

# Portuguese Pronunciation Guide 6

Practicing review using a popular folk song

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YouTube URL: <https://youtu.be/T2eLKhX0DLw>

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## Intro and Lyrics reading

Hello,

today we are going to **have fun** with a famous Portuguese traditional song and practice stressed syllables in the process.

Please pay attention to the red **syllables**.

And because this is a **tutorial**, the English translation is literal.

So, it may sound off, but I'm trying to describe how Portuguese sentences are constructed.

Here it goes:

**Lá em cima estava** o Tiro-liro-liro  
(up there there was Tiro-liro-liro)

**Cá em baixo estava** o tiro-liro-ló  
(Down here was Tiro-liro-ló )

**Juntaram-se** os dois à **esquina**  
(met, the two, by the corner)

**A tocar a concertina**  
(Playing the concertina)

**E a dançar** o sol e do.  
(And dancing the Sol and Do)

Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Si Do.

## Analyzing the graphical accent in the Portuguese word Lá

Now, let's look at the stress of some of the words.

Why does "lá" in "lá em cima" have a stress mark?

Being a monosyllabic word, we could assume that it would be written as "la". No accent mark.

Well, there are possible explanations for it, but I've decided to explain it idiomatically.

It's simple and easier to remember:

In English we say, "there, or over there", which translates to "acolá" in Portuguese.

Now, lá is short for acolá, but it also changes the context.

When we say "acolá", we normally point to it with a finger.

But, when we say "lá", we are generalizing.

In addition, "lá" is also used in many idiomatic expressions in multiple contexts.

So, it is a very popular word.

As for the accent in "lá", well, think of "acolá".

So, short for "acolá", you could say "lá".

There are other explanations, of course,  
but you can't go wrong with this one for now.

As for "Cá",

it's the opposite of "lá".

The accent makes sense as well.

## Why doesn't "aqui" have an accent in "í", the last syllable?

Now, additionally, the opposite of "acolá" is "aqui".

Notice the same stress being on the last syllable of aqui.

It's not áqui, but aqui.

So, another question is,

why doesn't "aqui" have an accent in "í", the last syllable?

From previous lessons in this series, we noticed two reasons:

### Reason 1-

It ends in "i".

Remember, words ending in i, u, l, r, z, im

are stressed on the last syllable without graphical accents.

They are oxytones (any word stressed on the last syllable).

### Reason 2-

The second reason that we also know from previous studies is that, had we added an accent to "í", it would break the diphthong.

So, we would have to pronounce it separately,

as "aqu-í", (sounds aqwi), which is incorrect.

The "u" here should be silent.

For further explanation I'll add a comment to the video explaining why the "u" is used here.

Summarizing the accent is lá and cá:

Think of **lá**, acol**á**.

Think of **cá** opposite of **lá**.

So, let's practice the song lyrics a bit more and revisit other pronunciation rules.

## Analyzing more words in the Tiro-Liro-Liro lyrics

Lá em cima estava o Tiro-liro-liro

Cá em baixo estava o tiro-liro-ló

Juntaram-se os dois à esquina

A tocar a concertina

E a dançar o sol e do.

Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Si Do.

So here,

"cima", "estava", "baixo",

"juntaram-se", "Esquina", "concertina",

they are all paroxytone words.

Normal Portuguese stress is on the penultimate syllable (paroxytone words).

So, no graphical accent needed.

In "Juntaram-se", however, the "se" does not count as last syllable, so "ta" remains as the penultimate syllable and is, therefore, stressed just as any other common Portuguese word.

Then, in "tocar" and "dançar",  
they both end with an "r",  
making them oxytone words,  
stress on the last syllable because of the "r".



## A note about the Solfège letters

Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Si Do

Each word in the solfege part at the end of our lyrics is monosyllabic, so, they are open sounds, not just for that reason, but also because of musical terminology standards as well.

In English, however, we say, "Ti Do", instead of "Si Do".

This is probably because we also have another convention of naming notes, starting with "C", equivalent to Do, which could confuse the sound of "Si", equivalent to "B", or "Ti", in the standard solfege naming.

Hence, in English, "Si" is changed to "Ti".

## Final thoughts

Ok, my friend,  
please practice the song a few times  
paying attention to the syllabic stress.  
I will leave a [link](#) to the traditional song  
on the description if you are curious about it.

If you practice these rules,  
as we explain them,  
you could then read anything in Portuguese  
and [learn on your own](#).

I'll see you at the next session.

Thank you!

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