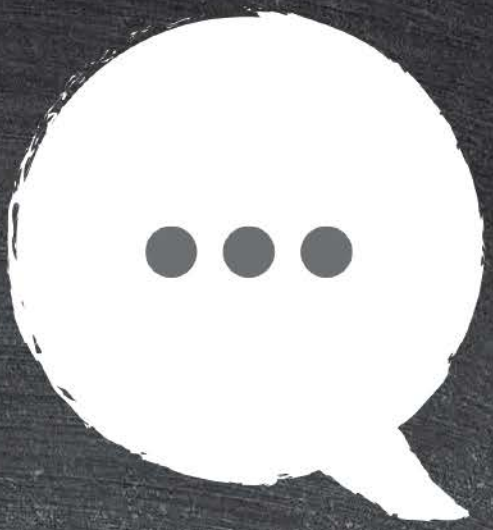
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LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #1
The Italian Word That Ends it All!

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1

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ITALIAN

1. Cinzia: Marco sai che giorno è oggi?
2. Marco: Il sei gennaio, perché?
3. Cinzia: Oggi è il giorno dell'Epifania, che tutte le feste si porta via.
4. Marco: Hai ragione! Quindi la Befana ha portato delle caramelle.
5. Cinzia: Per te ha portato solo carbone! Guarda!
6. Marco: Ma è carbone dolce! Buono!

ENGLISH

1. Cinzia: Marco, do you know what day it is today?
2. Marco: January sixth, why?
3. Cinzia: Today is the day of the Epiphany, which concludes all the holidays.
4. Marco: You are right! So the Befana has brought some candies.
5. Cinzia: She brought only coal for you! Look!
6. Marco: But it's sweet coal! Good!

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class	Gender
Epifania	Epiphany	noun	feminine

gennaio	January	noun	masculine
quindi	so, therefore	conjunction	
festa	feast, holiday, party	noun, noun feminine	
giorno	day	noun	masculine
carbone	coal, charcoal, carbon	noun	masculine

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Domani è l'Epifania. "Tomorrow it's the Epiphany."	**Io sono nata a gennaio.** "I was born in January."
A gennaio vado in Sicilia. "I am going to Sicily in January."	**Quindi non usciamo?** "So we are not going out?"
Questa festa è proprio noiosa! "This party is really boring!"	**Benvenuti alla mia festa di compleanno.** "Welcome to my birthday party."
Facciamo una festa? "Shall we have a party?"	**Che giorno è?** “What day is it?”
Che giorno è oggi? "Which day is it today?"	**Mangio lo yogurt ogni giorno.** "I eat yogurt every day."
Quella è una minera di carbone. "That is a coalmine."	

GRAMMAR

Portare

Oggi è il giorno dell'Epifania, che tutte le feste si porta via.

Today is the day of the Epiphany, which concludes all the holidays.

We use the Italian verb *portare* in many different circumstances and its meaning varies according to both the context into which we insert it and the direct object that follows it (i.e., the following noun or pronoun). As we have seen in the dialogue above, Cinzia says "... *Epifania, che tutte le feste si porta via.*"

The expression *portare via* means both "to take away," and "to end, to conclude." In this case, only the context provides the precise meaning of the verb (*portare*) + noun (*via*) association. Later in the dialogue, we use the verb *portare* in its basic meaning of "to bring."

There are other additional basic meanings of the verb. For example:

1. "to carry"
   Sto portando il mio (computer) portatile.
   "I'm carrying my laptop."

2. "to take someone/something to somewhere"
   Mi porteresti all'aereoporto?
   "Would you take me to the airport?"

There are additional commonly used expressions made with the verb *portare*.

For example:

1. ***portare sfortuna** (also, *sfiga*) - "to bring bad luck"
   Si dice che vedere un gatto nero porti sfortuna.
   "It is a common belief that seeing a black cat brings bad luck."

2. *portare aiuto/soccorso a qualcuno* - "to help someone"
   I medici hanno portato rapido soccorso ai rifugiati.
   "The medics arrived promptly to help the refugees."

3. *portare a compimento* - "to complete"
   Il progetto è stato portato a compimento.
   "The project was completed."

4. *portare al settimo cielo* - "to make (somebody) very happy"
   Stare con te mi porta la settimo cielo.
   "Being with you makes me very happy."

*__Note__: *Portare sfiga*, though not exactly a rude expression, is very informal. We should only use it with people we are very acquainted with.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Caesar

One can find Caesar's first important role in the Roman political scene in the foundation of the triumvirate, when he was called to lead the Roman Republic along with Crassus and Pompeius in 60 B.C.

He subsequently became consul in 59 B.C., in which the Senate gave him the duty to rule the Gallic areas (which correspond roughly to modern French) the subsequent year. As soon as he took up his position, he started a military campaign employing an old, though extremely efficient, Roman tactic. He pretended to protect some of the local tribes from rival clans, allying alternatively with the weakest side and reinforcing it with additional troops and supplies. This strategy proved to be a political and military success. By limiting Roman casualties, Caesar was literally able to conquer all of Gaul without losing human and economic resources, while gaining the trust and political consent of his allies in the meantime. Moreover, he let the Celts keep their religious and folk traditions, just requiring them to pay a tribute to Rome.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #2
Italian If-Clauses: If You Don't Do This, You'll Be Sorry!

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ITALIAN

1. Luca: Che ore sono?
2. Elena: È mezzogiorno e venti.
3. Luca: Se non fosse andata in bagno saremmo arrivati in tempo.
4. Elena: Non è stato per colpa della sosta, ma dell'incidente che ha rallentato il traffico.
5. Luca: Sì hai ragione, scusami.
6. Elena: Ora entriamo.

ENGLISH

1. Luca: What time is it?
2. Elena: It's twenty past noon.
3. Luca: If she hadn't gone to the bathroom, we would have arrived on time.
4. Elena: It wasn't because of the stopover, but the accident that slowed down the traffic.
5. Luca: Yes, you are right, sorry.
6. Elena: Let's go in now.

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
mezzogiorno	noon, midday	noun
colpa	fault, blame, guilt, sin	noun
sosta	stop, break, stop-off, stopover	noun
rallentare	to slow down, decelerate	verb
incidente	accident, incident	noun
avere ragione	to be right	expression

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Ci vediamo a mezzogiorno. "I'll see you at noon."	**È mezzogiorno!** "It's noon!"
Non è colpa mia. "It's not my fault."	**Facciamo una sosta?** "Shall we do a stopover?"
Rallenta, stai andando troppo veloce. "Slow down, you are going too fast."	**Ho avuto un incidente, ma niente di grave.** "I had an accident, but nothing serious."
C'è stato in incidente. "There's been an accident."	**Hai ragione!** "You are right!"
Lui pensa di aver sempre ragione. "He thinks he is always right."	

GRAMMAR

Type III If-Clauses

Se non fosse andata in bagno saremmo arrivati in tempo.

"If she hadn't gone to the bathroom, we would have arrived on time."

The *condizionale passato* (past conditional), alternatively called *condizionale composto* (compound conditional), is the compound form of the conditional mood. Compared to the present conditional, its proper usages are more limited.

In type III if-clauses, we employ the past conditional into the main clause to express past occurrences that did not take place since the requirement contained in the subordinate clause had not been met.

For instance:

1. *Se avesse prestato attenzione ai miei consigli, Luca non avrebbe perso il portafoglio.*
   "If he had paid attention to my advice, Luca wouldn't have lost his wallet."

2. Se Lucia non avesse perso il treno, avrebbe potuto essere qui con noi.
   "If Lucia hadn't missed the train, she could have been here with us."

3. Se fosse stato più determinato, Antonio sarebbe riuscito a completare il lavoro.
   "If he had been more resolute, Antonio would have been able to finish the job."

As explained in previous classes, we may introduce the subordinate clause with different prepositions, not just by *se* ("if").

For example:

1. *Con un po' di pazienza, avremmo potuto trovare i biglietti per il concerto.*
   (literally) "With a bit of patience, we could have found the tickets for the concert."
   Meaning:
   Se avessimo avuto un po' di pazienza, avremmo potuto trovare i biglietti per il concerto.
   "If we had been more patient, we could have found the tickets for the concert."

2. *Avendo una macchina più veloce, saremmo arrivati prima.*
   (literally) "Having a faster car, we would have arrived earlier."
   Meaning:
   Se avessimo avuto una macchina più veloce, saremmo arrivati prima.
   "If we had a faster car, we would have arrived earlier."

For further information regarding the different forms that if-clauses can take, please refer to the appropriate lesson and grammar bank.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Celtic Leader Vergingetorix

The information we have at our disposal about the Celtic leader Vergingetorix, comes almost exclusively from Caesar's accounts, contained in his *De Bello Gallico*. Of course, we can hardly consider this source objective or reliable since his rival wrote it in order to present himself as the savior of Rome. The other few sources we have at our disposal present Vergingetorix as a courageous and powerful warrior, warden of one of the most important druidic sites (the druids were the religious figures of the Celtic culture). His prestige and martial fame allowed the leader to succeed in reuniting many rival Celtic tribes, a nearly impossible task that nobody had been able to achieve before. Caesar ascribes this success to Vergingetorix's threats, deceptions, and despotism.

The truth was obviously different. The Celtic leader had to negotiate different needs, and rival tribes were fully aware that he couldn't afford to lose any warrior in the coming war against the Roman conquerors. More than mere vengeance, his political skills were probably the reason why Caesar decided to execute him after his triumph over the French Gauls.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #3
Past Conditional: I Would Have Come with You to Milan, But...

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ITALIAN

1. Peter: Il prossimo fine settimana andiamo al cinema?
2. Anna: Sarei venuta volentieri, ma ho già promesso ad Elena di uscire con lei.
3. Peter: Ah. Facciamo un'altra volta allora.
4. Anna: Comunque, che film avevi in mente?
5. Peter: Pensavo a Wall-E.

ENGLISH

1. Peter: Shall we go to the cinema next weekend?
2. Anna: I'd gladly come, but I've already promised Elena to go out with her.
3. Peter: Ah, let's do it some other time then.
4. Anna: Anyway, what movie did you have in mind?
5. Peter: I was thinking of Wall-E.

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
cinema	cinema, movie theater	noun

volentieri	willingly, gladly, sure, with pleasure	adverb
già	already, formerly	adverb
promettere	to promise, to swear, to guarantee, to commit oneself	verb
comunque	however, anyhow, anyway, whatever	conjunction
avere in mente	to have in mind	expression

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Mia cugina va al cinema ogni fine settimana. "My cousin goes to the cinema every weekend."	**Domenica vado al cinema.** "I am going to the movie theater on Sunday."
Beviamo un caffè? Volentieri. "Do we drink a coffee? With pleasure."	**Vengo volentieri con voi a mangiare la pizza.** "I gladly come with you to eat a pizza."
Vengo volentieri al cinema. "I'd gladly come to the movie theater."	**Sono già arrivati.** "They've already arrived."
Prometto di arrivare in orario. "I promise I'll arrive on time."	**Comunque, ci vediamo domani.** "Anyway, I'll see you tomorrow."
Cosa hai in mente? "What do you have in mind?"	

GRAMMAR

The Past Conditional Tense

Sarei venuta volentieri, ma ho già promesso ad Elena di uscire con lei.

"I'd gladly come, but I've already promised Elena to go out with her."

We may use the past conditional tense to express future actions that, according to the speaker, will not take place. In this case, the speaker takes up the viewpoint of the past instead of the present, formulating utterances as if they were already part of past occurrences. We should use this structure only when we are utterly sure that a future action will never take place.

For instance:

1. *Sarei venuto con te lunedì prossimo, ma sarò fuori città.*
   (literally) "I'd have come with you next Monday, but I'll be out of town."
   Meaning:
   Verrei con te lunedì prossimo, ma sarò fuori città.
   "I'd come with you next Monday, but I'll be out of town."

2. *Ti avrei comprato un regalo, ma non credo d'avere abbastanza soldi.*
   (literally) "I'd have bought you a gift, but I don't think I have enough money."
   Meaning:
   Ti comprerei un regalo, ma non credo che avrò abbastanza soldi.
   "I'd buy you a gift, but I don't think I'll have enough money."

We attain the past conditional tense of the three conjugations of verbs by using the present conditional of the auxiliary verb (either *essere* or *avere*) conjugated according to the person it refers to, followed by the past participle of the main verb:

Subject + auxiliary verb (present conditional) + main verb (past participle)

Keep in mind that whenever a verb requires the auxiliary verb *essere* ("to be"), we have to conjugate its past participle according to the gender and number of the person it refers to.

For instance:

1. *Maria sarebbe tornata* (feminine singular) *la settimana succesiva.*
   "Maria would have come back the following week."

2. *Francesco e Federico si sarebbero divertiti (masculine plural) molto al cinema.*
"Francesco and Federico would have enjoyed themselves a lot at the cinema."

Condizionale Passato

Auxiliary Verb: *essere*
partire - "to leave"

Condizionale Passato	**"Past Conditional"**
Io sarei partito	"I would have left"
Tu saresti partito	"You would have left"
Lui/lei sarebbe partito	"He/she/it would have left"
Noi saremmo partiti	"We would have left"
Voi sareste partiti	"You would have left"
Loro sarebbero partiti	"They would have left"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Caius Julius Caesar (100- 44 B.C.)

Caius Julius Caesar was born into an old patrician family, the *gens Jiulia*. However, the political influence and economic wealth of his family was declining; therefore, Caesar couldn't count on the economic and military means of rival patrician families.

Despite this disadvantageous start, he managed to rise among the senators using both his well-versed diplomatic skills, and a populist propaganda aimed to gain the consensus of the lower classes. He understood that lower classes do not care about political issues in general terms. On the contrary, they seek *panem and circenses*, or "proper nourishment and leisure activities."

His political career is marked by the constant attention to people's support on one hand, and by the negotiation of power between the different senatorial parties on the other. Later in his career, Caesar openly displayed his power by founding public games and contests, and trying to build his leadership on a "man of the people" model. This model proved to be extremely effective during the civil war that tore the Republic apart, leaving ashes on which his heir, Octavianus Augustus, would build one of the greatest Empires that ever existed.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #4
Past Conditional: We Knew it Would Always Last in Italy!

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ITALIAN

1. Peter: È dalla stazione di servizio che sei triste.

2. Luca: Odio essere in ritardo. Mentre aspettavamo Anna ed Elena, sapevo che saremmo arrivati in ritardo.

3. Peter: Non essere giù, non è una cosa grave.

4. Luca: Hai ragione. Inoltre oggi è un giorno per festeggiare.

5. Peter: Bravo!

6. Luca: Andiamo a salutare gli altri.

ENGLISH

1. Peter: It's from the service station that you are sad.

2. Luca: I hate being late. While we were waiting for Anna and Elena, I knew we'd arrive late.

3. Peter: Don't be depressed. It's not something serious.

4. Luca: You are right. Besides, today is a day to celebrate.

5. Peter: Good!

6. Luca: Let's go say hi to the others.

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
bravo	good, clever, smart, skilled	adjective
triste	sad, gloomy, unhappy	adjective
odiare	to hate, to loathe, to detest	verb
essere giù	to be down, to be depressed, to be run down	expression
inoltre	furthermore, besides, moreover, also, what's more	adverb
festeggiare	to celebrate	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Sei molto brava a disegnare. "You are very good at drawing."	**Non essere triste.** "Don't be sad."
Odio andare a scuola! "I hate going to school."	**Sei sempre giù.** "You are always depressed."
Inoltre vorrei ringraziare Anna. "Furthermore, I'd like to thank Anna."	**Quando festeggiamo le vostre nozze?** "When do we celebrate your wedding?"
Domani sera festeggiamo il compleanno di Lucia. "Tomorrow evening we are celebrating Lucia's birthday."	

GRAMMAR

Past Conditional Tense

Mentre aspettavamo Anna ed Elena, sapevo che saremmo arrivati in ritardo.

"While we were waiting for Anna and Elena, I knew we'd arrive late."

The principal usage of the past conditional is to express future events in the past, following the tense agreement of past tenses. This use differs from English, since in Italian we employ the past conditional, whereas in English we would use the present conditional instead. In this case, a verb conjugated in the past tense always precedes the past conditional.

For instance:

1. *Mentre pensavo alla mia ragazza sapevo che mi avrebbe chiamato.*
   "While I was thinking about my girlfriend, I knew she would call me."

2. *I passeggeri aspettavano sul treno, sapendo che sarebbero arrivati in ritardo.*
   "The passengers were waiting on the train, knowing they'd arrive late."

3. Anche se non aveva prove, Antonio sentiva che avrebbe vinto la partita.
   "Even though he didn't have any proof, Antonio felt he'd win the match."

We attain the past conditional of verbs that require the auxiliary verb *avere* as follows:

Subject + auxiliary verb (present conditional) + main verb (past participle)

Note that the past participle of main verbs that require the auxiliary verb *avere* never change their form according to the subject they refer to.

For instance:

1. *Io avrei comprato una casa.*
   "I would have bought a house."

2. *Noi avremmo comprato una casa.*
   "We would have bought a house."

