Newbie 1

Italian Lessons 1-25





Introduction

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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.

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Newbie Lesson

First Impressions Can Last a Lifetime!

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Formal Italian

Laura Buon giorno.
John Buon giorno. Piacere di conoscerLa. Mi chiamo John Smith.
Laura Piacere di conoscerLa. Mi chiamo Laura Rossi.

English

Laura Good afternoon.
John Good afternoon. Pleased to meet you. My name is John Smith.
Laura Pleased to meet you. My name is Laura Rossi.

Informal Italian

Laura Ciao.
John Ciao. Piacere di conoscerti. Mi chiamo John.
Laura Piacere di conoscerti. Mi chiamo Laura.

Informal English

Laura Hi.
John Hi. Pleased to meet you. My name is John.
Laura Pleased to meet you. My name is Laura.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
ciao	hello, hi, bye	greeting expression
buon giorno	good morning, good day, good afternoon	greeting expression
Piacere di conoscerti.	Pleased to meet you.	greeting expression
Mi chiamo...	My name is... (lit. I call myself)	phrase

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Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Ciao mamma!	"Hi, mom!"
Ciao, Laura.	"Hello, Laura."
Buon giorno Signor Martini.	"Good morning, Mr. Martini."
Buon giorno, Luca.	"Good day, Luca."
Piacere di conoscerti. Mi chiamo John.	"Pleased to meet you. My name is John."
Mi chiamo Peter.	My name is Peter.
Mi chiamo Luigi.	My name is Luigi.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Italian Greetings
Buon giorno. Ciao.
"Good Afternoon. Hello."

Ciao is the easiest and most common Italian greeting people use to say "hello" or "goodbye." You should only use this greeting with people whom you are well acquainted with, such as friends or relatives. It is common to address foreigners entering into Italy with ciao. The reason for this is that it's a friendly and easy way to greet them. Sometimes owners of casual, modern shops may greet customers with ciao as a way to keep social distances at a minimum and make talking easier and faster, thus making you feel more comfortable.

On the other hand, you may use *buon giorno* (also written *buongiorno*) with anyone, even people met for the first time. Literally, *buon giorno* means "good day," however, you may also interpret it to mean "good morning" or "good afternoon." As a rule of thumb you can use *buon giorno* only during daytime-from morning until evening-or from before daybreak to before dusk. If we want to express "good morning" clearly, we may use *buon mattino*, but this expression is very rare. As for "good afternoon," we sometimes use *buon pomeriggio*.

Piacere di conoscerti, as we have seen, directly translates as:

1. "pleased to meet you"
2. "how do you do?"
3. "nice to meet you"

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Note the difference between *conoscerti* and *conoscerLa*. In informal situations, you use *-ti*, while the use of *-la* is preferred for formal situations. Both of these endings refer to the occasion of meeting one person. When meeting more people you use *piacere di conoscervi* regardless of the situation. We will discuss more details of their usage in future lessons.

The Focus of This Lesson is Stating Your Name
Mi chiamo John.
"My name is John."

Instead of *mi chiamo*, literally, "I call myself," we may use *io sono* ("I am").

Note that in the informal dialogue, it was not necessary to state one's surname-just the name was enough.

Cultural Insight

Where Will You Find The Italian Language?

Italian is the official language of Italy and San Marino, one of the official languages of Switzerland, and it is the second official language used in the Vatican City.

Italian and its dialects are widely used by Italian immigrants and their descendants. For example, in the United States you would most commonly find Italian speakers in four cities: Boston, Chicago, New York City, and Philadelphia. In Canada there are large Italian-speaking communities in Montreal and Toronto, and it is the second most commonly spoken language in Australia.

Throughout the world, Italian is the fifth most taught non-native language, after English, French, and German.

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Newbie Lesson

How do you want them to Remember this Night?

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Italian

Laura Buona sera. Come sta?
John Buona sera, io sto bene e Lei?
Laura Anche io sto bene, grazie.

English

Laura Good evening. How are you, sir?
John Good evening. I am fine, and you madam?
Laura I am also well, thank you.

Informal Italian

Laura Buona sera. Come stai?
John Buona sera, io sto bene e tu?
Laura Anche io sto bene, grazie.

Informal English

Laura Good evening. How are you?
John Good evening. I am fine, and you?
Laura I am also fine, thank you.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
buona sera	good evening	greeting expression
buona serata	have a good evening	exclamation
stare	to be, to stand, to lie, to be located, to be situated	verb
bene	good, well	adverb
anche	also, too	adverb
grazie	thank you	exclamation

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e	and	conjunction
come	how	interrogative adverb

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Buona sera Signor Martini.	"Good evening, Mr. Martini."
Buona sera, Giovanni.	"Good evening, Giovanni."
Buona serata, Luca.	Have a good evening, Luca.
Come stanno Luigi e Anna?	"How are Luigi and Anna?"
Predicare bene e razzolare male	Practice what you preach
Parlo per il tuo bene.	I'm talking for your good.
Stanno bene.	They are fine.
Anche Luca?	Also Luca?
Grazie, ciao.	"Thank you, bye."
Grazie dell'informazione.	"Thank you for the information."
Io e Anna andiamo a casa.	"Anna and I are going home."
E tu?	"And you?"
Come ti chiami?	What is your name?
Come stai?	"How are you?"
Come stanno?	"How are they?"
Come state?	"How are you?" (second person plural)

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Italian Greetings for the Evening
Buona sera.
"Good Evening."

As we have seen in the dialogues, *buona sera* (also written *buonasera*) is the perfect equivalent for "good evening" and as such you should use this term when meeting someone. Instead, you may use *buona serata* (never written *buonaserata*) to wish someone a nice evening. You should not use this greeting when meeting someone for the first time or upon entering a place. For example, if I enter a shop during the evening, the shopkeeper greets me with *buona sera* and I can reply *buona sera*. However, when leaving the shop, we may use *buona sera* or *buona serata*.

People use buona sera and buona serata from dusk until just before going to bed. When someone is about to go to bed, *buona notte* (also written *buonanotte*) is almost exclusively the word people use. If

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for example, a person is leaving a restaurant at 9:00 pm, you might use buona serata to wish him a good evening. You may say the same when a person leaves at 11:00 pm or after midnight if the intended meaning is to wish him to have fun in the following hours, even if it is already nighttime. If instead we wish to bid him a good night (i.e., a good sleep) then you should use buona notte.

The Focus of This Lesson is Asking How They Are in Italian!
Come stai?
"How are you?"

Come stai means, "how are you" referring to "you" in the second person singular. You use *come sta* in formal speech such as "how are you, sir." This term actually has two meanings. To explain this better, let us look at our first Italian verb conjugation in present indicative form.

Stare can have many meanings depending on context. Here are a few of the most common: "to be, to stand, to lie, to be located," and "to be situated." Note: the direct equivalent of "to be" is *essere*.

Stare	
Italian	**"English"**
Io sto	"I am"
Tu stai	"You are"
Lui / lei sta	"He/she/it is"
Noi stiamo	"We are"
Voi state	"You are"
Loro stanno	"They are"

As you can clearly see, the informal way to ask "how are you" is to use the second person singular *tu*. When we want to use formal speech, we just have to switch to the next person lui / lei, thus creating a distance between speakers. So come sta can actually mean, "how are you," in formal speech, and "how is he/she?" in informal speech. The same happens for tu and lei (also written Lei).

When we hear lei, it can actually mean "her" in informal speech or "you" (both masculine and feminine) in formal speech. The context allows us to understand the meaning. Lui can only mean "him."

Cultural Insight

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Italian Greetings
Ciao!
"Hello/Goodbye"

Ciao is the general salutation we use to greet people, regardless of the time of the day. We may use this term as "hi" and "bye" (in any of its forms of valediction; goodbye, bye-bye, etc.) when we talk to people we are acquainted with.

Buongiorno vs. Buonasera

The usage of *buongiorno* vs. *buonasera* varies largely according to the city and region we live in. Generally, in southern and central Italy, Italians begin to use *buonasera* at around 7:00 pm, preferring the slowly fading *buonpomeriggio* for the afternoon time. This different perception is because they traditionally consume their larger meals later in the day than northern Italians, although this habit differs in larger cities. As a rule of thumb, we can start using *buonasera* instead of *buongiorno* after dusk.

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Do People Understand Where You're Coming From?

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Italian

Laura	Di dove è (Lei)?
John	Sono di New York. E Lei?
Laura	Sono di Milano.
Laura	È di Boston?
John	No, non sono di Boston, sono di New York. E Lei?
Laura	Sono di Milano.

English

Laura	Where are you from, sir?
John	I am from New York; and you, madam?
Laura	I am from Milan.
Laura	Sir, are you from Boston?
John	No, I am not from Boston; I am from New York; and you, madam?
Laura	I am from Milan.

Informal Italian

Laura	Di dove sei?
John	Sono di New York. E tu?
Laura	Sono di Milano.
Laura	Sei di Boston?
John	No, non sono di Boston, sono di New York. E tu?
Laura	Sono di Milano.

Informal English

Laura	Where are you from?
John	I am from New York; and you?
Laura	I am from Milan.

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Laura	Are you from Boston?
John	No, I am not from Boston; I am from New York; and you?
Laura	I am from Milan.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
di	of, some, by, from, about	preposition
dove	where	adverb
essere	to be	verb
no	no	adverb
non	not	adverb

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

La penna è di Luca.	"It's Luca's pen."
Di dove sei?	"Where are you from?"
Dove andiamo?	"Where are we going?"
Dove sei stato?	"Where have you been?"
Dove sei?	"Where are you?"
Dove abiti?	"Where do you live?"
Era una bella giornata.	"It was a beautiful day."
Questa estate è troppo calda.	"This summer is too hot."
Siamo italiani.	"We are Italians."
Dove sono Luigi e Laura?	"Where are Luigi and Laura?"
No, non sono di Roma.	No, I am not from Rome.
Non andare!	"Don't go!"
Non vengo con te.	"I'm not going with you."
No, non è di Londra.	"No, she isn't from London."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Talking About Origins in Italian
Di dove sei?
"Where are you from?"

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As we have seen, *di dove sei* is the perfect response to "where are you from?" It indicates the precise place where one comes from. One should answer with his home city or nearest important city in order to let the speaker easily understand.

We may also use *da dove vieni* (informal) or *da dove viene* (formal), which translates as "where do you come from?" However, while di dove sei requires a more specific location, we can answer this latter expression with our country of origin.

Example:

1. *Da dove vieni? Vengo dall'Italia.*
   "Where do you come from? I come from Italy."

We will delve into additional explanations of this expression and the verb *venire* (to come) in later lessons.

Di is a stationary preposition that we use with *essere*, while *da* is a preposition of movement that we use with verbs like *venire* that indicate movement from a location. Let us now look at the conjugation of the irregular verb essere, "to be."

essere	
Italian	**"English"**
Io sono	"I am"
Tu sei	"You are"
Lui / lei è	"He/she/it is"
Noi siamo	"We are'
Voi siete	"You are"
Loro sono	"They are"

As it is irregular, there are no shortcuts to learning this verb except to memorize it, sorry. The easiest method to memorize it is to do some written-verbs drills.

Notice in the dialogue di dove sei is translated as "where are you from," but there is no tu (Italian for "you"). This is because there is no need to specify, as sei can only indicate "you," in the second singular person. This is always the way it is in Italian unless we want to highlight the person clearly.

Let us look again at a very important aspect of the Italian language regarding formal speech. The

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informal way to ask, "where are you from" uses the second person singular tu. However, when we want to use formal speech, we just have to switch to the next person lui / lei, thus creating a distance between speakers. So di dove è can actually mean, "where are you from" in formal speech and "where is he/she from" in informal speech.

When negating a statement you should use the negative particle, "*no*" and *non* + verb. You can also skip the initial "no" and just answer with non + verb. For example, *non sono di Boston*.

Cultural Insight

When in Rome...

Rome is the capital of the current Italian nation. We say *current* because after the fall of the Roman Empire, Italy was divided into many small kingdoms, each one with their own capital. After reunifying in 1870, Rome became the new capital due to its universally recognized cultural and political importance. Its monuments and historical buildings are too numerous to mention here. In fact, we could view Rome as a single giant museum in which artists and architects have been working for 2,500 years! The city developed over time into many sub-cities, thus having many historical centers.

The comments regarding Rome's artistic and historical importance rightly extend to Venice as well. Its architectural style is less diverse and the city itself is a great deal smaller than Rome. The famous *ponti* (bridges) connect its small islands, thus creating a network of interlinked small neighborhoods that form the city itself. *Piazza San Pietro* (St. Peter Square) is a masterful example of how the Italian piazza is at the same time a social, religious, and political meeting place. In fact, it hosts Venice's cathedral, the *Palazzo dei Signori* (the Republic of Venice old town hall), as well as a broad open space where citizens and foreigners alike gather.

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Newbie Lesson

Capitalize on Italian Hospitality!

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Formal Italian

Laura Salve, è francese?
John No, non sono francese, sono americano. E Lei?
Laura Sono italiana.

Anna Di che nazionalità è?
Peter Sono australiano. E Lei?
Anna Sono Spagnola.

English

Laura Hello sir, are you French?
John No, I am not French; I am American, and you, madam?
Laura I am Italian.

Anna What nationality are you sir?
Peter I am Australian, and you madam?
Anna I am Spanish.

Informal Italian

Laura Ciao, sei francese?
John No, non sono francese, sono americano. E tu?
Laura Sono italiana.

Anna Di che nazionalità sei?
Peter Sono australiano. E tu?
Anna Sono spagnola.

Informal English

Laura Hello, are you French?
John No, I am not French; I am American, and you?
Laura I am Italian.

