3 MINUTE ITALIAN COURSE 6
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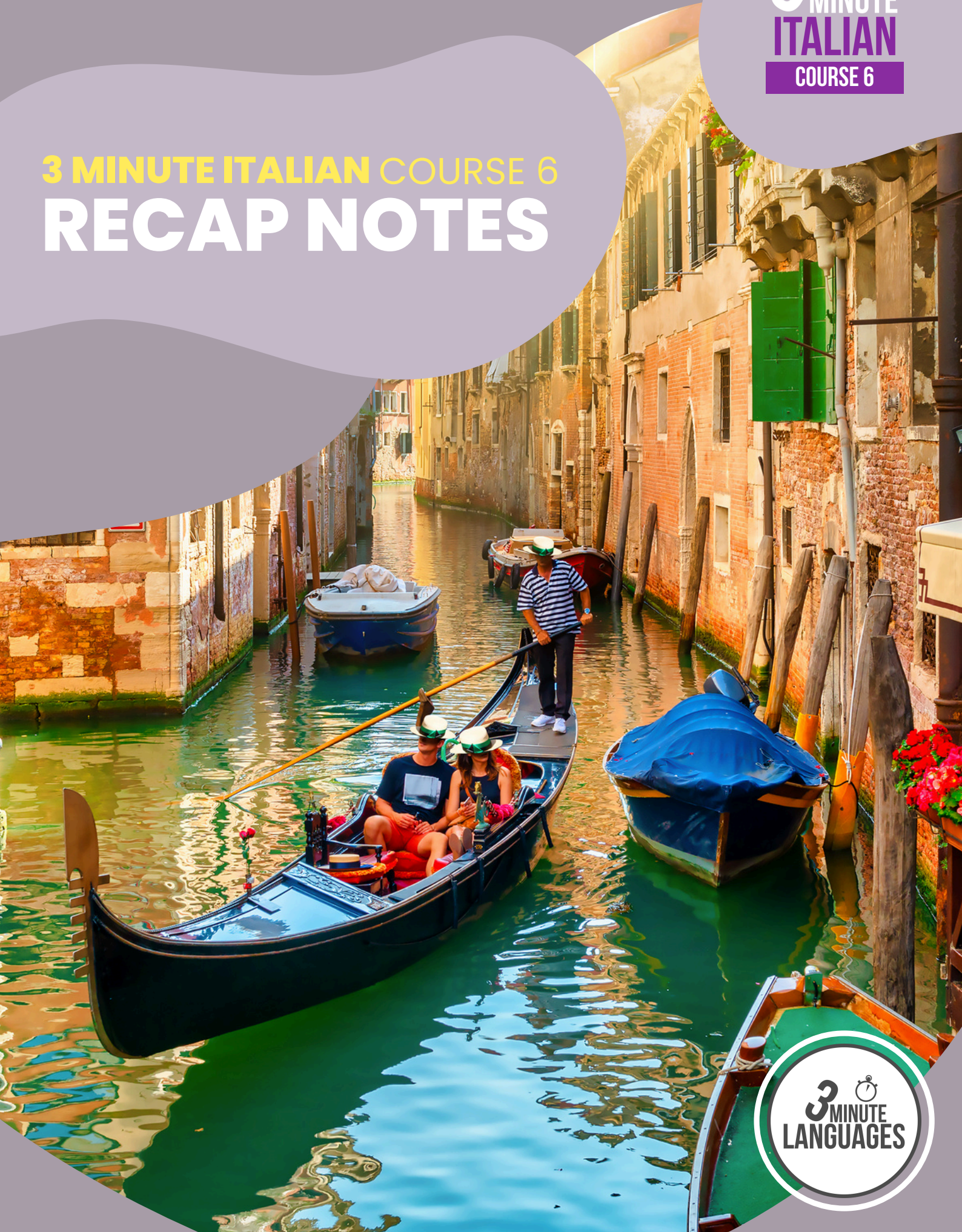
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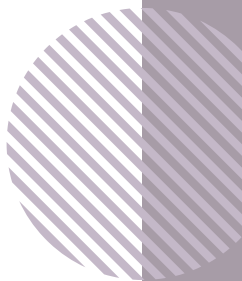
(L')ITALIANO

If you want to say "**I understand Italian**" in Italian, you literally have to say "**I understand <u>the</u> Italian**". This is also the same if you want to say that you're learning Italian.

capisco l'italiano
I understand (the) Italian

imparo l'italiano
I'm learning (the) Italian

However, if you want to say "**I speak Italian**", you don't need the word for "**the**".

parlo italiano
I speak Italian

Don't worry too much if you get it wrong; you'll be perfectly understood, but at least now you know the grammar.