Condizionale Passato

Auxiliary Verb: *avere*

giocare - "to play"

Condizionale Passato	**"Past Conditional"**
Io avrei giocato	"I would have played"
Io avresti giocato	"You would have played"
Lui/lei avrebbe giocato	"He/she/it would have played"
Noi avremmo giocato	"We would have played"
Voi avreste giocato	"You would have played"
Loro avrebbero giocato	"They would have played"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

The Fontana di Trevi

The great architect Niccolò Salvi realized the *Fontana di Trevi* during the papacy of Clemente XII in 1735. The fountain takes its water supply from the ancient *acquedotto Vergine* ("Her Lady aqueduct") developed in 19 D.C. by the consul Agrippa, son-in-law of the first emperor Agrippa. The fountain has a splendid triumphal arch, surmounted by an attic displaying Clemente XII's personal blazon. The centre is occupied by a huge statue of the god *Oceano* ("Ocean"), riding a shell-shaped cart pulled by seahorses. Tritons lead the seahorses, traditionally considered the heralds of Neptune in the ancient Greek and Roman culture. Two women stand next to the statue of Ocean, which symbolize *Salubrità* ("healthiness") and *Prosperità* ("prosperity").

Many legends surround the fountain. The most famous one says that when people toss coins into the fountain, they'll return to Rome. Another less-known, romantic tale regards lovers. The legend says that if lovers exchange a kiss on the eastern-most side of the fountain, they'll be blessed with the privilege of being forever loyal to each other.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #5
But Mom...My Italian Teacher Said They Are Masculine Nouns!

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ITALIAN

1. Peter: Non ho mai bevuto il Barbera, è buono?
2. Luca: Sì è molto buono. Specialmente il Barbera d'Asti.
3. Peter: Hai ragione, ha un aroma molto forte.
4. Luca: Prendiamo qualcosa da mangiare.
5. Peter: C'è anche il gorgonzola! Buono!
6. Luca: Sei un buongustaio.

ENGLISH

1. Peter: I've never drunk Barbera wine. Is it good?
2. Luca: Yes, it's very good; especially Barbera d'Asti.
3. Peter: You are right. It has a very strong aroma.
4. Luca: Let's get something to eat.
5. Peter: There's also gorgonzola cheese! Yummy!
6. Luca: You're a gourmet.

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class	Gender

bere	to drink	verb	
barbera	Barbera wine	noun	
specialmente	especially, notably, particularly	adverb	
aroma	aroma, flavoring	noun	
gorgonzola	Gorgonzola	noun	
buongustaio	gourmet, foodie	noun	masculine

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Mia madre non beve alcolici. "My mother doesn't drink alcohol."	**Bevo sempre un caffè dopo pranzo.** "I always drink coffee after lunch."
Beviamo un tè? "Shall we drink tea?"	**Bevo un po' di vino.** "I drink some wine."
Mi piace molto il barbera. "I really like Barbera wine."	**Specialmente di notte sono nervoso.** "I'm especially nervous at night."
Il caffè appena macinato ha un buon aroma. "Freshly ground coffee has a good aroma."	**Il gorgonzola è un po' piccante.** "Gorgonzola cheese is a little spicy."
Luca è un buongustaio. "Luca is a gourmet."	

GRAMMAR

Masculine Nouns Ending in -a

C'è anche il gorgonzola!

"There's also gorgonzola cheese!"

A certain number of singular masculine Italian nouns end with the vowel *-a*, which we normally associate with feminine singular nouns. We may divide these nouns into four categories according to the historical development within the Italian language:

First Category

Various Italian names, the majority of which come from ancient Greek words, have mostly kept their gender and form. The plural form of these nouns still end with *-i*.

For example:

1. *Il poeta* (masculine singular) *scrisse una profonda poesia.*
   "The poet wrote a profound poem."

2. *I poeti (masculine plural)* civili sono sempre stati parte d'ogni cultura.
   "Civil poets have always been part of every culture."

As shown in the sample sentences above, articles and adjectives agree with the gender and number of the nouns we attach them to.

Learner's Tip

Many of these nouns end with *-ma*, *-gramma*, or *-arca*.

The following list provides you with the most widely used nouns belonging to this category.

Please note that "indeclinable" means that the noun does not alter its inflections, but always stays the same.

Italiano (singolare)	"English" (singular)
aforisma (l')	"aphorism"
aldilà (l' - indeclinable*)*	"afterlife"
amalgama (l')	"amalgam"
arciduca (l')	"archduke"
aròma (l')	"aroma, fragrance"
ascèta (l')	"ascetic"
assìoma (l')	"axiom"
battistrada (il - indeclinable*)*	"tread (of a tire)"
barbera (il)	"kind of Italian wine"
bòa (il - indeclinable*)*	"boa"
bòia (il - indeclinable*)*	"executioner"
càccia (il - indeclinable*)*	"fighter"
camerata (il)	"member of the Fascist party"
Canada (il - indeclinable*)*	"Canada"
capolinea (il - indeclinable*)*	"Terminus, end of the line"
carisma (il - indeclinable*)*	"charisma"
carovita (il - indeclinable*)*	"cost of living"
cataclisma (il)	"cataclysm"
cavalcavia (il - indeclinable*)*	"flyover, overpass"
cìnema (il - abbreviation of "*cinematografo*"*)*	"cinema"

clima (il)	"climate"
còbra (il - indeclinable*)*	"cobra"
colera (il - indeclinable*)*	"cholera"
coma (il - indeclinable*)*	"coma"
crocevia (il - indeclinable*)*	"crossroads"
cruciverba (il - indeclinable*)*	"crosswords"
diplòma (il)	"degree"
dogma (il)	"dogma"
doposcuola (il - indeclinable*)*	"supplementary lessons after school-time"
dormiveglia (il - indeclinable*)*	"drowsiness"
dramma (il)	"drama"
duca (il)	"duke"
enigma (l')	"enigma"
entroterra (l' - indeclinable*)*	"inland"
fantasma (il)	"phantom"
fonèma (il)	"phoneme"
geòmetra (il)	"surveyor"
gerarca (il)	"gerarca" (Fascist party official)
gorgonzola (il - indeclinable*)*	"kind if Italian soft cheese"
gorilla (il - indeclinable*)*	"gorilla"
grana (il)	"kind of Italian hard cheese"

guardaroba (il)	"closet"
idiòma (l')	"idiom"
marasma (il)	"chaos, confusion"
messìa (il - indeclinable*)*	"Messiah"
miasma (il)	"miasma"
monarca (il)	"monarch"
panorama (il)	"view"
papà (il - indeclinable*)*	"dad"
pàpa (il)	"pope"
parabrezza (il - indeclinabile*)*	"windshield"
paradigma (il)	"paradigm"
parapiglia (il - indeclinable*)*	"turmoil"
patriarca (il)	"patriarch"
pentagramma (il)	"pentagram"
pianéta (il)	"planet"
pilòta (il)	"pilot"
pirata (il)	"pirate"
poèma (il)	"poem"
poèta (il)	"poet"
portafortuna (il - indeclinable*)*	"lucky charm"
prisma (il)	"prism"

problèma (il)	"problem"
proclama (il)	"proclamation"
profèta (il)	"prophet"
programma (il)	"program"
promemoria (il - indeclinable*)*	"memo, note"
retroterra (il - indeclinable*)*	"hinterland"
schema (lo)	"scheme, pattern"
scioglilingua (lo - indeclinable*)*	"tongue twister"
scisma (lo)	"schism"
sistèma (il)	"system"
sòsia (il - indeclinable*)*	"double"
stratagèmma (lo)	"stratagem, trick"
telegramma (il)	"telegram"
tèma (il)	"theme"
teorèma (il)	"theorem"
tràuma (il)	"trauma"
valpolicella (il - indeclinable*)*	"kind of wine"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Parcere subiectis, debellare superbos

("Forgive those who submit, defeat those who are arrogant")

Vergilius, Aeneid, VI, 853

This maxim isn't merely a well-written verse of the greatest Latin poet. In fact, it perfectly summarizes the standard Roman expansionistic policy. The Roman Republic first, and the Roman Empire later, were extremely generous to those people who willingly acknowledged the authority of Rome. On the contrary, it was completely unforgiving and violent to those who opposed its rule and sought independence even after they were conquered. The Romans allowed their allies to keep their own religious and folk traditions knowing that they would be substituted by the Roman culture in due time.

Caesar adopted the same policy at the battle of Alesia, the city in which the last Celtic leader Vercingetorix decided to withdraw for the final battle against the Roman invaders. Caesar didn't give the authorization to leave the city to its inhabitants thus forcing them to follow the same fate as the army they decided to host. This attitude shows us that the extent of Roman rights and laws never extended to those who didn't belong to them. The Celtic army let the population die of starvation, while Caesar watched the tragedy unfold before his eyes, unmoved. They intended these events to be a message for both near and far enemies of Rome. They worked pretty well, since the Romans conquered a large deal of their territories with diplomacy and cunning, rather than bloodshed.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #6 Masculine Nouns Part 2: I Can Make Italian Guys Shorter?

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ITALIAN

1. Elena: Cosa ti ha chiesto Peter?
2. Anna: Vuole andare al cinema il prossimo fine settimana.
3. Elena: Il raga vuole sempre uscire.
4. Anna: Beato lui, io vorrei stare a casa e riposare.
5. Elena: Ora andiamo a fare delle foto alla sposa.

ENGLISH

1. Elena: What did Peter ask you?
2. Anna: Next weekend he wants to go to the cinema.
3. Elena: The guy always wants to go out.
4. Anna: Lucky him. I'd like to stay at home and rest.
5. Elena: Now let's go and take some pictures of the bride.

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
ragazzo	boy, lad, guy	noun
beato	blissful, lucky, blessed	adjective
sempre	always	adverb

riposare	to rest, repose	verb
sposa	bride	noun
cosa	what	interrogative word

SAMPLE SENTENCES

I ragazzi ci aspettano. "The guys are waiting for us."	**Quel ragazzo è carino.** "That guy is cute."
Beato Luca. Ha già finito i compiti. "Lucky Luca. He already finished homework."	**Sono sempre indaffarato.** "I'm always busy."
Giulia è sempre gentile con me. "Giulia is always kind with me."	**Mangiamo sempre insieme.** "We always eat together."
Vado a riposare per mezz'ora. "I'm going to rest for half and hour."	**La sposa è molto bella.** "The bride is very pretty."
Cosa facciamo domani sera? "What shall we do tomorrow evening?"	**Cosa mangi?** "What are you eating?"
Cosa hai detto? "What did you say?"	

GRAMMAR

Abbreviated Italian Masculine Nouns

Il raga vuole sempre uscire.

"The guy always wants to go out."

In today's class, we shall analyze a particular category of nouns: the abbreviations. Since they kept the gender of their previous form, their functioning differs slightly from standard Italian nouns.

Second Category

Certain abbreviations, by now totally accepted as independent proper words, kept the gender they had before changing. In other words, the gender of the noun comes directly from the former full form of the word.

For example:

1. *Il cinema* (i.e. *cinematografo*) *vicino a casa mia è molto economico.*
   "The cinema close to my home is very inexpensive."

2. *I cinema moderni non sono belli come quelli vecchi.*
   "Modern cinemas are not as beautiful as the old ones."

3. *Il raga (i.e. ragazzo) vuole andare a ballare.*
   "The guy wants to go dancing."

4. *I raga (i.e. ragazzi) vogliono andare a ballare.*
   "The guys want to go dancing."

Many abbreviations have the same written form both in the singular and plural number. However, articles and adjectives agree with the gender and number of the nouns they are attached to, as shown in the second and fourth sample sentences above. Note that this does not apply to abbreviations of feminine nouns, which normally keep their former gender.

For example:

Previous Italian Form	*Abbreviated Italian Form*	"English Translation"

La fotografia è bella.	*La foto è bella.*	"The photo is nice."
Ho comprato una nuova motocicletta.	*Ho comprato una nuova moto.*	"I bought a new motorcycle."
La vostra automobile è molto bella.	*La vostra auto è molto bella.*	"Your automobile is very nice."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

The Colonna Palace

The *Palazzo Colonna* (Colonna Palace) is a splendid Roman palace located in the center of Rome on an area that has been dedicated to the buildings of the Colonna family since the tenth century A.C. The ancient family name of the Colonna family was *Tuscolo*. It seems it was changed to Colonna later since their palace was close to the famous *Colonna di Traiano* (Column of Traianus), erected by the emperor to display his deeds as Roman emperor. The column also became the official symbol of the family, emblazoned on their heraldry.

The architect Girolamo Fontana renovated the palace in 1671. He built the most famous part of the edifice, the *Galleria Colonna* (Colonna Gallery), planning to make it one of the most important European museums. Unfortunately, during the French revolution the Colonna family had to sell some important pieces of art (works of Raffaello, Tiziano, Veronese, Correggio, Reni, and Guercino), whose place in the collection was only partially taken by later acquisitions. However, both the palace and its gallery are still among the most marvelous places to visit when in Rome.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #7
Masculine Nouns Part 3: Can a Man Do a Woman's Job in Italy?

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ITALIAN

1. Elena: Che lavoro fa il marito di Jennifer?
2. Anna: Fa il giornalista.
3. Elena: E la madre di Jennifer?
4. Anna: Anche lei fa la giornalista.
5. Elena: E il padre?
6. Anna: Se ho capito bene è un dentista.

ENGLISH

1. Elena: What is Jennifer's husband's job?
2. Anna: He is a journalist.
3. Elena: And Jennifer's mother?
4. Anna: She's also a journalist.
5. Elena: And the father?
6. Anna: If I've understood correctly, he's a dentist.

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class	Gender

giornalista	journalist, reporter	noun	
madre	mother	noun	feminine
padre	father	noun	masculine
capire	to understand, comprehend, see, figure out	verb	
dentista	dentist	noun	masculine
marito	husband	noun	masculine

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Da grande voglio fare il giornalista. "When I grow up, I want to be a journalist."	**Pietro, tua madre è sempre molto giovanile.** "Peter, your mother is always very youthful."
Tua madre cucina molto bene. "Your mother cooks very well."	**Il padre di Giacomo è un astronauta.** "Giacomo's father is an astronaut."
Ho capito le tue intenzioni. "I understood your intentions."	**Non hai capito nulla.** "You haven't understood anything."
Ieri sono andato dal dentista. "Yesterday, I went to the dentist."	**Suo marito ha trentadue anni.** "Her husband is thirty-two years old."

GRAMMAR

Italian Masculine Nouns Referring to Specific People

Fa il giornalista.

"He is a journalist."

In today's class, we will continue our analysis of Italian masculine nouns ending with *-a*. The third category includes names that take a specific gender only when they refer to a specific person.

Third Category

This group includes nouns whose gender is masculine when they refer to males, and feminine when they refer to females.

For instance:

1. *La giornalista è alta e carina.*
   "The (female) journalist is tall and nice-looking."

2. Il giornalista italiano ha lavorato in America.
   "The Italian (male) journalist worked in the US."

3. La paracadutista è atterrata senza problemi.
   "The parachutist landed safely."

4. Il paracadutista è salito sull'aereo.
   "The parachutist got on the plane."

As you can see from the examples above, unless we previously know the gender of the person we are talking about, we can infer this solely by the (in fact, many) elements attached to the noun. These elements, such as articles and the ending vowel of adjectives and past participles (when they require the auxiliary *essere*, or "to be," of course), change according to the noun's gender. Keep in mind that in Italian we use masculine gender when referring to mixed groups.

Note that the majority of these nouns end with the suffix *-ista*. The following list presents the most commonly used nouns belonging to this category.

Italiano (singolare)	"English" (singular)
acrobata	"acrobat"
apprendista	"apprentice"
artista	"artist"
astronauta	"astronaut"
autista	"driver"
camionista	"truck driver"
carrista	"tank driver"
comunista	"communist"
dentista	"dentist"
despota	"despot"
economista	"economist"
elettricista	"electrician"
estremista	"extremist"
giornalista	"journalist"
ipocrita	"hypocrite"
macchinista	"machinist; engineer"
modellista	"model maker"
omicida	"person who committed a homicide"
paracadutista	"parachutist"
stratega	"strategist"

suicida	"person that committed suicide"
terrorista	"terrorist"
violinista	"violin player"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Via Nazionale

Via Nazionale was renovated during the late nineteenth century by order of the Italian king Umberto I. The Roman inhabitants criticized how the king decided to carry out the project, mostly for the distrust of the Italian state administrators seen as *buzzurri* (Roman dialect term indicating people lacking good taste and manners). The critics didn't take into account that the former ruler of the eternal city, Pope XI, had already started many renovation works.

Via Nazionale connects the station of Roma Termini to *Piazza della Repubblica*. There are many shops, traditional and not, on its sides that are among the most popular places for shopping-lovers in Rome. The *Palazzo delle Esposizioni* (Palace of Exhibitions) is an important cultural center. It hosts a great number of permanent and temporary exhibitions, an experimental theatre, and the so-called "jazz house." Enjoying the magnificent forms of Roman sculptures bordered by the musical tradition of professional jazz players creates a magical atmosphere you will only find in a few other places.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #8 Masculine Nouns Part 4: The Radium Helped You Sleep in Italy?

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ITALIAN

1. Peter: A Firenze costruiranno il metro?
2. Luca: Il metro? Ah! Attento si dice la metro.
3. Peter: Quindi la metro è il mezzo di trasporto.
4. Luca: Esatto.
5. Peter: Allora il metro cos'è?
6. Luca: Il metro è l'unità di misura e anche lo strumento per misurare la lunghezza.

