

Russian with Annie

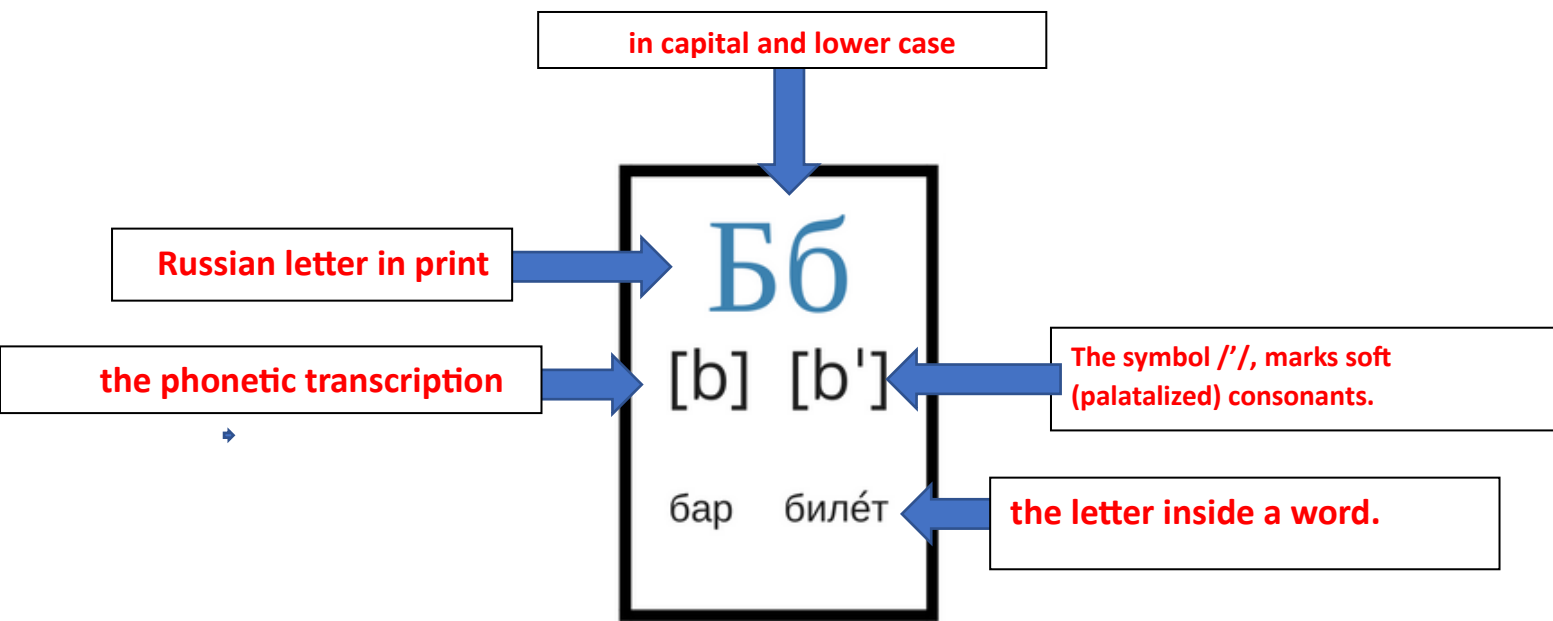
Free short course to learn to read, pronounce and write the Cyrillic alphabet.

Section 1. Welcome

1. Presentation: <https://1drv.ms/b/s!Aj2c0gRVsVVXuXB7ooF-yggqBJij?e=jYG9I2>

2. The Cyrillic Alphabet: letters and sounds

Here is for you an interactive alphabet: you can see the letters and hear their sound, as follows:



That is, the **Russian letter in print, in handwriting, in capital and lower case**; in squared brackets there is the **phonetic transcription**, that is the pronunciation, and then examples of the letter inside a word.

The phonetic transcription helps pronounce a word correctly, but it is much better to first listen to the sound, to memorize it rightly.

Important Note:

- In Russian, the pronunciation of vowels is affected by word stress. Stressed vowels are pronounced clearly and distinctly whereas unstressed vowels are shorter and weaker (reduced). The position of the stress **CHANGES** and the easiest way to learn these changes is to practice listening and step by step memorize them.

- The symbol /j/ (a superscript j) marks soft (palatalized) consonants. It can be also written /'/, like an apostrophe.

