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SUMMARY OF TENSES

Italian verbs have fourteen tenses, seven simple and seven compound. The changes that a verb undergoes in different tenses and moods are accomplished by use of endings and auxiliaries. Their systematic arrangement is called conjugation.

Verbs are divided into three classes according to their infinitive endings:

-are	-ere	-ire
gioc are	vend ere	part ire
to play	to sell	to leave

Here is the conjugation model of the verb: **giocare**:

Italian

English

Present Tenses

Presente dell'Indicativo:

[Io] gioco

Present:

I play / I do play

Present Continuous:

I am playing

Presente del Congiuntivo:

[che] io giochi

Present Subjunctive:

[that] I may play

Past Tenses

Passato Remoto:

[Io] giocai

Simple Past:

I played / I did play

Imperfetto dell'Indicativo:

io giocavo

Imperfect:

I played / I used to play

Past Continuous:

I was playing

Congiuntivo Passato:

[che] io abbia giocato

Past Subjunctive:

[that] I may have played

Imperfetto del Congiuntivo:

[che] io giocassi

Imperfect Subjunctive:

[that] I might play

Perfect Tenses

Passato Prossimo:

[Io] ho giocato

Present Perfect:

I have played

Present Perfect Continuous:

I have been playing

Past Perfect Tenses

Trapassato Remoto:
[lo] ebbi giocato

Past Anterior:
I had played

Trapassato Prossimo:
lo avevo giocato

Past Perfect:
I had played

Past Perfect Continuous:
I had been playing

Trapassato del Congiuntivo:
[che] io avessi giocato

Past Perfect Subjunctive:
[that] I might have played

Future Tenses

Futuro Semplice:
[lo] giocherò

Future:
I will / shall play
I am going to play

Future Continuous:
I will be playing

Future Perfect Tenses

Futuro Anteriore:
[lo] avrò giocato

Future Perfect:
I shall have played
I will have played

Present Conditional

Condizionale Presente:
lo giocherei

Present Conditional: **Conditional Continuous:**
I would play I would be playing

Conditional Perfect

Condizionale Passato:
lo avrei giocato

Conditional Perfect:
I would have played.

Modal Verbs

The modal verbs may be conjugated with either **avere** or **essere**, depending on the infinitive that follows. If the infinitive is a transitive verb, it is conjugated with **avere**. If the infinitive expresses movement and is **not** transitive, then it is conjugated with **essere**.

When the modal verb is used in a response, where the infinitive is understood, **avere** is used as the auxiliary verb.

DOVERE (must) , **POTERE** (be able to) and **VOLERE** (want) are usually followed by an infinitive and are considered irregular verbs since they don't follow the pattern of the regular **-ere** verbs.

DOVERE

[Io] devo	I must	
[Tu] devi	You must	
Egli (lui, essa) deve	He (she, it) must	
[Noi] dobbiamo		We must
[Voi] dovete	You must	
Essi [loro] devono	They must	

POTERE

[Io] posso	I can	
[Tu] puoi	You can	
Egli può	He (she, it) can	
[Noi] possiamo	We can	
[Voi] potete	You can	
Essi [loro] possono	They can	

VOLERE

[Io] voglio	I want	
[Tu] vuoi	You want	
Egli vuole	He (she, it) want	
[Noi] vogliamo		We want
[Voi] volete	You want	
Essi [loro] vogliono	They want	

Maria deve finire il compito.
Maria must finish the homework.

Non sono voluti uscire con noi.
They didn't want to go out with us.

Avere/Essere

The Italian Auxiliary verbs "essere" (to be) and "avere" (to have) are irregular. They are called Auxiliary Verbs because they are used in conjunction with other verbs to form compound tenses.

Avere, used by itself, is a transitive verb with the meaning : **to own or to have**.

Essere, used by itself, is an intransitive verb with the meaning: **to exist**.

Essere and **Avere** are conjugated as follows:

AVERE

Presente dell'Indicativo

[Io] ho	I have
[Tu] hai	You have
Egli ha	He/she has
[Noi] abbiamo	We have
[Voi] avete	You have
Essi [loro] hanno	They have

Imperfetto dell'Indicativo

[Io] avevo	I had
[Tu] avevi	You had
Egli aveva	He/she had
[Noi] avevamo	We had
[Voi] avevate	You had
Essi [loro] avevano	They had

Passato Remoto (Simple Past or Past Absolute) :

[Io] ebbi	I had
[Tu] avesti	You had
Egli ebbe	He/she had
[Noi] avemmo	We had
[Voi] aveste	You had
Essi [loro] ebbero	They had

Futuro (Future) :

[Io] avrò	I will have
[Tu] avrai	You will have
Egli (ella) avrà	He/she will have
[Noi] avremo	We will have
[Voi] avrete	You will have
Essi [loro] avranno	They will have

Condizionale Presente (Present Conditional) :

[Io] avrei	I would have
[Tu] avresti	You would have
Egli (ella) avrebbe	He/she would have
[Noi] avremmo	We would have
[Voi] avreste	You would have
Essi [loro] avrebbero	They would have

Presente del Congiuntivo (Present Subjunctive):

che io abbia	that I have
che tu abbia	that you have
che egli (ella) abbia	that he/she has
che noi abbiamo	that we have
che voi abbiate	that you have
che essi [loro] abbiano	that they have

Imperfetto del Congiuntivo (Imperfect Subjunctive):

che io avessi	that I had
che tu avessi	that you had
che egli (ella) avesse	that he/she had
che noi avessimo	that we had
che voi aveste	that you had
che essi [loro] avessero	that they had

Passato Prossimo (Present Perfect):

[Io] ho avuto	I have had
[Tu] hai avuto	You have had
Egli (ella) ha avuto	He/she has had
[Noi] abbiamo avuto	We have had
[Voi] avete avuto	You have had
Essi [loro] hanno avuto	They have had

Trapassato Prossimo (Past Perfect):

[Io] avevo avuto	I had had
[Tu] avevi avuto	You had had
Egli (ella) aveva avuto	He/she had had
[Noi] avevamo avuto	We had had
[Voi] avevate avuto	You had had
Essi [loro] avevano avuto	They had had

Trapassato Remoto (Past Anterior):

[Io] ebbi avuto	I had had
-----------------	-----------

[Tu] avesti avuto	You had had
Egli (ella) ebbe avuto	He/she had had
[Noi] avemmo avuto	We had had
[Voi] aveste avuto	You had had
Essi [loro] ebbero avuto	They had had

Futuro Anteriore (Future Perfect):

[Io] avrò avuto	I will have had
[Tu] avrai avuto	You will have had
Egli (ella) avrà avuto	He/she will have had
[Noi] avremo avuto	We will have had
[Voi] avrete avuto	You will have had
Essi [loro] avranno avuto	They will have had

Condizionale Passato (Past Conditional or Conditional Perfect):

[Io] avrei avuto	I would have had	
[Tu] avresti avuto	You would have had	
Egli (ella) avrebbe avuto	He/she would have had	
[Noi] avremmo avuto	We would have had	
[Voi] avreste avuto	You would have had	
Essi [loro] avrebbero avuto		They would have had

Passato del Congiuntivo (Past Subjunctive):

che io abbia avuto	that I have had	
che tu abbia avuto	that you have had	
che egli (ella) abbia avuto	that he/she has had	
che noi abbiamo avuto	that we have had	
che voi abbiate avuto	that you would have had	
che essi [loro] abbiano avuto		that they would have had

had

Trapassato del Congiuntivo (Past Perfect Subjunctive):

che io avessi avuto	that I had had
che tu avessi avuto	that you had had
che egli (ella) avesse avuto	that he/she had had
che noi avessimo avuto	that we had had
che voi aveste avuto	that you had had
che essi [loro] avessero avuto	that they had had

ESSERE

Presente dell'Indicativo (Present Indicative)

[Io] sono	I am
[Tu] sei	You are
Egli è	He/she is
[Noi] siamo	We are
[Voi] siete	You are
Essi [loro] sono	They are

Imperfetto dell'Indicativo (Imperfect)

[Io] ero	I was
[Tu] eri	You were
Egli era	He/she was
[Noi] eravamo	We were
[Voi] eravate	You were
Essi [loro] erano	They were

Passato Remoto (Simple Past or Past Absolute) :

[Io] fui	I was
[Tu] fosti	You were
Egli fu	He/she was
[Noi] fummo	We were
[Voi] foste	You were
Essi [loro] furono	They were

Futuro (Future) :

[Io] sarò	I will be
[Tu] sarai	You will be
Egli (ella) sarà	He/she will be
[Noi] saremo	We will be
[Voi] sarete	You will be
Essi [loro] saranno	They will be

Condizionale Presente (Present Conditional) :

[Io] sarei	I would be
[Tu] saresti	You would be
Egli (ella) sarebbe	He/she would be
[Noi] saremmo	We would be
[Voi] sareste	You would be
Essi [loro] sarebbero	They would be

Presente del Congiuntivo Present Subjunctive):

che io sia	that I am
che tu sia	that you are

che egli (ella) sia
che noi siamo
che voi siate
che essi [loro] siano

that he/she is
that we are
that you are
that they are

Subjunctive):

Imperfetto del Congiuntivo (Imperfect

che io fossi
che tu fossi
che egli (ella) fosse
che noi fossimo
che voi foste
che essi [loro] fossero

that I was
that you were
that he/she was
that we were
that you were
that they were

Passato Prossimo (Present Perfect):

[Io] sono stato
[Tu] sei stato
Egli (ella) è stato/a
[Noi] siamo stati
[Voi] siete stati
Essi [loro] sono stati

I have been
You have been
He/she has been
We have been
You have been
They have been

Trapassato Prossimo (Past Perfect):

[Io] ero stato
[Tu] eri stato
Egli (ella) era stato/a
[Noi] eravamo stati
[Voi] eravate stati
Essi [loro] erano stati

I had been
You had been
He/she had been
We had been
You had been
They had been

Trapassato Remoto (Past Anterior):

[Io] fui stato
[Tu] fosti stato
Egli (ella) fu stato/a
[Noi] fummo stati
[Voi] foste stati
Essi [loro] furono stati

I had been
You had been
He/she had been
We had been
You had been
They had been

Futuro Anteriore (Future Perfect):

[Io] sarò stato
[Tu] sarai stato

I will have been
You will have been

Egli (ella) sarà stato/a	He/she will have been
[Noi] saremo stati	We will have been
[Voi] sarete stati	You will have been
Essi [loro] saranno stati	They will have been

Conditional Perfect): Condizionale Passato (Past Conditional or

[Io] sarei stato	I would have been
[Tu] saresti stato	You would have been
Egli (ella) sarebbe stato/a	He/she would have been
[Noi] saremmo stati	We would have been
[Voi] sareste stati	You would have been
Essi [loro] sarebbero stati	They would have been

Passato del Congiuntivo (Past Subjunctive):

che io sia stato	that I have been
che tu sia stato	that you have been
che egli (ella) sia stato/a	that he/she has been
che noi siamo stati	that we have been
che voi siate stati	that you would have been
che essi [loro] siano stati	that they would have been

Subjunctive): Trapassato del Congiuntivo (Past Perfect

che io fossi stato	that I had been
che tu fossi stato	that you had been
che egli (ella) fosse stato/a	that he/she had been
che noi fossimo stati	that we had been
che voi foste stati	that you had been
che essi [loro] fossero stati	that they had been

All **transitive** verbs are conjugated with the auxiliary **avere**. In all the forms with the Auxiliary **essere** the Past Participle always agrees with its subject:

Mia sorella è uscita con gli amici.
My sister has gone out with friends.

Molti palazzi erano stati distrutti.
Many buildings had been destroyed.

Siamo arrivati in ritardo.
We have arrived late.

Si sono smarrite.
They (f.) got lost.

È venuta mia sorella?
Has my sister come?

In the active forms with the Auxiliary **avere** the Past Participle **does not** inflect **unless** the direct object is a **pronoun**. The past participle **must** agree in gender and number when the direct object is a pronoun.

Loro hanno usato la mia bicicletta.
They used my bicycle.

Loro l'hanno usata.
They used it.

Li ho mangiati tutti.
I ate them all.

Le ho viste ieri.
I saw them yesterday.

Avete letto la rivista?
Have you read the magazine?

Sì, l'abbiamo letta.
Yes, we read it.

There are also some intransitive verbs that are conjugated with **avere**, although most are conjugated with **essere**. The following are conjugated with **avere**:

camminare	to walk
parlare	to talk
dormire	to sleep
passaggiare	to walk
vivere	to live
viaggiare	to travel
nuotare	to swim

Verbs conjugated with **essere**:

- Verbs which express movement:

È andato a Roma.
He went to Rome.

- Reflexive verbs:

Questa mattina mi sono alzato tardi.
This morning I woke up late

- Verbs which express a change:

È morto ieri.
He died yesterday

- Impersonal verbs:

Si è parlato in inglese, alla conferenza.
English was spoken at the conference

- Verbs in the passive form:

Il libro è stato pubblicato da Random House.
The book has been published by Random House.

Idiomatic Use of Fare (To do)

Besides its idiomatic uses in expressions of weather, the verb **fare**, followed by an infinitive, conveys the idea of having something done (the past participle of any verb), or causing someone to do something. The object pronoun(s), if any, precede(s) the inflected form of **fare**, and not the infinitive. For example:

Che tempo **fa** oggi?

How **is** the weather today?

Faceva freddo quando uscii.

It **was** cold when I went out.

Gli ho **fatto** dire una bugia.

I have **made** him say a lie.

Me l'ha già **fatto** ripetere due volte.

He **has** already made me repeat it twice.

Glielo **feci** vedere l'altro giorno.

I **had** him see it yesterday.

Ha **fatto** chiamare Suo fratello?

Have you sent for your brother?

Glielo **farò** ammettere, non dubiti.

I **will** make him admit it, do not doubt it.

PRESENT TENSE (Presente Indicativo)

The Italian Present Tense (Presente dell'Indicativo) is formed by changing the [infinitive](#) **-are / -ere / -ire** to the following endings for **regular** verbs:

	-are verbs	-ere verbs	-ire verbs
io	-o	-o	-o
tu	-i	-i	-i
egli, ella, lui, lei	-a	-e	-e
noi	-iamo	-iamo	-iamo
voi	-ate	-ete	-ite
essi [loro]	-ano	-ono	-ono

EXAMPLES:

PARLARE (FIRST CONJUGATION)

[Io] parlo	I speak
[Tu] parli	You speak [fam.]
Egli (lui, essa) parla	He (she, it) speaks
[Noi] parliamo	We speak
[Voi] parlate	You speak [pl., fam.]
Essi [loro] parlano	They speak

SCRIVERE (SECOND CONJUGATION)

[Io] scrivo	I write
[Tu] scrivi	You write [fam.]
Egli scrive	He (she, it) writes
[Noi] scriviamo	We write
[Voi] scrivete	You write [pl., fam.]
Essi [loro] scrivono	They write

The **ire** verbs are of several types: two common types are the ones in which the endings are added directly to the stem (as **avvertire**, **partire**, **aprire** etc) and those that insert **-isc** between the stem and the ending in the first, second and third person singular and third person plural forms of the present indicative, imperative and subjunctive tenses.

APRIRE (THIRD CONJUGATION)

[Io] apro	I open
[Tu] apri	You open [fam.]
Egli apre	He (she, it) opens
[Noi] apriamo	We open
[Voi] aprite	You open [pl., fam.]

Essi [loro] apr**ono** They open

Type 2 of **-ire** verbs: **finire**

[Io] fin isco	I finish
[Tu] fin isci	You finish [fam.]
Lei fin isce	You finish [formal]
Egli (ella,esso) fin isce	He (she, it) finishes
[Noi] fin iamo	We finish
[Voi] fin ite	You finish [pl., fam.]
Essi [loro] fin iscono	They finish

Irregular verbs have conjugations of their own that can be easily found in Italian dictionaries.

Irregular verbs: ANDARE

[Io] vado	I go
[Tu] vai	You go [fam.]
Egli (ella) va	He (she, it) goes
[Noi] andiamo	We go
[Voi] andate	You go [pl., fam.]
Essi [loro] vanno	They go

USAGE:

The Present Tense is equivalent to the English Simple Present + Present Continuous (Present Indicative). It is used to state:

1. A general fact that is permanently true:

Il sole è la stella più vicina alla terra.
The sun is the closest star to the earth.

2. A present action or state of being:

[Io] lavoro in ufficio.
I work in the office.

3. An action that will occur in the near future:

Mi visitano alle tre.
They will visit me at three o'clock.

4. An habitual action within a specified period of time.

Vado in chiesa tutte le domeniche.

I go to church every Sunday.

5. The English Present Continuous (most of the time):

[Io] **leggo** le istruzioni.

I am reading the instructions.

6. A sentiment that may extend indefinitely into the past or the future (called the universal present):

Dio **è** misericordioso.

God *is* merciful.

Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

Preterite Tense (Passato Remoto)

The preterite tense (passato remoto) expresses an action that was completed in the distant past.

