Two pasts Dois passados

Portuguese has two everyday pasts. The pretérito perfeito tells what happened: a **dot**, done and over. The imperfeito paints how things were: a **line**, going on in the background. English often uses one form for both, so ask what you mean.

● Pretérito perfeito the dot

falei I spoke, I have spoken

It happened, and it's over
Ontem **comi** uma pizza.
Yesterday I had a pizza.

One step after another
Acordei, **tomei** um banho e **fui** trabalhar.
I woke up, had a shower and went to work.

A set number of times, a set length
Morei dois anos em Lisboa.
I lived in Lisbon for two years. And then it ended.

I've done it: already, ever, never
Já **comi**, obrigado.
I've already eaten, thanks.

— Imperfeito the line

falava I was speaking, I used to speak

Used to, would: habits
Eu **jogava** futebol todos os sábados.
I used to play football every Saturday.

Was going on
Chovia muito.
It was raining hard.

Descriptions, feelings
A casa **era** grande e **tinha** um jardim.
The house was big and had a garden.

Age and the time
Eram três horas.
It was three o'clock.

Both in one sentence: the line gets cut by a dot

dormia: going on for a while

tocou: one moment

Eu **dormia** quando o telefone **tocou**.
I was asleep when the phone rang. The sleeping was already going on: a line. The ring cut into it: a dot.

From English to Portuguese

I spoke · I have spoken	**falei**	page 2
I was speaking	**falava** or BR **estava** falando · PT **estava** a falar	page 4
I used to speak · I would speak, every day	**falava**	page 4
I've been speaking, lately	**tenho falado**	not I have spoken: page 5

Words that point the way

Often with the perfeito

ontem yesterday · **de repente** suddenly · **uma vez** once · **na semana passada** last week · **no ano passado** last year · **já** already

Often with the imperfeito

antigamente in the old days · **todos os dias** every day · **normalmente** usually · **naquele tempo** back then · **enquanto** while · **quando era criança** as a child

Hints, not laws: the meaning decides. Ontem **chovia** paints yesterday's weather as a scene; ontem **trabalhei** dez horas reports what you did.

The perfeito O pretérito perfeito

2 · regular verbs · pink is the ending

Drop -ar, -er or -ir and add the ending. -er and -ir verbs share almost every ending; only the vowel changes: com**eu**, part**iu**. The ele form also covers você, so in Brazil it does a lot of the work: BR Você **falou** com ela?

	falar speak	comer eat	partir leave, break
eu I	falei	comi	parti
PT **tu** you, one friend	falaste	comeste	partiste
ele, ela, você he, she, you	falou	comeu	partiu
nós we	falamos PT falámos	comemos	partimos
eles, elas, vocês they, you all	falaram	comeram	partiram

We spoke: in Brazil, BR **falamos** is both we speak and we spoke; ontem or the story tells you which. In Portugal, -ar verbs usually write the past with an accent: PT **falámos**. -er and -ir verbs look like the present in both countries: comemos, partimos.

The tu row: tu is the everyday you in Portugal, as on the Brazil and Portugal sheet. Brazil mostly says você with the ele form. The tu form always ends in -ste: PT **falaste**, **comeste**, **partiste**.

Spelling changes in the eu form: c, g and ç before e

ficar · stay, be **fiquei** **ficou**	chegar · arrive **cheguei** **chegou**	começar · start **comecei** **começou**	tocar · play, ring **toquei** **tocou**	jogar · play (a game) **joguei** **jogou**	almoçar · have lunch **almocei** **almoçou**

Why: the ending -ei starts with e, and c, g and ç would change their sound before it. So c becomes qu, g becomes gu and ç becomes c: fi**qu**ei, che**gu**ei, come**c**ei. Only the eu form changes; ele keeps the plain spelling: **ficou**, **chegou**, **começou**.

Twelve more you'll hear all the time: eu and ele

acordar · wake up **acordei** **acordou**	gostar · like **gostei** **gostou**	levar · take, carry **levei** **levou**	acabar · finish, end **acabei** **acabou**	pensar · think **pensei** **pensou**	trabalhar · work **trabalhei** **trabalhou**
beber · drink **bebi** **bebeu**	conhecer · meet **conheci** **conheceu**	perder · lose, miss **perdi** **perdeu**	esquecer · forget **esqueci** **esqueceu**	abrir · open **abri** **abriu**	decidir · decide **decidi** **decidiu**

Hear the ending: -ei, -i for eu; -ou, -eu, -iu for ele. **Gostei**! I liked it! **Gostou**? Did you like it? Short, and in every show.

The tu trick: from the tu form you get two more: drop -ste, add -mos for nós and -ram for eles. PT **fizeste**, **fizemos**, **fizeram**. It works for every verb, the irregular ones on page 3 too.