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Anna	What nationality are you?
Peter	I am Australian, and you?
Anna	I am Spanish.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
francese	French	adjective
americano	American	adjective
essere	to be	verb
nazionalità	nationality	noun
che	what	interrogative adjective
australiano	Australian	adjective
spagnolo	Spanish	adjective

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Mi piace il pane francese.	"I like French bread."
Sono francese.	I am French.
La mia amica è Americana.	"My friend is American."
Mike è americano.	Mike is American.
Era una bella giornata.	It was a beautiful day.
Questa estate è troppo calda.	This summer is too hot.
Siamo italiani.	We are Italians.
Dove sono Luigi e Laura?	"Where are Luigi and Laura?"
Di che nazionalità è Alessio?	"What nationality is Alessio?"
Di che nazionalità sei, Marco?	What nationality are you, Marco?
Che cosa fai?	What are you doing?
Che mangiamo oggi?	What are we gonna eat today?
No, non è australiano.	No, he isn't Australian.
Mia madre è spagnola.	"My mother is Spanish."
Sono spagnolo.	I am Spanish.
Lara è spagnola.	Lara is Spanish.

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Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Asking About Nationality in Italian
Ciao, sei francese?
"Hello, are you French?"

In the dialogues, we have seen how to ask one's nationality. The construction of *ciao, sei francese* is the same as "hello, are you French" with two exceptions. First, as we have seen in the previous lesson, there is no *tu* (Italian for "you"), because there is no need to specify the subject since sei can only indicate "you" in the second person singular tense. Second, when expressing nationalities, Italians do not use capital letters. Therefore, we can write *americano*, but not *Americano*, which would mean "the American (guy)," becoming an independent noun.

Italian does not use capitals as often as English does. Please, remember the following rules:

1. Write proper names (Luca, Laura), town names (Milano, Roma), countries, lakes, rivers, etc., with a capital letter
2. In headings or titles, only the first word has a capital letter and the rest of the title is in lower case. For example, *Il signore degli anelli* "The Lord of the Rings"
3. Days of the week, seasons, and months are always in lower case
4. You should always write words such as English, Italian, and Japanese (always in upper case in English) with a lower case letter in Italian: inglese, italiano, giapponese

In future lessons, we shall see Italian adjectives in more detail. For now, please remember two points:

1. Italian adjectives can have feminine, masculine, singular, or plural meanings. You will realize the difference by changing the ending
2. In the case of adjectives of nationality, there are only two types: one that follows both gender and number, and one that only follows number

Italian Adjectives		
Gender and Number	***Italian***	***French***
Masculine Singular	*italiano*	*francese*
Feminine Singular	*italiana*	*francese*
Masculine Plural	*italiani*	*francesi*
Feminine Plural	*italiane*	*francesi*

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Cultural Insight

Italian Hospitality

Hospitality is a common shared feature of the Italian culture. This tradition comes directly from ancient Greek heritage in which they considered guests a sacred gift from gods. Due to its geographic position and historical development, Italy has always been a "bridge" between different nations and cultures. The Republic of Venice, who for seven hundred years traded with and often fought against the Middle East empires, embodied this multinational perspective. Wherever we go, Italians are pleased to exhibit the extent of their hospitality, especially through dinner invitations. When accepting, we should bring a small present such as a bottle of wine to show our gratitude and appreciation. Offering home-cooked meals is the most common way for Italians to host us warmly in their homes. The only possible hindrance, if we wish to call it so, is that they will present us with large amounts of food, which we should not turn down. They might consider refusing to eat rude and impolite, particularly in southern and central Italy where people tend to offer feast-like banquets in honor of guests.

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Newbie Lesson

Age Restrictions Do Apply!

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Italian

Laura	Quanti anni ha?
John	Ho venticinque anni. E Lei?
Laura	Ho ventiquattro anni.

English

Laura	How old are you, sir?
John	I am twenty-five years old; and you, Miss?
Laura	I am twenty-four years old.

Informal Italian

Laura	Quanti anni hai?
John	Ho venticinque anni. E tu?
Laura	Ho ventiquattro anni.

Informal English

Laura	How old are you?
John	I am twenty-five years old; and you?
Laura	I am twenty-four years old.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
quanto	how much	adjective
quanti	how many	noun
anno	year	noun
anni	years	noun
avere	to have	verb

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Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Quanto costa questo fiore?	"How much does this flower cost?"
Quanto costa quello?	"How much is that?"
Quanto costano negli Usa?	"How much are they in the U.S.A.?"
Quanto costa una mela?	"How much does an apple cost?"
Quanto costa un panino?	"How much does a sandwich cost?"
Quanto pane mangi al giorno?	"How much bread do you eat in a day?"
Quanto costa?	"How much does it cost?"
Quanti anni hanno?	"How old are they?"
Quanti pantaloni hai?	"How many trousers do you have?"
Quanti anni avete?	How old are you?
Loro hanno trentadue anni.	"They are thirty-two years old."
Fra un anno sarò sicuramente sposato.	"In one year's time, I'll definitely be married."
L'anno prossimo.	"Next year."
Quanti anni ha Luca?	How old is Luca?
Ho un gatto nero.	"I have a black cat."
Hai venti anni?	Are you twenty years old?

Grammar Points

3

The Focus of This Lesson is Using the Verb *Avere* to Discuss Age in Italian
Quanti anni hai?
"How old are you?"

If we break down *quanti anni hai* we obtain "how many years do you have?" In English, we use the verb "to be" when indicating age, while in Italian we use *avere* (to have).

Let's look at its conjugation:

avere		
Person/Plurality	***Italian***	**"English Translation"**
First Person Singular	*Io ho*	"I have"
Second Person Singular	*Tu hai*	"You have"
Third Person Singular	*Lui/lei ha*	"He/she/it has"
First Person Plural	*Noi abbiamo*	"We have"
Second Person Plural	*Voi avete*	"You have"
Third Person Plural	*Loro hanno*	"They have"

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So you could literally translate the first dialogue as:

Italian **"English"**

Laura: *Quanti anni hai?* "How many years do you have?"

John: *Ho venticinque anni. E tu?* "I have twenty-five years; and you?"

Laura: *Ho ventiquattro anni.* "I have twenty-four years."

Please, remember this when using age.

Cultural Insight

Who Can You Ask About Age in Italy?

In Italy, asking about a woman's age is not very polite unless both speakers are females of roughly the same age. When speakers are young, let's say in their twenties, asking their age is not generally an issue, although we cannot be sure of anybody's age unless we ask. Therefore, it is often better to infer the age of a person in more subtle ways. For example, we could ask a woman about her studies at the university. We should avoid asking questions regarding marriage as well. When they are in their thirties and not yet married, Italian women feel hurt and take offense at these types of questions.

On the contrary, men tend to talk freely about their age. Common sense suggests not making certain comments with both females and males. For example, "you look older, I thought you were fifty," (when someone is actually thirty), or "time has not been forgiving with you."

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Newbie Lesson

How Many Cups of Espresso Have You Had?!?

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Informal Italian

Laura	Quanti anni ha Mike?
John	Mike ha ventisette anni.
Laura	Davvero?

Laura	Quanti anni hanno Mike e Laura?
John	Mike ha ventotto anni e Laura ventisei anni.
Laura	Giovani!

Informal English

Laura	How old is Mike?
John	Mike is twenty-seven years old.
Laura	Really?

Laura	How old are Mike and Laura?
John	Mike is twenty-eight and Laura is twenty-six years old.
Laura	Young!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
davvero	really, truly, indeed	adverb
giovane	young (singular)	adjective
giovani	young (plural)	adjective

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Hai davvero ventinove anni?	"Are you really twenty-nine years old?"
Ho davvero caldo!	"I'm really hot!"
Davvero stai bene?	"Are you really feeling well?"
Devo davvero andare.	"I really have to go."
Davvero?	"Really?"
Quando ero giovane giocavo a calcio.	"I used to play soccer when I was young."

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Sei giovane.	"You are young." (second person singular)
Siete giovani.	You are young. - 2nd person plural

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is the Gender and Number of Italian Nouns
Mike ha ventisette anni.
"Mike is twenty-seven years old."

Italian nouns have both gender (feminine and masculine) and number (singular and plural).

In the dialogue we see *anni* ("years"); its singular form is *anno* ("year"). Because it ends in -o, it is a masculine noun. Following is a scheme for defining the gender of Italian nouns according to their ending vowel.

Please take a look at the following table:

In their singular form, if Italian nouns end in:			
	Gender	**Examples**	**Notes**
-o	The majority of the nouns are masculine	*anno* (year), *tavolo* (table), *libro* (book)	Some nouns are feminine such as *mano* (hand)
-a	The majority of the nouns are feminine	*sedia* (chair), *giacca* (jacket), *tazza* (cup)	Some nouns are masculine such as *tema* (theme)
-e	About half of these nouns are masculine and half are feminine	**Masculine** examples: *pallone* (soccer ball), *dente* (tooth), *bicchiere* (glass) **Feminine** examples: *televisione* (television), *voce* (voice), *patente* (license)	

In their plural form, Italian nouns change ending following the rules below:

Rule 1- Singular -o changes to Plural -i for both genders.

Examples:

1. Masculine: *anni* (years), *tavoli* (tables), *libri* (books)

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Feminine: *mani* (hands)

Rule 2- Singular -a changes to Plural -i for masculine nouns, and -e for feminine nouns.

Examples:

1. Masculine plural -i: *temi* (themes)
2. Feminine plural -e: *sedie* (chairs), *giacche* (jackets), *tazze* (cups)

Rule 3- Singular -e becomes Plural -i for both genders.

1. Masculine: *palloni* (soccer balls), *denti* (teeth), *bicchieri* (glasses)
2. Feminine: *televisioni* (televisions), *voci* (voices), *patenti* (licenses)

So how do Italians know the difference between masculine and feminine nouns? Well, certainly by using them every day they know them by heart, but also because the Italian articles help them. We shall see the articles in our next lesson.

The Focus of This Lesson is the Gender and Number of Italian Adjectives
Quanti anni hanno Mike e Laura?
"How old are Mike and Laura?"

Because Italian nouns have gender and number, adjectives must also have them. This is because they follow nouns. In the dialogue, we see *quanti anni*, where the adjective quanto changes to its masculine plural form to match anno, in its plural form anni.

Cultural Insight

Now That's Espresso!

The English espresso coffee does not coincide with the Italian espresso commonly found in international, chain company Italian stores, such as Starbucks. They serve Italian espresso in

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small-sized ceramic cups and the quantity is very limited. However, what it lacks in quantity it more than makes up for in strength. An average, bar-served espresso contains enough caffeine to help us stay awake for a whole day and doctors advise not to drink more than two to three cups per day. Many Italians prefer to have a cappuccino for breakfast, which they serve in larger cups with foaming, warm milk. In both cases, Italians prefer to eat freshly made brioches (the equivalent of the French croissant) in the morning. They either enjoy the brioche plain, or with chocolate or jam in it.

Italians drink coffee at home also, both in the morning and after meals. They make their coffee with the *moka* coffee machine, invented in 1933 by the metalworker and inventor Alfonso Bialetti. *Moke* (plural form of the feminine noun moka) vary in size and capacity, ranging from one to twelve cups capacity, though the three-cup moke are the most frequently used. Since the coffee produced by the moka is less strong than the one found in bars, Italians tend to drink larger quantities at home. They often serve this kind of coffee with milk and biscotti (similar to cookies, but small in size) in the morning.

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Newbie Lesson

Fulfilling All Your Desires Begins Here!

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Italian

Laura	Vorrei una bottiglia di acqua minerale, per favore.
Barista	Certo, naturale o gassata?
Laura	Gassata, grazie.

English

Laura	I would like a bottle of mineral water, please.
Bartender	Certainly, natural or sparkling?
Laura	Sparkling, thank you.

Informal Italian

Luca	Mamma, voglio un gelato!
Mamma	OK OK, ecco! Contento?
Luca	Si.

Informal English

Luca	Mommy, I want an ice cream!
Mother	Okay, Okay, here you go! Happy?
Luca	Yes.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
volere	to want, wish, long, demand	verb
bottiglia	bottle	noun
di	of	preposition
acqua	water	noun
minerale	mineral	adjective
certo	certainly, sure	adverb
naturale	natural	adjective

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gassata	fizzy, carbonated	adjective
ecco	here it is	adverb
contento	happy, content	adjective

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Voleva solo salutarti.	"She just wanted to say hi."
Voglio comprare una macchina nuova.	"I want to buy a new car."
Volere la botte piena e la moglie ubriaca.	"To have your cake and eat it, too."
Vorrei un cappuccino, per favore.	"I'd like a cappuccino, please."
Vorrei una mela.	"I would like an apple."
Una bottiglia di vino.	A bottle of wine.
Una bottiglia di whisky.	A bottle of whisky.
Una bottiglia d'acqua.	A bottle of water.
Acqua minerale naturale.	Natural mineral water.
Certo, signore.	Certainly, sir.
Cibo naturale.	Natural food.
Acqua gassata.	Sparkling water.
Ecco a Lei.	Here you are, sir/madam.
Se vieni a casa la nonna sarà contenta.	"If you come home, grandmother will be happy."
Sono contento.	"I'm happy."
Paolo è contento.	"Paolo is happy."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Expressing Desires With *Vorrei*
Mamma, voglio un gelato!
"Mommy, I want an ice cream!"

Vorrei is the present conditional form of the verb *volere* meaning, "to want, to wish, to long, to demand," and so on. In this lesson, we will not see the conditional form in depth, but only the usage of vorrei.

Here is its conjugation in present conditional form:

Volere in Present Conditional Form		
Person/Plurality	***Italian Form***	**"English Translation"**

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First Person Singular	*Io vorrei*	"I would like"
Second Person Singular	*Tu vorresti*	"You would like"
Third Person Singular	*Lui / lei vorrebbe*	"He/she/it would like"
First Person Plural	*Noi vorremmo*	"We would like"
Second Person Plural	*Voi vorreste*	"You would like"
Third Person Plural	*Loro vorrebbero*	"They would like"

As you can see, when ordering something just for yourself you can use the first person singular vorrei. If you are ordering for more people, you should use the first person plural *vorremmo*.

For example:

1. *Vorremmo una bottiglia di vino.*
   "We would like a bottle of wine."

Never use *voglio* when ordering as it is not a polite way to ask. Just as in English, you would not say, "I want," when speaking with strangers. Instead you use *voglio* in the present indicative form in informal situations when, for example, we want to stress a real desire for something. Here are a few examples of this usage:

1. *Che regalo vuoi?*
   "What present do you want?"
2. *Voglio una pizza!*
   "I want a pizza!"