ENGLISH

1. Peter: Will they build a meter in Firenze?
2. Luca: A meter? Ah! Careful, you have to say subway.
3. Peter: So subway is the means of transportation.
4. Luca: Right.
5. Peter: So what is a meter?
6. Luca: A meter is a unit of measurement and a device to measure length.

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class	Gender
metro	meter	noun	masculine
attento	careful, painstaking, prudent	adjective	
metro	subway	noun (feminine)	
mezzo di trasporto	means of transport	noun	
esatto	exact, correct, right	adjective	
strumento	instrument, tool	noun	

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Sono alto un metro e settanta centimetri. "I am one meter and seventy centimeters tall."	**Stai attento!** "Be careful!"
La metro di Milano è molto comoda. "Milano subway is very comfortable."	**I mezzi di trasporto moderni sono molto veloci.** "Modern means of transport are very fast."
La risposta è esatta! "The answer is correct!"	**È esatto!** "It's correct!"

Il telescopio è uno strumento per vedere le stelle.

"The telescope is an instrument for viewing stars."

GRAMMAR

Masculine Nouns Whose Meaning is Determined by Gender

Il metro? Ah! Attento si dice la metro.

"A meter? Ah! Careful, you have to say subway."

In today's class, we will see the last category of Italian nouns ending with *-a*.

Fourth Category

This category of nouns changes their meaning according to the gender they take. Since their singular written form never changes, we can identify their gender solely by the articles, adjectives, and past participles (in compound tenses requiring the auxiliary *essere*, or "to be"). The following list provides the most commonly used nouns belonging to this category. Note that when there is no equivalent translation in English, we provide an explanation of the word in the third column (Meaning).

Italiano (singolare)	**"English" (singular)**	**Meaning**
(l') alma; m.	----------	"game similar to checkers"
(la) alma; f.	"soul"	
(l') asse; m.	"axis"	
(l') asse; f.	"board"	
(il) barba; m.	----------	"uncle" in some northern dialects
(la) barba; f.	"beard"	
(il) boa; m.	"boa"	
(la) boa; f.	"buoy"	
(il) caccia; m.	"fighter" (airplane)	

(la) caccia; f.	"hunting"	
(il) camerata; m.	----------	"member of the fascist party"
(la) camerata; f.		"dormitory" (hospitals or barracks)
(il) capitale; m.	"capital" (money invested)	
(la) capitale; f.	"capital" (of a country)	
(il) cappa; m	"the letter -k"	
(la) cappa; f.	"cloak"	
(il) carcere; m.	"sentence" (as in jail)	
(la) carcere; f.	"prison" (building)	
(il) corrente; m.	"stringer"	
(la) corrente; f.	"current, stream, flow"	
(la) Comune; f.	"the revolutionary government of Paris in 1871"	
(il) comune; m.	"municipality"	
(il) dramma; m.	"drama"	
(la) drama; f.	"drachma" (old Greek currency)	
(il) fine; m.	"purpose, aim"	
(la) fine; f.	"end, conclusion"	
(il) governante; m.	"governor, statesman"	
(la) governante; f.	"housekeeper"	

(il) lama; m.	"Buddhist monk"	
(la) lama; f.	"blade"	
(il) metro; m.	"meter" (both the device and the unit of length)	
(la) metro; f.	"subway"	
(il) mitra; m.	"machine gun"	
(la) mitra; f.	"bishop's headgear"	
(il) morale; m.	"mood, spirit"	
(la) morale; f.	"morals, ethics"	
(il) moto; m.	"movement"	
(la) moto; f.	"motorbike"	
(il) presente; m.	----------	"the present time"
(la) presente; f.	----------	"the letter being written"
(il) prima; m.	----------	"what happened before the present time"
(la) prima; f.	----------	"the first night of a theatrical opera"
(il) radio; m.	"radium"	
(la) radio; f.	"radio"	
(il) rosa; m.	"pink" (color)	
(la) rosa; f.	"rose" (flower)	
(il) tema; m.	"topic"	

(la) tema; f.	"fear"	
(il) viola; m.	"purple"	
(la) viola; f.	"viola" (classical musical instrument)	

Note:
m. = masculine
f. = feminine

Finally, note that in informal Italian, people may playfully use the family name instead of the first name to refer to a person they are acquainted with. In this case, the definite article follows the gender of the person and it's not related to the form of their family names.

For instance:

First Name:
Ieri ho visto Maria (first name) *Piccolo* (family name) che parlava con Mike.

Family Name:
Ieri ho visto la Piccolo che parlava con Mike.

"English"
"Yesterday, I saw Maria Piccolo talking to Mike."

We may also use the same structure in formal speech when talking about famous artists and prominent characters of the past. We can then say, *il Machiavelli*, *l'Alighieri* (Dante), etc.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Palazzo Barberini

Palazzo Barberini (Barberini palace) was erected by the combined efforts of three great Italian architects of the Renaissance: Carlo Maderno, Francesco Borromini, and Gian Lorenzo Bernini. In 1662, the nephew of the emergent cardinal Maffeo Barberini, Francesco

Barberini, purchased a rural villa to make it his private residence. After many expensive renovation works, it became a magnificent villa meant to host the most important aristocratic families and religious authorities. Francesco's generosity became flamboyantly extreme. He acquired many important pieces of art from other aristocratic families and private vendors. Unfortunately, due to hereditary issues, his huge collection was gradually broken up into smaller parts and completely dispersed in 1934. After a very long and difficult intelligence investigation, the Italian State managed to get many works back.

The palace nowadays hosts about 1500 canvases and nothing less than two thousand sculptures obtained from the most important Roman art collectors.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #9
Italian Affirmative Imperative: Pass Me the Salt, Please!

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ITALIAN

1. Peter: Luca, passami il sale, per favore.
2. Luca: Tieni.
3. Peter: Passami anche il formaggio, per favore.
4. Luca: Certo, tieni.
5. Peter: Certo che noia questo matrimonio, meno male che almeno il cibo è buono.
6. Luca: È vero. Versami un pò di quel vino dai.

ENGLISH

1. Peter: Luca, pass me the salt, please.
2. Luca: Here it is.
3. Peter: Pass me the cheese too, please.
4. Luca: Sure, here it is.
5. Peter: This wedding party is really boring, good thing that at least the food is good.
6. Luca: True. Come on; pour me some of that wine.

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class	Gender
passare	stop by, pass by, drop in	verb	
vino	wine	noun	masculine
sale	salt	noun	masculine
noia	boredom, bore, drag	noun	
formaggio	cheese	noun	
versare	to pour, spill, shed	verb	

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Mi puoi passare una forchetta? "Could you hand me a fork?"	**Una bottiglia di vino bianco.** "A bottle of white wine."
Aggiungi solo un pò di sale. "Just add a bit of salt."	**Lucia è una noia!** "Lucia is such a bore!"
Mi piace mangiare il prosciutto con il formaggio. "I like to eat ham with cheese."	**Versami del vino!** "Pour me some wine!"

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Italian Affirmative Imperative

Luca, passami il sale, per favore.

"Luca, pass me the salt, please."

As in English, the *modo imperativo* ("imperative mood") has only one tense (present) and two persons (second person singular and second person plural).

Regarding informal Italian, we use the imperative mood to issue orders or to offend.

For example:

1. *Smetti di parlare!*
   "Stop talking!"

2. *Ascoltate ciò che sto dicendo.*
   "Listen to what I am saying."

3. *Vai al diavolo*
   "Go to hell."

In formal Italian, you should strongly avoid the use of the imperative mood without any polite introductory phrases. When we wish to give suggestions, invitations, exhortations, or politely issue orders, we can choose between the singular or plural form of the second person.

Let's see it in details:

Second Person (either singular or plural): use the imperative mood, preceded by polite expressions such as *per favore*, *per cortesia* ("please"), etc.

For example:

1. *Per favore, passami il sale.*
   "Pass me the salt, please."

2. *Per cortesia, telefona a Claudio.*
   "Call Claudio, please."

3. *Stammi bene.*
   "Be well."

We present the *imperativo presente* ("present imperative") of the three conjugations of regular verbs below.

Conjugation	*Infinito* ("English")	*Seconda persona singolare*	*Seconda persona plurale*	Second Person Singular & Plural "English"
First	*comprare* ("to buy")	*compr-a*	*compr-ate*	"buy"
Second	*prendere* ("to take")	*prend-i*	*prend-ete*	"take"
Third	*aprire* ("to open")*	*apr-i*	*apr-ite*	"open"

***Note**: The root of regular verbs is the same of the indicative present tense. In other words, the third conjugation root may belong to either of the two groups - the standard or that which requires -*isc*-. For additional information, please refer to the appropriate Newbie lesson.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

The Arco della Pace ("Arch of Peace")

The *Arco della Pace* (Arch of Peace) of Milan lies at the center of piazza Sempione, a large area located at the very heart of the city.

Luigi Cagnola started its construction in 1807, under the patronage of Napoleon and the city of Milan. When the fall of the *Regno Italico* (Italian Reign) occurred, two-thirds of the monument was completed. In particular, the Arch and decorative sculptures had already been realized; the latter represented idealized figures, thus following the neoclassic fashion of seeking to relate human deeds to timeless archetypes. The most appealing sculptures portrayed history and poetry.

The arch was finished only in 1826 by the will of the Austrian emperor Francis I of Austria who dedicated it to the peace that reunited the greater part of the European countries in 1815.

Francesco Londonio and Francesco Beverelli completed it in 1838 and the emperor himself attended its unveiling.

In his memorial called A Movable Feast, Ernest Hemingway erroneously says that the Arch of Peace of Milan was parallel to other two important French arches, the Arches of Triumph of Carrousel and Paris.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #10
Italian Affirmative Imperative: Relax, Please!

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ITALIAN

1. Amica di Luca: Luca, vai! Tocca a te!
2. Professore: Buon giorno signor Martini. Prego, si sieda.
3. Luca: Grazie.
4. Professore: Allora, Signor Martini, vediamo se ha studiato…mi parli del suo argomento preferito, per cortesia.
5. Luca: Va bene.
6. Professore: E si rilassi, per cortesia.

ENGLISH

1. Luca's friend: Luca, go! It's your turn!
2. Examiner: Good morning, Mr. Martini. Please, have a seat.
3. Luca: Thank you.
4. Examiner: So, Mr. Martini, let's see if you studied…talk to me about your favorite subject, please.
5. Luca: Okay.
6. Examiner: And please, relax.

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
vedere	to look, to watch, to see	verb
sedersi	to sit, sit down	verb
preferito	favorite	adjective
argomento	subject, argument, topic	noun
rilassarsi	to relax, rest, loosen up	verb
studiare	to study	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Andiamo a vedere una gara di sci. "Let's go watch a ski competition."	**Hai visto quel film?** "Have you seen that movie?"
Hai visto il mio cellulare? "Have you seen my cell phone?"	**Mi siedo qui.** "I sit here."
Il blu è il mio colore preferito. "My favorite color is blue."	**Non cambiare argomento!** "Don't change the subject!"
Ho bisogno di rilassarmi. "I need to relax."	**Quanto tempo studi al giorno?** "How long do you study in a day?"
È interessante studiare l'italiano. "Studying Italian is interesting."	**Peter studia ingegneria.** "Peter studies engineering."

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Italian Affirmative Imperative Used in Formal Situations

Si rilassi, per cortesia.
"And please, relax."

When we wish to give suggestions, invitations, exhortations, or politely issue orders, we use the third person (either singular or plural) of the *congiuntivo presente* ("present subjunctive"). The sentence may be followed by the same polite expressions used for the *imperativo presente* ("present imperative").

For Example:

1. *Mi lasci il suo numero di telefono, per favore.*
   "Give me your phone number, please." (literally)
   "Sir/miss, would you give me your phone number, please?" (meaning)

2. *Si rilassi, per cortesia.*
   "Relax, please." (literally)
   "Sir/miss would you relax, please?" (meaning)

3. *Prego, si sieda.*
   "Please, take your seat."

Please, note that the employment of third person is preferred in any formal circumstance, including when the speaker is acquainted with the interlocutor.

The *imperativo presente* conjugation of Italian irregular verbs is presented below.

Infinito Italiano	***Seconda persona singolare***	**"Second Person Singular"**	***Seconda persona plurale***	**"Second Person Plural"**
*andare** ("to go")	*va'*	"go"	*and-ate*	"go"
avere ("to have")	*abbi*	"have"	*abbi-ate*	"take"

*dare** ("to give")	*dai*	"give"	*d-ate*	"open"
*dire** ("to say")	*di'*	"say"	*d-ite*	"say"
essere ("to be")	*Sii*	"be"	*Si-ate*	"be"
*fare** ("to do; to make")	*fa'*	"do"	*f-ate*	"do"
sapere ("to know")	*sappi*	"know"	*sappi-ate*	"know"
*stare** ("to stay")	*sta'*	"stay"	*st-ate*	"stay"

*Please, note that when the second person of these verbs attaches to a pronoun, the latter doubles its starting consonant.

For Example:

1. *Dammelo!* (i.e., *Dai a me quello!*)
   "Give it to me!"

2. *Fallo!* (i.e., *Fai quello!*)
   "Do it!"

3. *Vacci!* (i.e, *Vai là!*)
   "Go there!"

We will fully explain the functioning of the present imperative when associated with both direct and indirect pronouns in the next class.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

The loggia degli Osii ("loggia of the Osii")

The *loggia degli Osii* ("The Loggia of the Osii") overlooks *piazza dei Mercanti* ("Merchants' Square") in Milan. It was built in 1316 by order of Matteo Visconti who wished to erect an interlocking system of arcades surrounding *Palazzo della Ragione* ("Palace of Reason"), devoting it to the city attorney general and tribunal. The architect Scoto da San Gimignano planned the palace.

The court judges used the balcony of the palace (called parlera, "place from where people speak") to make public announcements, read edicts, and pass sentences. The balcony still displays the blazons of aristocratic Milanese families, especially those of the Visconti family who ruled Milan for almost two hundred years.

The palace has been renovated many times during the centuries, altering its original structure and including both decorative and substantial elements of many different periods.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #11
Italian Negative Imperative: Don't Waste Time on Your Mobile!

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ITALIAN

1. Mario: Ciao Elena! Come va il lavoro?
2. Elena: Ciao Mario! Non c'è male, grazie, oggi ci sono molti clienti.
3. Mario: Mi raccomando non distrarti e non ascoltare la radio mentre sei al lavoro, ok?
4. Elena: Ok, ok. (un telefonino inizia a squillare)
5. Mario: E non perdere tempo al telefonino, spegnilo!
6. Elena: Va bene, va bene, scusami...

ENGLISH

1. Mario: Hi Elena, how's the work today?
2. Elena: Hi Mario. Not bad, thank you. Today we've got a lot of customers.
3. Mario: Please don't be distracted and don't listen to the radio while you're at work, okay?
4. Elena: Okay, okay. (A mobile phone starts ringing.)
5. Mario: And don't waste time on your mobile, turn it off!
6. Elena: All right, all right, I'm sorry…

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class	Gender
distrarsi	to be distracted	verb	
ascoltare	to listen	verb	
lavoro	work, job	noun	
telefonino	mobile phone	noun	
radio	radio	noun	feminine
spegnere	to turn off, switch off, put out, extinguish	verb	

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Sei troppo distratto. "You are too distracted."	**Ero distratto dalla musica.** "I was distracted by the music."
Non ascoltare musica a volume alto. "Don't listen to loud music."	**Ascoltiamo il discorso di Mario.** "We are listening to Mario's speech."
Ascolta bene! "Listen well!"	**Vai al lavoro in macchina, in treno o in pullman?** "Do you go to work by car, by train or by bus?"
Sto cercando un nuovo lavoro. "I'm looking for a new job."	**Che lavoro fa Luigi?** "What does Luigi do?" / "What job does Luigi do?"

Voglio compare un nuovo telefonino per Natale. "I want to buy a new mobile phone for Christmas."	**Ascoltiamo la radio.** "Let's listen to the radio."
Ho comprato una nuova radio. "I bought a new radio."	**Ascolti la radio?** "Do you listen to the radio?"

Potresti spegnere la luce?

"Could you turn off the light?"

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Italian Negative Imperative.
E non perdere tempo al telefonino, spengilo!
"And don't waste time on your mobile, turn it off!"

We express the negative imperative differently according to the number of persons we address.

When the subject of the statement is singular (second person singular), we use the negative particle *non*, followed by the infinitive of the verb, thus following the syntax, *non* + infinitive of the verb.For example...

Italian	**"English"**
Non dormire.	"Don't sleep."
Non correre.	"Don't run."
Non uscire.	"Don't go out."

When the subject of the statement is plural (second person plural), we simply add the negative particle *non* before the verb.

Italian	**"English"**
Non gridate!	"Don't shout!"
Non fate rumore!	"Don't make any noise!"
Non ascoltate più la radio!	"Don't listen to the radio anymore!"

Please, note that when the subject of the reflexive verb is the second person singular, the reflexive pronoun attaches directly to the infinitive, which drops its ending vowel. For example...

Italian	**"English"**
Non lavarti. (infinitive, *lavarsi*)	"Don't wash yourself."
Non alzarti. (infinitive, *alzarsi*)	"Don't stand up."
Non distrarti. (infinitive, *distrarsi*)	"Don't get distracted."

Due its exhortative nature, the *imperativo presente* ("present imperative") is often followed by either direct or indirect pronouns. In this case, they attach to the imperative form of the verb thus making a single word. Note that the word stress does not change.

