

Preface

The purpose of this book, in our opinion, is to fill a major gap in the Italian as a foreign language textbook market. Although *Progetto italiano Junior* is not the first course aimed at teenagers and older children, we believe (and it was certainly our objective) that it isn't merely a textbook modified for use by this age group, but that it has been specifically designed and created for them. And in our opinion, that makes an enormous difference. Indeed, the course is characterised by its continual references to the reality of daily life as experienced by young people today: artists, books, athletes, music, customs, hobbies, and so on. These references permeate all the units, stimulating students to develop an active interest in Italian culture and language.

How (and why) we set about achieving our objective

Every venture begins with an idea. Our idea, which was to produce a youth version of a textbook that has achieved huge international success, was born and took shape as a response to requests from numerous colleagues who have used *Nuovo Progetto italiano* with classes of teenagers for years. Teachers have repeatedly asked us for a version more suited to this particular age group. Edilingua always takes the views of Italian teachers seriously, so the first stage in the process was to gather feedback: a questionnaire, completed by hundreds of colleagues working around the world, allowed us to get a better understanding of their needs and of those of their students. Because, of course, people who teach teenagers know better than anyone else that their requirements are not the same as those of adults. Having analysed the data, and after much contemplation, it soon became clear that it would not be enough to simply make a few minor changes – at least not if a *truly effective book* was the required outcome. The next step was to analyse large amounts of material; in addition to websites and magazines for young people, we also looked at other textbooks (English, Spanish, French, German and Italian courses). As a consequence we amassed many ideas, which we assessed, condensed, adapted and personalised based on our experience in teaching Italian to teenagers. The result was a book with a unit structure that satisfied not just us, the authors, but everyone else involved (including the publishing editors).

The compilation of the book (which took several months) was followed by a period of testing and critical appraisal by colleagues in various countries, teachers in secondary schools. Their much appreciated feedback allowed us to revise and refine the content of the book you are now holding.

The book's philosophy

We have tried to find a solution to the problems associated with teaching teenagers and older children, by producing material that is highly motivating. This has been achieved by employing a wide variety of techniques and activities, requiring briefer and less demanding input (the tasks are always "achievable challenges"). The philosophy is one of discovery when exploring each new element (grammar, lexis, communication, etc.); game activities have been created that are easy to understand and fun to do.

A fundamental decision was to create a comic strip story that continues through all 18 units of the course. The story follows five main characters, a mix of boys and girls, who are complete individuals that students can identify with. The characters have the same interests as them, face the same problems, share the same concerns and experiences, and speak the way young people speak. The finished product is realistic, with just the right amount of humour.

Each unit is divided into two shorter units (or learning units), which in turn are subdivided into sections. Each of the two shorter units has its own structure and can stand alone, but remains linked to the other by the subject matter. For this reason we have called them "Part One" (*Prima parte*) and "Part Two" (*Seconda parte*), with each consisting of an aspect of Italian life and, more often than not, a comic strip. Positioned at the end of each unit's *Prima parte* is a symbol displaying the word "Stop", which advises students to carry out a short revision exercise and, once the whole unit is complete, there are some general self-assessment exercises for students to do. The purpose of the subdivisions is to make learning a more gradual process, in keeping with the spirit of a humanistic-affective approach.

The purpose of the *Progettiamo!* section, within the teen magazine *Conosciamo l'Italia* at the end of each unit, is to make students work together on brief, practical tasks. They communicate in Italian, putting into practice what they have learned by doing activities that embody the principles of task based learning and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The purpose of the online activities, which can be found on the Edilingua website, is much the same.

What's new?

Based on the feedback we received it was clear that many elements of *Nuovo Progetto italiano*, above all its philosophy and structure, needed to be carried over into the youth edition. It would not have been a very clever move on our part to throw out ideas that had proven to be effective and largely well received. But we did not stop there. *Progetto italiano Junior* is not a "simplified" version of the original, but is a course that has been devised and created with young students in mind; it respects their learning patterns, their learning needs and, above all, their interests.

Aside from the features already mentioned, let us examine in more detail what *Progetto italiano Junior* has to offer: the sections on Italian life are structured like a teen magazine, with the news and information that interests teenagers; the grammar appendix (*Grammatica@junior*) explains each aspect of grammar studied clearly and concisely; very modern, dynamic graphics, designed to appeal to this age group, strike the right balance between comic strips and photos. Additionally, a colour Workbook containing game activities, a test at the end of each of its units, and varied exercises that reflect the methods of certifications such as Celi, Cils and Plida, has been combined with the Student's book to produce one, single volume; the glossary, available online, is multilingual (English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Serbian) making the course particularly suited to students from a wide range of countries; and, in addition to the listening texts, the audio CD contains dialogues and various authentic interviews with Italian teenagers to give students the opportunity to hear the opinions, feelings and experiences of their peers, as well as a variety of accents.

Finally, the video activities section (after the Workbook in the book) creates a direct link between the textbook course and the three *Progetto italiano Junior* video DVDs. The activities relate to the three components of the DVD: film clips, interviews and quizzes. Following the same lexical and grammatical progression as the book, each film clip is a short story that usually takes place between the two dialogues of each unit, thereby completing them. In short, the clip can be watched either during the unit (as is suggested in the book) or as a stand-alone film as and when the school timetable allows. Either way, the film remains pertinent and of educational value.

The *Progetto italiano Junior* course is supported by a range of other materials designed to make your lessons easier and more stimulating. These are: a Teacher's Guide, with interesting ideas, advice and suggestions on how to use the book; a Music Blog (www.musicaperjunior.blogspot.com) where students will find, for each unit in the book, a video clip of a famous Italian song chosen with the unit's topic or grammar points in mind, and two or three activities that students can do on their own at home or in class; high quality Interactive Whiteboard Software that is simple, functional, intuitive and complete. This multimedia tool allows the various teaching mediums (CD, DVD, the course units, games, tests, etc.) to be used interactively and on a single platform, thus giving teachers enormous flexibility in how the lessons and classes are managed. The result is increased student participation, motivation and collaboration.

Stay connected to the Edilingua website, not only to access this new additional material, but to send us your comments and ideas; let us know what you think of the *Junior* series or of the materials you are already using, and whether there are other teaching materials you need.

Grazie e buon lavoro!

The authors

Key to the Symbols



Work with a Partner



Role Play



Oral Task



Written Task

26



Listen to Track 26
of the audio CD



Game to Play
in Class



Do Exercise 10
in the Workbook



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Go to www.edilingua.it
and do the online activity



Fine Prima parte
pagina 145

Do the Minitest on page 145



Refer to the grammar
(*Grammatica@junior*) on page 152