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Beth Bartolini-Salimbeni
Italian language instructor

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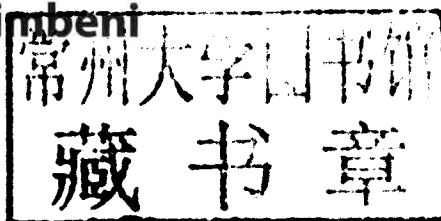
Gli aggettivi

I verbi

Italian Grammar

FOR
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by Beth Bartolini-Salimbeni



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Italian Grammar For Dummies®

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Introduction

In your mother tongue, you need to know very little about grammar to communicate accurately and efficiently. You may not know a predicate adjective from a walrus, but you don't have to. To pick up a second language, like Italian, however, you definitely need to understand grammar. Grammar is the foundation on which you lay vocabulary — and vocabulary makes up the walls, roof, and furnishings that go on the foundation and that allow you to communicate. Grammar and vocabulary come together to produce something greater than the sum of its parts: communicative, living (*read*: useful) language.

Grammar doesn't mean diagramming sentences and labeling parts. It's more like building a house. The goal of this book is to enable you to construct solid Italian from the ground up and to have fun while doing so.

About This Book

Each chapter of *Italian Grammar For Dummies* introduces a particular piece of grammar, explaining what it is and showing you, through examples and practice, what it does. Each chapter ends with an answer key, which allows you to check your work as you go.

Italian Grammar For Dummies begins with the essentials — parts of speech, pronunciation, nouns, numbers, and descriptive words. These elements alone allow you to communicate, though at a rather basic level. So moving through the book, you discover how to add in verbs (in all their tenses and moods) and other critical parts of language, parts that let you elaborate and elucidate.

You probably don't want to read straight through this book, unless you're starting at the very beginning with Italian. (If you're a complete beginner to Italian, you may want to first check out *Italian For Dummies* by Teresa Picarazzi, Francesca Romana Onofri, and Karen Möller, published by Wiley.) If you're somewhat familiar with Italian, though, you can pick and choose chapters that clarify for you a particular grammar point.

I use the following conventions to make use of this book easy.

- ✓ Italian words, phrases, and sentences appear in **bold**.
- ✓ English equivalents, set in *italic*, follow the Italian.
- ✓ When putting Italian into English, I'm not always literal. For example, the Italian **prego** literally means *I pray*, but it's often used to mean *you're welcome*, *go ahead* (if you're holding a door for someone), or *May I take your order?* (when a waiter says it to you in a restaurant). In this book, I repeat the importance of context as a way to grasp meaning; **prego** is a good example of how important context is.

- ✓ At the end of each chapter is an answer key that provides the correct responses to all the practice exercises in that chapter.
- ✓ This book doesn't give you phonetic pronunciations after Italian texts. It focuses on grammar and written communication. The obvious source for pronunciation (besides Chapter 2) is the dictionary, though Italian movies, television, music, and radio can also be especially helpful.

Foolish Assumptions

As I was writing this book, I assumed the following things about you.

- ✓ You already know some Italian and may be interested in honing your communicative skills. (If you're truly a beginner, I recommend starting with *Italian For Dummies* [Wiley].)
- ✓ You want to practice skills as you review or learn them so you can cement and retain them.
- ✓ You love Italian — its sounds, its idiosyncrasies, its culture as expressed in language, and its grammar. Well, maybe not the last. Remember, though, that grammar makes the rest of language feasible for you.

Icons Used in This Book

To make certain kinds of information easier to reference, I use the following icons in this book.



This icon highlights information that's especially critical to your mastery of Italian. If you don't read anything else, read text marked with this icon.



This icon gives you tips for understanding Italian grammar.



This icon advises of something perhaps illogical, irregular, or just plain tricky about Italian grammar.



This icon leads you to practice exercises you can use to make sure you understand the concepts being discussed.



This icon gives more technical insights to Italian grammar.

Beyond the Book

In addition to the material in the book you're reading right now, this product also comes with some access-anywhere goodies on the web. Because verbs are critical to communication, you'll find more information on them on the free Cheat Sheet at www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/ItalianGrammar. Other useful information related to Italian Grammar can be found at www.dummies.com/extras/italiangrammar.

Where to Go from Here

You decide your next step. Do you need to review the basics? Go to Chapters 1 and 2 for pronunciation and general comments on the structure of Italian. Chapters 3 and 5 reinforce the idea that nouns have genders (masculine and feminine) and numbers (singular and plural) in Italian and that they need to agree with just about everything, including adjectives, articles, and verbs. Speaking of verbs, you can find all the nitty-gritty details — tenses and moods, reflexive or not, regular or irregular — in Parts II, IV, and V. You can also find chapters on particular verb forms here.

Each chapter in this book is self-contained; that is, you can pick and choose what you want to work on. The more chapters you read and work through, the better your Italian will be. **In bocca al lupo!** (*Good luck!*)

Part I
**Getting Started with
Italian Grammar**



For Dummies can help you get started with lots of subjects. Visit www.dummies.com to learn more and do more with *For Dummies*.

In this part . . .

- ✓ Broaden and deepen your communication skills in Italian with the road map to Italian grammar. Get familiar with Italian grammar basics and prepare to master the language.
- ✓ Practice stressing the right syllable, adjusting your intonation, and pronouncing vowels, consonants, and diphthongs to help your Italian sound **bello** (*beautiful*).
- ✓ Expand your vocabulary by mastering not only the words for things but also how to recognize a noun's gender (yes, Italian nouns have gender!), how to make a noun plural, and how to use definite and indefinite articles.
- ✓ Add precision and context to your growing Italian by talking about when and where events occur, using numbers, dates, and times.