

AP[®] Italian Language and Culture Syllabus 2

Course Overview

Grammar and vocabulary are introduced and reviewed through cultural units created by the teacher. Each unit incorporates all three modes of communication: Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational. Some units in the text *Ponti* (Tognozzi and Cavatorta 2004) as well as other texts and supplemental materials are utilized. The three modes are stressed through readings, films, discussion days, and a variety of writing assignments. The theme of the curriculum is “Italian contributions to the world.” A list of materials and activities that can be used to improve communication in the three modes follows.

Interpersonal Mode:

Speaking: Students participate in a weekly discussion day. They perform dialogues using different registers in a variety of settings. Students practice directed dialogues based on the topic being studied. Student progress is assessed through class discussion and dialogues that require students to speak in the interpersonal mode. [C2, C10, C11]

Writing: Writing activities include journal entries, formal and informal correspondence (e-mails, letters, etc.). Students also use teacher-created materials, *Schaum’s Outline of Italian Grammar*, AMSCO’s *Lingua e Cultura*, and other materials to practice and develop grammar skills. Student progress is assessed through tests and quizzes that require students to write in the interpersonal mode. [C2, C8, C11]

Interpretive Mode:

Reading: Students read short stories, magazine and newspaper articles, literature excerpts, poems, short books, etc. They develop skills such as identifying main ideas and determining the writer’s purpose and inference. Student progress is assessed through reading comprehension tests and quizzes. [C2, C6, C10, C11]

Listening: Students view movies, listen to short news reports, view videos that accompany various textbooks, and listen to presentations made by fellow students. Students listen to songs, understand vocabulary, and complete worksheets that require them to fill in missing words. Activities are designed to get students accustomed to listening to unfamiliar voices in different contexts. Student progress is assessed through the listening comprehension tests and quizzes. [C2, C5, C10, C11]

Presentational Mode:

Cultural Topics: Selections from history, music, art, geography, current events, gastronomy, and similar topics are studied. Students research these topics and present findings to the class. [C2, C3]

Speaking: Students give individual and group oral presentations based on cultural topics, readings, and movies. Students practice picture sequences as well. This work is assessed frequently. [C2, C3, C11]

C2—The course prepares students to demonstrate their level of Italian proficiency across the three communicative modes—interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational—and as articulated in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (Standards). (For Standards descriptions, see the Standards Executive Summary.)

C10—The course provides students with frequent opportunities to interpret and utilize a variety of formal and informal registers across skills.

C11—Assessments are frequent, varied, and explicitly linked to the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes. Prior to assigning an assessment task, teachers share with their students the criteria against which their performances will be evaluated.

C8—The course provides instruction and frequent opportunities to organize and write interpersonal and presentational texts in Italian.

C6—Instructional materials include a variety of written texts, such as newspapers and magazine articles, literary texts, and other authentic writings, that develop students’ interpretive reading abilities at the Intermediate High level.

C5—Instructional materials include a variety of authentic audio and/or video recordings that develop students’ listening abilities at the Intermediate High level.

C3—In addition to **communication**, the course also addresses the Standards’ other four goals: **cultural** competence, **connections** to other school disciplines, **comparisons** between Italian language and culture and those of the learners, and the use of the language within the broader **communities** beyond the traditional school environment.

Writing: Students write timed compositions based on the cultural unit. Students write short essays based on readings and films. Students write movie reviews as well. This work is assessed frequently. [C2, C3, C11]

Course Planner

I select certain units to cover each school year, and I spend about three to four weeks on each of them. Examples of these units are provided in the Student Activities section below. Writing assignments are frequent and varied in the AP® Italian Language and Culture class, and I always provide students with substantive feedback on their rough drafts before they prepare their final copies). Depending on the nature of the assignment, I sometimes require the students to supplement the text of their final drafts with culturally appropriate illustrations. [C8]

Teaching Strategies

Since there are students of varying abilities in my classes, I use strategies for all types of learning styles. I use techniques from the multiple intelligences, differentiation strategies and consciously try to employ Bloom’s Taxonomy to formulate questions of varying difficulty.