In the dialogue, we see Luca, a small boy whining to get an ice cream. In fact, it is rare to hear children using the more formal *vorrei* unless they are very well behaved and are talking to people that are not family.

Here is the conjugation of *volere* in present indicative form:

Volere in Present Indicative Form		
Person/Plurality	***Italian Form***	**"English Translation"**
First Person Singular	*Io voglio*	"I want"
Second Person Singular	*Tu vuoi*	"You want"
Third Person Singular	*Lui/lei vuole*	"He/she/it wants"
First Person Plural	*Noi vogliamo*	"We want"
Second Person Plural	*Voi volete*	"You want"

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Third Person Plural	*Loro vogliono*	"They want"

There is no need to remember these conjugations by heart immediately, as we shall see them again in the future. For now, try to grasp their usage and practice them. We suggest you do some verbs-drills for now writing short, full sentences that are meaningful to you.

The Focus of This Lesson is How to Make Your Requests More Polite
Vorrei una bottiglia di acqua minerale, per favore.
"I would like a bottle of mineral water, please."

As we have seen in the dialogue, *per favore* means "please" and we use this phrase when requesting something. When coupled with *vorrei*, it makes the request more courteous. We can use it in any form of speech.

Also, *per piacere* has the same meaning but is more informal. Instead, *per cortesia* is very formal and slightly old-fashioned.

Cultural Insight

Bottled Water Consumption in Italy

Few people know that Italians were the first European consumers of bottled mineral water. Although drinkable water is available almost everywhere in Italy, except in certain southern areas during summer time, Italians seem to prefer bottled water for their daily consumption. This is because the bottled water mineral composition varies according to its workmanship. Therefore, manufacturers can better design bottled water to accommodate customers' needs.

The Italians have such a deep fondness for bottled mineral water that they produced an independent presentation at the *Biennial Exhibition of Modern Art in Venice* in 2005. Here, the Italian scientist Masaru Emoto demonstrated not only its healthy virtues, but also its artistic beauty by creating geometric, balanced patterns within frozen water crystals.

The most popular bottled water brands in Italy are San Benedetto, San Pellegrino, Sant'Anna, and Panna. As you probably noticed, many brands are named after saints. This is because the springs they take the water from are generally located in mountains that bear the names of Italian saints.

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Newbie Lesson

A Gender Mistake You Can't Afford to Make!

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Informal Italian

Laura	John vuoi una mela?
John	Si grazie. Tu vuoi un panino?
Laura	No grazie, sono piena.
John	Vuoi un bicchiere di vino?
Laura	Si grazie.

Informal English

Laura	John, would you like an apple?
John	Yes, thank you. Do you want a sandwich/panino?
Laura	No thanks, I'm full.
John	Do you want a glass of wine?
Laura	Yes, thank you.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
una	a, an	indefinite article
mela	apple	noun
un	a, an	indefinite article
piena	full	adjective
bicchiere	glass	noun
vino	wine	noun
panino	sandwich, panino	noun

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Esco con una mia amica.	"I'm going out with a friend of mine."
Voglio una pesca	"I want a peach."
Ho mangiato una mela verde.	"I ate a green apple."
La mela verde.	"The green apple."
Francesco Totti è un calciatore.	Francesco Totti is a soccer player.
La scatola è piena.	The box is full.

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La bottiglia è piena.	The bottle is full.
Due bicchieri di vino rosso.	"Two glasses of red wine."
Vorrei un bicchiere di Coca-Cola.	"I'd like a glass a Coke."
Una bottiglia di vino bianco.	"A bottle of white wine."
Mi piacciono molto i panini italiani.	"I like Italian sandwiches very much."
Mangio un panino.	I eat a sandwich.
Il panino al prosciutto crudo.	The sandwich with Parma Ham.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Italian Indefinite Articles
John vuoi una mela?
"John, would you like and apple?"

As in English, there are also articles in Italian. They can be singular, plural, masculine, or feminine just as the nouns we have seen in the last lesson. This is because they are bound to nouns and must therefore agree with their gender and number.

This is bad news because it gives us more things to remember. However, it is also good news because, as we shall see, the articles help us understand what gender and number the following nouns are.

There are two main kinds of articles. Indefinite articles have broadly the same meaning as the English "a" and "an." Definite articles correspond to "the." We shall see the latter ones in a following lesson.

Indefinite articles (see rules below)

Construction (Following Noun Begins with...)	Masculine	Feminine
Consonant	*un libro*	*una mela*
Vowel	*un abito*	*un'amica*
-y, -z, -x, -ps, -gn, or -s + consonant	*uno yogurt*	*una sedia*
-i + other vowel	*uno iettatore*	

Rule 1- Use un before masculine nouns starting with:

1. A consonant: *un libro* ("a book")
2. A vowel: *un abito* ("a dress")

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Rule 2- Use uno before masculine nouns starting with:

1. -y, -z, -x, -ps, -gn, or -s + consonant: *uno yogurt* ("a yogurt"), *uno zio* ("an uncle"), *uno stagno* ("a pond"), *uno gnomo* ("a gnome"), *uno psichiatra* ("a psychiatrist"), *uno pneumatico* ("a tire")
2. -i + another vowel: *uno iettatore* ("a jinx")

Rule 3- Use una before all feminine nouns starting with:

1. A consonant: *una mela* ("an apple"), *una sedia* ("a chair")

Rule 4- Use un' before all feminine nouns starting with:

1. A vowel: *un'amica* ("a female friend")

Italian foreignisms (words adopted from foreign languages) normally fall under the masculine category, with few exceptions. One last important point is that since indefinite articles refer to an unspecified nouns category, you can never use them with proper nouns, such as Laura and John.

Cultural Insight

Italian *vigneti*

Italian *vigneti* ("vineyards") spread throughout the entirety of the Italian territory and are often hundreds of years old. Although before the Second World War they used to be family-run businesses, this situation has been changing over the last half a century. Due to the growth of worldwide Italian wine consumption, some popular wine companies have grown into International companies with an international-based approach to business. Notwithstanding this trend, many Italian companies still entrust their business to the new generations and develop unique techniques to produce wine. They normally keep these operating procedures secret since a wine's flavor uniqueness springs from both the territory's traits and the aforementioned techniques.

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Apart from the most common white and red wines, Italians produce another kind of wine, which is pink in color. You can find this *rosato* ("pinkish") wine in every Italian region and with different kinds of wine qualities.

Although we can find many different varieties of wine in every bar and restaurant, Italian wine connoisseurs prefer to drink at *enoteche* (literally, "collection of wine" and by extension "wine shops"). The enoteche offer an impressive selection of Italian and international wine of any aging and they are usually more expensive than bars and restaurants.

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Informal Italian

Laura	John vorrei il panino al prosciutto.
John	Eccolo. Io voglio la panna cotta.
Laura	Sei un goloso!

Informal English

Laura	John, I would like to have the ham sandwich.
John	Here it is. I want panna cotta (literally, baked cream).
Laura	Oh, you are a gluttonous one!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
panino	sandwich, panino	noun
Eccolo	Here it is	expression
la	the (feminine singular)	article
il	the (masculine singular)	article
panna cotta	panna cotta (lit. baked cream)	noun
goloso	gluttonous	adjective
prosciutto	ham	noun

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Mi piacciono molto i panini italiani.	"I like Italian sandwiches very much."
Mangio un panino.	I eat a sandwich.
Il panino al prosciutto crudo.	The sandwich with Parma Ham.
Mi passi il Parmigiano per favore? Certo, eccolo!	Pass me the Parmesan cheese please? Sure, here it is!
La mattina bevo il caffé.	In the morning I drink coffee.
La casa rossa.	The red house.

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Il pavimento è sporco.	"The floor is dirty."
Il fine giustifica i mezzi	The end justifies the means
Il prosciutto cotto è quello rosa.	Prosciutto cotto / cured ham is the pink one.
La panna cotta è un dolce italiano.	Panna cotta is an Italian dessert.
Luca è goloso.	Luca is gluttonous.
La pizza prosciutto e funghi è molto comune.	"Ham and mushroom pizza is very popular."
Il prosciutto cotto è buono.	Ham is good.
Il prosciutto è buono.	Prosciutto is good.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Singular Definite Articles
John vorrei il panino al prosciutto.
"John, I would like to have the ham sandwich."

As mentioned in our previous lesson, definite articles correspond to the English counterpart "the." As in English, we use these articles to identify one or more specific nouns which are inferred either from the context (including the unseen elements such as body language) or from the dialogue itself.

As for the indefinite articles, since proper nouns are already very specific, they do not follow any kind of articles. To say "the John" or "a John" would not make any sense since there can be only one individual named John.

Definite Italian articles observe the following scheme in their singular form. See the rules that follow:

Construction (Before a noun that ends in...)	Masculine	Feminine
Before consonant	*il cane*	*la ragazza*
Before vowel	*l'albero*	*l'uva*
Before -z, -y, or -s + consonant	*lo zaffirolo, lo studente, lo yogurt*	*la strada*

Rule 1- Use il before masculine nouns starting with:

1. A consonant: *il cane* ("the dog")

Rule 2- Use l + apostrophe before masculine nouns starting with:

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1. A Vowel: *l'albero* ("the tree")

Rule 3- Use lo before masculine nouns starting with:

1. Use before -z, -y, or -s + consonant: *lo zaffiro* ("the sapphire"), *lo studente* ("the student"), *lo yogurt* ("the yogurt").

Rule 4- Use la before feminine nouns starting with:

1. A consonant: *la ragazza* ("the girl"), *la strada* ("the road")

Rule 5- Use l + apostrophe before feminine nouns starting with:

1. A vowel: *l'uva* ("the grapes")

4

Cultural Insight

Picnicking in Italy

Many Italians love to spend time outdoors and having a picnic with friends is usually a good occasion. Roughly, the best time of year to have a picnic with friends starts in early April and ends in late September. In southern Italy, this time period is usually longer providing that the weather is sufficiently warm and sunny to allow it (which is normally the case).

Italians rarely if ever, renounce the pleasure of having good meals, and going for a picnic makes no exception. Women usually prepare either a packed lunch or proper courses in advance to bring with them for such occasions, while men take care of the logistics and physical labor involved. Normally, a picnic will include healthy sports or activities, such as hiking or bike riding, before or after eating.

Easter Monday picnics deserve a special mention. This is an emotional occurrence, which takes place

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the day after Easter. A large part of the population carefully plans their outdoor trips far in advance. Mountains and shores are highly regarded destinations for Easter picnics. Many Italians wake up quite early in order to be able to reach these areas without being stuck in the long, rather unique Easter traffic jams!

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Newbie Lesson

We Have To Share What?

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Informal Italian

Laura	John, shhh! Guarda gli scoiattoli!
John	È vero! Guarda i piccoli scoiattoli.
Laura	Sono così carini!

Informal English

Laura	John, shhh! Look, the squirrels!
John	It's true! Look baby squirrels.
Laura	They are so cute!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
gli	the (masculine plural)	article
scoiattoli	squirrels	noun
vero	true	adjective
i	the (masculine plural)	article
piccoli	babies	noun
così	so, that, like this	adverb
carini	cute	adjective
guardare	to look, watch	verb

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Gli uccelli.	The birds.
Gli scoiattoli sono carini.	The squirrels are cute.
È vero che hai vinto il torneo?	"Is it true you won the tournament?"
Vero o falso?	"True or false?"
I piatti sono sporchi.	"The dishes are dirty."
I piccoli di scoiattolo.	The squirrel's babies.
È così.	"It's like this."
Che carini!	How cute!
Guardiamo un film italiano?	"Shall we watch an Italian movie?"

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Non guardare!	"Don't look!"
Guardo un film.	"I watch a movie."
Guardi la tv?	"Are you watching TV?"

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Plural Definite Articles
Guarda gli scoiattoli!
"Look, the squirrels!"

As mentioned in our previous lesson, definite articles correspond to the English counterpart "the." Today we shall see the plural form.

Plural definite articles (see rules below):

Construction (Before Nouns Starting with...)	Masculine	Feminine
Before consonant	*i ragazzi*	*le camicie*
Before vowel	*gli unicorni*	*le unghie*
Before -z, -y, or -s + consonant	*gli zerbini, gli scoiattoli*	*le zanzare, le scale*

Rule 1- Use *i* before masculine nouns starting with:

1. A Consonant*: i ragazzi* ("the boys")

Rule 2- Use *gli* before masculine nouns starting with:

1. A vowel: *gli unicorni* ("the unicorns")
2. -z: *gli zerbini* ("the doormats")
3. -s + consonant: *gli scoiattoli* ("the squirrels")

Rule 3- Use *le* for every feminine noun, regardless of the starting letter.

1. Feminine nouns: *le camicie* ("the shirts"), *le unghie* ("the fingernails"), *le zanzare* ("the mosquitoes"), *le scale* ("the stairs")

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One difference between the Italian and English languages is that in the former we often employ "substantive adjectives," which are adjectives we use as stand-alone nouns. We normally use substantive adjectives when we take one quality of the subject and elect it to be a temporary or permanent synonym of the subject (which can be both an animate or inanimate object) we refer to. For example, assume we have a group of five people and only one of them has blonde-hair. We could say *il biondo* ("the blonde one") since the context clarifies we can identify just one person.

These adjectives follow all the grammatical rules concerning nouns, thus they can be masculine or feminine, singular or plural; they can be preceded by articles, and so on.

Cultural Insight

Italian Parks

There are many parks in Italy where you can spend an afternoon enjoying a picnic or enjoying a family gathering. You can often find up to four generations sharing the same meal under the warm sun. Grandmothers usually spend most of the previous day preparing delicious food for their families. Usually after the meal, the youngsters play soccer, volleyball, or other sports. After a few hours, teenagers usually fret to go meet with their friends and girl or boyfriends, so the group starts to get smaller.

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Newbie Lesson

But I Just Paid My Credit Card Bill!

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Italian

John	Mi scusi, quanto costa questa maglietta?
Commessa	Costa quindici euro.
John	E quanto costano questi pantaloni?
Commesso	I pantaloni costano venti euro.
John	La ringrazio, li compro entrambi.

