

## Italian basics in 5 steps for Beginners

### 1. Sentence structure: how Italian sentences work

Italian follows a subject verb object (SVO) structure, just like English.

> Examples: *Io mangio la pasta.* (I eat pasta.) *Lei legge un libro.* (She reads a book.)

However, word order in Italian is more flexible compared to English, allowing changes for emphasis. But avoid feeling overwhelm and stick to the **key tip**: follow the basic SVO pattern for clarity when starting, then experiment with different structures as you progress.

### 2. Personal pronouns

Unlike English, **Italian pronouns (I, you, he/she, etc.) can be omitted** because verbs already indicate who is performing the action.

Italian personal subject pronouns:

- Io (**I**)
- Tu (**You**)
- Lui / Lei (**He / She**)
- Noi (**We**)
- Voi (You all)
- Loro (**They**)

> **Example:** *Parlo italiano!* (**I speak Italian!**) – No need for "Io," since *parlo* already tells us it's first-person singular.

**Key tip:** When should you use pronouns?

To avoid confusion, especially when multiple people are involved.

To add emphasis, *Io lavoro, ma lui dorme!* (I work, but he sleeps!).

### 3. Noun gender in Italian grammar

Unlike English, where words used to refer to things, ideas or people are gender-neutral, every Italian noun\* is either masculine or feminine.

\*A noun is a grammar element, a word that functions as the name of a person, place, thing, or idea.

- Masculine nouns: Usually end in "-o" (*ragazzo* = boy | *libro* = book)
- Feminine nouns: Usually end in "-a" (*ragazza* = girl | *casa* = house)

**Important Note:** Although we use gender in grammar to refer to people (based on the person's sex), gender in Italian is merely a grammar feature and a word's gender doesn't reflect any sort of social or personal perception of what could be interpreted as feminine or masculine.

**Exceptions Exist!** Some words are irregular and don't follow the usual gender rule.

- *Il problema* (**The problem**) Masculine, even though it ends in "-a"!
- *La mano* (**The hand**) Feminine, even though it ends in "-o"!

**Key tip:** No stress about irregulars! Just learn them through your learning journey and facilitate this making a short list of the most common irregulars!

### 4. Adjective agreement

Adjectives must match the gender and number of the noun they describe.

Singular Adjective Agreement:

- *Il gattO è nerO.* (The cat is black.) Masculine Singular
- *La sedìA è rossA.* (The chair is red.) Feminine Singular

Plural Adjective Agreement:

- *I gattI sono nerI.* (The cats are black.) Masculine Plural
- *Le sedìE sono rossE.* (The chairs are red.) Feminine Plural

**Key Tip:** Memorize opposite adjectives to expand learning:

*Grande* (**Big**) vs. *Piccolo* (**Small**)

*Veloce* (**Fast**) vs. *Lento* (**Slow**)

There are irregulars also with adjectives, but remember No Stress about irregulars! Just learn them as you go and make a brief list of the most common ones!

## 5. Present tense verbs: essential conjugations

Italian verbs conjugate based on who is the subject performing the action. There are three main conjugations patterns that apply depending on how the verb ends when infinitive (neutral form).

Verbs ending in -ARE : Parlare (to speak)

*Io parlo* (I speak)

*Tu parli* (You speak)

*Lui/Lei parla* (He/She speaks)

*Noi parliamo* (We speak)

*Voi parlate* (You all speak)

*Loro parlano* (They speak)

Verbs ending in -ERE : Chiedere (to ask)

*Io chiedo* (**I ask**)

*Tu chiedi* (**You ask**)

*Lui/Lei chiede* (**He/She asks**)

*Noi chiediamo* (**We ask**)

*Voi chiedete* (**You all ask**)

*Loro chiedono* (**They ask**)

Verbs ending in -IRE : Dormire (to sleep)

*Io dormo* (I sleep)

*Tu dormi* (You sleep)

*Lui/Lei dorme* (He/She sleeps)

*Noi dormiamo* (We sleep)

*Voi dormite* (You all sleep)

*Loro dormono* (They sleep)

**Learn common regular verbs** and try conjugate them!

- *Mangiare* (**to eat**) *Io mangio una mela.* (**I eat an apple.**)

- *Correre* (**to run**) *Tu corri veloce!* (**You run fast!**)

- *Aprire* (**to open**) *Lui apre la finestra.* (**He opens the window.**)

**With irregular verbs** just focus on the most common ones and start memorise them!

**Key Tip:** When practicing with conjugating verbs, form short simple sentences to help your memorising process and expanding vocabulary! Using words with purpose facilitates your learning journey! For example:

*Io mangio con il mio amico* (**I eat with my friend**)

*Tu mangi una mela rossa* (**You eat a red apple**)

*Lui mangia fuori per cena* (**He eats outside for dinner**)

**Find here the three regular present conjugation patterns (also the -isco pattern for some verbs in IRE) and a table with the most common irregular verbs:**

	<b>-are</b>	<b>-ere</b>	<b>-ire</b>	<b>-ire (isco)</b>
<b>Io</b>	-o	-o	-o	-isco
<b>tu</b>	-i	-i	-i	-isci
<b>lui/lei</b>	-a	-e	-e	-isce
<b>noi</b>	-iamo	-iamo	-iamo	-iamo
<b>voi</b>	-ate	-ete	-ite	-ite
<b>loro</b>	-ano	-ono	-ono	-iscono

Indichiamo di seguito il presente indicativo dei più importanti verbi irregolari.

<b>Avere</b>	<b>Essere</b>	<b>Fare</b>	<b>Dare</b>	<b>Andare</b>
io ho	io sono	io faccio	io do	io vado
tu hai	tu sei	tu fai	tu dai	tu vai
lui ha	lui è	lui fa	lui dà	lui va
noi abbiamo	noi siamo	noi facciamo	noi diamo	noi andiamo
voi avete	voi siete	voi fate	voi date	voi andate
loro hanno	loro sono	loro fanno	loro danno	loro vanno
<b>Stare</b>	<b>Sapere</b>	<b>Potere</b>	<b>Dovere</b>	<b>Volere</b>
io sto	io so	io posso	io devo	io voglio
tu stai	tu sai	tu puoi	tu devi	tu vuoi
lui sta	lui sa	lui può	lui deve	lui vuole
noi stiamo	noi sappiamo	noi possiamo	noi dobbiamo	noi vogliamo
voi state	voi sapete	voi potete	voi dovete	voi volete
loro stanno	loro sanno	loro possono	loro devono	loro vogliono
<b>Uscire</b>	<b>Capire</b>	<b>Dire</b>	<b>Venire</b>	<b>Salire</b>
io esco	io capisco	io dico	io vengo	io salgo
tu esci	tu capisci	tu dici	tu vieni	tu sali
lui esce	lui capisce	lui dice	lui viene	lui sale
noi usciamo	noi capiamo	noi diciamo	noi veniamo	noi saliamo
voi uscite	voi capite	voi dite	voi venite	voi salite
loro escono	loro capiscono	loro dicono	loro vengono	loro salgono

\* Si coniugano come CAPIRE alcuni verbi come FINIRE, PULIRE, COSTRUIRE, RESTITUIRE.