



Lower Intermediate 1

Lessons 1-25



1-25



Introduction

This is Innovative Language Learning.

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The course consists of lessons centered on a practical, real-life conversation.

In each lesson, first, we'll introduce the background of the conversation.

Then, you'll hear the conversation two times:

One time at natural native speed and one time with the English translation.

After the conversation, you'll learn carefully selected vocabulary and key grammar concepts.

Next, you'll hear the conversation 1 time at natural native speed at the end of the lesson.

Finally, practice what you have learned with the review track. In the review track, a native speaker will say a word or phrase from the dialogue, wait three seconds, and then give you the English translation. Say the word aloud during the pause. Halfway through the review track, the order will be reversed. The English translation will be provided first, followed by a three-second pause, and then the word or phrase from the dialogue. Repeat the words and phrases you hear in the review track aloud to practice pronunciation and reinforce what you have learned.

Before starting the lessons, go to [InnovativeLanguage.com/audiobooks](https://www.innovativelanguage.com/audiobooks) to get the lesson notes for this course and sign up for your FREE lifetime account.



Lower Intermediate

Are These the Best Italian Films?

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Italian

Manuel: Ti andrebbe di venire al cinema con me?
Giulia: Cinema? Hmm, che film hai in mente?
Manuel: Stavo pensando al Signore degli Anelli.
Giulia: Oh, amo Viggo Mortensen.
Manuel: Cosa ne dici del Labirinto del Fauno?
Giulia: Hmm no, preferisco il primo.

English

Manuel: Would you fancy going to the cinema with me?
Giulia: Cinema? Hmm, what movie do you have in mind?
Manuel: I was thinking of The Lord of the Rings.
Giulia: Oh I love Viggo Mortensen.
Manuel: What about Pan's Labyrinth?
Giulia: Hmm no, I prefer the first one.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
film	movie	noun
mente	mind	noun
pensare	to think	verb
amare	to love	verb
labirinto	labyrinth, maze	noun
primo	first	adjective, ordinal number

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Che film vuoi vedere?
Lui era la mente del gruppo.

What movie do you want to watch?
He was the mind of the group.



A che pensi?

Non pensare troppo!

Amo viaggiare.

Ami il tuo ragazzo?

I gatti amano dormire.

Il labirinto di Cnosso.

Noi siamo i primi e gli unici!

What are you thinking about?

Don't think too much!

"I love traveling."

"Do you love your boyfriend?"

"Cats love sleeping."

The Knossos labyrinth.

We are the first and only!

Grammar Points

We shall first consider the functioning of the two progressive present and past tenses, in Italian respectively *presente* and *passato progressivo*.

To convey these two tenses in Italian we use the verb *stare* to translate the English "to be" plus the *gerundio* of the main verb that never changes its ending. For the *presente progressivo* tense we simply use the present of the verb *stare*; for example *sto andando a pranzo* "I'm going for lunch", while for the *passato progressivo* tense we use the *imperfetto* tense of the verb *stare*; for example *stavo uscendo quando mi hai telefonato* "I was going out when you called me".

We note that the *gerundio* of the main verb never changes its ending, the information regarding the person and the number is provided by the conjugation of the auxiliary verb *stare*: *io stavo; tu stavi; lui stava*, etc. + *pensando* "I was, You were, he was, etc. + thinking".

Whereas we can use *presente progressivo* tense only to talk about ongoing actions that are taking place at the present moment, the *passato progressivo* can also be used in its extended employment to refer both to ongoing actions that took place in the past, as well as to present ongoing actions. In the first case the *passato progressivo* is used in its proper form, while in the latter it is utilized metaphorically. When Giulia says *Stavo pensando al...* "I was thinking of...", she actually means *Sto pensando al* "I am thinking of...".

In Italian we often use the expression *ti andrebbe di* + infinitive form to invite a friend out or to ask doing something together, this expression is made up by the pronominal particle *ti* that means *a te* "to you" and *andrebbe, condizionale presente* of the verb *andare* "to go". This is normally translated in English as "do you fancy/like + ing form". For example *Ti andrebbe di andare a Rimini per il fine settimana?* "Do you fancy going to Rimini this week-end?"

Then we have another similar expression : *cosa ne dici di* + infinitive form; they can be

interchangeable because they have the same meaning, so if we use this expression for the sentence we have just seen, it would become *Cosa ne dici di andare a Rimini per il fine settimana?* "What about going to Rimini this week-end?"; be careful because as you can see, in the dialogue the English translation is conveyed with "what about + noun".

Cultural Insight

When talking about dating a person in Italy we first have to consider the traditions and customs of the area we live in. In average-size cities people have a more open-minded approach to life and this general attitude also reflects to on their dating habits. Particularly new generation girls tend to be more aggressive and it does sometimes happen that ladies make the first move. They obviously need a certain degree of acquaintance with the person. Whether it is the male that makes the proposal or not, girls expect males to respect certain unwritten rules. Males usually pick them up at their homes and then take them to a nice, characteristic place. Although this might sound old-fashioned or even chauvinistic, it is customary for men to open the car's door to them. However, this should not lead us to believe that Italian girls are generally shy or timid. They like to be courted with respect, but also with passion. They talk about their lives and intimate desires sometimes even on the first date and expect their partner to show their true selves with the same self-confidence. Bringing flowers or gifts on the first date is not common.

On the other hand, foreign girls get occasionally puzzled by the straightforwardness of Italian males, taking offense for unwanted and uncalled compliments. As long as those compliments do not cross the respect line, we should keep in mind that in Latino cultures people relate differently, look (even stare) at each other when walking in public streets and have a "theatrical" way of performing their everyday actions. This is a sort of game, in which everyone plays their own part and it's just another aspect of the Italian passionate way of life. If we are to delve into this culture, we have to learn how to tell rude observations from sincere, honest compliments.



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Where Will You Find the Most Beautiful Italian Beaches?

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Italian

Manuel: Ciao come stai?
Giulia: Io bene e tu?
Manuel: Anche io bene. Cosa fai domani?
Giulia: Credo di andare al mare.
Manuel: Vai da sola?
Giulia: No, penso di andare con le mie amiche.

English

Manuel: Hello, how are you?
Giulia: I am fine and you?
Manuel: I am also fine. What are you doing tomorrow?
Giulia: I think I will go to the beach.
Manuel: Are you going alone?
Giulia: No, I think I will go with my girlfriends.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
andare	to go	verb (irregular)
credere	to believe	verb
mare	sea	noun
solo (da solo)	alone, lonely	adjective
pensare	to think	verb
amico	friend	noun

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

*I miei amici vanno in vacanza in Sardegna.
Siamo andati a Venezia.*

"My friends go on holiday to Sardinia."
"We went to Venice."



Siamo andati in vacanza.

Vai a casa?

Vorrei andare a ballare.

Andiamo al cinema?

Credo che qualcosa non vada.

Credo di si.

Non ci credo!

Ho il mal di mare.

Preferisco lavorare da solo.

Vado da solo.

A che pensi?

Non pensare troppo!

Davide è un amico.

Ti presento la mia amica Valeria.

Un buon amico.

"We went on vacation."

"Are you going home?"

"I would like to go dancing."

"Shall we go to the cinema?"

"I believe there's something wrong."

"I believe so."

"I don't believe it!"

I am seasick.

I prefer working alone.

I am going alone.

What are you thinking about?

Don't think too much!

"David is a friend."

"Let me introduce you to my friend Valeria."

"A good friend."

Grammar Points

We shall first discuss the usage of the verb *credere* commonly translated in English as "to believe", but also as "to think"; "to deem". In today's dialogue this verb is followed by *di* plus the present infinitive, that expresses what we "believe" or "think" of doing. Furthermore *credo di andare al mare* is translated using "I think will go to the beach" because we are expressing an opinion, a belief, a desire.

The same applies to the verb *pensare*, "to think". There are very slight differences between *penso di* and *credo di* in this usage, so try using both as you please. Here are a few examples:

Penso di si "I think so"

Credo di si "I believe so"

Penso di no "I don't think so"

Credo di no "I don't believe so"

Penso di andare a dormire "I think I will go to sleep"

Credo di andare a dormire "I believe I will go to sleep" (Not commonly used in English)

Penso di partire domani "I think I will leave tomorrow"

Credo di partire domani "I believe I will leave tomorrow"

Cultural Insight

While living in Italy, we should always remember to stay in good terms with our neighbors. Although this situation is presently changing, neighborhoods are still an independent part of social life and the bonds people create there may affect their private and professional lives.

It is not unheard of for many people to find a good job through personal acquaintance with a neighbor and, particularly in small communities, this kind of interlinked human relations is the key to get inside the community social life. Young people in Italy reflect the general Italian attitude of being well-open to conversation. Therefore, we cannot expect them to be too quiet, since they tend to play pretty much everywhere, even in our own yard! If we do not wish them to invade our private space, it is usually wiser to nicely talk to their parents and inform them by saying something like: "I think it might be dangerous for your child to play in garden when I am not at home.". Avoid confronting them too harshly. Italians are sensible and, especially when talking about their heir safety, they are really reasonable and understanding. Moreover, family friends are really important; sometimes they can even become an extension of the family itself.



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Get Help with Your Italian!

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Italian

Cinzia Marco, cosa stai facendo?
Marco Sto cercando di finire la lezione.
Cinzia Sembri in difficoltà. Lascia che ti aiuti!
Marco Grazie. Sei molto gentile.

English

Cinzia Marco, what are you doing?
Marco I am trying to finish the lesson.
Cinzia You look in trouble. Let me help you!
Marco Thanks. You're very kind.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
fare	to do, to make, to build	verb
cercare	to look for, seek, search	verb
finire	to finish, end, stop	verb
lezione	lesson	noun
sembrare	to seem, look, look like	verb
difficoltà	difficulty, trouble	noun
lasciare	to let go, leave	verb
aiutare	to help, aid, assist	verb

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Cosa facevi quando eri in Italia?
Vorrei fare un viaggio in Thailandia.
Faccio una telefonata.
Che lavoro fai?

"What did you do when you were in Italy?"
"I would like to make a trip to Thailand."
"I'm making a phone call."
"What do you do?" / "What job do you do?"

Sto cercando un vestito per la festa di domani sera.

Stai cercando qualcuno?

Hai finito i compiti?

Non finisci mai di sorprendermi!

Finisco subito.

Ho una lezione di francese alle 9:00.

Questa borsa sembra carissima.

Le cose non sono sempre come sembrano.

Quegli spaghetti sembrano buoni.

Mi trovo in difficoltà.

Lasciami in pace!

Grazie per l'aiuto.

Puoi aiutarmi, non trovo più il mio gatto.

Ti posso aiutare?

"I am looking for a dress for tomorrow evening's party."

"Are you looking for somebody?"

"Did you finish your homework?"

"You never cease to amaze me!"

"I will finish right away."

I have a French lesson at 9:00.

"This bag looks very expensive."

"Things are not always what they seem."

"That spaghetti looks delicious."

I'm in trouble.

Leave me alone!

"Thanks for the help."

"Can you help me: I can't find my cat anymore."

"Can I help you?"

Grammar Points

The verb *stai facendo* is conjugated in the *presente progressivo* (present progressive) tense, which works in Italian exactly as the English –ing progressive tenses.

The auxiliary verb of *fare* is *stare*, therefore, since it is *presente progressivo* the second person is *stai*. The main verb, *fare*, is conjugated in the *gerundio* tense, which is realized by adding to the infinitive form of the verb (in this case *stare*) the ending –endo. Thus we have *facendo* (as you noticed, since *fare* is an irregular verb, the *r* becomes a *c*).

Cinzia uses the second singular person, *stai*, to refer to her friend, since it's assumed that they are quite on familiar terms, thus enjoying a homely atmosphere.

"Let me help you" in Italian is *lascia che ti aiuti*. Please note that *lascia* is in the indicative mode, while *aiuti* is in the subjunctive mode. So if you want to say "let me + verb + you" use *lascia che ti* followed by the verb you want to use in the subjunctive mode.

For example:

Lascia che ti porti fuori. Let me take you out.

Lascia che ti accompagni. Let me accompany/escort you.

Cultural Insight

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It is common in every part of Italy for people to be helpful in normal circumstances. Unless they are in hurry or talking on the phone (mobile phones are extremely widespread in Italy), Italians are generally forthcoming and friendly. When talking to someone you have a good degree of familiarity (family members, friends, well-known colleagues, etc.), you can formulate the question without introducing yourself with a formal expression ("I beg you pardon, sir..." *mi scusi.*), already considered in the previous lessons. This aspect does not change whether the speakers are Italian or foreigners.

In central and southern Italy the necessity of being helpful is particularly felt and performed in the daily social life. It may happen that people's willingness to be helpful in those areas gets pushy, thus forcing the person who refuses to be helped to repeat their answers more than once. In this case, we should not get upset, since in central and southern Italians this attitude is seen as a sign of good will and proper education. Repeating your refusal a couple of times will be sufficient as this reaction will not offend the other speaker.



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This Italian Bread Shouldn't Make You Fat?

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Italian

Customer Come va il lavoro?
Shopkeeper Potrebbe andare meglio. I giovani non mangiano più il pane.
Customer Si, tutti credono che mangiare pane faccia ingrassare.
Shopkeeper Sul serio? Ma gli italiani normalmente non sono grassi.

English

Customer How's work?
Shopkeeper It could be better. Young people don't eat bread anymore.
Customer Yes, everyone thinks eating bread makes you fat.
Shopkeeper Really, but Italians aren't usually fat.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
lavoro	work, job	noun
giovani	young people, youngsters	noun
più	more	adverb
pane	bread	noun
tutti	everyone	pronoun
ingrassare	to gain weight, get fat	verb
sul serio	really, seriously	expression
normalmente	normally, usually	adverb

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Sto cercando un nuovo lavoro.

"I'm looking for a new job."

Oggi vado a lavoro in macchina.

"Today, I am going to work by car."

L'Italia è una Repubblica democratica, fondata sul lavoro.
Italy is a democratic Republic based on work.



Che lavoro fa Luigi?

"What does Luigi do?" / "What job does Luigi do?"

I giovani amano divertirsi.

Young people love having fun.

Lei è più bella.

She is more beautiful.

È più caro.

It's more expensive.

Puoi comprare del pane?

"Can you buy some bread?"

Quanto pane mangi al giorno?

"How much bread do you eat in a day?"

Sono tutti felici.

Everyone is happy.

Antonio ha sempre paura d'ingrassare.

Antonio is always afraid of putting on weight.

Non devo ingrassare.

I don't have to gain weight.

Sul serio hai vinto alla lotteria?

"You really won the lottery?"

Usciamo sul serio?

"Are we really going out?"

Normalmente torno a casa presto.

I normally go back home early.

