

babylonia



ITALIAN LANGUAGE SCHOOL

taormina, sicily



Are you looking for a place to combine:



- a high quality school
- nationally and internationally accredited
 - a family atmosphere
 - a relaxing place for your holiday
 - a beautiful location by the sea
 - a breathtaking and dramatic landscape
- a region full of history, culture and traditions
 - delicious food and excellent wine



yes, **ma dove?!**





in Taormina,



in Sicily !





Sicily

Most people do not seem to realize how much Sicily has to offer. With its sun, its beige pebble and sandy beaches, its warm aqua blue water, its snow-topped volcano, Mount Etna, its forests and rolling golden hills. Sicily has always been at the centre of the Mediterranean Sea, and therefore, it has always been at the centre of Mediterranean **storia**. Every major European royal dynasty that wanted to have power in Europe had to "own" Sicily, every major Mediterranean power has left its mark on Sicily! Important artistic, architectural and cultural remains are visible at virtually every corner in virtually every town on this island in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea.



J.W. Goethe wrote about Sicily in his book "Italienische Reise" (Flight to Italy) back in 1786: "Without Sicily, Italy cannot be fully understood. It is here one finds the key to all things". Syracuse ruled over the Mediterranean Sea and over Italy up to Tuscany, influencing first the Etruscans and then the Roman culture. It was so powerful in the Mediterranean Sea that Athens was obliged to defend its supremacy in the Greek world in different wars. Many of the **legende** described in Homer's Odyssey take place in Sicily, between the Aeolian Islands and the Volcano, Mount Etna. Agrigento, with its magnificent temple, was described by Pyndar as "the most beautiful town for mortals". Catania, among many, gave birth to Caronda, the first man in the world who understood the importance of having law in a written form to guarantee democracy. Palermo, where the Arabs left beautiful traces of their vast knowledge in science and architecture and where the Arab culture mixed with the German culture of the court of Frederick II by leaving beautiful palaces, churches and chapels with breathtaking mosaics and columns.



In Fine Arts the contribution of Sicily has been enormous. Since the Middle Ages, when the language and the **poesia** of the court of Federico II was about to become the national language, before Dante and his magnificent Comedy put an end to the controversy. Sicily has contributed with 2 Nobel prizes in literature: Quasimodo and Pirandello. Most of the school of literary realism was Sicilian: Verga, Capuana, Rosso di San Secondo. And still in the contemporary scenario Sciascia, Bufalino, Consolo, and Camilleri are best sellers. Don't be misled with the question of dialect. Every region in Italy, from North to South, has its own "incomprehensible" dialect. In fact, in Italy we can say that we all live in a sort of bilingualism: our National language, spoken all over the country, and our local dialects, spoken locally in every region from the Alps to Sicily. Sicily has also contributed greatly in music, from the old cantastorie travelling around the island singing the stories of the paladins of France to Vincenzo Bellini delighting XIX century European royal courts with his Norma. As well as in pop music nowadays with Franco Battiato and Carmen Consoli, Mario Venuti and Denovo. In painting and sculpture, from Antonello di Messina to Renato Guttuso. In fashion, from Marella Ferrera to Dolce & Gabbana. And in cooking & wine: from pasta alle sarde to caponatina, from cannoli to pasta reale, from Marsala to Malvasia.





Taormina

Taormina is full of history and **cultura**. It is famous because of its beauty, its incredible history and architecture, and its reputation for welcoming travellers. Taormina is perfectly situated to offer students easy access to the beautiful and historically important treasures of Sicily: the right place for combining study and holiday.



The town of Taormina is an important archaeological and historical location. The Greeks, fathers of Italian and European culture, established the first colony in Italy here in the Bay of Naxos. Here is one of the most famous Greek Theatres in the world. The town is like a treasure chest of history: walking along its main street, Corso Umberto, a maze of narrow staircased streets and small beautiful squares, you find Theatre and Gymnasium of the Greek Age, Odeon and Baths of the Roman Age, beautiful buildings in which the Arab and Norman cultures melt together in a memorable sense of **bellezza**, traces of the Byzantine domination and beautiful villas which belonged to the European aristocracy in the XVIII and XIX century, all in the context of a small town on top of Monte Tauro hill, overlooking the coastline of the Ionian Sea, 2 minutes away from the beach by cable car.



