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Assimil Super Pack: Italian With Ease - Assimil (Italian Edition)



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Synopsis

he Assimil method for teaching foreign languages is through the listening of audio cd’s and the reading of an accompanying book, one side native language, one side foreign language. This method is focused on learning whole sentences, for an organic learning of the grammar. It begins with a long passive phase of only reading and listening, and eventually adds active exercises. Most books contain around 100 lessons, with the active phase starting on Lesson 50. The word Assimil comes from assimilation.Several different series are published: With Ease series, which teach basic rules of grammar and a vocabulary of 2000-3000 words; Perfectionnement series, which teaches more advanced idiosyncrasies and idioms of the target language; Business series, which focuses on vocabulary related to international business; Idioms series, which teaches common idioms

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the third Assimil course I have used (others being French and Spanish). Honestly, this has been my least favorite of the three.If you aren’t familiar with Assimil, the general course goes like this:100 short (1 - 3 minutes long) dialogues that are progressively more complicated. Left page = Italian, right page = English. Footnotes explain grammar points and other difficult expressions. Every dialogue is fully recorded and only in the target language (Italian here). I don’t think people realize how rare and important this is. There are literally hours of Italian audio here, whereas most course have less than a single hour after you trim all of the English reading. And it’s not a hour of an Italian reading a word list like some "courses" are, but honest-to-god dialogues. This is an amazing way to get "comprehensible input" (see Stephen Krashen)The dialogues often contain vocabulary,

expressions, grammar, etc. that you will need to "assimilate" by listening to the dialogues multiple times and doing the exercises. Almost every grammar point / vocabulary word is used multiple times throughout the different dialogues, so the lessons are truly progressive. There may be a short cultural note with some vocabulary as well at the end of the lesson. There are two sets of exercises (usually 5 per set): Italian -> English translation, and English -> Italian fill-in-the-blank sentences. The Italian -> English translation set is recorded as well, so you can use that as listening practice to transcribe what you hear, then translate it.All-in-all, this system works pretty well, but does require a lot of time spent on a single lesson. But there is some secret sauce in the Assimil method.Assimil is famous for having interesting, lively, and funny dialogues to keep the reader motivated and keep the lessons interesting. Assimil Spanish had some truly funny dialogues that I still remember, and Assimil French just had some clever one-liners. I always loved it when I finally understood the punchline! It made me feel like was part of some kind of club of people who knew jokes in a foreign language. :)Hoever, Assimil Italian is just...plain. I made it to about lesson 50 and so far I can say that it has been a journey devoid of the humor and wit that I've come to love. Some of the dialogues are just awful -- as in, I literally do not want to replay them because the content and voices are so annoying. Adult actors whining like children about tummy aches and a mother saying it's been too long since they since have eaten chocolate...ugh. Spare me! There are also a lot of dialogues that portray women as dull or dimwitted. It's subtle and probably wouldn't even register for most people, but it's kind of an underlying theme that some man has to jump in and be the voice of reason or intelligence after a woman. It culminates with a dialogue called "Women are always right". Basically, some guy complaining about his stupid girlfriend who always wants to see the latest, trashy movies even though she knows nothing about them and thinks the movies are boring. He asks his friend, "Does that seem rational?" The other dude responds that it's totally illogical but hey, you know women - they never like to be contradicted even when they know they're wrong. Yay stereotypes!Don't get me wrong, I have definitely learned a lot from it, and you will too, if you work the course. It's by design. In other languages, used to love the opportunity to get out my Assimil course and see what the next lesson had in store! It was exciting and I loved sharing the funny dialogues with my wife (who already spoke the language). However, in Assimil Italian the content (at least up to lesson 50) one is just uninspired. The structure is excellent, the grammar notes are excellent, and the reference in the back a life-saver. The course can be tedious. Yes, I would still recommend it, but only because it's so effective if you do it, but not because you'll enjoy it. For a lot of people "not being able to enjoy it" will kill their motivation.I'm fiercely motivated to complete this course, and so I will, but I can't help but think the spark is missing. Maybe the last 50 lessons will be

different. Time will tell...

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