The Simple Past Tense or Preterite Tense (Passato Remoto) of regular verbs is formed by changing the infinitive

-are / -ere / -ire to the following endings after the infinitive ending has been dropped:

	-are verbs	-ere verbs	-ire verbs
io	-ai	-ei	-ii
tu	-asti	-esti	-isti
egli, ella	-ó	-é	-í
noi	-ammo	-emmo	-immo
voi	-aste	-este	-iste
Essi [loro]	-arono	-erono	-irono

EXAMPLES:

PARLARE

[Io] parl ai	I spoke
[Tu] parl asti	You spoke [fam.]
Egli, ella parl ó	He (she, it) spoke
[Noi] parl ammo	We spoke
[Voi] parl aste	You spoke [fam., pl.]
Essi [loro] parl arono	They spoke

RIFLETTERE

[Io] riflette i	I reflected
[Tu] riflette sti	You reflected
Egli, ella riflette ò	He (she, it) reflected
[Noi] riflette mmo	We reflected
[Voi] riflette ste	You reflected
Essi [loro] riflette rano	They reflected

APRIRE

[Io] apri ii	I opened
[Tu] apri sti	You opened
Egli apri ì	He (she, it) opened
[Noi] apri mmo	We opened
[Voi] apri ste	You opened
Essi [loro] apri rano	They opened

USAGE:

The Simple Past Tense is equivalent to the English Simple Past. It is used to describe:

1. An action completed in the past:

Non **feci** colazione ieri.
I *did* not eat breakfast yesterday.

Debora **andò** al ginnasio la settimana scorsa.
Debora *went* to the gymnasium last week.

2. An action completed within a definite period of time:

Il film **durò** piú di due ore.
The movie *lasted* more than two hours.

Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Present Tense](#)

Imperfect Indicative (Imperfetto dell'Indicativo)

The imperfect indicative is a past tense. Because "imperfect" implies incomplete, the imperfect tense describes an action which was continuous in the past but whose state of completion is unknown or ambiguous.

The Imperfect Tense (Imperfetto dell'Indicativo) is formed by changing the infinitive -are / -ere / -ire to the following endings:

	-are verbs	-ere verbs	-ire verbs
io	-avo	-evo	-ivo
tu	-avi	-evi	-ivi
egli, ella	-ava	-eva	-iva
noi	-avamo	-evamo	-ivamo
voi	-avate	-evate	-ivate
Essi [loro]	-avano	-evano	-ivano

EXAMPLES:

[Io] parlavo	I was speaking
[Tu] parlavi	You were speaking [fam.]
Lei parlava	You were speaking [formal]
Egli (ella) parlava	He (she, it) was speaking
[Noi] parlavamo	We were speaking
[Voi] parlavate	You were speaking [pl., fam.]
Loro parlavano	They were speaking

Italian employs it to describe:

- A past state of mind, opinion or emotion:

Sapevo che ai miei amici non piacevano le mie idee.
I knew my friends didn't like my ideas.

- A description of a scene in the past:

Nel parco, il tempo era bello e gli uccelli cantavano.
In the park, the weather was beautiful and the birds were singing.

- An habitual action that took place in the past.

Quando ero al liceo, lavoravo tutti i week-ends.
When I was in college, I worked every weekend.

- Mental, emotional, and physical conditions in the past as well as other past conditions such as weather, time, and age.

L'amava molto.
He loved her very much.
Faceva molto caldo.
It was very hot.

Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Simple Past Tense](#)

Future Tense (Futuro)

To form the future tense in Italian two things must be done. For the **-ARE** verbs, the infinitive ending **-are** is changed to **-er** and then **-ò, -ai, -à, -emo, -ete, -anno** is added. Both the **-ERE** and the **-IRE** verbs are formed as follows. First, the final **e** is dropped from the infinitive ending, changing **-ere** to **-er** and **-ire** to **-ir**. Next, one of the following future endings is added onto the word, **-ò, -ai, -à, -emo, -ete, or -anno**.

EXAMPLE:

[Io] parler ò	I will speak
[Tu] parler ai	You will speak [fam.]
Lei parler à	You will speak [formal]
Egli (ella) parler à	He (she, it) will speak
[Noi] parler emo	We will speak
[Voi] parler ete	You will speak [pl., fam.]
Essi [loro] parler anno	They will speak

USAGE:

The **Future Tense** is equivalent to the English Future Tense using **will** or **shall**. It is used to describe actions or states that, it is assumed, will take place at a time future to the present:

Il balletto **avrà** luogo sabato prossimo.
The ballet will take place next Saturday.

To use the future on present intent or determination.

Andrò a vederlo domani.
I will go to see him tomorrow.

Use of the future after **quando** (**when**). When the main clause is in the future, and the subordinate clause is introduced by **quando**, the subordinate clause will be in the future:

Lo **vedrò** quando arriverò.
I will see him when I (will) arrive.

Present probability:

Saranno probabilmente a casa.
They are probably already home.

Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Future Perfect Tense](#)

Conditional (Condizionale)

Like the indicative, the imperative, and the subjunctive, the conditional is a mood, with its own endings for various tenses. The root of the verb is the same as the future root. The **-ARE** verb ending changes to **-er** and a conditional ending is added **-ei, -esti, -ebbe, -emmo, -este, -ebbero**. The **-ERE and -IRE** verbs drop their final **e** before adding one of the following conditional endings, **-ei, -esti, -ebbe, -emmo, -este, -ebbero**.

EXAMPLE:

[Io] parl erei	I would speak
[Tu] parl eresti	You would speak [fam.]
Lei parl erebbe	You would speak [formal]
Egli (ella) parl erebbe	He (she, it) would speak
[Noi] parl eremmo	We would speak
[Voi] parl ereste	You would speak [pl., fam.]
Essi [loro] parl erebbero	They would speak

The **Present Conditional** is equivalent to the English construction **would** + **infinitive**. It has four major uses:

- To express the result of a hypothetical situation, the verb in the conditional follows the conjunction **se** plus a verb in the past subjunctive:

Se fossi in te, non lo farei.
If I were you, I would not do it.

- To express a probability in the future:

Andrei in Italia domani.
I would go to Italy tomorrow.

- To express politeness, and in sentences where there is only one verb what is expressed in English by, **I would . . .**:

Lo farei con piacere.
I'd do that with pleasure.
Vorrei una tazza di caffè.
I would like a cup of coffee.

Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Present Tense](#)

[Future Perfect Tense](#)

[Clauses](#)

Present Subjunctive (Congiuntivo Presente)

The subjunctive mood is rarely used in English but is frequently used in Italian. A verb takes the subjunctive when it is preceded by certain verbs or certain expressions that indicate a subjective situation.

The present subjunctive tense is formed by dropping the final **o** found at the end of the present indicative and then adding a present subjunctive ending. For **-ARE** verbs, add **-i, -i, -i, -iamo, -iate, -ino**. For **-ERE** and **-IRE** verbs, add **-a, -a, -a, -iamo, -iate, -ano**.

	-are verbs	-ere / -ire verbs
io	-i	-a
tu	-i	-a
egli, ella	-i	-a
noi	-iamo	-iamo
voi	-iate	-iate
Essi [loro]	-ino	-ano

EXAMPLES:

Parlare (To speak - First Conjugation)

[io] parli	that I may speak
[tu] parli	that you may speak [fam.]
Egli (ella) parli	that he (she, it) may speak
[Noi] parliamo	that we may speak
[Voi] parliate	that you may speak [pl., fam.]
[Essi, loro] parlino	that they may speak

Scrivere (To write - Second Conjugation)

[io] scriva	that I may write
[tu] scriva	that you may write [fam.]
Egli (ella) scriva	that he (she, it) may write
[Noi] scriviamo	that we may write
[Voi] scriviate	that you may write [pl., fam.]
[Essi, loro] scrivano	that they may write

Aprire (To open - Third Conjugation)

[io] apra	that I may open
[tu] apra	that you may open [fam.]
Egli (ella) apra	that he (she, it) may open
[Noi] apriamo	that we may open
[Voi] apriate	that you may open
[Essi, loro] aprano	that they may open

After an expression of personal sentiment (emotion, will, or desire):

Sono contento che voi siate qui.

I am happy that you are here.

Desidero che tu arrivi presto.

I wish that you arrive early.

After an expression of necessity, doubt or possibility:

È necessario che tu venga con me.

You must come with me.

È possibile che noi andiamo a Parigi.

It is possible that we're going to Paris.

After verbs of opinion (*pensare, credere, sperare, sentire*) when they are in the negative or interrogative:

Lei non pensa che sia freddo in Alaska.

She doesn't think it is cold in Alaska.

Le sembra che io sia malato?

Does it seem to you that I am sick?

After certain conjunctive phrases that express the idea of unaccomplished goal or aim:

benchè	so that; in order that
affinchè	so that; in order that
in modo che	so that; in order that
prima che	before (that)
per paura che	out of fear that
a meno che	unless
fino a che	until
benchè	although

After *chiunque* (*whoever*), *qualunque* (*whatever*), *dovunque* (*wherever*):

Chiunque Lei sia . . .	Whoever you are . . .
Qualunque cosa io faccia. . .	Whatever I do . . .
Dovunque si vada . . .	Wherever one goes . . .

After a superlative adjective when there is an idea of doubt, probability, but not certainty:

Tu sei forse il miglior amico che io abbia.

You are maybe the best friend that I have.

In subordinate clauses, following an impersonal expression only when the subordinate clause contains a subject.

È importante che i bambini mangino la verdura.

It is important that the children eat vegetables.

Impersonal Expressions

è importante	it's important
è impossibile	it's impossible
è necessario	it's necessary
è possibile	it's possible

è probabile

it's probable, likely

Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Present Tense](#)

[Clauses](#)

[Negation](#)

IMPERFECT SUBJUNCTIVE (Congiuntivo Imperfetto)

The past subjunctive is a literary tense whose modern use is rare, even in literature. It may be used in sentences where the subjunctive is called for but the verb of the **main clause** is in the past tense or conditional mood. To form the past subjunctive for **-ARE** verbs add **-assi, -assi, -asse, -assimo, -aste, assero**. For **-ERE** verbs, add **-essi, -essi, -esse, -essimo, -este, -essero**. For **-IRE** verbs, add **-issi, -issi, -isse, -issimo, -iste, -issero**.

The imperfect subjunctive:

Volevo che tu lo facessi.
I wanted you to do it.

The present subjunctive:

Voglio che tu lo faccia.
I want you to do it.

EXAMPLES:

Parlare (To speak - First Conjugation)

[Io] parl assi	that I might speak
[Tu] parl assi	that you might speak [fam.]
Egli (ella) parl asse	that he (she, it) might speak
[Noi] parl assimo	that we might speak
[Voi] parl aste	that you might speak [pl., fam.]
Essi [loro] parl assero	that they might speak

Scrivere (To write - Second Conjugation)

[io] scriv essi	that I might write
[tu] scriv essi	that you might write [fam.]
Egli (ella) scriv esse	that he (she, it) might write
[Noi] scriv essimo	that we might write
[Voi] scriv este	that you might write [pl., fam.]
[Essi, loro] scriv essero	that they might write

Aprire (To open - Third Conjugation)

[io] apr issi	that I might open
[tu] apr issi	that you might open [fam.]
Egli (ella) apr isse	that he (she, it) might open
[Noi] apr issimo	that we might open
[Voi] apr iste	that you might open
[Essi, loro] apr issero	that they might open

USAGE:

The Imperfect Subjunctive expresses uncertainty, possibility, a feeling, or a wish, as does

the [Present Subjunctive](#).

The [subjunctive](#) must be used in [subordinate clauses](#) in which there is a change of [subject](#) and when there is doubt in the mind of the speaker or writer as to the absolute truth or future fulfillment of his statement.

If the verb in the [main clause](#) is in the [Imperfect Indicative](#), [Simple Past](#), [Conditional](#), or [Past Perfect](#), the Imperfect Subjunctive is used in the [subordinate clause](#).

The [Subjunctive](#) is used:

1. In [subordinate clauses](#) that follow verbs of desire, command, emotion, doubt, and uncertainty.

Avevano paura che lui lo **facesse**. [change of subject]
They feared that he might do it.

Lei insistè che [io] lo **facessi**.
She insisted that I do it.

2. In [subordinate clauses](#) that follow an [impersonal expression](#) only when the subordinate clause contains a [subject](#).

[Era importante](#) che **ascoltassimo** i dettagli.
It was important that we listened to the details.

3. In [subordinate clauses](#), when the [noun](#) modified by the [subordinate clause](#) does *not* refer to a specific person or thing.

Volevo parlare con qualcuno che **conoscesse** bene la Francia.
I wanted to speak with someone who knows France well.

4. After the subordinating conjunction "**come se**," to express a [contrary-to-fact](#) condition. "**Come se**" *always* takes the Imperfect Subjunctive.

Parla [come se](#) mi **conoscesse**.
He speaks as if he knew me.

Mi tratta [come se](#) **fossi** un cretino.
He treats me as if I were a fool.

Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Imperfect Tense](#)

COMPOUND TENSES

The Compound Tenses of all verbs are formed from the various tenses of the conjugated auxiliary verb **avere** (to have) or **essere** (to be) plus the past participle of the main verb.

Sono venuti? *Have they come?*
Hai visto...? *Have you seen...?*
Abbiamo sempre detto... *We have always said...*

Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Present Perfect Tense](#)

[Past Perfect Tense](#)

[Future Perfect Tense](#)

[Conditional Perfect](#)

[Past Perfect Subjunctive](#)

PRESENT PERFECT TENSE (Passato Prossimo)

The **present perfect**, or conversational past (**passato prossimo**):

The present perfect tense, along with the imperfect tense, is the main past tense in Italian. It is formed with the present tense of the auxiliary verb (**avere** or **essere**) plus the past participle of the main verb.

The Past Participle of regular verbs is formed by dropping the infinitive ending **-are** and adding the ending **-ato** for regular first conjugation verbs; dropping the infinitive ending **-ere** and adding **-uto** for regular second conjugation verbs; and dropping the infinitive ending **-ire** and adding **-ito** for regular third conjugation verbs. Look at the following examples of regular past participles:

ballare	ballato
cantare	cantato
avere	avuto
cadere	caduto
sapere	saputo
partire	partito
capire	capito

Study the following model and then look at the examples:

io	ho	+ past participle
tu	hai	+ past participle
egli, ella ,etc	ha	+ past participle
noi	abbiamo	+ past participle
voi	avete	+ past participle
Essi	hanno	+ past participle

io	sono	+ past participle
tu	sei	+ past participle
egli, ella ,etc	è	+ past participle
noi	siamo	+ past participle
voi	siete	+ past participle
Essi	sono	+ past participle

EXAMPLES:

[Io] **ho parlato**
[Tu] **hai parlato**

I have spoken
you have spoken [fam.]

Egli(ella) ha parlato	he (she, it) has spoken
[Noi] abbiamo parlato	we have spoken
[Voi] avete parlato	you have spoken [pl., fam.]
Essi,loro hanno parlato	they have spoken
[Io] sono andato	I have gone
[Tu] sei andato	you have gone [fam.]
Egli (ella) è andato/a	he (she, it) has gone
[Noi] siamo andati	we have gone
[Voi] siete andati	you have gone [pl., fam.]
Essi, loro sono andati/e	they have gone

The **present perfect** (passato prossimo) has two major uses:

- To express an action or a state of mind, emotion, or opinion at a precise or sudden moment in the past:

Quando mi ha visto, ho avuto paura.

When he saw me, I was afraid.

- To express a completed action, thought, or statement:

Ella ha aperto la porta e io sono entrato.

She opened the door and I entered.

The conjugation of the "passato prossimo" with the present tense of avere or essere depends on whether the following verb is transitive or intransitive. **Transitive verbs** are conjugated with **avere**. **Intransitive verbs** are conjugated with **essere**.

Transitive verbs take a direct object that answers the question what or whom. The object can be a noun or a verb.

Ha mangiato una pizza.

He ate a pizza.

Ha guardato la TV.

He watched TV.

Ha voluto cantare.

He wanted to sing.

Intransitive verbs do not take a direct object or answer the question what. They usually express movement.

È andato a Roma.

He went to Rome.

Sono partiti ieri.

They left yesterday.

Important!

Remember that the Past Participle of verbs conjugated with **essere** must agree in number and gender with the subject of the sentence.

La ragazza è andata a scuola.

The girl has gone to school.

I ragazzi sono andati a scuola.
The boys have gone to school.

Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Present Tense](#)

[Passive Voice](#)

Past Perfect Tense (Trapassato Prossimo)

The past perfect tense, (trapassato prossimo) may be used in writing to indicate the relationship between two successive past actions. It is a compound tense formed by combining the auxiliary verb (**essere** or **avere**) in the imperfect tense with the past participle of the main verb.

Using the preterite perfect tense:

Non eravamo usciti perché già avevamo comprato i regali.
We had not gone out because we had already bought the presents.