English

John	Excuse me, how much does this t-shirt cost?
Sales clerk	It costs fifteen euros.
John	And how much do these pants cost?
Sales clerk	The pants cost twenty euros.
John	Thank you, madam. I'll purchase them both.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
quanto	how much	adjective
costare	to cost	verb
questa	this (feminine singular)	demonstrative adjective
pantaloni	pants (British English pair of trousers)	noun
comprare	to buy, to get	verb
acquistare	to buy, to purchase	verb
entrambi	both (masculine plural)	pronoun
maglietta	t-shirt	noun

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Quanto costa questo fiore?	"How much does this flower cost?"
Quanto costa quello?	"How much is that?"
Quanto costano negli Usa?	"How much are they in the U.S.A.?"
Quanto costa una mela?	"How much does an apple cost?"

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Quanto costa un panino?	"How much does a sandwich cost?"
Quanto pane mangi al giorno?	"How much bread do you eat in a day?"
Quanto costa?	"How much does it cost?"
Questo libro costa dodici euro.	"This book costs twelve euros."
Questi stivali costano duecento cento euro.	"These boots cost two hundred euros."
La giacca costa cento euro.	"The jacket costs one hundred euros."
Quanto costa quello?	"How much is that?"
Questa è la mia borsa.	"This is my bag."
Questa casa è grande.	"This house is big."
Questa sera.	"This evening."
I pantaloni sono long.	"The pants are long."
Peter ha comprato un iPhone.	"Peter bought an iPhone."
Voi acquistate bei vestiti.	"You purchase nice clothing."
Siete entrambi carini.	"You are both good-looking."
Compro una maglietta nuova.	"I buy a new t-shirt."
Quella maglietta ti sta bene.	"That t-shirt suits you."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Present Indicative Tense of First Conjugation Verbs.
Mi scusi, quanto costa questa maglietta?
"Excuse me, how much does this t-shirt cost?"

The verb *costare* ("to cost") works in Italian exactly like its English equivalent; we conjugate it according to the gender and number of the noun it refers to.

John asks the clerk about the cost of a *maglietta* ("t-shirt," feminine singular noun) using *costa*, the third singular person of the verb *costare* in the present indicative tense. When he refers to *pantaloni* ("pants," masculine plural noun), he uses *costano*, the third person plural of the verb *costare*.

The following is the conjugation of *comprare*, an *-are* verb, in the *presente indicativo* tense.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
io compro	"I buy"
tu compri	"you buy"
lui/lei compra	"he/she buys"

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noi compriamo	"we buy"
voi comprate	"you buy"
loro comprano	"they buy"

We form the *presente indicativo* conjugation by taking the verb's stem (that is what we are left with when we take out the ending *-are* of the infinitive) and adding the endings presented in the scheme above.

We may employ an alternative structure to ask for goods' price as follows:

For Example:

1. *Qual'è il prezzo di quella maglietta?*
   Literally, "What is the price of that t-shirt?"

We use this second option less frequently.

In very formal Italian, we prefer to employ the synonym *acquistare* (which corresponds to "to purchase" in English).

Cultural Insight

Tips for Your Italian Shopping Spree

Shopping in Italy is for most tourists a leisure activity, which we have to address according to our individual needs. When we look for average quality goods at reasonable prices, we should avoid purchasing them in shops that are in or close to cities' centers. Generally speaking, we can buy the exact same product in other stores located in cities' suburbs or nearby districts, unless we are specifically looking for particular products (such as an Armani suit, for instance). Shops in Florence, Venice, Rome, and many other tourist cities overprice their products by a great deal.

Contrary to what happens in other countries (such as the United States), in Italy we can negotiate the price of goods to a certain extent. Particularly in central and southern Italy, Italians always try to get even a minor discount whenever they spend what they deem to be a great deal of money. There is not a

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general rule that we can apply in every circumstance; common sense and some experience are the most valuable parameters we should rely upon. For example, it would seem strange to ask for a discount when we plan to buy a pamphlet that costs four Euros. The situation is clearly different when we spend five hundred Euros on various pieces of clothing in a store.

In Italy, we have two main end-of-season sale periods. The first one comes right after Christmas vacations, starting roughly on January 7 and ending on January 31. The second one takes place during the summer, between August 15 and September 10. The starting and ending dates of those periods vary from region to region and are regulated by the Italian government, which establishes fixed periods for sales and fines those who do not respect them.

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Newbie Lesson

Oh…Just a Little "This" and "That"!

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Informal Italian

Laura	John, questa maglietta è nuova?
John	Si, bella vero? Anche questo cappello è nuovo.
Laura	Davvero? Bello. Anche questa camicia è nuova?
John	No, questa camicia è vecchia.

Informal English

Laura	John, is this t-shirt new?
John	Yes, nice, right? This hat is also new.
Laura	Really? Nice. Is the shirt also new?
John	No, this shirt is old.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
questa	this (feminine singular)	demonstrative adjective
nuova	new (feminine singular)	adjective
bella	nice, beautiful (feminine singular)	adjective
questo	this (masculine singular)	demonstrative adjective
camicia	shirt	noun
cappello	hat	noun
vecchia	old (feminine singular)	adjective

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Questa è la mia borsa.	"This is my bag."
Questa casa è grande.	"This house is big."
Questa sera.	"This evening."
Una casa nuova.	"A new house."
Una bella ragazza.	"A nice-looking girl."
Questo è un fiore.	"This is a flower."
Questo libro è interessante.	"This book is interesting."
Questo panino.	"This sandwich."

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Quella camicia è molto bella.	"That shirt is very nice."
La camicia è pulita.	"The shirt is clean."
Un cappello nero.	"A black hat."
Una casa vecchia.	"An old house."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Singular Form of the Demonstrative Adjective *Questo* ("This").
John, questa maglietta è nuova?
"John, is this t-shirt new?"

In today's lesson, we shall learn how to use one item of a category of Italian adjectives named demonstrative adjectives. As with every Italian adjective, the demonstrative ones also have to agree with the nouns they refer to in both gender and number and cannot stand alone (in some occurrences, we could also use them as pronouns, but we will discuss them in the advanced courses). What we shall see today is only the singular forms (both masculine and feminine) of the demonstrative adjective *questo*, whose English equivalent is "this."

Construction	Masculine Singular	Feminine Singular
Before consonant	*questo cane*	*questa ragazza*
Before vowel	*questo albero*	*quest'unghia*
Before *-z*, *-y*, or *-s* + a consonant	*questo zaffiro* *questo yogurt* *questo scandalo*	*questa strada*

Use *questo* before masculine nouns starting with a consonant, starting with a vowel, and starting with *-z* , *-y*, or *-s* + a consonant.

For Example:

Italian	"English"
questo cane	"this dog"
questo albero	"this tree"
questo zaffiro	"this sapphire"
questo yogurt	"this yogurt"
questo scandalo	"this scandal"

Also use *questo* with rare nouns starting with *gn-*.

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For Example:

Italian	"English"
gnomo	"dwarf"
questo gnomo	"this dwarf"

Use *questa* before feminine nouns starting with a consonant and starting with -*z*, -*y*, or -*s* + a consonant.

For Example:

Italian	"English"
questa ragazza	"this girl"
questa strada	"this road"

Use *quest'* before feminine nouns starting with a vowel.

For Example:

Italian	"English"
quest'unghia	"this fingernail"

Although you always need to use *quest'* with a feminine noun starting with a vowel, with masculine nouns starting with a vowel, both *quest'* and *questo* are possible.

For Example:

Italian	"English"
questo alunno, *quest'alunno*	"this pupil"

We can use this category of adjectives to refer to three different dimensions of the discourse: space, time, and ideas (the latter includes other discourses). When we use them in spatial and temporal terms, they work exactly like its English equivalent, "this," and bear the meaning of something close to the speaker or the writer.

For Example:

Italian	"English"
questo libro	"this book"
quest'estate	"this summer"

However, when we mention ideas and past discourses (both spoken and written), in Italian we often use

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questo, *questi* ("this," "these") rather than *quello*, *quelli* ("that" and "those").

It will suffice to quote the Italian translation of Hamlet's famous monologue: "To be or not to be, that (*quello*) is the question": *Essere o non essere, questo* ("this") *è il problema*.
This is due to the different unconscious perception of reality; in English, ideas and past discourses are felt as distant from the subject, while in Italian they are more often personified and rendered close to the speaker (or writer).

Cultural Insight

How to Dress to Impress in Italy

Italian customs regarding the most appropriate garments to wear at work have changed over the last twenty years, and the situation is presently quite diversified. Many business companies, even international corporations, do not require their employees to wear a suit or a similar garment while at work. Italian fashion has suggested an alternative: mixed style. People often freely combine casual, classic, and contemporary innovations. Seeing an employee who wears the upper part of a suit along with a pair of jeans and classic leather shoes would not cause a negative reaction from an employer.

However, there are certain business sectors that maintain a more traditional approach to this matter. These companies normally set a common standard for their employees, suggesting either the use of suits and ties or sometimes even standardized uniforms. Banks, financial corporations, and public offices fall under this category.

Female workers tend to always be better dressed than males. They often wear boots and shoes with high heels and fashionable clothing in every working environment.

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Newbie Lesson

Don't Let Them Give You the Boot!

13

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Italian

Laura	Mi scusi, quanto costano queste scarpe nere?
Commesso	Costano centocinquanta euro, signorina.
Laura	Umm... E questi sandali marroni?
Commesso	I sandali costano ottantatre euro.
Laura	Va bene, grazie. Ci vorrei pensare un po'.

English

Laura	Excuse me, how much do these black shoes cost?
Shop clerk	They cost one hundred and fifty euros, Miss.
Laura	Ooh...and these brown sandals?
Shop clerk	The sandals cost eighty-three euros.
Laura	Okay, thank you. I'd like to think about it.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
quanto	how much	adjective
costare	to cost	verb
queste	these (feminine plural)	demonstrative adjective
scarpe	shoes (feminine plural)	noun
nere	black (feminine plural)	adjective
questi	these (masculine plural)	demonstrative adjective
sandali	sandals (masculine plural)	noun
marroni	brown (masculine plural)	adjective

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Quanto costa questo fiore?	"How much does this flower cost?"
Quanto costa quello?	"How much is that?"
Quanto costano negli Usa?	"How much are they in the U.S.A.?"
Quanto costa una mela?	"How much does an apple cost?"
Quanto costa un panino?	"How much does a sandwich cost?"

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Quanto pane mangi al giorno?	"How much bread do you eat in a day?"
Quanto costa?	"How much does it cost?"
Questo libro costa dodici euro.	"This book costs twelve euros."
Questi stivali costano duecento cento euro.	"These boots cost two hundred euros."
La giacca costa cento euro.	"The jacket costs one hundred euros."
Quanto costa quello?	"How much is that?"
Queste arance.	"These oranges."
Le scarpe italiane.	"Italian shoes."
Le olive nere.	"Black olives."
Questi pomodori.	"These tomatoes."
I sandali di cuoio.	"Leather sandals."
Gli occhi marroni.	"Brown eyes."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Plural Forms of the Demonstrative Adjective *Questo*.
Umm... E questi sandali marroni?
"Ooh... And these brown sandals?"

In today's lesson, we will learn how to use the plural forms of the demonstrative adjective *questo* ("this") previously seen in the twelfth Newbie lesson.

As the demonstrative adjectives have to agree with the nouns they refer to in both gender and number, we will learn today the masculine and the feminine plural forms, whose English equivalent is "these."

Construction	Masculine Plural	Feminine Plural
Before consonant	*questi stivali*	*queste ciabatte*
Before vowel	*questi accessori*	*queste isole*

Use *questi* before any masculine, plural noun either starting with a consonant or a vowel.

For Example:

Italian	"English"
questi mocassini	"these moccasins"
questi zoccoli	"these clogs"
questi stivali	"these boots"
questi accessori	"these accessories"

Use *queste* before any feminine, plural noun either starting with a consonant or a vowel.

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For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
queste ciabatte	"these slippers"
queste isole	"these islands"

Cultural Insight

The Italian Foot Fetish

Italians, and especially Italian women, love shoes and it is not unusual to hear about people having even twenty or more pairs of them. As a matter of fact, there is a very long shoe manufacturing tradition in Italy, and people worldwide recognize the high quality and design of Italian shoes. Like clothing, shoes do play an important role in the outfit Italians choose for any occasion of their daily life and one of the rules is that they should match in color and style with either the belt or the bag.

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Newbie Lesson

How Can You Get the Best of Italy?

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Formal Italian

Salumiere	Buongiorno, prego?
Laura	Vorrei un etto e mezzo di quel prosciutto cotto, per favore.
Salumiere	Altro?
Laura	Sì. Quell'insalata di mare è fresca?
Salumiere	Ma certo, signora!
Laura	Allora anche due etti di insalata, per favore.
Salumiere	Ecco a Lei.

English

Butcher	Good afternoon. How can I help you?
Laura	I'd like one hundred and fifty grams of that cured ham, please.
Salumiere	Anything else?
Laura	Yes. Is that seafood salad fresh?
Salumiere	Of course, madam!
Laura	Then also two hundred grams of salad, please.
Salumiere	Here you are.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
etto	one hundred grams	noun
prosciutto	ham	noun
cotto	cured, cooked (masculine singular)	adjective
insalata di mare	seafood salad	noun
signora	madam, lady, misses	noun
fresca	fresh (feminine singular)	adjective
allora	so, then, at that time	adverb
anche	too, also, as well	conjunction
ecco	here, here it is, here you are	adverb

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Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Un etto di parmiggiano.	"One hundred grams of Parmesan cheese."
La pizza prosciutto e funghi è molto comune.	"Ham and mushroom pizza is very popular."
Il prosciutto cotto è buono.	"Ham is good."
Il prosciutto è buono.	"Prosciutto is good."
Il prosciutto cotto è in frigorifero.	"The cured ham is in the refrigerator."
Preparo un'insalata di mare.	"I make a seafood salad."
Come si chiama signora?	"What's your name, Madame?"
Quella signora è francese.	"That lady is French."
Aria fresca.	"Fresh air."
Allora come si chiama?	"So what's his name?"
Allora andiamo a pranzo insieme?	"Then are we going to lunch together?"
Allora, dove andiamo?	"So, where do we go?"
Anche tu vieni al concerto?	"Are you also coming to the concert?"
Anche a te piace la pasta?	"Do you also like pasta?"
Viene anche Luigi.	"Luigi comes too."
Una Coca Cola, prego. Ecco.	"A Coke, please. Here you are."
Ecco il treno!	"Here's the train!" or "There's the train"

Grammar Points

3

The Focus of This Lesson Is Distinguishing Demonstrative Adjectives.
Vorrei un etto e mezzo di quel prosciutto cotto, per favore.
"I'd like one hundred and fifty grams of that cured ham, please."

