

ITALIAN II HONORS

Course Description

Italian 2 Honors is a rigorous second-year course designed for students who demonstrate strong foundational proficiency and readiness for increased academic challenge. Students develop communicative competence through sustained interpersonal interaction, structured presentational writing, and interpretation of authentic materials. Instruction is organized around the regions of Italy and emphasizes intercultural analysis, critical thinking, and independent language production. Equal emphasis is placed on listening, reading, writing, and speaking; however, honor students are expected to sustain longer discourse, communicate spontaneously, and produce organized paragraph-level writing. The Holy Cross World Language Department uses ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines to measure growth. Italian 2 Honors targets movement from Novice High to Intermediate Low proficiency, with high-performing students approaching Intermediate Mid by the end of the academic year. In alignment with the school's Portrait of the Crusader, students are encouraged to be inspired learners with a strong foundation of effective communication, critical thinking, and intercultural understanding. Through our study of cultures and traditions, students grow as faithful citizens who respect the dignity and uniqueness of every human being.

Honors-Level Academic Expectations

- Students enrolled in Italian 2 Honors are expected to:
- Sustain spontaneous interpersonal conversation beyond memorized dialogue
- Write organized multi-paragraph responses (150–250 words)
- Narrate in present and past time frames
- Use transition words consistently
- Interpret authentic materials with limited scaffolding
- Engage in cultural comparison using evidence
- Demonstrate measurable growth toward Intermediate-Low proficiency
- Placement in Honors requires consistent academic responsibility and independent work habits.

Essential Questions for the Course

Language:

- How does my language shape my identity?
- How does my language affect how others relate to me?
- How can I enhance my connections with people through language?
- How will learning a new language help me to become an active global citizen?
- How will learning another language be useful in other aspects of life?
- Why is precise language important in all aspects of life?
- How does language change in different situations?

Culture:

- How do cultures evolve?
- How do cultural practices help shape identity?
- How do traditions and celebrations reflect the history and values of a place and a people?

- How are traditional practices reflected in our modern lifestyle?
- How are we transformed by our study of other cultures?
- Why should we preserve historical, cultural, and geographic destinations?

Course Curriculum

Preliminary Unit: ¡Bentornati in Italia!

Pacing 2 -3 weeks

Focus Questions for Self-Reflection:

- In which vocabulary theme are you most proficient and least proficient?
- In which grammar points are you most proficient and least proficient?
- What cultural aspects did you find most interesting in Italian 1 and why?

Concepts/Skills:

Vocabulary and Grammar:

- Review vocabulary words, including idiomatic and culturally authentic expressions, based on the thematic topics from Italian I.
- Read and comprehend selected authentic sources in Italian.
- Demonstrate comprehension of authentic audio recordings.
- Use the grammatical structures learned in Italian I.
- Produce brief creative writings using the vocabulary and structures taught in Italian I.

Communication:

- Conduct short research to answer foundational questions about Italian culture and festivals.
- Discuss the language-focused essential questions. (This activity is used throughout the course.)

Intercultural Focus:

- Explore the cultural aspects of Italian summer celebrations in Italy, in the United States, and in our own community. Share and discuss observations.

Assessments:

- Conversational interview. (Interpersonal Speaking)
- Research and present information focused on the products, practices, and perspectives of *Ferragosto* - Midsummer Feast (Presentational Speaking)
- ACTFL-aligned diagnostic writing benchmark (minimum 150 words)
- Spontaneous interpersonal speaking benchmark (2–3 minutes without script)

Unit 1: La Liguria 1

Pacing: 5 -6 weeks

Focus Questions:

- What are some differences between Italian and American families?
- What is your most important possession and why?
- What are some attractions of Liguria?

Concepts/Skills:

Vocabulary and Grammar:

- Learn and apply vocabulary in context:
 - Family members
 - Parts of the body
 - Common possessions
- Learn and apply grammar in context:
 - Possessive adjectives - agreement in gender and number (agree with the item, not the owner)
 - Possessive adjectives to state family relationships
 - Definite articles with possessive adjectives
 - The verbs *uscire* (to go out) and *dare* (to give)
 - Irregular nouns

Communication:

- Engage in basic conversation about family members.
- Ask and answer basic questions about family members and their interests or belongings.
- Engage in basic conversation, both scripted and spontaneous, about your favorite possessions.
- Read excerpts in the target language and respond.

