*Conversational Italian*
*for Travelers*

# Just the Grammar

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Stella *Lucente*

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# How to Use This Book

This book, *Conversational Italian for Travelers Just the Grammar*, is a companion book to the *Conversational Italian for Travelers* textbook. The handbook *Just the Grammar* contains the complete grammar section from each of the 18 chapters in the textbook, all condensed into one smaller book for easy access and reading.

*Just the Grammar* begins with detailed, but easy to read descriptions of the Italian use of gender and number agreement for the definite articles, nouns, and adjectives, along with their correct placement in an Italian sentence. The adverbs, possessive adjectives, object pronouns, and the partitive are discussed with realistic examples from daily life. The link between English and Italian is emphasized in the cognate sections, which show the student how to build their own vocabulary.

Like the textbook from which it is derived, *Just the Grammar* focuses on the conversational use of Italian, with emphasis on current, commonly used expressions. These details are included in the grammar sections themselves, as well as in additional excerpts from the "Numbers," "Verbs" and "Idiomatic Expressions" sections of the *Conversational Italian for Travelers* textbbook. As a complete work in and of itself, this book makes learning Italian grammar really come alive!

*Just the Grammar* is a complete text in and of its own right, and will provide a wonderful basis for the beginning and intermediate student of Italian to use for many years. A few words about the textbook from which it is derived:

*Conversational Italian for Travelers* is unique in that it functions both to teach the Italian language in a gradual, understandable way, and also to serve as a reference book for important travel phrases, basic and intermediate grammar, verb conjugations, numbers, and the idiomatic expressions spoken by real Italians today.

The idea is that the adult who is interested in learning a second language has specific needs to communicate with other adults and the world around him, and that these needs should be stressed. In fact, most adults try to learn a new language fairly quickly before they must visit, relocate, or do business in another country. This book is designed to focus on the vocabulary and grammar adults will most often encounter, while at the same time teaching the formal rules of the language. It is an instructional book that can be kept for later reference as well.

The material covered is from beginning to intermediate levels, and contains three units. The units describe the information covered: "Transportation,""City Life," and "Hotels and Restaurants" – with three full chapters on how to read those Italian menus! All books in the *Conversational Italian for Travelers* series are color-coded for easy visual learning. Choose the book for you and get started today!   *-Kathryn Occhipinti*

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*Map of Italy*
Italian Cities

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# *Getting Started*

## The Italian Alphabet

The Italian alphabet has only 21 letters, but there are names in Italian for all of the Latin letters, including those traditionally described as foreign to Italian. The letters that are foreign to Italian are listed in parenthesis and are included together with the Italian alphabet given below. The written form of each letter's name in Italian and the phonetic pronunciation are listed in separate columns.

| Letter | Italian Name | Phonetic Pronunciation | Letter | Italian Name | Phonetic Pronunciation |
|--------|-------------|------------------------|--------|-------------|------------------------|
| a | a | ah | u | u | oo |
| b | bi | bee | v | vu/vi | voo/vee |
| c | ci | chee | (w) | doppia vu | doh-pee-ah voo |
| d | di | dee | (x) | ics | eeks |
| e | é | eh | (y) | ipsilon | eep-see-lohn |
| f | èffe | ehf-feh | | i greca | ee greh-ka |
| g | gi | jee | z | zèta | zeh-tah |
| h | àcca | ah-kah | | | |
| i | i | ee | | | |
| (j) | i lunga | ee loon-gah | | | |
| (k) | càppa | kahp-pah | | | |
| l | èlle | ehl-eh | | | |
| m | èmme | ehm-eh | | | |
| n | ènne | ehn-eh | | | |
| o | ò | oh | | | |
| p | pi | pee | | | |
| q | cu | koo | | | |
| r | èrre | ehr-reh | | | |
| s | èsse | es-seh | | | |
| t | ti | tee | | | |

# Getting Started

## The Italian Sound Combinations

Here is the Italian alphabet again, with an example word in Italian to represent how each written letter should sound, as well as an example of an English word that has an equivalent sound. If the sounds are identical in Italian and English, no explanation is given. Multiple examples will be given for a letter if the pronunciation can vary. Italian is one of the most phonetic (and beautiful) languages spoken, and a little time spent learning how to pronounce the letter combinations will make learning this language much easier!

