STARTER COURSE · LEVEL A1

Italian with Dante

Learn Italian from zero — with the most famous Italian of all time



▶ Video · 🗣️ Speaking · 🖍️ Exercises · ✅ Corrections in the video

👋 *Ciao! I'm Dante. 700 years ago, I wrote the most famous poem in Italian. Now... I'm going to teach **you** Italian!*

For English speakers · No grammar background needed · a video lesson + this workbook

LESSON 1

Ciao!

Hello & goodbye — at any time of day



🎯 After this lesson, you can...

- ✓ say **hello** in the morning, the afternoon and the evening
- ✓ say **goodbye** — and "see you tomorrow", "see you later"
- ✓ choose between **friendly** (**ciao**) and **polite** (**buongiorno**)
- ✓ never say **buonanotte** at the wrong moment 😉

How to study this lesson

1. Watch
the lesson video — pause when Dante says *"pause!"*

2. Repeat
every word out loud with Dante — when you see *"your turn!"*

3. Practise
exercises 1 to 5 — Dante corrects them in the video

4. Speak
exercise 4 in the video: Dante asks, you answer

Italians greet you according to the time of day

Each of these works for **hello** and **goodbye** — except **buonanotte**.

Buongiorno
morning → early afternoon
bwon-JOR-no

Buon pomeriggio
afternoon — mostly to say **goodbye**
bwon po-meh-REE-djo

Buonasera
from about 5 pm
bwo-na-SEH-ra

Buonanotte
only when going to bed, or leaving very late
bwo-na-NOT-teh

Italian style

Friends and family greet with **two light kisses on the cheeks** — one on each side. With strangers, in shops or at work: a **handshake**, or just a big smile.

And when Italians leave, they often say it twice: **Ciao ciao!** — try it, you'll sound like a local.

LESSON 1

The 12 words

▶ in the video · repeat with Dante

	ITALIAN	SAY IT	MEANS	USE IT…
1	**Buongiorno**	*bwon-JOR-no*	Good morning / Hello	POLITE morning → early afternoon
2	**Buon pomeriggio**	*bwon po-meh-REE-djo*	Good afternoon	POLITE mostly to say goodbye
3	**Buonasera**	*bwo-na-SEH-ra*	Good evening	POLITE from about 5 pm
4	**Buonanotte**	*bwo-na-NOT-teh*	Good night	EVERYONE before bed only
5	**Ciao**	*CHOW*	Hi! / Bye!	FRIENDLY friends, family, kids
6	**Salve**	*SAHL-veh*	Hello	SAFE when you're not sure
7	**Arrivederci**	*ar-ree-veh-DEHR-chee*	Goodbye	POLITE works almost everywhere
8	**ArrivederLa**	*ar-ree-veh-DEHR-la*	Goodbye (very polite)	FORMAL a boss, an older stranger
9	**A presto**	*a PREH-sto*	See you soon	FRIENDLY
10	**A dopo**	*a DOH-po*	See you later (today)	FRIENDLY
11	**A domani**	*a doh-MAH-nee*	See you tomorrow	FRIENDLY
12	**Ci vediamo**	*chee veh-DYAH-mo*	See you!	FRIENDLY

🤝 Friendly or polite?

Italians speak one way to **friends** and another way to **people they don't know** (shops, waiters, teachers, older people). For now, just pick the right greeting:

Friends & family

Ciao! · **A dopo!**
A domani! · **Ci vediamo!**

Shops, strangers, work

Buongiorno · **Buonasera**
Arrivederci · **ArrivederLa**

Not sure?

Say **Salve** to say hello, and **Arrivederci** to leave. Never wrong!

🤫 Dante's secret

Ciao comes from Venice! In old Venetian, *"s-ciào vostro"* meant **"I am your servant"** — a very humble, very polite greeting. Centuries later, it became the most **informal** word in Italian… and now the whole world says it!

LESSON 1

In real life

⚠️ Careful!

1. **Buonanotte is not "good evening".** You arrive at a dinner at 10 pm? Say **Buonasera!** — because **buonanotte** is only for going to bed, or leaving very late.

2. **Salve means hello — not goodbye.** To leave politely, say **Arrivederci**.

Dialogue 1 · At the café

8:00 in the morning

DANTE	**Buongiorno!**	
BARISTA	**Buongiorno! Un caffè?**	A coffee?
DANTE	**Sì, grazie!**	Yes, thank you!
	... five minutes later ...	
DANTE	**Arrivederci!**	
BARISTA	**Arrivederci, buona giornata!**	Goodbye, have a nice day!

