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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 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 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:

неч imperfective
сов совершенный perfective

The following abbreviations are also used:

sing. singular
fem. feminine
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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 крásный ‘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.

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 бы́стрее ‘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 бы́ 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.

**Fleeting vowel**

This is the term used for a vowel (usually e, o or è) 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 хороши ‘it is good to’, are part of the adverb system, while others, such as можна ‘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.

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 ‘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.

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. это ‘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, самый высокий ‘(the) highest’ or громче всех ‘loudest (of all)’. See 6.8.4, 6.8.5 and 9.1.7.

**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’, делать, ‘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.

Вводные слова

Вводные слова 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.
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 ъ and the hard sign ѣ—have no sound value of their own.

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

### Letters in alphabetical order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>А а</td>
<td>as in father (but shorter)</td>
<td>a (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Б б</td>
<td>as in boss</td>
<td>b (be)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>В в</td>
<td>as in vast</td>
<td>в (ve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Г г</td>
<td>as in gum</td>
<td>г (ge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Д д</td>
<td>as in dark</td>
<td>д (de)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Е е</td>
<td>as in yellow or cheek</td>
<td>е (ye)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ё ё</td>
<td>as in yogurt or chocolate</td>
<td>ё (yo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ж ж</td>
<td>as the s in pleasure</td>
<td>ж (zhe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>З з</td>
<td>as in zone</td>
<td>з (ze)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>И и</td>
<td>as in east (but shorter)</td>
<td>и (i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Й й</td>
<td>as in yes or boy</td>
<td>и краткое ‘short й’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>К к</td>
<td>as in cup</td>
<td>к (ka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Л л</td>
<td>as in luck</td>
<td>ль (cl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>М м</td>
<td>as in mother</td>
<td>м (cm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Н н</td>
<td>as in none</td>
<td>н (cn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>О о</td>
<td>as in mock or taught (but shorter)</td>
<td>о (o)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>П п</td>
<td>as in park</td>
<td>п (pe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Р р</td>
<td>as the Scottish rolled ґ in rock</td>
<td>рр (er)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>С с</td>
<td>as in gun</td>
<td>с (cs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Т т</td>
<td>as in tall</td>
<td>т (te)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>У у</td>
<td>as in moon (but shorter)</td>
<td>у (ui)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ф ф</td>
<td>as in fall</td>
<td>ф (cf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Х х</td>
<td>as in Scottish loch</td>
<td>ха (kha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ц ц</td>
<td>as in nats</td>
<td>ц (tsce)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ч ч</td>
<td>a in chess</td>
<td>че (che)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ш ш</td>
<td>as in shark</td>
<td>ш (sha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Щ щ</td>
<td>as in fresh sheets</td>
<td>щ (shsh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ъ ъ</td>
<td>no sound value</td>
<td>твёрдый знак ‘hard sign’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The precise difference between the pronunciation of hand ы 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 6, hard ⁍) ‘was’, был (hard 6, soft ⁍) ‘true story’, был (soft 6, hard ⁍) past tense of ‘hit’ or ‘beat’; мат (hard uslim, hard  componentDidUpdate) ‘checkmate’, мат (hard uslim, soft toupper) ‘mother’, мат (soft uslim, hard  componentDidUpdate) ‘crumpled’, мат (soft uslim, soft  componentDidUpdate) ‘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, ш and щ 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 ъ is pronounced with the tongue resting against the top teeth. It sounds
like the English ‘I’ in words such as ‘film’, ‘table’.

To pronounce ʒ and ʃ, 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 ʒ, ʃ, and ʒ are pronounced with the tip of the tongue resting against the back of the top teeth.

Hard k, ɻ, and ʒ 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 ɓ, ɓ, ɗ, ɗ, ɖ, ɖ, ʢ, ʢ, ɱ, ɱ, ɲ, ɲ, ɲ, ŋ, ɕ, ɕ, ʂ, ʂ, ʐ, ʐ, ʑ, ʑ are all capable of being palatalised, while ɶ and ɿ 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:


**NOTE** In transcriptions, the sign ‘ 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 ɿ 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 ɓ, ɓ, ɗ, ɗ, ɖ, ɖ, ʢ, ʢ, ɱ, ɱ, ɲ, ɲ, ɲ, ŋ, ɕ, ɕ, ʂ, ʂ, ʐ, ʐ, ʑ, ʑ 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 ɓ, ɓ, ɗ, ɗ, ɖ, ɖ, ʢ, ʢ, ɱ, ɱ, ɲ, ɲ, ɲ, ŋ, ɕ, ɕ, ʂ, ʂ, ʐ, ʐ, ʑ, ʑ are pronounced hard when they:

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

ходим ‘he goes (on foot)’, глаз ‘eye’, спорит ‘sport’;

(b) when they are followed immediately by another consonant:
глаз ‘eye’, знать ‘to know’, спор ‘sport’;

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


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’, возьму ‘I will take’, фильм ‘film’, кровать ‘bed’;

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

1.2.5 Voiced and unvoiced consonants

The letters ɓ, ɓ, ɗ, ʄ, ɠ 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 ɗ, ʄ, ɠ, ʛ, ʢ.

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:

NOTE: ɓɔ̀̀ ‘God’ is pronounced [bokh].

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


NOTE: Unvoiced consonants are not voiced when they occur before в: о́мбрь [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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Спelled</th>
<th>Pronounced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>чг</td>
<td>хот in что ‘what’ and чтобы ‘in order to’, otherwise чт: почта ‘post office’, почти ‘almost’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чи</td>
<td>ши in certain everyday words: конечно ‘of course’, скучно ‘boring’ (adv.), яичница ‘fried eggs’, and also in female patronymics: Никитична, Ильинична</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лин</td>
<td>in солнце ‘sun’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>гк</td>
<td>хк: лёгкий ‘light’, ‘easy’, мягкий ‘soft’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сг, сж</td>
<td>сг: честный ‘honest’, местный ‘local’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>зг, зж</td>
<td>зг: звёздный ‘star’ (adj.), здёздно ‘late’ (adv.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>жч, жй</td>
<td>жч: перебо́чник ‘carrier’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1.3 Vowels

#### 1.3.1 Russian vowel sounds and letters

To indicate the six Russian vowel sounds, ten letters are used: я, е, ё, 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 ы, е, ё, ю

Four of the letters indicating vowels (я, е, ё, 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spelled</th>
<th>Pronounced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>сч</td>
<td>in the root -чить/чёть; считать ‘to count’, ‘to consider’, расчёт ‘calculation’, also in счастье ‘happiness’; otherwise неч. исчезать ‘to disappear’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>жч</td>
<td>не мужчина ‘man’; перебежчик ‘deserter’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>шш</td>
<td>a long шш: сшить ‘to sew (together)’, бесшумный ‘noiseless’, без шума ‘without noise’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ыы</td>
<td>я: мыться ‘to wash oneself’, улыбаться ‘to smile’, молются ‘they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тт</td>
<td>тся ‘wash themselves’, улыбаются ‘they smile’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** The greeting здравствуйте ‘hello’ is pronounced as здравствуйте in formal language, but more informally as здравствуйте.
indicate that the preceding consonant is *soft*:

\[
\text{мієо} ['m\text{\'a}..] \text{‘meat’, міло} ['\text{\'e}..] \text{‘body’, вєє ['f\text{\^e}o] ‘everything’, мєє} ['\text{\'n}\text{\'u}] \text{‘menu’}.
\]

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


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


NOTES

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


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

статьи́ [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:


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
1.4.1 The importance of stress

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

мучка ‘tornment’, мук ‘flour’
dома ‘at home’, дом ‘houses’.

For more on the grammatical terms, see 2.2.

For the rules of stress with prepositions, see 9.2.7.
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 ē is used only in stressed syllables, stress is not indicated separately for words containing this letter.

For more on the use of ē 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 и and certain prepositions—it indicates that this syllable carries the stress for the following word as well. An example is the phrase на 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, родилась ‘she was born’, means that both родилась and родила́сь are possible.

1.4.3 Reduction of unstressed vowels.

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

1.4.4 Unstressed a and o

Unstressed a and o are pronounced as a when they occur either in the syllable
immediately before the stressed syllable or at the very beginning of a word:


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

1.4.5 Unstressed е and ё

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


Unstressed е and ё are pronounced as ə when they occur in any syllable that comes after the stress:


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


1.4.6 Other unstressed vowels

The vowels ы, ыи, ыи 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:


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 (´):

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 ĕ

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

вешă ‘he went in’, but вешă ‘he went out’; вĕл ‘he led’, but велă ‘she led’.

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


They should, however, be read as:

еě, ещě, принеc, лĕкcий, мед.

In dictionaries and other lists arranged alphabetically, e and ĕ are usually treated as being the same letter.

1.5.2 Spelling after , , , ,

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, Ч, Щ, Ц are always hard and Ч, Ш 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 ă and я do not occur after these consonants; instead, y and a are used:


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:

па́рашют ‘parachute’, жю́р ‘jury’.

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


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

The letter ы is normally used after ъ but ъoccurs in some words of foreign origin and in some surnames:


NOTE When ъ is used after ш, ж or ъ it is pronounced as if it were ы.
The letter ο is used after Ш, Ж, Ч, Ш, Щ 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’ — душею
нож ‘knife’ — ножом, but муж ‘husband’ — мужчин
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:


1.5.3 Use of е and Э

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


The letter ë 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:


For the use of это transcribe English а, 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, Щ.
1.5.4 Use of И after К, Г, Х

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

сторожница 'stewardess', рёбры 'rugby', Сент-Луис 'Saint-Louis', темп 'pace', женщина 'woman', шея 'neck', цель 'aim'.

1.5.5 The ending -Г(И)о

The ending -Г(И)о 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' — его [yivo]
тот 'that' — тво [trvo]
кто 'who?' — кого [kovo]
что 'what?' — чего [chivo]
новый 'new' — ново [novo]
хороший 'good' — хорошо [khurosho]
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 бе-, ве-, вон- and раз-form, however, an exception, since they are spelled бе-, ве-, вон- and рес- when they occur before an unvoiced consonant (к, п, с, т, ф, ц, ч, ш, щ):

бе́длымный ‘thoughtless’, but бесстра́стный ‘passionless’;
встремнуть ‘to take a nap’, but вскипя́ть ‘to boil’;
воспрóдить ‘to revive’, but воспита́ть ‘to bring up’;
издáть ‘to publish’, but исправи́ть ‘to correct’;
разбу́дить ‘to wake’, but рассы́пать ‘to scatter’.

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 я́ ’I’:

Тру́до повéрить, 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, навéрное, приду в четвёртý.

I’ll probably arrive on Thursday.
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:

At university I studied English literature.

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

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:

Министерство культуры

‘The Ministry of Culture’

Московский государственный университет

‘Moscow State University’

Большой театр

The Bolshoi Theatre

«Независимая газета»

Nezavisimaia gazeta (the name of a newspaper)

«Кто хочет стать миллионером?»

Who Wants to be a Millionaire?

Новый год

‘New Year’

With geographical names, generic terms such as море ‘sea’ and улица ‘street’ are normally spelled with a small letter:
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

**Северная Ирландия**

Northern Ireland

**Восточная Сибирь**

Eastern Siberia

**Дальнний Восток**

The Far East

**Европейский Союз**

The European Union
Вступление

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:

Лучше, конечно, читать «Войну и мир» в оригинале.

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

Завтра в кинотеатре «Иллюзия» показывают фильм «Броненосец Потёмкин».

Tomorrow they’re showing Battleship Potemkin in the Illuzion cinema.

Весной прошлого года петербургский футбольный клуб «Зенит» фактически перешёл под контроль компании «Газпром».

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

В шестидесятые годы «Битлз» были очень популярными в Советском Союзе, хотя их пластинки там не продавались.

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

Ресторан «Пекин» находится недалеко от метро «Маяковская».
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian letter</th>
<th>English equivalent</th>
<th>Russian letter</th>
<th>English equivalent</th>
<th>Russian letter</th>
<th>English equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>а</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>ă</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>ɐ</td>
<td>kh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>б</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>л</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>ц</td>
<td>ts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>в</td>
<td>в</td>
<td>м</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>ч</td>
<td>eh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>г</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>н</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>ш</td>
<td>sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>д</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>о</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>ш</td>
<td>sheh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>е</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>п</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>ё</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ё</td>
<td>ĕ</td>
<td>р</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>й</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ж</td>
<td>zh</td>
<td>с</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>й</td>
<td>ia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>з</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>т</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>э</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>и</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>у</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>й</td>
<td>io</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>й</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>ф</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>я</td>
<td>io</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES

(i) Where the letter е is used instead of ĕ, it is usually transliterated as е; therefore, Горбачёв would be transliterated as Gorbachev, but Горбачев would be Гorbachev.

(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 бои and бои are transliterated as boi.

For the use of the letter е in place of ĕ, 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Name</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Дмитрий Анатольевич Медведев</td>
<td>Dmitrii Anatol'evich Medvedev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Борис Николаевич Ельцин</td>
<td>Boris Nikolaevich El'tsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Хрущёв</td>
<td>Khrushchev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Толстой</td>
<td>Tolstoi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Достоевский</td>
<td>Dostoevskii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Чехов</td>
<td>Chekhov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Горький</td>
<td>Gorkii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Маяковский</td>
<td>Maiakovskii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Татьяна</td>
<td>Tat'iana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Анастасия</td>
<td>Anastasiia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Владивосток</td>
<td>Vladivostok</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 ø, and the character’ used to transliterate й 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 \textit{a} is often rendered by \textit{e} or \textit{ə}, and \textit{u} is often rendered by \textit{a}.

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 \textit{Hei?l}.

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:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{h} (except when silent) is rendered by \textit{f} or \textit{x}
\item \textit{j} (and the \textit{g} as in gem) are rendered by \textit{ж} or \textit{г}
\item \textit{th} (as in think) is rendered by \textit{т}
\item \textit{th} (as in this) is rendered by \textit{ч}
\end{itemize}
**NOTES**

(i) The use of *r* 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 ‘I’, when it occurs at the end of a word or before a consonant, is often rendered by "лъ".

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

1.6.5 Examples of English names in Russian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Name</th>
<th>Russian Name</th>
<th>Russian Name</th>
<th>Russian Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winston Churchill</td>
<td>Уинстон Черчилль</td>
<td>Сара Батлер</td>
<td>Сара Батлер</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Dunn</td>
<td>Джон Данн</td>
<td>Тони Блэр</td>
<td>Антони</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Potter</td>
<td>Гарри Поттер</td>
<td>Антони</td>
<td>Антони or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Энтони</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>Фрэнк</td>
<td>Гейтер</td>
<td>Хезер or Хизер</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>Абердин</td>
<td>Блэкпул</td>
<td>Блэкпул</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford</td>
<td>Брадфорд</td>
<td>Эдинбург</td>
<td>Эдинбург</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>Глазго</td>
<td>Дублин</td>
<td>Дублин</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Инь-Йорк</td>
<td>Сиэтл</td>
<td>Сиэтл</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>Вашингтон</td>
<td>Перт</td>
<td>Перт</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(The) Times</td>
<td>«Таймс»</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>горо́х</th>
<th>peas</th>
<th>лук</th>
<th>onion(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>морко́вь</td>
<td>carrot(s)</td>
<td>карто́фель, карто́шка</td>
<td>potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>изюм</td>
<td>raisins</td>
<td>клубни́ка</td>
<td>strawberries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ма́ліна</td>
<td>raspberries</td>
<td>виногра́д</td>
<td>grape(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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
- труса́й, тру́сики | (under)trousers, knickers
- пло́рны | shorts
- пла́вки | swimming trunks
- колготки | tights
- ножни́цы | scissors
- ци́щцы | tongs, pincers, tweezers

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

- дрова́ | firewood
- дро́жжи | yeast
- обо́й, | wallpaper
- поминки | wake (for the dead)
- са́ни | sledge
- сли́вки | cream
- сутки | day, period of 24 hours
- счёты | abacus
- черни́ла | ink
- ци | 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:
There are a very small number of neuter nouns that refer or can refer to persons or animals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Русский</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>мужчина (masc.)</td>
<td>man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лев (masc.)</td>
<td>lion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сестра (fem.)</td>
<td>sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>потолок (masc.)</td>
<td>ceiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>окно (n.)</td>
<td>window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>религия (fem.)</td>
<td>religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>брат (masc.)</td>
<td>brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>женщина (fem.)</td>
<td>woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>львица (fem.)</td>
<td>lioness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дверь (fem.)</td>
<td>door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>атеизм (masc.)</td>
<td>atheism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>христианство (n.)</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>животное</td>
<td>animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лицо</td>
<td>face; person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 мужчина́: good man; -ий is an ending that indicates masculine gender.

хоро́шая жёнища: good woman; -ая is an ending that indicates feminine gender.

хоро́шее слово́: good word; -ее is an ending that indicates neuter gender.

In these examples -ий 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:

стол table
май May (the month)

student
герой hero

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

кни́га book
неде́ля week

сту́дентка (female) student
тётя aunt
Nouns which in the nominative singular end in -а or -я and which refer to male persons are masculine:

дядя uncle мужчина man
юноша 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:

левша left-hander пьяница drunkard

Nouns which in the nominative singular end in -о, -е, -ё or -мя are normally neuter:

окно window море sea
здание building копье spear
время 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* - *ап* and denoting someone who carries out a particular activity are *masculine*:

ниса́тель writer
предсе́датель chairman
вра́ч doctor
голо́вка head of state

Names of months are *masculine*:

янвáрь January
апрéль April
октя́брь October

*Abstract* nouns ending in *-ость* *-нье* are *feminine*:

ра́дость joy
болéзнь illness
стáрость old age
жизнь life

Nouns ending in *-ов*, *-ов*, *-ь*, *-Ш* or *-Ъ* are *feminine*:

кровь blood
ру́я rye
ни́ше church
мёд мед
мёд мед

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

автомóбиль car, motor vehicle
góлубь dove, pigeon
góсть guest
góсель goose
dень day
dождь rain
камéнь stone
картофель potatoes
крéмель Kremlin
лючь swan
портфéль briefcase
ремéнь strap
ро́йль (grand) piano
слóварь dictionary
рабóль rouble
шампóн shampoo
угóль coal

The following nouns are *feminine*:
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 -йор in -ъ 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>брат ‘brother’</td>
<td>бра́та</td>
<td>бра́та</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>геро́й ‘hero’</td>
<td>геро́я</td>
<td>геро́я</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>коро́ль ‘king’</td>
<td>коро́ля</td>
<td>коро́ля</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тигр ‘tiger’</td>
<td>тигр</td>
<td>тигр</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>соловей ‘nightingale’</td>
<td>соловь́й</td>
<td>соловь́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ло́сь ‘elk’</td>
<td>ло́ся</td>
<td>ло́ся</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inanimate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>столь ‘table’</td>
<td>столь</td>
<td>столь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>поцелу́й ‘kiss’</td>
<td>поцелу́й</td>
<td>поцелу́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>день ‘day’</td>
<td>день</td>
<td>день</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>тигр 'tiger'</td>
<td>тигры</td>
<td>тигров</td>
<td>тигров</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>герой 'hero'</td>
<td>герои</td>
<td>героев</td>
<td>героев</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>король 'king'</td>
<td>короли</td>
<td>королей</td>
<td>королей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>муся 'fly'</td>
<td>мухи</td>
<td>мух</td>
<td>мух</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>судья 'judge'</td>
<td>судьи</td>
<td>судей</td>
<td>судей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лошадь 'horse'</td>
<td>лошади</td>
<td>лошадей</td>
<td>лошадей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лицо 'person'</td>
<td>лица</td>
<td>лиц</td>
<td>лиц</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inanimate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>стол 'table'</td>
<td>столы</td>
<td>столы</td>
<td>столы</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>день 'day'</td>
<td>дни</td>
<td>дни</td>
<td>дни</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>книга 'book'</td>
<td>книги</td>
<td>книги</td>
<td>книги</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>неделя 'week'</td>
<td>недели</td>
<td>недели</td>
<td>недели</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>косяк 'bone'</td>
<td>косяки</td>
<td>косяки</td>
<td>косяки</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>поле 'field'</td>
<td>поля</td>
<td>поля</td>
<td>поля</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the inanimate nouns, the nominative and accusative plural forms are the same, and the genitive plural forms are used to indicate possession.
In the following sections the tables illustrating declension types will, where applicable, contain examples of both animate and inanimate nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>имени ‘name’</td>
<td>имени́</td>
<td>имени́</td>
<td>имени́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лицо ‘face’</td>
<td>лица́</td>
<td>лица́</td>
<td>лиц́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 лицо shows, some nouns can be either animate or inanimate, depending on the meaning: when лицо 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, е 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, -йор -ь

The fleeting vowel occurs with a large number of masculine nouns ending in a consonant, -йор -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
-еу, -ок, -ёк or -ей, although it is by no means restricted to these nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>отец ‘father’</td>
<td>отца́</td>
<td>отцы́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>огурец ‘cucumber’</td>
<td>огурца́</td>
<td>огурцы́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рынок ‘market’</td>
<td>рынка́</td>
<td>рынки</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>турок ‘Turk’</td>
<td>турка́</td>
<td>турки</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ветер ‘wind’</td>
<td>ветра́</td>
<td>ветры</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>огонь ‘fire’</td>
<td>огня́</td>
<td>огни</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>козёл ‘billy-goat’</td>
<td>козла́</td>
<td>козлы́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With nouns ending in -ён after a consonant or -ей the fleeting vowel is replaced by a soft sign (ь):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>конёк ‘skate’</td>
<td>конька́</td>
<td>коньки́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>воробей ‘sparrow’</td>
<td>воробы́й</td>
<td>воробы́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With nouns ending in -ён after a vowel the fleeting vowel is replaced by -ий-:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>паёк ‘ration’</td>
<td>паийка́</td>
<td>паийки́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the noun зайца ‘hare’ in all forms except the nominative singular -я is replaced by -ий-:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>зайца</td>
<td>зайна</td>
<td>зайцы</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ложка ‘spoon’</td>
<td>ложки</td>
<td>ложек</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кухня ‘kitchen’</td>
<td>кухни</td>
<td>кухонь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>окно ‘window’</td>
<td>окна</td>
<td>окон</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сердце ‘heart’</td>
<td>сердца́</td>
<td>сердцё́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>тюрьма ‘prison’</td>
<td>тюрьмы</td>
<td>тюрьем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>письмо ‘letter’</td>
<td>письма</td>
<td>писем</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The rules for determining which vowel is used are as follows:

(i) After क, र only -o- is used; for examples, see कुंडक, ओवाबे above.

(ii) The vowel -o- is used before -क, -ट, -घ unless the preceding consonant is ज, ड, ठ, or न.
(See also яйц above.)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>сказка 'fairy tale'</td>
<td>сказки</td>
<td>сказок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ручка 'handle', 'pen'</td>
<td>ручки</td>
<td>ручек</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: The vowel -е- is used before -ев in stressed syllables; see the example сёдце above.

A soft sign ⟨ё⟩ before я-е or ё is usually replaced by -е- or -ё-; the former normally occurs under stress:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>статья 'article'</td>
<td>статьи</td>
<td>статьи</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>свинья &quot;pig&quot;</td>
<td>свиньи</td>
<td>свиней</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сиденье 'seat'</td>
<td>сиденьи</td>
<td>сиденьи</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>копье 'spear'</td>
<td>копьи</td>
<td>копий</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>копейка 'copeck'</td>
<td>копейки</td>
<td>копеек</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: The genitive plural of яйцо 'egg' is яйц the genitive plural of война '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, -ла as well as some others.
that are less predictable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>вещество́́ 'substance'</td>
<td>веществá</td>
<td>веществв́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>место́ 'place'</td>
<td>места́</td>
<td>меств́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>карта́ 'map'</td>
<td>карты</td>
<td>картв́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>звездà 'star'</td>
<td>звёзды</td>
<td>звёздв́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>солнце́ 'sun'</td>
<td>солнца́</td>
<td>солнцв́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nom./acc. sing</th>
<th>ложь</th>
<th>рожь</th>
<th>любовь</th>
<th>церковь</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen./dat/prep. sing.</td>
<td>лжи</td>
<td>ржи</td>
<td>любви</td>
<td>церкви</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr. sing.</td>
<td>ложью</td>
<td>рожью</td>
<td>любовью</td>
<td>церковью</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nom./acc. pl.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>любви</td>
<td>церкви</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nom./acc. sing</th>
<th>Любовь</th>
<th>Gen./dat/prep. sing.</th>
<th>Любови</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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, -Йог -Ь

2.6.1 Masculine nouns ending in a consonant other than -К, -Г, -Х,-П, -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’).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>стол</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>стола́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>столу́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>стол</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inst.</td>
<td>столом</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>столе́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>слон</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>слона́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>слону́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>слона́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inst.</td>
<td>слоном</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>слоне́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>осли</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>осла́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>ослу́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.6.2 Masculine nouns ending in *-К, -Г, -Х, -Щ, -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, -Щ, -Ж, -Ч, -Ш, -Щ ends in -Н:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>враг ‘enemy’</td>
<td>враги́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>волк ‘wolf’</td>
<td>волки́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>слух ‘rumour’</td>
<td>слухи́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>нож ‘knife’</td>
<td>ножи́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>врач ‘doctor’</td>
<td>врачи́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>карандаш ‘pencil’</td>
<td>карандашнц́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>плащ ‘raincoat’</td>
<td>плащи́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N插. sing.</th>
<th>Instr sing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>отец ‘father’</td>
<td>отцо́м</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>нож</td>
<td>ноже́м</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>врач</td>
<td>врачо́м</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>карандаш</td>
<td>карандашо́м</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>плащ</td>
<td>плаще́м</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мёсцо ‘mouth’, ‘moon’</td>
<td>мёсцем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>муж ‘husband’</td>
<td>мужем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>плач ‘weeping’</td>
<td>плаче́м</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>душ ‘shower’</td>
<td>душе́м</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>товарищ ‘comrade’</td>
<td>товарище́м</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the same rule the genitive plural of masculine nouns ending in -Щ ends in -ОБ only when the ending is stressed; otherwise the ending is -ЕВ:
This rule does not apply, however to the *genitive plural of masculine nouns* ending in -ж, -ч, -щ, -щ, this ending is always -ей regardless of the stress:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>конец ‘end’</td>
<td>концев</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>палец ‘finger’</td>
<td>палцев</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 (поселуй ‘kiss’); the second table gives an example of an animate noun with stress not on the ending (герой ‘hero’); the third table gives an example of a noun both with a fleeting vowel and with stress on the ending (ручей ‘stream’).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>попелуй</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>попелуя</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>попелею</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>попелуй</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>попелуем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>попелоем</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>герой</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>героя</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>герою</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>героя</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>героем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>героем</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>ручеи</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>ручей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>ручей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>ручей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>ручеем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>ручеем</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** Nouns ending in -ий have the ending -ин in the *prepositional singular:*
2.6.4 Masculine nouns ending in *-ъ

The endings of masculine nouns ending in -ъ are also affected by the spelling rule given in 1.5.1. In the *instrumental singular* the ending -ъ 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 (рублъ ‘rouble’);

(b) an *animate* noun which also has stress not on the ending (гость ‘guest’);

(c) a noun with a *fleeting vowel* (огонь ‘fire’).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>рубль</td>
<td>рубли́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рубля́</td>
<td>рубли́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рублю́</td>
<td>рубля́м</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рублью</td>
<td>рубля́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рублём</td>
<td>рубля́ми</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рубле́</td>
<td>рубля́х</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** The noun путь ‘way, track, path’ has the irregular form пут’ in the *genitive, dative and prepositional singular.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nom.</strong></td>
<td>гость</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gen.</strong></td>
<td>гости</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dat.</strong></td>
<td>гостю</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acc.</strong></td>
<td>гость</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instr.</strong></td>
<td>гостем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prep.</strong></td>
<td>госте</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nom.</strong></td>
<td>огонь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gen.</strong></td>
<td>огня</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dat.</strong></td>
<td>огню</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acc.</strong></td>
<td>огонь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instr.</strong></td>
<td>огнём</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prep.</strong></td>
<td>огне</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.7 Non-standard endings for masculine nouns ending in a consonant, -йор -ь

2.7.1 The second genitive in -у/-о

Some nouns belonging to the classes described in 2.6 have a second form of the genitive singular ending in -у/-о. 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:

Дайте мне, пожалуйста, чашку чая (чая).

Would you mind giving me a cup of tea.

К сожалению у меня нет сахара (сахара).

Unfortunately, I haven’t got any sugar.

Чай очень крепкий, подлей в чайник кипятку (кипятка).

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

Может, к кофе выпьем по рюмке коньяка (коньяка)?

How about having a glass of brandy with our coffee?

For the use of the preposition пой in constructions indicating ‘(so many), each’, see 19.1.4.

The use of the partitive genitive is obligatory in the common set phrases много народа ‘a lot of people’, and мало народа ‘not many people’, used in the context of whether a location is crowded or not:
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.

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 ра́зу ‘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 ра́зу не ста́лкивался с этой проблемой.

Not once have I encountered this problem.

С тех пор, как он уехал за границу, от него ни слу́ху ни ду́ху.

Since he went abroad we haven’t heard a thing from him.
He told us such a funny joke that we almost died of laughter.

For more on negative constructions using нн, see 15.3.4.

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

2.7.2 The second prepositional in -ý/-ö

Some nouns belonging to the classes described in 2.6 have a second form of the prepositional singular ending in -ý/-ö. 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/об ‘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:
2.7.3 The nominative plural in -а/-я

Some nouns belonging to the classes described in 2.6 have a nominative plural that ends in -а/-я. 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>аэропорт</td>
<td>airport</td>
<td>в аэропорте</td>
<td>в аэропорту</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бал</td>
<td>ball, dance</td>
<td>на балу</td>
<td>на балу</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>берег</td>
<td>shore</td>
<td>на берегу</td>
<td>на берегу</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бой</td>
<td>battle</td>
<td>в бою</td>
<td>в бою</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>глаз</td>
<td>eye</td>
<td>в глазу</td>
<td>в глазу</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>год</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>в году</td>
<td>в году</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лес</td>
<td>wood, forest</td>
<td>в лесу</td>
<td>в лесу</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лёд</td>
<td>ice</td>
<td>на льду</td>
<td>на льду</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мех</td>
<td>fur</td>
<td>в меху</td>
<td>в/на меху</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>нос</td>
<td>nose</td>
<td>в носу</td>
<td>в/на носу</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>плен</td>
<td>captivity</td>
<td>в плену</td>
<td>в плену</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пол</td>
<td>floor</td>
<td>на полу</td>
<td>на полу</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>порт</td>
<td>port</td>
<td>в порту</td>
<td>в порту</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рай</td>
<td>paradise</td>
<td>в рай</td>
<td>в рай</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рот</td>
<td>mouth</td>
<td>в рту</td>
<td>в рту</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>угол</td>
<td>corner</td>
<td>в углу</td>
<td>в/на углу</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>шкаф</td>
<td>cupboard</td>
<td>в шкафу</td>
<td>в шкафу</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other nouns that take this ending include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>адрес ‘address’</td>
<td>адреса́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>век ‘century’</td>
<td>века́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вечер ‘evening’</td>
<td>вечера́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>голос ‘voice’</td>
<td>голоса́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>город ‘town’, ‘city’</td>
<td>города</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>директор ‘boss’, ‘director’</td>
<td>директора́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>доктор ‘doctor’</td>
<td>доктора</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дом ‘house’, ‘block of flats’</td>
<td>дома</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>колокол ‘bell’</td>
<td>колокола́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>край ‘edge’</td>
<td>кра́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>номер ‘number’, ‘hotel room’</td>
<td>номера́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>округ ‘district’</td>
<td>округа́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>острог ‘island’</td>
<td>острога</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>парус ‘sail’</td>
<td>паруса</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>паспорт ‘passport’</td>
<td>паспорта</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>повар ‘cook’</td>
<td>повара</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>поезда ‘train’</td>
<td>поезда</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>профессор ‘professor’</td>
<td>профессора</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сорт ‘sort’, ‘type’</td>
<td>сорта</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>том ‘volume’</td>
<td>тома</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>бухгálтер ‘accountant’</td>
<td>бухгалтеры or бухгалтера́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>договор ‘contract’, ‘treaty’</td>
<td>договоры or договора</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>трактор ‘tractor’</td>
<td>тракторы or трактора</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A number of nouns have endings in -ы (-и) and -á (-я) which are not
interchangeable, but which are selected according to the precise meaning of the word concerned:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nom. sing.</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Nom. pl. in ы</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Nom. pl. in a</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>образ</td>
<td>image; icon</td>
<td>образы</td>
<td>images</td>
<td>образы́</td>
<td>icons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пропуск</td>
<td>omission; pass</td>
<td>пропуски</td>
<td>omissions</td>
<td>пропуска́</td>
<td>passes (documents)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following may also be noted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>цвет ‘colour’</td>
<td>цвета́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>цвето́к ‘flower’</td>
<td>цветы́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>счё́т ‘account’, ‘score’</td>
<td>счета, but also счё́ты (no sing.) ‘abacus’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пропо́в ‘wire’</td>
<td>пропо́ва, but also пропо́вы (no sing.) ‘farewell party’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** It is often difficult to predict which nouns will have a *nominative plural* in ‘-ов/-а’ 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 ру́кав ‘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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ватт ‘watt’</td>
<td>ват́ты</td>
<td>ватт</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>герц ‘hertz’</td>
<td>гер́цы</td>
<td>герц</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>раз ‘time’, ‘occasion’</td>
<td>разы́</td>
<td>раз</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES**

(i) The nouns гра́мм ‘gram’, кило́гра́мм ‘kilogram’ have alternative forms гра́мы, кило́гра́мы and гра́ммов, кило́гра́ммов. The latter sometimes occur in formal contexts, but are rarely used in ordinary speech.

(ii) The nouns байт ‘byte’, кило́байт ‘kilobyte’ have alternative forms бай́т, кило́бай́т and бай́тов, кило́бай́тов. 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>башкир ‘Bashkir’</td>
<td>башкиры</td>
<td>башкир</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>грузин ‘Georgian’</td>
<td>грузины</td>
<td>грузин</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>турок ‘Turk’</td>
<td>турки</td>
<td>турок</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The noun цыган ‘gypsy’, has an irregular nominative plural цыгане:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>цыган</td>
<td>цыгане</td>
<td>цыган</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the use of small letters with nouns indicating nationalities and ethnic groups, 
see 1.5.7.

(3) Some nouns indicating military terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>партизан 'partisan'</td>
<td>партизаны</td>
<td>партизан</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>солдат 'soldier'</td>
<td>солдаты</td>
<td>солдат</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ботинок 'shoe'</td>
<td>ботинки</td>
<td>ботинок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>глаз 'eye'</td>
<td>глаза</td>
<td>глаз</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сапог '(high) boot'</td>
<td>сапоги</td>
<td>сапог</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чулок 'stocking'</td>
<td>чулки</td>
<td>чулок</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 -н. For -т.

(ii) Some nouns denoting the names of fruit have alternative forms in -ов and with a zero ending. Examples include: помидор 'tomato' (помидоров and помидор) and баклажан 'aubergine', 'egg-plant' (баклажанов and баклажан).

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

2.8 Neuter nouns ending in -0, -ě, -ě, -МЯ

2.8.1 Nouns ending in -о:

The first table gives an example of the standard declension pattern (место 'place'); the second table gives an example of a noun with a fleeting vowel (письмо 'letter');
### Singular | Plural
--- | ---
Nom. место | места
Gen. места | мест
Dat. месте | мест
Acc. место | мест
Instr. местое | местах
Prep. месте | местах

### Singular | Plural
--- | ---
Nom. письмо | письма
Gen. письма | писем
Dat. письму | письмам
Acc. письмо | письма
Instr. письмом | письмами
Prep. письмо | письмом
2.8.2 Nouns ending in -e

The following tables give examples of:

(a) the standard declension pattern (клáдбище ‘cemetery’);

(b) a noun ending in -e with a fleeting vowel (сéрдце ‘heart’);

(c) a noun ending in -ье (у́щéлье ‘ravine’, ‘gorge’)

(d) a noun ending in -не (здáние ‘building’).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>клáдбище</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>клáдбище</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>клáдбищу</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>клáдбище</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>клáдбищем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>клáдбище</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** The nouns мóре ‘sea’ and полé ‘field’ have the nominative plural ending -и́ and the genitive plural ending -ей.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>мóре</td>
<td>мóрь</td>
<td>мóрей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>полé</td>
<td>полёй</td>
<td>полей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>сердце</td>
<td>сердца</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>сердца</td>
<td>сердце</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>сердцу</td>
<td>сердцам</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>сердце</td>
<td>сердца</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>сердцем</td>
<td>сердцами</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>сердце</td>
<td>сердцами</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>ушёлье</td>
<td>ушёлья</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>ушёлья</td>
<td>ушёльный</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>ушёлью</td>
<td>ушёльям</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>ушёлье</td>
<td>ушёлья</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>ушёлья</td>
<td>ушёльями</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>ушёлье</td>
<td>ушёльях</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** Nouns ending in -ель have the *fleeting vowel -u-* in the genitive plural.
NOTE The prepositional singular of these nouns ends in -ни, the genitive plural ends in -ній.

2.8.3 Nouns ending in -ë

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>копьё</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>копья</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>копьём</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>копьё</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>копьём</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>копьё</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOUN The noun ружье ‘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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>имя</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>имени</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>имени</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>имя</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>именем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>имени</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ве́кo ‘eyelid’</td>
<td>ве́ки</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>очкo ‘point (in a game)’</td>
<td>очкí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>яблуко ‘apple’</td>
<td>яблуки</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTES

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

Nom. sing. облако 'cloud' Nom. pl. облака

(ii) The noun очки (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:

---|---
колено 'knee' | колени
плечо 'shoulder' | плечи

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

2.8.6 Non-standard endings for nouns ending in -о or -е: genitive plural ending in -О or -Е

Some nouns ending in -К have a genitive plural ending in -Қ examples include:

---|---
очки | очков
облако | облаков

Some nouns ending in -Б have a genitive plural ending in -Б the only example in common use is:

---|---
платье 'dress' | платьев

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

2.9.1 Nouns ending in -а
The following tables give examples of:

(a) an inanimate noun (берёза ‘birch’);

(b) an animate noun (корова ‘cow’);

(c) a noun with a fleeting vowel (сестра ‘sister’).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>берёза</td>
<td>берёзы</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>берёзы</td>
<td>берёз</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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, -ча, -ша, or -ща have the genitive singular and the nominative plural ending in -ни:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>кни́га 'book'</td>
<td>кни́ги</td>
<td>кни́ги</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рукá 'arm', 'hand'</td>
<td>рукí</td>
<td>рукí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>му́ха 'fly'</td>
<td>му́хи</td>
<td>му́хи</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кра́жа 'theft'</td>
<td>кра́жи</td>
<td>кра́жи</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дачá 'dacha'</td>
<td>дачи</td>
<td>дачи</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>юно́ша 'youth', 'young man'</td>
<td>юно́ши</td>
<td>юно́ши</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тё́ща 'mother-in-law' (wife's mother)</td>
<td>тё́щи</td>
<td>тё́щи</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>сі́жа ‘soot’</td>
<td>сі́жей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>я́ччнича ‘fried eggs’</td>
<td>я́ччницей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дача ‘dacha’</td>
<td>дачей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>юноша ‘youth’, ‘young man’</td>
<td>юношей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тёща ‘mother-in-law’ (wife’s mother)</td>
<td>тёщей</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.9.3 Nouns ending in -Я

The following tables give examples of:

(a) an inanimate noun (неделя, ‘week’);

(b) an animate noun (няня, ‘nanny’);

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom. неделя</td>
<td>недели</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. неделя</td>
<td>недель</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat. неделе</td>
<td>неделям</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc. неделю</td>
<td>недели</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inst. неделей</td>
<td>неделями</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep. неделе</td>
<td>неделях</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom. няня</td>
<td>нянни</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. няны</td>
<td>нань</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat. нянё</td>
<td>няням</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc. няню</td>
<td>нань</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inst. няней</td>
<td>нянъими</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep. няне</td>
<td>нянних</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom. земля</td>
<td>земли</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. земли</td>
<td>землей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat. земле</td>
<td>землям</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc. землю</td>
<td>земли</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inst. землей</td>
<td>землями</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep. земле</td>
<td>землях</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>стаи́ 'flock' (of birds)</td>
<td>стайий</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>линия́ 'line'</td>
<td>линий</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(iv) Most nouns ending in -ъя have a *genitive plural* ending in -eй:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>стать́ 'article'</td>
<td>стать́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>судья́ 'judge, referee'</td>
<td>судей́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.9.4 Non-standard endings with nouns ending in -а or -Я

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>левша ‘left-hander’</td>
<td>левшей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>юноша ‘youth’, ‘young man’</td>
<td>юношей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дядя ‘uncle’</td>
<td>дядей</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>доля ‘share’</td>
<td>долей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ноздря ‘nostril’</td>
<td>ноздрей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>простынй ‘sheet’</td>
<td>простыней/простынь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>свеча ‘candle’</td>
<td>свечей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тётка ‘aunt’</td>
<td>тётей/тётя</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>басня ‘fable’</td>
<td>басен</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>песня ‘song’</td>
<td>песен</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exceptions are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>деревня ‘village’, ‘countryside’</td>
<td>деревень</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кухня ‘kitchen’</td>
<td>кухонь</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.10 Feminine nouns ending in -Я

2.10.1 Standard endings

The following tables give an example of:
(a) an inanimate noun (роль ‘role’, ‘part’);

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

For examples with a ‘fleeting vowel’, see 2.5.3.
2.10.2 Application of the spelling rule given in 1.5.2

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ночь ‘night’</td>
<td>ноча́м</td>
<td>ноча́ми</td>
<td>ноча́х</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мышь ‘mouse’</td>
<td>мыша́м</td>
<td>мыша́ми</td>
<td>мышах</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вещь ‘thing’</td>
<td>веща́м</td>
<td>веща́ми</td>
<td>вещах</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.10.3 Non-standard endings: МАТЬ, ДОЧЬ

The nouns МАТЬ ‘mother’ and ДОЧЬ ‘daughter’ insert -еп- before all endings except the nominative and accusative singular:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>мать</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>матери</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>матери</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>матерь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>матерью</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>матери</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 -ьм and -ами:

dверьми/дверями  дочерью/дочерями  лошадьми/лошадьми
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 -ЪЯ

A number of masculine nouns ending in a consonant have a nominative plural ending in -ЪЯ. 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 -еи (with no soft sign!), otherwise it is -еев. The tables give examples of:

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>муж</td>
<td>мужъъ</td>
<td>брат</td>
<td>бра́тья</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>мужа</td>
<td>муже́й</td>
<td>брата</td>
<td>бра́тьев</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>мужу</td>
<td>муже́м</td>
<td>бра́ту</td>
<td>бра́тьям</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>мужа</td>
<td>муже́й</td>
<td>бра́та</td>
<td>бра́тьев</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>муже́м</td>
<td>муже́ями</td>
<td>бра́том</td>
<td>бра́тьям</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>муже́</td>
<td>муже́ях</td>
<td>бра́те</td>
<td>бра́тьях</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>стул</td>
<td>сту́лья</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>сту́ла</td>
<td>сту́льев</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>сту́лу</td>
<td>сту́льям</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>сту́л</td>
<td>сту́лья</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>сту́лом</td>
<td>сту́льями</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>сту́ле</td>
<td>сту́льях</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>клок 'shred', 'patch'</td>
<td>клочь</td>
<td>клочьев</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>друг 'friend'</td>
<td>друзья</td>
<td>друзей</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сын 'son'</td>
<td>сыновь</td>
<td>сыновей</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some nouns have two different plural forms with different meanings:

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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>дерево 'tree'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>дерева</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>дереву</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>дерево</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>деревом</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>дереве</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other examples include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>крыло 'wing'</td>
<td>крылья</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>перо 'feather'</td>
<td>перья</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.11.3 Masculine nouns in -АНИН (-ЯНИН)

Masculine nouns ending in -АНИН -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:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom. а́нгли́чани́н 'Englishman'</td>
<td>а́нгли́чани́е</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. а́нгли́чани́на</td>
<td>а́нгли́чани́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat. а́нгли́чани́нну</td>
<td>а́нгли́чани́́м</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc. а́нгли́чани́нна</td>
<td>а́нгли́чани́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inst. а́нгли́чани́нном</td>
<td>а́нгли́чани́́ми</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep. а́нгли́чани́не</td>
<td>а́нгли́чани́́х</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom. котёнок</td>
<td>котёта</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. котёнка</td>
<td>котёт</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat. котёнку</td>
<td>котетам</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc. котёнка</td>
<td>котёт</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr. котёнком</td>
<td>котетами</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep. котёнке</td>
<td>котётах</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>мідвежонок</td>
<td>мідвежата</td>
<td>мідвежат</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii) The noun щенок ‘puppy’ has alternative forms in the plural:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>щенки/щенята</td>
<td>щенков/щенят</td>
<td>щенками/щенятам</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th></th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th></th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>хозяин</td>
<td></td>
<td>хозяева</td>
<td></td>
<td>господин</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>хозяина</td>
<td></td>
<td>хозяев</td>
<td></td>
<td>господина</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the use of гospодъин and гospodâн in forms of address, see 13.4.3 and 13.5.2.

2.11.6 Other non-standard neuter nouns

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>ухо</td>
<td>уши</td>
<td>око</td>
<td>очи</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>уха</td>
<td>ушëй</td>
<td>ося</td>
<td>очëй</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>уху</td>
<td>унëм</td>
<td>оку</td>
<td>очам</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>ухо</td>
<td>уны</td>
<td>окъ</td>
<td>очи</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>ухом</td>
<td>унëми</td>
<td>оком</td>
<td>очами</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>ухе</td>
<td>унëах</td>
<td>оке</td>
<td>очах</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** The normal word for ‘eye’ is глаз; окон 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 судно‘vessel’, ‘ship’ declines as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>судно</td>
<td>суда</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>судна</td>
<td>судов</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>судну</td>
<td>судам</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>судно</td>
<td>суда</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>судном</td>
<td>судами</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>судне</td>
<td>судах</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The nouns небо‘sky’, ‘heaven’ and чудо‘miracle’ insert -ec- before the endings in the plural:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>нёбо</td>
<td>небеса</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>нёба</td>
<td>небес</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>нёбу</td>
<td>небесам</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>нёбо</td>
<td>небеса</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr</td>
<td>нёбом</td>
<td>небесами</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>нёбе</td>
<td>небесах</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.11.7 Nouns where the singular and plural forms are totally different

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominative (Nom.)</th>
<th>Genitive (Gen.)</th>
<th>Dative (Dat.)</th>
<th>Accusative (Acc.)</th>
<th>Instrumental (Instr.)</th>
<th>Prepositional (Prep.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>че́ловек</td>
<td>лю́ди</td>
<td>лю́дим</td>
<td>лю́дей</td>
<td>лю́де́ком</td>
<td>лю́дях</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

The position with ребёно́к ‘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 де́ти is used. The declension of ребёно́к and ребя́та follows the pattern given in 2.11.4; де́ти declines as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominative (Nom.)</th>
<th>Genitive (Gen.)</th>
<th>Dative (Dat.)</th>
<th>Accusative (Acc.)</th>
<th>Instrumental (Instr.)</th>
<th>Prepositional (Prep.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>де́ти</td>
<td>де́ти</td>
<td>де́тям</td>
<td>де́тей</td>
<td>де́тейми</td>
<td>де́тях</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 лю́дьми́, де́тейми́, the endings for the dative, instrumental and prepositional plural all follow the regular patterns -ам, -ами, -ях or -ям, -ямы, -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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>брю́ки  &quot;trousers&quot;</td>
<td>брю́к</td>
<td>брю́кам</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>шта́ны  &quot;trousers&quot;</td>
<td>штана́в</td>
<td>штана́м</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тру́сы  &quot;(under)pants&quot;, 'knickers'</td>
<td>трусов́</td>
<td>тусам́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>шорты 'shorts'</td>
<td>шорты/шортов</td>
<td>шортам</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пла́вки 'swimming trunks'</td>
<td>плавок</td>
<td>плавкам</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ко́лготки 'tights'</td>
<td>ко́лготок</td>
<td>ко́лготкам</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ножни́цы 'scissors'</td>
<td>ножни́ц</td>
<td>ножни́цам</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>щипце́вы 'tongs', 'pincers', 'tweezers'</td>
<td>щипцёв</td>
<td>щипцам</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дровá 'firewood'</td>
<td>древ</td>
<td>дровам́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.12 Declension of surnames

2.12.1 Russian surnames ending in -ов, -ев, -ён, -ин, -ын

The most widely occurring endings for Russian surnames are -ов, -ев, -ён, -ин, -ын—for example, Петров, Брежнев, Горбачёв, Пушкин, Солженицын. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>дрожжи́ ‘yeast’</td>
<td>дрожжі́й</td>
<td>дрожжі́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>обо́й ‘wallpaper’</td>
<td>обеев</td>
<td>обеев</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>помя́нки ‘wake’</td>
<td>помя́нок</td>
<td>помя́нок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>са́ни ‘sledge’</td>
<td>сане́й</td>
<td>сане́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сля́вки ‘cream’</td>
<td>сля́вок</td>
<td>сля́вок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сутки́ ‘day’, ‘period of 24 hours’</td>
<td>суто́к</td>
<td>суто́к</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>счёты́ ‘abacus’</td>
<td>счёто́в</td>
<td>счёто́в</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чернила́ ‘ink’</td>
<td>черни́л</td>
<td>черни́л</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ши́и ‘type of cabbage soup’</td>
<td>ше́й</td>
<td>ше́й</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.12.1 Russian surnames ending in -ов, -ев, -ён, -ин, -ын

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Петро́в</td>
<td>Петро́ва</td>
<td>Петрòвы</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Петро́ва</td>
<td>Петро́вой</td>
<td>Петрòвых</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Петро́ву</td>
<td>Петро́вой</td>
<td>Петрòвым</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Петро́ва</td>
<td>Петро́вой</td>
<td>Петрòвым</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Петро́вым</td>
<td>Петро́вой</td>
<td>Петрòвым</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Петро́ве</td>
<td>Петро́вой</td>
<td>Петрòвых</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Пу́шкина</td>
<td>Пу́шкина</td>
<td>Пу́шкины</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Пу́шкина</td>
<td>Пу́шкиной</td>
<td>Пу́шкиных</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Пу́шкину</td>
<td>Пу́шкиной</td>
<td>Пу́шкиными</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Пу́шкина</td>
<td>Пу́шкиной</td>
<td>Пу́шкиными</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Пу́шкиными</td>
<td>Пу́шкиными</td>
<td>Пу́шкиными</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Пу́шкине</td>
<td>Пу́шкиной</td>
<td>Пу́шкиными</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Place names ending in -ов, -ев, -ён, -ин, -ын decline like ordinary
masculine nouns ending in a consonant:

У него дача где-то под Пушкином.

