

Getting started with Italian 2



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Introduction

Introduction

Welcome to this free course, *Getting started with Italian 2*.

Whatever your reasons for learning Italian, this two-week course gives you a chance to start a new and exciting learning experience. The course will focus on telling and giving the time in Italian.

Each week comprises of 3–4 hours of interactive activities, explanations, exercises and tips about language learning. It's a good idea to keep notes either on paper or on your preferred digital device. Each week you'll be encouraged to revise your notes and to add to your own personal phrase book and decide how best you can go about memorising and practising key phrases and vocabulary. Keep a record of your own learning journey, think about aspects you enjoy and aspects you find challenging and reflect on how you can overcome these challenges; this will help you consolidate your learning as well as adapt your own practice to your own learning style. Throughout the course, you will be invited to reflect on your learning in the consolidation activities at the end of each week.

There is also a weekly quiz for you to practise what you've been learning.

You are going to learn and practise how to ask and say the time. This will involve using numbers as well as practising your speaking and listening skills. Before you start, you might like to revise numbers in Italian.

When saying the time, the pronunciation of numbers is very important if you want to be correctly understood, so you might want to say the numbers out loud as you revise them. You will also have a chance to practise pronunciation in some of the activities that follow.

Open Centre for Languages and Cultures

This course has been developed from extract parts of [LXI002 - *Beginners Italian 2: in cammino*](#). The Open University has launched a dedicated learning centre called [The Open Centre for Languages and Cultures](#). OpenLearn is supporting this project and is providing extracted units of all courses on The Open Centre in our dedicated [Language and Cultures Hub](#).

The Open Centre for Languages and Cultures is the exciting new home for non-accredited language and intercultural communication short courses. You can study a wide range of language and language related subjects with us anywhere in the world, in any time zone, whatever your motivation – leisure, professional development or academic.

It's the one stop shop for engaging with languages, professional communication and intercultural dialogue.

Our short courses allow us to be agile and responsive to the needs of learners who want to be part of a global society. We offer non-accredited short courses in a range of subjects including modern languages, and languages for business and the workplace. We are also leading the way in developing short courses for academic research methods and pre-sessional English with IELTS, which will be available for registration in due course.

The Open Centre for Languages and Cultures is an international leader in online language learning and intercultural communications, built on our pioneering pedagogy and research.

What makes the Open Centre different?

- The OU is the leader in online learning and teaching with a heritage of more than 50 years helping student achieve their learning ambitions.
- The short courses are underpinned by academic rigour and designed by native speakers experienced in producing engaging materials for online learning of languages and cultures.
- The graduating nature of the courses means that learners can build up their language and skills over time.
- Learners will also gain a better understanding of the culture(s) associated with the language(s) they study enabling the development of intercultural communication skills.
- Learners can mix and match the short courses and study more than one course at a time.

Once this course is complete you will be directed to OpenLearn's hub for language content where you will be able to build on your newly found language skills.

Now that you're fully prepared, it's time to start on [Week 1](#).

Buon lavoro!

Week 1: Talking about the time

Introduction



In this first week, you are going to learn and practise how to ask and say the time. This will involve using numbers as well as practising your speaking and listening skills. Before you start, you might want to revise Italian numbers.

When saying the time, the pronunciation of numbers is very important if you want to be correctly understood, so you might want to say the numbers out loud as you revise them. You will also have a chance to practise pronunciation in some of the activities that follow.

At the end of the week, you can test your learning with a quick quiz.

This OpenLearn course is an adapted extract from the Open University course [LXI002 *Beginners Italian 2: in cammino*](#).

1 Asking what the time is

You'll start this week by testing your knowledge of how to tell the time in Italian.

Activity 1

Interactive content is not available in this format.



2 Saying what the time is

Next, you'll have a chance to hear people saying the time.

Activity 2

Listen to the following people asking and being told the time and put these dialogues in the correct order.

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3 Asking and saying the time

To ask the time, you can either say:

Che ore sono? What time is it? (literally: What hours are they?)

or:

Che ora è? What time is it? (literally: What hour is it?)

To say the time, you use the verb *essere*. For all plural hour times use *sono*:

Sono le due. It's two o'clock.

Sono le undici. It's eleven o'clock.

but for 'one o'clock' use *è*:

È l'una. It's one o'clock.

As you can see from the examples above, the definite article – *le* for plural hours and *la* (shortened to *l'*) for *una* – is used, followed by the hour.

For midday and midnight, *è* is used, without the article:

È mezzogiorno. It's midday.

È mezzanotte. It's midnight.

