Por y para

Both can mean "for," but they are not interchangeable

Goal. Use para for a purpose, recipient, deadline or destination, and por for a cause, duration, price or movement through a place.

1 PARA LOOKS FORWARD

Purpose, use, recipient, deadline, destination

purpose or goal | use or recipient | deadline or destination

Estudio español **para** trabajar con clientes.
(I study Spanish in order to work with clients.)

Esta caja es **para** los cables.
(This box is for the cables.)

Este regalo es **para** ti.
(This gift is for you.)

El informe es **para** el viernes.
(The report is due on Friday.)



Camino **por** el parque.
(I walk through the park.)

Salgo **para** el trabajo.
(I leave for work.)

2 POR LOOKS AROUND

Cause, time, price, through

cause or reason | duration or price | movement through a place

Llego tarde **por** el tráfico.
(I'm late because of the traffic.)

Pagué diez dólares **por** el almuerzo.
(I paid ten dollars for lunch.)

Caminamos **por** el parque todas las tardes.
(We walk through the park every afternoon.)

No salgo **por** la lluvia.
(I'm not going out because of the rain.)

3 A QUICK MAP

At this level, purpose is para + infinitive

PARA	POR
purpose / goal	cause / reason
recipient (for you)	exchange or price
deadline (due Friday)	duration (for an hour)
destination (for the airport)	through a place
use (a cup for tea)	por eso = that's why

4 COMMON TRAP

Typical mistakes

✗ ~~Llego tarde para el tráfico.~~

✓ **Llego tarde por el tráfico.**
A cause or reason takes por, not para.

✗ ~~Estudio por aprobar el examen.~~

✓ **Estudio para aprobar el examen.**
A purpose or goal takes para + infinitive.

✗ ~~Este regalo es por ti.~~

✓ **Este regalo es para ti.**
The recipient takes para.

5 QUICK TIP

Ask which question you are answering.

What for? / Who for? / By when? → **para**

Why? / For how long? / Through where? → **por**

Purpose at this level is **para + infinitive**, not para que (that comes later).

6 TRY IT

Write por or para.

1. Abro la ventana ____ ventilar la habitación.
2. No salgo ____ la lluvia.
3. Este regalo es ____ ti.
4. Caminamos ____ el parque todas las tardes.
5. Pagué diez dólares ____ el almuerzo.
6. El informe es ____ el viernes.

Answers: 1 **para** · 2 **por** · 3 **para** · 4 **por** · 5 **por** · 6 **para**

7 SAY IT OUT LOUD

Estudio español **para** trabajar con clientes de Perú.
(I study Spanish in order to work with clients from Peru.)

es-**TOO**-dyo es-pa-**NYOL PAH**-rah tra-ba-**HAR** kon klyen-tes deh pe-**ROO**

Llego tarde **por** el tráfico.
(I'm arriving late because of the traffic.)

YEH-go **TAR**-deh por el **TRAH**-fee-ko