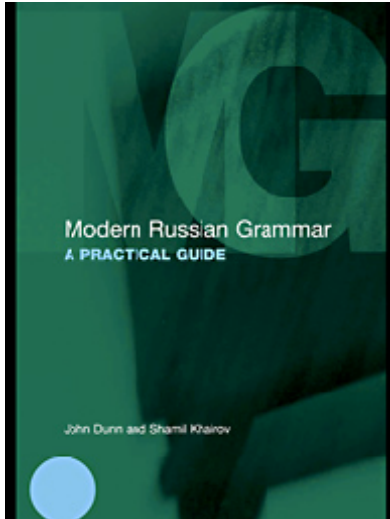


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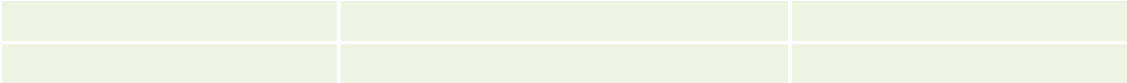
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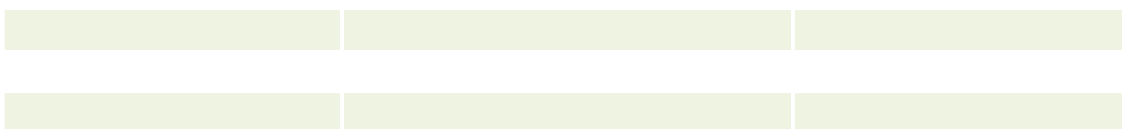


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Introduction

This book is an innovative reference grammar, aimed at meeting the practical needs of English speakers who are learning Russian as a foreign language. It provides the necessary structural and functional information to enable users properly to interpret what they hear and read, and to communicate effectively, both in speech and in writing, in a wide range of situations. Most people who learn Russian start the language at university, and our book is aimed particularly at students in the first two years of a university course. It will, however, also be valuable for more advanced students, as well as for those learning Russian at school or independently. Although not particularly orientated towards ‘business Russian’, the book will be useful for those whose reasons for learning the language are related to business.

Following the pattern of the previous volumes in this series, the book is divided into two parts. Part A (Chapters 1–11) deals with the structure of the language. This is closer to a traditional grammar, in that attention is focused on the grammatical behaviour of the different parts of speech, as well as on issues that are particularly important to Russian grammar, such as the use of the cases, the aspects of the verb and grammatical agreement. Part B, however, is concerned with functions. This relates to the ways in which language is used in particular contexts and situations, and it is these contexts and situations that determine the way in which the information is presented. From a starting point such as asking questions, giving instructions and making requests or talking about causes and consequences, the user is given the necessary grammatical information to allow successful communication to take place.

It has to be said that writing a grammar of Russian presents a number of interesting challenges. The first is that, for English speakers Russian is from the structural point of view a very complex language. It has a rich system of endings and patterns, embellished by numerous exceptions, that, as is often the way with language, tend to affect words that are in common use. This has inevitably influenced the structure of the book, and Part A is rather more substantial than is the case with the other volumes in the series. It also means that it is impossible to avoid using a certain amount of grammatical terminology. Here we have borne in mind that readers will also be using other course materials, and in order to minimise confusion, our use of terminology is fairly traditional for English-language grammars. We have at the same time taken account of the knowledge of grammar likely to be possessed by native speakers of English starting to learn Russian, and grammatical terms are explained either in the Glossary or in the relevant chapter.

It is also the case that for various linguistic and cultural reasons Russian is a language that tends to 'do things' differently from English. Even such relatively straightforward

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contexts such as addressing friends, acquaintances and strangers, talking about marital status, indicating possession or describing a journey involve using language in ways bearing little resemblance to those that will be familiar to English speakers. It is this consideration that has determined our choice of structures for Part B and, in particular, explains why we have devoted substantial chapters to such questions as establishing identity, establishing contact, and talking about coming and going.

The political, social and economic changes that have taken place in Russia since 1985 have been matched by changes to the language. Fortunately (for us, at least) grammar moves at a much slower pace than does vocabulary, although we have had to contend with the fact that there is now much less agreement about what constitutes 'good' or 'correct' Russian than used to be the case. We have tried to take due note of linguistic innovations, especially where this is likely to be especially relevant to learners; at the same time, bearing in mind the need for reference grammars to have a certain 'timeless' quality, we have steered clear of matters that are likely to be ephemeral (for this reason we give relatively few examples involving prices!). Above all, we have aimed at following the principle that this book is intended to be a practical guide.

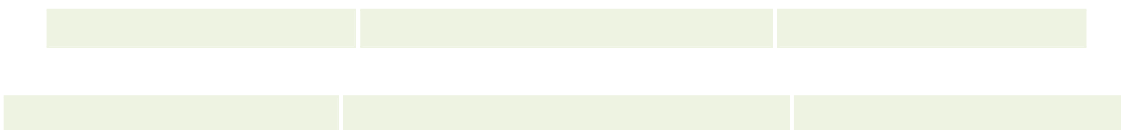
There is a long-standing tradition in the writing of Russian textbooks that the material presented should reflect the notion that 'everything in the garden is rosy'. This can sometimes provoke the reaction of focusing undue attention on the unkempt and weed-choked areas of the linguistic 'garden' that have been previously kept hidden. Here too, we have tried to avoid extreme positions. Most of our recommendations and examples belong to a standard and neutral educated register, but where appropriate we have labelled usages as 'informal' or 'formal': the former are likely to be appropriate in such contexts as conversations between friends or personal letters; the latter would tend to occur in official documents and letters, or be used at meetings or in lectures. With a couple of reasoned exceptions we have avoided extremes of 'high' and 'low' language and have purposely steered clear of vulgar or obscene forms. Mindful of the fact that for Russian perhaps to a greater extent than for other languages learners are not always expected to

produce the same language as native speakers, we have issued, where necessary, ‘health warnings’ about certain usages that will be encountered but which may sound odd, inappropriate or even offensive if uttered by a learner of the language.

Finally, this is a practical guide: we cannot claim to be comprehensive or to have foreseen every eventuality. It will be noticed that many of our recommendations are hedged with words such as ‘normally’ and ‘generally’. What this means is that users should feel free to go ahead and follow these recommendations without trepidation, but should not be unduly surprised and should certainly not be put off if they occasionally encounter something that appears to be a direct contradiction.

Warmest thanks are due to Sarah Butler for her editorial guidance and encouragement during the early stages of writing this book, and to Larisa Stizhko who has read through the text and given us a great many valuable comments on current Russian usage. We would also like to thank the Russian students of Glasgow University who for more than thirty years have acted as unwitting guinea-pigs for much of the material included here, and whose unexpectedly cheerful willingness to engage with the complexities of Russian grammar was a great incentive for us to take up the challenge of writing this book.

John Dunn and Shamil Khairov



How to use this book

Part A of this book is a reference guide to the *structures* of Russian. The individual chapters deal with grammatical categories such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and pronouns. There are also chapters devoted to the use of the cases, to aspects of the verb and to grammatical agreement.

Part B is concerned with communicative *functions*, that is, the uses to which language is put. In this part of the book, therefore, each individual chapter is concerned with a specific function, such as establishing identity, talking about being and becoming, or asking questions. This part also includes chapters on focus and emphasis, and on communication strategies.

Each chapter is divided into sections, and in order to allow the material to be presented in portions of manageable size, most of the latter are divided further into subsections. Each chapter, section and subsection has its own heading, as in the following examples:

13 Establishing contact

13.2 Greetings

13.2.2 Informal greetings

In Part A much of the information is presented in the form of grammatical tables or of lists. Where appropriate, in Part A and throughout Part B the grammatical information is illustrated by copious examples, which are more or less complicated according to the type of information being presented. Many of the examples have been taken from actual printed or Internet sources, but these have mostly been adapted to remove extraneous linguistic complexities or obscure references. Where it was thought helpful, notes are used to provide supplementary grammatical or cultural information.

Russian language material is presented in **bold type**, and in the examples key words are highlighted by the use of *italic*. All examples are translated into English, and a literal version is supplied in those instances where the natural English translation is significantly different from the Russian original.

It is impossible to describe a language such as Russian without using a certain amount of grammatical terminology. We have tried as far as possible to use standard terms, and where necessary, we explain the terms used at the point where

they first occur. There is in addition a separate Glossary of grammatical terms at the front of the book.

There are three ways of finding out where a specific topic may be located in the book. At the very beginning of the book the Contents lists what can be found in each chapter in the order in which the material is presented. At the end of the book the main Index

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lists all the topics covered in English alphabetical order, while a separate Index lists key Russian words in Russian alphabetical order (a table of the Russian alphabet is given at the beginning of Chapter 1). Finally, where an explanation or an example touches on a grammatical point covered elsewhere in the book, this is indicated by means of a cross-reference.

We have tried to keep the use of abbreviations to a minimum, but the following English abbreviations are used to indicate the names of the grammatical cases:

nom.	nominative
gen.	genitive
dat.	dative
acc.	accusative
instr.	instrumental
prep.	prepositional

The following *Russian* abbreviations are used for the aspects of the verb, especially in Chapters 4 and 5:

нсв	несоверше́нный	<i>imperfective</i>
св	соверше́нный	<i>perfective</i>

The following abbreviations are also used:

sing.	singular
fem.	feminine

masc.	masculine
n.	neuter
pl.	plural

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Glossary of grammatical terms

Note: **Bold type** is used to cross-refer to other entries in the Glossary.

Active voice

The category of voice is used to indicate the relationship of **subject** and **object** to the action or state indicated by the **verb**. The **active** voice is used when the **subject** of the **verb** is the performer of the action or the main participant in the state or event; it contrasts with the **passive voice**. *See* **4.14** and **20.2**.

Adjective

An adjective is a word that indicates some attribute or quality and is used to qualify a **noun**; examples are **красный** ‘red’ and **английский** ‘English’. Adjectives have distinct sets of endings and normally agree with the nouns they qualify in **number**, **gender** and **case**. *See* **Chapter 6** and **11.1**.

Adverb

Adverbs are mainly used to qualify a **verb**, although they can also qualify **adjectives** or even other **adverbs**. Examples are **быстро** ‘quickly’, **по-русски** ‘in Russian’ and **очень** ‘very’. **Adverbs** never change their endings. *See* **9.1**.

Agreement

One of the two factors that determine which endings are put on **nouns**, **verbs**, **adjectives**, **pronouns** and **numerals** (*see* also **Government**). The principle of

agreement is that the endings of certain words are determined by the word either that they qualify or to which they refer. The two contexts where **agreement** is particularly important are within the **noun phrase** and between the **grammatical subject** of a sentence and the **verb**. *See Chapter 11.*

Article

An **article** is a word used with a **noun** to indicate whether it is definite or indefinite. In English the **articles** are ‘the’ and ‘a/an’. Russian has no **articles** and therefore has to resort to other means to indicate whether a noun is definite or indefinite. *See 20.4.*

Aspect

A category that refers to the different ways in which the action or state indicated by a verb may be viewed by the speaker. The Russian verb has two **aspects**, imperfective and perfective: in general terms the perfective **aspect** is used when an action or state is considered from the point of view of either one (beginning or end) or both of its boundaries, while the imperfective is used in all other circumstances. Every Russian verb belongs to either the imperfective or the perfective **aspect**, and **aspect** is one of the attributes of a verb given in dictionaries. *See 4.2 and Chapter 5.*

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Case

Case refers to the different endings assumed by **nouns, adjectives, pronouns** and **numerals** as a means of indicating the particular grammatical function that the word concerned fulfils in a sentence. Russian has six **cases**: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, instrumental and prepositional. *See Chapters 2 and 3.*

Clause

A clause is a unit that contains a **verb**, but which forms part of a larger sentence. A **main clause** is one that is capable of standing on its own, while a **subordinate clause** is one that must be combined with a **main clause**. A **subordinate clause** is most frequently introduced by a subordinating **conjunction**, although they can also be introduced by a relative **pronoun**. *See 7.5, 9.3 and Chapter 21.*

Comparative

The **comparative** form of an **adjective** or **adverb** is used when comparing different degrees of the quality indicated by the word in question; examples are **быстрее** 'quicker, more quickly' and **громче** 'louder, more loudly'. See **6.8.1–6.8.3, 9.1.7** and **21.9.1–21.9.6**.

Complement

The **complement** is usually the **noun** or **adjective** that completes a sentence containing a verb such as **быть** 'to be' or **становиться/стать** 'to become'. In Russian the **complement** is sometimes in the nominative **case** and sometimes in the instrumental. See **14.1**.

Conditional mood.

The conditional is the form of the **verb** that is used in a variety of hypothetical situations, such as conditions incapable of being fulfilled and certain kinds of wishes or requests. It is formed by combining the **particle бы** with the past **tense** form of the verb. See **4.10, 18.4** and **21.5.2**.

Conjugation

Conjugation is the term used for the changes in the endings of **verbs** to reflect **agreement** with the **subject**. It also the term used for the two regular patterns of verb endings in the present and future perfective. See **Chapter 4**, especially **4.3** and **4.6–4.8**.

Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words that join two **clauses** together. Two main **clauses** are joined by co-ordinating **conjunctions**, for example **и** 'and' or **но** 'but'. A main **clause** and a subordinate **clause** are joined by subordinating **conjunctions**, such as **если** 'if', **когда** 'when' or **потому** 'because'. See **9.3** and **Chapter 21**.

Declension

Declension is the term used for the changes in the endings of **nouns, adjectives, pronouns** and **numerals** to reflect different grammatical functions. See **Chapters 2, 3, 6, 7, 8**.

Direct object

The **direct object** of a **verb** denotes the principal person or object affected by the action that the **verb** indicates. In Russian the **direct object** is in the accusative **case**, though after a negated verb it is sometimes in the genitive. *See 3.2 and 15.4.*

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Fleeting vowel

This is the term used for a vowel (usually **e**, **o** or **ë**) that occurs in some forms of a word, but not in others. It is particularly important for the **noun declension** system, although examples occur with other parts of speech as well. *See especially 2.5, but also 4.5.3, 4.7.3, 4.7.13, 6.5.1.*

Gender

Gender is a system of classifying **nouns**. Russian has **three** genders—masculine, feminine and neuter—and all nouns that can occur in the singular belong to one or other of these genders. There are no gender distinctions in the plural. **Gender** is mainly indicated through the system of **agreement: adjectives**, for example, have separate sets of endings for each of the three **genders**. There is also a very strong correlation between **gender** and **declension** type. *See 2.3 and Chapter 11.*

Gerund

Gerund is the term conventionally used in Russian grammar for a form that is at the same time both a part of the **verb** and an **adverb**. The main function of the **gerund** is to form complex sentences, in which a **gerund** is used in place of a **conjunction+ verb**. *See 4.11 and 21.10.*

Government

Government is one of the two factors that determine which endings are put on **nouns, adjectives, pronouns** and **numerals** (*see also Agreement*). **Government** essentially concerns the rules for selecting which case to use in different grammatical circumstances. *See Chapter 3 and 9.2.*

Grammatical subject *see Subject.*

Imperative mood

This is the form of the **verb** used in commands, prohibitions and certain kinds of requests. *See 4.9 and Chapter 18.*

Impersonal predicate forms

These fulfil the same function as **verbs**, but unlike ordinary **verbs** they can never be used along with a **grammatical subject** and they do not change their endings. Some **impersonal predicate forms**, such as **хорошо** ‘it is good to’, are part of the **adverb** system, while others, such as **можно** ‘one may; one can’, are words that are used only in this function. *See 11.2.2.*

Impersonal verbs

Impersonal verbs are those **verbs** that cannot be used with a **grammatical subject**. **Impersonal verbs** occur only in the third person singular (present and future **tenses**) or the neuter singular (past **tense**). *See 3.4.3 and 11.2.2.*

Infinitive

This is the form under which verbs are listed in dictionaries. It does not change its ending. Infinitives are normally used in conjunction with other **verbs**, although under certain circumstances they can be used on their own in commands and prohibitions. *See 4.1 and 18.2.2.*

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Intransitive verb

This is any **verb** that is not used with a **direct object**. *See 4.13.1.*

Noun

A **noun** is a word denoting a living being, an object or a concept. Examples of **nouns** are **волк** ‘wolf’, **стол** ‘table’ or **понятие** ‘concept’. **Nouns** denoting living beings or physical objects are called concrete **nouns**, while **nouns** denoting concepts are referred to as abstract **nouns**. **Nouns** that function as the names of people, places or organisations are proper **nouns**; all other nouns are common **nouns**. *See Chapters 2 and 3.*

Noun phrase

Noun phrase is the term used for a **noun** and any accompanying **adjectives**, **pronouns** or **numerals**. The phrase **эти два молодых студента** 'these two young students' is an example of a **noun phrase** that contains all four types of word. *See 11.1.*

Number

Number as a grammatical category is a part of the **noun** system relating to quantity. There are two **numbers**: singular (relating to one person, animal, object or concept) and plural (relating to more than one of any of the above). Most nouns have both singular and plural forms, although some occur only in the singular and some only in the plural. *See 2.1.*

Numeral

The **numeral** in Russian is a distinct part of speech, divided into three sub-groups: cardinal **numerals (8.1)**, collective **numerals (8.3)** and ordinal **numerals (8.4)**. Each of these has its own set(s) of endings and its own rules for combining with **nouns** and **adjectives**. *See Chapter 8.*

Participle

Participle is the term conventionally used in Russian grammar for a verbal **adjective**, that is, something at the same time both part of the **verb** and an **adjective**. The forms of the participle are described in **4.12**; its use is described in **4.14** and **23.1.3**.

Particle

Particle is a term used for an additional word providing information that supplements or supports that provided by the main elements of a sentence. Some **particles** have a very specific grammatical or semantic function, while others are used mostly to provide focus and emphasis. *See 9.4* and **20.3.3**.

Passive voice

The category of voice is used to indicate the relationship of **subject** and **object** to the action or state indicated by the **verb**. The **passive** voice is used when the **subject** of a **verb** is affected by the action, rather than performing it. It contrasts with the **active voice**. *See 4.14* and **20.2**.

Person

Person indicates the relationship between the verb and the **grammatical subject** of the sentence. There are three **persons**: the first **person** indicates or includes the speaker, the second **person** indicates or includes the addressee(s); the **third person** indicates the person(s), object(s) or concept(s) being referred to. Since each **person** can be singular or plural (*see* **Number**), there are six **person** forms in all.

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Prefix

Prefix is a form, usually of one or two syllables, that is attached to the beginning of a word in order to supply additional information relating to grammar or meaning. Russian has a rich range of **prefixes** that can be attached to **verbs** to convey various meanings or nuances. *See* **10.4**.

Preposition

Prepositions are words placed before **nouns** or **noun phrases** to provide additional information about the meaning and function of the noun. Each **preposition** is followed by a **noun** in a particular **case** (part of **government**); some **prepositions** can be followed by more than one case, depending on their precise meaning in the particular context in which they are used. *See* **9.2**.

Productive verb classes

Productive verb classes are those classes of verbs to which newly formed **verbs** can in principle be added. The majority of Russian **verbs** belong to one of the four classes of **productive verbs**. *See* **4.6**.

Pronoun

Pronouns are either words used in place of **nouns** or words that serve to qualify **nouns**, usually in a rather more general way than **adjectives**. **Pronouns** are divided into several categories, including personal **pronouns** (e.g. **мы** 'we'), possessive **pronouns** (e.g. **наш** 'our'), demonstrative **pronouns** (e.g. **этот** 'this'), interrogative **pronouns** (e.g. **что?** 'what?'), relative **pronouns** (e.g. **который** 'who', 'which', 'that') and indefinite **pronouns** (e.g. **кто-то** 'someone'). *See* **Chapter 7**.

Reflexive verb

Although **reflexive verbs** do serve certain other functions as well, the main purpose of making a verb **reflexive** is to transform a **transitive verb** into one that is **intransitive**. **Reflexive verbs are indicated** by the presence of the **suffix -ся(-сь** after a vowel) in all forms of the **verb**. *See 14.3.2.*

Subject

The **subject** of a sentence denotes the person, animal or object that performs the action or is the main participant in the event indicated by the **verb (active voice)**; in the **passive voice** the **subject** denotes the person, animal or object affected by the action. Russian distinguishes between the **grammatical subject**, which is always in the **nominative case**, and the **logical subject**, which is used with the **infinitive** or with **impersonal verbs** and **predicate forms**, and which is in some other **case**, usually the **dative**. *See 3.1, 3.4.3 and 11.2.2.*

Suffix

This is a form, usually of one or two syllables, which is attached to the end of a word in order to supply additional information relating to grammar or meaning. Russian has a rich range of **suffixes** that can be attached to **nouns** to convey various meanings or nuances. *See 10.1.*

Superlative

The **superlative** is the form of an **adjective** or an **adverb** that is used to indicate the highest possible degree of quality concerned, for example, **са́мый вы́сокий** '(the) highest' or **гро́мче всех** 'loudest (of all)'. *See 6.8.4, 6.8.5 and 9.1.7.*

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Tense

Tense is the category of the **verb** that relates to time. Russian has a simple system of three **tenses**: present, future and past. *See 4.3–4.5.*

Transitive verb

Transitive verb is a **verb** that is used with a **direct object**. *See 14.13.1.*

Uninflected parts of speech

Uninflected parts of speech are those that never change their endings. The principal **uninflected parts of speech** are **adverbs, conjunctions, particles and prepositions**. *See Chapter 9.*

Unproductive verb classes

Unproductive verb classes are those to which no new **verbs** can be added. Although many **unproductive verb classes** contain very few **verbs**, there are many **verbs** in common use that belong to one or other of these classes. *See 4.7.*

Verbs


Verbs are words that denote an action or a state. Examples include **быть**, 'to be', **дѣлать** 'to do' and **читать**, 'to read'. *See Chapter 4.*

Verbs of motion

Verbs of motion are a special group of **verbs** that have meanings related to movement in one form or another. These verbs have certain special characteristics, the most important being that they come in pairs: one member denotes motion in one direction, while the other denotes motion in more than one direction or in no specific direction. *See Chapter 22.*

Vvódnye slová

Vvódnye slová or 'introductory words' are a special group of words and phrases that normally come at or near the beginning of a sentence and that are separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma. They provide extra information that in one way or another qualifies what is said in the rest of the sentence. *See 23.2.1.*



Page 1

Part A
Structures



1

Sounds and spelling

1.1 The Russian alphabet

Russian is written in the *Cyrillic* alphabet. This consists of 33 letters: 21 letters represent consonant sounds; 10 letters are used to express vowel sounds, and 2 letters—the soft sign **ь** and the hard sign **ъ**—have no sound value of their own.

Unlike English, Russian does not use combinations of letters for denoting a single sound.

<i>Letters in alphabetical order</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Letter name</i>
А а	as in <u>f</u> ather (but shorter)	а (a)
Б б	as in <u>b</u> oss	бэ (be)
В в	as in <u>v</u> ast	вэ (ve)
Г г	as in <u>g</u> um	гэ (ge)
Д д	as in <u>d</u> ark	дэ (de)
Е е	as in <u>y</u> ellow or <u>ch</u> eck	е (ye)
Ё ё	as in <u>y</u> ogurt or <u>ch</u> ocolate	ё (yo)
Ж ж	as the <u>s</u> in <u>pl</u> ea <u>s</u> ure	жэ (zhe)
З з	as in <u>z</u> one	зэ (ze)
И и	as in <u>e</u> ast (but shorter)	и (i)
Й й	as in <u>y</u> es or <u>b</u> oy	и краткое 'short и'
К к	as in <u>c</u> up	ка (ka)
Л л	as in <u>l</u> uck	эль (el)
М м	as in <u>m</u> other	эм (em)
Н н	as in <u>n</u> one	эн (en)
О о	as in <u>m</u> ock or <u>t</u> a <u>u</u> ght (but shorter)	о (o)
П п	as in <u>p</u> ark	пэ (pe)
Р р	as the Scottish rolled <u>r</u> in <u>r</u> ock	эр (er)
С с	as in <u>s</u> un	эс (es)
Т т	as in <u>t</u> all	тэ (te)
У у	as in <u>m</u> oon (but shorter)	у (u)
Ф ф	as in <u>f</u> all	эф (ef)
Х х	as in Scottish <u>l</u> och	ха (kha)
Ц ц	as in <u>n</u> uts	цэ (tse)
Ч ч	a in <u>ch</u> ess	че (che)
Ш ш	as in <u>sh</u> ark	ша (sha)
Щ щ	as in <u>fr</u> esh <u>sh</u> eets	ща (shsha)
Ъ ъ	no sound value	твёрдый знак 'hard sign'

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<i>Letters in alphabetical order</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Letter name</i>
Ы ы	no exact English equivalent; approximately as in <i>thin</i>	ы (y)
Ь ь	no sound value	мягкий знак 'soft sign'
Э э	as in <i>egg</i>	э (eh)
Ю ю	as in <i>you</i> or <i>tuna</i>	ю (yu)
Я я	as in <i>yard</i>	я (ya)

The precise difference between the pronunciation of **н** and **нь** is explained in **1.3.1**. The exact pronunciation of most letters is partly determined by the neighbouring letters in the word or sentence (see **1.2.1** and **1.3.1**).

1.2 Consonants

1.2.1 Hard and soft consonants

Most Russian consonant sounds have two pronunciations, which are conventionally described as *hard* and *soft*. The distinguishing feature of soft consonants is that they are *palatalised*—that is, they are pronounced with the middle part of the tongue raised towards the hard palate.

For more on the pronunciation of soft consonants, see **1.2.3**.

Whether a consonant is hard or soft in Russian is important because it can serve to distinguish **between** two otherwise identical words: **был** (hard **б**, hard **л**) 'was', **быль** (hard **б**, soft **л**) 'true story', **бил** (soft **б**, hard **л**) past tense of 'hit' or 'beat'; **мат** (hard **м**, hard **т**) 'checkmate', **мать** (hard **м**, soft **т**) 'mother', **мят** (soft **м**, hard **т**) 'crumpled', **мять** (soft **м**, soft **т**) 'to crumple'.

Not all consonants form hard/soft pairs. The sounds represented by the letters **ж**, **ц**, **ш** are always hard, while those represented by **ч**, **щ** and **й** are always soft.

1.2.2. The pronunciation of hard consonants

Most hard consonants are pronounced in a similar or identical fashion to their English equivalents, as indicated in the table in **1.1**. The following, however, require a more detailed explanation.

The hard **л** is pronounced with the tongue resting against the top teeth. It sounds

like the English 'I' in words such as 'film', 'table'.

To pronounce **ж** and **ш**, the middle of the tongue is drawn down to the bottom of the mouth, while the tip of the tongue points upwards towards the area behind the top teeth.

Hard **д**, **н** and **т** are pronounced with the tip of the tongue resting against the back of the top teeth.

Hard **к**, **п** and **т** are pronounced without the slight aspiration (expulsion of a breath of air) that usually accompanies the equivalent sounds in English.

1.2.3 The pronunciation of soft consonants

Soft or palatalised consonants can be heard in English in the way that many (though not all) English speakers pronounce the initial consonants in words such as ‘due’, ‘new’ and ‘Tuesday’. In Russian, however, the consonants **б, в, г, д, з, к, л, м, н, п, р, с, т, ф, х** are all capable of being palatalised, while **ч** and **щ** are *always* palatalised. The distinguishing feature of palatalised consonants is that the middle part of the tongue is raised towards the hard palate (the middle part of the top of the mouth). The perception is often of a slight [y] sound pronounced together with the consonant, but some care should be taken not to exaggerate this effect, since in Russian there is a clear distinction between a palatalised consonant and a consonant followed by y:

обѣд [ob'ed] ‘dinner’ ~ **объѣдки** [ob'yedk'i] ‘[food] leftovers’.

NOTE In transcriptions, the sign ‘i’ is used to indicate a palatalised consonant.

For the use of the hard sign (**ь**) to indicate the presence of the sound [y] see **1.3.2**.

The palatalised consonant **щ** is pronounced as a long soft ‘sh’ sound, as in the English sequence ‘fresh sheets’, but without the slight pause between the words. An alternative pronunciation, shch, as in ‘Ashchurch’, is recommended in older text books, but is now falling into disuse.

1.2.4 The representation of hard and soft consonants in writing

The letters **б, в, г, д, з, к, л, м, н, п, р, с, т, ф, х** are used to represent both hard and soft consonants. The hardness or softness is not denoted by the letters themselves, but is indicated by the letter that immediately follows them (or by the absence of a following letter).

The consonants **б, в, г, д, з, к, л, м, н, п, р, с, т, ф, х** are pronounced *hard* when they:

(a) occur at the very end of a word:

ходит ‘he goes (on foot)’, **глаз** ‘eye’, **спорт** ‘sport’;

(b) when they are followed immediately by another consonant:

глаз 'eye', знать 'to know', спорт 'sport';

(c) when they are followed by one of the vowel letters from the group **а, о, у, э, ы**:

да 'yes', ходит 'he goes [on foot]', рука 'hand', 'arm', сэр 'sir', ты 'you'.

The consonants **б, в, г, д, з, к, л, м, н, п, р, с, т, ф, х** are pronounced *soft* when they are followed by either:

(a) the *soft* sign (**ь**):

лошадь 'horse', возьму́ 'I will take', фильм 'film', кровать 'bed';

(b) one of the vowel letters from the group **е, ё, и, ю, я**:

белый 'white', тётя 'aunt', виза 'visa', плюс 'plus', мясо 'meat'.

1.2.5 Voiced and unvoiced consonants

The letters **б, в, г, д, ж, з** normally denote voiced consonants—that is, consonants pronounced with a vibration of the vocal cords. The *unvoiced* consonants corresponding to these are indicated respectively by the letters **п, ф, к, т, ш, с**. Voiced consonants are normally *devoiced*—that is, pronounced like their unvoiced counterparts when they occur either at the end of a word or before *another unvoiced consonant*. This change in pronunciation, which can occur across a boundary between two words, is not usually reflected in the spelling:

зуб [p] ‘tooth’, **лев** [f] ‘lion’, **флаг** [k] ‘flag’, **год** [t] ‘year’, **муж** [sh] ‘husband’, **глаз** (s) ‘eye’;

NOTE: **Бог** ‘God’ is pronounced [bokh].

тру́бка [p] ‘pipe’, **все** [f] ‘all’, **но́гти** [k] ‘nails’, **во́дка** [t] ‘vodka’, **му́жской** [sh] ‘masculine’, **ска́зка** [s] ‘fairy tale’; **в парк** [f] ‘to the park’, **из теа́тра** [s] ‘from the theatre’, **над сто́лом** [t] ‘above the table’, **муж се́стры** [sh] ‘sister’s husband’, **снег чист** [k] ‘the snow is clean’.

Unvoiced consonants are pronounced like the corresponding *voiced* consonant when they occur before a *voiced* consonant:

сбить [z] ‘to knock down’, **к дру́гу** [g] ‘to a friend’, **наш дом** [zh] ‘our house’, **отбро́сы** [d] ‘garbage’.

NOTE: **Unvoiced consonants are not** voiced when they occur before **в: отве́т** [t] ‘answer’.

1.2.6 Consonant clusters

When two or more consonants come together, the pronunciation of the resulting cluster may differ from the sum of the original components.

<i>Spelled</i>	<i>Pronounced</i>
чт	шт in что 'what' and чтобы 'in order to', otherwise чт : пóчта 'post office', пóчти 'almost'
чн	шн in certain everyday words: конéчно 'of course', скúчно 'boring' (adv.) яйчница 'fried eggs', and also in female patronymics: Никитична, Ильинична For more on patronymics see 12.1.2. Otherwise чн : начни́ 'start!', очну́ться 'to come to oneself', вéчный 'eternal', бесконéчный 'infinite, endless'
лн	н in солнце 'sun' Otherwise лн : солнечный 'sunny', пóлный 'full'
гк	хк : лёгкий 'light', 'easy', мягкий 'soft'
стн	сн : чéстный 'honest', мéстный 'local'
здн	зн : звёздный 'star' (adj.), пóздно 'late' (adv.)
зж	a long ж : éзжу 'I go', 'I travel', сжáть 'to grip'
сж	
зч	шч : перевóзчик 'carrier'

<i>Spelled</i>	<i>Pronounced</i>
сч	щ: in the root -чит/чѐт-: <i>считáть</i> 'to count', 'to consider', <i>расчѐт</i> 'calculation'; also in <i>счáстье</i> 'happiness'; otherwise щч: <i>исчезáть</i> 'to disappear'
жч	щ: <i>мужчѐина</i> 'man'; <i>перѐбѐжчик</i> 'deserter'
сш	a long ш: <i>сшѝть</i> 'to sew (together)', <i>бѐсшѝмный</i> 'noiseless', <i>бѐз шѝма</i>
зш	'without noise'
ться	щч: <i>мѝться</i> 'to wash oneself', <i>улыбáться</i> 'to smile', <i>мѝются</i> 'they wash themselves', <i>улыбáются</i> 'they smile'

NOTE: The greeting *здрáвствуйте* 'hello' is pronounced as *здрáствуйте* in formal language, but more informally as *здрáсьте*.

1.3 Vowels

1.3.1 Russian vowel sounds and letters

To indicate the six Russian vowel sounds, ten letters are used: **а, е, ѐ, и, о, у, ы, э, ю, я**.

The pronunciation of the vowels is indicated in the table in **1.1**. Russian vowels are pronounced as 'pure' vowels with the tongue remaining in a constant position; they do not have the 'diphthong' quality that vowels generally have in most English pronunciations.

For changes to the pronunciation of vowels in unstressed syllables, *see* **1.4**.

The vowel 'о' is an *open* sound—that is, it is closer to the vowel in 'all' or 'taught', than to the vowel in 'hope'.

The vowel **ы** has no direct equivalent in English, although it is not unlike the vowel in the word 'bit' as pronounced by some Scottish speakers. It is a vowel half-way between the 'ee' in *feel* and the 'oo' in *fool*, and a close approximation can be achieved by spreading the lips for the 'ee' sound and then moving the tongue towards the back of the mouth.

1.3.2 The pronunciation of **я, е, ѐ, ю**

Four of the letters indicating *vowels* (**я, е, ѐ, ю**) have two pronunciations, depending on what comes immediately before them. If this is a *consonant*, they are pronounced as the vowels 'а', 'е', 'о', 'у' respectively; at the same time they also

indicate that the preceding consonant is *soft*:

мясо [m'a..] 'meat', **тело** [t'e..] 'body', **всѣ** [fs'o] 'everything',
меню [..n'u] 'menu'.

If they (a) occur at the beginning of a word, (b) come immediately after another vowel or (c) come immediately after the soft sign (**ь**) or the hard sign (**ъ**), the letters **я, е, ѣ, ю** express not one, but two sounds: their normal vowel sound preceded by the sound

[y]—i.e. [ya], [ye], [yo], [yu] respectively:

ящик [yashshik] ‘box’, **еду** [yedu] ‘I am going [by transport]’, **ёлка** [yolka] ‘Christmas tree’, **юг** [yuk] ‘south’;

шея [sheya] ‘neck’, **уеду** [uyedu] ‘I shall go away’, **даёт** [dayot] ‘s/he gives’, **мою** [moyu] ‘I wash’;

статья [stat'ya] ‘article’ **досье** [dos'ye] ‘dossier’, **льёт** [l'yot] ‘s/he pours’, **пью** [p'yu] ‘I drink’; **разъяснить** [..zyas..] ‘to clarify’, **съезд** [syest] ‘congress’.

NOTES

- (i) When **ь**, occurs after a vowel or at the beginning of a word, it is usually pronounced without the preceding (y):

наивный [na-iv..] ‘naive’, **клéнт** [kle-it] ‘s/he glues’, **и́мя** [im'a] ‘name’.

After the soft sign (**ь**), however, the [y] is usually pronounced:

статья́ [stat'yi] ‘articles’.

- (ii) In the examples given in this section, the function of the hard and soft signs is to indicate the presence of the sound [y] between a consonant and a vowel. This is the sole function of the hard sign in present-day Russian.

In certain names and in foreign words the combination of **й** with **я**, **е**, **о** or even **и** is possible:

Майя ‘Maya’ (female name), **парано́йя** ‘paranoia’, **майо́р** ‘major’ (military rank), **Йе́мен** ‘Yemen’, **Нью-Йо́рк** ‘New York’, **йо́га** ‘yoga’, **йогу́рт** ‘yogurt’.

1.4 Stress

1.4.0 Introduction

Each Russian word normally has *one stressed* syllable. This syllable is pronounced with greater emphasis, and the vowel in the stressed syllable is longer than other vowels. Stress in Russian is described as being both free and mobile—that is it can fall on *any* syllable in a word and can fall on *different* syllables in different forms of the same word. This principle is illustrated by the following forms of the word

голова́ ‘head’:

голова́:	nom. sing.
го́лову:	acc. sing.
на́ голову:	acc. sing. after the preposition на
голо́в:	gen. pl.

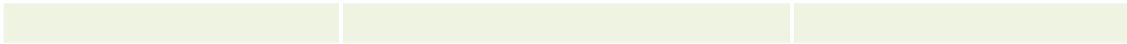
For more on the grammatical terms, *see* 2.2.

For the rules of stress with prepositions, *see* 9.2.7.

1.4.1 The importance of stress

The position of the stressed syllable is important for two reasons. The first is that some-times two otherwise identical words are distinguished only by the place of the stress:

му́ка ‘torment’, мука́ ‘flour’
дома́ ‘at home’, дома́ ‘houses’.



The second is that the pronunciation of many vowels depends on whether they appear in a stressed or an unstressed syllable. This question is discussed in detail in **1.4.3**.

1.4.2 The marking of stress

Russian stress is normally marked in textbooks and dictionaries, but is indicated in ordinary text only when it is necessary to avoid misunderstandings (as in the examples quoted in **1.4.1**). The normal means of indicating stress is the *acute accent* (').

In this book, with the exception of a few examples (e.g. in **1.6**) which are intended to reproduce as closely as possible the appearance of a normal printed text, stress is indicated throughout by means of the acute accent.

Because the letter **ѐ** is used only in stressed syllables, stress is not indicated separately for words containing this letter.

For more on the use of **ѐ** only in stressed syllables *see* **1.5.1**.

Stress is not normally indicated for words of only one syllable. Where stress is indicated on a word of one syllable—for example, the negative particle **не** and certain prepositions—it indicates that this syllable carries the stress for the following word as well. An example is the phrase **на́ голову**, quoted in **1.4.0**.

Occasionally, a word will be found with two stress marks. This means that there are alternative stresses: for example, **роди́лась** ‘she was born’, means that both **роди́лась** and **родила́сь** are possible.

1.4.3 Reduction of unstressed vowels.

When unstressed, the vowels **о**, **а/я**, **е/э** are significantly *reduced*—that is, they become shorter, but also change their quality. The symbols **o** and **o** are used below to denote different levels of vowels reduction: **o** stands for a sound similar to **а**, but shorter and less distinct, like the vowel in the ‘Mac (Mc)’ prefix of certain Scottish surnames, or the first vowel in ‘candelabra’; **o** stands for a short neutral vowel similar to the second and the final vowels in ‘candelabra’.

1.4.4 Unstressed a and o

Unstressed **а** and **о** are pronounced as **o** when they occur either in the syllable

immediately before the stressed syllable or at the *very beginning* of a word:

да́рю [dɑ-] 'I give', **африка́нец** [ɑf-] 'African', **ходи́ть** [kɦɑ-] 'to go (on foot)', **отказа́ться** [ɑt-] 'to refuse'.

Unstressed **a** and **o** are pronounced as **ɐ** when they occur either two or more syllables before the stressed syllable or in any syllable that comes *after* the stress:

дарови́тый [dər-] 'gifted', **выда́ть** [-dət'] 'to give out', **холово́й** [kɦəd-] 'marketable, popular', **вы́ход** [-kɦət] 'exit'.

1.4.5 Unstressed e and я; unstressed Э

Unstressed **e** and **я** are pronounced as a shorter version of **i** when they occur in any syllable *before* the stressed syllable:

се́мьсо́т [s'im-] 'seven hundred', **пя́тьсо́т** [p'it-] 'five hundred', **семиле́тний** [s'i-] 'seven years old', **пя́тьдеся́т** [p'i-] 'fifty'.

Unstressed **e** and **я** are pronounced as **e** when they occur in any syllable that comes *after* the stress:

во́семь [-s'əm'] 'eight', **па́мять** [-m'ət'] 'memory'.

Unstressed **Э**, which occurs only at the beginning of a word, is normally pronounced as a shorter version of **i**:

эква́тор [ikv-] 'equator', **эгои́ст** [ig-] 'egoist', **эколо́гия** [ik-] 'ecology'.

1.4.6 Other unstressed vowels

The vowels **и**, **ы**, **у/ю** in unstressed positions are shorter than when they are stressed, but any change in quality is negligible.

1.4.7 Stress units of more than one word

Sometimes a single stress unit is made up of more than one word. This is most commonly the case when nouns are used with prepositions or when a word is preceded or followed by an unstressed particle. In such cases the rules of vowel reduction apply to the stress unit as a whole:

за тебя́ [zət'-] 'for you', **через де́нь** [chiri'rizd'-] 'after a day', **какие́-то** [-tə] 'some (pl.)', **принеси́-ка** [-kə] 'bring!', **не зна́ешь ли?** [n'iz-] 'don't you know?', **под го́ру** [-gəru] 'downhill'.

1.4.8 Secondary stress

Stress units containing a preposition with more than one syllable as well as many compound words may have a weaker *secondary stress*. This is usually indicated by a *grave accent* (`):

Во́зле до́ма 'near the house', по́сле ма́тча 'after the match',
литерату́рове́дение 'literary science', га́ла-конце́рт 'gala concert',
теле́сериал 'TV serial', моро́зоусто́йчивый 'frost resistant'.

Secondary stress, where it occurs, always *precedes* the main stress.

1.5 Spelling rules

1.5.0 Introduction

Russian spelling is not, strictly speaking, 'phonetic' (as is sometimes claimed), but it is much more predictable than English spelling, and in general there is a reasonably close relationship between spelling and pronunciation. Nevertheless, there are some specific peculiarities which it is useful to bear in mind. These rules are particularly important

for determining the spelling of the endings that are attached to *nouns, adjectives, pronouns, numerals and verbs*.

1.5.1 Use of the letter *ë*

As was noted in 1.4.2, the letter *ë* occurs only in *stressed* syllables. In *unstressed* syllables it is replaced by *е*:

вошёл ‘he went in’, *but* **вышёл** ‘he went out’; **вёл** ‘he led’, *but* **вела́** ‘she led’.

In addition, the letter *ë* is used consistently only in textbooks, dictionaries and books written for children. Elsewhere it is usually replaced by the letter *е*. This means, for example, that the following words will appear in print as:

ее ‘her’, **еще** ‘still, more’, **принес** ‘he brought’, **легкий** ‘light, easy’, **мед** ‘honey’.

They should, however, be read as:

её, ещё, принёс, лёгкий, мёд.

In dictionaries and other lists arranged alphabetically, *е* and *ë* are usually treated as being the same letter.

1.5.2 Spelling after *ш, ж, ц*

As was pointed out in 1.2.4, one of the functions of the vowel letters is to indicate the hardness or softness of the preceding consonant. Since, however, the consonants **ш, ж, ц** are *always hard* and **ч, щ** are *always soft*, this function becomes redundant, and the choice of vowel letter to follow these consonants is determined instead by special rules.

The letters **ю** and **я** do not occur after these consonants; instead, **у** and **а** are used:

варю́ ‘I boil’, *but* **спеши́у** ‘I hurry’, **ви́жу** ‘I see’, **лечу́** ‘I am flying’, **пущу́** ‘I will let’.

варя́ ‘boiling’, *but* **спеши́а** ‘hurrying’, **трево́жа** ‘worrying’, **мо́лча** ‘in silence’, **мори́ца** ‘wrinkling’.

For more on these verb forms, *see* 4.6.4, 4.7.15 and 4.11.

Exceptions to this spelling rule are found in a few words of foreign origin:

парашю́т ‘parachute’, **э́юри** ‘jury’.

The letter **ы** does not occur after **ш, ж, ч, щ**; instead **и** is used:

сто́лы ‘tables’, *but* **карандаши́** ‘pencils’, **но́жи** ‘knives’, **врачи́** ‘doctors’, **товари́щи** ‘comrades’.

For more on these noun forms, *see* **2.6.1** and **2.6.2**.

The letter **ы** is normally used after **ц**, but **и** occurs in some words of foreign origin and in some surnames:

цыплёнок ‘chicken’, **отцы́** ‘fathers’, *but* **цирк** ‘circus’, **Е́льцин** ‘El'tsin’.

NOTE When **и** is used after **ш, ж** or **ц**, it is pronounced as if it were **ы**.

The letter **о** is used after **ш, ж, ч, щ, ц** only in stressed syllables; elsewhere **е** is used. This can be illustrated by the instrumental singular forms of the following nouns:

карандаш 'pencil', – **карандашом**, *but* **душ** 'shower' – **душем**
нож 'knife' – **ножом**, *but* **муж** 'husband' – **мужем**
врач 'doctor' – **врачом**, *but* **матч** '(football) match' – **матчем**
борщ 'borshch' – **борщом**, *but* **товарищ** 'comrade' – **товарищем**

For more on these endings *see* **2.6.1** and **2.6.2**.

Exceptions to this rule are found in a few words of foreign origin and in a few surnames:

шоколад 'chocolate', **жокей** 'jockey', **Шостакович** 'Shostakovich'.

1.5.3 Use of **е** and **Э**

The letter **э** is found mostly at the beginning of a word in foreign borrowings and foreign proper names:

эгоист 'egoist', **экономист** 'economist', **экология** 'ecology', **Эмма** 'Emma', **Эдинбург** 'Edinburgh'.

The letter **э** occurs in a small number of native Russian words such as:

это 'this (is)', **этот** 'this', **эх** 'oh'.

The letter **э** is used after a consonant in only a small number of Russian words of foreign origin and in the transcription of some foreign proper names:

мэр 'mayor', **сэр** 'sir', **рэп** 'rap (music)'; **Блэр** 'Blair', **Тэтчер** 'Thatcher'.

For the use of **э** to transcribe English **a**, *see* **1.6.5**.

Elsewhere the letter **е** is used even after hard consonants. This sequence occurs only in words recently borrowed from foreign languages and in native Russian words after the consonants **ш, ж, ц**:

стюардэсса 'stewardess', рэ́гби 'rugby', Сэ́нт-Луи́с 'Saint-Louis', темп 'race', же́нщина 'woman', ше́я 'neck', це́ль 'aim'.

1.5.4 Use of **И** after **К, Г, Х**

The letter **ы** does not occur after the consonants **К, Г, Х**; instead **и** is used:

сто́лы 'tables', *but* я́щики 'boxes', мозги́ 'brains', духи́ 'perfume'.

1.5.5 The ending **-ГО**(vo)

The ending **-го** is pronounced as [vo] when it occurs in the *genitive singular masculine* and *neuter* ending of *adjectives, pronouns* and *certain numeral forms*, such as **один**:

он 'he'	его́ [yivo]
тот 'that'	того́ [tavo]
кто 'who?'	кого́ [kavo]
что 'what?'	чего́ [chivo]
но́вый 'new'	но́вого́ [novəvə]
хоро́ший 'good'	хоро́шего́ [kharoshəvə]

си́нний ‘(dark) blue’	си́него [s'in'əvə]
тре́тний ‘third’	тре́тьего [tr'et'yəvə]
оди́н ‘one’	оди́ного [adnəvə]

For more on these endings, see **Chapters 6, 7 and 8**.

The same discrepancy between pronunciation and spelling is found in the word *сего́дня* (s'ivodn') ‘today’.

1.5.6 The spelling of certain prefixes

Normally the spelling of affixes remains unchanged regardless of the way in which pronunciation is affected by surrounding consonants. The prefixes **без-**, **вз-**, **воз-**, **из-** and **раз-** form, however, an exception, since they are spelled **бес-**, **вс-**, **вос-**, **ис-**, **рас-** when they occur before an *unvoiced* consonant (к, п, с, т, ф, ц, ч, ш, щ):

бездумный ‘thoughtless’, but *бесстрастный* ‘passionless’;
вздремнуть ‘to take a nap’, but *вскипятить* ‘to boil’;
возродить ‘to revive’, but *воспитать* ‘to bring up’;
издать ‘to publish’, but *исправить* ‘to correct’;
разбудить ‘to wake’, but *рассыпать* ‘to scatter’.

1.5.7 Use of capital letters

Capital letters in Russian are used in much the same way as they are in English. There are, however, some important differences that it is useful to note. In particular capital letters are not normally used in Russian for:

The first person singular pronoun **я** ‘I’:

Трудно поверить, но завтра я уже буду в Москве.

It’s hard to believe it, but tomorrow I’ll already be in Moscow.

Days of the week and names of months:

Я, наверное, приеду в четверг.

I’ll probably arrive on Thursday.

В июле и в августе здесь бывает очень жарко.

In July and August it can get very hot here.

Adjectives derived from names of countries and nouns denoting nationalities and the inhabitants of towns and cities:

В университете я изучал английскую литературу.

At university I studied English literature.


В нашей гостинице много русских, но кроме нас, кажется, нет никаких англичан.

There are a lot of Russians in our hotel, but apart from us there don't seem to be any other English people.

Как и многие москвичи, они редко пользовались своей машиной в черте города.

Like many Muscovites, they rarely used their car within the city limits.

For more on adjectives and nouns denoting nationality, *see* **10.1.8**, **10.1.9** and **12.5**.



On the other hand it is customary in letters to use a capital letter for the second person pronouns **Вы** 'you' and **Ваш** 'your' when they are used as *polite singular* forms:

Жаль, что в Вашем письме Вы не рассказали о Вашей поездке в Китай.

It's a pity that in your letter you didn't tell me anything about your trip to China.

With titles and names of organisations and institutions of various sorts, books, plays, television programmes and the like, it is usual to use a capital letter only for the first word:

Министёрство культу́ры

'The Ministry of Culture'

Моско́вский госуда́рственный университе́т

'Moscow State University'

Большо́й теа́тр

'The Bolshoi Theatre'

«Незави́симая газе́та»

Nezavisimaia gazeta (the name of a newspaper)

«Кто хо́чет стать миллионе́ром?»

Who Wants to be a Millionaire?

Но́вый год

'New Year'

With geographical names, generic terms such as **мо́ре** 'sea' and **у́лица** 'street' are normally spelled with a small letter:

Чёрное море	The Black Sea
озеро Байкал	Lake Baikal
улица Тверская	Tverskaia Street
Красная площадь	Red Square

It is normal to spell with a capital letter all words that form the names of countries, major geographical regions, international organisations and certain titles that are deemed worthy of particular respect:

Российская Федерация

The Russian Federation

Се́верная Ирландия

Northern Ireland

Восто́чная Сибирь

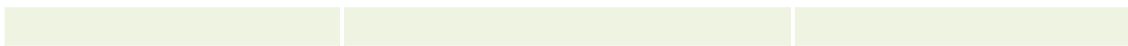
Eastern Siberia

Да́льний Восто́к

The Far East

Европе́йский Сою́з

The European Union



Госуда́рственная Ду́ма Росси́йской Федера́ции

The State Duma of the Russian Federation

День Побе́ды

Victory Day (9 May)

1.5.8 Use of inverted commas

The most common form of inverted commas used in print in Russian is « ... ». In handwriting these usually take the form of, “In general inverted commas are used more frequently in Russian than in English. In addition to titles of books, films, plays, newspapers, and so on (where italics are often used in English), inverted commas tend to be used for names of companies, rock bands, sports teams, brand names and even the names of the Moscow underground stations:

Лу́чше, коне́чно, чита́ть «Войну́ и мир» в оригина́ле.

It's better, of course, to read *War and Peace* in the original.

За́втра в киноте́атре «Иллюзио́н» пока́зывают фильм «Броненосец Потёмкин».

Tomorrow they're showing *Battleship Potemkin* in the *Illuzion* cinema.

Весно́й про́шлого го́да петербу́ргский футбо́льный клуб «Зени́т» факти́чески перешёл под контро́ль компани́и «Газпром».

In the spring of last year Zenit, the St Petersburg football team was effectively taken over by Gazprom.

В шестидеся́тые го́ды «Битлз» бы́ли о́чень популярными в Советском Сою́зе, хотя́ их пластинки там не продава́лись.

In the 1960s the Beatles were very popular in the Soviet Union, although their records were not on sale there.

Рестора́н «Пеки́н» нахо́дится недалеко́ от метро́ «Маяко́вская».

The Peking restaurant is near the Mayakovskaia underground station.

On inverted commas in direct speech, *see* **21.8.1**.

For the rules for declining words and phrases in inverted commas, *see* **11.1.3**.

1.6 Transliteration and transcription

1.6.0 Introduction

In circumstances where it is either impossible or undesirable to reproduce Russian words in their original form, it is necessary to resort to *transliteration* or *transcription*. Transliteration means the substitution of Russian letters by their nearest English equivalents in such a way as to allow the reader to reconstruct the spelling of the Russian original. *Transcription* means the use of English letters to reproduce the sounds of the Russian original; its purpose is to enable the reader to reconstruct the pronunciation of the Russian original.

Except in special circumstances—for example, in guides to the pronunciation of Russian (as in the earlier sections of this chapter)—Russian is reproduced in English by means



of transliteration. It is recommended that learners of the language adopt a standard system of transliteration and try to use it as consistently as possible.

1.6.1 The Library of Congress system of transliteration

Until quite recently there were several systems of transliteration in common use, but since the 1980s what is known as the *Library of Congress* system has gradually come to be adopted for most purposes throughout the English-speaking world. It is this system that is used wherever transliterated forms appear in this book.

Library of Congress system: Table of transliteration

<i>Russian letter</i>	<i>English equivalent</i>	<i>Russian letter</i>	<i>English equivalent</i>	<i>Russian letter</i>	<i>English equivalent</i>
а	a	к	k	х	kh
б	b	л	l	ц	ts
в	v	м	m	ч	ch
г	g	н	n	ш	sh
д	d	о	o	щ	shch
е	e	п	p	ъ	"
ё	ë	р	r	ы	y
ж	zh	с	s	ь	'
з	z	т	t	э	è
и	i	у	u	ю	iu
й	i	ф	f	я	ia

NOTES

(i) Where the letter **e** is used instead of **ë**, it is usually transliterated as **e**; therefore, **Горбачёв** would be transliterated as **Gorbachëv**, but **Горбачев** would be **Gorbachev**.

(ii) The Library of Congress system has a number of ambiguities. The most important is that the same letter, **i**, is used for both **и** and **й**, so that both **бой** and **бон** are transliterated as **boi**.

For the use of the letter **e** in place of **ë**, see 1.5.1.

1.6.2 Examples of transliteration using the Library of Congress system

The following examples illustrate the Library of Congress system of transliteration:

Дмитрий Анатольевич Медведев	Dmitrii Anatol'evich Medvedev
Борис Николаевич Ельцин	Boris Nikolaevich El'tsin
Хрущёв	Khrushchëv
Толстой	Tolstoi
Достоевский	Dostoevskii
Чехов	Chekhov
Горький	Gor'kii
Маяковский	Maiakovskii
Татьяна	Tat'iana
Анастасия	Anastasiia
Владивосток	Vladivostok



Ярославль	Iaroslavl'
Нижний Новгород	Nizhnii Novgorod
съезд	s"ezd
сестра	sestra
сёстры	sěstry

1.6.3 Exceptions to the Library of Congress system

In some circumstances—for example, in formal academic writing—it is desirable to follow the Library of Congress system as closely and as consistently as possible. Elsewhere, however, some departures from the system may be admissible or even preferable.

In cases where non-standard characters are impossible or are not wanted **ë** can be replaced by **e** or **o**, and the character **'**, used to transliterate **ь**, can be omitted:

Горбачёв would be transliterated as **Gorbachev** or **Gorbachov**.

Горький would be transliterated as **Gorkii**.

With proper names it is sometimes desirable to use an English spelling that represents the pronunciation more closely than does the Library of Congress transliteration. In such cases:

Ельцин might be represented as **Yeltsin**.

Ярославль might be represented as **Yaroslavl**.

Some Russian proper names have an English spelling that has become generally accepted:

Чайковский (the composer) is almost invariably known in English as Tchaikovsky; this spelling is based on a nineteenth-century French transliteration.

1.6.4 The representation of English forms in Russian

Because of the complex and often eccentric relationship between spelling and pronunciation in English, *transliteration* does not really work for representing English words in Russian, and instead a system closer to *transcription* is normally used. There are, however, some points to note:

1 The model of pronunciation used is that of a British film actor of the 1930s. What this means is that **a** is often rendered by **е** or **э** and **u** is often rendered by **а**.

2 Those who devise the transcription may not be aware of all of the eccentricities of English spelling and may therefore not reflect the exact pronunciation—for example, the name ‘Neil’ is often rendered as **Нейл**.

3 There may well be variations and inconsistencies. For example, forms used in some official documents, such as visas, may sometimes be closer to a transliteration than those encountered elsewhere.

The following conventions are used for letters indicating sounds that do not occur in Russian:

h (except when silent) is rendered by **г** or **х**

j (and the **g** as in **gem**) are rendered by **дж**

th (as in **think**) is rendered by **т**

th (as in **this**) is rendered by **т** or **з**



w is rendered by **в** or **у**

NOTES

(i) The use of **г** for English 'h' is now rather old-fashioned and tends to be restricted to proper names that are well established, such as **Гарольд** for 'Harold'.

(ii) English 'l', when it occurs at the end of a word or before a consonant, is often rendered by **ль**.

(iii) English double letters tend to be rendered by double letters in Russian.

1.6.5 Examples of English names in Russian

Winston Churchill	Уинстон Черчилль	Sarah Butler	Сара Батлер
John Dunn	Джон Данн	Tony Blair	Тони Блэр
Harry Potter	Гарри Поттер	Anthony	Антони or Энтони
Frank	Фрэнк	Heather	Хезер or Хизер
Aberdeen	Абердин	Blackpool	Блэкпул
Bradford	Брадфорд	Edinburgh	Эдинбург
Glasgow	Глазго	Dublin	Дублин
New York	Иью-Йорк	Seattle	Сиэтл
Washington	Вашингтон	Perth	Перт
<i>(The) Times</i>	«Таймс»		

2 Nouns

2.0 Introduction

The Russian noun contains the following categories.

Number (2.1). This is a category that relates to quantity. Russian, like English, has two numbers: *singular* and *plural*.

Case (2.2). This category refers to different endings assumed by certain parts of speech as a means of indicating the particular grammatical function that the part of speech fulfils in a sentence. English (although only in certain pronouns) can distinguish three cases: a *subject* case ('he'), an *object* case ('him') and a *possessive* case ('his'); Russian *nouns, adjectives, pronouns* and *numerals* have six cases: *nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, instrumental* and *prepositional*.

Gender (2.3). This category is essentially a means of classifying nouns, although there is some link between *grammatical* and *biological* gender. Russian distinguishes three genders: *masculine, feminine* and *neuter*, although there are no distinctions of gender in the plural.

Animacy (2.4). In some circumstances Russian distinguishes between *animate* nouns, which refer to persons or animals, and *inanimate* nouns (all others).

2.1 Number

2.1.1 Singular and plural

The *singular* is used to denote *one* person, animal, object or concept, while the *plural* is used to indicate *more than one* of any of the above. Most nouns have both singular and plural forms.

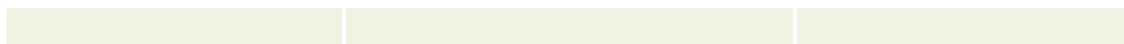
2.1.2 Nouns that occur only in the singular

There are quite a few nouns which in Russian are used only in the *singular*. Those that require particular attention are the ones for which the normal English equivalent can occur either in the singular or in the plural. Such nouns include:

Certain *abstract* nouns:

борьба struggle

разница difference



The names of certain vegetables, berries and fruit, for example:

горо́х	peas	лу́к	onion(s)
морко́вь	carrot(s)	карто́фель, карто́шка	potatoes
изю́м	raisins	клу́бника	strawberries
мали́на	raspberries	виногра́д	grape(s)

NOTE The word **карто́шка** is characteristic of informal language.

Some nouns that fit into neither of the above categories:

ложь	lie
ору́жие	weapons
пламя	flame

2.1.3 Nouns used only in the plural

Some nouns that occur only in the *plural* denote objects that can be thought of as being made up of paired elements:

брю́ки	trousers
штаны́	trousers
трусы́, труси́ки	(under)pants, knickers
шо́рты	shorts
плавки́	swimming trunks
колго́тки	tights
но́жницы	scissors
щи́пцы	tongs, pincers, tweezers

Other nouns that occur only in the plural are, however, less easy to explain:

дро́ва	firewood
дро́жди	yeast
обои́	wallpaper
по́минки	wake (for the dead)
са́ни	sledge
сли́вки	cream
су́тки	day, period of 24 hours
счё́ты	abacus
че́рнила	ink
щи́	type of cabbage soup

2.2 Case

2.2.1 The six cases

Although, as was noted above, English has the remains of a case system, the Russian system is much more complicated. Russian has six cases: *nominative*, *genitive*, *dative*, *accusative*, *instrumental* and *prepositional*. These names are for the most part arbitrary, and each case has in practice a wide range of functions; these are described in detail in **Chapter 3**.

NOTE There is more than one standard order for listing the different cases. That used above (and in the following sections) is the one preferred for grammars and reference works produced in Russia.

2.2.2 How the cases are indicated

The *case* in which a noun is used is indicated by the *ending*. As there are separate sets of endings for the *singular* and the *plural*, the ending of a noun gives information about both *case* and *number*.

The *nominative singular* (*nominative plural* for nouns that occur only in the plural) is the form under which nouns are listed in dictionaries.

The process of changing the endings associated with each noun in order to indicate the different cases is usually referred to as *declension*. Russian has several standard *declension types*, and the great majority of nouns belong to one or other of these. There are also some non-standard declension types, which group together relatively small numbers of nouns. In most instances (although by no means always), the remaining endings of any noun can be predicted from the *nominative singular*.

The different declension types are described in detail in **2.6–2.11**.

Russian has a number of indeclinable nouns. These have the same ending for all case forms in both singular and plural.

Indeclinable nouns are described in detail in **2.13–2.14**.

2.3 Gender

2.3.0 Introduction

Grammatical *gender* is a means of classifying nouns. Russian has three grammatical genders—*masculine*, *feminine* and *neuter*—and all nouns that can occur in the singular belong to one or other of these genders. There are no gender distinctions in the plural, and nouns that occur only in the plural do not belong to any grammatical gender.

2.3.1 Grammatical and biological gender

There is a partial match between *grammatical* and *biological gender*, in that nouns referring to male persons or animals are generally *masculine*, and nouns referring to female persons or animals tend to be *feminine*. All other nouns, however, can belong to any one of the three genders:

мужчина (masc.)	man	брат (masc.)	brother
лев (masc.)	lion	женщина (fem.)	woman
сестра (fem.)	sister	львица (fem.)	lioness
потолок (masc.)	ceiling	дверь (fem.)	door
окно (n.)	window	атеизм (masc.)	atheism
религия (fem.)	religion	христианство (n.)	Christianity

There are a very small number of neuter nouns that refer or can refer to persons or animals:

животное	animal	лицо	face; person
-----------------	--------	-------------	--------------

2.3.2 Determining grammatical gender

The only absolutely reliable indicator of grammatical gender is the ending of any *adjective* or *pronoun* that may accompany a *noun*:

хоро́ший мужчи́на good man; **-ий** is an ending that indicates *masculine* gender.

хоро́шая же́нщина good woman; **-ая** is an ending that indicates *feminine* gender.

хоро́шее сло́во good word; **-ее** is an ending that indicates *neuter* gender.

хоро́шие мужчи́ны	good men
хоро́шие же́нщины	good women
хоро́шие слова́	good words

In these examples **-ие** is an ending used for all nouns in the *plural*.

The endings of *adjectives* are described in detail in **Chapter 6**.

The endings of *pronouns* are described in detail in **Chapter 7**.

The question of *agreement* between *adjectives*, *pronouns* and *nouns* is examined in detail in **11.1**.

2.3.3 Grammatical gender and declension type

There is a very close relationship between *grammatical gender* and *declension type*:

Nouns which in the *nominative singular* end in a *consonant* or in **-ий** are normally *masculine*:

сто́л	table	студе́нт	(male) student
ма́й	May (the month)	геро́й	hero

Nouns which in the *nominative singular* end in **-а** or **-я** (except **-мя**) are normally *feminine*:

кни́га	book	студе́нтка	(female) student
неде́ля	week	те́тя	aunt

Nouns which in the *nominative singular* end in **-а** or **-я** and which refer to male persons are *masculine*:

дядя́	uncle	мужчина́	man
юноша́	youth, young man		

Nouns which in the *nominative singular* end in **-а** or **-я** and which can refer either to male or to female persons are *masculine* unless they refer specifically to a woman, in which case they are *feminine*:

левша́	left-hander	пьяница́	drunkard
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Nouns which in the *nominative singular* end in **-о**, **-е**, **-ѐ** or **-мя** are normally *neuter*:

окно́	window	мо́ре	sea
здáние	building	копье́	spear
вре́мя	time		



The only nouns that can cause problems are those ending in **-ь**, since some are *masculine*, while others are *feminine*. For some nouns it is possible to work out what the gender will be.

Nouns ending in **-тель** or **-арь** and denoting someone who carries out a particular activity are *masculine*:

писа́тель	writer	председа́тель	chairman
врати́тель	goalkeeper		

Names of months are *masculine*:

янва́рь	January	апри́ль	April
октя́брь	October		

Abstract nouns ending in **-ость** or **-знь** are *feminine*:

радо́сть	joy	ста́рость	old age
боле́знь	illness	жизнь	life

Nouns ending in **-овь**, **-жь**, **-чь**, **-шь** or **-щь** are *feminine*:

кро́вь	blood	це́рковь	church
ро́жь	guy	мелочь	small change
ро́скошь	luxury	вещь	thing

With other nouns ending in **-ь** there are no reliable ways of predicting the gender. For example, the following are *masculine*:

автомобиль	car, motor vehicle	голубь	dove, pigeon
гость	guest	гусь	goose
день	day	дождь	rain
камень	stone	картофель	potatoes
Кремль	Kremlin	лебедь	swan
портфель	briefcase	ремень	strap
рояль	(grand) piano	рубль	rouble
словарь	dictionary	уголь	coal
шампунь	shampoo		

The following nouns are *feminine*:

дверь	door	кость	bone
лошадь	horse	мебель	furniture
очередь	queue	печень	liver
пыль	dust	роль	part, role
соль	salt	степь	steppe
цель	goal, aim	цепь	chain

The rules for determining the gender of *indeclinable* nouns and of *abbreviations* and *acronyms* are given in **2.13.2** and **2.14.2** respectively.

2.4 Animacy

Russian nouns are divided into *animate* and *inanimate* nouns. Animate nouns are those that denote human beings or animals. All other nouns are inanimate.

The importance of the distinction between animate and inanimate nouns is its effect on certain endings for the *accusative* case. In the *singular*, all *animate masculine* nouns



ending in a *consonant*, in **-ий** or in **-ь** have an ending in the *accusative* that is identical to that of the *genitive*; all *inanimate masculine* nouns belonging to these declension types have an ending in the *accusative* that is identical to that of the *nominative*:

Animate

<i>Nom.</i>	<i>Acc.</i>	<i>Gen.</i>
брат 'brother'	брат ^а	брат ^а
геро ^й 'hero'	геро ^я	геро ^я
коро ^{ль} 'king'	коро ^{ля}	коро ^{ля}
тигр 'tiger'	тигр ^а	тигр ^а
солов ^{ей} 'nightingale'	солов ^{ья}	солов ^{ья}
лось 'elk'	лось ^я	лось ^я

Inanimate

<i>Nom.</i>	<i>Acc.</i>	<i>Gen.</i>
стол 'table'	стол	стол ^а
поцелу ^й 'kiss'	поцелу ^й	поцелу ^я
день 'day'	день	дня

No other nouns are affected in the singular by the distinction between animate and inanimate nouns.

In the *plural* all animate nouns (regardless of the gender and the declension type in the singular) have an ending in the *accusative* that is identical to that of the *genitive*; all inanimate nouns have an ending in the *accusative* that is identical to that of the *nominative*:

Animate

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Acc. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
тигр 'tiger'	ти́гры	ти́гров	ти́гров
геро́й 'hero'	герои́	героев	героев
коро́ль 'king'	короли́	короле́й	короле́й
му́ха 'fly'	му́хи	мух	мух
судья́ 'judge'	судьи́	суде́й	суде́й
лоша́дь 'horse'	лошади́	лошаде́й	лошаде́й
лицо́ 'person'	лица́	лиц	лиц

Inanimate

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Acc. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
сто́л 'table'	сто́лы	сто́лы	сто́лов
де́нь 'day'	дни́	дни́	дне́й
кни́га 'book'	кни́ги	кни́ги	кни́г
неде́ля 'week'	неде́ли	неде́ли	неде́ль
ко́сть 'bone'	ко́сти	ко́сти	ко́стей
по́ле 'field'	поля́	поля́	по́лей

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Acc. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
и́мя 'name'	име́на	име́на	имёи
лицо́ 'face'	лица́	лица́	лиц

In the following sections the tables illustrating declension types will, where applicable, contain examples of both animate and inanimate nouns.

NOTES

(i) The distinction between *animate* and *inanimate* nouns generally follows common-sense principles and presents few difficulties. Nevertheless, it may be noted that while **труп** 'corpse', is inanimate, **мертвец** 'dead man' is animate; **кукла** 'doll, puppet' is animate. **Ферзь** 'queen' (in chess) is a masculine animate noun.

(ii) As the example of **лицо́** shows, some nouns can be either *animate* or *inanimate*, depending on the meaning: when **лицо́** means 'person', it is animate, but when it means 'face', it is inanimate. Similarly, when **Спартак** denotes 'Spartacus' (the leader of the Roman slave rebellion), it is animate; when it denotes 'Spartak' (the sports organisation) it is inanimate (when used in the latter sense it is normally written in inverted commas; *see 1.5.8*).

2.5 The fleeting vowel

2.5.0 Introduction

An important part in the Russian grammatical system is played by the so-called *fleeting vowel*. This is a vowel that is found in some forms of a word, but not in others. There are occasional exceptions, but normally the only vowels that can be fleeting are **е**, **ё** and **о**. Although examples of the fleeting vowel can be found elsewhere, this phenomenon is particularly important for the noun declension system.

For examples of the fleeting vowel in verbs and adjectives, *see 4.5.3, 4.7.3, 4.7.13, 6.5.1*.

2.5.1 The fleeting vowel with masculine nouns ending in a consonant, **-й** or **-ь**

The fleeting vowel occurs with a large number of masculine nouns ending in a consonant, **-й** or **-ь**. The vowel is present in the *nominative singular* (and *accusative*

singular if the noun is *inanimate*), but absent in all other forms of the noun. The fleeting vowel is particularly likely to occur with nouns ending in **-ец, -ок, -ёк** or **-ей**, although it is by no means restricted to these nouns:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
оте́ц 'father'	отца́	отцы́
огуре́ц 'cucumber'	огурца́	огурцы́
рыно́к 'market'	рынка́	рынки́
ту́рок 'Turk'	ту́рка	ту́рки
вѐтер 'wind'	вѐтра	вѐтры
огонь́ 'fire'	огня́	огни́
козѐл 'billy-goat'	козла́	козлы́

With nouns ending in **-ёк** (after a consonant) or **-ей**, the fleeting vowel is replaced by a *soft sign* (**ь**):

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
конёк 'skate'	конька́	коньки́
воробей 'sparrow'	воробья́	воробьи́

With nouns ending in **-ёк** (after a vowel) the fleeting vowel is replaced by **-й-**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
паёк 'ration'	пайка́	пайки́

With the noun **заяц** 'hare' in all forms except the nominative singular **-я** is replaced by **-й-**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
заяц	зайца́	зайцы́

2.5.2 The fleeting vowel with nouns ending in **-а, -я, -о, -е, -ё**

With nouns ending in **-а, -я, -о, -е, -ё**, a *fleeting vowel* sometimes appears in the *genitive plural*. This occurs with most (though not all) nouns which have a series of *two or more* consonants immediately preceding the ending:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
ложка́ 'spoon'	ложки́	ложек
кухня́ 'kitchen'	кухни́	кухонь
окно́ 'window'	окна́	окон
сёрдце́ 'heart'	сердца́	сердец

In some instances, the sequence of two consonants may be separated by **-ь-**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
тюрьма́ 'prison'	тюрьмы́	тюрем
письмо́ 'letter'	письма́	писем

The rules for determining which vowel is used are as follows:

(i) After **к, г, х** only **-о-** is used; for examples, see **ку́хня** and **окно́** above.

(ii) The vowel **-о-** is used before **-к, -г, -х** unless the preceding consonant is **ж, ц, ч,** or **ш**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
ска́зка 'fairy tale'	ска́зки	ска́зок
ручка́ 'handle', 'pen'	ру́чки	ру́чек

(See also *ложка* above.)

(iii) In all other instances either **-e-** or **-ë-** is used, depending on the stress; **-ë-** is used when the stress is on the fleeting vowel:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
сестра́ 'sister'	сёстры	сестёр
серьга́ 'earring'	сёрьги	серёг
кресло́ 'armchair'	крёсла	крёсел

NOTE The vowel **-e-** is used before **-н-** even in stressed syllables; see the example *се́рдце* above.

A soft sign (**ь**) before **я-е** or **ë** is usually replaced by **-e-** or **-и-**; the former normally occurs under stress:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
статья́ 'article'	статьи́	статей
свинья́ 'pig'	свиньи́	свиней
сиденье́ 'seat'	сиденья́	сидений
копье́ 'spear'	копья́	копий

When **-й-** appears before the last consonant it is usually replaced by **-e-**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
копейка́ 'kopeck'	копейки	копеек

NOTE: The genitive plural of *яйцо́* 'egg' is *яиц*; the genitive plural of *война́* 'war' is *войн*.

Not all nouns in these classes with a sequence of consonants immediately before the ending have the fleeting vowel in the genitive plural. Nouns that do not have the fleeting vowel include those ending in **-ство, -сто, -та, -да** as well as some others

that are less predictable:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
вещество́ 'substance'	вещества́	веще́ств
ме́сто 'place'	места́	мест
ка́рта 'map'	ка́рты	ка́рт
звезда́ 'star'	звёзды	звёзд
со́лнце 'sun'	со́лнца	со́лнц

2.5.3 The fleeting vowel with feminine nouns ending in **-Ь**

Some nouns, for example, **ложь** 'lie', **рожь** 'rye', **любовь** 'love' and **церковь** 'church', have a *fleeting vowel* that is present in the *nominative*, *accusative* and *instrumental singular*, but absent in all other forms:

Nom./acc. sing.	ложь	рожь	любовь	церковь
Gen./dat./prep. sing.	лжи	ржи	любви	церкви
Instr. sing.	ложью	рожью	любовью	церковью
Nom./acc. pl.	—	—	любви	церкви

NOTE When **Любовь** occurs as a *forename*, it does not have a *fleeting vowel*:

Nom./acc. sing.	Любовь	Gen./dat./prep. sing.	Любви
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Examples of nouns containing a fleeting vowel will be included in the tables in the following sections.

2.6 Masculine nouns ending in a consonant, **-Й** or **-Ь**

2.6.1 Masculine nouns ending in a consonant other than **-К, -Г, -Х, -Ц, -Ж, -Ч, -Ш, -Щ**

The following tables give examples of:

an *inanimate* noun (**стол** 'table');

an *animate* noun (**слон** 'elephant');

a noun with a *fleeting vowel* (**осёл** 'donkey').

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	сто́л	сто́лы
Gen.	сто́ла	сто́лов
Dat.	сто́лу	сто́лам
Acc.	сто́л	сто́лы
Inst.	сто́лом	сто́лами
Prep.	сто́ле	сто́лах

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	сло́н	сло́ны
Gen.	сло́на	сло́нов
Dat.	сло́ну	сло́нам
Acc.	сло́на	сло́нов
Inst.	сло́ном	сло́нами
Prep.	сло́не	сло́нах

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	осёл	ослы́
Gen.	осла́	осло́в
Dat.	ослу́	осла́м

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Acc.	осла́	осло́в
Instr.	осло́м	осла́ми
Prep.	осле́	ослах

2.6.2 Masculine nouns ending in **-К, -Г, -Х, -Ц, -Ж, -Ч, -Ш, -Щ**: application of the spelling rules given in 1.5.2 and 1.5.4

The application of the spelling rules given in 1.5.2 and 1.5.4 means that the *nominative plural* of masculine nouns ending in **-Г, -К, -Х, -Ж, -Ч, Ш, -Щ** ends in **-и**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
враг 'enemy'	враги́
волк 'wolf'	во́лки
слух 'rumour'	слу́хи
нож 'knife'	ножи́
врач 'doctor'	врачи́
карандаш 'pencil'	карандаши́
плащ 'raincoat'	плащи́

The application of the spelling rules given in 1.5.2 means that the *instrumental singular* of nouns ending in **-Ц, -Ж, -Ч, -Ш, -Щ** is **-ом** only when the ending is *stressed*, otherwise it is **-ем**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Instr. sing.</i>
оте́ц 'father'	отецо́м
нож	ножо́м
врач	врачо́м
карандаш	карандашо́м
плащ	плащо́м
ме́сяц 'month', 'moon'	ме́сяцем
му́ж 'husband'	му́жем
плач 'weeping'	пла́чем
душ 'shower'	ду́шем
това́рищ 'comrade'	това́рищем

Following the same rule the *genitive plural* of masculine nouns ending in **-Ц** ends in **-ов** only when the ending is *stressed*; otherwise the ending is **-ев**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
коне́ц 'end'	конецо́в
пале́ц 'finger'	пале́цев

This rule does not, apply, however to the *genitive plural* of *masculine nouns* ending in **-ж, -ч, -ш, -щ**, this ending is always **-ей** regardless of the stress:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
нож	нож ^{ей}
пляж 'beach'	пляж ^{ей}
врач	врач ^{ей}
карандаш	карандаш ^{ей}
товарищ	товарищ ^{ей}

2.6.3 Masculine nouns ending in **-й**

The endings of masculine nouns ending in **-й** are affected by the spelling rule given in **1.5.1**. In the *instrumental singular* and the *genitive plural* the respective endings **-ём** and **-ёв** occur only when the stress is on the ending; otherwise, the corresponding endings are **-ем** and **-ев**.

The first of the following tables gives an example of an *inanimate* noun with stress not on the ending (**поцелу^й** 'kiss'); the second table gives an example of an *animate* noun with stress not on the ending (**геро^й** 'hero'); the third table gives an example of a noun both with a *fleeting vowel* and with stress on the ending (**руч^{ей}** 'stream').

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	поцелу́й	поцелу́и
Gen.	поцелу́я	поцелу́ев
Dat.	поцелу́ю	поцелу́ям
Acc.	поцелу́й	поцелу́и
Instr.	поцелу́ем	поцелу́ями
Prep.	поцелу́е	поцелу́ях

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	геро́й	геро́и
Gen.	геро́я	геро́ев
Dat.	геро́ю	геро́ям
Acc.	геро́я	геро́ев
Instr.	геро́ем	геро́ями
Prep.	геро́е	геро́ях

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	ручѐй	ручѐи
Gen.	ручѐя	ручѐв
Dat.	ручѐю	ручѐям
Acc.	ручѐй	ручѐи
Instr.	ручѐем	ручѐями
Prep.	ручѐе	ручѐях

NOTE Nouns ending in **-ий** have the ending **-ии** in the *prepositional singular*:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Prep. sing.</i>
ка́льций 'calcium'	ка́льции
ге́ний 'genius'	ге́нии

2.6.4 Masculine nouns ending in **-ь**

The endings of masculine nouns ending in **-ь** are also affected by the spelling rule given in 1.5.1. In the *instrumental singular* the ending **-ём** occurs only when the stress is on the ending; otherwise the corresponding ending is **-ем**.

The *genitive plural* ending for these nouns is **-ей**.

The following tables give examples of:

- (a) an *inanimate* noun which also has stress on the ending (**ру́бль** 'rouble');
- (b) an *animate* noun which also has stress not on the ending (**гос́ть** 'guest');
- (c) a noun with a *fleeting vowel* (**огóнь** 'fire').

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	ру́бль	рубли́
Gen.	рубли́	рубле́й
Dat.	рублю́	рублям
Acc.	ру́бль	рубли́
Instr.	рубле́м	рублями
Prep.	рубле́	рубля́х

NOTE The noun **пу́ть** 'way, track, path' has the irregular form **пути́** in the *genitive*, *dative* and *prepositional singular*.

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	го́сть	го́сти
Gen.	го́стя	го́стей
Dat.	го́стю	го́стям
Acc.	го́стя	го́стей
Instr.	го́стем	го́стями
Prep.	го́сте	го́стях

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	о́гонь	о́гни
Gen.	о́гня	о́гней
Dat.	о́гню	о́гням
Acc.	о́гонь	о́гни
Instr.	о́гнём	о́гнями
Prep.	о́гне	о́гнях



2.7 Non-standard endings for masculine nouns ending in a consonant, **-Й** or **-Ь**

2.7.1 The second genitive in **-у/-ю**

Some nouns belonging to the classes described in 2.6 have a second form of the *genitive singular* ending in **-у/-ю**. This second form of the genitive singular can serve two functions.

With nouns denoting uncountable substances, the *second genitive* has a *partitive* function and is used in a range of quantity expressions. In practice, this *partitive genitive* tends to be used only with a small number of nouns indicating substances in common use, and in most instances it is an optional alternative to the normal genitive singular ending in **-а/-я**:

Дай мне, пожалуйста, ча́шку чаю́ (ча́я).

Would you mind giving me a cup of tea.

К сожалéнию у меня́ нет са́хару (са́хара).

Unfortunately, I haven't got any sugar.

Чай о́чень крéпкий, подлей в чайник кипятку́ (кипятка́).

This tea is very strong; pour some boiling water into the teapot.

Мо́жет, к ко́фе выпьем по рю́мке коньяку́ (коньяка́)?

How about having a glass of brandy with our coffee?

For the use of the preposition **по** in constructions indicating '(so many), each', see 19.1.4.

The use of the partitive genitive is obligatory in the common set phrases **мно́го наро́ду** 'a lot of people', and **ма́ло наро́ду** 'not many people', used in the context of whether a location is crowded or not:

Когда они пришли в кафе, там уже было много народу, и они с трудом нашли свободный столик.

When they arrived at the café, there were already a lot of people there [*or* it was already very busy], and they had some difficulty finding a free table.

В прошлом году мы отдыхали на севере Англии: там мало народу и цены не слишком высокие.

Last year we went on holiday to the North of England: there are not many people there [*or* it's quiet] and the prices are reasonable.

For more on the use of the genitive in quantity expressions, *see* 3.3.2.

The other use of the *second genitive* in **-y** is in various set expressions, for the most part in constructions involving a *negative* or after certain *prepositions*. Perhaps the most useful of these is the phrase **ни разу** 'not (even) once' (*see also* 15.3.4); with others it is probably more important to recognise them than to be able to use them:

Я ни разу не сталкивался с этой проблемой.

Not once have I encountered this problem.

С тех пор, как он уехал за границу, от него ни слуху ни духу.

Since he went abroad we haven't heard a thing from him.

Он рассказа́л нам такой смешной анекдо́т, что мы чуть не у́мерли со́ смеху́.

He told us such a funny joke that we almost died of laughter.

For more on negative constructions using **ни**, see 15.3.4.

For more on the preposition **с/со** used to indicate cause, see 21.4.4.

2.7.2 The second prepositional in **-ý/-ю́**

Some nouns belonging to the classes described in 2.6 have a second form of the *prepositional singular* ending in **-ý/-ю́**. This form is used only after the prepositions **в/во** ‘in, at’, and **на** ‘on, at’, when these are used to indicate location; after other prepositions (such as **о(б)** ‘about, concerning’) the normal prepositional form is used. This form is found mainly (though not exclusively) with monosyllabic nouns, and when it occurs, this ending is always stressed and its use is obligatory.

For more on the use of prepositions with the prepositional case, see 9.2.6.

For more on the use of the prepositions **в/во** and **на** to indicate location, see sections 21.2.1–21.2.10.

Examples of nouns that have a *second prepositional* form include the following:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Normal prep. sing.</i>	<i>Second prep. sing.</i>
аэропóрт	airport	об аэропóрте	в аэропортý
бал	ball, dance	о балé	на балý
бéрег	shore	о бéреге	на берегý
бой	battle	о боé	в бою́
глаз	eye	о глазе́	в глазу́
год	year	о годе́	в году́
лес	wood, forest	о лесе́	в лесу́
лёд	ice	о льде́	на льду́
мех	fur	о мехе́	в/на меху́
нос	nose	о носе́	в/на носу́
плен	captivity	о плéне	в плену́
пол	floor	о по́ле	на полу́
порт	port	о порте́	в порту́
рай	paradise	о раé	в раю́
рот	mouth	о рте́	во рту́
угол	corner	об углé	в/на углу́
шкаф	cupboard	о шка́фе	в шкафу́

2.7.3 The nominative plural in **-а́/-я́**

Some nouns belonging to the classes described in 2.6 have a *nominative plural* that ends in **-а́/-я́**. This ending is always stressed, and nouns that take this ending have the stress on the ending in all forms of the plural.

This ending is particularly likely to be found with nouns denoting objects that usually come in pairs:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
бе́рег 'shore', 'bank' (of a river)	берега́
бок 'side'	бока́
глаз 'eye'	глаза́
рог 'horn'	рога́
рукав 'sleeve'	рукава́

Other nouns that take this ending include the following:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
а́дрес 'address'	адреса́
век 'century'	века́
вече́р 'evening'	вечера́
го́лос 'voice'	голоса́
го́род 'town', 'city'	города́
ди́ректор 'boss', 'director'	директора́
до́ктор 'doctor'	доктора́
дом 'house', 'block of flats'	дома́
ко́локол 'bell'	колокола́
край 'edge'	края́
но́мер 'number', 'hotel room'	номера́
о́круг 'district'	округа́
о́стров 'island'	острова́
парус 'sail'	паруса́
па́спорт 'passport'	паспорта́
повар 'cook'	повара́
поезд 'train'	поезда́
про́фессор 'professor'	профессора́
со́рт 'sort, 'type'	сорта́
то́м 'volume'	тома́

Some nouns have alternative endings in **-ы (-и)** and **-а́ (-я́)**. Where this occurs, the latter ending tends to be more characteristic of informal language:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
бухга́лтер 'accountant'	бухга́лтеры or бухгалтера́
до́говор 'contract', 'treaty'	догово́ры or догово́ра
тра́ктор 'tractor'	тра́кторы or трактора́

A number of nouns have endings in **-ы (-и)** and **-а́ (-я́)** which are not

interchangeable, but which are selected according to the precise meaning of the word concerned:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Nom. pl. in ы (-и)</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Nom. pl. in а (-я)</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
о́браз	image; icon	о́бразы	images	образа́	icons
про́пуск	omission; pass	про́пуски	omissions	пропуска́	passes (documents)

The following may also be noted:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
цвет 'colour'	цвета́
цвето́к 'flower'	цветы́
счё́т 'account', 'score'	счета́, but also счёты (no sing.) 'abacus'
прово́д 'wire'	прово́да, but also прово́ды (no sing.) 'farewell party'

NOTE It is often difficult to predict which nouns will have a *nominative plural* in **-а́/-я́**, but a useful hint is that a noun of more than one syllable, which has stress on the final syllable in the *nominative singular*, will normally not have this ending. The only exception in common use is **рукав** 'sleeve' (see above).

2.7.4 The 'zero ending' in the genitive plural

Some nouns belonging to the classes described in 2.6 have a so-called *zero ending* in the *genitive plural*; this means that the *genitive plural* is identical to the *nominative singular*. This ending is found with the following:

(1) Many nouns denoting weights, measures and other units, as well as some other words that occur mainly after numerals:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
ва́тт 'watt'	ва́тты	ва́тт
ге́рц 'hertz'	ге́рцы	ге́рц
ра́з 'time', 'occasion'	ра́зы	ра́з

NOTES

- (i) The nouns **грамм** 'gram', **килограмм** 'kilogram' have alternative forms **грамм, килограмм** and **граммов, килограммов**. The latter sometimes occur in formal contexts, but are rarely used in ordinary speech.
- (ii) The nouns **байт** 'byte', **килобайт** 'kilobyte' have alternative forms **байт, килобайт** and **байтов, килобайтов**. The former are particularly likely to be used after a numeral.

For the use of the genitive plural after certain numerals, see 8.2.3 and 8.2.4.

(2) Some nouns indicating nationalities and ethnic groups:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
башки́р 'Bashkir'	башки́ры	башки́р
грузи́н 'Georgian'	грузи́ны	грузи́н
ту́рок 'Turk'	ту́рки	ту́рок

The noun **цыга́н** 'gypsy', has an irregular nominative plural **цыга́не**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
цыга́н	цыга́не	цыга́н

For the use of small letters with nouns indicating nationalities and ethnic groups, see 1.5.7.

(3) Some nouns indicating military terms:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
партиза́н 'partisan'	партиза́ны	партиза́н
солда́т 'soldier'	солда́ты	солда́т

(4) Some nouns denoting objects that tend to come in pairs:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
боти́нок 'shoe'	боти́нки	боти́нок
глаз 'eye'	глаза́	глаз
сапо́г '(high) boot'	сапоги́	сапо́г
чуло́к 'stocking'	чулки́	чуло́к

NOTES

(i) For nouns in groups (2) and (3) the *genitive plural* with a *zero ending* is more likely to be used with nouns, which in the nominative singular, end in **-и**, **-ор** or **-т**.

(ii) Some nouns denoting the names of fruit have alternative forms in **-ов** and with a zero ending. Examples include: **помидо́р** 'tomato' (**помидо́ров** and **помидо́р**) and **баклажа́н** 'aubergine', 'egg-plant' (**баклажа́нов** and **баклажа́н**).

(iii) The noun **во́лос** 'hair' has a zero ending in the genitive plural, but with a different stress: **воло́с**.

2.8 Neuter nouns ending in **-о**, **-е**, **-ё**, **-мя**

2.8.1 Nouns ending in **-о**:

The first table gives an example of the standard declension pattern (**ме́сто** 'place'); the second table gives an example of a noun with a *fleeting vowel* (**письмо́** 'letter');

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	ме́сто	ме́ста
Gen.	ме́ста	мест
Dat.	ме́сту	ме́стам
Acc.	ме́сто	ме́ста
Instr.	ме́стом	ме́стами
Prep.	ме́сте	ме́стах

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	пи́сьмо	пи́сьма
Gen.	пи́сьма	пи́сем
Dat.	пи́сьму	пи́сьмам
Acc.	пи́сьмо	пи́сьма
Instr.	пи́сьмом	пи́сьмами
Prep.	пи́сьме	пи́сьмах



2.8.2 Nouns ending in -e

The following tables give examples of:

- (a) the standard declension pattern (кладби́ще ‘cemetery’);
- (b) a noun ending in -e with a *fleeting vowel* (се́рдце ‘heart’);
- (c) a noun ending in -ье (ущё́лье ‘ravine’, ‘gorge’)
- (d) a noun ending in -ние (здáние ‘building’).

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	кладби́ще	кладби́ща
Gen.	кладби́ща	кладби́щ
Dat.	кладби́щу	кладби́щам
Acc.	кладби́ще	кладби́ща
Instr.	кладби́щем	кладби́щами
Prep.	кладби́ще	кладби́щах

NOTE The nouns *мо́ре* ‘sea’ and *по́ле* ‘field’ have the *nominative plural* ending -я and the *genitive plural* ending -ей:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
мо́ре	моря́	морей
по́ле	поля́	полей

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	се́рдце	се́рдца́
Gen.	се́рдца	се́рдцец
Dat.	се́рдиу	се́рдца́м
Acc.	се́рдце	се́рдца
Instr.	се́рдцем	се́рдца́ми
Prep.	се́рдце	се́рдца́х

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	уше́лье	уше́лья
Gen.	уше́лья	уше́лий
Dat.	уше́лью	уше́льям
Acc.	уше́лье	уше́лья
Instr.	уше́льем	уше́льями
Prep.	уше́лье	уше́льях

NOTE Nouns ending in **-ье** have the *fleeting vowel -и* in the *genitive plural*.

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	зда́ние	зда́ния
Gen.	зда́ния	зда́ний
Dat.	зда́нию	зда́ниям
Acc.	зда́ние	зда́ния
Instr.	зда́нием	зда́ниями
Prep.	зда́нии	зда́ниях

NOTE The *prepositional singular* of these nouns ends in **-ии**; the *genitive plural* ends in **-ий**.

2.8.3 Nouns ending in -ё

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	копье́	копья́
Gen.	копья́	копий
Dat.	копью́	копья́м
Acc.	копье́	копья́
Instr.	копье́м	копья́ми
Prep.	копье́	копья́х

NOUN The noun **ружьё́** 'gun' has the *genitive plural* **ружей**. Almost all other nouns ending in **-ё** occur in the singular only.

2.8.4 Nouns ending in -МЯ

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	и́мя	име́на
Gen.	и́мени	имён
Dat.	и́мени	име́нам
Acc.	и́мя	име́на
Instr.	и́менем	име́нами
Prep.	и́мени	име́нах

2.8.5 Non-standard endings for nouns ending in -o or -e: nominative plural in -И

Almost all nouns (except surnames) ending in **-ко** have a *nominative plural* ending in **-ки**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
вѣко 'eyelid'	вѣки
очко 'point (in a game)'	очки
яблоко 'apple'	яблоки

NOTES

(i) There is one exception to the above rule:

Nom. sing. **о́блако** 'cloud' Nom. pl. **облака́**

(ii) The noun **очки́** (in the plural only) has the additional meaning of 'spectacles'.

For surnames ending in **-ко**, see 2.13.1.

Two further nouns, both denoting parts of the body, have a *nominative plural* ending in **-и**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
ко́лено 'knee'	ко́лени
плечо́ 'shoulder'	плéчи

For examples where a *nominative plural* in **-и** is combined with other non-standard endings, see 2.11.6.

2.8.6 Non-standard endings for nouns ending in -o or -e: genitive plural ending in **-ов** or **-ев**

Some nouns ending in **-ко** have a *genitive plural* ending in **-ков**; examples include:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
о́чко	о́чков
о́блако	о́блаков

Some nouns ending in **-ье** have a *genitive plural* ending in **-ьев**; the only example in common use is:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
платье́ 'dress'	платье́в

2.9 Nouns, mostly feminine, ending in -a or -я

2.9.1 Nouns ending in -a

The following tables give examples of:

(a) an inanimate noun (**берёза** 'birch');

(b) an animate noun (**коро́ва** 'cow');

(c) a noun with a *fleeting vowel* (**сестра́** 'sister').

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	берёза	берёзы
Gen.	берёзы	берёз

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Dat.	берёзе	берёзам
Acc.	берёзу	берёзы
Instr.	берёзой	берёзами
Prep.	берёзе	берёзах

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	коро́ва	коро́вы
Gen.	коро́вы	коро́в
Dat.	коро́ве	коро́вам
Acc.	коро́ву	коро́в
Instr.	коро́вой	коро́вами
Prep.	коро́ве	коро́вах

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	сестра́	се́стры
Gen.	сестры́	сестёр
Dat.	сестре́	се́страм
Acc.	сестру́	сестёр
Instr.	сестрой́	се́страми
Prep.	сестре́	се́страх

2.9.2 Application of the spelling rules given in 1.5.2 and 1.5.4

Application of the spelling rules given in **1.5.2** and **1.5.4** means that nouns ending in **-га, -ка, -ха, -жа, -ча, -ша,** or **ща** have the *genitive singular* and the *nominative plural* ending in **-и**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
кни́га 'book'	кни́ги	кни́ги
рука́ 'arm', 'hand'	руки́	ру́ки
му́ха 'fly'	му́хи	му́хи
кра́жа 'theft'	кражи́	кра́жи
дача́ 'dacha'	дачи́	да́чи
юно́ша 'youth', 'young man'	юноши́	юно́ши
те́ща 'mother-in-law' (wife's mother)	те́щи	те́щи

Application of the spelling rule given in **1.5.2** means that nouns ending in **-жа, -ца, -ча, -ша** or **-ща** and having the stress not on the ending, have an *instrumental*

singular ending in -ей:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Instr. sing.</i>
са́жа 'soot'	са́жей
яи́чница 'fried eggs'	яи́чницей
да́ча 'dacha'	да́чей
юно́ша 'youth', 'young man'	юно́шей
те́ща 'mother-in-law' (wife's mother)	те́щей

2.9.3 Nouns ending in **-Я**

The following tables give examples of:

(a) an inanimate noun (**неде́ля**, ‘week’);

(b) an animate noun (**ня́ня**, ‘nanny’);

(c) a noun with a fleeting vowel (**земля́**, ‘land’, ‘earth’).

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	неде́ля	неде́ли
Gen.	неде́ли	неде́ль
Dat.	неде́ле	неде́лям
Acc.	неде́лю	неде́ли
Inst.	неде́лей	неде́лями
Prep.	неде́ле	неде́лях

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	ня́ня	ня́ни
Gen.	ня́ни	ня́нь
Dat.	ня́не	ня́ням
Acc.	ня́ню	ня́нь
Inst.	ня́ней	ня́нями
Prep.	ня́не	ня́нях

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	земля́	зе́мли
Gen.	земли́	земéль
Dat.	земле́	зе́млям
Acc.	зе́млю	зе́мли
Inst.	земле́й	зе́млями
Prep.	земле́	зе́млях

NOTES

(i) As is shown in the above tables, the ending in the *instrumental singular* is **-ей** when the stress is on the ending; otherwise it is **-ей**.

(ii) Nouns ending in **-ня** have the ending **-ни** in the *dative* and *prepositional*

singular:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Dat. sing.</i>	<i>Prep. sing.</i>
<u>А́нглия</u> 'England'	А́нглии	А́нглии

(iii) Nouns in which the final **-я** follows a vowel have a *genitive plural* ending in **-ий**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
<u>ста́я</u> 'flock' (of birds)	ста́й
<u>ли́ния</u> 'line'	ли́ний

(iv) Most nouns ending in **-ья** have a *genitive plural* ending in **-ей**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
<u>ста́тья</u> 'article'	ста́тей
<u>су́дья</u> 'judge', 'referee'	су́дей

2.9.4 Non-standard endings with nouns ending in -а or -я

Some nouns ending in **-ча**, **-ша** or **-я** have a *genitive plural* ending in **-ей**. This ending is particularly likely to occur with nouns that are (or can be) *masculine*:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
ле́вша 'left-hander'	ле́вше́й
ю́ноша 'youth', 'young man'	ю́ноше́й
дядя́ 'uncle'	дяде́й

Examples of *feminine* nouns with this ending include the following (in some instances the ending in **-ей** is optional):

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
до́ля 'share'	доле́й
ноздря́ 'nostril'	ноздре́й
просто́вня 'sheet'	просто́вней/просто́внѣ
свеча́ 'candle'	свече́й
тётя́ 'aunt'	тёте́й/тётѣ

Most nouns ending in **-ня**, and having a fleeting vowel in the genitive plural, have a genitive plural ending in **-н**:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
ба́сня 'fable'	ба́сен
пе́сня 'song'	пе́сен

Exceptions are:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
дерёвня́ 'village', 'countryside'	дереве́нь
ку́хня 'kitchen'	кухонь

2.10 Feminine nouns ending in -ь

2.10.1 Standard endings

The following tables give an example of:

(a) an inanimate noun (**ро́ль** ‘role’, ‘part’);

(b) an animate noun (**свекро́вь** ‘mother-in-law’ (husband’s mother)).

For examples with a ‘fleeting vowel’, *see* **2.5.3**.

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	ро́ль	ро́ли
Gen.	ро́ли	роле́й
Dat.	ро́ли	роля́м
Acc.	ро́ль	ро́ли
Instr.	ро́лью	роля́ми
Prep.	ро́ли	роля́х

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	свекро́вь	свекро́ви
Gen.	свекро́ви	свекро́вей
Dat.	свекро́ви	свекро́вям
Acc.	свекро́вь	свекро́вей
Instr.	свекро́вью	свекро́вьями
Prep.	свекро́ви	свекро́вях

2.10.2 Application of the spelling rule given in 1.5.2

Nouns ending in **-жь, -чь, -шь** or **-щъ** have the endings **-ам, -ами, -ах** in the *dative*, *instrumental* and *prepositional* plural respectively:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Dat. pl.</i>	<i>Instr. pl.</i>	<i>Prep. pl.</i>
но́чь 'night'	ноча́м	ноча́ми	ноча́х
мышь 'mouse'	мыша́м	мыша́ми	мыша́х
вещь 'thing'	веща́м	веща́ми	веща́х

2.10.3 Non-standard endings: **МАТЬ, ДОЧЬ**

The nouns **ма́ть** 'mother' and **до́чь** 'daughter' insert **-еп-** before all endings except the *nominative* and *accusative singular*:

	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
Nom.	ма́ть	до́чь	ма́тери	до́чери
Gen.	ма́тери	до́чери	матере́й	дочере́й
Dat.	ма́тери	до́чери	матеря́м	дочеря́м
Acc.	ма́ть	до́чь	матере́й	дочере́й
Instr.	ма́терью	до́черью	матеря́ми	дочеря́ми <i>or</i> дочере́ями
Prep.	ма́тери	до́чери	матеря́х	дочеря́х

2.10.4 Non-standard endings: instrumental plural in **-ЬМИ**

The nouns **дверь** 'door', **дочь** 'daughter' and **лошадь** 'horse' have alternative endings for the *instrumental plural* in **-ЬМИ** and **-ЯМИ**:

дверьми́/дверя́ми **дочерьми́/дочеря́ми** **лошадьми́/лошадя́ми**

2.11 Non-standard declension types

2.11.0 Introduction

There are a number of *non-standard declension types*. These are generally characterised by the presence in the *plural* of a set of endings that cannot be predicted from the *nominative singular*.

2.11.1 Nouns ending in a consonant and having a nominative plural in **-ья**

A number of masculine nouns ending in a consonant have a *nominative plural* ending in **-ья**. These decline according to the following patterns. It will be noticed that the ending in the *genitive plural* depends on the stress: when the stress is on the ending, it is **-ей** (with no soft sign!), otherwise it is **-ьев**. The tables give examples of:

(a) *animate* nouns (**муж** ‘husband’, **брат** ‘brother’);

(b) an *inanimate* noun (**стул**, ‘chair’).

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	муж	му ^ж ья́	бра ^т	бра ^т ья́
Gen.	му ^ж а	му ^ж ей	бра ^т а	бра ^т ьев
Dat.	му ^ж у	му ^ж ья́м	бра ^т у	бра ^т ья́м
Acc.	му ^ж а	му ^ж ей	бра ^т а	бра ^т ьев
Instr.	му ^ж ем	му ^ж ья́ми	бра ^т ом	бра ^т ья́ми
Prep.	му ^ж е	му ^ж ья́х	бра ^т е	бра ^т ья́х

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	сту ^л	сту ^л ья́
Gen.	сту ^л а	сту ^л ьев
Dat.	сту ^л у	сту ^л ья́м
Acc.	сту ^л	сту ^л ья́
Instr.	сту ^л ом	сту ^л ья́ми
Prep.	сту ^л е	сту ^л ья́х

There are no inanimate nouns with a genitive plural ending in **-ей**.

In some instances nouns belonging to this group have an additional complication, involving either a *change of consonant* or the insertion of an *extra syllable* in all

endings of the *plural*:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
к ^л о ^к 'shred', 'patch'	к ^л о ^ч ья	к ^л о ^ч ьев
д ^р у ^г 'friend'	д ^р у ^з ья	д ^р у ^з ей
с ^ы н 'son'	с ^ы но ^в ья	с ^ы но ^в ей

Some nouns have two different plural forms with different meanings:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Nom. pl. in ы (-и)</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Nom. pl. in -ья</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
зуб	tooth; cog	зубы	teeth	зубья	cogs
корень	root	корни	roots (general)	коренья	roots (used in cooking or traditional medicine)
лист	leaf; sheet of paper	листы	sheets of paper	листья	leaves
повод	cause; rein	поводы	causes	поводья	reins

2.11.2 Nouns ending in -o and having a nominative plural in -ья

Some neuter nouns ending in **-o** have a *nominative plural* in **-ья**. These decline according to the following pattern:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	дерево 'tree'	деревья
Gen.	деревя	деревьев
Dat.	дереву	деревьям
Acc.	дерево	деревья
Instr.	деревом	деревьями
Prep.	дереве	деревьях

Other examples include:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
крыло 'wing'	крылья
перо 'feather'	перья

2.11.3 Masculine nouns in -анин (-янин)

Masculine nouns ending in **-анин** or **-янин**, many of which denote the inhabitants of certain cities or countries, or the members of certain religions or social classes, lose the **-ин-** in the *plural* and have non-standard endings in the *nominative* and *genitive plural*:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	англича́нин 'Englishman'	англича́не
Gen.	англича́нина	англича́н
Dat.	англича́нину	англича́нам
Acc.	англича́нина	англича́н
Inst.	англича́нином	англича́нами
Prep.	англича́нине	англича́нах

For the use of small letters with nouns indicating the inhabitants of cities and countries, *see* 1.5.7.

For more examples of nouns belonging to this declension type, *see* 10.1.8.

2.11.4 Masculine nouns in **-ёнок (-онок)**

Masculine nouns ending in **-ёнок (-онок)** decline according to the following pattern. Almost all of these nouns in common use denote the young of animals.

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	котёнок 'kitten'	котя́та
Gen.	котёнка	ко́тят
Dat.	котёнку	ко́тятам
Acc.	котёнка	ко́тят
Instr.	котёнком	ко́тятми
Prep.	котёнке	ко́тятах

NOTES:

- (i) The spelling **-онок** occurs after the consonants **-ж**, **-ч** and **-ш**. In accordance with the spelling rule given in 1.5.2 the plural forms are spelled **-ята**, etc.:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
медвежо́нок 'bear-cub'	медвежа́та	медвежа́т

- (ii) The noun **шенок** 'puppy' has alternative forms in the plural:

<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>	<i>Dat. pl.</i>
шени́/шени́та	шени́ков/шени́т	шени́кам/шени́там

For **ребёнок** and **ребята**, which form a special case, *see* 2.11.7.

2.11.5 Other non-standard masculine nouns

The nouns **чёрт** 'devil' and **сосед** 'neighbour', 'room-mate' decline as follows:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	чёрт	чёрти	сосед	соседи
Gen.	чёрта	чёртей	соседа	соседей
Dat.	чёрту	чёртям	соседу	соседям
Acc.	чёрта	чёртей	соседа	соседей
Instr.	чёртом	чёртями	соседом	соседями
Prep.	чёрте	чёртях	соседе	соседях

The nouns **хозяин** ‘master’, ‘owner’ and **господин** ‘gentleman’, ‘Mr’ decline as follows:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	хозяин	хозяева	господин	господа
Gen.	хозяина	хозяев	господина	господ

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Dat.	хозя́ину	хозя́евам	госпо́дину	господа́м
Acc.	хозя́ина	хозя́ев	госпо́дина	госпо́д
Instr.	хозя́ином	хозя́евами	госпо́дином	господа́ми
Prep.	хозя́ине	хозя́евах	госпо́дине	господа́х

For the use of **госпо́дин** and **господа́** in forms of address, see 13.4.3 and 13.5.2.

2.11.6 Other non-standard neuter nouns

The nouns **у́хо** ‘ear’ and **о́ко** ‘eye’ have a change of consonant in the *plural* as well as non-standard endings in the *nominative* and *genitive plural*:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	у́хо	у́ши	о́ко	о́чи
Gen.	у́ха	уше́й	о́ка	оче́й
Dat.	у́ху	уша́м	о́ку	о́ча́м
Acc.	у́хо	у́ши	о́ко	о́чи
Instr.	у́хом	уша́ми	о́ком	о́ча́ми
Prep.	у́хе	уша́х	о́ке	о́ча́х

NOTE The normal word for ‘eye’ is **глаз**; **о́ко** is mostly used in poetic and high-flown language; it is found, for example, in the title of the well-known song «Очи чёрные» ‘Black eyes’.

The noun **су́дно** ‘vessel’, ‘ship’ declines as follows:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	су́дно	суда́
Gen.	судна́	судо́в
Dat.	судну́	суда́м
Acc.	су́дно	суда́
Instr.	су́дном	суда́ми
Prep.	судне́	суда́х

The nouns **не́бо** ‘sky’, ‘heaven’ and **чу́до** ‘miracle’ insert **-ec-** before the endings in the *plural*:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	не́бо	небе́са
Gen.	неба́	небе́с
Dat.	небу́	небеса́м
Acc.	небо́	небеса́
Instr.	небо́м	небеса́ми
Prep.	небе́	небеса́х

2.11.7 Nouns where the singular and plural forms are totally different

The noun **челове́к** ‘man’, ‘person’, has no plural forms of its own. Instead, **люди́** (which in turn has no corresponding singular form) is used:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	челове́к	люди́
Gen.	челове́ка	люде́й
Dat.	челове́ку	людя́м
Acc.	челове́ка	люде́й
Instr.	челове́ком	людьми́
Prep.	челове́ке	людя́х

For the use of **челове́к** as a special *genitive plural* form after certain numerals, see **8.2.3**.

The position with **ребёнок** ‘child’ is a little more complicated. An associated plural form **ребя́та** does exist, but this normally has the meaning of ‘lads’, ‘guys’ and is a sort of collective noun used to refer to groups of young men or mixed groups of young people. Instead, to indicate the plural ‘children’ the unrelated form **дети́** is used. The declension of **ребёнок** and **ребя́та** follows the pattern given in **2.11.4**; **дети́** declines as follows:

Nom.	дети́
Gen.	детей́
Dat.	детя́м
Acc.	детей́
Instr.	детьми́
Prep.	детя́х

2.11.8 The declension of nouns that exist in only the plural

It will be noted from the tables of declensions given in the preceding sections that with a minute handful of exceptions, such as the instrumental forms **людьми́**, **детьми́**, the endings for the *dative*, *instrumental* and *prepositional plural* all follow the regular patterns **-ам**, **-ами**, **-ах** or **-ям**, **-ями**, **-ях**, with the choice between **-а-** and **-я-** being determined by the spelling rules given in **1.2.4** and **1.5.2**. Therefore, with nouns that exist in only the plural, the sole form that is not immediately unpredictable from the *nominative* is the *genitive*. Below we give the

genitive and *dative* forms of the nouns listed above in 2.1.3:

<i>Nom.</i>	<i>Gen.</i>	<i>Dat.</i>
брюки 'trousers'	брюк	брюкам
штаны́ 'trousers'	штанов	штанам
трусы́ '(under)pants', 'knickers'	трусóв	трусáм
шóрты 'shorts'	шóрт/шóрто́в	шóртам
плавки́ 'swimming trunks'	плавóк	плавкáм
колгóтки 'tights'	колгóток	колгóткам
но́жницы 'scissors'	но́жниц	но́жницам
щипцы́ 'tongs', 'pincers', 'tweezers'	щипцо́в	щипца́м
дрова́ 'firewood'	дров	дрова́м

<i>Nom.</i>	<i>Gen.</i>	<i>Dat.</i>
дро́жки 'yeast'	дро́жжей	дро́жжам
обо́и 'wallpaper'	обо́ев	обо́ям
поминки́ 'wake'	поми́нок	поми́нкам
са́ни 'sledge'	са́ней	са́ням
сли́вки 'cream'	сли́вок	сли́вкам
су́тки 'day', 'period of 24 hours'	су́ток	су́ткам
счёты́ 'abacus'	счётов	счётам
черни́ла 'ink'	черни́л	черни́лам
щи́ 'type of cabbage soup'	щи́	щи́ам

2.12 Declension of surnames

2.12.1 Russian surnames ending in **-ОВ, -ЕВ, -ЁВ, -ИН, -ЫН**

The most widely occurring endings for Russian surnames are **-ов, -ев, -ёв, -ин, -ын**,—for example,

Петро́в, Бре́жнев, Горбачёв, Пу́шкин, Солжени́цын. These surnames, which have *masculine, feminine* and *plural* forms, have a special declension pattern that combines a mixture of *noun* and *adjective* endings.

Information on the declension of adjectives is given in **Chapter 6**.

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	Петро́в	Петро́ва	Петро́вы
Gen.	Петро́ва	Петро́вой	Петро́вых
Dat.	Петро́ву	Петро́вой	Петро́вым
Acc.	Петро́ва	Петро́ву	Петро́вых
Instr.	Петро́вым	Петро́вой	Петро́выми
Prep.	Петро́ве	Петро́вой	Петро́вых

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	Пу́шкин	Пу́шкина	Пу́шкины
Gen.	Пу́шкина	Пу́шкиной	Пу́шкиных
Dat.	Пу́шкину	Пу́шкиной	Пу́шкиным
Acc.	Пу́шкина	Пу́шкину	Пу́шкиных
Instr.	Пу́шкиным	Пу́шкиной	Пу́шкиными
Prep.	Пу́шкине	Пу́шкиной	Пу́шкиных

NOTE: Place names ending in **-ов, -ев, -ёв, -ин, -ын** decline like ordinary

masculine nouns ending in a consonant:

У него́ дáча гдé-то под Пу́шкином.

He has a dacha somewhere near (the town of) Pushkin.



2.12.2 Other surnames ending in a consonant or **-Ь**

Other surnames ending in a consonant or in **-Ь** (including foreign surnames that happen to end in **-ОВ, -ЕВ** or **-ИН**) decline in the *masculine* and in the *plural* like other masculine nouns ending in a consonant or in **-Ь**. The *feminine* form, which in the nominative is identical to the masculine, is always *indeclinable*.

For more on indeclinable nouns, *see* **2.13**.

2.13 Indeclinable nouns

2.13.1 Which nouns are indeclinable?

Russian has a fairly large number of *indeclinable* nouns, that is, nouns that have the same ending for all cases and (where relevant) in both singular and plural. For the most part it is relatively simple to predict which nouns do not decline; specifically, nouns belonging to the following categories are indeclinable:

(i) All nouns which in the *nominative singular* end in **-И, -У, -Ю, -Э** or **-Ы**:

такси́ 'taxi'
меню́ 'menu'

кенгуру́ 'kangaroo'
каное́ 'canoe'

In practice, there are no nouns in common use that have a nominative singular ending in **-Ы**.