Irregular perfeito Os irregulares

The most common verbs have their own past. Learn them as words. ser and ir share every form: context tells you which. **Fui** ao Rio, I went to Rio. **Fui** professora, I was a teacher.

	ser · ir was · went	ter had	estar was, been	fazer did, made	dizer said	poder could	querer wanted
eu I	fui	tive	estive	fiz	disse	pude	quis
PT **tu** you, one friend	foste	tiveste	estiveste	fizeste	disseste	pudeste	quiseste
ele, ela, você he, she, you	foi	teve	esteve	fez	disse	pôde	quis
nós we	fomos	tivemos	estivemos	fizemos	dissemos	pudemos	quisemos
eles, elas, vocês they, you all	foram	tiveram	estiveram	fizeram	disseram	puderam	quiseram

	saber knew, found out	trazer brought	ver saw	vir came	dar gave	pôr put
eu I	soube	trouxe	vi	vim	dei	pus
PT **tu** you, one friend	soubeste	trouxeste	viste	vieste	deste	puseste
ele, ela, você he, she, you	soube	trouxe	viu	veio	deu	pôs
nós we	soubemos	trouxemos	vimos	viemos	demos	pusemos
eles, elas, vocês they, you all	souberam	trouxeram	viram	vieram	deram	puseram

eu and ele: often they differ by one letter: **tive teve**, **estive esteve**, **fiz fez**, **pude pôde**, **pus pôs**. Keep them apart. In **disse**, **quis**, **soube**, **trouxe**, they're the same: context tells.

Tiny accents matter: **pôde** with a hat is he could, pode is he can. And the infinitive pôr keeps its hat to tell it from por, by or for.

ver and vir: **vi** and **viu** are I saw, he saw; **vim** and **veio** are I came, he came. And **vimos** is we saw, but also we come: the present of vir.

Two verbs for I was: **estive** for where you were or how you were, for a while: **Estive** em Lisboa no verão. **fui** for what you were, or for went.

Sounds: the x in **trouxe**, **trouxeram** and the rest of trazer's past sounds like ss, not like the x of táxi.

Family resemblance: dar takes the -er endings, except **dei**: **deu**, **demos**, **deram**. ver takes the -ir endings: **viu**, **viram**.

In a sentence

O que **aconteceu**?
What happened?

Tive um dia horrível.
I had an awful day.

Eles **disseram** que sim.
They said yes.

Não **pude** ir.
I couldn't go.

Ela **quis** saber tudo.
She wanted to know everything.

Quem **trouxe** o bolo?
Who brought the cake?

Ontem **vieram** cedo.
Yesterday they came early.

Onde **puseram** as chaves?
Where did they put the keys?

The imperfeito O pretérito imperfeito

Two endings, and only four irregular verbs. -ar verbs take -ava, -er and -ir verbs take -ia. Even ir, fazer, dizer and ver are regular here: **ia**, **fazia**, **dizia**, **via**.

In full: three regular verbs and the four irregular ones

	falar was speaking	comer was eating	partir was leaving	ser was	ter had	vir was coming	pôr was putting
eu I	fal**ava**	com**ia**	part**ia**	**era**	**tinha**	**vinha**	**punha**
PT **tu** you, one friend	fal**avas**	com**ias**	part**ias**	**eras**	**tinhas**	**vinhas**	**punhas**
ele, ela, você he, she, you	fal**ava**	com**ia**	part**ia**	**era**	**tinha**	**vinha**	**punha**
nós we	fal**ávamos**	com**íamos**	part**íamos**	**éramos**	**tínhamos**	**vínhamos**	**púnhamos**
eles, elas, vocês they, you all	fal**avam**	com**iam**	part**iam**	**eram**	**tinham**	**vinham**	**punham**

eu and ele are the same: **falava** is I was speaking and he was speaking. So people keep the pronoun when it isn't clear: eu **falava**, ele **falava**.

nós always has an accent: **falávamos**, **comíamos**, **éramos**, **tínhamos**, **vínhamos**, **púnhamos**. It marks the stress, three syllables from the end.

What it's for

Used to, would

Eu **morava** no Porto.
I used to live in Porto.

Aos domingos, **almoçava** com a minha mãe.
Every Sunday I'd have lunch with my mum.

Descriptions, states, feelings

A rua **estava** vazia.
The street was empty.

Eu não **sabia**.
I didn't know.

Age and the time

Eu **tinha** dez anos.
I was ten.

Era uma hora. **Eram** três horas.
It was one o'clock. It was three o'clock.

Polite requests, softer than now

Queria um café, por favor.
I'd like a coffee, please.

Podia repetir?
Could you say that again?