I WAS

To say "**I was**" in Italian, you say "**(io) sono stato**". However, if you're female, you should change it slightly, and say, "**(io) sono stata**"

(io) sono stato qui ieri
I was here yesterday (masculine)

(io) sono stata qui ieri
I was here yesterday (feminine)

EXCUSE ME

There are three main ways to say "**excuse me**" in Italian, and it simply depends on whom you're speaking to.

scusa
informal singular

scusi
formal singular

scusate
plural

So, you can use the first two if you're speaking to one person, and the last one if you're speaking to more than one person. If you want, you can add the word "**mi**" to each of those, to get but they go in slightly different places:

scusami
informal singular

mi scusi
formal singular

scusatemi
plural

PROVARE VS. CERCARE

The verb "**to try**", in English, has two meanings. It can mean "**to try**" something as in **to taste it** or **to try it on**, or it can mean "**to try**" as in **to attempt to do something**.

In Italian, you can use "**provare**" with any noun to say that you're trying it:

vorrei provare il vino
I would like to try the wine

sto per provare le scarpe
I'm about to try the shoes on

If you say that you're trying to do something, you need to use the verb "**cercare di**" instead

vorrei cercare di fare quello
I would like to try to do that

sto per cercare di parlare italiano
I'm about to try to speak Italian

LOST

The word "**perso**", meaning "*lost*", is the past participle of the verb "**perdere**" (*to lose*). You can use it in two ways

ho perso...
I've lost...

mi sono perso
I'm lost

You can use a noun after "**ho perso**" to say what you have lost.

ho perso la macchina
I have lost the car

You can change "**mi sono perso**" to any person:

(io) mi sono perso - *I am lost*
(tu) ti sei perso - *you are lost*
(lui) si è perso - *he is lost*
(lei) si è persa - *she is lost*
(Lei) si è perso - *you are lost*
(noi) ci siamo persi - *we are lost*
(voi) vi siete persi - *you are lost*
(loro) si sono persi - *they are lost*

I UNDERSTAND YOU

In the last course, we learnt that there were multiple ways to say "**you have**". Well, in this course, we've learnt multiple ways to say "I understand you".

The reason is because there are three different ways to say "**you**" in Italian, and the one you use depends on whom you're speaking to.

ti capisco
singular informal

La capisco*
singular formal

vi capisco
plural

*Just note that the L needs to be capital in "La capisco", otherwise it would mean, "I understand her".

PAST TENSE QUESTIONS

In course 5, we learnt all about how to form the **present perfect tense**, which is a tense you can use to talk about the past. In course 6, we learnt how to use this tense to form questions. Basically, all you have to do is change the auxiliary verb.

AUXILIARY VERBS AS QUESTIONS

Here are the auxiliary verbs as questions:

(io) ho...? have I...?
(tu) hai...? have you...?
(lui) ha...? has he...?
(lei) ha...? has she...?
(Lei) ha...? have you...?
(noi) abbiamo...? have we...?
(voi) avete...? have you...?
(loro) hanno...? have they...?

Or you can use an auxiliary verb in a **negative question** format:

(io) non ho...? haven't I...?
(tu) non hai...? haven't you...?
(lui) non ha...? hasn't he...?
(lei) non ha...? hasn't she...?
(Lei) non ha...? haven't you...?
non abbiamo...? haven't we...?
(voi) non avete...? haven't you...?
(loro) non hanno...? haven't they...?

Once you have an auxiliary verb, you simply put a past participle on the end.

EXAMPLES

(tu) hai finito?
have you finished?

(lui) non ha fatto quello?
hasn't he done that?

(loro) hanno provato il vino?
have they tried the wine?

(lei) non ha fatto una prenotazione?
hasn't she made a reservation?