In today's lesson, we will learn how to use the singular forms of the demonstrative adjective *quel* ("that"), not to be confused with *questo* ("this") that we have previously seen. As the demonstrative adjectives have to agree with the nouns they refer to in both gender and number, today we shall cover the masculine and the feminine singular forms, whose English equivalent would be "that."

Construction	**Masculine Singular**	**Feminine Singular**
Before consonant	*quel quadro*	*quella porta*
Before *-y*, *-z*, *-x*, *-ps*, *-gn*, and *-s* + consonant	*quello stereo*	*quella stella*
Before vowel	*quell' albero*	*quell' alunno*

Use *quel* before a masculine, singular noun starting with a consonant.

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For Example:

Italian	"English"
quel quadro	"that painting"
quel giorno	"that day"

Use *quello* before a masculine, singular noun starting with *-y*, *-z*, *-x*, *-ps*, *-gn*, or *-s* + a consonant.

Italian	"English"
quello zaino	"that backpack"
quello xilofono	"that xylophone"
quello psicologo	"that psychologist"
quello stereo	"that stereo"

Use *quell'* before a singular feminine or masculine noun starting with a vowel.

Italian	"English"
quell'albero	"that tree"
quell' isola	"that island"

Use *quella* before any singular feminine noun starting with a consonant.

Italian	"English"
quella stella	"that star"
quella porta	"that door"
quella zattera	"that raft"

Cultural Insight

Think Global, Shop Local in Italy

In spite of the big number of supermarkets that grow bigger and bigger as globalization moves in where it is possible to buy all sorts of goods, Italians still like to do their food shopping at the small retailers' shops close to their houses. Every town and every quarter of bigger cities count a remarkable number of bakeries, greengrocers, butchers, and fishmongers shops, just to name a few, where Italians enjoy going on their daily errands. These shops are usually a bit more expensive than supermarkets,

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but they are conveniently located just next door and offer more of an at-home atmosphere compared to supermarkets. Another popular shopping place for Italian mothers is the weekly outdoor markets, because they are usually very cheap and fun to go even just for a stroll. Delicatessens, on the other hand, are more of a urban shopping option: they normally sell delicacies and are therefore quite pricy.

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Newbie Lesson

Don't Let Your Italian Dream Become a Nightmare!

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Informal Italian

Luca	Mamma, voglio quel pallone!
Mamma	Ecco.
Luca	Voglio anche quei giocattoli!
Mamma	Ecco. Contento adesso?
Luca	No! Voglio anche quelle macchinine!
Mamma	OK OK, ma poi basta!
Luca	Sì.

Informal English

Luca	Mommy, I want that ball!
Mamma	Here you go.
Luca	I want those toys, too!
Mamma	Here you go. Happy now?
Luca	No! I also want those toy cars!
Mamma	Okay, okay, but that's it!
Luca	Yes.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
pallone	ball	noun
anche	too, as well, also	conjunction
giocattoli	toys	noun
contento	happy, content	adjective
adesso	now	adverb
macchinine	toy cars (femminine singular)	noun (diminutive)

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

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Un pallone nuovo.	"A new ball."
Anche io.	"Me too."
Luca ha tanti giocattoli.	"Luca has a lot of toys."
Se vieni a casa la nonna sarà contenta.	"If you come home, grandmother will be happy."
Sono contento.	"I'm happy."
Paolo è contento.	"Paolo is happy."
Adesso scrivo un'e-mail.	"Now I write an e-mail."
Adesso piove.	"It is raining now."
Gigi gioca con le macchinine.	"Gigi plays with toy cars."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Plural Forms of the Demonstrative Adjective *Quello*.
Voglio anche quei giocattoli!
"I want those toys, too!"

In today's lesson, we will learn how to use the plural forms of the demonstrative adjective *quello* ("that") we saw previously in Newbie lessons. As the demonstrative adjectives have to agree with the nouns they refer to in both gender and number, we will learn today the masculine and the feminine plural forms, whose English equivalent would be "those."

Construction	Masculine Plural	Feminine Plural
Before consonant	*quei libri*	*quelle donne*
Before *-y*, *-z*, *-x*, *-ps*, *-gn*, and *-s* + consonant	*quegli sbagli*	*quelle scarpe*
Before vowel	*quegli occhiali*	*quelle uova*

Use *quei* before a masculine, plural noun starting with a consonant.

For Example:

Italian	"English"
quei libri	"those books"
quei giocattoli	"those toys"

Use *quegli* before a masculine, plural noun starting with *-z*, *-x*, *-y*, *-ps*, *-gn*, or *-s* + a consonant or starting with a vowel.

For Example:

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Italian	"English"
quegli sbagli	"those mistakes"
quegli anelli	"those rings"
quegli uomini	"those men"

Use *quelle* before any feminine, plural noun either starting with a consonant or a vowel.

For Example:

Italian	"English"
quelle donne	"those women"
quelle uova	"those eggs"

Cultural Insight

Can You Tell Me an Italian Nursery Rhyme?

In Italy, most of the traditional nursery rhymes *(filastrocche)* and songs for children are not in official Italian, but in one of the many regional dialects-mainly used in small communities or in the home-that have been handed down orally. Yet, in many regions, the use of dialect is declining even within the family, so the collective memory of these traditional *filastrocche* and songs in dialect risks fading with it.

Due to regional dialects and different cultural settings, Italian children do not all grow up knowing and loving the same nursery rhymes. However, many of them do exist in more or less similar versions in different dialects (and some in other European languages). The majority of Italian *filastrocche* reflect the Christian tradition (many of them are about the holy family or the infant Jesus), other, more obscurely and symbolically, reflect pre-Christian rites (the magic, the labyrinth, the tarots, the spirit of nature), the cycle of life (birth, marriage, and death) and of the year (seasons, harvest, Lent, Carnival, etc.).

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Newbie Lesson

One Missing Ingredient Can Ruin the Whole Italian Dish!

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Informal Italian

Laura	Io compro queste tazze e questi bicchieri. E tu?
John	Vorrei comprare quella tovaglia e quei piatti ma...
Laura	Ma cosa?
John	Ma...Questo negozio è troppo caro!
Laura	Ah! E non compri nulla?!
John	No, questa volta no...

Informal English

Laura	I'll buy these mugs and these glasses. And you?
John	I'd like to buy that tablecloth and those dishes but...
Laura	But what?
John	But...this store is too expensive!
Laura	Ah! So you are not buying anything?!
John	Nope, not this time...

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
tazze	mugs	noun
bicchieri	glasses	noun
tovaglia	tablecloth	noun
piatti	dishes, plates	noun
negozio	shop, store	noun
troppo	too much	adverb and adjective
caro	expensive	adjective

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Le tazze nuove.	"New mugs."

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I bicchieri di plastica.	"Plastic glasses."
Una tovaglia bianca.	"A white tablecloth."
Due piatti grandi.	"Two big dishes."
Un negozio di scarpe.	"A shoe store."
Non dovresti bere troppo vino.	"You shouldn't drink too much wine."
Fa troppo caldo!	"It's too hot!"
Ho bevuto troppo.	"I drank too much."
Mangi troppo!	"You eat too much!"
Il biglietto è caro.	"The ticket is expensive."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Demonstrative Adjectives.
Vorrei comprare quella tovaglia e quei piatti ma...
"I'd like to buy that tablecloth and those dishes but..."

In today's lesson, we will review all the demonstrative adjectives we've seen previously. We can roughly split demonstrative adjectives into two main groups. The first group is made of all the variations in gender and number of the demonstrative adjective *questo* ("this"), which in meaning refers to something or someone close both to the speaker and to the listener or close to the speaker but far from the listener. To the second group belong all the variations in gender and number of the demonstrative adjective *quello* ("that"), which refers instead to something or someone far both from the speaker and from the listener or close to the listener but far from the speaker.

The demonstrative adjective *questo* follows this scheme:

Demonstrative	Before a Consonant	Before a Vowel
Masculine singular	*questo piatto*	*questo albergo* *quest' albergo*
Feminine singular	*questa ragazza*	*quest' isola*
Masculine plural	*questi bicchieri*	*questi occhiali*
Feminine plural	*queste tazze*	*queste ali*

Use *questo* before masculine nouns starting with any consonant or starting with a vowel.

For Example:

Italian	"English"
questo piatto	"this dish"

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questo zoccolo	"this clog"
questo studente	"this student"
questo albergo	"this hotel"

Use *questa* before feminine nouns starting with any consonant.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
questa ragazza	"this girl"
questa scuola	"this school"

Use *quest'* before any nouns, either masculine or feminine, starting with a vowel.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
quest'isola	"this island"
quest'alunno	"this pupil"

Use *questi* before any masculine, plural noun either starting with a consonant or a vowel.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
questi bicchieri	"these glasses"
questi alunni	"these pupils"

Use *queste* before any feminine, plural noun either starting with a consonant or a vowel.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
queste tazze	"these mugs"
queste ali	"these wings"

The demonstrative adjective *quello* follows this scheme:

Demonstrative	**Before a consonant**	**Before *-y*, *-z*, *-x*, *-ps*, *-gn*, and *-s* + a consonant**	**Before a vowel**
Masculine singular	*quel negozio*	*quello zaino*	*quell' italiano*

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Feminine singular	*quella tovaglia*	*quella stanza*	*quell' oasi*
Masculine plural	*quei libri*	*quegli yogurt*	*quegli anelli*
Feminine plural	*quelle tazze*	*quelle scarpe*	*quelle ali*

Use *quel* before a masculine, singular noun starting with a consonant.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
quel negozio	"that shop"

Use *quello* before a masculine, singular noun starting with *-y*,*-z*, *-x*, *-ps*, *-gn*, or *-s* + a consonant.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
quello zaino	"that backpack"
quello gnomo	"that dwarf"

Use *quell'* before a singular feminine or masculine noun starting with a vowel.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
quell'italiano	"that Italian"
quell'oasi	"that oasis"

Use *quella* before any singular feminine noun starting with a consonant.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
quella stella	"that star"
quella porta	"that door"
quella zattera	"that raft"

Use *quei* before a masculine, plural noun starting with a consonant.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
quei libri	"those books"

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Use *quegli* before a masculine, plural noun starting with *-z*, *-x*, *-y*, *-ps*, *-gn*, or *-s* followed by a consonant or a masculine, plural noun starting with a vowel.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
quegli yogurt	"those yogurts"
quegli anelli	"those rings"

Use *quelle* before any feminine, plural noun either starting with a consonant or a vowel.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
quelle ali	"those wings"
quelle mani	"those hands"

Cultural Insight

Artwork on the Italian Table

Eating and food are serious matters for Italians. Just as a frame can emphasize a beautiful painting, any drink and food seem to taste better when served in a matched, framing tableware. So Italians do spend some energy (and often, quite a lot of money) on choosing their kitchenware, and they never have a meal without properly setting their tables first. In setting a table, all restaurants follow some basic rules (for example, forks on the left side of the dish, knives and spoons on the right, etc.). However, even when at home where people do not strictly follow these rules and the dishes might be less pretentious, an Italian table never fails in offering at first a pleasure to the eyes.

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Newbie Lesson

Can You Find Everything You Need in the Present?

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Informal Italian

John È quasi mezzogiorno, ho un po' di fame.
Laura Anch'io. Cerchiamo una buona trattoria?
John Ottima idea, così mangiamo bene!
Laura E non paghiamo troppo!

Informal English

John It's almost noon; I'm a bit hungry.
Laura Me too. Shall we look for a good restaurant?
John Great idea; this way we'll eat well!
Laura And we don't spend too much.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
quasi	almost	adverb
mezzogiorno	noon, midday	noun
un po'	a little, a bit, a little bit, some	adjective
anch'io	me too	conjunction
trattoria	trattoria (traditional Italian restaurant)	noun
ottima	great (feminine singular, referring to something's quality)	adjective
così	so, this way	adverb
troppo	too much	adverb and adjective

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Siamo quasi arrivati. "We're nearly there."
È quasi pronto! "It's almost ready!"

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Ci vediamo a mezzogiorno.	"I'll see you at noon."
È mezzogiorno!	"It's noon!"
Posso avere un pò d'acqua?	"Can I have some water?"
Vuoi un po' di fragole?	"Would you like some strawberries?"
Ho freddo! Anch'io!	"I'm cold! Me too!"
Conosci una buona trattoria?	"Do you know a good trattoria?"
Questa pasta è ottima.	"This pasta is great."
Tutti lo chiamano così.	"Everybody calls him this way."
È così buono!	"It's so good!"
Laura è così bella!	"Laura is so beautiful!"
Non dovresti bere troppo vino.	"You shouldn't drink too much wine."
Fa troppo caldo!	"It's too hot!"
Ho bevuto troppo.	"I drank too much."
Mangi troppo!	"You eat too much!"

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is First Conjugation Verbs at the Present Indicative Tense.
Cerchiamo una buona trattoria?
"Shall we look for a good restaurant?"

The infinitives of all regular verbs in Italian end in *-are*, *-ere*, or *-ire* and we refer to them as first, second, or third conjugation verbs, respectively. Just a reminder: the infinitive in English is "to + verb," for example, "to eat."

We form the *presente indicativo* of the first conjugation by taking the verb's stem (that is what we are left with when we take out the ending *-are* of the infinitive) and adding the endings presented in the following scheme.