Grammar Points

Before starting our considerations about the dialogue, we should review the analysis of the verbs that express opinion, desire, belief, etc. This category of verbs, called "opinion verbs", is followed by either the infinitive (past or present) of verbs or a sentence, called subordinate clause. In this case, the subordinate clause's verb has to be conjugated in the subjunctive mode: *tutti credono che mangiare pane renda grassi* "everyone thinks eating bread makes you fat"; Since *credono* is conjugated in the *presente* tense, the following *rendere* verb has to be conjugated in the *congiuntivo presente* tense: *renda*.

The verb *andare*, in addition to its basic meaning "to go", can also be used in fixed expressions such as: "How's work?" *Come va il lavoro?*; "How's life?" *Come va la vita?*; "How are you doing?" *Come va?*. In all the aforementioned cases, the verb *andare* relates to movement just metaphorically, thus assuming the meaning of "to be". We should avoid literally translating those expressions, since the verb *essere* here means "do you like...?": *Com'è il lavoro?* "Do you like your job?".

Time adverbs are usually, though not always, positioned between the verb and the object: *I giovani non mangiano più il pane* "Young people don't eat bread anymore". On the contrary, frequency adverbs are inserted between the subject and the verb and possible negation particles: *gli italiani normalmente non sono grassi* "Italians aren't usually fat". The syntactic order is therefore: S + frequency adverb + negation particle + V + O.

While in English we use the third person singular to refer to people in general, in the affirmative Italian equivalent utterances we use the third person plural: *tutti credono che...* "everyone thinks



that...". Negative Italian general statements present the same structure as English: *Nessuno crede che...* "no one believes that...".

Cultural Insight

Italian eating habits vary according to the region and size of the city we live in. Generally speaking, in central and southern Italy people tend to eat more, each meal ordinarily consisting in at least two courses. Due to the increasingly fast pace of life, in large-size cities inhabitants tend to eat more quickly, especially for lunch, and pay more attention on what they eat. A *panino* (similar, but exactly identical, to a sandwich) is preferred over fast foods and vegetable are present in large quantities. Young generations care about appearance and weight. They tend to eat less than adults and frequently do quite a lot of physical exercise. Young men and women follow pretty much the same standards, making an exception only for alcoholic beverages. Due to the climatic situation, people wear few layers of clothing and the perception of the body is deemed to be really important. Older generations behave differently; to them food is normally an issue of health, proper nourishment and, of course, the sheer pleasure of enjoying good food with good friends. Community meals and *cene al ristorante* ("dinners at the restaurant") are extremely common in Italy, being an important occurrence to see old and dear friends and relatives.





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Have You Had Your First Italian Kiss?

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Italian

Manuel: Ciao Frederik come va?
Frederik: Io sto bene, ma ho appena scoperto una cosa davvero particolare.
Manuel: Cosa?
Frederik: Che gli italiani spesso si danno pacche sulle spalle mentre parlano, ci credi?
Manuel: Certo, in Italia è normale, anche quando amici si salutano di solito si abbracciano e si scambiano dei baci sulle guance.
Frederik: Incredibile!

English

Manuel: Hi Frederik how are you doing?
Frederik: I am fine, but I just learned a very peculiar thing.
Manuel: What?
Frederik: That Italians often pat each other on the shoulders while they talk, can you believe it?
Manuel: Sure, in Italy it's normal, even when they greet each other they usually hug and kiss each other on the cheeks.
Frederik: Unbelievable!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
come va	how are you doing, how is it going	expression
appena	just, as soon as	adverb
scoprire	to discover, find out	verb
particolare	particular, peculiar	adjective
pacca	slap	noun
spalla	shoulder	noun
credere	to believe	verb



mentre	while	conjunction
salutare	to greet	verb
abbracciare	to hug	verb
baciare	to kiss	verb
guancia	cheek	noun

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Come va il lavoro?

Ero appena tornata quando mi hai chiamato.

Cristoforo Colombo ha scoperto l'America nel 1492.

Un punto di vista particolare.

È una storia molto particolare.

Mi ha dato una pacca sulla spalla ed è partito.

Si è rotto la spalla giocando a calcio.

Credo che qualcosa non vada.

Credo di sì.

Non ci credo!

Mentre studio ascolto la musica.

Salutami tua sorella.

Abbracciami!

Nel film si baciavano appassionatamente.

Hai le guance rosse.

How is work going?

I had just got back when you called me.

Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492.

"A particular point of view."

It's a very peculiar story.

He slapped me on the back and he left.

He broke his shoulder whilst playing football.

"I believe there's something wrong."

"I believe so."

"I don't believe it!"

I listen to the music while studying.

Say hi to your sister.

Hug me!

In the movie they were kissing passionately.

You are blushing.

Grammar Points

Whereas in English we employ the simple past tense to refer to finished actions, such as finding something out, in Italian we use the *passato prossimo*. We have already considered the grammatical structure of this Italian tense.

Here we see that the adverb *appena*, “just”, that precedes the verb in English, is inserted in Italian between the auxiliary and main verb. This is true for any compound tense in Italian (*trapassato prossimo*, *trapassato remoto*, etc.), which we shall be discussing in future lessons.

Notice that the syntactical order “aux. verb + adverb + main” verb” is valid for every adverb that refers

to time. All other adverbs, including those expressing quantity or quality, are positioned after the main verb, ex.: *Ho mangiato molto.*; I ate a lot.

Note that with the main verb *credere* "to believe", we need to use the object *ci* in order to formulate interrogative utterances; *ci* stands for "it". In the interrogative form, *ci* precedes the main verb. This rule applies in every circumstance, even when *credere* is employed without the modal verb *potere* "can".

For instance: *Ho comprato una casa in Italia, ci credi?* "I bought a house in Italy, can you believe it?"

Cultural Insight

It is in fact a widespread habit for Italians to touch other speakers, whether to draw their attention or to stress the importance of what they are saying. The range of possible situations is practically endless; therefore we will consider the most recurrent ones.

Touching other speakers mostly happens only in informal dialogs, since the formal ones, due to their very nature, assume a respect of certain set of rules which do not include any degree of closeness. It would be indeed rare for an employee to be so acquainted with their employer as to touch them, though it is not uncommon for the latter to occasionally pat his/her employees on the shoulder. Between colleagues of similar rank, it is perfectly acceptable to touch each other when having a drink together after work, though the same action would be strange on their workplace. The same social distance intervenes between young and elder people. While it is really common for parents and grandparents to touch their grandchildren, the other way around is only possible when exchanging effusions of affection and love.

Men are never allowed to invade the private space of women in any circumstance. Italian women react really roughly when their privacy is violated, therefore men should never try to touch or even get too close to them. The desire to have a warmer conversation is normally shown by women. In that case, they shorten the distance and may start softly patting men on the shoulders. As regards this aspect, avoid greeting women with "Ciao Bella!" or "Ciao Bello!" This expression does not exist in Italy and it sounds like an invitation to have a more intimate relationship, which might put speakers in embarrassing situations.

Generally speaking, Italians tend not to touch foreigners unless they know them fairly well. If an Italian insistently touches a foreigner it most likely means that a dangerous situation could be taking place. It is advisable to avoid people that seem to be over-friendly since they first meet you, especially in tourist cities, such as Rome and Florence.



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Did You Find a New Italian Roommate?

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Italian

Andrea: Ciao. C'è Frederik?
Manuel: No, è appena uscito.
Andrea: Ma tu devi essere il nuovo coinquilino di Frederik.
Manuel: Sì, non ci siamo ancora incontrati, io sono Manuel, piacere.
Andrea: Piacere, io sono Andrea.
Manuel: Vuoi entrare?
Andrea: Grazie, ma ho fretta. Di solito a che ora torna Frederik?
Manuel: Per l'ora di pranzo.
Andrea: Bene, allora passo più tardi. Ciao!
Manuel: Ciao.

English

Andrea: Hi. Is Frederik here?
Manuel: No, he just went out.
Andrea: But you must be Frederik's new flatmate.
Manuel: Yes, we haven't met yet, I'm Manuel, nice to meet you.
Andrea: Nice to meet you. My name's Andrea.
Manuel: Do you want to come in?
Andrea: Thank you, but I'm in a hurry. What time does Frederik usually come back home?
Manuel: For lunch time.
Andrea: Cool, then I'll stop by later. See you!
Manuel: Bye.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
uscire	to go out	verb
dovere	to have to/must	verb
coinquilino	housemate	noun
incontrare	to meet	verb
entrare	to go in, come in, enter	verb



fretta	rush, hurry	noun
avere fretta	to be in a hurry	expression
tornare	to go back, come back, get back	verb
allora	so, then, at that time	adverb
di solito	usually	adverb
passare	to pass, hand, hand over, hand down	verb
più tardi	later	expression

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Sei uscito all'alba.

Usciamo domenica sera verso le otto.

Domani sera esco con gli amici.

Devo proprio andare, scusami.

Devi mangiare la nutella.

Devi fare i compiti.

Dovresti lavorare.

Dobbiamo parcheggiare qui.

Ho conosciuto il mio nuovo coinquilino.

Dopo incontro Rossella.

Ieri ho incontrato Luisa.

Ho incontrato un vecchio amico.

Fa freddo fuori! Entra!

Entriamo?

Che fretta c'è?

Ho fretta, devo andare a scuola!

Torna da me!

Torno subito.

Ieri sono tornato a casa tardi.

Torniamo insieme?

Vorrei tornare a S. Gimignano.

Allora come si chiama?

Allora andiamo a pranzo insieme?

Allora, dove andiamo?

Di solito torno presto.

You went out at dawn.

"We will go out Sunday night around eight."

Tomorrow night I am going out with friends.

"I really have to go. Sorry."

"You have to eat Nutella."

"You must do your homework."

"You should work."

"We have to park here."

I met my new housemate.

"I'll meet with Rossella later."

Yesterday I met Luisa.

I met an old friend.

"It's cold outside! Come in!"

"Shall we go in?"

"What's the hurry?"

I'm in hurry, I have to go to school!

"Come back to me!"

"I'll be right back."

"Yesterday I got back home late."

"Shall we go back together?"

"I would like to go back to S. Gimignano."

"So what's his name?"

"Then are we going to lunch together?"

"So, where do we go?"

I usually come back early.

Mi puoi passare una forchetta?
Più tardi devo andare a lavoro.

“Could you hand me a fork?”
Later I have to go to work.

Grammar Points

With compound tenses the time adverb *ancora* "yet" is inserted between the auxiliary and the past participle of the main verbs. In the dialogue we find it in Manuel's statement *Non ci siamo ancora incontrati* "We haven't met yet". So the main difference is that in English the word "yet" is positioned at the end of the sentence.

For example: *Non ho ancora mangiato* "I haven't eaten yet". In the Italian sentence, as you can see, *ancora* is positioned between *ho* (auxiliary verb) and *mangiato* (past participle).

Please note that the Italian word *ancora* can also mean "again", "still" and "even" and is used in both affirmative and negative sentences.

Since the dialogue is between friends it is in the informal level of speech, so in this case the time adverb "usually" is translated as *di solito*. If the conversation was in the formal level of speech the same adverb would be translated as *di norma* or *solitamente*. Those are pure synonyms, without any semantic variation and can thus be freely interchanged.

The English expression "to be in a hurry" is translated in Italian as *avere fretta* literally translated as "to have rush, hurry", therefore using the verb *avere*.

The usage of the verb *avere* in this case implies a condition.

With the same meaning some other expressions can be used such as *vado di fretta* and *sono di fretta*.

Examples of different usage of the verb *passare*:

Ti passo Claudia "Let me pass you through Claudia/Let me pass you over to Claudia"

Passami il pane per favore "Pass me the bread please"

Passo a casa tua verso le due "I'll stop by your place around two"

Il tempo passa velocemente "Time goes by fast"

Cultural Insight

Italians deem social life to be a very important part of their human relations and attach much importance to it. Therefore, introducing ourselves to our neighbors when moving to a new residence is something we should do within a couple of days after our arrival. It is customary for newcomers to

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present their neighbors with a minor present, such as a home-made pie or a bottle of wine. In case of foreigners, it is not uncommon for them to bring a present characteristic of their countries. These exotic gifts will definitely be more appreciated by Italians than something bought at the store downstairs.

Neighbors tend to pay back the favor by inviting the newcomers over for dinner, who are supposed to accept their invitation within due time. This habit is particularly strong in central and southern Italy. It might happen, especially in the most small and insular cities, that neighbors will not be so eager to meet newcomers (whether Italians or foreigners). This is normal pretty much everywhere; it just takes some time to be accepted by small communities.



Lower Intermediate

Don't be Too Late for Work in Italy!

7

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Italian

Marcella Che ore sono?
Giulia Le nove meno un quarto.
Marcella Ah! È tardissimo! Devo scappare al lavoro.
Giulia Sì, anche io devo andare. Ci sentiamo più tardi.
Marcella Sì certo. Buona giornata!
Giulia Grazie anche a te!

English

Marcella What time is it?
Giulia It's quarter to nine
Marcella Ah! It's very late! I have to dash off/fly to work.
Giulia Yes, I have to go too. I'll speak to you later.
Marcella Yes sure. Have a nice day!
Giulia Thank you and you.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
ora	time, hour	noun
essere	to be	verb
tardi	late	adverb
dovere	to have to/must	verb
scappare	to escape, run away	verb
lavoro	work, job	noun
sentire	to hear, listen to	verb
certo	of course, sure	adverb
buona giornata	nice day	greeting
che	what	interrogative adjective



Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>E' ora di andare a letto.</i>	"It's time to go to bed."
<i>A che ora arrivi?</i>	"What time will you arrive?"
<i>Era una bella giornata.</i>	"It was a beautiful day."
<i>Questa estate è troppo calda.</i>	"This summer is too hot."
<i>Siamo italiani.</i>	"We are Italians."
<i>Dove sono Luigi e Laura?</i>	"Where are Luigi and Laura?"
<i>Arrivi sempre tardi in ufficio.</i>	"You always arrive late at the office."
<i>Ieri notte sono tornato tardi.</i>	"Last night I came back late."
<i>Scusa, ho fatto tardi.</i>	"Sorry, I'm late."
<i>Devo proprio andare, scusami.</i>	"I really have to go. Sorry."
<i>Devi mangiare la nutella.</i>	"You have to eat Nutella."
<i>Devi fare i compiti.</i>	"You must do your homework."
<i>Dovresti lavorare.</i>	"You should work."
<i>Dobbiamo parcheggiare qui.</i>	"We have to park here."
<i>Il mio gatto è scappato.</i>	My cat ran away.
<i>Sto cercando un nuovo lavoro.</i>	"I'm looking for a new job."
<i>Oggi vado a lavoro in macchina.</i>	"Today, I am going to work by car."
<i>L'Italia è una Repubblica democratica, fondata sul lavoro.</i>	"Italy is a democratic Republic based on work."
<i>Che lavoro fa Luigi?</i>	"What does Luigi do?" / "What job does Luigi do?"
<i>Parlo a voce bassa, mi senti.</i>	"I speak softly; can you hear me?"
<i>Non lo sento da due giorni.</i>	"I haven't heard from him in two days."
<i>Hai sentito cosa è successo?</i>	"Have you heard what happened?"
<i>Certo che puoi provarli.</i>	Of course you can try them.
<i>Certo che possiamo andare!</i>	Of course we can go!
<i>Buona giornata!</i>	Have a nice day!
<i>Che cosa fai?</i>	What are you doing?
<i>Che mangiamo oggi?</i>	What are we gonna eat today?

