



Modern Russian Grammar
A PRACTICAL GUIDE

John Dunn and Shamil Khairov



Modern
RUSSIAN
Grammar

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Modern RUSSIAN Grammar

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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

INTRODUCTION

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

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

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

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

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

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

нсв	несовершённый	<i>imperfective</i>
св	совершённый	<i>perfective</i>

The following abbreviations are also used:

sing.	singular
fem.	feminine
masc.	masculine
n.	neuter
pl.	plural

Glossary of grammatical terms

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

Active voice

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

Adjective

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

Adverb

Adverbs are mainly used to qualify a **verb**, although they can also qualify **adjectives** or even other **adverbs**. Examples are **быстро** 'quickly', **по-ру́сски** 'in Russian' and **о́чень** '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 **быстрее** 'quicker, more quickly' and **громче** 'louder, more loudly'. *See 6.8.1–6.8.3, 9.1.7 and 21.9.1–21.9.6.*

Complement

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

Conditional mood.

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

Conjugation

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

Conjunctions

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

GLOSSARY OF GRAMMATICAL TERMS

Fleeting vowel

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

Gender

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

Gerund

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

Government

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

Grammatical subject *see* **Subject**.

Imperative mood

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

Impersonal predicate forms

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

Impersonal verbs

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

Infinitive

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

Intransitive verb

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

Noun

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

Noun phrase

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

Number

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

Numeral

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

Participle

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

Particle

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

Passive voice

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

Person

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

Prefix

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

Preposition

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

Productive verb classes

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

Pronoun

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

Reflexive verb

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

Subject

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

Suffix

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

Superlative

The **superlative** is the form of an **adjective** or an **adverb** that is used to indicate the highest possible degree of quality concerned, for example, **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.*

Vvódnye slová

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

Part A

Structures

1

Sounds and spelling

1.1 The Russian alphabet

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

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

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

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

The precise difference between the pronunciation of **и** and **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 **б**, hard **л**) 'was', **быль** (hard **б**, soft **л**) 'true story', **бил** (soft **б**, hard **л**) past tense of 'hit' or 'beat'; **мат** (hard **м**, hard **т**) 'checkmate', **мать** (hard **м**, soft **т**) 'mother', **мят** (soft **м**, hard **т**) 'crumpled', **мять** (soft **м**, soft **т**) 'to crumple'.

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

1.2.2. The pronunciation of hard consonants

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

The hard **л** is pronounced with the tongue resting against the top teeth. It sounds like the English 'l' in words such as 'film', 'table'.

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

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

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

1.2.3 The pronunciation of soft consonants

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

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

NOTE

In transcriptions, the sign ' is used to indicate a palatalised consonant.

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

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

1.2.4 The representation of hard and soft consonants in writing

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

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

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

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

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

глаз ‘eye’, **знать** ‘to know’, **спорт** ‘sport’;

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

да ‘yes’, **хóдит** ‘he goes [on foot]’, **рука́** ‘hand’, ‘arm’, **сэр** ‘sir’, **ты** ‘you’.

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

- (a) the *soft* sign (ь):

ло́шадь ‘horse’, **возьму́** ‘I will take’, **фильм** ‘film’, **кровать** ‘bed’;

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

бе́лый ‘white’, **те́тя** ‘aunt’, **ви́за** ‘visa’, **плюс** ‘plus’, **мясо́** ‘meat’.

1.2.5 Voiced and unvoiced consonants

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2.6 Consonant clusters

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

<i>Spelled</i>	<i>Pronounced</i>
чт	шт in что ‘what’ and чтобы ‘in order to’, otherwise чт: по́чта ‘post office’, почти́ ‘almost’
чн	шн in certain everyday words: конéчно ‘of course’, ску́чно ‘boring’ (adv.) яичница ‘fried eggs’, and also in female patronymics: Никитична, Ильинична For more on patronymics see 12.1.2. Otherwise чн: начини́ ‘start!’, очну́ться ‘to come to oneself’, вéчный ‘eternal’, бесконéчный ‘infinite, endless’
лн	н in со́лнце ‘sun’ Otherwise лн: солне́чный ‘sunny’, по́лный ‘full’
гк	хк: лёгкий ‘light’, ‘easy’, мя́кий ‘soft’
стн	сн: че́стный ‘honest’, ме́стный ‘local’
здн	зн: звёздный ‘star’ (adj.), поздно́ ‘late’ (adv.)
жж	a long ж: э́жду ‘I go’, ‘I travel’, сжа́ть ‘to grip’
сж	
зч	щ: перево́зчик ‘carrier’

<i>Spelled</i>	<i>Pronounced</i>
сч	щ: in the root -чит/чёт- : <i>считать</i> ‘to count’, ‘to consider’, <i>расчёт</i> ‘calculation’; also in <i>счастье</i> ‘happiness’; otherwise щч: <i>исчезать</i> ‘to disappear’
жч	щ: <i>мужчина</i> ‘man’; <i>перебёжчик</i> ‘deserter’
сш	a long ш: <i>сшить</i> ‘to sew (together)’, <i>бесшумный</i> ‘noiseless’, <i>без шума</i>
зш	‘without noise’
ться	щч: <i>мыться</i> ‘to wash oneself’, <i>улыбаться</i> ‘to smile’, <i>моются</i> ‘they
тся	wash themselves’, <i>улыбаются</i> ‘they smile’

NOTE: The greeting *здравствуйте* ‘hello’ is pronounced as *здравствуйте* in formal language, but more informally as *здрасьте*.

1.3 Vowels

1.3.1 Russian vowel sounds and letters

To indicate the six Russian vowel sounds, ten letters are used: **а, 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 я, 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 indicate that the preceding consonant is *soft*:

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES

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

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

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

статьи [stat'yi] ‘articles’.

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

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

Майя ‘Maya’ (female name), **паранойя** ‘paranoia’, **майор** ‘major’ (military rank), **Йемен** ‘Yemen’, **Нью-Йорк** ‘New York’, **йога** ‘yoga’, **йогурт** ‘yogurt’.

1.4 Stress

1.4.0 Introduction

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

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

For more on the grammatical terms, see 2.2.

For the rules of stress with prepositions, see 9.2.7.

1.4.1 The importance of stress

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

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

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

1.4.2 The marking of stress

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.4.3 Reduction of unstressed vowels.

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

1.4.4 Unstressed a and o

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

да́рю [dα-] ‘I give’, **а́фрика́нец** [αf-] ‘African’, **хо́дить** [khα-] ‘to go (on foot)’, **о́тказа́ться** [αt-] ‘to refuse’.

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

да́рови́тый [dər-] ‘gifted’, **вы́дать** [-dət] ‘to give out’, **хо́довой** [khəd-] ‘marketable, popular’, **вы́ход** [-khət] ‘exit’.

1.4.5 Unstressed e and я; unstressed э

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

сѐмьсѐт [s'im-] 'seven hundred', **пѝтьсѐт** [p'it-] 'five hundred', **сѐмилѝтний** [s'i-] 'seven years old', **пѝтьдѝсят** [p'i-] 'fifty'.

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

вѐсемь [-s'эм'] 'eight', **пѝмѝя** [-m'эт'] 'memory'.

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

экваѝтор [ikv-] 'equator', **эгоѝст** [ig-] 'egoist', **экологѝя** [ik-] 'ecology'.

1.4.6 Other unstressed vowels

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

1.4.7 Stress units of more than one word

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

за тебѝя [zət'-] 'for you', **черѝз дѝнь** [chiri'rizd'-] 'after a day', **какіѝе-то** [-tə] 'some (pl.)', **принѝси-ка** [-kə] 'bring!', **не знаѝешь ли?** [n'iz-] 'don't you know?', **под гору** [-gəru] 'downhill'.

1.4.8 Secondary stress

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

Вѝзле дѝма 'near the house', **пѝсле мѝтча** 'after the match', **литѝратурѝведение** 'literary science', **гѝла-концѝрт** 'gala concert', **телѝсериал** 'TV serial', **морѝзоустѝйчивѝый** 'frost resistant'.

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

1.5 Spelling rules**1.5.0 Introduction**

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

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

1.5.1 Use of the letter ё

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

вошёл 'he went in', but **вышел** 'he went out'; **вёл** 'he led', but **вела** 'she led'.

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

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

They should, however, be read as:

её, ещё, принёс, лёгкий, мёд.

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

1.5.2 Spelling after ш, ж, ч, щ, ц

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

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

варю́ 'I boil', but **спеши́у** 'I hurry', **ви́жу** 'I see', **лечу́** 'I am flying', **пу́щу** 'I will let'.
варя́ 'boiling', but **спеша́** 'hurrying', **трево́жа** 'worrying', **мо́лча** 'in silence', **морща́** 'wrinkling'.

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

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

параши́от 'parachute', **жю́ри** 'jury'.

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

сто́лы 'tables', but **карандаши́** 'pencils', **ножи́** 'knives', **врачи́** 'doctors', **товари́щи** 'comrades'.

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

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

цыплёнок 'chicken', **отцы́** 'fathers', but **цирк** 'circus', **Ельцин** 'El'tsin'.

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

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

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

For more on these endings see 2.6.1 and 2.6.2.

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

шоколад ‘chocolate’, **жокей** ‘jockey’, **Шостакович** ‘Shostakovich’.

1.5.3 Use of **е** and **э**

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

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

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

это ‘this (is)’, **этот** ‘this’, **эх** ‘oh’.

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

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

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

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

стюардесса ‘stewardess’, **регби** ‘rugby’, **Сент-Луис** ‘Saint-Louis’, **темп**
‘pace’, **женщина** ‘woman’, **шея** ‘neck’, **цель** ‘aim’.

1.5.4 Use of **и** after **к, г, х**

The letter **ы** does not occur after the consonants **к, г, х**; instead **и** is used:

столы ‘tables’, *but* **ящики** ‘boxes’, **мозги** ‘brains’, **духи** ‘perfume’.

1.5.5 The ending **-го (во)**

The ending **-го** is pronounced as [vɔ] 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’	того [tavo]
кто ‘who?’	кого [kavo]
что ‘what?’	чего [chivo]
новый ‘new’	нового [novəvə]
хороший ‘good’	хорошего [kharoshəvə]

с иний ‘(dark) blue’	с инего [s'in'əvə]
т ретьий ‘third’	т ретьего [tr'et'yəvə]
о дин ‘one’	о дного [adnəvə]

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

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

1.5.6 The spelling of certain prefixes

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

*безд*умный ‘thoughtless’, but *бес*страстный ‘passionless’;
*вздр*емнуть ‘to take a nap’, but *вск*ипятить ‘to boil’;
*возр*одить ‘to revive’, but *вос*питать ‘to bring up’;
*изд*ать ‘to publish’, but *ис*править ‘to correct’;
*разб*удить ‘to wake’, but *рас*сыпать ‘to scatter’.

1.5.7 Use of capital letters

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

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

Трудно поверить, но завтра я уже буду в Москве.
 It’s hard to believe it, but tomorrow I’ll already be in Moscow.

Days of the week and names of months:

Я, наверное, приеду в четверг.
 I’ll probably arrive on Thursday.

В июле и в августе здесь бывает очень жарко.
 In July and August it can get very hot here.

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

В университете я изучал английскую литературу.
 At university I studied English literature.

В нашей гостинице много русских, но кроме нас, кажется, нет никаких англичан.
 There are a lot of Russians in our hotel, but apart from us there don't seem to be any other English people.

Как и многие москвичи, они редко пользовались своей машиной в черте города.
 Like many Muscovites, they rarely used their car within the city limits.

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

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

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

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

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

Министёрство культу́ры

'The Ministry of Culture'

Моско́вский государственный университет

'Moscow State University'

Большо́й теа́тр

'The Bolshoi Theatre'

«Незави́симая газе́та»

Nezavisimaia gazeta (the name of a newspaper)

«Кто хо́чет стать миллио́нером?»

Who Wants to be a Millionaire?

Но́вый год

'New Year'

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

Чёрное мо́ре

The Black Sea

о́зеро Байка́л

Lake Baikal

у́лица Тве́рская

Tverskaia Street

Кра́сная пло́щадь

Red Square

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

Росси́йская Федера́ция

The Russian Federation

Се́верная Ирла́ндия

Northern Ireland

Восто́чная Сиби́рь

Eastern Siberia

Да́льний Восто́к

The Far East

Европе́йский Сою́з

The European Union

Госуда́рственная Ду́ма Росси́йской Федера́ции
The State Duma of the Russian Federation

День Побе́ды
Victory Day (9 May)

1.5.8 Use of inverted commas

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

Лу́чше, коне́чно, чита́ть «Войну́ и мир» в оригина́ле.
It's better, of course, to read *War and Peace* in the original.

За́втра в киноте́атре «Иллюзио́н» пока́зывают фильм «Бронене́сец Потёмкин».
Tomorrow they're showing *Battleship Potemkin* in the *Illuzion* cinema.

Весно́й про́шлого го́да петербу́ргский футбо́льный клуб «Зени́т» факти́чески перешёл под контро́ль компани́и «Газпро́м».
In the spring of last year Zenit, the St Petersburg football team was effectively taken over by Gazprom.

В шестидеся́тые го́ды «Битлз» бы́ли о́чень популя́рными в Советско́м Сою́зе, хотя́ их пла́стинки там не продава́лись.
In the 1960s the Beatles were very popular in the Soviet Union, although their records were not on sale there.

Рестора́н «Пеки́н» нахо́дится недале́ко от метро́ «Маяко́вская».
The Peking restaurant is near the Mayakovskaia underground station.

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

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

1.6 Transliteration and transcription

1.6.0 Introduction

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

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

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

1.6.1 The Library of Congress system of transliteration

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

Library of Congress system: Table of transliteration

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

NOTES

- (i) Where the letter e is used instead of ë, it is usually transliterated as **e**; therefore, **Горбачёв** would be transliterated as **Gorbachëv**, but **Горбачев** would be **Gorbachev**.
- (ii) The Library of Congress system has a number of ambiguities. The most important is that the same letter, **i**, is used for both **и** and **й**, so that both **бой** and **бон** are transliterated as **boi**.

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

1.6.2 Examples of transliteration using the Library of Congress system

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

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

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

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 **ѣ** can be replaced by **e** or **o**, and the character **'**, used to transliterate **ь**, can be omitted:

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

Горький would be transliterated as **Gorkii**.

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

Ельцин might be represented as **Yeltsin**.

Ярославль might be represented as **Yaroslavl**.

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

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

1.6.4 The representation of English forms in Russian

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

- 1 The model of pronunciation used is that of a British film actor of the 1930s. What this means is that **a** is often rendered by **e** or **э**, and **u** is often rendered by **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 **Нейл**.
- 3 There may well be variations and inconsistencies. For example, forms used in some official documents, such as visas, may sometimes be closer to a transliteration than those encountered elsewhere.

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

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

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

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

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

w is rendered by **в** or **у**

NOTES

- (i) The use of **р** for English 'h' is now rather old-fashioned and tends to be restricted to proper names that are well established, such as **Гарольд** for 'Harold'.
- (ii) English 'l', when it occurs at the end of a word or before a consonant, is often rendered by **ль**.
- (iii) English double letters tend to be rendered by double letters in Russian.

1.6.5

Examples of English names in Russian

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

2

Nouns

2.0 Introduction

The Russian noun contains the following categories.

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

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

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

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

2.1 Number

2.1.1 Singular and plural

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

2.1.2 Nouns that occur only in the singular

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

Certain *abstract* nouns:

борьба struggle разни́ца difference

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

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

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

Some nouns that fit into neither of the above categories:

ложь	lie
ору́жие	weapons
пла́мя	flame

2.1.3 Nouns used only in the plural

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

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

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

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

2.2 Case

2.2.1 The six cases

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

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

2.2.2 How the cases are indicated

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

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

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

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

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

Indeclinable nouns are described in detail in 2.13–2.14.

2.3 Gender

2.3.0 Introduction

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

2.3.1 Grammatical and biological gender

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

мужчина́ (masc.)	man	брат (masc.)	brother
лев (masc.)	lion	женщина́ (fem.)	woman
сестра́ (fem.)	sister	львица́ (fem.)	lioness
потолок (masc.)	ceiling	дверь (fem.)	door
окно́ (n.)	window	атеизм (masc.)	atheism
религия́ (fem.)	religion	христианство́ (n.)	Christianity

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

живо́тное	animal	лицо́	face; person
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2.3.2 Determining grammatical gender

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

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

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

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

хоро́шие мужчи́ны	good men
хоро́шие же́нщины	good women
хоро́шие сло́ва	good words

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

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

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

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

2.3.3 Grammatical gender and declension type

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

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

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

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

кни́га	book	студе́нтка	(female) student
неде́ля	week	те́тя	aunt

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

дядя́	uncle	мужи́на	man
юно́ша	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*:

ле́вша́	left-hander	пья́ница	drunkard
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Nouns which in the *nominative singular* end in **-о**, **-е**, **-ё** or **-мя** are normally *neuter*:

окно́	window	мо́ре	sea
зда́ние	building	копье́	spear
вре́мя	time		

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

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

писа́тель	writer	председа́тель	chairman
вратарь	goalkeeper		

Names of months are *masculine*:

январь	January	апрель	April
октябрь	October		

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

радо́сть	joy	ста́рость	old age
боле́знь	illness	жизнь	life

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

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

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

автомобиль	car, motor vehicle	голубь	dove, pigeon
го́сть	guest	гу́сь	goose
де́нь	day	дождь	rain
ка́мень	stone	картофель	potatoes
Кре́мль	Kremlin	лебе́дь	swan
портфе́ль	briefcase	реме́нь	strap
роя́ль	(grand) piano	ру́бль	rouble
слова́рь	dictionary	уго́ль	coal
шампу́нь	shampoo		

The following nouns are *feminine*:

дверь	door	ко́сть	bone
лоша́дь	horse	ме́бель	furniture
оче́редь	queue	пече́нь	liver
пы́ль	dust	ро́ль	part, role
со́ль	salt	сте́пь	steppe
це́ль	goal, aim	це́пь	chain

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

2.4

Animacy

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

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

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

Animate

<i>Nom.</i>	<i>Acc.</i>	<i>Gen.</i>
брат ‘brother’	брати́а	брати́а
геро́й ‘hero’	геро́я	геро́я
коро́ль ‘king’	коро́ля	коро́ля
тигр ‘tiger’	ти́гра	ти́гра
соловѐй ‘nightingale’	соловѐя	соловѐя
лось ‘elk’	ло́ся	ло́ся

Inanimate

<i>Nom.</i>	<i>Acc.</i>	<i>Gen.</i>
стол ‘table’	стол	стола́
поцелу́й ‘kiss’	поцелу́й	поцелу́я
день ‘day’	день	дня

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

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

Animate

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

Inanimate

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Acc. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
стол ‘table’	стола́	стола́	столо́в
день ‘day’	дни́	дни́	дне́й
кни́га ‘book’	кни́ги	кни́ги	кни́г
неде́ля ‘week’	неде́ли	неде́ли	неде́ль
кость ‘bone’	ко́сти	ко́сти	косте́й
по́ле ‘field’	поля́	поля́	поле́й

The fleeting vowel

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

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

NOTES

- (i) The distinction between *animate* and *inanimate* nouns generally follows common-sense principles and presents few difficulties. Nevertheless, it may be noted that while **труп** 'corpse' is inanimate, **мертвец** 'dead man' is animate; **кукла** 'doll, puppet' is animate. **Ферзь** 'queen' (in chess) is a masculine animate noun.
- (ii) As the example of **лицо́** shows, some nouns can be either *animate* or *inanimate*, depending on the meaning: when **лицо́** means 'person', it is animate, but when it means 'face', it is inanimate. Similarly, when **Спартак** denotes 'Spartacus' (the leader of the Roman slave rebellion), it is animate; when it denotes 'Spartak' (the sports organisation) it is inanimate (when used in the latter sense it is normally written in inverted commas; see **1.5.8**).

2.5 The fleeting vowel

2.5.0 Introduction

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

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

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

The fleeting vowel occurs with a large number of masculine nouns ending in a consonant, **-й** or **-ь**. The vowel is present in the *nominative singular* (and *accusative singular* if the noun is *inanimate*), but absent in all other forms of the noun. The fleeting vowel is particularly likely to occur with nouns ending in **-ец**, **-ок**, **-ёк** or **-ей**, although it is by no means restricted to these nouns:

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

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

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

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

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

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
за́яц	за́йца	за́йцы

2.5.2

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

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
ло́жка 'spoon'	ло́жки	ло́жек
ку́хня 'kitchen'	ку́хни	ку́хонь
о́кно 'window'	о́кна	о́кон
се́рдце 'heart'	се́рдца	се́рдце

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
тю́рма 'prison'	тю́рьмы	тю́рем
пи́сьмо 'letter'	пи́сьма	пи́сем

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

- (i) After **к, г, х** only **-о-** is used; for examples, see **ку́хня** and **о́кно** above.
- (ii) The vowel **-о-** is used before **-к, -г, -х** unless the preceding consonant is **ж, ц, ч**, or **ш**:

The fleeting vowel

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

(See also **ложка** above.)

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

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

NOTE: The vowel **-e-** is used before **-ц** even in stressed syllables; see the example **сёрдце** above.

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

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

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

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

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

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
вещество́ 'substance'	вещества́	веществ
место́ 'place'	места́	мест
карта́ 'map'	карты́	карт
звезда́ 'star'	звёзды́	звёзд
солнце́ 'sun'	солнца́	солнц

2.5.3 The fleeting vowel with feminine nouns ending in -Ь

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

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

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

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

2.6 Masculine nouns ending in a consonant, -Й OR -Ь

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

The following tables give examples of:
 an *inanimate* noun (**стол** 'table');
 an *animate* noun (**слон** 'elephant');
 a noun with a *fleeting vowel* (**осёл** 'donkey').

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	стол	сто́лы
Gen.	стола́	столо́в
Dat.	столу́	стола́м
Acc.	стол	сто́лы
Inst.	столо́м	стола́ми
Prep.	столé	стола́х

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	слон	сло́ны
Gen.	слона́	слоно́в
Dat.	слону́	слона́м
Acc.	слона́	слоно́в
Inst.	слоно́м	слона́ми
Prep.	слоне́	слона́х

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

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

2.6.2

Masculine nouns ending in -к, -г, -х, -ц, -ж, -ч, -ш, -щ: application of the spelling rules given in 1.5.2 and 1.5.4

The application of the spelling rules given in 1.5.2 and 1.5.4 means that the *nominative plural* of masculine nouns ending in -г, -к, -х, -ж, -ч, ш, -щ ends in -и:

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

The application of the spelling rules given in 1.5.2 means that the *instrumental singular* of nouns ending in -ц, -ж, -ч, -ш, -щ is -ом only when the ending is *stressed*, otherwise it is -ем:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Instr. sing.</i>
оте́ц 'father'	оте́цом
нож	ноже́м
врач	врачо́м
карандаш	карандашо́м
плащ	плащо́м
ме́сяц 'month', 'moon'	ме́сяцем
му́ж 'husband'	му́жем
плач 'weeping'	плаче́м
душ 'shower'	душе́м
товари́щ 'comrade'	товари́щем

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
коне́ц 'end'	коне́цов
па́лец 'finger'	па́льцев

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
нож	ножѐй
пляж 'beach'	пляжѐй
врач	врачѐй
карандаш	карандашѐй
товарищ	товарищѐй

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 **-ѐм** and **-ѐв** 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 (**поцелу́й** 'kiss'); the second table gives an example of an *animate* noun with stress not on the ending (**геро́й** 'hero'); the third table gives an example of a noun both with a *fleeting vowel* and with stress on the ending (**ручѐй** 'stream').

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

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

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	ручѐй	ручьѐй
Gen.	ручьѐя	ручьѐв
Dat.	ручьѐю	ручьѐям
Acc.	ручѐй	ручьѐй
Instr.	ручьѐм	ручьѐями
Prep.	ручьѐ	ручьѐях

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

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

2.6.4 Masculine nouns ending in -ь

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

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

The following tables give examples of:

- (a) an *inanimate* noun which also has stress on the ending (рубль ‘rouble’);
- (b) an *animate* noun which also has stress not on the ending (гость ‘guest’);
- (c) a noun with a *fleeting vowel* (огонь ‘fire’).

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	рубль	рубли́
Gen.	рубля́	рубле́й
Dat.	рублю́	рубля́м
Acc.	рубль	рубли́
Instr.	рублём	рубля́ми
Prep.	рубле́	рубля́х

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

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	гость	го́сти
Gen.	го́стя	госте́й
Dat.	го́стю	гостя́м
Acc.	го́стя	госте́й
Instr.	го́стем	гостя́ми
Prep.	го́сте	гостя́х

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	о́гонь	огни́
Gen.	огня́	огне́й
Dat.	огню́	огня́м
Acc.	о́гонь	огни́
Instr.	огнём	огня́ми
Prep.	огне́	огня́х

2.7

Non-standard endings for masculine nouns ending in a consonant, -й or -ь

2.7.1

The second genitive in -у/-ю

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

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

Дай мне, пожалуйста, чашку чаю (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 коньяку (коньяка)?

How about having a glass of brandy with our coffee?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Я ни разу не сталкивался с этой проблемой.

Not once have I encountered this problem.

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

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

Он рассказáл нам такой смешной анекдóт, что мы чуть не ўмерли сó смеху.

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

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

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

2.7.2 The second prepositional in -ý/-ю

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

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

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

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Normal prep. sing.</i>	<i>Second prep. sing.</i>
аэропóрт	airport	об аэропóрте	в аэропортý
бал	ball, dance	о бале	на балу́
бе́рег	shore	о бе́реге	на бере́гу
бой	battle	о бо́е	в бою́
глаз	eye	о гла́зе	в глазу́
год	year	о го́де	в году́
лес	wood, forest	о ле́се	в лесу́
ле́д	ice	о льде́	на льду́
мех	fur	о ме́хе	в/на меху́
нос	nose	о но́се	в/на носу́
плен	captivity	о плéне	в плену́
пол	floor	о по́ле	на полу́
порт	port	о пор́те	в порту́
рай	paradise	о рае́	в раю́
рот	mouth	о рте́	во рту́
угол	corner	об углé	в/на углу́
шкаф	cupboard	о шка́фе	в шкафу́

2.7.3 The nominative plural in -а́/-я́

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

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

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

Other nouns that take this ending include the following:

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

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
бухгалте́р 'accountant'	бухгалтеры́ or бухгалтера́
догово́р 'contract', 'treaty'	договоры́ or договора́
тра́ктор 'tractor'	тракторы́ or трактора́

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

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

The following may also be noted:

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

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

2.7.4

The 'zero ending' in the genitive plural

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

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

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

NOTES (i) The nouns **грамм** 'gram', **килогра́мм** 'kilogram' have alternative forms **грамм**, **килогра́мм** and **граммов**, **килограммов**. The latter sometimes occur in formal contexts, but are rarely used in ordinary speech.

(ii) The nouns **байт** 'byte', **килоба́йт** 'kilobyte' have alternative forms **байт**, **килоба́йт** and **ба́йтов**, **килоба́йтов**. The former are particularly likely to be used after a numeral.

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

(2) Some nouns indicating nationalities and ethnic groups:

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

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

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

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

(3) Some nouns indicating military terms:

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

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

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

NOTES

- (i) For nouns in groups (2) and (3) the *genitive plural* with a zero ending is more likely to be used with nouns, which in the nominative singular, end in **-н**, **-р** or **-т**.
- (ii) Some nouns denoting the names of fruit have alternative forms in **-ов** and with a zero ending. Examples include: **помидо́р** 'tomato' (**помидоро́в** and **помидо́р**) and **баклажа́н** 'aubergine', 'egg-plant' (**баклажа́нов** and **баклажа́н**).
- (iii) The noun **во́лос** 'hair' has a zero ending in the genitive plural, but with a different stress: **воло́с**.

2.8

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

2.8.1

Nouns ending in -о:

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

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	ме́сто	места́
Gen.	места́	мест
Dat.	месту́	места́м
Acc.	ме́сто	места́
Instr.	ме́стом	места́ми
Prep.	ме́сте	места́х

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	писа́мó	писа́ма
Gen.	писа́ма	писа́ем
Dat.	писа́му́	писа́мам
Acc.	писа́мó	писа́ма
Instr.	писа́мом	писа́мами
Prep.	писа́ме́	писа́мах

2.8.2 Nouns ending in -е

The following tables give examples of:

- (a) the standard declension pattern (**кладбище** ‘cemetery’);
 (b) a noun ending in -е with a *fleeting vowel* (**сердце** ‘heart’);
 (c) a noun ending in -ье (**ущелье** ‘ravine’, ‘gorge’)
 (d) a noun ending in -ие (**здание** ‘building’).

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	кладбище	кладбища
Gen.	кладбища	кладбищ
Dat.	кладбищу	кладбищам
Acc.	кладбище	кладбища
Instr.	кладбищем	кладбищами
Prep.	кладбище	кладбищах

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
море	моря	морей
поле	поля	полей

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	сердце	сердца
Gen.	сердца	сердец
Dat.	сердцу	сердцам
Acc.	сердце	сердца
Instr.	сердцем	сердцами
Prep.	сердце	сердцах

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	ущелье	ущелья
Gen.	ущелья	ущельий
Dat.	ущелью	ущельям
Acc.	ущелье	ущелья
Instr.	ущельем	ущельями
Prep.	ущелье	ущельях

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

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

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

2.8.3 Nouns ending in -ѐ

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	копье́	копья́
Gen.	копья́	копий
Dat.	копью́	копьям
Acc.	копье́	копья́
Instr.	копье́м	копьями
Prep.	копье́	копьях

NOTE The noun **ружьѐ** 'gun' has the *genitive plural* **ружей**. Almost all other nouns ending in **-ѐ** occur in the singular only.

2.8.4 Nouns ending in -мя

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

2.8.5 Non-standard endings for nouns ending in -о or -е: nominative plural in -и

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
вѐко 'eyelid'	вѐки
очко́ 'point (in a game)'	очки́
я́блоко 'apple'	я́блоки

NOTES

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

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

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

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

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
коле́но 'knee'	коле́ни
плечо́ 'shoulder'	плечи́

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

2.8.6

Non-standard endings for nouns ending in -о or -е: genitive plural ending in -ов or -ев

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
очко́	очко́в
о́блако	облако́в

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

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

2.9

Nouns, mostly feminine, ending in -а 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* (**сестра́** 'sister').

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

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

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

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	сестра́	се́стры
Gen.	сестры́	сестёр
Dat.	сестре́	сестрам
Acc.	сестру́	сестёр
Instr.	сестрой	сестрами
Prep.	сестре́	сестрах

2.9.2 Application of the spelling rules given in 1.5.2 and 1.5.4

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
кни́га ‘book’	кни́ги	кни́ги
рука́ ‘arm’, ‘hand’	руки́	руки
му́ха ‘fly’	мухи	мухи
кра́жа ‘theft’	кра́жи	кра́жи
да́ча ‘dacha’	да́чи	да́чи
юно́ша ‘youth’, ‘young man’	юно́ши	юно́ши
те́ща ‘mother-in-law’ (wife’s mother)	те́щи	те́щи

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

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

2.9.3 Nouns ending in -я

The following tables give examples of:

- (a) an inanimate noun (**неде́ля**, ‘week’);
 (b) an animate noun (**ня́ня**, ‘nanny’);
 (c) a noun with a fleeting vowel (**земля́**, ‘land’, ‘earth’).

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

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

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

NOTES

- (i) As is shown in the above tables, the ending in the *instrumental singular* is **-ей** when the stress is on the ending; otherwise it is **-ей**.
 (ii) Nouns ending in **-ня** have the ending **-ни** in the *dative* and *prepositional* singular:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Dat. sing.</i>	<i>Prep. sing.</i>
А́нглия ‘England’	А́нгли	А́нгли

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

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

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
ста́тья ‘article’	ста́тей
судья́ ‘judge’, ‘referee’	суде́й

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

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
левша́ 'left-hander'	левше́й
юноша́ 'youth', 'young man'	юноше́й
дядя́ 'uncle'	дяде́й

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
доля́ 'share'	доле́й
ноздря́ 'nostril'	ноздре́й
простыня́ 'sheet'	простыне́й/простынь
свеча́ 'candle'	свече́й
тётя́ 'aunt'	тёте́й/тётъ

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

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

Exceptions are:

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

2.10 Feminine nouns ending in -ь

2.10.1 Standard endings

The following tables give an example of:

- (a) an inanimate noun (**ро́ль** 'role', 'part');
- (b) an animate noun (**свекро́вь** 'mother-in-law' (husband's mother)).

For examples with a 'fleeting vowel', see 2.5.3.

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

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

2.10.2 Application of the spelling rule given in 1.5.2

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

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

2.10.3 Non-standard endings: МАТЬ, ДОЧЬ

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

	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
Nom.	ма́ть	до́чь	ма́тери	до́чери
Gen.	ма́тери	до́чери	ма́терей	до́черей
Dat.	ма́тери	до́чери	ма́терям	до́черям
Acc.	ма́ть	до́чь	ма́терей	до́черей
Instr.	ма́терью	до́черью	ма́терями	до́черьми́ or до́черья́ми
Prep.	ма́тери	до́чери	ма́терях	до́черях

2.10.4 Non-standard endings: instrumental plural in -ЬМИ

The nouns **дверь** 'door', **до́чь** 'daughter' and **ло́шадь** 'horse' have alternative endings for the *instrumental plural* in **-ьми** and **-ями**:

дверьми́/дверя́ми дочерьми́/дочеря́ми лошадьми́/лошадя́ми

2.11 Non-standard declension types

2.11.0 Introduction

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

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

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

- (a) *animate nouns* (**муж** ‘husband’, **брат** ‘brother’);
 (b) an *inanimate noun* (**стул**, ‘chair’).

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	муж	мужья́	брат	бра́тья
Gen.	му́жа	муже́й	бра́та	бра́тьев
Dat.	му́жу	мужья́м	бра́ту	бра́тьям
Acc.	му́жа	муже́й	бра́та	бра́тьев
Instr.	му́жем	мужья́ми	бра́том	бра́тьями
Prep.	му́же	мужья́х	бра́те	бра́тьях

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	стул	сту́лья
Gen.	сту́ла	сту́льев
Dat.	сту́лу	сту́льям
Acc.	стул	сту́лья
Instr.	сту́лом	сту́льями
Prep.	сту́ле	сту́льях

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

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

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>
клок ‘shred’, ‘patch’	кло́чья	кло́чьев
друг ‘friend’	дру́зья	друзе́й
сын ‘son’	сыно́вья	сынове́й

Some nouns have two different plural forms with different meanings:

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

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:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	де́рево 'tree'	дерéвья
Gen.	де́рева	дерéвьев
Dat.	де́реву	дерéвьям
Acc.	де́рево	дерéвья
Instr.	де́ревом	дерéвьями
Prep.	де́реве	дерéвьях

Other examples include:

<i>Nom. sing.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
крыло́ 'wing'	крылья́
перо́ 'feather'	пе́рья

2.11.3 Masculine nouns in -анин (-янин)

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

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

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

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

2.11.4 Masculine nouns in -ёнок (-онок)

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

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

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

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

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

<i>Nom. pl.</i>	<i>Gen. pl.</i>	<i>Dat. pl.</i>
щенки́/щеня́та	щенко́в/щеня́т	щенка́м/щеня́там

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

2.11.5 Other non-standard masculine nouns

The nouns **че́рт** 'devil' and **сосе́д** 'neighbour', 'room-mate' decline as follows:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	че́рт	че́рти	сосе́д	сосе́ди
Gen.	че́рта	че́ртей	сосе́да	сосе́дей
Dat.	че́рту	че́ртям	сосе́ду	сосе́дям
Acc.	че́рта	че́ртей	сосе́да	сосе́дей
Instr.	че́ртом	че́ртями	сосе́дом	сосе́дями
Prep.	че́рте	че́ртях	сосе́де	сосе́дях

The nouns **хозя́ин** 'master', 'owner' and **господи́н** 'gentleman', 'Mr' decline as follows:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	хозя́ин	хозя́ева	господи́н	господа́
Gen.	хозя́ина	хозя́ев	господи́на	госпо́д

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

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

2.11.6 Other non-standard neuter nouns

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

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

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

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

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	су́дно	суда́
Gen.	су́дна	судо́в
Dat.	су́дну	суда́м
Acc.	су́дно	суда́
Instr.	су́дном	суда́ми
Prep.	су́дне	суда́х

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

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	не́бо	небеса́
Gen.	не́ба	небе́с
Dat.	не́бу	небеса́м
Acc.	не́бо	небеса́
Instr.	не́бом	небеса́ми
Prep.	не́бе	небеса́х

2.11.7 Nouns where the singular and plural forms are totally different

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

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	челове́к	люди́
Gen.	челове́ка	люде́й
Dat.	челове́ку	лю́дям
Acc.	челове́ка	люде́й
Instr.	челове́ком	лю́дьми
Prep.	челове́ке	лю́дях

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

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

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

2.11.8 The declension of nouns that exist in only the plural

It will be noted from the tables of declensions given in the preceding sections that with a minute handful of exceptions, such as the instrumental forms **лю́дьми**, **детьми́**, the endings for the *dative*, *instrumental* and *prepositional plural* all follow the regular patterns **-ам**, **-ами**, **-ах** or **-ям**, **-ями**, **-ях**, with the choice between **-а-** and **-я-** being determined by the spelling rules given in **1.2.4** and **1.5.2**. Therefore, with nouns that exist in only the plural, the sole form that is not immediately unpredictable from the *nominative* is the *genitive*. Below we give the *genitive* and *dative* forms of the nouns listed above in **2.1.3**:

<i>Nom.</i>	<i>Gen.</i>	<i>Dat.</i>
брюки́ ‘trousers’	брюк	брюкам
штаны́ ‘trousers’	штанов	штанам
трусы́ ‘(under)pants’, ‘knickers’	трусов	трусам
шо́рты ‘shorts’	шо́рт/шо́ртов	шо́ртам
плавки́ ‘swimming trunks’	плавок	плавкам
колго́тки ‘tights’	колго́ток	колго́ткам
но́жницы ‘scissors’	но́жниц	но́жницам
щипцы́ ‘tongs’, ‘pincers’, ‘tweezers’	щипцов	щипца́м
дро́ва ‘firewood’	дров	дрова́м

<i>Nom.</i>	<i>Gen.</i>	<i>Dat.</i>
дро́жжи ‘yeast’	дро́жжей	дро́жжам
обо́и ‘wallpaper’	обо́ев	обо́ям
поминки́ ‘wake’	поми́нок	поми́нкам
са́ни ‘sledge’	са́ней	са́ням
сли́вки ‘cream’	сли́вок	сли́вкам
су́тки ‘day’, ‘period of 24 hours’	су́ток	су́ткам
счё́ты ‘abacus’	счё́тов	счё́там
че́рнила ‘ink’	че́рнил	че́рнилам
щи́ ‘type of cabbage soup’	щей	щам

2.12 Declension of surnames

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

The most widely occurring endings for Russian surnames are **-ов, -ев, -ёв, -ин, -ын**, – for example, **Петро́в, Бре́жнев, Горба́чѳв, Пу́шкин, Солже́ницын**. These surnames, which have *masculine*, *feminine* and *plural* forms, have a special declension pattern that combines a mixture of *noun* and *adjective* endings.

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

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

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

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

У него́ да́ча где́-то под Пу́шкином.

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

2.12.2 Other surnames ending in a consonant or -Ь

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

For more on indeclinable nouns, see 2.13.

2.13 Indeclinable nouns

2.13.1 Which nouns are indeclinable?

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

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

такси́ 'taxi'	кенгу́ру 'kangaroo'
меню́ 'menu'	каноэ́ 'canoe'

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

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

мада́м 'madam(e)'	ми́сс 'miss'
ми́ссис '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):

Ма́ргарет 'Margaret'	Эли́забет 'Elizabeth'
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Surnames (of any origin):

Кли́нтон 'Clinton'	Тэ́тчер 'Thatcher'
Абрамо́вич 'Abramovich'	Жу́к 'Zhuk'

(iii) Borrowed or newly coined words ending in **-О** or **-Е**:

депо́ 'depôt'	кило́ 'kilo(gram)'
кино́ 'cinema'	метро́ 'metro', 'underground railway'
пальто́ (cf. French <i>paletot</i>) 'overcoat'	кафе́ 'café'
ко́фе 'coffee'	купе́ 'compartment' (in a railway carriage)

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

Кличко́ 'Klichko'	Ющенко́ 'Yushchenko' (Yushchenko)
Гюго́ '(Victor) Hugo'	Пира́нделло́ 'Pirandello'
Гёте́ 'Goethe'	Витте́ 'Witte'

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

боа 'boa'
Дюма́ 'Dumas'

буржуа́ 'bourgeois'

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

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

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

Седых
Козловских

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

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

2.13.2 The gender of indeclinable nouns

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

There are, however, some exceptions to this rule. The noun **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 **виски** 'whisk(e)y' or **пе́пси** '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.

NOTE Although it is a form that is frequently encountered, many speakers of Russian consider treating **ко́фе** as a neuter noun to be unacceptable. In cases of doubt it is probably safer for learners to follow the recommendations of dictionaries and other reference works.

2.14 Abbreviations and acronyms

2.14.1 Declension of abbreviations and acronyms

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

КВН (Клуб весёлых и находчивых)

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

МВД (Министёрство внúтренних дел)
Ministry of the Interior

МГУ (Москóвский госудáрственный университет)
Moscow State University

МЧС (Министёрство по чрезвычайным ситуациям)
Ministry for Emergencies

НАТО
NATO

РФ (Росси́йская Федера́ция)
The Russian Federation

СНГ (Содрúжество незави́симых госудáрств)
CIS (The Commonwealth of Independent States)

США (Соединённые Штáты Аме́рики)
USA

чп (чрезвычайное происше́ствие)
emergency

In general, abbreviations and acronyms are indeclinable. If, however, an acronym takes the form of a masculine noun ending in an 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 (Госудáрственный универса́льный магази́н)
GUM (a large department store, now more a collection of independent trading outlets, located in the centre of Moscow)

МИД (Министёрство иностран́ных дел)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

В ГУМе открылся бутик «Iceberg».
Iceberg have opened a boutique in GUM.

Профессиона́льный у́ровень перево́дчиков МИДа исклю́чительно высо́к.
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 (вы́сшее учё́бное заведе́ние)
higher education institution, university

ЖЭК/жэк (жили́щно-эксплуатацио́нная конто́ра)
district housing office

ЗАГС/загс (за́пись а́ктов граждáнского состоя́ния)
Register Office

С нача́ла но́вого учё́бного го́да повыша́ются стипен́дии во всех ву́зах Росси́и.
Student grants in all Russian universities are being increased from the start of the coming academic year.

Через пару месяцев явились из ЖЭКа и сказали, что завтра начнут ремонт.

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 (Содружество 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 Грозном открылся первый государственный духовный вуз – Чеченский исламский институт.

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

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

3

Case

3.0 Introduction

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

He can see me.

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

I can see *him*.

I gave *him* the book.

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

The form ‘his’ is used to indicate possession:

I have borrowed *his* book.

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

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

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

There are two points to note here. The first is that this chapter concentrates on the principal functions of the cases; further illustrations of the different ways in which they are used will be given in **Part B** of this book. The second is that each of the cases can be used after prepositions: a list of prepositions and the cases they are used with is given in **9.2**.

3.1 The nominative

3.1.1 Dictionaries and vocabularies

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

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

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

Мой брат только что вернулся из Великобритании.

My brother has just returned from Great Britain.

Ровно сто десять лет назад в Санкт-Петербурге состоялся первый в 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.

Пессимист считает, что стакан полупустой, тогда как оптимист полагает, что он наполовину полон.

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

Как оказалось, она была совершенно права.

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, мальш, давно порá спать.

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

3.2 The accusative

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

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

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

Она написала *очень хорошую* книгу о жизни в *постсоветской* России.

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

История показывает, что искоренить *коррупцию* полностью и навсегда невозможно.

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

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

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

I'll have the solianka (a thick soup with meat or fish and vegetables) and for my main course chicken Kiev.

Алло, добрый день. Можно *Александра Николаевича* к телефону?

Hello. May I speak to Aleksandr Nikolaevich, please?

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

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

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

3.3 The genitive

3.3.1 The use of the genitive in constructions involving two nouns

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

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

машина Тани	Tania's car
рюкзак сына	(my) son's rucksack
имущество олигархов	the oligarchs' property
дача друзей	(our) friends' dacha

Мы договорились встретиться через неделю на квартире его брата.
We agreed to meet a week later in his brother's flat.

Вообще-то, это мобильник жены; свой 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*:

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

В русском языке английскому 'brother-in-law' соответствуют три слова: зять – это муж сестры, шурин – это брат жены, а деверь – это брат мужа.

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:

Глава 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

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

кусок пирога	a piece of the pie
часть класса	part of the class
остатки обеда	the leftovers from the dinner
конец фильма	the end of the film

Они купили себе квартиру в очень престижном районе Москвы.
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:

лекция профессора	the professor's lecture
вопросы студентов	the students' questions
колебания маятника	the swing of the pendulum
фотография дочери	the daughter's photograph [i.e. one that she has taken]

Извержение вулкана застало жителей долины врасплох.

The eruption of the volcano caught the valley dwellers unawares.

А вот эта фотография дочери получила приз на конкурсе.

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

(b) the *object* of an action:

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

Укрепление курса рубля – одна из главных задач Центробанка.

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

Фотографию дочери он повесил у себя в каюте.

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

3.3.2 The use of the genitive in quantity expressions

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

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

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

Он вдруг почувствовал, что ему нужен глоток свежего воздуха.

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

The *genitive* is also used in *partitive* constructions, that is, when it indicates an unspecified quantity of a substance (i.e. where English uses, for example, 'some'):

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

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

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

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

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

3.3.4

Verbs that take an object in the genitive

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

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

боя́ться	to fear, be frightened
держаться	to keep to
добиваться/добиться	to strive for, to attain
достига́ть/достигну́ть, дости́чь	to achieve
жела́ть/пожела́ть	to wish, to desire
избегать/избежать, избе́гнуть	to avoid
лиша́ться/лиши́ться	to be deprived of, to lose
каса́ться/косну́ться	to touch, to concern
ослу́шиваться/ослу́шаться	to disobey
приде́рживаться	to hold to, to keep to
слу́шаться/послу́шаться	to obey

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

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

На прошлой неделе цены на нефть достигли исторического максимума.
Last week oil prices reached an all-time high.

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

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

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

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

Спускаясь на эскалаторе, держитесь правой стороны.
Keep to the right when coming down the escalator.

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

всего доброго, всего хорошего
good-bye, all the best

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

спокойной ночи
good night

NOTE In more informal language the verbs **бояться** and **(по)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 боится 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 писем от тех, кто нуждается в нашей помощи.
We await letters from those who need our help.

Обещали прислать письмо с приглашением, и теперь жду это письмо с большим нетерпением.
They promised to send a letter with an invitation, and now I'm desperately waiting for that letter to arrive.

—Почему не едем?

—Ждём Ваню, он пошёл покупать минералку.

—Why don't we go?

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

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

просить/попросить to ask for

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

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

Прошу́ прощения́: я был неправ.
I apologise; I was wrong.

Я попроси́л у него́ видеока́меру на́ день; ты представля́ешь, он отказáл.
I asked to borrow his video-camera for a day, and can you imagine? He refused.

Он попроси́л жenú перезвони́ть ему́ через час.
He asked his wife to phone him back in an hour.

стои́ть
to cost

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

Этот гáлстук стои́т ты́сячу рублéй.
This tie costs 1,000 roubles.

Чемпио́нство стои́ло ему́ сло́манного ребра́.
Winning the championship cost him a broken rib.

иска́ть
to look for

хотéть/захотéть
to want

тре́бовать/потре́бовать
to demand

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

Что ты хочéшь – чай или ко́фе?
What do you want – tea or coffee?

Ну, чего́ же ты хочéшь от жи́зни?
Well, then, what do you want from life?

У нас не рабо́тал душ, так что потре́бовали друго́й но́мер.
The shower wasn't working where we were, so we demanded a different room.

Мы потре́бовали объясне́ний.
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:

Ка́ждый ме́сяц я даю́ своéй бы́вшей жене́ пять ты́сяч рублéй.
Every month I give my former wife 5,000 roubles.

Передайте привёт 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 проносить в салон самолёта жидкости и режущие 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.

Тебе бы отдохнуть как следует!

You should get a proper rest!

У университета не хватает общежитий, и иногородним студентам негде жить. Что бедному студенту делать в таких обстоятельствах?

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

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

3.4.3

The use of the dative in impersonal constructions

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

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

For more on impersonal constructions, *see* 11.2.2.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Девочке было жаль кошку, но она понимала, что котят надо будет раздать.

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

Ты пойми, мне не жалко денег, но я знаю, к чему это приведёт.

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*:

везти́/повезти́: мне везёт

I am lucky

приходи́ться/прийти́сь: мне приходи́тся

I have to (by force of circumstances)

хотéться/захотéться: мне хочéтся

I feel like, I would like

спáться: мне не спи́тся

I can't sleep

На́шей кома́нде повезло́: нам доста́лся сла́бый сопе́рник.

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

Из-за нелётной пого́ды *Аэрофло́ту* пришло́сь отмени́ть бо́лее пятидеся́ти ре́йсов.

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

Ка́ждой же́нщине хочéтся, что́бы её счита́ли осо́бенной.

Every woman would like to be considered special.

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

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

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

каза́ться/показа́ться: мне ка́жется

I think

надоеда́ть/надое́сть: мне надо́ело

I'm fed up (of)

нравя́ться/понравя́ться: мне нра́вится

I like

сни́ться/присни́ться: мне присни́лось

I dreamt

удава́ться/уда́ться: мне уда́ется

I succeed (in doing something)

Examples of *impersonal* constructions:

Нам ка́жется, что на́шим зри́телям надо́ело ви́деть одни́ и те же лица́, слы́шать одни́ и те же шу́тки.

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

Пре́зиденту не нра́вится, ко́гда ему́ задаю́т вопро́сы о ситуа́ции в Чечне́.

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

Мне присни́лось, бу́дто ты ста́ла у нас пе́рвой же́нщиной-пре́зидентом.

I dreamt you became our first woman president.

Сестре́ уда́лось найт́и простору́ную кварта́иру в са́мом це́нтре го́рода.

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

Examples of *personal* constructions:

Тако́й исхо́д собы́тий каза́лся бо́льшинству́ коммента́торов маловероятным.

Most commentators thought that this development of events was unlikely.

Туристам надоели бесконечные дожди, и многие стали уезжать домой до срока.

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 удаются 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:

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

А ты веришь его рассказам о том, как он общался с инопланетянами?

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

У нас по этому вопросу очень твёрдая позиция, и изменять своим принципам мы не намерены.

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

На первом курсе все студенты обучаются основам информатики.

In the first year all students study basic IT.

Эти старинные книги принадлежали моему дедушке.

These old books belonged to my grandfather.

Родители помогали молодожёнам как могли.

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

NOTES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

С годами она изменила свои взгляды на воспитание детей.

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

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

Именно эти люди принадлежат к группе риска.

It is precisely these people who belong to the group most at risk.

With the verbs **учить/научить** and **обучать/обучить** 'to teach, to instruct' the person being instructed is indicated using the *accusative* case, while the subject being taught is indicated using the *dative*:

По-моему, хорошо, что наших детей учат основам бизнеса.

In my opinion it's a good thing that our children are taught the rudiments of business.

3.5

The instrumental

3.5.1

The use of the instrumental to indicate the instrument or means with which an action is carried out or accomplished

The *instrumental* is used to indicate the *instrument* with which an action is carried out or the *means* by which an action is accomplished:

На всякий случай заполните анкету карандашом: легче будет исправить ошибки.

To be on the safe side, fill in the form in pencil; it will be easier to correct any mistakes.

Серьёзные покупки она предпочитала оплачивать кредитной карточкой.

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

Посуду из-под 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 подѣйствовать 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:

Эта книга была написана моим дедушкой.

This book was written by my grandfather.

Это не помешало ей побить рекорд, установленный её соотечественницей десять лет назад.

This did not stop her from breaking the record established by her compatriot ten years ago.

3.5.3 The use of the instrumental to indicate the complement

The *instrumental* is very frequently used to indicate the *complement* of the verb **быть**, especially if the complement is a *noun*:

Когда я был студентом, у меня не было денег, чтобы регулярно ходить в театр.

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

Его происхождение не имеет значения. Главное, чтобы он был честным человеком.

His origins are irrelevant. The main thing is that he should be an honest man.

For more on the complement of **быть**, see 3.1 and 14.1.

In addition, the instrumental is normally used to indicate the complement of the following verbs:

выглядеть	to look
делаться/сделаться	to become
казаться/показаться	to seem
оказываться/оказаться	to (turn out to) be
оставаться/остаться	to remain
становиться/стать	to become, to be
являться	to be

В этой шляпе я выгляжу полным идиотом.

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

Его назначение оказалось для всех нас большим сюрпризом.

His appointment came as a surprise to everyone.

Остается загадкой, как некоторым семьям удаётся сводить концы с концами.

It remains a mystery how some families make ends meet.

Он является Нобелевским лауреатом в области медицины.

He's a Nobel prize-winner for medicine.

For more on verbs that can correspond to English 'to be', see 14.1.5.

3.5.4

The use of the instrumental to indicate a predicate with a transitive verb

There are in Russian a number of *transitive* verbs, corresponding to English 'to call', 'to consider', 'to elect as', 'to appoint (as)' and other verbs with a similar meaning which are used with the *instrumental*; the form in the instrumental indicates what the *direct object* is called, considered to be, elected or appointed as, and so on. Verbs in this category include the following:

выбира́ть/вы́брать	to choose, to elect
избира́ть/избра́ть	to elect (to high office)
назнача́ть/назнача́ть	to appoint
называ́ть/назва́ть	to call, to name
счита́ть/счесть	to consider
чу́вствовать себя́/почу́вствовать себя́	to feel (ill, etc.)

В апреле 1995 го́да Миро́нова избра́ли пе́рвым заместите́лем председа́теля законодательного собра́ния Санкт-Петербу́рга.

In April 1995 Mironov was elected first deputy chairman of the St Petersburg city council.

В Росси́и по́льзователи Интерне́та называ́ют симво́л «@» «соба́кой».

In Russia, Internet users call the @ symbol a 'dog'.

Ско́лько на́до зараба́тывать, что́бы чу́вствовать себя́ сча́стливы́м?

How much do you need to earn in order to feel happy?

NOTES

- (i) The verbs **называ́ть** and **счита́ть** are often used in the *imperfective passive* forms **называ́ться** and **счита́ться** respectively.

Он счита́ется веду́щим специа́листом в э́той о́бласти.

He is considered to be a leading specialist in this area.

For more on passive verbs, see **4.14**.

- (ii) The verbs **называ́ть** and **называ́ться** are often used with a *predicate* in the nominative, especially if the predicate is a proper name and/or it appears in inverted commas:

Он когда́-то был веду́щим о́чень популя́рной програ́ммы, кото́рая называ́лась «Взгляд».

He was once a presenter on a very popular (television) programme called *Vzgliad (View)*.

3.5.5

The use of the instrumental to indicate state or capacity

The instrumental is often used to indicate the *state* or *capacity* in which someone carries out a particular action:

Тогда́ он рабо́тал гла́вным инже́нером на одно́м из кру́пных заво́дов Петербу́рга.

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

В да́нном слúчае на́ша о́бласть мо́жет служи́ть приме́ром для всей Росси́и.

In this case our region can serve as an example for the whole of Russia.

Чтобы бежать из осаждённого города, ему пришлось переодеться женщиной.

The only way he could escape from the besieged city was to dress up as a woman.

Похоже, что он опять вышел сухим из воды.

It looks as if he's got off scot-free again (*literally*, 'as if he's come out of the water dry').

Она вернулась из отпуска свежей и отдохнувшей.

She returned from her holidays fresh and relaxed.

3.5.6 The use of the instrumental in adverbial functions

The instrumental is used in a variety of adverbial constructions, indicating, for example, the manner in which, the place where or the time when something is done:

Развернуться в этом дворе было невозможно, и пришлось выезжать задним ходом.

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

Я отправлю вам этот журнал заказной бандеролью.

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

Новое правительство первым делом займётся бюджетом на следующий год.

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

В Праге она любила часами бродить улочками Старого города.

When she was in Prague she could spend hours wandering through the narrow streets of the old town.

For more on the use of the instrumental in time expressions, see 21.1.1.

3.5.7 Verbs that take an object in the instrumental

A large number of verbs are used with an object in the *instrumental*; for convenience, these can be divided into groups according to their meaning.

(a) Verbs indicating *activities* or *interests*:

заниматься/заняться

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	to rule
располага́ть	to have at one's disposal
руководи́ть	to be in charge of, to manage
управля́ть	to manage, to run

Здесь запрещено *пользоваться* мобильными телефо́нами.
It's forbidden to use mobile phones here.

Мы не *располага́ем* информацией о том, кто владе́л *этой* карти́ной после войны́.

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

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

бре́зговать/побре́зговать	to be fastidious <i>or</i> squeamish about
восхища́ться/восхити́ться	to admire (e.g. a person)
горди́ться	to be proud of
любова́ться	to admire (e.g. a view)
наслажда́ться	to enjoy, to delight in
пренебрега́ть/пренебре́чь	to scorn, to disregard, to neglect

Мы все *восхища́емся* его *достиже́ниями*.

We all admire his achievements.

Не стои́т *пренебрега́ть* здоро́вьем.

It's not worth neglecting your health.

(d) Some verbs are used with an *object* in the *instrumental* when they refer to movements made by parts of the body:

кача́ть/покача́ть <i>головой́</i>	to shake one's head
кива́ть/кивну́ть <i>головой́</i>	to nod one's head
маха́ть/махну́ть <i>рукой́</i>	to wave one's hand
морга́ть/моргну́ть <i>гла́зом</i>	to blink, to wink
пожима́ть/пожа́ть <i>плеча́ми</i>	to shrug one's shoulders
топа́ть <i>нога́ми</i>/то́пнуть <i>нога́й</i>	to stamp one's feet/foot

Он не отве́тил на мой вопро́с, лишь *пожа́л* *плеча́ми* и *вы́шел* из *ко́мнаты*.

He didn't answer my question, but merely shrugged his shoulders and left the room.

(e) Some miscellaneous verbs:

па́хнуть	to smell of
обменива́ться/обменя́ться	to exchange
рискова́ть/рискну́ть	to risk
торгова́ть	to trade in

Не люблю́, когда́ в *о́фисе* *пахнет* *сига́рета́ми*.

I don't like it when the office smells of cigarettes.

NOTE The verb **па́хнуть** 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**:

чита́ть	to read
писа́ть	to write
говори́ть	to say, to speak

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

гrestí	to row (i.e. a boat)
вести́	to (be) lead(ing)
везти́	to (be) convey(ing)
изобрести́	to invent

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

мочь	to be able
печь	to bake

The ending of the infinitive never changes.

For more on the meaning of **вести́**, **нести́**, **идти́** (and other verbs indicating movement), see 22.1.

As suggested in the glosses above, the *infinitive* of the Russian verb corresponds approximately to the 'to' form of the English verb. It is most often used together with another verb, as in the following examples:

Я не хоте́л вас оби́деть.

I didn't want to offend you.

Вы мо́жете приходи́ть в любое́ вре́мя.

You can come any time you like.

Он не успе́л предупреди́ть меня́.

He didn't have time to warn me.

On its own the infinitive can sometimes be used to express *commands* and *prohibitions*; see 18.2.2.

4.2 Aspects of the verb

4.2.1 Imperfective and perfective aspects

Although it is arguable that *aspects* are a feature of the English verb (e.g. the difference between 'I do' and 'I am doing'), the Russian verbal aspect differs greatly from the English in both form and function.

The Russian verb system has two aspects: *imperfective* and *perfective*. As may be imagined, each aspect covers a wide range of functions, but in general terms it may be stated that the perfective aspect is used when an action or state is considered from the point of view of either one (beginning or end) or both of its boundaries, while the imperfective is used in all other circumstances (if there is a 'default' aspect in Russian, it is the imperfective).

Every Russian verb belongs to one or the other of these aspects, which means that one English verb will normally correspond to a pair of verbs in Russian, one of which is imperfective and the other perfective:

to give	дава́ть (imperfective)	дать (perfective)
to read	чита́ть (imperfective)	проче́тать (perfective)
to write	писа́ть (imperfective)	написа́ть (perfective)

In Russian dictionaries the aspect of each verb is indicated, usually by the abbreviations **нсв** (**несовершенство́нный** = imperfective) and **св** (**совершенство́нный** = perfective). For the remainder of this chapter and in the following chapter the aspect of all verbs used in examples will be indicated by these same abbreviations.

This section is concerned with the *formation of aspect pairs*; the use of the two aspects will be examined in detail in **Chapter 5**.

As the examples listed above suggest, in most pairs of verbs the imperfective and perfective partners are closely related, with the relationship normally conforming to one of three basic patterns.

4.2.2 Imperfective and perfective verbs are both unprefixes

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

бро́сать (нсв)	бро́сить (св)	to throw
дава́ть (нсв)	дать (св)	to give
коне́чать (нсв)	коне́чить (св)	to finish
пуска́ть (нсв)	пусти́ть (св)	to let
толка́ть (нсв)	толкну́ть (св)	to push

4.2.3 The imperfective is unprefixes and the perfective verb is prefixed

In the following examples the *imperfective* verb has no prefix, but the *perfective* is *prefixed*. It will be seen from the list that follows that a number of different prefixes can be used to form the perfective partner of an unprefixes imperfective. There is no easy way of predicting which prefix will be found with any given verb, although the most common prefixes used in this way are **по-**, **с-** and **за-**:

ве́рить (нсв)	пове́рить (св)	to believe
дела́ть (нсв)	сде́лать (св)	to do
есть (нсв)	сье́сть (св)	to eat
жела́ть (нсв)	пожела́ть (св)	to wish
красть (нсв)	укра́сть (св)	to steal
ночевать (нсв)	переноче́вать (св)	to spend the night
печь (нсв)	испе́чь (св)	to bake

писа́ть (нсв)	написа́ть (св)	to write
пить (нсв)	вы́пить (св)	to drink
ста́вить (нсв)	поста́вить (св)	to put (standing)
стро́ить (нсв)	постро́ить (св)	to build
хоте́ть (нсв)	захоте́ть (св)	to want
чита́ть (нсв)	проче́тать (св)	to read

The following two verbs deviate from this pattern:

па́дать (нсв)	упа́сть (св)	to fall
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The perfective verb also has a change of suffix:

покупа́ть (нсв)	купи́ть (св)	to buy
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Here, uniquely, the imperfective verb has a prefix which is lost in the perfective.

4.2.4

Both imperfective and perfective verbs have the same prefix

In the following examples both *imperfective* and *perfective* verbs have the same prefix:

запи́сывать (нсв)	записа́ть (св)	to record, to write down
подпи́сывать (нсв)	подписа́ть (св)	to sign
припи́сывать (нсв)	приписа́ть (св)	to ascribe
спи́сывать (нсв)	списа́ть (св)	to write off, to copy
дове́рять (нсв)	дове́рить (св)	to trust
распе́кать (нсв)	распе́чь (св)	to tear a strip off someone
допи́вать (нсв)	допи́ть (св)	to drink something up
спра́шивать (нсв)	спроси́ть (св)	to ask (about something)
предста́влять (нсв)	предста́вить (св)	to present, to introduce
устро́ивать (нсв)	устро́ить (св)	to arrange

In the above examples, the *perfective* partner is formed by adding a *prefix* directly to the *unprefixed* verb; unlike the prefixes used to form the perfective in the examples in 4.2.3, these prefixes also change the meaning of the verb. The *imperfective* partner is formed from the *perfective* by changing the *suffix* and sometimes by also changing the *vowel* and/or *consonant* in the stem. Unfortunately, it is difficult to give precise rules for forming the imperfective from the perfective, but all the principal patterns are illustrated here:

выбра́сывать (нсв)	выбро́сить (св)	to throw out
прода́вать (нсв)	продать (св)	to sell
допуска́ть (нсв)	допусти́ть (св)	to allow

In these examples, the *perfective* partner is formed by adding a *prefix* to the *perfective* partner of a pair of *unprefixed* verbs; here, too, there are different patterns for forming the imperfective partner:

защи́щать (нсв)	защити́ть (св)	to defend
исчеза́ть (нсв)	исчезну́ть (св)	to disappear
продолжа́ть (нсв)	продолжи́ть (св)	to continue
убежда́ть (нсв)	убеди́ть (св)	to convince
успева́ть (нсв)	успе́ть (св)	to have time

There are no unprefixed forms of the verbs listed in the above examples.

Note on stress: Where a prefix is added to an unprefix verb, the stress normally remains unchanged. The exception is where a perfective verb has the prefix **вы-**: here the stress is on the prefix in all forms of the verb. **N.B:** *This rule applies to perfective verbs only.*

For more on verbal prefixes, *see* 10.4.

4.2.5 Pairs of verbs where the perfective and imperfective partners are unrelated

There are a few pairs of verbs where the *perfective* and *imperfective* partners are unrelated:

брать (НСВ)	взять (СВ)	to take
говорить (НСВ)	сказать (СВ)	to say (but <i>see</i> 4.2.6 below)
класть (НСВ)	положить (СВ)	to put (lying)
ловить (НСВ)	поймать (СВ)	to catch

4.2.6 Exceptions to the principle of 'paired' verbs

Not all verbs come in neat *imperfective/perfective* pairs.

Some *unprefixed* verbs have more than one perfective partner, the choice of which depends on the precise meaning of the verb.

The verb **бить** (НСВ) has perfective partners **побить** 'to beat', 'hit someone or something' and **пробить** 'to strike' (of a clock).

The verb **говорить** (НСВ) has perfective partners **поговорить** 'to talk', 'to speak' and **сказать** 'to say'.

The verb **есть** (НСВ) has perfective partners **съесть** 'to eat something up' (transitive) and **поесть** 'to do some eating' (intransitive).

A number of imperfective verbs have no commonly used perfective partner. These include:

выть	to howl
дружить	to be friends with
знать	to know
состоять	to consist of/in
сочувствовать	to sympathise
участвовать	to take part in

Examples of perfective verbs without imperfective partners are much less common, but the following may be noted:

ринуться	to rush
состояться	to take place (cf. состоять above)

NOTE

The **-ся** suffix indicates that the verb is reflexive (*see* 4.13.2).

Finally, some verbs are *bi-aspectual*, i.e. the same verb is used for both imperfective and perfective aspects; these include:

жениться	to get married (of a man)	использовать	to use
казнить	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 **дѣлать** 'to do':

1st person sing.	я дѣлаю	I do (<i>or am doing</i>)
2nd person sing.	ты дѣлаешь	you (sing.) do (<i>or are doing</i>)
3rd person sing.	он/она/оно дѣлает	he/she/it does (<i>or is doing</i>)
1st person pl.	мы дѣлаем	we do (<i>or are doing</i>)
2nd person pl.	вы дѣлаете	you (pl.) do (<i>or are doing</i>)
3rd person pl.	они дѣлают	they do (<i>or are doing</i>)

NOTE: **я дѣлаю** corresponds to both 'I do' and 'I am doing'.

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

<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
-ю/у	-ю/-у
-ешь/-ѣшь	-ишь
-ет/-ѣт	-ит
-ем/-ѣм	-им
-ете/-ѣте	-ите
-ют/-ут	-ят/-ат

Verbs with the endings in column 1 are described as belonging to the *first conjugation*; verbs with the endings in column 2 are described as belonging to the *second conjugation*.

The first conjugation endings **-ю**, **-ют** are used after a vowel, the endings **-у**, **-ут** after a consonant; the endings with **-е** occur when the stress is on any syllable other than the ending.

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

NOTE: There are a few first conjugation verbs where the endings **-ю**, **-ют** occur after the consonants **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

чита́ть (нсв) ‘to read’	писа́ть (нсв) ‘to write’
читаю	пишу́
читае́шь	пи́шешь
читае́т	пи́шет
читае́м	пи́шем
читае́те	пи́шете
читаю́т	пи́шут
бра́ть (нсв) ‘to take’	дава́ть (нсв) ‘to give’
беру́	даю́
берё́шь	даё́шь
берёт	даёт
берём	даём
берёте	даёте
беру́т	даю́т
пить (нсв) ‘to drink’	целова́ть (нсв) ‘to kiss’
пью́	целую́
пье́шь	целу́ешь
пьёт	целу́ет
пьем	целу́ем
пьёте	целу́ете
пью́т	целу́ют

Second conjugation verbs

говори́ть (нсв) ‘to say’, ‘to speak’	крича́ть (нсв) ‘to shout’
говору́	кричу́
говори́шь	кричи́шь
говори́т	кричи́т
говори́м	кричи́м
говори́те	кричи́те
говору́т	крича́т

Three observations are prompted by these tables:

(1) Three *stress patterns* are found in the present tense: (a) the stress is always on the stem, e.g. **чита́ть**; (b) the stress is always on the ending, e.g. **говори́ть**; (c) the stress is on the ending in the 1st person singular, but on the stem in all other forms, e.g. **писа́ть**. All of these stress patterns can be found with verbs of either conjugation.

(2) In order to work out the full set of endings (including stress) in the present tense, it is both necessary and sufficient to know the 1st and 2nd person singular forms; all other forms can be worked out from these two endings.

(3) Although the endings themselves are regular (see 4.8 for the handful of exceptions), it is not possible to work out the present tense of a verb from the infinitive. From the point of view of the relationship between infinitive and present tense, Russian verbs fall into about twenty classes, which are described below in 4.6 and 4.7.

4.4 Future tense

4.4.0 Introduction

The *future tense* in Russian is formed from both *imperfective* and *perfective* verbs, although the means of forming the future is different for each aspect.

4.4.1 Imperfective verbs

There is one *imperfective* verb that has a special form for the *future tense*. This is **быть** 'to be', and the future is formed by attaching present tense endings to the stem **буд-**:

б ^{уду}	I will be	б ^{удем}	we will be
б ^{удешь}	you will be	б ^{удете}	you will be
б ^{удет}	he/she/it will be	б ^{удут}	they will be

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

ч ^{ит} ать (нсв) 'to read'	г ^{овор} ить (нсв) 'to say', 'to speak'
б ^{уду} ч ^{ит} ать	б ^{уду} г ^{овор} ить
б ^{удешь} ч ^{ит} ать	б ^{удешь} г ^{овор} ить
б ^{удет} ч ^{ит} ать	б ^{удет} г ^{овор} ить
б ^{удем} ч ^{ит} ать	б ^{удем} г ^{овор} ить
б ^{удете} ч ^{ит} ать	б ^{удете} г ^{овор} ить
б ^{удут} ч ^{ит} ать	б ^{удут} г ^{овор} ить

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.

п ^{роч} итать (св) 'to read'	н ^{апис} ать (св) 'to write'
п ^{роч} итаю	н ^{апи} шу
п ^{роч} итаешь	н ^{апи} шешь
п ^{роч} итает	н ^{апи} шет
п ^{роч} итаем	н ^{апи} шем
п ^{роч} итаете	н ^{апи} шете
п ^{роч} итают	н ^{апи} шут
в ^{ып} ить (св) 'to drink'	п ^{оцел} овать (св) 'to kiss'
в ^{ып} ью	п ^{оцел} ую
в ^{ып} ьешь	п ^{оцел} уешь
в ^{ып} ьет	п ^{оцел} ует
в ^{ып} ьем	п ^{оцел} уем
в ^{ып} ьете	п ^{оцел} уете
в ^{ып} ьют	п ^{оцел} уют
п ^{огов} орить (св) 'to speak', 'to have a conversation'	з ^{акри} чать (св) 'to shout'
п ^{огов} орю	з ^{акри} чу
п ^{огов} оришь	з ^{акри} чишь
п ^{огов} орит	з ^{акри} чит
п ^{огов} орим	з ^{акри} чим
п ^{огов} орите	з ^{акри} чите
п ^{огов} орят	з ^{акри} чат

NOTE The three observations made above at the end of section 4.3 apply equally to the *future perfective*. For this reason in sections 4.6–4.8 the term ‘non-past’ will be used to refer to both the present tense of imperfective verbs and the future tense of perfective verbs.

4.5 Past tense

4.5.1 The formation of the past tense

Russian has only one *past tense*, but it is formed from both *imperfective* and *perfective* verbs. The formation of the past tense is one of the simpler and more regular features of Russian grammar: for the vast majority of verbs the past tense is formed by removing the final **-ТЬ** of the infinitive and adding the appropriate endings (**-л, -ла, -ло, -ли**) to the stem that remains.

The past tense behaves as if it were a *short form* of adjective (see 6.5). The endings give information about the gender and number of the subject, but not about the person. This means that each verb has four endings: *masculine singular, feminine singular, neuter singular* and *plural* (remember that Russian has no gender distinctions in the plural):

БЫТЬ (нсв) ‘to be’:

Я/ты/он/Сергѐй 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 Сергѐй 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:

Говорить (нсв) ‘to say’, ‘to speak’:

говори́л, говори́ла, говори́ло, говори́ли

Сказать (св) ‘to say’:

сказа́л, сказа́ла, сказа́ло, сказа́ли

Писать (нсв) ‘to write’:

писа́л, писа́ла, писа́ло, писа́ли

Написать (св) ‘to write’:

написа́л, написа́ла, написа́ло, написа́ли

Давать (нсв) 'to give':

дава́л, дава́ла, дава́ло, дава́ли

Дать (св) 'to give':

дал, дала́, да́ло, да́ли

4.5.2 The past tense of verbs with a stem ending in a consonant

Some verbs form their past tense by adding the endings onto a stem that ends in a *consonant*, in which case the -л in the *masculine* is omitted.

лезть (нсв) 'to (be) climb(ing)':

лез, ле́зла, ле́зло, ле́зли

нести́ (нсв) 'to (be) carry(ing)':

нёс, несла́, несло́, несли́

исчезнуть (св) 'to disappear':

исчез, исчезла́, исчезло́, исчезли

мочь (нсв) 'to be able':

мог, могла́, могло́, могли́

умереть (св) 'to die':

у́мер, умерла́, умерло́, умерли

More detailed information on which classes of verbs form the past tense in this way is given in 4.7.

4.5.3 An irregular past tense form

Only one verb has a completely *irregular past tense*:

идти́ (нсв) 'to (be) go(ing)':

шёл, шла, шло, шли

Prefixed forms of идти́ form the *past tense* in the same way:

войти́ (св) 'to enter'

вошёл, вошла́, вошло́, вошли́

4.6 The classification of verbs: productive verb classes

4.6.0 Introduction

Although there are approximately twenty classes of Russian verbs, the overwhelming majority belong to one of four *productive* classes. This term means that when new verbs are formed (other than by prefixing), they are added to one or other of these classes.

4.6.1 First productive class of first conjugation verbs

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

- | | |
|---|--|
| (a) Infinitive -ать | Non-past -аю, -аешь , etc. |
| (b) Infinitive -ять | Non-past -яю, -яешь , etc. |
| (c) Infinitive -еть | Non-past -ею, -еешь , etc. |
| | |
| (a) делáть (нсв) ‘to do’ | чита́ть (нсв) ‘to read’ |
| делаю | читаю |
| делаешь | читаешь |
| делает | читает |
| делаем | читаем |
| делаете | читаете |
| делают | читают |
| (b) позволя́ть (нсв) ‘to permit’ | (c) уме́ть (нсв) ‘to know how to’ |
| позволяю | умею |
| позволяешь | умеешь |
| позволяет | умеет |
| позволяем | умеем |
| позволяете | умеете |
| позволяют | умеют |

4.6.2 Second productive class of first conjugation verbs

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

Infinitive **-овать/-евать** Non-past **-ую, -уешь (-уёшь)/-уюю, -уюешь (-уюёшь)**, etc.

целова́ть (нсв) ‘to kiss’	танцева́ть (нсв) ‘to dance’	плева́ть (нсв) ‘to spit’
целую	танцую	плюю
целуешь	танцуешь	плюёшь
целует	танцует	плюёт
целуем	танцуем	плюём
целуете	танцуете	плюёте
целуют	танцуют	плюют

NOTES

- (i) The spelling of the various forms of **танцева́ть** is determined by the rules given in **1.5.2**.
 (ii) In spite of appearances, this pattern is perfectly regular and is the one followed by the vast majority of newly formed verbs, for example:

интересова́ть (нсв) ‘to interest’	интересую́	интересуе́шь
организова́ть (нсв/св) ‘to organise’	организу́ю	организуе́шь
приватизи́ровать (нсв/св) ‘to privatise’	приватизи́рую	приватизи́руешь
цити́ровать (нсв) ‘to quote’	цити́рую	цити́руешь

4.6.3 Third productive class of first conjugation verbs

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

Infinitive -нуть	Non-past -ну, -нешь/-нёшь , etc.
крикнуть (св) 'to shout'	толкнуть (св) 'to push'
крикну	толкну
крикнешь	толкнёшь
крикнет	толкнёт
крикнем	толкнём
крикнете	толкнёте
крикнут	толкнут

NOTES

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

толкну́л, толкну́ла, толкну́ло, толкну́ли

(ii) With the exception of **гнуть** (нсв) 'to bend' (transitive), all verbs in this class are perfective.

4.6.4 The productive class of second conjugation verbs

The verbs in this class belong to the *second* conjugation verbs and follow the pattern:

Infinitive -ить	Non-past -ю/у, -ишь , etc.	
говорить (нсв) 'to speak', 'to say'	ответить (св) 'to answer'	просить (нсв) 'to ask (someone to do something)'
говорю́	отвечу́	прошу́
говоришь	ответишь	просишь
говорит	ответит	просит
говорим	ответим	просим
говорите	ответите	просите
говорят	ответят	просят

In the *non-past* of many verbs of this class there is a *consonant alternation* in the *first person singular* only. The alternations are as follows:

с ~ ш, з ~ ж, т ~ ч/щ, д ~ ж, п ~ пл, б ~ бл, ф ~ фл, в ~ вл, м ~ мл.

Except for verbs with a stem ending in **-т**, these alternations are perfectly regular and consistent. The alternation **т ~ ч** is somewhat more common than the alternation **т ~ щ**; with some *prefixed perfective* verbs the appropriate alternation is indicated by the paired *imperfective*:

ответить (св) 'to answer' ~ отвечу́	отвечать (нсв)
осветить (св) 'to illuminate' ~ освещу́	освещать (нсв)

Examples of the other consonant alternations:

просить (нсв) 'to ask (someone to do something)'	прошу́, просишь
снизить (св) 'to lower'	снижу́, снизишь
ходить (нсв) 'to go (on foot)'	хожу́, ходишь
купить (св) 'to buy'	куплю́, купишь
любить (нсв) 'to love'	люблю́, любишь
графить (нсв) 'to rule (paper)'	графлю́, графишь
ловить (нсв) 'to catch'	ловлю́, ловишь
кормить (нсв) 'to feed'	кормлю́, кормишь

4.7 Unproductive verbs

4.7.0 Introduction

Although the overwhelming majority of Russian verbs belong to one of the four *productive* classes of verbs described in the preceding section, the unproductive classes include a large number of verbs that are in common use.

4.7.1 First unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

The verbs in this class are *first* conjugation verbs with an infinitive in **-ать** and a *consonant alternation* in the *non-past*:

писа́ть (нсв) 'to write'	сказа́ть (св) 'to say'	пла́кать (нсв) 'to cry', 'to weep'	сы́пать (нсв) 'to pour (dry goods)'
пишу́	скажу́	плачу́	сыплю́
пише́шь	скаже́шь	пла́чешь	сыпле́шь
пишет	скажет	пла́чет	сыпле́т
пи́шем	ска́жем	пла́чем	сы́плем
пи́шете	ска́жете	пла́чете	сы́плете
пи́шут	ска́жут	пла́чут	сы́плют

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:

хото́вать (нсв) 'to laugh (loudly)'	хохо́чу, хохо́чешь
маха́ть (нсв) 'to wave'	машу́, маше́шь (but <i>see</i> note (i) below)
иска́ть (нсв) 'to look for'	ищу́, ище́шь
колеба́ть (нсв) 'to shake'	колеблю́, коле́блешь
дрема́ть (нсв) 'to doze'	дремлю́, дре́млешь

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):

капа́ть (нсв) 'to drip'	ка́плет or ка́пают
маха́ть (нсв) 'to wave'	ма́шет or ма́хает

Generally speaking, the forms with the consonant alternation are more old-fashioned and more likely to occur in formal or elevated language.

- (ii) The verb **посла́ть** and other *prefixed* verbs with the same root have the alternation **сл ~ шл**:

посла́ть (св) 'to send'	пошлю́, пошлѐшь
-------------------------	-----------------

4.7.2 Second unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

This class is made up of *first* conjugation verbs following the patterns:

- (a) Infinitive in **-ать** Non-past in **-му, мешь/-мѐшь**, etc.
 (b) Infinitive in **-ать** Non-past in **-ну, -нешь/-нѐшь**, etc.
 (c) Infinitive in **-ять** Non-past in **-му, -мѐшь**, etc.

(a) жать (нсв) 'to squeeze'	(b) начать (св) 'to begin'	(c) взять (св) 'to take'
жму	начну́	возьму́
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 (нсв)**, **жну**, **жнёшь**, etc. 'to reap'.
- (ii) The verbs with an infinitive in **-ять** form the *future tense* (all are *perfective*) in slightly different ways:

понять (св) to understand
снять (св) to take off

пойму́, поймёшь
сниму́, снимёшь

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 (нсв) 'to wait'	стонать (нсв) 'to moan', 'to groan'
жду	стону́
ждёшь	стоне́шь
ждёт	стонет
ждём	стонем
ждёте	стонете
ждут	стонут
брать (нсв) 'to take'	звать (нсв) 'to call'
беру́	зову́
берёшь	зове́шь
берёт	зовёт
берём	зовём
берёте	зовёте
берут	зовут

NOTE The verbs **брать**, **драть (нсв)** (**деру**, **дерёшь** etc.) 'to tear' and **звать** have a *fleeting vowel* in the *present tense*.

