

When to use **BENE** (well) and **BUONO** (good)

Getting confused between **BENE** and **BUONO**?

You shouldn't! ;-)

BENE means WELL, while **BUONO** means GOOD.

That is, **BENE/WELL** are **adverbs**, while **BUONO/GOOD** are **adjectives**.

If you know how to use them right in English you should be able to use them right in Italian (in most cases!).

ADVERBS alter a verb, that is, they tell us how much/little of the verb you are doing:

Io parlo bene italiano

I speak Italian well

Io cucino molto bene

I cook very well

Non conosco bene Sandro

I don't know Sandro well

Sto bene, grazie

I'm well, thank you

In all the above cases **BENE** is telling us **something about the VERB**. Right?

The opposite of **BENE** is **MALE**.

Io parlo male italiano

I speak Italian badly (poorly)

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Io cucino molto male

I cook really badly

Sto male oggi

I'm unwell today

ADJECTIVES alter a **noun**, that is, they add qualities to the stuff we're talking about. They **describe** stuff.

THIS RED CAR IS FAST

THE CAR IS RED AND FAST

MY FAST CAR IS RED

In all these cases **RED**, **FAST** and **MY** are **adjectives** of CAR.

BUONO is an adjective. It has several possible translation into English. The most **common** are:

▶ Good tasting

▶ Well behaved

▶ Good quality

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We **do not use BUONO** to **describe** the **artistic value** of something (like a film, a painting, or a book). We use **BELLO**:

Questo film è molto bello

This movie is very good.

We also **do not use BUONO** to **describe** someone in relation to their **performance** (a musician, a student, a child, a dog). We use **BRAVO**.

I miei studenti sono tutti molto bravi.

All of my students are very good.

▷ **Something you must remember about adjectives...**

In Italian adjectives usually **FOLLOW the noun** they are **describing** AND they **reflect the GENDER** and **NUMBER** of such noun.

So, if an adjective is referring to a **singular masculine noun**, then the **adjective** will be **singular** and **masculine**.

Un panino buono

A good sandwich

If an adjective is referring to a **singular feminine noun**, then the **adjective** will be **singular** and **feminine**.

Una pizza buona

A good pizza

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If an adjective is referring to a **plural masculine noun**, then the **adjective** will be **plural** and **masculine**.

Due panini buoni

Two good sandwiches

Finally, if an adjective is referring to a **plural feminine noun**, then the **adjective** will be **plural** and **feminine**.

Due pizze buone

Two good pizzas

Adverbs NEVER change in **gender** and **number**. It's actually impossible!

▷ SOME EXAMPLES:

Il mio cane è buono

My dog is good (well behaved)

Questa pizza è molto buona

This pizza is really good (tasty)

I tuoi biscotti sono buonissimi

Your cookies are very good (delicious)

Here we **could not** be using **BENE**, since what we are trying to do is describe the **DOG**, the **PIZZA** and the **COOKIES**.

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To do that we need an **ADJECTIVE**.

It would make **no sense** to say "*this pizza is very well*", right?

That's **exactly** what you'd be saying if you said "*questa pizza è molto bene*".

▷ SOME FINAL TIPS

▷ **BENE** (and other adverbs) go right **after** the **verb**

▷ **BUONO** (and other adjectives) go right **after** the **nouns**

▷ BUT

sometimes the following adjectives are used **before** the **noun**, just to confuse us! And **BUONO** is one of them! So **don't panic** if you ever see BUONO before the noun!

▷ BUONO

Una buona occasione

A good deal

▷ BELLO

Una bella opportunità

A good opportunity

▷ GRANDE

Una grande festa

A big party

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▷ BRAVO

Un bravo ragazzo

A good boy

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▷ EXERCISE

Translate the first group of sentences into Italian and the second group into English.

1. Stefano swims very well.

2. Sara doesn't know English particularly well.

3. Her songs are really good!

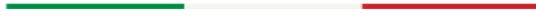
4. You make good pizza.

5. A good husband is hard to find.

6. Zia Simona oggi non sta bene.

7. Tuo figlio Luigi è un bravo ragazzo.

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8. Ieri sera ho visto un film molto bello.

9. Jennifer Lawrence recita molto bene.

10. I dolci in Italia sono abbastanza buoni.

▷ ANSWERS

Here are some possible translations for the exercises.

1. Stefano nuota molto bene.
2. Sara non conosce l'inglese particolarmente bene.
3. Le sue canzoni sono veramente belle!
4. Tu fai una buona pizza.
5. Un marito buono è difficile da trovare (or "*è difficile trovare un buon marito*")
6. Aunt Simona is not well today.
7. Your son Luigi is a good boy.
8. Last night I watched a really good movie.
9. Jennifer Lawrence acts very well.
10. Italian sweets are rather good.

▷ YOUR NOTES