Italian	**"English"**
Bevi l'acqua! -- Bevila!	"Drink the water!" -- "Drink it!"
Accendete il computer! -- Accendetelo!	"Turn the PC on!" -- "Turn it on!"
Date a loro le penne! -- Dategliele!	"Give them the pens!" -- "Give them to them."

Note that in this case, the negative form follows the standard procedures related to the number of the person.

Second person singular, *non* + infinitive, with attached pronouns

Second person plural, *non* + standard conjugation

For instance:

Italian	**"English"**
Non parlarmi! (i.e., *Non parlare a me!*)	"Don't talk to me."
Non mangiatelo! (i.e., *Non mangiate quello!*)	"Don't eat that!"
Non prenderlo! (i.e., *Non prendere quello!*)	"Don't take that!"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Theater's Amateur Dramatic Society (*Teatro dei filodrammatici*)

The former *teatro dei filodrammatici,* literally, "Theater's Amateur Dramatic Society," was located in a section of a historically important building. The history of this theater starts with the arrival of Napoleon in Milan. His first edicts were aimed to revolutionize the political and social structure of the city. He cleared off many religious institutions, including the famous *Collegio de' Nobili* ("College of Nobles"), the education provider for the former ruling class's offspring. A small group of dramaturgy lovers paid a visit to Napoleon to ask for his permission to use its theater. They wanted to put a theater representation on stage based on the ideas of the new "democracy" brought by the French conquest. They called themselves *Società del Teatro Patriottico* ("Society of Patriotic Theater") and started staging important Italian and European plays. An agreement between Napoleon and the former owners of the College forced them to stop their activities.

The popular architect Luigi Canonica erected the new *teatro dei filodrammatici* in Milan between 1798 and 1800. The fact that many important actors, playwrights, and performers made it their experimental laboratory confirm its key role in the development of Italian opera and classical music. The theater has been renovated many times during the last two centuries.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #12
Italian Advice on Multitasking

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ITALIAN

1. Elena: Buongiorno signore! Che cosa le do oggi?

2. Cliente: Buongiorno! Vorrei delle michette e un po' di pizza bianca e del pane integrale.

3. Elena: Nient'altro?

4. Cliente: No grazie, basta così.

5. Elena: Va bene.

6. Cliente: Ah no, senta, e poi mi dia anche un paio di cornetti e quattro panini all'olio.

7. Elena: (il cellulare di Elena squilla) Mi scusi un momento!

8. Cliente: (stizzito) Prego.

9. Elena: (spegne il cellulare) Sì, mi scusi, mi dica. Voleva altro?

10. Cliente: No, basta così, grazie.

11. Elena: Va bene, fanno 5 euro in totale.

12. Cliente: Grazie, arrivederci.

13. Mario: Elena, fai troppo cose assieme. E quando servi i clienti, e quando rispondi al telefono. Cosi facendo perderai clienti!

ENGLISH

CONT'D OVER

1. Elena: Good morning Sir! What can I give you today?

2. Customer: Good morning! I'd like to have some michette and some white pizza and some whole meal bread.

3. Elena: Nothing else?

4. Customer: No thanks, that's enough.

5. Elena: All right.

6. Customer: Ehm, no listen. And give me a couple of croissants and four olive oil panini.

7. Elena: (Elena's mobile rings) Excuse me, just a minute.

8. Customer: (irritated) Please.

9. Elena: (turns off the mobile) Yes, I'm sorry, please tell me. Did you want something else?

10. Customer: No, that's enough, thank you.

11. Elena: All right, it's five euros in total.

12. Customer: Thanks, goodbye.

13. Mario: Elena, you do too many things at the same time. You serve the customers and answer the phone. This way you will lose customers!

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
volere	to want, to wish, to demand	verb
integrale	whole, entire, wholemeal, uncut	adjective
cornetto	croissant	noun
momento	moment	noun
cliente	customer, client, guest	noun
perdere	to lose, to waste, to miss	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Vorrei andare al cinema con te. "I'd like to go to the cinema with you."	**Voleva solo salutarti.** "She just wanted to say hi."
Volere la botte piena e la moglie ubriaca. "To have your cake and eat it, too."	**Mi piace il pane integrale.** "I like whole meal bread."
Un cornetto e un cappuccino, per favore. "A croissant and a cappuccino, please."	**E' il momento giusto.** "It's the right moment."
Il cliente ha sempre ragione. "The customer is always right."	**Forza ragazzi! Stiamo perdendo la partita.** "Come on, boys! We are losing the match."
Ho perso il portafogli. "I lost my wallet."	**Abbiamo perso la partita.** "We lost the match."

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is on *congiunzioni coordinative correlative* ("Coordinative Correlative Conjunctions")

Vorrei delle michette e un po' di pizza bianca e del pane integrale.

"I'd like to have some michette and some white pizza and some whole meal bread."

The *congiunzioni coordinative correlative* ("coordinative correlative conjunctions"; henceforth simply referred to as *congiunzioni correlative*) are those conjunctions that join two (rarely more) words or phrases, thus relating each element in reciprocal terms.

Their meaning and usage is exactly the same as their English counterparts. The *congiunzioni correlative* are always used in pairs, unless they are part of peculiar expressions including adverbs or other conjunctions (which we will deal with in our higher level courses).

In informal spoken Italian, we use the pair *e...e* ("and...and") to relate two or more objects or actions that take place at the same time.

For example:

1. *Io guardo la tv e mangio un panino e bevo un bicchiere d'acqua.*
   "I'm watching the TV and eating a sandwich and drinking a glass of water."

In the sentence above, the pair *e...e* joins two phrases.

1. *Leggo romanzi e d'avventura e di fantascienza.*
   "I read adventure and science fiction novels."

In this case, the pair *e...e* joins two adjectives.

1. *Fai troppe cose assieme: e studi, e lavori, e giochi a rugby.*
   "You do too many things at the same time: you study, and you work, and you play rugby."

In this sentence, the conjunction *e* joins a list of actions the subject performs in a given period.

In proper Italian, we should avoid using *e...e* at all times, unless we voluntarily wish to use a very low level of Italian. Rather, in both spoken and written Italian, we should use the

conjunction *e* just once, inserting it before the last element of the list. Please note that when used in this way, the conjunction *e* ("and") works exactly as its English equivalent.

For example:

Italian	**"English Translation"**
Mi piace leggere e andare alle feste.	"I like reading and going to parties."
*Ho comprato il pane, la pasta, il tonno *e l'olio d'oliva.*	"I bought bread, pasta, tuna, *and olive oil."
*Io, Luigi e Serena** siamo andati in vacanza assieme.*	"Serena, Luigi, and I** went on vacation together."

*In Italian, when making lists of more than two elements, we do not insert the serial comma (the comma before the conjunction "and" at the end of a list).

**When using multiple subjects that include *io* ("I"), in Italian, the first singular pronoun is normally the first element of the list, not the last as would be the case in English.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Teatro degli Arcimboldi

The *teatro degli Arcimboldi* ("theater of the Arcimboldi") is a recently built theater in Milan. It takes its name from a villa located relatively close to it that belongs to the Arcimboldi family. The theater's dimensions and capacity (2,400 seats) are similar to those of *La Scala*, thus making moving settings from one theater to the other an easy task. The fan-shaped main hall is 46 meters long, 35 meters deep, and 22 meters high. The stage tower is nearly 40 meters high and dominates the hall with its large size.

Even though the theater was designed as a theoretical continuation of its parent theater, *La Scala*, some elements hinder its functionality and availability. Since it is located in Milan's outskirts, it is inadequately served by public transportation. In addition, easy access to the building is completely cut out on one side by railway lines.

During *La Scala*'s renovation, the theater acted as a substitute, hosting *La Scala's* plays and world-famous artists. However, when *La Scala* was fully restored, the importance of the *teatro degli Arcimboldi* declined. Other theatrical managements, such as those of *Teatro Piccolo* and *Teatro Smeraldo*, currently run the theater.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #13
How to Pass the Italian Bikini Test

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#13

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ITALIAN

1. Elena: Ok Mario, ho spento il telefono!
2. Mario: Brava, così si fa! Ora concentrati sui clienti.
3. Cliente: (entra nel negozio) Buongiorno.
4. Elena: Buongiorno, come posso servirla?
5. Cliente: Mi servirebbe del pane per celiaci.
6. Elena: Abbiamo sia il pane alla soya che quello senza glutine, quale le do?
7. Cliente: Va bene, prendo entrambi, grazie.
8. Elena: Va bene, glieli incarto.
9. Cliente: Vorrei sia l'uno che l'altro in bustine separate, per favore.
10. Elena: Ecco a lei.

ENGLISH

1. Elena: Okay Mario, I've turned off the mobile!
2. Mario: Good, well done! Now focus on the customers.
3. Customer: (entering the shop) Good morning.
4. Elena: Good morning, how can I help you?

CONT'D OVER

5. Customer: I need some bread for celiacs.

6. Elena: We have both soy bread and gluten-free bread, which one do you like?

7. Customer: Okay, I'll take both, thanks.

8. Elena: All right, I'll wrap it up for you.

9. Customer: I'd like to have both in separate wrappings, please.

10. Elena: Here you go.

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class	Gender
concentrarsi	to focus, concentrate	verb	
pane	bread	noun	masculine
celiaco	celiac	adjective	
glutine	gluten	noun	
entrambi	both (masculine plural)	pronoun	
incartare	to wrap, wrap up	verb	

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Concentrati di più!	**Puoi comprare del pane?**
"Focus more!"	"Can you buy some bread?"

Quanto pane mangi al giorno? "How much bread do you eat in a day?"	**Lui è celiaco.** "He's a celiac."
Sono allergico al glutine. "I am allergic to gluten."	**Siete entrambi carini.** "You are both good-looking."
Ho incartato il regalo. "I wrapped up the present."	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is on *congiunzioni coordinative correlative* ("Coordinative Correlative Conjunctions")

Abbiamo sia il pane alla soya che quello senza glutine, quale le do?

"We have both soy bread and gluten-free bread, which one do you like?"

In today's class, we will study two pairs of *congiunzioni* correlative that convey opposite meanings.

Among the most frequently employed, the pair *sia...che/sia* ("both...and") join two words or phrases expressing actions that are both possible. Note that we can use either *che* or *sia* as the second conjunction; *sia* is slightly more formal than *che*, though they are both perfectly acceptable in formal Italian.

For instance:

Italian	**"English Translation"**
Vorrei bere sia del vino bianco, che del vino rosso.	"I'd like to drink both red and white wine."
Sia Marco che Michael volevano andare allo zoo.	"Both Marco and Michael wanted to go the zoo."

Ero indeciso tra "Twilight" e "Star Wars," poi ho deciso di guardare sia l'uno, sia l'altro.	I was undecided between "Twilight" and "Star Wars," I then decided to watch them both.

In the last sample sentence, *sia l'uno, sia l'altro* means *entrambi* ("them both"); we can use the pronoun *entrambi* since we had previously mentioned both terms (the movies' titles). The employment of *sia l'uno, sia l'altro* instead of *entrambi* achieves more elegant stylistic results.

On the other hand, the pair *né...né* ("neither...nor") suggests that neither option (for words) nor action (for phrases) is possible.

For instance:

Italian	**"English Translation"**
Non ho né studiato, né fatto la lavatrice.	"I have neither studied, nor done the laundry."
Non posso mangiare né la pasta, né il riso.	"I can eat neither pasta nor rice."
Né dormire, né fare finta che non sia successo cambierà la situazione.	"Neither sleeping nor pretending it didn't happen will change the situation."

Please note that you may also express the first sample sentence through a similar grammatical form, which includes a negation of the main verb (*non*, meaning "not") and the conjunction (*né*, meaning "nor"). You can use this alternative form when negating the **past participle** of a verb (this is not possible when negating other tenses, including the infinitive).

For example:

Non ho studiato, né fatto la lavatrice.
"I haven't studied, nor done the laundry."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Sailing in Milan

The *Navigli* (plural, singular: *Naviglio*) of Milan are navigable artificial canals constructed in different phases from the twelfth to the fifteenth century BC, serving the purpose of linking Milan to the Adda and Ticino rivers. They were used to carry goods and people, both for business and military reasons. Among the many interesting reasons they were used include bringing both the necessary marble slabs to build the *Duomo* of Milan and the paper required to print *Corriere della Sera*, which is even to this day and age the most popular Italian newspaper.

After the Italians introduced a new means of transportation called *tramvia* ("tram") in the eighteenth century, the usefulness of *Navigli* started declining. The city authorities wondered whether it were the case to cover them with earth, thus expanding the recently established tram network rail. The majority of *Navigli* was gradually covered starting in 1929.

Today, the term *Navigli* specifically designates the area included between the *Naviglio Grande* and the *Naviglio Pavese*, and more generally the whole neighborhood, which is a very nice and fashionable area of Milan for both business and leisure activities.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #14
Not Only Will You Like This - You Will LOVE This Italian Lesson!

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#14

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ITALIAN

1. Elena: Ciao Carlo...
2. Carlo: Scusami Elena, c'era un traffico incredibile per venire qui.
3. Elena: (sbuffa) Okay, okay...
4. Carlo: Oh, accidenti...ho dimenticato il...
5. Elena: Carlo…quindi non solo sei in ritardo, ma hai anche dimenticato di portarmi il CD che mi avevi promesso.
6. Carlo: Scusami Ele.
7. Elena: Sei sempre distratto. Ora pensi alle ragazze, ora ad andarti a divertire.
8. Carlo: Dai non arrabbiarti.
9. Elena: Va bene, va bene, per stavolta ti perdono.
10. Carlo: Grazie!

ENGLISH

1. Elena: Hi Carlo...
2. Carlo: Sorry Elena, there was terrible traffic on the way here.
3. Elena: (fumes) Okay, okay...

CONT'D OVER

4. Carlo: Oh, damn...I forgot the...

5. Elena: Carlo…so not only are you late, but you've also forgotten to bring me the CD you promised me.

6. Carlo: Sorry Ele.

7. Elena: You're always distracted. One minute you think about girls, the next one about going to have fun.

8. Carlo: Come on. Don't be mad at me.

9. Elena: All right, all right, I forgive you this time.

10. Carlo: Thank you!

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
traffico	traffic	noun
dimenticare	to forget, to leave behind	verb
ritardo	delay, lateness	noun
arrabbiarsi	to be, get angry	verb
distrarsi	to be distracted	verb
perdonare	to forgive	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

C'è sempre traffico in centro. "There is always traffic downtown."	**Oggi c'è molto traffico sull'autostrada.** "Today, there is a lot of traffic on the highway."
Ho dimenticato la sciarpa sul treno. "I forgot the scarf on the train."	**Il treno subirà un ritardo di quaranta minuti.** "The train will be delayed forty minutes."
Sono arrabbiato! "I am angry!"	**Sei troppo distratto.** "You are too distracted."
Ero distratto dalla musica. "I was distracted by the music."	**Sono in ritardo, mi perdoni?** "I am late, would you forgive me?"

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is on *congiunzioni coordinative correlative* ("Coordinative Correlative Conjunctions").

Uff, Carlo...quindi non solo sei in ritardo, ma hai anche dimenticato di portarmi il CD che mi avevi promesso.

"Uff, Carlo...so not only are you late, but you've also forgotten to bring me the CD you promised me."

The couple *non solo...ma anche* is used to join two or more words or phrases, with particular emphasis on the second term. Just like its English equivalent, it does not emphasize the second term over the first: it simply implies the importance (whether in negative or positive terms) of both elements.

For instance:

Italian	**"English"**

Non solo sei in ritardo, ma hai anche dimenticato di portarmi i cd!	"Not only are you late, but you've also forgotten to bring me the CDs!"
Lei non ha solo studiato italiano, ma ha anche vissuto in Italia.	"Not only had she studied Italian, but she also lived in Italy."
Non solo avevo perso il portafoglio, ma avevo anche lasciato il cellulare a casa.	"Not only had I lost the wallet, but I also left the mobile at home."

The couple *ora...ora* indicates the random alternation of elements it introduces. Although you may use it both in formal and informal Italian, you might translate this couple differently in English according to its context.

For instance:

Italian	**"English"**
Lui è sempre distratto: ora pensa alla ragazza, ora ad andare a divertirsi.	(literally) "He is always self-absorbed: now he thinks about the girlfriend, now about going to have fun." "He is always distracted: one minute he thinks about the girlfriend, the next about going to have fun."
Il clima inglese è molto particolare, ora piove, ora c'è il sole.	(literally) "British weather is really peculiar, now it rains, now it's sunny." "British weather is really peculiar, first it rains, and then it's sunny."
Il mio gatto è imprevedibile: ora dorme, ora miagola.	(literally) "My cat is unpredictable: now he sleeps, now he meows." "My cat is unpredictable: one minute he sleeps, the next he meows."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Teatro Dal Verme

The *Teatro Dal Verme* is a historical theater in Milan. The Italians formerly used it to stage prestigious operas, plays, and political debates. Today, its importance in Milan's cultural life has slightly declined; it is mostly used as cinema or stage for concerts.

