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FOR BEGINNERS
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A2

ciao

**TARGET:
LANGUAGES**

**LEARN
ITALIAN**
Beginner level
A2

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Adapted for English speakers
by Elise Bradbury



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I

FIRST

CONTACT

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND GREETINGS

PRESENTAZIONI E SALUTI

AIMS

- INTRODUCING YOURSELF
- SAYING HELLO
- SAYING GOODBYE

TOPICS

- DEFINITE ARTICLES
- GENDER OF NOUNS
- FORMING THE PLURAL
- NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES
ENDING IN -O
- THE SUBJECT PRONOUNS
- PRESENT TENSE OF THE VERB
ESSERE ('TO BE')

THE NEW NEIGHBOUR (f.)

Carlo: Hi! I'm Carlo (*I myself I-call Carlo*). What's your name (*And you how yourself you-call*)?

Luisa: Hello (*good-day*)! I'm Luisa. Nice to meet you (*pleasure*)!

Carlo: Are you the new neighbour (f.)?

Luisa: Yes, I've been living (*I-live*) here since yesterday. I come from Milan.

Carlo: Ah, you're from Milan.

Luisa: No, no, we are Sicilian (pl.), but my parents (*the mine*) have been working (*they-work*) in the north [of Italy] for years.

Carlo: As for me (*I on-the-other-hand*), I'm from here, my family has been living (*it-lives*) in Bologna for generations and generations.

Luisa: It's a lovely city, isn't it (*true*)?

Carlo: Very beautiful! It's my city (*the mine*)! And it's full of young people!

Luisa: Well, I have to go to class now (*I now must go to lesson*). My bus comes (*passes*) in two minutes. See you later (*us we-see*)!

Carlo: I'm also a student (*I'm student also-I*), you know? So goodbye! See you soon (*at-the next*)! And ... careful not to miss the bus!

03

LA NUOVA VICINA

Carlo: Ciao! Io mi chiamo Carlo. E tu come ti chiami?

Luisa: Buongiorno! Io sono Luisa. Piacere!

Carlo: Sei la nuova vicina?

Luisa: Sì, abito qui da ieri; vengo da Milano.

Carlo: Ah, sei di Milano.

Luisa: No no, siamo siciliani, ma i miei lavorano nel nord da anni.

Carlo: Io invece sono di qui, la mia famiglia abita a Bologna da generazioni e generazioni.

Luisa: È una bella città, vero?

Carlo: Bellissima! È la mia! Ed è piena di ragazzi!

Luisa: Beh, io adesso devo andare a lezione. Il mio autobus passa tra due minuti. Ci vediamo!

Carlo: Sono studente anch'io, sai? Beh, arrivederci! Alla prossima! E... attenzione a non perdere l'autobus!

■ UNDERSTANDING THE DIALOGUE

GREETINGS

- The polite standard greeting is **buongiorno** *good day* or **buonasera** *good evening*. The more informal **ciao** is used between friends and young people.
- Another option is **Salve!**, which is between the two, but is better to reserve for people you're on familiar terms with.

INTRODUCING YOURSELF

- To give one's name, the reflexive verb **chiamarsi** *to be called* is used:
Mi chiamo... *My name is ...* or literally, 'myself I-call'.
- The reply is **Piacere!** *Nice to meet you!* This word literally means 'pleasure' and implies **È un piacere conoscerti!** *It's a pleasure to meet you!*

SAYING GOODBYE

The standard expression for *goodbye* is **arrivederci**. Other options are **ciao** *bye*, **alla prossima** *until next time* or **ci vediamo** *see you soon*.

CULTURAL NOTE

Immigration from the south to the north of Italy has been common since the end of World War II. Northern Italy is more economically developed, so it is easier to find work there, and whole families move as a result. For families in the north, however, it is not unusual to live in your hometown **da generazioni e generazioni...**!

