

## YOUR GUIDE TO BETTER PRONUNCIATION IN RUSSIAN

After learning the Cyrillic alphabet, students of the Russian language are usually pleased to discover that, unlike English, Russian is a *phonetic* language—that is, words are almost always pronounced as they are spelled. Nonetheless, knowing the alphabet does *not* guarantee an acceptable Russian accent. The subtle differences, for example, between Russian vowels and their English counterparts can only be discerned by *listening* to Russian speakers.

The *How to Pronounce Russian Correctly* audiocassette affords students—from beginning to advanced—the opportunity to concentrate on the sounds of Russian with a fluent Russian speaker. *How to Pronounce Russian Correctly* explains, illustrates, and drills the basic sounds of the Russian language, concentrating on those that cause special problems for English speakers. The tape begins with the sounds that are closest to English and concludes with the three sounds that have no equivalent in our language. Pronunciation material is divided up into 11 parts, so that you are introduced to Russian sounds in short, accessible lessons. And the cassette format allows you to repeat and practice as often as you like, until you get it right!

This User's Manual features both a transcript of the cassette, as well as charts and footnotes that expand on the recorded explanations. The Manual's Introduction discusses the differences between the English and Russian sound systems, explains stress and describes how best to use the cassette.

All in all, *How to Pronounce Russian Correctly* is an indispensable key to an improved Russian accent.

# HOW TO PRONOUNCE RUSSIAN CORRECTLY



**HOW  
TO  
PRONOUNCE  
RUSSIAN  
CORRECTLY**

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**PASSPORT BOOKS**

a division of *NTC Publishing Group*  
Lincolnwood, Illinois USA

# Contents

Introduction v

## PART ONE: THE RUSSIAN ALPHABET

Unit 1: The Vowels <b>А, О, Э</b> , and <b>у</b>	1
Unit 2: Consonants	4
Unit 3: Consonants ( <i>Continued</i> )	8
Unit 4: Letters with Unusual Sounds	13
Unit 5: The Soft Vowels and <b>Й</b>	16

## PART TWO: SOUND VARIATIONS

Unit 6: Action of the Soft Sign	23
Unit 7: Action of the Soft Vowels	28
Unit 8: Action of the Separation Signs	33
Unit 9: Voicing and Devoicing of Consonants	37
Unit 10: The Unstressed Vowels	46
Unit 11: Special Pronunciation Rules	56

## PART THREE: APPENDIX

The Russian Alphabet in Sequence	60
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### 1991 Printing

Published by National Textbook Company, a division of NTC Publishing Group.  
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# Introduction

*How to Pronounce Russian Correctly* is a comprehensive program designed to introduce and reinforce the basic sounds of the Russian language. Consisting of a Study Guide and an audiocassette, the program is designed to help language students develop the most authentic Russian accent possible.

Russian has certain intrinsic features that make it relatively easy for an English-speaker to pronounce. To begin with, each letter in the Russian alphabet represents a definite sound. When a Russian letter deviates from this “true” sound in the alphabet, it does so according to definite rules that have few exceptions. In addition, Russian spelling is essentially phonetic—that is, a Russian word is pronounced exactly as it is spelled. Thus, once you learn the true sound of every letter in the Russian alphabet and know the circumstances that modify that sound, you will be able to pronounce *at sight* every Russian word you encounter. By contrast, many letters in the *English* alphabet represent not one, but several sounds, and it is often very difficult for English-language students to know which of these sounds a particular letter is intended to represent.

Besides the natural characteristics that make Russian an easy language to pronounce, certain special features of the cassette and Study Guide should make your progress still easier. First of all, you do not have to know the Russian alphabet before you begin. In Units 1–5, you will learn to recognize each letter as you learn to pronounce it. In addition, the letters will be presented, not in alphabetical order, but in a sequence that begins with the sounds closest to those in English (and therefore the easiest to pronounce), moving gradually towards the three sounds that have no counterpart in English. Transcriptions have been provided for all Russian sounds, but, to simplify matters, they are given as simple English transliterations, rather than in phonetic symbols. In addition, technical terminology has been avoided whenever possible. When it *is* used, it has been fully explained.

The example words provided for illustration and practice have been carefully selected so that your attention is focused on a single aspect of pronunciation at a time. In Unit 1, you will study only four Russian letters—the sounds *ah*, *aw*, *eh*, and *oo*. You will practice pronouncing them in actual Russian words that contain only three additional letters (the Russian *K*, *M*, and *T*), selected because they look and sound like their counterparts in English.

In Units 2–5, you will learn one additional letter at a time. The example words in these units do not contain any Russian letters that have not been formally introduced. In this way, you will be able to concentrate on the sound of each new letter, as you reinforce your familiarity with letter sounds previ-

ously discussed. With only one exception, sound variations will not be discussed in Units 1–5. Instead, these will be covered systematically in Units 6–11, so that, in the first five units, you can concentrate on the “true” sounds of the letters.

The one variation that could not be deferred involves the sounds of stressed and unstressed Russian vowels. Although discussed in detail in Unit 10, this variation occurs so frequently in Russian that some mention of it has to be made in Unit 1. Because of their importance, you should be familiar at the very outset with the following characteristics of stressed and unstressed Russian vowels.

1. In Russian, words have as many syllables as they have vowels.
2. However, only one syllable (and thus only one vowel) in a Russian word is stressed.
3. The sound of a stressed vowel is its true sound in the alphabet. Any other vowels in the same word are *slurred*, that is, they are shorter and less distinct.
4. In words of one syllable, the vowel is automatically stressed.
5. In words of more than one syllable, you can identify the stressed syllable by the accent mark [ / ] that appears over the vowel in that syllable. Accent marks are not a usual part of the Russian writing system, but they appear in most textbooks as an aid for beginners.

Stressing, as it does, the *component sounds* of Russian words, *How to Pronounce Russian Correctly* reflects an approach that is thoroughly consistent with current methodology in language teaching. The emphasis on *sound patterns* that can be recognized in any number of unfamiliar words contrasts with an older methodology that treated each word as a unique sound unit having little relationship to other sound units in the language.

As you move through this program, you will study all the basic aspects of Russian pronunciation, as well as the most common exceptions to the phonetic rules. After mastering the material in the Study Guide and on tape, you will be able to approach Russian pronunciation with confidence.

From beginning to end, the material on tape takes about 50 minutes to listen to. However, do *not* do too much at one time: you will only become confused. You may also acquire incorrect speech habits that will be hard to lose later on. So, plan to study just one unit at a time, and master it before you move on to the next one.

Before listening to any one lesson on the cassette, read the corresponding section in the Study Guide. Pay particular attention to the supplementary explanations, which may be set off in indented paragraphs, enclosed in brackets, or given in footnotes to distinguish them from the basic text that is heard on tape. When you have understood the explanations as a whole, review the example words highlighted in boldface type and followed by four periods. The phonetic transcriptions accompanying these examples are a preliminary guide to the correct pronunciation you will hear on the audiotape.

Once you have familiarized yourself with the contents of one unit in the Study Guide, listen to the same unit on the cassette. Repeat the indicated words right after you hear the speaker pronounce them. Ample time has been provided on the tape for you to do this. Do not be afraid to exaggerate the sounds at first. However, as soon as you can, try to speak softly and in a natural way. You will learn faster if you do. Next, go back and practice reading the examples aloud by yourself. Then test yourself by repeating them after the speaker again. When you find that you can quickly associate a new letter with its proper sound and can pronounce the examples as the speaker does, go on to the next unit and follow the same procedure. At frequent intervals, review the material you have studied up to that point. Review will strengthen your mastery of correct pronunciation at each stage of progress.

As soon as you are ready, extend the principles you have learned to other Russian-language materials of your choice, using the Study Guide and cassette tape to refresh your memory of the rules and to improve your pronunciation of particular sounds. The alphabetical reference guide at the back of this book has been specially provided for this purpose.

Designed for classroom use, practice in the language laboratory, or individual study at home, *How to Pronounce Russian Correctly* is an invaluable tool for developing and maintaining an appropriate Russian accent at all levels of language study.



# **Part One**

## **The Russian Alphabet**

# UNIT 1

## THE VOWELS A, O, Э, AND Y

The first sounds you will learn to pronounce will be the vowels **a** [ah], **o** [aw], **э** [eh], and **y** [oo]. These are some of the Russian sounds that are closest to those in English.

### The Letter A a [transcribed ah when stressed]

The stressed Russian **a** sounds almost like the *a* in *father*, but it is brighter and shorter. Say: **Ah** . . . .

EXAMPLES	TRANSCRIPTION	MEANING
Now say: <b>мак</b> . . . .	<i>mahk</i>	poppy
<b>как</b> . . . .	<i>kahk</i>	how
<b>так</b> . . . .	<i>tahk</i>	thus
<b>акт</b> . . . .	<i>ahkt</i>	act

Now say the four words together:

**мак, как, так, акт** . . . .

### The Letter O o [transcribed aw when stressed]

The stressed Russian **o** sounds like the *aw* [au] in *fault* or *law*, but it is crisper. Say: **Walk** . . . .

Now pucker your lips the same way and say the Russian **o** . . . .

Say: <b>том</b> . . . .	<i>tawm</i>	volume
<b>то</b> . . . .	<i>tawt</i>	that (one)
<b>кто</b> . . . .	<i>ktaw</i>	who
<b>кот</b> . . . .	<i>kawt</i>	cat

The four words together:

**ТОМ, ТОТ, КТО, КОТ . . . .**

### The Unstressed A and O [transcribed *uh*]

Now you know how to pronounce the stressed **a** and **o** in Russian. Whenever they appear in an *unstressed* position in a word of more than one syllable, both the **a** and the **o** sound like the *uh*-sound in *lemon*.

Say: **ТАМ . . . .**      *tahm*\*      there

Now say: **МАМА . . . .**      *mah-muh*\*      mother

Did you hear the difference between the stressed **a** in the first syllable and the unstressed **a** in the second syllable?

Repeat: **ТАМ, МАМА . . . .**

Again: **ТАМ, МАМА . . . .**

Say: **КОТ . . . .**      *kawt*      cat

Now say: **КОТА́ . . . .**      *kuh-tah*      of the cat

This is the difference between the stressed and the unstressed **o**.

Repeat: **КОТ, КОТА́ . . . .**

Again: **КОТ, КОТА́ . . . .**

### The Letter Э э [transcribed *eh*]

The Russian letter **э** sounds almost like the *eh* in *men* or *let*, but keep your mouth a little more closed.

