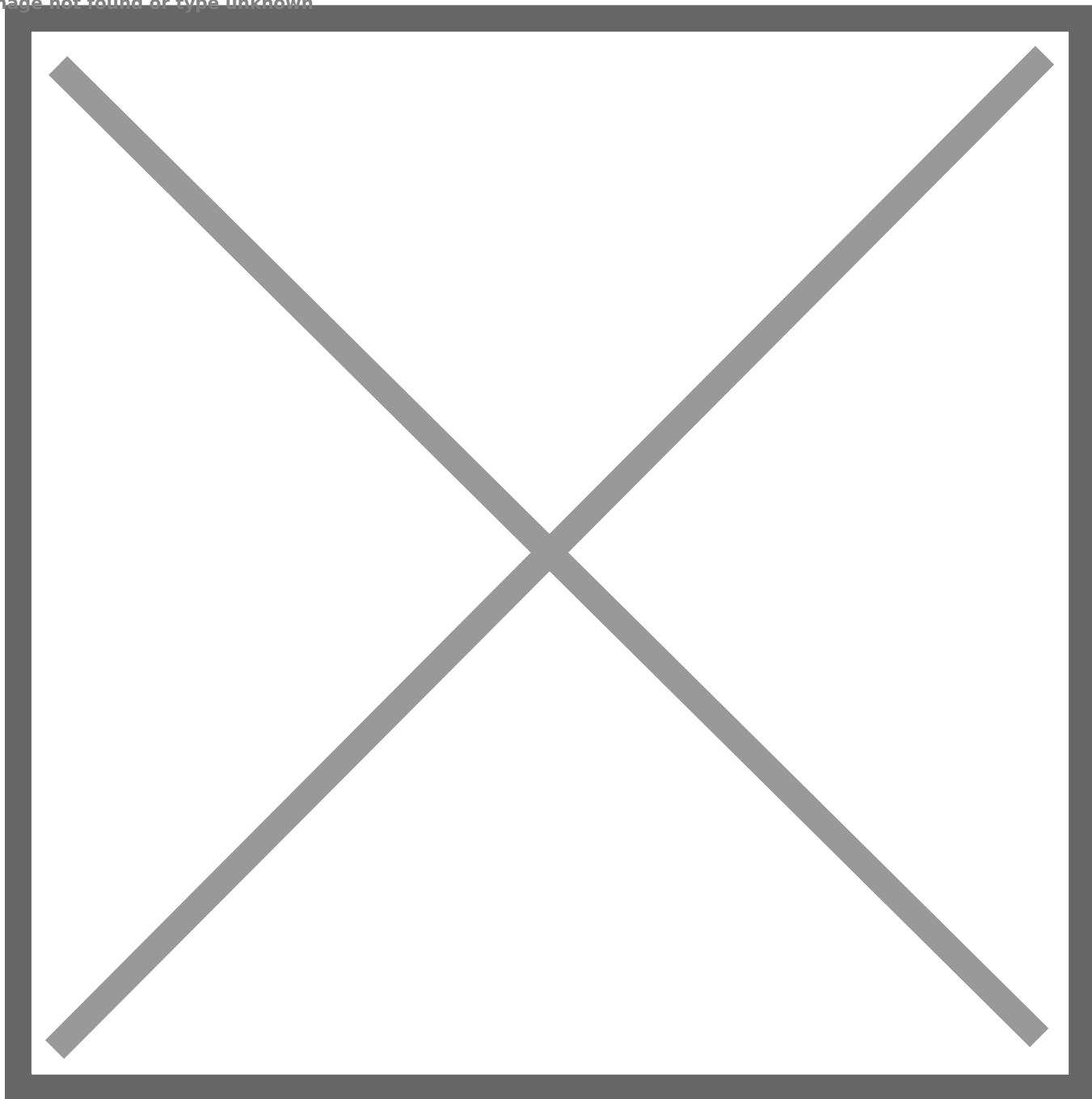


Act 2: La dolce vita

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Welcome back to our Language Theater! Benvenuti! Yes, you guessed right, it's me again, Luigi. I hope you enjoyed Act 1 and are ready for a brand-new installment of our show. Are you ready? Yes? Let's dive in, then. Wait, let me tell you a couple more things. Today we'll explore the realm of nouns and adjectives. We'll also see how a statement can be changed into a question by the mere addition of a question mark. Also, my friends, don't forget to review the flashcard before tuning in. All the new words you'll see in there will be used in today's play. And they're likely to show up again in our coming acts. So, yes, I suggest you memorize them all.