Grammar Points

There are two different systems to express time in Italian.

The informal one is identical to the American informal way and it is realized by placing the hour before minutes. For example, "it's ten fifteen" would be in Italian *sono le dieci e quindici*. We notice

that the only difference is that in Italian we use the third plural person “sono” of the verb *essere* present tense "to be", while in English we use the impersonal third singular person. The formal one is identical to the British system, as it divides an hour in four quarters. For example, "it's a quarter to five" would be in Italian *sono un quarto alle cinque*.

"What time is it?" in Italian is conveyed with *Che ora è?* or *Che ore sono?*

Mezzogiorno, mezzanotte, l'una always require the singular.

To convey the structure of a comparative of majority in English normally there is the positive form of the adjective or adverb, plus the suffix -er, or (in the case of polysyllabic words borrowed from foreign languages) the modifier "more" before the adjective or adverb. In Italian we use *più* to translate "more" or the suffix "-er". The English form is usually completed by "than" which in Italian has to be translated with *di* followed by the noun which is being compared, for example: *Maria è più alta di sua sorella* "Maria is taller than her sister". *Di* is used as a subordinating conjunction to introduce the second element of a comparative sentence.

Il ghepardo è più veloce del leone. "The cheetah is faster than the lion."

Fabio è più basso di Claudio. "Fabio is shorter than Claudio."

In Italian to convey the comparative superlative normally we modify the adjective by taking away the final vowel and adding *-issimo* (singular masculine), *-issima* (singular feminine), *-issimi* (plural masculine), or *-issime* (plural feminine). For example: *Lo Shinkansen è velocissimo* "The Shinkansen is very fast". We will see the exceptions in next few lessons.

Il gorgonzola è buonissimo. "Gorgonzola is very good."

Il treno locale è lentissimo. "The local train is very slow."

Cultural Insight

How is the typical Italian breakfast and how much does it mean to the Italian people?

The typical Italian breakfast is made up of milk, coffee, rusks/cookie-like hard bread, jam, yogurt and fresh orange juice. Normally we can substitute jam with honey, tea in place of coffee and toasted bread instead of rusks.



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As the proverb says *Il buongiorno si vede dal mattino* in Italy people love starting their day in the best way. In Italy children drink hot chocolate, plain milk, or hot milk with very little coffee *latte e caffè* while usual workers prefer a quick breakfast at the Italian bar, normally the ones who haven't got the time to have breakfast at home, have the habit to go to a café before going to work. The winning pair is cappuccino or espresso and brioche or croissant, *cornetto*. Italian people normally don't start their day without the espresso but one other important part of the Italian breakfast can be the well known *Nutella* which is a hazelnut-based sweet spread and actually it's now marketed in over 75 countries across the globe.

Another typical habit for the Italian families is *la colazione del Mulino Bianco*. *Mulino Bianco* is an Italian brand that produces sweet snacks and biscuits. It's very famous and well known for representing a healthy breakfast full of nutritional elements, appropriate for all the members of the family. So the *Mulino Bianco* is not only a simple brand but now it embodies a real cultural prototype.





Lower Intermediate

Did You Just Answer the Phone in Italian?

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Italian

Manuel Ieri mentre eri a pranzo ti ha chiamato Marcella.
Giulia Ah si? Ti ha detto perchè chiamava?
Manuel Voleva solo farti un saluto.
Giulia Grazie, ora la richiamo.

English

Manuel Marcella called you yesterday while you were out to lunch.
Giulia Really? Did she say what she was calling for?
Manuel She just wanted to say hi.
Giulia Thank you, I'll call her back right now.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
ieri	yesterday	adverb
mentre	while, whilst	conjunction
pranzo	lunch	noun
chiamare	to call	verb
dire	to say, to tell	verb
volere	to want, wish, long, demand	verb
fare un saluto	to drop in, to say hi	expression
richiamare	to call sb. back	verb

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Ieri sera sono uscito con Marta.
Ieri sono rimasto a casa.
Ieri siamo andati al pub.
Mi hai chiamato ieri?

"Yesterday evening, I went out with Marta."
"Yesterday, I stayed at home."
"Yesterday, we went to the pub."
"Did you call me yesterday?"



Guarda avanti mentre cammini.
Ascolto musica mentre viaggio in treno.
Mentre tornavo ho incontrato Matteo.
Oggi per pranzo mangio un gelato.
Ti invito a pranzo.
Hai chiamato tuo fratello?
Chiamami più tardi.
Hai detto a Elisa che stiamo arrivando?
Mi ha detto che domani non viene.
Hanno detto che vanno al cinema.
Voleva solo salutarti.
Voglio comprare una macchina nuova.
Volere la botte piena e la moglie ubriaca.
Vorrei un cappuccino, per favore.
Vorrei una mela.
Passo a salutarti uno di questi giorni.

"Look in front of you while you're walking."
"I listen to music while I travel by train."
"I met Matteo while I was going back."
"Today I eat an ice cream for lunch."
I invite you for lunch.
"Did you call your brother?"
"Call me later."
"Have you told Elisa we are coming?"
"She told me she's not going to come tomorrow."
"They said they're going to the cinema."
"She just wanted to say hi."
"I want to buy a new car."
"To have your cake and eat it, too."
"I'd like a cappuccino, please."
"I would like an apple."
I'll drop in one of these days.

Grammar Points

You use the *imperfetto*

1) to express an action still occurring in the past and not completed yet.

Ex: *Alle otto di sera guardavo ancora la televisione.* "At eight in the evening I was still watching the TV."

2) to express two actions occurring at the same time in the past.

Ex: *Mentre lavoravo, ascoltavo la musica.* "I was listening to the music while (I was) working."

3) to express habitual actions which used to occur in the past.

Ex: *Da bambino andavo in vacanza al mare.* "When I was little I used to go on holiday to the beach."

You use the *passato prossimo*



1) to express an action occurred and completed in the past.

Ex: *Ho guardato la televisione fino alle otto di sera.* "I watched TV till eight in the evening."

2) to express two actions occurred one after another in the past.

Ex: *Prima ho studiato e poi sono uscito con gli amici.* "First I studied, then I went out with friends."

You use both the *imperfetto* and the *passato prossimo* together.

1) to express two past actions; the one in *passato prossimo* has been completed, while the one in *imperfetto* is still occurring. Ex: *Mentre studiavo, è arrivato un mio amico.* "A friend of mine came while I was studying."

The *imperfetto* is much more frequently used in Italian than in English. It can correspond to the English "used to" or to the English Simple Past tense; it describes conditions that lasted an indefinite time in the past. It's also used to describe time, age, and weather in the past.

The *passato prossimo* can correspond both to the English Simple past or the Present perfect.

Cultural Insight

In Italy there is always a good reason to celebrate. Either it's an historical event, religious holiday, or festival. One of the most important holidays is the so called *Carnevale*.

From the Epiphany on January 6 to the beginning of *Quaresima*, *il Carnevale* is considered as the best time to dedicate to parades and masquerade balls, entertainment and music. The word *Carnevale* comes from *carne levare* "take the meat away", since eating meat was restricted while waiting for Easter. Nowadays children play with coriandoli (coloured pieces of paper) while adults attend funny costume balls, and in many towns, like Venezia, there is plenty of parades with papier-mâché floats. The proverb of the Italian *Carnevale* is *A Carnevale ogni scherzo vale* "Anything goes at Carnival". Like many other Italian celebrations, special foods are prepared for *Carnevale*. The *dolci tradizionali di Carnevale* "the traditional cakes of *Carnevale*" include *castagnole*, *causone napoletano*, *chiacchiere*, *cicerchiata*, *struffoli*, and *zeppole*. *Cicerchiata* is a typical of Central Italy (Abruzzo, Umbria, Marche, Lazio), while *struffoli* are a specialty of the *Carnevale* celebration in Southern Italy. The most important regional celebrations of *Carnevale* are the ones of Viareggio, Ivrea and Venezia. Considered as Europe's big festivals.



Lower Intermediate

Can Your Italian Keep You High and Dry?

9

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Italian

Manuel Se piove il balcone si bagna.
Frederik È normale.
Manuel Ah sì?
Frederik Attento che se la finestra è aperta la pioggia entra in casa.
Manuel Non lo sapevo, la chiudo subito.

English

Manuel If it rains the balcony gets wet.
Frederik It's normal.
Manuel Really?
Frederik Be careful that if the window is open rain gets into the house.
Manuel I didn't know that, I'll close it immediately.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
piovere	to rain	verb
balcone	balcony	noun
Ah sì?	Really?	Interrogative exclamation
finestra	window	noun
pioggia	rain	noun
chiudere	to close, to lock	verb

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

*Le previsioni dicono che domani pioverà.
Vorrei vivere in una casa con un bel balcone.
Ieri ho visto Mike. Ah sì?
Apri la finestra per favore.*

The forecast says tomorrow it'll rain.
I'd like to live in a house with a nice balcony.
Yesterday I saw Mike. Really?
Open the window, please.



Hai chiuso la finestra?

Amo la pioggia.

Ha chiuso la porta.

Did you close the window?

I love rain.

He closed the door.

Grammar Points

As in English, the hypothetical period is divided into three main categories:

1st- Type I, conditional sentence of the real condition.

2nd-Type II, conditional sentence of the possible condition.

3rd- Type III, conditional sentence of the impossible condition.

In today's class, we will provide you with the theoretical frame regarding the three kinds of if-clauses traits and definitions, along with the explanation concerning the first type if-clause.

The if-clause is divided into two parts:

1st- Subordinate clause (which expresses the condition; it is technically called protasis)

2nd- Main clause (which expresses the consequence, the result; it is technically called apodosis)

For example:

Se prendi le chiavi, possiamo prendere la mia macchina.

If you take the keys, we can take my car.

As you see, the subordinate clause "If you take the keys" conveys a condition that may or may not become true, whereas the main clause "we can take my car" is the result of the first phrase and depends on whether the condition(s) become true or not.

Finally, note that, the subordinate clause does not have to necessarily precede the main clause, although this is often the case.

Type "0" Hypothetical period.

Although it is sometimes included in the *Periodo ipotetico della realtà* (which will be dealt with in the next lesson), the type 0 if-clause stands apart from the three main hypothetical period types.

This conditional sentence expresses the connection between two factual actions. In fact, this if-clause is just apparently hypothetical, since it simply connects a cause to its effect.

For example:

Se/Quando l'acqua raggiunge 100° Celsius, (l'acqua) bolle .

If/When water gets to 100° Celsius, it boils.

Se/Quando piove, il suolo si bagna.

If/When it rains, the ground gets wet.

Se/Quando ti fai la doccia, ti bagni.

If/When you take a shower, you get wet.

As we see, the subordinate clause doesn't express a condition that may or may not become true; it is a mere general statement that connects two factual truths. In order to recognize this kind of hypothetical period, we simply need to ask ourselves: "Can I substitute "if" with "when"?"

If the answer is "Yes", we are dealing with a "Type 0" hypothetical period.

Type 0 hypothetical period requires the *presente indicativo* (simple present) tense in both the subordinate and main clause.

Cultural Insight

La Regata storica di Venezia (Venice's historical regatta) represents even nowadays one of the most deeply felt Venetian tradition, as well as being an entertaining event for visiting tourists. It takes place on 7th September.

Moving through the city on sixteenth-century ships and boats, an historical procession commemorates the arrival in Venice of Caterina Cornaro in 1489. She was the former queen of Cyprus island, who abdicated in favor of the Republic of Venice, thus giving the kingship of the island to the Venetian *Doge*. The pomp and splendor of this historical reenactment deserves to be seen. There are plenty of



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online sources that display pictures of the most breathtaking ships.

The origins of regatta itself, that takes place right after the historical reenactment, come from the distant past. No one knows exactly when it started, but primary sources confirm it was a well-established social event in the second half of the thirteenth century.





Lower Intermediate

Don't Forget to Make Reservations at the Italian Restaurant!

10

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Italian

Manuel Domani sera vado a cena con Giulia.
Frederik Dove la porti?
Manuel La porto alla pizzeria La Diligenza.
Frederik Domani è sabato. Se prenoti prima trovi un tavolo.
Manuel Allora chiamo subito.

English

Manuel Tomorrow evening I am going to dinner with Giulia.
Frederik Where are you taking her?
Manuel I am taking her to the pizzeria La Diligenza.
Frederik Tomorrow is Saturday. If you book in advance, you'll get a table.
Manuel Then I'll call right away.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
domani	tomorrow	adverb
cena	dinner	noun
portare	to take	verb
prenotare	to book, reserve	verb
chiamare	to call	verb
subito	right away, now	adverb

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Ci vediamo domani allora.
Sei libero domani sera?
A domani!
È pronta la cena?

"I'll see you tomorrow, then."
"Are you free tomorrow evening?"
"See you tomorrow!"
Is the dinner ready?



Verresti a cena con me?
Ho portato il libro ad Antonio.
Ho prenotato due biglietti.
Abbiamo prenotato i biglietti.
Hai chiamato tuo fratello?
Chiamami più tardi.
Ti ho detto di partire subito!
Potrei avere un caffè? Subito!

"Would you come to dinner with me?"
I took the book to Antonio.
"I booked two tickets."
We booked the tickets.
"Did you call your brother?"
"Call me later."
"I told you to leave right away!"
"Could I have a coffee? Right Away!"

Grammar Points

Periodo ipotetico della realtà

The first type of hypothetical period is called in Italian *Periodo ipotetico della realtà* (literally, Hypothetical period of reality).

The major difference between *Periodo ipotetico della realtà* and “Type 0” hypothetical periods is that in the former the clause “if” cannot be substituted by “when”. This means that in the Type 1 if-clause, the condition must take place in a contextual precise, definite situation.

For example:

Se mi viene fame, mangio.

If I get hungry, I'll eat.

Se Luca arriva prima delle sei del pomeriggio, andiamo al cinema.

If Luca arrives before 6 p.m., we'll go to the cinema.

Se prenoti prima, trovi un tavolo al ristorante.

If you book in advance, you'll get a table at the restaurant.

