

Talk Italian 2 in the classroom: Units 1-5

Unit 1

1.1 Getting to know people

Learners work in small groups of three or four practising the key questions **Come ti chiami?**, **Dove abiti?**, **Che lavoro fai?** If they don't already know each other, they answer with information about themselves. If they know each other from a previous class, you can supply fictional identity cards for them to work from. Using the information they've found out in their original groups, each person then introduces another learner and provides information about them in the third person. This is done within different groups, ideally of about six or seven. To finish off, these groups work together to come up with at least one sentence in the third person plural with the information they've found out, for example **X e Y abitano a ...**

1.2 Talking about people

Ask everyone to bring in a photograph or picture showing several people (it could be a family photo or a picture from a magazine, such as a celebrity family) and to prepare a few sentences about it. One of these must include **da** + a year.

Brainstorm with the whole group the questions needed to find out information about people.

Working in small groups, each learner then talks for a couple of minutes about their picture and answers questions from the others about it. It doesn't matter if questions relate to information already given – this is an opportunity to field simple questions and to reinforce vocabulary.

If preparing for [Asset Languages external assessment](#), this activity could be revisited at a later stage and comparisons introduced and practised: **più**, **meno** and some simple adjectives such as **giovane**, **vecchio**, **grande**, etc.

1.3 Asking and saying why

Write the reasons given for wanting to learn Italian on page 11 onto cards or slips of paper, one per card. Since you need enough for each learner to have a card, you can modify some of the reasons **Il calcio è la mia passione**, **Vado pazzo per Firenze**.

Learners mingle, asking **Perché vuoi imparare l'italiano?** and answering according to the card they hold. They need to jot down the reasons they're given. You can pull the activity together at the end by asking questions **Chi vuole imparare perché gli piace la cucina italiana?**, simply expecting a name in reply. At this stage they are often able to understand what you're saying without necessarily being able to supply accurate detailed answers by themselves.

1.4 Professional introduction

Particularly if you're teaching people who are learning Italian for work, encourage learners to introduce and talk about themselves as if they were at a professional meeting. They may need to look up in a dictionary some key vocabulary relating to their work.

Practice for this activity could include reading a selection of personal profiles and assuming another person's identity. You can find any number of these on the internet, allowing you to extend vocabulary. It makes useful listening practice for the rest of the group and is an opportunity for you to focus on linguistic detail appropriate to your class.

1.5 Verb endings

An excellent way of getting to grips with verb endings is for learners to work in small groups, each group has a small stack of cards with a regular verb on each, ideally with an image of the action on it too. Each group also needs a die, with a personal pronoun on each face: **io, tu, lui/lei, noi, voi, loro**. These are available commercially.

Learners take turns to pick a card (from the pile face down on the table), throw the die, and give the correct ending for the verb according to which pronoun they've thrown. The others verify the ending and challenge any errors.

Encourage groups to speed this up as it progresses.

Unit 2

2.1 24-hour clock

These activities should get learners familiar with the 24-hour clock and with **prima delle** and **dalle ... alle** – meaning that they can listen at home to the Talk Italian 2 audio for page 16, thoroughly prepared.

- It's straightforward to recreate airport announcements for learners to listen to for key information. Having revised numbers and listened to some times, they could practise simple role-plays at a check-in desk, where one partner asks the times of flights to a few destinations, the other replies, and they check for comprehension.

Alternatively, you can create a 'departures screen' by writing a list of places with the departure time and a flight number against each one. Make three copies: keep one as your master, and on the other two blank out different pieces of information. Learners work in pairs, filling the gaps by asking each other the appropriate questions.

- A picture of a departures screen can be used as a prompt for describing what you see. It practises statements such as **Il prossimo volo per Bari parte alle ...** or **Non c'è un volo per Torino prima delle ...**

2.2 12-hour clock and daily life

Make two lists, both headed **Trova qualcuno che ...** On the first, follow this with about six phrases involving time, for example, **si alza presto ogni giorno**, or **va a letto prima delle dieci di sera**. On the second list, the phrases are more general and could include, e.g. **lavora da casa**, **fa il pendolare**.

The lists need to include some items that will not easily be found, since the purpose is to allow adequate opportunity to practise asking and answering the questions.

You'll need enough copies for everyone in the group, and they'll need a few minutes to think about the questions. You can manipulate the rules depending on the strength of the group. For example, if the instruction is **Trova qualcuno che si alza presto**, you could let them to use the wording on their list: **Di solito, ti alzi* presto?** or you could insist that they rephrase: **Di solito, a che ora ti alzi?**

Learners then mingle, asking questions to find someone who is on their list, and replying to questions at the same time. When they find a person who fulfils a requirement on their list, they make a note of their name.

You can pull it together at the end by asking questions to the whole group: **Chi lavora da casa?, C'è qualcuno che si alza tardi ogni giorno?** This is a good time to include the plural: **Quante persone si alzano presto?**

*This activity is more effective with **tu** than **lei**, as learners are then made aware of the change in verb ending.

