**Language and Culture Show and Tell: Portuguese**

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**Transcript**

Hello! Olá! My name is Joana (the Portuguese ‘J’ sounds like the ‘S’ in ‘treasure’). I am a Senior Teaching Fellow in Portuguese and Comparative Literature at UCL and I will take you on a journey through the beautiful city of Sintra and into the UCL Slade School of Fine Art.

**Sintra**

Sintra, a UNESCO Word Heritage Site, is a charming town on the outskirts of Lisbon, described by Lord Byron as a ‘glorious Eden’, a paradise, and by English poet Robert Southey as ‘the most blessed spot on the whole inhabitable globe’. And you can visit it here (*Video from the VisitSintra website*). Hidden within its steep, pine-covered hills are Romantic palaces… and also the ruins of a medieval Moorish castle… along with lavish villas, lush fern gardens and oak forests. Sintra has been a popular destination for royalty, the European elite, writers and artists for many, many centuries.

This colourful and extravagant castle, which you may have spotted at the beginning of the video, is the Pena Palace — a paradigmatic example of 19th-century Romanticism that mixes different architectural styles, including Gothic, Moorish and Manueline. In the words of Danish author Hans Christian Andersen, who’s best remembered for his fairy tales, ‘The whole ascent is like a garden wherein nature and art beautifully sustain each other; here is the most beautiful promenade one can imagine’. The Palace is the product of King Ferdinand II’s imagination – the artist king who loved etching, painting, architecture, ceramics, botany and the theatre. Ferdinand would spend his last years at Pena, where he received the greatest artists of his time. (*Video from the World Heritage Journeys backend YouTube channel*.)

German composer Richard Strauss describes the palace thus: ‘Today is the happiest day of my life. I have been to Italy, Sicily, Greece and Egypt, but I have never seen anything like Pena, anything at all. It’s the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen. This is the true garden of Klingsor, and up there in the heights is the Castle of the Holy Grail’. The picturesque town with its wondrous sights has also inspired countless Portuguese writers, including Fernando Pessoa and Eça de Queirós. To this day, artists and travellers from all over the world continue to find inspiration in the myriad palaces and exotic mansions that dot its mist-covered hills. One such artist who took up residence in Sintra was creative printmaker and teacher Bartolomeu Cid dos Santos, widely known as Barto.

**Bartolomeu dos Santos**

Barto was born in Lisbon, Portugal’s capital, in 1931. And here, in the picture, you can see one of Lisbon’s quaint yellow trams. Following the completion of his undergraduate studies in Fine Arts, Barto planned on moving to Paris to pursue a career. Before setting off to the French capital, he came across a book called *Charmes de Londres* in French, that’s *Charmes de Londres* in Portuguese or *Charms of London.* This book marked a turning point in Barto’s life. It’s a book of photographs taken in postwar London, accompanied with poems by renowned French poet, Jacques Prévert. Inspired by the black-and-white photographs of a scarred and mysterious city, Barto decided to move from Lisbon (Lisboa) to London (Londres) and applied to study at the Slade School of Fine Art, then considered the most prestigious art college in England. What was supposed to have been a short, one-year period of non-diploma graduate study at the Slade changed the course of his life forever. He enrolled in 1956, started teaching shortly after and stayed on until his retirement, forty years later, in 1996. He continued to use the Slade studios during the summer until his death.

**UCL Art Museum**

For this taster, I have chosen a print by dos Santos from the UCL Art Museum. You can find over forty works by Barto in the museum collections! The one that I have chosen is titled *Slade Printmaking Christmas Lunch Invitation* and I’ll be using it to introduce you to some nouns you can employ to describe body parts. In this print, we can see the face (‘face’ or ‘cara’) of a woman (mulher). This word, ‘mulher’, is hard to pronounce because it contains a digraph : ‘lh’. Mulher.

Now, let’s zoom in on the etched face. I’m going to show you a few words in Portuguese and what I’d like you to do is repeat them after me. Is that okay? All right, so here is our first word. You’ve already learned how to pronounce the ‘lh’. Can you try and repeat the word aloud by yourselves? Olho /olhos. Can you repeat that? All right, now on to our second word:

nariz (I’ll give you a few seconds after each word, so that you can repeat it.)

lábios

boca

bochechas (this is a funny one to pronounce, isn’t it? Bochechas)

cabelo

pescoço

You might have guessed what some of these mean, especially if you are familiar with other Romance languages. Let’s check together:

olho / olhos — eye/eyes

nariz — nose

lábios — lips

boca — mouth (it’s spelled the same as in Spanish and it’s very similar also to the Italian word, but the pronunciation is slightly different)

bochechas — cheeks

cabelo — hair

pescoço — neck

Now, let’s zoom out again so that we can see the full image. In terms of colour or the colour scheme used, can you guess what these words mean in English?

preto

castanho

branco

sépia

cinzento

So, preto means black; castanho: brown; branco: white; sepia: sepia and finally cinzento, which is grey.

So, three things may have stood out when looking at and pronouncing these nouns and colours: the accents, digraphs and diphthongs. We have five accents in Portuguese and we are going to focus on two of these. The first accent you see on the table, which is the same for ‘lábios’ and ‘sépia’, is called an acute accent. It indicates that the accented vowel is stressed and that its sound is ‘open’, so to speak (so, ‘é’, ‘á’). The cedilla is that hook or tail under the ‘c’, which changes the pronunciation from ‘c’, as in ‘boca’ to ‘s’, as in ‘pescoço’. The words ‘cedilha’, ‘mulher’ and ‘olho’ share the digraph ‘lh’ and then, finally, we have the diphthong ‘eu’, which means that these two letters, ‘e-u’, are pronounced as one syllable, one sound, ‘eu’.

But back to Barto. Barto lived in London most of his life, but travelled frequently around the world and especially to Sintra, where there is now a plaque commemorating his life and work.

A book, a city and a university changed Barto’s life forever. As he recounts in an interview, he struggled to understand the English accent when he first arrived in Gower Street. Learning to speak fluently in English helped open the door to his career in teaching. Learning a new language, you see, is much more than learning words: it is about immersing yourself in a different culture; it is about expanding your horizons and becoming more aware of the world and the people around you; it means being able to communicate with millions more people in our increasingly globalised world.

**Further Resources**

If you want to learn more about Sintra, you can check out these links. And, for more on Barto’s life and work, you can go to the Slade Archive Project: Oral History Collection, where you can find excerpts from an interview. More importantly, if you want to see the artwork featured in the Show and Tell, or other works by Barto, or other Portuguese artists, or if you want to see anything else from this world-renowned museum, please visit UCL Art Museum at their website. You can also make an appointment or enquire about the collections by emailing museums@ucl.ac.uk.

And, to wrap up, here are some fun facts you might not know about Portuguese. It is:

* spoken natively by over 220 million people.
* the 1st language in the southern hemisphere.
* the 2nd Romance language, after Spanish.
* the official language of Portugal, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Angola, São Tomé and Príncipe and Equatorial Guinea.

Thank you very much for listening (and watching!). Thank you and goodbye! Obrigada e adeus!