| Letters(s) | Italian Pronunciation | English Pronunciation Equivalent | |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| a | cane | father | (ah sound) |
| b | bene | bell | |
| ca/co/cu | casa | cat | (hard c sound) |
| ci | ciao | cheese | (soft ch with long ee sound) |
| ce | cena | cheddar | (soft ch with short e sound) |
| chi | chi | key | (hard c with long ee sound) |
| che | che | kennel | (hard c with sort e sound) |
| d | dado | dad | |
| e | era | bet | (eh sound) |
| e | vedi | bait | (ay sound) |
| f | farfalla | fan | |
| ga/go/gu | gusto | good | (hard g sound) |
| gi | giro | jeer | (soft j with long ee sound) |
| ge | gettare | jet | (soft j with short e sound) |
| gli | figlio | million | ("gli" is a unique Italian sound similar to the "lli" in million, pronounced like mil-lyee-on)* |
| gn | signora | onion | (sounds like the "ni" in onion) |
| h | -- | -- | (h is not pronounced in Italian) |
| i | vita | meet | (long ee sound) |
| l | luna | love | |
| m | mamma | mother | |
| n | non | no | |

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# *Getting Started*

## The Italian Sound Combinations (cont'd)

| Letters(s) | Italian Pronunciation | English Pronunciation Equivalent | |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| o | sole | soap | (oh sound) |
| o | modo | law | (aw sound) |
| p | pasta | pasta | |
| qu | quanto | quest | (qu together makes the kw sound) |
| r | Roma | --- | (r is always trilled in Italian) |
| s | rossa | toss | (hard s) |
| s | rosa | nose | (soft s) |
| schi | schiavo | skeet | (s + chi makes hard skey sound) |
| sche | schema | skill | (s + che makes hard skeh sound) |
| sci | sciare | shield | (soft sh sound with long ee sound) |
| sce | scemo | shed | (soft sh sound with short e sound) |
| t | tu | to | |
| u | uva | boot | (oo sound) |
| v | vincere | vine | |
| z | zero | zero | (soft z) |
| z | pizza | pizza | (hard z, like tz sound) |

**\***To form the sound that corresponds to the letter combination "gli" in Italian, place the tip of your tongue behind your upper teeth. Then, raise the back part of your tongue to the palate and roll your tongue forward to form the guttural "gl" sound that is a part of this combination. Finish with the "yee" sound. By listening, you will note the word **gli (the)** stresses the guttural sound, but when placed in the middle of the word, such as with **figlio (son),** the "yee" part of the sound is stressed.

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# *Getting Started*

## Masculine and Feminine Nouns and Definite Articles

Italian, and all of the romance languages, have what are called masculine and feminine nouns. When referring to a person, the ending of the noun for the person's name must match that person's gender. As we all know, nouns refer not only to people, but also to places and things. In Italian, even references to a place or an object will be either masculine or feminine, as assigned by the rules of linguistics. In Italian, then, all nouns will be either masculine or feminine.

The definite article – the word "the" in English – will change in Italian to reflect the gender of the noun that is being modified. It is necessary to learn both the definite article and the noun together in order to speak fluently, so the definite article will always be included with the nouns given in the vocabulary lists. In some cases where the definite article is followed by an apostrophe, the combined sounds create one spoken "word" instead of two.

Here are some general rules:

For the most part, Italian nouns that end in **–a** will be designated as feminine, and take the definite article **la,** which means **the.**

For the most part, Italian nouns that end in **–o** will be masculine, and take the definite article **il,** which also means **the.**

There are also Italian nouns that end in **–e,** and these can be *in some cases masculine*, and *in other cases feminine*, as assigned by the rules of linguistics. Feminine nouns that end in **–e** will take **la** and masculine nouns that end in **–e** will take **il** as their definite article.

If the noun begins with a vowel, whether it is masculine or feminine, **l**' will be used as the definite article.

For Italian masculine nouns that begin with **s + consonant, z, ps, gn, pn,** or for foreign words incorporated into Italian that begin with the letters **x** or **y,** the definite article **lo** will be used.

For plural nouns, the definite articles will also change. Each noun, then, will have at least two forms, either singular or plural.

