



Beginner Italian Course Pronunciation - Lesson 2

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Ruota, Rumore, Ronaldo, Orrore, Rombo, Amare, Romantico, Verona, Drago

What do all these words have in common? But the rolled R, of course!

The rolled R, ERRE, or alveolar trill as it is called technically, is one of the most difficult sounds for some foreigners to produce, depending on their nationality. This special sound can be found also in other languages, for example in Arabic, Russian, Spanish, or Scottish.

But what is this sound, R, exactly?

It's a vibration, a stream of airflow coming out over the tip of your tongue, that's it. The difficult thing at the beginning is to train your tongue to a new position and a new sound, but with practice you can do it!

Two easy steps:

STEP 1 To roll your R like a native you have to put the tip of your tongue against the ridge just behind your upper teeth

STEP 2 Let out some air, not too strong, not too soft, like this:

RUOTA, VERONA, AMORE

The position of the tongue is the same when you say the word DO. D, D, D. So, again, put your tongue behind your upper teeth as if you were to say D, and then keep it there and let the air flow and the tongue vibrate.

If it's easier, start pronouncing a D, and then add the R. But keep the sound D, don't change the sound into G, like English speakers do, or you will modify the sound of the R as well: D R DR DR DRAGO, not dragon. In the English word dragon, the tongue is actually moving backwards. No, don't do that, you have to keep the tip behind your upper teeth, and let it vibrate. DRAGO.

And remember, this sound is produced in the front of your mouth, so don't put the tip of your tongue too back, and don't try to produce the sound from the bottom of your throat, or what you'll get is this:

The muscles of the tongue mustn't be too tense, your tongue mustn't be too stiff, or it won't vibrate, and what you'll get is this:

It's very important to relax your tongue!

Just a flow of air coming out of your teeth. You have to exercise, and once you have found the right position, against the palate, behind your teeth, it's important to keep the tongue relaxed, so to make it vibrate. Try, try, try, try to say words with the ERRE anytime you can, or anytime you're alone, and you'll find the right position.

Important: the tongue itself doesn't move, it's not a real movement of the tongue, just a vibration.

Another advice I can give you is to open your mouth as if you were smiling. English speakers, for example, tend to keep their mouth closer than we do, so sounds are different.

Let's try together:

ERRE ERRE ERRE

ROMBO ROMANTICO RAGNO

To summarise:

- 1. Put the tip of your tongue against the ridge just behind your upper teeth**
- 2. Let out some air, not too strong, not too soft**
- 3. Keep your tongue relaxed**