The goal of language teaching today is to help students develop proficiency in communication. Therefore, like most teachers, I use an eclectic approach to achieve that goal. I use group work, pair/partner work, multiple intelligence techniques, stations, research projects, journal writing, discussion groups, games, videos, films, and occasional lectures. As much as possible, I try to use a student-centered approach. I use Italian almost entirely in class and encourage the students to do so as well. [C7] [C4]

Student Activities

The following are examples of units done in levels 4/5. They all fall under one of the cultural topics outlined in the *AP Italian Language and Culture Course Description*. This is a curriculum that covers two years worth of material. Units were created as to not have repetition in levels 4 and 5. Some can be chosen for a course in the pre-AP year (level 4) and the rest at the AP level.

Contemporary Life

1. **Chi sono io?** This unit is intended as an icebreaker and introduction to the level 4/AP curriculum. The students discuss themselves through a variety of projects. For example, they can do any of the following:

- Create a personality card or a self-descriptive collage and present it orally to the class.
- After reading authentic personal ads, students create their own.
- Read authentic horoscopes and report individual character traits to the class.
- Create original horoscopes for a magazine article. [C2, C3]

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C3—In addition to **communication**, the course also addresses the Standards’ other four goals: **cultural** competence, **connections** to other school disciplines, **comparisons** between Italian language and culture and those of the learners, and the use of the language within the broader **communities** beyond the traditional school environment.

C11—Assessments are frequent, varied, and explicitly linked to the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes. Prior to assigning an assessment task, teachers share with their students the criteria against which their performances will be evaluated.

C8—The course provides instruction and frequent opportunities to organize and write interpersonal and presentational texts in Italian.

C7—The course provides students with frequent opportunities, in class or in a language laboratory, to practice their Interpersonal and Presentational speaking skills in a variety of settings, types of discourse, topics, and registers.

C4—The teacher uses Italian almost exclusively in class and encourages students to do likewise.

- Respond to a personal ad with an original letter.
- Students write a list of activities that recalls their childhood and compares and contrasts those events to their lives today, and then share the list with a partner.
- Compare the lives and activities of American teenagers to those of Italian young people.

Readings: Buzzati, Dino “*Siamo spiacenti*”; Moskowitz, *Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Classroom*

2. **La famiglia.** After reviewing vocabulary related to the family (including the blended family), students discuss their own family dynamics and then compare and contrast the Italian family of yesterday and today. Students write poems about family members, discuss roles in their families and the consequences of not following rules, and role-play situations. Through readings, students learn about the role of women and how the modern family has changed. Students compare family dynamics in Italy with those typically found in the United States. [C2, C3]

Readings: *Pantomima* (Achille Campanile, in Chelotti Burney, *Tempi moderni*); *Scherzi di Gioventù* (Aldo Palazzeschi) [C6]

Movies: *Stanno tutti bene*, *La famiglia*, *Tre fratelli* [C5]

Social Customs and Traditions

1. **Geografia:** This unit provides an overview of Italian geography. Students study main geographical features, write reports or create collages featuring regions, major cities, fill in maps, etc. [C9]

Source: Tursi and Cininnato, *Italian: Two and Three Years*.

2. **I Giramondi:** Through teacher-generated introduction, students learn about Italian explorers (their origins and destinations); read excerpts from the travels of Marco Polo; write a journal entry as a newly arrived immigrant or explorer; role-play an interview with an explorer; create a newsletter that might have been published in the 1400s or 1500s, written from a different point of view (e.g., monarchs, explores, indigenous population). [C3, C7, C8]

3. **Uno sguardo all’Italia:** This unit provides an overview of Italy’s history, folklore and traditions. Suggested activities: create illustrated history timelines, describe self as an historical figure (in costume if possible), write obituaries of famous people, play *Jeopardy* using history and geography questions, do a research project on folklore, interview an immigrant. This unit is linked to appropriate social studies curriculum on immigration. [C9] [C3, C7]

Sources: Rodelli, *Voci d’Italia*, Isenberg & Pasta, *Immagini d’Italia*

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C5—Instructional materials include a variety of authentic audio and/or video recordings that develop students’ listening abilities at the Intermediate High level.

