

Italian - Definition of native and heritage speakers

Native Speaker

Native Speaker: Students from Italy are considered native speakers of Italian if they received elementary and at least junior high school education with Italian as the primary language of instruction. Due to their native proficiency in the language, they are not permitted to take the placement exam nor any language courses, including ITAL 101, 105, 102, 201, 202, 205, 301 or 302. Native speakers may take literature or culture courses taught in Italian such as ITAL 341 and 342. No credits for lower-level courses (ITAL 101, 102, 201, 202) will be granted after completion of any literature courses.

Heritage Speaker

The term heritage speaker of Italian refers to: 1) individuals who are exposed to Italian during childhood or early adolescence but did not receive a formal education in Italy, or their formal education in Italian ended before the age of 14. 2) second or third generation speakers who were raised speaking the language in a natural environment outside of any Italian-speaking country. Typically, heritage speakers do not receive formal instruction in the home language until later in life (high school or college) but have good oral skills. Thus, there is often a wide range of proficiency across the bilingual continuum. For this reason, heritage speakers should make an appointment with the Italian Language Coordinator, Dr. Annalisa Mosca mosca@purdue.edu for a formal interview to determine appropriate placement.

Upon completion of the course into which heritage speakers are placed with a minimum grade of C-, they are eligible for credit for the whole sequence of language courses, up to ITAL 202.

Please note: Native speakers and Heritage speakers are allowed to pursue a major or a minor in Italian. Please contact the Director of Italian Studies, Dr. Tatjana Babic tbabic@purdue.edu for alternative courses.

Questions and Concerns

Any questions or concerns about issues related to heritage or native speakers of Italian should be directed to the Italian Language Coordinator, Dr. Annalisa Mosca mosca@purdue.edu or to the Director of Italian Studies, Dr. Tatjana Babic tbabic@purdue.edu, or to the Undergraduate Advisor for the School of Languages and Cultures, Ms. Ashley Rivera, riversaaa@purdue.edu. General questions about the placement test should be directed to the SLC Language Testing and Placement Coordinator.