

# Italian School life

## General information

Regardless of nationality, education in Italy is compulsory from 6 to 16 years of age, and is divided into five stages: **pre-school** (scuola dell'infanzia), **primary school** (scuola primaria or scuola elementare), **first grade secondary school**(scuola secondaria di primo grado or scuola media), **second grade secondary school**(scuola secondaria di secondo grado or scuola superiore).

### Nidi e Scuola dell'infanzia (Crèches and kindergarten)

Before entering the schooling system, children are usually introduced to non-compulsory **nidi d'infanzia** and **sezioni primavera**, the equivalent of crèches. These sections usually are for children of one to three years of age.



They then enter the **scuola dell'Infanzia**, the equivalent of preschool where they are looked after by two teachers per class, they play, start socialising and learn to recognize letters and numbers.

### Scuola Primaria (Primary School)

At age six, children start their formal, compulsory education with the Scuola Primaria also known as Scuola Elementare (Primary School). At Scuola Primaria children learn to read and write and study a wide range of subjects including maths, geography, Italian, English and science.

Scuola Primaria lasts for five years and at the age of eleven they begin their Secondary education.



**Scuola Media (Middle School) Scuola Secondaria di Primo Grado (Junior Secondary School)** All children aged between eleven and fourteen must attend the Scuola Secondaria di Primo Grado (Junior Secondary School). On average the subjects studied every week are: Italian (six hours), History and Geography (three hours), Mathematics (four hours), Science (two hours), Technology (two hours), English (three hours), Second community language (French/Spanish/German) (two hours), Art (two hours), Music (two hours), Physical Education (two hours) and Catholic Religion (one hour).

At the end of the third year, pupils sit for a written exam in the subjects of Italian, mathematics, foreign language, while there is an oral examination of the other subjects. Successful pupils are awarded the Licenza di Scuola Media (Licenza Media) so they then move onto the Scuola Secondaria di Secondo Grado (Secondary High School).

### Scuola Superiore (High School) Scuola Secondaria di Secondo Grado (Second Grade Secondary School)

Italian high schools are of different types, depending on the main focus of their teachings. Pupil

must choose which high school to enroll during the final year of **junior high school**.

Italian high schools can be divided as such:

**Liceo Classico (Classical High School):**

This lasts for five years and prepares the student for university level studies. Latin, Greek and Italian literature form an important part of the curriculum. During the last three years, philosophy and history of art are also studied.

**Liceo Scientifico (Scientific High School):**

Lasts for five years with an emphasis on Maths, physics, chemistry and natural sciences. The student also continues to study Latin and one modern language.

**Liceo Artistico (Fine Arts High School):**

Studies can last four to five years and prepare for university studies in painting, sculpture or architecture.

**Liceo Linguistico:** focuses on foreign languages

**Liceo musicale e coreutico:** has branches in music and dance

**Liceo delle scienze umane:** focusing on humanities and psychology

**Istituto d'Arte (Artistic Schools):** it lasts three years and prepares for work within an artistic field and leads to an arts qualification (diploma di Maestro d'Arte)

**Istituti Tecnici (Technical Institutes):** it lasts five years and prepares for both university studies or work. There is a great number of pupils which attend technical schools that prepare them to work in a technical or administrative field, in agriculture, industry or business.

**Istituti Professionali (Vocational Schools):** These schools have a first three-year course at the end of which there is an exam for the pupils to get a leaving certificate and go to work with specific skills. After this exam, some pupils get on studying and attend the last two years to get a diploma of technical school.

In order to receive the Diploma di Scuola Superiore also known as the Diploma di Maturità (Secondary school diploma), students must pass written and oral exams in front of a board of six teachers (three are theirs and three are from other schools).

This exam covers aspects of most their final year at school. Successful students receive various types of Diploma according to the type of school attended.



## **University**

University is available to all students if they have completed five years of secondary school and received an upper secondary school diploma. Those attending university after completing their Diploma di Scuola Superiore go for three years (four years for teaching qualifications) to achieve their Laurea (Bachelor's Degree).

## **TIME FOR SCHOOL:**

### **SCHOOL TERM**

Lessons usually start around the second week of September and finish around the second week of June.

There are school breaks only for Christmas and Easter, with most holidays being concentrated in the summer, and schools are closed on national holidays.

