

Maschile e femminile

As you may know, Italian nouns (a person, place, or thing) come with a twist: each one is either masculine or feminine. To build a correct sentence, you always need to know the gender of a noun, but it can be tricky.

GENDER IS TOTALLY RANDOM AND UNPREDICTABLE— for example chair, picture, and night are feminine, while table, problem, and day are masculine. *la sedia, la foto, la notte / il tavolo, il problema, il giorno*

DEBUNKING THE MYTH ABOUT GENDER



The notion that nouns ending in -A are feminine and those ending in -O are masculine is an oversimplification. A helpful hint more than a law set in stone: there are many exceptions, not to mention thousands of nouns ending in -E, of which roughly half are masculine, and half are feminine. **There's no surefire way to determine a noun's gender just by looking at it.**

FACT

There's no guaranteed way to determine a noun's gender just by looking at it. The key is in the articles (the / a) and adjectives that accompanies the noun. **Always learn nouns along with articles and adjectives.** For example, don't learn "notte", but: **una notte buia**, a dark night. It's a great way to avoid playing the guessing game (and getting it wrong all the time, so frustrating!)

Masculine articles: il, lo, l', i, gli, un, uno, del, dello, dei, degli

Feminine articles: la, l', le, una, un', della, delle

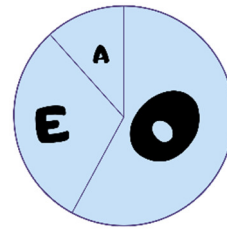
When we talk about nouns ending in -o, -a, or -e what we mean is that's their ending in the singular, it's their basic form, the same you find in dictionaries.

MASCULINE NOUNS

MOST masculine nouns end in -o

MANY masculine nouns end in -e

SOME masculine nouns end in -a

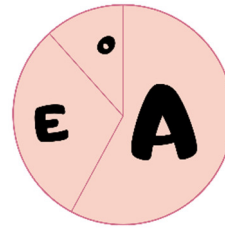


FEMININE NOUNS

MOST feminine nouns end in -a

MANY feminine nouns end in -e

SOME feminine nouns end in -o



TO FORM THE PLURAL, NOUNS CHANGE THEIR LAST LETTER:

masculine nouns ending in -o change into -i

masculine nouns ending in -a change into -i

masculine nouns ending in -e change into -i

feminine nouns ending in -e change into -i

feminine nouns ending in -a change into -E

In other words, all plural nouns end in -i, except for feminine nouns ending in -a that in their plural form end in -E



I can't stress this enough: there's no way to tell the gender. That's why you need to learn them with their definite articles, and pay attention to the words related to them, like adjectives.

Is the noun PROBLEMA masculine or feminine?

Un grosso problema

[masculine: il problema]

Aggettivi

Adjectives are words that describe something and tell us more about a noun. Words like big, red, interesting, and new are all adjectives. In the sentence "In Italy I had a delicious, cheesy, and crispy pizza," the adjectives tell us three things about the pizza. In Italian, adjectives need to agree with the noun they describe.

Italian adjectives can be divided into two groups, depending on their ending in the masculine singular form:

ADJECTIVES ENDING IN -O have 4 different forms:

masculine singular -O
feminine singular -A
masculine plural -I
feminine plural -E

un uomo italiano
una donna italiana
due uomini italiani
due donne italiane

ADJECTIVES ENDING IN -E have 2 different forms:

masculine singular }
feminine singular } -E
masculine plural }
feminine plural } -I

un uomo intelligente
una donna intelligente
due uomini intelligenti
due donne intelligenti



When an adjective describes a group of people where there are both men and women, we use the masculine plural:

i compiti sono difficili
homework is difficult



Building a sentence is like solving a jigsaw puzzle: all the pieces need to fit together perfectly. If the noun is masculine singular, the adjective must also be masculine singular. If the noun is feminine plural, the adjective must be feminine plural too. It makes perfect sense, doesn't it?

It does, but you need to remember that endings of nouns and their describing adjectives do not always match!

Questo libro è molto bello	this book is really good
Questo libro è molto interessante	this book is really interesting
Questa foto è molto bella	this picture is really nice
Questa foto è molto interessante	this picture is really interesting

Il libro is a masculine noun ending in -o

La foto is a feminine noun ending in -o

Bello is an adjective with 4 forms

Interessante is an adjective with 2 forms

Questo is and adjective with 4 forms



If you've mastered the endings of nouns and adjectives, and how to combine them, brace yourself because there are a handful of adjectives that in their basic form (masculine singular) end in -A and have a total of 3 forms:

un uomo egoista, una donna egoista
due uomini egoisti, due donne egoiste

Other adjectives ending in -A: *ottimista, pessimista, altruista, idealista, materialista, entusiasta, idiota.*

Un giorno sì e un giorno no

Indulging in Italian cuisine is a total delight, but hitting the restaurants every night might be pushing it - though honestly, is there even such a thing as too much pasta or tiramisù? Anyhow, how would you say *every other day* in Italian?



