Grammar Lesson #1: Gostar vs. Gustar
Sitting on the Grass

Dialog

Michelle: Valdo, olhe pro gramado. Veja como os universitários americanos gostam de livros, de música…
Valdo, mira la grama. Ve como a los universitarios americanos les gustan os libros, y la música…
Valdo, look at the lawn. You see how American university students like music, book…

Valdo: E você gosta de sentar na grama como eles para estudar?
Te gusta sentarte en el césped como ellos para estudiar?
Do you like to sit on the lawn to study like they do?

Michelle: Não, não estou acostumada. Mas os alunos aqui nos Estados Unidos adoram.
No, no estoy acostumbrada. Pero a los alumnos de aquí de los Estados Unidos les encanta.
No, I'm not used to it. But the students here in the United State love it.

Valdo: Pois é, não gosto disso não. É um pouco desconfortável e tem muita formiga.
Pues, a mí no me gusta. Es un poco incómodo y hay muchas hormigas.
Yea, I don't like it either. It is kind of uncomfortable and there are a lot of ants.

Michelle: Eh, eu também não gosto de formiga não. Onde você prefere estudar?
De acuerdo. Tampoco me gustan las hormigas. ¿Dónde prefieres estudiar? Yea, I don't like ants either. Where do you like to study?

Valdo: Eu gosto muito de estudar no conforto da minha casa ou na biblioteca. Me gusta mucho estudiar en la comodidad de mi casa o en la biblioteca.

I really like to study in the comfort of my home or in the library.

Cultural Notes
Besides the lessons in pronunciation and grammar, all of the dialogs key on some cultural issue that Valdo and Michelle have noticed as Brazilians living in the United States.

In Brazil it is not common for college students to lie down on the grass on campus to study, to chat or hang out in general. In fact the whole idea of "lawns" is different in Brazil. College campuses rarely have what North Americans identify as lawns. As such, there isn't a tradition of going outside to sit on the lawn.

Grammar Notes
The verb "to like" in Portuguese is gostar and it is basically what is called a "regular verb, meaning the conjugation is simply:

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So, you think that the lesson should be easy, and it is. But, there are two other factors to consider.

First, some verbs require specific prepositions. For example, in English we depend on people. We would never say that we depend of people. In English we think about people. We don't think in people. Sometimes there are verbs in Portuguese that require a preposition that our English-speaking brain doesn't want to accept. This is the case with gostar that requires the preposition de. So, for example, in Portuguese we say,

Eu gosto de você. (I like you.)
Michelle não gosta de formigas. (Michelle doesn't like ants.)
Valdo gosta de estudar. (Valdo likes to study.)

This is similar to English phrases with the verb "to be fond of". In English we say things like, "I am fond of strawberries and cream." We would never say in English, "I am fond strawberries and cream." In the same way, in Portuguese we have to include the preposition de "of".

We should make you aware of one small exception. If the last word in the sentence is the verb gostar, there is no need to add the word de. For example:

Voce gosta de estudar? Gosto.
Marcos gosta de livros? Gosta, sim.

Second, for all of the native speakers of English who have had to learn how to use gustar in Spanish, congratulations! However, none of it applies to Portuguese. The Spanish forms with the indirect objects are simply not a part of Portuguese. For example:

Me gusta el libro.  Eu gosto do livro.  I like the book.
Me gustan los libros.  Eu gosto dos livros.  I like the books.
Te gusta cantar.  Você gosta de cantar.  You like to sing.
Les gusta cantar.  Eles gostam de cantar.  They like to sing.