(ii) *All feminine* nouns ending in a *consonant*:

мада́м 'madam(e)'
ми́ссис 'Mrs'

ми́сс 'miss'

By far the largest group of nouns belonging to this category is made up of women's forenames and surnames.

Forenames (mostly of foreign origin):

Ма́ргарет 'Margaret'

Эли́забет 'Elizabeth'

Surnames (of any origin):

Кли́нтон 'Clinton'
Абрамо́вич 'Abramovich'

Тэ́тчер 'Thatcher'
Жу́к 'Zhuk'

(iii) Borrowed or newly coined words ending in **-o** or **-e**:

депо́ 'depôt'
кино́ 'cinema'
пальто́ (cf. French *paletot*)
'overcoat'
ко́фе 'coffee'

кило́ 'kilo(gram)'
метро́ 'metro', 'underground railway'
кафе́ 'café'
купе́ 'compartment' (in a railway carriage)

Surnames (of whatever origin) ending in **-o** or **-e** also belong to this category:

Кличко́ 'Klichko'
Гюго́ '(Victor) Hugo'
Гёте́ 'Goethe'

Ю́щенко 'Yushchenko' (Yushchenko)
Пира́нделло́ 'Pirandello'
Витте́ 'Witte'



(iv) Some borrowed nouns and foreign surnames ending in **-a**. There is no hard-and-fast rule about this, but nouns are more likely not to be declined if the final **-a** is preceded by a vowel or if the word is borrowed from a French word with a silent final consonant:

боа́ 'boa' буржуа́ 'bourgeois'
Дюма́ 'Dumas'

(v) Words ending in a consonant and occurring only in the plural:

коммáндос 'commandos' прáймериз 'primaries' (in an election campaign)
«Битлз» 'The Beatles'

(vi) Surnames ending in **-ых** or **-их** and looking like the genitive plural forms of adjectives:

Седых́
Козловских́

The declension of adjectives is described in **Chapter 6**.

NOTE Place names ending in **-ино, -ово/-ево** can decline like other neuter nouns ending in **-о**, but there is a tendency to make these nouns indeclinable.

2.13.2 The gender of indeclinable nouns

Special rules exist for determining the gender of *indeclinable* nouns. If an indeclinable noun denotes a person or an animal, it will normally be *masculine*, although if it explicitly denotes a woman or a female animal it will be *feminine*. All other indeclinable nouns are *neuter*.

There are, however, some exceptions to this rule. The noun **кофе́** 'coffee' is according to all dictionaries and reference books masculine, but in informal speech it will sometimes be neuter. Conversely, some other nouns denoting drinks, such as **виски́** 'whisk(e)y' or **пéпси** 'Pepsi', are normally listed as neuter, but in informal speech can be masculine. The noun **éвро** 'euro' (the currency unit), can be either masculine or neuter, although the former is more common.

NOTE Although it is a form that is frequently encountered, many speakers of

Russian consider treating кофе as a neuter noun to be unacceptable. In cases of doubt it is probably safer for learners to follow the recommendations of dictionaries and other reference works.

2.14 Abbreviations and acronyms

2.14.1 Declension of abbreviations and acronyms

Modern Russian, both spoken and written, contains a large number of *abbreviations* and *acronyms*. Frequently encountered examples include the following:

КВН (Клуб весёлых и находчивых)

A Club for the Merry and the Resourceful (a popular and long-running television programme)

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МВД (Министёрство внутренних дел)

Ministry of the Interior

МГУ (Моско́вский госуда́рственный университе́т)

Moscow State University

МЧС (Министёрство по чрезвычайным ситуа́циям)

Ministry for Emergencies

НАТО

NATO

РФ (Росси́йская Федера́ция)

The Russian Federation

СНГ (Содру́жество незави́симых госуда́рств)

CIS (The Commonwealth of Independent States)

США (Соединённые Шта́ты Аме́рики)

USA

чп (чрезвычайное происше́ствие)

emergency

In general, abbreviations and acronyms are indeclinable. If, however, an acronym takes the form of a masculine noun ending in a consonant, it can be declined like other masculine nouns ending in a consonant. Whether these forms are declined is largely a matter of custom and practice and even personal preference, but they are more likely to be declined in informal language. Examples include:

ГУМ (Госуда́рственный универса́льный магази́н)

GUM (a large department store, now more a collection of independent trading outlets, located in the centre of Moscow)

МИД (Министёрство инострáнных дел)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

В ГУМе открылся бутик «Iceberg».

Iceberg have opened a boutique in GUM.

Профессиональный уровень переводчиков МИДа исключительно высок.

The level of professionalism of the translators who work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is exceptionally high.

Those acronyms that are no longer perceived as such and which are (or can be) written with small letters tend to be declined as a matter of course:

ВУЗ/вуз (высшее учебное заведение)

higher education institution, university

ЖЭК/жэк (жилищно-эксплуатацио́нная ко́нтора)

district housing office

ЗАГС/загс (за́пись а́ктов гражда́нского состоя́ния)

Register Office

С начала́ но́вого учебно́го го́да повыша́ются стипенди́и во всех ву́зах Росси́и.

Student grants in all Russian universities are being increased from the start of the coming academic year.



Через па́ру ме́сяцев яви́лись из ЖЭКа и сказа́ли, что за́втра начну́т ремо́нт.

A few months later someone came round from the housing office and said that the repairs would begin the next day.

Церемо́ния регистра́ции бра́ка в ЗАГСе незате́йлива и коротка́.

The wedding ceremony in a Register Office is short and simple.

2.14.2 The gender of abbreviations and acronyms

The general rule for establishing the gender of abbreviations and acronyms is that the gender is the same as it would be if the abbreviation or acronym were written out in full. According to this rule (in each instance the word that establishes the gender has been italicised)

МГУ (Моско́вский госуда́рственный универси́тет) is masculine;

РФ (Росси́йская Федера́ция) is feminine;

СНГ (Содру́жество незави́симых госуда́рств) is neuter;

США (Соединённые Шта́ты Аме́рики) is plural.

Regardless of this rule, acronyms that take the form of a masculine noun ending in a consonant and which are capable of being declined tend to be treated as masculine:

В Гро́зном откры́лся пе́рвый госуда́рственный духо́вный вуз – Чече́нский исламский институ́т.

The first state-owned theological college—the Chechen Islamic Institute—has opened in Grozny.

The masculine adjective endings used in this example are explained in **6.1**.

3 Case

3.0 Introduction

The use of the *case system* to indicate different grammatical functions can be illustrated by the three different forms of the English pronoun 'he'. The form 'he' is used to indicate the *subject* of a sentence:

He can see me.

The form 'him' is used among other functions to indicate either the direct or the indirect object of a verb. It is also used after prepositions:

I can see *him*.

I gave *him* the book.

I haven't heard from *him* for a long time.

The form 'his' is used to indicate possession:

I have borrowed *his* book.

The Russian case system is much more complicated. As noted in **Chapter 2**, there are six cases: *nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, instrumental* and *prepositional*. In addition, the case system encompasses not only *nouns*, but also *adjectives, pronouns* and *numerals*.

The declension of adjectives, pronouns and numerals is described in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 respectively.

A further complication is that almost all of the cases are used in a wide variety of functions and the relationship between these different functions is in many instances neither obvious nor logical. The aim of this chapter is to examine the principal functions of each of the cases in turn.

There are two points to note here. The first is that this chapter concentrates on the principal functions of the cases; further illustrations of the different ways in which they are used will be given in **Part B** of this book. The second is that each of the

cases can be used after prepositions: a list of prepositions and the cases they are used with is given in **9.2**.

3.1 The nominative

3.1.1 Dictionaries and vocabularies

The *nominative* is the form under which *nouns, adjectives, pronouns and numerals* are listed in dictionaries, vocabularies and other word lists. Nouns are listed under the *nominative singular (nominative plural* if they have no singular form), while adjectives, pronouns and the numeral **один** 'one' are listed under the *nominative singular masculine*.

3.1.2 The use of the nominative to indicate the subject of finite verbs

The *nominative* is the case used to indicate the *subject* of a *finite verb*:

Мой брат только что верну́лся из Великобри́тании.

My brother has just returned from Great Britain.

Ровно сто де́сять лет наза́д в Санкт-Петербу́рге состо́ялся пе́рвый в Росси́и футбо́льный ма́тч.

Russia's first football match took place in St Petersburg exactly 110 years ago.

NOTE: In Russian it is not necessary for the subject of a sentence to precede the verb. For more on word order, *see 20.1*.

For a description of which verb forms are finite and which are non-finite, *see 4.0*.

3.1.3 The use of the nominative to indicate the complement

In certain circumstances the *nominative* case is used for the *complement* in sentences containing definitions or statements of equivalence. The nominative is always used in present-tense constructions where there is no explicit verb form (corresponding to the present tense of the verb 'to be' in English) and is sometimes used in sentences containing different forms of the verb **быть**, especially if the complement takes the form of an adjective:

Гово́рят, её о́тец – изве́стный полити́к.

They say her father is a well-known politician.

Пессимист счита́ет, что стака́н *полупусто́й*, тогда́ как оптимист полага́ет, что он наполови́ну *полон*.

A pessimist thinks that the glass is half-empty, while an optimist assumes that it is half-full.

Как оказа́лось, она́ была́ соверше́нно *права́*.

As it turned out, she was absolutely right.

For more on the complement of **быть** and other verbs with a related meaning, *see* **3.5** and **14.1**.

3.1.4 The use of the nominative in forms of address

The *nominative* is the case that is used when addressing people:

Джон, можно вас на минуточку?

John, can I have a word with you? *or* John, can I borrow you for a minute?

Тётя Наташа, а у вас в детстве была верная подруга?

Auntie Natasha, did you have a best (*literally*, a faithful) friend when you were a child?

А тебе, мальчи, давно пора спать.

And you, young man, should have been in bed a long time ago.

3.2 The accusative

The main use of the *accusative* case is to indicate the *direct object* of a verb:

Я давно знаю вашего мужа: мы учились вместе в школе.

I've known your husband for a long time: we were at school together.

Она написала очень хорошую книгу о жизни в постсоветской России.

She's written a very good book on life in post-Soviet Russia.

История показывает, что искоренить коррупцию полностью и навсегда невозможно.

History shows that it is impossible permanently and totally to eradicate corruption.

When ordering food and drink in a bar or restaurant, or when asking for someone on the telephone, it is normal to use the accusative, even though no verb may be present in the sentence:

Мне, пожалуйста, солянку, а на второе котлету по-киевски.

I'll have the solianka (a thick soup with meat or fish and vegetables) and for my

main course chicken Kiev.

Алло́, до́брый день. Мо́жно Алекса́ндра Никола́евича к телефо́ну?

Hello. May I speak to Aleksandr Nikolaevich, please?

For more on Russian names and forms of address, *see* **12.1** and **13.4**.

For more on using the telephone, *see* **13.6.2**.

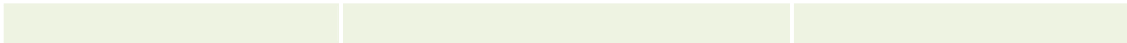
For the use of the accusative in time expressions, *see* **21.1.3**.

3.3 The genitive

3.3.1 The use of the genitive in constructions involving two nouns

The genitive is used in a wide range of constructions involving two nouns that are placed adjacent to each other. Most of these correspond to constructions where English would use the preposition ‘of’ or the possessive form in -’s (-s’):

The genitive indicates *possession* in the strict sense of the word:



машина Та́ни	Tania's car
рюкза́к сы́на	(my) son's rucksack
иму́щество олига́рхов	the oligarchs' property
дача дру́зей	(our) friends' dacha

Мы догово́рились встре́титься через неде́лю на кварта́ире его́ бра́та.

We agreed to meet a week later in his brother's flat.

Вообще́-то, э́то моби́льныйк же́ны; свой я забы́л до́ма.

This is really my wife's mobile; I've left mine at home.

For more on the absence of the possessive pronoun in constructions involving close relatives and the like, *see* 7.2.4.

The genitive is also used to indicate *relationships between people*:

подру́га до́чери	(our) daughter's friend
учите́ль сы́на	(our) son's teacher
помо́щник прези́дента	the president's assistant

В ру́сском языке́ англи́йскому 'brother-in-law' соотве́тствуют три слова́: зять – э́то муж се́стры, шу́рин – э́то брат же́ны, а де́верь – э́то брат му́жа.

Russian has three words that correspond to English 'brother-in-law': **ziat'** means 'the husband of one's sister', **shurin**, 'the brother of one's wife' and **dever'**, 'the brother of one's husband'.

The genitive is used in constructions indicating functions, positions and titles:

Глава́ правите́льства	the head of the government
Геро́й Росси́и	Hero of Russia (an official title)
води́тель тролле́йбуса	trolleybus driver
нача́льник о́тдела	head of a department
чемпио́н мира	world champion

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The genitive is also used in constructions indicating the part of a whole:

кусо́к пирога́	a piece of the pie
часть́ класса́	part of the class
оста́тки обе́да	the leftovers from the dinner
коне́ц фильма́	the end of the film

Они́ купи́ли себе́ кварти́ру в о́чень прести́жном райо́не Москвы́.

They have bought themselves a flat in a very prestigious area of Moscow.

In constructions containing two nouns the genitive can indicate (a) the *performer* of an action:

ле́кция профе́ссора	the professor's lecture
вопросы́ студенто́в	the students' questions
колебания́ маятника́	the swing of the pendulum
фотографи́я доче́ри	the daughter's photograph [i.e. one that she has taken]

Извержение вулкана застало жителей долины врасплох.

The eruption of the volcano caught the valley dwellers unawares.

А вот эта фотография дочери получила приз на конкурсе.

And that photograph taken by our daughter won a prize at the competition.

(b) the *object* of an action:

чтение стихов	the reading of poetry
ограбление банка	a bank robbery
приготовление ужина	making supper
фотография дочери	a photograph of (our) daughter [i.e. one that depicts her]

Укрепление курса рубля – одна из главных задач Центробанка.

Strengthening the exchange rate of the rouble is one of the main tasks of the Central Bank.

Фотографию дочери он повесил у себя в каюте.

He put up a photograph of his daughter in his cabin.

3.3.3 The use of the genitive in quantity expressions

The *genitive* is used in constructions indicating the *quantity* of a particular substance:

Я купил две буханки хлеба, литр молока, пачку масла, банку майонеза, пучок петрушки, килограмм мяса и двести грамм колбасы.

I've bought two loaves of bread, a litre of milk, a packet of butter, a jar of mayonnaise, a bunch of parsley, a kilo of meat and 200 grams of salami.

Он вдруг почувствовал, что ему нужен глоток свежего воздуха.

He suddenly felt that he needed a breath of fresh air.

The genitive is also used in *partitive* constructions, that is, when it indicates an

unspecified quantity of a substance (i.e. where English uses, for example, ‘some’):

Спаси́бо, я пива́ не пью́, а вот ча́ю выпью́ с удово́льствием, е́сли дадите́.

No thank you, I don't drink beer, but I would like some tea, if you're offering it.

Тебе́ де́нег на доро́гу дать, или не на́до?

Do you want me to give you some money for the journey, or are you all right?

For the use of the genitive after certain numerals and in other quantity expressions, see **8.2** and **8.6.3**

3.3.3 The use of the genitive in negative constructions

The *genitive* is used with negative forms of the verb **быть** (and other verbs with a related meaning) to indicate absence or non-existence:

Президе́нта сейча́с нет в Москвѐ: он отды́хает в Со́чи.

The President is not in Moscow at the moment; he's on holiday in Sochi.

Таки́х лека́рств прѐсто не существу́ет.

That kind of medicine simply doesn't exist.

For more on the form **нет**, see **4.8**.



For more on the use of the genitive to indicate absence or non-existence, *see* **15.1.2**.

The genitive is also used sometimes instead of the accusative to indicate the *direct object* of a *negated verb*:

Обычно она не делает ошибок, но в этом диктанте их целых пять.

She doesn't usually make mistakes, but there are no fewer than five in this dictation.

Спасибо, я пива не пью, а вот чаю выпью с удовольствием, если дадите.

No thank you, I don't drink beer, but I would like some tea, if you're offering it.

For more on the use of the accusative and the genitive to indicate the direct object of a negated verb, *see* **15.5**.

3.3.4 Verbs that take an object in the genitive

The following verbs are normally used with an object in the genitive.

NOTE: In the following and in subsequent lists verbs will normally be given in pairs separated by a slash (/). In such cases the verb to the left of the slash is imperfective and the verb to the right is perfective. Verbs separated by a comma are alternative forms. For an explanation of imperfective and perfective verbs, *see* **4.2**.

боя́ться	to fear, be frightened
держаться	to keep to
добиваться/добиться	to strive for, to attain
достигать/достигнуть, достичь	to achieve
желать/пожелать	to wish, to desire
избегать/избежать, избегнуть	to avoid
лишаться/лишиться	to be deprived of, to lose
касаться/коснуться	to touch, to concern
ослушиваться/ослушаться	to disobey
придерживаться	to hold to, to keep to
слушаться/послушаться	to obey

Я не люблю находиться на улице поздно вечером: глупо, но боюсь темноты.

I don't like to be out in the streets late at night, it's stupid, but I'm afraid of the dark.

На прошлой неделе цены на нефть достигли исторического максимума.

Last week oil prices reached an all-time high.

Желаю вам крепкого здоровья, успехов в работе и счастья в личной жизни.

I wish you good health, success in your work and happiness in your personal life.

Что касается вашего вопроса, то обещаю вам, что он не останется без ответа.

As far as your question is concerned, I promise you that it will not remain unanswered.

Спуска́ясь на эскаля́торе, держа́тесь пра́вой сторо́ны.

Keep to the right when coming down the escalator.

In some salutations that are in the genitive case the verb **жела́ю** 'I wish' is understood:

всего́ до́брого, всего́ хоро́шего

good-bye, all the best

до́брого вре́мени су́ток

good whatever time of day it is (a semi-humorous greeting frequently used in e-mails and on the Internet)

спокойной но́чи

good night

NOTE In more informal language the verbs **боя́ться** and **(по)слу́шаться** can sometimes be found with an object in the *accusative*, especially if the object is *animate* and/or a *proper name*.

Че́стно говоря́, мы все бо́имся на́шу но́вую нача́льницу.

To be honest, we're all frightened of our new boss.

The title of Edward Albee's play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* can be translated either as **«Кто бо́ится Ви́рджинии Ву́льф»** (genitive) or as **«Кто бо́ится Ви́рджинию Ву́льф»** (accusative).

3.3.5 Verbs that can take an object either in the accusative or in the genitive

The following verbs can be used with an object either in the *accusative* or in the *genitive*:

ждать to wait (for)
ожидать to wait for, to expect

With these verbs the accusative tends to be used if the object is *definite* (and especially if the object is *animate*), while the genitive tends to be used if the object is *indefinite*:

Ждём писем от тех, кто нуждается в нашей помощи.

We await letters from those who need our help.

Обещали прислать письмо с приглашением, и теперь жду это письмо с большим нетерпением.

They promised to send a letter with an invitation, and now I'm desperately waiting for that letter to arrive.

—Почему не едем?

—Ждём Ваню, он пошёл покупать минералку.

—Why don't we go?

—We're waiting for Vania, he's gone off to buy some mineral water.

For more on the formation **минералка** *see* 10.1.11.

просить/попросить to ask for

Here, if the object is the *item* asked for, it tends to be in the *genitive* when it is abstract or indefinite; otherwise, it is mostly in the *accusative*. If, however, the object is the *person* to whom the request is made, it is in the *accusative* provided that there is no



other object; if there is another object, the person asked is indicated using the *preposition у* (+ gen.):

Прошу́ прощёния: я был неправ.

I apologise; I was wrong.

Я попроси́л у него́ видеока́меру на́ день; ты представля́ешь, он отказáл.

I asked to borrow his video-camera for a day, and can you imagine? He refused.

Он попроси́л жене́у перезвони́ть ему́ через час.

He asked his wife to phone him back in an hour.

стои́ть

to cost

The accusative is used if the object is a sum of money, but in other contexts the genitive is used:

Этот галстук стои́т ты́сячу рублёй.

This tie costs 1,000 roubles.

Чемпио́нство стои́ло ему́ сло́манного ребра́.

Winning the championship cost him a broken rib.

иска́ть

to look for

хоте́ть/захоте́ть

to want

требова́ть/потребова́ть

to demand

With these verbs the object is usually in the accusative, but the genitive is sometimes used if the object is *general and abstract*:

Что ты хочешь – чай или кофе?

What do you want—tea or coffee?

Ну, чего же ты хочешь от жизни?

Well, then, what do you want from life?

У нас не работал душ, так что потребовали другой номер.

The shower wasn't working where we were, so we demanded a different room.

Мы потребовали объяснений.

We demanded explanations.

3.4 The dative

3.4.1 The use of the dative for the indirect object

The *dative* is used for the *indirect object* of a verb. This is the recipient of something that is given or the person to whom something is communicated in one form or another:

Каждый месяц я даю своей бывшей жене пять тысяч рублей.

Every month I give my former wife 5,000 roubles.



Переда́йте привёт сестре́.

Pass on my regards to your sister.

Я пишу́ ба́бушке неча́сто, приме́рно три ра́за в год.

I don't write to my grandmother often, about three times a year.

Президе́нт сообщи́л собра́вшимся журнали́стам о том, что он не наме́рен балло́тироваться на тре́тий срок.

The President told the assembled journalists that he had no intention of standing for a third term.

Мы посла́ли все́м на́шим чита́телям анке́ту по электро́нной по́чте в фо́рме вложе́ния.

We've sent all our readers a questionnaire in the form of an e-mail attachment.

The dative is also used to indicate the person to whom permission is given or refused:

Вла́сти разреши́ли органи́заторам прове́сти свою́ а́кцию то́лько на окра́ине го́рода.

The authorities allowed the organisers to hold their event, but only on the outskirts of the city.

Пассажи́рам запре́щено проно́сить в сало́н самолё́та жидкости́ и ре́зущие предме́ты.

Passengers are forbidden from carrying liquids and sharp objects onto the plane.

3.4.2 The use of the dative to indicate the logical subject of an infinitive

The *infinitive*, being by definition a *non-finite* form of the verb, never occurs with a *subject* in the *nominative*. Instead, in sentences where the *main verb* is an *infinitive*, any logical subject is in the *dative*.

For more on the infinitive, see **4.1**.

Тебе́ бы отдохну́ть как сле́дует!

You should get a proper rest!

*У университе́та не хвата́ет общежи́тий, и иногоро́дным студе́нтам
негде жи́ть. Что бе́дному студе́нту де́лать в таких обстоя́тельствах?*

The university does not have enough hostel accommodation and students from out of town have nowhere to live. What is a poor student to do in such circumstances?

For more on the constructions used in these examples, *see 15.5 and 18.4.*

3.4.3 The use of the dative in impersonal constructions

The *dative* is used to indicate the main participant in a wide range of *impersonal* constructions. In such constructions the verb (if there is one) is the *third person singular* (present and future tenses) or in the *neuter singular* (past tense); there is no subject in the nominative.

For more on these verb forms, *see 4.3.1 and 4.5.1.*

For more on impersonal constructions, *see 11.2.2.*



In the following expressions there is no verb in the *present* tense; in the *past and future* tenses the appropriate forms of **быть** 'to be' (**было** and **будет** respectively) are used. To indicate a change of state **стало** (past tense) or **станет** (future tense) can be used:

мне холодно	I am cold
мне тепло	I am warm
мне жарко	I am hot
мне лучше	I feel better, it's better for me
мне хуже	I feel worse, it's worse for me
мне весело	I feel cheerful
мне грустно	I feel sad
мне интересно	it's interesting for me
мне скучно	I am bored
мне удобно	I feel comfortable
мне неудобно	I feel uncomfortable/awkward/embarrassed
мне жаль	I feel sorry (for)
мне жалко	I feel sorry (for), I begrudge
мне стыдно	I feel ashamed
мне всё равно	I couldn't care less, it's all the same to me
мне безразлично	it's all the same to me, it's a matter of indifference
мне надо	I have to, I must
мне нужно	I have to, I must
мне необходимо	I have to, I cannot avoid (doing)

На прошлой неделе всем москвичам было холодно: слишком рано отключили отопление в этом году.

Last week all the inhabitants of Moscow were feeling cold: the (district) heating was switched off too early this year.

К вечеру больному стало лучше: он уже не кашлял, и температура спала.

By evening the patient started to feel better; he was no longer coughing and his temperature had gone down.

Мне, как честному человеку, стыдно за государство, где происходят такие вещи.

As an honest man I feel ashamed on behalf of a state where such things happen.

*Девóчке было жаль ко́шку, но она́ понима́ла, что котя́т на́до бу́дет
разда́ть.*

The girl felt sorry for her cat, but she understood that the kittens would have to be given away.

Ты пойми́, мне не жа́лко де́нег, но я зна́ю, к чему́ э́то приведе́т.

It's not that I begrudge the money, you understand, but I know what it will lead to.

NOTE When *жаль* and the more informal *жа́лко* mean 'to feel sorry for', they are used with an object in the *accusative*. When *жа́лко* means 'to begrudge', it is used with an object either in the *genitive* or in the *accusative*.

For more on *мне на́до* and *мне ну́жно*, see 18.1.1.



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The following verbs are *impersonal*:

везти́/повезти́: мне везёт

I am lucky

приходи́ться/прийти́сь: мне приходится

I have to (by force of circumstances)

хотéться/захотéться: мне хочётся

I feel like, I would like

спáться: мне не спится

I can't sleep

Нашей команде повезло́: нам достáлся сла́бый соперник.

Our team was lucky: we were drawn against a weak opponent.

Из-за нелётной погоды Аэрофлóту пришлóсь отмени́ть бо́лее пятидесяти ре́йсов.

Because of the bad weather Aeroflot had to cancel over fifty flights.

Ка́ждой же́нице хочется, что́бы её счита́ли о́собенной.

Every woman would like to be considered special.

NOTE The verb pair **везти́/повезти́** is *impersonal* only in this meaning; when it means 'to convey (by transport)', it is used in normal *personal* constructions.

For more on the use of **везти́/повезти́**, see **22.1**.

The following verbs can be used in either *impersonal* or *personal* constructions:

казаться/показаться: мне кажется	I think
надоедать/надоесть: мне надоело	I'm fed up (of)
нравиться/понравиться: мне нравится	I like
сниться/присниться: мне приснилось	I dreamt
удаваться/удаться: мне удаётся	I succeed (in doing something)

Examples of *impersonal* constructions:

Нам кажется, что нашим зрителям надоело видеть одни и те же лица, слышать одни и те же шутки.

We think that our viewers are fed up of seeing the same faces and hearing the same jokes all the time.

Президенту не нравится, когда ему задают вопросы о ситуации в Чечне.

The President doesn't like being asked questions about the situation in Chechnya.

Мне приснилось, будто ты стала у нас первой женщиной-президентом.

I dreamt you became our first woman president.

Сестре удалось найти просторную квартиру в самом центре города.

My sister has succeeded in finding a spacious flat in the very centre of the city.

Examples of *personal* constructions:

Такой исход событий казался большинству комментаторов маловероятным.

Most commentators thought that this development of events was unlikely.

Тури́стам надо́ели бесконе́чные дожди́, и мно́гие ста́ли уезжа́ть домо́й до сро́ка.

The tourists had got fed up of the ceaseless rain, and many decided to go home ahead of schedule.

Мои́ филь́мы нра́вятся не все́м зри́телям.

Not all audiences like my films.

Вчера́ мне присни́лся стра́шный сон.

I had a terrible dream last night.

Пе́рвые щи, кото́рые удаю́тсямолодо́му по́вару, всегда́ са́мые вку́сные.

The first *shchi* that a young cook makes successfully is always the tastiest.

For an explanation of *shchi*, see **2.1.3**.

3.4.4 Verbs that take an object in the dative

The following verbs are used with an *object* in the *dative* case:

вѐрить/повѐрить	to believe (someone or something)
вредить/навредить	to harm
доверять/доверить	to trust
изменять/изменить	to betray
мешать/помешать	to disturb, to hinder
обучаться/обучиться	to learn, to study
помогать/помочь	to help
предшествовать	to precede
принадлежать	to belong
равняться	to be equal to (<i>see 19.1.2</i>)
радоваться/обрадоваться	to be pleased (about something)
соболезновать	to commiserate with
содействовать	to further
соответствовать	to correspond to
сопротивляться	to resist, to oppose
сочувствовать	to sympathise (with)
угождать/угодить	to please, to oblige
удивляться/удивиться	to be surprised (at <i>or</i> by something)
учиться/научиться	to learn

А ты вѐришь его́ рассказам о том, как он обща́лся с инопланетя́нами?

Do you believe his stories about talking to aliens from another planet?

У нас по́ этому вопро́су о́чень твёрдая позиция, и изменять сво́им принципам мы не намерены́.

We have adopted a very firm line on this question and we do not intend to betray our principles.

На пѐрвом кúрсе все студѐнты обуча́ются оснóвам информáтики.

In the first year all students study basic IT.

Эти старинные книги принадлежа́ли моему́ дѐдушке.

These old books belonged to my grandfather.

Родители́ помога́ли молодо́жёнам как могли́.

Their parents helped the young (married) couple as best they could.



NOTES

- (i) When **вѣрить/повѣрить** means 'to believe in something or someone', it is followed by the preposition **в** (+ acc.).

Он никогда не вѣрил в Бога и оставался убеждённым атеистом до конца своих дней.

He never believed in God and remained a convinced atheist to the end of his days.

- (ii) When **доверять/доверить** means 'to entrust something into someone's care', the thing entrusted is a *direct object* in the *accusative* case, while the person to whom it is entrusted is an *indirect object* in the *dative*.

Я просто не знаю, могу ли я доверить машину сыну.

I simply don't know if I can trust my son with my car.

- (iii) When **изменять/изменить** means 'to change', it is followed by a direct object in the *accusative*.

С годами она изменила свои взгляды на воспитание детей.

Over the years she has changed her views on how to bring up children.

- (iv) When **принадлежать** means 'to belong to a category of a group' it is followed by the preposition **к** (+ dat).

Именно эти люди принадлежат к группе риска.

It is precisely these people who belong to the group most at risk.

With the verbs **учить/научить** and **обучать/обучить** 'to teach, to instruct' the person being instructed is indicated using the accusative case, while the subject being taught is indicated using the dative:

По-моему, хорошо, что наших детей учат основам бизнеса.

In my opinion it's a good thing that our children are taught the rudiments of

business.

3.5 The instrumental

3.5.1 The use of the instrumental to indicate the instrument or means with which an action is carried out or accomplished

The *instrumental* is used to indicate the *instrument* with which an action is carried out or the *means* by which an action is accomplished:

На всякий случай за́полните анкету карандашом: легче будет исправить ошибки.

To be on the safe side, fill in the form in pencil; it will be easier to correct any mistakes.

Серьёзные покупки она́ предпочитала оплачивать кредитной карточкой.

She preferred to pay for her more serious purchases with a credit card.

Посуду из-под молока́ следует мыть сначала холодной, а затем горячей водой.

Crockery that has had milk in it should be washed in cold water first and then in hot water.

Ни угрозами, ни уговорами подействовать на него́ невозможно.

It's impossible to move him with either threats or persuasion.

3.5.2 The use of the instrumental to indicate the agent in a passive construction

The *instrumental* is used to indicate the *agent* in a *passive* construction (that is, the person, or less often, the object responsible for carrying out the action indicated by the passive verb or participle).

For more on passive verbs and participles, *see* 4.14 and 23.1.3:

Эта книга была́ написана моим дедушкой.

This book was written by my grandfather.

Это не помешало ей побить рекорд, установленный её соотечественницей десять лет назад.

This did not stop her from breaking the record established by her compatriot ten years ago.

3.5.3 The use of the instrumental to indicate the complement

The *instrumental* is very frequently used to indicate the complement of the verb **быть**, especially if the complement is a *noun*:

Когда́ я был студентом, у меня́ не было́ денег, чтобы́ регулярно ходить́ в театр.

When I was a student, I didn't have the money to go to the theatre regularly.

Его́ происхождение́ не имеет значения́. Главное, чтобы́ он был честным человеком.

His origins are irrelevant. The main thing is that he should be an honest man.

For more on the complement of **быть**, see 3.1 and 14.1.

In addition, the instrumental is normally used to indicate the complement of the following verbs:

вы́глядеть	to look
де́латься/сде́латься	to become
каза́ться/показа́ться	to seem
оказыва́ться/оказа́ться	to (turn out to) be
остава́ться/оста́ться	to remain
станови́ться/ста́ть	to become, to be
явля́ться	to be

В э́той шля́пе я вы́гляжу по́льным иди́отом.

I look (like) a total idiot in this hat.

Его́ назначе́ние оказа́лось для всех нас большо́м сюрпри́зом.

His appointment came as a surprise to everyone.

Оста́ется зага́дкой, как не́которым се́мьям удаётся своди́ть концы́ с конца́ми.

It remains a mystery how some families make ends meet.

Он явля́ется Но́белевским лауре́атом в о́бласти медици́ны.

He's a Nobel prize-winner for medicine.

For more on verbs that can correspond to English 'to be', see **14.1.5**.



3.5.4 The use of the instrumental to indicate a predicate with a transitive verb

There are in Russian a number of *transitive* verbs, corresponding to English ‘to call’, ‘to consider’, ‘to elect as’, ‘to appoint (as)’ and other verbs with a similar meaning which are used with the *instrumental*; the form in the instrumental indicates what the *direct object* is called, considered to be, elected or appointed as, and so on. Verbs in this category include the following:

выбира́ть/вы́брать	to choose, to elect
избира́ть/избра́ть	to elect (to high office)
назнача́ть/назнача́ть	to appoint
называ́ть/назва́ть	to call, to name
счита́ть/счесть	to consider
чу́вствовать себя́/почу́вствовать себя́	to feel (ill, etc.)

В апреле 1995 года Миронова избрали первым заместителем председателя законодательного собрания Санкт-Петербурга.

In April 1995 Mironov was elected first deputy chairman of the St Petersburg city council.

В России пользователи Интернета называют символ «@» «собакой».

In Russia, Internet users call the @ symbol a ‘dog’.

Сколько надо зарабатывать, чтобы чувствовать себя счастливым?

How much do you need to earn in order to feel happy?

NOTES

(i) The verbs *называть* and *считать* are often used in the *imperfective passive* forms *называться* and *считаться* respectively.

Он считается ведущим специалистом в этой области.

He is considered to be a leading specialist in this area.

For more on passive verbs, see **4.14**.

(ii) The verbs **называ́ть** and **называ́ться** are often used with a *predicate* in the nominative, especially if the predicate is a proper name and/or it appears in inverted commas:

Он когда-то был веду́щим о́чень популярной програ́ммы, кото́рая *называ́лась* «Взгляд».

He was once a presenter on a very popular (television) programme called *Vzgliad* (*View*).

3.5.5 The use of the instrumental to indicate state or capacity

The instrumental is often used to indicate the *state* or *capacity* in which someone carries out a particular action:

Тогда́ он рабо́тал *гла́вным инже́нером* на одно́м из *крупных* заво́дов Петербу́рга.

At that time he was working as the chief engineer of a large factory in St Petersburg.

В да́нном слу́чае *наша* о́бласть *мо́жет служи́ть приме́ром* для всей Росси́и.

In this case our region can serve as an example for the whole of Russia.

Чтобы бежать из осаждённого города, ему пришлось переодеться женщиной.

The only way he could escape from the besieged city was to dress up as a woman.

Похоже, что он опять вышел сухим из воды.

It looks as if he's got off scot-free again (*literally*, 'as if he's come out of the water dry').

Она вернулась из отпуска свежей и отдохнувшей.

She returned from her holidays fresh and relaxed.

3.5.6 The use of the instrumental in adverbial functions

The instrumental is used in a variety of adverbial constructions, indicating, for example, the manner in which, the place where or the time when something is done:

Развернуться в этом дворе было невозможно, и пришлось выезжать задним ходом.

It was impossible to turn round in the yard and we had to drive out backwards.

Я отправлю вам этот журнал заказной бандеролью.

I'll send you the magazine as a registered package.

Новое правительство первым делом займётся бюджетом на следующий год.

The first task of the new government will be to sort out the budget for next year (*literally*, '... will as its first task ...').

В Праге она любила часами бродить улочками Старого города.

When she was in Prague she could spend hours wandering through the narrow streets of the old town.

For more on the use of the instrumental in time expressions, see **21.1.1**.

3.5.7 Verbs that take an object in the instrumental

A large number of verbs are used with an object in the *instrumental*; for convenience, these can be divided into groups according to their meaning.

(a) Verbs indicating *activities* or *interests*:

занима́ться/зани́ться

to occupy oneself with

интересова́ться/заинтересова́ться

to be interested in

увлека́ться/увле́чься

to be keen on, to be carried away by

К сожалéнию, на́ши де́ти всё ме́ньше занима́ются спо́ртом.

Unfortunately, our children do less and less sport.

(b) Verbs referring to *control*, *use* and *ownership*:

владéть

to own

злоупотребля́ть/злоупотреби́ть

to abuse, to misuse

пользо́ваться/ воспользо́ваться

to use, to take advantage of

пра́вить	to rule
располага́ть	to have at one's disposal
руководи́ть	to be in charge of, to manage
управля́ть	to manage, to run

Здесь запрещено́ *пользоваться* мобильными телефо́нами.

It's forbidden to use mobile phones here.

Мы не *располага́ем* информа́цией о том, кто владел́ *этой* карти́ной после войны́.

We have no information about who owned this picture after the war.

(c) Verbs expressing an *attitude*, especially one of *admiration* or *scorn*:

бре́зговать/побре́зговать	to be fastidious <i>or</i> squeamish about
восхища́ться/восхити́ться	to admire (e.g. a person)
гори́ться	to be proud of
любова́ться	to admire (e.g. a view)
наслажда́ться	to enjoy, to delight in
пренебрега́ть/пренебре́чь	to scorn, to disregard, to neglect

Мы все *восхища́емся* его дости́жениями.

We all admire his achievements.

Не сто́ит *пренебрега́ть* здоро́вьем.

It's not worth neglecting your health.

(d) Some verbs are used with an *object* in the *instrumental* when they refer to movements made by parts of the body:

кача́ть/покача́ть головой́	to shake one's head
кива́ть/кивну́ть головой́	to nod one's head
махать/махну́ть рукой́	to wave one's hand
морга́ть/моргну́ть глазом	to blink, to wink
пожима́ть/пожа́ть плеча́ми	to shrug one's shoulders
топа́ть ногами́ /то́пну́ть ногой́	to stamp one's feet/foot

Он не отве́тил на мой вопро́с, лишь *пожа́л плеча́ми* и *вы́шел* из *ко́мнаты*.

He didn't answer my question, but merely shrugged his shoulders and left the room.

(e) Some miscellaneous verbs:

па́хнуть	to smell of
обме́ниваться/обме́няться	to exchange
риско́вать/риску́ть	to risk
торгова́ть	to trade in

Не люблю́, когда́ в о́фисе *пахнет* *сига́ретами*.

I don't like it when the office smells of cigarettes.

NOTE The verb **пахнуть** is often used impersonally (as in the above example). For more on impersonal constructions, see **11.2.2**.

3.6 The prepositional

The *prepositional* case is used only after *prepositions*. A list of the prepositions that are used with the prepositional case is given in **9.2.6**.

4 Verbs

4.0 Introduction

The Russian *verb* is a grammatically complex part of speech: if the most complex English verb ('to be') has eight separate forms ('am', 'is', 'are', 'was', 'were', 'be', 'being', 'been'), most Russian verbs have fifty or more separate forms. Moreover, the Russian verb contains a large number of categories, many of which are either unimportant or do not exist at all in English.

Finite and non-finite verbs. *Non-finite* verbs are those that are incapable of being combined with a *grammatical subject*. In Russian, there are three non-finite forms: the *infinitive* (4.1), the *gerund* (4.11) and the *participle* (4.12). All the remaining forms are *finite*.

Aspect (4.2) refers to the different ways in which the action or state indicated by the verb may be viewed by the speaker. The Russian verb has two aspects, *imperfective* and *perfective*.

Tense is used to situate the action or state indicated by the verb in a particular time. The Russian verb has a simple system of three tenses: *present* (4.3), *future* (4.4) and *past* (4.5).

Person indicates the relationship between the verb and the *grammatical subject* of the sentence. There are three persons: the *1st person* indicates or includes the speaker ('I', 'we'), the *2nd person* indicates or includes the addressee(s) ('you'); the *3rd person* indicates the person(s), object(s) or concept(s) being referred to ('he', 'she', 'it', 'they'). Since each person can be *singular* or *plural* (see 2.1), there are six forms in all.

Mood indicates the attitude of the speaker towards the state or action. Straightforward statements or questions are in the *indicative* mood; the *imperative* (4.9) is used for commands or prohibitions, and the *conditional* or *subjunctive* (4.10) is used for hypothetical statements.

Transitive and intransitive verbs (4.13.1): a transitive verb is one that is used with a direct object in the accusative case; all other verbs are intransitive.

Reflexive verbs (4.13.2): although reflexive verbs do serve certain other functions

as well, the main purpose of making a verb reflexive is to transform a transitive verb into one that is intransitive.

NOTE Reflexive verbs are indicated by the suffix **-c** (**-c** after a vowel), which is attached to all forms of the verb.

Voice (4.14) is the category used to indicate the relationship of *subject* and *object* to the action or state indicated by the verb. The *active* voice is used when the subject of the verb is the performer of the action or the main participant in the state; the *passive* voice is used when the subject is on the receiving end of the action.

4.1 The infinitive

The *infinitive* is the form by which a verb is listed in dictionaries. It most frequently ends in **-ть**:

чита́ть	to read
писа́ть	to write
говори́ть	to say, to speak

A few verbs have an infinitive ending in **-ти́** (with stress always on the ending), for example:

гrestí	to row (i.e. a boat)
вести́	to (be) lead(ing)
везти́	to (be) convey(ing)
изобрести́	to invent

A small number of verbs have an infinitive ending in **-чь**, for example:

мочь	to be able
печь	to bake

The ending of the infinitive never changes.

For more on the meaning of **вести́**, **нести́**, **идти́** (and other verbs indicating movement), see **22.1**.

As suggested in the glosses above, the *infinitive* of the Russian verb corresponds approximately to the 'to' form of the English verb. It is most often used together with another verb, as in the following examples:

Я не хоте́л вас оби́деть.

I didn't want to offend you.

Вы можете приходить в любое время.

You can come any time you like.

Он не успел предупредить меня.

He didn't have time to warn me.

On its own the infinitive can sometimes be used to express *commands* and *prohibitions*; see **18.2.2**.

4.2 Aspects of the verb

4.2.1 Imperfective and perfective aspects

Although it is arguable that *aspects* are a feature of the English verb (e.g. the difference between 'I do' and 'I am doing'), the Russian verbal aspect differs greatly from the English in both form and function.



The Russian verb system has two aspects: *imperfective* and *perfective*. As may be imagined, each aspect covers a wide range of functions, but in general terms it may be stated that the perfective aspect is used when an action or state is considered from the point of view of either one (beginning or end) or both of its boundaries, while the imperfective is used in all other circumstances (if there is a 'default' aspect in Russian, it is the imperfective).

Every Russian verb belongs to one or the other of these aspects, which means that one English verb will normally correspond to a pair of verbs in Russian, one of which is imperfective and the other perfective:

to give	дава́ть (imperfective)	да́ть (perfective)
to read	чита́ть (imperfective)	проче́тать (perfective)
to write	писа́ть (imperfective)	написа́ть (perfective)

In Russian dictionaries the aspect of each verb is indicated, usually by the abbreviations **нсв**(**несовершенный**=imperfective) and **св**(**совершенный**=perfective). For the remainder of this chapter and in the following chapter the aspect of all verbs used in examples will be indicated by these same abbreviations.

This section is concerned with the *formation of aspect pairs*; the use of the two aspects will be examined in detail in **Chapter 5**.

As the examples listed above suggest, in most pairs of verbs the imperfective and perfective partners are closely related, with the relationship normally conforming to one of three basic patterns.

4.2.2 Imperfective and perfective verbs are both unprefixes

In the following examples both the *imperfective* and the *perfective* verb are *unprefixed*:

броса́ть (нсв)	бро́сить (св)	to throw
дава́ть (нсв)	да́ть (св)	to give
конча́ть (нсв)	коне́чить (св)	to finish
пуска́ть (нсв)	пусти́ть (св)	to let
толка́ть (нсв)	толкну́ть (св)	to push

4.2.3 The imperfective is unprefixes and the perfective verb is prefixed

In the following examples the *imperfective* verb has no prefix, but the *perfective* is

prefixed. It will be seen from the list that follows that a number of different prefixes can be used to form the perfective partner of an unprefixated imperfective. There is no easy way of predicting which prefix will be found with any given verb, although the most common prefixes used in this way are **по-**, **с-** and **за-**:

вѐрить (нсв)	повѐрить (св)	to believe
делать (нсв)	сделать (св)	to do
есть (нсв)	съесть (св)	to eat
желать (нсв)	пожелать (св)	to wish
красть (нсв)	украсть (св)	to steal
ночевать (нсв)	переночевать (св)	to spend the night
печь (нсв)	испечь (св)	to bake



писа́ть (нсв)	написа́ть (св)	to write
пи́ть (нсв)	выпи́ть (св)	to drink
ста́вить (нсв)	постави́ть (св)	to put (standing)
стро́ить (нсв)	постро́ить (св)	to build
хоте́ть (нсв)	захоте́ть (св)	to want
чита́ть (нсв)	проче́тать (св)	to read

The following two verbs deviate from this pattern:

па́дать (нсв)	упа́сть (св)	to fall
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The perfective verb also has a change of suffix:

покупа́ть (нсв)	купи́ть (св)	to buy
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Here, uniquely, the imperfective verb has a prefix which is lost in the perfective.

4.2.4 Both imperfective and perfective verbs have the same prefix

In the following examples both *imperfective* and *perfective* verbs have the same prefix:

запи́сывать (нсв)	записа́ть (св)	to record, to write down
подпи́сывать (нсв)	подписа́ть (св)	to sign
припи́сывать (нсв)	приписа́ть (св)	to ascribe
спи́сывать (нсв)	списа́ть (св)	to write off, to copy
дове́рять (нсв)	дове́рить (св)	to trust
распека́ть (нсв)	распече́ть (св)	to tear a strip off someone
допи́вать (нсв)	допи́ть (св)	to drink something up
спра́шивать (нсв)	спроси́ть (св)	to ask (about something)
представля́ть (нсв)	представи́ть (св)	to present, to introduce
устрои́вать (нсв)	устрои́ть (св)	to arrange

In the above examples, the *perfective* partner is formed by adding a *prefix* directly to the *unprefixed* verb; unlike the prefixes used to form the perfective in the examples in 4.2.3, these prefixes also change the meaning of the verb. The *imperfective* partner is formed from the *perfective* by changing the *suffix* and sometimes by also changing the *vowel* and/or *consonant* in the stem. Unfortunately, it is difficult to give precise rules for forming the imperfective from the perfective, but all the principal patterns are illustrated here:

выбрасывать (нсв)	выбросить (св)	to throw out
продавать (нсв)	продать (св)	to sell
допускать (нсв)	допустить (св)	to allow

In these examples, the *perfective* partner is formed by adding a *prefix* to the *perfective* partner of a pair of *unprefixed* verbs; here, too, there are different patterns for forming the imperfective partner:

защищать (нсв)	защитить (св)	to defend
исчезать (нсв)	исчезнуть (св)	to disappear
продолжать (нсв)	продолжить (св)	to continue
убеждать (нсв)	убедить (св)	to convince
успевать (нсв)	успеть (св)	to have time

There are no unprefixed forms of the verbs listed in the above examples.



Note on stress: Where a prefix is added to an unprefix verb, the stress normally remains unchanged. The exception is where a perfective verb has the prefix **вы-**: here the stress is on the prefix in all forms of the verb. **N.B:** *This rule applies to perfective verbs only.*

For more on verbal prefixes, *see* **10.4**.

4.2.5 Pairs of verbs where the perfective and imperfective partners are unrelated

There are a few pairs of verbs where the *perfective* and *imperfective* partners are unrelated:

брать (нсв)	взять (св)	to take
говорить (нсв)	сказать (св)	to say (but <i>see</i> 4.2.6 below)
класть (нсв)	положить (св)	to put (lying)
ловить (нсв)	поймать (св)	to catch

4.2.6 Exceptions to the principle of 'paired' verbs

Not all verbs come in neat *imperfective/perfective* pairs.

Some *unprefixed* verbs have more than one perfective partner, the choice of which depends on the precise meaning of the verb.

The verb **бить** (нсв) has perfective partners **побить** 'to beat', 'hit someone or something' and **пробить** 'to strike' (of a clock).

The verb **говорить** (нсв) has perfective partners **поговорить** 'to talk', 'to speak' and **сказать** 'to say'.

The verb **есть** (нсв) has perfective partners **съесть** 'to eat something up' (transitive) and **поесть** 'to do some eating' (intransitive).

A number of imperfective verbs have no commonly used perfective partner. These include:

выть	to howl
дружить	to be friends with
знать	to know
состоять	to consist of/in
сочувствовать	to sympathise
участвовать	to take part in

Examples of perfective verbs without imperfective partners are much less common, but the following may be noted:

ринуться	to rush
состояться	to take place (cf. состоять above)

NOTE The **-ся** suffix indicates that the verb is reflexive (*see 4.13.2*).

Finally, some verbs are *bi-aspectual*, i.e. the same verb is used for both imperfective and perfective aspects; these include:

жени́ться	to get married (of a man)	испо́льзовать	to use
казни́ть	to execute	обеща́ть(ся)	to promise
организова́ть	to organise		

4.3 Present tense

4.3.1 The endings of present tense

Russian has only one *present tense*, which is formed from *imperfective* verbs only. The endings used for the present tense give information about the *person* and *number* of the subject.

The present tense of the verb **де́лать** ‘to do’:

1st person sing.	я де́лаю	I do (<i>or</i> am doing)
2nd person sing.	ты де́лаешь	you (sing.) do (<i>or</i> are doing)
3rd person sing.	он/она́/оно́ де́лает	he/she/it does (<i>or</i> is doing)
1st person pl.	мы де́лаем	we do (<i>or</i> are doing)
2nd person pl.	вы де́лаете	you (pl.) do (<i>or</i> are doing)
3rd person pl.	они́ де́лают	they do (<i>or</i> are doing)

NOTE **я де́лаю** corresponds to both ‘I do’ and ‘I am doing’.

There are two separate sets of endings for the present tense, as follows:

<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
-ю/у	-ю/-у
-ешь/-ёшь	-ишь
-ет/-ёт	-ит
-ем/-ём	-им
-ете/-ёте	-ите
-ют/-ут	-ят/-ат

Verbs with the endings in column 1 are described as belonging to the *first conjugation*; verbs with the endings in column 2 are described as belonging to the

second conjugation.

The first conjugation endings **-ю, -ют** are used after a vowel, the endings **-ы, -ят** after a consonant; the endings with **-е-** occur when the stress is on any syllable other than the ending.

The second conjugation endings **-ы, -ят** occur only after those consonants which, according to the spelling rules given in **1.5.2**, cannot be followed by **я** or **ю**.

NOTE There are a few first conjugation verbs where the endings **-ю, -ют** occur after the consonants **ж, ш, ч, щ, ф**. See **4.7.1** and **4.7.8** for examples.

4.3.2 Examples of present tense endings

The following tables give examples of present tense endings:

First conjugation verbs

чита́ть (нсв) 'to read'
читаю́
читае́шь
читае́т
читае́м
читае́те
читаю́т

писа́ть (нсв) 'to write'
пишу́
пише́шь
пише́т
пише́м
пише́те
пишу́т

брати́ (нсв) 'to take'
беру́
берё́шь
берёт
берём
берёте
беру́т

дава́ть (нсв) 'to give'
даю́
даё́шь
даёт
даём
даёте
даю́т

пить (нсв) 'to drink'
пью́
пьё́шь
пьёт
пьем
пьёте
пью́т

целова́ть (нсв) 'to kiss'
целую́
целу́ешь
целу́ет
целу́ем
целу́ете
целую́т

Second conjugation verbs

говори́ть (нсв) 'to say', 'to speak'
говору́
говори́шь
говори́т
говори́м
говори́те
говоря́т

крича́ть (нсв) 'to shout'
кричу́
кричи́шь
кричи́т
кричи́м
кричи́те
крича́т

Three observations are prompted by these tables:

- (1) Three *stress patterns* are found in the present tense: (a) the stress is always on the stem, e.g. чита́ть; (b) the stress is always on the ending, e.g. говори́ть; (c) the

stress is on the ending in the 1st person singular, but on the stem in all other forms, e.g. **писа́ть**. All of these stress patterns can be found with verbs of either conjugation.

(2) In order to work out the full set of endings (including stress) in the present tense, it is both necessary and sufficient to know the 1st and 2nd person singular forms; all other forms can be worked out from these two endings.

(3) Although the endings themselves are regular (see **4.8** for the handful of exceptions), it is not possible to work out the present tense of a verb from the infinitive. From the point of view of the relationship between infinitive and present tense, Russian verbs fall into about twenty classes, which are described below in **4.6** and **4.7**.

4.4 Future tense

4.4.0 Introduction

The *future tense* in Russian is formed from both *imperfective* and *perfective* verbs, although the means of forming the future is different for each aspect.

4.4.1 Imperfective verbs

There is one *imperfective* verb that has a special form for the *future tense*. This is **быть** 'to be', and the future is formed by attaching present tense endings to the stem **буд-**:

б^уду	I will be	б^удем	we will be
б^удешь	you will be	б^удете	you will be
б^удет	he/she/it will be	б^удут	they will be

The future tense of all other imperfective verbs is formed using **б^уду**, etc. and the infinitive:

читать (нсв) 'to read'	говорить (нсв) 'to say', 'to speak'
б^уду читать	б^уду говорить
б^удешь читать	б^удешь говорить
б^удет читать	б^удет говорить
б^удем читать	б^удем говорить
б^удете читать	б^удете говорить
б^удут читать	б^удут говорить

4.4.2 Perfective verbs

The future tense of all *perfective* verbs is formed in exactly the same way as the present tense of *imperfective* verbs.

прочита́ть (св) 'to read'

прочита́ю
прочита́ешь
прочита́ет
прочита́ем
прочита́ете
прочита́ют

вы́пить (св) 'to drink'

вы́пью
вы́пьешь
вы́ьет
вы́ьем
вы́пете
вы́пьют

поговори́ть (св) 'to speak',
'to have a conversation'

поговори́ю
поговори́шь
поговори́т
поговори́м
поговори́те
поговори́ят

написа́ть (св) 'to write'

напи́шу
напи́шешь
напи́шет
напи́шем
напи́шете
напи́шут

поцелова́ть (св) 'to kiss'

поцелу́ю
поцелу́ешь
поцелу́ет
поцелу́ем
поцелу́ете
поцелу́ют

закрича́ть (св) 'to shout'

закричу́
закричи́шь
закричи́т
закричи́м
закричи́те
закрича́т



NOTE The three observations made above at the end of section 4.3 apply equally to the *future perfective*. For this reason in sections 4.6–4.8 the term ‘non-past’ will be used to refer to both the present tense of imperfective verbs and the future tense of perfective verbs.

4.5 Past tense

4.5.1 The formation of the past tense

Russian has only one *past tense*, but it is formed from both *imperfective* and *perfective* verbs. The formation of the past tense is one of the simpler and more regular features of Russian grammar: for the vast majority of verbs the past tense is formed by removing the final **-ть** of the infinitive and adding the appropriate endings (**-л, -ла, -ло, -ли**) to the stem that remains.

The past tense behaves as if it were a *short form* of adjective (see 6.5). The endings give information about the gender and number of the subject, but not about the person. This means that each verb has four endings: *masculine singular, feminine singular, neuter singular* and *plural* (remember that Russian has no gender distinctions in the plural):

Быть (нсв) ‘to be’:

Я/ты/он/Сергей был здесь.

I (masc.)/you (masc. sg.)/he/Sergei was here.

Я/ты/она/Анна была здесь.

I (fem.)/you (fem. sg.)/she/Anna was here.

Оно/окно было открыто.

It/the window was open.

Мы/вы/они/Анна и Сергей были здесь.

We/you (pl.)/Anna and Sergei were here.

For the use of the second person plural pronoun **вы** as a formal means of addressing

one person, *see* **13.1**; for the use of the plural verb in such circumstances, *see* **11.2.1**.

Other examples:

Говори́ть (нсв) ‘to say’, ‘to speak’:

говори́л, говори́ла, говори́ло, говори́ли

Сказа́ть (св) ‘to say’:

сказа́л, сказа́ла, сказа́ло, сказа́ли

Писа́ть (нсв) ‘to write’:

писа́л, писа́ла, писа́ло, писа́ли

Написа́ть (св) ‘to write’:

написа́л, написа́ла, написа́ло, написа́ли

Давать (нсв) 'to give':

дава́л, дава́ла, дава́ло, дава́ли

Дать (св) 'to give':

дал, дала́, да́ло, да́ли

4.5.2 The past tense of verbs with a stem ending in a consonant

Some verbs form their past tense by adding the endings onto a stem that ends in a *consonant*, in which case the **-л** in the masculine is omitted.

лезть (нсв) 'to (be) climb(ing)':

лез, ле́зла, ле́зло, ле́зли

нести́ (нсв) 'to (be) carry(ing)':

не́с, несла́, несло́, несли́

исчезнуть (св) 'to disappear':

исче́з, исче́зла, исче́зло, исче́зли

мочь (нсв) 'to be able':

мог, могла́, могло́, могли́

умереть (св) 'to die':

у́мер, умерла́, у́мерло, у́мерли

More detailed information on which classes of verbs form the past tense in this way is given in 4.7.

4.5.3 An irregular past tense form

Only one verb has a completely *irregular past tense*:

идти́ (нсв) 'to (be) go(ing)':

шёл, шла, шло, шли

Prefixed forms of **идти́** form the past tense in the same way:

войти́ (св) 'to enter'

вошёл, вошла́, вошло́, вошли́

4.6 The classification of verbs: productive verb classes

4.6.0 Introduction

Although there are approximately twenty classes of Russian verbs, the overwhelming majority belong to one of four *productive* classes. This term means that when new verbs are formed (other than by prefixing), they are added to one or other of these classes.

4.6.1 First productive class of first conjugation verbs

This class consists of *first* conjugation verbs following one of the following patterns:

(a) Infinitive -ать	Non-past -аю, -аешь, etc.
(b) Infinitive -ять	Non-past -яю, -яешь, etc.
(c) Infinitive -еть	Non-past -ею, -еешь, etc.
(a) делáть (нсв) 'to do'	чита́ть (нсв) 'to read'
делаю	читаю
делаешь	читаешь
делает	читает
делаем	читаем
делаете	читаете
делают	читают
(b) позволя́ть (нсв) 'to permit'	(c) уме́ть (нсв) 'to know how to'
позволяю	умею
позволяешь	умеешь
позволяет	умеет
позволяем	умеем
позволяете	умеете
позволяют	умеют

4.6.2 Second productive class of first conjugation verbs

This class is made up of *first* conjugation verbs following the pattern:

Infinitive -овать/-евать	Non-past -ую, -уешь (-уёшь)/-уюю, -юешь (-юёшь), etc.	
целова́ть (нсв) 'to kiss'	танцева́ть (нсв) 'to dance'	плева́ть (нсв) 'to spit'
целю́ю	танцую́	плюю́
целу́ешь	танцу́ешь	плюёшь
целу́ет	танцует	плюёт
целу́ем	танцу́ем	плюём
целу́ете	танцуете	плюёте
целу́ют	танцуют	плюют

NOTES

(i) The spelling of the various forms of **танцева́ть** is determined by the rules given in **1.5.2**.

(ii) In spite of appearances, this pattern is perfectly regular and is the one followed by the vast majority of newly formed verbs, for example:

интересова́ть (нсв) 'to interest'	интересу́ю	интересу́ешь
организова́ть (нсв/св) 'to organise'	организу́ю	организу́ешь
приватизи́ровать (нсв/св) 'to privatise'	приватизи́рую	приватизи́руешь
цити́ровать (нсв) 'to quote'	цити́рую	цити́руешь

4.6.3 Third productive class of first conjugation verbs

This class consists of *first* conjugation verbs following the pattern:

Infinitive -нуть	Non-past -ну, -нешь/-нёшь, etc.
кри́кнуть (св) 'to shout'	толкнѹть (св) 'to push'
кри́кнѹ	толкнѹ
кри́кнешь	толкнёшь
кри́кнет	толкнѣт
кри́кнем	толкнѣм
кри́кнете	толкнѣте
кри́кнут	толкнут

NOTES

- (i) These verbs form the *past tense* from the *infinitive* in the normal way (cf. 4.7.10):

толкну́л, толкну́ла, толкну́ло, толкну́ли

- (ii) With the exception of *гнуть* (нсв) 'to bend' (transitive), all verbs in this class are perfective.

4.6.4 The productive class of second conjugation verbs

The verbs in this class belong to the *second* conjugation verbs and follow the pattern:

Infinitive -ить	Non-past -ю/у, -ишь, etc.	
говори́ть (нсв) 'to speak', 'to say'	отвѣти́ть (св) 'to answer'	проси́ть (нсв) 'to ask (someone to do something)'
говори́ю	отвѣчу́	прошу́
говори́шь	отвѣтишь	просишь
говори́т	отвѣтит	просит
говори́м	отвѣтим	просим
говори́те	отвѣтите	просите
говори́ят	отвѣтят	просят

In the *non-past* of many verbs of this class there is a *consonant alternation* in the *first person singular* only. The alternations are as follows:

с ~ ш, з ~ ж, т ~ ч/щ, д ~ ж, п ~ пл, б ~ бл, ф ~ фл, в ~ вл, м ~ мл.

Except for verbs with a stem ending in -Т, these alternations are perfectly regular and consistent. The alternation т ~ ч is somewhat more common than the alternation т ~ ш; with some *prefixed perfective* verbs the appropriate alternation is indicated by the paired *imperfective*:

отвѣ́тить (св) 'to answer' ~ отвѣ́чу	отвеча́ть (нсв)
освети́ть (св) 'to illuminate' ~ освещу́	освеща́ть (нсв)

Examples of the other consonant alternations:

проси́ть (нсв) 'to ask (someone to do something)'	прошу́, про́сишь
сни́зить (св) 'to lower'	снижу́, сни́зишь
ходи́ть (нсв) 'to go (on foot)'	хожу́, ходи́шь
купи́ть (св) 'to buy'	куплю́, купи́шь
люби́ть (нсв) 'to love'	люблю́, люби́шь
графи́ть (нсв) 'to rule (paper)'	графлю́, графи́шь
лови́ть (нсв) 'to catch'	ловлю́, лови́шь
корми́ть (нсв) 'to feed'	кормлю́, ко́рмишь

4.7 Unproductive verbs

4.7.0 Introduction

Although the overwhelming majority of Russian verbs belong to one of the four *productive* classes of verbs described in the preceding section, the unproductive classes include a large number of verbs that are in common use.

4.7.1 First unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

The verbs in this class are *first* conjugation verbs with an infinitive in **-ать** and a *consonant alternation* in the *non-past*

писа́ть (нсв) 'to write'	сказа́ть (св) 'to say'	пла́кать (нсв) 'to cry', 'to weep'	сыпа́ть (нсв) 'to pour (dry goods)'
пишу́	скажу́	плачу́	сыплю́
пише́шь	скаже́шь	плаче́шь	сыпле́шь
пишет	скажет	плачет	сыплет
пишем	скажем	плачем	сыпем
пишете	скажете	плачете	сыплете
пишут	скажут	плачут	сыплют

The consonant alternations are:

с ~ ш, з ~ ж, т ~ ч, к ~ ч, г ~ ж, х ~ ш, ск ~ щ, п ~ пл, б ~ бл, м ~ мл.

Some of these alternations are restricted to a very small number of verbs.

Additional examples to those given above are:

хохота́ть (нсв) 'to laugh (loudly)'	хохо́чу, хохо́чешь
маха́ть (нсв) 'to wave'	машу́, маше́шь (but <i>see</i> note (i) below)
иска́ть (нсв) 'to look for'	ищу́, ище́шь
колеба́ть (нсв) 'to shake'	колеблю́, колебле́шь
дрема́ть (нсв) 'to doze'	дремлю́, дремлешь

NOTES

(i) Some verbs belonging to this class have an alternative set of endings that follow the pattern of the first class of productive verbs (4.6.1):

ка́пать (нсв) 'to drip'	ка́плет or ка́пае́т
маха́ть (нсв) 'to wave'	ма́шет or маха́е́т

Generally speaking, the forms with the consonant alternation are more old-fashioned and more likely to occur in formal or elevated language.

(ii) The verb *посла́ть* and other *prefixed* verbs with the same root have the alternation *сл ~ шл*:

посла́ть (св) 'to send'	пошлю́, пошлѐшь
-------------------------	-----------------

4.7.2 Second unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

This class is made up of *first* conjugation verbs following the patterns:

- (a) Infinitive in **-ать** Non-past in **-му, мешь/-мѐшь, etc.**
- (b) Infinitive in **-ать** Non-past in **-ну, -нешь/-нѐшь, etc.**
- (c) Infinitive in **-ять** Non-past in **-му, -мѐшь, etc.**

(a) жать (нсв) 'to squeeze' жму жмёшь жмёт жмём жмёте жмут	(b) начать (св) 'to begin' начну́ начнёшь начнёт начнём начнёте начнут	(c) взять (св) 'to take' возьму́ возьмёшь возьмёт возьмём возьмёте возьмут
--	--	--

NOTES

(i) Alongside the verb **жать**, **жму**, **жмёшь**, etc. there is an unrelated (and less common) verb **жать (нсв)**, **жну**, **жнёшь**, etc. 'to reap'.

(ii) The verbs with an infinitive in **-ять** form the *future tense* (all are *perfective*) in slightly different ways:

понять (св) to understand	пойму́, поймёшь
снять (св) to take off	сниму́, снимешь

4.7.3 Third unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

These are *first* conjugation verbs following the pattern:

Infinitive in -ать ждать (нсв) 'to wait' жду ждёшь ждёт ждём ждёте ждут брать (нсв) 'to take' беру́ берёшь берёт берём берёте берут	Non-past in -у, -ешь/-ёшь, etc. стонать (нсв) 'to moan', 'to groan' стону́ стонёшь стонет стонем стонете стонут звать (нсв) 'to call' зову́ зовёшь зовёт зовём зовёте зовут
--	--

NOTE The verbs **брать, драть (нсв)** (деру, дерёшь etc.) 'to tear' and **звать** have a

fleeting vowel in the present tense.

For more on the fleeting vowel, see **2.5**.

4.7.4 Fourth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

This class consists of *first* conjugation verbs following the pattern:

Infinitive in -авать	Non-past in -аю, -аёшь, etc.	
дава́ть (НСВ) 'to give'	встава́ть (НСВ) 'to stand up', 'to get up'	узнава́ть (НСВ) 'to recognise'
даю́	встаю́	узнаю́
даёшь	встаёшь	узнаёшь
даёт	встаёт	узнаёт

даём	встаём	узнаём
даёте	встаёте	узнаёте
дают	встают	узнают

NOTE The *imperfective* verb *узнавать* is to be distinguished from its *perfective* partner *узнать*. The latter has the *future* tense *узнаю, узнаешь*, etc.

4.7.5 Fifth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

These are *first* conjugation verbs following the pattern:

Infinitive in -ять	Non-past in -ю, -ешь/-ёшь , etc.
лаять (нсв) 'to bark'	смеяться (нсв) 'to laugh'
лаю	смеюсь
лаешь	смеёшься
лаёт	смеётся
лаём	смеёмся
лаете	смеётесь
лают	смеются

NOTE смеяться occurs only as a reflexive verb (see 4.13.2).

4.7.6 Sixth class of unproductive verbs of first conjugation verbs

This class is made up of *first* conjugation verbs following the patterns:

(a) Infinitive in -ить	Non-past in -ью, -ёшь , etc.		
(b) Infinitive in -ыть	Non-past in -ою, -оешь , etc.		
(c) Infinitive in -ить	Non-past in -ею, -еешь , etc.		
(d) Infinitive in -еть	Non-past in -ою, -оёшь , etc.		
(a) бить (нсв) 'to beat', 'to hit', 'to strike'	(b) мыть (нсв) 'to wash'	(c) брить (нсв) 'to shave'	(d) петь (нсв) 'to sing'
бую	мою	брею	пою
бьёшь	моёшь	бреёшь	поёшь
бьёт	моёт	бреёт	поёт
бьём	моем	бреём	поём
бьёте	моёте	бреёте	поёте
бьют	моют	бреют	поют

NOTES

(i) All *unprefixed* verbs in this class have only one syllable in the infinitive.

(ii) **Брить** and **петь** are the only verbs to follow their respective patterns.

4.7.7 Seventh unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

This class is made up of *first* conjugation verbs following the pattern:

Infinitive in -уть	Non-past in -ую, -уешь, etc.
ду^тть (нсв) 'to blow'	
ду^ю	
ду^ешь	
ду^ет	
ду^ем	
ду^ете	
ду^ют	

4.7.8 Eighth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

This class consists of *first* conjugation verbs following the patterns:

(a) Infinitive in -олоть	Non-past in -олю, -олешь/-олёшь, etc.
(b) Infinitive in -ороть	Non-past in -орю, -орешь/-орёшь, etc.
(a) ко^лоть (нсв)	(b) бо^роться (нсв)
'to split', 'to prick'	'to struggle', 'to wrestle'
ко^{лю}	бо^{рю}сь
ко^лешь	бо^решься
ко^лет	бо^рется
ко^лем	бо^ремся
ко^лете	бо^ретесь
ко^лют	бо^рются

NOTE **бороться** occurs only as a *reflexive* verb (see 4.13.2).

4.7.9 Ninth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

In this class are *first* conjugation verbs following the pattern:

Infinitive in **-ереть**

тере́ть (нсв) 'to rub'
тру
трёшь
трёт
трём
трёте
трут

Non-past in **-ру, -рёшь**, etc.
Past tense in **-р, -рла**, etc.

умере́ть (св) 'to die'
умру
умрёшь
умрёт
умрём
умрёте
умрут

Past tense:

тёр, тёрла, тёрло, тёрли
умер, умерла, умерло, умерли

4.7.10 Tenth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

This class contains *first* conjugation verbs following the pattern:

Infinitive in **-нуть**

Non-past in **-ну, -нешь/-нёшь**, etc.

The past tense is formed without the **-ну-**.

мёрзнуть (нсв) 'to freeze'

мёрзну

мёрзнешь

мёрзнет

мёрзем

мёрзнете

мёрзнут

привыкнуть (св) 'to get used to'

привыкну

привыкнешь

привыкнет

привыкнем

привыкнете

привыкнут

Past tense:

мёрз, мёрзла, мёрзло, мёрзли

привык, привыкла, привыкло, привыкли

NOTES

(i) This class differs from the *third* class of *productive* verbs only in the past tense. It contains both *imperfective* and *perfective* verbs.

(ii) **достигнуть** (св) 'to reach', 'to achieve' has an alternative infinitive **достичь**.

4.7.11 Eleventh unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

This class consists of *first* conjugation verbs following the patterns:

(a) Infinitive in -ИТЬ	Non-past in -иву, -ивёшь, etc.
(b) Infinitive in -ЫТЬ	Non-past in -ыву, -ывёшь, etc.
(a) жить (нсв) 'to live'	(b) плыть (нсв) 'to (be) swim(ming)'
живу́	плыву́
живёшь	плывёшь
живёт	плывёт
живём	плывём
живёте	плывёте
живу́т	плыву́т

4.7.12 Twelfth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

This class is made up of *first* conjugation verbs following these patterns:

(a) Infinitive in -ЗТЬ/-ЗТИ	Non-past in -зу, -зешь/-зёшь, etc.	
(b) Infinitive in -СТИ	Non-past in -су, -сёшь, etc.	
(c) Infinitive in -ТИ	Non-past in -ту, -тёшь, etc.	
(d) Infinitive in -СТЬ/-СТИ	Non-past in -ду, -дешь/-дёшь, etc.	
(e) Infinitive in -ТИ	Non-past in -бу, -бёшь, etc.	
(a) ползти́ (нсв) 'to (be) crawl(ing)'	(b) нести́ (нсв) 'to (be) carrying)'	(c) изобрести́ (св) 'to invent'
ползу́	несу́	изобрету́
ползёшь	несёшь	изобретёшь

ползёт	несёт	изобретёт
ползём	несём	изобретём
ползёте	несёте	изобретёте
ползут	несут	изобретут
(d) класть (нсв) 'to put (lying)'	вести (нсв) 'to (be) lead(ing)'	(e) грести (нсв) 'to rake', 'to row (a boat)'
кладу́	веду́	гребу́
кладёшь	ведёшь	гребёшь
кладёт	ведёт	гребёт
кладём	ведём	гребём
кладёте	ведёте	гребёте
кладу́т	веду́т	гребу́т

These verbs form the *past tense* as follows:

- (a) полз, ползла́, ползло́, ползли́
- (b) нёс, несла́, несло́, несли́
- (c) изобрёл, изобрела́, изобрело́, изобрели́
- (d) вёл, вела́, вело́, вели́
- (e) грёб, грёбла́, грёбло́, грёбли́

NOTES

- (i) **сесть (св)** 'to sit down' has the *future tense* **сяду́, сядёшь**, etc. (*past tense* **сел, села́, село́, сели́**).
- (ii) **расти́ (нсв)** 'to grow' (intransitive) has *present tense* **расту́, растёшь**, etc., but *past tense* **рос, росла́, росло́, росли́**.

4.7.13 Thirteenth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

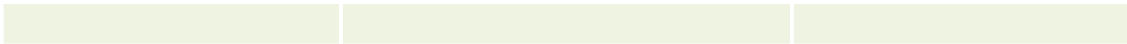
The verbs in this class are *first* conjugation verbs following the patterns:

- (a) Infinitive in -чь Non-past in -гу, -жешь/-жешь, etc.
 (b) Infinitive in -чь Non-past in -ку, -чешь/-чешь, etc.

(a) мочь (нсв) 'to be able'	(b) жечь (нсв) 'to burn'	(c) печь (нсв) 'to bake'
могу́	жгу́	пеку́
можешь	жжёшь	печёшь
может	жжёт	печёт
можем	жжём	печём
можете	жжёте	печёте
могут	жгут	пекут

These verbs form the *past tense* as follows:

- (a) мог, могла́, могло́, могли́; жёг, жгла, жгло, жгли
 (b) пёк, пекла́, пекло́, пекли́.



4.7.14 Miscellaneous first conjugation verbs

There are a few *first* conjugation verbs that fall into none of the above classes:

(a) идти́ (нсв) 'to (be) go(ing) (on foot)'	(b) ехать́ (нсв) 'to (be) go(ing) (by transport)'	(c) ошибиться́ (св) 'to make a mistake'
иду́	еду́	ошибу́сь
иде́шь	еде́шь	ошибе́шься
иде́т	еде́т	ошибе́тся
иде́м	еде́м	ошибе́мся
иде́те	еде́те	ошибе́тесь
иду́т	еду́т	ошибу́тся

These verbs form their *past tense* as follows:

- (a) **шёл, шла, шло, шли**
- (b) **ехал, ехала, ехало, ехали**
- (c) **ошибся, ошиблась, ошиблось, ошиблись.**

NOTES

(i) **идти́** is the only verb in Russian to have a *past tense* that is totally irregular (see 4.5.3).

(ii) In all its forms except the *infinitive* **ошибиться́** is identical to **грести́**.

4.7.15 First unproductive class of second conjugation verbs

This class consists of *second conjugation* verbs with an *infinitive* in **-еть**:

видеть (нсв) 'to see'	висеть (нсв) 'to hang' (intransitive)	смотреть (нсв) 'to look at'
вижу́	вишу́	смотре́ю
види́шь	виси́шь	смотре́ишь
види́т	виси́т	смотре́ит
види́м	виси́м	смотре́им
види́те	виси́те	смотре́ите
ви́дят	ви́сят	смотре́ят

NOTE: The same rules concerning *consonant alternations* in the *first person singular* of the *non-past* as were described above (4.6.4) for the *productive* class of *second* conjugation verbs also apply to these verbs.

4.7.16 Second unproductive class of second conjugation verbs

These are *second* conjugation verbs with an *infinitive* in *-ать/-ять*:

спать (нсв) 'to sleep'	держáть (нсв) 'to hold'	стоять (нсв) 'to stand'
сплю	держу́	стою́
спишь	держишь	стоишь
спит	держит	стоит
спим	держим	стоим
спите	держите	стойте
спят	держат	стоят

NOTES

(i) **Спать** is the only verb in this class where there is a *consonant alternation* in the *first person singular* of the *non-past*. Almost all other verbs in this class with an *infinitive* ending in **-ать** have a stem ending in **ж, ч, ш** or **щ**, and the endings in the *non-past* are subject to the spelling rules described in **1.5.2**.

(ii) The *infinitive* ending **-ять** occurs after a *vowel*.

4.8 Irregular verbs

Russian has only a handful of verbs that are totally irregular.

Two verbs have a mixture of *first* and *second* conjugation endings in the *non-past*:

хотеть (нсв) 'to want'

хочу
хочешь
хочет
хотим
хотите
хотят

бежать (нсв) 'to (be) run(ning)'

бегу
бежишь
бежит
бежим
бежите
бегут

Two verbs have endings in the *non-past* that belong to neither conjugation:

дать (св) 'to give'

дам
дашь
даст
дадим
дадите
дадут

есть (нсв) 'to eat'

ем
ешь
ест
едим
едите
едят

NOTES

(i) These two verbs, though otherwise identical, have different endings in the *third person plural*.

(ii) The past tense of **дать** is perfectly regular; the past tense of **есть** follows the pattern **ел, ела, ело, ели**.

Although it is an *imperfective* verb, **быть** ‘to be’ has no *present tense*. The only form that survives is the *third person (singular and plural)* form **есть**; this is most often used to indicate the presence or existence of something:

Здесь *есть* одна маленькая проблема.

There is a small problem here.

The *negative* form of **есть** is **нет** (this is the only special negative form in Russian, see **15.1**):

Здесь *нет* проблем.

There are no problems here.

The use of **есть** and **нет** and the ways in which Russian compensates for the otherwise missing *present tense* of **быть** are explained in **14.1, 14.2, 14.3** and **15.1**.



4.9 The imperative

4.9.0 Introduction

The *imperative* is used for giving commands and instructions or (in the negative) prohibitions and warnings; it can also be used for making requests (*see Chapter 18*). It is formed from both *imperfective* and *perfective* verbs. Special endings exist only for the *second person singular* and *plural*.

4.9.1 Second person singular

This is formed by taking the *second person singular* of the *non-past* and removing the *ending* (-ешь/-ёшь/-ишь).

If the stem that remains ends in a vowel, add -й:

делáть (нсв) 'to do'	делаешь	делáй
танцевáть (нсв) 'to dance'	танцуешь	танцуй
стрелять (нсв) 'to shoot'	стреляешь	стреляй
стоять (нсв) 'to stand'	стоишь	стой

If the stem that remains ends in a *consonant* and the stress of the verb is either always on the ending or is mobile, add -и:

братъ (нсв) 'to take'	берёшь	бери́
взять (св) 'to take'	возьмёшь	возьми́
писа́ть (нсв) 'to write'	пишешь	пиши́
сказа́ть (св) 'to say'	скажешь	скажи́
нести́ (нсв) 'to be carrying'	несёшь	неси́
говори́ть (нсв) 'to say', 'to speak'	говоришь	говори́
смотре́ть (нсв) 'to look'	смотришь	смотри́

If the stem that remains ends in a *consonant* and the stress of the verb is never on the ending, add -ь:

пла́кать (нсв) 'to cry'	плачешь	плачь
лезть (нсв) 'to climb'	лезешь	лезь
сесть (св) 'to sit down'	сядешь	сядь
оста́вить (св) 'to leave'	оставишь	оставь

If, however, the remaining stem ends in *two consonants* or if the verb is a *perfective*

verb with the *prefix* **вы-** and the *imperative* of the corresponding unprefix verb ends in **-и**, then **-и** is added:

кри́кнуть (св) 'to shout'	кри́кнешь	кри́кни
вы́нести (св) 'to carry out' (cf. нести above)	вы́несешь	вы́неси

The following verbs do not form their *imperative* according to any of the above patterns:

(a) Verbs of class **4.7.4**:

дава́ть (нсв) 'to give'	даёшь	дава́й
встава́ть (нсв) 'to stand up'	встаёшь	встава́й



(b) Verbs of sub-class **4.7.6** (a):

лить (нсв) 'to pour'	льёшь	лей
пить (нсв) 'to drink'	пьёшь	пей

(c) Verbs of class **4.7.13**:

беречь (нсв) 'to save'	бережёшь	береги́
печь (нсв) 'to bake'	печёшь	пеки́

The final consonant is the same as in the *first person singular* of the *non-past*.

(d) Other miscellaneous verbs:

быть (нсв) 'to be'	—	будь
лечь (св) 'to lie down'	ляжешь	ляг
сыпать (нсв) 'to pour (solids)'	сыплешь	сыпь

4.9.2 Second person plural

This is formed by adding **-те** to the second person singular. There are no exceptions to this rule:

дѐлать (нсв) 'to do'	дѐлай	дѐлайте
танцевать (нсв) 'to dance'	танцуй	танцуйте
взять (св) 'to take'	возьми	возьмите
писа́ть (нсв) 'to write'	пиши́	пишите
говори́ть (нсв) 'to say, to speak'	говори́	говорите
пла́кать (нсв) 'to cry'	плачь	плачьте
оста́вить (св) 'to leave'	оста́вь	оста́вьте
дава́ть (нсв) 'to give'	давай	давайте
пить (нсв) 'to drink'	пей	пейте
быть (нсв) 'to be'	будь	будьте

4.9.3 The third person imperative

The *third person imperative* is formed by using the *particle* **пусть** (less often **пускай**) with the *third person singular* or plural of the *future perfective* or *present imperfective*:

войти́ (св) 'to enter' пусть войдёт пусть войду́т
говорить (нсв) 'to say', 'to speak' пусть говорит пусть говорят

Мы готовы начать собеседование; пусть он войдёт.

We're ready to begin the interview; let him come in.

Пусть говорят; мы не боимся правды.

Let them speak; we're not afraid of the truth.

4.10 The conditional (or subjunctive)

In Russian the terms *conditional* and *subjunctive* are used interchangeably, although the former is more common and is preferred here. The conditional is used for all sorts of hypothetical situations, for example, conditions incapable of being fulfilled or when giving advice (*see* **18.4** and **21.5**).

The conditional can be formed from both *imperfective* and *perfective* verbs. It is formed with the *enclitic particle* **бы** (see 9.4) and the *past tense* of the verb:

говори́ть (нсв) ‘to say’, ‘to speak’:

говори́л бы, говори́ла бы, говори́ло бы, говори́ли бы

сказа́ть (св) ‘to say’:

сказа́л бы, сказа́ла бы, сказа́ло бы, сказа́ли бы

писа́ть (нсв) ‘to write’:

писа́л бы, писа́ла бы, писа́ло бы, писа́ли бы

написа́ть (св) ‘to write’:

написа́л бы, написа́ла бы, написа́ло бы, написа́ли бы

дава́ть (нсв) ‘to give’:

дава́л бы, дава́ла бы, дава́ло бы, дава́ли бы

да́ть (св) ‘to give’:

да́л бы, да́ла бы, да́ло бы, да́ли бы

4.11 Gerunds

4.11.0 Introduction

Gerunds are *verbal adverbs*, which means they are at the same time both a part of the *verb* and an *adverb*. Although they can sometimes be used alongside other adverbs, their main function is to form complex sentences, in which a *gerund* is used in place of a *conjunction + verb*.

The use of gerunds is described in detail in **21.10**.

Gerunds are rare in speech, but they are widely used in all forms of writing. There

are *imperfective* (or *present*) gerunds and *perfective* (or *past*) gerunds.

4.11.1 The imperfective gerund

The *imperfective gerund* is formed from the present tense of *imperfective* verbs. The easiest way to form this gerund is to take the *third person plural*, remove the final two letters and add **-я**:

чита́ть (нсв) 'to read'	чита́ют	чита́я
позволя́ть (нсв) 'to allow'	позволя́ют	позволя́я
целова́ть (нсв) 'to kiss'	целу́ют	целу́я
идти́ (нсв) 'to (be) go(ing)'	идут	идя́
говори́ть (нсв) 'to say, to speak'	говоря́т	говоря́
крича́ть (нсв) 'to shout'	кричат	крича́

NOTE The spelling of **крича́** is determined by the spelling rule that prevents the letter **я** occurring after **ж, ц, ч, ш, щ** (see 1.5.2).

The following verbs have an irregular *imperfective gerund*:

дава́ть (нсв) 'to give' дают дава́я

The same rule applies to all other verbs in class 4.7.4.

быть (нсв) 'to be' — бу́дучи
 е́хать (нсв) 'to (be) go(ing)
 (by transport)' е́дут е́дучи

NOTES

- (i) It is not normally possible to form *imperfective gerunds* from most *unproductive* classes of *first* conjugation verbs (exceptions are 4.7.4, 4.7.5, 4.7.6(c), 4.7.7, 4.7.8 and 4.7.11).
- (ii) Some *imperfective gerund* forms have been transformed into other parts of speech and are no longer used as gerunds:
- хотя́ 'although' is a conjunction (see 21.6.3);
- смотря́ 'depending (on)' is an adverb used with a question word or the preposition по(+ dat.) (see 16.5.3).

4.11.2 The perfective gerund

The *perfective gerund* is formed from the *past tense* of *perfective* verbs. Where the *masculine singular* form of the *past tense* ends in **-л**, this is removed and replaced by **-в**:

прочита́ть (св) 'to read' прочита́л прочита́в
 написа́ть (св) 'to write' написа́л написа́в
 взять (св) 'to take' взял взяв
 поджа́рить (св) 'to fry' поджа́рил поджа́рив

Note that *reflexive* verbs (4.13.2) form the *perfective gerund* by inserting **-ши-** between the normal gerund and the *reflexive particle* **-сь**:

верну́ться (св) 'to return' верну́лся верну́вшись

If the *masculine singular* form of the *past tense* ends in a consonant other than *-л*, then *-ши* is added:

вы́расти 'to grow up' испечь 'to bake'	вы́рос испёк	вы́росши испёкши
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Verbs belonging to classes **4.7.9** and **4.7.10** have alternative forms of the perfective gerund:

умерéть (св) 'to die' замёрзнуть (св) 'to freeze' (intransitive)	у́мер замёрз	умерéв/у́мерши замёрзнув/замёрзши
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NOTE The only perfective gerund formed from **исчезнуть (св)** 'to disappear' is **исчезнув**.

Prefixed perfective verbs based on **везти́**, **вести́**, **идти́** and **нести́** form their perfective gerunds according to the rules for forming imperfective gerunds:

ввезти́ (св) 'to import' провести́ (св) 'to conduct, to spend (time)' уйти́ (св) 'to go away' вынести́ (св) 'to carry out'	ввезу́т проведу́т уйду́т вынесу́т	ввезя́ проведя́ уйдя́ вынеся́
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4.12 Participles

4.12.0 Introduction

The *participle* in Russian is a *verbal adjective*, which means that it is at the same time both part of the *verb* and an *adjective*. There are four participles: *present active*, *past active*, *present passive* and *past passive*. The first three of these have only a *long form*, but the *past passive participle* has both *long* and *short* forms.

For more on the long and short forms of adjectives, see **6.1** and **6.5**.

Long form participles are not normally found in speech or in informal writing, but they are a characteristic feature of formal written Russian, where they are used to form clauses similar in function to *relative clauses*.

The use of long form participles is discussed in **23.1.3**.

The *short form* of the *past passive participle* is used to form the *passive voice* of *perfective* verbs (**4.14**) and therefore occurs in both spoken and written language of all types.

The declension of *present* and *past active* participles follows the pattern described in **6.1.5**. The declension of present and past passive participles (in the long form) follows the pattern described in **6.1.1**.

4.12.1 The present active participle

The *present active participle* is formed from *imperfective* verbs. It is most easily formed by taking the *third person plural* of the *present tense*, removing the last letter, adding **-щ-** and the appropriate *adjective* endings:

чита́ть (нсв) 'to read'	чита́ют	чита́ющий, -щая, -щее
писа́ть (нсв) 'to write'	пишут	пишущий, -щая, -щее
танцева́ть (нсв) 'to dance'	танцуют	танцующий, -щая, -щее
пить (нсв) 'to drink'	пьют	пьющий, -щая, -щее
уходи́ть (нсв) 'to go away'	уходят	уходящий, -щая, -щее
крича́ть (нсв) 'to shout'	кричат	кричащий, -щая, -щее

4.12.2 The past active participle

The *past active participle* is formed from both *imperfective* and *perfective* verbs. It

is formed from the *masculine singular* of the *past tense*: if this ends in -л, the final consonant is removed and replaced by -вш- and the appropriate *adjective* endings:

чита́ть (нсв) 'to read'	чита́л	чита́вший, -шая, -шее
написа́ть (св) 'to write'	написа́л	написа́вший, -шая, -шее
целова́ть (нсв) 'to kiss'	целова́л	целова́вший, -шая, -шее
взя́ть (св) 'to take'	взя́л	взя́вший, -шая, -шее
сесть (св) 'to sit down'	сел	се́вший, -шая, -шее

If the *masculine singular* of the *past tense* ends in a *consonant* other than -л, then -ш- and the appropriate *adjective* endings are added to this form:



замёрзнуть (св) 'to freeze'	замёрз	замёрзший, -шая, -шее
умереть (св) 'to die'	умер	умерший, -шая, -шее
нести (нсв) 'to (be) carry(ing)'	нёс	нёсший, -шая, -шее

The following *past active participles* are formed irregularly:

вести́ (нсв) 'to (be) lead(ing)'	вёл	ведший, -шая, -шее
идти́ (нсв) 'to (be) go(ing)'	шёл	шедший, -шая, -шее
обрести́ (св) 'to find', 'to obtain'	обрёл	обрётший, -шая, -шее

NOTE When *present* or *past active participles* are formed from *reflexive* verbs, the *reflexive suffix* takes the form **-ся** regardless of whether the preceding letter is a *vowel* or a *consonant* (see 4.13.2):

боя́ться (нсв) 'to be afraid of':

Present active:	боя́щийся	боя́щаяся	боя́щееся
Past active:	боя́вшийся	боя́вшаяся	боя́вшееся

4.12.3 The present passive participle

The *present passive participle* is the least used of all participles; it is formed from some *imperfective transitive* verbs only. It is formed by adding the appropriate *adjective* endings to the *first person plural* of the present tense:

выбра́сывать (нсв) 'to throw out'	выбра́сываем	выбра́сываемый, -мая, -мое
повторя́ть (нсв) 'to repeat'	повторя́ем	повторя́емый, -мая, -мое
цити́ровать (нсв) 'to quote'	цити́руем	цити́руемый, -мая, -мое
проводи́ть (нсв) 'to conduct, to spend (time)'	проводи́м	проводи́мый, -мая, -мое

Verbs of class 4.7.4 keep the **-ва-** infix from the *infinitive* in the *present passive participle: past*

признава́ть (нсв) 'to recognise, to admit'	призна́ем	but признава́емый, -мая, -мое
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In practice, the *present passive participle* is formed only from verbs belonging to

the classes represented in the examples (4.6.1, 4.6.2, 4.6.4 and all classes of *second* conjugation verbs), and then from not all of these. It is difficult to give precise rules, but generally speaking, *present passive participles* are more likely to be formed from *prefixed imperfective* verbs or from verbs with a more abstract or literary meaning.

4.12.4 The past passive participle

The past passive participle is formed from all *perfective transitive* verbs. The great majority of verbs form this participle with the suffix **-н(н)-**.

Important note: This is the only participle with both *long* and *short* forms. The spelling **-нн-** is used throughout the long form; the spelling **-н(-)** is used throughout the short form.

If the infinitive ends in **-ать, -ять** (classes **4.6.1, 4.6.2, 4.7.1, 4.7.3** and **4.7.16**), the *participle* is formed from the *infinitive* by removing the **-ть** and replacing it with the *participle suffix* and the appropriate *adjective* endings:

прочита́ть (св) ‘to read’	прочи́танный, -нная, -нное
написа́ть (св) ‘to write’	написа́нный, -нная, -нное
нарисова́ть (св) ‘to draw’	нарисова́нный, -нная, -нное
порва́ть (св) ‘to tear’	порва́нный, -нная, -нное

Verbs belonging to classes **4.7.12** and **4.7.13** form the *past passive participle* from the *non-past (future) tense*; the *consonant* to which the ending is added is that found in the *first person plural*:

прине́сти (св) ‘to bring’	принесе́м	прине́сённый, -нная, -нное
введе́ти (св) ‘to lead in’	веде́м	веде́нённый, -нная, -нное
 изобре́сти (св) ‘to invent’	изобре́тём	изобре́тённый, -нная, -нное
испе́чь (св) ‘to bake’	испе́чем	испе́чённый, -нная, -нное
сбере́чь (св) ‘to save’	сбере́жем	сбере́жённый, -нная, -нное

Prefixed forms of **идти́** follow this pattern:

найти́ (св) ‘to find’	наиде́м	наиде́нный, -нная, -нное
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Second conjugation verbs with an infinitive in **-ить, -еть** have the *suffix* **-енн-/-ённ-** and the same *consonant alternation* as in the *first person singular* of the *future tense*:

Without *consonant alternation*:

поджа́рить (св) ‘to fry’	поджа́рю	поджа́ренный, -нная, -нное
реше́ть (св) ‘to decide’	реше́у	реше́нный, -нная, -нное

With *consonant alternation*:

пове́сить (св) 'to hang'	пове́шу	пове́шенный, -нная, -нное
снизить (св) 'to lower'	снизю́	сни́женный, -нная, -нное
оплати́ть (св) 'to pay for'	оплачу́	опла́ченный, -нная, -нное
освети́ть (св) 'to illuminate'	освещу́	освеще́нный, -нная, -нное
обиде́ть (св) 'to offend'	обижу́	оби́женный, -нная, -нное
ограби́ть (св) 'to rob'	ограблю́	огра́бленный, -нная, -нное
купи́ть (св) 'to buy'	куплю́	купле́нный, -нная, -нное
прояви́ть (св) 'to show (a quality), to develop (photographs)'	проявлю́	проявле́нный, -нная, -нное
накорми́ть (св) 'to feed'	накормлю́	накормле́нный, -нная, -нное

NOTES

(i) Some *second* conjugation verbs with an *infinitive* in *-дить, -деть* change the *consonant* to *-жд-* in the *past passive participle*:

утверди́ть (св) to state, to affirm	утвержу́	утвержде́нный, -нная, -нное
убеди́ть (св) to convince	—	убежде́нный, -нная, -нное

In the case of *paired imperfective* and *perfective* verbs, these verbs can be identified from the *imperfective*:

утверди́ть (св) ~ утвержда́ть (нсв).
убеди́ть (св) ~ убежда́ть (нсв)

The *first person singular* of the *future tense* of *убеदि́ть* (and also of *победи́ть* 'to defeat') is never used.

(ii) The *past passive participle* of **увидеть** (св) 'to see' does not have the expected *consonant alternation*:

увидеть уви́жу увиденный, -нная, -нное

Verbs belonging to classes **4.6.3, 4.7.2, 4.7.6, 4.7.7, 4.7.8, 4.7.9, 4.7.10, 4.7.11** and *prefixed perfectives* formed from **быть** have a *past passive participle* in **-т-**:

обману́ть (св) 'to deceive'	обма́нутый, -тая, -тое
взять (св) 'to take'	взя́тый, -тая, -тое
спеть (св) 'to sing'	спе́тый, -тая, -тое
разду́ть (св) 'to blow, to inflate'	разду́тый, -тая, -тое
приколо́ть (св) 'to pin up'	приколо́тый, -тая, -тое
заперё́ть (св) 'to lock'	заперты́й, -тая, -тое
свергну́ть (св) 'to overthrow'	свергну́тый, -тая, -тое
прожить (св) 'to live (a certain length of time somewhere)'	прожиты́й, -тая, -тое
забы́ть (св) 'to forget'	забы́тый, -тая, -тое

Examples of *short forms*:

прочита́ть (св) 'to read'	прочита́н, -тана, -тано, -таны
написа́ть (св) 'to write'	написа́н, -сана, -сано, -саны
принести́ (св) 'to bring'	принесе́н, -сена, -сено, -сены
испе́чь (св) 'to bake'	испече́н, -чена, -чено, -чены
повеси́ть (св) 'to hang'	повеше́н, -шена, -шено, -шены
освети́ть (св) 'to illuminate'	освеще́н, -щена, -щено, -щены
обиде́ть (св) 'to offend'	оби́жен, -жена, -жено, -жены
взять (св) 'to take'	взя́т, взя́та, взя́то, взя́ты
забы́ть (св) 'to forget'	забы́т, -та, -то, -ты

4.13 Transitive, intransitive and reflexive verbs

4.13.1 Transitive and intransitive verbs

Transitive verbs are those used with a *direct object* in the *accusative case*. In both of the following sentences the verb is *transitive*, since the pronoun **что** and the noun **кни́гу** are both *direct objects* in the *accusative*:

Что он де́лает?

What is he doing?

Он чита́ет кни́гу.

He is reading a book.

In the following examples, the verbs are *intransitive*, since they are not used with a *direct object* in the *accusative* case. In the last two examples, the verbs are used with *objects*, but in the *instrumental* and the *dative* cases respectively:

Она́ живёт в Москвѐ.

She lives in Moscow.

Я уже ходил за хлебом.

I've already been for the bread. **Он сидел за столом.**

He was sitting at the table. **Мои глаза ещё не привыкли к темноте.**

My eyes still haven't got used to the darkness. **Как пользоваться этим словарём.**

Guide to the use of this dictionary [*literally*, How to use this dictionary].

Вам помочь?

Can I help you?

For more on the use of different cases to indicate the object of a verb, see **3.2, 3.3.4, 3.3.5, 3.4.4** and **3.5.7**.

In English, the difference between *transitive* and *intransitive* verbs is of little or no importance, and a great many verbs can be used either transitively or intransitively:

She *walks* to school every day. *Intransitive*

She *walks* the dog every day. *Transitive*

Why not *hang* this picture on the wall? *Transitive*

The picture *is* already *hanging* on the wall. *Intransitive*

In Russian, only a very small number of verbs denoting simple actions, such as **чита́ть** 'to read', **писа́ть** 'to write' and **есть** 'to eat', can be used either transitively or intransitively:

Что он де́лает? Он чита́ет кни́гу. *Transitive*

What is he doing? He is reading a book.

Что он де́лает? Он чи́тает. *Intransitive*

What is he doing? He is reading.

Even here, however, there is a complication, since the *perfective* partners of these verbs depend on whether the verb is transitive or intransitive:

прочита́ть, **написа́ть** and **съе́сть** are normally used if the respective verbs are transitive, while **почита́ть**, **пописа́ть** and **пое́сть** are used if the respective verbs are

intransitive.

The vast majority of Russian verbs are either transitive or intransitive; it is virtually impossible for an intransitive verb to be used transitively, and very rare for a transitive verb to be used intransitively. It follows from this that where in English the same verb can be used either transitively or intransitively, different verbs will be required in Russian:

Она́ ка́ждый день хóдит в шко́лу пешко́м.

Intransitive

She *walks* to school every day.

Она́ ка́ждый день выгу́ливает соба́ку.

Transitive

She *walks* the dog every day.

Почему́ не повéсить э́ту карти́ну на стéну?

Transitive

Why not *hang* this picture on the wall?

Карти́на уже́ висит на стене́.

Intransitive

The picture *is* already *hanging* on the wall.



The verb **ходить** (НСВ) 'to go somewhere regularly on foot' is intransitive, whereas **выгуливать** (НСВ)/**выгулять** (СВ) 'to take a dog for a walk' is transitive. Similarly, **вешать** (НСВ)/**повесить** (СВ) 'to hang something somewhere' is transitive, while **висеть** (НСВ)/**повисеть** (СВ) 'to be hanging somewhere' is intransitive.

Sometimes adding a prefix can make an intransitive verb transitive or vice versa: **выгуливать** is derived from **гулять** (НСВ) 'to walk, 'to stroll', which is intransitive; **платить** (НСВ)/**заплатить** (СВ) 'to pay' is usually intransitive, while **оплачивать** (НСВ)/**оплатить** (СВ) 'to pay for' is transitive.

После обеда она гуляет в парке.

After lunch she goes for a walk in the park.

Почему вы не заплатили за проезд?

Why haven't you paid your fare?

Почему вы не оплатили проезд?

Why haven't you paid your fare?

The last two examples have the same meaning and are interchangeable.

4.13.2 Reflexive verbs

Reflexive verbs are formed with the suffix **-ся**. This suffix, which except in *participles* (see 4.12.2) is shortened to **-сь** after a vowel, appears in all forms of the verb. The various forms of a reflexive verb can be illustrated by **смеяться** (НСВ)/**засмеяться** (СВ) 'to laugh'.

Non-past

(a) <i>Present imperfective</i>	(b) <i>Future perfective</i>
смею́сь	засмею́сь
смеёшься	засмеёшься
смеётся	засмеётся
смеёмся	засмеёмся
смеётесь	засмеётесь
смеются	засмеются

Future imperfective: буду смея́ться, etc.

Past tense: (за)смея́лся, (за)смея́лась, (за)смея́лось, (за)смея́лись

Imperative: (за)сме́йся, (за)сме́йтесь

Imperfective gerund: смея́сь

Perfective gerund: засмея́вшись

Present participle: смею́щийся, смею́щаяся, смею́щееся

Past participle: (за)смея́вшийся, (за)смея́вшаяся, (за)смея́вшееся

Reflexive verbs are by definition intransitive, and the main purpose of making a verb reflexive is to turn a transitive verb into an intransitive verb:

Я уже верну́л эту кни́гу в библиоте́ку.

I've already returned this book to the library.

Я верну́лся домо́й позавчера́.

I returned home the day before yesterday.

Не открывайте́ эту дверь!

Don't open that door!

Двери́ открыва́ются автоматиче́ски.

The doors open automatically.

Завтра́ начина́ю рабо́ту над кни́гой.

Tomorrow I'm beginning work on the book.

Конце́рт начина́ется в во́семь часо́в.

The concert begins at eight o'clock.

Осторо́жно! На́ша соба́ка ино́гда куса́ет незнако́мых.

Careful! Our dog sometimes bites strangers.

Осторо́жно! На́ша соба́ка куса́ется.

Careful! Our dog bites.

Не высóвывайте́ го́лову в окно́.

Don't stick your head out of the window.

Не высóвываться!

(Please) do not lean out of the window (as used on notices in railway carriages).

In each of the above pairs of examples the verb in the first sentence is used with a *direct object* in the *accusative* and so is *transitive*, while the verb in the second sentence is *reflexive* and *intransitive*.

There are a number of verbs in Russian that occur only as *reflexive* verbs. Common examples include the following:

борот́ся (нсв)	to struggle, to wrestle
боят́ся (нсв)	to be afraid of
наде́яться (нсв)	to hope, to rely on
напива́ться (нсв)/ напи́ться (св)	to get drunk
появля́ться (нсв)/ появи́ться (св)	to appear
сме́яться (нсв)/ засме́яться (св)	to laugh

Another function of reflexive verbs is discussed in the following section.

4.14 Active and passive verbs

4.14.1 The active and the passive voices

In all the sentences quoted so far in this section, the verbs have been in the *active* voice, that is to say, the performer of the action or the main participant in the state is the *subject* of the *verb*. When it is necessary to make the recipient of the action the subject of the verb, the *passive* voice is used:

Мой де́душка написа́л эту кни́гу. *Active*

My grandfather wrote this book.

Эта кни́га была́ написа́на мо́им де́душкой. *Passive*

This book was written by my grandfather.

Мой де́душка написа́л эту кни́гу в 1931 г. *Active*

My grandfather wrote this book in 1931.

Эта книга была написана в 1931 г.

Passive

This book was written in 1931.

When a passive verb is used, what would have been the *direct object* of the corresponding *active verb* becomes the *subject* of the sentence in the *nominative* case. It follows from this that the *passive voice* can be formed only from *transitive* verbs. In a passive sentence, the performer of the action is known as the *agent* and is in the *instrumental* case (as in the first pair of examples). As the second pair of examples shows, it is not necessary for the agent to be present.

For more on the use of the instrumental for the agent of a passive verb, see **3.5.2**.

4.14.2 The passive of imperfective verbs

The formation of the passive voice depends on the aspect of the verb. With *imperfective* verbs the *reflexive* is used for the passive:

Мы считаем его крупным специалистом в этой области.

Active

We consider him (to be) a great specialist in this area.

Он считается крупным специалистом в этой области.

Passive

He is considered (to be) a great specialist in this area.

Надо сохранять таможенную декларацию на весь период временного въезда/выезда и предъявлять её таможенным органам при возвращении.

Active

You should retain your customs declaration for the whole duration of your visit and present it to the customs authorities on your return.

Таможенная декларация сохраняется на весь период временного въезда/выезда и предъявляется таможенным органам при возвращении.

Passive

The customs declaration is retained for the duration of the whole visit and is presented to the customs authorities on your return.

As this last example, quoted almost word for word from a Russian customs declaration form, indicates, the use of the *imperfective passive* is often a distinguishing feature of formal and official language.

4.14.3 The passive of perfective verbs

The *passive voice* of *perfective* verbs is formed using the *short form* of the *past passive participle* and the appropriate form of the verb **быть** 'to be':

Здесь *был* постро́ен но́вый дом.

A new building was put up here.

Здесь постро́ен но́вый дом.

A new building has been put up here.

Здесь *будет* постро́ен но́вый дом.

A new building will be put up here.

Эта кни́га *была́* написа́на на ру́сском языке́.

This book was written in Russian.

Эта кни́га *написа́на* на ру́сском языке́.

This book is written in Russian.



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Эта книга будет написана на русском языке.

This book will be written in Russian.

There are no stylistic restrictions on the use of perfective passive, but in general passive verbs are used rather less frequently in Russian than in English. More information on the use of passive verbs and the means that exist for avoiding them is given in **20.2**.

5 Aspects of the verb

5.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter (*see 4.2*) it was pointed out that the Russian verb was characterised by the presence of two aspects—*imperfective* and *perfective*—and that every Russian verb (with a handful of exceptions) belongs to one or other of these aspects. In this chapter it is intended to examine in some detail the use of the two aspects, although it may be noted that whole books have been written on this topic, and it will therefore not be possible here to discuss every circumstance in which a decision on aspectual usage has to be made.

It is usually reckoned that aspects of the verb present a particularly tough challenge to speakers of English attempting to learn Russian. There are perhaps three reasons for this.

First, with the exception of the *present tense*, which is formed only from *imperfective verbs*, the aspect system extends to all parts of the verb, including *gerunds* and (at least in some circumstances) *participles*. It is therefore necessary to make a decision about aspects almost every time a verb is used.

Second, differences in meaning between the aspects of the Russian verb tend not to correspond to differences in meaning between English verb forms. For example, in English it is possible to talk about ‘reading’ in the past using the following forms:

I read

I have read

I did read

I had read

I was reading

I used to read

I would read

In Russian, an imperfective verb (**я чита́л**), depending on the context, might be the equivalent of any of those forms; a *perfective* verb (**я прочита́л**), depending on the context, might be the equivalent of any of the first four forms.

Third, although numerous attempts have been made, it is extremely difficult to come up with a brief account of the differences between the aspects that can serve as a practical guide for all occasions. In section **4.2** it was suggested that each aspect covers a wide range of functions, but in general terms the perfective aspect is used when an action



or state is considered from the point of view of its boundaries (beginning, end or both), while the imperfective is used in all other circumstances (if there is a 'default' aspect in Russian, it is the imperfective). The authors of this volume consider this to be as good a single-sentence statement of the difference between the aspects as any other, but we readily accept that there will be many circumstances where it will be of no help at all and that there will even be occasions where the choice of aspect appears to be (or can be interpreted as being) in direct contradiction with it.

Nevertheless, the difficulties should not be overstated. Although a choice of aspect has to be made almost every time a verb is used, not all choices are equally important. The situations where questions of aspect arise can be divided into four categories:

- 1 Only one aspect is grammatically possible.
- 2 Either aspect can be used and the meaning of the sentence is affected by the aspect used.
- 3 One aspect is preferable, but the use of the other aspect will not lead to a misunderstanding.
- 4 Either aspect can be used without there being any significant difference.

It follows from this that only in the first two situations is there a danger of producing a sentence that is either grammatically unacceptable or likely to be misunderstood. In other situations it is possible that the Russian will not 'sound quite right', but no real problems of communication will arise.

In this chapter the first section will be devoted to those situations where only one aspect is grammatically possible, while examples of the other three situations will be found at different points throughout the remaining sections. The second section will enumerate some general principles that can be applied to most verb forms where there is choice of aspects, while in the remaining sections there will be an examination of the issues relating to the specific meanings of particular groups of verbs (5.3), single completed actions (5.4), questions (5.5), commands and invitations (5.6) and negated sentences (5.7); the final section (5.8) contains a description of a construction that allows both aspects to be used in the same verb phrase. As in the previous chapter, the aspect of each of the relevant verbs used in the examples will be indicated by the abbreviations **нсв**(=**несовершенный**

imperfective) and **св**(=**совершенный** *perfective*).

5.1 Situations where there is no choice

5.1.0 Introduction

In a number of instances involving the *infinitive*, only one aspect is grammatically possible.

For more on the infinitive, *see* **4.1**.

5.1.1 Only the imperfective is possible

A verb in the *infinitive* must be in the *imperfective* aspect when it is used in conjunction with one of the following:



1 A verb conveying the idea of *beginning*, *continuing* or *stopping* an action, for example:

начина́ть (нсв)/нача́ть (св)	to begin
продолжа́ть (нсв)	to continue
конча́ть (нсв)/кончи́ть (св)	to finish
перестава́ть (нсв)/переста́ть (св)	to cease
прекраща́ть (нсв)/прекрати́ть (св)	to cease
броса́ть (нсв)/бро́сить (св)	to give up

Он нача́л рассказыва́ть (нсв) о том, где он был и что он дела́л.

He began to talk about where he had been and what he had been doing.

Она прервала́ свой рассказ, но сле́дователь ничего́ не говори́л и продол́жал смотре́ть (нсв) на неё с иронической улы́бкой на лице́.

She broke off her account, but the investigating officer said nothing and continued to look at her with an ironic smile on his face.

Он кончи́л счита́ть (нсв) де́ньги и вы́писал кви́танцию.

He finished counting the money and wrote out a receipt.

По́сле пе́рвого ку́рса он перестáл ходи́ть (нсв) на ле́кции, но стал проводи́ть бо́льше вре́мени в библиоте́ке.

After first year he stopped going to lectures and spent more time in the library.

Специали́сты пришл́и к вы́воду, что с 1997 го́да озо́новый слой, за исклю́чением простран́ства над по́люсами, прекрати́л уменьша́ться (нсв).

Scientists have come to the conclusion that from 1997 onwards the ozone layer, with the exception of the area above the poles, has stopped diminishing.

Я не знал, что вы бро́сили кури́ть (нсв).

I didn't know you'd given up smoking.

2 A verb or another predicate form indicating the undesirability or the pointlessness

of an action, for example:

не на́до	don't, you shouldn't
не ну́жно	don't, you shouldn't
не стои́т	it's not worth
бесполе́зно	it's pointless
неза́чем	there's no point in
нет смы́сла, не име́ет смы́сла	it makes no sense to

Не на́до звони́ть (исв) так ра́но: я ещё не просну́лся как сле́дует.

Don't phone so early, I haven't woken up properly yet.

Не ну́жно говори́ть (исв) такие ве́щи вслух.

You shouldn't say such things aloud.

Не стои́т писа́ть (исв) жа́лобу: всё равно́ ниче́го не изме́нится.

It's not worth writing a complaint, nothing's going to change anyway.

С ним бесполе́зно спо́рить (исв): он всё зна́ет и никогó не слу́шает.

It's pointless arguing with him, he knows everything and doesn't listen to anyone.



Незачем идти (нсв) так рано: в это время никого там не будет.

There's no point in going so early; at this time of day there'll be nobody there.

Так поздно ехать (нсв) на автобусе не имеет смысла; лучше я вызову такси.

It doesn't make sense to go by bus when it's this late; it'll be better if I call a taxi.

3 The following verbs:

запрещать (нсв)/запретить (св)	to forbid
уметь (нсв)	to know how to do something
учиться (нсв)/научиться (св)	to learn how to do something

Здесь запрещено пользоваться (нсв) мобильными телефонами.

It's forbidden to use mobile phones here.

Она умеет так красиво излагать (нсв) свои мысли.

She knows how to express her thoughts so beautifully.

Я в школе учился играть (нсв) в шахматы, но ничего не получилось.

I tried to learn how to play chess at school, but never got anywhere with it.

5.1.2 Only the perfective is possible

An *infinitive* verb must be in the *perfective* aspect if it is used with any of the following *perfective* verbs:

выйти (св)	to pop out (to do something)
зайти (св)	to drop in (to do something)
удаться (св)	to succeed
успеть (св)	to succeed, to have time (to do something)
суметь (св)	to be clever enough, to be able (to do something)

Давай выйдем (св) покурить (св).

Let's go out for a smoke.

Если можно, я зайду́ (св) завтра поговорить (св) о наших планах.

If it's all right, I'll call in tomorrow to talk about our plans.

Ему́ удало́сь (св) найти́ (св) квартиру в самом центре города.

He managed to find a flat in the very centre of town.

Сего́дня я не успею́ (св) сде́лать (св) э́тот перево́д.

I won't have time to do the translation today.

Письмо́ написа́но ме́лким, неразбо́рчивым по́черком, но мы всё же сумели́ (св) его́ прочита́ть (св).