He has a dacha somewhere near (the town of) Pushkin.
2.12.2 Other surnames ending in a consonant or -ъ

Other surnames ending in a consonant or in -ъ (including foreign surnames that happen to end in -объ, -ецъ or -инъ) decline in the masculine and in the plural like other masculine nouns ending in a consonant or in -ъ. 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 -нъ, -нъ, -нъ, -лъ or -ъ:

такси ‘taxi’
меню ‘menu’
кенгуру ‘kangaroo’
казан ‘canoe’

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

(ii) All feminine nouns ending in a consonant:

мадам ‘madam(е)’
мисс ‘miss’
миссис ‘Mrs’

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):

Маргарет ‘Margaret’

Surname (of any origin):

Элизабет ‘Elizabeth’
(iii) Borrowed or newly coined words ending in \(-o\) or \(-e\):

- депо ‘depôt’
- кинотеатр ‘cinema’
- пальто (cf. French paletot) ‘overcoat’
- кофе ‘coffee’
- кило ‘kilo(gram)’
- метро ‘metro’, ‘underground railway’
- кафе ‘café’
- купе ‘compartment’ (in a railway carriage)

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

- Кли́нтон ‘Clinton’
- Абрамо́вич ‘Abramovich’
- Тэтчер ‘Thatcher’
- Жук ‘Zhuk’
- Кли́чко ‘Klichko’
- Гю́го ‘(Victor) Hugo’
- Гёте ‘Goethe’
- Ющенко ‘Yushchenko’ (Yuschchenko)
- Пира́нделло ‘Pirandello’
- Витте ‘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:

\[ \text{боа́ 'boa'} \quad \text{бу́ржуа́ 'bourgeois'} \]
\[ \text{Дюма́ 'Dumas'} \]

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

\[ \text{комма́ндос 'commandos'} \quad \text{пра́ймериз 'primaries' (in an election campaign)} \]
\[ \text{«Битлэ́» 'The Beatles'} \]

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

\[ \text{Сель́х} \quad \text{Козлóвских} \]

The declension of adjectives is described in Chapter 6.

\[ \text{NOTE} \quad \text{Place names ending in -ино, -эво/-эво can decline like other neuter nouns ending in -o, but there is a tendency to make these nouns indeclinable.} \]

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 ко́фе '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 ви́ски 'whisk(e)y' or пё́пси 'Pepsi', are normally listed as neuter, but in informal speech can be masculine. The noun е́вро 'euro' (the currency unit), can be either masculine or neuter, although the former is more common.

\[ \text{NOTE} \quad \text{Although it is a form that is frequently encountered, many speakers of} \]
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)
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 (Государственный универсальный магазин)
GUM (a large department store, now more a collection of independent trading outlets, located in the centre of Moscow)

МИД (Министерство иностранных дел)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

В ГУМ 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-эксплуатационная компания)

district housing office

ЗАГС/загс (запись актов гражданского состояния)

Register Office

С начала нового учебного года повышаются стипендии во всех вузах России.

Student grants in all Russian universities are being increased from the start of the coming academic year.
A few months later someone came round from the housing office and said that the repairs would begin the next day.

Церемония регистрации брака в ЗАГСе незатейлива и коротка.

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 (Московский государственный университет) is masculine;
РФ (Российская Федерация) is feminine;
СНГ (Союз независимых государств) is neuter;
США (Соединённые Штаты Америки) 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 Грóзном откры́лся пёрвый госуда́рственный духовный вуз — Чечё́нский исламский институт.

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

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 вернулся из Великобритании.

My brother has just returned from Great Britain.

Русский первый в 110-летие первой России футбольный матч.

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:

Говорят, её отец — известный политик.
They say her father is a well-known politician.

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

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, малыши, 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 учись 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, покалуйста, 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.

Аллô, дôбрый день. Мóжно Алекса́ндр И́гореви́ч к телефóну?

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

Вообще-то, это мобильник жены; мой я забыл дома.

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:

предупредитель дочери (our) daughter's friend
учитель сына (our) son's teacher
помощник президента the president's assistant


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:

Голова правительства the head of the government
Герой России Hero of Russia (an official title)
водитель троллейбуса trolleybus driver
начальник отдела head of a department
чемпион мира world champion
L.A. Verbitskaia is the Rector of St Petersburg University and President of the Russian Society of Russian Language and Literature Teachers.

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

- кусок пирога́ a piece of the pie
- часть класса part of the class
- остатки обе́да the leftovers from the dinner
- конец фильма the end of the film

Они купи́ли себé кварти́ру в очень 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 професо́сора the professor’s lecture
- вопро́сы студе́нтов the students’ questions
- колеба́ния маянника the swing of the pendulum
- фотография доче́ри the daughter’s photograph
  [i.e. one that she has taken]
Page 58

Извержение вулкана застала жители 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 каютe.

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 саламы.

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’):

Спасибо, я пива не пью, а вот чай пьюю с удовольствием, если дадите.

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

Тебе денег на дорогу дать, или не надо?

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:

Президента сейчас нет в Москве; он отдыхает в Сочи.

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

Таких лекарств просто не существует.

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 не пью, а вот чай выпьете с удовольствием, если дайте.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperfective</th>
<th>Perfective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>бо́ться</td>
<td>to fear, be frightened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>держа́ться</td>
<td>to keep to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>доби́ваться/добы́ться</td>
<td>to strive for, to attain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дости́гать/достигнуть, дости́чь</td>
<td>to achieve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>жела́ть/пожела́ть</td>
<td>to wish, to desire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>избега́ть/избежать, избе́гнуть</td>
<td>to avoid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лиша́ться/лиши́ться</td>
<td>to be deprived of, to lose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ка́саться/коснуться</td>
<td>to touch, to concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ослуши́ваться/ослушаться</td>
<td>to obey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>приде́рживаться</td>
<td>to hold to, to keep to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>слуши́ваться/послуши́ться</td>
<td>to obey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I don’t like to be out in the streets late at night, it’s stupid, but I’m afraid of the dark.

Last week oil prices reached an all-time high.

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

As far as your question is concerned, I promise you that it will not remain unanswered.
Keep to the right when coming down the escalator.

In some salutations that are in the genitive case the verb желать ‘I wish’ is understood:

всего доброго, всего хорошего
good-bye, all the best
dобро времеණи суток
good whatever time of day it is (a semi-humorous greeting frequently used in e-mails and on the Internet)
спокойной нощи
good night

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

Честно говоря, мы все боимся нашу новую начальницу.

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 боится Вирджинии Вулф” (genitive) or as “Кто бойтся Вирджинию Вулф” (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 письем от тех, кто нуждается в нашей помощи.**

We await letters from those who need our help.

**Обещали пришлить 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 Ванию, 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 y (+ gen.):

Прошу прощения: я был неправ.

I apologise; I was wrong.

Я попросил у него видеокамеру на день; ты представляешь, он отказал.

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

Он попросил жену перезвонить ему через час.

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

costo

to cost

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

Этот галстук стоит тысячу рублей.

This tie costs 1,000 roubles.

Чемпионство стоило ему сломанного ребра.

Winning the championship cost him a broken rib.

иска́ть

to look for

хотеть/захотеть

to want

tребовать/потребовать
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*:

What do you want—tea or coffee?

Well, then, what do you want from life?

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

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:

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

Pass on my regards to your sister.

Я пишу бабушке нечасто, примерно три раза в год.

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

Президент сообщил собравшимся журналистам о том, что он не намерен баллотироваться на третий срок.

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

Мы послали всем нашим читателям анкету по электронной почте в форме вложения.

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:

Власти разрешили организаторам провести свою акцию только на окраине города.

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

Пассажирам запрещено пронести в салон самолета жидкости и резкие предметы.

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.
You should get a proper rest!

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:

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

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

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

As an honest man I feel ashamed on behalf of a state where such things happen.
The girl felt sorry for her cat, but she understood that the kittens would have to be given away.

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 жалко mean ‘to feel sorry for’, they are used with an object in the *accusative*. When жалко means ‘to begrudge’, it is used with an object either in the *genitive* or in the *accusative*.

For more on мне надо and мне нужно, see 18.1.1.
The following verbs are *impersonal*:

**везти/повезти**: мне везёт

I am lucky

**приходить/прийтися**: мне приходится

I have to (by force of circumstances)

**хотеть/захотеться**: мне хочется

I feel like, I would like

**спаться**: мне не спится

I can’t sleep

*Нашей команде повезло: нам достался слабый соперник.*

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

*Из-за нелётной погоды Аэрофлоту пришлось отменить более пятидесяти рейсов.*

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

*Каждой женщине хочется, чтобы её считали особенной.*

Every woman would like to be considered special.

*NOTE* The verb pair везти/повезти 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 везти/повезти see 22.1.

The following verbs can be used in either *impersonal* or *personal* constructions:
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.
The tourists had got fed up of the ceaseless rain, and many decided to go home ahead of schedule.

Мои фильмы нравятся не всем зрителям.

Not all audiences like my films.

Вчера мне приснился страшный сон.

I had a terrible dream last night.

Первые щи, которые удаётся молодому повару, всегда самые вкусные.

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

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

In the first year all students study basic IT.

These old books belonged to my grandfather.

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

(i) When **вери́ть/пове́рить** means ‘to believe in something or someone’, it is followed by the preposition **в (+ acc.)**.

Он никогда не ве́рил в Бого 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 **дозе́рить/дове́рить** 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 **изме́нить/измен́ить** 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 **принадле́жить** 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 **учи́ть/научи́ть** and **обучи́ть/обучать** ‘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 заполните анкету карандашом: лёгче 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 она предпочитала оплачивать кредитной картой.

She preferred to pay for her more serious purchases with a credit card.

После упаковки молока 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 него 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:

This book was written by my grandfather.

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:

When I was a student, I didn’t have the money to go to the theatre regularly.

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:
I look (like) a total idiot in this hat.

His appointment came as a surprise to everyone.

It remains a mystery how some families make ends meet.

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:

выбирать/выбрать — to choose, to elect
избирать/избрать — to elect (to high office)
назначать/назначить — to appoint
называться/называть — to call, to name
считать/счесть — to consider
чувствовать себя/почувствовать себя — 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 называть and называется 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 ведущим очень популярной программы, которая называлась «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:

Тогда он работал главным инженером на одном из крупных заводов Петербурга.

At that time he was working as the chief engineer of a large factory in St Petersburg.

В данном случае наша область может служить примером для всей России.

In this case our region can serve as an example for the whole of Russia.
The only way he could escape from the besieged city was to dress up as a woman.

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:

It was impossible to turn round in the yard and we had to drive out backwards.

I’ll send you the magazine as a registered package.

The first task of the new government will be to sort out the budget for next year (literally, ‘… will as its first task …’).

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:

заниматься/заниться
to occupy oneself with

интересоваться/заинтересоваться
to be interested in

увлекаться/увлечься
to be keen on, to be carried away by

К сожалению, наши дети всё меньше занимаются спортом.

Unfortunately, our children do less and less sport.

(b) Verbs referring to control, use and ownership:

владеть to own
злоупотреблять/ злоупотребить to abuse, to misuse
пользоваться/воспользоваться to use, to take advantage of
пра́вить
располо́гать
руководи́ть
управля́ть

to rule
to have at one’s disposal
to be in charge of, to manage
to manage, to run

Здесь запрещено пользоваться мобильными телефонами.

It’s forbidden to use mobile phones here.

Мы не располагаем информацией о том, кто владел этой картиной после войны.

We have no information about who owned this picture after the war.

(c) Verbs expressing an attitude, especially one of admiration or scorn:

бре́готь/нобре́готь
восхи́титься/восхити́ться
горди́ться
либоваться
наслаждаться
пренебрегать/пренебре́чь

to be fastidious or squeamish about
to admire (e.g. a person)
to be proud of
to admire (e.g. a view)
to enjoy, to delight in
to scorn, to disregard, to neglect

Мы все восхища́емся его достижения́ми.

We all admire his achievements.

Не сто́ит пренебрегать здоровьем.

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:

качать/покача́ть головой
кивать/кину́ть головой
мая́ть/махнуть рукой
моргать/моро́гнуть глазом
пожи́мать/пожа́ть плечами
топать ногами/топнуть ногой

to shake one’s head
to nod one’s head
to wave one’s hand
to blink, to wink
to shrug one’s shoulders
to stamp one’s feet/foot
He didn’t answer my question, but merely shrugged his shoulders and left the room.

(e) Some miscellaneous verbs:

пахнуть — to smell of
обмениваться/обменяться — to exchange
рисковать/рискнуть — to risk
торговывать — to trade in

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 -ся (-сь 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:

чить to read
писать to write
говорить to say, to speak

A few verbs have an infinitive ending in -ти (with stress always on the ending), for example:

грести to row (i.e. a boat)
вести to (be) lead(ing)
вести to (be) convey(ing)
изобрести to invent

A small number of verbs have an infinitive ending in -чить, for example:

мочь to be able
печь to bake

The ending of the infinitive never changes.

For more on the meaning of вести, вести, идти (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 хотел вас обидеть.

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: давать (imperfective) дать (perfective)
- to read: читать (imperfective) прочитать (perfective)
- to write: писать (imperfective) написать (perfective)

In Russian dictionaries the aspect of each verb is indicated, usually by the abbreviations **ис** (несовершенный = imperfective) and **пс** (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 unprefixed

In the following examples both the *imperfective* and the *perfective* verb are *unprefixed*:

- бросать (ис) бросить (пс) to throw
- дать (ис) дать (пс) to give
- кончать (ис) кончить (пс) to finish
- пусть (ис) пусть (пс) to let
- толкнуть (ис) толкнуть (пс) to push

### 4.2.3 The imperfective is unprefixed and the perfective verb is prefixed

In the following examples the *imperfective* verb has no prefix, but the *perfective* is
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 unprefixed 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- and за-.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Imperfective</th>
<th>Perfective</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>по-</td>
<td>верить (нев)</td>
<td>поверить (св)</td>
<td>to believe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по-</td>
<td>делать (нев)</td>
<td>сдёлать (св)</td>
<td>to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по-</td>
<td>есть (нев)</td>
<td>съесть (св)</td>
<td>to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по-</td>
<td>желать (нев)</td>
<td>пожелать (св)</td>
<td>to wish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по-</td>
<td>красть (нев)</td>
<td>украсть (св)</td>
<td>to steal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по-</td>
<td>ночевать (нев)</td>
<td>переночевать (св)</td>
<td>to spend the night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по-</td>
<td>печь (нев)</td>
<td>испечь (св)</td>
<td>to bake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperfective</th>
<th>Perfective</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>записывать (нсв)</td>
<td>записать (св)</td>
<td>to record, to write down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>подписывать (нсв)</td>
<td>подписать (св)</td>
<td>to sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>приписать (нсв)</td>
<td>приписать (св)</td>
<td>to ascribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>спи́вать (нсв)</td>
<td>спи́ть (св)</td>
<td>to write off, to copy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>доверять (нсв)</td>
<td>доверить (св)</td>
<td>to trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>распечатать (нсв)</td>
<td>распечатать (св)</td>
<td>to tear a strip off someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>допивать (нсв)</td>
<td>допить (св)</td>
<td>to drink something up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>спрашивать (нсв)</td>
<td>спросить (св)</td>
<td>to ask (about something)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>представлять (нсв)</td>
<td>представлять (св)</td>
<td>to present, to introduce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>устраивать (нсв)</td>
<td>устроить (св)</td>
<td>to arrange</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREFIXED VERB</th>
<th>UNPREFIXED VERB</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>выбрасывать (нсв)</td>
<td>выбросить (св)</td>
<td>to throw out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>продавать (нсв)</td>
<td>продать (св)</td>
<td>to sell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>допускать (нсв)</td>
<td>допустить (св)</td>
<td>to allow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>защищать (нсв)</td>
<td>защитить (св)</td>
<td>to defend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>исчезать (нсв)</td>
<td>исчезнуть (св)</td>
<td>to disappear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>продолжать (нсв)</td>
<td>продолжить (св)</td>
<td>to continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>убеждать (нсв)</td>
<td>убедить (св)</td>
<td>to convince</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>успевать (нсв)</td>
<td>успеть (св)</td>
<td>to have time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are no unprefixed forms of the verbs listed in the above examples.
Note on stress: Where a prefix is added to an unprefixed verb, the stress normally remains unchanged. The exception is where a perfective verb has the prefix 
бы-; 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>брать (нец)</td>
<td>взять (св)</td>
<td>to take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говорить (нец)</td>
<td>сказать (св)</td>
<td>to say (but see 4.2.6 below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>класть (нец)</td>
<td>положить (св)</td>
<td>to put (lying)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ловить (нец)</td>
<td>поймать (св)</td>
<td>to catch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 (нец) has perfective partners пойбить ‘to beat’, ‘hit someone or something’ and пробить ‘to strike’ (of a clock).

The verb говорить (нец) has perfective partners поговорить ‘to talk’, ‘to speak’ and сказать ‘to say’.

The verb есть (нец) has perfective partners есть ‘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:
Examples of perfective verbs without imperfective partners are much less common, but the following may be noted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>выйти</td>
<td>to howl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дружить</td>
<td>to be friends with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>знать</td>
<td>to know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>состоять</td>
<td>to consist of in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сочувствовать</td>
<td>to sympathise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>участвовать</td>
<td>to take part in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

| ЖЕНИТЬСЯ | TO GET MARRIED (OF A MAN) | ИСПОЛЬЗОВАТЬ | TO USE |
| КАЗНЯТЬ | TO EXECUTE | ОБЕЩАТЬ(СЯ) | TO PROMISE |
| ОРГАНИЗОВАТЬ | 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 *делать* ‘to do’:

| 1st person sing. | я делаю | I do (or am doing) |
| 2nd person sing. | ты делаешь | you (sing.) do (or are doing) |
| 3rd person sing. | он/она/они делает | he/she/it does (or is doing) |
| 1st person pl. | мы делаем | we do (or are doing) |
| 2nd person pl. | вы делаете | you (pl.) do (or are doing) |
| 3rd person pl. | они делают | they do (or are doing) |

**NOTE**: я делаю corresponds to both ‘I do’ and ‘I am doing’.

There are two separate sets of endings for the present tense, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ю/у</td>
<td>-ю/-у</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ешь/-ешь</td>
<td>-ишь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ет/-ет</td>
<td>-ет</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ем/-ем</td>
<td>-им</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ете/-ете</td>
<td>-ите</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ют/-ют</td>
<td>-ют/-ат</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 -ио, -иот are used after a vowel, the endings -и, -иы after a consonant; the endings with -е- occur when the stress is on any syllable other than the ending.

The second conjugation endings -ы, -ат occur only after those consonants which, according to the spelling rules given in 1.5.2, cannot be followed by я or io.

NOTE There are a few first conjugation verbs where the endings -ио, -иот occur after the consonants л, н or р. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Русский (RUS)</th>
<th>Немецкий (GER)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>чита́ть (исл)</td>
<td>писа́ть (исл)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чита́ю</td>
<td>пишу</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чита́ешь</td>
<td>пишешь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чита́ет</td>
<td>пишет</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чита́ем</td>
<td>пишем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чита́ете</td>
<td>пишете</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чита́ют</td>
<td>пишут</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бра́ть (исл)</td>
<td>дава́ть (исл)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бери́</td>
<td>даю</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бери́шь</td>
<td>даёшь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бери́т</td>
<td>даёт</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бери́м</td>
<td>даём</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бери́те</td>
<td>даёте</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бери́т</td>
<td>даёт</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пить (исл)</td>
<td>целова́ть (исл)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пь́ю</td>
<td>целую</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пь́ёшь</td>
<td>целуешь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пьёт</td>
<td>целует</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пьём</td>
<td>целуем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пьёте</td>
<td>целуете</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пьют</td>
<td>целуют</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second conjugation verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Русский (RUS)</th>
<th>Немецкий (GER)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>говори́ть (исл)</td>
<td>крича́ть (исл)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говори́ю</td>
<td>кричу</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говори́шь</td>
<td>кричишь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говори́т</td>
<td>кричит</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говори́м</td>
<td>кричим</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говори́те</td>
<td>кричите</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говори́т</td>
<td>кричит</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. писать. 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 буду-:

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>буду</td>
<td>I will be</td>
<td>буду</td>
<td>we will be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>будешь</td>
<td>you will be</td>
<td>будете</td>
<td>you will be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>будет</td>
<td>he/she/it will be</td>
<td>будут</td>
<td>they will be</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The future tense of all other imperfective verbs is formed using буду etc. and the infinitive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>imperfective verb</th>
<th>future tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>читать (нсв) ‘to read’</td>
<td>буду читать</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говорить (нсв) ‘to say’, ‘to speak’</td>
<td>буду говорить</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Verb</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>прочита́ть (св)</td>
<td>‘to read’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>написа́ть (св)</td>
<td>‘to write’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>прочитаю</td>
<td>напишу</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>прочита́ешь</td>
<td>напишешь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>прочита́ем</td>
<td>напишем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>прочита́ете</td>
<td>напишете</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>прочита́ют</td>
<td>напишут</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выпи́ть (св)</td>
<td>‘to drink’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>поцелу́вать (св)</td>
<td>‘to kiss’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выпи́ю</td>
<td>поцелую</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выпи́ешь</td>
<td>поцелуешь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выпи́ет</td>
<td>поцелует</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выпи́ем</td>
<td>поцелуем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выпи́ете</td>
<td>поцелуе́те</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выпи́ют</td>
<td>поцелу́ют</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>погово́рить (св)</td>
<td>‘to speak’, ‘to have a conversation’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>закрича́ть (св)</td>
<td>‘to shout’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>погово́рю</td>
<td>закричу</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>погово́ришь</td>
<td>закричишь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>погово́рит</td>
<td>закричит</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>погово́ром</td>
<td>закричим</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>погово́рите</td>
<td>закричите</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>погово́рят</td>
<td>закричат</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 (-я, -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’:

gовори́л, говори́ла, говори́ло, говори́ли

Сказа́ть (св) ‘to say’:

сказа́л, сказа́ла, сказа́ло, сказа́ли

Писа́ть (нсв) ‘to write’:

пише́л, писа́ла, писа́ло, писа́ли

Написа́ть (св) ‘to write’:

написа́л, написа́ла, написа́ло, написа́ли
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 -ин the masculine is omitted.

4.5.3 An irregular past tense form

Only one verb has a completely irregular past tense:
идти́ (мест) 'to (be) go(ing)':

шёл, шла, шло, шли

Prefix forms of идти́ form the past tense in the same way:

войти́ (мест) 'to enter'

вошёл, вошла, вошло, вошли
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) де́лать (нсв) ‘to do’
   де́лаю
   де́лаешь
   де́лает
   де́ляем
   де́лаете
   де́ляют
   читать (нсв) ‘to read’
   читаю
   читаешь
   читает
   читаем
   читаете
   читают

(b) по́зволять (нсв) ‘to permit’
   по́зволяю
   по́зволяешь
   по́зволяет
   по́зволяем
   по́зволяете
   по́зволяют
   умèть (нсв) ‘to know how to’
   умèю
   умèешь
   умèет
   умèем
   умèете
   умèют

4.6.2 Second productive class of first conjugation verbs

This class is made up of first conjugation verbs following the pattern:
NOTES

(i) The spelling of the various forms of танцевать 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
<th>&quot;-уешь&quot; (-уешь)/&quot;-юю&quot;, &quot;-ешь&quot; (-ёшь), etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>целовать (нсб) &quot;to kiss&quot;</td>
<td>танцевать (нсб) &quot;to dance&quot;</td>
<td>плюнуть (нсб) &quot;to spit&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>целую</td>
<td>танцую</td>
<td>плюю</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>целуешь</td>
<td>танцует</td>
<td>плюём</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>целует</td>
<td>танцует</td>
<td>плюёт</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>целуем</td>
<td>танцуете</td>
<td>плюёте</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>целуете</td>
<td>танцуют</td>
<td>плюют</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>целуют</td>
<td>танцуют</td>
<td>плюют</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| interesseвать (нсб) "to interest" | interesseу     | interesseюн     |
| организовать (нсб/су) "to organise" | организую   | организуюн     |
| приватизировать (несн/су) "to privatisе" | приватизирующую | приватизируешь |
| цитировать (нсб) "to quote" | цитирую     | цитируешь     |
4.6.3 Third productive class of first conjugation verbs

This class consists of first conjugation verbs following the pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive -нуть</th>
<th>Non-past -ну, -нешь-/нёшь, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>крикнуть (св) 'to shout'</td>
<td>толкнуть (св) 'to push'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>крикну</td>
<td>толкну</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>крикнешь</td>
<td>толкнешь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>крикнёт</td>
<td>толкнёт</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>крикнём</td>
<td>толкнём</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>крикнёте</td>
<td>толкнёте</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>крикнут</td>
<td>толкнут</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES

(i) These verbs form the past tense from the infinitive in the normal way (cf. 4.7.10):

толкнул, толкнула, толкнуло, толкнули

(ii) With the exception of гнуть (св) '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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive -ить</th>
<th>Non-past -ю/у, -ишь, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>говорить (св) 'to speak', 'to say'</td>
<td>ответить (св) 'to answer'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говорю</td>
<td>отвечаю</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говоришь</td>
<td>отвечишь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говорит</td>
<td>отвечает</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говорим</td>
<td>отвечаем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говорите</td>
<td>отвечайте</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говорят</td>
<td>отвечает</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:
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:

отвё́тить (св) ‘to answer’ ~ отвё́чу
осве́тить (св) ‘to illuminate’ ~ осве́щу

отвеча́ть (нсв)
осве́щать (нсв)

Examples of the other consonant alternations:

проси́ть (нсв) ‘to ask (someone to do something)’
проси́шь, проси́шь
сни́жать (св) ‘to lower’
сни́жу, сни́жишь
ходи́ть (нсв) ‘to go (on foot)’
ходи́, ходи́шь
купи́ть (св) ‘to buy’
kуплю, купи́шь
люби́ть (нсв) ‘to love’
люблю, люби́шь
графи́ть (нсв) ‘to rule (paper)’
графи́ю, графи́шь
лови́ть (нсв) ‘to catch’
ловлю, лови́шь
корми́ть (нсв) ‘to feed’
кормлю, корми́шь
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. 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:

хохотать (нсв) ‘to laugh (loudly)’
махать (нсв) ‘to wave’
искать (нсв) ‘to look for’
колебаться (нсв) ‘to shake’
дрезать (нсв) ‘to doze’

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):
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 ~ нёст:

посла́ть (св) ‘to send’ пошли́, пошли́нень

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
(b) Infinitive in -ать
(c) Infinitive in -ать

Non-past in -му/-мешь, etc.
Non-past in -ну/-нешь, etc.
Non-past in -му/-мешь, etc.
(a) жать (iscv) ‘to squeeze’  
(b) начать (cv) ‘to begin’  
(c) взять (scv) ‘to take’

жму начну взятьму
жмёшь начнёшь возьмёшь
жмёт начнёт возьмёт
жмём начнём возьмём
жмёте начнёте возьмёте
жмут начнут возьмут

NOTES

(i) Alongside the verb жать, жму, жмёшь etc. there is an unrelated (and less common) verb жать (iscv), жну, жнёшь etc. ‘to reap’.

(ii) The verbs with an infinitive in -ять form the future tense (all are perfective) in slightly different ways:

повить (cv) to understand  
снять (cv) to take off  

пойму, поймёшь  
сниму, снимешь

4.7.3 Third unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

These are first conjugation verbs following the pattern:

Infinitive in -ать  
Non-past in -у, -ешь/-ёшь, etc.

ждать (iscv) ‘to wait’  
стонать (iscv) ‘to moan’, ‘to groan’
жду  
стону
ждёшь  
стонешь
ждёт  
стонет
ждём  
стонем
ждёте  
стонете
ждут  
стонут

брать (iscv) ‘to take’  
звать (iscv) ‘to call’
беру  
зову
берёшь  
зовёшь
берёт  
зовёт
берём  
зовём
берёте  
зовёте
берут  
зовут

NOTE The verbs брать, драть (iscv) (перу, 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive in -авать</th>
<th>Non-past in -аю, -аешь, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>давать (нсб)</td>
<td>вставать (нсб)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘to give’</td>
<td>‘to stand up’, ‘to get up’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>даю</td>
<td>встаю</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>даём</td>
<td>встаём</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>даёт</td>
<td>встаёт</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7.5 Fifth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

These are first conjugation verbs following the pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive in -ать</th>
<th>Non-past in -ю, -ешь, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ла́ять (нсв) ‘to bark’</td>
<td>сме́яться (нсв) ‘to laugh’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лаю</td>
<td>сме́юсь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лаёшь</td>
<td>сме́ешься</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ла́ет</td>
<td>сме́ётся</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лаём</td>
<td>сме́ёмся</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лаёте</td>
<td>сме́е́тесь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ла́ют</td>
<td>сме́ются</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** сме́ется 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
(b) Infinitive in -ыть
(c) Infinitive in -ить
(d) Infinitive in -еть

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) бить (нсв)</th>
<th>(b) мыть (нсв)</th>
<th>(c) брить (нсв)</th>
<th>(d) петь (нсв)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘to beat’, ‘to hit’, ‘to strike’</td>
<td>‘to wash’</td>
<td>‘to shave’</td>
<td>‘to sing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бьё</td>
<td>мо́ю</td>
<td>бре́ю</td>
<td>ною</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бьёшь</td>
<td>мо́ешь</td>
<td>бре́ешь</td>
<td>поёшь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бьёт</td>
<td>мо́ет</td>
<td>бре́ет</td>
<td>поёт</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бьём</td>
<td>мо́ем</td>
<td>бре́ем</td>
<td>поём</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бьёте</td>
<td>мо́ете</td>
<td>бре́ете</td>
<td>поёте</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бьют</td>
<td>мо́ют</td>
<td>бре́ют</td>
<td>ноют</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES**
(i) All *unprefixed* verbs in this class have only one syllable in the infinitive.

(ii) **Бриться** and **нестися** 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive in -уть</th>
<th>Non-past in -ую, -уешь, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>дуть (нсв) ‘to blow’</td>
<td>дую</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дуешь</td>
<td>дует</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дуете</td>
<td>дуешь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дуют</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7.8 Eighth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

This class consists of *first* conjugation verbs following the patterns:

(a) Infinitive in -олоть
(b) Infinitive in -ороть

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive in -олоть</th>
<th>Non-past in -олю, -олешь/-олёшь, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>колоть (нсв) ‘to split’, ‘to prick’</td>
<td>колю</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>колешь</td>
<td>колет</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>колем</td>
<td>колете</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>колют</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive in -ороть</th>
<th>Non-past in -орю, -орешь/-орёшь, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>бороться (нсв) ‘to struggle’, ‘to wrestle’</td>
<td>борюсь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>борешь</td>
<td>борется</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>боремся</td>
<td>боретесть</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 -еть

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>тереть (нсв) ‘to rub’</th>
<th>умереть (св) ‘to die’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>тер</td>
<td>умер</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>трёпь</td>
<td>умрён</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>трёт</td>
<td>умрёт</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>трём</td>
<td>умрём</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>трёте</td>
<td>умрёте</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тргут</td>
<td>умрут</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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-.

мёрнуть (нсь) ‘to freeze’  привыкнуть (св) ‘to get used to’
мёрну  привыкну
мёрнешь  привыкнешь
мёрнег  привыкает
мёрнем  привыкаем
мёрнеге  привыкете
мёрнуг  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 дости́чь.

4.7.11 Eleventh unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

This class consists of first conjugation verbs following the patterns:
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 -ить**
    Non-past in -ну, -нёвь, etc.
(b) **Infinitive in -ить**
    Non-past in -ны, -нёвь, etc.

(a) жить (нсв) 'to live'
- живу
- живёшь
- живёт
- живём
- живёте
- живут
(b) пить (нсв) 'to be swim(ming)'
- пьву
- пьвёшь
- пьвёт
- пьвём
- пьвёте
- пьвут

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 -еть/-сти**
    Non-past in -зу, -зёшь/-зёнь, etc.
(b) **Infinitive in -сти**
    Non-past in -бу, -бёнь, etc.
(c) **Infinitive in -сти**
    Non-past in -ду, -дёнь, etc.
(d) **Infinitive in -сть/-сти**
    Non-past in -бу, -бёнь, etc.
(e) **Infinitive in -сти**
    Non-past in -бу, -бёнь, etc.

(a) ползти (нсв)
    'to (be) crawl(ing)'
- ползу
- ползёшь
(b) нести (нсв)
    'to (be) carrying,'
- несу
- несёшь
(c) изобрести (св)
    'to invent'
- изобрету
- изобретёшь
These verbs form the past tense as follows:

(a) ползл, ползл., ползлó, ползл́

(b) неё, несл, неслó, несли́

(c) изобрёл, изобрела́, изобрела́, изобрели́

(d) вел, вела́, вело́, вел́

(e) гребл, гребла́, гребло́, гребли́

Notes

(i) сесть́ (св) ‘to sit down’ has the future tense сиду́, сидёшь, etc. (past tense сел, села, село, сели).

(ii) расти́ (исв) ‘to grow’ (intransitive) has present tense расти́, расти́шь, etc., but past tense рос, росла, росло, росли.

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.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(a) мочь (сгв) ‘to be able’</th>
<th>(b) жечь (сгв) ‘to burn’</th>
<th>(c) печь (сгв) ‘to bake’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>могу</td>
<td>жгу</td>
<td>печь</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>можешь</td>
<td>жжешь</td>
<td>печёть</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>можем</td>
<td>жжёт</td>
<td>печём</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>можете</td>
<td>жжёте</td>
<td>печёте</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>могут</td>
<td>жжут</td>
<td>печёт</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These verbs form the *past tense* as follows:

(a) мог, могла, могло, могли; жег, жгла, жгло, жгли

(b) пёк, пекла, пекло, пекли.
4.7.14 Miscellaneous first conjugation verbs

There are a few *first* conjugation verbs that fall into none of the above classes:

(a) **идти (нсв)**
   ‘to (be) go(ing) (on, foot)’
   **иду**
   **идёшь**
   **идёт**
   **идём**
   **идёте**
   **идут**

(b) **ехать (нсв)**
   ‘to (be) go(ing) (by transport)’
   **ёду**
   **ёдешь**
   **еёт**
   **еём**
   **еёте**
   **еёт**

(c) **опоздать (св)**
   ‘to make a mistake’
   **опоздаю**
   **опоздаешь**
   **опоздаёт**
   **опоздаем**
   **опоздаете**
   **опоздают**

These verbs form their *past tense* as follows:

(a) **шёл, шла, шло, шли**

(b) **ехал, ехала, ехало, ехали**

(c) **опоздала, опоздал, опоздала, опоздали.**

**NOTES**

(i) **идти** 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* **опоздать** is identical to **поздравить**.

4.7.15 First unproductive class of second conjugation verbs

This class consists of *second conjugation* verbs with an *infinitive* in -**ёться**:

- **видеть (нсв)** ‘to see’
- **висеть (нсв)** ‘to hang’ (intransitive)
- **смотреть (нсв)** ‘to look at’
- **выйду**
- **видишь**
- **видит**
- **видим**
- **видите**
- **видят**
- **вису**
- **висишь**
- **висит**
- **висим**
- **висите**
- **висят**
- **смотру**
- **смотришь**
- **смотри**
- **смотрим**
- **смотрите**
- **смотрят**
4.7.16 Second unproductive class of second conjugation verbs

These are second conjugation verbs with an *infinitive* in -ать/-я́ть:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>спать (нсв)</th>
<th>держать (нсв)</th>
<th>стоять (нсв)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘to sleep’</td>
<td>‘to hold’</td>
<td>‘to stand’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сплю</td>
<td>держу</td>
<td>стой</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>спишь</td>
<td>держишь</td>
<td>стойшь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>спит</td>
<td>держит</td>
<td>стойт</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>спим</td>
<td>держим</td>
<td>стоя́м</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>спи́те</td>
<td>держите</td>
<td>стоя́те</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>спият</td>
<td>держат</td>
<td>стоят</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 -ать 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>хотеть (несв) ‘to want’</th>
<th>бежать (несв) ‘to (be) run(ning)’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>хочу</td>
<td>бегу</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>хочушь</td>
<td>бежишь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>хочешь</td>
<td>бежит</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>хотим</td>
<td>бежим</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>хотите</td>
<td>бежите</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>хотят</td>
<td>бегут</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two verbs have endings in the non-past that belong to neither conjugation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>дать (есь) ‘to give’</th>
<th>есть (есь) ‘to eat’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>дам</td>
<td>ем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дашь</td>
<td>ешь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дасть</td>
<td>ест</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дадим</td>
<td>едим</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дадите</td>
<td>едите</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дадут</td>
<td>едят</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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, ела́ло, ела́л.
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 (-ей/-ий/-и́й).

If the stem that remains ends in a vowel, add -ий:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
<th>Perfective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>делать (нсв) ‘to do’</td>
<td>делаешь</td>
<td>деи́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>танцевать (нсв) ‘to dance’</td>
<td>танцуешь</td>
<td>тану́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>стрелять (нсв) ‘to shoot’</td>
<td>стре́яешь</td>
<td>стре́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>стоять (нсв) ‘to stand’</td>
<td>стоишь</td>
<td>сто́й</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 -и́:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
<th>Perfective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>брать (нсв) ‘to take’</td>
<td>береш</td>
<td>бери</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>взять (св) ‘to take’</td>
<td>возьмём</td>
<td>возьми</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>писать (нсв) ‘to write’</td>
<td>пищешь</td>
<td>пишь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сказать (св) ‘to say’</td>
<td>скажешь</td>
<td>скажи</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>нести (нсв) ‘to be carrying’</td>
<td>неси́шь</td>
<td>неси</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говорить (нсв) ‘to say’, ‘to speak’</td>
<td>говори́шь</td>
<td>говори́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>смотреть (нсв) ‘to look’</td>
<td>смотри́шь</td>
<td>смотри</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the stem that remains ends in a consonant and the stress of the verb is never on the ending, add -и́:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
<th>Perfective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>плакать (нсв) ‘to cry’</td>
<td>плака́ешь</td>
<td>плака́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лезть (нсв) ‘to climb’</td>
<td>ле́зешь</td>
<td>лезь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сесть (св) ‘to sit down’</td>
<td>седи́шь</td>
<td>сидь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>оставиться (св) ‘to leave’</td>
<td>остави́шь</td>
<td>оставь</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 unprefixed verb ends in -н, then -нис added:

крить (св) ‘to shout’
вынести (св) ‘to carry out’
(св. нести above)

крькнешь
вынесешь
крькнис
вынесис

The following verbs do not form their imperative according to any of the above patterns:

(a) Verbs of class 4.7.4:

dавать (св) ‘to give’
вставать (св) ‘to stand up’
daешь
dавай
встаешь
вставай
(b) Verbs of sub-class 4.7.6 (a):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Verb</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>лить (нев)</td>
<td>‘to pour’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пить (нев)</td>
<td>‘to drink’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>жечь (нев)</td>
<td>‘to save’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>печь (нев)</td>
<td>‘to bake’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final consonant is the same as in the first person singular of the non-past.

(d) Other miscellaneous verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Verb</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>быть (нев)</td>
<td>‘to be’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лечь (св)</td>
<td>‘to lie down’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сыпать (нев)</td>
<td>‘to pour’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(solids)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.9.2 Second person plural

This is formed by adding -тё to the second person singular. There are no exceptions to this rule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Verb</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>делать (нев)</td>
<td>‘to do’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>танцевать (нев)</td>
<td>‘to dance’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>взять (св)</td>
<td>‘to take’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>писать (нев)</td>
<td>‘to write’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говорить (нев)</td>
<td>‘to say, to speak’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>плакать (нев)</td>
<td>‘to cry’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>оставить (св)</td>
<td>‘to leave’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>давать (нев)</td>
<td>‘to give’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пить (нев)</td>
<td>‘to drink’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>быть (нев)</td>
<td>‘to be’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.9.3 The third person imperative

The third person imperative is formed by using the particle пустъ (less often пускай), with the third person singular or plural of the future perfective or present imperfective:
We’re ready to begin the interview; let him come in.

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:

говорить (нсв) ‘to say’, ‘to speak’:

говорил бы, говорила бы, говорило бы, говорили бы

сказать (св) ‘to say’:

сказал бы, сказала бы, сказали бы, сказали бы

писать (нсв) ‘to write’:

писал бы, писала бы, писали бы, писали бы

написать (св) ‘to write’:

написал бы, написала бы, написали бы, написали бы

давать (нсв) ‘to give’:

давал бы, давала бы, давало бы, давали бы

дать (св) ‘to give’:

dал бы, дала бы, дало бы, дали 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*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb (НСВ)</th>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Imperfective</th>
<th>Perfective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>читать (НСВ)</td>
<td>to read</td>
<td>читают</td>
<td>читая</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>позволить (НСВ)</td>
<td>to allow</td>
<td>позволят</td>
<td>позволила</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>целовать (НСВ)</td>
<td>to kiss</td>
<td>целуют</td>
<td>целуя</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>идти (НСВ)</td>
<td>to (be) go(ing)</td>
<td>идут</td>
<td>идёт</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говорить (НСВ)</td>
<td>to say, to speak</td>
<td>говорят</td>
<td>говорят</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кричать (НСВ)</td>
<td>to shout</td>
<td>кричат</td>
<td>крича</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NOTE* The spelling of крича is determined by the spelling rule that prevents the letter я occurring after ж, з, э, э(see 1.5.2).
The following verbs have an irregular imperfective gerund:

дата (несов) ‘to give’

дать
dat

doing

The same rule applies to all other verbs in class 4.7.4.

быть (несов) ‘to be’

будучи

ёхать (несов) ‘to (be) going’

(б)идут
(b)id

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:

хотя ‘although’ is a conjunction (see 21.6.3);

смотря ‘depending (on)’ is an adverb used with a question word or the preposition no (+ 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

написав

взя́ть (св) ‘to take’

взял

взяв

поджарить́ (св) ‘to fry’

поджарил

поджарив

Note that reflexive verbs (4.13.2) form the perfective gerund by inserting -ни- between the normal gerund and the reflexive particle -св:

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>masculine form</th>
<th>perfective form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>вырасти ‘to grow up’</td>
<td>вырос</td>
<td>выросши</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>испечь ‘to bake’</td>
<td>испек</td>
<td>испекши</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbs belonging to classes 4.7.9 and 4.7.10 have alternative forms of the perfective gerund:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>masculine form</th>
<th>perfective form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>умереть (св) ‘to die’</td>
<td>умер</td>
<td>умерев/умерши</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>замёрзнуть (св) ‘to freeze’ (intransitive)</td>
<td>замёрз</td>
<td>замёрзнув/замёрзни</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** The only perfective gerund formed from *исчезнуть (св)* ‘to disappear’ is *исчёзнув.*

*Prefixed perfective* verbs based on **везти**, вести, **идти** and **нести** form their perfective gerunds according to the rules for forming imperfective gerunds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>masculine form</th>
<th>perfective form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>везти (св) ‘to import’</td>
<td>везут</td>
<td>вези</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>провести (св) ‘to conduct, to spend (time)’</td>
<td>проведут</td>
<td>провела</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>уйти (св) ‘to go away’</td>
<td>уйдут</td>
<td>уйди</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вынести (св) ‘to carry out’</td>
<td>вынесут</td>
<td>вынеси</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:

- читать (чт) ‘to read’
- писать (пиш) ‘to write’
- танцевать (танц) ‘to dance’
- пить (пьют) ‘to drink’
- уходить (уходит) ‘to go away’
- кричать (кричат) ‘to shout’

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 -ший and the appropriate *adjective* endings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Masculine Singular of Past Tense</th>
<th>Masculine Adjective Endings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>чита́ть (нсв) ‘to read’</td>
<td>чита́л</td>
<td>чита́вший, -шая, -шее</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>напи́сать (св) ‘to write’</td>
<td>напи́са́л</td>
<td>напи́савший, -шая, -шее</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>цело́вать (нсв) ‘to kiss’</td>
<td>цело́вал</td>
<td>цело́вавший, -шая, -шее</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>взя́ть (св) ‘to take’</td>
<td>взя́л</td>
<td>взя́вший, -няя, -нее</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сесть (св) ‘to sit down’</td>
<td>сел</td>
<td>севший, -ная, -нее</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the *masculine singular* of the *past tense* ends in a *consonant other than ~л then ~ший* and the appropriate *adjective* endings are added to this form:
The following past active participles are formed irregularly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb (СВ)</th>
<th>Past active (СВ)</th>
<th>Present active (СВ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>вести (СВ) 'to lead(ing)'</td>
<td>вел</td>
<td>бывший, -шее</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>идти (СВ) 'to go(ing)'</td>
<td>шел</td>
<td>бывший, -шее</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>обрести (СВ) 'to find', 'to receive'</td>
<td>обрел</td>
<td>обретший, -шее</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE When present or past active participles are formed from reflexive verbs, the reflexive suffix takes the form -ешь regardless of whether the preceding letter is a vowel or a consonant (see 4.13.2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb (СВ)</th>
<th>Present active (СВ)</th>
<th>Present active (СВ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>бояться (СВ) 'to be afraid of'</td>
<td>боящийся</td>
<td>боящийся</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past active:</td>
<td>боящийся</td>
<td>бояться</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb (СВ)</th>
<th>Present passive participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>выбрасывать (СВ) 'to throw out'</td>
<td>выбрасываемый, -мое</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>повторить (СВ) 'to repeat'</td>
<td>повторяемый, -мое</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>цитировать (СВ) 'to quote'</td>
<td>цитируемый, -мое</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>проводить (СВ) 'to conduct, to spend (time)'</td>
<td>проводимый, -мое</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbs of class 4.7.4 keep the -ва-infinitive from the infinitive in the present passive participle: past

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb (СВ)</th>
<th>Present passive participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>признавать (СВ) 'to recognise, to admit'</td>
<td>признаваемый, -мое</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 -нн(-).

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:

прачитыть (св) ‘to read’  прачитанный, -ная, -ное
написать (св) ‘to write’  написанный, -ная, -ное
нарисовать (св) ‘to draw’  нарисованный, -ная, -ное
порвать (св) ‘to tear’  порванный, -ная, -ное

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:

принести (св) ‘to bring’  принесём  принесённый, -ная, -ное
вести (св) ‘to lead in’  введём  введённый, -ная, -ное
изобрести (св) ‘to invent’  изобретём  изобретённый, -ная, -ное
испечь (св) ‘to bake’  испечём  испечённый, -ная, -ное
сберечь (св) ‘to save’  сбережём  сбережённый, -ная, -ное

Prefixed forms of идти follow this pattern:

найти (св) ‘to find’  найдём  найдённый, -ная, -ное

Second conjugation verbs with an infinitive in -ять, -еть have the suffix -ены/-ённ- and the same consonant alternation as in the first person singular of the future tense:

Without consonant alternation:

поджарить (св) ‘to fry’  поджарю  поджаренный, -ная, -ное
решить (св) ‘to decide’  решу  решённый, -ная, -ное

With consonant alternation:
NOTES

(i) Some second conjugation verbs with an infinitive in *дить, *деть change the consonant to *жь* in the past passive participle:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Ukrainian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>повесить (св) 'to hang'</td>
<td>повесить</td>
<td>пове́шённый, -ная, -ное</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>снизить (св) 'to lower'</td>
<td>снизить</td>
<td>сниженный, -ная, -ное</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>оплатить (св) 'to pay for'</td>
<td>оплатить</td>
<td>оплаченный, -ная, -ное</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>осветить (св) 'to illuminate'</td>
<td>осветить</td>
<td>освещённый, -ная, -ное</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>обидеть (св) 'to offend'</td>
<td>обидеть</td>
<td>обиженный, -ная, -ное</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ограбить (св) 'to rob'</td>
<td>ограбить</td>
<td>ограбленный, -ная, -ное</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>купить (св) 'to buy'</td>
<td>купить</td>
<td>купленный, -ная, -ное</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>проявить (св) 'to show'</td>
<td>проявить</td>
<td>проявленный, -ная, -ное</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>накормить (св) 'to feed'</td>
<td>накормить</td>
<td>накормленный, -ная, -ное</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the case of paired imperfective and perfective verbs, these verbs can be identified from the imperfective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>утвердить (св)</td>
<td>to state, to affirm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>убедить (св)</td>
<td>to convince</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first person singular of the future tense of убедить (and also of победить 'to defeat') is never used.
(ii) The past passive participle of увидеть (св) ‘to see’ does not have the expected consonant alternation:

| видеть | увижу | увиденный, -няя, -ное |

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-:

обмануть (св) ‘to deceive’  
выбрать (св) ‘to take’  
спеть (св) ‘to sing’  
раздувать (св) ‘to blow, to inflate’  
приколоть (св) ‘to pin up’  
запереть (св) ‘to lock’  
свергнуть (св) ‘to overthrow’  
прожить (св) ‘to live’

(a certain length of time somewhere)

забыть (св) ‘to forget’

Examples of short forms:

прочитать (св) ‘to read’  
писать (св) ‘to write’  
принести (св) ‘to bring’  
испечь (св) ‘to bake’  
повесить (св) ‘to hang’  
осветить (св) ‘to illuminate’

обидеть (св) ‘to offend’  
взять (св) ‘to take’  
забыть (св) ‘to forget’

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 книгу are both direct objects in the accusative:

Прочитай книгу.
Что он делает?

What is he doing?

Он читает книгу.

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:

Она живёт в Москве.

She lives in Moscow.
I’ve already been for the bread. Он садел за столом.

He was sitting at the table. Мой 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.
She walks the dog every day.
Why not hang this picture on the wall?
The picture is already hanging on the wall.

In Russian, only a very small number of verbs denoting simple actions, such as читать ‘to read’, писать ‘to write’ and есть ‘to eat’, can be used either transitively or intransitively:

Что он делает? Он читает книгу.
What is he doing? He is reading a book.

Что он делает? Он читает.
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: прочитать, написать and есть are normally used if the respective verbs are transitive, while почитать, написать and поесть are used if the respective verbs are
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:

**Intransitive**

Она́ каждый день хо́дит в шко́лу пешком.
She walks to school every day.

Почему́ не пове́сить́ эту карти́ну на сте́ну?
Why not hang this picture on the wall?

Карти́на уже́ виси́т на стене́.
The picture is already hanging on the wall.

**Transitive**

Она́ каждый день выгу́ливает соба́ку.
She walks the dog every day.

Why not hang this picture on the wall?

**Intransitive**

Карти́на уже́ виси́т на стене́.
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)/*повесеть* (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*
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 вернула эту книгу в библиотеку.

I’ve already returned this book to the library.

Я вернулся домой позавчера.

I returned home the day before yesterday.
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Не открывайте эту дверь!
Don’t open that door!

Двери открываются автоматически.
The doors open automatically.

Завтра начинаю работу над книгой.
Tomorrow I’m beginning work on the book.

Концерт начинается в восемь часов.
The concert begins at eight o’clock.

Осторожно! Наша собака иногда кусает незнакомых.
Careful! Our dog sometimes bites strangers.

Осторожно! Наша собака кусается.
Careful! Our dog bites.

Не высовывайте голову в окно.
Don’t stick your head out of the window.

Не высовываться!
(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:
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:

**Active**

Мой дедушка написал эту книгу.
My grandfather wrote this book.

**Passive**

Эта книга была написана моим дедушкой.
This book was written by my grandfather.

Мой дедушка написал эту книгу в 1931 г.
My grandfather wrote this book in 1931.
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:

**Active**

Мы считаем его крупным специалистом в этой области.

We consider him (to be) a great specialist in this area.

Он считается крупным специалистом в этой области.

He is considered (to be) a great specialist in this area.

Ни́до сохра́нять тамо́женную декларацию на весь период временного въезда/выезда и предъявлять её таможенным органам при возвращении.

You should retain your customs declaration for the whole duration of your visit and present it to the customs authorities on your return.