Right in the middle of it: estar in the imperfeito

To stress that something was going on at that moment, use **estava** with the same pattern as the present: the -ndo form in Brazil, a + the infinitive in Portugal.

	BR Brazil	PT Portugal
I was talking to her.	Eu **estava** falando com ela.	Eu **estava** a falar com ela.
What were you doing?	O que você **estava** fazendo?	O que **estavas** a fazer?

Was going to: ir in the imperfeito + a verb as it is in the dictionary: Eu **ia** sair, mas **começou** a chover. I was going to go out, but it started to rain.

In a story Numa história

Once, or again and again

● Once: the perfeito	— Again and again: the imperfeito
Ontem **fui** ao cinema. Yesterday I went to the cinema.	Aos sábados, eu **ia** ao cinema. On Saturdays I used to go to the cinema.
No sábado **joguei** futebol. On Saturday I played football.	Na escola, eu **jogava** futebol todos os dias. At school I played football every day.
Em 2020, **morei** no Rio. In 2020 I lived in Rio. A year, now over.	Quando **era** criança, **morava** no Porto. When I was a child, I lived in Porto.

The scene and what happened

BR Eu **estava** vendo TV quando ele **chegou**.

PT Eu **estava** a ver TV quando ele **chegou**.

I was watching TV when he arrived. The watching was going on, his arrival cut into it.

Era uma noite fria de inverno. **Chovia** e a rua **estava** vazia. Eu **estava** em casa e **lia** um livro. De repente, a campainha **tocou**. **Abri** a porta: **era** um velho amigo da escola, com uma mala na mão. Ele **morava** no Canadá e **estava** de visita. **Fiz** um café e ele **contou** tudo. **Foi** uma noite ótima.

pink: what happened next, one step at a time **orange, underlined**: the scene, how things were

The tenho falado trap

It looks like I have spoken, but it means something has kept happening lately, up to now.

Tenho falado muito com ela.
I've been talking to her a lot lately.

Tenho dormido mal.
I've been sleeping badly.

Tenho trabalhado muito.
I've been working a lot.

For English I have done, already, ever or never, Portuguese uses the perfeito.

Já comi.
I've already eaten.

Nunca estive em Portugal.
I've never been to Portugal.

BR **Você já viu esse filme?**
Have you seen this film?

PT **Já viste este filme?**
Have you seen this film?

Lines from shows and daily life

Eu sabia!
I knew it!

Gostei!
I liked it!

Não foi nada.
It was nothing.

Cheguei!
I'm here! I'm home!

Era uma vez...
Once upon a time...

Quem foi?
Who was it? Who did it?

Pensei que era outra pessoa.
I thought it was someone else.

BR **Foi mal!**
My bad! Sorry!

BR **Estava brincando!**
I was joking!

PT **Estava a brincar!**
I was joking!

BR **Ganhamos!**
We won!

PT **Ganhámos!**
We won!

Practice Prática

6 · twenty gaps · answers at the bottom

How: pick the perfeito or the imperfeito, then make the form of the verb in the box. Say each whole line out loud, then check the answers in small print at the bottom: **pink** is the perfeito, **orange** the imperfeito.

1 Ontem eu _____ (comer) um bolo inteiro.

2 Antigamente, eu _____ (morar) perto da praia.

3 Na sexta, eu _____ (chegar) muito tarde.

4 _____ (ser) três horas quando ele ligou.

5 No sábado nós _____ (ir) ao cinema.

6 Eu _____ (ter) dez anos quando aprendi a nadar.

7 O que ele _____ (fazer) ontem?

8 Naquele tempo, eles _____ (jogar) futebol na rua.

9 Eu já _____ (ver) esse filme duas vezes.

10 Eu _____ (querer) um café, por favor.

11 Eles _____ (dizer) que não.

12 Ela não _____ (poder) vir ontem.

13 Todos os dias, nós _____ (jantar) às oito.

14 Eu _____ (estar) no Brasil em 2019.

15 Antes, eu _____ (ler) muito.

16 Quem _____ (trazer) as bebidas?

17 Ele _____ (vir) sempre aos domingos.

18 Ele _____ (pôr) o casaco e foi embora.

19 Quando eu cheguei, ela _____ (dormir).

20 Eu _____ (estar) cansado, por isso fui dormir.

Answers

1 **comi** 2 **morava** 3 **cheguei** 4 **Eram** 5 **fomos**
6 **tinha** 7 **fez** 8 **jogavam** 9 **vi** 10 **queria**
11 **disseram** 12 **pôde** 13 **jantávamos** 14 **estive** 15 **lia**
16 **trouxe** 17 **vinha** 18 **pôs** 19 **dormia** 20 **estava**

Meet a word you don't know? In Kitsumi, hover any word in subtitles to see what it means.