2.3 Irregular verbs

One way of familiarising learners with the irregular verbs introduced in this unit is to use the pronoun *dice*, which force them to use all forms of the verb.

2.4 Daily or work routine

- Working in small groups, learners take it in turn to talk to the rest of the group about their daily routine (or work routine). This need only last a couple of minutes, and ten sentences should be enough. Some preparation needs to be done beforehand, both on their presentation and on creating some questions to ask the speaker.
- Follow this up by moving to the third person. Show some pictures of people working in various occupations, for example milkman, postman, teacher, police officer, shop assistant, office worker. Start by asking questions about their hours of work, encouraging learners to offer information. Being provocative, for example, saying teachers finish work at 3pm, can lead to a heated debate in Italian.
- If learners are interested in writing about this afterwards at home, suggest that they write about someone else's day in addition to their own. Or they could include a friend or partner, and write in the first person plural.

Unit 3

3.1 Ce ne sono ...

You can familiarise learners with vocabulary and at the same time practise **c'è, ci sono, ce n'è, ce ne sono** by using descriptions of Italian towns, whether from tourist brochures or the internet. Learners work in groups and you'll need one town per group.

Allow the groups plenty of time to read about their particular town. Then bring the class together and brainstorm the vocabulary for the places they've found. From these, choose a list of about six, for example **campeggio, castello, ristoranti, gallerie**.

Give them the names of all the towns and ask them to circulate and find out what places from the list are available in the various towns. They ask one question at a time, for example **A X ci sono ...?** The person addressed gives the answer if they know it, otherwise they say **Mi dispiace, non so** – unless you choose to teach **Non conosco** + place.

You can stop the activity when you feel people are comfortable with the form of the questions and answers, and follow up with a whole-class discussion or summary.

3.2 Potere

Potere can be practised, if necessary, using pronoun dice.

3.3 Mi piace

An effective way of practising **Mi piace, Mi piacciono** is to use dice with smiley faces on them. The commercial ones usually have six different gradations which could equate to **Mi piace, Mi piace molto, Mi piace soprattutto, Non mi piace, Non mi piace molto** and **Non mi piace per niente**. You also need a set of cards depicting various leisure activities on them.

Learners work in pairs asking **Ti piace, Le piace** + the activity on the card picked from the pile. The answer depends on how the die is thrown.

3.4 Who likes what?

A survey is a great way to practice **Mi piace**. Put together a short list of leisure interests and ask learners to circulate, asking people whether they like to do

these – and they make a note of who does and doesn't. They reply according to their own preferences.

You then bring the class together and ask true or false questions: **Il calcio piace a tre persone. Vero o falso?** Learners tend to find such constructions difficult, particularly at this stage, so this is an opportunity for them to hear and understand plenty of them – without having to produce the language themselves.

3.5 Mi and ci

For this activity practising **interessa(no)** and **potere** and gaining familiarity with plural forms, you need sets of about 10-12 cards with symbols or words on them representing various activities, for example: nature, water sports, historical monuments, walking. You also need a separate list of sentences relating to them: **fare windsurf, andare al castello.**

Working in pairs, one learner picks a card and says **Mi interessa/interessano** or **Ci interessa/interessano** + what's on the card. Their partner has to find a suitable item from their list and start the response with **Può** or **Potete**, depending on whether **mi** or **ci** was used.

3.6 Bisogna

Find some images, for example: climbing, football, sailing. Display them one at a time, telling the class that you're going to do this activity and invite them to come up with a relevant piece of advice **È consigliabile avere una piantina, Bisogna indossare scarpe adatte.**

3.7 Describing a place

Particularly if your learners are preparing for external assessment, get them to prepare a promotional presentation for a town, city or region, describing its main features and saying what there is to do and see there. They could include their likes and dislikes and make some recommendations.

Class preparation for this could centre on a picture or photo of a town known to the learners.

Unit 4

Most of the activities for Unit 4 require pictures of properties. It's very useful to have a wide selection – they're readily available from magazines, local and national newspapers, the internet, estate agents' offices.

4.1 Types of property

In this very simple activity, learners circulate asking everyone in the class **Com'è la tua/sua casa?** and making a note of the reply. Only the type of property is needed here: **una villetta a schiera, un appartamento, una villa indipendente.** You can get them to reply according to where they really live, or you can give everyone a picture to answer from.

After the questions, learners work in pairs or small groups. Using their notes, they summarise the results: **Una persona abita in un rustico, tre persone abitano in villette.** After a suitable time the whole class can discuss the findings.

4.2 Understanding property descriptions

Provide about ten pictures of different properties, and separately, written descriptions for six of them. Learners work in pairs or small groups to identify which properties are featured in the written descriptions.

The groups then produce a written description for any two of the remaining properties. Collect these descriptions and redistribute them at random, asking them to identify the picture they refer to. Following this stage with a general discussion gives you the opportunity to focus on detail and accuracy.