The letter was written in small, illegible handwriting, but none the less we managed to read it.

NOTE The verb удаваться (нсв)/удаться (св), when used with an *infinitive*, is an *impersonal* verb, and the *dative* case is used to indicate the person who succeeds in doing something.

For more on impersonal verbs, see 3.4.3 and 11.2.2.

5.2 Some general principles

5.2.1 Incomplete actions

When a verb is used to indicate an incomplete action, it is in the *imperfective* aspect. Such actions can be interrupted by some event or can be going on the background while something else happens.

Она сидела (исв) в офисе и разбира́ла (исв) какие-то финансовые документы, когда вдруг раздался стук в дверь.

She was sitting in the office and going through some financial documents, when suddenly there was a knock at the door.

Когда он вошёл в комнату, его начальник разговаривал (исв) по телефону.

When he came into the room, his boss was talking on the telephone.

Он спешил, потому́ что опаздывал (исв) на поезд.

He was hurrying because he was late for the train.

In the last example, the second verb is *imperfective* because the action of being late is not completed until the person arrives at the station and discovers that the train has already left. In many instances the incompleteness is implied by the general situation or context:

—Что вы де́лали (исв) вче́ра ве́чером?

—Ниче́го интере́сного: я чита́л (исв) кни́гу, реша́л (исв) кроссво́рд в ве́черней газе́те и смотре́л (исв) телеви́зор.

—What did you do yesterday evening?

—Nothing interesting: I read a book, had a go at crossword in the evening paper, watched television.

If, however, specific accomplishments are mentioned, the *perfective* is more likely to be used:

У меня вчера был такой насыщенный вечер: я *прочитал* (св) десять студенческих работ, *решил* (св) кроссворд в вечерней газете и наконец *посмотрел* (св) ту передачу, которую ты всё время рекомендуешь.

I had a very full evening yesterday; I read ten student essays, solved the crossword in the evening paper and eventually watched that programme you're always recommending.

Another type of incomplete action is one that is in process and is to be continued:

***Читайте* (нсв), *читайте* (нсв); не обращайтесь внимания на шум в коридоре.**

Carry on reading; don't pay any attention to the noise in the corridor.

5.2.2 Focusing on the process

On meeting a friend or colleague on Monday morning, you may be asked one of the following questions:

**Как вы *провели* (св) субботу-воскресенье?
Как вы *проводили* (нсв) субботу-воскресенье?**

Both sentences mean essentially the same thing:

How did you spend the weekend?

They are, however, asking for different information. When the question is asked using the *perfective* verb (**провели**), you are being invited to sum up your weekend, and an appropriate answer might be:

Очень хорошо, спасибо.

Very well, thank you.

If the question is asked using the *imperfective* verb (**проводили**), you are being invited to say what you did to fill up the weekend, i.e. the focus is on the *process* of spending the weekend. Here an appropriate answer might be:

В суббо́ту я ходи́л на футбо́л, а в воскресе́нье съезди́л домо́й к роди́телям.

On Saturday I went to a football match and on Sunday went home to see my parents.

NOTE The word **уик-энд** 'weekend' is known and used by many Russians, although others prefer the more traditional **суббо́та-воскресе́нье** 'Saturday and Sunday' or **выходные** 'days off'.

Хорошо́, что меня́ встреча́ли (исв) на вокза́ле, а то не зна́ю, как бы я добра́лся до гостини́цы.

It's a good job I was met at the station, or else I don't know how I would have got to the hotel.

The idea of meeting someone off a train or an aeroplane is thought of as a process, involving going to the station or the airport, finding the right place to wait and delivering the person to their destination. When, however, the reference is to a simple encounter, the perfective is more likely to be used:

Он до́лго броди́л по у́лицам, пока́, наконец, он не встрети́л (св) кого́-то из знако́мых.

He wandered the streets for a long time until at last he met someone he knew.

Пока́ не зна́ю, кто её уби́л. Могú только дога́дываться (исв).

At the moment I don't know who killed her. I can only make guesses.

The *imperfective* **догады́ваться** implies that the speaker is in a position to go through the process of making guesses; the *perfective* (**догада́ться**) would imply that the speaker is already in a position to guess the right answer, something that is contradicted by the previous sentence.

Я пойду́ узнава́ть (исв), когда́ отпра́вляется по́езд.

I'll go and find out what time the train leaves.

Here the focus is on the process of finding out: going to the station, asking the necessary question and returning with the information. The perfective is used when the focus is on the information itself:

Я то́лько что узна́л (св), что наш по́езд отменён; сле́дующий бу́дет то́лько че́рез два часа́.

I've just found out that our train has been cancelled; the next one won't be for another two hours.

Мне не сто́ило большо́го труда́ опровергну́ть всю напра́слину, возведённую на меня́, но *опроверга́ть* (исв) её всё-таки́ пришло́сь.

It didn't cost me a lot of trouble to refute all the tissue of lies that were told about me, but nevertheless I had to do it.

The *imperfective* **опроверга́ть** is used because the speaker is thinking of himself having to go through the process of refutation.

The focus is on process in contexts relating to the possibility or desirability of starting an action which is already understood to be due to take place at some time:

Ита́к, тре́тий ра́унд о́кóнчен; мо́жно оста́навливать (нсв) секундоме́р.

So, the third round is over; you can stop the stop-watch.

Уже́ по́здно; нам, наве́рно, на́до идти́ (нсв), а то не успе́ем на по́следний авто́бус.

It's already late; we ought to be going, or else we'll miss the last bus.

Ка́жется, пора́ за́канчивать (нсв) дискуссию́: лю́ди уже́ ста́ли смотре́ть на часы́.

I think it's time we were bringing the discussion to an end; people are already starting to look at their watches.

5.2.3 Repetition

The *imperfective* aspect is normally used to indicate *repeated* actions.

Она́ всерьёз сле́дила за своим здоро́вьем и регуля́рно посещала́ (нсв) тренажё́рный зал, бассе́йн и теннисный ко́рт.

She took a serious interest in her health and paid regular visits to the gym, the swimming baths and the tennis court.

Лондо́нский футбо́льный клуб «Челси́» с но́вого сезо́на бу́дет прово́дить (нсв) выездные́ матчи́ в я́рких футбо́лках кисло́тно-лимо́нного цвета́.

From next season Chelsea, the London football team, will play their away matches in a bright acid-lemon strip.

В жа́ркую пого́ду сле́дует поча́ще пить (нсв) минера́льную во́ду или другие́ прохла́дительные напитки́.

In hot weather you should drink more mineral water or other cooling drinks.

Чита́йте (нсв) на́шу газе́ту ка́ждый день!

Read our newspaper every day!

This principle normally applies to statements or instructions that have general significance, even if repetition is not specifically mentioned:

Мы бу́дем пресле́довать (нсв) терро́ристов всю́ду.

We will pursue terrorists everywhere.

По́льзуясь эскаля́тором, сто́йте (нсв) справа́, держи́тесь (нсв) за поруче́нь.

When using the escalator, stand on the right and keep hold of the handrail.

Where both a *finite verb* and an *infinitive* are used together in a sentence in a context relating to a repeated action, the choice of aspect will be determined by which of the two verbs denotes the action being repeated:

Я то́лько что бы́л у врача́; он посо́ветовал (св) мне выпива́ть (нсв) по литру́ минера́льной воды́ в день.

I've just been to the doctor; he's advised me to drink a litre of mineral water a day.



При каждой нашей встрече он *советовал* (исв) мне *написать* (св) автобиографию.

Every time we met he advised me to write my autobiography.

In the first sentence the advice was given once, but is to be followed every day; consequently, the finite verb ('advised') is *perfective* and the infinitive ('to drink') is *imperfective*. In the second sentence the advice was given regularly, but would have been followed only once; here it is the finite verb that is *imperfective* and the infinitive that is *perfective*.

A perfective verb tends to be used when a series of repeated actions is seen as a single event. This occurs, for example, when a series of actions is repeated in quick succession as part of a chain of events:

Мы *сели* за стол, *выпили* (св) по три чашки чая и *съели* (св) по порции мороженого.

We sat down at the table, drank three cups of tea and ate a portion of icecream each.

Перед тем, как *покинуть* зал, он успел *несколько раз* *выкрикнуть* (св) какой-то непонятный лозунг.

Before leaving the hall he managed several times to shout out some incomprehensible slogan.

The same principle applies when the totality of what has been achieved over a certain period is being summed up:

Он *прожил* прекрасную жизнь и *написал* (св) прекрасные книги.

He lived a fine life and wrote fine books.

За *последние* десять лет она *опубликовала* (св) более двухсот статей на *разные* темы.

In the last ten years she has published over 200 articles on different topics.

5.2.4 Focusing on completion

The *perfective* aspect is normally used when the focus is on the *completion* of an action:

Никто́ отсюда́ не уйдёт, пока́ я не получу́ (св) отве́ты на все мои́ вопро́сы.

No one will leave here until I receive answers to all my questions.

Кто его́ обидит, тот дня́ не проживёт (св).

Anyone who offends him won't live to see the end of the day.

The first example talks about an action that cannot take place until another is completed; the second talks about circumstances that will lead to an action in process not being completed.

The focus is on *completion* in many sentences where an *infinitive* is used:

Мне не стоило́ большо́го труда́ опровергну́ть (св) всю напраслину́, возведённую на меня́, но опроверга́ть её всё-таки́ пришлось.

It didn't cost me a lot of trouble to refute all the tissue of lies that were told about me, but nevertheless I had to do it.



The second infinitive in this sentence focuses on the process, as was explained above in 5.2.2; the first infinitive, however, focuses on the *result*, in this case the successful refutation of the tissue of lies. Following the same logic, *perfective* infinitives tend to be used in conjunction with the following:

легко́	it is easy to
трудно́	it is difficult to
стоит	one only has to
стараться́ (нсв)/постараться́ (св)	to try to
пытаться́ (нсв)/попы́таться	to try to
чтобы́	in order to

Думаю, что с такой информацией нам *легко́* будет *докопаться́* (св) до истины.

I think that with this information it will be easy for us to dig down to the truth.

***Трудно́* сказа́ть (св), когда́ вы смо́жете получи́ть ваш зака́з.**

It's difficult to say when we will be able to get your order to you.

Но сто́ило ему́ *почувствовать* (св), что его́ хотят обману́ть, как он начина́л злиться.

But he only had to feel that someone was trying to deceive him for him to start to get angry.

Я *постараюсь* *прийти́* (св) домо́й не *позже* десяти́.

I'll try to come home no later than ten o'clock.

В самолёте он безуспешно *пыта́лся* *засну́ть* (св).

In the aeroplane he tried in vain to fall asleep.

Он *взя́лся* за это́ де́ло то́лько *ради́* того́, *чтобы́* *заработать* (св) де́нег для семьи́.

He only took on this task in order to earn some money for his family.

In some instances the aspect of the infinitive affects the meaning of the sentence. In

5.3.2 an example was given of **пора́** used with an *imperfective* infinitive; the meaning was ‘It’s time’ (to be doing something). When **пора́** is used with a *perfective* infinitive, the meaning is ‘It’s (high) time’ (to have done something), i.e. with a focus on *completion*, rather than on *process*:

Нам давно́ пора́ уй́ти (св) со сце́ны росси́йской поли́тики и усту́пить (св) ме́сто молоды́м.

It’s high time we had left the stage of Russian politics and given way to the young.

Хва́тит and **доста́точно** both mean ‘(it’s) enough’; when **доста́точно** is followed by a *perfective* infinitive, it means ‘it’s enough to’, ‘all one has to do is...’:

Доста́точно проче́сть (св) пе́рвую стра́ницу его́ биогра́фии, что́бы поня́ть, поче́му его́ не лю́бят в Кре́мле.

It’s enough to read the first page of his biography to understand why he’s not liked in the Kremlin.

When used with an *imperfective* infinitive, both **доста́точно** and **хва́тит** mean ‘that’s enough of that’, i.e. they form an instruction to stop doing something:

Все́, хва́тит валя́ть (исв) дурака́. Е́сли не хо́чешь ве́сти серье́зный разгово́р, я уйду́.

Right, that’s enough of playing the fool. If you don’t want to hold a serious conversation with me, I’m going.



Достаточно говорить (нсв) об этом. И так всё ясно.

You don't need to say any more on the subject. We've got the picture. (*Literally*, That's enough of talking about it. Everything's clear as it is.)

5.3 The specific meaning of the verb

5.3.0 Introduction

In many instances the details of aspect usage are determined by specific meaning of the verb concerned.

For specific issues relating to the use of aspects with unprefixed verbs of motion, *see 22.1*.

5.3.1 Verbs that cannot indicate an action in process in both Russian and English

There are many verbs which, because of their precise meaning, cannot normally indicate *action in process*. With such verbs, however, the usual English meaning does not necessarily indicate whether or not a particular Russian verb belongs to this category.

Examples of where neither a Russian verb nor its English equivalent can normally indicate an action in process:

находить (нсв)/найти (св) 'to find'

NOTE This restriction does not apply in either language when the verb is used in the sense of 'form a particular opinion of something':

Я нахожу (нсв) ваши слова неуместными.

I find your words inappropriate.

5.3.2 Verbs that can indicate an action in process in Russian, but not in English

There are quite a few examples where the Russian verb can indicate an action in process, but where the normal English translation of the Russian *perfective* cannot. In such instances the Russian *imperfective* will usually be translated either by a

different verb or by 'try to...':

добива́ться (нсв) 'to strive for',
'to try to attain'
лечи́ть (нсв) 'to treat (a patient)'
лови́ть (нсв) 'to try to catch'
реша́ть (нсв) 'to try to decide,
to try to solve'
убежда́ть (нсв) 'to try to convince'
уговарива́ть (нсв) 'to try to persuade'

добы́ться (св) 'to attain'
вылечи́ть (св) 'to cure'
пойма́ть (св) 'to catch'
реши́ть (св) 'to decide,
to solve'
убеди́ть (св) 'to convince'
уговори́ть (св) 'to persuade'



Человек должен добиваться (нсв) в своём деле совершенства.

A person should strive to achieve perfection in whatever activity they are pursuing.

В последние годы наши учёные добились (св) потрясающих результатов в этой сфере.

In recent years our scientists have achieved amazing results in this field.

В прошлом году меня лечили (нсв) от радикулита. Кажется, вылечили (св), но полной уверенности нет, конечно.

Last year I was treated for back pain. I think I'm cured but, of course, you can never be totally sure.

Ловить (нсв) такси лучше всего на углу. Там всегда большое движение.

The best place to try to catch a taxi is on the corner. There is always a lot of traffic there.

На основе достоверной информации, полученной из разных источников, сотрудники милиции смогли устроить засаду и поймать (св) преступников.

On the basis of reliable information received from different sources the police were able to set a trap and catch the criminals.

Вчера вечером я читал книгу, решил (нсв) кроссворд в вечерней газете и смотрел телевизор.

Yesterday evening I read a book, had a go at a crossword in the evening paper and watched television.

У меня вчера был такой насыщенный вечер: я прочитал десять студенческих работ, решил (св) кроссворд в вечерней газете и наконец посмотрел ту передачу, которую ты всё время рекомендуешь.

I had a very full evening yesterday; I read ten student essays, solved the crossword in the evening paper and eventually watched that programme you're always recommending.

Он **о́чень** **с**т^ра^нн^ый **ч**ел^ов^ек: **м**о^жет **ц**е^лы^й **в**е^чер **у**бе^жда^ть (н^св) те^бя, **ч**то **д**ва^жды **д**ва – **п**ять, **а** **н**е **ч**еты^ре, **к**ак **т**ебе **п**очему⁻то **в**се^гда **к**а^за^лось.

He's a very strange man: he can spend a whole evening trying to convince you that two and two are five and not, as for some reason you've always thought, four.

Я **з**на^ю **в**се **в**а^ши **а**рг^уме^нты **н**а^зу^сть, **и** **в**ы **н**ико^гда **н**е **у**бе^ди^те (с^в) **м**еня, **ч**то **в**ы **п**ра^вы.

I know all your arguments by heart, and you'll never convince me that you're right.

Я **т**о^ль^ко **ч**то **б**ыл **у** ше^фа. Он **у**го^ва^ривал (н^св) **м**еня **в**оз^гла^ви^ть **н**аше **п**ред^ста^ви^тель^ство **н**а **С**е^ве^рном **К**ав^ка^зе. **Н**о **н**е **у**го^во^рил (с^в)!

I've just been to see the boss. He was trying to persuade me to take over our office in the North Caucasus. But he didn't succeed! (*Literally*, he didn't persuade me.)

NOTE The phrase **ловить (нсв) ры́бу** means 'to go fishing'.

5.3.3 Verbs that can indicate an action in process in English, but not in Russian

There are some verbs where the Russian *imperfective* cannot be used to indicate an action in process, but where no such restriction applies to the English equivalent:

слу́чатся (нсв)/случи́ться (св)	to happen
приходи́ть (нсв)/прийти́ (св)	to come, to arrive

In such instances the Russian imperfective can be used to indicate repeated action, but to indicate process an alternative verb with a closely related meaning is used:

происходи́ть (нсв)/произо́йти (св)	to happen
идти́ (нсв)	to be going/coming
прибыва́ть (нсв)/прибы́ть (св)	to arrive

Посмотри́ в окно́ и скажи́ нам, что *происходит* (нсв) на у́лице.

Look out of the window and tell us what's happening outside.

Тише! *Идёт* (нсв) учи́тель.

Quiet! The teacher's coming.

Наш по́езд *прибывает* (нсв) на ко́нечную ста́нцию. *Выходя́* из ваго́на, пожа́луйста, не забыва́йте свои́ вещи.

Our train is coming into the terminus. When leaving the carriage, please remember to take all items of luggage with you (*Literally*, please don't forget your things.)

NOTE The verb *прибыва́ть* (нсв)/*прибы́ть* (св) is somewhat associated with official contexts and tends to be used in notices and announcements relating to public transport (see 22.4.3).

5.3.4 Verbs indicating an action that by definition cannot be completed

There are some verbs that indicate actions that by definition cannot be completed. Some of these verbs occur in the *imperfective* only; a list of such verbs was given in 4.2.6. Others have *perfective* partners which have special connotations. Many of these have a *perfective* partner with the prefix **по-**. This has the connotation of

‘doing the action for a while and then doing something else’:

лежа́ть (нсв)/полежа́ть (св)	to lie (down), to be lying (down)
сиде́ть (нсв)/посиде́ть (св)	to (be) sit(ting)
стоя́ть (нсв)/постоя́ть (св)	to (be) stand(ing)
говори́ть (нсв)/поговори́ть (св)	to talk
молча́ть (нсв)/помолча́ть (св)	to be silent
пла́кать (нсв)/попла́кать (св)	to cry
рабо́тать (нсв)/порабо́тать (св)	to work

Сейча́с сде́лаем перерыв на ко́фе; *посиди́м (св) немно́жко, погово́рим (нсв)*, а мину́т че́рез пята́дцать продо́лжим на́шу рабо́ту.

We’ll break for coffee now; we’ll sit for a short while and talk, and then after about 15 minutes we’ll resume our work.



Услы́шав отве́т, он не́сколько секун́д *помолча́л* (св), пото́м взял под козырё́к, поверну́лся и вы́шел из ко́мнаты.

Having heard the answer, he remained silent for a few seconds, then saluted, turned round and marched out of the room.

NOTE When *говори́ть* means 'to say', its perfective partner is *сказа́ть*.

Some of these verbs have a second perfective partner with the *за-*prefix. This has the connotation of 'beginning the action':

<i>заговори́ть</i> (св)	to (start to) talk
<i>замолча́ть</i> (св)	to fall silent
<i>запла́кать</i> (св)	to (start to) cry

Я о́чень удиви́лся, ко́гда он вдруг *заговори́л* (св) по-ру́сски. Но по́сле двух-тре́х предложе́ний он *замолча́л* (св). По-видимому, не знал, что сказа́ть да́льше.

I was very surprised when he suddenly started speaking Russian. But after two or three sentences he fell silent. Evidently he didn't know what to say next.

Прочита́в письмо́, она *запла́кала* (св) и вы́бежала из ко́мнаты.

Having read the letter, she started crying and ran out of the room.

5.3.5 'Semelfactive' perfectives

A special group of *perfective* verbs is made up of the so-called 'semelfactive' verbs. These verbs, all of which belong to class **4.6.3**, denote a single, instantaneous action. Examples (given here with their *imperfective* partners) include:

а́хать (нсв)/а́хнуть (св)	to say 'akh', to give a shout of joy, surprise or sadness
взды́хать (нсв)/вздо́хнуть (св)	to sigh
кива́ть (нсв)/кивну́ть (св)	to nod
кида́ть (нсв)/кину́ть (св)	to throw
крича́ть (нсв)/крикну́ть (св)	to shout
лопа́ться (нсв)/ло́пнуть (св)	to burst
маха́ть (нсв)/махну́ть (св)	to wave
оха́ть (нсв)/о́хнуть (св)	to say 'okh', to groan
пина́ть (нсв)/пну́ть (св)	to kick
прыга́ть (нсв)/пры́гнуть (нсв)	to jump
сверка́ть (нсв)/сверкну́ть (св)	to sparkle, to flash
стреля́ть (нсв)/стрельну́ть (св)	to shoot
стуча́ть (нсв)/стукну́ть (св)	to knock
толка́ть (нсв)/толкну́ть (св)	to push
хихика́ть (нсв)/хихикну́ть (св)	to giggle
чиха́ть (нсв)/чихну́ть (св)	to sneeze
шага́ть (нсв)/шагну́ть (св)	to stride

Мир *вздохнул* (св) с облегчением, услышав об освобождении заложников.

The world gave a sigh of relief when it heard about the release of the hostages.

Скóро бу́дет дождь: то́лько что *сверкнула* (св) мо́лния.

It's going to rain soon; there's just been a flash of lightning.



5.4 Single completed actions

5.4.0 Introduction

Because the *imperfective* aspect is normally used for *repeated* actions, and because the *perfective* aspect is used when the focus is on the *completion* of an event, it is tempting to conclude that the perfective is the aspect to be used when describing single completed actions in the past. Unfortunately, it is not as simple as that: although the perfective aspect is indeed used on very many occasions, the imperfective is by no means infrequent. The principle to follow is that given at the beginning of this chapter: the imperfective is the default aspect and should be used unless there is a particular reason for using the perfective. And the reason that is most commonly found for using the perfective is that the event is placed in one of a limited number of specific contexts.

5.4.1 The context of other actions

One context that normally requires the use of the *perfective* is that of *preceding* and/or *following* actions—in other words, where an action forms part of a sequence of events. This use of the perfective is found especially frequently in *narratives* of one sort or another:

На следующее утро он проснулся (св) в прекрасном настроении, встал (св), принял (св) душ, побрился (св), позавтракал (св) и уселся (св) за работу.

The next day he woke up in an excellent mood, got up, had a shower, shaved, had breakfast and sat down to work.

Sometimes gerunds or conjunctions such as **когда** ‘when’ are used to indicate that two or more events occur in sequence:

Одévшись (св), он положил (св) вещи в огромную сумку и спустился (св) вниз.

Having got dressed, he put his things in an enormous bag and went downstairs.

Он успел (св) прочитать десять страниц, когда телефонный звонок заставил (св) его отложить книгу.

He had managed to read ten pages when a telephone call forced him to put aside his

book.

For more on the use of conjunctions and gerunds in time expressions, *see* **21.1** and **21.10**.

The same principle applies to a sequence of events that is expected to take place in the future:

Я пришлю́ (св) тебе́ приглаше́ние, и ты оформи́шь (св) туристи́ческую визу и прие́дешь (св) на неде́лю. Потом вернё́шься (св) домой, улади́шь (св) все формальности и прие́дешь (св) уже́ оконча́тельно.

I'll send you an invitation, and you can get a tourist visa and come for a week. Then you'll go home, sort out all the formalities and move here permanently.

A repeated action, an incomplete action or a continuing action taking place in the background of a sequence of events will be indicated by an *imperfective* verb according to the principles discussed in **5.2.1** and **5.2.3**:



Она оберну́лась (св) и уви́дела (св) же́нщину сре́дних лет, кото́рая делала (нсв) ей какие-то жесты.

She turned round and saw a middle-aged woman who was gesturing to her.

The making of the gestures is a repeated action that is going on in the background and is indicated by the imperfective verb **делала**.

Я реши́л (св) по́ехать до́мой на метро́. На «Киевской», где я де́лал (нсв) пере́садку на Кольцеву́ю ли́нию, меня́ удиви́ла (св) толпа́ люде́й, стоя́щих на платфо́рме.

I decided to go home by metro. At Kievskaiia station, where I changed onto the Circle Line, I was surprised by the crowd of people standing on the platform.

Here the verb **де́лал** is imperfective because the narrator had not completed the process of changing from one train to another at the time when he was surprised by the crowd of people on the platform.

The imperfective is also used for whole sequences of repeated actions:

У него́ был о́чень стра́нный рабо́чий день: он появля́лся (нсв) в о́фисе позже всех, выпива́л (нсв) ча́шку ко́фе, просмо́тривал (нсв) электро́нную по́чту и пото́м исче́зал (нсв) на весь день.

His working day was a very strange one: he would appear in the office later than everyone else, drink a cup of coffee, look through his e-mails and then disappear for the rest of the day.

5.4.2 The context of the present

The *perfective* aspect is used when the focus is on the fact that the consequences of the action continue to be felt at the present time:

Я разби́л (св) очки́ и не зна́ю, как я без них доберу́сь до до́ма.

I have broken my glasses and I don't know how I'm going to get home without them.

Я то́лько что узна́л (св), что наш по́езд отменён (св); сле́дующий бу́дет то́лько че́рез два часа́.

I've just found out that our train has been cancelled; the next one won't be for another two hours.

In the first example the focus is on the consequences of the speaker breaking his glasses, namely, the difficulty of getting home without them; with the first verb in the second example the focus is on the consequence of finding out, namely, the possession of new information, while with the second verb the focus is on the consequences of the train being cancelled, namely, that the speaker and his companion are stuck in the station for another two hours.

Where the consequences of a past action do not extend into the present, the *imperfective* is more likely to be used. In many instances this use of the imperfective denotes an action that has, so to speak, been 'reversed' by later events:

Ты во́время пришёл. То́лько что зашла́ (св) твоя́ сестра́; она́ ждёт тебя́ на ку́хне.

You've come at just the right time. Your sister has just dropped in; she's waiting for you in the kitchen.

Жаль, что ты пришёл домой так поздно. Заходила (исв) твоя сестра; она хотела о чём-то поговорить с тобой.

It's a pity you've come home so late. Your sister called (and has gone away again); she wanted to talk to you about something.

К сожалению я весь день занят: приехала (св) делегация из Англии, и я должен показать им всё, что мы здесь делаем.

Unfortunately, I'm busy all day; a delegation has arrived from England and I have to show them everything that we are doing here.

В прошлом году приезжала (исв) делегация из Англии. Мы показали им всё, что здесь делаем, и в итоге был подписан протокол о намерениях.

Last year a delegation came out from England. We showed them everything that we are doing here and as a result a joint statement of intent was signed.

Although this usage is perhaps most common with prefixed verbs of motion, it can be found with other verbs as well:

Здесь холодно. А-а, вот почему: кто-то открыл (св) окно.

It's cold in here. Ah, that's why; somebody has opened the window (and it is still open).

Здесь холодно, как будто кто-то открывал (исв) окно.

It's cold in here, as if somebody had opened the window (but now it's shut).

In the sentences below, the action of summoning the speaker to see the boss is not 'reversed' as such, but once the visit to the boss is over, the direct consequence of the act of summoning (rushing to his office, sitting there and being given instructions, etc.) no longer applies, which is why the *imperfective* is used in the second example:

Я сейчас иду к шефу. Меня вызвали (св).

I'm on the way to the boss('s office). I've been summoned to see him.

Я то́лько что был у ше́фа. Меня *вызыва́ли* (исв).

I've just been with the boss. I'd been summoned to see him.

5.4.3 The context of a specific occasion

The third type of context is that of a specific and explicitly mentioned occasion:

Одна́жды, на исхо́де ле́та про́шлого го́да мне *позвони́л* (св) ста́рый друг и сказа́л (св), что сде́лает мне предложе́ние, от кото́рого я не могу́ отка́заться.

Once, towards the end of last summer, I was phoned by an old friend, who said he was going to make me an offer I can't refuse.

В про́шлом году́ прие́зжала делегáция из А́нглии. Мы *показа́ли* (св) им всё, что здесь делаем, и в итоге́ был подписа́н протоко́л о намерéниях.

Last year a delegation came out from England. We showed them everything that we are doing here and as a result a joint statement of intent was signed.

If no explicit context is given, the *imperfective* is more likely to be used, even if it is clear that the event occurred only once:

Они́ учи́лись в одной шко́ле, но в разны́х клáссах: ви́дели друг дру́га на пере́менах, вме́сте *высту́пали* (*нсв*) одна́жды на шко́льной сце́не – вот и всё зна́комство.

They had gone to the same school, but were in different classes; they had seen each other at break times and had once performed together on the school stage, but that was the full extent of their acquaintance.

Она́, коне́чно, зна́ет отве́т, но кто-то, ви́димо, *проси́л* (*нсв*) её не говори́ть об это́м.

Of course, she knows the answer, but somebody must have asked her not to talk about it.

The imperfective is even more likely to be used if there is nothing to indicate whether the action took place on one occasion or was repeated:

Припо́мните, мо́жет быть, она́ *расска́зывала* (*нсв*) вам о своёй рабо́те, куда́ е́здила, с кем встре́чалась.

Try to remember; perhaps she told you about her work, where she travelled to, who she met.

Ты действительно́ меня́ *предупрежда́л*, (*нсв*), но тепе́рь уже́ по́здно: что сде́лано – то сде́лано.

You did indeed warn me, but it's too late now; what's done is done.

Повере́йте мне, я зна́ю, как э́ти лю́ди рабо́тают. Я уже́ *ста́лкивался* (*нсв*) с ними́.

Believe me, I know how these people work. They've already crossed my path.

One apparent exception to the principles described here occurs when quoting words that were written in the past. In these circumstances the verb **писа́ть** is normally in the imperfective, even though it would seem that a precise context is mentioned:

В отве́тном письме́ (от 24 дека́бря 1876 г.) Ча́йко́вский *писа́л* (*нсв*): «Как я рад, что ве́чер в консерва́тории оста́вил в вас хоро́шее воспомина́ние!»

In his reply (written on 24 December 1876) Tchaikovsky wrote: 'How glad I am

that the evening at the Conservatory has left you with such warm memories.’

5.5 Asking questions

5.5.0 Introduction

Asking questions involves for the most part applying the general principles outlined in **5.2**. There are, however, some specific points to note.

5.5.1 Questions about the past

In general, when asking about a single event in the past, it is possible to follow the principles described in **5.4**. When one is merely making a general enquiry about whether an event has taken place or not, the *imperfective* is normally used:

Вы читали (исв) «Войну́ и мир»?

Have you read *War and Peace*?



Я когда-нибудь рассказывал (св) вам о моей встрече с премьер-министром?

Have I ever told you about the time I met the Prime Minister?

The *perfective* is used when one is enquiring about an event that was expected to take place at a particular time. For example, if you know that someone has been trying to make an international telephone call, you may ask them:

Вы дозвонились (св)?

Did you get through?

Similarly:

Когда вы встретились в аэропорту, он сказал (св) вам, куда улетает?

When you met in the airport, did he tell you where he was flying to?

The perfective is also used when asking about a past event from the point of view of its effect on the present. After making an arrangement to meet someone, you may conclude by saying:

Договорились (св)?

Is that agreed, then?

When entering a room that is in a state of chaos, you might say:

Что здесь случилось (св)? Откуда такой беспорядок?

What's happened here? What caused all this chaos?

5.5.2 Questions about the future

When asking about someone's wishes or intentions, the *imperfective* is normally used:

Ты будешь пить (исв) кофе?

Are you going to have some coffee? Or

Would you like a cup of coffee?

In informal speech, this is often shortened to:

Кофе́ будешь?

Где ты будешь по́чевать (исв)?

Where are you going to spend the night?

The *perfective* is more likely to be used in questions relating to matters of fact, especially if there is a specific context or if the focus is on completion:

Когда мы увидимся (св)?

When will we see each other?

Ты прие́дешь (св) за́втра или послеза́втра?

Are you arriving tomorrow or the day after?

Мне придётся тебя́ оста́вить на па́ру дней. Ты как, спра́вишься (св) оди́н? Смо́жешь (св) себя́ прокорми́ть?

I'm going to have to leave you for a couple of days or so. Will you cope on your own? Will you manage to feed yourself?



5.6 The imperative

5.6.0 Introduction

In general, the use of the aspects with the *imperative* follows the principles outlined in 5.2. This section is concerned with certain specific issues.

For more on using the imperative, *see* **18.2.1** and **18.3.1**.

5.6.1 Giving instructions

The *perfective* is normally used when giving an instruction that is to be carried out once and where there is no focus on the process:

Скажи́те (св), пожа́луйста, ско́лько вре́мени?

Could you tell me what time it is, please?

Войди́те (св)!

Come in!

Позвони́ (св) мне се́годня ве́чером, часо́в в де́сять.

Phone me this evening at about ten o'clock.

5.6.2 Issuing an invitation

Following the principle outlined in **5.2.2**, the *imperfective* is used when indicating that the time has now come to carry out an action that is either explicitly or implicitly understood to be appropriate. This includes the issuing of what are in effect *invitations*, a use of the imperfective that is limited to certain specific situations. For example, when visiting someone at their home you may receive all or some of the following invitations:

Заходи́те (нсв).

Come in.

Раздева́йтесь (нсв).

Take off your hat and coat.

Проходи́те (нсв).

Come through into the flat.

Садитесь (нсв).

Sit down.

NOTE The verb *раздева́ться (нсв)/разде́ться (св)* normally means 'to get undressed'.
In this context the invitation does not extend beyond the outer garments.

If, when seated at table, you display a hesitancy in attacking your plate of food, you may be encouraged with the words:

Е́шьте, е́шьте (нсв)! Or sometimes Ку́шайте, ку́шайте (нсв)!

Do start eating!

NOTE The verb *ку́шать* is a synonym of *есть* (both mean 'to eat'), but its use is very restricted; it is normally used only in the *second person* (especially the *imperative*) and the infinitive and is principally associated with the issuing of polite invitations to start eating.

A waiter or waitress waiting to take your order may say:

Говори́те (исв).

Can I take your order? (*Literally*, Speak.)

5.6.3 Being impatient

Another application of the same principle results in the use of the imperfective when an instruction is repeated. If someone knocks at your door, you will normally respond by saying **Войдите** (see 5.6.2). If the person, instead of coming in, half-opens the door and looks nervously into the room, you may well go on to say in a tone that, according to the circumstances, can vary from the encouraging to the impatient:

Ну, входите (исв) же!

Well, come in if you're going to.

5.6.4 Other uses of the imperfective

The *imperfective* is also used to express indifference or a challenge to someone to carry out a threat. This usage can correspond to something like the English 'go ahead':

—Мы должны́ провери́ть всё, что здесь написа́но.

—Ну, что ж, проверя́йте (исв).

—We have to check everything that's written here.

—Go ahead and check if you want to.

—Если́ не прекра́тится э́тот шум, мы вы́зовем мили́цию.

—Здесь нет ника́кого шума. Вызыва́йте (исв).

—If this noise doesn't stop, we'll call the police.

—There's no noise here. Go ahead and call them.

5.7 Negation

5.7.0 Introduction

In general, sentences with *negation* are rather more likely to contain an *imperfective* verb than are sentences where there is no negation. It is probably useful to follow the principle that in sentences with negation the imperfective should be used unless there is a good reason for selecting the perfective.

5.7.1 Negation in the past

A verb in the past tense will be in the *perfective* aspect when it refers to an action that could have taken place on a specific occasion in the past, did not take place and can now no longer take place:

Он нажал первую кнопку, но ничего не произошло (св). Он нажал вторую, и дверь открылась.

He pressed the first button, but nothing happened. He pressed the second, and the door opened.

Украли все деньги и кредитные карточки, но, к счастью, паспорт и документы не взяли (св).

They stole all (my) money and credit cards, but fortunately didn't take (my) passport and other documents.



Sometimes the verb in such sentences is reinforced by the phrase **так и**, corresponding approximately to the English 'never did':

Я так и не узнал (св) его́ имя.

I never did find out his name.

The perfective is also used when the focus is on the implications for the present of the fact that the action has not taken place:

Она́ хо́чет показáть тебе́, что не испугáлась (св).

She wants to show you that she hasn't been frightened *or* that she isn't frightened.

Жаль, что мы не достигли (св) взаимопонимáния.

It's a pity that we haven't reached a mutual understanding.

When an action is expected, but has not yet taken place, either aspect is possible. The perfective is more likely to be used when the focus is on completion, if the action has already started or if the action does not involve intention on the part of the subject:

Я то́лько что посмотре́л в ящик. По́чта ещё не пришла́ (св).

I've just looked in the box. The post hasn't arrived yet.

К сожалéнию, я ещё не сдал (св) все необходи́мые экзаméны.

Unfortunately, I still haven't passed all the necessary examinations.

The *imperfective* is more likely to be used if the focus is on the process, if the action has not started or if the action involves intention on the part of the subject:

К сожалéнию, я ещё не сдава́л (нсв) все необходи́мые экзаméны.

Unfortunately, I still haven't taken all the necessary examinations.

Европе́йский суд ещё не присту́пил (нсв) к рассмотре́нию э́того и́ска.

The European Court (of Human Rights) has not begun its examination of this case.

In some instances of this sort, however, either aspect can be used, without there being any significant difference between them:

Госуда́рственная Ду́ма ещё не рассма́тривала (нсв) бюджет на следующий год.

The State Duma has not yet examined the budget for next year.

Госуда́рственная Ду́ма ещё не рассмотре́ла (св) бюджет на сле́дующий год.

The State Duma has not yet examined the budget for next year.

In all other circumstances the imperfective will normally be used:

Как ни странно, я не чита́л (нсв) «Войну́ и мир».

Strange as it may seem, I haven't read *War and Peace*.

Я могу́ подтвердить, что он из ко́мнаты не выходи́л (нсв).

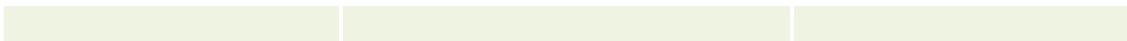
I can confirm that he didn't leave the room.

Пове́рьте мне, я не убива́л (нсв) его́.

Believe me, I didn't kill him.

Ты никогда́ не рассказывал (нсв) мне об э́том.

You never told me about that.



5.7.2 Negation in the future

In general, the use of aspects with *negated future tense* verbs is not significantly different from that which occurs in *questions* and which is described in 5.5.2. The *imperfective* tends to be used when referring to intentions:

Я прошу́ прощения́, но я не буду́ отве́чать (нсв) на э́тот вопро́с: для э́того нужно́ мно́го вре́мени.

I apologise, but I will not answer that question, because it would take up a lot of time.

The *perfective* tends to be used to make factual statements about events that might have occurred, but which will not happen, especially in relation to a specific set of circumstances:

Не сто́ит спра́шивать, об э́том: никто́ вам ничего́ не ска́жет (св), ни здесь, ни в прокуратуре́.

It's not worth asking about it; nobody will tell you anything, either here or at the prosecutor's office.

5.7.3 Negation with the imperative

Negated imperative verbs are almost invariably in the *imperfective*:

Не подходи́ (нсв) ко мне. У меня́ грипп.

Don't come near me. I've got the flu.

Ремóнт бу́дет сде́лан, е́сли не за́втра, то послеза́втра. Не беспоко́йтесь (нсв).

The repair work will be carried out if not tomorrow, then the day after. Don't worry.

Не покупáй (нсв) э́тот сыр. Срок го́дности уже́ истёк.

Don't buy that cheese. It's past its sell-by date.

The *perfective* is used only on rare occasions, when the verb serves as a warning to

avoid some inadvertant event:

Не потеряй (св) ручку, а то нечем будет заполнить анкету.

Don't lose the pen, or you'll have nothing to fill the form in with.

Sometimes these forms are used in conjunction with **смотри** 'watch', 'mind out':

Смотри, не разбей (св) этот стакан!

Watch you don't break that glass.

5.7.4 Negation with infinitives

Infinitive verbs in a sentence with *negation* are most commonly *imperfective*. This applies whether it is the main verb or the infinitive that is negated:

Я не советую вам читать (нсв) «Евгения Онегина» в переводе.

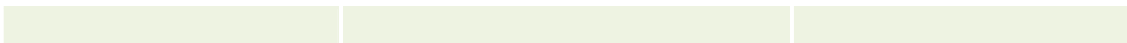
I don't advise you to read *Evgenii Onegin* in translation.

Ребёнку стало лучше, так что они решили не вызывать (нсв) врача.

Their child felt better, so they decided not to ask the doctor to call round.

Я советую вам не задавать (нсв) ему этот вопрос.

I advise you not to ask him that question.



A *perfective* infinitive is used after negated forms of the verb **хотѣть** in sentences containing an apology for the unintended consequences of an action:

Извини́те, я не хоте́л вас оби́деть (нсв).

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend you.

5.7.5 Impossibility and undesirability

An exception to the above principle occurs in contexts relating to permission and (im) possibility, since here the aspect of the infinitive depends on the meaning of the sentence. In general, an *imperfective infinitive* is used in contexts relating to the giving or refusing of permission, while a *perfective infinitive* is used in contexts relating to the possibility or impossibility of an action.

An imperfective infinitive used on its own in a negated sentence indicates a categorical prohibition. This construction has bureaucratic or military connotations, and sometimes it can be found on notices or official documents:

Не кури́ть (нсв)!

No smoking!

Не пи́сать (нсв) ни́же пункти́рной ли́нии.

Do not write beneath the dotted line.

The use of the perfective infinitive in such sentences indicates impossibility. This usage is fairly rare and its presence is indicative of a certain degree of rhetorical flourish:

Он зна́ет сто́лько языко́в! Все не пере́числить (св)!

There's no end to the number of languages he knows!

(*Literally*, He knows so many languages! It's impossible to enumerate them all!)

The adverb **лучше́** is used with a *negated imperfective infinitive* to convey a recommendation not to do something. This construction serves as a mild form of negative command:

По-моему, лучше не отвечать (нсв) на этот вопрос.

In my opinion, it would be better not to answer that question.

Or I don't think you should answer that question.

Лучше can be used with a negated perfective infinitive, although this occurs much less frequently. This construction is used to bestow high praise; the sense is that the action was performed in such a way that it would have been impossible to improve on it:

Ты блестяще разобрался с его каверзными вопросами: лучше не ответить (св)!

You coped brilliantly with his trick questions; you couldn't have come up with better answers!

An imperfective infinitive is used with negated forms of the verb **мочь** 'to be able' and with **нельзя** 'one cannot' to indicate that an action is not permitted:

NOTE

Нельзя is the negative form of **можно** 'one can', 'one may'.

К сожалению, я не могу отвечать (нсв) на этот вопрос.

Unfortunately, I cannot (i.e. I am not allowed to) answer that question.

Туда нельзя входить (нсв): там идёт какое-то совещание.

You can't go in there; there's a meeting going on.



When a perfective infinitive is used with negated forms of the verb **мочь** or with **нельзя**, the meaning conveyed is that the action is impossible:

К сожалéнию, я не могу́ отве́тить (св) на э́тот вопро́с: у меня́ прóсто нет никакой информации на э́ту те́му.

Unfortunately, I can't answer that question; I just don't have any information on that topic.

Нельзя́ сказа́ть (св) за́ранее, ка́кой у них бу́дет результа́т.

You can't say in advance what sort of result they'll get.

If the verb **мочь** or the form **можно́** is used with a negated imperfective infinitive, the meaning conveyed is that of permission not to do something:

Если хоте́те, вы мо́жете не отве́чать (нсв) на э́тот вопро́с.

If you don't want to, you don't have to answer that question.

Е́сли у вас ме́ньше, чем де́сять ты́сяч до́лларов, мо́жно не запо́лнять (нсв) декла́рацию.

If you have less than \$10,000, you don't have to fill in a declaration form.

If the verb **мочь** is used with a negated perfective infinitive, the meaning conveyed is the possibility that something may not happen (**можно́** is not used in this construction):

Он мо́жет не отве́тить (св) на ваш вопро́с: вре́мени у него́ о́чень мало́.

It's possible he won't answer your question; he's got very little time left.

Но мне мо́гут не пове́рить (св).

But it is possible that they won't believe me. *Or* But I might not be believed.

If **нельзя́** or a negated form of the verb **мочь** is used with a negated infinitive, the two negatives cancel each other out, and the meaning is something like 'it is impossible not to'. In this construction, which is used rather more frequently than

the English equivalent, the infinitive is usually perfective:

Нельзя́ не восхи́титься (св) его́ реши́тельностью.

It is impossible not to admire his determination. *Or* One cannot help admiring his determination.

Он не мо́жет не отве́тить (св) на ва́ше письмо́.

He cannot fail to answer your letter. *Or* He has no choice but to answer your letter.

For more on issuing prohibitions, giving advice and giving permission, *see* **18.2.4, 18.4, 18.5.**

5.8 Some practical points

5.8.0 Introduction

Practical problems in the use of aspects can sometimes arise from the fact that the various connotations associated with each of the two aspects are not in all cases mutually exclusive. In some instances there are solutions available that might not be immediately obvious.

5.8.1 Making a 'negative' choice

In the previous sections of this chapter attention has been focused on positive reasons for choosing which aspect to use. In some instances, however, the choice of aspect is determined less by any obvious positive connotations of the preferred form than by the potential for misunderstanding that may arise from the connotations of the alternative:

Вы можете *зайти* (св) ко мне после обеда.

You can call in and see me after lunch.

Он *хочет пере́ехать* (св) в Москву́.

He wants to move to Moscow.

In these examples, assuming they each refer to a specific occasion, the *perfective* infinitive is used not so much because of any particular connotations of the perfective, but because the respective *imperfectives* (*заходить*, *переезжать*) might introduce undesirable connotations of either repetition or, in the case of the second example, a focus on the process, rather than the result.

For the use of the imperfective to indicate repeated action, *see* 5.2.3.

For the use of the imperfective to focus on the process, *see* 5.3.2.

5.8.2 Having your cake and eating it

There is one construction that makes it possible to use both aspects at the same time. This is when the past or the future tense of the *perfective verb* **стать** is combined with an *imperfective infinitive*. This construction is mostly used to indicate the start of a series of repeated actions or of a single continuing action. It occurs frequently in descriptions of a chain of events, but is not restricted to that type of context. When sentences with this construction are being translated into English, the verb **стать** is sometimes rendered as 'start' or 'begin', although in many instances only the accompanying imperfective verb is translated:

Поселившись в гостинице, расположенной в самом центре Лондона, я стал (св) *ждать* (нсв). Ближе к полуночи мне позвонил незнако́мый мужчина с иностранным акцентом.

Having settled into the hotel, which was located in the very centre of London, I waited. Towards midnight I received a telephone call from an unknown man with a foreign accent.

Я поднял бумажник и стал (св) проверять (нсв) содержимое. Слава Богу, документы оказались на месте. Деньги пропали, но это, в конце концов, не так страшно.

I picked up my wallet and checked the contents. Thank goodness, the documents were all present and correct. My money had gone but, when all's said and done, that's not so terrible.

Жара расслабляюще действует на всех, и студенты и даже профессора стали (св) приходить (нсв) на лекции в футболках и шортах.

The heat has had a relaxing effect on everyone, and students and even professors have taken to coming to lectures in T-shirts and shorts.

In the first two of these examples the perfective verb **стал** is used to situate the action within a sequence of events. In the first example, the imperfective infinitive **ждать** is used to indicate a continuing event that cannot lead to a conclusion, while in the second



example, the imperfective infinitive **проверя́ть** is used to focus on the process. In the following sentence we are given the narrator's reaction to what he finds during the process of checking. In the third example, the perfective verb **ста́ли** is used to indicate that the consequence of the action in the past still applies in the present, while the imperfective infinitive **приходи́ть** indicates repeated action.

For more uses of the verb **стать**, see 14.1.6.

The future **ста́ну** is used less frequently with an imperfective infinitive. Although it can have the same nuances as the past tense, there is often little or no practical difference between this construction and the ordinary imperfective future formed using **буду** and the *imperfective infinitive*:

Я, наве́рно, ста́ну (св) приходи́ть (нсв) на рабо́ту то́лько по́сле обе́да, так как мне ле́гче рабо́тать до́ма.

I shall probably start coming into work only after lunch, since it's easier for me to work at home.

The use of **буду приходи́ть** would not make a significant difference here.

5.8.3 Не **стал, не ста́ну** +imperfective infinitive

When negated forms of the verb **стать** are used with an *imperfective infinitive*, the effect is to produce a more categorical negation. In the *past tense* the meaning is often close to 'chose/decided not to':

Прокурату́ра не ста́ла (св) возбу́ждать (нсв) де́ло прот́ив его́ бра́та.

The prosecutor's office has decided not to bring criminal charges against his brother.

In the *future tense* this construction can be an emphatic way of indicating that someone has no intention of doing something:

Разгова́рива́ть (нсв) с тобо́й на э́ту те́му я не ста́ну (св).

I have no intention of talking to you on that topic.

6 Adjectives

6.0 Introduction

Adjectives are words that are used to *qualify nouns*, usually by the addition of a descriptive term. Adjectives can be used in two ways: *attributive adjectives* form part of a single phrase with the nouns they qualify; *predicative adjectives* form part of the *predicate*, that is, they normally appear in conjunction with the verb **быть** or one of its synonyms. The difference between the two types of adjective can be illustrated by the following two English sentences:

There is a *full* glass on the table.

Attributive

The glass is *full*.

Predicative

Russian adjectives decline in a similar fashion to nouns, albeit with distinct sets of endings. Attributive adjectives agree with the nouns they qualify in *number*, *gender* and *case*; predicative adjectives agree with the nouns they qualify in *number* and *gender*, but are used only in the *nominative* or *instrumental* cases. Some adjectives have an additional form, known as the *short form*, which is used only in the predicative function and only in the *nominative* case; these are described separately in **6.5**.

Attributive adjectives are normally placed *before* the nouns they qualify. Exceptions to this are discussed in **6.7** and **20.1.3**.

Russian adjectives have *four* sets of endings: one for each gender in the singular and one to serve for all nouns in the plural. Almost all adjectives belong to one of three declension types, and although there are some predictable complications caused by the application of the spelling rules given in **1.5.2**, **1.5.4** and **1.5.5**, there are relatively few irregularities.

6.1 Hard adjectives

6.1.1 The standard declension pattern of hard adjectives

The standard declension pattern of *hard* adjectives can be illustrated by **новый́** ‘new’:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	но́вый	но́вая	но́вое	но́вые
Gen.	но́вого	но́вой	но́вого	но́вых
Dat.	но́вому	но́вой	но́вому	но́вым
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	но́вую	но́вое	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	но́вым	но́вой	но́вым	но́выми
Prep.	но́вом	но́вой	но́вом	но́вых

The *accusative* ending in the *masculine singular* and in the *plural* is identical to the respective *nominative* ending when the adjective qualifies an *inanimate* noun and identical to the respective *genitive* ending when the adjective qualifies an *animate* noun. This rule applies to all adjectives:

Я купил но́вый стол для кúхни.

I've bought a new table for the kitchen.

Я давно́ знаю ва́шего но́вого дру́га.

I've known your new friend for a long time.

Теперь на́до купи́ть но́вые сту́лья.

Now I have to buy new chairs.

Когда́ я пере́ехал в Петербу́рг, я бы́стро приобрёл но́вых друзéй.

When I moved to St Petersburg, I soon made new friends.

For more on animate and inanimate nouns, *see* 2.4.

6.1.2 Adjectives with stress on the ending

Adjectives that have the stress on the ending, for example:

круто́й	steep, hard, tough, 'cool'
молодо́й	young
тупо́й	blunt, dull, stupid

have a *nominative singular masculine* ending in **-о́й**. All other endings follow the

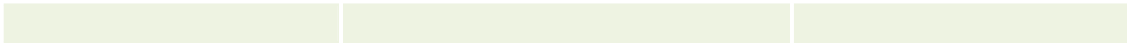
standard pattern:

<i>Nom. sing. masc.</i>	<i>Nom. sing. fem.</i>	<i>Nom. sing. n.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
круто́й	крута́я	круто́е	круты́е

6.1.3 Application of the spelling rule given in 1.5.5

In accordance with the spelling rule given in **1.5.5**, the ending of the *genitive singular masculine* and *neuter* is spelled **-го**, but is pronounced as if written with the letter **в**. For example, the form written **ново́го** is pronounced [пóвнəвə]. This rule applies to all adjectives, as well as to *pronouns* and *numerals* with *genitive singular* endings in **-го**.

For an explanation of the vowel symbols used in the above example, see **1.4.3** and **1.4.4**.



6.1.4 Application of the spelling rule given in 1.5.4

When an adjective has a stem ending in **-Г-**, **-К-** or **-Х-**, the application of the spelling rule given in **1.5.4** means that any **-Ы-** that would occur in an ending is automatically replaced by **-И-**. This rule affects the *nominative singular masculine*, the *instrumental singular masculine* and *neuter* and all endings in the plural.

For example, **стро́гий** 'severe', **ру́сский** 'Russian', **ти́хий** 'quiet':

Nom. sing. masc.	стро́гий	ру́сский	ти́хий
Instr. sing. masc. and n.	стро́гим	ру́ским	ти́хим
Nom. pl.	стро́гие	ру́ские	ти́хие
Gen. and prep. pl.	стро́гих	ру́ских	ти́ких

If the stress is on the *ending*, the *nominative singular masculine* ends in **-о́й**, but all other endings follow the above pattern:

Nom. sing. masc.	дорого́й 'dear'
Instr. sing. masc. and n.	дороги́м
Nom. pl.	дороги́е
Gen. and prep. pl.	дороги́х

6.1.5 Application of the spelling rules given in 1.5.2

The effects of the spelling rules given in **1.5.2** on the endings of adjectives are a little more complicated than those mentioned in the previous sections. If an adjective has a stem ending in **-Ж-**, **-Ч-**, **-Ш-** or **-Щ-** and if the stress is not on the ending, any **-Ы-** occurring in the ending is replaced by **-И-** and any **-О-** occurring immediately after one of these consonants is replaced by **-Е-**. The results of applying these rules can be illustrated by **хоро́ший** 'good':

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	хоро́ший	хоро́шая	хоро́шее	хоро́шие
Gen.	хоро́шего	хоро́шей	хоро́шего	хоро́ших
Dat.	хоро́шему	хоро́шей	хоро́шему	хоро́шим
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	хоро́шую	хоро́шее	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	хоро́шим	хоро́шей	хоро́шим	хоро́шими
Prep.	хоро́шем	хоро́шей	хоро́шем	хоро́ших

NOTE The very small number of rarely used adjectives in **-цкий**, for example,

краснолицый ‘red-faced’ and **куцый** ‘dock-tailed’, ‘skimpy’, follow the second, but not the first of these rules, i.e. they retain **-ы-** but replace **-о-** with **-е-**.

The number of adjectives in this category with stress on the ending is also very small, but this group includes the widely used **большой** ‘big’ and **чужой** ‘someone else’s’. These adjectives follow the first of the above rules, but not the second, i.e. **-ы-** is replaced by **-и-**, but **-о-** is retained (and is also found in the *nominative singular masculine*). The results of applying these rules can be illustrated by **большой**:



	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	большо́й	больша́я	большо́е	больши́е
Gen.	большо́го	большо́й	большо́го	больши́х
Dat.	большо́му	большо́й	большо́му	больши́м
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	большу́ю	большо́е	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	больши́м	большо́й	больши́м	больши́ми
Prep.	большо́м	большо́й	большо́м	больши́х

6.2 Soft adjectives (1)

Russian has two groups of adjectives with a soft declension. With the exception of **ка́рий** 'brown' (mostly of eyes); 'chestnut' (of horses), all adjectives belonging to the first group end in **-ный**. Their declension can be illustrated by **си́нний** 'dark blue':

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	си́нний	си́няя	си́нее	си́ние
Gen.	си́него	си́ней	си́него	си́них
Dat.	си́нему	си́ней	си́нему	си́ним
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	си́нюю	си́нее	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	си́ним	си́ней	си́ним	си́ними
Prep.	си́нем	си́ней	си́нем	си́них

Other frequently used adjectives belonging to this group include:

ве́рхний	upper	да́льний	distant, far
дре́вний	ancient	за́дний	back, rear
заму́жняя	married (of a woman)	искре́нный	sincere
край́ний	extreme, endmost, last	ли́шний	extra, superfluous
ни́жний	lower	пе́редний	front, forward
по́здний	late	после́дний	last
сре́дний	middle, average		

NOTE Because of its meaning **заму́жняя** normally occurs only in the *feminine* and *plural* forms.

In addition, there a large number of adjectives formed from *nouns*, *adverbs*, *prepositions* and *phrases* that indicate place or time. Examples include:

зима́	winter	зи́мний	winter (adj.)
вече́р	evening	вече́рний	evening (adj.)
здесь	here	зде́шний	local'
сего́дня	today	сего́дняшний	today's
в про́шлом	last year	прошлого́дний	last year's
году́			
со́рок лет	forty years	сорокале́тний	forty years (old)

For more on the formation of adjectives in this way, *see* **10.2.2**.

6.3 Soft adjectives (2)

The adjectives belonging to this group are all formed from animate nouns, although the group also includes the *ordinal numeral* **трѐтій** ‘third’ and the *pronoun* **чей?** ‘whose?’.

For more on ordinal numerals, *see* **8.4**.

For more on the pronoun, **чей** *see* **7.4.2**.

The declension of adjectives belonging to this group is characterised by the presence of a *soft sign* (**ь**) immediately before the ending in all forms except the *nominative singular masculine* and by the fact that, unlike other adjectives, they have *monosyllabic* endings in *nominative* and *accusative singular feminine* and *neuter* and the *nominative plural*. Their declension can be illustrated by **пти́чий** (formed from **пти́ца** ‘bird’):

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	пти́чий	пти́чья	пти́чье	пти́чи
Gen.	пти́чьего	пти́чьей	пти́чьего	пти́чьих
Dat.	пти́чьему	пти́чьей	пти́чьему	пти́чьим
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	пти́чью	пти́чье	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	пти́чьим	пти́чьей	пти́чьим	пти́чьими
Prep.	пти́чьем	пти́чьей	пти́чьем	пти́чьих

For more on the formation and use of these adjectives, *see* **10.2.5**.

6.4 Nouns that decline like adjectives

6.4.0 Introduction

In Russian there are a number of nouns that were originally adjectives or participles and that decline like adjectives, rather than like ordinary nouns.

Common nouns normally have a fixed gender and decline according to the pattern of that gender in the singular, as well as in the plural. Some nouns referring to people, however, have both masculine and feminine forms, and some occur only in the plural.

Surnames have masculine, feminine and plural forms.

6.4.1 Common nouns

Examples of *masculine* nouns:

водяной	water spirit
военнопленный	prisoner-of-war
военнослужащий	member of the armed forces
главнокомандующий	commander-in-chief
дворецкий	butler, major-domo
домовой	spirit that lives in the house
леший	spirit of the forest

портно́й	tailor
рядо́вой	private (soldier)
управля́ющий	manager
часово́й	sentry

Examples of *feminine* nouns:

бу́лочная	baker's	ва́нная	bathroom
горни́чная	(chamber)maid	гости́нная	living-room
закусочная	snack-bar	запя́тая	comma
крива́я	curve (e.g. on a graph)	набере́жная	embankment
пивна́я	beer bar, pub	пра́чечная	laundry
сбо́рная	national (sports) team	сто́ловая	canteen, refectory, dining-room
убо́рная	toilet; dressing room (e.g. in a theatre)	шашлы́чная	shashlik-house, kebab-house

Examples of nouns that can be *masculine* or *feminine*:

больно́й, больна́я	patient (sick person)
вожа́тый, вожата́я	leader of a youth group (e.g. the Pioneers)
дежу́рный, дежу́рная	person on duty
заклю́ченный, заклю́ченная	prisoner
крепосто́ной, крепо́стная	serf
нищий, нища́я	beggar
подсуди́мый, подсуди́мая	accused (in court)
рабо́чий, рабо́чая	worker
ру́сский, ру́сская	Russian (man or woman)
служи́щий, служи́щая	white-collar employee
сумасше́дший, сумасше́дная	mad person

Examples of *neuter* nouns:

буду́щее	the future	гору́чее	fuel
жа́ркое	roast meat, fried meat	живо́тное	animal
ле́гкое	lung	млекопита́ющее	mammal
моро́женое	icecream	насеко́мое	insect
насто́ящее	the present (time)	пиро́жное	cake
пресмы́кающееся	reptile	прилагáтельное	adjective
прош́лое	the past	ска́зуемое	predicate
соде́ржимое	contents (e.g. of a bottle)	су́ществительное	noun
числи́тельное	numeral	шампа́нское	champagne, sparkling wine

NOTE The noun **пресмы́кающееся** declines like the *present participle* of a reflexive verb, so that the *genitive singular*, for example, is **пресмы́кающегося**.

For more on the participles of reflexive verbs, see **4.12, 4.13**.

Examples of nouns that occur only in the *plural*:

да́нные 'data'	командиро́вочные 'travelling expenses'
нали́чные 'cash'	позывные 'call-sign'
чае́вые 'tip' (e.g. in a restaurant)	

NOTE In some instances there exist adjectives or participles identical in form to these nouns. In some instances the meaning of the adjective is closely related to that of the noun, e.g. ру́сский, ру́сская, ру́сское, ру́ские 'Russian' or пивно́й, пивна́я, пивно́е, пивные 'relating to beer'; in other instances the adjective has a different meaning, e.g. лёгкий, лёгкая, лёгкое, лёгкие 'light', 'easy' or настоя́щий, настоя́щая, настоя́щее, настоя́щие 'present', but also 'real', 'authentic'.

6.4.2 Surnames

The adjectival ending that occurs most frequently in surnames is **-ский**, as in **Ольша́нский**, **Досто́евский**, **Маяко́вский** and **Чайко́вский**, but other endings characteristic of adjectives are found as well:

<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Ольша́нский	Ольша́нская	Ольша́нские
Чайко́вский	Чайко́вская	Чайко́вские
Кра́мской	Кра́мская	Кра́мские
Лу́жный	Лу́жная	Лу́жные
Толсто́й	Толсто́я	Толсто́ые
Непо́мящий	Непо́мящая	Непо́мящие

6.5 The short forms of adjectives

6.5.0 Introduction

Many adjectives have a second set of endings known as *short forms*. These endings occur only in the *nominative* and are used only in the *predicative* function. In contrast, the endings described in sections **6.1–6.3** are sometimes known as *long forms*.

This means that adjectives have three forms that can be used in predicative function: the *nominative long form*, the *instrumental long form* and the *short form*. The use of these different forms is explained in **14.1.4**.

6.5.1 The endings of short adjectives

The endings of *short form* adjectives can be arrived at by removing the final syllable (-ый/-ой/-ий, -я, -е, -е) from the nominative ending of the long form. The endings can be illustrated by the following examples:

<i>Nom. sing. masc. (long form)</i>	<i>Masc. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Fem. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Neut. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Pl. (short form)</i>
пра́вый 'right'	пра́в	права́	право́	правы́
пья́ный 'drunk'	пьян	пьяна́	пьяно́	пьяны́
чи́стый 'clean'	чист	чиста́	чисто́	чисты́



<i>Nom. sing. masc. (long form)</i>	<i>Masc. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Fem. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Neut. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Pl. (short form)</i>
высо́кий 'high', 'tall'	высо́к	высока́	высоко́	высо́ки
све́жий 'fresh'	свеж	свежа́	свежо́/све́же	све́жи
пусто́й 'empty'	пуст	пуста́	пу́сто	пусты́

NOTE The stress on the short form endings often differs from that of long form endings and in some instances alternative stresses are possible. This can affect the application of the spelling rules given in 1.5.2, as in the example свежо́/све́же (long form све́жее) above.

If the removal of the masculine singular ending **-ый** etc. would result in two consonants coming together, a *fleeting vowel* is usually inserted.

For more on the fleeting vowel, see 2.5.0.

<i>Nom. sing. masc. (long form)</i>	<i>Masc. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Fem. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Neut. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Pl. (short form)</i>
любе́зный 'kind', 'courteous'	любе́зен	любе́зна	любе́зно	любе́зны
тесный 'cramped', 'small'	тесен	тесна́	тесно́	тесны́
лёгкий 'light', 'easy'	лёгок	легка́	легко́	лёгки/легки́
ре́зкий 'sharp', 'abrupt'	ре́зок	ре́зка	ре́зко	ре́зки
досто́йный 'worthy'	досто́инн	досто́йна	досто́йно	досто́йны

NOTES

- (i) The rules for determining which *fleeting vowel* is used are essentially the same as those given in 2.5.2 for the *genitive plural* endings of *feminine* and *neuter* nouns.
- (ii) In the masculine singular short form of the adjective **досто́йный** the vowel inserted is **и**, and not the expected **е**.

There are, however, some instances where a fleeting vowel is not inserted. Among these are **пусто́й** and **чи́стый**, mentioned above, and other examples include the following:

<i>Nom. sing. masc. (long form)</i>	<i>Masc. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Fem. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Neut. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Pl. (short form)</i>
бо́дрый 'cheerful'	бодр	бодра́	бо́дро	бо́дры
до́брый 'good', 'kind'	добр	добра́	до́бро	до́бры
тре́звый 'sober'	резв	резва́	тре́зво	тре́звы

6.5.2 Adjectives with no short forms

A substantial number of adjectives either have no short forms or have short forms that are so rarely used that for all practical purposes they can safely be disregarded. The following fall into this category:

1 All adjectives ending in **-ский** or **-енький** (for the special case of **ма́ленький**, see below).

2 All adjectives belonging to the second group of soft adjectives (described in 6.3).

3 Almost all adjectives belonging to the first group of soft adjectives (described in 6.2). The only exception in general use is **искренний** 'sincere', which has the following short form endings:

Masc. sing.	искренен
Fem. sing.	искренна
N. sing.	искренне/искренно
Pl.	искренни/искренны

4 Adjectives that indicate a quality that is by definition inherent or permanent. Examples include **деревянный** 'wooden', **десятичный** 'decimal', **трамвайный** 'relating to trams', **яблочный** 'relating to or made from apples'.

6.5.3 Irregular forms

The adjectives **большой** 'big' and **маленький** 'small' have short forms that are derived (regularly) from the related adjectives **великий** 'great', 'big' and **малый** 'small' respectively:

большой ~ велик, велика́, велико́, велики́
маленький ~ мал, мала́, мало́, малы́

The adjective **рад, рада, радо, рады** 'pleased about something' exists only in the short form; it tends to be used with an *infinitive* or with a noun in the *dative*:

Мы очень рады вас видеть.

We are very pleased to see you.

Я рад вашим успехам.

I am pleased about your success(es).

6.6 Possessive adjectives

6.6.1 The formation of possessive adjectives

In informal language Russian makes wide use of *possessive adjectives*. These are

formed from proper names and terms indicating family relations that end in **-а** or **-я** by removing the final vowel and adding **-ин**. They are used instead of the *genitive* of the noun concerned to indicate *possession*.

For the use of the genitive case to indicate possession, *see* **3.3.1**.

The following examples illustrate the formation of *possessive adjectives*. In general, when they are formed from forenames, they are usually based on the *familiar*, rather than the full form, although the latter is used in some contexts, e.g. when indicating saints' days.

For more on the full and the familiar forms of forenames, *see* **12.1.1**.

ма́ма	Mum	ма́мин	Mum's
па́па	Dad	па́пин	Dad's
те́ща	(husband's) mother-in-law	те́щин	mother-in-law's
Та́ня	Tat'iana, Tania	Та́нин	Tania's
Га́ля	Galina, Galia	Га́лин	Galia's

Са́ша	Aleksandr, Aleksandra, Sasha	Са́шин	Sasha's
Ми́ша	Mikhail, Misha	Ми́шин	Misha's

6.6.2 The declension of possessive adjectives

Although many of the endings of *possessive adjectives* are the same as of normal adjectives, there are special endings for the *nominative* and the *accusative*:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	ма́мин	ма́мина	ма́мино	ма́мины
Gen.	ма́миного	ма́миной	ма́миного	ма́миных
Dat.	ма́миному	ма́миной	ма́миному	ма́миным
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	ма́мину	ма́мино	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	ма́миным	ма́миной	ма́миным	ма́миными
Prep.	ма́мином	ма́миной	ма́мином	ма́миных

Possessive adjectives do not have short forms.

6.6.3 The use of possessive adjectives

The following sentences illustrate the use of possessive adjectives:

Вдруг за двéрью он услы́шал па́пин го́лос.

Suddenly he heard his father's voice on the other side of the door.

У тебя́ нет случа́йно Ми́шиного телефо́на?

You wouldn't happen to have Misha's telephone number, would you?

Э́то Та́нины ве́щи: лу́чше их не тро́гать.

Those are Tania's things. I wouldn't touch them if I were you.

In each of these sentences the *possessive adjectives* could be replaced by a noun in the *genitive* or by another construction indicating possession:

**Вдруг за двёрью он услышал гóлос пáпы.
У тебя нет случайно телефона Миши?
Эти вёщи принадлежат Тане: лúчше их не трóгать.**

(Literally, These things belong to Tania.)

Although possessive adjectives tend to be characteristic of informal language, they can be more generally useful as a means of avoiding a string of nouns in the genitive:

Она нёсколько раз бывáла на квартирe Сáшиной мáтери.

She had been to Sasha's mother's flat several times.

It is in principle possible to form possessive adjectives by adding the suffix **-ов/-ев** to masculine nouns; these decline exactly like adjectives in **-ин**, but are much less frequently used. Both types of possessive adjectives are, however, found in a range of set expressions. In such instances there is no option of using another construction instead. Examples include:

ахиллéсова пята́	Achilles' heel
крокодиловы слéзы	crocodile tears



маменькин сынóк	Mummy's boy
папенькина дочка	Daddy's girl
Татьянин день	St Tatiana's day (25 January; this has come to be regarded as a special day for students)

Я вам покажу́ кузькину мать!

I'll give you what for! I'll show you a thing or two!

Вообще́ он пи́шет очень хоро́шо, но его́ ахиллэсова пята́ – это́ же́нские персона́жи.

On the whole he writes very well, but female characters are his Achilles' heel.

Сего́дня *Татьянин день*: в общежития́х пройду́т вечеринки, во мно́гих бара́х и клуба́х органи́зованы специа́льные дискоте́ки для студéнтов.

It's St Tatiana's day today. There will be parties in the student hostels, and many bars and clubs are putting on special discos for students.

6.7 Indeclinable adjectives

Russian has a very small number of *indeclinable* adjectives. Most of these belong to one of a restricted range of semantic categories, and they are noteworthy for the fact that, with certain exceptions, they are placed *after* the nouns they qualify.

Adjectives indicating the colour and style of clothes:

хаки	khaki
клёш	flared, bell-bottomed

Culinary terms:

ассорти́	mixed
фри	(deep-)fried

Adjectives indicating ethnic groups or languages:

ко́ми	Komi
хи́нди	Hindi
урду́	Urdu
эспера́нто	Esperanto

NOTE The adjective **ко́ми** can either precede or follow the noun it qualifies.

Other indeclinable adjectives:

пи́к	peak (used only in the phrase часы́ пи́к 'peak hours')
ми́ни	mini (this usually precedes the noun)
э́кстра	extra (quality)

Забавно посмотре́ть старые́ фильмы́ семидеся́тых годов, где все́ ходят в э́тих стра́шных брю́ках кле́ш.

It's funny watching old films from the 1970s, where everyone's wearing those dreadful flared trousers.

«Талу́н» – э́то ежедне́вная информа́ционная програ́мма на ко́ми языке́.

Talun is a daily news programme in (the) Komi (language).



Не люблю́ ездить в метро́ в часы́ пик, тем бо́лее, е́сли на́до де́лать переса́дку в це́нтре го́рода.

I don't like being on the metro during the peak time, especially if I have to change trains in the centre of the city.

In present-day Russian, there are a few recently borrowed words, notably **бизнес** 'business', **интерне́т** 'Internet' and **онлайн** 'on-line', which are used as if they were indeclinable adjectives. The normal spelling convention, however, is to join them to the following noun with hyphen:

Бизнес-образова́ние она́ получи́ла в одно́м из знамени́тых университе́тов США.

She received her business education at a famous university in the United States.

Ка́жется, я об э́том чита́л в како́м-то интерне́т-журна́ле.

I think I read about it in some Internet journal.

Мы прове́ли ма́ленький онла́йн-опро́с, но результа́ты оказа́лись не оче́нь интере́сными.

We carried out a small on-line survey of opinion, but the results weren't very interesting.

6.8 Comparative and superlative forms

6.8.0 Introduction

Comparative adjectives are used when comparing different degrees of the quality indicated by the adjective in question. *Superlative* adjectives are used to indicate the highest possible degree of quality concerned.

There are two ways of forming comparative adjectives in Russian: one, the *short comparative*, is used mostly for *predicative* adjectives, while the other, the *long comparative* is mainly used for *attributive* adjectives.

The use of comparative adjectives is described in **21.9.1–21.9.6**.

There are four ways of forming superlative adjectives, which are differentiated by

style and function.

6.8.1 The short comparative

The *short comparative* does not decline and has only one form for all numbers and genders. For the majority of adjectives the short comparative is formed by removing the ending and by adding the suffix **-ee**:

гру́бый	crude, rough	гру́бее	cruder, rougher
дли́нный	long	дли́ннее	longer
древни́й	ancient	древне́е	more ancient
интересный	interesting	интереснее	more interesting
но́вый	new	нове́е	newer
я́сный	clear	я́снее	clearer



If an adjective has a stem that ends in one of the following consonants or sequences of consonants, the consonant(s) undergo a change according to patterns given below and the ending is **-e**. With some adjectives that end in a consonant followed by **-кий**, the **-к** is removed and the preceding consonant is changed:

г~ж	дорогой	dear	дороже	dearer
д~ж	молодой	young	моложе	younger
	редкий	rare	реже	rarer
з~ж	близкий	nearer	ближе	nearer
	узкий	narrow	уже	narrower
к~ч	крепкий	strong	крепче	stronger
	лёгкий	light, easy	легче	lighter, easier
	жёсткий	hard	жёстче	harder
ст~щ	чистый	clean	чище	cleaner
т~ч	богатый	rich	богаче	richer
	короткий	short	короче	shorter
х~ш	тихий	quiet	тише	quieter

A number of adjectives, many in common use, have irregular comparatives:

большой	big	больше	bigger
высокий	high	выше	higher
глубокий	deep	глубже	deeper
далёкий	far, distant	дальше	farther, further, more distant
дешёвый	cheap	дешевле	cheaper
долгий	long (of time)	дольше	longer
маленький	small	меньше	smaller
сладкий	sweet	слаще	sweeter
старый	old	старше	older
тонкий	thin	тоньше	thinner
широкий	wide	шире	wider

The adjective **поздний** 'late' has alternative short comparative forms **позднее** and **позже** 'later'.

Two adjectives have short comparatives that are totally different from the basic form:

плохой	bad	хуже	worse
хороший	good	лучше	better

NOTE The adjective **худой** 'thin' has the short comparative **худее**.

There are many adjectives that do not have short comparative forms. These include:

1 Adjectives denoting a quality that by definition cannot exist in different degrees, for example **двуногий** 'two-legged', **босой** 'bare-footed', **трамвайный** 'relating to trams'. This category also includes all adjectives belonging to the second group of soft adjectives.

2 Virtually all adjectives ending in **-ский, -ской** or **-енький**.

3 Some miscellaneous adjectives, including **ветхий** 'old', 'decrepit', **голый** 'bare', 'naked', **гордый** 'proud', **дикий** 'wild', **липкий** 'sticky' and **нагой** 'naked'.



Especially in informal language the short comparative is frequently used with the prefix **по-**. The effect of adding the prefix is normally to soften slightly the degree of comparison:

Если бы я был *помоло́же*, я бы у́ехал иска́ть рабо́ту за гра́ницей.

If I were (a bit) younger, I would go and look for work abroad.

Не нра́вится э́то шампа́нское? Тогда́ попрóбуй друго́е. Вот э́то бу́дет *посла́ще*.

Don't you like this champagne? Then try another. This one here will be a bit sweeter.

6.8.2 The long comparative

The *long comparative* is formed by placing **бо́лее** before the *long form* of adjective:

дре́вний	ancient	бо́лее дре́вний	more ancient
интерéсный	interesting	бо́лее интерéсный	more interesting
оптимистический	optimistic	бо́лее оптимистический	more optimistic
широкий	wide	бо́лее широкий	wider

The only restriction on the formation of the long comparative is that it is not normally used with adjectives denoting a quality that by definition cannot exist in different degrees.

6.8.3 Declining comparatives

There are in Russian four comparative forms that decline like normal long adjectives. These are:

хоро́ший	good	лу́чший	better
плохой	bad	худший	worse
большóй	big	больш́ий	bigger
маленький	little	мень́ший	smaller

NOTE Some of the forms of **бо́льший** (e.g. the nominative singular feminine **бо́льшая**) are identical to the equivalent forms of **большóй**; in such instances the comparative forms are usually printed with the stress mark.

The above forms are used in the attributive function. For examples, *see* **21.9.5**.

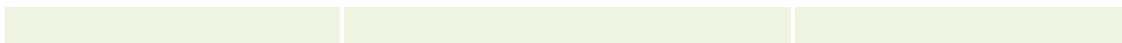
In addition, the adjectives **молодо́й** ‘young’ and **ста́рый** ‘old’ have associated forms that look like declinable comparatives, but which are really separate adjectives:

молодо́й	мла́дший	younger, junior
ста́рый	ста́рший	elder, older, senior

These forms are mostly used with reference to siblings or ranks (in either the armed forces or civilian life):

Моя́ ста́ршая сестра́ живёт в Петербу́рге.

My elder sister lives in St Petersburg.



Она́ рабо́тает мла́дшим нау́чным сотру́дником в Словáрном сэ́кторе Акаде́мии нау́к.

She works as a junior research officer in the Dictionary Section of the Academy of Sciences.

6.8.4 The superlative with **са́мый** or **наибóлее**

The most common way of forming the *superlative* of adjectives is to place the *pronoun* **са́мый** before the long form of the adjective.

For more on the pronoun **са́мый**, *see* 7.8.2.

When **са́мый** is used with an adjective, both parts decline and agree with the noun in *number*, *gender* and *case*. **Са́мый** declines like a normal *hard* adjective (*see* 6.1):

Э́то са́мая интере́сная кни́га, кото́рую я когда́-либо чита́л.

This is the most interesting book I have ever read.

Они́ покупа́ют са́мую сти́льную оде́жду и едят в са́мых доро́гих рестора́нах.

They buy the most stylish clothes and eat in the most expensive restaurants.

The *declinable comparative* adjectives **лу́чший** and **ху́дший** can be used either on their own or prefaced by **са́мый** to indicate *superlative* meaning:

У нас ка́ждый год прово́дится ко́нкурс на (са́мое) лу́чшее стихотворе́ние на те́му «Росси́я».

Every year we hold a competition for the best poem on the topic of 'Russia'.

The adverb **наибóлее** can be used in place of **са́мый**. **Наибóлее** is normally found only in written language:

Наибóлее ода́ренных дете́й отбира́ют в музыка́льную шко́лу-интерна́т при Моско́вской консервато́рии.

The most talented children are chosen for places at a special (music) boarding-

school attached to the Moscow Conservatory.

The opposite of **наиболее** is **наименее**:

Метод, который они выбрали, оказался наименее эффективным.

The method they chose proved to be the least effective.

6.8.5 Other forms of the superlative

Some adjectives form a second superlative with the suffix **-ейший** (**-айший** if there is consonant change following the patterns given in **6.8.1** for the short comparative). Examples that are likely to be encountered include:

важный	important	важнейший	most important
грубый	crude, rough	грубейший	crudest, roughest
дальный	far	дальнейший	furthest, further
интересный	interesting	интереснейший	most interesting
крупный	big, large	крупнейший	biggest, largest
новый	new	новейший	newest
опасный	dangerous	опаснейший	most dangerous
полный	full	полнейший	fullest



у́мный	clever	умне́йший	most clever
це́нный	valuable	ценне́йший	most valuable

Also:

ма́ленький, ма́лый	small	ма́ле́йший	smallest, slightest
бли́зкий	near	ближа́йший	nearest, next (few)
вели́кий	great	велича́йший	greatest
ме́лкий	small, petty	мельча́йший	smallest, slightest
ре́дкий	rare	редча́йший	rarest
стро́гий	strict, severe	строжа́йший	strictest
тихий	quiet	тиша́йший	quietest

Some care is needed in interpreting these forms, since they are potentially ambiguous. While they can be used as true superlatives, they are often used to indicate a very high (but not necessarily the highest) degree of the quality indicated by the adjective:

В нашем регионе находится крупнейший в мире завод по производству троллейбусов.

Our region is home to the largest trolley-bus factory in the world.

Президентские выборы – это крупнейшее событие в жизни страны.

The election of a president is a huge event in the life of our country.

For the most part these forms occur in the more formal levels of written language. There are, however, some forms that are used more widely and can even occur in speech. These are **ближайший**, both with its spatial meaning ('nearest') and used with **время** to mean 'in the near future' or with other time-related words to mean 'the next few'; **дальнейший** with the meaning 'further' (and in the phrase **в дальнейшем** 'henceforth', 'hereafter'); **малейший** with the meaning 'slightest':

В ближайшее время осадков не ожидается.

No rain or snow is expected in the near future.

В ближай́шие го́ды бу́дут снесены́ все пятиэта́жные дома́, постро́енные в хрущёвское вре́мя.

During the next few years all the five-storey blocks built in the Khrushchev period will be demolished.

Ждём ва́ших дальне́йших указа́ний.

We await your further instructions.

Они́ не име́ют ни мале́йшего предста́вления о том, что мы здесь де́лаем.

They haven't even the slightest idea about what we are doing here.

It is also possible to form a superlative by adding the prefix **наи-**either to one of the *declinable comparative* adjectives or to one of the above forms in **-ейший** or **-айший**:

лу́чший	наилу́чший
худший	наихудший
больший	наибольший
меньший	наименьший
нове́йший	наинове́йший



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These forms are also generally characteristic of the more formal levels of written language (including journalism), although **наилучший** is often found in expressions of good wishes:

Желаём здоровья, счастья и всего самого наилучшего.

We wish you health, happiness and simply all the very best.

Мы считаем, что именно эти новые книги должны представлять наибольший интерес для наших читателей.

We think it is these new books that should be of most interest to our readers.

7 Pronouns

7.0 Introduction

Pronouns are often defined as words that can be used in place of nouns, and many of the words that in Russian are conventionally known as pronouns do indeed fulfil this function. Others, however, can serve to *qualify nouns*; the difference between pronouns and adjectives is that the former do not indicate a specific quality, but qualify the noun in a much more general way.

Russian pronouns can be divided into several categories: *personal pronouns (7.1)*, *possessive pronouns (7.2)*, *demonstrative pronouns (7.3)*, *interrogative pronouns (7.4)*, *relative pronouns (7.5)*, *indefinite pronouns (7.6)* and *pronouns that in one way or another express the idea of totality (7.7)*; pronouns that fit into none of these categories are dealt with in 7.8.

Negative pronouns are dealt with in the chapter concerning negation, in sections 15.3.2, 15.3.3 and 15.5.

All pronouns decline: some have the same four sets of endings as *adjectives* (masculine, feminine, neuter and plural), while others have only a single set of endings. Indeed, some pronouns have exactly the same endings as adjectives, while others have endings that are peculiar to themselves.

7.1 Personal pronouns

7.1.1 Personal pronouns in Russian

Russian has the following *personal pronouns*:

я	1st person singular: 'I'
ты	2nd person singular (informal): 'you'
он	3rd person singular masculine: 'he (it)'
она	3rd person singular feminine: 'she (it)'
оно	3rd person singular neuter: 'it'
мы	1st person plural: 'we'
вы	2nd person singular (formal) and plural: 'you'
они	3rd person plural: 'they'

There is also a *reflexive* pronoun **себя**. The use of this pronoun is explained in 7.1.7.

The choice of which third person pronoun to use is determined by the *grammatical gender* of the noun to which it refers: thus, the masculine form **он** refers to all *masculine* nouns and the feminine form **она** refers to all *feminine* nouns, regardless of whether they are animate or inanimate:

—Ты случайно не видел мою ручку?

—Вот она, лежит на столе.

—You haven't by any chance seen my pen anywhere?

—Here it is, it's on the table.

For more on the gender of nouns, *see* **2.3**.

For more on the use of **ты** and **вы** to address one person, *see* **13.1**.

7.1.2 Declension of the first and second person pronouns and the reflexive pronoun

The *first* and *second person pronouns* and the *reflexive pronoun* decline as follows:

Nom.	я	ты	–
Gen.	меня́	тебя́	себя́
Dat.	мне	тебе́	себе́
Acc.	меня́	тебя́	себя́
Instr.	мно́й/мно́ю	тобо́й/тобо́ю	собо́й/собо́ю
Prep.	мне	тебе́	себе́

Nom.	мы	вы
Gen.	нас	вас
Dat.	нам	вам
Acc.	нас	вас
Instr.	на́ми	ва́ми
Prep.	нас	вас

NOTES

(i) The *reflexive pronoun* **себя́** has no *nominative* form.

(ii) In the instrumental the forms **мно́й, тобо́й, собо́й** are more widely used, but the alternatives **мно́ю, тобо́ю, собо́ю** are sometimes preferred for reasons of euphony,

especially in *passive constructions*:

Все статьи, написанные *мною* в прошлом году, можно найти в Интернете.

All the articles I wrote [*literally*, written by me] last year can be found on the Internet.

For more on passive constructions, *see* **4.14** and **20.2**.



7.1.3 The declension of the third person pronoun

The *third person pronoun* declines as follows:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	он	она́	оно́	они́
Gen.	его́	её́	его́	их
Dat.	ему́	ей	ему́	им
Acc.	его́	её́	его́	их
Instr.	им	ей/е́ю	им	и́ми
Prep.	не́м	не́й	не́м	ни́х

NOTES

- (i) The spelling rule given in 1.5.5 applies to the *genitive singular masculine* and *neuter*, i.e. the letter **г** is pronounced as if it were a **в**.
- (ii) The alternative instrumental singular feminine form **е́ю** is used for euphony and where it is necessary to avoid possible confusion with the dative form **ей**.
- (iii) The *accusative* ending of all personal pronouns is identical to that of the *genitive*.

Immediately after a *preposition* an **н**-is added to the beginning of all relevant forms of the third person pronoun. Because the prepositional case is used only after prepositions, the **н**-is always present in prepositional forms of this pronoun:

Я получи́л от него́́ очень́ странное́ письмо́.

I've received a very strange letter from him.

Я зайду́ к нему́́ после́ обе́да.

I'll call in and see him after lunch.

В послед́нее вре́мя мы́́ очень́ ма́ло слы́шим о́ ней.

In recent times we've heard very little about her.

Тре́нер изви́нился пе́ред ни́ми за плоху́ю игру́ национа́льной сбо́рной.

The coach apologised to them for the poor performance of the national side.

NOTE Forms without the **н** are normally preferred after some polysyllabic prepositions, notably **благодаря**(+ dat.) ‘thanks to’, **вопреки**(+ dat.) ‘contrary to’, **навстречу**(+ dat.) ‘in the direction of and **согласно**(+ dat.) ‘according to’.

7.1.4 The omission of personal pronouns when they indicate the grammatical subject of a sentence

In English, the verb does not for the most part give any information about the subject of the sentence, and therefore *personal pronouns* indicating the *grammatical subject* can be omitted only in very restricted circumstances (e.g. after the conjunction ‘and’). In Russian, verbs in the *present* and *future* tenses contain information about the subject in the ending, and although this information is not present in the ending of *past* tense verbs, it is nonetheless sometimes possible to omit *subject personal pronouns* in contexts where they would be required in English.



It is difficult to give precise rules for when subject pronouns can be omitted, but in general it occurs more often in speech than in writing. In particular, the subject personal pronoun is often omitted in dialogues of the following sort:

—Не помните, во сколько начина́ется за́втрашнее совеща́ние?

—Не помню, или вернее, не знаю́.

—Do you happen to remember what time the meeting starts tomorrow?

—No, I don't, or rather, I don't know.

The subject personal pronoun tends to be omitted when a sentence is made up of two separate clauses with the same subject:

Он спеши́л, потому́ что опазды́вал на по́езд.

He was hurrying because he was late for the train.

В суббо́ту я ходи́л на футбо́л, а в воскресе́нье съезди́л домо́й к роди́телям.

On Saturday I went to a football match and on Sunday I went home to see my parents.

Мы показáли им всё, чем здесь занима́емся.

We showed them everything we're doing here.

The same principle applies when two short sentences follow one another:

—Но она́ пла́чет. Вдруг ушибла́сь?

—Если бы ушибла́сь, она́ бы пла́кала намно́го грóмче.

—But she's crying. What if she's hurt herself?

—If she'd hurt herself, she would be crying a lot louder.

7.1.5

The generalised subject

Russian has no special pronoun form to indicate a *generalised subject* (cf. English 'one'). Instead, the most usual way of indicating this is to use the *third person plural* of the verb, but without any explicit noun or pronoun subject:

Гово́рят, её о́тец – изве́стный поли́тик.

They say her father is a well-known politician.

Зде́сь не ку́рят.

You are requested not to smoke. (*Literally*, One does not smoke here.)

У нас борщ гото́вят по-друго́му.

Here people make borshch differently.

В бу́лочную на такси́ не е́здят.

People don't get a taxi to go to the baker's.

This construction is often used in contexts where English would use a *passive verb*:

Моше́нников пригово́рили к разли́чным сро́кам лише́ния свобо́ды.

The swindlers were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

Нам вче́ра провели́ скоро́стной интерне́т.

Yesterday we were connected to broadband. (*Literally*, high-speed Internet.)

For more on the use of the third person plural verb without a pronoun subject in sentences where English would use a passive verb, see **20.2.2**.



In more informal language a *second person singular* verb, again without the *pronoun subject*, can be used in a generalised sense (cf. English ‘you’ used in the same way):

Иной раз сидишь дома, смотришь любимую передачу, и вдруг звонит телефон.

Sometimes you can be sitting at home, watching your favourite programme, and suddenly the telephone rings.

In cases other than the *nominative*, the appropriate form of the pronoun **ты** can be used to indicate a generalised person, while the nominative form **ты** is used to indicate a generalised subject in sentences where there is no verb present:

Хорошо, когда ты начальник: тебя все слушают, на тебя никто не кричит.

It’s good when you’re the boss; everybody listens to you and nobody shouts at you.

7.1.6 Multiple persons

In Russian, where there is reference to multiple persons (cf. English ‘you and I’ or ‘you and your sister’), the persons are joined not by a conjunction but by the preposition **с** (+ instr.). In addition, the first (or only) pronoun takes the form of an ‘inclusive’ plural:

Мы с тобой должны обсудить этот вопрос.

You and I should discuss this question.

А что, разве вас с сестрой не пригласили на свадьбу?

Were you and your sister not invited to the wedding?

7.1.7 The use of the reflexive pronoun **себя**

The *reflexive pronoun* **себя** has no nominative form. It is used to replace other personal pronouns whenever reference is to the subject of the sentence, and consequently it corresponds to English ‘myself’, ‘yourself’, ‘ourselves’, ‘themselves’, etc. depending on the context:

Если он действительно так считает, он явно обманывает себя.

If he really thinks that, he's clearly deceiving himself.

Почему ты не купишь себе компьютер помощнее?

Why don't you buy yourself a more powerful computer?

Обязательно принесите с собой все документы.

Don't fail to bring all your documents with you.

Мы слышали о себе немало лестного, но, к сожалению, не всё это правда.

We have heard many flattering things about ourselves, but unfortunately not all of it is true.

The *reflexive pronoun* normally refers to the subject of the nearest verb; in some instances this can be the notional subject of an infinitive:

Он посоветовал нам принести с собой все документы.

He advised us to bring all our documents with us.



But:

Он посоветовал нам принести ему все документы.

He advised us to bring him all our documents.

It is important not to confuse the *reflexive pronoun* **себя́**, which fulfils the function of a *personal pronoun*, with the *reflexive particle* **-ся (-сь)**, used to form *reflexive verbs*.

For more on the formation and function of reflexive verbs, see **4.13, 4.14**.

Мой дядя считает себя́ большим знатоком марочных вин.

My uncle considers himself a great connoisseur of fine wines.

Мой дядя считается великим знатоком марочных вин.

My uncle is considered a great connoisseur of fine wines.

Они́ убедии́ли себя́ в том, что противник не знает об их замыслах.

They convinced themselves that their opponent did not know about their plans.

Они́ убедии́лись в том, что противник не знает об их замыслах.

They were certain that their opponent did not know about their plans.

The reflexive pronoun **себя́** is used idiomatically in a number of constructions:

вести́/повести́ себя́	to behave
выходить/выйти из себя́	to lose one's temper
представлять собой	to be (formal)
чувствовать/почувствовать себя́	to feel (ill, happy, etc.)
к себе́, на себя́	pull (on doors)
от себя́	push (on doors)

В последнее время она стала вести́ себя́ очень странно.

Recently she has begun to behave very strangely.

For an example of **представлять собой**, see 14.1.5.

For an example of **чувствовать себя**, see 3.5.4.

More examples of the use of **себя** are given in 7.8.1.

7.2 Possessive pronouns

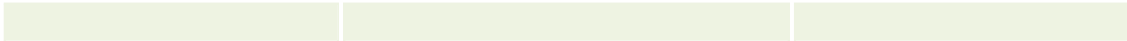
7.2.1 First and second person possessive pronouns

The *first person singular possessive pronoun* is **мой** ‘my’, ‘mine’.

The *second person singular (informal) possessive pronoun* is **твой** ‘your’, ‘yours’.

The *first person plural possessive pronoun* is **наш** ‘our’, ‘ours’.

The *second person singular (formal) and plural possessive pronoun* is **ваш** ‘your’, ‘yours’.



These pronouns decline as follows:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	мой	мо́я	моё	мои́
Gen.	моего́	моёй	моего́	мои́х
Dat.	моему́	моёй	моему́	мои́м
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	мою́	моё	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	мои́м	моёй	мои́м	мои́ми
Prep.	моём	моёй	моём	мои́х

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	наш	на́ша	на́ше	на́ши
Gen.	на́шего	на́шей	на́шего	на́ших
Dat.	на́шему	на́шей	на́шему	на́шим
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	на́шу	на́ше	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	на́шим	на́шей	на́шим	на́шими
Prep.	на́шем	на́шей	на́шем	на́ших

Твой declines exactly like **мой**.

Ваш declines exactly like **наш**.

The rules for the pronunciation of the *genitive singular masculine* and *neuter* endings and for the use of the different endings for the *accusative singular masculine* and *accusative plural* are the same as those given for adjectives in **6.1.3** and **6.1.1**.

7.2.2 The third person possessive pronouns

The *third person possessive pronouns* are as follows:

- его́** his, its (referring to *masculine* and *neuter* nouns)
- её́** her, its (referring to *feminine* nouns)
- их** their (referring to *plural* nouns)

These pronouns are identical to the corresponding *genitive* forms of the third person pronoun (see **7.1.3**) and do not decline:

Наско́лько я по́мню, я дал ключи́ её́ бра́ту.

As far as I remember, I gave the keys to her brother.

Я не могу́ не восхища́ться их успе́хами.

I cannot but admire their success.

Unlike the third person pronoun, however, these *possessive pronouns* never take the **н**-prefix when they follow a preposition:

Я забы́л отда́ть ему́ ключи́ от его́ кварти́ры.

I forgot to give him back the keys to his flat.

Да́же в са́мые трудо́вые времена́ я всегда́ был на их сторо́не.

Even in the most difficult of times I was always on their side.



7.2.3 The possessive pronoun **СВОЙ**

The *possesive pronoun* **свой**, which declines exactly like **мой** and **твой**, always refers to the subject of the sentence, regardless of the person.

When the subject is in the *first* person, there is usually a choice whether to use **свой** or **мой/наш**:

Мы сталкиваемся с определёнными трудностями в *своей/нашей* работе.

We encounter certain difficulties in our work.

Гостиница была большая, поэтому мы не сразу смогли найти *свою/нашу* комнату.

It was a big hotel, and so we didn't immediately manage to find our room.

In a sentence where the *first person plural* includes both the speaker and the addressee, **наш** tends to be preferred:

Послушай, кажется, мы пропустили *нашу* очередь.

Listen, I think we've missed our turn.

When the subject is in the *second* person, **свой** tends to be preferred:

Разве *ты* не можешь позвонить ему со *своего* мобильного?

Can't you phone him from your mobile?

When the subject is in the *third* person, however, there is a clear distinction between **свой** and **его/её/их**, and **свой** must be used whenever reference is to the subject of the sentence:

На вечеринке у Виктора Иван танцевал со *своей* девушкой.

At Viktor's party Ivan danced with his (own) girlfriend.

На вечеринке у Виктора Иван танцевал с *его* девушкой.

At Viktor's party Ivan danced with his (i.e. Viktor's) girlfriend.

Моему́ брату́ доводи́лось слу́шать, как Бро́дский чита́ет *свои́* стихи́.

My brother had occasion to hear Brodsky reading his (own) poetry.

Мой брат обожа́ет Бро́дского и ча́сто чита́ет *его́* стихи́ вслух.

My brother admires Brodsky and often reads aloud his (i.e. Brodsky's) poetry.

In each of these pairs of examples there is potential for misunderstanding in English, but the fact that **свой** and **его́** would clearly refer to different people means that there is no difficulty in interpreting the Russian correctly.

As with the *reflexive pronoun* **себя́, свой** normally relates to the subject of the nearest verb, even when this is the *notional subject* of an *infinitive*:

Врач посоветова́л Ива́нову поме́ньше по́льзоваться *своей* маши́ной.

The doctor advised Ivanov not to use his (i.e. Ivanov's) car so much.

Козло́в охóтно позволя́л Ива́нову по́льзоваться *его́* маши́ной.

Kozlov was happy to allow Ivanov to use his (i.e. Kozlov's) car.

Свой cannot normally be used to qualify the subject of a sentence or a clause, nor can it be used or qualify one of two or more joint subjects:

Она́ счита́ла, что *её́* муж поступи́л о́чень необду́манно.

She thought that her husband had acted very precipitately.



Она́ и её́ племя́нница ви́новны в ра́вной стéпени.

She and her niece are equally guilty.

Unlike **себя́, свой** does have *nominative* case forms. These are used in two sets of circumstances:

1 In sentences indicating possession using the construction with **у** (+ gen.):

Когда́ она́ роди́ла пе́рвого ребёнка, у них уже́ была́ *своя́* кварти́ра.

When she gave birth to their first child, they already had their own flat.

For more on the use of this construction to indicate possession, *see* **14.3**.

2 In certain more or less set expressions:

У нас нет от неё́ секрétов: она́ здесь *своя́* (челове́к).

We don't keep any secrets from her; she's one of us.

***Своя́* руба́шка бли́же к те́лу.**

Charity begins at home [literally, One's own shirt is closer to one's body].

The opposite **свой** in many instances is the adjective **чужо́й** 'other people's', 'someone else's':

Там нет ничего́ оригина́льного: он то́лько повто́ряет *чужие́* слова́.

There's nothing original in that; he's simply repeating other people's words.

***Чужие́* ве́щи лу́чше не тро́гать.**

It's best not to touch someone else's things.

7.2.4 The use of possessive pronouns

Russian does not generally use *possessive pronouns* in conjunction with nouns denoting parts of the body, close relatives and in some other contexts where the

link between the possessor and the item possessed is obvious:

В отве́т он кивну́л *головой́*.

He nodded his head in answer.

Я слы́шал, что он уше́л *от жены́* и уе́хал жить куда́-то на Се́вер.

I heard that he's left his wife and gone off to live somewhere in the north.

Ка́жется, пора́ *заканчивать́* дискуссию́: люди́ уже́ ста́ли смотре́ть *на часы́*.

I think it's time we were bringing the discussion to an end; people are already starting to look at their watches.

Она́ допила́ *кофе́*, попра́вила *причёску*, расплати́лась и вы́шла из кафе́.

She finished her coffee, tidied her hair, paid and left the café.

If someone does something to a part of their (or someone else's) body, the possessor can be indicated by the *dative* form of the appropriate *personal pronoun*:

Они́ в у́жасе: *дочь* *побри́ла себе́* *голова́*.

They're horrified: their daughter's shaved her head.



7.3 Demonstrative pronouns

7.3.1 The declension of the demonstrative pronouns

The two main *demonstrative pronouns* in Russian are **э́тот** ‘this’ and **то́т** ‘that’. They decline as follows:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	э́тот	э́та	э́то	э́ти
Gen.	э́того	э́той	э́того	э́тих
Dat.	э́тому	э́той	э́тому	э́тим
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	э́ту	э́то	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	э́тим	э́той	э́тим	э́тими
Prep.	э́том	э́той	э́том	э́тих

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	то́т	та	то	те
Gen.	то́го	той	то́го	тех
Dat.	то́му	той	то́му	тем
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	ту	то	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	тем	той	тем	теми
Prep.	том	той	том	тех

The rules for the pronunciation of the *genitive singular masculine* and *neuter* endings and for the use of the different endings for the *accusative singular masculine* and *accusative plural* are the same as those given for adjectives in **6.1.3** and **6.1.1**.

A third demonstrative pronoun **се́й** ‘this’ is now found only in church language and in the most formal of bureaucratic styles. Relics of it, however, can be found in certain common words and set expressions:

сего́дня [s'ivódn'ə]	today
се́йчас	now, immediately, just a minute
до сих пор	up to now
ни то́ ни се́	neither one thing nor another
ни с то́го ни с сего́	suddenly, without any obvious reason
сию́ мину́ту!	this minute!

A fourth demonstrative pronoun **тако́й** corresponds to English ‘such’, ‘like

that/those'. It declines like the adjective *дорогой* (see 6.1.2 and 6.1.4).

7.3.2 The use of **ЭТОТ** and **ТОТ**

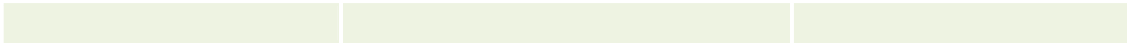
In many instances **ЭТОТ** and **ТОТ** correspond closely to English 'this' and 'that', except that **ТОТ** tends to be used only when there is an explicit contrast or when indicating something that is far away:

Этот галстук мне очень нравится, а *тот* я скорее всего отдам брату.

I like this tie very much, but I'll probably pass that one on to my brother.

Принеси мне, пожалуйста, вон *ту* папку.

Could you bring me that folder from over there.



In other contexts, **э́тот** may be the equivalent of English ‘that’:

Гла́вный реда́ктор заяв́ил, что ни́кто с э́тим предложе́нием к не́му не обра́щался.

The editor-in-chief stated that no one had put that proposal to him.

На ва́шем ме́сте я бы э́того не де́лал.

If I were you, I wouldn’t do that.

NOTE In formal language, **да́нный** (which declines like an adjective) can be used in place of **э́тот**. It is often found in the phrase **в да́нном случа́е** ‘in this instance’ (for an example, see **22.1.3**).

The *neuter* form **э́то** is used to refer back to general concepts, as well as to whole phrases, clauses or sentences:

Он спроси́л меня́ о послед́них собы́тиях на Кавка́зе, но я призна́лся, что ни́чего об э́том не знаю́.

He asked me about recent events in the Caucasus, but I admitted that I knew nothing about it.

Расскажи́те им о ва́ших моско́вских приключе́ниях; э́то бу́дет для них о́чень интере́сно.

Tell them about your adventures in Moscow; they’ll find it very interesting.

In this usage **э́то** always refers back to something mentioned. It is not normally used to translate the English ‘dummy’ subject ‘it’ in sentences of the following type:

Интересно́ бы́ло бы́ знать, где они́ бы́ли вчера́ ве́чером.

It would be interesting to know where they got to last night.

За́втра у́тром бу́дет я́сно, смо́жем мы́ вы́ехать или́ нет.

By tomorrow morning *it* will be clear whether we can leave or not.

Это is also used for pointing things out and in definitions:

—**Что это?**

—**Это мой новый мобильник.**

—What's that?

—That's my new mobile phone.

Это – не история страны, это – моя личная история.

This is not the history of the nation; it's my personal history.

In sentences of this sort it is the *noun phrase* that is regarded as the subject, and therefore determines the form of any verb that may be present:

Это была для меня большая честь.

It was a great honour for me.

Тот is sometimes used as a third person pronoun; it is used in a narrative sequence when reference is made not to the subject of the preceding sentence, but to someone else involved in the events:

Иван встречал отца на вокзале. Он очень устал, но тем не менее считал нужным это сделать.

Ivan met his father at the station. He (i.e. Ivan) was very tired, but nonetheless thought it was something he had to do.



Ива́н встре́чал отца́ на вокза́ле. *Тот* си́льно уста́л с доро́ги, но о́чень обра́довался, ко́гда уви́дел сы́на.

Ivan met his father at the station. He/the latter (i.e. the father) was extremely tired after the journey, but was greatly cheered when he saw his son.

The phrase **не тот** means ‘the wrong ...’:

У нас пробле́ма: присла́ли *не те* запча́сти.

We have a problem; we’ve been sent the wrong (spare) parts.

When a preposition is used, it is placed immediately before the *pronoun*:

Он стра́шно расстро́ился, ко́гда обнару́жил, что вложи́л письмо́ не́весте *не в тот* конверт.

He was extremely upset when he found out that he had put the letter to his fiancée in the wrong envelope.

For the use of **тот** with relative pronouns, *see 7.5.*

For the use of **тот** in the phrase **тот же (са́мый)**, *see 21.9.7.*

7.3.3 The use of **тако́й**

The *pronoun* **тако́й** means ‘such’, ‘like this’, ‘like that’. The difference between **тако́й** and **э́тот** can be illustrated by the following pair of examples:

Э́ти фи́льмы я все́гда́ смотре́ю с большо́м удо́вольствием.

I always enjoy watching these (specific) films.

Таки́е фи́льмы я все́гда́ смотре́ю с большо́м удо́вольствием.

I always enjoy watching films like these/those.

In some contexts **тако́й** can correspond to English ‘that’ or ‘this’ or even the indefinite article:

В *тако́м* слúчае нам нéзачем продолжáть разговóр.

In that case there's no point in continuing our conversation.

У меня́ *тако́е* предложéние: дава́йте устро́им аукциóн!

I've got a suggestion: let's organise an auction.

Тако́й is also used to qualify *long adjectives* with the meaning 'so':

Ты уме́ешь то́лько крити́ковáть. Предложи́ решéние, е́сли ты *тако́й* умный́.

You only know how to criticise. Suggest a solution since you're so clever.

Short adjectives (see 6.5) are qualified by **так**:

Она́ была́ *так хороша́, так мила́*, что слов нет.

She was so pretty and so nice that there are no words to describe her.

The pronoun **тако́й-то** means 'such-and-such', i.e. it replaces a specific name when giving general indications:

Здесь на́до указа́ть, что е́дешь в Росси́ю по приглаше́нию *тако́й-то* организаци́и.

Here you have to state that you are travelling to Russia at the invitation of such-and-such an organisation.

7.4 Interrogative pronouns

7.4.1 The interrogative pronouns **кто** and **что**

The *interrogative pronouns* **кто** and **что** mean ‘who’ and ‘what’ respectively. They decline as follows:

Nom.	кто	что
Gen.	кого́	чего́
Dat.	кому́	чему́
Acc.	кого́	что
Instr.	кем	чем
Prep.	ком	чём

The spelling rule given in **1.5.5** applies to the *genitive singular* forms of these pronouns, i.e. the letter **г** is pronounced as if it were a **в**.

For examples of the use of **кто** and **что**, see **12.6.1** and **17.3.1**.

7.4.2 The interrogative pronouns **чей, какой, кото́рый**

The *interrogative pronoun* **чей** means ‘whose’. It declines like a *soft adjective* of the *second group*, as described in **6.3**, albeit with some slight differences in the *nominative* case. The endings can be illustrated by those of the *nominative* and *genitive* cases:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	чей	чья	чьё	чьи
Gen.	чьего́	чьей	чьего́	чьих

The use of **чей** can be demonstrated by the following examples. In practice, examples of cases other than the *nominative* are not particularly frequent, especially in speech:

Чья́ э́та кни́га?

Whose is that book?

Есть ли способ узнать, с чьего номера тебе звонили?

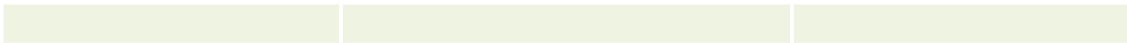
Is there a way of finding out from whose number you have been telephoned?

The pronouns **какой** 'which', 'what kind of' and **который** 'which' decline like the adjective **дорогой** and **новый** respectively (see 6.1.1, 6.1.2 and 6.1.4). Examples of their use are given in 17.1.3 and 17.4.1.

7.5 Relative pronouns

7.5.0 Introduction

The function of a relative pronoun is to serve as a bridge between what would otherwise be two separate sentences. The *interrogative pronouns* **который, кто, что, чей** and **какой** can all be used as relative pronouns.



7.5.1 The relative pronoun **КОТОРЫЙ**

The most widely used relative pronoun is **который**, which can correspond to English 'who', 'which' and 'that'. **Который** is normally used to refer back to a *noun*, and its ending depends on two factors: the *number* and *gender* are determined by the noun to which it refers, while the *case* is determined by the *grammatical function* that the pronoun fulfils in the clause where it appears:

Вот новая книга, которую я только что купил.

Here is a new book that I have just bought.

In the above sentence **которую** is *feminine singular*, agreeing with the feminine singular noun **книга**, but is in the accusative because it functions as the direct object of the verb **купил**.

For more on the use of the accusative case for the direct object of a verb, *see* **3.2**.

In English, it is sometimes possible to join clauses in this way without a relative pronoun; in Russian, however, the relative pronoun can never be omitted:

Книга, которую я взял в поездку, оказалась такой скучной, что я намеренно оставил её в каком-то кафе.

The book I took with me on my journey was so boring that I deliberately left it in a café.

Unlike in English, a relative pronoun cannot be separated from any preposition that may govern it:

Она показала мне старую машину, на которой её отец ездил в Россию.

She showed me the old car that her father had driven to Russia in.

Nouns used with relative pronouns are frequently qualified by the *demonstrative pronoun* **тот**, which can correspond to the English definite article or the demonstrative pronouns 'this' or 'that':

Фирма несёт юридическую ответственность лишь за те пункты, которые перечислены в договоре.

The firm bears legal responsibility only for those matters that are mentioned in the agreement.

Его удивило то равнодушие, с которым она его встретила.

He was surprised at the indifference with which she greeted him.

7.5.2 The relative pronouns **КТО** and **ЧТО**

When a *relative pronoun* is used to refer back to a pronoun, rather than to a noun, **кто** 'who' or **что** 'that', 'which' is normally used:

Он успел перекинуться словом с каждым, кто был на приёме.

He managed to exchange a few words with everyone who was at the reception.

Вы не знаете кого-нибудь, кто мог бы перевести на русский вот этот документ.

Do you happen to know anyone who could translate this document into Russian?

Это всё, что я могу сказать по этому поводу.

That's everything (that) I can say on the subject.



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For more on the pronoun **каждый**, *see 7.7.2.*

For more on the pronoun **кто-либо**, *see 7.6.4.*

For more on the pronoun **весь**, *see 7.7.1.*

Тот, кто can mean ‘those who’ or ‘anyone who’; similarly, **то, что** can mean ‘that which’ or ‘what’:

Тот, кто бывал в России, сразу же поймёт, о чём я говорю.

Those who have been (*or* Anyone who has been) to Russia will immediately know what I am talking about.

То, что ты говоришь, меня не убеждает.

What you’re saying doesn’t convince me.

Не верь тому, что он будет сейчас говорить.

Don’t believe what he’s about to tell you.

The pronoun **те** is normally followed by **кто**:

Лучше обратиться к тем, кто уже накопил какой-то опыт в этой сфере.

It’s best to approach those who have already gained some experience in this area.

Которые is used, however, if the reference is to inanimate objects:

Она хотела купить себе брюки, но те, которые ей понравились, оказались малы.

She wanted to buy some trousers, but those that she liked were too small.

For the use of the short adjective (**великий**) meaning ‘too big’, *see 14.1.4.*

NOTE The pronoun **кто** is always followed by a third person *singular* verb

(which is *masculine* in the *past tense*), even when it clearly refers to more than one person (see **11.2.1**).

Что is used when reference is to a whole clause or sentence or to a general concept not expressed by a specific noun:

У него́ была́ привычка́ опаздывать на собрания, что́ очень раздража́ло его́ колле́г.

He had the habit of being late for meetings, which greatly irritated his colleagues.

7.5.3 The relative pronouns **чей** and **какой**

The *relative pronoun* **чей** means ‘whose’:

Мы ка́ждый день получа́ем бо́лее ста жа́лоб от гра́ждан, *чьи* права́ наруша́ются.

Every day we receive more than 100 complaints from citizens whose rights are being infringed.



In this sentence it would be possible to replace **чьи** with the *genitive plural* form of **ко́торый**:

Мы ка́ждый день получа́ем бо́лее ста жа́лоб от гра́ждан, пра́ва ко́торых наруша́ются.

When **како́й** is used as a **relative pronoun**, it has the meaning ‘(of the kind) that’; it tends to be preceded by **тако́й**:

Он поку́пает та́кие ви́на, ка́кие мо́жно найт́и то́лько в са́мых доро́гих магази́нах.

He buys wines (of the sort) that you can only find in the most expensive shops.

Стоя́ла та́кая ти́хая и со́лнечная по́года, ка́кая обы́чно быва́ет то́лько в се́редине ба́бьего ле́та.

There was the calm and sunny weather (of the kind) that you usually only get in the middle of an Indian summer.

