Unit 1 - Review #1

Italian Foundations

Before diving into new stuff, it is always wise to make sure we have strong foundations.

In this video lesson we reviewed:

**Gender of Nouns & Adjectives**
**Plurals of Nouns & Adjectives**
**Exceptions with Plurals**
**Definite Articles**
**Indefinite Articles**
**Sentence Structure**

How do you feel about all these topics? Where is confidence when it comes to these aspects on the Italian grammar?

It is essential that you be honest about this and never become complacent with your knowledge. It is a fact: we know a lot more than what we remember to use.

And it’s OK!

That is exactly why we need to re-inforce all concepts and check if we can apply them.

Refer back to the original Lessons from *Beginner Italian Level 1* and *Beginner Italian Level 2* if you need to go deeper with your review. Contact Support for a great deal on those two courses, if you don’t have them.
Gender of Nouns and Adjectives

- Italian nouns have gender (masculine or feminine)
- Gender is fixed and “randomly” assigned
- Adjectives need to match the gender of the noun they are describing
- Singular masculine words \textit{usually} end in -O
- Singular feminine words \textit{usually} end in -A
- Singular Italian words end in -E are harder to guess, as they can be either masculine or feminine (but still, one or the other)
- These words are clearly masculine: \textit{divano, bagno, vino}
- These words are clearly feminine: \textit{panna, casa, pizza}
- These words are hard to guess: \textit{elefante} (masculine), \textit{chiave} (feminine), \textit{cane} (masculine)
- Similarly to nouns, adjectives can end in -O for masculine or -A for feminine, but some end in -E, and can be used to describe both genders.

\textit{Divani bianco}
\textit{Casa bianca}
\textit{Elefante bianco}
\textit{Chiave bianca}
\textit{Divano grande}
\textit{Casa grande}
\textit{Elefante grande}
\textit{Chiave grande}

- In the above examples, BIANCO changes the ending for masculine and feminine, while GRANDE does not.

Your Notes
Plurals of Nouns and Adjectives

- Plural masculine words usually end in -I
- Plural feminine words usually end in -E
- Singular Italian words ending in -E usually end in -I in the plural (and the gender is hard to guess)
- These words are masculine: divani, bagni, vini, elefanti, cani
- These words are feminine: panne, case, pizze, chiavi
- elefanti (masculine), chiavi (feminine), cani (masculine) are plurals of word ending in -E in the singular, and therefore confusing
- When in doubt with a word ending in -I, it is safer to assume that it is a masculine plural
- Adjectives have to match the number of the nouns
- Similarly to nouns, plural adjectives can end in -I for masculine or -E for feminine, but adjectives ending in -E in the singular, usually end in -I in the plural, and can be used to describe both genders.

Divano bianchi
Case bianche
Elefanti bianchi
Chiavi bianche
Divani grandi
Case grandi
Elefanti grandi
Chiavi grandi

- In the above examples, BIANCO changes the ending for masculine plural to -I and for feminine plural to -E, while GRANDE only changes its ending to -I for plurals, regardless of gender (yet it is a masculine or feminine adjective)

Your Notes
Exceptions with Plurals

- Foreign words do not change in the plural
- Adjectives describing plural foreign words still need to express gender and number (gender being harder to tell for foreign words and number being given away from context and the articles used)

  \[
  \text{Lo sport} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Gli sport} \\
  \text{Lo sport americano} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Gli sport americani}
  \]

- Words ending with an accented syllable do not change in the plural
- Adjectives describing these plural words still need to express gender and number

  \[
  \text{Un caffè corto} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Due caffè corti} \\
  \text{Una città bella} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Due città belle}
  \]

- Some exotic animals ending in -A in the singular do not change in the plural (and are usually masculine!)
- Adjectives describing these plural words still need to express gender and number

  \[
  \text{Un koala piccolo} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Due Koala piccoli} \\
  \text{Un gorilla simpatico} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Due gorilla simpatici}
  \]