**Passive**

Таможенная декларация сохраняется на весь период временного въезда/выезда и предъявляется таможенным органам при возвращении.

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 построен новый дом.
A new building was put up here.

Здесь построен новый дом.
A new building has been put up here.

Здесь будет построен новый дом.
A new building will be put up here.

Эта книга была написана на русском языке.
This book was written in Russian.

Эта книга написана на русском языке.
This book is written in Russian.
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 читал) depending on the context, might be the equivalent of any of those forms; a perfective verb (я прочитал) 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 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:

- начинать (инч) / начать (св) to begin
- продолжать (инч) to continue
- кончать (инч) / кончить (св) to finish
- переставать (инч) / перестать (св) to cease
- прекращать (инч) / прекратить (св) to cease
- бросать (инч) / бросить (св) to give up

Он *нача́л рассказы́вать (инч)* о том, где он был и что он делал.

He began to talk about where he had been and what he had been doing.

Она прервала́ свой расска́з, но сле́дователь ниче́го не говори́л и *продолже́л смотреть (инч)* на неё с ирони́ческой улы́бкой на лице.

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 ко́нчи́л счита́ть (инч) деньги и вы́писал квита́нцию.

He finished counting the money and wrote out a receipt.

После пе́рвого курса он *переста́л ходи́ть (инч)* на лекции, но стал проводи́ть бо́льше времени в библиоте́ке.

After first year he stopped going to lectures and spent more time in the library.

Специа́листы пришли́ к вь́воду, что с 1997 го́да озо́новый слой, за исключени́ем проме́стности над польсами, прекра́тил уменьшать́ся (инч).

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 бро́сил ку́рить (инч).

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 надо  
edon’t, you shouldn’t
не нужно  
edon’t, you shouldn’t
не стоит  
it’s not worth
бесполезно  
it’s pointless
незачем  
there’s no point in
нет смысла, не имеет смысла  
it makes no sense to

Не надо звонить (нсв) так рано: я ещё не проснулся как следует.

Don’t phone so early, I haven’t woken up properly yet.

Не нужно говорить (нсв) такие вещи вслух.

You shouldn’t say such things aloud.

Не стоит писать (нсв) жалобу: всё равно ничего не изменится.

It’s not worth writing a complaint, nothing’s going to change anyway.

С ним бесполезно спорить (нсв): он всё знает и никого не слушает.

It’s pointless arguing with him, he knows everything and doesn’t listen to anyone.
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>НГ</th>
<th>НСВ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>запретить (нсв)</td>
<td>запрещьте (нсв)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>учиться (нсв)</td>
<td>научиться (нсв)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>уметь (нсв)</td>
<td>to know how to do something</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>НСВ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>выйти (нсв)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>зайти (нсв)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>уда́ться (нсв)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>успе́ть (нсв)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>суме́ть (нсв)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Давай выйдем (нсв) покурить (нсв).
Let’s go out for a smoke.

Если можно, я заеду (св) завтра поговорить (св) о наших планах.

If it’s all right, I’ll call in tomorrow to talk about our plans.

Ему удалось (св) найти (св) квартиру в самом центре города.

He managed to find a flat in the very centre of town.

Сегодня я не смогу (св) сделать (св) этот перевод.

I won’t have time to do the translation today.

Письмо написано мелким, неразборчивым почерком, но мы всё же сумели (св) его прочитать (св).

The letter was written in small, illegible handwriting, but none the less we managed to read it.

**NOTE** The verb удаваться (нсв)/удаётся (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 разбирала (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, потому 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 делали (исв) вчера вечером?
— Ничего интересного: я читал (исв) книгу, решал (исв) кроссворд в вечерней газете и смотрел (исв) телевизор.

— 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:
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:

*Чита́йте (нсв), чи́тайте (нсв); не обращайте внима́ния на шум в коридо́ре.*

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 прове́ли (св) субботу-воскресенье?*
*Как вы проводи́ли (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 (провели́) you are being invited to sum up your weekend, and an appropriate answer might be:

О́чень хоро́шо́, спаси́бо.

Very well, thank you.

If the question is asked using the imperfective verb (проводи́ли), 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 во́скресе́нье съе́здил 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 суббота-воскресенье ‘Saturday and Sunday’ or выходные ‘days off’.

Хорошо, что меня встре́чили (не) на вокза́ле, а то не знаю, как бы я добри́лся до гостиницы.

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, наконе́ц, он не встре́тил (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 е́ё уби́л. Могу́ только догады́ваться (нес).
At the moment I don’t know who killed her. I can only make guesses.

The imperfective логадыться implies that the speaker is in a position to go through the process of making guesses; the perfective логадаться would imply that the speaker is already in a position to guess the right answer, something that is contradicted by the previous sentence.

Я пойду узнать (исч), когда отправляется поезд.

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 только что узнал (св), что наш поезд отменён; следующий будет только через два часа.

I’ve just found out that our train has been cancelled; the next one won’t be for another two hours.

Мне не стоило большие труда опровергнуть всю напраслину, возведенную на меня, но опровергать (исч) её всё-таки 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 imperfective опровергать 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:

Итак, третий раунд окончен; можно останавливать (инв) секундомер.

So, the third round is over; you can stop the stop-watch.

Уже поздно; нам, наверно, надо идти (инв), а то не успеем на последний автобус.

It’s already late; we ought to be going, or else we’ll miss the last bus.

Кажется, пора заканчивать (инв) дискуссию: люди уже стали смотреть на часы.

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.

Она всерьез следила за своим здоровьем и регулярно посещала (инв) тренажёрный зал, бассейн и теннисный корт.

She took a serious interest in her health and paid regular visits to the gym, the swimming baths and the tennis court.

Лондонский футбольный клуб «Челси» с нового сезона будет проводить (инв) выездные матчи в ярких футболках кислотно-лимонного цвета.

From next season Chelsea, the London football team, will play their away matches in a bright acid-lemon strip.

В жаркую погоду следует пить (инв) минеральную воду или другие прохладительные напитки.
In hot weather you should drink more mineral water or other cooling drinks.

*Читайте (сев) нашу газету каждый 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 будем преследовать (сев) террористов всюду.*

We will pursue terrorists everywhere.

*Пользуйся эскалатором, стойте (сев) справа, держитесь (сев) за поручень.*

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 только что был у врача; он мне посоветовал (сев) мне выпивать (сев) по литру минеральной воды в день.*

I’ve just been to the doctor; he’s advised me to drink a litre of mineral water a day.
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:

We sat down at the table, drank three cups of tea and ate a portion of icecream each.

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:

He lived a fine life and wrote fine books.

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:

Ни́кто отси́да не уйдёт, пока́ я не полу́чу́ (св) отве́ты на все мо́и вопро́сы.

No one will leave here until I receive answers to all my questions.

Ќто е́го оби́дит, тот дня́ не прожи́вёт (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 сто́ило больши́го труда́ опровергнуть́ (св) всю напра́вленную, возведённую на мени́, но опровергать́ её всё-та́ки 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>легко́</td>
<td>it is easy to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>трудно́</td>
<td>it is difficult to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>стоит</td>
<td>one only has to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>стараться (нев)/постараться (св)</td>
<td>to try to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пытаться (нев)/попытаться</td>
<td>to try to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чтобы</td>
<td>in order to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Думаю, что с такой информацией нам легко будет докопаться (св) до истины.

I think that with this information it will be easy for us to dig down to the truth.

*Трудно сказать (св), когда вы сможете получить ваш заказ.*

It’s difficult to say when we will be able to get your order to you.

*Но стоило ему почувствовать (св), что его хотят обмануть, как он начал злиться.*

But he only had to feel that someone was trying to deceive him for him to start to get angry.

*Я постараюсь прийти (св) домой не позже десяти.*

I’ll try to come home no later than ten o’clock.

*В самолёте он безуспешно пытался заснуть (св).*

In the aeroplane he tried in vain to fall asleep.

*Он взялся за это дело только ради того, чтобы заработать (св) денег для семьи.*

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 *поро́ди* used with an *imperfective* infinitive; the meaning was ‘It’s time’ (to be doing something). When *поро́ди* 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 *поро́ди* уйти́ (се) со сце́ны росси́йской полі́тики и уступи́ть (се) мес́то молодым.

It’s high time we had left the stage of Russian politics and given way to the young.

*Хвати́ть* 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 прочёсъ́ (се) первую́ страницу́ его́ биогра́фии, чтобы́ пони́ть, почему́ его́ не любят в Кремлё.*

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 *хвати́ть* mean ‘that’s enough of that’, i.e. they form an instruction to stop doing something:

Всё, *хвати́ть* вали́ть (исе) дура́ка. Если́ не хо́чешь вести́ серьёзный разго́вор, 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.
Page 114

Достаточно говорить (небо) 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:

находиться (небо)/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* (небо) 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...’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Verb</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| доби́ться (нсв) | *to strive for*,
| | ‘to try to attain’ |
| лечи́ть (нсв)  | *to treat (a patient)* |
| лови́ть (нсв)  | *to try to catch* |
| решать́ (нсв)  | *to try to decide, to try to solve* |
| убеждать́ (нсв) | *to try to convince* |
| уговариватъ́ (нсв) | *to try to persuade* |
| доби́ться (св) | *to attain* |
| вы́лечить (св) | *to cure* |
| пойму́ть (св) | *to catch* |
| решать́ (св)  | *to decide, to solve* |
| убе́дить (св)  | *to convince* |
| угово́рить (св) | *to persuade* |
A person should strive to achieve perfection in whatever activity they are pursuing.

In recent years our scientists have achieved amazing results in this field.

Last year I was treated for back pain. I think I’m cured but, of course, you can never be totally sure.

The best place to try to catch a taxi is on the corner. There is always a lot of traffic there.

On the basis of reliable information received from different sources the police were able to set a trap and catch the criminals.

Yesterday evening I read a book, had a go at a crossword in the evening paper and watched television.

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.
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.

I know all your arguments by heart, and you’ll never convince me that you’re right.

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) рыбу 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Verb (imperfective)</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>случиться (св)/случиться (св)</td>
<td>to happen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>приходить (св)/прийти (св)</td>
<td>to come, to arrive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Verb (imperfective)</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>происходить (св)/произойти (св)</td>
<td>to happen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>идти (св)</td>
<td>to be going/coming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>прибывать (св)/прибыть (св)</td>
<td>to arrive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Посмотри в окно и скажи нам, что происходит (св) на улице.

Look out of the window and tell us what’s happening outside.

Тише! Идёт (св) учитель.

Quiet! The teacher’s coming.

Наши поезда прибывают (св) на конечную станцию. Выходя из вагона, пожалуйста, не забывайте свои 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 *прибывать (св)/прибыть (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 *пое-.* This has the connotation of
'doing the action for a while and then doing something else':

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>лежать (св)/полежать (св)</td>
<td>to lie (down), to be lying (down)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сидеть (св)/посидеть (св)</td>
<td>to (be) sit(ting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>стоять (св)/постоять (св)</td>
<td>to (be) stand(ing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>говорить (св)/поговорить (св)</td>
<td>to talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>молчать (св)/помолчать (св)</td>
<td>to be silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>плакать (св)/поплакать (св)</td>
<td>to cry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>работать (св)/поработать (св)</td>
<td>to work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Сейчас сделаем перерыв на кофе; посидим (св) немножко, поговорим (св), а минут через пятнадцать продолжим нашу работу.

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.
Having heard the answer, he remained silent for a few seconds, then saluted, turned round and marched out of the room.

NOTE: When говорить means ‘to say’, its perfective partner is сказать.

Some of these verbs have a second perfective partner with the за-prefix. This has the connotation of ‘beginning the action’:

- заговорить (св) to (start to) talk
- замолчать (св) to fall silent
- заплакать (св) to (start to) cry

Я очень удивился, когда он вдруг заговорил (св) по-русски. Но после двух-трёх предложений он замолчал (св). По-видимому, не знал, что сказать дальше.

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.

Прочитав письмо, она заплакала (св) и выбежала из комнаты.

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:
The world gave a sigh of relief when it heard about the release of the hostages.

Мир вздохнул с облегчением, услышав об освобождении заложников.

It’s going to rain soon; there’s just been a flash of lightning.

Скоро будет дождь: только что сверкнула молния.
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), помылся (св), выбрался (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:

Одевшись (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:

\[ \text{Я пришлю (св) тобе приглашение, и ты оформишь (св) туристическую визу и приедешь (св) на неделе. Потом вернёшься (св) домой, уладишь (св) все формальности и приедешь (св) уже окончательно.} \]

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:
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 решил (св) поехать домой на метро. На «Киевской», где я делал (нсв) пересадку на Кольцевую линию, меня удивила (св) толпа людей, стоящих на платформе.

I decided to go home by metro. At Kievskaya station, where I changed onto the Circle Line, I was surprised by the crowd of people standing on the platform.

Here the verb делал 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 него был очень странный рабочий день: он появился (нсв) в офисе позже всех, выпил (нсв) чашку кофе, просмотрел (нсв) электронную почту и потом исчез (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 разбил (св) очки и не знаю, как я без них доберусь до дома.

I have broken my glasses and I don’t know how I’m going to get home without them.
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 вовремя пришёл. Только что зашла (cs) твоя сестра; она ждёт тебя на кухне.

You’ve come at just the right time. Your sister has just dropped in; she’s waiting for you in the kitchen.
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.

Unfortunately, I’m busy all day; a delegation has arrived from England and I have to show them everything that we are doing here.

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:

It’s cold in here. Ah, that’s why; somebody has opened the window (and it is still open).

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:

I’m on the way to the boss(’s office). I’ve been summoned to see him.
Я только что был у шефа. Меня вызывали (исч).

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:

Однажды, на исходе лета прошлого года мне позвонил (са) старый друг и сказала (са), что сделает мне предложение, от которого я не могу отказаться.

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 прошлом году приезжала делегация из Англии. Мы показали (са) 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.

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:
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.

Они учились в одной школе, но в разных классах; видели друг друга на переменах, вместе выступали (нсв) однажды на школьной сцене — вот и всё знакомство.

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:

Припомините, может быть, она рассказывала (нсв) вам о своей работе, куда ездила, с кем встречалась.

Try to remember; perhaps she told you about her work, where she travelled to, who she met.

Ты действительно меня предупредил (нсв), но теперь уже поздно: что сделано — то сделано.

You did indeed warn me, but it’s too late now; what’s done is done.

Поверьте мне, я знаю, как эти люди работают. Я уже сталялся (нсв) с ними.

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 писать is normally in the imperfective, even though it would seem that a precise context is mentioned:

В ответном письме (от 24 декабря 1876 г.) Чайковский писал (нсв): «Как я рад, что вечер в консерватории оставил в вас хорошее воспоминание!»

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:

Ви чита́ли (нев) «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 (пить) кофе?
Are you going to have some coffee? *Or*

Would you like a cup of coffee?

In informal speech, this is often shortened to:

**Кофе будешь?**

Где ты будешь ночевать (на?)?

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 (с ней)?**

When will we see each other?

**Ты приедешь (с ней) завтра или послезавтра?**

Are you arriving tomorrow or the day after?

Мне придётся тебя оставить на пару дней. Ты как, справишься (с ней) один? Сможешь (с ней) себя прокормить?

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:

Could you tell me what time it is, please?

Come in!

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:

Come in.

Could you tell me what time it is, please?

Come in!

Phone me this evening at about ten o’clock.

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:

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Come in.

Could you tell me what time it is, please?

Come in!

Phone me this evening at about ten o’clock.
Take off your hat and coat.

Проходите (если).

Come through into the flat.

Садитесь (если).

Sit down.

**NOTE** The verb раздевайтесь (если)/раздёйтесь (если) 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:

Ешьте, ешьте (если)! Or sometimes Кушайте, кушайте (если)!

Do start eating!

**NOTE** The verb кушать 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:

**Говорите (нсв).**

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 (нсв) 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 должны проверить всё, что здесь написано.
— Ну, что ж, проверяйте *(нсв)*.

— We have to check everything that’s written here.

— Go ahead and check if you want to.

— Если не прекратится этот шум, мы вызовем милицию.
— Здесь нет никакого шума. Вызовайте *(нсв)*.

— 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 нажа́л пе́рвую клю́пку, но ниче́го не произо́шлось́ (св). Он нажа́л вто́рую, и дверь откры́лась.

He pressed the first button, but nothing happened. He pressed the second, and the door opened.

Укра́ли все де́ны и креди́тные карто́чки, но, к сча́стью, па́спорт и до́кументы не взя́ли (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) его 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:

Она хочет показать тебе, что не испугалась (св).

She wants to show you that she hasn’t been frightened or that she isn’t frightened.

Жаль, что мы не достигли (св) взаимопонимания.

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 только что посмотрел в ящик. Пост ещё не пришёл (св).

I’ve just looked in the box. The post hasn’t arrived yet.

К сожалению, я ещё не сдал (св) все необходимые экзамены.

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 сожалению, я ещё не сдавал (псв) все необходимые экзамены.

Unfortunately, I still haven’t taken all the necessary examinations.

Европейский суд ещё не приступал (псв) к рассмотрению этого иска.
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:

Государственная Дума ещё не рассматривала (сев) бюджет на следующий год.

The State Duma has not yet examined the budget for next year.

Государственная Дума ещё не рассмотрела (сев) бюджет на следующий 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 странны, я не читал (сев) «Войну и мир».

Strange as it may seem, I haven’t read War and Peace.

Я могу подтвердить, что он из комнаты не выходил (сев).

I can confirm that he didn’t leave the room.

Поверьте мне, я не убивал (сев) его.

Believe me, I didn’t kill him.

Ты никогда не рассказывал (сев) мне об этом.

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 просі́ть пропо́щення, но я не бу́ду отво́вачі́ть (поза) на цей вопро́с: для цього необхі́дно нато́місні́ час.

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 спра́шувати об цьому: нікто вами нічого не ска́жет (є), ни́зда, ни́ в прокука́ту́рі.

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 підхо́ди́ (поза) ко́ мі́. У мене́ грипі́.

Don’t come near me. I’ve got the flu.

Ремо́нт бу́де виконано, є́ли не завтра́, то послезавтра́. Не беспоко́йтесь (поза).

The repair work will be carried out if not tomorrow, then the day after. Don’t worry.

Не поко́пуй (поза) цей съ́р. Срок съ́дности уже́ истек.

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 (св) «Евгения Онегина» в переводе._

I don’t advise you to read *Evgenii Onegin* in translation.

_Ребёнку стало лучше, так что они решили не вызывать (св) врача._

Their child felt better, so they decided not to ask the doctor to call round.

_Я советую вам не задавать (св) ему этот вопрос._

I advise you not to ask him that question.
A perfective infinitive is used after negated forms of the verb хотелъ in sentences containing an apology for the unintended consequences of an action:

Извините, я не хотел вас обидеть (нёв).

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 курить (нёв)!

No smoking!

Не писать (нёв) ниже пунктирной линии.

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 знает столько языков! Все не перечислить (сё)!

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 лучше 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 (не) 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 отвечать (не)!

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 можь‘ 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 ответить (не) на этот вопрос.

Unfortunately, I cannot (i.e. I am not allowed to) answer that question.

Туда нельзя входить (не): 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 сожалению, я не могу ответить (св) на этот вопрос: у меня просто нет никакой информации на эту тему.

Unfortunately, I can’t answer that question; I just don’t have any information on that topic.

Нельзя сказать (св) заранее, какой у них будет результат.

You can’t say in advance what sort of result they’ll get.

If the verb мочь or the form можно is used with a negated imperfective infinitive, the meaning conveyed is that of permission not to do something:

Если хотите, вы можете не отвечать (св) на этот вопрос.

If you don’t want to, you don’t have to answer that question.

Если у вас меньше, чем десять тысяч долларов, можно не заполнять (св) декларацию.

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 (можно is not used in this construction):

Он может не ответить (св) на ваш вопрос: времени у него очень мало.

It’s possible he won’t answer your question; he’s got very little time left.

Но мне могут не поверить (св).

But it is possible that they won’t believe me. Or But I might not be believed.

If нельзя 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:

Нельзя не восхищаться (св) его решительностью.

It is impossible not to admire his determination. Or One cannot help admiring his determination.

Он не может не ответить (св) на ваше письмо.

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 переезжать (св) в Москву.

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 (неп). Ближе к полуночи мне позвонил незнакомый 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.

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.

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 проверить 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 сталнис used to indicate that the consequence of the action in the past still applies in the present, while the imperfective infinitive приходить indicates repeated action.

For more uses of the verb стать, see 14.1.6.

The future станет 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, наверно, стану (св) приходить (усв) на работу только после обеда, так как мне легче работать дома.

I shall probably start coming into work only after lunch, since it’s easier for me to work at home.

The use of буду приходить would not make a significant difference here.

5.8.3 Не стал, не станет + 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 стала (св) возбужда́ть (усв) дело против его брата.

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:

Разговаривать (усв) с тобой на эту тему я не стану (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.  
The glass is full.  

Attributive  
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 новый ‘new’:
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 новый стол для кухни.

I’ve bought a new table for the kitchen.

Я давно знаю вашего нового друга.

I’ve known your new friend for a long time.

Теперь надо купить новые стулья.

Now I have to buy new chairs.

Когда я переехал в Петербург, я быстро приобрёл новых друзей.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Маскулинное</th>
<th>Фемининное</th>
<th>Нейтральное</th>
<th>Плural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>ново́й</td>
<td>нова</td>
<td>нове</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>ново́го</td>
<td>ново́й</td>
<td>ново</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>ново́му</td>
<td>ново́й</td>
<td>ново́м</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
<td>новую</td>
<td>новое</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>новым</td>
<td>ново́й</td>
<td>новым</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>новом</td>
<td>ново́й</td>
<td>ново́м</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...have a nominative singular masculine ending in -ой. All other endings follow the
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 \(-t\) but is pronounced as if written with the letter \(b\). For example, the form written \(нóборо\) is pronounced \([нóвá]̈\). This rule applies to all adjectives, as well as to *pronouns* and *numerals* with *genitive singular* endings in \(-т\).

For an explanation of the vowel symbols used in the above example, see 1.4.3 and 1.4.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>кру́той</td>
<td>кру́тая</td>
<td>кру́тое</td>
<td>кру́тые</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 -М- 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’, русский ‘Russian’, тихий ‘quiet’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom. sing. masc.</td>
<td>стро́гий</td>
<td>русский</td>
<td>тихий</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr. sing. masc. and n.</td>
<td>стро́гим</td>
<td>русским</td>
<td>тихим</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nom. pl.</td>
<td>стро́гие</td>
<td>русские</td>
<td>тихие</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. and prep. pl.</td>
<td>стро́гих</td>
<td>русских</td>
<td>тихих</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the stress is on the ending, the nominative singular masculine ends in -ОЙ, but all other endings follow the above pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom. sing. masc.</td>
<td>доро́гой ‘dear’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr. sing. masc. and n.</td>
<td>доро́гим</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nom. pl.</td>
<td>доро́гие</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. and prep. pl.</td>
<td>доро́гих</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 -М- 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’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom. хорое́ний</td>
<td>хоро́шая</td>
<td>хоро́шее</td>
<td>хоро́шнее</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. хорое́него</td>
<td>хоро́шего</td>
<td>хоро́шего</td>
<td>хоро́шых</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat. хорое́нему</td>
<td>хоро́шему</td>
<td>хоро́шему</td>
<td>хоро́шим</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abl. as nom. or gen.</td>
<td>хоро́ную</td>
<td>хоро́шее</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr. хорошим</td>
<td>хоро́шему</td>
<td>хоро́шему</td>
<td>хорошим</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep. хорошем</td>
<td>хоро́шем</td>
<td>хоро́шем</td>
<td>хоро́ших</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** The very small number of rarely used adjectives in -НЫЙ, for example,
красноли́цый ‘red-faced’ and ку́ный ‘dock-tailed’, ‘skimpy’, follow the second, but not the first of these rules, i.e. they retain -у- 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.
6.2 Soft adjectives (1)

Russian has two groups of adjectives with a soft declension. With the exception of 'brown' (mostly of eyes); 'chestnut' (of horses), all adjectives belonging to the first group end in -ий. Their declension can be illustrated by синий 'dark blue':

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>синий</td>
<td>синее</td>
<td>синее</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>синего</td>
<td>синяя</td>
<td>сине</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>синему</td>
<td>синей</td>
<td>синему</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
<td>синою</td>
<td>синее</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>синим</td>
<td>синей</td>
<td>синим</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>синем</td>
<td>синей</td>
<td>синем</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other frequently used adjectives belonging to this group include:

- верхний upper
- древний ancient
- замужняя married (of a woman)
- крайний extreme, endmost, last
- нижний lower
- поздний late
- средний middle, average

NOTE Because of its meaning замужняя 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:
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 трéтий ‘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 птицей (formed from птица ‘bird’):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>птичий</td>
<td>птица</td>
<td>птичье</td>
<td>птицы</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>птичего</td>
<td>птицей</td>
<td>птичего</td>
<td>птичих</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>птичemu</td>
<td>птицей</td>
<td>птичemu</td>
<td>птичим</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aec.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
<td>птичо</td>
<td>птичье</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>птичием</td>
<td>птицей</td>
<td>птичим</td>
<td>птичими</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>птичье</td>
<td>птицей</td>
<td>птичим</td>
<td>птичих</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

- водяноть - water spirit
- военнопленный - prisoner-of-war
- военнослужащий - member of the armed forces
- глаўнокомандующий - commander-in-chief
- дворецкий - butler, major-domo
- домовой - spirit that lives in the house
- лесный - spirit of the forest
Examples of feminine nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>булочная</td>
<td>baker’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>горничная</td>
<td>(chamber)maid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>закусочная</td>
<td>snack-bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кривая</td>
<td>curve (e.g. on a graph)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пивная</td>
<td>beer bar, pub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сборная</td>
<td>national (sports) team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>уборная</td>
<td>toilet; dressing room (e.g. in a theatre)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ванная</td>
<td>bathroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>гостинная</td>
<td>living-room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>запятая</td>
<td>comma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>набережная</td>
<td>embankment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>прачечная</td>
<td>laundry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>головная</td>
<td>canteen, refectory, dining-room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>шашлычная</td>
<td>shashlik-house, kebab-house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of nouns that can be masculine or feminine:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>больной, больная</td>
<td>patient (sick person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вожатый, вожатая</td>
<td>leader of a youth group (e.g. the Pioneers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дежурный, дежурная</td>
<td>person on duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>заключённый, заключённая</td>
<td>prisoner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>крепостной, крепостная</td>
<td>serf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>нищий, нищая</td>
<td>beggar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>подсудимый, подсудимая</td>
<td>accused (in court)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рабочий, рабочая</td>
<td>worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>русский, русская</td>
<td>Russian (man or woman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>служащий, служащая</td>
<td>white-collar employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сумасшедший, сумасшедшая</td>
<td>mad person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of neuter nouns:
NOTE The noun пресмыка́ющееся declines like the present participle of a reflexive verb, so that the genitive singular, for example, is пресмыка́ющееся.

For more on the participles of reflexive verbs, see 4.12, 4.13.
Examples of nouns that occur only in the plural:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>данные ‘data’</td>
<td>командировочные ‘travelling expenses’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>наличные ‘cash’</td>
<td>позывные ‘call-sign’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чаевые ‘tip’ (e.g. in a restaurant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. русский, русская, русское ‘Russian’ or пивной, пивная, пивное, пивные ‘relating to beer’; in other instances the adjective has a different meaning, e.g. лёгкий, лёгкая, лёгкое, лёгкие ‘light’, ‘easy’ or настоящий, настоящая, настоящее, настоящие ‘present’, but also ‘real’, ‘authentic’.

6.4.2 Surnames

The adjectival ending that occurs most frequently in surnames is -ский, as in Ольшанский, Достоевский, Маяковский, and Чайковский, but other endings characteristic of adjectives are found as well:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ольшанский</td>
<td>Ольшанская</td>
<td>Ольшанские</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Чайковский</td>
<td>Чайковская</td>
<td>Чайковские</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Крамской</td>
<td>Крамская</td>
<td>Крамские</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Лужкий</td>
<td>Лужная</td>
<td>Лужные</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Толстой</td>
<td>Толстая</td>
<td>Толстые</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Непомнящий</td>
<td>Непомнящая</td>
<td>Непомнящие</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 (-ий/-ой/-ий, -я, -е, -е) from the nominative ending of the long form. The endings can be illustrated by the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>правый ‘right’</td>
<td>пра́в</td>
<td>правá</td>
<td>право</td>
<td>правы́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пьяный ‘drunk’</td>
<td>пья́</td>
<td>пья́я</td>
<td>пья́но</td>
<td>пья́ны</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чистый ‘clean’</td>
<td>чист</td>
<td>чистá</td>
<td>чисто</td>
<td>чисты́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 свежо/свеже (long form свежее) 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.

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 достойный the vowel inserted is ы and not the expected е.

There are, however, some instances where a fleeting vowel is not inserted. Among these are пустой and чистый mentioned above, and other examples include the following:
### 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 -**скій** or -**енькій** (for the special case of **маленький**, see below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>бодрый 'cheerful'</td>
<td>бодр</td>
<td>бодра</td>
<td>бодро</td>
<td>бодры</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>добрый 'good', 'kind'</td>
<td>добр</td>
<td>добра</td>
<td>добро</td>
<td>добрь</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>трезвый 'sober'</td>
<td>трез</td>
<td>трезва</td>
<td>трезво</td>
<td>трэвы</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masc. sing.</th>
<th>Н. sing.</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>искрен</td>
<td>искренне/искренно</td>
<td>искренны</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*, *велика*, *велико*, *великі*  
*маленький* ~ *мал*, *мала*, *мало*, *малы*

The adjective *рад*, *ра́да*, *ра́до*, *ра́ды* ‘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 ва́шим успе́хам.

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 -a or -я by removing the final vowel and adding -нн. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
<th>Familiar Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>мама</td>
<td>Mum</td>
<td>мамин</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>папа</td>
<td>Dad</td>
<td>папин</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тёща</td>
<td>(husband’s) mother-in-law</td>
<td>тёцин</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Татья</td>
<td>Tat’iana, Tania</td>
<td>Танин</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Галя</td>
<td>Galina, Galia</td>
<td>Галин</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>мъмин</td>
<td>мъминга</td>
<td>мъмин</td>
<td>мъмины</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>мъминого</td>
<td>мъминой</td>
<td>мъминого</td>
<td>мъминых</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>мъминому</td>
<td>мъминой</td>
<td>мъминому</td>
<td>мъминым</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
<td>мъмину</td>
<td>мъмино</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>мъминым</td>
<td>мъминой</td>
<td>мъминым</td>
<td>мъмиными</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>мъмином</td>
<td>мъминой</td>
<td>мъмином</td>
<td>мъминых</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 дверью он услышал папин голос.

Suddenly he heard his father’s voice on the other side of the door.

У тебя нет случайно Мишиного телефона?

You wouldn’t happen to have Misha’s telephone number, would you?

Это Танины вещи: лучше их не трогать.

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 дверью он услышал голос папы.
У тебя нет случайно телефона Михаил?
Эти вещи принадлежат Тане: лучше их не трогать.

(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 несколько раз бывала на квартире Сашиной матери.

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:

а́хилле́сова пя́та
кроко́дилю́вые слёзы
Achilles’ heel
crocodile tears
Я вам покажу куськуку мат'!

I’ll give you what for! I’ll show you a thing or two!

Вообще он пишет очень хорошо, но его ахиллесова пят' – это женские персонажи.

On the whole he writes very well, but female characters are his Achilles’ heel.

Сегодня Татьянины день: в общежитиях пройдут вечеринки, во многих барах и клубах организованы специальные дискотеки для студентов.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>русский</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>хаки</td>
<td>khaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>клёш</td>
<td>flared, bell-bottomed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Culinary terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ассорти</td>
<td>mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>фри</td>
<td>(deep-)fried</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjectives indicating ethnic groups or languages:
Other indeclinable adjectives:

- пик - peak (used only in the phrase часы пик ‘peak hours’)
- мини - mini (this usually precedes the noun)
- экстра - extra (quality)

Забавно смотреть старые фильмы семидесятых годов, где все ходят в этих страшных брюках клеш.

It’s funny watching old films from the 1970s, where everyone’s wearing those dreadful flared trousers.

«Талун» – это ежедневная информационная программа на коми языке.

Talun is a daily news programme in (the) Komi (language).
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’, интернет ‘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-образование она получила в одном из знаменитых университетов США.

She received her business education at a famous university in the United States.

Кажется, я об этом читал в каком-то интернет-журнале.

I think I read about it in some Internet journal.

Мы провели маленький онлайн-опрос, но результаты оказались не очень интересными.

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
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>гру́бый</td>
<td>crude, rough</td>
<td>гру́бее,</td>
<td>crueler, rougher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дли́нный</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>дли́ннее</td>
<td>longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>древний</td>
<td>ancient</td>
<td>древне́е</td>
<td>more ancient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>интересный</td>
<td>interesting</td>
<td>интересне́е</td>
<td>more interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>новый</td>
<td>new</td>
<td>новее</td>
<td>newer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ясный</td>
<td>clear</td>
<td>ясне́е</td>
<td>clearer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 -кiй the -к- is removed and the preceding consonant is changed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Г—Ж</th>
<th>Д—Ж</th>
<th>З—Ж</th>
<th>К—Ч</th>
<th>СТ—Щ</th>
<th>Т—Ч</th>
<th>Г—Ш</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>дорого́й</td>
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<td>жёсткiй</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>богаты́й</td>
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<tr>
<td>короткiй</td>
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<tr>
<td>тихiй</td>
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<td>тихiй</td>
<td>тихiй</td>
<td>тихiй</td>
<td>тихiй</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A number of adjectives, many in common use, have irregular comparatives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>больши́й</th>
<th>больши́й</th>
<th>больши́й</th>
<th>больши́й</th>
<th>больши́й</th>
<th>больши́й</th>
<th>больши́й</th>
<th>больши́й</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>высоки́й</td>
<td>высоки́й</td>
<td>высоки́й</td>
<td>высоки́й</td>
<td>высоки́й</td>
<td>высоки́й</td>
<td>высоки́й</td>
<td>высоки́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>глубоки́й</td>
<td>глубоки́й</td>
<td>глубоки́й</td>
<td>глубоки́й</td>
<td>глубоки́й</td>
<td>глубоки́й</td>
<td>глубоки́й</td>
<td>глубоки́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>далёкiй</td>
<td>далёкiй</td>
<td>далёкiй</td>
<td>далёкiй</td>
<td>далёкiй</td>
<td>далёкiй</td>
<td>далёкiй</td>
<td>далёкiй</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>де́шёвый</td>
<td>де́шёвый</td>
<td>де́шёвый</td>
<td>де́шёвый</td>
<td>де́шёвый</td>
<td>де́шёвый</td>
<td>де́шёвый</td>
<td>де́шёвый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>долгiй</td>
<td>долгiй</td>
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<td>долгiй</td>
<td>долгiй</td>
<td>долгiй</td>
<td>долгiй</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>маленьки́й</td>
<td>маленьки́й</td>
<td>маленьки́й</td>
<td>маленьки́й</td>
<td>маленьки́й</td>
<td>маленьки́й</td>
<td>маленьки́й</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>сладкiй</td>
<td>сладкiй</td>
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<td>сладкiй</td>
<td>сладкiй</td>
<td>сладкiй</td>
<td>сладкiй</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ста́рый</td>
<td>ста́рый</td>
<td>ста́рый</td>
<td>ста́рый</td>
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<td>ста́рый</td>
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<td>ста́рый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тонкiй</td>
<td>тонкiй</td>
<td>тонкiй</td>
<td>тонкiй</td>
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<td>тонкiй</td>
<td>тонкiй</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>широ́кий</td>
<td>широ́кий</td>
<td>широ́кий</td>
<td>широ́кий</td>
<td>широ́кий</td>
<td>широ́кий</td>
<td>широ́кий</td>
<td>широ́кий</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The adjective позднiй 'late' has alternative short comparative forms позднее and позже 'later'.

Two adjectives have short comparatives that are totally different from the basic form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>плохо́й</th>
<th>плохо́й</th>
<th>плохо́й</th>
<th>плохо́й</th>
<th>плохо́й</th>
<th>плохо́й</th>
<th>плохо́й</th>
<th>плохо́й</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>хороши́й</td>
<td>хороши́й</td>
<td>хороши́й</td>
<td>хороши́й</td>
<td>хороши́й</td>
<td>хороши́й</td>
<td>хороши́й</td>
<td>хороши́й</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 двуно́гий ‘two-legged’, босо́й ‘bare-footed’, трамва́йный ‘relating to trams’. This category also includes all adjectives belonging to the second group of soft adjectives.

2. Virtually all adjectives ending in -сий, -ско́й or -сный.


NOTE The adjective худо́й ‘thin’ has the short comparative худе́е.
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 помоложе, я бы уехал искать работу за границей.

If I were (a bit) younger, I would go and look for work abroad.

Не нравится это шампанское? Тогда попробуй другое. Вот это будет послаще.

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 более before the long form of adjective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Древний</th>
<th>Ancient</th>
<th>Более древний</th>
<th>More ancient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Интересный</td>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>Более интересный</td>
<td>More interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Оптимистический</td>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>Более оптимистический</td>
<td>More optimistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Широкий</td>
<td>Wide</td>
<td>Более широкий</td>
<td>Wider</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Хороший</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Лучший</th>
<th>Better</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Плохой</td>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>Худший</td>
<td>Worse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Большой</td>
<td>Big</td>
<td>Больший</td>
<td>Bigger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Маленький</td>
<td>Little</td>
<td>Меньший</td>
<td>Smaller</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** Some of the forms of большой (e.g. the nominative singular feminine большая) are identical to the equivalent forms of большой 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 моло́дой ‘young’ and ста́рый ‘old’ have associated forms that look like declinable comparatives, but which are really separate adjectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>молодой</th>
<th>младший</th>
<th>younger, junior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ста́рый</td>
<td>старший</td>
<td>elder, older, senior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These forms are mostly used with reference to siblings or ranks (in either the armed forces or civilian life):

Мо́й ста́ршая сестра́ живёт в Петербу́рге.

My elder sister lives in St Petersburg.
She works as a junior research officer in the Dictionary Section of the Academy of Sciences.

6.8.4 The superlative with са́мый or наибо́лее

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 когда-либо чита́л.

This is the most interesting book I have ever read.

Они́ покупа́ют са́мую сти́льную оде́ежду и е́дят в са́мых дорого́их ре́сторанах.

They buy the most stylish clothes and eat in the most expensive restaurants.

The declinable comparative adjectives лучший and ху́дший can be used either on their own or prefixed by са́мый to indicate superlative meaning:

У нас кка́ждый год прово́дится конъку́ре на (са́мое) лучшее стихо́творение на тему «Россия».

Every year we hold a competition for the best poem on the topic of ‘Russia’.

The adverb наибо́лее can be used in place of са́мый. Наибо́лее is normally found only in written language:

Наибо́лее одарённых дете́й отби́ра́ют в музыка́льную шко́лу-инте́рнат при Московской консерва́тории.

The most talented children are chosen for places at a special (music) boarding-
school attached to the Moscow Conservatory.

The opposite of наиболее наимёнее:

Метод, который они выбрали, оказался наимёнее 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-ейший 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>comparative form</th>
<th>superlative form</th>
<th>actual superlative form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>важный</td>
<td>important</td>
<td>важнейший</td>
<td>most important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>гру́бый</td>
<td>crude, rough</td>
<td>грубейший</td>
<td>crudest, roughest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дальний</td>
<td>far</td>
<td>дальнейший</td>
<td>furthest, further</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>интере́сный</td>
<td>interesting</td>
<td>интереснейший</td>
<td>most interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кру́пный</td>
<td>big, large</td>
<td>крупнейший</td>
<td>biggest, largest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>новый</td>
<td>new</td>
<td>новейший</td>
<td>newest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>опасный</td>
<td>dangerous</td>
<td>опаснейший</td>
<td>most dangerous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>полный</td>
<td>full</td>
<td>полнейший</td>
<td>fullest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Also:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>маленький,</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>малейший</td>
<td>smallest,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>малый</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>slightest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>близкий</td>
<td>near</td>
<td>ближайший</td>
<td>nearest,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>next (few)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>великий</td>
<td>great</td>
<td>величайший</td>
<td>greatest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мелкий</td>
<td>small, petty</td>
<td>мельчайший</td>
<td>smallest,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>slightest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>редкий</td>
<td>rare</td>
<td>редчайший</td>
<td>rarest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>строгий</td>
<td>strict, severe</td>
<td>строжайший</td>
<td>strictest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тихий</td>
<td>quiet</td>
<td>тишайший</td>
<td>quietest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

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 in both 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’; далее́йший 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 ближайшие годы будут снесены все пятиэтажные дома, построенные в хрущевское время.

During the next few years all the five-storey blocks built in the Khrushchev period will be demolished.

Ждём ваших дальнейших указаний.

We await your further instructions.

Они не имеют ни малейшего представления о том, что мы здесь делаем.

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 най- either to one of the declinable comparative adjectives or to one of the above forms in -ейщий or -айский:

лучший
наилучший
худший
наихудший
больший
наибольший
меньший
наименьший
новейший
наиновейший
These forms are also generally characteristic of the more formal levels of written language (including journalism), although найлучший is often found in expressions of good wishes:

Желаем 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)’
- Она 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 себ́ь. 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nom.</th>
<th>я</th>
<th>ты</th>
<th>—</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>меня́</td>
<td>тебя́</td>
<td>себя́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>мне́</td>
<td>тебе́</td>
<td>себе́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>меня́</td>
<td>тебя́</td>
<td>себя́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>мой/моё</td>
<td>твой/твоё</td>
<td>собо́й/собо́ю</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>мне́</td>
<td>тебе́</td>
<td>себе́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nom.</th>
<th>мы́</th>
<th>вы́</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>нас</td>
<td>вас</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>нам</td>
<td>вам</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>нас</td>
<td>вас</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>нами</td>
<td>вами</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>нас</td>
<td>вас</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NOTES

(i) The reflexive pronoun *себя* has no nominative form.

(ii) In the instrumental the forms *мой*, *твой*, *собо́й* are more widely used, but the alternatives *мою*, *тобою*, *собою* are sometimes preferred for reasons of euphony,
especially in *passive constructions*:

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>он</td>
<td>она́</td>
<td>онó</td>
<td>они́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>его́</td>
<td>её́</td>
<td>его́</td>
<td>их́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>ему́</td>
<td>ей́</td>
<td>ему́</td>
<td>им́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>его́</td>
<td>её́</td>
<td>его́</td>
<td>их́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>им</td>
<td>ей/её́</td>
<td>им</td>
<td>ним</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>нём</td>
<td>ней́</td>
<td>нём</td>
<td>них́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES**

(i) The spelling rule given in 1.5.5 applies to the *genitive singular masculine* and *neuter*, i.e. the letter is pronounced as if it were a в.

(ii) The alternative instrumental singular feminine form её 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 получил от него́ очень странное письмо́.

I’ve received a very strange letter from him.

Я зайду к нему́ после обе́да.

I’ll call in and see him after lunch.

В последнее время́ мы очень мало слышим о ней.

In recent times we’ve heard very little about her.

Трени́р извинил́ся перед нами за плохую игру́ национа́льной сборной.
The coach apologised to them for the poor performance of the national side.

**NOTE** Forms without the **не**- 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 начинается завтрашнее совещание?
—Не помню, или вернее, не знаю.

—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 спешил, потому что опаздывал на поезд.

He was hurrying because he was late for the train.

В субботу я ходил на футбол, а в воскресенье съездил домой к родителям.

On Saturday I went to a football match and on Sunday I went home to see my parents.

Мы показали им всё, чем здесь занимаемся.

We showed them everything we’re doing here.

The same principle applies when two short sentences follow one another:

—Но она плачет. Вдруг заплакала?
—Если бы заплакала, она бы плакала намного громче.

—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:

**Говорят, её отец – известный политик.**

They say her father is a well-known politician.

**Здесь не курят.**

You are requested not to smoke. (Literally, One does not smoke here.)

**У нас борщ готовят по-другому.**

Here people make borschch differently.

**В булочную на такси не едут.**

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:

**Мошенников приговорили к различным срокам лишения свободы.**

The swindlers were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

**Нам вчера провели скоростной интернет.**

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):

Иногда 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:
If he really thinks that, he’s clearly deceiving himself.

Why don’t you buy yourself a more powerful computer?

Don’t fail to bring all your documents with you.

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:

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 себя, 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 себя большим знатоком мэроных вин.

My uncle considers himself a great connoisseur of fine wines.

Мой дядя считается велиkim знатоком мэроных вин.

My uncle is considered a great connoisseur of fine wines.

Они убедили себя в том, что противник не знал об их замыслах.

They convinced themselves that their opponent did not know about their plans.

Они убедились в том, что противник не знал об их замыслах.

They were certain that their opponent did not know about their plans.

The reflexive pronoun себя is used idiomatically in a number of constructions:

вести/повести себя  
выходить/выйти из себя  
представлять собой  
чувствовать/почувствовать себя к себе, на себя  
от себя  

to behave  
to lose one’s temper  
to be (formal)  
to feel (ill, happy, etc.)  
pull (on doors)  
push (on doors)

В последнее время она стала вести себя очень странныо.
Recently she has begun to behave very strangely.

For an example of представи́ть себе́ see 14.1.5.

For an example of чувству́вать себе́ see 3.5.4.

More examples of the use of себе́ 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 мой́ ‘my’, ‘mine’.

The second person singular (informal) possessive pronoun is твой́ ‘your’, ‘yours’.

The first person plural possessive pronoun is наш́ ‘our’, ‘ours’.

The second person singular (formal) and plural possessive pronoun is ваш́ ‘your’, ‘yours’.
These pronouns decline as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>мой</td>
<td>мою</td>
<td>моёй</td>
<td>мой</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>моего</td>
<td>моей</td>
<td>моего</td>
<td>моих</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>моему</td>
<td>моей</td>
<td>моему</td>
<td>моим</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aacc.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen. мою</td>
<td>мою</td>
<td>as nom. or gen. моим</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>моим</td>
<td>моей</td>
<td>моим</td>
<td>моими</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>моём</td>
<td>моей</td>
<td>моём</td>
<td>моих</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>наш</td>
<td>наша</td>
<td>наше</td>
<td>наши</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>на́шего</td>
<td>на́шей</td>
<td>на́шего</td>
<td>на́ших</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>на́шему</td>
<td>на́шей</td>
<td>на́шему</td>
<td>на́шим</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aacc.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen. на́шу</td>
<td>на́ше</td>
<td>as nom. or gen. на́шими</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>на́шим</td>
<td>на́шей</td>
<td>на́шим</td>
<td>на́шими</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>на́шем</td>
<td>на́шей</td>
<td>на́шем</td>
<td>на́ших</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

его his, its (referring to masculine and neuter nouns)

её 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:

Насколько я понимаю, я дал ключи её враты.
As far as I remember, I gave the keys to her brother.

Я не мог у не восхищаться их успехами.

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 забыл отдать ему ключи от его квартиры.

I forgot to give him back the keys to his flat.

Даже в самые трудные времена я всегда был на их стороне.

Even in the most difficult of times I was always on their side.
7.2.3 The possessive pronoun СВОЙ

The possessive 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 своём/нашей работе.

We encounter certain difficulties in our work.

Гостиница была большая, поэтому мы не сразу смогли найти свой/наш номер.

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 прошли свой 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 мобильника?

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/ЕЕ/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.

Моему брату доводилось слушать, как Бродский читает свои стихи.

My brother had occasion to hear Brodsky reading his (own) poetry.

Мой брат обожает Бродского и часто читает его стихи 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 его would clearly refer to different people means that there is no difficulty in interpreting the Russian correctly.

As with the reflexive pronoun себя, свой normally relates to the subject of the nearest verb, even when this is the notional subject of an infinitive:

Врач посоветовал Иванову поменьше пользоваться своей машиной.

The doctor advised Ivanov not to use his (i.e. Ivanov’s) car so much.

Козлов охотно позволил Иванову пользоваться его машиной.

Kozlov was happy to allow Ivanov to use his (i.e. Kozlov’s) car.

Свои 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:

Она считала, что её муж поступил очень необдуманно.

She thought that her husband had acted very precipitately.
Она и её племянница виновны в равной степени.

She and her niece are equally guilty.

Unlike себе, 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.):

Когда она родила первого ребёнка, у них уже была свой квартира.

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 неё секретов: она здесь свой (человек).

We don’t keep any secrets from her; she’s one of us.

Свой рубашка ближе к телу.

Charity begins at home [literally, Ones’s own shirt is closer to one’s body].

The opposite свой in many instances is the adjective чужой ‘other people’s’, ‘someone else’s’:

Там нет ничего оригинального: он только повторяет чужие слова.

There’s nothing original in that; he’s simply repeating other people’s words.

Чужие вещи лучше не трогать.

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 ответ он кивнул головой.

He nodded his head in answer.

Я слышал, что он ушёл от жены и уехал жить куда-то на Север.

I heard that he’s left his wife and gone off to live somewhere in the north.

Кажется, пора заканчивать дискуссию: люди уже стали смотреть на часы.

I think it’s time we were bringing the discussion to an end; people are already starting to look at their watches.

Она допила кофе, поправила причёску, расплатилась и вышла из кафе.

She finished her coffee, tidied her hair, paid and left the cafe.

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:

Они в ужасе: дочь побрила себе голову.

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 ‘this’ and ‘that’. They decline as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nom.</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Мъст</td>
<td>Мъа</td>
<td>Мъ</td>
<td>Мън</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>Мъто</td>
<td>Мъй</td>
<td>Мътоь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>Мътомь</td>
<td>Мъйь</td>
<td>Мътомь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>Мъимь</td>
<td>Мъйь</td>
<td>Мъимь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>Мъмь</td>
<td>Мъйь</td>
<td>Мъмь</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 ‘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:

сегодня ['zivÓd'na] today
сейчас now, immediately, just a minute
до сих пор up to now
ни то ни се neither one thing nor another
ни с того ни с сего suddenly, without any obvious reason
сию минуту! this minute!

A fourth demonstrative pronoun ‘such’, ‘like
that/those’. It declines like the adjective дорого́й (see 6.1.2 and 6.1.4).

7.3.2 The use of ЭТО́ and ТО́Т

In many instances ЭТО́ and ТО́Т correspond closely to English ‘this’ and ‘that’, except that ТО́Т tends to be used only when there is an explicit contrast or when indicating something that is far away:

ЭТО́Т галстук мне очень нра́вится, а ТО́Т я скорее всего отда́м бра́ту.

I like this tie very much, but I’ll probably pass that one on to my brother.

Принеси́ мне, пожа́луйста, вон ту па́нку.

Could you bring me that folder from over there.
In other contexts, 
этот may be the equivalent of English ‘that’:

Гла́вный реда́ktor заяви́л, что нико́гда́ с этым предло́жением к нёму́ не обращался.

The editor-in-chief stated that no one had put that proposal to him.

На ва́шем ме́сте я бы́ этоголо́ не де́лал.

If I were you, I wouldn’t do that.

NOTE In formal language, данный (which declines like an adjective) can be used in place of этот. It is often found in the phrase в данном слу́чае ‘in this instance’ (for an example, see 22.1.3).

The neuter form это́й is used to refer back to general concepts, as well as to whole phrases, clauses or sentences:

Он спроси́л мене́ о последне́х собы́тиях на Ка́вка́зе, но я призна́лся, что ничего́ об этым не знаю.

