

1.12: Gli aggettivi

Adjectives

An **adjective** describes something (a place, an object, a person, an idea, etc.). Consider this sentence in English: *I live in a small town.* *Small* is an adjective, and in this sentence it describes the town. The town could also be big, old, French, beautiful, chaotic... these are all adjectives.

Unlike in English, adjectives **follow** the noun in Italian. There are exceptions and they have to do with emphasis.

Adjectives in Italian must agree in gender and number with the noun that they are modifying, and they follow the same rules that you have already learned for nouns.

There are two general types of adjectives in Italian:

Type 1 – Adjectives that end in **-o** in the masculine-singular form. These adjectives have four forms:

	singular	plural
masculine	modern o	modern i
feminine	modern a	modern e

Type 2 – Adjectives that end in **-e** in the masculine-singular form. These adjectives have only 2 forms: a singular form and a plural form.

	singular	plural
masculine	interessant e	interessant i
feminine	interessant e	interessant i

Type 1 examples:

- Un negozio **moderno** > *negozio* is masculine singular, hence *moderno*.
- I negozi **moderni** > *negozi* is masculine plural, hence *moderni*.
- Una libreria **moderna** > *libreria* is feminine singular, hence *moderna*.
- Le librerie **moderne** > *librerie* is feminine plural, hence *moderne*.

Type 2 examples:

- Un libro **interessante** / Una città **interessante** > *interessante* works both as a masculine and as a feminine singular adjective.
- I libri **interessanti** / Le città **interessanti** > *interessanti* works both as a masculine and as a feminine plural adjective

Particular cases

- Adjectives ending in **-ista**:

	singular	plural
masculine	ottimist a	ottimist i
feminine	ottimist a	ottimist e

- Adjectives ending in **–co** and **–go** always add an **h** in the feminine plural form, but do not always add an **h** in the masculine plural form:

	singular	plural
masculine	antico	antichi
feminine	antica	antiche

Similar adjectives: stanco[tired], tedesco[German], pittoresco.

	singular	plural
masculine	simpatico	simpatici
feminine	simpatica	simpatiche

Similar adjectives: greco [Greek], gotico [Gothic], fantastico.

Adjectives that precede a noun

Some common adjectives can precede the noun. Among others, there are these pairs of opposites:

- bello / brutto** Una bella città / Una brutta città
- buono / cattivo** Una buona pizza / Una cattiva pizza
- nuovo / vecchio** Un nuovo negozio / Un vecchio negozio
- piccolo / grande** Una piccola piazza / Una grande piazza
- questo / quello** Questa trattoria / Quella trattoria
- molti(e) / alcuni(e)** Molti palazzi / Alcuni palazzi

To say **very** use **molto** before an adjective. In this case **molto** does not change its form: *questa città è molto bella*.

- When **buono** precedes the noun, it takes the form of the **indefinite articles – un, uno, una, un’** – in the singular form:

un → **buon** una → **buona**

uno → **buono** un’ → **buon’**

The plural forms are regular: buoni / buone.

- When **bello** and **quello** precede the noun, they take the form of the **definite articles – il, lo, la, l’, i, le, gli**:

il → **bel** il → **quel**

lo → **bello** lo → **quello**

l’ → **bell’** l’ → **quell’**

la → **bella** la → **quella**

i → **bei** i → **quei**

gli → **begli**

gli → **quegli**

le → **belle**

le → **quelle**

However, when **buono**, **bello**, **quello**, and **questo** follow the noun (like any other adjective), they have regular forms. Examples:

Un buon panino vs. Quel panino è buono.

Due bei negozi vs. Quei due negozi sono belli.

Ti piace quel bar? vs. No, mi piace quello (*quello* here stands for *bar*)

- **Questo** is a regular adjective. However, when it is followed by a vowel in the singular form it contracts into **quest'**, as in **quest'aula** [this classroom].

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