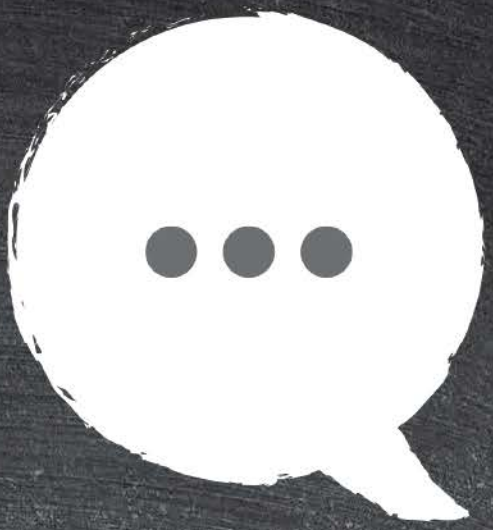
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# TRAVEL TO ITALY

## Conversation Cheat Sheet

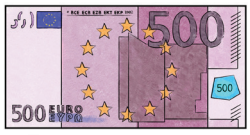
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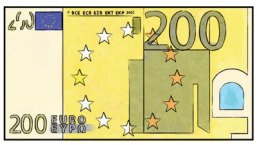
## MONEY & SHOPPING

**Is there an ATM nearby?**
C'è un bancomat qui vicino?

**How much is ~?**
Quanto costa ~?



five hundred euros
cinquecento euro



two hundred euros
duecento euro



hundred euros
cento euro



fifty euros
cinquanta euro



twenty euros
venti euro



ten euros
dieci euro



five euros
cinque euro



two euros
due euro

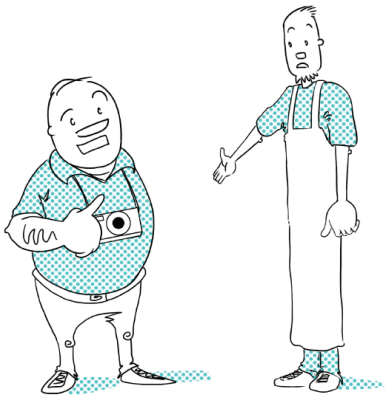


one euro
un euro

## AROUND TOWN

**Where is ~?**
Dov'è ~ ?

**I'd like to go to ~.**
Vorrei andare a ~.





Cinque Terre
Cinque Terre



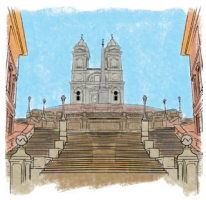
Coliseum
Colosseo



Galleria Borghese
Galleria Borghese



Sicily Island
Sicilia



Spanish Steps
Scalinata della Trinità dei Monti



Trevi Fountain
Fontana di Trevi

## SURVIVAL PHRASES

**Please take me to ~.**
Per favore mi porti a ~.

**Where is the station?**
Dov'è la stazione?

**Where is the restroom?**
Dov'è il bagno?

## COMMUNICATION

**Hello.**
Ciao.

**Excuse me.**
Scusi.

**I'm sorry.**
Mi dispiace.

**Nice to meet you.**
Piacere.

**Please.**
Per favore.

**Yes.**
Sì.

**I am ~.**
Sono ~.

**Thank you.**
Grazie.

**No.**
No.




## ASKING QUESTIONS

**Do you understand?**
Capisce?

**I understand.**
Capisco.

**I don't understand.**
Non capisco.

**Do you speak English?**
Parla inglese?

**Yes, I do.**
Sì.

**No, I don't.**
No.

**Can you eat this?**
Può mangiare questo?

**Of course.**
Certo.

**No, I can't eat it.**
No, non posso mangiarlo.




## ORDERING FOOD



**lasagne**
lasagne



**tiramisu**
tiramisù



**parmigiana**
parmigiana



**bagna cauda**
bagna cauda



**pork**
maiale



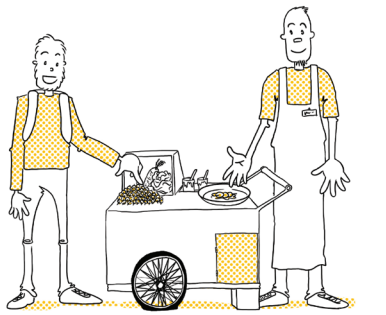
**beef**
manzo



**polenta**
polenta

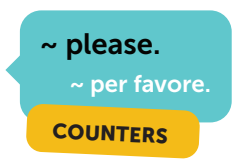


**pizza**
pizza




## COUNTERS

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| un, uno, una | due | tre | quattro | cinque | sei | sette | otto | nove | dieci |



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# DINING LIKE A CHAMP

## Conversation Cheat Sheet

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### Phrases You Need to Know at the Dining Table ›››

**I have a reservation at nine.**
Ho una prenotazione per le nove.

**Do you have a table for two?**
Avete un tavolo per due?

**May I have a menu?**
Potrei avere il menù?

**May I order?**
È possibile ordinare?

**What do you recommend?**
Che cosa mi consiglia?

**I'll have this, please.**
Prendo questo, per favore.

**Excuse me.**
Mi scusi.

**My order hasn't come yet.**
Il piatto che ho ordinato non è ancora arrivato.

**Check, please.**
Il conto, per favore.

### Top Words You'll Need at the Restaurant ›››

**POINT & SPEAK**
PUNTA & PARLA

**~ please.**
~ per favore.



**appetizer**
antipasto



**main dish**
primo



**dessert**
dolce



**chicken**
pollo



**beef**
manzo



**pork**
maiale



**salad**
insalata



**seafood**
frutti di mare

**What are today's specials?**
Quali sono i piatti del giorno?

**Can I have a drink menu?**
Posso avere il menù delle bevande?

**Can I have some more ~?.**
Posso avere ancora del ~.

### Counters

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| uno | due | tre | quattro | cinque | sei | sette | otto | nove | dieci |

## How to Choose The Best Foods to Fit Your Preferences

**With ~, please.**
Con ~, per favore.

**Without ~, please.**
Senza ~, per favore.

| meat | fish | vegetables | butter | sugar | olive oil |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| carne | pesce | verdure | burro | zucchero | olio d'oliva |

| bell pepper | onions | wine | cheese | tomato | alcohol |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| peperone | cipolle | vino | formaggio | pomodoro | alcol |

**Does this dish contain any~?**
In questo piatto c'è del ~?

**I can't eat/drink ~.**
Non posso mangiare/bere ~.

**Please remove ~ from this dish.**
Per favore, togliete ~ da questo piatto.

## Table Request In The Restaurant

**Can you bring me (a) ~?**
Può portarmi (un) ~?

**I need (a) ~.**
Ho bisogno di (un) ~.

| spoon | fork | knife | napkin | salt | black pepper |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| cucchiaio | forchetta | coltello | tovagliolo | sale | pepe nero |

| water | bread | drink | menu | coffee | dessert |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| acqua | pane | bevanda | menù | caffè | dolce |

## Complimenting and Criticizing the Food

**It's delicious!**
È delizioso!

**It looks tasty.**
Sembra gustoso.

**It's very good.**
È buonissimo!

**It's overcooked.**
È scotto.

**It lacks salt.**
Manca il sale.

**It's raw!**
È crudo!

**It smells so nice.**
Ha un odore così buono.

**This is not fresh.**
Questo non è fresco.

**It's too spicy.**
È troppo piccante.

## Food Allergies & Restrictions!

**I am allergic to ~.**
Sono allergico a ~.

| meat | eggs | milk | peanuts | shellfish | wheat | soy | fish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| carne | uova | latte | arachidi | molluschi | grano | soia | pesce |

**I am a vegetarian.**
Sono vegetariano.

**I am a vegan.**
Sono vegano.

**I can't eat pork.**
Non posso mangiare carne di maiale.

LESSON NOTES

# Basic Bootcamp #1 Self Introductions and Basic Greetings in Formal Italian

## CONTENTS

2 Italian
2 English
2 Vocabulary
2 Sample Sentences
3 Grammar
6 Cultural Insight

# 1



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## ITALIAN

1. Portiere: Buon giorno , signora. Mi chiamo Giovanni.
2. Signora Lenti: Piacere, signore. Mi chiamo Lenti Barbara.
3. Portiere: Piacere, signora.

## ENGLISH

1. Receptionist: Hello, madam. I'm Giovanni.
2. Mrs. Lenti: Nice to meet you, sir. I'm Barbara Lenti.
3. Receptionist: Nice to meet you, madam.

## VOCABULARY

| Italian | English | Class |
|---|---|---|
| buon giorno | good morning, good day, good afternoon | greeting expression |
| signora | madam, lady, misses | noun |
| Mi chiamo... | My name is... (Literally, I call myself) | |
| Piacere | Nice to meet you. | expression |

## SAMPLE SENTENCES

| | |
|---|---|
| **Buon giorno signore.**<br>"Hello, sir." | **Buon giorno Signor Martini.**<br>"Good morning, Mr. Martini." |
| **Buon giorno, Luca.**<br>"Good day, Luca." | **Buon giorno signora.**<br>"Hello, madam." |
| **Come si chiama signora?**<br>"What's your name, madam?" | **Quella signora è francese.**<br>"That lady is French." |
| **Mi chiamo Nicola.**<br>"My name is Nicola." | **Mi chiamo Peter.**<br>"My name is Peter." |
| **Mi chiamo Luigi.**<br>"My name is Luigi." | **Mi fa piacere rivederla.**<br>"I'm pleased to see you again." |

## GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is Introducing Yourself and Basic Greetings in Formal Italian.**
***Buon giorno, signora.***
**"Hello, madam."**

---

*Benvenuti* ("Welcome") to the Italian language basics. Introducing yourself is inevitable in any situation and is rather easy! Let's start with the phrase *buon giorno*!

***Buon giorno* ("Hello"/"Good day")**

---

For a more classical and frequent greeting, use *buon giorno*, meaning "hello." Its literal meaning is "good day."

You can use *buon giorno* anytime during the day in any circumstances. If you are speaking to a friend, an elderly person, or an unknown person in an informal or formal situation, use *buon giorno*. It is the safest and most respectable way of greeting a person while in Italy.

If the evening is falling and night is soon to come, use *buona sera*, meaning "good evening." Like *buon giorno*, *buona sera* is the most common way to greet someone in a safe manner. The only difference is that you can use *buona sera* for farewells as well at the end of the day.

Note that a title can follow both *buon giorno* and *buona sera* to be a bit more proper.

**For Example:**

| ***Italian*** | **"English"** |
|---|---|
| *Buon giorno* | "Hello," "Good day" |
| *Buon giorno signore* | "Hello, sir"/"Good day, sir" |
| *Buon giorno signora* | "Hello, madam"/"Good day, madam" |

**Greeting or Farewell in the Evening or at Night**

| ***Italian*** | **"English"** |
|---|---|
| *Buona sera* | "Hello"/"Good evening" |
| *Buona sera signore* | "Hello"/"Good-bye, sir" |
| *Buona sera signora* | "Hello"/"Good-bye, ma'am" |

## Stating a Name

---

After someone formally greets you at your hotel, someone will certainly ask you about your identity.

In many other situations, social or otherwise, to get to know someone or introduce yourself, you will ask or hear the most frequent question: "What is your name?"

**To answer it, use:**

1. the verb *chiamarsi* conjugated at the correct form.
2. You can omit the personal pronoun *io*, meaning "I" in English, which we use only for emphasis.

## Conjugating the Verb *Chiamarsi* ("to be called")

---

The verb *chiamarsi* means "to be called," and we translate it with the verb "to be" in English when stating a name, as shown in the dialogue translation. The infinitive verb *chiamarsi* ends with the letters *-si*, telling us it is a reflexive verb.

Its particularity is the presence at its infinitive form of the suffix *-si*. This tells us that this verb (like others with the same feature) is a "reflexive verb," which we call in Italian *verbo riflessivo.* The suffix *-si* is the reflexive part of the verb. Its function is to refer to the information following the verb *chiamarsi* - in other words, a name, back to the subject of the sentence.

When conjugating a reflexive verb, you should follow two steps. First you need to replace the suffix *-si* with the appropriate reflexive pronoun and put it in front of the conjugated verb. Then change the verb form according to the subject of the sentence.

## Changing the Reflexive Part of the Verb *Chiamarsi*

---

In the sentence *(io) mi chiamo Giovanni*, the personal pronoun is *io*, which belongs to the first person singular. As the verb *chiamarsi* is a "reflexive verb" or *verbo riflessivo*, the suffix *-si* becomes *mi*, and we put it before the conjugated verb. You will then have *(io)* ***mi chiamo***. We call *mi* a "reflexive pronoun" or *pronome riflessivo*.

Be aware that you only use *mi* if the information following the verb *chiamarsi* belongs to the person speaking it. If not, if you hear *io ti chiamo Giovanni*, it would mean "I call you Giovanni" (instead of Mrs. Lenti, for example). In other words, the name stated needs to be the one of the person stating it, as in "*Mi chiamo Lenti Barbara*."

## Conjugating the Verb *Chiamarsi*

After changing the suffix *-si* into the reflexive personal pronoun *mi*, which we put in front of the verb, we must conjugate the verb. For any verb ending in *-are* at the infinitive form, just replace *-are* with *-o* corresponding to the first person singular. You will have the final conjugated form: (*io*) *mi chiamo*.

**For Example:**

| ***Italian*** | **"English"** |
|---|---|
| *Mi chiamo Maria.* | "My name is Mary." |
| *Mi chiamo Signora Rossi.* | "My name is Mrs. Maria." |
| *Mi chiamo Rossi Maria.* | "My name is Mary Rossi." |

## CULTURAL INSIGHT

### Italian Given First Names

The *Ufficio Anagrafe*, or register of births, marriages, and deaths, communicates yearly records of the names chosen for newborn Italians. This information almost immediately becomes available on the Internet, partly to satisfy the general public's curiosity, but above all to help prospective parents to choose a name for their soon-to-be-born offspring.

It is curious to note how names change in popularity over the years. A bunch of evergreen names, both for boys and girls, will never fall out of fashion, such as Andrea, Luca, and Marco for boys and Giulia, Chiara, and Francesca for girls. Sometimes parents with a creative flair name their children after football players, pop singers, or even fictional TV characters, both Italian and international. Sensible parents would rather reserve this for their pets, though.

More traditional parents sometimes give their children their own mother or father's names, although this practice is rather old-fashioned. Sometimes children would get only their middle

name from their grandparents. However, middle names are not very common and Italians almost never use them in official documents.

Sometimes it is easy to guess which part of Italy someone comes from by their first name, as there is a higher incidence of certain names in different regions. For example, Salvatore is popular in the south, while Mirko is more popular in northern Italy.

Long names, such as Massimiliano and Salvatore for boys and Raffaella or Valentina for girls, will inevitably turn into a shorter nickname, such as Massi, Salvo, Lella, or Vale.

Names ending with an *-o* are usually boys' names, while those ending with an *-a* are girls'. There are exceptions of course: Andrea is for boys while Consuelo is for girls.

LESSON NOTES

# Basic Bootcamp #2
# Basic Italian Simple Phrases with the Verb Essere ("to be")

## CONTENTS

2 Italian
2 English
2 Vocabulary
2 Sample Sentences
3 Grammar

# 2



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## ITALIAN

1. Carla: Ciao, sono Carla. Sono francese.

2. Paul: Ciao, sono Paul. Sono americano.

## ENGLISH

1. Carla: Hello, I am Carla. I am French.

2. Paul: Hello, I am Paul, I am American.

## VOCABULARY

| Italian | English | Class |
|---|---|---|
| io | I | personal pronoun |
| sono | I am, conjugated form of essere | verb |
| francese | French | adjective |
| americano | American | adjective |

## SAMPLE SENTENCES

| | |
|---|---|
| **Io sono di Firenze.**<br>"I am from Florence." | **Sono nato in giugno.**<br>"I was born in June." |
| **Sono preoccupato.**<br>"I am worried." | **Sono a casa.**<br>"I am home." |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Mi piace il pane francese.**<br><br>"I like French bread." | **Sono francese.**<br><br>"I am French." |
| **La mia amica è Americana.**<br><br>"My friend is American." | **Mike è americano.**<br><br>"Mike is American." |

## GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is Basic Italian Simple Phrases with the Verb *Essere* ("to be").**
***Sono francese.***
**"I am French."**

---

Stating who you are and where you are from is a standard conversation starter anywhere you might be in your native country or in a foreign one.

While in Italy, you should use the verb *essere* to speak of your nationality and give your name. The verb *essere* is the equivalent of the verb "to be" in English. This is one of the most common Italian verbs we use to describe states, feelings, location, identity, origin, and much more. To use it properly, you must incorporate it in a phrase.

### Understanding the Construction of a Simple Phrase

#### A - Its Word Order

---

To build a simple phrase, you need to use three elements:

1. The subject - which is a person, a thing, or a place performing the action or receiving it.
2. The verb - which is the action of the sentence.
3. The object - which we also call the complement.

In Italian, the word order of a simple phrase is always subject, verb, then complement.

## B - Subject and Verbs

---

In the sentences below, the subjects and verbs are highlighted.