Taormina offers many **opportunità** in the way of hotels, restaurants, bars, discos, entertainment and sports: windsurfing, diving, snorkelling, mountain-biking, hill-climbing, rafting, tennis and golf. And during summertime there are concerts and ballets, cinema and theatre during the International Festival of "Taormina Arte".





A school with a new concept

be totally immersed not only in the language but in the culture and in the community!

Our courses and programs are held at "Casa Silva". "Casa Silva" is an historic villa, just 200 metres from the Greek Theatre : an architectural, natural treasure that Taormina has miraculously managed to conserve. The villa is hidden from view by an impressive stone wall that separates it from the steps of Via Timoleone. Built in 1811, in the park that at the time included the current public gardens, the property was owned by Professor Salvatore Cacciola, mayor of Taormina for many years during the 19th century and husband to Lady Florence Trevelyan, a cousin to the English royal family. The villa still today boasts a luxurious botanical garden filled with citrus trees, Mediterranean plants, centuries-old palms, monkey puzzle trees and magnolias, as well as many other exotic trees and plants.

Both impressive and elegant at the same time, "Casa Silva" reflects - in its architectural style and use of varied materials - the eclectic taste of Professor Cacciola. He was a cosmopolitan traveller like many Sicilian gentlemen of that period, an expert in the field of medicine, and together with his wife Lady Trevelyan created the villa as a stone representation of his cultural interests, a harmonic mix of classic culture, Sicilian tradition, exotic travels, hints of the Orient (very much in fashion during the 19th century) fused together in a sophisticated and intriguing combination, showing a Sicily of a time gone by.

"Casa Silva" is protected by the Sovrintendenza alle Belle Arti (the National Agency for the preservation of Art and Monuments).

At "Casa Silva", BABILONIA hosts **Book Presentations** by authors, a **Cine-Forum** and in summertime, **Painting** and **Sculpture exhibitions** in its 1,000 square metres of botanical garden. Additionally, **Live Theatre Performances** and **Live Concerts** (jazz and classical music) are offered. In the **net-c@fé** located in the **WI-FI garden**, students can enjoy their leisure time under the lush green trees to study, relax and meet their classmates. A kitchen hosts our **cooking courses** and students can buy coffee, cappuccino, fruit salad, croissants, cakes and typical Sicilian dishes in our **cafeteria**.

While maintaining our high calibre of academic teaching qualities, Babilonia is not just a language school, but truly a Cultural Centre, open both to the local community and to our international students who will gain a wider cultural experience and the chance to easily interact and integrate with the local community.

Our school is accredited by:

- the Italian Ministry of Education
- A.S.I.L.S. - Association of Schools of Italian as Second Language -
- the University for Foreigners of Perugia as Authorised Exam Centre
- the University "Ca' Foscari" of Venice as Teacher Training Centre for graduating teachers of Italian as Foreign Language Master ITALS
- Agency for Higher Education for C.S.N., for loans and grants to students in Sweden
- Frei and Hansestadt of Hamburg for Bildungsurlaub in Germany
- U.S. College & University Credits

All teachers at Babilonia are university graduates and many speak at least one or two other foreign languages. Most have studied foreign languages at university and abroad and all have been trained to teach Italian as a foreign language. We organize our own ongoing in-house teacher training program and teachers participate regularly in scheduled teacher training seminars and workshops offered by the A.S.I.L.S., as well as by other professional national and international organizations. We would all love to welcome you soon and help you to have an unforgettable, personal, cultural and educational experience at our school.

Method & goals

The Babilonia program has been developed from a communicative based approach and focuses on the four language abilities (listening, speaking, reading, writing).

Our first goal is communication, both oral and written.