The subordinate clauses of all the examples above convey a possibility that will lead to a specific result in the future.

The tense agreement between the subordinate and main clauses works as follows:

1- We can employ the simple present tense in both the subordinate and main clause. For example:

Se mi telefoni domani, ti racconto cosa faccio stasera.

If you call me tomorrow, I'll tell you what I'd do this evening.

Se ai tuoi amici va bene, mangiamo una pizza.

If it's fine for your friends, we'll have a pizza.

2- We can employ the simple present tense in the subordinate clause, and the simple future tense in the main clause. Note that the tense agreement works exactly as it does in English. *Se mi vuoi vedere, me lo farai sapere.* If you want to see me, you'll let me know. *Se andiamo in Italia, visiteremo Roma.* If we go to Italy, we'll visit Rome.

3- We can employ the simple future tense in both the subordinate and main clauses. Note that this is not possible in English. For example:

Se pioverà, staremo a casa.

If it rains, we'll stay at home.

Se preparerai la cena, mangeremo bene.

If you make the dinner, we'll eat well.

The tense agreement choice is solely due to stylistic reasons.

Finally, note that it is not possible to use the simple future tense in the subordinate clause and the simple present in the main clause.

Cultural Insight

The *Giostra della Quintana* (Quintana Joust) is a chivalry (chivalrous?) joust that takes place in *Foligno* (a small town in Umbria region) on the third Saturday of June. There is also a return contest

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takes place on the second Sunday of September.

The name *Quintana* comes from the fifth road of the ancient Roman camp, where soldiers armed with spears trained. The most important military drill consisted in charging on the back of horses, trying to hit a training puppet. During the Middle Age, the spear was substituted by heavy, long lances. Italian knights came from all over the Italian reign to prove their worth to their respective lords, as well as to young ladies.

The contest is nowadays very similar to the more famous *Palio di Siena*. Ten knights, each one representing one of *Foligno's contrade* (*Foligno's* traditional districts), try to catch small rings with their lances. The size of the rings decreases gradually, so that catching them becomes more difficult as the contest goes on. The statue used to hold the rings was made over three-hundred years ago, in the early seventeenth century.





Lower Intermediate

Is There Room at the Italian Pizzeria?

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Italian

Giulia Domani sera vado a cena con Manuel.
Marcella Dove andate a mangiare?
Giulia Se Manuel prenotasse in tempo andremmo a La Diligenza.
Marcella Pensi che non chiamerà in tempo?
Giulia Sì è sempre così occupato.

English

Giulia Tomorrow evening I am going to dinner with Manuel.
Marcella Where are you going to eat?
Giulia If Manuel booked in time we would go to La Diligenza.
Marcella Do you think he won't call in time?
Giulia Yes, he is always so busy.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
domani	tomorrow	adverb
mangiare	to eat	verb
pensare	to think, believe	verb
sempre	always	adverb
così	so, this way	adverb
occupato	busy	adjective

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Ci vediamo domani allora.
Sei libero domani sera?
A domani!
Hai mangiato bene?

"I'll see you tomorrow, then."
"Are you free tomorrow evening?"
"See you tomorrow!"
"Did you eat well?"



<i>È meglio non mangiare troppo.</i>	"It's better not to eat too much."
<i>Mangio molto.</i>	"I eat a lot."
<i>Penso che arriverò in ritardo.</i>	"I think I'll be late."
<i>Cosa ne pensi?</i>	"What do you think about it?"
<i>Sono sempre indaffarato.</i>	"I'm always busy."
<i>Giulia è sempre gentile con me.</i>	"Giulia is always kind with me."
<i>Mangiamo sempre insieme.</i>	"We always eat together."
<i>Tutti lo chiamano così.</i>	"Everybody calls him this way."
<i>È così buono!</i>	"It's so good!"
<i>Laura è così bella!</i>	"Laura is so beautiful!"
<i>Mi dispiace, oggi sono occupato.</i>	"I'm sorry, I'm busy today."
<i>Questa settimana sono stato molto occupato.</i>	"I've been very busy this week."

Grammar Points

In today's class we will study the second type of *periodo ipotetico*, the *Periodo ipotetico della possibilità*.

As regards its meaning, this hypothetical period is similar to the *periodo ipotetico della realtà*; the main difference is the condition expressed in the subordinate clause is less likely to happen, though we deem it to be potentially possible. In both types of if-clauses the main sentence refers to the future (i.e., if the condition is satisfied, the result will take place in the future). Compare the following sentences:

A) *Se Mario ha la macchina, andiamo a fare una passeggiata in montagna.*
If Mario has the car, we go hiking. (type I hypothetical period)

B) *Se Mario avesse la macchina, andremmo a fare una passeggiata in montagna.*
If Mario had the car, we would go hiking.

Sentence A expresses a factual connection between the condition (If Mario has the car) and the result (we go hiking). Sentence B expresses the same identical connection, except that the condition is less likely to happen.

Periodo ipotetico della possibilità

The *Periodo ipotetico della possibilità* tense agreement requires the *congiuntivo imperfetto* (imperfect

subjunctive) in the subordinate clause, and the *condizionale presente* (present conditional) in the main clause.

Do not be fooled by the tense's denomination; as mentioned earlier, the action expressed by the *condizionale presente* in the main clause points to a future occurrence. For example:

Se avessimo tempo, andremmo a fare shopping.

If we had time, we would go shopping.

Se usassero il dizionario, non avrebbero problemi per trovare le parole giuste.

If they used the dictionary, they wouldn't have problems in finding the right words.

Se Luisa fosse più ragionevole, non avremmo litigato.

If Luisa were more reasonable, we wouldn't have argued.

Cultural Insight

The *Scala Illuminata* (the lit steps) is part of a religious event that takes place in *Calatagirone*, a small town of Sicily, on 24th July. Following a tradition that started in the early seventeenth century, the inhabitants of *Calatagirone* prepare thousand bowls on the steps leading to *Santa Maria del Monte* church during the feast of city's patron saint, *S. Giacomo*. The bowls are adorned with colored sand and candles, so that each one sheds a unique dye when lit. Architects and artists plan the form and colors of the bowls, thus forming pictures portraying famous representation of saints, often taken from renowned painters of the past.

The candles are all lit at the same time, and the overall effect is spectacular. The effigies of saints light up the night and can be seen from far away. There are plenty of online photos that show the unique nature of this sacred land art; we strongly advise you to take a look at them.



Lower Intermediate

No, That Restaurant has the Best Italian Pizza!

12

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Italian

Manuel Ciao.
Giulia Ciao.
Manuel Scusami ma a La Diligenza è tutto prenotato.
Giulia Se avessi prenotato prima avremmo avuto un tavolo.
Manuel Hai ragione, ma se avessi trovato un tavolo a La Diligenza non avrei prenotato ai Girasoli.
Giulia I Girasoli, ma è fantastico!

English

Manuel Hello.
Giulia Hi.
Manuel I am sorry, but at La Diligenza it is all booked.
Giulia If you had booked earlier we would have had a table.
Manuel You are right, but if I had found a table at La Diligenza I wouldn't have booked at Girasoli.
Giulia Girasoli, that's fantastic.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
scusarsi	to be sorry, to forgive someone	reflexive verb
prenotato	booked	adjective
prima	earlier	adverb
avere ragione	to be right	expression
trovare	to find	verb
fantastico	fantastic	adjective

Vocabulary Sample Sentences



Scusami, sono in ritardo.

I biglietti dell'opera sono tutti prenotati.

Finiamo prima sta sera.

Se avessi iniziato prima, avrei già finito.

Hai ragione!

Lui pensa di aver sempre ragione.

L'ho trovato! L'ho trovato!

Non trovo le chiavi.

Ho trovato questo portafoglio.

Abbiamo trovato un cane in giardino.

Questo è uno spettacolo fantastico.

"Forgive me. I'm late."

The opera tickets are all booked.

"Let's finish earlier tonight."

"Had I started earlier, I'd be already done."

"You are right!"

"He thinks he is always right."

"I've found it! I've found it!"

"I can't find my keys."

"I found this wallet."

"We found a dog in the yard."

This is a fantastic show.

Grammar Points

In today's class we see the third type of the hypothetical period, the *Periodo ipotetico dell'irrealtà*.

Contrary to the previously analyzed conditional sentences types, the *Periodo ipotetico dell'irrealtà* refers to past occurrences. Specifically, the subordinate clause refers to a past condition that wasn't satisfied; therefore, the action in the main clause did not take place. Compare the following sentences:

A) *Se Marco arrivasse entro le cinque del pomeriggio, andremmo a giocare a calcio.*

If Marco arrived within 5 p.m., we would go play football.

B) *Se Marco fosse arrivato entro le cinque, saremmo andati a giocare a calcio.*

If Marco had arrived within 5 p.m., we would have gone playing football.

Sentence A conveys a possibility which, though not likely to happen, is a possible condition nonetheless. On the contrary, sentence B refers to a past condition that was not satisfied (i.e., Marco arrived after 5 p.m.); therefore, the action of the main clause did not take place (i.e., we didn't go playing football).

Periodo ipotetico dell'irrealtà.

The *Periodo ipotetico dell'irrealtà* tense agreement requires the *congiuntivo passato* (past subjunctive) in the subordinate clause and the *condizionale passato* (past conditional) in the main clause, as shown in the following examples.



Se fossi stato più attento, non avrei rotto il vaso.

Had I been more careful, I wouldn't have broken the vase.

Se ci fossero state più persone, sarebbe stato un grande concerto.

Had there been more people, it would have been a great concert.

Se avessimo avuto più tempo, avremmo visitato il museo.

Had we had more time, we would have visited the museum.

Cultural Insight

The Italian passion for football is famous throughout the world. Many Italians are also fond of their local traditions. The association of these two elements may sometimes result in peculiar, bizarre exhibitions.

The *Calcio fiorentino in livrea* (football played wearing a Florentine livery) is most likely its most popular display. This kind of sport is deemed to be the forefather of contemporary football, although in many aspects it is closer to rugby, rather than football.

Every match lasts fifty minutes, with no breaks. Two teams, each one consisting in twenty-seven players wearing Florentine liveries, challenge one another in taking the ball to the opposite net. After each score, the teams swap positions.

There are no additional rules, any mean and strategy is allowed. This often results in chaotic situations with people jumping all over one another; the *Capitano* (captain) and *Alfiere* (standard bearer) are charged with the daunting task of quelling the numerous brawls during the game.

Even the prize is quite peculiar, consisting in calf of *Chianina* breed.



Lower Intermediate

Get Dressed Up for Your Night Out in Italy!

13

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Italian

Manuel Se partiamo verso le sette arriviamo in tempo.
Giulia Hai prenotato per le otto?
Manuel Sì. Se avessi prenotato alle sette non avremmo avuto tempo di
 prepararci.
Giulia Hai ragione. Inoltre, dato che andiamo ai Girasoli, mi vestirò bene.
Manuel Sarai molto affascinante!

English

Manuel If we leave at around seven we will get there in time.
Giulia Did you book at eight?
Manuel Yes. If I had booked at seven, we wouldn't have had time to get ready.
Giulia You're right. Besides, as we are going to Girasoli, I will dress up.
Manuel You will be very fascinating!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
verso	around, toward	preposition
prenotare	to book, reserve	verb
prepararsi	to get ready	verb (reflexive)
inoltre	besides	adverb
dato che	as, since	conjunction
vestirsi bene	to dress up	expression
affascinante	fascinating	adjective

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

*Maria arriverà verso le quattordici.
Verso sera.*

Maria will come at around two p.m.
Around evening.



<i>Ho prenotato due biglietti.</i>	"I booked two tickets."
<i>Abbiamo prenotato i biglietti.</i>	We booked the tickets.
<i>Mi sto preparando per la partita.</i>	I'm getting ready for the match.
<i>Luisa non è sposata. Inoltre, è troppo giovane per sposarsi.</i>	Luisa is not married. Besides, she's too young to get married.
<i>Dato che hai cenato, possiamo andare a fare una passeggiata.</i>	Since you had dinner, we can go for a walk.
<i>Elisa ama vestirsi bene.</i>	Elisa loves dressing up.
<i>Che donna affascinante.</i>	"What a fascinating woman."
<i>Luca è un ragazzo piuttosto affascinante.</i>	Luca is a quite fascinating guy.

Grammar Points

As its English equivalent, the Italian hypothetical period is subdivided into three main subcategories. In addition to these, we also have an additional "hypothetical period", called Type 0.

If-clause sentences (of any type) are divided into two parts:

1st- Subordinate clause. (protasis)

It expresses the condition on which the action of the main clause depends.

2nd- **Main clause.** (apodosis)

It expresses the consequence, the **result** that will occur if the condition of the subordinate clause is fulfilled.

For example:

Se non faccio le pulizie oggi, non avrò tempo fino a Sabato.

If I don't do the cleaning today, **I won't have time until Saturday** .

Se pensi che Manuel sia intelligente, chiedegli di lavorare con te.

If you think that Manuel is intelligent, ask him to work with you.

Note that the position of the subordinate and main clause may be swapped due to stylistic reasons. In fact, there is no semantic difference between saying:

Se pensi di aver ragione, continua a lavorare come hai fatto sinora.

If you think you are right, keep working as you have done so far.



and:

Continua a lavorare come hai fatto sinora, se pensi di aver ragione.

Keep working as you have done so far, if you think you are right.

The only difference lies in stressing the first phrase over the following; the choice depends solely on what part of the sentence we wish to emphasize.

Type “0” period

Although this is not strictly speaking an if-clause, this peculiar conditional sentence is often inserted into this group.

The type 0 hypothetical period expresses the connection between two factual truths, merely connecting a cause to its effect. Therefore, the conjunction *se* (if) can always be substituted by *quando* (when).

For example:

Se/Quando il ferro raggiunge 1538° Celsius, fonde.

If/When iron reaches 1538° Celsius, it melts.

Se/Quando si lavora troppo, si è stanchi.

If/When we work too much, we get tired.

Se/Quando l'aria si riscalda, sale.

If/When air gets warmer, it rises.

Type 0 hypothetical period requires the **presente indicativo** (simple present) tense in both the subordinate and main clause.

Type I period: Periodo ipotetico della realtà

The *periodo ipotetico della realtà* expresses the connection between a condition that may, or may not, become true and its factual result. Contrary to the type 0 period, the subordinate phrase conveys a real condition that must be satisfied in a contextual frame. Therefore, this type of if-clause never conveys general statements or theories. For example:

Se Carlo non ci chiama, non possiamo partire. If Carlo doesn't call us, we cannot leave.



Se Maria non ci riporta le chiavi, non possiamo entrare.

If Maria doesn't bring us the keys, we cannot get inside.

Se non ti prendi cura di te stesso, non starai mai bene.

If you don't take care of yourself, you'll never feel fine.