In 1860, the area on which the *Teatro dal Verme* stands was occupied by a *politeàma* (a kind a multi-purpose popular theater), where eccentric, bizarre characters used to perform. The *politeàma* ran opera plays and horse-riding contests, thus attracting middle and lower class audiences from contiguous blocks. This situation raised public order issues, and the inhabitants of the neighborhood firmly complained about it. The wealthy and highly aristocratic family of *Dal Verme* resolved to purchase the whole and surrounding areas and to demolish the old *politeàma* to build a brand-new theater, which was named after the family upon completion.

The new theater became one of the most fashionable European opera theaters where famous European artists and directors performed. Giacomo Puccini and Ruggero Leoncavallo made their debut at this theater. Unfortunately, it was destroyed in 1943 in an Allied bombardment. It was rebuilt in 1946, but its fame and fortune as "Opera Heaven" had long since passed.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #15
Which Italian Car Will You Choose - a Fiat or a Ferarri?

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ITALIAN

1. Carlo: Elena, allora dove ti porto? Vuoi andare a casa?

2. Elena: Mmm, non so se passare da Valeria o andare direttamente a casa.

3. Carlo: Valeria non lavora più alla panetteria?

4. Elena: No.

5. Carlo: Ok, cosa devo fare? O ti lascio da Valeria, o ceniamo assieme, scegli tu.

6. Elena: Lo so, è che proprio stasera hai ricevuto la tua nuova macchina, potevamo andare a cena insieme…

7. Carlo: Non ti preoccupare dai, possiamo cenare insieme dopodomani, ovvero domenica.

8. Elena: Allora va bene, andiamo pure da Valeria. Vuoi prendere l'autostrada o la strada statale?

9. Carlo: Penso che sia meglio l'autostrada, con questo traffico!

10. Elena: Ok!

ENGLISH

1. Carlo: Elena, so where should I take you? Do you want to go home?

CONT'D OVER

2. Elena: Mmm, I don't know if I should pass by Valeria's place or go straight home.

3. Carlo: Valeria isn't working at the bakery anymore?

4. Elena: No.

5. Carlo: Okay, what should I do? Either I leave you at Valeria's place, or we have dinner together, that's your call.

6. Elena: I know, it's just that tonight you received your new car, we could have had dinner together…

7. Carlo: Come on, don't worry. We can have dinner together the day after tomorrow, that is, Sunday.

8. Elena: It's all right, then let's go to Valeria's place. Do you want to take the highway or the state highway?

9. Carlo: I think the highway may be better with all this traffic!

10. Elena: Okay!

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class	Gender
casa	home, house, one's place	noun	
direttamente	directly, straight	adverb	
panetteria	bakery	noun	feminine

cenare	to have dinner, to dine	verb	
dopodomani	the day after tomorrow	adverb	
autostrada	highway	noun	feminine

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Alla sera mi piace stare a casa. "In the evening I like to stay at home."	**All'ipermercato vicino casa mia ci sono degli sconti sul vestiario.** "At the superstore close to my place, there are discounts on clothing."
C'è una festa a casa di Mario. "There's a party at Mario's place."	**Ci vediamo direttamente al cinema.** "Let's meet directly at the cinema."
Vai direttamente a casa dopo il film? "Are you going straight home after the movie?"	**Lavoro in una panetteria.** "I work in a bakery."
Stasera ceniamo a casa. "Tonight, we will have dinner at home."	**Ceno normalmente alle otto.** "I normally dine at 8:00 PM."
Ci vediamo dopodomani. "See you the day after tomorrow."	**Sono in autostrada.** "I'm on the highway."

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is on *congiunzioni disgiuntive* ("Disjunctive Conjunctions").
Ok, cosa devo fare? O ti lascio da Valeria, o ceniamo assieme, scegli tu.

"Okay, what should I do? Either I leave you at Valeria's place, or we have dinner together, that's your call."

Similar to their English equivalents, the principal function of *congiunzioni disgiuntive* ("disjunctive conjunctions") is to join two or more phrases or words whose relationship is mutually exclusive.

In other words, the employment of *congiunzioni disgiuntive* suggests that the truthfulness or applicability of one phrase automatically excludes the other.

The most important *congiunzioni disgiuntive* are the following: *o*, *ovvero* ("or"); *oppure*, *altrimenti* ("or," "otherwise," or "else"). Today, we will study the functions of *o* and *ovvero*.

Whereas *o* is the most commonly used disjunctive conjunction, the use of *ovvero* in this context has been gradually declining in recent years. As stated above, both conjunctions are to relate two phrases, suggesting that only one of them is actually possible.

For example:

Italian	**"English Translation"**
Scegli: o studi, o lavori!	"Choose: you either work or study!"
Vorresti la birra o il vino?	"Would you rather have beer or wine?"
O vado da Mario, o ceniamo assieme; non posso fare entrambe le cose.	"Either I go to Mario (home), or we dine together; I can't do both."

As you can see in the first and third example, you may also insert the conjunction *o* before the first phrase. Although this is not strictly necessary as far as grammar is concerned, it serves the purpose of stressing the need to choose between options to achieve more elegant, stylistic results.

In Italian, when enlisting more than two options, we normally insert the conjunction *o* before the last element of the series.

For instance:

1. *Non sapevo cosa comprare: un paio di scarpe, un maglietta, un paio di jeans o un cappello.*
   "I didn't know what to buy: (either) a pair of shoes, a t-shirt, a pair of jeans, or a hat."

Even though Italian grammarians usually include *ovvero* in the *congiunzioni disgiuntive*, this specific use has been gradually declining in recent years, and currently, it is rarely used in that sense in standard Italian (except in the jurisprudential terminology).

The most common employment of *ovvero* is to clarify, add additional information, emphasize, or better explain a previous statement. When used as such, it means *cioè* (meaning "that is," "namely," etc.)

For instance:

Italian	**"English Translation"**
Io ho mangiato la pasta, ovvero gli spaghetti.	"I ate pasta, that is, spaghetti."
Pago io, ovvero mia moglie.	"I'll pay, that is, my wife will."
Ci vediamo dopodomani, ovvero domenica.	"I'll see you the day after tomorrow, that is, on Sunday."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Teatro alla Scala

The *Teatro alla Scala*, simply called *La Scala*, is one of the most famous theaters in the world. The most important singers and directors acknowledge *La Scala* as the "temple of opera." The theater lies in *Piazza della Scala*; a small church called *Chiesa di Santa Maria della Scala* was demolished to make room for *La Scala* in 1776.

The will of the German empress Maria Theresa provided money for *La Scala's* construction, after the former opera theater, *Teatro Regio Ducale*, burned in a terrible fire some years

before. All the greatest and most appreciated Italian opera singers have performed there; in fact, even having a minor part in an opera is considered a great personal and artistic success.

The theater was seriously damaged in 1943 by bombing, taking special damage on the roof and ceiling. It was rebuilt in 1946, and Arturo Toscanini inaugurated it with an unforgettable concert. Its success peaked in the 1970s, during the directorship of Paolo Grassi, a talented and educated theater actor who was also skilled in management. During that period, the theater ran almost three hundred plays per year.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #16
On the Other Hand, Everything You Need in Italy is Right Here!!

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ITALIAN

1. Carlo: Eccoci!

2. Elena: Grazie Carlo. Allora tu cosa farai stasera?

3. Carlo: Stavo pensando di andare da Piero a vedermi la partita, oppure di affittare un film.

4. Elena: Valeria ha detto che puoi entrare a bere qualcosa se vuoi.

5. Carlo: Ok, grazie!

6. (entrano)

7. Valeria: Ciao ragazzi!

8. Carlo e Elena: Ciao Valeria.

9. Valeria: Preferite bere acqua oppure succo d'arancia?

10. Carlo: Succo d'arancia per me, grazie.

11. Elena: Io prendo l'acqua.

12. Valeria: Carlo, stasera rimani qui con noi?

13. Carlo: No, stavo pensando di andare da Piero a vedere la partita.

14. Valeria: Ah! Allora forse è meglio che ti sbrighi, o la perderai!

ENGLISH

CONT'D OVER

1. Carlo: Here we are!

2. Elena: Thanks, Carlo. So what will you do tonight?

3. Carlo: I was thinking of going to Piero's place to see the football match, or I could rent a movie.

4. Elena: Valeria said you can come in for a drink if you want.

5. Carlo: Okay, thanks!

6. (they enter)

7. Valeria: Hi guys!

8. Carlo and Elena: Hi Valeria.

9. Valeria: Would you like to have water or orange juice?

10. Carlo: Orange juice for me, thanks.

11. Elena: I'll have the water.

12. Valeria: Carlo, will you stay with us tonight?

13. Carlo: No, I was thinking of going to Piero's place to see the football match.

14. Valeria: Ah! But maybe it is better for you to hurry up, otherwise you'll miss it!

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
pensare	to think, believe	verb
partita di calcio	football match, game	expression
affittare	to let, rent	verb
succo d'arancia	orange juice	expression
sbrigarsi	to hurry up, be quick	verb
perdere	to lose, to waste, to miss	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Penso che arriverò in ritardo. "I think I'll be late."	**Cosa ne pensi?** "What do you think about it?"
Facciamo una partita? "Shall we play a match?"	**Voglio affittare questo appartamento.** "I want to rent this apartment."
Mi piace il succo d'arancia. "I like orange juice."	**Se voglio arrivare in orario, devo sbrigarmi.** "If I am to arrive on time, I have to hurry up."
Forza ragazzi! Stiamo perdendo la partita. "Come on, boys! We are losing the match."	**Ho perso il portafogli.** "I lost my wallet."
Abbiamo perso la partita. "We lost the match."	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is *congiunzioni disgiuntive* ("Disjunctive Conjunctions").
Stavo pensando di andare da Piero a vedermi la partita, oppure di affittare un film.
"I was thinking of going to Piero's place to see the football match, or I could rent a movie."

The disjunctive conjunction *oppure* ("or," "alternatively," "rather," "on the other hand") serves to reinforce the mutually exclusive, oppositional meaning of *o* (which we studied in the previous class).

For example:

Italian	**"English Translation"**
Preferite bere acqua oppure succo d'arancia?	"Would you rather drink water or orange juice?
Prendiamo la tua macchina oppure la mia?	"Shall we take my or your car?"
Potremmo fare un barbecue, oppure potremmo andare in pizzeria.	"We could have a barbecue; alternatively, we could go to a pizzeria."

When used in "if" clauses, you may also substitute *altrimenti* ("or else," "otherwise") for *oppure*, meaning *in caso contrario* (the latter is more formal than the former).

For instance:

1. *Devi cominciare a studiare seriamente, in caso contrario (altrimenti) non passerai l'esame.*
   "You need to start studying seriously; otherwise you won't pass the exam."
   meaning
   A meno che tu non inizi a studiare seriamente, non passerai l'esame.
   "Unless you start studying seriously, you won't pass the exam."

2. *Dovresti decidere cosa fare nella tua vita, in caso contrario (altrimenti) non sarai mai felice.*
   "You should decide what to do in your life; otherwise you'll never be happy."
   meaning
   Se non decidi cosa fare nella tua vita, non sarai mai felice.
   "Unless you decide what to do in your life, you'll never be happy."

3. *Sbrigati, altrimenti perderai l'autobus!*
   "Hurry up; otherwise you'll miss the bus!"
   meaning
   Se non ti sbrighi, perderai l'autobus.
   "If you don't hurry up, you'll miss the bus."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Palazzo Madama di Torino

The history of *Palazzo Madama di Torino* ("Madama Palace") spans throughout the development of Turin, somehow mirroring the different peoples and cultures that contributed to its growth.

Its saga began more than two thousand years ago, when the Roman settlers built a city gate close to the Po River. Its position made it a strategic defensive point against possible assaults coming from Celt tribes thriving in northern Italy. During the early Middle Ages, renovations expanded the gate, making it an important stronghold crucial to the city's defense. Due to the urban expansion, thanks mostly to *Savoia* family, the defensive importance of the building slowly decreased, also because it acquired a central position into the city area, which made it hardly an ideal front line. Having grown in power, wealth, and political influence, the *Savoia* family turned the former stronghold into a residential palace, mainly to designate it as a symbol for the capital of their territories, even though they preferred *Palazzo Reale* ("Royal Palace") to *Palazzo Madama* as their standard residence.

The palace became the seat of the *Museo Civico d'arte antica* ("City Museum of Ancient Art") in 1934, and UNESCO later declared it a patron of humanity. Today it is home to many

important antique sculptures, pottery, and picture galleries.

If you wish to know more about the museum, you may visit the following link:

http://www.palazzomadamatorino.it/home.php

(English and French version of the website text is available).

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #17
I'll Race Your Italian Ferrari With My Italian Scooter!

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ITALIAN

1. Carlo: Che cosa avete fatto poi ieri sera?

2. Elena: Abbiamo visto un film dell'orrore che aveva portato il cugino di Valeria.

3. Carlo: Com'era?

4. Elena: Veramente spaventoso, dopo il film Valeria non voleva rimanere da sola.

5. Carlo: Davvero? Se mi dici il titolo lo noleggio!

6. Elena: Adesso non mi ricordo, ma ti farò sapere... e tu hai visto la partita poi?

7. Carlo: Quando sono arrivato da Marco era già finito il primo tempo.

8. Elena: Perché sei arrivato tardi?

9. Carlo: Ho trovato un incidente per la strada e c'era una coda lunghissima!

10. Elena: Ti avevo detto che era meglio il motorino!

11. Carlo: Hai ragione, quando si è in ritardo il motorino è sempre meglio.

ENGLISH

1. Carlo: What did you do then yesterday evening?

CONT'D OVER

2. Elena: We saw a horror movie that Valeria's cousin had brought.

3. Carlo: How was it?

4. Elena: Really frightening; after the movie, Valeria didn't want to stay alone.

5. Carlo: Really? If you tell me the title, I'll rent it!

6. Elena: Now I don't remember, but I'll let you know…and did you see the match then?

7. Carlo: When I arrived at Marco's place, the first half was already finished.

8. Elena: Why did you arrive late?

9. Carlo: I found an accident on the road and there was a very long traffic jam!

10. Elena: I told you the scooter would have been better!

11. Carlo: You're right; when one's late, the scooter is always better.

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class	Gender
orrore	horror	noun	masculine
cugino	cousin	noun	
spaventoso	frightening, scary	adjective	
noleggiare	to rent	verb	
incidente	accident, incident	noun	

motorino	scooter	noun	masculine

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Mi piacciono I film dell'orrore. "I like horror movies."	**Sono molto affezionato a mio cugino.** "I am very fond of my cousin."
Ho letto un racconto veramente spaventoso. "I read a really frightening story."	**Ho deciso di noleggiare un camper per il viaggio.** "I decided to rent a camper for the trip."
Noleggiamo una barca! "Let's rent a boat!"	**Ho avuto un incidente, ma niente di grave.** "I had an accident, but nothing serious."
C'è stato in incidente. "There's been an accident."	**Devi avere almeno 14 anni per guidare il motorino.** "You have to be at least 14 years old to ride a scooter."
Ho preso di nascosto il motorino di mia sorella. "I secretly took my sister's scooter."	**Voglio comprare un motorino.** "I want to buy a scooter."

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is on the Usage of *Trapassato Prossimo Tense*.
Quando sono arrivato da Marco era già finito il primo tempo.
"When I arrived at Marco's place, the first half was already finished."

We use the Italian *trapassato prossimo* tense ("pluperfect") to convey the completeness or anteriority of a past action in relation to another past event. It follows that the employment of the *trapassato prossimo* tense is not absolute but relative to another past action, which we would usually, but not always, express in English through the past perfect tense.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
Quando sono arrivati i miei amici, avevo già mangiato.	"When my friends arrived, I had already eaten."
Ieri io e la mia ragazza abbiamo visto un film che avevo visto.	"Yesterday, my girlfriend and I watched a movie I'd watched."
Ho comprato la gonna che avevo visto la settimana scorsa.	"I bought the skirt I had seen last week."

Note that the past action to which the *trapassato prossimo* refers does not need to be stated; it may be implied.

For Example:

1. *Ieri alle 5 del pomeriggio ero già tornato a casa.*
   (literally) "Yesterday at five o'clock p.m., I was already back home."

In the sentence above, the *trapassato prossimo* means that I was already back home before five o'clock p.m.

We may conjugate the past action that the *trapassato prossimo* refers to in any past tense, though the most commonly employed past tenses are *passato prossimo*, *imperfetto*, and *passato remoto*.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
Io aspettavo una lettera che era già stata consegnata. (*imperfetto*)	"I was waiting for a letter that had been already delivered."

Loro vollero verificare se le informazioni che avevano ricevuto erano corrette. (*passato remoto*)	"They wanted to verify whether the information they had received was correct or not."
Hai voluto prendere la penna che avevi provato.	"You wanted to buy the pen you had tried out."

We can also use the *trapassato prossimo* tense in conjunction with the so-called *presente storico* ("historical present").

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
I senatori criticano Antonio per ciò che aveva fatto.	"The senators criticize Antonio for what he did."
Cicerone sa che viene giudicato per ciò che aveva pubblicato.	"Cicero knows he's being judged for what he published."
Napoleone aspetta che lo arrestino per i crimini che aveva commesso.	"Napoleon is waiting to be arrested for the crimes he committed."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Parco della Rimembranza

The *Parco della Rimembranza* is a public park of Turin situated on the peak of *Colle della Maddalena* ("Maddalena Hill"), which is also Turin's tallest point. It stretches over ninety hectares and has over twenty-one thousand trees. The park was built in 1925 in order to celebrate the memory of Italian victory in the First World War and the inhabitants of Turin who fell during the conflict. A botanical garden was originally built next to the terrace, with a tree planted to honor the memory of each fallen soldier. There were 4,787 trees, each bearing a plaque with the name of a fallen soldier.