To emphasise an exact time on the hour, you can add *in punto* ('on the dot').

Sono le undici in punto. It's eleven o'clock precisely.

4 Expressing 'ten past' and 'ten to'

Next, you'll think about how 'past' and 'to' are expressed in Italian when giving the time.

Activity 3

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5 Saying what the time is ('past' and 'to')

For minutes past the hour, use *e*.

Sono le cinque e dieci. It's ten past five.

È l'una e venticinque. It's twenty-five past one.

For minutes to the hour use *meno*.

Sono le sei meno venti. It's twenty to six.

È l'una meno cinque. It's five to one.

For 'half past', use *mezzo* or *mezza* (there is no difference in meaning).

È mezzanotte e mezza. It's half-past midnight.

Sono le undici e mezzo. It's half-past eleven.

For 'quarter past' or 'quarter to', use *un quarto* with *e* or *meno*.

Sono le cinque e un quarto. It's (a) quarter past five.

È l'una meno un quarto. It's (a) quarter to one.

For 'quarter to' you can also use *e tre quarti* ('three-quarters past').

Sono le dodici e tre quarti. It's (a) quarter to one. / It's twelve forty-five.

6 Practising your listening and speaking skills

Now you'll have the opportunity to test your listening and speaking skills.

Activity 4

Listen to the questions and respond according to the prompts while recording yourself. Then play back your recording and listen to the model answer.

1.

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2.

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3.

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4.

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5.

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7 Practising your pronunciation

Next, you'll continue to practise your pronunciation of times.

Activity 5

Look at each clockface, say what time it is and record your answer. Then play back your recording and listen to a model answer.

1.



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2.



Interactive content is not available in this format.



3.



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4.



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5.



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8 This week's quiz

Check what you've learned this week by taking the end-of-week quiz.

[Week 1 quiz](#)

Open the quiz in a new window or tab (by holding ctrl [or cmd on a Mac] when you click the link), then return here when you have done it.

9 Summary of Week 1

It is useful to keep notes on the main points to remember, which could be grammar rules, vocabulary or expressions. The way in which you choose to keep this record of your learning is up to you: a simple paper notebook, an electronic document, mind maps or any means which suits you. It is important that you add to it regularly so that all key learning points are together in one place and easily accessible for reference and revision. Many learners also find that writing notes helps them to understand grammar points and to memorise vocabulary and expressions. Adding an example of your own to each rule, term and expression will help you fix them in your memory.

Keeping a record of your learning

Whether you keep your notes on paper or digitally, it's important to organise them, so here is an idea that may help, based on your Week 1 studies:

Key phrases

Provide your answer...

Pronunciation

Provide your answer...

Culture

Provide your answer...

Language

Provide your answer...

Think about what you would write in each box. Would you add more boxes? It's up to you!

Now let's move on to [Week 2](#).

Week 2: Talking about the time (continued)

Introduction



Last week you learned how to ask and say what the time is. This week you're going to learn and practise how to ask and say the time using the 24-hour clock, which is commonly used for arrival and departure times, and for opening and closing times of shops and services. You'll also learn how to talk about different times of the day, such as morning, afternoon and evening.

Traditionally Italians divide the day into three parts depending on when they are having their meals, which varies in different parts of the country: for example, in the North the morning usually stretches until 12:30–1 p.m. and the afternoon starts after that. In the South the morning stretches until 1:30–2:30 p.m. and the afternoon starts after that. It's very important to keep this in mind when learning about how to talk about parts of the day: for example, 'let's meet in the early afternoon' for some Italians means meeting no earlier than 2:30–3 p.m.

1 Listening to time announcements

In the first activity this week, you'll listen to some time announcements.

Activity 1

Interactive content is not available in this format.



2 Using the 24-hour clock

The 24-hour clock is used in situations when it is important to avoid any confusion between a.m. and p.m., such as when travelling or talking about timetables or schedules. It is also used by online or telephone 'speaking clocks' (*l'orologio parlante*), which tell you the precise time (*l'ora esatta*). To say the time in the 24-hour format, use *sono* or *è* followed by the hour, then *e* and then the minutes.

Sono le diciotto e trentacinque. It's eighteen thirty-five.

Sono le quindici e ventidue. It's fifteen twenty-two.

È l'una. It's one o'clock.

Note that in Italian, as in English, we do not use the expressions *un quarto*, *mezza/mezzo* and *tre quarti* when telling the time with the 24-hour clock. Instead, we use numbers: *quindici*, *trenta* and *quarantacinque*.

3 Telling the time using the 24-hour clock

Next, you'll test your learning of telling the time.