As you noticed, all the characters mentioned in the example above are real people whose actions take place in specific situations.

We have three possible tense agreements between the subordinate and main clauses, which work as follows:

1- We can employ the simple present tense in both the subordinate and main clause. For example:

Se andiamo a Bologna, mangio la piadina.

If we go to Bologna, I eat a piadina (a tasty, flat bread sandwich).

Se non ti prepari, non andiamo a casa di tuo fratello.

If you don't get ready, we don't go to your brother's house.

2- We can employ the simple present tense in the subordinate clause, and the **simple future** tense in the main clause. Note that the tense agreement works exactly as it does in English.

Se compri un nuovo computer, lavorerai meglio.

If you buy a new computer, you'll work better.

Se vendi la casa, avrai più soldi.

If you sell your house, you'll have more money.

3- We can employ the simple future tense in both the subordinate and main clauses. Note that this is not possible in English. It is not possible to use the simple future tense in the subordinate clause and the simple present in the main clause. For example:

Se lo vorrai, ti aiuterò.

If you wish so, I'll help you.

Se andremo a Roma, visiteremo il Vaticano.

If we go to Rome, we'll visit Vatican city.

The tense agreement choice is solely due to stylistic reasons.

Type II period: *Periodo ipotetico della possibilità*

The *periodo ipotetico della possibilità*'s meaning is close to that of *periodo ipotetico della realtà*, except that the condition is deemed to be less likely to happen.

The tense agreement requires the *congiuntivo imperfetto* (imperfect subjunctive) in the subordinate clause, and the *condizionale presente* (present conditional) in the main clause.

Se Francesco fosse qui, ti direbbe di aspettare.

If Francesco were here, he'd tell you to wait.

Se fossi tuo padre, sarei orgoglioso di te.

If I were your father, I'd be proud of you.

Se gli atleti perdessero questa gara, andrebbero a casa.

If the athletes lost this match, they'd go back home.

The action expressed by the *condizionale presente* in the main clause refers to the future.

Type III period: *Periodo ipotetico della irrealità*

Contrary to the previous if-clauses, the *Periodo ipotetico dell'irrealità* concerns past events. This means that the subordinate clause expresses an unfulfilled past condition; therefore, the action in the main clause did not take place.

Se Napoleone avesse vinto la campagna di Russia, avrebbe conquistato tutta l'Europa.

If Napoleon had won the Russian campaign, he would have conquered the whole of Europe.

Se Dante non avesse scritto la Divina Commedia, non sarebbe divenuto il padre della lingua italiana.

If Dante hadn't written the Divine Comedy, he wouldn't have become the father of Italian language.

Se Antonio avesse vinto la gara, avrebbe conquistato la medaglia d'oro.

If Antonio had won the contest, he'd have won the gold medal.

Cultural Insight

Carlo Rubbia is an internationally renowned Italian scientist. He graduated at the top-ranking Normale University of Pisa in 1957. After his graduation, he spent a year at Colombia University, specializing in atom physics.

In 1960 he became a researcher at the Geneva CERN, where he worked upon elementary particles. In 1983 he discovered the particles that create the weak nuclear force, the W and Z bosons.

Due to his important scientific discoveries, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1984, along with his colleague Simon van der Meer. He taught physics at Harvard University from 1971 to 1988. In 1999, he was appointed General Manager of the ENEA Institute (Italian national committee for the research and development of Nuclear and Alternative energy).

However, after having asked to relieve the Institute of the corrupted political influences in 2005, he was suddenly dismissed by the Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi. Since then, he has been working with the CIEMAT (the Spanish counterpart of ENEA), perfecting and promoting the spreading of solar energy power plants.



Lower Intermediate

Does Anything Beat Italian Ice Cream?

14

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Italian

Giulia Finalmente hai fatto una cosa giusta!
Manuel Cosa vorresti dire?
Giulia Niente.
Manuel Dai dimmi!
Giulia Hai trovato un bel posto dove portarmi a cena.
Manuel Pretendi che ti porti a cena ogni sera in un ristorante lussuoso?
Giulia Ma no! È che di solito andiamo solo a prendere un gelato.
Manuel Ma il gelato italiano è così buono!
Giulia Haha. Hai ragione, ti perdono!

English

Giulia At last you have done a good thing!
Manuel What do you mean? Lit. What do you want to say (with that)?
Giulia Nothing.
Manuel Come on, tell me!
Giulia You've found a nice place to take me out to dinner.
Manuel Do you expect me to take you to dinner every night at a luxurious restaurant?
Giulia No way! It's just that usually we only go and get an ice cream.
Manuel But Italian ice cream is so good!
Giulia Haha. You are right, I forgive you!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
finalmente	at last, finally	verb
voler dire	to mean	verb
dai	come on	exclamation
pretendere	to expect	verb
lussuoso	luxurious	adjective
ma no	no way	exclamation



solo	only	adverb
perdonare	to forgive	verb

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Finalmente si mangia!

"Finally, we eat!"

Finalmente siamo arrivati a casa!

We came back home at last!

Sergio non voleva dire che tu sei stato scortese.

Sergio didn't mean that you were rude.

Dai, andiamo!

Come on, let's go!

Pretendi che tutti ti aspettino sempre?

"Do you expect everybody to always wait for you?"

Ho comprato una macchina lussuosa.

I bought a luxurious car.

Sei stato tu a rompere il vaso? Ma no!

Was it you that broke the vase? No way!

Questa maglia costa solo cinque euro.

"This shirt costs only five euros."

Solo tre euro.

"Only three euros."

Sono in ritardo, mi perdoni?

"I am late, would you forgive me?"

Grammar Points

Technically named "false cognates" in English, ("false friends" in Italian), these expressions and words are the learners' most deceptive "friends", since they bear a mere formal similarity to other English words, while their meaning is utterly different.

Since the terms and expressions are too many to be all mentioned in one lesson, the following sentences present you with the most widely used false cognates, along with the proper translation of the aforementioned deceiving cognates.

-*Tom vive attualmente a Roma.* Tom lives **presently** in Rome.
actually= *in realtà*

-*John è molto annoiato.* John is really **bored**.
annoyed= *infastidito*

-*Bob non è soddisfatto della retribuzione.* Bob is not satisfied with his **pay**.
retribution= *castigo, vendetta*

-*Mary è una ragazza molto sensibile.* Mary is a very **sensitive** girl.
sensible= *intelligente, sensato*

-*Alfred è un sensitivo.* Alfred is a **seer**.
sensitive= *sensibile*

-*Il datore di lavoro vuole assumere Mike.* The employer wants **to hire** Mike.
to assume= *presumere*

-*Lorenzo è un bravo ragazzo.* Lorenzo is a **good** guy.
brave= *coraggioso*

-*Avete una camera libera?* Do you have a free **room**?
camera= *macchina fotografica*

-*I miei parenti vengono da Napoli.* My **relatives** come from Naples.
parent= *genitore*

-*La ricchezza è relativa alle necessità delle persone.* Wealth **is related** to people's needs.
relative= *parente*

-*Il contadino vive nella fattoria.* The farmer lives in a **farm**. *factory= industria*

-*Ho letto un bel romanzo.* I read a good **novel**.
romance= *storia d'amore*

-*Pretendo un pieno risarcimento.* I **expect** a full compensation.
to pretend= *fingere*

-*La mia vacanza è stata molto rilassante.* My **vacation** was very relaxing.
vacancy= *posto vacante*

-*Mi piace il pane morbido.* I like **soft** bread.
morbid= *morboso*
pane= *pannello di vetro* (glass panel)

-*Tuo figlio è un ragazzo molto educato.* Your son is a very **polite** guy.
educated= *colto*

-*È una giornata calda?* Is it a **hot** day?
cold= *freddo*

- *Amo la lettura.* I love **reading**.
lecture= *conferenza, lezione*

- *La lussuria è uno dei peccati capitali.* **Lust** is one of the cardinal sins.
luxury= *lusso, fasto*

The semantic differences may be ascribed to the different historical development that romance terms adopted by English (mainly from French) had in English. This does not mean that they necessarily share the same root (i.e., come from the same Latin word).

Be particularly wary when you employ those terms; there are mistakes that bear no particular embarrassing consequences, while others might put yourself in funny situations.

Cultural Insight

Although *Lazise* is currently a small, popular tourist town, it had an important role in the Italian history development. *Lazise* lies on the Western shores of Garda Lake. It was founded in the Iron Age, roughly around the eighth century B.C. Its present name comes from the Latin word “lacus”, that means “lacustral”.

After having been conquered by the German Empire in the Middle Ages, *Lazise* was given the privilege to manage its own territory and economy without being affected by external interferences, thus becoming the first free Italian Common.

Its beautiful, large castle was built by the *Scaligeri*'s family, the former lords of *Verona*, whose members were praised by Dante in the *Divine Comedy*. The castle itself stands nowadays as a symbol of *Lazise*'s past glories and many tourists visit its halls and gardens, which currently host exhibitions of important international artists.

During the Second World War, the Fascist regime built a detention camp in *Lazise* for British and American prisoners. The local populace helped those prisoners in any way they could, giving them the means to escape the camp and hosting them at their homes, thus risking (and sometimes, paying with) their lives. The courage and brotherhood of those days, though oversaw by the official history, survive



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in the memory and hearts of both the inhabitants of *Lazise*, and the heir of those veterans.





Lower Intermediate

Will You be On Time for Your Italian Date?

15

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Italian

Manuel: Ciao Giulia, sei pronta per uscire?
Giulia: Sì, prendo la mia giacca.
Manuel: Ti ha chiamato Marcella?
Giulia: Sì, ha detto che se torna a Milano in tempo, mi chiama.
Manuel: Ma andiamo al ristorante da soli, giusto?
Giulia: Certamente!

English

Manuel: Hi Giulia, are you ready to go out?
Giulia: Yes, I'll grab my jacket.
Manuel: Has Marcella called you?
Giulia: Yes, she said that if she gets back to Milan in time, she'd call me.
Manuel: But we are going to the restaurant alone, right?
Giulia: Absolutely!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
uscire	to go out	verb
prendere	to take, to get, to grab	verb
giacca	jacket	noun
tornare	to go back, come back, get back	verb
dire	to say, to tell	verb
solo (da solo)	alone, lonely	adjective
certamente	absolutely	adverb

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Sei uscito all'alba.

You went out at dawn.



Usciamo domenica sera verso le otto.

Domani sera esco con gli amici.

Hai preso il tuo zaino?

Hai preso le chiavi?

Ho dimenticato la giacca in macchina.

Ho comprato una giacca verde.

È una giacca di pelle.

Torna da me!

Torno subito.

Ieri sono tornato a casa tardi.

Torniamo insieme?

Vorrei tornare a S. Gimignano.

Hai detto a Elisa che stiamo arrivando?

Mi ha detto che domani non viene.

Hanno detto che vanno al cinema.

Preferisco lavorare da solo.

Vado da solo.

Mi potresti aiutare? Certamente!

Vieni al cinema stasera? Certamente!

"We will go out Sunday night around eight."

Tomorrow night I am going out with friends.

Have you taken your backpack?

Did you grab the keys?

"I forgot the jacket in the car."

"I bought a green jacket."

"It's a leather jacket."

"Come back to me!"

"I'll be right back."

"Yesterday I got back home late."

"Shall we go back together?"

"I would like to go back to S. Gimignano."

"Have you told Elisa we are coming?"

"She told me she's not going to come tomorrow."

"They said they're going to the cinema."

I prefer working alone.

I am going alone.

Could you help me out? Absolutely!

Are you coming to the cinema tonight?

Absolutely!

Grammar Points

As we saw in the dialogue above, the functioning of the Italian hypothetical period is nearly identical to its English equivalent. In fact, apart from the tenses agreement, its syntactical structure and meaning are exactly the same.

Giulia relates what Marcella told her, when she states *Sì, ha detto che se..Dire che* correspond to “to tell (someone) that...” and it is the most frequently used form to convey someone else’s words.

The type I hypothetical period, that follows *dire che*, merely conveys a cause-effect relation. If Marcella gets back to Milan in time, she will call Giulia. In this case, we need to use just the *presente indicativo* (simple present) in both the main and subordinate clauses.

The type I if-clause is by far the most used hypothetical period, because it subordinates the action of the main clause to the condition expressed in the subordinate phrase. It doesn’t say anything about how speakers feel about them.

If Giulia had thought that Marcella wouldn’t likely get back in time, she would have said *se tornasse a Milano in tempo, mi avrebbe chiamato*, thus using the imperfect subjunctive in the subordinate clause,

and the present conditional in the main phrase. The factual connection between “getting back in time” and “call Giulia” doesn’t change a bit; the only semantic difference is that Giulia doesn’t really think that Marcella will make it (Manuel would probably like it better that way).

Finally, note that Manuel starts his reply saying *Ma...* Although starting a sentence with *ma* is normally considered inappropriate in written Italian, it is acceptable in informal spoken Italian.

Cultural Insight

Friuli Venezia Giulia is a northern Italian region, located between Veneto and Slovenia. Its populace is divided into two main cultural entities: the first is related to *Friuli* area, the second stems from the Venetian historical cultural influence.

The majority of the region inhabitants live in medium-size towns, keeping for the largest part their own linguistic identity and traditional customs. Although *Friuli Venezia Giulia* is nowadays one of the wealthiest Italian regions, in recent past it faced many economic depressions. Its inhabitants were thus forced to emigrate, mostly to Argentina, United States and Australia.

As it is the case with all regions of the peninsula, Italian is the *Friuli Venezia Giulia*’s official language. However, the region’s inhabitants speak a variety of other languages, according to the linguistic area they live in:

- *Friuliano*: this Rhaeto-Romanic idiom is spoken mainly in the Friuli area.
- *Veneto*: this language is spoken in the *Venezia* area and bordering territories.
- Slovenian: this language is spoken chiefly in *Gorizia* and *Trieste*.
- German: it is spoken by the German-Italian community in *Val Canale* (Canal Valley).

Note that almost every inhabitant of the region is perfectly bilingual, being fluent in Italian and at least another of the aforementioned languages. Moreover, it is not uncommon to meet people who are completely at ease in employing three or even four idioms at the same time.



Lower Intermediate

Hungry? Try this Italian Dinner!

16

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Italian

Giulia La cena è veramente ottima.
Manuel Davvero, in questo ristorante il cibo è delizioso.
Giulia Già... Accidenti!
Manuel Cosa c'è?
Giulia Mi sta chiamando Marcella. Sì, pronto? Ah ok allora ci vediamo dopo.
Manuel Tutto a posto?
Giulia Sì. Dopo cena andiamo in centro che ci aspetta Marcella.
Manuel Ah sì?
Giulia Sì, non te lo avevo detto?
Manuel No.
Giulia Se ci portassero presto il dolce, potremmo partire tra dieci minuti.