Don't worry too much about this now, however: it is something you will learn with practice.

VIDEO [Алфавит: буквы и звуки в русском языке \(с аудио\) \(bururo.com\)](#) VIDEO

2. The Cyrillic Alphabet: let's deal with it bravely.

In the Russian alphabet there are **33 letters: 10 vowels, 20 consonants, two signs and a semi-vowel (й)**.

To make these 33 letters easier to learn, we can divide them in **4 groups**.

1. **THE FIRST** group contains **six sounds and letters which are like English/Latin** letters and sounds:

А а	[a] as in father
К к	[k] as in kangaroo
М м	[m] as in man
О о	[o] as in bottle - but note that in unstressed" syllables• (i.e. with no stress mark ') standard Moscow pronunciation of о is closer to [a]. For 'stress', see 2.2.
Т т	[t] as in tan

Now you can read Russian words such as:

Тот /tot/ that

Кот /kot/ cat

Так /tak/ so

Там /tam/ there

кто-то /któ-to/ someone (the second /o/ is pronounced /a/ because it is unstressed, see note above)

2. The **SECOND** group contains seven letters which look like English/Latin ones, but **have different sounds**:

В в	/v/ as in vet
Е е	/ye/ as in yes
Н н	/n/ as in never
Р р	/r/ as in error
С с	/s/ as in sit
У у	/oo/ as in boot
Х х	/h/ pronounced like ch in German, Bach . The sound is like an expiration from the throat

These letters are **false friends**.

PRACTICE

1. Read the following word (the stress is marked red)

Нет	/nyet/	no
Москва	/mask-va/	Moscow
Метро	/metro/	underground
Он	/on/	he
Она	/ona/	she
Сестра	/sye-stra/	sister
Ресторан	/re-sta-ran/	

2. Read now these other words, covering the pronunciation.

Сахар	/sa-har/	sugar
вам	/vam/	you (object)
Вера	/Vyera/	Vera, proper noun

Утро	/utro/	morning
Нева	/Nyeva/	Neva, the river of Saint Petersburg
касса	/kassa/	cash desk
карта	/kar-ta/	map
марка	/mar-ka/	stamp

TIP

You'd better read these lists of words twice, because you will meet them again, and, moreover,

REPEATING IS LEARNING'S MOTHER! - Повторить - мать учения

If you have difficulty in pronouncing the Russian words, **read them syllable by syllable** twice or more, and then read it straight. It is a method that works, I assure you!

A **syllable is a consonant + a vowel**. When you meet words with an *exaggerate* number of consonants, unite some of them to the previous vowel, and some to the following: Москва /Mosk-va/ (Moscow)

3. The **THIRD** group contains **13 letters** which **look unfamiliar but have familiar sounds**:

Б б	/b/ as in bet
Г г	/g/ as in get
Д д	[d] as in debt
Ё ё	[yo] as in yonder
З з	[z] as in zoo
И и	[ee] as in eel
Й й	[y] as in boy ; й forms diphthongs, so ой sounds like [oy] in boy , Ай sounds like the igh in sigh , Уй [ooi] sounds like oui in the name Louis
Л л	[l] as in people
П п	/p/ as in pet

Ф ф	/f/ as in fat
Э э	/e/ as in fed
Ю ю	/yoo/ as in universe
Я я	/ya/ as in yak

PRACTICE

1. Read the following examples. The stressed letter is marked red. The [ë] is always stressed, so it is not necessary to mark it red.

Word	Pronunciation	Translation
мир	[meer]	peace', 'world' '
да	[da]	yes'
фут б ол	[foot-bol]	'football'
спаси б о	[spa-se'e-ba]	'thank you'
до свид а ия	[da svee-da-nee-ya)	'goodbye' (до has no stress, so is pronounced [da])
Алекса н др	[a-lye-ksandr]	'Alexander'
Сп у тник	[spo-ot-neek]	'sputnik', 'travelling companion'
Владивосто к	[vla-dee-va-stok]	'Vladivostok' (a town in the Easternmost Russia, near the border with China)

