
Toffolo, Linda, Nadia Nuti, and Renate Merklingshaus. *Corso multimediale d'italiano, Allegro 1.*

Edilingua, 2003. ISBN: 960-7706-60-9 (Libro). Note: a package offering the book and CD is also available. ISBN: 960-6632-13-X.

Toffolo, Linda, M. Gloria Tommasini, and Renate Merklingshaus. *Corso multimediale d'italiano, Allegro 2.*

Edilingua, 2003. ISBN: 960-7706-71-4.

Toffolo, Linda, and Renate Merklingshaus. *Corso multimediale d'italiano. Allegro 3.*

Edilingua, 2005. ISBN: 960-7706-90-0 (Libro). Note: a package offering the book and CD is also available. ISBN: 960-6632-15-6.

This Edilingua series of Italian texts for foreigners is entirely in Italian. A new version for English speakers, *That's Allegro 1*, is now available; however, since I did not have a copy of it to review, my comments will be limited to the Italian-only version.

Each text (1, 2, and 3) is geared towards the adolescent or adult language learner and conforms to levels A1, A2, and B1 of the European Union standards, respectively (the European standards are similar to ACTFL's). Each text is divided into 12 units, 4 of which are review (3, 6, 9, and 12) in the first two texts, and three of which are review in the 3rd text. Each unit contains a wide variety of activities (solo, paired, and group) aimed at developing and improving the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each unit introduces a different theme (*Come va?*; *Dove vai?*; *Prendi un caffè?*, etc.) and is divided into sections (typically 5 or 6) centered on the main theme. Pronunciation is covered in the final section of each unit. Review units, printed on yellow pages for easy identification, offer students study tips (flash cards and how to organize them, word associations, reading comprehension strategies, etc.) and a section on Italian culture. The 12 units are followed by a section of written exercises corre-

sponding to each non-review unit. Written exercises are varied, innovative, and engaging, with many photos, graphs, charts, and drawings to enliven what sometimes can be viewed by students as a boring activity. The third section of each text is a grammar appendix, which goes into more depth on the grammar points previously presented in each unit. The final section is a glossary that contains all of the vocabulary divided by unit and accompanied by a blank space on which the student is encouraged to write the translation in his/her native language. The *Edilingua* Website indicates that an instructor's teaching guide is also available, which includes supplemental materials to photocopy, transcriptions of all listening activities, and a key to the grammar exercises.

Allegro 1 covers the equivalent amount of material found in the first half of a typical introductory college-level text, including:

- definite and indefinite articles
- singular and plural nouns
- cardinal numbers
- telling time
- possessives
- adjectives
- days of the week
- present tense verbs (regular and irregular including *piacere* and reflexive verbs)
- the *passato prossimo*
- articulated prepositions
- adverbs of place and adverbs in *-mente*
- direct object pronouns
- use of the partitive

Allegro 2 covers most of what would be found in the second half of a typical introductory college-level text, with the exception of the subjunctive, contrary-to-fact statements, and the *passato remoto*. Topics covered include:

- the *passato prossimo* of reflexive verbs
- double negation
- indirect object pronouns
- direct object pronouns with the *passato prossimo*
- conditional
- absolute superlative

- ordinal numbers
- impersonal (*si* + 3rd person singular or plural)
- present progressive
- comparatives (of equality and inequality)
- imperfect
- imperfect vs. *passato prossimo*
- demonstrative adjectives
- imperative
- imperative with direct and indirect object pronouns
- relative pronouns
- future
- past perfect

Allegro 3, in compliance with standards set for the low-intermediate level (B1), covers the remaining grammar points not covered in *Allegro 1* or *2*, and goes into intermediate-level details on points covered in the previous two texts.

Full-color photographs, maps, and drawings make the entire *Allegro* series visually appealing and inviting. The numerous photographs accurately depict Italy in the 21st century and could easily be used as a springboard to discuss various facets of Italian culture. Each written and oral segment is authentic, providing the student with realistic examples of current usage of Italian. The rich cultural content of this series brings each unit's grammar and vocabulary to life.

To give a better idea of how each unit functions, I will use Unità 4, *Prendi un caffè?* as an example. This unit is divided into 7 sections and covers such related topics as the verbs *prendere* and *avere*, numbers, plural nouns, and associated vocabulary. The pronunciation section for this unit covers *gn* and *gl*, very useful when ordering *gnocchi* and *tagliatelle*! The corresponding written exercises offer the student the opportunity to practice food vocabulary, the verbs *prendere* and *avere*, numbers, and indefinite and definite articles. Activities include fill-in-the-blank, matching, organizing random words to create a dialogue, creating questions to go with provided answers, etc. There is enough variety to keep any student from becoming bored.

After reviewing this innovative series of texts for foreigners, I have very few criticisms. Among them, I would point out the lack of page numbers in the index. Only the starting page for each unit is given although it would be quite easy to add the starting number for each segment within the unit. In addition, the glossary does not contain page numbers, something else that would be easy to add and useful to students as they review grammar and vocabulary. I think that a text entirely in Italian could be intimidating and frustrating to the typical college or university student, who initially might feel entirely lost without one word of

English to guide him or her. I would welcome the chance to review the *That's Allegro 1* text for speakers of English to see how it compares to the version for foreigners. The series is perhaps better suited to the language school setting than to the typical college or university language classroom; however, I feel that in the hands of a properly trained and motivated professor, this series could provide a welcome and refreshing alternative to the typical North American language text.

Overall, I am very impressed with the *Allegro* series. It is vibrant, inviting, colorful, well organized, and soundly based on the European Union standards for the teaching of foreign languages.

Rosemary Sands
Adjunct Instructor of Italian
University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
Green Bay, WI