Our Standard group course is divided into two parts: 2 hours of language **analisi** followed by 2 hours of practice with communicative tasks. The analytical activities part includes controlled oral and written work, while the communicative tasks part involves listening and reading comprehension and free oral and written activities. The instructors rotate weekly to add variety and interest to the group dynamic. Grammatical **struttore** are presented in order of frequency and relative complexity. The material is always introduced in some form of authentic text (newspaper or magazine article, taped dialogue, video-taped situation, letter, short story, etc.). Progress is monitored and all teachers meet weekly to facilitate organization and ensure proper student placement.

There is a maximum number of 10 students per class, though depending on season, our average class size is generally between 5 and 8 people. This limit ensures a small group environment conducive to **comunicazione** and offers each student the opportunity to participate as much as possible.

Ranging from Absolute Beginner to Advanced, our program is divided into seven different levels of ability.

All students are placed in a level based on their entrance exam (written and oral).

OUR USUAL TIME TABLE

08:30 – 09:25	One-to-one or Two-to-one lessons
09:30 – 11:20	Specific or Standard Group courses: language analysis
11:20 – 11:40	Coffee break
11:40 – 13:30	Specific or Standard Group courses: communicative tasks
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch break
14:30 – 15:25	One-to-one and Intensive and Culture courses
15:30 – 16:25	One-to-one and Intensive and Culture courses
16:30 – 17:25	One-to-one and Intensive and Culture courses

This time-table may change according to school needs. On rare occasions (e.g. extraordinary high season) Group classes may also be scheduled in the afternoon.

Our school at a glance

number of levels	seven
maximum class size	ten students
absolute beginners accepted	yes, please see our course schedule
average student age	from 17 to 75
junior programs offered	on request
average size of school low season	12 - 20 students
average size of school high season	50 - 65 students
minimum course length	one week
maximum course length	as long as you wish
lesson hour	55 minutes
classes take place	Monday to Friday
each of the 6 levels lasts	four weeks
entrance test	compulsory on the first day
final exam	on request
teaching material	yes, free
internet for students	yes, free
coffee machine	yes
library for students	yes
tv, stereo, videotapes, music tapes, cd roms	yes
student lounge	yes
air-conditioning in classrooms	yes
student card for discounts	yes



Courses of Italian

● GROUP COURSES

SEMI-STANDARD COURSE 2 hours per day: language analysis or communicative tasks	designed for those who want to study only 2 hours per day, focusing on language analysis activities or communicative tasks
STANDARD COURSE 4 hours per day: language analysis & communicative tasks	designed for those who want a complete language experience, studying 4 hours per day, focusing on language analysis activities and communicative tasks
STANDARD PLUS COURSE 4 hours per day: language analysis & communicative tasks PLUS 1 hour individual lesson per day	designed for those who, beyond the advantages of the Standard group course, want to have an extra individual hour (one-to-one) especially devoted to their individual language needs
INTENSIVE COURSE 6 hours per day: language analysis & communicative tasks	designed for those who want to have a more intensive group course to strengthen their abilities in a shorter time

More information on the structure of the courses & dates for CELI Exam of the University for Foreigners of Perugia is in the Price List

● ONE-TO-ONE COURSES & TWO-TO-ONE COURSES

INDIVIDUAL COURSE (One-to-one) As many hours as per your request	designed and arranged on an individual basis to meet your needs,
CLOSED GROUP COURSE (Two-to-one) As many hours as per your request	designed for two people who want to share a language course with no one else

● CULTURE COURSE

THE SICILIAN WRITERS IN THE ITALIAN LITERATURE Italian literature from its origin to the present day	group course 8 hours per week or individual course 4 hours per week
THE HISTORY OF SICILY From the Etruscans, Greeks and Romans to the present	group course 8 hours per week or individual course 4 hours per week
ART HISTORY IN SICILY Sculpture, Painting and Architecture in Italy	group course 8 hours per week or individual course 4 hours per week

ALL COURSE PRICES INCLUDE :

- free internet access
- free extra curricular activities program
- student card for discounts
- final certificate of attendance
- student insurance
- educational material
- oral and written entrance test

Italian plus ... fun!!!

These courses are meant to be added to the language course to give students the opportunity to broaden their experience of Italian culture. An average knowledge of Italian is required at least. Course length is minimum 1 week up to as many weeks as required .

