IT

ITALIAN LESSON

Basic Conversation 1 · Chapter 1 · Greetings & Goodbyes

Italian Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 1 · Greetings & Goodbyes

👋 Greetings & Goodbyes — Saluti e commiati

*Welcome to your first Italian conversation lesson. By the end of this chapter you will be able to greet people, say please, thank you and sorry, ask how someone is and say goodbye, choosing between the formal and informal style. Italian spelling is a reliable guide to its sounds, so a short **sound guide** (below) will take you a long way. Every Italian line in the dialogs also has an English **respelling beneath it**, with CAPITALS on the stressed syllable. The people in the dialogs are invented.*

① Good Morning (formal) — Buongiorno

A:

Buongiorno, signora Rossi.

bwon-JOR-noh, see-NYOH-rah ROHS-see.

Good morning, Mrs Rossi.

B:

Buongiorno. Come sta?

bwon-JOR-noh. KOH-meh STAH?

Good morning. How are you?

A:

Bene, grazie. E Lei?

BEH-neh, GRAH-tsyeh. eh LAY?

Well, thank you. And you?

B:

Non c'è male, grazie.

nohn CHEH MAH-leh, GRAH-tsyeh.

Not bad, thank you.

② Meeting a Friend (informal) — Ciao!

A:

Ciao, Giulia!

CHOW, JOO-lyah!

Hi, Giulia!

B:

Ciao, Marco! Come stai?

CHOW, MAR-koh! KOH-meh STY?

Hi, Marco! How are you?

A:

Tutto bene. E tu?

TOOT-toh BEH-neh. eh TOO?

All good. And you?

B:

Benissimo!

beh-NEES-see-moh!

Great!

③ Arriving at a Hotel — Buonasera

A:

Buonasera.

④ Good Night — Buonanotte

A:

Sono stanco. Vado a letto.

bwoh-nah-SEH-rah.

Good evening. (Philip, arriving)

B:

Buonasera, signore. Benvenuto.

bwoh-nah-SEH-rah, see-NYOH-reh. ben-veh-NOO-toh.

Good evening, sir. Welcome.

A:

Grazie mille.

GRAH-tsyeh MEEL-leh.

Thank you very much.

B:

Prego, si accomodi.

PREH-goh, see ahk-KOH-moh-dee.

Not at all, do come in and sit down.

⑤ Excuse Me — Mi scusi

A:

Mi scusi, è libero questo posto?

mee SKOO-zee, eh LEE-beh-roh KWEH-stoh POH-stoh?

Excuse me, is this seat free?

B:

Sì, prego.

SEE, PREH-goh.

Yes, please do.

A:

Grazie. Oh, mi dispiace!

GRAH-tsyeh. oh, mee dee-SPYAH-cheh!

Thank you. Oh, I'm sorry!

B:

Non fa niente.

nohn fah NYEHN-teh.

It doesn't matter.

SOH-noh STAHN-koh. VAH-doh ah LET-toh.

I'm tired. I'm going to bed.

B:

Buonanotte. Dormi bene.

bwoh-nah-NOHT-teh. DOR-mee BEH-neh.

Good night. Sleep well.

A:

Grazie, anche tu.

GRAH-tsyeh, AHN-keh TOO.

Thanks, you too.

B:

A domani.

ah doh-MAH-nee.

See you tomorrow.

⑥ Leaving Friends (informal, plural) — Ci vediamo

A:

Ragazzi, io vado.

rah-GAHT-tsee, EE-oh VAH-doh.

Everyone, I'm off.

B:

Di già? Va bene, ci vediamo.

dee JAH? vah BEH-neh, chee veh-DYAH-moh.

Already? All right, see you.

A:

State bene!

STAH-teh BEH-neh!

Take care, all of you!

B:

Ciao, a presto!

CHOW, ah PREH-stoh!

Bye, see you soon!

📢 The Sounds of Italian — I suoni

Learn the five vowels and a handful of spellings and you can read most Italian aloud. Vowels stay clear: they are not swallowed as in English.

