



My Italian Circle

How to learn Italian – Tips & Resources

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VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Learn Italian **quickly**! Learn Italian in 30 minutes! Better, learn it in 5 minutes! Learn Italian in your sleep! Become fluent in 2 months! In 2 weeks! Now, this very minute!

Okay, so we are all a bit obsessed with doing things **quickly** nowadays – we want to learn a lot of new things and we want to squeeze as many activities as we can in our busy day. That's great, but is this a good attitude when learning a language? Is it the best way to achieve our goals? We are all looking for a secret method that will make it easy, but what is that secret?

So, today I'll talk about language learning strategies and resources for busy people. I will also discuss language proficiency levels – another thing that many people obsess about. Let's begin!

How long does it take to learn Italian? Well, how long does it take to read through all these books and do all these exercises? I can assure you that 30 minutes are not enough, and probably not even 2 months, unless this is the only thing that you do, day in day out. Here enters a variety of factors: How busy are you? How much time are you willing to commit? What level of proficiency are you aiming for? Why are you learning Italian? How difficult is it for you? And first and foremost: are you wasting your time?

Italian is not a difficult language. In [another video](#) we saw that it shares many similarities with other Romance languages, but also with English. You don't need to learn thousands of characters, or a completely new alphabet, just a handful of

accented letters. Pronunciation is very easy, and unlike German, Turkish, or Finnish, we don't have cases. If you do it right, you could very well reach a fair level of proficiency in about a year. Well, I studied Chinese for 4 years at university with great teachers and let me tell you, that was not enough to master it! So I'd say that Italian is a comparatively easy language.

Maybe the problem is that it's too easy. A lot of people think that they only need to put on some Italian music or have a podcast in Italian going in the background, and they will magically absorb the language. Or that playing with an app for a few minutes a day or learning word lists will allow them to communicate with Italians. Well, all these things can be useful, and if you have time for them, great! But if you're looking for secrets to learn Italian **quickly** maybe you don't have that time, so stop wasting it!

First of all, can you self-teach Italian? Absolutely! I know people who taught themselves classical piano. This wouldn't have been possible before the Internet, but now there are so many excellent resources out there: ebooks, podcasts, videos, apps, and so on. There are also many people willing to share what they know on social media, online forums, and YouTube channels – perhaps too many. Like with movies, the most popular channels are not necessarily the best ones. My personal favourites are quite popular though:

Vaporetto Italiano for all-Italian content. Francesco is extremely committed and has built a very active community.

Italy Made Easy for content in English. There's no beating him there.

Channels by polyglots who share their secrets and methods are also very popular. I think they are a great resource for language students, but there's one thing that I'd like to point out about this kind of channels: most polyglots are not your average language student – they are highly committed and motivated and they devote a lot of time to languages, sometimes all of their time. So definitely look at them for inspiration, but don't feel bad if you don't progress as **quickly** as them!

Quickly. Here's that word again. Actually, I don't think that your goal should be to learn Italian **quickly**. It's not a race! What's the secret then? Don't quit. Don't quit and you *will* learn Italian. Obviously, if you're self-teaching, you are at the same time the person who needs goals and motivation, and the person who provides them. That's why self-teaching is not easy, and it's not for everybody. If you need accountability, and someone who helps you to get through the plateaus and those times when you are losing focus, then a teacher is probably the best choice, or at least some kind of structured course, a method that allows you to measure your progress and keep you interested and motivated.

The problem is that there is too much to choose from out there, so many apps and so many programs to enrol in, and it's easy to end up wasting time on something that isn't quite right for you. Going through a lot of different resources and trying them out in order to choose the right ones also takes time. Bottom line: if you are in a hurry, if **quickly** is important to you, you will be better off with a teacher. A good teacher will ask you what your goals and expectations are, and will provide materials that are interesting to you. A good teacher will address your weaknesses, because that's what you need to work on, but will also make you feel good about your achievements.