For nouns that refer to people, this creates four different possibilities: masculine singular, masculine plural, feminine singular and feminine plural!

Please see the table and examples that summarize these rules on the following page.

# *Getting Started*

## Masculine and Feminine Nouns and Definite Articles (cont'd)

| The Italian Definite Article | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Masculine Definite Article (singular/plural)** | | **Feminine Definite Article (singular/plural)** |
| | | | |
| **Noun begins with a consonant** | **il / i** | | **la / le** |
| | | | |
| **Noun begins with s+consonant, z,ps,gn,pn,x or y** | **lo / gli** | | |
| | | | |
| **Noun begins with a vowel** | **l' / gli** | | **l' / le** |

| | **Masculine Definite Article (singular/plural)** | | **Feminine Definite Article (singular/plural)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| **Noun begins with a consonant** | **il ragazzo / i ragazzi** the boy / the boys | | **la ragazza / le ragazze** the girl / the girls |
| | | | |
| **Noun begins with s+consonant, z,ps,gn,pn,x or y** | **lo zio / gli zii** the uncle the uncles | | |
| | | | |
| **Noun begins with a vowel** | **l'amico / gli amici** the (male) friend / the (male) friends | | **l'amica / le amiche+** the (girl) friend / the (girl) friends = the girlfriends |

+Notice the letter "**h**" has been inserted in this case before the letter "**e,**" but do not worry about this for now. Its function is just to maintain the correct sound.

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# Getting Started

## Masculine and Feminine Nouns and Definite Articles
### Examples for Nouns that End in the Letter E

Nouns that end in **–ore, –one, –ale,** and **–ile** are masculine, so the letter **–e** will change to an **–i** in the plural, and the definite articles **il**, **l'** and **i** will be used to correspond to the masculine origin of the noun. Below is a list of commonly used words we will encounter later in the text that have an **–e** ending and are masculine.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **il dottore** | the doctor | **i dottori** | the doctors |
| **l'attore** | the actor | **gli attori** | the actors |
| **il direttore** | the manager | **i direttori** | the managers |
| **lo scrittore** | the writer | **gli scrittori** | the writers |
| **l'albergatore** | the hotel owner | **gli albergatori** | the hotel owners |
| **il viaggiatore** | the traveler | **i viaggiatori** | the travelers |
| **il giornale** | the newspaper | **i giornali** | the newspapers |
| **il badile** | the shovel | **i badili** | the shovels |
| **il pallone** | the soccer ball | **i palloni** | the soccer balls |

Nouns that end in **–ione** and **–ice** are feminine, and will take the feminine definite articles in the singular and plural: **la, l'** and **le**. However, the **–e** ending of the noun will change to an **–i.** In this case, the definite article in the plural is a reminder of the feminine origin of the noun. Below is a list of commonly used words we will encounter later in the text that have an **–e** ending and are feminine. Notice that for the professions, the **–ice** ending is the feminine counterpart to the masculine **–ore.**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **l'attrice** | the actress | **le attrici** | the actresses |
| **la direttrice** | the manager | **le direttrici** | the directors |
| **la scrittrice** | the writer | **le scrittrici** | the writers |
| **l'albergatrice** | the hotel owner | **le albergatrici** | the hotel owners |
| **la viaggiatrice** | the travelor | **le viaggiatrici** | the travelors |
| **la stagione** | the season | **le stagioni** | the seasons |

# *Getting Started*

## General Pronunciation and Stress for Italian Words

The Italian language is a phonetic language, and so each letter in an Italian word needs to be pronounced to create the final sound. If two vowels are written next to each other, both are pronounced, but the sound is a combined sound (referred to as a diphthong). There are many pronunciation rules, which include rules for consonants, pure vowels and semivowels, but the easiest thing to remember is just to pronounce what you see!

Most Italian words will be stressed on the second to last syllable, which is easy to remember if the word contains only three syllables – just stress the syllable in the middle of the word. In general, a syllable in Italian is usually made up of a vowel or consonant group with its vowel. So, for many Italian words, just look for the vowel in the middle of the word and stress the syllable it goes with by making your intonation a little higher and more forceful.  The word **ragazzo,** for instance, which means **boy,** will place the stress on the **/ga/** sound.