◆ GRAMMAR

AGREEMENT IN GENDER AND NUMBER

Every noun in Italian is either masculine or feminine, even those that don't refer to people: for example, **la città** *city* is feminine. This is important because other words that describe the noun (e.g. articles, pronouns and adjectives) change form to agree with its gender. So the adjective **bello** *beautiful* in the masculine becomes **bella** in the feminine. When an adjective describes a person, it needs to agree with the person's gender: **vicino** *neighbour* (male), **vicina** (female).

A noun and the words that modify it also change depending on whether it is singular or plural. In Italian, plurals are not formed by adding **-s!** The masculine singular

ending **-o** changes to **-i**, and the feminine singular ending **-a** changes to **-e**: **ragazzo** *young man*, **ragazza** *young woman*, **ragazzi** *young men* (or a mixed group of young men and women), **ragazze** *young women*.

THE DEFINITE ARTICLE 'THE'

As a result, there are a number of ways to say *the* – not only are there different forms for masculine and feminine, singular and plural, but they also vary depending on what letter the following word starts with! The table below shows the different forms. Note that an apostrophe is used before a singular noun starting with a vowel: **l'amica** *friend* (f.).

	Masculine noun			Feminine noun	
	Starting with a consonant (but see column 2)	Starting with s + consonant, gn, z, ps	Starting with a vowel	Starting with a consonant	Starting with a vowel
SINGULAR	il il mio autobus	lo lo studente	l' l'autobus	la la vicina	l' l'amica
PLURAL	i i miei	gli gli studenti, gli autobus		le le vicine, le amiche	

NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES ENDING IN -O

Before you throw up your hands in despair at these complications, the good news is that many singular nouns and adjectives end in **-o** in the masculine and in **-a** in the feminine. As we've seen, the plural forms become **-i** (masculine) and **-e** (feminine):

	Masculine	Feminine
SINGULAR	-o il siciliano bello	-a la siciliana bella
PLURAL	-i i siciliani belli	-e le siciliane belle

THE SUBJECT PRONOUNS

The subject pronouns in Italian are **io** *I*, **tu** *you* (informal singular), **lui** *he*, **lei** *she*, **noi** *we*, **voi** *you* (informal plural) and **loro** *they*. When addressing someone formally, **Lei** *you* (singular) or **Loro** *you* (plural) are used. The subject pronouns are usually left out

unless emphasis is necessary: for example, to show contrast or differentiate the speaker: **lo invece sono di qui**. *As for me, I'm from here.*

SOME PREPOSITIONS

- We've now seen two meanings for **da**. One is to indicate origin (*from*) **vengo da Milano** *I come from Milan*; another is to indicate the passage of time (*for, since*): **da generazioni** *for generations*.
- However, in **sei di Milano** *you're from Milan*, the preposition **di** *of* is used because the verb does not express movement ('you are of Milan').
- The preposition **tra** is used to express that something will happen within a period of time (*in*): **tra due minuti** *in two minutes*.

THE CONJUNCTION 'AND'

The one-letter word **e** means *and*. It becomes **ed** before a word starting with a vowel, although this is only strictly required before the vowel **e**: **ed è piena di ragazzi** *and it's full of young people*.

▲ CONJUGATION THE PRESENT TENSE OF *ESSERE*

Introducing the present tense of the very useful verb **essere** *to be*, which is irregular. We've included the subject pronouns in the table below, but as we've mentioned, these are often left out since the conjugated verb indicates who the subject is.

(io) sono	<i>I am</i>	(noi) siamo	<i>we are</i>
(tu) sei	<i>you are</i> (informal sing.)	(voi) siete	<i>you are</i> (informal pl.)
(lui, lei, Lei) è	<i>he is, she is, you are</i> (formal sing.), also <i>it is</i>	(loro, Loro) sono	<i>they are, you are</i> (formal pl.)

◆ EXERCISES

The exercises accompanied by audio are indicated with a speaker icon . In some cases, you need to listen to the recording first, and then answer the exercise questions; in other cases, you need to do the exercise first and then check your answers by listening to the audio. You'll find all of the answers in the 'Exercise answers' section at the end of the book.

