
Unit 1 - Review #6

PREPOSITIONS and Articulated Prepositions

We are moving forward and going to tackle what might arguably be one of the most challenging topic for students of Italian to master... **PREPOSITIONS** and **ARTICULATED PREPOSITIONS**!

Even when you become fluent in Italian, you can still be confused by **prepositions** and how to use them correctly every time. In this review, we will summarize the key points of **prepositions** and **articulated prepositions** so that you have a guide to look back on when you need a reminder!

(If you are a student who learns best through song or rhymes, please rewatch the start of this review video to hear the melody of a little song Italians sing when learning prepositions. It may be a good memory tool for you!)

Although **prepositions** and **articulated prepositions** are a concept that will surely confuse you a bit, luckily for us, they behave in a relatively predictable way. So, once you grasp **prepositions** and **articulated prepositions**, you will be able to follow some guidelines, more or less, to help you use them correctly!

Tell me everything you know about Prepositions! When do you use each one? How much can you remember?



The main PREPOSITIONS

DI	<i>OF</i>
A	<i>TO / AT</i>
DA	<i>FROM</i>
IN	<i>IN</i>
CON	<i>WITH</i>
SU	<i>ON / OVER</i>
PER	<i>FOR</i>
TRA / FRA (these two are interchangeable)	<i>BETWEEN / AMONG / AMONGST</i>

We are going to first begin with the **prepositions CON, SU, PER**.

Tell me everything you know about the prepositions: CON, SU, PER.



The Prepositions CON, SU, PER

CON	<i>WITH</i>
SU	<i>ON / OVER</i>
PER	<i>FOR</i>

The **preposition CON** may be the easiest one to use out of these three. It means *WITH* and it is used in the same way that you would use it in English.

Examples:

Mi piace studiare con Flavia.

Esci con me?

Orecchiette con i carciofi

I like to study with Flavia.

Will you go out with me?

Orecchiette (type of pasta) with artichokes

The **preposition PER** is another relatively easy one. It translates in most cases to *FOR*, and is also used the way it would be used in English.

Examples:

Ecco un regalo per tua figlia.

Ho studiato l'italiano per tre anni.

Here is a present for your daughter.

I studied Italian for three years.

NOTE

Since we use the **Passato Prossimo HO STUDIATO** in this sentence, it means that *I STUDIED* Italian for three years and no longer study it.

If you want to say: *I have been studying Italian for three years (and still study it)*, the sentence is:
Studio l'italiano da tre anni.

We basically need to state the fact in the Present Tense and use the Proposition **DA** (*from*).



Another Example using PER:

Per chi cucini stasera?

For whom are you cooking tonight?

Who are you cooking for tonight?

The **preposition SU** is very similar to English. It means **ON**. Like English, the **preposition SU** is usually followed by an article like, **ON THE TABLE**.

Examples:

La penna è sul tavolo.

The pen is on the table.

In this example, **SU** combines with the article **IL** from **IL TAVOLO**.

SU + IL = SUL

Scrivo un libro sulla lingua Italiana

I am writing a book about/on the Italian language.

In this example, **SU** combines with the article **LA** from **LA LINGUA**.

SU + LA = SULLA

Vado su!

I am going upstairs!

In this example, **SU** means **UPSTAIRS**. **GIÙ** on the other hand, means **DOWNSTAIRS**.

SU combines with articles

CON / PER only combines with articles in speech (you'll see more of this when we get to the part about **Articulated Prepositions**).

PER "in order to"

If you wanted to say:

In order to find a job, you must have a good CV

You would use the preposition **PER**:

Per trovare lavoro, devi avere un buon CV

I know that **TROVARE** already means **TO FIND**. But remember, Italian is its own language and the more you try to translate things word for word, the more confused you will become. So in this

sentence, you say **PER TROVARE** because in Italian you need something to suggest that the verb we are using is performed “*in order to*” achieve another goal/verb.

