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2.1   Opening the Italian Nouns module.

Before you open the module, please check to see that 'Italian Nouns 1.1' and a separate file called 'Italian Nouns 1.1 keys' are in the same folder.

The first time you open the module, the easiest way is to double-click the icon for 'Italian Nouns'.   You can click either the database file itself, or the nearby 'keys' file that has the same name with the word 'keys' added at the end.   If you prefer, you can launch the parent program first, and open the database from within the program by pulling down File menu and choosing Open DB...   This leads to a standard navigation dialog box.

2.2   The Browse window :   a tour of the window

The Browse window should be displayed automatically when you first open the module.
The title-bar shows the name of the particular module you're using.   The Browse window
isn't labelled 'Browse', but you can recognise it because it has the word 'Find' in the top left-
hand corner.   It can take a little time to load all the data, so please be patient.   If the
window isn't displayed at all, pull down File menu and choose Browse.   Click on the window
to make it active.

We'll start at the top-left corner and work round the screen.

The first thing you see is the word 'Find' at the top left-hand corner, with a small empty box
beside it.   This is part of the 'Find' feature.   We'll come back to this in section 2.3.

Underneath 'Find', it says 'Show list of words as'.   This is part of the 'Groups' feature.   We'll
skip this one too for the moment (it's in section 2.4).

The Main Scroll List.

The next item down on the left-hand side is a panel with a scroll-bar.   This is the Main Scroll
List, which displays the Italian words that are in the database.

If you're using an unregistered demo copy of the parent program, only 59 words will be
displayed.   A registered copy of the parent program gives you access to all the words that
are in the database - there are more than 2,000 of them.

The first time you open the module with a registered copy of the parent program you may
find that part of the alphabet is missing.   It's not a bug.   The program is pre-set to display
1000 words at a time.   Other parts of the alphabet will be displayed when you use the Find
feature (see section 2.3).   However, if you'd like the Main Scroll List to display all the words,
pull down the DB menu at the top of the screen and choose Preferences.   In the pop-up
menu choose 'Max. items in list 2500', and click OK.   You'll be returned to the Browse
window.   To complete the change, close the Browse window by clicking the close box, and
reopen it by pulling down the File menu and choosing Browse.

In the Browse window, look again at the list of words in the Main Scroll List.   Scroll down a
little, and click once on 'albergo'.   If you can't find 'albergo', click once on any word, but
we'll assume you've clicked on 'albergo'.   Clicking on a particular word displays the
information stored for that word in the database, and we'll look at it as we tour the window.

The bottom line of the Browse window.

At the bottom of the window, you'll see three buttons labelled 'New', 'Delete', and 'List'.
These are part of the Groups feature, and we'll skip them for the moment (they are in
section 2.4).

The next item along in the bottom line is 'noun'.   All the words in this module are nouns,
and they all have this entry.

The next item in the bottom line is 'masculine'.   This is the gender of the word you've chosen.

The last item in the bottom line is a cryptic entry.   For 'albergo', the entry is 'masc.go/ghi.v'. If you can't see the whole of the entry 'masc.go/ghi.v', try making the window wider.   You don't have to worry about this.   It's to do with the 'rules' that you'll use when you come to add words of your own.   If you're interested, this item records that this word is masculine, and it forms its plural by changing -go to -ghi, and it starts with a vowel.   Some unusual words don't have an entry in the corner, for instance 'acacia' which has two plural forms, and 'ala' which is irregular.

The translation.

Now please take a look at the top of the window.   Near the middle of the top line, you'll see 'Translation'.   This gives the English translation of the word you've chosen.   For 'albergo', the English translation is 'hotel', which is short and sweet.   Some of the translations are longer.   If you don't like the translation provided, you can change it.   There's information about this in chapters 4 and 5 of this manual.   It's probably best to get used to the module before you start making changes.

Under the translation there's a pop-up menu which shows 'Singular and plural forms'.   You don't have to do anything about this for 'Italian Nouns' - in fact, you can't.   It's needed when the program is used for some other modules, but you don't use it for this one.

Below that pop-up menu, you'll see the entries 'Singular l'albergo' and 'Plural gli alberghi'. Obviously, these are the singular and plural forms of the word you've chosen, with the appropriate forms of the definite articles.   The numerous ways of forming the plural in Italian is one of the things this module is about.   You can use these entries to look up the plural of a particular word if it's in the module, and you can practise the plural forms, and the definite articles, and test your knowledge in the Exercises window, but we'll come to that in chapter 3.