C9—The course frequently integrates Italian cultural topics, including geography, contemporary life, arts and sciences, social customs and traditions, and contributions of Italians and Italian Americans to the world.

C7—The course provides students with frequent opportunities, in class or in a language laboratory, to practice their Interpersonal and Presentational speaking skills in a variety of settings, types of discourse, topics, and registers.

C8—The course provides instruction and frequent opportunities to organize and write interpersonal and presentational texts in Italian.

Arts and Sciences

L'arte: This unit provides an overview (with teacher-directed notes) of Greek, Etruscan, Roman, Christian, Renaissance, Baroque, and modern art. Students research and write reports on individual artists and present what they have learned about the artist's life or work to the class in an interdisciplinary lesson that combines Italian with Art History. In addition, students view PowerPoint presentations or videos of various works of art. Students select a period of art and create a piece of artwork that demonstrates characteristics of that period; in pairs, students interview artists; in groups, they create résumés of individual artists competing for a commission. Groups create posters representing different periods of art; students participate in an art scavenger hunt in the classroom, and they visit current exhibits in local museums. [C3, C7]

Reading: Ginevra de' Benci (reading found in *Dieci Uomini e Donne Illustri*, National Textbook Publications or Applause Learning Resources)

La musica: In this teacher-generated introduction to opera and its composers, the students discuss how opera is used in cartoons and commercials; view an opera or part of one; write critiques; compare themes to today's shows on Broadway; and read a libretto or part of one. They present summaries of opera plots and characters to the class; attend an opera performance; read the lyrics of, or listen to, contemporary or folk songs to study vocabulary and idioms; read about the *cantautori* and translate lyrics and identify themes of their songs; learn seasonal or regional music; create original lyrics using any contemporary melody; and sing for other classes.

La scienza: Generate a list of scientists, discoveries, or inventions. Students role-play scientists and tell the class about the scientists and their contributions; create posters illustrating inventions and scientists; create illustrated, captioned, scientific timelines; read current event articles or create bumper stickers about the environment (*I Verdi*); and create inventions and explain their use to the class in Italian. [C7]

Contemporary Life/Traditions

La gastronomia: In this unit, students learn new vocabulary by having in-depth discussions about meals and courses, the importance and influence of the Italian coffee culture around the world, and wine as a food group; regional specialties; the psychological implication of meals in the Italian culture; the debate over fast food in Italy; and Italian versus Italian American cuisine. They might also give food demonstrations in Italian, watch an Italian chef program for comprehension, or create a recipe book about one category of Italian cuisine (e.g., appetizers, sweets, wines, first courses). Pair work might include any of the following: one student gives the directions for a recipe while the other executes the recipe; two students role-play situations at restaurants; students create a gastronomic map showing foods and wines of different regions; they read current magazine articles pertaining to food and nutrition and summarize them in their own words; they visit an open-air market. [C3, C9]

Readings: "Ho una fame che non ci vedo" (in Costantino and Heywood, *Avventure in città*), excerpts from *Pinocchio*, recipes, current articles.

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Contributions Of Italians and Italian Americans

Contributions of Italian Americans: Students research and create biographical booklets on important Italian Americans and discuss in Italian their impact on American culture, read teacher-generated material, view videos, interview a grandparent or older Italian American and report to the class what they have learned about his/her experience as an Immigrant, create thematic collages of famous Italian Americans (e.g., politicians, entertainers), write a journal entry as a famous person; role-play interviews; and discuss the negative media portrayal of Italian Americans in spite of their numerous contributions. [C3, C9]

Source: The Web site of the National Italian American Foundation (www.niaf.org).