\* In the phonetic transcription of the examples, the stressed syllable is given in italics. Words of one syllable will always be transcribed in italics since the vowel in such words is always stressed.

Say:	<b>ЭТО . . . .</b>	<i>eh-tuh</i>	this is
	<b>ЭТА . . . .</b>	<i>eh-tuh</i>	this ( <i>f.</i> )
	<b>ЭТАК . . . .</b>	<i>eh-tuhk</i>	thus ( <i>coll.</i> )
	<b>ЭТОТ . . . .</b>	<i>eh-tuht</i>	this ( <i>m.</i> )

Did you notice the sound of the unstressed **a** and the unstressed **o** in these words? Let us try them again:

**ЭТО, ЭТА, ЭТАК, ЭТОТ . . . .**

### The Letter Y y [transcribed *oo*]

The Russian letter **y** sounds much shorter than the *oo* in *noodles* or *room*. Puckering your lips will help you to pronounce the Russian **y**.

Say:	<b>УМ . . . .</b>	<i>oom</i>	mind, intelligence
	<b>КУМ . . . .</b>	<i>koom</i>	godfather
	<b>ТУТ . . . .</b>	<i>toot</i>	here
	<b>ТОМУ́ . . . .</b>	<i>tuh-moo</i> *	to that (one)

Repeat all four together:

**УМ, КУМ, ТУТ, ТОМУ́ . . . .**

### The Unstressed Э and Y

The **э** and the **y** sound almost the same, whether stressed or unstressed. [That is, the unstressed **э** and **y** sound almost like their stressed counterparts. Hence, there will be no variation in the respective transcriptions of these letters.]

\* Note the unstressed **o** in the first syllable.



# UNIT 2

## CONSONANTS

Now let us pronounce some Russian consonants that also sound much as they do in English. They are the letters: **М** [emm] . . . ., **Б** [beh] . . . ., **В** [veh] . . . ., **Ф** [eff] . . . ., and **Г** [geh] . . . .

### The Letter М м [transcribed m]

Say:	<b>мак</b> . . . .	<i>mahk</i>	poppy
	<b>там</b> . . . .	<i>tahm</i>	there
	<b>том</b> . . . .	<i>tawm</i>	volume
	<b>ум</b> . . . .	<i>oom</i>	mind

**мак, там, том, ум** . . . .

### The Letter Б б [transcribed b]

Say:	<b>бак</b> . . . .	<i>bahk</i>	tank (receptacle)
	<b>бум</b> . . . .	<i>boom</i>	boom
	<b>бок</b> . . . .	<i>bawk</i>	side
	<b>баба</b> . . . .	<i>bah-buh</i>	peasant woman

**бак, бум, бок, баба** . . . .

### The Letter В в [transcribed v]

Say:	<b>вам</b> . . . .	<i>vahm</i>	to you
	<b>вот</b> . . . .	<i>vawt</i>	here

<b>вата</b> . . . .	<i>vah-tuh</i>	cotton, wadding
<b>буква</b> . . . .	<i>book-vuh</i>	letter (of the alphabet)

**вам, вот, вата, буква** . . . .

### The Letter Ф ф [transcribed f]

Say:	<b>фат</b> . . . .	<i>fahf</i>	fop
	<b>факт</b> . . . .	<i>fahkt</i>	fact
	<b>фото</b> . . . .	<i>faw-tuh</i>	photo
	<b>фата</b> . . . .	<i>fuh-tah</i>	bridal veil

**фат, факт, фото, фата** . . . .

### The Letter Г г [transcribed g]

The Russian letter **г** [geh] is pronounced like the *g* in *go*, never as in *gentle* or *gem*.

Say:	<b>гамма</b> . . . .	<i>gahm-muh</i>	scale (in music)
	<b>губа</b> . . . .	<i>goo-bah</i>	lip
	<b>гамак</b> . . . .	<i>guh-mahk</i>	hammock
	<b>бумага</b> . . . .	<i>boo-mah-guh</i>	paper

**гамма, губа, гамак, бумага** . . . .

Now let us consider the Russian letters **Д** [deh] and **Н** [enn] which sound harder than the corresponding letters in English because the tip of the tongue goes down rather than up.

### The Letter Д д [transcribed d]

Say:	да . . . .	<i>dah</i>	yes
	два . . . .	<i>dvah</i>	two
	дом . . . .	<i>dawm</i>	house
	да́ма . . . .	<i>dah-muh</i>	lady

да, два, дом, да́ма . . . .

### The Letter Н н [transcribed n]

Say:	на . . . .	<i>nah</i>	on, upon
	ну . . . .	<i>noo</i>	well!
	нам . . . .	<i>nahm</i>	to us
	Кана́да . . . .	<i>kuh-nah-duh</i>	Canada

на, ну, нам, Кана́да . . . .

### The Letter Л л [transcribed l]

The Russian letter л [ell] is also a hard sound, harder than the *l* in *table* or *Mabel*. Say: **table** . . . . Now say: **tablah** . . . .

Make the л as hard as you possibly can. Make sure that the tip of your tongue touches your upper teeth and then bends downwards.

Say: л [ell] . . . . Now practice the following words:

лак . . . .	<i>lahk</i>	lacquer
лом . . . .	<i>lawm</i>	crowbar
лук . . . .	<i>look</i>	onion

лак, лом, лук . . . .

ку́кла . . . .	<i>kook-luh</i>	doll
мала́ . . . .	<i>muh-lah</i>	small ( <i>f.</i> )
луна́ . . . .	<i>loo-nah</i>	moon

ку́кла, мала́, луна́ . . . .

The Russian consonants з [zeh] and с [ess] sound sharper than the corresponding letters in English. Whistle more.

### The Letter З з [transcribed z]

Say:	за . . . .	<i>zah</i>	behind
	знак . . . .	<i>znahk</i>	sign, signal
	звук . . . .	<i>zvook</i>	sound
	ва́за . . . .	<i>vah-zuh</i>	vase

за, знак, звук, ва́за . . . .

### The Letter С с [transcribed s]

Say:	сам . . . .	<i>sahm</i>	oneself
	сон . . . .	<i>sawm</i>	dream, sleep
	нос . . . .	<i>naws</i>	nose
	стул . . . .	<i>stool</i>	chair

сам, сон, нос, стул . . . .

# UNIT 3

## CONSONANTS (Continued)

Now let us take up some sounds that will require a little practice—first, the letters **п** [*peh*], **т** [*teh*], and **к** [*kah*].

### A Note on Aspiration

*Aspiration* occurs when a short puff of breath is released after another sound, giving the effect of a slight hesitation or *h*-sound. It can be heard after the *p* in *pie*, after the *t* in *tie*, and after the *k* in *kind*. By contrast, the *h*-sound should not be heard after the *p* in *please*, after the *t* in *try*, or after the hard *c* in *clean*.

Before you proceed to work intensively on the letters **п**, **т**, and **к**, practice on the English words *please*, *try*, and *clean* so that you may be sure to avoid any aspiration when you pronounce the Russian **п**, **т**, and **к**.

### The Letter П п [transcribed p]

The Russian **п** [*peh*] sounds like the *p* in *please*. The slight *aspiration* heard after the *p* in English words like *pen* and *pie* never occurs in Russian.

Say:	<b>пакт</b> . . . .	<i>pahkt</i>	pact
		not <i>pHHahkt</i>	
but:	<b>пакт</b> . . . .	<i>pahkt</i>	pact
	<b>пост</b> . . . .	<i>paʊst</i>	post
	<b>суп</b> . . . .	<i>soop</i>	soup
	<b>Пана́ма</b> . . . .	<i>puh-nah-muh</i>	Panama
	<b>пакт, пост, суп, Пана́ма</b> . . . .		

### The Letter Т т [transcribed t]

The Russian **т** [*teh*] sounds like the *t* in *try*. Again, the aspiration heard after the *t* in such English words as *tie* and *table* never occurs in Russian.

Say:	<b>там</b> . . . .	<i>tahm</i>	there
		not <i>tHHahm</i>	
but:	<b>там</b> . . . .	<i>tahm</i>	there
	<b>тон</b> . . . .	<i>tawn</i>	tone
	<b>тут</b> . . . .	<i>toot</i>	here
	<b>мост</b> . . . .	<i>maʊst</i>	bridge
	<b>там, тон, тут, мост</b> . . . .		

### The Letter К к [transcribed k]

The Russian **к** [*kah*] sounds like the *k*-sound in *clean*. Once more, the aspiration heard after the *k* in English words like *key* and *kind* never occurs in Russian.

Say:	<b>как</b> . . . .	<i>kahk</i>	how
		not <i>kHHahk</i>	
but:	<b>как</b> . . . .	<i>kahk</i>	how
	<b>кот</b> . . . .	<i>kaʊt</i>	cat
	<b>класс</b> . . . .	<i>klahss</i>	class
	<b>лук</b> . . . .	<i>look</i>	onion
	<b>как, кот, класс, лук</b> . . . .		

The following Russian letters are quite easy to pronounce because we have similar sounds in English. However, in English, it is necessary to use *several* letters to represent these sounds; in Russian, each of these sounds has its own special letter. These letters are: **ж** [*zheh*] . . . ., **ш** [*shah*] . . . ., **ц** [*tseh*] . . . ., **ч** [*cheh*] . . . ., and **щ** [*shchah*] . . . .\*

The letters **ж**, **ш**, and **ц** sound harsher than in English.

### The Letter **Ж ж** [transcribed *zh*]

The Russian letter **ж** [*zheh*] sounds even harsher than in *pleasure* or *vision*.

Say: **жук** . . . . *zhook* beetle

**жа́жда** . . . . *zhahzh-duh* thirst

**жук, жа́жда** . . . .

**ко́жа** . . . . *kaw-zhuh* skin

**у́жас** . . . . *oo-zhuhs* terror

**ко́жа, у́жас** . . . .

### The Letter **Ш ш** [transcribed *sh*]

The Russian letter **ш** [*shah*] sounds harsher than in *nation* or *Russian*.

\* For example, in English words the sound of **ж** is represented by a variety of combinations: e.g., *pleasure*, *vision*, *seizure*. For the sound of **ш**, consider: *nation*, *Russian*, *short*, *sure*. For the sound of **ц**, consider: *quartz*, *cats*.

