

## 1A.1/1A.2 Nouns and Articles –i nomi e gli articoli (pp.10-13)

A noun is a word that identifies a person, animal, place, thing, or idea. As in English, nouns are singular or plural. All Italian nouns also have gender, even those that refer to objects.

**This means that in Italian, there are masculine and feminine nouns.**

Nouns that refer to males are usually masculine, and that refer to females are usually feminine.

\*\*Exception: **persona**, which is feminine, but can refer to a man or a woman (person of any gender).

\*\*\*To speak with or as people who are non-binary, see last page.

Masculine	Feminine	Non-binary
amico	amica	amicə
attore	attrice	attorə
studente	studentessa	studentə

**Usually, nouns that end in –o are masculine and nouns that end in –a are feminine.**

Masculine	Feminine
libro	casa
tavolo	domanda
ufficio	idea

**Nouns that end in – e may be either masculine or feminine, so you must memorize.**

Masculine	Feminine
esame	automobile
ristorante	notte

**Nouns ending in a consonant or –ore, are masculine, and nouns ending in –ione are feminine.**

Masculine	Feminine
autobus	lezione
computer	stazione
dottore	televisione

**To form the plural of most Italian nouns, you need to change the final vowel.** The masculine ending –o becomes –i and the feminine ending –a becomes –e. Regardless of gender, singular nouns that end in –e change the vowel to –i in the plural. **Some nouns don't have plural endings.**

\*\*\***There are NO s's to make plural words in Italian.**

o → i (ragazzo → ragazzi) a → e (donna → donne) e → i (notte → notti) ə → ə or ɜ (studentə → studentɜ)

**When referring to a mixed group of males and females, standard is to use the masculine plural form.**

**We can also use the gender-neutral ending.**

gli amici      gli studenti      gli ragazzi      l3 ragazzɜ

For more practice, do **PROVALO** on p.10 (*Maschile o femminile?*) and others on p. 11.

### Indefinite and Definite articles with nouns

Indefinite articles (*l'articolo indeterminativo*) means “a/an” or the **number 1** and indicates an unspecified person or thing. In Italian the form of the indefinite article changes according to the gender (masc/fem or non-binary) of the noun that follows it. They are used with **singular** nouns.

Gender	singular
(masculine)	<b>un</b>
(m. before a vowel)	<b>un</b>
(feminine)	<b>una</b>
(f. before a vowel)	<b>un'</b>

(masc. before s+cons. x, y, z, gn, ps, pn) **uno**  
 non-binary **unə**

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate indefinite article.

- |                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. _____ giorno   | 10. _____ studentessa |
| 2. _____ giornata | 11. _____ uomo        |
| 3. _____ donna    | 12. _____ amica       |
| 4. _____ ragazzo  | 13. _____ città       |
| 5. _____ ragazza  | 14. _____ radio       |
| 6. _____ ragazzə  | 15. _____ università  |
| 7. _____ zaino    | 16. _____ zoo         |
| 8. _____ studente | 17. _____ figliə      |
| 9. _____ studentə |                       |

**Definite article (*l'articolo determinativo*)** means “the” in many cases and indicates a specific person or thing. In Italian the form of the definite article changes according to the gender (masc/fem/non-binary) and number (singular/plural) of the noun that follows it. If the singular noun begins with a vowel, **l'** is used. For masculine/plural nouns that begin with a vowel, **gli** is used. For all feminine plural nouns use **le**. For masculine nouns that begin with s + consonant, z, x, y, gn, ps, pn - **lo** is used in the singular, and **gli** is used in the plural.

Gender	singular	plural
(masculine)	il	→ i
(m. before a vowel) l'	→	gli
(feminine)	la	→ le
(f. before a vowel)	l'	→ le
(m. before s+cons., z, x, y, gn, ps, pn)	lo	→ gli
non-binary	lə	→ lɜ/ ə

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate singular definite article, then make the noun plural and change the singular article to plural. (*Attention, some words do not change in the plural!*)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ giorno -> \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ giornata -> \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ donna -> \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_ ragazzo -> \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_ ragazzə -> \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_ ragazza -> \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_ zaino -> \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_ studente -> \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_ studentə -> \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_ studentessa -> \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_ uomo -> \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_ amica -> \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_ città -> \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_ radio -> \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_ università -> \_\_\_\_\_
16. \_\_\_\_\_ zoo -> \_\_\_\_\_
17. \_\_\_\_\_ figliə -> \_\_\_\_\_

Plural forms of **words ending in -co/-ca/-go/-ga** ADD an “h” in order to keep the hard c or g sound. (See top of p. 11, second bullet point.)

(m) un parco ----→ \_\_\_\_\_

(f) una banca ----→ \_\_\_\_\_

(f) amica ----→ \_\_\_\_\_

(m) un banco ----→ \_\_\_\_\_  
(desk, seat, bench)

(m) un gioco ----→ \_\_\_\_\_

\***exception** un amico -→ \_\_\_\_\_

**Some nouns do not have a plural ending:** foto, caffè, autobus, città, università, radio, zoo.

**Remember plural rules:**

o → i  
e → i  
a → e  
ə → ə or 3

\* exception: masc. nouns ending in -ma-  
\* add ‘h’ after co/ca/go/ca (but not always)  
& some words don’t change

Ciao a *tuttu* - Ciao a *tuttə* - Ciao a *tutt\**.

Non-binary/neutral endings

As we have learned, Italian is a language with gendered words. This includes gendering people and adjectives that describe people. While some people who are non-binary prefer to alternate between feminine and masculine endings when referring to themselves or others, there is a growing movement over the past 10 years to use a gender-neutral ending. Some people have been using the letter ‘u’ as an alternative suffix, as in *Ciao a **tuttu!*** Others have been using an asterix, *Ciao, amic\**! Other less known options are x, y, or z.

Vera Gheno and other Italian sociolinguists have been researching and promoting the use of what is becoming the most commonly used ending:

the schwa “ə” - called lo schwa or upside-down e (una **e capovolta**). How is this pronounced? Think about the “a” in the word “about” – that is a good model.

Qui il breve video della sociolinguista **Vera Gheno** sulla pronuncia:

<https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/17848588865141319/>

Some examples:

amichə  
tuttə  
studentə  
ragazzə

As we learn adjectives, the schwa (la **e capovolta** (*upside down*) can also be used. For example, if I say, “I am happy” in Italian, I will say “sono content**a**” because I am a woman, and a man would say “sono content**o**.” Someone who is gender fluid or identifies with neither gender could say “sono content**ə**.”

There is also a plural version of this ending: 3. In theory, if you wanted to refer to a number of friends/people who are gender fluid or don’t identify with either gender, or you just don’t like

that Italian falls back on the masculine to describe a group of males and females, you could say:  
... (But this so far, is less common).

amich3  
tutt3/tuttə  
student3  
ragazz3

Common use: to reference “everyone” *tutti* in an inclusive way: **tuttə**

**Lo schwa:** ə

**Il simbolo plurale:** 3