He asked me about recent events in the Caucasus, but I admitted that I knew nothing about it.

Расскажи́те им о ва́ших моско́веских приключе́ниях; это́ буде́т для них очень́ интересно.

Tell them about your adventures in Moscow; they’ll find it very interesting.

In this usage это́й always refers back to something mentioned. It is not normally used to translate the English ‘dummy’ subject ‘it’ in sentences of the following type:

Интере́сно бы́ло бы знать, где они́ бы́ли вче́ра́ ве́чером.

It would be interesting to know where they got to last night.

Завтра́ утром будет я́сно, смо́жем мы́ вы́ехать или нет.

By tomorrow morning it will be clear whether we can leave or not.
Eto 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 встретил отца на вокзале. Он очень устал, но тем не менее посчитал 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.
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 проблема: прислали не те запчасти.**

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 страшно расстроился, когда обнаружил, что вложил письмо невесте 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 (самый)**, see 21.9.7.

### 7.3.3 The use of **такой**

The **pronoun** **такой** means ‘such’, ‘like this’, ‘like that’. The difference between **такой** and **этот** can be illustrated by the following pair of examples:

**Эти фильмы я всегда смотрю с большим удовольствием.**

I always enjoy watching these (specific) films.

**Такие фильмы я всегда смотрю с большим удовольствием.**

I always enjoy watching films like these/those.

In some contexts **такой** can correspond to English ‘that’ or ‘this’ or even the indefinite article:
In that case there’s no point in continuing our conversation.

У меня также предложение: давайте устроим аукцион!

I’ve got a suggestion: let’s organise an auction.

Такой is also used to qualify long adjectives with the meaning ‘so’:

Ты умеешь только критиковать. Предложи решение, если ты такой умный.

You only know how to criticise. Suggest a solution since you’re so clever.

Short adjectives (see 6.5) are qualified by так:

Она была так хороша, так мила, что слов нет.

She was so pretty and so nice that there are no words to describe her.

The pronoun такой-то means ‘such-and-such’, i.e. it replaces a specific name when giving general indications:

Здесь надо указать, что едешь в Россию по приглашению такой-то организации.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>КТО</th>
<th>ЧТО</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>kto</td>
<td>čto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>koto</td>
<td>čego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>komu</td>
<td>čemu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>koto</td>
<td>čto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>kem</td>
<td>čem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>kim</td>
<td>čem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The spelling rule given in 1.5.5 applies to the genitive singular forms of these pronouns, i.e. the letter o is pronounced as if it were a v.

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, КОТОРЫЙ

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>čej</td>
<td>čya</td>
<td>čjej</td>
<td>čyj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>čego</td>
<td>čey</td>
<td>čego</td>
<td>čey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

Чьё эта книга?

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 *кото́рый*

The most widely used relative pronoun is *кото́рый*, which can correspond to English ‘who’, ‘which’ and ‘that’. *Кото́рый* 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, кото́рую я только́ что купи́л.**

Here is a new book that I have just bought.

In the above sentence *кото́рую* 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 *купи́л*.

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:

**Кни́га, кото́рую я взял в пое́здку, ока́залась тако́й скучно́й, что я наме́ренно остави́л её в како́м-то кафе́.**

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:

**Она́ показа́ла мне ста́рую маши́ну, на кото́рой е́е оте́ц е́здил в Росси́ю.**

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’:
The firm bears legal responsibility only for those matters that are mentioned in the agreement.

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 приеме.

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 поймет, 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 тёс 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 (велики), 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 него была привычка опаздывать на собрания, что очень раздражало его коллег.

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 каждый день получаем более ста жалоб от граждан, чьи права нарушаются.

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 который:

Мы каждый день получаем более ста жалоб от граждан, права которых нарушаются.

When какой is used as a relative pronoun, it has the meaning ‘(of the kind) that’; it tends to be preceded by такой:

Он покупает такое вина, которое можно найти только в самых дорогих магазинах.

He buys wines (of the sort) that you can only find in the most expensive shops.

Стала такая тихая и солнечная погода, какой обычно бывает только в середине бабьего лета.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>кто-то</th>
<th>кто-нибудь</th>
<th>кто-либо</th>
<th>кое-кто</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>что-то</td>
<td>что-нибудь</td>
<td>что-либо</td>
<td>кое-что</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>какой-то</td>
<td>какой-нибудь</td>
<td>какой-либо</td>
<td>кое-какой</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чей-то</td>
<td>чей-нибудь</td>
<td>чей-либо</td>
<td>кое-чей</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### NOTES

(i) Pronouns formed from чей are less widely used than the others, and кое-чей, though theoretically possible, is probably best avoided.

(ii) Pronouns with the кое-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 -нибудь 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 “TOseries

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 перешептывались.
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.
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 войны эта писательская организация перестала существовать: 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 somethig 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 идти сегодня на работу.

Somehow I don’t feel like going to work today.

У меня 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:

Когда я открыл дверь, на пороге стоял какой-то мужчина в чёрном пальто.
I opened the door to a man in a black overcoat.

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.

When used with a long adjective како́й-то has the meaning of ‘somehow’, ‘in some way’:

Чай сегодня како́й-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:

Ужас како́й-то!

It was awful!

Кошма́р како́й-то!

It was a nightmare!

По доро́ге в аэро́пор́т мы соро́к мину́т проротра́ли в про́бке. Кошма́р како́й-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 -ни́будь-series

The -ни́будь-series 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 -ни́будь and the -то-series can be difficult to define. In the following sequence the questioner can use either что-ни́будь or что-то, but the person answering must use что-то, since she clearly has something in mind:

— За чем ты вернулась? Что-ни́будь/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 что-ни́будь or что-то is possible (cf. English ‘someone’/‘anyone’):

Если кто-ни́будь/кто-то позвони́т с работы, скажи́, что я занят и не мо́гу подойти к телефо́ну.

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 здешней гостинице на окраине города.

I don’t really want to stay in some miserable hotel on the outskirts of town.
In quantity expressions, какой-небудь can convey both approximation and the idea of ‘a mere’, ‘no more than’:

Через какой-нибудь два года вы не узнаёте наш город.

In a mere two years from now you won’t recognise our city.

7.6.4 The -ЛИБОseries

Many dictionaries describe the -ЛИБОseries as being synonymous with the -НИБУДЬ series, and they are indeed similar in meaning. Nevertheless, there are some contexts where the -НИБУДЬ series does seem to be preferred.

Pronouns from the -ЛИБОseries 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 какой-либо футбольные клубы.

He announced that he had no plans to acquire any football clubs.

Pronouns from the -ЛИБОseries 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 -ЛИБОseries 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 -ЛИБОpronouns emphasise that it really does not matter who or what is involved:

Тебе 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.

A были в вашей библиотеке какие-либо книги по искусству?

Did your library have any books on art?

7.6.5 The Koe-series

The koe-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 меня есть для вас какие-нибудь 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 такой уж я полный невежда! Кое в чём всё-таки разбираюсь.

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 ВЕСЬ

The pronoun веcь corresponds to English ‘all’. It declines as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>веcь</td>
<td>вся</td>
<td>всё</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>веcего</td>
<td>всей</td>
<td>всего</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>всему́</td>
<td>всей</td>
<td>всему́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>всём</td>
<td>всей</td>
<td>всём</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>всем</td>
<td>всей</td>
<td>всем</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>всём</td>
<td>всей</td>
<td>всём</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 веcь can be illustrated by the following examples:

Наш рейс отменили, пришлось весть день просидеть в аэропорту.
Our flight was cancelled, and we had to spend all day at the airport.

Я прочитал не всю книгу, а только первые сто страниц.

I haven’t read all the book, just the first hundred pages.

Последствия глобального потепления теперь ощущимы на всех континентах.

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’:

Скажи мне всё, что ты знаешь.

Tell me everything you know.

Не беспокойтесь, пива хватит 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 пове́рит.

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 арбу́з: оста́вьте хотя бы па́ру куско́в на завтра.

Don’t eat the whole water-melon; leave at least a couple of portions for tomorrow.

Они спо́рили о том, мо́жно ли за один раз съесть целый арбу́з.

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 кáждый, всéкий, and любóй. These decline like the adjectives нóвый, русскýй, and молодóй, respectively (see 6.1).

Кáждый corresponds to English ‘every’. It is normally used only in the singular, although the plural forms are used with nouns such as полчасá‘half an hour’ and полгода‘half a year’, ‘six months’, which are treated as grammatically plural:

Бы́ло ви́дно, что, отвечáя на вопро́сы, он изве́шивал кáждое слóво.

It was clear that when he answered the questions he was weighing up every word.

Кáждый гóд он éздит в Испáнию на мéсяц.

Every year he goes to Spain for a month.

Кáждые полчасá в палáту загля́дывала медсестра́ – проверить, не просну́лся ли он.

Every half-hour a nurse looked into the ward to check if he had woken up.
Всёкий can also mean ‘every’, ‘all’, although nowadays this is most frequently found in certain set phrases, such as всёкий раз ‘every time’, всёкий (человек) ‘everybody’, выше всёких похвал ‘beyond all praise’. Its most common meaning is ‘all kinds of’:

В российской истории двоевластие всёкий раз приводило к гражданской войне.

In Russian history dual power has led to civil war every time.

У него всегда бывают всёкие интересные идеи.

He always has all sorts of interesting ideas.

В жизни всёкое бывает.

All sorts of things can happen in life.

Всёкий can mean ‘any’ after the preposition без (+ gen) ‘without’ and in some other constructions with negative implications:

Это без всёкого 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 всёкого вкуса.

Her wardrobe is characterised by the total absence of any taste.

Всёкий is also used in a number of set phrases, as shown in the following examples.

на всёкий случай and the more informal на всёкий похарный (случай) ‘just in case’:

во всёмом случае in any case
at any rate
however that may be
Take an umbrella, just in case.

The influence of his ideas is declining, at any rate in Russia.

The economic situation for the coming year remains unstable. At any rate, economists are forecasting a further rise in inflation.

*Любой* generally corresponds to ‘any’, especially when used in the sense of ‘every’:

*Вы найдёте наши товары в любом супермаркете.*

You’ll find our goods in any supermarket.

*В любом случае* means ‘in any event’, ‘whatever happens’:

*В любом случае я буду ждать вас на вокзале.*

Whatever happens, I’ll be waiting for you at the station.

In some instances the meaning of *любой* 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 дорогу, спроси кого-нибудь.

If you don’t know the way, ask someone [emphasis is on the asking; the person may or may not know the answer].

Доехайте до Невского проспекта, а там любой вам скажет, как пройти к Русскому 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>сам</td>
<td>самая</td>
<td>само</td>
<td>сами</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>самого́</td>
<td>самой́</td>
<td>самого́</td>
<td>самыми́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>самому́</td>
<td>самой́</td>
<td>самому́</td>
<td>самыми́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
<td>самое́ (само́й)</td>
<td>само́</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>самим</td>
<td>самой́</td>
<td>самим</td>
<td>самыми́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>самом</td>
<td>самой́</td>
<td>самом</td>
<td>самыми́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The older accusative singular feminine form само́й 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 отказался делать какие-либо комментарии, заявив, что у него самого нет никакой информации.
He refused to make any comment, stating that he himself had no information.

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 сам.

Thank you, but I don’t need your help; I can do everything myself.

Сам is frequently used with the reflexive pronoun себя:

Этими действиями они только вредят самим себе.

With these actions they are only damaging themselves.
In time all politicians become parodies of themselves.

The following set phrases involving сам and себя are worth noting:

сам по себе \textit{in itself, independently, separately}
само собой (разумеется) \textit{of course, obviously, it goes without saying}

Идея \textit{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 \textit{сам по себе}.

Their movements were totally unco-ordinated with each other; everybody was acting independently.

\textit{Само 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 са́мый

The \textit{pronoun са́мый}, which declines like the adjective новь́й (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 са́мом центре города.

She struck lucky and found a flat in the very centre of the city.

Он затронул эту тему только в са́мом конце лекции.

He touched on this topic only at the very end of his lecture.
Са́мый is used in a number of useful set expressions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>в са́мый раз</td>
<td>just right (in terms of time, number or size)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>в са́мом деле</td>
<td>indeed, really; in fact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>на са́мом деле</td>
<td>in actual fact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>э́то са́мое</td>
<td>the what’s-its-name (used when someone cannot remember the name for something)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Чёрные боти́нки мне велико́ваты, а вот э́ти кори́чневые в са́мый раз.

The black boots are a bit big, but the brown ones are just right.

Вы в са́мом деле э́того не зна́ли?

Did you really not know that?

—Ты зачём верну́лесь? Что́-нибудь забы́ла?
—Да, я в са́мом деле что́-то забы́ла.

—Why have you come back? Have you forgotten something?

—Yes, indeed, I have forgotten something.

Он выда́ёт себя́ за ве́ликого колду́на́ и цели́теля, а на са́мом деле он просто́ 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 тóт же (самый) ‘the same’, see 21.9.7.

7.8.3 The reciprocal pronoun друг друга

The pronoun друг друга 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 друга?

Do you already know each other?

Они поссорились на днях и теперь даже не здороваяются друг с другом.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Russian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>ноль, нуль</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>тридцать два, тридцать две</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>один, одна, одно, один</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>тридцать восемь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>два, две</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>сорок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>три</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>пятьдесят</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>четыре</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>шестьдесят</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>пять</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>семьдесят</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>шесть</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>восемьдесят</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>семь</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>девяносто</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>восемь</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>сто</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>девять</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>сто один, сто один, сто один</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>десять</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>сто два, сто два</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>одиннадцать</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>сто десять</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>двенадцать</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>сто двадцать пять</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>тринадцать</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>сто шестьдесят</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>четырнадцать</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>двести</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>пятнадцать</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>триста</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>шестнадцать</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>четыреста</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>семнадцать</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>пятьсот</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>восемнадцать</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>шестьсот</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>девятнадцать</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>семьсот</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>двадцать</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>восемьсот</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>двадцать один, двадцать одно, двадцать одно</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>девятьсот</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>двадцать два, двадцать два</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>девятьсот девяносто девять</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>двадцать три</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>тысяча</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>двадцать четыре</td>
<td>1,001</td>
<td>тысяча одна, тысяча одна</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>двадцать пять</td>
<td>1,002</td>
<td>тысяча два, тысяча две</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>тридцать</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>тысяча сто</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>тридцать один, тридцать одно</td>
<td>1,211</td>
<td>тысяча двести одиннадцать</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>тридцать два, тридцать две</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>две тысячи</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the different endings of одни, see 8.1.2

For the different endings of два, see 8.1.3

For the different endings of тысячи and миллионы, 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 миллиард; a (US) trillion (i.e. one million million) is, however, триллион.

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:

сто тысяч четыре сорок одна тысяча пятьсот сорок семьсот пятьдесят одна тысяча триста восемьдесят четыре

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 тридцать девять девяносто два шестнадцать

In journalistic and academic writing the following abbreviations are frequently found:

тыс., тысяч (тысячи, тысяч, etc.)
млн., миллион (миллиона, миллионов, etc.)
млрд., миллиард (миллиарда, миллиардов, etc.)

Наш завод выпускает ежегодно 400 тыс. машин.

Our factory manufactures 400,000 cars a year.

В Москве и её пригородах проживают около 20 млн. человек.

About 20 million people live in Moscow and the surrounding area.
In 2002 Russian military expenditure amounted to approximately 11 billion dollars.

8.1.3 Declension of ОДИ́Н

The declension of the numeral оди́н is similar to that of the pronoun этот:

For the declension of этот see 7.3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>оди́н</td>
<td>одна</td>
<td>одно́</td>
<td>одни́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>одногó</td>
<td>одной</td>
<td>одногó</td>
<td>однóх</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>одномú</td>
<td>одной</td>
<td>одномú</td>
<td>однîм</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aacc.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen. однóу</td>
<td>однó</td>
<td>as nom. or gen. однóм</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>однóм</td>
<td>одной</td>
<td>однóм</td>
<td>однîми</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>однóм</td>
<td>одной</td>
<td>однóм</td>
<td>однîх</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 одногó человéка, который с тобой не согла́сится.

I know one person who won’t agree with you.

Я провёл с неё толькó оди́н день, но уже знаю всю истóрно её семьéй.

I’ve only spent one day with her, but I already know the whole history of her family.

Почему мужчины любят однóх женéц, а жéнятся на другóх?

Why do men not marry the women they love?
(Literally, Why do men love some women, but marry different ones?)

Я читаю детективы.

I read nothing but detective novels.

8.1.4 The plural of ОДИ́Н

The plural form of ОДИ́Н 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)’:
He put one pair of trousers and one shirt in his suitcase.

2 With the meaning ‘only’, ‘nothing but’:

Я читаю одни детективы.

I read nothing but detective novels.

3 With the meaning ‘alone’, ‘on one’s own’:

Не оставляйте детей дома одних!

Don’t leave your children at home on their own.

4 With the meaning ‘some’ (in contrast to others):

Одни увлекаются спортом, другие музыкой, а третьи ничем не увлекаются.

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, четыре

The numerals два(2), три(3) and четыре(4) follow a declension pattern peculiar to themselves:
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 углу двух милиционёров?

Did you notice two policemen on the corner?

На этом снимке мы видим четырёх дочерей последнего царя.

On this photograph we can see all four daughters of the last tsar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine and neuter</th>
<th>All genders</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom. ̀два́</td>
<td>двое́</td>
<td>две́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. ̀дво́й</td>
<td>двое́й</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat. ̀дво́м</td>
<td>двое́м</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc. as nom. or gen.</td>
<td>двое́й</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr. ̀дво́мый</td>
<td>двое́мый</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep. ̀дво́м</td>
<td>двое́м</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All genders</th>
<th>All genders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom. ̀три́</td>
<td>четы́ре́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. ̀трё́х</td>
<td>четы́рё́х</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat. ̀трё́м</td>
<td>четы́рё́м</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc. as nom. or gen.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr. ̀трё́мь</td>
<td>четы́рё́мь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep. ̀трё́х</td>
<td>четы́рё́х</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Я только что купил две последние книги Бориса Акунина.

I’ve just bought Boris Akunin’s last two books.

Дайте, пожалуйста, три банки пива и две большие бутылки минеральной воды.

Could you give me three cans of beer and two large bottles of mineral water.

**NOTE** Одн and два are the only numerals that distinguish gender; одн, 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>пять (5)</th>
<th>шесть (6)</th>
<th>семь (7)</th>
<th>восьмь (8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>пять</td>
<td>шесть</td>
<td>семь</td>
<td>восьмь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>пяти</td>
<td>шести</td>
<td>семи</td>
<td>восьми</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>пяти</td>
<td>шести</td>
<td>семи</td>
<td>восьми</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>пяти</td>
<td>шести</td>
<td>семи</td>
<td>восьми</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>пятьъ</td>
<td>шестьъ</td>
<td>семьъ</td>
<td>восьмъо</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>пяти</td>
<td>шести</td>
<td>семи</td>
<td>восьми</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>девять (9)</th>
<th>десять (10)</th>
<th>двенадцать (12)</th>
<th>двадцать (20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>девять</td>
<td>десять</td>
<td>двенадцать</td>
<td>двадцать</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>девяти</td>
<td>десяти</td>
<td>двенадцати</td>
<td>двадцати</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>девяти</td>
<td>десяти</td>
<td>двенадцати</td>
<td>двадцати</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>девятьъ</td>
<td>десятьъ</td>
<td>двенадцатьъ</td>
<td>двадцатьъ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>девятьъ</td>
<td>десятьъ</td>
<td>двенадцатьъ</td>
<td>двадцатьъ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>девяти</td>
<td>десяти</td>
<td>двенадцати</td>
<td>двадцати</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** The numeral восьмь has a fleeting vowel, which (optionally) reappears in the instrumental case.

The remaining numerals between 11 and 19 follow the same pattern as двадцать; тридцать (30) follows the same pattern as двадцать.
8.1.7 The declension of сорок, девяносто and сто

The numerals сорок (40), девяносто (90) and сто (100) follow a distinctive, but simple declension pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nom. and Acc.</th>
<th>сорок</th>
<th>девяносто</th>
<th>сто</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All other cases</td>
<td>сорока</td>
<td>девяноста</td>
<td>ена</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:
8.1.9 The declension of числительные ноль/нуль, тысяча, миллион, миллиард

The numerals ноль/нуль(0), тысяча‘thousand’, миллион‘million’, миллиард ‘(US) billion’ are more like nouns than the other numerals. They have grammatical gender, decline like nouns and, unlike other numerals (except один), they have both singular and plural forms.

ноль/нуль is masculine and declines like a masculine noun ending in -ъ.
тысяча is feminine and declines like a feminine noun ending in -ча.

Миллион and миллиард are masculine and decline like masculine nouns ending in a consonant.

**Singular:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Миллион</th>
<th>Миллиард</th>
<th>Тысяча</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>ноль/нуль</td>
<td>тысяча</td>
<td>миллион</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>ноль/нуль</td>
<td>тысячи</td>
<td>миллиона</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>ноль/нуль</td>
<td>тысяче</td>
<td>миллиону</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>ноль/нуль</td>
<td>тысячу</td>
<td>миллион</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>ноль/нуль</td>
<td>тысяче</td>
<td>миллионом</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>ноль/нуль</td>
<td>тысяче</td>
<td>миллионе</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Миллиард</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>миллиард</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>миллиарда</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>миллиарду</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>миллиард</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>миллиардом</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>миллиарде</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plural:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Genitive</th>
<th>Dative</th>
<th>Accusative</th>
<th>Instrumental</th>
<th>Prepositional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>ноль/нуль</td>
<td>тысячи</td>
<td>миллионы</td>
<td>миллиарды</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>нольей/нулей</td>
<td>тысяч</td>
<td>миллионы</td>
<td>миллиард</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>нольем/нuleм</td>
<td>тысячам</td>
<td>миллионам</td>
<td>миллиардам</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>нольи/нули</td>
<td>тысячи</td>
<td>миллионы</td>
<td>миллиарды</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>нолейми/нuleм</td>
<td>тысячами</td>
<td>миллионами</td>
<td>миллиардами</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>нолью/нулю</td>
<td>тысячах</td>
<td>миллионах</td>
<td>миллиардах</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The plural of ноль/нуль is fairly rare, but occurs in such contexts as:

**Число триллион изображается на письме единицей с двенадцатью нулями.**

The figure one trillion is written as a one, followed by twelve noughts.

The plural forms of тысяча, миллионы and миллиард 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:

**Наша фирма имеет представительства в двадцати семи десяти четырёх городах по всему миру.**

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 бассейн Невы входят около пятисот тысяч озёр и шестидесяти тысяч 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 одні́н in the plural, see 8.1.4

Я купи́л тóлько однú бухáнку чёрного хлéба.

I bought only one loaf of black bread.

В со́вё́тские време́на иностранцы не могли éздить из одного гóрода 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 чита́ю одні́х классико́в; в прошлóм году́ я не прочи́тал ни одного современного ромáна.

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, трé, чéтьре

When the numerals два, трé, or чéтьре are themselves in the nominative or the (inanimate) accusative, any noun that is used with them will be in the genitive singular:

Я вы́рос в большóй семье: у меня́ трé брата́ и две сестры́.

I grew up in a big family; I have three brothers and two sisters.

Лéтом в на́шем офисе очень жéрко: там чéтьре окна́, и все они́ выхо́дят 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, трé, чéтьре, 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 его на вокзале три часа.

I waited at the station for him for three hours.

Мы болтали больше часа.

We chatted away for more than an hour.

If nouns used after два, три, четыре 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 меня два чёрных кота.

I have two black cats.

В нашем офисе четыре больших окна.

Our office has four big windows.

Мы поставили перед собой три основных основные задачи.

We have set ourselves three main tasks.

У меня две старшие сестры.

I have two older sisters.

The nominative plural of задачи is задачи, the nominative plural of сестры is сёстры.
A noun that takes the endings of an adjective (e.g. животное ‘animal’ or столовая ‘dining room’, ‘canteen’) behaves like an adjective:

В нашем корпусе две студенческих столовых и буфет для преподавателей.

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 последние три года она написала две книги и десять научных 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 знаете моих двух младших сестёр?

Do you know my two younger sisters?

Она живёт одна с тремя огромными собаками.

She lives on her own with three enormous dogs.

Я смотрел в трёх разных учебниках и нашёл три разных ответа.

I looked in three different textbooks and found three different answers.

8.2.3 The cases used with numerals from Пять to Девятьсот

When a numeral between пять and девятьсот is in the nominative or the accusative case, any following noun and/or adjective is in the genitive plural:

Наш поезд опоздал на пять часов.

Our train was five hours late.
Из послёдние пять лет она написала две кни́ги и тридцать нау́чных ста́тей.

In the last five years she has written two books and thirty learned articles.

Тогда обед в этом ресторане стоил четы́реста рубле́й.

In those days a meal in this restaurant cost 400 roubles.

The nouns год and челове́к have special forms that are used after numerals instead of the ordinary genitive plural. These forms are respectively лет and челове́к:

За послёдние пять лет она написала две кни́ги и тридцать нау́чных ста́тей.

In the last five years she has written two books and thirty learned articles.

Я насчита́л в за́ле примерно двести челове́к.

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 магази́н работает с семи часо́в.

Our shop is open from seven o’clock.
He ended up in last place with his miserable five hundred votes.

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 ноль/нуль, тысяча, миллион, миллиард

When the numerals ноль/нуль, тысяча, миллион or миллиард are followed by a noun and/or an adjective, these are always in the genitive plural, regardless of the case of the numeral itself:

Минима́льная температу́ра но́чью бу́дет о́коло нуля́ градусов.

The minimum temperature at night will be around zero degrees.

Та́кие ве́щи мо́жно купи́ть в лю́бом магази́не за ты́сячу рубле́й.

You can buy things like that in any shop for a thousand roubles.

Оди́н киломе́тр равен (оди́й) ты́сяче метров.

One kilometre is equal to one thousand metres.

Из окна́ самолёта бы́л ви́ден горо́д, кото́рый свети́лся милю́ном огне́й.

From the window of the aeroplane you could see a city lit up by a million lights.

Инвести́ции в́ этот проеќт составят 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 моей книге двести сорок одна страница.

In my book there are 241 pages.

Моя новая книга содержит двести сорок одну страницу.


Он был задержан на границе при попытке нелегально вывезти из страны семьдесят три редкие/редких иконы.

He was arrested at the frontier while trying to take 73 rare icons out of the country illegally.

Один килобайт равен (одной) тысяче двадцати четырёх байтам.

One kilobyte is equal to one thousand and twenty-four bytes.

When тысячa, миллион or миллиард are used after other numerals, their endings are determined by the rules given in 8.2.1–8.2.3:

Билет до Москвы в бизнес-классе стоит две тысячи евро.

A business class ticket to Moscow costs 2,000 euros.
The basin of the River Neva includes about 50,000 lakes and 60,000 rivers.

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*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Номер</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>8-9 Plural</th>
<th>10 Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>двое</td>
<td>чётвёрое</td>
<td>четвёрый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>двоих</td>
<td>четвёрых</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>двоим</td>
<td>четверым</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>двоим</td>
<td>четверыми</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>двоём</td>
<td>четвёрьми</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many dictionaries and reference works list collective numerals for 8 (*восьмеро*), 9 (*девятёро*), and 10 (*десятеро*), 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:
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, че́тверо are used with nouns that denote countable objects and that do not have a singular form, e.g. сутки ‘day’, ‘period of 24 hours’, брю́ки ‘trousers’, часы́ ‘clock’, ‘watch’; these numerals are also used with дети́ ‘children’:

После этого разгово́ра она́ не спала́ дво́е суток.

After that conversation she didn’t sleep for two (whole days and) nights.

На туале́тном сто́лике аккура́тно лежа́ли тро́е жёнщи́н и не́сколько расчёсок.

On the dressing table were neatly placed three pairs of scissors and several combs.

Мо́и до́чери нужна́ кварти́ра побольше: у них с мужем уже́ че́тверо де́тей.

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. мужчи́на ‘man’) and (2) when the persons concerned are thought of as a group, rather than as separate individuals:

Если встре́чаются дво́е мужчи́ны, они́ разгово́ряют о жёнщениях, или о футболе; других тем просто́ не существует.

If two men meet, they talk about either women or football; there are no other topics of conversation.

В на́шем отделе́ дво́е мужчи́ны и четы́ре женщи́ны.

In our department there are two men and four women.

Победи́телями конку́рса при́знаны́ тро́е студен́тов Новосиби́рского государ́ственного університета.

The winners of the competition were three students from Novosibirsk State
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:

There are four of us in the group.

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:

He eats enough for five.

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 replaced by ordinary cardinal numerals:

Она приехала со своими двумя детьми.

She came with her two children.

Ветреная, морозная погода сохранятся в Москве, как минимум, в течение двух суток.

The windy and frosty weather in Moscow will continue for at least another 48 hours.

Мальчик стоял сразу за двумя мужчинами, которые громко разговаривали между 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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ordinal Number</th>
<th>Russian Equivalent</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>первый, первая, первое, первые</td>
<td>60th, шестидесятый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>второй, вторая, второе, вторые</td>
<td>70th, семидесятый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>третий, третья, третье, третьи</td>
<td>80th, восьмидесятый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>четвёртый, четвёртая, четвёртое, четвёртые</td>
<td>90th, девяностый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>пятый, пятая, пятое, пятое</td>
<td>100th, сотый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>шестой, шестая, шестое, шестые</td>
<td>200th, двухсотый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>седьмой, седьмая, седьмое, седьмые</td>
<td>300th, трёхсотый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>восьмой</td>
<td>400th, четырёхсотый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>девятый</td>
<td>500th, пятисотый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>десятый</td>
<td>600th, шестисотый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>одиннадцатый</td>
<td>700th, семисотый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th</td>
<td>пятнадцатый</td>
<td>800th, восьмисотый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th</td>
<td>двадцатый</td>
<td>900th, девятисотый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th</td>
<td>тридцатый</td>
<td>1,000th, тысячный</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40th</td>
<td>сороковой</td>
<td>2,000th, двухтысячный</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50th</td>
<td>пятидесятый</td>
<td>10,000th, десятитысячный</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45th</td>
<td>сорок пятое</td>
<td>150th, сто пятидесятый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>281st</td>
<td>двести восемьдесят первый</td>
<td>1975th, тысяча девятьсот семьдесят первый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007th</td>
<td>две тысячи седьмой</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:
8.4.2 Declension of ordinal numerals

The numeral трéтьий ‘third’ declines like one of the second class of soft adjectives. Its endings can be illustrated by the following sample:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>трéтьй</td>
<td>трéтья</td>
<td>трéтье</td>
<td>трéтья</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>трéтьего</td>
<td>трéтьей</td>
<td>трéтьего</td>
<td>трéтьих</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more detail on the declension of трéтьй 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 нóвый or мóлодóй, 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:

Это вторáя улица налево.

It’s the second street on the left.

Трéтье марта – это мой день рождения.

The 3rd of March is my birthday.

Его первые три ромáна никто не читáл, но чéтвертый почему-то пошёл нарасхват.

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 семнадцатьм 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 добьюсь на сорок седьмом автобусе до университета?

Excuse me, will a 47 bus get me to the university?

Мне, пожалуйста, два купеных 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:
These nouns are all feminine and declined according to the patterns for feminine nouns ending in -а or -ъ given in 2.9 and 2.10. Their use is illustrated by the following examples:

Давай разделим последнее яблоко поровну, тебе половину и мне половину.

Let’s divide the last apple evenly—half for you and half for me.

Я прочитал два трети его книги, но потом бросил, так как уже разгадал концовку.

I read (the first) two-thirds of his book, but then gave up, since I had already guessed the ending.

Три четверти всей недвижимости в этой части города фактически принадлежит банкам.

Three quarters of the property in this part of the city effectively belongs to the banks.
The fraction 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 переехали сюда пять с половиной месяцев назад.

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):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Нормальная часть</th>
<th>Frauenzahl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>одна пята</td>
<td>one-fifth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>две семьих</td>
<td>two-sevenths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>три десятых</td>
<td>three-tenths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any following noun and/or adjective is always in the *genitive singular*:

Если быть точным, то две пятых фірмы принадлежит мне, а три пятых остальными акционерам.

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 седьмых.

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 целая ‘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 | It 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 процёнт‘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 (ты́сячна ‘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:

dва и сорок восемь шестьдесят 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nom. and Acc.</th>
<th>Masc. and n.</th>
<th>All genders</th>
<th>Fem.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All other cases</td>
<td>полтора́</td>
<td>полторы́</td>
<td>полу́тора</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 года я перечита́л всего Пу́шкина.

In eighteen months (literally, one and a half years) I reread the whole of Pushkin.

Текст у меня́ очень короткий — не бо́льше полу́тора стра́ниц.

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.

Полтора can be combined with other numerals as follows:

| Полтора́ста | 150 |
| Полторы́ тысяч | 1,500 |
| Полтора́ миллиона | 1,500,000 |

Я помню те времена, когда месячная зарплата в полтора́ста рублей считалась совсем неплохой.

I can remember the days when a monthly salary of 150 roubles was thought to be not at all bad.

Наша область получит полтора́ миллиона рублей на борьбу с лесными пожарами.

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:

| Полгода | half a year, six months |
| Полкило́ | half a kilo |
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 a.

(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 были в полчаса от победы, когда прозвучал финальный свисток.

We were within an inch of victory (literally, half a step from victory) when the final whistle blew.

Пациентам иногда приходится ждать операции до полугода.

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:
The basic function of these nouns is to indicate the associated digit:

Вы неправильно записали мой телефон: в начале должна быть двойка.

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, двойка and above are used to indicate the face value of playing cards; двойка (2 = fail), тройка (3 = satisfactory), четверка (4 = good), пятерка (5 = excellent) are the standard marks awarded throughout the Russian education system; тройка can mean ‘a team of three horses used to pull a cart or a sledge’ and also ‘a three-piece suit’; восьмерка can mean ‘an eight’ (in rowing); десятка can mean ‘a tenrouble note’. All can be used instead of ordinal numerals to indicate bus or tram routes.

В карты я никогда не играю: мне попадаются один шестёрки и семёрки.

I never play cards; I only ever get sixes and sevens.
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.

Гла́вы стран Больше́й восьмёрки встреча́ются 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 три́дцать 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Немецкое</th>
<th>Английское</th>
<th>Русское</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>пара</td>
<td>pair, couple</td>
<td>пара</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>десяток</td>
<td>ten (of something)</td>
<td>десяток</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>полсотни</td>
<td>fifty (of something)</td>
<td>полсотни</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пято́к</td>
<td>five (of something)</td>
<td>пято́к</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ди́жина</td>
<td>dozen</td>
<td>ди́жина</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сотня</td>
<td>hundred (of something)</td>
<td>сотня</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Вчера́ я купил в суперма́ркете деся́ток яи́ц, так что на завтрак можно поджарить я́ичницу.

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 ди́жина 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masc. and n.</th>
<th>Fem.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>́оба</td>
<td>́обе</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>́обе́х</td>
<td>́обе́х</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>́обе́им</td>
<td>́обе́им</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
<td>as nom. or gen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>́обе́ими</td>
<td>́обе́ими</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>́обе́х</td>
<td>́обе́х</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
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 другое/ и те и другие* is used instead.

Соседи сверху – пенсионеры, соседи по лестничной клетке – пожилой инвалид с дочерью. И те и другие очень милые приветливые люди.

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 гулять или питьку?
— Мне и то и другое.

— Do you want goulash or pizza?
— Both.

В воскресенье я предпочитаю сначала позавтракать и только потом полистать газеты, а моя жена велит и то и другое одновременно.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>сколько?</td>
<td>how much?, how many?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>несколько</td>
<td>some, several</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мало</td>
<td>not much, few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>много</td>
<td>much (of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>немногое</td>
<td>a little (of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>некоторый</td>
<td>some, a certain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>столько</td>
<td>so much, so many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>многое</td>
<td>much (of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>немного</td>
<td>some, a little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>многие</td>
<td>many (of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>немногие</td>
<td>only a few (of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>некоторые</td>
<td>some, a few (of)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Сколько, столько and несколько decline according to the following pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Declension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>сколько</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>скольких</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>сколькоим</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>сколько</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>сколькими</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>скольких</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When сколько or столько is in the nominative or the accusative case, any following noun and/or adjective is in the genitive (singular or plural); when несколько 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.

Много, мало, немного do not decline and are used in the nominative and accusative only. Много and мало are followed by a noun in the genitive (singular or plural); немного is usually followed by a noun in the genitive singular.
Многое and немногое decline like adjectives in the neuter singular. Мно́гие, немного́е and некото́рые decline like adjectives in the plural. Некоторый declines like an adjective.

For more on the declension of adjectives, see 6.1.

For more on the use of сколько, see 17.3.3 and 19.3.1.

For more on the use of столько, 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>глупый</td>
<td>stupid</td>
<td>глупо</td>
<td>stupidly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>гру́бый</td>
<td>crude</td>
<td>гру́бо</td>
<td>crudely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дешёвый</td>
<td>cheap</td>
<td>дешёво</td>
<td>cheaply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>любезный</td>
<td>kind</td>
<td>любезно</td>
<td>kindly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чистый</td>
<td>clean</td>
<td>чисто</td>
<td>cleanly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дорогой</td>
<td>dear</td>
<td>дорого</td>
<td>dearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>редкий</td>
<td>rare</td>
<td>редко</td>
<td>rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тихий</td>
<td>quiet</td>
<td>тихо</td>
<td>quietly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>хороший</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>хорошо́</td>
<td>well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adverbs formed from soft adjectives of the first group (see 6.2) and adverbs that are formed from adjectives ending in -жий, -чий, -шний or -щий and that do not have stress on the final syllable end in -е:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>внешний</td>
<td>external</td>
<td>внешне</td>
<td>externally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>внутренний</td>
<td>internal</td>
<td>внутренне</td>
<td>internally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>искренний</td>
<td>sincere</td>
<td>искренне</td>
<td>sincerely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>неуклюжий</td>
<td>clumsy</td>
<td>неуклюже</td>
<td>clumsily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>блестящий</td>
<td>brilliant</td>
<td>блестящее</td>
<td>brilliantly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTE Alongside искренне, there is an alternative form искренне 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 -кий end in -ски or -кі respectively:

геройческий  heroic  геро́йчески  heroically
tворческий  creative  творчески  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 -кий. 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:
His judgements were always superficial and childishly naive.

**NOTE** In some instances adverbs with and without the **по**-prefix exist side by side:

дружески/по-дружески
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’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>po-angliyski</td>
<td>in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>po-nemetski</td>
<td>in German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>po-ruessler</td>
<td>in Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>po-frantski</td>
<td>in French</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Вы говорите po-ruesski?

Do you speak Russian?

У нас такие странные диалоги: она задаёт вопросы po-angliyski, а я отвечаю po-frantski.

We have these strange dialogues: she asks questions in English, and I reply in French.

Хозяйка дома оказалась занятой в длинный разговор, и он ушёл po-angliyski, не попрощавшись.

His hostess was involved in a long conversation and he left without saying goodbye.

**NOTE** уходить/уйти po-angliyski 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 *po-* prefix:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>волк, ‘wolf’</td>
<td>volchii</td>
<td>po-volchyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘relating to wolves’</td>
<td>‘in a wolf-like manner’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кошка, ‘cat’</td>
<td>kozhiy</td>
<td>po-koshchi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘relating to cats’</td>
<td>‘in a cat-like manner’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>человек, ‘man’</td>
<td>chelovechi</td>
<td>po-chelovechi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘relating to human beings’</td>
<td>‘in a human way’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
В его рассказах звери часто говорят по-человечьи.

In his stories animals often speak like humans.

С волками жить — по-волчьи выйти.

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-человечески is used:

Мне её по-человечески 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>по-дру́гому</td>
<td>differently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по-преде́жнему</td>
<td>as before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по-мо́ему</td>
<td>in my opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по-ново́му</td>
<td>in a new way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по-ра́зноуму</td>
<td>variously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по-своёму</td>
<td>in my/your/his/her/our/their own way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Давайте подумаем, как это сказать по-другому.

Let’s think how we might say this differently.

Страна стремительно меняется, и придётся научиться жить и работать по-новому.

The country’s changing rapidly, and we’ll have to learn how to live and to work in a new way.

По-моему, они приняли правильное решение.

In my opinion they’ve made the right decision.

Этот фильм по-своему интересен, но многим он не понравится.

In its own way the film is interesting, but a lot of people won’t like it.

In some contexts по-разному can serve as the equivalent of ‘it depends’ or ‘it varies’:

—— Как реагирует местная администрация на ваши требования?
—— По-разному, но в общем у нас с ней очень хорошие отношения.

—— 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:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>сейчас</td>
<td>now, immediately,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>just a minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тогда</td>
<td>then, at that time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>позавчера</td>
<td>the day before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yesterday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сегодня</td>
<td>today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>послезавтра</td>
<td>the day after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tomorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>нанакануне</td>
<td>the day before</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the pronunciation of **сегодня**, see [1.5.5 and 7.3.1].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>рано</td>
<td>early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>давно</td>
<td>a long time ago,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for a long time (referring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to a continuing action)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>длительно</td>
<td>for a long time (referring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to an action in the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or the future)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сразу</td>
<td>immediately, at once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ранее</td>
<td>in advance, beforehand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>всегда</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>уже</td>
<td>already</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>поздно</td>
<td>late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>недавно</td>
<td>recently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>скоро</td>
<td>soon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>неделенно</td>
<td>immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>постоянно</td>
<td>constantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ещё</td>
<td>still, yet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The adverb ещё is combined with the negative particle нето 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:
For the use of **назад** in the time expression (тому)**назад** ago, see **21.1.9**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>здесь, тут</td>
<td>here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сюда</td>
<td>here (motion), hither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>отсюда</td>
<td>from here, hence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>везде</td>
<td>everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>повсюду</td>
<td>everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>далеко</td>
<td>far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вверху́</td>
<td>above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вверх</td>
<td>upwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сверху́</td>
<td>from above, from upstairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вниз</td>
<td>downwards, downstairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>впереди́</td>
<td>in front, ahead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>назад</td>
<td>backwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сбоку́</td>
<td>from/on one side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>справа</td>
<td>from/on the right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>там</td>
<td>there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>туда́</td>
<td>there (motion), thither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>оттуда</td>
<td>from there, thence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>всюду</td>
<td>everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>близко</td>
<td>near</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рядом</td>
<td>adjacent, next to, next door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>наверху́</td>
<td>upstairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>наверх</td>
<td>upwards, upstairs (motion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>внизу́</td>
<td>below, downstairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>снизу́</td>
<td>from below, from downstairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вперёд</td>
<td>forwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сзади</td>
<td>from the back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>слева</td>
<td>from/on the left</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indefinite Adverb</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
<th>Russian Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>где?</td>
<td>where?</td>
<td>где́-либо</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>когда?</td>
<td>when?</td>
<td>когда́-либо</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>откуда?</td>
<td>where from?, whence?</td>
<td>откуда-либо</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>зачем?</td>
<td>why?, with what aim?</td>
<td>зачём-либо</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>как?</td>
<td>how?</td>
<td>как-либо</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>куда?</td>
<td>where to?, whither?</td>
<td>куда-либо</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>почему?</td>
<td>why?, for what reason?</td>
<td>почему-либо</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are no adverbs in the кое-series formed from откуда, почему́, зачём.

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 где́-то забыл свой зонт.

I’ve left my umbrella somewhere.

Она́ когда-то работала у нас.

At one time she did work for us.

Он почему́-то всегда́ опаздывает.

For some reason he’s always late (there is a specific reason, but the speaker does not know what it is).

Он всегда́ почему́-нибудь да опаздывает.
He’s always late for some reason or other (but not necessarily the same reason each time).

Не беспокойтесь: как-нибудь разберёмся.

Don’t worry, we’ll sort it out somehow.

Может, сходим куда-нибудь после обеда.

Perhaps we might go somewhere after lunch.

У себя на даче он чувствовал себя очень комфортно - комфортнее, чем где-либо.

He always felt at ease at his dacha, more at ease than anywhere else.

Зима в этом году теплее, чем когда-либо на моей памяти.

This year the winter has been warmer than at any time that I can remember.

Из-за метели движение транспорта в городе парализовано, и кое-где отключено электричество.

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 кáк-то and кáк-нибудь are sometimes used to refer to time, i.e. they can be synonyms of когда-то and когда-нибудь respectively:

Приезжайте кáк-нибудь летом, и мы вам покáжем всё 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 кáждого кáрса нужно было вы́ставить баскетбо́льную кома́нду. Кое-как и мы собрали вось́мь че́ловек.

Each year had to put up a basketball team. We just about managed to assemble (a squad of) eight people.

В шкóле он уч́ился кое-ка́к, с двóйки на трóйку.

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.

tакже  also
tоже  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 a ‘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.
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).

Она свободно владеет французским, испанским, а также разговорным русским языком. Её брат также немного говорит по-русски.

She has a fluent command of French, Spanish and also colloquial Russian. Her brother also speaks a little Russian.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>вместе</th>
<th>together</th>
<th>даже</th>
<th>even</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>иначе</td>
<td>otherwise</td>
<td>кстати</td>
<td>by the way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>наоборот</td>
<td>on the contrary</td>
<td>опять</td>
<td>again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>почти</td>
<td>almost</td>
<td>слишком</td>
<td>too (excessively)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>так</td>
<td>so</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 себя на даче он чувствовал себя очень комфортнее, чем где-либо.

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 более 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 советские времена дети проводили летние каникулы более организованно.

In Soviet times children spent their summer holidays in a more organised fashion.
For the use of мёнее with adverbs, see 21.9.6.

A superlative form can be created by using the comparative and the genitive pronoun forms всев (if the reference is to people) or всего (in other contexts):

Лучше всех у нас в семье поёт мама.

In our family the one who sings the best is mother.

Лучше всего она поёт украинские народные песни.

What she sings best are Ukrainian folk songs.

Лёгче всего начать с самого начала.

It will be easiest to begin at the very beginning.

Some of these forms have become set expressions:

прежде всего: ‘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. 3a (+ instr.), meaning that in the context being described, 3a 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 y (+ 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:
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*:

Сегодня состоялась встреча студентов с кандидатом в депутаты Государственной Думы.

Today students had a chance to meet one of the candidates standing for election to the State Duma.

После окончания университета она пошла в актрисы.

After finishing university she went off to become an actress.
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 что за итога?

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>в (во)</td>
<td>into, to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>на</td>
<td>onto, to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по</td>
<td>until (up to and including)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>про</td>
<td>about, concerning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>через</td>
<td>across, after (a certain time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>за</td>
<td>behind (motion), (in exchange) for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>на</td>
<td>against, onto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>под (поло)</td>
<td>under (motion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сквозь</td>
<td>through</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.2.3 Prepositions followed by the genitive

The main prepositions followed by the genitive are:
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>благода́рь</td>
<td>thanks to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>к (ко)</td>
<td>to(wards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по</td>
<td>along, according to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вопреки</td>
<td>despite, contrary to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>навстречу</td>
<td>in the direction of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>согласно</td>
<td>in accordance with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.2.5 Prepositions followed by the instrumental

The main prepositions followed by the *instrumental* are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>за</td>
<td>behind (location)</td>
<td>за домом (behind the house)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>над (надо)</td>
<td>above</td>
<td>над столом (above the desk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>перед (передо)</td>
<td>in front of, (just) before</td>
<td>перед столом (in front of the desk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>между</td>
<td>between</td>
<td>между столом и стулом (between the desk and the chair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>под (подо)</td>
<td>under (location)</td>
<td>под столом (under the desk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>с (со)</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>с столом (with the desk)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.2.6 Prepositions used with the prepositional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>в (во)</td>
<td>in (location)</td>
<td>в Москве (in Moscow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>о (об, обо)</td>
<td>about, concerning</td>
<td>о товарах (about goods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>при</td>
<td>adjoining, at, in the presence of, in the lifetime of</td>
<td>при Москве (at Moscow)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** Both *о (об, обо)(+ prep.)* and *пос(+ 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>в Москва́ (вМоскв́)</td>
<td>to Moscow</td>
<td>в Москве́ (to Moscow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>с братом (с братом)</td>
<td>with (my) brother</td>
<td>с братом (with my brother)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>под Москва́й (подМоскв́й)</td>
<td>just outside Moscow</td>
<td>под Москва́й (just outside Moscow)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 хотите, возьмите по два.

If you want, take two each.

Я уезжаю дни на 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 городе́м — 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 дозвони́ться: он, наве́рно, за́ городом.

I can’t get through to him on the phone; he’s probably out of town.

Я на́ ночь не пью крепкий чай.

I don’t drink strong tea before going to bed.

Я здесь́ ни при чём: стака́н сам упал 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:

- брать́/взять́ кого́-нибудь за́ руку — to take someone by the hand
- доста́вка на́ дом — home delivery
- как се́ть на́ голову — like a bolt from the blue
- пропа́вший без вести — missing in action

9.2.8 The fleeing vowel

The three prepositions consisting of a single consonant and some other prepositions ending in a consonant have a fleeing vowel which appears mostly before certain consonant clusters. Forms containing a fleeing vowel are indicated in brackets in the lists above.

With the prepositions б, к, č the forms with the fleeing 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 б and č only):
Also:

во Вьетнаме in Vietnam

(2) Before the quantity words многое, многое: 'many'; before forms of the first person pronoun beginning ми-before forms of the pronoun во Вьетнаме 'all' beginning вс-:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>во мне</th>
<th>in me</th>
<th>ка мне</th>
<th>to me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>с со мной</td>
<td>with me</td>
<td>во многих</td>
<td>in many . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>к со многим</td>
<td>to many . .</td>
<td>с со многими</td>
<td>with many . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>во всем</td>
<td>in everyone</td>
<td>кое всем</td>
<td>to everyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>с со всеми</td>
<td>with everyone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE Forms without the fleeting vowel are also found before the quantity words многое, многое.
(3) Before sequences of two consonants in monosyllabic masculine nouns that themselves have a fleeting vowel in the nominative singular:

| лёд | ice      | со льдом | with ice |
| рот | mouth    | во рту  | in the mouth |

(4) In some other set combinations:

| во дворе́ | in the yard | во имя́ | in the name (of) |
| во избежание | for the | во сколько? | 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 многое, многое, before forms of the pronoun весь beginning вс- and before some other sequences of consonants:

| надо мно́й | above me | перед мно́й | in front of me |
| под мно́й | beneath me | под многое́ми/ | beneath many |
| под мно́й | многое/ | без всего́/ | without everything |
| без всего́ | without everything | подо льдом | under the ice |

The preposition об 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 Англии | about England | об одного́ | about one |
| об этом | about this | обо мне́ | about me |
| обо всём | about everything |

9.2.9 Prepositions requiring special comment: за (+ accus.)

When it is not used in contexts relating to time or place (see 21.1.14, 21.2.14), the basic meaning of за (+ accus.) 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:

Похожий дом продаётся на соседней улице за сто тысяч.
A house like this is on sale in the next street for a hundred thousand.

Иван купил у моего соседа велосипед за тысячу рублей.

Ivan bought a bicycle off his neighbour for one thousand roubles.

Сколько вы заплатили за билет?

How much did you pay for your ticket?

В прошлом году ей был присуждён специальный приз за личный вклад в развитие российского телевидения.

Last year she was awarded a special prize for her personal contribution to the development of Russian television.

Его оштрафовали за нарушение паспортного режима.

