

Guide for Teachers

In this section of the website, we talk about ways to exploit the material of the Units further and about other activities you can carry out with your students on the same topic. You may have lots of ideas of your own.

We welcome further suggestions and comments on these and on the course from practising teachers using it. The website is intended to be live and active!

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Some general suggestions

Using video

For the lower levels, use *spot pubblicitari* (adverts) or simpler programmes, especially programmes with lots of visuals and not too much 'text'. If necessary, prepare a transcript. You can ask students to prepare a transcript in groups.

For more advanced levels, choose something controversial from a current affairs or chat programme e.g. on *razzismo*, *adozione*, *pena di morte*, etc. where they can discuss the issues, act out a simulation or take sides in a debate. Back it up with newspaper articles. Prepare them by brainstorming for connected vocabulary. Use the RAI website (www.rai.it).

Students always find it more stimulating when they can watch and listen at the same time. Video activities can be used not only as listening practice, but also in oral exercises, where students have the opportunity to discuss or describe what they have seen. Here are some examples:

- **Back to the TV**
Get one student to sit with his/her back to TV and get the other students to describe what is happening
- **Mister Bean**
To be used for vocabulary: students have list of items seen on video and they tick them off as they see them
- **Gap filling story**
After they have watched the video, the students have to fill in the gaps in a story using the right verbs.
- **Guessing Game**
Turn the sound down on the video and get students to predict what characters are saying or ask them to guess the relationship between the people, what their jobs are, where they are.

▪ **Detective Game**

Ask half of the students to leave the room and ask them to prepare some questions (you can give them the situation or the questions in English); in the meantime, the other half of the class watch a video and at the end the students come back in and put their questions to the others.

Using songs

Songs are very useful to motivate students and make the lesson more interesting; they can set the scene for a discussion, consolidate grammar and vocabulary and improve pronunciation.

Before listening: arousing interest, predicting content of the song:

- Get students talking about the song before and then listen to see if they have guessed the meaning
- Pre-teaching vocabulary
- Match up half-lines or words / phrases from songs
- Predict completions of half-lines from songs

During listening: tasks

- The students put the lyrics in order
- The students fill in the gaps (either on a worksheet or they run up to stick words on a flipchart in front of the class)
- The students try and change the words (deaven-heaven)

After listening: follow-up activities:

- Comprehension questions
- Discussion type questions
- Role-play from story
- Letter-writing etc.

Using radio

Radio can be used in many of the activities listed for Video. The easiest way of getting Italian radio is through the Internet. Alternatively if you or the place you work has satellite TV from Italy, you will be able to record radio broadcasts as well.

Using the press

Now that most newspapers are online (*see list of websites for Media*) cutting and pasting has become so much easier. By saving articles as a Word document, you can use them for reading comprehensions or for gapped texts, where verbs, nouns or adjectives have been removed and have to be restored.

Grammar and reference texts

Grammar structures are the building blocks of any language. If your students don't learn it properly from the beginning, they will find it difficult to progress and will continue to make errors even later on in their study. Many students prefer to read grammar explanations in their own time and when they need to use particular points; class time is often limited and best used for more communicative and interactive activities. Students should have a good grammar reference book at home. Learn at home – practise in class. While students at lower levels might prefer basic grammar reference books such as *Azione Grammatica* (Derek Aust) or *Teach Yourself Italian Grammar* (Anna Proudfoot) tutors might prefer something more complete. We can recommend the *Modern Italian Grammar* (Anna Proudfoot and Francesco Cardo) also published by Routledge.

Students who have a limited understanding of grammar often benefit from texts explaining structures in English, such as *English grammar for students of Italian*' (Sergio Adorni and Karen Primorac).

Many Universities have a grammar programme on the network which allows students to do grammar exercises at their own pace and usually tells them how many questions they got right, and what the correct answer was. There are also many websites hosted by universities which offer online grammar programmes. For students who prefer printed exercises, without having to purchase the matching textbook, texts such as *Schede di Lavoro* offer a traditional way to practise.

Finally it goes without saying that all students and tutors should have a good bilingual dictionary. Depending on the resources offered on campus, other reference texts which can be useful in teaching, include *Dizionari dei sinonimi*, *Verb tables*, etc.

