

# Talk Italian 2 in the classroom: Units 6-10

## Unit 6

### 6.1 Giving and understanding directions

Although in general learners are far more likely to need to understand directions than to give them out, it's useful to have an activity where they produce the language, because it tends to fix the vocabulary more effectively than listening on its own.

One simple way of doing this is for learners to work in groups, taking it in turn to give directions to a particular destination. Where it is depends on the class: if they're all local people familiar with the area, they can be asked to imagine they're directing an Italian visitor from one local landmark to another. Otherwise, a street map of any town will do, with a copy for everyone. The others listen (and follow the map, if used) and work out where the destination is.

### 6.2 Past participles

Learners appreciate staged practice of the perfect tense: first forming past participles, then using **avere**, then taking part in activities using the perfect tense.

One way of doing this is for learners to work in groups, first with verb cards. They pick a card up and provide the past participle. After a while, give out dice – and they can then provide the perfect tense of the verb they pick up, in the person indicated by the pronoun on the dice.

### 6.3 The perfect tense 1

Display about five or six phrases using known verbs in the infinitive **vedere un film, guardare la TV, perdere qualcosa, trovare amici, comprare un libro, mangiare in un ristorante ...**

The aim is to find how many people have done each of these during the week. This is done by everyone circulating and asking questions such as **Hai visto un film questa settimana?** The answers will vary according to ability, and it's perfectly acceptable for them to range from a simple **Sì** or **No** to a full sentence, as the principal aim is to become comfortable with forming past participles from infinitives.

Tie it up by summarising the findings, which lets you bring in **hanno**.

## 6.4 The perfect tense 2

This practises pretty much the same language as 6.2, and you need pictures of vocabulary from the first six units of Talk Italian 2 that will trigger statements about the past. For example a laptop, wallet, ticket, phone or passport could lead to **Ho perso il mio portatile**; items of clothing or shoes could elicit **Ho comprato una giacca**. A car or bike could lead to **Ho noleggiato una macchina**; a house could trigger **Ho preso in affitto una villa**; a phone and a person becomes **Ho telefonato a X**, and so on.

Brainstorm all the regular verbs they know – and possibly add a couple of useful new regular verbs. Then display the images and tease out statements from the learners. It may be quite slow and basic at first, but if you have enough images the statements will become more confident and imaginative.

## 6.5 Directions and the perfect tense

Draw the unit together with another directions activity, this time involving narrative using the perfect tense of **girare, attraversare, continuare, seguire** and **prendere**.

As for 6.1, destinations depend on the class, and can involve familiar local places or places from a map.

Learners work in groups, taking it in turn to tell people how they got to a particular place. Their story starts off with **Da** + a known place/building/street. The others work out the destination.

## 6.6 Consolidation and revision

For revision, you could draw together the language of Units 3, 4, 5 and 6 by getting learners to work together in small groups to create a presentation of a village or town of their choice (anywhere in the world will do; they can be as ambitious as they like, particularly if they have access to the internet during the preparation). The presentation could include what there is to do and see, a description of a particular building and an explanation of how to get there from another specified point. Encourage them to include at least one comparison and to express a preference or opinion about one aspect.

## Unit 7

### 7.1 Andare: present tense

To practise **andare** you could use dice as for earlier irregular verbs or organise a survey where everybody mingles to ask as many people as possible in five minutes or so: **Dove vai in vacanza quest'anno?** With real or fictional answers, they say where they're going and when. Give them the option of adding who they're going with and using **andiamo**.

Then, working in groups or as a whole class, they reveal their findings, using **va** or **vanno**.

### 7.2 Andare: perfect tense

Activity 7.1 also works with **Dove sei andato in vacanza l'anno scorso?**, but there are other ways of practising this.

Provide everyone with four blank pieces of card – it makes life easier to have two in one colour and two in another. Ask everybody to write a destination on two cards of the same colour. This should be an Italian town or island, or another European country. On the cards in the second colour they put down two means of transport to revise vocabulary.