**For Example:**

| *Italian* | "English" | *Subject* | *Verb* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1 - Maria mangia una mela.* | "Marie eats an apple." | *Maria* | *mangia* |
| *2 - La città cresce velocemente.* | "The city grows with rapidity." | *città* | *cresce* |
| *3 - L'albero è caduto a terra.* | "The tree has fallen on the ground." | *albero* | *è caduto* |

1. In the first sentence, Maria is performing the action of eating. *Maria* is the subject and *mangia* ("eats") is the verb.
2. In the second sentence, the city receives the action of growing. *La città* ("the city") is the subject, and the verb is *cresce* ("grows"), which is the action of the phrase.
3. In the last sentence, the tree is victim of its weight and fell. Therefore, *albero*, meaning "tree," is the subject of the verb *è caduto*, which means "has fallen."

## C - Complement

---

The object is appropriately called the complement in Italian and indicates the object of the verb or a circumstance, as in the sentences below.

**For Example:**

| *Italian* | "English" | *Complement* |
|---|---|---|
| *1 - Maria mangia una mela.* | "Maria eats an apple." | *una mela* |
| *2 - La città cresce velocemente.* | "The city grows with rapidity." | *velocemente* |
| *3 - L'albero è caduto a terra.* | "The tree has fallen on the ground." | *a terra* |

The complement can designate something, such as the apple in the first sentence; a way the action is happening or done, as in the second example; or a place, as in the third sentence.

**Note:** With the verb *essere*, the complement is in fact called an "attribute," or *un attributo* in Italian.

## The Verb *Essere* in a Simple Phrase

### A - Word Order

---

To build a sentence with the verb *essere*, you must follow the word order of a simple sentence, which consists of:

**(*Soggetto*) + *verbo essere* + *attributo*.**

Remember that in Italian, we do not normally use the personal pronoun (*io*, *tu*, etc.) as a subject. We only use it to express emphasis or opposition.

*L'attributo* or "the complement" in English is mainly associated with the verb *essere* and describes:

**A. a state of the subject**

**For Example:**

| *Italian* | "English" |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| *(Io) sono triste.* | "I'm sad." |
| *(Io) sono stanco.* | "I'm tired." |
| *(Io) sono felice.* | "I'm happy." |
| *(Io) sono in buona salute.* | "I'm in good health." |

**B. a quality or nature of the subject**

**For Example:**

1. *Sono italiano.*
   "I'm Italian."

*L'attributo* can be an adjective, such as *triste* ("sad") or *italiano* ("Italian"), as in the examples above.
It can also be many other words, such as:

**C. a noun we use to tell something about ourselves:**

**For Example:**

| Noun Type | *Italian* | "English" |
|---|---|---|
| a profession | *(Io) sono studente.* | "I am a student." |
| a place | *(Io) sono in centro.*<br>*(Io) sono al lavoro.* | "I am downtown."<br>"I am at work." |
| a trait | *(Io) sono un buffone.* | "I am a clown." |
| a quality | *(Io) sono esperto.* | "I am an expert." |

Note: Some other verbs have *un attributo*, including the verb *chiamarsi*, such as in the dialogue phrase *(Io) sono Carla* ("I'm Carla.").

## B - Conjugation of *Essere*

The verb *essere* is irregular; however, it is very common and we use it extremely frequently in the Italian language. We use it not only to state information about a thing or person, but also in other tenses. For this reason, mastering it is important, as it will affect your Italian further along in your studies.

To describe your own or someone else's nationality, first use the appropriate noun and verb form:

| **Talking...** | ***Italian*** | **"English"** |
|---|---|---|
| About yourself | *io sono* | "I am" |
| To your interlocutor | *tu sei* | "you are" |
| About a man | *lui è* | "he is" |
| About a woman or about a person formally | *lei è* | "she is" |
| About you and someone else | *noi siamo* | "we are" |
| About a group of people or a person formally | *voi siete* | "you are" |
| About men and women | *loro sono* | "they are" |

### Telling Someone about Your Nationality/Origin

Then add any of the appropriate nationalities, which you will find in the table below:

| **"English"** | ***Italian Masculine*** | ***Italian Feminine*** |
|---|---|---|
| "French" | *francese* | *francese* |
| "American" | *americano* | *americana* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| "English" | *Inglese* | *inglese* |
| "Australian" | *australiano* | *australiana* |
| "Indian" | *indiano* | *indiana* |
| "Belgian" | *belga* | *belga* |
| "Spanish" | *spagnolo* | *spagnola* |
| "Portuguese" | *portoghese* | *portoghese* |
| "Brazilian" | *brasiliano* | *brasiliana* |
| "Swiss" | *svizzero* | *svizzera* |
| "German" | *tedesco* | *tedesca* |
| "Moroccan" | *marocchino* | *marocchina* |
| "Italian" | *italiano* | *italiana* |
| "Mexican" | *messicano* | *messicana* |
| "Cuban" | *cubano* | *cubana* |
| "Canada" | *canadese* | *canadese* |
| "Russian" | *russo* | *russa* |
| "Japanese" | *giapponese* | *giapponese* |
| "Chinese" | *cinese* | *cinese* |
| "Korean" | *coreano* | *coreana* |

**For Example:**

If you want to say that your friend Bob is German, you would say either:

1. *Bob è tedesco.*
   "Bob is German."

2. *E' tedesco.*
   "He is German."

LESSON NOTES

# Basic Bootcamp #3
# Useful Phrases for Learning Italian

## CONTENTS

2 Italian
2 English
2 Vocabulary
3 Sample Sentences
3 Grammar
7 Cultural Insight

# 3



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## ITALIAN

1. Studente: Professoressa, come si dice 'a fork' in italiano
2. Professoressa: Una forchetta.
3. Studente: Può ripetere? Lentamente, per favore?
4. Professoressa: “U-na for-chet-ta."
5. Studente: Può scriverlo per favore?

## ENGLISH

1. Student: Teacher, how do you say "a fork" in Italian?
2. Teacher: "Una forchetta."
3. Student: Can you repeat? Slowly, please?
4. Teacher: "U-na for-chet-ta."
5. Student: Please write it down.

## VOCABULARY

| Italian | English | Class | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|
| come | how | interrogative word | |
| forchetta | fork | noun | feminine |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| per favore | please | adverb |
| può | formal, you can, conjugated form of potere | verb |
| scrivere | to write | verb |
| lo | it, him | pronoun |

## SAMPLE SENTENCES

| | |
|---|---|
| **Come è il tempo a Roma?**<br>"How's the weather like in Rome?" | **Come ti chiami?**<br>What is your name? |
| **Come stai?**<br>How are you? | **Come stanno?**<br>How are they? |
| **Come state?**<br>How are you? (second person plural) | **Mi puoi passare una forchetta?**<br>"Could you hand me a fork?" |
| **Potrei avere del caffè, per favore?**<br>"Could I have some coffee, please?" | **Potete ascoltare canzoni italiane.**<br>"You can listen to Italian songs." |
| **Mi può portare un caffè, per favore?**<br>"Can you bring me some coffee, please?" | **Le scriverò una lettera d'amore!**<br>"I will write her a love letter!" |
| **L'albero è bello. Paolo lo guarda.**<br>"The tree is beautiful. Paolo is looking at it." | |

## GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is Useful Phrases for Learning Italian.**

***Professore, come si dice 'a fork' in italiano?***

**"Teacher, how do you say 'a fork' in Italian?"**

---

While learning a language, you should always use it whenever possible. This will allow you to engage yourself and acquire the correct habits right away while being immersed as much as possible in the language you are learning.

To immerse yourself in Italian from day one, you should learn some basic phrases so you can use them immediately. Getting in the correct habit of using standard phrases, their correct pronunciation, and their usage will greatly affect your Italian studies later on. Getting the right habits right away will help you avoid repeating mistakes and picking up bad habits that are difficult to get rid of once you're anchored in your routine while using Italian.

How can you learn Italian while using Italian? In several ways, which we'll show you below.

When trying to acquire new vocabulary, a recurrent question from everyone from newbie to advanced levels is *Come si dice...in italiano ?* ("How do you say...in Italian?")

We can use this question in both formal and informal Italian. We use the impersonal pronoun *si* whenever the subject is indefinite. It is very common in Italian.

**For Example:**

1. *In Italia si guida a destra*.
   "In Italy, they drive on the right."

The pronoun *si* refers to "people" in general. *Si* as an impersonal pronoun requires the third person singular. However, it indicates an indefinite number of people performing the action.
We can also use *si* instead of *noi* when the speaker refers to himself and other person(s). In other words, it means "we." However, we use *noi* more commonly than *si* in this context.

We use the verb *dire* ("to say") conjugated at "the present tense," which we call *il presente indicativo* in Italian.

## Language Focus

---

After asking how to say a word, you might be curious about how to spell it. In this case, you need to ask how to write it, as there is no specific word for "spelling" in Italian.

**For Example:**

1. *Come si scrive...?*
   "How do you write...?"

### ***Può ripetere? Lentamente, per favore?*** **("Can you repeat? Slowly, please.")**

---

After asking how to say a word, you may have difficulty understanding it. We are here to rescue you with another practical phrase that asks your interlocutor to repeat what he or she just said. Here are several ways you can ask that question, depending on the formality required.

**For Example:**

1. *Può ripetere?*
   "Can you repeat?"

To make your request more pleasant, I'll suggest adding the magic words *per favore.* You can also combine the two elements and make one question.

**For Example:**

1. *Può ripetere lentamente per favore?*
   "Can you repeat slowly, please?"

To emphasize your request to slow the speed, add the word *più.*

**For Example:**

1. *Può ripetere più lentamente per favore?*
   "Can you repeat more slowly, please?"

In these three options, the verb *potere* conjugated at the third person singular *può* tells us the question is in formal Italian. This is called the *lei* form. Then the auxiliary verb *potere* is followed by the infinitive verb *ripetere*, meaning "to repeat."

**For Example:**

1. *Puoi ripetere?*
   "Can you repeat?"

*Puoi* is the auxiliary verb *potere* conjugated at the second person singular, without the personal pronoun. This is the informal Italian register, and we refer to it as the *tu* form.

**For Example:**

1. *Puoi ripetere lentamente per favore?*
   "Can you repeat slowly, please?"
2. *Puoi ripetere più lentamente per favore?*
   "Can you repeat more slowly, please?"

## Language Tip

---

Note that when two verbs follow each other in a question or statement, the second one is often at the infinitive form.

**For Example:**

1. *Può ripetere?*
   "Can you repeat?"
2. *Puoi ripetere?*
   "Can you repeat?"

***Può scriverlo?* ("Can you write it down?")**

---

To memorize a word, you should review it a minimum of seven times. In other words, when you discover a new word, you need to use it seven times.

You could reuse it in a vocabulary exercise, mention it in a conversation, write it in a letter or a sentence, look for it while reading a text, or try any other uses you might imagine. The more you think of it, the better the chance you'll memorize it at a faster pace.

People often suggest that you write down a new word to help you record it in your gray matter. Some people prefer to speak it, while others are more visual. Find the best method for you.

## CULTURAL INSIGHT

### How to Address Your Italian Teacher

---

When in a classroom, adult students usually refer to their teacher using *professore* for a man or *professoressa* for a woman, both meaning "professor." If the teacher prefers that you call him or her something else, the teacher will certainly introduce herself or himself the first day and let you know how to address him or her. The professor may also ask you to call him by his or her first name if the setting, group, or conditions may allow it, such as an Italian course taken during vacation time or an exchange program, for example, when the atmosphere is usually more relaxed.

For younger students, such as children in primary or secondary schools, pupils refer to their teacher as *maestro* for male instructors or *maestra* for female teachers, which is a common practice in all schools of Italy.

LESSON NOTES

# Basic Bootcamp #4
# Counting from One to Twenty

## CONTENTS

2 Italian
2 English
2 Vocabulary
3 Sample Sentences
5 Grammar

# 4



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## ITALIAN

1. Laura: Uno, due, tre, quattro, cinque, sei, sette, otto, nove, dieci.

2. Laura: Undici, dodici, tredici, quattordici, quindici, sedici, diciassette, diciotto, diciannove e venti!

## ENGLISH

1. Laura: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

2. Laura: Eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen and twenty!

## VOCABULARY

| Italian | English | Class | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|
| zero | zero, nought, nil | numeral | |
| uno | one | numeral | masculine |
| due | two | numeral | masculine |
| tre | three | numeral | masculine |
| quattro | four | numeral | masculine |
| cinque | five | numeral | masculine |
| sei | six | numeral | masculine |
| sette | seven | numeral | masculine |
| otto | eight | numeral | masculine |
| nove | nine | numeral | masculine |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| dieci | ten | numeral | masculine |
| undici | eleven | numeral | masculine |
| dodici | twelve | numeral | masculine |
| tredici | thirteen | numeral | masculine |
| quattordici | fourteen | numeral | masculine |
| quindici | fifteen | numeral | masculine |
| sedici | sixteen | numeral | masculine |
| diciasette | seventeen | numeral | masculine |
| diciotto | eighteen | numeral | masculine |
| diciannove | nineteen | numeral | masculine |
| venti | twenty | numeral | masculine |

## SAMPLE SENTENCES

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ieri notte ha fatto zero gradi centigradi.**<br>"Last night, it was zero degrees Centigrade." | **Ricomincerò da zero.**<br>"I'll start again from scratch." |
| **Ho un euro.**<br>"I have one euro." | **Sono il numero uno.**<br>"I'm the number one." |
| **Sì, ci sono stato due volte.**<br>Yes, I've been twice. | **Ho due fratelli.**<br>"I have two brothers." |
| **Ho visto due amici.**<br>"I saw two friends." | **Hai due possibilità.**<br>"You have two possibilities." |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Sono le tre.**<br>It's three o'clock. | **Ha tre anni.**<br>"He is three years old." |
| **Ho comprato tre libri.**<br>"I bought three books." | **Sono quattro Euro.**<br>It's four Euros. |
| **Quattro euro per un panino? E' caro!**<br>"Four euros for a sandwich? That's expensive!" | **Ci sono quattro sedie.**<br>"There are four chairs." |
| **Ho studiato letteratura per quattro anni.**<br>"I studied literature for four years." | **Sono le cinque.**<br>It's five o'clock. |
| **Ho cinque auto!**<br>"I have five cars!" | **La Fiat Punto ha cinque posti.**<br>"The Fiat Punto has five seats." |
| **Vorrei sei banane.**<br>"I'd like six bananas." | **Ho sei paia di scarpe.**<br>"I have six pairs of shoes." |
| **Il sette è un numero fortunato.**<br>"Seven is a lucky number." | **Ho studiato italiano per sette anni.**<br>"I've been studying Italian for seven years." |
| **Sono le otto.**<br>It's eight o'clock. | **Sono le otto, è ora di andare al lavoro.**<br>"It is eight o'clock; it is time to go to work." |
| **Oggi ho bevuto otto caffè.**<br>"Today I drank eight coffees." | **Andate nella camera numero nove.**<br>"Go to room number nine." |
| **Siamo in nove.**<br>"We are nine people." | **Siamo in nove.**<br>"We are in nine." |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ho dieci anni.**<br>"I am ten years old." | **Tornerò in Giappone fra dieci giorni.**<br>"I'll move back to Japan in ten days." |
| **Ho letto dieci pagine del libro.**<br>"I've read ten pages of the book." | **Sono già le undici?**<br>"It's already eleven?" |
| **Sono le dodici e dieci.**<br>"It's ten past twelve." | **In Italia il tredici è un numero fortunato.**<br>"In Italy thirteen is a lucky number." |
| **Ho comprato un set di quattordici piatti.**<br>"I've bought a set of fourteen dishes." | **Ho letto quindici libri sull'Egitto.**<br>"I have read fifteen books about Egypt." |
| **Ho sedici paia di calzini.**<br>"I have sixteen pairs of socks." | **Ci vediamo alle diciotto e trenta circa.**<br>"I'll see you around eighteen thirty." |
| **Il treno partirà alle diciannove e dodici.**<br>"The train will leave at nineteen twelve." | **Ho venti nuovi numeri di telefono nella mia rubrica.**<br>"I've got twenty new phone numbers in my phone book." |
| **Ho mangiato venti caramelle.**<br>"I ate twenty candies." | |

## GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is Counting**

***Uno, due, tre, quattro, cinque, sei, sette, otto, nove, dieci.***

**"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten."**

Numbers surround our daily lives. They help us function and run our lives. The applications of numbers today are as various as where we find them. In Italy, we use the ten-digit system with the cardinal numbers below.

## From Zero to Nine

| Number | *Italian* |
|---|---|
| 0 | *zero* |
| 1 | *uno* |
| 2 | *due* |
| 3 | *tre* |
| 4 | *quattro* |
| 5 | *cinque* |
| 6 | *sei* |
| 7 | *sette* |
| 8 | *otto* |
| 9 | *nove* |

## From Ten to Nineteen

Now that you know the numbers from one to ten in Italian, it is time to provide you with additional tips!

The series of numbers from ten to twenty don't follow a pattern.

| Number | *Italian* |
|---|---|
| 10 | *dieci* |
| 11 | *undici* |
| 12 | *dodici* |
| 13 | *tredici* |
| 14 | *quattordici* |
| 15 | *quindici* |
| 16 | *sedici* |
| 17 | *diciassette* |
| 18 | *diciotto* |
| 19 | *diciannove* |

Learning Italian numbers may seem overwhelming at first. What's the secret to mastering them? Well, just learn them...

