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Present Tense

The present tense is formed by adding **-o, -i, -a, -iamo, -ate, -ano** to verbs of the **ARE** verb stem, **-o, -i, -e, -iamo, -ete, -ono** to verbs of the **ERE** verb stem, and **-o, -i, -e, -iamo, -ite, -ono** to verbs of the **IRE** verb stem. It has several uses:

- To express something that is presently occurring:
C'è una mosca nella mia zuppa.
There is a fly in my soup.
- To translate the English present progressive most of the time:
Leggo un buon libro.
I am reading a good book.
- To express something that is accurate for only a short period of time:
Abita a Parigi in questo momento.
He lives in Paris at this moment.
- To express a sentiment that may extend indefinitely back into the past and forward into the future, this usage is referred to as the "universal present."
Più le cose cambiano, Più restano le stesse.
The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Passato Remoto

The preterite tense (passato remoto) expresses an action that was completed in the distant past. To form the preterite form for regular **-ARE** verbs, drop the verb's infinitive ending and add **-ai, -asti, -ò, -ammo, -aste, -arono**. For **-ERE** verbs add **-ei, -esti, -é, -emmo, -este, -erono** after dropping the infinitive ending. For **-IRE** verbs add **-ii, -isti, -í, -immo, -iste, -irono** after the infinitive ending has been dropped.

Napoleon morì nel 1821.

Napoleon died in 1821.

Imperfect Indicative

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. To form the imperfect tense with regular **-ARE** verbs, drop the infinitive ending and add **-avo**, **-avi**, **-ava**, **-avamo**, **-avate**, **-avano**. For the **-ERE** verbs, add **-evo**, **-evi**, **-eva**, **-evamo**, **-evate**, **-evano**, after dropping the infinitive ending. For the **-IRE** verbs, add **-ivo**, **-ivi**, **-iva**, **-ivamo**, **ivate**, **-ivano**. This tense expresses:

- 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 e umidità.
It was very hot and humid.

Imperative

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 ogni giorno!
Eat fruit every day!

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 da leggere!
Finish reading!

Paghino in contanti, per favore!
Pay in cash, please!

Dia 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!

Future Tense

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**.

To express 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.

Conditional

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**. It has four major uses:

- To express a past of the future,(i.e. to express an action or state that was future with respect to the past):

Ha detto che verrebbe presto.
He said he would come soon.

- 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 Lei, 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.

Present Subjunctive

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.

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:

E necessario che tu venga con me.
You must come with me.
E 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.

Formation:

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**.

Past Subjunctive

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 past subjunctive:

Volevo che ella arrivasse molto presto.
I wanted her to arrive very early.

The present subjunctive:

Voglio che ella arrivi molto presto.
I wanted her to arrive every early.

Present Perfect

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 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 le porte 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 the question **what**. They usually express movement.

E andato a Roma.

He went to Rome.

Sono partiti ieri.

They left yesterday.

See also [Avere/Essere](#)

Trapassato Remoto

The preterite perfect tense, (trapassato remoto) like the preterite tense (see also Passato Remoto), 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 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.

Using the preterite perfect tense:

Quando il re ebbe finito, fece un discorso.

After the king had finished, he gave a speech.

Past Perfect

The past perfect indicative tense is used to express an action which happened in the past before another past action. Since it is used in relation to another past action, the other past action is ordinarily expressed in the present perfect indicative (passato prossimo). In Italian, this tense is formed with the imperfect indicative of the auxiliary (**essere** or **avere**) plus the past participle of the main verb.

Using the past perfect Indicative:

Quando sono arrivato a casa, mio fratello era già uscito.

When I arrived home, my brother had already gone out.

Future Perfect

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.

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.

The conjunctions **quando**, **non appena**, **che**, when indicating a future action, must be followed by either the future or the future perfect.

Conditional Perfect

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

To express a result of a past hypothetical condition:

Se voi foste venuti, noi saremmo stati molto contenti.