He was fined for breaking the passport regulations.

When ‘for’ means ‘for the benefit of’, the Russian equivalent is usually для:

Для студентов есть специальная столовая.

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 моим 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.
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 Alfёrov 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’:

Она 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 **c(+ instr.)** is not used in contexts relating to the instrument with which something is accomplished:

После́д молока́ следует мыть сначала холодной, а затем горя́чей 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’
- **но** ‘but’
- **в то вре́мя как** ‘while’
- **не то ... не то** indicates uncertainty
- **а** ‘and’, ‘but’
- **зато** ‘but’, ‘on the other hand’
- **или** ‘or’
- **то ли ... то ли** indicates conjecture
- **то ... то** indicates alternating actions

#### 9.3.2 The use of **и, а, но, зато, в то вре́мя как**

The conjunctions **и** and **но** correspond to English ‘and’ and ‘but’ respectively:

В университе́те я изучал русский язы́к и литерату́ру.

At university I studied Russian language and literature.

Ве́чером он обы́чно сиди́т дому́ и смотрит телеви́зор.
In the evenings he usually stays at home and watches television.

Зи́мы у нас стали теплее, и очень редко падает 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 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 *но* indicate emphasis, see 20.3.3.

Его выступление на съезде было кратким, но содержательным.

His speech at the congress was short, but full of content.

Вечером он обычно дома, но сегодня я почему-то не могу до него дозвониться.

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 широкий круг друзей и в Москве и в Петербурге.

He has a wide circle of friends in both Moscow and St Petersburg.

In formal written language, however, как … так и is also found:

Наша партия пользуется большой поддержкой как в Москве, так и Санкт-Петербурге.

Our party enjoys great support both in Moscow and in St Petersburg.

The normal equivalent of ‘not only…but also’ is не только … но и:

Её произведения публикуются не только в России, но и во многих странах Центральной и Восточной Европы.

Her works are published not only in Russia, but also in many Central and East European countries.

The use of the conjunction a 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 субботу я уехал к родителям, и в воскресенье мы отметили день рождения 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 субботу я весь день занимался в университетской библиотеке, а в воскресенье мы с подругой ездили за грибами.

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.]
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 examples of the use of a:

Сёстрами он говорил по-русски, а с матерью по-татарски.

He spoke Russian with his sisters and but Tatar with his mother.

Через полчаса придут гости, а ты ещё не привела себя в порядок.

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 приезжаем не в понедельник, а во вторник.

We are arriving not on Monday, but on Tuesday.

For the use of a with также, see 9.1.6.

For the use of a to link sentences, see 23.2.2.
For the use of a in the phrase a то see 21.6.3.

The conjunction зато, used either on its own or after на, means ‘yet’, ‘but on the other hand’:

При таком ремонте жилые комнаты не трогают, (но) зато 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 conjunctionи́ли, 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 после завтра.

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 понимаю: ли он очень умный, ли ему просто повезло.

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 купил себе новую машину, только цвет непонятный, не то серый, не то серебристый.

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).

После распада Советского Союза она эмигрировала то ли в Германию, то ли в Израиль.

After the collapse she emigrated; I think she went either to Germany or to Israel.

The conjunction то ... то indicates alternating actions:

Погода здесь переменчивая: то идёт дождь, то сияет солнце.

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)
- **предназначенный** 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:

- **показано что** because (21.4.6)
- **показано как** because (21.4.6)
- **так как** because, since (21.4.6)
- **поскольку** because, since (21.4.6)
- **ибо** for (21.4.6)
- **так что** so that (21.4.7)
(5) Subordinating conjunction indicating conditions:

если         if (21.5)

(6) Subordinating conjunction indicating a concession:

хотя         although (21.6.3)

(7) Subordinating conjunction of purpose:

чтобы         in order to/that (21.7.3)

(8) Subordinating conjunctions introducing indirect speech:

что         that (21.8.2)
что́бы      introduces indirect commands (21.8.2)
будто         that (implies doubt) (21.8.2)
якобы         that (implies disbelief) (21.8.2)
(9) Subordinating conjunctions used in comparisons:

чём 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 был which is used to form the conditional (see 4.10); just as был 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:

тогда́, когда́ as much as
там, где
туда́, куда́ to the extent that
оттуда, откуда́ in so far as
так, как
столько́, сколько́
настолько́, насколько́
постолько́, поскольку́

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 меня́ никто́ 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.
I know as much about it as you do.

Your problems interest me in so far as they affect the overall atmosphere in the group.

Used on its own, the phrase постъльку посъльку means something like ‘not bad’, ‘up to a point’ or even ‘it depends’:

—У вас хорошие отношения с зарубежными партнерами?

—Постъльку посъльку.

—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 тó* 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 *помещу*:

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 доль ‘down with’, which is followed by a
noun in the accusative case:

Доль смертную казнь!
Down with the death penalty!

The particles вот and он 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’:
Here are my glasses, I’ve been looking for them all day!

Они лежали вот здесь, под этой газетой.

They were lying right here, underneath this newspaper.

Вон Мавзолей Ленина, но, кажется, вход в него закрыт.

There’s Lenin’s Mausoleum, but I don’t think you can get in.

Можно ехать на пятом автобусе; остановка вот там, на той стороне улицы.

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 пустъ to form the third person imperative, see 4.9.

For the use of the particle было 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 лиин direct questions, see 17.1.2.

For the use of the particle лиин 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:
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 куртке!

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 -ник, -ок/-ёк/-ёк, -ец and -чик.

The suffix -ник is never stressed. Examples include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Слово (masculine)</th>
<th>Diminutive (masculine)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>дом</td>
<td>домик</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>заяц</td>
<td>зайчик</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ковёр</td>
<td>коврик</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ломтик</td>
<td>лоттик</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мост</td>
<td>мостик</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>нож</td>
<td>ножик</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сад</td>
<td>садик</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>стол</td>
<td>столик</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>час</td>
<td>часик</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>шар</td>
<td>шарик</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The suffix -ок/-ёк/-ёк is usually, though not always stressed. Before this suffix the consonants -т, -к, -х change to -ж, -ч, -ш respectively. Some nouns ending in -н or -ч change the final consonant to -ш. Examples include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Слово (masculine)</th>
<th>Diminutive (masculine)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>глаз</td>
<td>глазок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>друг</td>
<td>другок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>знак</td>
<td>знакок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>конёк</td>
<td>конёчок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>корень</td>
<td>корешок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кофе</td>
<td>кофеёк</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>круг</td>
<td>кружок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>огонь</td>
<td>огонёк</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>петух</td>
<td>петушок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ремень</td>
<td>ремешок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>старик</td>
<td>старичок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чай</td>
<td>чайки</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>шум</td>
<td>шумок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>горох</td>
<td>горошек</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>орех</td>
<td>орехок</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>человек</td>
<td>человечек</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following are among the nouns that form the diminutive with the -мен suffix:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>морозь</td>
<td>frost</td>
<td>морозен</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>хлеб</td>
<td>bread</td>
<td>хлебен</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are among the nouns that form the diminutive with the -чик suffix:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>блин</td>
<td>pancake</td>
<td>блиничек</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>карман</td>
<td>pocket</td>
<td>карманчик</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>палец</td>
<td>finger</td>
<td>пальчик</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>стакан</td>
<td>glass</td>
<td>стаканчик</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The vast majority of nouns have only one diminutive forms, but the following are exceptions in having two alternative forms:

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-, -щ-respectively and -щ-changes to -ч-.

Examples include:

- вода́ water  водка́ vodka (only! see 10.1.5)
- голова́ head  головка́ also head of any small object
- дорога́ road  дорога́ path
- дочь daughter  дочька
- ель fir tree  ёлька also Christmas tree
- кни́га book  кни́жка
- нога́ leg, foot  ножка́ also leg of item of furniture
- площадь́ square (in city)  площадька any small area
- птица́ bird  пти́чка
- река́ river  речка
- рука́ arm, hand  ручька́ also handle, pen
- стрела́ arrow  стрелка́ also hand (of a clock)
- тётя aunt  тё́тка

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:
10.1.4 Diminutive suffixes for neuter nouns

Many neuter nouns have a diminutive ending in -ко or -нъ. Before these suffixes -к- and -н- change to -ч-, -х- changes to -ш-:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>звезда</td>
<td>star</td>
<td>звёздочка</td>
<td>[as in кредитная карточка credit card]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>карта</td>
<td>card, map</td>
<td>картochka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лодка</td>
<td>boat</td>
<td>лодочка</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тряпка</td>
<td>rag, piece of cloth, duster</td>
<td>тряпочка</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>блюдец</td>
<td>saucer</td>
<td>блюдечко</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>молоко</td>
<td>milk</td>
<td>молочко</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>облако</td>
<td>cloud</td>
<td>облако</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сердце</td>
<td>heart</td>
<td>сердечко</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ухо</td>
<td>ear</td>
<td>ушко</td>
<td>also eye (of a needle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>яблоко</td>
<td>apple</td>
<td>яблочко</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>яйцо</td>
<td>egg</td>
<td>яйчко</td>
<td>also testicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>колесо</td>
<td>wheel</td>
<td>колёсико</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another suffix found with neuter nouns is -це/-цо/-цо; the third variant of the suffix is used after a sequence of two consonants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>зеркало</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>зеркальце</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>слово</td>
<td>word</td>
<td>словцо</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>письмо</td>
<td>letter</td>
<td>письмечко</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** The noun блюдо ‘saucer’ is in origin a diminutive form of блюдо ‘dish’.

A small number of neuter nouns have a diminutive with the suffix -ышко:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>горло</td>
<td>throat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>зерно, зерно</td>
<td>grain, kernel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>крыло</td>
<td>wing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.1.5 Second diminutive suffixes

With some nouns it is possible to add a further suffix, thereby creating a *secondary diminutive* form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>друг</td>
<td>friend</td>
<td>другік</td>
<td>friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>син</td>
<td>son</td>
<td>снік</td>
<td>son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тетя</td>
<td>aunt</td>
<td>тетка</td>
<td>aunt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>минута</td>
<td>minute</td>
<td>минуточка (минутка)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>секунда</td>
<td>second</td>
<td>секундочка</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сестра</td>
<td>sister</td>
<td>сестричка (сестрица)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is particularly important to distinguish the following pair of nouns and their
respective diminutives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word</th>
<th>word</th>
<th>diminutive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>вода</td>
<td>water</td>
<td>води́чка (води́ца)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вода</td>
<td>vodka</td>
<td>вода́чка</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.1.6 Augmentative suffixes

Augmentative forms are used much less frequently than diminutives. The suffixes used are -ине(for masculine and neuter nouns), -иша(for feminine nouns) and -ин(а) for masculine and feminine nouns. Before these suffixes the consonants -г, -к, -к change to -ж-, -ч-, -щ- respectively:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word</th>
<th>word</th>
<th>augmentative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>волк</td>
<td>wolf</td>
<td>волчи́ще</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кулак</td>
<td>fist</td>
<td>кулаччи́ще</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бородá</td>
<td>beard</td>
<td>бороди́ша</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>жара</td>
<td>heat (wave)</td>
<td>жари́ща</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:

- водить to lead, to drive  водитель driver
- жить to live  житель inhabitant
- избирать/избрать to elect  избиратель elector
- изобретать/изобрести to invent  изобретатель inventor
- любить to love  любитель lover (e.g. of art), amateur
- писать/написать to write  писатель writer
- рождать/родить to give birth  родитель parent
- строить/построить to build  строитель builder
- учить/научить to teach  учитель teacher
- читать/прочитать to read  читатель reader

The pair of verbs спасать/спастись ‘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:

спасатель rescue worker  спаситель saviour

Some nouns formed in this way indicate an object, rather than a person:

- выключать/выключить to switch off  выключатель switch
- двигать/двинуть to move  двигатель engine, motor
- предохранять/предохранить to protect  предохранитель safety catch, fuse
- указывать/указать to point out  указатель 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:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Word</th>
<th>English Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>за́щита</td>
<td>defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мясо</td>
<td>meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по́лярный</td>
<td>polar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рабо́та</td>
<td>work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ремесло</td>
<td>trade, craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>совре́менный</td>
<td>contemporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>учакство</td>
<td>participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>учить́сь</td>
<td>to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>грузь</td>
<td>load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>летать́</td>
<td>to fly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>перебе́гать/ перебе́гать</td>
<td>to run across</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>боле́ть</td>
<td>to be ill; to support (a sports team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>за́щитник</td>
<td>defender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мя́ник</td>
<td>butcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по́лярник</td>
<td>explorer of the polar regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рабо́ник</td>
<td>worker, employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ремесле́ник</td>
<td>craftsman, artisan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>совре́менник</td>
<td>contemporary (noun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>учакник</td>
<td>participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>учакник</td>
<td>pupil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>грузчик</td>
<td>loader, porter, docker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лётчик</td>
<td>pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>перебе́жчик</td>
<td>defector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>боле́льщик</td>
<td>supporter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some of the following nouns denote instruments, rather than or as well as people:

- градус - degree (temperature)
- счет - bill, account
- градусник - thermometer
- счетчик - 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
- Владимир - Vladimir
- Екатеринбург - Ekaterinburg
- (Санкт-)Петербург - St Petersburg
- Ярославль - Iaroslavl
- Лондон - London
- Пекин - Beijing
- Америка - America
- Германия - Germany;
- немецкий - German
- Испания - Spain
- Италия - Italy
- Канада - Canada
- Китай - China
- Шотландия - Scotland
- Чечня - Chechnya
- воронежец
- владимирец
- екатеринбуржец
- (санкт-)
- петербуржец
- ярославец
- лондонец
- пекинец
- американец
- немец
- испанец
- итальянец
- канадец
- китаец
- шотландец
- чеченец
- Spaniard
- Italian
- Canadian
- Chinese person
- Scot
- 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian City</th>
<th>English City</th>
<th>Russian Suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ирку́тск</td>
<td>Irkutsk</td>
<td>ирку́тчанин</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Киев</td>
<td>Kiev</td>
<td>кievляни́н</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Минск</td>
<td>Minsk</td>
<td>минчани́н</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Петрозаво́дск</td>
<td>Petrozavodsk</td>
<td>петрозаво́дча́ни́н</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ростов-на-Дону́</td>
<td>Rostov-on-Don</td>
<td>ростовчани́н</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same suffix is used, albeit less often, to forms nouns indicating inhabitants of other cities or indicating nationality:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>English City</th>
<th>Russian Suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Пари́ж</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>парижанни́н</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ри́га</td>
<td>Riga</td>
<td>рижанни́н</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ри́м</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>римляни́н</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City, Town</th>
<th>Noun Form</th>
<th>City/Town Dwellers</th>
<th>Village Dwellers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>город</td>
<td>горожанин</td>
<td>city/town-dweller</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>село</td>
<td>сельчанин, селянин</td>
<td>village-dweller</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>гражданин</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дворянин</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>nobleman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>крестьянин</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>peasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мусульманин</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>христианин</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE When it declines, the noun Христианин loses the -о/enitive Христианин-дative Христианин.

For the declension of nouns ending in -анн/-янн/-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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Noun Form</th>
<th>City</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Москва</td>
<td>Moscow</td>
<td>москвич</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Одесса</td>
<td>Odessa</td>
<td>одесский</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Пермь</td>
<td>Perm</td>
<td>пермяк</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Польша</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>поляк</td>
<td>Pole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Греция</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>грек</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Франция</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>француз</td>
<td>Frenchman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Швеция</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>швед</td>
<td>Swede</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>американец</td>
<td>американка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>шотландец</td>
<td>шотландка</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** The feminine equivalents of nouns indicating the inhabitants of Russian cities and ending in -ен are rare and can be difficult to form. To indicate a female inhabitant of St Petersburg彼得бурженка is the preferred form, but words formed with other suffixes may also be encountered.

With nouns in -анин/-янян/-чанин the feminine equivalent is formed by removing the last two letters of the masculine suffix and adding -ка:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ростовчанин</td>
<td>ростовчанка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>английчанин</td>
<td>английчанка</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Милань</th>
<th>Milan</th>
<th>москва́</th>
<th>Москва́</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>швед</td>
<td>Swede</td>
<td>шведка</td>
<td>Шведка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>поля́к</td>
<td>Pole</td>
<td>поля́</td>
<td>Полька</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With a few nouns indicating national or ethnic affiliation the feminine in -ка is not formed directly from the masculine:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>грек</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>греча́нка</th>
<th>Гречанка</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>китайц</td>
<td>Chinese man</td>
<td>китая́нка</td>
<td>Китайянка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>коре́ец</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>коре́йка</td>
<td>Корейка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>францу́з</td>
<td>Frenchman</td>
<td>французенка</td>
<td>Французенка</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** A certain amount of care is required with some of these forms, since the ‘expected’ feminine form exists, but with a different meaning:

- гречёка (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 -ель the feminine equivalent of nouns ending in -ик is formed by replacing the final two letters with the suffix -ника:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>писа́тель</th>
<th>writer</th>
<th>писа́тельница</th>
<th>Писательница</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>учите́ль</td>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>учите́льница</td>
<td>Учительница</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>уборщи́к</td>
<td>cleaner</td>
<td>уборщи́ца</td>
<td>Уборщица</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ученик</td>
<td>pupil</td>
<td>ученица</td>
<td>Ученица</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The suffix -ница is added to nouns with the suffixes -арь, -ср, -ёр, -ир, and to a few other nouns, while the suffix -ка tends to be used with nouns falling into none of the above categories:
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), -ание (verbs with an infinitive in -ать) or -ение (other verbs). Nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>вахтер</td>
<td>janitor, person who guards the entry to a building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кассир</td>
<td>cashier, person who sits at a cash-desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>секретарь</td>
<td>secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>аспирант</td>
<td>post-graduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>спортсмен</td>
<td>sportsman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>студент</td>
<td>student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вахтерша</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кассириша</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>секретарша</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>аспирантка</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>спортсменка</td>
<td>sportswoman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>студентка</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>изучать/изучать</td>
<td>to study</td>
<td>изучение</td>
<td>study(ing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>курить</td>
<td>to smoke (tobacco)</td>
<td>курение</td>
<td>smoking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>оформлять/оформить</td>
<td>to register, to legalise</td>
<td>оформление</td>
<td>registration, legalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>раскаиваться/раскаяться</td>
<td>to repent</td>
<td>раскаяние</td>
<td>repentance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>созерцать</td>
<td>to contemplate</td>
<td>созерцание</td>
<td>contemplation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>употреблять/употребить</td>
<td>to use</td>
<td>употребление</td>
<td>use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>читать/прочитать or прочесть</td>
<td>to read</td>
<td>чтение</td>
<td>reading,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>вводить/ввести</td>
<td>to lead in, to bring in</td>
<td>введение</td>
<td>introduction (e.g. to a book)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>двигать/двинуть</td>
<td>to move</td>
<td>движение</td>
<td>movement, traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>предлагать/предложить</td>
<td>to offer</td>
<td>предложение</td>
<td>offer; sentence (grammatical)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>приглашать/пригласить</td>
<td>to invite</td>
<td>приглашение</td>
<td>invitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>содержать</td>
<td>to contain</td>
<td>содержание</td>
<td>contents (e.g. of a book)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сокращать/сократить</td>
<td>to abbreviate</td>
<td>сокращение</td>
<td>abbreviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>убеждать/убедить</td>
<td>to convince</td>
<td>убеждение</td>
<td>conviction, belief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nouns belonging to this group can occur in all types of writing and speech.
NOTES

(i) It will be noticed that the nouns чётное and движение 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ВХОДИТЬ/ВОЙТИ</th>
<th>ВЫХОДИТЬ/ВЫЙТИ</th>
<th>ДОХОДИТЬ/ДОЙТИ</th>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
<th>RUSSIAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to enter (on foot)</td>
<td>to go out (on foot)</td>
<td>to get as far as</td>
<td>вход</td>
<td>выход</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

entry | exit | income
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>глупый</td>
<td>глупость</td>
<td>stupidity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>молодой</td>
<td>молодость</td>
<td>youth(fulness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>новый</td>
<td>новость</td>
<td>(item of) news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>редкий</td>
<td>редкость</td>
<td>rarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>смелый</td>
<td>смелость</td>
<td>boldness, courage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>старый</td>
<td>старость</td>
<td>old age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other suffixes that can be used to form abstract nouns from various parts of speech include -ство, -ба, -нь, -изна:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb/Adjective</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>бегать</td>
<td>бегство</td>
<td>flight, escape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>брат</td>
<td>братство</td>
<td>fraternity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дети</td>
<td>детство</td>
<td>childhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бороться</td>
<td>борьба</td>
<td>struggle, wrestling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>стрелять</td>
<td>стрельба</td>
<td>shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>болеть</td>
<td>болезнь</td>
<td>illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>жить</td>
<td>жизнь</td>
<td>life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>белый</td>
<td>белизна</td>
<td>whiteness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кругой</td>
<td>кругизна</td>
<td>steepness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 о (after hard consonants) or е (after soft consonants or щ, 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:

- детский сад kindergarten
- медицинская сестра nurse
- политическая корректность political correctness
- политический заключённый political prisoner
- профессиональный союз trade union
- детсáд медсестра политкорректность политзаключённый профсоюз

The status of the abbreviated forms varies: детсáд 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:

- авиабилет air ticket
- автовокзал (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 генсек, formed from генеральный секретарь ‘general secretary’. Many such forms have disappeared or have become restricted to specialised contexts, but among those still in common use are the following:
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 -ник or 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Phrase</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>во́енны́й комите́с</td>
<td>military commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>избира́тельная коми́сси́я</td>
<td>electoral commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>компрометиру́ющий мате́риал</td>
<td>compromising material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>во́йсковые подразде́лени́я специ́ального назначения</td>
<td>special forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Министе́рство здравоохра́нения</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>универсальны́й магази́н</td>
<td>department store</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Phrase</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>кре́дитная карта́</td>
<td>credit card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сельская крупа́</td>
<td>semolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>минеральны́я вода́</td>
<td>mineral water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Phrase</th>
<th>Russian Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>credit card</td>
<td>кре́дитная карта́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semolina</td>
<td>сельская крупа́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mineral water</td>
<td>минеральны́я вода́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 (-еный, -овый) 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:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Word</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
<th>Russian Word</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>автомобіль</td>
<td>car, motor vehicle</td>
<td>автомобільний</td>
<td>military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бархат</td>
<td>velvet</td>
<td>бархатний</td>
<td>military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>верёвка</td>
<td>string</td>
<td>верёвочный</td>
<td>military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>воздух</td>
<td>air</td>
<td>воздушный</td>
<td>military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>война</td>
<td>war</td>
<td>военный</td>
<td>military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>восток</td>
<td>cast</td>
<td>восточный</td>
<td>military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дерево</td>
<td>tree, wood (the material)</td>
<td>деревянный</td>
<td>wooden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>запад</td>
<td>west</td>
<td>западный</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>луна</td>
<td>moon</td>
<td>лунный</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>молоков</td>
<td>milk</td>
<td>молочный</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>север</td>
<td>north</td>
<td>северный</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>трамвай</td>
<td>tram</td>
<td>трамвайный</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>улица</td>
<td>street</td>
<td>уличный</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>школа</td>
<td>school</td>
<td>школьный</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>юг</td>
<td>south</td>
<td>южный</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In some instances the stress is on the ending, which means that the nominative singular masculine ends in -ой (see 6.1.2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>День</th>
<th>day</th>
<th>Дневной</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>зуб</td>
<td>tooth</td>
<td>зубной</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ночь</td>
<td>night</td>
<td>Ночной</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пиво</td>
<td>beer</td>
<td>Пивной</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>река</td>
<td>river</td>
<td>Речной</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рука</td>
<td>arm, hand</td>
<td>Ручной</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.2.2 The suffix -н with a soft ending (-НИЙ)

The combination of the suffix -н and a soft ending (-н) 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Вечер</th>
<th>evening</th>
<th>Вечерний</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Утро</td>
<td>morning</td>
<td>Утренний</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*But cf. дневной, ночной listed in 10.2.1.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Весна</th>
<th>spring</th>
<th>Весенний</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Зима</td>
<td>winter</td>
<td>Зимний</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Лето</td>
<td>summer</td>
<td>Летний</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Осень</td>
<td>autumn</td>
<td>Осенний</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Суббота</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Субботний</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*But воскресенье Sunday воскресный*

Adjectives formed from adverbs relating to time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Вчера</th>
<th>yesterday</th>
<th>Вчерашний</th>
<th>yesterday’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Сегодня</td>
<td>today</td>
<td>Сегодняшний</td>
<td>today’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Нынче</td>
<td>today, nowadays</td>
<td>Нынешний</td>
<td>today’s, present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Завтра</td>
<td>tomorrow</td>
<td>Завтрашний</td>
<td>tomorrow’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Всегда</td>
<td>always</td>
<td>Всегдашний</td>
<td>usual, invariable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Теперь</td>
<td>now</td>
<td>Теперьшний</td>
<td>present, of today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Тогда</td>
<td>then</td>
<td>Тогдашний</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adjectives formed from nouns relating to place:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>зад</td>
<td>back (part of</td>
<td>задний</td>
<td>задни́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>something), buttocks</td>
<td>back, rear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>перед</td>
<td>front (part of</td>
<td>передний</td>
<td>передни́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>something)</td>
<td>front</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>верх</td>
<td>top</td>
<td>верхний</td>
<td>верхни́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>низ</td>
<td>bottom</td>
<td>нижний</td>
<td>нижни́й</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjectives formed from adverbs or prepositions relating to place:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>здесь</td>
<td>here</td>
<td>здешний</td>
<td>здешни́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тут</td>
<td>here</td>
<td>тутопальный</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>там</td>
<td>there</td>
<td>тамошний</td>
<td>тамошни́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вне (+ gen.)</td>
<td>outside</td>
<td>внешний</td>
<td>внешни́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>внутри (+ gen.)</td>
<td>inside</td>
<td>внутренний</td>
<td>внутренни́й</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10.2.3 Adjectives formed with the suffix -<span>СК</span>-

The suffix -<span>СK</span>- is particularly characteristic of adjectives formed from geographical names:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Equivalent</th>
<th>Adjective Form</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Америка</td>
<td>America</td>
<td>американский</td>
<td>Англия</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Великобритания</td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>(велико)британский</td>
<td>Польша</td>
<td>Polish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Россия</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>российский</td>
<td></td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>русский</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the difference between российский and русский, see 12.5.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Adjective Form</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Adjective Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Москва</td>
<td>Московский</td>
<td>Санкт-Петербург</td>
<td>Санкт-петербургский</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Санкт-)Петербург</td>
<td>St Petersburg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** The form (сант-)петербургский is also possible, but is less widely used. Forms with the prefix Санкт are characteristic of formal language and are used, for example, in the official titles of St Petersburg institutions such as Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет St Petersburg State University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Adjective Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Лондон</td>
<td>Лондонский</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Париж</td>
<td>Парижский</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Байка́л</td>
<td>Байка́льский</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Кавказ</td>
<td>Кавказский</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Камчатка</td>
<td>Камчатский</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Нева</td>
<td>Невский</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same suffix is also used with adjectives formed from surnames:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Adjective Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Горбачёв</td>
<td>Горбачёвский</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Пушкин</td>
<td>Пушкинский</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Толстой</td>
<td>Толстовский</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other adjectives with the -<span>СK</span>-suffix include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Adjective Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>январь</td>
<td>Январький</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>апрель</td>
<td>Апрельский</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>октябрь</td>
<td>Октябрький</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and all other adjectives formed from the names of the months;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>арифметика</td>
<td>arithmetic</td>
<td>арифметический</td>
<td>arithmetical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Библия</td>
<td>Bible</td>
<td>библейский</td>
<td>biblical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>брат</td>
<td>brother</td>
<td>братский</td>
<td>fraternal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дети</td>
<td>children</td>
<td>детский</td>
<td>childlike, childish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>капиталист</td>
<td>capitalist</td>
<td>капиталистический</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>любитель</td>
<td>lover (e.g. of music), amateur</td>
<td>любительский</td>
<td>amateur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>родитель</td>
<td>parent</td>
<td>родительский</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>солдат</td>
<td>soldier</td>
<td>солдатский</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some of the adjectives with this suffix have the stress on the ending:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Дон</th>
<th>(river) Don</th>
<th>донской</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>город</td>
<td>city, town</td>
<td>городской</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>море</td>
<td>sea</td>
<td>морской marine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>banana</th>
<th>банный</th>
<th>bananovy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bronze</td>
<td>бронзовый</td>
<td>bronze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mass (large amount or quantity)</td>
<td>массовый</td>
<td>mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>model (for imitation)</td>
<td>образованный</td>
<td>model, ideal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nut</td>
<td>ореховый</td>
<td>nut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sturgeon</td>
<td>осётровый</td>
<td>sturgeon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rice</td>
<td>рисовый</td>
<td>rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lead</td>
<td>свинцовый</td>
<td>lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lilac (lilac)</td>
<td>сиреневый</td>
<td>lilac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soya</td>
<td>соевый</td>
<td>soya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cherry</td>
<td>черёмуховый</td>
<td>cherry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(morello) cherry</td>
<td>вишневый</td>
<td>cherry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rouble</td>
<td>рублевый</td>
<td>rouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shore</td>
<td>береговой</td>
<td>shore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daily life</td>
<td>бытовой</td>
<td>daily life everyday, social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group</td>
<td>групповой</td>
<td>group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sound</td>
<td>звуковой</td>
<td>sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brain</td>
<td>мозговой</td>
<td>brain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hour</td>
<td>часовой</td>
<td>hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clock, watch</td>
<td>часовой</td>
<td>clock, watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>food</td>
<td>пищевой</td>
<td>food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speech</td>
<td>речевой</td>
<td>speech</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Ukrainian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Бог</td>
<td>God</td>
<td>Божий</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>человек</td>
<td>man, human</td>
<td>человечий</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вдова́</td>
<td>widow</td>
<td>вдова́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>баран</td>
<td>ram</td>
<td>барани́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бык</td>
<td>bull</td>
<td>бычи́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>верблю́д</td>
<td>camel</td>
<td>верблю́жні́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>волк</td>
<td>wolf</td>
<td>волчні́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>корова́</td>
<td>cow</td>
<td>коровні́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кошка</td>
<td>cat</td>
<td>кошачні́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лиси́я</td>
<td>fox</td>
<td>лисні́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>медвёдь</td>
<td>bear</td>
<td>медвежні́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пти́ца</td>
<td>bird</td>
<td>птичні́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>собака</td>
<td>dog</td>
<td>собачні́й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>щука</td>
<td>pike</td>
<td>щучні́й</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These adjectives, and especially those formed from nouns denoting animals, can be used in a wide range of possessive and descriptive functions:

Здесь храм Божий: надо вести себя прилично.

This is God’s temple; you must behave properly.

У него волчий аппетит.

He has the appetite of a wolf.

Я откуда-то слышу кошачье мурлыканье.

From somewhere I can hear the purring of a cat.

The following adjectives are used in a number of set expressions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Закон Божий</th>
<th>Religious Instruction (subject in school)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>«Птичье молоко»</td>
<td>a well-known brand of chocolates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[the allusion is to bird’s milk as something exquisite and rare]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Собачий холод</td>
<td>intense cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(как) по шучьему веленью</td>
<td>as if by magic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Русский слова</th>
<th>Английский перевод</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>боль</td>
<td>pain, ache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>больной</td>
<td>sick, ill, sore, (as a noun) patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>болевой</td>
<td>relating to pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>век</td>
<td>century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вековой</td>
<td>centuries old, ancient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вёчный</td>
<td>eternal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>друг</td>
<td>friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дружеский</td>
<td>friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дружественный</td>
<td>friendly, cordial (official)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дружный</td>
<td>harmonious, unanimous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мир</td>
<td>world; peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мировой</td>
<td>world(-wide)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мирный</td>
<td>peaceful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мирской</td>
<td>secular, lay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>серебро</td>
<td>silver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>серебряный</td>
<td>(made of) silver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>серебристый</td>
<td>silver (coloured)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сила</td>
<td>strength, force, power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сильный</td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>силовой</td>
<td>relating to power or the use of force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>стекло</td>
<td>glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>стеклянный</td>
<td>(made of) glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>стекольный</td>
<td>relating to the production of glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чудо</td>
<td>miracle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чудесный</td>
<td>miraculous, wonderful, marvellous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чудный</td>
<td>wonderful, marvellous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чудной</td>
<td>strange, cranky</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 o (e after a soft consonant):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Adjective+Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>белая голова́</td>
<td>white head</td>
<td>белоголо́вый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ветхий Завет</td>
<td>Old Testament</td>
<td>ветхозаветный</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>красное ли́цо</td>
<td>red face</td>
<td>красноли́цый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>крупный масштаб</td>
<td>large scale</td>
<td>крупно-масштабный</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>научная фантастика</td>
<td>science fiction</td>
<td>научно-фантасти́ческий</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>русский язык</td>
<td>Russian language</td>
<td>русскоязы́чный</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>средние века́</td>
<td>Middle Ages</td>
<td>средневеко́вый</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Да́льний восто́к</td>
<td>Far East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дальне́восточный</td>
<td>far eastern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>За́падная Укра́їна</td>
<td>Western Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>западноукра́нский</td>
<td>West Ukrainian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ти́хий океа́н</td>
<td>Pacific Ocean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тихоокеа́нский</td>
<td>Pacific</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When adjectives are formed from a numeral+noun, the numeral is usually in the genitive case form:
10.2.8 Adjectives formed from other adjectives

The suffix -енький fulfills 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>suffix</th>
<th>adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>красный</td>
<td>-ный</td>
<td>красный</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>короткий</td>
<td>-ный</td>
<td>короткий</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чистый</td>
<td>-ый</td>
<td>чистый</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are two special cases to note:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>suffix</th>
<th>adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>малый</td>
<td>-ий</td>
<td>малий, малий</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here, adjectives with the -ский suffix are in general use; малый tends to be restricted to set phrases or to titles such as:

Малый театр (name of a theatre in Moscow)

In the following instances the adjective with the suffix has a different meaning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>suffix</th>
<th>adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>хороший</td>
<td>-ший</td>
<td>хорошоший</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rather less widely used are the augmentative suffixes -ощий, -енный:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>suffix</th>
<th>adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>холодный</td>
<td>-ый</td>
<td>холодный</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>здоровый</td>
<td>-ый</td>
<td>здоровый</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>suffix</th>
<th>adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>глупый</td>
<td>-ый</td>
<td>глуповатый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>красный</td>
<td>-ый</td>
<td>красноватый</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>страшный</td>
<td>-ый</td>
<td>страшноватый</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

арестовать (нсв/св) to arrest
бастовать/забастовать to go on strike
диктовать/продиктовать to dictate
короновать (нсв/св) to crown
пробовать/попробовать to try
расшифровывать/расшифровать to decipher
рисковать/рискнуть to risk

The infinitive ending -овать occurs after soft consonants and after the consonants ж, ж, ш, ч in accordance with the spelling rule given in 1.5.2:

ночевать/переночевать to spend the night
танцевать/станцевать to dance

Examples of verbs ending in -изовать:

организовать (нсв/св) to organise
парализовать (нсв/св) to paralyse
характеризовать/характеризовать to characterise

NOTES

(i) Some perfective verbs ending in -овывать/-изовать have an imperfective partner in -овывать/-изывать (as in the example расшифровывать/расшифровать).

(ii) Although the verbs арестовать and организовать are bi-aspectual, there are imperfective partners арестовывать and организовывать, respectively; these are not normally used in the present and future tenses.

Examples of verbs ending in -привать:

бойкотировать (нсв/св) to boycott
игнорировать (нсв/св) to ignore
инвестировать (нсв/св) to invest
иллюстрировать (нсв/св) to illustrate
планировать/запланировать to plan
редактировать/отредактировать to edit
цитировать/процитировать to quote
Examples of verbs ending in -изировать:

- госпитализировать (нсв/св) to hospitalise
- модернизировать (нсв/св) to modernise
- приватизировать (нсв/св) to privatise
- символизировать (нсв/св) to symbolise
- стабилизировать (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:

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*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>translation</th>
<th>meaning</th>
<th>translation</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>партизан</td>
<td>partisan</td>
<td>партизанить (нев)</td>
<td>to fight with the partisans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>пылесос</td>
<td>vacuum cleaner</td>
<td>пылесосить (нев)</td>
<td>to vacuum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сигнал</td>
<td>signal, alarm</td>
<td>сигнали́ть</td>
<td>to signal (especially to hoot a car horn)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сканда́л</td>
<td>scandal, scene</td>
<td>сканда́лить (нев)</td>
<td>to create a scene</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тиран</td>
<td>tyrant</td>
<td>тиранить (нев)</td>
<td>to behave like a tyrant towards, to oppress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>транжир</td>
<td>spendthrift</td>
<td>транжирить/ прогнанжирить</td>
<td>to squander</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>хулиган</td>
<td>hooligan</td>
<td>хулигани́ть (нев)</td>
<td>to behave like a hooligan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of transitive verbs with an infinitive ending in -ить:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>English [literally]</th>
<th>English [figuratively]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>бёлый</td>
<td>white</td>
<td>to paint white, to whiten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>молодой</td>
<td>young</td>
<td>to make someone look younger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>трезвый</td>
<td>sober</td>
<td>to sober someone up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чёрный</td>
<td>black</td>
<td>to blacken [literally]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to blacken [figuratively]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 unprefixed 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: б(0)-, в(0)-/вс-, в(0)-/вс-, вы-, де-, За-, и(0)-/ес-, на-, н(0)-, о(0)-, от(0)-, пере-, пред(0)-, пред(0)-, при-, про-, раз(0)-/рас-, с(0)-, 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 -занд -с, see 1.5.6.

Some of the above prefixes have either a single or a very limited range of meanings: the prefix н(0)- always conveys the idea of an action carried out to an insufficient degree; the prefix б(0)- usually conveys the idea of movement into (if not literally, then figuratively). Other prefixes, such as за-, о(0)-or с(0)-, 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:
Она вошла в комнату.

She came into the room.

10.4.1 The prefix Б(о)-

With the meaning of movement into Б(о)- is used with verbs of motion, but also with a number of other verbs:

- входить/войти — to go in, to come in (on foot)
- въехать/въехать — to drive in, to enter (by vehicle)
- вбегать/вбежать — to run in
- вводить/ввести — to bring in, to introduce
- вмешиваться/вмешаться — to interfere in
- впускать/впустить — to let in
- вставлять/вставить — to insert
- вступать/вступить — to enter, to join (e.g. a political party)
With the following verb the meaning is understood figuratively:

**влечать/влечь** to include, to switch on

10.4.2 The prefixes **вз(о)-/вс-**, **вос(о)-/вос-**

The basic meaning of **вз(о)-/вс-** is movement upwards:

**входить/вйти**
**взлетать/взлететь**

to rise (e.g. the sun)
to take off (of an aeroplane)

When it is used with the following verbs, the meaning is more one of agitation:

**взбивать/взбить**
**взрывать/взрвать**

to whip (cream)
to blow something up

The prefix **вос(о)-/вос-** has basically the same range of meanings, but it tends to be used in more figurative contexts:

**возбуждать/возвбудить**
**возвышать/возвысить**
**возмутиать/вомутить**
**возникать/возникнуть**
**воспитывать/воспитать**
**восхищаться/восхититься**

to arouse, to incite
to raise (up)
to anger, to outrage
to arise, to spring up, to appear
to bring up, to educate
to admire, to be captivated by

With some verbs this prefix can convey the meaning of returning, restoring:

**возвращать(ся)/возвратить(ся)**, **вернуть(ся)**
**восстанавливать/восстановить**
to return
to restore

10.4.3 The prefix **вы-**

The basic meaning of the prefix **вы-** is movement out:
выходить/выйти  
выбегать/выбежать  
выносить/вынести  
выбросывать/выбросить  
вынимать/вынуть  
выписывать/выписать  
выступать/выступить  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb in Russian</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>выходить/выйти</td>
<td>to go/come out of, to leave (on foot)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выбегать/выбежать</td>
<td>to run out from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выносить/вынести</td>
<td>to carry/bring out (physically), to endure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выбрасывать/выбросить</td>
<td>to throw out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вынимать/вынуть</td>
<td>to take out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выписывать/выписать</td>
<td>to write out, to subscribe to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выступать/выступить</td>
<td>to appear (in public), to perform, to make a speech</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With some verbs this prefix can convey the notion of an action carried out exhaustively:

высказываться/высказать  
высыпаться/выспаться

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb in Russian</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>высказываться/высказать</td>
<td>to have one’s say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>высыпаться/выспаться</td>
<td>to have a good sleep, to sleep one’s fill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following useful verbs do not really fit into either of the above categories:

выигрывать/выиграть  
выключать/выключить

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb in Russian</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>выигрывать/выиграть</td>
<td>to win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выключать/выключить</td>
<td>to switch off</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

доехать/доехать  to travel as far as
донесись/донести́сь  to carry (of a sound)

In the following verb the meaning is figurative:

донеси́ть/донести́ на (+ acc.)  to denounce someone

The prefix ДО-is combined with a wide variety of verbs to convey the meaning to finish off an action:

дописыват/дописать  to finish writing
dостраивает/достройть  to finish building
doчитывать/дочитать  to finish reading

A closely related meaning, found with a few verbs, is that of topping up:

доливают/долить  to top up with (a liquid)
dоплачивать/доплатить  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:

dогадываться/догада́ться  to guess the right answer
dоговариваться/договори́ться  to come to an agreement
dожидаться/дожа́даться  to wait until the person arrives
dозваниваться/дозво́ниться  to get through (on the telephone)
dоскакивать́сь/доскона́ться  to dig down until you find what you are looking for (literally and figuratively)

With other reflexive verbs the same prefix can convey the meaning of carrying out an action to the point where there are unpleasant consequences:
The prefix *допе́ться* (до хрипоты) is to sing (until you are hoarse).

*допить* (св) (до чёртиков) is to drink (to the point of seeing little pink elephants (literally, small devils)).

*догра́ться* (св) is 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:

*захо́дить* (зайти) is to go behind.

Verbs of motion with the prefix *за*-often convey the meaning of calling in somewhere:

*захо́дить* (зайти) is to call in, to drop in.

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:

*забивать* (забить гол) is to score a goal.

*забрасывать* (забросить шайбу) is to score a goal (in ice-hockey).
The prefix за-can also convey the idea of closing or wrapping up:

за-вра́чивать/за́вернуть to wrap up (a parcel)
за-вявля́ть/за́являть to tie up (a parcel)
за-крывать/за́крыть to close, to shut
за-пи́рать/за́переть to lock
за-стегивать/за́стегнуть 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:

за-вира́ться/за́вра́ться to get carried away with one’s lies
за-говори́ваться/за́говори́ться to get carried away talking
за-си́живаться/за́сидеться to sit too long (e.g. over food and drink or at a meeting)
за-читы́ваться/за́читаться to become (too) absorbed in one’s reading

The connotations of the following verb are slightly different:

за-ду́мываться/за́думаться 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 unprefixed imperfective verb:

го́вори́ть to talk
за-го́вори́ть to start talking
пы́лать to cry, to weep
за-пы́лать to start crying
ходи́ть to go (on foot), to walk
за-ходи́ть to start walking up and down

There are, however, a few instances of imperfective/perfective pairs:

за-боле́вать/за́болеть to fall ill
за-жига́ть/за́жечь to ignite, to set fire to
за-сы́пать/за́сыпть 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Слово</th>
<th>Перевод</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>заблудиться (св)</td>
<td>to lose one’s way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>заблуждаться (нсв)</td>
<td>to be mistaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>забывать/забыть</td>
<td>to forget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>заваривать/заварить</td>
<td>to brew (tea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>зависеть (ен) от (+ gen.)</td>
<td>to depend on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>загореть/загореть</td>
<td>to sunbathe, to acquire a tan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>заказывать/заказать</td>
<td>to order (goods or in a restaurant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>заключать/заключить</td>
<td>to conclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>заменить/заменить</td>
<td>to replace, to substitute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>занимать/занять</td>
<td>to occupy, to borrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>заниматься/позаниматься</td>
<td>to study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>записывать/записать</td>
<td>to write down, to record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>запрещать/запретить</td>
<td>to forbid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>заполнить/заполнить</td>
<td>to fill in (a form)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>запоминать/запомнить</td>
<td>to memorise, to remember</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10.4.6 The prefix \( \text{ИЗ(о)/ИС-} \)

The prefix \( \text{ИЗ(о)/ИС-} \) is often associated with the general idea of movement outwards, often conceived figuratively:

- избегать/избежать: to avoid
- избирать/избрать: to elect (to high office)
- извлекать/извлечь: to extract, to gain (e.g. benefit)
- издывать/издать: to publish, to make (a sound)
- исключать/исключить: to exclude, to expel, to rule out

With some verbs the prefix \( \text{ИЗ(о)/ИС-} \) can convey the meaning the exhaustion of resources or covering the whole surface of something; with these meanings \( \text{ИЗ(о)/ИС-} \) can either form a perfective partner of an unprefixed imperfective or form imperfective/perfective pairs:

- тратить: to spend
- ходить: to go (on foot), to walk

- истра́тить: to spend up
- исхо́дить: to walk the length and breadth of

- испи́сывать/исписать: to fill up or to cover with writing

10.4.7 The prefix \( \text{НА-} \)

The prefix \( \text{НА-} \) can convey the idea of motion onto; examples with verbs of motion are rare, but more frequently encountered instances include:

- нажима́ть/нажать́ (на кнопку́): to press (a button)
- накле́ивать/накле́йть (на марку на конверт): to stick (a stamp on an envelope)
- наступа́ть/наступить на (+ accus.)
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
- наелеться/нае́сться - to eat one’s fill
- налюбоваться (св) - to admire to one’s heart’s content

In the following verb the connotation is slightly different:

- напивать́ться/напить́ся - to get drunk

There are some miscellaneous verbs with the prefix на:-

- набирать́/набрать́ - to pick up (speed), to dial
- намека́ть/намекну́ть - to hint
- нареза́ть/наре́зать - to cut, to slice (bread or cheese)
- настраивать́/настро́ить - to tune (a radio or a musical instrument)
- находить́/найти́ - to find
10.4.8 The prefix **недо-**

The prefix **недо-** always conveys the idea of insufficiency:

- незоооценять/недооценить to underestimate
- недосаливать/недосолить to undersalt

The prefix **об(о)**

When used with verbs of motion, the prefix **об(о)** conveys the meaning of movement around:

- обходить/обойти to walk around
- облетать/облететь to fly around, to orbit

This prefix can also convey the idea of the comprehensiveness or thoroughness of an action:

- обходить/обойти to go round (e.g. all the shops in search of something)
- описывать/описать to describe
- опрашивать/опросить to ask a large number, to carry out a survey of opinion
- осматривать/осмотреть to examine, to inspect (from all angles)

The prefix in the form **о-**, when used with certain reflexive verbs, can indicate an accidental mistake:
On the other hand, the prefix in the form об-can be used with certain verbs to imply deliberate deception:

обманывать/обмануть  to deceive
обвести/обвести к обманеть to give short weight to
обманывать/обмануть к обманеть to shortchange

The prefix об(is sometimes used to form transitive verbs from adjectives:

охлаждать/охладить to deafen
охлаждать to dearen

The reflexive verb обойти/обойтись when used with без(+gen.), means ‘to do without’.