For more on the fleeting vowel, see 2.5.

4.7.4

Fourth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

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

Infinitive in -авать	Non-past in -аю, -аёшь , etc.	
давать (нсв) 'to give'	вставать (нсв) 'to stand up', 'to get up'	узнавать (нсв) 'to recognise'
даю	встаю́	узнаю́
даёшь	встаёшь	узнаёшь
даёт	встаёт	узнаёт

даём
даёте
дают

встаём
встаёте
встают

узнаём
узнаёте
узнают

NOTE The *imperfective* verb **узнава́ть** is to be distinguished from its *perfective* partner **узна́ть**. The latter has the *future* tense **узна́ю, узна́ешь**, etc.

4.7.5 Fifth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

These are *first* conjugation verbs following the pattern:

Infinitive in -ять	Non-past in -ю, -ешь/-ёшь , etc.
ла́ять (нсв) 'to bark'	смея́ться (нсв) 'to laugh'
ла́ю	смею́сь
ла́ешь	смеёшься
ла́ет	смеётся
ла́ем	смеёмся
ла́ете	смеётесь
ла́ют	смеются

NOTE **смея́ться** occurs only as a reflexive verb (see 4.13.2).

4.7.6 Sixth class of unproductive verbs of first conjugation verbs

This class is made up of *first* conjugation verbs following the patterns:

(a) Infinitive in -ить	Non-past in -ью, -ёшь , etc.		
(b) Infinitive in -ыть	Non-past in -ою, -оешь , etc.		
(c) Infinitive in -ить	Non-past in -ею, -еешь , etc.		
(d) Infinitive in -еть	Non-past in -ою, -оёшь , etc.		
(a) би́ть (нсв) 'to beat', 'to hit', 'to strike'	(b) мы́ть (нсв) 'to wash'	(c) бри́ть (нсв) 'to shave'	(d) пе́ть (нсв) 'to sing'
бью́	мою́	брею́	пою́
бьёшь	моёшь	бреёшь	поёшь
бьёт	моёт	бреет	поёт
бьём	моём	бреём	поём
бьёте	моёте	бреёте	поёте
бьют	моют	бреют	поют

NOTES: (i) All *unprefixed* verbs in this class have only one syllable in the infinitive.
(ii) **Бри́ть** and **пе́ть** are the only verbs to follow their respective patterns.

4.7.7 Seventh unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

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

Infinitive in -уть	Non-past in -ую, -уешь , etc.
ду ^т ь (нсв) 'to blow'	
ду ^ю	
ду ^{ешь}	
ду ^{ет}	
ду ^{ем}	
ду ^{ете}	
ду ^{ют}	

4.7.8 Eighth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

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

(a) Infinitive in -олоть	Non-past in -олю, -олешь/-олёшь , etc.
(b) Infinitive in -ороть	Non-past in -орю, -орешь/-орёшь , etc.
(a) ко ^л о ^т ь (нсв) 'to split', 'to prick'	(b) бо ^р о ^т ься (нсв) 'to struggle', 'to wrestle'
ко ^{лю}	бо ^{рюсь}
ко ^{лешь}	бо ^{решься}
ко ^{лет}	бо ^{рется}
ко ^{лем}	бо ^{ремся}
ко ^{лете}	бо ^{ретесь}
ко ^{лют}	бо ^{руются}

NOTE **бороться** occurs only as a *reflexive* verb (see 4.13.2).

4.7.9 Ninth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

In this class are *first* conjugation verbs following the pattern:

Infinitive in -ереть	Non-past in -ру, -рёшь , etc.
	Past tense in -р, -рла , etc.
те ^р е ^т ь (нсв) 'to rub'	уме ^р е ^т ь (св) 'to die'
те ^{ру}	уме ^{ру}
те ^{рёшь}	уме ^{рёшь}
те ^{рёт}	уме ^{рёт}
те ^{рем}	уме ^{рем}
те ^{рёте}	уме ^{рёте}
те ^{рут}	уме ^{рут}

Past tense:

те^р, те^{рла}, те^{рло}, те^{рли}
 уме^р, уме^{рла}, уме^{рло}, уме^{рли}

4.7.10 Tenth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

This class contains *first* conjugation verbs following the pattern:

Infinitive in **-нуть**

Non-past in **-ну, -нешь/-нёшь**, etc.

The past tense is formed without the **-ну-**.

мёрзнуть (нсв) 'to freeze'

мёрзну

мёрзнешь

мёрзнет

мёрзнем

мёрзнете

мёрзнут

привыкнуть (св) 'to get used to'

привыкну

привыкнешь

привыкнет

привыкнем

привыкнете

привыкнут

Past tense:

мёрз, мёрзла, мёрзло, мёрзли

привык, привыкла, привыкло, привыкли

NOTES

- (i) This class differs from the *third* class of *productive* verbs only in the past tense. It contains both *imperfective* and *perfective* verbs.
- (ii) **достигнуть** (св) 'to reach', 'to achieve' has an alternative infinitive **достичь**.

4.7.11 Eleventh unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

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

(a) Infinitive in **-ить**

Non-past in **-иву, -ивёшь**, etc.

(b) Infinitive in **-ыть**

Non-past in **-ыву, -ывёшь**, etc.

(a) **жить** (нсв) 'to live'

живу́

живёшь

живёт

живём

живёте

живут

(b) **плыть** (нсв) 'to (be) swim(ming)'

плыву́

плывёшь

плывёт

плывём

плывёте

плывут

4.7.12 Twelfth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

This class is made up of *first* conjugation verbs following these patterns:

(a) Infinitive in **-зть/-зти**

Non-past in **-зу, -зешь/-зёшь**, etc.

(b) Infinitive in **-сти**

Non-past in **-су, -сёшь**, etc.

(c) Infinitive in **-сти**

Non-past in **-ту, -тёшь**, etc.

(d) Infinitive in **-сть/-сти**

Non-past in **-ду, -дешь/-дёшь**, etc.

(e) Infinitive in **-сти**

Non-past in **-бу, -бёшь**, etc.

(a) **ползти́** (нсв)
'to (be) crawl(ing)'

ползу́

ползёшь

(b) **нести́** (нсв)
'to (be) carrying'

несу́

несёшь

(c) **изобрести́** (св)
'to invent'

изобрету́

изобретёшь

ползёт	несёт	изобретёт
ползём	несём	изобретём
ползёте	несёте	изобретёте
ползут	несут	изобретут
(d) класть (нсв) 'to put (lying)'	вести (нсв) 'to (be) lead(ing)'	(e) грести (нсв) 'to rake', 'to row (a boat)'
кладу́	веду́	гребу́
кладёшь	ведёшь	гребёшь
кладёт	ведёт	гребёт
кладём	ведём	гребём
кладёте	ведёте	гребёте
кладут	ведут	гребут

These verbs form the *past tense* as follows:

- (a) полз, ползла́, ползло́, ползли́
 (b) нёс, несла́, несло́, несли́
 (c) изобрёл, изобрела́, изобрело́, изобрели́
 (d) вёл, вела́, вело́, вели́
 (e) грёб, грёбла́, грёбло́, грёбли́

NOTES

- (i) *сесть* (св) 'to sit down' has the *future tense* *сяду́, сядёшь*, etc. (*past tense* *сел, села́, село́, сели́*).
- (ii) *расти́* (нсв) 'to grow' (intransitive) has *present tense* *расту́, растёшь*, etc., but *past tense* *рос, росла́, росло́, росли́*.

4.7.13

Thirteenth unproductive class of first conjugation verbs

The verbs in this class are *first* conjugation verbs following the patterns:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| (a) Infinitive in -чь | Non-past in -гу, -жешь/-жёшь , etc. | |
| (b) Infinitive in -чь | Non-past in -ку, -чешь/-чёшь , etc. | |
| (a) мочь (нсв) 'to be able' | (b) жечь (нсв) 'to burn' | (c) печь (нсв) 'to bake' |
| могу́ | жгу́ | пеку́ |
| можёшь | жжёшь | печёшь |
| может | жжёт | печёт |
| можем | жжём | печём |
| можете | жжёте | печёте |
| могут | жгут | пеку́т |

These verbs form the *past tense* as follows:

- (a) мог, могла́, могло́, могли́; жёг, жгла́, жгло́, жгли́
 (b) пёк, пекла́, пекло́, пекли́.

4.7.14 Miscellaneous first conjugation verbs

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

(a) идти́ (нсв) 'to (be) go(ing) (on foot)' иду́ идёшь идёт идём идёте идут	(b) ехать́ (нсв) 'to (be) go(ing) (by transport)' еду́ едешь едет едем едете едут	(c) ошибиться́ (св) 'to make a mistake' ошибу́сь ошибёшься ошибётся ошибёмся ошибётесь ошибутся
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These verbs form their *past tense* as follows:

- (a) шёл, шла, шло, шли
(b) ехал, ехала, ехало, ехали
(c) ошибся, ошиблась, ошиблось, ошиблись.

NOTES

- (i) идти́ is the only verb in Russian to have a *past tense* that is totally irregular (see 4.5.3).
(ii) In all its forms except the *infinitive* ошибиться́ is identical to грести́.

4.7.15 First unproductive class of second conjugation verbs

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

видеть (нсв) 'to see' вижу́ видишь видит видим видите видят	висеть (нсв) 'to hang' (intransitive) вишу́ висишь висит висим висите висят	смотреть (нсв) 'to look at' смотрю́ смотришь смотрит смотрим смотрите смотрят
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NOTE

The same rules concerning *consonant alternations* in the *first person singular* of the *non-past* as were described above (4.6.4) for the *productive* class of *second* conjugation verbs also apply to these verbs.

4.7.16 Second unproductive class of second conjugation verbs

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

спать (нсв) 'to sleep' сплю спишь спит спим спите спят	держать (нсв) 'to hold' держу́ держишь держит держим держите держат	стоять (нсв) 'to stand' стою́ стоишь стоит стоим стойте стоят
--	---	---

NOTES

- (i) **Спать** is the only verb in this class where there is a *consonant alternation* in the *first person singular* of the *non-past*. Almost all other verbs in this class with an *infinitive* ending in **-ать** have a stem ending in **ж, ч, ш** or **щ**, and the endings in the *non-past* are subject to the spelling rules described in **1.5.2**.
- (ii) The *infinitive* ending **-ять** occurs after a *vowel*.

4.8 Irregular verbs

Russian has only a handful of verbs that are totally irregular.

Two verbs have a mixture of *first* and *second* conjugation endings in the *non-past*:

хотѐть (нсв) 'to want'	бежа́ть (нсв) 'to (be) run(ning)'
хочу́	бегу́
хочѐшь	бежи́шь
хочѐт	бежи́т
хотим	бежи́м
хотите	бежи́те
хотя́т	бегу́т

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

да́ть (св) 'to give'	есть (нсв) 'to eat'
дам	ем
дашь	ешь
даст	ест
дадим	е́дим
дадите	е́дите
даду́т	едя́т

NOTES

- (i) These two verbs, though otherwise identical, have different endings in the *third person plural*.
- (ii) The past tense of **да́ть** is perfectly regular; the past tense of **есть** follows the pattern **ел, е́ла, е́ло, е́ли**.

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 пробле́ма.
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 пробле́м.
There are no problems here.

The use of **есть** and **нет** and the ways in which Russian compensates for the otherwise missing *present tense* of **быть** are explained in **14.1, 14.2, 14.3** and **15.1**.

4.9 The imperative

4.9.0 Introduction

The *imperative* is used for giving commands and instructions or (in the negative) prohibitions and warnings; it can also be used for making requests (see **Chapter 18**). It is formed from both *imperfective* and *perfective* verbs. Special endings exist only for the *second person singular* and *plural*.

4.9.1 Second person singular

This is formed by taking the *second person singular* of the *non-past* and removing the ending (-ешь/-ёшь/-ишь).

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

дѐлать (нсв) 'to do'	дѐлаешь	дѐлай
танцевать (нсв) 'to dance'	танцѐешь	танцуй
стрѐлять (нсв) 'to shoot'	стрѐляешь	стрѐляй
стоять (нсв) 'to stand'	стойшь	стой

If the stem that remains ends in a *consonant* and the stress of the verb is either always on the ending or is mobile, add **-и**:

брать (нсв) 'to take'	берѐшь	бери
взять (св) 'to take'	возьмѐшь	возьми
писать (нсв) 'to write'	пишешь	пиши
сказать (св) 'to say'	скажешь	скажи
нести (нсв) 'to be carrying'	несѐшь	неси
говорить (нсв) 'to say', 'to speak'	говоришь	говори
смотреть (нсв) 'to look'	смотришь	смотри

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

плакать (нсв) 'to cry'	плачешь	плачь
лезть (нсв) 'to climb'	лезешь	лезь
сесть (св) 'to sit down'	сядешь	сядь
оставить (св) 'to leave'	оставишь	оставь

If, however, the remaining stem ends in *two consonants* or if the verb is a *perfective* verb with the prefix **вы-** and the *imperative* of the corresponding unprefixed verb ends in **-и**, then **-и** is added:

крикнуть (св) 'to shout'	крикнешь	крикни
вынести (св) 'to carry out' (cf. нести above)	вынесешь	вынеси

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

(a) Verbs of class 4.7.4:

давать (нсв) 'to give'	даѐшь	давай
вставать (нсв) 'to stand up'	встаѐшь	вставай

The conditional (or subjunctive)

(b) Verbs of sub-class 4.7.6 (a):

лить (нсв) 'to pour'	льёшь	лей
пить (нсв) 'to drink'	пьёшь	пей

(c) Verbs of class 4.7.13:

беречь (нсв) 'to save'	бережёшь	береги́
печь (нсв) 'to bake'	печёшь	пеки́

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

(d) Other miscellaneous verbs:

быть (нсв) 'to be'	—	будь
лечь (св) 'to lie down'	ляжешь	ляг
сыпать (нсв) 'to pour (solids)'	сыплешь	сыпь

4.9.2 Second person plural

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

делать (нсв) 'to do'	делай	делайте
танцевать (нсв) 'to dance'	танцуй	танцуйте
взять (св) 'to take'	возьми	возьмите
писать (нсв) 'to write'	пиши	пишите
говорить (нсв) 'to say, to speak'	говори	говорите
плакать (нсв) 'to cry'	плачь	плачьте
оставить (св) 'to leave'	оставь	оставьте
давать (нсв) 'to give'	давай	давайте
пить (нсв) 'to drink'	пей	пейте
быть (нсв) 'to be'	будь	будьте

4.9.3 The third person imperative

The *third person imperative* is formed by using the *particle* *пусть* (less often *пускáй*) with the *third person singular* or plural of the *future perfective* or *present imperfective*:

войти́ (св) 'to enter'	пусть войдёт	пусть войдут
говорить (нсв) 'to say', 'to speak'	пусть говорит	пусть говорят

Мы готовы начать собеседование; пусть он войдёт.

We're ready to begin the interview; let him come in.

Пусть говорят; мы не боимся правды.

Let them speak; we're not afraid of the truth.

4.10 The conditional (or subjunctive)

In Russian the terms *conditional* and *subjunctive* are used interchangeably, although the former is more common and is preferred here. The conditional is used for all sorts of hypothetical situations, for example, conditions incapable of being fulfilled or when giving advice (see 18.4 and 21.5).

The conditional can be formed from both *imperfective* and *perfective* verbs. It is formed with the *enclitic particle* **бы** (see 9.4) and the *past tense* of the verb:

говори́ть (нсв) ‘to say’, ‘to speak’:

говори́л бы, говори́ла бы, говори́ло бы, говори́ли бы

сказа́ть (св) ‘to say’:

сказа́л бы, сказа́ла бы, сказа́ло бы, сказа́ли бы

писа́ть (нсв) ‘to write’:

писа́л бы, писа́ла бы, писа́ло бы, писа́ли бы

написа́ть (св) ‘to write’:

написа́л бы, написа́ла бы, написа́ло бы, написа́ли бы

дава́ть (нсв) ‘to give’:

дава́л бы, дава́ла бы, дава́ло бы, дава́ли бы

дать (св) ‘to give’:

дал бы, дала́ бы, да́ло бы, да́ли бы

4.11 Gerunds

4.11.0 Introduction

Gerunds are *verbal adverbs*, which means they are at the same time both a part of the *verb* and an *adverb*. Although they can sometimes be used alongside other adverbs, their main function is to form complex sentences, in which a *gerund* is used in place of a *conjunction + verb*.

The use of gerunds is described in detail in 21.10.

Gerunds are rare in speech, but they are widely used in all forms of writing. There are *imperfective* (or *present*) gerunds and *perfective* (or *past*) gerunds.

4.11.1 The imperfective gerund

The *imperfective gerund* is formed from the present tense of *imperfective* verbs. The easiest way to form this gerund is to take the *third person plural*, remove the final two letters and add **-я**:

чита́ть (нсв) ‘to read’	чита́ют	чита́я
позволя́ть (нсв) ‘to allow’	позволя́ют	позволя́я
целова́ть (нсв) ‘to kiss’	целу́ют	целу́я
идти́ (нсв) ‘to (be) go(ing)’	идут	идя́
говори́ть (нсв) ‘to say, to speak’	говоря́т	говоря́я
крича́ть (нсв) ‘to shout’	крича́т	крича́я

NOTE The spelling of **крича́я** is determined by the spelling rule that prevents the letter **я** occurring after **ж, ц, ч, ш, щ** (see 1.5.2).

The following verbs have an irregular *imperfective gerund*:

дава́ть (нсв) 'to give'	даю́т	дава́я
-------------------------	-------	--------

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

бы́ть (нсв) 'to be'	—	бу́дучи
е́хать (нсв) 'to (be) go(ing) (by transport)'	е́дут	е́дучи

NOTES

(i) It is not normally possible to form *imperfective gerunds* from most *unproductive* classes of *first* conjugation verbs (exceptions are 4.7.4, 4.7.5, 4.7.6(с), 4.7.7, 4.7.8 and 4.7.11).

(ii) Some *imperfective gerund* forms have been transformed into other parts of speech and are no longer used as gerunds:

хотя́ 'although' is a conjunction (see 21.6.3);

смотря́ 'depending (on)' is an adverb used with a question word or the preposition **по** (+ dat.) (see 16.5.3).

4.11.2 The perfective gerund

The *perfective gerund* is formed from the *past tense* of *perfective* verbs. Where the *masculine singular* form of the *past tense* ends in **-л**, this is removed and replaced by **-в**:

прочита́ть (св) 'to read'	прочита́л	прочита́в
написа́ть (св) 'to write'	написа́л	написа́в
взя́ть (св) 'to take'	взя́л	взя́в
поджа́рить (св) 'to fry'	поджа́рил	поджа́рив

Note that *reflexive* verbs (4.13.2) form the *perfective gerund* by inserting **-ши-** between the normal gerund and the *reflexive particle* **-сь**:

верну́ться (св) 'to return'	верну́лся	верну́вшись
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If the *masculine singular* form of the *past tense* ends in a consonant other than **-л**, then **-ши** is added:

вы́расти 'to grow up'	вы́рос	вы́росши
испе́чь 'to bake'	испе́к	испе́кши

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

умере́ть (св) 'to die'	у́мер	умере́в/у́мерши
заме́рзнуть (св) 'to freeze' (intransitive)	заме́рз	заме́рзнув/заме́рзши

NOTE

The only perfective gerund formed from **исче́знуть (св)** 'to disappear' is **исче́знув**.

Prefixed perfective verbs based on **везти́**, **вести́**, **идти́** and **нести́** form their perfective gerunds according to the rules for forming imperfective gerunds:

ввезти́ (св) 'to import'	ввезу́т	ввезя́
провести́ (св) 'to conduct, to spend (time)'	проведу́т	проведя́
уйти́ (св) 'to go away'	уйду́т	уйдя́
вынести́ (св) 'to carry out'	вынесу́т	вынеся́

4.12 Participles

4.12.0 Introduction

The *participle* in Russian is a *verbal adjective*, which means that it is at the same time both part of the *verb* and an *adjective*. There are four participles: *present active*, *past active*, *present passive* and *past passive*. The first three of these have only a *long form*, but the *past passive participle* has both *long* and *short* forms.

For more on the long and short forms of adjectives, see 6.1 and 6.5.

Long form participles are not normally found in speech or in informal writing, but they are a characteristic feature of formal written Russian, where they are used to form clauses similar in function to *relative clauses*.

The use of long form participles is discussed in 23.1.3.

The *short form* of the *past passive participle* is used to form the *passive voice* of *perfective verbs* (4.14) and therefore occurs in both spoken and written language of all types.

The declension of *present* and *past active participles* follows the pattern described in 6.1.5. The declension of present and past passive participles (in the long form) follows the pattern described in 6.1.1.

4.12.1 The present active participle

The *present active participle* is formed from *imperfective verbs*. It is most easily formed by taking the *third person plural* of the *present tense*, removing the last letter, adding **-щ-** and the appropriate *adjective* endings:

чита́ть (нсв) 'to read'	чита́ют	чита́ющий, -щая, -щее
писа́ть (нсв) 'to write'	пи́шут	пи́шущий, -щая, -щее
танцева́ть (нсв) 'to dance'	танцуют	танцующий, -щая, -щее
пить (нсв) 'to drink'	пьют	пьющий, -щая, -щее
уходи́ть (нсв) 'to go away'	уходят	уходящий, -щая, -щее
крича́ть (нсв) 'to shout'	крича́т	крича́щий, -щая, -щее

4.12.2 The past active participle

The *past active participle* is formed from both *imperfective* and *perfective verbs*. It is formed from the *masculine singular* of the *past tense*: if this ends in **-л**, the final consonant is removed and replaced by **-вш-** and the appropriate *adjective* endings:

чита́ть (нсв) 'to read'	чита́л	чита́вший, -шая, -шее
написа́ть (св) 'to write'	написа́л	написа́вший, -шая, -шее
целова́ть (нсв) 'to kiss'	целова́л	целова́вший, -шая, -шее
взя́ть (св) 'to take'	взя́л	взя́вший, -шая, -шее
сесть (св) 'to sit down'	сел	се́вший, -шая, -шее

If the *masculine singular* of the *past tense* ends in a *consonant* other than **-л**, then **-ш-** and the appropriate *adjective* endings are added to this form:

замёрзнуть (св) 'to freeze'	замёрз	замёрзший, -шая, -шее
умереть (св) 'to die'	умер	умерший, -шая, -шее
нести (нсв) 'to (be) carry(ing)'	нёс	нёсший, -шая, -шее

The following *past active participles* are formed irregularly:

вести (нсв) 'to (be) lead(ing)'	вёл	ведший, -шая, -шее
идти (нсв) 'to (be) go(ing)'	шёл	шедший, -шая, -шее
обрести (св) 'to find', 'to obtain'	обрёл	обретший, -шая, -шее

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

боя́ться (нсв) 'to be afraid of':

Present active:	боя́щийся	боя́щаяся	боя́щееся
Past active:	боя́вшийся	боя́вшаяся	боя́вшееся

4.12.3 The present passive participle

The *present passive participle* is the least used of all participles; it is formed from some *imperfective transitive verbs* only. It is formed by adding the appropriate *adjective* endings to the *first person plural* of the present tense:

выбра́сывать (нсв) 'to throw out'	выбра́сываем	выбра́сываемый, -мая, -мое
повторя́ть (нсв) 'to repeat'	повторя́ем	повторя́емый, -мая, -мое
цити́ровать (нсв) 'to quote'	цити́руем	цити́руемый, -мая, -мое
проводя́ть (нсв) 'to conduct, to spend (time)'	проводя́дим	проводя́емый, -мая, -мое

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

признава́ть (нсв) 'to recognise, to admit'	призна́ем	but признава́емый, -мая, -мое
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In practice, the *present passive participle* is formed only from verbs belonging to the classes represented in the examples (4.6.1, 4.6.2, 4.6.4 and all classes of *second conjugation verbs*), and then from not all of these. It is difficult to give precise rules, but generally speaking, *present passive participles* are more likely to be formed from *prefixed imperfective verbs* or from verbs with a more abstract or literary meaning.

4.12.4 The past passive participle

The *past passive participle* is formed from all *perfective transitive verbs*. The great majority of verbs form this participle with the suffix *-н(н)-*.

Important note: This is the only participle with both *long* and *short* forms. The spelling *-нн-* is used throughout the long form; the spelling *-н(-)* is used throughout the short form.

If the infinitive ends in **-ать, -ять** (classes 4.6.1, 4.6.2, 4.7.1, 4.7.3 and 4.7.16), the *participle* is formed from the *infinitive* by removing the **-ть** and replacing it with the *participle suffix* and the appropriate *adjective* endings:

прочитать (св) 'to read'	прочитанный, -нная, -нное
написать (св) 'to write'	написанный, -нная, -нное
нарисовать (св) 'to draw'	нарисованный, -нная, -нное
порвать (св) 'to tear'	порванный, -нная, -нное

Verbs belonging to classes 4.7.12 and 4.7.13 form the *past passive participle* from the *non-past (future) tense*; the *consonant* to which the ending is added is that found in the *first person plural*:

принести (св) 'to bring'	принесём	принесённый, -нная, -нное
вести (св) 'to lead in'	введём	введённый, -нная, -нное
изобрести (св) 'to invent'	изобретём	изобретённый, -нная, -нное
испечь (св) 'to bake'	испечём	испечённый, -нная, -нное
сберечь (св) 'to save'	сбережём	сбережённый, -нная, -нное

Prefixed forms of **идти** follow this pattern:

найти (св) 'to find'	найдем	найденный, -нная, -нное
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Second conjugation verbs with an infinitive in **-ить, -еть** have the *suffix* **-енн-/-ённ-** and the same *consonant alternation* as in the *first person singular* of the *future tense*:

Without *consonant alternation*:

поджарить (св) 'to fry'	поджарю	поджаренный, -нная, -нное
решить (св) 'to decide'	решу	решённый, -нная, -нное

With *consonant alternation*:

повесить (св) 'to hang'	повешу	повешенный, -нная, -нное
снизить (св) 'to lower'	снижу	сниженный, -нная, -нное
оплатить (св) 'to pay for'	оплачу	оплаченный, -нная, -нное
осветить (св) 'to illuminate'	освещу	освещённый, -нная, -нное
обидеть (св) 'to offend'	обижу	обиженный, -нная, -нное
ограбить (св) 'to rob'	ограблю	ограбленный, -нная, -нное
купить (св) 'to buy'	куплю	купленный, -нная, -нное
проявить (св) 'to show (a quality), to develop (photographs)'	проявлю	проявленный, -нная, -нное
накормить (св) 'to feed'	накормлю	накормленный, -нная, -нное

NOTES

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

утвердить (св) to state, to affirm	утвержу	утверждённый, -нная, -нное
убедить (св) to convince	—	убеждённый, -нная, -нное

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

утвердить (св) ~ утверждать (нсв).
убедить (св) ~ убеждать (нсв)

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*:

увидеть увижу увиденный, -нная, -нное

Verbs belonging to classes 4.6.3, 4.7.2, 4.7.6, 4.7.7, 4.7.8, 4.7.9, 4.7.10, 4.7.11 and *prefixed perfectives* formed from **быть** have a *past passive participle* in **-т-**:

обмануть (св) 'to deceive'	обманутый , -тая, -тое
взять (св) 'to take'	взятый , -тая, -тое
спеть (св) 'to sing'	спетый , -тая, -тое
раздуть (св) 'to blow, to inflate'	раздутый , -тая, -тое
приколоть (св) 'to pin up'	приколотый , -тая, -тое
запереть (св) 'to lock'	запертый , -тая, -тое
свергнуть (св) 'to overthrow'	свергнутый , -тая, -тое
прожить (св) 'to live (a certain length of time somewhere)'	прожитый , -тая, -тое
забыть (св) 'to forget'	забытый , -тая, -тое

Examples of *short forms*:

прочитать (св) 'to read'	прочитан , -тана, -тано, -таны
написать (св) 'to write'	написан , -сана, -сано, -саны
принести (св) 'to bring'	принесён , -сена, -сено, -сены
испечь (св) 'to bake'	испечён , -чена, -чено, -чены
повесить (св) 'to hang'	повешен , -шена, -шено, -шены
осветить (св) 'to illuminate'	освещён , -шена, -щено, -щены
обидеть (св) 'to offend'	обижен , -жена, -жено, -жены
взять (св) 'to take'	взят , взята , взято , взяты
забыть (св) 'to forget'	забыт , -та, -то, -ты

4.13 Transitive, intransitive and reflexive verbs

4.13.1 Transitive and intransitive verbs

Transitive verbs are those used with a *direct object* in the *accusative* case. In both of the following sentences the verb is *transitive*, since the pronoun **что** and the noun **книгу** are both *direct objects* in the *accusative*:

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 Москвѣ.

She lives in Moscow.

Я уже ходил за хле́бом.
I've already been for the bread.

Он сиде́л за сто́лом.
He was sitting at the table.

Мои́ глаза́ ещё не привы́кли к темноте́.
My eyes still haven't got used to the darkness.

Как по́льзоваться э́тим словарём.
Guide to the use of this dictionary [*literally*, How to use this dictionary].

Вам помо́чь?
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 <i>walks</i> to school every day.	<i>Intransitive</i>
She <i>walks</i> the dog every day.	<i>Transitive</i>
Why not <i>hang</i> this picture on the wall?	<i>Transitive</i>
The picture <i>is</i> already <i>hanging</i> on the wall.	<i>Intransitive</i>

In Russian, only a very small number of verbs denoting simple actions, such as **чита́ть** 'to read', **писа́ть** 'to write' and **есть** 'to eat', can be used either transitively or intransitively:

Что он де́лает? Он чита́ет кни́гу.	<i>Transitive</i>
What is he doing? He is reading a book.	
Что он де́лает? Он чи́тает.	<i>Intransitive</i>
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: **проче́тать**, **написа́ть** and **съе́сть** are normally used if the respective verbs are transitive, while **почита́ть**, **пописа́ть** and **пое́сть** are used if the respective verbs are intransitive.

The vast majority of Russian verbs are either transitive or intransitive; it is virtually impossible for an intransitive verb to be used transitively, and very rare for a transitive verb to be used intransitively. It follows from this that where in English the same verb can be used either transitively or intransitively, different verbs will be required in Russian:

Она́ ка́ждый день хо́дит в шко́лу пешко́м.	<i>Intransitive</i>
She <i>walks</i> to school every day.	
Она́ ка́ждый день выгу́ливает соба́ку.	<i>Transitive</i>
She <i>walks</i> the dog every day.	
Почему́ не пове́сить э́ту карти́ну на стéну?	<i>Transitive</i>
Why not <i>hang</i> this picture on the wall?	
Карти́на уже́ висит на стéне.	<i>Intransitive</i>
The picture <i>is</i> already <i>hanging</i> on the wall.	

The verb **ходить** (НСВ) ‘to go somewhere regularly on foot’ is intransitive, whereas **выгуливать** (НСВ)/**выгулять** (СВ) ‘to take a dog for a walk’ is transitive. Similarly, **вешать** (НСВ)/**повесить** (СВ) ‘to hang something somewhere’ is transitive, while **висеть** (НСВ)/**повисеть** (СВ) ‘to be hanging somewhere’ is intransitive.

Sometimes adding a prefix can make an intransitive verb transitive or vice versa: **выгуливать** is derived from **гулять** (НСВ) ‘to walk, ‘to stroll’, which is intransitive; **платить** (НСВ)/**заплатить** (СВ) ‘to pay’ is usually intransitive, while **оплачивать** (НСВ)/**оплатить** (СВ) ‘to pay for’ is transitive.

После обеда она гуляет в парке.

After lunch she goes for a walk in the park.

Почему вы не заплатили за проезд?

Why haven't you paid your fare?

Почему вы не оплатили проезд?

Why haven't you paid your fare?

The last two examples have the same meaning and are interchangeable.

4.13.2 Reflexive verbs

Reflexive verbs are formed with the suffix **-ся**. This suffix, which except in *participles* (see 4.12.2) is shortened to **-сь** after a vowel, appears in all forms of the verb. The various forms of a reflexive verb can be illustrated by **смеяться** (НСВ)/**засмеяться** (СВ) ‘to laugh’.

Non-past

(a) *Present imperfective*

смеюсь
смеёшься
смеётся
смеёмся
смеётесь
смеются

(b) *Future perfective*

засмеюсь
засмеёшься
засмеётся
засмеёмся
засмеётесь
засмеются

Future imperfective: буду смеяться, etc.

Past tense: (за)смеялся, (за)смеялась, (за)смеялось, (за)смеялись

Imperative: (за)смейся, (за)смейтесь

Imperfective gerund: смеясь

Perfective gerund: засмеявшись

Present participle: смеющийся, смеющаяся, смеющееся

Past participle: (за)смеявшийся, (за)смеявшаяся, (за)смеявшееся

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 вернул эту книгу в библиотеку.

I've already returned this book to the library.

Я вернулся домой позавчера.

I returned home the day before yesterday.

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:

бороться (нсв)	to struggle, to wrestle
бояться (нсв)	to be afraid of
надеяться (нсв)	to hope, to rely on
напиваться (нсв)/ напиться (св)	to get drunk
появляться (нсв)/ появиться (св)	to appear
смеяться (нсв)/ засмеяться (св)	to laugh

Another function of reflexive verbs is discussed in the following section.

4.14 Active and passive verbs

4.14.1 The active and the passive voices

In all the sentences quoted so far in this section, the verbs have been in the *active* voice, that is to say, the performer of the action or the main participant in the state is the *subject* of the *verb*. When it is necessary to make the recipient of the action the subject of the verb, the *passive* voice is used:

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

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

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

Эта книга *была написана* в 1931 г.
This book was written in 1931.

Passive

When a passive verb is used, what would have been the *direct object* of the corresponding *active verb* becomes the *subject* of the sentence in the *nominative* case. It follows from this that the *passive voice* can be formed only from *transitive* verbs. In a passive sentence, the performer of the action is known as the *agent* and is in the *instrumental* case (as in the first pair of examples). As the second pair of examples shows, it is not necessary for the agent to be present.

For more on the use of the instrumental for the agent of a passive verb, see 3.5.2.

4.14.2 The passive of imperfective verbs

The formation of the passive voice depends on the aspect of the verb. With *imperfective* verbs the *reflexive* is used for the passive:

Мы *считаем* его крупным специалистом в этой области. Active
We consider him (to be) a great specialist in this area.

Он *считается* крупным специалистом в этой области. Passive
He is considered (to be) a great specialist in this area.

Надо *сохранять* таможенную декларацию на весь период временного въезда/выезда и *предъявлять* её таможенным органам при возвращении. Active
You should retain your customs declaration for the whole duration of your visit and present it to the customs authorities on your return.

Таможенная декларация *сохраняется* на весь период временного въезда/выезда и *предъявляется* таможенным органам при возвращении. Passive
The customs declaration is retained for the duration of the whole visit and is presented to the customs authorities on your return.

As this last example, quoted almost word for word from a Russian customs declaration form, indicates, the use of the *imperfective passive* is often a distinguishing feature of formal and official language.

4.14.3 The passive of perfective verbs

The *passive voice* of *perfective* verbs is formed using the *short form* of the *past passive participle* and the appropriate form of the verb *быть* 'to be':

Здесь *был 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.

Эта книга будет написана на русском языке.

This book will be written in Russian.

There are no stylistic restrictions on the use of perfective passive, but in general passive verbs are used rather less frequently in Russian than in English. More information on the use of passive verbs and the means that exist for avoiding them is given in **20.2**.

5

Aspects of the verb

5.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter (*see 4.2*) it was pointed out that the Russian verb was characterised by the presence of two aspects – *imperfective* and *perfective* – and that every Russian verb (with a handful of exceptions) belongs to one or other of these aspects. In this chapter it is intended to examine in some detail the use of the two aspects, although it may be noted that whole books have been written on this topic, and it will therefore not be possible here to discuss every circumstance in which a decision on aspectual usage has to be made.

It is usually reckoned that aspects of the verb present a particularly tough challenge to speakers of English attempting to learn Russian. There are perhaps three reasons for this.

First, with the exception of the *present tense*, which is formed only from *imperfective verbs*, the aspect system extends to all parts of the verb, including *gerunds* and (at least in some circumstances) *participles*. It is therefore necessary to make a decision about aspects almost every time a verb is used.

Second, differences in meaning between the aspects of the Russian verb tend not to correspond to differences in meaning between English verb forms. For example, in English it is possible to talk about ‘reading’ in the past using the following forms:

I read
I have read
I did read
I had read
I was reading
I used to read
I would read

In Russian, an *imperfective* verb (**я 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 **св** (=совершенный *perfective*).

5.1 Situations where there is no choice

5.1.0 Introduction

In a number of instances involving the *infinitive*, only one aspect is grammatically possible.

For more on the infinitive, *see* 4.1.

5.1.1 Only the imperfective is possible

A verb in the *infinitive* must be in the *imperfective* aspect when it is used in conjunction with one of the following:

1 A verb conveying the idea of *beginning*, *continuing* or *stopping* an action, for example:

начина́ть (нсв)/ нача́ть (св)	to begin
продолжа́ть (нсв)	to continue
конча́ть (нсв)/ кончи́ть (св)	to finish
перестава́ть (нсв)/ переста́ть (св)	to cease
прекраща́ть (нсв)/ прекрати́ть (св)	to cease
броса́ть (нсв)/ броси́ть (св)	to give up

Он нача́л рассказыва́ть (нсв) о том, где он был и что он дела́л.
He began to talk about where he had been and what he had been doing.

Она прервала́ свой рассказ, но сле́дователь ничего́ не говори́л и продолжа́л смотре́ть (нсв) на неё с ирониче́ской улы́бкой на лице́.
She broke off her account, but the investigating officer said nothing and continued to look at her with an ironic smile on his face.

Он кончи́л счита́ть (нсв) де́ньги и вы́писал кви́танцию.
He finished counting the money and wrote out a receipt.

После́ пе́рвого ку́рса он перестáл ходи́ть (нсв) на ле́кции, но стал проводи́ть бо́льше вре́мени в библиоте́ке.
After first year he stopped going to lectures and spent more time in the library.

Специали́сты пришл́и к вы́воду, что с 1997 го́да озо́новый слой, за исклю́чением простран́ства над по́люсами, прекрати́л уменьша́ться (нсв).

Scientists have come to the conclusion that from 1997 onwards the ozone layer, with the exception of the area above the poles, has stopped diminishing.

Я не зна́л, что вы бро́сили кури́ть (нсв).
I didn't know you'd given up smoking.

2 A verb or another predicate form indicating the undesirability or the pointlessness of an action, for example:

не на́до	don't, you shouldn't
не ну́жно	don't, you shouldn't
не стои́т	it's not worth
бесполе́зно	it's pointless
неза́чем	there's no point in
нет смы́сла, не имее́т смы́сла	it makes no sense to

Не на́до звони́ть (нсв) так ра́но: я ещё не просну́лся как сле́дует.
Don't phone so early, I haven't woken up properly yet.

Не ну́жно говори́ть (нсв) такие́ ве́щи вслу́х.
You shouldn't say such things aloud.

Не стои́т писа́ть (нсв) жа́лобу: всё равнó ничего́ не изме́нится.
It's not worth writing a complaint, nothing's going to change anyway.

С ним бесполе́зно спо́рить (нсв): он всё зна́ет и нико́го не слу́шает.
It's pointless arguing with him, he knows everything and doesn't listen to anyone.

Незачем идти (нсв) так рано: в это время никого там не будет.
There's no point in going so early; at this time of day there'll be nobody there.

Так поздно ехать (нсв) на автобусе не имеет смысла; лучше я вызову такси.

It doesn't make sense to go by bus when it's this late; it'll be better if I call a taxi.

3 The following verbs:

запрещать (нсв)/запретить (св)	to forbid
уметь (нсв)	to know how to do something
учиться (нсв)/научиться (св)	to learn how to do something

Здесь запрещено пользоваться (нсв) мобильными телефонами.
It's forbidden to use mobile phones here.

Она умеет так красиво излагать (нсв) свои мысли.
She knows how to express her thoughts so beautifully.

Я в школе учился играть (нсв) в шахматы, но ничего не получилось.
I tried to learn how to play chess at school, but never got anywhere with it.

5.1.2 Only the perfective is possible

An *infinitive* verb must be in the *perfective* aspect if it is used with any of the following *perfective* verbs:

выйти (св)	to pop out (to do something)
зайти (св)	to drop in (to do something)
удаться (св)	to succeed
успеть (св)	to succeed, to have time (to do something)
суметь (св)	to be clever enough, to be able (to do something)

Давай выйдем (св) покурить (св).
Let's go out for a smoke.

Если можно, я зайду (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 успею (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)/*удаться* (св), when used with an *infinitive*, is an *impersonal* verb, and the *dative* case is used to indicate the person who succeeds in doing something.

For more on impersonal verbs, see **3.4.3** and **11.2.2**.

5.2 Some general principles

5.2.1 Incomplete actions

When a verb is used to indicate an incomplete action, it is in the *imperfective* aspect. Such actions can be interrupted by some event or can be going on the background while something else happens.

Она сидела (нсв) в офисе и разбира́ла (нсв) какие-то финансовые документы, когда вдруг разда́лся 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 нача́льник разгово́ривал (нсв) по телефону.

When he came into the room, his boss was talking on the telephone.

Он спеши́л, потому́ что опазды́вал (нсв) на по́езд.

He was hurrying because he was late for the train.

In the last example, the second verb is *imperfective* because the action of being late is not completed until the person arrives at the station and discovers that the train has already left. In many instances the incompleteness is implied by the general situation or context:

—Что вы де́лали (нсв) вче́ра ве́чером?

—Ни́чего интере́сного: я чита́л (нсв) кни́гу, реши́л (нсв) кроссво́рд в ве́черней газе́те и смотре́л (нсв) телеви́зор.

—What did you do yesterday evening?

—Nothing interesting: I read a book, had a go at crossword in the evening paper, watched television.

If, however, specific accomplishments are mentioned, the *perfective* is more likely to be used:

У меня́ вче́ра был тако́й насы́щенный ве́чер: я прочита́л (св) де́сять студе́нческих рабо́т, реши́л (св) кроссво́рд в ве́черней газе́те и на́конец посмотре́л (св) ту пере́дачу, кото́рую ты всё вре́мя рекоме́ндуешь.

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), чита́йте (нсв); не обра́щайте внима́ния на шум в коридоре́.

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) суббо́ту-воскресе́нье?

Как вы прове́дили (нсв) суббо́ту-воскресе́нье?

Both sentences mean essentially the same thing:

How did you spend the weekend?

They are, however, asking for different information. When the question is asked using the *perfective* verb (**провели**), you are being invited to sum up your weekend, and an appropriate answer might be:

Очень хорошо, спасибо.

Very well, thank you.

If the question is asked using the *imperfective* verb (**проводили**), you are being invited to say what you did to fill up the weekend, i.e. the focus is on the *process* of spending the weekend. Here an appropriate answer might be:

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

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 встречали (нсв) на вокзале, а то не знаю, как бы я добрался 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 долго бродил по улицам, пока, наконец, он не встретил (св) кого-то из знакомых.

He wandered the streets for a long time until at last he met someone he knew.

Пока не знаю, кто её убил. Могу только догадываться (нсв).

At the moment I don't know who killed her. I can only make guesses.

The *imperfective* **догадываться** implies that the speaker is in a position to go through the process of making guesses; the *perfective* (**догадаться**) 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 узнавать (нсв), 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 большого труда опровергнуть всю напраслину, возведённую на меня, но опровергать (нсв) 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* **опроверга́ть** is used because the speaker is thinking of himself having to go through the process of refutation.

The focus is on process in contexts relating to the possibility or desirability of starting an action which is already understood to be due to take place at some time:

Ита́к, тре́тий ра́унд о́кóнчен; мо́жно оста́навливать (нсв) секундоме́р.

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

Уже́ по́здно; нам, наве́рно, на́до иди́ти (нсв), а то не успе́ем на по́сле́дний авто́бус.

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

Ка́жется, по́ра за́канчивать (нсв) дискуссию́: лю́ди уже́ ста́ли смотре́ть на часы́.

I think it's time we were bringing the discussion to an end; people are already starting to look at their watches.

5.2.3

Repetition

The *imperfective* aspect is normally used to indicate *repeated* actions.

Она́ всерьёз сле́дила за сво́им здоро́вьем и регуля́рно посе́щала (нсв) тренажё́рный зал, бассе́йн и те́ннисный ко́рт.

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

Лондо́нский футбо́льный клуб «Челси́» с но́вого сезо́на бу́дет прово́дити (нсв) вые́здные ма́тчи в я́рких футбо́лках кисло́тно-лимо́нного цве́та.

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

В жа́ркую по́году сле́дует поча́ще пи́ть (нсв) минеральную во́ду или дру́гие прохладительные напитки́.

In hot weather you should drink more mineral water or other cooling drinks.

Чи́тайте (нсв) на́шу газе́ту ка́ждый день!

Read our newspaper every day!

This principle normally applies to statements or instructions that have general significance, even if repetition is not specifically mentioned:

Мы бу́дем пресле́довать (нсв) терро́ристов всю́ду.

We will pursue terrorists everywhere.

По́льзуясь эска́латором, сто́йте (нсв) справа́, держа́йтесь (нсв) за поруче́нь.

When using the escalator, stand on the right and keep hold of the handrail.

Where both a *finite verb* and an *infinitive* are used together in a sentence in a context relating to a repeated action, the choice of aspect will be determined by which of the two verbs denotes the action being repeated:

Я то́лько что бы́л у вра́ча; он посо́ветовал (св) мне выпива́ть (нсв) по ли́тру минеральной во́ды в день.

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

При каждой нашей встрече он советовал (нсв) мне написать (св) автобиографию.

Every time we met he advised me to write my autobiography.

In the first sentence the advice was given once, but is to be followed every day; consequently, the finite verb ('advised') is *perfective* and the infinitive ('to drink') is *imperfective*. In the second sentence the advice was given regularly, but would have been followed only once; here it is the finite verb that is *imperfective* and the infinitive that is *perfective*.

A perfective verb tends to be used when a series of repeated actions is seen as a single event. This occurs, for example, when a series of actions is repeated in quick succession as part of a chain of events:

Мы сели за стол, выпили (св) по три чашки чая и съели (св) по порции мороженого.

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

Перед тем, как покинуть зал, он успел несколько раз выкрикнуть (св) какой-то непонятный лозунг.

Before leaving the hall he managed several times to shout out some incomprehensible slogan.

The same principle applies when the totality of what has been achieved over a certain period is being summed up:

Он прожил прекрасную жизнь и написал (св) прекрасные книги.

He lived a fine life and wrote fine books.

За последние десять лет она опубликовала (св) более двухсот статей на разные темы.

In the last ten years she has published over 200 articles on different topics.

5.2.4 Focusing on completion

The *perfective* aspect is normally used when the focus is on the *completion* of an action:

Никто отсюда не уйдёт, пока я не получу (св) ответы на все мои вопросы.

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

Кто его обидит, тот дня не проживёт (св).

Anyone who offends him won't live to see the end of the day.

The first example talks about an action that cannot take place until another is completed; the second talks about circumstances that will lead to an action in process not being completed.

The focus is on *completion* in many sentences where an *infinitive* is used:

Мне не стоило большого труда опровергнуть (св) всю напраслину, возведённую на меня, но опровергать 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 second infinitive in this sentence focuses on the process, as was explained above in 5.2.2; the first infinitive, however, focuses on the *result*, in this case the successful refutation of the tissue of lies. Following the same logic, *perfective* infinitives tend to be used in conjunction with the following:

легко́	it is easy to
трудно́	it is difficult to
стоит	one only has to
стараться́ (нсв)/постараться́ (св)	to try to
пытаться́ (нсв)/попытаться́	to try to
чтобы́	in order to

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

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

Трудно́ сказа́ть (св), когда́ вы смо́жете получи́ть ваш зака́з.

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

Но стоило́ ему́ почувствовать (св), что его́ хотят обману́ть, как он начинал злиться́.

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

Я постара́юсь *прийти́* (св) домо́й не по́зже десяти́.

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 взялся́ за это́ дело́ то́лько ра́ди того́, *чтобы́ зарабо́тать* (св) денег для семьи́.

He only took on this task in order to earn some money for his family.

In some instances the aspect of the infinitive affects the meaning of the sentence. In 5.3.2 an example was given of *пора́* used with an *imperfective* infinitive; the meaning was 'It's time' (to be doing something). When *пора́* is used with a *perfective* infinitive, the meaning is 'It's (high) time' (to have done something), i.e. with a focus on *completion*, rather than on *process*:

Нам давно́ *пора́* *уйти́* (св) со сцены́ российской полити́ки и *уступить* (св) место́ молоды́м.

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

Хва́тит and **доста́точно** both mean '(it's) enough'; when **доста́точно** is followed by a *perfective* infinitive, it means 'it's enough to', 'all one has to do is ...':

Доста́точно *проче́сть* (св) *пе́рвую* страни́цу его́ биографи́и, *чтобы́* *понять*, почему́ его́ не *люба́т* в Кре́мле.

It's enough to read the first page of his biography to understand why he's not liked in the Kremlin.

When used with an *imperfective* infinitive, both **доста́точно** and **хва́тит** mean 'that's enough of that', i.e. they form an instruction to stop doing something:

Все́, *хва́тит* *валя́ть* (нсв) дурака́. *Е́сли* не *хо́чешь* *вести́* *серьёзный* *разгово́р*, я *уйду́*.

Right, that's enough of playing the fool. If you don't want to hold a serious conversation with me, I'm going.

Достаточно говорить (нсв) об этом. И так всё ясно.

You don't need to say any more on the subject. We've got the picture. (*Literally*, That's enough of talking about it. Everything's clear as it is.)

5.3 The specific meaning of the verb

5.3.0 Introduction

In many instances the details of aspect usage are determined by specific meaning of the verb concerned.

For specific issues relating to the use of aspects with unprefixated verbs of motion, see 22.1.

5.3.1 Verbs that cannot indicate an action in process in both Russian and English

There are many verbs which, because of their precise meaning, cannot normally indicate *action in process*. With such verbs, however, the usual English meaning does not necessarily indicate whether or not a particular Russian verb belongs to this category.

Examples of where neither a Russian verb nor its English equivalent can normally indicate an action in process:

находить (нсв)/найти (св) 'to find'

NOTE This restriction does not apply in either language when the verb is used in the sense of 'form a particular opinion of something':

Я нахожу (нсв) ваши слова неуместными.
I find your words inappropriate.

5.3.2 Verbs that can indicate an action in process in Russian, but not in English

There are quite a few examples where the Russian verb can indicate an action in process, but where the normal English translation of the Russian *perfective* cannot. In such instances the Russian *imperfective* will usually be translated either by a different verb or by 'try to . . .':

добиваться (нсв) 'to strive for',
'to try to attain'

лечить (нсв) 'to treat (a patient)'

ловить (нсв) 'to try to catch'

решать (нсв) 'to try to decide,
to try to solve'

убеждать (нсв) 'to try to convince'

уговаривать (нсв) 'to try to persuade'

добиться (св) 'to attain'

вылечить (св) 'to cure'

поймать (св) 'to catch'

решить (св) 'to decide,
to solve'

убедить (св) 'to convince'

уговорить (св) 'to persuade'

Человек должен добиваться (нсв) в своём деле совершенства.

A person should strive to achieve perfection in whatever activity they are pursuing.

В последние годы наши учёные добились (св) потрясающих результатов в этой сфере.

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

В прошлом году меня лечили (нсв) от радикулита. Кажется, вылечили (св), но полной уверенности нет, конечно.

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

Ловить (нсв) такси лучше всего на углу. Там всегда большое движение.

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

На основе достоверной информации, полученной из разных источников, сотрудники милиции смогли устроить засаду и поймать (св) преступников.

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

Вчера вечером я читал книгу, решил (нсв) кроссворд в вечерней газете и смотрел телевизор.

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

У меня вчера был такой насыщенный вечер: я прочитал десять студенческих работ, решил (св) кроссворд в вечерней газете и наконец посмотрел ту передачу, которую ты всё время рекомендуешь.

I had a very full evening yesterday; I read ten student essays, solved the crossword in the evening paper and eventually watched that programme you're always recommending.

Он очень странный человек: может целый вечер убеждать (нсв) тебя, что дважды два – пять, а не четыре, как тебе почему-то всегда казалось.

He's a very strange man: he can spend a whole evening trying to convince you that two and two are five and not, as for some reason you've always thought, four.

Я знаю все ваши аргументы наизусть, и вы никогда не убедите (св) меня, что вы правы.

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

Я только что был у шефа. Он уговаривал (нсв) меня возглавить наше представительство на Северном Кавказе. Но не уговорил (св)!

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:

случа́ться (нсв)/случи́ться (св)	to happen
приходи́ть (нсв)/прийти́ (св)	to come, to arrive

In such instances the Russian imperfective can be used to indicate repeated action, but to indicate process an alternative verb with a closely related meaning is used:

происходи́ть (нсв)/произо́йти (св)	to happen
идти́ (нсв)	to be going/coming
прибыва́ть (нсв)/прибы́ть (св)	to arrive

Посмотрí в окно́ и скажи́ нам, что *происходи́т* (нсв) на у́лице.
Look out of the window and tell us what's happening outside.

Тише! *Иде́т* (нсв) учи́тель.
Quiet! The teacher's coming.

Наш по́езд *прибыва́ет* (нсв) на ко́нечную ста́нцию. **Выходя́ из вагона́, пожалуйста, не забыва́йте свои́ вещи.**
Our train is coming into the terminus. When leaving the carriage, please remember to take all items of luggage with you (*Literally*, please don't forget your things.)

NOTE The verb *прибыва́ть* (нсв)/*прибы́ть* (св) is somewhat associated with official contexts and tends to be used in notices and announcements relating to public transport (see 22.4.3).

5.3.4 Verbs indicating an action that by definition cannot be completed

There are some verbs that indicate actions that by definition cannot be completed. Some of these verbs occur in the *imperfective* only; a list of such verbs was given in 4.2.6. Others have *perfective* partners which have special connotations. Many of these have a *perfective* partner with the prefix *по-*. This has the connotation of 'doing the action for a while and then doing something else':

лежа́ть (нсв)/полежа́ть (св)	to lie (down), to be lying (down)
сиде́ть (нсв)/посиде́ть (св)	to (be) sit(ting)
стоя́ть (нсв)/постоя́ть (св)	to (be) stand(ing)
говори́ть (нсв)/поговори́ть (св)	to talk
молча́ть (нсв)/помолча́ть (св)	to be silent
пла́кать (нсв)/попла́кать (св)	to cry
рабо́тать (нсв)/порабо́тать (св)	to work

Сейча́с сде́лаем перерыв на ко́фе; *посиди́м* (св) *немно́жко*, *поговори́м* (нсв), а мину́т че́рез *пятна́дцать* *продолжи́м* нашу рабо́ту.
We'll break for coffee now; we'll sit for a short while and talk, and then after about 15 minutes we'll resume our work.

Услы́шав отве́т, он не́сколько секунд *помолча́л* (св), пото́м взял под козырёк, поверну́лся и вы́шел из ко́мнаты.

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

NOTE When *говори́ть* means 'to say', its perfective partner is *сказа́ть*.

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

заговори́ть (св)	to (start to) talk
замолча́ть (св)	to fall silent
запла́кать (св)	to (start to) cry

Я о́чень удиви́лся, когда́ он вдруг *заговори́л* (св) по-ру́сски. Но по́сле двух-трёх предложéний он *замолча́л* (св). По-видимому, не знал, что сказа́ть да́льше.

I was very surprised when he suddenly started speaking Russian. But after two or three sentences he fell silent. Evidently he didn't know what to say next.

Прочита́в письмо́, она́ *запла́кала* (св) и вы́бежала из ко́мнаты.

Having read the letter, she started crying and ran out of the room.

5.3.5 'Semelfactive' perfectives

A special group of *perfective* verbs is made up of the so-called 'semelfactive' verbs. These verbs, all of which belong to class 4.6.3, denote a single, instantaneous action. Examples (given here with their *imperfective* partners) include:

а́хать (нсв)/а́хнуть (св)	to say 'akh', to give a shout of joy, surprise or sadness
взды́хать (нсв)/вздохну́ть (св)	to sigh
кива́ть (нсв)/кивну́ть (св)	to nod
кида́ть (нсв)/кину́ть (св)	to throw
крича́ть (нсв)/крикну́ть (св)	to shout
лопа́ться (нсв)/лопну́ть (св)	to burst
маха́ть (нсв)/махну́ть (св)	to wave
о́хать (нсв)/о́хнуть (св)	to say 'okh', to groan
пина́ть (нсв)/пну́ть (св)	to kick
прыга́ть (нсв)/прыгну́ть (нсв)	to jump
сверка́ть (нсв)/сверкну́ть (св)	to sparkle, to flash
стреля́ть (нсв)/стрельну́ть (св)	to shoot
стуча́ть (нсв)/стукну́ть (св)	to knock
толка́ть (нсв)/толкну́ть (св)	to push
хихика́ть (нсв)/хихикну́ть (св)	to giggle
чиха́ть (нсв)/чихну́ть (св)	to sneeze
шага́ть (нсв)/шагну́ть (св)	to stride

Мир *вздохну́л* (св) с облегче́нием, услы́шав об освобождéнии заложников.

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

Скоро́ бу́дет дождь: то́лько что *сверкну́ла* (св) мо́лния.

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

5.4 Single completed actions

5.4.0 Introduction

Because the *imperfective* aspect is normally used for *repeated* actions, and because the *perfective* aspect is used when the focus is on the *completion* of an event, it is tempting to conclude that the perfective is the aspect to be used when describing single completed actions in the past. Unfortunately, it is not as simple as that: although the perfective aspect is indeed used on very many occasions, the imperfective is by no means infrequent. The principle to follow is that given at the beginning of this chapter: the imperfective is the default aspect and should be used unless there is a particular reason for using the perfective. And the reason that is most commonly found for using the perfective is that the event is placed in one of a limited number of specific contexts.

5.4.1 The context of other actions

One context that normally requires the use of the *perfective* is that of *preceding* and/or *following* actions – in other words, where an action forms part of a sequence of events. This use of the perfective is found especially frequently in *narratives* of one sort or another:

На следующее утро он проснулся (св) в прекрасном настроении, встал (св), принял (св) душ, побрился (св), позавтракал (св) и уселся (св) за работу.

The next day he woke up in an excellent mood, got up, had a shower, shaved, had breakfast and sat down to work.

Sometimes gerunds or conjunctions such as **когда** ‘when’ are used to indicate that two or more events occur in sequence:

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:

Я пришлю (св) тебе приглашение, и ты оформишь (св) туристическую визу и приедешь (св) на неделю. Потом вернешься (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**:

Она обернулась (св) и увидела (св) женщину средних лет, которая делала (нсв) ей какие-то жесты.

She turned round and saw a middle-aged woman who was gesturing to her.

The making of the gestures is a repeated action that is going on in the background and is indicated by the imperfective verb *делала*.

Я 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 Kievskaja 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 появлялся (нсв) в офисе позже всех, выпивал (нсв) чашку кофе, просматривал (нсв) электронную почту и потом исчезал (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.

Я только что узнал (св), что наш поезд отменён (св); 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.

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 (св) 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.

Жаль, что ты пришёл домой так поздно. Заходила (нсв) твоя сестра; она хотела о чём-то поговорить с тобой.

It's a pity you've come home so late. Your sister called (and has gone away again); she wanted to talk to you about something.

К сожалению я весь день занят: приехала (св) делегация из Англии, и я должен показать им всё, что мы здесь делаем.

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

В прошлом году приезжала (нсв) делегация из Англии. Мы показали им всё, что здесь делаем, и в итоге был подписан протокол о намерениях.

Last year a delegation came out from England. We showed them everything that we are doing here and as a result a joint statement of intent was signed.

Although this usage is perhaps most common with prefixed verbs of motion, it can be found with other verbs as well:

Здесь холодно. А-а, вот почему: кто-то открыл (св) окно.

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

Здесь холодно, как будто кто-то открывал (нсв) окно.

It's cold in here, as if somebody had opened the window (but now it's shut).

In the sentences below, the action of summoning the speaker to see the boss is not 'reversed' as such, but once the visit to the boss is over, the direct consequence of the act of summoning (rushing to his office, sitting there and being given instructions, etc.) no longer applies, which is why the *imperfective* is used in the second example:

Я сейчас иду к шефу. Меня вызвали (св).

I'm on the way to the boss's office. I've been summoned to see him.

Я только что был у шефа. Меня вызывали (нсв).

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 (св) старый друг и сказал (св), 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 (св) 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:

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.

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.

Она, конечно, знает ответ, но кто-то, видимо, просил (нсв) её не говорить об этом.

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:

Припомните, 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.

Повёрьте мне, я знаю, как эти люди работают. Я уже сталкивался (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:

Вы читали (нсв) «Войну 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 (нсв) 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 (нсв)?

Where are you going to spend the night?

The *perfective* is more likely to be used in questions relating to matters of fact, especially if there is a specific context or if the focus is on completion:

Когда мы увидимся (св)?

When will we see each other?

Ты приедешь (св) завтра или послезавтра?

Are you arriving tomorrow or the day after?

Мне придётся тебя оставить на пару дней. Ты как, справишься (св) один? Сможешь (св) 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:

Скажи́те (св), пожа́луйста, ско́лько вре́мени?

Could you tell me what time it is, please?

Войди́те (св)!

Come in!

Позвони́ (св) мне се́годня ве́чером, часо́в в де́сять.

Phone me this evening at about ten o'clock.

5.6.2 Issuing an invitation

Following the principle outlined in 5.2.2, the *imperfective* is used when indicating that the time has now come to carry out an action that is either explicitly or implicitly understood to be appropriate. This includes the issuing of what are in effect *invitations*, a use of the imperfective that is limited to certain specific situations. For example, when visiting someone at their home you may receive all or some of the following invitations:

Заходи́те (нсв).

Come in.

Раздева́йтесь (нсв).

Take off your hat and coat.

Проходи́те (нсв).

Come through into the flat.

Садите́сь (нсв).

Sit down.

NOTE The verb **раздева́ться (нсв)/разде́ться (св)** normally means 'to get undressed'. In this context the invitation does not extend beyond the outer garments.

If, when seated at table, you display a hesitancy in attacking your plate of food, you may be encouraged with the words:

Е́шьте, е́шьте (нсв)! Or sometimes Ку́шайте, ку́шайте (нсв)!

Do start eating!

NOTE The verb **ку́шать** is a synonym of **есть** (both mean 'to eat'), but its use is very restricted; it is normally used only in the *second person* (especially the *imperative*) and the infinitive and is principally associated with the issuing of polite invitations to start eating.

A waiter or waitress waiting to take your order may say:

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. Вызывайте** (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 нажал первую кнопку, но ничего не произошло (св). Он нажал вторую, и дверь открылась.

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

Украли все деньги и кредитные карточки, но, к счастью, паспорт и документы не взяли (св).

They stole all (my) money and credit cards, but fortunately didn't take (my) passport and other documents.

Sometimes the verb in such sentences is reinforced by the phrase **так и**, corresponding approximately to the English 'never did':

Я так и не узна́л (св) его́ и́мя.
I never did find out his name.

The perfective is also used when the focus is on the implications for the present of the fact that the action has not taken place:

Она́ хо́чет показáть тебе́, что не испугáлась (св).
She wants to show you that she hasn't been frightened *or* that she isn't frightened.

Жаль, что мы не достíгли (св) взаимопонимáния.
It's a pity that we haven't reached a mutual understanding.

When an action is expected, but has not yet taken place, either aspect is possible. The perfective is more likely to be used when the focus is on completion, if the action has already started or if the action does not involve intention on the part of the subject:

Я то́лько что посмотре́л в ящик. По́чта ещё не пришлá (св).
I've just looked in the box. The post hasn't arrived yet.

К сожалéнию, я ещё не сдал (св) все необходíмые экзамены́.
Unfortunately, I still haven't passed all the necessary examinations.

The *imperfective* is more likely to be used if the focus is on the process, if the action has not started or if the action involves intention on the part of the subject:

К сожалéнию, я ещё не сдава́л (нсв) все необходíмые экзамены́.
Unfortunately, I still haven't taken all the necessary examinations.

Европе́йский суд ещё не присту́пáл (нсв) к рассмотре́нию э́того и́ска.
The European Court (of Human Rights) has not begun its examination of this case.

In some instances of this sort, however, either aspect can be used, without there being any significant difference between them:

Госуда́рственная Ду́ма ещё не рассма́тривала (нсв) бюдже́т на следующи́й год.

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

Госуда́рственная Ду́ма ещё не рассмотре́ла (св) бюдже́т на сле́дующи́й 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 страна́но, я не чита́л (нсв) «Войну́ и мир».
Strange as it may seem, I haven't read *War and Peace*.

Я могу́ подтверди́ть, что он из ко́мнаты не выходи́л (нсв).
I can confirm that he didn't leave the room.

Пове́рьте мне, я не убивáл (нсв) его́.
Believe me, I didn't kill him.

Ты никогда́ не расска́зывал (нсв) мне об э́том.
You never told me about that.

5.7.2 Negation in the future

In general, the use of aspects with *negated future tense* verbs is not significantly different from that which occurs in *questions* and which is described in 5.5.2. The *imperfective* tends to be used when referring to intentions:

Я прошу́ проше́ния, но я не бу́ду отве́чать (нсв) на э́тот вопро́с: для э́того ну́жно мно́го вре́мени.

I apologise, but I will not answer that question, because it would take up a lot of time.

The *perfective* tends to be used to make factual statements about events that might have occurred, but which will not happen, especially in relation to a specific set of circumstances:

Не сто́ит спра́шивать об э́том: никто́ вам ничего́ не ска́жет (св), ни здесь, ни в прокурату́ре.

It's not worth asking about it; nobody will tell you anything, either here or at the prosecutor's office.

5.7.3 Negation with the imperative

Negated imperative verbs are almost invariably in the *imperfective*:

Не подходи́ (нсв) ко мне. У меня́ грипп.

Don't come near me. I've got the flu.

Ремóнт бу́дет сде́лан, е́сли не за́втра, то послеза́втра. Не беспоко́йтесь (нсв).

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

Не покупáй (нсв) э́тот сыр. Срок го́дности уже́ истёк.

Don't buy that cheese. It's past its sell-by date.

The *perfective* is used only on rare occasions, when the verb serves as a warning to avoid some inadvertant event:

Не потеря́й (св) ру́чку, а то не́чем бу́дет запо́лнить анке́ту.

Don't lose the pen, or you'll have nothing to fill the form in with.

Sometimes these forms are used in conjunction with **смотри́** 'watch', 'mind out':

Смотри́, не разби́й (св) э́тот стака́н!

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 сове́тую вам чита́ть (нсв) «Евге́ния Оне́гина» в перево́де.

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

Ребе́нку ста́ло лу́чше, так что они́ реши́ли не вызы́вать (нсв) врача́.

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

Я сове́тую вам не задава́ть (нсв) ему́ э́тот вопро́с.

I advise you not to ask him that question.

A *perfective* infinitive is used after negated forms of the verb **хотѣть** in sentences containing an apology for the unintended consequences of an action:

Извини́те, я не хотѣл вас обидѣть (нсв).
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend you.

5.7.5 Impossibility and undesirability

An exception to the above principle occurs in contexts relating to permission and (im) possibility, since here the aspect of the infinitive depends on the meaning of the sentence. In general, an *imperfective infinitive* is used in contexts relating to the giving or refusing of permission, while a *perfective infinitive* is used in contexts relating to the possibility or impossibility of an action.

An imperfective infinitive used on its own in a negated sentence indicates a categorical prohibition. This construction has bureaucratic or military connotations, and sometimes it can be found on notices or official documents:

Не кури́ть (нсв)!
No smoking!

Не пи́сать (нсв) ни́же пункти́рной ли́нии.
Do not write beneath the dotted line.

The use of the perfective infinitive in such sentences indicates impossibility. This usage is fairly rare and its presence is indicative of a certain degree of rhetorical flourish:

Он знаѣт сто́лько языко́в! Все не пере́числить (св)!
There's no end to the number of languages he knows!
(*Literally*, He knows so many languages! It's impossible to enumerate them all!)

The adverb **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-моѣму, лучше не отве́чать (нсв) на э́тот вопро́с.
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 блестя́ще разобрáлся с его́ ка́верзными вопро́сами: лучше не отве́тить (св)!
You coped brilliantly with his trick questions; you couldn't have come up with better answers!

An imperfective infinitive is used with negated forms of the verb **мочь** 'to be able' and with **нельзя́** 'one cannot' to indicate that an action is not permitted:

NOTE **Нельзя́** is the negative form of **можно́** 'one can', 'one may'.

К сожалѣнию, я не могу́ отве́чать (нсв) на э́тот вопро́с.
Unfortunately, I cannot (i.e. I am not allowed to) answer that question.

Туда́ нельзя́ входи́ть (нсв): там идёт како́е-то совеща́ние.
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 **нельзя́**, the meaning conveyed is that the action is impossible:

К сожалéнию, я не могу́ отве́тить (св) на э́тот вопро́с: у меня́ прóсто нет никакой информации на э́ту те́му.

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

Нельзя́ сказа́ть (св) за́ранее, какой у них бу́дет результа́т.

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

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

Если хоте́те, вы мо́жете не отве́чать (нсв) на э́тот вопро́с.

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

Éсли у вас ме́ньше, чем де́сять ты́сяч до́лларов, мо́жно не запо́лнять (нсв) декла́рацию.

If you have less than \$10,000, you don't have to fill in a declaration form.

If the verb **мочь** is used with a negated perfective infinitive, the meaning conveyed is the possibility that something may not happen (**мо́жно** is not used in this construction):

Он мо́жет не отве́тить (св) на ваш вопро́с: вре́мени у него́ о́чень мало́.

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

Но мне мо́гут не пове́рить (св).

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

If **нельзя́** or a negated form of the verb **мочь** is used with a negated infinitive, the two negatives cancel each other out, and the meaning is something like 'it is impossible not to'. In this construction, which is used rather more frequently than the English equivalent, the infinitive is usually perfective:

Нельзя́ не восхити́ться (св) его́ решите́льностью.

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

Он не мо́жет не отве́тить (св) на ва́ше письмо́.

He cannot fail to answer your letter. *Or* He has no choice but to answer your letter.

For more on issuing prohibitions, giving advice and giving permission, see 18.2.4, 18.4, 18.5.

5.8

Some practical points

5.8.0

Introduction

Practical problems in the use of aspects can sometimes arise from the fact that the various connotations associated with each of the two aspects are not in all cases mutually exclusive. In some instances there are solutions available that might not be immediately obvious.

5.8.1 Making a 'negative' choice

In the previous sections of this chapter attention has been focused on positive reasons for choosing which aspect to use. In some instances, however, the choice of aspect is determined less by any obvious positive connotations of the preferred form than by the potential for misunderstanding that may arise from the connotations of the alternative:

Вы можете зайти́ (св) ко мне после обе́да.

You can call in and see me after lunch.

Он хо́чет пере́ехать (св) в Москвú.

He wants to move to Moscow.

In these examples, assuming they each refer to a specific occasion, the *perfective* infinitive is used not so much because of any particular connotations of the perfective, but because the respective *imperfectives* (**заходить**, **переезжать**) might introduce undesirable connotations of either repetition or, in the case of the second example, a focus on the process, rather than the result.

For the use of the imperfective to indicate repeated action, see 5.2.3.

For the use of the imperfective to focus on the process, see 5.3.2.

5.8.2 Having your cake and eating it

There is one construction that makes it possible to use both aspects at the same time. This is when the past or the future tense of the *perfective verb* **стать** is combined with an *imperfective infinitive*. This construction is mostly used to indicate the start of a series of repeated actions or of a single continuing action. It occurs frequently in descriptions of a chain of events, but is not restricted to that type of context. When sentences with this construction are being translated into English, the verb **стать** is sometimes rendered as 'start' or 'begin', although in many instances only the accompanying imperfective verb is translated:

Поселившись в гостинице, расположенной в самом центре Лондона, я стал (св) ждать (нсв). Ближе к полуночи мне позвонил незнако́мый мужчина с иностранным акцентом.

Having settled into the hotel, which was located in the very centre of London, I waited. Towards midnight I received a telephone call from an unknown man with a foreign accent.

Я поднял бумажник и стал (св) проверять (нсв) содержимое. Сла́ва Бо́гу, докумен́ты оказа́лись на месте. Деньги пропали, но это, в конце концов, не так страшно.

I picked up my wallet and checked the contents. Thank goodness, the documents were all present and correct. My money had gone but, when all's said and done, that's not so terrible.

Жара расслабляюще действует на всех, и студéнты и да́же профессора́ стали (св) приходи́ть (нсв) на ле́кции в фу́тболках и шо́ртах.

The heat has had a relaxing effect on everyone, and students and even professors have taken to coming to lectures in T-shirts and shorts.

In the first two of these examples the *perfective* verb **стал** is used to situate the action within a sequence of events. In the first example, the *imperfective infinitive* **ждать** is used to indicate a continuing event that cannot lead to a conclusion, while in the second

example, the imperfective infinitive **проверя́ть** is used to focus on the process. In the following sentence we are given the narrator's reaction to what he finds during the process of checking. In the third example, the perfective verb **ста́ли** is used to indicate that the consequence of the action in the past still applies in the present, while the imperfective infinitive **приходи́ть** indicates repeated action.

For more uses of the verb **стать**, see 14.1.6.

The future **ста́ну** is used less frequently with an imperfective infinitive. Although it can have the same nuances as the past tense, there is often little or no practical difference between this construction and the ordinary *imperfective future* formed using **бу́ду** and the *imperfective infinitive*:

Я, наве́рно, ста́ну (св) приходи́ть (нсв) на рабо́ту то́лько по́сле обе́да, так как мне ле́гче рабо́тать до́ма.

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

The use of **бу́ду приходи́ть** would not make a significant difference here.

5.8.3

Не стал, не ста́ну + imperfective infinitive

When negated forms of the verb **стать** are used with an *imperfective infinitive*, the effect is to produce a more categorical negation. In the *past tense* the meaning is often close to 'chose/decided not to':

Прокура́тура не ста́ла (св) возбу́ждать (нсв) де́ло прот́ив его́ бра́та.

The prosecutor's office has decided not to bring criminal charges against his brother.

In the *future tense* this construction can be an emphatic way of indicating that someone has no intention of doing something:

Разговарива́ть (нсв) с тобо́й на э́ту те́му я не ста́ну (св).

I have no intention of talking to you on that topic.

6

Adjectives

6.0 Introduction

Adjectives are words that are used to *qualify nouns*, usually by the addition of a descriptive term. Adjectives can be used in two ways: *attributive adjectives* form part of a single phrase with the nouns they qualify; *predicative adjectives* form part of the *predicate*, that is, they normally appear in conjunction with the verb **быть** or one of its synonyms. The difference between the two types of adjective can be illustrated by the following two English sentences:

There is a *full* glass on the table. *Attributive*
The glass is *full*. *Predicative*

Russian adjectives decline in a similar fashion to nouns, albeit with distinct sets of endings. Attributive adjectives agree with the nouns they qualify in *number, gender and case*; predicative adjectives agree with the nouns they qualify in *number and gender*, but are used only in the *nominative* or *instrumental* cases. Some adjectives have an additional form, known as the *short form*, which is used only in the predicative function and only in the *nominative* case; these are described separately in **6.5**.

Attributive adjectives are normally placed *before* the nouns they qualify. Exceptions to this are discussed in **6.7** and **20.1.3**.

Russian adjectives have *four* sets of endings: one for each gender in the singular and one to serve for all nouns in the plural. Almost all adjectives belong to one of three declension types, and although there are some predictable complications caused by the application of the spelling rules given in **1.5.2**, **1.5.4** and **1.5.5**, there are relatively few irregularities.

6.1 Hard adjectives

6.1.1 The standard declension pattern of hard adjectives

The standard declension pattern of *hard* adjectives can be illustrated by **но́вый** ‘new’:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	но́вый	но́вая	но́вое	но́вые
Gen.	но́вого	но́вой	но́вого	но́вых
Dat.	но́вому	но́вой	но́вому	но́вым
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	но́вую	но́вое	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	но́вым	но́вой	но́вым	но́выми
Prep.	но́вом	но́вой	но́вом	но́вых

The *accusative* ending in the *masculine singular* and in the *plural* is identical to the respective *nominative* ending when the adjective qualifies an *inanimate* noun and identical to the respective *genitive* ending when the adjective qualifies an *animate* noun. This rule applies to all adjectives:

Я купил но́вый стол для кúхни.
I've bought a new table for the kitchen.

Я давно́ знаю ва́шего но́вого дру́га.
I've known your new friend for a long time.

Тепе́рь на́до купи́ть но́вые сту́лья.
Now I have to buy new chairs.

Когда́ я пере́ехал в Петербу́рг, я бы́стро приобрёл но́вых друзе́й.
When I moved to St Petersburg, I soon made new friends.

For more on animate and inanimate nouns, see 2.4.

6.1.2 Adjectives with stress on the ending

Adjectives that have the stress on the ending, for example:

круто́й steep, hard, tough, 'cool'
молодо́й young
тупо́й blunt, dull, stupid

have a *nominative singular masculine* ending in **-о́й**. All other endings follow the standard pattern:

<i>Nom. sing. masc.</i>	<i>Nom. sing. fem.</i>	<i>Nom. sing. n.</i>	<i>Nom. pl.</i>
круто́й	крута́я	круто́е	круты́е

6.1.3 Application of the spelling rule given in 1.5.5

In accordance with the spelling rule given in 1.5.5, the ending of the *genitive singular masculine* and *neuter* is spelled **-го**, but is pronounced as if written with the letter **в**. For example, the form written **но́вого** is pronounced [но́вəвə]. This rule applies to all adjectives, as well as to *pronouns* and *numerals* with *genitive singular* endings in **-го**.

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

6.1.4 Application of the spelling rule given in 1.5.4

When an adjective has a stem ending in **-г-**, **-к-** or **-х-**, the application of the spelling rule given in 1.5.4 means that any **-ы-** that would occur in an ending is automatically replaced by **-и-**. This rule affects the *nominative singular masculine*, the *instrumental singular masculine* and *neuter* and all endings in the plural.

For example, **стро́гий** 'severe', **ру́сский** 'Russian', **ти́хий** 'quiet':

Nom. sing. masc.	стро́гий	ру́сский	ти́хий
Instr. sing. masc. and n.	стро́гим	ру́ским	ти́хим
Nom. pl.	стро́гие	ру́ские	ти́хие
Gen. and prep. pl.	стро́гих	ру́ских	ти́ких

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

Nom. sing. masc.	дорого́й 'dear'
Instr. sing. masc. and n.	дороги́м
Nom. pl.	дороги́е
Gen. and prep. pl.	дороги́х

6.1.5 Application of the spelling rules given in 1.5.2

The effects of the spelling rules given in 1.5.2 on the endings of adjectives are a little more complicated than those mentioned in the previous sections. If an adjective has a stem ending in **-ж-**, **-ч-**, **-ш-** or **-щ-** and if the stress is not on the ending, any **-ы-** occurring in the ending is replaced by **-и-** and any **-о-** occurring immediately after one of these consonants is replaced by **-е-**. The results of applying these rules can be illustrated by **хоро́ший** 'good':

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	хоро́ший	хоро́шая	хоро́шее	хоро́шие
Gen.	хоро́шего	хоро́шей	хоро́шего	хоро́ших
Dat.	хоро́шему	хоро́шей	хоро́шему	хоро́шим
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	хоро́шую	хоро́шее	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	хоро́шим	хоро́шей	хоро́шим	хоро́шими
Prep.	хоро́шем	хоро́шей	хоро́шем	хоро́ших

NOTE

The very small number of rarely used adjectives in **-цкий**, for example, **красноли́цкий** 'red-faced' and **ку́цкий** 'dock-tailed', 'skimp', follow the second, but not the first of these rules, i.e. they retain **-ы-**, but replace **-о-** with **-е-**.

The number of adjectives in this category with stress on the ending is also very small, but this group includes the widely used **большо́й** 'big' and **чужо́й** '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 **большо́й**:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	большо́й	больша́я	большо́е	больши́е
Gen.	большо́го	большо́й	большо́го	больши́х
Dat.	большо́му	большо́й	большо́му	больши́м
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	большу́ю	большо́е	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	больши́м	большо́й	больши́м	больши́ми
Prep.	большо́м	большо́й	большо́м	больши́х

6.2

Soft adjectives (1)

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

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	си́ний	си́няя	си́нее	си́ние
Gen.	си́него	си́ней	си́него	си́них
Dat.	си́нему	си́ней	си́нему	си́ним
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	си́нюю	си́нее	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	си́ним	си́ней	си́ним	си́ними
Prep.	си́нем	си́ней	си́нем	си́них

Other frequently used adjectives belonging to this group include:

ве́рхний	upper	да́льний	distant, far
дре́вний	ancient	за́дний	back, rear
заму́жняя	married (of a woman)	искре́нный	sincere
крайний	extreme, endmost, last	ли́шний	extra, superfluous
ни́жний	lower	пе́редний	front, forward
поздний	late	после́дний	last
сре́дний	middle, average		

NOTE Because of its meaning **заму́жняя** normally occurs only in the *feminine* and *plural* forms.

In addition, there a large number of adjectives formed from *nouns*, *adverbs*, *prepositions* and *phrases* that indicate place or time. Examples include:

зима́	winter	зи́мний	winter (adj.)
вече́р	evening	вече́рний	evening (adj.)
здесь	here	зде́шний	local'
сего́дня	today	сего́дняшний	today's
в прошло́м	last year	прошло́годний	last year's
году́			
со́рок лет	forty years	со́рокале́тний	forty years (old)

For more on the formation of adjectives in this way, *see* 10.2.2.