   **ragazzo:**    **ra/<u>GAZ</u>/zo**

There are many exceptions to this rule, however, and the first syllable is stressed instead in many cases for words with three syllables, while the second syllable is often stressed in words with four syllables, as in **sabato** **(Saturday)** and **domenica** **(Sunday).**

   **sabato:**    **<u>SA</u>/ba/to**

   **domenica:**   **do/<u>ME</u>/ni/ca**

A vowel alone can also form a complete syllable.  **Abito** **(I live),** is a verb with three syllables where the first syllable, which happens to be the vowel **/a/** is stressed.

   **abito:**    **A/bi/to**

In the few cases where the very last syllable is stressed, the vowel at the end of the word will be given a grave **(`)** accent, as in **città** **(city)** or **caffè** **(coffee)**.  Otherwise, accents are infrequently used in Italian, and pronunciation is learned by listening!

For words with double consonants, hold the original sound of the consonant a little longer. For similar words, this can change the meaning; **ca**s**a** **(house)** or **ca**ss**a** **(cash register)!**

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# *Unit 1*

# *Transportation*

# *At the Airport*

## Cultural Note - The World in Italian

When Americans travel, we travel to a place – to Italy, to Rome, to the northeast. Italians travel directly *in* **(in)** a country, region, or large island, but *to* **(a)** a city, town, or small island. (In Italian, the word for **in** is the same as in English… **in!**) For instance, in our textbook dialogue, Caterina lives **in America,** but **a Chicago,** Here is a list of the Italian words for the continents and a selection of the countries of **the world (il mondo),** along with some capital cities. Notice that by convention the definite article **(the) (il, la,** or **l')** is used to refer to countries, except when talking about traveling directly *into* them!

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Europe | l'Europa | Africa | l' Africa |
| Austria | l'Austria | Asia | l'Asia |
| Belgium | il Belgio | Central America | l'America Centrale |
| *Brussels* | *Bruxelles* | Europe | l'Europa |
| Denmark | la Danimarca | Middle East | il Medio Oriente |
| England | l'Inghilterra | North America | l'America del nord |
| *London* | *Londra* | South America | l'America del sud |
| France | la Francia | Australia | l'Australia |
| *Paris* | *Parigi* | | |
| Germany | la Germania | Argentina | l'Argentina |
| *Berlin* | *Berlino* | Brazil | il Brasile |
| Greece | la Grecia | Canada | il Canada |
| *Athens* | *Atene* | Chile | il Cile |
| Holland | l'Olanda | China | la Cina |
| *Amsterdam* | *Amsterdam* | Egypt | l'Egitto |
| Ireland | l'Irlanda | *Cairo* | *il Cairo*\* |
| *Dublin* | *Dublino* | India | l'India |
| Italy | l'Italia | Indonesia | l'Indonesia |
| *Rome* | *Roma* | Japan | il Giappone |
| Norway | la Norvegia | Korea | la Corea |
| Poland | la Polonia | Mexico | il Messico |
| Portugal | il Portogallo | Pakistan | il Pakistan |
| *Lisbon* | *Lisbona* | Russia | la Russia |
| Scandanavia | la Scandanavia | *Moscow* | *Mosca* |
| Spain | la Spagna | Turkey | la Turchia |
| *Madrid* | *Madrid* | United States | gli Stati Uniti |
| Sweden | la Svezia | Viet Nam | il Vietnam |
| Switzerland | la Svizzera | | |

\*In this case**, il Cairo** is the name of the city, rather than the word **Cairo** alone, by convention.

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# *At the Airport*

## Grammar Note
### Buono and Bello

**Buono** is a word you will hear quite often – so many things are **good** in Italy! But, the form of this adjective will change according to the masculine or feminine form of the noun (person, place or thing) it modifies, and also according to where it is placed in the sentence.

