

Phonics

The good news is that there are clear rules about how Italian sounds are spelled. Of course, people have different accents, depending on where they come from or their background, but the basic patterns between sounds and their spellings are regular and quite easy to learn compared to some other languages.

Vowels

Each of the five vowels has its own sound:

a as in **hat**

e as in **pet**

i as in **feet**

o as in **clock**

u as in **boot**



male



carta



casa



amare



agosto



[to be]

essere

[this]

questo

[to have]

avere



letto



senza



libro



interessante



lista



primo



in



dodici

[a lot]

molto



mondo



orso



con



[a; an]

uno



tu

[on]

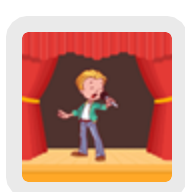
su



musica

[to use]

usare



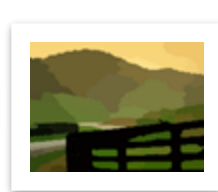
cantare



cavallo



cambiare



campo



calcio



con



piccolo



come?



bianco



costa



scuro



cucina



scuola



cuoco



cuore



veloce



voce



cellulare



dicembre

[necessary]

necessario



calcio



dieci



amici



cinema



cibo



chiesa

[to call]

chiamare



che?

[why, because]

perché

[clear, light]

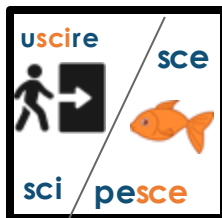
chiaro



sciarpa



sciare



[choice]

scelta



scendere

[risk]

rischio



schiena



[joke]

scherzo



schermo



gallina



bottega



regalo



gamba

[to pay]

pagare



[long]

lungo



gomma

[place]

luogo



golf



lago



[figure,
shape]

figura



[to watch]

guardare



[to read]

leggere



gennaio



gelato

[generally]

generalmente



gesto



pagina

[today]

oggi



originale



ginnastica



viaggi



The **i** sound when followed by **a / o / u** almost completely disappears.



giallo



giocare



giusto



tartarughe



portoghese



ghiaccio

[colleagues]

colleghi



famiglia



luglio



foglia



biglietto



bottiglia



montagna



bagno



disegno



Spagna



giugno

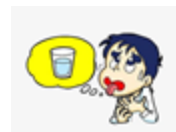
Double consonants in Italian are pronounced much more forcefully than a single consonant. The easiest way to do this is to shorten the vowel sound which comes before them. Compare these words below.



sette



palla



sete



pala



nonno



pollo



sonno



nono



polo



sono



H in Italian is always silent.



hotel

[I have]

ho



chiuso

[why? / because]

perché