Say: **штат** . . . . *shtaht* state

**ваш** . . . . *vahsh* yours

**штат, ваш** . . . .

**шанс** . . . . *shahns* chance

**шум** . . . . *shoom* noise

**шанс, шум** . . . .

### The Letter **Ц ц** [transcribed *ts*]

The Russian letter **ц** [*tseh*] sounds harsher than in *quartz* or *cats*.

Say: **бац** . . . . *bahts* bang

**цукáт** . . . . *tsoo-kaht* candied fruit

**бац, цукáт** . . . .

**плац** . . . . *plahnts* parade ground

**ца́ца** . . . . *tsah-tsuh* swelled head (*coll.*)

**плац, ца́ца** . . . .

The next two sounds are softer than in English. It helps to smile when you pronounce them.

# UNIT 4

## The Letter Ч ч [transcribed *ch*]

The Russian letter ч [*ch*] sounds softer than the *ch* in *church* or *child*.

Say: **час** . . . . *chahs* hour

**луч** . . . . *looch* ray

**час, луч** . . . . .

**пóчта** . . . . *pauch-tuh* post office

**чулóк** . . . . *choo-lawk* stocking

**пóчта, чулóк** . . . .

## The Letter Щ щ [transcribed *shch*]

The Russian letter щ [*shch*] sounds similar to, but softer than, the sound you hear in *fresh* chicken.

Say: **щúка** . . . . *shchoo-kuh* pike (fish)

**плащ** . . . . *plahshch* raincoat

**щúка, плащ** . . . .

## LETTERS WITH UNUSUAL SOUNDS

Now let us consider the sounds that have no counterpart in English. Two of them occur in several other European languages; the last one is particularly Russian. These sounds are the **р** [*err*], the **х** [*khah*], and the **ы** [*ih*].

### The Letter Р р [transcribed *r*]

To pronounce the Russian **р** [*err*], purr like a cat: **rrrr** . . . . Exaggerate the sound at first. It will help you get used to it. Try again: **rrrr** . . . .

Now say: **ром** . . . . *rawm* rum

**рак** . . . . *rahk* crayfish, crab

**брат** . . . . *braht* brother

**ром, рак, брат** . . . .

**спорт** . . . . *spawrt* sport

**курс** . . . . *koors* course

**март** . . . . *mahrt* March

**спорт, курс, март** . . . .

### The Letter Х х [transcribed *kh*]

The Russian letter **х** [*khah*] is something like the English *h* in *hut*, *hid*, or *harp*, but pronounced much more harshly. It is really a guttural sound, closer to the *kh*-sound in the German *nacht* or the Scottish *loch*. Say: **Ха** [*khah*] . . . .

Now say: <b>ох</b> . . . .	<i>awkh</i>	oh!
<b>хам</b> . . . .	<i>khahm</i>	cad
<b>хор</b> . . . .	<i>khawr</i>	choir
<b>ох, хам, хор</b> . . . .		
<b>слух</b> . . . .	<i>slookh</i>	hearing
<b>ухо</b> . . . .	<i>oo-khuh</i>	ear
<b>му́ха</b> . . . .	<i>moo-khuh</i>	fly
<b>слух, у́хо, му́ха</b> . . . .		

### The Letter **ы**\* [transcribed *ih* when stressed]

The letter **ы** is typically Russian. Nothing like it exists in English. To pronounce it, put a pencil between your teeth and push your tongue backwards. Now try to say:

**its** . . . .

**its** . . . .

Hear the sound rumbling in your throat? That is where it should be—down deep in your throat.

Exaggerate and try it again: **its** . . . .

Say: **син** . . . .

Now say: **сын** . . . . *sihn* son

\* The letter **ы** never begins a word.

Say: **дым** . . . .

Now say: **дым** . . . . *dihm* smoke

Say: **быт** . . . .

Now say: **быт** . . . . *biht* mode of life

Do you hear the difference? Now let us try some Russian words with the only really difficult sound in the Russian language—**ы**.

Say: **мы** . . . . *mih* we

**сыр** . . . . *sihr* cheese

**бык** . . . . *bihk* bull

**мы, сыр, бык** . . . .

**ры́ба** . . . . *rih-buh* fish

**ты́ква** . . . . *tihk-vuh* pumpkin

**мы́шка** . . . . *mihsh-kuh* mouse

**ры́ба, ты́ква, мы́шка** . . . .

# UNIT 5

## THE SOFT VOWELS AND Ъ

You have now learned and practiced the five *hard* vowels: **а, о, э, у, and ы**. Next, let us take up the five *soft* vowels.\*

### The Letter И и [transcribed *ee* when stressed]

The first soft vowel we will study is the letter **и**. The Russian **и** sounds shorter than the *ee* in *feet* or *people*.

Say:	<b>и́ва</b> . . . .	<i>ee-vuh</i>	willow tree
	<b>и́ск</b> . . . .	<i>eesk</i>	legal action
	<b>и́дол</b> . . . .	<i>ee-duhl</i>	idol

**и́ва, и́ск, и́дол** . . . .

### The Letter Ъ ъ [transcribed *y*; pronounced as in *yank*]

Before studying the other soft vowels, you will find it very useful to learn to pronounce a special Russian letter which is part of the sound of these soft vowels. This letter closely resembles the **и** [*ee*] in appearance, but it is neither a consonant nor a vowel. It never stands alone. It always stands next to a vowel. This is the letter **ъ**.

**After a Vowel.** When **ъ** comes *after* a vowel, it sounds like the *y* in *boy*.

Say:	<b>маъ</b> . . . .	<i>mahy</i>	May
	<b>боъ</b> . . . .	<i>bahy</i>	battle

\* The words *hard* and *soft*, as used in connection with vowels, are widely accepted, conventional terms that have nothing to do with the actual sounds of the vowels themselves. What the terms do indicate is that certain vowels (the soft vowels) affect the sound of a consonant that precedes them, whereas the hard vowels do not. This phenomenon will be discussed in Bands 6 and 7.

**худъ** . . . . *khoo-dawy* thin

**двойноъ** . . . . *dvuhy-nawy* double

**маъ, боъ, худъ, двойноъ** . . . .

**Before a Vowel.** When **ъ** comes *before* a vowel, it is pronounced like the *y* in *yet*.

Say:	<b>ъорк</b> . . . .	<i>yawrk</i>	York
	<b>ъота</b> . . . .	<i>yaw-tuh</i>	iota

**ъорк, ъота** . . . .

**Between Two Vowels.** When **ъ** falls *between* two vowels, it sounds like the *y* in *coyote*.

Say:	<b>маър</b> . . . .	<i>muh-yawr</i>	major
	<b>раън</b> . . . .	<i>ruh-yawn</i>	region, district

**маър, раън** . . . .

### The Letters Я я, Ё ё, Е е, and Ю ю

Now you are ready to study the other four soft vowels. They actually sound like a combination of **ъ** plus one of the hard vowels—**а, о, э, or у**.\*

\* When **я, ё, е, and ю** are *stressed*, and appear (1) at the beginning of a word or (2) following another vowel, they will be transcribed, respectively, as *yah, yaw, yeh, and yoo*.

**The Phonetic Relationship between  
Hard and Soft Vowels**

<b>й</b> + <b>а</b> = <b>я</b>	(y + ah = yah)
<b>й</b> + <b>о</b> = <b>ё</b>	(y + aw = yaw)
<b>й</b> + <b>э</b> = <b>е</b>	(y + eh = yeh)
<b>й</b> + <b>у</b> = <b>ю</b>	(y + oo = yoo)

Say: **yard** . . . . The sound of **й** [y] plus **а** [ah] is the sound of the Russian letter **я** [yah].

Say: **York** . . . . The sound of **й** [y] plus **о** [aw] is the sound of the Russian letter **ё** [yaw].

Say: **yet** . . . . The sound of **й** [y] plus **э** [eh] is the sound of the Russian letter **е** [yeh].

Say: **you** . . . . The sound of **й** [y] plus **у** [oo] is the sound of the Russian letter **ю** [yoo].

**At the Beginning of a Word.** Let us practice the sounds **я** [yah] . . . ., **ё** [yaw] . . . ., **е** [yeh] . . . ., and **ю** [yoo] . . . . at the beginning of a word.

For the letter **я** at the beginning of a word, say:

<b>яма</b> . . . .	<i>yah-muh</i>	hole, pit
<b>Янки</b> . . . .	<i>yahn-kee*</i>	Yankee
<b>язва</b> . . . .	<i>yahz-vuh</i>	ulcer

\* When **я** appears in an unstressed position, its sound is shorter and less distinct. This variation is discussed in Band 10 (page 28).

**яблоко** . . . . *yahb-luh-kuh* apple

**яма, Янки, язва, яблоко** . . . .

For the letter **ё** at the beginning of a word, say:

**ёлка** . . . .\* *yawl-kuh* spruce tree

**ёрзал** . . . . *yawr-zuhl* (he) fidgeted

**ёлка, ёрзал** . . . .

For the letter **е** at the beginning of a word, say:

**ем** . . . . *yehm* (I) am eating

**Ева** . . . . *yeh-vuh* Eve

**ест** . . . . *yehst* (he) is eating

**ем, Ева, ест** . . . .

For the letter **ю** at the beginning of a word, say:

**юмор** . . . . *yoo-muhr* humor

**юнга** . . . . *yoon-guh* cabin boy

**Юкон** . . . . *yoo-kawn* Yukon

**юла** . . . . *yoo-lah* top (a toy)

**юмор, юнга, Юкон, юла** . . . .

\* The vowel **ё** is always stressed. Hence, the *diaeresis* [¨] not only serves to distinguish **ё** from **е**, but also serves as a stress mark.



**After Another Vowel.** Now let us try **я, ё, е, and ю** when these letters follow a vowel.

For the letter **я** after another vowel, say:

**маяк . . . .**      *muh-yahk*      lighthouse

**буян . . . .**      *boo-yahn*      ruffian

**маяк, буян . . . .**

For the letter **ё** after another vowel, say:

**заём . . . .**      *zuh-yawm*      loan

**поёт . . . .**      *puh-yawt*      (he) sings

**заём, поёт . . . .**

For the letter **е** after another vowel, say:

**я ем . . . .**      *yah yehm*      I am eating

**уехал . . . .**      *oo-yeh-khuhl*      (he) drove away

**я ем, уехал . . . .**

For the letter **ю** after another vowel, say:

**каюта . . . .**      *kuh-yoo-tuh*      cabin

**уют . . . .**      *oo-yoot*      coziness

**жую . . . .**      *zhoo-yoo*      (I) am chewing

**каюта, уют, жую . . . .**

# Part Two

## Sound Variations

# UNIT 6

## ACTION OF THE SOFT SIGN

You have now learned to pronounce all the Russian letters when they are true to their sound in the alphabet. However, as in English, the sound of a Russian letter is affected by: the sounds of the letters that surround it, by its position in the word, and by its position in the sentence. First, let us study how a consonant is affected by the sounds that surround it.

