

Many consider French to be the language of love. However, if this question were posed to me, my language of choice would be Italian. From the meaning behind each word, to the way each word is pronounced, there is a rich culture that remains to be discovered. Italian speaks of myths, heroes, revolutionists, martyrs, artists, and more. When words are spoken, in them we hear stories unfold, secrets whispered, an entire history laid out before us. Only through school has the opportunity to study this language been presented to me. At one point, I attended a high school that only offered Spanish and French as foreign language electives. Spanish I study out of practicality. In the United States today, it is very useful to be fluent in Spanish. Thankfully however, I soon transferred to a school that offered Italian. Luckily for me, the teacher at my school is one of the few Italian born instructors in the country. When Professoressa Randazzo di Enna teaches, she is not simply listing verbs and nouns, making her students conjugate and enunciate; rather, she is opening our eyes to the beautiful country that is Italy.

I feel extremely privileged to have a teacher that is actually from Italy. Learning to speak a language involves fully immersing oneself into the culture. My professoressa promotes this. From things such as her intricate stories to her the simplest hand gestures, she is teaching us all that is Italy. I understand that other Italian teachers may have studied in Italy or lived there for some time. But it truly is a treasure to have a teacher that, from birth, has experienced all Italy has to offer. Studying Italian is something that I've always wanted to do. The language intrigues me. Simple words like *il cucchiaino* – the spoon – I delight in. the culture also fascinates me. Though I've never visited Italy, through movies and photographs and books, I've seen the best

the country has to offer, and wait in growing anticipation for the day when I'll be able to visit such a magnificent place in person.

Studying Italian in school has greatly assisted me in other studies. I can connect the life of Garibaldi, learned in Italian, to the Unification of Italy, which I learned in AP World History. Also, when speaking of the Renaissance in History, I can link what I have learned of Dante or Leonardo in Italian. When talking philosophy in AP English Language and reading Machiavelli's *Prince*, I recall what I know of Italy during his lifetime. In music, Italian proves extremely helpful. When I see *forte*, *allegro*, or *da capo al fine* when reading sheet music for piano, I associate their musical definitions with the actual denotations in Italian. Italian also helps with my Spanish and English. There are at times words that I don't know in these languages, but because I know the Italian cognate, or even the Italian root, I can determine the definition. For instance, a friend told me that he was a recent vegetarian, but a pescetarian. Because fish in Italian is *pesce*, I knew that he was a vegetarian that consumed seafood.

In my opinion, anyone that speaks Italian is creating art simply by uttering words. The sounds that are emitted are like music to my ears. I find this language and culture beautiful and enchanting, full of intrigue, passion, and strength. With the world constantly changing around me, I feel drawn to this country that maintains its connection to history through its archeology, architecture, artwork, and much more. Italians seem to be traditionalists with high moral values that are lacking in the country in which I live. This I greatly esteem. The Italian people appear to be motivated by love. Love is such a rare quality in the world. I want to go somewhere in which I can take a deep breath and feel love fill my lungs, feel it in every part of my being, be it from smell of the grapes so lovingly cultivated by the viticulturist, or from the feel of cobblestones so

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carefully laid underfoot, or the taste of rare truffles so painstakingly found by the Lagotto Romagnolo. Genuine Italian culture is something I can experience in one place only. It is an experience I dream of one day having. But for now, I am grateful just that can learn Italian through the public school that I attend. For now, that fact, and my dreams, will keep Italy alive in my heart.