

Italian For Gringos Lesson 3 Numbers 120 2026 10 04

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Maya: Ciao, and welcome back to Italian for Gringos! I'm Maya.

Devon: And I'm Devon. Lesson three, and today we're conquering numbers one through twenty plus the number one pronunciation trick in all of Italian.

Maya: Devon, why do numbers matter so much for a traveler?

Devon: Because every price tag, every platform number at the train station, and every hotel room number is just numbers. Learn these twenty and Italy gets a lot less confusing.

Maya: And the secret weapon today is double consonants. In Italian, a doubled consonant means you hold it longer. It's a real pause, not just spelling. Miss it and you say the wrong word entirely. Let's hear the difference with our first group, one through five.

Devon: Uno, due, tre, quattro, cinque. That's one through five.

Maya: Respellings: uno is OO-noh. Due is DOO-eh. Tre is just treh. Quattro is KWAHT-troh feel the double t, hold it. Cinque is CHEEN-kweh. Remember the rule: c before e or i sounds like ch, so ci is chee.

Devon: So quattro has a held t: KWAHT-troh. And cinque starts with a ch sound: CHEEN-kweh. What's the word danger if I skip the double?

Maya: Oh, plenty. But today's classic: next group. Sei, sette, otto, nove, dieci. Six through ten.

Devon: Respellings: sei is seh-ee, two quick syllables. Sette is SEHT-teh hold that double t or it sounds like sete, which means thirst. Otto is OHT-toh double t again. Nove is NOH-veh. Dieci is dyeh-CHEE, ten, with the c-before-i ch sound.

Maya: Perfect. Double consonants held, every time. Now the teens, eleven through fifteen, and they follow a pattern: the small number plus dieci. Undici, dodici, tredici, quattordici, quindici.

Devon: So eleven is undici: oon-DEE-chee. Twelve is dodici: DOH-dee-chee. Thirteen is tredici: TREH-dee-chee. Fourteen is quattordici: kwaht-TOR-dee-chee double t again. Fifteen is quindici: KWEEN-dee-chee.

Maya: Listen to the music of them: undici, dodici, tredici, quattordici, quindici. Final stretch, sixteen through twenty. Sedici, diciassette, diciotto, diciannove, venti.

Devon: Sixteen is sedici: SEH-dee-chee. Seventeen is diciassette: dee-chahs-SEHT-teh and there's our double s and double t, hold them both or it's mush. Eighteen is diciotto: dee-CHOT-toh double t. Nineteen is diciannove: dee-chahn-NOH-veh. And twenty is venti: VEHN-tee.

Maya: Now the famous one. Anno means year. Spelled with a double n. If you say it with a single n, ano, it means something you absolutely do not want to say at dinner. Hold the n: AHN-noh.

Devon: Lesson learned. Double consonants or disaster. Demo time. We're at a gelato stand

Maya: Prego!

Devon: We used due, tre, cinque, per favore, grazie, and prego lessons one, two, and three all in one gelato order. Cultural note: Italians count on their fingers starting with the thumb for one. So if a vendor holds up a thumb, that's uno, not a thumbs-up. And when they say a price, they say it fast cinque euro can sound like one word. Ask them to repeat: puòripetere? That means can you repeat: pwoh ree-peh-TEH-reh.

Maya: Recap drill. Three numbers. Devon, you're up.

Devon: Hit me.

Maya: The number seven.

Devon: Sette. SEHT-teh, with the held double t.

Maya: The number thirteen.

Devon: Tredici. TREH-dee-chee.

Maya: The number twenty.

Devon: Venti. VEHN-tee.

Maya: Bravissimo! Numbers one through twenty are yours, and you now know the double consonant rule that unlocks all of Italian pronunciation. Next lesson: numbers twenty to one hundred, plus money and prices.

Devon: Arrivederci! Practice out loud uno, due, tre all day long!