

# Lesson 164

## The Preposition, tra & fra

The preposition, **fra** and **tra**, are [simple prepositions](#), are interchangeable and have the same usage and meaning. **Tra/fra** never combines with the definite article (as [articulated prepositions](#) do). As with most Italian prepositions, the usage and meaning can vary depending upon the context and what you are trying to convey. Below are some of the most common uses of the preposition, **tra/fra**:

### 1. Referring to two people or things, or two groups of people or things

**Tra/fra** can be used to refer to two people or things or to two (2) distinct groups of people or things. The English translation would be *between*. This usage can also be used when referring to place or position:

Spero che il mio segreto rimanga solo **fra te e lui**.  
*I hope that my secret stays only **between you and him**.*

C'è un bel paese **tra Rome e Firenze** che mi piace visitare.  
*There is a beautiful town **between Rome and Florence** that I like to visit.*

Ci sono molte differenze **fra mio fratello e me**.  
*There are many differences **between my brother and me**.*

Le idee sono diverse **tra il partito democratico e il partito repubblicano**.  
*The ideas are different **between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party**.*

### 2. Referring to two or more among a group

**Tra/fra** can be used to refer to two or more people or things among a larger group. The English translation would be *among* or *amongst*:

Non ci sono segreti **fra amici**.  
*There are no secrets **among friends**.*

Mia zia non può trovare le chiavi. Forse sono **fra gli effetti personali**.  
*My aunt can't find her keys. Perhaps they are **among her belongings**.*

Quell'uccello è difficile da vedere perché gli piace nascondersi **fra gli alberi**.  
*That bird is difficult to see because it likes to hide **amongst the trees**.*

### 3. Expressions of time

**Tra/fra** has the meaning of *in*, *within*, *between* or *from* when used in expressions of time:

**Fra una settimana** vado a Roma.  
*I am going to Rome **in a week**.*

Il progetto è attuato **fra agosto e settembre**.  
*The project is happening **from August to September**.*

Il treno arriva di solito **fra l'una e le due del pomeriggio**.  
*The train usually arrives **between 1 and 2 in the afternoon**.*

Vedrai mia sorella **fra un'ora**.  
*You will see my sister **within the hour**.*

#### 4. **To indicate an approximate value**

**Tra/fra** can be used to indicate approximate values, such as distance, price, time, etc. The English translation is usually *about, from, or around*.

La distanza al negozio è **fra i 5 ed i 10 chilometri**.  
*The distance to the store is **about 5 to 10 kilometers**.*

La nuova macchina costerà **fra i 10 ed i 15 mila**.  
*The new car will cost **around 10,000 to 15,000**.*

#### 5. **Distributive meaning**

**Tra/fra** can have a distributive meaning, that is something that is divided among a group. The English translation would be *among*:

La corte ha ordinato che si dividano tutti i soldi **fra i parenti**.  
*The court ordered that we share all the money **among the relatives**.*

La società ha diviso il premio **fra tutti i vincitori**.  
*The company divided the prize **among all the winners**.*

#### 6. **After relative superlatives or with partitives for emphasis**

**Tra/fra** can be used with [superlatives](#) and some [partitives](#) to mean *among* or *out of*, as a means of singling out one particular person/group/thing from a larger group:

**Nessuno fra voi** ha fatto bene il compito  
*None of us did the homework well.*

Le Nozze di Figaro è una **tra** le opere più belle del periodo classico.  
*The 'Marriage of Figaro' is one of the most beautiful operas of the classical period.*

#### 7. Useful expressions with **fra/tra**:

*fra poco* shortly, in a short time, soon  
*fra po'* shortly, in a short time, soon  
*primo fra tutti* first of all  
*uno fra mille* one in a thousand  
*uno fra dieci* one in ten  
*fra noi* between you and me  
*frai i piedi* under one's feet  
*fra la folla* in the crowd



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last updated: 20 October 2008