● VOCABULARY

- abitare** *to live* (in a place)
- adesso** *now*
- anche** *also, too* (**anch'io** *me too*)
- l'anno** *year* (**gli anni** *the years*)
- l'autobus** *bus*
- bello/a** *beautiful* (**bellissimo/a** *very beautiful*)
- chiamarsi** *to be called* (**chiamare** *to call*)
- ciao** *hi, hello*
- la città** *city*
- come** *how*
- la famiglia** *family*
- la generazione** *generation* (**le generazioni** *generations*)
- ieri** *yesterday*
- invece** *but, on the other hand, instead*
- lavorare** *to work*
- la lezione** *class, lesson*
- ma** *but*
- il minuto** *minute* (**i minuti** *minutes*)
- nuovo/a** *new*
- passare** *to pass*
- perdere** *to miss, to lose*
- qui** *here*
- i ragazzi** *young people* (**il ragazzo** *young man*, **la ragazza** *young woman*)
- sapere** *to know* (a fact or how to do something)
- siciliano/a** *Sicilian*
- lo studente / la studentessa** *student*
- venire** *to come*
- il vicino / la vicina** *neighbour*

1. USE THE CORRECT FORM OF DEFINITE ARTICLE FOR EACH NOUN.

- a. città
- b. studenti
- c. vicino
- d. università
- e. siciliane

2. FILL IN THE TABLE WITH THE MISSING TERMS.

Masculine singular	Masculine plural	Feminine singular	Feminine plural
il vicino siciliano			
	i ragazzi belli		

03 3. LISTEN TO THE RECORDING AND THEN FILL IN THE MISSING WORD IN EACH SENTENCE.

- a. Come ti chiami? Io mi Carlo.
- b. Io Martina,
- c. Abiti qui molto tempo?
- d. qui da ieri.
- e. Adesso devo andare;
- f. Alla

4. FILL IN THE SENTENCES WITH THE CORRECT FORM OF THE VERB *ESSERE*.

- a. I miei bolognesi da generazioni.
- b. Noi invece siciliani.
- c. Voi studenti.
- d. Io di Milano e tu di dove
- e. Bologna molto bella.

2. TALKING ABOUT YOURSELF

PARLARE DI SÉ

AIMS

- SAYING WHERE YOU'RE FROM
- GIVING YOUR AGE
- DESCRIBING WHAT YOU DO

TOPICS

- INDEFINITE ARTICLES
- PRESENT TENSE OF THE VERB *AVERE* ('TO HAVE')

CLASSMATES (*companions of faculty*)

Solveig: Hi, can I sit (*seat-myself*) next to you? I've [only] been (*I-am*) here for a week, and in this course I don't know anyone (*not I-know no-one*).

Albert: Of course! Have a seat (*Settle-yourself*)! There's a space (*place free*) right here!

Solveig: I'm Solveig. And (*you*) what's your name?

Albert: I'm Albert. I'm Belgian, born in Liège. You, however, with the name (*that*) you have, you are surely Scandinavian (f.).

Solveig: Yes, I'm from (*I-come from-the*) Norway. I'm here to learn Italian.

Albert: Me too, I need it for my job (*of-it I-have need for the my job*).

Solveig: What do you do (*What work you-do*)?

Albert: I'm an (*I-do the*) engineer. In (*the*) my company we have relationships with countries around the world (*all the countries of-the world*).

Solveig: So young [and] you're already [an] engineer? How old are you (*But how-many years you-have*)?

Albert: I'm 27 (*I-have twenty-seven years*), and you?

Solveig: I'm 28 (*I of-them I-have twenty-eight*) and I'm still a student (f.)!

Albert: Everyone studies at their own pace (*In-the studies each has the his/her paces*)! And besides in (*in-the*) your country you (pl.) have (*of-the*) excellent schools, you (pl.) are really clever!