The school year is divided into two terms, 'quadrimestri'. The autumn term starts in September and runs until the end of January. At the end of each term, students receive a 'pagella', a report card with their grades which may vary from 10 (excellent) to 1 (impossible to assess), 6 being the average. Today, report cards are frequently issued in automated form and may be mailed to parents/students or made accessible on a special section of the school website.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

The majority of schools in Italy run morning lessons starting at 8.00am/8.30 am which usually last 5 hours, from Monday to Saturday. This means most kids come back home for lunch, therefore, there is no canteen in most Italian schools. Kindergarten and schools with special afternoon projects and activities are an exception though, as they are usually open till 4.00/4.30 pm and provide lunch for the kids.

According to the Programme for International Student Assessment, coordinated in 2013 by the OECD, Italian secondary education ranks as the 21st in the world.

*<http://www.understandingitaly.com/profile-content/education.html>*

*<http://www.lifeinitaly.com/moving/school-system.asp>*

*<http://www.italymagazine.com/featured-story/back-school-10-things-you-should-know-about-italian-school-system>*

## **Let's practice**

### **1. True (T) or False (F)**

- a. "Nidi d'infanzia", the equivalent of crèches, are compulsory schools
- b. Scuola Primaria lasts for five years
- c. At the end of "scuola media" students sit only written exams.
- d. Pupils don't choose the High School
- e. University is available to all students if they have completed five years of secondary school and received an upper secondary school diploma

### **2. Match the high schools with their main subjects**

- a. Liceo linguistico
- b. Liceo classico
- c. Liceo scientifico
- d. Liceo artistico
- e. Liceo delle scienze umane

1. Latin, Ancient Greek, Italian, history and philosophy

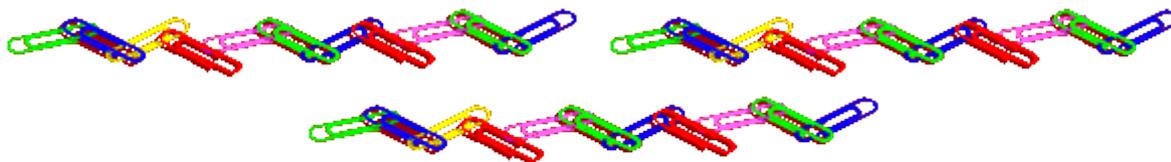
2. Mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, earth science and computer science

- 3. Graphics, design, audiovisual, multimedia, scenography and architecture, painting, sculpture
- 4. English, Spanish, French, German
- 5. Pedagogy, anthropology, psychology, sociology, and social research

### 3. Complete the sentences

- a. The majority of schools in Italy run morning lessons starting at.....
- b. The school year is divided into.....
- c. Lessons usually start around the second week of ... and finish around the second week of ...
- d. There are school breaks only for ..... and ..... with most holidays being concentrated in the ....., and schools are closed on .....
- e. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment, Italian secondary education ranks as the .....in the world.

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## Some extra information

### TRAINING DEBITS AND CREDITS

During secondary high school some students finish a year with one or more subject failures. If teachers consider the student to be capable of achieving a pass in (usually not more than 3 subjects) said subjects, the pupil will attend a summer course and then, before the new year starts he/she sits for an exam on the failed subjects. If he/she is successful, he/she can attend the following year course, otherwise he/she has to attend the same course of the previous year.

If the pupils participates in projects and integrated school activities, he/she will earn school credits, which could be valued and converted into points towards a higher grade in the State exam.

1) Now try to remember at what age boys and girls begin all kinds of school – match the level of school with the age:

PRIMARY SCHOOL

BOYS AND GIRLS 14-18

LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL

BOYS AND GIRLS 6-10

2) How many hours do boys and girls study these subjects at Junior Secondary School:

ITALIAN	
HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY	1 HOURS
MATHEMATICS	
SCIENCE	2 HOURS
TECHNOLOGY	
ENGLISH	3 HOURS
SECOND COMMUNITY LANGUAGE	
ART	4 HOURS
MUSIC	
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	6 HOURS
CATHOLIC RELIGION	

3) Which subjects boys and girls study in these schools – Match the type of school with the right list of subjects:

ARTISTIC LYCEUM	Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Earth sciences, Computer science
CLASSICAL LYCEUM recently,	English, French, Spanish, German and,  Russian, Arabic, Chinese
LINGUISTIC LYCEUM Sociology	Pedagogy, Psychology, Anthropology and
LYCEUM OF MUSIC AND DANCE	Latin, Greek, Italian, History, Philosophy
SCIENTIFIC LYCEUM Design,	Drawing, Sculpture, Decoration, Graphics,

Architecture

LYCEUM OF HUMAN SCIENCES

Music, History of music, Dance, Choreography

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