LESSON NOTES

# Basic Bootcamp #5 Counting from Twenty to One Million in Italian

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2 Italian
2 English
2 Vocabulary
2 Sample Sentences
4 Grammar
8 Cultural Insight

# 5



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## ITALIAN

1. Laura: Venti, trenta, quaranta, cinquanta, sessanta, settanta, ottanta, novanta, cento!

## ENGLISH

1. Laura: Twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety, one hundred!

## VOCABULARY

| Italian | English | Class | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|
| venti | twenty | numeral | masculine |
| trenta | thirty | cardinal number | |
| quaranta | forty | cardinal number | |
| cinquanta | fifty | cardinal number | |
| sessanta | sixty | cardinal number | |
| settanta | seventy | cardinal number | |
| ottanta | eighty | cardinal number | |
| novanta | ninety | cardinal number | |
| cento | a hundred | cardinal number | |

## SAMPLE SENTENCES

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ho venti nuovi numeri di telefono nella mia rubrica.**<br>"I've got twenty new phone numbers in my phone book." | **Ho mangiato venti caramelle.**<br>"I ate twenty candies." |
| **Ho comprato trenta figurine per il mio album.**<br>"I bought thirty trading cards for my album." | **Ho trenta anni.**<br>"I'm thirty years old." |
| **Possiamo pagare la macchina in quaranta rate!**<br>"We can pay for the car in forty installments!" | **Ho quaranta anni.**<br>"I am forty years old." |
| **Questo palazzo ha quaranta piani.**<br>"This building has forty stories." | **Su questo autobus ci sono cinquanta posti disponibili.**<br>"There are fifty available seats on this bus." |
| **Ho solo cinquanta centesimi.**<br>"I have only fifty cents." | **Mi piacciono le pettinature degli anni sessanta.**<br>"I like the hair-styles of the sixties." |
| **Ho conosciuto tua madre sessanta anni fa.**<br>"I met your mother sixty years ago." | **Mio fratello è settanta chili.**<br>"My brother is seventy kilograms." |
| **Nonna è nata settanta anni fa.**<br>"Grandma was born seventy years ago." | **Alla festa sono venute ottanta persone.**<br>"Eighty people came to the party." |
| **Ottanta persone stanno lavorando su questo progetto.**<br>"Eighty people are working on this project." | **Mia nonna ha novanta anni.**<br>"My grandmother is ninety years old." |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Una partita di calcio dura novanta minuti.**<br><br>"A football match lasts for ninety minutes." | **L'ufficio postale è lontano cento metri dalla stazione.**<br><br>"The post office is one hundred meters from the station." |

**Ho già letto questo passaggio cento volte!**

"I've read this passage a hundred times already!"

## GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is Counting From Twenty to One Million.**
***Venti, venti-cinque, cinquanta, sessanta-due, settanta-sei, ottanta-quattro, cento!***
**"Twenty, twenty-five, fifty, sixty-two, seventy-six, eighty-four, and one hundred!"**

---

### Numbers by Tens

---

First, refer to the table below for each series of ten to know how to pronounce the first digit of a two or more digit number.

| Number | *Italian* |
|---|---|
| "twenty" (20) | *venti* |
| "thirty" (30) | *trenta* |
| "forty" (40) | *quaranta* |
| "fifty" (50) | *cinquanta* |
| "sixty" (60) | *sessanta* |
| "seventy" (70) | *settanta* |
| "eighty" (80) | *ottanta* |

| | |
|---|---|
| "ninety" (90) | *novanta* |
| "one hundred" (100) | *cento* |

## From Twenty to One Hundred

Counting from twenty to ninety-nine is fairly easy. Just take the tens, from twenty to ninety, and add the numbers one to nine. For example, "twenty-five" is *venti-cinque*, just like in English.

The only thing to remember is that the numbers *venti* ("twenty") to *novanta* ("ninety") drop the final vowel before adding *uno* ("one") and otto ("eight"), which are numbers starting with a vowel. For example, "twenty-one" is *vent-uno*, "twenty-eight" is *vent-otto*, "thirty-one" is *trent-uno*, "thirty-eight" is *trent-otto*, and so on.

There is also a small writing rule to remember. We write *tre* without an accent. However, when *tre* follows another number, for example *venti-tré* ("twenty-three"), it takes an accent. This will not change pronunciation in any way though, so don't worry about it.

Please observe the table below with the series of numbers from twenty to one hundred.

**For Example:**

| **Numbers** | ***Italian*** |
|---|---|
| "twenty" (20) | *venti* |
| "twenty-one" (21) | *ventuno* |
| "twenty-two" (22) | *ventidue* |
| "twenty-three" (23) | *ventitré* |
| "twenty-four" (24) | *ventiquattro* |
| "twenty-five" (25) | *venticinque* |
| "twenty-six" (26) | *ventisei* |

| | |
|---|---|
| "twenty-seven" (27) | *ventisette* |
| "twenty-eight" (28) | *ventotto* |
| "twenty-nine" (29) | *ventinove* |
| "thirty-one" (31) | *trentuno* |
| "forty-two" (42) | *quarantadue* |
| "fifty-three" (53) | *cinquantatré* |
| "sixty-four" (64) | *sessantaquattro* |
| "seventy-five" (75) | *settantacinque* |
| "eighty-six" (86) | *ottantasei* |
| "ninety-seven" (97) | *novantasette* |
| "one hundred" (100) | *cento* |

So let's recap. What you should know is that in Italian, we begin saying each series of numbers in the twenties and everything from the thirties through the nineties by saying their first digits.

For example, let's look at the number twenty-seven. First, we say the number "twenty," *venti* in Italian, and then the last digit, "seven," or *sette* in Italian, as you would in English. You'll have "twenty-seven," *venti-sette*. For all the other numbers from twenty to one-hundred, the pattern is identical, except for those rules we saw above. So to say "thirty-three," as you may during a consultation with a doctor, you'd say *trenta* ("thirty") and then *tre* ("three"), *trentatré.* To say "forty-six" when telling someone's age, you'd say *quaranta* ("forty") followed by *sei* ("six"), *quaranta-sei*. To say forty-eight, an old fashioned way to indicate a chaotic situation, *quaranta* would drop the *-a*. So *quaranta* ("forty") + *otto* ("eight") would become *quarantotto*. *Che quarantotto!* "What a mess!"

## From One Hundred to One Million

Counting from one hundred to one million follows a regular pattern. Let's have a look at the chart below.

| **Numbers** | ***Italian*** |
|---|---|
| "one hundred" (100) | *cento* |
| "two hundred" (200) | *duecento* |
| "three hundred" (300) | *trecento* |
| "one thousand" (1,000) | *mille* |
| "two thousand" (2,000) | *duemila* |
| "three thousand" (3,000) | *tremila* |
| "ten thousand" (10,000) | *diecimila* |
| "twenty thousand" (20,000) | *ventimila* |
| "one hundred thousand" (100,000) | *centomila* |
| "two hundred thousand" (200,000) | *duecentomila* |
| "one million" (1,000,000) | *un milione* |

To create multiples of hundreds, attach the number before the word for "hundred," *cento*. It works just like in English: for example, "two hundred" would be *due* + *cento*, *duecento*.

To create multiples of thousands, you follow the same rule: you need to attach the number before the word for "thousand." However, *mille* becomes *mila* (its plural form) from two thousand up to one million. For example, "five thousand" becomes *cinque mila*, "one hundred thousand" becomes *cento-mila*, and "eight hundred thousand" is *otto-cento-mila*.

Let's have a look at the chart below to see how we can create more complicated numbers. The overall logic is the same as the previous one. Please note that we only use hyphens here to make the structure easier to understand. We write numbers in Italian as single words.

**For Example:**

| Numbers | *Italian* |
|---|---|
| 101 | *cento-uno* |
| 102 | *cento-due* |
| 210 | *due-cento-dieci* |
| 317 | *tre-cento-diciassette* |
| 425 | *quattro-cento-venti-cinque* |
| 1,001 | *mille-uno* |
| 1,002 | *mille-due* |
| 1,045 | *mille-quaranta-cinque* |
| 1,111 | *mille-cento-undici* |
| 5,178 | *cinque-mila-cento-settant-otto* |
| 15,000 | *quindici-mila* |
| 21,000 | *vent-uno-mila* |
| 32,000 | *trenta-due-mila* |
| 400,025 | *quattro-cento-mila-venti-cinque* |
| 999,000 | *nove-cento-novanta-nove-mila* |

## CULTURAL INSIGHT

### The Italian Lotto and the Neapolitan Smorfia

When it comes to folklore, especially of the magic and superstitious kind, the southern city of

Napoli cannot be surpassed. So it is only natural that a bizarre and unusual way to use numbers comes from a Neapolitan tradition.

The *smorfia*, which roughly translates as "to make faces," is a system that provides a code to convert dreams into numbers, probably based on cabala numerology. For example, *il caffè* ("coffee") corresponds to the number "forty-two," *quarantadue*. *Il morto che parla* ("a dead man talking") is *quarantotto* ("forty-eight"). And if you ever dream about Sant'Antonio ("Saint Anthony"), you will get a *tredici*, "thirteen."

Why would you want to turn your dreams into numbers anyway? Well, here comes the pragmatic side of the magic world: the *smorfia* provides series of numbers to play in the *lotto*, the Italian lottery. The lotto tradition in Italy dates back to the 1500s and is still going strong today. Lotto is based on the extraction of numbers from one to ninety, *da uno a novanta.* You win if you guess which numbers are going to be extracted.

It's easy to find out how to turn dreams into numbers: you never know, you might become rich! Let's say this is your dream: while you are cutting bread with a knife, you cut your hand and scream, scaring the cat who runs out into the garden. Now all you need is a bit of interpretation of the objects and actions with the help of the *smorfia* symbolic code.

| ***Italian*** | **"English"** |
|---|---|
| *pane* = *cinquanta* | "bread" = "fifty" |
| *coltello* = *quarantuno* | "knife" = "forty-one" |
| *tagliare* = *quarantasei* | "to cut" = "forty-six" |
| *mano* = *cinque* | "hand" = "five" |
| *urlare* = *settantasette* | "to scream" = "seventy-seven" |
| *paura* = *novanta* | "fear" = "ninety" |
| *scappare* = *sessantasei* | "to run away" = "sixty-six" |
| *gatto* = *tre* | "cat" = "three" |
| *giardino* = *cinquantuno* | "garden" = "fifty-one" |

So here, you have plenty of numbers to play in the lotto! It's not difficult to work out your numbers: today, you can easily find the ancient oral tradition of *smorfia* in books and even online. All you need is to learn Italian.

LESSON NOTES

# All About #1
# The Top Five Reasons to Study Italian

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2 Grammar

# 1



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# GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top Five Reasons to Study Italian**

---

## Background of the Italian Language

The Italian language belongs to the romance languages family. The philology of this group has its roots in Latin, precisely from vulgar Latin. That is the popular Latin spoken by soldiers, settlers, and merchants of the Roman Empire, as distinct from the Classical form of the language spoken by the Roman upper classes, which is the form in which the language was generally written. Italian language embodies many Latin influences, making it the closest language in the world to Latin. In fact, Italian scores eighty-nine percent in similarity to Latin from a lexical point of view.

Italian is based on the Roman alphabet, which is the most widely used alphabetic writing system on the planet. Italian still differs a bit from the archaic Latin alphabet: it is made up of a total of twenty-six letters, some of which, like *-j* or *-k*, are used for the so-called "loan words," which are words coming from foreign languages.

## About Italy

Italy as a country is quite young, but historically speaking it has very ancient origins. We can say that Italy has almost three thousand years of history. Some recent excavations throughout the country reveal a modern human presence dating back to the Paleolithic period, meaning two hundred thousand years ago. Preserving the remains of the ancient culture is really important for Italians. This is why each city has its own historical or archaeological site in Italy.

According to more widespread accounts, *Italia* borrowed its name from the Greek word meaning "land of young cattle." The bull represented southern Italian tribes and is a defiant representation of free Italy, which was often portrayed brutally goring the Roman wolf. People also say that *Italia* was the name of just a part of Italy, the south Calabria region, but eventually it was extended to the whole peninsula during the Roman Empire.

## Where Is Italian Spoken?

In addition to Italy, San Marino, and the Vatican City, Italian is one of the official languages of Switzerland, Slovenia, Croatia, and Malta. Almost seventy million people in the world officially speak the Italian language.

Furthermore, around one hundred and twenty million people worldwide speak Italian as a second or cultural language. This is easily understandable if we think about the presence of a "Little Italy" in some famous major towns.

### Why is it Important?

The top five reasons to learn this language are...

**5.** Starting from the bottom of our chart, the fifth reason to learn Italian is to better appreciate Italian society and to communicate with Italian people, who are usually known for being friendly and open.

**4.** The fourth reason is because Italian is easy to pronounce and has a beautiful sound. As soon as you start speaking the language, you can appreciate all the musicality and the melody within it.

**3.** Knowing Italian helps you learn more than just one language. It is a way to understand all the romance languages since Italian is the closest one to Latin itself and very similar to Spanish and others too.

**2.** Italian is one of the languages studied for business. For instance, people use Italian frequently for those jobs whose work is connected to fashion, design, the restaurant industry, the motor industry, the opera, and much more. Italian is fun and learning it could improve your results in marketing relations with the peninsula.

**1.** The first and most important reason to learn Italian is Italian culture and art. Italy is the country that has the largest number of world heritage sites worldwide. Italian art and culture are full of famous geniuses and great names, and understanding them in their own language is priceless!

LESSON NOTES

# All About #2
# Learn the Italian Writing System!

## CONTENTS

2 Grammar
3 Cultural Insight

# 2



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# GRAMMAR

## The Focus of This Lesson Is the Italian Writing System

---

We write Italian using the Latin alphabet of the Roman Empire plus some acute and grave accents, such as the acute accent upon the vowel -*e*: for example, -*é*, as it happens for the word *perché* ("why"). On the other hand, we also use the grave accent on the -*e*, as in *caffè* ("coffee"), but even on the letters -*a*, -*i*, -*o*, and -*u* to mark the stressed vowel. These stressed vowels are always positioned at the end of the word to distinguish them from those words that don't have any accent marks because they are automatically stressed in the penultimate syllable. For this reason, Italian differs from the Spanish and French languages in usage of the accents.

### The Origin of the Italian Writing System

Written Italian first appears in some documents dating back to the tenth century. As we mentioned during the previous lesson, the language spoken by Romans was the vulgar Latin that differs from the literary Latin, the language of upper classes and scholars. This is the reason why the first documents that have been found are lawsuits, regulations, and poems in literary Latin: only these people used the written form of the language.

Because of the presence of many different dialects, the written language was the only form comprehensible in all of the vast Roman Empire. These dialects have changed into what is now called the New Latin or romance languages.

Over centuries, the Italian territory has seen many dialects that were influenced by the domination of each area. However, it was during the early Middle Ages that some writers tried to unify the language by popularizing their local dialects. Such writers as Dante Alighieri, Petrarch, and Boccaccio proposed the "Tuscan of Florence," *la lingua fiorentina*, as a standard literary language. In fact, the first grammar of Italian was titled *Regule lingue florentine* ("Rules of the Florentine language"), which Leon Battista Alberti wrote in the fourteenth century. The old Tuscan dialect slowly became what now is the standard Italian, even if every region maintains its own dialect only in spoken form.

### The Italian Alphabet

We write Italian using the Latin alphabet, and it is composed of twenty-one letters. In ancient times, the letters had just one basic form, as similar to our uppercase or lowercase,

depending on our styles of writing. During the Middle Ages, people began to alternate two different styles while writing. One is called *maiuscolo*, which means "uppercase." *Maiuscolo* was proper to use for the initial letters in titles of certain words. The other one is the *minuscolo*, which is "lowercase," and people used it for the rest of the text. Eventually, people started to use *maiuscolo* and *minuscolo* together in text as it happens in modern Italian.

In the following table, we show you all the letters of the Italian alphabet, including their uppercase form, lowercase form, and pronunciation.

### The Italian Alphabet

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| B, b [bi] | I,I [i] | R,r [erre] |
| C,c [ci] | L,l [elle] | S,s [esse] |
| A, a [a] | H,h [acca] | Q,q [cu] |
| D,d [di] | M,m [emme] | T,t [ti] |
| E,e [e] | N,n [enne] | U,u [u] |
| F,f [effe] | O,o [o] | V,v [vu] |
| G,g [gi] | P,p [pi] | Z,z [zeta] |

Besides these, there are five other letters that Italian only uses for loan and foreign words: -*J, -j* [i lunga/jei]; -*K*, -*k* [cappa]; -*W*, -*w* [doppia vu]; -*X*, -*x* [ics]; -*Y*, -*y* [i greca/ipsilon].

We only use the letter -*h* in written Italian, and we never pronounce it in the spoken language because this sound does not exist in Italian. Basically, we pronounce Italian as it is written: we clearly pronounce all letters and we always pronounce them in the same way. Even in stressed syllables, the vowels are always short.

## CULTURAL INSIGHT

### The Unification of Italians, in More Ways than One

Considering that the unification of Italy is dated in 1861, the phrase that the politician Massimo D'Azeglio said during those years is remarkable: *fatta l'Italia ora bisogna fare gli italiani*, which literally means "Italy is done; now we have to make Italians." Every Italian learned this famous phrase that perfectly expresses the feeling of that moment.

What makes people feel they are of the same nationality? First of all: the language. Here the written national language helped Italian people build a unique way of being Italian, trying to impose the standard Italian on the dialects. It is only during the twentieth century, thanks to the influence of television and mass media, that the Italian language found its conformity not only in the written form. Today, dialects in Italy are used throughout Italy (due to the importance that Italian people give to their origins), but it only concerns the spoken language; the written languages in these areas conform to the standard Italian.