TWO MEANINGS

There are two ways to translate the past tense questions into English. One way has the word "**have**", and the other has "**did**".

(tu) hai mangiato?
have you eaten? / did you eat?

(loro) hanno bevuto?
have they drunk? / did they drink?

(lei) ha parlato?
has she spoken? / did she speak?

There are also two ways to translate the negative past tense questions. One way has "**haven't**" and the other has "**didn't**".

(tu) non hai mangiato?
haven't you eaten? / didn't you eat?

(loro) non hanno bevuto?
haven't they drunk? / didn't they drink?

(loro) non hanno parlato?
haven't they spoken? / didn't they speak?

ME

In English, you can put the word "me" after verbs:

*Can you help **me**?*
*Will you show **me**?*
*Marie will tell **me***

You can do the same in Italian, except the word "**mi**" is attached to the end of the verb. All you have to remember is to remove the letter "**e**" from the end of the verb before you attach the "**mi**".

(Lei) può dirmi?
Can you tell me?

(Lei) vuole aiutarmi?
Do you want to help me?

(Lei) può mostrarmi il vino?
Can you show me the wine?

I KNOW

The phrase "**(io) so**" means "**I know**", and you can put a verb on the end of it to say "**I know how to do**" something.

(io) so fare quello
I know how to do that

(io) so parlare italiano
I know how to speak Italian

You don't need to use the word "**how**" or "**come**" after "**(io) so**"

MOSTRARE

The verb, "**mostrare**" means "**to show**", but it's used slightly different in Italian to how we use it in English.

In English, we can generally say sentences that contain "**to show**" in two ways:

I'm going to show Maria the car
I'm going to show the car to Maria

You can put "**Maria**" before or after "**the car**", but if it comes after, you have to say "**to Maria**". Well, in Italian, you always have to put the word "**a**" in front of the person you're showing something to.

sto per mostrare la macchina a Maria
I'm about to show the car to Maria

And this is true whether or not we use "**to**" in English; you ***always*** have to use "**a**" in Italian:

(Lei) può mostrare a Maria dov'è lui?
Can you show Maria where he is?
(Literally: Can you show to Maria where is he?)

vorrei mostrare la macchina a Paolo
I would like to show Paolo the car
(Literally: I'm going to show the car to Paolo)

vorrei mostrare a Alice quale vogio
I would like to show Alice which one I want
(Literally: I would like to show to Alice which one I want)

"IT" IN THE PAST

We already learnt that you can put "**lo**" in front of a verb to mean "**it**". However, in the past tense, you have to put the word "**lo**" in front of the auxiliary verb, and it can shorten to **L'**

(io) lo ho mangiato / (io) l'ho mangiato
I have eaten it / I ate it

(lui) lo ha visto / (lui) l'ha visto
he has seen it / he saw it

(noi) l'abbiamo provato
we have tried it / we tried it

In the negative, the "**lo**" or "**l'**" still goes in front of the auxiliary verb, and the "**non**" would go in front of that

(io) non l'ho mangiato
I haven't eaten it / I didn't eat it

(lui) non l'ha visto
he hasn't seen it / he didn't see it

(noi) non l'abbiamo provato
we haven't tried it / we didn't try it

HIM OR HER

The word "**lo**" means "**it**", but it can also mean "**him**".

(io) lo ho visto
I have seen him / I saw him

If you want to say "**her**", you would use "**la**" instead. But, when you put "**la**" in front of an auxiliary verb, it can shorten to **L'**, just like "**lo**". This means you can't tell whether it's **lo** or **la**, so you won't know if it means **him** or **her**. So, in Italian, to clarify that you're saying "**her**" rather than "**him**", you change the "**o**" on the end of the past participle to an "**a**":

(io) l'ho vista
I have seen her / I saw her

(noi) l'abbiamo chiamato
we called him

(noi) l'abbiamo chiamata
we called her

THE PECULIARITY OF
ANY

There's a tiny peculiarity with the English word "any". It can have two slightly different meanings. Have a look at these two sentences:

Do you want any wine?
I don't have any wine

On first glance, there's nothing strange about the sentences, but in reality, the first sentence assumes there is wine available, whilst the second sentence points out that there is no wine available. The first sentence is, therefore, positive, and the second sentence is negative.

