
Unit 1 - Review #1

Italian Foundations

Before diving into new stuff, it is always wise to make sure we have strong foundations.

In this video lesson we reviewed:

Gender of Nouns & Adjectives

Plurals of Nouns & Adjectives

Exceptions with Plurals

Definite Articles

Indefinite Articles

Sentence Structure

How do you feel about all these topics? Where is confidence when it comes to these aspects on the Italian grammar?

It is essential that you be honest about this and never become complacent with your knowledge. It is a fact: we know a lot more than what we remember to use.

And it's OK!

That is exactly why we need to re-inforce all concepts and check if we can apply them.

Refer back to the original Lessons from ***Beginner Italian Level 1*** and ***Beginner Italian Level 2*** if you need to go deeper with your review. Contact [Support](#) for a great deal on those two courses, if you don't have them.



Gender of Nouns and Adjectives

- Italian nouns have gender (masculine or feminine)
- Gender is fixed and “randomly” assigned
- Adjectives need to match the gender of the noun they are describing
- Singular masculine words usually end in **-O**
- Singular feminine words usually end in **-A**
- Singular Italian words end in **-E** are harder to guess, as they can be either masculine or feminine (but still, one or the other)
- These words are clearly masculine: *divano, bagno, vino*
- These words are clearly feminine: *panna, casa, pizza*
- These words are hard to guess: *elefante* (masculine), *chiave* (feminine), *cane* (masculine)
- Similarly to nouns, adjectives can end in **-O** for masculine or **-A** for feminine, but some end in **-E**, and can be used to describe both genders.

Divani bianco

Casa bianca

Elefante bianco

Chiave bianca

Divano grande

Casa grande

Elefante grande

Chiave grande

- In the above examples, BIANCO changes the ending for masculine and feminine, while GRANDE does not.

Your Notes



Plurals of Nouns and Adjectives

- Plural masculine words usually end in **-I**
- Plural feminine words usually end in **-E**
- Singular Italian words ending in **-E** usually end in **-I** in the plural (and the gender is hard to guess)
- These words are masculine: *divani, bagni, vini, elefanti, cani*
- These words are feminine: *panne, case, pizze, chiavi*
- *elefanti* (masculine), *chiavi* (feminine), *cani* (masculine) are plurals of word ending in **-E** in the singular, and therefore confusing
- When in doubt with a word ending in **-I**, it is safer to assume that it is a masculine plural
- Adjectives have to match the number of the nouns
- Similarly to nouns, plural adjectives can end in **-I** for masculine or **-E** for feminine, but adjectives ending in **-E** in the singular, usually end in **-I** in the plural, and can be used to describe both genders.

Divano bianchi

Case bianche

Elefanti bianchi

Chiavi bianche

Divani grandi

Case grandi

Elefanti grandi

Chiavi grandi

- In the above examples, BIANCO changes the ending for masculine plural to **-I** and for feminine plural to **-E**, while GRANDE only changes its ending to **-I** for plurals, regardless of gender (yet it is a masculine or feminine adjective)

Your Notes



Exceptions with Plurals

- Foreign words do not change in the plural
- Adjectives describing plural foreign words still need to express gender and number (gender being harder to tell for foreign words and number being given away from context and the articles used)

Lo sport > *Gli sport*
Lo sport americano > *Gli sport americani*

- Words ending with an accented syllable do not change in the plural
- Adjectives describing these plural words still need to express gender and number

Un caffè corto > *Due caffè corti*
Una città bella > *Due città belle*

- Some exotic animals ending in **-A** in the singular do not change in the plural (and are usually masculine!)
- Adjectives describing these plural words still need to express gender and number

Un koala piccolo > *Due Koala piccoli*
Un gorilla simpatico > *Due gorilla simpatici*

- Some words deriving from Greek ending in **-I** in the singular do not change in the plural
- These are often the same words that end in **-IS** in English
- Adjectives describing these plural words still need to express gender and number

Una crisi politica > *Due crisi politiche*
Un'analisi chimica > *Due analisi chimiche*

Your Notes

Definite Articles

- Yes, Italian has seven ways to say **THE**
- **IL** is used for singular masculine words
- **LO** is used for singular masculine words starting with a strong (double) consonant sound, like **Z, GN, GL, X, Y, S+Consonant, PS...**
- **L'** is used for singular masculine words starting with a vowel
- **I** is used for plural masculine words
- **GLI** is used for the plural of those masculine words that use **LO** and **L** in the singular
- The 'default' articles for masculine words are **IL / I** and we are going to use these unless an exception is present (for which we will use **LO, L,** and **GLI**)
- **LA** is used for singular feminine words
- **L'** is used for singular feminine words that start with a vowel
- **LE** is used for all plural feminine words
- The 'default' articles for feminine words are **LA / LE** and we are going to use these unless the feminine word is starts with a vowel and is singular (for which we use **L'**)

Il divano

I divani

La ragazza

Le ragazze

Lo studente

Gli studenti

L'aquilone

Gli aquiloni

L'insalata

Le insalate

- In Italian the article is chosen based on the word that follows to improve sound and simplify pronunciation
- Nouns do not 'own' an article
- If we inserted the adjective **STRANO** in one of its forms between the article and the noun, we will notice that some articles need to change:



Il divano strano
I divani strani
La ragazza strana
Le ragazze strane
Lo studente strano
Gli studenti strani
L'aquilone strano
Gli aquiloni strani
L'insalata strana
Le insalate strane

Lo strano divano
Gli strani divani
La strana ragazza
Le strane ragazze
Lo strano studente
Gli strani studenti
Lo strano aquilone
Gli strani aquiloni
La strana insalata
Le strane insalate

Your Notes



Indefinite Articles

- In English, **A** and **AN** are Indefinite Articles
- **UN** is used for singular masculine words
- **UNO** is used for singular masculine words starting with a strong (double) consonant sound, like **Z, GN, GL, X, Y, S+Consonant, PS...**
- The 'default' indefinite article for masculine words is **UN**, unless there is need to use **UNO**
- **UNA** is used for singular feminine words
- **UN'** is used for singular feminine words that start with a vowel
- The 'default' indefinite article for feminine words is **UNA**, unless there is need to use **UN'**
- **UN'** can only be used for feminine words - masculine words that start with a vowel just use the default **UN**

Un cappuccino

Una castagna

Uno scandalo

Uno gnomo

Uno zaino

Uno xilofono

Un'anatra

Un'amica

Un amico

Un'isola

Your Notes



Sentence Structure

- Like English, Italian is an **S V O** language, that is, **Subject > Verb > Object**
- In the specific, an Italian sentence might look like:

Article + Noun + Adjective + Verb + Article + Noun

Il cane nero mangia la mela

- **Adverbs** are usually placed right after the verb
Il cane nero mangia spesso la mela
- To make a verb **negative**, we place **NON** right before the verb (or the pronoun, if the verb is already preceded by one)
Il cane nero non mangia la mela
- When using **negative words** such as **MAI, NIENTE, NESSUNO** (*never, nothing, nobody*), in Italian the verb still needs to be preceded by **NON**:
Il cane nero non mangia mai la mela
- Overall, Italian has the same structure as English (except when it comes to questions), and we should not be overly worried
- As long as we apply the main rules of the Italian language (omission of subject pronouns, abundance of definite articles, positioning of the adjective after the noun etc), we'll be fine
- Italian is more flexible than English when it comes to where we place blocks on content

Your Notes



Your Notes