For masculine nouns, **buono** is placed either <u>directly after</u> the noun, or at the end of the sentence, after the verb è for **is** (from the verb **essere**, which we will encounter in the next chapter). In the second case, the adjective **buono** will be separated from the noun it modifies, but both the noun and adjective will agree in gender.

| il giorno buono | the good day |
|---|---|
| Il giorno è buono | The day is good |

But, when the adjective **buono** is placed <u>before</u> a masculine noun, the letter **-o** is dropped from **buono** to make **buon**, as in, **"Buon giorno!"** The only exception to this will be if the Italian masculine noun begins with the letters: **s+consonant, z, ps, gn** or **pn.** The two most important masculine words to remember in this category are **studente** (student) and **zio** (uncle). In this case, we are back to our original word, and use **buono!**

| Buon giorno! | Good day! |
|---|---|
| il buono studente | the good student |
| il buono zio | the good uncle |

And, of course, many things are **beautiful** in Italy… so **bello** is an adjective that will come up frequently! **Bello** is used often, not only to refer to things that are **beautiful**, but also with the meanings of **nice, fine, lovely,** or **handsome**. The rules are similar to those for **buono** – just drop the **-o** ending (and the extra **"l"** if writing) to make **bel** when it is placed before the noun, unless the noun happens to begin with **s+consonant, z, ps, gn** or **pn.**

| il giorno bello | the beautiful day |
|---|---|
| Il giorno è bello. | The day is beautiful. |

| il bel giorno | the beautiful day |
|---|---|
| il bello studente | the fine student |
| il bello zio | the handsome uncle |

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# *At the Airport*

## Grammar Note
### Buona and Bella

For a feminine noun (person, place or thing), the words **buona** and **bella** are used to describe something **good** or **beautiful**, **nice, fine, lovely,** or **pretty,** whether placed _before_ or _after_ the noun these adjectives modify.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Buona sera!** | **Good evening!** |
| **La città è buona.** | **The city is good.** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **La bella città.** | **The beautiful city.** |
| **La città è bella.** | **The city is beautiful.** |

There is only one exception to this rule: if **buona** or **bella** is placed _before_ a feminine noun that begins with the letter **–a**, simply drop the last letter from **buona** or **bella** and add an apostrophe to make **buon'** or **bell'** for smoother conversation. Since our focus is on conversational Italian, just remember to bring the two words together when speaking, without repeating the **-a** ending, and don't worry for now about the spelling!

| | |
|---|---|
| **la buon'amica** | **the good friend** |
| **la bell'amica** | **the nice friend** |



Tour Bus by La Scala Opera House, Milan

# At the Airport

## Grammar Note
## Buono/Buona and Bello/Bella Summary

Here is a summary of all the rules we've covered. Notice the similarities between **buono** and **bello,** and for now, _focus on the most commonly used forms , which are given in bold._

But most of all, try to remember the word combinations in our examples; say them out loud, and listen to how smoothly they flow together when the endings are changed to reflect the different forms of each noun and adjective!

| Buono –good | Bello – beautiful, nice, fine, lovely, pretty, handsome |
|---|---|
| **Masculine** | **Masculine** |
| **buono -**       **after the noun**<br><br>before nouns that begin with:<br>s+consonant, z, ps, gn, pn | **bello - after the noun**<br><br>before nouns that begin with:<br>s+consonant, z, ps, gn, pn |
| **buon - before the noun** | **bel -**    **before the noun** |
| | |
| **Feminine** | **Feminine** |
| **buona- before** and **after the noun** | **bella-**    **before** and **after the noun** |
| **buon' -** before nouns that begin with **–a** | **bell' -**  before nouns that begin with **–a** |

# *At the Airport*

## Important Phrases – Meeting and Greeting

As in English, in Italian there are many ways to greet people, and different expressions will be used depending on the situation and how well the individuals know one another. Italian society has become overall less formal. Many easy-going, familiar, and slang expressions are now commonly used, not only between friends and family, but even between acquaintances, although polite forms of address are still important to know.

Listed below are some of the most common ways to say, "hello." **"Buon giorno,"** can be used to mean, **"Good morning,"** when greeting both family members at home and shop owners at the piazza; this phrase can also be used in more formal situations as its literal translation of, **"Good day."** It is a phrase used so often in fact, that one often hears the reply shortened to simply, **"Giorno."** There are at least as many ways to say "good bye" as there are to say "hello," as noted below. Notice that the word **ciao** is unique, since it can be used as both an informal **"hi"** as well as a quick way to say **"good bye." Ciao** is used frequently throughout Italy today with family and friends.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Buon giorno.* | Good morning. (lit. Good day.) | used all day into evening |
| Buona sera.* | Good evening. | early night–time greeting |
| Buona notte.* | Good night. | used when leaving/bedtime |
| Buona giornata. | (Have a) good day. | to wish someone a nice (entire) day |
| | | |
| Salve. | Hi./Hello. | informal greeting family/friends |
| Ciao. | Hi./Bye. | informal greeting family/friends |
| Ci vediamo! | (Until) we see each other (again)! | |
| | for family or for a friend you hope to see again soon | |
| Arrivederci. | Good-bye. | familiar polite |
| Arriverla. | Good-bye. | polite, with respect |
| ArrivederLa. | Good-bye. | formal written form |
| | | |
| A presto! | (See you) soon! | good-bye between friends |

