

THE SPEAK CLEARLY METHOD

FREE PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

English Pronunciation for Italian Speakers

per chi parla italiano · built around your first language

/θ/ TH

the H

-a endings

vowels

the R

NG

You don't have to lose your accent.

You have to be understood.

by Evangeline Smith & Miriam Smith · authors of Speak Clearly

THE PRACTICAL ENGLISH SERIES

English Pronunciation for Italian Speakers

A Speak Clearly Method guide

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Companion to "Speak Clearly: A Practical Guide to English Pronunciation."

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Built for Italian speakers

Your accent isn't random — it's Italian, a wonderfully musical language, showing through in English. Because Italian follows clear rules, the places it shapes your English are predictable. And predictable means fixable.

This guide skips the sounds you already handle well and goes straight to the handful that most affect whether English listeners understand you the first time.

The promise

This is not about erasing your accent or sounding American. Only about 1 in 4 English speakers learned it as a first language — you're the majority, not the exception. We keep your accent and fix only what gets in the way of being understood.

How to use it

Read the strengths on the next page first, then work through the fix cards one at a time. Say everything OUT LOUD — into your phone's recorder or a mirror. A sound only counts when it survives outside the page.

Sounds you already own

Italian gives you a big head start — more than most languages. Several sounds that defeat other learners are already yours. Trust them.

ci → CH

Your ci in ciao, cena is exactly English “ch” in cheese, watch.

gi → J

Your gi in gelato, giorno is exactly English “j” in jam, join, page.

sc → SH

Your sc in scena, pesce is English “sh” in she, wash, nation.

u → W

Your u in uovo, quando gives you English ‘w’ — so “west” is easy for you!

Clear vowels

Your vowels are crisp and musical — a strong, clear foundation.

Start from these. When a new English sound feels hard, remember how many you already make perfectly.

Fix cards · 1 of 3

-C

endings

Don't add a vowel

ITALIAN HABIT Italian words end in vowels, so English endings gain one: "dog"→"dog-uh," "big"→"big-uh."

THE FIX Stop cleanly ON the final consonant. Say "dog" and freeze — don't let a vowel escape after it.

dog

big

good

stop

TH

/θ ð/

The TH sound

ITALIAN HABIT Italian has no TH, so "think" becomes "tink/sink" and "this" becomes "dis."

THE FIX Put your tongue tip between your teeth and push air. In a mirror you should see it.

think

three

this

mother

H

/h/

The H sound

ITALIAN HABIT Italian h is silent, so "house" becomes "ouse" and "hello" becomes "ello."

THE FIX For h, push a little breath before the vowel — like fogging a mirror. Feel the air leave.

house

happy

behind

hello

Fix cards · 2 of 3

i:

/ɪ i:/

Ship vs Sheep

ITALIAN HABIT

Italian has one 'i', so short "ship" and long "sheep" sound the same.

THE FIX

Short /ɪ/: relaxed and quick. Long /i:/: spread your lips like a smile and hold it longer.

ship/sheep

live/leave

fill/feel

æ

/æ ɛ/

Cat vs bet

ITALIAN HABIT

Italian has 'e' but not the English /æ/, so "cat" becomes "ket" and "bad" becomes "bed."

THE FIX

For /æ/, open your mouth wider and smile — more open than the Italian e.

cat/bet

bad/bed

man/men

NG

/ŋ/

The NG sound

ITALIAN HABIT

Italian releases the g after n, so "sing" becomes "sing-g" and "singer" becomes "sin-ger."

THE FIX

Let the sound come through your nose and stop — no hard g. Pinch your nose: "sing" should stop.

sing

singer

running

Fix cards · 3 of 3

R

/r/

The English R

ITALIAN HABIT

The Italian r is trilled or tapped. The English r touches nothing — a rolled r sounds foreign.

THE FIX

Curl your tongue up and back and let it FLOAT — no contact anywhere. Round your lips slightly.

red

right

car

around

' ə

stress

Stress & the weak vowel

ITALIAN HABIT

Italian gives every vowel full value. English hammers ONE syllable and weakens the rest to a soft 'uh'.

THE FIX

Hit one strong beat per word; relax the others. baNAna, not ba-NA-na. Reduce the quiet vowels.

banana

about

teacher

together

PRACTISE

Your 7-day plan

Ten minutes a day. Record yourself on day 1 and day 7 — hearing your own progress is the most motivating thing you'll do.

DAY
1

Endings

Stop on the consonant: dog, big, good, stop. No vowel after. Record 3 sentences.

DAY
2

TH

Tongue between teeth: think, three, this. In the mirror.

DAY
3

The H

Breathe the h: house, happy, hello. Feel the air before the vowel.

DAY
4

Vowels

ship/sheep and cat/bet. Watch your mouth open wider for 'cat'.

DAY
5

NG

Nose test: sing (not sing-g), singer, running. Pinch your nose to check.

DAY
6

R & stress

Float the r; hit one strong beat (baNAna, comPUter).

DAY
7

Together

Re-record your day-1 sentences. Compare. Pick your hardest sound to keep polishing.

WHEN YOU'VE GOT THESE

Ready for all 22 sounds?

This guide covers the sounds Italian speakers most need. Speak Clearly — the full book — covers all 22 sounds and speech patterns, with minimal pairs and tongue twisters for every one, guides for six first languages, and a complete 30-day plan.

Speak Clearly

A Practical Guide to English Pronunciation

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**Speak clearly.
Speak as yourself.**

Parla come sei.

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