All right. Looks like we're all set. Let's find out what this new installment holds for us! Today Silvia, our Italian teacher, and her new student Connor are talking about movies. Yes, Connor is telling Silvia how much he loves old Italian movies. His favorite director? Federico Fellini. "He makes me dream about Italy", says Connor. Can you guess now what his favorite Italian movie is? I know, there's so many to choose from... so, why don't we listen to the play and find out? Enjoy the show!

Introduction

Silvia: Ciao Connor!

Connor: Ciao Silvia!

Silvia: Sono felice di rivederti.

Connor: Are we speaking in Italiano today?

Silvia: Yes, but just a little.

Connor: Mamma mia!

Silvia: Sono contenta di sentire some Italian words.

Connor: I can't wait to start! How do you say ... Our first Italian lesson Silvia?

Silvia: Our first...prima lezione di italiano.

Connor: Sì! Our prima lezione di italiano. I have studied...molto. Sylvia, may I tell you about a passion of mine?

Silvia: Benissimo. Go ahead Connor, I want to hear about your ... passione.

Connor: It is simple. I love Italian movies!

Silvia: Veramente? You...piace molto the Italian movies... I film italiani.

Connor: Film?

Silvia: In italiano we use the word *film* to refer to a movie ...so, your passione sono the film italiani.

Connor: That's right!

Silvia: Can you say that in italiano Connor?

Connor: Io sono Connor, io sono americano, io... love... mi piace... i film italiani.

Silvia: Bravissimo Connor! Come si chiamano i film that you like?

Connor: I am not sure I understand the word...chiamano.

Silvia: Do you remember we talked about "chiamarsi"?

Connor: Yes, tu ti chiami Silvia.

Silvia: E i film come si chiamano?

Connor: Film... the film si chiama *La Dolce Vita*.

Silvia: The film si chiama *La Dolce Vita*... any other movies?

Connor: I like other movies...but *La Dolce Vita* is my favorite.

Silvia: Come si chiama the regista... the film maker?

Connor: Si chiama Federico Fellini!

Silvia: Federico Fellini is a famous...famoso regista.

Connor: Federico Fellini makes me dream about Italia.

Silvia: Were you able to catch some words from the movie?

Connor: Just a few words. The actors speak too fast though...

Silvia: Yes, the actors speak fast, non è like our lezione di italiano.

Connor: Too fast for a beginner like myself.

Silvia: Did you watch the film with the sottotitoli in italiano?

Connor: Subtitles? Sì, I watched *La Dolce Vita* with sottotitoli in italiano! Subtitles?

Silvia: Molto bene! This is something I always advise my students to do.

Connor: Watching movies with subtitles?

Silvia: Esattamente! Sei un bravo studente, Connor!

Connor: Grazie, Silvia.

Silvia: Did you catch some examples of the verbo essere as the characters spoke their lines?

Connor: Sì! And I wrote down one sentence in italiano.

Silvia: Fantastico! Read it to me.

Connor: Here we go... "Tu sei tutto, Sylvia! Ma lo sai che sei tutto? You are everything, everything! Tu sei la... la... pr...

Silvia: Let me help you... la prima donna del primo giorno della creazione, sei la madre, la sorella, l'amante, l'amica, l'angelo, il diavolo, la terra, la casa..."

Connor: Bellissimo! Wow!

Silvia: Io mi chiamo Silvia, like the character in the film...

Connor: What a coincidence!

Silvia: Tu sei Marcello?

Connor: No, io sono Connor!

Silvia: Let's begin our lezione di italiano, Connor, your sentence will help us a lot today!

Connor: Ahhhh *La Dolce Vita*...

Grammar 1: Gendered/numbered adjectives and nouns

Silvia: Connor, let's start this **lezione di grammatica italiana** by analyzing the sentence you got from *La **Dolce Vita*** di Federico Fellini. Would you read it for me?

Connor: Sì, certo! "Tu sei la prima **donna** del primo **giorno** della **creazione**, sei la **madre**, la **sorella**, l'**amante**, l'**amica**, l'**angelo**, il **diavolo**, la **terra**, la **casa**..."

Silvia: OK, let's take "**amica**", which is a feminine noun, as our first example.