6.3 Soft adjectives (2)

The adjectives belonging to this group are all formed from animate nouns, although the group also includes the *ordinal numeral* **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 **птичий** (formed from **птица** ‘bird’):

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	пти́чий	пти́чья	пти́чье	пти́чьи
Gen.	пти́чьего	пти́чьей	пти́чьего	пти́чьих
Dat.	пти́чьему	пти́чьей	пти́чьему	пти́чьим
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	пти́чью	пти́чье	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	пти́чьим	пти́чьей	пти́чьим	пти́чьими
Prep.	пти́чьем	пти́чьей	пти́чьем	пти́чьих

For more on the formation and use of these adjectives, see 10.2.5.

6.4 Nouns that decline like adjectives

6.4.0 Introduction

In Russian there are a number of nouns that were originally adjectives or participles and that decline like adjectives, rather than like ordinary nouns.

Common nouns normally have a fixed gender and decline according to the pattern of that gender in the singular, as well as in the plural. Some nouns referring to people, however, have both masculine and feminine forms, and some occur only in the plural.

Surnames have masculine, feminine and plural forms.

6.4.1 Common nouns

Examples of *masculine* nouns:

водяно́й	water spirit
военноплéнный	prisoner-of-war
военнослужáщий	member of the armed forces
главнокомáнующий	commander-in-chief
дворецкíй	butler, major-domo
домово́й	spirit that lives in the house
лéший	spirit of the forest

портной	tailor
рядовой	private (soldier)
управляющий	manager
часовой	sentry

Examples of *feminine* nouns:

булочная	baker's	ванная	bathroom
горничная	(chamber)maid	гостиная	living-room
закусочная	snack-bar	запятая	comma
кривая	curve (e.g. on a graph)	набережная	embankment
пивная	beer bar, pub	прачечная	laundry
сборная	national (sports) team	столовая	canteen, refectory, dining-room
уборная	toilet; dressing room (e.g. in a theatre)	шашлычная	shashlik-house, kebab-house

Examples of nouns that can be *masculine* or *feminine*:

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

Examples of *neuter* nouns:

будущее	the future	горючее	fuel
жаркое	roast meat, fried meat	животное	animal
лёгкое	lung	млекопитающее	mammal
мороженое	icecream	насекомое	insect
настоящее	the present (time)	пирожное	cake
пресмыкающееся	reptile	прилагательное	adjective
прошлое	the past	сказуемое	predicate
содержимое	contents (e.g. of a bottle)	существительное	noun
числительное	numeral	шампанское	champagne, sparkling wine

NOTE The noun **пресмыкающееся** declines like the *present participle* of a *reflexive* verb, so that the *genitive singular*, for example, is **пресмыкающегося**.

For more on the participles of reflexive verbs, see **4.12, 4.13**.

Examples of nouns that occur only in the *plural*:

данные 'data'	командировочные 'travelling expenses'
наличные 'cash'	позывные 'call-sign'
чаевые 'tip' (e.g. in a restaurant)	

NOTE In some instances there exist adjectives or participles identical in form to these nouns. In some instances the meaning of the adjective is closely related to that of the noun, e.g. **русский, русская, русское, русские** '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:

<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Ольшанский	Ольшанская	Ольшанские
Чайковский	Чайковская	Чайковские
Крамской	Крамская	Крамские
Лужный	Лужная	Лужные
Толстой	Толстая	Толстые
Непомнящий	Непомнящая	Непомнящие

6.5 The short forms of adjectives

6.5.0 Introduction

Many adjectives have a second set of endings known as *short forms*. These endings occur only in the *nominative* and are used only in the *predicative* function. In contrast, the endings described in sections 6.1–6.3 are sometimes known as *long forms*.

This means that adjectives have three forms that can be used in predicative function: the *nominative long form*, the *instrumental long form* and the *short form*. The use of these different forms is explained in 14.1.4.

6.5.1 The endings of short adjectives

The endings of *short form* adjectives can be arrived at by removing the final syllable (**-ый/-ой/-ий, -я, -е, -е**) from the nominative ending of the long form. The endings can be illustrated by the following examples:

<i>Nom. sing. masc.</i> <i>(long form)</i>	<i>Masc. sing.</i> <i>(short form)</i>	<i>Fem. sing.</i> <i>(short form)</i>	<i>Neut. sing.</i> <i>(short form)</i>	<i>Pl. (short form)</i>
правый 'right'	прав	права	право	правы
пьяный 'drunk'	пьян	пьяна	пьяно	пьяны
чистый 'clean'	чист	чиста	чисто	чисты

<i>Nom. sing. masc. (long form)</i>	<i>Masc. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Fem. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Neut. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Pl. (short form)</i>
высо́кий 'high', 'tall'	высо́к	высока́	высоко́	высо́ки
све́жий 'fresh'	свеж	свежа́	свежо́/свеже́	све́жи
пусто́й 'empty'	пуст	пуста́	пусто́	пусты́

NOTE The stress on the short form endings often differs from that of long form endings and in some instances alternative stresses are possible. This can affect the application of the spelling rules given in 1.5.2, as in the example **свежо́/свеже́** (long form **свеже́е**) above.

If the removal of the masculine singular ending **-ый** etc. would result in two consonants coming together, a *fleeting vowel* is usually inserted.

For more on the fleeting vowel, see 2.5.0.

<i>Nom. sing. masc. (long form)</i>	<i>Masc. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Fem. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Neut. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Pl. (short form)</i>
любе́зный 'kind', 'courteous'	любе́зен	любе́зна	любе́зно	любе́зны
тесный 'cramped', 'small'	тесен	тесна́	тесно́	тесны́
лёгкий 'light', 'easy'	лёгк	легка́	легко́	лёгки/легки́
ре́зкий 'sharp', 'abrupt'	ре́зок	ре́зка	ре́зко	ре́зки
досто́йный 'worthy'	досто́инн	досто́йна	досто́йно	досто́йны

- NOTES (i) The rules for determining which *fleeting vowel* is used are essentially the same as those given in 2.5.2 for the *genitive plural* endings of *feminine* and *neuter* nouns.
- (ii) In the masculine singular short form of the adjective **досто́йный** the vowel inserted is **н**, and not the expected **е**.

There are, however, some instances where a fleeting vowel is not inserted. Among these are **пусто́й** and **чисто́й**, mentioned above, and other examples include the following:

<i>Nom. sing. masc. (long form)</i>	<i>Masc. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Fem. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Neut. sing. (short form)</i>	<i>Pl. (short form)</i>
бо́дрый 'cheerful'	бодр	бодра́	бо́дро	бо́дры
до́брый 'good', 'kind'	добр	добра́	до́бро	до́бры
тре́звый 'sober'	трезв	трезва́	тре́зво	тре́звы

6.5.2 Adjectives with no short forms

A substantial number of adjectives either have no short forms or have short forms that are so rarely used that for all practical purposes they can safely be disregarded. The following fall into this category:

- 1 All adjectives ending in **-ский** or **-енький** (for the special case of **мале́нький**, see below).

- 2 All adjectives belonging to the second group of soft adjectives (described in 6.3).
 3 Almost all adjectives belonging to the first group of soft adjectives (described in 6.2). The only exception in general use is **искренний** 'sincere', which has the following short form endings:

Masc. sing.	искренен
Fem. sing.	искренна
N. sing.	искренне/искренно
Pl.	искренни/искренны

- 4 Adjectives that indicate a quality that is by definition inherent or permanent. Examples include **деревянный** 'wooden', **десятичный** 'decimal', **трамвайный** 'relating to trams', **яблочный** 'relating to or made from apples'.

6.5.3 Irregular forms

The adjectives **большой** 'big' and **маленький** 'small' have short forms that are derived (regularly) from the related adjectives **великий** 'great', 'big' and **малый** 'small' respectively:

большой ~ велик, велика́, велико́, велики́
маленький ~ мал, мала, мало, малы́

The adjective **рад, рада, радо, рады** 'pleased about something' exists only in the short form; it tends to be used with an *infinitive* or with a noun in the *dative*:

Мы очень рады вас видеть.
 We are very pleased to see you.

Я рад вашим успехам.
 I am pleased about your success(es).

6.6 Possessive adjectives

6.6.1 The formation of possessive adjectives

In informal language Russian makes wide use of *possessive adjectives*. These are formed from proper names and terms indicating family relations that end in **-а** or **-я** by removing the final vowel and adding **-ин**. They are used instead of the *genitive* of the noun concerned to indicate *possession*.

For the use of the genitive case to indicate possession, see 3.3.1.

The following examples illustrate the formation of *possessive adjectives*. In general, when they are formed from forenames, they are usually based on the *familiar*, rather than the full form, although the latter is used in some contexts, e.g. when indicating saints' days.

For more on the full and the familiar forms of forenames, see 12.1.1.

ма́ма	Mum	ма́мин	Mum's
па́па	Dad	па́пин	Dad's
те́ща	(husband's) mother-in-law	те́щин	mother-in-law's
Та́ня	Tat'iana, Tania	Та́нин	Tania's
Га́ля	Galina, Galia	Га́лин	Galia's

Са́ша	Aleksandr, Aleksandra, Sasha	Са́шин	Sasha's
Ми́ша	Mikhail, Misha	Ми́шин	Misha's

6.6.2

The declension of possessive adjectives

Although many of the endings of *possessive adjectives* are the same as of normal adjectives, there are special endings for the *nominative* and the *accusative*:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	ма́нин	ма́мина	ма́мино	ма́нины
Gen.	ма́миного	ма́миной	ма́миного	ма́миных
Dat.	ма́миному	ма́миной	ма́миному	ма́миным
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	ма́мину	ма́мино	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	ма́миным	ма́миной	ма́миным	ма́миными
Prep.	ма́мином	ма́миной	ма́мином	ма́миных

Possessive adjectives do not have short forms.

6.6.3

The use of possessive adjectives

The following sentences illustrate the use of possessive adjectives:

Вдруг за двёрью он услышал па́пин го́лос.

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

У тебя́ нет случайно́ Ми́шиного телефо́на?

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

Э́то Та́нины ве́щи: лу́чше их не тро́гать.

Those are Tania's things. I wouldn't touch them if I were you.

In each of these sentences the *possessive adjectives* could be replaced by a noun in the *genitive* or by another construction indicating possession:

Вдруг за двёрью он услышал го́лос па́пы.

У тебя́ нет случайно́ телефо́на Ми́ши?

Э́ти ве́щи принадле́жат Та́не: лу́чше их не тро́гать.

(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*:

Она́ не́сколько раз быва́ла на кварти́ре Са́шиной ма́тери.

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:

ахилле́сова пята́

Achilles' heel

крокоди́ловы слёзы

crocodile tears

ма́менькин сыно́к	Mummy's boy
па́пенькина до́чка	Daddy's girl
Та́тьянин день	St Tatiana's day (25 January; this has come to be regarded as a special day for students)

Я вам покажу́ ку́зькину ма́ть!

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

Воо́бщэ он пи́шет о́чень хоро́шо, но егó ахиллэсова пята́ – э́то же́нские персона́жи.

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

Сего́дня Та́тьянин день: в общежи́тиях пройду́т вече́ринки, во мно́гих ба́рах и клу́бах органи́зованы специа́льные дискоте́ки для студéнтов.

It's St Tatiana's day today. There will be parties in the student hostels, and many bars and clubs are putting on special discos for students.

6.7 Indeclinable adjectives

Russian has a very small number of *indeclinable* adjectives. Most of these belong to one of a restricted range of semantic categories, and they are noteworthy for the fact that, with certain exceptions, they are placed *after* the nouns they qualify.

Adjectives indicating the colour and style of clothes:

ха́ки	khaki
клёш	flared, bell-bottomed

Culinary terms:

ассорти́	mixed
фри	(deep-)fried

Adjectives indicating ethnic groups or languages:

ко́ми	Komi
хи́нди	Hindi
урду́	Urdu
эспера́нто	Esperanto

NOTE The adjective **ко́ми** can either precede or follow the noun it qualifies.

Other indeclinable adjectives:

пик	peak (used only in the phrase часы́ пик 'peak hours')
мини́	mini (this usually precedes the noun)
э́кстра	extra (quality)

Заба́вно смотре́ть ста́рые фи́льмы семидеся́тых годов, где все хо́дят в э́тих стра́шных брю́ках кле́ш.

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

«Та́лун» – э́то ежедне́вная информа́ционная програ́мма на ко́ми языке́.
Talun is a daily news programme in (the) Komi (language).

Не люблю ездить в метро в часы пик, тем более, если надо делать пересадку в центре города.

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

6.8.0 Introduction

Comparative adjectives are used when comparing different degrees of the quality indicated by the adjective in question. *Superlative* adjectives are used to indicate the highest possible degree of quality concerned.

There are two ways of forming comparative adjectives in Russian: one, the *short comparative*, is used mostly for *predicative* adjectives, while the other, the *long comparative* is mainly used for *attributive* adjectives.

The use of comparative adjectives is described in 21.9.1–21.9.6.

There are four ways of forming superlative adjectives, which are differentiated by style and function.

6.8.1

The short comparative

The *short comparative* does not decline and has only one form for all numbers and genders. For the majority of adjectives the short comparative is formed by removing the ending and by adding the suffix **-ее**:

гру́бый	crude, rough	гру́бее	cruder, rougher
дли́нный	long	дли́ннее	longer
древ́ний	ancient	древ́нее	more ancient
интересный	interesting	интереснее	more interesting
но́вый	new	нове́е	newer
я́сный	clear	я́снее	clearer

If an adjective has a stem that ends in one of the following consonants or sequences of consonants, the consonant(s) undergo a change according to patterns given below and the ending is *-e*. With some adjectives that end in a consonant followed by *-кий*, the *-к-* is removed and the preceding consonant is changed:

г~ж	дорогой	dear	дороже	dearer
д~ж	молодой	young	моложе	younger
	редкий	rare	реже	rarer
з~ж	близкий	nearer	ближе	nearer
	узкий	narrow	уже	narrower
к~ч	крепкий	strong	крепче	stronger
	лёгкий	light, easy	легче	lighter, easier
	жёсткий	hard	жестче	harder
ст~щ	чистый	clean	чище	cleaner
т~ч	богатый	rich	богаче	richer
	короткий	short	короче	shorter
х~ш	тихий	quiet	тише	quieter

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

большой	big	больше	bigger
высокий	high	выше	higher
глубокий	deep	глубже	deeper
далёкий	far, distant	дальше	farther, further, more distant
дешёвый	cheap	дешевле	cheaper
долгий	long (of time)	дольше	longer
маленький	small	меньше	smaller
сладкий	sweet	слаще	sweeter
старый	old	старше	older
тонкий	thin	тоньше	thinner
широкий	wide	шире	wider

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

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

плохой	bad	хуже	worse
хороший	good	лучше	better

NOTE The adjective *худой* 'thin' has the short comparative *худее*.

There are many adjectives that do not have short comparative forms. These include:

- 1 Adjectives denoting a quality that by definition cannot exist in different degrees, for example *двуногий* 'two-legged', *босой* 'bare-footed', *трамвайный* 'relating to trams'. This category also includes all adjectives belonging to the second group of soft adjectives.
- 2 Virtually all adjectives ending in *-ский*, *-ской* or *-енький*.
- 3 Some miscellaneous adjectives, including *ветхий* 'old', 'decrepit', *голый* 'bare', 'naked', *гордый* 'proud', *дикий* 'wild', *липкий* 'sticky' and *нагой* 'naked'.

Especially in informal language the short comparative is frequently used with the prefix **по-**. The effect of adding the prefix is normally to soften slightly the degree of comparison:

Если бы я был *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:

древний	ancient	более древний	more ancient
интересный	interesting	более интересный	more interesting
оптимистический	optimistic	более оптимистический	more optimistic
широкий	wide	более широкий	wider

The only restriction on the formation of the long comparative is that it is not normally used with adjectives denoting a quality that by definition cannot exist in different degrees.

6.8.3 Declining comparatives

There are in Russian four comparative forms that decline like normal long adjectives. These are:

хороший	good	лучший	better
плохой	bad	худший	worse
большой	big	больший	bigger
маленький	little	меньший	smaller

NOTE Some of the forms of **больший** (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 **молодой** 'young' and **старый** 'old' have associated forms that look like declinable comparatives, but which are really separate adjectives:

молодой	младший	younger, junior
старый	старший	elder, older, senior

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

Моя старшая сестра живёт в Петербурге.
My elder sister lives in St Petersburg.

Она работает младшим научным сотрудником в Словарном секторе Академии наук.

She works as a junior research officer in the Dictionary Section of the Academy of Sciences.

6.8.4

The superlative with самый or наиболее

The most common way of forming the *superlative* of adjectives is to place the *pronoun* **самый** before the long form of the adjective.

For more on the pronoun **самый**, see 7.8.2.

When **самый** is used with an adjective, both parts decline and agree with the noun in *number, gender* and *case*. **Самый** declines like a normal *hard* adjective (see 6.1):

Это самая интересная книга, которую я когда-либо читал.

This is the most interesting book I have ever read.

Они покупают самую стильную одежду и едят в самых дорогих ресторанах.

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

The *declinable comparative* adjectives **лучший** and **худший** can be used either on their own or prefaced by **самый** to indicate *superlative* meaning:

У нас каждый год проводится конкурс на (самое) лучшее стихотворение на тему «Россия».

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

The adverb **наиболее** can be used in place of **самый**. **Наиболее** is normally found only in written language:

Наиболее одарённых детей отбирают в музыкальную школу-интернат при Московской консерватории.

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

The opposite of **наиболее** is **наименее**:

Метод, который они выбрали, оказался наименее эффективным.

The method they chose proved to be the least effective.

6.8.5

Other forms of the superlative

Some adjectives form a second superlative with the suffix **-ейший** (**-айший** if there is consonant change following the patterns given in 6.8.1 for the short comparative). Examples that are likely to be encountered include:

важный	important	важнейший	most important
грубый	crude, rough	грубейший	crudest, roughest
дальний	far	дальнейший	furthest, further
интересный	interesting	интереснейший	most interesting
крупный	big, large	крупнейший	biggest, largest
новый	new	новейший	newest
опасный	dangerous	опаснейший	most dangerous
полный	full	полнейший	fullest

у́мный	clever	умне́йший	most clever
це́нный	valuable	ценне́йший	most valuable

Also:

ма́ленький, ма́лый	small	мале́йший	smallest, slightest
бли́зкий	near	ближа́йший	nearest, next (few)
вели́кий	great	велича́йший	greatest
ме́лкий	small, petty	мельча́йший	smallest, slightest
редкий	rare	редча́йший	rarest
стро́гий	strict, severe	строжа́йший	strictest
тихий	quiet	тиша́йший	quietest

Some care is needed in interpreting these forms, since they are potentially ambiguous. While they can be used as true superlatives, they are often used to indicate a very high (but not necessarily the highest) degree of the quality indicated by the adjective:

В на́шем регио́не нахо́дится крупне́йший в ми́ре заво́д по произво́дству тролле́йбусов.

Our region is home to the largest trolley-bus factory in the world.

Пре́зидентские вы́боры – это крупне́йшее собы́тие в жи́зни страны́.

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 **ближа́йший**, both with its spatial meaning ('nearest') and used with **вре́мя** to mean 'in the near future' or with other time-related words to mean 'the next few'; **дале́нейший** with the meaning 'further' (and in the phrase **в дале́нейшем** 'henceforth', 'hereafter'); **мале́йший** with the meaning 'slightest':

В ближа́йшее вре́мя осадков не ожида́ется.

No rain or snow is expected in the near future.

В ближа́йшие го́ды бу́дут снесены́ все пятиэта́жные дома́, постро́енные в хрущёвское вре́мя.

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

Ждём ва́ших дале́нейших указа́ний.

We await your further instructions.

Они́ не име́ют ни мале́йшего предста́вления о том, что мы здесь де́лаем.

They haven't even the slightest idea about what we are doing here.

It is also possible to form a superlative by adding the prefix **наи-** either to one of the *declinable comparative* adjectives or to one of the above forms in **-ейший** or **-айший**:

лу́чший	наилу́чший
худший	наихудший
больший	наибольший
меньший	наименьший
нове́йший	наинове́йший

These forms are also generally characteristic of the more formal levels of written language (including journalism), although **наилу́чший** is often found in expressions of good wishes:

Жела́ем здоро́вья, сча́стья и всего́ са́мого *наилу́чшего*.

We wish you health, happiness and simply all the very best.

Мы счита́ем, что и́менно э́ти но́вые кни́ги *должны́* представля́ть *наибольший* интере́с для наших чита́телей.

We think it is these new books that should be of most interest to our readers.

7

Pronouns

7.0 Introduction

Pronouns are often defined as words that can be used in place of nouns, and many of the words that in Russian are conventionally known as pronouns do indeed fulfil this function. Others, however, can serve to *qualify nouns*; the difference between pronouns and adjectives is that the former do not indicate a specific quality, but qualify the noun in a much more general way.

Russian pronouns can be divided into several categories: *personal pronouns* (7.1), *possessive pronouns* (7.2), *demonstrative pronouns* (7.3), *interrogative pronouns* (7.4), *relative pronouns* (7.5), *indefinite pronouns* (7.6) and *pronouns that in one way or another express the idea of totality* (7.7); pronouns that fit into none of these categories are dealt with in 7.8.

Negative pronouns are dealt with in the chapter concerning negation, in sections 15.3.2, 15.3.3 and 15.5.

All pronouns decline: some have the same four sets of endings as *adjectives* (masculine, feminine, neuter and plural), while others have only a single set of endings. Indeed, some pronouns have exactly the same endings as adjectives, while others have endings that are peculiar to themselves.

7.1 Personal pronouns

7.1.1 Personal pronouns in Russian

Russian has the following *personal pronouns*:

я	1st person singular: 'I'
ты	2nd person singular (informal): 'you'
он	3rd person singular masculine: 'he (it)'
она	3rd person singular feminine: 'she (it)'
оно	3rd person singular neuter: 'it'
мы	1st person plural: 'we'
вы	2nd person singular (formal) and plural: 'you'
они	3rd person plural: 'they'

There is also a *reflexive pronoun* **себя**. The use of this pronoun is explained in 7.1.7.

The choice of which third person pronoun to use is determined by the *grammatical gender* of the noun to which it refers: thus, the masculine form **он** refers to all *masculine* nouns and the feminine form **она́** refers to all *feminine* nouns, regardless of whether they are animate or inanimate:

—Ты случайно не видел мою ручку?

—Вот она́, лежит на столе́.

—You haven't by any chance seen my pen anywhere?

—Here it is, it's on the table.

For more on the gender of nouns, *see* 2.3.

For more on the use of **ты** and **вы** to address one person, *see* 13.1.

7.1.2

Declension of the first and second person pronouns and the reflexive pronoun

The *first* and *second person pronouns* and the *reflexive pronoun* decline as follows:

Nom.	я	ты	—
Gen.	меня́	тебя́	себя́
Dat.	мне	тебе́	себе́
Acc.	меня́	тебя́	себя́
Instr.	мной/мною́	тобой/тобою́	собой/собою́
Prep.	мне	тебе́	себе́

Nom.	мы	вы
Gen.	нас	вас
Dat.	нам	вам
Acc.	нас	вас
Instr.	нами́	вами́
Prep.	нас	вас

NOTES

- (i) The *reflexive pronoun* **себя́** has no *nominative* form.
- (ii) In the instrumental the forms **мной**, **тобой**, **собой** are more widely used, but the alternatives **мною́**, **тобою́**, **собою́** are sometimes preferred for reasons of euphony, especially in *passive constructions*:

Все статьи́, написанные мною́ в прошлом году́, можно́ найти́ в Интернете́.

All the articles I wrote [*literally*, written by me] last year can be found on the Internet.

For more on passive constructions, *see* 4.14 and 20.2.

7.1.3 The declension of the third person pronoun

The *third person pronoun* declines as follows:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	о́н	о́на	о́но	о́ни
Gen.	е́го	её́	е́го	и́х
Dat.	е́му	е́й	е́му	и́м
Acc.	е́го	её́	е́го	и́х
Instr.	и́м	е́й/е́ю	и́м	и́ми
Prep.	не́м	не́й	не́м	ни́х

NOTES

- (i) The spelling rule given in **1.5.5** applies to the *genitive singular masculine* and *neuter*, i.e. the letter *г* is pronounced as if it were a *в*.
- (ii) The alternative instrumental singular feminine form *е́ю* is used for euphony and where it is necessary to avoid possible confusion with the dative form *е́й*.
- (iii) The *accusative* ending of all personal pronouns is identical to that of the *genitive*.

Immediately after a *preposition* an **н-** is added to the beginning of all relevant forms of the third person pronoun. Because the prepositional case is used only after prepositions, the **н-** is always present in prepositional forms of this pronoun:

Я получи́л от него́ о́чень стра́нное письмо́.

I've received a very strange letter from him.

Я зайдú к нему́ по́сле обе́да.

I'll call in and see him after lunch.

В по́следнее вре́мя мы о́чень ма́ло слы́шим о́ ней.

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

Тре́нер изви́нился пе́ред ни́ми за плохúю игру́ национа́льной сбо́рной.

The coach apologised to them for the poor performance of the national side.

NOTE

Forms without the **н-** are normally preferred after some polysyllabic prepositions, notably **благодаря́** (+ dat.) 'thanks to', **вопреки́** (+ dat.) 'contrary to', **навстрéчу** (+ dat.) 'in the direction of' and **согласно́** (+ 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 ушиблась?*

—*Если бы ушиблась, 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 borshch differently.

В булочную на такси не ездят.

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):

Иной раз сидишь дома, смотришь любимую передачу, и вдруг звонит телефон.

Sometimes you can be sitting at home, watching your favourite programme, and suddenly the telephone rings.

In cases other than the *nominative*, the appropriate form of the pronoun **ты** can be used to indicate a generalised person, while the nominative form **ты** is used to indicate a generalised subject in sentences where there is no verb present:

Хорошо, когда ты начальник: тебя все слушают, на тебя никто не кричит.

It’s good when you’re the boss; everybody listens to you and nobody shouts at you.

7.1.6

Multiple persons

In Russian, where there is reference to multiple persons (cf. English ‘you and I’ or ‘you and your sister’), the persons are joined not by a conjunction but by the preposition **с** (+ instr.). In addition, the first (or only) pronoun takes the form of an ‘inclusive’ plural:

Мы с тобой должны обсудить этот вопрос.

You and I should discuss this question.

А что, разве вас с сестрой не пригласили на свадьбу?

Were you and your sister not invited to the wedding?

7.1.7

The use of the reflexive pronoun себя

The *reflexive pronoun* **себя** has no nominative form. It is used to replace other personal pronouns whenever reference is to the subject of the sentence, and consequently it corresponds to English ‘myself’, ‘yourself’, ‘ourselves’, ‘themselves’, etc. depending on the context:

Если он действительно так считает, он явно обманывает себя.

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

Почему ты не купишь себе компьютер помощнее?

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

Обязательно принесите с собой все документы.

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

Мы слышали о себе немало лестного, но, к сожалению, не всё это правда.

We have heard many flattering things about ourselves, but unfortunately not all of it is true.

The *reflexive pronoun* normally refers to the subject of the nearest verb; in some instances this can be the notional subject of an infinitive:

Он посоветовал нам принести с собой все документы.

He advised us to bring all our documents with us.

But:

Он посоветовал нам принести ему все документы.

He advised us to bring him all our documents.

It is important not to confuse the *reflexive pronoun* **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 марочных вин.

My uncle considers himself a great connoisseur of fine wines.

Мой дядя считается великим знатоком марочных вин.

My uncle is considered a great connoisseur of fine wines.

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

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

Они убедились в том, что противник не знает 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	to behave
выходить/выйти из себя	to lose one's temper
представлять собой	to be (formal)
чувствовать/почувствовать себя	to feel (ill, happy, etc.)
к себе, на себя	pull (on doors)
от себя	push (on doors)

В последнее время она стала вести себя очень странно.

Recently she has begun to behave very strangely.

For an example of **представлять собой**, see 14.1.5.

For an example of **чувствовать себя**, see 3.5.4.

More examples of the use of **себя** are given in 7.8.1.

7.2 Possessive pronouns

7.2.1 First and second person possessive pronouns

The *first person singular possessive pronoun* is **мой** 'my', 'mine'.

The *second person singular (informal) possessive pronoun* is **твой** 'your', 'yours'.

The *first person plural possessive pronoun* is **наш** 'our', 'ours'.

The *second person singular (formal) and plural possessive pronoun* is **ваш** 'your', 'yours'.

These pronouns decline as follows:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	мой	моя́	моё́	мои́
Gen.	моего́	моёй	моего́	мои́х
Dat.	моему́	моёй	моему́	мои́м
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	мою́	моё́	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	мои́м	моёй	мои́м	мои́ми
Prep.	моём	моёй	моём	мои́х

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	наш	на́ша	на́ше	на́ши
Gen.	на́шего	на́шей	на́шего	на́ших
Dat.	на́шему	на́шей	на́шему	на́шим
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	на́шу	на́ше	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	на́шим	на́шей	на́шим	на́шими
Prep.	на́шем	на́шей	на́шем	на́ших

Твой declines exactly like **мой**.

Ваш declines exactly like **наш**.

The rules for the pronunciation of the *genitive singular masculine* and *neuter* endings and for the use of the different endings for the *accusative singular masculine* and *accusative plural* are the same as those given for adjectives in 6.1.3 and 6.1.1.

7.2.2

The third person possessive pronouns

The *third person possessive pronouns* are as follows:

- его́** his, its (referring to *masculine* and *neuter* nouns)
- её́** her, its (referring to *feminine* nouns)
- их** their (referring to *plural* nouns)

These pronouns are identical to the corresponding *genitive* forms of the third person pronoun (see 7.1.3) and do not decline:

Наско́лько я по́мню, я дал ключи́ её́ бра́ту.

As far as I remember, I gave the keys to her brother.

Я не могу́ не восхища́ться их успе́хами.

I cannot but admire their success.

Unlike the third person pronoun, however, these *possessive pronouns* never take the **н-** prefix when they follow a preposition:

Я забы́л отда́ть ему́ ключи́ от его́ кварти́ры.

I forgot to give him back the keys to his flat.

Да́же в са́мые тру́дные времена́ я всегда́ был на их сторо́не.

Even in the most difficult of times I was always on their side.

7.2.3 The possessive pronoun **свой**

The *possesive pronoun* **свой**, which declines exactly like **мой** and **твой**, always refers to the subject of the sentence, regardless of the person.

When the subject is in the *first* person, there is usually a choice whether to use **свой** or **мой/наш**:

Мы ста́лкиваемся с определёнными трудностями в *своей/нашей* работе.
We encounter certain difficulties in our work.

Гостиница была́ большая, поэтому мы не сразу смогли найти *свою/нашу* комнату.
It was a big hotel, and so we didn't immediately manage to find our room.

In a sentence where the *first person plural* includes both the speaker and the addressee, **наш** tends to be preferred:

Послу́шай, ка́жется, мы пропусти́ли *нашу* о́чередь.
Listen, I think we've missed our turn.

When the subject is in the *second* person, **свой** tends to be preferred:

Разве *ты* не мо́жешь позвони́ть ему́ *со своего* моби́льника?
Can't you phone him from your mobile?

When the subject is in the *third* person, however, there is a clear distinction between **свой** and **его/её/их**, and **свой** must be used whenever reference is to the subject of the sentence:

На вечеринке у **Виктора** **Иван** танцевал *со своей* де́вушкой.
At Viktor's party Ivan danced with his (own) girlfriend.

На вечеринке у **Виктора** **Иван** танцевал *с его* де́вушкой.
At Viktor's party Ivan danced with his (i.e. Viktor's) girlfriend.

Моему́ бра́ту доводи́лось слу́шать, как **Бродский** чита́ет *свои* стихи́.
My brother had occasion to hear Brodsky reading his (own) poetry.

Мой брат обожа́ет **Бродского** и ча́сто чита́ет *его* стихи́ вслух.
My brother admires Brodsky and often reads aloud his (i.e. Brodsky's) poetry.

In each of these pairs of examples there is potential for misunderstanding in English, but the fact that **свой** and **его** would clearly refer to different people means that there is no difficulty in interpreting the Russian correctly.

As with the *reflexive pronoun* **себя́**, **свой** normally relates to the subject of the nearest verb, even when this is the *notional subject* of an *infinitive*:

Врач посоветова́л **Иванову** поменьше пользо́ваться *своей* маши́ной.
The doctor advised Ivanov not to use his (i.e. Ivanov's) car so much.

Козлов охотно́ позволя́л **Иванову** пользо́ваться *его* маши́ной.
Kozlov was happy to allow Ivanov to use his (i.e. Kozlov's) car.

Свой cannot normally be used to qualify the subject of a sentence or a clause, nor can it be used or qualify one of two or more joint subjects:

Она́ счита́ла, что *её* муж поступи́л о́чень необду́манно.
She thought that her husband had acted very precipitately.

Она́ и её́ племя́нница ви́новны в ра́вной стéпени.
She and her niece are equally guilty.

Unlike **себя́, свой** does have *nominative* case forms. These are used in two sets of circumstances:

- 1 In sentences indicating possession using the construction with **у** (+ gen.):

Когда́ она́ роди́ла пе́рвого ребе́нка, у них уже́ была́ *своя́* кварти́ра.
When she gave birth to their first child, they already had their own flat.

For more on the use of this construction to indicate possession, see 14.3.

- 2 In certain more or less set expressions:

У нас нет от неё́ секрétов: она́ здесь *свой* (челове́к).
We don't keep any secrets from her; she's one of us.

***Своя́* руба́шка бли́же к те́лу.**
Charity begins at home [literally, One's own shirt is closer to one's body].

The opposite of **свой** in many instances is the adjective **чужо́й** 'other people's', 'someone else's':

Там нет ниче́го оригина́льного: он то́лько повто́ряет *чужие́* слова́.
There's nothing original in that; he's simply repeating other people's words.

***Чужие́* ве́щи лу́чше не тро́гать.**
It's best not to touch someone else's things.

7.2.4 The use of possessive pronouns

Russian does not generally use *possessive pronouns* in conjunction with nouns denoting parts of the body, close relatives and in some other contexts where the link between the possessor and the item possessed is obvious:

В отве́т он кивну́л *головой́*.
He nodded his head in answer.

Я слы́шал, что он уше́л *от жены́* и уе́хал жить куда́-то на Се́вер.
I heard that he's left his wife and gone off to live somewhere in the north.

Ка́жется, пора́ за́канчивать́ *диску́ссию*: люди́ уже́ ста́ли смотре́ть на *часы́*.
I think it's time we were bringing the discussion to an end; people are already starting to look at their watches.

Она́ допи́ла *ко́фе*, попра́вила *причёску*, расплати́лась и вы́шла из кафе́.
She finished her coffee, tidied her hair, paid and left the café.

If someone does something to a part of their (or someone else's) body, the possessor can be indicated by the *dative* form of the appropriate *personal pronoun*:

Они́ в у́жасе: дочь *побрíла себе́* го́лову.
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 **ЭТОТ** ‘this’ and **ТОТ** ‘that’. They decline as follows:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	ЭТОТ	ЭТА	ЭТО	ЭТИ
Gen.	ЭТОГО	ЭТОЙ	ЭТОГО	ЭТИХ
Dat.	ЭТОМУ	ЭТОЙ	ЭТОМУ	ЭТИМ
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	ЭТУ	ЭТО	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	ЭТИМ	ЭТОЙ	ЭТИМ	ЭТИМИ
Prep.	ЭТОМ	ЭТОЙ	ЭТОМ	ЭТИХ

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	ТОТ	ТА	ТО	ТЕ
Gen.	ТОГО	ТОЙ	ТОГО	ТЕХ
Dat.	ТОМУ	ТОЙ	ТОМУ	ТЕМ
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	ТУ	ТО	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	ТЕМ	ТОЙ	ТЕМ	ТЕМИ
Prep.	ТОМ	ТОЙ	ТОМ	ТЕХ

The rules for the pronunciation of the *genitive singular masculine* and *neuter* endings and for the use of the different endings for the *accusative singular masculine* and *accusative plural* are the same as those given for adjectives in **6.1.3** and **6.1.1**.

A third demonstrative pronoun **СЕЙ** ‘this’ is now found only in church language and in the most formal of bureaucratic styles. Relics of it, however, can be found in certain common words and set expressions:

сего́дня [s'ivódn'ə]	today
сейча́с	now, immediately, just a minute
до сих пор	up to now
ни то ни се́	neither one thing nor another
ни с то́го ни с се́го	suddenly, without any obvious reason
сию ми́нуту!	this minute!

A fourth demonstrative pronoun **тако́й** corresponds to English ‘such’, ‘like that/those’. It declines like the adjective **дорого́й** (see **6.1.2** and **6.1.4**).

7.3.2 The use of ЭТОТ and ТОТ

In many instances **ЭТОТ** and **ТОТ** correspond closely to English ‘this’ and ‘that’, except that **ТОТ** tends to be used only when there is an explicit contrast or when indicating something that is far away:

Этот галстук мне о́чень нра́вится, а **тот** я ско́рее все́го отда́м бра́ту.
I like this tie very much, but I’ll probably pass that one on to my brother.

Принеси́ мне, пожа́луйста, вон **ту** па́пку.
Could you bring me that folder from over there.

In other contexts, **этот** may be the equivalent of English ‘that’:

Главный редактор заявил, что никто с этим предложением к нему не обращался.

The editor-in-chief stated that no one had put that proposal to him.

На вашем месте я бы этого не делал.

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 случае** ‘in this instance’ (for an example, see **22.1.3**).

The *neuter* form **это** is used to refer back to general concepts, as well as to whole phrases, clauses or sentences:

Он спросил меня о последних событиях на Кавказе, но я признался, что ничего об этом не знаю.

He asked me about recent events in the Caucasus, but I admitted that I knew nothing about it.

Расскажите им о ваших московских приключениях; это будет для них очень интересно.

Tell them about your adventures in Moscow; they'll find it very interesting.

In this usage **это** always refers back to something mentioned. It is not normally used to translate the English ‘dummy’ subject ‘it’ in sentences of the following type:

Интересно было бы знать, где они были вчера вечером.

It would be interesting to know where they got to last night.

Завтра утром будет ясно, сможем мы выехать или нет.

By tomorrow morning it will be clear whether we can leave or not.

Это is also used for pointing things out and in definitions:

—**Что это?**

—**Это мой новый мобильник.**

—What's that?

—That's my new mobile phone.

Это – не история страны, это – моя личная история.

This is not the history of the nation; it's my personal history.

In sentences of this sort it is the *noun phrase* that is regarded as the subject, and therefore determines the form of any verb that may be present:

Это была для меня большая честь.

It was a great honour for me.

Тот is sometimes used as a third person pronoun; it is used in a narrative sequence when reference is made not to the subject of the preceding sentence, but to someone else involved in the events:

Иван встречал отца на вокзале. Он очень устал, но тем не менее считал нужным это сделать.

Ivan met his father at the station. He (i.e. Ivan) was very tired, but nonetheless thought it was something he had to do.

Ива́н встреча́л отца́ на вокза́ле. *Тот* си́льно уста́л с доро́ги, но о́чень обра́довался, когда́ уви́дел сы́на.

Ivan met his father at the station. He/the latter (i.e. the father) was extremely tired after the journey, but was greatly cheered when he saw his son.

The phrase **не тот** means ‘the wrong . . .’:

У нас пробле́ма: присла́ли *не те* запча́сти.

We have a problem; we’ve been sent the wrong (spare) parts.

When a preposition is used, it is placed immediately before the *pronoun*:

Он стра́шно расстро́ился, когда́ обнару́жил, что вложи́л письмо́ неве́сте *не в тот* конве́рт.

He was extremely upset when he found out that he had put the letter to his fiancée in the wrong envelope.

For the use of **тот** with relative pronouns, *see 7.5*.

For the use of **тот** in the phrase **тот же (са́мый)**, *see 21.9.7*.

7.3.3

The use of *тако́й*

The *pronoun* **тако́й** means ‘such’, ‘like this’, ‘like that’. The difference between **тако́й** and **э́тот** can be illustrated by the following pair of examples:

Э́ти филь́мы я все́гда́ смотре́ю с большо́м удо́вольствием.

I always enjoy watching these (specific) films.

Та́кие филь́мы я все́гда́ смотре́ю с большо́м удо́вольствием.

I always enjoy watching films like these/those.

In some contexts **тако́й** can correspond to English ‘that’ or ‘this’ or even the indefinite article:

В *тако́м* слу́чае нам не́зачем продо́лжать разгово́р.

In that case there’s no point in continuing our conversation.

У меня́ *тако́е* предложе́ние: дава́йте устро́им аукцио́н!

I’ve got a suggestion: let’s organise an auction.

Тако́й is also used to qualify *long adjectives* with the meaning ‘so’:

Ты уме́ешь то́лько крити́ковать. Предложи́ реше́ние, е́сли ты *тако́й* у́мный.

You only know how to criticise. Suggest a solution since you’re so clever.

Short adjectives (*see 6.5*) are qualified by **так**:

Она́ была́ *так хоро́ша́, так ми́ла́, что слов нет.*

She was so pretty and so nice that there are no words to describe her.

The pronoun **тако́й-то** means ‘such-and-such’, i.e. it replaces a specific name when giving general indications:

Здесь *на́до* указа́ть, что е́дешь в Росси́ю по приглаше́нию *тако́й-то* органи́зации.

Here you have to state that you are travelling to Russia at the invitation of such-and-such an organisation.

7.4 Interrogative pronouns

7.4.1 The interrogative pronouns **кто** and **что**

The *interrogative pronouns* **кто** and **что** mean ‘who’ and ‘what’ respectively. They decline as follows:

Nom.	кто	что
Gen.	кого́	чего́
Dat.	кому́	чему́
Acc.	кого́	что
Instr.	кем	чем
Prep.	ком	чём

The spelling rule given in 1.5.5 applies to the *genitive singular* forms of these pronouns, i.e. the letter **г** is pronounced as if it were a **в**.

For examples of the use of **кто** and **что**, see 12.6.1 and 17.3.1.

7.4.2 The interrogative pronouns **чей**, **како́й**, **ко́торый**

The *interrogative pronoun* **чей** means ‘whose’. It declines like a *soft adjective* of the *second group*, as described in 6.3, albeit with some slight differences in the *nominative* case. The endings can be illustrated by those of the *nominative* and *genitive* cases:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	чей	чья	чьё	чьи
Gen.	чьего́	чьей	чьего́	чьих

The use of **чей** can be demonstrated by the following examples. In practice, examples of cases other than the *nominative* are not particularly frequent, especially in speech:

Чья́ эта́ кни́га?

Whose is that book?

Есть ли спосо́б узна́ть, с чье́го но́мера тебе́ звони́ли?

Is there a way of finding out from whose number you have been telephoned?

The pronouns **како́й** ‘which’, ‘what kind of’ and **ко́торый** ‘which’ decline like the adjective **дорого́й** and **но́вый** 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* **ко́торый**, **кто**, **что**, **чей** and **како́й** can all be used as relative pronouns.

7.5.1 The relative pronoun **КОТОРЫЙ**

The most widely used relative pronoun is **ко́торый**, which can correspond to English ‘who’, ‘which’ and ‘that’. **Который** is normally used to refer back to a *noun*, and its ending depends on two factors: the *number* and *gender* are determined by the noun to which it refers, while the *case* is determined by the *grammatical function* that the pronoun fulfils in the clause where it appears:

Вот новая книга, которую я только что купил.

Here is a new book that I have just bought.

In the above sentence **которую** is *feminine singular*, agreeing with the feminine singular noun **книга**, but is in the accusative because it functions as the direct object of the verb **купил**.

For more on the use of the accusative case for the direct object of a verb, see 3.2.

In English, it is sometimes possible to join clauses in this way without a relative pronoun; in Russian, however, the relative pronoun can never be omitted:

Книга, которую я взял в поездку, оказалась такой скучной, что я намеренно оставил её в каком-то кафе.

The book I took with me on my journey was so boring that I deliberately left it in a café.

Unlike in English, a relative pronoun cannot be separated from any preposition that may govern it:

Она показала мне старую машину, на которой её отец ездил в Россию.

She showed me the old car that her father had driven to Russia in.

Nouns used with relative pronouns are frequently qualified by the *demonstrative pronoun* **тот**, which can correspond to the English definite article or the demonstrative pronouns ‘this’ or ‘that’:

Фирма несёт юридическую ответственность лишь за те пункты, которые перечислены в договоре.

The firm bears legal responsibility only for those matters that are mentioned in the agreement.

Его удивило то равнодушие, с которым она его встретила.

He was surprised at the indifference with which she greeted him.

7.5.2 The relative pronouns **КТО** and **ЧТО**

When a *relative pronoun* is used to refer back to a pronoun, rather than to a noun, **кто** ‘who’ or **что** ‘that’, ‘which’ is normally used:

Он успел перекинуться словом с каждым, кто был на 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.

For more on the pronoun **ка́ждый**, see 7.7.2.

For more on the pronoun **кто́-ли́бо**, 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 быва́л в Росси́и, сразу же пойме́т, о че́м я говорю́.

Those who have been (*or* Anyone who has been) to Russia will immediately know what I am talking about.

То, что ты говори́шь, меня́ не убежда́ет.

What you’re saying doesn’t convince me.

Не верь то́му, что он бу́дет сейча́с говори́ть.

Don’t believe what he’s about to tell you.

The pronoun **те** is normally followed by **кто**:

Лучше обрати́ться к тем, кто уже накопи́л како́й-то о́пыт в э́той сфе́ре.

It’s best to approach those who have already gained some experience in this area.

Кото́рые is used, however, if the reference is to inanimate objects:

Она́ хоте́ла купи́ть себе́ брю́ки, но те, кото́рые ей понра́вились, оказа́лись малы́.

She wanted to buy some trousers, but those that she liked were too small.

For the use of the short adjective (**велики́**) meaning ‘too big’, see 14.1.4.

NOTE The pronoun **кто** is always followed by a third person *singular* verb (which is *masculine* in the *past tense*), even when it clearly refers to more than one person (see 11.2.1).

Что is used when reference is to a whole clause or sentence or to a general concept not expressed by a specific noun:

У него́ была́ привы́чка опазды́вать на собра́ния, что́ о́чень раздража́ло его́ колле́г.

He had the habit of being late for meetings, which greatly irritated his colleagues.

7.5.3

The relative pronouns **чей** and **како́й**

The *relative pronoun* **чей** means ‘whose’:

Мы ка́ждый день получа́ем бо́лее ста жа́лоб от гра́ждан, *чьи* права́ наруша́ются.

Every day we receive more than 100 complaints from citizens whose rights are being infringed.

In this sentence it would be possible to replace **чьи** with the *genitive plural* form of **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 такие вина, какие можно найти только в самых дорогих магазинах.

He buys wines (of the sort) that you can only find in the most expensive shops.

Стояла такая тихая и солнечная погода, какая 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*:

кто́-то	кто́-нибудь	кто́-либо	ко́е-кто́
что́-то	что́-нибудь	что́-либо	ко́е-что́
какой-то	какой-нибудь	какой-либо	ко́е-какой
чей-то	чей-нибудь	чей-либо	

NOTES

- (i) Pronouns formed from **чей** are less widely used than the others, and **ко́е-чей**, though theoretically possible, is probably best avoided.
- (ii) Pronouns with the **ко́е-** prefix can be pronounced either with a secondary stress on the prefix or with two full stresses. Some speakers place a secondary stress on the second syllable of the **-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 -то series

This is probably the most widely used of the four series and the one most likely to encroach on the ‘territory’ of the others. The basic meaning of this series is ‘someone’, ‘something’, ‘some (or other)’, ‘some sort of’ – reference is to someone or something specific, the identity of which is either not known or is irrelevant to the speaker:

Когда тебя не было дома, кто́-то тебе звонил.

While you weren't here, someone telephoned you.

Я слышал, как они всё время о чём-то перешёптывались.

I could hear them whispering about something all the time.

Я помню только, что на нём была какая-то шляпа.

All I remember is that he was wearing some sort of hat.

Его́ очень трудно застать на месте: он всё время занят какими-то делами.

It's very difficult to find him; he's always busy with some business or other.

Вдруг он услышал чей-то голос.

Suddenly he heard someone's voice.

Кто-то often has the meaning of 'some people':

После войны́ эта писательская организа́ция перестала существова́ть: кто-то умер, кто-то уехал за границу, а кто-то вообще бросил писать.

After the war this writers' organisation ceased to exist; some people died, others went abroad, and some just gave up writing.

Что-то is often used with neuter singular adjectives:

Наде́юсь, что он принёс с собо́й что-то съедо́бное.

I hope he's brought something edible with him.

In informal language **что-то** can have the meaning of 'for some reason', 'somehow'; in quantity expressions it can mean 'something over':

Мне что-то не хо́чется иди́ти се́годня на рабо́ту.

Somehow I don't feel like going to work today.

У меня́ с собо́й ты́сяча с че́м-то рубле́й.

I've got something over a thousand roubles on me.

Како́й-то sometimes serves as the equivalent of an English indefinite article:

Когда́ я откры́л дверь, на поро́ге стоя́л како́й-то мужчи́на в чёрном пальто́.

I opened the door to a man in a black overcoat.

Кни́га, кото́рую я взял в по́ездку, оказа́лась тако́й ску́чной, что я намеренно оста́вил 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.

When used with a long adjective **како́й-то** has the meaning of 'somehow', 'in some way':

Чай се́годня 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:

У́жас како́й-то!

It was awful!

Кошма́р како́й-то!

It was a nightmare!

По доро́ге в аэропо́рт мы со́рок мину́т проторча́ли в проб́ке. 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 **-нибудь** series

The **-нибудь** differs from the **-то** series in that it is more indefinite. Here there is no reference to anything specific, and the identity of the person or object in question is unknown to either speaker or addressee. The English equivalents can involve either ‘some’ or ‘any’:

Если у тебя нет открывалки, попроси у кого-нибудь.

If you don't have a bottle-opener, ask somebody for one.

У нас есть что-нибудь сладкое к чаю?

Have you anything sweet we can have with our tea?

Есть ко мне какие-нибудь вопросы?

Are there any questions for me?

The boundaries between the **-нибудь** and the **-то** series can be difficult to define. In the following sequence the questioner can use either **что-нибудь** or **что-то**, but the person answering must use **что-то**, since she clearly has something in mind:

—**Зачём ты вернулась? Что-нибудь/что-то забыла?**

—**Да, я действительно что-то забыла.**

—Why have you come back? Have you forgotten something?

—Yes, indeed, I have forgotten something.

In sentences indicating conditions either **-нибудь** or **-то** is possible (cf. English ‘someone’/‘anyone’):

Если кто-нибудь/кто-то позвонит с работы, скажи, что я занят и не могу подойти к телефону.

If anyone/someone phones from work, tell them I'm busy and can't come to the telephone.

For more on conditions, see 21.5.

In the following pair of sentences **кто-то** indicates that it was always the same person who asked the question, while **кто-нибудь** implies that different people asked the first question on different occasions:

В конце каждой лекции первый вопрос всегда задавал кто-то с последнего ряда.

В конце каждой лекции первый вопрос всегда задавал кто-нибудь с последнего ряда.

Both sentences, however, can be translated into English as:

At the end of each lecture the first question was always asked by someone in the back row.

The **-нибудь** forms can sometimes convey the nuance of English ‘any old’:

С вами разговаривал не кто-нибудь, а сам председатель.

That wasn't any old person talking to you, but the chairman himself.

Я не очень хочу останавливаться в какой-нибудь задрюпанной гостинице на окраине города.

I don't really want to stay in some miserable hotel on the outskirts of town.

In quantity expressions **какой-нибудь** can convey both approximation and the idea of ‘a mere’, ‘no more than’:

Через *каких-нибудь* два года вы не узнаете наш город.
In a mere two years from now you won't recognise our city.

7.6.4 The **-либо** series

Many dictionaries describe the **-либо** series as being synonymous with the **-нибудь** series, and they are indeed similar in meaning. Nevertheless, there are some contexts where the **-либо** series does seem to be preferred.

Pronouns from the **-либо** series can be used to translate ‘any’ in a negative construction:

Я не могу представить, чтобы *кто-либо* сумел его обыграть.
I can't imagine that there's anyone capable of beating him.

Он заявил, что не планирует приобретать *какие-либо* футбольные клубы.
He announced that he had no plans to acquire any football clubs.

Pronouns from the **-либо** series are also used in comparisons after **чем**:

Он знает об этом больше, чем *кто-либо* другой.
He knows more about that than anyone else.

For more on comparisons with **чем**, see 21.9.2.

In some contexts pronouns from the **-нибудь** and the **-либо** series are indeed interchangeable. The latter tend to be more characteristic of formal language, but if there is a difference in meaning, it is that the **-либо** pronouns emphasise that it really does not matter who or what is involved:

Тебя вполне может временно заменить *кто-либо/кто-нибудь* из коллег.
You can easily be replaced on a temporary basis by (any)one of your colleagues.

А были в вашей библиотеке *какие-либо/какие-нибудь* книги по искусству?
Did your library have any books on art?

7.6.5 The **кое-** series

The **кое-** series is the least frequently used of the four series. The meaning of these pronouns is ‘some’, ‘a few’, ‘one or two’, although they can also carry the additional connotation of a slightly dismissive attitude on the part of the speaker:

Подозреваю, что *көе-кому* наши предложения не понравятся.
I suspect that some people won't like our suggestions.

Мне уже приходилось *көе-что* слышать о нём.
I've already had occasion to hear a few things about him.

Я тут принёс *көе-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 кое-какие 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* **весь** corresponds to English 'all'. It declines as follows:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>
Nom.	весь	вся	всё
Gen.	всего́	всей	всего́
Dat.	всему́	всей	всему́
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	всю	всё
Instr.	всем	всей	всем
Prep.	всём	всей	всём

The rules for the pronunciation of the *genitive singular masculine* and *neuter* endings and for the use of the different endings for the *accusative singular masculine* and *accusative plural* are the same as those given for adjectives in 6.1.3 and 6.1.1.

The use of **весь** can be illustrated by the following examples:

Наш рейс отменили, пришлось *весь* день просидеть в аэропорту́.

Our flight was cancelled, and we had to spend all day at the airport.

Я прочита́л не *всю* кни́гу, а то́лько пер́вые сто страни́ц.

I haven't read all the book, just the first hundred pages.

После́дствия глоба́льного потепле́ния тепе́рь ошути́мы на *всех* континента́х.

The consequences of global warming can now be felt in all continents.

Used on their own, the *neuter singular* **всё** means 'everything', and the *plural* **все** 'everyone':

Скажи́ мне *всё*, что ты зна́ешь.

Tell me everything you know.

Не беспоко́йтесь, пива́ хва́тит на *всех*.

Don't worry; there'll be enough beer for everybody.

In informal language **всё** can have the meaning ‘right’, ‘that’s it!’:

Всё, хватит! Я слышать этого больше не могу.
Right, that’s enough! I can’t listen to any more of this.

Всё is also widely used with the adverbs **ещё** and **равно**:

всё ещё still, even now
всё равно still, all the same, nonetheless, anyway

Он окончил университет пять лет назад, но всё ещё живёт у родителей.
He graduated five years ago, but still lives at home with his parents.

Пусть говорит всё, что угодно - всё равно ему никто не поверит.
Let him say what he likes, (still) nobody will believe him (anyway).

For the use of **всё равно** to indicate indifference, see 16.2.4.

For the use of **всё** with comparative adjectives and adverbs, see 21.9.1.

The *genitive singular* form **всего** is used, either on its own or with **лишь**, to mean ‘only’, ‘no more than’ in quantity expressions:

На лекции было всего (лишь) двадцать человек.
There were only twenty people at the lecture.

It is important to distinguish the *pronoun* **весь** ‘all’, ‘the whole’ from the *adjective* **целый** ‘a whole’:

Не ешьте весь арбуз: оставьте хотя бы пару кусков на завтра.
Don’t eat the whole water-melon; leave at least a couple of portions for tomorrow.

Они спорили о том, можно ли за один раз съесть целый арбуз.
They were debating whether it was possible to eat a whole water-melon at a single sitting.

7.7.2

Other pronouns relating to totality

The other pronouns that relate to totality are **каждый**, **всякий** and **любой**. These decline like the adjectives **новый**, **русский** and **молодой** respectively (see 6.1).

Каждый corresponds to English ‘every’. It is normally used only in the *singular*, although the *plural* forms are used with nouns such as **полчаса** ‘half an hour’ and **полгода** ‘half a year’, ‘six months’, which are treated as grammatically plural:

Было видно, что, отвечая на вопросы, он взвешивал каждое слово.
It was clear that when he answered the questions he was weighing up every word.

Каждый год он ездит в Испанию на месяц.
Every year he goes to Spain for a month.

Каждые полчаса в палату заглядывала медсестра – проверить, не проснулся ли он.
Every half-hour a nurse looked into the ward to check if he had woken up.

Всякий can also mean ‘every’, ‘all’, although nowadays this is most frequently found in certain set phrases, such as **всякий раз** ‘every time’, **всякий (человек)** ‘everybody’, **выше всяких похвал** ‘beyond all praise’. Its most common meaning is ‘all kinds of’:

В российской истории двоевластие всякий раз приводило к гражданской войне.

In Russian history dual power has led to civil war every time.

У него всегда бывают всякие интересные идеи.

He always has all sorts of interesting ideas.

В жизни всякое бывает.

All sorts of things can happen in life.

Всякий can mean ‘any’ after the preposition **без** (+ gen) ‘without’ and in some other constructions with negative implications:

Это без всякого сомнения самый скучный роман, который я когда-либо читал.

That is without any doubt the most boring novel I have ever read.

Для её гардероба характерно полное отсутствие всякого вкуса.

Her wardrobe is characterised by the total absence of any taste.

Всякий is also used in a number of set phrases, as shown in the following examples.

на всякий случай and the more informal **на всякий пожарный (случай)** ‘just in case’:

во всяком случае in any case
 at any rate
 however that may be

Возьми зонтик на всякий случай.

Take an umbrella, just in case.

Влияние его идей идёт на убыль, во всяком случае в России.

The influence of his ideas is declining, at any rate in Russia.

Экономическая ситуация в наступающем году остаётся нестабильной. Экономисты, во всяком случае, прогнозируют дальнейший рост инфляции.

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 доро́гу, спроси́ кого́-нибудь.

If you don't know the way, ask someone [emphasis is on the asking; the person may or may not know the answer].

Доезжайте до Не́вского проспекта, а там *любой* вам ска́жет, как пройти́ к Ру́сскому музе́ю.

Go to Nevskii Prospekt, and there anyone (you like) (emphasis is on the 'any'; it does not matter who you ask, because everybody knows the answer) will tell you how to get to the Russian Museum.

7.8 Other pronouns

7.8.1 The emphatic pronoun сам

The *emphatic pronoun* **сам** declines as follows:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	сам	сама́	само́	са́ми
Gen.	самого́	самой	самого́	самих
Dat.	самому́	самой	самому́	самим
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	саму́ (самоё)	само́	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	самим	самой	самим	самими
Prep.	самом	самой	самом	самих

The older *accusative singular feminine* form **самоё** is going out of use. Except for the *nominative plural* the stress is always on the ending.

The rules for the pronunciation of the *genitive singular masculine* and *neuter* endings and for the use of the different endings for the *accusative singular masculine* and *accusative plural* are the same as those given for adjectives in 6.1.3 and 6.1.1.

The pronoun **сам** adds emphasis to the noun or pronoun with which it is used; **сам** normally follows a pronoun, but tends to precede a noun :

Он отказáлся дéлать каки́е-ли́бо ко́мментарии́, заявív, что у него́ *самого́* нет ника́кой информа́ции.

He refused to make any comment, stating that he himself had no information.

Все ва́жные решéния, относя́щиеся к сфeре вnéшней поли́тики, принима́ет *сам* Президент.

All important decisions on matters concerning foreign policy are taken by the president himself.

Сам can also have the meaning of 'by oneself' in the sense of 'independently':

Спаси́бо, но я не нужда́юсь в ва́шей по́мощи: я всё сде́лаю *самá*.

Thank you, but I don't need your help; I can do everything myself.

Сам is frequently used with the *reflexive pronoun* **себя́**:

Э́тими дéйстви́ями они́ то́лько вредя́т *самим* себе́.

With these actions they are only damaging themselves.

С течением времени все политики становятся пародиями на самих себя.

In time all politicians become parodies of themselves.

The following set phrases involving **сам** and **себя** are worth noting:

сам по себе in itself, independently, separately
само собой (разумеется) of course, obviously, it goes without saying

Идея сама по себе интересная, но можно ли её применить на практике?
 In itself the idea is interesting, but can it be applied in practice?

В их передвижениях не было никакого взаимодействия: каждый действовал сам по себе.

Their movements were totally unco-ordinated with each other; everybody was acting independently.

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 **самый**

The *pronoun* **самый**, which declines like the adjective **новый** (see 6.1), is used with nouns indicating place or time to emphasise the precise point where or when something happens; in this sense it usually corresponds to English 'very':

Ей повезло: она нашла квартиру в самом центре города.
 She struck lucky and found a flat in the very centre of the city.

Он затронул эту тему только в самом конце лекции.
 He touched on this topic only at the very end of his lecture.

Самый is used in a number of useful set expressions:

в самый раз just right (in terms of time, number or size)
в самом деле indeed, really, in fact
на самом деле in actual fact
это самое the what's-its-name (used when someone cannot remember the name for something)

Чёрные ботинки мне великоваты, а вот эти коричневые в самый раз.
 The black boots are a bit big, but the brown ones are just right.

Вы в самом деле этого не знали?
 Did you really not know that?

—**Ты зачём вернулась? Что-нибудь забыла?**
 —**Да, я в самом деле что-то забыла.**

—**Why have you come back? Have you forgotten something?**
 —**Yes, indeed, I have forgotten something.**

Он выдаёт себя за великого колдуна и целителя, а на самом деле он просто шарлатан.

He claims to be a great magician or healer, but in actual fact he's just a charlatan.

Я привёс тебе *это самое* . . . энциклопéдию.

I've brought you the what's-its-name, the encyclopedia.

For the use of **са́мый** to form the superlative of adjectives, *see* 6.8.4.

For the use of **са́мый** in the phrase **тот же (самый)** 'the same', *see* 21.9.7.

7.8.3 The reciprocal pronoun друг дру́га

The pronoun **друг дру́га** means 'each other'; the first part is indeclinable, while the second part declines (in the singular only) according to its function in the sentence and can be used after prepositions:

Вы уже знаете друг дру́га?

Do you already know each other?

Они поссорились на днях и теперь да́же не здоро́ваются друг с дру́гом.

They fell out a few days ago and now aren't even on speaking terms.

(*Literally*, they don't even say 'hello' to each other.)

8

Numerals and other quantity words

8.1 Cardinal numerals

Cardinal numerals are those used when counting or indicating quantity.

8.1.1 List of cardinal numerals

0	ноль, нуль	32	тридцать два, тридцать две
1	один, одна, одно, одни́	38	тридцать восемь
2	два, две	40	сорок
3	три	50	пятьдесят
4	четыре	60	шестьдесят
5	пять	70	семьдесят
6	шесть	80	восемьдесят
7	семь	90	девяносто
8	восемь	100	сто
9	девять	101	сто один, сто одна, сто одно́
10	десять	102	сто два, сто две
11	одиннадцать	110	сто десять
12	двенадцать	125	сто двадцать пять
13	тринадцать	160	сто шестьдесят
14	четырнадцать	200	двести
15	пятнадцать	300	триста
16	шестнадцать	400	четыриста
17	семнадцать	500	пятьсот
18	восемнадцать	600	шестьсот
19	девятнадцать	700	семьсот
20	двадцать	800	восемьсот
21	двадцать один, двадцать одна, двадцать одно́	900	девятьсот
22	двадцать два, двадцать две	999	девятьсот девяносто девять
23	двадцать три	1,000	тысяча
25	двадцать пять	1,001	тысяча один, тысяча одна, тысяча одно́
30	тридцать	1,002	тысяча два, тысяча две
31	тридцать один, тридцать одна, тридцать одно́	1,100	тысяча сто
		1,211	тысяча двести одиннадцать
		2,000	две тысячи

3,000	три ты́сячи	500,000	пятьсо́т ты́сяч
4,000	четы́ре ты́сячи	501,000	пятьсо́т одна́ ты́сяча
5,000	пять ты́сяч	502,000	пятьсо́т две ты́сячи
10,000	деся́ть ты́сяч	1,000,000	миллио́н
15,000	пятна́дцать ты́сяч	2,000,000	два миллио́на
40,000	со́рок ты́сяч	5,000,000	пять миллио́нов
41,000	со́рок одна́ ты́сяча	50,000,000	пятьдеся́т миллио́нов
42,000	со́рок две ты́сячи	1,000,000,000	миллиа́рд
100,000	сто ты́сяч		

For the different endings of *один*, see 8.1.2

For the different endings of *два*, see 8.1.3

For the different endings of *ты́сяча* and *миллио́н*, see 8.2

NOTES

- (i) *Ноль* and *нуль* are alternative forms. *Ноль* tends to be preferred in the written language, while *нуль* is widely used in the spoken language.
- (ii) The normal equivalent of (US) billion (i.e. one thousand million) is *миллиа́рд*; a (US) trillion (i.e. one million million) is, however, *триллио́н*.

8.1.2

Reading and writing cardinal numbers

The individual elements that are put together to make a large number are written as separate words. Thus, 45 751 384 would be written in full as:

**со́рок пять миллио́нов семьсо́т пятьдеся́т одна́ ты́сяча триста
восемьдеся́т четы́ре**

NOTE

As this example shows, no punctuation is used to separate thousands, although a space can be left, especially with very large numbers. A comma is used instead of the decimal point (see 8.5.3).

Sequences of four or more digits are often broken up into units of two or (less often) three digits each, a procedure that is adopted more regularly in speech than in writing. For example, a seven-digit Moscow telephone number is written as:

139-92-16 *or* 139 9216

This would normally be read as:

сто три́дцать де́вять девяно́сто два шестна́дцать

In journalistic and academic writing the following abbreviations are frequently found:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| тыс. | ты́сяча (ты́сячи, ты́сяч, etc.) |
| млн. | миллио́н (миллио́на, миллио́нов, etc.) |
| млрд. | миллиа́рд (милла́рда, миллиа́рдов, etc.) |

Наш заво́д выпуска́ет ежегодно́ 400 тыс. маши́н.

Our factory manufactures 400,000 cars a year.

В Москве́ и её при́городах прожива́ют о́коло 20 млн. челове́к.

About 20 million people live in Moscow and the surrounding area.

В 2002 году военные расходы России составляли около 11 млрд. долларов.

In 2002 Russian military expenditure amounted to approximately 11 billion dollars.

8.1.3 Declension of один

The declension of the numeral **один** is similar to that of the pronoun **этот**:

For the declension of **этот** see 7.3.1.

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	один	одна	одно	одни
Gen.	одного	одной	одного	одних
Dat.	одному	одной	одному	одним
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	одну	одно	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	одним	одной	одним	одними
Prep.	одном	одной	одном	одних

The rules for the *accusative singular masculine* and the *accusative plural* are the same as for *adjectives* and *pronouns*. The form that is identical to the *genitive* is used with *animate* nouns, while the form that is identical to the *nominative* is used with *inanimate* nouns:

For more on animate and inanimate nouns, see 2.4.

Я знаю одного человека, который с тобой не согласится.

I know one person who won't agree with you.

Я провёл с ней только один день, но уже знаю всю историю её семьи.

I've only spent one day with her, but I already know the whole history of her family.

Почему мужчины любят одних женщин, а женятся на других?

Why do men not marry the women they love?

(Literally, Why do men love some women, but marry different ones?)

Я читаю одни детективы.

I read nothing but detective novels.

8.1.4 The plural of один

The plural form of **один** is used in the following ways:

1 To mean 'one' with nouns that denote countable objects and that do not have a singular form, e.g. **сутки** 'day', 'period of 24 hours', **брюки** '(pair of) trousers', **выборы** '(political) election(s)':

Он положил в чемодан *одни́* брюки и *одну́* рубашку.
He put one pair of trousers and one shirt in his suitcase.

- 2 With the meaning ‘only’, ‘nothing but’:

Я читаю *одни́* детективы́.
I read nothing but detective novels.

- 3 With the meaning ‘alone’, ‘on one’s own’:

Не оставляйте *детей́* дома́ *одних́*!
Don’t leave your children at home on their own.

- 4 With the meaning ‘some’ (in contrast to others):

***Одни́* увлекаются спортом, *другие́* музыкой, а *третьи́* ничём 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, четы́ре

The numerals **два** (2), **три** (3) and **четы́ре** (4) follow a declension pattern peculiar to themselves:

	<i>Masculine and neuter</i>	<i>All genders</i>	<i>Feminine</i>
Nom.	два		две
Gen.		двух	
Dat.		двум	
Acc.	as nom. or gen.		as nom. or gen.
Instr.		двумя́	
Prep.		двух	

	<i>All genders</i>	<i>All genders</i>
Nom.	три	четы́ре
Gen.	трёх	четырёх
Dat.	трём	четырёх
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	тремя́	четырьмя́
Prep.	трёх	четырёх

In the *accusative* the form that is identical to the *genitive* is used with *animate* nouns, while the form that is identical to the *nominative* is used with *inanimate* nouns:

Ты заметил на углу́ *двух* милиционеро́в?
Did you notice two policemen on the corner?

На э́том снимке́ мы ви́дим *всёх* *четырёх* доче́рей *последнего́* царя́.
On this photograph we can see all four daughters of the last tsar.

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 Один and два are the only numerals that distinguish gender; один, два, три and четыре are the only numerals that have different forms in the accusative for animate and inanimate nouns.

8.1.6 The declension of numerals ending in -ь

The numerals 5–20 and 30 all end in -ь and have the same endings as *feminine singular nouns* ending in -ь:

Nom.	пять (5)	шесть (6)	семь (7)	восемь (8)
Gen.	пяти	шести	семи	восьми
Dat.	пяти	шести	семи	восьми
Acc.	пять	шесть	семь	восемь
Instr.	пятью	шестью	семью	восемью or восьмью
Prep.	пяти	шести	семи	восьми

Nom.	девять (9)	десять (10)	двенадцать (12)	двадцать (20)
Gen.	девяти	десяти	двенадцати	двадцати
Dat.	девяти	десяти	двенадцати	двадцати
Acc.	девять	десять	двенадцать	двадцать
Instr.	девятью	десятью	двенадцатью	двадцатью
Prep.	девяти	десяти	двенадцати	двадцати

NOTE The numeral **восемь** has a fleeting vowel, which (optionally) reappears in the *instrumental* case.

The remaining numerals between 11 and 19 follow the same pattern as **двенадцать**; **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:

Nom. and Acc.	сорок	девяносто	сто
All other cases	сорока	девяноста	ста

8.1.8 The declension of the numerals 50–80 and 200–900

The numerals 50–80 and 200–900 follow a complicated declension pattern, in which the forms change both in the *middle* and at the *end* of the word:

Nom.	пятьдеся́т (50)	шестьдеся́т (60)	се́мьдесят (70)	во́семьдесят (80)
Gen.	пятидеся́ти	шестидеся́ти	семидеся́ти	восьмидеся́ти
Dat.	пятидеся́ти	шестидеся́ти	семидеся́ти	восьмидеся́ти
Acc.	пятьдеся́т	шестьдеся́т	се́мьдесят	во́семьдесят
Instr.	пятьюдеся́тью	шестьюдеся́тью	се́мьюдеся́тью	во́семьюдеся́тью or восьмьюдеся́тью
Prep.	пятидеся́ти	шестидеся́ти	семидеся́ти	восьмидеся́ти

Nom.	двѐсти (200)	три́ста (300)	четы́реста (400)
Gen.	двухсо́т	трѐхсо́т	четырёхсо́т
Dat.	двумста́м	трѐмста́м	четырёхмста́м
Acc.	двѐсти	триста́	четы́реста
Instr.	двумяста́ми	тремяста́ми	четырёхмяста́ми
Prep.	двухста́х	трѐхста́х	четырёхста́х

Nom.	пятьсо́т (500)	во́семьсо́т (800)
Gen.	пятисо́т	восьмисо́т
Dat.	пятиста́м	восьмиста́м
Acc.	пятьсо́т	во́семьсо́т
Instr.	пятьюста́ми	во́семьюста́ми or восьмьюста́ми
Prep.	пятиста́х	восьмиста́х

Шестьсо́т (600), се́мьсо́т (700) and девя́тьсо́т (900) follow the pattern of **пятьсо́т**.

NOTE In the forms **трѐхсо́т, трѐмста́м, трѐхста́х, четырёхсо́т, четырёхмста́м, четырёхста́х** there is a secondary stress on the syllables containing the letter **ѐ**.

8.1.9 The declension of **но́ль/ну́ль, ты́сяча, миллио́н, миллиа́рд**

The numerals **но́ль/ну́ль (0), ты́сяча** ‘thousand’, **миллио́н** ‘million’, **миллиа́рд** ‘(US) billion’ are more like nouns than the other numerals. They have *grammatical gender*, decline like nouns and, unlike other numerals (except **оди́н**), they have both *singular* and *plural* forms.

но́ль/ну́ль is *masculine* and declines like a *masculine noun* ending in **-ь**.

ты́сяча is *feminine* and declines like a *feminine noun* ending in **-ча**.

миллио́н and **миллиа́рд** are *masculine* and decline like *masculine nouns* ending in a *consonant*.

Singular:

Nom.	но́ль/ну́ль	ты́сяча	миллио́н	миллиа́рд
Gen.	но́ля/ну́ля	ты́сячи	миллио́на	миллиа́рда
Dat.	но́лю/ну́лю	ты́сяче	миллио́ну	миллиа́рду
Acc.	но́ль/ну́ль	ты́сячу	миллио́н	миллиа́рд
Instr.	но́лѐм/ну́лѐм	ты́сячей	миллио́ном	миллиа́рдом
Prep.	но́лѐ/ну́лѐ	ты́сяче	миллио́не	миллиа́рде

Plural:

Nom.	ноли́/нули́	ты́сячи	миллио́ны	миллиа́рды
Gen.	ноле́й/нуле́й	ты́сяч	миллио́нов	миллиа́рдов
Dat.	ноля́м/нуля́м	ты́сячам	миллио́нам	миллиа́рдам
Acc.	ноли́/нули́	ты́сячи	миллио́ны	миллиа́рды
Instr.	ноля́ми/нуля́ми	ты́сячами	миллио́нами	миллиа́рдами
Prep.	ноля́х/нуля́х	ты́сячах	миллио́нах	миллиа́рдах

The plural of **ноль/нуль** is fairly rare, but occurs in such contexts as:

Число́ триллио́н изобража́ется на письме́ единицей с двена́дцатью нуля́ми.

The figure one trillion is written as a one, followed by twelve noughts.

The plural forms of **ты́сяча**, **миллио́н** and **миллиа́рд** occur frequently in combination with other numerals and words indicating quantity. Examples are given in 8.2.5.

8.1.10 The declension of complex numerals

When two or more numerals are put together to form complex numerals, all parts of the numeral should in principle be declined:

Наша́ фи́рма име́ет представите́льства в дву́хста́х семиде́сяти четырёх́ города́х по́ всему́ миру́.

Our company has offices in 274 cities throughout the world.

Numerals of this type, although they will sometimes be heard in more formal contexts, are unwieldy and difficult to form spontaneously. In practice, the only case, other than the nominative and the accusative, that is used with any great frequency is the *genitive*, and even here numerals made up of more than two elements can usually be avoided. Examples such as the following are, however, not unusual:

В бассе́йн Невы́ вхо́дит о́коло пяти́десяти ты́сяч озе́р и шести́десяти ты́сяч рек.

The basin of the River Neva includes about 50,000 lakes and 60,000 rivers.

Доста́вка произво́дится в тече́ние двадца́ти четырёх́ часо́в по́сле полу́чения зака́за.

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 **оди́н**

The numeral **оди́н** behaves exactly like an *adjective* or a *pronoun*; in other words, it agrees with any noun it is used with in *gender*, *case* and *number*.

For the use of **один** in the plural, *see* 8.1.4

Я купил только одну буханку чёрного хлеба.

I bought only one loaf of black bread.

В советские времена иностранцы не могли ездить из одного города в другой без разрешения милиции.

In Soviet times foreigners were not able to travel from one town to another without the permission of the police.

Я читаю одних классиков; в прошлом году я не прочитал ни одного современного романа.

I only read the classic authors; last year I didn't read a single modern novel.

For the use of **не . . . ни** as an emphatic negative, *see* 15.3.4.

8.2.2 The cases used with **два, три, четыре**

When the numerals **два, три** or **четыре** are themselves in the *nominative* or the (*inanimate*) *accusative*, any noun that is used with them will be in the *genitive singular*:

Я вырос в большой семье: у меня три брата и две сестры.

I grew up in a big family; I have three brothers and two sisters.

Летом в нашем офисе очень жарко: там четыре окна, и все они выходят на юг.

In summer it gets very hot in our office; there are four windows and they all face south.

A small number of masculine nouns have the stress on the ending when used after **два, три, четыре**, but on the stem when used in the *genitive case*. The most common of these are **ряд** 'row', **час** 'hour' **шаг** 'pace', 'step':

Я ждал его на вокзале три часа.

I waited at the station for him for three hours.

Мы поболтали 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 котá.

I have two black cats.

В нашем офисе четыре больших окнá.

Our office has four big windows.

Мы поставили перед собой три основных/основные зада́чи.

We have set ourselves three main tasks.

У меня две старших сестры́.

I have two older sisters.

The *nominative plural* of **задача** is **задачи**; the *nominative plural* of **сестра** is **сёстры**.

A *noun* that takes the endings of an *adjective* (e.g. **живо́тное** ‘animal’ or **столо́вая** ‘dining room’, ‘canteen’) behaves like an *adjective*:

В на́шем ко́рпусе две студéнческих столо́вых и буфéт для 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 послед́ние три го́да она́ написа́ла две кни́ги и де́сять нау́чных статей.

In the last three years she has written two books and ten learned articles.

If the numeral is in the (*animate*) *accusative, genitive, dative, instrumental* or *prepositional*, then any *noun* and/or *adjective* is in the *plural* and in the *same case* as the numeral:

Вы не зна́ете мои́х двух млад́ших сестёр?

Do you know my two younger sisters?

Она́ живёт одна́ с тремя́ о́громными соба́ками.

She lives on her own with three enormous dogs.

Я смотре́л в трёх́ раз́ных учеб́никах и нашёл три́ раз́ных отве́та.

I looked in three different textbooks and found three different answers.

8.2.3

The cases used with numerals from пять to девяты́со́т

When a numeral between **пять** and **девяты́со́т** is in the *nominative* or the *accusative* case, any following *noun* and/or *adjective* is in the *genitive plural*:

Наш по́езд опозда́л на пять́ часо́в.

Our train was five hours late.

За послед́ние пять́ лет она́ написа́ла две кни́ги и три́дцать нау́чных статей.

In the last five years she has written two books and thirty learned articles.

Тогда́ обе́д в э́том рестора́не сто́ил четы́реста́ рублё́й.

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 **человек**:

За послед́ние пять́ лет она́ написа́ла две кни́ги и три́дцать нау́чных статей.

In the last five years she has written two books and thirty learned articles.

Я насчита́л в за́ле приме́рно двести́ 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 рабо́тает с семи́ часо́в.

Our shop is open from seven o'clock.

Он оказался на последнем месте со своими ничтожными пятьюстами голосами.

He ended up in last place with his miserable five hundred votes.

Я побывал в десяти разных городах и везде слышал одно и то же.

I've been in ten different cities and everywhere I went I heard the same thing.

NOTE This section applies only to numbers made up of a single element. For complex numerals, see 8.2.5.

8.2.4

The cases used with ноль/ноль, тысяча, миллион, миллиард

When the numerals **ноль/ноль**, **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:

Минимальная температура ночью будет около нуля градусов.

The minimum temperature at night will be around zero degrees.

Такие вещи можно купить в любом магазине за тысячу рублей.

You can buy things like that in any shop for a thousand roubles.

Один километр равен (одной) тысяче метров.

One kilometre is equal to one thousand metres.

Из окна самолёта был виден город, который светился миллионом огней.

From the window of the aeroplane you could see a city lit up by a million lights.

Инвестиции в этот проект составят около миллиарда долларов.

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.

My book contains 241 pages.

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 **тысяча**, **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.

В бассейн Невы входит около пятидесяти тысяч озёр и шестидесяти тысяч рек.

The basin of the River Neva includes about 50,000 lakes and 60,000 rivers.

За эти годы вузы Москвы выпустили почти два миллиона дипломированных специалистов.

In this period almost two million people have graduated from Moscow's higher education institutions.

8.3 Collective numerals

8.3.1 List of collective numerals

Russian has an additional set of numerals, which are known as *collective numerals*.

- 2 дво́е
- 3 тро́е
- 4 че́тверо
- 5 пя́теро
- 6 ше́стеро
- 7 се́меро

Many dictionaries and reference works list collective numerals for 8 (**во́сьмеро**), 9 (**девя́теро**) and 10 (**де́сятеро**), but these are rarely, if ever, used. There are no collective numerals above 10, and collective numerals cannot be combined with other numeral forms to form complex numerals.

8.3.2 The declension of collective numerals

Collective numerals decline according to the following patterns:

Nom.	дво́е	че́тверо
Gen.	двои́х	четыре́рых
Dat.	двои́м	четыре́рым
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	двои́ми	четыре́рыми
Prep.	двои́х	четыре́рых

Тро́е follows the pattern of дво́е; the remainder follow the pattern of че́тверо.

Accusative forms that are the same as the *genitive* are used with *animate nouns*; *accusative forms* that are the same as the *nominative* are used with *inanimate nouns*.

For more on animate and inanimate nouns, see 2.4.

8.3.3 The use of collective numerals

When *collective numerals* are in the *nominative* or *accusative* case, any following *nouns* and/or *adjectives* are in the *genitive plural*. In the *genitive*, *dative*, *instrumental* or *prepositional* the numeral and any following nouns and/or adjectives are in the same case. Examples are given below.