If you had come, we would have been very happy.

Present Perfect Subjunctive

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.

Pluperfect Subjunctive

The pluperfect 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.

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.

For example, **to finish** is transitive.

Maria ha dovuto finire il compito.
Maria had to finish the homework.

To **go out** expresses movement.

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

Answer the question **Why didn't you go out?:**

Perché non ho potuto.
Because I couldn't.

Avere/Essere

Verbs conjugated with **avere**:

All transitive verbs are conjugated with the auxiliary **avere**. The past participle stays the same **unless** the direct object is a pronoun.

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

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

The past participle **must** agree in gender and number when the direct object is a pronoun.

Li ho mangiati tutti.
I ate them all.
Le ho viste ieri.
I saw them yesterday.
La abbiamo letta.
We read it.

Verbs conjugated with **essere**:

- Verbs which express movement:

E andato a Roma.
He went to Rome.
E 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:

E 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 was published by Random House

Note: The past participle **must** agree in gender and number with the subject of the verb. Examples:

Siamo arrivati in ritardo.
We have arrived late.
Si sono smarrite.
They (f.) got lost.
E venuta mia sorella?
Has my sister come?
A che ora ti sei alzato?

At what time did you get up?

Idiomatic Use of Fare

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. 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 uno sproposito.

I have **made** him say a silly thing.

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 to 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.

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.

E probabile che l'abbia ricevuto.

It is probable that he has received it.

E 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.

Crede Lei 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.

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 visto 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:

E il più antico che esista.

It is the oldest there is.

Sono stati i primi che l'abbiano fatto.

They have been the first to do it.

E l'unico che non sia riuscito.

He is the only one who has not succeeded.

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.

E 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.

E 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.

E giusto che ognuno riceva la sua parte.

It is fair that each receive his share.

E 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:

Si vede è chiaro che non ha voglia di fare nulla.

It is clear that he has no desire to do anything.

E perchè lo dico io.

It is because I say so.

E 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:

E possibile farlo.

It is possible to do it.

E inutile proseguire.

It is useless to continue.

Bisogna parlare chiaramente.

We (one, they) must speak clearly.

Pronouns

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Direct Address Pronouns

	Subject	Direct Object	Indirect Object
Singular	tu, Lei	ti, La	ti, Le
Plural	Loro	Li (m.) Le (f.)	Loro

Tu is informal and familiar. **Lei** is the polite form of address and requires the verb in the third person. Unless otherwise indicated, use **Lei** at all times.

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.)

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.

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**.

Personal Pronouns

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).

Glielo 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 pó?

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.

Personal Pronouns II

Position of personal object pronouns:

Personal object pronouns precede all forms of the verb except the infinitive, present participle, and the affirmative imperative in the second singular, first and second plural. In the latter case the pronouns are attached to the verb without any shifting of stress. **Loro**, however, always follows the verb and is never joined to it.

When joining a pronoun to an infinitive, the latter drops final **e**. If the infinitive ends in **-rre**, it drops **-re**.

Examples.

All object pronouns except **gli** double their initial consonant when joined to an imperative form ending in a stressed vowel. The stress must be retained on the syllable originally stressed. Examples.

If an infinitive depends upon a verb other than **fare**, **lasciare**, **sentire**, **udire** and **vedere**, (which is usually a modal verb) the object pronoun(s) may either precede the main verb or follow and be attached to the infinitive. Examples.

a) Non lo voglio fare.

b) Non voglio farlo.

I do not want to do it.

a) Lo potrei vedere.

b) Potrei vederlo.

I could see him (it).

But,

Non mi lascia fare nulla.

He does not let me do anything.

Lo vidi venire a tutta furia.

I saw him coming in a great hurry.

Le farò vedere come si deve fare.

I will show you how it must be done.

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.

Ci and vi:

These two interchangeable forms mean *here*, *there*, *to this place*, *to that place*.

