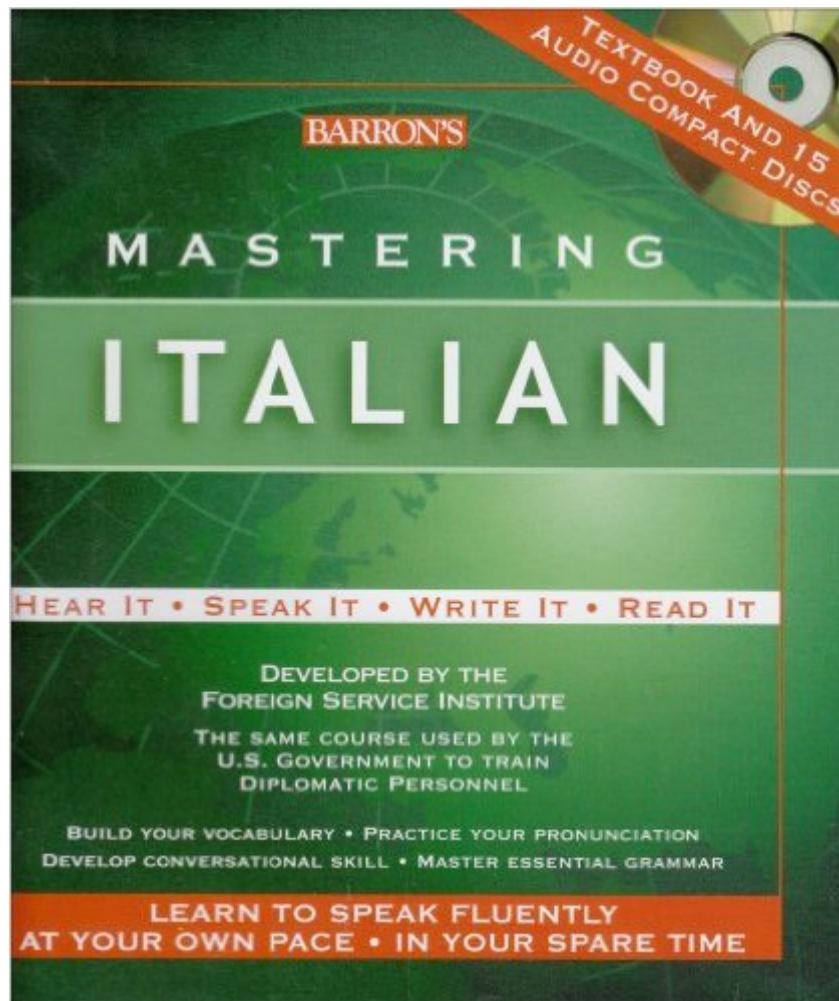


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Mastering Italian: With 15 Compact Discs (Mastering Series: Level 1 CD Packages)



Synopsis

These intensive programs are complete language immersion courses, and were created by the federal agency that trains U.S. government personnel in foreign language proficiency. They start with grammar and vocabulary basics, then bring students to proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension. This program contains a grammar textbook plus fifteen compact discs.

Book Information

Series: Mastering Series: Level 1 CD Packages

Audio CD

Publisher: Barron's Educational Series (March 13, 1992)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 9.9 x 3.4 x 12.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.4 pounds

Average Customer Review: 1.8 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (14 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,500,284 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #48 inÂ Books > Books on CD > Languages > Language Instruction > Italian #419 inÂ Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Foreign Languages > Italian #1657 inÂ Books > Books on CD > Nonfiction

Customer Reviews

As a professional linguist, I have devoted a great deal of time to learning, teaching, and using foreign languages and I can sincerely tell you that this Barron's series is a complete waste of time. As a matter of fact, I gave it one star because that is the only way I could write this review. My fiancée (who is also a professional linguist) and I purchased this series in order to learn Italian in anticipation of our honeymoon in Italy this spring. We bought this yesterday and will be returning it tomorrow for the Pimsleur course. The audio lessons focus too keenly on pronunciation (WHAT is this Vowel 70 nonsense all about anyway?!) and the accompanying textbook did little to overcome my dissatisfaction. The lessons are poorly developed and presented in both the audio and the text, and the use of phonetic letters in the text is distracting, unnecessary and extremely annoying. The program promises to teach you to "Hear it, Speak it, Write it, Read it", but it never develops a foundation from which to build comprehension and worse yet, it doesn't have a single page written in proper Italian characters!! I do agree with the reviewers who emphasize the importance of

pronunciation and precision when speaking a language, but this series spends too much time on that single aspect and not nearly enough time teaching you the living language. There are better and more effective ways to demonstrate, teach, and learn proper pronunciation without killing the enthusiasm of a new student and complicating the fairly simple and (fun) matter of learning a new language! If you are truly a serious student of Italian or of ANY language, then you (should) know that practicing vowel sounds for hours without any context will not make you better at the language, nor will that make it easier to learn.

"What the previous reviewer failed to realize is that this set isn't meant to be for someone who just wants to "learn how to order a meal, get a room, get around town, maybe shop a little". There are plenty of other products that will do that for you (in far less than 15 CDs). This is for someone who wants to learn to speak the language fluently." Oh, I think we all understand that, thank you. And it's certainly true that you're not going to learn how to order a meal, get a room, etc., from this course. The problem is that you're not going to learn anything else either! Point 1: You're not going to learn to speak any language fluently from CD's alone. Point 2: What a good CD course can do for you is - maybe - get you to the level where you can maintain a fairly simple conversation in the language, after which you need to find yourself a community of native speakers and start talking and listening. Point 3: This is not a good CD course. As a linguist I appreciate the importance of phonetics, but to quote an earlier reviewer, "practicing vowel sounds for hours without any context will not make you better at the language, nor will that make it easier to learn." Just in case you were wondering, that holds true for consonant sounds too. Having visited Italy several times, and having communicated with Italians in several different regions just fine without once worrying about "the tongue-flap R" or other niceties of phonetics that this course emphasizes, I KNOW this detailed phonetic study is not necessary for getting started in the language. So why do these CD's emphasize phonetics to the point of inducing coma?

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