LESSON NOTES

# All About #3
# Painless Italian Grammar

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2 Grammar

# 3



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# GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is Italian Grammar.**

---

## Sentence Order: SVO

To begin, comparing English to Italian is necessary to clarify that they belong to two different language families. English is a Germanic language, whereas Italian is a romance language. Nevertheless, these two languages have many similarities. To better understand Italian grammar, it is useful to make some comparisons to English as well. We call both of these languages SVO languages. This acronym indicates the main grammar order of the sentences we use in the language, which in this case is subject/verb/object. The subject always comes first, followed by the verb, and then the object.

**For Example:**

1. *Io mangio la mela.*

"I eat the apple."

*Io* ("I") is the subject, or the one doing the action. *Mangio* ("eat") is the verb, or the action taking place. And lastly, *la mela* ("the apple") is the object that receives the action. However, in Italian, we can change the SVO order according to what we want to emphasize.

**For Example:**

1. *La mela che io mangio.*

"The apple I eat."

In this case, the English translation sounds a bit unnatural. However, in Italian, it's normal to construct a sentence when we wish to emphasize the object, here *la mela* ("the apple").

## Tense

The tense of a sentence is any one of the inflected forms in the conjugation of a verb that indicates the time, such as past, present, or future, as well as the continuance or completion of the action or state. In other words, the tense expresses the temporal relationship between

the action a sentence reports and the time of its utterance. Italian verbs change form according to the tense and the subject. Consequently, it does not matter if we omit the subject in a sentence because we can easily recognize who is doing the action from the verb and the way we conjugate it. Italian verbs, as with those from all the other new Latin languages, have an infinitive form that changes its endings when we conjugate it in a specific tense. There are three conjugations of verbs in Italian: the so-called *-are* (like *mangiare*, meaning "to eat"), *-ere* (like *vedere*, meaning "to see") and *-ire* (like *dormire*, meaning "to sleep") verbs. With some exceptions, every verb of each group is inflected in the same way. Therefore, conjugating Italian verbs like a native should be a primary goal of all students, regardless of their level or ability.

## Conjugation

Compared to English, Italian conjugation involves all the persons (*io, tu, lui/lei, noi, voi,* and *loro*).

The conjugation of Italian verbs is the part of grammar that takes more time to adjust to. This is due to the fact that every infinitive form of verbs changes its ending according to the subject and tense it refers to. Here is a practical example.

**For Example:**

1. *Io mangi-**o***

*tu mang-**i***

*lui mangi-**a***

*noi mangi-**amo***

*voi mangi-**ate***

*loro mangi-**ano***

That is the conjugation of the verb *mangiare* ("to eat") at the present indicative for all the six persons.

As we can clearly see, each person has a different ending in the verb. Changing the different endings is the procedure to inflect verbs. There are several rules that help to make it easy.

## Singular and Plural Nouns

When forming a plural in English, it is usually only necessary to add "-s" at the end of a word, but there are tons of exceptions (for example: "wolves" and "teeth"). Italian has basically two ways to build a plural. The primary distinction is between masculine and feminine nouns. As a rule of thumb, feminine nouns ending in *-a* take the *-e* in their plural form.

**For Example**

1. *pizz**a*** becomes *pizz**e***

On the other hand, masculine nouns ending in *-o* take the *-i* in their plural form.

**For Example:**

1. *gelat**o*** becomes *gelat**i***

Of course, there are some irregularities that we explain in detail in our Absolute Beginner series.

## Gender

Aside from singular and plural, Italian nouns also have a gender: masculine or feminine. There are no rules to distinguish whether a noun is feminine or masculine, but basically those ending in *-o* are masculine and those ending in *-a* are feminine. Nevertheless, there are several exceptions, making this general rule only a sort of hint.

In Italian, adjectives follow the nouns they modify: this means that they change their endings according to the gender of the noun. This also happens with articles. This is why knowing the gender of nouns in Italian is considered one of the first steps in learning this language.

LESSON NOTES

# All About #4
# Learn Italian Pronunciation

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2 Grammar

# 4



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# GRAMMAR

## The Focus of This Lesson Is Pronunciation

---

It is well known that Italian pronunciation is one of the easiest aspects of this language. Italian is a language where words are rarely difficult to pronounce or to hear due to the fact that a great majority of Italian words end in vowels.

### Sounds and Syllables

Compared to other languages, Italian does not have that many sounds. Italian sounds are made up of the combination between consonants and vowels. The Italian alphabet has only sixteen consonants (*-b,-c, -d, -f, -g, -h, -l, -m, -n, -p, -q, -r, -s, -t, -v,*and *-z*) and five vowels (*-a, -e, -i, -o,* and *-u*).

For example, the word *gelato* is made up of three syllables, *ge-, la-,* and *-to,* all of which have one consonant and one vowel.

Among the vowels, we can pronounce the *-e* in two different ways, called the open *-e* and the closed *-e*.

For instance, in the word *pesca, pésca** means "fishing" when we pronounce it as a closed *-e*.

However, if we pronounce it with an open *-e*, its meaning changes into "peach." Besides *-e*, the *-o* can also have two different pronunciations. For example, take the word *botte.* When we pronounce it with an open sound, it means "beatings," but when we pronounce it with a closed *-o*, it takes the meaning of "barrel."

Unfortunately, you can only find the accent mark when these vowels are positioned at the end of a word. In Italian, vowels standing in the middle of words do not take any accent mark.

*Here, we have used the accent mark just to make the explanation easier to understand.

### Stress

The best way to remember the stress mechanism is to listen to native speakers, but aside from that, we could say that comparing the words in English and Italian could help you find your way through it. If we consider the word *navale* and "naval," meaning in both cases "pertaining to ships," the stress is on the first "-a" in the two-syllable English word. However, in

the three-syllable Italian word, it falls on the second -*a*.

We usually stress Italian words on the penultimate syllable.

**For Example:**

1. ***ca****sa*

2. *ma****ri****to*

3. *intelli****gen****te*

4. ***pu****bblico*

In certain cases, the stress can also fall on the antepenultimate syllable.

**For Example:**

**1. *pu****bblico***

Lastly, the stress can fall also on the last syllable, which is always indicated by an accent.

**For Example:**

1. *caf****fè***

2. *felici****tà***

LESSON NOTES

# All About #5
# The Top Five Must Know Italian Phrases

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2 Grammar

# 5



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# GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top Five Phrases for Learning Italian.**

---

Here we'll introduce five phrases in Italian that will take you a long way and help you out in a variety of situations!

### *Ciao* ("Hi," "Hello," "Good-bye")

---

It is the most common form of greeting in Italian. However, we only use *ciao* in informal situations such as with friends or relatives. In English, we translate it as "hi" or "hello," but it can also mean "good-bye." That is why we can use *ciao* when we meet people but also when we leave people. It is not unusual to hear Italians say it twice, *ciao ciao*, especially when talking on the phone. In formal Italian, we replace it with the famous expression *buon giorno,* meaning "good morning."

### *Piacere* ("Nice to meet you")

---

*Piacere* is the English equivalent of "nice to meet you," but it literally means "it's a pleasure." When meeting someone new, it is proper to say *ciao, piacere* to a young person but *buon giorno, piacere* to an older person. It is important to keep in mind that we never use *piacere* when parting from people. We just use it when we meet as a greeting.

### *Grazie/Prego* ("Thank you," "You are welcome")

---

Whenever we want to thank someone in Italian, the word to use is *grazie*. When we want to say "thank you very much," it is necessary to add *mille* or *tante*: *grazie mille* or *grazie tante*. Replying to *grazie*, we should use *prego*, meaning "you are welcome." It is important to clarify that *prego* also has another meaning. In fact, we can also use it when you want someone to go ahead of you or do something before you.

### *Scusi/Scusa* ("Excuse me")

*Scusi* and *scusa* both mean "excuse me." *Scusi* is proper in formal Italian, whereas we use *scusa* for informal situations. This expression is part of common life and we can use it on several occasions, such as to get someone's attention: for example, we might say *scusi* when we want to call the waiter over at a restaurant, get the attention of a shop clerk, or get the attention of a passerby we want to ask a question. Furthermore, whenever what someone is saying to us is not clear, we can ask *Scusa?* or *Scusi?* to show that we did not catch what that person said.

### *Per Favore* ("Please")

The meaning of *per favore* is simply "please." We use it when asking a favor or making a request of some kind, like asking "please?" We also often use it when asking for something, as in a tangible object. The thing that we are asking for comes before *per favore*. For example, in a café, it is normal to hear the phrase *un caffè, per favore* which means "a coffee, please." This quick and polite way to ask for something can be very useful for those who are new with this language.

LESSON NOTES

# All About #6

# Can You Answer These Five Questions About Italy?

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Grammar

#6

# GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is the Five Things You Have to Know about Italy.**

---

What do you know about Italy? Test your knowledge! Through this mini-test, you will build your basic knowledge of Italy by quizzing yourself on five areas about Italy:

1. Geography
2. Pop culture
3. Travel
4. Economics
5. Society and tradition

## Question One: Italian Geography

---

The territory of Italy is divided into regions and it is 301,401 square kilometers. The population is estimated at 57,844,000.

**How many regions are there in Italy?**

A: Sixteen regions

B: Twenty-one regions

C: Twenty regions

There are twenty-one Italian regions, and five of them are autonomous regions with special status: these are Sardinia, Sicily, Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol, Aosta Valley, and Friuli-Venezia Giulia. This means they can enact local legislation on certain matters. The most populated region in Italy is Lombardia with 9,122,000 inhabitants.

## Question Two: Italian Pop Culture

---

Italy is a center for culture and entertainment, such as fashion, sports, cinema, and music. Italian popular culture has some big names for some of these entertainment fields. Trying to recognize which name does not belong to Italy is very easy.

**Talking about fashion stylists, who is not Italian among the following three choices?**

A: Giorgio Armani

B: Christian Dior

C: Dolce & Gabbana

**Talking about cinema, who is not an Italian director among the following three choices?**

A: Federico Fellini

B: Roberto Benigni

C: Pedro Almodovar

**Talking about music, who is not an Italian singer among the following three choices?**

A: Maria Callas

B: Luciano Pavarotti

C: Andrea Bocelli

The answers are B: Christian Dior (French), C: Pedro Almodovar (Spanish), and A: Maria Callas (Greek), respectively.

## Question Three: Italian Travel

---

Italy attracts millions of tourists every year, making tourism one of Italy's fastest-growing and most profitable industrial sectors. In fact, Italy is the fifth most-visited country in the world. This popularity is due to several reasons, but mainly because of Italian art and history. With thousands of unique sightseeing locations, boutiques with cutting-edge fashion and a lot of famous brands, the Italian cuisine that is widely appreciated and cooked throughout the world, and lastly because of its beautiful coastlines, mountains, and the variety of its landscape.

**In which city can we visit the *Colosseo* ("the Colosseum")?**

A: Roma ("Rome")

B: Firenze ("Florence")

C: Milano ("Milan")

**Where can we get on a *gondola*?**

A: Napoli ("Naples")

B: Venezia ("Venice")

C: Palermo ("Palermo")

**Which one of the following sculptures is located in Firenze?**

A: " David" by Michelangelo

B: "Psyche Revived by Love's Kiss" by Canova

C: "Pietà" by Michelangelo

The answers are A: Roma, B: Venizia, and A: Michelangelo's "David," respectively.

## Question Four: The Italian Economy

After the Second World War II, the Italian economy changed and developed the country into an industrial state ranked as the world's seventh-largest industrial economy. Italy is a member of the Group of Eight (G-8) industrialized nations; it is also part of the European Union and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

**What are the most important economic sectors in Italy?**

A: Service sector

B: Primary sector (agriculture)

C: Secondary sector (industry)

The answer is A. The Italian economy is oriented for the service sector. In 2006, it accounted for the two-thirds of Italy's gross national product.

## Question Five: Italian Society

One of the important aspects of Italian culture and society is cuisine. Thanks to a regional tradition that dates back centuries, Italian cuisine is various and people consider meals important moments during the day. Besides the popularity of Italian food throughout the world, the importance Italians give to food can sometimes bring to some common stereotypes about the way of eating and cooking in Italy.

**Can every Italian prepare handmade pasta and pizza?**

A: True

B: False

**Do Italians eat pasta every day?**

A: True

B: False

The answer to both questions is B: False.

LESSON NOTES

# All About #7
# The Top Five Italian Dishes You Have To Try!

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2 Grammar

# 7



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# GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is Italian Cuisine.**

---

Cuisine is definitely an important aspect of Italian culture. When we think about Italy, it is very hard not to think about Italian food. At first, travelers to Italy usually remember a city with streets and ancient monuments, and then, after that, a delicious Italian dish. Throughout the world, people imitate Italian cooking in restaurants but also at home. Italian cuisine is greatly loved. Despite this, a majority of people probably don't know that Italy is a country of great variety. Cooking is just another aspect that shows the diversity of Italian culture. Local traditions result from long, complex historical developments and strongly influence local habits. Consequently, it is very common in Italy to find different variants of recipes and products even within a few miles of distance.

## Table Etiquette

---

Before we go on to the food, let's first talk about Italian table etiquette. Before eating, it is customary to say *buon appetito*, which means "enjoy your meal," as a way to show gratitude for the meal. You should wait for everybody to have their meal on the plate before starting, and you should avoid putting your elbows on the table. When you eat your first dish, don't use a spoon to twirl the spaghetti. The Italian second dish is a plate of meat or fish that is usually accompanied by a piece of bread. You should put your bread on the tablecloth beside your plate.

If you wish to pour water or wine into your glass, you should check other people's glasses beforehand. If their glasses are not full, you should pour the drink in their glasses and only then pour it into yours. When you want to use a toothpick, you can do it at the table, but you should cover your mouth with the other hand. Any sort of guttural sound is inappropriate, such as slurping and sniffling.

## Italian Cuisine Basics

---

Italian cooking is exceptionally varied, nutritious, and healthy. Every single region, district,

and city has centuries of traditions passed on from family to family, providing an incalculable number of recipes. However, all these recipes have some major ingredients in common: first of all, tomatoes and tomato sauce. People also often use this vegetable as a symbol of Italy because Italians use it in the preparation of many dishes. Italy has been exporting tomatoes all around the world for decades. The second major ingredient is cheese, especially mozzarella cheese. In Italy, you can eat hundreds of types of cheese, from the most delicate to the spiciest one.

First dishes are mainly made up of pasta, whether dry pasta or fresh pasta. Pasta can be long (like *spaghetti* or *tagliatelle*) or short (like *penne* or *fusilli*) and can be shaped in many different ways. Olives and olive oils give the food a pleasant Mediterranean flavor, and we use olive oil as a dressing for almost every meal. Among the herbs, basil and parsley are the ones people use most. Finally, in Italian cuisine, there is a large presence of cold cuts, with hundreds of types of salami, ham, and sausages. As a result, the combination of these ingredients gives a huge choice of recipes.

## Regional Dishes

### *Caprese*

Among appetizers, the most famous regional dish is *Insalata Caprese*, made of sliced "water buffalo mozzarella" (*mozzarella di bufala*), plum tomatoes, and basil. Mozzarella cheese and *caprese* were first made in Campania, in the region of Napoli. Pizza's origins go back to Campania as well.

### *Lasagne*

*Lasagne alla Bolognese* is a dish from the region of Emilia-Romagna. You can make it by alternating layers of pasta, *ragù* ("meat sauce"), and Béchamel cheese. You can make another version of *lasagne* by using vegetables.

### *Risotto*

Rice in Italy is mainly cultivated in north Italy; this recipe has its roots in the region of Piemonte. The basic preparation consists of boiled rice in broth with parmesan cheese, but there are many versions. The most famous one is made with saffron.

### *Spaghetti alla Carbonara*

*Spaghetti alla Carbonara* is from Lazio. We can also prepare it with other types of pasta, such as *rigatoni* or *bucatini*, but the sauce is always made of eggs, *pecorino romano* (cheese made

of sheep's milk), smoked bacon, and black pepper.

### *Bistecca alla Fiorentina*

*Bistecca* in Italian stands for "steak" and *fiorentina* means "Florentine," from the city of Florence. The Tuscan cuisine is characterized by rustic simplicity, and preparing this huge slice of beef is pretty easy. You must quickly grill the meat (for five or six minutes) and season it with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Sometimes people also use a bit of lemon. We usually serve *bistecca alla fiorentina* with some salad.

LESSON NOTES

# All About #8
# The Top Five Things You Need to Know about Italian Society!

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2 Grammar

# 8



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# GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top Five Things You Need to Know about Italian Society!**

---

Society is a very broad topic and is hard to summarize in a single lesson. That's why we are narrowing it down to the top five most important aspects of Italian society.

## 1. Major Cities and How they Work

---

Roma ("Rome") is the capital of Italy and the country's largest and most populated city with over 2.7 million people. Rome is the Italian center for politics: the Italian government, the Italian Parliament, the Prime Minister, and the President of the Italian Republic are all located within Rome.

Rome's history goes back over two and a half thousand years. This city has maintained in good condition very ancient ruins such as the *Colisseo* ("Colosseum") and the *Foro Romano* ("Roman Forum"), which give the old capital a unique atmosphere. When strolling through the streets of Rome, we can hear many different languages due to the large number of tourists and immigrants, and this gives the city a very cosmopolitan atmosphere.