Vado in Italia per migliorare il mio Italiano *I'm going to Italy to improve/better my Italian*

This sentence is similar to the one above. **MIGLIORARE** already means **TO IMPROVE**. But, we must say **PER MIGLIORARE**. If it helps you remember the correct usage of **PER**, say this sentence in English like this instead:

I'm going to Italy (in order to) improve/better my Italian

Or, in a slightly odd English:

I'm going to Italy for improving/bettering my Italian

In Italian, you **CAN'T** end a sentence in a **preposition**. In English you might say:

Want to come with?

In Italian, you *can't* say this because you can't end a sentence with the preposition **CON**.

You can say:

Vuoi venire con me? *Want to come with me?*

More examples:

Con chi esci? *Who are you going out with?*

Perché lo fai? *What are you doing this for?*



Prepositions TRA / FRA

TRA / FRA	BETWEEN / AMONGST
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Tell me everything you know about the prepositions: TRA / FRA.

Anytime you want to say *AMONGST* or *BETWEEN*, you can use either **TRA** or **FRA**, as they're interchangeable and usually chosen based on personal preference of to avoid the repetition of the sounds TR and FR in nearby words.

Examples:

Abito tra Roma e Firenze

I live between Rome and Florence

È seduto fra i suoi amici

He's sitting amongst/between his friends

Quale preferisci fra tutti questi?

Which do you prefer among/between all of these?

Another point to remember about the **prepositions TRA / FRA**, is that it is also used when in English we say *IN* when referring to Time.



Examples:

Ci vediamo fra 10 minuti
 Vado in Italia fra due mesi

See you in 10 minutes
 I am going to Italy in two months

It's a common *mistake* for student to say:

*Ci vediamo in 10 minuti

Notice it now, and do your best to not make this mistake!

TRA / FRA only combines with prepositions in speech.

The preposition DA

DA	<i>FROM / BY / FOR</i>
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Tell me everything you know about the preposition DA.

The **preposition DA** is another one that is often *combined* with a **definite article**.



Examples:Ho ricevuto un regalo da Carlo*I received a present from Carlo*Vengo dalla spiaggia*I am coming from the beach*Da dove arriva questo pacco?*Where does this parcel come from?*Prendete l'acqua dal frigo*Take the water from the fridge*

The **preposition DA** becomes a little confusing when it comes to **verbs of movement**. With **verbs of movement**, the preposition **DA** can mean **TO**.

When we are referring to Time, the preposition **DA** can mean **FOR**.

Examples:Stasera andiamo da Rita*Tonight we are going to Rita's*Studio Italiano da quattro anni*I've been studying Italian for four years*Ti aspettiamo da due ore!*We've been waiting for you for two hours!*

I know, this is a challenging concept in Italian! Don't worry so much about it. Practice will help you get better at it. I know people who are fluent and really good at Italian who still get **prepositions** confused when they speak. You just have to do your best! I know English very well but still make mistakes sometimes. This is all apart of learning a new language!

The preposition A

A	<i>TO / AT</i>
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Before we review more about the **preposition A**:

What can you remember about the preposition A?



Right from the start the **preposition A** has two meanings: *TO* or *AT*.

Some examples:

Sono <u>a</u> scuola	<i>I'm <u>at</u> school</i>
Studiate <u>all'</u> università	<i>You guys study <u>at the</u> university</i>
<u>A</u> che ora parti?	<i>(<u>At</u>) what time are you leaving?</i>
Porto la cena <u>a</u> mia sorella	<i>I am bringing dinner <u>to</u> my sister</i>

The examples above are quite similar to when you would use *TO* or *AT* in English. However, the **preposition A** is the preposition we use before *cities*:

Example:

Abitiamo <u>a</u> Roma	<i>We live <u>in</u> Rome</i>
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In English you would say:

We live in Rome

But, in Italian, instead of using *IN* we use the preposition **A**.

Don't forget that the **preposition A** combines with definite articles. You can see in the sentence above:

Studiate all'università

A + LA (for l'università) = **ALL'università**.

