

Definite Articles, this, that, these, and those

Learning to work with Singular and Plural Italian nouns

Making singular nouns plural

To make a singular noun ending in “o” plural, change the “o” to “i”. Here is an example;
Bambino (little boy) to Bambini (little boys)

Special note: when the “o” is preceded by an “i” you just drop the “o” and do not add a second “i”. Here is an example;
Negozio (store) Negozi (stores)

To make a singular noun ending in “a” plural, change the “a” to “e”. Here is an example;
Bambina (little girl) to Bambine (little girls)

Special note: when the “a” is preceded by an “c” or “g” you must add an “h” before the “e” in order to maintain the hard “c” or “g” sound.
Here is an example;
Amica (friend) Amiche (friends)

To make a singular noun ending in “e” plural, change the “e” to “i”. Here is an example;
Dottore (doctor) to Dottori (doctors)

Nouns ending with an accented vowel or a consonant are invariable and do not change. Example;
il sport (the sport) i sport (the sports) & la città (the city) le città (the cities)

Learning a little bit about Italian definite articles

This is by no means an all encompassing lesson on definite articles in Italian. It is a good basis from which to start however. At the bottom of this page you will find resources which are available where you can learn more on this subject.

In their book "Complete Italian Grammar" Marcel Danesi says the following about definite articles; "...are 'function words' which mark nouns as specific ..., that is referring to something in particular... A function word is a form that has grammatical meaning or value." In laymen's terms, the definite article in English is "the" and makes a noun a specific noun or nouns (for example - a boy {general term} vs the boy {a specific boy} .

In Italian there are 7 ways to write or say "The". The following is a list of those seven ways with the rules dictating when each is used;

Italian for "The"	Rules for use	Example
L'	Masculine singular before nouns starting with a vowel	L'aereo
Lo	Masculine singular before nouns starting with Z or an S + a consonant	Lo studente
Il	Masculine singular before all other masculine nouns	Il bambino
Gli	Masculine plural for nouns starting with a vowel, Z or an S + a consonant	Gli uomini
I	Masculine plural for all other masculine plural nouns	I ragazzi
L'	Feminine singular before nouns starting with a vowel	L'autostrada
La	Feminine singular before all other feminine nouns	La donna
Le	Feminine plural before all feminine nouns	Le bambine

il Tavolo Italiano

Learning a little bit about this, that, these and those in Italian

At the bottom of this page you will find resources which are available where you can learn more on this subject.

In Italian there are 3 ways to write or say "This" and 2 ways to write or say "These". The following is a list of those seven ways with the rules dictating when each is used;

Italian	English	Rules for use	Example
Quest'	This	Used with all singular nouns starting with a vowel	Quest'albero
Questo	This	Used with all other masculine singular nouns	Questo ragazzo
Questa	This	Used with all other feminine singular nouns	Questa motocicletta
Queste	These	Used with all feminine plural nouns	Queste forchette
Questi	These	Used with all masculine plural nouns	Questi piatti

In Italian there are 4 ways to write or say "That" and 3 ways to write or say "Those". The following is a list of those seven ways with the rules dictating when each is used;

Italian	Italian	Rules for use	Example
Quell'	That	Masculine singular before nouns starting with a vowel	Quell'aereo
Quello	That	Masculine singular before nouns starting with Z or an S + a consonant	Quello studente
Quel	That	Masculine singular before all other masculine nouns	Quel bambino
Quegli	Those	Masculine plural for nouns starting with a vowel, Z or an S + a consonant	Quegli uomini
Quei	Those	Masculine plural for all other masculine plural nouns	Quei ragazzi
Quell'	That	Feminine singular before nouns starting with a vowel	Quell'autostrada
Quella	That	Feminine singular before all other feminine nouns	Quella donna
Quelle	Those	Feminine plural before all feminine nouns	Quelle bambine



When used with nouns as in the examples above, the words questi, quello, questo, etc are "Demonstrative Adjectives" because they point to an object or person mentioned in the sentence thus modifying it by specifying that object or person.

These can also be used as "Demonstrative Pronouns". This happens when they take the place of the "Demonstrative Phrase" created by the use of the adjective. Example;

Demonstrative Adjective	Those
Demonstrative Phrase	Those plates
Demonstrative Pronoun	Those

Thus, it starts with;

1. What plates are you talking about? (plates being the noun in question)
2. I am talking about those plates. (those being a demonstrative adjective)
3. I am talking about those. (those being a demonstrative pronoun)

This is also basically how it also works in Italian. When used as a pronoun the demonstratives still retain the gender and number properties that they would have had as an adjective. Example;

Che cosa hai bisogno? Ho bisogno di questi bicchieri. Hai bisogno di quei? Sì, ho bisogno di questi.