*Milano* ("Milan") is recognized as the second major city of Italy after Rome. It is the center of fashion and Italian design, providing a strong influence also on commerce, industry, music, sport, literature, art, and media. Milan is one of the world's major financial and business centers, and *Teatro della Scala* is known throughout the world for all the great musicians who have played there. For its importance in Italian economy and culture, people from Milan like to call their city the "Moral Capital."

*Venezia* ("Venice") and *Firenze* ("Florence") are both small cities and considered the centers of Italian arts. Each year, Florence and its Uffizi Gallery bring thousands of tourists from all over the world to admire the major masterpieces of the Renaissance period. The lagoon of Venice on the northeastern coast is one of the most popular cities in the world. San Marco Square hosts the famous carnival festivals that evoke the eighteenth century. Venice is also often chosen as destination for a romantic honeymoon.

*Napoli* ("Naples") plays an important role among Italian major cities for its rich history, art, culture, architecture, music, and gastronomy and also because it's the largest city in the south

of Italy. Its population is estimated at around 2.25 million people. Naples is located in the region of Campania very close to Mount Vesuvius and the ruins of Pompeii. This city has been a major influence on Italian culture, starting with pizza, which originated here. It also has brought a wide-reaching impact on music, including the invention of the romantic guitar and the mandolin as well as strong contributions to opera and folk songs.

## 2. Family Life

---

The image of an Italian family could probably be the one with six or eight people seated at the table eating their dinner all together, but in the last decades the situation of Italian families has changed a lot. The elders are becoming the larger proportion of the population because the birthrate has dropped to the ratio of 1.2 children per woman. Each family is having only one baby because of the economic crisis and the continuing increase of unemployment in the country. Children usually live with their parents until they get married, and Italians in general are really attached to their towns, homes, and neighborhoods.

Italian cuisine is an important aspect of Italian culture because every dish can be identified with a town and also because mealtime is family time in Italy. Family members expect to eat together around the table. After dinner, the family may go out for a *passeggiata*, the "evening stroll." This is the occasion for family members to relax and chat with neighbors and friends and a time to see and be seen. This is why everyone dresses to look their best.

## 3. Work Culture and Economy

---

Italy's economy is ranked seventh in the world and is the fourth largest in Europe. Italy belongs to the Group of Eight industrialized nations and is a member of the European Union. The Italian economy has developed in the northern area thanks to the presence of many factories and industrial companies, including those in the area between Turin, Milan, and Genoa. Economically speaking, southern Italy is strongly divided from the north. In the southern area, the economy is based on agriculture and tourism, clearly in contrast with the more dynamic and industrialized northern part. This brought a massive emigration of Italian people from the south to the north of the country.

Despite this phenomenon, every year Italy exports food and fashion throughout the world. This is thanks to the work of thousands of farms spread around the territory and to the world's

most famous brand companies and stylists. Furthermore, the tourism sector is very profitable for the national economy, considering that Italy is the fifth most-visited country in the world.

### 4. Politics

---

Monarchy in Italy was abolished by popular referendum on June 2, 1946, making the country a democratic republic. For this reason, the second day of June is a national holiday in Italy. Italy is a parliamentary republic based on a multi-party system. The current President of the Italian Republic is Giorgio Napolitano, and the Prime Minister is Silvio Berlusconi, who leads the cabinet of the executive power (the Council of Ministers). His party, the PDL, is leading the right wing. On the other hand, the center-left political party is the Democratic Party of Italy, which is led by Pier Luigi Bersani. The parliament is based on a bicameral legislature.

Government in Italy changes constantly, but corruption is still a dramatic part of the Italian political landscape. Over the years, there have been many investigations into scandals involving politicians, administrators, and businessmen.

### 5. Italian Lifestyle

---

Italians have a passion for the arts, fashion, and eating, but also for talking. When watching Italian TV, you can see how many talk shows there are and how Italians like to discuss everything. The Italian educational system is oriented to give Italian children the ability to build their own opinions on every kind of topic. While growing up, Italian children use this skill in conversations at the most common meeting places, such as bars and the *piazza*, meaning "the square." It is very common to see Italian people having conversations for hours sitting in squares, probably accompanied by a glass of wine, shouting, laughing, and gesticulating.

Italian gestures are another important aspect of conversation. They help to better express what Italians are saying, especially since the will to be understood is so strong. Italian people like to express what they think, even about personal feelings. For these and many other reasons, Italians are said to be warm people. As a result, Italians are generally friendly, and if you go to live in Italy, you will be surprised at how many friends you can make even in a short period of time.

LESSON NOTES

# All About #9

# Top Five Important Dates During the Italian Calendar Year!

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Grammar

#9

# GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top Five Important Holidays During the Italian Calendar Year.**

In Italy, we have eleven national holidays. During these days, schools, government institutions, banks, and most companies are officially closed, and most employees get the day off. Here is a list of these Italian holidays:

| **Date** | ***Italian*** | **"English"** |
|---|---|---|
| January 1 | *Capodanno* | "New Year's Day" |
| January 6 | *Epifania/La Befana* | "Epiphany" |
| March or April | *Pasqua* | "Easter" (variable date) |
| April 25 | *Anniversario della Liberazione* | "Anniversary of Liberation from the Fascist Regime" |
| May 1 | *Festa del Lavoro* | "Labor Day" |
| June 2 | *Festa della Repubblica* | Republic's Day" |
| August 15 | *Assunzione di Maria Vergine* | Assumption Day," which celebrates the Virgin Mary |
| November 1 | *Festa di Ognissanti—Tutti i Santi* | "All Saints' Day" is a time when Italians commemorate and remember the deceased |
| December 8 | *Immacolata Concezione* | Immaculate Conception" |
| December 25 | *Natale* | "Christmas" |
| December 26 | *Santo Stefano* | "Saint Stephen's Day" |

In this lesson, we will cover the five most popular and interesting celebrations.

### ***La Befana*** **("The Feast of the Epiphany")**

The Feast of Epiphany, the so-called *Befana*, takes place on the sixth of January. We consider it the day on which Christmas holidays end. During this day, all decorations are taken off. According to the legend, an old woman called the *Befana* arrives on her broomstick during the night of January fifth. She fills the socks that children prepare the day before with candies and sweets for the good children and coal for the bad ones. Starting from a week before this day, you can find packed *Befana* stockings full of sweets in supermarkets, which people usually give as a present to little children. It is said that this feast has old pagan origins, and its traditions were incorporated into Christmas celebrations when Christianity became mainstream.

### ***Anniversario della Liberazione*** **("Anniversary of Liberation")**

On April 25, 1945, the Allied troops liberated Italy from the fascist regime. This date marked the end of the Second World War in Italy. During this day, Italians commemorate and honor their fallen soldiers and partisans of the Italian Resistance who fought the Nazis as well as Mussolini's troops. As a result, on the twenty-fifth day of April, there are crowds of people on streets and squares in every city watching parades filled with marching bands and large or small Italian flags. Even on TV they celebrate this date by broadcasting historical documentaries or images of the main commemorations in Rome with the most important leaders of the Italian government.

### *Festa del Lavoro* ("Labor Day")

The first day of May is an international holiday that celebrates the economical and social achievement of workers, in particular the eight-hour work shift of 1886. This festivity in Italy was suspended during the fascist regime's years. The biggest event for this holiday takes place in Rome. In the square of Porta San Giovanni, the Italian unions CGIL, CISL, and UIL sponsor a big concert usually featuring performances by a lot of different singers and bands, mainly national. The entrance is free, and thousands of people participate every year: at least half of all Roman citizens go there. During this public holiday, all kinds of companies are officially closed.

### *La Festa dell'Assunzione, Ferragosto* ("Assumption Day")

If you ask Italians what day is the fifteenth of August, they will be probably reply by saying *Ferragosto* instead of *Assunzione*. According to the Christian tradition, this is the day when the Virgin Mary was transported with both body and soul into heaven. In August, Italians are generally on vacation. Summer holidays are usually spent by the seaside, but there are also those who like mountains. Even though cities are empty, you'll find celebrations often including music, food, and fireworks in many places. If you have the chance to be on an Italian beach on the fifteenth day of August, watch out because it is common to throw water bombs and buckets all around during this day!

### *Natale* ("Christmas")

Christmas is the most important holiday in Italy. All Italians put decorations on their house doors, decorate Christmas trees, and buy presents for their friends and relatives. On the night of Christmas Eve, it is common to take part in the church Mass. This festivity is heartily felt by Italians because they can have a reunion of all family members while eating a long and rich Christmas lunch. This is the other important aspect of this celebration: staying with relatives, preparing food all together, and playing games or cards. All this is considered the soul of this feast, which is probably much more important than the religious aspect. Cuisine is, once again, the leading characteristic of this holiday. Every single region in Italy has its own unique menu for Christmas Day, but almost everywhere the same sweets are eaten, such as *panettone* and *pandoro*, followed by espresso coffee and dry fruits or peanuts.

LESSON NOTES

# All About #10
# Top Five Italian Pop Culture Things/ Icons You Need to Know about!

CONTENTS

2 Grammar

# 10



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# GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top Five Things to Know about Pop Culture in Italy: Music, Movies, TV, Popular Foreigners, Popular Italian Men/Women, and Sports Figures Abroad.**

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Italian popular culture is not only the one between the walls of museums and churches or the one appearing in textbooks and documentaries. Italian pop culture today is still on the cutting edge, from music to sports, and from movies to fashion. The creativity of Italian people is still giving many gifts to mankind.

By the way, it is important to consider that the entertainment industry in Italy is strongly influenced by both European and American cultures.

## Popular Music

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When thinking about Italian popular music, the first songs that probably come to your mind are those Old Italian songs like *Funiculì Funiculà*, *Volare (Nel Blu Dipinto di Blu)*, and *O Sole Mio*. However, Italian music now offers many talented singers and bands covering different genres, from melodic music and opera to rock. Those singers who are also "songwriters," the so-called *cantautori*, like Eros Ramazzoti, Laura Pausini, and Sugar Fornaciari (Zucchero), are very popular in Italy but also have had considerable success abroad during recent years. Today, Andrea Bocelli is probably the most beloved artist among opera singers.

Eros Ramazotti is a singer who sold more than thirty-six million records worldwide; he is beloved mainly in Europe and Central and South America. The secret of his success derives probably from the melody of his songs and his unique nasal tone of voice. He sings in English and Spanish and in duets with some big names, such as Cher, Celine Dion, Tina Turner, Andrea Bocelli, and more recently with Anastacia and Ricky Martin. The female music world is undoubtedly dominated by the awesome voice of Laura Pausini. Laura is famous throughout the world considering that she has sold over twenty-six million albums since 2004, including one Diamond album and 160 Platinum albums, and her concerts are always sold out everywhere. Her romantic songs went straight to the hearts of thousands of fans throughout Italy, Europe, and North and South America: she released her albums in Italian, English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Her great success is due to the high quality of her music, the energy and sweetness of her voice, and her lyrics. We probably cannot call her a *cantautrice* (feminine for *cantautore*) because she has her own songwriter, but she often collaborates with him to write her own songs.

The figure who gives Italian music the soul of blues is Sugar Fornaciari, known in Italy as Zucchero. He is one of Italy's greatest musicians and one reason is that he brought blues into Italian houses. At the age of thirteen, Zucchero met an American student who introduced him to soul, blues, and

## Popular Movies

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Hollywood movies are very popular in Italy; however, Italian film culture is populated by great names such as Federico Fellini with his *la Dolce Vita*, Visconti, and Sergio Leone, and with comedies to horror movies, such as those of Dario Argento. The contemporary movie landscape includes some other notable Italian directors: for example, the Sicilian Giuseppe Tornatore with his *Io non ho paura* and *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso* (which won him an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film). Or Roberto Benigni, the beloved Italian comedian who expressed his great talent also as a dramatic actor in his masterpiece *La Vita è Bella* ("Life Is Beautiful"). "Life Is Beautiful" is the story of a Jewish man who, with the power of his humor, protects his son in a Nazi death camp. As a result of his acting in this unforgettable fable, Benigni won three Oscars.

## Popular Television

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Italian television is populated by talk shows, sports shows, comedy programs, quiz shows with half-naked girls, music programs, and TV news. However, American TV shows and Italian shows adapted from American or English formats dominate television. Recently, Italians started to be very addicted to reality shows as well, probably because Italian people have some attitudes and reactions that are very interesting and amusing to be seen on a TV screen. Among Italian TV shows to describe, we have chosen the most popular one: "The X Factor." This is the Italian version of the program first originating in the United Kingdom. It consists of a contest between aspiring pop singers selected by public auditions. The prize is always a recording contract. The most popular Italian singer who has participated in it is Giusy Ferreri.

## Popular Foreigners

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Among favorite actors in Italy are very popular Hollywood stars including Johnny Depp, Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, and Charlize Theron. In sports, we have many foreign soccer players such as Pato, Etò, Vucinic, and Mutu who have many fans in Italy at the moment. However, it is the field of music where there is the largest number of foreign artists. Recently, some

European rock bands, like Muse from England and Tokio Hotel from Germany, have become very popular. Of course, Italians also favor some everlasting phenomena like Madonna and Michael Jackson as well as newer stars of pop music such as Beyoncé and Lady Gaga. On the Italian TV screen, there are many foreign soubrettes: for example, the Swiss Michelle Hunzicker, the Spanish Vanessa Incontrada, the American Justine Mattera, the Croatian Nina Moric, and the most recent Argentinian showgirl Belen Rodriguez.

## Popular Italian Men/Women Abroad and Sports Figures

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Besides all those Italian famous names taken from the past such as Leonardo da Vinci, Marco Polo, Michelangelo, Alessandro Volta, Rodolfo Valentino, and so on, today Italy has some new famous figures who are loved throughout the world. Thanks to the Italian fashion industry, names like Armani, Valentino, Roberto Cavalli, Gucci, Dolce and Gabbana, and many others are familiar to a large number of people. Concerning sports, Italian football players such as Alessandro Del Piero, Francesco Totti, and Fabio Cannavaro are probably the best known because they took part in the national Italian team, who won the World Cup in 2006. In skiing, recently Giorgio Rocca appeared in many foreign magazines, and ice skating is represented by Carolina Kostner. Italy has also one of the most successful motorcycle racers in the world, with eight Grand Prix World Championships to his name: Valentino Rossi. Finally, the symbol of Italian female beauty for the last forty years is the no-longer young Sophia Loren, who is living in the United States and participating in many famous TV shows.

LESSON NOTES

# All About #11
# Top Five Tools for Learning Italian

CONTENTS

2 Grammar

# #11



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# GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top Five Useful Tools to Learn Italian.**

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There are some useful learning tools that we can use while studying Italian, but these can only help you if you commit yourself and have a little time.

## Resource Books

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The first step is to recognize your level of Italian. To do that, it is necessary to check the "Common European Framework of Reference." Here we can find all the levels from A1 to C2, with detailed explanations concerning what kinds of skills are required for each level. The table below is an excerpt from the framework.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mastery | C2 | Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, constructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express himself/ herself spontaneously, very fluently, and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Effective Operational Proficiency | C1 | Can understand a wide range of demanding longer texts and recognize implicit meaning. Can express himself/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors, and cohesive devices. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Vantage | B2 | Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Threshold | B1 | Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise while traveling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple, connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Waystage | A2 | Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment, and matters in areas of immediate need. |
| Breakthrough | A1 | Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help. |

Once you define the level or decide which level to reach, the second step is to look for a good manual and reference aids. Here are some helpful links:

- *Zanichelli Editore*, http://www.dudat.it/zanichellibenvenuti (*Zanichelli* is the most famous Italian publisher for language training aids)
- *Accademia Della Crusca*, http://www.accademiadellacrusca.it (*Accademia della Crusca* is the most important institution and reference point for the Italian language since 1585)

## Online Dictionaries

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When learning Italian, one of the first things that you must quickly recognize is the feminine or masculine and plural or singular forms of nouns. The best way to recognize them is to check them in a good dictionary to find out the right answer. A good dictionary is not only a tool to understand the meaning of words, but it also gives clarifications about spelling and verb conjugations. Here, the web offers very good solutions for Italian online dictionaries. They include the following resources

1. "Word Reference" (http://www.wordreference.com) provides many languages in addition to Italian as well as translations from English to Italian and vice versa. This website also offers a very useful forum.
2. "The Free Dictionary" (http://it.thefreedictionary.com) is not only a good Italian dictionary: this website also gives the etymology of words and acronyms, and it offers a forum and provides news.
3. *Dizionario Italiano* (http://www.dizionario-italiano.it) is for those who have a higher knowledge of the Italian language. This online dictionary is completely in Italian and also provides grammar sections.

## Grammar/Verb Checker

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For any specific clarification about Italian grammar, you can always refer to *Accademia della*

*Crusca*, but for more general explanations, the grammar section of

## Italian Folk Songs and Lyrics/Italian Comics

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Learning with songs is a fun way to improve your skills in Italian. Songs are a part of culture, and you can only benefit from the music. On the web, you can find a lot of websites with Italian songs in karaoke form. Reading while you're singing is amusing, but afterward you should check the lyrics to better understand the meaning and the usage of words. The Italian language in songs can be very simple but also very complicated and poetic. The singers we recommend are Elisa, Laura Pausini, Eros Ramazzotti, Zucchero, Alex Britti, Carmen Consoli, and Tiziano Ferro. These are only a few artists, but the Italian musical panorama is very vast, with everything from pop music, folk, and rock to opera. Understanding opera masterpieces in their original language is undoubtedly priceless.

