

INTREPID ITALIAN

HOW TO LEARN ITALIAN FASTER
WITH THE JANE AUSTEN METHOD



Ciao ciao!

Grazie! Thank you for downloading this cheat-sheet. This guide features your action plan to learning Italian with the **Jane Austen Method**. If you found this guide useful, then you'll love [Intrepid Italian](https://intrepiditalian.com), my series of online self-paced video courses that break down everything you need to know about Italian using my 80/20 method. For more details, visit [Intrepiditalian.com](https://intrepiditalian.com).

Got a trip to Italy coming up? Remember, you don't need to be fluent in Italian to have meaningful interactions with the locals and create memories that will last a lifetime, but you can be **fluent enough for travel**.

Learning to use just a few words can do wonders for enhancing your travel experiences. Plus, it's a great way to show respect and make a good first impression. This is why I not only write detailed destination guides and create informative videos, I also created a [free travel phrase guide](#) and [online language courses](#) to help smart and savvy travellers like you get the most out of their travel experiences through the power of language.



Hi! I'm Michele, an Australian travel blogger and language educator and 'guide' behind [The Intrepid Guide](#). I help my readers and students enrich their travels with beautiful and [detailed destinations guides](#), [free travel phrase guides](#), and effective [online language courses](#) that follow my 80/20 method so they can enjoy meaningful interactions with the locals and avoid being

treated like a tourist. Over the past few years, I've travelled the world and learned several foreign languages using my unique building-block method which is the basis of all my language courses. Keep in touch with me via Instagram [@intrepiditalian](#) where I share daily Italian lessons.

How to learn Italian FASTER with the Jane Austen Method

When I first started learning Italian, I kept getting tripped up by the grammar. Why do Italians say “*I have hunger*” instead of “I’m hungry”? Or “*I am gone*” instead of “I went”?

That's when I stumbled across something incredible that only a [non-native Italian teacher](#) like me would notice.

So in this guide, I want to show you what it is plus I'll share the **7 everyday Italian phrases** that sound just like they're straight out of a Jane Austen novel that will help you flip your mindset so you can speak Italian more naturally and *think in Italian*.

Pronti? (Ready?) **Iniziamo!** (Let's get started!)

Introducing *The Jane Austen Method* — My Secret to Learning Italian Faster

As I was studying Italian, something fascinating happened. Every time I felt confused by grammar, a little voice in my head would whisper, “*You’ve seen this before...*”

And I had...in Jane Austen novels! That elegant, old-fashioned English like “*I am gone*,” “*I have hunger*,” “*Pray, tell me*” mirrors modern Italian structures almost perfectly. It's like English once spoke the same way... and then moved on, while Italian kept its poetic rhythm.

That's when I coined what I now call **The Jane Austen Method**— my unique approach to learning Italian by looking back at how English *used to be spoken*. Instead of forcing translations or memorising grammar rules, you *connect the dots* between old English and modern Italian. You see *patterns*, not just words. You think in *structures*, not translations.

And that's the key to **how to learn Italian faster**. Because when grammar feels familiar and you can say “*I am gone*” and understand “*sono andato*” intuitively, the learning stops being hard work and starts to *click*.

So, whether you're reading *Pride and Prejudice* or practicing your Italian verbs, remember: **Fluency isn't just about study — it's about seeing the beauty in how languages evolve and connect**. That's the heart of *The Jane Austen Method*.

Let's take a closer look!



1. I am 40 years old → Ho quarant'anni

In English, age is something you **are**. In Italian, age is something you **have**. In Italian, you say: **Ho quarant'anni** = I have 40 years.

Grammar tip: “Ho” is the first-person singular of avere (to have). This structure is shared across other Romance languages too, like French and Spanish.

Jane Austen used an interesting structure too. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet says:

“I am not one and twenty.”

Elizabeth doesn't say “I'm twenty-one”, she says “I am not one and twenty” — reflecting an older English structure where age was counted or possessed. So next time you want to say your age in Italian, say: **Ho quarant'anni** — I have 40 years.

2. You look well → Ti trovo bene

Ti trovo bene literally means: *I find you well*

It's the same **trovare** you'd use for “to find your keys.” But here, it's about your impression of someone's well-being. Like you're stumbling upon their good energy!

For example: **Ciao Marco! Ti trovo bene oggi!**— “Hey Marco, you're looking good today!”

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Lady Catherine says:

*“Do not imagine, Miss Bennet, that your ambition will ever be gratified. I came to try you. I hoped to **find you** reasonable; but, depend upon it, I will carry my point.”*

“I hoped to **find you** reasonable” mirrors **ti trovo bene**. The emotional state is something perceived or found — not assumed or stated directly. Same concept. This poetic tone echoes the idea of finding someone well, not just in body but in spirit.

3. I went → Sono andato



Sono andato literally means: "I am gone". It's like saying: "I went" in English. Why?

In Italian, many verbs of movement use **essere** instead of **avere** in the past tense. So it's literally: "I am gone to Rome" → **Sono andato a Roma**.

It's called the **passato prossimo**. It feels like the present perfect in English (I have gone), but it's used way more frequently.

