

Portuguese: a Snapshot

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Portuguese language and culture

As well as in Portugal and Brazil, Portuguese is an official language in Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Timor-Leste, Equatorial Guinea, Cape Verde, and São Tomé and Príncipe. It has roughly 226 million speakers worldwide. While there are 10 million speakers in Portugal, there are some 200 million in Brazil. Portuguese is a Romance language and, as with Spanish, there is an Arabic influence too. It is important to remember that there are some differences between the Portuguese and Brazilian varieties of the language, related for example to levels of formality and informality; however, this does not prevent understanding. Whilst Portuguese culture, including the Roman Catholic faith, has shaped Brazilian culture to a large extent, Brazil has also been influenced by African and indigenous American traditions as well as by other Western European countries.



English words of Portuguese origin:

baroque, cashew, caste, dodo,
embarrass, grouper, labrador, maraca,
marmalade, monsoon, mosquito,
potato, savvy, tank

Portuguese in the UK

The Portuguese-speaking population in the UK has grown significantly in recent years. The 2011 Census estimated 133,000 speakers, but we expect this number to be about five times higher in the 2021 Census. The main concentration is in London, particularly in the Lambeth area.

Portuguese education

Portuguese language lessons are offered in the UK in several ways. Both the Portuguese and the Brazilian governments have partnerships with British universities for contributing to the offer of Portuguese language and literature undergraduate programmes. Lessons are offered to school-aged students (from Beginners to Advanced Level) via Camões-IP, the Portuguese institute, in after-school classes and in some schools as part of the mainstream curriculum. There are also a number of Brazilian supplementary schools. More recently, the Anglo-Portuguese School of London, the only mainstream school in the UK, has started its activities. Despite being organized separately, it is possible for speakers/learners of these and other varieties of the language to attend the same lessons.

Examinations

- Pearson Edexcel offers both GCSE and Advanced Level examinations in Portuguese <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/portuguese-2018.html>
- European Portuguese language proficiency is certified by the Portuguese as a Foreign Language Assessment Centre (CAPLE - for adults and Camões Júnior – secondary school), as detailed on <https://www.instituto-camoes.pt/en/index.php?itemid=2926> and the EPE certification programme (<https://www.instituto-camoes.pt/en/activity-camoes/what-we-do/learn-portuguese/certification/epe-certification>, through the Portuguese Education Department in London (see contact below).
- Brazilian Portuguese language proficiency (Celpe-Bras) is certified by Brazil's Ministry Education, as detailed on <http://londres.itamaraty.gov.br/en-us/celpe-bras.xml>



Supporting Portuguese speakers in your school

- Anglo-Portuguese School of London: <https://angloportugueseschool.org/en/>
- Association of Teachers and Researchers of Portuguese: <https://tropouk.weebly.com/>
- Brazilian complementary schools: <https://www.polhuk.com/>
- Brazilian curriculum guide for the teaching of Portuguese as a Heritage Language: <https://funag.gov.br/biblioteca-nova/produto/21-1126-1> (item 6)
- Brazilian curriculum guide for the teaching of children's literature: <https://funag.gov.br/biblioteca-nova/produto/1-1172>
- Portuguese Education Department: <https://www.e-portugues.co.uk/portuguese-education-department/>

With sincere thanks to the Portuguese parents who gave us permission to use the photos in this snapshot.