



Noun gender, indefinite articles & stare (to stay)

Learning about Gender and Indefinite Articles in Italian

Gender of the Italian Noun

In Italian all nouns have gender. Some seem logical like donna (woman) which is feminine.

Others don't seem to have any logical assignment such as montagna (mountain) which is feminine. That's because it really doesn't have to do with the object as much as it does the grammatical assignment of a word to a specific category. My advice is to spend less time trying to figure out why something is classified masculine or feminine and spend more time studying how to tell if a word is masculine or feminine and what that means when it comes to how that affects using it in a sentence.

Determining the gender of an Italian noun

This is by no means an exhaustive explanation of noun gender. It is adequate to get us started and we want to keep things as simple as possible to keep us moving along. At this point we will only address singular nouns. We will learn more about noun gender as we move on.

Nouns ending in "o" are predominately masculine (esempio - "bambino")

Nouns ending in "a" are predominately feminine (esempio - "bambina")

Nouns ending in "e" can be masculine or feminine

Most nouns taken from other languages are predominately masculine.

One note regarding nouns ending in "e" is;

Nouns ending with "ore" (dottore, fiore) are masculine

Nouns ending with "ione" (stazione, lezione) are usually feminine.

The Italian Indefinite Article

The indefinite articles in Italian are the equivalent of the English words "a" and "an" that we use for phrases like "I'll have **an** apple" or "I need **a** car". The indefinite articles must agree in gender with the nouns they are used with. In other words, you have to use a masculine indefinite article with a masculine noun and so on.



Criteria for choosing which Indefinite Articles used in the Italian

Indefinite Article	Gender	Special considerations
Un	Masculine	
Uno	Masculine	Nouns starting with Z or S + a consonant
Una	Feminine	
Un'	Feminine	Nouns starting with a vowel

You never use an indefinite article in the plural

* Although greatly simplified I learned this information from the Book "Ciao!" by Carla Federici and Carla Larese Riga, Copyright 1986 –and from the Drive Time Italian Audio Course, Copyright 2005

Stare		
Subject Pronoun	Stare conjugated	English
Io	Sto	I stay
Tu	Stai	You stay
Lui/Lei	Sta	He/She stays
Noi	Stiamo	We stay
Voi	State	Y'all stay
Loro	Stanno	They stay

Thus;

Io sto = I stay / Tu stai = You stay / Lui sta = He stays / Lei sta = She stays
Noi stiamo = we stay / Voi state = Y'all stay / Loro stanno = They stay