Collective numerals are used in the following circumstances:

Дво́е, тро́е, че́тверо are used with nouns that denote countable objects and that do not have a singular form, e.g. **су́тки** ‘day’, ‘period of 24 hours’, **брюки** ‘trousers’, **часы́** ‘clock’, ‘watch’; these numerals are also used with **де́ти** ‘children’:

По́сле э́того разгово́ра она́ не спала́ дво́е су́ток.

After that conversation she didn't sleep for two (whole days and) nights.

На туа́летном сто́лике акку́ратно ле́жали тро́е но́жниц и не́сколько расче́сок.

On the dressing table were neatly placed three pairs of scissors and several combs.

Моёй до́чери нужна́ кварта́ра побольше: у них с му́жем уже́ че́тверо дете́й.

My daughter needs a bigger flat; she and her husband already have four children.

Any collective numeral can be used with a *masculine noun* referring to a person. In this usage there is little difference between *collective* and ordinary *cardinal* numerals, but *collective numerals* tend to be preferred (1) with masculine nouns that end in the nominative singular in **-а** or **-я** (e.g. **му́жчина** ‘man’) and (2) when the persons concerned are thought of as a group, rather than as separate individuals:

Е́сли встре́чаются дво́е му́жчин, они́ разгово́ривают и́ли о же́нщинах, и́ли о футбо́ле; други́х тем про́сто не существу́ет.

If two men meet, they talk about either women or football; there are no other topics of conversation.

В на́шем отде́ле дво́е му́жчин и четы́ре же́нщины.

In our department there are two men and four women.

Побе́дителями ко́нку́рса при́знаны тро́е студе́нтов Ново́сибирского госуда́рственного университе́та.

The winners of the competition were three students from Novosibirsk State University.

Collective numerals are used on their own to refer to a group of people; they are mostly used when the group is understood to consist entirely of males or to be mixed:

Нас в гру́ппе че́тверо.

There are four of us in the group.

По пя́тницам мы бра́ли в магази́не буты́лку во́дки на тро́их, ка́кую-нибу́дь заку́ску и шли́ к Ива́ну: он жил один.

On Fridays we used to go to the shop to buy a bottle of vodka for the three of us and something to eat with it; we went off to Ivan's: he was living alone.

Collective numerals are sometimes used in set phrases, for example:

Он ест за пя́терых.

He eats enough for five.

Не́ было поче́му-то трамва́ев, так что она́ пришла́ на свои́х дво́их.

For some reason there were no trams running, so she came on her own two feet [or on Shanks's pony].

When they are used with a noun collective numerals are mostly found in the *nominative* and *accusative* cases. In other cases, they tend to be replaced by ordinary cardinal numerals:

Она́ прие́хала со свои́ми *двумя́* детьми́.

She came with her two children.

Ве́трена́я, моро́зная пого́да сохра́нится в Москве́, как ми́нимум, в *течение́* *двух* *суток*.

The windy and frosty weather in Moscow will continue for at least another 48 hours.

Ма́льчи́шка сто́ял *сразу́* за *двумя́* *мужчи́нами*, кото́рые *гро́мко* *разгова́ривали* между́ собой.

The boy stood immediately behind two men who were talking to one another in loud voices.

8.4 Ordinal numerals

8.4.0 Introduction

Ordinal numerals are used to indicate the *order* in which someone or something comes in a sequence. They correspond to English 'first', 'second', 'third', etc. In Russian ordinal numerals are grammatically similar to adjectives.

8.4.1 List of ordinal numerals

1st	пе́рвый, пе́рвая, пе́рвое, пе́рвые	60th	ше́стидеся́тый
2nd	вто́рой, вто́рая, вто́рое, вто́рые	70th	се́мидеся́тый
3rd	тре́тий, тре́тья, тре́тье, тре́тьи	80th	во́сьмидеся́тый
4th	че́твёртый, че́твёртая, че́твёртое, че́твёртые	90th	де́вяно́стый
5th	пя́тый, пя́тая, пя́тое, пя́тые	100th	со́тый
6th	ше́стой, ше́стая, ше́стое, ше́стые	200th	двухсо́тый
7th	се́дьмой, се́дьмая, се́дьмое, се́дьмые	300th	трёхсо́тый
8th	во́сьмой	400th	четырёхсо́тый
9th	девя́тый	500th	пятисо́тый
10th	деся́тый	600th	шестисо́тый
11th	оди́ннадцаты́й	700th	семисо́тый
15th	пяти́надцаты́й	800th	во́сьмисо́тый
20th	два́дцаты́й	900th	девя́тисо́тый
30th	три́дцаты́й	1,000th	ты́сячный
40th	сороко́вой	2,000th	двухты́сячный
50th	пяти́десяты́й	10,000th	деся́титы́сячный
		1,000,000th	миллио́нный

When ordinal numbers are made up of more than one element, only the *last* element is in the form of an ordinal numeral; the remaining elements take the form of cardinal numerals:

45th	со́рок пя́тый	150th	сто пяти́десяты́й
281st	двё́сти во́семьдесят пе́рвый	1975th	ты́сяча девя́тсot се́мьдесят пя́тый
2007th	две ты́сячи се́дьмой		

8.4.2 Declension of ordinal numerals

The numeral **трѐтний** ‘third’ declines like one of the second class of *soft adjectives*. Its endings can be illustrated by the following sample:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	трѐтний	трѐтняя	трѐтнее	трѐтние
Gen.	трѐтнего	трѐтней	трѐтнего	трѐтних

For more detail on the declension of **трѐтний** and other adjectives belonging to the same class, *see* 6.3.

All other ordinal numerals decline like ordinary *hard* adjectives and follow the pattern of **но́вый** or **молодо́й**, depending on whether the stress is on the *stem* or the *ending*.

For more detail on the declension of adjectives belonging to this class, *see* 6.1.

Ordinal numerals do not have short forms.

8.4.3 The use of ordinal numerals

In most situations the use of Russian *ordinal numerals* is similar to that of their English equivalents:

Э́то второ́я у́лица на́лево.
It's the second street on the left.

Тре́тье ма́рта – это мой день ро́ждения.
The 3rd of March is my birthday.

Его́ пе́рвые три рома́на никто́ не чита́л, но четвёртый почему́-то пошёл на́расхва́т.
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:

Она́ роди́лась в ты́сяча девя́тсот во́семьдесят второ́м году́.
She was born in 1982.

Надо́ начина́ть: уже́ де́сять мину́т шесто́го.
We ought to begin; it's already ten past five.

For more on telling the time, *see* 19.2.

For more on indicating the year in dates, *see* 19.3.2.

Ordinal numerals also tend to be preferred in a number of circumstances where someone or something is identified by a number. These include members of sports teams, hotel and other rooms, bus and tram routes, railway carriage and seat numbers, chapter and page numbers, and clothes sizes:

Знаменитый хоккеист Валерий Харламов играл под семнадцатым номером.

The famous ice-hockey player Valerii Kharlamov used to wear the number 17 shirt.

Будьте любезны, дайте ключ от двадцать пятого номера.

Could I have the key to room 25, please?

Простите, я доеду на сорок седьмом автобусе до университета?

Excuse me, will a 47 bus get me to the university?

Мне, пожалуйста, два купейных на завтра до Петрозаводска на шестьсот пятьдесят седьмой (поезд), если можно, в восьмом вагоне.

Can you give me 2 tickets to Petrozavodsk, for berths in a compartment, travelling tomorrow on train number 657, if possible, in carriage number 8.

Я должен вас предупредить, что на двадцатой странице моей статьи есть одна досадная опечатка.

I ought to warn you that on page 20 of my article there is an annoying misprint.

Я обычно ношу сорок третий (размер), но эти туфли немного тесноваты.

I usually wear size 9 (*literally*, size 43) shoes, but this particular pair feels a little tight.

8.5

Fractions

8.5.1

Special nouns used to indicate fractions

Russian has three special nouns that are used to indicate fractions. These are:

половина	half
треть	third
четверть	quarter

These nouns are all *feminine* and declined according to the patterns for feminine nouns ending in **-а** or **-ь** given in 2.9 and 2.10. Their use is illustrated by the following examples:

Давай поделим последнее яблоко поровну, тебе половине и мне половине.

Let's divide the last apple evenly – half for you and half for me.

Я прочитал две 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.

Половина can be attached to a numeral by the preposition **с** (+ instr.). When this happens, the case of any following noun and/or adjective is determined by the numeral to which **половина** is attached:

Мы 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):

одна пятая	one-fifth
две седьмых	two-sevenths
три десятых	three-tenths

Any following noun and/or adjective is always in the *genitive singular*:

Если быть точным, то две пятых фирмы принадлежит мне, а три пятых остальным 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 **И** tends to be present if **целая** is omitted and vice versa.

На президентских выборах 2004 года явка избирателей составила 61,48% (шестьдесят один и сорок восемь сотых процента).
In the 2004 presidential elections the turn-out was 61.48%.

Он пробежал двести метров за двадцать одну и девяносто семь сотых секунды.
He ran 200 metres in 21.97 seconds.

For more on how to read the year, see 8.4.3 and 19.3.2.

NOTES

- (i) Percentages are indicated by using the masculine noun **процѐнт** 'per cent'.
- (ii) This pattern for reading decimal fractions is normally used for figures with one or two places of decimals and is at least in theory possible for three decimal places (**ты́сячная** 'thousandth' would be used). Longer sequences of decimals can be read in the same way as other long sequences of digits; thus, 2,4863 might be read as:

два и со́рок во́семь ше́стьдеся́т три.

For more on reading long sequences of digits, see 8.1.2.

8.5.4 Other forms used in fractions

The numeral **полтора́** (feminine **полторы́**) means 'one and a half'. It declines as follows:

	<i>Masc. and n.</i>	<i>All genders</i>	<i>Fem.</i>
Nom. and Acc.	полтора́		полторы́
All other cases		полу́тора	

The rules for using **полтора́** are the same as for **два**, **три**, **четы́ре**: when the numeral is in the *nominative* or the *accusative* any following *noun* is in the *genitive singular* and any following *adjective* is in the *genitive plural*; in all other cases, any following noun or adjective is in the plural and in the same case as the numeral:

За полтора́ годá я перечи́тал все́го Пу́шкина.

In eighteen months (*literally*, one and a half years) I reread the whole of Pushkin.

Текст у меня́ очень ко́роткий – не бо́лее полу́тора страни́ц.

My text is very short – no more than one and a half pages.

For more on the rules for using **два**, **три**, **четы́ре**, see 8.2.2.

Полтора́ can be combined with other numerals as follows:

полтора́ста	150
полторы́ ты́сячи	1,500
полтора́ миллио́на	1,500,000

Я по́мню те вре́мена, ко́гда ме́сячная зарпáта в полтора́ста ру́блѐй счита́лась совсе́м непло́хой.

I can remember the days when a monthly salary of 150 roubles was thought to be not at all bad.

На́ша о́бласть полу́чит полтора́ миллио́на ру́блѐй на борьбу́ с лесны́ми пожа́рами.

Our region will receive one and a half million roubles to fight forest fires.

The prefix **по́л-** 'half-' can be added to a number of nouns. Frequently used examples include the following:

по́лго́да	half a year, six months
по́лкило́	half a kilo

пол-ли́тра	half a litre
полча́са	half an hour

Ка́ждые полча́са она достаёт из су́мочки пома́ду и подкраши́вает губы.
Every half-hour she gets her lipstick out of her handbag and re-does her lips.

NOTES

- (i) A hyphen is used if the second part of the word begins with a vowel or the letter л.
- (ii) When these forms are in the *nominative* or the *accusative*, any adjective or pronoun used with them is in the *plural*.
- (iii) When these forms are used in cases other than the *nominative* or the *accusative*, the second part takes the same endings as the unprefixated word; the first part normally changes to *полу-*.

Мы бы́ли в полуша́ге от побе́ды, ко́гда прозвуча́л фина́льный сви́сток.

We were within an inch of victory (*literally*, half a step from victory) when the final whistle blew.

Пацие́нтам ино́гда при́ходится жда́ть опе́рации до полуго́да.

Some patients have to wait for anything up to six months (*literally*, half a year) for their operations.

8.6

Other quantity words

8.6.1

Nouns formed from numerals

The following nouns are derived from numerals:

1	еди́ница	10	деся́тка
2	дво́йка	20	двадца́тка
3	тро́йка	30	тридцáтка
4	четве́рка	40	сороко́вка
5	пяте́рка	50	пятидеся́тка
6	шесте́рка	60	шестидеся́тка
7	се́мёрка	70	семидеся́тка
8	восе́мёрка	80	восемидеся́тка
9	девя́тка	100	со́тка

The basic function of these nouns is to indicate the associated digit:

Вы непра́вильно записа́ли мой телефо́н: в нача́ле должна́ быть дво́йка.

You've written my telephone number down incorrectly: there should be a '2' at the beginning.

By extension these forms have acquired a number of additional meanings. For example, **дво́йка** and above are used to indicate the face value of playing cards; **дво́йка** (2 = fail), **тро́йка** (3 = satisfactory), **четве́рка** (4 = good), **пяте́рка** (5 = excellent) are the standard marks awarded throughout the Russian education system; **тро́йка** can mean 'a team of three horses used to pull a cart or a sledge' and also 'a three-piece suit'; **восе́мёрка** can mean 'an eight' (in rowing); **деся́тка** can mean 'a ten-rouble note'. All can be used instead of ordinal numerals to indicate bus or tram routes.

В ка́рты я нико́гда не играю́: мне попада́ются одни́ шесте́рки и се́мёрки.

I never play cards; I only ever get sixes and sevens.

В университете она училась хорошо и получала в основном четвёрки и пятёрки.

She did well at university and mostly got fours and fives.

Отсюда надо сесть на девятку и выйти через три остановки.

From here you should catch a number nine and get off after three stops.

Главы стран Большой восьмёрки встречаются в этом году в Берлине.

The heads of government of the G8 countries are meeting this year in Berlin.

Forms other than those listed in the table at the beginning of the section are occasionally found, usually with reference to specific contexts.

В войну он был танкистом: воевал на знаменитой тридцать четвёрке.

During the war he fought in a tank unit and was in one of the famous T-34 tanks.

The following nouns are used to indicate quantity:

пара	pair, couple	пяток	five (of something)
десяток	ten (of something)	дюжина	dozen
полсотни	fifty (of something)	сотня	hundred (of something)

Вчера я купил в супермаркете десяток яиц, так что на завтрак можно поджарить яичницу.

I bought ten eggs at the supermarket yesterday, so we can have fried eggs for breakfast.

NOTES

- (i) In Russia, items tend not to be sold in dozens, and **дюжина** is much less widely used than its English equivalent.
- (ii) For the most part these nouns are characteristic of informal language.

8.6.2

The numeral **оба**

The numeral **оба** (feminine **обе**) means 'both'. It declines as follows:

	<i>Masc. and n.</i>	<i>Fem.</i>
Nom.	оба	обе
Gen.	обоих	обёих
Dat.	обоим	обёим
Acc.	as nom. or gen.	as nom. or gen.
Instr.	обоими	обёими
Prep.	обоих	обёих

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, 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.

Оба моих брата живут в России.

Both my brothers live in Russia.

Россия́ будет добиваться́ такого́ решéния, котóрое приéмлемо для обéих сторóн.

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.

Сосéди свéрху – пенсиóне́ры, сосéди по лéстничной клéтке – пожило́й инва́лид с доче́рью. **И те и другие́** о́чень ми́лые привéтливые лю́ди.

The upstairs neighbours are pensioners, while those on our landing are an elderly invalid and his daughter. Both sets of people are very nice and friendly.

—Вам гуля́ш или пи́ццу?

—**Мне и то и друго́е.**

—Do you want goulash or pizza?

—Both.

В воскресе́нье я предпочитаю́ сна́чала позáвтракать и то́лько потóм полиста́ть газéты, а моя́ же́на де́лает **и то и друго́е** одновреме́нно.

On Sunday I prefer to have breakfast first and then look at the papers, while my wife does both at the same time.

8.6.3

Other words used to indicate quantity

The following words are used to indicate quantity:

ско́лько?	how much?, how many?	сто́лько	so much, so many
не́сколько	some, several	мно́го	much, many
ма́ло	not much, few	немно́го	some, a little
мно́гое	much (of)	мно́гие	many (of)
немно́гое	a little (of)	немно́гие	only a few (of)
не́который	some, a certain	не́которые	some, a few (of)

Ско́лько, сто́лько and **не́сколько** decline according to the following pattern:

Nom.	ско́лько
Gen.	ско́льких
Dat.	ско́льким
Acc.	ско́лько
Instr.	ско́лькими
Prep.	ско́льких

When **ско́лько** or **сто́лько** is in the *nominative* or the *accusative* case, any following *noun* and/or *adjective* is in the *genitive* (singular or plural); when **не́сколько** is in the *nominative* or the *accusative* case, any following *noun* and/or *adjective* is in the *genitive plural*. When any one of these words is in the *genitive, dative, instrumental* or *prepositional* case, then any accompanying *noun* and/or *adjective* is in the *same case*.

Мно́го, ма́ло, немно́го do not decline and are used in the *nominative* and *accusative* only. **Мно́го** and **ма́ло** are followed by a *noun* in the *genitive* (singular or plural); **немно́го** is usually followed by a *noun* in the *genitive singular*.

Мно́гое and **немно́гое** decline like *adjectives* in the *neuter singular*. **Мно́гие**, **немно́гие** and **не́которые** decline like *adjectives* in the *plural*. **Не́который** declines like an *adjective*.

For more on the declension of adjectives, *see* **6.1**.

For more on the use of **ско́лько**, *see* **17.3.3** and **19.3.1**.

For more on the use of **сто́лько**, *see* **9.3.5**.

For more on the use of the other words listed here, *see* **19.5**.

9

Uninflected parts of speech

9.0 Introduction

Uninflected parts of speech are those that neither decline nor conjugate. They consist of *adverbs* (9.1), *prepositions* (9.2), *conjunctions* (9.3) and *particles* (9.4).

9.1 Adverbs

9.1.0 Introduction

The main function of *adverbs* is to qualify **verbs**, although they can also be used to qualify *adjectives* and even other *adverbs*. An adverb is normally placed *immediately before* the word it qualifies (see 20.1.3).

9.1.1 Adverbs formed from adjectives: the standard pattern

The standard pattern for forming an adverb from a hard adjective (see 6.1) is to replace the adjective ending with **-о**:

глупый	stupid	глупо	stupidly
грубый	crude, rude	грубо	crudely, rudely
дешёвый	cheap	дёшево	cheaply
любезный	kind, courteous	любезно	kindly, courteously
умный	clever	умно	cleverly
частый	frequent	часто	frequently
чистый	clean	чисто	cleanly
дорогой	dear	дорого	dearly
редкий	rare	редко	rarely
тихий	quiet	тихо	quietly
хороший	good	хорошо	well

Adverbs formed from *soft adjectives* of the *first group* (see 6.2) and adverbs that are formed from adjectives ending in **-жий**, **-чий**, **-ший** or **-щий** and that do not have stress on the final syllable end in **-е**:

внешний	external	внешне	externally, on the outside
внутренний	internal	внутренне	internally
искренний	sincere	искренне	sincerely
неуклюжий	clumsy	неуклюже	clumsily
блестящий	brilliant	блестяще	brilliantly

NOTE Alongside **искренне** there is an alternative form **искренно** with the same meaning. The adverbs associated with the adjectives **поздний** 'late' and **ранний** 'early' are **поздно** and **рано** respectively.

Adverbs formed from adjectives ending in **-ский** or **-цкий** end in **-ски** or **-цки** respectively:

героический	heroic	героически	heroically
творческий	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 **-цкий**. These adjectives are in turn mostly formed from nouns, and the adverbs with the **по-** prefix usually refer to doing something or behaving in the manner associated with the noun concerned:

<i>Noun</i>	<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Adverb</i>
брат 'brother' дети 'children'	братский 'fraternal' детский 'childlike', 'childish'	по-братски 'fraternally' по-детски 'in a childlike or a childish manner'
друг 'friend'	дружеский 'friendly'	по-дружески 'in a friendly manner', 'like a friend'
солдат 'soldier'	солдатский 'soldierly'	по-солдатски 'in a soldierly manner', 'like a soldier'
товарищ 'comrade'	товарищеский 'comradely'	по-товарищески 'in a comradely manner'

Его суждения всегда были поверхностными и по-детски наивными.
His judgements were always superficial and childishly naive.

Он кратко, по-солдатски ответил на все мои вопросы.
He answered all my questions briefly, like a soldier.

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’:

английский	English	по-английски	in English
немецкий	German	по-немецки	in German
русский	Russian	по-русски	in Russian
французский	French	по-французски	in French

Вы говорите по-русски?

Do you speak Russian?

У нас такие странные диалоги: она задаёт вопросы по-английски, а я отвечаю по-французски.

We have these strange dialogues: she asks questions in English, and I reply in French.

Хозяйка дома оказалась втянутой в длинный разговор, и он ушёл по-английски, не попрощавшись.

His hostess was involved in a long conversation and he left without saying good-bye.

NOTE **уходить/уйти по-английски** *literally* ‘to leave in an English manner’ means ‘to leave without saying good-bye’.

The third group of these adverbs is formed from *soft adjectives* of the *second group* (see 6.3). In use and meaning they are similar to the first group of adverbs with a **по-** prefix:

<i>Noun</i>	<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Adverb</i>
волк ‘wolf’	волчий ‘relating to wolves’	по-волчьи ‘in a wolf-like manner’
кошка ‘cat’	кошачий ‘relating to cats’	по-кошачьи ‘in a cat-like manner’
человек ‘man’, ‘human being’	человечий ‘relating to human beings’	по-человечьи ‘in a human way’

В его рассказах звери часто говорят по-человечьи.

In his stories animals often speak like humans.

**С волками жить
— по-волчьи выть.**

When in Rome, do as the Romans do. (*Literally*, When living with wolves, howl like a wolf.)

NOTE When referring to the social or spiritual, as opposed to the biological properties of a human being, the adverb **по-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:

по-другому	differently	по-новому	in a new way
по-прежнему	as before	по-разному	variously
по-моему	in my opinion	по-своему	in my/your/his/her/our/ their own way

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*:

сейчас	now, immediately, just a minute	теперь	now
тогда	then, at that time	потом, затем	then, after that
позавчера	the day before yesterday	вчера	yesterday
сегодня	today	завтра	tomorrow
послезавтра	the day after tomorrow	накануне	the day before

For the pronunciation of **сегодня**, see 1.5.5 and 7.3.1.

рано	early	поздно	late
давно	a long time ago, for a long time (referring to a continuing action)	недавно	recently
долго	for a long time (referring to an action in the past or the future)	скоро	soon
сразу	immediately, at once	немедленно	immediately
заранее	in advance, beforehand	постоянно	constantly
всегда	always	ещё	still, yet
уже	already		

The adverb **ещё** is combined with the negative particle **не** to mean ‘not yet’; the combination **уже не** means ‘no longer’:

Он ещё не сдал все экзамены.

He has not yet passed all his examinations.

Эта программа устарела, и я её уже не использую.

This programme is out of date, and I no longer use it.

In combination with a *perfective* verb in the *past* tense **уже** can serve as the equivalent of the English *pluperfect* (‘had done’), indicating that one action was fully completed before another took place:

Я уже уехал оттуда, когда разразился скандал.

I had already left when the scandal broke out.

For more on the use of perfective verbs in a sequence of events, see 5.4.1.

Ещё can have the meaning of ‘yet (another)’, ‘more’:

Что вы ещё хотите?

What else would you like?

Вот ещё один человек, который хотел бы изучать русский язык.

Here’s another person who would like to learn Russian.

Further examples of adverbs of time are given in 21.1.

9.1.4

Adverbs of place

The following are the principal *adverbs* used to indicate *place*:

здесь, тут	here	там	there
сюда	here (motion), hither	туда	there (motion), thither
отсюда	from here, hence	оттуда	from there, thence
езде	everywhere	всюду	everywhere
повсюду	everywhere	близко	near
далеко	far	рядом	adjacent, next to, next door
вверху	above	наверху	upstairs
вверх	upwards	наверх	upwards, upstairs (motion)
сверху	from above, from upstairs	внизу	below, downstairs
вниз	downwards, downstairs (motion)	снизу	from below, from downstairs
вперед	in front, ahead	вперёд	forwards
назад	backwards	сзади	from the back
сбоку	from/on one side	слева	from/on the left
справа	from/on the right		

For the use of **назад** in the time expression (**тому**) **назад** ‘ago’, see 21.1.9.

дома at home

домой home(wards)

Examples of adverbs indicating place are given in 21.2.

9.1.5 Indefinite adverbs

Four series of indefinite adverbs, corresponding to the four series of indefinite pronouns described in 7.6, are formed from the following question words:

где?	where?	как?	how?
когда?	when?	куда?	where to?, whither?
откуда?	where from?, whence?	почему?	why?, for what reason?
зачем?	why?, with what aim?		

где-то	где-нибудь	где-либо	кõe-где
как-то	как-нибудь	как-либо	кõe-как
когда-то	когда-нибудь	когда-либо	кõe-когда
куда-то	куда-нибудь	куда-либо	кõe-куда
откуда-то	откуда-нибудь	откуда-либо	
почему-то	почему-нибудь	почему-либо	
зачем-то	зачем-нибудь	зачем-либо	

There are no adverbs in the **кõe-** series formed from **откуда**, **почему** or **зачем**.

In general terms the usage of these series is equivalent to that of the corresponding series of indefinite pronouns as described in 7.6. With the **-то** series reference is to something specific, the identity of which is unknown or indifferent to the speaker; the **-нибудь** and **-либо** series refer to something indefinite, and the **-либо** tends to be preferred with a *negated* verb or after a *comparative*; the **кõe-** series indicates a small quantity of places or occasions:

Я где-то забыл свой зонт.

I've left my umbrella somewhere.

Она когда-то работала у нас.

At one time she did work for us.

Он почему-то всегда опаздывает.

For some reason he's always late (there is a specific reason, but the speaker does not know what it is).

Он всегда почему-нибудь да опаздывает.

He's always late for some reason or other (but not necessarily the same reason each time).

Не 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 кõe-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 **как-то** and **как-нибудь** are sometimes used to refer to time, i.e. they can be synonyms of **когда-то** and **когда-нибудь** respectively:

Приезжайте как-нибудь летом, и мы вам покажем все достопримечательности города.

Come and see us some time in the summer, and we'll show you all the sights of the city.

- (ii) Adverbs of the **-либо** series, and especially **когда-либо**, are used in a clause following on from a *superlative* adjective:

Это самая интересная книга, которую я когда-либо читал.

This is the most interesting book I have ever read.

For more on superlative adjectives, see 6.8.4 and 6.8.5.

- (iii) The meanings of **коё-как** do not correspond to those of the other pronouns and adverbs in the **коё-** series; it can usually be translated into English as either 'only just (manage to do something)' or 'any-old-how, in a slapdash manner':

От каждого курса нужно было выставить баскетбольную команду. Коё-как и мы собрали восемь человек.

Each year had to put up a basketball team. We just about managed to assemble (a squad of) eight people.

В школе он учился коё-как, с двойки на тройку.

He didn't bother about studying when he was at school and just about scraped by.

9.1.6 Other adverbs

A large number of *adverbs* fit into none of the other categories. The most important of these are listed here:

очень very

Unlike its English equivalent, **очень** can be used to qualify not only an *adjective* or an *adverb*, but also a *verb*:

Очень люблю слушать, когда Евтушенко читает свои стихи.

I really like hearing Evtushenko reading his poetry.

также also

тоже also

Although both these adverbs can be translated as 'also', they are not generally interchangeable. **Также** is used when extending a list and is often combined with the conjunction **а** 'and', while **тоже** is used when making comparisons:

Наше агентство предлагает поездки по всей России. Мы также организуем автобусные туры в Польшу и Чехию.

Our agency offers trips to all parts of Russia. We also organise coach tours to Poland and the Czech Republic.

Она свободно владеет французским, испанским, а также разговорным русским языком.

She has a fluent command of French, Spanish and also colloquial Russian.

На Камча́тке кли́мат о́чень суро́вый; на Саха́лине он помя́гче, но зимо́й там *то́же* о́чень хо́лодно.

In Kamchatka the climate is very severe; on Sakhalin it is gentler, but in winter it gets very cold there as well (just like Kamchatka).

Она́ свобо́дно владе́ет францу́зским, испа́нским, а та́кже разгово́рным ру́сским языко́м. Её́ бра́т *то́же* неме́лого говори́т по-ру́сски.

She has a fluent command of French, Spanish and also colloquial Russian. Her brother also speaks a little Russian.

вме́сте	together	да́же	even
и́на́че	otherwise	кста́ти	by the way
наобо́ро́т	on the contrary	опя́ть	again
почти́	almost	сли́шком	too (excessively)
так	so		

9.1.7 The comparative and superlative forms of adverbs

Comparative and *superlative* forms of *adverbs* exist only for those adverbs formed from *adjectives*. The *short comparative* of an *adverb* is identical in form to the short comparative of the adjective from which it is derived:

У себя́ на да́че он чу́вствовал себя́ о́чень комфо́ртно - комфо́ртнее, чем где-ли́бо.

He always felt at ease at his dacha, more at ease than anywhere else.

For the formation of the short comparatives of adjectives, see 6.8.1.

For examples of the short comparative of adverbs, see 21.9.1-4.

A *long comparative* can be formed by placing *бо́лее* before the adverb. This form must be used with adverbs formed from adjectives with no short comparative and is preferred with many other adverbs of four or more syllables:

В сове́тские времена́ де́ти проводи́ли ле́тние кани́кулы *бо́лее органи́зованно*.

In Soviet times children spent their summer holidays in a more organised fashion.

For the use of *ме́нее* with adverbs, see 21.9.6.

A *superlative* form can be created by using the *comparative* and the *genitive pronoun* forms *всех* (if the reference is to people) or *всего́* (in other contexts):

Лу́чше *всех* у нас в семье́ поёт ма́ма.

In our family the one who sings the best is mother.

Лу́чше *всего́* она́ поёт украи́нские наро́дные пе́сни.

What she sings best are Ukrainian folk songs.

Ле́гче *всего́* нача́ть с са́мого нача́ла.

It will be easiest to begin at the very beginning.

Some of these forms have become set expressions:

пре́жде *всего́* ‘above all’, ‘first and foremost’

9.2 Prepositions

9.2.0 Introduction

Prepositions are words placed before *nouns* or *noun phrases* to provide additional information about the meaning and function of the noun. In principle, it is possible for a noun in any case to follow a preposition, and nouns in the prepositional case are used only after prepositions. Several prepositions can be followed by nouns in more than one case, depending on the precise meaning of the preposition; sometimes the different meanings of prepositions when used with different cases are totally unrelated. For this reason, whenever the use of prepositions is discussed in this book, the case required is indicated in brackets after the preposition, e.g. **за** (+ instr.), meaning that in the context being described, **за** is followed by the *instrumental* case.

In Russian a preposition can *never* be followed by a *verb*.

Prepositional usage is discussed in detail at various points in **Part B**. In particular:

Prepositions indicating *time* are discussed in **21.1**.

Prepositions indicating *place* (location, destination and origin) are discussed in **21.2**.

Prepositions indicating *cause* are discussed in **21.4**.

Prepositions indicating *purpose* are discussed in **21.7**.

The use of the preposition **у** (+ gen.) in constructions indicating possession is discussed in **14.3**.

In this section, therefore, attention will be focused only on those issues not covered elsewhere in the book.

9.2.1 Prepositions followed by the nominative

In general, prepositions are not used with the *nominative* case. Exceptionally, two prepositions can be followed by the nominative, but both are used only in a very restricted range of expressions:

в (во)

за

The preposition **в (во)** is followed by the noun **люди** and nouns denoting occupations and professional or social status and is used in certain constructions relating to joining the profession or acquiring the status concerned. It is only ever followed by nouns in the *plural*:

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.

А о чём ей беспокоиться? На здоровье не жалуется, пенсия неплохая, все дети вышли в люди.

What's she got to worry about? There's nothing wrong with her health, she doesn't get a bad pension and all her children have made their way in the world.

The preposition **за** is followed by the nominative only in the phrase **что за**, used in questions and exclamations:

А это что за штука?

What sort of thing is this (meant to be)?

Что за ерунда: ничего не понятно!

What sort of nonsense is this? I can't understand any of it.

For more on this construction, see 17.3.2.

9.2.2 Prepositions followed by the accusative

The main prepositions followed by the *accusative* are:

в (во)	into, to	за	behind (motion), (in exchange) for
на	onto, to	о (об, обо)	against, onto
по	until (up to and including)	под (подо)	under (motion)
про	about, concerning	сквозь	through
через	across, after (a certain time)		

9.2.3 Prepositions followed by the genitive

The main prepositions followed by the *genitive* are:

без (безо)	without	вдоль	along
вместо	instead of	вне	outside
внутри	inside	возле	alongside
для	for (the benefit of)	до	as far as, until, before
из (изо)	out of, from	из-за	from behind, because of
из-под	from under	кроме	besides, apart from
мимо	past	относительно	concerning, in relation to
напротив	opposite	около	around, about
от (ото)	(away) from	после	after
против	against	ради	for the sake of
с (со)	from (the top of)	среди	among
у	at, near, beside		

In addition, there are a number of prepositional phrases, made up of preposition + noun, all of which are followed by the genitive:

в течение	during
за счёт	at the expense of, by means of

9.2.4 Prepositions followed by the dative

The main prepositions followed by the *dative* are:

благодаря	thanks to	вопреки	despite, contrary to
к (ко)	to(wards)	навстречу	in the direction of
по	along, according to	согласно	in accordance with

9.2.5 Prepositions followed by the instrumental

The main prepositions followed by the *instrumental* are:

за	behind (location)	ме́жду	between
над (надо)	above	под (подо)	under (location)
пе́ред (передо)	in front of, (just) before	с (со)	with

9.2.6 Prepositions used with the prepositional

в (во)	in (location)	на	on (location)
о (об, обо)	about, concerning	по	after
при	adjoining, at, in the presence of, in the lifetime of		

NOTE

Both **о (об, обо)** (+ prep.) and **про** (+ acc.) mean 'about', 'concerning'; the former is the more widely used, while the latter is more characteristic of informal language.

9.2.7 The pronunciation of prepositions

All *one-syllable* and many *two-syllable prepositions* have no stress of their own and are always pronounced as a single unit with the following noun or the first word of the following noun phrase. It is important, therefore, not to make any sort of pause between a preposition and the following word, even or especially when the preposition consists of a single consonant:

в Москвú (vmaskvú)	to Moscow
с бра́том (zbrátəm)	with (my) brother
под Москвóй (pədmaskvój)	just outside Moscow

For the signs used to indicate the pronunciation of unstressed vowels, *see* 1.4.4.

For the use of **под** to mean 'just outside', 'near (a city)', *see* 21.2.12.

In some circumstances, the single stress for the unit made up of the preposition and the following word can fall on the preposition. It has to be said that such instances are increasingly coming to be regarded as anomalous and are often optional alternatives or even obsolescent; there are, however, a few cases where stress on the preposition is still preferred.

When a numeral follows a monosyllabic preposition, especially **за**, **на**, **по**, and when the numeral is itself not immediately followed by a noun, the tendency is to put the stress on the preposition:

Е́сли хоти́те, возьми́те по́ два.
If you want, take two each.

Я уезжа́ю дня́ на́ два.
I'm going away for about two days.

For the use of **по** (+ acc.) in constructions relating to distribution, *see* 19.1.4.

For information on the placing of the numeral after the noun to indicate an approximate quantity, see 19.4.2.

Other frequently used instances include:

за́ город	out of town (motion)	за́ городом	out of town (location)
на́ ночь	for a night, before going to bed	на́ пол	on(to) the floor
		на́ бок	sideways, to the side

Я не могу́ до него́ дозвони́ться: он, на́вэ́рно, за́ городом.

I can't get through to him on the phone; he's probably out of town.

Я на́ ночь не пью́ крэ́пкий чай.

I don't drink strong tea before going to bed.

Я здесь ни при чём: стака́н сам упáл на́ пол и разби́лся.

This has nothing to do with me; the glass fell on the floor and broke all by itself.

Stress on the preposition is often found in set phrases:

брати́/взять, кого́-нибу́дь за́ руку	to take someone by the hand
доставка на́ дом	home delivery
как снег на́ голову	like a bolt from the blue
пропа́вший бе́з вести	missing in action

9.2.8

The fleeting vowel

The three prepositions consisting of a single consonant and some other prepositions ending in a consonant have a *fleeting vowel* which appears mostly before certain consonant clusters. Forms containing a fleeting vowel are indicated in brackets in the lists above.

With the prepositions **в**, **к**, **с** the forms with the fleeting vowel are used:

(1) Before a sequence of two or more consonants, the first of which is either identical to or the voiced/unvoiced partner of the consonant that makes up the preposition (this rule applies to **в** and **с** only):

во́ время	during	со ско́ростью	with a speed (of)
во Франци́и	in France	со зрите́лями	with the viewers
во вто́рник	on Tuesday	со своим . . .	with one's own . . .

Also:

во Вьетна́ме in Vietnam

(2) Before the quantity words **мно́гое**, **мно́гие** 'many'; before forms of the first person pronoun beginning **мн-**; before forms of the pronoun **весь** 'all' beginning **вс-**:

во мне	in me	ко мне́	to me
со мной	with me	во мно́гих	in many . . .
ко мно́гим	to many . . .	со мно́гими	with many . . .
во все́х	in everyone	ко все́м	to everyone
со все́ми	with everyone		

NOTE Forms without the fleeting vowel are also found before the quantity words **мно́гое**, **мно́гие**.

(3) Before sequences of two consonants in monosyllabic masculine nouns that themselves have a fleeting vowel in the nominative singular:

лёд	ice	со льдо́м	with ice
рот	mouth	во рту́	in the mouth

(4) In some other set combinations:

во дворе́	in the yard	во и́мя	in the name (of)
во избежа́ние	for the avoidance of	во ско́лько?	at what time?

With the prepositions **без, из, от, над, перед, под** the fleeting vowel occurs much less frequently. It tends to be preferred before forms of the first person pronoun beginning **мн-** and is sometimes found before **мно́гое, мно́гие**, before forms of the pronoun **весь** beginning **вс-** and before some other sequences of consonants:

на́до мно́й	above me	пери́до мно́й	in front of me
подо́ мно́й	beneath me	подо́ мно́гими/	beneath many
		подо́ мно́гими	
без всего́/	without everything	подо́ льдо́м	under the ice
безо́ всего́			

The preposition **о** has variant forms **об**, which is used before a vowel, and **обо**, which is used before forms of the first person pronoun beginning **мн-** and before forms of the pronoun **весь** beginning **вс-**:

об А́нглии	about England	об одно́м	about one
об э́том	about this	обо́ мне́	about me
обо́ все́м	about everything		

9.2.9

Prepositions requiring special comment: за (+ acc.)

When it is not used in contexts relating to time or place (see 21.1.14, 21.2.14), the basic meaning of **за** (+ acc.) is 'for' in the sense of 'in exchange for'. It is used in contexts of buying or selling items for a particular sum, paying for something and of being rewarded or punished for something:

Похо́жий дом продаётся на соседней у́лице за сто ты́сяч.

A house like this is on sale in the next street for a hundred thousand.

Ива́н купи́л у моего́ сосе́да велосипе́д за ты́сячу рубли́й.

Ivan bought a bicycle off his neighbour for one thousand roubles.

Ско́лько вы запла́тили за биле́т?

How much did you pay for your ticket?

В про́шлом году́ ей был присужде́н специа́льный при́з за ли́чный вклад в разви́тие росси́йского телеви́дения.

Last year she was awarded a special prize for her personal contribution to the development of Russian television.

Его́ оштрафо́вали за наруше́ние па́спортного режи́ма.

He was fined for breaking the passport regulations.

When 'for' means 'for the benefit of', the Russian equivalent is usually **для**:

Для студе́нтов есть специа́льная столова́я.

There's a special refectory for students.

9.2.10 Prepositions requiring special comment: по (+ dat.)

Apart from its use in contexts relating to place (see 21.2.16), one of the most important meanings of **по** (+ dat.) is ‘according to’:

По моём часам уже десять.

According to my watch it’s already ten o’clock.

По расписанию поезд должен был прибыть два часа назад.

According to the timetable the train should have arrived two hours ago.

По твоим глазам вижу, что не говоришь всю правду.

I can tell by your eyes that you’re not telling the whole truth.

Здесь мы играем строго по правилам.

Here we play strictly by the rules.

По (+ dat.) is also used with reference to means of communication:

Пришлите нам подтверждение по факсу.

Send us confirmation by fax (*or* Fax us confirmation).

Я не обсуждаю такие темы по телефону.

I don’t discuss such things on the telephone.

Another use of **по** (+ dat.) is to define categories:

Я купил хороший учебник по социологии.

I bought a good sociology textbook

Они работают над справочником по русской грамматике.

They’re working on a handbook of Russian grammar.

Чемпионат России по футболу обычно начинается в марте и завершается в конце октября.

The Russian football championship usually starts in March and comes to a conclusion at the end of October.

В 2000 г. Жорес Алфёров был удостоен Нобелевской премии по физике.

In 2000 Zhores Alfërov was awarded the Nobel prize for physics.

Он в течение нескольких лет был деканом по работе с иностранными студентами.

For several years he was the Dean responsible for foreign students.

Он специалист по микрохирургии глаза.

He’s a specialist in optical micro-surgery.

9.2.11 Prepositions requiring special comment: с (+ instr.)

The basic meaning of the preposition **с** (+ instr.) is ‘with’ in the sense of ‘accompanying, together with’:

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 **с** (+ instr.) is not used in contexts relating to the instrument with which something is accomplished:

Посуду из-под молока следует мыть сначала холодной, а затем горячей водой.

Crockery that has had milk in it should be washed first with cold water and then with hot.

For more examples, *see* 3.5.1.

9.3 Conjunctions

9.3.0 Introduction

Conjunctions are words used to link either whole clauses or individual words and phrases within the framework of a single sentence. There are two kinds of conjunctions: *co-ordinating* and *subordinating*.

9.3.1 Co-ordinating conjunctions

Co-ordinating conjunctions join units of equal weight, whether they are words, phrases or whole clauses. The following are the main co-ordinating conjunctions used in Russian:

и 'and'	а 'and', 'but'
но 'but'	зато 'but', 'on the other hand'
в то время как 'while'	или 'or'
не то ... не то indicates uncertainty	то ли ... то ли indicates conjecture
	то ... то indicates alternating actions

9.3.2 The use of **и**, **а**, **но**, **зато**, **в то время как**

The conjunctions **и** and **но** correspond to English 'and' and 'but' respectively:

В университете я изучал русский язык и литературу.
At university I studied Russian language and literature.

Вечером он обычно сидит дома и смотрит телевизор.
In the evenings he usually stays at home and watches television.

Зимы 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 **и**, except when it joins two clauses, each of which has an *explicit* grammatical subject (as in the third of the above examples).

For the use of **и** to indicate emphasis, *see* 20.3.3.

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 него́ широ́кий круг друзе́й и в Москвѣ и в Петербу́рге.

He has a wide circle of friends in both Moscow and St Petersburg.

In formal written language, however, **как ... так и** is also found:

На́ша па́ртия по́льзуется большо́й подде́ржкой как в Москвѣ, так и Санкт-Петербу́рге.

Our party enjoys great support both in Moscow and in St Petersburg.

The normal equivalent of ‘not only ... but also’ is **не то́лько ... но и**:

Еѐ произведе́ния публику́ются не то́лько в Росси́и, но и во мно́гих странах Центра́льной и Восто́чной Евро́пы.

Her works are published not only in Russia, but also in many Central and East European countries.

The use of the conjunction **а** is rather more complicated, since it can correspond to either ‘and’ or ‘but’, depending on the context. It always contains an element of contrast, but to a lesser degree than that indicated by **но**:

В суббо́ту я уѐхал к роди́телям, и в воскресе́нье мы отме́тили день рожде́ния папы́.

On Saturday I went to visit my parents, and on Sunday we celebrated father’s birthday. [Here there is no contrast: the events of Sunday are a logical development of those of Saturday.]

В суббо́ту я весь день занима́лся в университе́тской библиоте́ке, а в воскресе́нье мы с подро́гой ѐздили за гриба́ми.

On Saturday I spent all day working in the university library, and on Sunday my girlfriend and I went out into the country to collect mushrooms. [Here there is a degree of contrast between the events of Saturday and Sunday, but the two days’ events still make up a coherent way of spending a weekend, which is why ‘and’ is used in the English translation.]

В суббо́ту мы уѐхали на да́чу, но пришло́сь в тот же ве́чер верну́ться в го́род из-за плохой пого́ды.

On Saturday we went to the dacha, but we had to come back the same evening because of the bad weather. [Here there is a stronger contrast between the two events described; the change in the weather means that the plans for the weekend have to be changed.]

The following give further further examples of the use of **а**:

С се́страми он говори́л по-ру́сски, а с ма́терью по-тата́рски.

He spoke Russian with his sisters and/but Tatar with his mother.

Через полчаса́ придут го́сти, а ты ещё не привела́ себя́ в поря́док.

Our visitors will be here in half an hour and you’re still not ready.

The conjunction **а** is also used to introduce a positive contrast to a previous negative:

Мы приезжа́ем не в понеде́льник, а во вто́рник.

We are arriving not on Monday, but on Tuesday.

For the use of **а** with **та́кже**, see 9.1.6.

For the use of **а** to link sentences, see 23.2.2.

For the use of **a** in the phrase **a to**, see 21.6.3.

The conjunction **зато́**, used either on its own or after **на**, means ‘yet’, ‘but on the other hand’:

При таком ремонте жилые комнаты не трогают, (но) зато́ меняют кровлю и обновляют систему отопления.

With a refurbishing of this sort they don't do anything to the living accommodation, but on the other hand they do re-roof the property and renew the heating system.

The conjunction **в то время как** means ‘while’, used in a contrastive sense:

У «Почты России» самая большая сеть отделений по всей России, в то время как коммерческие структуры работают преимущественно в крупных городах.

The Russian Post Office has the largest network of branches throughout Russia, while commercial structures work mainly in large cities.

9.3.3

The use of the conjunctions *или*, *не то ... не то*, *то ли ... то ли*, *то ли*, *то ... то*

The conjunction **и́ли** means ‘or’:

Что важнее для студента – учёба *или* работа?

What is more important for a student – study – or work?

Ремонт будет закончен завтра, *или* в худшем случае послезавтра.

The repair will be carried out tomorrow or, at the worst, the day after.

‘Either ... or’ is **и́ли ... и́ли** (less often **ли́бо ... ли́бо**):

Туда можно добраться *или* на метро *или* автобусом.

You can get there either by metro or by bus.

Не понимаю: *или* он очень умный, *или* 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:

когда́	when (21.1.5)
до того́ как	before (21.1.11)
прежде́ чем	before (21.1.11)
после́ того́ как	after (21.1.11)
пока́	while (21.1.14)
с тех пор как	since (21.1.16)
как то́лько	as soon as (21.1.16)
(до тех пор), пока́ ... не	until (21.1.16)

(2) Subordinating conjunctions of place:

где	where (21.2.13)
куда́	where (to), whither (21.2.14)
откуда́	where from, whence (21.2.15)

(3) Subordinating conjunction of manner:

как	how (21.3.4)
-----	--------------

(4) Subordinating conjunctions of cause and consequence:

потому́ что	because (21.4.6)
потому́ как	because (21.4.6)
та́к как	because, since (21.4.6)
поско́льку	because, since (21.4.6)
ибо́	for (21.4.6)
та́к что	so that (21.4.7)

(5) Subordinating conjunction indicating conditions:

е́сли	if (21.5)
-------	-----------

(6) Subordinating conjunction indicating a concession:

хотя́	although (21.6.3)
-------	-------------------

(7) Subordinating conjunction of purpose:

что́бы	in order to/that (21.7.3)
--------	---------------------------

(8) Subordinating conjunctions introducing indirect speech:

что	that (21.8.2)
что́бы	introduces indirect commands (21.8.2)
бу́дто	that (implies doubt) (21.8.2)
яко́бы	that (implies disbelief) (21.8.2)

(9) Subordinating conjunctions used in comparisons:

чем	than (21.9.2, 21.9.4)
тем более, что	all the more because, especially as (21.9.4)
как	as (21.9.8)

NOTE The conjunction **чтобы** contains the particle **бы**, which is used to form the conditional (see 4.10); just as **бы** is combined with a finite verb in the past tense, so if **чтобы** is used with a finite verb, that verb will always be in the past tense as well.

9.3.5 'Matching' adverbs and conjunctions

One feature of Russian is that *subordinating conjunctions* are often buttressed by *adverbs* in the *main clause* that match the conjunction in meaning and usually in form as well. Matching pairs of adverbs and conjunctions include the following:

тогда́, когда́	
там, где	
туда́, куда́	
оттуда́, откуда́	
так, как	
сто́лько, ско́лько	as much as
насто́лько, наско́лько	to the extent that
посто́лько, поско́льку	in so far as

Мы подпи́шем контра́кт то́лько тогда́, когда́ у нас бу́дет по́лная информация́ по всем вопро́сам.

We will sign the contract only when we have full information on all questions.

Я хоте́л бы жить там, где меня́ никто́ не зна́ет.

I'd like to live where nobody knows me.

Е́сли бу́дете поступи́ть так, как я вам рекомендо́ую, никаки́х пробле́м не бу́дет.

If you do as I recommend, there won't be any problems.

Я зна́ю об э́том сто́лько, ско́лько и вы.

I know as much about it as you do.

Ва́ши пробле́мы интере́суют меня́ посто́лько, поско́льку о́ни влия́ют на о́бщую атмосфе́ру в коллективе́.

Your problems interest me in so far as they affect the overall atmosphere in the group.

Used on its own, the phrase **посто́лько поско́льку** means something like 'not bad', 'up to a point' or even 'it depends':

—У вас хоро́шие отноше́ния с зарубе́жными партнёрами?

—Посто́лько поско́льку.

—Do you get on well with your foreign partners?

—Up to a point. (or 'It depends.')

9.3.6 Prepositional phrases with conjunctions

In Russian two clauses are often joined by a *prepositional phrase* (a preposition followed by the appropriate form of the *neuter demonstrative pronoun то*) and a conjunction. This can correspond to the English use of a preposition followed by the -ing form of verb. The most frequent conjunction used in this way is **что**, although others that occur include **чтобы** (in hypothetical contexts) and **почему**:

Её критиковали за то, что в своих романах она не затрагивала социальные темы.

She was criticised for not touching on social topics in her novels.

Начнём с того, что изберём председательствующего.

We'll begin by electing someone to take the chair.

Они настаивают на том, чтобы это условие было включено в контракт.

They are insisting on this condition being included in the contract.

Им следовало бы задуматься над тем, почему нормальные люди прибегают к таким мерам.

They should stop and think about why normal people resort to such measures.

9.4 Particles

9.4.0 Introduction

Particles are additional words providing information that supplements or supports that provided by the main elements of a sentence. Some particles have a very specific grammatical or semantic function, while others are used in a less easily defined manner.

9.4.1 Particles with a very specific grammatical or semantic function

The particles used when answering questions are **да** 'yes' and **нет** 'no'. For more on their use in this function, *see* 17.1.4.

The *particle* **да** is also used with third person verb forms to create an imperative. This usage is mostly characteristic of church language, but one phrase in common use is:

да здравствует!

long live!

Да здравствует дружба между нашими странами!

Long live the friendship between our countries!

NOTE The opposite of **да здравствует** is **долгой** 'down with', which is followed by a noun in the *accusative* case:

Долой смертную казнь!

Down with the death penalty!

The particles **вот** and **вон** are used when pointing out; the former, which is much more frequent, points to something or somewhere near and is often combined with **здесь** 'here', while the latter points to something far from the speaker and can be combined with **там** 'there':

Вот мой очки́, я иска́л их весь день!

Here are my glasses, I've been looking for them all day!

Они лежа́ли вот здесь, под э́той газе́той.

They were lying right here, underneath this newspaper.

Вон Мавзоле́й Ле́нина, но, ка́жется, вход в него́ закры́т.

There's Lenin's Mausoleum, but I don't think you can get in.

**Мо́жно е́хать на пя́том авто́бусе; остано́вка вон там, на той сторо́не
у́лицы.**

You can go on the number five bus; the stop's over there, on the other side of the street.

For the use of **вот** as a sentence filler, *see* 23.3.

Some particles are used to form parts of the verb system:

For the use of the particle **пусть** to form the third person imperative, *see* 4.9.

For the use of the particle **бы** to form the conditional, *see* 4.10.

For the use of the particle **-ка** with the imperative, *see* 18.2.1

For the use of the particle **ли** in direct questions, *see* 17.1.2.

For the use of the particle **ли** in indirect questions, *see* 21.8.3,

For the use of the **negative** particle **не**, *see* 15.1.

For the use of particles in indirect speech, *see* 21.8.2.

9.4.2

Other particles

Other frequently used particles include the following:

ведь 'surely', 'you know'

ну 'well (now)'

уж adds emphasis

же adds emphasis or can indicate contrast

-то adds emphasis

The use of these particles is a complex matter of idiom, and the translations and indications given here are only approximate.

For information on the use of particles to provide emphasis, *see* 20.3.3.

For information on particles used as sentence fillers, *see* 23.3.

In addition, the particles **да** and **вот** can be used for expressive effect:

Да ты с ума́ сошла́! В тако́й моро́з в одной ку́рточке!

Are you totally out of your mind? Going out in this cold weather in just a jacket!

Вот так пра́здник! Ни горя́чей воды́, ни электри́чества!

A fine holiday this has turned out to be! No hot water and no electricity!

9.4.3 Notes on the pronunciation and spelling of particles

The following particles are *enclitic*, that is, they have no stress of their own, but form a single stress unit with the *preceding* word:

бы, -ка, же, ли, -то

Of these, **ли** always follows the first stressed word of the clause or sentence in which it appears.

The particle **не** is *proclitic*, that is, it forms a single stress unit with the *following* word.

The particles **-ка** and **-то** are always joined to the preceding word with a hyphen. Other particles are always written as separate words.

10

Word formation

10.0 Introduction

An important feature of the structure of Russian is the use of various word-forming devices to create new words on the basis of those that already exist. The most important of these are *prefixes* and *suffixes*, although sometimes new words are created by removing suffixes or by combining two words into one. Since the meanings of the various prefixes and suffixes are fairly consistent, it is often possible to work out at least the approximate meaning of an unknown word by breaking it up into its individual word-forming components. (Note the words ‘fairly’ and ‘approximate’: this is a useful, but not an infallible tip!)

As with aspects of the verb, whole books have been written on Russian word formation, and in this chapter it is possible only to touch on those issues that are likely to be of most concern to learners. There are sections on the noun (10.1), the adjective (10.2) and the verb (10.3), while section 10.4 deals separately with the question of verbal prefixes.

10.1 Formation of nouns

10.1.1 Diminutives and augmentatives

Most Russian nouns have a variant form, created by the addition of a suffix, which is conventionally known as the *diminutive*. This form is often used with specific reference to size, but it can also indicate a particular emotional attitude to the object in question; the attitude is often one of affection or attachment, although sometimes it may be one of contempt.

In some instances the diminutive has partly or wholly detached itself from the noun from which it was originally formed and has acquired a separate meaning. Examples where this has happened are noted in the lists below.

With some nouns it is possible to add a different suffix to form an *augmentative*. These normally refer to (large) size, but this too can be combined with the expression of an emotional attitude. In general, augmentatives are much less widely used than diminutives.

The use of diminutives and augmentatives to indicate emotional attitudes is discussed in 16.1.

It can occasionally happen that the addition of a diminutive or an augmentative suffix changes the declension type of the original noun. In such instances the grammatical gender of the noun remains unchanged.

10.1.2 Diminutive suffixes for masculine nouns

The main diminutive suffixes for masculine nouns are **-ик**, **-ок/-ёк/ек**, **-ец** and **-чик**.

The suffix **-ик** is never stressed. Examples include:

дом	house, block of flats	до́мик	<i>especially</i> a small individual house
за́яц	hare	за́йчик	
ковёр	carpet	коврик	<i>also</i> mat
ломоть	slice	ломтик	
мост	bridge	мо́стик	<i>also</i> captain's bridge
нож	knife	но́жик	<i>especially</i> penknife
сад	garden	са́дик	<i>also</i> kindergarten (informal)
стол	table	сто́лик	<i>especially</i> restaurant or café table
час	hour	ча́сик	
шар	sphere, globe, balloon	ша́рик	

The suffix **-ок/-ёк/-ек** is usually, though not always stressed. Before this suffix the consonants **-г**, **-к**, **-х** change to **--ж-**, **-ч-**, **-ш-** respectively. Some nouns ending in **-н** or **нь** change the final consonant to **-ш-**. Examples include:

глаз	eye	глазо́к	<i>also</i> peep-hole
друг	friend	дружо́к	
знак	sign	значо́к	badge
ко́ньяк	brandy, Cognac	ко́ньячо́к	
ко́рень	root	корешо́к	<i>also</i> counterfoil
кофе	coffee	кофеё́к	
круг	circle	кружо́к	<i>also</i> club
огонь	fire	огонё́к	
пету́х	rooster, cock(erel)	петушо́к	
реме́нь	strap, belt	ремешо́к	strap (e.g. of a watch)
старик	old man	старичо́к	
чай	tea	чаё́к	
шум	noise	шумо́к	
горо́х	peas	гороше́к	
орех	nut	ореше́к	
челове́к	man, human being	челове́чек	

The following are among the nouns that form the diminutive with the **-ец** suffix:

моро́з	frost	морозе́ц
хлеб	bread	хлебце́

The following are among the nouns that form the diminutive with the **-чик** suffix:

блин	pancake	блинчик
карма́н	pocket	карманчик
палец	finger	пальчик
стакан	glass	стаканчик

The vast majority of nouns have only one diminutive forms, but the following are exceptions in having two alternative forms:

брат	brother	братец, братик (used only to refer to children)
вопрос	question	вопросик, вопросец
год	year	годик, годок
стул	chair	стульчик, стулик

10.1.3 Diminutive suffixes for feminine nouns

The most widely used diminutive suffix for feminine nouns is **-ка**. Before this suffix the consonants **-г-, -к-, -х-** change to **-ж-, -ч-, -ш-** respectively and **-ц-** changes to **-ч-**. Examples include:

вода	water	водка	vodka (only! see 10.1.5)
голова	head	головка	also head of any small object
дорога	road	дорожка	path
дочь	daughter	дочка	
ель	fir tree	ёлка	also Christmas tree
книга	book	книжка	
нога	leg, foot	ножка	also leg of item of furniture
площадь	square (in city)	площадка	any small area
птица	bird	птичка	
река	river	речка	
рука	arm, hand	ручка	also handle, pen
стрела	arrow	стрелка	also hand (of a clock)
тётя	aunt	тётка	

Some feminine nouns have a diminutive form with the suffix **-ица**:

вещь	thing	вещица	
часть	part	частица	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**:

звезда	star	звёздочка	
карта	card, map	карточка	[as in кредитная карточка credit card]
лодка	boat	лодочка	
тряпка	rag, piece of cloth, duster	тряпочка	

10.1.4 Diminutive suffixes for neuter nouns

Many neuter nouns have a diminutive ending in **-ко** or **-ико**. Before these suffixes **-к-** and **-ц-** change to **-ч-**; **-х-** changes to **-ш-**:

блю́дце	saucer	блю́дечко	
молоко́	milk	молочко́	
облако́	cloud	облачко́	
сердце́	heart	сердечко́	
ухо́	ear	ушко́	also eye (of a needle)
яблоко́	apple	яблочко́	
яйцо́	egg	яичко́	also testicle
колесо́	wheel	колёсико́	

лицо́	face	ли́чко
плечо́	shoulder	плё́чко

Another suffix found with neuter nouns is **-це/-цо/-ецо**; the third variant of the suffix is used after a sequence of two consonants:

зе́ркало	mirror	зе́ркальце
слово́	word	сло́вцо
письмо́	letter	письме́цо

NOTE The noun **блю́дце** 'saucer' is in origin a diminutive form of **блю́до** 'dish'.

A small number of neuter nouns have a diminutive with the suffix **-ышко**:

го́рло	throat	го́рлышко
зе́рно	grain, kernel	зе́рнышко
крыло́	wing	крылы́шко

10.1.5 Secondary diminutive suffixes

With some nouns it is possible to add a further suffix, thereby creating a *secondary diminutive* form:

друг	friend	дружо́к	дружо́чек
сын	son	сыно́к	сыно́чек
тётя	aunt	тётка	тётенька

In general, these forms have a significantly stronger emotional content than the primary diminutives and they should be used with some degree of caution. For more on this, see 16.1.

There are, however, some secondary diminutives that are used either exclusively or more frequently than the primary forms (the latter, where they exist, are indicated below in brackets):

мину́та	minute	мину́точка (мину́тка)
секунда	second	секундо́чка
сестра́	sister	сестри́чка (сестри́ца)

It is particularly important to distinguish the following pair of nouns and their respective diminutives:

вода́	water	води́чка (води́ца)
во́дка	vodka	во́дочка

10.1.6 Augmentative suffixes

Augmentative forms are used much less frequently than *diminutives*. The suffixes used are **-ище** (for masculine and neuter nouns), **-ища** (for feminine nouns) and **-ина** (for masculine and feminine nouns). Before these suffixes the consonants **-г**, **-к**, **-х** change to **-ж-**, **-ч-**, **-ш-** respectively:

во́лк	wolf	волчи́ще
кула́к	fist	кулачи́ще
борода́	beard	боро́дища
жара́	heat (wave)	жари́ща

дом	house, block of flats	домина
рыба	fish	рыбина

10.1.7 Suffixes indicating someone who carries out an action

The suffix most frequently used to form a noun indicating the person who carries out the action denoted by a verb is **-тель**:

води́ть	to lead, to drive	води́тель	driver
жить	to live	житель	inhabitant
избира́ть/избра́ть	to elect	избира́тель	elector
изобрета́ть/изобрести́	to invent	изобрета́тель	inventor
люби́ть	to love	люби́тель	lover (e.g. of art), amateur
писа́ть/написа́ть	to write	писа́тель	writer
рожда́ть/роди́ть	to give birth	роди́тель	parent
строи́ть/построи́ть	to build	строи́тель	builder
учи́ть/научи́ть	to teach	учи́тель	teacher
чита́ть/прочи́тать	to read	чита́тель	reader

The pair of verbs **спаса́ть/спасти́** 'to save' is unusual, in that it serves as a base for two nouns with different meanings; one is formed from the *imperfective* and the other from the *perfective*:

спаса́тель	rescue worker	спаси́тель	saviour
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Some nouns formed in this way indicate an object, rather than a person:

выключа́ть/ выключи́ть	to switch off	выключа́тель	switch
дви́гать/ двину́ть	to move	дви́гатель	engine, motor
предохра́нять/ предохра́нить	to protect	предохра́нитель	safety catch, fuse
указыва́ть/ указа́ть	to point out	указа́тель	index

Other suffixes that can be used to form nouns indicating someone who carries out a particular activity are **-ник**, **-чик** and **-щик**. These are mostly used with nouns not formed directly from verbs:

защи́та	defence	защи́тник	defender
мясо́	meat	мясни́к	butcher
поля́рный	polar	поля́рник	explorer of the polar regions
рабо́та	work	рабо́тник	worker, employee
ремесло́	trade, craft	ремесленни́к	craftsman, artisan
совре́менный	contemporary (adjective)	совре́нник	contemporary (noun)
уча́стие	participation	уча́стник	participant
учи́ться	to learn	учени́к	pupil
груз	load	грузчи́к	loader, porter, docker
лета́ть	to fly	ле́тчик	pilot
перебегáть/ перебежа́ть	to run across	перебежчи́к	defector
боле́ть	to be ill; to support (a sports team)	боле́льщик	supporter

гардероб	cloakroom	гардеробщик	cloakroom attendant
регулировать	to regulate, to control	регулировщик	policeman controlling traffic

Some of the following nouns denote instruments, rather than or as well as people:

градус	degree (temperature)	градусник	thermometer
счёт	bill, account	счётчик	a counting device, meter, someone who counts

10.1.8

Suffixes indicating inhabitants, members of nationalities or other forms of status

The suffix **-ец** is widely used to indicate inhabitants of towns and cities in Russia and elsewhere, as well as nationality and ethnic affiliation. Nouns with this suffix normally have a *fleeting vowel*:

Воронеж	Voronezh	воронежец	
Владимир	Vladimir	владимирец	
Екатеринбург	Ekaterinburg	екатеринбуржец	
(Санкт-)Петербург	St Petersburg	(санкт-)петербуржец	
Ярославль	Iaroslavl	ярославец	
Лондон	London	лондонец	
Пекин	Beijing	пекинец	
Америка	America	американец	American
Германия	Germany;	немец	German
немецкий	German		
Испания	Spain	испанец	Spaniard
Италия	Italy	итальянец	Italian
Канада	Canada	канадец	Canadian
Китай	China	китаец	Chinese person
Шотландия	Scotland	шотландец	Scot
Чечня	Chechnya	чеченец	Chechen

For more on the fleeting vowel, see 2.5.1.

For more on the use of small letters to indicate inhabitants and members of nationalities and ethnic groups, see 1.5.7.

The suffix **-анин/-янин/-чанин** is widely used to form nouns indicating the inhabitants of towns and cities in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus:

Иркутск	Irkutsk	иркутянин
Киев	Kiev	киевлянин
Минск	Minsk	минчанин
Петрозаводск	Petrozavodsk	петрозаводчанин
Ростов-на-Дону	Rostov-on-Don	ростовчанин

The same suffix is used, albeit less often, to form nouns indicating inhabitants of other cities or indicating nationality:

Париж	Paris	парижанин
Рига	Riga	рижанин
Рим	Rome	римлянин

А́нглия	England	а́нглича́нин	Englishman
А́рме́ния	Armenia	а́рмяни́н	Armenian
Да́ния	Denmark	да́тча́нин	Dane

This suffix can also form nouns indicating inhabitants of more general locations, members of religious faiths and persons possessing a particular social or other kind of status:

го́род	city, town	горожа́нин	city-/town-dweller
се́ло	village	сельча́нин, се́лянин	village-dweller
		гражда́нин	citizen
		дворя́нин	nobleman
		крестья́нин	peasant
		мусульма́нин	Muslim
Хри́сто́с	Christ	христиа́нин	Christian

NOTE When it declines, the noun **Хри́сто́с** loses the **-ос**: genitive **Хри́ста́**, dative **Хри́сту́** etc.

For the declension of nouns ending in **-анин/-янин/-чанин**, see 2.11.3.

Some nouns indicating the inhabitants of some Russian, Ukrainian or Belarusian towns and cities or indicating nationalities are formed with other, often unpredictable suffixes; some nouns indicating nationalities have no suffix at all:

Москва́	Moscow	москви́ч	
Оде́сса	Odessa	одессит	
Пермь	Perm	пермяк	
По́льша	Poland	поляк	Pole
Гре́ция	Greece	грек	Greek
Фран́ция	France	фра́нцу́з	Frenchman
Шве́ция	Sweden	швед	Swede

10.1.9 Suffixes used to form feminine nouns

Nouns indicating inhabitants of a place, national or ethnic affiliation or social status normally have separate *masculine* and *feminine* forms. Some nouns indicating occupations also have a separate feminine form. The feminine forms are created either by replacing one suffix with another or by adding a feminine suffix to the masculine form.

To form the feminine equivalent of nouns indicating nationalities and ending in **-ец** the suffix is normally removed and replaced with **-ка**:

а́мерика́нец	American	а́мерика́нка
шо́тландец	Scot	шо́тландка

NOTE The feminine equivalents of nouns indicating the inhabitants of Russian cities and ending in **-ец** are rare and can be difficult to form. To indicate a female inhabitant of St Petersburg **пете́рбурже́нка** is the preferred form, but words formed with other suffixes may also be encountered.

With nouns in **-анин/-янин/-чанин** the feminine equivalent is formed by removing the last two letters of the masculine suffix and adding **-ка**:

ро́стовча́нин	inhabitant of Rostov-on-Don	ро́стовча́нка	
а́нглича́нин	Englishman	а́нглича́нка	Englishwoman

With other nouns indicating inhabitants of a place or national or ethnic affiliation the feminine suffix **-ка** is usually added to the end of the masculine form; in a few instances **-ка** replaces the masculine suffix:

москвѣч	Muscovite	москвѣчка
швед	Swede	шведка
поляк	Pole	полька

With a few nouns indicating national or ethnic affiliation the feminine in **-ка** is not formed directly from the masculine:

грек	Greek	грѣчанка
китаец	Chinese man	китайнка
кореец	Korean	корейнка
француз	Frenchman	француженка

NOTE

A certain amount of care is required with some of these forms, since the 'expected' feminine form exists, but with a different meaning:

грѣчка	(an informal term for) buckwheat
корейка	(a form of) smoked ham

For more on nouns indicating citizenship or ethnic affiliation, *see* 12.5.1.

With nouns denoting someone who carries out an action the suffix **-ница** is added to nouns ending in **-тель**; the feminine equivalent of nouns ending in **-ик** is formed by replacing the final two letters with the suffix **-ница**:

писатель	writer	писательница
учитель	teacher	учительница
уборщик	cleaner	уборщица
ученик	pupil	ученица

The suffix **-ша** is added to nouns with the suffixes **-арь**, **-ер**, **-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:

вахтёр	janitor, person who guards the entry to a building	вахтёрша
кассир	cashier, person who sits at a cash-desk	кассирша
секретарь	secretary	секретарша
аспирант	post-graduate student	аспирантка
спортсмен	sportsman	спортсменка sportswoman
студент	student	студентка

It is important to note that there are restrictions on the use of feminine nouns describing someone who has a particular occupation or profession. This question is discussed in detail in 12.6.2.

10.1.10 Other nouns formed from verbs

Many verbs have nouns formed from them with the suffix **-ание** (verbs with an infinitive in **-ать**), **-яние** (verbs with an infinitive in **-ять**) or **-ение** (other verbs). Nouns

formed from *second conjugation* verbs have the same changes of consonant as occur in the *past passive participle*.

For more on these changes of consonant, *see* 4.12.4.

Many of the nouns formed in this way function as pure *verbal nouns*, that is, they indicate the action denoted by the verb:

изуча́ть/изучи́ть	to study	изуче́ние	study(ing)
кури́ть	to smoke (tobacco)	куре́ние	smoking
оформля́ть/ оформи́ть	to register, to legalise	оформле́ние	registration, legalisation
раскаива́ться/ раска́яться	to repent	раска́яние	repentance
созерца́ть	to contemplate	созерца́ние	contemplation
употребля́ть/ употреби́ть	to use	употребле́ние	use
чита́ть/прочи́тать or проче́сть	to read	чте́ние	reading,

The use of these verbal nouns is particularly characteristic of formal written language. For more on this use, *see* 23.1.4.

Many of these verbal nouns have acquired more concrete meanings:

вводи́ть/ввести́	to lead in, to bring in	введе́ние	introduction (e.g. to a book)
дви́гать/дви́нуть	to move	движе́ние	movement, traffic
предлага́ть/ предложи́ть	to offer	предложе́ние	offer; sentence (grammatical)
приглаша́ть/ пригласи́ть	to invite	приглаше́ние	invitation
содержа́ть	to contain	содержа́ние	contents (e.g. of a book)
сокраща́ть/ сократи́ть	to abbreviate	сокраще́ние	abbreviation
убежда́ть/убеди́ть	to convince	убежде́ние	conviction, belief

Nouns belonging to this group can occur in all types of writing and speech.

NOTES

(i) It will be noticed that the nouns **чте́ние** and **движе́ние** are not formed directly from the corresponding verbs.

(ii) The noun used to indicate the physical contents of, for example, a tin is **содержи́мое**.

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:

входи́ть/войти́	to enter (on foot)	вход	entry
выходи́ть/выйти́	to go out (on foot)	выход	exit
доходи́ть/дойти́	to get as far as	доход	income

запуска́ть/запустить	to launch (e.g. a rocket)	за́пуск	launch
пропуска́ть/ пропусти́ть	to let through, to omit	про́пуск	pass, omission
приговáривать/ приговори́ть	to sentence	приговóр	sentence (in court)
рассказа́ывать/ рассказа́ть	to tell, to narrate	расска́з	short story

10.1.11 Other suffixes used to form abstract nouns

The suffix *-ость* is widely used to form abstract nouns from adjectives; these nouns are always *feminine*:

глу́пый	stupid	глу́пость	stupidity
молодо́й	young	молодо́сть	youth(fulness)
но́вый	new	но́вость	(item of) news
ре́дкий	rare	ре́дкость	rarity
сме́лый	bold, courageous	сме́лость	boldness, courage
ста́рый	old	ста́рость	old age

Other **suffixes** that can be used to form **abstract nouns** from various parts of speech include **-ство, -ба, -нь, -изна**:

бе́гать	to run	бе́гство	flight, escape
бра́т	brother	бра́тство	fraternity
де́ти	children	де́тство	childhood
боро́ться	to struggle, to wrestle	боро́мба	struggle, wrestling
стре́лять	to shoot	стре́льба	shooting
боле́ть	to be ill	боле́знь	illness
жи́ть	to live	жи́знь	life
бе́лый	white	бели́зна	whiteness
круто́й	steep	крути́зна	steepness

10.1.12 Making one noun out of two words

There are numerous nouns in Russian that are put together out of two recognisably separate elements. In most instances the elements are linked by the vowels **о** (after hard consonants) or **е** (after soft consonants or **ц, ж, ш**) and sometimes the noun ends in a suffix of one sort or another:

бро́нь 'armour' + носи́ть 'to carry'	бро́неносец 'battleship'
верте́ть 'to spin' + лета́ть 'to fly'	вертолёт 'helicopter'
рука́ 'hand', 'arm' + писа́ть 'to write'	рукопи́сь 'manuscript'
о́бщий 'general', 'common' + жи́ть 'to live'	о́бщежи́тие 'hostel'
о́гонь 'fire' + туши́ть 'to extinguish'	огнетуши́тель 'fire extinguisher'
пра́во 'right', 'law' + наруше́ние 'infringement'	право́наруше́ние 'crime, infringement of the law'
пы́ль 'dust' + соса́ть 'to suck'	пылесос 'vacuum cleaner'
са́м 'oneself' + гна́ть 'to chase', 'to distil'	самогон 'home-distilled vodka', 'hooch'
са́м 'oneself' + лета́ть 'to fly'	самолёт 'aeroplane'
те́плый 'warm' + ходи́ть 'to go'	теплохо́д 'motor vessel'

Another device for creating one noun out of two words is to preface a noun with the abbreviated form of an adjective. These formations were particularly characteristic of bureaucratic and journalistic writing in the Soviet period, but the device has survived and several such forms are in more or less common use:

де́тский сад	kindergarten	детса́д
ме́дицинская сестра́	nurse	медсестра́
полити́ческая ко́рректность	political correctness	политко́рректность
полити́ческий за́ключённый	political prisoner	политза́ключённый
профессио́нальный сою́з	trade union	профсою́з

The status of the abbreviated forms varies: **детса́д** normally occurs only in informal language, but in the other instances the abbreviated version is in practice the only form in general use.

In the following instances the first part is not really capable of being expanded into a full adjective:

авиабилéт	air ticket
автовокза́л	(long-distance) bus station

Another type of word formation that was characteristic of the Soviet period is the so-called 'stump compound'. These are words put together from a part (usually the first syllable or first two syllables) of two or more other words; a typical example is **генсе́к**, formed from **гене́ральный секретáрь** 'general secretary'. Many such forms have disappeared or have become restricted to specialised contexts, but among those still in common use are the following:

воённый комиссариáт	военкома́т
military recruitment office	
избира́тельная комис́сия	избирко́м
electoral commission	
компромети́рующий материа́л	компрома́т
compromising material	
во́йские подразделения́ специа́льного	
назначéния	спецна́з
special forces	
Министéрство здравоохранéния	Минздрáв
Ministry of Health	
универса́льный магази́н	универма́г
department store	

In a number of instances a noun is formed from a phrase usually consisting of noun + adjective; the original noun is dropped and a noun-forming suffix (usually **-ка** but sometimes **-ник**) is added to a shortened form of the adjective. These formations are widely used in informal language, but in more formal contexts the full form is preferred:

кредитная ка́рт(очк)а	кредитка́
credit card	
ма́нная крупа́	ма́нка
semolina	
минера́льная вода́	минерáлка
mineral water	

мобильный телефон mobile telephone	мобильник
футбольная майка football shirt, tee-shirt	футболка
читальный зал reading room	читалка
«Вечерняя Москва» (Moscow's evening newspaper)	«Вечёрка»
Государственная публичная библиотека имени М.Е. Салтыкова-Щедрина M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library (in St Petersburg)	Публичка

10.2 Formation of adjectives

10.2.0 Introduction

To form an adjective from a noun it is necessary to add a suffix to which adjectival endings can be added. The three main suffixes used are: **-н-**, **-ск-** and **-ов-/-ев-/ёв-**. In addition, there are certain suffixes (**-енький**, **-оватый**) which are used to form adjectives from other adjectives.

10.2.1 The suffix -н-

The suffix **-н-** is by far the most widely used of the three suffixes used to form adjectives from nouns. Certain consonants undergo changes before this suffix:

к ~ ч
г ~ ж
х ~ ш
ц ~ ч
л ~ ль

As a rule, the adjective has the same meaning as the noun. Exceptions are indicated where appropriate:

автомобиль	car, motor vehicle	автомобильный	
бархат	velvet	бархатный	
верёвка	string	верёвочный	
воздух	air	воздушный	
война	war	военный	military
восток	east	восточный	
дерево	tree, wood (the material)	деревянный	wooden
запад	west	западный	
луна	moon	лунный	
молоко	milk	молочный	
север	north	северный	
трамвай	tram	трамвайный	
улица	street	уличный	
школа	school	школьный	
юг	south	южный	

In some instances the stress is on the ending, which means that the *nominative singular masculine* ends in **-ой** (see 6.1.2):

день	day	дневной	
зуб	tooth	зубной	
ночь	night	ночной	
пиво	beer	пивной	
река́	river	речной	
рука́	arm, hand	ручной	also tame

10.2.2 The suffix **-н-** with a soft ending (**-ний**)

The combination of the suffix **-н-** and a soft ending (**-ний**) is characteristic of adjectives formed from *nouns*, *adverbs* or *prepositions* relating to *time* or *place*. These adjectives belong to the *first group* of *soft adjectives*, described in 6.2.

Adjectives formed from nouns relating to time:

вечер	evening	вечерний
утро	morning	утренний

But cf. **дневной**, **ночной** listed in 10.2.1.

весна́	spring	весенний
зима́	winter	зимний
ле́то	summer	летний
о́сень	autumn	осенний
суббо́та	Saturday	субботный

But **воскресе́нье** Sunday **воскресный**

Adjectives formed from adverbs relating to time:

вчера́	yesterday	вчера́шний	yesterday's
сего́дня	today	сего́дняшний	today's
ны́не	today, nowadays	ны́нешний	today's, present
за́втра	tomorrow	за́втрашний	tomorrow's
все́гда	always	все́гдашний	usual, invariable
тепе́рь	now	тепе́рьшний	present, of today
тогда́	then	тогда́шний	

Adjectives formed from nouns relating to place:

зад	back (part of something), buttocks	за́дний	back, rear
пе́ред	front (part of something)	пе́редний	front
верх	top	ве́рхний	upper
низ	bottom	ни́жний	lower

Adjectives formed from adverbs or prepositions relating to place:

здесь	here	зде́шний	
тут	here	ту́тошний	
там	there	тамо́шний	
вне (+ gen.)	outside	вне́шний	external
внутри (+ gen.)	inside	вну́трешний	internal

10.2.3 Adjectives formed with the suffix -ск-

The suffix **-ск-** is particularly characteristic of adjectives formed from geographical names:

Аме́рика	America	американский	American
А́нглия	England	английский	English
Великобрита́ния	Great Britain	(велико)британский	British
По́льша	Poland	польский	Polish
Росси́я	Russia	российский русский	Russian Russian

For the difference between **российский** and **ру́сский**, see 12.5.2.

Москв́а	Moscow	моско́вский
(Санкт-)Петербу́рг	St Petersburg	(санкт-)петербу́ргский

NOTE

The form **(санкт-)петербуржский** 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-петербу́ргский госуда́рственный уни́верси́тет** St Petersburg State University.