Activity 2

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4 Saying what time it is

In this next activity, you'll test your spoken skills.

Activity 3

Look at each of the clock faces and say what time it is (p.m.) using the 24-hour clock and recording your answer. Then check your answer.

1.



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2.



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3.



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4.



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5.



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5 Expressing the time of day

In the next activity, you'll explore expressing the time of day.

Activity 4

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6 Talking about different times of the day

To specify whether the time referred to is *mattina* (morning), *pomeriggio* (afternoon), *sera* (evening) or *notte* (night), use **di** after the indication of time.

Sono le sette di mattina.

It's seven o'clock in the morning.

Di mattina tends to be used until 11 a.m.

Sono le nove di sera.

It's nine o'clock in the evening.

Di sera tends to be used until 11 p.m. (but usage can vary depending on the part of the country).

Sono le due di notte.

It's two o'clock in the morning.

Di notte is used for the early morning hours.

With *pomeriggio*, it's more common to use **del** than *di*.

Sono le tre del pomeriggio.

It's three o'clock in the afternoon.

Del pomeriggio tends to be used until 6 p.m. (but usage can vary depending on the part of the country).

Note that the abbreviations a.m. and p.m. are not used in Italian at all.

7 Saying what time is it in the rest of the world

When it is 11 a.m. in Rome, what time is it in the rest of the world?

Activity 5

Select the correct sentence describing the time for each one of the following cities.

Roma – 11 a.m.

- Sono le undici del pomeriggio.
- Sono le undici di mattina.
- Sono le undici di sera.
- Sono le undici di notte.

Londra – 10 a.m.

- Sono le dieci del pomeriggio.
- Sono le dieci di sera.
- Sono le dieci di notte.
- Sono le dieci di mattina.

Canberra – 7 p.m.

- Sono le sette di sera.
- Sono le sette del pomeriggio.
- Sono le sette di mattina.
- Sono le sette di notte.

Pechino – 5 p.m.

- Sono le cinque di sera.
- Sono le cinque di mattina.
- Sono le cinque del pomeriggio.
- Sono le cinque di notte.

Discussion

Del pomeriggio tends to be used until 6 p.m.

Buenos Aires – 6 a.m.

- Sono le sei del pomeriggio.
- Sono le sei di sera.
- Sono le sei di mattina.
- Sono le sei di notte.

San Francisco – 2 a.m.

- Sono le due del pomeriggio.
- Sono le due di notte.
- Sono le due di sera.
- Sono le due di mattina.

Discussion

Di notte is used for the early morning hours.

Santiago – 5 a.m.

- Sono le cinque del pomeriggio.
- Sono le cinque di sera.
- Sono le cinque di notte.
- Sono le cinque di mattina.

Auckland – 9 p.m.

- Sono le nove di sera.
- Sono le nove del pomeriggio.
- Sono le nove di mattina.
- Sono le nove di notte.

Discussion

Di sera tends to be used until 11 p.m.

8 This week's quiz

Check what you've learned this week by taking the end-of-week quiz.

[Week 2 quiz](#)

Open the quiz in a new window or tab (by holding ctrl [or cmd on a Mac] when you click the link), then return here when you have done it.

9 Summary of Week 2

Well done for completing Week 2 and reaching the end of this course!

This week you have worked with numbers. Numbers can be difficult to use in context: we can say them in a sequence (e.g. from 1 to 10, from 10 to 100), but when we need to tell or understand the time in a foreign language we suddenly find out that we are processing the information slower than in our language. This is because numbers are a language themselves, therefore you are dealing with two languages at the same time: the foreign language that you are learning and the language of numbers. If then you are throwing in an English translation, you end up with three languages at the same time.

Here are two tips on how to deal with it:

- when you are telling the time in Italian, picture it in your mind as you would see it on a clockface (like the ones that you have seen in the activities carried out this week) rather than thinking of it as expressed in English
- in the same way, when listening to somebody telling the time in Italian, picture it in your mind as you would see it on a clockface rather than translating it into English.

This means that you will be dealing with only two languages at a time (Italian and numbers), therefore making it easier for yourself

This OpenLearn course is an adapted extract from the Open University course [LXI002 *Beginners Italian 2: in cammino*](#).

Next steps

We hope that you'll continue your Italian studies with The Open University on our Beginners Italian courses:

[Beginners Italian 1: primi passi](#)

[Beginners Italian 2: in cammino](#)

[Beginners Italian 3: stai andando bene!](#)

Or continue your learning adventure on OpenLearn with our free courses in our [Language and Cultures Hub](#).

Acknowledgements

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Week 2

Images

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