Non ci sono mai stato.
I have never been there.
Non ci andiamo quasi mai.
We hardly ever go there.
Chi c'è? Nessuno.
Who is there? No one.
Non c'è nessuno qui.
There is no one here.

Ci and vi become *ce* and *ve* before *ne* (*of it*, *of them*, etc.)

Ce ne sono parecchi, non è vero?
There are several of them, are there not?

Ci is often the equivalent of the English pronoun *it* (or a demonstrative) preceded by a preposition.

Non ci penso mai.
I never think about it(that).
Non avevi pensato al tuo viaggio? No, non ci avevo pensato.
Hadn't you thought of your trip? No, I hadn't thought of it.

Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns and adjectives:

Singular		Plural		
Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine	
il mio	la mia	i miei	le mie	my, mine
il tuo	la tua	i tuoi	le tue	your (fam)
il suo	la sua	i suoi	le sue	his, her
il Suo	la Sua	i Suoi	le Sue	your
il nostro	la nostra	i nostri	le nostre	our, ours
il vostro	la vostra	i vostri	le vostre	your
il loro	la loro	i loro	le loro	their
il Loro	la Loro	i Loro	le Loro	yours

Possessive adjectives agree in gender and number with the thing possessed, and possessive pronouns with their antecedents.

La mia penna e la Sua.
My pen and yours.
La sua automobile è là.
His automobile is there.

The definite article is not used with the possessive adjective when the following noun is singular and denotes dignity, family relationship; but it is used when the noun is plural, has a diminutive ending or is modified by another adjective.

Sua Eccellenza His Excellency
mio fratello my brother
mio nonno my grandfather

But,

i miei cugini my cousins
il mio fratellino my little brother
il mio vecchio nonno my old grandfather

In direct address the possessive follows the noun. For example:

Amico mio, fai attenzione!
My friend, be careful!

The possessive also follows the noun in certain standing phrases:

A casa mia (tua, sua)
At my (your, his) house
A modo mio
In my own way (emphatic)
E colpa mia, Signore.
It is my fault, Sir.

The possessive has no article when used as the predicate after the verb **essere**, unless the contrast is implied:

Questo è affare mio.
This is my business.
Quel libro non è mio.
That book is not mine.

But,

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

Note also the expressions of mine, of his, of ours, etc.

E un amico mio.

He is a friend of mine.

E una mia idea.

It is an idea of mine.

Possessive Inflections

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

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 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 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.

Pronoun Inflections

There are two demonstrative pronouns in Italian: **questo** (this) and **quello** (that).

These pronouns are used to refer to indefinite things, intangible concepts, and to concrete or animate nouns

Chi ha detto questo?
Who said this?

Questo è vero
This is true

Chi ha detto quello?
Who said that?

Quello è vero
That is true

Questo and **quello** must agree in gender and number with the nouns they represent, as shown in the table below:

	Questo		Quello	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Masculine	questo	questi	quello	quelli
Feminine	questa	queste	quella	quelle

Voglio leggere il libro
I want to read the book

Voglio leggere questo
I want to read this (one)

Voglio leggere quello
I want to read that (one)

La ragazza è inglese
The girl is English

Questa è inglese
This (one) is English

Quella è inglese
That (one) is English

It is possible to add extra emphasis to either of the demonstrative pronouns by adding **qui** (here) or **lì** (there).

Questo qui è interessante
This one here is interesting

Quello lì è interessante
That one there is interesting

Personal Pronoun Inflections

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.

Relative Pronouns

The relative pronouns are: **che** (invariable), **cui** (variable), **il quale** (inflected). **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 danaro **che** ho ricevuto.

The money (that) I received.

Sono io **che** l'ho fatto.

It is I who did it.

E Suo 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.

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

E un uomo **il cui** ingegno tutti ammirano.

He is a man **whose** intelligence all admire.

E 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.

Questa è la macchina **nella quale** ho fatto tanti viaggi.

This is the car in which I have taken so many trips.

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 yours.

Preferisco **quelli che** ho visto ieri.