The *Faro della Vittoria* ("the Beacon of Victory," the sculpture of an angel holding a light pointing to the city) lies at the center of the park's panoramic terrace. The sculpture was designed by Edoardo Rubino, the president of the *Accademia Albertina* (the most prominent art academy in Turin). The famous Italian poet Gabriele D'Annunzio wrote a short poem that was engraved on its pedestal:

ALLA PURA MEMORIA

ALL'ALTO ESEMPIO
DEI MILLE E MILLE FRATELLI COMBATTENTI
CHE LA VITA DONARONO
PER ACCRESCERE LA LUCE DELLA PATRIA
A PROPIZIAR COL SACRIFICIO L'AVVENIRE
IL DUREVOLE BRONZO
LA RINNOVANTE SELVA
DEDICANO
GLI OPERAI DI OGNI OPERA
DAL LORO CAPO GIOVANNI AGNELLI
ADUNATI SOTTO IL SEGNO
DI QUELLA PAROLA BREVE
CHE NELLA GENESI
FECE LA LUCE

FIAT LUX: ET FACTA EST LUX NOVA

MAGGIO MCMXV MAGGIO MCMXXVIII

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #18
Take Me Shopping With You in Italy!

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#18

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ITALIAN

1. Valeria: Ciao Carlo, sono Valeria, disturbo?

2. Carlo: No, dimmi.

3. Valeria: Ti ho chiamato per chiederti un favore, mi presteresti il tuo motorino?

4. Carlo: Ah, per quando ne hai bisogno?

5. Valeria: Domani pomeriggio. Devo comprare delle cose all'outlet fuori città.

6. Carlo: Ah ok, non c'è problema. Posso usare la macchina per andare al lavoro. Comunque pensavo tu ne avessi uno...

7. Valeria: Sì, ma è dal meccanico, ha qualche problema al motore. Sinceramente non ci capisco niente, mi avevano detto che era questione di un paio di giorni, ma è già passata una settimana...

8. Carlo: Ahh. Non ti preoccupare lo lascio davanti a casa, per le chiavi suona il campanello e chiedile a mia madre.

9. Valeria: Ho capito. Grazie, sei un tesoro!

10. Carlo: Ah sì? Allora compra qualcosa anche per me!

ENGLISH

1. Valeria: Hi Carlo, this is Valeria, am I bothering you?

CONT'D OVER

2. Carlo: No, what's up?

3. Valeria: I called you to ask for a favor. Could you lend me your scooter?

4. Carlo: Ah, when do you need it?

5. Valeria: Tomorrow afternoon, I have to buy some stuff in the outlet store out of town.

6. Carlo: Ah okay, no problem. I can use the car to go to work. Anyway, I thought you had one...

7. Valeria: Yes, but it is at the mechanic, it has some problems with the engine. Honestly, I don't understand anything about it; they told me it was a matter of a couple of days, but a week has already passed...

8. Carlo: Ahh. Don't worry, I'll leave it in front of my house, for the keys, ring the doorbell and ask my mother for them.

9. Valeria: I understand. Thank you. You are a treasure!

10. Carlo: Oh really? Buy something for me then!

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
prestare	to lend, yield, give	verb
bisogno	need, lack, necessity, poverty	noun
fuori	out, outside	adverb
motore	engine, motor	noun

sinceramente	honestly, sincerely	adverb
campanello	doorbell, buzzer	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Mi puoi prestare la penna? "Can you lend me the pen?"	**Ho bisogno di una bicicletta.** "I need a bicycle."
Francesca abita fuori città. "Francesca lives out of the city."	**È meglio tenere la spazzatura fuori casa.** "It is better to keep the garbage out of the house."
La mia macchina nuova ha un problema con il motore. "My new car has a problem with the engine."	**Sinceramente, quell vestito non ti sta bene.** "Honestly, that dress is not good on you."
Suona il campanello quando arrivi. "When you arrive, ring the doorbell."	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is Specifically the Rules That Are to be Followed When Using Imperative Forms in Conjunction With Pronouns. We'll Also See an Important Exception to the General Rule Concerning the Functioning of the Most Frequently Used Irregular Verbs When They Attach to Pronouns in the Imperative Mood.

Ah sì? Allora compra qualcosa anche per me!

"Oh really? Buy something for me then!"

In the dialogue above, Carlo replies to Valeria using one of the most common Italian expressions: *dimmi*. This form combines the imperative mode, *dì* (written with an accent on the vowel *i*, in order to distinguish it from the simple preposition *di*) and the indirect pronoun *mi*, which means *a me* ("to me").

Please note that the alternative form *dì a me* ("tell me") does not convey the same meaning. Rather, it is a stressed form, where the emphasis is put on the person to whom the action is addressed, and not on the action the verb expresses.

Therefore, whenever we employ the imperative mood in conjunction with both direct and indirect pronouns, they attach to the end of the verb.

For Example:

1. *Parlami*. (*parla* + *mi*, emphasis on the verb).
   "Talk to me."

2. *Parla a me.* (emphasis on the indirect object, *a* + the pronoun *me*).
   (literally) "Talk to me." (meaning) "Talk to me alone, and not to somebody else."

Exception: When we use the pronouns with verbs that follow an irregular pattern in the imperative mood, we need to double the starting letter of the pronoun when attaching it to the second singular person. Please note that this does not apply to the second plural person; in this case, it follows the standard rule presented above. The most frequently used verbs that follow an irregular conjugation in the imperative mood are:

1. *fare* ("to do," "to make")

2. *dire* ("to say," "to tell")

3. *andare* ("to go")

4. *dare* ("to give")

For Example:

Italian	**->**	***Italian Imperative***	**"English"**

Fai a me un favore.	->	*Fammi.* → *fa* + (*m*)*mi un favore.*	"Do me a favor."
Dì a me.	->	*Dimmi.* → *di** + (*m*)*mi.*	"Tell me."
Vai lì.	->	*Vacci.* → *va* + (*c*)*ci.*	"Go there."

Please note the starting consonant of pronouns does not double when attached to the second plural person.

For Example:

Italian	**->**	***Italian Imperative***	**"English"**
Fate a me un favore.	->	*Fatemi* (*fate* + *mi*) *un favore.*	"Do me a favor."
Dite a me.	->	*Ditemi* (*dite* + *mi*).	"Tell me."
Andate lì.	->	*Andateci* (*andate* + *ci*).	"Go there."

*= Note that when *dì* attaches to a pronoun, its ending vowel loses the accent, becoming a standard *i*.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Venetian Alchemy

Many supposed alchemists and wizards lived in the city of Venice, the most eminent being Casanova (the famous lover), Cagliostro (an Italian nobleman the church condemned for heresy), and Giordano Bruno (one of the greatest Italian philosophers of all time).

Due to the close relations that Venice had with Middle and Far Eastern cultures, the city has

always been a crossroads of many different cultures. The *Giudecca*, for example, used to be the Jewish neighborhood, and the Jewish were deemed experts in the field of alchemy. Of course, we need to specify that for a long time, in certain cases until the eighteenth century, people normally considered alchemy and chemistry (as well as other related disciplines) the same discipline. Therefore, the Jewish expertise in the medical and natural sciences fields was perceived as a form of wizardry.

The Muslim alchemic and mystical knowledge is also present in many Venetian monuments and public buildings, especially regarding their wealth of knowledge in astronomy and astrology. The fact that many of these symbols are actually present in churches and public buildings strikes the attention of many visitors, giving an accurate account of the peculiar, eclectic form that Christianity took in Venice.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #19
I Have a Favor to Ask You in Italian!

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#19

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ITALIAN

1. Elena: Buongiorno.

2. Antonio: Buongiorno. Mamma mia che acquazzone!

3. Elena: Eh sì...è completamente bagnato!

4. Antonio: Eh…stamattina avevo visto che era nuvoloso ma non pensavo potesse piovere così forte. Le strade sono allagate ed io non ho l'ombrello.

5. Elena: Ah capisco… Mi dica, cosa le do oggi?

6. Antonio: Mmmm, non ho fatto colazione, vorrei un bel pezzo di focaccia con funghi e carciofi.

7. Elena: Ok. Ecco qua! Le serve altro?

8. Antonio: In realtà ero venuto anche per chiederle un favore. Potrebbe tenere la mia valigia in negozio per un'oretta? Devo fare delle spese prima di prendere il treno.

9. Elena: Non c'è problema. Mi dia pure la sua valigia. Le presto anche il mio ombrello.

10. Antonio: Oh, grazie infinite signorina, lei è sempre così gentile.

ENGLISH

1. Elena: Good morning.

CONT'D OVER

2. Antonio: Good morning. My goodness, what a rainstorm!

3. Elena: Oh yes...you are completely wet!

4. Antonio: Eh...this morning, I had seen it was cloudy but I didn't think it could rain so heavily. Streets are overflowing and I don't have an umbrella.

5. Elena: Ah I see… Please tell me, what shall I give you today?

6. Antonio: Mmmm, I didn't have breakfast; I'd like a big piece of focaccia with mushrooms and artichokes.

7. Elena: Okay. Here you go! Do you need anything else?

8. Antonio: Actually, I also came to ask you a favor. Could you keep my suitcase in the shop for about one hour? I have to do some shopping before getting on the train.

9. Elena: No problem. Please give me your bag. I'll also lend you my umbrella.

10. Antonio: Oh, thank you so much miss, you are always so kind.

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class	Gender
acquazzone	rainstorm, downpour, rainshower	noun	
bagnato	wet	adjective	
ombrello	umbrella	noun	masculine

pezzo	piece, part, bit	noun	
focaccia	focaccia (a type of flat bread)	noun	feminine
carciofo	artichoke	noun	masculine

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Per via di un acquazzone improvviso sono rimasto a casa. "Due to a sudden rainstorm, I stayed home."	**Il giornale è bagnato, non riesco più a leggerlo.** "The newspaper is wet; I can't read it anymore."
Il tuo maglione è tutto bagnato! "Your jumper is all wet!"	**Puoi stare sotto al mio ombrello.** "You can stay under my umbrella."
Mi puoi dare un altro pezzo di torta? "Can you give me another piece of cake?"	**Oggi per pranzo mangio solo una focaccia.** "Today, I eat only a focaccia for lunch."
Ho mangiato due focacce. "I ate two focaccia."	**In Italia c'è un famoso liquore a base di carciofo.** "In Italy there is a famous liqueur made from artichoke."
I carciofi sono buoni anche sulla pizza. "Artichokes are good even on pizza."	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Usage of *Trapassato Prossimo* Tense. We Will Also See

the *Trapassato Prossimo* Reference Boards With Both *Essere* and *Avere* Auxiliary Verbs.

Eh...stamattina avevo visto che era nuvoloso ma non pensavo potesse piovere così forte. Le strade sono allagate ed io non ho l'ombrello.

"Eh...this morning, I had seen it was cloudy but I didn't think it could rain so heavily. Streets are overflowing and I don't have an umbrella."

We use the Italian *trapassato prossimo* tense ("pluperfect") in informal Italian to convey the unlikeliness of an action. Please note that this use is only possible in (really) informal spoken Italian and we should avoid it both in the written language and in properly spoken Italian.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
Se avessi prenotato prima, a quest'ora eravamo già entrati.	"If you booked in advance, we'd already be inside by now."
Avete deciso di prendere la macchina, se avessimo preso l'aereo, eravamo arrivati.	"You decided to take the car; had we taken the plane, we would have arrived."
Se Luca avesse ascoltato il mio consiglio, aveva finito il suo compito.	"Had Luca listened to my advice, he would have been done with his assignment."

Note that in the sample sentences presented above, the proper Italian grammar would require the use of the *condizionale* tense (either present or past) instead of *trapassato prossimo*. Although using the latter tense this way is considered incorrect in standard Italian, we still have to be able to recognize this (mis)usage.

Finally, we may employ the *trapassato prossimo* tense to express a higher level of politeness, mainly (but not exclusively) when using the verb *venire* ("to come"), as an alternative possibility to the employment of the *passato prossimo* tense. There is no difference in the English translation.

For Example:

Passato Prossimo	***Trapassato Prossimo***	**"English"**

Buongiorno, sono venuto per chiederle un favore.	*Buongiorno, ero venuto per chiederle un favore.*	"Good morning, I came to ask you a favor."
Ciao, sono venuto per vedere se avevi bisogno di qualcosa.	*Ciao, ero venuto per vedere se avevi bisogno di qualcosa.*	"Hi, I came to see if you needed something."
Ciao, siamo venuti per aiutarvi.	*Ciao, eravamo venuti per aiutarvi.*	"Hi, we came to help you."

In this case, the speaker(s) formulate the sentence as if it were a past occurrence in order to achieve a higher level of courtesy and formality.

We can form the *trapassato prossimo* of the three conjugations by using the *indicativo imperfetto* ("imperfect indicative") of the auxiliary verb (either *essere* or *avere*) conjugated according to the person it refers to, followed by the past participle of the main verb, as follows:

Subject + Auxiliary Verb (imperfect) + Main Verb (past participle)

Trapassato Prossimo

Auxiliary Verb: *essere*
arrivare ("to arrive")

Trapassato Prossimo	**"Pluperfect"**
io ero arrivato/a	"I had arrived"
tu eri arrivato/a	"you had arrived"
lui/lei era arrivato/a	"he/she/it had arrived"
noi eravamo arrivati/e	"we had arrived"
voi eravate arrivati/e	"you had arrived"
loro erano arrivati/e	"they had arrived"

Trapassato Prossimo

Auxiliary Verb: *avere*
vedere ("to see," "to watch")

Trapassato Prossimo	**"Pluperfect"**
Io avevo visto	"I had seen"
tu avevi visto	"you had seen"
lui/lei aveva visto	"he/she/it had seen"
noi avevamo visto	"we had seen"
voi avevate visto	"you had seen"
loro avevano visto	"they had seen"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Parco Ruffini

Parco Ruffini ("Ruffini Park," alternatively called *il Valentino nuovo*, "the new Valentine") stretches over 130.00 square miles in the *Pozzo Strada* neighborhood.

The park was built during the twenties and was inaugurated on December 31, 1931 as *Parco Gerolamo Napoleone Bonaparte*. Due to the significant expansion of the city, the park satisfied the need to have a large green area in which the inhabitants of Turin could relax, chat, and play sports. The park was supplied with many sporting facilities, thus supporting the Fascist ideal of having a physically fit populace.

Right after the end of the Second World War, the park was renamed in the memory of Francesco Ruffini, a former Italian minister and University professor who refused to collaborate with the Fascist party and decided not to continue his teaching activity in an anti-democratic society.

However, the sport vocation of the park remained a constant aspect of its future developments. In 1961, the architect Annibale Vitellozzi planned and erected the *palazzetto dello sport* ("sports arena"), subsequently called *Palaruffini*, which became the most important point of reference for sport and music happenings and official events.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #20
How to Avoid Becoming an Italian Disaster

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ITALIAN

1. Mario: Ehi, chi ha lasciato qui questa valigia?
2. Elena: Oh, scusi...
3. Mario: Ecco, sono inciampato e mi è caduto il pane!
4. Elena: Ci penso io a buttarlo.
5. Mario: Insomma, fa attenzione! Porto dei vassoi roventi!
6. Elena: Abbia pazienza. È la valigia del Signor Antonio...
7. Mario: Non è quello il punto. Quando cominciai a lavorare anche io facevo degli errori, ma tu sei quasi un disastro!
8. Elena: Non dica così, faccio del mio meglio.
9. Mario: Lo so, ma sei troppo distratta!

ENGLISH

1. Mario: Hey, who left this suitcase here?
2. Elena: Oh, excuse me...
3. Mario: There! I stumbled and dropped the bread!
4. Elena: I'll take care of throwing it away.

CONT'D OVER

5. Mario: Well, pay attention! I bring red-hot trays!

6. Elena: Please forgive me. That's Mr. Antonio's luggage...

7. Mario: That's not the point. When I began working I made some mistakes too, but you are almost a disaster!

8. Elena: Please don't talk like that; I do my best.

9. Mario: I know, but you're too absentminded!

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
inciampare	to stumble, trip	verb
infornare	to put into the oven, bake	verb
vassoio	tray	noun
rovente	red-hot, scorching	adjective
cominciare	to start, begin	verb
disastro	disaster, mess	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Sono inciampato di nuovo. "I stumbled again."	**Devo infornare le lasagne.** "I have to put lasagna into the oven."
Mia nonna ha un vassoio d'argento. "My grandmother has a silver tray."	**Metti la carne in una padella rovente.** "Put the meat in a red-hot pan."

Comincia la partita. "The soccer game is starting."	**Ho cominciato a frequentare un corso di danza del ventre.** "I started attending a belly-dancing course."
Domani comincia la nuova serie di Heroes. "Tomorrow, the new Heroes series will start."	**Ho fatto un disastro in cucina.** "I made a disaster in the kitchen."

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Differences in the Usage of *Passato Remoto* Tense as Regards the Spoken Language in Northern and Southern Italy. We Will Also See the *Passato Remoto* Reference Board of First Conjugation Regular Verbs.

Hey, chi ha lasciato quì questa valigia?

"Hey, who left this suitcase here?"

