

First-Year Portuguese Course at Oxford

Preliminary Information

The following information and advice will help you prepare for the first-year course in Portuguese at Oxford. You will shortly be receiving an invitation from the Faculty of Modern Languages to attend the 2026 Bridging Course in Portuguese Language in Oxford. The course takes place in the week prior to Fresher's week, ie from Monday 28 September to Friday 2 October inclusive. Thanks to a generous grant from the Joicey Trust we are able to offer the course without charge to participants, including board and lodgings at St Peter's College for six nights from Sunday 27 September.

This document outlines some resources you can use to start learning the language over the summer. Once offers have been confirmed in August, you will receive a complete reading list with the literary texts for the first year and further guidance on learning the language. Please read this information carefully now so as to act on it in good time.

Taking Your First Steps in Portuguese Before the Bridging Course

The beginner's course takes you from the basics to more advanced language skills very quickly. Although we will start right from how to say 'hello' in the bridging course, you will need to familiarise yourself with the language beforehand in order to make the most of that week. In August, we will send a grammar book with instructions on which exercises you **must** complete before you arrive, but, in the meantime, we suggest that you use one of the following free resources to begin to get used to the sound and feel of Portuguese (it does not matter which variety as you will be taught by both Brazilian and Portuguese native speakers on the course).

Apps:

Duolingo: Some daily practice on this free app will help you familiarise yourself with some basic sounds in (Brazilian) Portuguese and work as a starting point for vocabulary acquisition. We recommend 15-20 minutes a day.

Busuu: Some daily practice on this free app will help you feel more confident in your pronunciation of Portuguese words and sounds, as you'll be asked to record yourself and the audio clips will be peer-reviewed by native speakers. We recommend 10 minutes a day.

Drops: Some daily practice on this free app will allow you to build and expand your vocabulary, in exercises tailored to your personal tastes. We recommend 5-10 minutes a day.

Memrise: Some daily practice on this free app will help you get a feeling for how the vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation you learn in the other apps is used in casual conversation in Portuguese. We recommend 5-10 minutes a day.

YouTube Channels:

Portuguese With Leo: focused on European Portuguese, this YouTube channel headed by Portuguese teacher Leonardo Coelho tackles grammar and differences between European and Brazilian Portuguese, as well as Portuguese and Spanish, in simple and instructive videos. The playlist “Quick Portuguese Lessons” is a good starting point.

Speaking Brazilian: language teacher Virginia Langhammer publishes weekly videos mixing language learning with cultural aspects of Brazilian society, as well as offering a Basic Course aimed at new learners.

Textbooks:

We do not expect you to spend money on your own textbook, but if you prefer to learn in that way, you may want to buy (or borrow from your local library) one of the following:

Sue Tyson-Ward, *Practice Makes Perfect: Basic Portuguese* (McGraw Hill, 2019)

Maria Fernanda Allen, Hugo’s *Portuguese in 3 Months* (DK, 2022)

Sue Tyson-Ward with Ethel Pereira de Almeida Rowbotham, *Complete Brazilian Portuguese Beginner to Intermediate Course* (Teach Yourself, 2016)

João Sampaio and Barbara McIntyre, *Colloquial Portuguese: The Complete Course for Beginners* (Routledge, 2002)

Viviane Gontijo, *Colloquial Portuguese of Brazil: The Complete Course for Beginners* (Routledge, 2018)

Olly Richards, *Short Stories in Brazilian Portuguese for Beginners* (Teach Yourself, 2019)

Listening Practice:

For listening practice, there are a number of Brazilian and Portuguese TV series and films available on streaming services. Usually, you can filter search results by language. Using subtitles in the original language is a good way to start connecting the written language to how the words are pronounced (even if you don’t really understand what is being said, it is good to try this on occasion).

Reading Practice:

In terms of reading, the *Portuguese in Translation Book Club* (<https://www.pintbookclub.com/>) hosts online meetings (for a small fee), and will introduce you to a bit of the cultures of the Portuguese-speaking world. Online journals and magazines such as *Asymptote* and *Words Without Borders* are also free to access and often publish translated literature from Portuguese, as does *Poetry International* (<https://www.poetryinternational.com/en>).