**About Italy**

**Geography**
Italy is a country in southern Europe. It looks like a boot. This is called a peninsula because it is surrounded by water on 3 sides. Italy is in the Mediterranean Sea. Other countries that touch Italy are Austria, France, San Marino, Slovenia, Switzerland and Vatican City. Italy is about the size of Arizona. There are lots of mountains in this country. The Alps go from east to west and the Apennines go from north to south. There are four volcanoes in Italy that still sometimes explode. Italy is a very pretty country because it isn’t crowded.

**Economy**
Italy makes lots of things that they sell to other people. Examples are clothes, shoes, tomatoes, wine and big machine equipment. Natural resources include:
- Mercury
- Marble
- Fish
- Oil & Gas

**Weather**
North Italy’s weather is different from Southern Italy’s weather. In the north, the summer is warm and the winters are cool. In the south, the summer is hot and the winter is not very cold.

**Government**
Italy is called a republic. It has 2 legislative houses. The chief of the state is called the president. His name is Carlo Azeglio Ciampi. The head of the government is called the Prime Minister. The current Prime Minister is Silvio Berlusconi.

**Fast Facts**
- Capital: Rome
- Official language: Italian
- Population: 57,723,000
- Religion: Roman Catholic
- Money unit: Euro
- Time zone: 1 hour ahead of Greenwich Time
- Lowest point: Mediterranean Sea (0 miles)
- Highest Point: Mont Blanc (4,807 miles)
- Independence: March 17, 1961

**Vatican City**
Vatican City is a special city in Rome, Italy. It is considered it’s own state, even though it is also a city. The Pope lives in Vatican City. He is the leader of the Roman Catholic religion. He talks to everyone in the world on the Vatican Radio.

Vatican City is in a triangle area in northern Italy. It has many gardens, courtyards and old buildings. There are lots of people who live and work there. They have their own army and own government. This is the world headquarters for Catholics.