



## Vespa

### Listening Questions 1

1. What company is the Vespa brand a subsidiary of?
2. What does the word “vespa” mean in Italian?
3. How many Vespas have been sold?
4. When did the first Vespa come out?
5. In what movie did a Vespa appear and who starred in it?

### Listening Questions 2

1. What's one thing that made Vespas unique?
2. How old is the PX model and how much does it cost in Japan?
3. What is the Gita and what will it be able to do?
4. How many wheels does the Ape have?
5. What does “ape” mean in Italian?

## Transcript 1

If you're the owner of a scooter, summer is the perfect time to take it out for a ride. While most motorcycles are more powerful and glamorous, scooters are a very practical and affordable way to get around. Scooters can be a workhorse, a daily commuter or just a fun ride.

One of the most famous scooters of all time is the Vespa. The Vespa brand is part of the Piaggio group which includes Moto Guzzi and Aprilia, two notable motorcycle manufacturers. In Italian, the word "vespa" means "wasp", as in the fast bee-like yellow and black insect. The iconic Italian two-wheeler was launched in 1946.

In addition to being a practical vehicle, the Vespa is also appealing because of its retro-chic look and feel. According to the company, more than 18 million of them have been sold around the world.

If you're a movie buff, you probably know that Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn famously cruised around Rome on a Vespa in the classic 1953 film Roman Holiday.



## Transcript 2

One thing that makes the Vespa unique is the way a rider changes gears. To shift gears, you twist the left handgrip either up or down one "notch" while operating the clutch simultaneously. It's a technique that is difficult to get used to.

The PX is one of the models that uses this kind of transmission. The PX originally came out in 1977, which means this particular model is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Several models are available in Japan starting at approximately 470,000 yen.

A different kind of two-wheeled product that one of Piaggio's subsidiaries is currently developing is a robot called Gita, which will be able to carry things around for its owner. It looks like a big ball, turns on a dime, and can carry a load of about 18 kg.

Finally, Piaggio also makes a three-wheeled vehicle called Ape, (pronounced "Ah-pe") which means "bee" in Italian. The Ape is a kind of utility vehicle or small pickup that can be used to carry lighter loads.