The **preposition A** is also used to introduce **direction of movement**. It can also be used **between two verbs**. As you can see, the **preposition A** is used in many different ways!

Examples of A used to introduce direction of movement:

Stasera andate <u>a</u> cinema?	<i>Are you guys going <u>to the</u> cinema/movies tonight?</i>
Non vado <u>a</u> casa, vado <u>a</u> scuola!	<i>I'm not going <u>to</u> school, I'm going (<u>to</u>) home!</i>

Examples of A between two verbs:

Vado <u>a</u> casa <u>a</u> preparare la cena	<i>I'm going (<u>to</u>) home <u>to</u> prepare dinner</i>
Vai in Italia <u>a</u> studiare o <u>a</u> lavorare?	<i>Are you going to Italy <u>to</u> work or <u>to</u> study?</i>



The Preposition DI

DI	OF
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What can you remember about the preposition DI?

The **preposition DI** means *OF*. It is used to **express material** or the “**intrinsic**” quality of something.

Examples:

Un tavolo di legno

A wooden table / Table made of wood

Un vestito di cotone

A cotton dress / A dress made of cotton

The **preposition DI** is used also as the English *Saxon Genitive* would be used. You add the **preposition DI** where you would add an **apostrophe S** in English, “*S*”.

Examples:

La casa di Marco

Marcos house

Il compleanno di Lucia

Lucias birthday

Notice the order: thing owned first + DI + owner



The **preposition DI** is also used when English would use two nouns where one noun **describes another**. In English you are basically using one of the two nouns as an *adjective*, but in Italian we simply cannot have one noun describing another noun. **DI** (and sometimes **DA**) fix this problem.

Il libro **di** ricette

A recipe book / A book of recipes

In English, both *RECIPE* and *BOOK* are nouns, but we are using *RECIPE* as an adjective of *BOOK*.

Il corso **di** Italiano mi piace molto

I like the course of Italian a lot / I like the Italian course a lot

La festa **di** compleanno **di** Lucia

The party of Lucia's birthday / Lucia's birthday party

If you are finding it challenging to understand how to use the **preposition DI**, refer back to [Beginner Italian Level 1](#) where they were first introduced, or check your grammar good.

The Preposition IN

IN	/N
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What can you remember about the preposition IN?



The **preposition IN**, I think, is pretty straight forward. It gets a little tricky when it is used with **verbs of movement**, but we're going to do our best to understand it as clearly and as straightforward as possible.

The **preposition IN** usually combines with **articles**.

Examples:

Metti l'acqua nel frigo

Put the water in the fridge

Ho gli occhiali nello zaino

I have glasses in the backpack

(my glasses are in my backpack)

The **preposition IN** will combine with articles like we see above. UNLESS we are using the **preposition IN** with **verbs of movement**, to express *movement towards* (TO). In this case, **IN** stays unchanged.

Examples:

Andiamo in banca

We are going to the bank

NOT *andiamo nella banca

Andiamo in palestra

We are going to the gym

Andiamo in farmacia

We are going to the pharmacy

The **preposition IN** is used in many many different expressions for no particular reason like:

In vacanza

on holiday / vacation

In spiaggia

at the beach

In ufficio

at the office

The **preposition IN** is also used before *Countries* and *States* or *Regions*.

Examples:

Abito in Italia

I live in Italy

Sono in vacanza

I am on vacation / holiday

Vado in Italia

I am going to Italy

In Italia si parla Italiano

In Italy you speak in Italian



When the Preposition IN is NOT used

The **preposition IN** is *NOT* used with expressions of Time

The **preposition IN** is *NOT* used before the months of the year

We *DO NOT* say:

*Ci vediamo in due giorni

We SAY:

Ci vediamo fra / tra due giorni

I will see you/we will see each other in two days

We *DO NOT* say:

*In settembre mi sposo

We SAY:

A settembre mi sposo

I am getting married in September

The Prepositions A, IN, DA with Verbs of Movement

What can you remember about the prepositions A, IN, DA when they are used with Verbs of Movement?