Another useful tool that can help you become familiar with conversational and casual Italian is comics. In Italy, Disney's Mickey Mouse is known by another name: *Topolino*. Topolino is written in easy Italian for kids. Reading it can be fun and relaxing at the same time. For those who are more confident with the Italian language, we recommend some other famous comics such as Dylan Dog, the "investigator of nightmares," Diabolic the thief, Tex, and Nathan Never. These are rich in common expressions we use in casual Italian.

## Pronunciation Tool

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Finally, while being exposed to new Italian words either written or oral, you might first learn how to pronounce them. In this case, there is a useful website you can visit:

There are only three easy steps to do:

1. First, choose either the masculine voice (Giovanni) or the feminine voice (Francesca) for Italian.
2. Then enter the word or phrase you want to learn how to pronounce in the box.
3. Finally, click either on the button "speak" to hear the word or phrase or click on the "download" button to listen and save the audio file of the word or phrase you added in the text box.

This tool gives you a decent pronunciation of standard Italian and will surely help you improve your pronunciation.

LESSON NOTES

# All About #12
# Top Five Italian Classroom Phrases!

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2 Grammar

# 12



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# GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top Five Italian Classroom Phrases.**

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There are probably some words and phrases very familiar to you from taking your Italian class. In case you have not started your class yet, here is a list of five of the most common phrases that you can say or that you may hear during an Italian lesson.

***Scusi, può ripetere per favore?* ("Can you repeat please?")**

---

When teachers are speaking, there will be surely some words or phrases you cannot catch easily. When you want to ask "Can you repeat please?" the right sentence to use is *Scusi, può ripetere per favore?*

This sentence is in the *Lei* courtesy form, since with a teacher it is customary to use *Lei*.

*Scusi* is an expression to draw someone's attention, and it means "excuse me." *Può* is the verb *potere*, meaning "can," for the third singular person *Lei* conjugated at the present tense. *Ripetere* means "to repeat," and finally, *per favore* is the Italian expression for "please."

***Per favore andate a pagina...; puoi leggere?* ("Please look at page..."; "Can you read?")**

---

When studying Italian, you might use a manual or a textbook. Using page numbers to refer to items in these books can also help a student memorize how to count in Italian. While opening the book, the teacher might ask you, for example, *per favore andate a pagina numero 11* ("Please look at page number eleven."). In Italian, we use the verb *andare*, meaning "to go," instead of the verb *guardare*, which means "to look at." Since a class is usually composed of more than one person, *andate* refers to the second plural person *voi*, and it's the conjugation of the verb *andare*. Next, the teacher will probably ask someone to read by saying his or her name followed by the phrase *puoi leggere?* ("Can you read?") *Puoi* is the present tense for the second singular person of the verb *potere*, meaning "can"; *leggere* means "to read."

***Come si dice…in italiano?* ("How do we say...in Italian?")**

When looking for the meaning of a word, it is customary to look it up in a dictionary without interrupting the lesson. However, there are some special expressions that you won't find easily. When this happens, it is appropriate to say *scusi, come si dice…in italiano?* ("Excuse me, how do we say…in Italian?") *Come* stands for "how" in Italian, and *si dice* is the translation for "we say." *Si dice* is an impersonal form and the conjugation of the verb *dire*, "to say," at the third singular person: *lui/lei dice* is the formal version.

### *Cosa significa?* ("What does it mean?")

In Italian, the verb "to mean" is *significare*, and we translate "what" as *cosa*. The infinitive verb *significare* changes into *significa* when we conjugate it at the present tense for the third singular person. That is why "What does it mean?" is *cosa significa*?

In order to say "What is the meaning for?" you should use the phrase *qual'è il significato di? Il significato literally means* "the meaning."

### *Avete capito? Ci sono domande?* ("Do you understand? Any questions?")

At the end of an Italian lesson, the teacher will probably ask the class *avete capito?* It literally means "have you understood?" In English, it is more appropriate to use the simple tense, but in Italian it goes with the past tense. *Avete capito* is the "past tense," *passato prossimo*, for the verb *capire* ("to understand") at the second plural person, *voi*. Another common sentence you are going to hear at the end of an Italian class is *ci sono domande?* ("Any questions?") *Ci sono* literally means "there are" and *domande* is the plural form of the feminine noun *domanda*, meaning "question."

LESSON NOTES

# All About #13
# Top Ten Italian Phrases Your Teacher Will Never Teach You

CONTENTS

2 Grammar

# 13



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# GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is the Ten Phrases Your Teacher Will Never Teach You.**

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In this lesson, we will see some of the most fun and useful expressions taken from normal Italian conversations, because Italian language students know how it can be important to get past the slang barrier. These phrases are hard to find in a dictionary, and teachers definitely rarely mention them during an Italian class. The following sentences and words are part of standard Italian: this means that any Italian speaker understands and uses them in daily life.

## 1. *Tipo/Tipa*

---

Tipo/tipa is an Italian noun that means "guy" or "girl" in English. When referring to a third party, we commonly use it as *un tipo* or *una tipa*.

**For Example:**

1. *Ho conosciuto una tipa interessante.*
   "I met an interesting girl."

2. *Il mio capo è un tipo severo.*
   "My boss is a strict guy." *Tipo* substitutes for the word *ragazzo*, which is quite a long word.

## 2. *Forte!*

---

The adjective *forte* is what we mainly translate in English as "cool" if we consider it an exclamation. In fact, its other meaning in Italian is "strong." *Forte* is an adjective ending in *-e* that we use both for feminine and masculine nouns. Consequently, in both cases, the plural form is *forti*. It is a very normal exclamation that always expresses a positive opinion.

**For Example:**

1. *Questa macchina fotografica è proprio forte!*
   "This camera is really cool."

When someone says *Parto per la Sardegna domani* ("Tomorrow I'm leaving for Sardinia."), we can simply answer by saying *Forte!* ("Cool!") as normally happens during a conversation in English.

### 3. *Roba da Matti!*

---

Roba da matti literally means "stuff for crazy" and indicates someone, something, or a situation that is really bizarrely crazy, whether dangerous or disappointing.

Here is a list of some of those moments in which you can use the exclamation *roba da matti*:

- When you are stuck in a traffic jam
- When you hear news on TV
- When someone is acting bizarrely
- When you listen to a fun story
- When you are in a crowded place
- When you receive something unexpected

### 4. *Pedala!*

---

Pedala comes from the verb *pedalare*, which means "to pedal" or "to ride a bicycle." We

convey it at the imperative form, precisely referring to *tu*, which is Italian for "you." The whole expression is *hai voluto la bicicletta, adesso pedala!* literally meaning "You wanted a bicycle; now you have to ride it!" In other words, it means "don't express complaints for consequences of a choice you yourself have made." In English, what probably better fits with this proverb is "you made your bed, now lie in it" or "practice what you preach." Now, we mustn't forget that *pedala!* used as pep talk can be translated as "move on" or "hurry to do something." It is a sort of provocation, but it depends on the way the speaker says it.

### 5. *Abbiocco*

---

The term *abbiocco* comes from the reflexive verb *abbioccarsi*, which means "being in a state of drowsiness." When someone says *che abbiocco* in Italian, it means that he or she is "going to fall asleep" or is "dozing off." Another way people often use it is *non ti abbioccare*! ("Don't fall asleep!" or "Wake up!") Italians usually use this verb after eating a heavy meal.

### 6. *Beccare qualcuno*

---

Since *beccare* in Italian means "to peck" and *qualcuno* is "someone," *beccare qualcuno* can only have the meaning of "to hit someone" or "to pick someone in a peculiar situation." We usually use it when we find out someone else did something wrong. For example, when you catch a friend who is stealing your chocolate from the fridge, you can yell *beccato!* Moreover, when you catch your sister taking something from your bag, you can say *beccata!* A more passionate situation can be one where you find your boyfriend or girlfriend out with someone else; in this case, you can shout *ti ho beccato!* for a boyfriend or *ti ho beccata* in the case of a girlfriend.

### 7. *Essere Fuori*

---

The expression *essere fuori* means "to be a little wacky" or "to be high" and literally "to be out." A fitting situation to use this expression is when someone is doing or saying something very odd. For instance, if you are wearing a pair of shoes the wrong way or you are saying something obviously untrue, you can be told *ma sei fuori?* ("Are you out of your mind?") Besides this last meaning, *essere fuori* can also stand for "to be drunk."

## 8. *Mettersi Insieme*

---

We use *mettersi insieme* when someone is starting a serious relationship. Its literal meaning is pretty fun: "to put together." However, it is important to point out that we always use this expression at the past tense.

**For Example**:

1. *Carla si è messa insieme a Alberto.*
   "Carla started a relationship with Alberto."

2. *Mi sono messo con lei un anno fa.*
   "I started my relationship with her a year ago."

## 9. *Quattro Gatti*

---

If you are students of the Italian language, you probably know these two words: *quattro* (the number "four") and *gatti* ("cats"). All together, *quattro gatti* is a very common and nice expression that means "only a few people." When you are talking about a party where there were "only a few people," you can say *eravamo quattro gatti*. Or, you can also use this expression in a normal conversation on the phone.

**For Example:**

1. A: *Ciao, com'è il locale?*
   "How is the club?"

2. B: *Ma…, ci sono solo quattro gatti!*
   "There are only a few people!"

## 10. *Spettegolare*

---

Spettegolare is a slang verb, and it means "to gossip" or "to tattle," one thing that many

Italians really like to do.

**For Example:**

1. *Alla mia amica piace proprio spettegolare*.
   "My friend really likes to gossip."

The person who tends to *spettegolare* is called a *pettegolo* (masculine) or a *pettegola* (feminine), and *pettegolezzo* means "gossip." So we can replace the previous phrase, *alla mia amica piace proprio spettegolare*, with *la mia amica è proprio una pettegola* ("my friend is really a gossiper").

LESSON NOTES

# All About #14
# Top Five Mistakes You Should Never Make in Italian

CONTENTS

2 Grammar

# 14



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# GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top Five Mistakes You Should Never Make in Italian.**

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There is a very famous proverb in Italy that says *sbagliando s'impara* (literally, "making mistakes we learn"). We know that practice makes perfect, but there are some mistakes that you can easily avoid while learning a language. In this lesson, you will find the top five most common mistakes that Italian language students usually make, and we will provide you with some useful tips.

## Verb Agreement

---

It is well known that the biggest effort while learning Italian is verbs and their conjugations. Verbs change their endings according to the six different subjects (*io, tu, lui, lei, noi voi,* and *loro*) and according to the tenses (*presente, passato prossimo, futuro*). It is very easy to make mistakes here, even for native Italian language speakers, but using the right verb agreement definitely makes you more confident with the language.

Considering a normal conversation in Italian, the politeness level of sentences is also very important. Italians tend to be formal in some situations, and using *tu* ("you") and *Lei*, the Italian courtesy form for "you," requires the right verb agreement. For instance, if you are talking to a professor asking *come stai?* ("How are you?" (referring to *tu*)), instead of *Come sta?* (referring to *Lei*), you are making a common mistake that influences the politeness level of your speech.

Italians study verbs for years at school, but you do not have all that time to learn, so you might:

- Practice every day. For example, you can test yourself with the vast number of exercises you can find on the web.
- When talking, first think about the infinitive form of the verb, then the tense you want to change it into, and then which person you need.
- When in doubt, you can check the verb in a dictionary. There are always some pages dedicated to tense templates.

## Gender and Number

Especially for English speakers, gender and number agreement errors are very common. Basically, there is no general rule that determines whether a noun is masculine or feminine, except the one that indicates nouns ending in *-o* are masculine and nouns ending in *-a* are feminine. However, there are several exceptions that make this last rule only a simple rule of thumb. Grammatically speaking, adjectives and articles change their endings according to the gender and number of a noun. Consequently, it is very important not to make mistakes when expressing even a simple sentence.

To avoid these mistakes, you can do two main things:

- If your interlocutor and the situation allow it, consult a handy, pocket-size Italian dictionary that you can carry with you everywhere you go.
- When in doubt, follow the general rule on the feminine and masculine endings for nouns: those ending in *-o* are masculine (like *libro*, meaning "book"), and those ending in *-a* are feminine (like *macchina*, meaning "car"); words derived from foreign languages, such as *sport, garage,* and *sushi* are usually considered masculine in Italian, unless they are related to a particular gender or have a similar counterpart in Italian. For example, "the e-mail" can be *la mail* or *l'email*.

## Pronunciation/Double Consonants

In Italian, there is a relatively small number of possible sounds. This is why there are many words that sound exactly the same or almost the same but with different meanings. The most common errors made when pronouncing Italian words involve double consonants. We can notice the difference double consonants make thanks to the following examples: *capello* ("hair") and *cappello* ("hat"), *pena* ("punishment," "pain") and *penna* ("pen"), *fato* ("fate") and *fatto* ("done").

How can you recognize them? First of all, you should listen carefully to your Italian teacher. Secondly, try to listen to Italian radio, watch Italian movies in the original language, and listen to Italian songs. Besides this general advice, we can give you a list of rules that might help you:

- There is always a double consonant after the following prefixes:

1. ***contra***- (*contraddire*, meaning "to contradict")
2. ***sovra***- (*sovrapporre*, meaning "to lay upon")
3. ***sopra***- (*soprattutto*, meaning "above all")
4. ***a-*** (*annaffiare*, meaning "to water")
5. ***e-*** **(***eppure*, meaning "even so," "still")
6. ***i-*** (*irraggiungibile*, meaning "unreachable," "unattainable")
7. ***ra***- (*rafforzare*, meaning "to reinforce")
8. ***so-*** (*sorridere*, meaning "to smile")
9. ***su-*** **(***susseguirsi*, meaning "to follow one after the other")
10. ***da-*** **(*dappertutto*,** meaning **"everywhere")**
11. ***se-*** (*sebbene*, meaning "although")
12. ***fra-*** **(***frattempo*, meaning "meantime").

- We double the letter -*q* only in the word *soqquadro*, meaning "mess" or "lack of order."

- The prefix *contro-* does not require any double consonants: for example, *controcorrente*, meaning "upstream."

- The final part, **-***bile*, never has a double -*b*: for example, *affabile*, meaning "affable," and *comprensibile*, meaning "comprehensible."

- We never double the letters **-***r* and -*g* in words ending in **-***ione*: for example, *stagione*, meaning "season," and *emozione*, meaning "emotion."

## Choosing *Essere* or *Avere*

---

The use of *essere* ("to be") and *avere* ("to have") is quite challenging. First, the most frequent mistake is using the wrong verb in certain expressions, such as when giving your age or when talking about hunger or thirst when socializing among Italian-speaking people. As an example, in Italian, we use the verb "to have" to express someone's age.

**For Example:**

1. *Io* ***ho*** *ventidue anni.*
   "I am twenty-two years old."

2. *Io* ***ho*** *fame.*
   "I am hungry."

In both cases, we use the verb *avere* instead of the verb *essere*.

Another common mistake concerns the use of *essere* or *avere* as auxiliary verbs in order to build verbs in a compound tense like *passato prossimo*. When in doubt, the best way to find out which one to use is to check a good grammar book or an Italian language dictionary.

## Prepositions

---

Besides Italian verbs, every student of the Italian language probably says that another challenging part of this language is prepositions and their employment. We can use each preposition alone *di, a, da,* and *in* [..] (*preposizioni semplici*) or attached to the definite articles *del, al,* and *nel* [..] *(preposizioni articolate*). There is not much logic, no reasons, and no rational rules for their usage: just as in English, there are few rules and many exceptions. However, prepositions help us better explain ourselves, figure out directions, and frankly change from speaking the basics of a language to speaking like a native. In the case of prepositions, we only have a few tips:

I. Use the preposition *a* before the name of a city.

**For Example:**

1. *a Milano*

2. *a New York*

II. Use *in* before the name of a country.

**For Example:**

1. *in Italia*

2. *in America*

III. Use *in* before words ending in *–teca.*

**For Example:**

1. *in discoteca*
   "in the nightclub"

2. *in biblioteca*
   "in the library"

IV. Use *al* before these places for daily life.

**For Example:**

1. *al museo*
   "at the museum"

2. *al teatro*
   "at the theater"

3. *al ristorante*
   "at the restaurant"

4. *al supermercato*
   "at the supermarket"

LESSON NOTES

# All About #15
# Top Five Pet Phrases from the Italian Teachers!

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# 15



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# GRAMMAR

**The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top Five Phrases from the ItalianPod101 Team.**

---

Here is a list of some additional phrases we chose because of their practical usage, their frequently requested meaning or translation, their frequent use in Italy, and their cultural aspects.

### 1. *Salute/Cin Cin*

---

When toasting in Italy, people usually say *cin, cin!* Sometimes it is followed by *alla salute* or simply *salute! Salute* means "health" in Italian. By saying *buona salute* to the other people who are holding their drinks, you are wishing them to have "good health." By the way, the word *salute* in Italian can have another usage that has nothing to do with "cheers." That is the English "bless you," which we use when someone sneezes. In this case, first we say *salute* to the person who sneezed, and then the person should usually answer by saying *grazie*, meaning "thank you."

### 2. *Non c'è problema/Va bene!*

---

In Italian, we frequently use the expression *non c'è problema*. In English, this is literally "there is no problem." Sometimes we also say *non c'è nessun problema* or the plural version *non ci sono problemi*. When everything is okay, you can also use the Italian: *va tutto bene!* The phrase *va bene* stands perfectly for "it is okay," but recently the use of the English "okay" has also spread among Italians. So if you are suggesting a place or something to do, don't be surprised if Italians tell you "okay."

