

Countries Around the World™

Italy

Program Summary

Meet Olivia. She and her family live in Rome, the capital of Italy. Join Olivia as she and her grandfather stroll through the streets of Rome and introduce students to aspects of Italian religious traditions as they leave a Catholic Mass and pass Vatican City — the independent state within Rome where the pope lives. Next, Olivia travels to the coastal town of Fiumicino to pick up her cousin, Isa, at the airport, and they play on the beach, enjoying the Mediterranean climate. Once back in Rome, Olivia and Isa browse some of the shops selling fashionable clothing. Experience the grandeur and history of Italian architecture when Olivia and her family explore the ancient ruins of the Roman Forum and marvel at the Pantheon, a building dedicated to the Roman deities, before heading over to the Trevi Fountain. Finally, Olivia and her family sit down in a restaurant for a meal of delicious pasta.

Country Information

- **location:** Southern Europe, a peninsula extending into the central Mediterranean Sea; bordered by Austria, France, Vatican City, San Marino, Slovenia and Switzerland
- **capital:** Rome
- **official language:** Italian
- **type of government:** republic
- **total area:** approximately 301,230 sq km
- **climate:** predominantly Mediterranean; Alpine in the far North; hot and dry in the South
- **terrain:** mostly rugged and mountainous with some plains and coastal lowlands
- **natural resources:** includes coal, mercury, zinc, potash, marble, barite, asbestos, pumice, fluorspar, feldspar, sulfur, natural gas and crude oil reserves, fish and arable land
- **industries:** includes tourism, machinery, iron and steel, chemicals, food processing, textiles, motor vehicles, clothing, footwear and ceramics
- **agricultural products:** includes grapes, potatoes, sugar beets, soybeans, grain, olives, beef, dairy products and fish

Vocabulary

Vatican City — An independent, papal state on the Tiber River within Rome, Italy.

cappuccino — Espresso coffee mixed or topped with steamed milk or cream.

risotto — A dish of rice that is cooked in broth and served with grated cheese.

dialect — A regional or social variety of a language that is distinguished by pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary.

peninsula — A portion of land that is surrounded by water on three sides.

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Lombardy — *Lombardia* in Italian. A region of northern Italy. Lombardy is situated on a part of the border with Switzerland.

Lazio — A region of central Italy. Lazio is located on Italy's western coast.

Apulia — *Puglia* in Italian. A region of southern Italy. Apulia forms the "heel" of Italy's "boot."

Sardinia — *Sardesna* in Italian. An island off the western coast of Italy. Sardinia is also considered a region of Italy.

Sicily — *Sicilia* in Italian. An island off the southern coast of Italy. Sicily is also considered a region of Italy.

Apollo — The ancient Roman god of the Sun. In ancient Greece, this deity also was also known as Apollo.

Jupiter — The ancient Roman god of the heavens, Jupiter was considered the ruler of the gods. In ancient Greece, this deity was known as Zeus.

Hadrian — A Roman emperor who ruled from 117-138 C.E.

Baroque — A style of elaborate, decorative forms of art, music or architecture that flourished in Europe in the 17th century.

Neptune — The ancient Roman god of the sea. In ancient Greece, this deity was known as Poseidon.

panini — Plural of "panino." An Italian sandwich that is usually made with vegetables, cheese and grilled or cured meat.

tagliatelli — Also tagliatelle. Pasta that is cut in flat, narrow strips or a dish made from this type of pasta. Also known as "fettuccini."

panna cotta — A dessert that is made from a cold, light, molded egg-custard and flavored with caramel.

Piedmont — *Piemonte* in Italian. A region of northwestern Italy. Part of Piedmont is situated on a section of the border with France and Switzerland.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Distribute outline maps of Italy to the class. Have students find and label the capital and the country's 20 different regions, including the islands of Sicily and Sardinia. Ask students questions, such as: Since there are so many regions in Italy, do you think there are differences among the people who live there? How might people living in the North be different from the people in the South? How about the people who live on the islands of Sicily and Sardinia? What could be some possible similarities among the Italian people?
- Lead a discussion about nationalism and patriotism. Introduce the ideas of nationalism as a feeling of a common identity and patriotism as pride in one's country. Ask questions, such as: What does it mean to be an American? What are considered to be the core beliefs of America? How is patriotism related to the idea of nationalism? Then, discuss how it is possible that a country with a population of diverse peoples can still have a sense of common identity. Help students understand this concept by reminding them that while there are differences among them, they are all considered to be a part of the school community.
- As a class, brainstorm a list of questions about Italy. Prompt students by asking them to share what they already know about Italy and what they would like to find out about the country. Students can make predictions about what they think they will see in the program. As they watch, have students keep track of how many of their questions were answered and if their preconceptions about Italy were correct or not.