Please note that we have to keep the sound of the stem's last letter, which means that we have to add an *-h* for the second singular and first plural persons when the present infinitive stem ends with the sound [k]. For instance, the conjugation of the verb *cercare* ("to look for," "to seek," "to search") will be...

Italian	**"English"**
Io cerc-o	"I look for"
*Tu cerc-**h**i*	"You look for"
Lui/lei cerc-a	"He/she looks for"
*Noi cerc-**h**iamo*	"We look for"
Voi cerc-ate	"You look for"

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Loro cerc-ano	"They look for"

and the conjugation of the verb *pagare* ("to pay") will be...

Italian	**"English"**
Io pag-o	"I pay"
*Tu pag-**h**i*	"You pay"
Lui/lei pag-a	"He/she pays"
*Noi pag-**h**iamo*	"We pay"
Voi pag-ate	"You pay"
Loro pag-ano	"They pay"

Here are two other common verbs that follow this rule: *spaccare* ("to break") and *pregare* ("to pray").

Please note that when the present infinitive stem ends with either the so-called "soft" *-c* [t?] (for example, "sketch" [sket?]), or *-g* [d?] (for example, "John" [d??n]) sounds, the verb follows the standard *-are* conjugation.

For Example:

1. *setacciare*
   "to sieve," "to search"
2. *mangiare*
   "to eat"

This rule is valid for all three Italian conjugations.

Cultural Insight

A Sacred and Secular Italian Celebration

A Roman legend says that once upon a time some sailors, while fishing on Tevere's docks on an unspecified day of July, collected a case from the river containing a precious statue of *La Madonna* ("Our Lady"). Struck by its sheer beauty, the sailors took it to Saint Agata church, where it is still kept nowadays. From that day onward, the "Madonna that came from Tevere" has been taken from this

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church to the amazingly beautiful San Crisogno church during a religious procession. This celebration normally takes place each second Saturday of July. The statue stays there eight days before being taken back to the church that first hosted it.

The procession was originally organized by the Potters' guild, which used to bring massive pitchers full of good wine. As you can imagine, the celebration eventually took a less religious approach, becoming a secular popular celebration, called *Festa de Noantri* ("Our Feast") where Romans drank cheerfully and profusely for a whole day.

Although the celebration is nowadays officiated by the Holy Sacrament catholic brotherhood, the secular festivity is still celebrated as a parallel, pagan festival. *Osterie* ("inns") and peddlers stay open for the whole day, while old wooden stages host plays as well as local mimes and musicians. This is a rare example of how the sacred and secular found a common ground to celebrate, joining together in a typical display of the Italian soul.

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Newbie Lesson

Versace and Valentino and Armani, Oh My!

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Informal Italian

Laura	Cosa c'è?
John	Spendo troppi soldi!
Laura	Davvero?
John	Si!
Laura	Quanto spendi ogni giorno?
John	Hmm circa 100 euro.
Laura	Cosa?!? Nessuno spende così tanto!

Informal English

Laura	What's happening?
John	I spend too much money!
Laura	Really?
John	Yes!
Laura	How much do you spend a day?
John	Hmm, around one hundred euros.
Laura	What?!? Nobody spends that much!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
cosa	what	interrogative adjective
spendere	to spend	verb (transitive)
troppi	too much, too many	adjective
davvero	really, truly, indeed	adverb
ogni	every	adjective
circa	about, around, nearly, circa	adverb
nessuno	nobody, no one	pronoun

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

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Cosa facciamo domani sera?	"What shall we do tomorrow evening?"
Cosa mangi?	"What are you eating?"
Cosa hai detto?	"What did you say?"
Spendo sempre troppi soldi.	"I always spend too much money."
Mangio troppi dolci.	"I eat too many sweets/cakes."
Hai davvero ventinove anni?	"Are you really twenty-nine years old?"
Ho davvero caldo!	"I'm really hot!"
Davvero stai bene?	"Are you really feeling well?"
Devo davvero andare.	"I really have to go."
Davvero?	"Really?"
Ogni giorno.	"Every day."
Vado in pizzeria ogni Sabato.	"I go to the pizzeria every Saturday."
Studio circa 3 ore al giorno.	"I study about two hours a day."
Luca ha circa trent'anni.	"Luca is nearly thirty years old."
Nessuno conosce il proprio destino.	"Nobody knows his/her destiny."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Second Conjugation Verbs at the Present Indicative Tense.
Spendo troppi soldi!
"I spend too much money!"

We form the second conjugation *presente indicativo* by taking out the verb's stem (that is what we are left with when we take out the ending *-ere* from the infinitive) and adding the endings presented in the scheme below. Let's take the regular verb *spendere*.

Italian	**"English"**
Io spend-o	"I spend"
Tu spend-i	"You spend"
Lui/lei spend-e	"He/she spends"
Noi spend-iamo	"We spend"
Voi spend-ete	"You spend"
Loro spend-ono	"They spend"

It is important to notice that a considerable number of verbs belonging to the second conjugation are irregular. This means that they do not follow the standard rules. They can change either the stem or the ending, but rarely both.

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The following modal verbs are the most notable and widely used:

Italian	**"English"**
dovere	"to have to," "to ought to," "must"
potere	"can," "may"
sapere	"to know"
volere	"to want," "to wish"

We shall see these verbs in detail in future lessons and you can also check their full conjugation in the Grammar Bank under the Verbs section.

Cultural Insight

The Significance of April 25 in Italy

April 25 is an important Italian holiday. It marks the awakening of the national civil conscience when Italians were engaged in open war against the Nazi invaders on one side and against the fascist regime on the other. On April 25, 1945, the two regimes were eventually defeated, thus freeing the Italian population from the fascist dictatorship of the *ventennio* (1925-1945), as well as putting an end to the war in Europe.

The liberation of Italy from the dictatorship was made possible thanks to the sacrifice of many young boys and girls belonging to different and heterogeneous social classes. Regardless of their social or political descents (which ranged from Communists to monarchic soldiers, including Catholic, socialist groups in the spectrum), they described themselves with a single name: partisans. They fought on the side of the Allies until they achieved victory.

Nowadays, Italians celebrate the historical event by attending concerts run in the most important Italian *piazze*, where popular artists pay homage to those heroes who gave their lives to make Italy the peaceful and beautiful country it deserves to be.

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Newbie Lesson

I Prefer to Sleep in Italy!

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Informal Italian

John	Ciao Laura.
Laura	Ciao John.
John	Cosa fai stasera?
Laura	Dormo!
John	Dormi?
Laura	Si domani parto per Firenze.
John	Parti presto?
Laura	Si preferisco partire presto.

Informal English

John	Hi, Laura.
Laura	Hi, John.
John	What are you doing this evening?
Laura	I am sleeping.
John	You are sleeping?
Laura	Yes, tomorrow I am leaving for Florence.
John	Are you leaving early?
Laura	Yes, I prefer to leave early.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
stasera	tonight	noun
dormire	to sleep	verb
domani	tomorrow	adverb
partire	to leave, start, take off	verb
presto	early	adverb
preferire	to prefer	verb

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Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Possiamo uscire insieme stasera?	"Can we go out together tonight?"
Stasera usciamo?	"Shall we go out tonight?"
Ieri ho dormito tutto il giorno.	"Yesterday, I slept all day long."
Il gatto dorme.	"The cat is sleeping."
Ci vediamo domani allora.	"I'll see you tomorrow, then."
Sei libero domani sera?	"Are you free tomorrow evening?"
A domani!	"See you tomorrow!"
Domani partirò per Milano.	"I'll leave for Milan tomorrow."
Sono partito alle sei del mattino.	"I left at six o'clock a.m."
Domani parto per Roma.	"Tomorrow, I am leaving for Rome."
I lunedì esco presto!	"Mondays I go out early!"
Io preferisco il verde.	"I prefer green."
Preferisco bere acqua.	"I prefer drinking water."
Preferisci il vino o la birra?	"Do you prefer wine or beer?"
Io preferisco viaggiare che lavorare.	"I prefer traveling to working."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Third Conjugation Verbs at the Present Indicative Tense.
Dormo!
"I am sleeping."

As for the other two conjugations, we form the third conjugation *presente indicativo* by taking out the verb's stem (that is what we are left with when we take out the ending *-ire* from the infinitive) and adding the endings presented in the scheme below.

Let's take the regular verb *dormire*.

Presente Indicativo

Italian	**"English"**
Io dorm-o	"I sleep"
Tu dorm-i	"You sleep"
Lui/lei dorm-e	"He/she sleeps"
Noi dorm-iamo	"We sleep"
Voi dorm-ite	"You sleep"

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Loro dorm-ono	"They sleep"

Also *partire* ("to leave") follows the above rules.

Moreover, a significant number of the third conjugation's regular verbs add the interfix (which is a group of letters inserted between the prefix and the suffix) *-isc-* in all the six persons, except the first and second plural persons. In all the remaining cases, they follow the standard conjugation.

Let's see the verb *preferire*.

Presente Indicativo

Italian	**"English"**
*Io prefer-**isc**-o*	"I prefer"
*Tu prefer-**isc**-i*	"You prefer"
*Lui/lei prefer-**isc**-e*	"He/she prefers"
Noi prefer-iamo	"We prefer"
Voi prefer-ite	"You prefer"
*Loro prefer-**isc**-ono*	"They prefer"

Please note that this form applies exclusively to the present indicative, present subjunctive, and imperative.

As far as grammar is concerned, there is no general rule to distinguish the verbs that need the interfix *-isc-* from those that follow the standard conjugation. The most efficient method to figure it out is to consult a good dictionary and use them right away!

Finally, the following list shows some of the most widely used third conjugation irregular verbs.

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
uscire	"to go out," "to exit"
venire	"to come"
morire	"to die," "to pass away"
udire	"to hear"
divenire	"to become"
aprire	"to open"
mentire	"to lie"
salire	"to go upward," "to climb"

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Cultural Insight

The Place to Meet in Florence

Santa Maria Novella square is one of the most historically significant public squares in Florence. It's located near Florence's main railway station, which is named after it (Santa Maria Novella Station). Santa Maria Novella square is also close to Florence's principal church, Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral.

The Common of Florence built the public square in 1325, and it was enlarged over time in order to contain the numerous believers who came to this piazza to attend the Dominican friars' sermons and to pray.

During the Renaissance, due to its amplitude and thanks to the Medicis' wealth and cultural patronage, it became an important social and political meeting point, hosting political debates, festivities, celebrations, and shows such as *Palio dei Cocchi* (a coach race similar to the Roman *bigas* contest), which Cosimo de' Medici instituted in 1563. The social importance of Santa Maria Novella square has not faded during its history: on the contrary, it still remains an important cultural crossroads, where people coming from all over world meet and discuss with an ease that is difficult, if not impossible, to find in any other Italian square.

Many famous Italian and foreign intellectuals, scholars, and artists met in this square, regularly visiting it and thus building long-term relationships.

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Newbie Lesson

The Rhythm of Italy

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Informal Italian

John	Che musica ascolti?
Laura	Io amo la musica classica.
John	Davvero? Andiamo ad un concerto?
Laura	Certamente! Suggerisco di andare subito.
John	Ok, prendo la giacca e partiamo.

Informal English

John	What music do you listen to?
Laura	I love classical music.
John	Really? Shall we go to a concert?
Laura	Sure! I suggest going right away.
John	Okay, I'll get my jacket and then we'll leave!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
ascoltare	to listen	verb
amare	to love	verb
musica	music	noun
classica	classic (feminine singular)	adjective
davvero	really, truly, indeed	adverb
andare	to go	verb (irregular)
concerto	concert	noun
certamente	certainly	adverb
suggerire	to suggest	verb
subito	now, immediately	adverb
prendere	to take, get (figuratively, to buy)	verb
giacca	jacket	noun

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Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Non ascoltare musica a volume alto.	"Don't listen to loud music."
Ascoltiamo il discorso di Mario.	"We are listening to Mario's speech."
Ascolta bene!	"Listen well!"
Amo viaggiare.	"I love traveling."
Ami il tuo ragazzo?	"Do you love your boyfriend?"
I gatti amano dormire.	"Cats love sleeping."
Ascolto la musica Rock.	"I listen to rock music."
I Rolling Stones suonano rock classico.	"Rolling Stones play classic rock."
Hai davvero ventinove anni?	"Are you really twenty-nine years old?"
Ho davvero caldo!	"I'm really hot!"
Davvero stai bene?	"Are you really feeling well?"
Devo davvero andare.	"I really have to go."
Davvero?	"Really?"
I miei amici vanno in vacanza in Sardegna.	"My friends go on holiday to Sardinia."
Siamo andati a Venezia.	"We went to Venice."
Siamo andati in vacanza.	"We went on vacation."
Vai a casa?	"Are you going home?"
Vorrei andare a ballare.	"I would like to go dancing."
Andiamo al cinema?	"Shall we go to the cinema?"
Vado al concerto jazz.	"I'm going to the jazz concert."
Concerto all'aperto.	"Open-air concert."
Puoi prestarmi dieci euro? Certamente.	"Can you lend me ten euros? Sure."
Certamente signore!	"Certainly, sir!"
I dottori suggeriscono di mangiare molta frutta.	"Doctors suggest eating a lot of fruit."
Torno subito.	"I'll be right back."
Andiamo a prendere Luca.	"Let's go get Luca."
Prendere due piccioni con una fava.	"Kill two birds with one stone."
Hai preso il pane?	"Did you buy the bread?"
Anthony prende un gelato.	"Anthony gets an ice cream."
Prendi le chiavi per favore.	"Get the keys, please."
Ho dimenticato la giacca in macchina.	"I forgot the jacket in the car."
Ho comprato una giacca verde.	"I bought a green jacket."
È una giacca di pelle.	"It's a leather jacket."

Grammar Points

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The Focus of This Lesson Is the Present Indicative Tense.
Ok, prendo la giacca e partiamo.
"Okay, I'll get my jacket and then we'll leave!"

We use the Italian *presente indicativo* tense in the following circumstances:

1) to express habitual actions that take place on a regular basis

For Example:

1. *Vado in palestra tutti i giorni.*
   "I go to the gym every day."

2) to express an ongoing action

For Example:

1. *John legge un libro.*
   "John is reading a book."