7.6 Indefinite pronouns

7.6.1 The formation of indefinite pronouns

By attaching a prefix or suffix to an *interrogative pronoun* Russian forms four separate series of *indefinite pronouns*:

кто́-то	кто́-нибу́дь	кто́-ли́бо	ко́е-кто́
что́-то	что́-нибу́дь	что́-ли́бо	ко́е-что́
како́й-то	како́й-нибу́дь	како́й-ли́бо	ко́е-како́й
че́й-то	че́й-нибу́дь	че́й-ли́бо	

NOTES

- (i) Pronouns formed from **че́й** are less widely used than the others, and **ко́е-че́й**, though theoretically possible, is probably best avoided.
- (ii) Pronouns with the **ко́е**-prefix can be pronounced either with a secondary stress on the prefix or with two full stresses. Some speakers place a secondary stress on the second syllable of the **-нибу́дь** suffix.

Although it is possible to give general guidelines on the use of these pronouns, it is worth noting that the boundaries between them are not always easy to draw, and there is a certain amount of overlap in the way they are used.

7.6.2 The **•ТО** series

This is probably the most widely used of the four series and the one most likely to encroach on the ‘territory’ of the others. The basic meaning of this series is ‘someone’, ‘something’, ‘some (or other)’, ‘some sort of’—reference is to someone or something specific, the identity of which is either not known or is irrelevant to the speaker:

Когда тебя не было дома, кто-то тебе звонил.

While you weren't here, someone telephoned you.

Я слышал, как они всё время о чём-то перешёптывались.

I could hear them whispering about something all the time.

Я помню только, что на нём была какая-то шляпа.

All I remember is that he was wearing some sort of hat.

Его́ очень трудно застать на месте: он всё время занят какими-то делами.

It's very difficult to find him; he's always busy with some business or other.

Вдруг он услышал чей-то голос.

Suddenly he heard someone's voice.

Кто-то often has the meaning of 'some people':

После войны́ эта писательская организа́ция переста́ла существова́ть: кто-то умер, кто-то уехал за границу, а кто-то вообще бросил писать.

After the war this writers' organisation ceased to exist; some people died, others went abroad, and some just gave up writing.

Что-то is often used with neuter singular adjectives:

Надеюсь, что он принёс с собой что-то съедобное.

I hope he's brought something edible with him.

In informal language **что-то** can have the meaning of 'for some reason', 'somehow'; in quantity expressions it can mean 'something over':

Мне что-то не хочется идти́ сегодня́ на работу́.

Somehow I don't feel like going to work today.

У меня́ с собой тысяча с чем-то рублей.

I've got something over a thousand roubles on me.

Какой-то sometimes serves as the equivalent of an English indefinite article:

Когда́ я откры́л дверь, на поро́ге стоя́л какой-то мужчи́на в чёрном пальто́.

I opened the door to a man in a black overcoat.

Кни́га, кото́рую я взял в по́ездку, оказа́лась такой ску́чной, что я намеренно оставил её в *каком-то* кафе.

The book I took with me on my journey was so boring that I deliberately left it in a café.

When used with a long adjective **како́й-то** has the meaning of ‘somehow’, ‘in some way’:

Чай се́годня *какой-то* невку́сный.

The tea today doesn't taste right somehow.

In informal language **како́й-то** is also used in certain exclamatory set phrases; in these phrases it generally follows the noun:

Ужа́с *какой-то*!

It was awful!

Кошма́р *какой-то*!

It was a nightmare!

По до́роге в аэропо́рт мы со́рок мину́т проторча́ли в про́бке. *Кошма́р какой-то!*

We were stuck for 40 minutes in a traffic jam on the way to the airport. It was a nightmare!

7.6.3 The **-нибудь** series

The **-нибудь** differs from the **-то** series in that it is more indefinite. Here there is no reference to anything specific, and the identity of the person or object in question is unknown to either speaker or addressee. The English equivalents can involve either 'some' or 'any':

Если у тебя нет открывалки, попроси у кого-нибудь.

If you don't have a bottle-opener, ask somebody for one.

У нас есть что-нибудь сладкое к чаю?

Have you anything sweet we can have with our tea?

Есть ко мне какие-нибудь вопросы?

Are there any questions for me?

The boundaries between the **-нибудь** and the **-то** series can be difficult to define. In the following sequence the questioner can use either **что-нибудь** or **что-то**, but the person answering must use **что-то**, since she clearly has something in mind:

—**Зачём ты вернулась? Что-нибудь/что-то забыла?**

—**Да, я действительно что-то забыла.**

—Why have you come back? Have you forgotten something?

—Yes, indeed, I have forgotten something.

In sentences indicating conditions either **-нибудь** or **-то** is possible (cf. English 'someone'/'anyone'):

Если кто-нибудь/кто-то позвонит с работы, скажи, что я занят и не могу подойти к телефону.

If anyone/someone phones from work, tell them I'm busy and can't come to the telephone.

For more on conditions, *see* 21.5.

In the following pair of sentences **кто-то** indicates that it was always the same person who asked the question, while **кто-нибудь** implies that different people asked the first question on different occasions:

В конце каждой лекции первый вопрос всегда задавал кто-то с последнего ряда.

В конце каждой лекции первый вопрос всегда задавал кто-нибудь с последнего ряда.

Both sentences, however, can be translated into English as:

At the end of each lecture the first question was always asked by someone in the back row.

The **-нибудь** forms can sometimes convey the nuance of English ‘any old’:

С вами разговаривал не кто-нибудь, а сам председатель.

That wasn’t any old person talking to you, but the chairman himself.

Я не очень хочу останавливаться в какой-нибудь задрюпанной гостинице на окраине города.

I don’t really want to stay in some miserable hotel on the outskirts of town.

In quantity expressions **какой-нибудь** can convey both approximation and the idea of ‘a mere’, ‘no more than’:

Через *каких-нибудь* два года вы не узнаете наш город.

In a mere two years from now you won't recognise our city.

7.6.4 The **-либо** series

Many dictionaries describe the **-либо** series as being synonymous with the **-нибудь** series, and they are indeed similar in meaning. Nevertheless, there are some contexts where the **-либо** series does seem to be preferred.

Pronouns from the **-либо** series can be used to translate ‘any’ in a negative construction:

Я не могу представить, чтобы *кто-либо* сумел его обыграть.

I can't imagine that there's anyone capable of beating him.

Он заявил, что не планирует приобретать *какие-либо* футбольные клубы.

He announced that he had no plans to acquire any football clubs.

Pronouns from the **-либо** series are also used in comparisons after **чем**:

Он знает об этом больше, чем *кто-либо* другой.

He knows more about that than anyone else.

For more on comparisons with **чем**, see **21.9.2**.

In some contexts pronouns from the **-нибудь** and the **-либо** series are indeed interchangeable. The latter tend to be more characteristic of formal language, but if there is a difference in meaning, it is that the **-либо** pronouns emphasise that it really does not matter who or what is involved:

Тебя вполне может временно заменить *кто-либо/кто-нибудь* из коллег.

You can easily be replaced on a temporary basis by (any)one of your colleagues.

А были в вашей библиотеке какие-либо/какие-нибудь книги по искусству?

Did your library have any books on art?

7.6.5 The **кое**-series

The **кое**-series is the least frequently used of the four series. The meaning of these pronouns is 'some', 'a few', 'one or two', although they can also carry the additional connotation of a slightly dismissive attitude on the part of the speaker:

Подозреваю, что кое-кому наши предложения не понравятся.

I suspect that some people won't like our suggestions.

Мне уже приходилось кое-что слышать о нём.

I've already had occasion to hear a few things about him.

Я тут принёс кое-какие старые фотографии; посмотрите, может быть, они подойдут для вашей книги.

I've brought one or two old photographs with me; have a look and see if they'll do for your book.

Sometimes these pronouns can convey the idea of information that the speaker knows, but does not wish to divulge:

У меня́ есть для вас *ко́е-каки́е* подарки.

I've got one or two presents for you (but I'm not telling you what they are).

When these pronouns are used with a *preposition*, the more usual practice is to place the preposition between the *prefix* and the *pronoun*; in this case the different elements are written as three separate words:

Не тако́й уж я по́лный неве́жда! *Ко́е в че́м всё-таки разбира́юсь.*

I'm not a complete ignoramus, you know! There are one or two things I do know about.

7.7 Pronouns relating to totality

7.7.1 The pronoun **ВСЬ**

The *pronoun* **весь** corresponds to English 'all'. It declines as follows:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>
Nom.	весь	вся	всё
Gen.	всего́	всей	всего́
Dat.	всему́	всей	всему́
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	всю	всё
Instr.	всем	всей	всем
Prep.	всём	всей	всём

The rules for the pronunciation of the *genitive singular masculine* and *neuter* endings and for the use of the different endings for the *accusative singular masculine* and *accusative plural* are the same as those given for adjectives in **6.1.3** and **6.1.1**.

The use of **весь** can be illustrated by the following examples:

Наш рейс отмени́ли, пришло́сь *весь день* просиде́ть в аэропорту́.

Our flight was cancelled, and we had to spend all day at the airport.

Я прочита́л не *всю* кни́гу, а то́лько пе́рвые сто страни́ц.

I haven't read all the book, just the first hundred pages.

После́дствия глоба́льного потепле́ния тепе́рь ошути́мы на *всех* континента́х.

The consequences of global warming can now be felt in all continents.

Used on their own, the *neuter singular* **всё** means 'everything', and the *plural* **все** 'everyone':

Скажи́ мне *всё*, что ты зна́ешь.

Tell me everything you know.

Не беспоко́йтесь, пива́ хва́тит на *всех*.

Don't worry; there'll be enough beer for everybody.



In informal language **всё** can have the meaning ‘right’, ‘that’s it!’:

Всё, хватит! Я слышать этого больше не могу.

Right, that’s enough! I can’t listen to any more of this.

Всё is also widely used with the adverbs **ещё** and **равно**:

всё ещё	still, even now
всё равно	still, all the same, nonetheless, anyway

Он окончил университет пять лет назад, но всё ещё живёт у родителей.

He graduated five years ago, but still lives at home with his parents.

Пусть говорит всё, что угодно - всё равно ему никто не поверит.

Let him say what he likes, (still) nobody will believe him (anyway).

For the use of **всё равно** to indicate indifference, see **16.2.4**.

For the use of **всё** with comparative adjectives and adverbs, see **21.9.1**.

The *genitive singular* form **всего** is used, either on its own or with **лишь**, to mean ‘only’, ‘no more than’ in quantity expressions:

На лекции было всего (лишь) двадцать человек.

There were only twenty people at the lecture.

It is important to distinguish the *pronoun* **весь** ‘all’, ‘the whole’ from the *adjective* **целый** ‘a whole’:

Не ешьте весь арбуз: оставьте хотя бы пару кусков на завтра.

Don’t eat the whole water-melon; leave at least a couple of portions for tomorrow.

Они спорили о том, можно ли за один раз съесть целый арбуз.

They were debating whether it was possible to eat a whole water-melon at a single

sitting.

7.7.2 Other pronouns relating to totality

The other pronouns that relate to totality are **ка́ждый**, **всякий** and **любо́й**. These decline like the adjectives **но́вый**, **ру́сский** and **молодо́й** respectively (see 6.1).

Ка́ждый corresponds to English 'every'. It is normally used only in the *singular*, although the *plural* forms are used with nouns such as **полчаса́** 'half an hour' and **полго́да** 'half a year', 'six months', which are treated as grammatically plural:

Бы́ло ви́дно, что, отве́чая на вопро́сы, он взвёшивал ка́ждое сло́во.

It was clear that when he answered the questions he was weighing up every word.

Ка́ждый год он е́здит в Испа́нию на ме́сяц.

Every year he goes to Spain for a month.

Ка́ждые полчаса́ в пала́ту загля́дывала ме́дсестра́ – провё́рить, не просну́лся ли он.

Every half-hour a nurse looked into the ward to check if he had woken up.

Всякий can also mean ‘every’, ‘all’, although nowadays this is most frequently found in certain set phrases, such as **всякий раз** ‘every time’, **всякий (человек)** ‘everybody’, **выше всяких похвал** ‘beyond all praise’. Its most common meaning is ‘all kinds of’:

В российской истории двоевластие всякий раз приводило к гражданской войне.

In Russian history dual power has led to civil war every time.

У него всегда бывают всякие интересные идеи.

He always has all sorts of interesting ideas.

В жизни всякое бывает.

All sorts of things can happen in life.

Всякий can mean ‘any’ after the preposition **без** (+ gen) ‘without’ and in some other constructions with negative implications:

Это без всякого сомнения самый скучный роман, который я когда-либо читал.

That is without any doubt the most boring novel I have ever read.

Для её гардероба характерно полное отсутствие всякого вкуса.

Her wardrobe is characterised by the total absence of any taste.

Всякий is also used in a number of set phrases, as shown in the following examples.

на всякий случай and the more informal **на всякий пожарный (случай)** ‘just in case’:

во всяком случае	in any case
	at any rate
	however that may be

Возьми́ зóнтик на всякий случай.

Take an umbrella, just in case.

Влияние его́ идей идёт на úбыль, во всяком случае́ в Росси́и.

The influence of his ideas is declining, at any rate in Russia.

Экономическая ситуация́ в наступа́ющем году́ остаётся нестаби́льной. Экономисты, во всяком случае́, прогнози́руют дальнейший рост инфля́ции.

The economic situation for the coming year remains unstable. At any rate, economists are forecasting a further rise in inflation.

Любо́й generally corresponds to ‘any’, especially when used in the sense of ‘every’:

Вы найдёте наши́ товары́ в любо́м суперма́ркете.

You’ll find our goods in any supermarket.

В любо́м случае́ means ‘in any event’, ‘whatever happens’:

В любо́м случае́ я буду́ ждать вас на вокза́ле.

Whatever happens, I’ll be waiting for you at the station.

In some instances the meaning of **любо́й** is close to, but not identical with that of **кто-нибудь/какой-нибудь**. The difference between them can be illustrated by the following pair of examples:

Если ты не знаешь доро́гу, спроси́ *кого́-нибудь*.

If you don't know the way, ask someone [emphasis is on the asking; the person may or may not know the answer].

Доезжайте до Не́вского проспекта, а там *любо́й* вам ска́жет, как пройти́ к Ру́сскому музею.

Go to Nevskii Prospekt, and there anyone (you like) (emphasis is on the 'any'; it does not matter who you ask, because everybody knows the answer) will tell you how to get to the Russian Museum.

7.8 Other pronouns

7.8.1 The emphatic pronoun **сам**

The *emphatic pronoun* **сам** declines as follows:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	са́м	сама́	само́	са́ми
Gen.	самого́	самой	самого́	самих
Dat.	самому́	самой	самому́	самим
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	саму́ (самоё)	само́	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	самим	самой	самим	самими
Prep.	самом	самой	самом	самих

The older *accusative singular feminine* form **самоё** is going out of use. Except for the *nominative plural* the stress is always on the ending.

The rules for the pronunciation of the *genitive singular masculine* and *neuter* endings and for the use of the different endings for the *accusative singular masculine* and *accusative plural* are the same as those given for adjectives in **6.1.3** and **6.1.1**.

The pronoun **сам** adds emphasis to the noun or pronoun with which it is used; **сам** normally follows a pronoun, but tends to precede a noun :

Он откazáлся де́лать каки́е-ли́бо ко́мmentáрии, зая́вив, что у него́ *самого́* нет никакой информации.

He refused to make any comment, stating that he himself had no information.

Все важные решения, относящиеся к сфере внешней политики, принимает сам Президент.

All important decisions on matters concerning foreign policy are taken by the president himself.

Сам can also have the meaning of ‘by oneself’ in the sense of ‘independently’:

Спасибо, но я не нуждаюсь в вашей помощи: я всё сделаю сама́.

Thank you, but I don't need your help; I can do everything myself.

Сам is frequently used with the *reflexive pronoun* **себя́**:

Этими действиями они́ только вредят самим себе́.

With these actions they are only damaging themselves.

С течением времени все политики становятся пародиями на самих себя.

In time all politicians become parodies of themselves.

The following set phrases involving **сам** and **себя** are worth noting:

сам по себе	in itself, independently, separately
самó собой (разумеется)	of course, obviously, it goes without saying

Идея сама по себе интересная, но можно ли её применить на практике?

In itself the idea is interesting, but can it be applied in practice?

В их передвижениях не было никакого взаимодействия: каждый действовал сам по себе.

Their movements were totally unco-ordinated with each other; everybody was acting independently.

Самó собой разумеется, мы будем оказывать необходимую помощь всем пострадавшим от недавнего стихийного бедствия.

It goes without saying that we will be providing all necessary assistance to the victims of the recent disaster.

7.8.2 The pronoun **САМЫЙ**

The *pronoun* **самый**, which declines like the adjective **новый** (see 6.1), is used with nouns indicating place or time to emphasise the precise point where or when something happens; in this sense it usually corresponds to English ‘very’:

Ей повезло: она нашла квартиру в самом центре города.

She struck lucky and found a flat in the very centre of the city.

Он затронул эту тему только в самом конце лекции.

He touched on this topic only at the very end of his lecture.

Самый is used in a number of useful set expressions:

в самый раз	just right (in terms of time, number or size)
в самом деле	indeed, really, in fact
на самом деле	in actual fact
это самое	the what's-its-name (used when someone cannot remember the name for something)

Чёрные ботинки мне великоваты, а вот эти коричневые в самый раз.

The black boots are a bit big, but the brown ones are just right.

Вы в самом деле этого не знали?

Did you really not know that?

—Ты зачём вернулась? Что-нибудь забыла?

—Да, я в самом деле что-то забыла.

—Why have you come back? Have you forgotten something?

—Yes, indeed, I have forgotten something.

Он выдаёт себя за великого колдуна и целителя, а на самом деле он просто шарлатан.

He claims to be a great magician or healer, but in actual fact he's just a charlatan.



Я принёс тебе *это самое* . . . энциклопедию.

I've brought you the what's-its-name, the encyclopedia.

For the use of **са́мый** to form the superlative of adjectives, *see* **6.8.4**.

For the use of **са́мый** in the phrase **тот же (самый)** 'the same', *see* **21.9.7**.

7.8.3 The reciprocal pronoun **друг дру́га**

The pronoun **друг дру́га** means 'each other'; the first part is indeclinable, while the second part declines (in the singular only) according to its function in the sentence and can be used after prepositions:

Вы уже знаете *друг дру́га*?

Do you already know each other?

Они́ поссо́рились на днях и тепе́рь да́же не здоро́ваются *друг с дру́гом*.

They fell out a few days ago and now aren't even on speaking terms. (*Literally*, they don't even say 'hello' to each other.)

8 Numerals and other quantity words

8.1 Cardinal numerals

Cardinal numerals are those used when counting or indicating quantity.

8.1.1 List of cardinal numerals

0	ноль, нуль	32	тридцать два, тридцать две
1	один, одна, одно, одни	38	тридцать восемь
2	два, две	40	сорок
3	три	50	пятьдесят
4	четыре	60	шестьдесят
5	пять	70	семьдесят
6	шесть	80	восемьдесят
7	семь	90	девяносто
8	восемь	100	сто
9	девять	101	сто один, сто одна, сто одно
10	десять	102	сто два, сто две
11	одиннадцать	110	сто десять
12	двенадцать	125	сто двадцать пять
13	тринадцать	160	сто шестьдесят
14	четырнадцать	200	двести
15	пятнадцать	300	триста
16	шестнадцать	400	четыреста
17	семнадцать	500	пятьсот
18	восемнадцать	600	шестьсот
19	девятнадцать	700	семьсот
20	двадцать	800	восемьсот
21	двадцать один, двадцать одна, двадцать одно	900	девятьсот
22	двадцать два, двадцать две	999	девятьсот девяносто девять
23	двадцать три	1,000	тысяча
25	двадцать пять	1,001	тысяча один, тысяча одна, тысяча одно
30	тридцать	1,002	тысяча два, тысяча две
31	тридцать один, тридцать одна, тридцать одно	1,100	тысяча сто
		1,211	тысяча двести одиннадцать
		2,000	две тысячи

3,000	три ты́сячи	500,000	пятьсо́т ты́сяч
4,000	четыре ты́сячи	501,000	пятьсо́т одна́ ты́сяча
5,000	пять ты́сяч	502,000	пятьсо́т две ты́сячи
10,000	деся́ть ты́сяч	1,000,000	миллион
15,000	пятьна́дцать ты́сяч	2,000,000	два миллио́на
40,000	со́рок ты́сяч	5,000,000	пять миллио́нов
41,000	со́рок одна́ ты́сяча	50,000,000	пятьдеся́т миллио́нов
42,000	со́рок две ты́сячи	1,000,000,000	миллиа́рд
100,000	сто ты́сяч		

For the different endings of **один**, *see* 8.1.2

For the different endings of **два**, *see* 8.1.3

For the different endings of **ты́сяча** and **миллион**, *see* 8.2

NOTES

- (i) **Ноль** and **нуль** are alternative forms. **Ноль** tends to be preferred in the written language, while **нуль** is widely used in the spoken language.
- (ii) The normal equivalent of (US) billion (i.e. one thousand million) is **миллиа́рд**; a (US) trillion (i.e. one million million) is, however, **триллио́н**.

8.1.2 Reading and writing cardinal numbers

The individual elements that are put together to make a large number are written as separate words. Thus, 45 751 384 would be written in full as:

**со́рок пять миллио́нов семьсо́т пятьдеся́т одна́ ты́сяча триста
восемьдеся́т четы́ре**

NOTE As this example shows, no punctuation is used to separate thousands, although a space can be left, especially with very large numbers. A comma is used instead of the decimal point (*see* 8.5.3).

Sequences of four or more digits are often broken up into units of two or (less often) three digits each, a procedure that is adopted more regularly in speech than

in writing. For example, a seven-digit Moscow telephone number is written as:

139–92–16 *or* 139 9216

This would normally be read as:

сто три́дцать де́вять девяно́сто два шестна́дцать

In journalistic and academic writing the following abbreviations are frequently found:

тыс.	ты́сяча (ты́сячи, ты́сяч, etc.)
млн.	миллио́н (миллио́на, миллио́нов, etc.)
млрд.	миллиа́рд (миллиа́рда, миллиа́рдов, etc.)

Наш заво́д выпуска́ет ежегодно́ *400 тыс.* маши́н.

Our factory manufactures 400,000 cars a year.

В Москве́ и её пригоро́дах прожиа́ют о́коло *20 млн.* челове́к.

About 20 million people live in Moscow and the surrounding area.

В 2002 году военные расходы России составляли около 11 млрд. долларов.

In 2002 Russian military expenditure amounted to approximately 11 billion dollars.

8.1.3 Declension of **ОДИН**

The declension of the numeral **один** is similar to that of the pronoun **этот**:

For the declension of **этот** see 7.3.1.

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	один	одна	одно	одни
Gen.	одного	одной	одного	одних
Dat.	одному	одной	одному	одним
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	одну	одно	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	одним	одной	одним	одними
Prep.	одном	одной	одном	одних

The rules for the *accusative singular masculine* and the *accusative plural* are the same as for *adjectives* and *pronouns*. The form that is identical to the *genitive* is used with *animate* nouns, while the form that is identical to the *nominative* is used with *inanimate* nouns:

For more on animate and inanimate nouns, see 2.4.

Я знаю одного человека, который с тобой не согласится.

I know one person who won't agree with you.

Я провёл с ней только один день, но уже знаю всю историю её семьи.

I've only spent one day with her, but I already know the whole history of her family.

Почему мужчины любят одних женщин, а женятся на других?

Why do men not marry the women they love?

(Literally, Why do men love some women, but marry different ones?)

Я читаю *одни* детективы.

I read nothing but detective novels.

8.1.4 The plural of **ОДИН**

The plural form of **один** is used in the following ways:

1 To mean 'one' with nouns that denote countable objects and that do not have a singular form, e.g. **сутки** 'day', 'period of 24 hours', **брюки** '(pair of) trousers', **выборы** '(political) election(s)':



Он положи́л в чемода́н *одни́* брю́ки и *одну́* руба́шку.

He put one pair of trousers and one shirt in his suitcase.

2 With the meaning ‘only’, ‘nothing but’:

Я чита́ю *одни́* детекти́вы.

I read nothing but detective novels.

3 With the meaning ‘alone’, ‘on one’s own’:

Не оставля́йте дете́й до́ма *одних!*

Don’t leave your children at home on their own.

4 With the meaning ‘some’ (in contrast to others):

***Одни́* увлека́ются спо́ртом, *други́е* му́зыкой, а *тре́тьи* ниче́м не увлека́ются.**

Some people are interested in sport and others in music, but some people aren’t interested in anything.

8.1.5 The declension of **два, три, четы́ре**

The numerals **два**(2), **три**(3) and **четы́ре**(4) follow a declension pattern peculiar to themselves:

	<i>Masculine and neuter</i>	<i>All genders</i>	<i>Feminine</i>
Nom.	два		две
Gen.		двух	
Dat.		двум	
Acc.	as nom. or gen.		as nom. or gen.
Instr.		двумя́	
Prep.		двух	

	<i>All genders</i>	<i>All genders</i>
Nom.	три	четыре
Gen.	трёх	четырёх
Dat.	трём	четырёх
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	тремя́	четырьмя́
Prep.	трёх	четырёх

In the *accusative* the form that is identical to the *genitive* is used with *animate* nouns, while the form that is identical to the *nominative* is used with *inanimate* nouns:

Ты заметил на углу́ *двух милиционеро́в*?

Did you notice two policemen on the corner?

На э́том снимке́ мы ви́дим все́х *четырёх дочерёй* последне́го ца́ря.

On this photograph we can see all four daughters of the last tsar.



Я то́лько что купи́л две по́следние кни́ги Бори́са Аку́нина.

I've just bought Boris Akunin's last two books.

Да́йте, пожа́луйста, три ба́нки пи́ва и две бо́льшие бу́тылки ми́неральной во́ды.

Could you give me three cans of beer and two large bottles of mineral water.

NOTE *Один* and *два* are the only numerals that distinguish gender; *один*, *два*, *три* and *четыре* are the only numerals that have different forms in the accusative for animate and inanimate nouns.

8.1.6 The declension of numerals ending in **-ь**

The numerals 5–20 and 30 all end in **-ь** and have the same endings as *feminine singular nouns* ending in **-ь**:

Nom.	пять (5)	шесть (6)	семь (7)	во́семь (8)
Gen.	пяти́	шести́	семи́	восьми́
Dat.	пяти́	шести́	семи́	восьми́
Acc.	пять	шесть	семь	во́семь
Instr.	пятью́	шестью́	семью́	во́семью́ <i>or</i> восьмью́
Prep.	пяти́	шести́	семи́	восьми́

Nom.	де́вять (9)	де́сять (10)	двена́дцать (12)	два́дцать (20)
Gen.	девяти́	десяти́	двена́дцати	двадцати́
Dat.	девяти́	десяти́	двена́дцати	двадцати́
Acc.	де́вять	де́сять	двена́дцать	два́дцать
Instr.	девяты́ю	десяты́ю	двена́дцатью	двадцатью́
Prep.	девяти́	десяти́	двена́дцати	двадцати́

NOTE The numeral *во́семь* has a fleeting vowel, which (optionally) reappears in the *instrumental* case.

The remaining numerals between 11 and 19 follow the same pattern as *двена́дцать*; *три́дцать* (30) follows the same pattern as *два́дцать*.

8.1.7 The declension of **со́рок**, **девяно́сто** and **сто**

The numerals **со́рок**(40), **девяно́сто**(90) and **сто**(100) follow a distinctive, but simple declension pattern:

Nom. and Acc.	со́рок	девяно́сто	сто
All other cases	сорока́	девяно́ста	ста

8.1.8 The declension of the numerals 50–80 and 200–900

The numerals 50–80 and 200–900 follow a complicated declension pattern, in which the forms change both in the *middle* and at the *end* of the word:

Nom.	пятьдеся́т (50)	шестьдеся́т (60)	се́мьдесят (70)	во́семьдесят (80)
Gen.	пятидесяти	ше́стидесяти	се́мидесяти	во́сьмидесяти
Dat.	пятидесяти	ше́стидесяти	се́мидесяти	во́сьмидесяти
Acc.	пятьдеся́т	шестьдеся́т	се́мьдесят	во́семьдесят
Instr.	пятидеся́тью	ше́стьюдесятью	се́мьюдесятью	во́семьюдесятью <i>or</i> во́сьмьюдесятью
Prep.	пятидесяти	ше́стидесяти	се́мидесяти	во́сьмидесяти

Nom.	двѐсти (200)	три́ста (300)	четы́реста (400)
Gen.	двухсо́т	трѐхсо́т	четырёхсо́т
Dat.	двумста́м	трѐмста́м	четырёхмста́м
Acc.	двѐсти	три́ста	четы́реста
Instr.	двумяста́ми	тремяста́ми	четырьмяста́ми
Prep.	двухста́х	трѐхста́х	четырёхста́х

Nom.	пятьсо́т (500)	во́семьсо́т (800)
Gen.	пятисо́т	во́сьмисо́т
Dat.	пятиста́м	во́сьмиста́м
Acc.	пятьсо́т	во́семьсо́т
Instr.	пятьюста́ми	во́семьюста́ми <i>or</i> во́сьмьюста́ми
Prep.	пятиста́х	во́сьмиста́х

Шестьсо́т(600), се́мьсо́т(700) and де́вятъсо́т(900) follow the pattern of пятьсо́т.

NOTE In the forms
трѐхсо́т, трѐмста́м, трѐхста́х, четырёхсо́т, четырёхмста́м, четырёхста́х there is a secondary
stress on the syllables containing the letter ѐ.

8.1.9 The declension of **но́ль/ну́ль, ты́сяча, миллио́н, миллиа́рд**

The numerals **но́ль/ну́ль**(0), **ты́сяча** ‘thousand’, **миллио́н** ‘million’, **миллиа́рд** ‘(US) billion’ are more like nouns than the other numerals. They have *grammatical gender*, decline like nouns and, unlike other numerals (except **оди́н**), they have both *singular* and *plural* forms.

но́ль/ну́ль is *masculine* and declines like a *masculine noun* ending in **-ь**.

ты́сяча is *feminine* and declines like a *feminine noun* ending in **-ча**.

миллио́н and **миллиа́рд** are *masculine* and decline like *masculine nouns* ending in a *consonant*.

Singular:

Nom.	но́ль/ну́ль	ты́сяча	миллио́н	миллиа́рд
Gen.	но́ля/ну́ля	ты́сячи	миллио́на	миллиа́рда
Dat.	но́лю/ну́лю	ты́сяче	миллио́ну	миллиа́рду
Acc.	но́ль/ну́ль	ты́сячу	миллио́н	миллиа́рд
Instr.	но́лём/ну́лём	ты́сячей	миллио́ном	миллиа́рдом
Prep.	но́ле/ну́ле	ты́сяче	миллио́не	миллиа́рде



Plural:

Nom.	ноли́/нулю́	ты́сячи	миллио́ны	миллиа́рды
Gen.	ноле́й/нуле́й	ты́сяч	миллио́нов	миллиа́рдов
Dat.	ноля́м/нуля́м	ты́сячам	миллио́нам	миллиа́рдам
Acc.	ноли́/нулю́	ты́сячи	миллио́ны	миллиа́рды
Instr.	ноля́ми/нуля́ми	ты́сячами	миллио́нами	миллиа́рдами
Prep.	ноля́х/нуля́х	ты́сячах	миллио́нах	миллиа́рдах

The plural of **ноль/нуль** is fairly rare, but occurs in such contexts as:

Число́ триллио́н изобража́ется на письме́ единице́й с двена́дцатью нуля́ми.

The figure one trillion is written as a one, followed by twelve noughts.

The plural forms of **ты́сяча**, **миллио́н** and **миллиа́рд** occur frequently in combination with other numerals and words indicating quantity. Examples are given in **8.2.5**.

8.1.10 The declension of complex numerals

When two or more numerals are put together to form complex numerals, all parts of the numeral should in principle be declined:

На́ша фи́рма име́ет предста́вительства в *двухста́х семиде́сяти четырёх* города́х по все́му ми́ру.

Our company has offices in 274 cities throughout the world.

Numerals of this type, although they will sometimes be heard in more formal contexts, are unwieldy and difficult to form spontaneously. In practice, the only case, other than the nominative and the accusative, that is used with any great frequency is the *genitive*, and even here numerals made up of more than two elements can usually be avoided. Examples such as the following are, however, not unusual:

В бассе́йн Невы́ входит *около́ пятидеся́ти ты́сяч озе́р и шестиде́сяти ты́сяч рек.*

The basin of the River Neva includes about 50,000 lakes and 60,000 rivers.

Доставка производится в течение двадцати четырёх часов после получения заказа.

Delivery takes place within 24 hours of our receiving the order.

8.2 Selecting what case to use with cardinal numerals

8.2.0 Introduction

The rules for selecting what case to use with cardinal numerals are complicated and depend both on the numeral concerned and on the case in which the numeral itself is placed.

8.2.1 The cases used with **один**

The numeral **один** behaves exactly like an *adjective* or a *pronoun*; in other words, it agrees with any noun it is used with in *gender*, *case* and *number*.

For the use of **один** in the plural, *see* 8.1.4

Я купил только одну буханку чёрного хлеба.

I bought only one loaf of black bread.

В советские времена иностранцы не могли ездить из одного города в другой без разрешения милиции.

In Soviet times foreigners were not able to travel from one town to another without the permission of the police.

Я читаю одних классиков; в прошлом году я не прочитал ни одного современного романа.

I only read the classic authors; last year I didn't read a single modern novel.

For the use of **не . . . ни** as an emphatic negative, *see* 15.3.4.

8.2.2 The cases used with **два, три, четыре**

When the numerals **два, три** or **четыре** are themselves in the *nominative* or the (*inanimate*) *accusative*, any noun that is used with them will be in the *genitive singular*:

Я вырос в большой семье: у меня три брата и две сестры.

I grew up in a big family; I have three brothers and two sisters.

Летом в нашем офисе очень жарко: там четыре окна, и все они выходят на юг.

In summer it gets very hot in our office; there are four windows and they all face south.

A small number of masculine nouns have the stress on the ending when used after **два, три, четыре**, but on the stem when used in the genitive case. The most common of these are **ряд** 'row', **час** 'hour' **шаг** 'pace', 'step':

Я ждал его́ на вокза́ле *три часа́*.

I waited at the station for him for three hours.

Мы проболта́ли *больше́ часа́*.

We chatted away for more than an hour.

If nouns used after **два, три, четы́ре** are qualified by an *adjective*, the adjective is in the *genitive plural*. With *feminine* nouns the adjective can be in either the *genitive plural* or the *nominative plural*; the genitive tends to be preferred when the stress of the noun in the *genitive singular* is different from that of the *nominative plural*:

У меня́ *два чёрных котá*.

I have two black cats.

В нашем о́фисе *четы́ре больш́их окна́*.

Our office has four big windows.

Мы поста́вили пе́ред собой *три основ́ных/основны́е зада́чи*.

We have set ourselves three main tasks.

У меня́ *две ста́рших сестры́*.

I have two older sisters.

The nominative plural of **зада́ча** is **зада́чи**; the nominative plural of **сестра́** is **се́стры**.



A *noun* that takes the endings of an *adjective* (e.g. **живо́тное** ‘animal’ or **столо́вая** ‘dining room’, ‘canteen’) behaves like an *adjective*:

В на́шем ко́рпусе две студéнческих столо́вых и буфéт для преподава́телей.

Our building has two student canteens and a snack bar for members of staff.

If an adjective precedes the numeral, it is in the *nominative/accusative plural*:

За по́следние три го́да она́ написа́ла две кни́ги и де́сять нау́чных статей.

In the last three years she has written two books and ten learned articles.

If the numeral is in the (*animate*) *accusative, genitive, dative, instrumental or prepositional*, then any *noun* and/or *adjective* is in the *plural* and in the *same case* as the numeral:

Вы не знаёте мо́их двух мла́дших сестёр?

Do you know my two younger sisters?

Она́ живёт одна́ с тремя́ о́громными соба́ками.

She lives on her own with three enormous dogs.

Я смотре́л в трёх ра́зных учебника́х и нашёл три ра́зных отве́та.

I looked in three different textbooks and found three different answers.

8.2.3 The cases used with numerals from **пять** to **девя́тьсо́т**

When a numeral between **пять** and **девя́тьсо́т** is in the *nominative* or the *accusative* case, any following *noun* and/or *adjective* is in the *genitive plural*:

Наш по́езд опозда́л на пять часо́в.

Our train was five hours late.

За последние пять лет она написала две книги и тридцать научных статей.

In the last five years she has written two books and thirty learned articles.

Тогда обед в этом ресторане стоил четыреста рублей.

In those days a meal in this restaurant cost 400 roubles.

The nouns **год** and **человек** have special forms that are used after *numerals* instead of the ordinary genitive plural. These forms are respectively **лет** and **человек**:

За последние пять лет она написала две книги и тридцать научных статей.

In the last five years she has written two books and thirty learned articles.

Я насчитал в зале примерно двести человек.

I counted about 200 people in the hall.

As the first of the above examples shows, when an adjective precedes a numeral, it is in the *nominative/accusative plural*.

When one of these numerals is in the *genitive, dative, instrumental or prepositional* case, then any accompanying *noun* and/or *adjective* is in the *same case* as the numeral:

Наш магазин работает с семи часов.

Our shop is open from seven o'clock.



Он оказа́лся на последне́м ме́сте со свои́ми ничто́жными пятьюста́ми голосо́ами.

He ended up in last place with his miserable five hundred votes.

Я побыва́л в десяти́ разны́х города́х и везде́ слы́шал одно́ и то же.

I've been in ten different cities and everywhere I went I heard the same thing.

NOTE This section applies only to numbers made up of a single element. For complex numerals, see **8.2.5**.

8.2.4 The cases used with **но́ль/ну́ль, ты́сяча, миллио́н, миллиа́рд**

When the numerals **но́ль/ну́ль, ты́сяча, миллио́н** or **миллиа́рд** are followed by a *noun* and/or an *adjective*, these are always in the *genitive plural*, regardless of the case of the numeral itself:

Минимáльная температу́ра но́чью бу́дет о́коло ну́ля гра́дусов.

The minimum temperature at night will be around zero degrees.

Такие́ ве́щи мо́жно купи́ть в любо́м магази́не за ты́сячу рубле́й.

You can buy things like that in any shop for a thousand roubles.

Оди́н киломе́тр ра́вен (оди́ной) ты́сяче ме́тров.

One kilometre is equal to one thousand metres.

Из окна́ самолёта́ был ви́ден го́род, кото́рый свети́лся миллио́ном огне́й.

From the window of the aeroplane you could see a city lit up by a million lights.

Инвести́ции в э́тот прое́кт соста́вят о́коло миллиа́рда до́лларов.

Investment in this project comes to about a billion dollars.

8.2.5 The cases used with complex numerals

When two or more numerals are put together to form complex numerals, the case of any following *nouns* and/or *adjectives* is determined by the *last* numeral in the sequence:

В моёй кни́ге двéсти со́рок одна́ страни́ца.

In my book there are 241 pages.

Моя́ но́вая кни́га соде́ржит двéсти со́рок одну́ страни́цу.

My book contains 241 pages.

Он был заде́ржан на границе при попы́тке нелега́льно вы́везти из страны́ се́мьдесят три ре́дкие/ре́дких ико́ны.

He was arrested at the frontier while trying to take 73 rare icons out of the country illegally.

Оди́н килоба́йт ра́вен (одной) ты́сяче два́дцати́ четы́рём ба́йтам.

One kilobyte is equal to one thousand and twenty-four bytes.

When **ты́сяча**, **миллио́н** or **миллиа́рд** are used after other numerals, their endings are determined by the rules given in **8.2.1–8.2.3**:

Биле́т до Москвы́ в бизне́с-кла́ссе сто́ит две ты́сячи е́вро.

A business class ticket to Moscow costs 2,000 euros.



В бассе́йн Невы́ вхо́дит о́коло пятидеся́ти ты́сяч озе́р и шестидеся́ти ты́сяч рек.

The basin of the River Neva includes about 50,000 lakes and 60,000 rivers.

За э́ти го́ды ву́зы Москвы́ выпу́стили почти́ два миллио́на дипломированных специалистов.

In this period almost two million people have graduated from Moscow's higher education institutions.

8.3 Collective numerals

8.3.1 List of collective numerals

Russian has an additional set of numerals, which are known as *collective numerals*.

- 2 дво́е
- 3 тро́е
- 4 че́тверо
- 5 пя́теро
- 6 ше́стеро
- 7 се́меро

Many dictionaries and reference works list collective numerals for 8 (**во́сьмеро**), 9 (**де́вятеро**) and 10 (**де́сятеро**), but these are rarely, if ever, used. There are no collective numerals above 10, and collective numerals cannot be combined with other numeral forms to form complex numerals.

8.3.2 The declension of collective numerals

Collective numerals decline according to the following patterns:

Nom.	дво́е	че́тверо
Gen.	двои́х	четверы́х
Dat.	двои́м	четверы́м
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	двои́ми	четверы́ми
Prep.	двои́х	четверы́х

Трое́ follows the pattern of **дво́е**; the remainder follow the pattern of **че́тверо**.

Accusative forms that are the same as the *genitive* are used with *animate nouns*; *accusative forms* that are the same as the *nominative* are used with *inanimate nouns*.

For more on animate and inanimate nouns, *see* **2.4**.

8.3.3 The use of collective numerals

When *collective numerals* are in the *nominative* or *accusative* case, any following *nouns* and/or *adjectives* are in the *genitive plural*. In the *genitive*, *dative*, *instrumental* or *prepositional* the numeral and any following *nouns* and/or *adjectives* are in the same case. Examples are given below.

Collective numerals are used in the following circumstances:

Дво́е, тро́е, четы́веро are used with nouns that denote countable objects and that do not have a singular form, e.g. **су́тки** ‘day’, ‘period of 24 hours’, **брюки́** ‘trousers’, **часы́** ‘clock’, ‘watch’; these numerals are also used with **де́ти** ‘children’:

По́сле э́того разгово́ра она́ не спала́ дво́е су́ток.

After that conversation she didn't sleep for two (whole days and) nights.

На туа́летном сто́лике акку́ратно ле́жали тро́е но́жниц и не́сколько расче́сок.

On the dressing table were neatly placed three pairs of scissors and several combs.

Моёй до́чери нужна́ кварта́ра побольше́: у них с му́жем уже́ четы́веро дете́й.

My daughter needs a bigger flat; she and her husband already have four children.

Any collective numeral can be used with a *masculine noun* referring to a person. In this usage there is little difference between *collective* and ordinary *cardinal* numerals, but *collective numerals* tend to be preferred (1) with masculine nouns that end in the nominative singular in **-а** or **-я** (e.g. **му́жчина** ‘man’) and (2) when the persons concerned are thought of as a group, rather than as separate individuals:

Е́сли встре́чаются дво́е му́жчин, они́ разгово́ривают и́ли о же́нщинах, и́ли о футбо́ле; други́х тем про́сто не существу́ет.

If two men meet, they talk about either women or football; there are no other topics of conversation.

В на́шем отде́ле дво́е му́жчин и четы́ре же́нщины.

In our department there are two men and four women.

Победи́телями ко́нку́рса при́знаны́ тро́е студе́нтов Ново́сибирского́ госуда́рственного́ университе́та.

The winners of the competition were three students from Novosibirsk State

University.

Collective numerals are used on their own to refer to a group of people; they are mostly used when the group is understood to consist entirely of males or to be mixed:

Нас в группе *четыре*.

There are four of us in the group.

По пятницам мы брали в магазине бутылку водки *на троих*, какую-нибудь закуску и шли к Ивану: он жил один.

On Fridays we used to go to the shop to buy a bottle of vodka for the three of us and something to eat with it; we went off to Ivan's: he was living alone.

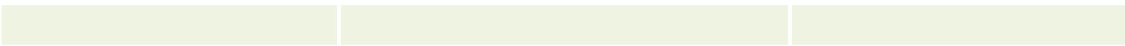
Collective numerals are sometimes used in set phrases, for example:

Он ест *за пятерых*.

He eats enough for five.

Не было почему-то трамваев, так что она пришла *на своих двоих*.

For some reason there were no trams running, so she came on her own two feet [*or on Shanks's pony*].



When they are used with a noun collective numerals are mostly found in the *nominative* and *accusative* cases. In other cases, they tend to be replaced by ordinary cardinal numerals:

Она́ прие́хала со свои́ми *двумя́* детьми́.

She came with her two children.

Ве́трена́я, моро́зная пого́да сохра́нётся в Москве́, как ми́нимум, в *тече́ние* *двух* *суток*.

The windy and frosty weather in Moscow will continue for at least another 48 hours.

Мальчи́шка сто́ял *сразу́* за *двумя́* *мужчина́ми*, кото́рые *гро́мко* *разгова́ривали* между́ собой.

The boy stood immediately behind two men who were talking to one another in loud voices.

8.4 Ordinal numerals

8.4.0 Introduction

Ordinal numerals are used to indicate the *order* in which someone or something comes in a sequence. They correspond to English 'first', 'second', 'third', etc. In Russian ordinal numerals are grammatically similar to adjectives.

8.4.1 List of ordinal numerals

1st	пе́рвый, пе́рвая, пе́рвое, пе́рвые	60th	ше́стидеся́тый
2nd	второ́й, второ́я, второ́е, второ́е	70th	се́мидеся́тый
3rd	тре́тий, тре́тья, тре́тье, тре́тьи	80th	во́сьмидеся́тый
4th	че́твёртый, че́твёртая, че́твёртое, че́твёртые	90th	девяно́сый
5th	пя́тый, пя́тая, пя́тое, пя́тые	100th	со́тый
6th	ше́стой, ше́стая, ше́стое, ше́стые	200th	двухсо́тый
7th	се́дью́й, се́дья́я, се́дью́е, се́дью́е	300th	тре́хсо́тый
8th	во́сьмью́й	400th	четыре́хсо́тый
9th	девя́тый	500th	пя́тисо́тый
10th	деся́тый	600th	ше́стисо́тый
11th	оди́ннадцаты́й	700th	се́мисо́тый
15th	пяти́надцаты́й	800th	во́сьмисо́тый
20th	два́дцаты́й	900th	девя́тисо́тый
30th	три́дцаты́й	1,000th	ты́сячны́й
40th	со́року́й	2,000th	двухты́сячны́й
50th	пяти́десяты́й	10,000th	деся́титы́сячны́й
		1,000,000th	миллио́нны́й

When ordinal numbers are made up of more than one element, only the *last* element is in the form of an ordinal numeral; the remaining elements take the form of cardinal numerals:

45th	со́рок пя́тый	150th	сто пятидеся́тый
281st	двэ́сти во́семьдесят пе́рвый	1975th	ты́сяча девятьсо́т се́мьдесят пя́тый
2007th	две ты́сячи се́дью́й		

8.4.2 Declension of ordinal numerals

The numeral **трéтий** ‘third’ declines like one of the second class of *soft adjectives*. Its endings can be illustrated by the following sample:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	трéтий	трéтья	трéтье	трéтьи
Gen.	трéтьего	трéтьей	трéтьего	трéтьих

For more detail on the declension of **трéтий** and other adjectives belonging to the same class, *see* **6.3**.

All other ordinal numerals decline like ordinary *hard* adjectives and follow the pattern of **но́вый** or **молодо́й**, depending on whether the stress is on the *stem* or the *ending*.

For more detail on the declension of adjectives belonging to this class, *see* **6.1**.

Ordinal numerals do not have short forms.

8.4.3 The use of ordinal numerals

In most situations the use of Russian *ordinal numerals* is similar to that of their English equivalents:

Э́то второ́я у́лица нале́во.

It’s the second street on the left.

Тре́тье ма́рта – это мой день рождéния.

The 3rd of March is my birthday.

Его́ пе́рвые три рома́на никто́ не чита́л, но четвёртый почему́-то пошёл нарасхва́т.

Nobody read his first three novels, but the fourth, for some reason, sold like hot cakes.

There are, however, some situations in which a cardinal numeral is used in English,

but where an ordinal numeral is preferred in Russian. In particular, ordinal numerals are used (along with the noun **год** ‘year’) to indicate a calendar year and are used in some constructions for telling the time:

Она родилась в тысяча девятьсот восемьдесят втором году.

She was born in 1982.

Надо начинать: уже десять минут шестого.

We ought to begin; it's already ten past five.

For more on telling the time, *see* **19.2**.

For more on indicating the year in dates, *see* **19.3.2**.



Ordinal numerals also tend to be preferred in a number of circumstances where someone or something is identified by a number. These include members of sports teams, hotel and other rooms, bus and tram routes, railway carriage and seat numbers, chapter and page numbers, and clothes sizes:

Знаменитый хоккеист Валерий Харламов играл под семнадцатым номером.

The famous ice-hockey player Valerii Kharlamov used to wear the number 17 shirt.

Будьте любезны, дайте ключ от двадцать пятого номера.

Could I have the key to room 25, please?

Простите, я доеду на сорок седьмом автобусе до университета?

Excuse me, will a 47 bus get me to the university?

Мне, пожалуйста, два купейных на завтра до Петрозаводска на шестьсот пятьдесят седьмой (поезд), если можно, в восьмом вагоне.

Can you give me 2 tickets to Petrozavodsk, for berths in a compartment, travelling tomorrow on train number 657, if possible, in carriage number 8.

Я должен вас предупредить, что на двадцатой странице моей статьи есть одна досадная опечатка.

I ought to warn you that on page 20 of my article there is an annoying misprint.

Я обычно ношу сорок третий (размер), но эти туфли немного тесноваты.

I usually wear size 9 (*literally*, size 43) shoes, but this particular pair feels a little tight.

8.5 Fractions

8.5.1 Special nouns used to indicate fractions

Russian has three special nouns that are used to indicate fractions. These are:

половина	half
треть	third
четверть	quarter

These nouns are *all feminine* and declined according to the patterns for feminine nouns ending in **-а** or **-ь** given in **2.9** and **2.10**. Their use is illustrated by the following examples:

Давай́ раздели́м послед́нее я́блоко по́ровну, тебе́ полови́ну и мне полови́ну.

Let's divide the last apple evenly—half for you and half for me.

Я прочита́л две трети́ его́ кни́ги, но пото́м бро́сил, так как уже́ разгада́л концовку́.

I read (the first) two-thirds of his book, but then gave up, since I had already guessed the ending.

Три че́тверти́ всей недви́жимости в э́той ча́сти го́рода факти́чески принадле́жит банка́м.

Three quarters of the property in this part of the city effectively belongs to the banks.



Половина can be attached to a numeral by the preposition **с** (+ instr.). When this happens, the case of any following noun and/or adjective is determined by the numeral to which **половина** is attached:

Мы пере́ехали сюда́ пять с полови́ной ме́сяцев наза́д.

We moved here five and a half months ago.

8.5.2 Ordinary fractions

Other ordinary fractions are indicated by using *ordinal numbers* in the *feminine* (the noun **часть** 'part' is understood):

одна́ пя́тая	one-fifth
две се́дьмых	two-sevenths
три де́сятых	three-tenths

Any following noun and/or adjective is always in the *genitive singular*:

Е́сли бы́ть то́чным, то две пя́тых фи́рмы принадле́жит мне, а три пя́тых оста́льным акцио́нерам.

If we're going to be accurate, two-fifths of the firm belongs to me and three-fifths to the remaining shareholders.

If a fraction follows a whole number, the latter is in the *feminine* and the conjunction **и** is put between the whole number and the fraction:

Две и три се́дьмых.

Two and three-sevenths.

More examples are given in the following section.

8.5.3 Decimals

As in most other European languages, a comma is used instead of the decimal point in numerals. Unlike most other European languages, however, Russian decimals are not read as they are written but as if they were ordinary fractions. If no noun is present, the *feminine adjective* **це́лая** 'whole' is frequently used between the whole

number and the decimal (and is always used after **ноль**):

0,5 ноль целых, пять десятых

literally, nought and five-tenths

7,1 семь (целых) (и) одна десятая

literally, seven and one-tenth

21,43 двадцать одна (целая) (и) сорок три сотых

literally, twenty-one and forty-three hundredths

NOTE И tends to be present if **целая** is omitted and vice versa.

На президентских выборах 2004 года явка избирателей составила 61,48% (шестьдесят один и сорок восемь сотых процента).

In the 2004 presidential elections the turn-out was 61.48%.

Он пробежал двести метров за двадцать одну и девяносто семь сотых секунды.

He ran 200 metres in 21.97 seconds.

For more on how to read the year, *see* **8.4.3** and **19.3.2**.

NOTES

(i) Percentages are indicated by using the masculine noun **проце́нт** ‘per cent’.

(ii) This pattern for reading decimal fractions is normally used for figures with one or two places of decimals and is at least in theory possible for three decimal places (**ты́сячная** ‘thousandth’ would be used). Longer sequences of decimals can be read in the same way as other long sequences of digits; thus, 2,4863 might be read as:

два и со́рок во́семь ше́стьдеся́т три.

For more on reading long sequences of digits, *see* **8.1.2**.

8.5.4 Other forms used in fractions

The numeral **полтора́** (feminine **полторы́**) means ‘one and a half’. It declines as follows:

	<i>Masc. and n.</i>	<i>All genders</i>	<i>Fem.</i>
Nom. and Acc.	полтора́		полторы́
All other cases		полу́тора	

The rules for using **полтора́** are the same as for **два, три, четы́ре**: when the numeral is in the *nominative* or the *accusative* any following *noun* is in the *genitive singular* and any following *adjective* is in the *genitive plural*; in all other cases, any following noun or adjective is in the plural and in the same case as the numeral:

За полтора́ годá я перечита́л всего́ Пу́шкина.

In eighteen months (*literally*, one and a half years) I reread the whole of Pushkin.

Текст у меня́ очень ко́роткий – не бо́лее полу́тора страни́ц.

My text is very short—no more than one and a half pages.

For more on the rules for using **два, три, четыре**, see 8.2.2.

Полтора́ can be combined with other numerals as follows:

полтора́ста	150
полторы́ тысячи	1,500
полтора́ миллио́на	1,500,000

Я по́мню те времена́, когда́ ме́сячная зарпла́та в *полтора́ста рубле́й* счита́лась совсе́м непло́хой.

I can remember the days when a monthly salary of 150 roubles was thought to be not at all bad.

На́ша о́бласть полу́чит *полтора́ миллио́на рубле́й* на борьбу́ с лесны́ми пожа́рами.

Our region will receive one and a half million roubles to fight forest fires.

The prefix **пол-** 'half-' can be added to a number of nouns. Frequently used examples include the following:

по́лго́да	half a year, six months
по́лкило	half a kilo

по́л-ли́тра	half a litre
по́лчаса	half an hour

Ка́ждые по́лчасá она достаёт из сýмочки пома́ду и подкрашиваёт губы́.

Every half-hour she gets her lipstick out of her handbag and re-does her lips.

NOTES

- (i) A hyphen is used if the second part of the word begins with a vowel or the letter л.
- (ii) When these forms are in the *nominative* or the *accusative*, any adjective or pronoun used with them is in the *plural*.
- (iii) When these forms are used in cases other than the *nominative* or the *accusative*, the second part takes the same endings as the unprefixed word; the first part normally changes to **полу-**.

Мы бы́ли в полуша́ге от побе́ды, ко́гда прозвуча́л фина́льный свисто́к.

We were within an inch of victory (*literally*, half a step from victory) when the final whistle blew.

Пацие́нтам иногда́ приходи́тся жда́ть опе́рации до полуто́да.

Some patients have to wait for anything up to six months (*literally*, half a year) for their operations.

8.6 Other quantity words

8.6.1 Nouns formed from numerals

The following nouns are derived from numerals:

1	единица	10	деся́тка
2	дво́йка	20	двадцáтка
3	тро́йка	30	тридцáтка
4	четвёрка	40	сороковá
5	пятёрка	50	пятидеся́тка
6	шестёрка	60	шестидеся́тка
7	семёрка	70	семидеся́тка
8	восьмёрка	80	восьмидеся́тка
9	девятка	100	со́тка

The basic function of these nouns is to indicate the associated digit:

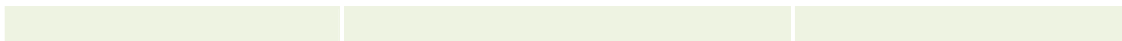
Вы неправѳльно записа́ли мой телефо́н: в нача́ле должна́ быть дво́йка.

You've written my telephone number down incorrectly: there should be a '2' at the beginning.

By extension these forms have acquired a number of additional meanings. For example, **дво́йка** and above are used to indicate the face value of playing cards; **дво́йка** (2= fail), **тро́йка** (3=satisfactory), **четвёрка** (4=good), **пятёрка** (5=excellent) are the standard marks awarded throughout the Russian education system; **тро́йка** can mean 'a team of three horses used to pull a cart or a sledge' and also 'a three-piece suit'; **восьмёрка** can mean 'an eight' (in rowing); **деся́тка** can mean 'a ten-rouble note'. All can be used instead of ordinal numerals to indicate bus or tram routes.

В ка́рты я никогда́ не играю́: мне попада́ются одни́ шестёрки и семёрки.

I never play cards; I only ever get sixes and sevens.



В университете она училась хорошо и получала в основном четвёрки и пятёрки.

She did well at university and mostly got fours and fives.

Отсюда надо сесть на девятку и выйти через три остановки.

From here you should catch a number nine and get off after three stops.

Главы стран Большой восьмёрки встречаются в этом году в Берлине.

The heads of government of the G8 countries are meeting this year in Berlin.

Forms other than those listed in the table at the beginning of the section are occasionally found, usually with reference to specific contexts.

В войну он был танкистом: воевал на знаменитой тридцать четвёрке.

During the war he fought in a tank unit and was in one of the famous T-34 tanks.

The following nouns are used to indicate quantity:

пара	pair, couple	пяток	five (of something)
десяток	ten (of something)	дюжина	dozen
полсотни	fifty (of something)	сотня	hundred (of something)

Вчера я купил в супермаркете десяток яиц, так что на завтрак можно поджарить яичницу.

I bought ten eggs at the supermarket yesterday, so we can have fried eggs for breakfast.

NOTES

(i) In Russia, items tend not to be sold in dozens, and *дюжина* is much less widely used than its English equivalent.

(ii) For the most part these nouns are characteristic of informal language.

8.6.2 The numeral **оба**

The numeral **оба** (feminine **обе**) means 'both'. It declines as follows:

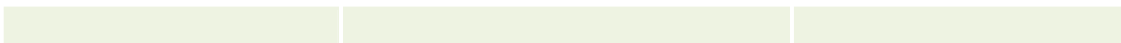
	<i>Masc. and n.</i>	<i>Fem.</i>
Nom.	оба	обе
Gen.	обо́их	обе́их
Dat.	обо́им	обе́им
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	обо́ими	обе́ими
Prep.	обо́их	обе́их

In the *accusative* the form that is identical to the *genitive* is used with *animate* nouns, while the form that is identical to the *nominative* is used with *inanimate* nouns.

The rules for using **оба** are the same as for **два, три, четыре**: when the numeral is in the *nominative* or the *accusative* any following *noun* is in the *genitive singular* and any following *adjective* is in the *genitive plural*; in all other cases any following *noun* or *adjective* is in the *plural* and in the same case as the numeral.

Оба мо́их бра́та живу́т в Росси́и.

Both my brothers live in Russia.



Россия́ будет добиваться́ тако́го реше́ния, кото́рое прие́млемо для обе́их сторо́н.

Russia will strive for a solution that is acceptable to both sides.

The use of **оба/обе** has an important formal limitation: it can be used only to refer to nouns and to nouns that are both singular and of the same gender. **Оба/обе** cannot refer to two verbs. In cases where nouns are of different genders or plural, or when the reference is made to two verbs the phrase **и то и друго́е/ и те и други́е** is used instead.

Сосе́ди све́рху – пенсионе́ры, сосе́ди по ле́стничной кле́тке – пожило́й инвали́д с доче́рью. И те и други́е оче́нь ми́лые приве́тливые лю́ди.

The upstairs neighbours are pensioners, while those on our landing are an elderly invalid and his daughter. Both sets of people are very nice and friendly.

—**Вам гуля́ш или пи́ццу?**

—**Мне и то и друго́е.**

—Do you want goulash or pizza?

—Both.

В воскресе́нье я предпочита́ю сна́чала позавтрака́ть и то́лько пото́м полиста́ть газе́ты, а моя́ жена́ де́лает и то и друго́е однове́менно.

On Sunday I prefer to have breakfast first and then look at the papers, while my wife does both at the same time.

8.6.3 Other words used to indicate quantity

The following words are used to indicate quantity:

ско́лько?	how much?, how many?	сто́лько	so much, so many
не́сколько	some, several	мно́го	much, many
мало́	not much, few	не́много́	some, a little
мно́гое	much (of)	мно́гие	many (of)
не́много́е	a little (of)	не́мно́гие	only a few (of)
не́который	some, a certain	не́которые	some, a few (of)

Ско́лько, сто́лько and **не́сколько** decline according to the following pattern:

Nom.	ско́лько
Gen.	ско́льких
Dat.	ско́льким
Acc.	ско́лько
Instr.	ско́лькими
Prep.	ско́льких

When **ско́лько** or **сто́лько** is in the *nominative* or the *accusative* case, any following *noun* and/or *adjective* is in the *genitive* (singular or plural); when **не́сколько** is in the *nominative* or the *accusative* case, any following *noun* and/or *adjective* is in the *genitive plural*. When any one of these words is in the *genitive*, *dative*, *instrumental* or *prepositional* case, then any accompanying *noun* and/or *adjective* is in the *same case*.

Мно́го, ма́ло, немно́го do not decline and are used in the *nominative* and *accusative* only. **Мно́го** and **ма́ло** are followed by a *noun* in the *genitive* (singular or plural); **немно́го** is usually followed by a *noun* in the *genitive singular*.



Мно́гое and **немно́гое** decline like *adjectives* in the *neuter singular*.

Мно́гие, немно́гие and **не́которые** decline like *adjectives* in the *plural*. **Не́который** declines like an *adjective*.

For more on the declension of adjectives, *see* **6.1**.

For more on the use of **ско́лько**, *see* **17.3.3** and **19.3.1**.

For more on the use of **сто́лько**, *see* **9.3.5**.

For more on the use of the other words listed here, *see* **19.5**.

9

Uninflected parts of speech

9.0 Introduction

Uninflected parts of speech are those that neither decline nor conjugate. They consist of *adverbs* (9.1), *prepositions* (9.2), *conjunctions* (9.3) and *particles* (9.4).

9.1 Adverbs

9.1.0 Introduction

The main function of *adverbs* is to qualify **verbs**, although they can also be used to qualify *adjectives* and even other *adverbs*. An adverb is normally placed *immediately before* the word it qualifies (see 20.1.3).

9.1.1 Adverbs formed from adjectives: the standard pattern

The standard pattern for forming an adverb from a hard adjective (see 6.1) is to replace the adjective ending with **-о**:

глупый	stupid	глупо	stupidly
грубый	crude, rude	грубо	crudely, rudely
дешёвый	cheap	дёшево	cheaply
любезный	kind, courteous	любезно	kindly, courteously
умный	clever	умно	cleverly
частый	frequent	часто	frequently
чистый	clean	чисто	cleanly
дорогой	dear	дорого	dearly
редкий	rare	редко	rarely
тихий	quiet	тихо	quietly
хороший	good	хорошо	well

Adverbs formed from *soft adjectives* of the *first group* (see 6.2) and adverbs that are formed from adjectives ending in **-жий**, **-чий**, **-ший** or **-щий** and that do not have stress on the final syllable end in **-е**:

внешний external
внутренний internal
искренний sincere
неуклюжий clumsy
блестящий brilliant

внешне externally, on the outside
внутренне internally
искренне sincerely
неуклюже clumsily
блестяще brilliantly

NOTE Alongside *искренне* there is an alternative form *искренно* with the same meaning. The adverbs associated with the adjectives *поздний* 'late' and *ранний* 'early' are *поздно* and *рано* respectively.

Adverbs formed from adjectives ending in *-ский* or *-цкий* end in *-ски* or *-cki* respectively:

<i>героический</i>	heroic	<i>героически</i>	heroically
<i>творческий</i>	creative	<i>творчески</i>	creatively

Он очень любезно ответил на все мои вопросы.

He very kindly answered all my questions.

Она редко здесь бывает, где-то два-три раза в месяц.

She rarely comes here, about two or three times a month.

Она блестяще справилась со всеми трудностями.

She coped brilliantly with all the difficulties.

Новый «Форд» внешне похож на старую модель.

From the outside the new Ford is like the old model.

9.1.2 Adverbs formed from adjectives and pronouns with the prefix **ПО-**

A number of adverbs formed from adjectives and pronouns have a hyphenated prefix **по-**. These adverbs can be divided into four groups. The first group is made up of adverbs formed in the usual way from adjectives ending in *-ский* or *-цкий*. These adjectives are in turn mostly formed from nouns, and the adverbs with the **по-** prefix usually refer to doing something or behaving in the manner associated with the noun concerned:

<i>Noun</i>	<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Adverb</i>
брат 'brother'	бра́тский 'fraternal'	по-бра́тски 'fraternally'
де́ти 'children'	де́тский 'childlike', 'childish'	по-де́тски 'in a childlike or a childish manner'
друг 'friend'	дру́жеский 'friendly'	по-дру́жески 'in a friendly manner', 'like a friend'
солда́т 'soldier'	солда́тский 'soldierly'	по-солда́тски 'in a soldierly manner', 'like a soldier'
това́рищ 'comrade'	това́рищеский 'comradely'	по-това́рищески 'in a comradely manner'

Его́ сужде́ния всегда́ бы́ли пове́рхностными и *по-де́тски* наивными.

His judgements were always superficial and childishly naive.

Он крáтко, *по-солда́тски* отве́тил на все мои́ вопро́сы.

He answered all my questions briefly, like a soldier.

NOTE In some instances adverbs with and without the **по**-prefix exist side by side:

дру́жески/по-дру́жески

The second group consists of adverbs formed in the same way from adjectives indicating nationality. These usually have the meaning of ‘in a particular language’, although they can also mean ‘in a way associated with a particular nationality’:

англи́йский	English	по-англи́йски	in English
неме́цкий	German	по-неме́цки	in German
ру́сский	Russian	по-ру́сски	in Russian
францу́зский	French	по-францу́зски	in French

Вы говорите по-ру́сски?

Do you speak Russian?

У нас такие стран́ные диало́ги: она́ задаёт вопро́сы по-англи́йски, а я отвечаю по-францу́зски.

We have these strange dialogues: she asks questions in English, and I reply in French.

Хозя́йка до́ма оказа́лась втяну́той в дли́нный разгово́р, и он ушёл по-англи́йски, не попроща́вшись.

His hostess was involved in a long conversation and he left without saying good-bye.

NOTE уходи́ть/уйти́ по-англи́йски *literally* ‘to leave in an English manner’ means ‘to leave without saying good-bye’.

The third group of these adverbs is formed from *soft adjectives* of the *second group* (see 6.3). In use and meaning they are similar to the first group of adverbs with a **по-**prefix:

<i>Noun</i>	<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Adverb</i>
во́лк ‘wolf’	во́лчий ‘relating to wolves’	по-во́лчьи ‘in a wolf-like manner’
ко́шка ‘cat’	коша́чий ‘relating to cats’	по-коша́чьи ‘in a cat-like manner’
челове́к ‘man’, ‘human being’	челове́чий ‘relating to human beings’	по-челове́чьи ‘in a human way’

В егó рассказах зvéри ча́сто говоря́т по-челове́чьи.

In his stories animals often speak like humans.

**С волка́ми жить
—по-во́лчьи выть.**

When in Rome, do as the Romans do. (*Literally*, When living with wolves, howl like a wolf.)

NOTE When referring to the social or spiritual, as opposed to the biological properties of a human being, the adverb **по-челове́чески** is used:

Мне её по-челове́чески жаль.

From a human point of view, I'm sorry for her.

Adverbs belonging to the final group have an ending identical to the *dative singular neuter* of the adjectives or pronouns from which they are formed. They have various meanings:

по-друго́му	differently	по-но́вому	in a new way
по-прежне́му	as before	по-разно́му	variously
по-мо́ему	in my opinion	по-сво́ему	in my/your/his/her/our/ their own way

Дава́йте подума́ем, как э́то сказа́ть по-друго́му.

Let's think how we might say this differently.

Стра́на стремительно́ меня́ется, и приде́тся научи́ться жи́ть и рабо́тать по-ново́му.

The country's changing rapidly, and we'll have to learn how to live and to work in a new way.

По-мо́ему, они́ приня́ли пра́вильное реше́ние.

In my opinion they've made the right decision.

Э́тот фильм по-сво́ему интере́сен, но мно́гим он не понравится.

In its own way the film is interesting, but a lot of people won't like it.

In some contexts **по-разно́му** can serve as the equivalent of 'it depends' or 'it varies':

—Как реаги́рует ме́стная администра́ция на ва́ши тре́бования?

—По-разно́му, но в общем у нас с ней о́чень хоро́шие отноше́ния.

—How does the local administration react to your demands?

—It depends (*or* It varies), but on the whole our relations with them are very good.

9.1.3 Adverbs of time

The following are the principal *adverbs relating to time*:

сейча́с	now, immediately, just a minute	тепе́рь	now
тогда́	then, at that time	потом, зате́м	then, after that
позавче́ра	the day before yesterday	вчера́	yesterday
сего́дня	today	за́втра	tomorrow
послезавтра́	the day after tomorrow	накану́не	the day before

For the pronunciation of **сего́дня**, see 1.5.5 and 7.3.1.

ра́но	early	по́здно	late
давно́	a long time ago, for a long time (referring to a continuing action)	неда́вно	recently
до́лго	for a long time (referring to an action in the past or the future)	ско́ро	soon
сра́зу	immediately, at once	немедле́нно	immediately
за́ранее	in advance, beforehand	постоя́нно	constantly
всегда́	always	ещё	still, yet
уже́	already		

The adverb **ещё** is combined with the negative particle **не** to mean 'not yet'; the combination **уже не** means 'no longer':

Он ещё не сдал все экзамены.

He has not yet passed all his examinations.

Эта программа устарела, и я её уже не использую.

This programme is out of date, and I no longer use it.

In combination with a *perfective* verb in the *past* tense **уже** can serve as the equivalent of the English *pluperfect* ('had done'), indicating that one action was fully completed before another took place:

Я уже уехал оттуда, когда разразился скандал.

I had already left when the scandal broke out.

For more on the use of perfective verbs in a sequence of events, see **5.4.1**.

Ещё can have the meaning of 'yet (another)', 'more':

Что вы ещё хотите?

What else would you like?

Вот ещё один человек, который хотел бы изучать русский язык.

Here's another person who would like to learn Russian.

Further examples of adverbs of time are given in **21.1**.

9.1.4 Adverbs of place

The following are the principal *adverbs* used to indicate *place*:

здесь, тут	here	там	there
сюда	here (motion), hither	туда	there (motion), thither
отсюда	from here, hence	оттуда	from there, thence
езде	everywhere	всюду	everywhere
повсюду	everywhere	близко	near
далеко	far	рядом	adjacent, next to, next door
вверху́	above	наверху́	upstairs
вверх	upwards	наверх	upwards, upstairs (motion)
сверху́	from above, from upstairs	внизу́	below, downstairs
вниз	downwards, downstairs (motion)	снизу́	from below, from downstairs
впереди́	in front, ahead	вперёд	forwards
назад	backwards	сзади	from the back
сбоку	from/on one side	слева	from/on the left
справа	from/on the right		

For the use of **наза́д** in the time expression **(тому́) наза́д** 'ago', *see 21.1.9.*

до́ма	at home	до́мой	home(wards)
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Examples of adverbs indicating place are given in **21.2.**

9.1.5 Indefinite adverbs

Four series of indefinite adverbs, corresponding to the four series of indefinite pronouns described in 7.6, are formed from the following question words:

где?	where?	как?	how?
когда?	when?	куда?	where to?, whither?
откуда?	where from?, whence?	почему?	why?, for what reason?
зачем?	why?, with what aim?		
где-то	где-нибудь	где-либо	кое-где
как-то	как-нибудь	как-либо	кое-как
когда-то	когда-нибудь	когда-либо	кое-когда
куда-то	куда-нибудь	куда-либо	кое-куда
откуда-то	откуда-нибудь	откуда-либо	
почему-то	почему-нибудь	почему-либо	
зачем-то	зачем-нибудь	зачем-либо	

There are no adverbs in the **кое**-series formed from **откуда**, **почему** or **зачем**.

In general terms the usage of these series is equivalent to that of the corresponding series of indefinite pronouns as described in 7.6. With the **-то** series reference is to something specific, the identity of which is unknown or indifferent to the speaker; the **-нибудь** and **-либо** series refer to something indefinite, and the **-либо** tends to be preferred with a *negated* verb or after a *comparative*; the **кое**-series indicates a small quantity of places or occasions:

Я где-то забыл свой зонт.

I've left my umbrella somewhere.

Она когда-то работала у нас.

At one time she did work for us.

Он почему-то всегда опаздывает.

For some reason he's always late (there is a specific reason, but the speaker does not know what it is).

Он всегда почему-нибудь да опаздывает.

He's always late for some reason or other (but not necessarily the same reason each time).

Не беспоко́йтесь: *ка́к-нибу́дь* разбе́рёмся.

Don't worry, we'll sort it out somehow.

Мо́жет, сходи́м *куда́-нибу́дь* по́сле обе́да.

Perhaps we might go somewhere after lunch.

У себя́ на да́че он чу́вствовал себя́ о́чень комфо́ртно - комфо́ртнее, чем *где-ли́бо*.

He always felt at ease at his dacha, more at ease than anywhere else.

Зима́ в э́том году́ тепле́е, чем *когда́-ли́бо* на моёй па́мяти.

This year the winter has been warmer than at any time that I can remember.

Из-за мете́ли движе́ние тра́нспорта в го́роде парази́овано, и *ко́е-где́* отклю́чено элеќтричество.

Because of the snow-storm traffic in the city has ground to a halt and here and there (or in some places) electricity has been cut off.

There are, however, some additional points to consider:

(i) Especially in informal language **как-то** and **как-нибудь** are sometimes used to refer to time, i.e. they can be synonyms of **когда-то** and **когда-нибудь** respectively:

Приезжайте *как-нибудь* летом, и мы вам покажем все достопримечательности города.

Come and see us some time in the summer, and we'll show you all the sights of the city.

(ii) Adverbs of the **-либо** series, and especially **когда-либо**, are used in a clause following on from a *superlative* adjective:

Это самая интересная книга, которую я *когда-либо* читал.

This is the most interesting book I have ever read.

For more on superlative adjectives, see **6.8.4** and **6.8.5**.

(iii) The meanings of **кое-как** do not correspond to those of the other pronouns and adverbs in the **кое-** series; it can usually be translated into English as either 'only just (manage to do something)' or 'any-old-how, in a slapdash manner':

От каждого курса *нужно было* выставить баскетбольную команду. *Кое-как* и мы собрали восемь человек.

Each year had to put up a basketball team. We just about managed to assemble (a squad of) eight people.

В школе он учился *кое-как*, с двойки на тройку.

He didn't bother about studying when he was at school and just about scraped by.

9.1.6 Other adverbs

A large number of *adverbs* fit into none of the other categories. The most important of these are listed here:

очень very

Unlike its English equivalent, **очень** can be used to qualify not only an *adjective* or an *adverb*, but also a *verb*:

Очень люблю слушать, когда Евтушенко читает свои стихи.

I really like hearing Evtushenko reading his poetry.

также	also
тоже	also

Although both these adverbs can be translated as ‘also’, they are not generally interchangeable. **Также** is used when extending a list and is often combined with the conjunction **а** ‘and’, while **тоже** is used when making comparisons:

Наше агентство предлагает поездки по всей России. Мы также организуем автобусные туры в Польшу и Чехию.

Our agency offers trips to all parts of Russia. We also organise coach tours to Poland and the Czech Republic.

Она свободно владеет французским, испанским, а также разговорным русским языком.

She has a fluent command of French, Spanish and also colloquial Russian.

На Камча́тке кли́мат о́чень суро́вый; на Саха́лине он помя́гче, но зи́мой там *то́же* о́чень хо́лодно.

In Kamchatka the climate is very severe; on Sakhalin it is gentler, but in winter it gets very cold there as well (just like Kamchatka).

Она́ свобо́дно владе́ет францу́зским, испа́нским, а та́кже разгово́рным ру́сским язы́ком. Её бра́т *то́же* немно́го говори́т по-ру́сски.

She has a fluent command of French, Spanish and also colloquial Russian. Her brother also speaks a little Russian.

вме́сте	together	да́же	even
и́на́че	otherwise	кста́ти	by the way
наобо́рот	on the contrary	опя́ть	again
почти́	almost	сли́шком	too (excessively)
та́к	so		

9.1.7 The comparative and superlative forms of adverbs

Comparative and *superlative* forms of *adverbs* exist only for those adverbs formed from *adjectives*. The *short comparative* of an *adverb* is identical in form to the short comparative of the adjective from which it is derived:

У себя́ на да́че он чу́вствовал себя́ о́чень комфо́ртно - комфо́ртнее, чем где-ли́бо.

He always felt at ease at his dacha, more at ease than anywhere else.

For the formation of the short comparatives of adjectives, *see* 6.8.1.

For examples of the short comparative of adverbs, *see* 21.9.1–4.

A *long comparative* can be formed by placing **бо́лее** before the adverb. This form must be used with adverbs formed from adjectives with no short comparative and is preferred with many other adverbs of four or more syllables:

В сове́тские време́на де́ти проводи́ли ле́тние кани́кулы *бо́лее органи́зованно*.

In Soviet times children spent their summer holidays in a more organised fashion.

For the use of **м́нее** with adverbs, see **21.9.6**.

A *superlative* form can be created by using the *comparative* and the *genitive pronoun* forms **всех** (if the reference is to people) or **всего́** (in other contexts):

Лучше́ всех у нас в семье́ поёт ма́ма.

In our family the one who sings the best is mother.

Лучше́ всего́ она поёт украинские наро́дные пе́сни.

What she sings best are Ukrainian folk songs.

Лёгче́ всего́ нача́ть с са́мого нача́ла.

It will be easiest to begin at the very beginning.

Some of these forms have become set expressions:

прежде́ всего́ ‘above all’, ‘first and foremost’

9.2 Prepositions

9.2.0 Introduction

Prepositions are words placed before *nouns* or *noun phrases* to provide additional information about the meaning and function of the noun. In principle, it is possible for a noun in any case to follow a preposition, and nouns in the prepositional case are used only after prepositions. Several prepositions can be followed by nouns in more than one case, depending on the precise meaning of the preposition; sometimes the different meanings of prepositions when used with different cases are totally unrelated. For this reason, whenever the use of prepositions is discussed in this book, the case required is indicated in brackets after the preposition, e.g. **за** (+ instr.), meaning that in the context being described, **за** is followed by the *instrumental* case.

In Russian a preposition can *never* be followed by a *verb*.

Prepositional usage is discussed in detail at various points in **Part B**. In particular:

Prepositions indicating *time* are discussed in **21.1**.

Prepositions indicating *place* (location, destination and origin) are discussed in **21.2**.

Prepositions indicating *cause* are discussed in **21.4**.

Prepositions indicating *purpose* are discussed in **21.7**.

The use of the preposition **у** (+ gen.) in constructions indicating possession is discussed in **14.3**.

In this section, therefore, attention will be focused only on those issues not covered elsewhere in the book.

9.2.1 Prepositions followed by the nominative

In general, prepositions are not used with the *nominative* case. Exceptionally, two prepositions can be followed by the nominative, but both are used only in a very restricted range of expressions:

в (во)

за

The preposition **в (во)** is followed by the noun **люди** and nouns denoting occupations and professional or social status and is used in certain constructions relating to joining the profession or acquiring the status concerned. It is only ever followed by nouns in the *plural*:

**Сего́дня состо́ялась встре́ча студéнтов с кандида́том в депута́ты
Госуда́рственной Ду́мы.**

Today students had a chance to meet one of the candidates standing for election to the State Duma.

По́сле оконча́ния универси́тета она́ пошла́ в актри́сы.

After finishing university she went off to become an actress.



А о чём ей беспокоиться? На здоровье не жалуется, пенсия неплохая, все дети вышли в люди.

What's she got to worry about? There's nothing wrong with her health, she doesn't get a bad pension and all her children have made their way in the world.

The preposition **за** is followed by the nominative only in the phrase **что за**, used in questions and exclamations:

А это что за штука?

What sort of thing is this (meant to be)?

Что за ерунда: ничего не понятно!

What sort of nonsense is this? I can't understand any of it.

For more on this construction, see **17.3.2**.

9.2.2 Prepositions followed by the accusative

The main prepositions followed by the *accusative* are:

в (во)	into, to	за	behind (motion), (in exchange) for
на	onto, to	о (об, обо)	against, onto
по	until (up to and including)	под (подо)	under (motion)
про	about, concerning	сквозь	through
через	across, after (a certain time)		

9.2.3 Prepositions followed by the genitive

The main prepositions followed by the *genitive* are:

без (безо)	without	вдоль	along
вместо	instead of	вне	outside
внутри	inside	возле	alongside
для	for (the benefit of)	до	as far as, until, before
из (изо)	out of, from	из-за	from behind, because of
из-под	from under	кроме	besides, apart from
мимо	past	относительно	concerning, in relation to
напротив	opposite	около	around, about
от (ото)	(away) from	после	after
против	against	ради	for the sake of
с (со)	from (the top of)	среди	among
у	at, near, beside		

In addition, there are a number of prepositional phrases, made up of preposition + noun, all of which are followed by the genitive:

в течение	during
за счёт	at the expense of, by means of

9.2.4 Prepositions followed by the dative

The main prepositions followed by the *dative* are:

благодаря	thanks to	вопреки	despite, contrary to
к (ко)	to(wards)	навстречу	in the direction of
по	along, according to	согласно	in accordance with

9.2.5 Prepositions followed by the instrumental

The main prepositions followed by the *instrumental* are:

за	behind (location)	ме́жду	between
над (надо)	above	под (подо)	under (location)
перед (передо)	in front of, (just) before	с (со)	with

9.2.6 Prepositions used with the prepositional

в (во)	in (location)	на	on (location)
о (об, обо)	about, concerning	по	after
при	adjoining, at, in the presence of, in the lifetime of		

NOTE Both **о (об, обо)**(+ prep.) and **про**(+ acc.) mean ‘about’, ‘concerning’; the former is the more widely used, while the latter is more characteristic of informal language.

9.2.7 The pronunciation of prepositions

All *one-syllable* and many *two-syllable prepositions* have no stress of their own and are always pronounced as a single unit with the following noun or the first word of the following noun phrase. It is important, therefore, not to make any sort of pause between a preposition and the following word, even or especially when the preposition consists of a single consonant:

в Москвѹ́ (vmaskvú)	to Moscow
с б́ратом (zbrátəm)	with (my) brother
под Москво́й (pədmaskvój)	just outside Moscow

For the signs used to indicate the pronunciation of unstressed vowels, *see* **1.4.4**.

For the use of **под** to mean ‘just outside’, ‘near (a city)’, *see* **21.2.12**.

In some circumstances, the single stress for the unit made up of the preposition and the following word can fall on the preposition. It has to be said that such instances are increasingly coming to be regarded as anomalous and are often optional alternatives or even obsolescent; there are, however, a few cases where stress on the preposition is still preferred.

When a numeral follows a monosyllabic preposition, especially **за**, **на**, **по**, and when the numeral is itself not immediately followed by a noun, the tendency is to put the stress on the preposition:

Если хоти́те, возьми́те *по́* два.

If you want, take two each.

Я уезжа́ю дня *на́* два.

I'm going away for about two days.

For the use of **по**(+ acc.) in constructions relating to distribution, *see* **19.1.4**.

For information on the placing of the numeral after the noun to indicate an approximate quantity, *see* **19.4.2**.

Other frequently used instances include:

за́ город	out of town (motion)	за́ городом	out of town (location)
на́ ночь	for a night, before going to bed	на́ пол	on(to) the floor
		на́ бок	sideways, to the side

Я не могу́ до него́ дозвониться: он, на́верно, за́ городом.

I can't get through to him on the phone; he's probably out of town.

Я на́ ночь не пью́ кре́пкий чай.

I don't drink strong tea before going to bed.

Я здесь ни при чём: стака́н сам упáл на́ пол и разби́лся.

This has nothing to do with me; the glass fell on the floor and broke all by itself.

Stress on the preposition is often found in set phrases:

брати́/взяти́ ко́го-нибу́дь за́ руку	to take someone by the hand
доставка́ на́ дом	home delivery
как снег на́ голову́	like a bolt from the blue
пропа́вший бе́з вести́	missing in action

9.2.8 The fleeting vowel

The three prepositions consisting of a single consonant and some other prepositions ending in a consonant have a *fleeting vowel* which appears mostly before certain consonant clusters. Forms containing a fleeting vowel are indicated in brackets in the lists above.

With the prepositions **в**, **к**, **с** the forms with the fleeting vowel are used:

(1) Before a sequence of two or more consonants, the first of which is either identical to or the voiced/unvoiced partner of the consonant that makes up the preposition (this rule applies to **в** and **с** only):

во́ время during
во Фра́нции in France
во вто́рник on Tuesday

со ско́ростью with a speed (of)
со зри́телями with the viewers
со своим . . . with one's own . . .

Also:

во Вьетна́ме in Vietnam

(2) Before the quantity words **мно́гое, мно́гие** 'many'; before forms of the first person pronoun beginning **мн-** before forms of the pronoun **во Вьетна́ме** 'all' beginning **вс-**:

во мне in me
со мной with me
ко мно́гим to many . . .
во всех in everyone
со все́ми with everyone

ко мне to me
во мно́гих in many . . .
со мно́гими with many . . .
ко все́м to everyone

NOTE Forms without the fleeting vowel are also found before the quantity words **мно́гое, мно́гие**.

(3) Before sequences of two consonants in monosyllabic masculine nouns that themselves have a fleeting vowel in the nominative singular:

лёд	ice	со льдо́м	with ice
ро́т	mouth	во рту́	in the mouth

(4) In some other set combinations:

во дворе́	in the yard	во и́мя	in the name (of)
во избежа́ние	for the avoidance of	во ско́лько?	at what time?

With the prepositions **без, из, от, над, перед, под** the fleeting vowel occurs much less frequently. It tends to be preferred before forms of the first person pronoun beginning **мн-** and is sometimes found before **мно́гое, мно́гие**, before forms of the pronoun **весь** beginning **вс-** and before some other sequences of consonants:

на́до мно́й	above me	пери́до мно́й	in front of me
подо́ мно́й	beneath me	под мно́гими/ подо́ мно́гими	beneath many
бе́з всего́/ бе́зо всего́	without everything	подо́ льдо́м	under the ice

The preposition **о** has variant forms **об**, which is used before a vowel, and **обо**, which is used before forms of the first person pronoun beginning **мн-** and before forms of the pronoun **весь** beginning **вс-**:

об А́нглии	about England	об одно́м	about one
об э́том	about this	обо́ мне́	about me
обо́ все́м	about everything		

9.2.9 Prepositions requiring special comment: **За** (+ acc.)

When it is not used in contexts relating to time or place (see **21.1.14, 21.2.14**), the basic meaning of **за** (+ acc.) is 'for' in the sense of 'in exchange for'. It is used in contexts of buying or selling items for a particular sum, paying for something and of being rewarded or punished for something:

Похо́жий дом продаётся на соседней у́лице за сто ты́сяч.

A house like this is on sale in the next street for a hundred thousand.

Ива́н купи́л у моего́ сосе́да велосипе́д за *ты́сячу* рубле́й.

Ivan bought a bicycle off his neighbour for one thousand roubles.

Ско́лько вы заплати́ли за *биле́т*?

How much did you pay for your ticket?

В про́шлом году́ ей был присужде́н специа́льный приз за *ли́чный вклад* в развитие россия́нского телевидения́.

Last year she was awarded a special prize for her personal contribution to the development of Russian television.

Его́ оштрафовали́ за *наруше́ние* па́спортного режи́ма.

He was fined for breaking the passport regulations.

When 'for' means 'for the benefit of', the Russian equivalent is usually **для**:

***Для студе́нтов* есть специа́льная столова́я.**

There's a special refectory for students.

9.2.10 Prepositions requiring special comment: 110 (+ dat.)

Apart from its use in contexts relating to place (see **21.2.16**), one of the most important meanings of **по(+ dat.)** is ‘according to’:

По моём часам уже десять.

According to my watch it’s already ten o’clock.

По расписанию поезд должен был прибыть два часа назад.

According to the timetable the train should have arrived two hours ago.

По твоим глазам вижу, что не говоришь всю правду.

I can tell by your eyes that you’re not telling the whole truth.

Здесь мы играем строго по правилам.

Here we play strictly by the rules.

По(+ dat.) is also used with reference to means of communication:

Пришлите нам подтверждение по факсу.

Send us confirmation by fax (*or* Fax us confirmation).

Я не обсуждаю такие темы по телефону.

I don’t discuss such things on the telephone.

Another use of **по(+ dat.)** is to define categories:

Я купил хороший учебник по социологии.

I bought a good sociology textbook

Они работают над справочником по русской грамматике.

They’re working on a handbook of Russian grammar.

Чемпионат России по футболу обычно начинается в марте и завершается в конце октября.

The Russian football championship usually starts in March and comes to a conclusion at the end of October.

В 2000 г. Жорес Алфёров был удостоен Нобелевской премии по физике.

In 2000 Zhores Alfërov was awarded the Nobel prize for physics.

Он в течение нескольких лет был деканом по работе с иностранными студентами.

For several years he was the Dean responsible for foreign students.

Он специалист по микрохирургии глаза.

He's a specialist in optical micro-surgery.

9.2.11 Prepositions requiring special comment: с (+ instr.)

The basic meaning of the preposition **с**(+ instr.) is 'with' in the sense of 'accompanying, together with':

Она́ обычно приходит на такие мероприятия с мужем.

She usually comes to events like this with her husband.

For the use of **с**(+ instr.) to refer to multiple persons in contexts where English would use 'and', *see 7.1.6.*



The preposition **с**(+ instr.) is not used in contexts relating to the instrument with which something is accomplished:

Посуду из-под молока следует мыть сначала холодной, а затем горячей водой.

Crockery that has had milk in it should be washed first with cold water and then with hot.

For more examples, *see* **3.5.1**.

9.3 Conjunctions

9.3.0 Introduction

Conjunctions are words used to link either whole clauses or individual words and phrases within the framework of a single sentence. There are two kinds of conjunctions: *co-ordinating* and *subordinating*.

9.3.1 Co-ordinating conjunctions

Co-ordinating conjunctions join units of equal weight, whether they are words, phrases or whole clauses. The following are the main co-ordinating conjunctions used in Russian:

и 'and'	а 'and', 'but'
но 'but'	зато 'but', 'on the other hand'
в то время как 'while'	или 'or'
не то ... не то indicates uncertainty	то ли ... то ли indicates conjecture
	то ... то indicates alternating actions

9.3.2 The use of **и, а, но, зато, в то время как**

The conjunctions **и** and **но** correspond to English 'and' and 'but' respectively:

В университете я изучал русский язык и литературу.

At university I studied Russian language and literature.

Вечером он обычно сидит дома и смотрит телевизор.

In the evenings he usually stays at home and watches television.

Зи́мы у нас ста́ли тепле́е, и о́чень ре́дко па́дает снег.

Winters have got warmer here, and we very have little snow.

NOTE In general, all conjunctions are preceded by a comma. Commas are not, however, used before **и** except when it joins two clauses, each of which has an *explicit* grammatical subject (as in the third of the above examples).

For the use of **и** to indicate emphasis, see **20.3.3**.

Его́ выступле́ние на съезде́ бы́ло кра́тким, но содержа́тельным.

His speech at the congress was short, but full of content.

Ве́чером он обы́чно до́ма, но се́годня я поче́му-то не могу́ до него́ дозвони́ться.

In the evening he's usually at home, but today I can't get through to him on the phone for some reason.



The equivalent of 'both...and' is usually **и ... и**:

У него широ́кий круг друзе́й и в Москвѣ и в Петербу́рге.

He has a wide circle of friends in both Moscow and St Petersburg.

In formal written language, however, **как ... так и** is also found:

На́ша па́ртия по́льзуется большо́й подде́ржкой как в Москвѣ, так и Санкт-Петербу́рге.

Our party enjoys great support both in Moscow and in St Petersburg.

The normal equivalent of 'not only...but also' is **не то́лько ... но и**:

Её произведе́ния публику́ются не то́лько в Росси́и, но и во мно́гих странах Центра́льной и Восто́чной Евро́пы.

Her works are published not only in Russia, but also in many Central and East European countries.

The use of the conjunction **а** is rather more complicated, since it can correspond to either 'and' or 'but', depending on the context. It always contains an element of contrast, but to a lesser degree than that indicated by **но**:

В суббо́ту я у́ехал к родите́лям, и в воскресе́нье мы отме́тили день рожде́ния папы.

On Saturday I went to visit my parents, and on Sunday we celebrated father's birthday. [Here there is no contrast: the events of Sunday are a logical development of those of Saturday.]

В суббо́ту я весь день занима́лся в университе́тской библиоте́ке, а в воскресе́нье мы с подро́гой е́здили за гриба́ми.

On Saturday I spent all day working in the university library, and on Sunday my girlfriend and I went out into the country to collect mushrooms. [Here there is a degree of contrast between the events of Saturday and Sunday, but the two days' events still make up a coherent way of spending a weekend, which is why 'and' is used in the English translation.]

В суббо́ту мы у́ехали на да́чу, но пришло́сь в тот же ве́чер верну́ться в го́род из-за плохой пого́ды.

On Saturday we went to the dacha, but we had to come back the same evening because of the bad weather. [Here there is a stronger contrast between the two events described; the change in the weather means that the plans for the weekend have to be changed.]

The following give further further examples of the use of **a**:

С сёстрами он говори́л по-ру́сски, а с ма́терью по-тата́рски.

He spoke Russian with his sisters and/but Tatar with his mother.

Через полчаса́ придут го́сти, а ты ещё не привела́ себя́ в поря́док.

Our visitors will be here in half an hour and you're still not ready.

The conjunction **a** is also used to introduce a positive contrast to a previous negative:

Мы приезжа́ем не в понеде́льник, а во вто́рник.

We are arriving not on Monday, but on Tuesday.

For the use of **a** with **та́кже**, see 9.1.6.

For the use of **a** to link sentences, see 23.2.2.



For the use of **а** in the phrase **а то**, see 21.6.3.

The conjunction **зато́**, used either on its own or after **на**, means ‘yet’, ‘but on the other hand’:

При таком ремонте жилые комнаты не трогают, (но) зато́ меняют кровлю и обновляют систему отопления.

With a refurbishing of this sort they don’t do anything to the living accommodation, but on the other hand they do re-roof the property and renew the heating system.

The conjunction **в то время как** means ‘while’, used in a contrastive sense:

У «Почты России» самая большая сеть отделений по всей России, в то время как коммерческие структуры работают преимущественно в крупных городах.

The Russian Post Office has the largest network of branches throughout Russia, while commercial structures work mainly in large cities.

9.3.3 The use of the conjunctions **или, не то ... не то, то ли ...**

то ли, то ... то

The conjunction **или** means ‘or’:

Что важнее для студента – учёба или работа?

What is more important for a student—study or work?

Ремонт будет закончен завтра, или в худшем случае послезавтра.

The repair will be carried out tomorrow or, at the worst, the day after.

‘Either...or’ is **или ... или** (less often **либо ... либо**):

Туда можно добраться или на метро или автобусом.

You can get there either by metro or by bus.

Не понима́ю: *или* он о́чень у́мный, *или* ему́ прóсто повезло́.

I don't understand it; either he's very clever or he was simply lucky.

The conjunctions **не то ... не то** and **то ли ... то ли** both suggest uncertainty; the former suggests neither quite one thing nor another, while the latter introduces an element of conjecture:

Я купи́л себе́ но́вую маши́ну, то́лько цвет непоня́тный, *не то* се́рый, *не то* серебри́стый.

I've bought myself a new car, but I can't work out what colour it is; it's somewhere between grey and silver (*or* it's not exactly grey and it's not exactly silver).


По́сле распа́да Соове́тского Сою́за она́ эмигри́ровала *то ли* в Герма́нию, *то ли* в Израи́ль.

After the collapse she emigrated; I think she went either to Germany or to Israel.

The conjunction **то ... то** indicates alternating actions:

Пого́да здесь пере́мчивая: *то* идёт дождь, *то* сия́ет со́лнце.

The weather's changeable here; one minute it's raining, the next the sun is shining.



9.3.4 Subordinating conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions always join two clauses to make up a single sentence. They are so called because the clauses they introduce (*subordinate clauses*) can never stand alone, but can appear only in conjunction with a *main clause* as part of a *complex sentence*.

The use of subordinating conjunctions is described in detail in **Chapter 21**.

The following are the most widely used subordinating conjunctions in Russian:

(1) Subordinating conjunctions of time:

когда	when (21.1.5)
до того как	before (21.1.11)
прежде чем	before (21.1.11)
после того как	after (21.1.11)
пока	while (21.1.14)
с тех пор как	since (21.1.16)
как только	as soon as (21.1.16)
(до тех пор), пока ... не	until (21.1.16)

(2) Subordinating conjunctions of place:

где	where (21.2.13)
куда	where (to), whither (21.2.14)
откуда	where from, whence (21.2.15)

(3) Subordinating conjunction of manner:

как	how (21.3.4)
-----	--------------

(4) Subordinating conjunctions of cause and consequence:

потому́ что	because (21.4.6)
потому́ как	because (21.4.6)
так как	because, since (21.4.6)
поско́льку	because, since (21.4.6)
и́бо	for (21.4.6)
так что	so that (21.4.7)

(5) Subordinating conjunction indicating conditions:

е́сли if (21.5)

(6) Subordinating conjunction indicating a concession:

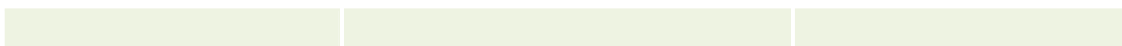
хотя́ although (21.6.3)

(7) Subordinating conjunction of purpose:

что́бы in order to/that (21.7.3)

(8) Subordinating conjunctions introducing indirect speech:

что́	that (21.8.2)
что́бы	introduces indirect commands (21.8.2)
бу́дто	that (implies doubt) (21.8.2)
яко́бы	that (implies disbelief) (21.8.2)



(9) Subordinating conjunctions used in comparisons:

чем	than (21.9.2, 21.9.4)
тем более, что	all the more because, especially as (21.9.4)
как as (21.9.8)	

NOTE The conjunction **чтобы** contains the particle **бы**, which is used to form the conditional (see 4.10); just as **бы** is combined with a finite verb in the past tense, so if **чтобы** is used with a finite verb, that verb will always be in the past tense as well.

9.3.5 'Matching' adverbs and conjunctions

One feature of Russian is that *subordinating conjunctions* are often buttressed by *adverbs* in the *main clause* that match the conjunction in meaning and usually in form as well. Matching pairs of adverbs and conjunctions include the following:

тогда, когда	
там, где	
туда, куда	
оттуда, откуда	
так, как	
столько, сколько	as much as
настолько, настолько	to the extent that
постольку, постольку	in so far as

Мы подпишем контракт только тогда, когда у нас будет полная информация по всем вопросам.

We will sign the contract only when we have full information on all questions.

Я хотел бы жить там, где меня никто не знает.

I'd like to live where nobody knows me.

Если будете поступать так, как я вам рекомендую, никаких проблем не будет.

If you do as I recommend, there won't be any problems.

Я знаю об этом столько, сколько и вы.

I know as much about it as you do.

Ваши проблемы интересуют меня постольку, поскольку они влияют на общую атмосферу в коллективе.

Your problems interest me in so far as they affect the overall atmosphere in the group.

Used on its own, the phrase **постольку поскольку** means something like 'not bad', 'up to a point' or even 'it depends':

— У вас хорошие отношения с зарубежными партнёрами?

— Постольку поскольку.

—Do you get on well with your foreign partners?

—Up to a point. (*or* 'It depends.')

9.3.6 Prepositional phrases with conjunctions

In Russian two clauses are often joined by a *prepositional phrase* (a preposition followed by the appropriate form of the *neuter demonstrative pronoun* **то** and a conjunction. This can correspond to the English use of a preposition followed by the -ing form of verb. The most frequent conjunction used in this way is **что**, although others that occur include **чтобы** (in hypothetical contexts) and **почему**:

Её критиковали за то, что в своих романах она не затрагивала социальные темы.

She was criticised for not touching on social topics in her novels.

Начнём с того, что изберём председательствующего.

We'll begin by electing someone to take the chair.

Они настаивают на том, чтобы это условие было включено в контракт.

They are insisting on this condition being included in the contract.

Им следовало бы задуматься над тем, почему нормальные люди прибегают к таким мерам.

They should stop and think about why normal people resort to such measures.

9.4 Particles

9.4.0 Introduction

Particles are additional words providing information that supplements or supports that provided by the main elements of a sentence. Some particles have a very specific grammatical or semantic function, while others are used in a less easily defined manner.

9.4.1 Particles with a very specific grammatical or semantic function

The particles used when answering questions are **да** 'yes' and **нет** 'no'. For more on their use in this function, see **17.1.4**.

The *particle* **да** is also used with third person verb forms to create an imperative.

This usage is mostly characteristic of church language, but one phrase in common use is:

да здравствует!

long live!

Да здравствует дружба между нашими странами!

Long live the friendship between our countries!

NOTE The opposite of **да здравствует** is **долой** 'down with', which is followed by a noun in the *accusative* case:

Долой смертную казнь!

Down with the death penalty!

The particles **вот** and **вон** are used when pointing out; the former, which is much more frequent, points to something or somewhere near and is often combined with **здесь** 'here', while the latter points to something far from the speaker and can be combined with **там** 'there':

Вот мой очки́, я иска́л их весь день!

Here are my glasses, I've been looking for them all day!

Они лежа́ли вот здесь, под э́той газе́той.

They were lying right here, underneath this newspaper.

Вон Мавзоле́й Ле́нина, но, ка́жется, вход в него́ закры́т.

There's Lenin's Mausoleum, but I don't think you can get in.

***Мо́жно е́хать на пя́том авто́бусе; остано́вка вон там, на той сторо́не́
у́лицы.***

You can go on the number five bus; the stop's over there, on the other side of the street.

For the use of **вот** as a sentence filler, *see 23.3.*

Some particles are used to form parts of the verb system:

For the use of the particle **пусть** to form the third person imperative, *see 4.9.*

For the use of the particle **бы** to form the conditional, *see 4.10.*

For the use of the particle **-ка** with the imperative, *see 18.2.1*

For the use of the particle **ли** in direct questions, *see 17.1.2.*

For the use of the particle **ли** in indirect questions, *see 21.8.3,*

For the use of the **negative** particle **не**, *see 15.1.*

For the use of particles in indirect speech, *see 21.8.2.*

9.4.2 Other particles

Other frequently used particles include the following:

ведь 'surely', 'you know'
ну 'well (now)'
уж adds emphasis

же adds emphasis or can indicate contrast
-то adds emphasis

The use of these particles is a complex matter of idiom, and the translations and indications given here are only approximate.

For information on the use of particles to provide emphasis, *see* **20.3.3**.

For information on particles used as sentence fillers, *see* **23.3**.

In addition, the particles **да** and **вот** can be used for expressive effect:

Да ты с ума сошла! В такой мороз в одной курточке!

Are you totally out of your mind? Going out in this cold weather in just a jacket!

Вот так праздник! Ни горячей воды, ни электричества!

A fine holiday this has turned out to be! No hot water and no electricity!

9.4.3 Notes on the pronunciation and spelling of particles

The following particles are *enclitic*, that is, they have no stress of their own, but form a single stress unit with the *preceding* word:

бы, -ка, же, ли, -то

Of these, **ли** always follows the first stressed word of the clause or sentence in which it appears.

The particle **не** is *proclitic*, that is, it forms a single stress unit with the *following* word.

The particles **-ка** and **-то** are always joined to the preceding word with a hyphen. Other particles are always written as separate words.

10 **Word formation**

10.0 Introduction

An important feature of the structure of Russian is the use of various word-forming devices to create new words on the basis of those that already exist. The most important of these are *prefixes* and *suffixes*, although sometimes new words are created by removing suffixes or by combining two words into one. Since the meanings of the various prefixes and suffixes are fairly consistent, it is often possible to work out at least the approximate meaning of an unknown word by breaking it up into its individual word-forming components. (Note the words 'fairly' and 'approximate': this is a useful, but not an infallible tip!)

As with aspects of the verb, whole books have been written on Russian word formation, and in this chapter it is possible only to touch on those issues that are likely to be of most concern to learners. There are sections on the noun (**10.1**), the adjective (**10.2**) and the verb (**10.3**), while section **10.4** deals separately with the question of verbal prefixes.

10.1 Formation of nouns

10.1.1 Diminutives and augmentatives

Most Russian nouns have a variant form, created by the addition of a suffix, which is conventionally known as the *diminutive*. This form is often used with specific reference to size, but it can also indicate a particular emotional attitude to the object in question; the attitude is often one of affection or attachment, although sometimes it may be one of contempt.

In some instances the diminutive has partly or wholly detached itself from the noun from which it was originally formed and has acquired a separate meaning. Examples where this has happened are noted in the lists below.

With some nouns it is possible to add a different suffix to form an *augmentative*. These normally refer to (large) size, but this too can be combined with the expression of an emotional attitude. In general, augmentatives are much less widely used than diminutives.

The use of diminutives and augmentatives to indicate emotional attitudes is discussed in **16.1**.

It can occasionally happen that the addition of a diminutive or an augmentative suffix changes the declension type of the original noun. In such instances the grammatical gender of the noun remains unchanged.

10.1.2 Diminutive suffixes for masculine nouns

The main diminutive suffixes for masculine nouns are **-ик**, **-ок/-ёк/ек**, **-ец** and **-чик**.

The suffix **-ик** is never stressed. Examples include:

дом	house, block of flats	домик	<i>especially</i> a small individual house
заяц	hare	зайчик	
ковёр	carpet	коврик	<i>also</i> mat
ломоть	slice	ломтик	
мост	bridge	мостик	<i>also</i> captain's bridge
нож	knife	ножик	<i>especially</i> penknife
сад	garden	садик	<i>also</i> kindergarten (informal)
стол	table	столик	<i>especially</i> restaurant or café table
час	hour	часик	
шар	sphere, globe, balloon	шарик	

The suffix **-ок/-ёк/-ек** is usually, though not always stressed. Before this suffix the consonants **-г**, **-к**, **-х** change to **-ж**, **-ч**, **-ш** respectively. Some nouns ending in **-н** or **нь** change the final consonant to **-ш**. Examples include:

глаз	eye	глаз ^о к	<i>also</i> peep-hole
друг	friend	друж ^о к	
знак	sign	знач ^о к	badge
коньяк	brandy, Cognac	коньяч ^о к	
корень	root	кореш ^о к	<i>also</i> counterfoil
кофе	coffee	кофе ^ё к	
круг	circle	круж ^о к	<i>also</i> club
огонь	fire	огон ^ё к	
петух	rooster, cock(ere)	петуш ^о к	
ремень	strap, belt	ремеш ^о к	strap (e.g. of a watch)
старик	old man	старич ^о к	
чай	tea	ча ^ё к	
шум	noise	шум ^о к	
горох	peas	горош ^е к	
орех	nut	ореш ^е к	
человек	man, human being	человеч ^е к	

The following are among the nouns that form the diminutive with the **-ец** suffix:

морóз	frost	морóзец
хлеб	bread	хлебeц

The following are among the nouns that form the diminutive with the **-чик** suffix:

блин	pancake	блинчик
карман	pocket	карманчик
палец	finger	пальчик
стакан	glass	стаканчик

The vast majority of nouns have only one diminutive forms, but the following are exceptions in having two alternative forms:

брат	brother	бра́тец, бра́тник (used only to refer to children)
вопро́с	question	вопро́сик, вопро́сец
год	year	го́дик, го́док
стул	chair	сту́льчик, сту́лик

10.1.3 Diminutive suffixes for feminine nouns

The most widely used diminutive suffix for feminine nouns is **-ка**. Before this suffix the consonants **-Г-, -К-, -Х-** change to **-ж-, -ч-, -ш-** respectively and **-Ц-** changes to **-ч-**. Examples include:

вода́	water	во́дка	vodka (only! see 10.1.5)
голова́	head	го́ловка	also head of any small object
доро́га	road	доро́жка	path
дочь	daughter	дочка	
ель	fir tree	ёлка	also Christmas tree
кни́га	book	кни́жка	
нога	leg, foot	но́жка	also leg of item of furniture
пло́щадь	square (in city)	площа́дка	any small area
пти́ца	bird	пти́чка	
река́	river	ре́чка	
рука́	arm, hand	ру́чка	also handle, pen
стрела́	arrow	стрелка́	also hand (of a clock)
тётя	aunt	тётка	

Some feminine nouns have a diminutive form with the suffix **-ица**:

вещь	thing	вещи́ца	
часть	part	части́ца	particle

Some nouns with a stem ending in two consonants have a diminutive with the suffix **-очка**; this suffix is the one normally used for nouns ending in a consonant + **ка**:

звезда́	star	звёздочка	
ка́рта	card, map	ка́рточка	[as in креди́тная ка́рточка credit card]
ло́дка	boat	ло́дочка	
тря́пка	rag, piece of cloth, duster	тря́почка	

10.1.4 Diminutive suffixes for neuter nouns

Many neuter nouns have a diminutive ending in **-ко** or **-ико**. Before these suffixes **-к-** and **-ц-** change to **-ч-**; **-х-** changes to **-ш-**:

блю́дце	saucer	блю́дечко	
молоко́	milk	моло́чко	
о́блако	cloud	о́блачко	
се́рдце	heart	се́рдечко	
ухо́	ear	у́шко	<i>also</i> eye (of a needle)
ябло́ко	apple	яблочко	
яйцо́	egg	яи́чко	<i>also</i> testicle
колесо́	wheel	колёсико	

ли́цо	face	ли́чко
плечо́	shoulder	плéчко

Another suffix found with neuter nouns is **-це/-цо/-ецо**; the third variant of the suffix is used after a sequence of two consonants:

зе́ркло	mirror	зе́ркальце
слово́	word	слово́це
письмо́	letter	письмецо́

NOTE The noun **блюди́це** 'saucer' is in origin a diminutive form of **блюдо́** 'dish'.

A small number of neuter nouns have a diminutive with the suffix **-ышко**:

го́рло	throat	го́рлышко
зе́рно	grain, kernel	зе́рнышко
крыло́	wing	крылы́шко

10.1.5 Secondary diminutive suffixes

With some nouns it is possible to add a further suffix, thereby creating a *secondary diminutive* form:

друг	friend	дружо́к	дружо́чек
сын	son	сыно́к	сыно́чек
тётя	aunt	тётка	тётенька

In general, these forms have a significantly stronger emotional content than the primary diminutives and they should be used with some degree of caution. For more on this, *see* **16.1**.

There are, however, some secondary diminutives that are used either exclusively or more frequently than the primary forms (the latter, where they exist, are indicated below in brackets):

мину́та	minute	мину́точка (мину́тка)
секу́нда	second	секу́ндочка
сестра́	sister	сестри́чка (сестри́ца)

It is particularly important to distinguish the following pair of nouns and their

respective diminutives:

вода́	water	води́чка (води́ца)
во́дка	vodka	водо́чка

10.1.6 Augmentative suffixes

Augmentative forms are used much less frequently than *diminutives*. The suffixes used are **-ище** (for masculine and neuter nouns), **-ища** (for feminine nouns) and **-ина** (for masculine and feminine nouns). Before these suffixes the consonants **-Г, -К, -Х** change to **-Ж-, -Ч-, -Ш-** respectively:

во́лк	wolf	во́лчище
кула́к	fist	кула́чище
боро́да	beard	боро́дища
жа́ра	heat (wave)	жа́рища



дом	house, block of flats	доми́на
ры́ба	fish	ры́бина

10.1.7 Suffixes indicating someone who carries out an action

The suffix most frequently used to form a noun indicating the person who carries out the action denoted by a verb is **-тель**:

води́ть	to lead, to drive	води́тель	driver
жить	to live	жи́тель	inhabitant
избира́ть/избра́ть	to elect	избира́тель	elector
изобрета́ть/изобрести́	to invent	изобрета́тель	inventor
люби́ть	to love	люби́тель	lover (e.g. of art), amateur
писа́ть/написа́ть	to write	писа́тель	writer
рожда́ть/роди́ть	to give birth	роди́тель	parent
строи́ть/построи́ть	to build	строи́тель	builder
учи́ть/научи́ть	to teach	учи́тель	teacher
чита́ть/прочи́тать	to read	чита́тель	reader

The pair of verbs **спаса́ть/спасти́** 'to save' is unusual, in that it serves as a base for two nouns with different meanings; one is formed from the *imperfective* and the other from the *perfective*:

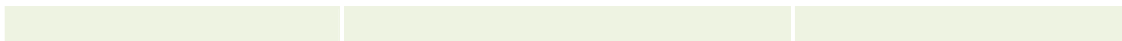
спаса́тель	rescue worker	спаси́тель	saviour
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Some nouns formed in this way indicate an object, rather than a person:

выключа́ть/ выключи́ть	to switch off	выключа́тель	switch
дви́гать/ двину́ть	to move	дви́гатель	engine, motor
предохраня́ть/ предохрани́ть	to protect	предохрани́тель	safety catch, fuse
указыва́ть/ указа́ть	to point out	указа́тель	index

Other suffixes that can be used to form nouns indicating someone who carries out a particular activity are **-ник**, **-чик** and **-щик**. These are mostly used with nouns not formed directly from verbs:

защита	defence	защитник	defender
мясо	meat	мясник	butcher
полярный	polar	полярник	explorer of the polar regions
работа	work	работник	worker, employee
ремесло	trade, craft	ремесленник	craftsman, artisan
современный	contemporary (adjective)	современник	contemporary (noun)
участие	participation	участник	participant
учиться	to learn	ученик	pupil
груз	load	грузчик	loader, porter, docker
летать	to fly	лётчик	pilot
перебегать/ перебежать	to run across	перебежчик	defector
болеть	to be ill; to support (a sports team)	болельщик	supporter



гардероб	cloakroom	гардеробщик	cloakroom attendant
регулировать	to regulate, to control	регулировщик	policeman controlling traffic

Some of the following nouns denote instruments, rather than or as well as people:

градус	degree (temperature)	градусник	thermometer
счёт	bill, account	счётчик	a counting device, meter, someone who counts

10.1.8 Suffixes indicating inhabitants, members of nationalities or other forms of status

The suffix **-ец** is widely used to indicate inhabitants of towns and cities in Russia and elsewhere, as well as nationality and ethnic affiliation. Nouns with this suffix normally have a *fleeting vowel*:

Воронеж	Voronezh	воронежец	
Владимир	Vladimir	владимирец	
Екатеринбург	Ekaterinburg	екатеринбуржец	
(Санкт-)Петербург	St Petersburg	(санкт-)петербуржец	
Ярославль	Iaroslavl	ярославец	
Лондон	London	лондонец	
Пекин	Beijing	пекинец	
Америка	America	американец	American
Германия Germany; немецкий German		немец	German
Испания	Spain	испанец	Spaniard
Италия	Italy	итальянец	Italian
Канада	Canada	канадец	Canadian
Китай	China	китаец	Chinese person
Шотландия	Scotland	шотландец	Scot
Чечня	Chechnya	чеченец	Chechen

For more on the fleeting vowel, *see* 2.5.1.