I prefer **the ones** I saw yesterday.

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 subjectively 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**) when 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 da preferirsi?

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!

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)

Articles

Definite Article

Article Inflections

Definite Article

	Singular	Plural
Masculine	il	i
	lo, l'	gli
Feminine	la, l'	le

Notes:

- **Il** and **i** are used before masculine nouns beginning with a consonant except **z** and **s** impure (i.e. **s** + consonant), **ps** and **gn**.
- **Lo**, **l'**, and **gli** are used before masculine nouns beginning with a vowel, **s** impure, **z**, **ps** and **gn**.
- **La** and **le** are used before feminine nouns.
- **Lo** and **la** are written **l'** before a vowel, and **gli** may become **gl'** only before **i**. Examples:

il cervello	the brain
i ricchi	the wealthy
lo zio	the uncle
gli amici	the friends
lo spazio	the space
la strada	the road
l'anima	the soul
gl'Italian	the Italians

Uses of the definite article:

The definite article is used in Italian whenever it is used in English. When an English noun is not preceded by the definite article, the Italian equivalent must have it in the following two cases:

- When the noun is used in a general sense or when it represents the whole class:
 - La natura è bella**
Nature is beautiful.
 - L'uomo è un essere razionale.**
Man is a rational being.
 - Le automobili sono utili.**
Automobiles are useful.
- When the noun denotes a part of the body or an article of clothing (in these two cases, English often has a possessive adjective).
 - Ho perduto il cappello.**
I have lost my hat.
 - Ha gli occhi azzurri.**
He has blue eyes.
 - Ritrovò i guanti.**
He found his gloves again.

Article Inflections

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
the state

lo zio
the uncle

lo psicologo
the psychologist

lo gnosticismo
agnosticism

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 à 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.

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](#).

Demonstratives

Demonstrative Adjectives and Pronouns:
Demonstrative Inflections

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'uomothis man

Quest'ariathis 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.

All is not gold **that** glitters.

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 Suo 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!

Demonstrative Inflections

The Italian demonstratives are **questo** (this) and **quello** (this). **Questo** and **quello** must agree in gender and number with the nouns they precede, as shown in the tables below:

Questo

Masculine		Singular	Plural
	Before consonant	questo	questi
	Before vowel	quest' or questo	questi
Feminine	Singular	Plural	
	Before consonant	questa	queste
	Before vowel	quest' or questa	queste

Questo libro
this book

Questi libri
these books

Quest'albero
this tree

Questo albero
this tree

Questi alberi
these trees

Questa ragazza
this girl

Queste ragazze
these girls

Quest'opera
this opera

Questa opera
this opera

Queste opere
these operas

Quello

Masculine		Singular	Plural
	Before "pure" consonant	quel	quei
	Before "impure" consonant	quello	quegli
	Before vowel	quell'	quegli
Feminine	Before consonant	quella	quelle
	Before "impure" consonant	quella	quelle
	Before vowel	quell'	quelle

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

quello stato
that state

quello zio
that uncle

quello psicologo
that psychologist

quello gnosticismo
that agnosticism

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

Indefinites

Indefinite Pronouns and Adjectives

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.

When **nessuno** follows a verb (not interrogative), that verb must be preceded by **non**. When the verb is interrogative, **non** is used if the answer expected is negative. Otherwise **non** is omitted.

Non vedo nessuno.

I do not see **anyone**.

Non è venuto nessuno? No.

Nobody came? No.

È venuto nessuno? Sì.

Did anyone come? Yes.

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 *wish* **anything**, thank you.

Nulla è buono per Lei.

Nothing is good for you.

Non vuole nulla, Lei? No, grazie.

Don't you *wish* **anything**? No thanks.

Vuole nulla, Signore? Sì.

Do you *wish* **anything**, Sir? Yes.

Qualche cosa (something):

Mi dia **qualche cosa** di meglio.

Give me **something** better.

