Grand Canyon National Park. Arizona

English B2
IM259, *Lingua Inglese Pari a Livello B2*

Lesson 5

1. Morphology

1.1. Let's refresh our English B2-Level goals:

B2 is one of the CEFR levels described by the Council of Europe.

English B2 can be defined as:

"The capacity to achieve most goals and express oneself on a range of topics.
Examples:
1. Can show visitors around and **give a detailed description of a place**.
2. Can **understand the main ideas of complex texts** on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.
3. Can **interact** with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible **without strain for either party.**
4. Can **produce clear, detailed text** on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options."

The above goals can be summarized as follows:

- Interact effortlessly with native speakers.
- Understand and produce complex level texts.

Which in practice means that:

- You must be able to clearly reproduce the English sounds so as not to interfere with the meaning of words.

- You must express your ideas freely, combining the words in an appropriate way (morphology and syntax) and conveying the meanings you want to express in the suitable situations (semantics and pragmatics).

In past sections we took care of **the sounds** that prove to be problematic for the Italian speaker.

Now, we'll talk about words, **the form of words**; about **morphology**.

There is a big difference between Italian and English word-morphology, which can be an obstacle to achieve the required fluidity when expressing our meanings.

Why is this so?

When we studied the sound system, we observed that English had more vowel sounds than Italian. More vowels = more effort on the side of the foreign speaker who has to learn how to "accommodate" a greater number of vowels in the same space of the oral tract.

With the verb, the problem is the other way around. The Italian VERBAL morphology is BY FAR more complex than the English verbal morphology. English verbal system has a lot fewer forms than Italian!

Let's explain this a bit by refreshing the **Indicative Mode** in Italian

Indicativo Presente	
io cammino	I walk
tu cammini	you walk
lei/lui cammina	she/he/it walks
noi camminiamo	we walk
voi camminiate	you walk
loro camminano	they walk
6 different forms	**2 different** forms: • walk • walks

Indicativo imperfetto	
io camminavo	I walked
tu camminavi	you walked
lei/lui camminava	she/he/it walked
noi camminavamo	we walked
voi camminavate	you walked
loro camminavano	they walked
6 different forms	**1 single** form: walked
Indicativo passato remoto	
io camminai	
tu camminasti	**0 forms**
lei/lui camminò	(non-existent tense)
noi camminammo	
voi camminaste	
loro camminarono	
Indicativo futuro semplice	
io camminerò	I shall walk
tu camminerai	you will walk
lei/lui camminerà	she/he/it will walk
noi cammineremo	we shall walk
voi camminerete	you will walk
loro cammineranno	they will walk
6 different forms	**1** verbal form: walk 2 different <u>auxiliary</u> forms: shall/will, which, in speech are contracted in just one: **I'll; you'll**

Exercise 1   Grab pencil and paper and explore the remaining forms of the Italian and English verb. Do not forget subjunctive and conditional modes! (This will be an excellent opportunity to brush up on your Italian grammar). And remember:

If your grammar skills in Italian are poor, so will be your English skills.
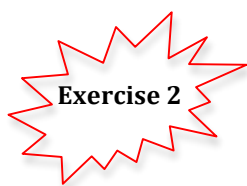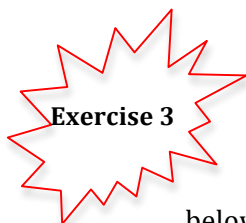
Exercise 2

Explore this interesting link about modal verbs and take the small test suggested:

https://www.ecenglish.com/learnenglish/lessons/will-would-shall-should

Summary of verb morphology

English has a lot fewer verbal forms than Italian. This turns out to be a "poisoned chalice" because you may want to express the mood, tense, and aspect you are accustomed to in Italian by means of a very short set of elements and by complementing the idea you wish to convey using adverbs, prepositions or circumlocutions.

Exercise 3

Examine the poem "**Alla sera**" di Ugo Foscolo presented in the link below. Note the efforts made in English in order to maintain the Italian verb meaning in all its aspects. You may want to skip the recitation and concentrate on the text.

https://talkinitalian.com/italian-poems/

2. An interesting aspect of English semantics. False friends.

For historical reasons, a great amount of English vocabulary (29 %) has its origin in Old French. Since French and Italian have a common ancestor namely Latin, many words in English and Italian (and other Romance Languages as well) are similar **in their form,** but differ in meaning. These words are called in linguistics "faux-amies" or "false friends" because we may think —at first— that we know their meaning, but, in fact, we don't. We may go into a considerable amount of confusion by assigning them the wrong meaning.

A very important case is the word "eventually" in English. We tend naturally to associate it with the word "eventualmente" in Italian. But both meanings are completely different and we must be aware of it.

Examples:

Let's examine the following sentence:

1. The patient in room 12A is in critical conditions, but according to the medical board, he will eventually recover.

If you were proposed the following options as an interpretation of (1), which one would you choose?

a) The patient in room 12A is going to recover.

b) The patient in room 12A may or may not recover.

Note that if we are not familiar with the difference between "eventually" and "eventualmente", we will have doubts regarding the future of "the patient in room 12A".
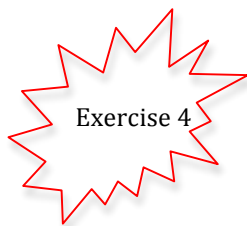
To solve the riddle we have to remember that:

"**eventually**" in English talks about a <u>future certainty.</u>

on the contrary,

"**eventualmente**" in Italian, talks about a <u>future possibility.</u>

So, the correct answer above is:

a) The patient in room 12A is going to recover.

Exercise 4   1) Read the following article and get a good glimpse of the false friends situation.

http://www.lifemilan.it/en/false-friends-a-must-learn-list/

2) From the long list provided in the article, extract the ones you use frequently. Make sure that you understand their meaning in English and, above all, that you can confidently use them in a conversation.