

## Lesson 83: Introduction to the pronoun, ne

The pronoun **ne** can be confusing to English speakers, but it is not difficult to understand once you know how it works. After learning these rules, try to work it into your Italian. Practice using it in your writing and speaking so that it becomes second nature to you. Try looking for examples online ([click here to repeat a search](#) on Google News and see **ne** used in varying contexts) as this will help you to understand better it uses.

**Ne** has the following functions in Italian:

1. **Ne** is used to replace [partitive constructions](#). Consider it a way to avoid repeating the same thing over again. See the example below:

Vuoi **del latte**?  
*Do you want some milk?*

No, non **ne** voglio. (*ne = del latte*)  
*No, I do not want any (of it).*

As you can see in the example, **del latte** (some milk) is replaced with the preposition **ne** which translates in English as *any (of it)*.

**Think of ne as a special object pronoun for the partitive.**

2. When the partitive is modified by an adjective, only the noun is replaced by **ne**, and the adjective remains and follows the preposition, **di**:

Vuoi del latte fresco?  
*Do you want some fresh milk?*

Sì, grazie! Ne vorrei **di fresco**. (*ne = del latte*)  
*Yes, thank you! I would like some (of the fresh stuff).*

Hai visto dei film interessanti?  
*Have you seen any interesting films?*

Sì, ne ho visti **di interessanti**.  
*Yes, I have seen some interesting ones.*

3. **Ne** is used to substitute nouns when numbers and quantities (definite\* **or** indefinite\*\* but not **tutto**\*\*\*) are involved. **The rule is this:** When the direct object is missing in the presence of a definite or indefinite quantity, then **ne** must be used.

Take note when the noun being replaced is modified by an adjective. The quantity and adjective remain, and the adjective agrees in gender and number with the item being replaced by **ne**.

See the examples below:

Vorresti **due mele**?  
*Would you like two apples?*

Sì, grazie! **Ne** vorrei due.  
*Yes, thank you! I would like two (of them).*

Vorresti due mele rosse?  
*Would you like two red apples?*

Sì, grazie! **Ne** vorrei due rosse.  
*Yes, thank you! I would like two red ones.*

**Quante riviste** hai ricevuto?  
*How magazines did you receive?*

**Ne** ho ricevute tre. (**ne = tre riviste**)  
*I received three (of them).*

Compra sempre troppe mele.  
*She always buys too many apples.*

Perché **ne** compra troppe? (**ne = troppe mele**)  
*Why does she buy so many of them?*

It should be noted that the past participle **generally must agree** in gender and number with the object which **ne** has replaced. In second example above, **ne** replaced 'magazines' (le riviste) causing the past participle to become ricevute.

Take note the agreement of the past participle when **ne** replaces definite and indefinite quantities that are not numbers in compound tenses (**see rule #7**):

Non ti piace la Diet?  
*You don't like the diet soda?*

No, mi dispiace. Però **ne** ho bevuto un **orso**.  
*No, sorry. But I drank a sip of it. (ne = della Diet)*

4. **Ne** replaces prepositional phrases introduced by the preposition, **di**.

Hai scritto **della polemica**?  
*Did you write about the controversy?*

Sì, **ne** ho scritto. (**ne = della polemica**)  
*Yes, I wrote about it.*

5. **Ne** can also be used to substitute prepositional phrases introduced by **da**, but only when it the phrase represents motion *from* a place. **Ne** normally *does not* replace the agent in passive sentences (introduced by *da*).

Il cane ha corso nella stanza da letto, ma **ne** è uscito subito. (**ne = dalla stanza da letto**).

*The dog ran into the room, but he went out immediately.*

6. **Ne** can also be used with verbs that use the preposition, **da**, such as:

**ottenere da**

Conoscevi Gino oggi?

*You met Gino today?*

Sì, comunque non **ne** ho ottenuto nulla. (ne = da Gino, da lui)

*Yes, however I did not obtain anything from him.*

Other verbs with da:

**ricavare da**

**trarre da**

**risultare da**

7. **Ne** influences the past participle in compound tenses in certain situations, while in others it does not:

-Ne **does not influence** the past participle to agree when replacing prepositional phrases (see section #4, #6).

-Ne **does influence** the past participle when it replaces a number or an indefinite quantity, where the past participle agrees in gender and number with the noun substituted for with ne:

Ho comprato tre mele.

**Ne** ho **comprate** tre.

-If the quantity is indicated by another noun (*etto, chilo, pacco, cesto, tazza, sacco*) the past participle agrees with the quantity noun and **not** with the object that was replaced):

Quante mele hai comprato al supermercato?

*How many apples did you buy at the supermarket?*

**Ne** ho comprato un etto.

*I bought 100 grams of them.*

(see how the past participle agrees with *etto* and **not** *le mele*)

-With reflexive verbs, the past participle agrees with the object replaced by **ne** and **not** with the subject (remember, that with reflexive verbs, **si** becomes **se** before **ne**):

Giovanna si è **comprata** tre gonne.

*Giovanna bought herself three skirts.*

Giovanna se ne è **comprate** tre.

*Giovanna bought herself three of them.*

8. **Ne** is also used in various idiomatic expressions (as seen below). Remember that in many of these constructions, **ne** is not translated literally and may have no meaning in the sentence:

andarsene  
farne a meno  
non poterne più  
valerne la pena  
combinarne di tutti i colori  
venirsene  
starsene  
partirsene  
rimanersene

\*Definite quantities: any number (1, 10, 100, 12012, ecc.), etto, chilo, pacco, cesto, tazzo, sacco, sorso, etc.

\*\*Indefinite quantities are: molto, poco, troppo, tanto, nessuno, alcuno, qualcuno.

\*\*\* Tutto is never used with **ne** because, as it means "all" or "whole", there's no partitive.



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