Qualunque (any, any...whatever) when used as an adjective. **Qualunque cosa** (anything, whatever, at all):

Ne prenda uno **qualunque**.

Take **any** one of them (at random).

Farò **qualunque cosa** purchè sia dignitosa.

I will do **anything** (at all) provided that it be dignified.

Adjectives

Comparatives

Intensified Adjectives

Superlatives

Adjective Inflections

Adverb Comparison

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**.

Intensified Adjectives

Many adjectives have, in addition to their normal forms, intensified forms in **-ísimo** which add emphasis and convey a sense of "very" or "extremely".

The intensified adjective endings follow the regular model of normal adjectives such as **e**.

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**, 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.

Adjective Inflections

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 **piú** and their superlatives with the appropriate article and **piú**:

Questo ragazzo è alto.

This boy is tall

Questo ragazzo è piú alto degli altri.

This boy is taller than the others

Questo ragazzo è il piú alto della famiglia.

This boy is the tallest in the family

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.

Adverb Comparison

The formation and comparison of 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
maggiorment e	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.

General

Conditional Sentences

Time of Day

that

her

for

play

in

it

more

Interrogative Inflections

Non-Inflecting

Conditional Sentences

All conditional sentences are patterned after the following models:

Se me lo mandano, glielo darò.

If they send it to me, I shall give it to him.

Se me lo mandassero, glielo darei.

If they sent it to me, I would give it to him.

Se me lo avessero mandato, glielo avrei dato.

If they had sent it to me, I would have given it to him.

Time of Day

Following are some common expressions dealing with time.

Che ora è?

What time is it?

E 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 of eight.

Sono le tre e mezzo.

It is half past three.

that

English uses one word, **that**, in grammatical situations where Italian would require different kinds of words, according to the context.

In English, **that** may be used as a conjunction. For example:

I know **that** boys play football.

Choose the Italian conjunction, **che**, as the translation for the conjunction, **that**.

When **that** in English serves as a relative pronoun, it replaces the noun or noun clause that immediately precedes it. For example:

The car **that** you saw was speeding.

Use the Italian relative pronoun, **che**, to translate the relative pronoun, **that**.

If **that** is used as a demonstrative adjective, it points out some object or person. For example:

That sandwich tasted good.

Translate the demonstrative adjective, **that**, with the Italian word, **quel**(masculine) **quella**(feminine).

The word **that** is often used to mean **that one**, as opposed to **this one**. For example:

This computer is better than **that one**.

Choose the pronoun, **quello**(masculine) **quella**(feminine), as the translation of **that one**.

That may be used in English to replace an unspecified noun:

We bought **that** yesterday.

To translate this usage of **that**, choose the Italian pronoun **quello/quella**.

her

The word, **her**, in English can be either a pronoun or an adjective. When translating **her** into Italian, you must choose from among several pronouns and adjectives, depending on the function of **her** in the original sentence.

Her may be used as an adjective, indicating ownership or possession. For example:

Her book is red.

Translate this usage of **her** with the Italian possessive adjective, **suo**.

If **her** replaces a noun that is the direct recipient of an action, it is functioning as a direct object pronoun.

For example:

I saw **her**.

(**Her** replaces a noun, such as **the woman**.) To replace a feminine direct object in Italian, choose the pronoun, **la**.

Her may be used as an indirect object pronoun, replacing an oblique recipient of some action. For example:

I wrote (to) **her** a letter.

(**Her** replaces a noun, such as **my girlfriend**.) Translate the English indirect object pronoun, **her**, with the Italian pronoun, **le**.

English also uses **her** to indicate the object of a preposition. Prepositions are words like **of**, **to**, and **with**.

For example:

I went with **her**.

To indicate the feminine object of a preposition, choose the Italian pronoun, **lei**.

Finally, English uses **her** to indicate the object of a command. For example:

Help **her**!

The correct Italian translation for **her** when it is used as the object of a command is the tonic pronoun, **la**.

