

How to use the present
(indicative) to talk about the past
and the future

THE ITALIAN PRESENT TENSE

1 Use it to talk about... the present!

When we are talking about something that we consider to be/happen in the present moment or we describe a custom, routine, or something that is always valid (like a proverb), we can use the present:

- **Mangio** una mela (I eat an apple, now)
- **Scrivo** un diario (I write a journal, not now, it is part of my everyday routine)
- Chi **va** piano, **va** sano e **va** lontano (slow and steady wins the race)

2 Use it to talk about the future

When we know for sure that we are going to do something, we can use the present instead of the future, to keep things simple and informal. Usually, there is a time expression that lets us understand that we are talking about the future:

- **Domani vado** a Roma (I'll go to Rome tomorrow)
- Il tuo treno **arriva fra 10 minuti** (your train will arrive in 10 minutes)
- **La prossima settimana ti preparo** la pizza (next week I'm going to make pizza for you)

3 Use it to talk about the past

We call it "presente storico" and it is used to describe historical events, for example in books or in documentaries:

- Napoleone **nasce** in Francia nel 1769
(Napoleon was born in France in 1769)

But we can also use the present to talk, very informally, about past events that happened to us:

- **Ieri sera vado** al cinema e chi **incontro?** (I went to the cinema yesterday evening and guess who I met?)

BE CONSISTENT
AND PRACTICE!