Honors students are expected to produce sustained paragraph-level writing and participate in spontaneous interpersonal speaking tasks with reduced reliance on scripted language.

Intercultural Focus: *La Liguria*

- Recognize differences between family-related traditions in Italy, the United States, and in the community.
- Locate and discuss important characteristics of the Liguria region.
- Identify and discuss famous Ligurians.
- Identify cultural products of Liguria by viewing the movie “Luca”.

Assessments:

- Engage in scripted and original conversation focused on describing pictures of family members. (Interpersonal speaking)
 - Listen to and interpret introductory conversations between native Italian speakers focused on the topics of the unit (Interpretive Listening)
 - Read and respond to a basic email in the target language. (Interpretive Reading)
 - Complete written assessments that monitor learning of the content and skills taught in the unit.
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Unit 2: La Calabria

Pacing: 6 - 7 weeks

Focus Questions:

- What are some things that you wish to do? What are some goals that you want to achieve?
- What are some things that you are obliged to do?
- What are some of your favorite places to go? Why?
- What is Calabria known for?

Concepts/Skills:

Vocabulary and Grammar:

- Learn and apply vocabulary in context:
 - Common rooms in a house
 - Places in a city or town
 - Words that express location
- Learn and apply grammar in context:
 - The verbs *volere* (to want; to wish), *dovere* (to have to; must), *venire* (to come)
 - Prepositions and prepositional contractions with definite article
 - Demonstrative adjectives (this, that, these and those), agreement in gender and number

Communication:

- Ask and answer questions about activities that someone *wants to do* and *has to do*.
- Engage in conversation about short and long-term goals.
- Accurately form questions and responses about the location of places in the city and the location of items in the rooms of a house.
- Using vocabulary from the unit, engage in basic conversation about the specialties and characteristics of Calabria.

Honors students are expected to produce sustained paragraph-level writing and participate in spontaneous interpersonal speaking tasks with reduced reliance on scripted language.

Intercultural Focus: La Calabria

- Discover ways the region of Calabria is important for its coast and mountains.
- Explore aspects of its food and how the production of food products defines identity.
- Discuss famous Calabrians and the contributions they have made in society.
- Examine how geography shapes the cultural practices, perspectives, and products of Calabria.

Assessments:

- Listen to and interpret a conversation about what a person wants to do and needs to do. (Interpretive Listening)
- View and listen to a description of an image and identify its location, weather, and the people in it. (Interpretive listening)
- Read a dialogue and identify the weather, location, and people involved. (Interpretive reading)
- Complete written assessments that monitor learning of content and skills taught in the unit.

Unit 3: L'Umbria

Pacing: 6 - 7 weeks

Focus Questions:

- How do clothes represent society?
- How do people's way of dressing reflect their values and the values of their communities?
- Why are numbers important?
- What is unique about the Umbria region of Italy?

Concepts/Skills:

Vocabulary and Grammar:

- Learn and apply vocabulary in context:
 - What, where, when, with whom
 - Idiomatic expressions with the verb *fare* (to do)
 - Clothing
 - Numbers from 100 to one billion
- Learn and apply grammar in context:
 - Irregular verb *fare*
 - Direct object pronouns and their placement
 - Exclamations *Che!* (What!) and *Quanto!* (How!)

Communication:

- Apply the vocabulary and grammatical structures to exchange information about when, what, where, and with whom one has breakfast; takes a trip; and does shopping.
- Read short passages and watch short videos spoken in Italian; interpret and comment on what is read/heard.
- Write descriptive text and share information using an integrated multimedia approach.
- Discuss how the way one dresses impacts daily life activities and perspectives on identity.

Honors students are expected to produce sustained paragraph-level writing and participate in spontaneous interpersonal speaking tasks with reduced reliance on scripted language.