Connor: Sylvia è l'**amica**.

Silvia: Esattamente, Sylvia è l'**amica** di Marcello.

Connor: Io sono l'**amica** of Marcello.

Silvia: Well, just keep in mind that **amica** is a feminine noun, and in **italiano** all nouns, nomi, have a gender.

Connor: So, how would I say **amica** if I were to talk about myself?

Silvia: **Amico**.

Connor: Io sono **amico** of Silvia.

Silvia: Very good!

Connor: How do I know whether a noun is masculine or feminine?

Silvia: Well, è **semplice**. By looking at the final vowel of a noun you'll know the gender and number of the noun itself.

Connor: With no exceptions?

Silvia: With some exceptions... but let's focus on the general rule, so everything is clear.

Connor: Sì.

Silvia: **Amico** ends with an "o" and that's how you know it is a masculine noun. To make it plural, you'll have to drop the final vowel and replace it with an "i", the English "i (ai)".

Connor: **Amici**?

Silvia: Molto bene! Nouns ending with an "a" are feminine and to make them plural, you'll have to replace the "a" with an "e". Let's take the **parola sorella**. Would you like to try?

Connor: **Sorella** becomes **sorelle**. Voi siete **sorelle**.

Silvia: Bravo! In **italiano**, we also have nouns ending with "e", which can be either masculine or feminine. In their plural form, these nouns replace "e" with "i".

Connor: And the example is?

Silvia: Let me see... la **parola amante**, *lover*, can be either feminine or masculine... And its plural form is...

Connor: **Amanti**! Loro sono **amanti**.

Silvia: Sì, molto bene.

Connor: It looks like this film is inspiring our **lezione**!

Silvia: Sì! So... let's talk some more about adjectives.

Connor: Love them!

Silvia: Perché?

Connor: Because they add romanticism to a scene...

Silvia: Let me give you some tips then, so you can use them better! Adjectives, just like nouns, are number and gender-sensitive. They always agree in gender and number with the nouns they describe... and, to do so, they change their final vowel, applying the same rules we saw with nouns. Adjectives are very important in everyday conversation. The more you practice, the closer you'll get to mastering la lingua italiana!

Connor: Molto bene, as you say.

Silvia: You already know a few nouns, we learned some adjectives... try pairing them up now!

Connor: **Ragazza bella... regista bravo... film romantici...** io sono tired!

Silvia: Tu sei **stanco**.

Connor: Io sono a **studente stanco**.

Silvia: But you want to learn.

Connor: I do! And I want to go to Italy and live *La Dolce Vita*.

Grammar 2: Present indicative of *Stare*

Silvia: Let's continue our lezione di grammatica italiana by exploring the verbo **stare**. Let me conjugate it for you.

io	sto
tu	stai
lui/lei/Lei	sta
noi	stiamo
voi	state
loro	stanno

Connor: Is this an irregular verbo, Silvia?

Silvia: Sì. The verbo **stare** in italiano replaces the verbo essere quite often. As a general rule, we can say that the verbo essere means to be and the verbo **stare** means to stay. However, when used in idiomatic expressions and specific constructions, the verb **stare** changes its meaning. Let me give you some examples. If I were to ask you: *how are you?* How would you answer my question in English?

Connor: I'm good!

Silvia: OK. You used the verb *to be* in English. In italiano you would have to use the verb **stare**.

Connor: Io **sto** bene.

Silvia: Esattamente. The same rule applies when you ask somebody *how are you* in italiano. You say: **come stai?**

Connor: Come stai, Silvia?

Silvia: **Sto** male, which means I am not feeling well.

Connor: Really?

Silvia: No, no, **sto bene**, that was just an example! **Come stanno** your grandparents, Connor?

Connor: **Loro stanno** molto bene!

Silvia: This is good, Connor! So, today we learned that in idiomatic expressions about one's health and greetings, the Italian language uses the verbo **stare**.

Connor: Come **stiamo**?

Silvia: **Stiamo meglio**, grazie.

Connor: **Stiamo meglio**... got it!

Silvia: Connor, I'm sure you remember that in our first lesson we mentioned the difference between "tu" and "Lei".

Connor: Sì! I'm supposed to use "Lei", the formal version of "tu", whenever I'm talking to somebody who is older than me.