Ло́ндон	London	ло́ндонский
Пари́ж	Paris	пари́жский
Байка́л	Lake Baikal	байка́льский
Кавка́з	Caucasus (mountain range)	кавказский
Камча́тка	Kamchatka (peninsula)	камча́тский
Нева́	River Neva	не́вский

The same suffix is also used with adjectives formed from *surnames*:

Горбачёв	горбачёвский
Пушкин	пушкинский
Толстой	толсто́вский

Other adjectives with the **-ск-** suffix include the following:

январь	January	январский
апрель	April	апрельский
октябрь	October	октя́брьский

and all other adjectives formed from the names of the months;

арифме́тика	arithmetic	арифмети́ческий	arithmetical
Библи́я	Bible	библейский	biblical
брат	brother	братский	fraternal
дети	children	детский	childlike, childish
капита́лист	capitalist	капиталисти́ческий	
люби́тель	lover (e.g. of music), amateur	люби́тельский	amateur
роди́тель	parent	роди́тельский	
солда́т	soldier	солда́тский	

Some of the adjectives with this suffix have the stress on the ending:

До́н	(river) Don	до́нский	
го́род	city, town	го́родский	
мо́ре	sea	мо́рский	marine

10.2.4 Adjectives formed with the suffix -ов-/-ев-/-ёв

The suffix **-ов-/-ев-/-ёв** is the least widely used of the three word-forming suffixes discussed here. Examples include:

ба́нан	banana	ба́нанный	
бро́нза	bronze	бро́нзовый	
ма́сса	mass (large amount or quantity)	ма́ссовый	
обра́зец	model (for imitation)	обра́зцовый	model, ideal
оре́х	nut	оре́ховый	
осётр	sturgeon	осётро́вый	
ри́с	rice	ри́совый	
сви́нец	lead	сви́нцовый	
си́рень	lilac (tree)	си́реньевый	
со́я	soya	со́евый	
че́решня	cherry	че́решневый	
ви́шня	(morello) cherry	ви́шнёвый	
ру́бль	rouble	ру́блёвый	
бе́рег	shore	бе́реговой	
бы́т	daily life	бы́товой	everyday, social
гру́ппа	group	гру́пповой	
звук	sound	звучо́вой	
мо́зг	brain	мо́зговой	
ча́с	hour		
ча́сы	clock, watch	ча́совой	also sentry
пи́ща	food	пи́щевой	
ре́чь	speech	ре́чевой	

10.2.5 Adjectives belonging to the second group of soft adjectives

The adjectives belonging to the *second group of soft adjectives* (described in 6.3) are all formed from animate nouns:

Бо́г	God	Бо́жий
чело́век	man, human being	чело́вечий
вдо́ва	widow	вдо́вий
ба́ран	ram	ба́ранный
бы́к	bull	бы́чий
ве́рблюд	camel	ве́рблюжий
во́лк	wolf	во́лчий
коро́ва	cow	коро́вий
ко́шка	cat	ко́шачий
ли́са	fox	ли́сий
ме́дведь	bear	ме́двежий
пти́ца	bird	пти́чий
соба́ка	dog	соба́чий
щу́ка	pike	щу́чий

These adjectives, and especially those formed from nouns denoting animals, can be used in a wide range of possessive and descriptive functions:

Здесь храм 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:

Закон Божий	Religious Instruction (subject in school)
«Птичье молоко»	a well-known brand of chocolates [the allusion is to bird's milk as something exquisite and rare]
собачий холод	intense cold
(как) по щучьему веленью	as if by magic

10.2.6

Nouns from which two or more adjectives are formed

There are several Russian nouns from which more than one adjective can be formed. In such instances the different adjectives will have different meanings:

боль	pain, ache	больной	sick, ill, sore, (as a noun) patient
		болево́й	relating to pain
век	century	веково́й	centuries old, ancient
		вече́ный	eternal
друг	friend	дру́жеский	friendly
		дружественный	friendly, cordial (official)
		дру́жный	harmonious, unanimous
мир	world; peace	мирово́й	world(-wide)
		ми́рный	peaceful
		ми́рской	secular, lay
серебро	silver	серебра́ный	(made of) silver
		серебри́стый	silver (coloured)
си́ла	strength, force, power	си́льный	strong
		си́ловой	relating to power or the use of force
сте́кло	glass	сте́клянный	(made of) glass
		стеко́льный	relating to the production of glass
чу́до	miracle	чуде́сный	miraculous, wonderful, marvellous
		чу́дный	wonderful, marvellous
		чудно́й	strange, cranky

язы́к	tongue, language, tribe	языко́вой	linguistic, relating to language
		язы́ческий	pagan

10.2.7 Adjectives formed from phrases

In many instances it is possible to form a single adjective from a phrase. The majority of these consist either of an *adjective* + *noun* or a *numeral* + *noun*.

When adjectives are formed from an *adjective* + *noun*, the two parts of the adjective are linked by the vowel **о** (**е** after a soft consonant):

бе́лая голова́	white head	белоголо́вый	white-haired, fair-haired
Ве́тхий Завет	Old Testament	ветхозаве́тный	Old Testament
красно́е лицо́	red face	краснолицы́й	red-faced
крупный ма́сштаб	large scale	крупно- ма́сштабный	large-scale
научная фанта́стика	science fiction	научно- фантасти́ческий	science-fiction
ру́сский язы́к	Russian language	ру́скоязы́чный	Russian-speaking
сре́дние ве́ка	Middle Ages	средневеко́вый	medieval

NOTE The example **научно-фантасти́ческий** is unusual because it has two stresses and is normally hyphenated, rather than being written as one word.

Adjectives of this type are frequently formed from geographical names:

Да́льний восток	Far East
да́льневосто́чный	far eastern
За́падная Украина	Western Ukraine
западноукраи́нский	West Ukrainian
Ти́хий океа́н	Pacific Ocean
тихоокеа́нский	Pacific

When adjectives are formed from a *numeral* + *noun*, the numeral is usually in the *genitive case* form:

две но́ги	two legs	двуно́гий	two-legged
два смы́сла	two senses	двусмы́сленный	ambiguous
два то́ма	two volumes	двухто́мный	in two volumes
два эта́жа	two storeys	двухэта́жный	two-storeyed
три часа́	three hours	трёхчасо́вый	three hours long
два́дцать пять лет		twenty-five years	
двадцатипятиле́тний		twenty-five years old	

10.2.8 Adjectives formed from other adjectives

The suffix **-енький** fulfils a similar function for adjectives as the various diminutive suffixes do for nouns, that is, they indicate either small size or a particular emotional attachment. In most instances, therefore, they do not have a different translation from

that of the adjective from which they are derived. In practice, adjectives with this suffix tend to be formed only from adjectives indicating colour and a few other widely used adjectives indicating a subjective quality:

краси́вый	beautiful	краси́венький
красный	red	красне́нький
коро́ткий	short	коро́тенький
чи́стый	clean	чисте́нький

There are two special cases to note:

ма́лый	small, little	ма́ленький
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Here, adjectives with the **-енький** suffix are in general use; **ма́лый** tends to be restricted to set phrases or to titles such as:

Ма́лая А́зия	Asia Minor
Ма́лый теа́тр	(name of a theatre in Moscow)

In the following instances the adjective with the suffix has a different meaning:

хоро́ший	good	хороше́нький	pretty
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Rather less widely used are the *augmentative* suffixes **-ющий**, **-енный**:

холо́дный	cold	холоднóщий	
здоровый	healthy	здорове́нный	fine, strapping

For more on the use of these diminutive and augmentative suffixes, see 16.1.5.

The suffix **-ватый** attenuates the meaning of the original adjective; it can thus correspond to the English ‘-ish’:

глу́пый	stupid	глупова́тый	fairly stupid
красный	red	краснова́тый	reddish
страшный	terrible, frightening	страшнова́тый	quite frightening

10.3 Formation of verbs

10.3.0 Introduction

Any newly created verb in Russian, other than those created by the addition of a prefix (see 10.4), must belong to one of the four *productive* classes of verbs described in 4.6, although in practice some of these classes are more productive than others.

10.3.1 Verbs ending in -ОВАТЬ

The overwhelming majority of newly created Russian verbs belong to the class of verbs with an *infinitive* ending in **-ОВАТЬ** and *non-past* endings in **-ую**, **-уешь**, etc.

For the conjugation of verbs belonging to this class, see 4.6.2.

The suffix used to form the infinitive of these verbs can take the following forms: **-ОВАТЬ/-ЕВАТЬ**, **-ИЗОВАТЬ**, **-ИРОВАТЬ**, **-ИЗИРОВАТЬ**. Many verbs in this class that have entered the language very recently are *bi-aspectual*, that is, the same form is used for both *imperfective* and *perfective* aspects; bi-aspectual verbs are indicated in the lists below with the abbreviation **нсв/св**.

Examples of verbs ending in **-овать**:

арестова́ть (нсв/св)	to arrest
бастова́ть/забастова́ть	to go on strike
диктова́ть/продиктова́ть	to dictate
коронова́ть (нсв/св)	to crown
пробова́ть/попробова́ть	to try
расшифровыва́ть/расшифрова́ть	to decipher
рискова́ть/рискнутъ	to risk

The infinitive ending **-евать** occurs after soft consonants and after the consonants **ж, ц, ш, ч** in accordance with the spelling rule given in **1.5.2**:

ночевáть/переночевáть	to spend the night
танцевáть/станцевáть	to dance

Examples of verbs ending in **-изовать**:

организова́ть (нсв/св)	to organise
парализова́ть (нсв/св)	to paralyse
характеризова́ть/охарактеризова́ть	to characterise

NOTES

- (i) Some perfective verbs ending in **-овать/-изовать** have an imperfective partner in **-овывать/-изовывать** (as in the example **расшифровыва́ть/расшифрова́ть**).
- (ii) Although the verbs **арестова́ть** and **организова́ть** are bi-aspectual, there are imperfective partners **арестовыва́ть** and **организовыва́ть** respectively; these are not normally used in the present and future tenses.

Examples of verbs ending in **-ировать**:

бойкоти́ровать (нсв/св)	to boycott
игнори́ровать (нсв/св)	to ignore
инвести́ровать (нсв/св)	to invest
иллюстри́ровать (нсв/св)	to illustrate
плани́ровать/заплани́ровать	to plan
редакти́ровать/отредакти́ровать	to edit
цити́ровать/прочи́тировать	to quote

Examples of verbs ending in **-изировать**:

госпита́лизи́ровать (нсв/св)	to hospitalise
модерни́зировать (нсв/св)	to modernise
приватизи́ровать (нсв/св)	to privatise
симво́лизи́ровать (нсв/св)	to symbolise
стабили́зировать (нсв/св)	to stabilise

10.3.2 Verbs with an infinitive ending in **-ить**

It is sometimes possible to form from a noun a second conjugation verb with an infinitive ending in **-ить**.

For the conjugation of second conjugation verbs with an infinitive ending in **-ить**, see **4.6.4**.

Examples of verbs formed in this way include the following, most of which tend to be restricted to the more informal levels of language:

партиза́н	partisan	партиза́нить (нсв)	to fight with the partisans
пылесос	vacuum cleaner	пылесоси́ть (нсв)	to vacuum
сигна́л	signal, alarm	сигна́лить/просигна́лить	to signal (<i>especially</i> to hoot a car horn)
сканда́л	scandal, scene	сканда́лить (нсв)	to create a scene
тира́н	tyrant	тира́нить (нсв)	to behave like a tyrant towards, to oppress
транжи́р	spendthrift	транжи́рить/протранжи́рить	to squander
хулига́н	hooligan	хулига́нить (нсв)	to behave like a hooligan

10.3.3 Verbs formed from adjectives

There are two types of verbs formed from adjectives. *Intransitive* verbs with an infinitive ending in **-еть** are formed from a wide range of adjectives. These are *first conjugation* verbs and they belong to the type described in 4.6.1(c).

Transitive verbs with an infinitive ending in **-ить** are formed from a more restricted range of adjectives. These are *second conjugation* verbs of the types described in 4.6.4.

For the difference between transitive and intransitive verbs, see 4.13.1.

Examples of intransitive verbs with an infinitive ending in **-еть**:

бе́дный	poor	бе́днеть/обе́днеть	to grow poor
бе́лый	white	бе́леть/побе́леть	to turn white, to show up white
бе́дный	pale	бе́днеть/побе́днеть	to turn pale
бога́тый	rich	бога́теть/разбога́теть	to become rich
красна́ый	red	красне́ть/покра́снеть	to turn red, to blush
лева́ый	left	лева́еть/полева́еть	to move to the left (politically)
ста́рый	old	ста́реть/постаре́ть	to grow old
те́мный	dark	те́мнеть/сте́мнеть	to grow dark
тре́звый	sober	тре́зветь/отре́зветь, протре́зветь	to sober up

Examples of transitive verbs with an infinitive ending in **-ить**:

бе́лый	white	бе́лить/побе́лить	to paint white, to whiten
молодо́й	young	молоди́ть/омолоди́ть	to make someone look younger
тре́звый	sober	тре́звить/отре́звить	to sober someone up
че́рный	black	че́рнить/заче́рнить, очере́нить	to blacken [<i>literally</i>] to blacken [<i>figuratively</i>]

10.4 Verbal prefixes

10.4.0 Introduction

Attaching a *prefix* to a *verb* serves one of two functions. In the first place it can create the *perfective* partner of an unprefixated *imperfective* without changing the meaning of the verb; examples of this are given in 4.2.3. The second function is to change both the *aspect* and the *meaning*; in the great majority of these cases new pairs of imperfective and perfective verbs with the same prefix are created according to the patterns described and illustrated in 4.2.4. This use of verbal prefixes is an important part of the Russian system of word formation; it corresponds in large measure to the creation of the so-called 'phrasal verbs' in English (such as 'go out', 'take in' or 'put up with') and, as with phrasal verbs in English, some of the distinctions of meaning that result from this process are quite subtle.

The following prefixes are used to create new verbs: **в(о)-**, **вз(о)-/вс-**, **воз(о)-/вос-**, **вы-**, **до-**, **за-**, **из(о)/ис-**, **на-**, **недо-**, **о/об(о)**, **от(о)-**, **пере-**, **пре-**, **под(о)-**, **пред(о)-**, **при-**, **про-**, **раз(о)/рас-**, **с(о)-**, **у-**.

The spelling **(о)** indicates that a *fleeting vowel* (see 2.5.0) appears before some forms of certain verbs.

For more on the distribution of forms in **-з** and **-с**, see 1.5.6.

Some of the above prefixes have either a single or a very limited range of meanings: the prefix **недо-** always conveys the idea of an action carried out to an insufficient degree; the prefix **в(о)-** usually conveys the idea of movement into (if not literally, then figuratively). Other prefixes, such as **за-**, **о/об(о)** or **с(о)-**, have a wide range of meanings that do not necessarily have any obvious link between them; one consequence of this is that it is sometimes possible to find the same verb used with the same prefix in two different meanings. Almost all prefixes, though, have at least one fundamental spatial meaning which is revealed when they are used with *verbs of motion*.

For more on verbs of motion, see 22.1, 22.2.

In many instances there is a match between the prefix and the preposition most widely used in conjunction with the verb in question, as in the following example:

Она́ вошла́ в ко́мнату.

She came into the room.

10.4.1 The prefix **в(о)-**

With the meaning of movement into **в(о)-** is used with *verbs of motion*, but also with a number of other verbs:

входи́ть/войти́	to go in, to come in (on foot)
въезжа́ть/въеха́ть	to drive in, to enter (by vehicle)
вбегать/вбежа́ть	to run in
вводи́ть/ввести́	to bring in, to introduce
вмешива́ться/вмеша́ться	to interfere in
впуска́ть/впусти́ть	to let in
вставля́ть/встави́ть	to insert
вступа́ть/вступи́ть	to enter, to join (e.g. a political party)

With the following verb the meaning is understood figuratively:

включать/включить to include, to switch on

10.4.2 The prefixes **вз(о)-/вс-**, **воз(о)-/вос-**

The basic meaning of **вз(о)-/вс-** is movement upwards:

всходить/взойти to rise (e.g. the sun)
взлетать/взлететь to take off (of an aeroplane)

When it is used with the following verbs, the meaning is more one of agitation:

взбивать/взбить to whip (cream)
взрывать/взорвать to blow something up

The prefix **воз(о)-/вос-** has basically the same range of meanings, but it tends to be used in more figurative contexts:

возбуждать/возбудить to arouse, to incite
возвышать/возвысить to raise (up)
возмущать/возмутить to anger, to outrage
возникать/возникнуть to arise, to spring up, to appear
воспитывать/воспитать to bring up, to educate
восхищаться/восхититься to admire, to be captivated by

With some verbs this prefix can convey the meaning of returning, restoring:

возвращать(ся)/возвратить(ся), to return
вернуть(ся)
восстанавливать/восстановить to restore

10.4.3 The prefix **вы-**

The basic meaning of the prefix **вы-** is movement out:

выходить/выйти to go/come out of, to leave (on foot)
выбегать/выбежать to run out from
выносить/вынести to carry/bring out (physically), to endure
выбрасывать/выбросить to throw out
вынимать/вынуть to take out
выписывать/выписать to write out, to subscribe to
выступать/выступить to appear (in public), to perform,
to make a speech

With some verbs this prefix can convey the notion of an action carried out exhaustively:

высказываться/высказаться to have one's say
высыпаться/выспаться to have a good sleep, to sleep one's fill

The following useful verbs do not really fit into either of the above categories:

выигрывать/выиграть to win
выключать/выключить to switch off

For information on the stress of perfective verbs with the **вы-** prefix, see 4.2.4.

10.4.4 The prefix до-

The basic spatial meaning of the prefix **до-**, when it is combined with *verbs of motion*, is movement as far as:

доезжа́ть/дое́хать	to travel as far as
доноси́ться/донести́сь	to carry (of a sound)

In the following verb the meaning is figurative:

доноси́ть/донести́ на (+ acc.)	to denounce someone
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The prefix **до-** is combined with a wide variety of verbs to convey the meaning to finish off an action:

допи́сывать/дописа́ть	to finish writing
достраива́ть/дострои́ть	to finish building
дочита́вать/дочита́ть	to finish reading

A closely related meaning, found with a few verbs, is that of topping up:

долива́ть/доли́ть	to top up with (a liquid)
допла́чивать/доплати́ть	to have to pay a bit extra

There are certain *reflexive* verbs with the prefix **до-** that have the meaning of doing the action until the desired result is achieved:

дога́дываться/догада́ться	to guess the right answer
догова́риваться/договори́ться	to come to an agreement
дожда́ться/дожда́ться	to wait until the person arrives
дозвани́ваться/дозвони́ться	to get through (on the telephone)
докапы́ваться/докопа́ться	to dig down until you find what you are looking for (<i>literally and figuratively</i>)

With other reflexive verbs the same prefix can convey the meaning of carrying out an action to the point where there are unpleasant consequences:

допева́ться/допе́ться (до хрипоты́)	to sing (until you are hoarse)
допи́ться (св) (до че́ртиков)	to drink (to the point of seeing little pink elephants (<i>literally</i> , small devils)
доигра́ться (св)	to land oneself in trouble

10.4.5 The prefix за-

When used with *verbs of motion* and other verbs indicating displacement, the prefix **за-** often has the meaning of movement behind:

заходи́ть/зайти́	to go behind
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Verbs of motion with the prefix **за-** often convey the meaning of calling in somewhere:

заходи́ть/зайти́	to call in, to drop in
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In a number of expressions the prefix **за-** can convey the idea of movement into; used in this way, this prefix implies the application of a certain amount of energy and a movement that continues far inside the implied or expressed container:

забива́ть/заби́ть гол	to score a goal
забрасыва́ть/заброси́ть шайбу́	to score a goal (in ice-hockey)

засовывать/засунуть руки в карман to thrust one's hands into one's pocket

The prefix **за-** can also convey the idea of closing or wrapping up:

заворачивать/завернуть to wrap up (a parcel)
завязывать/завязать to tie up (a parcel)
закрывать/закрыть to close, to shut
запирать/запереть to lock
застёгивать/застегнуть 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:

зави́раться/завра́ться to get carried away with one's lies
заговáриваться/заговори́ться to get carried away talking
заси́живаться/засиде́ться to sit too long (e.g. over food and drink or at a meeting)
зачи́тываться/зачита́ться to become (too) absorbed in one's reading

The connotations of the following verb are slightly different:

заду́мываться/заду́маться 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:

говори́ть	to talk	заговори́ть	to start talking
пла́кать	to cry, to weep	запла́кать	to start crying
ходи́ть	to go (on foot), to walk	заходи́ть	to start walking up and down

There are, however, a few instances of *imperfective/perfective* pairs:

заболева́ть/заболе́ть to fall ill
зажигáть/зажечь to ignite, to set fire to
засыпа́ть/засну́ть to fall asleep

In addition to the above, there are a large number of verbs where the prefix **за-** fits into none of the above categories; in many of these the prefix does not itself have an easily identifiable meaning and in some instances may no longer be perceived as a prefix:

заблуди́ться (св) to lose one's way
заблужда́ться (нсв) to be mistaken
забыва́ть/забыть to forget
завáривать/завари́ть to brew (tea)
зависе́ть (св) от (+ gen.) to depend on
загора́ть/загоре́ть to sunbathe, to acquire a tan
заказы́вать/заказа́ть to order (goods or in a restaurant)
заключа́ть/заключи́ть to conclude
заменя́ть/замене́ть to replace, to substitute
занима́ть/заня́ть to occupy, to borrow
занима́ться/позанима́ться to study
записыва́ть/записа́ть to write down, to record
запрещáть/запрети́ть to forbid
заполня́ть/заполни́ть to fill in (a form)
запомина́ть/запо́мнить to memorise, to remember

заставля́ть/заста́вить	to force, to compel
защища́ть/защити́ть	to defend
заявля́ть/заяви́ть	to declare, to state

10.4.6 The prefix **из(о)/ис-**

The prefix **из(о)/ис-** is often associated with the general idea of movement outwards, often conceived figuratively:

избега́ть/избежа́ть	to avoid
избира́ть/избра́ть	to elect (to high office)
извлека́ть/извле́чь	to extract, to gain (e.g. benefit)
издава́ть/изда́ть	to publish, to make (a sound)
исключа́ть/исключи́ть	to exclude, to expel, to rule out

With some verbs the prefix **из(о)/ис-** can convey the meaning the exhaustion of resources or covering the whole surface of something; with these meanings **из(о)/ис-** can either form a *perfective* partner of an unprefixated *imperfective* or form *imperfective/perfective* pairs:

тра́тить	to spend	истра́тить	to spend up
ходи́ть	to go (on foot), to walk	исходи́ть	to walk the length and breadth of
испи́сывать/исписа́ть			to fill up with <i>or</i> to cover with writing

10.4.7 The prefix **на-**

The prefix **на-** can convey the idea of motion onto; examples with *verbs of motion* are rare, but more frequently encountered instances include:

нажима́ть/нажа́ть (на кно́пку)	to press (a button)
накле́ивать/наклеи́ть (ма́рку на конвер́т)	to stick (a stamp on an envelope)
наступа́ть/наступи́ть на (+ acc.)	to step on, to tread on

When used with some *reflexive* verbs, the prefix **на-** can convey the idea of carrying out an action to the point of satisfaction; some of these verbs occur only in the *perfective*:

наговори́ться (св)	to talk enough
наеда́ться/наесты́я	to eat one's fill
налюбова́ться (св)	to admire to one's heart's content

In the following verb the connotation is slightly different:

напива́ться/напи́ться	to get drunk
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There are some miscellaneous verbs with the prefix **на-**:

набира́ть/набра́ть	to pick up (speed), to dial
намека́ть/намекну́ть	to hint
нареза́ть/нареза́ть	to cut, to slice (bread or cheese)
настраива́ть/настрои́ть	to tune (a radio or a musical instrument)
находи́ть/найти́	to find

10.4.8 The prefix недо-

The prefix **недо-** always conveys the idea of insufficiency:

недооценивать/недооценить	to underestimate
недосаливать/недосолить	to undersalt

10.4.9 The prefix о/об(о)

When used with *verbs of motion*, the prefix **о/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:

оговариваться/оговориться	to make a slip of the tongue
описываться/описаться	to make a slip of the pen
ослышаться (св)	to mishear
ошибаться/ошибиться	to make a 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
обвешивать/обвесить	to give short weight to
обсчитывать/обсчитать	to shortchange

The prefix **о/об(о)** is sometimes used to form *transitive* verbs from *adjectives*:

оглушать/оглушить	to deafen
осложнять/осложнить	to complicate

The reflexive verb **обходиться/обойтись**, when used with **без** (+ gen.), means 'to do without'.

10.4.10 The prefix от(о)-

The spatial meaning of the prefix **от(о)-** is movement away from:

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/отвинтить	to unscrew
откусывать/откусить	to bite off
отпиливать/отпилить	to saw off
отвыкать/отвыкнуть	to get unused to
отговаривать/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/отозваться	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:

перепиливать/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 (св)	to try too hard, to get carried away

The prefix **пере-** is used to express the idea of redoing an action:

передёльвать/передёловать	to redo
передумывать/передумать	to change one's mind
перезванивать/перезвонить	to phone back
переписывать/переписать	to rewrite

This prefix can sometimes convey the idea of outdoing:

перекрикивать/перекричать	to out-shout
перехитрить (св)	to outwit

With some verbs that are both *reflexive* and *imperfective* only, the prefix **пере-** indicates a repeated action that goes backwards and forwards between two participants:

перебрасываться (нсв)	to throw backwards and forwards
переписываться (нсв)	to exchange letters, to correspond

With certain verbs the prefix **пере-** conveys the idea of extending the action to all possible objects:

перечислять/перечислить to enumerate, to list in full

The meanings of the prefix **пре-** overlap with those of **пере-**; in particular, it can convey the ideas of cutting through and exceeding, often understood figuratively:

преграждать/преградить (путь) to bar (the way)

прекращать/прекратить to cease

превышать/превысить to exceed

10.4.12 The prefix под(о)-

The first spatial meaning of the prefix **под(о)-** is movement or position under:

подкладывать/подложить to put under (in a horizontal position)

подставлять/подставить to put under (in a vertical position)

подписывать/подписать to sign, to put one's name to

подчёркивать/подчеркнуть to underline

With many verbs of motion and some other verbs, **под(о)-** conveys the meaning of movement up to, approaching:

подходить/подойти to approach, to go up to

подвозить/подвезти to give someone a lift

пододвигать/пододвинуть to bring something nearer

A third spatial meaning conveyed by this prefix is movement upwards or from below; this can be either literal or figurative:

подбрасывать/подбросить to throw up in the air

поддерживать/поддержать to support

поднимать/поднять to raise

подниматься/подняться to rise, to go up(wards)

The prefix **под(о)-** can convey the notion of adding a small quantity:

подбавлять/подбавить to add (a small amount)

подогревать/подогреть to warm something up

подсаливать/подсолить to add a little salt

A further meaning of this prefix is that of doing something furtively or illegally:

подделывать/подделать to forge (banknotes or documents)

поджигать/поджечь to burn down

подкупать/подкупить to bribe, to suborn

подсказывать/подсказать to prompt, to whisper the answer

подслушивать/подслушать to eavesdrop, to 'bug'

10.4.13 The prefix пред(о)-

The prefix **пред(о)-** normally has the meaning of anticipation:

предвидеть (нсв) to predict

предполагать/предположить to assume, to presuppose

предупреждать/предупредить to warn

However:

предлага́ть/предложить́	to offer, to propose
представля́ть/предста́вить	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)
приезжа́ть/прие́хать	to come, to arrive (by vehicle)
приноси́ть/принести́	to bring (on foot)
приземля́ться/ приземли́ться	to land
приближа́ться/ приблизиться́	to approach
призыва́ть/призвать́	to summon, to call up (for military service)
привлека́ть/привлече́ь	to attract

The same prefix can convey the idea of attaching one thing to another (sometimes figuratively):

привя́зывать/привяза́ть	to tie (something to something else)
присоединя́ть/присоедини́ть	to join, to unite
пришива́ть/пришить́	to sew on (e.g. a button)
припи́сывать/приписа́ть	to ascribe

The prefix **при-** can also convey the meaning of adding:

прибавля́ть/приба́вить	to add
припи́сывать/приписа́ть	to add (something to a written text)
пристраива́ть/пристро́ить	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:

приболе́ть (св)	to be off-colour, to feel unwell
привстава́ть/привста́ть	to half-rise (e.g. from a sitting position)
приле́чь (св)	to lie down (for a short time)
приостанавлива́ть/ приостанови́ть	to stop (something for a time), to suspend
присажива́ться/присе́сть	to sit down (for a short time), to perch on the edge of one's seat

With reflexive verbs formed from verbs indicating watching or listening, the prefix **при-** suggests attentiveness; the perfective verbs often contain the additional meaning of acting in response to the observations made:

прислу́шиваться/прислу́шаться к (+ dat.)	to listen attentively, to pay heed to
присма́триваться/присмотре́ться к (+ dat.)	to watch attentively, to size someone up

10.4.15 The prefix про-

The prefix **про-** has two spatial meanings. With *verbs of motion* and a number of other verbs it can indicate movement through:

проходи́ть/пройти́	to go through (on foot)
прони́кать/проникну́ть	to penetrate
пропу́ска́ть/пропу́стить	to let through
протека́ть/протече́ть	to leak through

The other meaning, found only with verbs of motion, is movement past:

проходи́ть/пройти́	to go past (on foot)
прое́зжа́ть/проеха́ть	to drive past

The prefix **про-** also has the meaning of omission, often through inattentiveness:

проба́лты́ваться/ проболта́ться	to let the cat out of the bag, to spill the beans
прогу́ливать/прогуля́ть	to miss (classes), to be absent from work
прое́зжа́ть/проеха́ть (свою́ остано́вку)	to miss (one's stop)
прозева́ть (св) (свою́ о́чередь)	to miss (one's turn through inattentiveness)
пропу́ска́ть/пропу́стить	to omit

The prefix **про-** can also convey the idea of failure:

прои́гры́вать/прои́гра́ть	to lose (a game)
пропи́вать/пропи́ть (все де́ньги)	to drink away (all one's money)

When used with a *direct object* indicating time or distance, verbs with the prefix **про-** emphasise either the time an action was continued for or the distance covered during an action:

пробега́ть/пробежа́ть (двeсти ме́тров)	to cover (200 metres, running)
прожи́вать/прожи́ть (где-то сорок ле́т)	to live (somewhere for 40 years)

There are some useful verbs with the prefix **про-** that do not fit into any of the above categories:

проводи́ть/прове́сти	to conduct (e.g. a meeting or an experiment)
продава́ть/продáть	to sell
просыпа́ться/просну́ться	to wake up

10.4.16 The prefix раз(о)/рас-

The prefix **раз(о)/рас-** can convey the meaning of 'dispersal', 'distribution':

расходи́ться/разойти́сь	to disperse (intransitive)
разгоня́ть/разогна́ть	to disperse (transitive)
рассту́паться/рассту́питься	to part, to make way
раздава́ть/разда́ть	to give out, to distribute
распреде́лять/распреде́лить	to distribute, to allocate

The same prefix can also convey the idea of dividing up (into many pieces):

разбива́ть/разби́ть	to break into pieces, to smash
разводи́ться/развести́сь	to get divorced
разделя́ть/разделе́ть	to divide up
разреза́ть/разре́зать	to cut up, to slice up (into many pieces)

The prefix **раз(о)/рас-** can be used to indicate the idea of reversing an action; this applies in particular to two groups of verbs, those connected with tying or closing and those referring to certain mental processes:

развяза́вать/развяза́ть	to untie
раскупо́ривать/раскупо́рить	to un cork, to open (a bottle)
рассте́гивать/рассте́гнуть	to unbutton
разду́мать (св)	to decide not to do something, to change one's mind
разлюби́ть (св)	to stop loving
разочаро́вывать/разочарова́ть	to disenchant, to disappoint
расхоте́ть (св)	to stop wanting
разору́жать/разору́жить	to disarm [transitive]

With some verbs the prefix **раз(о)/рас-** suggests an action carried out thoroughly:

разраба́тывать/разрабо́тать	to work out, to elaborate, to develop
распраши́вать/распроси́ть	to question, to ask all about
рассматрива́ть/рассмотре́ть	to examine (thoroughly)

With a number of *reflexive* verbs the prefix **раз(о)/рас-** indicates an action that gradually gains in intensity or which is carried out with some vigour; these verbs are *perfective* only:

разгово́рится	to start talking freely <i>or</i> fluently
расплака́ться	to burst out crying
рассмея́ться	to burst out laughing
расхохота́ться	to burst out into uproarious laughter

10.4.17 The prefix **с(о)-**

With *verbs of motion* and with some other verbs, the prefix **с(о)-** has the meaning of movement downwards:

сходи́ть/сойти́	to come down (on foot)
сноси́ть/снести́	to bring down, to demolish
спры́гивать/спры́гнуть	to jump down
спуска́ться/спусти́ться	to come down, to descend

With a large number of verbs the same prefix has the meaning of 'removal' (especially from a surface):

сбра́сывать/сбро́сить	to shed, to throw off
сбри́вать/сбри́ть	to shave off
сверга́ть/свергну́ть	to overthrow
смы́вать/смы́ть	to wash off
снима́ть/сня́ть	to take off, to remove
стира́ть/стере́ть	to rub off, to erase

With some *reflexive verbs of motion* and with a number of other verbs, the prefix **с(о)-** conveys the meaning of congregating or uniting:

сходиться/сойтись	to congregate, to come together
собирать/собрать	to collect
связывать/связать	to tie together
соединять/соединить	to unite

With a small number of verbs the prefix **с(о)-** conveys the idea of copying:

снимать/снять	to photograph, to film
списывать/списать	to copy

With some reflexive verbs the prefix **с(о)-** can suggest a mutual action (one that is not usually repeated):

сдружиться (св)	to become friends
созваниваться/созвониться	to have a conversation on the telephone

With some verbs that are used only in the *imperfective* the prefix **с(о)-** can indicate accompanying or carrying out an action together; in this meaning the prefix always appears in the form **со-**:

сопровождать (нсв)	to accompany (e.g. on a journey)
сочувствовать (нсв)	to sympathise

There are some useful verbs that do not fit clearly into any of the above categories:

сбываться/сбыться	to come true
сдавать/сдать	to give up, to hand in, to take (imperfective)/ to pass (perfective), an examination
сдаваться/сдаться	to give in, to surrender
сдерживать/сдержать	to restrain
скрывать/скрыть	to hide
содержать (нсв)	to contain, to maintain, to keep

10.4.18 The prefix у-

When used with verbs of motion and with some other verbs, the prefix **у-** has the meaning of going away or removal:

уходить/уйти	to go away (on foot)
уезжать/уехать	to go away (by transport)
уносить/унести	to take away, to carry away
уклоняться/уклониться	to evade
убирать/убрать	to clear away, to tidy up
удалять/удалить	to remove

The same prefix is used to form *transitive* verbs from *adjectives* and (less often) *nouns*:

улучшать/улучшить	to improve
упрощать/упростить	to simplify
ухудшать/ухудшить	to make worse
удочерять/удочерить	to adopt (a daughter)
усыновлять/усыновить	to adopt (a son)

The prefix **y-** can convey the meaning of an action carried out in a way that makes things convenient or comfortable:

уса́живаться/усе́ться	to sit comfortably
устанáвливать/устано́вить	to establish, to set up, to install
устро́ивать/устро́ить	to organise, to arrange

The prefix **y-** can imply the accomplishment of an action only after some difficulty:

убежда́ть/убеди́ть	to convince
угово́ривать/угово́рить	to persuade

11

Agreement

11.0 Introduction

It is an important principle of Russian grammar that every ending, whether on a noun, an adjective, a pronoun, a numeral or a verb is there for a reason, and that these endings convey information that is often vital and always helpful in enabling the listener or the reader to understand what is said or written. There are two factors that between them determine the ending of each element within a sentence: the first is *government*, which basically concerns the rules for selecting which case to use. The basic principles relating to the use of the cases were given in **Chapter 3**; information concerning the use of cases after prepositions is given in **9.2**, and more detailed information relating to specific functions is given in **Part B**.

The second factor is *agreement*: the endings of certain words are determined by the word either that they qualify or to which they refer. There are two contexts where agreement is particularly important: the first is within the *noun phrase* (that is, two or more of *pronoun + numeral + adjective + noun*); the second is *agreement* between the *grammatical subject* of a sentence and the *verb*.

11.1 Agreement within the noun phrase

11.1.1 The general rule

The general rule for *agreement* within the *noun phrase* is simply that *pronouns*, *adjectives* and the *numeral* **один** ‘one’ always agree with the noun they qualify in number, gender and case:

Вчера́ вéчером я познако́милась с одной́ о́чень интере́сной писательницей́.

Last night I met a certain (*literally*, one) very interesting (female) writer.

Here the noun **писа́тельница** is *feminine*, *singular* and in the *instrumental case* after the preposition **с** (meaning ‘with’). Consequently, both the numeral **один** and the adjective **интере́сный** have the *singular feminine instrumental* ending:

Обы́чно в э́то вре́мя я рассу́лаю́ все́м сво́им ста́рым дру́зьям но́вогодние по́здрави́ения.

Usually at this time (of year) I send out New Year greetings to all my old friends.

Here the noun **друг** is *masculine, plural* and in the *dative case* as the *indirect object* of the verb **рассылать**. Consequently, the pronouns **весь** and **свой** and the adjective **старый** all have the *plural dative* ending (remember that pronouns and adjectives do not distinguish gender in the plural).

An adjective that simultaneously qualifies two singular nouns will tend to agree with the nearer:

В университете я изучаю русский язык и литературу.

At university I'm studying Russian language and literature.

The only circumstances when adjectives do not agree in number, gender and case with the nouns they qualify is after the numerals **два, три, четыре** in the *nominative* or the *accusative* case. Here it will be recalled that a noun used after these numeral is in the *genitive singular*. If, however, the noun is qualified by an *adjective*, the adjective is in the *genitive plural*. With *feminine* nouns, the adjective can be in either the *genitive plural* or the *nominative plural*.

For examples and more detailed information, see **8.2.2**.

11.1.2 Apposition

A *noun* or *noun phrase* that is in *apposition* is one that is placed adjacent to a noun or pronoun in order to expand on or qualify its meaning. Nouns or noun phrases in apposition must be in the same case as the nouns or pronouns to which they refer:

Наша цель – познакомить вас с Санкт-Петербургом, самым красивым городом России.

Our aim is to familiarise you with St Petersburg, Russia's most beautiful city.

Here the phrase **самым красивым городом** is in apposition to **с Санкт-Петербургом** and must therefore be in the same case, here the *instrumental*.

Sometimes words or phrases in apposition are introduced by **как** 'as', 'in the capacity of':

Позвольте мне, как самому старому человеку в этой компании, предложить тост за здоровье всех присутствующих.

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 **роман** 'novel', **ОАО (открытое акционерное общество)** 'PLC', **станция** 'station'. In the written language the defining term may sometimes take the form of an abbreviation, while the name itself will be placed in inverted commas:

Это, кажется, цитата из романа «Война и мир».

I think this is a quotation from the novel *War and Peace*.

В прошлом году наш городской театр поставил чеховскую пьесу «Три сестры».

Last year our local theatre put on Chekhov's play *Three Sisters*.

Годовое общее собрание акционеров ОАО «Газпром» состоялось 29 июня 2007 года.

The Annual General Meeting of the shareholders of Gazprom PLC took place on 29 June 2007.

Я обычно покупаю продукты в магазине «Седьмой континент».

I usually do my food shopping in (the shop) *Sed'moi kontinent* [*The Seventh Continent*].

Поезд следует до станции «Комсомольская».

This train goes as far as Komsomol'skaia station.

The same principle applies to *names of geographical locations*, except that declension tends to occur when the place is well known and the name is grammatically simple:

Я отправился в г. Белая Калитва.

I set off for (the town of) Belaia Kalitva.

But

Наш поезд прибыл на конечную станцию в г. Москву.

Our train has arrived at our terminus in Moscow.

NOTES

- (i) In these examples the preposition **в** is followed by the *accusative* case; the abbreviation **г.** stands for **город** '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 Калитва 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'skaia.

Цифры говорят, что в течение года каждый четвёртый житель Белой Калитвы 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*.

Мой родители придут попозже.
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:

Анна Ивановна, правда, что вы однажды видели Сталина?
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:

Было четыре часа, и уже темнело.

It was four o'clock and already getting dark.

Мне удалось выяснить, какие документы нужны.

I've managed to find out what documents we need.

Хотелось бы знать побольше о его планах.

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 **холодно**, **интересно** or **хорошо**, 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**:

Вчера было очень холодно.

It was very cold yesterday.

Интересно было бы знать его точку зрения по этому вопросу.

It would be interesting to know his opinion on this question.

Хорошо было бы уехать куда-нибудь на юг на пару недель.

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 **и** 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 подружкой.

My brother went off to America with a girlfriend.

In English, some collective nouns, such as ‘family’ or ‘government’ can be used with either a singular or a plural verb: ‘the government has decided’ or ‘the government have decided’. In Russian, this possibility does not exist: collective nouns are grammatically *singular* and must be used with a *singular* verb:

Правительство решило, что приоритетной задачей в будущем году будет борьба с инфляцией.

The government has decided that its main priority next year will be the battle against inflation.

Наша семья обычно встречает Новый год дома.

Our family usually see(s) in the New Year at home.

Наконец-то! В первый раз в этом сезоне наша команда одержала победу.

At last! For the first time this season our team has/have managed to win a game.

The one exception to this is the noun **большинство** ‘majority’, which, when used with a noun in the *genitive plural*, is frequently used with a plural verb:

Подавляющее большинство других секторов экономики будут весьма привлекательными для инвестиций.

The overwhelming majority of the other sectors of the economy will be extremely attractive for investing in.

11.2.4 Difficult cases: numerals and quantity words

When the subject of a sentence consists of or contains a *numeral* or another quantity word, such as **много**, **мало** or **несколько**, the verb can be in either the (*neuter*) *singular* or the *plural*. In many instances it is difficult to give hard-and-fast rules, but factors favouring the *plural* are: (i) placing the subject *before* the verb; (ii) an *animate* subject; (iii) the presence of a verb that indicates *activity* on the part of the subject. Conversely, factors favouring the use of the *singular* are: (i) placing the subject *after* the verb; (ii) an *inanimate* subject; (iii) the presence of a verb that does *not* indicate *activity* on the part of the subject. The singular is also more likely to be used when the subject contains a preposition such as **около**.

Examples with *plural* agreement:

133 человека в якутском посёлке Артык две недели остаются 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 **пáспорт** ‘internal passport’, ‘identity document’. Russians who travel abroad will also have a **заграницный пáспорт** or **загранпáспорт** ‘passport’. Many Russians will have an additional identity document, which may be issued by an employer or by some official body, and which is known as an **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 Ивановна
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, **Л.Н. Толстой, С.П. Иванова**. When these are read out, the normal convention is to say the name in full; if the forename and patronymic are not known, just the surname should be read out.

12.1.1 Russian forenames

Most (though not all) Russian forenames come in several different versions, of which *two* are particularly important.

The first of these is the *full* or *formal version*: this is the version given on birth certificates and in passports or other identity documents.

The second is the *familiar* or *informal* version that is used in a wide range of social contexts, for example, between friends, siblings and in addressing children. Although the familiar version is derived from the full version, the link between them is in some cases not immediately transparent.

NOTE Although the relationship between the full and the familiar versions can in some respects be compared to the relationship between English 'Robert' and 'Bob', there is an important difference: in English, the decision to use a familiar version is usually a matter of personal preference; in Russian there are circumstances where the use of the familiar version is more or less obligatory. These are discussed in **13.4.1**.

The following tables give the full and familiar versions of the principal Russian forenames:

Male forenames

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Familiar version</i>
Алекса́ндр	Са́ша, Шу́ра, Са́ня
Алексе́й	Але́ша, Ле́ша
Анато́лий	То́ля
Бори́с	Бо́ря
Вале́нтин	Ва́ля
Васи́лий	Ва́ся
Ви́ктор	Ви́тя
Влади́мир	Воло́дя, Во́ва
Генна́дий	Ге́на
Григо́рий	Гри́ша
Дми́трий	Ди́ма, Ми́тя
Евге́ний	Же́ня
Ива́н	Ва́ня
Константи́н	Ко́стя
Михаи́л	Ми́ша
Никола́й	Ко́ля
Паве́л	Па́ша
Пе́тр	Пе́тя
Серге́й	Серё́жа
Юри́й	Юра́

Female forenames

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Familiar version</i>
Алекса́ндра	Са́ша, Шу́ра
Анаста́сия	На́стя
А́нна	А́ня
Вале́нтина	Ва́ля
Га́лина	Га́ля
Да́рья	Да́ша
Евге́ния	Же́ня
Екатери́на	Ка́тя
Еле́на	Ле́на
Лари́са	Лара́
Любо́вь	Люба́
Людми́ла	Люда́
Мари́я	Ма́ша
Наде́жда	На́дя
Ната́лья	Ната́ша
О́льга	О́ля
Светла́на	Све́та
Со́фия	Со́ня
Татья́на	Та́ня

NOTE Some familiar names can be formed both from a male and a female name – for example, **Ва́ля** (from **Вале́нтин** and **Вале́нтина**), **Же́ня** (from **Евге́ний** and **Евге́ния**), **Са́ша** and **Шу́ра** (from **Алекса́ндр** and **Алекса́ндра**).

Many names tend not to have separate familiar forms; these include the following:

Male names: **Андре́й, Дени́с, И́горь, Макси́м, Оле́г**

Female names: **А́лла, Окса́на, Тама́ра**

Additional expressive versions of forenames can be formed from the familiar version using the diminutive suffixes described in 10.1.2 and 10.1.3. These can be illustrated by the following:

Во́ва – Во́вочка – Во́вик – Во́вчик
А́ня – А́нечка – А́ннушка – А́нюта – Нью́ша – Нью́ра

Although it is useful to be able to recognise these forms, their use carries with it significant connotations and nuances of attitude. Learners are therefore advised that they should be very sure of their ground before attempting to use them.

For more on the use of these forms, see 16.1.4.

In general the full, familiar and expressive versions of Russian forenames all decline predictably according to the patterns given in Chapter 2. The following specific points may be noted, however: the name **Па́вел** has a fleeting vowel, **Любо́вь**, when used as a forename, has no fleeting vowel.

For more on the fleeting vowel, see 2.5.

12.1.2 Patronymics

The *patronymic* is derived from the forename of the bearer's father, using different suffixes for the male and female versions. The patronymic is always derived from the full version of the forename.

Patronymics are formed as follows:

- 1 If the forename ends in a *consonant*, the *male* version is formed by adding **-ович** and the *female* version by adding **-овна**:

Ива́н	Ива́нович	Ива́новна
Пе́тр	Петро́вич	Петро́вна
Паве́л	Павлови́ч	Павлови́на

NOTE If the forename contains a *fleeting vowel*, this is removed before forming the patronymic.

- 2 If the forename ends in **-ей**, the final letter is removed and **-евич** is added to form the *male* version and **-евна** to form the *female* version:

Алексе́й	Алексе́евич	Алексе́евна
Серге́й	Серге́евич	Серге́евна

- 3 If the forename ends in **-ий**, the final two letters are removed and **-ьевич** is added to form the *male* version and **-ьевна** to form the *female* version:

Анато́лий	Анато́льевич	Анато́льевна
Ю́рий	Ю́рьевич	Ю́рьевна

- 4 If the forename ends in **-ь**, the final letter is removed and **-евич** is added to form the *male* version and **-евна** to form the *female* version:

Иго́рь	Иго́ревич	Иго́ревна
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- 5 If the forename ends in **-а** or **-я**, the male version is formed by removing the last letter and adding **-ич**; the female version is formed by removing the last letter and adding **-ична** (if the ending is stressed) or **-ична** (if the ending is unstressed):

Кузьма́	Кузьми́ч	Кузьми́чна
Никита́	Никити́ч	Никити́чна
Илья́	Ильи́ч	Ильи́чна

In all but the most formal levels of spoken language, patronymics are shortened in pronunciation:

Миха́йлович	Миха́лыч	Миха́лна
Никола́евич	Никола́ич	Никола́вна
Серге́евич	Серге́ич	Серге́вна
Алекса́ндрович	Алекса́ндрыч (or Алекса́ныч or Са́ныч)	Алекса́нна
Па́влович	Па́лыч	Па́лна

In informal speech some combinations of name and patronymic can be reduced even further:

Алекса́ндр Алекса́ндрович	Сан Са́ныч
Па́вел Па́влович	Па́л Па́лыч

For more information on the use of the patronymic in addressing people, see 13.4.2 and 13.4.3.

The following points may be noted here:

- 1 The patronymic may be combined only with the full form of the forename.
- 2 Because all citizens of Russia are required to have a patronymic, these can be formed, where necessary, from non-Russian names:

Альфри́д Рейнго́льдович Кох
 Серге́й Кужу́гетович Шойгу́
 Шами́ль Вялиу́ллович Ха́йров
 Ири́на Муцу́евна Хакама́да

- 3 Although it is normal practice to form the patronymic automatically from the forename of the bearer's father, there is no actual legal requirement to do so, and in appropriate circumstances (for example, when someone is adopted) a patronymic may be bestowed or even changed.

12.1.3 Russian surnames

Most Russian *surnames* belong to one or other of the following patterns:

- 1 Surnames ending in **-ов(а)/-ев(а)/-ёв(а)** or **-ин(а)/-ын(а)**: this is the most frequently encountered pattern. Surnames following this pattern have *masculine*, *feminine* and *plural* forms:

<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Бурми́стров	Бурми́строва	Бурми́стровы
Кузнецо́в	Кузнецо́ва	Кузнецо́вы
Серге́ев	Серге́ева	Серге́евы
Миши́н	Миши́на	Миши́ны
Пти́цын	Пти́цына	Пти́цыны

The declension of these surnames is given in 2.12.1.

- 2 Surnames that take the form of adjectives. These too have separate *masculine*, *feminine* and *plural* forms:

<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Бе́лый	Бе́лая	Бе́лые
Петро́вский	Петро́вская	Петро́вские
Садо́вничий	Садо́вничая	Садо́вничие
Толсто́й	Толсто́я	Толсто́ые

For more on these surnames, see 6.4.2.

- 3 Surnames (other than those following patterns (1) and (2)) ending in a consonant, in **-й** or in **-ь**. The *masculine* and *feminine* forms are identical in the *nominative*, but while the masculine forms decline according to the patterns given in 2.6, the feminine forms are indeclinable; the plural forms tend to be avoided:

Абрамо́вич	Швец
Борисе́вич	Ковту́н
Шевчу́к	Воро́бей
Третья́к	Гого́ль

NOTE It is important to distinguish surnames ending in **-о́вич** or **-е́вич** from male patronymics that may be similar in appearance. The surnames differ from the patronymics in two ways: (i) the stress in the nominative is always on the second last syllable; (ii) in the nominative, the feminine is identical to the masculine.

For more on the declension of these surnames, see 2.12.2 and 2.13.1.

- 4 Surnames ending in **-а** or **-я**. These normally decline following the patterns described in 2.9. The plural forms are not used:

Гли́нка
Ку́чма

- 5 Surnames ending in **-о** (including Ukrainian surnames ending in **-ко**, **-енко**). These are *indeclinable*:

Жи́ваго
Сти́жко
Шевче́нко

For more on indeclinable surnames, see 2.13.1.

NOTE On getting married, Russian women may either keep their maiden name or adopt their husband's surname. The practice of joining the two names with a hyphen is rare. The Russian for 'maiden name' is **де́вичья 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 Джо́н Данн

Both parts can be declined according to the pattern given in 2.6.1:

Я разгова́ривал с Джо́ном Данно́м.
I was talking to John Dunn.

Marie Dunn Мари́ Данн

Both parts are *indeclinable*, following the rules given in 2.13.1:

Я разговáривал с Мари́ Дани.
I was talking to Marie Dunn.

Anna Smith **А́нна Смит**

The forename can be declined according to the pattern given in 2.7.1; the surname is indeclinable following the rules given in 2.13.1:

Я разговáривал с А́нной Смит.
I was talking to Anna Smith.

It may be useful to note the following points about foreign names:

- 1 It is not customary to create informal or expressive versions of foreign forenames.
- 2 Although some choose to adopt one, presumably from a desire to appear more 'Russian', in general, foreigners are neither required nor expected to have a patronymic.
- 3 Names originating in languages other than English are transliterated or transcribed according to the rules applicable to that language. This can produce forms that are not immediately recognisable to English speakers:

<i>French:</i>	Гюго́	(Victor) Hugo
	Дюма́	Dumas
<i>German:</i>	Гёте	Goethe
<i>Italian:</i>	Толья́тти	Togliatti
<i>Chinese:</i>	Мао Цзе-дун	Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung)

- 4 There is an exception to the general practice of not 'russifying' foreign names. Female forenames ending in a consonant may sometimes have two forms: a form derived by direct transcription/transliteration and ending in a consonant, and a form ending in **-а** or **-я**, which may be adjusted to be identical with a similar-sounding Russian forename. The former is used in official documents, such as visas, but the latter tends to be preferred in ordinary conversation:

Louise	Луи́з	Луи́за
Margaret	Марга́рет	Марга́рита

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:

Ско́лько тебе́ лет?
How old are you?

Ско́лько лет ва́шей до́чери?
How old is your daughter?

NOTE If the person is indicated by a pronoun, this will normally be placed before **лет**; a noun or a noun phrase normally follows **лет** (as in the above examples).

The answers to these questions may be:

Мне пятьдесят восемь (лет).

I'm fifty-eight (years old).

Моёй 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 и** 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:

двухмѣсячный	two-month-old
девятимѣсячный	nine-month-old
двухлѣтний	two-year-old
двадцатилѣтний	twenty-year-old
двадцатипятилѣтний	twenty-five-year-old
сорокалѣтний	forty-year-old

Он женился на двадцатилѣтней студѣнтке.
He married a twenty-year-old student.

For more on the formation of these adjectives, see 10.2.7.

NOTE The adjective corresponding to 'one-year-old' is **годовалый**. Adjectives formed from numerals ending in **один** 'one' (e.g. **двадцать один** 'twenty-one') are problematic and best to be avoided.

12.3.3 Other ways of talking about age

The following *prepositional* constructions are used when talking about age:

в (+ acc.)	at the age of
в возрасте (+ gen.)	at the age of
с (+ gen.)	from the age of
до (+ gen.)	up to the age of
к (+ dat.)	by the age of

Он научился играть в шахматы в четыре года.
He learned to play chess at the age of four (*or* when he was four).

Она овдовѣла в возрасте тридцати двух лет.
She was widowed at the age of thirty-two.

В балетную студию принимают с пяти лет.
They accept (children) at ballet school from the age of five upwards.

Он дирижировал оркестром до восьмидесяти лет.
He continued to conduct the orchestra up to the age of eighty (*or* until he was eighty).

Она сохраняла ясность мысли и бодрость духа до глубокой старости.
She remained clear-headed and cheerful until well into her old age.

К сорока годам он лысѣл, обзавѣлся брюшком и оставил свои революционные идеи.
By the time he was forty, he had gone bald, acquired a paunch and abandoned his revolutionary ideas.

12.4 Addresses

12.4.1 Postal addresses

Traditionally, addresses on Russian envelopes were written in the reverse order from that normally used in English-speaking countries, that is, starting with the largest unit and ending with the smallest; the recipient, usually in the *dative* case, came at the end. Now, however, the Russian Post Office recommends following international practice, starting with the recipient and listing the address working from the smallest unit to the largest. The recipient still tends to be indicated in the dative, although names of organisations are more likely to be in the *nominative*. It is reasonable to assume that for the time being both systems are being used, and they can be illustrated by the following examples:

Traditional system

Postcode + republic or region	185014 р. Карелия
City, town or village	г. Петрозаводск
Street name	ул. Гоголя
Street number + flat number	д. 21, корп. 3, кв. 46
Recipient (in the dative)	Касьянову Глебу Сергеевичу

NOTE Lines 3 and 4 could be combined if space allowed. The abbreviation **корп.** (корпус 'block') is used to distinguish between several buildings that share the same street number.

New system (personal recipient)

Recipient (in the dative)	Касьянову Глебу Сергеевичу
Street name + street and flat numbers	ул. Гоголя, д. 21, корп. 3, кв. 46
City, town or village	г. Петрозаводск
Republic or region	р. Карелия
Postcode	185014

If the recipient is an organisation

Name of organisation (in the nominative)	Клуб юных моряков «Парус»
City, town or village	пос. Солнечное
District	Сестрорецкий р-н
Republic or region	Ленинградская обл.
Postcode	197720

NOTE Because the second address is located in a large village, no street name or number is needed, but an extra administrative layer (**район** 'district') is required.

The following abbreviations are used in postal addresses:

к.	ко́мната	room
кв.	кварти́ра	flat
корп.	ко́рпус	block
д.	до́м	house, building
б-р	бульва́р	avenue

пер.	переу́лок	alley
пр.	проспе́кт	avenue
ш.	шоссе́	highway, road
ул.	у́лица	street
пл.	пло́щадь	square
п/я	почто́вый ящи́к	PO box
пос.	посё́лок	large village, settlement
дер.	дерёвня	(small) village, hamlet
с.	се́ло	village
г.	го́род	town, city
р-н	райо́н	district
обл.	обла́сть	region
р.	республи́ка	republic

Two abbreviations that are used regionally are:

а.	ау́л	village (in the Caucasus)
х.	хуто́р	village (in Cossack areas)

The following terms are also useful in indicating addresses:

до востре́бования	poste restante
почто́вый индеќс	postcode

If a letter is intended for a person other than the addressee, a construction with **для** (+ gen.) is used:

Мишиной С.А. (для Даши).
Dasha c/o S.A. Mishina.

12.4.2 Finding one's way

When indicating how to get to a particular location the following terms may be used:

ста́нция	(metro or railway) station
остановка	(bus or tram) stop
светофо́р	traffic lights
перекрё́сток	road junction, crossroads
въезд	entry (for vehicles)
двор	yard, back courtyard
подъезд	entry (to a block of flats), stairway
эта́ж	floor, storey
дверь	door
вход со двора́	the entrance is located in the back courtyard
домофо́н	entry-phone
ко́довый замо́к	a lock with an entry code

NOTE The term **пе́рвый эта́ж** corresponds to (British) English 'ground floor'; similarly, **второ́й эта́ж** corresponds to 'first floor', and so on.

Скажи́те такси́сту, что вход в подьезд не с у́лицы, а со двора́. Въезд во двор сразу за перекрё́тком. У нас тре́тий подьезд. Домофон не рабо́тает. В подьезде ко́довый замо́к. Код 345. Поднима́йтесь на ли́фте на девя́тый эта́ж, кварти́ра 36, это второ́я дверь напра́во.

Tell the taxi driver that the entrances to the building are in the back courtyard, not in the street. There's an entry for vehicles just past the crossroads. Our flat is on the third staircase. The entry-phone isn't working, but there is a lock with an entry code. The code is 345. Take the lift to the ninth (eighth) floor. Our flat is number 36; it's the second door on the right.

12.4.3 Registration

Each individual in the Russian Federation is supposed to be officially registered at a specific address, which is indicated by a stamp in his/her **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:

регистра́ровать/зарегист́рировать	to register (someone)
пропи́сывать/прописа́ть	to register (someone)
регистра́роваться/зарегист́роваться	to be registered
пропи́сываться/прописа́ться	to be registered
прожи́вать	to reside (at), to be resident (at)

—По какому́ адресу вы *прописаны* (*зарегист́рованы*)?

—Я *прописан* по адресу: Санкт-Петербу́рг, Садовая, три́дцать че́тыре, кварти́ра два́дцать пять, но я там не *проживаю*.

—What address are you registered at?

—I'm registered in St Petersburg, at 34 Sadovaia, flat 25, but I don't actually live there.

На вре́мя учёбы ба́бушка *прописа́ла* его́ у себя́.

While he was a student, he was registered at his grandmother's (address).

У меня́ вообше́-то нет моско́вской *регистра́ции*: я *прописана* в Ряза́ни.

I don't have a registration for Moscow; I'm officially registered as living in Riazan'.

NOTE As these examples may suggest, there is often a considerable gap between the requirements of officialdom and the demands of real life.

12.5 Citizenship and nationality

12.5.1 Гражда́нство and национа́льность

In Russian, a very clear distinction is normally made between the following two concepts:

гражда́нство	citizenship, nationality
национа́льность	ethnic identity

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 *национальность*:

In the context of Russia

евре́й/евре́йка	Jew
калмы́к/калмы́чка	Kalmyck
ру́сский/ру́сская	Russian
татарин/татарка	Tatar
чече́нец/чече́нка	Chechen

In other contexts

валли́ец/валли́йка	Welshman, Welshwoman
ката́лонец/ката́лонка	Catalan
цыга́н/цыга́нка	Roma
шотла́ндец/шотла́ндка	Scot

Кто вы по национальности?
What is your ethnic identity?

Я татарин.
I am a Tatar.

The following terms refer specifically to *гражданство*:

брита́нец/брита́нка	citizen of Great Britain
россиянин/россиянка	citizen of Russia

Какое у вас гражданство?
What is your nationality *or* citizenship?

Я британец *or* Я гражданин Великобритании.
I am British *or* I am a citizen of Great Britain.

Many terms can be used in either sense:

америка́нец/америка́нка	American
армянин/армянка	Armenian
ита́льянец/ита́льянка	Italian
не́мец/не́мка	German
украинец/украинка	Ukrainian
финн/финка	Finn
француз/француженка	Frenchman/Frenchwoman

For more on the suffixes used, *see* 10.1.8 and 10.1.9.

12.5.2 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 **россиянин/россиянка** 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:

росси́йский фла́г	Russian flag
росси́йский пре́зидент	Russian president
росси́йский спо́ртсмен	Russian sportsman
росси́йская а́рмия	Russian army
росси́йская исто́рия	history of Russia
росси́йское гра́жданство	Russian citizenship
росси́йское ру́ководство	Russia's leaders

ру́сский язы́к	Russian language
ру́сский ха́рактер	Russian character
ру́сский фо́льклор	Russian folklore
ру́сский худо́жник	Russian artist
ру́сская ли́тература	Russian literature
ру́сская ку́хня	Russian cooking
ру́сская наро́дная му́зыка	Russian folk music
ру́сское хлебосо́льство	(traditional) Russian hospitality

In international contexts the language factor often plays the key role in defining a person or an object as **ру́сский**:

ру́сские фи́льмы	Russian films
ру́сские га́зеты	Russian(-language) newspapers

12.6 Occupations

12.6.1 Talking about one's occupation

The following questions can be used to ask about somebody's occupation:

Кто вы по профе́ссии?
Какая́ у вас профе́ссия?
Чем вы занима́етесь?
Кем вы рабо́таете?

All these can be translated as:

What do you do for a living?

Answers might be:

(По профе́ссии) я инже́не́р.
 (By profession) I'm an engineer.

Я рабо́таю бухга́лтером.
 I work as an accountant.

In these contexts **занима́ться** and **рабо́тать** 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:

до́лжность	position
звање	rank (e.g. in the armed forces)
слу́жба	service (e.g. in the armed forces)
рабо́тник	worker (someone who works in a particular place)
рабо́чий	worker (member of the working class)

сотру́дник	someone who works for a particular organisation, official, employee
служи́ть	to serve (e.g. in the armed forces or in government service)
зараба́тывать/зарабо́тать	to earn
подраба́тывать/подрабо́тать	to moonlight
подхалту́ривать/подхалту́рить	to moonlight

Её муж сле́дователь, *служи́т* в прокурату́ре. На *службу́* ходит в штатском.

Her husband's an investigator for the prosecutor's office. He goes to work in civilian dress.

Госуда́рство обяза́но заботи́ться о *рабо́тниках* бюдже́тной сфе́ры.

The state has an obligation to take care of those who work in the public sector.

Сотру́дник аэропо́рта проверя́л все поса́дочные тало́ны.

An airport official was checking all the boarding cards.

В тру́дные для семье́и го́ды она́ *подраба́тывала* перево́дами и ча́стными уроками́.

When times were difficult for her family, she earned a bit of extra money doing translations and giving private lessons.

Мно́гие столи́чные студё́нты *подхалту́ривают* в массов́ках на «Мосфи́льме».

Many Moscow students earn a bit extra by working as extras for Mosfilm.

12.6.2 Occupation and gender

As was noted in 10.1.9, some, but not all nouns indicating holders of jobs or members of professions have separate *masculine* and *feminine* nouns. From this point of view these nouns can be divided into several categories.

- 1 Nouns with only a *masculine* form, which is used for both men and women. This is the largest group and is found particularly widely in relation to 'high-prestige' professions:

архите́ктор	architect
водолаз	diver
врач	doctor
геоло́г	geologist (the same applies to all other nouns ending in -олог)
депута́т	deputy (in a parliament)
космонавт	cosmonaut
ле́тчик	pilot
мини́стр	minister
офице́р	officer (in the armed forces) (the same applies to all ranks in the armed forces)
пека́рь	baker
профе́ссор	professor
режиссе́р	(film) director
слесарь	metal worker, locksmith, repair man
строи́тель	builder
физи́к	physicist

- 2 Some nouns have separate *masculine* and *feminine* forms with equal status; the use depends solely on the sex of the person concerned:

актёр/актриса	actor
официант/официантка	waiter/waitress
певец/певица	singer
танцор/танцорка, танцовщица	dancer
танцовщик/танцовщица, балерина	ballet dancer

- 3 In some instances, the *feminine* form is restricted to informal language, while in formal language the *masculine* is used to refer to both sexes:

воспитатель/воспитательница	teacher (e.g. in a kindergarten)
преподаватель/преподавательница	teacher (in a college or university)
продавец/продавщица	salesperson
учитель/учительница	teacher (in a school)
художник/художница	artist

- 4 In the following cases the *feminine* form, though widely used in informal language, may be perceived as derogatory:

кассир/касси́рша	cashier
секретарь/секретарша	secretary

NOTES

- (i) Only the masculine form **секретарь** would be used to refer to someone who holds high office in a political party or an academic institution.
- (ii) Other feminine forms ending in **-ша** or **-иха** are unreservedly derogatory and should be avoided.

- 5 Some nouns have only a *feminine* form:

акуше́рка	midwife
горничная	(chamber)maid
медсестра́	nurse
няня́	nanny
пра́чка	laundrywoman

NOTE

The term **мелбра́т** 'male nurse' is possible in theory, but very rare in practice.

- 6 There is one 'asymmetric' pair:

машини́ст	locomotive driver
машинистка	typist

For information on the question of grammatical agreement when masculine nouns are used to refer to a woman, see 11.2.5.

12.7 Talking about marital status

Talking about marital status in Russian is complicated by the fact that different words are used, depending on whether you are talking about a man, a woman or a couple. The following are the main terms found in this context:

муж	husband
жена	wife
супруг/супруга	spouse (used more often than the English equivalent)
жених	bridegroom, fiancé
невеста	bride, fiancée
жениться (нсв/св) на (+ prep.)	to get married (of a man)
выходить/выйти замуж за (+ acc.)	to get married (of a woman)
пожениться (св)	to get married (of a couple)
быть женат(ым) на (+ prep.)	to be married (of a man)
быть замужем за (+ instr.)	to be married (of a woman)
женатый	married (of a man)
замужняя	married (of a woman)
холостяк	bachelor
незамужняя женщина	unmarried woman

For more on the use of the instrumental long form and the short form of adjectives such as *женат(ый)*, see 14.1.4.

свадьба	wedding
брак	marriage
супружество	matrimony, wedlock
женитьба	marriage (referring to a man)
замужество	marriage (referring to a woman)
ЗАГС	register office
гражданский брак	nonofficial marriage, civil partnership
расписываться/расписаться (в ЗАГСе)	to get married (at the register office) [literally, to sign the register], to take the plunge

For more on the acronym ЗАГС, see 2.14.1.

развод	divorce
разводиться/развестись	to get divorced
разведённый	divorced
расходиться/разойтись	to split up

In recent years some terms borrowed from English have started to be used, especially in the mass media:

бойфренд	boyfriend
партнёр	partner

Он женился на двадцатилетней студентке.
He married a twenty-year-old student.

Она вышла замуж за иностранца.
She married a foreigner.

Он женат на известной писательнице.
He's married to a famous writer.

Она замужем за сотрудником налоговой инспекции.
She's married to someone who works at the tax office.

Они поженились в прошлом году.
They got married last year.

В течение двадцати лет они жили в гражданском браке, но в прошлом году они наконец расписались.

For twenty years they lived together (in a civil partnership), but last year they finally took the plunge and got married.

Насколько я знаю, он разведён.

As far as I know, he's divorced.

Да, точно. Они развелись два года назад.

Yes, that's right. They got divorced two years ago.

13

Establishing contact

13.1 Formal and informal address

Russian has two *second person pronouns* that correspond to English ‘you’: **ТЫ** and **ВЫ**. Their use is determined by the following rules and guidelines.

When addressing more than one person, only the *plural* pronoun **ВЫ** can be used.

When addressing one person the *singular* pronoun **ТЫ** is used when addressing a child, an animal, a member of one’s family or a person with whom one is on informal terms; it is also the form used in prayers. In other circumstances, that is, when addressing an adult with whom one is not on informal terms, the pronoun **ВЫ** is used.

For the rules of agreement between the pronoun **ВЫ** and the verb, *see* 11.2.1.

In transactions between adults **ВЫ** is the default form, and the switch to **ТЫ** is usually by mutual agreement. The person initiating the switch may say:

Давайте перейдём на «ты».
Let’s switch to ‘ty’, shall we?

It is hard to give absolute rules for the use of **ТЫ** and **ВЫ**, since much depends on circumstances and on individual habits and preferences. In general, the younger people are, the more quickly they will switch to **ТЫ**, and, other things being equal, two people of the same sex may switch more rapidly than two people of different sexes. The use of **ТЫ** and **ВЫ** between adults is supposed to be equal and mutual, but the practice of addressing inferiors with **ТЫ** and superiors with **ВЫ** is found in many hierarchical situations.

The use of many of the greetings and forms of address dealt with in the later sections of this chapter are closely linked to the use of **ТЫ** and **ВЫ**.

For the occurrence of capital letters with the pronouns **ВЫ** and **Ваш** when they are used in letters to address one person, *see* 1.5.7.

13.2 Greetings

13.2.1 The greeting **здравствуй /здравствуйте**

The greeting **здравствуй /здравствуйте** is a useful all-purpose greeting that corresponds fairly closely to the English ‘hello’. It can be used at any time of the day and in a wide

variety of situations. **Здравствуй** is used when speaking to someone one would address with **ты**; otherwise, **здравствуйте** is used:

Здравствуйте, садитесь. Начинаем урок.

Good morning. Sit down. Let's get on with the lesson (in school).

Здравствуйте, уважаемые радиослушатели.

Hello, listeners.

—**Здравствуйте, Джейн.**

—**Здравствуйте, Борис Борисович. Как вы поживаете?**

—**Спасибо, неплохо, а вы?**

—Hello, Jane.

—Hello, Boris Borisovich. How are you?

—Not bad, thank you. And how about you?

—**Здравствуйте, Ирина Алексеевна.**

—**Здравствуй, Коля. Что у тебя новенького?**

—**Мне мама купила собаку.**

—Hello, Irina Alekseevna.

—Hello Kolia. What news have you got?

—Mummy's bought me a dog.

For the pronunciation of **здравствуй(те)**, see 1.2.6.

For more on the names and forms of address, see 13.4 and 13.5.2.

13.2.2 Informal greetings

The most widely used informal greeting is **привёт**, which can be used when greeting a single person or a group. Also found, though less often, are **здорово**, which contains a strong element of familiarity and which is more characteristic of male speech, and **салют**.

Привёт, Лара, как у тебя дела?

Hi, Lara. How are things?

—**Здорово, мужики. Игра давно началась? Какой счёт?**

—**Привёт. Минут пять назад. Пока по нулям.**

—Hi lads, has the game been going long? What's the score?

—Hi. About five minutes. It's still nil-nil.

Привёт can also be used both in speech and writing with the meaning 'regards', 'best wishes':

—**Передайте привёт родителям и бабушке.**

—**Непрёмённо передам.**

—Pass on my regards to your parents and your grandmother.

—I most certainly will.

The verb **передавать /передать** is often omitted:

Ну что ж, счастливого пути! Привёт женё. В слéдующий раз приезжайте вме́сте.

Well, then, have a pleasant journey. Regards to your wife. Next time the two of you must come.

Привёт из Венеции! Тут много воды, лодок и туристов.

Best wishes from Venice! There's a lot of water, a lot of boats and a lot of tourists.

Привёт от Володи.

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**:

<i>доброе утро</i>	good morning
<i>добрый день</i>	good day, good afternoon
<i>добрый вечер</i>	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 **приветствовать** 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.

Добрó пожаловать means 'welcome' and for the most part is used in formal situations or on signs; it is often followed by the prepositions **в** or **на** (+ acc.).

А вот и гости. Добрó пожаловать! Проходите, раздевайтесь.

Here are our guests. Welcome! Please come in and take off your coats.

Добрó пожаловать в Москву!

Welcome to Moscow!

13.2.4 Saying goodbye

The most widely used and most neutral way of saying goodbye is the phrase **до свидания**. Less widely used are the extended version **до скорого свидания** and its shortened informal version **до скорого**.

Всего́ (вам) добро́го, всего́ хоро́шего are slightly more formal and often used as a reply to **до свидания** in order to avoid repetition.

Пока́ is particularly common in informal situations, especially among younger people; it is normally used only with people you would address with **ты**.

Будь здоро́в (зоро́ва), будьте здоро́вы, быва́йте здоро́вы are now restricted to informal situations. Although they are sometimes favoured by older people, these phrases are becoming obsolete.

Проща́й(те) is used when parting for a long time or forever.

Счастли́во is used when saying goodbye to someone who is leaving. Alternatively, if you are leaving, you may say **счастли́во остава́ться** to those who are staying behind.

Спокойно́й но́чи or **до́брой но́чи** ‘good night’ are used when parting late at night or when going to bed.

If you know when you are next going to meet, this can be indicated using **до** (+ gen.):

до за́втра	see you tomorrow
до сле́дующей неде́ли	see you next week

In other circumstances **до встре́чи** ‘until we next meet’ can be used.

13.2.5 Polite enquiries and responses

The following polite enquiries can be used to follow up a greeting:

Как пожива́ешь?/Как пожива́ете?
Как живёшь?/Как живёте?
Как (твой/ваши) дела́?
Как у тебя/вас дела́?

The following versions are more familiar in tone:

Как дели́шки?
Как здоро́вье?
Как жизнь?
Как живётся-мо́жется?

All of the above can be translated as ‘How are things?’

In response, the following answers might be given, all introduced by **Спаси́бо** ‘Thank you’:

хорошо́	fine
нормально́	OK, not bad
неплохо́	not bad
ничего́	OK, not too bad
так себе	so-so
лучше́ всех	great (this is more familiar in tone)

If things really are too bad for any of the above, a humorous answer is:

- Как дела́?**
- Как са́жа 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 **поздравлять/поздравить с** (+ instr.); the recipient of the salutation, if indicated, is in the *accusative*:

Поздравляю тебя с днём рождения!

I wish you all the best on your birthday *or* Many happy returns on your birthday!

Дорогой папочка, поздравляем тебя с Днём защитника Отечества!

Dear father, we salute you on Defenders of the Fatherland Day.

NOTE **День защитника Отечества** (23 February) is a special day devoted to those who are serving or who have served in Russian or Soviet armed forces.

In less formal contexts the verb tends to be omitted:

С днём рождения тебя!

Many happy returns of the day!

Other frequently used salutations include the following:

(Поздравляю/Поздравляем):

с Новым годом

Happy New Year

с Рождеством Христовым

Happy Christmas

с Пасхой

Happy Easter

с Днём светлого

Happy Easter (more formal)

Христово Воскресения

с Днём Победы

(used on Victory Day, 9 May)

с (Международным)

(used on International Women's Day,

женским днём

8 March, a national holiday in Russia)

с Днём учителя

(see Note (i) below)

- NOTES (i) In Russia, it is the custom for all professional groups to have their own special day (which does not, alas, mean an extra day off work). **День учителя** 'Teachers' Day' is 5 October.
- (ii) On Easter Sunday, it is the custom for Orthodox believers to greet each other with the following exchange:

—Христос воскрес(е)!

—Воистину воскрес(е)!

—Christ is risen!

—He is risen indeed!

The verb is not used in the following greetings:

с праздником

(a useful all-purpose greeting that can be used on any national or other holiday)

с лёгким паром

(a greeting often made to someone who has just taken a shower, although it is more properly reserved for those who have taken a steam bath in a **баня** (a traditional Russian bathhouse))

In circumstances where it is appropriate to return a salutation, this can be done by saying:

Взаимно!

And the same to you!

The verb **поздравлять/поздравить** с (+ instr.) also means ‘to congratulate’:

Поздравляю/поздравляем вас с рождением дочери.

Congratulations on the birth of your daughter!

The second pattern uses a *noun phrase* in the *genitive*. This is understood as being the object of the verb **желать/пожелать** ‘to wish’, although the verb itself is usually omitted; examples include:

Счастливого пути

Have a good journey

Доброго пути

Have a good journey

Приятного отдыха

Enjoy your holiday

Приятного аппетита!

(said to someone who is eating or about to start eating)

Ни пуха ни пера!

Good luck!

NOTE

This last phrase, which literally means ‘Neither fur nor feather’, is used to wish someone good luck before an ordeal such as an examination or a performance on stage. The correct reply, which is perfectly polite in this context, is:

К чёрту!

Go to the devil!

13.3

Making introductions and giving names

13.3.1

Introducing yourself

Older Russians are likely to introduce themselves either with their full name or with their surname alone:

Разрешите представиться: Геннадий Петрович Козодобов.

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:

знако́мьтесь	may I introduce you?
познако́мьтесь	may I introduce you?
разреши́те вам предста́вить (+ acc.)	allow me to introduce you to
разреши́те вас познако́мить с (+ instr.)	allow me to introduce you to

Джон, разреши́те вас познако́мить с мо́им колле́гой Воло́дей Семако́вым.

John, allow me to introduce you to my colleague Volodia Semakov.

Э́то мо́я сестра́ Га́лина, а э́то мо́й шве́дский друг А́ндерс, – познако́мьтесь.

May I introduce you? This is my sister Galina and this is my Swedish friend Anders.

13.3.3 Asking for someone's name

To ask for someone's name the question word **как**, *literally*, 'how', is used. The most usual way to ask someone's name is to use the *third person plural, present tense* of the verb **звать** 'to call' (**зову́т**) and the *accusative*:

Как вас/тебя́ зову́т?
What is your name?

Как зову́т твою́ сестру́?
What is your sister called?

In more informal language the verb can be in the *infinitive*:

Как тебя́ звать?
What's your name?

If you want to enquire about a specific part of someone's name, a construction with the preposition **по** (+ *dat.*) can be used:

Как вас по и́мени-о́тчеству?
What is your name and patronymic?

NOTE **и́мя-о́тчество** 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 ва́ше и́мя-о́тчество?
What is your name and patronymic?

Как фами́лия э́того актёра?
What is that actor's surname?

With other types of name the pronoun **како́й** tends to be used:

про́звище	nickname
кли́чка	nickname, name of an animal
ник	nickname (of Internet user)

Кака́я кли́чка у э́той ло́шади?
What is the name of that horse?

13.3.4 Giving one's name

The normal way of giving one's name echoes the question given at the beginning of the previous section:

Меня зову́т Ива́н.
I am called Ivan.

Её зову́т Ла́ри́са Петро́вна.
She is called Larisa Petrovna.

Although the name is normally given in the *nominative*, in informal language it can be put in the *instrumental*:

Ме́ня зову́т Ива́ном.
I'm called Ivan.

Её зва́ть Ла́ри́сой.
She's called Larisa.

To refer to a specific part of someone's name, a construction with the preposition **по** (+ *dat.*) can be used:

Бы́л на на́шем ку́рсе оди́н студе́нт по фами́лии Бре́жнев.
We had a student in our year called Brezhnev (*or* whose surname was Brezhnev).

13.3.5 Titles and names of places or other objects

The word **назва́ние** is normally used to indicate the name of an inanimate object, including geographical names, names of institutions, and the titles of books, films and works of art. The verb associated with this noun is **называ́ться** 'to be called':

Как называ́ется дере́вня, в кото́рой мы ви́дели вчера́ чуде́сную дере́вянную це́рковь?
What is the name of the village where we saw a wonderful wooden church yesterday?

Как бу́дет называ́ться э́та но́вая организа́ция?
What's this new organisation going to be called?

Как называ́лись э́ти два самолёта, кото́рые просла́вились в возду́шных боя́х за Бри́танию́?
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 назва́ние**:

Как назва́ние то́го лека́рства, что ты мне дава́ла на про́шлой неде́ле?
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 дере́вня называ́ется Та́мбицы.
The village is called Tambitsy.

The noun **назва́ние** is used in the following patterns and phrases:

име́ть назва́ние	to have the name
носи́ть назва́ние	to bear the name

дава́ть/дать назва́ние to give the name
под назва́нием under the name

—Как называется ваша земля? – спросил капитан испанского корабля.
—Юкатан! – ответил вождь местного племени, что на туземном языке означало «не понимаю». С тех пор полуостров носит название Юкатан.

—‘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) Yucatán.

Название «Война́ и мир», которое дал Толстой своему́ роману, стало предметом дискуссий на долгие годы.

The name *War and Peace*, which Tolstoy (chose to) give his novel, was the subject of controversy for many years.

Фигуристы исполнили новый танец под названием «Матрёшки».

The figure-skaters performed a new dance called (*literally*, under the name) ‘The Matrioshkas’.

For the use of inverted commas in titles, *see* 1.5.8.

13.4

Addressing friends and acquaintances

13.4.0

Introduction

Although Russian has several different forms that can be used to address friends and acquaintances, the most important are the *familiar* form of the *forename* and the *full forename + patronymic*.

For the structure of Russian names, *see* 12.1.

13.4.1

Using the forename

The *familiar* version of the *forename* is the normal form of address used between friends or, within the family, between siblings and by adults when speaking to children. It is used more generally by older people when speaking to children and is, for example, the form used by teachers when speaking to their students. Although there is no absolute rule about this, the familiar form of the forename is normally combined with the pronoun **ты**:

Надя, иди́ домой, ба́бушка прие́хала!

Nadia, go home! Your grandmother’s arrived.

Ко́ля, приве́т! Как у тебя́ дела́?

Hi, Kolia, how are things?

Серёжа, здра́вствуй! Сто лет тебя́ не ви́дела. Как пожива́ешь?

Hello, Seriozha, I haven’t seen you for ages. How are you getting on?

In appropriate circumstances the more *expressive* forms of the forename can be used:

Приве́т, Ната́шка. Меня́ в а́рмию забира́ют. Прово́ды в суббо́ту. Приде́шь?

Hi, Natasha! I’ve been called up into the army. The farewell party is on Saturday. Are you coming?

For more on forenames and their familiar and expressive forms, see 12.1.1 and 16.1.4.

When addressing someone using a familiar form that ends in **-а** or **-я**, it is possible to shorten the name by dropping the final vowel. This shortened form, which is characteristic of more informal levels of language, is used particularly frequently when the name is repeated:

Коль, не знаёшь, 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 Петро́вич, зайдите́, пожа́луйста, ко мне в кабинéт. У меня́ есть некото́рые вопро́сы по ва́шему отчёту.

