

P R E G O !

AN INVITATION TO ITALIAN



GRAZIANA LAZZARINO

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PREFACE

PREGO! An Invitation to Italian is a new, imaginative first-year program which introduces all fundamental Italian grammatical structures and offers a well-balanced coverage of the four language skills. Written and illustrated by an all-Italian team, *PREGO!* encourages students' active use of the language. Numerous exercises and innovative activities provide a flexible framework that can be adapted to any classroom situation and accommodate many different goals and methodologies.

This program was developed by the authors with the assistance of over forty coordinators of Italian courses throughout the United States and Canada.

Organization

The main text consists of 22 chapters. Each chapter is divided into six or seven parts as follows:

1. **Obiettivi**, which outline the grammar and culture presented in each chapter;
2. **Grammatica**, three to six grammar points, each introduced in context by a short dialog and accompanied by numerous and varied exercises;
3. **Esercizi di pronuncia** (in the first 14 chapters), which focus on individual sounds that are particularly difficult for native speakers of English;
4. **Dialogo**, the main dialog, presenting true-to-life situations and introducing students to the people, customs and institutions of Italy;
5. **Esercizi di ricapitolazione**, review exercises that combine and reinforce the structures and vocabulary of the chapter;
6. **Lettura culturale**, an illustrated reading that focuses on a cultural theme related to the main dialog of the chapter, giving the student practice in reading Italian;
7. **Parole da ricordare**, the chapter vocabulary list, including all words and expressions that students should learn.

Between chapters, a special section called *Intermezzo* presents directed oral and written activities and adds an element of fun and humor to the classroom.

Supplementary materials

PREGO! may be used in conjunction with any of the following components:

Workbook, by Luigi Romeo, provides additional practice with grammatical structures through a variety of written assignments;

Lab manual and tape program, by Graziana Lazzarino, offers phonetic drills, listening comprehension exercises, dictations, pattern practice, and additional grammar exercises;

Instructor's manual contains guidelines for the teacher;

Per tutti i gusti, by Graziana Lazzarino, a communication manual which offers a choice of additional oral and written activities that stress the creative use of Italian.

Authors

Professor Annamaria Kelly, University of Arizona, contributed the *Letture culturali* and related exercises, except where indicated; Professor Antonella Centaro Pease, University of Texas at Austin, wrote the main dialogs; the cultural commentaries following some of them, and many of the mini-dialogs; Professor Luigi Romeo, University of Colorado at Boulder, is the author of all pronunciation sections; and Professor Graziana Lazzarino, University of Colorado at Boulder, is the coordinator of the project and the author of all grammatical explanations, exercises and activities.

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THE SOUNDS OF ITALIAN

Like French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Rumanian, the Italian language was derived from Latin, which was spoken by the ancient Romans. Both Italian and English use the same alphabet: 26 written letters.

a (a)	h (acca)	o (o)	v (vu or vi)
b (bi)	i (i)	p (pi)	w (doppia vu)
c (ci)	j (i lunga)	q (cu)	x (ics)
d (di)	k (cappa)	r (erre)	y (ipsilon)
e (e)	l (elle)	s (esse)	z (zeta)
f (effe)	m (emme)	t (ti)	
g (gi)	n (enne)	u (u)	

This does not mean, however, that letters which are familiar in printed form are always pronounced the same way as in English. There are noticeable differences. If you want to develop a good accent, you must learn to listen and imitate.

The two most striking differences in pronunciation are vowel sounds and double consonants.

Vowels

Italian vowels are represented by five letters: **a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, and **u**, and five or seven sounds. The letters **a**, **i**, and **u** are pronounced the same way all over Italy; **e** and **o**, which may vary somewhat from one region to another, have an open sound or a closed sound.

Unlike English vowels, the five or seven basic vowels of Italian are never slurred or weakened to the point of becoming indistinguishable. They are pronounced sharp and clear, regardless of their position.