### The Hard Sound of Consonants

The sounds which you have already learned and practiced for the Russian consonants are known as *hard sounds*.

#### A Note on the Meaning of Hard Sounds

To speak of the "hard sounds of consonants" is to say that the Russian consonants are pronounced like their English counterparts, except for the slight differences that have been specifically pointed out thus far. In the actual production of hard sounds, the tongue is nearer to the lower teeth, the mouth is in a relaxed position, and the pitch of the voice is relatively low.

The consonants have a hard sound: at the end of a word, as in **кон**; when followed by a hard vowel, as in **бумага**; or when followed by another consonant, as in **стул**.

### The Soft Sound of Consonants

However, there are occasions when the hard sound of the consonant becomes softened [see note at the right]. It happens when the consonant is followed by the soft sign or by a soft vowel. Let us take up the soft sign first.

### A Note on the Softening of Consonants

The softening of the sound of a consonant is accomplished by raising the tongue nearer to the roof of the mouth and smiling at the same time. This gives to the sound of a soft consonant a higher pitch than it has when pronounced hard.

Study the differences in pitch and in the position of the tongue in the following sets of English words, particularly with respect to the formation of the initial letter in each word.

HARD INITIAL CONSONANT	SOFT INITIAL CONSONANT
<i>taught</i>	<i>teach</i>
<i>dill</i>	<i>deal</i>
<i>sill</i>	<i>seal</i>
<i>noodle</i>	<i>needle</i>
<i>poodle</i>	<i>people</i>
<i>foot</i>	<i>few</i>
<i>moose</i>	<i>muse</i>

It should be clearly understood that soft consonants in Russian are not new letters. Most Russian consonants—with only a few exceptions—may be pronounced either hard or soft, depending upon the letter which follows. The *exceptions* are: **ж**, **ш**, and **ц**, which are always pronounced *hard*; and **ч** and **щ**, which are always pronounced *soft*.

### The Letter Ъ (Soft Sign)

The soft sign [Ь] is a special Russian letter that has no sound. However, it affects the sound of the consonant before it.\* It *softens* it. When you see the soft sign [Ь], smile—and slightly raise your voice. Smiling will help you pronounce a word with a soft sign [Ь] in it.†

**At the End of a Word.** Let us see what the soft sign [Ь] does at the *end* of a word.

Say:     **дан . . . .**             *dahn*             given

Now smile and say:

**дань . . . .**             *dahñ*             tribute

Say:     **мол . . . .**             *mawl*             pier

Now smile and say:

**моль . . . .**             *mawĭ*             moth

Do you hear the difference? Say these words again.

**дан**                     *dahn*

**дань . . . . ‡**         *dahñ*

\* The soft sign [Ь] never begins a word.

† For the purposes of phonetic transcription, the softening of a Russian consonant will be indicated by the sign ~ above the softened consonant. This sign—known as the *tilde*—has been selected because of its softening effect on the sound of the letter *n* in Spanish words such as *mañana* (tomorrow) and *niño* (boy).

‡ It should be noted that the tilde will not appear over the transcription for the letters **ж**, **ш**, **ц**, **ч**, and **щ** since their sound is not affected by either a soft sign or a soft vowel.

‡ When examples are arranged in this fashion, be prepared to repeat them as a group.

дан	<i>dahn</i>
дань . . . .	<i>dahn̄</i>
мол	<i>mawl</i>
моль . . . .	<i>mawl̄</i>
мол	<i>mawl</i>
моль . . . .	<i>mawl̄</i>

Now let us practice some sets of words: *without* the soft sign [Ь], and *with* it.

Say:	стал	<i>stahl</i>	(he) stood
	сталь . . . .	<i>stahl̄</i>	steel
	брат	<i>braht</i>	brother
	брать . . . .	<i>braht̄</i>	to take
	удár	<i>oo-dahr</i>	a blow
	удáрь . . . .	<i>oo-dahr̄</i>	hit! ( <i>imper.</i> )
	мат	<i>maht</i>	checkmate
	мать . . . .	<i>maht̄</i>	mother

**Between Two Consonants.** When the soft sign [Ь] comes between two consonants, it not only softens the consonant that comes before it, but also makes the entire word brighter and softer.

Say:	бóльно . . . .	<i>bawl̄-nuh</i>	painful
	свáдьба . . . .	<i>svahd̄-buh</i>	wedding
	тьма . . . .	<i>t̄mah</i>	darkness
	бóльно, свáдьба, тьма . . . .		

Hear the difference the soft sign [Ь] makes in the following sets of words.

Say:	пóлка . . . .	<i>pawl-kuh</i>	shelf
Now say:	пóлька . . . .	<i>pawl̄-kuh</i>	polka

пóлка, пóлька . . . .

бáнка . . . .	<i>bahn-kuh</i>	jar
Вáнька . . . .	<i>vahn̄-kuh</i>	Johnny

бáнка, Вáнька . . . .

гóрка . . . .	<i>gawr-kuh</i>	hillock
гóрько . . . .	<i>gawr̄-kuh</i>	bitterly

гóрка, гóрько . . . .

# UNIT 7

## ACTION OF THE SOFT VOWELS

Now that you know how consonants are softened by the soft sign [Ь], let us see how the soft vowels **и**, **я**, **ё**, **е**, and **ю** do the same. We shall start with the **и**.

### The Vowel И after a Consonant

Say: **мал** . . . . *mahl* small (*m.*)

Now smile and say:

**мил** . . . . *mēel* nice (*m.*)

**мал, мил** . . . .

Say: **пол** . . . . *rawl* floor

Now smile and say:

**пил** . . . . *pēel* (he) drank

**пол, пил** . . . .

Did you hear the difference an **и** made in the sound of the **м** and of the **п**? Try it again.

**мал** *mahl*

**мил** . . . . *mēel*

**пол** *rawl*

**пил** . . . . *pēel*

Let us practice some more words *without* and *with* an **и**.

Say: **пар** *pahr* steam

**пир** . . . . *pēer* feast

**кот** *kawt* cat

**кит** . . . . *kēet* whale

**ва́за** *vah-zuh* vase

**ви́за** . . . . *vēe-zuh* visa

**ла́па** *lah-puh* paw

**ли́па** . . . . *lēe-puh* linden tree

**был** *bihl* (he) was

**бил** . . . . *bēel* (he) hit

### The Vowels Я, Ё, Е, and Ю after a Consonant

The vowels **я**, **ё**, **е**, and **ю** also soften a consonant before them, but in doing so, they lose their initial **й** [y] sound.

The **й** sound which otherwise begins the letters **я**, **ё**, **е**, and **ю** is *absorbed* by the softened consonant. In effect, when you see a consonant followed by **я**, **ё**, **е**, or **ю**:

1. Pronounce the consonant soft (except in the case of **ж**, **ш**, and **ц**)—lifting your tongue nearer to the roof of your mouth and smiling at the same time.

2. With the mouth in this position and the pitch of the voice raised, pronounce what remains of the soft vowel—i.e., *ah*, *aw*, *eh*, or *oo*.

Say:	<b>яма</b> . . . .	<i>yah-muh</i>	pit, hole
Now say:	<b>мял</b> . . . .	<i>m̄ahl*</i>	(he) crumpled
not	<b>мйял</b>	<i>myahl</i>	
but	<b>мял</b> . . . .	<i>m̄ahl</i>	
Say:	<b>ел</b> . . . .	<i>yehl</i>	(he) ate
Now say:	<b>пел</b> . . . .	<i>p̄ehl</i>	(he) sang
not	<b>пйел</b>	<i>pyehl</i>	
but	<b>пел</b> . . . .	<i>p̄ehl</i>	

Did you hear the difference? Say these words again:

<b>яма</b>	<i>yah-muh</i>
<b>мял</b> . . . .	<i>m̄ahl</i>
<b>ел</b>	<i>yehl</i>
<b>пел</b> . . . .	<i>p̄ehl</i>

Let us practice some additional examples of the same type. First, **я** after a consonant.

Say:	<b>мал</b>	<i>mahl</i>	small ( <i>m.</i> )
	<b>мял</b> . . . .	<i>m̄ahl</i>	(he) crumpled

\* For purposes of phonetic transcription, when a stressed **я**, **ѐ**, **е**, or **ю** is preceded by a consonant, it will be transcribed as *ah*, *aw*, *eh*, or *oo*, respectively. At the same time, a tilde [~] will appear over the preceding consonant to indicate the softening action of the vowel and the absorption of the **ж** sound by the consonant.

<b>вал</b>	<i>vahl</i>	rampart
<b>вял</b> . . . .	<i>v̄ahl</i>	(he) faded
<b>пола́</b>	<i>puh-lah</i>	flap, lap
<b>поля́</b> . . . .	<i>puh-l̄ah</i>	fields

Now **ѐ** after a consonant.

Say:	<b>мол</b>	<i>mawł</i>	pier
	<b>ме́л</b> . . . .	<i>m̄awł</i>	(he) swept
	<b>нос</b>	<i>nawıs</i>	nose
	<b>не́с</b> . . . .	<i>n̄awıs</i>	(he) carried
	<b>лот</b>	<i>lawł</i>	half an ounce
	<b>слёт</b> . . . .	<i>s̄lawł</i>	gathering

Now **е** after a consonant.

Say:	<b>пол</b>	<i>pawł</i>	floor
	<b>пел</b> . . . .	<i>p̄ehl</i>	(he) sang
	<b>мол</b>	<i>mawł</i>	pier
	<b>мел</b> . . . .	<i>m̄ehl</i>	chalk
	<b>сват</b>	<i>svaht</i>	matchmaker
	<b>свет</b> . . . .	<i>s̄veht</i>	light

Now **ю** after a consonant.