*Can be written as one word, as in **buongiorno, buonasera,** or **buonanotte.**

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# *At the Airport*

## Important Phrases – Meeting and Greeting
### Polite Expressions of Agreement

Below are some informal, slang phrases of greeting for those you know well:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Come va? | How (is it) go(ing)? | a slang greeting used often |
| Ciao bella!/Ciao bello! | Hey, beautiful girl!/Hey handsome! | |
| | for someone you know (well) | |
| A dopo! | (See you) later! | good-bye between friends |
| A più tardi! | (See you) later! | good-bye between friends |
| Certo. | Of course. | |

Use these phrases to agree with what someone is saying:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sì. | Yes. |
| D'accordo. | (I) agree. |
| Penso di sì. | (I) think so. |

When addressing someone formally, Italians use the following titles:

| | |
|---|---|
| Signore | Mister/Sir |
| Signora | Misses/Madam/Ma'am |
| Signorina | Miss |

The two different ways to say, **please** in Italian, **per piacere** and **per favore,** are inter-changeable, and loosely translate into **"for a pleasantry/nicety"** or **"for a favor."** **Grazie** is a noun that means **thanks,** and used in the same way as the English **thank you.** If you are really pleased, say, **"Molte grazie!" "Tante grazie!"** or **"Mille grazie!"**

| | |
|---|---|
| Per favore./Per piacere. | Please. |
| Grazie. | Thank you. |
| Molte grazie! | Thank you very much! |
| Tante grazie! | |
| Mille grazie! | Thank you so much!/Thanks a lot! |
| | (lit. A thousand thanks!) |

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# *At the Airport*

## **Grammar Point**
### Studying Italian Verbs and Italian Subject Pronouns

The action words, or verbs, are the heart of every language. One who knows a wide variety of verbs and how to conjugate them quickly has a much easier time understanding others and also expressing their own point of view.

At first, learning how to conjugate Italian verbs may seem complicated to the English speaker, and for good reason. In English, we rely on the subject pronouns - I, you, he, she, etc., to signal who is doing the talking. In Italian, however, the speaker is signaled by the verb endings themselves . A different ending must be learned for *each speaker* for *each form of the verb!* Since the Italian verb endings are different for each speaker, the subject pronouns are only included for emphasis in Italian. More often than not, subject pronouns are left out of the sentence in conversational Italian.

As an example, in cases where the word "it" is the subject, the third person singular verb form is used, but the subject pronoun "it" is always omitted. But, with a little  practice (that is with "verb drills," which are available in the *Conversational Italian Audio Dialogue Practice Book*), this way of speaking will become more easily understood and the  correct conjugation of the verb alone will be easy to remember and just "sound right."

The table below shows the order in which all subject pronouns will be listed when learning each verb form, with the technical names (first, second, third person) for each type of conjugation. At first, when learning to conjugate a verb, try to focus only on the **io,  tu,** and **noi** forms, as these forms will be used the most in conversation; and luckily, the endings will be the same in the present tense for all three major Italian verb forms!

| Subject Pronouns | | |
|---|---|---|
| **io** | **I** | **1**[st] **person singular** |
| **tu** | **you (familiar)** | **2**[nd] **person singular** |
| **Lei/lei/lui** | **you (polite)/she/he/(it)** | **3**[rd] **person singular** |
| | | |
| **noi** | **we** | **1**[st] **person plural** |
| **voi** | **you all (familiar)** | **2**[nd] **person plural** |
| **Loro/loro** | **you all (polite)/they** | **3**[rd] **person plural** |

# *At the Airport*

## Grammar Point
### The Many Forms of "You" in Italian – Singular Forms

In Italian, when we address someone as "you," different subject pronouns and verb endings are used. As we've seen already from the examples in the prior verb section from this chapter, there are four different subject pronouns and verb endings in Italian that all mean "you" – for each verb! How do we know which is the correct form to use in a given situation? Since this is the first time we are studying verbs, we will go through the situations when each form of "you" is used. Also, throughout the text from here on, references to the familiar (fam.) and polite (pol.) forms of the Italian verbs may appear for clarity after the English translation of the verb.

