

OLLY RICHARDS

101

Conversations in Intermediate Italian

Short, Natural
Dialogues to Improve
Your **Spoken Italian**
From Home



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Short Natural Dialogues to Boost Your Confidence & Improve Your Spoken Italian

Written by Olly Richards

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101 Conversations in Intermediate Italian: Short Natural Dialogues to Boost Your Confidence & Improve Your Spoken Italian

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About the Author

Olly Richards is a foreign language expert and teacher who speaks eight languages and has authored over 20 books. He has appeared in international press including the BBC, Independent, El País, and Gulf News. He has also featured in a BBC documentary and authored language courses for the Open University.

Olly started learning his first foreign language at age of 19, when he bought a one-way ticket to Paris. With no exposure to languages growing up, and no natural talent for languages, Olly had to figure out how to learn French from scratch. Twenty years later, Olly has studied languages from around the world and is considered an expert in the field.

Through his books and website, I Will Teach You A Language, Olly is known for teaching languages through the power of story – including the book you are holding in your hands right now!

You can find out more about Olly, including a library of free training, at his website:

<https://www.iwillteachyoualanguage.com>

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Introduction

If you've ever tried speaking Italian with a stranger, chances are it wasn't easy! You might have felt tongue-tied when you tried to recall words or verb conjugations. You might have struggled to keep up with the conversation, with Italian words flying at you at 100mph. Indeed, many students report feeling so overwhelmed with the experience of speaking Italian in the real world that they struggle to maintain motivation. The problem lies with the way Italian is usually taught. Textbooks and language classes break Italian down into rules and other "nuggets" of information in order to make it easier to learn. But that can leave you with a bit of a shock when you come to actually speak Italian out in the real world: "People don't speak like they do in my textbooks!" That's why I wrote this book.

101 Conversations in Intermediate Italian prepares you to speak Italian in the real world. Unlike the contrived and unnatural dialogues in your textbook, the 101 authentic conversations in this book offer you simple but authentic spoken Italian that you can study away from the pressure of face-to-face conversation. The conversations in this book tell the story of a detective in Rome. You'll experience the story by following the conversations the characters have with one another. Written entirely in spoken Italian, the conversations give you the authentic experience of reading real Italian in a format that is convenient and accessible for an intermediate learner (B1-B2

on the Common European Framework of Reference).

The extensive, story-based format of the book helps you get used to spoken Italian in a natural way, with the words and phrases you see gradually

emerging in your own spoken Italian as you learn them naturally through your reading. The book is packed with engaging learning material including short dialogues that you can finish in one sitting, helpful English

definitions of difficult words, scene-setting introductions to each chapter to help you follow along, and a story that will have you gripped until the end.

These learning features allow you to learn and absorb new words and phrases, and then *activate* them so that, over time, you can remember and use them in your own spoken Italian. You'll never find another way to get so much practice with real, spoken Italian!

Suitable for intermediate learners, *101 Conversations in Intermediate Italian* is the perfect complement to any Italian course and will give you the ultimate head start for using Italian confidently in the real world! If you have set your sights on becoming fluent, this book is the biggest step forward you will take in your Italian this year.

If you're ready, let's get started!

How to Use this Book

There are many possible ways to use a resource such as this, which is written entirely in Italian. In this section, I would like to offer my suggestions for using this book effectively, based on my experience with thousands of students and their struggles.

There are two main ways to work with content in a foreign language: 1.

Intensively

2.

Extensively

Intensive learning is when you examine the material in great detail, seeking to understand all the content - the meaning of vocabulary, the use of grammar, the pronunciation of difficult words, etc. You will typically spend much longer with each section and, therefore, cover less material overall.

Traditional classroom learning, generally involves intensive learning.

Extensive learning is the opposite of intensive. To learn extensively is to treat the material for what it is – not as the object of language study, but rather as content to be enjoyed and appreciated. To read a book for pleasure is an example of extensive reading. As such, the aim is not to stop and study the language that you find, but rather to read (and complete) the book.

There are pros and cons to both modes of study and, indeed, you may use a combination of both in your approach. However, the “default mode” for most people is to study *intensively*. This is because there is the inevitable temptation to investigate anything you do not understand in the pursuit of progress and hope to eliminate all mistakes. Traditional language education trains us to do this.

Similarly, it is not obvious to many readers how extensive study can be effective. The uncertainty and ambiguity can be uncomfortable: “There’s so much I don’t understand!”

In my experience, people have a tendency to drastically overestimate what they can learn from intensive study, and drastically underestimate what they can gain from extensive study. My observations are as follows: **Intensive learning:** Although it is intuitive to try to “learn”

something you don't understand, such as a new word, there is no guarantee you will actually manage to "learn" it! Indeed, you will be familiar with the feeling of trying to learn a new word, only to forget it shortly afterwards! Studying intensively is also time-consuming meaning you can't cover as much material.