Росси я	[ra-sse ·e-ya]	'Russia'
Толсто й	[tal-stoy]	'Tolstoi' (author of <i>War and Peace</i>)
зи м а	[zee-ma]	'winter'
Белфаст	[byel-fast]	'Belfast'
Я зна ю	[ya zna-yoo]	'I know'
Аерофл о т	[a-e-ra-flot]	'Aeroflot' (the Russian airline)
Ликё р	[lee-kyor]	'liqueur' (ë always carries the stress, so there is no need to print the · mark on ë)
самалё т	[sa-ma-lyot]	'aeroplane'.
бойк о т	[bay-kot]	'boycott'
парк	[park]	'park'
киос к	[kee-osk]	'kiosk'
Байка л	[bay-kal]	'Baikal' (lake in Siberia)
Телефо н а	[tye-lye-fon]	'telephone'

4. The FOURTH and last group contains 8 letters that take longer to learn:

Ж ж	[zh] pronounced like the [s] in ple as ure.
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Ц ц	[ts] as in its
Ч ч	[ch] as in church
Ш ш	[sh] as in shut
Щ щ	[shsh] as in Welsh sheep
Ъ ъ	'hard sign'
Ы ы	[i] as in bit , but with the tongue tip further back
Ь ь	'soft sign'- [y] as in yet , but pronounced simultaneously with the letter before it - so нь sounds like the [ny] in canyon . Try not to separate the [y] from the preceding letter, particularly at the ends of words; to remind you of this you will see an apostrophe after the letter мать [Mat'].

PRACTICE

0. Cover the pronunciation and the translation, then read the words. Check.

Владимир	[Vla-de'e-meer]	'Vladimir'
туалет	[too-a-lyét]	'toilet'
метрó	[mye-tró]	'metro', 'underground'
троллейбус	[tra-lyéy-boos]	'trolleybus'
календарь	[ka-lyen-dár]	'calendar'
перестройка	[pye-gye-stróy-ka]	'perestroika', 'reorganization'
гласность	[glás-nast']	'openness'
Украина	[oo-kra-e'e-na]	'Ukraine'

Сибѳрь	[see-be'er']	'Siberia'
Вѳлга	[vól-ga]	'the Volga river'
Мáнчестер	[mán-chye-styer]	'Manchester'
Бѳрмингем	[be'er-meen-gyem]	'Birmingham'
Ливерпѳль	[lee-vyer-po'ol']	'Liverpool'
Абердѳн	[a-byer-de'en]	'Aberdeen'
Пѳртсмут	[pórt-smoot]	'Portsmouth'
Филáдѳлѳфия	[fee-la-dyé'l'-fee-ya]	'Philadelphia'
Мáйáми	[ma-yá-mee]	'Miami'
Гѳлуэѳ	[gó-loo-ey]	'Galway'
Дѳблѳн	[do'ob-leer]	'Dublin'
Мѳльбурн	[myél'-boorn]	'Melbourne'
Перт	[pyert]	'Perth'
дáчá	[dá-cha]	'country cottage'
хорѳшѳ	[ha-ra-shó]	'good', 'well', 'OK'
дѳбрѳе утѳрѳ	[dó-bra-ye o'o-tra]	'good morning'

EXERCISE 1/1

Read the following words. Can you translate them? The pronunciation and translations are in the key at the end of the book.

- 1 Борѳс
- 2 да
- 3 нет
- 4 большѳй
- 5 спáсѳбѳ
- 6 рѳсская áзбука (the heading of the lesson)
- 7 бѳрщ
- 8 чáй
- 9 сáхар
- 10 жѳрнáл

EXERCISE 1/2

Here are some common signs. Check your pronunciation in the key at the back of the book.

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1 АЗРОПѳРТ | AIRPORT |
| 2 БУФѳТ | SNACKBAR |
| 3 ГОСТѳНИЦА | HOTEL |
| 4 ДИРѳКТОР | MANAGER, DIRECTOR |
| 5 ЗАКРѳТО | CLOSED |
| 6 ЗАПРЕЩЕНО | FORBIDDEN |
| 7 ИНТУРѳСТ | INTOURIST |
| 8 КÁССА | CASH DESK/TICKET OFFICE |
| 9 К СЕБѳ | PULL |

10 НЕ КУРИТЬ	NO SMOKING
11 ОТ СЕБЯ	PUSH
12 ПАРИКМÁХЕРСКАЯ	HAIRDRESSER/BARBER
13 ПОЧТА	POST OFFICE
14 РЕМОНТ	CLOSED FOR REPAIRS
15 РЕСТОРА́Н	RESTAURANT
16 ТУАЛÉТ	TOILET

EXERCISE 1/3

What do these say?

