

READING ADVICE FOR NEW STUDENTS

ITALIAN LANGUAGE

Whether you have an A-Level or you start as a beginner, language classes in your first year will give you a firm grasp of grammar, develop your vocabulary and language skills and prepare you for the Language Preliminary Exams at the end of Trinity Term. Teaching in your first year will consist of 4 to 6 hours a week (depending on entry level) comprising grammar and vocabulary, listening and reading comprehension, speaking, writing, prose (translation from English into Italian) and translation (from Italian into English). Material will be provided by the Language Tutors, who will also advise you on independent learning and weekly assignments.

Material for classes will be provided by the Language Tutors, who will also advise you on independent learning and weekly assignments. You will need to purchase the following grammar book prior to the start of Michaelmas Term:

Beginners:

- *The Ultimate Italian Review and Practice*, by David Stillman, second edition (McGraw-Hill, 2019).

Post A-Level students:

- *A Reference Grammar of Modern Italian*, by Martin Maiden and Cecilia Robustelli (Routledge, 2007; second edition).

All students should acquire a good bi-lingual dictionary such as *Oxford-Paravia* or *il Ragazzini*. These and others will be available in the Oxford libraries and reputable online dictionaries (please see list below) may also be used.

In addition, other texts you may find useful during the year are:

- *Upgrade Your Italian*, by Clelia Boscolo (Hodder Education, 2005)
- *Modern Italian Grammar Workbook*, by Anna Proudfoot, second edition (Routledge, 2005)
- *Modern Italian Grammar. A Practical Guide*, 3rd edition, by Anna Proudfoot and Francesco Cardo, (Routledge, 2013)

Information for Beginners:

Diagnostic Test:

Prior to the start of the academic year, you are required to take a language test online. You will be sent a link at the beginning of September and you will be required to do the online test between 10th and no later than 20th September 2024. The test will enable us to allocate you to the appropriate class and it is therefore important that it reflects your actual knowledge at the time. Please make sure you complete the test, otherwise we'll be unable to assign you to the appropriate group.

Advice on how to prepare:

During the first year you will acquire a sound knowledge of the Italian language with regards to morphology, syntax, spelling and vocabulary and be able to speak, read advanced texts and write using a good range of structures. The language course will start by covering the basics and students are not expected to have prior knowledge. However, in order to benefit the most from the teaching (and not be too daunted by its fast and intense pace) students are strongly advised to prepare in advance and begin studying the following grammatical points over the summer prior to coming to Oxford: Nouns: gender and plural formation; Definite and indefinite articles; Adjectives: gender and plural formation; Verbs: Present indicative of regular and irregular verbs; *Passato prossimo* (regular participle formation); Forms of the *Imperfetto*.

It would be particularly useful to start learning regular (as well as some irregular) verb forms by heart (at this stage *present indicative*, *participio passato* and *imperfetto*), which will allow you to focus more on use and practice and give you an excellent starting point for the whole academic year. You can prepare through self-study on any good grammar text you may already have, or with the recommended *The Ultimate Italian Review and Practice* by David Stillman that you'll be using in class during the year. You can make excellent progress by working on your own, going through the above grammar points, doing some exercises, reading, listening etc. You can practice your Italian grammar and other skills also using online courses, such as the following:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~cmazzoni/3grammatica/grammatica/index.html>

You will find here explanations of the basic structures of Italian grammar, as well as many exercises. Highly recommended.

http://www.iluss.it/schede_gram_free.html

A selection of exercises on grammar points, vocabulary and listening (with the transcript). From beginners to advanced, arranged by levels.

ONLINE DICTIONARIES:

You will always be encouraged to use a good-sized bi-lingual dictionary throughout your years at Oxford, whether you have purchased your own copy or whether you are going to study in your College Library or in the Taylorian Library. Dictionary apps, such as the *Ragazzini* bilingual dictionary, are also an excellent tool and easier to carry around. The following reputable dictionaries are also available online (free):

Bilingual dictionaries:

[Dizionario di Inglese Sansoni](#)
[Dizionario Garzanti Linguistica](#)
[Collins Dictionary](#)

Monolingual dictionaries:

[Dizionario di italiano Sabatini-Coletti](#)
[Vocabolario della Lingua Italiana Treccani](#)

Synonyms:

[Dizionario dei Sinonimi e dei Contrari Rizzoli](#)
[Treccani Sinonimi e Contrari](#)

Reading

During your first year you will be studying four novels, a film, poetry, and reading texts from a variety of sources. You will be expected to develop your skills so that by the third term you can read the primary texts in Italian. You may start reading some Italian short stories with parallel text. There are many available, including the recent *Great Italian Stories. 10 Parallel Texts*, ed. by Jumpha Lahiri (Penguin, 2024).

ITALIAN LITERATURE

Whether you are a beginner or a more advanced student, you should do some preparatory reading in Italian literature before arriving in Oxford.

The works prescribed for the Prelims course, which students study during the first term are:

- 1) Primo Levi, *Se questo è un uomo*
- 2) Natalia Ginzburg, *Lessico familiare*
- 3) Giuseppe Ungaretti, *L'Allegria*
- 4) Eugenio Montale, *Ossi di seppia* (selection of 20 poems: *In limine*, *Non chiederci la parola*, *Merigiare pallido e assorto*, *Spesso il male di vivere ho incontrato*, *So l'ora in cui la faccia più impassibile*, *Gloria del disteso mezzogiorno*, *Felicità raggiunta si cammina*, *Il canneto rispunta i suoi cimelli*, *Forse un mattino andando*, *La farandola dei fanciulli sul greto*, *Cigola la carrucola del pozzo*; and all nine poems from the section entitled 'Mediterraneo')

Texts are due to be studied in the order given above. You should try to read **three** of the works before October, since there will not be sufficient time to read them all during term. Any modern paperback edition of the narrative texts will be fine (by Mondadori, Einaudi, Rizzoli etc), just ensure that the edition you work with is unabridged. Suggested editions for the poetry are as follows:

Giuseppe Ungaretti, *Vita d'un uomo: 106 poesie. 1914-1960* (Milan: Mondadori, 2016)

Eugenio Montale, *Ossi di seppia* (Milan: Mondadori, 2016)

Buon lavoro!

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