For more on the use of small letters to indicate inhabitants and members of nationalities and ethnic groups, *see* 1.5.7.

The suffix **-анин/-янин/-чанин** is widely used to form nouns indicating the

inhabitants of towns and cities in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus:

Ирку́тск	Irkutsk	иркутя́нин
Киев	Kiev	киевля́нин
Минск	Minsk	минча́нин
Петроза́водск	Petrozavodsk	петрозаводча́нин
Росто́в-на-Дону́	Rostov-on-Don	ростовча́нин

The same suffix is used, albeit less often, to form nouns indicating inhabitants of other cities or indicating nationality:

Пари́ж	Paris	парижа́нин
Рига	Riga	рижа́нин
Рим	Rome	римля́нин

А́нглия	England	англича́нин	Englishman
Арме́ния	Armenia	армя́нин	Armenian
Дания	Denmark	датча́нин	Dane

This suffix can also form nouns indicating inhabitants of more general locations, members of religious faiths and persons possessing a particular social or other kind of status:

го́род	city, town	горожа́нин	city-/town-dweller
се́ло	village	сельча́нин, се́лянин	village-dweller
		гражда́нин	citizen
		дворя́нин	nobleman
		крестья́нин	peasant
		мусульма́нин	Muslim
Христо́с	Christ	христиа́нин	Christian

NOTE When it declines, the noun *Христо́с* loses the *-ос*: genitive *Христа́*, dative *Христу́* etc.

For the declension of nouns ending in *-анин/-янин/-чанин*, see 2.11.3.

Some nouns indicating the inhabitants of some Russian, Ukrainian or Belarusian towns and cities or indicating nationalities are formed with other, often unpredictable suffixes; some nouns indicating nationalities have no suffix at all:

Москва́	Moscow	москвѐч	
Оде́сса	Odessa	оде́ссит	
Пермь	Perm	пермя́к	
Польша	Poland	поля́к	Pole
Гре́ция	Greece	гре́к	Greek
Фран́ция	France	фра́нцуз	Frenchman
Шве́ция	Sweden	швед	Swede

10.1.9 Suffixes used to form feminine nouns

Nouns indicating inhabitants of a place, national or ethnic affiliation or social status normally have separate *masculine and feminine* forms. Some nouns indicating occupations also have a separate feminine form. The feminine forms are created either by replacing one suffix with another or by adding a feminine suffix to the masculine form.

To form the feminine equivalent of nouns indicating nationalities and ending in **-ец** the suffix is normally removed and replaced with **-ка**:

американец	American	американка
шотландец	Scot	шотландка

NOTE The feminine equivalents of nouns indicating the inhabitants of Russian cities and ending in **-ец** are rare and can be difficult to form. To indicate a female inhabitant of St Petersburg **петербурженка** is the preferred form, but words formed with other suffixes may also be encountered.

With nouns in **-анин/-янин/-чанин** the feminine equivalent is formed by removing the last two letters of the masculine suffix and adding **-ка**:

ростовчанин	inhabitant of Rostov-on-Don	ростовчанка	
англичанин	Englishman	англичанка	Englishwoman



With other nouns indicating inhabitants of a place or national or ethnic affiliation the feminine suffix **-ка** is usually added to the end of the masculine form; in a few instances **-ка** replaces the masculine suffix:

москвѣч	Muscovite	москвѣчка
швед	Swede	шведка
поляк	Pole	полька

With a few nouns indicating national or ethnic affiliation the feminine in **-ка** is not formed directly from the masculine:

грек	Greek	грѣчанка
китаец	Chinese man	китайанка
кореец	Korean	корейанка
француз	Frenchman	французанка

NOTE A certain amount of care is required with some of these forms, since the ‘expected’ feminine form exists, but with a different meaning:

грѣчка	(an informal term for) buckwheat
корейка	(a form of) smoked ham

For more on nouns indicating citizenship or ethnic affiliation, *see* **12.5.1**.

With nouns denoting someone who carries out an action the suffix **-ница** is added to nouns ending in **-тель**; the feminine equivalent of nouns ending in **-ик** is formed by replacing the final two letters with the suffix **-ница**:

писатель	writer	писательница
учитель	teacher	учительница
уборщик	cleaner	уборщица
ученик	pupil	ученица

The suffix **-ша** is added to nouns with the suffixes **-арь**, **-ер**, **-ѣр**, **-ир** and to a few other nouns, while the suffix **-ка** tends to be used with nouns falling into none of the above categories:

вахтёр	janitor, person who guards the entry to a building	вахтёрша	
касси́р	cashier, person who sits at a cash-desk	касси́рша	
секретарь	secretary	секретарша	
аспира́нт	post-graduate student	аспира́нтка	
спортсме́н	sportsman	спортсме́нка	sportswoman
студе́нт	student	студе́нтка	

It is important to note that there are restrictions on the use of feminine nouns describing someone who has a particular occupation or profession. This question is discussed in detail in **12.6.2**.

10.1.10 Other nouns formed from verbs

Many verbs have nouns formed from them with the suffix **-ание** (verbs with an infinitive in **-ать**), **-яние** (verbs with an infinitive in **-ять**) or **-ение** (other verbs).
Nouns



formed from *second conjugation* verbs have the same changes of consonant as occur in the *past passive participle*.

For more on these changes of consonant, *see 4.12.4*.

Many of the nouns formed in this way function as pure *verbal nouns*, that is, they indicate the action denoted by the verb:

изуча́ть/изучи́ть	to study	изуче́ние	study(ing)
кури́ть	to smoke (tobacco)	куре́ние	smoking
оформля́ть/ оформи́ть	to register, to legalise	оформле́ние	registration, legalisation
раскаива́ться/ раска́яться	to repent	раска́яние	repentance
созерца́ть	to contemplate	созерца́ние	contemplation
употребля́ть/ употреби́ть	to use	употре́бление	use
чита́ть/проче́сть or проче́сть	to read	чте́ние	reading,

The use of these verbal nouns is particularly characteristic of formal written language. For more on this use, *see 23.1.4*.

Many of these verbal nouns have acquired more concrete meanings:

води́ть/ввести́	to lead in, to bring in	веде́ние	introduction (e.g. to a book)
дви́гать/дви́нуть	to move	движе́ние	movement, traffic
предлага́ть/ предложи́ть	to offer	предложе́ние	offer; sentence (grammatical)
приглаша́ть/ пригласи́ть	to invite	приглаше́ние	invitation
содержа́ть	to contain	содержа́ние	contents (e.g. of a book)
сокраща́ть/ сократи́ть	to abbreviate	сокраще́ние	abbreviation
убежда́ть/убеди́ть	to convince	убежде́ние	conviction, belief

Nouns belonging to this group can occur in all types of writing and speech.

NOTES

- (i) It will be noticed that the nouns **чтѐние** and **движѐние** are not formed directly from the corresponding verbs.
- (ii) The noun used to indicate the physical contents of, for example, a tin is **содержимое**.

Some nouns are formed from verbs without the addition of a suffix. This means of forming nouns is particularly characteristic of prefixed forms of certain verbs in common use. Many nouns formed in this way have concrete meanings more or less closely linked to the normal meaning of the verb:

вхóдить/вóйти	to enter (on foot)	вхóд	entry
выхóдить/вы́йти	to go out (on foot)	вы́ход	exit
дохóдить/дóйти	to get as far as	дохóд	income

запу́ска́ть/запу́сти́ть	to launch (e.g. a rocket)	за́пуск	launch
пропу́ска́ть/ пропу́сти́ть	to let through, to omit	про́пуск	pass, omission
приговари́вать/ приговори́ть	to sentence	приговóр	sentence (in court)
расска́зывать/ рассказа́ть	to tell, to narrate	расска́з	short story

10.1.11 Other suffixes used to form abstract nouns

The *suffix -ость* is widely used to form abstract nouns from adjectives; these nouns are always *feminine*:

глу́пый	stupid	глу́ность	stupidity
молодо́й	young	молодо́сть	youth(fulness)
ново́й	new	ново́сть	(item of) news
ре́дкий	rare	ре́дкость	rarity
сме́лый	bold, courageous	сме́лость	boldness, courage
ста́рый	old	ста́рость	old age

Other **suffixes** that can be used to form **abstract** nouns from various parts of speech include **-ство, -ба, -нь, -изна**:

бе́гать	to run	бе́гство	flight, escape
бра́т	brother	бра́тство	fraternity
де́ти	children	де́тство	childhood
боро́ться	to struggle, to wrestle	боро́ба	struggle, wrestling
стре́лять	to shoot	стре́льба	shooting
боле́ть	to be ill	боле́знь	illness
жи́ть	to live	жи́знь	life
бе́лый	white	бели́зна	whiteness
круто́й	steep	крути́зна	steepness

10.1.12 Making one noun out of two words

There are numerous nouns in Russian that are put together out of two recognisably separate elements. In most instances the elements are linked by the vowels **o** (after hard consonants) or **e** (after soft consonants or **ц, ж, ш**) and sometimes the noun ends in a suffix of one sort or another:

бронь 'armour' + **носить** 'to carry'
вертеть 'to spin' + **летать** 'to fly'
рука 'hand', 'arm' + **писать** 'to write'
общий 'general', 'common' + **жить** 'to live'
огонь 'fire' + **тушить** 'to extinguish'

право 'right', 'law' + **нарушение**
'infringement'

пыль 'dust' + **сосать** 'to suck'
сам 'oneself' + **гнать** 'to chase', 'to distil'

сам 'oneself' + **летать** 'to fly'
тёплый 'warm' + **ходить** 'to go'

броненосец 'battleship'

вертолёт 'helicopter'

рукопись 'manuscript'

общежитие 'hostel'

огнетушитель 'fire
extinguisher'

правонарушение 'crime,
infringement of the law'

пылесос 'vacuum cleaner'

самогон 'home-distilled
vodka', 'hooch'

самолёт 'aeroplane'

теплоход 'motor vessel'

Another device for creating one noun out of two words is to preface a noun with the abbreviated form of an adjective. These formations were particularly characteristic of bureaucratic and journalistic writing in the Soviet period, but the device has survived and several such forms are in more or less common use:

де́тский сад	kindergarten	детса́д
медици́нская сестра́	nurse	медсестра́
полити́ческая ко́рре́ктность	political correctness	политко́рре́ктность
полити́ческий за́клуче́нный	political prisoner	политза́клуче́нный
профессио́нальный сою́з	trade union	профсою́з

The status of the abbreviated forms varies: **детса́д** normally occurs only in informal language, but in the other instances the abbreviated version is in practice the only form in general use.

In the following instances the first part is not really capable of being expanded into a full adjective:

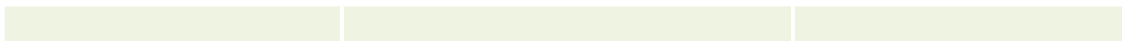
авиабиле́т	air ticket
автовокза́л	(long-distance) bus station

Another type of word formation that was characteristic of the Soviet period is the so-called 'stump compound'. These are words put together from a part (usually the first syllable or first two syllables) of two or more other words; a typical example is **генсе́к**, formed from **генера́льный секрета́рь** 'general secretary'. Many such forms have disappeared or have become restricted to specialised contexts, but among those still in common use are the following:

воённый комиссари́ат military recruitment office	военкома́т
избира́тельная комисси́я electoral commission	избирко́м
компромети́рующий материа́л compromising material	компрома́т
во́инские подразде́ления специа́льного назначе́ния special forces	спецна́з
Министе́рство здравоохране́ния Ministry of Health	Минздрáв
универса́льный магази́н department store	универма́г

In a number of instances a noun is formed from a phrase usually consisting of noun+ adjective; the original noun is dropped and a noun-forming suffix (usually **-ка** but sometimes **-ник**) is added to a shortened form of the adjective. These formations are widely used in informal language, but in more formal contexts the full form is preferred:

кредитна́я ка́рт(очк)а credit card	кредитка́
ма́нная крупа́ semolina	ма́нка
минерáльная вода́ mineral water	минерáлка



моби́льный телефо́н mobile telephone	моби́льник
футбо́льная ма́йка football shirt, tee-shirt	футбо́лка
чита́льный зал reading room	чита́лка
«Вече́рняя Москва́» (Moscow's evening newspaper)	«Вече́рка»
Госуда́рственная публи́чная библиоте́ка имени М.Е. Салты́кова-Щедри́на M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library (in St Petersburg)	Публи́чка

10.2 Formation of adjectives

10.2.0 Introduction

To form an adjective from a noun it is necessary to add a suffix to which adjectival endings can be added. The three main suffixes used are: **-н-**, **-ск-** and **-ов-/-ев-/ёв-**. In addition, there are certain suffixes (**-енький**, **-оватый**) which are used to form adjectives from other adjectives.

10.2.1 The suffix **-н-**

The suffix **-н-** is by far the most widely used of the three suffixes used to form adjectives from nouns. Certain consonants undergo changes before this suffix:

к ~ ч
г ~ ж
х ~ ш
ц ~ ч
л ~ ль

As a rule, the adjective has the same meaning as the noun. Exceptions are indicated where appropriate:

автомобиль	car, motor vehicle	автомобильный	
бархат	velvet	бархатный	
верёвка	string	верёвочный	
воздух	air	воздушный	
война	war	военный	military
восток	east	восточный	
дерево	tree, wood (the material)	деревянный	wooden
запад	west	западный	
луна	moon	лунный	
молоко	milk	молочный	
север	north	северный	
трамвай	tram	трамвайный	
улица	street	уличный	
школа	school	школьный	
юг	south	южный	



In some instances the stress is on the ending, which means that the *nominative singular masculine* ends in **-ой** (see 6.1.2):

день	day	дневной	
зуб	tooth	зубной	
ночь	night	ночной	
пиво	beer	пивной	
река	river	речной	
рука	arm, hand	ручной	also tame

10.2.2 The suffix **-н-** with a soft ending (**-ний**)

The combination of the suffix **-н-** and a soft ending (**-ний**) is characteristic of adjectives formed from *nouns*, *adverbs* or *prepositions* relating to *time* or *place*. These adjectives belong to the *first group of soft adjectives*, described in 6.2.

Adjectives formed from nouns relating to time:

вечер	evening	вечерний
утро	morning	утренний

But cf. **дневной, ночной** listed in 10.2.1.

весна	spring	весенний
зима	winter	зимний
лето	summer	летний
осень	autumn	осенний
суббота	Saturday	субботный
But воскресенье	Sunday	воскресный

Adjectives formed from adverbs relating to time:

вчера	yesterday	вчерашний	yesterday's
сегодня	today	сегодняшний	today's
ныне	today, nowadays	нынешний	today's, present
завтра	tomorrow	завтрашний	tomorrow's
всегда	always	всегдашний	usual, invariable
теперь	now	теперешний	present, of today
тогда	then	тогдашний	

Adjectives formed from nouns relating to place:

зад	back (part of something), buttocks	за́дний	back, rear
пе́ред	front (part of something)	пе́редний	front
верх	top	ве́рхний	upper
низ	bottom	нижний	lower

Adjectives formed from adverbs or prepositions relating to place:

здесь	here	зде́шний	
тут	here	ту́тошний	
там	there	тамо́шний	
вне (+ gen.)	outside	вне́шний	external
внутри (+ gen.)	inside	вну́тренний	internal

10.2.3 Adjectives formed with the suffix **-СК-**

The suffix **-ск-** is particularly characteristic of adjectives formed from geographical names:

Аме́рика	America	амери́канский	American
А́нглия	England	а́нглийский	English
Великобри́тания	Great Britain	(велико)бри́танский	British
По́льша	Poland	по́льский	Polish
Росси́я	Russia	росси́йский	Russian
		ру́сский	Russian

For the difference between **росси́йский** and **ру́сский**, see 12.5.2.

Москв́а	Moscow	моско́вский
(Са́нкт-)Пе́тербу́рг	St Petersburg	(са́нкт-)пе́тербу́ргский

NOTE The form **(са́нкт-)пе́тербу́ржский** is also possible, but is less widely used. Forms with the prefix **Са́нкт-** are characteristic of formal language and are used, for example, in the official titles of St Petersburg institutions such as **Са́нкт-пе́тербу́ргский госуда́рственный уни́верси́тет** St Petersburg State University.

Ло́ндон	London	ло́ндонский
Пари́ж	Paris	пари́жский
Ба́йкал	Lake Baikal	ба́йкальский
Кавка́з	Caucasus (mountain range)	ка́вказский
Камча́тка	Kamchatka (peninsula)	камча́тский
Нева́	River Neva	не́вский

The same suffix is also used with adjectives formed from *surnames*:

Горбачёв	горбачёвский
Пушкин	пушкинский
Толстой	толстовский

Other adjectives with the **-ск-** suffix include the following:

январь	January	январский
апрель	April	апрельский
октябрь	October	октябрьский

and all other adjectives formed from the names of the months;

арифме́тика	arithmetic	арифмети́ческий	arithmetical
Библи́я	Bible	библейский	biblical
бра́т	brother	бра́тский	fraternal
де́ти	children	де́тский	childlike, childish
капита́лист	capitalist	капиталисти́ческий	
люби́тель	lover (e.g. of music), amateur	люби́тельский	amateur
роди́тель	parent	роди́тельский	
солда́т	soldier	солда́тский	

Some of the adjectives with this suffix have the stress on the ending:

До́н	(river) Don	до́нский	
го́род	city, town	го́родской	
мо́ре	sea	мо́рской	marine

10.2.4 Adjectives formed with the suffix **-ов-/-ев-/-ёв**

The suffix **-ов-/-ев-/-ёв** is the least widely used of the three word-forming suffixes discussed here. Examples include:

ба́нан	banana	ба́нановый	
бро́нза	bronze	бро́нзовый	
ма́сса	mass (large amount or quantity)	ма́ссовый	
обра́зец	model (for imitation)	обра́зцовый	model, ideal
оре́х	nut	оре́ховый	
осётр	sturgeon	осётро́вый	
ри́с	rice	ри́совый	
сви́нец	lead	сви́нцовый	
си́рень	lilac (tree)	си́реньевый	
со́я	soya	со́евый	
че́решня	cherry	че́решневый	
ви́шня	(morello) cherry	ви́шнёвый	
ру́бль	rouble	ру́блёвый	
бе́рег	shore	бе́реговой	
бы́т	daily life	бы́товой	everyday, social
гру́ппа	group	гру́пповой	
звук	sound	звуче́вой	
мо́зг	brain	мо́зговой	
ча́с	hour		
ча́сы	clock, watch	ча́совой	also sentry
пи́ща	food	пи́щевой	
ре́чь	speech	ре́чевой	

10.2.5 Adjectives belonging to the second group of soft adjectives

The adjectives belonging to the *second group of soft adjectives* (described in 6.3) are all formed from animate nouns:

Бог	God	Бо́жий
челове́к	man, human being	челове́чий
вдова́	widow	вдо́вий
бара́н	ram	бара́ний
бык	bull	бы́чий
верблю́д	camel	верблю́жий
волк	wolf	волчи́й
коро́ва	cow	коро́вий
кошка	cat	коша́чий
лиса́	fox	лиси́й
медве́дь	bear	медве́жий
птица́	bird	птичи́й
соба́ка	dog	соба́чий
щу́ка	pike	щу́чий

These adjectives, and especially those formed from nouns denoting animals, can be used in a wide range of possessive and descriptive functions:

Здесь храм *Бо́жий*: на́до вести́ себя́ прили́чно.

This is God's temple; you must behave properly.

У него́ *во́лчий* аппети́т.

He has the appetite of a wolf.

Я откуда́-то слы́шу *коша́чье* мурлы́канье.

From somewhere I can hear the purring of a cat.

The following adjectives are used in a number of set expressions:

Зако́н Бо́жий	Religious Instruction (subject in school)
«Пти́чье молоко́»	a well-known brand of chocolates [the allusion is to bird's milk as something exquisite and rare]
соба́чий хо́лод	intense cold
(как) по шу́чьему велéнию	as if by magic

10.2.6 Nouns from which two or more adjectives are formed

There are several Russian nouns from which more than one adjective can be formed. In such instances the different adjectives will have different meanings:

боль	pain, ache	больной болево́й	sick, ill, sore, (as a noun) patient relating to pain
век	century	веково́й вечно́й	centuries old, ancient eternal
друг	friend	дру́жеский дружественный дру́жный	friendly friendly, cordial (official) harmonious, unanimous
мир	world; peace	мирово́й ми́рный ми́рской	world(-wide) peaceful secular, lay
серебро	silver	серебра́ный серебри́стый	(made of) silver silver (coloured)
си́ла	strength, force, power	си́льный си́лово́й	strong relating to power or the use of force
сте́кло	glass	сте́клянный стеко́льный	(made of) glass relating to the production of glass
чу́до	miracle	чу́десный чу́дный чу́дной	miraculous, wonderful, marvellous wonderful, marvellous strange, cranky



язы́к	tongue, language, tribe	языко́вой язы́ческий	linguistic, relating to language pagan
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10.2.7 Adjectives formed from phrases

In many instances it is possible to form a single adjective from a phrase. The majority of these consist either of an *adjective+noun* or a *numeral+noun*.

When adjectives are formed from an *adjective+noun*, the two parts of the adjective are linked by the vowel **о** (**e** after a soft consonant):

бе́лая голова́	white head	белоголо́вый	white-haired, fair-haired
Ве́тхий Завет́	Old Testament	ветхозаве́тный	Old Testament
красно́е лицо́	red face	краснолицы́й	red-faced
крупный ма́сштаб	large scale	крупно- ма́сштабный	large-scale
научна́я фанта́стика	science fiction	научно- фантасти́ческий	science-fiction
ру́сский язы́к	Russian language	рускоязы́чный	Russian-speaking
сре́дние века́	Middle Ages	средневеко́вый	medieval

NOTE The example **научно-фантасти́ческий** is unusual because it has two stresses and is normally hyphenated, rather than being written as one word.

Adjectives of this type are frequently formed from geographical names:

Да́льний востоќ	Far East
да́льневосто́чный	far eastern
За́падная Украина́	Western Ukraine
западноукраи́нский	West Ukrainian
Ти́хий океа́н	Pacific Ocean
тихоокеа́нский	Pacific

When adjectives are formed from a *numeral+noun*, the numeral is usually in the *genitive case* form:

две но́ги	two legs	двуно́гий	two-legged
два смы́сла	two senses	двусмы́сленный	ambiguous
два то́ма	two volumes	двухто́мный	in two volumes
два эта́жа	two storeys	двухэта́жный	two-storeyed
три часа́	three hours	трёхчасовой	three hours long
два́дцать пять лет		twenty-five years	
двадцатипятиле́тний		twenty-five years old	

10.2.8 Adjectives formed from other adjectives

The suffix **-енький** fulfils a similar function for adjectives as the various diminutive suffixes do for nouns, that is, they indicate either small size or a particular emotional attachment. In most instances, therefore, they do not have a different translation from

that of the adjective from which they are derived. In practice, adjectives with this suffix tend to be formed only from adjectives indicating colour and a few other widely used adjectives indicating a subjective quality:

краси́вый	beautiful	краси́венький
красный	red	красне́нький
коро́ткий	short	коро́тенкий
чи́стый	clean	чисте́нький

There are two special cases to note:

ма́лый	small, little	ма́ленький
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Here, adjectives with the **-енький** suffix are in general use; **ма́лый** tends to be restricted to set phrases or to titles such as:

Ма́лая А́зия	Asia Minor
Ма́лый теа́тр	(name of a theatre in Moscow)

In the following instances the adjective with the suffix has a different meaning:

хоро́ший	good	хоро́шенький	pretty
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Rather less widely used are the *augmentative* suffixes **-ющий, -енный**:

холо́дный	cold	холодню́щий	
здоровый	healthy	здорове́нный	fine, strapping

For more on the use of these diminutive and augmentative suffixes, *see* **16.1.5**.

The suffix **-ватый** attenuates the meaning of the original adjective; it can thus correspond to the English ‘-ish’:

глу́пый	stupid	глупова́тый	fairly stupid
красный	red	красова́тый	reddish
стра́шный	terrible, frightening	страшнова́тый	quite frightening

10.3 Formation of verbs

10.3.0 Introduction

Any newly created verb in Russian, other than those created by the addition of a prefix (*see* 10.4), must belong to one of the four *productive* classes of verbs described in 4.6, although in practice some of these classes are more productive than others.

10.3.1 Verbs ending in **-ОВАТЬ**

The overwhelming majority of newly created Russian verbs belong to the class of verbs with an *infinitive* ending in **-ОВАТЬ** and *non-past* endings in **-УЮ**, **-УЕШЬ**, etc.

For the conjugation of verbs belonging to this class, *see* 4.6.2.

The suffix used to form the infinitive of these verbs can take the following forms: **-ОВАТЬ/-ЕВАТЬ**, **-ИЗОВАТЬ**, **-ИРОВАТЬ**, **-ИЗИРОВАТЬ**. Many verbs in this class that have entered the language very recently are *bi-aspectual*, that is, the same form is used for both *imperfective* and *perfective* aspects; bi-aspectual verbs are indicated in the lists below with the abbreviation **НСВ/СВ**.



Examples of verbs ending in **-овать**:

арестова́ть (нсв/св)	to arrest
бастова́ть/забастова́ть	to go on strike
диктова́ть/продиктова́ть	to dictate
коронова́ть (нсв/св)	to crown
пробова́ть/попробова́ть	to try
расшифрова́вывать/расшифрова́ть	to decipher
рискова́ть/рискну́ть	to risk

The infinitive ending **-евать** occurs after soft consonants and after the consonants **ж, ц, ш, ч** in accordance with the spelling rule given in **1.5.2**:

ночева́ть/переночева́ть	to spend the night
танцева́ть/станцева́ть	to dance

Examples of verbs ending in **-изовать**:

организова́ть (нсв/св)	to organise
парализова́ть (нсв/св)	to paralyse
характеризова́ть/охарактеризова́ть	to characterise

NOTES

(i) Some perfective verbs ending in **-овать/-изовать** have an imperfective partner in **-овывать/-изовывать** (as in the example **расшифрова́вывать/расшифрова́ть**).

(ii) Although the verbs **арестова́ть** and **организова́ть** are bi-aspectual, there are imperfective partners **арестова́вывать** and **организова́вывать** respectively; these are not normally used in the present and future tenses.

Examples of verbs ending in **-ировать**:

бойкота́ровать (нсв/св)	to boycott
игнора́ровать (нсв/св)	to ignore
инвести́ровать (нсв/св)	to invest
иллюстра́ровать (нсв/св)	to illustrate
плани́ровать/заплани́ровать	to plan
редакти́ровать/отредакти́ровать	to edit
цита́ровать/процита́ровать	to quote

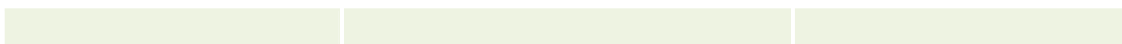
Examples of verbs ending in **-изировать**:

госпита ^л изи ^р овать (нсв/св)	to hospitalise
модерни ^з изи ^р овать (нсв/св)	to modernise
привати ^з изи ^р овать (нсв/св)	to privatise
символи ^з изи ^р овать (нсв/св)	to symbolise
стабили ^з изи ^р овать (нсв/св)	to stabilise

10.3.2 Verbs with an infinitive ending in **-ИТЬ**

It is sometimes possible to form from a noun a second conjugation verb with an infinitive ending in **-ИТЬ**.

For the conjugation of second conjugation verbs with an infinitive ending in **-ИТЬ**, see **4.6.4**.



Examples of verbs formed in this way include the following, most of which tend to be restricted to the more informal levels of language:

партиза́н	partisan	партиза́нить (нсв)	to fight with the partisans
пылесóс	vacuum cleaner	пылесóсить (нсв)	to vacuum
сигна́л	signal, alarm	сигна́лить/ просигна́лить	to signal (<i>especially</i> to hoot a car horn)
сканда́л	scandal, scene	сканда́лить (нсв)	to create a scene
тира́н	tyrant	тира́нить (нсв)	to behave like a tyrant towards, to oppress
транжи́р	spendthrift	транжи́рить/ протранжи́рить	to squander
хулига́н	hooligan	хулига́нить (нсв)	to behave like a hooligan

10.3.3 Verbs formed from adjectives

There are two types of verbs formed from adjectives. *Intransitive* verbs with an infinitive ending in **-еть** are formed from a wide range of adjectives. These are *first conjugation* verbs and they belong to the type described in **4.6.1(c)**.

Transitive verbs with an infinitive ending in **-ить** are formed from a more restricted range of adjectives. These are *second conjugation* verbs of the types described in **4.6.4**.

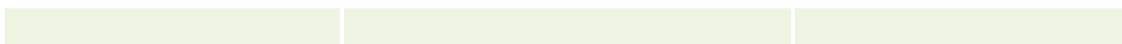
For the difference between transitive and intransitive verbs, *see* **4.13.1**.

Examples of intransitive verbs with an infinitive ending in **-еть**:

бе́дный	poor	бе́днеть/обедне́ть	to grow poor
бе́лый	white	бе́леть/побеле́ть	to turn white, to show up white
бле́дный	pale	бле́днеть/побле́днеть	to turn pale
бога́тый	rich	бога́теть/разбога́теть	to become rich
красна́ый	red	красне́ть/покрасне́ть	to turn red, to blush
лева́ый	left	леве́ть/полеветь	to move to the left (politically)
ста́рый	old	ста́реть/постаре́ть	to grow old
те́мный	dark	те́мнеть/стемне́ть	to grow dark
тре́звый	sober	тре́зветь/отре́зветь, протре́зветь	to sober up

Examples of transitive verbs with an infinitive ending in **-ить**:

бе́лый	white	бели́ть/побели́ть	to paint white, to whiten
молодо́й	young	молоди́ть/омолоди́ть	to make someone look younger
тре́звый	sober	трезви́ть/отрезви́ть	to sober someone up
чёрный	black	чёрни́ть/зачерни́ть	to blacken [<i>literally</i>]
		очерни́ть	to blacken [<i>figuratively</i>]



10.4 Verbal prefixes

10.4.0 Introduction

Attaching a *prefix* to a *verb* serves one of two functions. In the first place it can create the *perfective* partner of an unprefixated *imperfective* without changing the meaning of the verb; examples of this are given in 4.2.3. The second function is to change both the *aspect* and the *meaning*; in the great majority of these cases new pairs of imperfective and perfective verbs with the same prefix are created according to the patterns described and illustrated in 4.2.4. This use of verbal prefixes is an important part of the Russian system of word formation; it corresponds in large measure to the creation of the so-called 'phrasal verbs' in English (such as 'go out', 'take in' or 'put up with') and, as with phrasal verbs in English, some of the distinctions of meaning that result from this process are quite subtle.

The following prefixes are used to create new verbs: **в(о)-**, **вз(о)-/вс-**, **воз(о)-/вос-**, **вы-**, **до-**, **за-**, **из(о)/ис-**, **на-**, **недо-**, **о/об(о)**, **от(о)-**, **пере-**, **пре-**, **под(о)-**, **пред(о)-**, **при-**, **про-**, **раз(о)/рас-**, **с(о)-**, **у-**.

The spelling **(о)** indicates that a *fleeting vowel* (see 2.5.0) appears before some forms of certain verbs.

For more on the distribution of forms in **-з** and **-с**, see 1.5.6.

Some of the above prefixes have either a single or a very limited range of meanings: the prefix **недо-** always conveys the idea of an action carried out to an insufficient degree; the prefix **в(о)-** usually conveys the idea of movement into (if not literally, then figuratively). Other prefixes, such as **за-**, **о/об(о)** or **с(о)-**, have a wide range of meanings that do not necessarily have any obvious link between them; one consequence of this is that it is sometimes possible to find the same verb used with the same prefix in two different meanings. Almost all prefixes, though, have at least one fundamental spatial meaning which is revealed when they are used with *verbs of motion*.

For more on verbs of motion, see 22.1, 22.2.

In many instances there is a match between the prefix and the preposition most widely used in conjunction with the verb in question, as in the following example:

Она́ вошла́ в ко́мнату.

She came into the room.

10.4.1 The prefix **в(о)-**

With the meaning of movement into **в(о)-** is used with *verbs of motion*, but also with a number of other verbs:

входи́ть/войти́	to go in, to come in (on foot)
въезжа́ть/въеха́ть	to drive in, to enter (by vehicle)
вбегáть/вбежа́ть	to run in
вводи́ть/ввести́	to bring in, to introduce
вмеши́ваться/вмеша́ться	to interfere in
впуска́ть/впусти́ть	to let in
вставля́ть/вста́вить	to insert
вступа́ть/вступи́ть	to enter, to join (e.g. a political party)

With the following verb the meaning is understood figuratively:

включать/включить to include, to switch on

10.4.2 The prefixes **ВЗ(О)-/ВС-**, **ВОЗ(О)-/ВОС-**

The basic meaning of **вз(о)-/вс-** is movement upwards:

всходить/взойти to rise (e.g. the sun)
взлетать/взлететь to take off (of an aeroplane)

When it is used with the following verbs, the meaning is more one of agitation:

взбивать/взбить to whip (cream)
взрывать/взорвать to blow something up

The prefix **воз(о)-/вос-** has basically the same range of meanings, but it tends to be used in more figurative contexts:

возбуждать/возбудить to arouse, to incite
возвышать/возвысить to raise (up)
возмущать/возмутить to anger, to outrage
возникать/возникнуть to arise, to spring up, to appear
воспитывать/воспитать to bring up, to educate
восхищаться/восхититься to admire, to be captivated by

With some verbs this prefix can convey the meaning of returning, restoring:

возвращать(ся)/возвратить(ся), вернуть(ся) to return
восстанавливать/восстановить to restore

10.4.3 The prefix **ВЫ-**

The basic meaning of the prefix **вы-** is movement out:

выходить/выйти	to go/come out of, to leave (on foot)
выбегать/выбежать	to run out from
выносить/вынести	to carry/bring out (physically), to endure
выбрасывать/выбросить	to throw out
вынимать/вынуть	to take out
выписывать/выписать	to write out, to subscribe to
выступать/выступить	to appear (in public), to perform, to make a speech

With some verbs this prefix can convey the notion of an action carried out exhaustively:

высказываться/высказаться	to have one's say
высыпаться/выспаться	to have a good sleep, to sleep one's fill

The following useful verbs do not really fit into either of the above categories:

выигрывать/выиграть	to win
выключать/выключить	to switch off

For information on the stress of perfective verbs with the **вы**-prefix, *see* 4.2.4.



10.4.4 The prefix **ДО-**

The basic spatial meaning of the prefix **ДО-**, when it is combined with *verbs of motion*, is movement as far as:

доезжа́ть/дое́хать	to travel as far as
доноси́ться/донести́сь	to carry (of a sound)

In the following verb the meaning is figurative:

доноси́ть/донести́ на (+ acc.)	to denounce someone
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The prefix **ДО-** is combined with a wide variety of verbs to convey the meaning to finish off an action:

дописыва́ть/дописа́ть	to finish writing
достраива́ть/дострои́ть	to finish building
дочитыва́ть/дочита́ть	to finish reading

A closely related meaning, found with a few verbs, is that of topping up:

долива́ть/долить	to top up with (a liquid)
доплачива́ть/доплати́ть	to have to pay a bit extra

There are certain *reflexive* verbs with the prefix **ДО-** that have the meaning of doing the action until the desired result is achieved:

догады́ваться/догада́ться	to guess the right answer
догова́риваться/договори́ться	to come to an agreement
дожда́ться/дождат́ся	to wait until the person arrives
дозва́ниваться/дозвони́ться	to get through (on the telephone)
докапы́ваться/докопа́ться	to dig down until you find what you are looking for (<i>literally and figuratively</i>)

With other reflexive verbs the same prefix can convey the meaning of carrying out an action to the point where there are unpleasant consequences:

допева́ться/допе́ться (до хрипоты́)	to sing (until you are hoarse)
допи́ться (св) (до че́ртиков)	to drink (to the point of seeing little pink elephants (<i>literally</i> , small devils))
доигра́ться (св)	to land oneself in trouble

10.4.5 The prefix **за-**

When used with *verbs of motion* and other verbs indicating displacement, the prefix **за-** often has the meaning of movement behind:

заходи́ть/зайти́	to go behind
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Verbs of motion with the prefix **за-** often convey the meaning of calling in somewhere:

заходи́ть/зайти́	to call in, to drop in
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In a number of expressions the prefix **за-** can convey the idea of movement into; used in this way, this prefix implies the application of a certain amount of energy and a movement that continues far inside the implied or expressed container:

забива́ть/забить го́л	to score a goal
забрасыва́ть/забро́сить шайбу́	to score a goal (in ice-hockey)

засовыва́ть/засу́нуть ру́ки в карман to thrust one's hands into one's pocket

The prefix **за-** can also convey the idea of closing or wrapping up:

завора́чивать/заверну́ть to wrap up (a parcel)
завязыва́ть/завяза́ть to tie up (a parcel)
закрыва́ть/закры́ть to close, to shut
запира́ть/заперё́ть to lock
застёгива́ть/застегну́ть to button up

The prefix **за-** is combined with some reflexive verbs to convey the idea of carrying on an activity for too long or getting carried away with an activity:

завира́ться/завра́ться to get carried away with one's lies
заговари́ваться/заговори́ться to get carried away talking
засижива́ться/засиде́ться to sit too long (e.g. over food and drink or at a meeting)
зачи́тываться/зачита́ться to become (too) absorbed in one's reading

The connotations of the following verb are slightly different:

задума́ваться/зادу́маться to become pensive, to ponder over

Another meaning often conveyed by the prefix **за-** is that of beginning an action. For the most part **за-** is used in this sense to form a *perfective* partner of an unprefixated *imperfective* verb:

говори́ть	to talk	заговори́ть	to start talking
плака́ть	to cry, to weep	заплака́ть	to start crying
ходи́ть	to go (on foot), to walk	заходи́ть	to start walking up and down

There are, however, a few instances of *imperfective/perfective* pairs:

заболева́ть/заболе́ть to fall ill
зажига́ть/заже́чь to ignite, to set fire to
засыпа́ть/засну́ть to fall asleep

In addition to the above, there are a large number of verbs where the prefix **за-** fits

into none of the above categories; in many of these the prefix does not itself have an easily identifiable meaning and in some instances may no longer be perceived as a prefix:

заблудиться (св)	to lose one's way
заблуждаться (нсв)	to be mistaken
забывать/забыть	to forget
заваривать/заварить	to brew (tea)
зависеть (св) от (+ gen.)	to depend on
загорать/загореть	to sunbathe, to acquire a tan
заказывать/заказать	to order (goods or in a restaurant)
заключать/заклучить	to conclude
заменять/заменить	to replace, to substitute
занимать/занять	to occupy, to borrow
заниматься/позаниматься	to study
записывать/записать	to write down, to record
запрещать/запретить	to forbid
заполнять/заполнить	to fill in (a form)
запоминать/запомнить	to memorise, to remember



заставля́ть/заста́вить	to force, to compel
защища́ть/защити́ть	to defend
заявля́ть/заяви́ть	to declare, to state

10.4.6 The prefix **ИЗ(О)/ИС-**

The prefix **из(о)/ис-** is often associated with the general idea of movement outwards, often conceived figuratively:

избегáть/избежáть	to avoid
избира́ть/избра́ть	to elect (to high office)
извлека́ть/извлéчь	to extract, to gain (e.g. benefit)
издава́ть/изда́ть	to publish, to make (a sound)
исключа́ть/исключи́ть	to exclude, to expel, to rule out

With some verbs the prefix **из(о)/ис-** can convey the meaning the exhaustion of resources or covering the whole surface of something; with these meanings **из(о)/ис-** can either form a *perfective* partner of an unprefix *imperfective* or form *imperfective/perfective* pairs:

тра́тить	to spend	истра́тить	to spend up
ходи́ть	to go (on foot), to walk	исходи́ть	to walk the length and breadth of
испи́сывать/исписа́ть			to fill up with <i>or</i> to cover with writing

10.4.7 The prefix **На-**

The prefix **на-** can convey the idea of motion onto; examples with *verbs of motion* are rare, but more frequently encountered instances include:

нажима́ть/нажа́ть (на кно́пку)

to press (a button)

накле́ивать/наклеи́ть (ма́рку на конве́рт)

to stick (a stamp on an envelope)

наступа́ть/наступи́ть на (+ acc.)

to step on, to tread on

When used with some *reflexive* verbs, the prefix **на-** can convey the idea of carrying out an action to the point of satisfaction; some of these verbs occur only in the *perfective*:

наговори́ться (св)	to talk enough
наеда́ться/нае́сться	to eat one's fill
налюбова́ться (св)	to admire to one's heart's content

In the following verb the connotation is slightly different:

напива́ться/напи́ться	to get drunk
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There are some miscellaneous verbs with the prefix **на-**:

набира́ть/набрати́	to pick up (speed), to dial
намека́ть/намекну́ть	to hint
нареза́ть/наре́зать	to cut, to slice (bread or cheese)
настраи́вать/настрои́ть	to tune (a radio or a musical instrument)
находи́ть/найти́	to find

10.4.8 The prefix **недо-**

The prefix **недо-** always conveys the idea of insufficiency:

недооце́нивать/недооце́нить	to underestimate
недоса́ливать/недосо́лить	to undersalt

The prefix **о/об(о)**

When used with *verbs of motion*, the prefix **о/об(о)** conveys the meaning of movement around:

обходи́ть/обойти́	to walk around
облета́ть/облете́ть	to fly around, to orbit

This prefix can also convey the idea of the comprehensiveness or thoroughness of an action:

обходи́ть/обойти́

to go round (e.g. all the shops in search of something)

описыва́ть/описа́ть

to describe

опра́шивать/опроси́ть

to ask a large number, to carry out a survey of opinion

осма́тривать/осмотре́ть

to examine, to inspect (from all angles)

The prefix in the form **о-**, when used with certain *reflexive* verbs, can indicate an accidental mistake:

огова́риваться/оговори́ться	to make a slip of the tongue
описыва́ться/описа́ться	to make a slip of the pen
ослы́шаться (св)	to mishear
ошиба́ться/ошиби́ться	to make a mistake

On the other hand, the prefix in the form **об-** can be used with certain verbs to imply deliberate deception:

обма́нывать/обману́ть	to deceive
обвешива́ть/обвеси́ть	to give short weight to
обсчита́ывать/обсчита́ть	to shortchange

The prefix **о/об(о)** is sometimes used to form *transitive* verbs from *adjectives*:

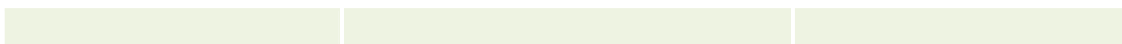
оглуша́ть/оглуши́ть	to deafen
осложня́ть/осложни́ть	to complicate

The reflexive verb **обходи́ться/обойти́сь**, when used with **без(+gen.)**, means ‘to do without’.

10.4.10 The prefix **от(о)-**

The spatial meaning of the prefix **от(о)-** is movement away from:

отходи́ть/отойти́	to move away from
отстава́ть/отстать	to fall behind, to be slow (of a clock or watch)
отступа́ть/отступи́ть	to retreat



The same prefix can also convey the notion of detachment, a concept that can be understood either literally or figuratively:

отвинчи́вать/отвинти́ть	to unscrew
отку́сывать/откуси́ть	to bite off
отпили́вать/отпили́ть	to saw off
отвы́кать/отвы́кнуть	to get unused to
отгова́ривать/отгово́рить	to dissuade
отказы́вать(ся)/отказа́ть(ся)	to refuse
откла́дывать/отложи́ть	to postpone
отменя́ть/отмени́ть	to cancel

The prefix **от(о)-** can also convey the idea of responding:

отвеча́ть/ответи́ть	to answer
отзыва́ться/отозва́ться	to respond, to react
отклика́ться/откликну́ться	to respond (e.g. to a shout or an appeal)

10.4.11 The prefixes **пере-, пре-**

The spatial meaning of the prefix **пере-** is movement across:

переходи́ть/перейти́	to go across (on foot)
переезжа́ть/перее́хать	to travel across, to move house
переплы́вать/переплы́ть	to swim across, to travel across (by boat)
пересека́ть/пересе́чь	to cross (e.g. a frontier)

The prefix **пере-** also has the meaning of dividing, cutting through, sometimes understood figuratively:

перепи́ливать/перепи́лить	to saw through
перере́зать/перере́зать	to cut through
перебива́ть/переби́ть	to interrupt

This prefix can also convey the idea of excess; in this sense it is the opposite of **недо-**:

переоце́нивать/переоце́нить	to over-estimate
перепла́чивать/переплати́ть	to pay too much
перестара́ться (св)	to try too hard, to get carried away

The prefix **пере-** is used to express the idea of redoing an action:

переде́лывать/переде́лать	to redo
переду́мывать/переду́мать	to change one's mind
перезвани́вать/перезвони́ть	to phone back
перепи́сывать/перепи́сать	to rewrite

This prefix can sometimes convey the idea of outdoing:

перекри́кивать/перекрича́ть	to out-shout
перехитри́ть (св)	to outwit

With some verbs that are both *reflexive* and *imperfective* only, the prefix **пере-** indicates a repeated action that goes backwards and forwards between two participants:

перебра́сываться (нсв)	to throw backwards and forwards
перепи́сываться (нсв)	to exchange letters, to correspond

With certain verbs the prefix **пере-** conveys the idea of extending the action to all possible objects:

перечислять/перечислить to enumerate, to list in full

The meanings of the prefix **пре-** overlap with those of **пере-**; in particular, it can convey the ideas of cutting through and exceeding, often understood figuratively:

преграждать/преградить (путь) to bar (the way)

прекращать/прекратить to cease

превышать/превысить to exceed

10.4.12 The prefix **под(о)-**

The first spatial meaning of the prefix **под(о)-** is movement or position under:

подкладывать/подложить to put under (in a horizontal position)

подставлять/подставить to put under (in a vertical position)

подписывать/подписать to sign, to put one's name to

подчёркивать/подчеркнуть to underline

With many verbs of motion and some other verbs, **под(о)-** conveys the meaning of movement up to, approaching:

подходить/подойти to approach, to go up to

подвозить/подвезти to give someone a lift

пододвигать/пододвинуть to bring something nearer

A third spatial meaning conveyed by this prefix is movement upwards or from below; this can be either literal or figurative:

подбрасывать/подбросить to throw up in the air

поддерживать/поддержать to support

поднимать/поднять to raise

подниматься/подняться to rise, to go up(wards)

The prefix **под(о)-** can convey the notion of adding a small quantity:

подбавля́ть/подбави́ть	to add (a small amount)
подогрева́ть/подогре́ть	to warm something up
подсалива́ть/подсоли́ть	to add a little salt

A further meaning of this prefix is that of doing something furtively or illegally:

подде́лывать/подде́лать	to forge (banknotes or documents)
поджигáть/поджечь	to burn down
подкупа́ть/подкупить	to bribe, to suborn
подсказыва́ть/подсказа́ть	to prompt, to whisper the answer
подслу́шивать/подслу́шать	to eavesdrop, to 'bug'

10.4.13 The prefix **пред(о)-**

The prefix **пред(о)-** normally has the meaning of anticipation:

предви́деть (нсв)	to predict
предполага́ть/предположи́ть	to assume, to presuppose
предупрежда́ть/предупреди́ть	to warn

However:

предлагать/предложить	to offer, to propose
представлять/представить	to present, to introduce (people)

10.4.14 The prefix **при-**

When used with verbs of motion and with certain other verbs, the prefix **при-** conveys the idea of arrival or (less often) approaching:

приходить/прийти	to come, to arrive (on foot)
приезжать/приехать	to come, to arrive (by vehicle)
приносить/принести	to bring (on foot)
приземляться/ приземлиться	to land
приближаться/ приблизиться	to approach
призывать/призвать	to summon, to call up (for military service)
привлекать/привлечь	to attract

The same prefix can convey the idea of attaching one thing to another (sometimes figuratively):

привязывать/привязать	to tie (something to something else)
присоединять/присоединить	to join, to unite
пришивать/пришить	to sew on (e.g. a button)
приписывать/приписать	to ascribe

The prefix **при-** can also convey the meaning of adding:

прибавлять/прибавить	to add
приписывать/приписать	to add (something to a written text)
пристраивать/пристроить	to build on (horizontally)

With certain verbs this prefix can convey the notion of doing something either tentatively or only partially or for a short time:

приболéть (св)	to be off-colour, to feel unwell
привстава́ть/привста́ть	to half-rise (e.g. from a sitting position)
прилечь (св)	to lie down (for a short time)
приостанавливать/ приостанови́ть	to stop (something for a time), to suspend
приса́живаться/присе́сть	to sit down (for a short time), to perch on the edge of one's seat

With reflexive verbs formed from verbs indicating watching or listening, the prefix **при-**suggests attentiveness; the perfective verbs often contain the additional meaning of acting in response to the observations made:

прислу́шиваться/прислу́шаться к (+ dat.)

to listen attentively, to pay heed to

присма́триваться/присмотрéться к (+ dat.)

to watch attentively, to size someone up



10.4.15 The prefix **про-**

The prefix **про-** has two spatial meanings. With *verbs of motion* and a number of other verbs it can indicate movement through:

проходи́ть/пройти́	to go through (on foot)
прони́кать/проникну́ть	to penetrate
пропу́скать/пропу́стить	to let through
протека́ть/протече́ь	to leak through

The other meaning, found only with verbs of motion, is movement past:

проходи́ть/пройти́	to go past (on foot)
прое́зжать/прое́хать	to drive past

The prefix **про-** also has the meaning of omission, often through inattentiveness:

пробалтыва́ться/ проболта́ться	to let the cat out of the bag, to spill the beans
прогу́ливать/прогуля́ть	to miss (classes), to be absent from work
прое́зжать/прое́хать (свою́ остано́вку)	to miss (one's stop)
прозева́ть (св) (свою́ о́чередь)	to miss (one's turn through inattentiveness)
пропу́скать/пропу́стить	to omit

The prefix **про-** can also convey the idea of failure:

прои́грывать/прои́грать	to lose (a game)
пропи́вать/пропи́ть (все де́ньги)	to drink away (all one's money)

When used with a *direct object* indicating time or distance, verbs with the prefix **про-** emphasise either the time an action was continued for or the distance covered during an action:

пробега́ть/пробежа́ть (двэ́сти ме́тров)	to cover (200 metres, running)
прожи́вать/прожи́ть (где-то со́рок ле́т)	to live (somewhere for 40 years)

There are some useful verbs with the prefix **про-** that do not fit into any of the above categories:

проводить/провести	to conduct (e.g. a meeting or an experiment)
продавать/продать	to sell
просыпаться/проснуться	to wake up

10.4.16 The prefix **раз(о)/рас-**

The prefix **раз(о)/рас-** can convey the meaning of ‘dispersal’, ‘distribution’:

расходиться/разойтись	to disperse (intransitive)
разгонять/разогнать	to disperse (transitive)
рассступаться/рассступиться	to part, to make way
раздавать/раздать	to give out, to distribute
распределять/распределить	to distribute, to allocate

The same prefix can also convey the idea of dividing up (into many pieces):

разбива́ть/разби́ть	to break into pieces, to smash
разводи́ться/развести́сь	to get divorced
разделя́ть/разделить	to divide up
разреза́ть/разре́зать	to cut up, to slice up (into many pieces)

The prefix **раз(о)/рас-** can be used to indicate the idea of reversing an action; this applies in particular to two groups of verbs, those connected with tying or closing and those referring to certain mental processes:

развяза́ывать/развяза́ть	to untie
раскупо́ривать/раску́порить	to uncork, to open (a bottle)
рассте́гивать/рассте́гнуть	to unbutton
разду́мать (св)	to decide not to do something, to change one's mind
разлюби́ть (св)	to stop loving
разочаро́вывать/разочарова́ть	to disenchant, to disappoint
расхоте́ть (св)	to stop wanting
разору́жать/разору́жить	to disarm [transitive]

With some verbs the prefix **раз(о)/рас-** suggests an action carried out thoroughly:

разраба́тывать/разрабо́тать	to work out, to elaborate, to develop
расспра́шивать/расспроси́ть	to question, to ask all about
рассматрива́ть/рассмотре́ть	to examine (thoroughly)

With a number of *reflexive* verbs the prefix **раз(о)/рас-** indicates an action that gradually gains in intensity or which is carried out with some vigour; these verbs are *perfective* only:

разгово́рится	to start talking freely <i>or</i> fluently
расплака́ться	to burst out crying
рассмея́ться	to burst out laughing
расхохота́ться	to burst out into uproarious laughter

10.4.17 The prefix **с(о)-**

With *verbs of motion* and with some other verbs, the prefix **с(о)-** has the meaning of movement downwards:

сходи́ть/сойти́	to come down (on foot)
сноси́ть/снести́	to bring down, to demolish
спры́гивать/спры́гнуть	to jump down
спуска́ться/спуститься́	to come down, to descend

With a large number of verbs the same prefix has the meaning of ‘removal’ (especially from a surface):

сбрасыва́ть/сбро́сить	to shed, to throw off
сбрива́ть/сбри́ть	to shave off
сверга́ть/свергну́ть	to overthrow
смыва́ть/смы́ть	to wash off
снима́ть/сня́ть	to take off, to remove
стира́ть/стереть	to rub off, to erase

With some *reflexive verbs of motion* and with a number of other verbs, the prefix **с(о)**-conveys the meaning of congregating or uniting:

сходиться/сойтись	to congregate, to come together
собирать/собрать	to collect
связывать/связать	to tie together
соединять/соединить	to unite

With a small number of verbs the prefix **с(о)**- conveys the idea of copying:

снимать/снять	to photograph, to film
списывать/списать	to copy

With some reflexive verbs the prefix **с(о)**- can suggest a mutual action (one that is not usually repeated):

сдружиться (св)	to become friends
созваниваться/созвониться	to have a conversation on the telephone

With some verbs that are used only in the *imperfective* the prefix **с(о)**- can indicate accompanying or carrying out an action together; in this meaning the prefix always appears in the form **со-**:

сопровождать (нсв)	to accompany (e.g. on a journey)
сочувствовать (нсв)	to sympathise

There are some useful verbs that do not fit clearly into any of the above categories:

сбываться/сбыться	to come true
сдавать/сдать	to give up, to hand in, to take (imperfective)/ to pass (perfective), an examination
сдаваться/сдаться	to give in, to surrender
сдерживать/сдержать	to restrain
скрывать/скрыть	to hide
содержать (нсв)	to contain, to maintain, to keep

10.4.18 The prefix **у-**

When used with verbs of motion and with some other verbs, the prefix **у-** has the

meaning of going away or removal:

уходи́ть/уйти́	to go away (on foot)
уезжа́ть/уехать	to go away (by transport)
уноси́ть/унести́	to take away, to carry away
укло́няться/укло́ниться	to evade
убира́ть/убра́ть	to clear away, to tidy up
удаля́ть/удалить	to remove

The same prefix is used to form *transitive* verbs from *adjectives* and (less often) *nouns*:

улучша́ть/улучши́ть	to improve
упроща́ть/упрости́ть	to simplify
ухудша́ть/ухудши́ть	to make worse
удочеря́ть/удочери́ть	to adopt (a daughter)
усыновля́ть/усынови́ть	to adopt (a son)



The prefix **у-** can convey the meaning of an action carried out in a way that makes things convenient or comfortable:

уса́живаться/усе́ться	to sit comfortably
уста́навливать/устано́вить	to establish, to set up, to install
устро́ивать/устро́ить	to organise, to arrange

The prefix **у-** can imply the accomplishment of an action only after some difficulty:

убежда́ть/убеди́ть	to convince
угово́ривать/угово́рить	to persuade

11 Agreement

11.0 Introduction

It is an important principle of Russian grammar that every ending, whether on a noun, an adjective, a pronoun, a numeral or a verb is there for a reason, and that these endings convey information that is often vital and always helpful in enabling the listener or the reader to understand what is said or written. There are two factors that between them determine the ending of each element within a sentence: the first is *government*, which basically concerns the rules for selecting which case to use. The basic principles relating to the use of the cases were given in **Chapter 3**; information concerning the use of cases after prepositions is given in **9.2**, and more detailed information relating to specific functions is given in **Part B**.

The second factor is *agreement*: the endings of certain words are determined by the word either that they qualify or to which they refer. There are two contexts where agreement is particularly important: the first is within the *noun phrase* (that is, two or more of *pronoun+numeral+adjective+noun*); the second is *agreement* between the *grammatical subject* of a sentence and the *verb*.

11.1 Agreement within the noun phrase

11.1.1 The general rule

The general rule for *agreement* within the *noun phrase* is simply that *pronouns*, *adjectives* and the numeral **один** ‘one’ always agree with the noun they qualify in number, gender and case:

Вчера вéчером я познако́милась с одной́ о́чень интере́сной писательницей́.

Last night I met a certain (*literally*, one) very interesting (female) writer.

Here the noun **писа́тельница** is *feminine*, *singular* and in the *instrumental case* after the preposition **с** (meaning ‘with’). Consequently, both the numeral **один** and the adjective **интере́сный** have the *singular feminine instrumental* ending:

**Обычно в это время я рассылаю всем своим старым друзьям
новогодние поздравления.**

Usually at this time (of year) I send out New Year greetings to all my old friends.



Here the noun **друг** is *masculine, plural* and in the *dative case* as the *indirect object* of the verb **рассылать**. Consequently, the pronouns **весь** and **свой** and the adjective **старый** all have the *plural dative ending* (remember that pronouns and adjectives do not distinguish gender in the plural).

An adjective that simultaneously qualifies two singular nouns will tend to agree with the nearer:

В университете я изучаю русский язык и литературу.

At university I'm studying Russian language and literature.

The only circumstances when adjectives do not agree in number, gender and case with the nouns they qualify is after the numerals **два, три, четыре** in the *nominative* or the *accusative case*. Here it will be recalled that a noun used after these numeral is in the *genitive singular*. If, however, the noun is qualified by an *adjective*, the adjective is in the *genitive plural*. With *feminine* nouns, the adjective can be in either the *genitive plural* or the *nominative plural*.

For examples and more detailed information, *see 8.2.2.*

11.1.2 Apposition

A *noun* or *noun phrase* that is in *apposition* is one that is placed adjacent to a noun or pronoun in order to expand on or qualify its meaning. Nouns or noun phrases in apposition must be in the same case as the nouns or pronouns to which they refer:

Наша цель – познакомить вас с Санкт-Петербургом, самым красивым городом России.

Our aim is to familiarise you with St Petersburg, Russia's most beautiful city.

Here the phrase **самым красивым городом** is in apposition to **с Санкт-Петербургом** and must therefore be in the same case, here the *instrumental*.

Sometimes words or phrases in apposition are introduced by **как** 'as', 'in the capacity of':

**Позвольте *мне*, как *са́мому* ста́рому челове́ку в э́той компа́нии,
предложи́ть тост за здоро́вье всех прису́тствующих.**

Allow me, as the oldest person in this company, to propose a toast to the health of everyone present.

Я восхища́юсь Маяко́вским как поэ́том.

I admire Maiakovskii as a poet [though not necessarily as a playwright].

NOTE When **как** means ‘such as’, ‘for example’, it is followed by the *nominative* case:

Я восхища́юсь таки́ми поэ́тами, как Пу́шкин и Маяко́вский.

I admire poets such as Pushkin and Maiakovskii.

11.1.3 Names of works of literature, commercial enterprises, railway stations and geographical locations

An exception to the rule about apposition occurs with names of *works of literature*, *commercial enterprises* and *railway stations*: these are normally in the *nominative* case, provided that they are preceded by a *defining term*, which takes on the ending required

by the grammatical context; examples of such defining terms include **роман** 'novel', **ОАО (открытое акционерное общество)** 'PLC', **станция** 'station'. In the written language the defining term may sometimes take the form of an abbreviation, while the name itself will be placed in inverted commas:

Это, кажется, цитата из романа «Война и мир».

I think this is a quotation from the novel *War and Peace*.

В прошлом году наш городской театр поставил чеховскую пьесу «Три сестры».

Last year our local theatre put on Chekhov's play *Three Sisters*.

Годовое общее собрание акционеров ОАО «Газпром» состоялось 29 июня 2007 года.

The Annual General Meeting of the shareholders of Gazprom PLC took place on 29 June 2007.

Я обычно покупаю продукты в магазине «Седьмой континент».

I usually do my food shopping in (the shop) *Sed'moi kontinent* [*The Seventh Continent*].

Поезд следует до станции «Комсомольская».

This train goes as far as Komsomol'skaia station.

The same principle applies to *names of geographical locations*, except that declension tends to occur when the place is well known and the name is grammatically simple:

Я отправился в г. Белая Калитва.

I set off for (the town of) Belaia Kalitva.

But

Наш по́езд при́был на ко́нечную ста́нцию в г. Москве́.

Our train has arrived at our terminus in Moscow.

NOTES

(i) In these examples the preposition **в** is followed by the accusative case; the abbreviation **г.** stands for **го́род** 'town', 'city'.

(ii) With names of towns and some other geographical terms, English uses a construction with 'of'; in Russian, however, the two nouns are placed in apposition:

го́род Бе́лая Кали́тва the town of Belaia Kalitva

Names belonging to all these categories are normally declined if the defining term is *not* present:

Вы когда-нибу́дь чита́ли «Войну́ и мир»?

Have you ever read *War and Peace*?

Какие́ права́ есть у акционе́ров «Газпро́ма»?

What rights do the shareholders of Gazprom have?

Наш по́езд сле́дует то́лько до «Комсомо́льской».

Our train is only going as far as Komsomol'skaia.

Ци́фры гово́рят, что в те́чение го́да ка́ждый четве́ртый жи́тель Бе́лой Кали́твы обра́щался к услу́гам ско́рой по́мощи.

Figures show that in the course of a year a quarter of the inhabitants of Belaia Kalitva contacted the emergency medical services.

11.2 Agreement between subject and verb

11.2.1 General principles

When a *finite verb* is in the *present* or the *future* tense, agreement with the subject in the nominative case is by *person* and *number*:

Почему́ ты всегда́ встаёшь так рано́?

Why do you always get up so early?

Here the grammatical subject is the *second person singular pronoun ты* and consequently, the verb has the ending for the *second person singular, present tense*.

Мои́ роди́тели придут́ попóзже.

My parents will come a bit later.

Here the grammatical subject is the plural noun **родители́**; this is a third person plural subject and consequently, the verb has the ending for the *third person plural, future tense*.

When a *finite verb* is in the *past* tense, agreement with the subject in the nominative case is by *number* and *gender*:

Я вы́шла за́муж в 1995 г.

I got married in 1995.

Here the subject is *first person singular* and *feminine* (in the first and second person singular the grammatical gender is determined by the sex of the speaker or the addressee respectively; here the speaker can be assumed to be a woman since the phrase **вы́йти за́муж** is used only of a woman getting married). Consequently, the verb has the *feminine singular past tense* ending.

For more on the different verbs corresponding to English ‘to get married’, see **12.7**.

The second person pronoun **вы** is always used with a plural verb, even when it is used in formal address to one person:

А́нна Ива́новна, пра́вда, что вы одна́жды ви́дели Ста́лина?

Anna Ivanovna, is it true that you once saw Stalin?

For more on formal and informal ways of addressing people, *see* **13.1** and **13.4**.

The pronoun **кто**, whether used as an interrogative or as a relative pronoun, is always used with a verb in the (*masculine*) *singular* form, even when reference is clearly to more than one person or to a woman:

Лучше довер́ить э́то де́ло тем, кто́ уже накопи́л како́й-то о́пыт в э́той сфе́ре.

It's best to entrust this matter to those who have already gained some experience in this area.

Для тех, кто́ роди́л пе́рвый раз, проводи́лись специа́льные ле́кции.

Special lectures were available for those who were about to give birth for the first time.

11.2.2 Sentences without a grammatical subject

Russian has a large number of *impersonal* constructions, that is, constructions where a *grammatical subject* in the *nominative* case is impossible. In such constructions there is no subject for the verb to agree with, and accordingly it takes on the 'default' form, which is the *third person singular (neuter singular in the past tense)*.

In some of these constructions it is the verb itself that is impersonal:

Бы́ло четы́ре часа́, и уже́ темне́ло.

It was four o'clock and already getting dark.

Мне уда́лось вы́яснить, каки́е докуме́нты нужны́.

I've managed to find out what documents we need.

Хоте́лось бы́ знать побольше́ о его́ пла́нах.

One would like to know a bit more about his plans.

In other constructions the place of the verb is taken by an *impersonal predicate form*. These can either take the form of an adverb, such as **хо́лодно, интере́сно** or **хорошо́**, or they can be the *modal predicate forms* **мо́жно** 'one may', 'it is possible'; **нелзя́** 'it is forbidden', 'it is impossible'; **на́до** 'one must'. These forms themselves never change, but in tenses other than the *present*, they are used with the appropriate form of the verb **бы́ть**:

Вчера́ бы́ло о́чень хо́лодно.

It was very cold yesterday.

Интересно́ бы́ло бы́ знать его́ то́чку зре́ния по э́тому вопро́су.

It would be interesting to know his opinion on this question.

Хорошо́ бы́ло бы́ уе́хать куда́-нибудь на юг на па́ру неде́ль.

It would be nice to go off to somewhere in the south for a couple of weeks.

Ремóнт кварти́ры уже́ *нельзя́* *бы́ло* откла́дывать на потóм.

The refurbishment of the flat could be put off no longer.

***Надо́* *бы́ло* сказа́ть об э́том за́рание.**

You should have told us about this in advance.

For more on adverbs, *see* **9.1**.

For more on the use of modal predicate forms, *see* **Chapter 18**.

11.2.3 Difficult cases: number

Two *singular* subjects joined by **и** or by **с** (+ instr.) will normally be used with a verb in the *plural*:

Росси́я и Украи́на подписа́ли но́вый догово́р о поста́вке га́за.

Russia and Ukraine have signed a new agreement on gas deliveries.

Брат с жено́й провели́ Но́вый год в А́встрии.

My brother and his wife spent New Year in Austria.

This does not apply, however, when a phrase introduced by **с** (+ instr.) is not part of the subject:

Мой брат уе́хал в Аме́рику с подру́гой.

My brother went off to America with a girlfriend.



In English, some collective nouns, such as ‘family’ or ‘government’ can be used with either a singular or a plural verb: ‘the government has decided’ *or* ‘the government have decided’. In Russian, this possibility does not exist: collective nouns are grammatically *singular* and must be used with a *singular* verb:

Правительство решило, что приоритетной задачей в будущем году будет борьба с инфляцией.

The government has decided that its main priority next year will be the battle against inflation.

Наша семья обычно встречает Новый год дома.

Our family usually see(s) in the New Year at home.

Наконец-то! В первый раз в этом сезоне наша команда одержала победу.

At last! For the first time this season our team has/have managed to win a game.

The one exception to this is the noun **большинство** ‘majority’, which, when used with a noun in the *genitive plural*, is frequently used with a plural verb:

Подавляющее большинство других секторов экономики будут весьма привлекательными для инвестиций.

The overwhelming majority of the other sectors of the economy will be extremely attractive for investing in.

11.2.4 Difficult cases: numerals and quantity words

When the subject of a sentence consists of or contains a *numeral* or another quantity word, such as **много, мало or несколько**, the verb can be in either the (*neuter*) *singular* or the *plural*. In many instances it is difficult to give hard-and-fast rules, but factors favouring the *plural* are: (i) placing the subject *before* the verb; (ii) an *animate* subject; (iii) the presence of a verb that indicates *activity* on the part of the subject. Conversely, factors favouring the use of the *singular* are: (i) placing the subject *after* the verb; (ii) an *inanimate* subject; (iii) the presence of a verb that does *not* indicate *activity* on the part of the subject. The singular is also more likely to be used when the subject contains a preposition such as **около**.

Examples with *plural* agreement:

133 челове́ка в яку́тском посёлке Арты́к две неде́ли остаю́тся без тепла́.

133 people in the Yakut settlement of Artyk have been left without heating for two weeks.

Ране́ния получи́ли не́сколько челове́к, среди́ них дво́е военнослу́жащих из континге́нта ООН.

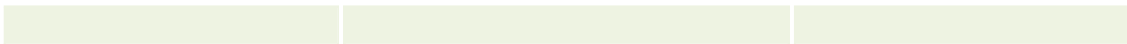
Several people were wounded, including two soldiers serving in the UN contingent.

NOTE Here the plural is used, even though not all three factors mentioned above are present.

Examples with *singular* agreement:

Здесь бу́дет постро́ено де́сять ты́сяч но́вых домо́в.

Ten thousand new houses are to be built here.



В этом районе проживает около семи тысяч человек.

About seven thousand people live in this district.

The (*neuter*) *singular* is always used when the subject is an expression relating to time or to someone's age:

Было четыре часа, и уже темнело.

It was four o'clock and already getting dark.

В январе этого года ему исполнилось сорок лет.

In January of this year he turned forty.

Where the subject consists of or contains a numeral form that is unambiguously in the *nominative plural* (for example, **ты́сячи** 'thousands' or **мно́гие** 'many (people)'), the verb will always be in the *plural*:

Мно́гие предпочитают об этом не думать.

Many people prefer not to think about that.

11.2.5 Difficult cases: gender

In general, gender agreement between subject and verb does not cause problems. In the vast majority of instances there is an automatic match between the grammatical gender of any noun that is the subject of a sentence and the gender of a verb in the past tense. The only circumstance where this does not always apply is when a *masculine* noun is used to refer to a woman. Most masculine nouns used in this way are terms indicating a profession, such as **врач** 'doctor' or **профессор** 'professor', for which there are no feminine equivalents. When this occurs, various patterns of agreement are possible, but the one that occurs most frequently and is most widely recommended is for any adjective used *attributively* with the noun to be *masculine*, but for any past tense verb to be in the *feminine* form:


Наш но́вый врач рекомендо́вала нам побольше занима́ться спо́ртом.

Our new (woman) doctor has recommended us to do more sport.

For more on masculine nouns indicating occupations and the absence of feminine equivalents, *see* **12.6.2**.

For more on attributive adjectives, *see* **6.0**.





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Part B
Functions



12 Establishing identity

12.0 Introduction

The principal document that confirms the identity of a Russian citizen is known, rather confusingly, as a **пáспорт** ‘internal passport’, ‘identity document’. Russians who travel abroad will also have a **заграничный пáспорт** or **загранпáспорт** ‘passport’. Many Russians will have an additional identity document, which may be issued by an employer or by some official body, and which is known as an **удостоверéние** ‘identity document’. Students have a **студéнский билет** ‘student card’. As Bulgakov wrote in his novel «Мáстер и Мaргарита»:

Нет докумéнта, нет и челове́ка.

If there’s no document, then there’s no person either.

12.1 Russian names

12.1.0 Introduction

Those who read Russian novels, especially in translation, are sometimes heard to complain about the apparent complexity of Russian names. It is true that the variety of names by which any individual Russian can be addressed is slightly larger than would be the case in English-speaking countries, but the complexity is more apparent than real: all Russian names follow a standard pattern and the range of possibilities is determined by a few specific rules of grammar and etiquette.

In this section we discuss the formation of Russian names. How these forms are used in addressing people is dealt with in **13.4**.

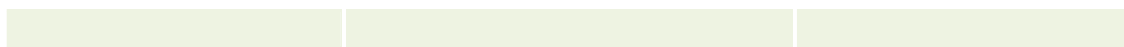
All Russians have *three* names: a *forename* (**и́мя**), a *patronymic* (**о́тчество**) and a *surname* (**фа́милия**). The forename is bestowed individually, the patronymic is normally derived from the name of the holder’s father, and the surname, as elsewhere, is passed down through the family. The names are usually given in the order: **и́мя – о́тчество – фа́милия**, but in some formal and official contexts the order can be changed to **фа́милия – и́мя – о́тчество**. The following are examples of Russian names in the order **и́мя – о́тчество – фа́милия**:

Андре́й Па́влович Ивано́в

Лев Никола́евич Толсто́й

Светла́на Па́вловна Ивано́ва

Со́фья Андре́евна Толста́я



NOTE In written texts of all types, Russian names often appear in the form of two initials followed by the surname, for example, **Л.Н. Толстой, С.П. Иванова.** When these are read out, the normal convention is to say the name in full; if the forename and patronymic are not known, just the surname should be read out.

12.1.1 Russian forenames

Most (though not all) Russian forenames come in several different versions, of which *two* are particularly important.

The first of these is the *full* or *formal version*: this is the version given on birth certificates and in passports or other identity documents.

The second is the *familiar* or *informal* version that is used in a wide range of social contexts, for example, between friends, siblings and in addressing children. Although the familiar version is derived from the full version, the link between them is in some cases not immediately transparent.

NOTE Although the relationship between the full and the familiar versions can in some respects be compared to the relationship between English ‘Robert’ and ‘Bob’, there is an important difference: in English, the decision to use a familiar version is usually a matter of personal preference; in Russian there are circumstances where the use of the familiar version is more or less obligatory. These are discussed in **13.4.1.**

The following tables give the full and familiar versions of the principal Russian forenames:

Male forenames

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Familiar version</i>
Алекса́ндр	Са́ша, Шу́ра, Са́ня
Алексе́й	Але́ша, Ле́ша
Анато́лий	То́ля
Бори́с	Бо́ря
Валенти́н	Ва́ля
Васи́лий	Ва́ся
Ви́ктор	Ви́тя
Влади́мир	Воло́дя, Во́ва
Генна́дий	Ге́на
Григо́рий	Гри́ша
Дми́трий	Дима, Ми́тя
Евге́ний	Же́ня
Ива́н	Ва́ня
Константи́н	Ко́стя
Михаи́л	Ми́ша
Никола́й	Ко́ля
Паве́л	Па́ша
Пе́тр	Пе́тя
Серге́й	Серё́жа
Ю́рий	Ю́ра



Female forenames

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Familiar version</i>
Алекса́ндра	Са́ша, Шу́ра
Анаста́сия	На́стя
А́нна	А́ня
Вале́нтина	Ва́ля
Га́лина	Га́ля
Да́рья	Да́ша
Евге́ния	Же́ня
Екатери́на	Ка́тя
Еле́на	Ле́на
Лари́са	Ла́ра
Любо́вь	Люба
Людми́ла	Люда
Ма́рия	Ма́ша
Наде́жда	На́дя
Ната́лья	Ната́ша
О́льга	О́ля
Светла́на	Све́та
Со́фия	Со́ня
Татья́на	Та́ня

NOTE Some familiar names can be formed both from a male and a female name—for example, Ва́ля (from Вале́нтин and Вале́нтина), Же́ня (from Евге́ний and Са́ша), Евге́ния and Шу́ра (from Алекса́ндр and Алекса́ндра).

Many names tend not to have separate familiar forms; these include the following:

Male names: **Андре́й, Дени́с, И́горь, Макси́м, Оле́г**

Female names: **А́лла, Окса́на, Тама́ра**

Additional expressive versions of forenames can be formed from the familiar version using the diminutive suffixes described in **10.1.2** and **10.1.3**. These can be illustrated by the following:

Во́ва – Во́вочка – Во́вик – Во́вчик

А́ня – А́нечка – А́ннушка – А́нюта – Нью́ша – Нью́ра

Although it is useful to be able to recognise these forms, their use carries with it

significant connotations and nuances of attitude. Learners are therefore advised that they should be very sure of their ground before attempting to use them.

For more on the use of these forms, *see* **16.1.4**.

In general the full, familiar and expressive versions of Russian forenames all decline predictably according the patterns given in **Chapter 2**. The following specific points may be noted, however: the name **Па́вел** has a fleeting vowel, **Любо́вь**, when used as a forename, has no fleeting vowel.

For more on the fleeting vowel, *see* **2.5**.



12.1.2 Patronymics

The *patronymic* is derived from the forename of the bearer's father, using different suffixes for the male and female versions. The patronymic is always derived from the full version of the forename.

Patronymics are formed as follows:

1 If the forename ends in a consonant, the male version is formed by adding **-ович** and the female version by adding **-овна**:

Ива́н	Ива́нович	Ива́новна
Пе́тр	Петро́вич	Петро́вна
Па́вел	Па́влович	Па́вловна

NOTE If the forename contains a *fleeting vowel*, this is removed before forming the patronymic.

2 If the forename ends in **-ей**, the final letter is removed and **-евич** is added to form the *male* version and **-евна** to form the female version:

Алексе́й	Алексе́евич	Алексе́евна
Серге́й	Серге́евич	Серге́евна

3 If the forename ends in **-ий**, the final two letters are removed and **-ьевич** is added to form the male version and **-ьевна** to form the female version:

Анато́лий	Анато́льевич	Анато́льевна
Ю́рий	Ю́рьевич	Ю́рьевна

4 If the forename ends in **-ь**, the final letter is removed and **-евич** is added to form the *male* version and **-евна** to form the female version:

И́горь	И́горевич	И́горевна
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5 If the forename ends in **-а** or **-я**, the male version is formed by removing the last letter and adding **-ич**; the female version is formed by removing the last letter and adding **-ична** (if the ending is stressed) or **-ична** (if the ending is unstressed):

Кузьма́	Кузьми́ч	Кузьми́нича
Ники́та	Ники́тич	Ники́тича
Илья́	Ильи́ч	Ильи́нича

In all but the most formal levels of spoken language, patronymics are shortened in pronunciation:

Миха́йлович	Миха́лыч	Миха́лна
Никола́евич	Никола́ич	Никола́вна
Серге́евич	Серге́ич	Серге́вна
Алекса́ндрович	Алекса́ндрыч (or Алекса́ныч or Са́ныч)	Алекса́нна
Па́влович	Па́лыч	Па́лна



In informal speech some combinations of name and patronymic can be reduced even further:

Алекса́ндр Алекса́ндрович	Сан Са́ныч
Па́вел Па́влович	Пал Па́лыч

For more information on the use of the patronymic in addressing people, see 13.4.2 and 13.4.3.

The following points may be noted here:

- 1 The patronymic may be combined only with the full form of the forename.
- 2 Because all citizens of Russia are required to have a patronymic, these can be formed, where necessary, from non-Russian names:

Альфре́д Рейнго́льдович Ко́х
Серге́й Ку́жуге́тович Шо́йгу
Ша́миль Вя́лиу́ллович Ха́йров
Ири́на Му́цүевна Ха́кама́да

- 3 Although it is normal practice to form the patronymic automatically from the forename of the bearer's father, there is no actual legal requirement to do so, and in appropriate circumstances (for example, when someone is adopted) a patronymic may be bestowed or even changed.

12.1.3 Russian surnames

Most Russian *surnames* belong to one or other of the following patterns:

- 1 Surnames ending in **-ов(а)/-ев(а)/-ёв(а)** or **-ин(а)/-ын(а)**: this is the most frequently encountered pattern. Surnames following this pattern have *masculine*, *feminine* and *plural* forms:


<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Бурми́стров	Бурми́строва	Бурми́стровы
Кузнецо́в	Кузнецо́ва	Кузнецо́вы
Серге́ев	Серге́ева	Серге́евы
Миши́н	Миши́на	Миши́ны
Пти́цын	Пти́цына	Пти́цыны

The declension of these surnames is given in **2.12.1**.

2 Surnames that take the form of adjectives. These too have separate *masculine*, *feminine* and *plural* forms:

<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Бе́лый	Бе́лая	Бе́лые
Петро́вский	Петро́вская	Петро́вские
Садовни́чий	Садовни́чая	Садовни́чие
Толсто́й	Толста́я	Толсто́ые

For more on these surnames, *see* **6.4.2**.



3 Surnames (other than those following patterns (1) and (2)) ending in a consonant, in **-ий** or in **-ь**. The *masculine* and *feminine* forms are identical in the *nominative*, but while the masculine forms decline according to the patterns given in 2.6, the feminine forms are indeclinable; the plural forms tend to be avoided:

Абрамо́вич	Швец
Борисе́вич	Ковту́н
Шевчу́к	Воро́бей
Третья́к	Гого́ль

NOTE It is important to distinguish surnames ending in **-ович** or **-евич** from male patronymics that may be similar in appearance. The surnames differ from the patronymics in two ways: (i) the stress in the nominative is always on the second last syllable; (ii) in the nominative, the feminine is identical to the masculine.

For more on the declension of these surnames, *see* 2.12.2 and 2.13.1.

4 Surnames ending in **-а** or **-я**. These normally decline following the patterns described in 2.9. The plural forms are not used:

Гли́нка
Кучма́

5 Surnames ending in **-о** (including Ukrainian surnames ending in **-ко**, **-енко**), These are *indeclinable*:

Жива́го
Стижко́
Шевче́нко

For more on indeclinable surnames, *see* 2.13.1.

NOTE On getting married, Russian women may either keep their maiden name or adopt their husband's surname. The practice of joining the two names with a hyphen is rare. The Russian for 'maiden name' is *девичья фамилия*.

12.2 Foreign names

In general, Russians do not ‘russify’ foreign names. Instead, the preferred option is to transliterate or to transcribe the name according to the principles given in **1.6.5** and **1.6.6**. If the result fits into one of the declension patterns described in **Chapter 2**, the name will be declined accordingly; if not, it will be *indeclinable*. This principle applies to both *forenames* and *surnames*:

John Dunn Джон Данн

Both parts can be declined according to the pattern given in **2.6.1**:

Я разговáривал с Джо́ном Да́нном.

I was talking to John Dunn.

Marie Dunn Мари́ Данн

Both parts are *indeclinable*, following the rules given in **2.13.1**:

Я разговáривал с Мари́ Дани.

I was talking to Marie Dunn.

Anna Smith **А́нна Смит**

The forename can be declined according to the pattern given in **2.7.1**; the surname is indeclinable following the rules given in **2.13.1**:

Я разговáривал с А́нной Смит.

I was talking to Anna Smith.

It may be useful to note the following points about foreign names:

- 1 It is not customary to create informal or expressive versions of foreign forenames.
- 2 Although some choose to adopt one, presumably from a desire to appear more 'Russian', in general, foreigners are neither required nor expected to have a patronymic.
- 3 Names originating in languages other than English are transliterated or transcribed according to the rules applicable to that language. This can produce forms that are not immediately recognisable to English speakers:

<i>French:</i>	Гюго́	(Victor) Hugo
	Дюма́	Dumas
<i>German:</i>	Гёте	Goethe
<i>Italian:</i>	Толья́тти	Togliatti
<i>Chinese:</i>	Мао Цзе-дун	Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung)

- 4 There is an exception to the general practice of not 'russifying' foreign names. Female forenames ending in a consonant may sometimes have two forms: a form derived by direct transcription/transliteration and ending in a consonant, and a form ending in **-а** or **-я**, which may be adjusted to be identical with a similar-sounding Russian forename. The former is used in official documents, such as visas, but the latter tends to be preferred in ordinary conversation:

Louise	Луи́з	Луи́за
Margaret	Ма́ргарет	Ма́ргари́та

12.3 Talking about people's ages

12.3.1 Saying how old you are

When talking about someone's age, the person in question is normally indicated by a *pronoun, noun or noun phrase* in the *dative*.

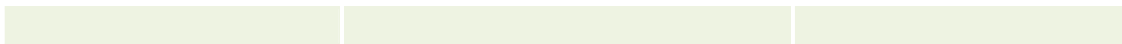
The normal way of asking about someone's age is as follows:

Скóлько тебе́ лет?

How old are you?

Скóлько лет ва́шей до́чери?

How old is your daughter?



NOTE If the person is indicated by a pronoun, this will normally be placed before **лет**; a noun or a noun phrase normally follows **лет** (as in the above examples).

The answers to these questions may be:

Мне пятьдесят восемь (лет).

I'm fifty-eight (years old).

Моей дочери двадцать один (год).

My daughter's twenty-one (years old).

For the different forms of the noun used with these numerals, *see* **8.2.1, 8.2.2** and **8.2.3**.

In the *past* tense, the neuter singular form of **быть** is used.

In the *future* tense, the third person singular of **быть** is used:

Ей было всего два года, когда родители отдали её в ясли.

She was only two years old when her parents put her into a nursery.

Нашему городу скоро будет тысяча лет.

Our city will soon be a thousand years old.

Although this construction is mostly used with reference to people and animals, it can sometimes be used, as this last example shows, to refer to inanimate objects.

When referring to a change in someone's age, the verb **исполняться/исполниться** is used:

В октябре ему исполнится восемнадцать (лет): значит, он сможет получить права и водить машину.

In October he will be eighteen (years old); he'll be able to get a driving licence and

start driving a car.

The most frequently used means of indicating an approximate age is to put the numeral after the noun:

Мне было лет десять, когда меня первый раз взяли на рыбалку с ночёвкой.

I was about ten years old when I was first taken on an overnight fishing trip.

To indicate an approximate age *above* a certain limit, a construction with the preposition **за**(+ acc.) can be used (the words **год/лет** are omitted):

Ему за тридцать.

He's over thirty.

To indicate an approximate age below a certain limit, a construction with **нет** is used; the numeral indicating the age is in the genitive and the words **год/лет** are usually omitted:

Ей нет и двадцати (лет).

She isn't yet twenty.



12.3.2 Talking about age using adjectives

The age of a person can also be indicated using an *adjective*. These adjectives are mostly formed from the combination *numeral+noun*. They can be illustrated by the following examples:

двухмесячный	two-month-old
девятимесячный	nine-month-old
двухлетний	two-year-old
двадцатилетний	twenty-year-old
двадцатипятилетний	twenty-five-year-old
сорокалетний	forty-year-old

Он женился на двадцатилетней студентке.

He married a twenty-year-old student.

For more on the formation of these adjectives, see 10.2.7.

NOTE The adjective corresponding to ‘one-year-old’ is годовалый. Adjectives formed from numerals ending in один ‘one’ (e.g. двадцать один ‘twenty-one’) are problematic and best to be avoided.

12.3.3 Other ways of talking about age

The following *prepositional* constructions are used when talking about age:

в (+ acc.)	at the age of
в возрасте (+ gen.)	at the age of
с (+ gen.)	from the age of
до (+ gen.)	up to the age of
к (+ dat.)	by the age of

Он научился играть в шахматы в четыре года.

He learned to play chess at the age of four (*or* when he was four).

Она овдовела в возрасте тридцати двух лет.

She was widowed at the age of thirty-two.

В балетную студию принимают с пяти лет.

They accept (children) at ballet school from the age of five upwards.

Он дирижировал оркестром до восьмидесяти лет.

He continued to conduct the orchestra up to the age of eighty (*or* until he was eighty).

Она сохраняла ясность мысли и бодрость духа до глубокой старости.

She remained clear-headed and cheerful until well into her old age.

К сорока годам он лысёл, обзавёлся брюшком и оставил свои революционные идеи.

By the time he was forty, he had gone bald, acquired a paunch and abandoned his revolutionary ideas.



12.4 Addresses

12.4.1 Postal addresses

Traditionally, addresses on Russian envelopes were written in the reverse order from that normally used in English-speaking countries, that is, starting with the largest unit and ending with the smallest; the recipient, usually in the *dative* case, came at the end. Now, however, the Russian Post Office recommends following international practice, starting with the recipient and listing the address working from the smallest unit to the largest. The recipient still tends to be indicated in the dative, although names of organisations are more likely to be in the *nominative*. It is reasonable to assume that for the time being both systems are being used, and they can be illustrated by the following examples:

Traditional system

Postcode + republic or region	185014 р. Карелия
City, town or village	г. Петрозаводск
Street name	ул. Гоголя
Street number + flat number	д. 21, корп. 3, кв. 46
Recipient (in the dative)	Касьянову Глебу Сергеевичу

NOTE Lines 3 and 4 could be combined if space allowed. The abbreviation **корп.** (корпус 'block') is used to distinguish between several buildings that share the same street number.

New system (personal recipient)

Recipient (in the dative)	Касьянову Глебу Сергеевичу
Street name + street and flat numbers	ул. Гоголя, д. 21, корп. 3, кв. 46
City, town or village	г. Петрозаводск
Republic or region	р. Карелия
Postcode	185014

If the recipient is an organisation

Name of organisation (in the nominative)	Клуб юных моряков «Парус»
City, town or village	пос. Солнечное
District	Сестрорецкий р-н
Republic or region	Ленинградская обл.
Postcode	197720

NOTE Because the second address is located in a large village, no street name or number is needed, but an extra administrative layer (**район** 'district') is required.

The following abbreviations are used in postal addresses:

к.	ко́мната	room
кв.	кварті́ра	flat
корп.	ко́рпус	block
д.	до́м	house, building
б-р	бульва́р	avenue

пер.	переу́лок	alley
пр.	проспе́кт	avenue
ш.	шоссе́	highway, road
ул.	у́лица	street
пл.	площа́дь	square
п/я	почто́вый ящи́к	PO box
пос.	посё́лок	large village, settlement
дер.	дерёвня	(small) village, hamlet
с.	се́ло	village
г.	го́род	town, city
р-н	райо́н	district
обл.	обла́сть	region
р.	республи́ка	republic

Two abbreviations that are used regionally are:

а.	ау́л	village (in the Caucasus)
х.	хуто́р	village (in Cossack areas)

The following terms are also useful in indicating addresses:

до востре́бования	poste restante
почто́вый индекс	postcode

If a letter is intended for a person other than the addressee, a construction with **для** (+ gen.) is used:

Мишиной С.А (для Даши).

Dasha c/o S.A.Mishina.

12.4.2 Finding one's way

When indicating how to get to a particular location the following terms may be used:

ста́нция	(metro or railway) station
оста́новка	(bus or tram) stop
светофо́р	traffic lights
перекры́сток	road junction, crossroads
въезд	entry (for vehicles)
двор	yard, back courtyard
подъезд	entry (to a block of flats), stairway
этаж	floor, storey
дверь	door
вход со двора́	the entrance is located in the back courtyard
домофон	entry-phone
ко́довый замо́к	a lock with an entry code

NOTE The term **пе́рвый этаж** corresponds to (British) English ‘ground floor’; similarly, **второ́й этаж** corresponds to ‘first floor’, and so on.

Скажи́те такси́сту, что вход в подъезд не с у́лицы, а со двора́. Въезд во двор сразу за перекре́стком. У нас тре́тий подъезд. Домофон не рабо́тает. В подъезде ко́довый замо́к. Код 345. Поднима́йтесь на ли́фте на девя́тый этаж, кварти́ра 36, это второ́я дверь напра́во.

Tell the taxi driver that the entrances to the building are in the back courtyard, not in the street. There's an entry for vehicles just past the crossroads. Our flat is on the third staircase. The entry-phone isn't working, but there is a lock with an entry code. The code is 345. Take the lift to the ninth (eighth) floor. Our flat is number 36; it's the second door on the right.

12.4.3 Registration

Each individual in the Russian Federation is supposed to be officially registered at a specific address, which is indicated by a stamp in his/her **пáспорт** (see **12.0**). The term now officially used for this procedure is **регистрация**, but the older word **прописка** is still in common use. The verbs used in relation to this process are:

регистра́ровать/зарегистривать	to register (someone)
прописыва́ть/прописа́ть	to register (someone)
регистра́роваться/зарегистриваться	to be registered
прописыва́ться/прописа́ться	to be registered
прожива́ть	to reside (at), to be resident (at)

—По какому́ адресу вы *прописаны* (*зарегистриваны*)?

—Я *прописан* по адресу: Санкт-Петербург, Садовая, тридцать четыре, квартира двадцать пять, но я там *не проживаю*.

—What address are you registered at?

—I'm registered in St Petersburg, at 34 Sadovaia, flat 25, but I don't actually live there.

На время́ учёбы ба́бушка *прописа́ла* его́ у себя́.

While he was a student, he was registered at his grandmother's (address).

У меня́ вообще́-то нет моско́вской *регистра́ции*: я *прописана* в Ряза́ни.

I don't have a registration for Moscow; I'm officially registered as living in Riazan'.

NOTE As these examples may suggest, there is often a considerable gap between the requirements of officialdom and the demands of real life.

12.5 Citizenship and nationality

12.5.1 Гражданство and национальность

In Russian, a very clear distinction is normally made between the following two concepts:

гражданство	citizenship, nationality
национальность	ethnic identity

In Soviet times the *национальность* was a part of every citizen's identity; it was shown in the *паспорт* (see **12.0**) and usually had to be indicated on official forms. Although this tends no longer to be the case, the concept of *национальность* remains very relevant in the Russian multi-ethnic context.

NOTE In the lists that follow the *masculine* form is placed to the *left* of the slash (/) and the *feminine* form is placed to the *right*.

The following terms are seen as relating to *национа́льность*:

In the context of Russia

евре́й/евре́йка	Jew
калмы́к/калмы́чка	Kalmyck
ру́сский/ру́сская	Russian
татари́н/татари́нка	Tatar
чече́нец/чече́нка	Chechen

In other contexts

валли́ец/валли́йка	Welshman, Welshwoman
ката́лонец/ката́лонка	Catalan
цыга́н/цыга́нка	Roma
шотла́ндец/шотла́ндка	Scot

Кто вы по национа́льности?

What is your ethnic identity?

Я татари́н.

I am a Tatar.

The following terms refer specifically to *гражда́нство*:

британи́ец/британи́нка	citizen of Great Britain
россия́нин/россия́нка	citizen of Russia

Како́е у вас гражда́нство?

What is your nationality *or* citizenship?

Я британи́ец *or* Я гражда́нин Великобрита́нии.

I am British *or* I am a citizen of Great Britain.

Many terms can be used in either sense:

американец/американка	American
армянин/армянка	Armenian
итальянец/итальянка	Italian
немец/немка	German
украинец/украинка	Ukrainian
финн/финка	Finn
француз/француженка	Frenchman/Frenchwoman

For more on the suffixes used, see **10.1.8** and **10.1.9**.

12.5.2 **Росси́йский and ру́сский**

It will be noticed from the preceding section that Russian has separate terms for the concept of ‘Russian’, depending on whether reference is to *гражданство* or *национальность*. The noun **россиянин/россиянка** and the associated adjective **росси́йский** refer to Russia as a state and a political unit, and hence, to the concept of Russian citizenship; the term **ру́сский**, which is both noun and adjective, refers to Russian language, culture and ethnicity. It has to be said that the distinction has been important only since 1991 and is not universally observed; it can also be difficult on occasion to work out which term is more appropriate. Nevertheless, the following collocations give some indication of how the two terms are used:



росси́йский фла́г	Russian flag
росси́йский прези́дент	Russian president
росси́йский спорте́мен	Russian sportsman
росси́йская а́рмия	Russian army
росси́йская исто́рия	history of Russia
росси́йское гра́жданство	Russian citizenship
росси́йское ру́ководство	Russia's leaders
ру́сский язы́к	Russian language
ру́сский характе́р	Russian character
ру́сский фолькло́р	Russian folklore
ру́сский худо́жник	Russian artist
ру́сская литерату́ра	Russian literature
ру́сская ку́хня	Russian cooking
ру́сская наро́дная му́зыка	Russian folk music
ру́сское хлебосо́льство	(traditional) Russian hospitality

In international contexts the language factor often plays the key role in defining a person or an object as **ру́сский**:

ру́сские филь́мы	Russian films
ру́сские газе́ты	Russian(-language) newspapers

12.6 Occupations

12.6.1 Talking about one's occupation

The following questions can be used to ask about somebody's occupation:

Кто вы по профе́сии?

Какая́ у вас профе́ссия?

Чем вы занима́етесь?

Кем вы рабо́таете?

All these can be translated as:

What do you do for a living?

Answers might be:

(По профессии) я инженер.

(By profession) I'm an engineer.

Я работаю бухгалтером.

I work as an accountant.

In these contexts **заниматься** and **работать** are used with the *instrumental* case. For more information, see **3.5.5** and **3.5.7**.

Other terms used in relation to employment include:

должность	position
звание	rank (e.g. in the armed forces)
служба	service (e.g. in the armed forces)
работник	worker (someone who works in a particular place)
рабочий	worker (member of the working class)

сотру́дник	someone who works for a particular organisation, official, employee
служи́ть	to serve (e.g. in the armed forces or in government service)
зараба́тывать/зарабо́тать	to earn
подраба́тывать/подрабо́тать	to moonlight
подхалту́ривать/подхалту́рить	to moonlight

Её муж сле́дователь, служи́т в прокурату́ре. На службу́ ходит в штатском.

Her husband's an investigator for the prosecutor's office. He goes to work in civilian dress.

Госуда́рство обяза́но заботи́ться о рабо́тниках бюдже́тной сфе́ры.

The state has an obligation to take care of those who work in the public sector.

Сотру́дник аэропо́рта проверя́л все поса́дочные тало́ны.

An airport official was checking all the boarding cards.

В тру́дные для семьи́ го́ды она́ подраба́тывала перево́дами и ча́стными уроками́.

When times were difficult for her family, she earned a bit of extra money doing translations and giving private lessons.

Мно́гие столи́чные студё́нты подхалту́ривают в массовка́х на «Мосфильме́».

Many Moscow students earn a bit extra by working as extras for Mosfilm.

12.6.2 Occupation and gender

As was noted in **10.1.9**, some, but not all nouns indicating holders of jobs or members of professions have separate *masculine* and *feminine* nouns. From this point of view these nouns can be divided into several categories.

1 Nouns with only a *masculine* form, which is used for both men and women. This is the largest group and is found particularly widely in relation to 'high-prestige'

professions:

архите́ктор	architect
водолаз	diver
врач	doctor
геолог	geologist (the same applies to all other nouns ending in -олог)
депутат	deputy (in a parliament)
космонавт	cosmonaut
лётчик	pilot
министр	minister
офицер	officer (in the armed forces) (the same applies to all ranks in the armed forces)
пекарь	baker
профессор	professor
режиссёр	(film) director
слесарь	metal worker, locksmith, repair man
строитель	builder
физик	physicist



2 Some nouns have separate *masculine* and *feminine* forms with equal status; the use depends solely on the sex of the person concerned:

актёр/актриса	actor
официант/официантка	waiter/waitress
певец/певица	singer
танцор/танцорка, танцовщица	dancer
танцовщик/танцовщица, балерина	ballet dancer

3 In some instances, the *feminine* form is restricted to informal language, while in formal language the *masculine* is used to refer to both sexes:

воспитатель/воспитательница	teacher (e.g. in a kindergarten)
преподаватель/преподавательница	teacher (in a college or university)
продавец/продащица	salesperson
учитель/учительница	teacher (in a school)
художник/художница	artist

4 In the following cases the *feminine* form, though widely used in informal language, may be perceived as derogatory:

кассир/кассирша	cashier
секретарь/секретарша	secretary

NOTES

- (i) Only the masculine form **секретарь** would be used to refer to someone who holds high office in a political party or an academic institution.
- (ii) Other feminine forms ending in **-ша** or **-ица** are unreservedly derogatory and should be avoided.

5 Some nouns have only a *feminine* form:

акушерка	midwife
горничная	(chamber)maid
медсестра	nurse
няня	nanny
прачка	laundrywoman

NOTE The term **медбрат** ‘male nurse’ is possible in theory, but very rare in practice.

6 There is one ‘asymmetric’ pair:

машини́ст	locomotive driver
машини́стка	typist

For information on the question of grammatical agreement when masculine nouns are used to refer to a woman, *see* **11.2.5**.

12.7 Talking about marital status

Talking about marital status in Russian is complicated by the fact that different words are used, depending on whether you are talking about a man, a woman or a couple. The following are the main terms found in this context:

муж	husband
жена	wife
супруг/супруга	spouse (used more often than the English equivalent)
жених	bridegroom, fiancé
невеста	bride, fiancée
жениться (нсв/св) на (+ prep.)	to get married (of a man)
выходить/выйти замуж за (+ acc.)	to get married (of a woman)
пожениться (св)	to get married (of a couple)
быть женат(ым) на (+ prep.)	to be married (of a man)
быть замужем за (+ instr.)	to be married (of a woman)
женатый	married (of a man)
замужняя	married (of a woman)
холостяк	bachelor
незамужняя женщина	unmarried woman

For more on the use of the instrumental long form and the short form of adjectives such as **женат(ый)**, see **14.1.4**.

свадьба	wedding
брак	marriage
супружество	matrimony, wedlock
женильба	marriage (referring to a man)
замужество	marriage (referring to a woman)
ЗАГС	register office
гражданский брак	unofficial marriage, civil partnership
расписываться/расписаться (в ЗАГСе)	to get married (at the register office) [literally, to sign the register], to take the plunge

For more on the acronym **ЗАГС**, see **2.14.1**.

развод	divorce
разводиться/развестись	to get divorced
разведённый	divorced
расходиться/разойтись	to split up

In recent years some terms borrowed from English have started to be used, especially in the mass media:

бойфрѐнд boyfriend
партнѐр partner

Он женился на двадцатилѐтней студѐнтке.

He married a twenty-year-old student.

Она вышла замуж за иностранца.

She married a foreigner.

Он женат на известной писательнице.


He's married to a famous writer.

Она замужем за сотрудником налоговой инспекции.

She's married to someone who works at the tax office.

Они поженились в прошлом году.

They got married last year.



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В течѣние двадцати лет они жили в гражданском браке, но в прошлом году они наконецъ расписались.

For twenty years they lived together (in a civil partnership), but last year they finally took the plunge and got married.

Насколько я знаю, он разведѣн.

As far as I know, he's divorced.

Да, точно. Они развелись два года назад.

Yes, that's right. They got divorced two years ago.

13

Establishing contact

13.1 Formal and informal address

Russian has two *second person pronouns* that correspond to English ‘you’: **ТЫ** and **ВЫ**. Their use is determined by the following rules and guidelines.

When addressing more than one person, only the *plural* pronoun **ВЫ** can be used.

When addressing one person the *singular* pronoun **ТЫ** is used when addressing a child, an animal, a member of one’s family or a person with whom one is on informal terms; it is also the form used in prayers. In other circumstances, that is, when addressing an adult with whom one is not on informal terms, the pronoun **ВЫ** is used.

For the rules of agreement between the pronoun **ВЫ** and the verb, *see 11.2.1*.

In transactions between adults **ВЫ** is the default form, and the switch to **ТЫ** is usually by mutual agreement. The person initiating the switch may say:

Давайте перейдём на «ты».

Let’s switch to ‘ty’, shall we?

It is hard to give absolute rules for the use of **ТЫ** and **ВЫ**, since much depends on circumstances and on individual habits and preferences. In general, the younger people are, the more quickly they will switch to **ТЫ**, and, other things being equal, two people of the same sex may switch more rapidly than two people of different sexes. The use of **ТЫ** and **ВЫ** between adults is supposed to be equal and mutual, but the practice of addressing inferiors with **ТЫ** and superiors with **ВЫ** is found in many hierarchical situations.

The use of many of the greetings and forms of address dealt with in the later sections of this chapter are closely linked to the use of **ТЫ** and **ВЫ**.

For the occurrence of capital letters with the pronouns **Вы** and **Ваш** when they are used in letters to address one person, *see 1.5.7*.

13.2 Greetings

13.2.1 **The greeting здравствуй /здравствуйте**

The greeting **здравствуй /здравствуйте** is a useful all-purpose greeting that corresponds fairly closely to the English 'hello'. It can be used at any time of the day and in a wide

variety of situations. **Здра́вствуй** is used when speaking to someone one would address with **ТЫ**; otherwise, **здра́вствуйте** is used:

Здра́вствуйте, садитесь. Начинаем урок.

Good morning. Sit down. Let's get on with the lesson (in school).

Здра́вствуйте, уважаемые радиослушатели.

Hello, listeners.

—Здра́вствуйте, Джейн.

—Здра́вствуйте, Бори́с Бори́сович. Как вы пожива́ете?

—Спаси́бо, непло́хо, а вы?

—Hello, Jane.

—Hello, Boris Borisovich. How are you?

—Not bad, thank you. And how about you?

—Здра́вствуйте, Ири́на Алексе́евна.

—Здра́вствуй, Ко́ля. Что у тебя́ но́венького?

—Мне ма́ма купи́ла соба́ку.

—Hello, Irina Alekseevna.

—Hello Kolia. What news have you got?

—Mummy's bought me a dog.

For the pronunciation of **здра́вствуй(те)**, see **1.2.6**.

For more on the names and forms of address, see **13.4** and **13.5.2**.

13.2.2 Informal greetings

The most widely used informal greeting is **привёт**, which can be used when greeting a single person or a group. Also found, though less often, are **здорово**, which contains a strong element of familiarity and which is more characteristic of male speech, and **салют**.

Привёт, Лара, как у тебя дела?

Hi, Lara. How are things?

—Здорово, мужики. Игра давно началась? Какой счёт?

—Привёт. Минут пять назад. Пока по нулям.

—Hi lads, has the game been going long? What's the score?

—Hi. About five minutes. It's still nil-nil.

Привёт can also be used both in speech and writing with the meaning 'regards', 'best wishes':

—Передайте привёт родителям и бабушке.

—Непрёмённо передам.

—Pass on my regards to your parents and your grandmother.

—I most certainly will.

The verb **передавать /передать** is often omitted:

Ну что ж, счастливого пути! Привёт женé. В слéдующий раз приезжайте вместе.

Well, then, have a pleasant journey. Regards to your wife. Next time the two of you must come.



Привѣт из Вене́ции! Тут мно́го воды, ло́док и тури́стов.

Best wishes from Venice! There's a lot of water, a lot of boats and a lot of tourists.

Привѣт от Володи́.

Regards from Volodia.

13.2.3 Other greetings

The following greetings are specific to a particular part of the day; they are slightly more formal than **здравствуйте**:

до́брое у́тро	good morning
до́брый день	good day, good afternoon
до́брый ве́чер	good evening

До́брое у́тро, Никола́й Ива́нович. Как пожива́ете?

Good morning, Nikolai Ivanovich. How are you?

До́брый ве́чер. Нача́инаем наш вы́пуск с обзо́ра гла́вных собы́тий дня.

Good evening. We begin our bulletin with a round-up of the main events of day.

The verb **привѣтствовать** is now slightly obsolete, but it is still used on formal and ceremonial occasions:

Мы ра́ды привѣтствовать вас в на́шем го́роде.

We are delighted to welcome you to our city.

Добро́ пожа́ловать means 'welcome' and for the most part is used in formal situations or on signs; it is often followed by the prepositions **во** **на**(+ acc.).

А вот и го́сти. Добро́ пожа́ловать! Проходи́те, раздева́йтесь.

Here are our guests. Welcome! Please come in and take off your coats.

Добро пожаловать в Москву!

Welcome to Moscow!

13.2.4 Saying goodbye

The most widely used and most neutral way of saying goodbye is the phrase **до свидания**. Less widely used are the extended version **до скорого свидания** and its shortened informal version **до скорого**.

Всего (вам) доброго, всего хорошего are slightly more formal and often used as a reply to **до свидания** in order to avoid repetition.

Пока is particularly common in informal situations, especially among younger people; it is normally used only with people you would address with **ты**.

Будь здоров (здорова), будьте здоровы, бывайте здоровы are now restricted to informal situations. Although they are sometimes favoured by older people, these phrases are becoming obsolete.

Прощай(те) is used when parting for a long time or forever.



Счастли́во is used when saying goodbye to someone who is leaving. Alternatively, if you are leaving, you may say **счастли́во остава́ться** to those who are staying behind.

Споко́йной но́чи or **до́брой но́чи** ‘good night’ are used when parting late at night or when going to bed.

If you know when you are next going to meet, this can be indicated using **до** (+ gen.):

до за́втра	see you tomorrow
до сле́дующей неде́ли	see you next week

In other circumstances **до встре́чи** ‘until we next meet’ can be used.

13.2.5 Polite enquiries and responses

The following polite enquiries can be used to follow up a greeting:

Как пожива́ешь?/Как пожива́ете?

Как живёшь?/Как живёте?

Как (твой/ва́ши) дела́?

Как у тебя́/вас дела́?

The following versions are more familiar in tone:

Как дели́шки?

Как здоро́вье?

Как жизнь?

Как живётся-мо́жется?

All of the above can be translated as ‘How are things?’

In response, the following answers might be given, all introduced by **Спаси́бо**

‘Thank you’:

хорошо́	fine
нормально́	OK, not bad
неплохо́	not bad
ничего́	OK, not too bad
так себе́	so-so
лучше́ всех	great (this is more familiar in tone)

If things really are too bad for any of the above, a humorous answer is:

—Как дела́?

—Как са́жа бе́ла...

—How are things?

—Really bad. (*Literally*, As soot is white, i.e. the reverse of how things ought to be.)

13.2.6 Greetings and salutations for special occasions

Russian has a wide range of greetings and salutations used for special occasions, many of which have no real equivalent in English. Most of these follow one of two patterns.



The first pattern uses the construction **поздравлять/поздравить с(+ instr.)**; the recipient of the salutation, if indicated, is in the *accusative*:

Поздравляю тебя с днём рождения!

I wish you all the best on your birthday *or* Many happy returns on your birthday!

Дорогой папочка, поздравляем тебя с Днём защитника Отечества!

Dear father, we salute you on Defenders of the Fatherland Day.

NOTE День защитника Отечества (23 February) is a special day devoted to those who are serving or who have served in Russian or Soviet armed forces.

In less formal contexts the verb tends to be omitted:

С днём рождения тебя!

Many happy returns of the day!

Other frequently used salutations include the following:

(Поздравляю/Поздравляем):

с Новым годом	Happy New Year
с Рождеством Христовым	Happy Christmas
с Пасхой	Happy Easter
с Днём светлого Христово Воскресения	Happy Easter (more formal)
с Днём Победы	(used on Victory Day, 9 May)
с (Международным) женским днём	(used on International Women's Day, 8 March, a national holiday in Russia)
с Днём учителя	(see Note (i) below)

NOTES

(i) In Russia, it is the custom for all professional groups to have their own special day (which does not, alas, mean an extra day off work). *День учителя* 'Teachers' Day' is 5 October.

(ii) On Easter Sunday, it is the custom for Orthodox believers to greet each other with the following exchange:

—Христóс воскрѣс(е)!

—Воистину воскрѣс(е)!

—Christ is risen!

—He is risen indeed!

The verb is not used in the following greetings:

с праздником	(a useful all-purpose greeting that can be used on any national or other holiday)
с лёгким паром	(a greeting often made to someone who has just taken a shower, although it is more properly reserved for those who have taken a steam bath in a баня (a traditional Russian bathhouse))

In circumstances where it is appropriate to return a salutation, this can be done by saying:

Вза́жно!	And the same to you!
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The verb **поздравлять/поздравить с** (+instr.) also means ‘to congratulate’:

Поздравляю/поздравляем вас с рождением дочери.

Congratulations on the birth of your daughter!

The second pattern uses a *noun phrase* in the *genitive*. This is understood as being the object of the verb **желать/пожелать** ‘to wish’, although the verb itself is usually omitted; examples include:

Счастливого пути	Have a good journey
Доброго пути	Have a good journey
Приятного отдыха	Enjoy your holiday
Приятного аппетита!	(said to someone who is eating or about to start eating)
Ни пуха ни пера!	Good luck!

NOTE This last phrase, which literally means ‘Neither fur nor feather’, is used to wish someone good luck before an ordeal such as an examination or a performance on stage. The correct reply, which is perfectly polite in this context, is:

К чёрту! Go to the devil!

13.3 Making introductions and giving names

13.3.1 Introducing yourself

Older Russians are likely to introduce themselves either with their full name or with their surname alone:

Разрешите представиться: Геннадий Петрович Козодёв.

Allow me to introduce myself: I am Gennadii Petrovich Kozodoev.

The following phrases all correspond to the English ‘Pleased to meet you’:

о́чень приятно

приятно познакомиться

я рад/рада (мы рады) познакомиться.

Рад познакомиться. Горбунков.

Pleased to meet you. (I am) Gorbunkov.

Younger people tend to use only their forenames even in formal introductions:

—Давайте познакомимся: меня зовут Михайл.

—Полина.

—Очень приятно.

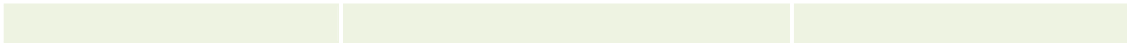
—Let's introduce ourselves: I am (called) Mikhail.

—I am Polina.

—Pleased to meet you.

13.3.2 Introducing people to each other and to a third party

When introducing people to each other or introducing somebody to a third party the following phrases are used:



знако́мьтесь	may I introduce you?
познако́мьтесь	may I introduce you?
разреши́те вам предста́вить (+ acc.)	allow me to introduce you to
разреши́те вас познако́мить с (+ instr.)	allow me to introduce you to

Джон, разреши́те вас познако́мить с мо́им колле́гой Володи́ей Семако́вым.

John, allow me to introduce you to my colleague Volodia Semakov.

Э́то мо́я сестра́ Гали́на, а э́то мо́й шведский друг А́ндерс, –
познако́мьтесь.

May I introduce you? This is my sister Galina and this is my Swedish friend Anders.

