



ДОБРОЕ УТРО = Good morning

НЕТ = No

ПРИВЕТ = Hi

ДА = Yes

ДОБРЫЙ ДЕНЬ = Good afternoon

ПОКА = Bye

Reading Russian in 10 minutes

Чтение по-русски за 10 минут

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Intro

- Russian is an Indo-European language (distant, but relative of English)
 - If you can read, you can decipher a lot of words
 - Borrowed words, words of common origin
- Russian uses Cyrillic script
 - Stems from the script developed in 9 AD by Saints Cyril and Methodius (who were both Greek monks, hence a Greek influence)
 - Really took off in the territory which is present day Bulgaria
 - About 50 languages use Cyrillic alphabet
 - Not just Slavic, but other language groups too (e.g. Turkic)
 - A few major languages (i.e. with state status)
 - There are differences in reading rules among all these languages + additional letters and the lack of other ones
- Russian Cyrillic alphabet (a better term)
 - 33 letters, ~ phonetic (English & French are not)
 - I'll go among them one by one and not in an alphabetic order (basics first, then consolidate on nuances)



The same / almost the same


- A** Called “Ah”, reads like “A” in **PAF**
 - O** Called “O”, reads like “O” in **FOR** (tends towards “A” when unstressed)
 - K** Called “Ka”, reads like “K” in **ASKAP**
 - M** Called “eM”, reads like “M” in **MULTIBEAM**
 - T** Called “Te”, reads like “T” in **TELESCOPE**
-

Almost the same, as English “c” also sometimes reads as “s”:

- C** Called “eS” and always reads like “S” in **SYSTEM**
(btw, single-letter word “**C**” means “with”)
-

We can already make some words:

A**TOM TOKAM****A****K** Or even my (short) name: **MAKC**

 Stress is a difficult subject, I’ll help you throughout this talk



Greek influence – may cause confusion

- Φ Called “eF”, reads like “F” in **PAF** – remember Greek Phi
 - Π Called “Peh”, reads like “P” in **PAF** – remember Greek Pi
 - Ρ Called “eR”, reads like “R” in **Radio** – remember Greek Rho
 - Γ Called “Ghe”, reads like “G” in **Galaxy** – remember Greek Gamma
 - Δ Called “Deh”, reads like “D” in **Data** – remember Greek Delta
 - Λ Called “eL”, reads like “L” in **teLescope** – remember Greek Lambda
-

A bit less straightforward, but also of Greek origin:

- Β Called “Veh”, reads like “V” in **Volume** – remember Greek Beta
(btw, single-letter word “**B**” means “in” or “at”) which is actually Veta
- Χ Called “ha”, often transliterated as “kh” or “h”, reads like “ch” in German “ich” or “x” in a Mexican way to say México (Greek Chi).



Familiar sounds, but different symbols

- H** Called “eN”, reads like “N” in **Nebula** – N -> **H**: remember N_2H^+
- B** Called “Beh”, reads like “B” in **Beam** – B -> **B**: Beam is Broken
- З** Called “Zeh”, reads like “Z” in **Zenith** – Zenith is 3 by 30 deg
- Y** Called “OOh”, reads like “OO” in the **Moon** – often transliterated as “u” or “ou”.

СУП = soup (both, meaning + pronunciation)

- Ю** Called “you”, reads like English word “**y**ou” – often transliterated as “u”, “yu” or “ju”.

СОЮЗ = Soyuz (rocket), btw it means “Union”

→ Stress is a difficult subject, as before I’ll help you



Some weird symbols

Ш Called “Shah”, reads like “SH” in red**SH**ift – remember Bracewell’s Shah function (bed of nails) = Dirac’s comb

Ч Called “Cheh”, reads like “CH” in ea**CH**, **CH**ange, mu**CH**, etc

МАТЧ = (sports) match (and reads ~ the same)

Щ **Difficult!** Called “Shchah”, often transliterated as “shch” or “sch”, but it is NOT equivalent to ШЧ in Russian. It is a “soft” (palatized) version of Ш with no matching sound in English.