Units 0 – 7

Students at this lower stage with very little language at their disposal will enjoy using realia and visual stimuli, which can help build on and consolidate the vocabulary learned. Here are some general suggestions for these lower level units. See also the list of websites.

The Internet

The Internet is an excellent source of realia. You could

- look for and present in class adverts, pictures, timetables, bar menus, restaurant menus, etc. to recreate realistic contexts. It's quite easy to find menus by searching for key words such as *Menu del giorno* or search for special menus for *Festa della Mamma* etc.

- look for short and realistic reading texts to develop understanding of real Italian. At this stage you should use brief and simple texts containing descriptions and instructions such as directions, instructions for buying tickets (Unit 3) e.g. ferries, trains, booking rooms or holiday courses.

The Internet is an endless (free!) resource of vocabulary, texts, information, newspapers, visual stimuli etc. and the perfect medium for language teachers. You can:

- give students projects, in which they can make use of the resources on the Internet to carry out linked activities. The stages of the project could be: Internet research (reading); group presentation (speaking); listening to other groups; group composition (writing) in which they report on what has been said. One example would be planning a journey.
- Students can be asked to plan an imaginary journey from a British city to an Italian one or from one Italian city to another. (Unit 3) The teacher will need to specify the budget, the dates and routes and ask the students to do their research on the Internet, putting together a list of relevant Websites, flights, trains, connections, hotels, restaurants. (*See list of websites for Units 1-7*) Students will then be asked to give brief and concise group presentations. Pair up the groups so that one has to produce a group composition about the work done by another group.

Magazines and newspapers

You can use

- headlines

Choose a number of headlines from a daily paper. Cut them into individual words and mix them up. Photocopy them and give each student one copy of all the words. Then divide the students into small groups and ask them to form sentences with the given words. Each word can be used once. Students do not need to use all the words. (Words like articles, pronouns and link words can be added by the students themselves.) Groups can swap their sentences at the end of the activity. At a higher level students could use these words to form first newspaper headlines and then the articles to go with them.

- adverts

Adverts are well suited because of their highly visual nature. Select a variety of adverts (pictures and captions) and take some key words out. Mix the words up and present them to the students together with the advert (picture and caption). Then ask the students to choose the right words to fill in the blanks in each caption. At later stages the

students could be asked to fill in the blanks without a list of words to choose from.

- short texts
Short texts can be exploited for skimming (to get the gist) or scanning (to find a particular piece of information).

Satellite TV

Even at this lower level you can use Italian TV. Adverts are especially useful, because of their concise nature. You can:

- show the first few seconds of the advert and ask the students to guess what the product advertised is.
- freeze an image and ask the students to describe people or places in that image.
- show the students an advert three times. Then give them a list of objects and ask them to say which ones were present in the advert.
- show the advert without audio. Students divided in small groups could be asked to write the words that go with the advert. They can present their work to the class and then each student can vote for the most imaginative and effective one.

Leaflets

You can use leaflets to great effect because the language is concise and realistic. For example, you can use leaflets or brochures for a product (Unit 4 *Facciamo un po' di shopping*) language schools, hotels, but also plane or train timetables (Unit 3 *In Viaggio*):

- Students can be asked to scan a text, (i.e. look for precise information such as date, price, time)
- Students can work in pairs (either in a language lab with pairing facility or back-to-back so they cannot use non-verbal signals). Student A has the brochure with information contained in it; student B has a set of questions he/she needs an answer to. This is a good exercise for mixed ability groups, since the weaker student can have the information already supplied while the stronger student has to do more productive speaking.

Roleplays

- Create short and simple role-plays to help the students retain useful vocabulary and ask them to perform realistic tasks in the target

language. This exercise helps the transition from receptive to productive vocabulary.

Units 8-14

- Some of the topics in Units 8-14 lend themselves to compiling questionnaires. You could ask students to prepare a questionnaire on, for example, the kind of holiday people prefer and their choice of destination (Unit 8), or a survey on the future of communications: *Telefoni e dopo?* (Unit 10), leisure activities (Unit 11), the problems of immigration (Unit 12), or the latest statistics about Italians (Unit 14).
- Comprehension of a reading text from the unit could be explored further by asking the students to prepare questions that will be answered by the others in the class. In addition, for the reading texts in Unit 8, 9, 11, 13 and 14, you could make up summaries in the form of a short report with some incorrect statements in them or as a series of individual sentences but in the wrong order.

