AP® Italian Language and Culture
Syllabus 3

Course Overview

Students meet two or three times a week for 77 minutes per class. The course is divided into two semesters, two quarters for each semester. The four skills and culture are integrated throughout the four quarters. Unfortunately, the school does not have a language laboratory so the interactive and receptive communication skills are performed in class with the use of a computer or CD/tape player. The class is conducted entirely in Italian so that students’ interactive, receptive and productive communication skills are constantly developed. [CR4; CR5]

— The teacher uses Italian

Content and Materials

First and Second Quarters

Unit 1
- Selection from Tempi Moderni
- Civilization sections from Primo Libro (Amsco) [CR9]
- Schaum’s Outline of Italian Vocabulary workbook
- Passages from National Italian Exams

Unit 2
- Weekly diaries
- Schaum’s Outline of Italian Grammar workbook
- Selected topics
- Pen pals [CR8]

CR4 — The teacher uses Italian almost exclusively in class and encourages students to do likewise.

CR5 — Instructional materials include a variety of authentic, audio, and/or video recordings that develop students’ listening abilities at the Intermediate High level.

CR9 — The course frequently integrates Italian cultural topics, including geography, contemporary life, arts and sciences, social customs and traditions, and contributions of Italians and Italian Americans to the world.

CR8 — The course provides instruction and frequent opportunities to organize and write Interpersonal and Presentational texts in Italian.
Unit 3
- *Stanno Tutti Bene* (film)
- *Cinema Paradiso* (film)
- Tapes from National Italian Examinations
- Articles from Italian newspapers: *Corriere della Sera, La Stampa, and La Nazione*
- Taped TV advertisements
- Articles from Italian magazines: *Oggi* and *Diciassette* [CR3, CR5, CR6, CR9]

Unit 4
- Written texts on history, music, art, geography, and culinary art from *Primo Libro*
- Information from movies, literature pieces, and national exams

Unit 5
- Ace the *AP Italian Exam* workbook

**Third and Fourth Quarters**

Unit 1
- Selection from *Sette Racconti* by Alberto Moravia
- Civilization Sections from *Primo Libro*
- Schaum’s *Outline of Italian Vocabulary* workbook

Unit 2
- Weekly diaries
- Schaum’s *Outline of Italian Grammar* workbook
- Selected topics
- Pen pals through Internet

Unit 3
- *Il Postino* (film)
- *La Vita è Bella* (film) [CR5, CR9]
- Tapes from National Italian Examinations

Unit 4
- Selections in Italian on history, music, art, geography, culinary art from *Primo Libro*
- Films and literary works, [CR6, CR9, CR10] and excerpts from national exams

Unit 5
- *ACE the AP Italian Exam* workbook
Sample Student Activities

Weekly Diaries
Once a week, students hand in an entry, written in Italian, that addresses an assigned or self-selected topic. I use these diaries similarly to response journals, in that I respond to each to their entries with a series of follow-up questions that they are required to respond to. In this way, each student is given the opportunity to engage in interpersonal writing on a regular basis. Many of these dialogues continue well beyond the week in which they began. [CR2, CR8, CR10]

Films
Students watch one film, without subtitles, per quarter. [CR2, CR3, CR10]

The first 15 minutes of each film are shown three times. I call these “three observations.” For each observation, students receive a worksheet to complete while they are watching the movie. This three-observation approach provides remarkable opportunities for class discussions.

Observation 1: There are two tasks for the students to complete. They are asked to (1) jot down any information about the film that they feel is significant [CR2, CR8] and (2) guess the theme of the film. I collect their work and compile their suggestions for the next day. As a class, we discuss the material [CR2, CR7] to make sure each student has an accurate understanding of the story line.

Observation 2: Students respond to 10 specific questions about the film. Again, I compile their answers, and on the next day we discuss their ideas, suggestions, or opinions as a class to make sure each student is aware of what the film is about. Their work can be set up as true/false statements. [CR2, CR8]

Observation 3: Students complete another worksheet of 10 very different questions, several of which ask the students to consider how Italian cultural perspectives drive the characters’ behaviors, or to consider how the story might be different if it were occurring in the United States. By this time, they have a clear understanding of the main characters and what may occur. They have also become interested in the film on several levels. [CR3]

After the third observation, students receive a packet on the film consisting of a synopsis in English and Italian, a list of idiomatic expressions (optional), and a lengthy list of vocabulary words, including nouns, adjectives and verbs. The packet is divided into five parts, with the film divided into five corresponding segments. Each part of the packet has a list of detailed questions about its segment of the film. Students watch a segment in class and answer questions for homework.
During class, after forming a circle, students express themselves in a variety of ways, from simple to complex. They learn how to agree and disagree with each other in a second language.

The purpose of integrating films in the AP curriculum is to expose all students to different cultures; to help them understand the importance of making connections and comparisons to promote languages and cultures by having the students share the information about each film to the community and most importantly, to give them a variety of topics on which to write or have a class discussion in a second language.

National Italian Examinations

Every week students read one or two passages in Italian from released forms of the AATI National Italian Examination in order to enhance their reading and comprehension abilities. Each passage has five challenging questions for students to dissect and answer. This activity helps students learn new vocabulary words and sentence structures. To enhance their listening and understanding skills, students listen to numerous tapes from previous National Italian Examinations and select the responses that are the best answer to each question. This activity truly sharpens their skills.