A good approximation is “X” sound in the word se**X**ual without the leading “k” sound



A few more weird symbols

Ц

Called “Tseh”, reads like “ts” in a quick succession

- often appears in place of the Latin letter “C” in Latin words
- and this is how Latin letter “C” is pronounced in math and chemistry (e.g. CO -> Ц O -> tseh oh; note – many elements are referred to by their Latin names)

Ж

Called “Zheh”, often transliterated as “zh”,
reads like “S” in meaSure, pleaSure



Я

Called “Ya”, often transliterated as “ya” or “ia” or “ja”,
reads like “Ya” in Yandasoft (rebranded ASKAPsoft). In fact,
the Wajarri word for picture can be written in Cyrillic as:

Btw, single-letter word “Я” means “I [am]”

ЯНДА



I’m marking the stress as before



Back to more familiar sounds

И Called “eeh”, reads like “ee” in **feed**, usually transliterated as “i” and it can cause confusion for readers in an open syllable.
(btw, the single-letter word “И” means “AND”)

Ы **May be difficult.** Pronounced (and called) close to “i” in **ill**, but ideally should be further from the “И” sound described above. Try to bend the tip of your tongue upwards. Often transliterated as “y” or “i” and can also cause confusion.

МЫШКА

Means “little mouse”

vs

МИШКА

Means “little bear”

or a very informal address to a guy

With the name of **МИХАИЛ**

Btw, changing the word’s ending to “И” or “Ы” is the most common way to construct the plural form of the word



Another familiar sound

Й

Called “eeh short”, considered to be a consonant and a separate letter rather than an accented version of “и”. Often transcribed as “y” or “i” which may be confusing.

Reads as “Y” in **maY**.

In fact, the month of May in Russian is: МАЙ



Can you decipher
the town’s name?

НАРРАБРАЙ



Helping you with the stress is
hardly necessary in this word



Almost at the finish line

- Е** Called “yeh”, reads like the whole English word “**yeah**”. It is transliterated as “e” which can be confusing given the reading rules in English (e.g. “ee” or “ea” combinations).
- Э** Called “eh”, reads like “e” in **electron**. Also transliterated as “e”. It was introduced to make “**Е**” without a leading “**Й**” sound.

ЭТО = This (neutral gender/if you don’t know what it is)

- Ё** Called “yoh”, reads like “yo” in **YO**ur. Usually transliterated as “e” or “yo”. Often replaced by “**Е**” in Russian, which can add to confusion. **Always gets stressed**. Sometimes converts to “**Е**” when the word changes and the stress can move away too.

ЁЖ = hedgehog
(reads ~ yozh)

ЕЖИ = hedgehogs
(reads ~ yeh-zheeh) ← more like **Ы** at the end (nuance)



More nuances – hard/soft consonants

The majority of consonants can be both “hard” and “soft” (palatized). We touched this a bit while discussing **Ш** and **Щ**.

May be difficult. This is because all consonants in English are “hard”. Think about consonant sounds in Spanish – these are “soft” versions.

Remember vowels with the leading “**Й**” sound:

Е ~ ЙЭ (yeh)

Ё ~ ЙО (yoh)

Ю ~ ЙУ (you)

Я ~ ЙА (ya)

After a consonant, they lose their leading “**Й**” sound and make the consonant “soft”.

Tip: just drop “**Й**”, if you struggle with the soft/hard aspect – it will be understood.