We might say "I went to London" today, but back in Austen's day, you'd hear:

"My father is gone to London, and Jane has written to beg my uncle's immediate assistance; and we shall be off, I hope, in half-an-hour. "

- Elizabeth Bennett

"I am glad you are come back, Lizzy." - Mr. Bennett

"I am glad you are come, for there is such fun here!" - Lydia

This sounds just like Italian: **Lui è andato a Londra** = He is gone to London.

This is also the case with the verb **tornare** (to come back). For example: "I come back to Rome" → **Sono tornato a Roma**. In other words, *I have come back to Rome*

In both languages, the perfect tense uses **"to be"** instead of **"to have"** for movement. Try it yourself: **Sono andata al mercato** — I am gone to the market.

It's all very elegant if you ask me :)

4. I'm hungry → Ho fame

Ho fame literally means "I have hunger" in Italian. This structure was also common in English. Hunger is something you possess, not something you are.

So:

- **Ho fame** = I have hunger → I'm hungry
- **Ho sete** = I have thirst → I'm thirsty
- **Ho sonno** = I have sleepiness → I'm tired
- **Ho freddo** = I have cold → I'm cold



5. I like it → **Mi piace**

Mi piace literally means: "It is pleasing to me"

This one trips everyone up. Want to say you like something? Remember, you're **not** the subject of the sentence. The thing is! For example:

Mi piace il gelato = Ice cream is pleasing to me

Not: "I like ice cream."

Ti piace la pizza? — Do you like pizza?

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr Bingley says:

"It shows an affection for her sister that is very pleasing,"

He doesn't say he like that fact that Elizabeth cares for her sister but that it is pleasing to him.

Here are some more examples:

Mi piace il tè — Tea pleases me → I like tea.

Ti piace Jane Austen? — Does Jane Austen please you? → Do you like Jane Austen?

6. Can you tell me? → **Prego, mi dica**

Prego, mi dica literally means: "Pray, tell me"

This versatile word is one of the first you learned. **Prego** literally means "I pray" or "please." While **Mi dica** means "Tell me" (formal command)

Put it together: **Prego, mi dica** = "Please, tell me. You'll hear this all the time from shopkeepers or staff.

This is pure Regency elegance. In *Pride and Prejudice*, you'll hear various characters say:

"Pray do, my dear Miss Lucas."

"Pray, tell your sister that I long to see her."

"Pray, do not talk of that odious man. "



Yes! Pray, tell me = **Prego, mi dica!**

In modern Italian, it's used all the time: **Prego, mi dica** — Go ahead, tell me (formal). Even though it sounds aristocratic in English, it's just everyday politeness in Italian.

Why does Italian feels so poetic?

Wondering why Italian feels so poetic? It's because its grammar never hurried to modernise. While English evolved and simplified over the centuries, Italian held onto many of the graceful structures that once filled the pages of Jane Austen's novels.

It's as if Italian froze time, preserving the elegance, rhythm, and expressiveness that English gradually left behind.

Speaking Italian is like opening a window to the past: every phrase feels lyrical, every sentence a touch of poetry.

How to Use The Jane Austen Method to Learn Italian Faster

Now that you've seen how Italian mirrors the elegant phrasing of old English, here's how to apply **The Jane Austen Method** which is the mindset shift that helps you learn Italian faster and think more like a native speaker.

1. Notice the Parallels

When you come across Italian phrases that seem unusual — like **“Ho fame”** or **“Sono andato”** — think of how Jane Austen might have written them in English: “I have hunger.” “I am gone.” Recognising these parallels makes Italian grammar feel natural and familiar instead of foreign or confusing.

2. Translate Like It's 1813, Not 2025

Stop trying to match every Italian sentence to modern English. Instead, think like an English speaker from Austen's time. When you read or listen to Italian, imagine it through that older lens as it instantly bridges the gap between the two languages.



3. Read with Curiosity, Not Perfection

When you encounter a tricky Italian phrase, don't panic or overanalyse. Ask yourself, "How would Jane Austen have said this in English?"

This curiosity helps you see patterns, not problems — which is the real secret to how to learn Italian faster.

4. Practice the Elegant Way

Try using The Jane Austen Method™ during your study time:

- Read a passage in Italian, then rephrase it in old-fashioned English.
- Listen for poetic or formal phrases in movies or audiobooks and note the similarities.
- Use your cheat sheet to compare Italian phrases with their "Austen-style" English twins.

5. Think Like a Character in a Novel

When you start to think in this way, Italian grammar stops being mechanical. It becomes expressive, emotional — almost theatrical. You're not just translating; you're embodying the rhythm and elegance of the language.



Grazie!

I hope you enjoyed this cheat-sheet and learned something new. Remember, don't worry about not being able to remember it all, you're learning more than most other people do so you should be very proud of yourself. I know I am!

Want more language resources? Check out my guide on top-rated [languages tools, courses, and apps here](#). If you enjoyed this compact language guide and you want to discover how I can help you boost your language skills, [check out my popular language courses here](#).

If you have any feedback on this guide or want to share any suggestions for future material you'd love me to create, feel free to get in touch michele@theintrepidguide.com

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With all the encouragement in the world, I wish you success!

Happy learning!

Michele