Some words don't have a singular form, or don't have a plural form.   In that case one of these entries will be blank.   If you want to see a word of this kind, look at 'alimentari'.   If you are using a registered copy, you can scroll down to 'calza', and click one by one on the words that start with 'calz'.   Remember to look at the translation at the top of the window.

The Comments box.

Below 'Singular' and 'Plural', there's a fairly large plain panel.   This is the 'Comments box'. For 'albergo' it's probably empty.   For some other words, the module contains some extra information which is displayed in this box.   You can add your own notes and comments in the box, for instance examples of the way the word is used, and extra translations if they are too long to fit in the normal place.   To do this, click in the box and you'll see the insertion point winking, ready for you to start typing.   You can delete anything you've entered, and you can also delete any information that's already provided.   You can copy and paste to and from the Comments box, and you can use other fonts or sizes, and bold, italic, etc (you can reach these via the Edit menu, and there are some keyboard commands as well). Depending on the size of your screen, you may be able to enlarge the Browse window, which will make the Comments box larger.   You can add more notes even when the Comments box looks full - it has a scroll-bar at the right.

Each word has its own Comments box.   Before you add a comment to a blank Comments box, please make sure that you have selected one of the words in the module.   Anything you type in the Comments box for that word is automatically saved when you select a different word.   If you omit to select a word, the comment you enter won't be attached to any particular word, and it won't be saved.

Copy and paste.

You can copy and paste the translations and the singular and plural forms of the noun from the Browse window, to the Comments box or to another document.   Select what you want to copy by double-clicking in a word and then dragging the mouse, or by clicking at one end of what you want to copy and dragging the mouse to the other end - it's easier if you start at the right-hand end.

You can also copy words that are in 'groups' to the clipboard (please see section 2.4).

2.3   The Browse window : the Find feature.

In the top left-hand corner of the Browse window you'll see the word 'Find', with a small empty panel beside it: this is the 'Find box'.   At the right of the box there's a button which displays either the American flag or a symbol with a kind of two-way arrow.

When the arrow-type symbol is displayed, the Find feature will search for Italian words.   When the American flag is displayed, the Find feature will search for English words.   Click the button to change the setting.

Finding an Italian word.

To find an Italian word, make sure that the button displays the arrow-type symbol.   If the button doesn't already display this symbol, click it so that it does.   Then click in the Find box at the left of the button (or press âŒ˜F on the keyboard).   The insertion point will start winking in the Find box.   Type any Italian word you can think of.   If you can't think of any, type any letter or combination of letters.   Then press the Return key (or click the word 'Find' at the left of the Find box).

If you've typed a word that's in the module, the Main Scroll List will scroll automatically to the word, and the word will be highlighted.   If you've typed something that isn't exactly the same as any word in the module, the list will scroll to whatever word would follow the thing you've typed.   For example, if you type 'ac', the list will scroll to the first word that starts with 'ac'.   If you type 'acz', it will scroll to the first word starting with 'ad'.

When the program has found an Italian word for you, it highlights the word in the Main Scroll List, and the information for the word is displayed in the other parts of the Browse window. Depending on the speed of your machine, it can take a few seconds for the program to complete the operation.

To find another Italian word, click in the Find box or press âŒ˜F.   Anything that's already in

the Find box will be highlighted.   You don't have to delete the existing entry - just type the next word you want to look for, and press Return.   Try doing this a few times, and look at the words that turn up, and the information that's displayed for them.   If you're using an unregistered copy, you can only 'Find' words starting from 'ab' to 'am'.   If you're using a registered copy, try 'città' and 'zio'.   If you can't remember the exact spelling, or don't want to get involved with accented letters yet, type the beginning of the word.   The list will scroll to the right part of the alphabet, and then you can locate the word that you want (if it's in the module).   Click once on the word to display the information.   Sometimes it takes the program a few seconds to complete the Find procedure, so please be patient if the word you want doesn't appear instantly.

Finding an English word.

To find an English word, make sure that the button at the right of the Find box displays the American flag.   If the button doesn't already display this symbol, click it so that it does.   Then click in the Find box (or press âŒ˜F) and type the English word you want (or the beginning of it).   If you'd like a suggestion, try typing 'air'.   Then press the Return key, or click the word 'Find' at the left of the Find box.