Keep in mind that for conversational Italian, the familiar is used very commonly in Italy today, so if you can remember the verb endings for the **io, tu,** and **noi** forms (which will be the same for each subject pronoun in all three conjugations), you are well on your way to speaking Italian! Remember these forms when you speak; recognize the other forms when you are listening.

You familiar (singular) – **tu** with an **–i** ending for the **–are, -ere,** and **–ire** verbs is used for people you know well, or are familiar with – family (always with children), friends, or someone you would like to be a friend. For instance, **"Tu parli italiano?"** uses the "familiar you" form of the verb **parlare** to ask the question, **"Do you speak Italian?"** Remember this form for traveling, as it can be used in almost all situations.

You polite (singular) – **Lei** with an **–a** ending for the **–are** verbs is used for people you do not know or have just met, and to be respectful toward someone older than you. **"Lei parla italiano?"** also means, **"Do you speak Italian?"** but asks this question in a more polite way than the example given in the last paragraph. This form of the verb, called the "polite" or "formal" form, is important to show respect to others. For the traveler, who is often a customer, the hotel personnel or the salespeople in a shop may use the polite form. You, in turn, may also want to use this polite form when making requests, and this will be emphasized throughout the text. Notice that in our textbook dialogue, the stewardess Maria uses the "polite you" when she says to Caterina, whom she has just met, **"Lei parla italiano molto bene."** The response may be in the familiar or polite form, and the situation will usually determine what form the rest of the conversation will continue in. We will focus on the appropriate use of the polite form and how and when to switch to the familiar form in Unit 2.

In written Italian, the subject pronoun **Lei** is capitalized in formal situations. In spoken Italian, the meaning of **Lei,** which means **polite you,** and **lei,** which means **she,** is, of course, understood from the situation.

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# *At the Airport*

## Grammar Point
### The Many Forms of "You" in Italian – Plural Forms

You familiar (plural) – **voi** with an **–ate** ending for the **–are** verbs is used when calling a group of people "you." In this text, this form will be referred to as the "you all" form, since the use of this subject pronoun is similar to the colloquial phrase used in the southern states of America. If speaking directly to a group of people you know, such as your family, use this form. Tour guides when addressing "all of you" on the tour will probably use this form, as they will become familiar with the members of the tour group.

When asking shop clerks, **"Do you have...?"** use this form for the "collective you" that includes owners and shopkeepers, and start your question with, **"Avete...?"** **"Do you all have...?** To ask a group of people if they speak Italian, we can say, **"Voi parlate italiano?"** which means, **"Do you all speak Italian?"**

You polite (plural) – **Loro** with an **–ano** ending for **–are** verbs. **Loro** is capitalized to distinguish the "polite plural you" from **loro,** which means **they**. **Loro** as the "polite you plural" is almost never used by Italians today, and it gives the language a very stiff feeling when it is occasionally used. In a very formal situation, **Loro** may be used to address a group of people, but it is unlikely one will encounter this use while traveling. So, the word **Loro** with a capital "L" to mean "polite you all" will not be included in the tables used to present verb conjugation after this section.

Finally, then, if we want to ask a group of people if they speak Italian in an extremely formal way we could say, **"Loro parlano italiano?"** which, again, means**, "Do you all (to a group) speak Italian?"** When making a general statement about a group of people, one would also say, **"Loro parlano italiano,"** to mean, **"They speak Italian."**

| Subject Pronouns | | |
|---|---|---|
| **io** | I | 1st person singular |
| **tu** | you (familiar) | 2nd person singular |
| **Lei/lei/lui** | you (polite)/she/he/(it) | 3rd person singular |
| | | |
| **noi** | we | 1st person plural |
| **voi** | you all (familiar) | 2nd person plural |
| **Loro/loro** | you all (polite)/they | 3rd person plural |