### 3. *Buona fortuna!/In bocca al lupo!*

Whenever you want to wish "good luck" to someone in Italian, you only need to say *buona fortuna*. *Fortuna* is a feminine noun and means "luck." Moreover, there is another fun expression in Italian that actually has the same meaning: *in bocca al lupo!* If we literally translate *in bocca al lupo*, it means "in the mouth of the wolf." When you are told *in bocca al lupo*, you absolutely have to answer by saying *crepi!* This stands for "'die," obviously referring to the wolf. A suitable situation where you can use this phrase could be when wishing good luck to a friend before an exam at school. Make sure that he or she says *crepi!*

### 4. *Amore mio/Tesoro/ Ti voglio bene/ Ti amo*

In the 1950s, Dean Martin was singing the famous song "That's Amore." He used this Italian word to say "love." It is interesting to think about the reason he chose this word. Italians are renowned as warm and romantic people: they are proud to say that they spend their entire life seeking, burning, and suffering for love. In a couple, they call each other *amore mio* or simply *amore* and *tesoro* (literally "treasure"). Relationships in Italy tend to be so important that it is normal to call or meet a friend every day and it is also normal to hear them calling each other *amore* even between friends. However, when the moment to express one's feelings comes, there are basically two sentences that clearly give a different level of intensity. One is *ti voglio bene*, meaning "I love you," which is usually used between friends and relatives. On the other hand, *ti amo* expresses the real love between a man and a woman, and for Italians it has a very strong meaning. If you say that to someone, it means that you really fell in love with that person.

### 5. *E' stato bello!/Mi sono divertito un sacco!*

In Italy, it is very easy to have a really good time with friends. Whenever you want to express how great it was, you can use these two phrases: *è stato bello!* or *mi sono divertito un sacco*.

We can translate *E' stato bello* into "it was great," "fantastic," "fabulous," or "terrific." *È stato* is the verb *essere*, "to be" at *passato prossimo*, the "past tense." We can use this expression after a pleasant experience, from the most intimate to the simplest one. Let's break down the sentence *mi sono divertito un sacco.* First, we have *mi sono divertito*, which is the reflexive verb *divertirsi*, meaning "to enjoy" or "to have fun," at *passato prossimo* tense of the first singular person *io*. *Un sacco* in Italian literally means "a sack" or "a bag," but it stands for "a lot" and Italians use it frequently. To summarize, *mi sono divertito un sacco* is "I had such a good time!" or "I really enjoyed it." If you use one of these two expressions with your Italian friends, they will definitely be glad.

LESSON NOTES

# Pronunciation #1
# The Italian Alphabet

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2 Grammar

# 1



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# GRAMMAR

## The Focus of This Lesson Is the Italian Alphabet

---

When you ask Italian language lovers why they chose to learn Italian language among so many different languages spoken around the globe, some of the most common answers will include "because it sounds so good," "because it's so melodic," and "because it's so pleasant to hear it." Well, there's a reason for this. Italian is a language where you will rarely hear words difficult to pronounce due to the fact that the great majority of Italian words end in vowels, so you may say a whole sentence as one single word without obstacles. If you just observe how beautiful an Italian opera sung by a good performer sounds, you will understand what we mean. So there is no need to worry—by engaging yourself to learn Italian pronunciation, you won't find yourself hopelessly repeating the same sound in order to say it right. You are about to learn the most melodic language in the world!

Italy's official language is called Standard Italian, which is a descendant of the Tuscan dialect and Latin. It is estimated that there are about fifty-five million speakers of the language in Italy and a further 6.7 million outside of the country.

Keep in mind that you are going to study Standard Italian, which is what you will hear on the television or radio. Pronunciation may vary according to one's sex, age, culture, geographical region, social environment of the speaker's origin, physical conditions and characteristics, and last but not least, one's mood. Italian is very rich in dialect and regional languages, but once you master Standard Italian, you won't have problems with communicating in any part of Italy since all Italian speakers use it as the official language.

In this lesson we will learn the basic structure of the Italian alphabet.

The Italian alphabet is composed of twenty-one letters, which we call "graphemes," that we use for words of Italian origin and five graphemes that we use for loan words. See the following table:

**ITALIAN ALPHABET:**

| | Letter | Pronunciation | "English Example" |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | ***-A*** | [a] | "b**a**rbarian" |
| 2. | ***-B*** | [bi] | **"be"** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3. | ***-C*** | [ tʃi] | **"chee**se" |
| 4. | ***-D*** | [d] | **"di**plomat" |
| 5. | ***-E*** | [e] | **"e**levator" |
| 6. | ***-F*** | [effe] | **"effe**ctive" |
| 7. | ***-G*** | [dʒi] | **"ge**ography" |
| 8. | ***-H**** | [acca] | **"accu**stomed" |
| 9. | ***-I*** | [i] | **"i**ntelligent" |
| 10. | ***-L*** | [elle] | **"ele**vator" |
| 11. | ***-M*** | [emme] | "el**eme**ntary" |
| 12. | ***-N*** | [enne] | **"ene**rgy" |
| 13. | ***-O*** | [o] | **"o**peration" |
| 14. | ***-P*** | [pi] | **"pi**cture" |
| 15. | ***-Q*** | [qu] | **"cou**pon" |
| 16. | ***-R*** | [erre] | **"ere**ct" |
| 17. | ***-S*** | [esse] | **"esse**ntial" |
| 18. | ***-T*** | [ti] | "liber**ty"** |
| 19. | ***-U*** | [u] | **"lu**minous" |
| 20. | ***-V*** | [vu] | **"voo**doo" |
| 21. | ***-Z*** | [zeta] | **"z**oo" |

* We NEVER pronounce the letter -***H*** (*acca*) in Italian; instead, it just serves as a graphic sign.

**For Example:**

An Italian speaker will say:

| "English" | Pronunciation |
|---|---|
| "Hilton Hotel" | [Ilton Otel] |
| "Harrison Ford" | [Arison Ford] |
| "Honda" | [Onda] |

We use the five letters that follow for words that came from foreign languages (loan words):

| | Letter | Pronunciation | "English Example" |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | ***-J*** | [I lunga] | "jazz," "junior" |
| 2. | ***-K*** | [cappa] | "killer," "karaoke" |
| 3. | ***-W*** | [doppia vu] | "whiskey," "weekend" |
| 4. | ***-X*** | [ics] | "xylophone," "xenophobia" |
| 5. | ***-Y*** | [ipsylon] | "yacht," "yoga" |

Okay, so we concluded that there are twenty-six letters in the Italian alphabet. Now, if we consider the sounds in the Italian language, we will come to a bit higher number. The number of sounds, or "phonemes," in the Italian language is thirty. Why? Because some letters, depending on their position in a word, can have two or more different ways of pronunciation.

In Italian language, we can divide thirty phonemes into three groups:

- Seven Vowels

- Twenty-one Consonants
- Two Semi-consonants

LESSON NOTES

# Pronunciation #2
# Italian Vowels

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# 2



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# GRAMMAR

## The Focus of This Lesson Is Vowels

---

Today we are going to focus on **vowels** in the Italian language. Let's start with the definition of a vowel: a **vowel** is any sound that, when we pronounce it, air goes out from the mouth cavity or mouth and nasal cavity together without encountering any obstacle. In the Italian language, there are seven sounds of this kind:

### *-A [a]*

---

**Articulation:**

Pronounced with a wide-open mouth cavity and your tongue placed on the bottom of your mouth. No specific difference from other languages.

**English Examples:**

1. "**a**lph**a**bet"
2. "**a**pplic**a**tion"

**Italian Examples:**

1. *m**a**mm**a***
2. *p**a**p**à***
3. *m**a**no*
4. *port**a***

### *-E (open) [ɛ]*

---

**Articulation:**

Move your tongue upward, close to the palate (the upper wall of the mouth). Stretch your lips as if you are smiling. When articulating, move the tongue toward the position of *-A*.

**English Examples:**

The English language does not recognize the difference between an open and closed [e] sound. It is similar to the sound you get if pronouncing the sound [e] (as in "**e**l**e**vator") or [a] (as in "**a**lph**a**bet")

**Italian Examples:**

1. *b**e**n**e***
2. *l**e**ggo*
3. *t**e**sta*
4. *z**e**ro*

### *-E (closed) [e]*

---

**Articulation:**

Put your tongue even closer to the upper palate.

**English Examples:**

The English language does not have the appropriate example for this sound. It is similar to the sound you get if you say together the sounds [**e**] **(**as in "**e**l**e**vator"**)** and [**i**] **(**as in "b**ee"**)**

**Italian Examples:**

1. *m**e**tto*
2. *r**e**t**e***
3. *s**e**ra*
4. *v**e**la*

### *-I [i]*

---

**Articulation:**

Place your tongue in the ulterior position with respect to the palate.

**English Examples:**

1. "b**ee**"
2. "k**i**ng"
3. "**l**isten"

**Italian Examples:**

1. *d**i**to*
2. *l**i**bro*
3. *v**i**ta*
4. ***I**tal**i**a*

### *-O (open) [ɔ]*

---

**Articulation:**

Tighten your lips into the shape of a circle. Your tongue should be close to the bottom of your mouth, and while articulating the sound, move your tongue backward as if you are articulating the [a] sound.

**English Examples:**

The English language does not recognize the difference between an open and closed [o] sound, either. The sounds seem like a combination of the [a] sound and the [o] sound.

**Italian Examples:**

1. *f**o**rte*
2. *n**o**ve*
3. *tr**o**vo*
4. *z**o**na*

### *-O (closed) [o]*

---

**Articulation:**

Contract your lips in the shape of a circle and push your lips out. Move your tongue backward.

**English Examples:**

The sound is similar to the combination of the [o] and [u] sounds.

**Italian Examples:**

1. *d**o**ve*
2. *m**o**lt**o***
3. *s**o**n**o***
4. *v**o**l**o***

### *-U [u]*

---

**Articulation:**

Contract your lips and push them out to the maximum, and your tongue should reach the ulterior position in your mouth.

**English Examples:**

1. "p**u**t"
2. "ill**u**mination"

**Italian Examples:**

1. *e**u**ropa*
2. ***u**omo*
3. ***u**lteriore*
4. *app**u**ntamento*

There are no specific rules on how to recognize an open or closed pronunciation. On the other hand, it is very important to know the exact pronunciation of these letters since it can change the meaning of some words.

**For Example:**

1. *mènte* (from the verb *mentire*, meaning "to lie") vs. *ménte* ("intellectual faculty")
2. *tèma* ("theme") vs. *téma* (from *temere*, meaning "to be afraid of something")

Since there are no fixed rules, please consult a dictionary for the pronunciation.

As we saw, based on the description above, we can group the vowels into the so-called *vowel triangle*, where we have:

- Three anterior vowels (palatals): [i], [e], [ɛ]
- One central vowel: [a]
- Three posterior vowels: [o] open, [o]closed, [u]

LESSON NOTES

# Pronunciation #3
# Italian Consonants

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# 3



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# GRAMMAR

## The Focus of This Lesson Is Pronouncing the Italian Consonants

---

Today we are going to learn the pronunciation of consonants in Italian language.

A consonant is a sound we articulate with a closed or half-closed vocal tract. We can close the vocal tract in a certain place or in a certain way by one of the following: our lips, tongue, teeth, or palate.

As we already mentioned, Italian consists of twenty-one consonants. According to the way we articulate the consonants, we can distinguish three major groups:

### Occlusive Consonants

---

Occlusive consonants are determined by a closure of the vocal tract while articulating the sound. For example, while pronouncing the sounds -*p* or -*b*, we do close the mouth completely for a moment. For the letters -*t* and -*d*, the closure comes between the teeth.

### Continuous Consonants

---

Continuous consonants are sounds where there is no complete closure of the vocal tract while articulating the sound; the air exits almost freely through the mouth. There is, however, a contraction of the channel. For example: when we articulate the letter -*s*, the top of the tongue comes closer to the dental alveolus, making the channel more narrow but not closed. We have three different kinds of continuous consonants:

1. Constrictive, such as -*f* or -*s*, because of the rustle they produce.
2. Vibrant, such as -*r*, because of the vibration it produces when the tongue reaches the alveolus.
3. Laterals, such as -*l*, because the air passes to the side of the tongue.

## Affricates

Affricates are, finally, the sounds that are in between occlusive and continuous consonants. Even though we perceive them as one unique sound when we articulate them, they are actually composed of two sounds (occlusive and continuous). For example, the sound of the letter *-z* (e.g., *zio*, meaning "uncle") is composed of [t] and [s].

Let us observe the table:

| Phoneme (sound) | Grapheme (letter) | Definition | "English" Example | *Italian* Example |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| [p] | *-P* | occlusive | "**p**ath," "**p**ilot" | ***p**alla* |
| [b] | *-B* | occlusive | "**b**all," "**b**eer" | ***b**ello* |
| [m] | *-M* | occlusive | "**m**orning" | ***m**are* |
| [t] | *-T* | occlusive | "**t**elevision" | ***t**ela* |
| [d] | *-D* | occlusive | "**d**oor," "**d**ream" | ***d**onna* |
| [n] | *-N* | occlusive | "**n**avy," "**n**ormal" | ***n**ero* |
| [ɲ] | *-Gn* | occlusive | "**n**ew" | ***gn**occhi, le**gn**o* |
| [k] * | *-c* (+ *-a*, *-o*, *-u*)<br>*-ch* (+ *-e*, *-i*)<br>*-q* (+ *-ua*, *-ue*, *-ui*, *-uo*) | occlusive | "**c**ar,"<br>"**q**uestion" | ***c**asa,*<br>***ch**ilo,*<br>***q**uadro* |
| [g] * | *-g* (+ *-a*, *-o*, *-u*)<br>*-gn* (+ *-e*, *-i*) | occlusive | "**g**as,"<br>"**g**overnment" | ***g**atto*<br>***gh**iro* |
| [ts] * | *-Z* | affricate | "i**t's**," "**cz**ar" | ***z**io* |
| [dz] * | *-Z* | affricate | "ra**z**or," "ba**s**ic" | **z**ero |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| [tʃ] * | *-C* (+ *-e*, *-i*) | affricate | "ri**ch**," "kit**ch**en" | ***c**era* |
| [dʒ] * | *-G* (+ *-e*, *-i*) | affricate | "pa**g**e," "**j**ail" | ***g**iro* |
| [f] | *-F* | continuous | "**ph**ysical," "**f**aith" | ***f**are* |
| [v] | *-V* | continuous | "**v**oice," "**v**alley" | ***v**edo* |
| [s] | *-S* | continuous | "**s**auce," "i**c**e" | ***s**era* |
| [z] | *-S* | continuous | "ro**s**es," "pau**s**e" | ***s**milzo* |
| [ʃ] * | *-Sc* (+ *-e*, *-i*)<br>*-Sc* (+ *-a*, *-o*, *-u*) | continuous | "**sh**ower," "po**sh**" | ***sc**ena*<br>***sc**iame* |
| [r] | *-R* | continuous | "**r**oad," "**r**ocket" | ***r**ana* |
| [l] | *-L* | continuous | "**l**eve**l**," "**l**ime" | ***l**una* |
| [ʎ] * | *-Gl* (+ *-i*)<br>*-Gl* (+-*a*, *-e*, *-o*, *-u*) | continuous | English does not have a similar sound. | ***gli***<br>*ta**gli**o* |

* These phonemes will be a subject of individual analysis in the next grammar point.

As you could observe in words like *pa**ll**a*, *be**ll**o*, *do**nn**a*, *ga**tt**o*, and *gno**cc**hi*, many Italian words have diphthongs (doubled consonants) or *doppie* in Italian. This is one of the characteristics of both spoken and written Italian language that distinguishes it most from the other Romance languages. A diphthong is an emphasized consonant, which means that when we pronounce them we make a little "brake" or a "stop" on the consonant that is doubled.

**For Example:**

1. *Ma**mm**a, da**mm**i quel cio**cc**olatino!*
   "Mom, give me that chocolate!"

We will pronounce this sentence while emphasizing the doubled consonants, making them last longer.

**For Example:**

1. *Ma**m-m**a, da**m-m**i quel cio**c-c**olatino!*

It is very important to pronounce diphthongs correctly, as it may occur that there is another similar word written with a single consonant.

**For Example:**

1. *fato* (a noun meaning "destiny") vs. *fatto* (a verb's past participle meaning "to do")
2. *eco* (an adjective meaning "ecological") vs. *ecco* (an exclamation meaning "here" or "there")
3. *copia* (a noun meaning "copy") vs. *coppia* (a number meaning "couple")

LESSON NOTES

# Pronunciation #4
# Specific Italian Consonants

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# 4



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# GRAMMAR

## The Focus of This Lesson Is Learning How to Pronounce Specific Consonants and Consonant Groups

---

Today we are going to learn how to pronounce specific consonants and consonant groups in the Italian language. Reviewing the table from the third lesson, you will see that we marked certain sounds with a *. These consonants have specific rules, and depending on the position and interaction with other sounds, they can change the way we pronounce them.