Teaching Elementary School Students

All students enrolled in the class are given the opportunity to teach the basics of the Italian language to several elementary school children for a period of eight weeks. Students teach once a week, with a partner or individually. They plan their lessons at home two to three weeks prior to this activity. I review all lessons before the students present their lessons to the children. This activity solidifies the students’ understanding and knowledge of the basic language. Once they have participated in this activity, they know the words for days of the week, months, colors, numbers, fruits, and vegetables, dates, common expressions, time of day, weather, holidays, and so on. This is an amazing learning activity for all students. In fact, several of the students have decided to become teachers because of this experience.

Culture

The Civilization section in Primo Libro is divided into 10 sections: nine are lessons, and one is a review of those one lessons. The information can be distributed to the students in English or in Italian. I prefer having the packet in English and discussing the information in Italian. This packet is meant to help students learn cultural aspects straightforwardly and then be able to communicate those aspects in their second language.

Each of the films introduces students to a profusion of cultural topics. At the end of each film, students work on a cultural project and present the
information to the class. Examples of projects include discussions of operas, composers, geography, political differences, family life, and historical periods. At the end of the course, students can compare and contrast various behaviors, attitudes, and values that reflect the culture.

Once a week students pair up and use “culture cards” to ask and answer each question. Answers are on the back side of each card. I observe their active participation.

**Supplementary Activities**
- Once a month students play Scrabble in Italian.
- Once or twice a quarter students learn an Italian song.
- Students role-play a story that they have read. Each presentation is videotaped so that at the end of the year students can assess their progress.
- Each student prepares and teaches one or two Italian grammar lessons a year.
- Students participate in storytelling on any topic. [CR2, CR7]
- Students prepare themselves for the AP Italian Exam by completing all the exercises in the *ACE the AP Italian Exam* workbook.

**Student Evaluation**

**Weekly quizzes** 20%
Quizzes on vocabulary and grammar take their lead directly from the cultural texts used during the week, [CR11] and are given in a variety of formats including cloze, matching, English-to-Italian, Italian-to-English, and open-ended questions. The purpose is to introduce as many vocabulary words as possible so that students do better on the AP Italian Language and Culture Exam.

**Tests** 20%
All end-of-unit tests include sections on dictation, listening, reading, and writing. These, too, are closely linked to the cultural content contained in whatever is being read or viewed at the time. Students answer simple and complex questions and write essays on films that they have watched. For each essay, students incorporate simple and compound tenses, subjunctive mood, and vocabulary words that were presented in each film. Rubrics that evaluate both writing process and product, and which are provided to the students beforehand, help them to develop their essays. [CR8, CR10, CR11]

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**CR2**—The course prepares students to demonstrate their level of Italian proficiency across the three communicative modes—interpreive, interpersonal, and presentational—and as articulated in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (Standards). (For Standards descriptions, see the Standards Executive Summary.)

**CR7**—The course provides students with frequent opportunities, in class or in a language laboratory, to practice their Interpersonal and Presentational speaking skills in a variety of settings, types of discourse, topics, and registers.

**CR11**—Assessments are frequent, varied, and explicitly linked to the Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational modes. Prior to assigning an assessment task, teachers share with their students the criteria against which their performances will be evaluated.

**CR8**—The course provides instruction and frequent opportunities to organize and write Interpersonal and Presentational texts in Italian.

**CR10**—The course provides students with frequent opportunities to interpret and utilize a variety of formal and informal registers across skills.
Diaries 20%
Students receive a weekly grade based on the conceptual understanding they exhibit in their writing, both in their original drafts and in our ongoing dialogues. A rubric for these diaries is presented to students at the beginning of the course.

Projects 10%
Quarterly projects are assigned on operas, composers, geography, historical events, family life, poems on love (after watching Il Postino), writers, artists, and political differences.

Class Participation 20%

Homework 10%

Teacher Resources

This workbook can be used to review or expand students’ vocabulary. It helps students develop vocabulary needed to converse effectively in Italian about everyday topics. Two or three lessons per quarter are selected in order to expose students to as many new words and idioms as possible.

This workbook helps students prepare for the AP Italian Language and Culture Exam. It contains 10 practice exercises of each component on the AP Exam: listening, reading, writing, culture, and speaking. The order of each component is exactly the way the students will encounter it on the AP Exam.

This textbook contains literary works that deal with some of the contemporary issues Italy faces today (“La Torre,” “Pantomima,” and “Esami di Maturità”). It also includes numerous exercises that allow students to practice their comprehension ability, review verb tenses and prepositions, and acquire new vocabulary words.

Students complete all grammar exercises and all review sections. The civilization section is useful for helping students learn or review material about geography, art, history, writers, explorers, sculptors, and scientists from different periods of time; culinary and musical terms; and Italy’s education system.

This literature easy reader is useful for helping students further develop their reading comprehension and speaking skills. They read a story at home and, as a class, discuss it, summarize it orally or in writing, or simply answer questions based on the material. Often students receive lists of words, taken from the story, to focus on.

**Writing Materials**


This workbook can be used to engage students in a thorough review of grammar from Levels I, II, and III and expose them to finer grammatical concepts.

**Listening/Speaking Materials (Films)**

*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*

*Il Postino*

*La vita è bella*

*Stanno Tutti Bene*

**National Italian Examinations**

Sponsored by the American Association of Teachers of Italian, the National Italian Examinations are administered annually to all participating high school students. There are four levels of examinations, corresponding with the four levels of course work in a fully developed high school Italian curriculum. Students place themselves in the appropriate language categories:

A. for students who study Italian only in the classroom  
B. for students who have prior knowledge of Italian, including dialect  
C. for students who are native speakers of Italian or students who have studied in Italy for two or more years

Each exam assesses listening, writing, and reading skills as well as some cultural knowledge.