UN GIORNO SÌ E UN GIORNO NO - To convey the idea of something occurring alternately every second day, Italians use a fun phrase that literally translates to "one day yes and one day no":

un giorno sì e un giorno no.

For short, **un giorno sì e uno no.**



OGNI DUE GIORNI is another good phrase, and only slightly more formal.



A GIORNI ALTERNI is a very formal option used to express something happening alternately or on an every-other-day basis.

Un giorno sì e un giorno no

Un giorno sì e uno no

Ogni due giorni

A giorni alterni


- ✓ lunedì ~~martedì~~
- ✓ mercoledì ~~giovedì~~
- ✓ venerdì ~~sabato~~
- ✓ domenica ~~lunedì~~...

Ogni also works with other units of time indicating a recurrence or frequency:

ogni dieci minuti	every ten minutes
ogni tre ore	every three hours
ogni due settimane	every two weeks / every other week
ogni tre mesi	every three months
ogni quattro anni	every four years

 **OGNI GIORNO** means **every day**, however it is a bit formal, and the go-to phrase for Italians is often the more casual

tutti i giorni.

 **TUTTI I GIORNI** is easier and quicker to pronounce, and it sounds more relaxed, easy-going, and natural.

TUTTI	OGNI	
tutti i giorni	ogni giorno	every day
tutte le sere	ogni sera	every evening / night
tutti i mesi	ogni mese	every month
tutti gli anni	ogni anno	every year
tutti i giovedì	ogni giovedì	every Thursday



TUTTI / TUTTE + DEFINITE ARTICLE + PLURAL

tutti i giorni (every day)

OGNI + SINGULAR

ogni giorno (every day)

Vado al ristorante un giorno sì e un giorno no perché tutti i giorni è troppo!

I go to the restaurant every other day because every day is too much!

Ecco

Where's my spritz? Here it is! And here's a useful word for you to learn – **ecco**. It means *here it is, here you go, there you are, there she is, oh, that's why, I thought so...* all wrapped into one tiny, powerful word. Ecco

In Italian, we use **ECCO**:



to draw attention to someone or something

We use *ecco* when someone or something suddenly appears, especially while pointing at them. In this case, *ecco* translates to *here it is, here they come, there you go...*



Ecco il resto.

here's your change

Ecco Stefano, finalmente. È sempre in ritardo.

finally, here comes Stefano. He's always late.



As a filler word, at the beginning of a sentence.

In this sense, it's somewhat like saying a hesitant *well...* or *ehm...* in English.

We use *ecco* when we don't know what to say, when we are embarrassed, when we don't have the courage to say something.

Ecco, ti volevo dire che ho perso il maglione che mi hai prestato

ehm... I need to tell you that I lost the sweater I borrowed from you.

Devi sapere che... beh, ecco... non ti amo più! Ti lascio!

there's something you need to know... and well... I don't love you anymore! I'm leaving you.

 in many expressions and idioms

Ecco qui	here you are (take it)
Ecco a lei	here you are (take it, formal)
Ecco a te	here you are (take it, informal)
Ecco fatto	all done, done!
Ecco perché	that's why
Ecco come si fa	here's how you do it
Ecco cosa succede se...	that's what happens if...
Ecco, sì	yeah, that's right
Ecco, così	here, this is how you do it



DIRECT PRONOUNS ATTACH TO ECCO.

When you don't want to repeat a noun or a name, and you use a pronoun instead, don't forget you need to attach it to *ecco*:

Eccomi	here I am
Eccoti	here you are (one person)
Eccolo	here he is / here it is (masculine)
Eccola	here she is / here it is (feminine)
Eccoci	here we are
Eccovi	here you are (multiple people)
Eccoli	here they are (masculine plural)
Eccole	here they are (feminine plural)



Che cosa cucini?

Italian culture is deeply food-oriented, and food goes far beyond mere sustenance—it's our love language! It's no surprise that our language reflects this obsession with food and that we have two verbs for **to cook**.



CUCINARE means *to cook*, as in preparing food. It refers to the entire process of cooking: selecting ingredients, cutting vegetables, peeling potatoes, frying in a pan, putting the dish together... Cucinare is a general verb that can be used when you talk about the overall act of cooking.

Non so cucinare.

I can't cook.

Anna ha cucinato tutto il giorno

Anna cooked all day.

Tu hai cucinato, io lavo i piatti.

you cooked, I'll do the dishes.

CUOCERE specifically refers to the act of cooking something by applying heat. When you cook food, it changes color and texture. You can cook something in the oven, on the stove, on a barbecue...

Cuocere is a very specific verb that means changing the state of a food, from raw to cooked.



Gli spaghetti cuociono in 9 minuti.

spaghetti cook in 9 minutes.

Ho cotto le verdure al vapore.

I steamed the vegetables.