SPELLING	SOUND	EXAMPLE
a, i, u	"ah", "ee", "oo"	**casa, vino, uno** *KAH-zah, VEE-noh, OO-noh*
e, o	"eh", "oh" (each has an open and a closed shade; do not worry yet)	**bene, sono** *BEH-neh, SOH-noh*
c before *e, i*	"ch" as in "church"	**cena, ciao** *CHEH-nah, CHOW*
c before *a, o, u*; **ch**	"k"	**casa, anche** *KAH-zah, AHN-keh*
g before *e, i*	"j" as in "jam"	**gelato, giorno** *jeh-LAH-toh, JOR-noh*
g before *a, o, u*; **gh**	hard "g" as in "go"	**gatto, spaghetti** *GAHT-toh, spah-GEHT-tee*
sc before *e, i*	"sh"	**uscita** *oo-SHEE-tah* (exit)
gn	"ny", as in "canyon"	**signora** *see-NYOH-rah*
gli	like "lli" in "million" (usually)	**famiglia** *fah-MEE-lyah*

SPELLING	SOUND	EXAMPLE
z	"ts" or "dz"	**grazie, zero** *GRAH-tsyeh, DZEH-roh*
r	tapped or rolled with the tongue tip	**arrivederci** *ahr-ree-veh-DEHR-chee*
h	silent (it only changes *c* and *g*, or marks a spelling)	**ho, hotel** *OH, oh-TEHL*

DOUBLE LETTERS AND STRESS

Hold a **double consonant** longer: *pala* (shovel) and *palla* (ball) are different words. Stress most often falls on the **second-to-last** syllable (*si-GNO-ra*), but not always (*LI-be-ro*). An **accent on a final vowel** shows stress there (*città*). A few short words use it to tell them apart: *è* "is" and *e* "and".

🔑 Key Phrases — Frasi chiave

*Use **tu** with friends, family and people your own age, and **Lei** (with the "he / she" form of the verb) with strangers, older people and in formal settings. To several people, say **voi**.*

SITUATION	FORMAL (LEI)	INFORMAL (TU)
Hello	**Buongiorno. / Salve.** *bwon-JOR-noh / SAHL-veh*	**Ciao!** *CHOW*
How are you?	**Come sta?** *KOH-meh STAH*	**Come stai?** *KOH-meh STY*
And you?	**E Lei?** *eh LAY*	**E tu?** *eh TOO*
Please	**Per favore. / Per piacere.** *pehr fah-VOH-reh / pehr pyah-CHEH-reh*	**Per favore.** *pehr fah-VOH-reh*
Thank you	**Grazie. La ringrazio.** *GRAH-tsyeh. lah reen-GRAH-tsyoh*	**Grazie! Ti ringrazio.** *GRAH-tsyeh. tee reen-GRAH-*

SITUATION	FORMAL (LEI)	INFORMAL (TU)
		tsyoh
You're welcome	**Prego.** *PREH-goh*	**Figurati! / Di niente.** *fee-GOO-rah-tee / dee NYEHN-teh*
Excuse me	**Mi scusi.** *mee SKOO-zee*	**Scusa.** *SKOO-zah*
Goodbye	**Arrivederci. / ArrivederLa.** *ahr-ree-veh-DEHR-chee / ahr-ree-veh-DEHR-lah*	**Ciao! / Ci vediamo.** *CHOW / chee veh-DYAH-moh*

> **Ciao Is Not for Everyone**
>
> *Ciao* means both "hi" and "bye", but only between people on *tu* terms. With a shopkeeper you don't know, *buongiorno* is safer, and *salve* is a handy neutral "hello" (not used for goodbye). When someone offers *Diamoci del tu?* ("Shall we use *tu*?"), you can switch.

🕐 Which Greeting When — Quando si dice

WHEN	SAY	NOTES
Morning to early afternoon	**Buongiorno.** *bwon-JOR-noh*	"good day"
Later afternoon and evening	**Buonasera.** *bwoh-nah-SEH-rah*	when people switch varies by place and habit
Parting for the night	**Buonanotte.** *bwoh-nah-NOHT-teh*	only as a goodbye, or at bedtime
Wishing a good rest of the day	**Buona giornata! / Buona serata!** *BWOH-nah jor-NAH-tah / BWOH-nah seh-RAH-tah*	on leaving a shop or an office

🔤 Three Verbs for Greetings — Verbi

__Stare__ ("to be", for how you are), __salutare__ ("to greet") and __parlare__ ("to speak"). Salutare and parlare are regular __-are__ verbs: take off -are and add the endings. Stare is irregular. The ending shows who is meant, so the pronoun is usually dropped.