💡 Polite place, someone you don't know → **Buongiorno** to say hello, **Arrivederci** to leave.

Dialogue 2 · With a friend

11 o'clock at night

BEATRICE	**Ciao, Dante!**	
DANTE	**Ciao, Beatrice!**	
	... one hour later ...	
BEATRICE	**È tardi... a domani!**	It's late... see you tomorrow!
DANTE	**A domani! Buonanotte!**	See you tomorrow! Good night!

💡 Friends → **Ciao** for hello. It's very late and they go home to sleep → **Buonanotte** is perfect here.

3 sounds from this lesson

ci = "chee"

ciao · arrivederc**i** · **ci** vediamo

*Like **ch** in "cheese".*

gi = "j"

buon**gi**orno · pomerig**gi**o

*Like **j** in "jogging".*

double letters

buonano**tt**e · a**rr**ivederci

Hold them a little longer!

Read both dialogues out loud. First as Dante, then as the barista and Beatrice. — *Speak with your hands too... you're Italian now!*

LESSON 1

Practice

1 What do you say?

Circle the right greeting.

8:30 am
You walk into a café.
Buongiorno / **Buonanotte**

9:00 pm
You walk into a restaurant.
Buonasera / **Buonanotte**

11:30 pm
You're going to bed.
Buongiorno / **Buonanotte**

4:00 pm
You leave a shop. The assistant is a stranger.
Ciao! / **Arrivederci**

2 Friendly or polite?

Who are you greeting? Tick one box.

	friendly	polite
a) your best friend	☐	☐
b) a police officer	☐	☐
c) your little brother	☐	☐
d) a hotel receptionist	☐	☐
e) your friend's grandmother — you meet her for the first time	☐	☐

3 Complete

Use each word once.

ciao · **a domani** · **buongiorno** · **arrivederci** · **salve**

a) In the morning, at the bakery: " _____ , un cornetto, per favore." *(a croissant, please)*

b) After school, to your friend — you'll see her tomorrow: "Ciao, _____ !"

c) You're not sure if it's formal: " _____ ! Parla inglese?" *(Do you speak English?)*

d) You leave the doctor's office: "Grazie, _____ !"

e) You see your friend Marco in the street: " _____ , Marco!"

4 Your turn — speak!

▶ in the video

In the video, Dante describes a situation. In the silence, **say your answer out loud**. Then listen to Dante's answer. Watch this part **twice** — the second time, try to answer faster!

☐ I did it once ☐ I did it twice ☐ I got them all right 🏆

LESSON 1

Mini-test

5 Choose the right answer

1. Buonanotte means...

a) good evening
b) good night — before bed
c) see you tomorrow

2. You walk into a shop at 6 pm. You say...

a) Buonanotte
b) Buonasera
c) Ciao

3. Hello AND goodbye with friends?

a) Ciao
b) Salve
c) Arrivederci

4. A domani means...

a) see you tomorrow
b) see you later
c) see you soon

5. The safest "hello" when you're not sure...

a) Salve
b) Ciao
c) Buonanotte

6. Ciao comes from a word meaning...

a) friend
b) I am your servant
c) good day

🏅 I can...

- [ ] say hello in the morning, the afternoon and the evening
- [ ] say goodbye, "see you later" and "see you tomorrow"
- [ ] choose between **ciao** (friendly) and **buongiorno / arrivederci** (polite)
- [ ] use **buonanotte** only at the right moment

★ Bonus — write it!

It's 8 pm. You meet a friend in the street, you chat... then you go home. Write your mini-dialogue in Italian.

YOU

FRIEND

YOU

FRIEND

Tip: use 3 words from this lesson. Then read it out loud — with your best Italian accent!

Finished? Play the video: Dante corrects everything with you. Then write your points on the next page.

LESSON 1

My score

▶ corrections in the video

No answers here — **Dante corrects every exercise in the video**. Play it, check your work with him, and write your points below.

1 What do you say?

_____ / 4

2 Friendly or polite?

_____ / 5

3 Complete

_____ / 5

4 Speak! (1 point per answer said in time)

_____ / 5

5 Mini-test

_____ / 6

Total

_____ / 25

My notes

The words I want to remember, my mistakes, Dante's tips...



Bravissimo! You can already greet all of Italy. A presto... in lesson 2!

Next: Lesson 2 · Io sono...

Say who you are, where you're from, and how old you are — with the verb **essere** (to be).