10.4.10 The prefix от(is-

The spatial meaning of the prefix от(о)-is movement away from:

отходить/отойти to move away from
отставать/отстать to fall behind, to be slow
(of a clock or watch)
отступать/отступить to retreat
The same prefix can also convey the notion of detachment, a concept that can be understood either literally or figuratively:

отвинчивать/отвинчивать to unscrew
откусывать/откусить to bite off
отпиливать/отпилить to saw off
отпылывать/отпылить to get unused to
отговоривать/отговорить to dissuade
отказывать(ся)/отказать(ся) to refuse
откладывать/отложить to postpone
отменять/отменить to cancel

The prefix от(о)-can also convey the idea of responding:

отвечать/ответить to answer
отзываться/оговориться to respond, to react
откликаться/откликнуться 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:

переходить/перейти to go across (on foot)
переезжать/переехать to travel across, to move house
переплывать/переплыть to swim across, to travel across (by boat)
пересекать/пересечь to cross (e.g. a frontier)

The prefix пере-also has the meaning of dividing, cutting through, sometimes understood figuratively:

перепилывать/перепилить to saw through
перерезать/перерезать to cut through
перебивать/перебить to interrupt

This prefix can also convey the idea of excess; in this sense it is the opposite of недо-:

переоценивать/переоценить to over-estimate
переплачивать/переплатить to pay too much
перестараться(ся) to try too hard, to get carried away
The prefix *пере*-is used to express the idea of redoing an action:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>переделывать/переделать</td>
<td>to redo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>передумывать/передумать</td>
<td>to change one’s mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>перезванивать/перезвонить</td>
<td>to phone back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>переписывать/переписать</td>
<td>to rewrite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This prefix can sometimes convey the idea of outdoing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>перекрикивать/перекричать</td>
<td>to out-shout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>перехитрить (св)</td>
<td>to outwit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>перебрасывать (не св)</td>
<td>to throw backwards and forwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>переписываться (не св)</td>
<td>to exchange letters, to correspond</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With certain verbs the prefix *пец* conveys the idea of extending the action to all possible objects:

- **пекечислять** to enumerate, to list in full

The meanings of the prefix *пец* overlap with those of *пец*-in particular, it can convey the ideas of cutting through and exceeding, often understood figuratively:

- **пёргреждить** to bar (the way)
- **пёкрервать** to cease
- **пёвышить** to exceed

10.4.12 The prefix **ПОД**

The first spatial meaning of the prefix **ПОД**-is movement or position under:

- **пёдкладывать** to put under (in a horizontal position)
- **пёдставлять** to put under (in a vertical position)
- **пёдписывать** to sign, to put one’s name to
- **пёдчеркивать** to underline

With many verbs of motion and some other verbs, **ПОД**-conveys the meaning of movement up to, approaching:

- **пёходить** to approach, to go up to
- **пёдовозить** to give someone a lift
- **пёдодвигать** 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:

- **пёдобрасть** to throw up in the air
- **пёдерживать** to support
- **пёдинати** to raise
- **пёдинаться** to rise, to go up(wards)

The prefix **ПОД**-can convey the notion of adding a small quantity:
A further meaning of this prefix is that of doing something furtively or illegally:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>пода́вля́ть/пода́вить</td>
<td>to add (a small amount)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>подогре́вать/подогре́ть</td>
<td>to warm something up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>подсалива́ть/подсоли́ть</td>
<td>to add a little salt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>поддё́лывать/поддела́ть</td>
<td>to forge (banknotes or documents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>поджига́ть/поджё́чь</td>
<td>to burn down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>подкупа́ть/подкупить</td>
<td>to bribe, to suborn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>подска́зывать/подсказа́ть</td>
<td>to prompt, to whisper the answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>подслу́шивать/подслуша́ть</td>
<td>to eavesdrop, to “bug”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.4.13 The prefix **пред(o)-**

The prefix **пред(o)-** normally has the meaning of anticipation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>предвídáть (не́в)</td>
<td>to predict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>предполага́ть/предпо́ложить</td>
<td>to assume, to presuppose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>предупрежда́ть/предупреди́ть</td>
<td>to warn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However:

| Времена предлога́ть/предложи́ть          | to offer, to propose          |
| Времена представи́ть/представи́ть      | 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:

| Приходи́ть/прийти́                   | to come, to arrive (on foot) |
| Приезжать/приехать                  | to come, to arrive (by vehicle) |
| Приноси́ть/принести                 | to bring (on foot) |
| Приземля́ться/приземлиться           | to land |
| Прибли́жаться/приблизиться           | to approach |
| Призывáть/призвать                  | to summon, to call up (for military service) |
| Привлечь/привлечь                   | to attract |

The same prefix can convey the idea of attaching one thing to another (sometimes figuratively):

| Привязы́вать/привяза́ть               | to tie (something to something else) |
| Присоедини́ть/присоединить           | to join, to unite |
| Привя́зывать/пришить                 | to sew on (e.g. a button) |
| Присписать́ть/присписать́            | to ascribe |

The prefix ПРИ- can also convey the meaning of adding:

| Прибавля́ть/прибави́ть               | to add |
| Приписать́ть/приписать́             | 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:
With reflexive verbs formed from verbs indicating watching or listening, the prefix при suggests attentiveness; the prefactive verbs often contain the additional meaning of acting in response to the observations made:

прислушиваться/прислушаться к (+ dat.)

to listen attentively, to pay heed to

присмотреться/присмотреться к (+ dat.)

to watch attentively, to size someone up
10.4.15 The prefix *пр-*

The prefix *пр-* has two spatial meanings. With *verbs of motion* and a number of other verbs it can indicate movement through:

- пройти / пройти́ть to go through (on foot)
- проникнуть / проникать to penetrate
- пропустить / пропускать to let through
- протечь / протекать to leak through

The other meaning, found only with verbs of motion, is movement past:

- пройти / пройти́ть to go past (on foot)
- пройти́ть / пройти́ть to drive past

The prefix *пр-* also has the meaning of omission, often through inattentiveness:

- пролить / пролить́ть to let the cat out of the bag, to spill the beans
- прогулять / прогуляться to miss (classes), to be absent from work
- пропасть / пропасть́ть to miss (one’s stop)
- пропасть́ть (своё́ очередь) to miss (one’s turn through inattentiveness)
- пропустить / пропустить́ть to omit

The prefix *пр-* can also convey the idea of failure:

- пропасть / пропасть́ть to lose (a game)
- пропасть́ть (все деньги́) to drink away (all one’s money)

When used with a *direct object* indicating time or distance, verbs with the prefix *пр-* emphasise either the time an action was continued for or the distance covered during an action:

- пройти́ть / пройти́ть (два́ сто метров) to cover (200 metres, running)
- пройти́ть / пройти́ть (где-то́ сто́ лет) to live (somewhere for 40 years)
There are some useful verbs with the prefix пр- 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)
- расходить/расходить
  - to disperse (transitive)
- расступаться/расступиться
  - 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):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>разби́вать/разбить</td>
<td>to break into pieces, to smash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>разведи́ться/развестись</td>
<td>to get divorced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>разде́лять/разделить</td>
<td>to divide up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>разреза́ть/разрезать</td>
<td>to cut up, to slice up (into many pieces)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>развязы́вать/развяза́ть</td>
<td>to untie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>раскую́ривать/раску́рить</td>
<td>to uncook, to open (a bottle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>расстёгива́ть/расстегнуть</td>
<td>to unbutton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>разду́вать (св)</td>
<td>to decide not to do something, to change one’s mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>разлюби́ть (св)</td>
<td>to stop loving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>разочаровы́вать/разочаро́вать</td>
<td>to disenchant, to disappoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>разхоте́ть (св)</td>
<td>to stop wanting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>разоружа́ть/разоружи́ть</td>
<td>to disarm [transitive]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With some verbs the prefix раз(о)/рас- suggests an action carried out thoroughly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>разра́батывать/разра́ботать</td>
<td>to work out, to elaborate, to develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>разспра́шивать/расспроси́ть</td>
<td>to question, to ask all about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рассма́тривать/рассмотреть</td>
<td>to examine (thoroughly)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>разго́вориться</td>
<td>to start talking freely or fluently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>расплака́ться</td>
<td>to burst out crying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рассме́яться</td>
<td>to burst out laughing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рассхо́диться</td>
<td>to burst out into uproarious laughter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:
With a large number of verbs the same prefix has the meaning of ‘removal’ (especially from a surface):

- сходи́ть/се́йти — to come down (on foot)
- сноси́ть/сне́сти — to bring down, to demolish
- спры́гивать/спры́гнуть — to jump down
- спуска́ться/спуститься — to come down, to descend

- сбрасы́вать/сброси́ть — to shed, to throw off
- сбры́вать/сбрить — to shave off
- свергнуть/свергнуть — to overthrow
- смывать/смыть — to wash off
- снимать/снять — to take off, to remove
- стирать/стереть — to rub off, to erase
With some reflexive verbs of motion and with a number of other verbs, the prefix c(o)-conveys the meaning of congregating or uniting:

сходить/сойти to congregate, to come together
собирать/собрать to collect
связывать/связать to tie together
соединить/соединить to unite

With a small number of verbs the prefix c(o)-conveys the idea of copying:

снимать/снять to photograph, to film
списывать/писать to copy

With some reflexive verbs the prefix c(o)-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 c(o)-can indicate accompanying or carrying out an action together; in this meaning the prefix always appears in the form co-:

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:

собывать/событься to come true
сладить/сдать to give up, to hand in, to take (imperfective)/ to pass (perfective), an examination
сладить/сладиться to give in, to surrender
держать/держать to restrain
скрывать/скрыть to hide
содержать (нсв) to contain, to maintain, to keep

10.4.18 The prefix y-

When used with verbs of motion and with some other verbs, the prefix y- has the
The same prefix is used to form transitive verbs from adjectives and (less often) nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>уходить/уйти</td>
<td>to go away (on foot)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>уезжать/уехать</td>
<td>to go away (by transport)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>уносить/унести</td>
<td>to take away, to carry away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>уклоняться/уклониться</td>
<td>to evade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>убирать/убрать</td>
<td>to clear away, to tidy up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>удалять/удалить</td>
<td>to remove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>улучшать/улучшить</td>
<td>to improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>упрощать/упростить</td>
<td>to simplify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ухудшать/ухудшить</td>
<td>to make worse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>удочерять/удочерить</td>
<td>to adopt (a daughter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>усыновлять/усыновить</td>
<td>to adopt (a son)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The prefix *y-* can convey the meaning of an action carried out in a way that makes things convenient or comfortable:

- усаживаться/усесться — to sit comfortably
- устанавливать/установить — to establish, to set up, to install
- устраивать/устроить — to organise, to arrange

The prefix *y-* can imply the accomplishment of an action only after some difficulty:

- убеждать/убедить — to convince
- уговоривать/уговорить — 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 вечером я познакомилась с одной очень интересной писательницей.

Last night I met a certain (literally, one) very interesting (female) writer.

Here the noun писательница is feminine, singular and in the instrumental case after the preposition с (meaning ‘with’). Consequently, both the numeral один and the adjective интересный have the singular feminine instrumental ending.
Usually at this time (of year) I send out New Year greetings to all my old friends.
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Here the noun друзья is masculine, plural and in the dative case as the indirect object of the verb рассылать. Consequently, the pronouns всё 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 съёмым красивым городом, 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’: 
Allow me, as the oldest person in this company, to propose a toast to the health of everyone present.

Я восхищаюсь Маяковским как поэтом.

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 восхищаюсь такими поэтами, как Пушкин и Маяковский.

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 рома́н 'novel', ОАО (откры́тое акцио́нерное общество) 'PLC', ста́нция '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:

Э́то, ка́жется, цита́та из рома́на «Война́ и мир».

I think this is a quotation from the novel War and Peace.

В про́шлом году́ наш городско́й теа́тр поста́вил че́ховскую пь́есу «Три сестры».

Last year our local theatre put on Chekhov’s play Three Sisters.

Годовое общее собра́ние акцио́неров ОАО «Газпро́м» состоя́лось 29 июня́ 2007 года.

The Annual General Meeting of the shareholders of Gazprom PLC took place on 29 June 2007.

Я оби́чно покупа́ю продукты в магази́не «Седьмой контине́нт».

I usually do my food shopping in (the shop) Sed’moi kontinent [The Seventh Continent].

По́езд сле́дует до ста́нции «Комсо́мольская».

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 отпра́вился в г. Бе́лая Кали́тва.

I set off for (the town of) Belaia Kalitva.

But
Our train has arrived at our terminus in Moscow.

NOTES

(i) In these examples the preposition is followed by the accusative case; the abbreviation stands for ‘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:

город Белая Калитра the town of Belaia Kalitva

Names belonging to all these categories are normally declined if the defining term is not present:

Вы когда-нибудь читали «Войну и мир»?

Have you ever read War and Peace?

Какие права есть у акционеров «Газпрома»?

What rights do the shareholders of Gazprom have?

Наш поезд следует только до «Комсомольской».

Our train is only going as far as Komsomol’skaya.

Цифры говорят, что в течение года каждый четвертый житель Белой Калитра обращался к услугам скорой помощи.

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:

Почему ты всегда встаёшь так рано?

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.

Мои родители придут позже.

My parents will come a bit later.

Here the grammatical subject is the plural noun родители; 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 вышла замуж 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 выйти замуж 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:
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 доверить это дело тем, кто уже накопил какой-то опыт в этой сфере.

It’s best to entrust this matter to those who have already gained some experience in this area.

Для тех, кто рожал первый раз, проводились специальные лекции.

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 че́тыре часо́в, и ужé темнёло.**

It was four o’clock and already getting dark.

**Мне уда́лось вы́яснить, како́е доку́менты нужные.**

I’ve managed to find out what documents we need.

**Хоте́лось бы знать побольше 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 **хóльдно, интере́сно or хоро́шо** or they can be the modal predicate forms **можно** ‘one may’, ‘it is possible’; **нельзя** ‘it is forbidden’, ‘it is impossible’; **надо** ‘one must’. These forms themselves never change, but in tenses other than the present, they are used with the appropriate form of the verb быть:

**Вчера́ бы́ло очень хóльдно.**

It was very cold yesterday.

**Интере́сно бы́ло бы знать его́ тóчку зрéния по э́тому вопрóсу.**

It would be interesting to know his opinion on this question.

**Хорошо́ бы́ло бы уéхать куда́-нибудь на юг на пárу недéль.**
It would be nice to go off to somewhere in the south for a couple of weeks.

Ремонт квартиры уже нельзя было откладывать на потом.

The refurbishment of the flat could be put off no longer.

Надо было сказать об этом заранее.

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 ир or by с (+ instr.) will normally be used with a verb in the plural:

Россия и Украина подписали новый договор о поставке газа.

Russia and Ukraine have signed a new agreement on gas deliveries.

Брат с женой провели Новый год в Австрии.

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 уехал в Америку с подругой.

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! Впервый 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:

Предавляющее 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 человек в якутском посёлке Артык две недели остались без тепла.

133 people in the Yakut settlement of Artyk have been left without heating for two weeks.

Ранения получили несколько человек, среди них двое военнослужащих из контингента 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 будет построено десять тысяч новых домов.

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, тысячи thousands’ or многие many (people)’), the verb will always be in the plural:

Многие 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 новый врач рекомендовала нам побольше заниматься спортом.

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.
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 паспорт ‘internal passport’, ‘identity document’. Russians who travel abroad will also have a заграничный паспорт ‘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 удостоверение ‘identity document’. Students have a студенческий билет ‘student card’. As Bulgakov wrote in his novel «Мастер и Маргарита»: 

Нет документа, нет и человека.

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 (имя) a patronymic (отчество) and a surname (фамилия). 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: имя – отчество – фамилия, but in some formal and official contexts the order can be changed to фамилия – имя – отчество. The following are examples of Russian names in the order имя – отчество – фамилия:
Андрей Павлович Иванов
Лев Николаевич Толстой
Светлана Павловна Иванова
Софья Андреевна Толстая
NOTE In written texts of all types, Russian names often appear in the form of two initials followed by the surname, for example, й.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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full name</th>
<th>Familiar version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Александр</td>
<td>Саша, Шура, Са́ня</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Алексей</td>
<td>Але́ша, Лёша</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Анатолий</td>
<td>То́ля</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Борис</td>
<td>Боря</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Валентин</td>
<td>Валя</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Василий</td>
<td>Ва́ся</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Виктор</td>
<td>Вита́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Владимир</td>
<td>Володя, Вова</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Георгий</td>
<td>Гео́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Григорий</td>
<td>Гри́ша</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Дмитрий</td>
<td>Ди́ма, Митья</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Евгений</td>
<td>Жёня</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Иван</td>
<td>Ва́ня</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Константин</td>
<td>Ко́сть</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Михаил</td>
<td>Миша</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Николай</td>
<td>Ко́ля</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Павел</td>
<td>Па́ша</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Пётр</td>
<td>Пётя</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Сергей</td>
<td>Серёжа</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Юрий</td>
<td>Юра</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Female forenames

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full name</th>
<th>Familiar version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Александра</td>
<td>Саша, Шура</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Анастасия</td>
<td>Настя</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Анна</td>
<td>Анна</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Валентина</td>
<td>Валя</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Таня</td>
<td>Гали</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Дарья</td>
<td>Даши</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Евгения</td>
<td>Женя</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Екатерина</td>
<td>Катя</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Елена</td>
<td>Лена</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Лариса</td>
<td>Лара</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Любовь</td>
<td>Любка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Людмила</td>
<td>Люда</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Мария</td>
<td>Маша</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Надежда</td>
<td>Надя</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Наталия</td>
<td>Наташа</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ольга</td>
<td>Оля</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Светлана</td>
<td>Света</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>София</td>
<td>София</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Татьяна</td>
<td>Таня</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE Some familiar names can be formed both from a male and a female name—for example, Валя (from Валентина and Валентина), Женя (from Евгения and Саша), Евгения и Шура (from Александра and Александра).

Many names tend not to have separate familiar forms; these include the following:

Male names: Андрей, Денис, Игорь, Максим, Олег
Female names: Алла, Оксана, Тамара

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:

Вова – Вовочка – Воин – Воинчик
Аня – Аничка – Аннушка – Анича – Июша – Июра

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 Павел 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*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forename</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Иван</td>
<td>Иванович</td>
<td>Иванова</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Пётр</td>
<td>Петрович</td>
<td>Петрова</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Павел</td>
<td>Павлович</td>
<td>Павловна</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** If the forename contains a *fleeting vowel*, this is removed before forming the patronymic.

2. If the forename ends in *-ий*, the final letter is removed and *-евич* is added to form the male version and *-евна* to form the female version:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forename</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Алексей</td>
<td>Алексеевич</td>
<td>Алексеевна</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Серге́й</td>
<td>Серге́евич</td>
<td>Серге́евна</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. If the forename ends in *-ий*, the final two letters are removed and *-евич* is added to form the male version and *-евна* to form the female version:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forename</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Анато́лий</td>
<td>Анато́льевич</td>
<td>Анато́льевна</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Юрий</td>
<td>Ю́рьевич</td>
<td>Ю́рьевна</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If the forename ends in *-й*, the final letter is removed and *-евич* is added to form the male version and *-евна* to form the female version:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forename</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Игорь</td>
<td>Игоревич</td>
<td>Игоревна</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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):
In all but the most formal levels of spoken language, patronyms are shortened in pronunciation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Ukrainian</th>
<th>Belarusian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Кузьма́</td>
<td>Кузьми́ч</td>
<td>Кузьми́нична</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Никита</td>
<td>Никитич</td>
<td>Никитична</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Илья́</td>
<td>Ильи́ч</td>
<td>Ильи́нична</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Миха́йлович</td>
<td>Миха́лыч</td>
<td>Миха́лна</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Никола́евич</td>
<td>Никола́ч</td>
<td>Никола́вна</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Серге́евич</td>
<td>Серге́йч</td>
<td>Серге́вна</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Алекса́ндрович (or Алекса́ньч)</td>
<td>Алекса́нна (or Алекса́нна)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Па́влович</td>
<td>Па́льч</td>
<td>Па́линna</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In informal speech some combinations of name and patronymic can be reduced even further:

Александр Александрович Санкт Петергоф
Павел Павлович Нар Петергоф

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:

Андре́й Петро́вич Ко́лх
Сергей Серге́евич Шойгу
Шафары́н Ивановий Шафары́н
Ирина Ивановна Ирина

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Бурмистров</td>
<td>Бурмистрова</td>
<td>Бурмистровы</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Кузнецов</td>
<td>Кузнецова</td>
<td>Кузнецовы</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Сергеев</td>
<td>Сергеева</td>
<td>Сергеевы</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Михин</td>
<td>Мишина</td>
<td>Мишины</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Птицын</td>
<td>Птицына</td>
<td>Птицыны</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Бёльй</td>
<td>Бёкая</td>
<td>Бёлыё</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Петрёвский</td>
<td>Петрёвская</td>
<td>Петрёвские</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Садовничий</td>
<td>Садовничая</td>
<td>Садовничие</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Толстый</td>
<td>Толстая</td>
<td>Толстыё</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more on these surnames, see 6.4.2.
3 Surnames (other than those following patterns (1) and (2)) ending in a consonant, in -йor in -ъ. 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:

| Абрамовиц | Щец |
| Борисевич | Коптун |
| Щевчук   | Воробей |
| Третьяк   | Гоголь |

**NOTE** It is important to distinguish surnames ending in -овиц 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:

- Глика
- Кущма

5 Surnames ending in -о (including Ukrainian surnames ending in -ко, -енко), These are indeclinable:

- Живацо
- Стижко
- Шевчёнко

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 де́ви́чья фами́лия.
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    Дже́й Да́нн

Both parts can be declined according to the pattern given in 2.6.1:

Я разгово́рил 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 разгова́ривал с Мар́и Дани.

I was talking to Marie Dunn.

Anna Smith    Ánna 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 разгова́ривал с Áнной 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:

   | French:  | Гюго   | (Victor) Hugo  |
   |         | Дюма   | Dumas          |
   | German: | Гёте   | Goethe         |
   | Italian:| Тольятти| Togliatti      |
   | Chinese:| 马о Цзе-ду́н| 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  | Лу́иза | Луиза |
   | Margaret | Маргарет | Маргарита |
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:

Сколько тебе лет?
How old are you?

Сколько лет вашей дочери?
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
- двадцатипятилетний - twenty-five-year-old
- сорокалетний  - forty-year-old

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 начался играть в шахматы в четырёх годах.

He learned to play chess at the age of four (or when he was four).

Она вдвоеела в возрасте тридцати двух лет.
She was widowed at the age of thirty-two.

В бале́тную сту́дию принимают с пяти́ лет.

They accept (children) at ballet school from the age of five upwards.

Он дирижи́ровал оркестро́м до восемидесяти́ лет.

He continued to conduct the orchestra up to the age of eighty (or until he was eighty).

Она́ сохраня́ла я́сность мы́сли и бо́дрость ду́ха до глубо́кой старости́.

She remained clear-headed and cheerful until well into her old age.

К сорока́ годам он полы́сёл, обзавёлся брю́шко́м и остави́л сво́и революцио́нные иде́и.

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, кorp. 3, кв. 46 |
| Recipient (in the dative)     | Касьянова 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)       | Касьянова Глебу Сергеевичу |
| Street name + street and flat numbers | ул. Гоголя, д. 21, кorp. 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:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>к.</td>
<td>комната</td>
<td>room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кв.</td>
<td>квартира</td>
<td>flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>корп.</td>
<td>корпус</td>
<td>block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>д.</td>
<td>дом</td>
<td>house, building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-р</td>
<td>бульвар</td>
<td>avenue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two abbreviations that are used regionally are:

- пер. переулок alley
- пр. проспект avenue
- ш. шоссе highway, road
- ул. улица street
- пл. площадь square
- п/я почтовый ящик PO box
- пос. посёлок large village, settlement
- дер. деревня (small) village, hamlet
- с. село village
- г. город town, city
- р-н район district
- обл. область region
- р. республика republic

The following terms are also useful in indicating addresses:

- до востребования poste restante
- почтовый 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:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>станция</td>
<td>(metro or railway) station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>остановка</td>
<td>(bus or tram) stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>светофор</td>
<td>traffic lights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>перекрёсток</td>
<td>road junction, crossroads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>въезд</td>
<td>entry (for vehicles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>двор</td>
<td>yard, back courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>подъезд</td>
<td>entry (to a block of flats), stairway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>этаж</td>
<td>floor, storey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дверь</td>
<td>door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вход со двора́</td>
<td>the entrance is located in the back courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>домофон</td>
<td>entry-phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кодовый замок</td>
<td>a lock with an entry code</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** The term **первый этаж** corresponds to (British) English ‘ground floor’; similarly, **второй этаж** corresponds to ‘first floor’, and so on.

Скажите таксисту, что вход в подъезд не с улицы, а со двора. Въезд во двор сразу за перекрёстком. У нас третий подъезд. Домофон не работает. В подъезде кодовый замок. קוד 345. Поднимайтесь на ли́фте на девятый этаж, квартира 36, это вторая дверь направо.
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 паспорт (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:

регистрировать/зарегистрировать — to register (someone)
прописывать/прописать — to register (someone)
регистрироваться/зарегистрироваться — to be registered
прописываться/прописаться — to be registered
проживать — to reside (at), to be resident (at)

— По какому адресу вы прописаны (зарегистрированы)?
— Я прописан по адресу: Санкт-Петербург, Садовая, тридцать четыре, квартира двадцать пять, но я там не проживал.
— 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 время учёбы бабушка прописала его у себя.
While he was a student, he was registered at his grandmother’s (address).

У меня вообще-то нет московской регистрации. Я прописана в Рязани.
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 Граждани́ство и национа́льность

In Russian, a very clear distinction is normally made between the following two concepts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>граждани́ство</th>
<th>citizenship, nationality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>национа́льность</td>
<td>ethnic identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Soviet times the национа́льность 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 национа́льность 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 nationality:

**In the context of Russia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>евре́й/евре́йка</td>
<td>Jew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>калмы́к/калмы́чка</td>
<td>Kalmyck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>русский/русская</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>татарин/татарка</td>
<td>Tatar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чечёнен/чечёнка</td>
<td>Chechen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In other contexts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>валлайс/валлайка</td>
<td>Welshman, Welshwoman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>катало́нс/катало́нка</td>
<td>Catalaan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>цыган/цыганка</td>
<td>Roma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>шотланде́йн/шотландка</td>
<td>Scot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Кто вы по национа́льности?**

What is your ethnic identity?

**Я татарин.**

I am a Tatar.

The following terms refer specifically to citizenship:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>брита́нс/брита́нка</td>
<td>citizen of Great Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>росси́янин/росси́янка</td>
<td>citizen of Russia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Какое у вас граждáнство?**

What is your nationality or citizenship?

**Я британец or Я граждáнин Великобритáнии.**

I am British or I am a citizen of Great Britain.

Many terms can be used in either sense:
12.5.2 **Российский and русский**

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 **российскй/российка** and the associated adjective **российский**, refer to Russia as a state and a political unit, and hence, to the concept of Russian citizenship; the term **русский**, 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Александрович</th>
<th>Виктор Александрович</th>
<th>Иван Александрович</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Александровна</td>
<td>Виктор Александровна</td>
<td>Иван Александровна</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more on the suffixes used, see **10.1.8** and **10.1.9**.
In international contexts the language factor often plays the key role in defining a person or an object as русский:

российский флаг  Russian flag
российский президент  Russian president
российский спортсмен  Russian sportsman
российская армия  Russian army
российская история  history of Russia
российское гражданство  Russian citizenship
российское руководство  Russia’s leaders

русский язык  Russian language
русский характер  Russian character
русский фольклор  Russian folklore
русский художник  Russian artist
русская литература  Russian literature
русская кухня  Russian cooking
русская народная музыка  Russian folk music
русское хлебосольство  (traditional) Russian hospitality

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 профессии?
Какая у вас профессия?
Чем вы занимаетесь?
Кем вы работаете?

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Должность</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Звание</td>
<td>Rank (e.g. in the armed forces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Служба</td>
<td>Service (e.g. in the armed forces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Работник</td>
<td>Worker (someone who works in a particular place)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Рабочий</td>
<td>Worker (member of the working class)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Her husband’s an investigator for the prosecutor’s office. He goes to work in civilian dress.

The state has an obligation to take care of those who work in the public sector.

An airport official was checking all the boarding cards.

When times were difficult for her family, she earned a bit of extra money doing translations and giving private lessons.

Many Moscow students earn a bit extra by working as extras for Mosfilm.

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:

архитектор  architect
водолаз    diver
врач       doctor
геолог     geologist (the same applies to all other nouns ending in -олог)
dепутат     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
слюсарь     metal worker, locksmith, repair man
строитель   builder
физик       physicist
Some nouns have separate *masculine* and *feminine* forms with equal status; the use depends solely on the sex of the person concerned:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>актёр/актриса</td>
<td>actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>офисный/офисная</td>
<td>waiter/waitress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>певец/певица</td>
<td>singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>танцёр/танцёрка, танцовщик/танцовщица</td>
<td>dancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>танцовщик/танцовщица, балерина</td>
<td>ballet dancer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>воспитатель/воспитательница</td>
<td>teacher (e.g. in a kindergarten)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>преподаватель/преподавательница</td>
<td>teacher (in a college or university)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>продавец/продавщица</td>
<td>salesperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>учитель/учительница</td>
<td>teacher (in a school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>художник/художница</td>
<td>artist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 In the following cases the *feminine* form, though widely used in informal language, may be perceived as derogatory:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>кассиер/кассирица</td>
<td>cashier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>секретарь/секретарица</td>
<td>secretary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 *-ла* or *-ха* are unreservedly derogatory and should be avoided.

5 Some nouns have only a *feminine* form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>акушерка</td>
<td>midwife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>горничная</td>
<td>(chamber)maid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>медсестра</td>
<td>nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>няня</td>
<td>nanny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>прачка</td>
<td>laundrywoman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6 There is one ‘asymmetric’ pair:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>машини́ст</td>
<td>локомотивный водитель</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>машини́стка</td>
<td>тайпист</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:
For more on the use of the instrumental long form and the short form of adjectives such as женатый, see 14.1.4.

For more on the acronym ЗАГС, see 2.14.1.

In recent years some terms borrowed from English have started to be used, especially in the mass media:
Он женился на двадцатилетней студентке.
He married a twenty-year-old student.

Она вышла замуж за иностранца.
She married a foreigner.

Он женился 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.
For twenty years they lived together (in a civil partnership), but last year they finally took the plunge and got married.

As far as I know, he’s divorced.

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 вам 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. Здра́вstuй is used when speaking to someone one would address with ты, otherwise, здра́вству́йте is used:

Здра́вству́йте, сади́тесь. Начи́наем урок.

Good morning. Sit down. Let’s get on with the lesson (in school).

Здра́вству́йте, уважа́емые радиослу́шатели.

Hello, listeners.

—Здра́вству́йте, Джейн.

—Здра́вству́йте, 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?

—Здра́вству́йте. Ири́на Алексе́евна.

—Здра́вству́йте, Ко́ля. Что у тебя́ новенького?

—Мне ма́ма купи́ла соба́ку.

—Hello, Irina Alekseevna.

—Hello Kolia. What news have you got?

—Mummy’s bought me a dog.

For the pronunciation of здра́вству́й(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 привет, which can be used when greeting a single person or a group. Also found, though less often, are здоровь, which contains a strong element of familiarity and which is more characteristic of male speech, and салют.

Прият, Ларя, как у тебя дела?

Hi, Lara. How are things?

—Здравствуй, мужик. Игра давно началась? Какой счет?

—Привет. Минаут 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.

Привет can also be used both in speech and writing with the meaning ‘regards’, ‘best wishes’:

—Передайте привет родителям и бабушке.

—Непременно 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! Привет жене. В следующий раз приезжайте вместе.

Well, then, have a pleasant journey. Regards to your wife. Next time the two of you must come.
Best wishes from Venice! There’s a lot of water, a lot of boats and a lot of tourists.

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**:

- **доброе утро**  
  good morning

- **добрый день**  
  good day, good afternoon

- **добрый вечер**  
  good evening

**Доброе утро, Николай Иванович. Как поживаете?**

Good morning, Nikolai Ivanovich. How are you?

**Добрый вечер. Начинаем наш выпуск с обзора главных событий дня.**

Good evening. We begin our bulletin with a round-up of the main events of day.

The verb **поприветствовать** is now slightly obsolete, but it is still used on formal and ceremonial occasions:

**Мы рады приветствовать вас в нашем городе.**

We are delighted to welcome you to our city.

**Добро пожаловать** means ‘welcome’ and for the most part is used in formal situations or on signs; it is often followed by the prepositions **вог на**(+ acc.).

**А вот и гости. Добро пожаловать! Проходите, раздевайтесь.**

Here are our guests. Welcome! Please come in and take off your coats.
Welcome to Moscow!

13.2.4 Saying goodbye

The most widely used and most neutral way of saying goodbye is the phrase \textit{до свидания}. Less widely used are the extended version \textit{до скорого свидания} and its shortened informal version \textit{до скорого}.

\textit{Всего (вам) добра, всего хорошего} are slightly more formal and often used as a reply to \textit{до свидания} in order to avoid repetition.

\textit{Пока} is particularly common in informal situations, especially among younger people; it is normally used only with people you would address with ты.

\textit{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.

\textit{Прощай(те)} is used when parting for a long time or forever.
Sчастливой is used when saying goodbye to someone who is leaving. Alternatively, if you are leaving, you may say счастливо оставаться to those who are staying behind.

Спокойной ночи, добрый ночнун‘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 завтра see you tomorrow
до следующей недели see you next week

In other circumstances до встречи ‘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 нёживаёшь?/Как нёживаете?
Как живёшь?/Как живёте?
Как (твои/ваши) дела?
Как у тебя/вас дела?

The following versions are more familiar in tone:

Как дела́шь?
Как здоровье?
Как жизнь?
Как живёться-можется?

All of the above can be translated as ‘How are things?’

In response, the following answers might be given, all introduced by Спасибо
‘Thank you’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>хорошо</td>
<td>fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>нормально</td>
<td>OK, not bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>неплохо</td>
<td>not bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ничего</td>
<td>OK, not too bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>так себе</td>
<td>so-so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лучше всех</td>
<td>great (this is more familiar in tone)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If things really are too bad for any of the above, a humorous answer is:

— Как дела́?

— Как са́жа белá…

— 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 `поздравля́ть/поздра́вить с(+ instr.);` the recipient of the salutation, if indicated, is in the *accusative*:

**Поздравля́ю тебя́ с днём рожде́ния!**

I wish you all the best on your birthday *or* Many happy returns on your birthday!

**Доро́гой па́почка, поздра́вля́ем тебя́ с Днём защи́тника Оте́чества!**

Dear father, we salute you on Defenders of the Fatherland Day.

**NOTE** День защи́тника Оте́чества (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 рожде́ния тебя́!**

Many happy returns of the day!

Other frequently used salutations include the following:

(Pоздравля́ю/Поздра́вляем):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c Новым годом</td>
<td>Happy New Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c Рождеством Христовым</td>
<td>Happy Christmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c Пасхой</td>
<td>Happy Easter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c Днём све́тлого Христова Воскре́сения</td>
<td>Happy Easter (more formal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c Днём Победы</td>
<td>(used on Victory Day, 9 May)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c (Междуна́родным) жё́нским днём</td>
<td>(used on International Women’s Day, 8 March, a national holiday in Russia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c Днём учителя</td>
<td>(see Note (i) below)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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:

—Христос воскресе!(е)!
—Воистину воскресе!(е)!
—Christ is risen!
—He is risen indeed!

The verb is not used in the following greetings:

с праздников (a useful all-purpose greeting that can be used on any national or other holiday)
с лёгким пárом (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 бáня (a traditional Russian bathhouse))

In circumstances where it is appropriate to return a salutation, this can be done by saying:

Взай́мно! And the same to you!
The verb **поздравлять/поздравить с(+instr.)** also means ‘to congratulate’:

Поздравляю честно за рабочий день.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Счастливого пути</th>
<th>Have a good journey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Доброго пути</td>
<td>Have a good journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Приятного отдыха</td>
<td>Enjoy your holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Приятного аппетита!</td>
<td>(said to someone who is eating or about to start eating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ни пуха ни пера!</td>
<td>Good luck!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 Козодоев.

Allow me to introduce myself: I am Gennadii Petrovich Kozodoev.

The following phrases all correspond to the English ‘Pleased to meet you’:

очень 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 Михаил.

—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:
John, allow me to introduce you to my colleague Volodia Semakov.

Это моё сестра Галина, а это мой шведский друг Андерс, – знакомьтесь.

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’ (зовут) and the accusative:

Как вас/тебя зовут?

What is your name?

Как зовут твою сестру?

What is your sister called?

In more informal language the verb can be in the infinitive:

Как тебя 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 по имени-отчеству?
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Прозвище</th>
<th>Nickname</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Кли́чка</td>
<td>Nickname, name of an animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ник</td>
<td>Nickname (of Internet user)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Какая кли́чка 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 зовут Иван.

I am called Ivan.

Её зовут Лариса Петровна.

She is called Larisa Petrovna.

Although the name is normally given in the nominative, in informal language it can be put in the instrumental:

Мёня зовут Иваном.

I’m called Ivan.

Её звать Ларисой.

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 нашем курсе один студент по фамилии Брежнев.

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 название 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 называться ‘to be called’:

Как называется деревня, в которой мы вчера чудесную деревянную церковь?

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
дать на́звание to give the name
по́д на́званием under the name

—Как называ́ется ваша земля́? — спроси́л кавитан испанского корабля́.

—Юка́тан! — отве́тил вождь места́ного племе́на, что на туземном язы́ке означа́ло «не понимаю». С тех пор полуостров поса́т на́звание Юка́тана.

—‘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.

Назы́вание «Во́йна и мир», кото́рое дал То́лстой своему рома́ну, ста́ло предме́том диску́сси́й на да́лние го́ды.

The name *War and Peace*, which Tolstoy (chose to) give his novel, was the subject of controversy for many years.

Фигу́ристы исполне́ли новы́й тане́ц под на́званием «Матрёшки».

The figure-skaters performed a new dance called (literally, under the name) ‘The Matroshkas’.

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:

Надя, иди домой, бабушка приехала!

Nadia, go home! Your grandmother’s arrived.

Коля, привет! Как у тебя дела?

Hi, Kolia, how are things?

Серёжа, здравствуй! Сто лет тебе не видела. Как поживаешь?

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:

Привет, Наташа. Меня в армию забирают. Прощай в субботу. Придёшь?

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 -a 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 знаешь, сколько времени?**

Kolia, do you happen to know what time it is?

**Тань, а Тань, иди сюда!**

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 Петрович, зайдите, пожалуйста, ко мне в кабинет. У меня есть некоторые вопросы по вашему отчёту.**

Piotr Petrovich, would you mind stepping into my office. I’ve got some questions about your report.

**Анна Сергеевна, вы уже проверили наши сочинения?**

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:

Репортер с места события ведет 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:

Михайлич, 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 толькo что был у Ивaн Ивaньчa.

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 слышала? Филимонова из отдела кадров родила двоих!

Have you heard? Filimonova from personnel has had twins.

Бритвихин и Столиаров вызвали в деканат.

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 фильмах Леонида Гайдая снимались лучшие отечественные актёры: Юрий Никунин, Андрей Мironов, Anatoliy Papanov.

NOTE The adjective отечественный is derived from отчество ‘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 вот эту куртку с капюшоном, что елея 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 сэр ‘sir’ and мадам ‘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 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 тётенька, 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 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

The Russian equivalent of ‘ladies and gentlemen’ is Дамы и господин, 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.

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 Вания! Dear Vania
Дорогой друг! Dear friend
The adjective ми́ла́й (ми́лая, ми́лье) ‘dear’ can also be used, especially when writing to close friends or relatives:

Ми́лая Та́ния!
Де́р Tания

Ми́лая ма́мочка!
Де́р Mum

Relatively formal letters can end with the formula:

и́скренне Ваш (твой)
с наилу́чшими пожела́ниями
Yours sincerely
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:

все́го до́бrego
все́го хоро́шего
all the best
all the best
In formal and official letters the name of the recipient is preceded by the adjective уважаемый, ‘respected’, ‘esteemed’ or глубокоуважаемый, ‘highly respected’/esteemed’:

Уважаемый Иван Петрович!
Глубокоуважаемый господин
Симпсон!

Dear Ivan Petrovich
Dear Mr Simpson

Formal letters can end with one of the following salutations:

С уважением
Искренне Ваш

Yours faithfully, 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 слушаю (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 плохо слышно. Перезвоните, пожалуйста.

Hello, I can’t hear you properly. Can you phone me back?

— Слушаю вас.

— Алло́, Михаил Моисеевич? Добрый день. Это Цветко́ва из «Вечерней газе́ты».

— Чем могу́ быть полезен?
—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 алло́г доб́рый 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 тринадцать.

—Пожалуйста, ваш адрес, куда поедем и на чье имя заказ.

—Березовый 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:

пригласите (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:

(А) кто его/её спрашивает?       Who is calling?

The following sentence can be used to offer to take a message:

Что ему/её передать?       Can I give him/her a message?

—Алло, салои причёсок.
—Будьте добрь, 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?
— Слухаю вас.
— Здравствуйте, може́ть Ніну?
— Одну минуточку. А кхто є́ спра́йниваєт?
— Є́то Валерій, онь знаєт.

— Hello.

— Hello, can I speak to Nina, please?

— Just a minute, Who’s calling?

— It’s Valerii. She’s expecting me to phone.

— Ало́, Макси́м?
— Нет, это́ егó отец.
— Добрый вече́р, а пьё́лъ ль с Максимом переговори́ть? Это́ Павел, егó одно́курьенц.
— Максима нет. Чтò ему переда́нь?
— Попроси́те, пожа́луйста, чтобы он мне перезво́нил на моби́льник. Он знает нуме́р.

— 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 (номером).
Вы не туда попали.

A typical message left on an answering machine (автоответчик) might be:

Здравствуйте, с вами говорит автоответчик. Оставьте, пожалуйста, ваше сообщение после звукового сигнала.

Hello, this is an answering machine. Please leave a message after the tone.

Other useful telephone-related words and phrases include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>звонить/позвонить (+ dat.)</td>
<td>to telephone (someone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>звонить/позвонить из автомата</td>
<td>to phone from a call-box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дозваниваться/дозвониться</td>
<td>to (succeed in) getting through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>перезванивать/перезонить</td>
<td>to ring back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>брать/взять трубку</td>
<td>to pick up the phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вешать/повесить or класть</td>
<td>to hang up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/положить трубку</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>набирать/набрать номер</td>
<td>to dial a number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мобильный/сотовый телефон</td>
<td>mobile telephone, cellphone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мобильник</td>
<td>mobile (informal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>посылать/послать (отправить/</td>
<td>to send a text message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>отправить, скинуть/сбросить)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>текстовое сообщение or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>СМС (смс, смсэ)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вводить/ввести номер в память</td>
<td>to put a number into the memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>заряжать/зарядить телефон</td>
<td>to charge up a telephone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:

Ма́ло кто зна́ёт, что мо́й бра́г — и́зве́стный актё́р.

Not many people know that my brother is a famous actor.

Э́льбру́с — са́мая высочайшая гора́ в Европе́.

El’brus is the highest mountain in Europe.

Спа́сибо, что ты ве́с так бы́стро сде́лал. Ты — насто́йчивый геро́й!

Thanks for doing everything so quickly. You are a real hero.

Два́жды два́ — че́тыре.

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:

Э́то, каж́ется, ва́ши ключи́.

I think these are your keys.

Запо́ми золо́тое пра́вило би́знеса: кла́нте всё́гда прав.

Remember the golden rule of business: the customer is always right.
Она моя двоюродная сестра.

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*

Уже ясно, что в ближайшие годы инфляция будет серьёзной проблемой для российского правительства.

It’s already clear that in the next few years inflation will be a serious problem for the Russian government.

*Imperative*

Профессор, у меня к вам просьба: будьте моим научным руководителем.

Professor, I’ve a favour to ask you. Would you agree to be my supervisor?

*Conditional*

Если бы ты был президентом России, как бы ты вёл борьбу с коррупцией?

If you were president of Russia, how would you manage the battle against corruption?

*Infinitive*

Не обязательно быть пророком, чтобы предсказать, чем это всё кончится.
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 третий муж был режиссёром одного из московских 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:

Она такая спосо́бная: кáжется, что уме́ет де́лать всё.

She’s so talented; it seems there’s nothing she can’t do.

Тут я вперы́е заме́тил, что глаза́ у него́ — голубые́.

It was then that I noticed for the first time his eyes are bright blue.

Остро́жно, эт́от гриб несъедо́бный!

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 очень инте́ресной.

I am sure that his new book will be very interesting.

Если бы он был бо́лее дальнови́дным, он не стал бы де́лать таки́х заявлений.

If he were more far-sighted he would not have made statements of that nature.
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:

Только теперь она поняла, что её решение было ошибочным.

Only now did she understand that her decision had been wrong.

В детстве ты была непоседливой и болтливой.

When you were a child you would never sit still or shut up.

Квартира, где он жил с семьёй, была большой, светлой, с видом на озеро.

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:

Будь мужественным: ничего с тобой не случится.

Be brave: nothing’s going to happen to you.
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.

Больше спасибо за помощь. Я очень благодарна.

Many thanks for your help. I’m very grateful.

— Ну что, поедем ужинать?
— Я вообще не голодаю.

— 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 туфли мне велики, у вас есть на размер меньше?

These shoes are too big for me. Do you have them in a size smaller?

Руки 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), прав right (not wrong)

just; right (not left)

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The short form of the adjective</th>
<th>Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Будьте добрý</td>
<td>Please be so kind as to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Будьте любезны</td>
<td>Please be so kind as to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Будьте здоровы</td>
<td>Bless you! (when someone sneezes), Take care (on parting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Мир тёсен</td>
<td>It’s a small world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Я жив, здоров</td>
<td>I’m alive and well, I’m still going strong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 се́бой

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 се́бой is used with a direct object in the accusative case; both subject and object are normally nouns:

С 2002 года он явлится членом Союза фотохудожников России.

He’s been a member of the Russian Union of Photographic Artists since 2002.

Учредитель Московского международного кинофестиваля является правительство России.

The official founder of the Moscow International Film Festival is the Russian government.

Новый фильм представляет собой неудачную смесь боевика и мелодрамы.

The new film is an unsuccessful cross between an action film and a melodrama.

The verb заключа́ться 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
The main difference between Batman and other superheroes is his absence of supernatural abilities.

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:

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 бывает 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 бывает 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.
There was some white powder in the envelope, but it was (or turned out to be) harmless.

14.1.6 The verb **стояться/стать**

The verb **стояться/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 молодежи.

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 **стояться/стать** with an adjectival complement, an intransitive verb formed from an adjective according to the pattern described in **10.3.3**: 
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, \textit{стать} functions very much like a perfective partner of \textit{быть} and in many instances it can be translated by ‘to be’:

\textit{Динамо} Киев, под руководством русского специалиста Юрия Семина впервые \textit{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. (\textit{Literally}, have become the winners…for the first time.)

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 \textit{Who Wants to be a Millionaire?} is called \textit{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.

\textbf{14.2 Existence, presence and location}

\textbf{14.2.1 The use of the verb \textit{быть}}

Existence, presence, and location is also often indicated by the verb \textit{быть}:

\textit{Была} одна проблема, но мы сумели её решить.

There was a problem, but we’ve managed to solve it.

\textit{Завтра я буду весь день на совещании.}

I’ll be at a meeting all day tomorrow.
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 московским 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 быть and оказываться/оказаться (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 бывает только по вторникам.

He is normally here only on Tuesdays.

Бывали случаи, когда 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 забивает столько мячей именно потому, что всегда оказывается 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 иметь is used, mostly in more formal types of language, to indicate existence or presence:

В распоряжении хакеров имеются программы, идентифицирующие пароли за несколько секунд.

There are programs available to hackers that identify passwords in a few seconds.

The verb находиться and the past passive participle расположен are widely used to indicate location:

Моя комната находится/расположена в конце коридора, рядом с ванной.

My room is (situated) at the end of the corridor, next to the bathroom.

Город Глазго расположен/находится в западной части Шотландии на обоих берегах реки 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 **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 **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 **лишь тысячёрублёвая 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 утверждать, 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 име́ться, нахо́диться, сто́ятъ, 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 меня два брата и одна сестра.
I have two brothers and a sister.

У неё ры́сые во́лосы и голубь́е глаза́.
She has light brown hair and pale blue eyes.

У меня эта кни́га уже есть.
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 бывать can be used in sentences indicating possession that is frequent, regular or intermittent:

Даже у извёстных футбо́льных клубов часто быва́ют больши́е 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 ВИДУ | to have in mind, to mean |
| ИМЕТЬ ВОЗМОЖНОСТЬ | to have the opportunity |
| ИМЕТЬ ДЕЛО (+ instr.) | to have dealings with |
| ИМЕТЬ ЗНАЧЕНИЕ | to have significance, to be important |
| ИМЕТЬ МЕСТО | to take place, to occur |
| ИМЕТЬ НАГЛОСТЬ | to have the cheek |
| ИМЕТЬ ПОСЛЕДСТВИЯ | to have consequences |
| ИМЕТЬ ПРАВО | to have the right |
| ИМЕТЬ ПРИЧИНУ | to have a reason |
| ИМЕТЬ СУДИМОСТЬ | to have a previous conviction |
| ИМЕТЬ ЧЕСТЬ | to have the honour |

Интересно было бы знать, что он имел в виду, когда задавал этот вопрос.

It would be interesting to know what he had in mind when he asked that question.

Корреспонденты местных газет гораздо реже имеют возможность задать вопрос президенту.

Correspondents working for local papers have much less opportunity to ask the president a question.

Ваше слово имеют для меня огромное значение.

Your words are extremely important to me.

Она заявила, что договорённые игры в теннисе по-прежнему имеют место, но только в мужском разряде.

She stated that fixed tennis matches still did take place, but only in men’s tournaments.

Имею честь предоставить слово нашему почётному гостю.
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 y (+gen.) is also possible:

*Если у меня будет возможность, я обязательно передам ему привет от тебя.*

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 претендовать на эту должность, надо иметь высшее образование.*

In order to apply for this post it is essential to have a university degree.

*Многие футбольные клубы, несмотря на хорошие результаты, имеют большие долги.*

Many football clubs, in spite of good results, have large debts.
I have never been married and have no children (e.g. in a formal statement).

I remember that official forms used to contain the question: ‘Do you have any relatives living abroad?’

14.3.3 The verbs облада́ть and владе́ть

The verbs облада́ть and владе́ть 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 паке́том акци́й этой коман́дии владе́ет государство.

A controlling share in the company is owned by the state.

До 1867 года Аля́ской владе́ла Россия.

Until 1867 Alaska was a possession of Russia.

Султа́н облада́л несметными бога́тствами и неогра́нченной вла́стью.

The sultan possessed countless riches and unlimited power.

Э́тот челове́к владе́ет уника́льной способно́стью чита́ть чуже́е мы́сли.

That man has the unique ability to read other people’s thoughts.

The phrase владе́ть (иностра́нным) язы́ком means ‘to know a (foreign) language’:

Мой колле́га свобо́дно владе́ет семьё́й иностранны́ми язы́ками.

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:

Рекомендуется менять деньги в аэропорту или в гостинице.

It is advisable to change money at the airport or in the hotel.

Не рекомендуется менять деньги в аэропорту или в гостинице.

It is not advisable to change money at the airport or in the hotel.

Теперь я знаю, что делать.

Now I know what to do.

Теперь я не знаю, что делать.

Now I don’t know what to do.

Звони домой каждый день.

Phone home every day.

Не звони домой каждый 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:

Боюсь, что его новая книга не будет очень интересной.
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 *neis 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:

| Мас. не был | Фем. не была | Н. не было | Р. не были |

Negation can be reinforced by the adverbs *совсём, совершенно, абсолютно* ‘absolutely’, ‘(not) at all’:

**Теперь я совсем/совершенно/абсолютно не знаю, что делать.**

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 уверен, что будут проблемы.**

I am certain there will be problems.

**Я уверен, что не будет проблем.**

I am certain there won’t be (any) problems.

**В двадцатые годы в Ростове уже был университет.**

In the 1920s there was already a university in Rostov.

**В конце девятнадцатого века в Ростове ещё не было университета.**

At the end of the nineteenth century there still was no university in Rostov.
Есть примеры этого явления и в России.

There are examples of this phenomenon in Russia.

В России нет примеров этого явления.

There are no examples of this phenomenon in Russia.

Завтра у меня будет время для этого.

I shall have time for this tomorrow.

Завтра у меня не будет времени для этого.

I won’t have time for this tomorrow.

У них дочь.

They have a daughter.

У них нет сына.

They have no son.
I already have that book.

Я уже эта книга есть.

I no longer have that book.

Я у этой книги уже нет.

Particular attention is drawn to the following examples, where this construction is used to indicate absence:

—Можно поговорить с Галией?
—Can I speak to Galia?

—Да, она здесь.
—Yes, she’s here.

Or

—Нет, сейчас ей нет.
—No, she’s not here at the moment.

Or

—Нет, ей не дома сейчас.
—No, she’s not at home at the moment.

Я был на этом собрании: я всё помню.

I was at that meeting. I can remember everything.

Меня не было на этом собрании: я не знаю, что там обсуждали.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Word</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>бывать</td>
<td>to be frequently or to be regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>оказываться/оказаться</td>
<td>to turn out to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>оставаться/остаться</td>
<td>to remain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>происходить/произойти</td>
<td>to happen, to occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>случиться/случиться</td>
<td>to happen, to occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>существоовать (не)</td>
<td>to exist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

В империи не бывает граждан. Есть только подданные императора.

You don’t have citizens in an empire. You just have subjects of the emperor.

В его машине не оказалось места для меня.

(It turned out that) there was no room in his car for me.

В Москве не осталось дешёвых ресторанов.

There are no cheap restaurants left in Moscow.

Чтобы этого не случилось, надо вовремя оплачивать счета.

For that not to happen, you have to pay your bills on time.

Единой модели демократии просто не существует.

A single model for democracy simply doesn’t exist.

NOTE The expression Его не стало 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:

*Они приезжают 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 топо 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>никогда́</td>
<td>never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>никак</td>
<td>in no way, by no means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>нигдё́</td>
<td>nowhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>никогда́</td>
<td>(to) nowhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>нигде́́</td>
<td>from nowhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>нисколько́</td>
<td>not in the slightest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ничуть́</td>
<td>not in the slightest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Но мы никогда́ не были друзья́ми.

But we were never friends.

Он никак не реаги́рует на мои́ просьбы́.

He doesn’t react in any way to my requests.

Бы́ло вре́мя, чёрная икра́ не продавалась нигдё́.

There was a time when black caviar was not sold anywhere.

Никуда́ не уходи́те.

Don’t go off anywhere.

Я помо́щи нигде́́ не жду́.
I’m not expecting help from anywhere.

Его нисколько не смущал тот факт, что уже дважды ему отказывали.

He was not in the slightest embarrassed by the fact that he had already been turned down twice.

Я ни в коем случае не сомневаюсь, 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:

никто

ничто/ничего

никакой

no one

nothing

not any, no

Никто, ничто/ничего and никакой decline like the interrogative pronouns кто, что and какой respectively (see 7.4.1 and 7.4.2); for more on ничто/ничего see 15.3.3.

Сегодня никто не звонил.

