

Lesson 1. LO: To retrieve information from a text.

Facts about Italy.

‘Bel paese’, otherwise known as Italy, lies in the south-east of Europe and borders four other countries: France, Austria, Slovenia and Switzerland. These countries are separated from Italy by the Alps in the north. The distinctive peninsula (the boot) of Italy protrudes into the Mediterranean Sea giving it its 4,722 miles stretch of coastline. Off this coastline, Italy boasts over 450 islands including the three largest: Sicily, Sardinia and Elba. These Italian islands are popular summer holiday destinations due to their geographical location and idyllic scenery.

To the south of Italy, the landscape becomes less mountainous. However, three volcanoes lay here including the infamous Vesuvius, which erupted in AD 79 burying whole cities and settlements. Vesuvius is one of the only European volcanoes to have erupted in the last 100 years and is considered to be one of the world’s most dangerous because of the millions of people who live nearby in Naples.

Did you know?

The Italian flag (il Tricolore) has three equally sized vertical panels which are believed to each represent a different virtue. The religious interpretation is that green represents hope, white represents faith and red represents charity.



The weather in Italy differs in each of its three main areas – the north, central and southern regions. Northern Italy is generally colder and wetter and, in the winter months, proves to be a popular skiing destination. Central Italy has a much milder climate and temperatures do not change much from winter to summer. It is in the south of Italy that temperatures can soar, especially in summer months, and this makes it a very popular summer holiday destination to more than 52 million tourists each year.

Rome, Italy's capital, is one of Europe's oldest cities and is also known as the 'Eternal City'. It was founded by Romulus, the first king of Rome, in 753 BC and was built upon seven hills. Its historical architecture and ancient buildings attract more than 4 million tourists each year. Once in Rome, visitors can explore the Colosseum, the Spanish Steps, the Sistine Chapel and over 200 fountains, including the famous Trevi Fountain.

Facts

- Mont Blanc (Monte Bianco in Italian) means 'White Mountain' and is the highest mountain in the Alps. It stands at 4807m tall and sits between France and Italy.
- In 1957, Italy became one of the founding members of the European Union in what was called 'The Treaty of Rome.'
- Italy is divided up into twenty different regions, which often speak in their own dialect of Italian and eat their own regional dishes.
- Italy is only 158 years old as it did not become a country until 1861.

Activity 1.

Answer these questions about Italy.

1. Which countries border Italy?
2. What is Vesuvius? Why is it *infamous*?
3. What do the colours in the Italian flag represent?
4. What is the capital of Italy?
5. How many regions are in Italy?

Activity 2

Use a dictionary or WordHippo to **explain** the meaning of these words.

1. peninsula
2. idyllic
3. virtue
4. ancient
5. founding