ЕЛЕНА (common name) may turn into Yelena or Elena

nuance++: “**И**” does the same (used to be “**ЙИ**”, hence “eeh short”)



Silent: **ь** (soft sign) and **Ъ** (hard sign)

Sometimes it is necessary to break the rule we just talked about

Ь Makes the preceding consonant "soft". The next vowel reads like at the start of the word (i.e. as the letter is called)

nuance: "и" gets (regains) a leading "й" sound

nuance++: sometimes no effect (e.g. after "ж", "ш", "щ")

Ъ Makes the preceding consonant "hard". The next vowel reads like at the start of the word (i.e. as the letter is called)

Both "ь" and "Ъ" are often transliterated as ' (apostrophe) or omitted

Tip: treat both as a gap + add "й" before "и" - it will be ~ ok

СЕЛ = he (has) sat

СЕЛЬ = mudflow

СЪЕЛ = he ate / he has eaten

КОНЬЯК = Cognac

СВИНЬИ = pigs

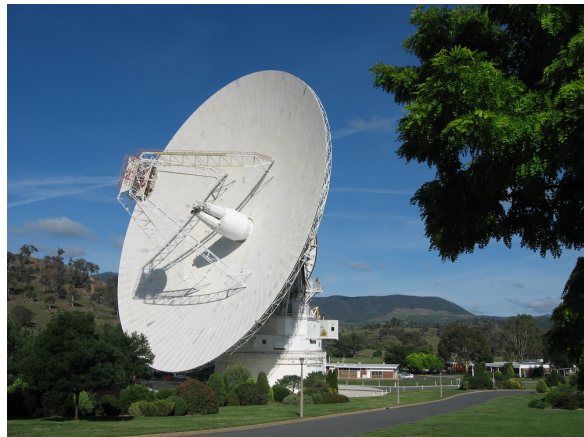
НЬЮ ЙОРК = New York



Time to practice a bit



ПАРКС



ТИДБИНБИЛЛА



ХОБАРТ



НЬЮ НОРСИЯ

Image credit:
CSIRO, wikipedia



More practice



ЭФФЕЛЬСБЕРГ

Image credit: Wikipedia



КАЛАЗИН (РТ-64)

Image credit: Сергей Дукачёв



ПУЩИНО

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РТ-22

РТ = РАДИОТЕЛЕСКОП

Image credit: PRAO



ДКР-1000



БСА



Stress is a difficult subject

The language standard encourages people to put the accent mark, especially if there is an ambiguity. But it is rarely done.

The only hard rule – “Ё” is **always stressed**. Unfortunately, it can be written as “Е” (it can be confusing in some family names)

For example, you may recall Chebyshev polynomials in math:

$T_n(\cos \theta) = \cos(n\theta)$ He was actually **ЧЕБЫШЁВ**, although most Russians would say **ЧЕБЫШЕВ**

Other Russian names with “Ё” you may be familiar with:

КОРОЛЁВ – the father of the Soviet space program

ГОРБАЧЁВ – the father of **ПЕРЕСТРОЙКА**

ХРУЩЁВ – the guy who promised to bury America in 60s



Stress is a difficult subject

Perhaps, it's the main difficulty for understanding (e.g. for names)

Usually mis-pronunciation can be figured out, but
it can also be offensive (rarely) or funny (more often)

English speakers tend to struggle more with female family names
(many, but not all, Russian family names change with gender)

Tip: try to change it into a male name. Stress should stay fixed.

*[OEË]BA → *[OEË]B

*ИНА → *ИН

*АЯ → *[ИЬЮ]Й

Tip: In longish words put a stress somewhere
else, not where your first reaction tells you
(for English speakers) or read by syllables.



Image credit:
wikipedia

МАРИЯ ШАРАПОВА



Why stress is important?

Unstressed vowels can be pronounced differently (reduction)
although it is always a similar sound
enough variation with regional accents

You can ignore this

The most pronounced: unstressed “O” sounds closer to “A”

РОССИЯ = Russia

МОСКВА = Moscow

Btw, you can guess abbreviated compound words:

РОСКОСМОС = Russia's space agency

РОСАВИАЦИЯ = Russia's aviation regulator

Heaps of Latin words *tion -> *ЦИЯ

Stress can also change the meaning (homographic words)!