When we use the **prepositions A, IN, DA** with **verbs of movement**, they can be roughly translated to the English **TO**. Yes this can be considered a lot. *Three Italian prepositions for one English preposition*. Give it time and practice!

Examples:

Vado a Roma	<i>I am going to Rome</i>
Vado in Italia	<i>I am going to Italy</i>
Vado da Manu	<i>I am going to Manu's</i>

The **preposition A** is used when we are going to/towards a *City*. This may be the easiest way to use it.

The **preposition A** is also used with “symbolic” destinations, or **concepts**. What I mean by this is that you can tell someone that you are going to the **OPERA** or **THEATER**. Yes, you are going to a physical place, but these activities are **concepts** and *art forms*. You can tell someone that you go to **COLLEGE** or **UNIVERSITY**. When you say this, you usually don't imply that you are physically going to the building where the **concept** of education persists, but that your occupation is student and that you **ATTEND THE UNIVERSITY / COLLEGE**.

The **preposition A** is also used with certain *fixed* expressions.

Some examples of fixed expressions that use **A**:

A CASA	<i>HOME</i>
A SCUOLA	<i>TO SCHOOL</i>
A LAVORO	<i>TO WORK</i>
AL SUPERMERCATO	<i>TO THE SUPERMARKET</i>
AL CINEMA	<i>TO THE CINEMA / MOVIES</i>
AL MERCATO	<i>TO THE MARKET</i>
AL MARE	<i>TO THE BEACH</i>

The **preposition A** usually combines with a **Definite Article**. But again, not always. You just have to remember the *fixed* expressions and phrases that *don't* require it, like, **A CASA**.



Examples:

Stasera andiamo all'opera

Tonight we're going to the opera

Studio all'università

I study at the University / I go to College

Vado a casa / a lavoro / a scuola

I am going home / to work / to school

Andate al cinema / al supermercato

You guys are going to the cinema(movies) / to the supermarket

We use the **preposition IN** when we speak of going to a **general destination**, movement *INTO* a building, Country, States, Regions.

Examples:

Vado in banca/in posta/in chiesa

I am going to the bank/post office/to church

Andiamo in America

We're going to America

Andiamo negli Stati Uniti

We're going to the United States

In this last example we see **IN** combined with **GLI**. I told you that **IN** doesn't usually combine with **articles** when it refers to *movement towards* something. Why do you think that in this specific sentence, **IN** is combined with an **article**?

Because **GLI** is a part of **STATI UNITI**. The correct way to say *THE UNITED STATES* is, **GLI STATI UNITI**.

More examples:

Venite in Calabria?

Are you guys coming to Calabria?

Vengo in California

I am coming to California

Don't overthink this! Some expressions you're just better off memorizing. If you try to make sense of every little detail of the Italian language, it will get unbearably confusing! Trust yourself and trust the process!



Now here's a piece of information that will either confuse you, or get you excited. I know that I told you that when it come to **verbs of movement**, we use the **preposition IN**. This is true when we are saying that we're going to the *BANK, LIBRARY* and so forth.

But, if we are talking about a **specific place**, like a specific *COMMONWEALTH BANK* or *NATIONAL MUSEUM*, we use the **preposition A**. Look here:

Andiamo alla banca dove lavora Sara *We're going to the bank where Sara works*

This example is very specific because we aren't going into just any bank, we're going to a bank where our friend *SARA* works.

Andiamo alla Biblioteca Nazionale *We're going to the National Library*

In this example we aren't going into just any library, we're going into the *NATIONAL LIBRARY* of the place we're in/visiting.

When we are talking about a **general** destination, we use the **preposition IN**.

Whenever we **specify** the destination, we switch back to the **preposition A**, combined with the correct **Definite Article**.

The **preposition DA** means *FROM*. But when it is used with **verbs of movement**, the **preposition DA** can mean *TO*. This happens when we move towards a **person**.

