



Ser vs Estar in Portuguese

Portuguese Lesson

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Video transcript

Hey there and welcome to Ablas! In this video, we're going to look at the difference between *ser* and *estar* in Portuguese. Both of these mean "to be", but each verb is only used in specific situations. Be sure to download the PDF of today's lesson from the link in the description!

When to use 'ser'

Let's start by seeing when "*ser*" can be used, before looking at some examples later.

The verb *ser* is often used to talk about permanent or long-lasting situations, such as:

- Introducing yourself. "Eu sou a Maria." (I'm Maria.)
- Telling people where you're from. "Tu és de Lisboa." (You're from Lisbon.)
- Talking about your job. "Ele é professor." (He's a teacher.)
- Describing a person's personality or traits. "Ela é simpática." (She's kind.)
- Your contact details, like your address. "A sua morada é Rua das Flores, nº 12." (Her address is 12 Rua das Flores.)
- Describing where something unmovable is, like a building or place. "A estação ferroviária é ali." (The train station is over there.)
- Saying who owns something. "Estes são os meus sapatos." (These are my shoes.)
- And surprisingly, we also use *ser* to talk about the day of the week or the time of day. "Hoje é sexta-feira. É meia-noite." (Today is Friday. It is midnight.)

When to use 'estar'

Now let's move on to see when "*estar*" can be used.

The verb *estar* is conversely used to talk about more temporary situations, such as:

- How someone is currently feeling. "Nós estamos tão felizes." (We are so happy.)

- The weather. "Hoje está nublado." (It is cloudy today.)
- Describing where someone is. "Agora estou em casa." (I am at home now.)
- And lastly, talking about an action that's currently happening. "Estás a caminhar pela rua." (You're walking down the road.)

Example sentences

It can be difficult to remember all the scenarios, so it's better to listen and pick up on each verb as you hear it. To help you do that, here are some example sentences: the first two will include the verb *ser*, and the last two will contain the verb *estar*.

English	Portuguese
Pedro is Portuguese, but he grew up in London with his grandparents.	O Pedro é português, mas cresceu em Londres com os avós.
This old watch belonged to my great-grandfather and is very valuable to the family.	Este relógio antigo era do meu bisavô e é muito valioso para a família.
We're studying for the Portuguese exam, but we're not ready yet.	Estamos a estudar para o exame de português, mas ainda não estamos preparados.
I'm very tired today because I was working late last night.	Estou muito cansado hoje porque estive a trabalhar até tarde ontem à noite.

Conversation

Now it's time to go one step further with a real-life conversation!

	English	Portuguese
	Beatriz and Daniel are childhood friends and meet at a café in Lisbon.	Beatriz e Daniel são amigos de infância e encontram-se num café em Lisboa.
Beatriz:	Hi, Daniel! How are you?	Olá, Daniel! Como estás?
Daniel:	I'm well, thanks! And you?	Estou bem, obrigado! E tu, como estás?
Beatriz:	I'm a bit tired, but happy.	Estou um pouco cansada, mas feliz.
Daniel:	Why are you tired?	Porque estás cansada?
Beatriz:	I'm working a lot this week. My new job is interesting, but demanding.	Estou a trabalhar muito esta semana. O meu novo emprego é interessante, mas exigente.
Daniel:	What's your boss like?	Como é o teu chefe?
Beatriz:	He's very kind and patient.	Ele é muito simpático e paciente.
Daniel:	I'm glad. It's important to have a good boss.	Fico contente. É importante ter um bom chefe.
Beatriz:	And you? Are you still studying at university?	E tu? Ainda estás a estudar na universidade?
Daniel:	Yes, I'm in my last year. The classes are hard this semester.	Sim, estou no último ano. As aulas são difíceis este semestre.
Beatriz:	Where is your university again?	Onde é a tua universidade, outra vez?

	English	Portuguese
Daniel:	It's near the river, in a very beautiful old building.	É perto do rio, num edifício antigo muito bonito.
Beatriz:	Ah, yes! I've been there once. It really is beautiful. You know, I'm thinking about travelling on holiday.	Ah, sim! Já estive lá uma vez. É mesmo bonito. Sabes, estou a pensar em viajar nas férias.
Daniel:	Really? Where are you thinking of going?	A sério? Para onde estás a pensar ir?
Beatriz:	I don't know yet. Maybe to Porto, it's a beautiful city.	Ainda não sei. Talvez para o Porto, é uma cidade linda.
Daniel:	Porto is fantastic! I was there last summer.	O Porto é fantástico! Estive lá no verão passado.
Beatriz:	Was it hot?	Estava calor?
Daniel:	Yes, it was very hot, but the nights were cool.	Sim, estava muito calor, mas as noites eram frescas.
Beatriz:	Sounds perfect. I'm excited just thinking about it.	Parece perfeito. Estou entusiasmada só de pensar.
Daniel:	You should go! Life is short.	Devias ir! A vida é curta.
Beatriz:	You're right. By the way, is that jacket new?	Tens razão. A propósito, esse casaco é novo?
Daniel:	It is! I bought it yesterday. Do you like it?	É sim! Comprei-o ontem. Gostas?
Beatriz:	I love it! It's elegant.	Gosto muito! É elegante.
Daniel:	Thanks! Well, it's almost six o'clock.	Obrigado! Bem, já são quase seis horas.

	English	Portuguese
Beatriz:	That's true, I have to go. It was great being with you.	É verdade, tenho de ir. Foi ótimo estar contigo.
Daniel:	Same here. See you soon, Beatriz! Take care.	Para mim também. Até breve, Beatriz! Cuida-te.

It's quiz time!

So, did you spot the different uses of ser and estar in that conversation? Feel free to leave us a comment with any questions. But we're not done yet – it's quiz time!

Which verb do you use to describe someone's nationality?

- A. Ser
- B. Estar

The correct answer is ser, which is used for permanent or long-lasting things.

"Ele está cansado" uses estar because it describes what?

- A. A profession
- B. A permanent trait
- C. A temporary state or condition

The correct answer is... a temporary state or condition.

Which of these statements is correct?

- A. Estão três horas da tarde
- B. São três horas da tarde
- C. Está três horas da tarde

The correct answer is... são três horas da tarde.

Your task

Well done for getting this far!

Now your task is to write a few sentences about your weekend plans. Try to include some different examples of ser and estar.

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