Intercultural Focus: L'Umbria

- Discover ways the region of Umbria is important for its history, cities, products and practices.
- Discuss the importance of the Eurochocolate Festival and the chocolate industry of Umbria.
- Explore churches, museums, and monuments of Umbria, with particular emphasis on the Basilica Di San Francesco in Assisi.
- Discuss famous people from Umbria and the contributions they have made in society.
- Analyze how geography shapes the cultural practices, perspectives, and products of Umbria.

Assessments:

- Listen to native Italian conversations about film, concerts, and places to visit in Umbria. Respond to/expand upon the information from the conversations. (Interpretive Listening)
- Write a descriptive essay about the types of clothing you would buy with a monetary gift, where you would go to make your purchase, and where you would wear your new clothes.

(Presentational Writing)

- Create an audiovisual presentation to illustrate/describe the information from the descriptive essay. (Presentational Speaking)
 - Complete written assessments that monitor learning of the content and skills taught to date.
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Unit 4: La Campania

Pacing: 6 - 7 weeks

Focus Questions:

- Why are sports important in everyday life?
- Is the past more important than the present? Why or why not?
- What is unique about La Campania?

Concepts/Skills:

Vocabulary and Grammar:

- Learn and apply vocabulary in context:
 - Sports and sports activities
 - Ordinal numbers
 - Time (past events, i.e., a month ago, a week ago, last evening)
 - Festival foods
- Learn and apply grammar in context: with *avere*
 - Past tense *passato prossimo*
 - Irregular past participles used with the helping verb *avere*
 - Direct object pronouns with verbs in the past tense

Communication:

- Express past actions. Retell stories and events sequencing past actions.
- Reduce redundancy in speech by using direct object pronouns.
- Ask and answer questions about sports in school during different seasons, items purchased, places visited, and foods eaten during sport outings and festivals.
- Rank sports using ordinal numbers and share these rankings with the class.
- Students must narrate using sequencing expressions (*prima, poi, dopo, mentre, alla fine*).
- Students must reduce redundancy using direct object pronouns.
- Students must retell past events without notes.

Honors students are expected to produce sustained paragraph-level writing and participate in spontaneous interpersonal speaking tasks with reduced reliance on scripted language.

Intercultural Focus: La Campania

- Discover ways that the region of Campania is important for its history, cities, products and practices. Research churches, museums, and monuments of Campania.
- Discuss famous people from Campania and the contributions they have made in society.
- Explore how geography shapes the cultural practices, perspectives, and products of Campania.

Assessments:

- Listen to and comment on the conversations of native Italian speakers focused on sports and festivals. (Interpretive Listening)
 - Write a descriptive essay to explain what happened at your friend's 16th birthday party last Saturday. (Presentational Writing)
 - Complete written assessments that monitor learning of the content and skills taught to date.
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Unit 5: L'Emilia Romagna

Pacing: 6 - 7 weeks

Focus Questions:

- What role do animals play in our daily lives?
- How would you share a joyful memory from your past?
- What is the region of Emilia-Romagna known for?

Concepts/Skills:

Vocabulary and Grammar:

- Learn and apply vocabulary in context:
 - Pets, animals and insects
 - Memories
- Learn and apply grammar in context:
 - The verbs to know: *conoscere* and *sapere*
 - Past tense with the auxiliary verb *essere* (to be)
 - Distinguishing past tense with the helping verb *avere* o *essere*

Communication:

- Use the vocabulary and grammatical structures from the unit to compare what you knew five years ago and what you know now.
- Analyze photographs, videos, ads, blogs, charts, and graphs to understand the importance of pets in Italy and share this information with others.
- Use the vocabulary used in the unit and the grammatical structures learned throughout the course to describe a joyful memory from your past. Share in writing and through oral presentation.

Honors students are expected to produce sustained paragraph-level writing and participate in spontaneous interpersonal speaking tasks with reduced reliance on scripted language.

Intercultural Focus: L'Emilia-Romagna

- Discover ways the region of Emilia-Romagna is important for its food and luxury automobile and motorcycle industries.
- Read and discuss famous people from Emilia-Romagna and the contributions they have made in society.
- Examine how geography shapes the cultural practices, perspectives, and products of Emilia-Romagna.