Say:	<b>лук</b>	<i>look</i>	onion
	<b>люк . . . .</b>	<i>l̄ook</i>	hatchway
	<b>стук</b>	<i>stook</i>	knock
	<b>тук . . . .</b>	<i>t̄ook</i>	bale
	<b>рámки</b>	<i>rahm-kee*</i>	frames
	<b>рióмки . . . .</b>	<i>r̄oom-kee*</i>	wine glasses

### The Softening of Consonants: Summary

1. The soft sign [Ь] and the soft vowels [и, я, ё, е, and ю] soften a consonant that precedes them.
2. The vowels я, ё, е, and ю lose their initial й sound when they follow a consonant.
3. The consonants ж, ш, and ц are invariably pronounced *hard*, and ч and щ are invariably pronounced *soft*. Hence their sound is not affected by a soft sign or a soft vowel that follows. Note, however, that when a soft vowel follows these consonants, it loses its initial й sound nonetheless.

\* Note that the letter к is also pronounced soft because it is followed by и. The fact that the и (or any soft vowel) is in an unstressed position does not hinder its softening effect on the sound of the consonant which precedes it; however, the unstressed и should be pronounced shorter and less distinct.

### ACTION OF THE SEPARATION SIGNS

In the previous examples illustrating the softening of consonants, the initial й sound of the soft vowels—я, ё, е, and ю—was lost. There is, however, a way of keeping the й sound of the soft vowels. It is done by means of two signs, one of which is already familiar to you—the soft sign [Ь].

The letter Ъ acts not only as a soft sign, softening the sound of a consonant that precedes it, but also as a *separation sign*. In the latter capacity, it serves to separate the sound of a soft consonant from the sound of the vowel that follows it. As a result of the separation, the initial й sound of the vowel is preserved. However, there should be no pause whatsoever between the sound of the consonant and the sound of the vowel.

### The Letter Ъ as a Separation Sign

When the soft sign [Ь] comes between a consonant and a vowel, you soften the consonant but keep the й sound of the vowel.

Say: **пью . . . .** *p̄'yoo\** (I) am drinking

Hear the й sound between the п and the ю? Say it again:

**пью . . . .** *p̄'yoo*

So remember, whenever you see a soft sign between a consonant and a vowel, soften the consonant and say й before the vowel. †

\* In the phonetic transcription, to indicate the separation, an apostrophe will be inserted between the softened consonant and the following vowel.

† The insertion of a soft sign [Ь] between a consonant and a vowel not only preserves the й sound of the vowels я, ё, е, and ю, but also adds a й sound to vowels that otherwise do not have it. For example:

<b>воробьи</b>	<i>vuh-ruh-b'yee</i>	sparrows
<b>бульон</b>	<i>boo-l'yawn</i>	broth

Ready for practice?

**пью** . . . . *p̄'yoo* (I) am drinking

**барьер** . . . . *buh-r̄'yehr* barrier

**пью, барьер** . . . .

**судья** . . . . *soo-d̄'yah* judge

**друзья** . . . . *droo-z̄'yah* friends

**коньяк** . . . . *kuh-n̄'yahk* cognac

**судья, друзья, коньяк** . . . .

To make sure you can recognize the difference the soft sign [ь] makes between a consonant and a vowel, repeat the following sets of words. Notice how the й sound is retained.

**хотя** *khuh-t̄ah* though

**статья** . . . . *stuh-t̄'yah* article

**репа** *r̄eh-puh* turnip

**барьер** . . . . *buh-r̄'yehr* barrier

**полёт** *puh-l̄awt* flight

**лёт** . . . . *l̄'yawt* (he) pours

**сплю** *sp̄loo* (I) am sleeping

**пью** . . . . *p̄'yoo* (I) am drinking

**плюнь** *p̄looñ* spit (*imper.*)

**вьюн** . . . . *v̄'yoon* quicksilver (*fig.*)

### The Letter ъ (Hard Sign)

To keep the й sound *without* softening the preceding consonant, however, another sign is used—the hard sign [ъ].

The hard sign is another special Russian letter which, like the soft sign, has no sound. The hard sign never begins a word but always falls between a consonant and a vowel. Its function is as follows:

When the hard sign [ъ] comes between a consonant and a vowel, you keep the consonant hard, and also keep the true sound of the vowel.

Say: **изъян** . . . . *eez'-yahñ* defect

**объект** . . . . *uhb'-yehkt* object

**подъём** . . . . *puhd'-yawm* ascent

**изъян, объект, подъём** . . . .

To make sure you can recognize the difference a hard sign [ъ] makes when it comes before a vowel, repeat the following sets of words. Listen for the й after the hard sign [ъ].



сестъ	<i>sehst̄</i>	to sit down
съестъ . . . .	<i>s'yehst̄</i>	to eat
сѣмга	<i>śawm-guh</i>	salmon
сѣмка . . . .	<i>s'yawm-kuh</i>	survey
обнятъ	<i>uhb-nah̄t̄</i>	to embrace
объятъ . . . .	<i>uhb'-yah̄t̄</i>	to fill, to envelop
обѣт	<i>uh-b̄eht</i>	vow
объект . . . .	<i>uhb'-yehkt</i>	object

### The Action of Separation Signs: Summary

Between a consonant and a vowel:

- Ь { softens the consonant that precedes it and preserves the **й** sound of the vowels **я, ё, е, and ю** (or creates a **й** sound before other vowels)
- Ъ { does not change the sound of the consonant that precedes it (i.e., the consonant remains hard), and it preserves the **й** sound of the vowels **я, ё, е, and ю**

### VOICING AND DEVOICING OF CONSONANTS

You have learned how the soft vowels and the soft and hard signs affect the sounds around them. Now you will see how the position of the consonant in the word affects its sound.

#### Voiced and Voiceless Consonants

Russian consonants are divided not only into *hard* and *soft* sounds (see page 14), but also into *voiced* and *voiceless* consonants. Voiced consonants are produced with the aid of the vocal chords, which give to the consonants a buzzing sound; in the production of voiceless consonants, however, the vocal chords remain inactive.

The same distinction exists in English: the English *b, v, d,* and *z* are voiced or buzzing sounds; the *p, f, t,* and *s* are voiceless sounds. Study the differences in the production of these letters in the following sets of words:

<i>bat</i>	<i>van</i>	<i>die</i>	<i>zeal</i>
<i>pat</i>	<i>fan</i>	<i>tie</i>	<i>seal</i>

You will notice that when you form each pair of words, your mouth is in the same position, yet the sound is different. The difference can be clearly put: in each word on top, the vocal chords are used in the production of the initial letter; in the corresponding word on the bottom, they are not.

Most voiced consonants in Russian have their voiceless counterparts, just as in English the *b* is related to the *p*, the *v* to the *f*, the *d* to the *t*, and the *z* to the *s*. However, in Russian pronunciation, unlike English, this relationship is functional; for under certain circumstances, voiced consonants become devoiced (i.e., pronounced like their voiceless counterparts), and vice versa.

Study the following table, to be sure you understand the pattern of these changes.

Classification of Russian Consonants as Voiced and Voiceless				
ALWAYS VOICED	VOICED COUNTERPARTS	and	VOICELESS	ALWAYS VOICELESS
л	б [b]	←→	п [p]	ц
м	в [v]	←→	ф [f]	ч
н	г [g]	←→	к, х [k, kh]	щ
р	д [d]	←→	т [t]	
	ж [zh]	←→	ш [sh]	
	з [z]	←→	с [s]	

### Devoicing at the End of a Word

Now let us take up the sounds that change when they are at the end of a word. The voiced consonants **б, в, г, д, ж, и**—when they come at the end of a word—lose their sharpness; that is, they become voiceless.

The **б** sounds almost like **п**.

The **в** sounds almost like **ф**.

The **г** sounds almost like **к** or **х**.

The **д** sounds almost like **т**.

The **ж** sounds almost like **ш**.

The **з** sounds almost like **с**.

For instance: The word **лоб** (*forehead*) is pronounced as if it were spelled “**лоп**” (*lawp*).

The word **друг** (*friend*) is pronounced as if it were spelled “**друк**” (*drook*).

The word **раз** (*once*) is pronounced as if it were spelled “**рас**” (*rahs*).

The Russian spelling, of course, does not actually change; only the pronunciation.

Listen carefully and repeat the following examples which illustrate the devoicing of the sound of these consonants at the end of a word, as compared with their regular voiced sound.

For the letter **б**, say:

<b>зуб</b>	<i>zooʹp</i>	tooth
<b>зу́бы . . . .</b>	<i>zoo-bih*</i>	teeth

For the letter **в**, say:

<b>нов</b>	<i>nawʹf</i>	new ( <i>m.</i> )
<b>но́во . . . .</b>	<i>naw-vuh</i>	new ( <i>n.</i> )

For the letter **г**, say:

<b>луг</b>	<i>look</i>	meadow
<b>луга́ . . . .</b>	<i>loo-gah</i>	meadows

For the letter **д**, say:

<b>сад</b>	<i>saht</i>	garden
<b>сады́ . . . . .</b>	<i>suh-dih</i>	gardens

For the letter **ж**, say:

<b>муж</b>	<i>moosh</i>	husband
<b>му́жья . . . .</b>	<i>moo-zh'yah†</i>	husbands

\* When **ы** appears in an unstressed position, its sound is much shorter and less distinct. This variation is discussed in Band 10 (page 27).

† The letter **ж** (like **ш** and **ц**) is always pronounced *hard*. Thus, the soft sign which follows **ж** does not affect its sound but simply indicates that the **ж** sound of the vowel **я** is to be preserved.

For the letter **з**, say:

<b>глаз</b>	<i>glahs</i>	eye
<b>глаза́ . . . .</b>	<i>gluh-zah</i>	eyes

If a soft sign comes at the end of a word, the consonant which precedes it is considered to be “at the end of the word” for the purposes of this rule. Thus, for example, **го́лубь** (*pigeon*) is pronounced: *gaw-looṑ̄*. The soft sign simply softens the devoiced **б**.

### Devoicing before a Voiceless Consonant

The same consonants [**б, в, г, д, ж, з**] also become devoiced when they precede a voiceless consonant [see table]. For example:

<b>ло́вко . . . .</b>	<i>lawf-kuh</i>	adroitly
<b>кру́жка . . . .</b>	<i>kroosh-kuh</i>	mug
<b>ло́дка . . . .</b>	<i>lawt-ka</i>	boat

Did you hear how the **в** became an **ф**, how the **ж** became a **ш**, and the **д** became a **т**? [As in the case of the devoicing of consonants at the end of a word, here also the change occurs only in pronunciation. The actual spelling of the Russian word does not change.]

