



VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Ciao! Welcome to the fourth video of our series about the secrets of Italian pronunciation. Today we'll unlock for you the wonderful world of Italian vowels!

Triangolo vocalico! Fonemi! Articolazione!

Cosa? No, no, we'll do it the easy way! No complicated jargon here, just lots of examples to help you master those sounds that are so important in our musical language: vowels!

In Italian there are 5 vowels, **A E I O U**. E and O can be both open and closed, so we have actually 7 vowel sounds, and it is very important to pronounce them correctly, because they make you sound natural and in a few cases you could end up saying the wrong word!

Let's see the details.

In Italian each vowel corresponds to one and only one sound. They don't change. A is always A, I is always I and so on.

A. This is the only sound that corresponds to the letter A. A, as in father, A, not ei, not EH, but A.

Anna, Amore, martello.

English speakers tend to call me Ena, but my name is Anna, A, double N, A. A at the beginning, A in the end.

Andrea, Angela, Anna, Antonio.

I. This is the only sound that corresponds to the letter I. I as in bee, not ai, not EH, but I.

Irto, miniera, mio.

U. This is the only sound that corresponds to the letter U, U as in boot, important: it's never pronounced IU as in uniform, just U.

E. The vowel E can be OPEN: È, as in caffè, tè. È as in bet. It can be closed: É, as in end: perché, finché.

The sound E, open or close, is the only sounds that corresponds to the letter E. Just E, never I. E.

Pay attention to the vowel sound in these words :

Vénti: twenty

vènti: winds

Pésca: fishing

Pèsca: peach

O. The vowel O can be OPEN: Ò as in born: oro, buono. It can be closed: Ó as in open: amore, tondo.

Be it open or close, the sound is always O, it never changes into U in the final part. It's O, not OU. So if you are a native English speaker, be careful with your O: Antonio, not Antoniou, it's capito, not capitOU. Armadio, riso, tondo. Capito?

Pay attention to the vowel sound in these words:

Cólto: cultured un uomo cólto, a cultured man

Còlto: hit, taken còlto di sorpresa, taken by surprise

There are rules to help you understand whether a vowel is open or close. Here we'll see just a few:

E is closed:

- before double consonants: tetto, giovinezza, stesso
- in the suffixes -mento and -mente: momento, parlamento, brevemente, certamente
- In words ending in -esa, -ese, -eto, -evole: cortese faceto piacevole
- In monosyllables me, te, se: me stesso, te stesso, se stesso

E is open in gerunds and adjectives ending in -endo, -ento, -ente: corrente, violento, partendo

O is closed:

- in words ending in -ore, -one, -zione, -oso: colore, popolazione, nuvoloso
- in pronouns noi, voi, loro

O is open:

- in suffixes -olo, -occio, -otto: poliziotto, belloccio, porticciolo
- in the diphthong uo: cuoco, fuoco

When there are more vowels together, remember: each vowel must be pronounced, and the sound doesn't change:

Euro
Buono
Invidia
Passione
Aumento
Zaino

Finally, look at this word:

AERONAUTICA

It has all 5 vowels, and they all pronounced: AERONAUTICA!

Are Italians accurate when it comes to vowels? Do Italians always pronounce their vowels correctly? The answer is... no!

There are of course regional variations, take me for example, I'm from Bologna, Emilia-Romagna, and my vowels are not always correct. For example: I would say cénto, but it should be cènto, I used to say perchè, but it is perché, so I changed my vowels to be a little more correct.

To summarise:

- 1. THE PRONUNCIATION OF VOWELS NEVER CHANGES.**
- 2. YOU HAVE TO PRONOUNCE ALL VOWELS.**
- 3. ALL VOWELS ARE PRONOUNCED SEPARATELY**

Now try to pronounce the following:

ANNA AIUOLA UNIVERSITÀ ANDARE IDEA

PERCHÉ MOMENTO SPIRITOSO INTELLIGENTE FUOCO