English

Giulia The dinner is really good.
Manuel Indeed, in this restaurant the food is delicious.
Giulia Yes... Damn!
Manuel What's wrong?
Giulia Marcella is calling me. Yes, hello? OK, I'll see you later then.
Manuel Is everything OK?
Giulia Yes. We are going to meet up with Marcella after dinner; she's waiting for us downtown.
Manuel Really?
Giulia Yes, didn't I tell you?
Manuel No, you didn't.
Giulia If they brought us the dessert soon, we could leave in ten minutes.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
cena	dinner	noun
veramente	really	adverb
cibo	food	noun



accidenti	damn	exclamation
pronto?	hello?	expression
tutto a posto	everything OK	expression
presto	soon, early	adverb

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

È pronta la cena?

Verresti a cena con me?

Stasera sei veramente bella!

Mangio spesso cibo cinese.

Sei pronta per partire? Accidenti, ho dimenticato il regalo!

Pronto? Ciao Mary, come stai?

Non ti preoccupare, è tutto a posto.

Se vogliamo andare al mare, dobbiamo partire presto.

Is the dinner ready?

"Would you come to dinner with me?"

"You are really beautiful this evening!"

"I often eat Chinese food."

Are you ready to leave? Damn, I forgot the present!

Hello? Hi Mary, how are you doing?

Don't worry, everything is OK.

"If we want to go to the sea, we have to leave early."

Grammar Points

There are many fixed-expressions, exclamations and generally speaking words that are used only in certain contexts, such as answering phone calls, expressing astonishment and so on. While these words have their own meaning when inserted into a sentence, this is not to be related to their usage as fixed-expressions. *Ah sì; accidenti* and *pronto* all fall into this category.

These were originally full sentences, which were spontaneously abbreviated by speakers through the temporal evolution of the language.

This is why we normally find it difficult to trace their meaning, especially when translating from another language.

The easiest way to deal with this kind of expressions is to see them as simple equivalents of related English expressions.

Giulia says *se ci portassero presto il dolce potremmo partire tra dieci minuti*. Using the type II hypothetical period, she conveys her personal opinion about the connection of cause and effect. In other words, she doesn't really believe that the waiter will serve the dessert soon, though it is still



possible. The connection between the main and independent clause is the same as the type I period: if they bring the dessert soon, they'll leave in ten minutes. The only difference between the type I and type II if-clauses is that the former is used by speakers when they believe that the condition expressed in the subordinate clause is less likely to happen. Both type I and II statements take place at the moment they are uttered, they do not refer to time in any way.

Cultural Insight

Afro Libio Basaldella (Udine, 4th March 1912 – Zurich, 24th July 1976) was an important painter, customarily associated by criticism with the Italian abstractionism movement. He was part of the so-called Roman movement, together with the internationally renowned Giorgio de Chirico and Renato Guttuso.

He was a precocious talent; he made his first solo exhibition at the age of sixteen. His works were particularly appreciated by some of the most important artists of his time; this successful exhibition led him to get into contact with an international audience.

Along with countless Italian solo exhibitions, Afro (whose name is a contraction of the word Africa; it literally means “he who comes from Africa”) also exhibited in New York, working closely with Catherine Viviano Gallery. In 1957 he taught painting techniques at Mills College in Oakland, California. He was later invited to exhibit at the notorious MIT (Michigan Institute of Technology) and won many internationally important prizes, such as the Solomon R. prize at the Guggenheim Museum. He realized a wall painting fresco for the UNESCO entitled “The Garden of Hope”, working closely with some of the greatest twentieth-century artists, such as Pablo Picasso and Juan Miró.



Lower Intermediate

Don't Make Your Italian Friends Wait!

17

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Italian

Manuel Dove ci aspetta Marcella?
Giulia Ci aspetta in Piazza San Babila.
Manuel È un po' tardi per incontrarla.
Giulia Già, se fossimo andati a cenare prima, ora saremmo già arrivati.
Manuel Hai ragione, ma non sapevo che avremmo incontrato Marcella.
Giulia Scusami, lo sai che è la mia migliore amica. Volevo vedere anche lei stasera.

English

Manuel Where is Marcella waiting for us?
Giulia She's waiting in Piazza San Babila.
Manuel It's a bit late to meet up with her.
Giulia That's right, if we had gone to dine sooner, we would have been already there.
Manuel You are right, but I didn't know we would have met up with Marcella.
Giulia Forgive me, you know she's my best friend. I wanted to see her as well this evening.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
aspettare	to wait	verb
po'	bit, little	adverb
cenare	to have dinner, to dine	verb
arrivare	to be there/get there	verb
sapere	to know	verb
incontrare	to meet	verb



Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Aspettami!</i>	"Wait for me!"
<i>Aspetta un attimo!</i>	"Wait a moment!"
<i>Ho aspettato fino all'una, ma non è venuto.</i>	"I waited until one, but he didn't show up."
<i>Sono in ritardo, mi aspetti?</i>	"I'm late; would you wait for me?"
<i>La questione è un po' complicata.</i>	The matter is a bit complicated.
<i>Stasera ceniamo a casa.</i>	"Tonight, we will have dinner at home."
<i>Ceno normalmente alle otto.</i>	"I normally dine at 8:00 PM."
<i>A che ora arrivi?</i>	At what time will you be here?
<i>Sai che ore sono?</i>	"Do you know what time it is?"
<i>Sai come prenotare un biglietto per il treno?</i>	"Do you know how to book a train ticket?"
<i>Sai dove andare?</i>	"Do you know where to go?"
<i>Non so niente.</i>	"I don't know anything."
<i>Dopo incontro Rossella.</i>	"I'll meet with Rossella later."
<i>Ieri ho incontrato Luisa.</i>	Yesterday I met Luisa.
<i>Ho incontrato un vecchio amico.</i>	I met an old friend.

Grammar Points

The particle *ci* may be used in two different fashions.

The first one regards its use as the direct object pronoun, as shown in the dialogue above. In this case, *ci* stands for *noi* (as direct object) and it always precedes the verb it is attached to. For example, the sentences *Marcella aspetta noi in Piazza San Babila* and *Lei ci aspetta in Piazza San Babila* are utterly equivalent. Although using the direct object *noi* is theoretically correct, it is normally used when we wish to stress the object over any other element of the sentence, that is in example provided above the fact that Marcella is waiting for us, and us alone, not someone else. The second concerns its use as locative adverb, which substitutes *là* (there; do not mistake it for the definite singular feminine article *la*, which is written without the accent). Please, note that the place we refer to has to be mentioned earlier in the discourse. For instance:

Vorrei tanto visitare Venezia. Ci vuoi andare sul serio?

I would much love visiting Venice. Do you really want to go there?

Ci as pronoun and *ci* as adverb are never used together within the same sentence, in order to avoid confusion.



When mentioning the dinner she had with Manuel, Giulia uses the type III hypothetical period. This is the only if-clause that refers to a past occurrence where the condition conveyed in the subordinate clause did not take place. This kind of hypothetical period always refers to the past; it often, though not always, expresses regret about something that didn't happen, because its condition was not satisfied.

Learning tip: when we don't feel totally at ease with a seemingly difficult grammatical structure, the best way to get rid of the problem is to use it as much as we can. Understanding the hypothetical period doesn't mean we are instantly able to conjugate any verb every time we need to.

Cultural Insight

Biagio Marin (Grado, 29th June 1891 - Grado, 24th December 1985) was an Italian poet who wrote in the unique variant of the Venetian dialect spoken in his hometown (Grado), with the exception of one collection of poems entitled *Acquamarina*.

After studying Philosophy at the University of Vienna and Rome, he participated at the cultural and irredentist debate regarding the mitteleuropean identity, collaborating with other eminent writers from that area, such as Umberto Saba and Scipio Slataper. He later participated at the Italian resistance movement against the Nazi and Fascist occupation.

He was one of the last poets to adopt dialect as a poetical language, taking it to the highest degrees of perfection and harmony. His collections of poems are strongly related to the origins of his motherland, bearing past memories and the specific cultural heritage of its seafaring people. He believed that it was not entirely possible, nor appropriate, to speak of cultures' uniqueness employing idioms other than its own, since certain words and grammatical structures bear unique feelings that are engraved within the language; these semantic and emotional messages do not relate to a supposedly objective meaning.

Here is a stanza of one of his poems, along with the Italian and English translation:

La solitàe la xe comò la piova
che la soneva sora 'l mar lisiera
cô, mámolo, me 'ndevo su la spiassa
su l'ora che a levante fêva sera.
La solitudine è come la pioggia
che suonava leggera sul mare
quando, bambino, me ne andavo sulla spiaggia
nell'ora che a levante faceva sera.

Solitude is like rain
Sounding softly on the sea
When, as a child, I used to pace on the shore
At the time that marked the eastern night.





Lower Intermediate

Will You Hurry to Hear this Italian Concert?

18

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Italian

Giulia and Manuel Ciao Marcella.
Marcella Ciao ragazzi, come va?
Giulia Bene grazie, e tu?
Marcella Bene. Pensavo che se volete potremmo andare alle Biciclette, c'è musica jazz stasera.
Giulia Ottima idea, di solito ci sono anche delle mostre d'artisti emergenti.
Manuel Se va bene a voi, per me è ok.
Giulia Affrettiamoci, come andiamo là?
Marcella Prendiamo la mia macchina e partiamo.

English

Giulia and Manuel Hi Marcella.
Marcella Hi guys, how is it going?
Giulia Fine thanks, what about you?
Marcella Fine. I was thinking that if you want to, we could go to the Biciclette, they put on jazz music this evening.
Giulia Great idea, there are also exhibitions of emerging artists.
Manuel If it is fine for you, it's OK to me.
Giulia Let's hurry up, how do we get there?
Marcella Let's take my car and leave.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
bene	well, good, fine	adverb
che	that	conjunction
ottimo	great, excellent, very good	adjective
idea	idea, thought	noun
emergente	emerging	adjective
affrettarsi	to hurry up, make haste, hurry	verb
prendere	to take, to get, to grab	verb



Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Io sto bene, e tu?

Stiamo bene!

Io credo che tu abbia ragione.

La bistecca che abbiamo mangiato era ottima!

Questo cibo è ottimo.

Che idea brillante!

Hai avuto un'ottima idea!

Mi piace ascoltare cantanti emergenti.

Luca ci aspetta al bar, faremmo meglio ad affrettarci.

Hai preso il tuo zaino?

Hai preso le chiavi?

"I'm doing fine, what about you?"

"We are fine!"

I think that you are right.

The steak we ate was very good.

This is great food.

"What a brilliant idea!"

"You had a great idea!"

I like listening to emerging singers.

Luca's waiting for us at the bar, we'd better hurry up.

Have you taken your backpack?

Did you grab the keys?

Grammar Points

As it is the case with many other languages, the hypothetical period does not convey only its proper cause-effect meaning, but it is also related to the politeness level of the conversation. Therefore, its structure (syntax and, more important, the tense agreement) has to be changed according to the politeness level we wish to employ.

In the dialogue above, Marcella says "...*se volete potremmo andare alle Biciclette...*", thus using the present tense in the subordinate phrase and the present conditional in the main phrase, instead of the present tense in both parts of the type I if-clause. We already saw that, as in English, polite requests are formulated in Italian using the *condizionale presente* (present conditional). This rule also applies with type I if-clauses, when they are aimed at expressing polite suggestions, requests and offers, rather than a mere cause-effect relation.

For example, saying *Se hai tempo, possiamo andare a ballare* (If you have time, we can go dancing) simply states a possibility (to go dancing) that can become true provided that the condition (to have time) is met.

On the contrary, saying *Se hai tempo, potremmo andare a ballare* (If you have time, we could go dancing) does not only convey the aforementioned cause-effect relation, but also an implicit courteous request to the interlocutor.

In fact, the sentence can be rephrased as *Se hai tempo, verresti a ballare con me?* (If you have time,

would you go dancing with me?).

The present conditional used in type I if-clauses is not to be mistaken for the present conditional used in type II if-clauses. The former conveys polite requests or suggestions in the affirmative form, while the latter simply obeys the type II if-clauses tense-agreement structure.

Cultural Insight

Dino Zoff is the historical Italian football team goalkeeper. He kept this role from 1968 to 1983, playing nothing less than 112 matches. He won the world cup in 1982, thus becoming a symbol of old-school Italian football.

After retiring from football, he became the coach of many Italian important football teams, such as Juventus and Lazio. He was appointed coach of the Italian football team for the European Cup in 2000. The Italian team managed to get to final match, against France. The two rival teams performed at the best of their possibilities, but at the French team won the match.

In spite of the great Italian team performance, Zoff was violently criticized by Silvio Berlusconi, the leader of Forza Italia political party. Being not willing to allow political issues to interfere with his work, he resigned right after the end of the European Cup.

In March 2004, Pelé, the greatest internationally acknowledged football player of all time, inserted his name in the FIFA100, a list of the 125 most notable football players that ever played in the international network. According to that list, he is nowadays considered the third greatest goalkeeper of all time.



Lower Intermediate

Have You Met the Italian Art Critic?

19

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Italian

Manuel: Mi piace il posto, ma non c'è musica jazz stasera.
Giulia: Già, ma la mostra di questo giovane artista americano è molto intrigante.
Marcella: Se lo sapevo, potremmo essere andati al Rolling Stones.
Manuel: Ma non si dovrebbe dire "se l'avessi saputo"?
Giulia: Ahah, non essere troppo preciso, va bene anche così.
Marcella: Cosa dite, potremmo andarci lo stesso?
Manuel: Questa scultura è veramente bella, chissà cosa rappresenta.
Giulia: Giochiamo a fare i critici d'arte!

English

Manuel: I like the place, though there is no jazz music tonight.
Giulia: That's right, but the exhibition of this young American artist is very intriguing.
Marcella: If I knew it, we could have gone to the Rolling Stones.
Manuel: But shouldn't it be "If I had known it"?
Giulia: Ahah, don't be square-head, it's fine also this way.
Marcella: We could go there anyway, what do you think?
Manuel: This sculpture is very nice, I wonder what it represents.
Giulia: Let's act being art critics.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
posto	place	noun
già	that's right	adverb
mostra	exhibition	noun
intrigante	intriguing	adjective
essere troppo preciso	to be square-head	expression
scultura	sculpture	noun
critico	critic	noun



Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Hai un posto in cui stare a Milano?</i>	"Do you have a place to stay in Milan?"
<i>Che posto è questo?</i>	"What kind of place is this?"
<i>L'Italia è un bel posto per vivere.</i>	"Italy is a good place to live."
<i>Hai perso il treno, vero? Già.</i>	You missed the train, did you? That's right.
<i>Noi di solito non andiamo alle mostre.</i>	We don't usually go to exhibitions.
<i>Il libro che ho letto è molto intrigante.</i>	The book I read is very intriguing.
<i>I miei colleghi sono troppo precisi.</i>	My colleagues are square-head.
<i>Il museo ospitava molte sculture in marmo.</i>	The museum hosted many marble sculptures.
<i>Mike è un critico musicale.</i>	Mike is a music critic.