Contemporary Life

Made in Italy: Students become familiar with Italy's industry and products, gather and share current articles regarding Italian industries (cars, fashion, furniture, etc.), compile a scrapbook of Italian products, create ads for various Italian products and role-play teams of advertising executives competing for the account, and create original jingles for products. [C9]

Source: Chiosso, *In Italy*

Arts and Sciences

Literature: Students read excerpts from a selection of Italian authors, including short stories (Buzzati, Ginzburg, Moravia, Soldati, Pirandello, etc.), and children's literature (Pinocchio, Biancaneve, Cappuccetto Rosso, *Fiabe* by Italo Calvino, etc.). Suggested activities: students create fables, write captions for a picture book, and present a puppet show of a fairy tale, or other literary work. In groups, students summarize segments of stories, unscramble a story and rearrange it in the correct order, and write a journal entry as a character in a fairy tale or fable. After reading an original work, students rewrite the story in a different form (e.g., convert a poem to dialogue or vice versa). Students can also act out a fairy tale and videotape themselves; listen to a fairy tale, a rhyme, or folk tales narrated by the teacher or a tape, and then describe to the class feelings about a favorite part; discuss their reactions to a literary work or role-play parts of stories.

Sources: Chelotti Burney, *Tempi moderni*; Mollica and Convertini, *L'Italia racconta*; Rodelli, *Voci d'Italia*; selected literary readings in course packet; Costantino and Heywood, *Avventure in città*

Social Customs and Traditions

Holidays: Students discuss, research, and/or read about Christmas (Natale) and how it is celebrated, write and answer letters to or from Babbo Natale and/or make anagrams, La Befana (students read poems), Carnevale (students make masks), Valentine's Day (students read short Italian poetry, watch the movie *Il Postino*, write original poems), and Italian folklore/traditions.

Addendum: Culminating activities include: students write a newspaper based on a piece of literature or the year's top stories in the United States, or current events in Italy; create a class yearbook; make a scrapbook of current events and articles about

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Italy and Italian culture; have a film festival and present awards; script a *fotoromanzo* (soap opera); host a talk show; teach a lesson to younger students in a middle or elementary school, and create a picture book for incoming students. THESE PROJECTS CAN ALSO BE USED AFTER THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE AP EXAM.

Student Evaluation

I use a point system. All homework, class activities, projects, tests, and quizzes are assigned a certain number of points, and everything is added together. The resulting sum is then divided by the number of points the students earn for the quarter to compute the grade. There are formative and summative assessments for each unit. The formative assessments can be short summaries of readings, a description and illustration of a favorite scene, film reviews, paired dialogue, discussion day, a report about a famous Italian, group presentations, or a student version of a poem. Students are provided with a rubric before each assignment. The summative assessment is a quiz, test, or essay. [C11]

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Teacher Resources

Books

Borra, Antonello, and Cristina Pausini. *Italian Through Film: A Text for Italian Courses*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003.

Buzzati, Dino. *Siamo spiacenti*. Milano: Mondadori, 1999.

Chelotti Burney, Anna. *Tempi moderni*. New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1982.

Chiosso, Giorgio. *In Italy*. St. Paul, Minn: EMC/Paradigm Publishing, 1988.

Costantino, Mario, and Wald Heywood. *Avventure in città*. New York: AMSCO Publications, 1988.

Germano, Joseph E., and Conrad J. Schmitt. *Schaum's Outline of Italian Grammar*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995.

Isenburg, Teresa, and Renato Pasta. *Immagini d'Italia*. Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2004.

Mollica, Anthony, and Angela Convertini. *L'Italia racconta*. Lincolnwood, Ill.: National Textbook Company, 1979.

Moskowitz, Gertrude. *Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Classroom*, Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1978.

Rodelli, Gianfranco. *Voci d'Italia*. Lincolnwood, Ill.: National Textbook Company, 1988.

Tognozzi, Elissa, and Giuseppe Cavatorta. *Ponti*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004.

Tursi, Joseph A., and Paul D. Cininnato. *Italian: Two and Three Years*. New York: AMSCO School Publications, 1997.

Films

Il postino

La famiglia

Stanno tutti bene

Tre fratelli

Other Audiovisual Materials

Italia Contemporanea: Conversations with Native Speakers. Lucas, Ceil. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001, workbook and video.

Acquerello italiano. Oldcorn, Anthony (ed.). Champs-d'Elysees, Inc. CD and tapescript.

Web sites

corriere.it

lanazione.quotidiano.net

dueparole.it

italiaoggi.it

www.linguaitaliana.rai.it

www.raiclick.rai.it

www.raiinternational.rai.it

www.mediaset.it

www.radioitalia.it

<http://musica.tiscali.it>