

Simplified Italian Pronunciation Guide

VOWELS:

A = like the *a* in father-----madre, padre
E (close) = like the *a* in date-----perché, tre
E (open) = like the *e* in met or let-----fresco, Enzo
I = like the *i* in machine or the *ee* in feet-----Gina, pizza
O (close) = like the *oa* in boat-----ravioli, cannoli
O (open) = like the *o* in for-----storia, cosa
U = like the *oo* in boom or moon-----tuba, Umbria

CONSONANTS:

C, G = hard sound if followed by a, o, u, or other consonants-----casa, grande, cupola, etc.
C + *e* or *i* = like English *ch* in church-----cello, cinema, Cunicelli
G + *e* or *i* = like English *g* in gem-----gemma, gentile, gigante
H = always silent (hardens the C and G)-----ho, hai, ghetto, chi
R = is trilled; there is no equivalent in English.
S = like the *s* in soap OR, if between two vowels, like the *s* in rose-----pasta, festa, casa, Pisa
Z = like the *ts* in cats OR like the *ds* in beds-----zio, grazie, pizza, pranzo

All other consonants are pronounced relatively close to or exactly like their English counterpart.

COMBINED LETTERS:

GN = like the *ny* in canyon-----lasagna, gnocchi
GLI = like the *lli* in million-----famiglia, imbroglio
CHI + another vowel = like a *ky*-----vecchio, chiesa, chiave
SC + *e* or *i* always like English *sh*-----scena, capisci
SC + *a*, *o* or *u* always like English *sk*-----scala, scopa, scuola