**ITALIAN LANGUAGE**

Whether you have an A’ Level or you start as a beginner, language classes in your first year will give you a firm grasp of grammar, develop your vocabulary and language skills and prepare you for the Language Preliminary Exams at the end of Trinity Term. Students are asked to do an online test prior to coming to Oxford, and they are subsequently streamed into four different levels (Level 1 for Beginners, Level 4 for Advanced). Teaching in your first year will consist of 4 hours a week, comprising weekly classes of Grammar, Prose (Translation from English into Italian), Listening and Reading comprehension, and two fortnightly classes of Essay writing and Translation from Italian into English.

Those who applied to Beginners Italian (Level 1 and 2), are advised to purchase a copy of:

* *The Ultimate Italian Review and Practice*, by David Stillman (McGraw-Hill, 2013)

Advanced Beginners and Post-A Level students Levels 3 and 4) are advised to purchase:

* *Soluzioni: A Practical Grammar of Contemporary Italian*, by Denise De Rome (Routledge, 2015) (**NB:** **third edition)**.

If you are unsure to which level you will be assigned, you may wait to buy the relevant grammar book/s after the language test and after the groups have been formed. Textbooks will be available at Oxford Blackwell’s. If you are attending the Italian Pre-sessional course, you will be receiving separate information on how to prepare.

At a more Advanced level, we also recommend the following reference books:

* *A Reference Grammar of Modern Italian*, by Martin Maiden and Cecilia Robustelli (Routledge, 2007; second edition).
* *Using Italian Vocabulary*, by [Marcel Danesi](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Marcel-Danesi/e/B001IGHOSG/ref%3Ddp_byline_cont_book_1) (Cambridge University Press, 2003)

You are strongly advised to acquire a good-sized bilingual Dictionary (such as Oxford-Paravia, Collins, Ragazzini), also available in libraries. You may also use the following online dictionaries. Whether using a paper or an online dictionary, we recommend you always write down the word or expression you’ve looked up in your own vocabulary notebook.

Bilingual dictionaries:

<http://www.garzantilinguistica.it>

Monolingual Italian dictionaries:

<http://www.treccani.it>

<http://dizionari.corriere.it/dizionario_italiano/>

Once at Oxford you’ll have access to the language learning resources at the Language Centre Library (12 Woodstock Road) and the Taylor Institution, where you can find all of the above and much more.

**Literature**

Once you have worked your way through about half of an introductory grammar (or straight away for those with A level), you should be able to start reading some literature. Look at some short stories by modern writers such as Buzzati, Calvino, Sciascia, Ginzburg; or some of the ‘limited vocabulary’ texts which are available from foreign-language bookshops. You should then start reading the novels you will be studying in your first year:

\* Each of the two literature papers has set texts:

**(a) Modern Italian Narrative and Film (any edition of the following):**

1. Primo Levi, *Se questo e un uomo* (1947)
2. Natalia Ginzburg, *Lessico Famigliare* (1963)
3. Italo Calvino, *Il cavaliere inesistente* (1959)
4. Igiaba Scego, *La mia casa è dove sono* (2010)
5. Marco Tullio Giordana, *I cento passi*, film (2000)

It is ok to read these in translation. However, please always take into consideration the Italian version.

You should also look into the historical and cultural background of all the writers, by using the entries in *The Oxford Companion to Italian Literature*, ed. by P. Hainsworth and D. Robey. Read relevant chapters in *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*. Look at P. Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, Caesar and Hainsworth, *Culture and Society in Postwar Italy*, Forgacs and Lumley, *Italian Cultural Studies:  An Introduction*; also useful Molitemo (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Italian Culture* published by Routledge, and *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Italian Culture*.

**(b) Poetry**

I) *The Sonnet* - an anthology of sonnets from the 13th to the 20th century will be provided after your arrival in Oxford. They will be studied as an introduction to poetry in general, and to the exercise of close critical commentary.

II) Ungaretti and Montale The works of these poets will be studied in detail for close commentary and essays.

G. Ungaretti, *Vita d'un uomo: 106 poesie*, Mondadori (Oscar series) - in particular the selection from *L'allegria*.

E. Montale, *Ossi di seppia*, Mondadori (Oscar series)

**Before arriving in Oxford you should have bought and read at least four of the set texts for the Modern Italian Narrative paper, and have bought and read as much of the Ungaretti and the Montale as possible.**

These books are usually available through the internet (try for instance: The Internet Bookshop Italia: <https://www.ibs.it/>)