ЗАМОК = Castle

ЗАМОК = Lock



Homographic words can get you in trouble

Quite dangerous (true for many derivatives too):

ПИСАТЬ = to write ПИИСАТЬ = to pee

Less likely to catch you (easy to break the ambiguity):

ПЕРЕДОХНУТЬ = to have a break/rest

ПЕРЕДОХНУТЬ = to die out (like animals, very derogatory)

Ambiguity exists only in some forms and only in plural:

БЕЛКИ = proteins БЕЛКИ = squirrels

Ambiguity exists only in some forms:

Я ПЛАЧУ = I'll pay Я ПЛАЧУ = I'm crying / I cry



Some funny facts about the language

А Б В Г Д Е Ё Ж З И Й К Л М Н О П Р С Т У Ф Х Ц Ч Ш Щ Ъ Ы Ь Э Ю Я

Sensible phrase made out of 5 consecutive letters of the alphabet

ГДЕ ЁЖ? = where is [a/the] hedgehog?

No articles (a/the) — No “to be” in the present tense

No special grammar for questions, they’re done by intonation

T-V language (it has a formal and informal address): **ТЫ** and **ВЫ**

Same concept as tú and usted in Spanish or tu and vous in French

Gendered language + there is a neutral gender (neuter)

*[АЯ, a consonant+Ь] -> feminine

*[ОЕ] -> neuter

ending on a consonant -> masculine

Word endings matter a lot!



Conjugation, declination/declension

Verbs have conjugations (may look different)

English retained it for “to be” (I am, you are, he/she is)

Russian has it for all verbs!

- + different cases for formal/informal 2nd person pronouns

- + gender form in the past tense, singular number

- (disappears in plural or for a formal address)

Nouns also have cases depending on their role in the sentence!

English pronouns retained a bit of it: (I, me, my, mine)

Russian has *at least* six cases (degeneracy vs. number of exceptions)

АСТРОНОМИЯ = Astronomy

ИНСТИТУТ АСТРОНОМИИ = Institute of Astronomy

Я ИНТЕРЕСУЮСЬ АСТРОНОМИЕЙ = I’m interested in astronomy

Я ПРЕПОДАЮ АСТРОНОМИЮ = I’m teaching astronomy



Intro into Russian names

First name / last name concept may be confusing

Patronymic as the middle name – not random (it essentially says “a son of” or “a daughter of” + father’s name), has a gender form

МАКСИМ АЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ ВОРОНКОВ

Some family names look like patronymic (but different stress)!

Women		Men	
<u>А</u> ННА	<u>А</u> НЯ	АЛЕКС <u>А</u> НДР	СА <u>А</u> ША
<u>О</u> ЛЬГА	<u>О</u> ЛЯ	СЕРГ <u>Е</u> Й	СЕР <u>Ё</u> ЖА
ТАТЬ <u>Я</u> НА	ТА <u>А</u> НЯ	МАКС <u>И</u> М	МАКС
ЕКАТЕР <u>И</u> НА	КА <u>А</u> ТЯ	АНДРЕ <u>Й</u>	АНДР <u>Ю</u> ША
НАТА <u>А</u> ЛЬЯ	НАТА <u>А</u> ША	ОЛЕГ	ОЛЕГ
АНАСТАС <u>И</u> Я	НА <u>А</u> СТЯ	<u>Ю</u> РИЙ	<u>Ю</u> РА
МАРИ <u>А</u>	МА <u>А</u> ША	АРТ <u>Ё</u> М	Т <u>Ё</u> МА



That's it. Now it is your turn

1. АСТРОФИЗИКА
2. АВСТРАЛИЯ
3. КОСМОЛОГИЯ
4. ПУЛЬСАР
5. ГАЛАКТИКА
6. КОРОНАВИРУС
7. ОБЪЕКТ
8. ФУНКЦИЯ
9. ЛУНАА
10. РАКЕТА
11. РЕСТОРАН
12. ЭЛЕКТРОНИКА

One of the most difficult words to read for English speakers:

13. ЗАЩИЩАЮЩИХСЯ (of those who defend themselves)



Thank you

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