AVERE

io	avevo	+ past participle
tu	avevi	+ past participle
egli, ella	aveva	+ past participle
noi	avevamo	+ past participle
voi	avevate	+ past participle
Essi, loro	avevano	+ past participle

ESSERE

io	ero	+ past participle
tu	eri	+ past participle
egli, ella	era	+ past participle
noi	eravamo	+ past participle
voi	eravate	+ past participle
Essi, loro	erano	+ past participle

EXAMPLES:

[Io] avevo parlato	I had spoken
[Tu] avevi parlato	you had spoken
Egli(ella) aveva parlato	he (she, it) had spoken
[Noi] avevamo parlato	we had spoken
[Voi] avevate parlato	you had spoken
Essi, loro avevano parlato	they had spoken

[Io] ero andato	I had gone
[Tu] eri andato	you had gone [fam.]
Egli (ella) era andato/a	he (she, it) had gone
[Noi] eravamo andati	we had gone
[Voi] eravate andati	you had gone [pl., fam.]
Essi, loro erano andati/e	they had gone

Related Topics:

Summary of Tenses

Preterite Tense (Passato Remoto)

Imperfect Indicative (Imperfetto dell'Indicativo)

CLAUSES

Preterite Perfect Tense (Trapassato Remoto)

The preterite perfect tense, (trapassato remoto) like the preterite tense, is limited in modern Italian to literary or historical contexts. It may be used in writing to indicate the relationship between two successive past actions. The preterite perfect is generally found in a subordinate clause, introduced by a conjunction. Conjunction of time: **appena, quando**. It is formed by combining the auxiliary verb (**essere** or **avere**) in the perfect tense with the past participle of the main verb.

The Italian Preterite Perfect Tense is used to express an action that occurred in the past before another past action.

Using the preterite perfect tense:

Quando il re ebbe finito, fece un discorso.
After the king had finished, he gave a speech.

io	ebbi	+ past participle
tu	avesti	+ past participle
egli, ella	ebbe	+ past participle
noi	avemmo	+ past participle
voi	aveste	+ past participle
Essi, loro	ebbero	+ past participle

io	fui	+ past participle
tu	fosti	+ past participle
egli, ella	fu	+ past participle
noi	fummo	+ past participle
voi	foste	+ past participle
Essi, loro	furono	+ past participle

EXAMPLES:

[Io] ebbi parlato	I had spoken
[Tu] avesti parlato	you had spoken [fam.]
Egli(ella) ebbe parlato	he (she, it) had spoken
[Noi] avemmo parlato	we had spoken
[Voi] aveste parlato	you had spoken [pl., fam.]
Essi, loro ebbero parlato	they had spoken

[Io] fui andato	I had gone
[Tu] fosti andato	you had gone [fam.]
Egli (ella) fu andato/a	he (she, it) had gone
[Noi] fummo andati	we had gone
[Voi] foste andati	you had gone [pl., fam.]
Essi, loro furono andati/e	they had gone

Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Simple Past Tense](#)

[Imperfect Tense](#)

[Clauses](#)

Future Perfect Tense (Futuro Anteriore)

The future perfect tense is a compound tense formed with the future of the auxiliary (**avere** or **essere**) plus the past participle of the verb you have in mind. In Italian and in English, this tense is used to express a future action that will happen before another future action. In English, this tense is formed by using **shall have** or **will have** plus the past participle of the verb you have in mind.

io	avrò	+ past participle
tu	avrà	+ past participle
egli ella	avrà	+ past participle
noi	avremo	+ past participle
voi	avrete	+ past participle
Essi, loro	avranno	+ past participle

Auxiliary **essere**

io	sarò	+ past participle
tu	sarai	+ past participle
egli ella	sarà	+ past participle
noi	saremo	+ past participle
voi	sarete	+ past participle
Essi, loro	saranno	+ past participle

EXAMPLES:

[Io] avrò parlato	I will have spoken
[Tu] avrà parlato	you will have spoken
Egli(ella) avrà parlato	he (she, it) will have spoken
[Noi] avremo parlato	we will have spoken
[Voi] avrete parlato	you will have spoken
Essi, loro avranno parlato	they will have spoken

[Io] sarò andato	I will have gone
[Tu] sarai andato	you will have gone
Egli(ella) sarà andato	he (she, it) will have gone
[Noi] saremo andati	we will have gone
[Voi] sarete andati	you will have gone
Essi, loro saranno andati	they will have gone

USAGE:

The Future Perfect Tense is used to express a simple action in the future completed before another future action:

Quando Lei avrà terminato, me lo dirà.
When you (will) have finished, you'll tell me.

Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Future Tense](#)

[Passive Voice](#)

Conditional Perfect (Condizionale Passato)

The conditional perfect is formed with the conditional of the auxiliary verb (**essere** or **avere**) plus the past participle of the main verb. It is used to express the result of a hypothetical condition or supposition in the past. Only the auxiliary is conjugated.

-are / -ere / -ire verbs

io	avrei	+ past participle
tu	avresti	+ past participle
egli ella	avrebbe	+ past participle
noi	avremmo	+ past participle
voi	avreste	+ past participle
Essi, loro	avrebbero	+ past participle

Auxiliary **essere**

io	sarei	+ past participle
tu	saresti	+ past participle
egli ella	sarebbe	+ past participle
noi	saremmo	+ past participle
voi	sareste	+ past participle
Essi, loro	sarebbero	+ past participle

EXAMPLES:

[Io] avrei parlato	I would have spoken
[Tu] avresti parlato	you would have spoken [fam.]
Lei avrebbe parlato	you would have spoken [formal]
Egli(ella) avrebbe parlato	he (she, it) would have spoken
[Noi] avremmo parlato	we would have spoken
[Voi] avreste parlato	you would have spoken [pl., fam.]
Essi, loro avrebbero parlato	they would have spoken

[Io] sarei andato	I would have gone
[Tu] saresti andato	you would have gone
Egli(ella) sarebbe andato	he (she, it) would have gone
[Noi] saremmo andati	we would have gone
[Voi] sareste andati	you would have gone
Essi, loro sarebbero andati	they would have gone

USAGE:

The conditional perfect is only used when the other verb is in the past perfect (trapassato prossimo).

The Conditional Perfect is used to express an action that *would* have occurred *if* something

else had been possible.

Se voi foste venuti, noi **saremmo stati** molto contenti.
If you had come, we would have been very happy.

Saremmo usciti più presto se avessimo saputo che i negozi chiudevano presto.
We *would have left* earlier if we had known (that) the stores closed early.

Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Present Conditional](#)

[Present Perfect Tense](#)

[Clauses](#)

Present Perfect Subjunctive (Passato del Congiuntivo)

The present perfect subjunctive tense (congiuntivo passato) is formed by using the **present subjunctive** of the auxiliary verb (**essere** or **avere**) plus the past participle of the main verb. It is used when the action in the subordinate clause has come before the action in the main clause (and all other conditions requiring the use of the Present Subjunctive are met).

Use the present perfect subjunctive when the subordinate action precedes the main action:

Non credo che Lei **abbia pagato** il ragazzo per i fiori.

I don't believe you **have paid** the boy for the flowers.

Sono contento che **siano venuti** a trovarmi.

I am glad that they **came** to see me.

-are / -ere / -ire verbs

io	abbia	+ past participle
tu	abbia	+ past participle
egli, ella ,etc	abbia	+ past participle
noi	abbiamo	+ past participle
voi	abbiate	+ past participle
Essi	abbiano	+ past participle

io	sia	+ past participle
tu	sia	+ past participle
egli, ella ,etc	sia	+ past participle
noi	siamo	+ past participle
voi	siate	+ past participle
Essi	siano	+ past participle

USAGE:

The Indicative is used to state a fact, and the Subjunctive is used to express uncertainty, possibility, a feeling, or a wish.

The Subjunctive must be used in subordinate clauses in which there is a change of subject and when there is doubt in the mind of the speaker or writer as to the absolute truth or outcome of the situation his statement describes.

Sono felice che Maria **sia venuta**. (Notice the agreement of the Past Participle with its subject).

I am happy that Maria **has come**.

Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Present Subjunctive](#)

PAST PERFECT SUBJUNCTIVE (Trapassato del Congiuntivo)

The past perfect subjunctive tense is a tense reserved for literary contexts. It is similar in use to the imperfect subjunctive, and consists of the imperfect subjunctive form of the auxiliary verb followed by a past participle. Modern usage exists only in the third person.

Using the pluperfect subjunctive:

Ero contento che Maria **fosse arrivata**.

I was happy that Mary had arrived.

The Subjunctive (Trapassato del Congiuntivo) of the auxiliary verbs **avere** or **essere** is used in a subordinate clause when the verb in the main clause is in a past tense and the action in the subordinate clause has already taken place.

The Past Perfect Subjunctive is formed with the imperfect subjunctive of the auxiliary **avere** (to have) or **essere** (to be) + **past participle** of the main verb.

-are / -ere / -ire verbs

io	avessi	+ past participle
tu	avessi	+ past participle
egli, ella ,etc	avesse	+ past participle
noi	avessimo	+ past participle
voi	aveste	+ past participle
Essi	avessero	+ past participle

io	fossi	+ past participle
tu	fossi	+ past participle
egli, ella ,etc	fosse	+ past participle
noi	fossimo	+ past participle
voi	foste	+ past participle
Essi	fossero	+ past participle

EXAMPLES:

[Io] avessi parlato	I might have spoken
[Tu] avessi parlato	you might have spoken [fam.]
Egli(ella) avesse parlato	he (she, it) might have spoken
[Noi] avessimo parlato	we might have spoken
[Voi] aveste parlato	you might have spoken [pl., fam.]
Essi, loro avessero parlato	they might have spoken

[Io] fossi andato	I might have gone
[Tu] fossi andato	you might have gone [fam.]
Egli (ella) fosse andato/a	he (she, it) might have gone
[Noi] fossimo andati	we might have gone
[Voi] foste andati	you might have gone [pl., fam.]

Essi, loro **fossero andati/e** they might have gone

USAGE:

The Indicative is used to state a fact, and the Subjunctive is used to express uncertainty, possibility, a feeling, or a wish.

The Subjunctive must be used in subordinate clauses in which there is a change of subject and when there is doubt in the mind of the speaker or writer as to the absolute truth or outcome of the situation his statement describes.

Non era possibile che tutti **avessero comprato** i biglietti.
It was not possible that everyone *had bought* the tickets.

Il datore di lavoro dubitò che gli impiegati **avessero completato** il progetto.
The boss doubted that the employees *had completed* the project.

Related Topics:

[Summary Of Tenses](#)
[Present Subjunctive](#)

PASSIVE VOICE

The Active Voice is a construction in which the subject performs the action described by the verb. In the Passive Voice, the subject receives the action of the verb. The person or entity performing the action is called the agent. The Passive Voice *always* involves an action that is being done to the subject.

Active Voice: L'università concederà una borsa di studio.
The university will grant a scholarship.

Passive Voice: Una borsa di studio sarà concessa dall'università.
A scholarship will be granted by the university.

In Italian the Passive Voice construction parallels that of English. The past participle agrees with the subject in gender and number.

Subject	+ <u>essere</u>	+ Past Participle	+ <u>PREPOSITIONS</u>	+Agent
Battisti.	La canzone	fu	scritta da	Lucio
The song	was	written	by	Lucio Battisti.

Il presidente **era** rispettato **da** tutti.
The president *was* respected *by* everyone.

La posta **è stata distribuita** dal postino.
The mail **has been delivered** by the mailman.

The impersonal *they* may be used as an alternate to the true Passive Voice:

Dicono **che fumare fa male alla salute**.
It is said (*they say*) that smoking is dangerous to the health.

When the doer of the action is not stated, Italian forms the passive voice by using the reflexive pronoun **si** with the third-person singular or plural form of the verb.

Si pensa che la casa sia stata venduta un anno fa.
It is thought that the house *was sold* a year ago.

Qui **si** parla italiano.
Italian is spoken here.

Related Topics:

Summary of Tenses
Reflexive Verbs

Imperative Forms

The imperative mood expresses commands, strong advice and calls to action. In Italian, there are forms of the imperative mood for formal and familiar discourse.

Familiar imperative:

The familiar imperative uses the **tu** or **voi** forms of the present indicative.

Scrivi la lettera!

Write the letter!

Finite il compito!

Finish the homework!

The second person singular, familiar (**tu**) form of regular verbs with infinitives in **ARE** uses the third person singular, indicative verb ending.

Mangia la frutta!

Eat the fruit!

Four short verbs with infinitives in **ARE** have frequently-used irregular **tu** imperative forms: **andare**, **dare**, **fare**, and **stare**.

Va' con lui!

Go with him!

Da' il libro a Maria!

Give the book to Maria!

Fa' il lavoro oggi!

Do the work today!

Sta' a casa questa settimana!

Stay home this week!

Dire has just one familiar imperative form: **di'**.

Di' la storia ai ragazzi!

Tell the story to the boys!

Formal imperative:

The Italian formal (**Lei/Loro**) imperative uses the same verb forms as the third person present subjunctive mood. If a verb is irregular in the subjunctive, it will also be irregular in the formal imperative.

Finisca di leggere!

Finish reading!

Paghi in contanti, per favore!

Pay in cash, please!

Dica la verità al professore!

Tell the truth to the teacher!

First person plural imperative:

Italian has an imperative form corresponding to the English **let's**. It is identical to the first person plural, indicative inflection of the Italian verb.

Andiamo al cinema!

Let's go to the movies!

Negative imperative:

To negate any Italian verb in the imperative mood, simply precede the imperative with **non**. To negate the **tu** imperative, use **non** followed by the infinitive of the verb.

Non andiamo al cinema stasera!
Let's not go to the movies tonight!

Non dormite in quel letto!
Don't sleep in that bed!

Non parlare mentre la professoressa parla!
Don't talk while the teacher is talking!

Related Topic:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

Definite Article

Italian articles exist in both masculine and feminine, singular and plural, and definite and indefinite forms.

The definite article has seven forms, used as follows:

Masculine		Singular	Plural
	Before "pure" consonant	il	i
	Before "impure" consonant	lo	gli
	Before vowel	l'	gli
Feminine			
	Before consonant	la	le
	Before vowel	l'	le

An "impure" consonant is an **s** followed by another consonant (**sb, sc, sp, st**), **z, ps** or **gn**. Examples:

lo stato	gli stati
the state	the states

lo zio	gli zii
the uncle	the uncles

lo psicologo	gli psicologi
the psychologist	the psychologists

lo gnosticismo	gli gnosticismi
agnosticism	agnosticisms

A pure consonant is any other consonant or group of consonants.

The Italian definite article is used with all general or abstract nouns. Examples:

I libri sono importanti.
Books are important.

L'amore fa bene a tutti.
Love is good for everyone.

The definite article must be used with titles when talking about someone. The article is omitted, however, in direct address.

La signora Savorelli abita a Roma

but

Buona sera, signora Savorelli

The definite article is usually used with the following geographical names:

- continents
- countries
- islands
- regions.

Note, however, that the definite article is omitted when the name of the continent, country, island, or region is preceded by the preposition **di** or **in**, unless the name of the country is masculine. The article is also omitted if the name of the continent, country, island or region is modified in any way.

NAMES OF COUNTRIES & CITIES

The definite article is used with names of certain countries:

l Argentina	il Giappone
il Brasile	la Repubblica di Panama
il Canada	il Paraguay
la Cina	il Perú
l Ecuador	il Salvador
l India	l Uruguay

Related Topics:

[Indefinite Article](#)

INDEFINITE ARTICLE

The Italian indefinite article has four forms, as follows:

Masculine

Before "pure" consonant	un
Before "impure" consonant	uno
Before vowel	un

Feminine

Before consonant	una
Before vowel	un'

Examples:

un treno
a train

uno specchio
a mirror

un ufficio
an office

una donna
a woman

un'eccezione
an exception

The use of the Italian indefinite article is similar to the English indefinite article [a/an](#).

OCCUPATION / RACE / NATIONALITY / SOCIAL STATUS / RELIGIOUS OR POLITICAL BELIEFS

If the speaker intends to classify the [subject](#) according to occupation, race, nationality, social status, religious or political beliefs, the indefinite article is omitted.

Antonio non è **italiano**, è **boliviano**.
Anthony is not Italian, he is Bolivian.
Essere **cattolico** o **protestante**.
To be a Catholic or a Protestant.

Related Topics:

[Definite Article](#)
[Nouns](#)

PLURAL AND GENDER

All Italian nouns occur in either masculine or feminine gender and have both singular and plural forms.

Most Italian nouns are inflected according to one of the five following patterns

Pattern	Singular	Plural	Example
1	-o	-i	ragazzo, ragazzi (boy)
2	-o	-a	uovo, uova (egg)
3	-a	-e	sorella, sorelle (sister)
4	-a	-i	turista, turisti (tourist)
5	-e	-i	cane, cani (dog)

When a noun ending in **-co**, **-go**, **-ca** or **-ga** forms its plural by adding **-i** or **-e** and there is no change in the pronunciation of the "hard" **-c** or **-g** of the stem, the plural is spelled with **-chi**, **-ghi**, **-che** or **-ghe** respectively to retain the hard sound. Examples:

albergo (m. sg.)
hotel

alberghi (m. pl.)
hotels.

