

the Italian alphabet

Learn online

www.bbc.co.uk/languages/italian

Italian Steps Stage 2: Spelling your name

A chance to listen at your own pace to the sounds of the Italian alphabet and to find out how to give an email address in Italian. Watch as Giovanna is asked to spell her name when checking into a hotel then do the online practice activities.

Key language

Il suo nome? Your name?

Come si scrive? How is it written?

doppia S double S

trattino hyphen

***A come Ancona** A as in Ancona

*To clarify letters when a word is being spelt out – the equivalent of using ‘Alpha, Bravo, Charlie ... Yankee, Zulu’ in English – Italian has a system largely made up of the names of cities.

For J, K, X and Y – not part of the Italian alphabet – you simply use the letter itself.

J = i lunga

K = kappa

X = iks

Y = ipsilon

A = Ancona

B = Bologna

C = Como

D = Domodossola

E = Empoli

F = Forlì

G = Genova

H = hotel (or acca)

I = Imola

L = Livorno

M = Milano

N = Napoli

O = Otranto

P = Padova

Q = quaranta

R = Roma

S = Savona

T = Torino

U = Udine

V = Venezia

W = Washington

Z = zeta

Learning hints

Some English names can be difficult for Italian speakers, which is why it's useful to be able to spell them out, particularly on the phone or voicemail. You're most likely to need to know how to spell out your own details, so make sure you practise spelling your name and address and the names of anyone who might be travelling with you.

Acquiring a good Italian accent is about more than knowing the alphabet, and it's very important to say words and phrases out loud on a regular basis. Listen as often as you can to Giovanna and the people she meets in Italian Steps and make a concerted effort to imitate them closely.

Quiz

The following spell the Italian names of 3 countries and 3 towns. Say them out loud, work out what each one is and match them up.

1. erre – u – doppia esse – i – a
2. e – di – i – emme – bi – u – erre – gi – o
3. esse – e – vu – i – doppia elle – a
4. esse – ci – o – zeta – i – a
5. emme – o – esse – ci – a
6. esse – pi – a – gi – enne – a

Answers on www.bbc.co.uk/languages/italian/answers.shtml