- Some words deriving from Greek ending in -I in the singular do not change in the plural
- These are often the same words that end in -IS in English
- Adjectives describing these plural words still need to express gender and number

  \[
  \text{Una crisi politica} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Due crisi politiche} \\
  \text{Un’analisi chimica} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Due analisi chimiche}
  \]
Definite Articles

- Yes, Italian has seven ways to say **THE**
- **IL** is used for singular masculine words
- **LO** is used for singular masculine words starting with a strong (double) consonant sound, like **Z, GN, GL, X, Y, S+Consonant, PS**...
- **L’** is used for singular masculine words starting with a vowel
- **I** is used for plural masculine words
- **GLI** is used for the plural of those masculine words that use **LO** and **L** in the singular
- The ‘default’ articles for masculine words are **IL / I** and we are going to use these unless an exception is present (for which we will use **LO, L, and GLI**)
- **LA** is used for singular feminine words
- **L’** is used for singular feminine words that start with a vowel
- **LE** is used for all plural feminine words
- The ‘default’ articles for feminine words are **LA / LE** and we are going to use these unless the feminine word is starts with a vowel and is singular (for which we use **L’**)

*Il divano*
*I divani*
*La ragazza*
*Le ragazze*
*Lo studente*
*Gli studenti*
*L’aquilone*
*Gli aquiloni*
*L’insalata*
*Le insalate*

- In Italian the article is chosen based on the word that follows to improve sound and simplify pronunciation
- Nouns do not ‘own’ an article
- If we inserted the adjective **STRANO** in one of its forms between the article and the noun, we will notice that some articles need to change:
Il divano strano
I divani strani
La ragazza strana
Le ragazze strane
Lo studente strano
Gli studenti strani
L’aquilone strano
Gli aquiloni strani
L’insalata strana
Le insalate strane

Lo strano divano
Gli strani divani
La strana ragazza
Le strane ragazze
Lo strano studente
Gli strani studenti
Lo strano aquilone
Gli strani aquiloni
La strana insalata
Le strane insalate
Indefinite Articles

- In English, **A** and **AN** are Indefinite Articles
- **UN** is used for singular masculine words
- **UNO** is used for singular masculine words starting with a strong (double) consonant sound, like **Z, GN, GL, X, Y, S+Consonant, PS**...
- The ‘default’ indefinite article for masculine words is **UN**, unless there is need to use **UNO**
- **UNA** is used for singular feminine words
- **UN’** is used for singular feminine words that start with a vowel
- The ‘default’ indefinite article for feminine words is **UNA**, unless there is need to use **UN’**
- **UN’** can only be used for feminine words - masculine words that start with a vowel just use the default **UN**

*Un cappuccino*
*Una castagna*
*Uno scandalo*
*Uno gnomos*
*Uno zaino*
*Uno xilofono*
*Un’anatra*
*Un’amica*
*Un amico*
*Un’isola*

**Your Notes**
Sentence Structure

- Like English, Italian is an **S V O** language, that is, **Subject > Verb > Object**
- In the specific, an Italian sentence might look like:

  **Article + Noun + Adjective + Verb + Article + Noun**

  _Il cane nero mangia la mela_

- **Adverbs** are usually placed right after the verb

  _Il cane nero mangia spesso la mela_

- To make a verb **negative**, we place **NON** right before the verb (or the pronoun, if the verb is already preceded by one)

  _Il cane nero non mangia la mela_

- When using **negative words** such as **MAI, NIENTE, NESSUNO** (*never, nothing, nobody*), in Italian the verb still needs to be preceded by **NON**:

  _Il cane nero non mangia mai la mela_

- Overall, Italian has the same structure as English (except when it comes to questions), and we should not be overly worried
- As long as we apply the main rules of the Italian language (omission of subject pronouns, abundance of definite articles, positioning of the adjective after the noun etc), we’ll be fine
- Italian is more flexible than English when it comes to where we place blocks on content

**Your Notes**