# *At the Airport*

## Idiomatic Expressions - Dove and Ecco

As in English, many Italian expressions do not make sense if each word is translated literally, but together the words do have a significant meaning. These types of phrases can be called "idiomatic expressions." Note that many of the meeting/greeting phrases are idiomatic expressions in Italian, and just need to be memorized. Here are a few more. For instance, the interrogative expressions for **where is/where are** are **dov'è** and **dove sono.** The typical answer of **here/there is/are** is **ecco. Ecco** is a single word in Italian that encompasses both the adverbs **here/there** and the verbs **is/are.** Note that **ecco** is used to point out something in plain sight.

Students can practice together to enlarge their vocabulary in each section using these expressions. For instance, one student can ask the next, **"Dov'è l'Italia?"** for **"Where is the (country of) Italy?"** and the response will be, **"Ecco l'Italia!"** for **"Here Italy is!"** when pointing to the correct country on a map.

| | |
|---|---|
| Dove? | Where? |
| Dov'è...? | Where is...? |
| Dove sono...? | Where are...? |
| | |
| Ecco... | Here is.../Here are...<br>There is.../There are... |
| | |
| Eccolo!/Eccola! | Here he is!/Here she is!/Here it is! |
| Eccomi! | Here I am! |

To ask someone where they are from, combine the prepositions, **di (of/from)** or **da (from)** with **dove** and a verb, as in the examples below. Either of the two phrases below can be used. (The grammar for this will be covered in Chapter 2). To make it easy to remember the response, simply repeat the same preposition and verb you hear in the question when giving your answer! It should be noted that Italians often answer with the largest city nearest to their town of origin, so you might want to do that also, especially as most Italians are familiar with the names of the larger cities in America.

| | |
|---|---|
| Di dov'è Lei? | Where are you (pol.) from?  (lit.  From where are you?) |
| Di dove sei? | Where are you (fam.) from?  (lit.  From where are you?) |
| Sono di Chicago. | I am of (from) Chicago. |
| | |
| Da dove viene? | Where (do) you (pol.) come from? (lit.  From where do you come?) |
| Da dove vieni? | Where (do) you (fam.) come from? (lit. From where do you come?) |
| | |
| Vengo da Chicago. | I come from Chicago. |

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# *At the Airport*

## Grammar Point - C'è and Ci sono vs. Ecco

**Ecco,** which means both **here is** and **here are,** is a very useful expression and will be used frequentlly in our textbook dialogues (see www.learntravelitalian.com) when Caterina is giving a document or payment to someone, or when Caterina is pointing out something that she has seen. In each instance, there is an object that is in plain sight.

You will notice, however, that there is another common way to say "there is" from the textbook dialogue in Chapter 6, when Pietro makes a general statement about the traffic: **"C'è molto traffico,"** which translates as, **"There is a lot of traffic."** **C'è** is the elided (contracted) form of **ci** and **è** which means **there is.** **Ci sono** is the form of this phrase that means **there are.** These expressions can be used when speaking of the existence of something *whether it can be seen or not*.

Along these lines, if you ask someone in Italy how they feel, or how things are going for them, they may reply, **"Non c'è male,"** which is the equivalent of the English, **"Not too badly."** When you spend time in Italy, you will hear phrases that use **c'è** often, in many different situations, and we will continue to encounter them in the remainder of our text.

Gondolas on the Grand Canal, Venice

# At the Airport

## Numbers – Counting 0 - 10

We will focus on numbers in every chapter of the first two units. Numbers are important in the daily life of a traveler, as you can imagine, for making reservations or purchasing goods and services.

Flash cards that children use when learning their addition or multiplication can be a fun way to practice numbers in a group. Each student can take turns picking a card, any card, out of the pile, and say the number in Italian!

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **0** | **zero** | **Zero** will change to the plural **zeri** when describing more than one of the numbers (i.e. 100 has **two zeros**, or **due zeri).** |
| **1** | **uno** | |
| **2** | **due** | |
| **3** | **tre** | |
| **4** | **quattro** | |
| **5** | **cinque** | |
| **6** | **sei** | |
| **7** | **sette** | |
| **8** | **otto** | |
| **9** | **nove** | |
| **10** | **dieci** | |

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