Nouns ending in **-io** with a stressed **-i** form a regular plural, that is the final **-o** is replaced by **-i**. Example:

zio zii
uncle uncles

Nouns ending in **-io** with an unstressed **-i**, lose the **-i** of the root. Example:

bacio baci
kiss kisses

occhio occhi
eye eyes

Almost all nouns not belonging to Patterns 1 - 5 above are invariable in the plural, including:

- nouns ending in a stressed vowel

la città
the city

le città
the cities

- nouns of one syllable

il re
the king

i re
the kings

- nouns ending in **-i**

la crisi
the crisis

le crisi
the crises

- nouns ending in a consonant

l'autobus
the bus

gli autobus
the buses

- abbreviations

l'auto
the car

le auto
the cars

- family names

i Marcenaro
the Marcenaro's

- foreign loan-words

lo sport
the sport

gli sport
the sports

The gender of Italian nouns cannot be determined based on either morphology or meaning, except that all nouns of PATTERN 2 above are masculine in the singular and feminine in the plural (e.g. **il ginocchio** the knee, **le ginocchia** the knees) and nouns in PATTERN 4 are masculine (**l'artista** the artist, **gli artisti** the artists). Most nouns in pattern 1 are masculine (except for **la mano** the hand, **le mani** the hands). Nouns ending in **-e** in pattern 5 are about equally distributed between masculine and feminine.

Many masculine nouns ending in **-o** or **-e** have a corresponding feminine form ending in **-a**. Examples:

zio
uncle
zia
aunt

signore
gentleman
signora
lady

Certain nouns have a special form for the feminine. Examples:

attore
actor
attrice
actress

dottore
doctor
dottoressa (female)
doctor

eroe
hero
eroina

heroine

Most nouns ending in **o** are masculine and most ending in **a** are feminine.

Masculine	English	Feminine	English
il gatto	cat	la blusa	blouse
il pollo	chicken	la camicia	shirt
il formaggio	cheese	la candela	candle
il cappello	hat	la casa	house
il telefono	telephone	la gonna	skirt
il lavoro	work	la donna	female
il tempio	temple	la lotteria	lottery / raffle
il maestro	teacher	la maestra	teacher
il ragazzo	boy	la ragazza	girl
il denaro	money	la moneta	coin

EXCEPTIONS

A few nouns that end in **o** are feminine:

la mano	hand
la foto	photo (abbreviation of la fotografia)

Some nouns ending in **a** are masculine. Some frequently used nouns belonging to this group are:

il programma	program
il pianeta	planet

Many nouns ending in **ma** are masculine:

il clima	climate	il dramma	drama
il sistema	system	il tema	theme / subject
il poema	poem	il problema	problem
il teorema	theorem		

However, the following common words ending in **ma** are always feminine:

la forma	form
la trama	plot / scheme
la vittima	victim

INFINITIVES AS NOUNS

Where the infinitive is used as a noun it is always masculine:

il viaggiare	traveling	il contribuire	contributing
il camminare	walking	il pensare	thinking

NOUNS ENDING IN -zione

Nouns ending in **-zione** are always feminine:

la benedizione	blissing
-----------------------	----------

la cauzione	warning
la costituzione	constitution
la funzione	function
la liberazione	liberation

NOUNS ENDING IN -tá

Nouns ending in **-tá** always feminine. Note the correlation between Italian **-tá** and English **-ty**:

la libertá	liberty	la malvagitá	wickedness
la bontá	goodness	la cittá	city
la caritá	charity	la santitá	holiness
la comunitá	community		
la difficoltá	difficulty		
la vanitá	vanity		

Note that these nouns are invariable in the Plural.

NOUNS DENOTING PERSONS / ANIMALS

Nouns denoting persons or animals can be masculine or feminine and are formed by adding **o** or **a** to a common stem:

il nonno	grandfather	la nonna	grandmother
lo sposo	bridegroom	la sposa	bride
il gatto	cat	la gatta	cat

NOUNS DENOTING PROFESSION / SOCIAL POSITION

Nouns denoting a person's profession or social position often end in **-ista**, **-ante**, or **-ente**. Gender is indicated by the article preceding the noun and the noun endings do not change:

l' artista	artist	la artista	artist
il cantante	singer	la cantante	singer
il dentista	dentist	la dentista	dentist

Gender for some common-stem nouns is indicated only by their articles. Note the meanings of common-stem nouns may *not* be related.

il capitale	capital (money)	la capitale	capital city
il fronte	military front	la fronte	forehead

Related Topics:

[Definite Article](#)

[Indefinite Article](#)

GROUP NOUNS

The masculine plural form can include both the female and male members of a group:

- i bambini** = boys / boy + girl / boys + girls / children
- i figli** = sons / son + daughter / sons + daughters
- I signori** = gentlemen / Mr. and Mrs.

Related Topics:

[Nouns](#)

[Compound Noun](#)

COMPOUND NOUNS

The article preceding some [compound nouns](#) changes from singular to plural to indicate a change in number, but the [noun](#) itself does not change its ending. [Compound nouns](#) are always masculine.

Singular

il lavapiatti dishwasher
il giradischi record player

Plural

i lavapiatti dishwashers
i giradischi record players

Related Topics:

GROUP NOUNS

Nouns

DIMINUTIVE AND AUGMENTATIVE FORMS

Diminutive in Italian convey an idea of lesser size. The most common diminutive suffixes are:

Masculine	Feminine
-ino	-ina
-etto	-etta

un ragazzo	un ragazzino
a boy	a little boy

una donna	una donnina
a woman	a little woman

un libro	un libretto
a book	a little book

una casa	una casetta
a house	a little house

A diminutive may be used to convey an idea of affection as in the examples above and in the following:

-ello, ella	asino, asinello	little donkey
-olo, -ola	figlio, figliolo	dear son
-uccio, -uccia	bocca, boccuccia	pretty little mouth

The ending **-ONE** is added to nouns to make them augmentative.

Feminine Nouns generally become *masculine* when made augmentative:

un ragazzo	un ragazzone
a boy.	a big boy.

una caserma	un casermone
barracks	big barracks

Alternatively, a **deprecativ diminutive** may convey an idea of something undesirable, ugly or hateful. Some examples:

-accio, -accia

-astro, -astra

-onzolo, -onzola

-ucolo, -ucola

libro, libraccio

poeta, poetastro

medico, mediconzolo

paese, paesucolo

horrible book

terrible poet

awful doctor

horrible little town

Related Topics:

[Interjection](#)

[Nouns](#)

Personal Pronouns

Like their English counterparts, Italian personal pronouns exist in singular and plural forms for the first, second, and third persons. Unlike English, Italian personal pronouns include both formal and informal forms of the second person pronouns. As do many European languages, Italian distinguishes between a formal (**Lei**) and informal (**tu**) second person pronoun. The use of one or the other is determined by the social relations between the speakers.

Subject forms

	Singular	Plural
First Person	io (I)	noi (we)
Second Person	tu (you)	voi (you pl.)
Third Person (m. or f.)		loro (they)
	lui, egli, esso (he)	essi (they, m)
	lei, ella, essa (she)	esse (they, f)
Formal	Lei (you)	Loro (you pl.)

In modern spoken Italian **lui**, **lei** and **loro** are most frequently used for **he**, **she**, **they**. In Italian the verb ending indicates the subject, and for this reason it is very common to drop the subject pronoun.

SUBJECT PRONOUNS FOR EMPHASIS

The adjective **stesso** (-a), **self**, is used with the subject pronouns to add emphasis:

io stesso -a	I myself
tu stesso -a	you yourself (thou thyself)
lui stesso	he himself
lei stessa	she herself
noi stessi -e	we ourselves (masc. and fem.)
voi -stessi -e	you yourselves (masc. and fem.)
loro stessi -e	they themselves (masc.and fem.)

Io stessa aggiustai la macchina.
I, myself, repaired the car.

Labbiamo detto **noi stessi**.
We have said it ourselves.

Related Topics:

[Personal Object Pronouns](#)

[Conjunctive Pronouns](#)

Lei/Tu

There are more pronouns in Italian for the expression of the subject **you** than in English, because Italian observes a distinction between styles of direct address that does not now exist in English.

Tu is second person form of the verb, and is employed when the relationship between speaker and person spoken to is intimate or familiar (close friends and family). **Lei** is used when the relationship is more formal and requires the verb in third person.

FAMILIAR

Tu hai molti figli, vero?

You have many children, true?

FORMAL

Lei ha molti figli, vero?

You have many children, true?

Related Topics:

[Personal Pronouns](#)

[Personal Object Pronouns](#)

Conjunctive Pronouns

Italian has a group of pronouns, called conjunctive pronouns, used only in conjunction with verbs. These pronouns follow imperative, infinitive and participle forms and are written together with the verb form. In the first and second person, singular and plural, the pronoun has the meaning of both direct and indirect object. In the third person, the pronouns have different forms for direct and indirect objects.

	Singular	Plural
First Person	mi (me; to me)	ci (us; to us)
Second Person	ti (you; to you)	vi (you; to you)
Third Person	lo (him; it) gli (to him; to it) la (her; it) le (to her; to it)	li (them, m) le (them, f)
Formal	La (you, m) Le (to you, f) La (you, f) Le (to you, f)	Li (you,f) Le (you, f)

Note that **lo** and **la** are contracted to **l'** before a verb beginning with a silent **h** or a vowel.

Italian has no third person plural indirect conjunctive pronoun for **to them** or **to you** (formal, plural). In their place, **loro** (**to them**) and **Loro** (**to you** formal plural) are used. This is not a conjunctive pronoun and, therefore, does not precede the verb.

Direct object pronouns may be placed after the verb for emphasis, in this case the following forms are used:

	Singular	Plural
First Person	me (me)	noi (us)
Second Person	te (you)	voi (you pl.)
Third Person	lui (him) lei (her)	loro (them) loro (them)
Formal	Lei (you)	Loro (you pl.)

Related Topics:

[Personal Pronouns](#)

[Personal Object Pronouns](#)

Personal Object Pronouns

	Direct Object		Indirect Object	
Singular:	mi	me	mi	to me
	ti	you	ti	you
	lo	him, it	gli	to him, to it
	la	her, it	le	to her, to it
	La	you (m,f)	Le	to you
Plural:	ci	us	ci	to us
	vi	you	vi	to you
	li	them (m)	loro	to them
	le	them (f)		
	Li	you (m)		
	Le	you (f)	Loro	to you

Note: The final vowel of **mi**, **ti**, **lo**, **la**, **La** may be elided before a vowel. **Ci** and **vi** lose their **i** only before another **i**.

Order of personal object pronouns:

Two personal pronouns used as the objects of the same verb have the following order: indirect-direct.

- **Mi**, **ti**, **ci** and **vi** and the reflexive **si** change respectively to **me**, **te**, **ce**, **ve** and **se** when followed by **lo**, **la**, **li**, **le** and **ne** (of it, of them, any, some, about it, about them).
- **Gli** and **le(Le)** change to **glie** before **lo**, **la**, **li**, **le**, and **ne** are written as one word.
- **Me lo**, **te lo**, **ce lo**, etc. are written as one word when joined to a verb form.
- **Loro** always follows the verb, but is not joined to it.

Examples:

Me lo farà sapere.
He will let me know (it).
Glilo porterò io.
I shall bring it to him (her, you).
Se la farà mandare.
He will have it sent (to himself).
Me ne parlerà più tardi.
He will speak to me about it later.
Vuole darcene un po?
Will you give us some?
Ve lo manderò domani.
I shall send it to you tomorrow.
Non me ne vuole dare.
He won't give me any.

Related Topics:

[Personal Pronouns](#)

[Prepositional Pronouns](#)

Prepositional Pronouns

The personal pronouns used as objects of prepositions are as follows:

	Singular		Plural
me	me	noi	us
te	thee (you)	voi	you
lui, esso	him	loro, essi	them (masc)
lei, essa	her	loro, esse	them (fem.)
Lei	you	Loro (m,f)	you

Reflexive = **sè**

Examples:

Non lo farebbe per **sè**, e molto meno per **te**.
He would not do it for himself and much less for you.
Per me non è mai in casa.
He is never at home to me.
Parla a lui, non a **Lei**.
He is speaking to him, not to you.

Notes:

- The forms **esso**, **essa**, **essi**, **esse**, are used for both persons and things, though not commonly.
- For the sake of emphasis, prepositional pronouns are used instead of the direct object form. **Lo disse a me** is more emphatic than **Me lo disse**.

Parlo a voi, Signore.
I am speaking to you, Sir.

- To show contrast, prepositional pronouns are used in the objective case after the verb:

Interrogherò **Lei**, non lui.
I shall question you, not him.

Related Topics:

[Personal Pronouns](#)

[Personal Object Pronouns](#)

Possessive Adjectives and Pronouns

Possessives are sometimes referred to in traditional grammar as pronouns or possessive adjectives. They convey a sense of ownership, or inherent quality and occur in both simple and emphatic forms corresponding to the personal pronouns. The possessive adjectives agree in both number and gender with the following noun or noun phrase. The possessive pronouns agree in gender and number with the noun or noun phrase they represent.

	m. sg.	m.pl.	f. sg.	f. pl.
first person sing.	mio	miei	mia	mie
second person sing.	tuo	tuoi	tua	tue
third person sing.	suo	suoi	sua	sue
third person sing. Formal	Suo	Suoi	Sua	Sue
first person pl.	nostro	nostri	nostra	nostre
second person pl.	vostro	vostr	vostra	vostre
third person pl.	loro	loro	loro	loro
third person pl. Formal	Loro	Loro	Loro	Loro

Note that the role of the third person plural (**their** and **your** plural formal) possessive adjective is filled by the possessive pronoun **loro** and **Loro** respectively. **This shows no gender or number variation.**

Unlike English, the Italian possessive is preceded by a definite article, an indefinite article, a demonstrative, a quantifier which also agrees in number and gender with the following noun or noun phrase. The possessive may also be preceded by a cardinal number, but this is invariable. Examples:

il mio libro
my book

la nostra casa
our house

i vostri libri
your (plural) books

le loro scuole
their schools

la mia amica
my friend

una mia amica
a friend of mine

questa mia amica
this friend of mine

tre mie amiche
three friends of mine

alcune mie amiche
some friends of mine

But,

Questo è il mio, quello il Suo.
This one is mine, that one yours.

In the case of the possessive adjective, for a small group of nouns indicating a family relationship the definite article is **omitted** under the following conditions:

- the noun is singular
- the noun is unmodified
- the noun has no suffixes (diminutives etc.)
- the possessive adjective is not **loro**

Examples:

mio padre
my father

tua cognata
your sister-in-law

nostro padre
our father

i miei fratelli
my brothers

la mia cugina francese
my French cousin

il nostro fratellino
our little brother

il loro padre
their father

The emphatic form of the possessive pronoun behaves in the same way as the simple form with regard to the article. Examples:

Questo è il mio
This is mine (sing. masc. noun)

Ho perso le mie
I've lost mine (fem. pl. noun)

It is important to remember that, in Italian, the number and gender agreement is determined by the noun or noun phrase that is modified or represented by the possessive. *The possessive forms tell the listener or reader nothing about the gender of the possessor involved.*

Related Topics:

[Personal Pronouns](#)

[Prepositional Pronouns](#)

Relative Pronouns

The relative pronouns are: **che**, **cui**, **il quale**. **Che** refers to persons and things and is used as the subject and the object of verbs. It is never omitted in Italian.

Il libro **che** è sulla tavola.
The book that is on the table.
Il denaro **che** ho ricevuto.
The money (that) I received.
Sono io **che** l'ho fatto.
It is I who did it.
È tuo padre **che** voglio vedere.
It is your father whom I wish to see.

Cui is used chiefly as the object of prepositions:

Il signore a **cui** parlo.
The gentleman to whom I speak.

But we can also say:

Il signore **al quale** parlo.
The gentleman to whom I speak.

The two forms are interchangeable.

English **whose**, is **il** (la, etc.) **cui** or **del** (della, etc.) **quale**, both forms being inflected.

È un uomo **il cui** ingegno tutti ammirano.
He is a man **whose** intelligence all admire.
È un uomo **del quale** tutti ammirano l'ingegno.
He is a man **whose** intelligence all admire.

Il quale and its inflected forms **la quale**, **i** (**le**) **quali**, are used instead of **che** when clearness demands it. They are used as subjects of verbs and objects of prepositions.

Il fratello di Anna, **il quale** venne a vedermi, è un bravo giovanotto.
Anna's brother who came to see me, is a fine young man.

He who (without an antecedent) is generally rendered by **chi**. **Those who** is rendered by **quelli** (**quelle**) **che**. **The one which** and **those which** by **quello** (**quella**) **che** and **quelli** (**quelle**) **che** respectively.

Chi l'ha detto non sa nulla.
He who said it knows nothing.
Quello che ho io è migliore del suo.
The one I have is better than his.
Preferisco **quelli che** ho visto ieri.
I prefer **the ones** I saw yesterday.