Before explaining the Italian *passato remoto* tense, we first of all need to make a distinction between northern and southern Italy as regards the spoken language.

Northern Italians tend to employ the *passato prossimo* tense to express any past occurrence, regardless of how much time elapsed between the conveyed event and the utterance of the sentence.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
I romani hanno costruito il colosseo.	"Romans built the Colosseum."
Gli americani sono sbarcati sulla luna nel 1969.	"Americans landed on the moon in 1969."

Ieri sono andato al cinema.	"Yesterday, I went to the cinema."

Similarly, southern Italians tend to use the *passato remoto* tense to express any past occurrence, making no distinction between distant and recent events.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
La battaglia di Lepanto accadde nel 1571.	"The battle of Lepanto took place in 1571."
Andammo in Inghilterra l'anno scorso.	"We went to England last year."
Stamattina incontrai tua sorella.	"I met your sister this morning."

Both the northern and southern Italian usage of, respectively, *passato prossimo* and *passato remoto* are perfectly acceptable in informal spoken language.

We form the *passato remoto* tense by dropping the ending from the infinitive form of the verb and adding the appropriate endings to the root, as presented below.

1. First, take the infinitive form of a verb, for example *coltivare* ("to till," "to cultivate," "to grow").
2. Second,drop the ending (that is the last three letter*s), leav*ing *coltiv-*.
3. Third, add the appropriate endings: *coltiv-ai*, *coltiv-asti*, *coltiv-ò*, etc.

The following board displays the *passato remoto* tense of first conjugation regular verbs:

Passato Remoto

amare ("to love")

Passato Remoto	**Passato Remoto**
io am-ai	"I loved"

tu am-asti	"you loved"
*lui/lei am-ò**	"he/she/it loved"
noi am-ammo	"we loved"
voi am-aste	"you loved"
loro am-arono	"they loved"

* Please do not forget to put the accent on the ending *ò*, otherwise you'll have (*Io*) *amo* ("I love"), the first singular person of the simple present tense.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Borgo e Castello medievale

The *Borgo e Castello medievale* ("medieval Castle and Village") form a sort of medieval hamlet built inside *Parco del Valentino* ("Valentino's Park") for the International Exposition run in Turin in 1884. The little medieval village should have been dismantled after the conclusion of the Exposition, but it remained where it was and became a city museum in 1942.

The little village consists in a realistic reproduction of a "typical" late-medieval *borgo* ("hamlet"). The *Rocca* ("castle") has four floors. The basement hosts the prisons. The ground floor houses the main gate, courtyard, kitchens, dining hall, and barracks for mercenary soldiers. The first floor contains the antechamber, baron's private quarters (including a bedroom shaped like the French king's at Issogne castle), the "room of the Lady," the chapel, and finally the chamber of the guardian who controlled the access to the drawbridge.

The village was designed by a group of artists and intellectuals led by the Portuguese architect Alfredo d'Andrade. The style of the buildings was taken from many medieval structures spread around the *Piemonte* region and southern France. The little village also has its own artisans and workshops; this business adds a medieval everyday life feeling that makes the place even more fascinating.

If you wish to know more and see pictures of this bizarre place, you may click on the following link:

http://www.borgomedioevaletorino.it/

(English and French versions of this website are available.)

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #21 Does "Practice Make Perfect" in Italy?

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#21

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ITALIAN

1. Elena: Signor Antonio, ecco la sua valigia.

2. Antonio: Grazie mille e scusi per l'inconveniente. Perchè quella faccia? Problemi a lavoro?

3. Elena: Eh sì. Riesco sempre a sbagliare e non me ne accorgo neanche.

4. Antonio: Eh, ricordo 10 anni fa quando ricevei una proposta di lavoro a Londra. Appena arrivato mi sentivo inadeguato e pensavo di non essere capace.

5. Elena: Esattamente come mi sento adesso. Sono un pò delusa di me stessa.

6. Antonio: Non ti preoccupare col passare del tempo vedrai che le cose miglioreranno. Sbagliando s'impara.

7. Elena: Grazie Signor Antonio, apprezzo molto le sue parole.

8. Antonio: Prego mia cara e non abbatterti, forza!

ENGLISH

1. Elena: Mr. Antonio, here's your suitcase.

2. Antonio: Thank you very much and sorry for the inconvenience. Why that face? Any problems at work?

3. Elena: Oh yes. I'm always making mistakes and I don't even notice them.

CONT'D OVER

4. Antonio: Eh, I remember ten years ago when I received a job offer in London. As soon as I arrived, I felt inadequate and I thought I wasn't able to do it.

5. Elena: Exactly the way I feel now. I am a little disappointed with myself.

6. Antonio: Don't worry, as time passes you'll see that things get better. Practice makes perfect.

7. Elena: Thank you, Mr. Antonio, I really appreciate your words.

8. Antonio: You're welcome my dear, and don't be discouraged, come on!

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
sbagliare	to make a mistake, be wrong	verb
proposta	proposal, offer, suggestion	noun
inadeguato	inadequate, deficient, unsatisfactory	adjective
capace	able, capable, skilled	adjective
esattamente	exactly, precisely	adverb
deluso	disappointed, frustrated	adjective

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Questa volta non sbagliare!	**Luisa ha sbagliato di nuovo.**
"Don't make a mistake this time!"	"Luisa was wrong again."

Diana ha accettato la proposta di matrimonio di Giovanni. "Diana accepted Giovanni's wedding proposal."	**Ho ricevuto una proposta di lavoro.** "I received a work proposal."
Sono andato alla festa con un vestito inadeguato. "I went to the party with an inadequate dress."	**Sei capace di pilotare un elicottero.** "Are you capable of flying a helicopter?"
Fai esattamente come ti dico! "Do exactly what I say to you!"	**Sono deluso del tuo comportamento.** "I am disappointed by your behavior."

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Usage of Passato Remoto and Passato Prossimo Tense. We Will Also See the Passato Remoto Reference Board of Second Conjugation Regular Verbs.

Eh, ricordo 10 anni fa quando ricevei una proposta di lavoro a Londra. Appena arrivato mi sentivo inadeguato e pensavo di non essere capace.

"Eh, I remember ten years ago when I received a job offer in London. As soon as I arrived, I felt inadequate and I thought I wasn't able to do it."

As we saw in the previous class, both the northern and southern Italian usage of the *passato prossimo* and *passato remoto,* respectively, are perfectly acceptable in informal spoken language.

However, in standard Italian, we use the *passato prossimo* tense to convey recent past occurrences, which means past events that the speaker deems to be recent. This is a subjective interpretation and does not in any way relate to any objective evaluation of time.

Conversely, we use the *passato remoto* tense to communicate distant past events. The

functioning of *passato prossimo* and *passato remoto* is in this sense remarkably different from English. The recentness or distance of past events is closely related to the context we are speaking in.

This difference is clear when we employ both tenses in close connection to each other. Note that we may use them either in the same sentence or in consecutive sentences.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
Secondo alcuni studiosi, i contienti si formarono (*passato remoto*) *quattro milioni di anni fa, mentre secondo altri si sono si sono formati* (*passato prossimo*) *solo un milione di anni fa.*	"According to some scholars, continents were created four million years ago, whereas according to others, they were created one million years ago."
Dieci anni fa andai (*passato remoto*) *in Egitto, ma l'anno scorso sono andato* (*passato prossimo*) *in vacanza in Spagna.*	"Ten years ago, I went to Egypt, but last year, I went to Spain on vacation."
I Romani costruirono (*passato remoto*) *molti ponti nei loro territori, ai giorni nostri le autorità italiane ne hanno costruiti* (*passato prossimo*) *meno.*	"Romans built many bridges in their territories; today, Italian authorities build fewer bridges."

The following board displays the *passato remoto* tense of second conjugation regular verbs:

Passato Remoto

ricevere ("to receive")

Italian	**"English"**
io ricev-ei	"I received"
tu ricev-esti	"you received"
*lui/lei ricev-é**	"he/she/it received"

noi ricev-emmo	"we received"
voi ricev-este	"you received"
loro ricev-erono	"they received"

*Please do not forget to put the accent on the *-é* ending, otherwise you'll have *lui/lei riceve* ("he/she/it receives"), the third singular person of the simple present tense.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Cattedrale di San Giovanni

The *cattedrale di San Giovanni* ("Cathedral of St. John," the patron saint of Turin) is the city's only Renaissance building. It was erected between 1491 and 1498 according to the will of the cardinal Domenico della Rovere. The architect Meo del Caprina planned the church, building it on a space three other churches formerly occupied, which had previously been demolished. In 1516, Pope Lion X elected the cathedral as his local residence.

The cathedral has been renovated many times during the last five hundred years. The most important change occurred when Guarino Guarini planned and built the *cappella della sacra sindone* ("Chapel of the Holy Shroud"), which links the church to the Royal Palace behind it.

The Holy Shroud alone represents the most famous object for visitors to see. Regardless of personal religious beliefs, the shroud has always been a mysterious and often discussed matter, both by Italians and Christians around the world. It is supposed to bear the shape of Jesus Christ's body upon his death.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #22
Living in Italy Is a Vacation!

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#22

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ITALIAN

1. Anna: Ehi Carlo, anche tu in partenza?

2. Carlo: Oh ciao Anna, sì, cerco una meta per le ferie. Qualche consiglio?

3. Anna: Io l'anno scorso sono andata in Egitto. Ho fatto tante escursioni, il mare poi è stupendo!

4. Agente di Viaggio: Scusi, ecco a lei il catalogo per il Mar Rosso. Le interessa?

5. Carlo: Oh grazie. Volevo andarci tre anni fa, ma la mia ragazza decise per la Tailandia...

6. Agente di Viaggio: Capisco, ma quest'anno ci sono un sacco di offerte.

7. Anna: Io adesso devo andare, ieri ho sentito tua sorella. Domani andiamo insieme a una mostra fotografica, vieni anche tu vero?

8. Carlo: Volentieri, allora a domani, ciao!

9. Anna: Ciao!

ENGLISH

1. Anna: Hey, Carlo, are you leaving, too?

2. Carlo: Oh, hi, Anna. Yes, I'm looking for a destination for my vacation. Any advice?

CONT'D OVER

3. Anna: Last year, I went to Egypt. I made a lot of day trips, and the sea is amazing!

4. Travel Agent: Excuse me. Here is the catalogue for the Red Sea. Are you interested?

5. Carlo: Oh, thank you. I wanted to go there three years ago, but my girlfriend decided on Thailand…

6. Travel Agent: I see. But this year there are many special offers.

7. Anna: I have to go now; yesterday, I spoke with your sister. Tomorrow, we're going together to a photographic exhibition; you are coming, right?

8. Carlo: Sure, see you tomorrow, bye!

9. Anna: Bye!

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
meta	destination, aim, goal	noun
ferie	vacation, holidays	noun
escursione	excursion, hike, journey, trip, day trip	noun
stupendo	wonderful, amazing, marvelous	adjective
fotografico	photographic	adjective

volentieri	willingly, gladly, sure, with pleasure	adverb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Non abbiamo ancora deciso la meta del viaggio. "We still haven't decided the trip's destination."	**Quest'estate non ho le ferie.** "This summer, I don't have any vacation."
Ho prenotato un'escursione per Pompei. "I booked an excursion for Pompei."	**Questo mazzo di fiori è stupendo.** "This posy is wonderful."
Siamo andati insieme a una mostra fotografica. "We went together to a photographic exhibition."	**Beviamo un caffè? Volentieri.** "Do we drink a coffee? With pleasure."
Vengo volentieri con voi a mangiare la pizza. "I gladly come with you to eat a pizza."	**Vengo volentieri al cinema.** "I'd gladly come to the movie theater."

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Usage of *Passato Remoto* and *Passato Prossimo* Tense. We Shall Consider Factors Other Than Time that Can Influence the Choice of Which Tense Is More Appropriate for the Context We Are Speaking in, and We Will See the Passato Remoto Reference Board of Third Conjugation Regular Verbs.

Oh grazie. Volevo andarci tre anni fa, ma la mia ragazza decise per la Tailandia...

"Oh thank you. I wanted to go there three years ago, but my girlfriend decided on Thailand..."

When deciding whether to choose the *passato prossimo* or the *passato remoto* tense, you should take certain factors into account, apart from the amount of time that has elapsed between the utterance of the sentence and the event(s) it conveys.

1st - The *passato prossimo* tense belongs to a standard level of formality in Italian, and we often associate it with the spoken language. Conversely, we tend to employ the *passato remoto* tense more often in the written language, unless we wish to adopt a highly formal variety of spoken Italian language. This is the case when we have to deliver speeches in formal working or studying environments, such as universities, businesses, and so forth.

For Example:

Construction	*Italian*	"English"
Standard spoken Italian	*Ciao Marco, sai che l'anno scorso sono andato* (*passato prossimo*) *a Londra?*	"Hi Marco, do you know last year I went to London?"
Highly formal spoken Italian: an oral report at a business	*Buona giornata. Desidero iniziare il mio rapporto evidenziando ciò che il mio predecessore decise* (*passato remoto*) *sei mesi fa.*	"Good day. I wish to begin my report underlining what my predecessor decided six months ago."
Highly formal spoken Italian: a presentation at a university	*Desidero iniziare la mia presentazione ricordando quali furono* (*passato remoto*) *le battaglie più importanti combattute dai greci nel quarto secolo A.C.**	"I wish to start my presentation recalling what were the major battles fought by the Greeks in the fourth century B.C."

*Please note that *A.C.* in Italian stands for *Avanti Cristo* ("Before Christ"), whereas in English, it means exactly the opposite.The following board displays the *passato remoto* tense of third

conjugation regular verbs:

Passato Remoto

dormire ("to sleep")

Italian	**"English"**
io dorm-ii	"I slept"
tu dorm-isti	"you slept"
*lui/lei dorm-ì**	"he/she/it slept"
noi dorm-immo	"we slept"
voi dorm-iste	"you slept"
loro dorm-irono	"they slept"

*Please do not forget to put the accent on the *-ì* ending, otherwise you'll have (*tu*) *dormi* ("you sleep"), the second singular person of the simple present tense.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Parco del Valentino

The *parco del Valentino* ("Park of the Valentine"; in *piemontese* dialect, *Ël Valentin*, "The Valentine") is without a doubt, the most visited public park in Turin. It lies along the banks of the Po River and became a key symbol of Turin -as important as the *Mole Antonelliana* (which we briefly presented in another lesson's Cultural Insight).

The origin of the park's name is uncertain; some assume it comes from a former Roman name, subsequently altered in order to adapt it to Italian. However, as fascinating as this theory sounds, there is no definite proof of this conjecture. Another assumption hypothesizes it took its name from a nearby old church dedicated to *San Valentino* ("St. Valentine"). French landscaper Barrillet-Dechamps, whose romantic philosophy the Italians adapted to suit the

park's landscape needs, inspired the shape and internal organization of the park. Since the park contains a castle (called *Castello del Valentino*) and the famous Medieval Hamlet, the planners wanted to recreate a sort of small-scale village settled in a natural environment. The park presents many streams, falls, rocks, trees, and bushes. Tree-lined alleys that contribute to create its unique atmosphere connect its fountains.

Its most important fountain is the *Fontana dei dodici mesi* ("Fountain of Twelve Months"), a fountain surrounded by twelve sculptures representing the months of the year.

If you wish to learn more about this particular park, you may visit it at the following link:

http://multimediatorino.tuttocitta.it/detail.php?idct=1&idit=3&idpoi=21

(The website is available in Italian only.)

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #23
Stayin' Alive in Italy

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#23

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ITALIAN

1. Elena: È tuo questo catalogo? Wow, guarda che bei posti!

2. Carlo: Sì, oggi sono andato in agenzia, ho pure incontrato Anna.

3. Elena: Ah davvero? Va in vacanza anche lei?

4. Carlo: Non lo so, non le ho chiesto.

5. Elena: So che ha intenzione di studiare un pò all'estero tramite il progetto Erasmus, forse in agenzia cercava solo delle informazioni.

6. Carlo: Eh sì, perchè del progetto Erasmus se ne occupa l'università, giusto?

7. Elena: Esatto. Devi compilare tanti documenti e seguire un sacco di procedure noiose...

8. Carlo: Sì, mi ricordo quando lo fece nostro cugino qualche anno fa.

9. Elena: Dai, accendi il computer che prenotiamo online i biglietti per la mostra!

ENGLISH

1. Elena: Is this catalog yours? Wow, look what beautiful places!

2. Carlo: Yes, today I went to the agency. I also met Anna.

3. Elena: Oh, really? Is she also going on holiday?

CONT'D OVER

4. Carlo: I don't know; I didn't ask her.

5. Elena: I know she intends to study abroad for a while through the Erasmus project. She was probably only looking for some information at the agency.

