

1. Vowels

Similar to the English language, Italian uses the vowels, *a, e, i, o, u*. However, there is a slight difference in the way vowels are pronounced in Italian. Below is the proper way to pronounce Italian vowels—and remember that most words in Italian actually end in a vowel!

- A- Ah (*Amore*) Ah-moh-reh
- E-Eh (*Bene*) Beh-neh
- I-eee (*Vino*) Vee-noh
- O- Oh (*Modo*) Moh-doh
- U-ooh (*Lungo*) Loohn-goh

2. Consonants

Some Italian consonants—such as *b, f, m, n,* and *v*—are pronounced the same as they are in English. The majority, however, are pronounced much differently. Below are some tips for how to properly pronounce the other consonants.

- D- Put your tongue to your teeth, to make the sound more explosive (*dove*)
- L- Sharper and more forward (*lingua*)
- H- Usually silent (*hanno*)
- P- A little less forced than in English (*Pane*)
- Q- Always accompanied with U after (*Quanto*)
- R- Make sure you roll those R's – flip your tongue against your upper teeth. (*Arriverderci*)
- T- Very pronounced (*Antipasto*)
- Z- Often can sound like T, but add more zest to it, especially when two Z's are together (*Grazie, Pizza*)

There are some consonants in the Italian language that have two pronunciations, such as

- S and SS- If S is used singular, in the middle of a word, it can often sound like a Z. If a double S (SS), the S is very much emphasized. (*Casa, passare*)
- Z and ZZ- When used singular, it can be silent, as in *Dizionario*, but as in *Pizza* it can sound more like two T's together.
- G- If G appears before the letters A, O, or U, it has a hard sound like *Grande*, but if it precedes E or I, like in *Gelato*, it has a soft, gentle sound.
- C- This also has two pronunciations, before A, O, U or other consonant, it sounds like a K, as in *Cane*, but if before I or E, it has a CH sound, as in *Cena*.

3. Consonant Digraphs

There are several consonant digraphs—or a combination of two letters that make one sound—present in Italian. Memorizing these combinations will allow you to better recognize the pronunciation of words. Below are some examples and how to properly pronounce them.

- CH- Spoken as K, (*Che*)
- GN- G is silent and N is hard (*Gnocchi*)
- GLI- G is silent, and L is the focus, almost sounds like a Y (*Famiglia*)
- SC-Before A, O, U sounds like SK (*Scarpe*), but if it's before I or E, it has an SH sound as in *Pesce*.

4. Double Consonants

Many Italian words have double consonants. It's wise to remember that all consonants can be doubled except for the letter H because it's always silent. It's common for English speakers to stumble over double consonants since there are very few in the English language.

Here's a helpful hint: double consonants have a stronger or more forced pronunciation when doubled together. For example, the CC is pronounced as K in the word *Secca*.