



ITALIAN DICTION

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Chapter 1: Phonetic Concepts **READING GUIDE**

Gateway to Italian Diction is both an introductory textbook to help you develop basic competency in Italian diction and a reference book that will serve you throughout your career. That is why it contains so many details and examples of Italian words and phrases. Using the Reading Guides will help you recognize the information that should be mastered first.

Diction

When we make our sung texts clear, we have good (1) _____. When we speak or sing only the best, most correct sounds, we have good (2) _____. When we speak or sing efficiently and with little tension, we have good (3) _____. Our aim is to achieve (4) _____.

The science of speech sounds is (5) _____, and the scholars who study it are (6) _____. Speech sounds that help to determine the meaning of what we say are called (7) _____. Whether a particular sound determines meaning in a particular language is proved by means of (8) _____. Sounds that are produced differently but are understood by the listener as if they are equivalent to each other are (9) _____.

IPA stands for (10) _____. To set off IPA symbols from other writing, we use (11) _____. The process of writing a text in IPA symbols is called (12) _____. In IPA, silent letters are (13) _____. Some signs that are used in normal writing are not used in IPA, for instance, (14) _____ and (15) _____.

Another term for narrow transcription is (16) _____ transcription. Another term for broad transcription is (17) _____ transcription.

Orthography

The writing and spelling of a language constitute its (18) _____. Words that are identical in meaning are (19) _____. Words that are identical in spelling are (20) _____. Words that are identical in sound are (21) _____.

If two letters are used to spell one sound, they are called a (22) _____.

Chapter 4: Vowels and Semivowels **VOWEL ARTICULATION PRACTICE**

The words in these lists contain only one vowel sound or two. Speak and sing them aloud, making sure of the consistency of the target vowel.

Stress is on the penultimate syllable, unless an accent mark shows either final or antepenultimate stress. Articles do not always contain the target vowel.

Remember that a stressed vowel is long if it is final in the syllable. Make a clear distinction between long and short stressed vowels in your pronunciations.

1. Words that use only /i/ and /i:/. Keep the vowel pure, regardless of what consonants come before and after.

<i>finiti</i>	finished (masc. pl.)	<i>i libri</i>	books
<i>vicini</i>	nearby (masc. pl.)	<i>i gridi</i>	outcries
<i>tristi</i>	sad (masc. pl.)	<i>i primi</i>	first (masc. pl.)

2. Words that use only /e/ and /e:/. Keep the vowel pure, with no hint of a diphthong /ei/.

<i>la rete</i>	net, network	<i>le pere</i>	pears
<i>le rene</i>	sands	<i>le tele</i>	fabrics
<i>bere</i>	to drink	<i>le bellezze</i>	beauties
<i>crédere</i>	to see	<i>tenere</i>	to keep
<i>le vendette</i>	acts of revenge	<i>leggete!</i>	read!

3. Words that use only /a/ and /a:/. Be sure that unstressed syllables also have /a/.

<i>la banca</i>	bank	<i>la sala</i>	room
<i>la gamba</i>	leg	<i>il papa</i>	pope
<i>canta</i>	sings	<i>paga</i>	pays
<i>la lana</i>	wool	<i>la lampada a gas</i>	gas lamp
<i>la ladra</i>	thief (fem.)	<i>la pala d'altar</i>	altarpiece

4. Words that use only /u/ and /u:/:

<i>tu</i>	thou, you (sing.)	<i>blu</i>	navy blue
<i>su</i>	on	<i>il blues</i>	blues (music)
<i>il tutú</i>	tutu		

5. Words that use only /o/ and /o:/. Keep the vowel pure, with no hint of a diphthong /ou/.

<i>loro</i>	their	<i>il borgo</i>	village
<i>contro</i>	against	<i>pronto</i>	ready
<i>sotto</i>	under	<i>rosso</i>	red
<i>il pomo</i>	apple	<i>rotondo</i>	round, circular
<i>il conto</i>	account, restaurant check	<i>profondo</i>	deep