6. Carlo: Well, yes. Because the university deals with the Erasmus project, right?

7. Elena: Exactly. You have to fill out many documents and follow a lot of boring procedures...

8. Carlo: Yes, I remember when our cousin did it years ago.

9. Elena: Come on; turn on the PC so that we can book online tickets for the exhibition!

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
pure	too, also	adverb
estero	foreign, abroad	noun
progetto	project, plan	noun
occuparsi	to deal, take care	verb
compilare	to fill in, complete	verb
procedura	procedure, proceeding, praxis	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Venite pure voi alla festa? "Are you also coming to the party?"	**Mi piacerebbe vivere all'estero.** "I'd like to live abroad."
Il tuo progetto è molto interessante. "Your project is very interesting."	**Abbiamo lavorato molto per questo progetto.** "We worked a lot for this project."
Devi occuparti del proprio lavoro! "You have to deal with your own business!"	**Mi può aiutare a compilare questo modulo?** "Can you help me fill out this form?"
Compili questi fogli, per favore. "Please complete these papers."	**Quale procedura è necessaria?** "Which procedure is necessary?"
Per iscriversi c'è una procedura semplice. "There's a simple procedure to register."	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is on the Usage of the *Passato Prossimo* and *Passato Remoto* Tenses.
Sì, mi ricordo quando lo fece nostro cugino qualche anno fa.
"Yes, I remember when our cousin did it years ago."

We use the *passato prossimo* tense in standard Italian to convey past actions that relate to the time when we formulate the utterance. We form this tense using the present form of the auxiliary verb (either *essere* or *avere*), followed by the past participle of the main verb. We must conjugate the auxiliary verb, as in any other compound tense, according to the person it refers to.

For Example:

Italian	"English"
Ho visto un bel film.	"I watched a nice film."
Stamattina sono andato al mercato.	"This morning, I went to the market."
Ieri sera ho perso le chiavi.	"I lost the keys yesterday evening."

We must conjugate the past participles of verbs that require the auxiliary verb *essere* according to the gender and number of the subjects they refer to. In this case, the past participle keeps the same meaning as the main verb, but it behaves (i.e., is conjugated) as a standard first-class adjective.

For Example:

Italian	"English"
Laura (singular feminine) *è scesa dalle scale*.	"Laura went down the stairs."
Marco e Luigi (plural masculine) *sono tornati*.	"Marco and Luigi came back."
Elisa e Luca (plural, feminine and masculine*) *sono partiti ieri*.	"Elisa and Luca left yesterday."

*Please note that when a group of nouns includes both masculine and feminine terms, we have to conjugate the past participle as if they were all plural masculine nouns.

We use the *passato remoto* tense to convey past occurrences that the speaker deems to be unrelated to the time when he or she formulates the utterance. In other words, whenever we talk about a past event that in our opinion belongs to the distant past, we should employ the *passato remoto* instead of *passato prossimo*.

For Example:

Italian	"English"

Io andai a Roma sei anni fa.	"I went to Rome six years ago."
L'ultimo imperatore romano morì molti secoli fa.	"The last Roman emperor died many centuries ago."
L'anno scorso decidemmo di passare le vacanze in Spagna.	"Last year, we decided to spend our vacation in Spain."

In the dialogue above, Carlo implies a considerable temporal distance when he says *mi ricordo quando lo fece nostro cugino qualche anno fa* ("I remember when our cousin did it years ago"). Whereas, his previous statement *oggi sono andato in agenzia* ("Today, I went to the agency") suggests that he is talking about a recent event, even if he does not specify it through the use of the temporal adverb *oggi* ("today").

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Venetian Haunted Places

Due to their historical importance, many Venetian buildings have given rise to plenty of legends.

For instance, the eminent and wealthy Venetian merchant Giovanni Dario built *Ca Mocenigo* and wrote a puzzling inscription at its bottom: *Genio urbis Joannes Dario* (which literally means "Giovanni Dario, city genius"). The same writing is also the source of many enigmatic anagrams, such as *Sub ruina insidiosa genero* ("He who lives in this house will go to ruin."). In fact, the *Mocenigo* family invited the illustrious philosopher Giordano Bruno to stay there; after trying to steal Bruno's supposed alchemic knowledge, family members denounced him to the Venetian Inquisition. He was arrested and later deported to Rome, where the Italians summarily proved him guilty of heresy and publicly put him to the stake and burned him alive on February 17, 1600.

The legend about *Ca Dario* ("Dario Palace") is particularly interesting. Many of its former owners and inhabitants died a violent death or committed suicide. The last two owners, the businessman Raul Gardini and the tenor Mario del Monaco, died this way.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #24
It's Time to Let It All Hang Out in Italy!

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

#24

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ITALIAN

1. Anna: Sai Carlo, il fotografo è un mio amico.
2. Carlo: Davvero? Ha viaggiato molto questo ragazzo!
3. Anna: Sì, ebbi un trauma quando sette anni fa mi disse che partiva in giro per il mondo.
4. Carlo: Wow, che tipo intraprendente!
5. Anna: Sì, poi ha un talento unico, guarda che colori....
6. Carlo: Che c'è Elena, non ti piace la mostra? Sei così pensierosa...
7. Elena: No, non è per quello. Sono solo un pò giù di morale per il lavoro.
8. Carlo: Non dovresti! Adesso sei con noi. Dopo ci andiamo a divertire!
9. Anna: Carlo ha ragione. Dai, proseguiamo per l'ultima sala e poi usciamo!

ENGLISH

1. Anna: You know, Carlo, the photographer is a friend of mine.
2. Carlo: Really? This guy traveled a lot!
3. Anna: Yes, I had a shock seven years ago when he told me he was leaving for a trip around the world.
4. Carlo: Wow, what an enterprising guy!

CONT'D OVER

5. Anna: Yes, and he has a unique talent; look at these colors....

6. Carlo: What's up Elena, don't you like the exhibition? You are so pensive...

7. Elena: No, it's not that. I am only a bit down because of my job.

8. Carlo: You shouldn't! Now you're with us. Later we're going to have fun!

9. Anna: Carlo is right. Come on, let's go on to the last room, and then let's go out!

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
viaggiare	to travel	verb
trauma	shock, trauma, blow	noun
intraprendente	enterprising, open-minded, go-ahead	adjective
talento	talent	noun
pensieroso	pensive, wistful, thoughtful, pondering	adjective
proseguire	to go on, keep on, continue, persist	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Amo viaggiare. "I love traveling."	**È stato un trauma quando ho avuto quell'incidente.** "It was a shock when I had that accident."

I miei genitori sono molto intraprendenti. "My parents are very open-minded."	**Mia sorella ha un grande talento nel canto.** "My sister has a big talent in singing."
Oggi sembri molto pensieroso. "Today, you look very thoughtful."	**Adesso, proseguiamo con le notizie sportive.** "Now let's continue with the sports news."

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Usage of *Passato Remoto* and *Passato Prossimo* Tenses, Completing Our Analysis of Factors Other Than Time That Can Influence the Choice of Appropriate Tense for the Context We Are Speaking in, and We Will See the *Passato Remoto* Reference Board of *Essere* and *Avere*.
Sì, ebbi un trauma quando sette anni fa mi disse che partiva in giro per il mondo.
"Yes, I had a shock seven years ago when he told me he was leaving for a trip around the world."

2nd - A fairly recent trend in the evolution of Italian language shows that Italians have gradually been substituting the *passato prossimo* tense for the *passato remoto* tense in many of its usages. This is happening because the conjugation of the former is easier than the conjugation of the latter. Therefore, it may happen that using the *passato remoto* tense may indicate to a listener that you are using it incorrectly, even when you use it appropriately. Sometimes its employment may be unsuitable for the context, especially when we are speaking informally.

For Example:

1. Mario: *Sai Giovanni, l'anno scorso andai* (*passato remoto*) *a Rovigo.*
   Mario: "You know, Giovanni, last year I went to Rovigo."

2. Giovanni: *Ahah, intendi dire che l'anno scorso sei andato* (*passato prossimo*) *a Rovigo?*
   Giovanni: "Ah ah, you mean last year you went to Rovigo."

As you can see from the translation provided above, there is no difference in English between the two expressions. This peculiarity of the Italian language is better understood in the target language.

Due to the shift of the cultural understanding of *passato remoto* and *passato prossimo* tense, we use the former to make linguistic jokes, rephrasing what has been previously said by our interlocutor using the *passato remoto* tense. This happens exclusively in the direct discourse when using the second person, either singular or plural. It's worth noticing that these are friendly, funny jokes and we should never get offended when somebody makes them, since they imply a positive degree of closeness between speakers.

For Example:

1. Francesco: *Sai Antonio, ieri ho baciato Maria.* (*passato prossimo*)
   Francesco: "You know Antonio, yesterday I kissed Maria."

2. Antonio: *La baciasti?* (*passato remoto*)
   Antonio: "Did you?"

The following board displays the *passato remoto* tense of the regular verbs *essere* and *avere*:

Passato Remoto
essere ("to be")

Italian	**"English"**
io fui	"I was"
tu fosti	"you were"
lui/lei fu	"he/she/it was"
noi fummo	"we were"

voi foste	"you were"
loro furono	"they were"

avere ("to have")

Italian	**"English"**
io ebbi	"I had"
tu avesti	"you had"
lui/lei ebbe	"he/she/it had"
noi avemmo	"we had"
voi aveste	"you had"
loro ebbero	"they had"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Nostradamus in Turin

Due to its innate mystical symbolism, the city of Turin has always attracted people interested in esotericism and magic. For example, Nostradamus decided to reside there for many years in a place called *Domus Morozzo* ("Morozzo House"), which a fire subsequently destroyed. Another scholar of mystical art, simply called "the prophet of Saint-Remy" (whose real name is unknown), lived in the same place some decades after Nostradamus. According to the legend, he understood the method to decipher Nostradamus's prophecies and left a carving on one of the house walls explaining the "access key" to understand his master's teachings.

The "white magic" of Turin stems from the city cathedral, which hosts the Holy Shroud. An Austrian architect studied in depth the symbolic references of the position of five main buildings of the city, noticing, for example, that all five Sabaudian (adjective meaning

"belonging to the Savoia family," the former Italian royal family) residences represent the tips of a perfectly symmetrical star when laid out on a map. This pattern could hardly happen by chance, so it seems likely it the Savoia family preordained it. However, its ultimate purpose remains as obscure as Turin's strange fondness for mages and alchemists.

LESSON NOTES

Beginner S2 #25 What Will You See in the Italian Club?

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ITALIAN

1. Anna: Wow, mi piace questa musica!

2. Elena: Però mi ricordo che quì c'era un altro tipo di locale prima... Quando andavo al liceo...

3. Carlo: Sì, aveva un altro nome, ma chiuse sette anni fa.

4. Elena: Comunque meglio adesso, mi piace molto come è arredato, è più moderno.

5. Carlo: In effetti prima era una semplice birreria. Guarda, proiettano anche delle immagini sulla parete.

6. Elena: E che bello quest'acquario, ci sono dei pesci stranissimi... Allora? Andiamo a ballare dopo?

7. Carlo: Elena, ti sei ripresa!

8. Elena: Credo proprio di sì.

9. Anna: Evviva!!!! Finiamo i nostri cocktail e andiamo!

ENGLISH

1. Anna: Wow, I like this music!

2. Elena: But I remember that before, there was another type of club here... When I was in high school...

CONT'D OVER

3. Carlo: Yes, it had another name but closed down seven years ago.

4. Elena: By the way, it's better now; I like very much the way it's furnished. It's more modern.

5. Carlo: Actually, before it was a simple beer house. Look, they're also projecting some images on the wall.

6. Elena: And this aquarium is so nice; there are some very strange fish... So? Are we going to dance later?

7. Carlo: Elena, you've cheered up!

8. Elena: I really think so.

9. Anna: Hurray!!!! Let's finish our cocktails and let's go!

VOCABULARY

Italian	English	Class
ricordarsi	to remember, remind, recall	verb
liceo	high school, secondary school	noun
arredato	furnished, equipped, provided	adjective
proiettare	to project, to screen, to show	verb
semplice	simple, plain, sober	adverb
acquario	aquarium, fish tank	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Ti ricordi di me? "Do you remember me?"	**Stasera vado a cena con i miei amici del liceo.** "Tonight, I have dinner with my high school friends."
La camera è arredata con gusto. "The room is furnished with taste."	**Il professore deve proiettare la sua relazione nell'auditorio.** "The professor has to project his essay in the auditorium."
Dammi una spiegazione semplice! "Give me a simple explanation!"	**Per favore, portami all'acquario di Genova!** "Please, bring me to Genoa's aquarium!"

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the First and Second Category of Verbs that Follow an Irregular Conjugation at the *Passato Remoto* Tense.
Sì, aveva un altro nome, ma chiuse sette anni fa.
"Yes, it had another name but closed down seven years ago."

Most of the verbs that follow an irregular conjugation at the *passato remoto* tense belong to the second conjugation. We can divide the majority of these irregular verbs into eight different groups:

I. Verbs Whose Stems' Last Consonant Becomes an -s Only at the First Singular, Third Singular, and Third Plural Persons

---

The procedure to conjugate this category of verbs is the following:

1. Take the infinitive form of the verb: for example, *chiudere* ("to close," "to lock")
2. Drop the ending: *chiud-*
3. Change the stem's last letter to *-s*: *chius-* (only for I, he/she/it, and they)
4. Add the standard endings

Passato Remoto

chiudere ("to close," "to lock")

Italian	**"English"**
io chius-i	"I closed"
tu chiud-esti	"you closed"
lui/lei chius-e	"he/she/it closed"
noi chiud-emmo	"we closed"
voi chiud-este	"you closed"
loro chius-ero	"they closed"

The following list presents some of the most widely used verbs belonging to this category:

Italian	**"English"**
accorgere	"to become aware of," "to notice"
alludere	"to allude to," "to refer to," "to hint at"
ardere	"to burn"
assolvere	"to absolve"
chiedere	"to ask"

cingere	"to tie around"
concludere	"to conclude," "to end"
correre	"to run"
decidere	"to decide"
dipingere	"to paint"
distinguere	"to distinguish"
dividere	"to divide"
emergere	"to emerge"
espellere	"to expel," "to turn/put/throw out"
esplodere	"to blow up"
evadere	"to evade," "to escape"
fingere	"to pretend," "to feign"
giungere	"to arrive," "to reach"
infrangere	"to break"
mordere	"to bite"
perdere	"to lose"
persuadere	"to persuade"
piangere	"to cry," "to weep"
porgere	"to give," "to pass," "to hand"
porre (i.e., *ponere*)	"to put," "to place"
pungere	"to sting," "to prick"

radere	"to shave," "to raze"
ridere	"to laugh"
rimanere	"to stay"
scorgere	"to notice," "to discern," "to catch a glance of"
sorgere	"to raise"
spargere	"to spread"
spingere	"to push"
stringere	"to grip," "to clasp"
tingere	"to dye"
uccidere	"to kill"
ungere	"to grease," "to oil," "to anoint"
vincere	"to win"
volgere	"to turn"

II. Verbs Whose Stems' Endings *-gli* /*-gn* Become, Respectively, *-ls* /*-ns* Only at the First Singular, Third Singular, and Third Plural Persons

---

The procedure to conjugate this category of verbs is the following:

1. Take the infinitive of the verb: for example, *scegliere* ("to choose"), *spegnere* ("to turn off")
2. Drop the ending: *scegli-*, *spegn-*

3. Change the stem's ending *-gli* to *-ls* and *-gn* to *-ns*: for example, *scels-*, *spens-* (only for I, he/she/it, they)

4. Add the appropriate endings

Passato Remoto

-gli-

cogliere ("to gather," "to pick")

Italian	**"English"**
io cols-i	"I picked"
tu cogli-esti	"you picked"
lui/lei cols-e	"he/she/it picked"
noi cogli-emmo	"we picked"
voi cogli-este	"you picked"
loro cols-ero	"they picked"

Passato Remoto

-gn-

spegnere ("to turn off")

Italian	**"English"**
io spens-i	"I turned off"
tu spegn-esti	"you turned off"
lui/lei spens-e	"he/she/it turned off"

noi spegn-emmo	"we turned off"
voi spegn-este	"you turned off"
loro spens-ero	"they turned off"

The following list presents some of the most widely used verbs belonging to this category:

Italian	**"English"**
cogliere	"to pick," "to gather"
sciogliere	"to melt"
spegnere	"to turn off," "to switch off"
scegliere	"to choose"
togliere	"to take away/out/off"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Portone del Diavolo

The *Portone del Diavolo* ("Devil's Gate") is the entry gate of *Palazzo Trucchi di Levaldigi*, an ancient private residence built in 1673 according to sketches drawn by Amedeo di Castellamonti. The inhabitants of Turin have always associated this palace with diabolical practices and unseen powers, probably because of its first owner, the count Trucchi, a powerful and influential (and a bit eccentric) statesman of his time.

The gate is beautifully and skillfully decorated with motifs of flowers, cupids, and many other symbolic figures. However, what really strikes the imagination of the viewer is the shape of the doorknocker. It represents the Devil, who looks at the visitors with a distressing sneer. The legends regarding missing guests, strange voices, violent murders, and phantoms haunting the palace halls abound throughout its comparatively short existence, lasting through the

contemporary age.

These stories are so deeply rooted into the cultural life of Turin that they compelled a celebrated writer, Beppe Fenoglio, to write important pages about them. Possibly the true value of these legends lies precisely in this ability to link the inhabitants of the city throughout time and social classes, stirring their creativity and linguistic ability in telling those stories.

(Beppe Fenoglio is the author, among many other writings, of splendid novel about the Italian resistance movement entitled *Il Partigiano Johnny*, a masterpiece written in both English and Italian.)

The following are two pictures of *Portone del Diavolo*.

http://media.libero.it/c/img100/fotogallery/week-end/07/799/2009/2/portonediavolo.jpg

http://www.pianetatorino.it/images/14082008924.jpg

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