3) to express an action that will happen in the immediate future

For Example:

1. *Paola torna alle sei.*
   "Paola will be back at six o'clock."

4) to express a permanent state or a recurring action

For Example:

1. *Elisa vive a Firenze.*
   "Elisa lives in Florence."

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5) to express how long the subject has been performing an action

For Example:

1. *Leggo da tre ore.*

"I have been reading for three hours."

Additionally, we may use the *presente indicativo* in narrations referring to past events. In this case, we call it the *presente storico* ("historical present") because we use it to relate past occurrences in the present form. We employ this stylistic aspect of the *presente indicativo* to achieve particular artistic effects.

For Example:

1. *Cesare nasce a Roma il 12 Luglio 100 A.C.*
   "Caesar was born in Rome on July 12, 100 B.C."

The following schemes summarize *presente indicativo* tense for the regular verbs of the three Italian conjugations.

First conjugation: *-are*
(verb: *amare*)

Italian	**"English"**
Io am-o	"I love"
Tu am-i	"You love"
Lui/lei am-a	"He/she loves"
Noi am-iamo	"We love"
Voi am-ate	"You love"
Loro am-ano	"They love"

Second conjugation: *-ere*
(verb: *prendere*)

Italian	**"English"**
Io prend-o	"I take"
Tu prend-i	"You take"

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Lui/lei prend-e	"He/she takes"
Noi prend-iamo	"We take"
Voi prend-ete	"You take"
Loro prend-ono	"They take"

Third conjugation: *-ire*
(verb: *partire*)

Italian	**"English"**
Io part-o	"I leave"
Tu part-i	"You leave"
Lui/lei part-e	"He/she leaves"
Noi part-iamo	"We leave"
Voi part-ite	"You leave"
Loro part-ono	"They leave"

(verb: *suggerire*)

Italian	**"English"**
*Io sugger-**isc**-o*	"I suggest"
*Tu sugger-**isc**-i*	"You suggest"
*Lui/lei sugger-**isc**-e*	"He/she suggests"
Noi sugger-iamo	"We suggest"
Voi sugger-ite	"You suggest"
*Loro sugger-**isc**-ono*	"They suggest"

Cultural Insight

Rock It Out(doors) in Italy!

Italian cities possess a long and esteemed tradition regarding free outdoor concerts. New Year's Eve concerts in Rome are rightly renowned worldwide. Due to the forgiving climate, Italians and foreigners alike go to Rome's *piazze* after the traditional *cenone* (New Year's Eve dinner; it literally means "big dinner") they usually consume with their family and friends. People wait for the New Year by attending concerts at Rome's public squares, which are lit by numerous Christmas lights. Celebrating the coming of the New Year with people from all over the world in such a matchless setting is indeed a unique experience; drinking, toasting, and celebrating in so many languages often creates bonds between individuals that last for a lifetime.

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The city of Rome invites famous artists from different countries. This cosmopolitan approach results in a wide variety of choices; we can walk to Piazza Navona and see an American blues singer and then move to Piazza del Quirinale to attend the State's official classical concert. Piazza del Popolo is the center of the celebrations in Rome.

For those who prefer to live more traditional aspects of Roman culture, it is also possible to visit typical *mercatini natalizi* ("Christmas markets"), which sell traditional Roman food and wine as well as homemade toys for kids for affordable prices.

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Newbie Lesson

How Much is Too Much?

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Informal Italian

John	Laura, che fai nel tempo libero?
Laura	Leggo spesso i romanzi di fantascienza. E tu?
John	Leggo a volte i romanzi d'amore e ascolto musica pop italiana.
Laura	Interessante, io preferisco il rock classico, conosci i Pink Floyd?
John	Li adoro!

Informal English

John	Laura, what do you do in your free time?
Laura	I often read science fiction novels. And you?
John	I sometimes read romantic novels and listen to Italian pop music.
Laura	Interesting. I prefer classic rock. Do you know Pink Floyd?
John	I love them!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
fare	to do, to make, to build	verb
tempo libero	free time, spare time	phrase
leggere	to read	verb
romanzo	novel	noun
a volte	sometimes	frequency adverb
fantascienza	science fiction	noun
ascoltare	to listen	verb
preferire	to prefer	verb
adorare	to worship, to love, to like	verb

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Cosa facevi quando eri in Italia?	"What did you do when you were in Italy?"
Vorrei fare un viaggio in Tailandia.	"I would like to make a trip to Thailand."
Faccio una telefonata.	"I'm making a phone call."
Che lavoro fai?	"What do you do?" / "What job do you do?"

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Non ho tempo libero.	"I don't have any free time."
Leggo sempre l'oroscopo.	"I always read the horoscope."
Leggo la sera prima di dormire.	"I read in the evening before going to sleep."
Leggo il giornale.	"I'm reading the newspaper."
Leggi i romanzi?	"Do you read novels?"
A volte non ti capisco Marco.	"Sometimes I don't understand you, Marco."
Il film di fantascienza.	"Science fiction movie."
Non ascoltare musica a volume alto.	"Don't listen to loud music."
Ascoltiamo il discorso di Mario.	"We are listening to Mario's speech."
Ascolta bene!	"Listen well!"
Io preferisco il verde.	"I prefer green."
Preferisco bere acqua.	"I prefer drinking water."
Preferisci il vino o la birra?	"Do you prefer wine or beer?"
Io preferisco viaggiare che lavorare.	"I prefer traveling to working."
Adoro la cucina italiana!	"I love Italian cuisine!"

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Recurring Frequency Adverbs and the Verbs *Fare, Preferire,* and *Adorare*.
Interessante, io preferisco il rock classico, conosci i Pink Floyd?
"Interesting. I prefer classic rock. Do you know Pink Floyd?"

In today's lesson, we will consider the most recurring frequency adverbs (*avverbi di frequenza*), along with the correct usage of *fare*, *preferire*, and *adorare* verbs.

Frequency Adverbs

We use frequency adverbs to provide additional information regarding how often the subject performs a certain action. We convey this frequency in relative terms, which means it does not relate to an absolute time measure (such as "twice a week," for instance).

The following are some of the Italian frequency adverbs:

Italian	**"English"**
sempre	"always"
spesso	"often"
raramente	"rarely," "seldom"

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We usually position them after the verb in simple tenses...

For Example:

1. *Io mangio spesso la pizza.*
   "I often eat pizza."

and after the main verb's past participle in the compound ones.

For Example:

1. *Io ho parlato spesso a John.*
   "I have often talked to John."

Please remember that we may change the syntax of frequency adverbs in order to obtain diverse and more refined stylistic effects, especially in the creative writing field.

The Verbs *Fare, Preferire,* and *Adorare*

Fare corresponds both to "to do" and "to make," and is one of the Italian verbs we use most frequently. Therefore, we would translate the sentences "Please make me an offer" and "I am doing my homework" in Italian with the verb *fare*, respectively, as *per favore fammi un'offerta* and *faccio i compiti*.

Similar to its English equivalent "to prefer," the verb *preferire* may be followed by either a direct object or a verb. The only difference is that in Italian, *preferire* is always followed by the infinitive of the verb and can never be followed by the "-ing" form.

For Example:

1. *Preferisco leggere un libro che guardare la tv.*
   "I prefer reading a book to watching TV."

The proper meaning of the verb *adorare* is "to worship." However, we often use this verb metaphorically, meaning "to love (something or someone)" or "to much like (something or someone),"

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as in our dialogue. For example, we would translate the expression "I much like reading science fiction novels" into Italian as *Adoro leggere romanzi di fantascienza*.

Cultural Insight

Which Types of Italian Pop Music Do You Prefer?

Italian pop music boasts a long and well-developed tradition. Its popularity often crosses the Italian borders. We can divide Italian pop music into two main categories: soft pop rock and singer-songwriter music.

The former deals with contemporary and popular issues, giving particular attention to love affairs and the way that many people tend to perceive and live them. Singers who specialize in this field generally study international pop music and introduce its most recent innovations within the Italian tradition. Vasco Rossi, Laura Pausini, and Luciano Ligabue are among the most appreciated Italian pop singers.

Songwriter music comes from a different, often regional origin. These extremely educated artists specialize in the old, pre-modern Italian musical traditions that, due to the historical political fragmentation of the peninsula, are extremely diversified in both melodies and musical instruments employed. The texts delve into historical unsolved problems, past and present political matters, as well as the preservation of the fading Italian dialects. Fabrizio de André, Giorgio Gaber, and Francesco De Gregori owe their undisputed fame to both the profound insight of their written texts as well as to the sheer grace of their melodies.

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Newbie Lesson

How Many Ways Can You Say 'I'm Sorry'?

22

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Italian

John	Ciao Martina, c'è Laura?
Martina	No, mi dispiace non c'è.
John	Sai dov'è?
Martina	Ogni tanto va al parco a fare jogging, forse è là.
John	Jogging? Ah... Io non faccio mai jogging.

English

John	Hi Martina, is Laura there?
Martina	No, sorry, she's not here.
John	Do you know where she is?
Martina	Sometimes she goes jogging at the park; maybe she's there.
John	Jogging? Ah...I never go jogging.

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
c'è	there is	verbal expression
mi dispiace	I am sorry, sorry	expression
sapere	to know	verb
ogni tanto	sometimes	frequency adverb
parco	park	noun
fare jogging	to go jogging	verbal expression
forse	maybe	adverb
mai	never	frequency adverb

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

C'è una bottiglia sul tavolo.	"There is a bottle on the table."
Pronto, c'è Marco?	"Hello, is Marco there?"
C'è un gatto sul divano.	"There is a cat on the sofa."
Mi dispiace non poter venire.	"I am sorry I can't come."
Mi dispiace, ho fatto tardi.	"Sorry, I'm late."

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Sai che ore sono?	"Do you know what time it is?"
Sai come prenotare un biglietto per il treno?	"Do you know how to book a train ticket?"
Sai dove andare?	"Do you know where to go?"
Non so niente.	"I don't know anything."
Ogni tanto mangio la verdura.	"Sometimes I eat vegetables."
Parco Sempione è a Milano.	"Sempione Park is in Milan."
Faccio jogging tre volte alla settimana.	"I go jogging three times a week."
Forse finisco i compiti domani.	"Maybe I'll finish doing my homework tomorrow."
Forse domani vado al mare.	"Maybe tomorrow I will go to the beach."
Effettivamente non so cosa dirti.	"Actually, I don't know what to tell you."
Non è mai in orario.	"He's never on time."
Mai dire mai.	"Never say never."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is More about Frequency Adverbs.
Ogni tanto va al parco a fare jogging, forse è là.
"Sometimes she goes jogging at the park; maybe she's there."

As we have seen in the previous lesson, we use frequency adverbs to provide additional information regarding how often the subject performs a certain action. We convey this frequency in relative terms: it does not relate to an absolute time measure (such as "twice a week," for instance). Here are some more common Italian frequency adverbs:

Italian	**"English"**
Ogni tanto - a volte	"sometimes"
Mai	"never"
Di solito	"usually"

We normally position *ogni tanto* before the verb in simple tenses.

For Example:

1. *Ogni tanto vado in palestra.*
   "I sometimes go to the gym."

In the compound ones, we normally position it at the beginning or at the end of the phrase.

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For Example:

1. *Sono andato a ballare ogni tanto/ogni tanto sono andato a ballare.*
   "Sometimes I went dancing."

Please remember that we cannot break up *ogni tanto*.

You will always find *mai* matched with *non*. So actually we convey the translation of the English "never" in Italian with *non* and then *mai*; we position *non* before the verb in simple tenses and *mai* right after it.

For Example:

1. *Non guardo mai la TV.*
   "I never watch TV."

In compound tenses, we position *non* before the auxiliary verb and *mai* between the auxiliary and the past participle of the main verb.

For Example:

1. *Non ho mai visto questo film.*
   "I've never seen this movie."

Di solito has the same meaning as "usually."

For Example:

1. *La mattina di solito esco alle otto.*
   "In the morning, I usually go out at eight o'clock."

Please remember that we may change the syntax of frequency adverbs in order to obtain diverse and more refined stylistic effects, especially in the creative writing field.

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Mi dispiace is an expression we normally use when we want to apologize. It's made up of the pronoun *mi* and *dispiace*. It's actually a reflexive verb: in fact, its infinitive is *dispiacersi*, and it doesn't have a literal translation in English because it should be "to feel one's self sorry" about something.

In Italian, we often use it to apologize if you have made a mistake and also to share someone's sorrow and express displeasure for something that has occurred.

Cultural Insight

Milan: Not Just for Fashion

Sempione Park is known as a big green area in the city of Milan. It takes the name Sempione from the main street located behind the park itself. The project was assigned to the architect Emilio Alemagna around 1889, and the purpose was to build a channel between the Sforza Castle and the Peace Arch.

From the time of its opening, Sempione Park has always been used as a center of public initiatives and exhibitions, such as the reuniting Exhibition of 1894 and the International Exhibition of 1906, from which remains the functioning Aquarium pavilion. The important buildings include the Art Palace built by Giovanni Muzio and the Park Towers by Gio Ponti.

The main function of the park is dedicated to every kind of leisure activity of the citizens. Recently, the Italian pop group *Elio e le storie tese* has dedicated a song to the park to denounce the cutting down of hundreds of trees and plants in the *Bosco di gioia* ("Gioia Wood").

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Newbie Lesson

How to Handle a Difficult Situation in Italian

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Informal Italian

Paolo	Ci sono birre nel frigorifero?
Martina	No, ma c'è il vino rosso sul tavolo.
Paolo	E il chinotto?
Martina	No.
Paolo	Ma non c'è proprio niente!

Informal English

Paolo	Are there beers in the fridge?
Martina	No, but there's the red wine on the table.
Paolo	What about chinotto?
Martina	No.
Paolo	But there really isn't anything!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
ci sono	there are	verbal expression
birre	beers	noun
frigorifero	refrigerator, fridge	noun
c'è	there is	verbal expression
vino	wine	noun
sul	on the	article, preposition
chinotto	chinotto, sometimes referred to as the Myrtle-leaf orange	noun
proprio	really, actually	adverb
niente	nothing	noun

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Ci sono molte persone.	"There are many people."
Bevo una birra.	"I drink a beer."
Quante birre compro?	"How many beers shall I buy?"