Nobody phoned today.
Я никого не обвиняю, но уже никому не верю.

I’m not accusing anybody, but I no longer believe anyone.

Ничего здесь не понимаю.

I can’t understand anything here.

Я не получил от него никакого ответа.

I haven’t received any answer from him.

Продажа таких вооружений не ограничена никакими международными соглашениями.

The sale of such weapons is not restricted by any international agreements.

Further examples with ничто/ничего are given in 15.3.3.

There are two negative pronouns that are used rather less frequently: ничей ‘no one’s’.

This declines like the pronoun чей (see 7.4.2):

—Чья эта собака?
—Никчя.

—Whose dog is that?
—Nobody’s.

The feminine form ничьи is also used as a noun with the meaning ‘draw’ (in sport):

Их последняя игра кончилась ничьи.

Their last game ended as a draw.

The pronoun никой is really only used in two set phrases that serve as emphatic negatives:
In no way whatsoever do state corporations take the place of private business.

Телевизионная академия ни в коем случае не должна быть политизированной.

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 обсуждал вашу проблему.

I haven’t discussed your problem with anyone.

Этот стиль ни с чьим не спутаешь.

You wouldn’t confuse this style with anything.

Её соперник ни при каких обстоятельствах не может рассчитывать на поддержку национальных меньшинств.

There are no circumstances in which her rival can rely on the support of the ethnic minorities.
Я не в чьей помощи не нуждаюсь.
I don’t need anyone’s help.

15.3.3 More on ничто/ничего

The form ничто 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:

Ничто здесь меня не интересует.
Nothing here interests me.

Forms in … что are also used in conjunction with prepositions that take the accusative case:

Она ни за что не поедет на Дальний Восток!
She won’t go to the Far East at any price!

The pronoun is found much more often in the form ничего: 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:

Мы ничего не боимся.
We’re not afraid of anything.

Наши дети ничего не читают.
Our children don’t read anything.

The form ничего is also used in impersonal expressions of the type:

Ничего не слышно, ничего не видно.
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, смотри́ть можнó.

The film’s OK; it’s watchable at least.

Ничего́ (стра́шного) can be used in reply to an apology:

—Извините, пожалуйста.
—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:

Никто никому ничего не должен.

Nobody owes anybody anything.

Я никогда никому ничего подобного не говорила.

I never said anything of the sort to anybody.

Negative adverbs and pronouns can be used in conjunction with the negative impersonal predicate forms нельзя ‘it is forbidden’, ‘it is impossible’ and невозможно ‘it is impossible’:

Во время дежурства ника́да нельзя выхо́дить.

You are not allowed to go anywhere while you are on duty.

Никак нельзя откры́ть окно́.

It’s totally impossible to open the window.

Нездё невозможно было купи́ть 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 нельзя 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 остались ни с чем.
We were left with nothing.

Вы сейчас находитесь на дороге в нигде.
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 рыбы ни мяса.
I eat neither fish nor meat.

Она не умеет разговаривать ни с коллегами ни с учениками.
She doesn’t know how to talk either to her colleagues or to her pupils.

Я не хочу ни есть ни пить.
I want neither to eat nor to drink.

Его нет ни дома ни на работе.
He’s neither at home nor at work.

The particle НИ is not used when НИ ... НИ is used in certain set phrases of the type:

ни ры́ба ни мя́со  neither one thing nor another
ни с тогó ни с сего́ suddenly, for no obvious reason
She suddenly decided to give everything up and go off and work in Italy.

The other use of нiнi to make negation more emphatic:

Я не знаю ни одного слова по-китайски.

I don’t know a single word of Chinese.

Я ни разу не был на Кавказе.

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.

Они не обратили на меня ни малейшего внимания.

They didn’t pay me even the slightest attention.

Ни с места!

Don’t move! or Stay right where you are!

NOTE The negative particle нi should be distinguished from the reinforcing particle нi found in constructions such as:

как бы то ни было however that might be
что бы ты ни 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 обращали 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 мясо.

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’:
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/жену.

I don’t know his wife.

Мы съездили мы не едим только по будням.

We don’t eat meat on weekdays only.

15.5 Negatives of the НЕЧЕГО, 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
нечего  there is nothing
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 понял, что ему некому передавать опыт.**

He suddenly realised there was nobody he could pass on his experience to.

**Нам здесь нечего делать.**

There’s nothing for us to do here.

**Мне некогда тут с вами рассиживаться.**

I haven’t got time to sit around here with you.

**Здесь негде припарковать машину.**

There’s nowhere here to park a car.

**Нашей молодежи вечером некуда пойти.**

Our young people have nowhere to go in the evening.

**Такую огромную сумму взять было неоткуда.**

There was nowhere to get hold of such an enormous sum (of money).

**Мне незачем ехать за границу: у меня здесь есть всё, что нужно.**

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):
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.

**Нечего** 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? Нечего было уходить так рано.**

Whose fault is it that you missed the most interesting part? There was no need to leave so early.
You need to get on with your work, instead of messing around.

There’s no cause to be surprised.

Some expressions involving these negative forms have become set phrases:

не́ за что — don’t mention it (a fairly formal reply to thanks)
от не́чего делать — from want of anything better to do (note that the preposition goes before the entire phrase)
да́льше не́ куда — that’s the limit, it can’t get any worse

— Большое спасибо.
— Не за то.

— Thank you very much.
— Don’t mention it.

Некоторые полагают, что советский человéк чита́л от не́чего делать.

Some people think that people in the Soviet Union read because they hadn’t anything better to do.

Ситуа́ция до то́го осложни́лась, что да́льше не́ куда.

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 билеты?
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?
Excuse me, you wouldn’t happen to have a light, would you?

Do please write down my phone number. If the tap starts dripping again, feel free to telephone me.

After the move everything was going smoothly and they were starting to think about having a second child.

I’m not bothered about summer, with all the heat, the dust and the mosquitoes, but I really love a cold and frosty winter.

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:

There’s a warm breeze, and fluffy clouds are scudding across the sky.

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 -ник-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 кофе-какоё бельышко.

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 ко́го́ хо́чешь разбу́дит.

A voice like that could wake anyone up.

С его́ кулачни́цами ему́ бы́ боксом занима́ться, а не на скрижа́лке игра́ть.

With fists like that he should take up boxing, not the violin!

Он сдал ключи́ от комна́ты, но такую́ грязни́цу после се́бя оста́вил, — да́же посуду́ за се́бой не по́мыл!

He handed in the keys to the room, but left such a filthy mess behind; he didn’t even do the washing up!

Сосе́дний дому пошёл под снос; стои́т гро́хот, пы́ли́ца . . .

They’ve started to demolish the building next door; there’s noise and dust everywhere!

Не дыши́ на меня́; от тебя́ вини́щем 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 -ни́цанormally has negative connotations, the noun дру́жище used as a form of address, expresses both a familiar and a positive attitude:

Сто́ лет тебе́ не ви́дел, дру́жище!

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>дочь</td>
<td>daughter</td>
<td>дочь, доченька</td>
<td>дочь, доченька</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сын</td>
<td>son</td>
<td>сынок, сынчик</td>
<td>сынок, сынчик</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мама</td>
<td>mum, mother</td>
<td>мамочка, мамуля</td>
<td>мамочка, мамуля</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сестра</td>
<td>sister</td>
<td>сестрица, сестричка</td>
<td>сестрица, сестричка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>брат</td>
<td>brother</td>
<td>братик, братец</td>
<td>братик, братец</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Наша дочь уже перешла во второй 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>жена́</td>
<td>wife</td>
<td>жена́шенька</td>
<td>жена́шенька</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>муж</td>
<td>husband</td>
<td>мужевёк</td>
<td>мужевёк</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>мама</td>
<td>mum, mother</td>
<td>мамочка, мамуля</td>
<td>мамочка, мамуля</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>папа</td>
<td>dad, father</td>
<td>папочка, папуля</td>
<td>папочка, папуля</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сын</td>
<td>son</td>
<td>сынок, сынчик, сынуля</td>
<td>сынок, сынчик, сынуля</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сестра</td>
<td>sister</td>
<td>сестра, сестринка</td>
<td>сестра, сестринка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>брат</td>
<td>brother</td>
<td>братец, братишка</td>
<td>братец, братишка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дедушка</td>
<td>grandfather</td>
<td>дедушка</td>
<td>дедушка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Turn your music down (son), or else the neighbours will be coming to complain again.

NOTES

(i) In this usage the suffix -ушка (сынушка) has positive connotations.

(ii) Братец is often used as a familiar form of address to a male person:

А ты, братец, хитёр! Лёвко приду-мал!

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 -к- and -очк-/очк-, -оньк-/оньк-. 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
### Female forenames

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full version</th>
<th>‘Standard’ familiar version</th>
<th>Version that expresses close familiarity or disdain</th>
<th>Version that expresses strong affection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Борис</td>
<td>Боря</td>
<td>Борька</td>
<td>Боренька</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Валентин</td>
<td>Валя</td>
<td>Валька</td>
<td>Валечка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Владимир</td>
<td>Володя, Вова</td>
<td>Вовка</td>
<td>Вовочка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Григорий</td>
<td>Гриша</td>
<td>Гришка</td>
<td>Гришенька</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Дмитрий</td>
<td>Дима</td>
<td>Димка</td>
<td>Димочка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Евгений</td>
<td>Женя</td>
<td>Женька</td>
<td>Женечка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Иван</td>
<td>Ваня</td>
<td>Ва́нька</td>
<td>Ванечка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Михаил</td>
<td>Миша</td>
<td>Мишка</td>
<td>Мишенька</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Николай</td>
<td>Коля</td>
<td>Колька</td>
<td>Коленька</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Пётр</td>
<td>Пётя</td>
<td>Пётъка</td>
<td>Петенька</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Серге́й</td>
<td>Серёжа</td>
<td>Серёшка</td>
<td>Серёженька</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full version</th>
<th>‘Standard’ familiar version</th>
<th>Version that expresses close familiarity or disdain</th>
<th>Version that expresses strong affection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Анна</td>
<td>Аня</td>
<td>Анька</td>
<td>Анечка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Валентина</td>
<td>Валя</td>
<td>Валька</td>
<td>Валечка</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Екатерина</td>
<td>Катя</td>
<td>Катья</td>
<td>Катенька, Катюша</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Petia, old man, why do you never phone?

Машенька, не надо волноваться. Всё будет хорошо.

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:

While the advertisements were on TV he nipped into the kitchen and opened a bottle of nice cool beer.

While the advertisements were on TV he nipped into the kitchen and opened a bottle of nice cool beer.

На следующий день она уже хвасталась в школе своим новеньким телефоном.

The next day she was already showing off her new telephone in school.

In the morning the village postman arrived on his ancient bicycle; he had brought
granny her pension.

Нет, купаться я сегодня не буду; вода холодная!

I have absolutely no intention of bathing today; that water’s freezing cold!

Когда он появился на занятиях, под голосом у него красовался здоровенный синяк.

He came to lectures sporting a fine black eye.

— Выключите телевизор; отец спит.
— Я тихонечко досмотрю фильм и потом выключу, можно?

— 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?

— Значит, мы договорились; встречаемся завтра в семь.
— Вот и чуденькое!

— 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.
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 **понравиться** tends to be used to indicate an immediate reaction to something:

Мне не нра́ви́ться эти зелёные я́блоки.

I really liked those green apples (when I tasted them).

Мне не нра́ви́лся его́ последний фильм.

I didn’t like his last film (when I saw it).

When they are used with reference to living beings, and especially people, **любить**/пологий and **нра́ви́ться**/понра́виться correspond respectively to the English ‘to love’ and ‘to like’:

Она нра́вила его́ с пе́рвого взгля́да.

She fell in love with him at first sight.

Он нра́ви́лся ей́ 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 *когда, если, или что*:

Я люблю слушать современную музыку.

I enjoy listening to contemporary music.

Ей нравилось гулять в парке после ужина.

She used to like going for a walk in the park after supper.

В детстве она любила, когда ей читали вслух.

When she was a child, she used to like being read aloud to.

А тебе понравится, если кто-нибудь начнёт следить за каждым твоим шагом?

Would you like it if someone started to watch you at every step?

Ему не нравилось, что после каждой вечеринки мать звонила родителям его друзей.

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 нравиться́ 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 было по душе́ такое обслуживание.

We liked that level of service.

The following words and phrases express a very strong degree of liking:

обожа́ть (исч) to adore, to admire

быть в восторге от (+ gen.) to be delighted with
Она обожает балет.
She adores ballet.

Своего старшего брата он обожал и подражал ему во всем.
He admired his elder brother and imitated everything he did.

Мы были в восторге от такого приема.
We were delighted by the welcome we got.

There are a number of useful words and phrases that use forms derived from любить:

влюбиться/влюбиться в (+ acc.) to fall in love with
влюблен/влюбленна в (+ acc.) in love with
влюбленный lover, person in love (often plural)
любовник/любовница lover (sexual partner)
любитель/любительница lover (of an activity), (masculine form only) amateur

Ромео влюбился в Джулетту с первого взгляда.
Romeo fell in love with Juliet at first sight.

Они влюблены друг в друга.
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 влюбленные 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 когда-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 раздельно.

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 предпочту жить в нищете, чем заниматься нелюбимым делом.

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:

Давай купим ей в подарок вазу; выбери что-нибудь подходящее, на твой вкус.

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’:

великолепно
замечательно
продиво
отлично
превосходно
чудесно
— А я уже приготовил завтрак.
— Вот и отлично.

— I’ve already made breakfast.
— That’s great!

— Он сдал все экзамены на пять и окончил университет с красным дипломом.
— 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’:

годится
tак себе
пойдёт
сойдёт

The last two words can be reinforced by the particle ничего:

— Это съедобный гриб?
— Годится, клади его в корзину.

— Is that an edible mushroom?
— It’s OK, put it in the basket.

— Фильм был интересный?
— Да так себе.
—Was the film interesting?

—It was all right, I suppose.

—Как тебе понравился фильм?

—Ничего, не очень хорошо заклеил эту дыру.

—I don't think I made a very good job of stopping up that hole.

—It's OK; it will do.

—Как ты думаешь, нам нужно делать в квартире влажную уборку?

—Ничего, 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 **сносный** means ‘adequate’, ‘acceptable’, ‘reasonable’, ‘not bad’:

Погода сносная, и, если одеться потеплее, можно было гулять 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:

*Ему было всё равно, куда идти.*

He didn’t care where they went.

*Я не болельщик; мне безразлично, чья команда сегодня победит.*

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 начать (literally, ‘to sneeze’) and плевать (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:

*Напра́си́мо мы наде́лились, что он послу́шает на́шего сове́та. Ему́ было на́ это плева́ть.*

Our hopes that he might listen to our advice were in vain. He couldn’t care less.

*A мне нача́ть 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 мо́я новья причёска?*
—*Ты знаешь, 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 ненави́деть/возненави́деть,
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 выношу
я не перенослю
я терпеть не могу
я на дух не переношу

(literally, I can’t digest)

В людях она ненавидела жадность и лицемерие.

She hated greed and hypocrisy in people.

Я человек терпеливый, но не выношу одного – женской истерии.

I am a patient man, but one thing I can’t stand is female hysterics.

Терпеть не могу, когда в машине курят.

I cannot put up with people smoking in my car.

Наша бабушка на дух не переносит рок-музыку.

Our grandmother cannot abide rock music.

Ты опять идешь на дискотеку со своей новой подругой? Сказать тебе честно, я её не перевариваю.

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 еще can be used to express disapproval:

Нужён 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)'.

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:

Она хочет выйти замуж в этом году.

She wants to get married this year.

Мы хотим завести собаку.

We want to get a dog.

Гость хотел принять ванну и выпить кофе.

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 чтобы:

Мы хотим, чтобы на планете не было войн.

We want the planet to be free of war.

Хочу пожелать всему коллективу авторов, чтобы эта книга была, наконец, 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 чтобы, see 9.3.4.
16.3.2 Less categorical desires

The impersonal reflexive pair of verbs хотеться/захотеться expresses a less categorical desire than хотят/захотят 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 хочется выйти замуж за киноактёра.
She wants to marry a film-star.

Ей захотелось романтики, чего-то необычного.
She (suddenly) felt like something romantic, something out of the ordinary.

Летом хочется загорать и купаться, а не сидеть 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 хотят has the effect of turning a wish into a polite request:

Добрый день, мой жена хотела бы получить консультацию врача.
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 хотел заказать завтрак в номер.
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 кружку пива!
I’d love a glass of beer right now!

Поехать бы сейчас на недельку к морю!

If only we could drop everything and go off to the seaside for a week!

Тебе бы отдохнуть как следует!

If only you could get a proper rest!

The infinitive, however, can be omitted:

Сейчас бы кружку пива!

I’d love a glass of beer right now!

Сейчас бы к морю на недельку!

If only we could drop everything and go off to the seaside for a week!

Эх, диктофон бы сейчас было бы записать рассказ этого старика о войне.

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
полагать (нев)
считать/счесть
мне кажется
по моему мнению
(по вашему мнению etc.)
по-моему (по-вашему etc.)
на мой взгляд
(на ваш взгляд etc.)

to think
to assume, to suppose
to consider
I think
in my opinion (in your opinion, etc.)
in my opinion (in your opinion, 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 согласен/согласна, вы согласны:
do you agree?

я согласен/согласна, мы согласны.

I agree, we agree.

—Мне кажется, первый приз нужно присудить участнику под номером три. Вы согласны?
—Да, я согласен.

—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 возражать/возразить ‘to object’:

_Ты не возражешь, если мы выключим телевизор?_

Would you have any objections if we turned the television off?

—Мне кажется, первый приз нужно присудить участнику под номером три. Вы согласны?
—Я не возражаю.

—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 согласиться/согласись ‘to agree’ is more frequently used to describe someone’s reaction rather than as a means of expressing one’s agreement:

_Мы предложили ей выступить у нас на семинаре. Подумав, она согласилась._

We invited her to give a seminar. After giving it some thought, she agreed.

Дать/дать согласие на(+acc.) ‘to give one’s agreement’ is used in formal contexts:

_Настоящим дать согласие на самостоятельный въезд моей несовершеннолетней дочери за пределы Российской Федерации без сопровождения взрослых._

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:
—Can Natasha borrow your umbrella?

—OK, she can borrow it, if she wants to.

—Можно Наташе взять твой зонт?
—Ладно, пусть берёт.

—Would you mind helping her with her translation?

—That’s OK. Tell her to come and see me.

—Давайте сделаем так: сегодня посуду моет Иван, а завтра Лиза.
—Договорились.

—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 согласенно 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/ного 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:
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Phrase</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>конечно</td>
<td>of course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(само собой) разумеется</td>
<td>of course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>безусловно</td>
<td>certainly, definitely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>несомненно</td>
<td>undoubtedly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вне всякого сомнения</td>
<td>beyond any doubt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>обязательно</td>
<td>definitely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 вобочкой.

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.
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 Вам, see 1.5.7.

The following adverbs and phrases are widely used in informal language to indicate certainty:

наверняка
definitely
железно
sure thing!
как пить дать
you (can) bet (your life on it)!

Безусловно, специалист в этой области, но я бы посоветовался с кем-нибудь ещё.

Nobody’s answering the telephone; they must definitely have left.

—Придёшь за́тра на трениро́вку?
—Желёзо.

—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:
We’d no hot water all day yesterday; they must have been changing the pipes somewhere.

—Боюсь, что магазин уже закрыт.
—Похоже на то.

—I’m afraid the shop’s already shut.
—It looks like it.
—Ты не знаешь, кто это сейчас с нами здоровался?
—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 = теплэлектроцентраль).

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:

ка́жется it seems, I think
может бы́ть perhaps
возмо́жно possibly
вроде́ (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.

Може́т быть, она уже не вернётся сюда.

Perhaps she won’t come back here again.

—Ты не забы́ла вы́ключить телеви́зор?
—Вроде нет.

—Did you forget to turn the television off?
—I don’t think so.

In informal contexts может бы́ть is often reduced to its first element:
Можете, я ещё приду сюда осенью.

I might come again in the autumn.

The Russian verb corresponding to the English ‘to doubt’ is **сомневаться** (нев). 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**
- **невероятно**
- **недоуверенно**
- **нельзя с уверенностью сказать**

Он болен и вряд ли появится на работе на этой неделе.

He’s ill and is unlikely to come back to work this week.
It’s unlikely that anything interesting is going to happen here.

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 зависит 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
  постолько поскольку also up to a point

— Вам часто приходится работать по вечерам?
— Когда как, or 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 постолько 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 by transformed into a question by raising the intonation on the relevant word:

Иван вчера купил словарь?

Did Ivan buy a dictionary yesterday?

Was it a dictionary that Ivan bought yesterday?

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:

Иван купил словарь вчера?

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 плохо?

Are you feeling unwell?
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*Счёт уже два-два?*

Is the score already two-two?

*Опять нё чего 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 сло́варь?*

Did Ivan buy the dictionary?

*Мóжно ли есть э́ти яго́ды?*

Can you eat these berries?

*Зде́сь ли выда́ют анкéты?*

Is it here that you can get application forms?

*В ту ли сто́рону мы идём?*

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 возражай, если я выключу телевизор?**
Would you have any objections if I turned the television off?

**Не хотите, как дойти до автовокзала?**
Could you tell me how to get to the bus station?

**Простите, это 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:

—Иван вчера купил словарь?
   —Да, купил.
   —Нет, не купил.

—Did Ivan buy a dictionary yesterday?

—Yes, he did.
—No, he didn’t.

—Здесь ли выдают анкеты?
   —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 его ли мы видели вчера на приёме в посольстве?
Didn’t we see him at the embassy yesterday, at the reception?

Оди́н ми́ну́точку, а нет ли тут ка́ко́го-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 позво́ни́ть ли Джо́ну?

Why don’t we phone John?

A не вы́пить ли нам конья́чку?

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. *Ра́зве*suggests that
Page 338

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 берет трубку. Да что они там, оглянули, 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?
This is your note, isn’t it?

It’s a lovely day today, isn’t it?

When you’re dialling the area code, you leave the zero out, don’t you?

You’re not going to the lecture today, are you?

They played really well today, didn’t they?

Some tag questions are a request for further information:

—Ты хорошо водишь машину?
—Неплохо, а что?

—Are you a good driver?

—Not bad. Why?

—Это ваша машина?
—Мой, а в чём дело?

—Is this your car?

—Yes, it is. Why do you want to know? or What’s the problem?

—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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interrogative Pronoun</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ктo?</td>
<td>who?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чтo?</td>
<td>what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>чей?</td>
<td>whose?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>какой?</td>
<td>which?, what sort of?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кото́рый?</td>
<td>which?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the declension of ктo and чтo, see 7.4.1.

For the declension of чей, какой and кото́рый, 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 предпочитаете — 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:

Который час? What time is it?
В котором часу? At what time?
For more on the use of который 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 это:

Како́й замечательный портрет — кто это?

What a remarkable portrait. Who is it?

Я никогда не пробовал ничего подобного — это что?

I’ve never tried anything like that before. What is it?

Ты слы́шила шаги? Кто это был?

Did you hear footsteps? Who was it?

Ты слы́шила шорох? Что это было?

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 такой: this pronoun will be masculine singular when used with кто and neuter singular when used with что:

Како́й стра́нный портрет — кто это такой?

What a strange portrait. Who (on earth) is it?

Я никогда не пробовал ничего подобного — что это такое?

I’ve never tried anything like that before. What (on earth) is it?
Кто and тако́й can also be used with a personal pronoun, in which case the gender of тако́й depends on the sex of the person being addressed or referred to:

—Простите, а кто вы така́я, что́бы здесь распоря́жаться?
—А вы кто тако́й?

—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 тако́й 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 ры́ба (така́я)?

What sort of fish is that?

что она́ за челове́к?

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 очка́х?

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 *сколько*, see 8.6.3.

сколько у них детей?

How many children do they have?

За сколько вы купили этот шарф?

How much did you buy that scarf for?

17.3.4 Interrogative adverbs

The following *interrogative adverbs* are used in Russian:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interrogative adverb</th>
<th>English equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>когда?</td>
<td>when?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>где?</td>
<td>where?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>куда?</td>
<td>where to?, whither?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>откуда?</td>
<td>where from?, whence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>как?</td>
<td>how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>насолько?</td>
<td>to what extent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>почему?</td>
<td>why? (for what reason?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>отчего?</td>
<td>why? (from what cause?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>зачем?</td>
<td>why? (for what purpose?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When are you leaving?

Where is (the town of) Saransk?

Where are we going after work?

Where did you get that information from?

How do you make borshch?

How well does he know English?

Why won’t this file open?

Why have they cancelled the trip?

Why are you looking so gloomy?

Why did you turn the light off? or What did you turn the light off for?
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-руски 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:

*Kак вы сме́сте говори́ть со мной таким то́ном!*

How dare you speak to me in that tone of voice!

*Kак тебе́ не сты́дно!*

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?

*Приди́рживайтесь дверь, сколь́ко можнó говори́ть!*

Hold the door. How many times do I have to tell you!

*Да сколько́ можнó повтори́ть – не брал я синей папки!*

How many times do I have to say it: I didn’t take the blue folder!

*Опять в кварти́ре барда́к - на что́ это похо́же!*

The flat’s in a total mess again. I’ve never seen anything like it! (*Literally, What does it look like?*)

*Один прогу́л и два опозда́ния за неде́лю - куда́́ это го́дится!*

*Зна́ете, что́ это? Вот тебе́ за ко́йку!*

*By the way, what is this? Here’s your bed!*
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 черта/какого дьявола ты здесь болтаешься!

What the devil are you hanging round here for?

Мыслимо ли дело, простой 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!

Поверили 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 да же гроссмейстеров, не веришь?

He’s even managed to beat grand masters. Can you believe it?

Она ещё и претензии предъявляет, видишь?

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 such things?

—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?

_Немогли 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 подайте 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 надо, нужно and необходимо

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:

надо
нужно

Надо кричать громче: тебя никто не слышит.
You need to shout louder. Nobody can hear you.

Нужно каждый день выпивать пять стаканов воды.
You/one should drink five glasses of water a day.

Надо было думать об этом раньше.
You should have thought of that earlier.

Если будет нужно, мы вам позвоним.
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:

Тебе надо сделать работу над ошибками.
You need to do some work on these mistakes.

Мне нужно будет подумать над вашим предложением.
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 направляйтесь 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 должен знать лучшие рестораны города.

She lived there for five years, so she ought to know which are the best restaurants
in the city.

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 должно быть indicate probability. see 16.5.1.

18.1.3 Using приходиться/прийтись

The impersonal verb приходиться/прийтись is widely used to express necessity through force of circumstances; the person subject to the necessity, if indicated, is in the dative:

На ку́хне опять текёт кран: придётся вызвать сантехника.

There’s a tap dripping in the kitchen again. I’ll have to get a plumber to look at it.
Sometimes my colleagues help, but very often I end up having to do everything myself.

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

18.1.4 Indicating lack of obligation

The negative forms не надо, не нужно, не должен, and не следует 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 обязан can be used:

Вы не обязаны отвечать на этот вопрос.

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 отвечать на этот вопрос.

You don’t have to answer that question.

Можно не переводить это последнее предложение. Я и так всё понял.

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 должен and не обязан). 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, тебе никто не спрашивает.**

Be quiet, nobody’s asking you.

**Кто-нибудь принесите воды.**

Would somebody bring some water.

**Подождите секунду.**

Wait a second.

**Пусть он возьмет такси и срочно едет домой.**

He’d better get a taxi and go home as a matter of urgency.
Danger! Don’t climb (this pylon)!

Don’t get out of the car under any circumstances.

Don’t dare to argue with me.

An instruction can be made less peremptory by attaching the particle -ко 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:

Прекратите огонь!

Stop firing!

Встаньте! Суд идёт.

All rise! The court is in session.

Military-style commands can sometimes be heard in everyday situations:
Your mother tells me you got top marks in the exam. Well done, keep it up!

Игра́ть низом, к сво́им воро́гам 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:

Внимание, перед включением в сеть удалить предохранительные прокладки.

Warning: remove all protective packing before connecting to the mains.

Открыва́ть с противополо́жной сто́роны.

Open from the other end.

Перед употребле́нием взба́ть.

Shake thoroughly before taking.
(4) In recipes:

**NOTE** The imperative can also be used in recipes.

Season the pieces of fish with salt and pepper, coat them in flour and fry them in a frying pan.

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:

- **приказывать**/**приказать** to order (someone to do something)
- **вёлеть** (нсв/св) to order (someone to do something)
- **распоряжаться**/**распорядиться** to arrange (for something to be done), to see (that something is done)

First person forms of **приказывать** 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**:

- **Приказываю вам в пятидневный срок прибыть в расположение части.**

You are ordered to return to your unit within five days.

- **Ректор приказал объединить эти две лаборатории в связи с реорганизацией.**

In connection with reorganisation, the rector (of the university) ordered that the two
laboratories be merged into one.

Я 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 распорядился, 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 roadsigns]

Мальчишки, а ну мара на улицу! Не хочо 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:

Врачи запретили ему курить.

The doctors have forbidden him to smoke.

В случае пожара пользоваться лифтом запрещается.

In the event of fire it is forbidden to use the lift.

Стоянка запрещена.

No parking.

For more on the formation of passive verbs, see 4.14.

The negative predicate form нельзя can also be used to indicate that something is forbidden:

Здесь нельзя курить.

You can’t smoke here.

—А без паспорта можно деньги обменять?
—Нет, нельзя.

—Can you change money without a passport?
—No, you can’t.

The negative predicate forms не надо, не нужно, не должен, не следует convey something between a prohibition and a strong recommendation not to do something:
—Мо́жно откры́ть окно́?
—Не́ на́до, здесь́ и так хо́лодно.

—Can I open a window?
—No, don’t; it’s cold enough in here as it is.

Вы не долже́ны забы́вать, что Москва́ и осталы́нная Росси́я — это дале́ко не оди́но и тó же.

Don’t forget that Moscow and the rest of Russia are far from being one and the same thing.

Не сле́дует слиш́ком серьё́зно отно́ситься к его́ угрóзам.

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, (толькó) попробуй́:

Не вздумай вы́ходить без ша́пки в тако́й моро́з.

Don’t even think of going out without a fur hat in this cold weather.

Толькó попробуй́ ещё раз э́то сдéлать!

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>пожалуйста</td>
<td>please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>будьте добры</td>
<td>please (be so kind as to)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>будьте любезны</td>
<td>please (be so kind as to)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>если вас не затруднит</td>
<td>if it is no trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>не сочтите за труд</td>
<td>if it is no trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сделайте одолжение?</td>
<td>would you do me a favour?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?

Верьте 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 сочтите за труд, сбегайте в магазин: у нас кончился сахар.

If it’s no trouble, would you mind running to the shops? We’ve run out of sugar.
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 ма́мы посу́да была́ помы́та.

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 просьба ‘request’:

Просьба не курить.

You are kindly requested not to smoke.

This noun can, however, be used in other contexts as well:

У меня к тебе (есть) одна просьба: ты не мог бы отложить мне англо-русский словарь на пару 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 просьбу говорить потише никто не отреагировал.

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, давай(те) is required. An accompanying finite verb will be perfective; an accompanying infinitive will be imperfective:
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 помилуй and поехалиin 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:

извините́ (те)
прости́те

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 пожалуйста ‘please’ or with the more expressive ради боже ‘please do’ (literally, ‘for God’s sake’):

Извините, можно Наташу к телефону?

Excuse me, could I speak to Natasha, please (on the telephone)?
Простите, а какая следующая остановка?

Excuse me, what is the name of the next stop?

Извините, пожалуйста, нет ли у вас ручки? Моя что-то не пишет.

Excuse me, please, but would you happen to have a pen? Mine doesn’t seem to be writing.

Извините меня ради бога – я не хотел вас обидеть.

Do please forgive me—I didn’t mean to offend you.

Я знаю, что я поступил нехорошо. Если можешь, прости.

I realise that I acted wrongly. Forgive me, if you can.

In the spoken language the exclamation виноват! (masculine only) ‘sorry!’ can be used:

—Прости, вы положили зонт на мою газету.
—Виноват!

—Excuse me, you’ve put your umbrella on my newspaper.

—Sorry!
The first person singular form извиняюсь can sometimes be heard instead of извините 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
жалеть I’m (you are, we are, etc.) sorry [less formal than the others]

Мы искренне сожалеем о том, что произошло, и приносим 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 получилось, 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>советовать/посоветовать</td>
<td>to advise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рекомендовать/порекомендовать</td>
<td>to recommend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>полезно</td>
<td>it is useful or beneficial to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вредно</td>
<td>it is harmful to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лучше</td>
<td>it would be better to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
It would be a good idea to take a few days off, preferably in the country.

It’s harmful to drink strong coffee last thing at night.

It would be better if you don’t get involved in that argument.

The particle **бы** can also be used with the infinitive:

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:

You should phone home more often.

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 карткой?
—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/одно is often replaced with the word раз (literally, 'once'):

Внимание, поднимаем: раз-два, взяли!

Ready to start lifting? One, two, up she goes!

Раз-два-три-четыре-пять, вышел зайчик погулять ...

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:

Сколько здесь желающих поехать на экскурсию? 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, четыре, 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:

\[
\text{Seven plus twenty-two equals/is equal to twenty-nine.}
\]

\[
\text{Twenty-nine minus seven equals/is equal to twenty-two.}
\]

\[
\text{Twelve multiplied by eight is equal to ninety-six.}
\]

\[
\text{210 divided by ten is equal to twenty-one.}
\]

\[
\text{NOTE} \quad \text{Равн} \text{ь} \text{и} \text{вь} \text{ется} \quad \text{equals,} \quad \text{is equal to} \quad \text{are both followed by a numeral in the dative case. With addition and subtraction, the construction can be simplified by using будет which is followed by the nominative:}
\]

\[
\text{Seven plus five is (literally, will be) twelve.}
\]

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.
Literally, If you add a thousand to twenty-two the result will be 1,022.

Изв двадцати девяти восьмь 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:

dважды, трижды.
четырежды, пято, шестой, седьмой, восьмой, девятой, десятой.

Два́жды два́ – четы́ре.

Twice two is four.
Three times seven is twenty-one.

Five fives are twenty-five.

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 द्वापर, त्रिापर, and (to a lesser extent) चौपापर, are also used more generally to correspond to English ‘twice’, ‘three times’ and ‘four times’; the equivalent of ‘once’ is एकापर, which often has the meaning of ‘at some time (or other)’:

That’s happened only once in the history of the country, and that was before the war.

We met once at a conference of Slavists.

Polivайте эти цветы дважды в неделю.
Water these flowers twice a week.

Её дед — знаменитый лётчик, Трижды Герой Советского Союза.

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 тысяча, миллион, миллиард) по is followed by the dative:

Принимайте это лекарство по одной таблетке три раза в день.

Take this medicine in doses of one tablet three times a day.

Все те, кто даст правильный ответ на этот вопрос, получат по тысяче рублей и по билету на гала-концерт.

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 пя́тина́дцать.

Fifteen all (score in lawn tennis).

Дед расска́зывал нам, что перед бо́ем солдатам выдава́ли по сто гра́мм(ов) во́дки для хра́брысти.

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 гра́мм, гра́ммов see 2.7.4.

Перед отпра́вкой они́ получи́ли по три апельси́на на кáждого.

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 пода́рок молодожёнам ска́ла́дывались по пя́тьсот рубле́й с человéка.

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:

Ко́торый 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’ часы normally used on its own, without the numeral:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Час</th>
<th>One o’clock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Два часа</td>
<td>Two o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Четыре часа</td>
<td>Four o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Пять часов</td>
<td>Five o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Восемь часов</td>
<td>Eight o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Пятнадцать часов</td>
<td>15.00 hours, 3 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Двадцать два часа</td>
<td>22.00 hours, 10 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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)
- дн́я  
  day, afternoon (midday–5 p.m.)
- вё́чера  
  evening (5 p.m.–midnight)
- но́чи  
  night (midnight–5 a.m.)

Therefore, times of the day can be indicated as:

- два часы́ дн́я  
  2 p.m., two o’clock in the afternoon
- два часы́ но́чи  
  2 a.m., two o’clock in the morning

The terms corresponding to ‘midday’ and ‘midnight’ are полдень and полночь respectively.

Sometimes an ordinal number is used with час to refer to an unspecified time in the first part of the following hour; thus, трё́х часо́в means ‘some time after two o’clock’:

Бы́л трё́х часо́в, когдá нас разбуди́ли сирё́ны 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
- двадцать мину́т трё́етьго  
  twenty (minutes) past two
- двадцать две мину́ты пято́го  
  twenty-two minutes past four
- двадцать пять мину́т (мину́т) седьмо́го  
  twenty-five (minutes) past six
NOTE The noun минута ‘minute’ is always present, except after двадцать пять, when its presence is optional.

The quarter is indicated by четверть and the half-hour by половина; the latter is often abbreviated to пол- in more informal language:

четверть восьмого  a quarter past seven
половина десятого, полдесятого  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 пяти двенадцать  five (minutes) to twelve
без трёх минут три  three minutes to three
без одной минуты два  one minute to two
без двадцати час  twenty (minutes) to one
без четверти 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 новостях.

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.
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 котором часу?
В какое время?
Во сколько?

The last of these is considered a little more informal than the others.

В котором 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 открывается 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.
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:

Сегодня я вышел из дома десять минут девятого.

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 кончаю работу в половине шестого.

I finish work at half-past five.

If, however, the abbreviated form пол- is used, this is unchanged:

Мы договорились встретиться в половине седьмого.

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 подъехал на своём мотоцикле к её дому без четверти 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 **пo москoвскoмy врeмeни**; in written sources this is sometimes abbreviated to **мск**. Other useful phrases are:

- **пo мeстнoму врeмeни** — local time
- **пo Грyнвyчy** — Greenwich Mean Time

**Зaпyск кoсмyчeскoгo кoрyбля был yпрoвeдeн в двaдцaть oднy чaс, тyдцaть мyнyт пo мoскyвскoмy врeмeни.**

The launch of the spacecraft took place at 21.30 hours Moscow time.

**Пpибытиe рyясa из Лyндoнa oжидаeтся в 15.30 мск.**

The flight from London is expected to arrive at 15.30 Moscow time.

**Мy yлyтeли из Лyндoнa в чeтыpнaдцaть тyдцaть пyть пo мeстнyмy врeмeни.**

We left London at 14.35 local time.

**Земyтpeсyнe пpизoшлo y пoль чaсoв, двaдцaть oднy мyнyт y по Грyнвyчy.**

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:

**Какoe сeнyднy чyслo?**
To which the answer might be:

Сегодня двадцать девятое. Or Сегодня двадцать девятое число.

Today is the twenty-ninth.

If the name of the month is given, this is in the genitive case and число is always omitted:

Сегодня первое сентябрь.

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 один is normally omitted before the word тысяча:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zahl</th>
<th>Jahr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>1848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the date is given in full, the year is in the *genitive* case:

Сегодня пятнадцатое августа две тысячи седьмого 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:

Пушкин родился шестого июня тысяча семьсот девяносто девятого года.

Pushkin was born on 6 June 1799.

Всемирная декларация прав человека была принята девятого декабря тысяча девятьсот сорок восьмого 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 Москве я был первый раз в августе тысяча девятьсот шестьдесят восьмого 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:

Насколько я помню, они вступили в июне.
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 -ъ 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 Москве на улице Девятсот пятого года.

She lives in Moscow, in 1905 Street.

Семнадцатый год стал переломным в истории России.

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.
Individual decades within a century are indicated using an *ordinal* number and the plural noun *годы*:

*Десятилетия стали эпохой больших перемен для многих стран Центральной и Восточной Европы.*

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:

*Этот танец был особенно популярен в семидесятые годы.*

This dance was especially popular in the (19)70s.

**NOTE** The word for ‘decade’ is *десятилетие*, the word *декада* means a period of ten days:

*Проездные билеты поступают в продажу в последней декаде предыдущего месяца.*

(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:

*Крепостное право в России было отменено в девятнадцатом веке.*

Serfdom in Russia was abolished in the nineteenth century.

If the century is indicated using figures, *capital Roman* numerals are invariably used:

*Успенский собор был построен во второй половине XV в. (пятнадцатого века).*
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 рождения 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:

Russian is studied in our faculty by approximately 120 students.

The price of the shares fell by about twenty points.

He spent about a week on holiday, but couldn’t stand the idleness and came back to work.

The average salary of those who work here is about 20,000 roubles a month.

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:

He’ll be about forty-five, I reckon.

For more on how to talk about people’s ages, see 12.3.

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 два дня.

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 около (+gen.):

В моей коллекции около двадцати двоенных плакатов.

I have about twenty pre-war posters in my collection.

Я ждал его на вокзале около пятнадцати минут.

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 десяток, полсотни, сорока, which indicate respectively the quantities of ten, fifty and one hundred:
In the fridge we discovered about ten [or about a dozen] eggs, a piece of cheese and a bottle of beer.

C 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 десёток, 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 for приблизительно in the second example:

В отпуске он пробил около недели, но не выдержал бедности 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 десёток and сотня are frequently used in the plural to indicate large, but imprecise quantities:

Я был в России десёток 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 гле-то, placing the numeral after the noun:

В продаже уже есть пять-шесть хороших словарей.

There are already five or six good dictionaries available.

На конференции было где-то двадцать пять-тридцать представителей стран Западной Европы.

At the conference there were somewhere in the region of twenty-five to thirty representatives of West European countries.

За сезон этот нападающий непременно забивает мячей пятидцать-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, МНОГОС, 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.

МНОГОС ‘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:

Many people think that politics is a dirty business.

Many Muscovites have the firm belief that the world comes to an end beyond the city’s outer ring-road.

I have already had the pleasure of meeting many of his friends.
19.5.2 Talking about large quantities using other expressions

Нема́ло ‘quite a lot’, ‘a fair number/amount’ is similar in meaning and usage to мно́го, although the quantity suggested may be slightly smaller:

В последнее время у нас было нема́ло 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 мно́го 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Expression</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>большое количество</td>
<td>a great quantity, many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>огромное количество</td>
<td>an enormous quantity, very many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>множество</td>
<td>a great number, many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(целый) ряд</td>
<td>a (great) number, many</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Без большого количества денег вам трудно будет жить в Лондоне.

Without a lot of money you’ll find it difficult to live in London.

Я получил от него письмо с огромным количеством вопросов.

I’ve received a letter from him with a great many questions.

Этот странный феномен уже породил множество теорий.

This strange phenomenon has already prompted a great many theories.

На ряде предприятий менеджеры ещё не освоили новейшие методы управления.

In a number of businesses the managers have yet to come to terms with the latest management practices.

Целый ряд европейских университетов теперь предлагает курсы нового типа на степень магистра.
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>куча</td>
<td>heaps (of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тьма</td>
<td>multitudes (of), hordes (of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>уйма</td>
<td>masses (of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>не перечесть</td>
<td>you can’t keep count (of), there’s no end to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Дела у неё пошли в гору; на одной только продаже компакт-дисков она заработала кучу денег.

Her business has really taken off; she’s made a heap of money just from selling compact discs.

На концерт под открытым небом пришла тьма народа.

The open-air concert was attended by hordes of people.

Я надеюсь, что ты никада не торопишься; у меня к тебе уйма вопросов.

I hope you’re not rushing off anywhere; I’ve got masses of questions to ask you.

Дочь губернатора была необыкновенно красива, и поклонников у неё к двадцати годам было не перечесть.

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 **мало, немного**

**мало** ‘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 мало читаю, а всё больше смотрю телевизор.

Recently, I haven’t been reading much and have been watching television more and more.

Если можно, зайдите ко мне завтра; у меня сейчас мало времени.

If you can, call in and see me tomorrow; I haven’t got much time at the moment.

Сделать карьеру здесь ему будет сложно; у него мало друзей среди начальства. It will be difficult for him to get on here; he has few friends among the bosses.

Я была на его лекции, но узнала мало интересного.

I went to his lecture, but I learned little that was interesting.

The connotations of **мало** are often negative, and sometimes it can mean ‘too few’, ‘too little’, ‘not enough’:

Пять тысяч рублей? Этого, я думаю, будет мало.

5,000 roubles? I don’t think that’s going to be enough.

Мало can be combined with a question word. The most widely used combination is **мало кто** ‘not many people’; when it functions as the subject of a sentence, the verb is in the *singular*:

Мало кто знает об этом.

Not a lot of people know about that.

**немного** and the more informal diminutive form **немножко** ‘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 
недо́го and небо́жко are usually neutral or positive:

Подождите небо́жко: дождь скоро пройдёт.

Wait a little; this rain will soon pass over.

Я прочтё вашу статью в субботу, когда у меня наконец будет небо́до свободного времени.

I’ll read your article on Saturday, when I’ll finally have a little free time.

Этот суп станет вкуснее, если в него добавить небо́жко соли.

This soup will taste better if you add a bit of salt to it.

Небо́годо and небо́жкос can be used with ordinary and comparative adjectives with 
the meaning of ‘a little’, ‘to some extent’:

Он никогда не встаёт раньше двенадцати; в этом отношении он 
действительно небо́жко странный.

He never gets up before twelve; in this respect he is indeed a little strange.

Она немного моложе меня – думаю, лет на семь-восемь.

She’s a bit younger than I am, by about seven or eight years, I reckon.
Мало, немного и немножко 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 мало, немного and немножко 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 несколько, некоторый

Несколько 'several', 'a few', 'some', is usually followed by a noun in the plural. When несколько 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 несколько see 8.6.3.

В комнате стоял большой стол и несколько деревянных стульев.

In the room there was a large table and a few wooden chairs.

Я уже несколько раз объяснял ему, почему нельзя употреблять такие слова.

I’ve already explained to him several times why he’s not allowed to use words like that.

В нескольких областях выпадет снег или пройдет дождь со снегом.

In a few regions there will be snow or sleet.

In the singular некоторый 'some', 'a certain' is used with время 'time' and with other abstract nouns:

Через некоторое время он понял, в чём была его ошибка.

Some time later he realised where he had made his mistake.

В её присутствии я всегда испытываю некоторую неловкость.
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 точки 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, чутьочку**

The adverb *чуть* ‘just’, ‘(very) slightly’ is often used to qualify adjectives and other adverbs:

**За перекрёстком ресторан «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 надежной 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*).
If you move up a tiny bit, there’ll be room for me as well.

Суп неплох, но я бы добавил чуть-чуть/чуть-чуть соли.

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 мало or немного after a preposition or in contexts requiring a case other than the accusative, although they are also used more generally:

маленькое количество a small quantity
небольшое количество a small quantity
некоторое количество a certain quantity

Глaвный недостaтoк этoгo учебника – слишкoм маленькое кoличество примерoв и упpажнений.

The main problem with this textbook is that it has too few examples and exercises.

Она мeлко нapeзала лук и обжиpила его в небольшoм кoличествe масла.

She cut the onion up small and fried it in a little oil.
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 обчелся** (very few; you can count on the fingers of one hand)

After the long years of silence he only had a handful of admirers left.

In spite of the rain and the cold, a handful of supporters of one of the candidates gathered in the square.

They’ve got precious little money left.

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 Мари́ю.
Мари́я 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:

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.

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. Страна 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 Тensing Норгей первыми въшли 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:

**Поздравля́ю вас с Но́вым годом!**

I wish you a happy New Year!

**Я хочу́ купи́ть себé но́вые джинсы.**

I want to buy myself some new jeans.

**Только́ что вы́шел како́й-то но́вый справо́вник по граммати́ке русско́го язы́ка.**

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 Герма́нии откры́лся пер́вый в ми́ре полно́стью автоматизи́рованный ре́сторан.**

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 звонила своему уже взрослому сыну.

She telephoned her already grown-up son just as frequently as before.

Эта поначалу безумная идея очень быстро превратилась в абсолютно 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:

Внешне новый «Форд» похож на старую модель.

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:
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:

—Между прочим, он сделал мне предложение.
—И что, ты его приняла?

—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:

Хочешь увидеть машину, на которой мы проехали через всю Россию?

Do you want to see the car that we travelled across Russia in?

Не верь тому, что он будет сейчас говорить.

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 ччто) 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 кому не интересно, те пусть не смотрят.

Those who don’t find it interesting, don’t need to watch.

Кто не работает, 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 России постепенно формируется слой граждан, делающих ставку на индивидуальный выбор и личную ответственность.

Russia is gradually acquiring a section of society that is willing to rely on individual choice and personal responsibility.

Мифом являются представления о «культурной пропасти», якобы разделяющей Россию и Европу.

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 редких, знающих человеческую психологию руководителей, которые умеют привлечь людей на свою сторону.

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 performor 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*:

*Ivan пригласил Марию на вечер.*

Ivan invited Mariia to the party.

*Професор Попов написал очень интересную книгу о современном русском романе.*

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 performor of the action, if mentioned, is referred to as the *agent*; in Russian, the agent of a passive verb is in the *instrumental* case:

*Оказывается, Мария была приглашена на вечер Иваном.*

It transpires that Mariia was invited to the party by Ivan.

*Самая интересная книга о современном русском романе была написана профессором Поповым.*

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, Мари́я пригласи́л Ива́н.**

It transpires that Mariia was invited by Ivan.

**Са́мую интересну́ю кнíгу о соврeмeнном русcком романe написа́л прoфeссор Пopoв.**

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:

**Этoт собо́р был построен в шeстьнaдцaтом вeкe.**

This cathedral was built in the sixteenth century.
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 число 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 **именно** and **как раз**

One of the main functions of the adverb **именно** is to indicate emphasis in a similar way to English ‘cleft sentences’:

**Именно так у нас происходит процедура голосования.**

That is how our voting system works.

**Трудно перечислить всё, что сделал Пушкин для русской культуры. Так, именно с Пушкина начинается современный русский литературный язык.**

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 раз** can also be used to add emphasis to a specific word or part of a sentence:

**А я как раз собирался вам звонить.**

I was just on the very point of phoning you.

**Как раз на молочные продукты у меня аллергия.**

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 **именно** is used, and the emphasis is not always indicated in translation.

One particle that can indicate strong emphasis is **бот**. In this function it tends to be used with question words and to appear at the beginning of a sentence:

**Бот кто нас выручит!**

That’s who is going to save our bacon!
That’s how to clean fish.

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.

You shouldn’t really smoke here.

But these are the people who are our main rivals.

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 уже are provided by the following:

—Тут написано: «Перед употреблением взбивать».

—Что я и делаю.

—It says here that you should shake (the bottle) before use.

—Which is (exactly) what I do.

Это не так уже 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, начнут 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:

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.

An exhibition of modern French painting is opening in Moscow.

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:
An exhibition of modern French painting is opening in Moscow. The exhibition will take place in the Pushkin Museum.

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.

20.4.2 Using qualifiers to indicate indefinite nouns

The pronouns какой-то (if referring to something specific) and какой-нибудь can be used to indicate an indefinite noun:

Моя жена опять забыла перчатки в каком-то кафе.

My wife has gone and left her gloves in a café again.

— Тебя звонили с работы.

— Кто звонил?

— Не знаю. Какой-то мужчина.

— Somebody phoned from work for you.

— Who was it?

— I don’t know. It was a man.

По дороге домой купи какой-нибудь газету с программой на недель.

On the way home buy a newspaper with the week’s (television) programmes in it.