Unit 8 **Andiamo in vacanza**

You could encourage students to carry out individual research into a particular city, region or area of Italy and then present it to the whole class. Alternatively a group of students could research a region where each of them has to look into a different aspect of the region: places to visit, history, traditions, food, etc.

The E.N.I.T. (Italian State Tourist Office) web site (**see Websites**) is particularly good for researching places of interest in Italy. They will also send on request posters, leaflets etc. completely free of charge. Other travel web sites could offer material relating to last minute trips, special offers, etc. for role plays.

This Unit covers the past tense. If you are working with adults, you could exploit your students' personal experiences by asking for memorable past experiences of travelling, using both / either *passato prossimo* and *imperfetto*.

A less open-ended activity is to use tourism-based 'realia' to elicit use of the *passato prossimo*. Photocopy a one-page montage of bus, train or metro tickets, theatre or cinema tickets, museum tickets, restaurant or café receipts. Start off by saying: '*Gianni e Luisa sono andati a Napoli...*' and encourage the students to continue. Alternatively you can do question-and-answer sessions '*Dove sono stati?*' '*Cosa hanno visto?*' '*Cosa hanno mangiato?*'

Unit 9 **Lavorare e studiare in Italia**

Here you could exploit the experience of any students who have gone or who hope to go on Erasmus exchanges.

If you want to focus more on the vocabulary of work (e.g. for language and business students), you could work more on CVs, job adverts, letters of applications for jobs, etc. There are manuals of *Italiano commerciale*. Use real job adverts taken from the WWW to add authenticity (see *list of websites*). For summer jobs, there are jobs advertised for working with children in summer camps, working in restaurants etc. Use 'Google' or similar search engines typing in keywords such as '*lavoro estivo*' or '*cercasi assistente*' to find some suitable job adverts. Students can:

- Write a letter of application for the job.
- Prepare a CV that would fit the job.
- Select suitable candidates choosing from several CVs.
- Interview potential candidates.

Unit 10 Pronto, mi senti?

As Unit 10 deals with polite requests, you could elicit students' own knowledge of Italian customs and encourage comparisons between students' countries and Italy.

- Students could carry out group or individual research on the history of telecommunication or on the different means of communication and present their findings to the whole class. They can find information on the TELECOM Italia website.
- You could set up a *Tavola Rotonda* assigning to students the roles of Parents, Teachers, Class Representatives, Heads of School, etc. and discuss the use of mobiles at schools.
- On a more imaginative level, ask students to imagine that Martians have landed and are telling them about their super advanced communication technology.

Unit 11 A che ora ci vediamo?

Exploit realia from newspapers, magazines and the Internet for ads of cinemas, theatres, exhibitions, leisure centres, theme parks, etc. and use them as the basis of role plays and other activities:

- Pair work where students have two different sets of information (communication gap exercise) and try and match them through questions and answers.
- Get students to write an email to their friend suggesting a day out in one of the theme parks or a film they might go and see together, based on the information supplied.
- Ask them to write lists of activities and, working in pairs or as a group, ask them to propose, in turn, an activity to which the

other/s have to find “acceptable excuses” for not wanting to do it.

- One of the students pretends to organise an end-of-year party and has to ask the others in the group if and when they can come. Encourage the students to exploit all possibilities to their fullest.

Unit 12 L’Italia multietnica

- You could do something similar to Exercise 18 of this Unit, asking students to create profiles of different immigrants, and prepare questions they can use as the basis of interviews.
- You could set students up as a panel of experts to prepare and pass new legislation on the issue of immigration and discuss its impact.
- Encourage informal discussions comparing immigration in students’ own place of origin and Italy or Europe. Extend the problem of immigration to discrimination and racism. Look in Italian Newspapers’ Archives online (see *Websites*), for example, to retrieve episodes of Italian racism.
- Give the students only the headline of an article and ask them to guess what it’s about. Alternatively ask students to pick the 10 key words which in their opinion would tell them what the rest of the article was about.
- Choose or let the students choose a series of topics either of a social nature like welfare, ecology, health, or more mundane like leisure activities, food, television, etc. Brainstorm the topics for vocabulary, then encourage them to reuse the vocabulary by comparing customs in the different countries.