Arrange learners in pairs, shuffle the cards, then give each pair four random cards of each colour, face down. They take turns to ask **Dove sei andato/a in vacanza l'anno scorso?** The partner picks up a place card and a transport card and replies accordingly.

Pull the activity together by asking everybody to make a statement about the person they worked with, saying where they went and how they got there.

### 7.3 Ci

**Sei mai stato in/a ...?** is a useful means of focusing on **ci**. In a similar activity to **Dove sei andato/a in vacanza?**, provide everyone with four blank pieces of card (again two sets of two colours). Again, they write a destination on two cards of the same colour. But this time, on the second colour they write any year after 1970. Collect all the cards and add a few blank ones to the year pack before you shuffle them and hand them out.

In pairs, a learner picks a place card and asks **Sei mai stato in/a + [the place on the card]?** The partner picks a year card and replies, using **ci** in the reply **Sì, ci**

**sono andato/a nel 2004.** If a blank card is drawn, the reply is **No, non ci sono mai stato/a.**

If practice of plural verb endings is needed, learners could be told they're speaking on behalf of themselves and somebody else: **Siete mai stati/e in/a + place?** with the reply in the **noi** form.

## 7.4 Weather

What people tend to want with weather language is to a) comment on what the weather's like - for that day, or for the time of year; b) understand what weather is forecast; c) say what the weather was like when they were at a particular place.

- a) With a set of cards depicting the weather, learners can take part in a quick and simple activity involving picking up a card and saying the weather phrase indicated on it. The faster the pace the better.

You could include some cards showing the months or seasons. This would require a sentence such as **In agosto fa molto caldo.**

Or you can use some cards depicting clothes as a trigger for a weather phrase - introducing a couple of new items has the advantage of widening their clothes vocabulary at the same time.

- b) Real weather forecasts are easy to find, whether in newspapers or on the internet. They require little in the way of linguistic knowledge since most rely heavily on symbols. The text that tends to accompany them makes useful reading comprehension. Multiple-choice questions can be useful and interesting.
- c) Saying what the weather was like in the past can be done in a similar way to a) above.

## 7.5 Different places

Display two pictures showing different holiday destinations, for example, a busy seaside resort and a resort in the mountains; a city and a village in the country. Invite comments and descriptive statements from the class, including comparisons (**più, meno**), preferences (**mi piace, mi interessa**) and comments on the weather.

For those interested in following this up at home, suggest that they write about a visit to one of these places (or to another place of their choice).

## **7.6 Personal diary**

In preparation for Unit 8, which involves relating an incident, you could bring together the language of Units 6 and 7 and tell the class about what you've been doing over the past week. Keep it simple, then draw them into the conversation, asking them where they've been, what they've eaten, who they've seen, and so on.

## Unit 8

### 8.1 Consolidating the perfect tense

- Although learners have now been taught the structures for talking about the past, a lot of practice is usually needed for them to be fully confident, so activities are needed to encourage narrative. At the simplest level, this can involve people at the start of a class chatting and sharing news about where they've been and what they've been doing since the previous meeting or on a specified day.
- You can make it more interactive with a series of statements which learners have to prove to be true or false. You need just a few statements, for example, three people went to [a local city] on Saturday; one person hired a car this week; four people ate at a restaurant; one person bought a new shirt. Really you are recycling familiar vocabulary to practise the new structures. You can use your personal knowledge of the class to include at least one statement you know to be true – although it really doesn't matter if they all turn out to be false.  
Everyone circulates, asking questions to find out who did what, then you can draw the activity together and find out which of your statements turned out to be true.

### 8.2 Fantasy lives

Variety (and some humour too) can be introduced by providing prompts for people to describe a fantasy existence. The prompts could come from a newspaper and include scenes of places, events or people in the news, adverts for films or TV programmes, an airline promotion for cheap flights or weekend breaks, or pictures of celebrities; or they could be a restaurant menu, a luxury hotel brochure, etc. Learners work in pairs with one prompt between them, and prepare a few phrases, using **io** or **noi** as you (or they) choose. Encourage them to be as imaginative as they like.