<p align="center">"CASALINGA" COOKING CLASS</p> <p>This course is given by a real Italian "mamma" in her home and it is for learning la "vera cucina casalinga" (first and second course, side dish and once a week sweet or cake). The price includes dinner with "mamma" and family in her home!</p>	<p align="center">COOKING CLASSES FOR REAL CHEFS</p> <p>Observe professional chefs while cooking Sicilian nouvelle cuisine in the kitchen of a top class restaurant. You will be tutored but, because of laws on hygiene, you will not be allowed to touch or cut or mix food. The course does not include dinner.</p>
<p align="center">WINE FOR BEGINNERS</p> <p>This wine tasting course is meant for people who like wine and want to learn how to recognize quality, age, characteristics, who want to be able to analyse wine: an introduction to become a sommelier in the future!</p>	<p align="center">SICILIAN WINE, OIL & CHEESE</p> <p>Sicily produces an extraordinary range of excellent wine, oil and cheese. Come and learn more about them with a personal experience. The course includes tasting and explanation about origin, production, recipes.</p>
<p align="center">HIKING, TREKKING & ECO TOURING</p> <p>This package includes hiking different trails in various National Parks of Sicily guided by professional eco-tour guides. Transportation is included. Personal equipment needed.</p>	<p align="center">MOUNTAIN BIKING</p> <p>A variety of adventure sports like paragliding, parachuting, hydro-speed, mountaineering, rafting, potholing, etc. Outdoor activities are season and weather dependent. Transportation, insurance and technical equipment is included.</p>
<p align="center">DIVING FOR BEGINNERS</p> <p>This course is designed for those who have never dived before and want to learn how to dive, to experience the beauty of diving. The course includes theory lessons and practice in diving. Equipment included. From May to October.</p>	<p align="center">SCUBA-DIVING</p> <p>For divers who already have their licence and want to enjoy diving with the instructors of the PADI Diving Center. Different specialities available. Equipment included. From May to October.</p>
<p align="center">"PADI" INTERNATIONAL DIVING LICENSE COURSE</p> <p>This course is designed for those who want to get the PADI International Diving Licence. The course includes theory lessons and practice in diving. Equipment included. From May to October.</p>	<p align="center">THE SICILIAN WAY TO CERAMIC & OTHER ART TECHNIQUES</p> <p>Learn how to make Sicilian ceramics or wood and furniture restoration, or other forms of art crafts on request. You will be tutored by professional craftsmen at the atelier. At the end of the course a Letter of Attendance is issued by the atelier.</p>
<p align="center">GOLF FOR BEGINNERS!</p> <p>Learn how to play golf in an enchanting golf club with an incredible position on the slopes of Mount Etna, about 40 minutes drive from Taormina. The package includes lessons with Head Professional Golf teacher and car rental.</p>	<p align="center">PLAYING GOLF</p> <p>Play 18 holes in an enchanting golf club with an incredible position on the slopes of Mount Etna, about 40 minutes drive from Taormina. The package includes car rental for you to drive to the golf club, golf car, equipment and trolley.</p>
<p align="center">COURSES FOR BUSINESS & EXECUTIVE PURPOSES</p> <p>If you are a businessman, a lawyer, an architect or a doctor, and you want to meet with an Italian colleague in your field to discuss professional issues, we can organize tailored private tuition in business, finance, law, medicine and architecture.</p>	<p align="center">COMMERCIAL CORRESPONDENCE</p> <p>This course is for learning how to write, compose or reply to commercial letters in Italian. Useful for those who have tourist, commercial or business relations with Italian customers or suppliers.</p>



Extra-curricular activities



Our school offers a scheduled program of free extra-curricular activities which are included in the price of the course, allowing you to have a richer experience with the language and the culture. These activities may include, but are not limited to, films, games, and **seminari**. Our weekly seminars cover a variety of subjects from Italian literature and poetry on specific subjects including history, politics, social life, cuisine, etc.



