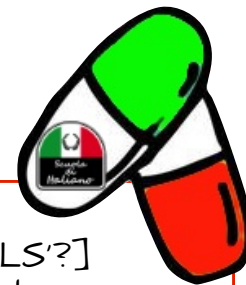




1 luglio
2022

Scuola di Italiano

Pillole di Italiano



CHE COSA SONO LE 'PILLOLE DI ITALIANO'? [WHAT ARE 'ITALIAN PILLS'?]
I recently discovered that in Italy, the concept of the Italian Pill is used frequently as a teaching tool by instructors of Italian in their lesson plans and lectures. The meaning is simple. These are tidbits of knowledge - of all things-Italian - given in small doses to the students -. It's mostly used for grammar, but can be adapted to other aspects of Italian language and culture.

PILLOLE DI ITALIANO → N° 001 **(SOME IMPORTANT FACTS ON ITALIAN SPELLING AND PRONUNCIATION)**

Buone notizie! [Good news!] → Italian is a highly phonetic language!

Specifically, the news is that for the most part, in Italian, words are written as they sound. *Each letter of the alphabet corresponds to one sound only*, with a few exceptions (get used to it as there are always exceptions!) Most Italian sounds also exist in the English language, although in Italian, the articulation may be a bit more emphatic. *That's so Italian!* With a little practice, it is not difficult for English speakers to acquire a good Italian accent.

Italian Vowels and Vowel Sounds...

There are five vowels in the Italian alphabet → 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o', and 'u'. However, there are seven vowel *sounds*. You should be aware of the fact that the vowels 'e' and 'o' have two possible sounds each. Each are known as 'open' and 'closed'. However, to most English speakers the difference is hardly noticeable. In some Italian regions speakers tend to close the 'e' and 'o', while in others they tend to open them. These variations across the Italian language rarely interfere with communication and add regional color and character to the overall language. This difference has been lost to the fact that in Italy there is a mix of regional accents due to population relocating and shifting over several past decades.

More **buone notizie** for you! In my opinion, beginning to intermediate students of Italian should not be concerned about the open vs closed sounds for 'e' and 'o'. This is for the more advanced linguistics geeks!

So... for our purposes: *five vowels*, and only *five vowel sounds*.

For assistance with the actual sounds of these vowels,
please refer to my article: "[Sandrino's Ultimate Guide to Italian Pronunciation](#)"
Available on [LearnFromSandro.com](#)

Italian Consonants and Consonant Combinations...

The 'c' and 'g' sounds → The pronunciation of the letters 'c' and 'g' are affected by the *letters that immediately follow them*. When followed by an 'e' or 'i' they are soft, as in:

LUCIANO, CIAO, GELATO, and TOPO GIGLIO

When the letters 'c' and 'g' are followed by 'a', 'o', 'u', 'h', or any consonant, they sound like the **hard-'c'** in the English word **candy** and the **hard-'g'** in the word **game**, as in:

MARCO, CUGINO [male cousin], **SPAGO** [string], **GAMBERO** [shrimp], **SPAGHETTI** [literally: little strings]

It's important to note that in **spaghetti**, an 'h' is added in order to maintain the **hard-'g'** sound.



Continua...



There are some sounds that are made up of a combination of two consonants but are pronounced as *one combined sound*. These include the following:

‘**sc**’ followed by ‘**i**’ or ‘**e**’ is a soft ‘sh’ sound, as in:

SCelta [choice], **SCENA** [scene], **SCIENZA** [science], and **USCITA** [exit]

‘**sc**’ followed by any other letter is pronounced “**sk**”, as in:

SCATOLA [box], **SCUOLA** [school], **RISCHIO** [risk], **SCERZO** [joke], and **SCODELLA** [bowl]

‘**gn**’ is pronounced as a single sound like the “**ny**” in the English word **canyon**. Another great example is the pronunciation of the ‘**gn**’ in the familiar word **Cognac**. Some examples:

SARDEGNA, **GIUGNO** [June], **SEGNO** [sign], and **GNOCCHI** [those wonderful ricotta & potato dumplings]

‘**gl**’ when followed by ‘**i**’ is pronounced like the **double-‘l’** in **million**:

MAGLIA [sweater], **FIGLIO** [son], **MOGLIE** [wife], and **LUGLIO** [July]

ESERCIZIO N° 1

Read the following words aloud and indicate which ones contain a **soft-‘c’** or **soft-‘g’** sound:

a. <u>gi</u> usto (fair, correct)	soft-g	b. <u>g</u> usto (taste, flavor)	c. <u>c</u> he (that which, what)
d. <u>c</u> ento (hundred)		e. <u>c</u> alcio (kick, soccer)	f. <u>c</u> anto (a chant, song)
g. <u>g</u> iovane (young)		h. <u>g</u> hiaccio (ice)	i. <u>c</u> ’è (there is)
j. <u>c</u> ena (dinner)		k. <u>S</u> icilia (Sicily)	l. <u>l</u> aggiù (down there)
m. <u>ch</u> i (who)		n. <u>g</u> iugno (June)	o. <u>b</u> acio 🙄

ESERCIZIO N° 2

Read the following words aloud and place them in the correct columns (**GN**, **SH**, **SK**, **GL**):

giugno	aglio	miglio	scendere	sconto
ascoltare	prosciutto	sogno	bruschetta	sciare
luglio	montagna	scatola	scioppo	maglia

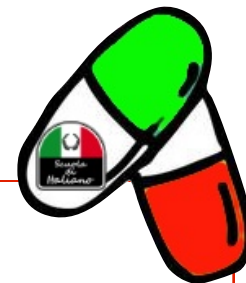
“ GN ” as in PRUGNA	<u>giugno</u>	_____	_____	_____	_____
“ SH ” as in SCIARPA	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
“ SK ” as in SCARPA	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
“ GL ” as in FIGLIO	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

NELL PROSSIMO “PILLOLE DI ITALIANO”

[Coming up in the next *Pillole di Italiano*] → **PRONUNCIATION: STRESS and ACCENTS**



APPUNTI



Lined writing area for notes.



**IN BOCCA AL LUPO
CON IL TUO
STUDIO DI ITALIANO!**