Note: When ordering a command the verb must be conjugated. For example:

Aiutiamo la!

(Let's) Help **her**!

for

The word, **for**, is most often used as a preposition. It expresses a relationship between two other words. For example:

The gift is **for** me.

Use the Italian preposition, **per**, as the translation of the English preposition, **for**.

For may also be a conjunction:

I left in a hurry, **for** I was late.

Translate the above usage of **for** with the Italian conjunction, **perché**.

play

The English noun, **play**, can indicate recreation or amusement:

The workers disturbed the **play** of the children.

Translate this usage of **play** with the Italian noun, **gioco**.

Play may also indicate a theatrical presentation:

I haven't seen a **play** by Molière.

The Italian word for a theatrical presentation is **dramma**.

The English verb, **to play**, indicates the action of recreating:

Six boys **are playing** in the street.

Translate this general use of **to play** with the Italian verb, **giocare**.

When **to play** takes an object, you must determine whether that object is a game or a musical instrument:

John loves **to play** cards.

Mary can **play** the piano.

(The object, **cards**, is a game. The object, **piano**, is an instrument.) When the object of **to play** is a game, use the Italian phrases, **giocare al** (for a masculine game), **giocare alla** (for a feminine game), or **giocare a** for a game that ends in the plural (such as **cards** above).

When the object of **to play** is a musical instrument, choose the Italian phrase, **suonare il** for a masculine instrument, **suonare la** for a feminine instrument.

in

In most cases, when the preposition **in** occurs before a noun modified by an adjective or article that is feminine, choose the Italian preposition, **nella** (**in** + **la** = **nella**). If the adjective is masculine and has the article **lo**, then choose the Italian preposition **nello**. If the article is **il**, then the preposition becomes **nel**. For example:

I am **in** the room.

Sono **nella** stanza.

He is **in** the studio.

Lui è **nello** studio.

They are **in** the café.

Loro sono **nel** café.

When **in** is used to specify the amount of time that will pass before something happens, use **fra**. For example:

He will leave **in** three days.

Lui partirà **fra** tre giorni.

When **in** precedes a specific month or year, use **a** for the month, and **nel** for the year. For example:

I will see you **in** May, **in** 1993.

Ti vedrò **a** Maggio, **nel** 1993.

When speaking of the seasons in general, choose **in**. For example:

In winter, the temperature drops below zero.

When speaking of a particular season, choose **nel**. For example:

In spring of 1990, there was an earthquake in Costa Rica.

Before a country, state, or continent, choose **in**.

We do not live **in** France.

Noi non abitiamo **in** Francia.

With a masculine plural country, use **negli**.

There are 250 million people **in** the United States.

Preceding the name of a city, choose **in**.

We will arrive **in** New York Thursday.

it

When **it** is the subject of a sentence or clause, use the Italian pronoun **il** to replace a masculine noun or **la** to replace a feminine noun. For example:

It goes very fast!
La macchina va molto veloce!

When the subject of the sentence is masculine use **lo**, or **la** when the subject is feminine.

We know that it is stolen.
Sappiamo che lo hanno rubato.

When **it** is a direct object, use **lo** to replace a masculine noun, or **la** to replace a feminine noun. For example:

I saw it yesterday.
L'ho visto ieri.
Or **Lo vidi ieri.**

Use **é** as the Italian pronoun to replace **it** when it precedes a name, a pronoun, or a superlative. For example:

It's Mary!
É Maria!
It is she.
É lei.
It's the best movie that I've ever seen.
É la miglior pellicola che ho mai visto.

Similarly, choose **è** as **it** with the verb **essere** (to be) when **it** is followed by a noun that has been modified by an article or adjective as in the following:

It is a heavy book.
It is an apple.

For the phrase **of it**, choose the pronoun **ne**. For example:

I have had enough of it.
Ne ho avuto abbastanza.

