

Translating cultural terms

Different strategies for the translation of cultural terms include:

1 Cultural equivalent

Esame di maturità	>	A-levels
Montecitorio	>	Westminster

2. Functional equivalent

Esame di maturità	>	Italian secondary school leaving certificate
Montecitorio	>	Parliament

3. Descriptive equivalent

Samurai	>	the Japanese aristocracy from the eleventh to the nineteenth century
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4. Literal Translation

L'Automobil Club d'Italia	>	Automobile Club of Italy
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Exercise. How do you translate these expressions and sentences into English

- a) L'anno scorso non ho fatto la settimana bianca.
- b) Ora inseguo. Ho superato il maxiconcorso l'anno scorso.
- c) Cosa farai per la Befana?

Translating Proper Names

Most of the proper names refer to places. As Chris Taylor says in *Language to Language*, (1998), “In the case of names of places and geographical phenomena there again appears to be no norm, though the names of many countries, principal cities, major rivers etc. are translated e.g. England, London, the Thames.” The names of kings, queens and popes of the past and present are translated. Equivalents of their first names are found in European languages, e.g. Charles I (Carlo I), Charles II (Carlo II).

Fictitious names are sometimes translated from English into Italian.

David Copperfield	>	<i>Davide Copperfield</i>
The Mad Hatter (Alice in Wonderland)	>	<i>Il Cappellaio Matto</i>
Snow White	>	<i>Biancaneve</i>
Sabre (dog)	>	<i>Killer</i>

Regarding artists' names, and whether or not they are translated from Italian into English, the general rule is that they are not translated. E.g. Piero della Francesca, Donatello. However, two exceptions include Raphael and Titian.

The names of roads, squares are not usually translated into English though there are a few exceptions for very famous places, e.g. St Peter's Square, St Mark's Square.

With names of buildings one usually translates just the kind of building.

Il Palazzo Pitti	>	the Pitti Palace; Monastero de la Verna	>	the Verna Monastery
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