A new miniature window will open to display the result.   The miniature window is in two parts, with two scroll-bars.   If the word you've typed is in the module, it will be displayed and highlighted in the top half of the miniature window.   The window also displays any other English words in the module that start with what you've typed.   For example, if you typed 'air', then depending on what's in the module at the time, you may get any or all of these words: air, aircraft carrier, airplane, airport.   British users may like to try 'aeroplane' as a separate exercise.

The bottom half of the miniature window displays the Italian for the English word that is highlighted in the top half of the   window.   Click on 'airplane' or 'airport' in the top half of the miniature window.   The bottom half of the miniature window will display the Italian word (or words) that are in the module for the English word you chose.   Then click in the bottom half of the miniature window on an Italian word that is displayed as a translation for the word you chose in the top half.   The Main Scroll List will scroll to that Italian word, and the information for the word will be displayed in various parts of the Browse window.   If you are using a registered copy, you can click on any of the words in the top half of the window, and on any of the words that appear in the bottom half.   Try telling the program to find 'post' or 'trip'.   You may have to click on the Browse window itself before you can reactivate the Find box.   If you're using an unregistered copy, you only have access to the first 59 Italian words in the module.

The Find feature won't always locate every word that you want, even if it's in the module.   If you tell it to find the English word 'girl', it will find 'giovane' and 'ragazza' but it may not find 'bambina'.   This will occur if the translation provided for 'bambina' is 'little girl'.   The Find feature finds entries that begin with what you've typed.   If the Find feature is important to you, you can change the translation to make the word easier to find.   Instructions for changing translations are in chapters 4 and 5 of this manual.

2.4   The Browse window   :   groups of nouns.

You can create custom groups (selections) of nouns that you want to study or practise.   For

example, you might want to select a group of nouns that end in -e, so that you can practise on words of this type, or test yourself or your students on them.   Below the Find button (the button that displays either the American flag or a two-way arrow symbol), there's a pop-up menu which shows either 'Multiple Groups' or 'Two Groups Split'.   These work in different ways.   Here we'll concentrate on Multiple Groups.   There's information about 'Two Groups Split' in the Read Me for Verbs & Nouns.

If the miniature 'Find' window is obscuring the Browse window, move it out of the way, or dismiss it by clicking its close box.

Creating a new 'group'.

Choose 'Multiple Groups' in the pop-up menu.   Below this there's another pop-up menu that probably says 'easy words'.   Below that there's a panel with a scroll-bar.   We'll call this panel the Groups Scroll List.   Underneath the Groups Scroll List there are three buttons called 'New', 'Delete', and 'List'.   Click the New button.   You'll get a dialog box inviting you to type a name for the group.   If you're just messing about, you can type 'My Words' or something like that.   Then click OK.

This creates a new 'group'.   The pop-up menu above the Groups Scroll List now says 'My Words' or whatever you decided to call it.   At present the new group is just a kind of storage place, and it doesn't have any words in it yet.

Putting some nouns into the new 'group'.

Choose a word from the Main Scroll List at the left of the window.   Drag-and-drop it into 'My Words' (i.e. into the Groups Scroll List).   The word won't be removed from the Main Scroll List, but a copy of the word will appear in 'My Words'.

Choose another word and drag it in the same way.   You can drop it into 'My Words' either below or above any word that's already there.   It makes very little difference what order you put the words in, in the Group.   The program will automatically rearrange the words in alphabetical order when you close the Group (for instance when you switch to a different Group).   If you want to get rid of a word you've added to 'My Words', click once on the word (in the Group) to highlight it, and press the Backspace/Delete key on your keyboard (not the Delete button in the Browse window).   Alternatively you can drag it back into the Main Scroll List at the left, and let it drop anywhere in the Main Scroll List.   It will disappear.   The original word in the Main Scroll List won't be damaged or displaced.

You can select several words in a scroll-list, for example to move them in one operation from the Main Scroll List into a group, or to delete them from a group.   To select several adjacent words, click on the first word you want to include, press the Shift key on your keyboard, and click on the last word you want.   To select several non-adjacent words, click on the first word you want, then press the Apple (Command) key on your keyboard, and click on each additional word you want.   Then move or delete them as a batch.