13.3.3 Asking for someone's name

To ask for someone's name the question word **как**, *literally*, 'how', is used. The most usual way to ask someone's name is to use the *third person plural, present tense* of the verb **звать** 'to call' (**зову́т**) and the *accusative*:

Как вас/тебя́ зову́т?

What is your name?

Как зову́т твою́ сестру́?

What is your sister called?

In more informal language the verb can be in the *infinitive*:

Как тебя́ звать?

What's your name?

If you want to enquire about a specific part of someone's name, a construction with the preposition **по**(+ dat.) can be used:

Как вас по́ имени-о́тчеству?

What is your name and patronymic?

NOTE *имя-отчество* is frequently used as a single compound noun, as in the above question. In this usage both parts of the noun decline.

The following illustrate another pattern for asking about a specific part of someone's name:

Как ваше имя-отчество?

What is your name and patronymic?

Как фамилия этого актёра?

What is that actor's surname?

With other types of name the pronoun **какой** tends to be used:

прозвище	nickname
кличка	nickname, name of an animal
ник	nickname (of Internet user)

Какая кличка у этой лошади?

What is the name of that horse?

13.3.4 Giving one's name

The normal way of giving one's name echoes the question given at the beginning of the previous section:

Меня зову́т Ива́н.

I am called Ivan.

Её зову́т Лари́са Петро́вна.

She is called Larisa Petrovna.

Although the name is normally given in the *nominative*, in informal language it can be put in the *instrumental*:

Ме́ня зову́т Ива́ном.

I'm called Ivan.

Её звать Лари́сой.

She's called Larisa.

To refer to a specific part of someone's name, a construction with the preposition **по**(+ dat.) can be used:

Был на на́шем ку́рсе о́дин студе́нт по фами́лии Бре́жнев.

We had a student in our year called Brezhnev (*or* whose surname was Brezhnev).

13.3.5 Titles and names of places or other objects

The word **назва́ние** is normally used to indicate the name of an inanimate object, including geographical names, names of institutions, and the titles of books, films and works of art. The verb associated with this noun is **называ́ться** 'to be called':

Как называ́ется дере́вня, в кото́рой мы ви́дели вчера́ чуде́сную деревя́нную це́рковь?

What is the name of the village where we saw a wonderful wooden church

yesterday?

Как будет называться эта новая организация?

What's this new organisation going to be called?

Как назывались эти два самолёта, которые прославились в воздушных боях за Британию?

What were the names of those two aeroplanes that became famous during the Battle of Britain?

Another, more informal way of asking about the name of an inanimate object is to use the phrase: **как название:**

Как название того лекарства, что ты мне давала на прошлой неделе?

What is the name of that medicine you gave me last week?

When answering the question, the name of the object is usually given in the *nominative*:

Эта деревня называется Тамбицы.

The village is called Tambitsy.

The noun **название** is used in the following patterns and phrases:

иметь название	to have the name
носить название	to bear the name

дава́ть/дать назва́ние	to give the name
под назва́нием	under the name

—Как называ́ется ва́ша земля́? – спроси́л капита́н испа́нского кора́бля.

—Юката́н! – отве́тил вождь ме́стного пле́мени, что на тузе́мном языке́ знача́ло «не понима́ю». С тех пор полу́остров но́сит назва́ние Юката́н.

—‘What is your land called?’ asked the captain of a Spanish ship.

—‘Yucatán!’ answered the the leader of the local tribe, using a phrase which in the local language meant ‘I don’t understand’. Since then the peninsula has been called (*literally*, borne the name) Yucatan.

Назва́ние «Война́ и мир», кото́рое дал Толсто́й своему́ рома́ну, ста́ло предме́том диску́ссий на долгие го́ды.

The name *War and Peace*, which Tolstoy (chose to) give his novel, was the subject of controversy for many years.

Фигури́сты испо́лнили но́вый та́нец под назва́нием «Матрёшки».

The figure-skaters performed a new dance called (*literally*, under the name) ‘The Matrioshkas’.

For the use of inverted commas in titles, *see* **1.5.8**.

13.4 Addressing friends and acquaintances

13.4.0 Introduction

Although Russian has several different forms that can be used to address friends and acquaintances, the most important are the *familiar* form of the *forename* and the *full forename+patronymic*.

For the structure of Russian names, *see* **12.1**.

13.4.1 Using the forename

The *familiar* version of the *forename* is the normal form of address used between

friends or, within the family, between siblings and by adults when speaking to children. It is used more generally by older people when speaking to children and is, for example, the form used by teachers when speaking to their students. Although there is no absolute rule about this, the familiar form of the forename is normally combined with the pronoun **ты**:

На́дя, иди́ до́мой, ба́бушка прие́хала!

Nadia, go home! Your grandmother's arrived.

Ко́ля, приве́т! Как у тебя́ дела́?

Hi, Kolia, how are things?

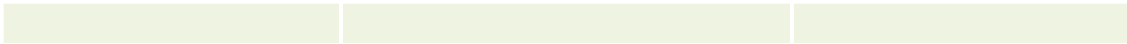
Серё́жа, здра́вствуй! Сто лет тебя́ не ви́дела. Как пожива́ешь?

Hello, Seriozha, I haven't seen you for ages. How are you getting on?

In appropriate circumstances the more *expressive* forms of the forename can be used:

Приве́т, Ната́шка. Меня́ в а́рмию забира́ют. Прове́ды в суббо́ту. Приде́шь?

Hi, Natasha! I've been called up into the army. The farewell party is on Saturday. Are you coming?



For more on forenames and their familiar and expressive forms, see **12.1.1** and **16.1.4**.

When addressing someone using a familiar form that ends in **-а** or **-я**, it is possible to shorten the name by dropping the final vowel. This shortened form, which is characteristic of more informal levels of language, is used particularly frequently when the name is repeated:

Коль, не зна́ешь, ско́лько вре́мени?

Kolia, do you happen to know what time it is?

Тань, а Тань, иди́ сюда́!

Tania, Tania, come here!

13.4.2 Use of forename+patronymic

The combination of *full* version of the *forename+patronymic* is the default form of address among adults. It is used in most circumstances where English speakers would use ‘Mr’/‘Mrs’/‘Ms’+surname and in some instances where English speakers might switch to the forename. In particular, it is used between colleagues in offices and institutions (and especially when addressing a superior); by pupils and students when addressing their teachers and lecturers, and more generally when addressing older people. It is always combined with the pronoun **вы**:

Пётр Петро́вич, зайдите́, пожа́луйста, ко мне в кабинéт. У меня́ есть некото́рые вопро́сы по ва́шему отчёту.

Piotr Petrovich, would you mind stepping into my office. I’ve got some questions about your report.

А́нна Серге́евна, вы уже́ прове́рили на́ши сочи́нения?

Anna Sergeevna, have you marked our essays yet?

13.4.3 Other forms of address

Traditionally, the *full* form of the forename was not widely used as a form of address, except when speaking to foreigners (since foreign names do not as a rule have *familiar* forms; see **12.2**). In recent years, however, it has become more

acceptable as an intermediate form in circumstances when the use of *forename+patronymic* seems too formal, but where the use of the familiar form of the forename is too informal, for example, between colleagues. It can be combined with either **ты** or **вы**. One situation where this form can be widely heard is on television, when, for example, newsreaders are talking on air to correspondents on location:

Репортаж с места событий ведёт наш корреспондент Александр Курганов.

—Александр? Александр, вы слышите меня?

—Да, Татьяна, я слышу вас хорошо.

For a live report from the scene of the events we are going over to our correspondent Aleksandr Kurganov.

—Aleksandr? Aleksandr, can you hear me?

—Yes, Tat'iana, I can hear you loud and clear.

In Soviet times the titles **господин** 'Mr' and **госпожа** 'Mrs' were combined with the *surname* only when addressing foreigners. Since 1991, however, these titles have started



to be used more widely, although they can still sometimes carry ironic or even derogatory overtones. Nevertheless, in formal circumstances it is now generally acceptable to address someone whose name and patronymic you do not know using the form **господин/госпожа**+surname:

Господин Петров, вы не могли бы заполнить для нас эту анкету.

Would you mind filling in this form for us, Mr Petrov?

On the other hand, the form **товарищ** ‘comrade’+surname, which was used in Soviet times, has now largely died out, although **товарищ** followed by the name of the rank is still used when addressing a superior officer in the armed forces or the police.

Surname alone is used by teachers and lecturers when addressing their students and also when addressing those lower in rank in the armed forces and other strictly hierarchical institutions:

Иванова, к доске! Докажи нам, пожалуйста, теорему Пифагора.

Ivanova, please step up to the blackboard and demonstrate for us the proof of Pythagoras’s theorem.

Patronymic alone is sometimes used in informal contexts. It indicates familiarity and can be combined only with **ты**. It cannot be used by younger people to indicate respect towards their elders:

Михалыч, когда за грибами поедем? Ты обещал!

Mikhalych, when are we going to look for mushrooms? You did promise!

For the ‘reduced’ form of the patronymic, *see* **12.1.2**.

13.4.4 Referring to someone not present

When referring in Russian to someone with whom one is on formal terms, it is perfectly normal to use the formula *forename+patronymic*. If the person referred to is a man, the name, especially in informal language, is often treated as a single unit, with only the patronymic being declined; here too the patronymic is normally

spoken in the reduced form:

Я то́лько что был у Ива́н Ива́ныча.

I've just been to see Ivan Ivanovich.

Referring to someone by *title+surname* is fairly rare. On the other hand, reference by surname alone is much more frequent and is acceptable in a wide range of contexts:

Ты слы́шала? Филимо́нова из отде́ла ка́дров роди́ла дво́йню!

Have you heard? Filimonova from personnel has had twins.

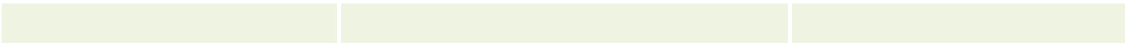
Бритви́хина и Столяро́ва вы́звали в декана́т.

Britvikhin and Stoliarov have been summoned to the Dean's office.

The formula *full forename+surname* (which is virtually never used as a form of address) was until recently used mainly to refer to sportspeople and performers in the world of the arts and show business. In the last few years its usage has been extended to others in the public eye, such as politicians:

**В фи́льмах Леони́да Га́йдая снима́лись лу́чшие оте́чественные актёры:
Ю́рий Нику́лин, Андре́й Миро́нов, Анато́лий Папа́нов.**

The films of Leonid Gaidai featured the best Russian/Soviet actors: Iurii Nikulin, Andrei Mironov, Anatolii Papanov.



NOTE The adjective **отечественный** is derived from **отечество** 'homeland', 'fatherland' and is frequently used in journalism and other similar types of language. Its meaning, depending on the time frame to which it refers, is either 'Russian' or 'Soviet'.

13.5 Addressing strangers

13.5.1 Introduction

When addressing strangers, Russians prefer, if possible, to use a form of address. There are various such forms in use, many of which have no real equivalent in English.

13.5.1 Addressing an individual

The forms used most frequently to address someone who is not known to the speaker are **молодой человек** 'young man' and **девушка** *literally*, 'girl'. These terms, which are perfectly polite and can be used to address anyone from late teens to early middle-age (and even beyond), are widely used in the street; they are the preferred forms for addressing waiters, shop assistants and others with whom one may come into casual contact:

Молодой человек, это не вы уронили блокнот?

Excuse me (young man), was it you that dropped this notebook?

Девушка, покажите мне вон ту куртку с капюшоном, что слева на витрине.

Would you mind showing me that jacket there with the hood, the one on the left in the window?

A problem arises with people who are too old to respond gracefully to **молодой человек** or **девушка**. Forms such as **мужчина** 'man', **женщина** 'woman' and **дама** 'lady' are quite frequently heard, but they can cause offence and are best avoided. There are periodic attempts to revive **сударь** 'sir' and **сударыня** 'madam', but these have never caught on and their use is likely to be seen as quaint or ironic. The best solution is probably to use an indirect way of attracting someone's attention, such as **простите** 'excuse me' or **будьте любезны** 'please', 'would you

mind?':

Простите, это не вы уронили блокнот?

Excuse me, was it you that dropped this notebook?

Будьте любезны, передайте за проезд: за двоих до Раменского.

Excuse me, would you mind passing this fare up to the driver? It's for two people going as far as Ramenskoe.

Дядя 'uncle' and **тётя** 'aunt(ie)' are used informally to address people of an older generation and, along with the more familiar **дяденька** and **тётяшка**, are used by children addressing adults:

Дяденька, а вы правда фокусник?

(Uncle), is it true you're a conjuror?



13.5.2 Addressing a group

Announcements made in Russian to a group of people normally begin with a form of address containing a noun which identifies the audience. This is normally preceded by the plural adjective **уважаемые** 'dear', *literally*, 'respected', 'esteemed'. Examples of these forms of address, which are given with notional translations since they do not have English equivalents, include the following:

уважаемые (теле)зрители	dear viewers
уважаемые коллеги	dear colleagues
уважаемые пассажиры	dear passengers
уважаемые слушатели	dear listeners

Уважаемые пассажиры, начинается посадка на самолёт, следующий по маршруту Ростов – Волгоград рейсом 2458.

Flight 2458 (from Rostov) to Volgograd is now ready for boarding.

A greater degree of intimacy is suggested by the formula:

дорогие друзья	dear friends
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The Russian equivalent of 'ladies and gentlemen' is **Дамы и господа**, although the presence of the above formulae means that it is used less often than the corresponding English phrase.

At the end of a lecture or a speech it is polite to say:

Спасибо за внимание	Thank you for your attention.
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13.6 Writing letters and telephoning

13.6.1 Writing letters

The normal practice is to begin ordinary letters with the adjective **дорогой (дорогая, дорогие)** 'dear' followed either by the name(s) of the people being addressed or by an appropriate noun, such as **друг** 'friend':

Дорогой Ваня!	Dear Vania
Дорогой друг!	Dear friend

The adjective **ми́лый** (**ми́лая, ми́лые**) ‘dear’ can also be used, especially when writing to close friends or relatives:

Ми́лая Та́нечка!	Dear Tania
Ми́лая ма́мочка!	Dear Mum

Relatively formal letters can end with the formula:

и́скренне Ваш (твой)	Yours sincerely
с наилучшими пожеланиями	With best wishes

For the occurrence of capital letters with the pronouns **Вы** and **Ваш** when they are used in letters to address one person, *see* 1.5.7.

More informal ways of ending letters are:

всего́ до́брого	all the best
всего́ хоро́шего	all the best



всего́ наилучшего крепко жму́ руку́	all the very best <i>literally</i> , I shake your hand firmly (mostly used by men)
(обнима́ю и) целую́	<i>literally</i> , (I embrace and) kiss you (mostly used by women)

In formal and official letters the name of the recipient is preceded by the adjective **уважаемый** *literally*, ‘respected’, ‘esteemed’ or **глубокоуважаемый** ‘highly respected/ esteemed’:

Уважаемый Ива́н Петро́вич!	Dear Ivan Petrovich
Глубокоуважаемый госпо́дин Симпсон!	Dear Mr Simpson

Formal letters can end with one of the following salutations:

С ува́жением	Yours faithfully, Yours sincerely
Искренне Ваш	Yours sincerely

NOTE Textbooks generally recommend putting an exclamation mark after the greeting at the beginning of a letter, although a comma can also be used.

13.6.2 Using the telephone

Алло́ (less frequently **алё**) is used to establish initial contact after picking up the telephone. A more formal way of answering the telephone is to say **слу́шаю (вас)** *literally*, ‘I am listening to you’. **Да** ‘yes’ is sometimes used, but is less polite; it tends to be used more often when the connection has been lost and re-established.

Алло́, вас пло́хо слы́шно. Перезвони́те, пожа́луйста.

Hello, I can’t hear you properly. Can you phone me back?

—**Слу́шаю вас.**

—**Алло́, Михаи́л Моисе́евич? До́брый день. Это Цветко́ва из «Вече́рней газе́ты».**

—**Чем могу́ быть поле́зен?**

—Hello.

—Hello, is that Mikhail Moiseevich? This is Tsvetkova from the *Vecherniaia gazeta*.

—How can I help you?

NOTE In Russian there is no problem about combining **здравствуйте** with a greeting such as **алло** or **добрый день**

The courtesy formulae in the business-related calls are normally reduced to a minimum:

—Такси «Тройка». *Слушаю вас.*

—Будьте любезны, нам машину на двадцать два тридцать.

—Пожалуйста, ваш адрес, куда поедem и на чье имя заказ.

—Берёзовый бульвар, 33, квартира 11, на железнодорожный вокзал, фамилия Дубровин.

—Заказ принят.



—Hello, Troika taxi service.

—Can I order a taxi please for 10.30 this evening?

—Can you give me your address, the destination and the name of the customer?

—33 Beriozovyi Bul'var, flat 11, going to the railway station, and the taxi's for Dubrovin.

—Your taxi is ordered.

To ask to speak to somebody the following formulae can be used:

пригласить (or позвать) к телефону
можно
нельзя ли

All three can be followed by the name of the person in the *accusative*; the second and third can also be followed by a verb in the *infinitive*. To ask who is calling, the following sentence is used:

(A) кто его/её спрашивает? Who is calling?

The following sentence can be used to offer to take a message:

Что ему/ей передать? Can I give him/her a message?

—Алло, салон причёсок.

—Будьте добры, пригласите к телефону Станислава Юрьевича.

—У него сейчас клиент. Перезвоните попозже.

—Hello, hairdressers.

—Hello, can I speak to Stanislav Iur'evich, please?

—I'm afraid he's with a customer. Can you ring back later?

—Слушаю вас.
—Здравствуйте, *можно Ни́ну?*
—Одну́ мину́точку. *А кто её спрашивает?*
—Это Валерий, она знает.

—Hello.

—Hello, can I speak to Nina, please?

—Just a minute, Who's calling?

—It's Valerii. She's expecting me to phone.

—Алло́, Макси́м?
—Нет, это его́ отец.
—Добры́й ве́чер, а *нельзя́ ли с Макси́мом перегово́рить?* Это Па́вел, его́
одноку́рсник.
—Максима нет. *Что ему́ переда́ть?*
—Попроси́те, пожа́луйста, что́бы он мне перезвони́л на моби́льный. Он
знает но́мер.

—Hello, is that Maksim?

—No, it's his father.

—Would it be possible to speak to Maksim? This is Pavel from the university.

—Maksim's not here. Can I give him a message?

—Would you mind asking him to phone me back on my mobile? He's got my number.

NOTE As the first example shows, Russian businesses are not always as informative as they might be when they answer the telephone.

There are two ways of telling someone that they have got a wrong-number:

**Вы ошиблись (но́мером).
Вы не туда попали.**

A typical message left on an answering machine (автоотве́тчик) might be:

**Здравствуйте, с ва́ми говори́т автоотве́тчик. Оста́вьте, пожа́луйста,
ваше сообще́ние после звуко́вого сигнала.**

Hello, this is an answering machine. Please leave a message after the tone.

Other useful telephone-related words and phrases include the following:

звони́ть/позвони́ть (+ dat.)	to telephone (someone)
звони́ть/позвони́ть из автома́та	to phone from a call-box
дозвани́ваться/дозвони́ться	to (succeed in) getting through
перезвани́вать/перезвони́ть	to ring back
брать/взять тру́бку	to pick up the phone
веша́ть/повеси́ть <i>or</i> класть /положи́ть тру́бку	to hang up
набира́ть/набра́ть но́мер	to dial a number
моби́льный/сотовы́й телефо́н	mobile telephone, cellphone
моби́льник	mobile (informal)
посыла́ть/посла́ть (отправля́ть/ отпра́вить, ски́дывать/ски́нуть) те́кстовое сообще́ние <i>or</i> СМС (э́смэс, э́смэску)	to send a text message
вводи́ть/ввести́ но́мер в па́мять	to put a number into the memory
заряжа́ть/заряди́ть телефо́н	to charge up a telephone

14

Being, becoming and possession

14.1 Being and becoming

14.1.1 Using the verb *быть*

The verb that corresponds most closely to the English ‘to be’, as used in sentences of the type ‘X is/was/will be Y’, is **быть**. When it is used in this function, **быть** has no *present tense* forms. In writing, the missing verb is normally indicated by a dash (–), especially when both *subject* and *complement* are *nouns*:

Мало кто знает, что мой брат – известный актёр.

Not many people know that my brother is a famous actor.

Эльбрус – самая высокая гора в Европе.

El’brus is the highest mountain in Europe.

Спасибо, что ты всё так быстро сделал. Ты – настоящий герой!

Thanks for doing everything so quickly. You are a real hero.

Дважды два – четыре.

Twice two is four.

The dash is not used when the subject is the pronoun **это** or when the complement is an *adjective*; it tends to be omitted when the subject is a *personal pronoun*:

Это, кажется, ваши ключи.

I think these are your keys.

Запомни золотое правило бизнеса: клиент всегда прав.

Remember the golden rule of business: the customer is always right.

Она́ моя́ двоюродная́ сестра́.

She is my cousin.

For more on the present tense of **быть**, see **4.8**.

For the formation of the future tense of **быть**, see **4.4.1**.

For the formation of the imperative of **быть**, see **4.9.1**.

For the formation of the imperfective gerund of **быть**, see **4.11.1**.

14.1.2 Noun complements of *быть*

As was noted in 3.1.3 and 3.5.3, the complement of *быть*, if it is a noun, is in some circumstances in the *nominative* case and in other circumstances in the *instrumental* case. The general rules for the use of the two cases are as follows:

In the present tense only the nominative is possible. Examples are given in the previous section.

With all other forms of *быть* except the past tense, the instrumental is normally used:

Future tense

Уже́ ясно, что в ближайши́е го́ды инфля́ция бу́дет серьё́зной пробле́мой для́ Росси́йского пра́вительства.

It's already clear that in the next few years inflation will be a serious problem for the Russian government.

Imperative

Профе́ссор, у меня́ к вам про́сьба: бу́дьте мо́им нау́чным ру́ководите́лем.

Professor, I've a favour to ask you. Would you agree to be my supervisor?

Conditional

Е́сли бы́ ты был пре́зидентом Росси́и, как бы́ ты ве́л борьбу́ с корруп́цией?

If you were president of Russia, how would you manage the battle against corruption?

Infinitive

Не обяза́тельно бу́ть проро́ком, что́бы предска́зать, чем э́то всё кончи́тся.

You don't have to be a prophet to predict how it will all end.

Gerund

Он начал свою карьеру, ещё будучи студентом.

He began his career while he was still a student.

For more on the use of the imperative in requests, *see* **18.3.1**.

For more on the use of the gerund, *see* **21.10**.

With the past tense of **быть** there is a tendency to prefer the instrumental:

Когда я был студентом, я был членом трёх обществ, но членом партии я не был.

When I was a student, I was a member of three societies, but I was never a member of the party.

Но мы когда-то были друзьями.

But at one time we were friends.



The *nominative*, however, is normally used if the *complement* refers to a permanent state:

Наша бабушка была красавица, к ней многие сватались.

Our grandmother was a beauty and many sought her hand in marriage.

14.1.2 Sentences where the complement precedes the subject

In Russian, there is no requirement for the subject of a sentence to precede the verb.

For information on the principles of word order in Russian, *see* **20.1**.

It is thus perfectly possible for a sentence to be constructed according to the following pattern: *complement* (in the *instrumental*)—*verb*—*subject* (in the *nominative*). A much quoted example is the following sentence:

Первым человеком в космосе был Юрий Гагарин.

The first man in space was Iurii Gagarin.

With sentences of this type it is not always straightforward to work out which noun should be in the *nominative* and which in the *instrumental*, but in general the following principles apply:

(1) The noun or noun phrase giving the more important information will come at the *end of the sentence*.

(2) The noun or noun phrase indicating the more temporary state will be in the *instrumental*.

The above sentence follows both those principles: the key information here is that it is Iurii Gagarin (and not someone else) who was the first man in space; Iurii Gagarin was always Iurii Gagarin (a permanent state), but he was only the first man in space for a part of his life (a more temporary condition).

Sometimes either noun or noun phrase can be in the *instrumental*, but in such instances there will be a subtle difference in meaning between the two sentences:

Её третьим мужем был режиссёр.

Her third husband was a (theatre or film) director [unlike her other husbands].

Её трéтий муж был режиссёром одногó из москóвских театров.

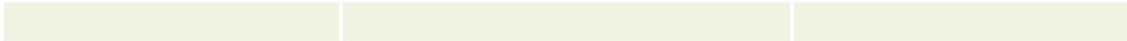
Her third husband was (*or* had been) a director at one of the Moscow theatres [but then may have gone on to do other things].

In the first sentence, being the third husband is seen as the more temporary state: the husband was a director before and possibly after his marriage. In the second sentence, being a director at one of the Moscow theatres is the more temporary state: the husband could have given up this specific activity some time before or during his marriage.

14.1.4 Adjective complements

When the complement of **быть** is an adjective, different rules apply. In the present tense there are two possibilities:

The *long form* in the *nominative*.



The *short form* (for those adjectives that have short forms).

With other forms of **быть** there are three possibilities:

The long form in the *nominative*.

The long form in the *instrumental*.

The short form (for those adjectives that have short forms).

For information on the short forms of adjectives and on those adjectives that have no short forms, *see 6.5*. It will be remembered that short forms occur only in the *nominative*.

The long form in the nominative tends to be used to refer to permanent characteristics, especially in present tense sentences:

Она́ такая́ способная́: ка́жется, что уме́ет де́лать всё.

She's so talented; it seems there's nothing she can't do.

Тут я впервы́е заме́тил, что глаза́ у него́ – голу́бые.

It was then that I noticed for the first time his eyes are bright blue.

Осторо́жно, э́тот гри́б несъе́добный!

Be careful, this mushroom's poisonous.

The long form in the instrumental tends to be preferred when **быть** is in the future, the *conditional* or the *infinitive*:

Я уве́рен, что его́ но́вая кни́га бу́дет о́чень интере́сной.

I am sure that his new book will be very interesting.

Если бы́ он был бо́лее дальновидным, он не стал бы де́лать таких́ заявле́ний.

If he were more far-sighted he would not have made statements of that nature.

Ка́ждый согласи́тся, что лу́чше *быть* бога́тым и здоро́вым, чем бе́дным и больны́м.

Everyone would agree that it is better to be rich and healthy than poor and sick.

When **быть** is in the past tense, the long form in the instrumental is widely used, but the long form in the *nominative* can be used when it is necessary to make it clear that a permanent quality is being talked about:

То́лько тепе́рь она́ поняла́, что её реше́ние бы́ло оши́бочным.

Only now did she understand that her decision had been wrong.

В де́тстве ты была́ непосе́дливой и болтли́вой.

When you were a child you would never sit still or shut up.

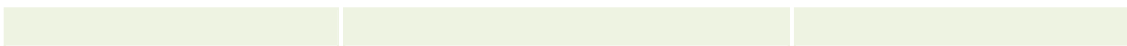
Кварти́ра, где он жил с семье́й, была́ больша́я, све́тлая, с ви́дом на о́зеро.

The flat where he lived with his family was large, bright and had a view onto the lake.

When **быть** is in the imperative, either the long form in the instrumental or the short form can be used:

Бу́дь му́жественным: ниче́го с тобо́й не случи́тся.

Be brave: nothing's going to happen to you.



Водители! Пёрвого сентября будьте особенно *осторожны* и *внимательны*!

Drivers! On 1 September (the start of the school year in Russia) be especially careful and pay particular attention!

For more examples with the short form, *see* below.

The short form tends to be used with reference to a specific occasion or set of circumstances:

Съёмка окончена, все *свободны*.

The filming is over. Everyone is free to go.

Большо́е спасибо за по́мощь. Я о́чень *благодарна*.

Many thanks for your help. I'm very grateful.

—Ну что, пойдём *ужинать*?

—Я вообще-то не *голоден*.

—Shall we go and have some supper?

—I'm not really hungry.

An extension of this is that the short form can have the meaning of 'too...':

Ты ещё *молод*, чтобы судить людей.

You're still too young to judge people.

Эти ту́фли мне *велики*, у вас есть на разме́р *меньше*?

These shoes are too big for me. Do you have them in a size smaller?

Ру́ки *коротки*!

Says you! (*Literally*, 'Your arms are too short!') It is said in response to a threat to carry out a particular action.)

The short form is normally used when the adjective occurs in conjunction with a dependent phrase, most commonly a noun or pronoun in a case other than nominative or accusative, or a prepositional phrase:

Я не знал, что ты способна на такой подвиг.

I didn't know you were capable of such a great achievement.

Я в математике не силен.

I'm not very good at maths.

The short form is used when the complement precedes the subject:

Известны случаи, когда родителям дают гражданство, а их детям – нет.

Cases are known where parents are granted citizenship, but not their children.

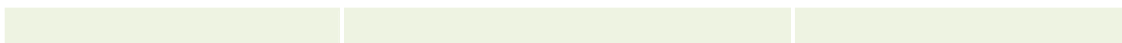
With some adjectives the short form is associated with a particular meaning:

живой	alive, lively	жив	alive
правый	right (not wrong), just; right (not left)	прав	right (not wrong)

The short form of the adjective **хороший** 'good' has the special meaning of 'goodlooking', 'attractive':

Она была так хороша, так мила – слов нет!

She was such an attractive and pleasant person that there are no words to describe her.



The short form of the adjective occurs in a number of set expressions:

Будьте добры́	Please be so kind as to
Будьте любезны́	Please be so kind as to
Будь здоро́в, Будьте здоро́вы	Bless you! (when someone sneezes), Take care (on parting)
Мир те́сен	It's a small world
Я жив, здоро́в	I'm alive and well, I'm still going strong

14.1.5 Synonyms of *быть*

The following verbs are more or less exact synonyms of **быть**. They are found almost exclusively in formal language:

явля́ться

представля́ть собо́й

Явля́ться is used with a *complement* in the *instrumental case*, which, where appropriate, can precede both *verb* and *subject*; both *subject* and *complement* are generally *nouns*, although *adjectival complements* are occasionally found, especially in bureaucratic language. **Представля́ть собо́й** is used with a *direct object* in the *accusative case*; both subject and object are normally nouns:

С 2002 го́да он явля́ется чле́ном Сою́за фотохудожников Росси́и.

He's been a member of the Russian Union of Photographic Artists since 2002.

Учре́дителем Моско́вского междунаро́дного кинофестива́ля явля́ется пра́вительство Росси́и.

The official founder of the Moscow International Film Festival is the Russian government.

Но́вый фильм представля́ет собо́й неуда́чную смесь боеви́ка и мелодрамы́.

The new film is an unsuccessful cross between an action film and a melodrama.

The verb **заклю́чаться в** (+prep.) can correspond to the English 'to be' when it has the meaning of 'consist in'; it can also be used with a clause introduced by the

conjunction **что**:

Главное отличие Бэтмена от других супергероев заключается в отсутствии у него сверхъестественных способностей.

The main difference between Batman and other superheroes is his absence of supernatural abilities.

Главная наша проблема заключается в том, что у нас не осталось денег.

Our main problem is that we have no money left.

The verb **бывать** means 'to tend to be', 'to be (frequently)'. It is used in all levels of language to refer to something that is repeated either intermittently or regularly, but would not be used to refer to something that is always the case; it is normally used with a complement in the *instrumental*, although an adjectival complement can be in the *short form*:

Зачастую такие дискуссии бывают жаркими и затягиваются до позднего вечера.

Quite often these discussions can be heated and can drag on late into the evening.

Used on its own or with **это, бывает** means ‘it happens’ or ‘these things can happen’:

—**Доктор, после удаления зуба у меня воспалилась десна.**
—**Это бывает. Я назначу вам антибиотики.**

—Doctor, after my tooth was removed, my gum became inflamed.

—This can happen. I’ll prescribe you antibiotics.

Бывает, в самый разгар спектакля у кого-нибудь из зрителей вдруг начинает звонить мобильник.

It can happen that at the most exciting point of the play someone’s mobile phone goes off.

With a negative **быва́ть** can indicate that something cannot or should not be expected to happen:

Он прогулял все лекции, а теперь надеется хорошо сдать экзамен.
Чудес не бывает.

He missed all his lectures and now hopes to get a good mark in the exam. He can’t expect miracles.

Лучше не бывает.

It doesn’t get any better.

For more on negation with **быва́ть**, see 15.1.2.

The verb **оказываться/оказаться** means ‘it transpired that’, ‘it turned out to be’, although in practice it can sometimes correspond simply to the English ‘to be’; it is used with a *complement* in the *instrumental*:

Оказывается, мы с ним учились на одном факультете, только в разные годы.

It turns out that we attended the same faculty but in different years.

В конверте был какой-то белый порошок, но он *оказался* безвредным.

There was some white powder in the envelope, but it was (*or* turned out to be) harmless.

14.1.6 The verb **становиться/стать**

The verb **становиться/стать** means ‘to become’. It is used with a complement in the *instrumental*:

Никто и подумать не мог тогда, что он *станет* крупным учёным.

At that time nobody could ever have thought that he would become a distinguished scholar.

Судебные иски потребителей к производителям некачественных товаров *стали* обычным явлением.

Instances of consumers suing manufacturers of poor quality goods have become an everyday occurrence.

Блоги *становятся* всё более популярными среди молодёжи.

Blogs are becoming more and more popular among young people.

In many instances and especially in sentences referring to a particular set of circumstances, it is possible to use, instead of **становиться/стать** with an adjectival complement, an intransitive verb formed from an adjective according to the pattern described in **10.3.3**:



За́ эти го́ды она́ си́льно поху́дела, а он, наобо́рот, распо́лнел.

In the last few years she has become much thinner, while he, on the other hand, has become fatter.

When it refers to a new state of affairs that has come into being, **стать** functions very much like a perfective partner of **быть** and in many instances it can be translated by 'to be':

Киевское «Динамо» под руководством российского специалиста Юрия Семёна впервые стало обладателем Кубка Первого канала.

Dynamo Kiev, under the guidance of the Russian trainer Iurii Sëmin, have won the First Channel Cup for the first time. (*Literally*, have become the winners...for the first time.)

Впервые в истории духовное управление мусульман возглавил этнический русский - им стал Алий Ефтеев.

For the first time in its history the Religious Council of (Russian) Muslims is to be headed by an ethnic Russian: he is Alii Efteev.

Following the same principle, the Russian version of the television quiz *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* is called «Кто хочет **стать** миллионером?». Presumably, everybody wants to *be* a millionaire, but not everyone is necessarily willing to do what is required in order to *become* one.

14.2 Existence, presence and location

14.2.1 The use of the verb **быть**

Existence, presence, and location is also often indicated by the verb **быть**:

Была́ одна́ пробле́ма, но мы сумели её решить.

There was a problem, but we've managed to solve it.

Завтра я буду́ весь день на совеща́нии.

I'll be at a meeting all day tomorrow.

Здесь когда-то *была* старая церковь, но её снесли в пятидесятые годы.

There used to be an old church here, but it was demolished in the 1950s.

In the present tense the third person form **есть** is frequently used, especially when the emphasis is on the fact of presence, rather than on the subject of the sentence; **есть** can be used with plural as well as with singular subjects:

В городе *есть* только один человек, который может нам помочь.

There's only one person in the town who can help us.

***Есть* вещи, о которых не принято говорить вслух.**

There are certain things that are not mentioned in public.

Теперь москóвским автомобилистам *есть* куда пожаловаться на незаконную эвакуацию их машин.

Now there is somewhere where Moscow drivers can complain when their vehicles have been towed away illegally.



14.2.2 Synonyms of **быть**

The verbs **быва́ть** and **ока́зыватьсЯ/ока́заться** (see 14.1.5) can also be used in sentences indicating existence, presence or location; the shades of meaning that they convey are the same as those described in 14.1.5:

Он здесь *быва́ет* то́лько по вто́рникам.

He is normally here only on Tuesdays.

***Быва́ли* случи́, ко́гда вслед за разрывом дипломатических отношений объявлялась война.**

There have been cases when the breaking-off of diplomatic relations has been followed by a declaration of war.

Он забива́ет сто́лько мяче́й и́менно потому́, что всегда́ *ока́зывается* в нужном месте в нужное время.

The reason he scores so many goals is that he's always in the right place at the right time.

The verb **име́ться** is used, mostly in more formal types of language, to indicate existence or presence:

В распоря́жении ха́керов *име́ются* програ́ммы, иденти́фицирующие пароли за не́сколько секунд.

There are programs available to hackers that identify passwords in a few seconds.

The verb **находи́ться** and the past passive participle **располо́жен** are widely used to indicate location:

Моя́ ко́мната *находи́тся/располо́жена* в конце́ коридо́ра, рядом с ванной.

My room is (situated) at the end of the corridor, next to the bathroom.

Го́род Гла́зго *располо́жен/находи́тся* в запа́дной ча́сти Шотла́ндии на обо́их берегах реки́ Клайд.

Glasgow is located in the West of Scotland, on both banks of the River Clyde.

For more on past passive participles, *see* 4.12.4.

The verb **стоять** can be used of buildings, statues and for objects standing vertically:

На центральной площади всё ещё *стоит* памятник Ленину.

In the central square there is still a statue of Lenin.

На полках *стояли* словари и книги на славянских языках.

On the shelves there were dictionaries and other books in Slavonic languages.

The verb **лежать** can be used with reference to something that can be thought of as lying flat. Following this logic the same verb is used with reference to someone in hospital:

В одном из этих конвертов *лежит* тысячерублёвая купюра.

In one of these envelopes there is a bank note for 1,000 roubles.

Он не может сегодня присутствовать, так как *лежит* в больнице.

He can't be here today as he's in hospital.



The verb **сидеть** is used with reference to specific locations, namely, staying at home or in prison; indeed, **сидеть** is sometimes used on its own with the meaning 'to be in prison':

Вчера я сидела дома весь день, так что не пытайся меня уверять, будто ты звонил несколько раз.

I was at home all day yesterday, so don't pretend that you tried to phone several times.

Я знаю, что он сидит (в тюрьме), но не знаю, за что.

I know he's in prison, but I don't know what for.

NOTE The verbs **иметься, находиться, стоять, лежать, сидеть** are *imperfective*.

14.3 Talking about possession

14.3.1 Talking about possession using the preposition **у** (+gen.)

The normal way of talking about possession in Russian does not involve a verb corresponding to the English 'to have'; instead, a construction indicating *location* is used: the verb is normally **быть** (in the third person) and the possessor is indicated by means of the *preposition у* (+gen.):

Сегодня я очень занят, но завтра у меня будет много свободного времени.

I'm very busy today, but tomorrow I'll have a lot of free time.

У него когда-то была машина, но он её продал и теперь ездит только на общественном транспорте.

He used to have a car, but he sold it and now travels only on public transport.

In the present tense, the verb form **есть** can either be present or be omitted. It tends to be used when emphasis is on the fact of possession, rather than the possessor or the item possessed:

У меня́ два брата́ и одна́ сестра́.

I have two brothers and a sister.

У неё́ ру́сые во́лосы и голу́бые глаза́.

She has light brown hair and pale blue eyes.

У меня́ э́та кни́га уже́ есть́.

I already have that book.

For the use of constructions with **у** (+gen.) in sentences indicating location proper, see **21.2.11**.

The verb form **быва́ть** can be used in sentences indicating possession that is frequent, regular or intermittent:

Да́же у извёстных футбо́льных клубов ча́сто *быва́ют* большо́е долги́.

Even well-known football clubs often have big debts.

14.3.2 The verb **ИМЕТЬ**

Russian has an equivalent verb to the English 'to have': this is **иметь**, a first conjugation verb belonging to the class described in **4.6.1 (c)**. It is used for the most part with a limited group of abstract nouns in what are more or less set expressions:

ИМЕТЬ в виду́	to have in mind, to mean
ИМЕТЬ возможность	to have the opportunity
ИМЕТЬ дело с (+ instr.)	to have dealings with
ИМЕТЬ значе́ние	to have significance, to be important
ИМЕТЬ ме́сто	to take place, to occur
ИМЕТЬ на́глость	to have the cheek
ИМЕТЬ послед́ствия	to have consequences
ИМЕТЬ пра́во	to have the right
ИМЕТЬ причи́ну	to have a reason
ИМЕТЬ судимос́ть	to have a previous conviction
ИМЕТЬ че́сть	to have the honour

Интересно́ бы́ло бы́ знать, что он *имёл в виду́*, когда́ задава́л э́тот вопро́с.

It would be interesting to know what he had in mind when he asked that question.

Корреспонде́нты ме́стных газе́т го́раздо ре́же *име́ют возмо́жность* зада́ть вопро́с президе́нту.

Correspondents working for local papers have much less opportunity to ask the president a question.

Ва́ши слова́ *име́ют* для́ меня́ о́громное значе́ние.

Your words are extremely important to me.

Она́ зая́вила, что догово́рные и́гры в те́нисе по-пре́жнему *име́ют ме́сто*, но то́лько в мужско́м разря́де.

She stated that fixed tennis matches still did take place, but only in men's tournaments.

***Име́ю че́сть* предоста́вить сло́во на́шему поче́тному го́стью.**

I now have the honour of asking our distinguished guest to address us.

For an example of **иметь право**, see 15.4.

With **возможность** and **причина** the construction with **у** (+gen.) is also possible:

Если у меня́ будет возможность, я обяза́тельно переда́м ему́ привёт от тебя́.

If I have the opportunity, I will definitely pass on your regards to him.

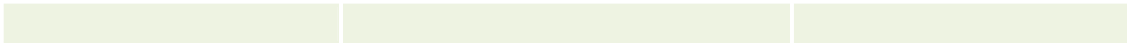
The verb **иметь** can be used to indicate possession, but it tends to occur only in more formal or abstract contexts:

Чтобы претендова́ть на э́ту до́лжность, на́до импе́ть вы́сшее образова́ние.

In order to apply for this post it is essential to have a university degree.

Мно́гие футбо́льные клубы́, несмотря́ на хоро́шие результа́ты, импе́ют большо́е долги́.

Many football clubs, in spite of good results, have large debts.



В браке не состоял, детей не имею.

I have never been married and have no children (e.g. in a formal statement).

В анкете, помнится, была такая графа: «Имеете ли вы родственников за границей?»

I remember that official forms used to contain the question: 'Do you have any relatives living abroad?'

14.3.3 The verbs **обладать** and **владеть**

The verbs **обладать** and **владеть** both mean 'to own', 'to possess' and both are used with an object in the *instrumental*. Their use is normally restricted to formal contexts in which the object possessed has a certain value:

Контрольным пакетом акций этой компании владеет государство.

A controlling share in the company is owned by the state.

До 1867 года Аляской владела Россия.

Until 1867 Alaska was a possession of Russia.

Султан обладал несметными богатствами и неограниченной властью.

The sultan possessed countless riches and unlimited power.

Этот человек обладает уникальной способностью читать чужие мысли.

That man has the unique ability to read other people's thoughts.

The phrase **владеть (иностранным) языком** means 'to know a (foreign) language':

Мой коллега свободно владеет семью иностранными языками.

My colleague has a fluent knowledge of seven foreign languages.

15 Negation

15.1 Simple negation

15.1.1 The particle **НЕ**

The normal way to create a straightforward negative sentence is to insert the negative particle **не** before the verb:

Рекоменду́ется меня́ть де́ньги в аэропорту́ или в гости́нице.

It is advisable to change money at the airport or in the hotel.

Не рекоменду́ется меня́ть де́ньги в аэропорту́ или в гости́нице.

It is not advisable to change money at the airport or in the hotel.

Тепе́рь я зна́ю, что де́лать.

Now I know what to do.

Тепе́рь я не зна́ю, что де́лать.

Now I don't know what to do.

Звони́ домо́й ка́ждый день.

Phone home every day.

Не звони́ домо́й ка́ждый день.

Don't phone home every day.

This rule applies to **быть** 'to be', but only when it is used in the way described in **14.1.1**, that is, in sentences indicating equivalence. In present tense sentences, where there is no verb present, the particle **не** is placed before the complement:

Бою́сь, что его́ но́вая кни́га не бу́дет о́чень интере́сной.

I'm afraid his new book won't be very interesting.

Если бы вы не были крупным бизнесменом, кем вы хотели бы стать?

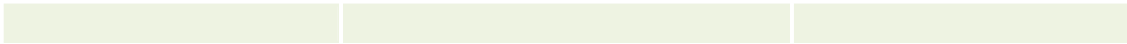
If you weren't a big businessman, what would you like to be?

Мы не олигархи, мы не акционеры, мы просто нормальные люди, которые хотят жить нормальной жизнью.

We're not oligarchs, we're not shareholders, we're just ordinary people who want to live an ordinary life.

Я в математике не силен.

I'm not good at maths.



NOTE The particle *не* is *proclitic*, that is, it forms a single stress unit with the following word. In a small number of past tense forms the stress moves forward from the verb onto the particle. The most widely occurring example is **быть**, where the negated forms of the past tense are stressed according to the following pattern:

Masc. **не́ был** Fem. **не́ была́** N. **не́ было** Pl. **не́ были**

Negation can be reinforced by the adverbs **совсе́м, совершенно, абсолютно** 'absolutely', '(not) at all':

Тепе́рь я *совсе́м/совершенно/абсолютно* не *знаю*, что *де́лать*.

Now I don't know at all what to do; *or* Now I haven't the slightest idea what to do.

15.1.2 Negation of sentences indicating existence, presence, location and possession

When **быть** 'to be' is used in sentences indicating existence, presence, location and possession (that is, those described in **14.2** and **14.3**), special rules for negation apply. An *impersonal construction* is used in which the *noun* or *pronoun* indicating what does not exist or is not present or possessed is in the *genitive* case, and the *verb* is in the *third person singular, neuter* in the past tense. The present tense form **есть** has a negative equivalent **нет**, which can never be omitted:

Я *уве́рен*, что *бу́дут* *пробле́мы*.

I am certain there will be problems.

Я *уве́рен*, что *не́ бу́дет* *пробле́м*.

I am certain there won't be (any) problems.

В *двадцáтые* *го́ды* в *Росто́ве* *уже́* *был* *университе́т*.

In the 1920s there was already a university in Rostov.

В *конец* *девятна́дцатого* *ве́ка* в *Росто́ве* *ещё* *не́ было* *университе́та*.

At the end of the nineteenth century there still was no university in Rostov.

Есть приме́ры э́того явле́ния и в Росси́и.

There are examples of this phenomenon in Russia.

В Росси́и *нет* приме́ров э́того явле́ния.

There are no examples of this phenomenon in Russia.

За́втра у меня́ бу́дет вре́мя для э́того.

I shall have time for this tomorrow.

За́втра у меня́ *не бу́дет* вре́мени для э́того.

I won't have time for this tomorrow.

У них дочь.

They have a daughter.

У них *нет* сы́на.

They have no son.



У меня́ эта́ кни́га уже́ есть.

I already have that book.

У меня́ э́той кни́ги уже́ нет.

I no longer have that book.

Particular attention is drawn to the following examples, where this construction is used to indicate absence:

—Мо́жно погово́рить с Га́лей?

—Can I speak to Galia?

—Да, она́ здесь.

—Yes, she's here.

Or

—Нет, сейча́с её́ нет.

—No, she's not here at the moment.

Or

—Нет, её́ нет до́ма сейча́с.

—No, she's not at home at the moment.

Я был на э́том собра́нии: я всё́ по́мню.

I was at that meeting. I can remember everything.

Меня́ не бы́ло на э́том собра́нии: я не зна́ю, что там обсужда́ли.

I wasn't at that meeting. I don't know what was discussed there.

This construction is not found only with **быть**, but also with a number of other

verbs when they are used to indicate existence, presence, location or possession:

быва́ть	to be frequently <i>or</i> to be regularly
оказыва́ться/оказа́ться	to turn out to be
остава́ться/оста́ться	to remain
происходи́ть/произо́йти	to happen, to occur
случа́ться/случи́ться	to happen, to occur
существова́ть (нсв)	to exist

В импе́рии *не быва́ет гра́ждан*. Есть то́лько по́дданные импе́ратора.

You don't have citizens in an empire. You just have subjects of the emperor.

В его́ маши́не *не оказа́лось ме́ста* для меня́.

(It turned out that) there was no room in his car for me.

В Москве́ *не оста́лось дешёвых рестора́нов*.

There are no cheap restaurants left in Moscow.

Чтобы́ *этого́ не случи́лось*, надо́ во́время опла́чивать счета́.

For that not to happen, you have to pay your bills on time.

Еди́ной моде́ли демокра́тии про́сто *не суще́ствует*.

A single model for democracy simply doesn't exist.

NOTE The expression **Его́ не ста́ло** is a somewhat high-flown way of saying 'He has died'.

15.2 Partial negation

15.2.1 Negating only part of a sentence

In the examples given in 15.1 it is the whole sentence that is negated. Where, however, it is only a single word or a specific part of a sentence that requires to be negated, the *negative* particle **не** is placed immediately *before* the word or phrase concerned:

Он приезжает не в четверг, а в пятницу.

He isn't coming on Thursday, but on Friday.

Не каждый умеет писать на таком прекрасном русском языке, как ты.

Not everyone can write such excellent Russian as you.

The position of **не** can affect the meaning of the sentence:

Очень не рекомендую вам менять деньги в аэропорту или в гостинице.

I would very much advise you not to change money at the airport or in the hotel.

Я вам не очень рекомендую менять деньги в аэропорту или в гостинице.

I would not particularly/really advise you to change money at the airport or in the hotel.

In the second example only **очень** is negated.

Её сегодня нет дома.

She's not at home today.

Она сегодня не дома, а на работе.

She's not at home today, but at work.

In the second example only **дома** is negated. When only part of the sentence is

negated, *impersonal constructions* of the type described in **15.2** are not used.

15.2.2 'Pseudo-negatives'

In some instances this use of **не** creates set phrases that are negative in form, but not necessarily in meaning:

не раз (not once, but) several times
не один (not one, but) several

Мы не раз обсуждали этот вопрос на заседаниях совета директоров.

We've discussed this question several times at board meetings.

Пережив не один тяжелейший кризис, «Спартак» выжил.

Having come through several extremely serious crises, Spartak has survived.

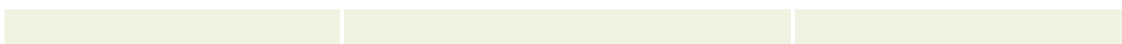
In **7.3.2** examples were given of the use of the phrase **не тот** to mean 'the wrong...'; **не** can also be combined with the adverbs **там** 'there' and **туда** 'thither', 'to that place' to similar effect:

Вы не там сидите.

You're sitting in the wrong place.

Вы не туда попали.

You've got the wrong number. (*Literally*, You've ended up in the wrong place.)



15.3 Negative adverbs, negative pronouns and the negative particle **НИ**

15.3.0 Introduction

Russian has a number of negative adverbs, negative pronouns, as well as the negative particle **ни**, which correspond to such English negative words as 'nowhere', 'nothing' and 'neither'. In Russian, these words are normally used in conjunction with the particle **не** in what appear to be sentences with a 'double negative'.

15.3.1 Negative adverbs

The following negative adverbs are used in Russian:

никогда́	never
ника́к	in no way, by no means
нигде́	nowhere
никуда́	(to) nowhere
ниоткуда́	from nowhere
нисколько́	not in the slightest
ничу́ть	not in the slightest

Но мы *никогда́ не* были друзья́ми.

But we were never friends.

Он *ника́к не* реаги́рует на мои́ про́сбы.

He doesn't react in any way to my requests.

Бы́ло вре́мя, чёрная икра́ *не* продава́лась *нигде́*.

There was a time when black caviar was not sold anywhere.

***Никуда́ не* уходите́.**

Don't go off anywhere.

Я помо́щи *ниоткуда́ не* жду.

I'm not expecting help from anywhere.

Его *ниско́лько не* смуща́л тот факт, что уже два́жды ему́ откáзывали.

He was not in the slightest embarrassed by the fact that he had already been turned down twice.

Я *ничу́ть не* сомнева́юсь, что он врёт.

I don't doubt in the slightest that he's lying.

15.3.2 Negative pronouns

The main negative pronouns used in Russian are:

никто́	no one
ничто́/ничего́	nothing
никакой	not any, no

Никто́, ничто́/ничего́ and **никакой** decline like the interrogative pronouns **кто, что** and **какой** respectively (*see 7.4.1 and 7.4.2*); for more on **ничто́/ничего́**, *see 15.3.3*.

Сего́дня *никто́ не* звони́л.

Nobody phoned today.

Я никого́ не обвиняю, но уже́ никому́ не верю.

I'm not accusing anybody, but I no longer believe anyone.

Ничего́ здесь не понимаю.

I can't understand anything here.

Я не получи́л от него́ никако́го отве́та.

I haven't received any answer from him.

Прода́жа таки́х воору́жений не ограни́чена никаки́ми междунаро́дными соглаше́ниями.

The sale of such weapons is not restricted by any international agreements.

Further examples with **ничто́/ничего́** are given in **15.3.3**.

There are two *negative pronouns* that are used rather less frequently: **ничей́** 'no one's'.

This declines like the pronoun **чей** (see **7.4.2**):

—**Чья́ э́та соба́ка?**

—**Ничья́.**

—Whose dog is that?

—Nobody's.

The feminine form **ничья́** is also used as a noun with the meaning 'draw' (in sport):

Их последняя игра́ кончилась ничье́й.

Their last game ended as a draw.

The pronoun **никой́** is really only used in two set phrases that serve as emphatic negatives:

нико́им образом in no way whatsoever
ни в ко́ем случае in no circumstances whatsoever

Госуда́рственные корпора́ции *нико́им образом* не замеща́ют частный бизнес.

In no way whatsoever do state corporations take the place of private business.

Телевизио́нная акаде́мия *ни в ко́ем случае* не должна́ быть политизи́рованной.

In no circumstances whatsoever should the Academy of Television become politicised.

As the last example shows, when these pronouns are used with prepositions, the preposition is placed between the negative prefix and the rest of the pronoun, and the whole unit is written as three separate words:

Я *ни с кем* не обсужда́л ва́шу пробле́му.

I haven't discussed your problem with anyone.

Э́тот стиль *ни с че́м* не спута́ешь.

You wouldn't confuse this style with anything.

Её сопе́рник *ни при каки́х* обстоя́тельствах не мо́жет рассчиты́вать на подде́ржку национа́льных меньшинств.

There are no circumstances in which her rival can rely on the support of the ethnic minorities.



Я ни в чьей помощи не нуждаюсь.

I don't need anyone's help.

15.3.3 More on **ничто́/ничего́**

The form **ничто́** is used only for the nominative case and thus occurs only on the fairly rare occasions when this pronoun is the *grammatical subject* of a sentence:

Ничто́ здесь меня́ не интересу́ет.

Nothing here interests me.

Forms in ... **что** are also used in conjunction with *prepositions* that take the *accusative* case:

Она́ ни за что́ не по́едет на Дальний Восто́к!

She won't go to the Far East at any price!

The pronoun is found much more often in the form **ничего́**; this is the ending for the *genitive* case, but it is also the form used without exception when the pronoun serves as the *direct object* of a *transitive* verb:

For more on transitive verbs, see **4.13.1**.

Мы *ничего́* не бо́имся.

We're not afraid of anything.

На́ши де́ти *ничего́* не чита́ют.

Our children don't read anything.

The form **ничего́** is also used in impersonal expressions of the type:

***Ничего́* не слы́шно, *ничего́* не ви́дно.**

We can't hear anything, we can't see anything. (*Literally*, Nothing is to be heard...)

In addition, **ничего́** can have the meaning of ‘all right, not too bad’:

—**Как дела́?**

—**Ничего́.**

—How are things?

—Not too bad *or* OK.

Фильм *ничего́*, посмотре́ть мо́жно.

The film’s OK; it’s watchable at least.

Ничего́ (стра́шного) can be used in reply to an apology:

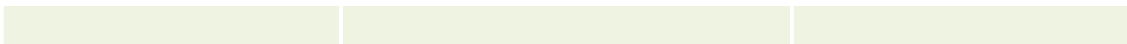
—**Извини́те, пожа́луйста.**

—**Ничего́.**

—I’m sorry.

—That’s all right.

For more on the use of **ничего́**, see **13.2.5** and **16.2.4**.



15.3.4 More on negative adverbs and pronouns

It is perfectly possible in Russian to combine two or more negative adverbs and/or pronouns in the same sentence:

Никто́ никому́ ничего́ не должен.

Nobody owes anybody anything.

Я никогда́ никому́ ничего́ подобного не говори́ла.

I never said anything of the sort to anybody.

Negative adverbs and pronouns can be used in conjunction with the negative impersonal predicate forms **нельзя́** ‘it is forbidden’, ‘it is impossible’ and **невозможно́** ‘it is impossible’:

Во время́ дежурства никуда́ нельзя́ выходить.

You are not allowed to go anywhere while you are on duty.

Ника́к нельзя́ открыть́ окно́.

It’s totally impossible to open the window.

Нигде́ невозможно́ было́ купить чёрной икры́.

It was impossible to buy black caviar anywhere.

For more on impersonal predicate forms, *see* **11.2.2**.

For more on the aspects of infinitive verbs used with **нельзя́**, *see* **5.7.5**.

There are some more or less set phrases where negative adverbs or pronouns are used without the particle **не**. These include:

Я здесь ни при чём.

This has nothing to do with me.

Мы оста́лись ни с че́м.

We were left with nothing.

Вы сейча́с нахо́дитесь на доро́ге в никуда́.

At the moment, you're on a road to nowhere.

15.3.5 The negative particle **НИ**

When it is used as a negative particle **ни** has two functions. The sequence **ни ... ни** corresponds to English 'neither...nor':

Я не ем ни ры́бы ни мя́са.

I eat neither fish nor meat.

Она не уме́ет разгова́ривать ни с колле́гами ни с ученика́ми.

She doesn't know how to talk either to her colleagues or to her pupils.

Я не хочу́ ни есть ни пить.

I want neither to eat nor to drink.

Его́ нет ни до́ма ни на рабо́те.

He's neither at home nor at work.

The particle **не** is not used when **ни ... ни** is used in certain set phrases of the type:

ни ры́ба ни мя́со
ни с того́ ни с сего́

neither one thing nor another
suddenly, for no obvious reason



Она́ ни с того́ ни с сего́ реши́ла всё бро́сить и уе́хать раба́тать в Ита́лию.

She suddenly decided to give everything up and go off and work in Italy.

The other use of **ни** is to make negation more emphatic:

Я не зна́ю ни одно́го сло́ва по-кита́йски.

I don't know a single word of Chinese.

Я ни ра́зу не́ был на Кавка́зе.

Not even once have I been to the Caucasus.

NOTE It is important to distinguish these emphatic negatives (which are combined with the particle **не**) from the 'pseudo-negatives' **не один, не раз** described in **15.3.2**.

Они́ не обрати́ли на меня́ ни мале́йшего внима́ния.

They didn't pay me even the slightest attention.

Ни с ме́ста!

Don't move! *or* Stay right where you are!

NOTE The negative particle **ни** should be distinguished from the reinforcing particle **ни** found in constructions such as:

как бы то ни́ было	however that might be
что бы ты ни́ говорил	whatever you might say

For more on these constructions, *see* **21.6.4** and **23.2.1**.

15.4 The case of the direct object in negative sentences

In **3.3.3** it was noted that the *genitive* is sometimes used instead of the *accusative* for the *direct object* of a *transitive* verb in a *negative* sentence. The choice of case

is partly a matter of rules, but partly a matter of preference.

The genitive is always used in conjunction with the emphatic particle **ни**:

Я не знаю ни одного слова по-китайски.

I don't know a single word of Chinese.

Они не обратили на меня ни малейшего внимания.

They didn't pay me even the slightest attention.

The genitive is normally used:

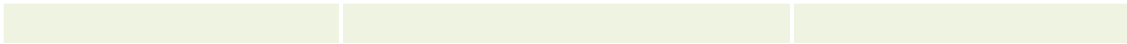
(1) In sentences with a *negative adverb* or the *negative pronoun* **никакой**:

Я никогда не ем мяса.

I never eat meat.

Я не получил от него никакого ответа.

I haven't received any answer from him.



(2) In constructions involving the verb **иметь**, as well as in some other set phrases such as **играть роль** 'to play a part':

Они не имеют права входить в ваш дом без вашего разрешения.

They have no right to enter your house without your permission.

Здесь интеллигенция не играет значительной роли.

Here the intelligentsia does not play a significant part.

(3) When the object is **это**:

Этого я не знал.

That is something I didn't know.

The *genitive* tends to be preferred in general statements or when the object is indefinite:

Ты что, газет не читаешь?

You mean to say you don't read newspapers?

Почему ты не купил хлеба?

Why didn't you buy (any) bread?

The *accusative* is used as follows:

(1) When it is not the whole the sentence, but only a specific part that is negated:

Не каждый совершит такой поступок.

Not everyone would do something like that.

(2) In sentences where the negation is apparent, rather than real, for example, 'pseudo-negatives' of the type described in **15.2.2** or genuine double negatives of the type **нельзя... не** 'it is impossible not to':

Мы не раз обсуждали этот вопрос на заседаниях совета директоров.

We've discussed this question several times at board meetings.

Нельзя не почувствовать гордость, когда читаешь о его спортивных подвигах.

It's impossible not to feel pride when you read about his sporting achievements.

In most instances not included in any of the above categories either case may be found:

Я решил не тратить время/времени на оправдания.

I am not going to waste time on excuses.

Я не знаю его жену/жены.

I don't know his wife.

Мясо/мяса мы не едим только по будням.

We don't eat meat on weekdays only.

15.5 Negatives of the **ничего, некогда** type

Russian has a special set of negative pronouns and adverbs that are used in sentences corresponding to the English 'there is nothing to do', 'there is nowhere to go':

некого	there is no one
ничего	there is nothing



не́когда	there is no time
не́где	there is nowhere
не́куда	there is nowhere (to go)
нео́ткуда	there is nowhere (from where)
не́зачем	there is no point

These forms are mostly used with an *infinitive* verb. If there is a *logical subject*, it goes, as in most impersonal sentences, in the *dative*:

Он вдруг по́нял, что ему́ не́кому передава́ть о́пыт.

He suddenly realised there was nobody he could pass on his experience to.

Нам здесь не́чего де́лать.

There's nothing for us to do here.

Мне не́когда тут с ва́ми рассу́живаться.

I haven't got time to sit around here with you.

Здесь не́где припарковáть маши́ну.

There's nowhere here to park a car.

На́шей молодё́жи ве́чером не́куда пойти́.

Our young people have nowhere to go in the evening.

Таку́ю о́громную су́мму взять бы́ло нео́ткуда.

There was nowhere to get hold of such an enormous sum (of money).

Мне не́зачем е́хать за гра́ницу: у меня́ здесь есть всё, что ну́жно.

There's no point in going abroad; I've everything I need here.

NOTE These sentences are the negative equivalent of sentences of the following type (already illustrated in **14.2.1**):

Теперь москóвским автомобилистам есть куда пожаловаться на незаконную эвакуацию их машин.

Now there is somewhere where Moscow drivers can complain when their vehicles have been towed away illegally.

In this case, however, the negative sentences are rather more frequent than those without negation.

When *pronouns* of this type are used with a *preposition*, the preposition is normally placed between the negative prefix and the pronoun, and the whole unit is written as three separate words:

Здесь *не с кем* выпить.

There's nobody to have a drink with here.

Нам с тобой *не о чем* говорить.

The two of us have nothing to talk about.

Нéчего can also mean 'there's no need to...', 'there's no cause to...', used in the sense of conveying a reproach:

Кто виноват, что вы пропустили самое интересное? Нéчего было уходить так рано.

Whose fault is it that you missed the most interesting part? There was no need to leave so early.

Работать надо, *ничего* дурака валять!

You need to get on with your work, instead of messing around.

Тут удивляться *ничего*.

There's no cause to be surprised.

Some expressions involving these negative forms have become set phrases:

не за что	don't mention it (a fairly formal reply to thanks)
от <i>ничего</i> делать	from want of anything better to do (note that the preposition goes before the entire phrase)
дальше <i>некуда</i>	that's the limit, it can't get any worse

—**Большое спасибо..**

—***Не за что.***

—Thank you very much.

—Don't mention it.

Некоторые полагают, что советский человек читал *от ничего* делать.

Some people think that people in the Soviet Union read because they hadn't anything better to do.

Ситуация до того осложнилась, что *дальше некуда*.

The situation's become so complicated that it can't get any worse.

16 Expressing attitudes

16.1 Expressing attitudes using suffixes

16.1.0 Introduction

A very important means by which attitudes are expressed in Russian is the use of certain *suffixes*, especially those attached to *nouns*. These suffixes, which are described in detail in **10.1.1**, are conventionally known as *diminutive* and *augmentative suffixes*, but these terms are somewhat misleading, since in addition to (and sometimes instead of) any connotations of size, they also give information about the attitude of the speaker. It is the use of these suffixes that often makes many people who come into contact with Russian describe the language as being unusually emotional and expressive. At the same time, however, these suffixes are particularly difficult for learners to master, partly because of the great variety of suffixes available and the sometimes unpredictable nature of the way in which they are used, and partly because the connotations they contain and the nuances of attitude that they express are often extremely subtle.

In general terms, suffixes with *positive* connotations, all of which are diminutive suffixes, render things small and/or ‘nice’ or ‘cute’. Suffixes with negative connotations, which can be diminutive or augmentative, on the other hand, make things either smaller or bigger, but also uglier or in some other way less appreciable.

16.1.1 Using diminutive suffixes with positive connotations

In the following examples nouns are used with a *diminutive* suffix that has a positive connotation. In these sentences the suffix is not intended to give information about size, but instead serves to convey a positive feeling from the speaker to the listener, for example, helping to soften a command or a request. For this reason the suffix itself is generally untranslatable, although sometimes its effect may be conveyed in English by other means:

Ну, съешьте ещё тарелочку!

Come on, eat up another plateful, please.

Будьте любезны, ваши билетики?

Can I see your tickets, please?

Извините, можно вас на минуточку?

Excuse me, could I have a word with you?

Or Excuse me, could I see you for a minute?



Простите, огоньку не найдётся?

Excuse me, you wouldn't happen to have a light, would you?

Запишите, пожалуйста, телефончик: если кран опять потечёт, позвоните мне.

Do please write down my phone number. If the tap starts dripping again, feel free to telephone me.

Жизнь на новом месте пошла гладко, и они уже стали подумывать о том, чтобы завести второго ребёнка.

After the move everything was going smoothly and they were starting to think about having a second child.

К лету я равнодушен: жара, пыль, комары... А вот зимушку морозную люблю!

I'm not bothered about summer, with all the heat, the dust and the mosquitoes, but I really love a cold and frosty winter.

Заходи завтра вечером, выпьем по рюмочке!

Call in tomorrow evening for a dram (*or* and we'll have a glass of something warming).

In the following sentences the suffix combines both a positive emotion and a reference to size:

Дует тёплый ветерок, и по небу плывут пушистые облака.

There's a warm breeze, and fluffy clouds are scudding across the sky.

В подаренной сумочке она обнаружила серебряное колечко и зеркальце в форме сердечка.

In the handbag she'd been given she found a silver ring and a small mirror in the shape of a heart.

Смотри, какая забавная собачка!

Look, what a funny little dog!

Наденьте малышу что-нибудь на головку, на улице уже прохладно.

You'd better cover the baby's head; it's quite chilly outside.

16.1.2 Using suffixes with negative connotations

In the following examples the *diminutive* suffix **-ишко** refers to size, but is also used to express a negative or diminishing attitude on the part of the speaker:

Городишко, в который его командировали, оказался серым и скучным, как тысячи других провинциальных городков на этом свете.

The miserable hole that he'd been sent to was as grey and as boring as thousands of other provincial towns on this earth.

А этот зайчишка откуда взялся? У тебя не было такой игрушки.

Where did you find that wretched little hare? That's not one of your toys.

Он бросил в чемодан старенький свитер, две пары носков да кое-какое бельишко.

He threw into the suitcase an old sweater, two pairs of socks and some underwear.



Augmentative suffixes normally convey both a reference to (large) size and generally negative connotations:

Тако́й го́лоси́на ко́го хо́чешь разбу́дит.

A voice like that could wake anyone up.

С егó кулачи́цами ему́ бы бо́ксом занима́ться, а не на скри́пке игра́ть.

With fists like that he should take up boxing, not the violin!

Он сдал ключи́ от ко́мнаты, но такую́ грязи́щу по́сле себя́ оста́вил, – да́же посу́ду за собо́й не помы́л!

He handed in the keys to the room, but left such a filthy mess behind; he didn't even do the washing up!

Сосе́дний дом поше́л под сно́с; стои́т гро́хот, пыли́ща . . .

They've started to demolish the building next door; there's noise and dust everywhere!

Не дыши́ на меня́; от тебя́ ви́нищем па́хнет!

Don't breathe on me; you smell terribly of booze!

NOTES

(i) As the first, second and fourth of the above examples demonstrate, the addition of a diminutive or an augmentative suffix, regardless of the ending, does not affect the gender of the original noun (*see also 10.1.1*).

(ii) Although the augmentative suffix *-ище* normally has negative connotations, the noun *дружи́ще*, used as a form of address, expresses both a familiar and a positive attitude:

Сто лет тебя́ не ви́дел, дружи́ще!

I haven't seen you for ages, mate!

16.1.3 Nouns indicating members of the family

Diminutive suffixes are frequently used to add expressive connotations to nouns indicating members of the family. Not surprisingly, the connotations of these suffixes are almost invariably positive. The following terms might be used when referring to a member of your family:

дочь	daughter	до́чка, до́ченька, дочу́рка
сын	son	сыно́к, сыно́чек, сыни́шка
ма́ма	mum, mother	ма́мочка, ма́муля, ма́маша, ма́менька
сестра́	sister	сестри́ца, сестри́чка, сестре́нка
брат	brother	бра́тник, бра́тец

На́ша до́чка уже́ перешла́ во второ́й класс.

Our daughter has already gone into second year (at primary school).

The following terms can be used as affectionate forms of address to members of your family:

жена́	wife	жёнушка
му́ж	husband	муже́нок
ма́ма	mum, mother	ма́мочка, ма́муля
па́па	dad, father	па́почка, па́пуля
сын	son	сыно́к, сыно́чек, сыну́ля
сестра́	sister	сестри́ца, сестри́чка
бра́т	brother	бра́тец, бра́тишка
дедушка	grandfather	деду́ля

бабушка	grandmother	бабуля
дядя	uncle	дядюшка
тётя	aunt	тётушка

Сынóчек, сде́лай му́зыку поти́ше, а то сосе́ди о́пять приду́т жа́ловаться.

Turn your music down (son), or else the neighbours will be coming to complain again.

NOTES

- (i) In this usage the suffix **-ишк-** (**сыннишка**) has positive connotations.
- (ii) **Бра́тец** is often used as a familiar form of address to a male person:

А ты, бра́тец, хитёр! Лóвко придумал!

You're a sharp one, mate! I don't know how you thought that one up!

16.1.4 Using suffixes with forenames

It was noted in **12.1.1** that Russian forenames have various different forms, of which the most important are the *full* and *familiar* versions. In addition, it is possible to add a wide range of diminutive suffixes to the familiar version in order to create forms that can express various subtle nuances of connotation. The two most frequently used suffixes are **-** and **-очк-/ечк-, -оньк-/еньк-**. These suffixes normally convey different attitudes: the former expresses close familiarity and even on occasion slight disdain; it is typically used between close friends and siblings. The latter expresses strong affection and love, and might be used by parents when comforting their children or when writing letters to them.

The following tables give the various forms of selected forenames:

Male forenames

<i>Full version</i>	<i>'Standard' familiar version</i>	<i>Version that expresses close familiarity or disdain</i>	<i>Version that expresses strong affection</i>
Борис	Боря	Борька	Боренька
Валентин	Валя	Валька	Валечка
Владимир	Володя, Вова	Вовка	Вовочка
Григорий	Гриша	Гришка	Гришенька
Дмитрий	Дима	Димка	Димочка
Евгений	Женя	Женька	Женечка
Иван	Ваня	Ванька	Ванечка
Михаил	Миша	Мишка	Мишенька
Николай	Коля	Колька	Коленька
Пётр	Петя	Петька	Петенька
Сергей	Серёжа	Серёжка	Серёженька

Female forenames

<i>Full version</i>	<i>'Standard' familiar version</i>	<i>Version that expresses close familiarity or disdain</i>	<i>Version that expresses strong affection</i>
А́нна	А́ня	А́нька	А́нечка
Вале́нтина	Ва́ля	Ва́лька	Ва́лечка
Екатери́на	Ка́тя	Ка́тька	Ка́тенька, Катю́ша



<i>Full version</i>	<i>'Standard' familiar version</i>	<i>Version that expresses close familiarity or disdain</i>	<i>Version that expresses strong affection</i>
Елѐна	Лѐна	Лѐнка	Лѐночка
Евгѐния	Жѐня	Жѐнька	Жѐнечка
Марѝя	Маша	Машка	Машенька
Нѝна	Нѝна	Нѝнка	Нѝночка
Поли́на	По́ля	Поли́нка	Поле́нька
Раиса	Рая	Райка	Раечка
Светла́на	Свѐта	Свѐтка	Свѐточка

Петька, почему́ не звони́шь, стари́к?

Petia, old man, why do you never phone?

Машенька, не надо волноваться. Всё будет хорошо́.

Masha, there's no need to worry. Everything will turn out OK.

16.5 Using suffixes with adjectives and adverbs

As was noted in **10.2.7**, it is also possible to add *diminutive* and *augmentative* suffixes to *adjectives* and *adverbs* in order to create forms that can express a particular attitude on behalf of the speaker. In many instances the nuances are particularly subtle and difficult to express in translation:

Пока́ по телеви́зору шла рекла́ма, он бы́стренько сходи́л на ку́хню и отку́порил бутылочку хо́лоденького пивка́.

While the advertisements were on TV he nipped into the kitchen and opened a bottle of nice cool beer.

На сле́дующий день она́ уже́ хва́сталась в шко́ле своѝм но́веньким телефо́ном.

The next day she was already showing off her new telephone in school.

У́тром на своѝм ста́реньком велосипѝде приѝехал дере́вѝнский почта́льон; привѝз бабушке пенсѝю.

In the morning the village postman arrived on his ancient bicycle; he had brought

granny her pension.

Нет, купа́ться я се́годня не бу́ду; вода́ холоди́ющая!

I have absolutely no intention of bathing today; that water's freezing cold!

Когда́ он появи́лся на за́няти́ях, под гла́зом у него́ красова́лся здоро́веньный синя́к.

He came to lectures sporting a fine black eye.

—Вы́ключи телеви́зор; оте́ц спит.

—Я тихо́нечко досмотрю́ фильм и пото́м вы́ключу, мо́жно?

—Turn off the television; your father's asleep.

—Will it be all right if I turn it down now and turn it off after the film?

—Зна́чит, мы догово́рились; встреча́емся за́втра в семь.

—Вот и чуде́нечко!

—We're agreed, then. We're meeting tomorrow at seven.

—That's great!



16.2 Likes, dislikes, loves, hates and preferences

16.2.1 To like and to love: **нравиться/понравиться** and **любить/полюбить**

Нравиться/понравиться and **любить/полюбить** correspond approximately to the English verbs ‘to like’ and ‘to love’. In general, the latter pair of verbs indicates a stronger feeling than the former.

Любить/полюбить is transitive: the grammatical subject in the nominative case indicates the person experiencing the feeling, while the *direct object* in the *accusative* indicates the object of his or her affection. With **нравиться/понравиться** the roles of subject and object are inverted: the grammatical *subject* in the *nominative* denotes what is liked and the *indirect object* in the *dative* denotes the person experiencing the feeling.

The following sentences illustrate the use of these verbs with reference to inanimate objects:

Я люблю классическую музыку.

I like/love classical music.

Я люблю зелёные яблоки.

I like/love green apples.

Я не люблю классическую музыку/классической музыки.

I don't like/enjoy classical music.

Мне нравится классическая музыка.

I like/am fond of classical music.

Мне нравятся зелёные яблоки.

I like/am fond of green apples.

***Мне не нра́вится* классическая му́зыка.**

I don't like (or I'm not fond of) classical music.

For more on the use of the accusative and the genitive cases to indicate the direct object of negative transitive verbs, *see* **15.4**.

The perfective verb **пона́виться** tends to be used to indicate an immediate reaction to something:

***Мне о́чень пона́вились* э́ти зелёные я́блоки.**

I really liked those green apples (when I tasted them).

***Мне не пона́вился* его́ послед́ний фильм.**

I didn't like his last film (when I saw it).


When they are used with reference to living beings, and especially people, **люби́ть/полюби́ть** and **нра́виться/пона́виться** correspond respectively to the English 'to love' and 'to like':

***Она полюби́ла* его́ с пе́рвого взгля́да.**

She fell in love with him at first sight.

***Он пона́вился* ей с пе́рвого взгля́да.**

She took an instant liking to him.



Both pairs of verbs can be used with an *infinitive* or with *subordinate clauses* introduced by **когда́, е́сли** or **что**:

Я люблю́ слу́шать совреме́нную му́зыку.

I enjoy listening to contemporary music.

Ей пра́вилось гуля́ть в па́рке по́сле у́жина.

She used to like going for a walk in the park after supper.

В де́тстве она́ люби́ла, когда́ ей чита́ли вслух.

When she was a child, she used to like being read aloud to.

А тебе́ понравится́, е́сли кто́-нибудь начи́нёт сле́дить за ка́ждым твои́м ша́гом?

Would you like it if someone started to watch you at every step?

Ему́ не пра́вилось, что́ по́сле ка́ждой вече́ринки ма́ть звони́ла роди́телям его́ друзе́й.

He didn't like the fact that his mother phoned his friends' parents after every party.

16.2.2 Other ways of talking likes and dislikes

The phrase **быть по душе́** is similar in meaning to **нравиться** and is constructed in the same way: the grammatical *subject* in the *nominative* denotes what is liked and the *indirect object* in the *dative* denotes the person experiencing the feeling:

Нам бы́ло по душе́ тако́е обслу́живание.

We liked that level of service.

The following words and phrases express a very strong degree of liking:

обожа́ть (нсв)	to adore, to admire
быть в восторге́ от (+ gen.)	to be delighted with

Она́ *обожает* балёт.

She adores ballet.

Своего́ старшего брата́ он *обожал* и подража́л ему́ во всё́м.

He admired his elder brother and imitated everything he did.

Мы *были* в *восторге* от тако́го приёма.

We were delighted by the welcome we got.

There are a number of useful words and phrases that use forms derived from **любить**:

влюбля́ться/влюби́ться в (+ acc.)	to fall in love with
влюблён/влюбле́н в (+ acc.)	in love with
влюблённый	lover, person in love (often plural)
любо́вник/любо́вница	lover (sexual partner)
люби́тель/люби́тельница	lover (of an activity), (masculine form only) amateur

Ромео́ *влюбился* в Джульетту́ с *первого* взгля́да.

Romeo fell in love with Juliet at first sight.

Они́ *влюблены́* друг в дру́га.

They are in love with one another.



Моя сестра влюблена в театр; она не пропускает ни одной премьеры.

My sister is in love with the theatre; she never misses a single first night.

Молодые влюблённые любят гулять по набережным Невы, когда в Петербурге стоят белые ночи.

Young lovers like to stroll along the banks of the Neva during the White Nights season in St Petersburg.

Ходили слухи, что она какое-то время была любовницей известного политика.

There were rumours that for some time she was the mistress of a famous politician.

Его мать – большая любительница фигурного катания.

His mother is a great lover of figure-skating.

Конкурсы для профессионалов и любителей обычно проходят отдельно.

Competitions for professionals and amateurs usually take place separately.

Любитель often appears as part of a compound noun denoting someone who practises a particular hobby:

фотолюбитель	a keen photographer
кинолюбитель	an amateur film maker
автолюбитель	someone whose hobby is cars and/or driving.

16.2.3 Talking about preferences

Preferences are indicated using the verb **предпочитать/предпочесть**. If the item to which something is preferred takes the form of a *noun* or *noun phrase*, this is in the *dative*; if it takes the form of a *clause*, this is introduced by the conjunction **чем**:

Он предпочитает коньяк водке.

He prefers brandy to vodka.

Я предпочита́ю жить в нищете́, чем занима́ться нелюби́мым де́лом.

I would prefer to live in poverty than to have to do something I don't like.

The phrase **на мой (твой, ваш, etc.) вкус** 'to my (your, etc.) taste' can also be used to express preferences:

Дава́й ку́ним ей в пода́рок ва́зу; вы́бери что́-нибудь подходя́щее, на твоей вку́с.

Let's buy her a vase for a present. You choose something suitable, whatever you prefer (*or* think best).

16.2.4 Indicating approval or acceptance

A reaction of approval or appreciation is normally expressed by one of the following adverbs, all of which can be translated as 'wonderful', 'excellent' or 'great':

великоле́пно
замеча́тельно
здорово
отли́чно
превосхо́дно
чуде́сно



—А я уже пригото́вил за́втрак.

—Вот и *отлично*.

—I've already made breakfast.

—That's great!

—Он сдал все экза́мены на пять и о́кончил университет с кра́сным дипло́мом.

—*Превосходно!*

—He got top marks in all his exams and graduated with distinction.

—Excellent!

NOTE Five is the top mark in all Russian exams. Those graduating with distinction receive a degree certificate with a red (instead of the normal blue) cover.

In informal language a reaction of acceptance, rather than of approval can be expressed by the following forms, all of which mean something like 'OK' or 'it will do':

годи́тся
так себе
пойде́т
сойде́т

The last two words can be reinforced by the particle **ничего́**:

—Э́то съедо́бный гри́б?

—*Годи́тся*, клади́ его́ в корзи́ну.

—Is that an edible mushroom?

—It's OK, put it in the basket.

—Филь́м был интере́сный?

—*Да та́к себе́.*

—Was the film interesting?

—It was all right, I suppose.

—**Ка́жется, я не о́чень хоро́шо закле́ил эту ды́ру?**

—**Ниче́го, пойдёт.**

—I don't think I made a very good job of stopping up that hole.

—It's OK; it will do.

—**Как ты ду́маешь, нам ну́жно де́лать в кварти́ре вла́жную убо́рку?**

—**Ниче́го, и так сойдёт.**

—What do you think? Do we need to give the flat a thorough spring cleaning?

—No, it will do as it is.

The adjective **сно́сный** means 'adequate', 'acceptable', 'reasonable', 'not bad':

Пого́да сто́яла сно́сная, и, е́сли одéться потеплée, мо́жно бы́ло гуля́ть у моря.

The weather wasn't too bad, and if you wrapped up warmly, you could go for a walk by the sea.

16.2.5 Indicating indifference, disapproval, dislikes and hates

Indifference can be expressed by the adverb **безразлично** or the phrase **всё равно**; in both instances the noun or pronoun denoting the person who experiences the feeling is in the *dative* case:

Ему́ было́ всё равно́, куда́ идти́.

He didn't care where they went.

Я не боле́льщик: мне безразлично́, чья кома́нда сего́дня победит́.

I'm not supporting anyone: it's a matter of indifference which team wins today.

Indifference can be indicated more forcefully by using the verbs **начхать** (*literally*, 'to sneeze') and **плевать/наплевать** (*literally*, 'to spit'), both of which are used with the preposition **на** (+acc.). Since these verbs are used in the infinitive, the logical subject is in the *dative*:

Напрáсно мы наде́ялись, что он послу́шает на́шего сове́та. Ему́ было́ на это́ наплева́ть.

Our hopes that he might listen to our advice were in vain. He couldn't care less.

А мне начхать́ на то, что обо мне поду́мают сосе́ди!

I don't give a damn what the neighbours think about me!

To express mild dislikes, the negative forms of the verbs and phrases given in **16.2.1** and **16.2.2** can be used:

—Ну, как тебе́ моя́ но́вая причёска?

—Ты знаёшь, я не в восторге...

—What do you think about my new hairstyle?

—Well, to be honest, I'm not exactly over the moon about it...

For other examples, *see* **16.1.1**.

The verb that corresponds to the English 'to hate' is **ненавидеть/возненавидеть**,

while a strong dislike can also be indicated by the following constructions, all of which correspond approximately to the English 'I can't stand':

**я не выношу́
я не перевариваю́ (literally, I can't digest)
я терпеть не могу́
я на дух не переношу́**

В лю́дях она́ ненави́дела жа́дность и лицеме́рие.

She hated greed and hypocrisy in people.

Я челове́к терпе́ливый, но не выношу́ одно́го – же́нской исте́рики.

I am a patient man, but one thing I can't stand is female hysterics.

Терпе́ть не могу́, ко́гда в маши́не ку́рят.

I cannot put up with people smoking in my car.

На́ша ба́бушка на дух не перено́сит рок-му́зыку.

Our grandmother cannot abide rock music.

Ты о́пять и́дешь на дискоте́ку со сво́ей но́вой подру́жкой? Сказа́ть тебе́ че́стно, я её не перева́риваю.

Are you going to the disco again with that new girlfriend of yours? To be honest, I can't stand her.

The *conditional*, reinforced with the adverb **ещё**, can be used to express disapproval:

Неужели ты и этого не умеешь? Ты бы ещё спросила, как надо картошку чистить!

Are you trying to tell me you can't even do that? You might just as well ask how to peel potatoes!

For information on the conditional, see **4.10**.

16.3 Wishes and desires

16.3.1 Хотеть/захотеть and желать/пожелать

The main verbs used for expressing wishes and desires are **хотеть/захотеть** 'to want' and **желать/пожелать** 'to wish (for)'.
The main verbs used for expressing wishes and desires are **хотеть/захотеть** 'to want' and **желать/пожелать** 'to wish (for)'.

Хотеть/захотеть is normally used with an object in the *accusative* case, but the *genitive* tends to be used if the object is abstract:

Мама, я хочу вот эту сумочку!

Mum, I want this bag here!

Он всю жизнь хотел только одного – богатства.

All his life he wanted only one thing: riches.

For more on the use of the accusative and the genitive with **хотеть/захотеть**, see **3.3.5**.

Желать/пожелать is used with an object in the *genitive* (see **3.3.4**):

Мы пожелали друзьям счастливого пути, и поезд тронулся.

We wished our friends a pleasant journey and the train then set off.

Both pairs of verbs can be used with an *infinitive* verb if the wish or the desire

concerns only the *subject* of the sentence:

Она́ *хóчет* вы́йти за́муж в э́том го́ду.

She wants to get married this year.

Мы *хотим* заве́сти соба́ку.

We want to get a dog.

Гость *пожела́л* приня́ть ва́нну и вы́пить ко́фе.

The guest expressed a wish to take a bath and have a drink of coffee.

If the wish or the desire concerns anyone other than the subject of the sentence, both pairs of verbs are followed by a *subordinate clause* introduced by the conjunction **что́бы**:

Мы *хотим*, *чтобы* на *планете* не́ было *войн*.

We want the planet to be free of war.

Хочу́ *пожела́ть* *всему́ коллективу́* *авторов*, *чтобы* э́та *кни́га* *была́*, *наконе́ц*, *издана*.

I would like to express to the entire team of authors my wish to see the book finally published (*literally*, that the book be finally published).

For the use of the past tense with **что́бы**, see 9.3.4.



16.3.2 Less categorical desires

The *impersonal reflexive* pair of verbs **хотéться/захотéться** expresses a less categorical desire than **хотéть/захотéть** and can imply less intention on the part of the person concerned; it often corresponds to the English 'feel like'. The person experiencing the feeling, if present, is indicated by a noun or pronoun in the *dative*:

Ей хочётся вы́йти за́муж за киноактёра.

She wants to marry a film-star.

Ей захотéлось романтики, чего́-то необы́чного.

She (suddenly) felt like something romantic, something out of the ordinary.

Лéтом хочётся загорáть и купáться, а не сидéть на скучных лекциях.

In summer you feel more like sunbathing and going for a swim than sitting in boring lectures.

For more on impersonal verbs, *see* **3.4.3** and **11.2.2**.

The conditional form of **хотéть** has the effect of turning a wish into a polite request:

Дóбрый день, моя́ жена́ хотéла бы получи́ть консульта́цию врача́.

Good day, I would like to make an appointment for my wife to see the doctor (*literally*, my wife would like an appointment...).

Я бы хотéл заказáть зáвтрак в но́мер.

I would like to order breakfast in my room.

16.3.3 Expressing a desire using the particle **бы**

The particle **бы** is often used in informal language to indicate a wish. It is usually accompanied by the infinitive:

Сейчас бы выпить кру́жку пива!

I'd love a glass of beer right now!

По́ехать бы сейча́с на неде́льку к мо́рю!

If only we could drop everything and go off to the seaside for a week!

Тебе́ бы отдохну́ть как сле́дует!

If only you could get a proper rest!

The infinitive, however, can be omitted:

Сейча́с бы кру́жку пи́ва!

I'd love a glass of beer right now!

Сейча́с бы к мо́рю на неде́льку!

If only we could drop everything and go off to the seaside for a week!

Эх, диктофо́н бы сюда́: мо́жно бы́ло бы записа́ть расска́з э́того стари́ка о войне́.

If only we had a dictaphone here, we could have recorded the old man's reminiscences about the war.



16.4 Expressing opinions

16.4.1 Indicating your opinion

To ask for someone's opinion the following question formula can be used:

как ты думаешь/вы думаете?

What do you think?

Как вы думаете, мы вовремя приедем, или нет?

What do you think? Will we arrive on time or not?

To indicate that something is a matter of opinion, the following verbs and phrases can be used:

думать/подумать	to think
полагать (нсв)	to assume, to suppose
считать/счесть	to consider
мне кажется	I think
по моему мнению (по вашему мнению etc.)	in my opinion (in your opinion, etc.)
по-моему (по-вашему etc.)	in my opinion (in your opinion, etc.)
на мой взгляд (на ваш взгляд etc.)	in my opinion (in your opinion, etc.)

Думаю, что скорее всего мы опоздаем.

I think we'll probably be late.

Вы не считаете, что всё это можно было бы сделать намного проще?

Don't you think that this could all have been done much more simply?

По нашему мнению, у обвинения недостаточно доказательств.

In our opinion the prosecution does not have sufficient evidence.

По-моему, ты неправ. Я бы посоветовал тебе извиниться перед ней.

I think you're wrong. I would advise you to apologise to her.

На мой взгляд, люди имеют право одеваться, как они хотят.

In my opinion, people have the right to wear whatever they like.

16.4.2 Indicating agreement and consent

The following formulae can be used in soliciting or giving agreement:

ты согласи́сен/согласна́, вы согласи́сны!

do you agree?

я согласи́сен/согласна́, мы согласи́сны.

I agree, we agree.

**—Мне ка́жется, пе́рвый при́з ну́жно присуди́ть уча́стнику под но́мером
три. Вы согласи́сны?**

—Да, я согласи́сен.

—I think we should award the first prize to contestant number three. Do you agree?

—Yes, I agree.

A slightly less enthusiastic form of agreement can be indicated by using negated forms of the verb **возража́ть/возразить** ‘to object’:

Ты не возража́ешь, е́сли мы вы́ключим телеви́зор?

Would you have any objections if we turned the television off?

—**Мне ка́жется, пе́рвый приз ну́жно присуди́ть уча́стнику под но́мером три. Вы согла́сны?**

—**Я не возража́ю.**

—I think we should award the first prize to contestant number three. Do you agree?

—I’ve no objections.

For the use of the *negative* to make a question more tentative, see **17.1.3**.

The verb **соглаша́ться/согласи́ться** ‘to agree’ is more frequently used to describe someone’s reaction rather than as a means of expressing one’s agreement:

Мы предложи́ли ей вы́ступить у нас на семина́ре. Подума́в, она́ согласи́лась.

We invited her to give a seminar. After giving it some thought, she agreed.

Дава́ть/дать согла́сие на (+acc.) ‘to give one’s agreement’ is used in formal contexts:

Настоя́щим даю́ согла́сие на самостоя́тельный вы́езд моёй несоверше́нноле́тней доче́ри за преде́лы Росси́йской Федера́ции без сопрово́ждения взросло́х.

I hereby give my consent for my daughter, who has not reached the age of majority, to leave the territory of the Russian Federation without being accompanied by an adult.

In informal language the following words and phrases can be used to indicate consent:

хорошо́	good, fine
ладно	OK, fine
так и быть	OK
догово́рились	that's agreed, OK

—Можно Наташе взять твой зонт?
—*Ладно*, пусть берёт.

—Can Natasha borrow your umbrella?

—OK, she can borrow it, if she wants to.

—Прошу́ тебя́, помоги́ ей с перево́дом.
—*Так и быть*, пусть приходит.

—Would you mind helping her with her translation?

—That's OK. Tell her to come and see me.

—Давайте сделаем так: сегодня посуду моет Ива́н, а завтра Ли́за.
—*Догово́рились*.

—Let's do it this way. Today Ivan does the washing up and tomorrow it's Liza's turn.

—OK.



16.4.3 Indicating disagreement

Disagreement can be expressed by using negated forms of **согласен** etc. or by using **против** (+gen.):

Мы совершенно не согласны с таким решением!

We are totally opposed to that decision.

Мы были против этих бюрократических нововведений.

We were against these bureaucratic innovations.

In more formal contexts the following formulae can be used to express polite disagreement:

это не (совсем) так

it's not (quite) like that

у меня другое/иное мнение

I am of a different opinion

я придерживаюсь другого/иного мнения

I am of a different opinion

позвольте с вами не согласиться

perhaps I might be so bold as to disagree with you

Что касается заключения комиссии по данному делу, то я придерживаюсь иного мнения.

As regards the conclusion reached by the commission looking into this matter, I am afraid that I am of a different opinion.

The following are used in informal language:

как бы не так! nothing of the sort, not a bit of it, don't you believe it!
ничего подобного! nothing of the sort, not a bit of it, don't you believe it!

Ты думаешь, он признал свои ошибки? *Как бы не так!*

Do you think he owned up to his mistakes? Nothing of the sort!

16.5 Expressing certainty, uncertainty, possibility or doubt

16.5.1 Expressing certainty, probability and possibility

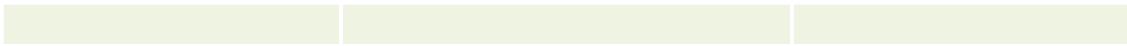
The following words and phrases are widely used to indicate certainty:

конечно	of course
(самой собой) разумеется	of course
безусловно	certainly, definitely
несомненно	undoubtedly
вне всякого сомнения	beyond any doubt
обязательно	definitely

All except the last of these come into the category of *вводные слова* (see 23.2.1) and are separated off from the rest of the sentence by commas:

Почему бы тебе не поехать с нами в деревню? Обещаю: будет рыбалка, ночной костёр на берегу озера, и, конечно, уха с водочкой.

Why don't you come with us to the country? I can promise you there'll be fishing, a camp fire by the lake and, of course, fish soup and vodka.



Он, безусловно, специалист в этой области, но я бы посоветовался с кем-нибудь ещё.

He's certainly a specialist in this field, but I would get a second opinion.

Благодарю вас за письмо. Я обязательно Вам отвечу, как только что-нибудь выясню относительно Вашего вопроса.

Thank you for your letter. I'll definitely reply once I have some information concerning your question.

For the use of the capital letter with the pronouns **Вы** and **Ваш**, see 1.5.7.

The following adverbs and phrases are widely used in informal language to indicate certainty:

навeрнякá	definitely
железно	sure thing!
как пить дать	you (can) bet (your life on it)!

Телефон не отвечает; они, навeрнякá, уже уехали.

Nobody's answering the telephone; they must definitely have left.

—Придeшь зáвтра на тренирóвку?

—Железно.

—Are you coming to the training tomorrow?

—I sure am!

—Как ты думаешь, она доложит шефу о нашем опоздании?

—Доложит, как пить дать!

—Do you think she'll report us to the boss for being late?

—You can bet your life on it.

The following words and phrases, all of which come into the category of *вводные слова*, express different degrees of probability:

по всем приме́там	by all appearances
по всей ви́димости	by all appearances, it must be the case that
должно́ быть	it must be the case that
похо́же на то	it looks like it
по-ви́димому	apparently
пожа́луй	perhaps, probably
вероятно́	probably
наверное́, наве́рно	probably
скорее́ всего́	probably

У нас вчера́ на весь день не́ было горячей воды́; *по всей ви́димости*, где-то меняли трубы́.

We'd no hot water all day yesterday; they must have been changing the pipes somewhere.

—Бою́сь, что магази́н уже́ закры́т.

—*Похо́же на то.*

—I'm afraid the shop's already shut.

—It looks like it.

—Ты не знаешь, кто это сейчас с нами поздоровался?

—Скорее всего, кто-то из моих студентов.

—Do you know who that was who just said ‘hello’ to us?

—It’s probably one of my students.

NOTE In Russian cities hot water is usually supplied centrally from district heating stations (ТЭЦ = теплоэлектроцентраль).

For more examples of *вводные слова* expressing probability, see 23.2.1.

16.5.2 Expressing uncertainty and doubt

The following words and phrases can express uncertainty:

кажется	it seems, I think
может быть	perhaps
возможно	possibly
вроде (бы)	it seems, I think

All except the last come into the category of *вводные слова*:

Что-то я неважно себя чувствую. Кажется, у меня температура.

I’m not feeling too good. I think I’ve got a temperature.

Может быть, она уже не вернется сюда.

Perhaps she won’t come back here again.

—Ты не забыла выключить телевизор?

—Вроде нет.

—Did you forget to turn the television off?

—I don’t think so.

In informal contexts *может быть* is often reduced to its first element:

Может, я ещё приеду сюда осенью.

I might come again in the autumn.

The Russian verb corresponding to the English 'to doubt' is **сомневаться (нсв)**. This can be used with the preposition **в**(+prep.) or by a clause introduced by **что**:

Они почему-то сомневаются в нашей честности.

For some reason they have doubts about our honesty.

Я сомневаюсь, что она сдаст этот экзамен.

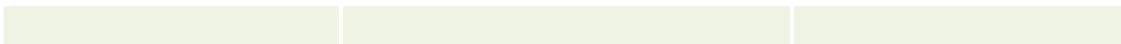
I doubt whether she'll pass the exam.

The following words and phrases can also be used to indicate doubt:

вряд ли	it's unlikely
навряд ли	it's unlikely
маловероятно	it's improbable
трудно сказать	it's difficult to say
нельзя с уверенностью сказать	it's impossible to say with certainty

Он болен и вряд ли появится на работе на этой неделе.

He's ill and is unlikely to come back to work this week.



Маловероятно, что здесь произойдёт что-нибудь интересное.

It's unlikely that anything interesting is going to happen here.

Трудно сказать, что хуже - трёхчасовой письменный экзамен или устный экзамен перед комиссией.

It's difficult to say what's worse, a three-hour written exam or an oral exam in front of a committee.

16.5.3 'It depends'

Russian has no direct equivalent of this useful means of expressing uncertainty or being evasive. The verb **зависеть** corresponds to the English 'to depend', but unlike the English verb it can never be used on its own, but only in conjunction with the preposition **от**(+gen.):

—**Вы поедете завтра с нами за город?**
—*Зависит от погоды.*

—Are you going to the country with us tomorrow?

—It depends (on the weather).

The prepositional phrase **смотря по**(+dat.) is similar in meaning:

—**Вы завтра поедете с нами за город?**
—*Смотря по погоде.*

—Are you going to the country with us tomorrow?

—It depends (on the weather).

Смотря can also be followed by a question word, such as **кто** 'who', **что** 'what', **когда** 'when', **где** 'where' or **как** 'how':

—**Вы любите играть в карты?**
—*Смотря с кем.*

—Do you like playing cards?

—It depends (who with).

—Вы любите выезжать на природу?

—Смотря куда.

—Do you like visiting the countryside?

—It depends (where).

The following can all serve as equivalents of ‘it depends’ when it means something like ‘it varies according to the circumstances’:

когда как	
бывает по-разному	also it varies
постольку поскольку	also up to a point

—Вам часто приходится работать по вечерам?

—Когда как. от Бывает по-разному.

—Do you often have to work in the evenings?

—It depends (sometimes I do, sometimes I don't).

For an example with **постольку поскольку**, see 9.3.5.



17

Asking questions

17.1 Neutral yes/no questions

17.1.0 Introduction

A neutral yes/no question is one that makes no assumptions about which answer is required. In Russian there are two ways of asking a question of this type: either by changing the intonation of the sentence or by using the interrogative particle **ли**.

17.1.1 Asking questions using intonation

Almost any statement can be transformed into a question by raising the intonation on the relevant word:

Ива́н вче́ра купи́л слова́рь?

Did Ivan buy a dictionary yesterday?

Ива́н вче́ра купи́л слова́рь?

Was it a dictionary that Ivan bought yesterday?

Ива́н вче́ра купи́л слова́рь?

Was it Ivan who bought a dictionary yesterday?

The focus of the question, if it is not the verb, tends to be placed at the end of the sentence:

Ива́н купи́л слова́рь вче́ра?

Was it yesterday that Ivan bought the dictionary?

Raising the intonation is the normal means used to indicate a question in a sentence that contains no verb:

Вам пло́хо?

Are you feeling unwell?



Счѐт уже́ два-два?

Is the score already two-two?

Опять́ не́чего пить?

Is there nothing to drink again?

17.1.2 Questions formed with the particle **ЛИ**

The *particle* **ли** is *enclitic* and normally follows the first stressed word of the sentence. In most situations this will be the *verb* or another predicate word, but if some other element forms the focus of the question, this can be placed first instead:

Купи́л ли Ива́н слова́рь?

Did Ivan buy the dictionary?

Мо́жно ли естѝ э́ти я́годы?

Can you eat these berries?

Зде́сь ли выдаю́т анке́ты?

Is it here that you can get application forms?

В ту́ ли сто́рону мы иде́м?

Are we going in the right direction?

NOTE When the focus of an English question is on some part of the sentence other than the verb, this is often indicated by using the formula 'Is/was it ... that'. In Russian, the same effect is normally achieved by changing the word order of the sentence, as is shown in the above examples. *See also* **20.3.1**.

For more on enclitic particles, *see* **9.4.2**.

For the use of the particle **ли** in indirect questions, *see* **21.8.3**.

17.1.3 Negative questions

Asking a negative question in Russian does not necessarily make assumptions about the answer. A negative question may still be neutral, but will usually be more tentative or more polite than an ordinary question. For this reason negative questions are often used when asking strangers for information:

Не холодно ли вам?

Are(n't) you cold?

Ты не возражаешь, если я выключу телевизор?

Would you have any objections if I turned the television off?

Не скажете, как дойти до автовокзала?

Could you tell me how to get to the bus station?

Простите, это не вы уронили блокнот?

Excuse me, was it you that dropped this notebook?

17.1.4 Answering yes/no questions

The Russian answers to yes/no questions are:

да	yes
нет	no

The answer can be expanded by repeating the verb or whichever other word forms the focus of the question:

—**Ива́н вчера́ купи́л слова́рь?**

—**Да, купи́л.**

—**Нет, не купи́л.**

—Did Ivan buy a dictionary yesterday?

—Yes, he did.

—No, he didn't.

—**Здесь ли выдаю́т анке́ты?**

—**Да, здесь.**

—Is it here that you can get application forms?

—Yes, it is.

17.2 Asking loaded questions

17.2.0 Introduction

A loaded question is one that expects a particular answer. Russian has several ways of asking loaded questions.

17.2.1 Negative loaded questions

Because *negation* is often used in Russian to make a question tentative or polite, *negative loaded questions* are somewhat less frequent than in English. They do, however, occur and can be illustrated by the following:

Не егó ли мы ви́дели вчера́ на приёме в посольстве?

Didn't we see him at the embassy yesterday, at the reception?

Одну́ мину́точку, а нет ли тут како́го-нибу́дь подво́ха?

Just a minute, isn't there some sort of catch here?

A negative question formed with a *perfective infinitive* verb produces what amounts to a suggestion or an invitation:

Не позвони́ть ли Джо́ну?

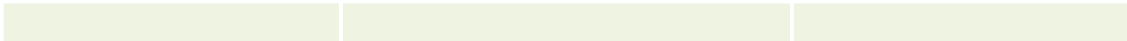
Why don't we phone John?

А не выпить ли нам коньячку́?

Why don't we have a brandy?

17.2.2 Loaded questions with **ра́зве** and **неуже́ли**

The question particles **ра́зве** and **неуже́ли** are widely used to form *loaded questions*. Both mean something like 'Can it really be the case that...?', but they are not interchangeable because they imply different attitudes on the part of the speaker. **Разве** suggests that



the speaker doubts or disbelieves the statement in question; **неужели**, while not implying disbelief, suggests that the speaker is surprised or disappointed. Sentences introduced by **разве** or **неужели** can be translated into English in a variety of ways, but sentences with **разве ... не** or **неужели ... не** often correspond to English negative questions:

Разве он уже вышел на пенсию?

Has he really retired? *or* Surely he's not retired yet?

А разве сегодня не пятница?

Isn't today Friday?

А разве вход не бесплатный?

Isn't there free entry? *or* I thought entry was free.

Неужели тебе было трудно позвонить?

Was it really so difficult for you to telephone?

Неужели уже ничего нельзя изменить?

Is it really impossible to change anything?

In informal language **неужто** can be used instead of **неужели**:

Неужто и впрямь не было билетов?

Are you telling me there were really no tickets?

17.2.3 Tag questions

Tag questions are those where the question is asked in a supplementary phrase added on to the end of a statement, as in English 'aren't you?', 'isn't it?'. They usually, though not always, assume a particular answer.

In spoken Russian the tag **что ли** is used very frequently to turn a statement into a question. It does not necessarily assume a particular answer and has no direct

equivalent in English; in dialogue it can imply an element of reproach, while elsewhere it can convey the notion of uncertainty or the suggestion of a possible answer:

—У меня неприятности на работе.

—Ты опять опоздал, что ли?

—I'm having problems at work.

—Were you late again?

Надо что-то приготовить на обед: сварить щи, что ли?

We need to prepare something for dinner. Shall I cook some *shchi*?

The tag **что ли** is often reinforced by using **что** after the first word of the sentence:

Никто не берёт трубку. Да что они там, оглохли, что ли?

No one's answering the phone. Have they all gone deaf or something?

The following Russian tags correspond to the English 'aren't you?', 'isn't it?', 'don't we?', etc. Unlike the English equivalents, the form does not depend on the structure of the original statement:

не так ли?

не правда ли?

так?

правда?

скажи?



Это ва́ша запис́ка, не так ли?

This is your note, isn't it?

Отли́чный сегодня́ денёк, не пра́вда ли?

It's a lovely day today, isn't it?

Когда́ набира́ешь код го́рода, ноль не ну́жен, так?

When you're dialling the area code, you leave the zero out, don't you?

Ты ведь не идёшь на ле́кцию, пра́вда?

You're not going to the lecture today, are you?

Здо́рово они́ сегодня́ игра́ли, скажи́?

They played really well today, didn't they?

Some tag questions are a request for further information:

—Ты хорошо́ во́дишь маши́ну?

—Неплохо, а что?

—Are you a good driver?

—Not bad. Why?

—Это ва́ша маши́на?

—Моя, а в чём дело?

—Is this your car?

—Yes, it is. Why do you want to know? *or* What's the problem?

—Ты за́пер вчера́ за собо́й дверь?

—Да, а что такое?

—Did you lock the door behind you yesterday?

—Yes. What’s happened?

17.3 Asking questions using question words

17.3.0 Introduction

Questions that do not require a yes/no answer are introduced by special *question words* that are normally placed at the beginning of the sentence. The question (or *interrogative*) words that are used in Russian can be divided into *pronouns*, *quantity words* and *adverbs*.

17.3.1 Interrogative pronouns

The following *interrogative pronouns* are used in Russian:

кто?	who?
что?	what?
чей?	whose?
какой?	which?, what sort of?
какой?	which?

For the declension of **кто** and **что**, *see 7.4.1*.

For the declension of **чей**, **какой** and **какой**, *see 7.4.2*.



Кто едет завтра на экскурсию?

Who's going on the excursion tomorrow?

От кого это письмо?

Who's the letter from?

Кем был построен этот дворец?

Who was this palace built by?

Что ты ему сказала?

What did you say to him?

Чем будем заправлять салат – растительным маслом или майонезом?

What are we going to dress the salad with—oil or mayonnaise?

Из чего построено это здание?

What is this building made of?

На какой остановке вы выходите?

Which stop are you getting off at?

Какие языки вы знаете?

What languages do you know?

Какое мороженое предпочитаешь – с шоколадом или с орехами?

What kind of ice cream do you prefer—with chocolate or with nuts?

As a question word **который** is nowadays used mostly with the set phrases:

Какой час? What time is it?

В каком часу? At what time?

For more on the use of **ко́торый** in time expressions, see **19.2.1** and **19.2.5**.

17.3.2 More on **КТО** and **ЧТО**

The interrogative pronouns are often used with the *neuter demonstrative* **э́то**:

Како́й замеча́тельный портре́т – кто э́то?

What a remarkable portrait. Who is it?

Я нико́гда не про́бывал ниче́го подо́бного – э́то что?

I've never tried anything like that before. What is it?

Ты слы́шала шаги́? Кто э́то был?

Did you hear footsteps? Who was it?

Ты слы́шала шоро́х? Что э́то было́?

Did you hear a rustling noise? What was it?

Questions of this type can be made more emphatic by the introduction of the demonstrative pronoun **тако́й**; this pronoun will be *masculine singular* when used with **кто** and *neuter singular* when used with **что**:

Како́й стра́нный портре́т – кто э́то тако́й?

What a strange portrait. Who (on earth) is it?

Я нико́гда не про́бывал ниче́го подо́бного – что э́то тако́е?

I've never tried anything like that before. What (on earth) is it?



Кто and **такой** can also be used with a personal pronoun, in which case the gender of **такой** depends on the sex of the person being addressed or referred to:

—Простите, а кто вы такая, чтобы здесь распоряжаться?
—А вы кто такой?

—Excuse me, who do you think you are, going round giving orders like that?
(addressed to a woman)

—And who do you think you are? (addressed to a man)

For more on the demonstrative pronoun **это**, see 7.3.2.

For more on the demonstrative pronoun **такой**, see 7.3.3.

For more on grammatical agreement with **кто**, see 11.2.1.

A question corresponding approximately to the English ‘what sort of?’ can be asked using **что за** (+nom.):

Что это за рыба (такая)?

What sort of fish is that?

Что она за человек?

What kind of a person is she?

This construction can sometimes be used as a pointed way of trying to identify someone or something:

Что это за тип в тёмных очках?

Who is that character in the sunglasses?

17.3.3 The interrogative quantity word

There is only one interrogative quantity word:

сколько? how much?, how many?

For the declension of **ско́лько**, see **8.6.3**.

Ско́лько у них дете́й?

How many children do they have?

За ско́лько вы купи́ли э́тот шарф?

How much did you buy that scarf for?

17.3.4 Interrogative adverbs

The following *interrogative adverbs* are used in Russian:

когда́?	when?
где?	where?
куда́?	where to?, whither?
откуда́?	where from?, whence?
как?	how?
наско́лько?	to what extent?
почему́?	why? (for what reason?)
отче́го?	why? (from what cause?)
заче́м?	why? (for what purpose?)



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Когда вы уезжаете?

When are you leaving?

Где находится город Саранск?

Where is (the town of) Saransk?

Куда идём после работы?

Where are we going after work?

Откуда у вас такие сведения?

Where did you get that information from?

Как вы готовите борщ?

How do you make *borshch*?

Насколько хорошо он владеет английским?

How well does he know English?

Почему этот файл не открывается?

Why won't this file open?

Почему отменили экскурсию?

Why have they cancelled the trip?

Отчего у тебя такой мрачный вид?

Why are you looking so gloomy?

Зачем ты выключил свет?

Why did you turn the light off? *or* What did you turn the light off for?

Зачём вы проводите этот опрос?

Why are you carrying out this survey? *or* What are you doing this survey for?

17.3.5 More on КАК

The interrogative adverb **как** corresponds to the English ‘what?’ in a number of frequently asked questions:

Как вас зовут?

What’s your name?

Как называется ваш новый роман?

What is the name of your new novel?

Как по-русски будет «elephant»?

What’s the Russian for ‘elephant’?

Как ты думаешь? Стоит смотреть этот фильм, или нет?

What do you think? Is it worth seeing this film or not?

For more on asking about names, *see* **13.3.3** and **13.3.5**.

On the other hand, **откуда** corresponds to the English ‘how?’ in the following question:

Откуда я знаю?

How should I know?

For more information on rhetorical questions, *see* **17.4.2**.



17.4 Rhetorical questions

17.4.0 Introduction

Rhetorical questions are phrases and sentences that are constructed in the form of a question, but that are not intended to obtain information. They can be used for a variety of purposes.

17.4.1 Expressing the speaker's attitude

Rhetorical questions can be used to indicate the speaker's attitude towards a particular situation. Perhaps the largest number express irritation or frustration:

Как вы смеёте говорить со мной таким тоном!

How dare you speak to me in that tone of voice!

Как тебе не стыдно!

You should be ashamed of yourself! (*Literally*, How are you not ashamed of yourself?)

Ты что, с ума сошёл (что ли)?

Have you gone raving mad?

Придерживайте дверь, сколько можно говорить!

Hold the door. How many times do I have to tell you!

Да сколько можно повторять – не брал я синей папки!

How many times do I have to say it: I didn't take the blue folder!

Опять в квартире бардак - на что это похоже!

The flat's in a total mess again. I've never seen anything like it! (*Literally*, What does it look like?)

Один прогул и два опоздания за неделю - куда это годится!

In the single week you were late twice and failed to turn up at all once. That's totally unacceptable! (*Literally*, What use is that?)

Какого чёрта/какого дьявола ты здесь болтаешься!

What the devil are you hanging round here for?

Мыслимое ли дело, простоять два часа на морозе в надежде на автограф.

It doesn't bear thinking about (*literally*, Is it something that can be thought about?): standing two hours in the freezing cold hoping to get someone's autograph!

Ну какой из тебя Дед Мороз!

What sort of Father Christmas do you think you'd make!

NOTE Дед Мороз, *literally*, 'Grandfather Frost' is the Russian equivalent of Father Christmas. A Soviet invention, he normally appears, accompanied by Снегурочка 'the Snow Maiden', at New Year, rather than at Christmas.

Rhetorical questions can also be used to express admiration or to express wishes:

И откуда у неё только силы берутся!

Just where does she get her strength from!

Кому не хочется прокатиться зимой на русской тройке!