Le patate devono cuocere ancora.

the potatoes need to cook longer

VOCABULARY BUILDING

KITCHEN VERBS

pelare

sbucciare

tagliare a dadini

affettare

tritare

sminuzzare

grattugiare

soffriggere

friggere

bollire

lessare

cuocere a vapore

cuocere in forno

riscaldare

scongellare

versare

mescolare

montare

spremere

condire

VERBI IN CUCINA

peel (for a thinner or softer skin)

peel (for thicker, easily removable peel)

dice

slice

mince, grind

break into small pieces

grate

sauté, lightly fry, brown

fry

boil (for water)

boil (to cook in boiling water)

steam

bake

heat

defrost, thaw

pour

stir

whip, beat

squeeze

season



Be more Italian!

How do you like your steak? In Italy, we only have three options... well, two actually, because a well done steak is considered a ruined steak – especially in Florence, where you will be flat-out denied a well done Fiorentina steak.

AL SANGUE

rare

MEDIA

medium

BEN COTTA

well done

MASCHILE E FEMMINILE (pages 14-15)

1) Masculine or feminine?

il cielo (the sky)
la mano (the hand)
la storia (the story, the history)
il tavolo (the table)
le porte (the doors)
la foto (the picture)
il clima (the climate)
la mente (the mind)
il mento (the chin)
la menta (the mint)
il fiume (the river)
la lezione (the lesson, the class)
la stanza (the room)
i treni (the trains)
lo spazio (the space)
la chiave (the key)
gli sport (the sports)
gli aerei (the planes)
il pane (the bread)
la vita (the life)
la vite (the screw, the grapevine)
la radio (the radio)
le forchette (the forks)
le luci (the lights)
lo stato (the state)
la nazione (the nation)
il sistema (the system)
il mare (the sea)
le fragole (the strawberries)
il sole (the sun)
le strade (the roads)
i denti (the teeth)

M	F

Soluzioni MASCHILE E FEMMINILE

1) Masculine or feminine?

	M	F
il cielo (the sky)	X	
la mano (the hand)		X
la storia (the story, the history)		X
il tavolo (the table)	X	
le porte (the doors)		X
la foto (the picture)		X
il clima (the climate)	X	
la mente (the mind)		X
il mento (the chin)	X	
la menta (the mint)		X
il fiume (the river)	X	
la lezione (the lesson, the class)		X
la stanza (the room)		X
i treni (the trains)	X	
lo spazio (the space)	X	
la chiave (the key)		X
gli sport (the sports)	X	
gli aerei (the planes)	X	
il pane (the bread)	X	
la vita (the life)		X
la vite (the screw, the grapevine)		X
la radio (the radio)		X
le forchette (the forks)		X
le luci (the lights)		X
lo stato (the state)	X	
la nazione (the nation)		X
il sistema (the system)	X	
il mare (the sea)	X	
le fragole (the strawberries)		X
il sole (the sun)	X	
le strade (the roads)		X
i denti (the teeth)	X	

AGGETTIVI (pages 16-17)

1) For each adjective, write all its different forms

- **Grande** (big):
- **Piccolo** (small):
- **Facile** (easy):
- **Difficile** (difficult, hard):
- **Nero** (black):
- **Bianco** (white):
- **Triste** (sad):
- **Felice** (happy):
- **Contento** (happy):
- **Stanco** (tired):

2) Pick the correct form of the adjective

- Le mie amiche sono inglese inglesi
- Due bicilette verde verdi
- Due biciclette... nuove nuovi
- Mi piacciono i film italiane italiani
- Ho noleggiato un'auto ... nera nero

3) Translate into Italian

two fast trains

an English book

a happy dog

I booked a big room

an interesting lesson

a selfish man

Soluzioni AGGETTIVI

1) For each adjective, write all its different forms

- Grande (big): **grande, grandi**
- Piccolo (small): **piccolo, piccoli, piccola, piccole**
- Facile (easy): **facile, facili**
- Difficile (difficult, hard): **difficile, difficili**
- Nero (black): **nero, neri, nera, nere**
- Bianco (white): **bianco, bianchi, bianca, bianche**
- Triste (sad): **triste, tristi**
- Felice (happy): **felice, felici**
- Contento (happy): **contento, contenti, contenta, contente**
- Stanco (tired): **stanco, stanchi, stanca, stanche**

2) Pick the correct form of the adjective

- Le mie amiche sono **inglesi** (*my girlfriends are English*)
- Due bicilette **verdi** (*two green bikes*)
- Due biciclette **nuove** (*two new bikes*)
- Mi piacciono i film **italiani** (*I like Italian movies*)
- Ho noleggiato un'auto **nera** (*I rented a black car*)

3) Translate into Italian

two fast trains	due treni veloci
an English book	un libro inglese
a happy dog	un cane felice / un cane contento
I booked a big room	ho prenotato una stanza grande
an interesting lesson	una lezione interessante
a selfish man	un uomo egoista