Examples:

Vado dal panettiere	<i>I am going to the bread baker</i>
Devi andare dal dottore?	<i>Do you have to go to the doctor?</i>
Passo dal farmacista	<i>I am going to pass/walk by the pharmacist</i>
Andiamo da Luca e Stefano?	<i>Are we going to Luca and Stefano's?</i>

This **preposition** with **verbs of movement** may be the easiest to remember because it's consistent!



Articulated Prepositions / Combined Prepositions

What can say about Articulated / Combined Prepositions?

Some **prepositions** merge with the **definite article** that follows.

In English you would say:

To the children

In this example, *TO* is the preposition and *THE* is the definite article. In Italian, *TO* is **A**, and *THE CHILDREN* is, **I BAMBINI**.

So, **Preposition + Definite Article = Articulated Preposition**

A + I = AI bambini

These **prepositions** combine with the Definite Articles ALL the time:

DI, A, DA, IN, SU

This **preposition** combines with Definite Articles only in **speech**:

CON

These **prepositions** sometimes combine, only in speech:

PER, TRA, FRA

You would see these **prepositions** merges in *poetic* writing. In speech you may sometimes hear it but not often. I don't recommend you try this right now because it's not necessary or common.



Why do we merge **prepositions** with the **article**? Because it's faster! Simple! When you combine a **preposition** with the **article**, you basically combine two words to make one, and it actually rolls off your tongue smoother when you speak!

Examples:

Prendo l'acqua dal frigo e la metto sul tavolo

I take the water from the fridge and put it on the table

Lavori dalle 8 alle 16

You work from (the)8 till (the)16/4:00

È aperto dal lunedì al sabato

It's open from (the)Monday to (the)Saturday

Dalla finestra si vedono le montagne

From the window you can see the Mountains

Col tempo, tutto passa

With (the)time, everything passes (time heals everything)

È entrata Marta colle scarpe bagnate

Marta entered with her wet shoes

Usciamo cogli amici

We're going out with our friends

Here is an example of **PER** + **IL**:

Per compleanno di Rita faccio la torta

For Rita's birthday I'm making a cake/I'm making a cake for Rita's birthday

Like I said, this way is kind of poetic and I don't recommend you do it. I do it sometimes when I'm speaking very very fast and just combining words. You will hear a lot of these combinations from people who are speaking very quickly.



How do these combinations work?

The **Definite Articles**:

IL	L'	LO	I	GLI
LA	L'			LE

The **Merging Prepositions**:

DI	A	DA	IN	SU	(CON)
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Combinations for the preposition **A**:

A + IL	AL
A + L	ALL'
A + LA	ALLA
A + LO	ALLO
A + I	AI
A + GLI	AGLI
A + LE	ALLE

Examples:

Porto la pizza alle ragazze

All'aeroporto non c'è mai parcheggio

Agli italiani piace mangiare

I'm bringing pizza to the girls

There's never any parking at the airport

Italians like to eat/eating is pleasing to

Italians

Combinations for the preposition **DI**:

DI + IL	DEL
DI + L	DELL'
DI + LA	DELLA
DI + LO	DELLO
DI + I	DEI
DI + GLI	DEGLI
DI + LE	DELLE

Combinations for the preposition **DA**:

DA + IL	DAL
DA + L	DALL'
DA + LA	DALLA
DA + LO	DALLO
DA + I	DAI
DA + GLI	DAGLI
DA + LE	DALLE

Combinations for the preposition **IN**:

IN + IL	NEL
IN + L	NELL'
IN + LA	NELLA
IN + LO	NELLO
IN + I	NEI
IN + GLI	NEGLI
IN + LE	NELLE

Combinations for the preposition **SU**:

SU + IL	SUL
SU + L	SULL'
SU + LA	SULLA
SU + LO	SULLO
SU + I	SUI
SU + GLI	SUGLI
SU + LE	SULLE

Combinations for the preposition **CON**:

CON + IL	COL
CON + L	COLL'
CON + LA	COLLA
CON + LO	COLLO
CON + I	COI
CON + GLI	COGLI
CON + LE	COLLE

Examples:

Compro vestiti dagli amici di Sandra
 Portano lo zaino sulle spalle
 Mangiamo dai genitori di Rita
 Scrive un libro sull'importanza
dell'alimentazione
 Il problema dello smog è che...