1 БАР	2 ПРАВДА	3 ТАКСИ
4 СТОП	5 МОСКВА	6 ЛОС АНДЖЕЛЕС
7 ПИЦЦА ХАТ	8 ВЛАДИМИР ЛЕНИН	9 ИЗВЕСТИЯ
10 НЬЮ-ЙОРК	11 ГЛАСНОСТЬ	12 РОЛЛС-РОЙС
13 БИТЛЗ	14 ШЕКСПИР	15 ХЕЛЬСИНКИ

ANCILLARY

We have given the sound for each letter, trying to reproduce them with the help of the English letters. We hope that this method is helpful. Anyway, **scientific systems of transcription** – write the sound – **and transliteration** – write the Russian word with the help of latin/English words – exist and are used all over the world.

Anyway, it remains by now something extra if your aim is to learn to read Russian. For this, it is sufficient what you have learnt up to now.

There is a bit of this extra information in this short course that we have highlighted calling the section **ANCILLARY**.

A Why do some letters have two sounds?

This is a peculiarity of Russian language. Some letters can have two different sounds: hard and soft.

B Why are no sounds shown for «Ъ» и «Ь»?

These symbols are **HARD SIGN «Ъ»** and **SOFT SIGN «Ь»**. They do not have any sound; they show how to pronounce the preceding consonant. The consonant preceding the hard sign is *hard*, the consonant before the soft sign is *soft*. Moreover, sometimes we need to separate the consonant from the vowel, so we write the soft sign between them.

Then now, read and listen again to the Russian alphabet [\[reference\]](#)INSERT , and pay attention to the different pronunciations.

PRACTICE 2

1) Using handwriting, name the objects.



1



2



3



4



5



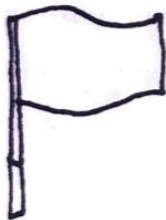
6



7



8



9



10



11



12

2) Can you recognize these proper names? Write them in English letters and add some.

Антони _____

Марк _____

Джованна _____

Мари _____

Саимон _____

Пэтэро _____

Джеоффри _____

Томас _____

3) Can you recognize these cities? Write them in English.

Москва, Санкт-Петербург, Милан, РOME, Нью Йорк, Лас Вегас, Париз, Берлин,
Осло, Стокколма, Пекино, Киев, Палермо.

KEY

1/1

1 [ba-re-es] **Boris**. 2 [da] **yes**. 3 [nyet] **no**. 4 [bal•sh6y] **big**. 5 [spa-se'e-ba] **thank you**. 6 [ro'o-ska-ya az-boo-ka] **Russian alphabet**. 7 [borshsh] **beetroot soup**.
8 [chay] **tea**. 9 [sa-har] **sugar**. 10 [zhoor-nal] **magazine**.

1/2

1 [a-e-ra-p6rt]. 2 [boo-fyet]. 3 [ga-ste-e-nee-tsa]. 4 [dee-ryek-tar]. 5 [za-krf-taj].
6 [za-prye-shshye-n6J]. 7 [een-too-reest]. 8 [ka-ssa]. 9 [ksye-bye].
10 [nye koo-re-et']. 11 [at sye-bya]. 12 [pa-reek-ma-hyer-ska-ya]. 13 [p6ch-taj].
14 [rye-m6nt]. 15 [rye-sta-ran]. 16 [too-a-lyet].

1/3

1 BAR. 2 PRAVDA (the newspaper). 3 TAXI [tak-se'e]. 4 STOP. 5 MOSCOW [mask-va]. 6 LOS ANGELES. 7 PIZZA HUT [-hat]. 8 Vladimir Lenin [vla-de'e-meer lye-neen]. 9 IZVESTIYA (newspaper) [eez-vye-stee-ya]. 10 NEW YORK [n•yoo-y6rk]. 11 glasnost ('openness') [glas-nast']. 12 ROLLS-ROYCE. 13 The Beatles. 14 Shakespeare. 15 HELSINKI (hy1W-seen-kee).

PRACTICE 2

EX. 1

Ваза, гриб, компьютер, ёж, луна, жираф, ключ, машина, флаг, рыба, шкаф, телефон.