### Phoneme (sound): [k]*

---

**Grapheme (letter):**

*-c* (+ *-a*, *-o*, *-u*)

*-ch* (+ *-e*, *-i*)

*-q* (+ *-ua*, *-ue*, *-ui*, *-uo*)

**Definition:** occlusive

**English:**

1. "**c**ar"
2. "**q**uestion"

**Italian:**

1. ***c**asa*
2. ***ch**ilo*
3. ***q**uadro*

## Phoneme (sound): [g]*

---

**Grapheme (letter):**

*-g* (+ *-a*, *-o*, *-u*)

*-gn* (+ *-e*, *-i*)

**Definition:** occlusive

**English:**

1. "**g**as"
2. "**g**overnment"

**Italian:**

1. ***G****atto*
2. ***gh****iro*

## Phoneme (sound): [ts]*

---

**Grapheme (letter):**

*-z*

**Definition:** affricate

**English:**

1. "i**t's**"
2. "**cz**ar"

**Italian:**

1. ***z****io*

**Phoneme (sound): [dz]***

---

**Grapheme (letter):**

*-z*

**Definition:** affricate

**English:**

1. "ra**z**or"
2. "ba**s**ic"

**Italian:**

1. ***z****ero*

**Phoneme (sound): [tʃ]***

---

**Grapheme (letter):**

*-c* (+ *-e*, *-i*)

**Definition:** affricate

**English:**

1. "ri**ch**"
2. "kit**ch**en"

**Italian:**

1. ***c****era*

**Phoneme (sound): [dʒ]***

---

**Grapheme (letter):**

*-g* (+ *-e*, *-i*)

**Definition:** affricate

**English:**

1. "pa**g**e"
2. "**j**ail"

**Italian:**

1. ***g****iro*

**Phoneme (sound): [ʃ]***

---

**Grapheme (letter):**

*-sc* (+ *-e*, *-i*)

*-sc* (+ *-a*, *-o*, *-u*)

**Definition:** continuous

**English:**

1. "**sh**ower"

2. "po**sh**"

**Italian:**

1. ***sc****ena*
2. ***sc****iame*

**Phoneme (sound): [ʎ]***

---

**Grapheme (letter):**

*-gl* (+ *-i*)

*-gl* (+ *-a*, *-e*, *-o*, *-u*)

**Definition:** continuous

**English:**

English does not have a similar sound.

**Italian:**

1. ***gli***
2. *ta****gli****o*

**Phoneme (sound): [ɲ]**

---

**Grapheme (letter):**

*-gn*

**Definition:** occlusive

**English:**

1. "**n**ew"

**Italian:**

1. *__gn__occhi*
2. *le__gn__o*

## Sounds [k] and [tʃ]

---

We write the sounds [k] and [tʃ] using the letter -*c*. Let us observe when we read the letter -*c* as [k] and when we read it as [tʃ].

If an -*e* or -*i* or the combinations -*ia*, -*io*, or –*iu* come after the letter -*c*, we read the letter -*c* as [tʃ], as in the English word "ri**ch**." See the examples below.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **[tʃ] *** | -*c* (+ -*e*, -*i*) | affricate | "ri**ch**," "kit**ch**en" | ***c****era* |

**For Example:**

| ***Italian*** | **Pronunciation** | **"English"** |
|---|---|---|
| ***ce****na* | [tʃena] | "dinner" |
| ***ci****nema* | [tʃinema] | "cinema" |
| ***cia****o!* | [tʃao] | "hello" |
| *ba**cio*** | [batʃo] | "kiss" |
| *cauc**ciù*** | [kautʃ-tʃu] | "a natural rubber" |

In *-c* + *-ia*, *-io*, and *-iu*, as in the last three examples, we do write the letters *-i*, *-a*, and *-u*, but we do not pronounce them. They just serve to make us pronounce the letter *-c* as [tʃ].

If the letter *-c* is, on the other hand, followed by an *-a*, *-o*, *-u*, or *-he*, *-hi*, we pronounce it as [k].

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **[k] *** | *-c* (+ *-a*, *-o*, *-u*)<br>*-ch* (+ *-e*, *-i*)<br>*-q* (+ *-ua*, *-ue*, *-ui*, *-uo*) | occlusive | "**c**ar,"<br>"**q**uestion" | ***c**asa*,<br>***ch**ilo*,<br>***q**uadro* |

**For Example:**

| *Italian* | Pronunciation | "English" |
|---|---|---|
| ***che*** | [**k**e] | "what" |
| ***chi*** | [**k**i] | "who" |
| ***ca**sa* | [**k**aza] | "house" |
| ***co**me* | [**k**ome] | "how" |
| ***cu**ltura* | [**k**ultura] | "culture" |

### Sounds [g] and [dʒ]

---

We can apply the same pronunciation rules to the letter *-g* as we did for the letter *-c*.

If the letter *-g* is followed by an *-i* or an *-e* as single sounds or *-ia*, *-io*, or *-iu*, we will read it as **[dʒ].**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **[dʒ]*** | *-g* (+ *-e*, *-i*) | affricate | "pa**g**e," "**j**ail" | ***g**iro* |

**For Example:**

| *Italian* | Pronunciation | "English" |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *gesto* | [dʒesto] | "gesture" |
| *giro* | [**dʒ**iro] | "circle," "walk" |
| *già* | [**dʒ**a] | "already" |
| *gioco* | [**dʒ**oko] | "game" |
| *giù* | [**dʒ**u] | "down" |

If the letter *-g* is, on the other hand, followed by *-a*, *-o*, *-u*, *-he*, or *-hi***,** we pronounce it as [**g**]:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| [**g**]* | *-g* (+ *-a*, *-o*, *-u*)<br>*-gn* (+ *-e*, *-i*) | occlusive | "**g**as,"<br>"**g**overnment" | ***g**atto*,<br>***gh**iro* |

**For Example:**

| ***Italian*** | **Pronunciation** | **"English"** |
|---|---|---|
| *gara* | [**g**ara] | "race" |
| *lago* | [la**g**o] | "lake" |
| *gufo* | [**g**ufo] | "owl" |
| *ghetto* | [**g**et-to] | "ghetto" |
| *Ghirlandino* | [**G**irlandino] | a proper name |

We apply the same rule for *–g* + *-ia*, *-io*, *-iu*: we do not pronounce the letter *-i*.

**Sound [ʃ]**

---

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **[ʃ]*** | *-sc* (+ *-e*, *-i*)<br>*-sc* (+ *-a*, *-o*, *-u*) | continuous | "**sh**ower,"<br>"po**sh**" | ***sc**ena*,<br>***sc**iame* |

The sound [ʃ] comes as a result of combining the letters -*s* and -*c* followed by -*e*, -*i*, or grouped letters -*ia*, -*io*, -*iu*—the same role as for the letters -*c* and -*g*. We can conclude that the letters -*e*, -*i*, -*ia*, -*io*, or -*iu* make the sound softer, as in [tʃ], [dʒ], and [ʃ], while -*a*, -*o*, -u, and -*h* make the pronounced sound harder, as in [k], [g], and [sk].

| Sound (Phoneme) | *Italian* | Pronunciation | "English" |
|---|---|---|---|
| [ʃ]<br>(as in "**sh**ow") | ***sc****ena* | [ʃena] | "scene" |
| [ʃ]<br>(as in "show") | ***sci*** | [ʃi] | "ski" |
| [ʃ]<br>(as in "show") | *la****sc****iare* | [laʃare] | "to leave" |
| [ʃ]<br>(as in "show") | ***sc****iopero* | [ʃopero] | "strike" |
| [ʃ]<br>(as in "show") | ***sc****iupare* | [ʃupare] | "to waste," "to destroy" |

If on the other hand, the letters -*sc* are followed by -*a*, -*o*, -*u*, or -*h*, then we will read it as [**sk**], as in the English word "**sk**i."

| Sound (Phoneme) | *Italian* | Pronunciation | "English" |
|---|---|---|---|
| [sk]<br>(as in "**sk**iing") | *scandalo* | [skandalo] | "scandal" |
| [sk]<br>(as in "skiing") | *ascoltare* | [askoltare] | "to listen" |
| [sk]<br>(as in "skiing") | *scuola* | [skuola] | "school" |
| [sk]<br>(as in "skiing") | *scheda* | [skeda] | "card" |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| [sk]<br>(as in "skiing") | *schifo* | [skifo] | "disgust" |

## Sound [ʎ]

---

The letters -*g* and -*l* produce the sound [**ʎ**].

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **[ʎ]*** | -*gl* (+ -*i*)<br>-*gl* (+-*a*, -*e*, -*o*, -*u*) | continuous | English does not have a similar sound. | ***gli,***<br>*ta**gli**o* |

This sound is not common in the English language. Nevertheless, it should not be very difficult to learn. Let us follow the simple logic:

If the letter -*n* [n] and the group -*ew* [yu] in the English language form the word "new" [nyu], we get a completely new sound: from [n] to [ny] or [ɲ].

Let us suppose we change the letter -*n* to the letter -*l*:

-*l* + -*ew* will give us a provisional word, "lew," that we would pronounce as [lyu] or [ʎu].

Once again, we apply the same rules. Please observe the table:

| Sound (Phoneme) | *Italian* | Pronunciation | "English" |
|---|---|---|---|
| [ʎ] | *figlie* | [fiʎe] | "daughters" |
| [ʎ] | *figli* | [fiʎi] | "sons" |
| [ʎ] | *figlia* | [fiʎa] | "daughter" |
| [ʎ] | *figlio* | [fiʎo] | "son" |
| [ʎ] | *pagliuzza* | [paʎutsa] | "straw" |

If, however, the letters -*gl* are followed by -*a*, -*o*, -*u*, or -*h*, then we will read it as [gl], as in English word "**gl**obe," which in Italian is *globo* [globo].

### Sound [ɲ]

---

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **[ɲ]** | -*gn* | occlusive | "**n**ew" | ***gn****occhi*, *le****gn****o* |

The sound [**ɲ**] is a product of the letters -*g* and -*n*. Here we do not apply the rule as in previous cases. The letters -*gn* always result in a soft sound, [ɲ]**.** Let us observe some examples.

| Sound (Phoneme) | *Italian* | Pronunciation | "English" |
|---|---|---|---|
| [ɲ] | *agnello* | [aɲel-lo] | "lamb" |
| [ɲ] | *ogni* | [oɲi] | "every," "each" |
| [ɲ] | *lavagna* | [lavaɲa] | "blackboard" |
| [ɲ] | *bisogno* | [bisoɲo] | "need" |
| [ɲ] | *gnu* | [ɲu] | "gnu," "wildebeest" |

From these examples, we can deduct a general rule.

We get a hard sound if the letters -*c*, -*g*, -*sc*, -*gl* are followed by -*a*, -*o*, -*u*, or -*h*.

On the other hand, we get a soft sound if the letters -*c*, -*g*, -*sc*, -*gl* are followed by -*e*, -*i*, -*ia*, -*io*, and -*iu.*

LESSON NOTES

# Pronunciation #5 Pronouncing the Letter -s, Diphthongs, and the Hiatus

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# GRAMMAR

## The Focus of This Lesson Is Pronouncing the Letter –S, Diphthongs, and the Hiatus.

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Today we are going to learn how we can pronounce the letter -*s* in the Italian language and how we read diphthongs and the hiatus.

### The Grapheme -S

---

The grapheme -*s* can have two phonetic values: *voiced* and *unvoiced*. The unvoiced -*s* [s] is the regular one from the English words "**s**port," "**s**ky," "**s**tar," and so forth. The voiced -*s* [z] is actually the sound [z] in English as we have in the words "zoo," "zone," "zip," and so forth. In the table that follows, we may observe the rules for the pronunciation of the letter -*s*.

### Grapheme (letter): -s + –a, -e, -i, -o, -u

---

**Italian Examples:**

1. *sale*

2. *serpente*

3. *silenzio*

4. *sole*

5. *superbo*

**Pronunciation:**

1. [sale]

2. [serpente]

3. [silentsio]

4. [sole]

5. [superbo]

**English Translations:**

1. "salt"

2. "snake"

3. "silence"

4. "sun"

5. "arrogant"

**Grapheme (letter): -l, -r, -m, -n + -s**

---

**Italian Examples:**

1. *polso*

2. *università*

3. *console*

**Pronunciation:**

1. [polso]

2. [università]

3. [console]

**English Translations:**

1. "wrist"

2. "university"

3. "consul"

## Grapheme (letter): -s + -c, -f, -p, -q, -t

---

**Italian Examples:**

1. *sconto*

2. *sforzo*

3. *speranza*

4. *squadra*

5. *storia*

**Pronunciations:**

1. [skonto]

2. [sfortso]

3. [sperantsa]

4. [skwadra]

5. [storia]

**English Translations:**

1. "discount"

2. "effort"

3. "hope"

4. "team"

5. "story"

## Grapheme (letter): -s + -b, -d, -g, -l, -m, -n, -r, -v

**Italian Examples:**

1. *sbaglio*

2. *sdraiarsi*

3. *sgridare*

4. *slittare*

5. *smemorato*

6. *snello*

7. *sradicare*

8. *svogliato*

**Pronunciations:**

1. [zbaʎo]

2. [zdrayarsi]

3. [zgridare]

4. [zlittare]

5. [zmemorato]

6. [znel-lo]

7. [zradicare]

8. [zvoʎato]

**English Translations:**

1. "mistake," "error"

2. "to lie down"

3. "to scold"

4. "to skid"

5. "forgetful"

6. "thin"

7. "eradicate," "uproot"

8. "halfhearted"

### Grapheme (letter): -s between vowels

---

**Italian Examples:**

1. *casa*

2. *cortese*

3. *fisica*

**Pronunciations:**

1. [kaza]

2. [korteze]

3. [fizika]

**English Translations:**

1. "house," "home"

2. "gentle," "courteous"

3. "physics"

Note that if the letter *-s* is doubled, we must pronounce it with an emphasis:

| *Italian* | Pronunciation | "English" |
|---|---|---|
| *cassa* | [kas-sa] | "crate," "cash desk" |
| *rosso* | [ros-so] | "red" |
| *abisso* | [abis-so] | "abyss" |

## Diphthongs

---

A diphthong is a juncture of either two identical consonants, as we mentioned earlier, or two vowels within the same syllable. The main characteristic of the vowel diphthong is that we pronounce it in one breath, and together both vowels lose their individual vowel characteristics, making a brand new sound. The first sound in the diphthong becomes a semivowel, because it loses a half of its vowel quality. We cannot break a diphthong into syllables.

Let us observe some examples:

**-*i* + vowel**

| *Italian* | Pronunciation | "English" |
|---|---|---|
| *chiaro* | [kyaro] | "clear" |
| *pieno* | [pyeno] | "full" |
| *chiodo* | [kyodo] | "nail" |
| *piuma* | [pyuma] | "feather" |

**-*u* + vowel**

| *Italian* | Pronunciation | "English" |
|---|---|---|
| *quando* | [kwando] | "when" |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *quello* | [kwel-lo] | "that" |
| *inguine* | [ingwine] | "groin" |
| *luogo* | [lwogo] | "place" |

**Vowel + -*i***

| ***Italian*** | **Pronunciation** | **"English"** |
|---|---|---|
| *zaino* | [zaino] | "rucksack" |
| *caleidoscopio* | [kaleidoskopyo] | "kaleidoscope" |
| *asteroide* | [asteroide] | "asteroid" |
| *anguilla* | [anguil-la] | "eel" |

**Vowel + -*u***

| ***Italian*** | **Pronunciation** | **"English"** |
|---|---|---|
| *pausa* | [pauza] | "break" |
| *deuterio* | [deuteryo] | "deuterium" |

As we can see, the vowels -*i* and -*u* combined with another vowel produce a vowel diphthong. The first case is when –*i* or -*u* come first:

-*I* followed by -*a*, -*e*, -*u*, or -*o* results in -*ya*, -*ye*, -*yu*, or -*yo*.

-*U* followed by -*a*, -*e*, -*i*, or -*o* results in -*wa*, -*we*, -*wi*, or -*wo*.

In these cases, -*i* and -*u* have become semi-vowels, because we do not pronounce them anymore as [u] and [i], but as [y] and [w].

The second case is when vowels are followed by -*i* or -*u*:

*-A*, *-e*, *-u*, or *-o* followed by *-i* become *-ai*, *-ei*, *-ui*, or *-oi*.

*-A* or *-e* followed by *-u* results in *-au* and *-eu*.

## Hiatus

---

Hiatus is the name for two contiguous vowels within the same word in which both of the vowels preserve their vowel quality. That is the main difference between a diphthong and a hiatus. When breaking the word into syllables, the hiatus is the place where we break the word. Here are some examples.

**For Example:**

| *Italian* | Pronunciation | "English" |
|---|---|---|
| *boemo* | [bo-e-mo] | "bohemian" |
| *creare* | [cre-a-re] | "to create" |
| *eroe* | [e-ro-e] | "hero" |
| *eroina* | [e-ro-i-na] | "heroin" |
| *violino* | [vi-o-li-no] | "violin" |

Regarding the pronunciation of a hiatus, keep your mouth open longer than usual. In some cases, the case of hiatus can cause difficulties in communication, as in the sentences below.

**For Example:**

1. *Lo d**à a A**ndrea.*
   "He will give it to Andrea."

2. *Ci vanno Luc**a e E**milio.*
   "Luca and Emilio are going there."

In these cases, especially when speaking fast, the speaker might merge the sounds *-a* and *-e*,

so the message can become unclear. In order to avoid it, we usually add the letter -*d* to "close" the hiatus.

**For Example:**

1. *Lo d**à ad A**ndrea.*
   "He will give it to Andrea."

2. *Ci vanno Luc**a ed E**milio.*
   "Luca and Emilio are going there."

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