Grammar Points

As it is the case for every language, there are sensible differences between spoken and written language, as well as between formal and informal communication. As regards the Italian type III if-clauses, the tense-agreement structure states that we have to employ the *congiuntivo trapassato* (past perfect subjunctive) in the subordinate clause, and the *condizionale passato* (past conditional) in the main clause. This is the proper, formal way to realize it as presented by Italian normative grammars.

However, when speaking at a colloquial, informal level, Italians sometimes use the *imperfetto indicativo* (indicative imperfect) tense in the subordinate clause instead of *congiuntivo trapassato*, as shown in the example below:

(Formal communication, appropriate in both written and spoken Italian):

Se avessi saputo che non ti piaceva, non avrei preparato la torta di mele.

Had I known you didn't like it, I wouldn't have made the apple pie.

(Informal communication, possible only in spoken Italian):

Se sapevo che non ti piaceva, non preparavo/avrei preparato la torta di mele.

If I knew you didn't like it, I wouldn't have made the apple pie.

The *indicativo imperfetto* may be used in either the subordinate or main clause, sometimes in both (though Italians tend to keep the past conditional in the main phrase, even at a colloquial level of spoken communication).



We need to make it clear that educated Italians don't use this variant, not even at a colloquial level, while the majority does. There is an ongoing debate whether to consider the *indicativo imperfetto* inappropriate at any level or not.

As far as everyday spoken Italian is concerned, we should use the *indicativo imperfetto* only in informal situations (preferably with people we are acquainted with), when we don't recall the appropriate *congiuntivo trapassato* form. The major benefits are that *indicativo imperfetto* is much easier to conjugate than *congiuntivo trapassato* and people will always understand us.

Cultural Insight

Giani Stuparich (Trieste, 4th April 1891 - Rome, 7th April 1961) was a mitteleuropean Italian writer. He graduated at the University of Florence, writing a dissertation on Machiavelli. He volunteered in the Italian army during the First World War, writing precise accounts of the many horrors and sacrifices personally witnessed. His literary production was profoundly marked by that experience; he denounced the war crimes and the pointlessness of fighting against human beings.

Therefore, he theorized the redemption of Humanity through the spontaneous brotherhood of people, who are often taught to hate their brothers from other countries by the governments.

The importance of real freedom, that is freedom from instilled fear, soon became the preeminent aspect of his literary works; starting from the mitteleuropean context, he dreamed to show people throughout the world a mean to realize that real freedom cannot be achieved by murder, but it is rather a progressive process of fighting those political powers that take advantage of those they are meant to protect.

His works have been translated into English, French, Spanish, German, Dutch and many other European languages.



Lower Intermediate

Where Can You Find the Most Delicious Italian Pastries?

20

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Italian

Manuel Non ho capito se questa scultura rappresenti una donna o un uomo.
Giulia Neanche io, ma credo che possa essere uno studio sulla dinamicità.
Marcella Scusate se vi interrompo ragazzi, che ne dite di andare a mangiare qualcosa?
Manuel Avendo tempo, potremmo andare da Antonio.
Giulia Mi piacciono moltissimo le sue paste!
Marcella Ok, sbrighiamoci perchè ho fame!
Manuel and Giulia Andiamo!

English

Manuel I haven't understood whether this sculpture represents a woman or a man.
Giulia Me neither, but I think it might be a study on dynamism.
Marcella Sorry to interrupt you guys, how do you feel about getting something to eat?
Manuel If we have time, we could go to Antonio's.
Giulia I love his pastries.
Marcella Ok, let's hurry up, I am hungry.
Manuel and Giulia Let's go!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
se	whether, if	conjunction
neanche	neither, even	adverb
dinamicità	dynamism	noun
interrompere	to interrupt, stop, discontinue	noun
sbrigharsi	to hurry up, be quick	verb
tra	in, between, amid, amongst, among	preposition



Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Non è chiaro se Luca voglia venire con noi.</i>	It's not clear whether Luca wants to come with us.
<i>Non ho comprato il regalo per Pete. Neanche io.</i>	I didn't buy the present for Pete. Me neither.
<i>I datori di lavoro apprezzano la dinamicità dei loro impiegati.</i>	Employers appreciate their employees dynamism.
<i>Vorrei poter concludere il mio discorso senza essere interrotto.</i>	I'd like to finish my speech without being interrupted.
<i>Se voglio arrivare in orario, devo sbrigarmi.</i>	"If I am to arrive on time, I have to hurry up."
<i>Ci vediamo tra due ore.</i>	I'll see you in two hours.

Grammar Points

If we wish to employ the *gerundio* mode in the subordinate clause, it's very important to avoid making mistakes in the rest of the sentence, since the meaning of the gerund is defined by the verb conjugation in the main clause. As we will see shortly, the subject of the sentence is stated only in the main clause. Consider the following examples:

Type I if-clause

Se ho tempo, vado a giocare a calcio con gli amici.
If I have time, I go playing football with my friends.
Avendo tempo, vado a giocare a calcio con gli amici.
(lit.): Having time, I go playing football with friends.

Type II if-clause

Se ascoltasse il mio consiglio, riparerebbe la macchina.
If he paid heed/listened to my advice, he'd repair the car.
Ascoltando il mio consiglio, riparerebbe la macchina.
(lit.): Paying heed/Listening to my advice, he'd repair the car.

Type III if-clause

Se avessero comprato gli strumenti giusti, avrebbero dipinto il muro.
If they'd bought the right tools, they'd have painted the wall.

Comprando (or avendo comprato) gli strumenti giusti, avrebbero dipinto il muro.

(lit.): Buying (or "having bought) the right tools, they'd have painted the wall.

As shown in the examples above, the structure "present gerund + noun (direct object)" may substitute the subordinate clause in all kinds of hypothetical periods, provided that the subject of both sentences is the same. Since the gerund is an infinitive mode, it is not related to any person; therefore, the subject of both sentences is inferred solely by the one expressed in the main clause.

The type of the if-clause we are dealing with can be inferred exclusively by the tense of the main clause, since the impersonal gerund mode does not give us any clue about it.

In type III if-clauses, we may use the past gerund, though both the present and the past gerund are perfectly acceptable (the past gerund is deemed to be slightly more formal).

Usage notes: Employing the gerund in the subordinate clause is considered proper Italian in both the written and spoken language. It's normally employed when we need to use several if-clauses in a row, since it changes their grammatical form, making them less repetitive.

Moreover, it's very useful when we don't recall the subjunctive conjugation of the subordinate clause verb. Just keep in mind that the subject of both sentences has to be the same.

Cultural Insight

4

Gino Paoli (Monfalcone, 23rd September 1934) is an Italian songwriter and musician. At the beginning of his career, he was part of group of young musician that shared a deep passion for every kind of music (Italian folk, Classic, Jazz, Blues, etc.). This group, later named by music critics *La Scuola di Genova* (Genoese School), included many of the greatest Italian songwriters of the Sixties and Seventies, such as Fabrizio de André, Luigi Tenco and Giorgio Calabrese.

After a disappointing start, Paoli achieved popularity with the song *Il Cielo in una stanza* (The sky in a room), through the help of the well-established singer Mina.

He started a love affair with another popular Italian songwriter, Ornella Vanoni in 1961. This relation inspired some of his most important songs, such as *Senza fine* (Endless), *Anche se* (Even though), *Me in tutto il mondo* (I, in the whole word), *Che cosa c'è* (What's happening).

In 1964 he participated at the famous San Remo Festival. However, his commitment and efforts were not recognized by the jury; as a result, his songs didn't win any prize.

Due to the profound disappointment, he sank into a deep depression and started taking drugs. After a terrible car accident, he decided to quit drugs and took a new path in his artistic career, writing socially committed songs. In the last two decades, he developed a unique Jazz style, entirely performed in Italian.

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Lower Intermediate

What's Your Secret Italian Recipe?

21

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Italian

Manuel Sfortunatamente Antonio è chiuso.
Giulia Che peccato! Potremmo andare a mangiare una piadina, che dite?
Marcella A me va bene. Ho fame.
Manuel In effetti, avendo voglia si potrebbe andare da me e fare una pasta.
Marcella Sai cucinare?
Manuel Certamente!
Giulia Andiamo da te, ma il sugo lo preparo io!

English

Manuel Antonio's is closed, unfortunately.
Giulia What a pity! We could go eat a piadina, what do you guys think?
Marcella It's fine with me. I am hungry.
Manuel In fact, if it's fine with you, we could go to my place and make some pasta.
Marcella Do you know how to cook?
Manuel Absolutely!
Giulia Let's go to your place, but I'll prepare the sauce!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
sfortunatamente	unfortunately, unluckily	adverb
che peccato!	What a pity!	exclamation (idiomatic expression)
cucinare	to cook	verb
certamente	absolutely	adverb
sugo	sauce	noun
preparare	to prepare, make, set, arrange	verb



Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Sfortunatamente, non abbiamo visto nessun cervo.</i>	"Unfortunately, we didn't see any deer."
<i>Ieri ho perso il treno. Che peccato!</i>	"Yesterday I missed the train. What a pity!"
<i>Che peccato!</i>	"What a pity!"
<i>Amo cucinare per i miei amici.</i>	I love cooking for my friends.
<i>Mi potresti aiutare? Certamente!</i>	Could you help me out? Absolutely!
<i>Vieni al cinema stasera? Certamente!</i>	Are you coming to the cinema tonight? Absolutely!
<i>Il sugo va preparato con attenzione.</i>	The sauce has to be carefully prepared.
<i>Il corso mira a preparare gli studenti per un'ampio ventaglio di carriere.</i>	"The course aims to prepare students for a wide range of careers."

Grammar Points

Italian is rich of impersonal structures and expressions. The impersonal forms represent the appropriate, conventional way to convey general statements, opinions, beliefs and such, as well as polite suggestions or requests.

While in English taking responsibility of what we say is connected to using the real subject of our utterances, in Italian impersonal structures are also used to politely make suggestions, without stating the actual subject of the sentence. This is simply a stylistic widely-accepted custom, which is not to be connected with its grammatical, literal meaning. For example:

A) *Potremmo andare a giocare a calcio, che ne dite?*

We could go play football, what do you think?

B) *Si potrebbe andare a giocare a calcio, che ne dite?*

We could go play football, what do you think?

As regards their meaning, sentences A and B are utterly equivalent; the only difference concerns their grammatical form: the subject of sentence A is *noi*, "we", while the subject of sentence B is the neutral third person singular "it", which, since it is never stated in Italian, does not have a written form. It is inferred by the use of the impersonal forms, such as the particle *si* or the *gerundio* (gerund) mode.

The second possibility is exemplified in the dialogue in Manuel's suggestion: *...avendo voglia si potrebbe andare da me...*; "if it's fine with you, we could go to my place".

Finally, the word *sugo* is used in Italian principally to indicate pasta sauce. When mentioning other kinds of sauce, we should refer to it as *salse* (feminine noun, singular: *salsa*, not to be mistaken for the Latin-American popular dance music.)

Cultural Insight

Paolo Rossi (Monfalcone, 22nd July 1953) is an Italian comedian, actor and songwriter. Right after graduating in Chemistry at high school, he started studying classic Italian theatre and the folk *Commedia dell'arte*. The *Commedia dell'arte* is the traditional Italian folk theatre, based on stereotyped characters. Each character comes from a specific Italian city; thus, it was meant to summarize the most important cultural traits. We will discuss the *Commedia dell'arte* in forthcoming cultural insights.

Paolo Rossi inserted the noble European theatrical tradition (i.e, Shakespeare, Berthold Brecht, Molière, etc.) into the *Commedia dell'arte*, developing a peculiar style of political stand-up show. By showing the vices of the Italian political through a witty satire, he earned the appreciation of people and critics, having being praised for his work by the Italian Nobel Prize winner Dario Fo.

His performances and theatrical works are available on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)



Lower Intermediate

This Italian Pasta Will be Ready in Five Minutes!

22

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Italian

- Manuel La pasta dovrebbe essere pronta in cinque minuti.
Giulia Il sugo è pronto. Ad avere un po' di cipolla, avrei preparato il "sugo Giulia".
Marcella È perfetto anche così.
Manuel Vi piace Claudio Baglioni? Ascolto sempre le sue canzoni per le mangiate di mezzanotte.
Giulia Non dire nulla, ingrasso solo a pensarci!

English

- Manuel The pasta should be ready in five minutes.
Giulia The sauce is ready. If I had some onion, I'd have prepared "Giulia's special".
Marcella It's perfect also this way.
Manuel Do you like Claudio Baglioni? I always listen to his songs for midnight square meals.
Giulia Don't say a word, I put on weight just thinking about it!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
pronto	ready, hello (when picking up the phone)	interjection
cipolla	onion	noun
perfetto	perfect	adjective
così	so, this way	adverb
mangiata	square meal	noun
ingrassare	to gain weight, get fat	verb

Vocabulary Sample Sentences



Siamo pronti per uscire?

Pronto. Chi parla?

La cipolla ha molte proprietà terapeutiche.

Un lavoro perfetto!

È perfetto!

Tutti lo chiamano così.

È così buono!

Laura è così bella!

Ieri ho fatto una mangiata memorabile.

Antonio ha sempre paura d'ingrassare.

Non devo ingrassare.

"Are we ready to leave?"

"Hello. Who's speaking?"

Onion has many therapeutic properties.

"A perfect job."

"It's perfect!"

"Everybody calls him this way."

"It's so good!"

"Laura is so beautiful!"

Yesterday I had an unforgettable square meal.

Antonio is always afraid of putting on weight.

I don't have to gain weight.

Grammar Points

In all three types of Italian if-clauses, the subordinate clause may be realized using the *a* (or *ad* when the following infinitive starts with the vowel *a*) + infinitive structure.

This informal, colloquial way is normally employed exclusively in the spoken language and should be avoided in formal speech and writings.

As for the gerund we studied in previous classes, the subject of both phrases must be the same.

Additionally, since the structure *a* + infinitive is impersonal, the subject of the sentence is explicitly stated only in the main clause. For example:

Se avessi tempo, (io) andrei al cinema.

If I had time, I'd go to the cinema.

Ad avere tempo, andrei al cinema.

If I had time, I'd go to the cinema.

Se fossi stato disonesto, (io) avrei guadagnato molti soldi.

If I'd been dishonest, I'd have made a lot of money.

Ad essere disonesto, avrei guadagnato molti soldi.

If I'd been dishonest, I'd have made a lot of money.