Piotr Petrovich, would you mind stepping into my office. I've got some questions about your report.

А́нна Серге́евна, вы уже́ провери́ли на́ши сочи́нения?

Anna Sergeevna, have you marked our essays yet?

13.4.3 Other forms of address

Traditionally, the *full* form of the forename was not widely used as a form of address, except when speaking to foreigners (since foreign names do not as a rule have *familiar* forms; see 12.2). In recent years, however, it has become more acceptable as an intermediate form in circumstances when the use of *forename + patronymic* seems too formal, but where the use of the familiar form of the forename is too informal, for example, between colleagues. It can be combined with either **ты** or **вы**. One situation where this form can be widely heard is on television, when, for example, newsreaders are talking on air to correspondents on location:

Репорта́ж с ме́ста собы́тий веде́т наш корреспондéнт Алекса́ндр Курга́нов.

—Алекса́ндр? Алекса́ндр, вы слы́шите ме́ня?

—Да, Та́тьяна, я слы́шу вас хорошо́.

For a live report from the scene of the events we are going over to our correspondent Aleksandr Kurganov.

—Aleksandr? Aleksandr, can you hear me?

—Yes, Tat'iana, I can hear you loud and clear.

In Soviet times the titles **господин** 'Mr' and **госпожа** 'Mrs' were combined with the *surname* only when addressing foreigners. Since 1991, however, these titles have started

to be used more widely, although they can still sometimes carry ironic or even derogatory overtones. Nevertheless, in formal circumstances it is now generally acceptable to address someone whose name and patronymic you do not know using the form **господин/госпожа** + surname:

Господин Петров, вы не могли бы заполнить для нас эту анкету.
Would you mind filling in this form for us, Mr Petrov?

On the other hand, the form **товарищ** ‘comrade’ + surname, which was used in Soviet times, has now largely died out, although **товарищ** followed by the name of the rank is still used when addressing a superior officer in the armed forces or the police.

Surname alone is used by teachers and lecturers when addressing their students and also when addressing those lower in rank in the armed forces and other strictly hierarchical institutions:

Иванова, к доске! Докажи нам, пожалуйста, теорему Пифагора.
Ivanova, please step up to the blackboard and demonstrate for us the proof of Pythagoras’s theorem.

Patronymic alone is sometimes used in informal contexts. It indicates familiarity and can be combined only with **ты**. It cannot be used by younger people to indicate respect towards their elders:

Михалыч, когда за грибами поедем? Ты обещал!
Mikhalych, when are we going to look for mushrooms? You did promise!

For the ‘reduced’ form of the patronymic, see 12.1.2.

13.4.4 Referring to someone not present

When referring in Russian to someone with whom one is on formal terms, it is perfectly normal to use the formula *forename + patronymic*. If the person referred to is a man, the name, especially in informal language, is often treated as a single unit, with only the patronymic being declined; here too the patronymic is normally spoken in the reduced form:

Я только что был у Иван Ивановича.
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 двойню!
Have you heard? Filimonova from personnel has had twins.

Бритвихина и Столярова 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 Никулин, Андрей Миронов, Анатолий Папанов.**

The films of Leonid Gaidai featured the best Russian/Soviet actors: Iurii Nikulin, Andrei Mironov, Anatolii Papanov.

NOTE

The adjective **отечественный** is derived from **отечество** 'homeland', 'fatherland' and is frequently used in journalism and other similar types of language. Its meaning, depending on the time frame to which it refers, is either 'Russian' or 'Soviet'.

13.5 Addressing strangers

13.5.1 Introduction

When addressing strangers, Russians prefer, if possible, to use a form of address. There are various such forms in use, many of which have no real equivalent in English.

13.5.1 Addressing an individual

The forms used most frequently to address someone who is not known to the speaker are **молодой человек** 'young man' and **девушка** *literally*, 'girl'. These terms, which are perfectly polite and can be used to address anyone from late teens to early middle-age (and even beyond), are widely used in the street; they are the preferred forms for addressing waiters, shop assistants and others with whom one may come into casual contact:

Молодой человек, это не вы уронили блокнот?

Excuse me (young man), was it you that dropped this notebook?

Девушка, покажите мне вон ту куртку с капюшоном, что слева на витрине.

Would you mind showing me that jacket there with the hood, the one on the left in the window?

A problem arises with people who are too old to respond gracefully to **молодой человек** or **девушка**. Forms such as **мужчина** 'man', **женщина** 'woman' and **дама** 'lady' are quite frequently heard, but they can cause offence and are best avoided. There are periodic attempts to revive **сударь** 'sir' and **сударыня** 'madam', but these have never caught on and their use is likely to be seen as quaint or ironic. The best solution is probably to use an indirect way of attracting someone's attention, such as **простите** 'excuse me' or **будьте любезны** 'please', 'would you mind?':

Простите, это не вы уронили блокнот?

Excuse me, was it you that dropped this notebook?

Будьте любезны, передайте за проезд: за двоих до Раменского.

Excuse me, would you mind passing this fare up to the driver? It's for two people going as far as Ramenskoe.

Дядя 'uncle' and **тётя** 'aunt(ie)' are used informally to address people of an older generation and, along with the more familiar **дяденька** and **тётяшка**, are used by children addressing adults:

Дяденька, а вы правда фокусник?

(Uncle), is it true you're a conjuror?

13.5.2 Addressing a group

Announcements made in Russian to a group of people normally begin with a form of address containing a noun which identifies the audience. This is normally preceded by the plural adjective **уважаемые** 'dear', *literally*, 'respected', 'esteemed'. Examples of these forms of address, which are given with notional translations since they do not have English equivalents, include the following:

уважаемые (теле)зрители	dear viewers
уважаемые коллеги	dear colleagues
уважаемые пассажиры	dear passengers
уважаемые слушатели	dear listeners

Уважаемые пассажиры, начинается посадка на самолёт, следующий по маршруту Ростов – Волгоград рейсом 2458.

Flight 2458 (from Rostov) to Volgograd is now ready for boarding.

A greater degree of intimacy is suggested by the formula:

дорогие друзья	dear friends
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The Russian equivalent of 'ladies and gentlemen' is **Дамы и господа**, although the presence of the above formulae means that it is used less often than the corresponding English phrase.

At the end of a lecture or a speech it is polite to say:

Спасибо за внимание	Thank you for your attention.
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13.6 Writing letters and telephoning

13.6.1 Writing letters

The normal practice is to begin ordinary letters with the adjective **дорогой** (**дорогая**, **дорогие**) 'dear' followed either by the name(s) of the people being addressed or by an appropriate noun, such as **друг** 'friend':

Дорогой Вáня!	Dear Vania
Дорогой друг!	Dear friend

The adjective **ми́лый** (**ми́лая**, **ми́лые**) 'dear' can also be used, especially when writing to close friends or relatives:

Ми́лая Та́нечка!	Dear Tania
Ми́лая ма́мочка!	Dear Mum

Relatively formal letters can end with the formula:

и́скренне Ваш (твой)	Yours sincerely
с наи́лучшими пожелáниями	With best wishes

For the occurrence of capital letters with the pronouns **Вы** and **Ваш** when they are used in letters to address one person, *see* 1.5.7.

More informal ways of ending letters are:

всего́ дóброго	all the best
всего́ хороше́го	all the best

всего́ наилучшего
крéпко жму́ рúку

all the very best
literally, I shake your hand firmly (mostly
used by men)

(обнимаю́ и) целую́

literally, (I embrace and) kiss you (mostly
used by women)

In formal and official letters the name of the recipient is preceded by the adjective **уважаемый** *literally*, 'respected', 'esteemed' or **глубокоуважаемый** 'highly respected/esteemed':

Уважаемый́ Ива́н Петро́вич!
Глубокоуважаемый́ господин
Симпсон!

Dear Ivan Petrovich
Dear Mr Simpson

Formal letters can end with one of the following salutations:

С ува́жением
Искренне Ваш

Yours faithfully, Yours sincerely
Yours sincerely

NOTE Textbooks generally recommend putting an exclamation mark after the greeting at the beginning of a letter, although a comma can also be used.

13.6.2 Using the telephone

Алло́ (less frequently **алё**) is used to establish initial contact after picking up the telephone. A more formal way of answering the telephone is to say **слу́шаю (вас)** *literally*, 'I am listening to you'. **Да** 'yes' is sometimes used, but is less polite; it tends to be used more often when the connection has been lost and re-established.

Алло́, вас пло́хо слы́шно. Пере́звони́те, пожа́луйста.
Hello, I can't hear you properly. Can you phone me back?

—*Слу́шаю вас.*

—*Алло́, Михаи́л Моисе́евич? До́брый день. Это́ Цветко́ва из «Вече́рней газе́ты».*

—*Чем могу́ бы́ть поле́зен?*

—Hello.

—Hello, is that Mikhail Moiseevich? This is Tsvetkova from the *Vecherniaia gazeta*.

—How can I help you?

NOTE In Russian there is no problem about combining **алло́** with a greeting such as **до́брый день** or **здра́вствуйте**.

The courtesy formulae in the business-related calls are normally reduced to a minimum:

—*Такси́ «Тро́йка». Слу́шаю вас.*

—*Будь́те любе́зны, нам маши́ну на два́дцать два́ три́дцать.*

—*Пожа́луйста, ваш а́дрес, куда́ пое́дем и на чьё́ имя зака́з.*

—*Бере́зовый бу́львар, 33, кварта́ра 11, на желе́знодоро́жный вокза́л, фами́лия Дубро́вин.*

—*Зака́з приня́т.*

- Hello, Troika taxi service.
- Can I order a taxi please for 10.30 this evening?
- Can you give me your address, the destination and the name of the customer?
- 33 Beriozovyi Bul'var, flat 11, going to the railway station, and the taxi's for Dubrovin.
- Your taxi is ordered.

To ask to speak to somebody the following formulae can be used:

пригласить (or позвать) к телефону
можно
нельзя ли

All three can be followed by the name of the person in the *accusative*; the second and third can also be followed by a verb in the *infinitive*. To ask who is calling, the following sentence is used:

(А) кто его/её спрашивает? Who is calling?

The following sentence can be used to offer to take a message:

Что ему/ей передать? Can I give him/her a message?

- Алло, салон причёсок.
- Будьте добры, *пригласите к телефону Станислава Юрьевича.*
- У него сейчас клиент. *Перезвоните попозже.*

- Hello, hairdressers.
- Hello, can I speak to Stanislav Iur'evich, please?
- I'm afraid he's with a customer. Can you ring back later?

- Слушаю вас.
- Здравствуйте, *можно Нину?*
- Одну минуточку. *А кто её спрашивает?*
- Это Валерий, она знает.

- Hello.
- Hello, can I speak to Nina, please?
- Just a minute, Who's calling?
- It's Valerii. She's expecting me to phone.

- Алло, Максим?
- Нет, это его отец.
- Добрый вечер, *а нельзя ли с Максимом переговорить?* Это Павел, его однокурсник.
- Максима нет. *Что ему передать?*
- Попросите, пожалуйста, чтобы он мне перезвонил на мобильник. Он знает номер.

- Hello, is that Maksim?
- No, it's his father.
- Would it be possible to speak to Maksim? This is Pavel from the university.
- Maksim's not here. Can I give him a message?
- Would you mind asking him to phone me back on my mobile? He's got my number.

NOTE As the first example shows, Russian businesses are not always as informative as they might be when they answer the telephone.

There are two ways of telling someone that they have got a wrong-number:

**Вы ошиблись (но́мером).
Вы не туда́ попали.**

A typical message left on an answering machine (**автоотвѣтчик**) might be:

Здравствуйтѐ, с ва́ми говори́т автоотвѣтчик. Оста́вьте, пожа́луйста, ва́ше сообще́ние после звуково́го сигнала́.

Hello, this is an answering machine. Please leave a message after the tone.

Other useful telephone-related words and phrases include the following:

звони́ть/позвони́ть (+ dat.)	to telephone (someone)
звони́ть/позвони́ть из автома́та	to phone from a call-box
дозвани́ваться/дозвони́ться	to (succeed in) getting through
перезвани́вать/перезвони́ть	to ring back
брать/взять тру́бку	to pick up the phone
веша́ть/повеси́ть <i>or</i> класть /положи́ть тру́бку	to hang up
набира́ть/набра́ть но́мер	to dial a number
моби́льный/сотовы́й телефо́н	mobile telephone, cellphone
моби́льник	mobile (informal)
посыла́ть/посла́ть (отправля́ть/ отправи́ть, скиды́вать/скину́ть) те́кстовое сообще́ние <i>or</i> СМС (э́смэ́с, э́смэ́ску)	to send a text message
вводи́ть/ввести́ но́мер в па́мять	to put a number into the memory
заряжа́ть/заряди́ть телефо́н	to charge up a telephone

14

Being, becoming and possession

14.1 Being and becoming

14.1.1 Using the verb *быть*

The verb that corresponds most closely to the English ‘to be’, as used in sentences of the type ‘X is/was/will be Y’, is **быть**. When it is used in this function, **быть** has no *present tense* forms. In writing, the missing verb is normally indicated by a dash (–), especially when both *subject* and *complement* are *nouns*:

Мало кто знает, что мой брат – известный актёр.

Not many people know that my brother is a famous actor.

Эльбрус – самая высокая гора в Европе.

El'brus is the highest mountain in Europe.

Спасибо, что ты всё так быстро сделал. Ты – настоящий герой!

Thanks for doing everything so quickly. You are a real hero.

Дважды два – четыре.

Twice two is four.

The dash is not used when the subject is the *pronoun* *это* or when the complement is an *adjective*; it tends to be omitted when the subject is a *personal pronoun*:

Это, кажется, ваши ключи.

I think these are your keys.

Запомни золотое правило бизнеса: клиент всегда прав.

Remember the golden rule of business: the customer is always right.

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

Уже́ ясно, что в ближайши́е го́ды инфля́ция бу́дет серьё́зной пробле́мой для́ российско́го правитель́ства.

It's already clear that in the next few years inflation will be a serious problem for the Russian government.

Imperative

Профе́ссор, у меня́ к вам про́сьба: бу́дьте мо́им нау́чным руководи́телем.

Professor, I've a favour to ask you. Would you agree to be my supervisor?

Conditional

Е́сли бы ты́ был пре́зидентом Росси́и, как бы ты́ ве́л борьбу́ с корруп́цией?

If you were president of Russia, how would you manage the battle against corruption?

Infinitive

Не обяза́тельно бу́ть проро́ком, что́бы предска́зать, чем э́то всё ко́нчится.

You don't have to be a prophet to predict how it will all end.

Gerund

Он на́чал свою́ карье́ру, ещё́ бу́дучи студе́нтом.

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*:

Когда́ я́ был студе́нтом, я́ был чле́ном трёх о́бществ, но чле́ном па́ртии я́ не́ был.

When I was a student, I was a member of three societies, but I was never a member of the party.

Но мы́ когда́-то́ бы́ли друзья́ми.

But at one time we were friends.

The *nominative*, however, is normally used if the *complement* refers to a permanent state:

Наша ба́бушка *была́* красáвица, к ней мно́гие свáтались.
Our grandmother was a beauty and many sought her hand in marriage.

14.1.3 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:

Пе́рвым челове́ком в ко́смосе *был* Ю́рий Гага́рин.
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 *тре́тним* му́жем *был* режиссё́р.
Her third husband was a (theatre or film) director [unlike her other husbands].

Её *тре́тий* муж *был* режиссё́ром *одно́го* из моско́вских теа́тров.
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 способная: кажется, что умеет делать всё.
She's so talented; it seems there's nothing she can't do.

Тут я впервые заметил, что глаза у него – голубые.
It was then that I noticed for the first time his eyes are bright blue.

Осторожно, этот гриб несъедобный!
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 уверен, что его новая книга будет очень интересной.
I am sure that his new book will be very interesting.

Если бы он был более дальновидным, он не стал бы делать таких заявлений.
If he were more far-sighted he would not have made statements of that nature.

Каждый согласится, что лучше быть богатым и здоровым, чем бедным и больным.
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 большая, светлая, 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.

Водители! Первого сентября будьте особенно *осторожны* и *внимательны!*

Drivers! On 1 September (the start of the school year in Russia) be especially careful and pay particular attention!

For more examples with the short form, *see* below.

The short form tends to be used with reference to a specific occasion or set of circumstances:

Съёмка окончена, все свободны.

The filming is over. Everyone is free to go.

Большое спасибо за помощь. Я очень благодарна.

Many thanks for your help. I'm very grateful.

—Ну что, пойдём ужинать?

—Я вообще-то не голоден.

—Shall we go and have some supper?

—I'm not really hungry.

An extension of this is that the short form can have the meaning of 'too ...':

Ты ещё *молод*, чтобы судить людей.

You're still too young to judge people.

Эти 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), just; right (not left)	прав	right (not wrong)

The short form of the adjective **хороший** 'good' has the special meaning of 'good-looking', 'attractive':

Она была так *хороша*, так мила – слов нет!

She was such an attractive and pleasant person that there are no words to describe her.

The short form of the adjective occurs in a number of set expressions:

Будьте добры́	Please be so kind as to
Будьте любезны́	Please be so kind as to
Будь здоро́в, Будьте здоро́вы	Bless you! (when someone sneezes), Take care (on parting)
Мир те́сен	It's a small world
Я жив, здоро́в	I'm alive and well, I'm still going strong

14.1.5 Synonyms of *быть*

The following verbs are more or less exact synonyms of **быть**. They are found almost exclusively in formal language:

явля́ться
представля́ть собо́й

Явля́ться is used with a *complement* in the *instrumental* case, which, where appropriate, can precede both *verb* and *subject*; both *subject* and *complement* are generally *nouns*, although *adjectival complements* are occasionally found, especially in bureaucratic language.

Представля́ть собо́й is used with a *direct object* in the *accusative case*; both subject and object are normally nouns:

С 2002 го́да он явля́ется члѐном Сою́за фотохудожни́ков Росси́и.

He's been a member of the Russian Union of Photographic Artists since 2002.

Учре́дителем Моско́вского междунаро́дного кинофестива́ля явля́ется пра́вительство Росси́и.

The official founder of the Moscow International Film Festival is the Russian government.

Но́вый филь́м представля́ет собо́й неуда́чную сме́сь боеви́ка и мелодра́мы.

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 conjunction **что**:

Гла́вное отли́чие Ба́тмена от други́х супергеро́ев заключа́ется в отсутстви́и у него́ сверхъестественных спосо́бностей.

The main difference between Batman and other superheroes is his absence of supernatural abilities.

Гла́вная на́ша пробле́ма заключа́ется в том, что у нас не оста́лось де́нег.

Our main problem is that we have no money left.

The verb **быва́ть** 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*:

Зачасту́ю таки́е диску́ссии быва́ют жа́ркими и заты́гиваются до позднего ве́чера.

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 **бывать** 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 **бывать**, see 15.1.2.

The verb **оказываться/оказаться** means ‘it transpired that’, ‘it turned out to be’, although in practice it can sometimes correspond simply to the English ‘to be’; it is used with a *complement* in the *instrumental*:

Оказывается, мы с ним учились на одном факультете, только в разные годы.

It turns out that we attended the same faculty but in different years.

В конверте был какой-то белый порошок, но он оказался безвредным.

There was some white powder in the envelope, but it was (*or* turned out to be) harmless.

14.1.6 The verb становиться/стать

The verb **становиться/стать** means ‘to become’. It is used with a complement in the *instrumental*:

Никто и подумать не мог тогда, что он станет крупным учёным.

At that time nobody could ever have thought that he would become a distinguished scholar.

Судебные иски потребителей к производителям некачественных товаров стали обычным явлением.

Instances of consumers suing manufacturers of poor quality goods have become an everyday occurrence.

Блоги становятся всё более популярными среди молодёжи.

Blogs are becoming more and more popular among young people.

In many instances and especially in sentences referring to a particular set of circumstances, it is possible to use, instead of **становиться/стать** with an adjectival complement, an intransitive verb formed from an adjective according to the pattern described in 10.3.3:

За эти годы она сильно похудела, а он, наоборот, располнел.

In the last few years she has become much thinner, while he, on the other hand, has become fatter.

When it refers to a new state of affairs that has come into being, **стать** functions very much like a perfective partner of **быть** and in many instances it can be translated by 'to be':

Киевское «Динамо» под руководством российского специалиста Юрия Сёмина впервые стало обладателем Кубка Первого канала.

Dynamo Kiev, under the guidance of the Russian trainer Iurii Sëmin, have won the First Channel Cup for the first time. (*Literally, have become the winners ... for the first time.*)

Впервые в истории духовное управление мусульман возглавил этнический русский - им стал Алий Ефтеев.

For the first time in its history the Religious Council of (Russian) Muslims is to be headed by an ethnic Russian: he is Alii Efteev.

Following the same principle, the Russian version of the television quiz *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* is called «Кто хочет стать миллионером?». Presumably, everybody wants to *be* a millionaire, but not everyone is necessarily willing to do what is required in order to *become* one.

14.2 Existence, presence and location

14.2.1 The use of the verb *быть*

Existence, presence, and location is also often indicated by the verb **быть**:

Была одна проблема, но мы сумели её решить.

There was a problem, but we've managed to solve it.

Завтра я буду весь день на совещании.

I'll be at a meeting all day tomorrow.

Здесь когда-то была старая церковь, но её снесли в пятидесятые годы.

There used to be an old church here, but it was demolished in the 1950s.

In the present tense the third person form **есть** is frequently used, especially when the emphasis is on the fact of presence, rather than on the subject of the sentence; **есть** can be used with plural as well as with singular subjects:

В городе есть только один человек, который может нам помочь.

There's only one person in the town who can help us.

Есть вещи, о которых не принято говорить вслух.

There are certain things that are not mentioned in public.

Теперь 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 *быва́ть* and *ока́зывать/ока́заться* (see 14.1.5) can also be used in sentences indicating existence, presence or location; the shades of meaning that they convey are the same as those described in 14.1.5:

Он здесь *быва́ет* то́лько по вто́рникам.

He is normally here only on Tuesdays.

***Быва́ли* случи́и, 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 забива́ет сто́лько мяче́й и́менно пото́му, что всегда́ *ока́зывается* в ну́жном ме́сте в ну́жное вре́мя.

The reason he scores so many goals is that he's always in the right place at the right time.

The verb *име́ться* is used, mostly in more formal types of language, to indicate existence or presence:

В распоря́жении ха́керов *име́ются* програ́ммы, иденти́фицирующе́е паро́ли за не́сколько секунд.

There are programs available to hackers that identify passwords in a few seconds.

The verb *находи́ться* and the past passive participle *располо́жен* are widely used to indicate location:

Моя́ ко́мната *находи́тся/располо́жена* в конце́ коридо́ра, ря́дом с ва́нной.

My room is (situated) at the end of the corridor, next to the bathroom.

Го́род Гла́зго *располо́жен/находи́тся* в запа́дной ча́сти Шотла́ндии на обо́их бере́гах ре́ки 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 *стоя́ть* can be used of buildings, statues and for objects standing vertically:

На це́нтра́льной пло́щади всё ещё *стои́т* па́мятник Ле́нину.

In the central square there is still a statue of Lenin.

На по́лках *стоя́ли* сло́вари и кни́ги на сла́вянских язы́ках.

On the shelves there were dictionaries and other books in Slavonic languages.

The verb *лежа́ть* 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 одно́м из э́тих конве́ртов *лежи́т* тысяче́рубле́вая купю́ра.

In one of these envelopes there is a bank note for 1,000 roubles.

Он не мо́жет се́годня прису́тствовать, та́к как *лежи́т* в больни́це.

He can't be here today as he's in hospital.

The verb **сидеть** is used with reference to specific locations, namely, staying at home or in prison; indeed, **сидеть** is sometimes used on its own with the meaning ‘to be in prison’:

Вчера я сидела дома весь день, так что не пытайся меня уверять, будто ты звонил несколько раз.

I was at home all day yesterday, so don't pretend that you tried to phone several times.

Я знаю, что он сидит (в тюрьме), но не знаю, за что.

I know he's in prison, but I don't know what for.

NOTE

The verbs **иметься, находиться, стоять, лежать, сидеть** are *imperfective*.

14.3 Talking about possession

14.3.1 Talking about possession using the preposition **у** (+ gen.)

The normal way of talking about possession in Russian does not involve a verb corresponding to the English ‘to have’; instead, a construction indicating *location* is used: the verb is normally **быть** (in the third person) and the possessor is indicated by means of the *preposition у* (+ gen.):

Сегодня я очень занят, но завтра у меня будет много свободного времени.

I'm very busy today, but tomorrow I'll have a lot of free time.

У него когда-то была машина, но он её продал и теперь ездит только на общественном транспорте.

He used to have a car, but he sold it and now travels only on public transport.

In the present tense, the verb form **есть** can either be present or be omitted. It tends to be used when emphasis is on the fact of possession, rather than the possessor or the item possessed:

У меня два брата и одна сестра.

I have two brothers and a sister.

У неё русые волосы и голубые глаза.

She has light brown hair and pale blue eyes.

У меня эта книга 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 известных футбольных клубов часто бывают большие долги.

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 с (+ 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.

Ваши слова имеют для меня огромное значение.

Your words are extremely important to me.

Она заявила, что договорные 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 **у (+ 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.

В браке не состоял, детей не имею.

I have never been married and have no children (e.g. in a formal statement).

В анкете, помнится, была такая графа: «Имеете ли вы родственников за границей?»

I remember that official forms used to contain the question: 'Do you have any relatives living abroad?'

14.3.3 The verbs **обладать** and **владеть**

The verbs **обладать** and **владеть** both mean 'to own', 'to possess' and both are used with an object in the *instrumental*. Their use is normally restricted to formal contexts in which the object possessed has a certain value:

Контрольным пакетом акций этой компании владеет государство.

A controlling share in the company is owned by the state.

До 1867 года Аляской владела Россия.

Until 1867 Alaska was a possession of Russia.

Султан обладал несметными богатствами и неограниченной властью.

The sultan possessed countless riches and unlimited power.

Этот человек обладает уникальной способностью читать чужие мысли.

That man has the unique ability to read other people's thoughts.

The phrase **владеть (иностранным) языком** means 'to know a (foreign) language':

Мой коллега свободно владеет семью иностранными языками.

My colleague has a fluent knowledge of seven foreign languages.

15

Negation

15.1 Simple negation

15.1.1 The particle не

The normal way to create a straightforward negative sentence is to insert the negative particle **не** before the verb:

Рекоменду́ется меня́ть де́ньги в аэропорту́ или в гости́нице.
It is advisable to change money at the airport or in the hotel.

Не рекоменду́ется меня́ть де́ньги в аэропорту́ или в гости́нице.
It is not advisable to change money at the airport or in the hotel.

Тепе́рь я зна́ю, что де́лать.
Now I know what to do.

Тепе́рь я не зна́ю, что де́лать.
Now I don't know what to do.

Звони́ домо́й ка́ждый де́нь.
Phone home every day.

Не звони́ домо́й ка́ждый де́нь.
Don't phone home every day.

This rule applies to **быть** 'to be', but only when it is used in the way described in **14.1.1**, that is, in sentences indicating equivalence. In present tense sentences, where there is no verb present, the particle **не** is placed before the complement:

Бою́сь, что егó но́вая кни́га не бу́дет о́чень интере́сной.
I'm afraid his new book won't be very interesting.

Е́сли бы вы не́ были́ круп́ным бизне́смено́м, кем вы хоте́ли бы ста́ть?
If you weren't a big businessman, what would you like to be?

Мы не олига́рхи, мы не акцио́не́ры, мы про́сто норма́льные лю́ди, кото́рые хоте́т жить норма́льной жи́знью.
We're not oligarchs, we're not shareholders, we're just ordinary people who want to live an ordinary life.

Я в матема́тике не си́лен.
I'm not good at maths.

NOTE

The particle **не** is *proclitic*, that is, it forms a single stress unit with the following word. In a small number of past tense forms the stress moves forward from the verb onto the particle. The most widely occurring example is **быть**, where the negated forms of the past tense are stressed according to the following pattern:

Masc. **не́ был** Fem. **не́ была́** N. **не́ было** Pl. **не́ были**

Negation can be reinforced by the adverbs **совсе́м**, **совершенно́**, **абсолютно́** ‘absolutely’, ‘(not) at all’:

Тепе́рь я *совсе́м/совершенно́/абсолютно́* не зна́ю, что де́лать.

Now I don’t know at all what to do; *or* Now I haven’t the slightest idea what to do.

15.1.2

Negation of sentences indicating existence, presence, location and possession

When **быть** ‘to be’ is used in sentences indicating existence, presence, location and possession (that is, those described in 14.2 and 14.3), special rules for negation apply. An *impersonal construction* is used in which the *noun* or *pronoun* indicating what does not exist or is not present or possessed is in the *genitive* case, and the *verb* is in the *third person singular*, *neuter* in the *past tense*. The present tense form **есть** has a negative equivalent **нет**, which can never be omitted:

Я уве́рен, что бу́дут пробле́мы.

I am certain there will be problems.

Я уве́рен, что *не* бу́дет пробле́м.

I am certain there won’t be (any) problems.

В два́дцатье го́ды в Ростове́ уже́ был университе́т.

In the 1920s there was already a university in Rostov.

В конце́ де́вятна́дцатого ве́ка в Ростове́ ещё́ *не́* было́ университе́та.

At the end of the nineteenth century there still was no university in Rostov.

Есть приме́ры э́того явле́ния и в Росси́и.

There are examples of this phenomenon in Russia.

В Росси́и *нет* приме́ров э́того явле́ния.

There are no examples of this phenomenon in Russia.

За́втра у меня́ бу́дет вре́мя для э́того.

I shall have time for this tomorrow.

За́втра у меня́ *не* бу́дет вре́мени для э́того.

I won’t have time for this tomorrow.

У них дочь.

They have a daughter.

У них *нет* сы́на.

They have no son.

У меня́ эта́ кни́га уже́ есть.
I already have that book.

У меня́ э́той кни́ги уже́ нет.
I no longer have that book.

Particular attention is drawn to the following examples, where this construction is used to indicate absence:

—**Мо́жно поговори́ть с Га́лей?**
—Can I speak to Galia?

—**Да, она́ здесь.**
—Yes, she's here.

Or

—**Нет, сейча́с её́ нет.**
—No, she's not here at the moment.

Or

—**Нет, её́ нет до́ма сейча́с.**
—No, she's not at home at the moment.

Я был на э́том собра́нии: я всё́ помню́.
I was at that meeting. I can remember everything.

Меня́ не бы́ло на э́том собра́нии: я не знаю́, что там обсу́ждали.
I wasn't at that meeting. I don't know what was discussed there.

This construction is not found only with **быть**, but also with a number of other verbs when they are used to indicate existence, presence, location or possession:

быва́ть	to be frequently <i>or</i> to be regularly
оказы́ваться/оказа́ться	to turn out to be
остава́ться/оста́ться	to remain
происходи́ть/произо́йти	to happen, to occur
случа́ться/случи́ться	to happen, to occur
существова́ть (нсв)	to exist

В импе́рии не быва́ет гра́ждан. Есть то́лько по́дданные импе́ратора.
You don't have citizens in an empire. You just have subjects of the emperor.

В его́ маши́не не оказа́лось ме́ста для́ меня́.
(It turned out that) there was no room in his car for me.

В Москвё́ не оста́лось дешё́вых рестора́нов.
There are no cheap restaurants left in Moscow.

Чтобы́ э́того не случи́лось, на́до во́время опла́чивать́ счета́.
For that not to happen, you have to pay your bills on time.

Еди́ной моде́ли демокра́тии прóсто не суще́ствует.
A single model for democracy simply doesn't exist.

NOTE

The expression **Его́ не ста́ло** is a somewhat high-flown way of saying 'He has died'.

15.2 Partial negation

15.2.1 Negating only part of a sentence

In the examples given in 15.1 it is the whole sentence that is negated. Where, however, it is only a single word or a specific part of a sentence that requires to be negated, the *negative* particle **не** is placed immediately *before* the word or phrase concerned:

Он приезжает не в четверг, а в пятницу.

He isn't coming on Thursday, but on Friday.

Не каждый умеет писать на таком прекрасном русском языке, как ты.

Not everyone can write such excellent Russian as you.

The position of **не** can affect the meaning of the sentence:

Очень не рекомендую вам менять деньги в аэропорту или в гостинице.

I would very much advise you not to change money at the airport or in the hotel.

Я вам не очень рекомендую менять деньги в аэропорту или в гостинице.

I would not particularly/really advise you to change money at the airport or in the hotel.

In the second example only **очень** is negated.

Её сегодня нет дома.

She's not at home today.

Она сегодня не дома, а на работе.

She's not at home today, but at work.

In the second example only **дома** is negated. When only part of the sentence is negated, *impersonal constructions* of the type described in 15.2 are not used.

15.2.2 'Pseudo-negatives'

In some instances this use of **не** creates set phrases that are negative in form, but not necessarily in meaning:

не раз (not once, but) several times

не один (not one, but) several

Мы не раз обсуждали этот вопрос на заседаниях совета директоров.

We've discussed this question several times at board meetings.

Пережив не один тяжелейший кризис, «Спартак» выжил.

Having come through several extremely serious crises, Spartak has survived.

In 7.3.2 examples were given of the use of the phrase **не тот** to mean 'the wrong ...'; **не** can also be combined with the adverbs **там** 'there' and **туда** 'thither', 'to that place' to similar effect:

Вы не там сидите.

You're sitting in the wrong place.

Вы не туда попали.

You've got the wrong number. (*Literally*, You've ended up in the wrong place.)

15.3 Negative adverbs, negative pronouns and the negative particle ни

15.3.0 Introduction

Russian has a number of negative adverbs, negative pronouns, as well as the negative particle **ни**, which correspond to such English negative words as ‘nowhere’, ‘nothing’ and ‘neither’. In Russian, these words are normally used in conjunction with the particle **не** in what appear to be sentences with a ‘double negative’.

15.3.1 Negative adverbs

The following negative adverbs are used in Russian:

никогда́	never
ника́к	in no way, by no means
нигде́	nowhere
никуда́	(to) nowhere
ниотку́да	from nowhere
ниско́лько	not in the slightest
ничу́ть	not in the slightest

Но мы *никогда́ не́* были друзьями.

But we were never friends.

Он *ника́к не* реаги́рует на мои́ про́сбы.

He doesn't react in any way to my requests.

Бы́ло вре́мя, чёрная икра́ *не* продава́лась *нигде́*.

There was a time when black caviar was not sold anywhere.

***Никуда́ не* уходите́.**

Don't go off anywhere.

Я помо́щи *ниотку́да не* жду.

I'm not expecting help from anywhere.

Его́ *ниско́лько не* сму́щала тот фа́кт, что уже́ два́жды ему́ отка́зывали.

He was not in the slightest embarrassed by the fact that he had already been turned down twice.

Я *ничу́ть не* сомнева́юсь, что он врёт.

I don't doubt in the slightest that he's lying.

15.3.2 Negative pronouns

The main negative pronouns used in Russian are:

никто́	no one
ничто́/ничего́	nothing
никако́й	not any, no

Никто́, **ничто́/ничего́** and **никако́й** decline like the interrogative pronouns **кто**, **что** and **како́й** respectively (see 7.4.1 and 7.4.2); for more on **ничто́/ничего́**, see 15.3.3.

Сего́дня *никто́ не* звони́л.

Nobody phoned today.

Я никого́ не обвиняю, но уже́ никому́ не ве́рю.

I'm not accusing anybody, but I no longer believe anyone.

Ничего́ здесь не понима́ю.

I can't understand anything here.

Я не получи́л от него́ никако́го отве́та.

I haven't received any answer from him.

Прода́жа таких вооруже́ний не ограни́чена ника́кими междунаро́дными соглаше́ниями.

The sale of such weapons is not restricted by any international agreements.

Further examples with **ничто́/ничего́** are given in **15.3.3**.

There are two *negative pronouns* that are used rather less frequently: **ниче́й** 'no one's'.

This declines like the pronoun **чей** (see **7.4.2**):

—**Чья́ э́та соба́ка?**

—**Ничья́.**

—Whose dog is that?

—Nobody's.

The feminine form **ничья́** is also used as a noun with the meaning 'draw' (in sport):

Их по́следняя игра́ ко́нчилась ничье́й.

Their last game ended as a draw.

The pronoun **нико́й** is really only used in two set phrases that serve as emphatic negatives:

нико́им обра́зом in no way whatsoever

ни в ко́ем слу́чае in no circumstances whatsoever

Госуда́рственные корпорации́ нико́им обра́зом не заме́щают ча́стный биз́нес.

In no way whatsoever do state corporations take the place of private business.

Телевизио́нная акаде́мия ни в ко́ем слу́чае не должна́ бы́ть полити́зированной.

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 ке́м не обсу́ждал ва́шу пробле́му.

I haven't discussed your problem with anyone.

Э́тот стиль ни с че́м не спу́таешь.

You wouldn't confuse this style with anything.

Её́ сопе́рник ни при́ каких́ обстоя́тельствах не мо́жет рассу́тывать на по́ддержку национа́льных меньши́нств.

There are no circumstances in which her rival can rely on the support of the ethnic minorities.

Я ни в чьей помощи не нуждаюсь.
I don't need anyone's help.

15.3.3 More on ничто́/ничего́

The form **ничто́** is used only for the *nominative* case and thus occurs only on the fairly rare occasions when this pronoun is the *grammatical subject* of a sentence:

Ничто́ здесь меня́ не интересу́ет.
Nothing here interests me.

Forms in ... **что** are also used in conjunction with *prepositions* that take the *accusative* case:

Она́ ни за что́ не 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 **ничего́**; this is the ending for the *genitive* case, but it is also the form used without exception when the pronoun serves as the *direct object* of a *transitive verb*:

For more on transitive verbs, see 4.13.1.

Мы ничего́ не бо́имся.
We're not afraid of anything.

Наши де́ти ничего́ не чита́ют.
Our children don't read anything.

The form **ничего́** is also used in impersonal expressions of the type:

Ничего́ не слы́шно, ничего́ не ви́дно.
We can't hear anything, we can't see anything. (*Literally*, Nothing is to be heard ...)

In addition, **ничего́** can have the meaning of 'all right, not too bad':

—Как дела́?
—**Ничего́.**

—How are things?
—Not too bad *or* OK.

Фильм ничего́, посмотре́ть мо́жно.
The film's OK; it's watchable at least.

Ничего́ (стра́шного) can be used in reply to an apology:

—Извини́те, пожа́луйста.
—**Ничего́.**

—I'm sorry.
—That's all right.

For more on the use of **ничего́**, see 13.2.5 and 16.2.4.

15.3.4 More on negative adverbs and pronouns

It is perfectly possible in Russian to combine two or more negative adverbs and/or pronouns in the same sentence:

Никто́ никому́ ничего́ не дол́жен.

Nobody owes anybody anything.

Я никогда́ никому́ ничего́ подобно́го не говори́ла.

I never said anything of the sort to anybody.

Negative adverbs and pronouns can be used in conjunction with the negative impersonal predicate forms **нельзя́** 'it is forbidden', 'it is impossible' and **невозможно́** 'it is impossible':

Во время́ дежу́рства никуда́ нельзя́ выходи́ть.

You are not allowed to go anywhere while you are on duty.

Ника́к нельзя́ откры́ть окно́.

It's totally impossible to open the window.

Нигде́ невозможно́ бы́ло 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 **нельзя́**, *see* 5.7.5.

There are some more or less set phrases where negative adverbs or pronouns are used without the particle **не**. These include:

Я здесь ни при чём.

This has nothing to do with me.

Мы оста́лись ни с чём.

We were left with nothing.

Вы сейча́с находи́тесь на доро́ге в никуда́.

At the moment, you're on a road to nowhere.

15.3.5 The negative particle ни

When it is used as a negative particle **ни** has two functions. The sequence **ни ... ни** corresponds to English 'neither ... nor':

Я не ем ни ры́бы ни мя́са.

I eat neither fish nor meat.

Она́ не уме́ет разгова́ривать ни с колле́гами ни с учени́ками.

She doesn't know how to talk either to her colleagues or to her pupils.

Я не хочу́ ни есть ни пить.

I want neither to eat nor to drink.

Его́ нет ни до́ма ни на рабо́те.

He's neither at home nor at work.

The particle **не** is not used when **ни ... ни** is used in certain set phrases of the type:

ни ры́ба ни мя́со
ни с того́ ни с сего́

neither one thing nor another
suddenly, for no obvious reason

Она́ ни с то́го ни с се́го решила всё бросить и уехать работать в Италию.

She suddenly decided to give everything up and go off and work in Italy.

The other use of **ни** is to make negation more emphatic:

Я не знаю́ ни одного́ слова́ по-кита́йски.

I don't know a single word of Chinese.

Я ни разу́ не́ был на Кавка́зе.

Not even once have I been to the Caucasus.

NOTE

It is important to distinguish these emphatic negatives (which are combined with the particle **не**) from the 'pseudo-negatives' **не один, не раз** described in **15.3.2**.

Они́ не обрати́ли на меня́ ни мале́йшего внима́ния.

They didn't pay me even the slightest attention.

Ни с ме́ста!

Don't move! *or* Stay right where you are!

NOTE

The negative particle **ни** should be distinguished from the reinforcing particle **ни** found in constructions such as:

как бы то ни́ было	however that might be
что бы ты ни́ говорил	whatever you might say

For more on these constructions, see **21.6.4** and **23.2.1**.

15.4

The case of the direct object in negative sentences

In **3.3.3** it was noted that the *genitive* is sometimes used instead of the *accusative* for the *direct object* of a *transitive* verb in a *negative* sentence. The choice of case is partly a matter of rules, but partly a matter of preference.

The genitive is always used in conjunction with the emphatic particle **ни**:

Я не знаю́ ни одного́ слова́ по-кита́йски.

I don't know a single word of Chinese.

Они́ не обрати́ли на меня́ ни мале́йшего внима́ния.

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* **никако́й**:

Я нико́гда́ не ем мя́са.

I never eat meat.

Я не получи́л от него́ никако́го отве́та.

I haven't received any answer from him.

(2) In constructions involving the verb **иметь**, as well as in some other set phrases such as **играть роль** 'to play a part':

Они не имеют права входить в ваш дом без вашего разрешения.
They have no right to enter your house without your permission.

Здесь интеллигенция не играет значительной роли.
Here the intelligentsia does not play a significant part.

(3) When the object is **это**:

Этого я не знал.
That is something I didn't know.

The *genitive* tends to be preferred in general statements or when the object is indefinite:

Ты что, газет не читаешь?
You mean to say you don't read newspapers?

Почему ты не купил хлеба?
Why didn't you buy (any) bread?

The *accusative* is used as follows:

(1) When it is not the whole the sentence, but only a specific part that is negated:

Не каждый совершит такой поступок.
Not everyone would do something like that.

(2) In sentences where the negation is apparent, rather than real, for example, 'pseudo-negatives' of the type described in 15.2.2 or genuine double negatives of the type **нельзя ... не** 'it is impossible not to':

Мы не раз обсуждали этот вопрос на заседаниях совета директоров.
We've discussed this question several times at board meetings.

Нельзя не почувствовать гордость, когда читаешь о его спортивных подвигах.
It's impossible not to feel pride when you read about his sporting achievements.

In most instances not included in any of the above categories either case may be found:

Я решил не тратить время/времени на оправдания.
I am not going to waste time on excuses.

Я не знаю его жену/жены.
I don't know his wife.

Мясо/мяса мы не едим только по будням.
We don't eat meat on weekdays only.

15.5

Negatives of the не́чего, не́когда 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':

не́кого	there is no one
не́чего	there is nothing

некогда	there is no time
нигде	there is nowhere
никуда	there is nowhere (to go)
ниоткуда	there is nowhere (from where)
низачем	there is no point

These forms are mostly used with an *infinitive* verb. If there is a *logical subject*, it goes, as in most impersonal sentences, in the *dative*:

Он вдруг понял, что ему никому передавать опыт.

He suddenly realised there was nobody he could pass on his experience to.

Нам здесь ничего 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 молодёжи 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):

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.

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.

Работать надо, не́чего дурака́ валять!

You need to get on with your work, instead of messing around.

Тут удивля́ться не́чего.

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 де́лать	from want of anything better to do (note that the preposition goes before the entire phrase)
да́льше не́куда	that's the limit, it can't get any worse

—**Бо́льшое спа́сибо..**

—**Не́ за что.**

—Thank you very much.

—Don't mention it.

Не́которые полага́ют, что сове́тский челове́к чита́л от не́чего де́лать.

Some people think that people in the Soviet Union read because they hadn't anything better to do.

Ситуа́ция до то́го о́сложнилась, что да́льше не́куда.

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 билетки?

Can I see your tickets, please?

Извините, можно вас на минуточку?

Excuse me, could I have a word with you?

Or Excuse me, could I see you for a minute?

Простите, огоньку не найдётся?

Excuse me, you wouldn't happen to have a light, would you?

Запишите, пожалуйста, телефончик: если кран опять потечёт, позвоните мне.

Do please write down my phone number. If the tap starts dripping again, feel free to telephone me.

Жизнь на новом месте пошла гладко, и они уже стали подумывать о том, чтобы завести второго ребёнка.

After the move everything was going smoothly and they were starting to think about having a second child.

К лету я равнодушен: жара, пыль, комары... А вот зимушку морозную люблю!

I'm not bothered about summer, with all the heat, the dust and the mosquitoes, but I really love a cold and frosty winter.

Заходи завтра вечерком, выпьем по рюмочке!

Call in tomorrow evening for a dram (*or* and we'll have a glass of something warming).

In the following sentences the suffix combines both a positive emotion and a reference to size:

Дует тёплый ветерок, и по небу плывут пушистые облака.

There's a warm breeze, and fluffy clouds are scudding across the sky.

В подаренной сумочке она обнаружила серебряное колечко и зеркалаще в форме сердечка.

In the handbag she'd been given she found a silver ring and a small mirror in the shape of a heart.

Смотри, какая забавная собачка!

Look, what a funny little dog!

Наденьте малышу что-нибудь на головку, на улице уже прохладно.

You'd better cover the baby's head; it's quite chilly outside.

16.1.2 Using suffixes with negative connotations

In the following examples the *diminutive* suffix **-ишко-** refers to size, but is also used to express a negative or diminishing attitude on the part of the speaker:

Городишко, в который его командировали, оказался серым и скучным, как тысячи других провинциальных городков на этом свете.

The miserable hole that he'd been sent to was as grey and as boring as thousands of other provincial towns on this earth.

А этот зайчишка откуда взялся? У тебя не было такой игрушки.

Where did you find that wretched little hare? That's not one of your toys.

Он бросил в чемодан старенький свитер, две пары носков да кое-какое бельишко.

He threw into the suitcase an old sweater, two pairs of socks and some underwear.

Augmentative suffixes normally convey both a reference to (large) size and generally negative connotations:

Такой голоси́на ко́го хо́чешь разбу́дит.

A voice like that could wake anyone up.

С его́ кулачи́щами ему́ бы бо́ксом занима́ться, а не на скри́пке игра́ть.

With fists like that he should take up boxing, not the violin!

Он сдал ключи́ от ко́мнаты, но такую́ грязи́щу по́сле себя́ оста́вил, – даже посу́ду за собо́й не помы́л!

He handed in the keys to the room, but left such a filthy mess behind; he didn't even do the washing up!

Сосе́дний дом поше́л под сно́с; стои́т гро́хот, пыли́ща . . .

They've started to demolish the building next door; there's noise and dust everywhere!

Не дыши́ на меня́; от тебя́ ви́нищем па́хнет!

Don't breathe on me; you smell terribly of booze!

NOTES

- (i) As the first, second and fourth of the above examples demonstrate, the addition of a diminutive or an augmentative suffix, regardless of the ending, does not affect the gender of the original noun (see also **10.1.1**).
- (ii) Although the augmentative suffix **-ище** normally has negative connotations, the noun **дружище**, used as a form of address, expresses both a familiar and a positive attitude:

Сто лет тебя́ не ви́дел, дружи́ще!

I haven't seen you for ages, mate!

16.1.3

Nouns indicating members of the family

Diminutive suffixes are frequently used to add expressive connotations to nouns indicating members of the family. Not surprisingly, the connotations of these suffixes are almost invariably positive. The following terms might be used when referring to a member of your family:

дочь	daughter	до́чка, до́ченька, дочу́рка
сын	son	сыно́к, сыно́чек, сыни́шка
ма́ма	mum, mother	ма́мочка, ма́муля, ма́маша, ма́менька
сестра́	sister	сестри́ца, сестри́чка, сестре́нка
брат	brother	бра́тик, бра́тец

На́ша до́чка уже́ перешла́ во второ́й класс.

Our daughter has already gone into second year (at primary school).

The following terms can be used as affectionate forms of address to members of your family:

жена́	wife	жёнушка
му́ж	husband	му́женёк
ма́ма	mum, mother	ма́мочка, ма́муля
па́па	dad, father	па́почка, па́пуля
сын	son	сыно́к, сыно́чек, сыну́ля
сестра́	sister	сестри́ца, сестри́чка
брат	brother	бра́тец, бра́тишка
деду́шка	grandfather	деду́ля

бабушка	grandmother	бабуля
дядя	uncle	дядюшка
тётя	aunt	тётушка

Сынóчек, сделай му́зыку потише, а то соседи опять придут жаловаться.
 Turn your music down (son), or else the neighbours will be coming to complain again.

NOTES

- (i) In this usage the suffix **-ишк-** (**сынишка**) has positive connotations.
- (ii) **Брати́ц** is often used as a familiar form of address to a male person:

А ты, братец, хитёр! Ловко придумал!
 You're a sharp one, mate! I don't know how you thought that one up!

16.1.4 Using suffixes with forenames

It was noted in 12.1.1 that Russian forenames have various different forms, of which the most important are the *full* and *familiar* versions. In addition, it is possible to add a wide range of diminutive suffixes to the familiar version in order to create forms that can express various subtle nuances of connotation. The two most frequently used suffixes are **-к-** and **-очк-/ечк-, -оньк-/еньк-**. These suffixes normally convey different attitudes: the former expresses close familiarity and even on occasion slight disdain; it is typically used between close friends and siblings. The latter expresses strong affection and love, and might be used by parents when comforting their children or when writing letters to them.

The following tables give the various forms of selected forenames:

Male forenames

<i>Full version</i>	<i>'Standard' familiar version</i>	<i>Version that expresses close familiarity or disdain</i>	<i>Version that expresses strong affection</i>
Бори́с	Бо́ря	Бо́рька	Бо́ренька
Вале́нтин	Валя́	Ва́лька	Ва́лечка
Влади́мир	Воло́дя, Во́ва	Во́вка	Во́вочка
Григо́рий	Гри́ша	Гри́шка	Гри́шенька
Дми́трий	Ди́ма	Ди́мка	Ди́мочка
Евге́ний	Же́ня	Же́нька	Же́нечка
Ива́н	Ва́ня	Ва́нька	Ва́нечка
Михаи́л	Ми́ша	Ми́шка	Ми́шенька
Никола́й	Ко́ля	Ко́лька	Ко́ленька
Пе́тр	Пе́тя	Пе́тька	Пе́тенька
Серге́й	Серё́жа	Серё́жка	Серё́женька

Female forenames

<i>Full version</i>	<i>'Standard' familiar version</i>	<i>Version that expresses close familiarity or disdain</i>	<i>Version that expresses strong affection</i>
А́нна	А́ня	А́нька	А́нечка
Вале́нтина	Валя́	Ва́лька	Ва́лечка
Екатери́на	Ка́тя	Ка́тька	Ка́тенька, Катю́ша

Full version	'Standard' familiar version	Version that expresses close familiarity or disdain	Version that expresses strong affection
Елена	Лена	Ленка	Леночка
Евгения	Жёня	Жёнька	Жёничка
Мария	Маша	Машка	Машенька
Нина	Нина	Нинка	Ниночка
Полина	Поля	Полинка	Поленька
Раиса	Рая	Райка	Раячка
Светлана	Света	Светка	Светочка

Петька, почему не звонишь, старик?

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.

16.1.5

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:

Пока по телевизору шла реклама, он быстренько сходил на кухню и откупорил бутылочку холоденького пивка.

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.

Утром на своём стареньком велосипеде приехал деревенский почтальон; привёз бабушке пенсию.

In the morning the village postman arrived on his ancient bicycle; he had brought granny her pension.

Нет, купаться я сегодня не буду; вода холоднющая!

I have absolutely no intention of bathing today; that water's freezing cold!

Когда он появился на занятиях, под глазом у него красовался здоровенный синяк.

He came to lectures sporting a fine black eye.

—**Выключи 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 чудненько!**

—We're agreed, then. We're meeting tomorrow at seven.

—That's great!

16.2 Likes, dislikes, loves, hates and preferences

16.2.1 To like and to love: нравиться/понравиться and любить/полюбить

Нравиться/понравиться and **любить/полюбить** correspond approximately to the English verbs ‘to like’ and ‘to love’. In general, the latter pair of verbs indicates a stronger feeling than the former.

Любить/полюбить is transitive: the grammatical *subject* in the *nominative* case indicates the person experiencing the feeling, while the *direct object* in the *accusative* indicates the object of his or her affection. With **нравиться/понравиться** the roles of subject and object are inverted: the grammatical *subject* in the *nominative* denotes what is liked and the *indirect object* in the *dative* denotes the person experiencing the feeling.

The following sentences illustrate the use of these verbs with reference to inanimate objects:

Я люблю классическую музыку.

I like/love classical music.

Я люблю зелёные яблоки.

I like/love green apples.

Я не люблю классическую музыку/классической музыки.

I don't like/enjoy classical music.

Мне нравится классическая музыка.

I like/am fond of classical music.

Мне нравятся зелёные яблоки.

I like/am fond of green apples.

Мне не нравится классическая музыка.

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 очень понравились эти зелёные яблоки.

I really liked those green apples (when I tasted them).

Мне не понравился его 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/полюбить** and **нравиться/понравиться** correspond respectively to the English ‘to love’ and ‘to like’:

Она полюбила его с первого взгляда.

She fell in love with him at first sight.

Он понравился ей с первого взгляда.

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** or **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 душе** is similar in meaning to **нравиться** and is constructed in the same way: the grammatical *subject* in the *nominative* denotes what is liked and the *indirect object* in the *dative* denotes the person experiencing the feeling:

Нам было по душе такое обслуживание.
We liked that level of service.

The following words and phrases express a very strong degree of liking:

обожать (нсв) 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 всём.
He admired his elder brother and imitated everything he did.

Мы были в восторге от такого приёма.
We were delighted by the welcome we got.

There are a number of useful words and phrases that use forms derived from **любить**:

влюбляться/влюбиться в (+ acc.) to fall in love with
влюблён/влюблена в (+ acc.) in love with
влюблённый lover, person in love (often plural)
любовник/любовница lover (sexual partner)
любитель/любительница lover (of an activity), (masculine form only) amateur

Ромео влюбился в Джульетту 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 влюблённые любят гулять по набережным Невы, когда в Петербурге стоят белые ночи.
Young lovers like to stroll along the banks of the Neva during the White Nights season in St Petersburg.

Ходили слухи, что она какое-то время была любовницей известного политика.
There were rumours that for some time she was the mistress of a famous politician.

Его мать – большая любительница фигурного катания.
His mother is a great lover of figure-skating.

Конкурсы для профессионалов и любителей обычно проходят 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 **предпочитáть/предпочёсть**. 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 предпочитáет коньяк вóдке.
He prefers brandy to vodka.

Я предпочтú жить в нищетé, чем занимáться нелюбимым дéлом.
I would prefer to live in poverty than to have to do something I don't like.

The phrase **на мой (твой, ваш, etc.) вкус** 'to my (your, etc.) taste' can also be used to express preferences:

Дава́й ку́пим ей в подаро́к ва́зу; вы́бери что́-нибудь подо́ходящее, на тво́й 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':

- великоле́пно
- замеча́тельно
- здорово
- отли́чно
- превосхо́дно
- чуде́сно

—А я уже пригото́вил за́втрак.

—Вот и *отлично*.

—I've already made breakfast.

—That's great!

—Он сдал все экза́мены на пять и о́кончил университет с кра́сным дипломом.

—*Превосхо́дно!*

—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

так себе

пойдёт

сойдёт

The last two words can be reinforced by the particle **ничего́**:

—**Это съедобный гри́б?**

—*Годится, клади́ его́ в корзи́ну.*

—Is that an edible mushroom?

—It's OK, put it in the basket.

—**Фильм был интере́сный?**

—*Да так себе́.*

—Was the film interesting?

—It was all right, I suppose.

—**Ка́жется, я не о́чень хоро́шо закле́ил эту ды́ру?**

—*Ничего́, пойдёт.*

—I don't think I made a very good job of stopping up that hole.

—It's OK; it will do.

—**Как ты ду́маешь, нам ну́жно де́лать в кварти́ре вла́жную убо́рку?**

—*Ничего́, и так сойдёт.*

—What do you think? Do we need to give the flat a thorough spring cleaning?

—No, it will do as it is.

The adjective **сно́сный** means 'adequate', 'acceptable', 'reasonable', 'not bad':

Пого́да стоя́ла сно́сная, и, е́сли оде́ться потепле́е, мо́жно бы́ло гуля́ть у мо́ря.

The weather wasn't too bad, and if you wrapped up warmly, you could go for a walk by the sea.

16.2.5 Indicating indifference, disapproval, dislikes and hates

Indifference can be expressed by the adverb **безразлично** or the phrase **всё равно**; in both instances the noun or pronoun denoting the person who experiences the feeling is in the *dative* case:

Ему́ было всё равно, куда́ идти́.

He didn't care where they went.

Я не боле́льщик: мне безразлично, чья кома́нда сего́дня победит́.

I'm not supporting anyone: it's a matter of indifference which team wins today.

Indifference can be indicated more forcefully by using the verbs **начхать** (*literally*, 'to sneeze') and **плевать/наплевать** (*literally*, 'to spit'), both of which are used with the preposition **на** (+ acc.). Since these verbs are used in the infinitive, the logical subject is in the *dative*:

Напрáсно мы наде́ялись, что он послу́шает на́шего сове́та. Ему́ было́ на это́ наплева́ть.

Our hopes that he might listen to our advice were in vain. He couldn't care less.

А мне начхать на то, что обо мне поду́мают соседи́!

I don't give a damn what the neighbours think about me!

To express mild dislikes, the negative forms of the verbs and phrases given in **16.2.1** and **16.2.2** can be used:

—Ну, как тебе́ моя́ но́вая причёска?

—Ты 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 **ненавидеть/возненавидеть**, while a strong dislike can also be indicated by the following constructions, all of which correspond approximately to the English 'I can't stand':

я не выношу́
я не перевариваю (*literally*, I can't digest)

я терпеть не могу́
я на дух не переношу́

В лю́дях она́ ненави́дела жа́дность и лицемерие.

She hated greed and hypocrisy in people.

Я челове́к терпе́ливый, но не выношу́ одно́го – же́нской истерии́.

I am a patient man, but one thing I can't stand is female hysterics.

Терпеть не могу́, когда́ в маши́не ку́рят.

I cannot put up with people smoking in my car.

На́ша ба́бушка на дух не переносит рок-му́зыку.

Our grandmother cannot abide rock music.

Ты опять и́дешь на дискоте́ку со своёй но́вой подру́жкой? Сказа́ть тебе́ че́стно, 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 **ещё**, can be used to express disapproval:

Неужели ты и этого не умеешь? Ты бы ещё спросила, как надо картошку чистить!

Are you trying to tell me you can't even do that? You might just as well ask how to peel potatoes!

For information on the conditional, see 4.10.

16.3 Wishes and desires

16.3.1 Хотеть/захотеть and желать/пожелать

The main verbs used for expressing wishes and desires are **хотеть/захотеть** 'to want' and **желать/пожелать** 'to wish (for)'.

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 пожелал 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 **хотётся/захотётся** expresses a less categorical desire than **хотеть/захотеть** 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 **хотеть** has the effect of turning a wish into a polite request:

Добрый день, моя 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 сюда: можно 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	to think
полагать (нсв)	to assume, to suppose
считать/счесть	to consider
мне кажется	I think
по моему мнению (по вашему мнению etc.)	in my opinion (in your opinion, etc.)
по-моему (по-вашему etc.)	in my opinion (in your opinion, etc.)
на мой взгляд (на ваш взгляд etc.)	in my opinion (in your opinion, etc.)

Думаю, что скорее всего мы опоздаем.
I think we'll probably be late.

Вы не считаете, что всё это можно было бы сделать намного проще?
Don't you think that this could all have been done much more simply?

По нашему мнению, у обвинения недостаточно доказательств.
In our opinion the prosecution does not have sufficient evidence.

По-моему, ты неправ. Я бы посоветовал тебе извиниться перед ней.
I think you're wrong. I would advise you to apologise to her.

На мой взгляд, люди имеют право одеваться, как они хотят.
In my opinion, people have the right to wear whatever they like.

16.4.2 Indicating agreement and consent

The following formulae can be used in soliciting or giving agreement:

ты 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 возражаешь, 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 **соглашаться/согласиться** '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.

Давать/дать согласие на (+ acc.) 'to give one's agreement' is used in formal contexts:

Настоящим даю согласие на самостоятельный выезд 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:

хорошо	good, fine
ладно	OK, fine
так и быть	OK
договорились	that's agreed, OK

—**Можно Наташе взять твой зонт?**

—**Ладно, пусть берёт.**

—Can Natasha borrow your umbrella?

—OK, she can borrow it, if she wants to.

—**Прошу тебя, помоги ей с переводом.**

—**Так и быть, пусть приходит.**

—Would you mind helping her with her translation?

—That's OK. Tell her to come and see me.

—**Давайте сделаем так: сегодня посуду моет 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 **согласен** etc. or by using **против** (+ gen.):

Мы совершенно не согласны с таким решением!
We are totally opposed to that decision.

Мы были против этих бюрократических нововведений.
We were against these bureaucratic innovations.

In more formal contexts the following formulae can be used to express polite disagreement:

Это не (совсем) так
it's not (quite) like that

у меня другое/иное мнение
I am of a different opinion

я придерживаюсь другого/иного мнения
I am of a different opinion

позвольте с вами не согласиться
perhaps I might be so bold as to disagree with you

Что касается заключения комиссии по данному делу, то я придерживаюсь иного мнения.

As regards the conclusion reached by the commission looking into this matter, I am afraid that I am of a different opinion.

The following are used in informal language:

как бы не так! nothing of the sort, not a bit of it, don't you believe it!
ничего подобного! nothing of the sort, not a bit of it, don't you believe it!

Ты думаешь, он признал свои ошибки? Как бы не так!
Do you think he owned up to his mistakes? Nothing of the sort!

16.5 Expressing certainty, uncertainty, possibility or doubt

16.5.1 Expressing certainty, probability and possibility

The following words and phrases are widely used to indicate certainty:

конечно	of course
(самой собой) разумеется	of course
безусловно	certainly, definitely
несомненно	undoubtedly
вне всякого сомнения	beyond any doubt
обязательно	definitely

All except the last of these come into the category of **вводные слова** (see 23.2.1) and are separated off from the rest of the sentence by commas:

Почему бы тебе не поехать с нами в деревню? Обещаю: будет рыбалка, ночной костёр на берегу озера, и, конечно, уха с водочкой.
Why don't you come with us to the country? I can promise you there'll be fishing, a camp fire by the lake and, of course, fish soup and vodka.

Он, безусловно, специалист в этой области, но я бы посоветовался с кем-нибудь ещё.

He's certainly a specialist in this field, but I would get a second opinion.

Благодарю вас за письмо. Я обязательно Вам отвечу, как только что-нибудь выясню относительно Вашего вопроса.

Thank you for your letter. I'll definitely reply once I have some information concerning your question.

For the use of the capital letter with the pronouns **Вы** and **Ваш**, see 1.5.7.

The following adverbs and phrases are widely used in informal language to indicate certainty:

наверняка	definitely
железно	sure thing!
как пить дать	you (can) bet (your life on it)!

Телефон не отвечает; они, наверняка, уже уехали.

Nobody's answering the telephone; they must definitely have left.

—**Придёшь завтра на тренировку?**

—**Железно.**

—Are you coming to the training tomorrow?

—I sure am!

—**Как ты думаешь, она доложит шефу о нашем опоздании?**

—**Доложит, как пить дать!**

—Do you think she'll report us to the boss for being late?

—You can bet your life on it.

The following words and phrases, all of which come into the category of **вводные слова**, express different degrees of probability:

по всем приметам	by all appearances
по всей видимости	by all appearances, it must be the case that
должно быть	it must be the case that
похоже на то	it looks like it
по-видимому	apparently
пожалуй	perhaps, probably
вероятно	probably
наверное, наверно	probably
скорее всего	probably

У нас вчера на весь день не было горячей воды; по всей видимости, где-то меняли трубы.

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 поздоровался?
 —Скорее всего, кто-то из моих студентов.
 —Do you know who that was who just said ‘hello’ to us?
 —It’s probably one of my students.

NOTE In Russian cities hot water is usually supplied centrally from district heating stations (ТЭЦ = теплоэлектростанция).

For more examples of *вводные слова* expressing probability, see 23.2.1.

16.5.2 Expressing uncertainty and doubt

The following words and phrases can express uncertainty:

кажется	it seems, I think
может быть	perhaps
возможно	possibly
вроде (бы)	it seems, I think

All except the last come into the category of *вводные слова*:

Что-то я неважно себя чувствую. Кажется, у меня температура.
 I’m not feeling too good. I think I’ve got a temperature.

Может быть, она уже не вернётся сюда.
 Perhaps she won’t come back here again.

—Ты не забыла выключить телевизор?
 —Вроде нет.

—Did you forget to turn the television off?
 —I don’t think so.

In informal contexts *может быть* is often reduced to its first element:

Может, я ещё приеду сюда осенью.
 I might come again in the autumn.

The Russian verb corresponding to the English ‘to doubt’ is *сомневаться* (нсв). This can be used with the preposition *в* (+ prep.) or by a clause introduced by *что*:

Они почему-то сомневаются в нашей честности.
 For some reason they have doubts about our honesty.

Я сомневаюсь, что она сдаст этот экзамен.
 I doubt whether she’ll pass the exam.

The following words and phrases can also be used to indicate doubt:

вряд ли	it’s unlikely
навряд ли	it’s unlikely
маловероятно	it’s improbable
трудно сказать	it’s difficult to say
нельзя с уверенностью сказать	it’s impossible to say with certainty

Он болен и вряд ли появится на работе на этой неделе.
 He’s ill and is unlikely to come back to work this week.

Маловероятно, что здесь произойдёт что-нибудь интересное.
It's unlikely that anything interesting is going to happen here.

Трудно сказать, что хуже - трёхчасовой письменный экзамен или устный экзамен перед комиссией.

It's difficult to say what's worse, a three-hour written exam or an oral exam in front of a committee.

16.5.3 'It depends'

Russian has no direct equivalent of this useful means of expressing uncertainty or being evasive. The verb **зависеть** corresponds to the English 'to depend', but unlike the English verb it can never be used on its own, but only in conjunction with the preposition **от** (+ gen.):

—**Вы поедете завтра с нами за город?**
—*Зависит от погоды.*

—Are you going to the country with us tomorrow?
—It depends (on the weather).

The prepositional phrase **смотря по** (+ dat.) is similar in meaning:

—**Вы завтра поедете с нами за город?**
—*Смотря по погоде.*

—Are you going to the country with us tomorrow?
—It depends (on the weather).

Смотря can also be followed by a question word, such as **кто** 'who', **что** 'what', **когда** 'when', **где** 'where' or **как** 'how':

—**Вы любите играть в карты?**
—*Смотря с кем.*

—Do you like playing cards?
—It depends (who with).

—**Вы любите выезжать на природу?**
—*Смотря куда.*

—Do you like visiting the countryside?
—It depends (where).

The following can all serve as equivalents of 'it depends' when it means something like 'it varies according to the circumstances':

когда как	
бывает по-разному	<i>also it varies</i>
постольку поскольку	<i>also up to a point</i>

—**Вам часто приходится работать по вечерам?**
—*Когда как. от Бывает по-разному.*

—Do you often have to work in the evenings?
—It depends (sometimes I do, sometimes I don't).

For an example with **постольку поскольку**, see 9.3.5.

17

Asking questions

17.1 Neutral yes/no questions

17.1.0 Introduction

A neutral yes/no question is one that makes no assumptions about which answer is required. In Russian there are two ways of asking a question of this type: either by changing the intonation of the sentence or by using the interrogative particle **ли**.

17.1.1 Asking questions using intonation

Almost any statement can be transformed into a question by raising the intonation on the relevant word:

— — — — —
Ива́н вчера́ купи́л слова́рь?
Did Ivan buy a dictionary yesterday?

— — — — —
Ива́н вчера́ купи́л слова́рь?
Was it a dictionary that Ivan bought yesterday?

— — — — —
Ива́н вчера́ купи́л слова́рь?
Was it Ivan who bought a dictionary yesterday?

The focus of the question, if it is not the verb, tends to be placed at the end of the sentence:

— — — — —
Ива́н купи́л слова́рь вчера́?
Was it yesterday that Ivan bought the dictionary?

Raising the intonation is the normal means used to indicate a question in a sentence that contains no verb:

— — —
Вам пло́хо?
Are you feeling unwell?

Счёт уже́ два-два?

Is the score already two-two?

Опять́ не́чего пить?

Is there nothing to drink again?

17.1.2 Questions formed with the particle **ли**

The *particle* **ли** is *enclitic* and normally follows the first stressed word of the sentence. In most situations this will be the *verb* or another predicate word, but if some other element forms the focus of the question, this can be placed first instead:

Купи́л ли Ива́н слова́рь?

Did Ivan buy the dictionary?

Мо́жно ли е́сть э́ти яго́ды?

Can you eat these berries?

Зде́сь ли выдаю́т анке́ты?

Is it here that you can get application forms?

В ту ли сто́рону мы иде́м?

Are we going in the right direction?

NOTE When the focus of an English question is on some part of the sentence other than the verb, this is often indicated by using the formula 'Is/was it ... that'. In Russian, the same effect is normally achieved by changing the word order of the sentence, as is shown in the above examples. See also **20.3.1**.

For more on enclitic particles, see **9.4.2**.

For the use of the particle **ли** in indirect questions, see **21.8.3**.

17.1.3 Negative questions

Asking a negative question in Russian does not necessarily make assumptions about the answer. A negative question may still be neutral, but will usually be more tentative or more polite than an ordinary question. For this reason negative questions are often used when asking strangers for information:

Не хо́лодно ли вам?

Are(n't) you cold?

Ты не возража́ешь, е́сли я вы́ключу телеви́зор?

Would you have any objections if I turned the television off?

Не ска́жете, как дойти́ до автовокза́ла?

Could you tell me how to get to the bus station?

Простите́, э́то не вы урони́ли блокно́т?

Excuse me, was it you that dropped this notebook?

17.1.4 Answering yes/no questions

The Russian answers to yes/no questions are:

да	yes
нет	no

The answer can be expanded by repeating the verb or whichever other word forms the focus of the question:

—Ива́н вче́ра купи́л слова́рь?

—Да, купи́л.

—Нет, не купи́л.

—Did Ivan buy a dictionary yesterday?

—Yes, he did.

—No, he didn't.

—Зде́сь ли выдаю́т анке́ты?

—Да, зде́сь.

—Is it here that you can get application forms?

—Yes, it is.

17.2 Asking loaded questions**17.2.0 Introduction**

A loaded question is one that expects a particular answer. Russian has several ways of asking loaded questions.

17.2.1 Negative loaded questions

Because *negation* is often used in Russian to make a question tentative or polite, *negative loaded questions* are somewhat less frequent than in English. They do, however, occur and can be illustrated by the following:

Не егó ли мы ви́дели вче́ра на приёме в посóльстве?

Didn't we see him at the embassy yesterday, at the reception?

Одну́ мину́точку, а нет ли тут како́го-нибу́дь подво́ха?

Just a minute, isn't there some sort of catch here?

A negative question formed with a *perfective infinitive* verb produces what amounts to a suggestion or an invitation:

Не позвони́ть ли Джо́ну?

Why don't we phone John?

А не выпить ли нам коньячку́?

Why don't we have a brandy?

17.2.2 Loaded questions with *разве* and *неужели*

The question particles *разве* and *неужели* are widely used to form *loaded questions*. Both mean something like 'Can it really be the case that ...?', but they are not interchangeable because they imply different attitudes on the part of the speaker. *Разве* suggests that

the speaker doubts or disbelieves the statement in question; **неужели**, while not implying disbelief, suggests that the speaker is surprised or disappointed. Sentences introduced by **разве** or **неужели** can be translated into English in a variety of ways, but sentences with **разве ... не** or **неужели ... не** often correspond to English negative questions:

Разве он уже вышел на пенсию?

Has he really retired? *or* Surely he's not retired yet?

А разве сегодня не пятница?

Isn't today Friday?

А разве вход не бесплатный?

Isn't there free entry? *or* I thought entry was free.

Неужели тебе было трудно позвонить?

Was it really so difficult for you to telephone?

Неужели уже ничего нельзя изменить?

Is it really impossible to change anything?

In informal language **неужто** can be used instead of **неужели**:

Неужто и впрямь не было билетов?

Are you telling me there were really no tickets?

17.2.3

Tag questions

Tag questions are those where the question is asked in a supplementary phrase added on to the end of a statement, as in English 'aren't you?', 'isn't it?'. They usually, though not always, assume a particular answer.

In spoken Russian the tag **что ли** is used very frequently to turn a statement into a question. It does not necessarily assume a particular answer and has no direct equivalent in English; in dialogue it can imply an element of reproach, while elsewhere it can convey the notion of uncertainty or the suggestion of a possible answer:

—У меня неприятности на работе.

—Ты опять опоздал, что ли?

—I'm having problems at work.

—Were you late again?

Надо что-то приготовить на обед: сварить щи, что ли?

We need to prepare something for dinner. Shall I cook some *shchi*?

The tag **что ли** is often reinforced by using **что** after the first word of the sentence:

Никто не берёт трубку. Да что они там, оглохли, что ли?

No one's answering the phone. Have they all gone deaf or something?

The following Russian tags correspond to the English 'aren't you?', 'isn't it?', 'don't we?', etc. Unlike the English equivalents, the form does not depend on the structure of the original statement:

не так ли?

не правда ли?

так?

правда?

скажи?

Это вáша запискa, не так ли?

This is your note, isn't it?

Отличнóй сего́дня денёк, не прав́да ли?

It's a lovely day today, isn't it?

Когда́ набира́ешь код го́рода, ноль не ну́жен, так?

When you're dialling the area code, you leave the zero out, don't you?

Ты ведь не идёшь на лекци́ю, прав́да?

You're not going to the lecture today, are you?

Здо́рово они́ сего́дня игра́ли, скажи́?

They played really well today, didn't they?

Some tag questions are a request for further information:

—Ты хорошо́ вóдишь маши́ну?

—Неплохо, а что?

—Are you a good driver?

—Not bad. Why?

—Это вáша маши́на?

—Моя, а в чём де́ло?

—Is this your car?

—Yes, it is. Why do you want to know? *or* What's the problem?

—Ты за́пер вчера́ за собо́й дверь?

—Да, а что тако́е?

—Did you lock the door behind you yesterday?

—Yes. What's happened?

17.3

Asking questions using question words

17.3.0

Introduction

Questions that do not require a yes/no answer are introduced by special *question words* that are normally placed at the beginning of the sentence. The question (or *interrogative*) words that are used in Russian can be divided into *pronouns*, *quantity words* and *adverbs*.

17.3.1

Interrogative pronouns

The following *interrogative pronouns* are used in Russian:

кто?	who?
что?	what?
чей?	whose?
како́й?	which?, what sort of?
кото́рый?	which?

For the declension of **кто** and **что**, see 7.4.1.

For the declension of **чей**, **како́й** 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 предпочитаешь – с шоколадом или с орехами?

What kind of ice cream do you prefer – with chocolate or with nuts?

As a question word **который** is nowadays used mostly with the set phrases:

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**:

Какой 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 слышала шаги? *Кто это был*?

Did you hear footsteps? Who was it?

Ты слышала 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**:

Какой странный 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 **такой** can also be used with a personal pronoun, in which case the gender of **такой** depends on the sex of the person being addressed or referred to:

—Простите, а *кто вы такая*, чтобы здесь распоряжаться?

—А *вы кто такой*?

—Excuse me, who do you think you are, going round giving orders like that?
(addressed to a woman)

—And who do you think you are? (addressed to a man)

For more on the demonstrative pronoun **это**, see 7.3.2.

For more on the demonstrative pronoun **такой**, see 7.3.3.

For more on grammatical agreement with **кто**, see 11.2.1.

A question corresponding approximately to the English ‘what sort of?’ can be asked using **что за** (+ nom.):

Что это за рыба (такая)?

What sort of fish is that?

Что она за человек?

What kind of a person is she?

This construction can sometimes be used as a pointed way of trying to identify someone or something:

Что это за тип в тёмных очках?

Who is that character in the sunglasses?

17.3.3 The interrogative quantity word

There is only one interrogative quantity word:

сколько? how much?, how many?

For the declension of **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:

когда?	when?
где?	where?
куда?	where to?, whither?
откуда?	where from?, whence?
как?	how?
насколько?	to what extent?
почему?	why? (for what reason?)
отчего?	why? (from what cause?)
зачем?	why? (for what purpose?)

Когда вы уезжаете?

When are you leaving?

Где находится город Саранск?

Where is (the town of) Saransk?

Куда идём после работы?

Where are we going after work?

Откуда у вас такие сведения?

Where did you get that information from?

Как вы готовите борщ?

How do you make *borshch*?

Насколько хорошо он владеет английским?

How well does he know English?

Почему этот файл не открывается?

Why won't this file open?

Почему отменили экскурсию?

Why have they cancelled the trip?

Отчего у тебя такой мрачный вид?

Why are you looking so gloomy?

Зачем ты выключил свет?

Why did you turn the light off? *or* What did you turn the light off for?

Зачем вы проводите этот опрос?

Why are you carrying out this survey? *or* What are you doing this survey for?

17.3.5

More on как

The interrogative adverb **как** corresponds to the English 'what?' in a number of frequently asked questions:

Как вас зовут?

What's your name?

Как называется ваш новый роман?

What is the name of your new novel?

Как по-русски будет «elephant»?

What's the Russian for 'elephant'?

Как ты думаешь? Стоит смотреть этот фильм, или нет?

What do you think? Is it worth seeing this film or not?

For more on asking about names, see 13.3.3 and 13.3.5.

On the other hand, **откуда** corresponds to the English 'how?' in the following question:

Откуда я знаю?

How should I know?

For more information on rhetorical questions, see 17.4.2.

17.4 Rhetorical questions

17.4.0 Introduction

Rhetorical questions are phrases and sentences that are constructed in the form of a question, but that are not intended to obtain information. They can be used for a variety of purposes.

17.4.1 Expressing the speaker's attitude

Rhetorical questions can be used to indicate the speaker's attitude towards a particular situation. Perhaps the largest number express irritation or frustration:

Как вы смéете говорить со мной таким то́ном!
How dare you speak to me in that tone of voice!

Как тебе не сты́дно!
You should be ashamed of yourself! (*Literally*, How are you not ashamed of yourself?)

Ты что, с ума́ сошёл (что ли)?
Have you gone raving mad?

Приде́рживайте дверь, ско́лько мо́жно говорить!
Hold the door. How many times do I have to tell you!

Да ско́лько мо́жно повто́рять – не брал я си́ней па́пки!
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?)

Оди́н прогу́л и два опозда́ния за неде́лю - куда́ это годи́тся!
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?)

Како́го че́рта/како́го дья́вола ты здесь болта́ешься!
What the devil are you hanging round here for?

Мысли́мое ли де́ло, простоя́ть два часа́ на моро́зе в наде́жде на авто́граф.
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 како́й из тебя́ Дед Моро́з!
What sort of Father Christmas do you think you'd make!

NOTE Дед Моро́з, *literally*, 'Grandfather Frost' is the Russian equivalent of Father Christmas. A Soviet invention, he normally appears, accompanied by Снегу́рочка 'the Snow Maiden', at New Year, rather than at Christmas.

Rhetorical questions can also be used to express admiration or to express wishes:

И откуда у неё только силы берутся!

Just where does she get her strength from!

Кому не хочется прокатиться зимой на русской тройке!

In winter who wouldn't like to go for a ride in a Russian *troika*!

For more on the noun **тройка**, see 8.6.1.

17.4.2 Rhetorical questions in dialogue

As part of a dialogue rhetorical questions can be used to solicit sympathy or solidarity:

Вы можете себе представить? Стою на перроне с газетой в руке, а мой поезд уже ушёл.

Can you imagine it? I was standing on the platform with a newspaper in my hand and my train had already left!

Пришли сантехники, перекрыли воду – и пропали на весь день! Как вам это понравится?

The plumbers came, cut off the water and then disappeared for the rest of the day. What do you think of that!

Повéрите ли, до сих пор при виде качелей мне делается дурно.

Can you believe it? Even now the very sight of a swing makes me feel queasy.

Он обыгрывал даже гроссмейстеров, не вéришь?

He's even managed to beat grand masters. Can you believe it?

Она ещё и претензии предъявляет, видáли?

And now she has the nerve to complain! Have you ever heard of (*literally*, seen) such a thing!

Other rhetorical questions can express a challenge to the other speaker:

—**А кто вы такая, чтобы здесь распоряжаться?**

—**А вы кто такой, чтобы мне указывать?**

—Who do you think you are, going round giving orders?

—And who do you think you are, telling me what to do?

—**Как ты можешь такое говорить!**

—**А что, не так?**

—How can you say such things?

—Are you suggesting what I'm saying is untrue?

—**Перестань бездельничать. Ты всю неделю провалялся на диване.**

—**Ну и что?**

—It's time you got up and did something. You've spent all week lying on that sofa.

—And your point is?