You can click on any word in 'My Words', and the information for that word will be displayed in the other parts of the Browse window, just the same as if you had clicked on the same word in the Main Scroll List.

You can create several separate groups.   To set up a second group, click the New button,

give a name to the new group, and follow the same procedure as before.   If you create two or more groups, try switching between them by using the pop-up menu immediately above the Groups Scroll List - but perhaps you should read the next paragraph first.

Ready-made groups included in the module.

In addition to the groups you've created yourself, you may find that there are other groups that have already been set up.   Don't be put off if the pop-up menu shows a long list of groups.   If they are there, they've been provided to help you get started by collecting a few words of certain types.   You can ignore them until you're ready for them, or you can add more words to them, or you can delete them if you don't want them (see below).   You can ignore the entry for 'Not Learned'.   This group is created automatically by the program. There's information about it in Chapter 3.

When you've finished with a group you've created yourself, or if you want to get rid of a group that's already provided, you can delete the group in one operation.   Make sure the group that's displayed is the group you want to get rid of, then click the Delete button under the Groups Scroll List (not the delete key on your keyboard).

The miniature List window.

Underneath the Groups Scroll List, there's a button called List.   Click it to see a miniature window that offers you another way of gaining access to the groups.   It also allows you to put several groups into a kind of super-group called a 'class'.   You probably won't need this at first, but it will be useful if you create lots of groups.   There's a checkbox in the top right-hand corner of this little window;   when the box is checked, you'll see a pop-menu at the top which enables you to choose the 'class' you want.   The groups in that class are displayed in the scroll-list below.   When the checkbox is unchecked, an extra set of buttons appears, and another pop-up menu.   You use these for renaming a group, creating a new class, moving a group into a particular class or from one class to another, and for some other functions as well.   There's information about them in the Read Me for the parent program.   You can move the little List window to a more convenient part of the screen, or you can get rid of it by clicking its close box.

Copying words from a group.

This is probably not something you'll want to do straightaway, but it's worth mentioning it while we are on the subject of groups.   When you have selected several words in the same group (by using the Shift key or the Apple (Command) key to allow you to select more than one word), you can copy the selected words to the clipboard.   You can copy all the words in the group this way, or just some of them.

Alternatively, you can export all the words in the group to a separate text file.   To do this, click the List button in the Browse window to open the miniature List window;   uncheck the checkbox in the top right-hand corner of the little List window;   locate and select the group whose words you want to export;   and click the Export button in the lower part of the List window.   You'll be presented with a dialog box inviting you to type a name for the text file, and to specify where you want it saved.

2.5   Setting up a group to practise on.

You're not obliged to set up a special group before using the Exercises window but, if you are not very far advanced in Italian, it's best to limit the exercise to words that are reasonably familiar.   You do this by creating a group of suitable words.

Start by creating a group to store the words you'd like to practise on (see section 2.4 for how to create a group).   Call the group almost anything you like: 'practising' will do.   However, don't choose a name that's been used for an existing group - the program won't let you have two groups with the same name.   When you have created the group, scroll through the alphabet in the Main Scroll List (or use Find), and pick a few words to drag to the 'practising' list.   If you're using a registered copy of the parent program, you can include any word in the module.   If you're using an unregistered copy of the program, you can only choose words from the first part of the alphabet, so we've set up some ready-made groups for you to practise on - they are called 'easy words', 'medium words' and 'difficult words'.   To display one of these groups (or to display a group you've created yourself), use the pop-up menu immediately above the Groups Scroll List.   There are 21 words in each of these groups.   You may need to scroll down to see them all, or else make the whole Browse window deeper.

After you have put words into a group, you can click on each word that's in it and look at the details displayed in the Browse window, to check that the word really is suitable for the group you want to make.   For 'grammatical groups' there's a short-cut way of checking that you've got it right: click on each word in the group in turn, and keep your eye on the bottom right-hand corner of the Browse window.   All nouns that belong to the same plural type and use the same definite articles will have the same entry in that corner of the window.   Some unusual words, for instance words with two plural forms, don't have an entry in the bottom right-hand corner.

The tutorial is continued in Chapter 3, which deals with doing exercises to practise plural forms, definite articles, and translation.   To open Chapter 3, press âŒ˜3 or pull down the Contents menu on the manual's menu bar and choose the next chapter.