

Italian Prepositions

Italian simple prepositions "Preposizioni Semplici"

This is by no means an all-encompassing lesson on prepositions. 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 "English Grammar for Students of Italian" Sergio Adorni and Karen Primorac say the following about prepositions; "A preposition is a word that shows the relationship of one word (usually a verb, a noun or pronoun) to another word in the sentence." This makes them incredibly valuable in properly communicating the thoughts which we wish to convey.

The following is a list of some common Italian simple prepositions (Preposizioni Semplici)

| italiano | inglese | esempi |
|----------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| di | of | La penna è di Giulia. |
| a | at/to/in | Noi andremo a Roma domani. |
| da | from/by | Sono ritornato da Roma. |
| in | in/into | Loro sono in America. |
| su | on/onto/over/above | Lei è su un cavallo. |
| con | with | Il cane è con Roberto. |
| per | for | Questo cibo è per mio padre. |
| tra | between/among | Il dizionario è tra due libri. |
| fra | between/among | Il ragazzo è fra i suoi fratelli. |

While the examples above are very similar to the way we would use those prepositions in English it is important to realize that in Italian, prepositions may often be used in ways we would never use those particular words. For example;

il Tavolo Italiano

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Vado a Roma. | I am going to Rome. |
| Vado in Italia | I am going to Italy. |
| Vado da Roberto | I am going to Robert's place. |
| Penso di capire. | I think I understand. |

There are various rules which govern the use of these prepositions in different circumstances. Too many to cover here. That is why I said that this is not an all-encompassing lesson on this page alone. However, before you understand the rules you need to learn the words and how they may be used in ways we can easily grasp. We will look more into these other circumstances as we continue to study Italian together.

One way in which Italian prepositions differ from those in English is how they work with definite articles. In English, the definite article usually simply follows the preposition such as in "on the table" or "in the box". In Italian, when the preposition is followed by a definite article they usually combine the two words to create the *preposizione articolata* such as in "sul tavolo" or "nella scatola".

The following is a common table found in many textbooks illustrating how you combine an Italian simple prepositions with a definite article to form a *preposizione articolata*

| | IL | LO / L' | LA/L' | I | GLI | LE |
|-----|-----|---------------|---------------|-----|-------|-------|
| di | del | dello / dell' | della / dell' | dei | degli | delle |
| a | al | allo / all' | alla / all' | ai | agli | alle |
| da | dal | dallo / dall' | dalla / dall' | dai | dagli | dalle |
| in | nel | nello / nell' | nella / nell' | nei | negli | nelle |
| su | sul | sullo / sull' | sulla / sull' | sui | sugli | sulle |
| con | col | collo / coll' | colla / coll' | coi | cogli | colle |

The *preposizione articolata* is governed by the same rules of gender and number as the article that they were partially derived from. For instance if you wanted to say **on** "il tavolo" (masculine, singular) you would now have to say "sul tavolo" (masculine, singular) and not "sulla tavolo" (which does not agree because it is feminine) or "sugli tavolo" (which does not agree because it is plural).