Related Topics:

[Interrogative Pronouns](#)

[Possessive Adjectives and Pronouns](#)

Interrogative Pronouns

The interrogative pronouns for direct and indirect questions are:

Chi? who, whom?
Che? che cosa? What?
cosa?
Quale (quali)? Which one(s)?

Examples:

Chi mi stava cercando?
Who was looking for me?
Non so **chi** voglia dire.
I do not know **who** he means.
Che cosa vuole che gli dica?
What do you wish me to tell him?

Chi? is never used as a subject in the plural except with the verb *essere*.

Chi sono costoro?
Who are these fellows?

Che? is used as the object of verbs and prepositions, and refers to things only.

Che vuol fare, signore?
What do you wish to do, Sir?
Di **che** parla quell'uomo?
What is that man talking about?

Note: In an indirect question *che* (*what*) is used as the object of a dependent infinitive.

Non saprei **che** dire.
I would not know **what** to say.

Quale (quali) as pronouns, are used as the subjects and objects of both verbs and prepositions, and refer to persons and things.

Quale delle due è preferibile?
Which one of the two is preferable?
Quale dei due arrivò primo?
Which of the two arrived first?
Quale desidera?
Which do you desire?

Interrogative *whose* is rendered by *di chi*?

Di chi è quella bella casa?
Whose beautiful house is that?

Interrogative adjectives:

The interrogative adjectives are *che* and *quale* (*quali*). They precede the noun and modify both persons and things.

Che modo di agire è questo?
What kind of behavior is this?
Quale barca preferisce, Lei?
Which boat do you prefer?
Quale maestro vuol dire, Lei?
Which teacher do you mean?

Note: In exclamations *che* means *what a...!* and *quale* simply means *what...!* Examples:

Che bella giornata!
What a beautiful day!
Quale avvenire sarebbe stato il suo!
What future his would have been!

Related Topics:

Possessive Adjectives and Pronouns

Relative Pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns

	Singular	Plural
First Person	mi (myself)	ci (ourselves)
Second Person	ti (yourself)	vi (yourselves)
Third Person	si (himself, herself, itself)	si (themselves)
Formal	si (you)	si (yourselves)

USAGE

Italian uses Reflexive Pronouns when the action of the verb is reflected back on the subject.

EXAMPLES:

Mi lavo.
I wash myself.

Ci laviamo.
We wash ourselves.

Ti lavi.
You wash yourself.

Vi lavate.
You wash yourselves.

Si lava.
He/she washes himself/herself.

Si lavano.
They wash themselves.

Note that reflexive structures are more common in Italian than in English since they sometimes express ideas that are not commonly expressed in English with reflexive structures.

Mario si siede.
Mario sits down.

Mi alzo alle otto.
I get up at eight.

In the Present Perfect Tense (Passato Prossimo) Reflexive Verbs always take the auxiliary **essere**, therefore the Past Participle agrees with the subject.

Le ragazze si sono lavate.
The girls haven't washed themselves.

I bambini si sono svegliati alle sette.
The children have woken up at seven.

In sentences like: *I like to wash myself* the reflexive pronoun attaches to the infinitive:

Mi piace lavarmi.

Related Topics:

[Relative Pronouns](#)

[Subject Pronouns](#)

Adjective Formation

Most Italian adjectives are regularly formed, and follow the model of **alto** (tall):

	Masculine	Feminine
Singular	alto	alta
Plural	alti	alte

Other common models are:

- **Adjectives** ending in **-e** (masculine and feminine forms the same)

	Masculine	Feminine
Singular	elegante	elegante
Plural	eleganti	eleganti

- **Adjectives** ending in **-ista** (masculine and feminine forms the same)

	Masculine	Feminine
Singular	comunista	comunista
Plural	comunista	comunista

Most adjectives regularly form their comparatives with **più** and their superlatives with the appropriate article and **più**:

Questo ragazzo è alto.
This boy is tall

Questo ragazzo è più alto degli altri.
This boy is taller than the others

Questo ragazzo è il più alto della famiglia.
This boy is the tallest in the family

Related Topics:

ADVERBS

Nouns

Comparatives

The comparative degree of adjectives:

The comparative degree of adjectives is formed by placing **più** (meaning **more**) and **meno** (meaning **less**) before the adjective. Example :

The following adjectives, in addition to the regular comparative degree, have an irregular one:

alto	high
più alto or superiore	higher
basso	low
più basso or inferiore	lower
buono	good
più buono or migliore	better
cattivo	bad
più cattivo or peggiore	worse
grande	big
più grande or maggiore	bigger
piccolo	small
più piccolo or minore	smaller

The forms **maggiore**, **minore**, **superiore**, **inferiore** are rarely used except to mean **older**, **younger**, **superior**, and **inferior** respectively. **Migliore** and **peggiore** are preferable to **più buono** and **più cattivo**.

Related Topics:

Adjective Formation

Superlatives

Superlatives

The superlative degree of adjectives:

The superlative degree is formed by placing the definite article before the comparative. For [example](#) :

Note: When the superlative immediately follows the noun, the article is omitted. For example:

Napoli è la città **più popolosa** d'Italia.
Naples is the **most crowded** city in Italy.

English **in** after a superlative is expressed by **di**.

Il più bello **di** tutto il mondo.
The most beautiful **in** the whole world.

By dropping the final vowel from an adjective and adding the suffix **-issimo** (inflected), we get a form that is an emphasis of an adjective in English. The same meaning results from prefixing the adverbs **molto** or **assai** (both mean **very**) to the adjective. This is called **absolute superlative (superlativo assoluto)**, since it does not involve any idea of comparison.

È un **bravissimo** ragazzo.
Or: È un ragazzo **molto bravo**.
He is a **very fine** boy.

The word **than** is expressed in the following three ways:

By **che** before an adjective, an infinitive, an adverb and after **piuttosto** (meaning **rather**). For example:

Sono più furbi **che** intelligenti.
They are shrewder **than** smart.
Meglio tacere **che** dire troppo.
Better to keep still **than** say too much.
Meglio tardi **che** mai.
Better late **than** never.
Prendo questo **piuttosto che** quello.
I take this **rather than** that.

By **di** before a numerical expression, a noun, or a pronoun.

Ne ha fatto più **di** venti.
He has made more **than** twenty.
Lo so fare meglio **di** Lei.
I can do it better **than** you.
Come cibo, il pane è migliore **del** cavolo.
As food, bread is better **than** cabbage.

By **di quello che** (**than, that, which**), before an inflected verb.

Spende più **di quello che** *guadagna*.
He spends more **than** he *earns*.

Some very common adjectives have irregular comparative and superlative forms. These include:

buono migliore il migliore
grande maggiore il maggiore

Unlike English, Italian adjectives usually follow the noun or noun phrase which they modify. A few adjectives, commonly **buono**, **grande** and **bello**, may also occur before the noun or noun phrase, often with a slight change of meaning. Such adjectives often require special endings for the masculine

singular which parallel the definite or indefinite article.

The substitution of an adjective for a noun referring to a person or object with a particular quality is more widespread in Italian than in English.

La vecchia voleva comprare del latte.

The old woman wanted to buy some milk.

Il giovane è bello.

The young man is handsome.

Related Topics:

[Adjective Formation](#)

[Comparatives](#)

Quantifiers

In Italian, as in English, there are three major types of quantifiers: **cardinal numbers**, **ordinal numbers** and **general quantifiers**.

Cardinal Numbers

Cardinal or counting numbers (**uno**, **due**, **tre** etc.) may either stand alone or before a following noun or noun phrase

Dieci e dieci fanno venti
Ten and ten are twenty

Ci sono tre ragazzi sulla strada
There are three boys in the street

They are invariable in form with several exceptions:

The final vowel of **venti**, **trenta**, **quaranta** etc. is dropped when **uno** and **otto** are added, giving **trentuno**, **quarantotto** etc. Note too that **tre** becomes accented when added to a multiple of ten, giving **sessantatré** etc.

The final **-o** of compound numbers ending in **uno** (**ventuno**, **sessantuno**) is usually dropped before nouns.

Examples:

ventun ragazzi
twenty-one boys

ottantun libri
eighty-one books

The word **cento** is invariable and the compounds of **cento** are attached (**seicento**, **settecento**). **Mille**, **milione**, **miliardo** on the other hand, do have plural forms and the compounding element is not attached.

Examples:

tre milioni
quattro miliardi

Note too that **one hundred** and **one thousand** in Italian are **cento** and **mille** respectively, never **un cento** or **un mille**. In the higher numbers **milione** and **miliardo**, **un** is used, giving **un milione** and **un miliardo** respectively.

Ordinal Numbers

Ordinal or ordering numbers (**primo**, **secondo**, **terzo** etc.) stand before a following noun or noun phrase, and agree in both number and gender.

il primo cane
the first dog

la terza volta
the third time

From the number **undici** (**eleven**) and up the final vowel of the cardinal number is dropped and the suffix **-esimo** is added. Examples:

dodici	dodicesimo	twelfth
ottanta	ottantesimo	eightieth

All compound cardinal numbers ending in **tré** are an exception to this rule, as they simply drop the accent and add the suffix **-esimo**. Example:

[ventitré](#)

[ventitreesimo](#)

[twenty-third](#)

General Quantifiers

The program may classify as general quantifiers words such as [all](#), [some](#), and [last](#) which carry a quantifying or ordering meaning.

Related Topics:

[Contents](#)

[THE CLOCK AND THE CALENDAR](#)

Demonstrative Adjectives And Pronouns

Demonstrative adjectives agree in gender and number with their nouns, and demonstrative pronouns with their antecedents.

Singular		Plural		
Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine	
questo	questa	questi	queste	this, these
quello	quella	quelli	quelle	that, those

Questo and **questa** are usually written **quest'** before a vowel.

Quest'uomo **this man**
Quest'aria **this air**

Quello (as an adjective) is inflected as follows:

quel	before a noun beginning with any consonant except z , s impure, ps and gn
quello	before z and s impure, ps and gn
quei	the plural of quel
quegli	the plural of quello

Ciò (**this**, **that**), represents a whole idea and not a single word.

Ciò si capisce.
That is understood.
Ciò è chiaro.
That is clear.

When what may logically be rendered by **that which**, use **quello che** or **ciò che**:

Ciò che Le dico è la pura verità.
What I tell you is the pure truth.

That which may be omitted in English, but never in Italian:

Non è tutto oro quello che luccica.
Not all that glitters is gold.
Tutto quello che disse si è avverato.
Everything (**that**) he said has come true.

This man is translated by **questi**; **that man** is translated by **quegli**. These two forms are invariable, refer only to a person, and are used in the subjective case exclusively.

English former and latter are rendered by **quegli** and **questi** respectively when referring to a person; otherwise by **quello** and **questo**.

That of, **those of**, are frequently omitted in English, but never in Italian:

Il mio e quello di Roberto.
Mine and Robert's
La mia casa e quella di tuo fratello.
My house and your brother's.

The forms **costui** (**this man**), **costei** (**this woman**) **costoro** (**these people**), are used, if not to express contempt, certainly indifference and aloofness:

Chi è **costui**?
Who is **this fellow**?

Che ardire hanno **costoro!**
What boldness **these people** have!

Related Topics:

Possessive Adjectives and Pronouns
Articles

ADVERBS

Most adverbs of manner are formed by adding **-mente** to the feminine singular of the corresponding adjective. **Adjectives** ending in **-le** and **-re** drop final **e** before adding **-mente**. For example:

franco	frank
francamente	frankly
debole	feeble
debolmente	feebly
facile	easy
facilmente	easily
maggiore	greater
maggiormente	more greatly

Adverbs are compared like adjectives. For example:

facilmente
più facilmente
il più facilmente

The following adverbs, however, have an irregular comparison:

bene	well
male	badly
meglio	better
peggio	worse
il meglio	the best
il peggio	the worst
molto	much
poco	little
più	more
meno	less
il più	the most
il meno	the least

Adverbs not ending in **-mente** may add **-issimo** after dropping the final vowel, and the result is the **superlative** equivalent of **molto** (**very**) + adverb. For example:

bene	well
molto bene	very well
benissimo	very well
piano	softly
molto piano	very softly
pianissimo	very softly

Adverbs generally follow the verb. **Non**, however, always precedes. In compound tenses the adverb invariably follows the past participle, except that **già** (**already**), **mai** (**ever**, **never**), **più** (**more**) and **sempre** (**always**) are usually placed between the auxiliary and the past participle. For example:

Ha **già** finito?
Have you **already** finished?
Sono **sempre** stato così.
I have **always** been that way.
Vi è **mai** stato?

Have you **ever** been there?
Non ha **più** voluto saperne.
He hasn't wanted to hear of it any **more**.
Non ha **mai** voluto ascoltarmi.
He has **never** wanted to listen to me.

NOUN + con AS ADVERB

Adverbs are frequently formed by using the prepositional phrase con + the singular form of the noun.

con + noun -mente English

con ansietà	ansiosamente	anxiously
con gusto	gustosamente	gladly
con affetto	affettuosamente	lovingly
con pazienza	pazientemente	patiently
con rapidità	rapidamente	rapidly

USAGE

ADVERBS THAT MODIFY ADJECTIVES + OTHER ADVERBS

Adverbs such as **molto**, **poco**, **abbastanza**, and **troppo** are used to convey intensity. Adverbs that express degree include **relativamente**, **straordinariamente**, **enormemente**, **estremamente**, and **realmente**.

Words such as **poco**, **molto**, and **abbastanza** can be used as both adverbs and adjectives. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. Adverbs *never* change their form. Adjectives modify nouns and pronouns and *must* agree with the words they modify in number and, if possible, in gender.

Adverbs *do not* change form.

Studio troppo rapidamente .	I study <i>too rapidly</i> .
Loro studiano troppo rapidamente .	They study <i>too rapidly</i> .

Adjectives change form.

Tengo troppe riviste.	I have <i>too many magazines</i> .
Comprai troppi vestiti.	I bought <i>too many dresses</i> .

MODIFICATION OF ADVERBS BY OTHER ADVERBS

Affirmative

Disegna molto, molto bene .	He (she) draws <i>very, very well</i> .
Canta veramente bene .	He (she) sings <i>really well</i> .
Corre abbastanza male .	He (she) runs <i>quite badly</i> .

Negative

Anna <i>non</i> parla proprio bene .	Anna <i>does not</i> speak <i>at all well</i> .
Paolo <i>non</i> canta molto bene .	Paul <i>does not</i> sing <i>very well</i> .

MODIFICATION OF ADJECTIVES BY ADVERBS

Roberto è **abbastanza alto**. Roberto is *quite tall*.
Maria si sente **troppo stanca**. Mary feels *too tired*.

Related Topics:

[ADVERBS](#)

[Adjective Formation](#)

PREPOSITIONS

The simple [prepositions](#) in Italian are:

a	at, to	mediante	through
con	with	meno	except, but
contro	against	di	of, from
per	for, by	da	from, since
durante	during	in	in, to, at, on
senza	without	tra	among, between
su	on, about	eccetto	except
dopo	after		

VERB + PREPOSITION

[Prepositions](#) complete the meaning of [verbs](#) in different ways:

pensare	think, intend
pensare di	to think of, have an opinion about
pensare a	to think of, meditate on

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

Some commonly used [prepositional phrases](#) include:

a causa di	on account of
al fine di	at the end of
a forza di	by dint of
al punto di	about to
davanti a	in front of
invece di	instead of

The preposition **a** means **to** or **at** in English. But when used in front of the name of a town can mean **in**.

Related Topics:

[Adjective Formation](#)

[Adverbs](#)

CONJUNCTIONS

The simple conjunctions uniting coordinate clauses are:

e	and
o	or
nè	nor
però	but nevertheless
ma	but

The simple conjunctions introducing *subordinate* clauses are:

come	as, as soon as
quando	when
mentre	while
che	that
se	if

PERÒ

Però means *but* or *nevertheless*:

Questa medicina è cattiva però fa bene.
This medicine tastes bad, *but* it is good for the health.

MA

Ma is more rhetorical than **però** and is sometimes used for euphony:

È un libro difficile, ma interessante.
It is a difficult book, *but* it is interesting.

CHE

Che serves as a conjunction and is required after affirmations or oaths and before adverbs and clauses, though redundant in English:

Dubito **che** venga. I doubt that he will come.
Credo **che** non sia vero. I believe (*that*) it is not true.

Related Topics:

[PREPOSITIONS](#)

[Clauses](#)

INTERJECTIONS

[Interjections](#) are more numerous and important in Italian than in English:

Divine names as exclamations are common and are *not* usually regarded as profane:

Dio!	God!
Per Dio!	For goodness' sake!
Dio mio!	Dear me!
Oh Dio mio!	Oh dear me!
Mamma mia!	Oh Dear!

[Nouns](#) and [adjectives](#) may become [interjections](#):

Bravo!	Good!
Attenzione!	Take care! Look out!
Al Fuoco!	Fire!
Aiuto!	Help!

Related Topics:

[Imperative Form](#)

[Negative Statements](#)

Participles

The [Infinitive](#), [Past Participle](#) and [Present Participle](#) are grouped together for functional reasons. These verb forms do not inflect for person and number in the same way as all the other tenses.