Follow-up Activities

- Students can learn more about the ruined structures of the Roman Forum by visiting intranet.grundel.nl/thinkquest/homeforum.html. Then, students can pick their favorite structures and, using various craft materials, cereal boxes and shoeboxes, build models of them for display in the classroom. Instruct students to create fact sheets to accompany their structures that feature information, such as the original purposes of the buildings, how old the structures are, how long they took to build, who built them, etc. Students can use their knowledge of scale to arrange their models in the classroom for a 3-D, miniature version of the ruins of the Forum. As an extension, students can write a series of journal entries as if they had been vacationing in Rome and had visited these structures.
- Whether it's pizza, spaghetti, lasagna or gelato, just about everybody loves Italian food! Students can prepare dishes that feature Italian foods and bring them to class for an Italian food lunch. For each dish that they bring in, students can write out the recipe and include a picture. Collect all the recipes for inclusion in an Italian food class cookbook.
- While the ancient Roman Empire may have started as just a small town on the banks of the Tiber River, it grew into one of the most powerful civilizations in history, and aspects of ancient Rome still influence life today. Engage students in a study of ancient Rome. Begin by dividing the class into small groups and assigning each group a topic to cover, such as history, religion, food, architecture, engineering, etc. Based on the information each group finds, it can produce fact posters, time lines, pictures or illustrations, dioramas, models and maps, as necessary. Have students plan and give presentations on their topics on ancient Rome. After all of the presentations, students can work together to create a classroom display dedicated to ancient Rome.
- Students will have fun learning all about Italy by creating their own question and answer books. Begin by dividing the class into small groups and assigning each group a topic to cover, such as climate, history, food or regional differences. Once they have finished creating their books, students can use the material from their question and answer books in a classroom trivia game about Italy. An interactive tool for making a question and answer book can be found at www.readwritethink.org/materials/flipbook/.
- The Coliseum in Rome was once the spot for the bloodiest and most popular sport in ancient Rome — the gladiatorial games. Students may enjoy Michael Martin's *Gladiators* (Coughlan Publishing, 2006) to find out more about the lives of the fierce warriors who battled inside the Coliseum. Then, students can pretend that they are promoters for upcoming gladiatorial games by designing posters that feature facts about the games, the Coliseum and illustrations of gladiators sporting authentic clothing and weaponry. Display the posters in the classroom.
- Even though the English language isn't based on Latin, like Italian, Spanish and French are, many words in English are based on Latin roots. Students can discover some of these Latin roots by visiting www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/resources/verbal.clues.with.latin/latinmainmenu.html. Each student can pick a Latin root and write the root's definition, along with an English word based on that root, on a note card. The English word can include the word's definition and part of speech. Collect the students' note cards and display them on a word wall dedicated to English words with Latin roots.
- Pasta, a popular Italian food, comes in many shapes and sizes. And while everyone knows that pasta makes a good meal, it can also make some great art! Encourage students to bring in different types of pasta, and along with various craft materials, they can use them to make pasta sculptures. As an extension, have students design new pasta shapes and name them.

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- Discuss the Renaissance with students, explaining how it began in Italy and brought about monumental changes in the way people thought about life, and how those changes were reflected in the art, architecture and literature of the time. In fact, the name "Renaissance" means "rebirth." Have students find out more about the Renaissance by visiting library.thinkquest.org/C006522/cnt.php. Then, using the information that they find, students can write and illustrate informational booklets on the Renaissance. Students can cover multiple topics about the Renaissance, or they can choose to focus on a particular aspect of this time period. Encourage students to share their booklets with the class.
- Have students select items commonly associated with Italy, like pizzas, sports cars or even the unique "boot" outline of the country itself, and write "shape poems" about them. For a brief introduction to shape poems, visit www.readwritethink.org/materials/shape/. Encourage students to share their poems with the class.
- Another legacy of ancient Rome, the planets and moons of the solar system (except for Earth and its moon) are named for the Roman gods and goddesses. Have students explore www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0875452.html to find facts about how and why the planets got their names. From the information they find, students can create fact posters about the planets and moons, including information about the Roman deities for which the celestial bodies are named. Then, using various craft materials, students can work together to make a 3-D model of the solar system. As an extension, students can rename the planets and moons of the solar system based on the planets' characteristics.
- Italian region bingo! Invite students to create their own bingo cards featuring the 20 different regions that make up Italy. For an additional challenge, include Italian cities from each region in the game. Then, have students fill out their bingo cards with the names of the regions. Draw the names of the regions from a bag. Who will be the first to bingo?
- *Buon giorno!* Invite students to learn basic words and phrases in Italian by visiting www.bbc.co.uk/languages/italian/talk/. Students can pair up and, using a combination of the words and phrases, write and perform a short skit in Italian. After they perform their skits, students can translate what they were saying into English. *Ciao!*

Suggested Internet Resources

- www.kidskonnct.com/AncientRome/AncientRomeHome.html
Learn more about ancient Rome and what it was like to live there. This web site provides comprehensive historical information about life in ancient Rome.
- www.timeforkids.com/TFK/hh/goplaces/main/0,20344,726880,00.html
Discover Italy and what it is like to live there! This web site by Time Inc. presents information about Italy's famous sites, history and language. Also includes a quiz.
- library.thinkquest.org/CR0212302/italy.html
Learn about the culture and customs of Italy from the perspective of a child who lives there! The students of Roosevelt School in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin present this award-winning site to teach people about different cultures.
- www.cia.gov
The CIA World Factbook web site presents detailed and up-to-date information on Italy and many other countries. Topics include geography, people, government, economy, transportation and communication. On the main page of the CIA site, click on the "World Factbook" link.

Suggested Print Resources

- Anderson, Robert. *National Geographic Countries of the World: Italy*. National Geographic Children's Books, Washington, D.C.; 2006.
- Gallagher, Sandra and Avery Hart. *Ancient Rome!: Exploring the Culture, People & Ideas of This Powerful Empire*. Williamson Publishing Company, Charlotte, VT; 2002.
- Olsen, Nathan. *Italy: A Question and Answer Book*. Capstone Press, Mankato, MN; 2005.

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