4.3 Describing a property

Learners work in small groups, with a selection of pictures spread out before them. They take it in turn to say three statements about one of these properties; the others have to deduce which it is. If they can't, then the speaker has to produce a fourth statement. Encourage the use of **molto, un po', piuttosto.**

4.4 Who lives where?

To link up with previous units and provide revision, give out pictures of a number of different properties and invite learners, working in small groups, to create a profile of the people who might live in them. Encourage them to say why.

4.5 Finding out about a house to rent

You need some cue cards for this activity, using words or symbols. A card has up to six pieces of information on it: location, age, number of bedrooms, garden, parking. The activity works best if several cards are similar in some of the detail. As the class will be divided into two groups, you will only need enough different cue cards for half of your class, and you need two copies of each card. If you use different coloured paper or card for each group, it makes life easier.

Group A wants to rent a house with the features listed on their card. Only one person in group B will have such a property and the aim is to find that person by asking questions about the properties people hold.

4.6 Describing a home

In pairs, learners take it in turn to describe their home and answer simple questions. The description should include at least one feature they like or don't like.

It's worth repeating this with different partners as it tends to be more fluent the second time around. The activity can be followed up with learners working in larger groups, saying where someone else lives and adding a couple of sentences about it.

An alternative is to ask people to describe their dream home and to imagine they're showing someone round it.

4.7 Comparing houses and expressing an opinion

If preparing for external assessment, you could return to the contents of this unit after Unit 5, using it to consolidate vocabulary and practise comparisons. Provide pairs of pictures of two properties that are very different, and invite statements using **più** or **meno** which highlight these differences. Learners could also give their opinion on the properties.

Unit 5

To familiarise learners with the vocabulary for clothes and colours, it's worth investing a little time in creating sets of cards depicting items of clothing in various colours.

5.1 Clothes and colours

Learners work in groups, with a pile of the cards face down on the table. One person picks up a card but doesn't show it. The rest of the group have to find out what it is by asking questions, for example **È una camicia?**, to which the person with the card replies **Sì è una camicia** or **No, non è una camicia** as the case may be.

When someone has guessed the item correctly, they then have to find out what colour it is **È una camicia bianca?** After three such guesses, the person with the card says what it is.

You can add incentive by awarding a point for a correct guess and a point to the card holder if nobody gets it right.

5.2 Asking for a specific item

The clothes cards can be used for a variation of Happy Families, which gives practice in asking for a specific item. For this, every learner also has an individual 'shopping list'.

They work in groups of about four, each with the same number of cards, which they keep hidden from each other. Working clockwise, they take it in turn to ask the person sitting next to them if that person has an item from their shopping list **Cerco una maglia nera. Avete una maglia nera?** If that person has the item, they have to give the card up.

The winner is the first person to obtain pictures of every item on their list.

5.3 Expressing an opinion

You can also use the clothes cards, together with dice or cards featuring expressive faces, to practise expressing opinions. When a person picks a card and a smiley face they have to find something positive to say about that item

Secondo me, questa camicia è perfetta. If a cross face is picked, they have to

express a negative opinion **Secondo me, questa camicia è un po' troppo spenta.**

After this controlled practice in groups, learners go on to describe and give their opinion of clothes worn by people in the news (as seen in pictures from magazines, colour supplements etc.). Alternatively, this stage could be done as a whole-class activity.

5.4 Witnesses

Show the class a picture of a few people together, and introduce one of them, but without mentioning their appearance or preparing the class for what follows – the element of surprise is essential. Let them look at the picture for about a minute, without writing anything down, then take it away, and ask the class to tell you what that person is wearing.

5.5 Comparisons

To practise **più** and **meno** and revise numbers at the same time, divide the class into groups, each group representing a colour. Write on the board the names of four or five items of clothing (including a plural item, such as **scarpe**) and ask groups to agree the price of those items.

Everyone then circulates and asks the price of as many items as they can in a specified time, noting the prices of the various colours.

Bring everyone together and ask questions such as **Quanto costa la giacca nera?** After someone has supplied the answer, ask questions along the lines of **E la rossa? È più o meno cara?** They can quicken the pace of the questioning as they become familiar with the language.

Finish off by practising superlatives with questions like **Quale giacca è la più cara?**

5.6 Focus on vocabulary and grammatical detail

The activity featuring the **zaino sport** on page 49 is designed to boost vocabulary while at the same time familiarising learners (who may have little grammatical awareness) with specific linguistic features, in this case, adjectives. There are countless items for sale on the internet that can be used in a similar way. Learners could work on a few in groups in the classroom, which would leave the **zaino** for them to discover at home.

5.7 Word association

A word association chain can be an entertaining end to a lesson, designed to consolidate and boost vocabulary. You start it off with something, for example **cravatta**, and invite learners to supply another word with some link to it. Next they need a word associated with the second word, and so on.

Learners will tend to use words from this unit because they're fresh in their minds. It provides useful consolidation but it does limit the scope of the activity so encourage them to look beyond.

Because learners at this level don't have an extensive vocabulary, it can be necessary to provide the occasional new word or some clever steering to stop the chain grinding to a halt.