Related Topics:

[Adjectives](#)

[Nouns](#)

[SUMMARY OF TENSES](#)

Past Participles

The Past Participle of regular verbs is formed by dropping the infinitive ending **-are** and adding the ending **-ato** for regular first conjugation verbs; dropping the infinitive ending **-ere** and adding **-uto** for *regular* second conjugation verbs; and dropping the infinitive ending **-ire** and adding **-ito** for *regular* third conjugation verbs. English equivalents are formed by adding **-ed**, **-t**, **-en**, etc. (i.e., **parked**, **kept**, **frozen**). They are used in the compound tenses and in passive voice and they can also stand alone as adjectives.

Look at the following examples of regular past participles:

ballare	ballato
cantare	cantato
avere	avuto
cadere	caduto
sapere	saputo
partire	partito
capire	capito

EXAMPLE: Il pollo era stato **cucinato**.
The chicken *had been* cooked.

Related Topics:

SUMMARY OF TENSES
Present Participles

Present Participles

The Present Participle (equivalent to the English "ing" form) is called so because it participates in the sentence assuming the functions of the adjective, in which case it must agree in number and gender with the noun(s) they modify.

:

Le squadre concorrenti alla coppa dei campioni.
The teams competing for the championship.

It has two forms: Participio Presente (Present Participle) and Participio Passato (Past Participle). The Present Participle is formed by dropping the ending: **-are** and adding **-ante** (for first conjugation verbs) and for **-ere** and **-ire** verbs adding the suffix **-ente**.

<i>Infinitive</i>	amare	(to love)
<i>Present Participle</i>	amante	(loving)
<i>Past Participle</i>	amato	(loved)

EXAMPLES:

una poesia **commovente** (commuovere)
a *moving* poem

una conversazione **stimolante** (stimolare)
a *stimulating* conversation

delle notizie **sorprendenti** (sorprendere)
some *surprising* news

Gerunds:

In Italian the **gerund** (also equivalent to the English **-ing** form) expresses an action that is linked to another through a **causal** relationship:

Lo incontrai **andando** al teatro.
I met him (while) going to the theatre.

Mi divertivo cantando.
I had fun (while) singing.

It has two forms: present (**cantando**) and past (**avendo cantato**).

Related Topics:

[Past Participles](#)

[SUMMARY OF TENSES](#)

NOTES ON PIACERE

The literal translation of **piacere** is *to be pleasing*, but the English meaning is *to like*. **Piacere** is almost always used with the indirect object pronouns, **mi**, **ti**, **le**, **gli**, **ci**, **vi**, and **a loro**.

Mi **piace** il caffè.
Coffee is *pleasing to me*. = I like coffee.

Ti **piacciono** i fiori.
Flowers are *pleasing to you*. = You like flowers.

A loro **piace** sciare.
Skiing is *pleasing to them*. = They like skiing (to ski).

Notice that the pattern is Indirect Object (**mi**), Verb (**piacere**), Subject (**caffè**) instead of the common one: Subject, Verb, Direct Object.

PIACERE + INFINITIVE

When the subject is an infinitive, **piacere** is always singular even if more than one infinitive is included:

Le **piace** pescare e nuotare.
Fishing and swimming are *pleasing to her*.
She *likes* fishing and swimming.

Related Topics:

VERB SEQUENCE

SUMMARY OF TENSES

DECLARATIVE SENTENCES

ACTIVE VOICE

The active voice is a construction in which the subject performs the action described by the **verb**. In both English and Italian, sentences in the active voice are constructed in the subject-verb-object pattern.

EXAMPLE:

Il meccanico / ripara / la macchina. The mechanic repairs (is repairing) the car.
subject verb object

SUBJECT

The **subject** of a sentence can be a **noun**, **pronoun**, proper name, or a noun phrase. A **clause**, **gerund**, gerund phrase, or infinitive phrase can also function as the **subject**. The simple subject is a **noun** or **pronoun**, whereas the complete subject consists of the **noun** or **pronoun** plus all its modifiers. A compound subject consists of two or more **nouns**, **pronouns**, or noun phrases.

POSITION OF SUBJECT

In Italian, the **subject** does not always occur before the **verb** as it does in English. A variety of constructions is therefore possible, including complete omission of the **subject**:

Subject at end:
Comincia **la lezione**.
The *lesson* begins.

Subject (egli / he) omitted:
Riparò la macchina.
He repaired the car.

The **subject** is often placed at the end of a sentence when it contains new information, as in answer to the question **Chi?**

Chi riparò la macchina? Who repaired the automobile?
La riparò **un buon meccanico**. A good mechanic repaired it.

INFINITIVE AS SUBJECT

When the **subject** is an **infinitive** (or more than one), the **verb** is always singular:

Gli piace *pescaire e nuotare*.
He *likes* fishing and swimming.

Related Topics:

[VERB SEQUENCE](#)

[SUMMARY OF TENSES](#)

PREDICATE

A [predicate](#) consists of a [verb](#) or verbal phrase, including any complements, objects, and modifiers of a sentence or clause. The predicate always contains a verb and can consist of a [verb](#) and complement ([nouns](#), [pronouns](#), [prepositional phrases](#), [adjectives](#), and verb phrases). The [predicate](#) can either be an [inflected verb](#) form or a combination of inflected [auxiliary](#) and [past participle](#) or [infinitive](#) verb forms.

A sentence can include more than one [verb](#), object, or complement.

Related Topics:

[VERB SEQUENCE](#)

[Subject](#)

OBJECT

The object of a sentence can be a [noun](#), [pronoun](#), proper name, or a noun phrase. A [subordinate clause](#) may also function as an object.

POSITION OF OBJECT

The Object usually directly follows the verb:

Il ragazzo mangia **la pizza**.
The boy eats the pizza.

But, in some cases can also be preceded by the partitive article **di**:

Ho mangiato **della pizza**.
I have eaten some pizza.

To avoid the risk of confusion between the direct object with similar constructions, it is sufficient to verify that it answers the question: **who?** **what?**

TWO OBJECT PRONOUNS

When two [object pronouns](#) are used with the same [verb](#), the [indirect object](#) pronoun occurs first.

Me lo diede.
Dammelo.

He gave it to *me*.
Give it to *me*.

TWO THIRD-PERSON PRONOUNS

When two [pronouns](#) of the third person occur together, the [indirect object](#) pronouns **lo** and **gli** assume the form **glielo**.

Mandai un regalo a mio padre.
Gli mandai un regalo.
Lo mandai a mio padre.
Glielo mandai.

I sent a present to my father.
I sent *him* a package.
I sent it to my father.
I sent it to *him*.

Related Topics:

[Personal Object Pronouns](#)

[Prepositional Pronouns](#)

VERB SEQUENCE

Whenever a subordinate clause occurs after a main verb in a past tense, the verb of the subordinate clause must be put in the Imperfect Subjunctive. However, meaning can also dictate that the Present Perfect Tense and the Conditional be followed by a present tense.

Main Clause

Present
Future
Present Conditional
Present Perfect
Imperfect
Past

Subordinate Clause

Present Subjunctive
Present Subjunctive
Present or Imperfect Subjunctive
Present or Imperfect Subjunctive
Imperfect Subjunctive or Past Perfect Subj.
Imperfect Subjunctive or Past Perfect Subj.

EXAMPLES:

Sono felice che **vadano**.
present present subj.
I am happy that they are going.

Giocherei con loro se mi **invitassero**.
conditional present subj.
I would play with them if they invited me.

Volevo che John **venisse** al concerto con noi.
imperfect imperfect subj.
I wanted John to come to the concert with us.

Related Topics:

QUESTIONS

SUMMARY OF TENSES

Syntax

REFLEXIVE VERBS

Verbs that are intransitive in English are often expressed in Italian by the reflexive:

sposare	to marry (off), join in marriage	sposarsi	to get married, marry
lavare	to wash (something or someone)	lavarsi	to get washed, wash (oneself)
sedere	to seat (somebody)	sedersi	to sit down
vestire	to dress (somebody)	vestirsi	to get dressed, dress (onself)

The reciprocal reflexive is used to indicate that two or more persons are doing the action to each other:

Ci scriviamo spesso.
We often write to each other from time to time.

Si amano molto.
They love each other a lot.

Related Topics:

[Contents](#)

[Reflexive Pronouns](#)

NEGATION

The negative **non** is always placed directly before the verb, except in sentences that contain a reflexive verb and/or object pronoun.

Parlo italiano.
I speak Italian.

Non *parlo italiano.*
I *don't* speak Italian.

Si lavano le mani.
They are washing their hands.

Non *si lavano le mani.*
They are *not* washing their hands.

In sentences containing an object pronoun, **non** precedes the object pronoun.

Lo chiamo.
I call him.

Non lo chiamo.
I don't call him.

In Reflexive verb constructions, **non** precedes the reflexive pronoun.

Mi lavo.
I wash myself.

Non *mi lavo.*
I don't wash myself.

Ci alziamo.
We get up.

Non *ci alziamo.*
We don't get up.

The position of **non** in the sentence can vary. When the negative word (in this case **mai**) precedes the verb, **non** is omitted.

mai - never

Non parliamo **mai**.
Mai parliamo.

We never speak.

Notice that when a verb appears in a compound tense (ex. Past Participle) **mai** can appear between the auxiliary and the past participle of the verb.

Non abbiamo **mai** parlato.
Mai abbiamo parlato.

We never spoke.

Negatives other than **non** may be also be placed before the verb.

Nessuno

The italian adjective **Nessuno** (equivalent to the English **no** / **none** / **not any** / **not one** / **neither**) is declined as follows:

SINGULAR

Masculine	Feminine
nessuno	nessuna

NOTE: The adjective **nessuno** has no plural form.

Nessun

Nessuno drops the final **o** when it modifies a masculine noun:

Non hai **nessun** motivo per criticarlo.
You don't have *any* reason to criticize him.

Nessun(o) (*no one, none, nobody*) is invariable when used as a pronoun. When used as an adjective, it is inflected and means *no, not...any*.

Nessuno l'avrebbe fatto così.
No one would have done it that way.
Nessuno l'ha visto
Nobody saw him.
Nessun aiuto mi gioverà.
No help will do me any good.
Nessuna spiaggia è più pittoresca di questa.
No beach is more picturesque than this.
Nessuno andò con lei.
Nobody went with her.

Niente and **nulla** are synonymous. They mean *nothing, not...anything*. The rule for their position is the same as for **nessuno**.

Non desidero nulla, grazie.
I do not *want anything*, thank you.
Nulla è buono per Lei.
Nothing is good for you.
Non vuole nulla, Lei? No, grazie.
Don't you *want anything*? No thanks.
Vuole nulla, Signore? Sì.
Do you *want anything*, Sir? Yes.

NÉ

né	not even
né...né	neither...nor
non...né	neither...nor

Né questo, né quello.
Neither this **nor** that.

Non lo disapprovo **né** lo giustifico.
I *neither* disapprove of it *nor* I justify it.

Related Topics:

[Punctuation](#)

[Negative Statements](#)

QUESTIONS

In Italian a statement can be changed into a question by placing a question mark at the end of it.

In spoken language it is sufficient to change the intonation.

Question

John **ha** due figli?
Does John have two children?

Statement

John **ha** due figli.
John has two children.

Sometimes questions are asked in Italian by placing the verb before the subject. The subject may be placed directly after the verb or at the end of the question.

Question

Viene a casa Roberto?
Is Robert coming?

Statement

Roberto **viene** a casa.
Robert is coming.

OR

Question

Viene Roberto a casa?
Is Roberto coming?

Statement

Roberto **viene** a casa.
Robert is coming.

RHETORICAL QUESTIONS

Affirmative and negative statements may be turned into questions by adding a question word or phrase at the end.

Vuoi accompagnarmi, **vero?**
You want to accompany me, right?

Non sei andato al concerto, **vero?**
You didn't go to the concert, right?

Ti piacciono i dolci, **no?**
You like pastries, right?

Related Topics:

[Interrogative Pronouns](#)

[Punctuation](#)

CLAUSES

A sentence may consist of a main clause containing, at a minimum, subject and a predicate.

È piccante.

It is spicy.

Or it may consist of a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

Mi piace **anche se è piccante.**

I like it although it is spicy.

MAIN CLAUSES

A main clause may begin with the subject of the sentence, one of the objects, an adverb / adverbial phrase, or a subordinate clause. The first position in the sentence is generally one of emphasis.

SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

By definition, a subordinate clause is always dependent on a main clause and cannot stand by itself. The statement made in a subordinate clause does not have the same weight as that made in the main clause.

Subordinate clauses are separated from the main clause by commas.

Se il mio bilancio lo permettesse, mi comprerei una casa in campagna.

If my budget permitted, I would buy a house in the country.

Related Topics:

QUESTIONS

Subjunctive/Noun Clauses

Subjunctive/Adjective Clauses

Subjunctive/Noun Clauses

The verb of a noun clause (introduced by **che**) is in the subjunctive in the following two cases:

- After the verbs or expressions that imply doubt, denial, probability, possibility, and the like. For example:

Dubito che sia vero.

I doubt that it is true.

Non posso ammettere che sappia farlo.

I cannot admit that he can do it.

È probabile che l'abbia ricevuto.

It is probable that he has received it.

È possibile che se ne sia andato?

Is it possible that he has gone away?

- After verbs of thinking and believing when doubt or uncertainty is implied. For example:

Veramente non credo che abbia ragione.

I really do not think that he is right.

Credi che me ne importi?

Do you think I care?

Note: The future, however, is used when there is no uncertainty.

Credo che mi ascolterà.

I believe he will listen to me.

Related Topics:

[Subjunctive/Adjective Clauses](#)

[Subordinate Clause](#)

Subjunctive/Adjective Clauses

The verb of an adjective clause is in the subjunctive in the following two cases:

- After a relative pronoun the antecedent of which is indefinite. For example:

Me ne dia un altro che non sia troppo caro.
Give me another that is not too expensive.
Cerco qualcuno che sia capace di farlo.
I am looking for someone who can do it.

But,

Ne ho visti parecchi che sono a buon mercato.
I have seen several that are cheap.
Ho trovato un individuo che sa fare qualunque cosa.
I have found a person who can do anything.

- After a superlative or one of the following adjectives having a superlative force: **primo, ultimo, solo, unico** (first, last, only, only). For example:

È il più antico che esista.
It is the oldest one there is.
Sono stati i primi che l'abbiano fatto.
They have been the first to do it.
È l'unico che non sia riuscito.
He is the only one who has not succeeded.

Related Topics:

[Subjunctive/Noun Clauses](#)

[Subordinate Clause](#)

Subjunctive After Impersonal

The verbs of a subordinate clause, introduced by **che**, after impersonal verbs or expressions implying possibility, probability, necessity, usefulness, uselessness, right, wrong, fairness, seeming, and the like, are in the subjunctive. For example:

È probabile che non ne sappia nulla.
He probably knows nothing about it.
È possibile che me lo dia.
It is possible that he may give it to me.
Bisogna (è necessario) che Lei agisca subito.
It is necessary that you act at once.
È inutile che gliene parli
It is useless for me to talk to him about it.
Non è giusto che anche Lei s'incomodi.
It is not proper that you too should inconvenience yourself.
Sembra che si sia deciso.
He seems to have made up his mind.
È giusto che ognuno riceva la sua parte.
It is fair that each receive his share.
È facile che ci faccia questo favore.
Very likely he will do us this favor.

This rule does not apply, however, to affirmative impersonal expressions such as **è vero**, **si vede**, **è chiaro**, **è perchè**, etc., in which the indicative is used. For example:

È chiaro che non ha voglia di fare nulla.
It is clear that he has no desire to do anything.
È perchè lo dico io.
It is because I say so.
È vero che lo disse.
It is true that he said it.

The infinitive is used when the subordinate clause has no expressed subject. For example:

È possibile farlo.
It is possible to do it.
È inutile proseguire.
It is useless to continue.
Bisogna parlare chiaramente.
We (one, they) must speak clearly.

Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Imperfect Subjunctive](#)

[Reflexive Verbs](#)

THE CLOCK AND THE CALENDAR

TIME OF DAY

The third person forms of **essere** are used to indicate time of day:

Following are some common expressions dealing with time.

Che ora è?

What time is it?

È l'una.

It is one o'clock.

Sono le due.

It is two (o'clock).

Sono le sei e dieci.

It is ten after six.

Sono le otto meno venti.

It is twenty to eight.

Sono le tre e mezzo.

It is half past three.

The names of the days, months, and seasons are usually not capitalized.

DAYS OF THE WEEK

lunedì Monday

martedì Tuesday

mercoledì Wednesday

giovedì Thursday

venerdì Friday

sabato Saturday

domenica Sunday

The definite article is required before expressions of time that are modified by an adjective.

la settimana scorsa...
last week...

il prossimo sabato...
next Saturday...

In expressions of time the definite article appears where English uses the preposition "on":

il venerdì...
on Friday...

i giovedì...
on Thursdays...