Silvia: Molto bene. In italiano, we follow the same rule when greeting a person. You will say "**Come stai?**" to someone your age, a family member, or somebody you've known for a long time. However, you will use "**Come sta?**", employing the third person of the verbo **stare**, when greeting someone who's older than you, somebody you either don't know very well or are meeting for the first time, as well as when greeting somebody in a position of authority, such as a professor or a politician.

Connor: So what should I say when I meet my family for the first time in Italia?

Silvia: If you're meeting someone who's part of your close famiglia, you may say "**Come stai?**" even if they're older than you.

Connor: So... what should I say to my zio Peppino?

Silvia: Chi è zio Peppino?

Connor: Zio Peppino è the brother of my mamma Giovanna!

Silvia: Well, even if you haven't met him yet, you can absolutely greet him with "ciao, **come stai**, zio Peppino?". Lui è close famiglia.

Connor: And what about the other family members whom I don't know yet?

Silvia: Use your judgement. Anyway, if you're talking to somebody older than you, always use "Lei". You will probably notice something that might seem strange to you at first, but is very common in Italia, which is you using the formal "Lei" while greeting and talking to someone and then replying by using the informal version "tu". Don't assume that you can switch to the informal "tu" just because they did. If they want to be addressed with "tu", dare del tu in italiano, they will let you know. Till then, keep using "Lei". They will think you are very gentile...

Connor: Gentile... polite.. io sono molto gentile, sì!

Expressions: Non capire un'acca

Silvia: The expression we will learn today revolves around the letter "acca", or "H" in English.

Connor: Huh?

Silvia: Sì, la lettera acca.

Connor: È molto importante the letter H?

Silvia: È molto speciale in the alfabeto italiano.

Connor: I had never thought a letter could be so importante.

Silvia: Well, la lettera H è the only one that doesn't have a sound, è una lettera muta.

Connor: What do you mean by that?

Silvia: I mean that if it is placed at the beginning of a word, you don't pronounce it.

Connor: A silent lettera?

Silvia: Yes, "H" is a voiceless lettera in italiano.

Connor: How do you say *hostess*?

Silvia: Well, we borrow that same word from the English language, but we say "*ostess*", as if the H were not there.

Connor: You could say that "H" is like a ghost letter!

Silvia: Esattamente. Not only is the letter H silent when placed at the beginning of a word, but it often plays an ancillary role for the sake of phonetics.

Connor: Oh, I feel sorry for the letter "H"!

Silvia: Sì, I agree ... speaking of which, in Italian, we have a very special expression.

Connor: Really? What is it?

Silvia: **Non capisci un'acca!**

Connor: Not understand the letter H? Oh Silvia...

Silvia: **Tu non capisci un'acca.**

Connor: This is a mind game!

Silvia: Well, it is a little game... a game with words and una lettera.

Connor: All right, I'm in, let's play!

Silvia: Tu **non capisci un'acca** di italiano.

Connor: If you meant to say that I don't understand the use of the letter H in Italian, you are absolutely right!

Silvia: I just said that you don't understand a thing in Italian!

Connor: Ohhhh... you're kidding me, right?

Silvia: Sì, certo, Connor!

Connor: Tu **non capisci un'acca** di Connor!

Silvia: You are a fast learner!

Connor: I told you, tu **non capisci un'acca** di Connor!

Silvia: Bene! You got it!

Connor: So, when I'm having a hard time understanding something... can I say that?

Silvia: Certo.

Connor: Io **non capisco un'acca** of German.

Silvia: Tu **non capisci un'acca** about cars.

Connor: Well, I know a thing or two about cars...

Silvia: No, no, I'm just giving you an example Connor! OK, one more...

Connor: Loro sono bravi but **non capiscono un'acca!**

Silvia: We also have a similar expression using the word *pipe*, tubo, in italiano.

Connor: Italians are very creative... pipes, ghost letters...

Silvia: A country of artists!

Connor: Sì! So what is it? I'm intrigued.

Silvia: **Non capire un tubo.**

Connor: Un tubo? A pipe? Why a pipe?

Silvia: Because a pipe is empty, so it has little value, like the letter H.

Connor: I would never have guessed that!

Silvia: Both expressions are used a lot in italiano.

Connor: Quando **non capisco un'acca**, what can I do?

Silvia: Studiare.

Connor: I will go over everything before our next lezione, Silvia!

Silvia: Eccellente! Arrivederci, Connor!

Connor: Arrivederci, Silvia!