In Italian, if you want to say "**any**" in a positive sentence, you should use the word "**di**" plus "**the**" (**del / della / dei / etc...**), but if you want to say "**any**" in a negative sentence, you simply don't say anything at all.

(Lei) vuole del vino?
Do you want any wine?

non ho vino
I don't have any wine

Paolo non ha soldi
Paolo doesn't have any money

Paolo ha dei soldi?
Does Paolo have any money?

SOME VS. ANY

Another way to look at the different forms of the word "**any**" in English is to compare it with the word "some". If you can replace "**any**" with "**some**", and it still makes sense, you should use "**del / della / dei...**" in Italian. If you can't replace "**any**" with "**some**" in a sentence, you don't use a word for "**any**" in Italian.

In the following question, you can easily replace the word "**any**" with "**some**", and it still makes sense. So, in Italian, you use "**del**"
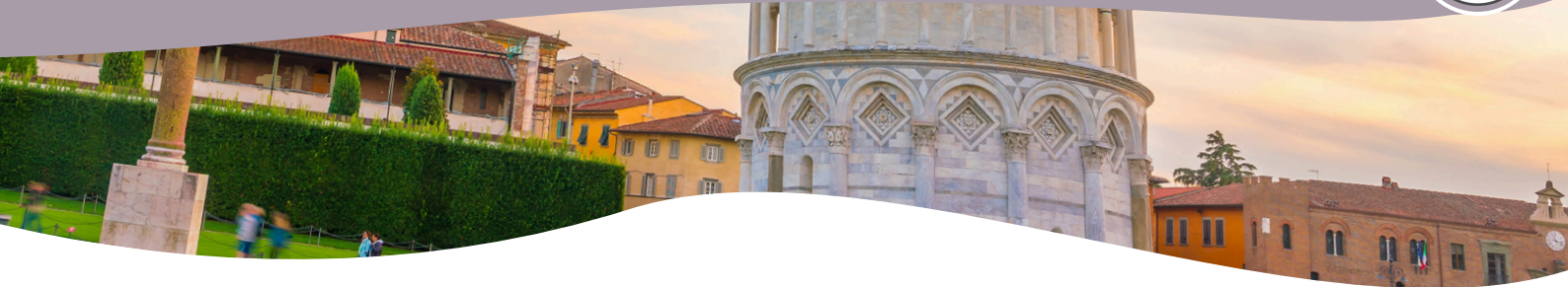
Do you want <u>any</u> wine?
(Do you want <u>some</u> wine?) ✓
(Lei) vuole del vino?

However, with the next sentence, you can't replace "any" with "some", because it wouldn't make sense. So, in Italian, you say nothing

I don't have <u>any</u> wine
(I don't have <u>some</u> wine) ✗
Non ho vino

DO YOU KNOW WHERE...?

In English, after the phrase "**Do you know where...?**", you can put a noun followed by the word "**is**" or "**are**":

Do you know where the hotel is?
Do you know where the children are?
Do you know where Paolo is?

In Italian, however, you put the noun to the end of the question, after the word "**è**" or "**sono**".

(Lei) sa dov'è l'albergo?
Do you know where the hotel is?

(Lei) sa dove sono i bambini?
Do you know where the children are?

(Lei) sa dov'è Paolo?
Do you know where Paolo is?

BUONO VS. BELLO

There are lots of things that we might describe as "**good**" in English, but that the Italians might describe as "**bello**" instead. You can use "**bello**" to mean "**beautiful**", but it could also be used to express "**great**" or "**lovely**". Just note, when you put "**bello**" in front of a masculine noun, it shortens to "**bel**"

ho visto un bel film - *I saw a great film*
un bel ristorante - *a nice restaurant*

Of course, you can use "**buono**" to describe these as "**good**"; I'm just pointing out that Italians use the word "**bello**" a lot more than we use the word "**beautiful**"

Let's have a quick recap of the different forms of "**bello**"

bello - masculine singular
bella - feminine singular
belli - masculine plural
belle - feminine plural

If the word "**bello**" goes in front of a masculine noun, it shortens to "**bel**". In front of a plural masculine noun, it's "**bei**"

bei ristoranti - *beautiful restaurants*

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