In addition to our complimentary extra-curricular activities, Babilonia also offers paid guided **escursioni**, usually every other weekend or occasionally in the afternoon. We try to take students to the truly special places off the beaten track, the places known more by "locals" than by tour buses and travel agencies. Students can very easily go to the main sites with the excursions organized by the many travel agencies located in Taormina.



In our program we also offer many social activities, such as dinners, theatre performances and **concerti** organized both by the school and occasionally by the students themselves. The school office can also facilitate in finding information for various excursions, agencies, appointments, and activities as desired.

Accommodation

We believe that quality accommodation can be just as important as a well planned curriculum. All of the accommodation available through the school has been selected for cleanliness, comfort, and location. Most accommodation is within 15 minutes walking distance from the school. Our Apartment Manager inspects monthly all accommodation offered. Special prices have been negotiated for our students that are generally below the standard rate available to tourists. Babilonia does not take any commission in the placement of students in accommodation.

It is a service that we offer exclusively to our students because we believe that it is an essential part of an enjoyable and productive stay. Since all accommodation is privately owned and operated, there are minor differences in amenities, but all meet a standard level of quality and convenience and are checked monthly by our school. In matching housing needs with what is available, everyone must keep in mind the cyclical and limited nature of housing resources in Taormina. The sooner you communicate housing needs, firm registration and deposit, the better we can respond.

Types of accommodation offered through the school are:

● SHARED STUDENT APARTMENTS

Available with single or double rooms, we offer apartments to be shared by our students in town. Shared apartments have a common kitchen and frequently share bathroom(s). We recommend shared apartments as a great way of facilitating social and personal interactions with fellow students.

● INDEPENDENT APARTMENTS

We also have a number of independent apartments available for those who prefer private accommodation. Frequently, we have single students or couples who prefer the privacy of their own apartment and these apartments are also made available to them on a first reserved, first served basis.

● HOME-STAYS

Available with single or double rooms. We have a certain number of families, couples and single adults, who make available rooms in their residence. Many are available with boarding options (meals), which include breakfast only, half-board (breakfast & lunch or dinner) and full board. Obviously this accommodation option requires a greater commitment not only on the part of the property owner, but also on the part the student. It is well suited to those who desire a more immersive learning experience and additional daily practice speaking Italian.

● HOTELS & PENSIONE

Taormina offers an abundance of accommodation at all price levels. The school has negotiated special rates with a few 2 and 3-star hotels and can provide information on hotels at all levels as well as boarding houses. Please be advised that given the cyclical nature of the tourist industry, availability is highly unpredictable and, as with private accommodation, we recommend making reservations well in advance.

All housing is on a first reserved first served basis, so we highly recommend making your reservation well in advance to secure optimal results.

How to get to Taormina

Closest Airport: CATANIA

Closest Train Station: GIARDINI-NAXOS

How far is Taormina from:

	by plane*	by train	by car
Roma	1 hr	10 hrs	8 hrs
Milan	1.75 hrs	16 hrs	15 hrs
Florence	1.20 hrs	12 hrs	10 hrs

* to Catania Airport



● GETTING FROM THE AIRPORT

● by bus:

there is a bus service from the airport to Taormina that takes approximately 90-minutes. Tickets may be purchased at the airport or at the bus station and buses leave nearly every hour during high season and obviously less during low season. Taormina bus station is a 5 minute walk from the centre of town;

● by taxi pick-up service:

we offer an airport pick-up service from Catania Airport to Taormina. This service must be reserved at least one week in advance of arrival.

All flight changes or delayed flights must be communicated immediately and directly to the service.

Direct telephone number information will be provided by the school after booking. This service is not cancellable within 48 hours of your arrival.

Taxi airport pick-up is available for both individuals and groups. Larger groups may be accommodated on request and with appropriate advanced notice.

● GETTING FROM THE RAILWAY STATION

There are many direct trains leaving for Sicily from all the main towns in Italy. The station for Taormina is Giardini-Naxos, along the coast.

The city centre of Taormina is a 10-minute drive from the station and you can take a local bus or taxi.

● CAR RENTAL

Car rental is available in Taormina or from Catania airport. Rates vary slightly from one company to another.