



GRAMMAR • FREE GUIDE

Ser vs Estar / Por vs Para Cheat Sheet

The one-pager that finally makes these two notorious pairs click.

Fala Portuguese.

Free resource from the Fala Portuguese Resource Library — falaportuguese.com

1-PAGE GRAMMAR GUIDE

Ser vs Estar / Por vs Para

The rule of thumb, plus examples for each.

SER — PERMANENT, IDENTITY, ESSENCE

- ✓ Origin, nationality: Sou americano. (I am American.)
- ✓ Profession: Ela é professora. (She is a teacher.)
- ✓ Inherent characteristics: O café é forte. (The coffee is strong.)
- ✓ Time & dates: São três horas. (It's three o'clock.)

ESTAR — TEMPORARY, CONDITION, LOCATION

- ✓ Current state: Estou cansado. (I am tired.)
- ✓ Location: O livro está na mesa. (The book is on the table.)
- ✓ Ongoing action: Estou estudando. (I am studying.)
- ✓ Weather/mood right now: Está frio hoje. (It's cold today.)

Quick test: if it would still be true next year, use ser. If it could change by tomorrow, use estar.

PART TWO

Por vs Para

Both mean "for," but they answer different questions.

POR — CAUSE, EXCHANGE, MOVEMENT THROUGH

- ✓ Reason/cause: Obrigado por tudo. (Thanks for everything.)
- ✓ Exchange/price: Paguei 10 reais por isso. (I paid 10 reais for it.)
- ✓ Through/along: Vamos passear pelo parque. (Let's walk through the park.)
- ✓ Duration: Fiquei por duas semanas. (I stayed for two weeks.)

PARA — PURPOSE, DESTINATION, RECIPIENT

- ✓ Purpose/goal: Estudo para aprender. (I study in order to learn.)
- ✓ Destination: Vou para o Brasil. (I'm going to Brazil.)
- ✓ Recipient: Isso é para você. (This is for you.)
- ✓ Deadline: Para amanhã. (For/by tomorrow.)

Quick test: "por" = because of / in exchange for. "para" = in order to / heading toward.