The structure *a or ad* + infinitive is mostly used to emphasize the subordinate clause over the main one, thus stressing the condition over the result.

Cultural Insight

Napoleone Giuseppe Carlo Bonaparte, called Plon - Plon (Trieste, 9th September 1822 - Rome, 17th March 1891) was an Italian prince and general, a relative of Napoleon who allied with the French army.

In 1848 he was part of French Constituent Assembly. During the reign of his cousin Napoleon III, he became an officer of the French army in the Crimean War. Although it might not seem like at the first analysis, the Crimean War was a decisive step in the Italian reunification process. Through the alliance with the French army, the Italian government found a powerful ally that would soon help its army in the incoming war against the Austrian Empire. This strategic war earned the rising Italian reign the largest part of northern Italy territories.

During the Italian Second Independence War, Plon - Plon led the Italian Fifth Army Corps, trying to weaken the Austrian control over northern Italy. After the death of Napoleon III's son, Plon - Plon supported a petition to make himself the new king of France. This political maneuver to overthrow the recently established French Third Republic did not go unnoticed; Plon - Plon was arrested and permanently banned from the French territory.



Lower Intermediate

Won't You Open a New Restaurant for Delicious Italian Pasta?

23

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Italian

Marcella	La pasta era ottima, complimenti Giulia, dovresti aprire un ristorante.
Giulia	Grazie, sei troppo gentile.
Marcella	Non sto scherzando, sei molto brava a cucinare.
Giulia	Ad avere i fondi, lo avrei già fatto.
Manuel	Ed io cosa farei nel ristorante?
Giulia	Avremmo sicuramente bisogno di un cameriere.
Manuel	Va bene, accetto questa mancanza di fede nelle mie doti culinarie.

English

Marcella	The pasta was very good, congratulations Giulia, you should open a restaurant.
Giulia	Thank you, you are too kind.
Marcella	I'm not kidding; you are very good at cooking.
Giulia	Had I had the funds, I'd have already done it.
Manuel	What should I be doing at the restaurant?
Giulia	We'll surely need a waiter.
Manuel	OK, I accept this lack of faith in my culinary abilities.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
ottimo	great, excellent, very good	adjective
complimenti	congratulations	noun
fondo	fund	noun (usually at the plural form)
cameriere	waiter	noun
mancanza (di)	lack, absence, shortage (of)	noun
fede	faith	noun
dote	ability, gift	adjective



Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>La bistecca che abbiamo mangiato era ottima!</i>	The steak we ate was very good.
<i>Questo cibo è ottimo.</i>	This is great food.
<i>Ho passato l'esame! Complimenti!</i>	I passed the exam. Congratulations!
<i>La compagnia aveva quasi esaurito i suoi fondi.</i>	The company almost used up its funds.
<i>Joe lavora come cameriere in Italia.</i>	Joe's working as waiter in Italy.
<i>Non ho potuto finire per mancanza di tempo.</i>	I couldn't finish due to lack of time.
<i>La fede è una parte integrale d'ogni religione.</i>	Faith is an integral part of any religion.
<i>Le tue doti sportive sono molto apprezzate.</i>	Your sports abilities are much appreciated.

Grammar Points

In the today's dialog we have practiced using the *a* + infinitive structure in the subordinate clause, to build the hypothetical period in Italian.

Please take a look at the previous lesson if you still have doubts on this construction.

In Today's grammar point we shall therefore take a look at some other interesting topics.

When learning a language we should always pay attention to the learning tips that could help us making it easier. In addition to our previously acquired knowledge, others may be found in simple rules, reading habits we will progressively acquire. In the lower intermediate series, we seek to provide a better insight of the language, thus giving you the right tools to gradually learn how to develop it independently.

In the dialogue Marcella tells Giulia *è molto brava a cucinare* (she's very good at cooking). Instead of translating every single word of the aforementioned sentence, the structure we should be considering is "to be good at doing something". We notice that the only difference is that in Italian *a* (to) is followed by the infinitive, whereas in English we need an -ing form. Considering the language from this viewpoint will give us a meaningful sentence to rely on, instead of a series of words.

Additionally, we should try to associate adjectives to nouns, thus remembering them as a whole. In the dialogue, Marcella states that the *pasta* is *ottima* (very good). The adjective *ottimo* is translated differently according to the noun it is attached to. Trying to memorize all possible associations would be a massive, quite pointless effort. Instead, we should build our knowledge one piece at a time,

gradually learning the adjective-noun appropriate combination into real, meaningful contexts.

Cultural Insight

Navarro is an Italian-Canadian rock band founded in Pordenone in 2002 by Max Philip Navarro and Nick Mayer, brother of the famous pop-blues musician John Mayer.

Max Navarro was born in Canada on 9th May 1982, from a Venetian emigrant. The family moved to Italy shortly after Max's birth. The musician kept constant artistic bonds with colleagues in Canada, trying to enrich pop-blues groove with melodies taken from the Italian folk music.

His first album, "Parallel Lines", was published in 2005. It failed to make a significant impression on the European music panorama, but it became extremely popular in Asia. In fact, Navarro was the first pop-rock band to conquer the Chinese, Japanese and Thai hit parade.

Navarro published their new album, "Branded on My Skin", in 2007. Contrary to what happened with their first record, the new album was appreciated also by the European and American audience. The band went on a European tour, named "European Faraway Tour", which definitely consolidated their success. Navarro has been an active supporter of UNICEF, as well as a supporter of Hydrogen-based economy, called "Hydrogen for Life".



Lower Intermediate

Let's Buy Pasta at the Italian Grocery Store!

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Italian

Giulia Bene, si è fatto tardi, dobbiamo andare.
Marcella Ciao Manuel, grazie di tutto.
Manuel Di nulla, il piacere è stato mio.
Giulia Ricordati che domani andiamo al supermercato alle quattro.
Manuel Certamente. Però, se avessimo la macchina...
Giulia Lo so, potremmo andare alla Triennale. Sarà per un'altra volta.
Marcella Ora dobbiamo veramente andare, ci vediamo domani sera.

English

Giulia Well, it got late, we have to leave.
Marcella Bye Manuel, thanks for everything.
Manuel No problem, it was my pleasure
Giulia Don't forget that tomorrow we'll go to the grocery store at four p.m.
Manuel I won't. However, if only we had a car...
Giulia I know, we could go to the Triennale. It'll be for another time.
Marcella We really need to leave now; I'll see you guys tomorrow evening.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
farsi tardi	to get late	verb (reflexive)
di nulla	no problem	prepositional phrase
piacere	pleasure	noun
ricordare	to remember, not forget, recall	verb
certamente	certainly	adverb
però	however, tough, but	conjunction

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

È meglio andare ora prima che si faccia tardi.

Ti ringrazio del tuo aiuto. Di nulla.

E' stato un piacere

Ho avuto il piacere di incontrare tuo fratello.

Non mi ricordo cosa ho mangiato ieri.

Ricordati di fare i compiti.

Puoi prestarmi dieci euro? Certamente.

Certamente signore!

Ho comprato il biglietto. Però non posso andare al concerto.

We'd better leave now before it gets late.

"Thanks for you help. No problem."

"It was a pleasure."

I had the pleasure of meeting your brother.

"I don't remember what I ate yesterday."

"Don't forget to do your homework."

"Can you lend me ten euros? Sure."

"Certainly, sir!"

I bought the ticket. However, I can't go to the concert.

Grammar Points

Although the *ipotesi interrotta* (interrupted hypothesis) belongs, grammatically speaking, to the "if-clause" category, it is used in different semantic contexts. Since it consists of just the subordinate clause, it doesn't refer to a predetermined cause-effect relation. As its English equivalent, it conveys a desire, an aspiration whose meaning can be inferred only by the context it is inserted into. This structure always carries a strong emotional value. For example:

Se avessi più soldi... (andrei in vacanza in Australia; comprerei una automobile nuova, ecc.)

If I had more money... (I'd go on vacation in Australia; I'd buy a new automobile, etc.)

The range of emotions expressed by this structure is wide and diversified, including anger (*Se ti prendo... If I catch you...*), disappointment (*Se solo non mi fossi ammalato... If only I didn't get ill*), nostalgia (*Se solo avessi ancora vent'anni... If only I were still twenty...*) and so on.

The "what if" structure is realized in Italian using the conjunctions *e + se* (lit. and + if). Contrary to the *ipotesi interrotta*, this subordinate clause expresses exclusively a rhetorical question, an alternative interpretation of something we take for granted. For example:

E se tuo fratello fosse ancora in Italia?

What if your brother is still in Italy?

E se la classe politica ci stesse mentendo?

What if the political class has been lying to us?

This hypothesis is realized in Italian using the *congiuntivo imperfetto* (imperfect subjunctive), thus linking it to type II conditional sentences. In this case, the subordinate clause is just an open question,

which brings forth a controversial, or otherwise polemical, attitude of whom uttered it.

Cultural Insight

Umberto Saba, pseudonym of Umberto Poli (Trieste, 9th March 1883 - Gorizia, 25th August 1957), was an Italian poet and writer. He was born in Trieste in a Jewish family; he was later forced to abandon both his family and city when he was banned from the territory by the Austro-Hungarian empire.

His early writings were influenced by a peculiar interpretation of the Poet's role, plainly explained in the article *Quello che resta da fare ai poeti* (What remains for poets to do). He believed in the social role and consequent responsibility of poets. According to his viewpoint, in order to convey their messages to people, poets ought to seek real communication, without embellishing their writings with superfluous frills.

He suffered of long and deep nervous tensions throughout his life. In order to find psychological solace, he regularly visited one of Freud's disciples, Edoardo Weiss. Psychology was yet to be recognized as an independent science and Saba contributed to its diffusion in the Italian peninsula. During the Second World War he was persecuted by the Fascist regime due to his Jewish origins. The terrible experiences he went through during the war, and the racial persecution he was victim of, left a deep mark on both his character and health. Saba died in a health clinic in 1957.



Lower Intermediate

Spaghetti, Tortellini... Which Italian Food Will Prove the Most Delicious?

25

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Italian

Manuel Compro questi spaghetti?
Giulia No, quelli sono in offerta speciale.
Manuel E questi tortellini?
Giulia No, prendi questi che sono più economici.
Manuel Cosa pensi di questo sugo pronto?
Giulia Il sugo fatto in casa è più saporito!
Manuel Lo so, ma non ho sempre tempo per preparare il sugo.
Giulia Allora prendi quello che è più saporito.

English

Manuel Shall I buy these spaghetti?
Giulia No, those ones are on special offer.
Manuel What about these tortellini?
Giulia No, grab these ones that are cheaper.
Manuel What do you think about this ready-made sauce?
Giulia Homemade sauce is better!
Manuel I know, but I don't always have time to prepare the sauce.
Giulia Then take that one that is tastier.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
spaghetti	spaghetti	noun (plural)
in offerta speciale	on special offer, on sale	expression
tortellini	tortellini	noun (uncountable, plural)
economico	cheap, economic	adjective
saporito	good, tasty, savory	adjective
tempo	time, weather, tense	noun



Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Mi piacciono gli spaghetti al ragù.

Ho preso questo Panettone in offerta speciale!

A pranzo mangio i tortellini ai quattro formaggi.

Questo supermercato è molto economico.

Questo posto è molto economico.

Questo formaggio è molto saporito.

È molto saporito.

Oggi è bel tempo.

Scusami, non ho tempo per aiutarti.

I like meat sauce spaghetti.

I got this Panettone on special offer!

"For lunch I'll eat four cheese tortellini."

"This supermarket is very cheap."

"This place is very cheap."

"This cheese is very tasty."

"It's very tasty."

"Today, the weather is good."

"Sorry, I have no time to help you."

Grammar Points

As in English, there are in Italian three different comparative "grades": *comparativo di maggioranza* (comparative of majority; X is greater than Y), *comparativo di minoranza* (comparative of minority; X is lesser than Y), *comparativo di uguaglianza* (comparative of equality; X is equal to Y).

The comparative forms are used to compare two different situations, people, inanimate objects, (someone; something) traits or groups of the aforementioned elements. In other words, they compare either a single trait between two nouns or two or more characteristics of a single noun.

The comparative grade concerns both adjectives and adverbs. For example:

Antonio è più fortunato (aggettivo) di Valeria.

Antonio is luckier (adjective) than Valeria.

Io cammino meno velocemente (avverbio) di te.

I walk less fast (adverb) than you.

La frutta fresca e la pasta sono più salutari (aggettivo) del cibo surgelato.

Fresh fruit and pasta are healthier (adjective) than frozen food.

The *comparativo di maggioranza* (comparative of majority) is realized by inserting the adverb *più* (more) before the adjective(s) or adverb(s) and the preposition *di* right after it (them), thus obeying the following syntax: first comparison term + verb + *più* + adjective/adverb + *di* or *che* (the usage of *che* instead of *di* will be discussed in the next lesson) + second comparison term.



Please, note that the number and gender of adjectives (only) have to agree with the first comparison term(s) they refer to. For example:

Annalisa e Maria sono più furbe (adjective, plural feminine) *di Gianluca e Marco*.

Annalisa and Maria are cleverer than Gianluca and Marco.

I bambini hanno mangiato più lentamente (adverb) *degli adulti*.

Kids ate slower than adults.

In addition, the preposition *di* may be combined with the definite article preceding the second comparison term, thus forming a compound preposition. Please, note that personal pronouns are never preceded by articles. For instance:

Il mare è più azzurro del (= *di + il*) *cielo*.

The sea is bluer than the sky.

Tu hai più esperienza di me.

You are more experienced than me.

Cultural Insight

The battle of Lepanto was fought on 7th October 1571 between the Christian and Turkish fleets. The Christian fleet, that grouped together the Spanish, Venetian, Austrian, French and Papal naval forces, consisted in 220 various kinds of battleships, nearly half of which belonged to the Republic of Venice. The battle of Lepanto was the most important sea battle of the Renaissance.

The Christian fleet was led by the supreme commander Giovanni d'Austria, supported by the experienced Venetian field commander Sebastiano Venier.

At the centre of the Turkish fleet stood their flagship, La Sultana (the Sultan). It displayed a green battle standard taken directly from the inner sanctum of the Mecca, bearing the name of the Prophet embroidered on it nothing less than 28900 times. The Christian fleet took a cross formation; its flagship, under command of Giovanni d'Austria, displayed an enormous battle standard depicting a portrait of Jesus Christ. At the forefront of the Christian fleet were six Venetian *galeazze*; huge, powerful floating fortresses that played a central role in the oncoming battle.

The battle raged for five long, terrible hours. At the end of the day, the Christian fleet lost over half of its battleships, 7000 men and counted over 20000 wounded soldiers. The Turkish fleet was virtually annihilated; 25000 men lay dead and over 3000 soldiers were captured by the heavily exhausted Christian army.

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