Extensive learning: By contrast, when you study extensively, you cover huge amounts of material and give yourself exposure to much more content in the language than you otherwise would. In my view, this is the primary benefit of extensive learning. Given the immense size of the task of learning a foreign language, extensive learning is the only way to give yourself the exposure to the language that you need in order to stand a chance of acquiring it.

You simply can't learn everything you need in the classroom!

When put like this, extensive learning may sound quite compelling!

However, there is an obvious objection: "But how do I *learn* when I'm not looking up or memorising things?" This is an understandable doubt if you are used to a traditional approach to language study. However, the truth is that you can learn an extraordinary amount *passively* as you read and listen to the language, but only if you give yourself the opportunity to do so!

Remember, you learned your mother tongue passively. There is no reason you shouldn't do the same with a second language!

Here are some of the characteristics of studying languages extensively:

Aim for completion When you read material in a foreign language, your first job is to make your way through from beginning to end. Read to the end

of the chapter or listen to the entire audio without worrying about things you don't understand. Set your sights on the finish line and don't get distracted.

This is a vital behaviour to foster because it trains you to enjoy the material before you start to get lost in the details. This is how you read or listen to things in your native language, so it's the perfect thing to aim for!

Read for gist The most effective way to make headway through a piece of content in another language is to ask yourself: "Can I follow the gist of what's going on?" You don't need to understand every word, just the main ideas. If you can, that's enough! You're set! You can understand and enjoy a great amount with gist alone, so carry on through the material and enjoy the feeling of making progress! If the material is so hard that you struggle to understand even the gist, then my advice for you would be to consider easier material.

Don't look up words As tempting as it is to look up new words, doing so robs you of time that you could spend reading the material. In the extreme, you can spend so long looking up words that you never finish what you're reading. If you come across a word you don't understand... Don't worry! Keep calm and carry on. Focus on the goal of reaching the end of the chapter. You'll probably see that difficult word again soon, and you might guess the meaning in the meantime!

Don't analyse grammar Similarly to new words, if you stop to study verb tenses or verb conjugations as you go, you'll never make any headway with the material. Try to *notice* the grammar that's being used (make a mental note) and carry on. Have you spotted some unfamiliar grammar? No problem. It can wait. Unfamiliar grammar rarely prevents you from understanding the gist of a passage but can completely derail your reading if you insist on looking up and studying every grammar point you encounter.

After a while, you'll be surprised by how this "difficult" grammar starts to become "normal"!

You don't understand? Don't worry! The feeling you often have when you are engaged in extensive learning is: "I don't understand". You may find an entire paragraph that you don't understand or that you find confusing. So, what's the best response? Spend the next hour trying to decode that difficult paragraph? Or continue reading regardless? (Hint: It's the latter!) When you read in your mother tongue, you will often skip entire paragraphs you find boring, so there's no need to feel guilty about doing the same when reading Italian. Skipping difficult passages of text may feel like cheating, but it can, in fact, be a mature approach to reading that allows you to make progress through the material and, ultimately, learn more.

If you follow this mindset when you read Italian, you will be training yourself to be a strong, independent Italian learner who doesn't have to rely on a teacher or rule book to make progress and enjoy learning. As you will have noticed, this approach draws on the fact that your brain can learn many things naturally, without conscious study. This is something that we appear to have forgotten with the formalisation of the education system. But, speak to any accomplished language learner and they will confirm that their proficiency in languages comes not from their ability to memorise grammar rules, but from the time they spend reading, listening to, and speaking the language, enjoying the process, and integrating it into their lives.

So, I encourage you to embrace extensive learning, and trust in your natural abilities to learn languages, starting with... The contents of this book!

The Five-Step Reading Process

Here is my suggested five-step process for making the most of each conversation in this book:

1.

Read the short introduction to the conversation. This is important, as it sets the context for the conversation, helping you understand what you are about to read. Take note of the characters who are speaking and the situation they are in. If you need to refresh your memory of the characters, refer to the character introductions at the front of the book.

2.

Read the conversation all the way through without stopping.

Your aim is simply to reach the end of the conversation, so do not stop to look up words and do not worry if there are things you do not understand. Simply try to follow the gist of the conversation.

3.

Go back and read the same conversation a second time. If you like, you can read in more detail than before, but otherwise simply read it through one more time, using the vocabulary list to check unknown words and phrases where necessary.

4.

By this point, you should be able to follow the gist of the conversation. You might like to continue to read the same conversation a few more times until you feel confident. This is time well-spent and with each repetition you will gradually build your understanding of the content.

5.