—**Какая погода будет завтра?**

—**Откуда я знаю?**

—What's the weather going to be like tomorrow?

—How should I know?

17.4.3 Requests in the form of a rhetorical question

A rhetorical question is a useful way of making a very polite (or a sarcastic) request:

Ты не хочешь помыть посуду?

You wouldn't like to wash the dishes, would you?

Не могли бы вы прикрыть дверь? Здесь сквозняк.

Would you mind closing the door? There's a draught here.

Вам не трудно включить свет?

Would you be kind enough to turn the light on? *or* (if being sarcastic) Would it be an imposition for you to turn the light on?

Вы не подадите мне очки?

Would you be good enough to pass me my glasses?

Нельзя ли немного погромче?

Could you turn the volume up a little?

А можно чуть потише?

Would you mind turning it down a bit?

For more on making requests, *see* 18.3.

18

Obligation, instructions, requests, advice and permission

18.1 Talking about obligation and necessity

18.1.1 Using **на́до**, **ну́жно** and **необходи́мо**

Obligation or necessity can be indicated in a wide range of contexts and all levels of language by using the *impersonal predicate* words with an *infinitive* verb:

на́до
ну́жно

На́до крича́ть го́мче: тебя́ никто́ не слы́шит.
You need to shout louder. Nobody can hear you.

Ну́жно ка́ждый день выпива́ть пять стака́нов воды́.
You/one should drink five glasses of water a day.

На́до бы́ло ду́мать об э́том ра́ньше.
You should have thought of that earlier.

Е́сли бу́дет ну́жно, мы вам позвони́м.
If need arises, we'll phone you.

The person on whom the obligation or necessity falls can be indicated by a *noun* or *pronoun* in the *dative*:

Тебе́ на́до сде́лать рабо́ту над оши́бками.
You need to do some work on these mistakes.

Мне ну́жно бу́дет поду́мать над ва́шим предложе́нием.
I shall have to give some thought to your proposal.

The *impersonal predicate form* **необходи́мо** is similar in meaning to **на́до** and **ну́жно**, but is characteristic of more formal levels of language:

Е́сли вы напра́вляе́тесь за гра́ницу по ча́стным дела́м, то за ви́зой вам необходи́мо обра́титься непосредственно́ в посольство́ или консу́льство соотве́тствующей страны́.

If you are travelling abroad on private business you need to apply directly for a visa to the embassy or consulate of the appropriate country.

For more on impersonal predicate forms, *see* 11.2.2.

18.1.2 Using **должен, обязан** and **следует**

The following tend to be used when talking about a duty or an obligation:

должен/должна/должно/должны
обязан/обязана/обязано/обязаны
следует

The first two behave like *short adjectives* and agree with a *grammatical subject* in the *nominative* case. The third is an *impersonal verb*; the person on whom the obligation falls, if present, is in the *dative*:

Я должен вам напомнить, что ключи от номера нужно будет сдать до двенадцати часов.

I have to remind you that room keys must be handed in before twelve.

Вы обязаны закончить работу к пяти часам.

You are required to finish work by five o'clock.

Вашим детям следует проводить больше времени на свежем воздухе.

Your children ought to spend more time in the fresh air.

Должен can have the meaning of 'it ought to be the case that ...':

Попробуй заменить батарейку, приёмник должен заработать.

Try replacing the battery, then your radio should come on.

Она там жила пять лет, и поэтому должна знать лучшие рестораны города.

She lived there for five years, so she ought to know which are the best restaurants in the city.

Они должны были приехать два часа назад. Видимо, где-то задержались в пути.

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** to 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 кухне опять течёт кран: придётся вызвать сантехника.

There's a tap dripping in the kitchen again. I'll have to get a plumber to look at it.

Иногда помогают коллеги, но очень часто приходится всё делать самому.

Sometimes my colleagues help, but very often I end up having to do everything myself.

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

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, тебя никто не спрашивает.

Be quiet, nobody's asking you.

Кто-нибудь принесите воды.

Would somebody bring some water.

Подождите секундочку.

Wait a second.

Пусть он возьмёт такси и срочно едет домой.

He'd better get a taxi and go home as a matter of urgency.

Не влезай: убьёт!

Danger! Don't climb (this pylon)!

Ни в коем случае не выходите из машины.

Don't get out of the car under any circumstances.

Не смей спорить со мной.

Don't dare to argue with me.

An instruction can be made less peremptory by attaching the particle **-ка** to the imperative:

Подождите-ка секундочку.

Wait a second.

For the formation of the imperative, *see* 4.9.

For the use of aspects with the imperative, *see* 5.6 and 5.7.2.

18.2.2 Using the infinitive to issue an instruction or a prohibition

The infinitive is used for instructions and prohibitions in a number of specific situations. These include the following categories:

- (1) The armed forces and certain other very formal contexts:

Прекратить огонь!

Stop firing!

Встать! Суд идёт.

All rise! The court is in session.

Military-style commands can sometimes be heard in everyday situations:

Мама сказала, ты отлично сдала экзамены. Молодец, так держать!

Your mother tells me you got top marks in the exam. Well done, keep it up!

Играть низом, к своим воротам не прижиматься!

Keep the ball down and keep moving upfield.

- (2) Official signs and notices:

Не курить!

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.

Открывать с противоположной стороны.

Open from the other end.

Перед употреблением взбалтывать.

Shake thoroughly before taking.

(4) In recipes:

Куски́ рыбы́ посоли́ть, посы́пать перце́м, обваля́ть в муке́ и обжа́рить на сковороде́.

Season the pieces of fish with salt and pepper, coat them in flour and fry them in a frying pan.

NOTE The imperative can also be used in recipes.

For more on the infinitive, *see* 4.1.

For the use of the imperfective aspect with the infinitive when it indicates a prohibition, *see* 5.7.5.

18.2.3 Other ways of giving instructions

The following verbs can be used in relation to giving orders:

приказы́вать/приказа́ть	to order (someone to do something)
велéть (нсв/св)	to order (someone to do something)
распоряжа́ться/распоряди́ться	to arrange (for something to be done), to see (that something is done)

First person forms of **приказы́вать** 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 **чтобы́**:

Приказы́ваю вам в пятиднёвный срок *прибы́ть* в расположе́ние ча́сти.
You are ordered to return to your unit within five days.

Ре́ктор *приказа́л* объе́динить э́ти две лабора́тории в связа́и с реорганиза́цией.

In connection with reorganisation, the rector (of the university) ordered that the two laboratories be merged into one.

По́мню, ко́гда я подрáлся с однокла́сником, учите́льница *велéла* мне *привести́* в школу́ ма́ть.

I remember that when I had a fight with a classmate, the teacher ordered me to bring my mother into school.

Я *распоряжусь*, *чтобы́* вам *выписа́ли* про́пуск.
I'll arrange for you to be given a pass.

Some instructions can be issued without any verb:

Сми́рно!
(Stand to) Attention!

Стоп!
Stop! [e.g. on roadsigns]

Ма́льчи́шки, а ну *марш* на у́лицу! Не́чего до́ма сидéть в таку́ю пого́ду.
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:

—Можно открыть окно?

—**Не надо**, здесь и так холодно.

—Can I open a window?

—No, don't; it's cold enough in here as it is.

Вы не должны забывать, что Москва и остальная Россия – это далеко не одно и то же.

Don't forget that Moscow and the rest of Russia are far from being one and the same thing.

Не следует слишком серьёзно относиться к его угрозам.

You shouldn't take his threats too seriously.

In informal language an expressive element can be added to a prohibition by using the imperative forms **не вздумай**, **(только) попробуй**:

Не вздумай выходить без шапки в такой мороз.

Don't even think of going out without a fur hat in this cold weather.

Только попробуй ещё раз это сделать!

Just try doing that again!

For the use of aspects in sentences indicating prohibition, *see* 5.1.1, 5.7.3 and 5.7.5.

18.3 Making a request

18.3.1 Making a request using the imperative

Unlike English, Russian makes very frequent use of the *imperative* for making a request. What distinguishes a request from an instruction is the inclusion of various courtesy formulae:

пожалуйста	please
будьте добры	please (be so kind as to)
будьте любезны	please (be so kind as to)
если вас не затруднит	if it is no trouble
не сочти(те) за труд	if it is no trouble
сделай(те) одолжение?	would you do me a favour?

The first of these is the most frequent and can be used in more or less any circumstances. The others add an extra degree of courtesy and formality, although the last can also be used in relatively informal situations:

Предъявите, пожалуйста, ваше удостоверение?

Could you please show me your ID?

Верни мне, пожалуйста, книгу: она библиотечная.

Can you please let me have the book back? It belongs to the library.

Будьте добры, передайте соль.

Would you mind passing me the salt?

Если вас не затруднит, прикройте окно. Сквозняк.

If it's no trouble, would you mind closing the window? There's a draught.

Не сочти за труд, сбегай в магазин: у нас кончился сахар.

If it's no trouble, would you mind running to the shops? We've run out of sugar.

Сделай одолжение, отправь вот эти письма.

Would you do me a favour and post these letters for me?

Sometimes the presence of a noun with a *diminutive suffix* can have the effect of softening the force of an instruction and turning it into a request:

Позвоните мне вечерком.

Could you phone me in the evening?

Возьмите ещё кусочек торта.

Do please take another piece of cake.

For more on the use of diminutive suffixes, *see* 16.1.1.

Occasionally, the context alone is sufficient to make it clear that a statement is a request, not an instruction:

Скажите, где тут выход?

Excuse me, where is the exit?

When in doubt, however, it never does any harm to use **пожалуйста** or one of the other politeness formulae mentioned above.

18.3.2 Making a request using просить/попросить, просьба, умолять

The verb **просить/попросить** means ‘to ask someone to do something’; the person being asked is in the *accusative*, and the verb can be followed by an *infinitive* or a clause beginning with **чтобы**. This verb can also be combined with a sentence containing an *imperative* verb of the type described in the previous section:

Я прошу вас задержаться ещё на несколько минут.
Would you mind staying back for a few minutes?

Уважаемые пассажиры, убедительно просим вас не открывать оставленные без присмотра сумки и пакеты, а сообщать о них в милицию.

We kindly request all passengers not to open any bags or parcels left unattended but to inform the police.

Я прошу, чтобы к приходу мамы посуда была помыта.

Will you please make sure that the washing up has been done by the time your mother gets home?

Прошу вас, задержитесь ещё на несколько минут.
Would you mind staying back for a few minutes?

For the use of the form of address **уважаемые пассажиры**, see 13.5.2.

The verb **умолять** can be used for strongly felt requests:

Умоляю тебя, откажись от этой затеи!
I beg you, please give up that idea!

Она умоляла сына не уезжать.
She pleaded with her son not to move away.

Impersonal requests (e.g. on signs) can be made using the noun **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 одолжить 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, **давайте** is required. An accompanying *finite* verb will be *perfective*; an accompanying *infinitive* will be *imperfective*:

Я вижу, ты очень устал. Давай сделаем перерыв на несколько минут.
I can see you're very tired. Let's have a break for a few minutes.

Давайте выпьем за здоровье наших гостей,
Let's drink to the health of our guests.

Давайте проводить такие опросы ежегодно.
Let's carry out these surveys every year.

Давайте думать, как нам лучше организовать работу над этим проектом.
Let's think about how best to organise the work on this project.

NOTE When a toast is being proposed, a construction with the preposition **за** (+ acc.) is used, as in the example above.

For the use of **пошли́** and **поехали́** in exhortations, see 22.1.8.

18.3.4 Apologising and making one's excuses

One special type of request is an apology, in which someone asks to be forgiven for some error or misdeed. The two forms used most frequently either to express an apology or as the equivalent of 'excuse me' when used as a politeness formula are:

извини́(те)
прости́(те)

They are mutually replaceable in most situations, but the latter tends to occur in more formal contexts (i.e. letters and speeches) or to apologise for something more serious. They can be reinforced either with **пожалуйста** 'please' or with the more expressive **ради бога** '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:

—Простите, 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 **извини(те)** in informal contexts, although many people consider it inappropriate (because it seems to pre-empt being excused):

Я извиняюсь, это не ваша газета?

Excuse me (*literally*, I excuse myself), isn't this your newspaper?

For the correct response to an apology, see 15.3.3.

The Russian words used for talking about being sorry in the sense of expressing regret are:

сожалеть to regret

к сожалению unfortunately

жаль I'm (you are, we are, etc.) sorry [less formal than the others]

Мы искренне сожалеем о том, что произошло, и прине́сим свои́ глубо́кие извинения́.

We are sincerely sorry about what happened and would like to express our profound apologies.

К (моему́ глубо́кому) сожа́лению, я не смогу́ прие́хать на Ваш юби́лей.
I am (extremely) sorry that I won't be able to come to your (special) birthday party.

Мне жаль, что так получи́лось, но вы не огорча́йтесь: вам всего́ двадца́ть, у вас ещё всё впереди́.

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 **юби́лей** (*literally*, 'jubilee') refers to a special birthday, associated with a round figure, such as a thirtieth, fortieth or fiftieth.

18.4 Giving advice

The following verbs and impersonal predicate forms can be used with an infinitive when giving advice:

совета́ть/посовета́ть to advise

рекомендова́ть/порекомендова́ть to recommend

полезно́ it is useful *or* beneficial to

вредно́ it is harmful to

лучше́ it would be better to

Советую́ вам записа́ться на прие́м к психиатру́.

I'd advise you to seek an appointment with a psychiatrist.

Е́сли вы собира́етесь с на́ми в экспеди́цию, мы настоя́тельно рекоменду́ем вам сде́лать все необходи́мые приви́вки.

If you're planning on coming on the expedition with us, we strongly recommend that you have all the necessary vaccinations.

При хрониче́ской бессони́це выпива́йте на́ ночь полстака́на горя́чего молока́ с ме́дом, а вот о́струю и жи́рную пи́щу есть не рекоменду́ется.

If you suffer from chronic insomnia, you should drink last thing at night half a glass of hot milk and honey, and spicy or fatty foods should be avoided.

Вам полезно отдохнуть несколько дней, лучше за городом.
It would be a good idea to take a few days off, preferably in the country.

Вредно пить крепкий кофе на ночь.
It's harmful to drink strong coffee last thing at night.

Тебе лучше не ввязываться в этот спор.
It would be better if you don't get involved in that argument.

The particle **бы** can also be used with the *infinitive*:

Тебе бы сходить к врачу.
You ought to go and see the doctor.

The *conditional* can be used to make statements that come somewhere between a request and a piece of advice:

Ты бы почаще звонил домой.
You should phone home more often.

Ты бы поменьше курила.
You shouldn't smoke so much.

For the formation of the conditional, *see* 4.10.

18.5 Giving permission

The *impersonal predicate* form **можно** is normally used for asking and giving permission; it can be used on its own or with an *infinitive*:

—**Можно задать вам один вопрос?**

—**Да, конечно, можно.**

—Can I ask you a question?

—Yes, of course you can.

—**Можно заплатить кредитной карточкой?**

—**К сожалению, нельзя.**

—Can I pay with a credit card?

—No, I'm afraid you can't.

NOTE The negative form of **можно** is **нельзя**. For the use of **нельзя** in prohibitions, *see* 18.2.4.

For extra politeness the phrase **с твоего/вашего разрешения/позволения** 'with your permission', 'if you don't mind' can be used:

С вашего разрешения, я открою окно.
With your permission (*or* If you don't mind), I'll open the window.

19

Using numbers: talking about times, dates and quantities

19.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the use of numbers and other words indicating quantity in various activities, such as counting and simple arithmetic (19.1), telling the time (19.2) and indicating the date (19.3); it will also examine how to talk about approximate or imprecise quantities, using either numerals (19.4) or other words that can indicate quantity (19.5).

19.1 Counting and doing simple arithmetic

19.1.1 Counting

In counting, the numeral **один/одна/одно́** is often replaced with the word **раз** (*literally*, 'once'):

Внима́ние, поднима́ем: раз-два, взяли́!
Ready to start lifting? One, two, up she goes!

Раз-два-три-четыре-пять, вы́шел зайчик погуля́ть ...
One, two, three, four, five, a hare went out for a walk ... (the start of a well-known child's counting rhyme; it is sometimes used, for example, when testing microphones).

Оди́н, etc. tends to be used when counting out specific objects or people:

Ско́лько здесь жела́ющих пое́хать на экску́рсию? Оди́н, два, три ...
How many people here want to go on the excursion? One, two, three ...

Оди́н (in the masculine form) is also used when counting down:

Пять, четы́ре, три, два, оди́н, пуск!
Five, four, three, two, one, launch!

19.1.2 Doing simple arithmetic

When simple arithmetical operations are being described, there is normally a choice between two constructions. In the first the operation is described as producing a result equal to a particular number:

Семь плюс двадцать два равно/равняется двадцати девяти.
Literally, Seven plus twenty-two equals/is equal to twenty-nine.

Двадцать девять минус семь равно/равняется двадцати двум.
Literally, Twenty-nine minus seven equals/is equal to twenty-two.

Двенадцать, умноженное на восемь, равно/равняется девяноста шести.
Literally, Twelve multiplied by eight is equal to ninety-six.

Двести десять, делённое на десять, равно/равняется двадцати одному.
Literally, 210 divided by ten is equal to twenty-one.

NOTE **Равно** and **равняется** 'equals', 'is equal to' are both followed by a numeral in the *dative* case. With addition and subtraction, the construction can be simplified by using **будет**, which is followed by the *nominative*:

Семь плюс пять будет двенадцать.
Seven plus five is (literally, will be) twelve.

In the second construction, the operation takes the form of a *condition*; the verb describing the operation is normally in the *infinitive* and the *conjunction* **если** is usually absent.

For more on conditions, see 21.5.

К двадцати двум прибавить тысячу будет/получится тысяча двадцать два.
Literally, If you add a thousand to twenty-two the result will be 1,022.

Из двадцати девяти вычесть семь будет/получится двадцать два.
Literally, If you subtract seven from twenty-nine the result will be twenty-two.

NOTE In more informal language **отнять** may be used instead of **вычесть**.

Тысячу умножить на тысячу будет/получится миллион.
Literally, If you multiply a thousand by a thousand, the result will be a million.

Двадцать одну тысячу разделить на сто будет/получится двести десять.
Literally, If 21,000 is divided by 100, the result will be 210.

19.1.3 Another way of talking about multiplication

In more informal language there is a third option that can be used when talking about multiplication. In this the number being multiplied is indicated by a special *adverb* form. Such adverb forms exist for all numbers from *two* to *ten*: **дважды**, **трижды**, **четырежды**, **пятью**, **шестью**, **семью**, **восемью**, **девятью**, **десятью**:

Дважды два – четыре.
Twice two is four.

Трижды семь – двадцать один.
Three times seven is twenty-one.

Пятью пять – двадцать пять.
Five fives are twenty-five.

Семью восемь – пятьдесят шесть.
Seven eights are fifty-six.

NOTES

- (i) These are the forms used when reciting multiplication tables in school.
(ii) The forms from five to ten are identical in spelling to the *instrumental* form of the corresponding *cardinal* number. The stress, however, is on the initial, rather than on the final syllable.

For more on the endings of cardinal numbers, see **8.1**.

The adverbs **дважды**, **трижды** and (to a lesser extent) **четырежды** are also used more generally to correspond to English 'twice', 'three times' and 'four times'; the equivalent of 'once' is **однажды**, which often has the meaning of 'at some time (or other)':

Такое в истории страны случилось лишь однажды, ещё до войны.
That's happened only once in the history of the country, and that was before the war.

Мы однажды встретились на конференции славистов.
We met once at a conference of Slavists.

Поливайте 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 пятна́дцать.

Fifteen all (score in lawn tennis).

Дед рассказы́вал нам, что перед бо́ем солда́там выдава́ли по сто грамм(ов) во́дки для хра́брости.

Grandfather told us that before a battle the soldiers were given 100 grams of vodka (each) for courage.

For the use of the genitive plural forms **грамм, гра́ммов**, see 2.7.4.

Перед отпра́вкой они́ получи́ли по три апельси́на на ка́ждого.

Before setting out they received three oranges each.

As the second example demonstrates, the recipients of a distribution can be indicated by the use of a construction with **на** (+ acc.). Similarly, those who contribute can be indicated by a construction using **с** (+ gen.):

На пода́рок молодо́жёнам скла́дывались по пятьсо́т рубле́й с челове́ка.

Everyone contributed 500 roubles (a head) towards a wedding present for the young couple.

19.2 Telling the time

19.2.1 Asking what time it is

In Russian, there are two ways of asking the question ‘What time is it?’ and these can be used interchangeably:

Како́рый час?

Ско́лько вре́мени?

19.2.2 Telling the time: a whole number of hours

If the answer to the question asked in 19.2.1 involves only a whole number of hours, the relevant numeral is used with the noun **час** in the appropriate case. To indicate ‘one o’clock’ **час** is normally used on its own, without the numeral:

час	one o’clock
два часа́	two o’clock
четы́ре часа́	four o’clock
пять часо́в	five o’clock
во́семь часо́в	eight o’clock
пятна́дцать часо́в	15.00 hours, 3 p.m.
два́дцать два часа́	22.00 hours, 10 p.m.

NOTE The 24-hour clock is widely used in Russia, especially in any official context. In particular, it is used in timetables of all sorts, for radio and television schedules, and to indicate the starting and finishing times of public events.

There are no direct equivalents of ‘a.m.’ and ‘p.m.’ in common use in Russian. Instead, the part of the day can be indicated by the use of the appropriate noun in the *genitive*

case. The nouns used and the approximate segment of the day that each one indicates are as follows:

у́тра	morning (5 a.m.–midday)
дня	day, afternoon (midday–5 p.m.)
вече́ра	evening (5 p.m.–midnight)
но́чи	night (midnight–5 a.m.)

Therefore, times of the day can be indicated as:

два часа́ дня	2 p.m., two o'clock in the afternoon
два часа́ но́чи	2 a.m., two o'clock in the morning

The terms corresponding to 'midday' and 'midnight' are **по́лдень** and **по́лночь** respectively.

Sometimes an *ordinal* number is used with **час** to refer to an unspecified time in the first part of the *following* hour; thus, **тре́тий час** means 'some time after two o'clock':

Был тре́тий час но́чи, когда́ нас разбудили сирены́ пожа́рных маши́н.
It was some time after two in the morning when we were woken up by the sirens of the fire engines.

19.2.3 Telling the time the 'traditional' way

There are two ways of telling the time when both hours and minutes are involved: these can be referred to as the 'traditional' way and the 'digital' way. Both are in common use.

When telling the time the 'traditional' way reference is made to the *following* hour. With times up to and including the half-hour, the hour is indicated using an *ordinal* number:

де́сять мину́т второ́го	ten (minutes) past one
два́дцать мину́т тре́тьего	twenty (minutes) past two
два́дцать две мину́ты пя́того	twenty-two minutes past four
два́дцать пять (мину́т) се́дьмого	twenty-five (minutes) past six

NOTE The noun **мину́та** 'minute' is always present, except after **два́дцать пять**, when its presence is optional.

The quarter is indicated by **че́тверть** and the half-hour by **полови́на**; the latter is often abbreviated to **пол-** in more informal language:

че́тверть восьмо́го	a quarter past seven
полови́на деся́того, полдеся́того	half-past nine

For times between the half-hour and hour, a *cardinal* number is used to indicate the hour; the minutes are indicated using **без** (+ gen.):

без пяти́ двена́дцать	five (minutes) to twelve
без трёх мину́т три	three minutes to three
без одной мину́ты два	one minute to two
без двадца́ти час	twenty (minutes) to one
без че́тверти семь	a quarter to seven

NOTE With this construction the noun *мину́та* 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 **ро́вно**:

ро́вно де́вять часо́в 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:

Моско́вское вре́мя *пятна́дцать часо́в, тридца́ть мину́т*. В э́фире но́вости.

Moscow time is 15.30 hours [*or* half-past two (p.m.)]. Here is the news.

То́чное вре́мя *оди́н час, два́дцать две мину́ты*.

The exact time is 1.22.

In less formal contexts, however, **час** and *мину́та* tend to be omitted, except that, as with the 'traditional' method, 'one o'clock' is indicated by **час**:

се́мь два́дцать пять 7.25, twenty-five past seven

оди́ннадцатъ со́рок 11.40, twenty to twelve

Се́йча́с уже́ час *пятна́дцать*.

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 **но́ль**; an exact number of hours is indicated by **но́ль но́ль**:

ше́стна́дцать но́ль пять 16.05 hours, five past four (p.m.)

двена́дцать но́ль но́ль twelve hundred hours, twelve o'clock precisely

Although it is by no means obligatory in informal contexts, the 24-hour clock does tend to be used quite frequently with the 'digital' method of telling the time.

19.2.5 Talking about the time at which something happens

In addition to the general question word **когда́?** 'when?', there are various phrases that can be used to ask at what time something happens, happened or will happen:

В *ко́тором* *часу́*?

В *како́е* *вре́мя*?

Во *ско́лько*?

The last of these is considered a little more informal than the others.

В *кото́ром* *часу́* *начина́ется* *спекта́кль*?

At what time does the performance begin?

В *како́е* *вре́мя* *вы* *ча́ще* *все́го* *быва́ете* *до́ма*?

At what time do you tend most often to be at home?

Во *ско́лько* *отпра́вляется* *твой* *по́езд*?

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.

Встретимся на выходе из метро в четверть пятого.
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 полвосьмого.
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 **по московскому времени**; in written sources this is sometimes abbreviated to **мск**. Other useful phrases are:

по местному времени local time
по Гринвичу Greenwich Mean Time

Запуск космического корабля был произведён в двадцать один час, тридцать минут по московскому времени.

The launch of the spacecraft took place at 21.30 hours Moscow time.

Прибытие рейса из Лондона ожидается в 15.30 мск.

The flight from London is expected to arrive at 15.30 Moscow time.

Мы вылетели из Лондона в четырнадцать тридцать пять по местному времени.

We left London at 14.35 local time.

Землетрясение произошло в ноль часов, двадцать одну минуту по Гринвичу.

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:

Какое сегодня число?

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 сентября.
 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 **одна** is normally omitted before the word **тысяча**:

Тысяча восемьсот сорок восьмой год (1848 г.)	1848
Двухтысячный год (2000 г.)	2000
Две тысячи седьмой год (2007 г.)	2007

When the date is given in full, the year is in the *genitive* case:

Сегодня́ пятна́дцатое́ а́вгуста́ две ты́сячи се́дмого́ го́да.

Today is the fifteenth of August 2007.

NOTE

When dates are written out using figures, the European order (day, month, year) is adopted. There is a tendency to use Roman numerals to indicate the month:

15 viii 2007

15 August 2007

19.3.3 Talking about the date on which something happens

When the exact date of an event is given, the whole of the date is in the *genitive* case:

Пу́шкин роди́лся шесто́го ию́ня ты́сяча се́мьсо́т девяно́сто девя́того го́да.

Pushkin was born on 6 June 1799.

Всео́бщая декла́рация пра́в челове́ка бы́ла приня́та деся́того дека́бря ты́сяча девя́тсо́т со́рок восьмо́го го́да.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on 10 December 1948.

When only the month and year are given, the former is indicated using the preposition **в** (+ prep.), while the latter is in the *genitive*:

В Москве́ я бы́л пе́рвый раз в а́вгусте ты́сяча девя́тсо́т ше́стьдеся́т восьмо́го го́да.

The first time I was in Moscow was August 1968.

If only the month or only the year is given, the preposition **в** (+ prep.) is used:

Наско́лько я по́мню, они́ поже́нились в ию́не.

As far as I remember, they got married in June.

Очередные́ ле́тние Олимпи́йские и́гры пройду́т в Ло́ндоне в две ты́сячи двена́дцатом го́ду.

The next summer Olympics will take place in London in 2012.

For the use of the prepositional form in *-у́*, 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:

Она́ живёт в Москве́ на у́лице Де́вятсо́т пя́того го́да.

She lives in Moscow, in 1905 Street.

Се́мна́дцатый го́д стал перело́мным в исто́рии Росси́и.

1917 was a turning point in Russian history.

В со́рок пе́рвом го́ду её муж ушёл доброво́льцем на фронт.

In 1941 her husband left for the front as a volunteer.

19.3.4 Decades and centuries; BC and AD

Individual decades within a century are indicated using an *ordinal* number and the plural noun **годы**:

Девяностые годы 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 рождества Христова** is also possible, but is much less frequent. If it is necessary to specify a date as AD (the Christian era) the phrase **нашей эры** (abbreviated to **н.э.**) can be used:

По данным археологов первые поселения появились на этом месте приблизительно в первом веке до н.э.

According to work carried out by archaeologists, the first settlements appeared here somewhere around the first century BC.

For other time expressions, including those that do not involve numerals, *see* 21.1.

19.4 Talking about approximate quantity using numerals**19.4.1 Talking about approximate quantity using adverbs**

The following *adverbs* can be used to indicate approximate quantity:

примерно	about, approximately
приблизительно	about, approximately
где-то	about, somewhere in the region of, something like

These have the advantage of flexibility in that they can be used in more or less any grammatical context. The first two are more characteristic of formal language, while the third is more likely to be found in informal contexts:

Русский язык на нашем факультете изучают *примерно* сто двадцать человек.

Russian is studied in our faculty by approximately 120 students.

Курс акций упал *приблизительно* на двадцать пунктов.

The price of the shares fell by about twenty points.

В отпуске он пробыл *где-то* неделю, но не выдержал безделья и вернулся к работе.

He spent about a week on holiday, but couldn't stand the idleness and came back to work.

Средний заработок наших сотрудников – *где-то* двадцать тысяч рублей в месяц.

The average salary of those who work here is about 20,000 roubles a month.

19.4.2 Talking about approximate quantity: placing the numeral after the noun

It is also possible to indicate approximate quantity by placing the numeral *after* the relevant noun. This is a particularly useful construction with numerals that are, grammatically speaking, relatively simple:

Ему, *наверно*, будет лет *сорок пять*.

He'll be about forty-five, I reckon.

For more on how to talk about people's ages, *see* 12.3.

Подожди *минут пять*, а потом попробуй ещё раз.

Wait for about five minutes and then try again.

When this means of expressing approximation is used with a prepositional construction, the preposition is placed *after* the *noun* and *immediately before* the *numeral*:

Я уезжаю *дня на два*.

I'm going away for a couple of days or so.

19.4.3 Talking about approximate quantity using prepositions

The preposition used most frequently to indicate approximate quantity is *около* (+ gen.):

В моей коллекции *около двадцати* довоенных 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*, *сотня*, which indicate respectively the quantities of ten, fifty and one hundred:

В холодильнике мы обнаружили с десяток яиц, кусок сыра и бутылку пива.

In the fridge we discovered about ten [*or* about a dozen] eggs, a piece of cheese and a bottle of beer.

С полсотни книг из своей библиотеки он раздал студентам.

He took about fifty books from his collection and gave them out to his students.

For more on *десяток*, *полсотни*, *сотня*, see 8.6.1 and 19.4.4.

NOTE Because it is not normally possible in Russian to combine two prepositions, *около* (+ gen.) and *с* (+ acc.) cannot be used in contexts where quantity is expressed by a phrase including a preposition. In the third example in 19.4.1, *около* can be used to replace *где-то*, but it would be impossible to substitute *около* for *приблизительно* in the second example:

В отпуске он пробыл около недели, но не выдержал безделья и вернулся к работе.

He spent about a week on holiday, but couldn't stand the idleness and came back to work.

19.4.4 Talking about approximate quantity using nouns formed from numerals

The nouns *десяток* and *сотня* are frequently used in the plural to indicate large, but imprecise quantities:

Я был в России десятки раз, но ни разу не стал жертвой преступления (тьфу, тьфу).

I've been to Russia dozens of times and have never once been the victim of crime (touch wood).

Нашу передачу ежедневно слушают сотни тысяч людей.

Hundreds of thousands of people listen to our programme every day.

NOTE Making the gesture of pretending to spit over one's shoulder and saying *тьфу, тьфу* (i.e. imitating the noise of spitting) is the Russian equivalent of touching wood.

19.4.5 Talking about the upper and lower limits of an approximate quantity

The upper and lower limits of an approximate quantity are normally indicated by two numerals joined by a hyphen. This can be combined with other means of expressing approximation such as *где-то* or placing the numeral after the noun:

В 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 пятнадцать-двадцать.

That forward can be guaranteed to score something like fifteen to twenty goals a season.

19.5 Talking about imprecise quantities using forms other than numerals

19.5.1 Talking about large quantities using **МНОГО**, **МНОГОЕ**, **МНОГИЕ**

The word used most widely to indicate an imprecise large quantity is **МНОГО** ‘much’, ‘many’, ‘a lot’. This can be used on its own or with a noun in the *genitive singular* (if it denotes an uncountable substance) or the *genitive plural*. It can also be followed by an *adjective* in the *genitive singular neuter* form. **МНОГО** does not decline and when used with a noun can be used only in contexts that require the *nominative* or the *accusative* case without a preposition:

Я очень много слышал о вас.

I've heard a lot about you.

Такие вещи занимают много времени.

These things take up a lot of time.

Она много раз была в Москве.

She's been to Moscow many times.

Я узнал от него много интересного.

I learned from him much that was interesting.

For expressions that can be used to replace **МНОГО** in cases other than the *nominative* or the *accusative* or after a preposition, see **19.5.2**.

МНОГОЕ ‘much’, ‘a great deal’ can be used on its own or with a construction using the preposition **из** (+ *gen.*), but it is not followed directly by a noun. It declines like an adjective in the *neuter singular* and can be used in all cases:

Многое из того, чему я научился в армии, я уже успел забыть.

I've already managed to forget much of what I learned when I was in the army.

МНОГИЕ ‘many (of)’ can be used on its own or it can be followed directly by a noun or by a construction using the preposition **из** (+ *gen.*). It usually implies ‘many of some larger group’ (which may or may not be mentioned explicitly), and when used on its own normally refers only to people. It declines like an adjective in the *plural* and can be used in all cases:

Многие считают, что политика – это грязное дело.

Many people think that politics is a dirty business.

У многих москвичей есть твёрдая вера в то, что мир кончается за пределами кольцевой автодороги.

Many Muscovites have the firm belief that the world comes to an end beyond the city's outer ring-road.

Я уже имел удовольствие познакомиться со многими из его друзей.

I have already had the pleasure of meeting many of his friends.

19.5.2 Talking about large quantities using other expressions

Немáло ‘quite a lot’, ‘a fair number/amount’ is similar in meaning and usage to **мнóго**, although the quantity suggested may be slightly smaller:

В послед́нее вре́мя у нас бы́ло немáло проблем с программным обеспечением.

Recently we’ve been having a fair number of problems with software.

The following words and expressions can be used instead of **мнóго** after a preposition or in contexts requiring a case other than the nominative or the accusative, although they are also used more generally. The third and fourth of these tend to be found in more formal language:

большóе количéство	a great quantity, many
огромное количéство	an enormous quantity, very many
множéство	a great number, many
(цéлый) ряд	a (great) number, many

Без большóго количéства дéнег вам трóдно бóдет жить в Лондоне.
Without a lot of money you’ll find it difficult to live in London.

Я получил от него́ письмо с о́громным количéством вопро́сов.
I’ve received a letter from him with a great many questions.

Этот стрáнный феноме́н уже породил мно́жество теорéй.
This strange phenomenon has already prompted a great many theories.

На ряде́ предприя́тий ме́неджеры ещё не осво́или новéйшие ме́тоды управле́ния.
In a number of businesses the managers have yet to come to terms with the latest management practices.

Цéлый ряд европе́йских университе́тов тепе́рь предлага́ет кóрсы но́вого типа на стéпень ма́гистра.
Many European universities are now offering master’s courses of the new type.

The following words and expressions also indicate a large, but unspecified quantity. They tend to occur in more informal types of language:

ку́ча	heaps (of)
тьма́	multitudes (of), hordes (of)
у́йма	masses (of)
не перече́сть	you can’t keep count (of), there’s no end to

Дела́ у неё пошли́ в го́ру; на одной то́лько прода́же компа́кт-дисков она́ заработала ку́чу дéнег.
Her business has really taken off; she’s made a heap of money just from selling compact discs.

На концер́т под откры́тым не́бом пришла́ тьма́ наро́ду.
The open-air concert was attended by hordes of people.

Я наде́юсь, что ты никуда́ не торо́пишься; у меня́ к тебе́ у́йма вопро́сов.
I hope you’re not rushing off anywhere; I’ve got masses of questions to ask you.

Дочь губерна́тора была́ необы́кновенно краси́ва, и покло́нников у неё к двадцати́ годам было́ не перече́сть.
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 *мáло*, *немно́го*

Мáло ‘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 послед́нее вре́мя я *мáло* чита́ю, а всё бо́льше смотре́ю телеви́зор.
Recently, I haven’t been reading much and have been watching television more and more.

Е́сли мо́жно, зайд́ите ко мне за́втра; у меня́ сейча́с *мáло* вре́мени.
If you can, call in and see me tomorrow; I haven’t got much time at the moment.

Сде́лать карье́ру здесь ему́ бу́дет сло́жно; у него́ *мáло* друзе́й среди́ нача́льства.
It will be difficult for him to get on here; he has few friends among the bosses.

Я бы́ла на его́ ле́кции, но узна́ла *мáло* интере́сного.
I went to his lecture, but I learned little that was interesting.

The connotations of **мáло** are often negative, and sometimes it can mean ‘too few’, ‘too little’, ‘not enough’:

Пять ты́сяч рубле́й? Э́того, я ду́маю, бу́дет *мáло*.
5,000 roubles? I don’t think that’s going to be enough.

Мáло can be combined with a question word. The most widely used combination is **мáло кто** ‘not many people’; when it functions as the subject of a sentence, the verb is in the *singular*:

***Мáло кто* зна́ет об э́том.**
Not a lot of people know about that.

Немно́го and the more informal diminutive form **немно́жко** ‘some’, ‘a bit’, ‘a little’ can be used on their own or with a following noun. In the latter environment they are mostly used with nouns denoting uncountable substances. The connotations of **немно́го** and **немно́жко** are usually neutral or positive:

Подожд́ите *немно́жко*: дождь ско́ро пройде́т.
Wait a little; this rain will soon pass over.

Я прочту́ ва́шу статью́ в суббо́ту, когда́ у меня́ наконце́ц бу́дет *немно́го* свобо́дного вре́мени.
I’ll read your article on Saturday, when I’ll finally have a little free time.

Э́тот суп ста́нет вку́снее, е́сли в него́ доба́вить *немно́жко* со́ли.
This soup will taste better if you add a bit of salt to it.

Немно́го and **немно́жко** can be used with ordinary and comparative adjectives with the meaning of ‘a little’, ‘to some extent’:

Он нико́гда не встаёт ра́ньше двена́дцати; в э́том отноше́нии он действите́льно *немно́жко* стра́нный.
He never gets up before twelve; in this respect he is indeed a little strange.

Она́ *немно́го* моло́же меня́ – ду́маю, лет на семь-во́семь.
She’s a bit younger than I am, by about seven or eight years, I reckon.

Мало, немного and **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 пройдёт 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 точкой зрения не согласен.

Some people criticised him for being excessively cautious, but I don't agree with that point of view.

После распада Советского Союза некоторые эмигранты решили вернуться в Россию.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, some émigrés decided to return to Russia.

С некоторыми из её книг я уже знаком, но есть и такие, которых я не читал.

I'm familiar with some of her books, but there are others that I haven't read.

NOTE **Некоторый** declines like an adjective.

For more on the declension of adjectives, see 6.1.

19.5.5 Talking about small quantities using *чуть, чуть-чуть, чутьточку*

The adverb **чуть** 'just', '(very) slightly' is often used to qualify adjectives and other adverbs:

За перекрёстком ресторán «Гавáна», а *чуть* дáльше 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:

Когдá он сказáл мне, что собираётся жени́ться, я *чуть не* упáл со стóла.

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 приходíл ко мне *чуть ли не* кáждый день.

He used to come and see me just about every day.

Рубль сейчáс укрепля́ется и стал *чуть ли не* сáмой надёжной валю́той.

The rouble is now getting stronger and has become just about the most reliable currency.

Чуть-чуть and **чутьточку** 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 моглí бы диктовáть *чуть-чуть/чутьточку* 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).

Подвínьтесь *чуть-чуть/чутьточку* – тогда́ бóдет ме́сто и для́ меня́.

If you move up a tiny bit, there'll be room for me as well.

Суп неплóх, но я бы доба́вил *чуть-чуть/чутьточку* со́ли.

The soup's not bad, but I would add just a tiny bit of salt.

19.5.6 Talking about small quantities using other words and expressions

The following words and expressions can be used instead of **мáло** or **немно́го** after a preposition or in contexts requiring a case other than the accusative, although they are also used more generally:

мáленькое ко́личество a small quantity

небольшóе ко́личество a small quantity

не́которое ко́личество a certain quantity

Глáвный недостáток э́того учебника – сли́шком мáленькое ко́личество примеров и упражне́ний.

The main problem with this textbook is that it has too few examples and exercises.

Она́ ме́лко наре́зала лук и обжа́рила его́ в небольшóм ко́личестве́ масла́.

She cut the onion up small and fried it in a little oil.

Для этого требуется некоторое количество денег.
For that you need a certain amount of money.

The following words and phrases also indicate an unspecified small quantity:

горстка	handful (of)
кучка	handful (of)
кот наплакал	very little, precious little
раз-два и обчёлся	very few, you can count on the fingers of one hand

После долгих лет молчания у него осталась всего лишь горстка почитателей.

After the long years of silence he only had a handful of admirers left.

Несмотря на дождь и холод, на площади собралась кучка сторонников одного из кандидатов.

In spite of the rain and the cold, a handful of supporters of one of the candidates gathered in the square.

Денег у них оставалось кот наплакал.

They've got precious little money left.

Хороших специалистов у нас по этой части раз-два и обчёлся.

You can count on the fingers of one hand the number of good specialists we have in this area.

20

Focus and emphasis

20.1 Principles of word order in Russian

20.1.1 Russian and English compared

The word order in an English sentence simultaneously fulfils two functions. In the first place it has a *structural* function: in a normal English sentence the *subject* comes *before* the verb; if there is an *object*, that will come *after* the verb. This makes it possible to interpret the following sentence unambiguously: ‘John invited Mary.’ ‘John’ comes before the verb and can only be the subject; ‘Mary’ comes after the verb and can only be the object. Therefore, it was John who did the inviting and Mary who was the person invited.

The second function relates to the *flow of information*: the word order of the above sentence tells us that this is a piece of information about John and what he did: that he invited Mary, either as opposed to inviting some other person or as opposed to forgetting to tell her about the event.

In Russian, the word order does not have to fulfil a structural function: the distinct case endings mean that the *subject* does not need to be identified by being placed *before* the verb, and the *object* does not have to be placed *after* the verb. The difference can be illustrated by the following pairs of examples:

John invited Mary.
Mary invited John.

**Иван пригласил Марию.
Марию пригласил Иван.**

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 Пётр Первый считается основателем российского военно-морского флота. Пётр также заложил основы российского судостроения.**
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 Первые российские военные корабли в России были построены в Воронеже. Основы российского судостроения заложил Пётр Первый.**
The first Russian warships were built in Voronezh. It was Peter the Great who laid the foundations of the Russian ship-building industry.

In each of the above sequences the second sentence provides information about Peter the Great laying the foundations of the Russian ship-building industry, but the information is presented in a different order. In sequence A, the subject (**Пётр** 'Peter') comes first, and the object (**основы российского судостроения** 'the foundations of the Russian ship-building industry') comes at the end. In sequence B, however, the object comes at the beginning of the sentence and the subject comes at the end.

The explanation for this lies in the context provided by the first sentence in each sequence. In sequence A, the first sentence concerns the activities of Peter the Great; he thus becomes the topic of the second sentence, with the new information being that in addition to founding the Russian navy, he also laid the foundations of the Russian ship-building industry. Hence, Peter the Great (here the grammatical subject of the sentence) comes first and the reference to the foundations of the ship-building industry comes at the end. In sequence B, the first sentence relates to the building of ships; here, therefore, it is 'the foundations of the Russian ship-building industry' that is the topic of the second sentence, and the new information is that these foundations were laid by Peter the Great, and not by some other Russian ruler.

The following examples provide further illustrations and demonstrate other possibilities for the word order in a Russian sentence:

Переходный 2008 год будет непростым для США. Стране нужен лидер, но сильных людей нет.

The transitional year of 2008 will be difficult for the USA. The country needs a leader, but there are no strong people around.

В мае 1953 года Эдмунд Хиллари и Тенсинг Норгей первыми вошли на Эверест. С тех пор на высочайшей точке земного шара побывало более 1200 человек из 63 стран мира.

In May 1953 Edmund Hillary and Tensing Norgay were the first people to reach the summit of Everest. Since then, over 1,200 people from 63 countries have reached the highest point on the planet.

In the second sentence of the first example, the word **страна** ‘country’ provides the link between the two sentences and it comes in first place, although it is, in the Russian construction, the dative complement of the short adjective **нужен** ‘is needed’, ‘is required’. In the second clause of the second sentence, the most important information is the absence of strong people; this information is provided by the negative verb form **нет** which comes at the end of the sentence.

In the second example, the link between the two sentences is provided by both the time and the place, and these elements are placed at the beginning of the second sentence. The most important information in this sentence is the number of people who have climbed Everest since Hillary and Tensing, and this information (the subject of the sentence) comes at the end.

Another illustration of the way in which information flows in Russian is provided by sentences that begin with a date or another construction indicating when an event happened. Here the most important information in the sentence is provided not by the verb, but by the subject of the sentence, that is, the noun or noun phrase referring to the event. For this reason the normal order of elements is: *date-verb-subject*:

22 июня 1941 года началась Великая Отечественная война.

The Great Patriotic War broke out on 22 June 1941.

В 1905 году произошла Первая Русская революция.

The first Russian revolution took place in 1905.

В январе у них родилась дочь.

They had a daughter in January.

NOTE

Russians normally distinguish between **Вторая мировая война**, that is, the Second World War, which began in September 1939, and **Великая Отечественная война**, which began with the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941.

For more on talking about dates, see 19.3.

20.1.3 More principles of Russian word order

In addition to the above, there are some general principles of Russian word order that apply to specific elements within a sentence.

Adjectives and *pronouns* are normally placed *before* the nouns they qualify:

Поздравляю вас с *Новым* годом!

I wish you a happy New Year!

Я *хочу* купить себе *новые* джинсы.

I want to buy myself some new jeans.

Только что вышел *какой-то* *новый* справочник по грамматике *русского* языка.

A new handbook of Russian grammar has just been published.

In written Russian, it is sometimes possible to place an entire adjectival phrase in front of a noun:

В *Германии* открылся *первый в мире* полностью автоматизированный ресторан.

The first fully automated restaurant in the world has opened in Germany.

Occasionally, an adjective is placed after a noun in order to convey special emphasis:

Человек он был *резкий*, но *справедливый*.

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:

Ему *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* четкий 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:

***Вне*шне *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:

Я не большой поклонник её таланта, но должен признаться, что сегодня она выступала очень хорошо.

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 *что*) to come at the *beginning* of a sentence, with the reference (usually a pronoun) coming at the beginning of the second clause. This construction is mostly used for making generalised statements:

А 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 и 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 performer of the action or the main participant in the state is the *subject* of the verb. The recipient of the action, if there is one, is the *direct object*:

Ива́н пригласи́л Марию́ на ве́чер.

Ivan invited Mariia to the party.

Профе́ссор Попо́в написа́л о́чень интере́сную кни́гу о совреме́нном ру́сском рома́не.

Professor Popov has written a very interesting book about the modern Russian novel.

Both these sentences give us information about the subject: they tell us something about what Ivan and Professor Popov did. Sometimes, it is necessary to give information about the recipient of the action, and one way of doing this is to use a *passive verb*. When a passive verb is used, the recipient of the action is the *subject* of the verb. The performer of the action, if mentioned, is referred to as the *agent*; in Russian, the agent of a passive verb is in the *instrumental* case:

Ока́зывается, Мари́я бы́ла пригласе́на на ве́чер Ива́ном.

It transpires that Mariia was invited to the party by Ivan.

Са́мая интере́сная кни́га о совреме́нном ру́сском рома́не бы́ла напи́сана профе́ссором Попо́вым.

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, Марию́ пригласи́л Ива́н.

It transpires that Mariia was invited by Ivan.

Са́мую интере́сную кни́гу о совреме́нном ру́сском рома́не написа́л профе́ссор Попо́в.

The most interesting book on the modern Russian novel was written by Professor Popov.

It follows from this that passive verbs are not used as frequently in Russian as they are in English, and that the most natural means of translating into English a Russian sentence where the object precedes the verb is often by means of a passive construction (as in the above two examples). Often there is a choice in Russian between the two types of construction, but passive verbs tend to be preferred in sentences where no agent is mentioned:

Э́тот собо́р бы́л постро́ен в шестна́дцатом ве́ке.

This cathedral was built in the sixteenth century.

Эта книга была написана на русском языке и только потом переведена на английский.

This book was written in Russian and only later translated into English.

NOTE

In the first of the above examples it would be possible to use an active verb in the third person plural, but this usage should be avoided when referring to actions carried out by nameable individuals (as in the second example):

Этот собор построили в шестнадцатом веке.

This cathedral was built in the sixteenth century.

For more on this use of the third person plural active verb, see **7.1.5**.

Passive verbs also tend to be preferred in those sentences where there are additional elements referring to time and/or place:

Мария была приглашена в числе первых.

Mariia was one of the first to be invited.

Эта книга была переведена на английский в начале прошлого века одним из братьев автора.

This book was translated into English at the beginning of the last century by one of the author's brothers.

Passive verbs tend to be characteristic of more formal types of language:

На вывозимые произведения искусства установлена экспортная пошлина в размере 100 процентов их стоимости.

Exported works of art are subject to a customs duty of 100 per cent of their value.

Ниже приводится перечень искусства, выдающих свидетельства на право вывоза произведений искусств за границу.

Below is published a list of those institutions that issue export certificates for works of art.

20.3

Other forms of emphasis

20.3.1

The pattern: 'It was Ivan who invited Mariia'

It was noted above that one of the ways of translating the following Russian sentence into English was:

Марию пригласил Иван.

It was Ivan who invited Mariia.

Sentences of this type are known as 'cleft sentences': they are very common in English, but have no direct equivalent in Russian. The change of emphasis introduced by the English construction is achieved in sentences following the above pattern by using the *object-verb-subject* word order, but where this is inappropriate, other forms of indicating emphasis can be used.

20.3.2 Indicating emphasis using *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 *вот*; in this function it tends to be used with question words and to appear at the beginning of a sentence:

Вот кто нас выручит!
That’s who is going to save our bacon!

Вот как надо чистить рыбу.
That’s how to clean fish.

Вот куда денежки улетают.
That’s where our money’s going to.

The particle that is perhaps the most widely used for indicating emphasis is *-то*; this is always joined to the preceding word with a hyphen:

Наконец-то! Первый раз в этом сезоне наша команда одержала победу.
At last! For the first time this season our team has managed to win a game.

Вообще-то здесь нельзя курить.
You shouldn’t really smoke here.

Но они-то и есть наши главные соперники.
But these are the people who are our main rivals.

Если Америка не хочет ссориться с Россией, то уж нам-то зачём?
If America does not want to quarrel with Russia, then why (on earth) should we?

It will be noted that in the last two examples *-то* is combined with the particles *и* and *уж* respectively.

Further examples of the use of **и** and **уж** are provided by the following:

—Тут написано: «Перед употреблением взбалтывать».

—Что я и делаю.

—It says here that you should shake (the bottle) before use.

—Which is (exactly) what I do.

Э́то не так уж и пло́хо!

It's not all that bad!

Another particle that can be used to indicate emphasis, especially after question words, is **же**:

Когда же, наконец, починят лифт?

So when will they finally get round to repairing the lift?

Так чего же ты хочешь?

But what on earth do you want?

Я же тебе говорил!

I told you so.

Or Didn't I tell you?

20.4 Definite and indefinite

20.4.0 Introduction

Because Russian has neither *definite* nor *indefinite articles*, it has to resort to other means to indicate whether a noun is definite or indefinite. Often this can be done using the word order of a sentence, although there are some occasions when a qualifier (a *pronoun* or the *numeral* **один**) can be used to clarify whether a noun is definite or indefinite.

20.4.1 Using word order to indicate whether a noun is definite or indefinite

In general, there is a strong tendency for indefinite nouns to be placed after the verb and towards the end of a sentence:

Рядом с моим домом есть кинотеатр. И в этом кинотеатре находится маленькое кафе, где я часто пью кофе с друзьями.

Next to my house there is a cinema. And in the cinema there is a small café where I often meet my friends for coffee.

В Москвѣ открываѣтся выставка современной французской живописи.

An exhibition of modern French painting is opening in Moscow.

Она́ была́ дома́ одна́, когда́ в дверь посту́чали. На поро́ге стоя́л приятный молодой человек с блокнотом в руке́.

She was at home alone when someone knocked at the door. On the doorstep was a pleasant young man with a notebook in his hand.

Conversely, *definite* nouns, which often form a link with the previous sentence(s), will tend to come at or near the beginning of a sentence:

В Москвѣ открываѣтся выставка современной французской живописи. Выставка пройдёт в Государственном музее им. А.С. Пушкина.

An exhibition of modern French painting is opening in Moscow. The exhibition will take place in the Pushkin Museum.

Она́ была́ дома́ одна́, когда́ в дверь посту́чали. На поро́ге стоя́л приятный молодой человек с блокнотом в руке́.

She was at home alone when someone knocked at the door. On the doorstep was a pleasant young man with a notebook in his hand.

20.4.2 Using qualifiers to indicate indefinite nouns

The pronouns **какой-то** (if referring to something specific) and **какой-нибудь** can be used to indicate an *indefinite* noun:

Моя жена́ опять забы́ла перча́тки в како́м-то кафе́.

My wife has gone and left her gloves in a café again.

—Тебе́ звони́ли с рабо́ты.

—Кто звони́л?

—Не знаю́. *Какой-то* мужчи́на.

—Somebody phoned from work for you.

—Who was it?

—I don't know. It was a man.

По доро́ге домо́й купи́ *какую-нибудь* газе́ту с програ́ммой на неде́лю.

On the way home buy a newspaper with the week's (television) programmes in it.

For more on the difference between **какой-то** and **какой-нибудь**, see 7.6.2 and 7.6.3.

The numeral **один** can also correspond to the English indefinite article:

В нача́ле восьмидеся́тых годов́ *один* студе́нт устро́ился ночны́м сторо́жем в *один* из моско́вских музе́ев.

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 **э́тот** can be used to indicate that a noun is definite:

Ря́дом с мо́им до́мом е́сть кинотеа́тр. И в *э́том* кинотеа́тре нахо́дится ма́ленькое кафе́, где я ча́сто пью́ кофе́ с друзьёми.

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 **то́т**, when used to qualify a noun used with the relative pronoun **ко́торый**, often corresponds to an English definite article. For an example, see 7.5.1

21

Establishing contexts and connections

21.1 Time

21.1.1 Talking about when something happened/happens/will happen: parts of the day

To indicate a part of a day the relevant noun is used in the *instrumental* case: **у́тром** ‘in the morning’, **днём** ‘during the day’, **вече́ром** ‘in the evening’, **но́чью** ‘in/during the night’. Russian has no noun that corresponds to English ‘afternoon’, and the equivalent of ‘in the afternoon’ is either **днём** or **после обеда** ‘after lunch’:

У́тром вы бу́дете ходи́ть на заня́тия, а по́сле обе́да вы свобо́дны.
You will attend classes in the morning and in the afternoon you are free.

А что вы собира́етесь де́лать вече́ром?
And what are you going to do in the evening?

Я обы́чно занима́юсь днём, но к экза́менам могу́ гото́виться и но́чью.
I usually work (study) during the day, but before exams I can work at night as well.

The phrase **с утра́** means ‘early/first thing in the morning’:

Перево́д ещё не гото́в, позвони́те за́втра с утра́.
The translation’s not ready yet; phone first thing in the morning.

If an event occurs regularly at a particular time of day, the preposition **по** (+ dat.) can be used; **по** is followed by a noun in the plural:

По утра́м мы ходи́ли за гриба́ми.
In the mornings we used to go mushroom hunting.

Нам пришло́сь пере́ехать из-за сосе́дей, по но́чам то сканда́лы, то музыка́ на полно́ую гро́мкость.
We had to move because of our neighbours; at night they were always either shouting at each other or playing music at full volume.

21.1.2 Talking about when something happened/happens/will happen: days of the week

To indicate an event that happened or will happen on a particular day of the week, the preposition **в** (+ acc.) is used:

Я у́еду в сре́ду.

I'm leaving on Wednesday.

Она́ прие́хала в воскресе́нье.

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 предпочита́ю не рабо́тать по суббо́там.

I prefer not to work on (a) Saturday.

Я обы́чно принима́ю по пя́тницам, но на э́той неде́ле вы мо́жете зайти́ ко мне в че́тве́рг.

I normally see (students) on Fridays, but this week you can call in and see me on Thursday.

For the use of small letters for days of the week, *see* 1.5.7.

For information on telling the time and indicating dates, *see* 19.2 and 19.3.

21.1.3 Talking about when something happened/happens/will happen: seasons of the year

The names of the seasons are:

весна́	spring
ле́то	summer
о́сень	autumn
зима́	winter

The *instrumental* case is used when talking about the seasons of the year:

Ле́том я обы́чно провожу́ суббо́ту-воскресе́нье на да́че.

In summer I usually spend the weekend at my dacha.

Сове́тую вам посети́ть наш го́род и́ли весно́й и́ли о́сенью.

I recommend that you visit our city either in the spring or autumn.

21.1.4 Other words and phrases used to indicate the time when something happened/happens/will happen

The following words and phrases are used to indicate specific times:

вчера́	yesterday
сего́дня	today
за́втра	tomorrow
позавчера́	the day before yesterday
послезавтра́	the day after tomorrow

на прошлой неделе	last week
на этой неделе	this week
на будущей неделе	next week
в прошлом месяце	last month
в этом месяце	this month
в будущем месяце	next month
в прошлом году	last year
в этом году	this year
в будущем году	next year

The following words and phrases are used to indicate an unspecified time:

скоро	soon
нескоро	not for a long time yet
давно	a long time ago
недавно	recently
на днях	recently, the other day (in the past), soon, any day now (in the future)

когда-то, некогда, в своё время all mean 'once', 'at some time (in the past)', the first is the most widely used:

Мы скоро узнаём всю правду об этом.
We'll soon find out the whole truth about this.

Судя по всему, появится он тут нескоро.
It looks as if he won't be here for a long time yet.

Мы познакомились давно; можно сказать, что мы старые друзья.
We met a long time ago; you could say that we're old friends.

Мы совсем недавно переехали в Лондон и ещё плохо ориентируемся в городе.
We moved to London only very recently and still don't know our way round the city.

Мы встретились на днях, и тогда он был в отличном настроении.
We met the other day and then he was in an excellent mood.

Некогда на этом месте стояла церковь.
There was once a church on this spot.

Он в своё время был чемпионом мира.
At one time he was a world champion.

For another meaning of **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 **когда**

When the time of an event is indicated by an entire clause, the conjunction **когда** is used; this is used for events in the past or in the future, for single events or repeated occurrences:

Когда я учился 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.

Когда погода плохая, я стараюсь не выходить из дома.

When(ever) the weather is bad, I try not to leave the house.

Когда 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 **когда** is sometimes omitted in informal language:

Отец вернётся – сама расскажешь.

When father gets back, you can tell him for yourself.

Купи, открой, зажги горелку;

Вскипит – 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 **раньше** is the comparative of **рано** 'early'. For more on using comparatives, see **21.9**.

По (+ prep.) can mean '(immediately) after'; like the English 'upon', it is used only with nouns that are formed from verbs and tends to be characteristic of more formal styles:

По окончáнии университéта она́ поступи́ла в аспиранту́ру.
After finishing her first degree she embarked on postgraduate studies.
cf. **окáнчивать/окóнчить** '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 приéхал в А́нглию за два го́да до войны́.
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.) ... **пóсле** (+ gen.) is used:

Она́ уéхала из Росси́и че́рез пять лет пóсле револю́ции.
She left Russia five years after the Revolution.

21.1.8 Indicating that something will occur after the elapse of a period of time

To indicate that something happened or will happen after the elapse of a period of time, either **через** (+ acc.) or **спустя** (+ acc.) can be used:

Он приéхал на шесть неде́ль, но уéхал че́рез три дня.
He came for six weeks, but left after three days.

Я верну́сь че́рез час.
I'll be back in an hour.

Они́ пожени́лись и спустя́ год (or год спустя́) уéхали жить в Герма́нию.
They got married and a year later went to live in Germany.

NOTE Unusually, **спустя́** can come either before or after the noun to which it refers.

21.1.9 The equivalent of 'ago'

To indicate that something happened at a particular time in the past, the adverb (**тому́**) **назад** 'ago' is used:

Он ушё́л буквáльно две мину́ты наза́д.
He left literally two minutes ago.

Пе́рвые тролле́йбусы появи́лись на у́лицах Москвы́ бо́лее чем се́мьдесят лет тому́ наза́д.

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, **позже** 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/позже.

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** or **прежде чем** ‘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 мнение по этому вопросу, я хотел бы поблагодарить председательствующего за приглашение выступить 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 начальником, я часто приглашал его на кружку пива.

Before he became the boss, I often used to invite him out for a glass of beer.

Я понял истинный смысл её слов только после того, как она уехала.

I understood the true meaning of her words only after she (had) left.

NOTE A comma should normally be placed before **как** or **чем** (as in the third example above), but can be omitted when the conjunction begins the sentence (as in the first two examples).

These conjunctions are not used anything like as frequently as their English equivalents, and especially in more informal contexts it is probably better to try to avoid them if at all possible. Sometimes this can be done by using a noun with a preposition:

Я до завтрака вообще ни на что не способен.

Before I’ve had breakfast I’m totally incapable of anything.

Только после окончания университета вы осознаёте, 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 **по-** or **про-** can sometimes be used. The former usually indicates a short duration as part of a sequence of actions, while the latter stresses the length of time an action or event lasted for:

После последней лекции я позанимался два часа в библиотеке, а потом пошёл домой.

After the last lecture I worked for a couple of hours in the library and then went home.

Он прожил тридцать лет в соседней квартире, но за всё это время ни разу со мной не поздоровался.

He lived in the next flat for thirty years, but in all that time never once said hello to me.

To indicate an unspecified duration, the adverbs **долго** 'for a long time' and **недолго** 'for a short time', 'not for long' can be used:

Он допил кофе, а потом долго смотрел в окно.

He finished his coffee and then spent a long time looking out of the window.

Мы недолго жили в Париже; там всё слишком дорого.

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 ждёте?

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 **за** is **в течение** (+ gen.) ‘during’, ‘in the course of’:

В течение пяти лет область полностью перейдёт на цифровое вещание.

Within five years our region will have fully gone over to digital broadcasting.

В течение is also used when talking about continuing states of affairs, repeated actions or actions that fail to occur over a particular period of time:

В течение этой недели будет преобладать облачная погода.

During (the course of) this week the weather will be mostly cloudy (*literally*, ... cloudy weather will prevail).

В течение двух месяцев я не замечал, что мой компьютер заражён вирусом.

For two months I failed to notice that my computer was infected with a virus.

Or, It took me two months to notice ...

To talk about the intended duration of an action or event, the preposition **на** (+ acc.) is used:

Я уезжаю на пару дней.

I am going away for a few days.

Он приехал на шесть недель, но уехал через три дня.

He came for six weeks, but left after three days.

When one action or event is taking place against the background of another, the preposition **во время** (+ gen.) ‘during’ is used:

Во время войны он служил в военной разведке.

During the war he worked in military intelligence.

If the background event lasted for several years, then **в годы** (+ gen.) ‘during (the years/ period of)’ can also be used:

В годы перестройки она работала корреспондентом в газете «Комсомольская правда».

During the perestroika period she worked as a correspondent for *Komsomol'skaia pravda*.

If two actions or events taking place at the same time are described in whole clauses, these can be joined by the conjunction **пока́** 'while':

Пока́ я был бо́лен, сестра́ навеща́ла меня́ ка́ждый день.
While I was ill, my sister visited me every day.

Пока́ я здесь, мо́жно задава́ть мне вопро́сы в лю́бое вре́мя.
While *or* For as long as I am here, you can ask me questions at any time.

In the first of these examples it would be equally possible to use **когда́**; **пока́** emphasises that the two actions are simultaneous, corresponding to the English 'for as long as'.

21.1.15 'From'/'to', 'until': using prepositions

The preposition used most frequently to indicate the starting point of an action is **с** (+ gen.):

Я бу́ду здесь с понеде́льника.
I'll be here from Monday onwards.

Наш магази́н рабо́тает с семи́ часо́в.
Our shop is open from seven o'clock.

The preposition used to indicate the finishing point of an action is **до** (+ gen.), which in addition to meaning 'before' also has the meaning of 'until':

Подожди́те до че́тverka: тогда́ я всё объ́ясню́.
Wait until Thursday, then I'll explain everything.

The phrase **вплоть до** has the meaning of 'right up until':

Вплоть до ко́нца жи́зни он писа́л стихи́, кото́рыми восхища́лись миллио́ны.
Right up until the end of his life he was writing verse that was admired by millions.

In formal language, and especially in official documents, **по** (+ acc.) is sometimes used with the meaning 'until'. Unlike **до**, which can be ambiguous, **по** always has the meaning of 'up to and including':

Настоя́щий докуме́нт действите́лен с 25-го октяб́ря по 31-е де́каб́ря
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 прие́хал сюда́, я ни ра́зу не бо́ле́л.
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 то́лько**:

Как то́лько я воше́л в ко́мнату, я по́нял, что меня́ не жда́ли.
As soon as I entered the room, I realised that they had not been expecting me.

When ‘until’ is used as a conjunction, the Russian equivalent is **пока́**, with the negative particle **не** used before the verb in the clause that **пока́** introduces:

Пока́ я не получи́л твоё письмо́, я даже не зна́л, в какой стране́ ты те́перь рабо́таешь.

Until I received your letter, I didn’t even know what country you were working in now.

The conjunction **пока́** can be reinforced by the phrase **до тех пор**:

Я не уйду́ отсюда́ до тех пор, пока́ не получу́ отве́ты на все мои́ вопро́сы.

I will not leave here until (such time as) I receive answers to all my questions.

NOTE When **пока́** and **как то́лько** refer to events taking place in the future, the verb that follows them is in the *future perfective* form:

Как то́лько вода́ закипи́т, доба́вьте морко́вь и вари́те 10 мину́т на ме́дленном огне́.
As soon as the water boils, add the carrots and let them simmer for ten minutes on a low heat.

Не уходите́, пока́ я не верну́сь.
Don’t go until I get back.

21.2 Place

21.2.1 Talking about location: the prepositions **в (+ prep.)** and **на (+ prep.)**

The most widely used prepositions for talking about location are **в (+ prep.)** and **на (+ prep.)**. The basic meaning of **в (+ prep.)**, when it is used to indicate location, is ‘in(side)’:

Я оста́вил ключи́ в столе́.

I’ve left my keys in my desk.

Именно́ в э́той ко́мнате я написа́л все свои́ кни́ги.

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 оста́вил ключи́ на столе́.

I’ve left my keys on the table.

Он лежа́л на траве́, обду́мывая свои́ пла́ны на бу́дущее.

He lay on the grass, thinking over his plans for the future.

In addition, these prepositions are used with a wide range of other locations. These are discussed in 21.2.2–21.2.10.

21.2.2 Town, cities, districts and regions

For locations in these categories the preposition **в** is used:

В го́роде Москве́ и в Моско́вской о́бласти температу́ра днём бу́дет 23–25 градусо́в.

In the city of Moscow and in the Moscow region the temperature through the day will be 23–25 degrees.

Такие вещи можно купить только в Париже, Лондоне или Нью-Йорке.
You can only buy things like that in Paris, London or New York.

21.2.3 Countries

The preposition **в** is also used with **страна́** ‘country’ and with the names of almost all countries:

Если вы хотите улучшить свой русский, то надо поучиться в России или в какой-нибудь другой стране, где ещё говорят по-русски.

If you want to improve your Russian, you need to study in Russia or in some other country where people still speak Russian.

В Англии в университете учатся три года, а в Шотландии обычно четыре.

In England people study at university for three years, but in Scotland it's usually four (years).

The preposition **на** (+ prep.) is used with the names of some countries that are also islands, notably **Кипр** ‘Cyprus’, **Куба** ‘Cuba’, **Мальта** ‘Malta’; **в** (+ prep.) is used with **Великобритания** ‘Great Britain’ and **Ирландия** ‘Ireland’:

На Кипре почему-то очень много русских.

For some reason there are a lot of Russians in Cyprus.

В Великобритании сохраняется фунт стерлингов, тогда как в Ирландии уже перешли на евро.

In Great Britain the pound sterling has been retained, while in Ireland they have already switched to the euro.

NOTE Before 1991 **на** was traditionally used with **Украина** ‘Ukraine’, but when the country gained its independence, the Ukrainians launched a campaign to encourage a switch to **в Украине** ‘in Ukraine’. Now both forms are possible: **в** is normally preferred in Ukraine, while **на** still tends to be used in Russia. The use of **на Украине** is likely to cause offence to some Ukrainians.

На is used with the noun **ро́дина** ‘homeland’:

Занимая должность посла, он сохранял контакты с политическими силами на родине.

While working as an ambassador, he kept up his contacts with political forces at home.

NOTE In Soviet times **Родина** 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.

В качестве тележурналиста он неоднократно бывал на Кавказе.
As a television journalist, he's been to the Caucasus several times.

There are, however, some exceptions, where **в** is used instead:

в Крыму́ in the Crimea
в Альпах in the Alps

For the use of **в/на** with islands that are also countries, see 21.2.3.

21.2.5 Other geographical terms

To indicate location with reference to the world **в** is used with **мир**, but **на** is used with **свет**:

Его́ го́лос зна́ют во всём ми́ре.
His voice is known everywhere in the world.

На све́те мно́го стран, где лю́ди жи́вут в бе́дности.
There are many countries in the world where people live in poverty.

NOTE The phrase **в све́те** means 'in the light of':

В све́те послéдних археологических открытий мы мо́жем сказа́ть, что в де́сятом ве́ке здесь уже́ было́ городское́ поселе́ние.

In the light of the latest archaeological discoveries we can say that in the tenth century there was already an urban settlement here.

В is used with terms indicating geographical or climatic zones, such as **пусты́ня** 'desert', **сте́пь** 'steppe', **тайга́** 'taiga', **ту́ндра** 'tundra':

Он чу́вствует себя́ до́ма вездé, будь э́то в ту́ндре, в тайге́, в степи́ или да́же в пусты́не.

He feels at home everywhere, whether it's in the tundra, the taiga, the steppe or even the desert.

На is used for points of the compass:

На северо-восто́ке страны́ ожида́ется о́блачная по́года с небольшо́ими дождя́ми, а на ю́ге бу́дет со́лнечно.

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 го́лову не приходи́ло, что на За́паде всё мо́жет быть по-друго́му.
It never even occurred to her that in the West things might be different.

NOTE Capital letters are generally used in Russian when a point of the compass is used to denote a geopolitical entity.

21.2.6 Locations that can be perceived in terms of a building or some other closed and covered space

For locations that would be thought of in terms of buildings or other enclosed spaces the preposition **в** is normally used:

В шко́ле я учи́лся о́чень хоро́шо, но в уни́версите́те мне ста́ло ску́чно, и я уше́л после́ второ́го ку́рса.

At school I did very well, but at university I started to get bored and left after the second year.

Не рекомендётся менять деньги в аэропорту или в гостинице; курс всегда лучше в банках и обменных пунктах.

It's not advisable to change money at the airport or in a hotel; the rate is always better at banks and *bureaux de change*.

Извините, но в театре нельзя курить.

I'm sorry, but you're not allowed to smoke in the theatre.

There are, however, a number of locations that seem to belong to this category, but with which, for no obvious reason, **на** is used. These include:

вокзал	(main line) railway station
станция	(underground, local railway or radio) station
факультет	faculty
кафедра	department (at a university)
почта	post office
почтамт	main post office
завод	factory (heavy industry)
фабрика	factory (light industry)
предприятие	enterprise, works, factory
дача	dacha, country cottage

Чтобы перейти на кольцевую линию, надо было выйти на станции «Киевская».

To change onto the Circle line you should have got off at Kievskaia station.

Он был на третьем курсе аспирантуры и на кафедре появлялся только тогда, когда назначалась встреча с научным руководителем.

He was a third-year postgraduate and only turned up in the department when he had an appointment with his supervisor.

В течение многих лет он работал на автозаводе в Москве.

For many years he worked at a car factory in Moscow.

With **квартира** 'flat' and **кухня** 'kitchen' either **в** or **на** can be used; when the emphasis is on the actual interior space, as opposed to the location in general, as in the first example, **в** is more likely to be used:

Мысль о том, что в квартире в её отсутствие побывали посторонние, была неприятной.

The thought that during her absence strangers had been in her flat was not a pleasant one.

Можно оставить ваши вещи у меня в/на квартире.

You can leave your things in my flat.

Мой муж в/на кухне, готовит ужин.

My husband's in the kitchen making supper.

21.2.7 Locations that can be perceived as open spaces

The preposition **на** is used with many locations that might be thought of as open spaces. Nouns that come into this category include: **рынок** ‘market’, **стадион** ‘stadium’, **остановка** ‘(bus or tram) stop’, **улица** ‘street’ and **площадь** ‘square’:

Продукты я обычно покупаю на рынке; там недорого.

I usually buy food at the market; it's not expensive there.

Матч Россия – Англия состоится завтра на стадионе «Локомотив».

The match between Russia and England takes place tomorrow at the Locomotive stadium.

Вы выходите на следующей остановке?

Are you getting off at the next stop?

У неё шикарная квартира на Тверской улице.

She has a posh flat in Tverskaia Street.

Мы договорились встретиться на Красной площади.

We arranged to meet in Red Square.

NOTE The phrase **на улице** often means ‘outside’, especially in the context of a city:

В аэропорту «Шереметьево» они удивительно быстро прошли паспортный контроль и таможню и через десять минут уже были на улице.

At Sheremet'ev Airport they got through passport and customs surprisingly quickly and after ten minutes were already outside.

The preposition **в** is used with **парк** ‘park’, **сад** ‘garden’ and **переулок** ‘narrow street’, ‘alley’:

Летом они обычно встречались в парке у фонтана.

In summer they used to meet near the fountain in the park.

Если вы интересуетесь экзотическими растениями, стоит побывать в Ботаническом саду.

If you're interested in exotic plants, it's worth visiting the Botanic Gardens.

Мы ужинали вчера в маленьком ресторане, который находится в одном из переулков Арбата.

We ate last night in a small restaurant, which is in one of the narrow streets of the Arbat.

With **двор** ‘yard’ both **в (во)** and **на** are found, although there is a difference in meaning. **Во дворе** is used when talking about a particular yard, and especially the courtyard of a block of flats; **на дворе** usually means simply ‘outside’:

В летние вечера дети играли во дворе большого дома.

In summer evenings children used to play in the courtyard of the large house.

Какая сейчас погода на дворе?

What's the weather like outside just now?

For the use of **во** (instead of **в**), see 9.2.8.

21.2.8 Means of transport

For locations that are a means of transport, both **в** and **на** are used, but with a difference in meaning. **В** is used when emphasis is on the interior of the form of transport, while **на** is used when the emphasis is on the vehicle as a means of getting from one place to another:

Власти работают над законом, который запрещает поцелуи в метро и других общественных местах.

The authorities are working on a law that will ban kissing in the underground and other public places.

Сидя в машине рядом с мужем, она молча курила и смотрела в окно.

Sitting in the car next to her husband, she was quietly smoking and looking out of the window.

Можно ехать на метро до станции Университет и потом на любом трамвае до остановки «Черёмушкинский рынок».

You can go by underground to University Station and then by any tram as far as the Cherëmushki market stop.

Ясно, что на машине никто не ездил несколько дней.

It is clear that nobody had driven the car for several days.

21.2.9 Organisations of various sorts

When the location is the name of an organisation, **в** is used:

В советские времена он служил в КГБ, но теперь он работает в Министерстве иностранных дел.

In Soviet times he worked for the KGB, but now he has a job in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

В милиции мне задали несколько вопросов и составили протокол.

The police asked me several questions and drew up an official report.

21.2.10 Locations where the noun denotes a function or activity

If the noun used to indicate a location denotes the function or activity that takes place there, then **на** is used:

На работе я пью только кофе – чтобы не засыпать на совещаниях.

At work I only drink coffee so as not to fall asleep at meetings.

Я познакомился с женой в Москве на студенческом вечере.

I met my wife in Moscow at a student party.

Вчера вечером я был на чудесном концерте.

Yesterday evening I was at a wonderful concert.

На занятиях я аккуратно конспектирую слова преподавателя, но потом всё равно ничего не понимаю.

In classes I take careful notes of what the lecturer says, but afterwards none of it makes sense.

NOTE When the preposition **в** (+ prep.) is used with nouns belonging to this category, it refers to the *content* of the event or activity rather than the location:

В моей работе нет ничего интересного: я всё время перевожу бесконечные скучные документы.

There's nothing interesting in my work; I spend my whole time translating interminable boring documents.

В сегодняшнем концерте мы будем играть музыку Чайковского и Мусоргского.

In today's concert we will be playing music by Tchaikovsky and Musorgskii.

21.2.11 Location using the preposition **у** (+ gen.)

The basic meaning of the preposition **у** (+ gen.), when used to indicate location, is 'close to', 'adjacent to':

Он стоял у окна и смотрел вдаль.

He was standing by the window looking into the distance.

Она ждала меня у входа в театр.

She was waiting for me at the entrance to the theatre.

The preposition **у** is used when the location takes the form of a noun or a pronoun indicating a person:

Извините за опоздание; я был у врача.

I'm sorry I'm late; I've been at the doctor's.

Она живёт у родителей.

She lives with her parents (i.e. at her parents' place).

У нас отключили отопление. Можно, я переночую у тебя?

They've turned our heating off. Can I spend the night at your place?

The following construction with **у** is often used in conjunction with a second prepositional phrase to indicate a location owned by or otherwise closely connected with the person concerned:

Можно оставить эти вещи у меня на квартире.

You can leave these things in my flat.

У сестры на работе есть бесплатный буфет и сауна, но работа у неё вредная.

My sister has a free canteen and sauna at work, although on the other hand her work is quite dangerous.

У нас в Ростове снег уже растаял.

In Rostov (where we live *or* come from) the snow has already melted.

21.2.12 Location using other prepositions

A number of other prepositions can be used to indicate location. These include **за** (+ acc.), **за** (+ instr.), **перед** (+ instr.), **под** (+ instr.), **над** (+ instr.), **при** (+ prep.).

За (+ acc.) is used when indicating the distance between two locations:

Наша деревня находится за шестьдесят километров от центра Москвы.

Our village is 60 kilometres away from the centre of Moscow.

За шестьдесят километров от Москвы мотор вдруг заглох.

Our engine died (when we were) 60 kilometres away from Moscow.

В (+ prep.) can be used with the same meaning, but is more likely to be found in formal contexts, especially in the written language:

Эта гостиница не очень удобная, так как находится в пяти километрах от вокзала.

This hotel is not very convenient, as it's 5 kilometres away from the station.

The basic meaning of **за** (+ instr.) is 'behind' or 'beyond':

Он ехал в первой машине. За ней следовал джип с охраной.

He was travelling in the first car. Behind it followed a jeep with the bodyguards.

Вы видите старый домик, вон там за рекой?

Can you see that little old house over there, beyond the river?

За (+ instr.) is used in a number of useful set phrases:

за границей	abroad
за рубежом	abroad
за пределами	beyond the boundaries of, outside
за столом	at table
за городом	out of town, in the country
за бортом	overboard
за кулисами	backstage

Она вдруг решила, что в России жить трудно, а за границей будет гораздо лучше.

She suddenly decided that living in Russia was difficult and that it would be a lot better abroad.

За пределами России эта проблема никого не интересует.

Outside Russia nobody's interested in this problem.

Они сидели за столом и ели какое-то блюдо из мяса.

They were sitting at the table eating some meat dish.

Я не могу дозвониться до него: он, наверно, за городом на даче.

I can't get through to him on the phone; he must be at his dacha in the country.

The meaning of **перед** (+ instr.), when it refers to a location, is 'in front of':

Перед вокзалом была большая площадь, где стоял памятник Ленину.

In front of the station was a large square with a statue of Lenin.

The most usual meaning of **под** (+ instr.) is 'under(neath)':

Я всегда прячу ключ под этим большим камнем.

I always hide the key under this big stone.

With names of towns **под** (+ instr.) has the meaning of 'just outside', 'very close to'. The same preposition is also used for the location of battles:

Он живёт где-то под Москвой.

He lives somewhere just outside Moscow.

Он был тяжело ранен (в битве) под Сталинградом.

He was badly wounded at (in the battle of) Stalingrad.

The preposition **над** (+ instr.) means ‘above’, ‘over’:

Мы летели прямо над городом, но из-за плохой погоды ничего не было видно.

We flew right over the city, but because of the bad weather we couldn't see anything.

The most usual meaning of **при** (+ prep.), when used to refer to a location is ‘attached to’, ‘adjacent to’:

При университете есть музей и картинная галерея.

Attached to the university is a museum and an art gallery.

При also has the meaning of ‘in the presence of’:

Она не хотела разговаривать об этом при сыне.

She didn't want to talk about it in the presence of her son.

21.2.13 Other ways of talking about location

A number of adverbs can be used to indicate location. These include:

здесь	here
тут	here
там	there
близко	near(by)
далеко	far, distant, a long way away
рядом	close by, adjacent, next door
впереди	ahead
сзади	behind

Здесь (or Тут) все места заняты.

All the places are taken here.

Я не поеду с тобой в деревню. Там нечего делать

I won't go with you to the village. There's nothing to do there.