*I buy clothes from Sandra's friends
 They carry the backpack on the shoulders
 We're eating at Rita's parents
 I am writing a book on the importance
 of nutrition
 The problem of the smog is...*



The great thing about these **combinations** is that you just have to memorize the combination for each preposition with the article **IL**. Then, it will be easy to replicate it using the rest of them!

DEL	AL	DAL	NEL	SUL	(COL)
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The PARTITIVO

What do you remember about the **PARTITIVO**?

What is the **PARTITIVO**? It is when you use the articulated preposition **DI** to express an *unspecified* and *undefined quantity*!

Examples:



Vorrei del pane	<i>I would like some bread</i>
Prendiamo della pizza	<i>We're getting some pizza</i>
Conosco delle persone simpatiche	<i>I know friendly people</i>
Mi porti delle carote?	<i>Will you bring me some carrots?</i>

If you don't have a specific amount/quantity of something, and just want **SOME** of something, we use the **Partitivo**.

Don't say:

**Vorrei pane*

Say:

Vorrei del pane

It's good to get familiar with the **PARTITIVO** because Italians use it a lot! It adds to the melody and flow of the Italian language.

If you're not ready to use the PARTITIVO yet, can you think of other expressions that would mean the same thing as saying *SOME* of something?



Other ways to express unspecified amounts

QUALCHE

ALCUNI / ALCUNE

UN PO' DI

literally means: *a little bit*

Do you remember these expressions?

Examples:

Compro delle carote	<i>I'm buying some carrots / a few carrots</i>
Compro qualche carota	<i>I'm buying some carrots / a few carrots</i>
Compro alcune carote	<i>I'm buying some carrots / a few carrots</i>
Compro un po' di carote	<i>I'm buying some carrots / a few carrots</i>

All of these sentences mean the same thing in Italian! So is there ANY difference between them?

QUALCHE + SINGULAR ITEM

Qualche amico *A few friends*

Even though we are basically speaking of *friends*, when we use **QUALCHE** we need to use the noun in the **singular**: **AMICO**.

ALCUNI/E + PLURAL

Alcune carote *Some carrots*

Alcuni amici *Some friends*

When using **ALCUNI/E**, you have to match the **gender** and make sure your noun is **plural**.

UN PO' DI + SINGULAR/PLURAL

Vorrei un po' d'acqua *I would like a little bit of water*

Vorrei un po' di torta *I would like a little bit of cake*

This expression literally means *A LITTLE BIT OF*. Although you can use it in the place of any of the other expressions listed above, be cautious with this one. It's very colloquial. You wouldn't really say:

Un po' di amici *A little bit of friends*



It's not wrong if you say it this way, but would you? Or would you rather say *SOME FRIENDS* or *A FEW FRIENDS*? However, you can absolutely have a *LITTLE BIT OF WATER* or *CAKE*.

Which one should you use?

If you asked me which expressions I like the best and which ones I think are the most eloquent to express this content of '*undefined quantity*' here is what I'd say!

MY PREFERENCE LIST:

1. PARTITIVO
2. QUALCHE
3. ALCUNI / ALCUNE
4. UN PO' DI

This means, that I would be, in most cases using the Partitivo, occasionally replacing it by QUALCHE. ALCUNI/ALCUNE is very beautiful, but tends to be used more in writing, while with UN PO' DI we run the risk of sounding too casual.

If we wanted to express that "*we are eating (some/a few) pastries*", we could say:

1. Mangiamo delle paste
2. Mangiamo qualche pasta
3. Mangiamo alcune paste
4. Mangiamo un po' di paste

* Don't be confused with this word... **PASTA** means **PASTA** when it's uncountable, but it means **PASTRY** (as in Danish) when it is countable!



Your Notes

