

Portuguese B2

— What to Study

Level: **B2 (Vantage)** • Language: **Portuguese** • Audience: **Learners**

B2 is where you stop working around Portuguese and start working in it. You can follow a lecture or a meeting, argue a point, read an opinion column and write a structured text that a native speaker would take seriously. At this level the gap between relaxed spoken Portuguese and the formal written standard becomes something you manage deliberately. This guide follows Brazilian Portuguese and points out where Portugal differs.

The Common European Framework describes B2 as being able to understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in your field of specialisation; to interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party; and to produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue, giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

Grammar to master

The subjunctive in all tenses.

- Compound forms: *tenha feito, tivesse feito, tiver feito* — *Espero que ele tenha chegado bem; Quando você tiver terminado, me avise*
- Concession and condition: *embora, ainda que, desde que* (provided that), *a menos que, contanto que*
- The sequence of tenses: the tense of the main verb decides which subjunctive follows

Hypotheses in the past. *Se eu tivesse sabido, teria vindo*; mixed forms such as *Se eu tivesse saído mais cedo, agora estaria em casa*. In speech you will hear *tinha* in place of *teria*: *Se eu soubesse, tinha vindo*.

Reported speech. Tense shifts when the reporting verb is in the past: *Ele disse que estava cansado, Ela perguntou se eu viria, Eles explicaram que já tinham saído*.

The formal written standard.

- Pronoun placement in formal writing, including after the verb — *Envio-lhe o documento* — and the rare *mesóclise* of formal and legal texts: *far-se-á, dir-se-ia*
- Nominal style in reports and articles: *a implementação da medida* rather than *implementar a medida*
- Formal correspondence: *Prezado / Prezada, Venho por meio deste..., Atenciosamente*

Structuring an argument.

- Connectors for contrast and consequence: *no entanto, contudo, todavia, portanto, por conseguinte, por um lado ... por outro*
- Proportion and purpose: *à medida que, a fim de que*
- Concession and nuance: *é verdade que ... mas, apesar de, mesmo assim*

Vocabulary areas

Aim for a broad passive vocabulary and at least 4,000 words you can use actively, with a clear sense of register.

- Society and politics, the economy, current affairs
- Science, technology and the environment
- The world of work in formal terms: contracts, responsibilities, negotiations
- Education and research
- Culture: literature, music, film, the arts, criticism
- The language of argument: stating a position, conceding, contrasting, concluding
- Formal correspondence and phrases for presentations and meetings

What you should be able to do

- Follow a lecture, presentation or meeting on a topic in your field
- Argue for a position in a discussion, respond to objections and summarise the other side fairly
- Understand newspaper articles and reports, including opinion pieces
- Write a structured argued text or formal letter with a clear position, advantages and disadvantages
- Write formal emails and letters in the appropriate register
- Give a short presentation and answer questions on it
- Understand most films and TV series in Brazilian Portuguese, and follow European Portuguese with some effort
- Explain a complex process or problem clearly

Common difficulties

Two grammars in one language. Relaxed Brazilian speech (*Me passa o sal, Eu vi ele*) and the written standard (*Passe-me o sal, Eu o vi*) differ more than in most languages. At B2 you are expected to switch between them deliberately.

The sequence of tenses. Choosing between *seja*, *fosse*, *tenha sido* and *tivesse sido* depends on the main verb and on time. Practise transforming the same sentence from present to past until the pattern is familiar.

European Portuguese by ear. Portugal's Portuguese drops many unstressed vowels, which makes it much harder to follow for learners trained on Brazilian audio. Regular listening to Portuguese radio or series is the fix.

Idioms and slang. Everyday Brazilian speech is rich in fixed expressions — *pagar mico*, *ficar de boa*, *dar um jeito*. Understanding the common ones is a B2 goal; using them well comes with time.

How to know you are ready for C1

You are ready when you can take part in a discussion on an unfamiliar abstract topic without falling back on simpler language, when an opinion column no longer needs a dictionary for its structure, and when your formal writing reads as organised Portuguese rather than translated thought. C1 moves from arguing clearly to arguing precisely: nuance, implication and style.

Written by GongbuLeng. Aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) B2 descriptors. For a CEFR-aligned certificate at this level, see the DIPLE exam from CAPLE at the University of Lisbon (European Portuguese). Brazil's official certificate is Celpe-Bras, run by INEP.