Вокзал 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 милицёрская машина с мигалкой, за ней пять-шесть автобусов с делегатами, и сзади ещё одна машина с мигалкой.

I can remember very well how we travelled to the opening of the congress: in front was a police car with a flashing light, then five or six buses with the delegates and behind was another car with a flashing light.

Бли́зко, **далеко́** and **рядом** can be used in combination with prepositions, as follows:

бли́зко к (+ dat.) *or* **бли́зко от** (+ gen.) close to
далеко́ от (+ gen.) a long way from, far from
рядом с (+ instr.) next (door) to

Кре́пость была́ совсе́м бли́зко к границе́.

The fortress was very close to the frontier.

Она́ стоя́ла так бли́зко от меня́, что я чу́вствовал за́пах её духо́в.

She was standing so close to me that I could smell her perfume.

Я бы ходи́л в бассе́йн поча́ще, но мы живём сли́шком дале́ко от спортко́мплекса.

I would go to the swimming baths more often, but we live too far away from the sports facilities.

За нали́чными дале́ко иди́ти не на́до: *рядом с гостии́ницей* есть банк.

You don't have to go far for cash. There's a bank next door to the hotel.

The conjunction used to indicate location is **где**:

Я нико́гда не́ был в го́роде, где есть так мно́го хоро́ших рестора́нов.

I have never been in a city where there are so many good restaurants.

21.2.14 Talking about destinations

There is a close correlation between the preposition used to indicate destination and that used to indicate location. Where location is indicated by **в** (+ prep.), the equivalent destination is indicated by **в** (+ acc.):

Не бу́дем входи́ть в э́ту ко́мнату; там спит мо́я до́чка, и я не хочу́ её буди́ть.

We won't go into that room; my daughter's asleep there and I don't want to wake her up.

Тур в Ло́ндон стои́т два́дцать ты́сяч рубле́й.

A package-tour to London costs 20,000 roubles.

На бу́дущей неде́ле меня́ здесь не бу́дет; мне на́до бу́дет съезди́ть в Росси́ю на па́ру дней.

I won't be here next week; I've got to go to Russia for a couple of days.

Обы́чно я хожу́ в уни́верси́тет пешко́м.

I usually walk to the university.

Е́сли не прекра́тится э́тот шум, я позво́ню в мили́цию.

If this noise doesn't stop, I'll phone the police.

Where a location is indicated by using **на** (+ prep.), the equivalent destination is indicated by **на** (+ acc.):

Официа́льная делегация́ во главе́ с пре́мьер-мини́стром вы́летела́ се́годня на Ку́бу.

An official delegation, led by the prime minister, left for Cuba today.

Он уехал на Запад в 1974 г. и вернулся в Россию только в конце восьмидесятых.

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.

Заезжай 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 съездим 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 найдёт.

Put the key under this stone. No one will find it there.

The remaining prepositions used to indicate location do not have corresponding constructions to indicate destination.

The following adverbs are used when talking about destination:

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 **куда́**:

Его́ сейчас нет, но я не знаю, куда́ 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 достал из ящика стола какую-то квитанцию.

He got up and took a receipt from the desk drawer.

Они улетели из Москвы в среду.

They left (or flew out of) Moscow on Wednesday.

Не подлежат вывозу из России старинные книги, изданные до 1926 года.

Old books published before 1926 cannot be exported from Russia.

Дети обычно возвращаются из школы в четыре часа.

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.):

Многие русские уехали с Кипра после экономического кризиса 1998 года.

Many Russians left Cyprus after the economic crisis of 1998.

Поезда с юга обычно прибывают или на Курский или на Казанский вокзал.

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 **у** (+ 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 невытая 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*:

Он, наконец, приехал в ту страну, откуда эмигрировали его родители в начале прошлого века.
He had finally arrived in the country from where his parents had emigrated at the beginning of the last century.

21.2.16 Other ways of talking about place

When talking about the point actually reached in a journey, the preposition *до* (+ gen.) is used:

Этот поезд следует только до станции «Комсомольская».
This train only goes as far as Komsomol'skaia station.

К вечеру первого дня мы доехали до Смоленска, где мы решили переночевать.

By the evening of the first day we had reached Smolensk, where we decided to spend the night.

To indicate the distance between two places *от* (+ gen.) ... *до* (+ gen.) is used:

От центра города до университета будет около пяти километров.
It'll be about 5 kilometres from the centre of the city to the university.

To indicate motion along the surface of something, the preposition **по** (+ dat.) is used. The motion can be in one direction, more than one direction or in no particular direction at all:

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 стекла машины.
She couldn’t make anything out through the tinted windows of the car.

Через also corresponds to English ‘via’:

Этот автобус идёт до университета через центр города.
This bus goes to the university via the city centre.

21.3

Manner

21.3.1

Talking about manner using adverbs

The most common way to indicate the manner in which an action is carried out is by using an *adverb*. Adverbs are usually placed immediately before the verb indicating the action concerned:

Она внимательно читала его письмо.
She read his letter carefully.

Президент чётко заявил, что он не собирается баллотироваться на третий срок.
The president has stated clearly that he will not stand for a third term.

Она очень хорошо знала, почему происходят перемены в её жизни.
She knew very well why changes were taking place in her life.

For more on questions of word order involving adverbs, see **20.1.3**.

For more on adverbs generally, see **9.1**.

21.3.2 Talking about manner using a qualifier plus noun

Another way of talking about manner is to use a *qualifier* (an *adjective* or a *pronoun*) with a *noun* in the *instrumental case*:

После короткой паузы он продолжил свою речь более спокойным голосом.

After a short pause he continued his speech in a calmer voice.

Он посмотрел на неё печальным взглядом, повернулся и пошёл прочь.

He looked at her with a sad expression, turned round and walked away.

This construction is widely used with nouns such as **образ**, **путь**, **способ** that have the general meaning of ‘way’, ‘manner’, ‘fashion’:

Ситуация сложилась таким образом, что последние три дня они проводили почти всё своё рабочее время вместе.

The situation has turned out in such a way that for the last three days they have spent most of their working time together.

Эта проблема некоторым образом касается и меня.

This problem also affects me in some ways [*or* to some extent].

Он никогда никому не давал взятки, и всегда действовал только законным путём.

He never bribed anyone and always acted legally [*or* in accordance with the law].

Эту задачу можно решать двумя способами.

This problem can be resolved in two ways.

For another use of **таким образом**, see 23.2.1.

Also used in this way is the noun **порядок**, although here the phrase is more usually used with the preposition **в** and is in the *prepositional case*. This construction tends to be found in formal and bureaucratic language:

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.

Он реаги́ровал на все на́ши предупрежде́ния *со своей обы́чной беззабо́тностью*.

He reacted to all our warnings in his usual carefree manner.

For the use of **со** instead of **с**, *see* 9.2.8.

21.3.4 Talking about manner using как

The conjunction used when talking about manner is **как**:

Сде́лайте так, *как я сове́тую*, и ника́ких пробле́м не бу́дет.

Do as I advise and there won't be any problems.

Ситуа́ция сложи́лась не так, *как мы ожида́ли*.

The situation had not turned out in the way that we expected.

Он не звони́л так ча́сто, *как она хоте́ла бы*.

He didn't telephone as often as she would have liked.

Он говори́л споко́йно, *как челове́к, кото́рый зна́ет це́ну свои́м слова́м*.

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 пого́ды наш самолёт опозда́л бо́лее чем на два часа́.

Because of the bad weather our plane was delayed for more than two hours.

Только благодаря́ твоей по́мощи мне уда́лось сде́лать всё во́время.

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 **причина́** 'reason' to indicate the cause of an action or event; this usage tends to be found in more formal types of language:

Она́ се́годня отсутству́ет *по уважи́тельной причи́не*.

She is absent today for a valid reason.

По причи́не отсутствия́ кво́рума голосова́ние не состоя́лось.

The vote failed to take place for lack of a quorum.

Причина is used in the plural in the phrase **по техническим причинам** ‘for technical reasons’. This is often used in Russian as a euphemism in order to avoid having to give a more precise explanation for some undesirable turn of events:

Мероприятие отменяется по техническим причинам.

The event is cancelled for technical reasons.

По is used with *abstract nouns* to indicate the inadvertent cause, usually of some unfortunate event:

Простите, я пропустил вашу лекцию по рассеянности.

I'm sorry, I missed your lecture out of absent-mindedness.

По досадному недоразумению письмо не было отправлено.

As a result of some annoying misunderstanding, the letter was never sent.

21.4.3 Other prepositions indicating general cause

The following prepositions and prepositional phrases are also used to indicate general cause. They are more likely to occur in the written than in the spoken language:

ввиду (+ gen.) because of, owing to, in the light of
(normally used in the context of something undesirable)

в результате (+ gen.) because of, owing to, as a result of

в силу (+ gen.) because of, owing to

вследствие (+ gen.) because of, owing to, as a consequence of

Ввиду угрозы террористических актов в аэропортах усилены меры безопасности.

In the light of the threat of terrorism, security at airports has been strengthened.

В результате решительных действий правительства рейтинг президента вырос на десять процентов.

As a result of the decisive actions of the government, the president's popularity has gone up by 10 per cent.

Возможно, в силу именно этих обстоятельств она ушла с юридического факультета.

It is possibly because of these particular circumstances that she withdrew from the Faculty of Law.

Вследствие последних событий на Ближнем Востоке поток туристов в этот регион резко сократился.

As a consequence of the recent events in the Middle East, there has been a sharp decline in the number of tourists visiting the region.

21.4.4 Talking about the direct physical cause of a state or action

The preposition most frequently used when talking about the direct, physical and involuntary cause of a state or an action is **от** (+ gen.):

В начале двадцатых годов многие крестьяне в этой области умерли от голода.

At the beginning of the 1920s many peasants in this region died of hunger.

Подума́в о возмо́жных послéдствиях своéго по́ступка, он побледне́л от стра́ха.

Having thought about the possible consequences of his action, he went pale from fear.

Её глаза́ всё ещё́ были мо́крыми от слёз.

Her eyes were still wet from the tears.

Здесь прое́хать нельзя́. Доро́гу развезло́ от дожде́й.

You can't get through here. The road's been made impassable by the rain.

The preposition **с** (+ gen.) is similar in meaning to **от**, but its use is characteristic of informal language. **С** is often used in figurative statements and in set expressions; when it is used with a masculine noun, this normally takes the ending in **-у** (see 2.7.1):

Он рассказа́л нам тако́й смешно́й анекдо́т, что мы чуть́ не у́мерли со́ смеху́.

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

For more concerning the stress on the preposition, see 9.2.7.

21.4.5

Talking about the conscious motive for an action

The preposition used when talking about the conscious motive for an action is **из** (+ gen.):

Я пришёл сюда́ из чи́стого любопы́тства.

I came here out of pure curiosity.

Они́ это́ дела́ют наро́чно, из вре́дности, что́бы осложни́ть на́шу рабо́ту.

They do it deliberately, out of malice, to make our job more difficult.

21.4.6

Talking about cause using conjunctions

Russian has several conjunctions that indicate cause and that correspond to the English 'because', 'as', 'since', 'for'. These are **потому́ что**, **потому́ как**, **так как**, **поско́льку**, **ибо**. **Потому́ что**, **потому́ как** and **ибо** are normally used in the middle of a sentence to join two clauses, while **так как** and **поско́льку** can be used either at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence. **Потому́ как** is characteristic of informal language, while **ибо** tends nowadays to be found only in very formal language. **Поско́льку** occurs widely, but is perceived by some to be characteristic of bureaucratic or journalistic language:

Я не могу́ звони́ть ему́ сейча́с, потому́ что́ уже́ по́здно.

I can't phone him now because it's too late.

Я не мог отве́чать, потому́ как не зна́л язы́ка.

I couldn't answer since I didn't know the language.

Та́к как тебя́ не́ было, мы реши́ли подо́ждать не́сколько мину́т.

Since you weren't here, we decided to wait for a few minutes.

Я не пойду́ с ва́ми в кино́, та́к как я уже́ смотре́л это́т филь́м.

I won't go with you to the pictures since I've already seen the film.

Поско́льку вы не во́время сда́ли докуме́нты, бу́дет заде́ржка в выдаче ва́шей визы́.

Since you did not hand in your documents on time, there will be a delay in the issue of your visa.

Он вы́нужден был уй́ти в отста́вку, и́бо то́го тре́бовала профе́ссиональная э́тика.

He was obliged to resign, since his professional ethics left him no choice.

NOTE When **та́к как** appears in the middle of a sentence, the comma is always placed before **так**. With **потому́ что** the comma normally precedes **потому́**, but it can be placed before **что** if the two elements of the conjunction are separated or if **потому́** is given particular emphasis; in the latter case it tends to be reinforced by a word such as **и́менно** or **как раз** 'precisely':

И́менно потому́, что э́тот фильм вы́звал сто́лько спо́ров, мы пригласи́ли его́ а́второв в студи́ю.

(It is) precisely because this film has stirred up so much debate (that) we have invited those who made it into the studio.

21.4.7 Talking about consequences

When talking about an action that is consequent on another action or state of affairs, **по́тому** 'therefore', 'that's why' can be used:

Он не о́чень доверя́л совреме́нным техноло́гиям, и по́тому ре́дко по́льзовался компью́тером.

He didn't much trust modern technology and therefore rarely used a computer.

Я хочу́, что́бы на́ша страна́ процвета́ла, что́бы все жи́ли хоро́шо. И́менно по́тому я пришёл в полити́ку.

I want our country to prosper, for everyone to live well. That's why I went into politics.

The expression **во́т и** can be used to indicate the consequence of an undesired action or state of affairs:

Я вчера́ подхвати́л просту́ду, во́т и сижу́ до́ма.

I caught a cold yesterday and that's why I'm stuck at home.

For more on the emphatic particles **во́т** and **и**, see **20.3.3**.

The conjunction that indicates consequence is **так что** '(and) so':

У меня́ за́втра экза́мен, так что́ се́годня́ приде́тся 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 in each case is real.

The following are examples of *unreal conditions*:

If it weren't raining, we might go for walk (but it is, so we can't).

If you had been here at the right time, you would have found out the right answer (but you weren't, so you didn't).

Here the possibility of it not raining at the time when the sentence is spoken or of the addressee being present when the right answer was revealed no longer exists.

21.5.1 Open conditions

The majority of *open conditions* refer to contingencies that may or may not arise in the future. For this reason the verb form that is most commonly used is the *future perfective*:

Если дашь мне очки, я прочитаю тебе его письмо.

If you pass me my glasses, I'll read you his letter.

Если я не сдам экзамен завтра, придётся пересдавать его осенью.

If I don't pass the exam tomorrow, I'll have to take it again in the autumn.

If the contingency is one that may occur regularly, the *future imperfective* is used:

Если вы постоянно будете опаздывать, то у вас будут серьёзные проблемы.

If you persist in being late, (then) you will have serious problems.

NOTES

- (i) The particle **то** is often used to join the two halves of a conditional sentence (cf. English 'then').
- (ii) In sentences referring to the future, the future tense is used in both halves of the sentences (unlike in English).

Where the contingency relates to the present or the past, the *present* or *past* tenses are used, as in English:

Если Маша работает в вечернюю смену, она ужинает в столовой.

(present tense)

If Masha is on the evening shift, she has her evening meal in the canteen.

Даже если он и 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, *распишитесь* здесь.
If everything is in order, sign here.

The *infinitive* is often used with *если* if the subject is not a specific person or persons:

Если *принять* во внимание все обстоятельства, то получается, что он всё-таки был прав.
If you take/one takes into account all the circumstances, it turns out he was right after all.

21.5.2 Unreal conditions

With *unreal conditions* the *conditional* (see 4.10) is used in both halves of the sentence:

Было бы очень приятно жить в Глазго, если бы климат тут был лучше.

It would be very pleasant living in Glasgow if the climate were a bit better (but see note (ii) below).

Если бы дождя не было, мы могли бы пойти гулять.
If it weren't raining, we might go for a walk.

Если бы ты рассказал мне всё, я бы помог тебе.
If you had told me everything, I would have helped you.

NOTES

- (i) The particle **бы** normally follows directly after *если*; in the other half of the sentence the word order is less fixed, but **бы** is most frequently placed either after the first stressed word or after the verb.
- (ii) In English unreal conditions, the verb distinguishes between present and past tense ('would' or 'would have'). In Russian, the verb does not distinguish tenses, but does distinguish between *imperfective* and *perfective aspects*. In many instances the imperfective aspect will correspond to the *present* in English and the perfective will correspond to the *past*, as in the second and third examples above. This is, however, not always the case, and sometimes it is necessary to consider the context to establish whether a Russian sentence refers to the past or the present. For example, in the first sentence above, the English translation given is appropriate if the speaker still lives in Glasgow and here the context is provided by the adverb **тут** 'here'; almost the same sentence could have been said by someone who no longer lives in that city, in which case the adverb would change to **там** 'there' and the translation would be:

It would have been very pleasant living in Glasgow if the climate had been better.

In unreal conditions *если бы* can sometimes be used simply with a noun, where it corresponds to the English 'If it were not for ...':

Если бы не дождь, мы могли бы пойти гулять.
If it were not for the rain, we might go for a walk.

It is important to note that the boundary between open and unreal conditions is much sharper in Russian than it is in English. In English the forms used for unreal conditions can also be used to indicate a condition which is tentative or which is unlikely to be fulfilled, as in the following example:

If it were to rain tomorrow, we would have to stay at home.

In Russian, the conditional is used only where it is totally impossible for a condition to be fulfilled. Here it is still possible that it might rain, and therefore in Russian this sentence would be treated as an open condition with the verbs in the *future tense*. If it is important to indicate the improbability or the tentative nature of the condition, this can be done with an adverb such as **случайно** ‘by any chance’, **вдруг** ‘suddenly’, ‘by some chance’ or **всё-таки** ‘after all’:

Если завтра будет дождь, придётся сидеть дома.

If it were to rain tomorrow, we would have to stay at home.

Если завтра вдруг пойдёт дождь, придётся сидеть дома.

If (by some chance) it were to rain tomorrow, we would have to stay at home.

Если завтра всё-таки будет дождь, придётся сидеть дома.

If (after all) it were to rain tomorrow, we would have to stay at home.

This situation can also arise in indirect speech. The sentence ‘He said he would come if he had time’ looks like an unreal condition, but the actual words being reported here are ‘I will come if I have time’ and therefore the condition is, in fact, an open one. In Russian, the future would therefore be used:

Он 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.

Не умри он пять лет назад, он был бы сейчас премьер-министром.

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:

Жарко покажется – открой окно.

If it seems hot, open a window.

Не уверен – не обгоняй.

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 поспешил бы отец на её образование, Лиза стала бы великой художницей.

If her father hadn’t skimped on her education, Liza would have become a great artist.

In more formal styles the preposition **при** (+ prep.) can be used with various abstract nouns to replace a clause with **если**:

При желании можно истратить на хороший сайт 10 000 долларов.
Should you wish to do so, you can spend \$10,000 on creating a good website.

При необходимости можно звонить в наш московский офис.
If the need arises, you can phone our Moscow office.

The phrase **в случае** corresponds to the English ‘in the event of’:

В случае пожара пользоваться лифтами запрещается.
In the event of fire it is forbidden to use the lifts.

21.6 Concessions

21.6.0 Introduction

Concession can be seen as the reverse of *condition* (21.5). Constructions involving concession are used when talking about something that happens *in spite of* a certain set of circumstances.

21.6.1 Making concessions using **несмотря на** (+ acc.), **вопреки** (+ dat.) or **при** (+ prep.)

The prepositional phrase **несмотря на** (+ acc.) corresponds to the English ‘in spite of’, ‘despite’:

Несмотря на ваш акцент я понимаю вас без всяких проблем.
In spite of your accent, I can understand you without any problems.

Несмотря на то, что corresponds to the English ‘in spite of the fact that’ or ‘in spite of’ when used with the ‘-ing’ form of the verb:

Несмотря на то, что вы читали его романы только в переводе, вы прекрасно знаете произведения Толстого.
In spite of the fact that you have read his novels only in translation, you have an excellent knowledge of the works of Tolstoi.
Or In spite of your having read his novels ...

Несмотря ни на что corresponds to the English ‘in spite of everything’, although only when it is used as a self-contained expression. When it is extended by another clause, **несмотря на всё (то), что** is used:

Она, несмотря ни на что, верила в светлое будущее человечества.
In spite of everything, she believed in a bright future for mankind.

Несмотря на всё (то), что с ней случилось, она не потеряла веры.
In spite of everything that had happened to her, she had not lost her faith.

The preposition **вопреки** (+ dat.) corresponds to the English ‘in spite of’, ‘contrary to’:

Это всё произошло вопреки моим желаниям.
It all happened contrary to my wishes.

The preposition **при** (+ prep.) corresponds to the English ‘for’ when used in the sense of ‘despite’:

Она поняла, что её муж, при всём своём таланте, 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 передачи всё-таки стараюсь не пропускать.

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’:

Хотя он и простил её, обида осталась.

Although he had forgiven her, the sense of grievance remained.

Мне бы очень хотелось, чтобы он победил, хотя шансов на это мало.

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 **иначе** correspond to the English ‘or else’:

Поторопись, а то опоздаешь.

Hurry up or else you'll be late.

Прое́кт дол́жен бы́ть сда́н в сро́к, и́на́че мы мо́жем лиши́ться финанси́рования.

The plan has to be submitted by the deadline, or else we might lose the money.

21.6.4

Talking about concessions: using a question word + **ни**

Another way of talking about concessions is to form a clause using a *question word* and the *particle* **ни**. The verb is normally in the *conditional* (see 4.10), especially if the reference is to hypothetical or generalised events:

Куда́ бы ты ни по́ехал, от воспомина́ний не убежи́шь.

Wherever you go, you won't escape your memories.

Где бы ты ни жи́л и ско́лько бы ты ни е́здил по све́ту, ты нико́гда не забу́дешь Пе́тербу́рг.

Wherever you live and however much you travel round the world, you'll never forget St Petersburg.

Каки́м бы спосо́бным он ни́ был, он вряд ли спра́вится с э́той зада́чей.

However capable he may be, he's unlikely to cope with this task.

Or Capable as he is ...

Что бы он ей ни говори́л, она́ все́гда́ посту́пала́ по-сво́ему.

No matter what he said to her, she still did whatever she wanted.

If the sentence refers to real, rather than to hypothetical events, the appropriate tense can be used:

Как её ни отгова́ривали, она́ все́ же вы́шла за него́ за́муж.

However much they tried to persuade her, she still married him.

Ско́лько он ни забива́ет на трениро́вках, тре́нер пока́ де́ржит его́ в запáсе.

However many goals he scores in training, the manager still keeps him on the bench.

The *future perfective* (see 4.4) or the *imperative* may be used in generalised statements, usually with a *second person singular verb*:

Что ни ска́жешь, ты все́ равно́ не убе́дишь его́.

Whatever you say, you won't convince him.

Or You can say what you like ...

Куда́ ни пое́дешь, от свои́х воспомина́ний не убежи́шь.

Wherever you go, you won't escape from your memories.

Or No matter where you go ...

Кого́ ни спроси́, все́ об э́том что́-то слы́шали.

It doesn't matter who you ask, everyone's heard something about it.

For the use of the second person singular in generalised statements, see 7.1.5.

For other uses of the particle **ни**, see 15.3.5.

21.7 Purpose

21.7.1 Talking about purpose using the prepositions **для** (+ gen.) and **на** (+ acc.)

To talk about the purpose served by a room or other space, or by a machine, a piece of equipment or similar object, the preposition **для** (+ gen.) is used:

Место для курения на первом этаже.

There is a place where you can smoke (*literally*, a place for smoking) on the ground floor.

У него в 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:

Может, я сбегая в магазин за хлебом?

Should I run out to the shops to buy some bread?

За билетом на этот концерт придётся стоять (в очереди) часа три, не меньше.

To get a ticket for that concert you'll have to queue for three hours, if not more.

Мы зайдём за тобой завтра в семь часов.

We'll come for you tomorrow at seven o'clock.

21.7.3 Talking about purpose using **чтобы** (+ infin.)

When talking about someone performing an action in order to achieve a particular aim or for a particular purpose, it is usually necessary to use a sentence made up of two clauses joined by the *conjunction* **чтобы**. If the subjects of the two clauses are the same, **чтобы** is followed by the *infinitive*:

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 рассказываю тебе всё это, *чтобы* ты знал всю правду о ситуации.
I'm telling you all this so that you know the whole truth about the situation.

It is possible to reinforce **чтобы** with **для того** or (less frequently) **с тем**:

Я расставил все ударения в тексте для того, *чтобы* тебе легче было 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', **остаться** '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.

Она́ была́ о́чень приле́жной, и *чтобы́* во́время *сда́ть* рабо́ту, приходи́ла в универси́тет да́же в те дни, ко́гда у неё не бы́ло заня́тий.

She was very conscientious and in order to hand in a piece of work on time would come in to the university even on days when she had no classes.

Она́ вы́шла из ко́мнаты, *чтобы́ не оказа́ться* в неудобно́м поло́жении.

She left the room in order not to find herself in an awkward situation.

21.7.5 The phrase с целью́

The phrase **с целью́** can be used to indicate purpose, especially in more formal levels of language. It can be followed by a *verb* in the *infinitive* or by a *noun* in the *genitive*:

Они́ ста́вили всё но́вые и но́вые усло́вия *с целью́* за́тяну́ть пере́говоро́ры.

They kept coming up with more and more conditions with the aim of stalling the negotiations.

Он прие́хал в Москву́ *с целью́* трудоустро́йства.

He came to Moscow with the aim of finding work.

21.8 Reporting the words of others

21.8.0 Introduction

There are two ways in which the words of others can be conveyed: *direct speech* means quoting the words of others word for word; *indirect speech* means that words are reported rather than quoted. There are two main forms of indirect speech: *indirect statements* and *indirect questions*.

21.8.1 Direct speech

Direct speech is used in ordinary spoken dialogue to create the effect of immediacy:

Зна́ешь, что он мне сказа́л? «Вы молоде́ц! Нам бы́ больше та́ких, как вы!»

You know what he said to me? ‘You’ve done really well! We could do with more like you!’

In written Russian, direct speech is used mostly, though by no means exclusively, in works of fiction to convey dialogue or the inner thoughts of a narrator. There are two points to note here.

The first is that where a piece of direct speech is followed by a verb indicating the speech act (e.g. **говори́ть/сказа́ть** ‘to say’, **спра́шивать/спроси́ть** ‘to ask’ or **отвеча́ть/ответи́ть** ‘to answer’), the verb always precedes the subject:

—Ты, ка́жется, всё зна́ешь, — сказа́л он.

—It seems you know everything, he said.

The second point concerns punctuation. *Inverted commas* are used when a piece of direct speech is contained within a paragraph; for more on Russian inverted commas, see 1.5.8. When, however, dialogue is set out in paragraphs, *dashes* are preferred:

Он встал и закури́л. «За́чем я э́то сде́лал?» — подумал он.

He got up and lit a cigarette. ‘What did I do that for?’ he wondered.

—Когда́ мы увидимся? – спроси́л он.

—Я рабо́таю до шести́, – отве́тила она́. – А пото́м я зайду́ в суперма́ркет.

—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 **говори́ть/сказа́ть** 'to say'. The conjunction corresponding to English 'that' is **что**:

Он говори́т, что никогда́ не ест ры́бы.

He says that he never eats fish.

Он сказа́л, что приде́т по́здно.

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 **говори́ть/сказа́ть**. These include:

заявля́ть/заяви́ть	to claim, to state, to declare
сообща́ть/сообщи́ть	to announce, to state
утвержда́ть (нсв)	to affirm, to state

Other verbs that can be used to introduce indirect statements include the following:

добавля́ть /доба́вить	to add
ду́мать/поду́мать	to think
крича́ть/закрича́ть	to shout
надея́ться	to hope
объясня́ть/объясни́ть	to explain
отвеча́ть/отве́тить	to answer
полага́ть (нсв)	to suppose, to think
понима́ть/пони́ять	to understand
предполага́ть/предположи́ть	to assume
счита́ть (нсв)	to consider, to think
шепта́ть/прошепта́ть	to whisper

In English, it is sometimes possible to omit the conjunction 'that'; in Russian **что** cannot be left out:

Он сказа́л, что понима́ет моё поло́жение.

He said that he understands my position.

Or, He said he understands my position.

When, however, the verb that introduces the indirect speech is in the present tense, it can be placed inside the speech being reported. In the written language, it is separated from the rest of the sentence by commas:

Он, говори́т, понима́ет моё поло́жение.

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 **дэскать**:

Он, мол, зарабатывает миллион рублей в год.
He claims to earn a million roubles a year.

Она, мол де, театральный режиссёр.
She claims to be a theatre director.

Он, дэскать, никогда не работал в КГБ.
He claims he never worked for the KGB.

A stronger degree of disbelief is indicated by the particle **якобы**:

Он уверял, что он, якобы, не работал 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 спросил, можно ли здесь купить проездной билет.
He asked if/whether it was possible to buy a season ticket here.

Он спросил, не знаю ли я, где ты живёшь.
He asked me if/whether I knew where you lived.

For the use of the negative question, see 17.1.3.

For more on the particle **ли**, see 17.1.2.

The particle **ли** invariably follows the first stressed word of the question being reported. Normally, this is the verb, as in the two examples above, but occasionally if some other part of the sentence forms the focus of the question, this can be placed at the beginning of the clause instead:

Он спросил, в понедельник ли ты приехал.

He asked if/whether it was on Monday that you arrived.

It is important to distinguish between ‘if’ used to introduce an indirect question (where the Russian equivalent is **ли**) and ‘if’ used to form a conditional sentence (where the Russian equivalent is **если**; see 21.5). It is particularly important not to confuse **если** (in a condition) with **есть ли** (in an indirect question):

Я всегда спрашиваю кого-нибудь, если я что-то не понимаю.

I always ask someone if there’s something I don’t understand. (condition)

Она спросила, есть ли у меня лишний билет.

She asked if/whether I had a spare ticket. (indirect question)

As a general rule, where ‘if’ can be replaced by ‘whether’, it is being used to introduce an indirect question, and the Russian equivalent will be **ли**.

Other words that can be used to introduce indirect questions include the following:

интересно (бы знать)	I wonder, it would be interesting to know
интересоваться/поинтересоваться	to ask, to enquire
осведомляться/осведомиться	to enquire (formal)
справляться/справиться	to enquire

Indirect questions can also be formed using the various interrogative words described in 17.3:

Я спросил его, с кем он был вчера на приёме.

I asked him who he was with at the reception yesterday.

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 спрошú его, знает ли он, который час.
I'll ask him if he knows what time it is.

Я спросил его, знает ли он, который час.
I asked him if he knew what time it was.

In English, when conditions appear in indirect speech, the application of this rule has the effect of appearing to turn open conditions into unreal conditions (*see 21.5.2*):

He says that if he doesn't pass the exam tomorrow, he'll have to take it again in the autumn.

He said that if he didn't pass the exam tomorrow, he would have to take it again in the autumn.

In each case, however, the original words spoken were:

If I don't pass the exam tomorrow, I'll have to take it again in the autumn.

In the Russian equivalents of both sentences, therefore, the verbs in the indirect speech would be in the *future perfective*.

The original words were:

Если я не сдам экзамен завтра, придётся пересдавать его осенью.
If I don't pass the exam tomorrow, I'll have to take it again in the autumn.

The equivalents in indirect speech are:

Он говорит, что если он не сдаст экзамен завтра, придётся пересдавать его осенью.
He says that if he doesn't pass the exam tomorrow, he'll have to take it again in the autumn.

Он сказа́л, что е́сли он не *сдаст* экза́мен за́втра, *приде́тся* пересдава́ть его́ о́сенью.

He said that if he didn't pass the exam tomorrow, he would have to take it again in the autumn.

21.9 Comparisons

21.9.0 Introduction

Constructions indicating comparison are used to indicate that two people, objects or qualities are the same or similar or, alternatively, that they differ from each other in one way or another.

21.9.1 Making comparisons using the short comparative form of adjectives and adverbs

Comparative adjectives and *adverbs* are used when talking about different degrees of the quality indicated by the adjective or adverb concerned. The *short comparative form* of the adjective is mostly used with *predicative* adjectives, that is, those that occur in conjunction with the verb **быть**:

For more on predicative adjectives, *see* 6.0.

For the formation of the short comparative, *see* 6.8.1.

Да, ты прав: 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-мо́ему красные яблоки вкуснее зелёных.

I think red apples are tastier than green ones.

Она́ говорит по-ру́сски лучше меня́.

She speaks Russian better than I do.

When the short comparative follows the noun, the *genitive* can be used if the person or object being compared is in the *accusative*:

Я найду́ гостиницу почище 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 водка дороже, чем в России.

Vodka is more expensive in England than in Russia.

Она́ говорит по-ру́сски лучше, чем в прошлом году́.

She speaks Russian better than she did last year.

Он моложе, 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:

Москва́ старше Санкт-Петербу́рга, но многие счита́ют, что Петербу́рг красивее, чем Москва́.

Moscow is older than St Petersburg, but many people think that St Petersburg is more beautiful than Moscow.

Наша ко́мната светлее́, 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:

Она́ на два го́да ста́рше меня́.

She's two years older than me.

Доро́га на метро́ занима́ет на полча́са ме́ньше, чем на авто́бусе.

The journey by metro takes half an hour less than by bus.

To indicate 'a lot (more)' **гора́здо**, **намно́го** or **значи́тельно** can be used:

Она́ гора́здо си́льнее́ в хи́мии, чем в матема́тике.

She's a lot better at chemistry than at maths.

Эта́ зада́ча мно́го сло́жнее́, чем ка́жется на пе́рвый взгляд.

This task is a lot more complicated than it looks at first sight.

Для амери́канских студе́нтов ру́сский язы́к значи́тельно трудно́е, чем испанский.

For American students, Russian is much more difficult than Spanish.

In informal language, **мно́го** or **куда́** are sometimes used instead of **намно́го**; **куда́** adds an extra degree of expressiveness to the comparison:

Да, это́ уже́ мно́го лу́чше.

Yes, that's already a lot better.

Сейча́с у нас усло́вия куда́ лу́чше, чем год наза́д.

Conditions now are a whole lot better than they were a year ago.

21.9.4

Other uses of short comparative forms

The forms **бо́льше** or **бо́лее** 'more' and **ме́ньше** or **ме́нее** 'less' are, like their English equivalents, used in a wide range of contexts:

Она́ говори́т по-ру́сски лу́чше меня́, но я пони́маю бо́льше.

She speaks Russian better than I do, but I understand more.

У меня́ с собо́й бо́лее пяти́со́т рубле́й.

I've got more than 500 roubles on me.

Эта́ маши́на сто́ит мно́го ме́ньше, чем я ожида́л.

This car costs a lot less than I expected.

Е́сли хоте́те поху́де́ть, необходи́мо ме́ньше есть и вести́ здоро́вый о́браз жи́зни.

If you want to lose weight, you need to eat less and lead a healthy life.

NOTES

- (i) In this usage **бо́льше** is interchangeable with **бо́лее** and **ме́ньше** with **ме́нее** when they occur in quantity expressions (as in the second example). Otherwise, **бо́льше** and **ме́ньше** are preferred. Only **бо́лее** and **ме́нее** 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), **бо́льше/бо́лее** and **ме́ньше/ме́нее**, when used in this sense, are not found in contexts where they would be required to be in a case other than the nominative or accusative, or where they would occur after a preposition. In most situations, this difficulty can be overcome by reformulating the sentence in such a way as to make the problem disappear. For example, in a context where an English-speaker might say: 'I left the house with less money than I thought', a Russian might prefer:

Ока́зывается, у меня́ с собо́й ме́ньше де́нег, чем я ду́мал.

Literally, It turns out that I have less money on me than I thought.

The Russian equivalent of ‘the more ... the more’ is **чем** + comparative ... **тем** + comparative:

Чем громче она говорила, тем хуже он понимал смысл её слов.

The louder she spoke, the less he understood what she was saying
(literally, the worse he understood the sense of her words).

The useful phrase **тем более (что)** corresponds to the English ‘all the more so (because)’, ‘especially (because)’, although it is used more frequently than the English equivalents:

Она не очень хотела оставаться дома, тем более что по телевизору нечего было смотреть.

She didn’t particularly want to stay at home especially since there was nothing to watch on television.

—**Не хочешь пойти в кино сегодня вечером?**

—**Не очень.**

—**Идёт какой-то новый боевик.**

—**Тогда тем более.**

—Do you want to go to the cinema tonight?

—Not particularly.

—They’re showing some new thriller.

—In that case I want to even less.

21.9.5 Making comparisons using the long comparative form of adjectives

The *long form* of the comparative is used with *attributive adjectives*, that is, those that form part of a single phrase with the nouns they qualify (see 6.0).

For the formation of the long form of the comparative, see 6.8.2.

Я нашёл для тебя более интересную книгу.

I’ve found you a more interesting book.

Мы оказались в более серьёзной ситуации, чем можно было предположить.

We’re in a more serious situation than could have been expected.

Наша группа применяет более тонкую методику опроса общественного мнения.

Our group uses a more subtle method of surveying public opinion.

The long form of the comparative can also be used with *predicative adjectives*. The long form must be used with those adjectives that do not have a *short comparative*.

For adjectives that do not have a short comparative form, see 6.8.1.

Наша страна сегодня более демократическая, но менее стабильная, чем тридцать лет назад.

Our country today is more democratic, but less stable than it was thirty years ago.

Было бы лучше, если бы его выступления в Думе были *более краткими, но более содержательными*.

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 куплю себе машину побольше.

In the New Year I'm going to buy myself a bigger car.

21.9.6 Indicating a lesser degree

To indicate a comparison of a lesser degree *мéнее* is used with a *long adjective* or with an *adverb*:

Эта книга мéнее интересная, чем я думал.

This book is less interesting than I thought.

Or This book is not as interesting as I thought (it would be).

Наша страна сегодня более демократическая, но мéнее стабильная, чем тридцать лет назад.

Our country is more democratic, but less stable than it was thirty years ago.

Они переехали в более просторную, но мéнее удобную квартиру.

They moved into a bigger, but less comfortable flat.

Они понимает по-русски лучше меня, но говорит мéнее свободно.

She understands Russian better than I do, but speaks it less fluently.

21.9.7 Indicating ‘the same’

The Russian for ‘the same’ is **тот же (са́мый)**:

For the declension of **тот**, see 7.3.1.

For the declension of **са́мый**, see 7.8.2.

Ока́зывается, мы учи́лись в том же (са́мом) университе́те.
It turns out we studied at the same university.

NOTE The use of **са́мый** in this construction is optional.

Тот же (without **са́мый**) is often reinforced by **один и** (cf. English ‘one and the same’):

Мы ка́ждый раз ста́лкиваемся с одной и той же пробле́мой.
Every time we come up against (one and) the same problem.

Он приходи́т ка́ждый день в одно́ и то же вре́мя.
He arrives every day at (exactly) the same time.

NOTE The phrase **в то же вре́мя** tends to mean ‘at the same time’ in the sense of ‘and yet’:

Они научи́лись де́лать надёжные и в то же вре́мя недоро́гие маши́ны.
They have learned how to make cars that are reliable, but at the same time inexpensive.

The equivalent of ‘the same’ in the sense of ‘of the same sort as’ is **тако́й же**:

У меня́ до́ма есть тако́е же пла́тье.
I have the same dress at home.

The Russian equivalent of ‘the same ... as’ is usually **тот же (са́мый) ... что и**:

У меня́ та же са́мая информа́ция, что и у вас.
I have the same information as you (do).

If the comparison involves locations, **где** is sometimes used instead of **что**:

Я покупа́ю проду́кты в тех же магази́нах, где и все.
I buy my groceries in the same shops as everybody else.

The equivalent of ‘the same’ when it is used adverbially (in the sense of ‘in the same way’) is often **одина́ково**:

Эти слова́ произно́сятся одина́ково, но различа́ются в написа́нии.
These words are pronounced the same, but differ in their spelling.

21.9.8 Indicating similarity

The adjective that corresponds to ‘similar (to)’ is **похо́жий (на + acc.)**:

У нас с тобо́й похо́жие интере́сы.
We have similar interests.

Мой брат о́чень похо́ж на меня́.
My brother looks very like me.

NOTE When used *predicatively* (as in the second example), **похо́жий** is almost always in the *short form*.

When introducing a sentence, **похо́же (что)** means ‘it looks as if’:

Похо́же, его́ сегодня́ уже́ не бу́дет.

It looks as if he won’t be here today.

Похо́же, что он нас обма́нул.

It looks as if he’s tricked us.

The conjunction that introduces comparisons is **как**:

Я голо́дный как волк.

I’m as hungry as a lion (*literally*, as a wolf).

Эта де́вочка танцу́ет, как прирождённая балери́на.

This girl dances like a natural ballerina.

The conjunction **как** is also used after a clause containing **тако́й** (see 7.3.3) or **так** (see 9.1.6):

Она́ тако́я же делови́тая и неутомиа́мая, как и её ма́ть.

She’s as efficient and as tireless as her mother.

Так же как и в про́шлом году́ наш ново́годний кон́церт состои́тся второ́го янва́ря.

Just as last year, our New Year concert will take place on 2 January.

For the form of the date, see 19.3.3.

21.9.9 Indicating difference

The adjective **друго́й** means ‘different’ in the sense of ‘another’:

Е́сли тебе́ не нра́вится э́та руба́шка, я могу́ надеть дру́гую́.

If you don’t like this shirt, I can put a different one on.

Ино́й can be used in formal language with the same meaning:

У меня́ дру́гая/иная́ то́чка зре́ния на э́тот вопро́с.

I have a different opinion on this question (e.g. from you).

The adjective **ра́зный** means ‘different’ (e.g. from each other):

У них ра́зные то́чки зре́ния на э́тот вопро́с.

They have different views on this question (i.e. from each other).

В ра́зных уче́бниках ты найдёшь ра́зные отве́ты на э́тот вопро́с.

In different textbooks you’ll find different answers to this question.

Ра́зный also means ‘different’ in the sense of ‘various’, ‘all kinds of’:

Здесь прода́ют ра́зные сорта́ чёрного и зелёного ча́я.

They sell different kinds of black and green tea here.

In formal language **разли́чный** also occurs; **разли́чный**, unlike **ра́зный**, has a *short form* (see 6.5):

Эти фе́рмеры применя́ют разли́чные удо́брения – отсю́да и разли́чные урожа́н.

These farmers use different fertilisers and thus obtain different yields.

Эти сочинения абсолютно различны как по стилю, так и по композиции.

These works are totally different, both in style and in the manner of composition.

Отличаться от (+ gen.) means ‘to differ from’; **различаться** means ‘to differ’ (e.g. from each other):

Его вторая книга отличается от первой тем, что она более серьёзная.

His second book differs from the first in that it is more serious.

Эти слова произносятся одинаково, но различаются в написании.

These words are pronounced the same, but differ in their spelling.

The nouns **разница** and **различие** both mean ‘difference’. The former is generally more common, but is only ever used in the singular; if a plural form is needed, the latter must be used:

Какая разница между его ответом и вашим?

What’s the difference between his answer and yours?

Какие различия можно найти между английским оригиналом и русским переводом?

What differences can you find between the English original and the Russian translation?

The equivalent of ‘unlike’, when used as a preposition, is **в отличие от** (+ gen.):

В отличие от тебя я никогда не был в России.

Unlike you, I have never been to Russia.

In other senses, the equivalent of ‘unlike’ is often **не похожий**:

Он совсем не похож на своего брата.

He is quite unlike his brother.

Я не 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 неуклюже, стесняясь, краснея, но искренне.

He answered awkwardly, nervously, blushing, but sincerely.

More frequently, however, gerunds are used to form complex sentences. In many instances these are similar in meaning to those formed with a *conjunction* and a *finite verb* and described earlier in this chapter (*see* 21.1.5, 21.1.11, 21.4.6, 21.5.1 and 21.6.3). Unlike clauses formed with a conjunction and finite verb, gerund clauses are normally possible only when the *grammatical subject* of the *main clause* and the *gerund clause* are the

same. Gerunds occur rarely in speech, but are widely used in almost all forms of written language.

21.10.1 Using the imperfective gerund without negation

The *imperfective gerund* is used when the actions indicated by the main clause and the gerund clause take place at the same time. Sometimes the clause introduced by the gerund is similar to an adverb in that it describes the manner in which a particular action is carried out:

Стараясь не задевать мебель, они протиснулись в маленькую комнату.
Trying not to bump into the furniture, they squeezed their way into the small room.

Приветливо улыбаясь, она предложила гостям снять пальто и пройти в гостиную.
With a smile of greeting, she invited her visitors to remove their coats and go through into the living-room.

In other contexts, a gerund clause is used in place of a subordinate clause of time, reason, condition or concession:

Он неторопливо пил кофе, время от времени поглядывая на часы.
He drank his coffee slowly, looking at his watch from to time.

Понимая, что шансов нет, они отозвали свой иск.
Since they realise they have no chance of winning, they have withdrawn their case.

Они видели друг друга только случайно, сталкиваясь в коридоре или в столовой.
They only saw each other by chance, if (or when) they met in the corridor or in the canteen.

—Понятия не имею, — сказала она, прекрасно зная ответ на его вопрос.
—I haven't the slightest idea, she said, although she knew perfectly well what the answer to his question was.

21.10.2 Using the imperfective gerund with negation

The *negated present gerund* usually functions as an adverb, describing the manner in which an action is carried out:

Он стоял, не зная, что ей сказать.
He stood there, not knowing what to say to her.

Often it corresponds to the English 'without ... -ing':

Он слушал её внимательно, не прерывая и не задавая вопросов.
He listened to her carefully, without interrupting and without asking any questions.

Occasionally, it can correspond to the English 'before':

Проверяйте сдачу, не отходя от кассы.
Check your change before moving away from the cash-desk.

21.10.3 Using the perfective gerund

The *perfective gerund* is normally used when the action denoted by the gerund *precedes* the action indicated by the main verb. For this reason, the relationship between the two parts of the sentence is usually one of *time*:

Взяв её руки в свои, он стал нежно целовать её пальцы.

Taking her hands in his, he started gently kissing her fingers.

Прочитав эту статью, он решил немедленно написать в редакцию.

Having read the article, he decided to write (a letter) to the editor immediately.

Вернувшись домой, он вошёл в кухню и поставил чайник.

Returning home, he went into the kitchen and put the kettle on.

NOTE In the English equivalents of such gerund clauses, it may sometimes be preferable to use a present, rather than a past tense form.

Sometimes, past gerunds can be used to express conditions:

Как должен поступить гражданин, оказавшись в подобной ситуации?

How should someone act if they find themselves in a situation like this?

The use of *negated past gerunds* is similar to that of negated present gerunds, except that the action indicated by the gerund is one that would have preceded the action indicated by the main verb:

Он вошёл, не постучав в дверь.

He came in without knocking at the door.

The main difference between the two gerund forms is one of *aspect*, rather than one of *tense*, and on occasion it is possible to find the perfective gerund used when the actions indicated by the gerund and the main verb appear to be simultaneous. This is when attention is focused on the *totality* or *outcome* of the action indicated by the gerund, rather than on the *process*.

For the use of the perfective aspect to focus on completion, *see* 5.2.4.

Что ни говори, она правильно поступила, выйдя замуж за Колью.

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**-type and **ходить**-type verbs (after the first pair of verbs in the following table).

22.1.1 The fourteen pairs of imperfective verbs of motion

	<i>Unidirectional</i>	<i>Multidirectional</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
1	идти́	ходить	to go (on foot), to walk
2	ехать́	ездить	to go (by transport), to travel, to ride
3	бежать	бегать	to run
4	лететь	летать	to fly
5	плыть	плавать	to swim, to sail
6	лезть	лазить	to climb
7	ползти́	ползать	to crawl
8	бродить	бродить	to wander
9	нести́	носить	to carry (on foot)

	<i>Unidirectional</i>	<i>Multidirectional</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
10	вести́	води́ть	to lead, to take (a person or an animal, on foot)
11	везти́	вози́ть	to take, to transport (by vehicle)
12	гнать	гона́ть	to chase
13	тащи́ть	таска́ть	to pull, to drag
14	кати́ть	ката́ть	to roll

In the above table verbs in rows 1–8 are *intransitive*; verbs in rows 9–14 are *transitive*. The verbs in rows 1–5 and 9–11 are the most frequently used and the most important.

Information on the conjugation of these verbs is given in the appropriate sections of **Chapter 4**.

For more on transitive and intransitive verbs, *see* 4.13.

22.1.2 Perfective partners for unprefixated verbs of motion

Perfective partners for *unprefixated verbs of motion* are formed by adding *prefixes*.

To form the perfective partner of *unidirectional* verbs the prefix **по-** is added:

идти́	пойти́
ехать	поехать
бежать	побежать
вести	повести́
везти́	повезти́

Various perfective partners of *multidirectional* verbs can be formed by adding different prefixes; the most important of these are **с-**, **по-** and **за-**:

ходить	сходить, походить, заходить
ездить	съездить, поездить, заездить
бегать	сбегать, побегать, забегать
возить	свозить, повозить, завозить

NOTE Many of the theoretically possible perfective partners of multidirectional verbs are never used in practice.

The specific meanings and the use of these perfective forms will be described in the following sections.

22.1.3 Talking about motion in one direction

To talk about motion taking place in one direction the *unidirectional* verbs are used. They often, though not always, correspond to the English continuous present (I am going, etc.):

Приве́т, куда́ бежи́шь?

Hi, where are you dashing off to?

Бежу́ в университет, опаздываю на ле́кцию.

I'm running to the university: I'm going to be late for my lecture.

В данный момент я иду по вашей улице, буду у вас через пять минут.
At the moment I'm walking along your street; I'll be with you in five minutes.

Куда ведёт эта дорога?
Where does this road lead to?

Папы нет дома сейчас; он везёт сестру из музыкальной школы.
Dad's not at home at the moment; he's bringing my sister home from music school (by car).

22.1.4 Talking about motion in more than one direction

Motion in more than one direction or motion in no particular direction is indicated using *multidirectional* verbs:

Отсюда видно, как над озером летают чайки.
From here you can see the seagulls flying above the lake.

После двенадцати ночи городской транспорт уже не ходит.
Public transport no longer runs after midnight.

Он уже полчаса ходит взад и вперёд по улице: видимо, кого-то ждёт.
He's been walking up and down the street for the last half hour; he must be waiting for someone.

Целый час мы ползали с сыном по пляжу – искали мои часы, но так и не нашли.

My son and I spent a whole hour crawling all over the beach; we were looking for my watch, but we never managed to find it.

В России они ездили на этой машине.
When they were in Russia they travelled around in this car.

Multidirectional verbs also indicate the ability to perform a particular type of action:

Я не умею плавать и вообще боюсь воды.
I can't swim and am totally afraid of water.

Нашему сыночку 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.

После обеда дети обычно бегали в парке.

After lunch, the children would often run around in the park.

For the use of prepositions indicating location, destination and starting point, *see* 21.2.

If, however, the repeated or habitual direction being described is specifically in one direction, a *unidirectional* verb will be used:

Часы пик – это время, когда люди едут на работу или с работы.

Peak hours are the times when people are travelling either to their work or from their work. [In this sentence the journeys to and from work are viewed as separate events.]

22.1.6 Talking about a single event in the past

To describe a single event in the past there are several possibilities with subtle, but clear differences in meaning and use.

The *imperfective past tense* of the *unidirectional* verb is used when attention is focused on the *process* of a single journey in one direction, especially a journey that is in process when something else happens:

Мы ехали к вам сначала на метро, потом на электричке.

To get to you, we travelled first on the metro and then on a suburban train.

Я как раз вела дочку в садик, когда случилась эта авария у светофора.

I was taking my daughter to kindergarten when the accident happened at the traffic lights.

NOTE Russian distinguishes between **поезд**, a long-distance train, usually with sleeping accommodation, and **электричка**, a suburban (electric) train.

The *perfective past tense* of *unidirectional* verbs is used when the focus is on the *beginning* of the action or a *change* in the direction or pace of the motion being described:

—А где Иван?

—Он пошёл в поликлинику.

—Where's Ivan?

—He's gone to the polyclinic (i.e. we know he has set off, but not what has happened after that).

Как только загорелся жёлтый, она сразу включила скорость и поехала.

As soon as the light changed to amber, she engaged gear and drove off.

С наступлением оттепели по Неве поплыли крупные льдины.

With the arrival of the thaw, large blocks of ice start coming down the Neva.

Собака какое-то время бежала за нами, но, услышав голос хозяина, побежала обратно.

The dog chased after us for a while, but hearing the voice of its master, ran back (to him).

Выехав на шоссе, он поехал быстрее.

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*:

Это что за пакеты на полу? Ты что, ходила в магазин?

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 *с-* are also used to describe a single round trip, but they also convey the notion that the trip was unimportant or of short duration:

Когда оказалось, что нечем зажечь свечи, я быстренько сбегал 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 *по-* are used to denote an action (motion in more than one direction) that was carried out for a short time, usually as part of a sequence of actions:

После работы я поплавала в бассейне, а потом пошла домой.

After work, I went for a swim in the baths and then went home.

Он несколько минут походил по двору, а потом, наконец, отважился позвонить в дверь.

He walked up and down the courtyard for a few minutes, but finally plucked up courage to ring the doorbell.

Perfectives with the prefix *за-* are used to focus on the start of an action (motion in more than one direction):

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 иду́ на у́лицу – заодно́ могу́ вы́нести мусор.

I'm going out: I can take the rubbish out at the same time.

В сле́дующую пя́тницу я лечу́ в Москву́: племя́нник же́нится.

I'm flying to Moscow next Friday; my nephew's getting married.

The *perfective future* forms of *multidirectional* verbs convey the same shades of meaning as the corresponding *past tense* forms:

Что я бу́ду де́лать в воскресе́нье? Попла́ваю в бассе́йне, поброжу́ по парку, схожу́ в кино́.

What am I going to do on Sunday? I'll go for a swim in the baths, wander round the park for a bit and go to the cinema.

Мо́жет, я сбéгаю за хле́бом?

Shall I run out and buy some bread?

22.1.8

Instructions, prohibitions and exhortations

Instructions relating to coming and going are usually given using the *imperative* of the *unidirectional* verb:

Иди́те к нему́.

Go and see him.

Поезжа́й на да́чу.

Go to the dacha.

Веди́те её в музе́й.

Take her to the museum.

Prohibitions, however, are normally issued using the *multidirectional* verb:

Не ходи́те к нему́. К нему́ нельзя́ ходи́ть.

Don't go and see him. You can't go and see him.

Не э́зди на да́чу. Не на́до туда́ э́здить.

Don't go to the dacha. You shouldn't go there.

Не води́те её в музе́й.

Don't take her to the museum.

The *unidirectional* verb is used if the prohibition relates an action already in progress:

Не беги́, у нас ещё́ есть вре́мя.

Don't run, we've still got time.

Не веди́ маши́ну так бли́зко к обо́чине.

Don't drive so close to the curb.

The *plural past perfective* forms **пошли́** and **по́ехали** correspond to the English exhortation 'let's go':

Все гото́вы? Ну, тогда́ по́ехали.

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 **идти́** takes a prefix, the *infinitive* changes to **-йти** and the corresponding *future tense* forms to **-ду**, **-дёшь** etc.:

войти́	to enter	войду́, войдёшь
подойти́	to approach	подойду́, подойдёшь

However, note the following:

выйти́	to go out, to come out	выйду́, выйдёшь
прийти́	to come, to arrive	приду́, придёшь

For more on the stress of perfective verbs with the prefix **вы-**, see 4.2.4.

Imperfective verbs are formed in some instances by adding a prefix to the *multidirectional* verb. In other instances, the imperfective verb is related to the multidirectional verb, but has either a different *suffix* or a different *stress*.

The following table illustrates the formation of aspect pairs of *prefixed verbs of motion*. Instances where the prefixed form differs from the unprefixed form are given in *italics*:

<i>Imperfective</i>		<i>Perfective</i>
-ходить		-йти́
входить	to enter	войти́
<i>-езжа́ть</i>		-е́хать
<i>уезжа́ть</i>	to leave, to go away	уе́хать
<i>-бега́ть</i>		-бежа́ть
<i>выбега́ть</i>	to run out	выбежа́ть
-лета́ть		-лете́ть
прилета́ть	to arrive (flying)	прилете́ть
<i>-плыва́ть</i>		-плыть
<i>переплыва́ть</i>	to swim across	переплы́ть
<i>-леза́ть</i>		-лезть
<i>слеза́ть</i>	to climb down	слезть
<i>-полза́ть</i>		-ползти́
<i>подполза́ть</i>	to crawl up to	подползти́
<i>-бредать</i>		-брести́
<i>забредать</i>	to wander off, to drop in	забрести́

<i>Imperfective</i>		<i>Perfective</i>
-носить		-нести
приносить	to bring (carrying)	принести
-возить		-везти
подвозить	to give someone a lift	подвезти
-водить		-вести
сводить	to bring (people) together	свести
-гонять		-гнать
загонять	to corral	загнать
-тащить		-тащить
вытащить	to drag out	вытащить
-катывать		-катить
прокатывать	to roll (past)	прокатить

22.2.2 Examples of prefixed verbs of motion

The following examples illustrate the use of *imperfective* and *perfective* pairs of *prefixed verbs of motion*:

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 захопали 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 воробья.

I set up a bird table in the garden and two sparrows immediately flew towards it.

Многие птицы имеют способность *уводить* хищника подальше от своих птенцов.

Many birds have the ability to lead a predator away from their young.

Пошёл дождь, и родители *увели* детей с игровой площадки.

It started to rain and the parents removed their children from the playground.

Весной многие хозяйки имеют обыкновение *выносить* подушки на просушку.

In spring, many housewives follow the practice of putting their pillows out to air.

Ты не мог бы *вынести* мусор?

Would you mind taking the rubbish out?

It is important to distinguish the *perfective* verbs *заходить*, *сходить*, which are perfective partners of the *multidirectional* verb *ходить*, from the *imperfective* verbs *заходить*,

сходить, which are imperfective partners of **зайти** ‘to drop in’, ‘to go behind’ and **сойти** ‘to come/go down’ respectively.

Прочитав письмо, он нервно заходил (св) по комнате.

Having read the letter, he began to walk nervously up and down the room.

По дороге домой он иногда заходил (нсв) в небольшое кафе на углу.

On the way home he sometimes dropped in to a small café on the corner.

Нечем зажечь свечи – придётся сходить (св) в киоск за спичками.

There’s nothing to light the candles with; somebody will have to go to the kiosk for matches.

Кататься на лыжах здесь стало опасно – начали сходить (нсв) снежные лавины.

It’s become dangerous to ski here; avalanches have started to occur (*literally*, come down).

22.2.3

Correlation between prefix and preposition

There is generally a high degree of correlation between the *prefixes* attached to verbs of motion and the *prepositions* used before *nouns* and *pronouns* to indicate destination, point of departure or an object encountered en route. The following are the correlations that occur most often:

<i>Prefix</i>	<i>Preposition (destination)</i>	<i>Prefix</i>	<i>Preposition (point of departure)</i>
при-	в/на	вы-	из
по-	в/на	у-	из
под-	к	с(о)-	с(о)
за-	к		
			<i>Preposition (object encountered en route)</i>
за-	в/на	о/об(о)-	вокруг ‘around’
		про-	мимо ‘past’/через ‘across’/сквозь ‘through’
		пере-	через

Она приехала в Россию.

She arrived in Russia.

Она пришла на лекцию.

She came to the lecture.

Она уехала из России.

She left Russia.

Он выполз 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

Он перевёл слепого через дорогу.
He took the blind man across the road.

In a number of instances the *prefix* and the *preposition* are identical:

Он зашёл за угол.
He went round the corner.

Отойди от края платформы: электричка идёт.
Move away from the edge of the platform: there's a train coming.

Когда мы въехали в город, была уже глубокая ночь.
When we drove into the city, it was already late at night.

Он доплыл до берега.
He swam as far as the shore.

Она слетела с крыши.
It (e.g. a bird) flew down from the roof.

Он внёс чемодан в дом.
He carried the suitcase into the house.

А за что, собственно, Бог изгнал из Рая Адама и Еву?
And why, exactly, did God expel Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden?

22.3

Verbs of motion used in figurative expressions and idioms

22.3.0

Introduction

Verbs of motion are used in a wide range of figurative expressions and idioms, which often have nothing obvious to do with movement. When such expressions involve *unprefixed verbs of motion*, then either only the *unidirectional* verb or (less often) only the *multidirectional* verb can be used.

22.3.1

Figurative expressions with unidirectional verbs of motion

The verb **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:

идёт дождь	it's raining
идёт снег	it's snowing

The verb **идти** is also used to convey the idea of something suiting someone or going well with something else:

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:

время идёт	time is passing
время бежит/летит	time flies
время ползёт	time is dragging

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 летят (к чёрту). (informal)
All our plans are up the spout.

У этой собаки лезет шерсть.
That dog is losing its fur.

Не лезь в драку.
Don't get involved in that fight.

Мы несём ответственность за это.
We have responsibility for this.

Что за ахинёю ты несёшь? (informal)
What rubbish are you talking now?

У меня от всего этого крыша едет. (informal)
All this is driving me round the bend.

For the use of **везти/повезти** as an impersonal verb in sentences describing someone's luck, see 3.4.3.

22.3.2 Figurative expressions with multidirectional verbs of motion

There are fewer figurative expressions involving multidirectional verbs.

The verb **носить** can mean 'to wear' (on a regular basis):

Молодёжь носит джинсы.
Young people wear jeans.

Я забыл, что она обычно носит очки.
I'd forgotten that she usually wears glasses.

There is no verb in Russian that corresponds to English 'to be wearing' (on a particular occasion). Instead, prepositional phrases are used:

Сегодня на нём чёрный свитер и серые брюки.
Today he's wearing a black pullover and grey trousers
(literally, On him there is ...).

На балу́ то́лько она́ одна́ была́ в кра́сном.

She was the only person wearing red (*literally*, in red) at the ball.

The *transitive* verb **катать/покатать** 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:

Оте́ц ката́л нас на ка́тере.

Our father used to take us out for rides in his boat.

Мо́жет, поката́емся на твоёй но́вой маши́не?

Can we go for a spin in your new car?

Шко́льные кани́кулы я обы́чно проводи́л в дере́вне; ката́лся на ло́шади, на ло́дке, на мото́цикле и да́же води́л грузо́вик.

I usually spent my school holidays in the country; I would go horse-riding and boating, would ride on a motorbike and even drove a lorry.

Кататься/покататься is also used in certain set phrases:

ката́ться/поката́ться на ко́ньках to go skating

ката́ться/поката́ться на лы́жах to go skiing

ката́ться/поката́ться на са́нках to go sledging

22.4

Other issues relating to coming and going

22.4.1

Coming and going

In general, Russian does not distinguish between ‘coming’ and ‘going’ when these relate simply to the direction of movement:

Извини́те за опозда́ние, мо́жно войти́?

I’m sorry for being late; may I come in?

Туда́ *входить* нельзя́: идёт уро́к.

You can’t go in there: there’s a lesson taking place.

Когда́ на а́рену *вышли* кло́уны, де́ти захло́пали в ладо́ши.

When the clowns came out into the ring, all the children started to applaud.

Не зна́ю, где он; мо́жет быть, *вышел* покури́ть.

I don’t know where he is; he may have gone outside for a smoke.

Тише́, идёт учи́тель.

Be quiet; the teacher’s coming.

To correspond to ‘coming’ in the sense of ‘arriving’, Russian verbs of motion with the **при-** can be used:

Мы *пришли́* к вам пешко́м, но домо́й от вас по́едем на такси́.

We came on foot, but we’re going home by taxi.

***Приезжайте* поча́ще.**

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 поедem 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 е́зжу 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 поезде/на поезде.
We came by train.

Мой прадед е́здил на лошади, мой дед е́здил на велосипеде, мой отец е́здил 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

Пришла́ Нина и, как обычно, принесла́ 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.

Сюда летают только вертолёты.

You can only get there by helicopter (*literally*, Only helicopters fly there).

Ехать and **ездить** or **плыть** and **плавать** tend to be preferred if the focus is on the means of transport as a physical object:

Мимо нас проёхал какой-то автобус.

A bus has just gone past us.

Я любил смотреть, как по Волге плывут большие белые пароходы.

I used to love watching the big white steamships sailing along the Volga.

22.4.3 Talking about coming and going using other verbs

There are numerous verbs that relate in one way to movement, but which do not come into the grammatical category of *verbs of motion*:

гулять	to stroll, to go for a walk
путешествовать	to travel
отправляться/отправиться	to set off
оставлять/оставить	to leave, to abandon
покидать/покинуть	to leave, to abandon
добираться /добраться до (+ gen.)	to get to
прибывать/прибыть	to arrive
возвращаться/вернуться	to return

Гулять is always *intransitive* and is used with a construction indicating location:

После ужина мы обычно гуляем с собакой в парке.

After supper we usually take the dog for a walk in the park.

A phrase that also corresponds to English ‘to go for a walk’ is **идти** or **ходить на прогулку**:

На улице прекрасная погода. Ты не хочешь пойти на прогулку?

The weather’s really nice. Do you want to go for a walk?

Путешествовать is used with relation to a fairly substantial journey; it is normally used with the preposition **по** (+ *dat.*):

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.

Добираться /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.

COMING AND GOING

Прибыва́ть/прибы́ть tends to be used in more formal types of language:

Уважа́емые пассажи́ры, наш по́езд *прибыва́ет* на ко́нечную ста́нцию.
We wish to inform passengers that this train is arriving at its final destination.

Отправля́ться/отправиться and **возвраща́ться/верну́ться** require no special comment:

За́втра *отправля́емся* ровно́ в семь часо́в.
We're setting off tomorrow at exactly seven o'clock.

Я слы́шал, что он *отпра́вился* в путеше́ствие по Зо́лотому ко́льцу́.
I heard he'd set off on a trip round the Golden Ring.

Он поки́нул э́тот го́род, что́бы уже́ нико́гда сюда́ не *возвраща́ться*.
He left the city, never to return to it.

Пе́рвой в ко́смос полете́ла соба́ка – на Зе́млю она́ не *верну́лась*.
The first animal in space was a dog, but she never returned to Earth.

NOTE

The Зо́лото́е ко́льцо́ 'Golden Ring' is the name given to a tourist route that takes in several ancient towns and cities located to the north-east of Moscow.

23

Communication strategies

23.1 Choosing what type of language to use

23.1.1 Formal and informal language

In this book we have tended to give advice on how words, phrases and grammatical constructions are used in terms of *formal* and *informal* language. Although this distinction is not always the most appropriate, it is in most circumstances more useful than the distinction between *written* and *spoken* language, since in practice both written and spoken language exist in formal and informal varieties, and formal written language, for example, will tend to have more in common with formal spoken language than it will with informal written language.

Formal written language is used in official documents, such as laws, regulations and contracts, as well as in business letters and scholarly books. Formal language also tends to be used in journalism, sometimes with an admixture of more informal varieties.

Formal spoken language tends to be used in texts that are written out in advance, such as lectures and political or ceremonial speeches. However, elements of formal language may also be preferred in official discussions and negotiations.

Informal spoken language is that which is normally used in ordinary conversation.

Informal written language is used in private letters and (sometimes in a stylised form) in works of fiction. Informal written language may also appear in the lyrics of pop and rock songs and is widely used in various forms of Internet communication.

It follows from this that virtually everyone who learns Russian is going to need some knowledge of both formal and informal language and of the differences between them. And even if many learners will never have to produce documents in formal written language, anyone who has any contact with the written language will at some point have to read and understand texts written in this particular variety.

NOTE

It is important to distinguish between *informal* language and *non-standard* language. Everybody uses informal language in the appropriate circumstances, while non-standard language consists of forms that are disapproved of and avoided by most educated speakers of the language, who consider them to be incorrect or improper. Those who learn Russian will at some point encounter non-standard language, most probably in casual conversation, although there is a whole Internet subculture that is based on the use of non-standard forms for playful effect, including deliberately incorrect spelling. Nevertheless, there are two points to note. The first is that many Russians take

the view that non-standard language is something that learners of the language should know nothing about and that it is certainly not something that they ever expect to find learners using themselves. The second point is that non-standard language, like formal and informal language, is a system in its own right, and the use of non-standard language in ways that do not conform to the 'rules' of that system is at best inappropriate and at worst highly embarrassing to all concerned. At the very least, therefore, the deliberate use of non-standard language should be attempted only by those who have an absolute and total confidence in their command of the standard language.

23.1.2 The characteristics of formal language

Formal language, and especially formal written language, is characterised by the following features:

- A preference for long and grammatically complex sentences.
- The widespread use of participles in the long form.
- A tendency to use abstract vocabulary and especially to prefer constructions with verbal nouns over finite verb forms.
- A tendency to avoid the first person singular and a preference for depersonalised constructions and for passive verbs.

23.1.3 The use of participles

The *short forms of past passive participles* are found in all types of language, where they are used to form *perfective passive* verbs. All other forms of participles are restricted to formal language and especially to formal written language.

For information on the formation of participles, *see 4.12*.

For information on the use of the short form of the past passive participle to form perfective passive verbs, *see 4.14.2*.

Participles are verbal adjectives and phrases containing a participle in the *long form* fulfil a similar function to clauses introduced by a *relative pronoun*.

For more on relative pronouns, *see 7.5*.

The stylistic limitation on the use of participles and the functional overlap between participial phrases and relative clauses mean that many learners may find that they rarely or never need to use them. Nevertheless, they are a sufficiently important element of formal writing that an ability to recognise them and to interpret them correctly is essential if this type of language is to be properly understood.

The following sentences illustrate the use of participles. Taken from official regulations concerning foreign travel, they show how several participial phrases can be used in one sentence in order to produce convoluted text that can be difficult to unravel and to translate:

Гражданин, достигший восемнадцатилетнего возраста и обращающийся за получением паспорта в связи с принятым им решением о выезде из Российской Федерации для проживания в другом государстве, указывает об этом в своём заявлении.

A citizen who has reached the age of eighteen and who requests the issue of a passport in connection with a decision he has made to leave the Russian Federation in order to live in another country, mentions this in his application.

Иностранные граждане могут въезжать в Российскую Федерацию и выезжать из Российской Федерации при наличии российской визы по действительным документам, удостоверяющим их личность и признаваемым Российской Федерацией в этом качестве, если иное не предусмотрено международными договорами Российской Федерации.
 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.

Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации может оформить и выдать паспорт гражданину Российской Федерации, проживающему на территории Российской Федерации, по его личному заявлению, поданному через командирующую его организацию, зарегистрированную в Министерстве иностранных дел Российской Федерации в порядке, установленном Правительством Российской Федерации.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation may issue a passport to a citizen of the Russian Federation who is resident on the territory of the Russian Federation in cases where that person submits a personal request through the organisation that is sending him abroad and which is registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in accordance with procedures laid down by the government of the Russian Federation.

Not all sentences containing participles are as complicated as those above. Some examples of rather more straightforward sentences are given in the comments on word order in 19.1.3.

To demonstrate how *participial phrases* fulfil much the same function as *relative clauses*, here is the first of the above examples rewritten with relative clauses replacing the participial phrases; the following version is somewhat more awkward than the original:

Гражданин, который достиг восемнадцатилетнего возраста и который обращается за получением паспорта в связи с решением о выезде из Российской Федерации для проживания в другом государстве, которое он принял, указывает об этом в своём заявлении.

Some participles are also used as ordinary adjectives or (less often) nouns. When used in this way they do not necessarily have the same stylistic restriction as they do when used as true participles. Examples include:

блестящий	brilliant
ведущий	leading, presenter (of a television programme)
выдающийся	outstanding
действующий	active, functioning
окружающий	surrounding
отсутствующий	absent (also as a noun)
потрясающий	staggering, amazing
предшествующий	preceding

присутствующий	present (also as a noun)
решающий	deciding, decisive
следующий	following, next
смягчающий	mitigating
текущий	current (e.g. affairs, account)
вооружённый	armed
воспитанный	well brought up
разочарованный	disenchanted, disappointed
убеждённый	convinced
умеренный	moderate
цивилизованный	civilised
верующий	believer, believing
курящий	smoker
служащий	white-collar worker
данные	data
подданный	subject (e.g. of the crown)
подчинённый	subordinate

Тогда у него появилась блестящая идея.

Then he had a brilliant idea.

На следующий день он проснулся с головной болью.

The next day he woke up with a headache.

В семидесятые годы он был убеждённым коммунистом.

In the 1970s he was a convinced communist.

На первом этаже есть специальное помещение для курящих.

On the ground floor there is a special room for smokers.

У него скверные отношения со всеми подчинёнными.

He has a dreadful relationship with all his subordinates.

23.1.4

Other characteristic features of formal language

The following sentence, already quoted in the section on participles, also provides an illustration of how *verbal nouns* are used in formal language:

Гражданин, достигший восемнадцатилетнего возраста и обращающийся за получением паспорта в связи с принятым им решением о выезде из Российской Федерации для проживания в другом государстве, указывает об этом в своём заявлении.

A citizen who has reached the age of eighteen and who requests the issue of a passport in connection with a decision he has made to leave the Russian Federation in order to live in another country, mentions this in his application.

If we exclude *заявление*, which takes the form of a verbal noun, but which here means a type of document (a written application for something), there are four verbal nouns in this sentence: **получение, решение, выезд, 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 прожить в другом государстве ...

A citizen ... who wants to receive a passport because he has decided to leave Russia in order to live in another country ...

For more on the formation of verbal nouns, *see* 10.1.10.

The following example, taken from a newspaper article written shortly after Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000, illustrates not only the use of *verbal nouns*, but also a preference for other forms of *abstract nouns* and for *passive* and *depersonalised* constructions. It will be noted that these features cannot always be reproduced in the translation:

Тем не менее в действиях Путина прослеживается определённая логика. Первые его шаги направлены на реанимацию государства, а именно: подчинение бюрократии, восстановление управляемости страны, ослабление автономных от государства центров силы. Как уже отмечалось, в данном случае речь идёт о решении задач новейшей эпохи.

Nevertheless, it is possible to discern a certain logic in Putin's actions. His first steps were aimed at reviving the state, specifically by bringing the bureaucracy to heel, by making the country governable again and by weakening centres of power not under state control. As has already been pointed out, we are talking here about addressing the problems of the most recent era.

For the use of *данный* in place of *этот* in formal language, *see* 7.3.2.

23.2 Constructing a text

23.2.0 Introduction

Any text, whether spoken or written, whether in formal or informal language, will consist of a series of individual sentences. This section will examine some of the ways in which individual sentences can be linked to form a coherent text.

23.2.1 Вводные слова: introductory words

Russian has a special category of forms known as **вводные слова** (*literally*, introductory words). In spite of the name, **вводные слова** do not necessarily appear at the beginning of a sentence and may consist either of a single word or of an entire phrase. **Вводные слова** are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas, and they are used to supply information that is additional to what is contained in the main body of the sentence.

Some **вводные слова** fulfil the specific role of linking sentences. These include:

впрочем	however, on second thoughts
значит	so
итак	and so
как бы то ни было	however that may be
кроме того	in addition, moreover
к тому же	in addition, moreover
однако	however
следовательно	therefore
стало быть	therefore
таким образом	therefore
тем не менее	nonetheless, nevertheless

По-моёму, не сто́ит жа́ловаться на такие ве́щи. Впро́чем, как хоте́те.

In my opinion, there's no point in complaining about such things. However, it's up to you.

Ме́неджеров из стран Евросою́за не так уж мно́го в Росси́и, и они́ ино́гда с трудо́м приспособля́ются к российским усло́виям. Как бы́ то ни бы́ло, они́ несúт с собо́й запа́дный подход к делу́ и запа́дную организа́цию.

There aren't that many managers from EU countries in Russia, and they sometimes have difficulty in adapting to Russian conditions. However that may be, they do bring with them a Western approach to business and Western organisation.

Вчера́ из-за пого́дных усло́вий бы́ло отменено́ бо́лее двухсо́т ре́йсов. Кроме́ того́, из-за тумана́ мно́гие ре́йсы бы́ли заде́ржаны на срок до двух часо́в.

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.

Делегата́м Съез́да не разреша́лось разглаша́ть содержа́ние докла́да. Тем не мене́, по́лный текст вско́ре появи́лся в запа́дной печа́ти.

Delegates at the congress were not allowed to reveal the contents of the speech. Nevertheless, the full text soon appeared in the Western press.

Another group of **вво́дные слова́** indicate the extent to which the information being communicated is probable. These include:

конечно́	of course
(са́мо собо́й) разуме́ется	of course
должно́ быть	it must be case that
наве́рное, наве́рно	probably
по-видимому́	apparently
пожа́луй	probably, perhaps
ка́жется	it seems
возмо́жно	it is possible that
мо́жет бы́ть	perhaps

NOTE Both **наве́рное** and **наве́рно** are characteristic of informal language, the former tends to be used in writing and the latter in speech.

Они́, конечно́, импе́ют пра́во не согласи́ться с на́ми.

Of course, they have the right not to agree with you.

Здесь нет его́ вещей, так что он, должно́ быть, уже́ уеха́л.

His things aren't here so he must already have left.

Я, наве́рно, зайдú к ней за́втра по́сле рабо́ты.

I'll probably call in and see her tomorrow after work.

Ты, пожа́луй, прав; не на́до бы́ло отка́зываться от его́ по́мощи.

You're probably right; we shouldn't have refused his help.

Здесь, ка́жется, не́ за чем остава́ться.

It seems that there's no point in staying here.

Россия, возможно, вступит в ВТО до конца текущего года.

It's possible that Russia will join the WTO (World Trade Organisation) before the end of the current year.

Следующий конгресс нашей организации состоится в России, может быть, во Владивостоке.

The next congress of our organisation will take place in Russia, possibly in Vladivostok.

For further examples of **вводные слова** used in this function, see 16.5.1.

Some **вводные слова** make a comment on the nature of the utterance itself. These include:

допустим	let us assume
предположим	let us suppose
одним словом	in a word
короче говоря	to put it briefly
собственно говоря	strictly speaking
шутки в сторону	joking apart
кстати (говоря)	by the way
между прочим	by the way

Допустим, он придёт. И что будет?

Suppose he comes. Then what happens?

Одним словом, это невозможно.

In a word, it's impossible.

Собственно говоря, вы не имеете права здесь присутствовать.

Strictly speaking, you don't have the right to be here.

Шутки в сторону, дискриминация мужчин – это реальная и очень серьёзная проблема.

Joking apart, discrimination against men is a genuine and a very serious problem.

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 истёк.

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

Я бы не советовал покупать этот телевизор: во-первых, он слишком дорогой; во-вторых, я сомневаюсь в его качестве, а в-третьих, можно найти более современную модель.

I wouldn't advise you to buy that television set. In the first place, it's too expensive; in the second place, I have doubts about its quality and in the third place, you can find a more up-to-date model.

23.2.2 Using the conjunction **а**

In addition to being used to link clauses (see 9.3.2), the conjunction **А** is often used at the beginning of a sentence, especially in dialogue. Here it serves the function of alerting the listener to a new topic or to a new development in the existing topic or simply of providing extra emphasis. In this function it is particularly common in questions:

Я считаю, что всё будет сделано к концу месяца. А ты как думаешь?

I think everything will be done by the end of the month. What do you think?

—**Здесь, пожалуйста, укажите ваше имя, фамилию, дату рождения, адрес, телефон.**

—**А зачем вам вся эта информация?**

—Could you indicate here your first name, surname, date of birth, address and telephone number?

—Why do you need all that information?

The phrase **А 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:

в общем	in general, on the whole
вот	(a sentence filler)
в принципе	in principle
значит	so (often used as a sentence filler)
так	so, well (can be used to gain time)
так сказать	so to speak

это (са́мое)	the whatsit (used when searching for a word)
как егó/её́ там	the whatever-it's-called, the what's-its-name

In the following examples, some of the above words and phrases are used with a definite and translatable meaning:

У него́ было́ не́сколько крити́ческих замеча́ний, но в о́бщем егó реце́нзия положи́тельная.

He had a few critical comments, but on the whole his review is positive.

В принци́пе я согла́сен, но тут есть не́которые спо́рные момéнты.

In principle I agree, but there are some unresolved issues here.

Сейча́с выходи́м из до́ма. Зна́чит, бу́дем у вас че́рез час.

We're leaving the house now. That means we'll be at your place in an hour's time.

Э́то лека́рство я про́бую в пе́рвый раз. Э́то, так сказа́ть, эксперимéнт.

I'm trying this medicine for the first time. It is, so to speak, an experiment.

In the following examples, the words and phrases listed above are used as discourse words, and in many instances they cannot be directly translated:

Та-ак, всё, в о́бщем, поня́тно. Я, зна́чит, поду́маю, что да́льше де́лать.

Well, then, I suppose that's all sorted out. I'll have to think now what to do next.

Мне, зна́чит, тут твоя́ жена́, э́то са́мое, расска́зала о ва́шей, так сказа́ть, пробле́ме. А вы не пробовали обра́щаться к э́тому, как егó́ там, сексоло́гу?

Well, I've sort of been, I don't know, told by your wife about your problem, as it were. Have you tried going to one of those, what are they called, sexologists?

—**Ты мо́жешь меня́ подвезти́ на вокза́л?**

—**В принци́пе да.**

—Can you give me a lift to the station?

—I suppose so.

NOTE When **так** is used at the beginning of a sentence in order to gain time, the vowel is often extended to double (or even triple) the normal length.

There are three discourse words that are particularly characteristic of the speech of young people. These are:

как бы	sort of
типа	like
блин	(emphasises the previous word)

Although it is inevitable that many learners of Russian will hear these words used by their friends and acquaintances, it is as well to know that they come with a serious 'health warning': the use of these expressions is regarded by many Russians as an indication of an inadequate grasp of the language and/or an inability to express one's thoughts in a clear and coherent manner. In particular, **блин**, although it literally means 'pancake', is in this usage a transparent euphemism for an obscenity and is consequently offensive to many Russians.

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