04

COMPAGNI DI FACOLTÀ

Solveig: Ciao, posso sedermi vicino a te? Sono qui da una settimana, e in questo corso non conosco nessuno.

Albert: Certo! Accomodati! C'è un posto libero proprio qui!

Solveig: Io mi chiamo Solveig, e tu come ti chiami?

Albert: Mi chiamo Albert, sono belga. Nato a Liegi. Tu invece, con il nome che hai, sei di certo scandinava.

Solveig: Sì, vengo dalla Norvegia, sono qui per imparare l'italiano.

Albert: Anch'io, ne ho bisogno per il mio lavoro.

Solveig: Che lavoro fai?

Albert: Faccio l'ingegnere, nella mia ditta abbiamo rapporti con tutti i paesi del mondo.

Solveig: Così giovane sei già ingegnere? Ma quanti anni hai?

Albert: Ho ventisette anni, e tu?

Solveig: Io ne ho ventotto e sono ancora una studentessa!

Albert: Negli studi, ognuno ha i suoi tempi! E poi nel tuo paese avete delle ottime scuole, siete bravissimi!

■ UNDERSTANDING THE DIALOGUE

INVITING SOMEONE TO SIT DOWN OR COME IN

Accomodati! (the underlined vowel is stressed) is an all-purpose invitation to come in, find a place, sit down: basically, to *Make yourself comfortable!*

TALKING ABOUT AGE

- To ask how old someone is: **Quanti anni hai?** ('How-many years you-have?')
To say how old you are: **Ho ... anni.** ('I-have ... years.')
- For the numbers, see lesson 7.

SAYING WHAT YOU DO

- In everyday speech, someone might ask **Che lavoro fai?** *What do you do?* You might also hear **Che mestiere fai?** (**lavoro** *work, job* / **mestiere** *trade*). **Qual è la tua professione?** *What is your profession?* is more formal.
- The most common reply uses the verb **fare** *to do*, with the definite article *the* rather than *a(n)*: **Faccio l'ingegnere.** *I'm an engineer.*
- It is also possible to use **essere** *to be*, which is slightly more formal:
Sono medico. *I am a doctor.* (Note that no article is used before the noun.)
Some professions have a specific form for males and females: **avvocato** / **avvocata** *lawyer* (m./f.).

CULTURAL NOTE

Italian students finish secondary school at the age of 19 with **la maturità**, the equivalent of a *high school diploma*, with which they can apply to a university. The term for a university degree is **la laurea**. There are different levels: **la laurea breve triennale** (three years), a Bachelor's degree, which can be followed by **la laurea biennale** (two years), corresponding to a Master's degree. With another three years of study, a student can receive **il dottorato di ricerca**, a doctorate or PhD.

◆ GRAMMAR

INDEFINITE ARTICLES

Like the definite article (*the*), there are different forms of the indefinite article (*a, an*). The form must agree with the gender of the noun, and also depends on the letter the noun starts with.

With a plural noun, the equivalent of the indefinite article *some* is formed by contracting the preposition **di** + the appropriate definite article (e.g. **degli** = **di** + **gli**). This is often left out with plural nouns, as in English: **avete ottime scuole** rather than **avete delle ottime scuole** *you have (some) excellent schools*; **abbiamo rapporti** rather than **abbiamo dei rapporti** *we have (some) relationships*. But as you may have noticed in the dialogues, articles are used in many contexts in Italian in which they are not used in English, so you'll have to get used to these differences!

	Masculine noun		Feminine noun	
	Starting with a consonant (but see column 2) or a vowel	Starting with s + consonant or gn, z, ps	Starting with a consonant	Starting with a vowel
SINGULAR	un un posto un amico	uno uno studente	una una studentessa	un' un' amica
	Starting with a consonant (but see column 2)	Starting with s + consonant or gn, z, ps or a vowel	Starting with a consonant or a vowel	
PLURAL	dei dei colleghi	degli degli studenti degli amici	delle delle ottime scuole delle amiche	

SOME PREPOSITIONS

The preposition **a** has several uses:

- it indicates direction towards a place: **Vado a Milano.** *I'm going to Milan.*
- it indicates proximity in the prepositional phrase **vicino a** *near to*:
Posso sedermi vicino a te? *Can I sit next to you?*
- it can also be used to convey being in a place, with no movement implied:
Sono nato a Liegi. *I was ('I-am') born in Liège.*

The term **con** means *with*: **con il nome che hai** *with the name that you have*.