For the phrase **in it**, choose the pronoun **dentro** as in the following:

The room was so dark that I couldn't find the ball in it
La camera era così buia che non ho potuto trovare la palla dentro.

more

When **more** is used as a comparative adverb, use the Italian adverb **piú**:

She is a **more** talented artist.

When **more** is used as an adjective expressing quantity, use **piú**:

He has **more** money in the bank than his friends.

For the expression **more than**, followed by a number, use **piú di**:

More than 10,000 people were at the concert.

When **more than** is followed by a subject, use **piú di**:

Mary has **more** cars **than** Peter does.

Interrogative Inflections

Many Italian interrogative words are uninflected for gender and number.

Dove sono i bambini?
Where are the children?

Quando vuoi andare a casa?
When do you want to go home?

Perché vai a casa?
Why are you going home?

The uninflected interrogatives **che** (**what**) and **chi** (**who, whom**) may assume the following positions in a question:

- subject
- direct object
- object of a preposition

Che succede?
What is happening?

Chi è arrivato?
Who has arrived

Che stai dicendo?
What are you saying?

Chi vedi?
Whom do you see?

Di che parla?
What is he talking about?

Per chi voterete?
For whom will you vote?

Note that **che** can be replaced by **che cosa** or **cosa**.

The Italian interrogatives **quale** and **quanto** can stand alone or precede a noun or noun phrase. The interrogative **quale** (**which**) can have both singular and plural forms, but shows no gender variation. Note, however that **quale** drops the final **-e** in front of **è** or **era**, and no apostrophe is inserted. **Quanto** (**how much, how many**) is inflected for both gender and number. **Quale** is used to indicate a quality; **quanto** indicates a quantity.

Quale dei libri hai letto?
Which of the books have you read?

Quale hai letto?
Which have you read?

Quali vuoi?
Which ones do you want?

Qual era il tuo libro?
Which was your book?

Quale ragazzo legge?
Which boy is reading?

Quale ragazza legge?
Which girl is reading?

Quali ragazzi leggono?
Which boys are reading?

Quali ragazze leggono?
Which girls are reading?

Quanto costa il biglietto?
How much does the ticket cost?

Quanto costano le arance?
How much do the oranges cost?

Quanto denaro hai?
How much money do you have?

Quanti libri hai?
How many books do you have?

Quanta pazienza hai?
How much patience do you have?

Quante amichette hai?
How many girlfriends do you have?

Non-Inflecting

The following parts of speech have no inflectional models:

- Conjunction
- Intensifier
- Non-Grammatical
- Note
- Preposition
- Prefix
- Relative
- Slot Phrase
- Suffix
- Title

Nouns

Noun Inflections
Diminutive Nouns

Noun Inflections

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

uncle

zii

uncles

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

bacio

kiss

baci

kisses

occhio

eye

occhi

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 crisis

- 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 that all nouns of type 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) and most nouns in pattern 4 are feminine. 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

Diminutive Nouns

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

Masculine	Feminine
-ino	-ina
-etto	-etta

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

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

-accio, -accia	libro, libraccio	horrible book
-astro, -astra	poeta, poetastro	terrible poet
-onzolo, -onzola	medico, mediconzolo	awful doctor
-ucolo, -ucola	paese, paesucolo	horrible little town

Quantifiers

Quantifier Inflections

In Italian, as in English, there are three major types of quantifiers: **cardinal numbers**, **ordinals 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 on 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 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:

due mila

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** 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

Italian Assistant may classify as general quantifiers words such as **all**, **some**, and **last** which carry a quantifying or ordering meaning.

Glossary of Terms

conjunction

conjunction

A word functioning as a connector between words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. For example: [and](#), [because](#), [but](#), [however](#).

vedere
vederlo

condurre
condurlo

dí
tell(thou)

dimmi
tell me

dà
give(thou)

dammi, dallo
give me, give it

diamo
let us give

diamolo
let us give it

diamogli
let us give to him

utile più utile meno utile

bello più bello meno bello

alto più alto il più alto

bello più bello il più bello

