

SCENE 20 • GRAMMAR

Era, estava, tinha

Past states in photographs

8 Exercises • Duration: 25 min.

Photos on the wall

Portuguese

Read & listen online



The past tense describes an earlier time. This unit uses the imperfect for states and habits.

Past states in photographs

The imperfect describes a past state or habit. **Ser: era, eras, era, éramos, eram, eram. Estar: estava, estavas, estava, estávamos, estavam, estavam. Ter: tinha, tinhas, tinha, tínhamos, tinham, tinham.** The first and third singular can be identical, so context matters.

Use **era pequeno, estava em casa, tinha dez anos.** Regular **-ar** imperfect endings are **-ava, -avas, -ava, -ávamos, -avam, -avam: morava, moravas, morava, morávamos, moravam, moravam.** These are background or repeated actions, not a sequence of completed events.

Person	ser	Meaning
eu	era	I was
tu	eras	you (familiar singular) were
ele · ela	era	he/she was
nós	éramos	we were
vocês	eram	you (plural) were
eles · elas	eram	they were

O João era pequeno.

João was little.

Nós éramos pequenos.

We were little.

Eu estava em casa.

I was at home.

Vocês estavam em casa.

You were at home, plural.

Eu tinha dez anos.

I was ten years old.

Nós tínhamos dez anos.

We were ten years old.

Sou nova (**novo**) aqui. Eu tinha dez anos.

I am new here. I was ten years old.

Sou nova (**novo**) aqui. Nós tínhamos dez anos.

I am new here. We were ten years old.

Haver in past descriptions is invariant **havia**: **havia uma casa, havia casas**. Singular past **saber** is **sabia, sabias, sabia**; plural **sabíamos, sabiam, sabiam**. **Vou desenhá-lo** is a future-plan chunk: I will draw him. The pronoun **o** follows the infinitive, drops final **r** and becomes **lo**; the vowel carries the stress mark. This is useful here before object pronouns are practised in module 5.

GRAMMAR**G1) NOTICE THE USEFUL PATTERN**

Underline the form practised in this unit.

- 1 O João era pequeno.

Meaning: João was little.

- 2 Nós éramos pequenos.

Meaning: We were little.

- 3 Eu estava em casa.

Meaning: I was at home.

- 4 Vocês estavam em casa.

Meaning: You were at home, plural.

G2) CHOOSE THE FORM 1

Choose the right word for the gap.

1 O João _____ pequeno.

- ☐ A era
- ☐ B eram
- ☐ C éramos

Meaning: João was little.

2 Nós _____ pequenos.

- ☐ A éramos
- ☐ B eras
- ☐ C era

Meaning: We were little.

3 Eu _____ em casa.

- ☐ A estavas
- ☐ B estava
- ☐ C estavam

Meaning: I was at home.

4 Vocês _____ em casa.

- ☐ A estava
- ☐ B estávamos
- ☐ C estavam

Meaning: You were at home, plural.

5 Eu _____ dez anos.

- ☐ A tinha
- ☐ B tinham
- ☐ C tinhas

Meaning: I was ten years old.

6 Nós _____ dez anos.

- ☐ A tínhamos
- ☐ B tinhas
- ☐ C tinha

Meaning: We were ten years old.

7 Sou nova aqui. Eu _____ dez anos.

- ☐ A tinham
- ☐ B tinhas
- ☐ C tinha

Meaning: I am new here. I was ten years old.

G3) CHOOSE THE FORM 2

Choose the right word for the gap.

1 Eu _____ uma criança.

- ☐ A era
- ☐ B eras
- ☐ C éramos

Meaning: I was a child.

2 Tu _____ uma criança.

- ☐ A éramos
- ☐ B era
- ☐ C eras

Meaning: You were (familiar singular) a child.

3 Ele _____ uma criança.

- ☐ A era
- ☐ B eras
- ☐ C éramos

Meaning: He was a child.

4 Vocês _____ crianças.

- ☐ A eras
- ☐ B era
- ☐ C eram

Meaning: You were (plural) children.

5 Eles _____ crianças.

- ☐ A eras
- ☐ B era
- ☐ C eram

Meaning: They were children.

6 Sou nova aqui. Nós _____ dez anos.

- ☐ A tínhamos
- ☐ B tinha
- ☐ C tinhas

Meaning: I am new here. We were ten years old.

G4) USE THE FORM 1

Fill the gaps with the words from the box.

era estava estavam éramos

O João _____ pequeno.

Meaning: João was little.

estava éramos era estavam

Nós _____ pequenos.

Meaning: We were little.

era estavam éramos estava

Eu _____ em casa.

Meaning: I was at home.

estavam estava éramos era

Vocês _____ em casa.

Meaning: You were at home, plural.

estava tinha éramos era

Eu _____ dez anos.

Meaning: I was ten years old.

estava tínhamos éramos era

Nós _____ dez anos.

Meaning: We were ten years old.

estava éramos era tinha

Sou nova aqui. Eu _____ dez anos.

Meaning: I am new here. I was ten years old.

G5) USE THE FORM 2

Fill the gaps with the words from the box.

eras era eram tínhamos

Eu _____ uma criança.

Meaning: I was a child.

era tínhamos eras eram

Tu _____ uma criança.

Meaning: You were (familiar singular) a child.

eras era tínhamos eram

Ele _____ uma criança.

Meaning: He was a child.

eram eras era tínhamos

Vocês _____ crianças.

Meaning: You were (plural) children.

eras tínhamos era eram

Eles _____ crianças.

Meaning: They were children.

eras tínhamos eram era

Sou nova aqui. Nós _____ dez anos.

Meaning: I am new here. We were ten years old.

G6) BUILD A SENTENCE

Put the words in order.

1

Meaning: João was little.

2 éramos Nós pequenos.

Meaning: We were little.

3 casa. em estava Eu

Meaning: I was at home.

4 em Vocês estavam casa.

Meaning: You were at home, plural.

5 tinha Eu anos. dez

Meaning: I was ten years old.

- 6 Nós tínhamos anos. dez

Meaning: We were ten years old.

G7) WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

Choose the right words for the situation.

1 João was little. You say:

- ☐ A O João era pequeno.
- ☐ B O João éramos pequeno.

2 We were little. You say:

- ☐ A Nós era pequenos.
- ☐ B Nós éramos pequenos.

3 I was at home. You say:

- ☐ A Eu estava em casa.
- ☐ B Eu estavas em casa.

4 You were at home, plural. You say:

- (A) Vocês estava em casa.
- (B) Vocês estavam em casa.

G8) CONNECT MESSAGES AND MEANINGS

Match the pairs.

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) O João era pequeno. | (A) We were ten years old. |
| (2) Vocês estavam em casa. | (B) We were little. |
| (3) Sou nova aqui. Nós tínhamos dez anos. | (C) I am new here. I was ten years old. |
| (4) Nós tínhamos dez anos. | (D) I am new here. We were ten years old. |
| (5) Eu estava em casa. | (E) I was ten years old. |
| (6) Sou nova aqui. Eu tinha dez anos. | (F) I was at home. |

7 Nós éramos
pequenos.

G João was little.

8 Eu tinha dez anos.

H You were at home, plural.