For more on the difference between какой-то and какой-нибудь see 7.6.2 and 7.6.3.
The numeral оди́н can also correspond to the English indefinite article:

В нача́ле восьми́деся́тых годóв оди́н студéнт усторо́нился ночным стóрожем в оди́н 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:

Рáдом с моим дóмом есть кинотеáтр. И в этóм кинотеáтре находитóсь маленькоé кафеé, гдè я чástо пьё кофе с друзья́ми.

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 котóрый, 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: ûтром ‘in the morning’, днём ‘during the day’, веêером ‘in the evening’, ноêью ‘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 обêда ‘after lunch’:

Уêтром вы будетê ходить на занятия, а после обêда вы свободны.

You will attend classes in the morning and in the afternoon you are free.

А что вы собираетесь делать вêером?

And what are you going to do in the evening?

Я обычно занимаюсь днём, но к экзаменам могу готовиться и ноêью.

I usually work (study) during the day, but before exams I can work at night as well.

The phrase с утêрî’ means ‘early/first thing in the morning’:

Перевêд ещё не готов, позвоните завтра с утêрî.

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 но(+ dat.) can be used; но is followed by a noun in the plural:

По утêрî мы ходили за гриêами.

In the mornings we used to go mushroom hunting.
We had to move because of our neighbours; at night they were always either shouting at each other or playing music at full volume.

Нам пришлось переехать из-за соседей; по ночам то скандалы, то музыка на полную громкость.
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 питицам, 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>весна</td>
<td>spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лето</td>
<td>summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>осень</td>
<td>autumn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>зима</td>
<td>winter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *instrumental* case is used when talking about the seasons of the year:
In summer I usually spend the weekend at my dacha.

I recommend that you visit our city either in the spring or autumn.

The following words and phrases are used to indicate specific times:

- **вчера** - yesterday
- **сегодня** - today
- **завтра** - tomorrow
- **позавчера** - the day before yesterday
- **после́завтра** - the day after tomorrow
The following words and phrases are used to indicate an unspecified time:

- 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 words and phrases скоро́, неско́ко, давно́, неда́вно, и на днях 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 не скоро.

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
We met the other day and then he was in an excellent mood.

There was once a church on this spot.

At one time he was a world champion.

For another meaning of давно and недавно 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 училась в школе, у меня всегда были хорошие отметки по математике.

When I was at school, I always got good marks for maths.

Жена уже спала, когда я пришёл домой.

My wife was already asleep when I got home.

Когда́ погода плохая, я стараюсь не выходить из дома.

When(ever) the weather is bad, I try not to leave the house.

Когда́ придёт, обязательно скажу ему.

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:

Отец вернётся — сама расскажешь.

When father gets back, you can tell him for yourself.

Купи, откры, зажги горелку;

Вскрикн — и наливай в тарелку.
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: р́́ньше is the comparative of р́́но ‘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:

Ппо окончании университета она поступила в аспирантуру.

After finishing her first degree she embarked on postgraduate studies.

cf. окончать/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 спустить(+ 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 вернулся через час.

I’ll be back in an hour.

Они поженились и спустя год (or год спустя) уехали жить в Германию.

They got married and a year later went to live in Germany.

**NOTE** Unusually, спустя 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 тому назад ‘ago’ is used:

Он ушёл буквально две минуты назад.

He left literally two minutes ago.

Первые тrolleyбусы появились на улицах Москвы более чем семьдесят лет тому 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 раньше; the equivalents of ‘afterwards’ are позже and, more informally, попозже or потом:

Надо было сказать об этом раньше.

You should have mentioned this before.

Разберёмся во всём этом позже.

We’ll sort all this out afterwards.

Расскажу тебе об этом потом/попозже.

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 того как before and после того как after. If the subject in both halves of the sentence is the same, the conjunction прежде чем can be followed by an infinitive:

Прежде чем высказать своё мне́ние по этому вопро́су, я хотел бы поблагодарить предсе́дательствуяще́го за приглаше́ние выступи́ть на этой конференции.

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 того как он стал нача́льником, я ча́сто приглаша́л его́ на кружку пива.

Before he became the boss, I often used to invite him out for a glass of beer.
I understood the true meaning of her words only after she (had) left.

**NOTE** A comma should normally be placed before **какой 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 завтрака вообще ни на что не способен.**

Before I’ve had breakfast I’m totally incapable of anything.

**Только после окончания университета вы осознаете, как здорово быть студентом.**

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 **когда** ‘when’:

**Даже когда я ещё учился в школе, я точно знал, кем я хочу 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 **пo**-or **пpo**-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 занимался 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 **дольно** ‘for a long time’ and **недолго** ‘for a short time’, ‘not for long’ can be used:
He finished his coffee and then spent a long time looking out of the window.

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 уже пять лет живу в этом доме.

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 давно ‘for a long time’; недавно ‘not for long’, ‘since recently’ is occasionally used, but is less common:

Вы давно ждете?

Have you been waiting long?

Я здесь недавно.

I haven’t been here long.

For other uses of давно and недавно, 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 написал книгу за шесть месяцев.

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 последние два года в нашем городе построено 3 000 новых домов.

In the last two years 3,000 new houses have been built in our city.

It can also indicate a negative outcome:

За время дежурства ничего существенного не произошло.

Nothing significant occurred during my period on duty.

A preposition that is close in meaning to в течение(+ gen.) ‘during’, ‘in the course of’:

В течение пяти лет область полностью перейдет на цифровое вещание.

Within five years our region will have fully gone over to digital broadcasting.

В течение недели будет преобладать облачная погода.

During (the course of) this week the weather will be mostly cloudy (literally, … cloudy weather will prevail).
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 *пока* *while*:

*Пока я был болен, сестра навещала меня каждый день.*

While I was ill, my sister visited me every day.

*Пока я здесь, можно задавать мне вопросы в любое время.*

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 *когда*, *пока* 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 буду здесь с понедельника.*

I’ll be here from Monday onwards.

*Наш магазин работает с семи часов.*

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’:

*Подождите до четверга: тогда я всё объясню.*

Wait until Thursday, then I’ll explain everything.

The phrase *до* *вплоть до* has the meaning of ‘right up until’:

*Вплоть до конца жизни он писал стихи, которыми восхитились миллионы.*
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 пока, with the negative particle не used before the verb in the clause that пока introduces:

Пока я не получил твоё письмо, я даже не знал, в какой стране ты теперь работаешь.

Until I received your letter, I didn’t even know what country you were working in now.

The conjunction пока can be reinforced by the phrase до тех пор:

Я не уйду отсюда до тех пор, пока не получу ответы на все мои вопросы.

I will not leave here until (such time as) I receive answers to all my questions.

NOTE When пока and как только refer to events taking place in the future, the verb that follows them is in the future perfective form:

Как только вода закипит, добавьте морковь и варите 10 минут на медленном огне.

As soon as the water boils, add the carrots and let them simmer for ten minutes on a low heat.

Не уходите, пока я не вернусь.

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 оставил ключи в столе.

I’ve left my keys in my desk.
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 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.
You can only buy things like that in Paris, London or New York.

21.2.3 Countries

The preposition bis also used with страна ‘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 na was traditionally used with Україна ‘Ukraine’, but when the country gained its independence, the Ukrainians launched a campaign to encourage a switch to в Україні ‘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 Україні is likely to cause offence to some Ukrainians.

На is used with the noun ро́дина ‘homeland’:

Занимая должность послы, он сохранял контакты с политическими силами на ро́дине.

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 Камчатке климат очень суровый; на Сахалине он помягче, но зимой там тоже очень холодно.

In Kamchatka (peninsula) the climate is very severe; on Sakhalin (island) it is gentler, but in winter it also gets very cold there.
As a television journalist, he’s been to the Caucasus several times.

There are, however, some exceptions, where **is** used instead:

- **в Крыму** 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 **is** used with **мир**, but **на** is used with **свет**:

**Его голос знают во всём мире.**

His voice is known everywhere in the world.

**На свете много стран, где люди живут в бедности.**

There are many countries in the world where people live in poverty.

**NOTE** The phrase **в свете** means ‘in the light of’:

**В свете 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.

**Bis** used with terms indicating geographical or climatic zones, such as **пустыня** ‘desert’, **степь** ‘steppe’, **тайга** ‘taiga’, **тундра** ‘tundra’:

**Он чувствует себя дома везде, будь это в тундре, в тайге, в степи или даже в пустыне.**

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 **бис** 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.

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, *найс* used. These include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>вокзала</td>
<td>(main line) railway station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>станция</td>
<td>(underground, local railway or radio) station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>факультета</td>
<td>faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кафедра</td>
<td>department (at a university)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>почта</td>
<td>post office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>почтамт</td>
<td>main post office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>завод</td>
<td>factory (heavy industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>фабрика</td>
<td>factory (light industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>предприятие</td>
<td>enterprise, works, factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>дача</td>
<td>dacha, country cottage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Чтобы перейти на кольцевую линию, надо было выйти на станции «Киевская».

To change onto the Circle line you should have got off at Kievskaya station.

Он был на третьем курсе аспирантуры и на кафедре появился 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 течении 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 или 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 выходитё 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 таможню и через десять минут уже были на улице.
At Sheremetyevo 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’:
In summer they used to meet near the fountain in the park.

If you’re interested in exotic plants, it’s worth visiting the Botanic Gardens.

We ate last night in a small restaurant, which is in one of the narrow streets of the Arbat.

With дверь ‘yard’ both в (во) and на are found, although there is a difference in meaning. Во дворе is used when talking about a particular yard, and especially the courtyard of a block of flats; на двере usually means simply ‘outside’:

In summer evenings children used to play in the courtyard of the large house.

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 band 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 поцелуй 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 «Черемушкинский рынок».

You can go by underground to University Station and then by any tram as far as the Cheremushki market stop.

Ясно, что в 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, на 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 на́й is used:

На работе я пью только кофе – чтобы не засыпать на сове́щаниях.

At work I only drink coffee so as not to fall asleep at meetings.

Я познако́мился с женой в Москв́е на студе́нческом ве́черее.

I met my wife in Moscow at a student party.

Вчера́ ве́чером я был на чуде́сном концерте.

Yesterday evening I was at a wonderful concert.

На занятиях я аккура́тно консекре́тирую слово́ препода́вателя, но по́то́м всё равно ничего не понима́ю.

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.
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>за границей</th>
<th>abroad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>за рубежом</td>
<td>abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>за пределами</td>
<td>beyond the boundaries of, outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>за столом</td>
<td>at table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>за городом</td>
<td>out of town, in the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>за бортом</td>
<td>overboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>за кулисами</td>
<td>backstage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 ‘underneath’:

Я всегда прячу ключ под этим большим камилем.

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 прямое 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>здесь</td>
<td>here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тут</td>
<td>here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>там</td>
<td>there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>близко</td>
<td>near(by)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>далеко</td>
<td>far, distant, a long way away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>рядом</td>
<td>close by, adjacent, next door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>впереди</td>
<td>ahead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сзади</td>
<td>behind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 совсем 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 милицейская 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.
Бли́ско, далеко́ and ри́дом can be used in combination with prepositions, as follows:

бли́ско к (+ dat.) or бли́ско от (+ gen.) close to
далеко от (+ gen.) a long way from, far from
рядом с (+ instr.) next (door) to

Крепость была́ совсем бли́ско к границе.

The fortress was very close to the frontier.

Она́ стоя́ла так бли́ско от меня́, что я чувствовал зáпах её духо́в.

She was standing so close to me that I could smell her perfume.

Я бы ходи́л в бассейн почасе́, но мы живём спáшком далеко́ от спора́ткомплекса.

I would go to the swimming baths more often, but we live too far away from the sports facilities.

За нали́чными далеко́ иди́ не на́до: ри́дом с гости́ницей 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 никогда́ не был в городе, где есть так много 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 будем вхо́дить в эту комна́ту; там снит мо́я дочька, 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 стоит двадцать тысяч рублей.

A package-tour to London costs 20,000 roubles.

На будущей неделе меня здесь не будет; мне надо будет съездить в Россию на пару дней.

I won’t be here next week; I’ve got to go to Russia for a couple of days.

Обычно я хожу в университет пешком.

I usually walk to the university.

Если не прекратится этот шум, я позвоню в милицию.

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.):

Официальная делегация во главе с премьер-министром вылетела сегодня на Кубу.

An official delegation, led by the prime minister, left for Cuba today.
He left for the West in 1974 and returned to Russia only at the end of the 1980s.

Можете заходить ко мне на работу в любое время.

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 окну и посмотрел на улицу.

He walked up to the window and looked at the street.

Завезай ко мне на работу к пяти. Я буду готов.

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.):

Сейчас солнце зайдёт за это облако.

The sun’s about to go behind that cloud.

В воскресенье съедим куда-нибудь за город.

On Sunday we’ll go somewhere out of town (or in the country).

Каждый год миллионы российских граждан выезжают за границу на отдых, на работу или учёбу.
Each year millions of Russian citizens go abroad on holiday, for work or to study.

Ужин готов. Приглашаю вас за стол.

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’:

Положи ключ под этот камень. Там его никто не найдет.

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:

сюда (to) here, hither
туда (to) there, thither

Иди сюда. Мне надо поговорить с тобой.

Come here. I want to talk to you.

Туда я не поеду ни за что!

I won’t go there at any price!
The conjunction that is used when talking about destination is *куда*.

Его сейчас нет, но я не знаю, куда он пошёл.

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 столя́ каку́то квита́нцию.

He got up and took a receipt from the desk drawer.

Они улетели из Москвы в сре́ду.

They left (or flew out of) Moscow on Wednesday.

Не поле́жа́т вь́возу из России старинные кни́ги, изданнные до 1926 года.

Old books published before 1926 cannot be exported from Russia.

Де́ти обы́чно возвраща́ются из шко́лы в четы́ре часы́.

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 русские у́ехали с Ки́пра по́сле эконо́мического кри́зиса 1998 года.

Many Russians left Cyprus after the economic crisis of 1998.

Поезда́ с това́ обычно прибыва́ют и́ли на Курский и́ли на Казанский вокзаль.
Trains from the south usually arrive (in Moscow) either at the Kursk or the Kazan’ stations.

Мне стало плохо, и я ушёл с концерта в антракте.

I started to feel unwell and left the concert during the interval.

Where a location is indicated by y (+gen.), the starting point is indicated by от (+gen.):

Он отошёл от окна и сел за стол.

He moved away from the window and sat down at the table.

Я только что от Кати - она передаёт тебе привет.

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:

Сейчас солнце выйдёт из-за облака.

The sun’s about to come out from behind a cloud.

Достаньте ключ из-под этого камня и откройте 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 вернулась из-за границы на прошлой неделе.

She returned from abroad last week.

В этом журнале часто печатались новости науки из-за рубежа.

This journal often used to publish items of science news from abroad.

Он встал из-за стола и подошёл к окну.

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 раковине лежала чья-то немытая посуда и пустая бутылка из-под молока.

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:

отсюда from here, hence
оттуда from there, thence

Отсюда открывается прекрасный вид на весь город.

From here you get a splendid view over the whole city.

Родом он из России, но он уехал оттуда ещё в молодости.

He is from Russia, but he left there while he was still young.

The conjunction used when talking about starting points is откуда:
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 ло (+gen.) is used:

Этот поезд следует только до станции «Комсомольская».

This train only goes as far as Komsomol’skaya 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.) ... ло(+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:

Скажите, пожалуйста, какие троллейбусы идут по Невскому проспекту?

Could you tell me please which trolleybuses run along Nevskii Prospekt?

Я очень люблю рано утром ходить по переулкам Арбата.

I am very fond of wandering through the narrow streets of the Arbat in the early morning.

Если хотите, мы можем организовать для вас экскурсию по городу.

If you want, we can organise a tour of the city for you.

The phrases по дороге, по пути mean ‘on the way (to)’:

По дороге домой я заходил к сестре.

On the way home I called in at my sister’s.

Нам с вами, кажется, по пути.

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:

Первый мост через реку был построен в двенадцатом веке.

The first bridge across the river was built in the twelfth century.

Она ничего не могла разглядеть через тёмные стёкла машины.

She couldn’t make anything out through the tinted windows of the car.
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 and is in the prepositional case. This construction tends to be found in formal and bureaucratic language:

Утерянный 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.
He reacted to all our warnings in his usual carefree manner.

For the use of *so* instead of *c*, see 9.2.8.

21.3.4 Talking about manner using **Как**

The conjunction used when talking about manner is **Как**:

Сделайте так, **Как** и 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.
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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.

Пос 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.)  
**в результате** (+ gen.)  
**в следствии** (+ gen.)

because of, owing to, in the light of  
because of, owing to, as a result of  
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 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 в 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.
Having thought about the possible consequences of his action, he went pale from fear.

Её глаза всё ещё были мокрыми от слёз.

Her eyes were still wet from the tears.

Здесь пройти нельзя. Дорогу развезло от дождя.

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 рассказал нам такой смешной анекдот, что мы чуть не умерли со смеху.

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 ( +gen.):

Я пришёл сюда из чистого любопытства.

I came here out of pure curiosity.

Они это делают нарочно, из вредности, чтобы осложнять нашу работу.

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
поскольку, потому что, так как, ибо. Потому что, потому как, and ибо are normally used in the middle of a sentence to join two clauses, while
так как and поскольку can be used either at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence. Потому что is characteristic of informal language, while ибо tends nowadays to be found only in very formal language. Поскольку occurs widely, but is perceived by some to be characteristic of bureaucratic or journalistic language:

Я не могу звонить ему сейчас, потому что уже поздно.
I can’t phone him now because it’s too late.

Я не мог отвечать, потому как не знал языка.
I couldn’t answer since I didn’t know the language.

Так как тебя не было, мы решили подождать несколько минут.
Since you weren’t here, we decided to wait for a few minutes.

Я не пойду с вами в кино, так как я уже смотрел этот фильм.
I won’t go with you to the pictures since I’ve already seen the film.
Поскольку вы не вовремя сдали документы, будет задержка в выдаче вашей визы.

Since you did not hand in your documents on time, there will be a delay in the issue of your visa.

Он вынужден был уйти в отставку, ибо это требовала профессиональная этика.

He was obliged to resign, since his professional ethics left him no choice.

**NOTE** When так как appears in the middle of a sentence, the comma is always placed before так. With почему что the comma normally precedes почему but it can be placed before что if the two elements of the conjunction are separated or if почему is given particular emphasis; in the latter case it tends to be reinforced by a word such as именно как раз ‘precisely’:

**Именно почему, что этот фильм вызвал столько споров, мы пригласили его авторов в студию.**

(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, почему ‘therefore’, ‘that’s why’ can be used:

**Он не очень доверял современным технологиям, и поэтому редко пользовался компьютером.**

He didn’t much trust modern technology and therefore rarely used a computer.

**Я хочу, чтобы наша страна процветала, чтобы все жили хорошо. Именно почему я пришёл в политику.**

I want our country to prosper, for everyone to live well. That’s why I went into politics.

The expression **вот** can be used to indicate the consequence of an undesired
I caught a cold yesterday and that's why I'm stuck at home.

For more on the emphatic particles *bot* 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 зубри́ть.

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 is 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:
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 ест в столовой.

(present tense)

If Masha is on the evening shift, she has her evening meal in the canteen.

Даже если он и сказал, куда уходит, он, наверное, соврал.

(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, распишите 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 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 полнее.

It would be very pleasant living in Glasgow if the climate were a bit better (but see note (ii) below).

Если бы дождь 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 ‘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 ‘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 сказал, что придёт, если у него будет время.

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 написал жалобу, а не стал бы скандалить.

If you were cleverer, you would write a letter of complaint instead of shouting and screaming.
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 покажетсya – откры́й 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 поскупы́лся бы отец на е́ё образова́ние, Ли́за ста́ла бы ве́ликой 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:
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 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 на что, верила в святлое 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 поняла, что её муж, **при всём своём палачине**, никогда не станет великим писателем.

She understood that her husband, for all his talent, would never become a great writer.

При всех своих недостатках, она была настоящим лидером коллектива.

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 равно still, even so
всё-таки still, all the same

Будет непросто, но всё же стоит попробовать.

It won’t be straightforward, but it’s still worth a try.

Столько раз мне это объясняли, но я всё равно ничего не понимаю.

It’s been explained to me so many times, but even so I don’t understand anything.

Я не очень люблю смотреть телевизор, но некоторые переда́чи всё-таки стараюсь 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 **хотя**corresponds to the English ‘although’:
Although he had forgiven her, the sense of grievance remained.

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 всякий случай она перекрестилась, хоть и не верила в Бога.**

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 него была масса титулов и наград, держался он скромно и даже незаметно.**

Even though he had heaps of titles and awards, he still conducted himself modestly and even unobtrusively.

The conjunctions **а то** and **или** correspond to the English ‘or else’:

**Поторопись, а то опоздаешь.**

Hurry up or else you’ll be late.
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:

Куда бы ты ни поехал, от воспоминаний не убежишь.

Wherever you go, you won't escape your memories.

Где бы ты ни жил и сколько бы ты ни ездил по своей, ты никогда не забудешь Петербург.

Wherever you live and however much you travel round the world, you'll never forget St Petersburg.

Каким бы способным он ни был, он вряд ли справится с этой задачей.

However capable he may be, he's unlikely to cope with this task.

Or Capable as he is ...

Что бы он ей ни говорил, она всегда поступала по-своему.

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 ей не отговаривали, она всё же вышла за него замуж.

However much they tried to persuade her, she still married him.

Сколько он ни забывал на тренировках, тренер пока держит его в запасе.
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 скажешь, ты всё равно не убедишь его.

Whatever you say, you won't convince him.

Or You can say what you like...

Куда ни пойдешь, от своих воспоминаний не убежишь.

Wherever you go, you won't escape from your memories.

Or No matter where you go...

Кого ни спроси, все об этом что-то слышали.

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 столе есть специальный ящик для секретных бумаг.

He has a special drawer in my desk for secret papers.

Купи мне, пожалуйста, крем для бритья 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 сбо́раю в магази́н за хле́бом?

Should I run out to the shops to buy some bread?

За би́летом на́ этот концер́т при́дётся стоя́ть (в о́череди) часы́ тра́и, не́ меньше.

To get a ticket for that concert you’ll have to queue for three hours, if not more.

Мы́ зайдём за тобо́й завтра́ в семь часа́.

We’ll come for you tomorrow at seven o’clock.

21.7.3 Talking about purpose using чтóбы(+ 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 чтóбы. If the subjects of the two clauses are the same, чтóбы is followed by the infinitive:
For more on conjunctions, see 9.3.

For more on the infinitive, see 4.1.

Он встал, чтобы пожать ей руку.

He got up in order to shake her hand.

Чтобы не опоздать на работу, я всегда выхожу из дома ровно в восемь 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 легче, я перевёл все трудные слова.

So that it is easier for you I’ve translated all the difficult words.

Я расскажу 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 того (less frequently) с тем:

Я рассставлял все ударения в тексте для того, чтобы тебе было легче читать его.

I’ve marked all the stresses in the text so that it’s easier for you to read it.

Весь год она брала уроки русского с тем, чтобы летом поехать 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 остановиться ‘to stop’, оставаться ‘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 осталась поболтать 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, чтобы is used:

Многие наши сотрудники с охотой поехали бы за границу, хотя бы на год, чтобы повысить квалификацию.

Many of the people who work would happily go abroad, even if only for a year, in order to improve their qualifications.
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.

Она вышла из комнаты, чтобы не оказаться в неудобном положении.

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:

Они ставили всё новые и новые условия с целью затянуть переговоры.

They kept coming up with more and more conditions with the aim of stalling the negotiations.

Он приехал в Москву с целью трудоустройства.

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:
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 отве́чать/отве́тить ‘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. «Заче́м я это сде́лал?» — поду́мал 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 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 (и св) — to affirm, to state

Other verbs that can be used to introduce indirect statements include the following:
In English, it is sometimes possible to omit the conjunction ‘that’; in Russian **что** cannot be left out:

**Он сказал, что понимает моё положение.**

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 говорит, понимает моё положение.**

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 десьать:

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.
He claims he never worked for the KGB.

A stronger degree of disbelief is indicated by the particle ́кобы:

Он уверя́л, что он, ́кобы, 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 спрашивать/спросить ‘to ask’. Instead of a conjunction, the *enclitic particle ли* is used; this corresponds to the English ‘if’ or ‘whether’:

Он спроси́л, мож́но ли здесь купи́ть проездной би́лет.

He asked if/whether it was possible to buy a season ticket here.

Он спроси́л, не зна́ю ли я, где ты жи́вёшь.

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
- интересоваться/поинтересоваться to ask, to enquire
- осведомиться/осведомиться to enquire (formal)
- справиться/спрашить 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.
Спроси его, что ему надо.

Ask him what he wants.

Тебе не интересно, где я был?

Don’t you want to know where I have been?

Он поинтересовался, сколько стоит билет до Риги.

He enquired how much a ticket to Riga cost.

Я не буду тебя спрашивать, когда ты планируешь вернуться домой.

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.
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 сказал, что придёт поздно.

He said he would arrive late.

Он говорит, что понимает моё положение.

He says he understands my position.

Он сказал, что понимает моё положение.

He said he understood my position.

Я спросил его, знает ли он, который час.
I'll ask him if he knows what time it is.

Я спроси́л его́, зи́мет ли он, ко́торый 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:

Еслі я не сдаю экза́мен з́втра, прий́деться пересдава́ть е́го 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 говори́т, что еслі он не сда́ет экза́мен з́втра, прий́деться пересдава́ть е́го осенью.

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.

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: это мороженое действительно вкуснее.

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.

Спасибо за предложение, но для такой задачи вам нужен человек помоложе.

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-моему красные яблоки вкуснее зелёных.

I think red apples are tastier than green ones.

Она говорит по-руски лучше меня.

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 найду гостиницу лучше этой.

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 этот фильм больше понравится Кате, чем её мужу.

I think Katia will like this film more than her husband will.

В Англии вода дороже, чем в России.

Vodka is more expensive in England than in Russia.

Она говорит по-руски лучше, чем в прошлом году.

She speaks Russian better than she did last year.

Он молодёжнее, чем выглядит.

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:

Москва старше Санкт-Петербурга, но многие считают, что Петербург красивее, чем Москва.

Moscow is older than St Petersburg, but many people think that St Petersburg is more beautiful than Moscow.

Наша комната светлее, 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.

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:
Она на два года старше меня.
She’s two years older than me.

Дорога на метро занимает на полчаса меньше, чем на автобусе.
The journey by metro takes half an hour less than by bus.

To indicate ‘a lot (more)’ гораздо, намного or значительно can be used:

Она гораздо сильнее в химии, чем в математике.
She’s a lot better at chemistry than at maths.

Эта задача намного сложнее, чем кажется на первый взгляд.
This task is a lot more complicated than it looks at first sight.

Для американских студентов русский язык значительно труднее, чем испанский.
For American students, Russian is much more difficult than Spanish.

In informal language, многое or куда are sometimes used instead of намного; куда adds an extra degree of expressiveness to the comparison:

Да, это уже много лучше.
Yes, that’s already a lot better.

Сейчас у нас условия куда лучше, чем год назад.
Conditions now are a whole lot better than they were a year ago.

21.9.4 Other uses of short comparative forms

The forms больше or более ‘more’ and меньше or менее ‘less’ are, like their English equivalents, used in a wide range of contexts:
Она говорит по-русски лучше меня, но я понимаю больше.

She speaks Russian better than I do, but I understand more.

У меня с собой больше пятисот рублей.

I’ve got more than 500 roubles on me.

Эта машина стоит намного меньше, чем я ожидал.

This car costs a lot less than I expected.

Если хотите похудеть, необходимо меньше есть и вести здоровый образ жизни.

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 менее when they occur in quantity expressions (as in the second example). Otherwise, больше and меньше are preferred. Only более and менее 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/менее, 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:

Оказалось, у меня с собой меньше денег, чем я думал.

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 БОЛЬШЕ (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 БОЛЬШЕ 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.

ИДЕТ какой-то новый боевик.

Тогда ТЕМ БОЛЬШЕ.

—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.
It would be better if his speeches in the Duma were shorter, but more full of content.

The four declinable comparative adjectives—лучший ‘better’, худший ‘worse’, больший ‘bigger’ and меньший ‘smaller’—are used as attributive adjectives:

Лучшего учителя русского языка вам нигде не найти!

You won’t find a better Russian teacher anywhere.

К сожалению, к худшему варианту мы не были готовы.

Unfortunately, we weren’t prepared for the worst alternative.

Большую часть работы делала секретарша, которая приходила в офис два раза в неделю.

Most (literally, the greater part) of the work was done by a secretary who came into the office twice a week.

Результат игры зависит в меньшей степени от погоды, чем от состояния поля.

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 лучший these forms are used rather less often than their English counterparts. In particular, больший and меньший tend to be restricted to abstract contexts or to set expressions such as большая часть ‘the greater part’, ‘the majority’ and в большей/меньшей степени ‘to a greater/lesser extent’. In other situations it is often preferable to use either a different adjective or a different construction:

После появления первого ребёнка они переселились в более просторную квартиру.
After the arrival of their first child they moved into a bigger (literally, more spacious) flat.

После Нового года я купил 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 мёнее is used with a long adjective or with an adverb:

Эта книга мёнее 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).

Наши страны сегодня более демократическая, но мёнее стабильная, чем тридцать лет назад.

Our country is more democratic, but less stable than it was thirty years ago.

Они переехали в более просторную, но мёнее удобную квартиру.

They moved into a bigger, but less comfortable flat.

Они понимает по-русски лучше меня, но говорит мёнее 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 (самый):

For the declension of тот see 7.3.1.

For the declension of самый see 7.8.2.

Оказывается, мы учились в том же (самом) университете.

It turns out we studied at the same university.

**NOTE** The use of самый in this construction is optional.

Тот же (without самый) is often reinforced by один и (cf. English ‘one and the same’):

Мы каждый раз сталкиваемся с одной и той же проблемой.

Every time we come up against (one and) the same problem.

Он приходит каждый день в одно и то же время.

He arrives every day at (exactly) the same time.

**NOTE** The phrase в то же время tends to mean ‘at the same time’ in the sense of ‘and yet’:

Они научились делать надёжные в в то же время недорогие машины.

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 такой же:

У меня дома есть такое же платье.
I have the same dress at home.

The Russian equivalent of ‘the same … as’ is usually тот же (самый) … что и:

У меня та же самая информация, 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 покупаю продукты в тех же магазинах, где и веc.

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 одинаково:

Эти слова произносятся одинаково, но различаются в написании.

These words are pronounced the same, but differ in their spelling.

21.9.8 Indicating similarity

The adjective that corresponds to ‘similar (to)’ is похожий (на + асс.):

У нас с тобой похожие интересы.

We have similar interests.

Мой брат очень похож на меня.

My brother looks very like me.
NOTE When used *predicatively* (as in the second example), похоже is almost always in the *short form*.

When introducing a sentence, похоже (что) means ‘it looks as if’:

Пожоше, его сегодня уже не будет.

It looks as if he won’t be here today.

Пожоше, 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 2 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.
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 найдешь 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 урожаи.

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.

ОТЛИЧА́ТЬСЯ от(+ gen.) means ‘to differ from’; различа́ться 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 ра́зница 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:

Кака́я ра́зница мёжду е́го отве́том и ва́шим?

What’s the difference between his answer and yours?

Какие разли́чия можнó найти мёжду англи́йским о́ригина́лом и русскýм пе́реводом?

What differences can you find between the English original and the Russian translation?

The equivalent of ‘unlike’, when used as a preposition, is В отли́чие от(+ gen.):

В отли́чие от тво́й я никогда́ не был в Росси́и.

Unlike you, I have never been to Russia.

In other senses, the equivalent of ‘unlike’ is often не похо́жий:

Он сове́ём не похо́же на сво́его бра́та.
He is quite unlike his brother.

Я не ожидал такого поведения. Это совсем не похоже на тебя.

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 отвечал неулыбчиво, спеша, краснея, но искренно.

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:

*Спра́вьтесь не заде́вав мебель, они́ протисну́лись в ма́леньку кóмнату.*

Trying not to bump into the furniture, they squeezed their way into the small room.

*При́я́телно улы́баясь, она́ предложи́ла госте́м снять пальто́ и пройти́ в гости́ную.*

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 неторопли́во пил кофе, вре́мя от вре́мени погля́дывая на часы.*

He drank his coffee slowly, looking at his watch from to time.

*Поня́ла, что шансов нет, они́ отозва́ли сво́й иск.*

Since they realise they have no chance of winning, they have withdrawn their case.

*Они́ ви́дели друг дру́га толькó случайно, с spécialisé́лась в коридóре́ и́ли в столовой́.*

They only saw each other by chance, if (or when) they met in the corridor or in the canteen.

—Поня́тия не име́ю, — сказа́ла она́, прекра́сно зна́я отве́т на его́ вопро́с.

—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’:

**Проверьте 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 еї ру́ки в сво́и, он стал нёжно целовáть еї па́льцы.

Taking her hands in his, he started gently kissing her fingers.

Прочитав э́ту статью, он реши́л неме́дленно написа́ть в реда́кцию.

Having read the article, he decided to write (a letter) to the editor immediately.

Верну́вшись домой, он вошёл в ку́хню и поста́вил 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 поступи́ть гражда́нин, оказа́вшись в подобной ситуа́ции?

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 говори, она правильно поступила, выйдя замуж за Коля.*

Say what you like, but she did the right thing when she married Kolia.

*Он вышел из комнаты, громко хлопнув дверью.*

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unidirectional</th>
<th>Multidirectional</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>идти</td>
<td>ходить</td>
<td>to go (on foot), to walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ехать</td>
<td>ездить</td>
<td>to go (by transport), to travel, to ride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>бежать</td>
<td>бегать</td>
<td>to run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лететь</td>
<td>лететь</td>
<td>to fly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>плыть</td>
<td>плыть</td>
<td>to swim, to sail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лезть</td>
<td>лезть</td>
<td>to climb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ползать</td>
<td>ползать</td>
<td>to crawl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>брести</td>
<td>бродить</td>
<td>to wander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>нести</td>
<td>нести</td>
<td>to carry (on foot)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 unprefixed verbs of motion

Perfective partners for unprefixed verbs of motion are formed by adding *prefixes*.

To form the perfective partner of *unidirectional* verbs the prefix **по**-is added:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unidirectional</th>
<th>Multidirectional</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 вести́</td>
<td>вади́ть</td>
<td>to lead, to take (a person or an animal, on foot)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 везти́</td>
<td>вези́ть</td>
<td>to take, to transport (by vehicle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 гнать</td>
<td>гоня́ть</td>
<td>to chase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 тащить</td>
<td>таска́ть</td>
<td>to pull, to drag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 кати́ть</td>
<td>ката́ть</td>
<td>to roll</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.):

**Привет, куда бежишь?**

Hi, where are you dashing off to?

**Бегу в университет, опаздываю на лекцию.**

I’m running to the university: I’m going to be late for my lecture.
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 ведёт 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 летят 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 мой 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 всего 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.
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
—Where’s Ivan?

—He’s gone to the polyclinic (i.e. we know he has set off, but not what has happened after that).

As soon as the light changed to amber, she engaged gear and drove off.

With the arrival of the thaw, large blocks of ice start coming down the Neva.

The dog chased after us for a while, but hearing the voice of its master, ran back (to him).

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:

What are these bags on the floor? Does this mean you’ve been shopping?

В прошлом году мы ездили в Эстонию.

Last year we went to Estonia.

В субботу они водили детей на выставку, а в воскресенье возили их за 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 -e- are also used to describe a single round trip, but they also convey the notion that the trip was unimportant or of short duration:

Когда оказалось, что нечем зажечь свечи, я быстренько сбежал в киоск за спичками.

When it turned out there was nothing to light the candles with, I dashed out quickly to the kiosk for matches.

В субботу я съездил домой к родителям.

On Saturday I took a quick trip home to see my parents.

Perfectives with the prefix -po- 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:

После работы я поплыла в бассейне, а потом пошла домой.

After work, I went for a swim in the baths and then went home.
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):

**Прочитав письмо, он нервно заходил по комнате.**

Having read the letter, he began to walk nervously up and down the room.

**Возле упавшей с дерева гусеницы тут же забегали муравьи.**

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:

**Летом мы полетим на Сахалин.**

We’re flying to Sakhalin in the summer.

**Завтра я пойду в Русский музей.**

I’m going to the Russian Museum tomorrow.
The present tense of unidirectional verbs is also used to talk about a planned event:

Я иду на улицу — завтра могу вынести мусор.

I’m going out: I can take the rubbish out at the same time.

В следующую пятницу я лечу в Москву: племянник женится.

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 буду делать в воскресенье? Поплажу в бассейне, побегу по парку, схожу в кино.

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.

Может, я сбегу за хлебом?

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:

Пойдите к нему.

Go and see him.

Поехайте на дачу.

Go to the dacha.

Ведите её в музей.

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 езди на дачу. Не надо туда ездить.
Don’t go to the dacha. You shouldn’t go there.

Не водите её в музей.
Don’t take her to the museum.

The unidirectional verb is used if the prohibition relates an action already in progress:

Не беги, у нас ещё есть время.
Don’t run, we’ve still got time.

Не веди машину так близко к обочине.
Don’t drive so close to the curb.

The plural past perfective forms пошли and поехали correspond to the English exhortation ‘let’s go’:

Все готовы? Ну, тогда поехали.
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-дешь etc.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>キレイ</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>войти́</td>
<td>to enter</td>
<td>войду́, войдешь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>подойти́</td>
<td>to approach</td>
<td>подойду́, подойдешь</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, note the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>キレイ</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>вы́йти</td>
<td>to go out, to come out</td>
<td>вы́йду, вы́йдешь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>прини́ти</td>
<td>to come, to arrive</td>
<td>приду́, придешь</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperfective</th>
<th>Perfective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ходить</td>
<td>-йти</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>входить</td>
<td>вйти</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ехать</td>
<td>-ехать</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>уезжать</td>
<td>уехать</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-бежать</td>
<td>-бежать</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выбежать</td>
<td>выбежать</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-летать</td>
<td>-лететь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>прилетать</td>
<td>прилететь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-плыть</td>
<td>-плыть</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>переплывать</td>
<td>переплыть</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-лезть</td>
<td>-лезть</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>слезать</td>
<td>слезть</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ползать</td>
<td>-ползти</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>подползать</td>
<td>подползти</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-бредать</td>
<td>-бредти</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>забредать</td>
<td>забредти</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to enter</td>
<td>to leave, to go away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to run out</td>
<td>to swim across</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to climb down</td>
<td>to crawl up to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to wander off, to drop in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:

Туда входить нельзя.

You can’t go in there.

А сюда можно войти?

But can I come in here?

Из зала суда все выходили молча.

Everyone was leaving the court in silence.

Когда на арену вышли клоуны, дети захлопали в ладоши.

When the clowns came out into the ring, all the children started to applaud.

Когда мы подлетали к Лондону, можно было разглядеть Темзу.

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 воробьи.

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 увезли 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 *ходить* which are perfective partners of the *multidirectional* verb *ходить* from the *imperfective* verbs *ходить*.
which are imperfective partners of *зайти* ‘to drop in’, ‘to go behind’ and *сойти* ‘come/go down’ respectively.

Прочитав письмо, он нервно заходил (сейчас) в комнате.

Having read the letter, he began to walk nervously up and down the room.

По дороге домой он иногда заходил (сейчас) в небольшое кафе на углу.

On the way home he sometimes dropped in to a small café on the corner.

Нечем зажечь свечи – придается *сходить* (сейчас) в кiosk за спичками.

There’s nothing to light the candles with; somebody will have to go to the kiosk for matches.

Кататься на льжах здесь стало опасно — начали *сходить* (сейчас) 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Preposition (destination)</th>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Preposition (point of departure)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>при-</td>
<td>в/на</td>
<td>вы-</td>
<td>из</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>по-</td>
<td>в/на</td>
<td>у-</td>
<td>из</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>под-</td>
<td>к</td>
<td>с(о)-</td>
<td>с(о)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>за-</td>
<td>в/на</td>
<td>о/об(о)-</td>
<td>вокруг ‘around’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>про-</td>
<td>мимо ‘past’/через ‘across’/сквозь ‘through’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>пере-</td>
<td>через</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Она приехала в Россию.
She arrived in Russia.

Она пришла на лекцию.
She came to the lecture.

Она уехала из России.
She left Russia.

Он вышел из норы.
It crawled out of the burrow.

Он подбежал к арбитру.
He ran up to the referee.

Он облетел вокруг света.
He orbited (literally, flew round) the earth.

Мяч пролетел мимо ворот.
The ball flew past (i.e. missed) the goal.
He took the blind man across the road.

In a number of instances the *prefix* and the *preposition* are identical:

Он занёс 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 внес 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 *идти* is used in a number of expressions where it has the basic meaning of ‘to take place’:

**Туда входить нельзя; идёт урок.**

You can’t go in there; there’s a lesson taking place.

**Какой фильм идёт в кинотеатре «Космос»?**

What film is on the Kosmos cinema?

**Сейчас идёт хороший спектакль в театре «Ленком»**.

There’s a good play on just now at the Lenkom theatre.

The same verb is also used for certain weather phenomena:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>идёт дождь</td>
<td>it’s raining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>идёт снег</td>
<td>it’s snowing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The verb идти is also used to convey the idea of something suiting someone or going well with something else:

Это платье ей идёт.

This dress suits her.

Водка хорошо идёт с солёными грибами.

Vodka goes very well with pickled mushrooms.

Time goes only in one direction, but can seem to go at different speeds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Направление времени</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>вре́мя идёт</td>
<td>time is passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вре́мя бежит/летит</td>
<td>time flies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вре́мя ползёт</td>
<td>time is dragging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other examples with unidirectional verbs include the following:

Здесь мы ведём учёт доходов и расходов всех отделений.

Here we keep track of the income and expenditure of all departments.

Она ведёт дневник.

She keeps a diary.

Все наши планы лёгли (к чёрту). (informal)

All our plans are up the spout.

У этой собаки лёст шерсть.

That dog is losing its fur.

Не лесь в драку.

Don’t get involved in that fight.
Мы несём ответственность за это.

We have responsibility for this.

Что за ахинеё ты несёйав? (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 ветёт/ловетёт 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 сёрье брюки.

Today he’s wearing a black pullover and grey trousers (literally, On him there is …).
She was the only person wearing red (literally, in red) at the ball.

The *transitive* verb **кататься/покататься** and the more frequent reflexive verb **кататься/покататься** are used to refer to a pleasure trip, usually without a specific destination, taken in some means of transport:

**Отец катал нас на катере.**

Our father used to take us out for rides in his boat.

**Может, покатаемся на твоей новой машине?**

Can we go for a spin in your new car?

**Школьные каникулы я обычно проводил в деревне; катался на лошади, на лодке, на мотоцикле и даже водил грузовик.**

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.

**Кататься/покататься** is also used in certain set phrases:

- **кататься/покататься на коньках** to go skating
- **кататься/покататься на лыжах** to go skiing
- **кататься/покататься на санках** 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:

**Извините за опоздание, могу войти?**

I’m sorry for being late; may I come in?
You can’t go in there: there’s a lesson taking place.

When the clowns came out into the ring, all the children started to applaud.

I don’t know where he is; he may have gone outside for a smoke.

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:

We came on foot, but we’re going home by taxi.

Do come and see us more often.
22.4.2 Going on foot or by transport

In general, идти 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 пешком can be used:

Мы пришли к вам пешком. но домой от вас поедем на такси.

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 еду в университет на сорок седьмом автобусе.

I go to the university on a 47 bus.

Or, I get the 47 bus to the university.

Мы приехали поездом/на поезде.

We came by train.

Мой прадед ехал на лошади, мой дед ехал на велосипеде, мой отец ездил на мотоцикле, а я хожу пешком.

My great-grandfather rode a horse, my grandfather travelled by bicycle, my father drove a motorbike and I go about on foot.

Четыре британки намерены на лодке переплыть Атлантический океан.

Four British women are planning to cross the Atlantic in a rowing boat.

На этот раз мы решили лететь 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:

Идти + нести, идти + вести
Ходить + носить; ходить + водить
Ехать + везти
Ездить + возить

Пришла Нина и, как обыкновенно, принесла последние новости.

Nina came and, as usual, brought the latest news with her.

Максим пришёл не один, он привёл невесту.

Maksim didn’t come on his own, but brought along his fiancée.

Брат уехал в Петербург и увёз мою гитару.

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 идти and ходить for land or water transport, but лететь and летать for

air transport:

Туда идёт сорок седьмой автобус.

The 47 bus goes there.

Поезд пришёл с небольшим опозданием.

The train arrived a few minutes late.

В этот пыльный городишко не заходят большие волжские пароходы.

The big Volga steamships do not visit this dusty little town.
You can only get there by helicopter (literally, Only helicopters fly there).

And to be preferred if the focus is on the means of transport as a physical object:

A bus has just gone past us.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>гулять</td>
<td>to stroll, to go for a walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>путешествовать</td>
<td>to travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>отправляться/отправиться</td>
<td>to set off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>оставлять/оставить</td>
<td>to leave, to abandon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>покинуть</td>
<td>to leave, to abandon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>добираться /добраться до (+ gen.)</td>
<td>to get to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>прибыть/прибыть</td>
<td>to arrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>возвращаться/вернуться</td>
<td>to return</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Гулять is always *intransitive* and is used with a construction indicating location:

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 идти 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):

Летом многие студенты путешествуют по Европе автостопом.

In summer many students hitch-hike around Europe.

Оставлять/оставить and покидать/покинуть are transitive verbs that mean ‘to leave’ with the additional connotation of ‘abandoning’:

После кровопролитных боёв в июле сорок второго года советские войска оставили Севастополь.

After the bloody battles of July 1942 the Soviet forces abandoned Sebastopol.

Он покинул этот город, чтобы уже никогда сюда не возвращаться.

He left the city, never to return to it.

Добраться /добраться до (+ gen.) tends to imply a certain amount of difficulty in reaching the destination:

Мы добрались до места назначения уже затемно.

It was well after dark when we reached our destination.
Прибы́ть/прибы́ть tends to be used in more formal types of language:

Уважаемые пассажиры, наш поезд прибывает на конечную станцию.

We wish to inform passengers that this train is arriving at its final destination.

Отправля́ться/отправи́ться and возвраща́ться/вернуться require no special comment:

Завтра отправляемся ровно в семь часов.

We’re setting off tomorrow at exactly seven o’clock.

Я слышал, что он отправился в путешествие по Золотому кольцу.

I heard he’d set off on a trip round the Golden Ring.

Он покинул этот город, чтобы уже никогда сюда не возвращаться.

He left the city, never to return to it.

Первой в космос полетела собачка – на Землю она не вернулась.

The first animal in space was a dog, but she never returned to Earth.

NOTE The Золотое кольцо’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
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.

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.

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:
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>блестящий</td>
<td>brilliant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ведущий</td>
<td>leading, presenter (of a television programme)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>выдающийся</td>
<td>outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>действующий</td>
<td>active, functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>окружающий</td>
<td>surrounding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>отсутствующий</td>
<td>absent (also as a noun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>потрясающий</td>
<td>staggering, amazing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>предшествующий</td>
<td>preceding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 куриящих.

On the ground floor there is a special room for smokers.

У него скверные отношения со всеми подчищёнными.

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, упоминает 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Вводные слова</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>впрочем</td>
<td>however, on second thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>значит</td>
<td>so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>итак</td>
<td>and so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>как бы то ни было</td>
<td>however that may be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кроме того</td>
<td>in addition, moreover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>к тому же</td>
<td>in addition, moreover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>однако</td>
<td>however</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>следовательно</td>
<td>therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>стало быть</td>
<td>therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>таким образом</td>
<td>therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тем не менее</td>
<td>nonetheless, nevertheless</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In my opinion, there’s no point in complaining about such things. However, it’s up to you.

Менеджеров из стран Евросоюза не так уж много в России, и они иногда с трудом приспосабливаются к российским условиям. Как бы то ни было, они несут с собой западный подход к делу и западную организацию.

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.

Вчера из-за погодных условий было отменено более двухсот рейсов. Кроме того, из-за тумана многие рейсы были задержаны на срок до двух часов.

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.

Делегатам Съезда не разрешалось разглашать содержание доклада. Тем не менее, полный текст вскоре появился в западной печати.

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 вводные слова indicate the extent to which the information being communicated is probable. These include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Конечно</th>
<th>Of course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>само собой</td>
<td>of course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Разумеется</td>
<td>it must be case that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Должно быть</td>
<td>probably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Наверное, наверно</td>
<td>apparently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>По-видимому</td>
<td>probably, perhaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Показу́й</td>
<td>it seems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Кажется</td>
<td>it is possible that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Возможнó</td>
<td>perhaps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE Both наверное and наверно are characteristic of informal language, the former tends to be used in writing and the latter in speech.
Of course, they have the right not to agree with you.

His things aren’t here so he must already have left.

I’ll probably call in and see her tomorrow after work.

You’re probably right; we shouldn’t have refused his help.

It seems that there’s no point in staying here.
It's possible that Russia will join the WTO (World Trade Organisation) before the end of the current year.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>допустим</td>
<td>let us assume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>предположим</td>
<td>let us suppose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>одним словом</td>
<td>in a word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>короче говоря</td>
<td>to put it briefly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>собственно говоря</td>
<td>strictly speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>шутки в сторону</td>
<td>joking apart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>кстати (говоря)</td>
<td>by the way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>между прочим</td>
<td>by the way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

Она, между прочим, заболела и скорее всего не придёт.

By the way, she’s not well and probably won’t come.

The following вводные слова indicate the speaker or the writer’s attitude to the matter being described:

| к счастью | fortunately |
| к сожалению | unfortunately |

К счастью, мы очень хорошо понимаем по-русски.

Fortunately, we understand Russian very well.

К сожалению, ваше заявление не может быть принято, так как последний срок подачи документов уже истек.

Unfortunately, your application cannot be accepted since the final deadline for the submission of documents has already expired.

The following вводные слова are used when enumerating points in an argument:

| во-первых | in the first place |
| во-вторых | in the second place |
| в-третьих | in the third place |
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 все 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>в общем</td>
<td>in general, on the whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вот</td>
<td>(a sentence filler)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>в принципе</td>
<td>in principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>значит</td>
<td>so (often used as a sentence filler)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>так</td>
<td>so, well (can be used to gain time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>так сказать</td>
<td>so to speak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the following examples, some of the above words and phrases are used with a definite and translatable meaning:

У него было несколько критических замечаний, но в общем его рецензия положительная.

He had a few critical comments, but on the whole his review is positive.

В принципе я согласен, но тут есть некоторые спорные моменты.

In principle I agree, but there are some unresolved issues here.

Сейчас выходим из дома. Значит, будем у вас через час.

We’re leaving the house now. That means we’ll be at your place in an hour’s time.

Это лекарство я пробую в первый раз. Это, так сказать, эксперимент.

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:

Так-то, все, в общем, понятно. Я, значит, подумаю, что дальше делать.

Well, then, I suppose that’s all sorted out. I’ll have to think now what to do next.

Мне, значит, тут твоя жена, это самое, рассказала о вашей, так сказать, проблеме. А вы не пробовали обращаться к этому, как его там, сексологу?

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 можешь меня подвезти на вокзал?
—В принципе да.
—Can you give me a lift to the station?

—I suppose so.

**NOTE** When тяж 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Русский</th>
<th>Английский</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>как бы</td>
<td>sort of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>типа</td>
<td>like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>блин</td>
<td>(emphasises the previous word)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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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