In winter who wouldn't like to go for a ride in a Russian *troika*!

For more on the noun **тройка**, see 8.6.1.

17.4.2 Rhetorical questions in dialogue

As part of a dialogue rhetorical questions can be used to solicit sympathy or solidarity:

Вы можете себе представить? Стою на перроне с газетой в руке, а мой поезд уже ушёл.

Can you imagine it? I was standing on the platform with a newspaper in my hand and my train had already left!

Пришли сантехники, перекрыли воду – и пропали на весь день! Как вам это понравится?

The plumbers came, cut off the water and then disappeared for the rest of the day. What do you think of that!

Повéрите ли, до сих пор при виде качелей мне делается дурно.

Can you believe it? Even now the very sight of a swing makes me feel queasy.

Он обыгрывал даже гроссмейстеров, не вéришь?

He's even managed to beat grand masters. Can you believe it?

Она ещё и претензии предъявляет, видáли?

And now she has the nerve to complain! Have you ever heard of (*literally*, seen)

such a thing!

Other rhetorical questions can express a challenge to the other speaker:

—**А кто вы такая, чтобы здесь распоряжаться?**

—**А вы кто такой, чтобы мне указывать?**

—Who do you think you are, going round giving orders?

—And who do you think you are, telling me what to do?

—**Как ты можешь такое говорить!**

—**А что, не так?**

—How can you say such things?

—Are you suggesting what I'm saying is untrue?

—**Перестань бездельничать. Ты всю неделю провалялся на диване.**

—**Ну и что?**

—It's time you got up and did something. You've spent all week lying on that sofa.

—And your point is?

—**Какая погода будет завтра?**

—**Откуда я знаю?**

—What's the weather going to be like tomorrow?

—How should I know?



17.4.3 Requests in the form of a rhetorical question

A rhetorical question is a useful way of making a very polite (or a sarcastic) request:

Ты не хочешь помыть посуду?

You wouldn't like to wash the dishes, would you?

Не могли бы вы прикрыть дверь? Здесь сквозняк.

Would you mind closing the door? There's a draught here.

Вам не трудно включить свет?

Would you be kind enough to turn the light on? *or* (if being sarcastic) Would it be an imposition for you to turn the light on?

Вы не подадите мне очки?

Would you be good enough to pass me my glasses?

Нельзя ли немного погромче?

Could you turn the volume up a little?

А можно чуть потише?

Would you mind turning it down a bit?

For more on making requests, *see* **18.3**.

18

Obligation, instructions, requests, advice and permission

18.1 Talking about obligation and necessity

18.1.1 Using **на́до**, **ну́жно** and **необходи́мо**

Obligation or necessity can be indicated in a wide range of contexts and all levels of language by using the *impersonal predicate* words with an *infinitive* verb:

на́до
ну́жно

На́до крича́ть гро́мче: тебя́ никто́ не слы́шит.

You need to shout louder. Nobody can hear you.

Ну́жно ка́ждый день выпива́ть пять стака́нов воды́.

You/one should drink five glasses of water a day.

На́до бы́ло ду́мать об э́том ра́ньше.

You should have thought of that earlier.

Е́сли бу́дет ну́жно, мы вам позвони́м.

If need arises, we'll phone you.

The person on whom the obligation or necessity falls can be indicated by a *noun* or *pronoun* in the *dative*:

Тебе́ на́до сде́лать рабо́ту над оши́бками.

You need to do some work on these mistakes.

Мне ну́жно бу́дет поду́мать над ва́шим предложе́нием.

I shall have to give some thought to your proposal.

The *impersonal predicate form* **необходимо** is similar in meaning to **надо** and **нужно**, but is characteristic of more formal levels of language:

Если вы направляетесь за границу по частным делам, то за визой вам необходимо обратиться непосредственно в посольство или консульство соответствующей страны.

If you are travelling abroad on private business you need to apply directly for a visa to the embassy or consulate of the appropriate country.

For more on impersonal predicate forms, see 11.2.2.

18.1.2 Using **должен, обязан** and **следует**

The following tend to be used when talking about a duty or an obligation:

должен/должна/должно/должны
обязан/обязана/обязано/обязаны
следует

The first two behave like *short adjectives* and agree with a *grammatical subject* in the *nominative case*. The third is an *impersonal verb*; the person on whom the obligation falls, if present, is in the *dative*:

Я должен вам напомнить, что ключи от номера нужно будет сдать до двенадцати часов.

I have to remind you that room keys must be handed in before twelve.

Вы обязаны закончить работу к пяти часам.

You are required to finish work by five o'clock.

Вашим детям следует проводить больше времени на свежем воздухе.

Your children ought to spend more time in the fresh air.

Должен can have the meaning of 'it ought to be the case that...':

Попробуй заменить батарейку, приёмник должен заработать.

Try replacing the battery, then your radio should come on.

Она там жила пять лет, и поэтому должна знать лучшие рестораны города.

She lived there for five years, so she ought to know which are the best restaurants

in the city.

Онi должны́ были́ прие́хать два часа́ наза́д. Види́мо, где-то задержались в пути́.

They should have been here two hours ago. They must have been held up somewhere on the way.

For more on short adjectives, *see* **6.5.1**.

For more on impersonal verbs, *see* **11.2.2**.

For the use of the phrase **должно́ быть** to indicate probability, *see* **16.5.1**.

18.1.3 Using **приходи́ться/прийти́сь**

The *impersonal verb* **приходи́ться/прийти́сь** is widely used to express necessity through force of circumstances; the person subject to the necessity, if indicated, is in the *dative*:

На ку́хне о́пять течёт кран: *приде́тся* вы́звать сантэ́хника.

There's a tap dripping in the kitchen again. I'll have to get a plumber to look at it.



Иногда помога́ют колле́ги, но о́чень ча́сто *приходи́тся* всё де́лать са́мому.

Sometimes my colleagues help, but very often I end up having to do everything myself.

Из-за нелётной пого́ды *Аэрофло́ту* *пришлось* отмени́ть бо́лее пятидесяти ре́йсов.

Because of the bad weather Aeroflot had to cancel over fifty flights.

18.1.4 Indicating lack of obligation

The negative forms **не на́до**, **не ну́жно**, **не до́лжен** and **не сле́дует** are generally used to indicate that something is forbidden or inadvisable (*see 18.2.4*). To indicate that something is not obligatory, the negative form **не обяза́н** can be used:

Вы *не обяза́ны* отвеча́ть на э́тот вопро́с.

You're not obliged to answer that question.

Another way of conveying the same information is to say that someone has permission not to do something. This is done by using either the verb **мочь** or the *impersonal predicate* form **можно**:

Вы *можете не отвеча́ть* на э́тот вопро́с.

You don't have to answer that question.

***Можно не перево́дить* э́то после́днее предложе́ние. Я и так всё по́нял.**

You don't have to translate that last sentence. I understood everything perfectly well.

Infinitive verbs used in these sentences are *imperfective* (though the *perfective* is occasionally found with **не до́лжен** and **не обяза́н**). For more on the use of aspects in these sentences, *see 5.7.5*.

18.2 Instructions and prohibitions

18.2.1 Issuing instructions and prohibitions using the imperative

The *imperative* form of the verb is the one most widely used for issuing instructions or prohibitions:

Немедленно прекратите это безобразие!

Stop this misbehaviour immediately!

Отойдите отсюда.

Move away from here.

Помолчи, тебя никто не спрашивает.

Be quiet, nobody's asking you.

Кто-нибудь принесите воды.

Would somebody bring some water.

Подождите секундочку.

Wait a second.

Пусть он возьмёт такси и срочно едет домой.

He'd better get a taxi and go home as a matter of urgency.

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Не влезай: убьёт!

Danger! Don't climb (this pylon)!

Ни в коем случае не выходите из машины.

Don't get out of the car under any circumstances.

Не смей спорить со мной.

Don't dare to argue with me.

An instruction can be made less peremptory by attaching the particle **-ка** to the imperative:

Подождите-ка секундочку.

Wait a second.

For the formation of the imperative, *see* **4.9**.

For the use of aspects with the imperative, *see* **5.6** and **5.7.2**.

18.2.2 Using the infinitive to issue an instruction or a prohibition

The infinitive is used for instructions and prohibitions in a number of specific situations. These include the following categories:

(1) The armed forces and certain other very formal contexts:

Прекратить огонь!

Stop firing!

Встать! Суд идёт.

All rise! The court is in session.

Military-style commands can sometimes be heard in everyday situations:

Ма́ма сказа́ла, ты отли́чно сдала́ экза́мены. Молоде́ц, так держа́ть!

Your mother tells me you got top marks in the exam. Well done, keep it up!

Игра́ть ни́зом, к своим вору́там не прижима́ться!

Keep the ball down and keep moving upfield.

(2) Official signs and notices:

Не кури́ть!

No smoking!

(3) On labels and packaging and in instruction manuals:

Внима́ние, пе́ред вклю́чением в сеть удали́ть предохра́нительные прокла́дки.

Warning: remove all protective packing before connecting to the mains.

Открыва́ть с противополо́жной сторо́ны.

Open from the other end.

Пе́ред употребле́нием *взба́лтывать*.

Shake thoroughly before taking.



(4) In recipes:

Куски́ рыбы́ посоли́ть, посы́пать пе́рцем, обваля́ть в муке́ и обжа́рить на сковороде́.

Season the pieces of fish with salt and pepper, coat them in flour and fry them in a frying pan.

NOTE The imperative can also be used in recipes.

For more on the infinitive, *see* **4.1**.

For the use of the imperfective aspect with the infinitive when it indicates a prohibition, *see* **5.7.5**.

18.2.3 Other ways of giving instructions

The following verbs can be used in relation to giving orders:

прика́зывать/приказа́ть	to order (someone to do something)
велеть (нсв/св)	to order (someone to do something)
распо́рядаться/распо́ряди́ться	to arrange (for something to be done), to see (that something is done)

First person forms of **прика́зывать** are associated with military and bureaucratic language.

The person required to carry out the order (if indicated) is in the *dative* and these verbs are usually used with an infinitive, although they can also be followed by a clause introduced by **чтобы**:

Прика́зываю вам в пятидне́вный срок *прибы́ть* в расположе́ние ча́сти.

You are ordered to return to your unit within five days.

Ре́ктор *приказа́л* *объедини́ть* э́ти две лабора́тории в связа́ с реорганиза́цией.

In connection with reorganisation, the rector (of the university) ordered that the two

laboratories be merged into one.

Помню, когда я подрался с одноклассником, учительница велела мне привести в школу мать.

I remember that when I had a fight with a classmate, the teacher ordered me to bring my mother into school.

Я распоряджусь, чтобы вам выписали пропуск.

I'll arrange for you to be given a pass.

Some instructions can be issued without any verb:

Смирно!

(Stand to) Attention!

Стоп!

Stop! [e.g. on road signs]

Мальчишки, а ну марш на улицу! Нечего дома сидеть в такую погоду.

Right, boys, quick march outside! You can't sit around the house in weather like this.

18.2.4 Other ways of issuing prohibitions

The verb corresponding to the English ‘to forbid’ is **запрещать/запретить**. It is normally used with an infinitive and the person who is being forbidden to do something is in the *dative*. In official and semi-official contexts, and especially on notices, the verb is often in the *passive*:

Врачи́ запрети́ли ему́ кури́ть.

The doctors have forbidden him to smoke.

В слу́чае пожа́ра по́льзоватьься ли́фтом запреща́ется.

In the event of fire it is forbidden to use the lift.

Стоя́нка запреще́на.

No parking.

For more on the formation of passive verbs, *see* **4.14**.

The *negative predicate* form **нельзя́** can also be used to indicate that something is forbidden:

Здесь нельзя́ кури́ть.

You can't smoke here.

—А без па́спорта мо́жно де́ньги обменя́ть?

—Нет, нельзя́.

—Can you change money without a passport?

—No, you can't.

The *negative predicate* forms **не на́до, не ну́жно, не до́лжен, не сле́дует** convey something between a prohibition and a strong recommendation not to do something:

—Можно открыть окно?
—*Не надо*, здесь и так холодно.

—Can I open a window?

—No, don't; it's cold enough in here as it is.

Вы не должны забывать, что Москва и остальная Россия – это далеко не одно и то же.

Don't forget that Moscow and the rest of Russia are far from being one and the same thing.

Не следует слишком серьёзно относиться к его угрозам.

You shouldn't take his threats too seriously.

In informal language an expressive element can be added to a prohibition by using the imperative forms **не вздумай**, **(только) попробуй**:

Не вздумай выходить без шапки в такой мороз.

Don't even think of going out without a fur hat in this cold weather.

Только попробуй ещё раз это сделать!

Just try doing that again!

For the use of aspects in sentences indicating prohibition, *see* 5.1.1, 5.7.3 and 5.7.5.



18.3 Making a request

18.3.1 Making a request using the imperative

Unlike English, Russian makes very frequent use of the *imperative* for making a request. What distinguishes a request from an instruction is the inclusion of various courtesy formulae:

пожалуйста	please
будьте добры	please (be so kind as to)
будьте любезны	please (be so kind as to)
если вас не затруднит	if it is no trouble
не сочти(те) за труд	if it is no trouble
сделай(те) одолжение?	would you do me a favour?

The first of these is the most frequent and can be used in more or less any circumstances. The others add an extra degree of courtesy and formality, although the last can also be used in relatively informal situations:

Предъявите, пожалуйста, ваше удостоверение?

Could you please show me your ID?

Верни мне, пожалуйста, книгу: она библиотечная.

Can you please let me have the book back? It belongs to the library.

Будьте добры, передайте соль.

Would you mind passing me the salt?

Если вас не затруднит, прикройте окно. Сквозняк.

If it's no trouble, would you mind closing the window? There's a draught.

Не сочти за труд, сбегай в магазин: у нас кончился сахар.

If it's no trouble, would you mind running to the shops? We've run out of sugar.

Сделай одолжение, отправь вот эти письма.

Would you do me a favour and post these letters for me?

Sometimes the presence of a noun with a *diminutive suffix* can have the effect of softening the force of an instruction and turning it into a request:

Позвоните мне вечерком.

Could you phone me in the evening?

Возьмите ещё кусочек торта.

Do please take another piece of cake.

For more on the use of diminutive suffixes, *see* **16.1.1**.

Occasionally, the context alone is sufficient to make it clear that a statement is a request, not an instruction:

Скажите, где тут выход?

Excuse me, where is the exit?

When in doubt, however, it never does any harm to use **пожалуйста** or one of the other politeness formulae mentioned above.



18.3.2 Making a request using **просить/попросить, просьба, умолять**

The verb **просить/попросить** means ‘to ask someone to do something’; the person being asked is in the *accusative*, and the verb can be followed by an *infinitive* or a clause beginning with **чтобы**. This verb can also be combined with a sentence containing an *imperative* verb of the type described in the previous section:

Я прошу вас задержаться ещё на несколько минут.

Would you mind staying back for a few minutes?

Уважаемые пассажиры, убедительно просим вас не открывать оставленные без присмотра сумки и пакеты, а сообщать о них в милицию.

We kindly request all passengers not to open any bags or parcels left unattended but to inform the police.

Я прошу, чтобы к приходу мамы посуда была помыта.

Will you please make sure that the washing up has been done by the time your mother gets home?

Прошу вас, задержитесь ещё на несколько минут.

Would you mind staying back for a few minutes?

For the use of the form of address **уважаемые пассажиры**, see 13.5.2.

The verb **умолять** can be used for strongly felt requests:

Умоляю тебя, откажись от этой затеи!

I beg you, please give up that idea!

Она умоляла сына не уезжать.

She pleaded with her son not to move away.

Impersonal requests (e.g. on signs) can be made using the noun **про́сьба** 'request':

Про́сьба не кури́ть.

You are kindly requested not to smoke.

This noun can, however, be used in other contexts as well:

У ме́ня к тебе́ (есть) о́дна про́сьба: ты не мог бы одолжи́ть мне а́нгло-ру́сский сло́варь на па́ру дней?

I have a favour to ask you. You couldn't lend me an English-Russian dictionary for a few days, could you?


На её про́сьбу говори́ть поти́ше никто́ не отреаги́ровал.

No one reacted to her request for people to speak more quietly.

For the use of questions as a means of making a polite (or a sarcastic) request, *see* **17.4.3.**

18.3.3 Exhortations

The *imperative* form **давай(те)** can be used either with a first person plural verb or with an *infinitive* to suggest beginning an action jointly with the person(s) being addressed. The form **давай** is used when speaking to someone who would be addressed using the pronoun **ты**; *otherwise*, **давайте** is required. An accompanying finite verb will be *perfective*; an accompanying *infinitive* will be *imperfective*:



Я вижу, ты очень устал. Давай сделаем перерыв на несколько минут.

I can see you're very tired. Let's have a break for a few minutes.

Давайте выпьем за здоровье наших гостей,

Let's drink to the health of our guests.

Давайте проводить такие опросы ежегодно.

Let's carry out these surveys every year.

Давайте думать, как нам лучше организовать работу над этим проектом.

Let's think about how best to organise the work on this project.

NOTE When a toast is being proposed, a construction with the preposition **за** (+acc.) is used, as in the example above.

For the use of **пошли́** and **поехали́** in exhortations, see **22.1.8**.

18.3.4 Apologising and making one's excuses

One special type of request is an apology, in which someone asks to be forgiven for some error or misdeed. The two forms used most frequently either to express an apology or as the equivalent of 'excuse me' when used as a politeness formula are:

извини́(те)
прости́(те)

They are mutually replaceable in most situations, but the latter tends to occur in more formal contexts (i.e. letters and speeches) or to apologise for something more serious. They can be reinforced either with **пожалуйста́** 'please' or with the more expressive **ради́ бога́** 'please do' (literally, 'for God's sake'):

Извини́те, мо́жно Ната́шу к телефо́ну?

Excuse me, could I speak to Natasha, please (on the telephone)?

Прості́те, а кака́я сле́дующая остано́вка?

Excuse me, what is the name of the next stop?

Извини́те, пожа́луйста, нет ли у вас ру́чки? Моя́ что́-то не пи́шет.

Excuse me, please, but would you happen to have a pen? Mine doesn't seem to be writing.

Извини́те меня́ ра́ди бо́га – я не хоте́л вас обидеть.

Do please forgive me—I didn't mean to offend you.

Я зна́ю, что я поступи́л нехорошо́. Е́сли мо́жешь, прости́.

I realise that I acted wrongly. Forgive me, if you can.

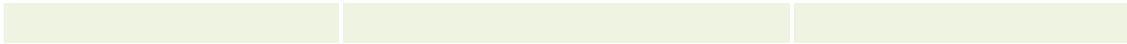
In the spoken language the exclamation **виновáт!**(masculine only) 'sorry!' can be used:

—Прості́те, вы положи́ли зонт на мою́ газету́.

—Виновáт!

—Excuse me, you've put your umbrella on my newspaper.

—Sorry!



The first person singular form **извиняюсь** can sometimes be heard instead of **извини(те)** in informal contexts, although many people consider it inappropriate (because it seems to pre-empt being excused):

Я извиняюсь, это не ваша газета?

Excuse me (*literally*, I excuse myself), isn't this your newspaper?

For the correct response to an apology, *see* **15.3.3**.

The Russian words used for talking about being sorry in the sense of expressing regret are:

сожалеть	to regret
к сожалению	unfortunately
жаль	I'm (you are, we are, etc.) sorry [less formal than the others]

Мы искренне сожалеем о том, что произошло, и принесим свои глубокие извинения.

We are sincerely sorry about what happened and would like to express our profound apologies.

К (моему глубокому) сожалению, я не смогу приехать на Ваш юбилей.

I am (extremely) sorry that I won't be able to come to your (special) birthday party.

Мне жаль, что так случилось, но вы не огорчайтесь: вам всего двадцать, у вас ещё всё впереди.

I'm sorry that it turned out like that, but don't be upset: you're only twenty and you've got your whole life ahead of you.

NOTE In this context **юбилей** (literally, 'jubilee') refers to a special birthday, associated with a round figure, such as a thirtieth, fortieth or fiftieth.

18.4 Giving advice

The following verbs and impersonal predicate forms can be used with an infinitive

when giving advice:

совета́ть/посовета́ть	to advise
рекомендова́ть/порекомендова́ть	to recommend
поле́зно	it is useful <i>or</i> beneficial to
вре́дно	it is harmful to
лучше	it would be better to

Советую вам записаться на приём к психиатру.

I'd advise you to seek an appointment with a psychiatrist.

Если вы собираетесь с нами в экспедицию, мы настоятельно рекомендуем вам сделать все необходимые прививки.

If you're planning on coming on the expedition with us, we strongly recommend that you have all the necessary vaccinations.

При хронической бессоннице выпивайте на ночь полстакана горячего молока с мёдом, а вот острую и жирную пищу есть не рекомендуется.

If you suffer from chronic insomnia, you should drink last thing at night half a glass of hot milk and honey, and spicy or fatty foods should be avoided.



Вам *полезно* отдохнуть несколько дней, лучше за городом.

It would be a good idea to take a few days off, preferably in the country.

Вредно пить крепкий кофе на ночь.

It's harmful to drink strong coffee last thing at night.

Тебе *лучше* не ввязываться в этот спор.

It would be better if you don't get involved in that argument.

The particle **бы** can also be used with the infinitive:

Тебе *бы* сходить к врачу.

You ought to go and see the doctor.

The *conditional* can be used to make statements that come somewhere between a request and a piece of advice:

Ты *бы* почаще звонил домой.

You should phone home more often.

Ты *бы* поменьше курила.

You shouldn't smoke so much.

For the formation of the conditional, *see* **4.10**.

18.5 Giving permission

The *impersonal predicate* form **можно** is normally used for asking and giving permission; it can be used on its own or with an *infinitive*:

—**Можно задать вам один вопрос?**

—**Да, конечно, можно.**

—Can I ask you a question?

—Yes, of course you can.

—*Можно* заплатить кредитной картой?

—К сожалению, *нельзя*.

—Can I pay with a credit card?

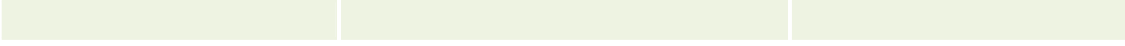
—No, I'm afraid you can't.

NOTE The negative form of *можно* is *нельзя*. For the use of *нельзя* in prohibitions, see **18.2.4**.

For extra politeness the phrase **с твоего/вашего разрешения/позволения** 'with your permission', 'if you don't mind' can be used:

С вашего разрешения, я открою окно.

With your permission (*or* If you don't mind), I'll open the window.



19

Using numbers: talking about times, dates and quantities

19.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the use of numbers and other words indicating quantity in various activities, such as counting and simple arithmetic (19.1), telling the time (19.2) and indicating the date (19.3); it will also examine how to talk about approximate or imprecise quantities, using either numerals (19.4) or other words that can indicate quantity (19.5).

19.1 Counting and doing simple arithmetic

19.1.1 Counting

In counting, the numeral *один/одна/одно́* is often replaced with the word **раз** (literally, 'once'):

Внима́ние, поднима́ем: раз-два, взяли́!

Ready to start lifting? One, two, up she goes!

Раз-два-три-четыре-пять, вы́шел зайчи́к погуля́ть ...

One, two, three, four, five, a hare went out for a walk ... (the start of a well-known child's counting rhyme; it is sometimes used, for example, when testing microphones).

Один, etc. tends to be used when counting out specific objects or people:

Ско́лько здесь жела́ющих по́ехать на экску́рсию? Один, два, три ...

How many people here want to go on the excursion? One, two, three ...

Один (in the masculine form) is also used when counting down:

Пять, четы́ре, три, два, один, пуск!

Five, four, three, two, one, launch!

Doing simple arithmetic

When simple arithmetical operations are being described, there is normally a choice between two constructions. In the first the operation is described as producing a result equal to a particular number:

Семь плюс двадцать два равно/равняется двадцати девяти.

Literally, Seven plus twenty-two equals/is equal to twenty-nine.

Двадцать девять минус семь равно/равняется двадцати двум.

Literally, Twenty-nine minus seven equals/is equal to twenty-two.

Двенадцать, умноженное на восемь, равно/равняется девяноста шести.

Literally, Twelve multiplied by eight is equal to ninety-six.

Двести десять, делённое на десять, равно/равняется двадцати одному.

Literally, 210 divided by ten is equal to twenty-one.

NOTE Равно and равняется 'equals', 'is equal to' are both followed by a numeral in the dative case. With addition and subtraction, the construction can be simplified by using *будет*, which is followed by the *nominative*:

Семь плюс пять будет двенадцать.

Seven plus five is (literally, will be) twelve.

In the second construction, the operation takes the form of a *condition*; the verb describing the operation is normally in the infinitive and the conjunction *если* is usually absent.

For more on conditions, *see* 21.5.

К двадцати двум прибавить тысячу будет/получится тысяча двадцать два.

Literally, If you add a thousand to twenty-two the result will be 1,022.

Из двадцати девяти вычесть семь будет/получится двадцать два.

Literally, If you subtract seven from twenty-nine the result will be twenty-two.

NOTE In more informal language **отнять** may be used instead of **вычесть**.

Тысячу умножить на тысячу будет/получится миллион.

Literally, If you multiply a thousand by a thousand, the result will be a million.

Двадцать одну тысячу разделить на сто будет/получится двести десять.

Literally, If 21,000 is divided by 100, the result will be 210.

19.1.3 Another way of talking about multiplication

In more informal language there is a third option that can be used when talking about multiplication. In this the number being multiplied is indicated by a special *adverb* form. Such adverb forms exist for all numbers from two to ten:

**дважды, трижды,
четырежды, пятью, шестью, семью, восемью, девятью, десятью:**

Дважды два – четыре.

Twice two is four.



Три́жды семь – двадца́ть один.

Three times seven is twenty-one.

Пя́тью пять – двадца́ть пять.

Five fives are twenty-five.

Се́мью во́семь – пяти́десят шесть.

Seven eights are fifty-six.

NOTES

- (i) These are the forms used when reciting multiplication tables in school.
- (ii) The forms from five to ten are identical in spelling to the *instrumental* form of the corresponding *cardinal* number. The stress, however, is on the initial, rather than on the final syllable.

For more on the endings of cardinal numbers, *see* **8.1**.

The adverbs **два́жды**, **три́жды** and (to a lesser extent) **четыре́жды** are also used more generally to correspond to English ‘twice’, ‘three times’ and ‘four times’; the equivalent of ‘once’ is **одна́жды**, which often has the meaning of ‘at some time (or other)’:

Тако́е в исто́рии страны́ случáлось лишь одна́жды, ещё до войны́.

That’s happened only once in the history of the country, and that was before the war.

Мы одна́жды встрéтились на конферен́ции славистов.

We met once at a conference of Slavists.

Полива́йте э́ти цветы́ два́жды в неде́лю.

Water these flowers twice a week.

Её дед – знамени́тый лётчик, Трѐжды Геро́й Советского Сою́за.

Her grandfather is a famous pilot, who was three times made a hero of the Soviet Union.

NOTE To indicate the period in which an action is repeated a certain number of times, a construction with **в(+acc.)** is used (as in the second example).

19.1.4 Distribution

The idea of distribution is expressed in Russian by means of a construction using the preposition **по**. This construction corresponds approximately to English constructions with 'each', although the Russian is used more widely.

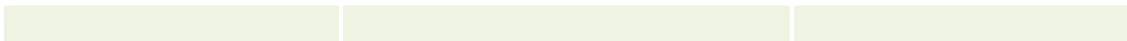
With the numeral **один/одна/одно** or with a noun in the singular (including in this context **ты́сяча, миллио́н, миллиа́рд**) **по** is followed by the dative:

Принима́йте э́то лека́рство по́ одной та́блетке́ три ра́за в день.

Take this medicine in doses of one tablet three times a day.

Все те, кто да́ст пра́вильный отве́т на э́тот вопро́с, полу́чат по́ ты́сяче рубле́й и по́ биле́ту на га́ла-конце́рт.

Everyone who answers this question correctly will receive 1,000 roubles and a ticket for the special concert.



With all other numerals **по** is followed by the accusative:

По пятна́дцать.

Fifteen all (score in lawn tennis).

Дед рассказывал нам, что перед бо́ем солда́там выдава́ли по сто гра́мм(ов) водки для хра́брости.

Grandfather told us that before a battle the soldiers were given 100 grams of vodka (each) for courage.

For the use of the genitive plural forms **грамм, гра́ммов**, *see 2.7.4*.

Перед отпра́вкой они́ получи́ли по три апельси́на на ка́ждого.

Before setting out they received three oranges each.

As the second example demonstrates, the recipients of a distribution can be indicated by the use of a construction with **на**(+acc.). Similarly, those who contribute can be indicated by a construction using **с**(+gen.):

На подаро́к молодожё́нам скла́дывались по пятьсо́т рублёй с челове́ка.

Everyone contributed 500 roubles (a head) towards a wedding present for the young couple.

19.2 Telling the time

19.2.1 Asking what time it is

In Russian, there are two ways of asking the question ‘What time is it?’ and these can be used interchangeably:

**Како́рый час?
Ско́лько вре́мени?**

19.2.2 Telling the time: a whole number of hours

If the answer to the question asked in **19.2.1** involves only a whole number of hours, the relevant numeral is used with the noun **час** in the appropriate case. To

indicate 'one o'clock' **час** is normally used on its own, without the numeral:

час	one o'clock
два часа́	two o'clock
четыре часа́	four o'clock
пять часо́в	five o'clock
восемь часо́в	eight o'clock
пятнадцать часо́в	15.00 hours, 3 p.m.
двадцать два часа́	22.00 hours, 10 p.m.

NOTE The 24-hour clock is widely used in Russia, especially in any official context. In particular, it is used in timetables of all sorts, for radio and television schedules, and to indicate the starting and finishing times of public events.

There are no direct equivalents of 'a.m.' and 'p.m.' in common use in Russian. Instead, the part of the day can be indicated by the use of the appropriate noun in the *genitive*



case. The nouns used and the approximate segment of the day that each one indicates are as follows:

у́тра	morning (5 a.m.–midday)
дня	day, afternoon (midday–5 p.m.)
вече́ра	evening (5 p.m.–midnight)
но́чи	night (midnight–5 a.m.)

Therefore, times of the day can be indicated as:

два часа́ дня	2 p.m., two o'clock in the afternoon
два часа́ но́чи	2 a.m., two o'clock in the morning

The terms corresponding to ‘midday’ and ‘midnight’ are **по́лдень** and **по́лночь** respectively.

Sometimes an *ordinal* number is used with **час** to refer to an unspecified time in the first part of the *following* hour; thus, **тре́тий час** means ‘some time after two o'clock’:

Был тре́тий час но́чи, когда́ нас разбудили сирены́ пожа́рных маши́н.

It was some time after two in the morning when we were woken up by the sirens of the fire engines.

19.2.3 Telling the time the ‘traditional’ way

There are two ways of telling the time when both hours and minutes are involved: these can be referred to as the ‘traditional’ way and the ‘digital’ way. Both are in common use.

When telling the time the ‘traditional’ way reference is made to the *following* hour. With times up to and including the half-hour, the hour is indicated using an *ordinal* number:

де́сять мину́т второ́го	ten (minutes) past one
два́дцать мину́т тре́тьего	twenty (minutes) past two
два́дцать две мину́ты пято́го	twenty-two minutes past four
два́дцать пять (мину́т) се́дьмого	twenty-five (minutes) past six

NOTE The noun **мину́та** 'minute' is always present, except after **два́дцать пять**, when its presence is optional.

The quarter is indicated by **че́тверть** and the half-hour by **полови́на**; the latter is often abbreviated to **пол**-in more informal language:

че́тверть восьмо́го	a quarter past seven
половина́ деся́того, по́лдеся́того	half-past nine

For times between the half-hour and hour, a *cardinal* number is used to indicate the hour; the minutes are indicated using **без**(+gen.):

без пяти́ двена́дцать	five (minutes) to twelve
без трёх мину́т три	three minutes to three
без одной мину́ты два	one minute to two
без двадца́ти час	twenty (minutes) to one
без че́тверти семь	a quarter to seven

NOTE With this construction the noun **минута** tends to be omitted, except for numbers between one and nine (excluding five).

When this method is used, a precise number of hours is indicated by the adverb **ровно**:

ровно девять часов nine o'clock precisely

19.2.4 Telling the time the 'digital' way

The 'digital' method of telling the time originated in military and bureaucratic circles, but because it is grammatically much simpler, it has come to be widely used in ordinary speech and is a perfectly acceptable alternative to the 'traditional' method. According to this method the time is given as if reading from the face of a digital clock:

Московское время пятнадцать часов, тридцать минут. В эфире новости.

Moscow time is 15.30 hours [*or* half-past two (p.m.)]. Here is the news.

Точное время один час, двадцать две минуты.

The exact time is 1.22.

In less formal contexts, however, **час** and **минута** tend to be omitted, except that, as with the 'traditional' method, 'one o'clock' is indicated by **час**:

семь двадцать пять 7.25, twenty-five past seven
одиннадцать сорок 11.40, twenty to twelve

Сейчас уже час пятнадцать.

It's already 1.15 (*or*, a quarter past one).

The 'zero' in times between one and nine minutes past the hour is indicated by **ноль**; an exact number of hours is indicated by **ноль ноль**:

шестнадцать ноль пять 16.05 hours, five past four (p.m.)
двенадцать ноль ноль twelve hundred hours, twelve o'clock precisely

Although it is by no means obligatory in informal contexts, the 24-hour clock does tend to be used quite frequently with the 'digital' method of telling the time.

19.2.5 Talking about the time at which something happens

In addition to the general question word **когда?** 'when?', there are various phrases that can be used to ask at what time something happens, happened or will happen:

В каком часу?
В какое время?
Во сколько?

The last of these is considered a little more informal than the others.

В каком часу начинается спектакль?

At what time does the performance begin?

В какое время вы чаще всего бываете дома?

At what time do you tend most often to be at home?

Во сколько отправляется твой поезд?

What time does your train leave?



The phrase **В какое время (суток)** tends to be used with reference to segments of the day, rather than to precise times:

В какое время суток вы предпочитаете работать?

During what part of the day do you prefer to work?

When whole hours are involved or when telling the time using the ‘digital’ method, a construction with the preposition **в(+acc.)** is used to indicate at what time something happens (happened, will happen):

Магазин открываётся в восемь часов.

The shop opens at eight o'clock.

Поезд отправляется в девятнадцать ноль ноль с Московского вокзала.

The train departs at 19.00 hours (*or* at 7 p.m. exactly) from the Moscow station.

Полное лунное затмение начнётся в два часа двадцать одну минуту.

The full lunar eclipse will begin at 2.21.

Наш самолёт приземлился в Лондоне в двадцать тридцать пять.

Our plane landed in London at 20.35.

If **ровно** is used, it is placed *before* the preposition:

Наш поезд отправляется ровно в семь часов.

Our train departs at exactly seven o'clock.

The construction with the preposition **в(+acc.)** can be used when telling the time the ‘traditional’ way, but only for times before the half-hour:

Сегодня я вышел из дома в десять минут девятого.

Today, I left home at ten past eight.

Встрéтимся на вы́ходе из метро́ в чéтверть пя́того.

Let's meet at the exit from the metro at a quarter past four.

In informal language it is possible to omit the preposition **в**:

Сего́дня я вы́шел из до́ма де́сять минут девя́того.

Today I left home at ten past eight.

To indicate half-past the hour the preposition **в** is used, but it is followed by the *prepositional* case:

Я конча́ю рабо́ту в полови́не шесто́го.

I finish work at half-past five.

If, however, the abbreviated form **пол**-is used, this is unchanged:

Мы догово́рились встрéтиться в по́лвосьмо́го.

We arranged to meet at half-past seven.

Since it is not normally possible to put two prepositions together in Russian, the construction with **в** cannot be used for times between the half-hour and the hour. The easiest way to solve the problem is to resort to the 'digital' method, where the problem does not arise, but if the 'traditional' method is preferred, the time is indicated without the use of any additional words:

Он подьéхал на своём мотоци́кле к её до́му без чéтверти шесть.

He arrived at her house on his motorcycle at a quarter to six.



19.2.6 Talking about time zones

Russia is spread over eleven time zones, of which the most important is the Moscow time zone, partly because it includes a substantial part of European Russia, but also because all rail and air timetables throughout the country use Moscow time. The phrase that indicates that Moscow time is being used is **по москóвскому врéмени**; in written sources this is sometimes abbreviated to **мск**. Other useful phrases are:

по мéстному врéмени local time
по Грiнвичу Greenwich Mean Time

За́пуск космiческого корабля́ был произведён в два́дцать о́дин час, три́дцать ми́нут по москóвскому врéмени.

The launch of the spacecraft took place at 21.30 hours Moscow time.

Прибы́тие ре́йса из Ло́ндона ожида́ется в 15.30 мск.

The flight from London is expected to arrive at 15.30 Moscow time.

Мы вы́летели из Ло́ндона в четы́рнадцать три́дцать пять по мéстному врéмени.

We left London at 14.35 local time.

Землетрясе́ние произошлó в ноль часóв, два́дцать о́дну́ ми́нуту по Грiнвичу.

The earthquake took place at 00.21 hours Greenwich Mean Time.

19.3 Talking about the date

19.3.1 The day of the month

The normal way of asking the question ‘What is the date today?’ in Russian is:

Како́е се́годня числó?

To which the answer might be:

Сего́дня два́дцать девя́тое. Or Сего́дня два́дцать девя́тое число́.

Today is the twenty-ninth.

If the name of the month is given, this is in the *genitive* case and **число́** is always omitted:

Сего́дня пе́рвое сентя́бря.

Today is the first of September.

For the use of small letters with the names of the months, *see* **1.5.7**.

19.3.2 Adding the year

The year in Russian is expressed using an ordinal number+the noun **год** 'year'. In writing, the noun is usually abbreviated to **г.** The numeral **одна́** is normally omitted before the word **ты́сяча**:

Ты́сяча во́семьсо́т со́рок во́сьмой год (1848 г.)	1848
Двухты́сячный год (2000 г.)	2000
Две ты́сячи се́дьмой год (2007 г.)	2007

When the date is given in full, the year is in the *genitive* case:

Сего́дня пятна́дцатое а́вгуста две ты́сячи се́дмого́ года.

Today is the fifteenth of August 2007.

NOTE When dates are written out using figures, the European order (day, month, year) is adopted. There is a tendency to use Roman numerals to indicate the month:

15 viii 2007

15 August 2007

19.3.3 Talking about the date on which something happens

When the exact date of an event is given, the whole of the date is in the *genitive* case:

Пу́шкин роди́лся шесто́го ию́ня ты́сяча се́мьсо́т девяно́сто девя́того года.

Pushkin was born on 6 June 1799.

Всео́бщая декла́рация пра́в челове́ка бы́ла приня́та деся́того дека́бря ты́сяча девя́тсо́т соро́к восьмо́го года.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on 10 December 1948.

When only the month and year are given, the former is indicated using the preposition **в**(+prep.), while the latter is in the genitive:

В Москве́ я был пе́рвый раз в а́вгусте ты́сяча девя́тсо́т ше́стьдесят восьмо́го года.

The first time I was in Moscow was August 1968.

If only the month or only the year is given, the preposition **в**(+prep.) is used:

Наско́лько я по́мню, они́ пожени́лись в ию́не.

As far as I remember, they got married in June.

Очередные летние Олимпийские игры пройдут в Лондоне в две тысячи двенадцатом году.

The next summer Olympics will take place in London in 2012.

For the use of the prepositional form in -у, see 2.7.2.

In spoken Russian it is a common practice, whenever there is no danger of ambiguity, to abbreviate the year to the last three, or more usually, the last two digits:

Она живёт в Москвѣ на улице Девятьсот пятого года.

She lives in Moscow, in 1905 Street.

Семна́дцатый год стал переломным в истории Росси́и.

1917 was a turning point in Russian history.

В сорок первом году её муж ушёл добровольцем на фронт.

In 1941 her husband left for the front as a volunteer.



19.3.4 Decades and centuries; BC and AD

Individual decades within a century are indicated using an *ordinal* number and the plural noun **го́ды**:

**Де́вяно́стые го́ды ста́ли э́похой бо́льших пере́мен для мно́гих стра́н
Центра́льной и Восто́чной Евро́пы.**

The (19)90s were a period of great change for many countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

To indicate that something happened in a particular decade, a construction with the preposition **в(+acc.)** is normally used:

Э́тот та́нец бы́л о́собенно популя́рен в се́мидеся́тые го́ды.

This dance was especially popular in the (19)70s.

NOTE The word for ‘decade’ is **десятиле́тие**; the word **дека́да** means a period of ten days:

Про́ездные́ биле́ты посту́пают в про́дажу в по́следней де́каде пре́дыдущего ме́сяца.

(Monthly) season tickets go on sale during the last ten days of the preceding month.

Centuries are indicated using an *ordinal* numeral and the noun **век** (usually abbreviated in writing to **в.**). To locate an event within a particular century a construction with the preposition **в(+prep.)** is used:

Кре́постное́ пра́во в Росси́и бы́ло отмене́но в де́вятна́дцатом ве́ке.

Serfdom in Russia was abolished in the nineteenth century.

If the century is indicated using figures, *capital Roman* numerals are invariably used:

Успе́нский собо́р бы́л постро́ен во второ́й полови́не *XV* в. (пяти́надцатого ве́ка).

The Cathedral of the Dormition (in the Moscow Kremlin) was built in the second half of the fifteenth century.

To indicate that a date is before Christ (before the Christian era) the phrase **до нашей эры** (abbreviated to **до н.э.** is used; **до рождества Христова** is also possible, but is much less frequent. If it is necessary to specify a date as AD (the Christian era) the phrase **нашей эры** (abbreviated to **н.э.**) can be used:

По данным археологов первые поселения появились на этом месте приблизительно в первом веке до н.э.

According to work carried out by archaeologists, the first settlements appeared here somewhere around the first century BC.

For other time expressions, including those that do not involve numerals, *see* **21.1**.

19.4 Talking about approximate quantity using numerals

19.4.1 Talking about approximate quantity using adverbs

The following *adverbs* can be used to indicate approximate quantity:

примерно	about, approximately
приблизительно	about, approximately
где-то	about, somewhere in the region of, something like

These have the advantage of flexibility in that they can be used in more or less any grammatical context. The first two are more characteristic of formal language, while the third is more likely to be found in informal contexts:

Русский язык на нашем факультете изучают *примерно* сто двадцать человек.

Russian is studied in our faculty by approximately 120 students.

Курс акций упал *приблизительно* на двадцать пунктов.

The price of the shares fell by about twenty points.

В отпуске он *пробыл где-то* неделю, но не выдержал безделья и вернулся к работе.

He spent about a week on holiday, but couldn't stand the idleness and came back to work.

Средний заработок наших сотрудников – *где-то* двадцать тысяч рублей в месяц.

The average salary of those who work here is about 20,000 roubles a month.

19.4.2 Talking about approximate quantity: placing the numeral after the noun

It is also possible to indicate approximate quantity by placing the numeral *after* the relevant noun. This is a particularly useful construction with numerals that are, grammatically speaking, relatively simple:

Ему, *наверно*, будет лет *сорок пять*.

He'll be about forty-five, I reckon.

For more on how to talk about people's ages, *see* **12.3**.

Подожди *минут пять*, а потом попробуй ещё раз.

Wait for about five minutes and then try again.

When this means of expressing approximation is used with a prepositional

construction, the preposition is placed *after* the *noun* and *immediately before* the *numeral*:

Я уезжаю дня на́ два.

I'm going away for a couple of days or so.

19.4.3 Talking about approximate quantity using prepositions

The preposition used most frequently to indicate approximate quantity is **о́коло** (+gen.):

В моей ко́ллекции о́коло двадца́ти дово́енных плака́тов.

I have about twenty pre-war posters in my collection.

Я ждал его́ на вокза́ле о́коло пята́дцати мину́т.

I waited for him at the station for about fifteen minutes.

Also used sometimes is the preposition **с** (+acc.). This tends to be used mostly in combination with the nouns **деся́ток, полсо́тни, со́тня**, which indicate respectively the quantities of ten, fifty and one hundred:

В холодильнике мы обнаружили с десяток яиц, кусок сыра и бутылку пива.

In the fridge we discovered about ten [*or* about a dozen] eggs, a piece of cheese and a bottle of beer.

С полсотни книг из своей библиотеки он раздал студентам.

He took about fifty books from his collection and gave them out to his students.

For more on **десяток, полсотни, сотня**, see **8.6.1** and **19.4.4**.

NOTE Because it is not normally possible in Russian to combine two prepositions, **около** (+gen.) and **с** (+acc.) cannot be used in contexts where quantity is expressed by a phrase including a preposition. In the third example in **19.4.1**, **около** can be used to replace **где-то**, but it would be impossible to substitute **около** for **приблизительно** in the second example:

В отпуске он пробыл около недели, но не выдержал безделья и вернулся к работе.

He spent about a week on holiday, but couldn't stand the idleness and came back to work.

19.4.4 Talking about approximate quantity using nouns formed from numerals

The nouns **десяток** and **сотня** are frequently used in the plural to indicate large, but imprecise quantities:

Я был в России десятки раз, но ни разу не стал жертвой преступления (тьфу, тьфу).

I've been to Russia dozens of times and have never once been the victim of crime (touch wood).

Нашу передачу ежедневно слушают сотни тысяч людей.

Hundreds of thousands of people listen to our programme every day.

NOTE Making the gesture of pretending to spit over one's shoulder and saying

тьфу, тьфу (i.e. imitating the noise of spitting) is the Russian equivalent of touching wood.

19.4.5 Talking about the upper and lower limits of an approximate quantity

The upper and lower limits of an approximate quantity are normally indicated by two numerals joined by a hyphen. This can be combined with other means of expressing approximation such as **где-то** or placing the numeral after the noun:

В прода́же уже́ есть *пять-шесть* хоро́ших словарей́.

There are already five or six good dictionaries available.

На конфе́ренции бы́ло *где-то двадцать пять-тридцать* представи́телей стран Западной Евро́пы.

At the conference there were somewhere in the region of twenty-five to thirty representatives of West European countries.

За сезо́н э́тот напада́ющий непреме́нно забива́ет мяче́й *пятнадцать-двадцать*.

That forward can be guaranteed to score something like fifteen to twenty goals a season.

19.5 Talking about imprecise quantities using forms other than numerals

19.5.1 Talking about large quantities using **МНОГО, МНОГОЕ, МНОГИЕ**

The word used most widely to indicate an imprecise large quantity is **много** ‘much’, ‘many’, ‘a lot’. This can be used on its own or with a noun in the *genitive singular* (if it denotes an uncountable substance) or the *genitive plural*. It can also be followed by an *adjective* in the *genitive singular neuter* form. **Много** does not decline and when used with a noun can be used only in contexts that require the *nominative* or the *accusative* case without a preposition:

Я очень много слышал о вас.

I've heard a lot about you.

Такие вещи занимают много времени.

These things take up a lot of time.

Она много раз была в Москве.

She's been to Moscow many times.

Я узнал от него много интересного.

I learned from him much that was interesting.

For expressions that can be used to replace **много** in cases other than the *nominative* or the *accusative* or after a preposition, *see* **19.5.2**.

Многое ‘much’, ‘a great deal’ can be used on its own or with a construction using the preposition **из**(+gen.), but it is not followed directly by a noun. It declines like an adjective in the *neuter singular* and can be used in all cases:

Многое из того, чему я научился в армии, я уже успел забыть.

I've already managed to forget much of what I learned when I was in the army.

Многие ‘many (of)’ can be used on its own or it can be followed directly by a noun or by a construction using the preposition **из**(+gen.). It usually implies ‘many of

some larger group' (which may or may not be mentioned explicitly), and when used on its own normally refers only to people. It declines like an adjective in the *plural* and can be used in all cases:

***Многие* считают, что политика – это грязное дело.**

Many people think that politics is a dirty business.

***У многих москвичей* есть твёрдая вера в то, что мир кончается за пределами кольцевой автодороги.**

Many Muscovites have the firm belief that the world comes to an end beyond the city's outer ring-road.

***Я уже* имел удовольствие познакомиться со многими из его друзей.**

I have already had the pleasure of meeting many of his friends.

19.5.2 Talking about large quantities using other expressions

Немáло ‘quite a lot’, ‘a fair number/amount’ is similar in meaning and usage to **мнóго**, although the quantity suggested may be slightly smaller:

В последнее время у нас было немáло проблем с программным обеспечением.

Recently we’ve been having a fair number of problems with software.

The following words and expressions can be used instead of **мнóго** after a preposition or in contexts requiring a case other than the nominative or the accusative, although they are also used more generally. The third and fourth of these tend to found in more formal language:

большóе количéство	a great quantity, many
огрóмное количéство	an enormous quantity, very many
множéство	a great number, many
(цéлый) ряд	a (great) number, many

Без большóго количéства дéнег вам трóдно бóдет жить в Лóндоне.

Without a lot of money you’ll find it difficult to live in London.

Я получил от него письмó с огрóмным количéством вопро́сов.

I’ve received a letter from him with a great many questions.

Этот стрáнный феноме́н уже породил множéство теóрий.

This strange phenomenon has already prompted a great many theories.

На ряде предприятий ме́неджеры ещё не осво́или новéйшие ме́тоды управления.

In a number of businesses the managers have yet to come to terms with the latest management practices.

Цéлый ряд европе́йских университетов тепéрь предлагаёт кóрсы нóвого типа на стéпень ма́гистра.

Many

European universities are now offering master's courses of the new type.

The following words and expressions also indicate a large, but unspecified quantity. They tend to occur in more informal types of language:

куча́	heaps (of)
тьма́	multitudes (of), hordes (of)
у́йма	masses (of)
не пере́чь	you can't keep count (of), there's no end to

Дела́ у неё пошли́ в го́ру; на одной то́лько прода́же компáкт-ди́сков она́ зарабо́тала кучу́ де́нег.

Her business has really taken off; she's made a heap of money just from selling compact discs.

На конце́рт под откры́тым не́бом пришла́ тьма́ наро́ду.

The open-air concert was attended by hordes of people.

Я наде́юсь, что ты никуда́ не торо́пишься; у меня́ к тебе́ у́йма вопро́сов.

I hope you're not rushing off anywhere; I've got masses of questions to ask you.

Дочь губерна́тора была́ необыкновенно краси́ва, и покло́нников у неё к двадцати́ годам было́ не пере́чь.

The governor's daughter was extraordinarily attractive, and by the time she was twenty there was no end to the number of her admirers.

19.5.3 Talking about small quantities using **МА́ЛО, НЕМНО́ГО**

Ма́ло ‘not much’, ‘few’, ‘little’ can be used on its own or with a noun in the *genitive singular* (if it denotes an uncountable substance) or the *genitive plural*. It can also be followed by an adjective in the *genitive singular neuter* form:

В последнее время я ма́ло читаю, а всё больше смотрю телеви́зор.

Recently, I haven’t been reading much and have been watching television more and more.

Если можно, зайдите ко мне завтра; у меня́ сейчас ма́ло вре́мени.

If you can, call in and see me tomorrow; I haven’t got much time at the moment.

Сделать карье́ру здесь ему́ бу́дет сло́жно; у него́ ма́ло друзе́й среди́ нача́льства. It will be difficult for him to get on here; he has few friends among the bosses.

Я была́ на его́ ле́кции, но узна́ла ма́ло интере́сного.

I went to his lecture, but I learned little that was interesting.

The connotations of **ма́ло** are often negative, and sometimes it can mean ‘too few’, ‘too little’, ‘not enough’:

Пять ты́сяч рубле́й? Э́того, я ду́маю, бу́дет ма́ло.

5,000 roubles? I don’t think that’s going to be enough.

Ма́ло can be combined with a question word. The most widely used combination is **ма́ло кто** ‘not many people’; when it functions as the subject of a sentence, the verb is in the *singular*:

Ма́ло кто зна́ет об э́том.

Not a lot of people know about that.

Немно́го and the more informal diminutive form **немно́жко** ‘some’, ‘a bit’, ‘a little’ can be used on their own or with a following noun. In the latter environment they

are mostly used with nouns denoting uncountable substances. The connotations of **немного́** and **немно́жко** are usually neutral or positive:

Подожди́те *немно́жко*: дождь ско́ро пройде́т.

Wait a little; this rain will soon pass over.

Я прочита́ю ва́шу статью́ в суббо́ту, когда́ у меня́ наконёц бу́дет *немного́* свободно́го време́ни.

I'll read your article on Saturday, when I'll finally have a little free time.

Этот суп ста́нет вкусне́е, е́сли в него́ доба́вить *немно́жко* со́ли.

This soup will taste better if you add a bit of salt to it.

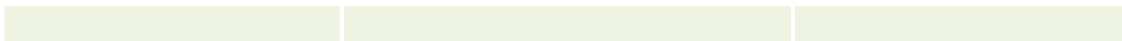
Немного́ and *немно́жко* can be used with ordinary and comparative adjectives with the meaning of 'a little', 'to some extent':

Он *никогда́* не встаёт *ра́ньше* двена́дцати; в э́том отноше́нии он *действительно* *немно́жко* *стра́нный*.

He never gets up before twelve; in this respect he is indeed a little strange.

Она́ *немного́* *моло́же* меня́ – *ду́маю*, лет на *семь-во́семь*.

She's a bit younger than I am, by about seven or eight years, I reckon.



Ма́ло, немно́го and **немно́жко** do not decline and can be used with a following noun only in contexts requiring the *nominative* or the *accusative* case without a preposition. For expressions that can replace **ма́ло, немно́го** and **немно́жко** in cases other than the *nominative* or the *accusative* or after a preposition, see the following sections.

19.5.4 Talking about small quantities using **не́сколько, не́который**

Не́сколько ‘several’, ‘a few’, ‘some’, is usually followed by a noun in the plural. When **не́сколько** is in the *nominative* or the *accusative* case, any following noun and/ or adjective is in the *genitive plural*. When it is in the *genitive, dative, instrumental* or *prepositional* case, then any accompanying noun and/or adjective is in the *same case*.

For the declension of **не́сколько**, see 8.6.3.

В ко́мнате стоя́л большо́й сто́л и не́сколько дере́вьянных сту́льев.

In the room there was a large table and a few wooden chairs.

Я уже́ не́сколько раз объясня́л ему́, почему́ нельзя́ употребле́ть такие́ слова́.

I’ve already explained to him several times why he’s not allowed to use words like that.

В не́скольких обла́стях выпадет снег и́ли пройдёт дождь со́ снегом.

In a few regions there will be snow or sleet.

In the singular **не́который** ‘some’, ‘a certain’ is used with **вре́мя** ‘time’ and with other abstract nouns:

Че́рез не́которое вре́мя он по́нял, в чём была́ его́ оши́бка.

Some time later he realised where he had made his mistake.

В её прису́тствии я всегда́ испыты́ваю не́которую нелов́кость.

When I'm in her presence I always feel a certain awkwardness.

The plural form **некоторые** means 'some', 'a few of some larger group' (which may or may not be mentioned explicitly). It can be used on its own or it can be followed directly by a noun or by a construction using the preposition **из**(+gen.). When used on its own it refers only to people:

Некоторые критиковали его за чрезмерную осторожность, но я с этой точкой зрения не согласен.

Some people criticised him for being excessively cautious, but I don't agree with that point of view.

После распада Советского Союза **некоторые** эмигранты решили вернуться в Россию.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, some émigrés decided to return to Russia.

С некоторыми из её книг я уже знаком, но есть и такие, которых я не читал.

I'm familiar with some of her books, but there are others that I haven't read.

NOTE **Некоторый** declines like an adjective. For more on the declension of adjectives, see **6.1**.

19.5.5 Talking about small quantities using **ЧУТЬ, ЧУТЬ-ЧУТЬ, ЧУТОЧКУ**

The adverb **ЧУТЬ** ‘just’, ‘(very) slightly’ is often used to qualify adjectives and other adverbs:

За перекрёстком ресторана «Гавана», а *чуть* дальше наш дом.

After the crossroads there is the Havana restaurant and our block is just beyond that.

The phrase **ЧУТЬ НЕ**, when used with a verb, means ‘almost’, ‘nearly’ and refers to involuntary actions:

Когда он сказал мне, что собирается жениться, я *чуть не* упал со стула.

When he told me that he was going to get married, I nearly fell off my chair.

The phrase **ЧУТЬ ЛИ НЕ** means ‘almost’, ‘just about’ and is used in a wide variety of contexts:

Он приходил ко мне *чуть ли не* каждый день.

He used to come and see me just about every day.

Рубль сейчас укрепляется и стал *чуть ли не* самой надёжной валютой.

The rouble is now getting stronger and has become just about the most reliable currency.

Чуть-чуть and **чутьочку** are more emphatic forms of **ЧУТЬ**, but they can also be used on their own or with nouns denoting uncountable substances to indicate a very small amount:

Вы не могли бы диктовать *чуть-чуть/чутьочку* помедленнее? Мы не успеваем записывать.

Could you dictate just a little bit more slowly? We can't keep up with you (*literally*, we don't have time to write it down).

Подви́ньтесь *чуть-чуть/чутьочку* – тогда́ бу́дет ме́сто и для́ меня́.

If you move up a tiny bit, there'll be room for me as well.

Суп неплóх, но я бы доба́вил *чуть-чуть/чутьочку* со́ли.

The soup's not bad, but I would add just a tiny bit of salt.

19.5.6 Talking about small quantities using other words and expressions

The following words and expressions can be used instead of **мáло** or **немно́го** after a preposition or in contexts requiring a case other than the accusative, although they are also used more generally:

ма́ленькое коли́чество	a small quantity
небольшо́е коли́чество	a small quantity
не́которое коли́чество	a certain quantity

Гла́вный недоста́ток э́того уче́бника – сли́шком *ма́ленькое коли́чество* приме́ров и упражне́ний.

The main problem with this textbook is that it has too few examples and exercises.

Она́ ме́лко наре́зала лук и обжа́рила его́ *в небольшо́м коли́честве* ма́сла.

She cut the onion up small and fried it in a little oil.



Для этого требуется *некоторое количество денег*.

For that you need a certain amount of money.

The following words and phrases also indicate an unspecified small quantity:

горстка	handful (of)
кучка	handful (of)
кот наплакал	very little, precious little
раз-два и обчёлся	very few, you can count on the fingers of one hand

После долгих лет молчания у него осталась всего лишь *горстка* почитателей.

After the long years of silence he only had a handful of admirers left.

Несмотря на дождь и холод, на площади собралась *кучка* сторонников одного из кандидатов.

In spite of the rain and the cold, a handful of supporters of one of the candidates gathered in the square.

Денег у них оставалось *кот наплакал*.

They've got precious little money left.

Хороших специалистов у нас по этой части *раз-два и обчёлся*.

You can count on the fingers of one hand the number of good specialists we have in this area.

20

Focus and emphasis

20.1 Principles of word order in Russian

20.1.1 Russian and English compared

The word order in an English sentence simultaneously fulfils two functions. In the first place it has a *structural* function: in a normal English sentence the *subject* comes *before* the verb; if there is an *object*, that will come *after* the verb. This makes it possible to interpret the following sentence unambiguously: 'John invited Mary.' 'John' comes before the verb and can only be the subject; 'Mary' comes after the verb and can only be the object. Therefore, it was John who did the inviting and Mary who was the person invited.

The second function relates to the *flow of information*: the word order of the above sentence tells us that this is a piece of information about John and what he did: that he invited Mary, either as opposed to inviting some other person or as opposed to forgetting to tell her about the event.

In Russian, the word order does not have to fulfil a structural function: the distinct case endings mean that the *subject* does not need to be identified by being placed *before* the verb, and the *object* does not have to be placed *after* the verb. The difference can be illustrated by the following pairs of examples:

John invited Mary.

Mary invited John.

Ива́н пригласи́л Марию́.
Марию́ пригласи́л Ива́н.

Changing the word order in the English sentences changes who invited whom: in the second example Mary did the inviting and John was the person invited. In both Russian sentences Ivan did the inviting and Mariia was the person invited. Indeed, as we shall see, the word order *object-verb-subject*, illustrated by the second sentence, is by no means unusual.

Because Russian word order does not fulfil a structural function, it is often described as 'free', but this is somewhat misleading: Russian word order does fulfil a function relating to *focus*, *emphasis* and the *flow of information*, and changing the

word order of a Russian sentence will change the meaning and more often than not will affect the most natural way of translating the sentence into English. To take the above examples, if the first sentence can be translated as:

Ivan invited Mariia.

the most appropriate translation of the second might be:

Mariia was invited by Ivan.

Or

It was Ivan who invited Mariia.

20.1.2 The basic principle of Russian word order

The basic principle underlying the word order of a Russian sentence is that the most important information comes at the *end of a sentence*. In other words, what often happens is that the first part of a sentence sets the scene, so to speak, by presenting the *topic* of the sentence (often in the form of information that is already known or given); the concluding part of the sentence tells us what is being said about the topic, usually in the form of new information.

NOTE As it is used in this context, *topic* is not to be confused with *grammatical subject*. The topic of a sentence can be the grammatical subject, but it can equally well be the *direct object* or, indeed, any other constituent of the sentence.

This principle can be illustrated by the following sequences of sentences:

Пётр Первый считается основателем российского военно-морского флота. Пётр также заложил основы российского судостроения.
A

Peter I (the Great) is considered the founder of the Russian navy. It was also Peter who laid the foundations of the Russian ship-building industry.

Первые российские военные корабли в России были построены в Воронеже. Основы российского судостроения заложил Пётр Первый.
B

The first Russian warships were built in Voronezh. It was Peter the Great who laid the foundations of the Russian ship-building industry.

In each of the above sequences the second sentence provides information about Peter the Great laying the foundations of the Russian ship-building industry, but the

information is presented in a different order. In sequence A, the subject (**Пётр** ‘Peter’) comes first, and the object (**основы российского судостроения** ‘the foundations of the Russian ship-building industry’) comes at the end. In sequence B, however, the object comes at the beginning of the sentence and the subject comes at the end.

The explanation for this lies in the context provided by the first sentence in each sequence. In sequence A, the first sentence concerns the activities of Peter the Great; he thus becomes the topic of the second sentence, with the new information being that in addition to founding the Russian navy, he also laid the foundations of the Russian ship-building industry. Hence, Peter the Great (here the grammatical subject of the sentence) comes first and the reference to the foundations of the ship-building industry comes at the end. In sequence B, the first sentence relates to the building of ships; here, therefore, it is ‘the foundations of the Russian ship-building industry’ that is the topic of the second sentence, and the new information is that these foundations were laid by Peter the Great, and not by some other Russian ruler.



The following examples provide further illustrations and demonstrate other possibilities for the word order in a Russian sentence:

Переходный 2008 год будет непростым для США. Стране нужен лидер, но сильных людей нет.

The transitional year of 2008 will be difficult for the USA. The country needs a leader, but there are no strong people around.

В мае 1953 года Эдмунд Хиллари и Тенсинг Норгей первыми взойшли на Эверест. С тех пор на высочайшей точке земного шара побывало более 1200 человек из 63 стран мира.

In May 1953 Edmund Hillary and Tensing Norgay were the first people to reach the summit of Everest. Since then, over 1,200 people from 63 countries have reached the highest point on the planet.

In the second sentence of the first example, the word **страна** 'country' provides the link between the two sentences and it comes in first place, although it is, in the Russian construction, the dative complement of the short adjective **нужен** 'is needed', 'is required'. In the second clause of the second sentence, the most important information is the absence of strong people; this information is provided by the negative verb form **нет** which comes at the end of the sentence.

In the second example, the link between the two sentences is provided by both the time and the place, and these elements are placed at the beginning of the second sentence. The most important information in this sentence is the number of people who have climbed Everest since Hillary and Tensing, and this information (the subject of the sentence) comes at the end.

Another illustration of the way in which information flows in Russian is provided by sentences that begin with a date or another construction indicating when an event happened. Here the most important information in the sentence is provided not by the verb, but by the subject of the sentence, that is, the noun or noun phrase referring to the event. For this reason the normal order of elements is: *date-verb-subject*:

22 июня 1941 года началась Великая Отечественная война.

The Great Patriotic War broke out on 22 June 1941.

В 1905 году произошла Первая Русская революция.


The first Russian revolution took place in 1905.

В январе у них родилась дочь.

They had a daughter in January.

NOTE Russians normally distinguish between **Вторая мировая война**, that is, the Second World War, which began in September 1939, and **Великая Отечественная война**, which began with the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941.

For more on talking about dates, *see* **19.3**.



20.1.3 More principles of Russian word order

In addition to the above, there are some general principles of Russian word order that apply to specific elements within a sentence.

Adjectives and *pronouns* are normally placed *before* the nouns they qualify:

Поздравляю вас с *Новым* годом!

I wish you a happy New Year!

Я хочу́ купить себе́ *новые* джинсы.

I want to buy myself some new jeans.

Только́ что вышел *какой-то* *новый* справочник по грамматике *русского* языка́.

A new handbook of Russian grammar has just been published.

In written Russian, it is sometimes possible to place an entire adjectival phrase in front of a noun:

В *Германии* открылся *первый в мире* полностью автоматизированный ресторан.

The first fully automated restaurant in the world has opened in Germany.

Occasionally, an adjective is placed after a noun in order to convey special emphasis:

Челове́к он был *ре́зкий*, но *справедли́вый*.

He was a man who was harsh, but fair.

For the use of short comparative adjectives after the noun they qualify, *see* **21.9.1**.

Numerals are also placed *before* the nouns they refer to:

Ему́ *сорок* пять лет.

He is forty-five years old.

A numeral placed after the noun it refers to indicates approximate quantity. For examples, see **19.4.2**.

Adverbs are normally placed immediately *before* the words they qualify, whether these are *verbs*, *adjectives* or other *adverbs*:

Она по-прежнему часто звони́ла своему́ уже́ взрослому сы́ну.

She telephoned her already grown-up son just as frequently as before.

Эта понача́лу безу́мная иде́я о́чень бы́стро преврати́лась в абсолю́тно чёткий план.

This initially insane idea has turned very quickly into an absolutely lucid plan.

Adverbs that are perceived as qualifying a whole sentence can be placed at the beginning:

Вне́шне но́вый «Форд» похо́ж на ста́рую моде́ль.

On the outside the new Ford is similar to the old model.

Adverbs in Russian are not placed at the end of a sentence as often as their English counterparts are, but this word order does occur if it is an adverb that is supplying the most important information:



**Я не большо́й покло́нник её тала́нта, но до́лжен призна́ться, что
сего́дня она́ выступала́ *очень хорошо́*.**

I am no great admirer of her talent, but I have to admit that today she performed very well.

Small words, especially unstressed pronouns, tend to be tucked away in the middle of a sentence:

**—Ме́жду про́чим, он сде́лал *мне* предложе́ние.
—И что, ты *его́* приняла́?**

—By the way, he's proposed to me.

—And so, have you accepted him?

Relative pronouns normally follow the nouns or pronouns to which they refer:

Хо́чешь уви́деть *маши́ну, на кото́рой* мы прое́хали́ через всю Росси́ю?

Do you want to see the car that we travelled across Russia in?

Не верь *тому́, что* он бу́дет сейча́с говори́ть.

Don't believe what he's about to tell you.

In more informal varieties of Russian, however, it is sometimes possible for a relative pronoun (especially **кто** or **что**) to come at the *beginning* of a sentence, with the reference (usually a pronoun) coming at the beginning of the second clause. This construction is mostly used for making generalised statements:

А *кому́* не интере́сно, *те* пусть не сме́трян.

Those who don't find it interesting, don't need to watch.

***Кто* не рабо́тает, *тот* не ест.**

Those who don't work, don't eat.

Participial phrases, which can be used in place of relative clauses in the most formal levels of written Russian, also tend to follow the nouns or pronouns that

they qualify:

В Росси́и посте́пенно форми́руется сло́й гра́ждан, де́лающих ста́вку на индивидуа́льный выбо́р и личную отве́тственность.

Russia is gradually acquiring a section of society that is willing to rely on individual choice and personal responsibility.

Ми́фом явля́ются и представле́ния о «культу́рной про́пасти», я́кобы разделя́ющей Росси́ю и Евро́пу.

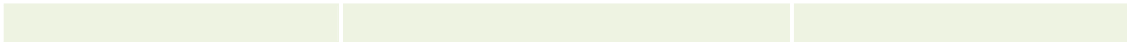
The notion of a ‘cultural gap’ that supposedly divides Russia from Europe is also a myth.

It is, however, by no means unknown for a participial phrase to precede the noun it qualifies; this word order also allows the same noun to be qualified by a relative clause:

Он был из тех ре́дких, зна́ющих челове́ческую психоло́гию руководи́телей, кото́рые уме́ют привле́чь люде́й на свою́ сто́рону.

He was one of those rare leaders who understood human psychology and who was therefore able to persuade people to support him.

For more on the use of participles, *see* **23.1.3**.



20.2 Active and passive verbs

20.2.1 Active and passive verbs

When a verb is in the *active* voice, the performer of the action or the main participant in the state is the *subject* of the verb. The recipient of the action, if there is one, is the *direct object*:

Ива́н пригласи́л Марию́ на ве́чер.

Ivan invited Mariia to the party.

Профе́ссор Попо́в написа́л о́чень интере́сную кни́гу о совреме́нном ру́сском рома́не.

Professor Popov has written a very interesting book about the modern Russian novel.

Both these sentences give us information about the subject: they tell us something about what Ivan and Professor Popov did. Sometimes, it is necessary to give information about the recipient of the action, and one way of doing this is to use a *passive verb*. When a passive verb is used, the recipient of the action is the *subject* of the verb. The performer of the action, if mentioned, is referred to as the *agent*; in Russian, the agent of a passive verb is in the *instrumental* case:

Ока́зывается, Мари́я была́ приглаше́на на ве́чер Ива́ном.

It transpires that Mariia was invited to the party by Ivan.

Са́мая интере́сная кни́га о совреме́нном ру́сском рома́не была́ написа́на профе́ссором Поповы́м.

The most interesting book on the modern Russian novel was written by Professor Popov.

For information on the formation of passive verbs, *see* **4.14.1**.

20.2.2 Using and avoiding passive verbs

In Russian, it is not necessary to use a *passive* verb in order to give information about the recipient of the action. The same effect can often be achieved by using an

active verb, but placing the direct object at the beginning of the sentence:

Ока́зывается, Мари́ю пригласи́л Ива́н.

It transpires that Mariia was invited by Ivan.

**Са́мую интере́сную кни́гу о совреме́нном ру́сском рома́не написа́л
профе́ссор Попо́в.**

The most interesting book on the modern Russian novel was written by Professor Popov.

It follows from this that passive verbs are not used as frequently in Russian as they are in English, and that the most natural means of translating into English a Russian sentence where the object precedes the verb is often by means of a passive construction (as in the above two examples). Often there is a choice in Russian between the two types of construction, but passive verbs tend to be preferred in sentences where no agent is mentioned:

Э́тот собо́р бы́л постро́ен в шестна́дцатом ве́ке.

This cathedral was built in the sixteenth century.

Эта книга была написана на русском языке и только потом переведена на английский.

This book was written in Russian and only later translated into English.

NOTE In the first of the above examples it would be possible to use an active verb in the third person plural, but this usage should be avoided when referring to actions carried out by nameable individuals (as in the second example):

Этот собор построили в шестнадцатом веке.

This cathedral was built in the sixteenth century.

For more on this use of the third person plural active verb, *see* **7.1.5**.

Passive verbs also tend to be preferred in those sentences where there are additional elements referring to time and/or place:

Мария была приглашена в числе первых.

Mariia was one of the first to be invited.

Эта книга была переведена на английский в начале прошлого века одним из братьев автора.

This book was translated into English at the beginning of the last century by one of the author's brothers.

Passive verbs tend to be characteristic of more formal types of language:

На вывозимые произведения искусства установлена экспортная пошлина в размере 100 процентов их стоимости.

Exported works of art are subject to a customs duty of 100 per cent of their value.

Ниже приводится перечень искусства, выдающих свидетельства на право вывоза произведений искусств за границу.

Below is published a list of those institutions that issue export certificates for works

of art.

20.3 Other forms of emphasis

20.3.1 The pattern: 'It was Ivan who invited Mariia'

It was noted above that one of the ways of translating the following Russian sentence into English was:

Марию пригласил Иван.

It was Ivan who invited Mariia.

Sentences of this type are known as 'cleft sentences': they are very common in English, but have no direct equivalent in Russian. The change of emphasis introduced by the English construction is achieved in sentences following the above pattern by using the *object-verb-subject* word order, but where this is inappropriate, other forms of indicating emphasis can be used.

20.3.2 Indicating emphasis using **и́менно** and **как ра́з**

One of the main functions of the adverb **и́менно** is to indicate emphasis in a similar way to English ‘cleft sentences’:

И́менно так у нас происхо́дит проце́дура голосова́ния.

That is how our voting system works.

Тру́дно пере́числить всё, что сде́лал Пу́шкин для ру́сской культу́ры. Так, и́менно с Пу́шкина начина́ется совреме́нный ру́сский литерату́рный язы́к.

It is difficult to enumerate everything that Pushkin did for Russian culture. It is to Pushkin that the modern Russian literary language traces its origins.

Как ра́з can also be used to add emphasis to a specific word or part of a sentence:

А я как ра́з собира́лся вам звони́ть.

I was just on the very point of phoning you.

Как ра́з на мо́лочные проду́кты у меня́ аллерги́я.

It is precisely to milk products that I have an allergy.

20.3.3 Indicating emphasis using particles

Various particles can be used to indicate emphasis. In many instances the degree of emphasis indicated is smaller than is the case when **и́менно** is used, and the emphasis is not always indicated in translation.

One particle that can indicate strong emphasis is **вот**; in this function it tends to be used with question words and to appear at the beginning of a sentence:

Вот кто нас вы́ручит!

That’s who is going to save our bacon!

Вот как надо чистить рыбу.

That's how to clean fish.

Вот куда денежки улетают.

That's where our money's going to.

The particle that is perhaps the most widely used for indicating emphasis is **-то**; this is always joined to the preceding word with a hyphen:

Наконец-то! Первый раз в этом сезоне наша команда одержала победу.

At last! For the first time this season our team has managed to win a game.

Вообще-то здесь нельзя курить.

You shouldn't really smoke here.

Но они-то и есть наши главные соперники.

But these are the people who are our main rivals.

Если Америка не хочет ссориться с Россией, то уж нам-то зачём?

If America does not want to quarrel with Russia, then why (on earth) should we?

It will be noted that in the last two examples **-то** is combined with the particles **и** and **уж** respectively.

Further examples of the use of **и** and **уж** are provided by the following:

—Тут написано: «Перед употреблением взбалтывать».

—Что я и делаю.

—It says here that you should shake (the bottle) before use.

—Which is (exactly) what I do.

Это не так уж и плохо!

It's not all that bad!

Another particle that can be used to indicate emphasis, especially after question words, is **же**:

Когда же, наконец, починят лифт?

So when will they finally get round to repairing the lift?

Так чего же ты хочешь?

But what on earth do you want?

Я же тебе говорил!

I told you so.

Or Didn't I tell you?

20.4 Definite and indefinite

20.4.0 Introduction

Because Russian has neither *definite* nor *indefinite articles*, it has to resort to other means to indicate whether a noun is definite or indefinite. Often this can be done using the word order of a sentence, although there are some occasions when a qualifier (a *pronoun* or the *numeral* **один**) can be used to clarify whether a noun is

definite or indefinite.

20.4.1 Using word order to indicate whether a noun is definite or indefinite

In general, there is a strong tendency for indefinite nouns to be placed after the verb and towards the end of a sentence:

Рядом с моим домом есть кинотеатр. И в этом кинотеатре находится маленькое кафе, где я часто пью кофе с друзьями.

Next to my house there is a cinema. And in the cinema there is a small café where I often meet my friends for coffee.

В Москве открывается выставка современной французской живописи.

An exhibition of modern French painting is opening in Moscow.

Она была дома одна, когда в дверь постучали. На пороге стоял приятный молодой человек с блокнотом в руке.

She was at home alone when someone knocked at the door. On the doorstep was a pleasant young man with a notebook in his hand.

Conversely, *definite* nouns, which often form a link with the previous sentence(s), will tend to come at or near the beginning of a sentence:

**В Москвѣ открыва́ется вы́ставка совреме́нной францу́зской живописи.
Вы́ставка пройде́т в Государстве́нном музее́ им. А.С. Пушклина.**

An exhibition of modern French painting is opening in Moscow. The exhibition will take place in the Pushkin Museum.

Она́ была́ дома́ одна́, когда́ в дверь посту́чали. На поро́ге стоя́л приятный молодой человек с блокнотом в руке́.

She was at home alone when someone knocked at the door. On the doorstep was a pleasant young man with a notebook in his hand.

20.4.2 Using qualifiers to indicate indefinite nouns

The pronouns **како́й-то** (if referring to something specific) and **како́й-нибудь** can be used to indicate an *indefinite* noun:

Моя́ жена́ опять забы́ла перча́тки в како́м-то кафе́.

My wife has gone and left her gloves in a café again.

—Тебе́ звони́ли с рабо́ты.

—Кто звони́л?

—Не зна́ю. Како́й-то мужчи́на.

—Somebody phoned from work for you.

—Who was it?

—I don't know. It was a man.

По доро́ге домой купи́ како́ю-нибудь газе́ту с програ́ммой на неде́лю.

On the way home buy a newspaper with the week's (television) programmes in it.

For more on the difference between **како́й-то** and **како́й-нибудь**, see 7.6.2 and 7.6.3.

The numeral **один** can also correspond to the English indefinite article:

В начале восьмидесятых годов один студент устроился ночным сторожем в один из московских музеев.

At the beginning of the 1980s a student was taken on as a night-watchman in a Moscow museum.

20.4.3 Using pronouns to indicate definite nouns

The demonstrative pronoun **этот** can be used to indicate that a noun is definite:

Рядом с моим домом есть кинотеатр. И в этом кинотеатре находится маленькое кафе, где я часто пью кофе с друзьями.

Next to my house there is a cinema, and in the cinema there is a small café where I often meet my friends for coffee.

The demonstrative pronoun **тот**, when used to qualify a noun used with the relative pronoun **который**, often corresponds to an English definite article. For an example, see **7.5.1**

21 Establishing contexts and connections

21.1 Time

21.1.1 Talking about when something happened/happens/will happen: parts of the day

To indicate a part of a day the relevant noun is used in the *instrumental* case: **у́тром** ‘in the morning’, **днём** ‘during the day’, **вече́ром** ‘in the evening’, **но́чью** ‘in/during the night’. Russian has no noun that corresponds to English ‘afternoon’, and the equivalent of ‘in the afternoon’ is either **днём** or **после обе́да** ‘after lunch’:

У́тром вы бу́дете ходи́ть на заня́тия, а по́сле обе́да вы свобо́дны.

You will attend classes in the morning and in the afternoon you are free.

А что вы собира́етесь де́лать вече́ром?

And what are you going to do in the evening?

Я обы́чно занима́юсь днём, но к экза́менам могу́ гото́виться и но́чью.

I usually work (study) during the day, but before exams I can work at night as well.

The phrase **с утра́** means ‘early/first thing in the morning’:

Перевóд ещё не гото́в, позвони́те за́втра с утра́.

The translation’s not ready yet; phone first thing in the morning.

If an event occurs regularly at a particular time of day, the preposition **по**(+ dat.) can be used; **по** is followed by a noun in the plural:

По утра́м мы ходи́ли за гриба́ми.

In the mornings we used to go mushroom hunting.

Нам пришлось пере́ехать из-за сосе́дей; по́ ноча́м то сканда́лы, то му́зыка на по́лную гро́мкость.

We had to move because of our neighbours; at night they were always either shouting at each other or playing music at full volume.

21.1.2 Talking about when something happened/happens/will happen: days of the week

To indicate an event that happened or will happen on a particular day of the week, the preposition **в**(+ acc.) is used:

Я уеду в среду.

I'm leaving on Wednesday.

Она приехала в воскресенье.

She arrived on Sunday.

If an event occurs regularly on a particular day of the week, the preposition **по**(+ dat.) can be used; **по** is followed by a noun in the plural:

Я предпочитаю не работать по субботам.

I prefer not to work on (a) Saturday.

Я обычно принимаю по пятницам, но на этой неделе вы можете зайти ко мне в четверг.

I normally see (students) on Fridays, but this week you can call in and see me on Thursday.

For the use of small letters for days of the week, *see* **1.5.7**.

For information on telling the time and indicating dates, *see* **19.2** and **19.3**.

21.1.3 Talking about when something happened/happens/will happen: seasons of the year

The names of the seasons are:

весна́	spring
ле́то	summer
о́сень	autumn
зима́	winter

The *instrumental* case is used when talking about the seasons of the year:

Летом я обычно провожу субботу-воскресенье на даче.

In summer I usually spend the weekend at my dacha.

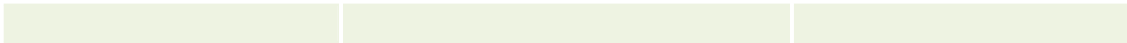
Советую вам посетить наш город или весной или осенью.

I recommend that you visit our city either in the spring or autumn.

21.1.4 Other words and phrases used to indicate the time when something happened/happens/will happen

The following words and phrases are used to indicate specific times:

вчера́	yesterday
сегодня́	today
завтра́	tomorrow
позавчера́	the day before yesterday
послезавтра́	the day after tomorrow



на прошлой неделе	last week
на этой неделе	this week
на будущей неделе	next week
в прошлом месяце	last month
в этом месяце	this month
в будущем месяце	next month
в прошлом году	last year
в этом году	this year
в будущем году	next year

The following words and phrases are used to indicate an unspecified time:

скоро	soon
нескоро	not for a long time yet
давно	a long time ago
недавно	recently
на днях	recently, the other day (in the past), soon, any day now (in the future)

когда-то, некогда, в своё время all mean 'once', 'at some time (in the past)', the first is the most widely used:

Мы скоро узнаём всю правду об этом.

We'll soon find out the whole truth about this.

Судя по всему, появится он тут нескоро.

It looks as if he won't be here for a long time yet.

Мы познакомились давно; можно сказать, что мы старые друзья.

We met a long time ago; you could say that we're old friends.

Мы совсем недавно переехали в Лондон и ещё плохо ориентируемся в городе.

We moved to London only very recently and still don't know our way round the

city.

Мы встретились *на днях*, и тогда он был в отличном настроении.

We met the other day and then he was in an excellent mood.

***Некогда* на этом месте стояла церковь.**

There was once a church on this spot.

Он *в своё время* был чемпионом мира.

At one time he was a world champion.

For another meaning of **давно́** and **недавно́**, see **21.1.13**.

For more on **когда-то**, see **9.1.5**.

For another meaning of **некогда**, see **15.5**.



21.1.5 Talking about when something happened/happens/will happen using the conjunction **когда́**

When the time of an event is indicated by an entire clause, the conjunction **когда́** is used; this is used for events in the past or in the future, for single events or repeated occurrences:

Когда́ я учи́лся в шко́ле, у меня́ всегда́ бы́ли хоро́шие отме́тки по математи́ке.

When I was at school, I always got good marks for maths.

Жена́ уже́ спала́, когда́ я пришёл́ домо́й.

My wife was already asleep when I got home.

Когда́ пого́да плоха́я, я стара́юсь не выходи́ть из до́ма.

When(ever) the weather is bad, I try not to leave the house.

Когда́ приде́т, обяза́тельно скажу́ ему́.

When he arrives, I'll definitely tell him.

NOTE If the event takes place in the future, the verb must be in the *future tense* (as in the last example).

When the sentence refers to an event in the future, the conjunction **когда́** is sometimes omitted in informal language:

Оте́ц верне́тся – сама́ расска́жешь.

When father gets back, you can tell him for yourself.

Купи́, открой́, зажги́ горелку́;

Вскипи́т – и наливай́ в тарелку́.

Buy (it), open it, light a hotplate;

When it boils, pour it into a bowl. [From an advertisement for tinned *borshch*.]

21.1.6 Before and after

The prepositions that are used most commonly when placing one event relative to another are **до**(+ gen.) ‘before’ and **после**(+ gen.) ‘after’:

Мне лучше звонить до обеда.

It’s best to phone me before lunch.

После двух я всегда на месте.

I’m always here after two o’clock.

Перед(+ instr.) means ‘immediately before’:

Всегда мойте руки перед едой.

Always wash your hands before eating.

Sometimes **раньше**(+ gen.), which literally means ‘earlier than’, can correspond to English ‘before’; it is used when stressing the earliest time at which something can or should happen:

Раньше вторника меня здесь, наверно, не будет.

I probably won’t be here before Tuesday.

Or Tuesday is the earliest I am likely to be here.



NOTE *раньше* is the comparative of *рано* 'early'. For more on using comparatives, see **21.9**.

По(+ prep.) can mean '(immediately) after'; like the English 'upon', it is used only with nouns that are formed from verbs and tends to be characteristic of more formal styles:

По окончании университета она поступила в аспирантуру.

After finishing her first degree she embarked on postgraduate studies.

cf. *оканчивать/окончить* 'to finish', 'to graduate from'

For more on nouns formed from verbs, see **10.1.10**.

21.1.7 When one event occurs before or after another

Where one event occurred (or will occur) *before* another, the construction **за**(+ acc.) ... **до**(+ gen.) is used:

Он приехал в Англию за два года до войны.

He came to England two years before the war.

On the same principle, where one event occurred (or will occur) *after* another, the construction **через**(+ acc.) ... **после**(+ gen.) is used:

Она уехала из России через пять лет после революции.

She left Russia five years after the Revolution.

21.1.8 Indicating that something will occur after the elapse of a period of time

To indicate that something happened or will happen after the elapse of a period of time, either **через**(+ acc.) or **спустя**(+ acc.) can be used:

Он приехал на шесть недель, но уехал через три дня.

He came for six weeks, but left after three days.

Я верну́сь че́рез час.

I'll be back in an hour.

Они́ поже́нились и спу́стя год (от год спу́стя) у́ехали жить в Герма́нию.

They got married and a year later went to live in Germany.

NOTE Unusually, *спустя́* can come either before or after the noun to which it refers.

21.1.9 The equivalent of 'ago'

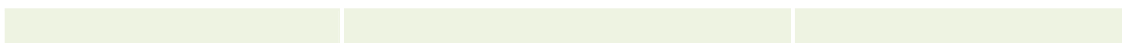
To indicate that something happened at a particular time in the past, the adverb *тому́ назад* 'ago' is used:

Он ушёл буквально две минуты назад.

He left literally two minutes ago.

Пе́рвые тролле́йбусы появи́лись на у́лицах Москвы́ бо́лее чем се́мьдесят лет тому́ назад.

The first trolleybuses appeared on the streets of Moscow more than seventy years ago.



21.1.10 Talking about before and after using adverbs

The equivalent of English 'before' when used as an adverb is **ра́ньше**; the equivalents of 'afterwards' are **по́зже** and, more informally, **попóзже** or **потóм**:

На́до бы́ло сказа́ть об э́том ра́ньше.

You should have mentioned this before.

Разберёмся во всём э́том по́зже.

We'll sort all this out afterwards.

Расскажу́ тебе́ об э́том потóм/попóзже.

I'll tell you about it afterwards.

21.1.11 Talking about before and after using conjunctions

Sometimes clauses joined by a conjunction are used to indicate that one action happened before or after another. The Russian conjunctions used in this sense are **до того́ как** or **пре́жде чем** 'before' and **пóсле того́ как** 'after'. If the subject in both halves of the sentence is the same, the conjunction **пре́жде чем** can be followed by an *infinitive*:

Пре́жде чем вы́сказа́ть своё мнёние по э́тому вопро́су, я хоте́л бы поблагодари́ть председа́тельствующего за приглаше́ние вы́ступити на э́той конфере́нции.

Before expressing my opinion on this question I would like to thank the chairman for the invitation to speak at this conference.

Or Before I express my opinion ...

До того́ как он стал нача́льником, я ча́сто приглаша́л его́ на кру́жку пи́ва.

Before he became the boss, I often used to invite him out for a glass of beer.

Я по́нял и́стинный смы́сл её слов то́лько по́сле того, как она уе́хала.

I understood the true meaning of her words only after she (had) left.

NOTE A comma should normally be placed before **как** or **чем** (as in the third example above), but can be omitted when the conjunction begins the sentence (as in the first two examples).

These conjunctions are not used anything like as frequently as their English equivalents, and especially in more informal contexts it is probably better to try to avoid them if at all possible. Sometimes this can be done by using a noun with a preposition:

Я до за́втрака воо́бще́ ни на что́ не спосо́бен.

Before I've had breakfast I'm totally incapable of anything.

То́лько по́сле оконча́ния универси́тета вы осозна́ете, как здо́рово быть студё́нтом.

Only after you've graduated will you understand how great it is to be a student.

A similar effect can sometimes be achieved by looking at an event from a different point of view, making it possible to use the more frequent conjunction **когда́** 'when':

Да́же когда́ я ещё́ учи́лся в шко́ле, я то́чно знал, кем я хочу́ стать

Even before I left school I knew exactly what I wanted to be.

(Literally, Even when I was still at school ...)



21.1.12 Duration: completed actions

To indicate the duration of time spent on an action the *accusative* case is used without a preposition:

Я жил в этом доме пять лет.

I lived in this house for five years [but now no longer do so; see below, **21.1.13**].

Вам придётся стоять два часа за билетом.

You'll have to queue for two hours to get a ticket.

Он три часа рассказывал мне о своих приключениях в Африке.

He was telling me about his adventures in Africa for three hours.

Or, He spent three hours telling me about his adventures in Africa.

Normally, the verb in such sentences is in the *imperfective* aspect, but *perfective* verbs with the prefixes **по-** or **про-** can sometimes be used. The former usually indicates a short duration as part of a sequence of actions, while the latter stresses the length of time an action or event lasted for:

После последней лекции я позанимался два часа в библиотеке, а потом пошёл домой.

After the last lecture I worked for a couple of hours in the library and then went home.

Он прожил тридцать лет в соседней квартире, но за всё это время ни разу со мной не поздоровался.

He lived in the next flat for thirty years, but in all that time never once said hello to me.

To indicate an unspecified duration, the adverbs **долго** 'for a long time' and **недолго** 'for a short time', 'not for long' can be used:

Он допи́л ко́фе, а пото́м до́лго смотре́л в окно́.

He finished his coffee and then spent a long time looking out of the window.

Мы недо́лго жи́ли в Пари́же; там всё сли́шком до́рого.

We didn't live in Paris for long; everything's too expensive there.

21.1.13 Duration: continuing actions

If an action started in the past and is still continuing, the same construction is used, but the verb is in the *present* tense:

Я уже́ пять лет живу́ в э́том до́ме.

I've been living in this house for five years (and still do).

If the action is still continuing, unspecified duration is expressed by the adverb **давно́** 'for a long time'; **неда́вно** 'not for long', 'since recently' is occasionally used, but is less common:

Вы давно́ ждёте?

Have you been waiting long?

Я здесь неда́вно.

I haven't been here long.

For other uses of **давно́** and **неда́вно**, see **21.1.4**.

21.1.14 Other constructions relating to duration

When the stress is on the length of time it took to complete something, the preposition **за**(+ acc.) is used:

Я написа́л кни́гу за́ шесть ме́сяцев.

I wrote the book in six months

Or, It took me six months to write the book.

This construction is used in order to stress what has been achieved in a particular period of time:

За по́следние два го́да в на́шем го́роде по́строено 3 000 но́вых до́мов.

In the last two years 3,000 new houses have been built in our city.

It can also indicate a negative outcome:

За вре́мя дежу́рства ниче́го су́щественного не произо́шло.

Nothing significant occurred during my period on duty.

A preposition that is close in meaning to **за** is **в те́чение**(+ gen.) ‘during’, ‘in the course of’:

В те́чение пяти́ лет о́бласть по́лностью переи́дёт на цифрово́е веща́ние.

Within five years our region will have fully gone over to digital broadcasting.

В те́чение is also used when talking about continuing states of affairs, repeated actions or actions that fail to occur over a particular period of time:

В те́чение э́той неде́ли бу́дет преоблада́ть о́блачная пого́да.

During (the course of) this week the weather will be mostly cloudy (*literally*, ... cloudy weather will prevail).

В течение двух месяцев я не замечал, что мой компьютер заражён вирусом.

For two months I failed to notice that my computer was infected with a virus.

Or, It took me two months to notice ...

To talk about the intended duration of an action or event, the preposition **на**(+ acc.) is used:

Я уезжаю на пару дней.

I am going away for a few days.

Он приехал на шесть недель, но уехал через три дня.

He came for six weeks, but left after three days.

When one action or event is taking place against the background of another, the preposition **во время**(+ gen.) ‘during’ is used:


Во время войны он служил в военной разведке.

During the war he worked in military intelligence.

If the background event lasted for several years, then **в годы**(+ gen.) ‘during (the years/period of)’ can also be used:

В годы перестройки она работала корреспондентом в газете «Комсомольская правда».

During the perestroika period she worked as a correspondent for *Komsomol'skaia pravda*.



If two actions or events taking place at the same time are described in whole clauses, these can be joined by the conjunction **пока́** ‘while’:

Пока́ я был бо́лен, сестра́ навеща́ла меня́ ка́ждый день.

While I was ill, my sister visited me every day.

Пока́ я здесь, мо́жно задава́ть мне вопро́сы в любое вре́мя.

While *or* For as long as I am here, you can ask me questions at any time.

In the first of these examples it would be equally possible to use **когда́**; **пока́** emphasises that the two actions are simultaneous, corresponding to the English ‘for as long as’.

21.1.15 ‘From’/‘to’, ‘until’: using prepositions

The preposition used most frequently to indicate the starting point of an action is **с** (+ gen.):

Я бу́ду здесь с понеде́льника.

I’ll be here from Monday onwards.

Наш магази́н рабо́тает с семи́ часо́в.

Our shop is open from seven o’clock.

The preposition used to indicate the finishing point of an action is **до** (+ gen.), which in addition to meaning ‘before’ also has the meaning of ‘until’:

Подожди́те до че́тverka: тогда́ я всё объясню́.

Wait until Thursday, then I’ll explain everything.

The phrase **вплоть до́** has the meaning of ‘right up until’:

Вплоть до́ конца́ жи́зни он писа́л стихи́, кото́рыми восхища́лись миллио́ны.

Right up until the end of his life he was writing verse that was admired by millions.

In formal language, and especially in official documents, **по**(+ acc.) is sometimes used with the meaning ‘until’. Unlike **до**, which can be ambiguous, **по** always has the meaning of ‘up to and including’:

Настоящий документ действителен с 25-го октября по 31-е декабря

This document is valid from 25 October and up to and including 31 December.

21.1.16 ‘Since’/‘as soon as’/‘until’: using conjunctions

The equivalent of the conjunction ‘since’, when used to indicate the starting point of an action, is **с тех пор, как**:

С тех пор, как я приехал сюда, я ни разу не болел.

Since I moved here, I haven’t been ill once.

NOTE The same rule for punctuation applies as for **до того(,) как** (see 21.1.11).

The Russian equivalent of ‘as soon as’ is **как только**:

Как только я вошёл в комнату, я понял, что меня не ждали.

As soon as I entered the room, I realised that they had not been expecting me.



When ‘until’ is used as a conjunction, the Russian equivalent is **пока́**, with the negative particle **не** used before the verb in the clause that **пока́** introduces:

Пока́ я не получи́л твоё письмо́, я даже не зна́л, в какой стране́ ты теперь рабо́таешь.

Until I received your letter, I didn’t even know what country you were working in now.

The conjunction **пока́** can be reinforced by the phrase **до тех пор**:

Я не уйду́ отсюда́ до тех пор, пока́ не получи́у отве́ты на все мои́ вопросы́.

I will not leave here until (such time as) I receive answers to all my questions.

NOTE When **пока́** and **как то́лько** refer to events taking place in the future, the verb that follows them is in the *future perfective* form:

Как то́лько вода́ закипи́т, доба́вьте морко́вь и вари́те 10 мину́т на ме́дленном огне́.

As soon as the water boils, add the carrots and let them simmer for ten minutes on a low heat.

Не уходите́, пока́ я не верну́сь.

Don’t go until I get back.

21.2 Place

21.2.1 Talking about location: the prepositions **в**(+ prep.) and **на**(+ prep.)

The most widely used prepositions for talking about location are **в**(+ prep.) and **на**(+ prep.). The basic meaning of **в**(+ prep.), when it is used to indicate location, is ‘in(side)’:

Я оста́вил ключи́ в столе́.

I’ve left my keys in my desk.

Именно в этой комнате я написал все свои книги.

It was in this room that I wrote all my books.

The basic meaning of the preposition is **на**(+ prep.) ‘on (the surface of)’:

Я оставил ключи на столе.

I’ve left my keys on the table.

Он лежал на траве, обдумывая свои планы на будущее.

He lay on the grass, thinking over his plans for the future.

In addition, these prepositions are used with a wide range of other locations. These are discussed in **21.2.2–21.2.10**.

21.2.2 Town, cities, districts and regions

For locations in these categories the preposition **в** is used:

В городе Москве и в Московской области температура днём будет 23–25 градусов.

In the city of Moscow and in the Moscow region the temperature through the day will be 23–25 degrees.



Такие вещи можно купить только в Париже, Лондоне или Нью-Йорке.

You can only buy things like that in Paris, London or New York.

21.2.3 Countries

The preposition **в** is also used with **страна́** 'country' and with the names of almost all countries:

Если вы хотите улучшить свой русский, то надо поучиться в России или в какой-нибудь другой стране, где ещё говорят по-русски.

If you want to improve your Russian, you need to study in Russia or in some other country where people still speak Russian.

В Англии в университете учатся три года, а в Шотландии обычно четыре.

In England people study at university for three years, but in Scotland it's usually four (years).

The preposition **на** (+ prep.) is used with the names of some countries that are also islands, notably **Кипр** 'Cyprus', **Куба** 'Cuba', **Мальта** 'Malta'; **в** (+ prep.) is used with **Великобритания** 'Great Britain' and **Ирландия** 'Ireland':

На Кипре почему-то очень много русских.

For some reason there are a lot of Russians in Cyprus.

В Великобритании сохраняется фунт стерлингов, тогда как в Ирландии уже перешли на евро.

In Great Britain the pound sterling has been retained, while in Ireland they have already switched to the euro.

NOTE Before 1991 **на** was traditionally used with **Україна** ‘Ukraine’, but when the country gained its independence, the Ukrainians launched a campaign to encourage a switch to **в Украине** ‘in Ukraine’. Now both forms are possible: **в** is normally preferred in Ukraine, while **на** still tends to be used in Russia. The use of **на Україне** is likely to cause offence to some Ukrainians.

На is used with the noun **рoдина** ‘homeland’:

Занима́я до́лжность посла́, он сохра́нял конта́кты с политическими си́лами на роди́не.

While working as an ambassador, he kept up his contacts with political forces at home.

NOTE In Soviet times **Рoдина** was usually spelled with a capital letter; this is now found much less frequently and tends to be restricted to particularly high-flown contexts.

21.2.4 Islands, peninsulas and mountain ranges

На is used with the names of most islands, peninsulas and mountain ranges:

На Камча́тке кли́мат о́чень сурoвьй; на Саха́лине он помя́гче, но зимо́й там то́же о́чень хо́лодно.

In Kamchatka (peninsula) the climate is very severe; on Sakhalin (island) it is gentler, but in winter it also gets very cold there.



В качестве тележурналиста он неоднократно бывал на Кавказе.

As a television journalist, he's been to the Caucasus several times.

There are, however, some exceptions, where **в** is used instead:

в Крыму́ in the Crimea
в Альпах in the Alps

For the use of **в/на** with islands that are also countries, *see* **21.2.3**.

21.2.5 Other geographical terms

To indicate location with reference to the world **в** is used with **ми́р**, but **на** is used with **свет**:

Его́ го́лос зна́ют во всём ми́ре.

His voice is known everywhere in the world.

На све́те мно́го стран, где лю́ди жи́вут в бе́дности.

There are many countries in the world where people live in poverty.

NOTE The phrase **в све́те** means 'in the light of':

В све́те последних археологических открытий мы можем сказать, что в десятом веке здесь уже было городское поселение.

In the light of the latest archaeological discoveries we can say that in the tenth century there was already an urban settlement here.

В is used with terms indicating geographical or climatic zones, such as **пусты́ня** 'desert', **сте́пь** 'steppe', **тайга́** 'taiga', **ту́ндра** 'tundra':

Он чу́вствует себя́ до́ма вездé, будь э́то в ту́ндре, в тайге́, в степи́ или да́же в пусты́не.

He feels at home everywhere, whether it's in the tundra, the taiga, the steppe or

even the desert.

На is used for points of the compass:

На северо-востоке страны ожидается облачная погода с небольшими дождями, а на юге будет солнечно.

In the north-east of the country it is expected to be cloudy with occasional rain, while in the south it will be sunny.

Ей и в голову не приходило, что на Западе всё может быть по-другому.

It never even occurred to her that in the West things might be different.

NOTE Capital letters are generally used in Russian when a point of the compass is used to denote a geopolitical entity.

21.2.6 Locations that can be perceived in terms of a building or some other closed and covered space

For locations that would be thought of in terms of buildings or other enclosed spaces the preposition **в** is normally used:

В школе я учился очень хорошо, но в университете мне стало скучно, и я ушёл после второго курса.



At school I did very well, but at university I started to get bored and left after the second year.

Не рекомендуется менять деньги в аэропорту или в гостинице; курс всегда лучше в банках и обменных пунктах.

It's not advisable to change money at the airport or in a hotel; the rate is always better at banks and *bureaux de change*.

Извините, но в театре нельзя курить.

I'm sorry, but you're not allowed to smoke in the theatre.

There are, however, a number of locations that seem to belong to this category, but with which, for no obvious reason, **на** is used. These include:

вокзал	(main line) railway station
станция	(underground, local railway or radio) station
факультет	faculty
кафедра	department (at a university)
почта	post office
почтамт	main post office
завод	factory (heavy industry)
фабрика	factory (light industry)
предприятие	enterprise, works, factory
дача	dacha, country cottage

Чтобы перейти на кольцевую линию, надо было выйти на станции «Киевская».

To change onto the Circle line you should have got off at Kievskaia station.

Он был на третьем курсе аспирантуры и на кафедре появлялся только тогда, когда назначалась встреча с научным руководителем.

He was a third-year postgraduate and only turned up in the department when he had an appointment with his supervisor.

В течение многих лет он работал на автозаводе в Москве.

For many years he worked at a car factory in Moscow.

With **квартира** 'flat' and **кухня** 'kitchen' either **в** or **на** can be used; when the emphasis is on the actual interior space, as opposed to the location in general, as in the first example, **в** is more likely to be used:

Мысль о том, что в квартире в её отсутствие побывали посторонние, была неприятной.

The thought that during her absence strangers had been in her flat was not a pleasant one.

Можно оставить ваши вещи у меня в/на квартире.

You can leave your things in my flat.

Мой муж в/на кухне, готовит ужин.

My husband's in the kitchen making supper.



21.2.7 Locations that can be perceived as open spaces

The preposition **на** is used with many locations that might be thought of as open spaces. Nouns that come into this category include: **рынок** 'market', **стадион** 'stadium', **остановка** '(bus Or tram) stop', **улица** 'street' and **площадь** 'square':

Продукты я обычно покупаю на рынке; там недорого.

I usually buy food at the market; it's not expensive there.

Матч Россия – Англия состоится завтра на стадионе «Локомотив».

The match between Russia and England takes place tomorrow at the Locomotive stadium.

Вы выходите на следующей остановке?

Are you getting off at the next stop?

У неё шикарная квартира на Тверской улице.

She has a posh flat in Tverskaia Street.

Мы договорились встретиться на Красной площади.

We arranged to meet in Red Square.

NOTE The phrase **на улице** often means 'outside', especially in the context of a city:

В аэропорту «Шереметьево» они удивительно быстро прошли паспортный контроль и таможену и через десять минут уже были на улице.

At Sheremet'ev Airport they got through passport and customs surprisingly quickly and after ten minutes were already outside.

The preposition **в** is used with **парк** 'park', **сад** 'garden' and **переулок** 'narrow street', 'alley':

Лéтом они́ обы́чно встреча́лись в па́рке у фонтáна.

In summer they used to meet near the fountain in the park.

Если вы интересу́етесь экзоти́ческими расте́ниями, сто́ит побыва́ть в Ботани́ческом саду́.

If you're interested in exotic plants, it's worth visiting the Botanic Gardens.

Мы у́жинали вчера́ в ма́леньком рестора́не, кото́рый нахо́дится в одном из переу́лков Арба́та.

We ate last night in a small restaurant, which is in one of the narrow streets of the Arbat.

With **двор** 'yard' both **в (во)** and **на** are found, although there is a difference in meaning. **Во дворе́** is used when talking about a particular yard, and especially the courtyard of a block of flats; **на дворе́** usually means simply 'outside':

В ле́тние вечера́ де́ти игра́ли во дворе́ большо́го до́ма.

In summer evenings children used to play in the courtyard of the large house.

Какая́ сейча́с пого́да на дворе́?

What's the weather like outside just now?

For the use of **во** (instead of **в**) see **9.2.8**.



21.2.8 Means of transport

For locations that are a means of transport, both **в** and **на** are used, but with a difference in meaning. **В** is used when emphasis is on the interior of the form of transport, while **на** is used when the emphasis is on the vehicle as a means of getting from one place to another:

Власти работают над законом, который запрещает поцелуи в метро и других общественных местах.

The authorities are working on a law that will ban kissing in the underground and other public places.

Сидя в машине рядом с мужем, она молча курила и смотрела в окно.

Sitting in the car next to her husband, she was quietly smoking and looking out of the window.

Можно ехать на метро до станции Университет и потом на любом трамвае до остановки «Черёмушкинский рынок».

You can go by underground to University Station and then by any tram as far as the Cherëmushki market stop.

Ясно, что на машине никто не ездил несколько дней.

It is clear that nobody had driven the car for several days.

21.2.9 Organisations of various sorts

When the location is the name of an organisation, **в** is used:

В советские времена он служил в КГБ, но теперь он работает в Министерстве иностранных дел.

In Soviet times he worked for the KGB, but now he has a job in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

В милиции мне задали несколько вопросов и составили протокол.

The police asked me several questions and drew up an official report.

21.2.10 Locations where the noun denotes a function or activity

If the noun used to indicate a location denotes the function or activity that takes place there, then **на** is used:

На рабо́те я пью то́лько ко́фе – что́бы не засыпа́ть на совеца́ниях.

At work I only drink coffee so as not to fall asleep at meetings.

Я познако́мился с жено́й в Москве́ на студё́нческом ве́чере.

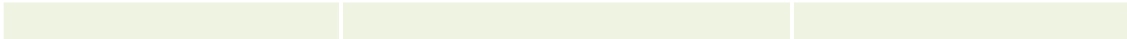
I met my wife in Moscow at a student party.

Вчера́ ве́чером я был на чуде́сном конце́рте.

Yesterday evening I was at a wonderful concert.

На заня́тиях я аккурати́но конспекти́рую слова́ преподава́теля, но пото́м всё равно́ ничего́ не понимаю́.

In classes I take careful notes of what the lecturer says, but afterwards none of it makes sense.



NOTE When the preposition **в**(+ prep.) is used with nouns belonging to this category, it refers to the *content* of the event or activity rather than the location:

В моей работе нет ничего интересного: я всё время перевожу бесконечные скучные документы.

There's nothing interesting in my work; I spend my whole time translating interminable boring documents.

В сегодняшнем концерте мы будем играть музыку Чайковского и Мусоргского.

In today's concert we will be playing music by Tchaikovsky and Musorgskii.

21.2.11 Location using the preposition **у** (+ gen.)

The basic meaning of the preposition **у** (+ gen.), when used to indicate location, is 'close to', 'adjacent to':

Он стоял у окна и смотрел вдаль.

He was standing by the window looking into the distance.

Она ждала меня у входа в театр.

She was waiting for me at the entrance to the theatre.

The preposition **у** is used when the location takes the form of a noun or a pronoun indicating a person:

Извините за опоздание; я был у врача.

I'm sorry I'm late; I've been at the doctor's.

Она живёт у родителей.

She lives with her parents (i.e. at her parents' place).

У нас отключили отопление. Можно, я переночую у тебя?

They've turned our heating off. Can I spend the night at your place?

The following construction with *у* is often used in conjunction with a second prepositional phrase to indicate a location owned by or otherwise closely connected with the person concerned:

Можно оставить эти вещи у меня на квартире.

You can leave these things in my flat.

У сестры на работе есть бесплатный буфет и сауна, но работа у неё вредная.

My sister has a free canteen and sauna at work, although on the other hand her work is quite dangerous.

У нас в Ростове снег уже растаял.

In Rostov (where we live *or* come from) the snow has already melted.

21.2.12 Location using other prepositions

A number of other prepositions can be used to indicate location. These include **за**(+ acc.), **за**(+ instr.), **перед**(+ instr.), **под**(+ instr.), **над**(+ instr.), **при**(+ prep.).

За(+ acc.) is used when indicating the distance between two locations:

Наша деревня находится за шестьдесят километров от центра Москвы.

Our village is 60 kilometres away from the centre of Moscow.



За шестьдесят километров от Москвы мотор вдруг заглох.

Our engine died (when we were) 60 kilometres away from Moscow.

В (+prep.) can be used with the same meaning, but is more likely to be found in formal contexts, especially in the written language:

Эта гостиница не очень удобная, так как находится в пяти километрах от вокзала.

This hotel is not very convenient, as it's 5 kilometres away from the station.

The basic meaning of **за**(+instr.) is 'behind' or 'beyond':

Он ехал в первой машине. За ней следовал джип с охраной.

He was travelling in the first car. Behind it followed a jeep with the bodyguards.

Вы видите старый домик, вон там за рекой?

Can you see that little old house over there, beyond the river?

За (+instr.) is used in a number of useful set phrases:

за границей	abroad
за рубежом	abroad
за пределами	beyond the boundaries of, outside
за столом	at table
за городом	out of town, in the country
за бортом	overboard
за кулисами	backstage

Она вдруг решила, что в России жить трудно, а за границей будет гораздо лучше.

She suddenly decided that living in Russia was difficult and that it would be a lot better abroad.

За пределами России эта проблема никого не интересует.

Outside Russia nobody's interested in this problem.

Они сидели за столом и ели какое-то блюдо из мяса.

They were sitting at the table eating some meat dish.

Я не могу дозвониться до него: он, наверно, за городом на даче.

I can't get through to him on the phone; he must be at his dacha in the country.

The meaning of **перед**(+instr.), when it refers to a location, is 'in front of':

Перед вокзалом была большая площадь, где стоял памятник Ленину.

In front of the station was a large square with a statue of Lenin.

The most usual meaning of **под**(+instr.) is 'under(neath)':

Я всегда прячу ключ под этим большим камнем.

I always hide the key under this big stone.

With names of towns **под**(+instr.) has the meaning of 'just outside', 'very close to'.

The same preposition is also used for the location of battles:

Он живёт где-то под Москвой.

He lives somewhere just outside Moscow.

Он был тяжело ранен (в битве) под Сталинградом.

He was badly wounded at (in the battle of) Stalingrad.



The preposition **над**(+instr.) means ‘above’, ‘over’:

Мы летели прямо над городом, но из-за плохой погоды ничего не было видно.

We flew right over the city, but because of the bad weather we couldn't see anything.

The most usual meaning of **при**(+prep.), when used to refer to a location is ‘attached to’, ‘adjacent to’:

При университете есть музей и картинная галерея.

Attached to the university is a museum and an art gallery.

При also has the meaning of ‘in the presence of’:

Она не хотела разговаривать об этом при сыне.

She didn't want to talk about it in the presence of her son.

21.2.13 Other ways of talking about location

A number of adverbs can be used to indicate location. These include:

здесь	here
тут	here
там	there
близко	near(by)
далеко	far, distant, a long way away
рядом	close by, adjacent, next door
впередí	ahead
сзади	behind

Здесь (or Тут) все места заняты.

All the places are taken here.

Я не поеду с тобой в деревню. Там нечего делать

I won't go with you to the village. There's nothing to do there.

Вокзал совсём *близко*; можно идти пешком.

The station's very near; you can go on foot.

Она *далеко* живёт, где-то в другом конце города.

She lives a long way away, somewhere at the other end of the town.

Гостиница была на главной улице города. *Рядом* был банк, а потом ряд магазинов.

The hotel was on the main street of the town. Next to it was a bank and then a row of shops.

Я очень хорошо помню, как мы ехали на открытие съезда: *впереди* была милицёрская машина с мигалкой, за ней пять-шесть автобусов с делегатами, и *сзади* ещё одна машина с мигалкой.

I can remember very well how we travelled to the opening of the congress: in front was a police car with a flashing light, then five or six buses with the delegates and behind was another car with a flashing light.

Бли́зко, **далеко́** and **рядом** can be used in combination with prepositions, as follows:

бли́зко к (+ dat.) <i>or</i> бли́зко от (+ gen.)	close to
далеко́ от (+ gen.)	a long way from, far from
рядом с (+ instr.)	next (door) to

Кре́пость была́ совсе́м бли́зко к границе́.

The fortress was very close to the frontier.

Она́ стояла́ так бли́зко от меня́, что я чу́вствовал за́пах её духо́в.

She was standing so close to me that I could smell her perfume.

Я бы ходи́л в бассе́йн поча́ще, но мы живём сли́шком далеко́ от спортко́мплекса.

I would go to the swimming baths more often, but we live too far away from the sports facilities.

За нали́чными далеко́ иди́ти не на́до: рядом с гостии́ницей есть банк.

You don't have to go far for cash. There's a bank next door to the hotel.

The conjunction used to indicate location is **где**:

Я нико́гда не́ был в го́роде, где есть так мно́го хоро́ших рестора́нов.

I have never been in a city where there are so many good restaurants.

21.2.14 Talking about destinations

There is a close correlation between the preposition used to indicate destination and that used to indicate location. Where location is indicated by **в**(+prep.), the equivalent destination is indicated by **в**(+acc.):

Не бу́дем входи́ть в э́ту ко́мнату; там спит мо́я до́чка, и я не хочу́ её буди́ть.

We won't go into that room; my daughter's asleep there and I don't want to wake her up.