Allow a finite time for the preparation, then pairs tell the rest of the class what they 'did'. This provides listening practice for everybody and gives you the opportunity to focus on linguistic accuracy.

### **8.3 Parts of the body**

Describing symptoms needs knowledge of parts of the body. Like so many other vocabulary families, this can be gained effectively with picture cards. If you don't have pictures of body parts, simply make multiple small copies of a person, and use arrows or colour to highlight the various parts. Include some plurals.

These can be used very simply in the first instance by naming them at random as a card is picked up.

### **8.4 Describing symptoms and giving health advice**

One way of practising both symptoms and health advice is for learners to work in pairs, using the body-parts cards. One person picks up a card and says something involving that part of the body. The partner has to think of a useful piece of advice directly relevant to what's just been said. This is not an easy exercise – but it tends to be one where progress is clearly visible as the activity develops.

### **8.5 Talking about an incident**

At this level, it's expecting a lot from learners to work independently to describe an incident or accident involving other people, and at the same time describe the symptoms a third person may have. But a combined effort can yield impressive results. Display an image of someone who's clearly in some kind of difficulty. Ask simple questions to tease out what might be hurting, where the person might be and what's happened. Then invite suggestions about what they should do, using **deve**. This draws the whole unit together.

### **8.6 Alternative health**

On the internet you can find any number of adverts and promotions such as the ones on page 79. If you find a few to discuss in class, the ones in the book can be left for learners to discover at home.

## Unit 9

### 9.1 Making suggestions

- Adverts and articles from local newspapers are useful for controlled practice of the first person plural imperative. They can be used for pair, small group and whole-class practice.
- If you normally organise a social occasion during the course, then this is the time to agree the format – in Italian.
- Set a fictional context, and ask the class to come up with suggestions for an unusual event. Encourage the discussion to include people's preferences and opinions: **(non) mi piace**, **(non) mi interessa**, **preferisco**, **secondo me**, etc.

### 9.2 Oral invitations

Practise oral invitations with a paired phone activity, ideally making sure partners can't see each other's faces while they're talking, since this adds the relevant 'blind' dimension to the activity.

Beforehand everyone prepares individually by creating a personal diary for the week ahead and filling in eight separate entries for various commitments.

In pairs, learners take it in turn to issue an invitation for an event of their choice on a particular day: morning, afternoon or evening. Their partner replies according to the availability in their diary: if they're 'free' they accept the invitation; if they have a commitment, they apologise and decline (or suggest a different day).

### 9.3 Written invitations

9.2 could be followed up with written invitations and replies, which can take the form of emails, letters or texts, with consequent variation in level of formality.

### 9.4 Talking about people

Talking about people can draw together Units 1 (family and work), 3 (leisure interests and likes and dislikes), 4 (home), 5 (clothes) and 9 (character and physical attributes) – making it an excellent opportunity for revision.

One context for this could be as witness to an incident. Show a picture of a person, remove it and ask learners to provide as much information as possible about what the person is like physically and what they are wearing.

## 9.5 Comparing people

Extend 9.4 to include more people, of differing builds and heights, with different hair and eye colouring etc. for contrast and comparison using **più/meno alto**, **magro**, etc.

## 9.6 Describing a person in detail

Start by describing an unnamed famous person and ask the class to work out the identity. Go on to describe other famous people, making them less easy to guess, so that the class has to ask questions to work out who it is.

Then give learners working in small teams some time to prepare their own descriptions: which can include physical attributes, character, nationality, family, home, job, interests, etc. They should aim for about six statements.

Bring everyone together for a team activity where a member of each team reads out the team description and the other teams ask questions and work out who it is. Put a time limit on each. The first team to guess the famous person correctly wins a point; if nobody manages to guess correctly, the original team wins two points.