Assessments:

- Read, interpret and share conclusions based on information from graphs, charts, lists of percentages, and short written texts about pets in Italy. (Interpretive reading)
 - Write a descriptive essay to share a joyful memory from your past and summarize for classmates. Use vocabulary and grammatical structures taught throughout the course. (Presentational writing / Presentational speaking)
 - Complete written assessments that monitor learning of the content and skills taught to date.
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Honors Writing Expectations

Italian 2 Honors students are expected to demonstrate measurable growth in paragraph-level writing throughout the academic year.

Writing Benchmarks:

- Unit 1 – 150–180 words
- Unit 2 – 180–200 words
- Unit 3 – 200 words minimum
- Unit 4 – 200–250 words
- Unit 5 – 200–250 words

By the end of the course, students must be able to:

- Produce organized multi-paragraph writing
- Narrate in present and past time frames
- Use transition words consistently
- Support opinions with simple reasoning
- Demonstrate control of previously learned grammar

Honors Placement & Academic Integrity Statement

Students enrolled in Italian 2 Honors are expected to maintain academic integrity, complete assignments independently, and participate actively in target-language instruction. Consistent failure to meet honors-level expectations may result in placement review.

Grading

Listening	15%
Reading	15%
Writing/Vocabulary & Grammar	25%
Speaking	25%
Culture & Participation	20%

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines used by the World Language Department

Honors students are evaluated using ACTFL-aligned rubrics emphasizing sustained discourse, spontaneity, transition use, and paragraph-level organization. Performance expectations exceed those of standard Italian 2.

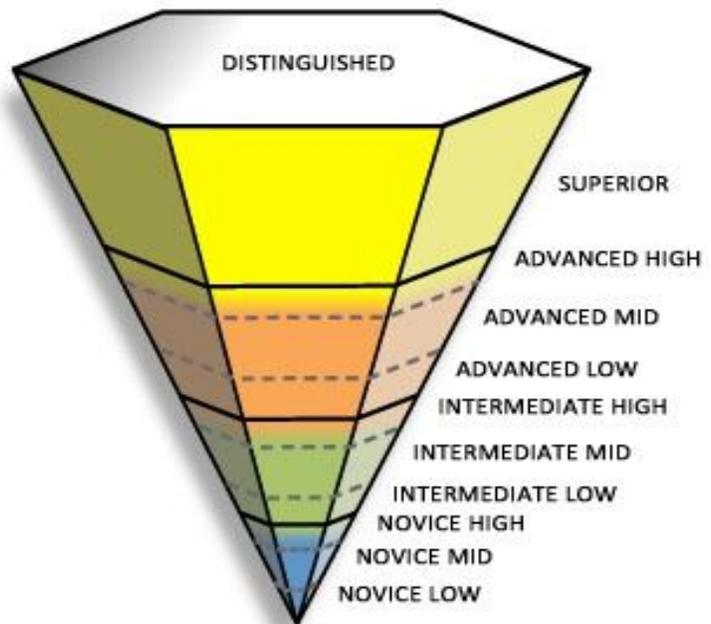
By mid-year, students must demonstrate consistent Novice High performance across modes.

By the end of the course, students are expected to perform at the Intermediate Low level in writing and speaking. Students not demonstrating growth toward this target may be reviewed for placement.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines are a description of what individuals can do with language in terms of speaking, writing, listening, and reading in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context. For each skill, these guidelines identify five major levels of proficiency: Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice. The major levels Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice are subdivided into high, mid, and low sublevels.

The levels of the ACTFL Guidelines describe the continuum of proficiency from that of the highly articulate, well-educated language user to a level of little or no functional ability.

These guidelines present the levels of proficiency as ranges and describe what an individual can and cannot do with language at each level, regardless of where, when, or how the language was acquired. Together these levels form a hierarchy in which each level subsumes all lower levels. The guidelines are not based on any particular theory, pedagogical method, or educational curriculum. They neither describe how an individual learns a language nor prescribe how an individual should learn a language, and they should not be used for such purposes. They are an instrument for the evaluation of functional language ability.



Resources

- *Chiarissimo UNO*. (2014) Bruna Petrarca Boyle, John Giovanelli, Wayside Publishing,
- [Learning Site – Wayside Publishing](#)
- www.wordreference.com
- Supplementary enrichment material