, to exist) PAST TENSE (use Ter instead)

Note: “Though haver is a full verb, its first-person perfect form is a ghost—grammatically alive but rarely seen.”

In this tense, haver is mostly used impersonally. For personal possession or experience, **ter** is preferred.

We’ve already covered the past tense of the verb **ter**, but here’s a quick chart to refresh your memory:

Pretérito Perfeito	Past Tense
eu tive	I had
tu tiveste	you had
ele/ela/você teve	he/she had
nós tivemos	we had
vós tivestes	you had
eles/elas/vocês tiveram	They had

Summary

Today we reviewed the following verbs in their infinitive, present, and simple past forms:

- **Ser** – to be (essential nature)
- **Estar** – to be (state or location)
- **Ir** – to go
- **Haver** – to have (mostly archaic, but useful in set phrases)
- **Ter** – to have (commonly used)

Keep this lesson on file and revisit it often.

Thanks for reading.

Tony de Araujo

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