An alternative is to skip presentations and to play Twenty Questions. Teams take it in turn to be in the spotlight while the rest of the class have the opportunity of asking up to 20 questions to ascertain the identity of the mystery person. The only questions not allowed are **Chi è?** and **Come si chiama?**

# Unit 10

## 10.1 Food vocabulary

- To boost vocabulary you could start with a whole-class activity where you name various Italian dishes and learners brainstorm the ingredients. Including quantities provides revision of numbers, which is always useful.
- Present about five batches of four or five ingredients, and learners work in teams to come up with dishes that can be made from each batch. The team with the most dishes wins.
- Write out a simple recipe and blank out the verbs. You can either ask learners to deduce what they are or provide them and ask learners to insert them in the correct gaps.

## 10.2 Understanding recipes

Write out a recipe, cut each instruction into a separate strip then ask learners in groups to rearrange the strips and tell you what the dish is. Make it more challenging by putting a time limit on it.

It's an easy activity to prepare, so it's worth preparing a range of recipes of varying length and complexity.

## 10.3 Giving out a recipe

This requires preparation at home beforehand. Ask everyone to bring in a recipe of their choice in Italian. In groups or as a whole class (depending on the size of the class) they take it in turn to say first of all why they've chosen it, where and when they've eaten or cooked it. They then describe how to cook it and recommend what to drink with it. Wine lovers can elaborate here on the wine they recommend.

As an alternative, before presenting the recipe, you could use a similar approach to unit 9.6, where the class (or groups) ask the person with the recipe up to 20 questions to find out what it is without being told. Brainstorm questions beforehand if you want to make sure they include specifics **va/viene servito fresco?**

## 10.4 Memorable meals

To revise the perfect tense in another context, hand out four blank cards per person, ideally in four different colours. Ask them to write a place in Italy on one colour, the name of a famous person on the second, two items from a menu on the third, and a wine on the fourth.

Collect the cards, shuffle them and randomly give one of each colour to everyone. The class then circulates asking each other where they went, who they went with, what they ate and what they drank. Everyone replies according to the cards they hold. The conversation ends with **Ti è piaciuto?** and a suitable response.

Afterwards, invite people to talk in the third person about the most memorable combination they came across during their conversations.

## 10.5 Eating places

Display some pictures of various eating places, a fast food counter, gourmet restaurant, large busy bar or small intimate restaurant. Brainstorm the sort of food you might eat in the different places before going on to establish as many comparisons as you can, in terms of size, price, quality, etc.

## 10.6 Drawing all the units together

An event of sorts is the ideal context for drawing together the Talk Italian 2 course content. That event could be an end-of-course party but a fictional one offers a more extravagant scope.

The activity is in several phases:

1. Start with a class discussion to come up with suggestions for the event, including place, date and time. Encourage an exotic venue.
2. Next the guest list: everyone suggests one well-known person and says something about them.
3. Depending on the time allocated for the activity, they can then continue working as a whole group or go into smaller groups with specific tasks for each, for example, producing the invitation, supplying directions to the venue, describing places to stay locally, summarising the weather at the time of year, drawing up menu(s), etc. Encourage debate in Italian, with people expressing their opinions and preferences.
4. The groups then report back and the findings are then shared and discussed as a class – giving the opportunity to focus on linguistic detail.

5. To keep the momentum going during the 'event' (when the learners circulate) give everyone a slip of paper with a specific task on it, which they need to ask or say to as many people as they want. Make these varied, for example, comment on the food or wine, ask when someone arrived, ask what work someone does, ask what their hobbies are, if they have seen a particular film or have been to a particular place. You can use random questions spanning the whole course. Revisiting them like this out of the blue is very useful practice. Encourage the class to be as outrageous as they want in their responses.
6. Finish off by working in groups to come up with an email or letter thanking the host, which should include at least one snippet of information gathered during the event.