Listen to the Italian pronunciation of the following words and contrast it with their English pronunciation:

marina saliva alibi quota fiasco propaganda bravo
gusto piano idea camera replica quasi aroma

a is pronounced as in *father*: *banana*, *patata*, *gala*

i is pronounced as in *marine*: *marina*, *Africa*, *Ida*

u is pronounced as in *rude*: *luna*, *su*, *uno*

e is pronounced roughly as in *late* or *quest*: *sete*, *presto*

o is pronounced roughly as in *cosy* or *cost*: *come*, *poco*, *no*.

Two vowels may combine to form a diphthong (two vowel sounds pronounced together without a pause): *Laura*, *fiasco*, *piove*, *pieno*, *mai*.

Consonants

Unlike English, Italian consonants are never aspirated. Compare Italian **pane** (*bread*) with English *pan*. Consonants can be either single or double. In most English double consonants, the doubling is rarely pronounced: *wedding*, *gutter*, *rubbing*, *buffer*, *stopper*, *hissing*. In Italian, the doubling is pronounced, as in the English words *unnerve* and *illogical*. Imitate your instructor, and compare the English and Italian pronunciation of these words: *motto*, *spaghetti*, *donna*, *Anna*, *dilemma*.

All of the consonant sounds are introduced step by step in Chapters 1 through 14, not in alphabetical order but according to their frequency in the grammar sections in which they appear. They are enclosed between slants, that is, /č/ as in /čao/ **ciao** (*hi*), to indicate the sound and not the spelling, although sound and spelling are nearly identical in most Italian words.

Stress

Most Italian words are pronounced with the stress on the next to the last syllable: **minestrone** (mi-ne-stro-ne), **vedere** (ve-de-re), **domanda** (do-man-da).

Some words are stressed on the last syllable; they always have a written accent on that syllable: **virtù** (vir-tu), **però** (pe-ro), **così** (co-sì).

Some words are stressed on a different syllable, but this is rarely indicated in writing. As an aid to students, the stressed syllable has been indicated in the vocabulary lists by a dot below the stressed vowel: **camera** (ca-me-ra), **credere** (cre-de-re), **piccolo** (pic-co-lo).

A written accent is also used on a few monosyllabic words. In many cases the accent distinguishes words that are spelled and pronounced alike yet have different meanings. Compare **sì** (oneself) with **sì** (*yes*), and **là** (*the*) with **là** (*there*).

Although two written accents (˘) and (˙) exist in Italian, most people use only one (˘), as in this text.

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I. OBIETTIVI

Culture

This chapter introduces you to the world of Italy and the Italians. The dialog presents a café scene: young Italians are discussing the arrival of two Italian-Americans. In the **lettura culturale** at the end of the chapter, you will get your first visual overview of Italy.

Grammar

This chapter presents the masculine and feminine genders of Italian nouns; the formation of the plural of nouns; numbers from 1 to 50; a very useful adjective, **buono** (*good*); and one of the most widely used verbs in Italian, **avere** (*to have*).

II. GRAMMATICA

A. Nouns



In una stazione italiana*.

VENDITORE: Panini, banane, gelati, vino, caffè, aranciate, birra!

TURISTA AMERICANA: Due panini e una birra, per favore!

VENDITORE: Ecco, signorina! Duemila lire.

TURISTA AMERICANA: Ecco due dollari. Va bene?

*In Italian railroad stations, vendors with pushcarts offer various types of snacks and beverages to passengers who remain on the train. Travelers can simply lean out of the window and order.

A noun is the name of any person, place, thing, quality, or idea: John, station, car, patience.

1. *Gender.* Italian nouns, with a few exceptions, end in a vowel (**-a**, **-e**, **-i**, **-o**, **-u**). They are either masculine or feminine even when they refer to inanimate objects or abstract notions.

MASCULINE

ragazzo boy

treno train

coraggio courage

FEMININE

ragazza girl

stazione station

pazienza patience

Generally, nouns ending in **-o** are masculine; nouns ending in **-a** are feminine. Nouns ending in **-e** can be masculine or feminine, so the gender of each must be memorized.

In an Italian railroad station.

VENDOR: Sandwiches, bananas, ice cream, wine, coffee, orangeade, beer! AMERICAN

TOURIST: Two sandwiches and a beer, please! VENDOR: Here you are, Miss. Two thousand

lire. AMERICAN TOURIST: Here are two dollars. Is that O.K.?