Unit 13 AAA Affittasi appartamento

- Pick up real ads from Italian web sites like www.casa.it or www.tecnocasa.it and cut them up for students to reorder. Alternatively use the ads for students to gather information by role-playing estate agent and potential tenant/buyer scenarios or by writing email messages.
- Choose ads with specific vocabulary like the ones in Text 13.6. Use them for pair work blanking out some words for student A and some different ones for student B, then ask them to fill the blanks by describing the words to each other.
- Exploiting texts 13.1-13.6 further, you could ask students to write a letter to a friend telling him/her they found the house they liked.

- Students could play the part of landlords and compile “dos and don’ts” notices using the *si impersonale* structure. According to the type of students you teach their tenants could be either students or professional couples.

Unit 14 Vita italiana

Choose further literary extracts from contemporary writers or use some web sites on aspects of Italian life and exploit them either for grammar learning purposes or in a more informal way.

- Ask students to change the verbs from and into the passato remoto.
- Ask students to predict what might happen next or to imagine their own ending for the story.
- Use news items from newspapers in conjunction with the TGs (Telegiornale) on the same issues and encourage discussions on the differences in the style of presentation, writing, etc.

Suggested activity for Audio 14.1 *Sono un italiano vero*

- After giving the students the title of the article, brainstorm all possible vocabulary.
- After giving the students the title of the article, brainstorm guesses about the content.
- Ask them to list all of Berlusconi’s possessions.
- Ask them to list a number of words under a specific category, like media or business, etc.
- Ask your students to turn the piece into the 3rd person or to relate it as reported speech or to change it into the past.
- Prepare some comprehension questions.
- Ask them to turn the text into an interview.
- Blank some words to be filled in by listening to the recording.
- Choose some expressions and ask them to explain in their own words.

Suggested activity for Audio 14.2 *Il Chocoholic*

- After giving the students the title of the article, brainstorm all possible vocabulary.
- After giving the students the title of the article, brainstorm guesses about the content.
- Prepare some comprehension questions.
- Blank some words to be filled in by listening to the recording.
- Ask them to list all words relating to medical conditions.
- Divide them into 2 groups: one group will report on the behaviour of the women and the other of the men.

- g. Ask them to list all food items or drink items.
- h. Prepare a list of synonyms of words or expressions to be found in the text.
- i. Choose some expressions and ask them to explain in their own words.

Units 15-22

Unit 15 Scuola e Università

- This topic can be expanded with materials from individual websites of Italian Universities or using various articles in the Italian press on changes in the educational system, as well as from the official website of the *Ministero dell'Istruzione* (www.istruzione.it).
- Students can be asked to research into new degrees developed in the last few years, as well as compare what different universities across the country offer in terms of undergraduate and postgraduate courses. For a complete list of Italian universities, see www.rdg.ac.uk/AcaDepts/li/Italian/univ.html.
- Topics for discussions: students can describe the school system in their countries and compare it with the Italian one; they can also discuss the validity of a shorter degree (three years rather than four) and the importance of a more uniform system throughout Europe.
- Reading activity on *I nuovi corsi di laurea*: students can prepare a debate, with each of them taking a specific role (vice-chancellor, student, minister of education, journalist, etc.) and then perform it in class.
- Prepare a questionnaire for an Erasmus project for students who wish to spend a year in an Italian university.
- Prepare a guide for Erasmus students coming to your country/University, giving them advice on things such as choosing courses, travel, accommodation, food, social life. Warn them about the things that are different from Italy.
- Students can describe their experience at University either in writing or verbally.

Unit 16 Innamorarsi su Internet

- Students can research the use of Internet in Italy (personal use as well as business use) and analyse different websites of Italian companies. Further materials can be found by looking at different policies in Europe relating to issues such as privacy and emails, advertising, etc.
- Research on the Net in Italian on a specific topic.
- Ask students to join a chat room in Italian or to create a website in Italian.