Here's an easy one: **in in (in questo corso** *in this course*). However, when followed by a definite article, the contracted form is quite different: **nel tuo paese** *in ('in-the') your country (in + il = nel)*. We'll look at contracted articles in the next lesson.

▲ CONJUGATION

THE PRESENT TENSE OF *AVERE* ('TO HAVE')

The very frequently used verb **avere** *to have* is irregular. Careful: the letter **h** before a vowel is silent in Italian, so it is not pronounced in the verb forms **ho** [oh], **hai** [I], **ha** [ah] or **hanno** [ahn-noh].

(io) ho	<i>I have</i>
(tu) hai	<i>you have</i> (informal singular)
(lui, lei, Lei) ha	<i>he has, she has, you have</i> (formal singular), also <i>it has</i>
(noi) abbiamo	<i>we have</i>
(voi) avete	<i>you have</i> (plural)
(loro, Loro) hanno	<i>they have, you have</i> (formal plural)

You have probably noticed that in contrast to English there are different forms of *you* in Italian, depending on whether the speaker is addressing one or more than one person, as well as on the level of politeness required (formal or informal). This affects both the pronoun and the conjugated form of the verb to use in specific situations.

◆ EXERCISES

1. USE THE CORRECT FORM OF INDEFINITE ARTICLE FOR EACH NOUN.

- città
- lavori
- studente
- studentessa
- ingegneri
- scuole

2. FILL IN THE SENTENCES WITH THE CORRECT CONJUGATED FORM OF *AVERE*.

- Io e Luisa una bella casa.
- Carlo un ottimo lavoro.
- Nel vostro paese ottime scuole.
- Tu un nome bellissimo.

● VOCABULARY

- belga** *Belgian* (m./f.)
bravo/a *good, clever, capable* (**bravissimo/a** *very good, clever, capable*)
conoscere *to know* (a person), *to meet*
così *so*
il bisogno *need, necessity*
il corso *course*
certo *of course, sure*
di certo *certainly*
la ditta *company, firm*
giovane *young*
imparare *to learn*
l'ingegnere *engineer*
l'italiano *Italian* (the language)
il lavoro *work, job*
libero/a *free, vacant*
il mondo *the world*
nessuno/a *no one*
il nome *first name*
ognuno *each*
ottimo/a *excellent*
il paese *country*
il posto *place, seat*
proprio *exactly, precisely*
sedersi *to sit down*
la settimana *week*
gli studi *studies* (**lo studio** *study*)
il tempo *time, pace*
il rapporto *relationship*
scandinavo/a *Scandinavian*
la scuola *school*

04 **3. LISTEN TO THE RECORDING AND COMPLETE THE SENTENCES WITH THE MISSING WORD.**

- a. Posso sedermi vicino te?
- b. Certo,!
- c. Che fai?
- d. l'ingegnere.
- e. anni hai?
- f. trent'anni.

4. COMPLETE THE TABLE WITH THE MISSING FORMS.

Masculine singular	Masculine plural	Feminine singular	Feminine plural
uno scandinavo			
	dei ragazzi bravissimi		

3. ADDRESSING OTHERS (*TU* OR *LEI*)

DARE DEL TU E DARE DEL LEI

AIMS

- USING FORMAL AND INFORMAL ADDRESS
- APOLOGIZING
- THANKING
- EXPRESSING POLITENESS

TOPICS

- NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES ENDING IN -E
- CONTRACTED PREPOSITION + ARTICLE
- REGULAR PRESENT TENSE OF -ARE VERBS (1ST GROUP)



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