	STARE (TO BE)	SALUTARE (TO GREET)	PARLARE (TO SPEAK)
io (I)	sto *STOH*	saluto *sah-LOO-toh*	parlo *PAR-loh*
tu (you)	stai *STY*	saluti *sah-LOO-tee*	parli *PAR-lee*
lui, lei, Lei (he, she; you, formal)	sta *STAH*	saluta *sah-LOO-tah*	parla *PAR-lah*
noi (we)	stiamo *STYAH-moh*	salutiamo *sah-loo-TYAH-moh*	parliamo *par-LYAH-moh*
voi (you, plural)	state *STAH-teh*	salutate *sah-loo-TAH-teh*	parlate *par-LAH-teh*
loro (they)	stanno *STAHN-noh*	salutano *sah-LOO-tah-noh*	parlano *PAR-lah-noh*

> **Come stai? Why "stare"?**
> Italian uses *stare* to ask how someone is: *Come stai? Sto bene.* The main verb for "to be", *essere*, is for who you are and comes in Chapter 2.

📖 Vocabulary — Vocabolario

20 key words. Read the Italian first, then check the respelling (CAPITALS = the stressed syllable).

#	ITALIAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	**ciao**	*CHOW*	hi; bye	phrase
2	**salve**	*SAHL-veh*	hello (neutral)	phrase
3	**buongiorno**	*bwon-JOR-noh*	good morning; good day	phrase
4	**buonasera**	*bwoh-nah-SEH-rah*	good evening	phrase
5	**buonanotte**	*bwoh-nah-NOHT-teh*	good night	phrase
6	**arrivederci**	*ahr-ree-veh-DEHR-chee*	goodbye	phrase
7	**a presto**	*ah PREH-stoh*	see you soon	phrase
8	**a domani**	*ah doh-MAH-nee*	see you tomorrow	phrase
9	**grazie**	*GRAH-tsyeh*	thank you	phrase
10	**prego**	*PREH-goh*	you're welcome; please do	phrase
11	**per favore**	*pehr fah-VOH-reh*	please	phrase
12	**mi scusi**	*mee SKOO-zee*	excuse me (formal)	phrase
13	**mi dispiace**	*mee dee-SPYAH-cheh*	I'm sorry	phrase
14	**bene**	*BEH-neh*	well; fine	adv
15	**male**	*MAH-leh*	badly	adv
16	**sì**	*SEE*	yes	phrase
17	**no**	*NOH*	no	phrase
18	**il signore**	*eel see-NYOH-reh*	gentleman; Mr	noun
19	**la signora**	*lah see-NYOH-rah*	lady; Mrs	noun
20	**la sera**	*lah SEH-rah*	the evening	noun

Titles

Before a surname, *signore* loses its final *e*: *signor Rossi*, but *signora Rossi*. When you address someone directly, there is no *il* or *la*.

✍️ Try It Yourself — Prova tu

Say each answer aloud, then click to check.

1. Greet your neighbour, Mr Bianchi, in the morning and ask how he is.

▼ Show answer

Buongiorno, signor Bianchi. Come sta?

2. Say hi to a friend and ask how they are.

▼ Show answer

Ciao! Come stai?

3. You bump into a stranger. Apologise.

▼ Show answer

Mi scusi! / Mi dispiace!

4. Read aloud: *gelato, anche, signora, ciao*

▼ Show answer

jeh-LAH-toh, AHN-keh, see-NYOH-rah, CHOW

5. Fill in: *Io ____ bene. Voi ____ italiano?* (stare, parlare)

▼ Show answer

Io sto bene. Voi parlate italiano?

6. Leaving a shop in the evening, say goodbye politely and wish them a good evening.

▼ Show answer

Arrivederci, buona serata!

Not Yet Verified

Checked (two web searches on 2026-11-26, search summaries only, pages not read): soft and hard *c* and *g*, *gn*, *gli*, double consonants; the time-of-day greetings and that the switchover varies; *tu* and *Lei*; limits on *ciao* and *salve*; *arrivederci* and *arrivederLa*; *Diamoci del tu?*

Not checked (general knowledge): the rest of the sound table and the stress notes, the dialogs, the other phrases, the verb forms, titles, vocabulary and all respellings. No native speaker has reviewed the Italian.

Please review: the respellings and dialog 3.

Sources: Duolingo (pronunciation) · Tu and Lei (open textbook) · Clozemaster (greetings)

Coming Up in Chapter 2

Next: **introducing yourself**: your name, *essere* ("to be") in full, and asking other people about themselves.