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Il latte è nel frigorifero.	"The milk is in the refrigerator."
C'è una bottiglia sul tavolo.	"There is a bottle on the table."
Pronto, c'è Marco?	"Hello, is Marco there?"
C'è un gatto sul divano.	"There is a cat on the sofa."
Vorrei una bottiglia di vino bianco.	"I would like a bottle of white wine."
Il Falerno è un vino rosso.	"Falerno is a red wine."
Le chiavi sono sul tavolo.	"The keys are on the table."
Il gatto dorme sul divano.	"The cat is sleeping on the sofa."
Un chinotto per favore!	"A chinotto please!"
Oggi sono proprio contenta.	"Today, I'm really happy."
Sei proprio sicuro?	"Are you really sure?"
Non ti capisco proprio.	"I really don't understand you."
Non c'è niente.	"There's nothing."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is *C'è* ("There Is") and *Proprio* ("Really," "Typical").
No, ma c'è il vino rosso sul tavolo.
"No, but there's the red wine on the table."

C'è is the Italian for "there is"; the structure of *c'è* is made up of *ci*, which is a locative adverb, plus *è*, from the verb *essere* ("to be"). As in English, we only use *c'è* with singular nouns.

For Example:

1. *C'è un quadro sulla parete.*
   "There is a picture on the wall."

For the plural form, we have *ci sono*, which is the Italian translation for "there are," and also here, as in English, we only use *ci sono* with plural nouns.

For Example:

1. *Ci sono dei gelati nel congelatore.*
   "There are some ice creams in the freezer."

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We convey the negative form with *non c'è/non ci sono*, so you just need to add *non* before *c'è/ci sono*.

For Example:

1. *Non c'è più latte!*
   "There's no more milk!"
2. *Non ci sono posti.*
   "There are no seats."

Please remember that in Italian a negation doesn't nullify another, so, for example, we translate "there is no one" with *non c'è nessuno* and "there is nothing" with *non c'è niente*. We often use the pattern *non c'è niente* when followed by the preposition *da* plus an infinitive.

For Example:

1. *Non c'è niente da fare.*
   "There is nothing to do."
2. *Non c'è niente da mangiare.*
   "There is nothing to eat."
3. *Non c'è niente da dire.*
   "There is nothing to say."

Proprio

Proprio in Italian can have three different meanings. First, as we have seen in the dialogue, we can use it as *davvero* or *veramente*.

For Example:

1. *È proprio un bel film!*
   "It's really a good movie!"

Second, it can also be a possessive adjective always referring to the subject. In English, we can translate it as "one's own."

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For Example:

1. *È difficile ammettere le proprie colpe*.
   "It's difficult to admit one's own faults."

Finally, we can also translate it as a synonym of *tipico* ("typical") or *caratteristico* ("distinctive").

For Example:

1. *La tarantella è una danza propria della regione Campania.*
   "Tarantella is a typical dance of the Campania region."

Cultural Insight

Thirsty? Consider this Unique Italian Beverage

The *chinotto* is a small bitter citrus fruit from the *chinotto*, a tree that grows in the regions of Liguria, Tuscany, Sicily, and Calabria. Probably the trees of *chinotto* used to grow in China, and Italians may have imported them from China, and thus, took the name *chinotto*, which reminds us of China.

We obtain the soft drink *chinotto* from the juice of the fruits of the *chinotto* tree mixed with some herb extracts. At a glance, it looks like Coca-Cola, but one of its unique attributes is that it tastes bitter and sweet at the same time. Normally Italians drink *chinotto* before meals since its flavor is ideal to open the palate in order to enjoy more food during a meal. The particular taste reminds us of *Campari*. In fact, *chinotto* is an essential component of most Italian bitter digestifs, called *amari*, and also of *Campari*.

Chinotto soda is consumed predominantly in Italy and Malta, and recently, the carbonated water company San Pellegrino started to export the drink in collaboration with Nestlé under the brand name Chinò. Coca-Cola produces it under the brand name Fanta Chinotto.

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Newbie Lesson

I Have Been Lucky in Italy!

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Informal Italian

Paolo	È stato un bel concerto?
Laura	Meraviglioso. Ho trovato un posto in prima fila.
Paolo	Davvero? Hai avuto fortuna!
Laura	Ahah, certo! Io sono fortunata!

Informal English

Paolo	Was it a good concert?
Laura	It was marvelous. I found a place in the front row.
Paolo	Really? You were lucky!
Laura	Aha, certainly. I am lucky!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
bel	good, pretty, nice	adjective
concerto	concert	noun
meraviglioso	marvelous, wonderful	adjective
trovare	to find	verb
posto	place	noun
primo	first	ordinal numeral adjective
fila	row, queue, line	noun
avere fortuna	to be lucky, to have luck	verbal expression

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Che bel panorama.	"What a nice view."
Vado al concerto jazz.	"I'm going to the jazz concert."
Concerto all'aperto.	"Open-air concert."
Lei ha visitato un castello meraviglioso.	"She visited a marvelous castle."

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L'ho trovato! L'ho trovato!	"I've found it! I've found it!"
Non trovo le chiavi.	"I can't find my keys."
Ho trovato questo portafoglio.	"I found this wallet."
Abbiamo trovato un cane in giardino.	"We found a dog in the yard."
Hai un posto in cui stare a Milano?	"Do you have a place to stay in Milan?"
Che posto è questo?	"What kind of place is this?"
L'Italia è un bel posto per vivere.	"Italy is a good place to live."
Ho comprato il mio primo computer.	"I bought my first computer."
Ho prenotato un posto in terza fila.	"I booked a place in the third row."
Non hai mai avuto fortuna.	"You have never been lucky."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is the *Passato Prossimo.*
È stato un bel concerto?
"Was it a good concert?"

Since the *passato prossimo* is a compound tense, we form it by using the present form of the auxiliary verb, conjugated according to the person it refers to, followed by the past participle of the main verb.

Note that *essere* and *avere* require their respective present forms as auxiliary verbs, which we must not confuse with the main verb, which we express in the past participle form. Whenever a verb requires the auxiliary *essere*, we have to conjugate its past participle according to the gender and number of the subject it refers to, following the scheme provided in the eighth Newbie lesson. In this case, we conjugate the past participle as if it were an adjective, though it keeps its main status as a verb.

For instance, we would translate the sentence "Your girlfriends have been/were lucky" into Italian as *Le tue amiche sono state fortunate*. Note that the past participle ending vowel *-e* agrees with the gender and the number of the noun *amiche*.

The following schemes display respectively the *passato prossimo* of the verbs *avere* ("to have") and *essere* ("to be"); for the latter, we traditionally present the plural persons in the plural masculine form, ending with the vowel *-i*.

Passato Prossimo
***avere* ("to have")**

Italian	"English"

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Io ho avuto	"I have had"/"I had"
Tu hai avuto	"You have had"/"You had"
Lui/Lei ha avuto	"He/She/It has had"/"He/She/It had"
Noi abbiamo avuto	"We have had"/"We had"
Voi avete avuto	"You have had"/"You had"
Loro hanno avuto	"They have had"/"They had"

Passato Prossimo
***essere* ("to be")**

Italian	**"English"**
Io sono stato	"I have been"/"I was"
Tu sei stato	"You have been"/"You were"
Lui è stato	"He has been"/"He was"
Lei è stata	"She has been"/"She was"
Noi siamo stati	"We have been"/"We were"
Voi siete stati	"You have been"/"You were"
Loro sono stati	"They have been"/"They were"

Finally, most of the time, we can translate the expression "to be lucky" in Italian as either *essere fortunato* (*fortunato* is an adjective and we have to conjugate it accordingly) or *avere fortuna* (*fortuna* is a singular uncountable noun and, as such, we never conjugate it).

4

Cultural Insight

Do You Want to Go to an Italian Fair?

The Italian *fiera* ("fair") has been an important part of cities' social and business lives since the early Middle Ages. A fair is an event in which sellers show their products in order to sell them. In the Middle Ages, the fairs were organized during local festivities; kings and rulers granted their subjects an exemption from normal taxation and tolls, thus making it possible to sell and buy goods for more convenient prices. This unique privilege created a toll-free, dynamic economy, attracting merchants and commoners from many distant countries.

We can divide the Italian *fiere* into two general categories. The *fiere campionarie* ("trade fairs") are dedicated to the field's professionals and are not generally open to visitors and onlookers. The most important Italian *fiere campionarie* are *Fiera di Milano* ("Fair of Milan"), *Fiera del Levante* ("Fair of

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the Levant" in Bari), *Fiera del Mediterraneo* ("Fair of the Mediterranean" in Palermo), and *Fiera del Sud* ("Fair of the South" in Catania).

The *fiere popolari* far outnumber the trade fairs. This type of fairs is linked strongly to the unique traditions of the hosting towns. They often coincide with popular festivities, both secular and religious. Numerous participating peddlers move from city to city in order not to miss any of these *fiere*. Visitors stroll slowly along the stages in a cheerful atmosphere, while children enjoy *on giostre* ("merry-go-rounds"). The *Fiera di Sant'Orso* in Aosta is among the most popular, world-renowned *fiere*. Its first edition was held one thousand years ago, on January 30, 1000 A.C.

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Newbie Lesson

Do You Have Enough Dough for Your Italian Life?

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Informal Italian

John Sei andata a fare la spesa?
Laura Sì, ma non ho trovato le tue focacce.
John Che peccato!

Informal English

John Did you go get groceries?
Laura Yes, though I didn't find your focaccia.
John What a pity!

Vocabulary

Italian	English	Class
andare	to go	verb (irregular)
fare la spesa	to get groceries	verbal expression
ma	but	conjunction
tuo	your, yours	possessive adjective, pronoun
focaccia	focaccia (a type of flat bread)	noun
che peccato!	What a pity!	exclamation (idiomatic expression)

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

I miei amici vanno in vacanza in Sardegna. "My friends go on holiday to Sardinia."
Siamo andati a Venezia. "We went to Venice."
Siamo andati in vacanza. "We went on vacation."
Vai a casa? "Are you going home?"
Vorrei andare a ballare. "I would like to go dancing."
Andiamo al cinema? "Shall we go to the cinema?"
Vado a fare la spesa, a dopo. "I'm off to buy some groceries; see you later."

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Non ho fatto la spesa.	"I didn't get groceries."
Ti ho salutato, ma non mi hai visto.	"I greeted you, but you didn't see me."
Strano, ma vero.	"It's strange, but true."
Come sta tua nonna.	"How is your grandma doing?"
Qual'è il tuo nome?	"What is your name?"
Cosa fa tuo padre?	"What does your father do?"
Il merito è tuo.	"The credit is yours."
Oggi per pranzo mangio solo una focaccia.	"Today, I eat only a focaccia for lunch."
Ho mangiato due focacce.	"I ate two focaccia."
Ieri ho perso il treno. Che peccato!	"Yesterday I missed the train. What a pity!"
Che peccato!	"What a pity!"

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is the *Passato Prossimo* Tense.
Sei andata a fare la spesa?
"Did you go get groceries?"

The comments and considerations regarding the *passato prossimo* tense we presented in the previous lesson are fully valid for all three conjugations. We form the *passato prossimo* tense by using the present form of the auxiliary verb, conjugated according to the subject it refers to, followed by the past participle of the main verb.

Deciding the appropriate auxiliary verb to employ may seem difficult at times. Although there is not a grammatical rule that describes all possible combinations, the following list shows the most important guidelines to keep in mind when dealing with Italian compound tenses.

Use the auxiliary *essere* associated with:

1) verbs that express physical movement from or to a specific point;

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
arrivare	"to arrive"
tornare	"to come back"
partire	"to leave"

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2) reflexive and pronominal verbs;

For Example:

Italian	**"English"**
svegliarsi	"to wake up"
nascere	"to be born"
morire	"to die"
vivere	"to live"
diventare	"to become"
piacere	"to like"
sembrare	"to seem"
succedere	"to happen," "to take place"

Use the auxiliary *avere* with all the remaining verbs. The easiest and most efficient method to identify the appropriate auxiliary verb is to look it up in a good bilingual dictionary. Finally, do not forget that we have to conjugate the past participle of the verbs requiring the auxiliary *essere* according to the number and gender of the subject they refer to.

For Example:

Passato Prossimo
***andare* ("to go")**

auxiliary: *essere*

Italian	**"English"**
Io sono andato	"I have gone"/"I went"
Tu sei andato	"You have gone"/"You went"
Lui è andato	"He has gone"/"He went"
Lei è andata	"She has gone"/"She went"
Noi siamo andati	"We have gone"/"We went"
Voi siete andati	"You have gone"/"You went"
Loro sono andati	"They have gone"/"They went"

Passato Prossimo
***trovare* ("to find")**

auxiliary: *avere*

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Italian	"English"
Io ho trovato	"I have found"/"I found"
Tu hai trovato	"You have found"/"You found"
Lui/Lei ha trovato	"He/She/It has found"/"He/She/It found"
Noi abbiamo trovato	"We have found"/"We found"
Voi avete trovato	"You have found"/"You found"
Loro hanno trovato	"They have found"/"They found"

Cultural Insight

Putting the "Made in Italy" Label on the Map

Vinitaly is the most important Italian wine trade fair. The world's largest fair of its type, it has been gaining international importance, opening Italy to technical and artistic innovations.

Its role has been established over forty years of intense activity, favoring the development of a field that has become the major ambassador to the world for the "Made in Italy" label, which is the renowned representative of the high quality of Italy's agricultural and food system. Vinitaly hosts normally 4,300 exhibitors from over thirty countries. Thirty percent of the visitors come from over one hundred foreign countries. This fair involves specialists coming from related fields including wine producers, good importers, cooks, technicians, journalists, and opinion leaders. Although Vinitaly concerns chiefly wine-related matters, it has become an important meeting for professionals, as well as lovers, of Italian cuisine.

A special area hosts the International Hall of Extra Virgin Olive Oil, a fascinating encounter between first-class world chefs and Italian olive oil.

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