Keep referring to the table of voiced and voiceless consonants in the manual (page 21). Now let us practice.

For the letter **б**, say:

<b>прóба</b>	<i>praw-buh</i>	test
<b>прóбка . . . .</b>	<i>prawp-kuh</i>	cork
<b>труба́</b>	<i>troo-bah</i>	trumpet
<b>тру́бка . . . .</b>	<i>troop-kuh</i>	pipe

For the letter **в**, say:

<b>вéчер</b>	<i>v̄eh-cheer*</i>	evening
<b>вчeра́ . . . .</b>	<i>fchee-rah*</i>	yesterday
<b>вeсь</b>	<i>v̄ehs̄</i>	all ( <i>m. sing.</i> )
<b>вe . . . .</b>	<i>fseh</i>	all ( <i>pl.</i> )

For the letter **г**, say:

<b>но́готь</b>	<i>naw-guhṫ</i>	nail
<b>но́гти . . . .</b>	<i>nawk-ṫee*</i>	nails
<b>магнít</b>	<i>muhg-ṫeet</i>	magnet
<b>мя́гко . . . .</b>	<i>m̄ahkh-kuh</i>	softly

For the letter **д**, say:

<b>водá</b>	<i>vuh-dah</i>	water
<b>во́дка . . . .</b>	<i>vawt-kuh</i>	vodka
<b>будítь</b>	<i>boo-ḏeēṫ</i>	to awaken
<b>бу́дка . . . .</b>	<i>boot-kuh</i>	cabin, booth

For the letter **ж**, say:

<b>кружóк</b>	<i>kroo-zhawk</i>	circle
<b>кру́жка . . . .</b>	<i>kroosh-kuh</i>	mug

\* The unstressed **е** and the unstressed **и** sound alike—shorter and less distinct than the stressed **и**. This variation will be discussed in Band 10 (page 28).

<b>мóжно</b>	<i>mawzh-nuh</i>	one may
<b>нóжка . . . .</b>	<i>nawsh-kuh</i>	little foot

For the letter **з**, say:

<b>ска́зать</b>	<i>skuh-zah̄t̄</i>	to tell
<b>ска́зка . . . .</b>	<i>skahs-kuh</i>	tale, story
<b>ма́зать</b>	<i>mah-zuh̄t̄</i>	to smear
<b>зама́зка . . . .</b>	<i>zuh-mahs-kuh</i>	putty

Devoicing before a voiceless consonant may occur when a word ends in two consecutive voiced consonants: the final consonant automatically becomes devoiced because it is at the end of a word; as a result, the next-to-last letter will also become devoiced because it precedes a consonant that has become voiceless. For example, consider the word **съезд**, spelled *s'yehzd* but pronounced *s'yehst*. The final consonant **д** became devoiced because of its position at the end of the word. Consequently, the preceding consonant **з** must also become devoiced because it comes before a voiceless sound (the devoiced **д**).

Devoicing before a voiceless consonant may also occur, even though a soft sign intervenes. Consider the word **ре́дька** [transcribed *řēt̄-kuh* and meaning "horse-radish"]. Here, the **д** becomes devoiced because the consonant which follows it [**к**] is already voiceless. The intervening soft sign simply softens the voiceless **д**.

### Voicing before a Voiced Consonant

The opposite holds true. If a voiced consonant [other than **л**, **м**, **н**, or **п**] follows a voiceless consonant, the voiceless consonant becomes voiced.

For example:

<b>сде́лать . . . .</b>	<i>zdeh-luh̄t̄</i>	to have done
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Hear how the **с** almost becomes a **з**? As another example, say:

<b>проси́ть . . . .</b>	<i>pruh-seēt̄</i>	to ask
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Now say: **прóсьба . . . .** *prawz̄-buh\** request

Hear the difference?

Repeat: **проси́ть** *pruh-seēt̄*

**прóсьба . . . .** *prawz̄-buh*

As in other instances of voicing and devoicing, when a voiceless consonant becomes voiced, the change occurs only in the pronunciation. The spelling of the Russian word remains the same.

Now repeat the following words where the voiceless consonants become voiced when followed by another voiced consonant.

<b>сажа́ть</b>	<i>suh-zhah̄t̄</i>	to seat
<b>сжа́ть . . . .</b>	<i>zzhah̄t̄</i>	to squeeze
<b>собра́ть</b>	<i>suh-brah̄t̄</i>	to gather
<b>сбо́р . . . .</b>	<i>zbawr</i>	collection
<b>кула́к</b>	<i>koo-lahk</i>	fist
<b>вокза́л . . . .</b>	<i>vuhg-zahl</i>	railway station

\* A soft sign intervening between a voiceless and voiced consonant does not prevent the voicing rule from operating. In the word **прóсьба**, the **с** becomes voiced because the consonant that follows it [**б**] is already voiced. The intervening soft sign simply softens the voiced **с**.

таба́к	tuh- <i>bahk</i>	tobacco
футбо́л . . . .	food- <i>bawl</i>	football
отодрáть	uh-tuh- <i>drahī</i>	to tear off
отда́ть . . . .	uhd- <i>dahī</i>	to give away

### Voicing and Devoicing of Prepositions

The preceding rules for the voicing and devoicing of consonants hold true for prepositions consisting of one letter. For purposes of pronunciation, a preposition consisting of one letter is considered part of the following word.

Practice the following examples.

Say: **в окне́** . . . . vuhk-*nēh* in the window

The **в** was not devoiced because it was followed by the vowel **о**. [However, it was pronounced as if it were part of the first syllable of the following word. There was, and should not have been, any hesitation between the two words.]

However, say:

**в комна́те** . . . . fkaum-nuh-*tēe* in the room

Here, the **в** was followed by the voiceless consonant **к** and became devoiced. [Again, it should have been pronounced as part of the following syllable without any hesitation whatsoever.]

Now an example showing when a voiceless consonant becomes voiced.

Say: **с доро́ги** . . . . zduh-*raw-ḡee* after the journey

Say: **с обе́да** . . . . suh-*bēh-duh* from dinner

The first **с** became voiced [being followed by the voiced consonant **д**]; the second **с** remained unvoiced [being followed by an

unstressed **о**. Once again, both prepositions should have been pronounced as part of the following syllable.]

[The rules for the voicing and devoicing of consonants also apply to longer prepositions, as well as to any words ending and beginning with consonants that fall under these rules.]

### Rules for Voicing and Devoicing: Summary

ALWAYS VOICED	VOICED COUNTERPARTS	and	VOICELESS	ALWAYS VOICELESS
<b>л</b>	<b>б</b> [b]	←→	<b>п</b> [p]	<b>ц</b>
<b>м</b>	<b>в</b> [v]	←→	<b>ф</b> [f]	<b>ч</b>
<b>н</b>	<b>г</b> [g]	←→	<b>к, х</b> [k, kh]	<b>ш</b>
<b>р</b>	<b>д</b> [d]	←→	<b>т</b> [t]	
	<b>ж</b> [zh]	←→	<b>ш</b> [sh]	
	<b>з</b> [z]	←→	<b>с</b> [s]	

1. The voiced consonants in the center column above become *devoiced* (i.e., pronounced like their voiceless counterparts):

- When they come at the end of a word.
- When followed by *any* voiceless consonant.

2. The voiceless consonants in the center column above become *voiced* (i.e., pronounced like their voiced counterparts):

- When followed by any voiced consonant *except* **л, м, н, or р** (see the first column above).

*Note:* A soft sign coming at the end of a word or between two consonants will not prevent voicing or devoicing from taking place. The soft sign will simply soften the resulting sound of the affected consonant.

# UNIT 10

## THE UNSTRESSED VOWELS

In the Introduction you learned that Russian words have only *one* stressed syllable and that the vowel in that stressed syllable always remains true to its sound in the alphabet. You therefore know how to pronounce every stressed vowel in the Russian language.

In this connection, it is also important to know that:

1. As in English, the stress in Russian has no fixed place in a word. In a word of two or more syllables, it may fall on any syllable. (In some languages there is a definite location of the stress: e.g., in French, on the last syllable; in Czech, on the first syllable; in Polish, on the next-to-last syllable.)

2. In Russian, the stressed syllable—and particularly the vowel in that syllable—is pronounced more emphatically than in English.

3. In the pronunciation of a stressed syllable in Russian, the pitch of the voice is raised.

The *unstressed* vowels? [I.e., all the other vowels in a given word.] They are much less distinct.\* It is practically impossible to give an exact value to their sounds, so listen to this part very carefully.

The vowels that change their sound when unstressed are **а**, **о**, **ы**, **е**, **и**, and **я**.

### The Unstressed A and O

We said [in Band 1] that the unstressed **а** and **о** sound like the *uh*-sound in *lemon*. Actually, there are slight differences in the sound of the unstressed **а** and **о**, depending on their exact position in a word.

\* One could approximate the values of unstressed vowels in Russian to those of the unstressed English sounds in such words as *potato*, *calendar*, *lantern*, *pencil*, *cabbage*, *city*, and the like.

**In the Pretonic Position.** When the unstressed **а** and **о** come [in the syllable] immediately before a stressed vowel [i.e., in the *pretonic* position], both **а** and **о** sound like the *uh*-sound in *come*.

The unstressed vowel in the pretonic position is somewhat stronger and has a more distinct sound than all other unstressed vowels in the same word. This should be particularly noted because it is just the opposite in English, where the pretonic unstressed vowel is the weakest and least distinct.

Say: **травá** . . . . truh-vah\* grass

Hear the difference between the first unstressed **а** and the second stressed **а**? Again, say:

**травá** . . . . truh-vah grass

**арбу́з** . . . . uhr-boos† watermelon

**магази́н** . . . . muh-guh-*z̄een* shop

**травá, арбу́з, магази́н** . . . .

Listen carefully to the speaker's pronunciation of **магази́н**. The word has two unstressed **а**'s, the second of which is in the pretonic position. Try to distinguish the difference in sound between the first **а** and the second (pretonic) **а**. The second **а** will sound stronger and more distinct than the first.

Say: **оно́** . . . . uh-naw it

\* The unstressed **а** and **о** will continue to be transcribed as *uh*, despite the slight differences in sound arising from their position in a word. To indicate these slight differences would require the use of more complicated phonetic symbols.

† Note the devoicing of the **з** at the end of a word. (See Summary, page 25.)

