

Pronoun

Italian Subject Pronouns

In modern Italian *he*, *she*, and *they* are usually expressed by **lui**, **lei**, and **loro**, respectively. (**Egli**, **ella**, **essi**, and **esse** are used more in written Italian than in the spoken language. **Esso** and **essa** are seldom used.)

Remember that **tu** and its plural form **voi** are used in addressing members of the family, peers, children, close friends, and animals.

In all other cases, **Lei** and its plural **Loro** are used.

Note that **Lei** and **Loro** always take, respectively, the third person singular and the third person plural of the verb.

Ascolti, Luisa? (Are you listening, Luisa?)

Ascoltate, ragazzi? (Are you listening, boys?)

Ascolta Lei, signorina Rossi? (Are you listening, Miss Rossi?)

Ascoltano Loro signorine? (Are you listening, young ladies?)

Singolare	Singular
Io	<i>I</i>
Tu	<i>you</i> (familiar)
lui (egli/esso)	<i>he</i>
lei (ella/essa)	<i>she</i>
Lei	<i>you</i> (formal)
Plurale	Plural
Noi	<i>we</i>
Voi	<i>you</i> (familiar)
loro (essi)	<i>they</i> (m.)
loro (esse)	<i>they</i> (f.)
Loro	<i>you</i> (formal)

Since the endings of conjugated verb forms indicate person and number, subject pronouns may be omitted in Italian except when necessary: (1) for clarity, (2) when modified by **anche** (*also*), or (3) when emphasis or contrast is desired. *It* and *they* referring to things are almost never used in Italian and need not be translated.

Italian personal pronouns (*pronomi personali*) replace proper or common Italian nouns (and in some cases even animals or things). There are three forms in the singular and three forms in the plural. They are also further divided into personal subject pronouns (*pronomi personali soggetto*) and personal object pronouns (*pronomi personali complemento*).

Personal Subject Pronouns (*Pronomi Personali Soggetto*)

Oftentimes in Italian the personal subject pronouns are implied because the form of the verb indicates the person.

- **egli** (he) and **ella** (she) refer only to people:

***Egli** (Mario) ascoltò la notizia in silenzio.*

He (Mario) heard the news in silence.

***Ella** (Marta) gli rimproverava spesso i suoi difetti.*

She (Martha) often reproached him for his faults.

NOTE: *ella* is now a literary form and has fallen into disuse in spoken language.

- **esso** (he) and **essa** (she) refer to animals and things:

Mi piace quel cane perché (esso) sia un bastardino.

I like that dog because (he) is a mutt.

NOTE: In colloquial language *essa* is also used to indicate people.

- **essi** (they) and **esse** (they) refer to people, animals and things:

Scrissi ai tuoi fratelli perché (essi) sono i miei migliori amici.

I wrote to your brothers because they are my best friends.

Il cane inseguì le pecore abbaiando ed esse si misero a correre.

The barking dog chased the sheep and they began to run.

NOTE: Often, in the spoken language, but also when written, the personal object pronouns *lui*(him), *lei* (her), and *loro* (them) function as the subject, and in particular:

» When they follow the verb

*È stato **lui** a dirlo non io.*

It was him who said it, not I.

» When you want to give special emphasis to the subject

*Ma **lui** ha scritto!*

But he wrote!

» In comparisons

*Marco fuma, **lui** (Giovanni) non ha mai fumato.*

Mark smokes, he (John) has never smoked.

» In exclamations

*Povero **lui**!*

Poor him!

*Beata **lei**!*

Lucky you!

» After *anche*, *come*, *neanche*, *nemmeno*, *persino*, *proprio*, *pure*, and *quanto*

***Anche loro** vengono al cinema.*

They too are at the cinema.

***Nemmeno lei** lo sa.*

Not even she knows.

*Lo dice **proprio lui**.*

He says it himself.

Personal Object Pronouns (*Pronomi Personali Complemento*)

In Italian, personal object pronouns replace direct objects and indirect objects (that is, those preceded by a preposition). They have *toniche* (tonic) and *atone* (atonic) forms.

- *toniche* or *forti* (strong) are those forms that have a strong emphasis in the sentence:

*È **a me** che Carlo si riferisce.*

It's me that Charles is referring to.

*Voglio vedere **te** e non tuo fratello.*

I want to see you and not your brother.

- *atone* or *debole* (weak) (also called *particelle pronominali*) are those forms that do not have particular significance and that may depend on the adjacent word. The unstressed forms are referred to as:

» *proclitiche* when they relate to the word they precede

***Ti** telefono da Roma.*

I'll phone from Rome.

***Ti** spedirò la lettera al più presto.*

I'll send the letter as soon as possible.

» *enclitiche*, when they relate to the previous word (usually the imperative or indefinite forms of the verb), giving rise to a single form

*Scriv**imi** presto!*

Write to me soon!

*Non voglio veder**lo**.*

I do not want to see it.

*Credend**olo** un amico gli confidai il mio segreto.*

Thinking he was a friend, I confided in him my secret.

NOTE: When verbal forms are truncated the consonant of the pronoun is doubled.

*fa' **a me**—fammi*

*di' **a lei**—dille*

PRONOMI PERSONALI

PERSONA		SOGGETTO		COMPLEMENTO
			<i>Forme Toniche</i>	<i>Forme Atone</i>
1 ^a singolare		io	me	mi (reflexive)
2 ^a singolare		tu	te	ti (reflexive)
3 ^a singolare	maschile	egli, esso	lui, sé (reflexive)	lo, gli, si (reflexive), ne
	femminile	ella, essa	lei, sé (reflexive)	la, le, si (reflexive), ne
1 ^a plurale		noi	noi	ci (reflexive)
2 ^a plurale		voi	voi	vi (reflexive)
3 ^a plurale	maschile	essi	loro, sé	li, si (reflexive), ne
	femminile	esse	loro, sé	le, si (reflexive), ne