

Gianna Tieri
 March 2, 2010
 Journal 4

“I Compiti”

Here is my homework for today:

Homework: March 2, 2010			
English	Due 3/3	Grammar	Basic concepts
English	Due 3/3 (ongoing)	Learning to write academic papers	Compare/Contrast & Character Analysis - revisions
English	Due 3/3 (Finish by 3/5)	Emma – Jane Austen	Read 75 pages
Italian	Due 3/3	Grammar/vocabulary	Review
Italian	Due 3/3	Textbook/workbook	Various exercises
History	Ongoing	World War II	Research: try two new databases through online library
History	Ongoing	Travel plans	Prepare interview questions
Learn to Travel	Due 11:59 pm (three ½ hours from now)	Travel Journal	1500/words – every week

Here is a portion of my personal to-do list:

Personal To-Do List	
Tasks:	(Original Due Date/s)
Call /e-mail friends/family/clients/alumni	2/1, 2/8, 2/15, 2/22, 3/1
Arrange a visit with the teacher I worked with last semester to visit classes	2/1
Thank you gifts for Nicole, Chelsea, and my other ragazze who left great gifts in Sansepolcro	2/1
Meredith College re: Library Essay Contest	2/16
Upload photo album - Trip to Firenze 2/19-2/20	2/21
E-mail Dr. and Dr. Banker re: my trip to Firenze (I recognized several paintings!)	2/21
Have dinner with host family	2/24
E-mail Dr. Swab and Mr. Ed re: science	2/28
Upload photo album - Trip to Siena 2/27	2/28
Research some places I want to visit	Ongoing
Research some of the places I've seen	Ongoing
Travel Plans	Ongoing
Capella della Gatta Tranquilla	Ongoing
Improve time-management skills	Ongoing
Wish list: lunch/dinner with other nice people I've met in Sansepolcro, watch movies, sleep late, aimless walk through town, exercise more, adopt a dog, etc...	When everything else is done

As I was staring at these lists tonight, an unpleasant sensation of panic was creeping up my spine and replacing my academic-exhaustion, but then I had an idea: I'm going to see if I can combine everything!

Dear Everyone:

Why haven't I written or called in a month? Well, the truth is I have no adequate excuses. What I can offer is a glimpse into how my time is spent here. I am very personally involved in my courses. Dr. Webb specifically designed this semester to allow me to learn more about my Italian ancestry. My Italian class is not just about learning the language; it is about finding a way to connect to my family. My history class is actually "my history" class. I am researching the journal my grandfather wrote for our family detailing their experiences during World War II in Italy. Dr. Webb also created an English 200 class that addresses some fundamental grammar and writing skills I (desperately) need. I am also part of the Travel to Learn class; which is filled with important travel information as well as interesting discussions about our experiences in Italy.

This morning, after about five hours of sleep, I was ready for our Travel to Learn class at 8:30. I do enjoy writing my journal, but I have a very hard time estimating how much time it will take me. An important lesson for me continues to be realistic about what I want to achieve, and what is reasonable to achieve (within the limits of my ability/schedule), and the results may be very different from what I want them to be. Each day I look at my to-do list, I am reminded that I need to manage my time more efficiently.

After Travel to Learn, I had an Italian tutoring session along with my (only) classmate, Kayley. These sessions have been helpful for reviewing concepts and exploring some of the Italian language mysteries in a less formal setting than the classroom. Today Bekah honored my request to learn more about anatomical language related to massage and bodywork. I love being a massage therapist and I had hoped to have more time last semester to have "spa-nights," but it didn't happen. This semester I recognize that offering massage is a way for me to relax and I need to make this a higher priority. There is a beautiful room in the palazzo that we call the chapel. This is where Chelsea used to play the piano at least three hours a day, so until she comes back, I think this room needs a purpose. What I hope to do is create a space for massage/meditation/yoga and call it: *La Capella della Gatta Tranquilla* (The Calm Cat Chapel).

I had fifty-one minutes to continue my to-do list. I spent four minutes eating a gorgeous blood orange, three minutes gathering my belongings and moving to a quiet room to work on my research for my history class. OK, fine, I did spend another eight minutes checking my e-mail, and although I wanted to write thoughtful responses, I didn't write anyone back. I spent the remainder of my time exploring the labyrinth of the Meredith online library. I found a few more dead ends, and one interesting article that could be helpful to my project. Normally, I find at least thirty articles/books I feel I must read immediately, but have nothing to do with my assignment. The amount of data available through the internet is truly staggering. The documentation about World War II seems limitless. There are thoroughly researched articles, interviews, and books with as many different perspectives from every imaginable country, journalist, soldier and scholar, but barely a mention of the small town where my family lived. I think my grandfather's journal may be the only English source available. When I visit in a few weeks, I may be able to learn more.

At noon, Italian class began. For our homework, Kayley and I had read a short article in our textbook about the Italian school system. In every class, we are encouraged to speak as much as possible in Italian, and today we began with a discussion about the general differences in the public school systems of the United States and Italy. I am participating in the discussion, but I'm not articulating my thoughts as much as I am stammering, stuttering, using incorrect words, conjugations, tenses, pronouns, omitting adjectives and forgetting some words altogether. Yet Francesca and Kayley unflinchingly support my efforts to form a sentence. I understand almost every single word our teacher Francesca says. Of course, she knows

exactly which words I know, but it's more than that. While she spoke about physical education in schools I was able to follow her without translating each word she said. It gives me a lot of hope. We learned more about *l'imperfetto* with *dovere*, *volere*, and *potere*, as well as *gli avverbi*. To create some adverbs in Italian, you can use the feminine form of an adjective and add "-mente," if the adjective ends in "-e," you just add, "-mente." *Per esempio: lento -> lenta -> + mente -> lentamente*. Easy!

Shortly after lunch began, Andrea, friend of Meredith College and fine opera singer, came to ask if he could use Chelsea's chapel to rehearse, so we were treated to his talent while having another delicious lunch.

I had an hour after lunch to spend some time reading Jane Austen's *Emma*. I don't think I've mentioned yet how much I love school. I *have* to read *Emma*: this is my assignment and I'm thoroughly enjoying it. I'm probably missing all of the important details, but I'll find out what they are in class tomorrow. My English class with Dr. Webb began at 3:30, in which I am the only student. I find it highly unlikely she will call on another student for the answer, so I must be triple prepared. She summons a phenomenal amount of patience, from what must be an epic reserve, to endure teaching me grammar. I am making progress, but it's even slower than Italian. Ironically, most of my challenges in learning Italian appear to be based in the fact that I don't understand some fundamental aspects of English. Here is a small achievement:

Please note my new skill with semi colons; I have stopped abusing commas.

Homework resumed from 5:30 until our community meeting at 7:30. We gathered around the dining room table to discuss several interesting topics, but I can't tell you any of them. The meetings are for students only.

Since then I've been trying to encompass a bit too much into my journal. I wanted to share pictures and stories from two group trips to Firenze and Siena. Dr. Bailey is here now, and soon the Swabs will join us as well. I wanted to write to the Bankers and let them know how much I retained of what they taught me and how much more meaningful my morning in the Pitti Palace was, but I will have to resume another time.

My time is up and I need to sign off, but so much more has happened! I want to link this journal entry to my online photo albums, but my online photo albums aren't online yet; in fact, my photos are still in my camera. I wish I could add just a few maps, web sites, hyperlinks or something more, but I can't, I have to start working on the rest of my homework. Learning how to manage my time may be my most important lesson. I'll let you know how it's going. Soon....

With love,
Gianna