L' aereo parte **il** quattordici.
The plane leaves *on the* fourteenth.

L'ultimo giorno del mese...
on the last day of the month...

MONTHS OF THE YEAR

gennaio January

febbraio February

luglio July

agosto August

marzo	March	settembre	September
aprile	April	ottobre	October
maggio	May	novembre	November
giugno	June	dicembre	December

SEASONS OF THE YEAR

la primavera	spring	l'autunno	autumn
l'estate	summer	l'inverno	winter

DIVISIONS OF THE DAY

la mattina	morning	
il giorno	day	
di giorno	by day	
la notte	night, evening	
il pomeriggio	afternoon	
ieri notte	last night	
l'altro ieri	the day before yesterday	
ieri	yesterday	
stanotte	tonight	
oggi	today	
domani		tomorrow
domani mattina		tomorrow morning

REPETITION

Repetition is expressed using **volta** (one time) and **per, alla**, or the definite article. It answers the question "How often?".

Quante volte alla settimana, al giorno, all'anno?...
How often a week, a day, a year?...

una volta	once
una volta che	once, as soon as, when
due volte	twice
a volte	at times, sometimes, occasionally
alla volta	at the same time, simultaneously
a sua volta	in turn; in his turn; for his, her, or one's part
qualche volta	occasionally, once in a while, sometimes
due volte più grande	twice as big
ogni volta	each time
quante volte	how often
una volta e per tutte	once and for all
una volta ogni tanto	from time to time
c'era una volta	once upon a time
la prima volta	the first time
molte volte	many times, often
poche volte	seldom, rarely
rare volte	seldom

Related Topics:

[Contents](#)

Syntax

CARDINAL & ORDINAL NUMBERS

CARDINAL NUMBERS

The cardinal numbers are:

0 = zero	10 = dieci
1 = uno	11 = undici
2 = due	12 = dodici
3 = tre	13 = tredici
4 = quattro	14 = quattordici
5 = cinque	15 = quindici
6 = sei	16 = sedici
7 = sette	17 = diciassette
8 = otto	18 = diciotto
9 = nove	19 = diciannove

20 = venti
21 = ventuno
22 = ventidue

30 = trenta
40 = quaranta
50 = cinquanta
60 = sessanta
70 = settanta
80 = ottanta
90 = novanta

100 = cento
1000 = mille
2000 = duemila

100.000 = centomila
200.000 = duecentomila

ORDINAL NUMBERS

The ordinal numbers are:

1st = primo -a
2d = secondo -a
3d = terzo -a
4th = quarto -a
5th = quinto -a
6th = sesto -a
7th = settimo -a
8th = ottavo
9th = nono -a

10th = decimo -a
11th = undicesimo -a
12th = dodicesimo -a
13th = tredicesimo -a

14th = quattordicesimo -a
15th = quindicesimo -a
16th = sedicesimo -a
17th = diciassettesimo -a
18th = diciottesimo -a
19th = diciannovesimo -a

20th = ventesimo -a
21st = ventunesimo -a
22d = ventiduesimo -a

30th = trentesimo -a
40th = quarantesimo -a
50th = cinquantesimo -a
60th = sessantesimo -a
70th = settantesimo -a
80th = ottantesimo -a
90th = novantesimo -a

100th = centesimo -a
101st = centunesimo -a
111th = centoundicesimo -a
121st = centoventunesimo -a

200th = duecentesimo, -a
300th = trecentesimo, -a
400th = quattrocentesimo -a
500th = cinquecentesimo, -a
600th = seicentesimo, -a
700th = settecentesimo, -a
800th = ottocentesimo, -a
900th = novecentesimo, -a

1000th = millesimo -a
2000th = duemillesimo -a

100,000th = centomillesimo -a
200,000th = duecentomillesimo -a

FRACTIONS

Fractional numerals:

one half = un mezzo
one third = un terzo
two thirds = due terzi

one fourth = un quarto
three fourths = tre quarti

one fifth = un quinto
one sixth = un sesto
one seventh = un settimo
one eighth = un ottavo
one ninth = un nono

one tenth = un **decimo**

Fractional numerals above **decimo** are formed by adding **-esimo** to the cardinals. The final **i** of a cardinal (except those containing **sette** and **nove**) may be dropped before **-esimo**.

one eleventh	=	un undicesimo
one twelfth	=	un dodicesimo
one thirteenth	=	un tredicesimo
one fourteenth	=	un quattordicesimo
one fifteenth	=	un quindicesimo
one sixteenth	=	un sedicesimo
one seventeenth	=	un diciassettesimo
one eighteenth	=	un diciottesimo
one nineteenth	=	un diciannovesimo
one twentieth	=	un ventesimo
one thirtieth	=	un trentesimo
one hundredth	=	un centesimo
one thousandth	=	un millesimo

Fractional numerals are also commonly formed with the feminine form of the ordinals modifying the word **parte**:

third	=	terza parte
twentieth	=	ventesima parte

The numerator of a fraction is a cardinal:

two-ninths	=	2/9	=	due noni
fourteen-thirtieths	=	14/30	=	quattordici trentesimi

NUMERICAL NOTATION

WHOLE NUMBERS

The *period* is used to divide *whole numbers*:

10.000 = ten thousand

DECIMALS

The *comma* is used for the *decimal point*:

1,2 = one and two-tenths

Related Topics:

[THE CLOCK AND THE CALENDAR](#)

[Adjectives](#)

PUNCTUATION

The Italian names of the marks of punctuation are:

.	punto	...	puntini sospensivi	''	dieresi
,	virgola	?	punto interrogativo	<< >>	virgolette
;	punto e virgola	!	punto esclamativo	-	trattino
:	due punti	()	parentesi		

The *period* is used to divide whole numbers and the *comma* is used for the decimal point:

10.000 = ten thousand (10,000)

1,4 = one and four tenths (1.4)

Related Topics:

[CARDINAL & ORDINAL NUMBERS](#)

[Contents](#)

Non-Grammatical Forms

The term, Non-Grammatical, is applied to words and expressions that do not fit into any other lexical category. Non-grammaticals do not inflect for gender, number, person or tense. Common Italian non-grammaticals are: **sì**, **no** and **grazie**.

Related Topics:

[Contents](#)

[Title Forms](#)

Title Forms

Common Italian titles applied to persons are **Signore**, **Signora**, **signorina**, and their associated abbreviations. These words typically occur before proper nouns and have certain restrictions concerning co-occurrence with articles. In Italian, the definite article is always used with titles, with the exception of direct address:

Il dottor Rossi è bravo.

Doctor Rossi is good.

Direct address:

Buongiorno dottor Rossi.

Good morning Doctor Rossi.

Titles ending in -e such as dottore, professore, signore, drop the -e when followed by proper names:

Il professore spiega la lezione.

The teacher explains the lesson.

Il professor Bianchi spiega la lezione.

Professor Bianchi explains the lesson.

Related Topics:

Non-Grammatical Forms

Nouns

Singular			Plural		
Masc.	Fem.		Masc.	Fem.	
questo	questa	this (near me)	questi	queste	these
quello	quella	that (over there)	quelli	quelle	those

DIMINUTIVE ENDINGS are added to nouns to imply a smaller form or lesser quality. They can also express affection or endearment. The most common diminutive endings are **-ino(a)**, **-etto(a)**, **-ello(a)**, and **-uccio(a)**.

EXAMPLES: la casa / **la casetta**
the house / the *little* house

la bocca / **la boccuccia**
the mouth / the *little* mouth

The **DIRECT OBJECT** is the person, place, or thing that is the direct recipient of the action described by a verb.

EXAMPLE: Lesse **la poesia**. He read *the poem*.

In English, a **GERUND** is a noun that is formed from a verb and ends in **-ing**. In Italian, the infinitive serves as the gerund.

EXAMPLE: **Fumare** fa male alla salute.
Smoking is bad for the health.

The **IMPERATIVE FORM** of a verb is used to give a command or make a suggestion. These forms are short and derived from the verb stem. Their spellings vary.

EXAMPLES: **Va** a casa! Go home!
Dammi il quaderno! Give me the notebook!

The **INDICATIVE** is the mood of the verb used in objective statements or questions. By contrast, the *conditional mood* indicates that a person would do something if something else were possible or that he would have done something if something else had been possible. The *subjunctive mood* expresses a request, a supposition, or an emotion such as a wish, a fear, a joy, etc. The *imperative mood* expresses a command or polite request.

An **INDIRECT OBJECT** is the person or thing "**to whom**" or "**for whom**" an action is performed.

EXAMPLE: John **le** regaló un vestito.
John gave *her* a dress.

INDIRECT SPEECH is the reporting of the words of an unknown speaker. Italian uses the pronoun **si** with the third person singular verb form to express "**it is...**", "**people...**", "**they...**", and "**one...**".

EXAMPLES:

Indirect Speech: **Lui dice che il progetto è terminato.**
He believes that (says that... / knows that...) the project is completed.

Indirect Speech with "si": **Si crede che...** It is believed that... People believe that...
They believe that... One believes that...
...the project is completed.

Si dice che... It is said that... People say that...
They say that... One says that...
...the project is completed.

Si sa che... It is known that... People know that...

They know that... One knows that...
...the project is completed.

An **INFINITIVE** is the basic form of a verb. It reflects no person, number, or tense. There are three infinitive endings in Italian: **-are**, **-ere**, and **-ire**.

An **INFINITIVE CLAUSE** with **per** (in order to) indicates purpose or intent.

EXAMPLE: Conservo i soldi **per comprare una casa**.
I am saving money (*in order*) *to buy a house*.

An **INFLECTED VERB** is one that has been identified as singular or plural and assigned endings for 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person.

EXAMPLE: **viaggia** (sing., 3rd person, Present Tense)
(*he*) *travels*

An **INTERJECTION** briefly expresses an emotional reaction to a situation, e.g., concern, approval, surprise, etc.

EXAMPLES: **Attenzione!** Watch out!
Poverino! Poor little thing!
Mamma mia! Oh dear!

An **INTRANSITIVE VERB** does not describe an action, but merely expresses a state of affairs, change, or natural process. It therefore does not take an object.

EXAMPLE: **Cammina** tutti i giorni.
he *walks* every day.

IRREGULAR VERBS show deviations from the usual pattern of inflection (spelling) in the stem as well as the endings.

EXAMPLE: **ANDARE (To go)**
Vado a casa.
I *go* home.

A **MAIN CLAUSE** is the independent or principal clause in a sentence. It does not depend on another clause for its meaning and can stand on its own as a full sentence.

EXAMPLE: Quando viene, **ti avviso**.
When he comes, *I will let you know*.

A **NOUN** names a person, place, or thing.

The **OBJECT OF A PREPOSITION** is a noun that follows a preposition.

EXAMPLE: Questo libro è per **Giacomo**.
This book is for *Giacomo*.

An **OBJECT PRONOUN** receives the action of the verb. A pronoun can also be the object of a preposition. The preposition **di** is repeated before each proper name and object pronoun in a series.

EXAMPLES: **Ci** visitarono. Vennero con **me**.
They visited *us*. They came *with me*.

A **PARTICIPIAL ADJECTIVE** is an adjective derived from a verb. It must agree in number with the noun it modifies.

EXAMPLE:

Serviamo la salsa **piccante**.
We serve hot sauce.

In **PASSIVE VOICE**, the order of subject and object are reversed, i.e., the subject receives the action of the verb. Passive voice conveys a sense of anonymity or objectivity. There are two passive constructions in Italian: (1) the impersonal subject **si**, and (2) **essere** + **past participle**.

EXAMPLES:

Active:	Lui terminò il contratto.	<i>He ended</i> the contract.
Passive:	Si terminò il contratto.	The contract <i>was ended</i> .
Passive:	Il contratto fu terminato .	The contract <i>was ended</i> .

PAST PARTICIPLES are formed by adding **-ato** or **-ito** to the present perfect stem of the verb. English equivalents are formed by adding **-ed**, **-t**, **-en**, etc. (i.e., **parked**, **kept**, **frozen**). They are used in the compound tenses and in passive voice and they can also stand alone as adjectives.

PAST PARTICIPLES are used in the compound tenses and in passive voice and they can also stand alone as adjectives.

EXAMPLE:

Il pollo era **stato cucinato**.
The chicken *had been cooked*.

POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES modify nouns and answer the question "**Whose...?**". They must be repeated before each noun they modify.

EXAMPLE:

mio padre e **mia** madre...
my father and mother...

A **POSSESSIVE PRONOUN** is a pronoun that answers the question "**Whose...?**".

EXAMPLE:

Usiamo la mia macchina o **la tua**?
Will we use my car or *yours*?

A **PREDICATE** modifies a subject and includes the verbs, objects, or phrases governed by the verb. It can also be a verb or linking verb (**essere** = "to be") that connects the elements of a sentence.

EXAMPLE:

Carmen / guidava la macchina.
Carmen / drove the car.
subject / predicate

A **PREDICATE ADJECTIVE** describes the subject of a predicate.

EXAMPLE:

Lui è molto **bello**. He is *very handsome*.

A **PREDICATE NOUN** is equivalent in meaning to the subject and is linked to it by a predicate.

EXAMPLE:

Lui è **ingegnere**. He is *an engineer*.

A **PREPOSITION** introduces a noun, pronoun, adverb, infinitive, or present participle and can indicate spatial or temporal relationships. Italian prepositions include the "personal **a**," **per**, **di**, **con**, **su**, **sopra**, **prima di**, and others.

EXAMPLE:

Si presentò **davanti al** giudice.
He appeared *before* the judge.

A **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE** consists of a preposition and its object and modifies the subject or verb.

Prepositional phrases are often used instead of adverbs of manner.

EXAMPLE: Il libro fu scritto **da** Umberto Eco.
The book was written *by* *Umberto Eco*.

In English, a **PRESENT PARTICIPLE** is a verb form ending in **-ing**. It may also be used as an adjective or a noun. In Italian, present participles end in **-ando** or **-endo**. They may only be used as verbs.

Stavano **parlando** del terremoto.
They were *talking* about the earthquake.

Avendo ricordato il suo indirizzo, cominciai a scriverle una lettera.
Having remembered her address, I started writing her a letter.

A **PRONOUN** can substitute for a noun. Like Italian nouns, pronouns have gender and number.

A **REFLEXIVE PRONOUN** is the object of a verb or preposition and refers back to the subject as "**myself**," "**yourself**," "**himself**," etc.

A **REFLEXIVE VERB** is accompanied by the pronoun **se**, which refers back to the subject, i.e., the subject is also the object of the verb.

EXAMPLES: **Si ruppe il braccio.**
He broke his arm.

Mi lavo le mani.
I am washing *my hands*.

A **RELATIVE CLAUSE** is a subordinate clause introduced by a relative pronoun that describes or qualifies the subject or object of a sentence. It answers the question "**What sort of...?**". The relative clause can contain a subject, verb, and/or object(s).

EXAMPLES: La ragazza **che** vedi è mia sorella.
The girl, *whom you see*, is my sister.

Indossò il vestito **che** comprò recentemente
She put on the hat *that she recently bought*.

RELATIVE PRONOUNS introduce relative clauses. Italian relative pronouns include:

chi	who, whom, the ones who
che	who, that, which, whom
il quale (i quali)	the one(s) which
la quale (le quali)	the one(s) which
dove	where

"**Chi**" means "**who**," "**whom**," and occasionally "**the one(s) who**."

"**Che**," the most frequently used relative pronoun, means "**who**," "**that**," or "**which**," and, as direct object of a verb, "**whom**." It refers to both persons and things, singular and plural, and its form is invariable.

EXAMPLE:

Vedemmo l'uomo **che** ci visitò la settimana scorsa.
We saw the man *who* visited us last week.

SIMPLE TENSES consist of a conjugated main verb only. They occur in the Present, Imperfect, Past, Future, Present Conditional, Present Subjunctive, and Imperfect Subjunctive.

STEM-CHANGING VERBS are regular and irregular verbs that take spelling changes in the stem when conjugated.

The **SUBJECT** of a sentence performs the action described by the verb.

A **SUBJECT COMPLEMENT** is a word or words used after a verb to complete a predicate. It modifies the noun, noun phrase, or pronoun in a sentence or clause.

EXAMPLES:

Loro avevano fretta.
They were *in a hurry*.

Ci piace camminare **per il vicinato**.
We like to walk *through the neighborhood*.

SUBJECT PRONOUNS refer to the person or thing that makes up the subject. The subject pronoun is expressed by the verb ending. The forms **io, tu, egli (o lui), ella (o lei), noi, voi, loro (o essi)** are therefore usually required only for emphasis.

EXAMPLES: Avevo fretta. I was in a hurry.
Io avevo fretta. I was in a hurry.

Lui è professore, e **lei** è ragioniera.
He is a teacher, but *she* is an accountant.

The **SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD** is used in subordinate clauses in which there is a change of subject and indicates that a situation is hypothetical, unreal, wished or hoped for, or somehow speculative in nature. The subjunctive mood is used in direct commands (except familiar) in which third persons are usually introduced by **che**. Italian uses special verb forms to indicate the subjunctive (Present, Past, Imperfect, and Past Perfect Subjunctives). The Future Subjunctive is used in clauses implying a supposition and is found only in legal style or antiquated phrases.

