

## Basic Facts About the Russian language

Written by Administrator

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Russian language belongs to the Indo-European family of languages, Slavic group, East Slavic branch. It was derived from the Old Russian language in 14th-15th centuries, from which Ukrainian and Belorussian languages derived as well. About 250 million people around the world speak Russian, including 180 million people on the territory of the former USSR. The closest relatives of the Russian language are the remaining two East Slavic languages: Ukrainian and Belorussian, Belorussian being the closest (it should be noted that in Belarus, beyond the countryside, people speak only Russian, not Belorussian, so Belorussian is possibly an endangered language). Other relatives include Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Slovene from South Slavic branch and Polish, Czech, Slovak, Upper Sorbian, Lower Sorbian, Polabian (extinct) from West Slavic branch. On the vast territory of Russia you will see almost no dialectal divisions, almost all people speak common literary language, only old people might still use local dialects which vary little from place to place. Russian is rather a synthetic language, not analytic, and being a synthetic language it is fleective, not agglutinative, which means that it uses a lot of prefixes, suffixes and flections and it can express in one word what analytic language like English has to use three words for; but unlike agglutinative languages, like Finno-Ugrian and Turkish ones, the same flection might express a lot of different grammatical categories and different flections might express the same grammatical category.

Basic grammatical features: there are three persons, two numbers (singular and plural), though there was dual number in Old Russian there are three genders: masculine, feminine and neutral

there is no article

nouns, adjectives, pronouns, numerals, participles do decline

there are 6 cases: Nominative, Genitive (the so-called Genitive-II is used with some nouns), Dative, Accusative, Instrumental and Prepositional (Prepositional-II is used with some nouns, though not with the same ones as Genitive-II) (Russian lacks Vocative case which is present in Ukrainian and in many other Slavic languages).

there are 3 classes of noun declension

adjectives decline according to case, gender and number and agree with nouns in case, gender and number

there are short adjectives that do not decline

verbs conjugate according to person, number, tense, voice and mood

there are two classes of conjugation, 3 tenses (Past, Present and Future) and 3 moods (Indicative, Subjunctive and Imperative)

verbs have two aspects: Imperfective and Perfective, similar to English Present and Perfect

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infinitives, e.g. to do - to have done, to go - to have gone, but these two forms in Russian both consist of one word

participles exist in 4 forms: Present Active, Past Active, Present Passive and Past Passive

there are short participles corresponding to two Passive forms of regular participles that like short adjectives do not decline

there are adverbial participles that do not decline and exist in Present and Past forms

word order is free, moreover, by changing the word order any word in a sentence can be emphasized

Basic phonetic features:

pronunciation is almost phonetic, that is there is one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds, but not at all since there is a lot of specific moments which have to be studied

there is no division of vowels into long and short ones

but consonants are divided into palatalized (soft) and non-palatalized (hard) ones unlike English

there are no diphthongs

sounds are generally less intensive and strenuous than in English

stress is free and moving, that is it can fall on any syllable of the word and on different syllables within the paradigm (the set of the word forms) of the same word

## The Basics of Russian Grammar

Basic grammatical features include:

- there are three persons, two numbers (singular and plural), though there was dual number in Old Russian
- there are three genders: masculine, feminine and neutral
- there is no article
- nouns, adjectives, pronouns, numerals, participles do decline
- there are 6 cases: Nominative, Genitive (the so-called Genitive-II is used with some nouns), Dative, Accusative, Instrumental and Prepositional (Prepositional-II is used with some nouns, though not with the same ones as Genitive-II) (Russian lacks Vocative case which is present in Ukrainian and in many other Slavic languages).
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- adjectives decline according to case, gender and number and agree with nouns in case, gender and number
- there are short adjectives that do not decline
- verbs conjugate according to person, number, tense, voice and mood
- there are two classes of conjugation, 3 tenses (Past, Present and Future) and 3 moods (Indicative, Subjunctive and Imperative)
- verbs have two aspects: Imperfective and Perfective, similar to English Present and Perfect infinitives, e.g. to do - to have done, to go - to have gone, but these two forms in Russian both consist of one word
- participles exist in 4 forms: Present Active, Past Active, Present Passive and Past Passive
- there are short participles corresponding to two Passive forms of regular participles that like short adjectives do not decline
- there are adverbial participles that do not decline and exist in Present and Past forms
- word order is free, moreover, by changing the word order any word in a sentence can be emphasized

## The Basics of Russian Phonetics

Basic phonetic features include:

- Pronunciation is phonetic. You will find that there is one-to-one correspondence between how the words are written and read (as opposed to "night" and "knight" in English which are spelled differently but pronounced the same). However, there are several important exceptions which have to be memorized.
- There is no division of vowels into long and short ones.
- Consonants are divided into palatalized (soft) and non-palatalized (hard) ones unlike English.
- There are no diphthongs.
- Sounds are generally less intensive and strenuous than in English.
- Stress is free and moving, that is it can fall on any syllable of the word and on different syllables within the paradigm (the set of the word forms) of the same word.