English Grammar: ‘so’ / ‘such’

How would you say “Ela é **tão** linda” in English?
How would you say “Ela é uma mulher **tão** linda” in English?

We use the words ‘**so**’ and ‘**such**’ for emphasis, and they both translate to **'tão'** in Portuguese, but they are used differently.

so This word is used before an **adjective** or an **adverb**:

- She is **so beautiful**. *(adjective)*
- Your dog is **so cute**. *(adjective)*
- He drives **so quickly**. *(adverb)*
- She walks **so slowly**. *(adverb)*

such This word is used before a **plural** or **uncountable noun** or **noun phrase**:

- They have **such big houses**. *(plural noun)*
- He eats **such expensive meals**. *(plural noun)*
- You have **such beautiful furniture**. *(uncountable noun)*
- He always shows **such generosity**. *(uncountable noun)*

such a/an This is used before a **singular, countable noun** or **noun phrase**:

- She is **such a beautiful woman**.
- It is **such a lovely day**.
- He is **such an intelligent man**.
- It is **such an interesting building**.

Summary:			
	Adjective	→ **‘so’**	The house is **so** beautiful.
	Noun	→ **‘such’**	The house has **such** beauty.
			It is **such a** beautiful house.
			They are **such** beautiful houses.

• This book is interesting.	This book is **so** interesting.
• This is an interesting book.	This is **such** an interesting book.
• He is generous.	He is **so** generous.
• He is a generous person.	He is **such** a generous person.
• The crowd was big.	The crowd was **so** big.
• There was a big crowd.	There was **such** a big crowd.
• The story was complicated.	The story was **so** complicated.
• It was a complicated story.	It was **such** a complicated story.
• You are intelligent.	You are **so** intelligent.
• You are an intelligent person.	You are **such** an intelligent person.

‘So’ + adjective	**‘such’ + noun**	**‘such’ + noun phrase**
so difficult	such difficulty	such a difficult test
so happy	such happiness	such happy people
so sad	such sadness	such a sad man
so quick	such velocity	such a quick car
so kind	such kindness	such a kind lady
so nice	such nicety	such nice waiters

Alternatives The words “quite”, “pretty” and “very” can sometimes substitute “so”/“such”:

- This house is **so** big.
- These houses are **so** big.
- This is **such** a big house.
- These are **such** big houses.
- This house is **quite** big.
- These houses are **quite** big.
- This is **quite** a big house.
- These are **quite** big houses.
- This house is **pretty** big.
- These houses are **pretty** big.
- These are **pretty** big houses.
- This house is **very** big.
- These houses are **very** big.
- These are **very** big houses.

such as The expression “such as” means “for example”, and is used in formal texts:

- I want to learn many languages, **such as** French, German or Italian.
- I like many styles of music, **such as** jazz, rock and bossa nova.

Mixed examples:

- How can parents **so** ugly produce **such a** beautiful baby?
- For **such an** intelligent boy, he can be **so** stupid sometimes.

Exercise 1. Complete the sentences with ‘**so**’ or ‘**such**’:

1. The story was _____ fascinating that the children paid complete attention.

2. The tourist didn't expect _____ kindness from the locals.

3. I'm glad that you all had _____ a good time at the picnic.

4. The sweater was _____ big that it touched her knees.

5. It was _____ a lovely day that they decided to go swimming.

6. He was _____ an intelligent boy that he was put in the advanced level.

7. There was _____ heavy rain that he couldn’t see the road.

8a. The contestants didn't think that they would have to face _____ difficulty.

8b. The contestants didn't think that they would have to face _____ a difficult test.

8c. The contestants didn't think that the test would be _____ difficult.

Exercise 2. Convert each sentence to another form (so → such / such → so).

Examples: He is **so** tall. → He is **such a** tall man.
The house was **so** big → It was **such** a big house
You are **such** a lovely person. → You are **so** lovely.
He shows **such** kindness. → He is **so** kind.

1. You are **so** clumsy!

_____

2. The story was **so** fascinating that the children paid complete attention.

_____

3. The sweater was **so** big that it touched her knees.

_____

4. It was **such** a lovely day that they decided to go swimming.

_____

5. He was **such** an intelligent boy that he was put in the advanced level.

_____

6. It was **such** heavy rain that he couldn’t see the road.

_____

7. The runners didn't think that the race would be **such** a difficult one.

_____

8. The tourists didn't expect **such** kindness from the locals.

_____

9. I'm glad that you had **such** a good picnic.

_____

10. Your son is **so** attentive.

_____