Hear the difference between the first unstressed **o** and the second stressed **o**? Again, say:

<b>оно́</b> . . . .	uh-naw	it
<b>полно́</b> . . . .	puhl-naw	full ( <i>n.</i> )
<b>хорошо́</b> . . . .	khuh-ruh-shaw	well

**оно́, полно́, хорошо́** . . . .

Listen carefully to the speaker's pronunciation of **хорошо́**. The word has two unstressed **o**'s, the second of which is in the pretonic position. Try to distinguish the difference between the two unstressed **o**'s. The second (pretonic) **o** will sound stronger and more distinct than the first.

**In Other Positions.** When the unstressed **a** and **o** come [in a syllable] *after* a stressed vowel or *not immediately before* a stressed vowel [such as the first **a** in **магази́н** and the first **o** in **хорошо́**], they are less distinct. Then they sound like the *uh*-sound in *lemon*.

Say: <b>э́та</b> . . . .	eh-tuh	this ( <i>f.</i> )
Now say: <b>э́то</b> . . . .	eh-tuh	this is

Look at the spelling of these words. The first ends with **a**, the second with **o**; yet the sound is exactly the same. Now repeat:

<b>э́та</b>	eh-tuh	this ( <i>f.</i> )
<b>э́то</b> . . . .	eh-tuh	this is
<b>сла́ва</b>	slah-vuh	glory
<b>сло́во</b> . . . .	slaw-vuh	word

**ко́мната** . . . . kawm-nuh-tuh room

**ко́локол** . . . . kaw-luh-kuhl bell

**ко́мната, ко́локол** . . . .

To appreciate the difference between the stressed and the unstressed **a** and **o**, repeat the following sets of words.

<b>сад</b>	sah†	garden
<b>сады́</b> . . . .	suh-dih	gardens
<b>раз</b>	rah†	once
<b>разговóр</b> . . . .	ruh-z-guh-vawr	conversation
<b>он</b>	awn	he
<b>она́</b> . . . .	uh-nah	she
<b>го́род</b>	gaw-ruht*	town
<b>города́</b> . . . .	guh-ruh-dah	towns
<b>хор</b>	khawr	choir
<b>хорошо́</b> . . . .	khuh-ruh-shaw	well

**Special Situations.** The same rule often applies to one-syllable prepositions, conjunctions, and particles, which for purposes of pronunciation are considered part of the following word.

\* Note the devoicing of **д** at the end of a word.

† Note the devoicing of **з**.

на сто́л . . . .	nuh˘stawl	onto the table
по го́роду . . . .	puh˘gaw-ruh-doo	about town
от бра́та . . . .	uhd˘brah-tuh	from brother

Sometimes, but not as often, the opposite can happen—that is, the preposition, conjunction, or particle is stressed while the word following it is completely unstressed. Listen and repeat carefully.

на́ пол . . . .	nah˘puhl	onto the floor
за́ руку . . . .	zah˘roo-koo	by the hand
по́ два . . . .	paw˘dvuh	by twos

### The Unstressed Ы

The unstressed **ы**, usually occurring at the end of a word, sounds something like a cross between the *uh*-sound in *lemon* and the true sound of the **ы**.

ва́зы . . . .	vah-z <sup>ih</sup> *	vases
ку́клы . . . .	kook-l <sup>ih</sup>	dolls
ва́зы, ку́клы . . . .		
кра́сный . . . .	krahs-n <sup>ihy</sup> †	red ( <i>m.</i> )
у́мный . . . .	oom-n <sup>ihy</sup>	intelligent ( <i>m.</i> )

кра́сный, у́мный . . . .

\* The unstressed **ы** will be transcribed as [ih].

† Note that **с** remains voiceless. The letter **н** is one of those voiced consonants which do not affect a voiceless consonant that precedes them. See Rule 2a in the Summary of Band 9 (page 25).

### The Unstressed Е, И, and Я

**Before a Stressed Syllable.** The unstressed **е**, **и**, and **я** also become less distinct. They sound something like the short *i* in *city*. It is a tricky sound. Again, listen carefully to the unstressed **е**, **и**, and **я** before a stressed syllable.

Say: лесá . . . .	ĩ <sup>ee</sup> -sah*	woods
Now say: лисá . . . .	ĩ <sup>ee</sup> -sah	fox

Now look at the spelling of these words. The first is spelled with a **е**, the second with an **и**; yet they sound alike.

Repeat: лесá	ĩ <sup>ee</sup> -sah	woods
лисá . . . .	ĩ <sup>ee</sup> -sah	fox
мелá	m̃ <sup>ee</sup> -lah	(she) swept
милá . . . .	m̃ <sup>ee</sup> -lah	nice ( <i>f.</i> )
яйцо́	y <sup>ee</sup> -tsaw †	egg
пятно́ . . . .	p̃ <sup>ee</sup> t-naw	spot
телефо́н . . . .	t̃ <sup>ee</sup> -ĩ <sup>ee</sup> -fawn	telephone
телефо́н . . . .		
литерату́ра . . . .	ĩ <sup>ee</sup> -t̃ <sup>ee</sup> -ruh-too-ruh	literature
литерату́ра . . . .		

\* The unstressed **е**, **и**, and **я** will be transcribed as [ee]. Note also in the following examples that a consonant still becomes softened when followed by a soft vowel, even when the soft vowel is unstressed.

† The unstressed **я** and **е** retain the initial **й** sound when they come at the beginning of a word or after another vowel.



**After a Stressed Syllable.** Listen now to the unstressed **е, и,** and **я** after a stressed syllable.

When the unstressed **е, и,** and **я** come *after* a stressed syllable, they sound shorter and weaker and much less distinct (without completely becoming a short *i*) than they did in the preceding examples where they came *before* the stressed syllable. However, since the difference in sound is relatively slight, the same phonetic transcription [ẽ] will be used.

мо́ре . . . .	maʷ-ĩ <sup>ee</sup>	sea
кни́ги . . . .	kñee-ġ <sup>ee</sup>	books
дядя́ . . . .	ďah-ď <sup>ee</sup>	uncle
мо́ре, кни́ги, дядя́ . . . .		

ма́льчик . . . .	mahl̃-ch <sup>ek</sup>	boy
по́ле . . . .	paʷ-ĩ <sup>ee</sup>	field
па́мять . . . .	paħ-m̃ <sup>ee</sup> ĩ	memory

ма́льчик, по́ле, па́мять . . . .

To appreciate the difference between the stressed and unstressed **е, и,** and **я,** repeat the following sets of words:

лес	ĩ <sup>ehs</sup>	wood
лесá . . . .	ĩ <sup>ee</sup> -sah	woods
лис	ĩ <sup>ees</sup>	fox ( <i>m.</i> )
лисá . . . .	ĩ <sup>ee</sup> -sah	fox ( <i>f.</i> )

мел	m̃ehl	chalk
мелá . . . .	m̃ <sup>ee</sup> -lah	(she) swept
мил	m̃eel	nice ( <i>m.</i> )
милá . . . .	m̃ <sup>ee</sup> -lah	nice ( <i>f.</i> )
пря́мо	p̃rah-muh	straight ( <i>adv.</i> )
прямо́й . . . .	p̃r <sup>ee</sup> -maʷy	straight ( <i>adj., m.</i> )
мя́со	m̃ah-suh	meat
мяснóй . . . .	m̃ <sup>ees</sup> -naʷy	of meat

**Special Situations.** The same pronunciation rule applies to one-syllable prepositions, conjunctions, and particles. Practice the unstressed **е** and **и** in the following examples.

я не зна́ю . . . .	yah ñ <sup>ee</sup> znah-yoo	I do not know
я не зна́ю . . . .		

э́то не хоро́шо . . . .	eh-tuh ñ <sup>ee</sup> khuh-ruh-shaw	this is not good
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э́то не хоро́шо . . . .

### The Unstressed Э, У, and Ю

The other vowels **э, у,** and **ю** remain practically the same, whether stressed or unstressed. Let us practice the following sentences.

э́то экра́н . . . .	eh-tuh ehk-rahñ	this is a screen
---------------------	-----------------	------------------

умный дуэт . . . .	<i>oom-n<sup>ihy</sup> doo-eh</i>	a clever duet
я мою каюту . . . .	<i>yah maw-yoo kuh-yoo-too</i>	I am washing the cabin

There was no real difference between the stressed and unstressed э, у, and ю in these phrases.

### The Letter Ё

Ё is always stressed.

объём ёлки два фута . . . .	<i>uhb'-yaym yawl-k<sup>ee</sup> dvah foo-tuh</i>	The spruce tree measures two feet
-----------------------------	---	-----------------------------------

объём ёлки два фута . . . .

### Significance of the Stress

You are probably wondering why all this emphasis on stressed and unstressed vowels. In Russian, many words which are spelled exactly alike have different meanings, depending entirely on the position of the stress. Say the following words and pay close attention to the difference in the position of the stress. Afterwards, look at the difference in meaning.

1. замо́к	<i>zah-muhk</i>	castle
замо́к . . . .	<i>zuh-mawk</i>	lock
2. му́ка	<i>moo-kuh</i>	torment
мука́ . . . .	<i>moo-kah</i>	flour
3. а́тлас	<i>ah-t-luhs</i>	atlas
атла́с . . . .	<i>uht-lahs</i>	satin

4. по́лы	<i>pa-w-l<sup>ih</sup></i>	flaps
по́лы . . . .	<i>puh-l<sup>ih</sup></i>	floors
5. по́лки	<i>pa-wl-k<sup>ee</sup></i>	shelves
полки́ . . . .	<i>puhl-k<sup>ee</sup></i>	regiments
6. ру́ки	<i>roo-k<sup>ee</sup></i>	arms ( <i>nom. pl.</i> )
рукí . . . .	<i>roo-k<sup>ee</sup></i>	of the arm ( <i>gen. sing.</i> )
7. до́ма	<i>daw-muh</i>	of the house ( <i>gen. sing.</i> )
дома́ . . . .	<i>duh-mah</i>	houses ( <i>nom. pl.</i> )
8. но́сите	<i>naw-s<sup>ee</sup>-t<sup>ee</sup></i>	(you) are carrying
носи́те . . . .	<i>nuh-see-t<sup>ee</sup></i>	carry! ( <i>imper.</i> )
9. ку́рите	<i>koo-r<sup>ee</sup>-t<sup>ee</sup></i>	(you) are smoking
кури́те . . . .	<i>koo-ree-t<sup>ee</sup></i>	smoke! ( <i>imper.</i> )

The position of the stress plays a very important role in the Russian language. It may:

a. Indicate different meaning, as in the first three pairs of examples on the preceding page.

b. Distinguish between words spelled alike in the plural though different in the singular, as in the fourth and fifth pairs of examples above.

c. Determine the case of certain words, as in the sixth and seventh pairs of examples.

d. Indicate the tense and mood of verbs, as in the eighth and ninth pairs of examples.

