



VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

IL CUORE. GLI SPAGHETTI. LA CASA. L'ITALIA. Today's grammar topic is... DEFINITE ARTICLES!
Exciting, isn't it?!?

But... what are definite articles exactly?

In this video I will explain everything you need to know about this very important element of the Italian language!

You use definite articles to refer to a specific thing or person. So:

THE car I bought is red - LA macchina che ho comprato è rossa.

THE blue book is mine - IL libro blu è mio.

In English there is just one definite article, THE, but in Italian we have SEVEN!

Why so many? It's because the word that you use for "the" changes depending on whether you're talking about something that is masculine or feminine, singular or plural. Definite articles have to agree in gender and number with the noun they refer to, that's it.

To determine which is the correct article, you need to keep in mind three things:

1. The gender of the noun, whether it's masculine or feminine.
2. The number: whether it's singular or plural - one or more than one.
3. Finally, the first letter of the noun.

Let's put this into practice and see a few examples.

We'll start with a masculine word, singular, LIBRO. The standard definite article is **IL**:

IL LIBRO, IL CANE, IL MONDO, IL TRENO, IL GATTO.

The plural form is **I**:

I LIBRI, I CANI, I MONDI, I TRENI, I GATTI.

BUT if the masculine noun begins with S + consonant, GN, PN, PS, x, y, z, then the article changes into **LO**:

LO STRUZZO, LO GNOMO, LO PNEUMATICO, LO PSICHIATRA, LO XILOFONO, LO YOGURT,
LO ZUCCHERO.

And in this case the plural form is **GLI**:

GLI STRUZZI, GLI GNOMI, GLI PNEUMATICI, GLI PSICHIATRI, GLI XILOFONI, GLI YOGURT,
GLI ZUCCHERI.

Finally, if our masculine noun begins with a vowel, then the definite article changes into **L'**:

L'ALBERO, L'ESERCIZIO, L'IMBUTO, L'ORTO, L'UOMO

And the plural form is - again - **GLI**:

GLI ALBERI, GLI ESERCIZI, GLI IMBUTI, GLI ORTI, GLI UOMINI

How to remember this? You can learn the rule, but you can also pay attention to the sound. Some combinations sound wrong and awkward. IL STRUZZO is a bit hard to say, right? LO STRUZZO sounds much better! Listen to a lot of Italian, and over time you will also be able to hear these differences.

Now some good news: when we have a feminine noun, things become much easier!

The standard feminine article is **LA**:

LA CARTA, LA BICICLETTA, LA GATTA, LA PIZZA, LA TORTA

The plural form is **LE**:

LE CARTE, LE BICICLETTE, LE GATTE, LE PIZZE, LE TORTE

If the feminine nouns begins with a vowel, then the article is **L'**:

L'AMICA, L'ERBA, L'INVIDIA, L'ONDA, L'URGENZA

And the plural form is still **LE**:

LE AMICHE, LE ERBE, LE INVIDIE, LE ONDE, LE URGENZE.

Let's summarise:

MASCULINE	SINGULAR	PLURAL
begins with a consonant*	IL	I
begins with a vowel	L'	GLI
* begins with S+consonant, GN, PN, PS, X, Y, Z	LO	GLI

FEMININE	SINGULAR	PLURAL
begins with a consonant	LA	LE
begins with a vowel	L'	LE

WHEN TO USE THE DEFINITE ARTICLE

The use of definite articles in Italian differs from English. We can say that generally in Italian we use definite articles more often than in English; for example, when you make a general statement the article is not used in English, but it's necessary in Italian. In English you don't put the article before a possessive pronoun, but in Italian you do: for example, in English you don't say THE MY HOUSE, but in Italian you do: LA MIA CASA.

Let's see the details. We use the definite article:

Before **signore, signora** and titles:

La signora Verdi

Il dottor Bianchi

BUT not when addressing someone in direct speech: Buongiorno, signor Rossi!

With languages:

Studio l'italiano.

Mi piace lo spagnolo.

With names of countries:

La Francia è un bellissimo Paese.

BUT not with the preposition IN: Vado spesso in Italia.

With time:

Che ore sono? Sono le undici.

With dates:

Il 2020. Il 15 giugno.

When expressing possession:

La tua casa è molto grande.

With abstract nouns or general statements:

La vita è bella.

I gatti sono adorabili.

Now, test yourself:

I will say a noun, and you have to choose the definite article for that noun:

CASA	LA CASA	feminine, singular, begins with consonant
UOVO	L'UOVO	masculine, singular, begins with a vowel
MURO	IL MURO	masculine, singular, begins with a consonant
CANI	I CANI	masculine, plural, begins with a consonant
PSICOLOGO	LO PSICOLOGO	masculine, singular, begins with PS
ALBA	L'ALBA	feminine, singular, begins with a vowel
BOTTIGLIE	LE BOTTIGLIE	feminine, plural

If you want to know more about definite articles go to our Website, where you can download our basic Italian grammar and more exercises on definite articles! See the video description for the links.