



Mancare

Just like *piacere*, ***mancare* works exactly the opposite than in English**. The Italian verb *mancare* means 'to miss' but it works in a different way. In English, the verb 'to miss' agrees with the subject, which is the person that misses someone or something. In Italian, instead, the verb agrees with the object, which is the thing (or person) that someone misses.

To make things a bit more complicated, *mancare* can be intransitive or transitive. As you may know very well, a **transitive verb** is a verb that only makes sense if it exerts its action on an object. An **intransitive verb** can still make sense if there is no object. Some verbs may be used both ways and this is the case of *mancare*. Actually, some linguists say that using *mancare* as a transitive verb is wrong but we'll get there later.

Let's first see how the verb *mancare* works as an intransitive verb. Just like *piacere*, it has an impersonal and a personal form.

Impersonal form

This is the most common form of *mancare*, which is used to express the fact that someone misses somebody or something. However, just like what we have seen for *piacere*, in Italian we don't say that someone misses somebody or something but that somebody or something is missed by somebody else. So, the **object of missing is the subject of the phrase**. It can be placed at the beginning or at the end of the sentence and the verb agrees with it:

A Paola manca tanto la Sicilia = Paola misses Sicily a lot

La Sicilia manca tanto a Paola = Paola misses Sicily a lot

The Italian verb *mancare* means 'to miss', but it is formed in a different way than in English: what in English is the subject in Italian is the **indirect object**, while what or whom somebody misses is the subject of the phrase and agrees with the verb.

A Francesca mancano i suoi fratelli = Francesca misses her brothers

If the subject is singular, the verb is singular, if it is plural, the verb is plural.

A Giovanna manca il mare = Giovanna misses the sea
-> *mare* is singular, so the verb is singular

Ai professori mancano gli esami = The professors miss the exams
-> *esami* is plural, so the verb is plural

Unlike in English, the thing that one likes is always preceded by the **definite article**.

A mia mamma manca IL caffè della mattina = My mom misses her morning coffee
Mi manca tanto LA scuola = I really miss school



When the **subject** is not a noun but **an action expressed by an infinite verb or by an expression**, *mancare* is in the third person singular:

A mio fratello manca tanto andare al mare = My brother misses going to the beach
-> *andare al mare* is the subject, so the verb is singular

A mia nonna manca che Paola la aiuti = My grandma misses the fact that Paola helps her
-> *che Paola la aiuti* is the subject, so the verb is singular

Some examples:

A me manca guidare – *A me mancano le auto sportive*
A te manca leggere libri – *A te mancano le librerie*
A lui manca fare sport – *A lui mancano le palestre*
A lei manca cucinare i dolci – *A lei mancano i libri di cucina*
A noi manca andare al mare – *A noi mancano le spiagge bianche*
A voi manca stare a casa – *A voi mancano le cene in famiglia*
A loro manca la Tv – *A loro mancano i programmi televisivi*



When the indirect object is a pronoun, it can be **tonic** (*a me, a te*, etc.) or **atonic** (*mi, ti*, etc.):

A me manca il mare / Mi manca il mare = I miss the sea
A lui mancano i suoi amici / Gli mancano i suoi amici = He misses his friends

Here is the full conjugation:

A me manca/mancano – Mi manca/mancano
A te manca/mancano – Ti manca/mancano
A lui manca/mancano – Gli manca/mancano
A lei manca/mancano – Le manca/mancano
A noi manca/mancano – Ci manca/mancano
A voi manca/mancano – Vi manca/mancano
A loro manca/mancano- Gli manca/mancano



To make a negative phrase, you only need to add **NON before the pronoun**, if you use an atonic pronoun (*mi, ti*, etc.), **or before the verb**, if you use a tonic pronoun (*a me, a te*, etc.).

Non mi manca la scuola = I don't miss school
A Barbara non manca studiare matematica = Barbara doesn't miss studying grammar



All the above examples refer to the main meaning of *mancare*, which is that feeling of missing the presence of someone or something. But it can also have another meaning, which is 'not to have something, to find out the absence of something'.

Here are some examples:

Non posso andare a fare la spesa perché mi manca il portafoglio – I can't go buy groceries because I don't have my wallet

Non posso uscire perché mi mancano i soldi per pagare la cena – I can't go out because I don't have money to pay dinner

Stavo per uscire quando mi sono accorta che mi mancavano guanti e cappello – I was about to go out when I realized that I didn't have gloves and hat

Mi mancano dieci euro per il cinema, me li presti tu? – I don't have 10 euros for the movies, can you lend them to me?



Personal form

This form is used to express the fact that someone is missed by somebody else. **The subject is the person that is missed:** *io, tu, lui, lei, noi, voi, loro*, etc. The verb agrees with the subject and it is fully conjugated and the **indirect object is the person is missing somebody else:** *a me, a Mario, a qualcuno, a tutti* etc.

Io manco a Carla = Carla misses me
Tu manchi a tutti = Everybody misses you
Lui manca a mia sorella = My sister misses him
Lei manca a Massimo = Massimo misses her
Noi manchiamo alla gente = People miss us
Voi mancate a mia nonna = My grandma misses you
Loro mancano alla maestra = The teacher misses them



As we said at the beginning of this post, **mancare can also be transitive**. Some grammar experts – and some dictionaries too – say that using *mancare* as a transitive verb is an improper use of the verb. However, it is very common to hear it in spoken language and therefore I have decided to include it here as well.

Mancare, when transitive, means ‘to fail to hit a target or a goal or to fail to hear, notice, or understand’. It can also mean ‘to miss an opportunity’. Here are some examples:

Quel calciatore è famoso, ma manca sempre la rete e non fa mai gol – That football player is famous but he always misses the net and never scores

Non mi piace giocare a bowling perché manco sempre i birilli – I don’t like bowling because I always miss the pins

Il treno è arrivato in ritardo e io ho mancato l’appuntamento – The train was late and I missed the appointment

Hai sentito cos’ha detto la tv? No, l’ho mancato – Have you heard what they said on TV? No, I’ve missed it

Stavo guardando il telefono e ho mancato l’uscita giusta – I was watching my phone and I’ve missed the right exit



The past participle of *mancare* is *mancato* and can be used to mean dead (usually, it is gentler than using the verb *morire*):

Mia nonna è mancata ieri sera: my grandma passed away last night

Quando è mancata la mia amica Jane, è stata una tragedia: it was a tragedy when Jane passed away