- Compare the use of mobile phones in Italy and in other European countries, as well as the legislation for use of mobile phones in public.
- Students can complete the speaking activity (Presenting a proposal) by writing their proposal and presenting it to the rest of the class, and the managing directors will then decide which proposals to vote for.

Unit 17 Gli Italiani? Pizza e Mafia

- Research on the position of linguistic minorities in Italy on those listed in text 17.2 or on others. Students can present the results of their research to the rest of the class.
- Research on how Italy has changed in the last fifty years (each student or group can look at a specific issue: shape of families, birth rate, women and work, etc.).
- Students can interview other foreign students to check whether the results of the reading (text 17.1) on Italian stereotypes is still valid.
- Students prepare the front page of a newspaper from a selection of articles given.
- Students can compare programmes such as Big Brother in Italy and in their country.
- A great deal of material can be found in the individual sites of each Italian region, which give students the opportunity to explore various aspects of Italian life (food, culture, festivals, etc.).
- Several Italian authors (Enzo Biagi, Indro Montanelli, Sergio Zavoli) have written extensively on Italian culture and Italian stereotypes and passages from their books can be used to analyse Italian life. Some foreign authors (Matt Frei, Tim Parks) have also written about Italy and their books can be used to compare their views on the country with the ones given by Italians.
- The Italian soap opera *Un posto al sole* is a good source of material and either students can view it independently on Satellite or tutors can dedicate a small part of the lesson on exercises about this programme: guessing what might happen to specific characters and analysing events and relationships can all be useful in the language learning process.
- All the major Italian newspapers have a very good archive, which can be used on Internet for finding further materials.
- The Italian national TV (Rai) has a very useful website, with information on TV listings as well as on specific programmes. The Rai archive offers the opportunity to select extracts of old and new programmes.

Popular programmes such as the Italian version of 'Big brother' ('Grande Fratello') or Survival can be viewed by students with additional exercises.

Unit 18 Andiamo al cinema

- A lot of material can be found on Italian cinema by either looking at specific films on www.kwcinema.kataweb.it or by looking at special events on film organised in Italy.
- The *Regione Lazio* has just created a museum of cinema, which can be seen on www.laziocineland.it.
- The *David di Donatello* (the Italian version of the Oscar) which takes place sometime in April, is a good opportunity for looking at clips of films which have just come out in the country.
- The *cineteche RAI* (www.rai.it) have a wide range of video material which can be viewed by students online.
- Students can present their favourite films to the rest of the class.
- Students can pretend to interview their favourite actors/directors and write an article about them.
- Students can research different aspects of Italian cinema (neorealism, spaghetti western, new Italian cinema) and then write a report for the others.

Unit 19 Pubblicità, Promozione e Prodotti

- Students (in pairs or as a group) can make their own adverts following the example of Text 19.2 (Audio 19.1) and record it for other students with questions to answer.
- Adverts in the press, on television, or on the web can be a good source of material for grammar exercises or vocabulary practice.

Unit 20 Immagini dell'Italia

The Section on exploiting Video and the Press has ideas you can use. You might want to focus on the actual language of the press and its use of certain features eg rhetoric, exaggeration, metonymy, foreign borrowings, 'coded' language using historical, mythological, classical references and similar.

- Choose an article that provides lots of examples of these features and ask students to find them in the text.

Unit 21 Politica e società

- Programmes such as *Porta a Porta* (RAI 1) or *Ballaro* (RAI 3) are very good for exploring political or social issues. Students can view part of the programmes and then debate the topics discussed.
- Websites of individual political parties can also offer a wide range of material for discussions (often the official website of a party will have a manifesto on various topics).

Unit 22 L'angolo della posta

- The texts of the letters 22.4 and 22.5 can be listened to by students and then used as a basis for an answer in pairs or in front of the whole class. In letter 22.4, tutors can also give students a sheet with Lui and Lei and the students have to listen to the text and fill in the sheet with all the information they hear about the two characters. Several mistakes can be introduced to Text 22.5, which students then have to identify while listening to the text.
- The text 22.6 on *La fine del mondo* can be listened to by the students with an information sheet to complete and the names of all the people interviewed. Alternatively, the names can be associated with the wrong definitions which the students will have to spot while listening to the interviews.