Тур в Лондон сто́ит двáдцать ты́сяч рублёй.

A package-tour to London costs 20,000 roubles.

На бу́дущей неде́ле меня́ здесь не бу́дет; мне на́до бу́дет съезди́ть в Росси́ю на па́ру дней.

I won't be here next week; I've got to go to Russia for a couple of days.

Обы́чно я хо́жy в уни́верситет пе́шкoм.

I usually walk to the university.

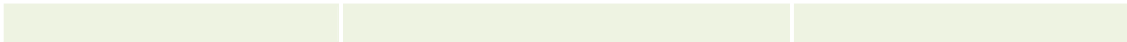
Е́сли не прекрати́тся э́тот шум, я позвоню́ в мили́цию.

If this noise doesn't stop, I'll phone the police.

Where a location is indicated by using **на**(+prep.), the equivalent destination is indicated by **на**(+acc.):

Официа́льная делега́ция во главе́ с пре́мьер-мини́стром вы́летела се́годня на Кубу́.

An official delegation, led by the prime minister, left for Cuba today.



**Он у́ехал на За́пад в 1974 г. и верну́лся в Росси́ю то́лько в конце́
восьмидеся́тых.**

He left for the West in 1974 and returned to Russia only at the end of the 1980s.

Мо́жете захо́дить ко мне на рабо́ту в любое́ вре́мя.

You can call in and see me at work any time you like.

Where a location is indicated by using **у** (+gen.), the equivalent destination is indicated by **к** (+dat):

Он подошёл к окну́ и посмотре́л на у́лицу.

He walked up to the window and looked at the street.

Заезжа́й ко мне на рабо́ту к пяти́. Я бу́ду гото́в.

Drop in (*literally*, to me) at work around five. I'll be ready by then.

For the use of **ко** instead of **к**, see **9.2.8**.

NOTE In sentences of the last type, both the person and the place are treated as destinations.

Where a location is indicated by using **за** (+instr.), the equivalent destination is indicated by **за** (+acc.):

Сейча́с со́лнце зайдёт за э́то о́блако.

The sun's about to go behind that cloud.

В воскресе́нье съезди́м куда́-нибудь за́ город.

On Sunday we'll go somewhere out of town (*or* in the country).

**Ка́ждый год миллио́ны россия́нских гра́ждан выезжа́ют за гра́ницу на
о́тдых, на рабо́ту или уче́бу.**

Each year millions of Russian citizens go abroad on holiday, for work or to study.

У́жин го́тов. Приглаша́ю вас за сто́л.

Supper's ready. Please come and sit at the table.

Where a location is indicated by using **под**(+instr.), the equivalent destination is indicated by **под**(+acc.). However, this usage is restricted to when the preposition has the literal meaning of 'under':

Положи́ ключ под э́тот ка́мень. Там его́ никто́ не найдёт.

Put the key under this stone. No one will find it there.

The remaining prepositions used to indicate location do not have corresponding constructions to indicate destination.

The following adverbs are used when talking about destination:

сюда́	(to) here, hither
туда́	(to) there, thither

Иди́ сюда́. Мне на́до погово́рить с тобо́й.

Come here. I want to talk to you.

Туда́ я не по́еду ни за что́!

I won't go there at any price!



The conjunction that is used when talking about destination is **куда́**:

Его́ сейча́с нет, но я не зна́ю, куда́ он поше́л.

He's not here at the moment, but I don't know where he's gone.

21.2.15 Talking about starting points

Just as there is a close correlation between the construction used for location and destination, so there is a similar correlation between the preposition used to indicate location and that used to indicate the starting point of a journey or an action. Where location is indicated by **в**(+prep.), the starting point is indicated by **из**(+gen.):

Он встал и доста́л из ящи́ка стола́ каку́ю-то кви́танцию.

He got up and took a receipt from the desk drawer.

Они́ улете́ли из Москвы́ в сре́ду.

They left (*or* flew out of) Moscow on Wednesday.

Не подлежа́т вы́возу из Росси́и стари́нные кни́ги, изда́нные до 1926 го́да.

Old books published before 1926 cannot be exported from Russia.

Де́ти обы́чно возвра́щаются из шко́лы в четы́ре часа́.

The children usually get back from school at four o'clock.

Where a location is indicated by **на**(+prep.), the starting point is indicated by **с**(+gen.):

Мно́гие ру́сские уе́хали с Ки́пра по́сле эконо́мического кри́зиса 1998 го́да.

Many Russians left Cyprus after the economic crisis of 1998.

Поезда́ с ю́га обы́чно прибыва́ют и́ли на Ку́рский и́ли на Каза́нский вокза́л.

Trains from the south usually arrive (in Moscow) either at the Kursk or the Kazan' stations.

Мне ста́ло пло́хо, и я ушёл с ко́нцерта в антра́кте.

I started to feel unwell and left the concert during the interval.

Where a location is indicated by **у** (+gen.), the starting point is indicated by **от** (+gen.):

Он отошёл от окна́ и сел за стол.

He moved away from the window and sat down at the table.

Я то́лько что от Ка́ти - она передаёт тебе́ привёт.

I've just come from Katia's; she sends you her regards.

In a similar fashion **из-за**(+gen.) and **из-под**(+gen.) correspond to **за**(+instr.) and **под**(+instr.) respectively:

Сейча́с со́лнце вы́дет из-за о́блака.

The sun's about to come out from behind a cloud.

Доста́ньте ключ из-под э́того ка́мня и откро́йте дверь.

Get the key from under that stone and open the door.



Out of the set expressions using **за**(+instr.) listed in **21.2.12** **из-за** is used normally only with **граница, рубеж** and **стол**:

Она верну́лась из-за гра́ницы на про́шлой неде́ле.

She returned from abroad last week.

В э́том журна́ле ча́сто печа́тались но́вости нау́ки из-за ру́бежа́.

This journal often used to publish items of science news from abroad.

Он встал из-за сто́ла и подошёл к окну́.

He got up from the table and went over to the window.

NOTE The preposition **из-под**(+gen.) is also used to indicate what were or would be contents of an empty container:

В ра́ковине лежа́ла чья́-то неме́тая посу́да и пу́стая буты́лка из-под мо́лока́.

In the sink were someone's unwashed dishes and an empty milk bottle.

For another use of **из-за**, see **21.4.1**.

The following adverbs are used when talking about starting points:

отсю́да from here, hence
отту́да from there, thence

Отсю́да открыва́ется прекра́сный вид на весь го́род.

From here you get a splendid view over the whole city.

Ро́дом он из Росси́и, но он у́ехал отту́да ещё в мо́лодости.

He is from Russia, but he left there while he was still young.

The conjunction used when talking about starting points is **отку́да**:

Он, наконец, приехал в ту страну, откуда эмигрировали его родители в начале прошлого века.

He had finally arrived in the country from where his parents had emigrated at the beginning of the last century.

21.2.16 Other ways of talking about place

When talking about the point actually reached in a journey, the preposition **до** (+gen.) is used:

Этот поезд следует только до станции «Комсомольская».

This train only goes as far as Komsomol'skaia station.

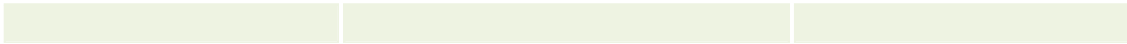
К вечеру первого дня мы доехали до Смоленска, где мы решили переночевать.

By the evening of the first day we had reached Smolensk, where we decided to spend the night.

To indicate the distance between two places **от**(+gen.) ... **до**(+gen.) is used:

От центра города до университета будет около пяти километров.

It'll be about 5 kilometres from the centre of the city to the university.



To indicate motion along the surface of something, the preposition **по**(+dat.) is used. The motion can be in one direction, more than one direction or in no particular direction at all:

Скажи́те, пожа́луйста, каки́е тролле́йбусы иду́т по Не́вскому проспе́кту?

Could you tell me please which trolleybuses run along Nevskii Prospekt?

Я о́чень люблю́ ра́но у́тром ходи́ть по переу́лкам Арба́та.

I am very fond of wandering through the narrow streets of the Arbat in the early morning.

Е́сли хоте́те, мы мо́жем организовáть для вас экску́рсию по го́роду.

If you want, we can organise a tour of the city for you.

The phrases **по доро́ге, по пу́ти** mean 'on the way (to)':

По доро́ге домо́й я захо́дил к сестре́.

On the way home I called in at my sister's.

Нам с вами, ка́жется, по пу́ти.

It looks as if we're going the same way.

To indicate the notion of across, over or from one side to the other of a location, the preposition **через** (+acc.) is used:

Пе́рвый мост че́рез ре́ку был постро́ен в двена́дцатом ве́ке.

The first bridge across the river was built in the twelfth century.

Она́ ниче́го не могла́ разгляде́ть че́рез те́мные стёкла маши́ны.

She couldn't make anything out through the tinted windows of the car.

Через also corresponds to English ‘via’:

Этот автобус идёт до университета *через* центр города.

This bus goes to the university via the city centre.

21.3 Manner

21.3.1 Talking about manner using adverbs

The most common way to indicate the manner in which an action is carried out is by using an *adverb*. Adverbs are usually placed immediately before the verb indicating the action concerned:

Она *внимательно* читала его письмо.

She read his letter carefully.

Президент *чётко* заявил, что он не собирается баллотироваться на третий срок.


The president has stated clearly that he will not stand for a third term.

Она *очень хорошо* знала, почему происходят перемены в её жизни.

She knew very well why changes were taking place in her life.

For more on questions of word order involving adverbs, *see* **20.1.3**.

For more on adverbs generally, *see* **9.1**.



21.3.2 Talking about manner using a qualifier plus noun

Another way of talking about manner is to use a *qualifier* (an *adjective* or a *pronoun*) with a *noun* in the *instrumental case*:

После короткой паузы он продолжил свою речь более спокойным голосом.

After a short pause he continued his speech in a calmer voice.

Он посмотрел на неё печальным взглядом, повернулся и пошёл прочь.

He looked at her with a sad expression, turned round and walked away.

This construction is widely used with nouns such as **образ, путь, способ** that have the general meaning of ‘way’, ‘manner’, ‘fashion’:

Ситуация сложилась таким образом, что последние три дня они проводили почти всё своё рабочее время вместе.

The situation has turned out in such a way that for the last three days they have spent most of their working time together.

Эта проблема некоторым образом касается и меня.

This problem also affects me in some ways [*or* to some extent].

Он никогда никому не давал взяток, и всегда действовал только законным путём.

He never bribed anyone and always acted legally (*or* in accordance with the law).

Эту задачу можно решать двумя способами.

This problem can be resolved in two ways.

For another use of **таким образом**, see 23.2.1.

Also used in this way is the noun **порядок**, although here the phrase is more usually

used with the preposition **в** and is in the *prepositional* case. This construction tends to be found in formal and bureaucratic language:

Утёрянный паспорт объявляется недействительным, а оформление нового осуществляется в обычном порядке.

A lost passport is declared invalid and a new one is issued in the usual way.

21.3.3 Talking about manner using an abstract noun and the preposition **с** (+instr.)

It is also possible to talk about manner using the *preposition с* followed by an *abstract noun* in the *instrumental case*. This construction is used much more frequently than the corresponding English equivalent:

Я с большим удовольствием слушаю музыку Чайковского.

I greatly enjoy listening to Tchaikovsky's music

(*literally*, I listen with great pleasure...).

Он ответил с достоинством, что пришёл по очень важному делу.

He answered with dignity [*or solemnly*] that he had come on a very important matter.



Он реагировал на все наши предупреждения со своей обычной беззаботностью.

He reacted to all our warnings in his usual carefree manner.

For the use of **со** instead of **с**, see 9.2.8.

21.3.4 Talking about manner using **КАК**

The conjunction used when talking about manner is **как**:

Сделайте так, как я советую, и никаких проблем не будет.

Do as I advise and there won't be any problems.

Ситуация сложилась не так, как мы ожидали.

The situation had not turned out in the way that we expected.

Он не звонил так часто, как она хотела бы.

He didn't telephone as often as she would have liked.

Он говорил спокойно, как человек, который знает цену своим словам.

He spoke calmly, in the manner of a man who knows the value of his words.

NOTE In this usage a comma is normally placed before **как**. It is particularly important to distinguish **так, как** (as in the above examples) from the conjunction **так как** 'since' (see 21.4.6).

For more uses of **как** as a conjunction, see 11.1.2 and 21.9.8.

21.4 Causes and consequences

21.4.1 Talking about general causes: the prepositions **из-за** (+gen.) and **благодаря** (+dat.)

The two prepositions used most frequently to indicate the general cause of an action or event are **из-за** (+gen.) 'because of' and **благодаря** (+dat.) 'because of',

‘thanks to’. The former is used for causes of a negative outcome, while the latter is mostly used when the outcome is positive:

Из-за плохой погоды наш самолёт опоздал более чем на два часа.

Because of the bad weather our plane was delayed for more than two hours.

Только благодаря твоей помощи мне удалось сделать всё вовремя.

It was only because of [or thanks to] your help that I was able to get everything done on time.

21.4.2 Talking about general causes: the preposition **ПО**(+dat.)

The preposition **по**(+dat.) can be used with the noun **благодаря** ‘reason’ to indicate the cause of an action or event; this usage tends to be found in more formal types of language:

Она сегодня отсутствует по уважительной причине.

She is absent today for a valid reason.

По причине отсутствия кворума голосование не состоялось.

The vote failed to take place for lack of a quorum.



Причина is used in the plural in the phrase **по техническим причинам** ‘for technical reasons’. This is often used in Russian as a euphemism in order to avoid having to give a more precise explanation for some undesirable turn of events:

Мероприятие отменяется по техническим причинам.

The event is cancelled for technical reasons.

По is used with *abstract nouns* to indicate the inadvertent cause, usually of some unfortunate event:

Простите, я пропустил вашу лекцию по рассеянности.

I'm sorry, I missed your lecture out of absent-mindedness.

По досадному недоразумению письмо не было отправлено.

As a result of some annoying misunderstanding, the letter was never sent.

21.4.3 Other prepositions indicating general cause

The following prepositions and prepositional phrases are also used to indicate general cause. They are more likely to occur in the written than in the spoken language:

ввиду (+ gen.)	because of, owing to, in the light of (normally used in the context of something undesirable)
в результате (+ gen.)	because of, owing to, as a result of
в силу (+ gen.)	because of, owing to
вследствие (+ gen.)	because of, owing to, as a consequence of

Ввиду угрозы террористических актов в аэропортах усилены меры безопасности.

In the light of the threat of terrorism, security at airports has been strengthened.

В результате решительных действий правительства рейтинг президента вырос на десять процентов.

As a result of the decisive actions of the government, the president's popularity has

gone up by 10 per cent.

Возможно, в силу именно этих обстоятельств она ушла с юридического факультета.

It is possibly because of these particular circumstances that she withdrew from the Faculty of Law.

Вследствие последних событий на Ближнем Востоке поток туристов в этот регион резко сократился.

As a consequence of the recent events in the Middle East, there has been a sharp decline in the number of tourists visiting the region.

21.4.4 Talking about the direct physical cause of a state or action

The preposition most frequently used when talking about the direct, physical and involuntary cause of a state or an action is **от**(+gen.):

В начале двадцатых годов многие крестьяне в этой области умерли от голода.

At the beginning of the 1920s many peasants in this region died of hunger.

Подума́в о возмо́жных послéдствиях своéго по́ступка, он побледне́л от стра́ха.

Having thought about the possible consequences of his action, he went pale from fear.

Её глаза́ всё ещё́ были мо́крыми от слёз.

Her eyes were still wet from the tears.

Здесь прое́хать нельзя́. Доро́гу развезло́ от дожде́й.

You can't get through here. The road's been made impassable by the rain.

The preposition **с** (+gen.) is similar in meaning to **от**, but its use is characteristic of informal language. **С** is often used in figurative statements and in set expressions; when it is used with a masculine noun, this normally takes the ending in **-у** (see 2.7.1):

Он рассказа́л нам такой смешно́й анекдо́т, что мы чуть не у́мерли со́ смеху́.

He told us such a funny joke that we almost died of laughter.

For more concerning the stress on the preposition, see 9.2.7.

21.4.5 Talking about the conscious motive for an action

The preposition used when talking about the conscious motive for an action is **из** (+gen.):

Я пришёл сюда́ из чистого любоны́тства.

I came here out of pure curiosity.

Они́ это́ де́лают наро́чно, из вре́дности, что́бы осложни́ть на́шу рабо́ту.

They do it deliberately, out of malice, to make our job more difficult.

21.4.6 Talking about cause using conjunctions

Russian has several conjunctions that indicate cause and that correspond to the English 'because', 'as', 'since', 'for'. These are **потому́ что, потому́ как, та́к как, поско́льку, и́бо. Потому́ что, потому́ как** and **и́бо** are normally used in the middle of a sentence to join two clauses, while **та́к как** and **поско́льку** can be used either at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence. **Потому́ как** is characteristic of informal language, while **и́бо** tends nowadays to be found only in very formal language. **Поско́льку** occurs widely, but is perceived by some to be characteristic of bureaucratic or journalistic language:

Я не могу́ звони́ть ему́ сейча́с, потому́ что уже́ по́здно.

I can't phone him now because it's too late.

Я не мог отве́чать, потому́ как не знал язы́ка.

I couldn't answer since I didn't know the language.

Та́к как тебя́ не́ было, мы реши́ли подо́ждать не́сколько мину́т.

Since you weren't here, we decided to wait for a few minutes.

Я не пойду́ с ва́ми в кино́, та́к как я уже́ смотре́л э́тот филь́м.

I won't go with you to the pictures since I've already seen the film.



**Поско́льку вы не во́время сда́ли докуме́нты, бу́дет заде́ржка в вы́даче
вашей ви́зы.**

Since you did not hand in your documents on time, there will be a delay in the issue of your visa.

**Он вы́нужден был уй́ти в отста́вку, и́бо того́ тре́бовала
профессио́нальная э́тика.**

He was obliged to resign, since his professional ethics left him no choice.

NOTE When **та́к как** appears in the middle of a sentence, the comma is always placed before **так**. With **потому́ что** the comma normally precedes **потому́**, but it can be placed before **что** if the two elements of the conjunction are separated or if **потому́** is given particular emphasis; in the latter case it tends to be reinforced by a word such as **именно** or **как раз** ‘precisely’:

**Именно́ потому́, что́ э́тот филь́м вызва́л сто́лько спо́ров, мы пригласи́ли его́ а́второв
в студию́.**

(It is) precisely because this film has stirred up so much debate (that) we have invited those who made it into the studio.

21.4.7 Talking about consequences

When talking about an action that is consequent on another action or state of affairs, **по́тому** ‘therefore’, ‘that’s why’ can be used:

**Он не о́чень дове́рял совреме́нным техноло́гиям, и по́тому ре́дко
пользова́лся компью́тером.**

He didn't much trust modern technology and therefore rarely used a computer.

**Я хочу́, что́бы на́ша страна́ процвета́ла, что́бы все жи́ли хорошо́.
Именно́ по́тому я прише́л в политику́.**

I want our country to prosper, for everyone to live well. That’s why I went into politics.

The expression **во́т** can be used to indicate the consequence of an undesired

action or state of affairs:

Я вчера подхватил простуду, вот и сижу дома.

I caught a cold yesterday and that's why I'm stuck at home.

For more on the emphatic particles **вот** and **и**, see **20.3.3**.

The conjunction that indicates consequence is **так что** '(and) so':

У меня завтра экзамен, так что сегодня придётся весь день зубрить.

I've an exam tomorrow, so today I'll have to spend all day swotting.

21.5 Conditions

21.5.0 Introduction

One form of connection is where an outcome or an event depends on the fulfilment of a particular condition. In such situations there are two types of conditions. *Open conditions* are those that are capable of being fulfilled, while *unreal conditions* are those that are incapable of being fulfilled because the situation envisaged by the condition is purely hypothetical.

The means normally used to express this form of connection is the *conditional sentence* which consists of two halves: the outcome indicated in one half of the sentence depends on the fulfilment of the condition indicated in the other half. In Russian, the two halves of the sentence are usually joined by the conjunction **если** (see 9.3.4), which corresponds to the English 'if'.

The following are examples of *open conditions*:

If it doesn't rain tomorrow, we will go for a walk.

If you know the answer to that, you are cleverer than I thought.

In the sentences above the possibility of it raining tomorrow or of the addressee knowing the answer in each case is real.

The following are examples of *unreal conditions*:

If it weren't raining, we might go for walk (but it is, so we can't).

If you had been here at the right time, you would have found out the right answer (but you weren't, so you didn't).

Here the possibility of it not raining at the time when the sentence is spoken or of the addressee being present when the right answer was revealed no longer exists.

21.5.1 Open conditions

The majority of *open conditions* refer to contingencies that may or may not arise in the future. For this reason the verb form that is most commonly used is the *future perfective*:

Если дашь мне очки, я прочитаю тебе его письмо.

If you pass me my glasses, I'll read you his letter.

Если я не сдам экзамен завтра, придётся пересдавать его осенью.

If I don't pass the exam tomorrow, I'll have to take it again in the autumn.

If the contingency is one that may occur regularly, the *future imperfective* is used:

Если вы постоянно будете опаздывать, то у вас будут серьёзные проблемы.

If you persist in being late, (then) you will have serious problems.

NOTES

- (i) The particle **то** is often used to join the two halves of a conditional sentence (cf. English 'then').
- (ii) In sentences referring to the future, the future tense is used in both halves of the sentences (unlike in English).

Where the contingency relates to the present or the past, the *present* or *past* tenses are used, as in English:

Если Маша работает в вечернюю смену, она ужинает в столовой.

(present tense)

If Masha is on the evening shift, she has her evening meal in the canteen.

Даже если он и сказа́л, куда́ уходит, он, наве́рное, совра́л.

(past tense)

Even if he did say where was going to, he was probably lying.



Where the result of the condition being met is a command, instruction or recommendation, it is indicated by the use of the *imperative*:

Если всё в порядке, распишитесь здесь.

If everything is in order, sign here.

The *infinitive* is often used with **если** if the subject is not a specific person or persons:

Если принять во внимание все обстоятельства, то получается, что он всё-таки был прав.

If you take/one takes into account all the circumstances, it turns out he was right after all.

21.5.2 21.5.2 Unreal conditions

With *unreal conditions* the *conditional* (see 4.10) is used in both halves of the sentence:

Было бы очень приятно жить в Глазго, если бы климат тут был лучше.

It would be very pleasant living in Glasgow if the climate were a bit better (but see note (ii) below).

Если бы дождя не было, мы могли бы пойти гулять.

If it weren't raining, we might go for a walk.

Если бы ты рассказал мне всё, я бы помог тебе.

If you had told me everything, I would have helped you.

NOTES

- (i) The particle **бы** normally follows directly after **если**; in the other half of the sentence the word order is less fixed, but **бы** is most frequently placed either after

the first stressed word or after the verb.

(ii) In English unreal conditions, the verb distinguishes between present and past tense ('would' or 'would have'). In Russian, the verb does not distinguish tenses, but does distinguish between *imperfective* and *perfective aspects*. In many instances the imperfective aspect will correspond to the *present* in English and the perfective will correspond to the *past*, as in the second and third examples above. This is, however, not always the case, and sometimes it is necessary to consider the context to establish whether a Russian sentence refers to the past or the present. For example, in the first sentence above, the English translation given is appropriate if the speaker still lives in Glasgow and here the context is provided by the adverb **ТУТ** 'here'; almost the same sentence could have been said by someone who no longer lives in that city, in which case the adverb would change to **ТАМ** 'there' and the translation would be:

It would have been very pleasant living in Glasgow if the climate had been better.

In unreal conditions **если бы** can sometimes be used simply with a noun, where it corresponds to the English 'If it were not for...':

Если бы не дождь, мы могли бы пойти гулять.

If it were not for the rain, we might go for a walk.

It is important to note that the boundary between open and unreal conditions is much sharper in Russian than it is in English. In English the forms used for unreal conditions can also be used to indicate a condition which is tentative or which is unlikely to be fulfilled, as in the following example:

If it were to rain tomorrow, we would have to stay at home.

In Russian, the conditional is used only where it is totally impossible for a condition to be fulfilled. Here it is still possible that it might rain, and therefore in Russian this sentence would be treated as an open condition with the verbs in the *future tense*. If it is important to indicate the improbability or the tentative nature of the condition, this can be done with an adverb such as **случайно** ‘by any chance’, **вдруг** ‘suddenly’, ‘by some chance’ or **всё-таки** ‘after all’:

Если завтра будет дождь, придётся сидеть дома.

If it were to rain tomorrow, we would have to stay at home.

Если завтра вдруг пойдёт дождь, придётся сидеть дома.

If (by some chance) it were to rain tomorrow, we would have to stay at home.

Если завтра всё-таки будет дождь, придётся сидеть дома.

If (after all) it were to rain tomorrow, we would have to stay at home.

This situation can also arise in indirect speech. The sentence ‘He said he would come if he had time’ looks like an unreal condition, but the actual words being reported here are ‘I will come if I have time’ and therefore the condition is, in fact, an open one. In Russian, the future would therefore be used:

Он сказа́л, что приде́т, е́сли у него́ бу́дет вре́мя.

He said he would come if he had time.

For more on the tenses in indirect speech, *see* **21.8.4**.

21.5.3 Conditions without **если**

In both spoken and written Russian it is possible to express *unreal conditions* by using the *imperative* (*see* **4.9**) instead of **если** and the conditional:

Будь ты умнее, ты бы написа́л жа́лобу, а не ста́л бы сканда́лить.

If you were cleverer, you would write a letter of complaint instead of shouting and screaming.

Не уми́ он пять лет наза́д, он был бы сейча́с пре́мьер-мини́стром.

If he hadn't died five years ago, he would now be the prime minister.

NOTE On the use of the instrumental with the conditional of **быть**, see **14.1.2**.

In spoken Russian and increasingly in the more informal styles of the written language both *open* and *unreal conditions* are expressed simply by placing two clauses together without any conjunction:

Жа́рко пока́жется – откря́й окно́.

If it seems hot, open a window.

Не уве́рен – не обгоня́й.

If you're not sure, don't overtake.

[In Soviet times this helpful piece of road-safety advice was often stencilled on the sides of lorries.]

Не поскупи́лся бы оте́ц на её образова́ние, Ли́за ста́ла бы вели́кой худо́жницей.

If her father hadn't skimped on her education, Liza would have become a great artist.

In more formal styles the preposition **при** (+prep.) can be used with various abstract nouns to replace a clause with **если**:

При желании можно истратить на хороший сайт 10 000 долларов.

Should you wish to do so, you can spend \$10,000 on creating a good website.

При необходимости можно звонить в наш московский офис.

If the need arises, you can phone our Moscow office.

The phrase **в случае** corresponds to the English ‘in the event of’:

В случае пожара пользоваться лифтами запрещается.

In the event of fire it is forbidden to use the lifts.

21.6 Concessions

21.6.0 Introduction

Concession can be seen as the reverse of *condition* (21.5). Constructions involving concession are used when talking about something that happens *in spite of* a certain set of circumstances.

21.6.1 Making concessions using **несмотря на** (+acc), **вопреки** (+dat.) or **при** (+prep.)

The prepositional phrase **несмотря на** (+acc.) corresponds to the English ‘in spite of’, ‘despite’:

Несмотря на ваш акцент я понимаю вас без всяких проблем.

In spite of your accent, I can understand you without any problems.

Несмотря на то, что corresponds to the English ‘in spite of the fact that’ or ‘in spite of’ when used with the ‘-ing’ form of the verb:

Несмотря на то, что вы читали его романы только в переводе, вы прекрасно знаете произведения Толстого.

In spite of the fact that you have read his novels only in translation, you have an excellent knowledge of the works of Tolstoi.

Or In spite of your having read his novels...

Несмотря ни на что corresponds to the English 'in spite of everything', although only when it is used as a self-contained expression. When it is extended by another clause, ***несмотря на всё (то), что*** is used:

Она, несмотря ни на что, верила в светлое будущее человечества.

In spite of everything, she believed in a bright future for mankind.

Несмотря на всё (то), что с ней случилось, она не потеряла веры.

In spite of everything that had happened to her, she had not lost her faith.

The preposition ***вопреки*** (+dat.) corresponds to the English 'in spite of', 'contrary to':

Это всё произошло вопреки моим желаниям.

It all happened contrary to my wishes.



The preposition **при** (+prep.) corresponds to the English ‘for’ when used in the sense of ‘despite’:

Она поняла́, что её муж, при всём своём тала́нте, никогда́ не ста́нет вели́ким писа́телем.

She understood that her husband, for all his talent, would never become a great writer.

При всех сво́их недоста́тках, она была́ настоя́щим лиде́ром коллекти́ва.

For all her faults, she was the real leader of the group.

21.6.2 Concessions and reservations: using adverbs

The following *adverbs* and *adverbial phrases* can be used when talking about concessions and reservations:

всё же	still, all the same
всё равно́	still, even so
всё-таки	still, all the same

Бу́дет непросто́, но всё же сто́ит попра́бовать.

It won't be straightforward, but it's still worth a try.

Сто́лько раз мне э́то objáсняли, но я всё равно́ ниче́го не понима́ю.

It's been explained to me so many times, but even so I don't understand anything.

Я не о́чень люблю́ смотре́ть телеви́зор, но не́которые переда́чи всё-таки стара́юсь не пропуска́ть.

I don't like watching television much, but all the same there are some programmes I try not to miss.

21.6.3 Talking about concessions: using conjunctions

The conjunction **хотя́** corresponds to the English ‘although’:

Хотя́ он и прости́л её, оби́да оста́лась.

Although he had forgiven her, the sense of grievance remained.

Мне бы́ о́чень хоте́лось, что́бы он победи́л, хотя́ ша́нсов на это ма́ло.

I would very much like him to win, although the chances of it are not very great.

In informal language, this conjunction can be shortened to **хоть**:

На вся́кий слúчай она́ перекрести́лась, хоть и не ве́рила в Бо́га.

She crossed herself just in case, even though she didn't believe in God.

The phrase **при (всём) том, что** can also join two clauses with the meaning of 'although':

При всём том, что у него́ была ма́сса титулов и наград, держался он скромно и даже незамётно.

Even though he had heaps of titles and awards, he still conducted himself modestly and even unobtrusively.

The conjunctions **а то** and **иначе** correspond to the English 'or else':

Поторопи́сь, а то опозда́ешь.

Hurry up or else you'll be late.

Прое́кт до́лжен быть́ сдан в срок, и́на́че мы мо́жем лиши́ться финанси́рования.

The plan has to be submitted by the deadline, or else we might lose the money.

21.6.4 Talking about concessions: using a question word + **НИ**

Another way of talking about concessions is to form a clause using a *question word* and the *particle* **ни**. The verb is normally in the conditional (*see* 4.10), especially if the reference is to hypothetical or generalised events:

Куда́ бы ты ни по́ехал, от воспомина́ний не убежи́шь.

Wherever you go, you won't escape your memories.

Где бы ты ни жи́л и ско́лько бы ты ни е́здил по све́ту, ты никогда́ не забуде́шь Петербу́рг.

Wherever you live and however much you travel round the world, you'll never forget St Petersburg.

Каки́м бы спосо́бным он ни́ был, он вряд ли справится́ с э́той зада́чей.

However capable he may be, he's unlikely to cope with this task.

Or Capable as he is ...

Что бы он ей ни говори́л, она́ всегда́ поступа́ла по-сво́ему.

No matter what he said to her, she still did whatever she wanted.

If the sentence refers to real, rather than to hypothetical events, the appropriate tense can be used:

Как её ни отгова́ривали, она́ всё же вы́шла за него́ за́муж.

However much they tried to persuade her, she still married him.

Ско́лько он ни забива́ет на трениро́вках, тре́нер пока́ де́ржит его́ в запáсе.

However many goals he scores in training, the manager still keeps him on the bench.

The *future perfective* (see 4.4) or the *imperative* may be used in generalised statements, usually with a *second person singular* verb:

Что ни ска́жешь, ты всё равно́ не убедíшь его.

Whatever you say, you won't convince him.

Or You can say what you like...

Куда́ ни поёдешь, от своих воспоминáний не убежи́шь.

Wherever you go, you won't escape from your memories.

Or No matter where you go...

Кого́ ни спроси́, все об э́том что́-то слы́шали.

It doesn't matter who you ask, everyone's heard something about it.

For the use of the second person singular in generalised statements, *see* 7.1.5.

For other uses of the particle **ни**, *see* 15.3.5.

21.7 Purpose

21.7.1 Talking about purpose using the prepositions **Для**(+ gen.) and **на**(+ acc.)

To talk about the purpose served by a room or other space, or by a machine, a piece of equipment or similar object, the preposition **для**(+ gen.) is used:

Место для курения на первом этаже.

There is a place where you can smoke (*literally*, a place for smoking) on the ground floor.

У него в столе́ есть специальный ящик для секретных бумаг.

He has a special drawer in my desk for secret papers.

Купи́ мне, пожа́луйста, крем для бритья́ и шампунь для сухих волос.

Could you buy me some shaving cream (*literally*, cream for shaving) and some shampoo for dry hair...

For the use of **первый этаж** with the meaning of ‘ground floor’, see **12.4.2**.

The preposition **на**(+ acc.) is similar in meaning to **для**, but it tends to be used when attention is focused on the purpose for which something is intended and in more abstract contexts:

А бывает, что людям не хватает денег даже на хлеб.

And some people don’t even have enough money for bread.

Разрешение на вывоз старинных книг можно получить в Российской Государственной библиотеке.

You can get permission to export old books from the Russian State Library.

После следующего доклада будет перерыв на обед.

After the next talk there’ll be a break for lunch.

21.7.2 Talking about purpose using the preposition **за** (+ instr.)

The preposition **за** (+ instr.) is used in contexts such as going to the shops to buy something, queuing for something or calling in to collect something or somebody:

Мо́жет, я сбéгаю в магази́н за хле́бом?

Should I run out to the shops to buy some bread?

За билéтом на э́тот ко́нцэ́рт приде́тся сто́ять (в о́череди) часá три, не меньше.

To get a ticket for that concert you'll have to queue for three hours, if not more.

Мы зайдём за тобо́й за́втра в семь часо́в.

We'll come for you tomorrow at seven o'clock.

21.7.3 Talking about purpose using **чтобы** (+ infin.)

When talking about someone performing an action in order to achieve a particular aim or for a particular purpose, it is usually necessary to use a sentence made up of two clauses joined by the *conjunction* **чтобы**. If the subjects of the two clauses are the same, **чтобы** is followed by the *infinitive*:



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For more on conjunctions, *see* 9.3.

For more on the infinitive, *see* 4.1.

Он встал, *чтобы* пожáть ей рúку.

He got up in order to shake her hand.

***Чтобы* не опоздáть на рабóту, я всегда выхожú из дóма рóвно в вóсемь часов.**

In order not to be late for work I always leave home at exactly eight o'clock.

If the subjects of the two clauses are different, **чтобы** is followed by a verb in the *past tense*:

***Чтобы* тебе *было* лéгче, я перевёл все тóудные слова́.**

So that it is easier for you I've translated all the difficult words.

Я рассказываю тебе всё это, *чтобы* ты знал всю правду о ситуации.

I'm telling you all this so that you know the whole truth about the situation.

It is possible to reinforce **чтобы** with **для того́** or (less frequently) **с тем**:

Я расстáвил все ударéния в тéксте *для того́*, *чтобы* тебе лéгче *было* читáть его́.

I've marked all the stresses in the text so that it's easier for you to read it.

Весь год она́ брала́ уроки́ рúсского *с тем*, *чтобы* лéтом поéхать в Сибирь с этнографической экспедицией.

She spent the whole year learning Russian in order to be able to go to Siberia on an ethnographic expedition.

21.7.4 Talking about purpose: omitting **чтобы**

In short simple sentences where the subjects of the two clauses are the same **чтобы**

can be omitted. This construction is restricted to sentences where the main verb is either a *verb of motion* or a verb with a related meaning, such as **останови́ться** ‘to stop’, **оста́ться** ‘to remain’.

For more on verbs of motion, *see Chapter 22*.

Я зашёл поздравить тебя с днём рождения.

I’ve called in to wish you a happy birthday.

—Где начальник?

—Он вышел покурить.

—Where’s the boss?

—He’s popped out for a smoke.

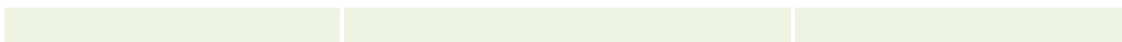
Все гости разошлись, а Лиза оста́лась поболта́ть с нами.

All the guests left, but Liza stayed behind to have a chat with us.

In more complicated sentences, in sentences where the clause indicating the aim comes first, or in sentences where the infinitive is negated, **что́бы** is used:

Мно́гие на́ши соотру́дники с охото́й по́ехали бы за гра́ницу, хотя́ бы на́ год, что́бы повы́шать квалифика́цию.

Many of the people who work would happily go abroad, even if only for a year, in order to improve their qualifications.



Она́ была́ о́чень приле́жной, и *чтобы* во́время *сда́ть* рабо́ту, приходи́ла в университет да́же в те дни, когда́ у неё не было́ занятый.

She was very conscientious and in order to hand in a piece of work on time would come in to the university even on days when she had no classes.

Она́ вы́шла из ко́мнаты, *чтобы* не оказа́ться в неудобном положе́нии.

She left the room in order not to find herself in an awkward situation.

21.7.5 The phrase с **целью**

The phrase с **целью** can be used to indicate purpose, especially in more formal levels of language. It can be followed by a *verb* in the *infinitive* or by a *noun* in the *genitive*:

Они́ ста́вили все́ но́вые и но́вые усло́вия с *целью* за́тянуть перегово́ры.

They kept coming up with more and more conditions with the aim of stalling the negotiations.

Он прие́хал в Москву́ с *целью* трудоустро́йства.

He came to Moscow with the aim of finding work.

21.8 Reporting the words of others

21.8.0 Introduction

There are two ways in which the words of others can be conveyed: *direct speech* means quoting the words of others word for word; *indirect speech* means that words are reported rather than quoted. There are two main forms of indirect speech: *indirect statements* and *indirect questions*.

21.8.1 Direct speech

Direct speech is used in ordinary spoken dialogue to create the effect of immediacy:

Зна́ешь, что он мне сказа́л? «Вы молодёц! Нам бы больше таких, как вы!»

You know what he said to me? ‘You’ve done really well! We could do with more like you!’

In written Russian, direct speech is used mostly, though by no means exclusively, in works of fiction to convey dialogue or the inner thoughts of a narrator. There are two points to note here.

The first is that where a piece of direct speech is followed by a verb indicating the speech act (e.g. **говори́ть/сказа́ть** ‘to say’, **спра́шивать/спроси́ть** ‘to ask’ or **отвеча́ть/ответи́ть** ‘to answer’), the verb always precedes the subject:

—Ты, ка́жется, всё зна́ешь, – сказа́л он.

—It seems you know everything, he said.

The second point concerns punctuation. *Inverted commas* are used when a piece of direct speech is contained within a paragraph; for more on Russian inverted commas, see **1.5.8**. When, however, dialogue is set out in paragraphs, *dashes* are preferred:

Он встал и закури́л. «За́чем я э́то сде́лал?» – подумал он.

He got up and lit a cigarette. ‘What did I do that for?’ he wondered.



—Когда мы увидимся? – спросил он.

—Я работаю до шести, – ответила она. – А потом я зайду в супермаркет.

—When will we see each other again? he asked.

—I am working until six, she answered. And then I'm going to the supermarket.

21.8.2 Indirect statements

When a statement made by someone else is being reported, the verb most commonly used is **говорить/сказать** 'to say'. The conjunction corresponding to English 'that' is **что**:

Он говорит, что никогда не ест рыбы.

He says that he never eats fish.

Он сказал, что придёт поздно.

He said that he would arrive late.

For an explanation of the different tenses in the English and Russian, *see* **21.8.4**.

In the more formal varieties of Russian there are a number of verbs that can be used as near synonyms of **говорить/сказать**. These include:

заявлять/заявить	to claim, to state, to declare
сообщать/сообщить	to announce, to state
утверждать (нсв)	to affirm, to state

Other verbs that can be used to introduce indirect statements include the following:

добавля́ть /добави́ть	to add
думать/подумать	to think
крича́ть/закрича́ть	to shout
надея́ться	to hope
объясня́ть/объясни́ть	to explain
отвеча́ть/ответи́ть	to answer
полага́ть (нсв)	to suppose, to think
понима́ть/пони́ять	to understand
предполага́ть/предположи́ть	to assume
счита́ть (нсв)	to consider, to think
шепта́ть/прошепта́ть	to whisper

In English, it is sometimes possible to omit the conjunction ‘that’; in Russian cannot be left out:

Он сказа́л, что понима́ет моё положéние.

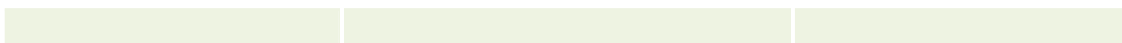
He said that he understands my position.

Or, He said he understands my position.

When, however, the verb that introduces the indirect speech is in the present tense, it can be placed inside the speech being reported. In the written language, it is separated from the rest of the sentence by commas:

Он, говори́т, понима́ет моё положéние.

He says he understands my position.



This can be a useful device for avoiding an awkward sequence of clauses introduced by **что**:

Я добавил, что она, надеюсь, понимает, что я здесь ни при чём.

I added that I hoped she understood this had nothing to do with me.

When the speech being reported contains an instruction or prohibition, this can be indicated by using the conjunction **чтобы**:

Он сказал, чтобы я не уходил.

He said that I should not go away.

Or, He told me not to go away.

For the use of the past tense with **чтобы**, see 9.3.4.

In the examples given so far in this section, the speaker does not express any attitude towards the statements being reported. Sometimes, however, a speaker will want to distance him- or herself from what others have said. This can be done by using the conjunction **будто**:

Он утверждает, будто он прожил пять лет в России.

He says (*or* he claims) to have lived in Russia for five years (but I don't really believe him).

Sometimes in the spoken language or in the more informal styles of the written language a similar effect is achieved by using the particles **мол, мол де** or **дескать**:

Он, мол, зарабатывает миллион рублей в год.

He claims to earn a million roubles a year.

Она, мол де, театральный режиссёр.

She claims to be a theatre director.

Он, де́скать, никогда́ не рабо́тал в КГБ.

He claims he never worked for the KGB.

A stronger degree of disbelief is indicated by the particle **якобы́**:

Он уверя́л, что он, *якобы́*, не рабо́тал в КГБ.

He claimed that he didn't work for the KGB (but nobody in their right mind would believe him).

For more on expressing doubt, *see* **16.5.2**.

21.8.3 Indirect questions

Indirect questions are most commonly introduced by the verb **спра́шивать/спроси́ть** 'to ask'. Instead of a conjunction, the *enclitic particle* **ли** is used; this corresponds to the English 'if' or 'whether':

Он спроси́л, мо́жно ли здесь купи́ть прое́здной биле́т.

He asked if/whether it was possible to buy a season ticket here.

Он спроси́л, не зна́ю ли я, где ты живёшь.

He asked me if/whether I knew where you lived.

For the use of the negative question, *see* **17.1.3**.

For more on the particle **ли**, *see* **17.1.2**.



The particle **ли** invariably follows the first stressed word of the question being reported. Normally, this is the verb, as in the two examples above, but occasionally if some other part of the sentence forms the focus of the question, this can be placed at the beginning of the clause instead:

Он спросил, в понедельник ли ты приехал.

He asked if/whether it was on Monday that you arrived.

It is important to distinguish between ‘if’ used to introduce an indirect question (where the Russian equivalent is **ли**) and ‘if’ used to form a conditional sentence (where the Russian equivalent is **если**; see 21.5). It is particularly important not to confuse **если** (in a condition) with **есть ли** (in an indirect question):

Я всегда спрашиваю кого-нибудь, если я что-то не понимаю.

I always ask someone if there’s something I don’t understand. (condition)

Она спросила, есть ли у меня лишний билет.

She asked if/whether I had a spare ticket. (indirect question)

As a general rule, where ‘if’ can be replaced by ‘whether’, it is being used to introduce an indirect question, and the Russian equivalent will be **ли**.

Other words that can be used to introduce indirect questions include the following:

интересно (бы знать)	I wonder, it would be interesting to know
интересоваться/поинтересоваться	to ask, to enquire
осведомляться/осведомиться	to enquire (formal)
справляться/справиться	to enquire

Indirect questions can also be formed using the various interrogative words described in 17.3:

Я спросил его, с кем он был вчера на приёме.

I asked him who he was with at the reception yesterday.

Спроси́ его́, что́ ему́ надо́.

Ask him what he wants.

Тебе́ не интере́сно, где́ я был?

Don't you want to know where I have been?

Он поинтере́совался, ско́лько сто́ит биле́т до Ри́ги.

He enquired how much a ticket to Riga cost.

Я не бу́ду тебя́ спрашива́ть, когда́ ты плани́руешь верну́ться домо́й.

I am not going to ask you when you intend to return home.

21.8.4 Tenses in indirect speech

In some of the examples given in this section the tense of the Russian verbs is different from that of the English equivalents. This is because in English when a verb that introduces indirect speech is in the past tense, this usually leads to changes in the tense of the verbs used with the indirect speech itself:

He says he will arrive late.

He said he would arrive late.



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He says he understands my position.

He said he understood my position.

I'll ask him if he knows what time it is.

I asked him if he knew what time it was.

In each of those pairs of sentences the actual words used in the original speech are the same:

I will be late.

I understand your position.

Do you know what time it is?

In Russian, this change of tense does not occur. In indirect speech, the tense and the aspect of the verbs are always *exactly the same* as they would have been in the original statement or question:

Он говорит, что *придёт* поздно.

He says he will arrive late.

Он сказа́л, что *придёт* поздно.

He said he would arrive late.

Он говорит, что *понима́ет* моё положение.

He says he understands my position.

Он сказа́л, что *понима́ет* моё положение.

He said he understood my position.

Я спрошу́ его́, *знаёт* ли он, кото́рый час.

I'll ask him if he knows what time it is.

Я спросил его, знает ли он, который час.

I asked him if he knew what time it was.

In English, when conditions appear in indirect speech, the application of this rule has the effect of appearing to turn open conditions into unreal conditions (*see 21.5.2*):

He says that if he doesn't pass the exam tomorrow, he'll have to take it again in the autumn.

He said that if he didn't pass the exam tomorrow, he would have to take it again in the autumn.

In each case, however, the original words spoken were:

If I don't pass the exam tomorrow, I'll have to take it again in the autumn.

In the Russian equivalents of both sentences, therefore, the verbs in the indirect speech would be in the *future perfective*.

The original words were:

Если я не сдам экзамен завтра, придётся пересдавать его осенью.

If I don't pass the exam tomorrow, I'll have to take it again in the autumn.

The equivalents in indirect speech are:

Он говорит, что если он не сдаст экзамен завтра, придётся пересдавать его осенью.

He says that if he doesn't pass the exam tomorrow, he'll have to take it again in the autumn.



Он сказа́л, что е́сли он не сдаст экза́мен за́втра, *приде́тся* пересдава́ть его́ о́сенью.

He said that if he didn't pass the exam tomorrow, he would have to take it again in the autumn.

21.9 Comparisons

21.9.0 Introduction

Constructions indicating comparison are used to indicate that two people, objects or qualities are the same or similar or, alternatively, that they differ from each other in one way or another.

21.9.1 Making comparisons using the short comparative form of adjectives and adverbs

Comparative adjectives and *adverbs* are used when talking about different degrees of the quality indicated by the adjective or adverb concerned. The *short comparative form* of the adjective is mostly used with *predicative* adjectives, that is, those that occur in conjunction with the verb **быть**:

For more on predicative adjectives, *see* **6.0**.

For the formation of the short comparative, *see* **6.8.1**.

Да, ты прав: э́то моро́женое действи́тельно *вкусне́е*.

Yes, you're right; this ice cream really is tastier.

In informal language a short comparative can be used with an *attributive* adjective, but only if the adjective immediately follows the noun. In such instances the adjective is more often than not used with the prefix **по-**:

For the use of the prefix **по-** with the short comparative, *see* **6.8.1**.

Спаси́бо за предложе́ние, но для тако́й зада́чи вам ну́жен челове́к *помоло́же*.

Thanks for the offer, but for that job you need someone younger.

В соседнем магазине есть пиво подешевле.

There's cheaper beer in the next-door shop.

The short comparative is also used as the comparative form of *adverbs*:

Говорите громче: из-за шума не слышно.

Speak louder. I can't hear because of the noise.

Всё, when used with a comparative, corresponds to the English 'more and more':

Снять квартиру в столице становится всё дороже.

It's getting more and more expensive to rent a flat in the capital.

21.9.2 The second element of the comparison

The second element of a comparison (introduced in English by 'than') is expressed in Russian in two different ways. In a simple sentence, when the person or object being



compared is in the *nominative* case and when a *short comparative* is used, the second element is in the *genitive* case:

По-мо́ему краси́вые я́блоки вку́снее зелёных.

I think red apples are tastier than green ones.

Она́ говори́т по-ру́ски лу́чше меня́.

She speaks Russian better than I do.

When the short comparative follows the noun, the *genitive* can be used if the person or object being compared is in the *accusative*:

Я найду́ гостини́цу почи́ще э́той.

I'll find a hotel cleaner than this one.

In all other types of sentences the second element of the comparison is introduced by the conjunction **чем**. **Чем** can be followed by a noun in any case, by a phrase or by a whole clause:

Думаю, что э́тот фильм бо́льше понравится Ка́те, чем её му́жу.

I think Katia will like this film more than her husband will.

В А́нглии во́дка доро́же, чем в Росси́и.

Vodka is more expensive in England than in Russia.

Она́ говори́т по-ру́ски лу́чше, чем в про́шлом году́.

She speaks Russian better than she did last year.

Он мо́ложе, чем вы́глядит.

He's younger than he looks.

In principle, it is possible to use **чем**(+ nom.) instead of the construction with the genitive. To some extent, it is a matter of personal preference, but **чем** is more

likely to be used in more complicated sentences, with less widely used comparative forms or in order to avoid ambiguity:

Москва́ ста́рше Санкт-Петербу́рга, но мно́гие счита́ют, что Петербу́рг кра́снее, *чем* Москва́.

Moscow is older than St Petersburg, but many people think that St Petersburg is more beautiful than Moscow.

На́ша ко́мната светле́е, *чем* их.

Our room is brighter than theirs.

In the second of these examples **чем** is needed to make it clear that **их** is the *possessive pronoun* and not the genitive plural of the *third person pronoun*:

For **их** as a possessive pronoun, *see 7.2.2*.

For the declension of the third person pronoun, *see 7.1.3*.

NOTE It is normally necessary to insert a comma before чем .
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21.9.3 Indicating the extent of a comparison

To indicate the extent to which more (or less) of a quality is found in a person or object a construction with the preposition **на**(+ acc.) is used:

Она́ на два го́да ста́рше меня́.

She's two years older than me.

Доро́га на метро́ занима́ет на полчаса́ ме́ньше, чем на авто́бусе.

The journey by metro takes half an hour less than by bus.

To indicate 'a lot (more)' **гора́здо, на́много́** or **значительно́** can be used:

Она́ гора́здо сильнее́ в хими́и, чем в математи́ке.

She's a lot better at chemistry than at maths.

Эта зада́ча на́много́ сложнее́, чем ка́жется на пе́рвый взгляд.

This task is a lot more complicated than it looks at first sight.

Для амери́канских студе́нтов ру́сский язы́к значите́льно труднее́, чем испанский.

For American students, Russian is much more difficult than Spanish.

In informal language, **мно́го** or **куда́** are sometimes used instead of **на́много́**; **куда́** adds an extra degree of expressiveness to the comparison:

Да, э́то уже́ мно́го лу́чше.

Yes, that's already a lot better.

Сейча́с у нас усло́вия куда́ лу́чше, чем год наза́д.

Conditions now are a whole lot better than they were a year ago.

21.9.4 Other uses of short comparative forms

The forms **бо́льше** or **бо́лее** 'more' and **ме́ньше** or **ме́нее** 'less' are, like their English equivalents, used in a wide range of contexts:

Она́ говори́т по-ру́сски лу́чше меня́, но я понима́ю *больше*.

She speaks Russian better than I do, but I understand more.

У меня́ с собо́й *более* пяти́со́т рубле́й.

I've got more than 500 roubles on me.

Эта маши́на сто́ит на́много́ *меньше*, чем я ожида́л.

This car costs a lot less than I expected.

Если хоте́те поху́деть, необходи́мо *меньше* есть и вести́ здоро́вый о́браз жизни́.

If you want to lose weight, you need to eat less and lead a healthy life.

NOTES

(i) In this usage **больше** is interchangeable with **более** and **меньше** with **мéнее** when they occur in quantity expressions (as in the second example). Otherwise, **больше** and **меньше** are preferred. Only **более** and **мéнее** are used to form the *long comparative* (see **21.9.5** and **6.8.2**).

(ii) Like some other words indicating quantity (see **19.5.1** and **19.5.3**), **больше/более** and **меньше/мéнее**, when used in this sense, are not found in contexts where they would be required to be in a case other than the nominative or accusative, or where they would occur after a preposition. In most situations, this difficulty can be overcome by reformulating the sentence in such a way as to make the problem disappear. For example, in a context where an English-speaker might say: 'I left the house with less money than I thought', a Russian might prefer:

Ока́зывается, у меня́ с собо́й *меньше* *де́нег*, чем я ду́мал.

Literally, It turns out that I have less money on me than I thought.

The Russian equivalent of ‘the more...the more’ is **чем**+ comparative... **тем** + comparative:

Чем громче она говорила, тем хуже он понимал смысл её слов.

The louder she spoke, the less he understood what she was saying (*literally*, the worse he understood the sense of her words).

The useful phrase **тем более (что)** corresponds to the English ‘all the more so (because)’, ‘especially (because)’, although it is used more frequently than the English equivalents:

Она не очень хотела оставаться дома, тем более что по телевизору нечего было смотреть.

She didn’t particularly want to stay at home especially since there was nothing to watch on television.

Не хочешь пойти в кино сегодня вечером?

Не очень.

Идёт какой-то новый боевик.

Тогда тем более.

—Do you want to go to the cinema tonight?

—Not particularly.

—They’re showing some new thriller.

—In that case I want to even less.

21.9.5 Making comparisons using the long comparative form of adjectives

The *long form* of the comparative is used with *attributive adjectives*, that is, those that form part of a single phrase with the nouns they qualify (*see 6.0*).

For the formation of the long form of the comparative, *see 6.8.2*.

Я нашёл для тебя *более интересную* книгу.

I've found you a more interesting book.

Мы оказались в *более серьёзной* ситуации, чем можно было предположить.

We're in a more serious situation than could have been expected.

Наша группа применяет *более тонкую* методику опроса общественного мнения.

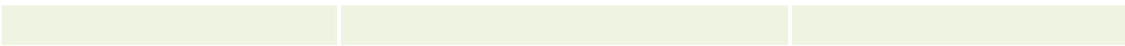
Our group uses a more subtle method of surveying public opinion.

The long form of the comparative can also be used with *predicative adjectives*. The long form must be used with those adjectives that do not have a *short comparative*.

For adjectives that do not have a short comparative form, *see 6.8.1*.

Наша страна сегодня *более демократическая*, но *менее стабильная*, чем тридцать лет назад.

Our country today is more democratic, but less stable than it was thirty years ago.



**Бы́ло бы лу́чше, е́сли бы егó выступле́ния в Ду́ме были бо́лее
кра́ткими, но бо́лее соде́ржательными.**

It would be better if his speeches in the Duma were shorter, but more full of content.

The four *declinable comparative adjectives*—лу́чший ‘better’, ху́дший ‘worse’, бо́льший ‘bigger’ and ме́ньший ‘smaller’—are used as attributive adjectives:

Лу́чшего учи́теля ру́сского язы́ка вам ни́где не найтí!

You won’t find a better Russian teacher anywhere.

К сожа́лению, к ху́дшему ва́рианту мы не́ были гото́вы.

Unfortunately, we weren’t prepared for the worst alternative.

**Бо́льшую ча́сть рабо́ты де́лала секретáрша, кото́рая приходи́ла в о́фис
два́ раза в неде́лю.**

Most (*literally*, the greater part) of the work was done by a secretary who came into the office twice a week.

**Резу́льтат игры́ зави́сит в ме́ньшей стéпени от пого́ды, чем от
состоя́ния поля́.**

The result of the game depends to a lesser extent on the weather than on the condition of the playing surface.

For more on the four declinable adjectives, *see* **6.8.3**.

NOTES Except for лу́чший these forms are used rather less often than their English counterparts. In particular, бо́льший and ме́ньший tend to be restricted to abstract contexts or to set expressions such as бо́льшая ча́сть ‘the greater part’, ‘the majority’ and в бо́льшей/ме́ньшей стéпени ‘to a greater/lesser extent’. In other situations it is often preferable to use either a different adjective or a different construction:

По́сле появле́ния пе́рвого ребе́нка они́ пересели́лись в бо́лее про́сторную кварти́ру.

After the arrival of their first child they moved into a bigger (*literally*, more spacious) flat.

После Нового года я куплю себе машину побольше.

In the New Year I'm going to buy myself a bigger car.

21.9.6 Indicating a lesser degree

To indicate a comparison of a lesser degree **мéнее** is used with a *long adjective* or with an *adverb*:

Эта книга **мéнее интересная**, чем я думал.

This book is less interesting than I thought.

Or This book is not as interesting as I thought (it would be).

Наша страна сегодня более демократическая, но **мéнее стабильная**, чем тридцать лет назад.

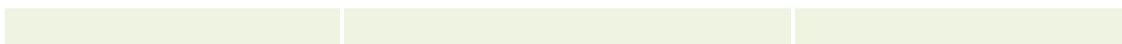
Our country is more democratic, but less stable than it was thirty years ago.

Онi переехали в более просторную, но **мéнее удобную** квартиру.

They moved into a bigger, but less comfortable flat.

Онi понимает по-русски лучше меня, но говорит **мéнее свободно**.

She understands Russian better than I do, but speaks it less fluently.



21.9.7 Indicating 'the same'

The Russian for 'the same' is **тот же (са́мый)**:

For the declension of **тот**, see 7.3.1.

For the declension of **са́мый**, see 7.8.2.

Ока́зывается, мы учи́лись в том же (са́мом) универси́тете.

It turns out we studied at the same university.

NOTE The use of **са́мый** in this construction is optional.

Тот же (without **са́мый**) is often reinforced by **один и** (cf. English 'one and the same'):

Мы ка́ждый раз ста́лкиваемся с одной и той же пробле́мой.

Every time we come up against (one and) the same problem.

Он приходи́т ка́ждый день в одно́ и то же вре́мя.

He arrives every day at (exactly) the same time.

NOTE The phrase **в то же вре́мя** tends to mean 'at the same time' in the sense of 'and yet':

Они научи́лись де́лать надёжные и в то же вре́мя недоро́гие маши́ны.

They have learned how to make cars that are reliable, but at the same time inexpensive.

The equivalent of 'the same' in the sense of 'of the same sort as' is **тако́й же**:

У меня́ до́ма есть тако́е же пла́тье.

I have the same dress at home.

The Russian equivalent of ‘the same ... as’ is usually **тот же (самый) ... что и:**

У меня́ та же са́мая информа́ция, что и у вас.

I have the same information as you (do).

If the comparison involves locations, **где** is sometimes used instead of **что**:

Я покупаю́ продукты́ в тех же магази́нах, где и все.

I buy my groceries in the same shops as everybody else.

The equivalent of ‘the same’ when it is used adverbially (in the sense of ‘in the same way’) is often **одина́ково**:

Эти слова́ произно́сятся одина́ково, но различа́ются в написа́нии.

These words are pronounced the same, but differ in their spelling.

21.9.8 Indicating similarity

The adjective that corresponds to ‘similar (to)’ is **похо́жий (на + acc.):**

У нас с тобой́ похо́жие интере́сы.

We have similar interests.

Мой брат о́чень похо́ж на меня́.

My brother looks very like me.



NOTE When used *predicatively* (as in the second example), **похожий** is almost always in the *short form*.

When introducing a sentence, **похоже (что)** means ‘it looks as if’:

Похоже, его сегодня уже не будет.

It looks as if he won't be here today.

Похоже, что он нас обманул.

It looks as if he's tricked us.

The conjunction that introduces comparisons is **как**:

Я голодный как волк.

I'm as hungry as a lion (*literally*, as a wolf).

Эта девочка танцует, как прирождённая балерина.

This girl dances like a natural ballerina.

The conjunction **как** is also used after a clause containing **такой** (*see 7.3.3*) or **так** (*see 9.1.6*):

Она такая же деловитая и неутомимая, как и её мать.

She's as efficient and as tireless as her mother.

Так же как и в прошлом году наш новогодний концерт состоится второго января.

Just as last year, our New Year concert will take place on 2 January.

For the form of the date, *see 19.3.3*.

21.9.9 Indicating difference

The adjective **другой** means ‘different’ in the sense of ‘another’:

Если тебе не нравится эта рубашка, я могу надеть другую.

If you don’t like this shirt, I can put a different one on.

Иной can be used in formal language with the same meaning:

У меня другая/иная точка зрения на этот вопрос.

I have a different opinion on this question (e.g. from you).

The adjective **разный** means ‘different’ (e.g. from each other):

У них разные точки зрения на этот вопрос.

They have different views on this question (i.e. from each other).

В разных учебниках ты найдёшь разные ответы на этот вопрос.

In different textbooks you’ll find different answers to this question.

Разный also means ‘different’ in the sense of ‘various’, ‘all kinds of’:

Здесь продают разные сорта чёрного и зелёного чая.

They sell different kinds of black and green tea here.

In formal language **различный** also occurs; **различный**, unlike **разный**, has a *short form* (see 6.5):

Эти фермеры применяют различные удобрения – отсюда и различные урожан.

These farmers use different fertilisers and thus obtain different yields.



Эти сочинения абсолютно различны как по стилю, так и по композиции.

These works are totally different, both in style and in the manner of composition.

Отличаться от (+ gen.) means 'to differ from'; **различаться** means 'to differ' (e.g. from each other):

Его вторая книга отличается от первой тем, что она более серьёзная.

His second book differs from the first in that it is more serious.

Эти слова произносятся одинаково, но различаются в написании.

These words are pronounced the same, but differ in their spelling.

The nouns **разница** and **различие** both mean 'difference'. The former is generally more common, but is only ever used in the singular; if a plural form is needed, the latter must be used:

Какая разница между его ответом и вашим?

What's the difference between his answer and yours?

Какие различия можно найти между английским оригиналом и русским переводом?

What differences can you find between the English original and the Russian translation?

The equivalent of 'unlike', when used as a preposition, is **в отличие от** (+ gen.):

В отличие от тебя я никогда не был в России.

Unlike you, I have never been to Russia.

In other senses, the equivalent of 'unlike' is often **не похожий**:

Он совсем не похож на своего брата.

He is quite unlike his brother.

Я не ожида́л тако́го поведе́ния. Э́то совсе́м не похо́же на тебя́.

I didn't expect such behaviour. It's most unlike you.

21.10 Indicating context using gerunds

For the formation of gerunds, *see* **4.11**.

21.10.0 Introduction

As was noted in **4.11.0**, the *gerund* is a *verbal adverb*, which means that it is at the same time both a part of the verb and an adverb. Gerunds can on occasion be used in a sentence alongside other adverbs:

Он отвеча́л неуклю́же, стесня́ясь, красне́я, но и́скренне.

He answered awkwardly, nervously, blushing, but sincerely.

More frequently, however, gerunds are used to form complex sentences. In many instances these are similar in meaning to those formed with a *conjunction* and a *finite verb* and described earlier in this chapter (*see* **21.1.5**, **21.1.11**, **21.4.6**, **21.5.1** and **21.6.3**). Unlike clauses formed with a conjunction and finite verb, gerund clauses are normally possible only when the *grammatical subject* of the *main clause* and the *gerund clause* are the



same. Gerunds occur rarely in speech, but are widely used in almost all forms of written language.

21.10.1 Using the imperfective gerund without negation

The *imperfective* gerund is used when the actions indicated by the main clause and the gerund clause take place at the same time. Sometimes the clause introduced by the gerund is similar to an adverb in that it describes the manner in which a particular action is carried out:

Стараясь не задевать мебель, они протиснулись в маленькую комнату.

Trying not to bump into the furniture, they squeezed their way into the small room.

Приветливо улыбаясь, она предложила гостям снять пальто и пройти в гостиную.

With a smile of greeting, she invited her visitors to remove their coats and go through into the living-room.

In other contexts, a gerund clause is used in place of a subordinate clause of time, reason, condition or concession:

Он неторопливо пил кофе, время от времени поглядывая на часы.

He drank his coffee slowly, looking at his watch from to time.

Понимая, что шансов нет, они отозвали свой иск.

Since they realise they have no chance of winning, they have withdrawn their case.

Они увидели друг друга только случайно, сталкиваясь в коридоре или в столовой.

They only saw each other by chance, if (or when) they met in the corridor or in the canteen.

—Понятия не имею, — сказала она, прекрасно зная ответ на его вопрос.

—I haven't the slightest idea, she said, although she knew perfectly well what the

answer to his question was.

21.10.2 Using the imperfective gerund with negation

The *negated present gerund* usually functions as an adverb, describing the manner in which an action is carried out:

Он стоял, не зная, что ей сказать.

He stood there, not knowing what to say to her.

Often it corresponds to the English ‘without ... -ing’:

Он слушал её внимательно, не прерывая и не задавая вопросов.

He listened to her carefully, without interrupting and without asking any questions.

Occasionally, it can correspond to the English ‘before’:

Проверяйте сдачу, не отходя от кассы.

Check your change before moving away from the cash-desk.



21.10.3 Using the perfective gerund

The *perfective gerund* is normally used when the action denoted by the gerund *precedes* the action indicated by the main verb. For this reason, the relationship between the two parts of the sentence is usually one of *time*:

Взяв её руки в свои, он стал нежно целовать её пальцы.

Taking her hands in his, he started gently kissing her fingers.

Прочитав эту статью, он решил немедленно написать в редакцию.

Having read the article, he decided to write (a letter) to the editor immediately.

Вернувшись домой, он вошёл в кухню и поставил чайник.

Returning home, he went into the kitchen and put the kettle on.

NOTE In the English equivalents of such gerund clauses, it may sometimes be preferable to use a present, rather than a past tense form.

Sometimes, past gerunds can be used to express conditions:

Как должен поступить гражданин, оказавшись в подобной ситуации?

How should someone act if they find themselves in a situation like this?

The use of *negated past gerunds* is similar to that of negated present gerunds, except that the action indicated by the gerund is one that would have preceded the action indicated by the main verb:

Он вошёл, не постучав в дверь.

He came in without knocking at the door.

The main difference between the two gerund forms is one of *aspect*, rather than one of *tense*, and on occasion it is possible to find the perfective gerund used when the actions indicated by the gerund and the main verb appear to be simultaneous. This is when attention is focused on the *totality* or *outcome* of the action indicated by the

gerund, rather than on the *process*.

For the use of the perfective aspect to focus on completion, *see* **5.2.4**.

Что ни говори́, она правильно поступи́ла, вы́йдя за́муж за Ко́лю.

Say what you like, but she did the right thing when she married Kolia.

Он вы́шел из комна́ты, гро́мко хлопну́в две́рью.

He left the room, slamming the door behind him.

Here attention is focused not on the process by which one gets married or makes a door slam, but on the state of being married (or, possibly, on the decision to get married) and on the noise made by a door that has been slammed.

For the different constructions corresponding to the English ‘to get married’, *see* **12.7**.

22

Coming and going

22.0 Introduction

Talking about coming and going involves a number of points of grammar where Russian behaves in a way that is very different from English. In the first place, Russian distinguishes between motion on foot and motion by means of transport, a distinction that is extended to carrying, leading or conveying objects, animals or people. Second, Russian has a special grammatical category of *verbs of motion*, where there is a distinction between *unidirectional* and *multidirectional* verbs. Finally, where English uses so-called ‘phrasal verbs’, such as ‘go in’, ‘come out’, ‘run through’, Russian uses verbs with prefixes.

22.1 Unidirectional and multidirectional verbs of motion

22.1.0 Introduction

There are fourteen pairs of unprefixed verbs that observe the distinction between *unidirectional* and *multidirectional* forms. All unprefixed verbs of motion are *imperfective*.

Various terms can be used to refer to the two groups of verbs: *unidirectional* and *multidirectional*, *determinate* and *indeterminate*, *durative* and *iterative*. The first is adopted here as being the most widely used and being the most transparent in meaning. Those who prefer, however, can refer to them as **ИДТИ**- and **ХОДИТЬ**-verbs (after the first pair of verbs in the following table).

22.1.1 The fourteen pairs of imperfective verbs of motion

	<i>Unidirectional</i>	<i>Multidirectional</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
1	идти́	ходить	to go (on foot), to walk
2	ехать	ездить	to go (by transport), to travel, to ride
3	бежать	бегать	to run
4	лететь	летать	to fly
5	плыть	плавать	to swim, to sail
6	лезть	лазить	to climb
7	ползти́	ползать	to crawl
8	бредти́	бродить	to wander
9	нести́	носить	to carry (on foot)

	<i>Unidirectional</i>	<i>Multidirectional</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
10	вести́	води́ть	to lead, to take (a person or an animal, on foot)
11	везти́	вози́ть	to take, to transport (by vehicle)
12	гнать	гоня́ть	to chase
13	тащи́ть	таска́ть	to pull, to drag
14	кати́ть	ката́ть	to roll

In the above table verbs in rows 1–8 are *intransitive*; verbs in rows 9–14 are *transitive*. The verbs in rows 1–5 and 9–11 are the most frequently used and the most important.

Information on the conjugation of these verbs is given in the appropriate sections of **Chapter 4**.

For more on transitive and intransitive verbs, *see* **4.13**.

22.1.2 Perfective partners for unprefixated verbs of motion

Perfective partners for unprefixated verbs of motion are formed by adding *prefixes*.

To form the perfective partner of *unidirectional* verbs the prefix **по-** is added:

идти́	пойти́
ехать	поехать
бежать	побежать
вести́	повести́
везти́	повезти́

Various perfective partners of *multidirectional* verbs can be formed by adding different prefixes; the most important of these are **с-**, **по-** and **за-**:

ходить	сходить, походить, заходить
ездить	съездить, поездить, заездить
бегать	сбегать, побегать, забегать
вози́ть	свози́ть, повози́ть, завози́ть

NOTE Many of the theoretically possible perfective partners of multidirectional verbs are never used in practice.

The specific meanings and the use of these perfective forms will be described in the

following sections.

22.1.3 Talking about motion in one direction

To talk about motion taking place in one direction the *unidirectional* verbs are used. They often, though not always, correspond to the English continuous present (I am going, etc.):

Приве́т, куда́ бежи́шь?

Hi, where are you dashing off to?

Бежу́ в университе́т, опазды́ваю на ле́кцию.

I'm running to the university: I'm going to be late for my lecture.

В данный момент я *иду* по вашей улице, буду у вас через пять минут.

At the moment I'm walking along your street; I'll be with you in five minutes.

Куда *ведёт* эта дорога?

Where does this road lead to?

Папы нет дома сейчас; он *везёт* сестру из музыкальной школы.

Dad's not at home at the moment; he's bringing my sister home from music school (by car).

22.1.4 Talking about motion in more than one direction

Motion in more than one direction or motion in no particular direction is indicated using *multidirectional* verbs:

Отсюда видно, как над озером *летают* чайки.

From here you can see the seagulls flying above the lake.

После двенадцати ночи городской транспорт уже не *ходит*.

Public transport no longer runs after midnight.

Он уже полчаса *ходит* взад и вперёд по улице: видимо, кого-то ждёт.

He's been walking up and down the street for the last half hour; he must be waiting for someone.

Целый час мы *ползали* с сыном по пляжу – искали мои часы, но так и не нашли.

My son and I spent a whole hour crawling all over the beach; we were looking for my watch, but we never managed to find it.

В России они *ездили* на этой машине.

When they were in Russia they travelled around in this car.

Multidirectional verbs also indicate the ability to perform a particular type of action:

Я не умею плавать и вообще боюсь воды.

I can't swim and am totally afraid of water.

Нашему сыночку всего́ год, а он уже ходит.

Our son's only a year old, but he's already walking.

22.1.5 Talking about repeated or habitual events

Repeated or habitual events usually involve motion in more than one direction and are therefore mostly described using the multidirectional verbs:

Он всегда носит с собой мобильник.

He always carries his mobile phone with him.

В детстве мы часто лазили на это дерево.

When we were children we often used to climb this tree.

Она ходит в клуб бальных танцев.

She goes to a ballroom dancing club.

После обеда дети часто бегали в парк.

After lunch, the children would often run to the park.



После обеда дети обычно бегали в парке.

After lunch, the children would often run around in the park.

For the use of prepositions indicating location, destination and starting point, *see* **21.2.**

If, however, the repeated or habitual direction being described is specifically in one direction, a *unidirectional* verb will be used:

Часы пик – это время, когда люди едут на работу или с работы.

Peak hours are the times when people are travelling either to their work or from their work. [In this sentence the journeys to and from work are viewed as separate events.]

22.1.6 Talking about a single event in the past

To describe a single event in the past there are several possibilities with subtle, but clear differences in meaning and use.

The *imperfective past tense* of the *unidirectional* verb is used when attention is focused on the *process* of a single journey in one direction, especially a journey that is in process when something else happens:

Мы ехали к вам сначала на метро, потом на электричке.

To get to you, we travelled first on the metro and then on a suburban train.

Я как раз вела дочку в садик, когда случилась эта авария у светофора.

I was taking my daughter to kindergarten when the accident happened at the traffic lights.

NOTE Russian distinguishes between **поезд**, a long-distance train, usually with sleeping accommodation, and **электричка**, a suburban (electric) train.

The *perfective past tense* of *unidirectional* verbs is used when the focus is on the *beginning* of the action or a *change* in the direction or pace of the motion being

described:

—А где Ива́н?

—Он *пошёл* в поликлини́ку.

—Where's Ivan?

—He's gone to the polyclinic (i.e. we know he has set off, but not what has happened after that).

Как то́лько загорéлся жёлтый, она́ сразу включи́ла ско́рость и поéхала.

As soon as the light changed to amber, she engaged gear and drove off.

С наступле́нием о́ттепели по Неве́ *поплы́ли* круп́ные льди́ны.

With the arrival of the thaw, large blocks of ice start coming down the Neva.

Соба́ка како́е-то вре́мя бежала́ за на́ми, но, услы́шав го́лос хозя́ина, побежала́ *обратно́*.

The dog chased after us for a while, but hearing the voice of its master, ran back (to him).

Выéхав на шоссе́, он поéхал *быстрее́*.

Once he turned onto the main road, he drove faster.

The *imperfective past tense of multidirectional verbs* is used when talking about a *completed round trip*:

Э́то что за паке́ты на полу́? Ты что, ходи́ла в магази́н?

What are these bags on the floor? Does this mean you've been shopping?

В про́шлом году́ мы е́здили в Эсто́нию.

Last year we went to Estonia.

В суббо́ту они́ води́ли дете́й на вы́ставку, а в воскресе́нье вози́ли их за́ город.

On Saturday they took the children to an exhibition and on Sunday took them for a trip into the country.

The *perfective past tense of multidirectional verbs* has different meanings according to the *prefix*. Perfectives with the prefix **с-** are also used to describe a single round trip, but they also convey the notion that the trip was unimportant or of short duration:

Когда́ оказа́лось, что не́чем заже́чь све́чи , я бы́стренько сбё́гал в кио́ск за спичка́ми.

When it turned out there was nothing to light the candles with, I dashed out quickly to the kiosk for matches.

В суббо́ту я съезди́л домо́й к роди́телям.

On Saturday I took a quick trip home to see my parents.

Perfectives with the prefix **по-** are used to denote an action (motion in more than one direction) that was carried out for a short time, usually as part of a sequence of actions:

По́сле рабо́ты я попла́вала в бассе́йне, а пото́м пошла́ домо́й.

After work, I went for a swim in the baths and then went home.

Он не́сколько мину́т *походи́л* по двору́, а пото́м, наконёц, отва́жился позвони́ть в дверь.

He walked up and down the courtyard for a few minutes, but finally plucked up courage to ring the doorbell.

Perfectives with the prefix **за-** are used to focus on the start of an action (motion in more than one direction):

Прочита́в письмо́, он не́рвно *заходи́л* по ко́мнате.

Having read the letter, he began to walk nervously up and down the room.

Во́зле упа́вшей с де́рева гусеницы́ ту́т же *забе́жали* муравьи́.

When the caterpillar fell from the tree, ants immediately started to run around.

22.1.7 Talking about a single event in the future

The *perfective future* of *unidirectional* verbs can be used when talking about a single event due to take place in the future:

Ле́том мы *полети́м* на Сахали́н.

We're flying to Sakhalin in the summer.

За́втра я *пойду́* в Ру́сский музе́й.

I'm going to the Russian Museum tomorrow.

The *present tense* of *unidirectional* verbs is also used to talk about a *planned* event:

Я иду́ на у́лицу – заодно́ могу́ вы́нести мусор.

I'm going out: I can take the rubbish out at the same time.

В сле́дующую пя́тницу я лечу́ в Москву́: племя́нник же́нится.

I'm flying to Moscow next Friday; my nephew's getting married.

The *perfective future* forms of *multidirectional* verbs convey the same shades of meaning as the corresponding *past tense* forms:

Что я бу́ду де́лать в воскресе́нье? Попла́ваю в бассе́йне, побро́жу по па́рку, схо́жу в кино́.

What am I going to do on Sunday? I'll go for a swim in the baths, wander round the park for a bit and go to the cinema.

Мо́жет, я сбегáю за хле́бом?

Shall I run out and buy some bread?

22.1.8 Instructions, prohibitions and exhortations

Instructions relating to coming and going are usually given using the *imperative* of the *unidirectional* verb:

Иди́те к нему́.

Go and see him.

Поезжай на да́чу.

Go to the dacha.

Веди́те её в музе́й.

Take her to the museum.

Prohibitions, however, are normally issued using the *multidirectional* verb:

Не ходите к нему. К нему нельзя ходить.

Don't go and see him. You can't go and see him.

Не е́зди на да́чу. Не на́до туда́ е́здить.

Don't go to the dacha. You shouldn't go there.

Не води́те её в музе́й.

Don't take her to the museum.

The *unidirectional* verb is used if the prohibition relates an action already in progress:

Не беги́, у нас ещё́ есть вре́мя.

Don't run, we've still got time.

Не ве́ди маши́ну так бли́зко к обо́чине.

Don't drive so close to the curb.

The *plural past perfective* forms **пошли́** and **поехали́** correspond to the English exhortation 'let's go':

Все гото́вы? Ну, тогда́ поехали́.

Is everybody ready? Right, in that case let's go.

For more on instructions, prohibitions and exhortations, *see* **18.2** and **18.3.3**.



22.2 Prefixed verbs of motion

22.2.0 Introduction

General information on the use of *prefixes* to form new verbs and on the principal meanings of the different prefixes is given in **10.4**. In this section we describe the formation of *imperfective* and *perfective* pairs of *prefixed verbs of motion* and give examples of how these verbs are used when talking about coming and going.

Prefixed verbs of motion do not distinguish between *unidirectional* and *multidirectional* movement.

22.2.1 The formation of imperfective and perfective pairs of prefixed verbs of motion

Perfective verbs are formed by adding a prefix to the *unidirectional* verb. When **идти** takes a prefix, the *infinitive* changes to **-йти** and the corresponding *future tense* forms to **-ду-дёшь** etc.:

войти́	to enter	войду́, войдёшь
подойти́	to approach	подойду́, подойдёшь

However, note the following:

выйти́	to go out, to come out	выйду́, выйдёшь
прийти́	to come, to arrive	приду́, придёшь

For more on the stress of perfective verbs with the prefix **вы-**, see **4.2.4**.

Imperfective verbs are formed in some instances by adding a prefix to the *multidirectional* verb. In other instances, the imperfective verb is related to the multidirectional verb, but has either a different *suffix* or a different *stress*.

The following table illustrates the formation of aspect pairs of *prefixed verbs of motion*. Instances where the prefixed form differs from the unprefixed form are given in *italics*:

*Imperfective**Perfective*

-ходить		-йти
входить	to enter	войти
-езжать		-ехать
уезжать	to leave, to go away	уехать
-бегать		-бежать
выбегать	to run out	выбежать
-летать		-лететь
прилетать	to arrive (flying)	прилететь
-плывать		-плыть
переплывать	to swim across	переплыть
-лезать		-лезть
слезать	to climb down	слезть
-ползать		-ползти
подползать	to crawl up to	подползти
-бредать		-брести
забредать	to wander off, to drop in	забрести

<i>Imperfective</i>		<i>Perfective</i>
-носить		-нести
приносить	to bring (carrying)	принести
-возить		-везти
подвозить	to give someone a lift	подвезти
-водить		-вести
сводить	to bring (people) together	свести
-гонять		-гнать
загонять	to corral	загнать
-тащить		-тащить
вытащить	to drag out	вытащить
-катывать		-катить
прокатывать	to roll (past)	прокатить

22.2.2 Examples of prefixed verbs of motion

The following examples illustrate the use of *imperfective* and *perfective* pairs of *prefixed verbs of motion*:

Туда́ *входить* нельзя́.

You can't go in there.

А сюда́ *можно войти́*?

But can I come in here?

Из за́ла суда́ все *выходили́* молча́.

Everyone was leaving the court in silence.

Когда́ на арéну *вышли́* клоуны, де́ти *захлопали́* в ладо́ши.

When the clowns came out into the ring, all the children started to applaud.

Когда́ мы *подлетали́* к Лондону, *можно́ было́* разглядéть Тёмзу.

As we were approaching London (in an aeroplane), we could make out the River Thames.

Я поставил в саду кормушку для птиц, и к ней сразу же подлетели два воробья.

I set up a bird table in the garden and two sparrows immediately flew towards it.

Многие птицы имеют способность уводить хищника подальше от своих птенцов.

Many birds have the ability to lead a predator away from their young.

Пошёл дождь, и родители увели детей с игровой площадки.

It started to rain and the parents removed their children from the playground.

Весной многие хозяйки имеют обыкновение выносить подушки на просушку.

In spring, many housewives follow the practice of putting their pillows out to air.

Ты не мог бы вынести мусор?

Would you mind taking the rubbish out?

It is important to distinguish the *perfective* verbs **заходить** **сходить**, which are perfective partners of the *multidirectional* verb **ходить** from the *imperfective* verbs **заходить**

сходить which are imperfective partners of **зайти** ‘to drop in’, ‘to go behind’ and **сойти** ‘come/go down’ respectively.

Прочитав письмо, он нервно заходил (св) по комнате.

Having read the letter, he began to walk nervously up and down the room.

По дороге домой он иногда заходил (нсв) в небольшое кафе на углу.

On the way home he sometimes dropped in to a small café on the corner.

Нечем зажечь свечи – придётся сходить (св) в киоск за спичками.

There’s nothing to light the candles with; somebody will have to go to the kiosk for matches.

Кататься на лыжах здесь стало опасно – начали сходить (нсв) снежные лавины.

It’s become dangerous to ski here; avalanches have started to occur (*literally*, come down).

22.2.3 Correlation between prefix and preposition

There is generally a high degree of correlation between the *prefixes* attached to verbs of motion and the *prepositions* used before *nouns* and *pronouns* to indicate destination, point of departure or an object encountered en route. The following are the correlations that occur most often:

<i>Prefix</i>	<i>Preposition (destination)</i>	<i>Prefix</i>	<i>Preposition (point of departure)</i>
при-	в/на	вы-	из
по-	в/на	у-	из
под-	к	с(о)-	с(о)
за-	к		
			<i>Preposition (object encountered en route)</i>
за-	в/на	о/об(о)-	вокруг ‘around’
		про-	мимо ‘past’/через ‘across’/сквозь ‘through’
		пере-	через

Она приехала в Росси́ю.

She arrived in Russia.

Она пришла́ на ле́кцию.

She came to the lecture.

Она уехала́ из Росси́и.

She left Russia.

Он выполз из норы́.

It crawled out of the burrow.

Он подбежал к арбитру́.

He ran up to the referee.

Он облетел́ вокруѓ све́та.

He orbited (*literally*, flew round) the earth.

Мяч пролетел́ мимо́ воро́т.

The ball flew past (i.e. missed) the goal



Он перевёл слепого через дорогу.

He took the blind man across the road.

In a number of instances the *prefix* and the *preposition* are identical:

Он зашёл за угол.

He went round the corner.

Отойди от края платформы: электричка идёт.

Move away from the edge of the platform: there's a train coming.

Когда мы въехали в город, была уже глубокая ночь.

When we drove into the city, it was already late at night.

Он доплыл до берега.

He swam as far as the shore.

Она слетела с крыши.

It (e.g. a bird) flew down from the roof.

Он внёс чемодан в дом.

He carried the suitcase into the house.

А за что, собственно, Бог изгнал из Рая Адама и Еву?

And why, exactly, did God expel Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden?

22.3 Verbs of motion used in figurative expressions and idioms

22.3.0 Introduction

Verbs of motion are used in a wide range of figurative expressions and idioms, which often have nothing obvious to do with movement. When such expressions

involve *unprefixed verbs of motion*, then either only the *unidirectional* verb or (less often) only the *multidirectional* verb can be used.

22.3.1 Figurative expressions with unidirectional verbs of motion

The verb **идти́** is used in a number of expressions where it has the basic meaning of 'to take place':

Туда́ входи́ть нельзя́; *идёт* уро́к.

You can't go in there; there's a lesson taking place.

Како́й фильм *идёт* в киноте́атре «Космос»?

What film is on the Kosmos cinema?

Сейча́с *идёт* хоро́ший спекта́кль в теа́тре «Ленко́м».

There's a good play on just now at the Lenkom theatre.

The same verb is also used for certain weather phenomena:

идёт дождь	it's raining
идёт снег	it's snowing

The verb **идти** is also used to convey the idea of something suiting someone or going well with something else:

Э́то пла́тье ей *идёт*.

This dress suits her.

Во́дка хоро́шо *идёт* с соле́ными гриба́ми.

Vodka goes very well with pickled mushrooms.

Time goes only in one direction, but can seem to go at different speeds:

вре́мя <i>идёт</i>	time is passing
вре́мя бежи́т/лети́т	time flies
вре́мя <i>ползёт</i>	time is dragging

Other examples with unidirectional verbs include the following:

Зде́сь мы *ведём* учё́т дохо́дов и расхо́дов всех отде́лений.

Here we keep track of the income and expenditure of all departments.

Она́ *ведёт* *дневник*.

She keeps a diary.

Все на́ши пла́ны *летят* (к че́рту). (informal)

All our plans are up the spout.

У э́той соба́ки *лэ́зет* шерсть.

That dog is losing its fur.

Не *лезь* в дра́ку.

Don't get involved in that fight.

Мы несём ответственность за это.

We have responsibility for this.

Что за ахинею ты несёшь? (informal)

What rubbish are you talking now?

У меня от всего этого крыша едет. (informal)

All this is driving me round the bend.

For the use of **везти/повезти** as an impersonal verb in sentences describing someone's luck, *see* **3.4.3**.

22.3.2 Figurative expressions with multidirectional verbs of motion

There are fewer figurative expressions involving multidirectional verbs.

The verb **носить** can mean 'to wear' (on a regular basis):

Молодёжь носит джинсы.

Young people wear jeans.

Я забыл, что она обычно носит очки.

I'd forgotten that she usually wears glasses.

There is no verb in Russian that corresponds to English 'to be wearing' (on a particular occasion). Instead, prepositional phrases are used:

Сегодня на нём чёрный свитер и серые брюки.

Today he's wearing a black pullover and grey trousers (*literally*, On him there is ...).

На балу́ то́лько она́ одна́ была́ в кра́сном.

She was the only person wearing red (*literally*, in red) at the ball.

The *transitive* verb **ката́ть/поката́ть** and the more frequent reflexive verb **ката́ться/поката́ться** are used to refer to a pleasure trip, usually without a specific destination, taken in some means of transport:

Оте́ц ката́л нас на ка́тере.

Our father used to take us out for rides in his boat.

Мо́жет, поката́емся на твоёй но́вой маши́не?

Can we go for a spin in your new car?

Шко́льные кани́кулы я обы́чно прово́дил в дере́вне; ката́лся на ло́шади, на ло́дке, на мотоци́кле и даже во́дил грузо́вик.

I usually spent my school holidays in the country; I would go horse-riding and boating, would ride on a motorbike and even drove a lorry.

Ката́ться/поката́ться is also used in certain set phrases:

ката́ться/поката́ться на ко́ньках	to go skating
ката́ться/поката́ться на лы́жах	to go skiing
ката́ться/поката́ться на са́нках	to go sledging

22.4 Other issues relating to coming and going

22.4.1 Coming and going

In general, Russian does not distinguish between ‘coming’ and ‘going’ when these relate simply to the direction of movement:

Извини́те за опозда́ние, мо́жно войти́?

I’m sorry for being late; may I come in?

Туда́ *входить* нельзя́: идёт урок.

You can't go in there: there's a lesson taking place.

Когда́ на арéну *вышли* клоуны, дéти захло́пали в ладо́ши.

When the clowns came out into the ring, all the children started to applaud.

Не знаю́, где он; мо́жет быть, *вышел* покурить.

I don't know where he is; he may have gone outside for a smoke.

Тише, *идёт* учитель.

Be quiet; the teacher's coming.

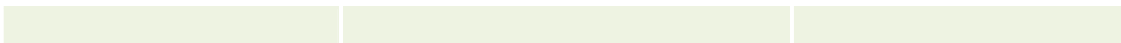
To correspond to 'coming' in the sense of 'arriving', Russian verbs of motion with the **при-** can be used:

Мы *пришли́* к вам пешко́м, но домо́й от вас поéдем на такси́.

We came on foot, but we're going home by taxi.

***Приезжа́йте* поча́ще.**

Do come and see us more often.



22.4.2 Going on foot or by transport

In general, **идти́** and **ходить** are used to refer to movement on foot. To emphasise that movement is on foot and not by means of transport, the adverb **пешко́м** can be used:

Мы пришли́ к вам пешко́м, но домо́й от вас по́едем на такси́.

We came on foot, but we're going home by taxi.

When reference is to a journey by means of transport, the verb depends on the means of transport: **ехать** and **ездить** are used for a journey by land transport, **плыть** and **плавать** for a journey on water, **лететь** and **летать** for a journey by air:

Я е́зжу в университет на со́рок седьмо́м авто́бусе.

I go to the university on a 47 bus.

Or, I get the 47 bus to the university.

Мы прие́хали по́ездом/на по́езде.

We came by train.

Мой пра́дед е́здил на ло́шади, мой дед е́здил на велосипе́де, мой оте́ц е́здил на мотоци́кле, а я хожу́ пешко́м.

My great-grandfather rode a horse, my grandfather travelled by bicycle, my father drove a motorbike and I go about on foot.

Четы́ре британки на́мерены на ло́дке пере́плыть А́тланти́ческий океа́н.

Four British women are planning to cross the Atlantic in a rowing boat.

На э́тот раз мы реши́ли лете́ть самолётом/на самолёте.

This time we decided to fly.

In general, there is a correlation between *intransitive* and *transitive* verbs of motion

according to the following patterns:

Идти́ + нести́; идти́ + вести́
Ходить + носить; ходить + водить
Ехать + везти́
Ездить + возить

Пришла́ Ни́на и, как обы́чно, принесла́ послед́ние но́вости.

Nina came and, as usual, brought the latest news with her.

Макси́м пришёл не оди́н, он привё́л невесту́.

Maksim didn't come on his own, but brought along his fiancée.

Брат у́ехал в Петербу́рг и увё́з мою́ гита́ру.

My brother has gone off to St Petersburg and taken my guitar with him.

When it is the means of transport itself that is the subject of the movement, Russian tends to use **идти́** and **ходить** for land or water transport, but **лететь** and **летать** for air transport:

Туда́ идёт со́рок седьмо́й авто́бус.

The 47 bus goes there.

По́езд пришёл с небольшо́м опозда́нием.

The train arrived a few minutes late.

В э́тот пы́льный городи́шко не захо́дят большо́е во́лжские парохо́ды.

The big Volga steamships do not visit this dusty little town.



Сюда *летают* только вертолёты.

You can only get there by helicopter (*literally*, Only helicopters fly there).

Ехать and *ездить* or *плыть* and *плавать* tend to be preferred if the focus is on the means of transport as a physical object:

Мимо нас *проёхал* какой-то автобус.

A bus has just gone past us.

Я любил *смотреть*, как по Во́лге *плывут* большие белые пароходы.

I used to love watching the big white steamships sailing along the Volga.

22.4.3 Talking about coming and going using other verbs

There are numerous verbs that relate in one way to movement, but which do not come into the grammatical category of *verbs of motion*:

гулять	to stroll, to go for a walk
путешествовать	to travel
отправляться/отправиться	to set off
оставлять/оставить	to leave, to abandon
покидать/покинуть	to leave, to abandon
добираться /добраться до (+ gen.)	to get to
прибывать/прибыть	to arrive
возвращаться/вернуться	to return

Гулять is always *intransitive* and is used with a construction indicating location:

После *ужина* мы обычно *гуляем* с собакой в парке.

After supper we usually take the dog for a walk in the park.

A phrase that also corresponds to English ‘to go for a walk’ is *идти* or *ходить на прогулку*

На *улице* прекрасная погода. Ты не хочешь *пойти* на *прогулку*?

The weather's really nice. Do you want to go for a walk?

Путешествовать is used with relation to a fairly substantial journey; it is normally used with the preposition **по** (+ dat):

Лéтом многие студéнты путешéствуют по Евро́пе автосто́пом.

In summer many students hitch-hike around Europe.

Оставля́ть/оста́вить and **покида́ть/поки́нуть** are *transitive* verbs that mean 'to leave' with the additional connotation of 'abandoning':

Пóсле кровопроли́тных боёв в ию́ле со́рок второ́го го́да сове́тские войска́ оста́вили Севасто́поль.

After the bloody battles of July 1942 the Soviet forces abandoned Sebastopol.

Он поки́нул э́тот го́род, что́бы уже́ нико́гда сюда́ не возвра́щаться.

He left the city, never to return to it.

Добира́ться /добрáться до (+ gen.) tends to imply a certain amount of difficulty in reaching the destination:

Мы добра́лись до ме́ста назна́чения уже́ за́темно.

It was well after dark when we reached our destination.



Прибыва́ть/прибы́ть tends to be used in more formal types of language:

Уважа́емые пассажи́ры, наш по́езд *прибыва́ет* на ко́нечную ста́нцию.

We wish to inform passengers that this train is arriving at its final destination.

Отправля́ться/отпра́виться and **возвраща́ться/верну́ться** require no special comment:

За́втра *отправля́емся* ро́вно в се́мь часо́в.

We're setting off tomorrow at exactly seven o'clock.

Я слы́шал, что он *отпра́вился* в путеше́ствие по Зо́лотому ко́льцу́.

I heard he'd set off on a trip round the Golden Ring.

Он поки́нул э́тот го́род, что́бы уже́ нико́гда сюда́ не *возвраща́ться*.

He left the city, never to return to it.

Пе́рвой в ко́смос полете́ла соба́ка – на Зе́млю она́ не *верну́лась*.

The first animal in space was a dog, but she never returned to Earth.

NOTE The **Зо́лото́е ко́льцо́** 'Golden Ring' is the name given to a tourist route that takes in several ancient towns and cities located to the north-east of Moscow.

23 Communication strategies

23.1 Choosing what type of language to use

23.1.1 Formal and informal language

In this book we have tended to give advice on how words, phrases and grammatical constructions are used in terms of *formal* and *informal* language. Although this distinction is not always the most appropriate, it is in most circumstances more useful than the distinction between *written* and *spoken* language, since in practice both written and spoken language exist in formal and informal varieties, and formal written language, for example, will tend to have more in common with formal spoken language than it will with informal written language.

Formal written language is used in official documents, such as laws, regulations and contracts, as well as in business letters and scholarly books. Formal language also tends to be used in journalism, sometimes with an admixture of more informal varieties.

Formal spoken language tends to be used in texts that are written out in advance, such as lectures and political or ceremonial speeches. However, elements of formal language may also be preferred in official discussions and negotiations.

Informal spoken language is that which is normally used in ordinary conversation.

Informal written language is used in private letters and (sometimes in a stylised form) in works of fiction. Informal written language may also appear in the lyrics of pop and rock songs and is widely used in various forms of Internet communication.

It follows from this that virtually everyone who learns Russian is going to need some knowledge of both formal and informal language and of the differences between them. And even if many learners will never have to produce documents in formal written language, anyone who has any contact with the written language will at some point have to read and understand texts written in this particular variety.

NOTE It is important to distinguish between *informal* language and *non-standard* language. Everybody uses informal language in the appropriate

circumstances, while non-standard language consists of forms that are disapproved of and avoided by most educated speakers of the language, who consider them to be incorrect or improper. Those who learn Russian will at some point encounter non-standard language, most probably in casual conversation, although there is a whole Internet subculture that is based on the use of non-standard forms for playful effect, including deliberately incorrect spelling. Nevertheless, there are two points to note. The first is that many Russians take the view that non-standard language is something that learners of the language should know nothing about and that it is certainly not something that they ever expect to find learners using themselves. The second point is that non-standard language, like formal and informal language, is a system in its own right, and the use of non-standard language in ways that do not conform to the 'rules' of that system is at best inappropriate and at worst highly embarrassing to all concerned. At the very least, therefore, the deliberate use of non-standard language should be attempted only by those who have an absolute and total confidence in their command of the standard language.

23.1.2 The characteristics of formal language

Formal language, and especially formal written language, is characterised by the following features:

- A preference for long and grammatically complex sentences.
- The widespread use of participles in the long form.
- A tendency to use abstract vocabulary and especially to prefer constructions with verbal nouns over finite verb forms.
- A tendency to avoid the first person singular and a preference for depersonalised constructions and for passive verbs.

23.1.3 The use of participles

The *short forms* of *past passive participles* are found in all types of language, where they are used to form *perfective passive* verbs. All other forms of participles are restricted to formal language and especially to formal written language.

For information on the formation of participles, *see* **4.12**.

For information on the use of the short form of the past passive participle to form perfective passive verbs, *see* **4.14.2**.

Participles are verbal adjectives and phrases containing a participle in the *long form* fulfil a similar function to clauses introduced by a *relative pronoun*.

For more on relative pronouns, *see* **7.5**.

The stylistic limitation on the use of participles and the functional overlap between participial phrases and relative clauses mean that many learners may find that they rarely or never need to use them. Nevertheless, they are a sufficiently important element of formal writing that an ability to recognise them and to interpret them correctly is essential if this type of language is to be properly understood.

The following sentences illustrate the use of participles. Taken from official regulations concerning foreign travel, they show how several participial phrases can be used in one sentence in order to produce convoluted text that can be difficult

to unravel and to translate:

**Гражданин, достигший восемнадцатилетнего возраста и
обращающийся за получением паспорта в связи с принятым им
решением о выезде из Российской Федерации для проживания в другом
государстве, указывает об этом в своём заявлении.**



A citizen who has reached the age of eighteen and who requests the issue of a passport in connection with a decision he has made to leave the Russian Federation in order to live in another country, mentions this in his application.

Иностранцы́е гра́ждане мо́гут въезжа́ть в Росси́йскую Федера́цию и выезжа́ть из Росси́йской Федера́ции при нали́чии росси́йской ви́зы по действительным документам, удостоверяющим их личность и признаваемым Росси́йской Федера́цией в э́том качестве, е́сли ино́е не предусмотре́но междунаро́дными догово́рами Росси́йской Федера́ции.

Foreign citizens may enter and leave the Russian Federation provided that they have a Russian visa accompanying valid documents confirming their identity and recognised for that purpose by the Russian Federation, unless different arrangements are provided for under international agreements signed by the Russian Federation.

Министе́рство иностра́нных дел Росси́йской Федера́ции мо́жет официа́льно оформити́ть и выда́ть па́спорт гра́жданину Росси́йской Федера́ции, прожита́ющему на террито́рии Росси́йской Федера́ции, по его́ лично́му заявле́нию, пода́нному че́рез кома́ндирующую его́ организа́цию, зарегистрированную в Министе́рстве иностра́нных дел Росси́йской Федера́ции в по́рядке, устано́вленном Прави́тельством Росси́йской Федера́ции.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation may issue a passport to a citizen of the Russian Federation who is resident on the territory of the Russian Federation in cases where that person submits a personal request through the organisation that is sending him abroad and which is registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in accordance with procedures laid down by the government of the Russian Federation.

Not all sentences containing participles are as complicated as those above. Some examples of rather more straightforward sentences are given in the comments on word order in **19.1.3**.

To demonstrate how *participial phrases* fulfil much the same function as *relative clauses*, here is the first of the above examples rewritten with relative clauses replacing the participial phrases; the following version is somewhat more awkward than the original:

Гражданин, который достиг восемнадцатилетнего возраста и который обращается за получением паспорта в связи с решением о выезде из Российской Федерации для проживания в другом государстве, которое он принял, указывает об этом в своём заявлении.

Some participles are also used as ordinary adjectives or (less often) nouns. When used in this way they do not necessarily have the same stylistic restriction as they do when used as true participles. Examples include:

блестящий	brilliant
ведущий	leading, presenter (of a television programme)
выдающийся	outstanding
действующий	active, functioning
окружающий	surrounding
отсутствующий	absent (also as a noun)
потрясающий	staggering, amazing
предшествующий	preceding

присутствующий	present (also as a noun)
решающий	deciding, decisive
следующий	following, next
смягчающий	mitigating
текущий	current (e.g. affairs, account)
вооружённый	armed
воспитанный	well brought up
разочарованный	disenchanted, disappointed
убеждённый	convinced
умеренный	moderate
цивилизованный	civilised
верующий	believer, believing
курящий	smoker
служащий	white-collar worker
данные	data
подданный	subject (e.g. of the crown)
подчинённый	subordinate

Тогда у него появилась блестящая идея.

Then he had a brilliant idea.

На следующий день он проснулся с головной болью.

The next day he woke up with a headache.

В семидесятые годы он был убеждённым коммунистом.

In the 1970s he was a convinced communist.

На первом этаже есть специальное помещение для курящих.

On the ground floor there is a special room for smokers.

У него скверные отношения со всеми подчинёнными.

He has a dreadful relationship with all his subordinates.

23.1.4 Other characteristic features of formal language

The following sentence, already quoted in the section on participles, also provides

an illustration of how *verbal nouns* are used in formal language:

Гражданин, достигший восемнадцатилетнего возраста и обращающийся за получением паспорта в связи с принятым им решением о выезде из Российской Федерации для проживания в другом государстве, указывает об этом в своём заявлении.

A citizen who has reached the age of eighteen and who requests the issue of a passport in connection with a decision he has made to leave the Russian Federation in order to live in another country, mentions this in his application.

If we exclude **заявление** which takes the form of a verbal noun, but which here means a type of document (a written application for something), there are four verbal nouns in this sentence: **выезд получение решение проживание**. In principle, each of these nouns could be replaced with a construction involving a verb; here is part of the sentence rewritten with the verbs used instead of nouns:

Гражданин ... который хочет получить паспорт, потому что он решил выехать из России, чтобы проживать в другом государстве ...

A citizen ... who wants to receive a passport because he has decided to leave Russia in order to live in another country ...

For more on the formation of verbal nouns, *see* **10.1.10**.

The following example, taken from a newspaper article written shortly after Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000, illustrates not only the use of *verbal nouns*, but also a preference for other forms of *abstract nouns* and for *passive* and *depersonalised* constructions. It will be noted that these features cannot always be reproduced in the translation:

Тем не менее в действиях Путина прослеживается определённая логика. Первые его шаги направлены на реанимацию государства, а именно: подчинение бюрократии, восстановление управляемости страны, ослабление автономных от государства центров силы. Как уже отмечалось, в данном случае речь идёт о решении задач новейшей эпохи.

Nevertheless, it is possible to discern a certain logic in Putin's actions. His first steps were aimed at reviving the state, specifically by bringing the bureaucracy to heel, by making the country governable again and by weakening centres of power not under state control. As has already been pointed out, we are talking here about addressing the problems of the most recent era.

For the use of **данный** in place of **этот** in formal language, *see* **7.3.2**.

23.2 Constructing a text

23.2.0 Introduction

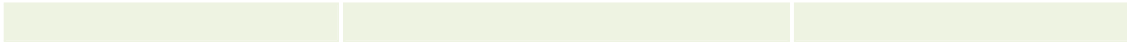
Any text, whether spoken or written, whether in formal or informal language, will consist of a series of individual sentences. This section will examine some of the ways in which individual sentences can be linked to form a coherent text.

23.2.1 Вводные слова: introductory words

Russian has a special category of forms known as **вводные слова** (*literally*, introductory words). In spite of the name, **вводные слова** do not necessarily appear at the beginning of a sentence and may consist either of a single word or of an entire phrase. **Вводные слова** are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas, and they are used to supply information that is additional to what is contained in the main body of the sentence.

Some **вводные слова** fulfil the specific role of linking sentences. These include:

впрочем	however, on second thoughts
значит	so
итак	and so
как бы то ни было	however that may be
кроме того	in addition, moreover
к тому же	in addition, moreover
однако	however
следовательно	therefore
стало быть	therefore
таким образом	therefore
тем не менее	nonetheless, nevertheless



По-моёму, не сто́ит жа́ловаться на такие ве́щи. Впро́чем, как хоте́те.

In my opinion, there's no point in complaining about such things. However, it's up to you.

Ме́неджеро́в из стран Евро́сою́за не так уж мно́го в Росси́и, и они́ ино́гда с тру́дом приспособля́ются к росси́йским усло́виям. Как бы́ то ни бы́ло, они́ несут с собо́й запа́дный подход к делу́ и запа́дную организа́цию.

There aren't that many managers from EU countries in Russia, and they sometimes have difficulty in adapting to Russian conditions. However that may be, they do bring with them a Western approach to business and Western organisation.

Вчера́ из-за погóдных усло́вий бы́ло отменено́ бо́лее двухсо́т ре́йсов. Кроме́ того́, из-за тумана́ мно́гие ре́йсы были́ задер́жаны на срок до двух часoв.

Yesterday more than 200 flights were cancelled because of the weather. In addition, the fog meant that many flights were delayed for up to two hours.

Делегáтам Съез́да не разрешáлось разглаша́ть содер́жание докла́да. Тем не мене́, по́лный текст вско́ре появил́ся в запа́дной печа́ти.

Delegates at the congress were not allowed to reveal the contents of the speech. Nevertheless, the full text soon appeared in the Western press.

Another group of **вво́дные слова́** indicate the extent to which the information being communicated is probable. These include:

конечно́	of course
(са́мо собо́й) разуме́ется	of course
должно́ быть	it must be case that
наверное́, наве́рно	probably
по-видимому́	apparently
пожалуй	probably, perhaps
кажется	it seems
возможно́	it is possible that
может быть	perhaps

NOTE Both *наверное́* and *наве́рно* are characteristic of informal language, the former tends to be used in writing and the latter in speech.

Они́, *конечно́*, имéют пра́во не согласи́ться с на́ми.

Of course, they have the right not to agree with you.

Здесь нет его́ вещей, так что он, *должно́ быть*, уже́ уеха́л.

His things aren't here so he must already have left.

Я, *наверно́*, зайду́ к ней за́втра по́сле рабо́ты.

I'll probably call in and see her tomorrow after work.

Ты, *пожа́луй*, прав; не на́до бы́ло отка́зываться от его́ по́мощи.

You're probably right; we shouldn't have refused his help.

Здесь, *ка́жется*, не́ за чем остава́ться.

It seems that there's no point in staying here.



Россия, возможно, вступит в ВТО до конца текущего года.

It's possible that Russia will join the WTO (World Trade Organisation) before the end of the current year.

Следующий конгресс нашей организации состоится в России, может быть, во Владивостоке.

The next congress of our organisation will take place in Russia, possibly in Vladivostok.

For further examples of **вводные слова** used in this function, see **16.5.1**.

Some **вводные слова** make a comment on the nature of the utterance itself. These include:

допустим	let us assume
предположим	let us suppose
одним словом	in a word
короче говоря	to put it briefly
собственно говоря	strictly speaking
шутки в сторону	joking apart
кстати (говоря)	by the way
между прочим	by the way

Допустим, он придёт. И что будет?

Suppose he comes. Then what happens?

Одним словом, это невозможно.

In a word, it's impossible.

Собственно говоря, вы не имеете права здесь присутствовать.

Strictly speaking, you don't have the right to be here.

Шутки в сторону, дискриминация мужчин – это реальная и очень серьёзная проблема.

Joking apart, discrimination against men is a genuine and a very serious problem.

Она́, ме́жду про́чим, заболела́ и скорее́ всего́ не приде́т.

By the way, she's not well and probably won't come.

The following **вво́дные слова́** indicate the speaker or the writer's attitude to the matter being described:

к сча́стью	fortunately
к сожа́лению	unfortunately

К сча́стью, мы о́чень хоро́шо понима́ем по-ру́ски.

Fortunately, we understand Russian very well.

**К сожа́лению, ва́ше заявле́ние не мо́жет бы́ть приня́то, та́к как
последний срок подачи документов уже истёк.**

Unfortunately, your application cannot be accepted since the final deadline for the submission of documents has already expired.

The following **вво́дные слова́** are used when enumerating points in an argument:

во-пе́рвых	in the first place
во-вто́рых	in the second place
в-тре́тьих	in the third place



Я бы не советовал покупать этот телевизор: во-первых, он слишком дорогой; во-вторых, я сомневаюсь в его качестве, а в-третьих, можно найти более современную модель.

I wouldn't advise you to buy that television set. In the first place, it's too expensive; in the second place, I have doubts about its quality and in the third place, you can find a more up-to-date model.

23.2.2 Using the conjunction **a**

In addition to being used to link clauses (see 9.3.2), the conjunction **A** is often used at the beginning of a sentence, especially in dialogue. Here it serves the function of alerting the listener to a new topic or to a new development in the existing topic or simply of providing extra emphasis. In this function it is particularly common in questions:

Я считаю, что всё будет сделано к концу месяца. А ты как думаешь?

I think everything will be done by the end of the month. What do you think?

—Здесь, пожалуйста, укажите ваше имя, фамилию, дату рождения, адрес, телефон.

—А зачем вам вся эта информация?

—Could you indicate here your first name, surname, date of birth, address and telephone number?

—Why do you need all that information?

The phrase **A вдруг** means 'what if?', 'suppose':

—Она должна быть здесь часам к одиннадцати.

—А вдруг она опоздает?

—She should be here by about eleven.

—But what if she's late?

23.3 Discourse words

Discourse words are words and phrases that have little or no meaning of their own,

but which are used to structure speech. They can be ‘filler words’ that give the speaker time to think or to find the right word, or they can be words that make a statement more tentative or more emphatic. Russian has a large number of such words and phrases, and these can have a more or less ‘translatable’ meaning, depending on the context in which they are used. Their proper usage is a matter of idiom and can be described here only approximately. The learner is thus advised to listen carefully to note how Russians use these expressions in their own speech.

The following is a list of discourse words that are widely used in Russian. Where appropriate, translations are given, but it should be noted that these will not be applicable in many instances:

в́ общем	in general, on the whole
вот	(a sentence filler)
в принципе	in principle
значит	so (often used as a sentence filler)
так	so, well (can be used to gain time)
так сказа́ть	so to speak

это (самое) the whatsit (used when searching for a word)
как его/её там the whatever-it's-called, the what's-its-name

In the following examples, some of the above words and phrases are used with a definite and translatable meaning:

У него́ было́ не́сколько крити́ческих замеча́ний, но в о́бщем его́ реце́нзия положи́тельная.

He had a few critical comments, but on the whole his review is positive.

В принци́пе я согла́сен, но тут есть не́которые спо́рные моме́нты.

In principle I agree, but there are some unresolved issues here.

Сейча́с выходи́м из до́ма. Зна́чит, бу́дем у вас че́рез час.

We're leaving the house now. That means we'll be at your place in an hour's time.

Э́то лека́рство я про́бую в пе́рвый раз. Э́то, так сказа́ть, экспе́римент.

I'm trying this medicine for the first time. It is, so to speak, an experiment.

In the following examples, the words and phrases listed above are used as discourse words, and in many instances they cannot be directly translated:

Та-ак, всё, в о́бщем, поня́тно. Я, зна́чит, поду́маю, что да́льше де́лать.

Well, then, I suppose that's all sorted out. I'll have to think now what to do next.

Мне, зна́чит, тут твоя́ жена́, э́то са́мое, расска́зала о ва́шей, так сказа́ть, пробле́ме. А вы не про́бовали обра́щаться к э́тому, как его́ там, сексоло́гу?

Well, I've sort of been, I don't know, told by your wife about your problem, as it were. Have you tried going to one of those, what are they called, sexologists?

**—Ты мо́жешь меня́ подвезти́ на вокза́л?
—В принци́пе да.**

—Can you give me a lift to the station?

—I suppose so.

NOTE When **так** is used at the beginning of a sentence in order to gain time, the vowel is often extended to double (or even triple) the normal length.

There are three discourse words that are particularly characteristic of the speech of young people. These are:

как бы	sort of
типа	like
блин	(emphasises the previous word)

Although it is inevitable that many learners of Russian will hear these words used by their friends and acquaintances, it is as well to know that they come with a serious ‘health warning’: the use of these expressions is regarded by many Russians as an indication of an inadequate grasp of the language and/or an inability to express one’s thoughts in a clear and coherent manner. In particular, **блин**, although it literally means ‘pancake’, is in this usage a transparent euphemism for an obscenity and is consequently offensive to many Russians.



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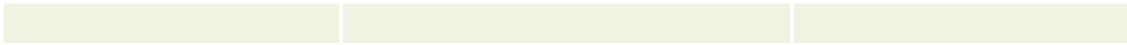
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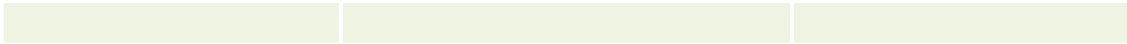
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