A **SUBORDINATE CLAUSE** is a secondary clause. Its meaning depends on the independent or main clause.

EXAMPLE: Volevo ritornare all'università per finire gli studi.
I wanted to return to the university *in order to finish my degree*.

A **SUPERLATIVE** is an adjective or adverb that expresses the third and highest level of comparison (e.g., most, least). In English it is formed by adding the ending **est** to the adjective. In Italian, it is formed by placing **il più** (the most) before the adjective.

EXAMPLES: l'edificio **più alto**... the *tallest* building...
il più alto... the *tallest*...

SYNTAX is the order in which words are put together to form phrases, clauses, or sentences.

A **TRANSITIVE VERB** expresses an action that directly affects someone or something. It therefore takes a direct object.

EXAMPLE: **Le regaló** dei fiori per il suo compleanno.
For her birthday, he *gave* her some flowers.

A **VERB** is a word that expresses an action.

Related Topics:

[Contents](#)
[GLOSSARY](#)

Adjectives

ADJECTIVES describe or qualify nouns. They answer the question "**What sort of...?**". Italian adjectives always agree in number and gender with the nouns they modify. Unlike English, Italian adjectives can be placed before or after the noun for special emphasis or meaning.

Adverbs

ADVERBS describe or qualify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb and answer the questions "**How...?**", "**When...?**", "**Where...?**", or "**In what manner...?**". In Italian, most "**how**" adverbs are formed by adding **-mente** to the feminine singular form of the adjective.

Augmentative Endings

AUGMENTATIVE ENDINGS on nouns imply a larger form or greater quality. They can also express disrespect or scorn. The most common augmentative endings are **-one** and **-accio(a)**.

EXAMPLE:

il libro / **il librone**
the book / *the big book*

il libro / **il libraccio**
the book / *the ugly book*

Auxiliary Verb

An **AUXILIARY VERB** helps in the conjugation of a main verb. The Italian auxiliary verbs **avere** (to have) and **essere** (to be) are used to form the compound tenses.

EXAMPLES: **Ho parlato** con la professoressa.
I have spoken with the teacher.

Sono andato a scuola.
I have gone to school.

Clause

A **CLAUSE** is a phrase or group of words that includes at least a subject and a verb and forms part of a larger sentence. Italian uses relative pronouns to introduce clauses.

EXAMPLE: La donna **che vende fiori** venne qui oggi.
The woman *who sells flowers* came by here today.

Compound Tenses

COMPOUND TENSES consist of a conjugated auxiliary verb plus the past participle of the main verb. They occur in the Present Perfect, Past Perfect, Past Anterior, Future Perfect, as well as the Conditional Perfect, Past Subjunctive, and Past Perfect Subjunctive.

EXAMPLE: Appena **ebbero finito** di mangiare, uscirono.
As soon as they had finished the meal, they left.

Conditional Clause

A **CONDITIONAL CLAUSE** is a phrase or group of words that states the condition under which the action described by the main clause may be realized.

EXAMPLE: **Se avessi una macchina,** potrei andare in Messico.
If I had a car, I could drive to Mexico.

Conditional Mood

The **CONDITIONAL MOOD** uses the construction "**if...then....**" It expresses the hypothetical, unreal, or speculative, and states the condition under which another action or event may be realized.

Conjugated

A verb is **CONJUGATED** when it is listed according to person (1st, 2nd, 3rd), number (singular / plural), tense (present, past, future, etc.), and/or conditional or subjunctive mood.

Conjunction

A **CONJUNCTION** serves as a link between words, phrases, clauses, or sentences.

EXAMPLE: Mio padre **e** mia madre.
My father *and* my mother.

Continuous Tenses

CONTINUOUS TENSES are used in English and Italian to indicate that an action or condition is in progress or ongoing, or that an action was in progress when another one took place. They occur in the Present, Past, Present Perfect, Past Perfect, and Future Tenses, and the Conditional Mood. In Italian, alternate continuous tenses may be formed using the auxiliaries *andare*, **venire**, or **stare** + **present participle**.

EXAMPLES: **Sta parlando** con la professoressa.
 He is talking with the teacher.

Venne correndo...
 He *came running*...

Contraction

A **CONTRACTION** is formed by omitting and/or combining some of the sounds of longer words. In Italian, **a + il** is contracted to **al**; **di + il** becomes **del**, **su + il** becomes **sul**.

EXAMPLES: Andammo **al** mare. We went to the beach.
Andammo a casa **del** Sr. Rossi We went to Mr. Rossi's house.

Contrary-to-Fact Statement

A **CONTRARY-TO-FACT STATEMENT** describes a condition or set of conditions that do not actually exist. It includes a second clause in which these conditions are described as fulfillable.

EXAMPLE: **Se la macchina non fosse così costosa**, potremmo comprarla.
If the car were not so expensive, we could buy it.

Coordinating Conjunctions

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS link two independent clauses in a sentence.

Demonstrative Adjectives

DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVES point to a definite person or object. English uses **this**, **these**, **that**, and **those**. A demonstrative is either an adjective or a pronoun and must agree with the noun it modifies. Italian uses:

<i>Singular</i>			<i>Plural</i>		
<i>Masc.</i>	<i>Fem.</i>		<i>Masc.</i>	<i>Fem.</i>	
questo	questa	this (near me)	questi	queste	these
quello	quella	that (over there)	quelli	quelle	those

Direct Object

The **DIRECT OBJECT** is the person, place, or thing that is the direct recipient of the action described by a verb.

EXAMPLE: Lesse **la poesia**. He read *the poem*.

Gerund

In English, a **GERUND** is a noun that is formed from a verb and ends in **-ing**. In Italian, the infinitive serves as the gerund.

EXAMPLE:

Fumare fa male alla salute.

Smoking is bad for the health.

Imperative Form

The **IMPERATIVE FORM** of a verb is used to give a command or make a suggestion. These forms are short and derived from the verb stem. Their spellings vary.

EXAMPLES: **Va'** a casa! *Go home!*
 Dammi il quaderno! *Give me the notebook!*

Indicative

The **INDICATIVE** is the mood of the verb used in ordinary, objective statements or questions. By contrast, the *conditional mood* indicates that a person would do something if something else were possible or that he would have done something if something else had been possible. The *subjunctive mood* expresses a request, a supposition, or an emotion such as a wish, a fear, a joy, etc. The *imperative mood* expresses a command or polite request.

Indirect Object

An **INDIRECT OBJECT** is the person or thing "**to whom**" or "**for whom**" an action is performed.

EXAMPLE: John **le** regaló un vestido.
John gave *her* a dress.

Indirect Speech

INDIRECT SPEECH is the reporting of the words of an unknown speaker. Italian uses the pronoun **si** with the third person singular verb form to express "**it is...**," "**people...**," "**they...**," and "**one...**"

EXAMPLES:

Indirect Speech:

Lui dice che il progetto è terminato.
He believes that (says that... / knows that...) the project is completed.

Indirect Speech with "si":

Si crede che... It is believed that... People believe that...
They believe that... One believes that...
...the project is completed.

Si dice che... It is said that... People say that...
They say that... One says that...
...the project is completed.

Si sa che... It is known that... People know that...
They know that... One knows that...
...the project is completed.

Infinitive

An **INFINITIVE** is the basic form of a verb. It reflects no person, number, or tense. There are three infinitive endings in Italian: **-are**, **-ere**, and **-ire**.

Infinitive Clause

An **INFINITIVE CLAUSE** with **per** (in order to) indicates purpose or intent.

EXAMPLE: Conservo i soldi **per comprare una casa.**
I am saving money (*in order*) to buy a house.

Inflected Verb

An **INFLECTED VERB** is one that has been identified as singular or plural and assigned endings for 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person.

EXAMPLE: viaggia (third person, Present Tense)
 (he) travels

Interjection

An **INTERJECTION** briefly expresses an emotional reaction to a situation, e.g., concern, approval, surprise, etc.

EXAMPLES: **Attenzione!** Watch out!
 Poverino! Poor little thing!
 Mamma mia! Oh dear!

Intransitive Verb

An **INTRANSITIVE VERB** does not describe an action, but merely expresses a state of affairs, change, or natural process. It therefore does not take an object.

EXAMPLE: **Cammina** tutti i giorni.
 he *walks* every day.

Irregular Verbs

IRREGULAR VERBS show deviations from the usual pattern of inflection (spelling) in the stem as well as the endings.

Main Clause

A **MAIN CLAUSE** is the independent or principal clause in a sentence. It does not depend on another clause for its meaning and can stand on its own as a full sentence.

EXAMPLE: Quando viene, **ti avviso**.
When he comes, *I will let you know.*

Noun

A **NOUN** names a person, place, or thing.

Object of a Preposition

The **OBJECT OF A PREPOSITION** is a noun that follows a preposition.

EXAMPLE: Quesro libro è per **Giacomo**.
This book is for *Giacomo*.

Object Pronoun

An **OBJECT PRONOUN** receives the action of the verb. A pronoun can also be the object of a preposition. The preposition **di** is repeated before each proper name and object pronoun in a series.

EXAMPLES: **Ci** visitarono. Vennero con **me**.
 They visited *us*. They came *with me*.

Participial Adjective

A **PARTICIPIAL ADJECTIVE** is an adjective derived from a verb. It must agree in number with the noun it modifies.

EXAMPLE:

Serviamo la salsa **piccante**.
We serve hot sauce.

Passive Voice

In **PASSIVE VOICE**, the order of subject and object are reversed, i.e., the subject receives the action of the verb. Passive voice conveys a sense of anonymity or objectivity. There are two passive constructions in Italian: (1) the impersonal subject **si**, and (2) **essere** + **past participle**.

EXAMPLES:	Active:	Lui terminó il contratto.	<i>He ended</i> the contract.
	Passive:	Si terminó il contratto.	The contract <i>was ended</i> .
	Passive:	Il contratto fu terminato .	The contract <i>was ended</i> .

Past Participles

PAST PARTICIPLES are used in the compound tenses and in passive voice and they can also stand alone as adjectives.

EXAMPLE:

Il pollo era **stato cucinato**.
The chicken *had been cooked*.

Personal Pronouns

PERSONAL PRONOUNS take the place of nouns. They usually accompany a verb and can be either the subject or the object of the verb.

Possessive Adjectives

POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES modify nouns and answer the question "**Whose...?**". They must be repeated before each noun they modify.

EXAMPLE: **mio** padre e **mia** madre...
 my father and mother...

Possessive Pronoun

A **POSSESSIVE PRONOUN** is a pronoun that answers the question "**Whose...?**".

EXAMPLE: Usiamo la mia macchina o **la tua**?
Will we use my car or *yours*?

Predicate

A **PREDICATE** modifies a subject and includes the verbs, objects, or phrases governed by the verb. It can also be a verb or linking verb (**essere** = "to be") that connects the elements of a sentence.

EXAMPLE: Carmen / guidava la macchina.
Carmen / drove the car.
subject / predicate

Predicate Adjective

A **PREDICATE ADJECTIVE** describes the subject of a predicate.

EXAMPLE: Lui è **intelligente**. He is *intelligent*

Predicate Noun

A **PREDICATE NOUN** is equivalent in meaning to the subject and is linked to it by a predicate.

EXAMPLE: John è **dottore**. He is a *doctor*.

Preposition

A **PREPOSITION** introduces a noun, pronoun, adverb, infinitive, or present participle and can indicate spatial or temporal relationships. Italian prepositions include **a, per, di, da, con, in, su, davanti a**, and others.

EXAMPLE: Si presentó **davanti al** giudice.
He appeared *before* the judge.

Prepositional Phrase

A **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE** consists of a preposition and its object and modifies the subject or verb. Prepositional phrases are often used instead of adverbs of manner.

EXAMPLE: Il libro fu scritto **da** Umberto Eco.
The book was written *by Umberto Eco*.

Prepositional Pronouns

PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUNS follow prepositions. Except for the first, second, and third persons singular (**me**, **te**, and **se**), the prepositional pronouns are the same as the subject pronouns.

Present Participle

In English, a **PRESENT PARTICIPLE** is a verb form ending in **-ing**. It may also be used as an adjective or a noun. In Italian, gerunds end in **-ando** or **-endo**. They may only be used as verbs.

Stavano **parlando** del terremoto.
They were *talking* about the earthquake.

Avendo ricordato il suo indirizzo, cominciai a scriverle una lettera.
Having remembered her address, I started writing her a letter.

Pronoun

A **PRONOUN** can substitute for a noun.

<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
io	I	noi	we
tu	you (familiar)	voi	you (familiar)
Lei	you (formal)	Loro	you (formal)
egli (ella)	he/she	Essi	they (masculine)
	they (feminine)		Esse

Reflexive Pronoun

A **REFLEXIVE PRONOUN** is the object of a verb or preposition and refers back to the subject as "**myself**," "**yourself**," "**himself**," etc.

Reflexive Verb

A **REFLEXIVE VERB** is accompanied by the pronoun(s) **mi, ti, si, ci, vi**, which refers back to the subject, i.e., the subject is also the object of the verb.

EXAMPLES: **Si rompe il braccio.**
He broke his arm.

Mi lavo le mani.
I am washing my hands.

Relative Clause

A **RELATIVE CLAUSE** is a subordinate clause introduced by a relative pronoun that describes or qualifies the subject or object of a sentence. It answers the question "**What sort of...?**". The relative clause can contain a subject, verb, and/or object(s).

EXAMPLES: La ragazza **che** vedi è mia sorella.
 The girl, *whom you see*, is my sister.

 Indossò il vestito **che** comprò recentemente
 She put on the hat *that she recently bought*.

Relative Pronouns

RELATIVE PRONOUNS introduce relative clauses. Italian relative pronouns include:

chi	who, whom, the ones who
che	who, that, which, whom
il quale (i quali)	that which, those which
la quale (le quali)	that which, those which
dove	where

"**Chi**" means "**who**," "**whom**," and occasionally "**the one(s) who**."

"**Che**," the most frequently used relative pronoun, means "**who**," "**that**," or "**which**," and, as direct object of a verb, "**whom**." It refers to both persons and things, singular and plural, and its form is invariable.

EXAMPLES:

Vedemmo uomo **che** ci visitò la settimana scorsa.
We saw the man *who* visited us last week.

Simple Tenses

SIMPLE TENSES consist of a conjugated main verb only. They occur in the Present, Imperfect, Past, Future, Present Conditional, Present Subjunctive, and Imperfect Subjunctive.

Stem-Changing Verbs

STEM-CHANGING VERBS are regular and irregular verbs that take spelling changes in the stem when conjugated.

Subject Complement

A **SUBJECT COMPLEMENT** is a word or words used after a verb to complete a predicate. It modifies the noun, noun phrase, or pronoun in a sentence or clause.

EXAMPLES: Loro avevano fretta.
They were *in a hurry*.

Ci piace camminare **per il vicinato**.
We like to walk *through the neighborhood*.

Subject Pronouns

SUBJECT PRONOUNS refer to the person or thing that makes up the subject. The subject pronoun is expressed by the verb ending. The forms **io, tu, egli (o lui), ella (o lei), noi, voi, loro (o essi)** are therefore usually required only for emphasis.

EXAMPLES: Avevo fretta. I was in a hurry.
io avevo fretta. I was in a hurry.

Lui è professore, e lei è ragioniera.
He is a teacher, but *she* is an accountant.

Subjunctive Mood

The **SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD** is used in subordinate clauses in which there is a change of subject and indicates that a situation is hypothetical, unreal, wished or hoped for, or somehow speculative in nature. The subjunctive mood is used in direct commands (except familiar) in which third persons are usually introduced by **che**. Italian uses special verb forms to indicate the subjunctive (Present, Past, Imperfect, and Past Perfect Subjunctives). The Future Subjunctive is used in clauses implying a supposition and is found only in legal style or antiquated phrases.

Subject

The **SUBJECT** of a sentence performs the action described by the verb.

Subordinate Clause

A **SUBORDINATE CLAUSE** is a secondary clause. Its meaning depends on the independent or main clause.

EXAMPLE: Volevo ritornare alluniversità **per finire gli studi.**
I wanted to return to the university *in order to finish my degree.*

Superlative

A **SUPERLATIVE** is an adjective or adverb that expresses the third and highest level of comparison (e.g., most, least). In English it is formed by adding the ending **est** to the adjective. In Italian, it is formed by placing **il più** (the most) before the adjective.

EXAMPLES: **il** palazzo **più** alto... the *tallest* building...
 il più alto... *the tallest*...

Syntax

SYNTAX is the order in which words are put together to form phrases, clauses, or sentences.

Transitive Verb

A **TRANSITIVE VERB** expresses an action that directly affects someone or something. It therefore takes a direct object.

EXAMPLE: Le **regalò** dei fiori per il suo compleanno.
For her birthday, he *gave* her some flowers.

Verb

A **VERB** is a word that expresses an action.