As an aside, talking about motivation: once you have the basics down, why not spice up your language learning experience with subjects that are dear to you? Many people learn Italian as a means to an end: maybe they are into cooking, or fashion, or they are big football fans, or they love Renaissance art, or opera music. Read and listen about the things you love, and you will remember new vocabulary... more **quickly**! More importantly, if you enjoy it, you will stick to it.

So, if you're learning a language, chances are that you do that in order to be able to speak to people: better to start sooner than later. Active use of the language - speaking and writing - is the hardest part, so you don't want to neglect that. A conversation buddy, on Italki for example, can be great too, just don't expect them to be able to answer all your tricky questions on Italian grammar - I'm sure you have a few! And this takes me to the last point I'd like to make. It's very important to speak (and write), so don't be shy and do that from the very beginning, but there's also another thing that is particularly important for Italian, and that's grammar. Italian is a highly inflected language - word endings change to convey meaning - so grammar is essential in Italian, there is no getting around it, and the sooner you get to grip with it, the better. I think it's important to grasp the concepts and principles, as well as the differences and similarities with your own native language. Our video about the building blocks of Italian that I mentioned above can be very useful for this, and of course the [basic Italian grammar](#) that you can download for free from our Website - you'll find the links in the description below. You don't want to be held back by perfectionism – you won't get all the endings right in the beginning, and not even at an intermediate level, and that's okay, people will still understand you! But it's something that you will need to work on for some time, especially if your goal is to become really fluent.

This brings me to the last thing I want to talk about today: proficiency levels. The current Common European Framework of Reference for Languages includes six

levels, from A1 to C2. A1 and A2 are the basic and elementary levels; B1 and B2 are intermediate, and C1 and C2 are advanced and native-like. Should you care about levels? Well, they give an idea of one's progress, of course, and adult learners need to measure their progress in order to keep going. Learning materials are usually graded according to this system, so pick a book that's not too hard and not too easy, or let the teacher pick it for you. This series is really good, Nuovo Espresso, but it's all in Italian, from page 1. You may want to complement it with a grammar handbook in your language. Finally, remember that B1 is already a very good level, that will allow you to deal with many different aspects and situations, and to have meaningful interaction with locals.



That's all I wanted to say! Leave me a comment if you'd like to share your experience, that's important. Check the links below and have a look at our playlists, we have a lot of videos on grammar topics, we have our listening practice with questions, that's important, too, and many others. And remember the secret of success: **Don't quit! Non mollare!**

Links

[The Building Blocks of Italian](#) – All the basics (ENG)

[How to Learn Italian](#) – Consigli per imparare l'italiano (ITA with ENG subs)

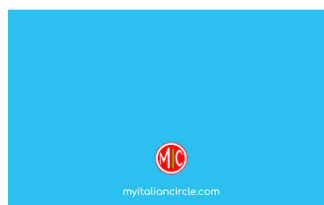
[Why Learn Italian?](#) – Perché imparare l'italiano? (ENG)

Check our [Free Beginner Course](#) with all these videos and more, and download our free Grammar Basics PDF: [Italian Grammar Basics](#)



Italian Grammar

Concise & Clearly Explained



We also published a complete [Grammar Handbook](#) on Amazon, check it out!

Recommended Textbooks:

Nuovo espresso Vol. 1 A1: [Amazon.it](#) - [Amazon.com](#) (affiliate links)

Nuovo espresso Vol. 2 A2: [Amazon.it](#) - [Amazon.com](#) (affiliate links)

Nuovo espresso Vol. 3 B1: [Amazon.it](#) - [Amazon.com](#) (affiliate links)

Nuovo espresso Vol. 4 B2: [Amazon.it](#) - [Amazon.com](#) (affiliate links)

Nuovo espresso Vol. 5 C1: [Amazon.it](#) - [Amazon.com](#) (affiliate links)

Nuovo espresso Vol. 6 C2: [Amazon.it](#) - [Amazon.com](#) (affiliate links)

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