# UNIT 11

## SPECIAL PRONUNCIATION RULES

Even people who have studied Russian for many years frequently do not pay enough attention to some of the finer points of Russian pronunciation. Therefore, even if you are a more advanced student, study the following rules carefully.

### The First Rule

After the letters **ж**, **ш**, and **щ**, the letters **и**, **е**, and **ё** will sound like **ы** [ih], **э** [eh], and **о** [aw] or their unstressed counterparts.

Say:	<b>жить</b> . . . .	<i>zhihĩ</i>	to live
	<b>жест</b> . . . .	<i>zhehst</i>	gesture
	<b>жёлтый</b> . . . .	<i>zhawl-t<sup>ihy</sup></i>	yellow (m.)
	<b>жить, жест, жёлтый</b> . . . .		
	<b>шить</b> . . . .	<i>shihĩ</i>	to sew
	<b>шесть</b> . . . .	<i>shehstĩ</i>	six
	<b>шёлк</b> . . . .	<i>shawlk</i>	silk
	<b>шить, шесть, шёлк</b> . . . .		
	<b>цент</b> . . . .	<i>tsehnt</i>	cent
	<b>цирк</b> . . . .	<i>tsihrk</i>	circus
	<b>цифра</b> . . . .	<i>tsihf-ruh</i>	number
	<b>цент, цирк, цифра</b> . . . .		

### The Second Rule

After the letters **ч** and **щ** [which are always pronounced *soft*], **а**, **о**, and **у** will sound like **я**, **ё**, and **ю** or their unstressed counterparts [minus the initial **й** sound. The position of the mouth and the pitch of the voice are the same as in the pronunciation of consonants followed by soft vowels. (See page 17.)]

Say:	<b>чай</b> . . . .	<i>chahy</i>	tea
	<b>час</b> . . . .	<i>chahs</i>	hour
	<b>чулок</b> . . . .	<i>choo-lawk</i>	stocking
	<b>чай, час, чулок</b> . . . .		
	<b>щука</b> . . . .	<i>shchoo-kuh</i>	pike
	<b>чаща</b> . . . .	<i>chah-shchuh</i>	thicket
	<b>ощущать</b> . . . .	<i>uh-shchoo-shchahĩ</i>	to feel, to sense
	<b>щука, чаща, ощущать</b> . . . .		

### The Third Rule

The letter **г** sometimes sounds like **в**.

	<b>его</b> . . . .	<i>y<sup>ee</sup>-vaw*</i>	his
	<b>сего́дня</b> . . . .	<i>š<sup>ee</sup>-vaw-dñ<sup>ee</sup></i>	today
	<b>его, сего́дня</b> . . . .		

\* Note that the unstressed **е** retains the initial **й** sound when it comes at the beginning of a word. See footnote on page 28.

### The Fourth Rule

The letter **ч** sometimes sounds like a **ш**.

<b>что</b> . . . .	<i>shtaw</i>	what
<b>конечно</b> . . . .	<i>kuh-ñesh-nuh</i>	of course
<b>что, конечно</b> . . . .		

### The Fifth Rule

Sometimes, in a group of three or more consonants, one of them is not pronounced.

A Russian will say:

[For the word **солнце**, *sun*] *sawn-tseh* . . . .

not sawLn-tseh but *sawn-tseh* . . . .

[For the word **честный**, *honest*] *chehs-n<sup>ihy</sup>* . . . .

not chehsT-n<sup>ihy</sup> but *chehs-n<sup>ihy</sup>* . . . .

[For the word **сердце**, *heart*] *šehr-tseh* . . . .

not šehrD-tseh but *šehr-tseh* . . . .

[For the word **известный**, *known*] *ʼz-ñehs-n<sup>ihy</sup>* . . . .

not ʼz-ñehsT-n<sup>ihy</sup> but *ʼz-ñehs-n<sup>ihy</sup>* . . . .

[For the word **чувство**, *feeling*] *choos-tvuh* . . . .

not chooVs-tvuh but *choos-tvuh* . . . .

[For the word **здоровый**, *how do you do*] *zdrah-stvooy*

not zdrahV-stvooy but *zdrah-stvooy*

There are even finer points that could be considered but you have now learned the fundamental principles of Russian pronunciation. If you continue to practice and apply these rules consistently, you will pronounce Russian correctly.

# Part Three

## Appendix

# The Russian Alphabet in Sequence

LETTER	NAME	CHARACTERISTICS*
<b>А а</b>	ah	<i>Hard stressed</i> , 1, 16; unstressed, 2, 46-50; after <b>ч</b> and <b>щ</b> , 57
<b>Б б</b>	beh	<i>Hard voiced</i> , 4, 23, 38; soft voiced, 23-35; hard devoiced, 38-45; soft devoiced, 40-42
<b>В в</b>	veh	<i>Hard voiced</i> , 4-5, 23, 38; soft voiced, 23-35; hard devoiced, 38-45; soft devoiced, 40-42
<b>Г г</b>	geh	<i>Hard voiced</i> , 5, 23, 38; soft voiced, 23-35; hard devoiced, 38-45; soft devoiced, 40-42; irregular, 57
<b>Д д</b>	deh	<i>Hard voiced</i> , 6, 24, 38; soft voiced, 23-35; hard devoiced, 38-45; soft devoiced, 40-42
<b>Е е</b>	yeh	<i>Soft</i> , 17-18; stressed after a consonant, 29-32; <i>stressed, other positions</i> , 17-20, 33-36; unstressed after a consonant, 51-53; unstressed, other positions, 51n., 53; after <b>ж</b> , <b>ш</b> , and <b>щ</b> , 56
<b>Ё ё</b>	yaw	<i>Soft</i> , 17-18; stressed after a consonant, 29-32; <i>stressed, other positions</i> , 17-20, 33-36; never unstressed, 19n., 54; after <b>ж</b> , <b>ш</b> , and <b>щ</b> , 56
<b>Ж ж</b>	zheh	<i>Hard voiced</i> , 10, 24, 38; hard devoiced, 37-45; never soft, 24; followed by a soft sign, 39n.
<b>З з</b>	zeh	<i>Hard voiced</i> , 7, 23, 38; soft voiced, 23-35; hard devoiced, 38-45; soft devoiced, 40-42
<b>И и</b>	ee	<i>Soft stressed</i> , 16, 28-29; unstressed, 51-53; after a soft sign, 33n.; after <b>ж</b> , <b>ш</b> , and <b>щ</b> , 56
<b>Й й</b>	y	<i>Semivowel</i> , after a vowel, 16-17; before a vowel, 17; between two vowels, 17
<b>К к</b>	kah	<i>Hard voiceless</i> , 9, 23, 38; soft voiceless, 23-35; hard voiced, 38, 42-45
<b>Л л</b>	ell	<i>Hard voiced</i> , 6-7, 23, 38; soft voiced, 23-35; never devoiced, 38
<b>М м</b>	emm	<i>Hard voiced</i> , 4, 23, 38; soft voiced, 23-35; never devoiced, 38
<b>Н н</b>	enn	<i>Hard voiced</i> , 6, 23, 38; soft voiced, 23-35; never devoiced, 38
<b>О о</b>	aw	<i>Hard stressed</i> , 1-2, 16; unstressed, 2, 46-50; after a soft sign, 33n.; after <b>ч</b> and <b>щ</b> , 57
<b>П п</b>	peh	<i>Hard voiceless</i> , 8, 23, 38; soft voiceless, 23-35; hard voiced, 38, 42-45; soft voiced, 43n.
<b>Р р</b>	err	<i>Hard voiced</i> , 13, 23, 38; soft voiced, 23-35; never devoiced, 38
<b>С с</b>	ess	<i>Hard voiceless</i> , 7, 23, 38; soft voiceless, 23-35; hard voiced, 38, 42-45; soft voiced, 43n.
<b>Т т</b>	teh	<i>Hard voiceless</i> , 9, 23, 38; soft voiceless, 23-35; hard voiced, 38, 42-45; soft voiced, 43n.
<b>У у</b>	oo	<i>Hard stressed</i> , 3, 16; unstressed, 3, 53-54; after <b>ч</b> and <b>щ</b> , 57
<b>Ф ф</b>	eff	<i>Hard voiceless</i> , 5, 23, 38; soft voiceless, 23-35; hard voiced, 38, 42-45
<b>Х х</b>	khah	<i>Hard voiceless</i> , 13-14, 23, 38; soft voiceless, 23-35; hard voiced, 38, 42-45
<b>Ц ц</b>	tseh	<i>Always hard voiceless</i> , 11, 24, 38; followed by a soft sign, 39n.
<b>Ч ч</b>	cheh	<i>Always soft voiceless</i> , 12, 24, 38; irregular, 58
<b>Ш ш</b>	shah	<i>Hard voiceless</i> , 10-11, 24, 38; hard voiced, 38, 42-45; never soft, 24; followed by a soft sign, 39n.
<b>Щ щ</b>	shchah	<i>Always soft voiceless</i> , 12, 24, 38
<b>Ъ ъ</b>	hard sign	<i>No sound</i> , 35-36; <i>always between a consonant and a vowel</i> , 35-36
<b>Ы ы</b>	ih	<i>Hard stressed</i> , 14-15; unstressed, 50
<b>Ь ь</b>	soft sign	<i>No sound</i> , 25; at the end of a word, 25-26; between two consonants, 26-27; between a consonant and a vowel, 33-35; effect on voicing and devoicing, 42, 43n.
<b>Э э</b>	eh	<i>Hard stressed</i> , 2-3, 16; unstressed, 3, 53-54
<b>Ю ю</b>	yoo	<i>Soft</i> , 17-18; stressed after a consonant, 29-32; <i>stressed, other positions</i> , 17-20, 33-36; unstressed, 53-54
<b>Я я</b>	yah	<i>Soft</i> , 17-18; stressed after a consonant, 29-32; <i>stressed, other positions</i> , 17-20, 33-36; unstressed after a consonant, 51-53; unstressed, other positions, 51n.

\* The phrases in italics indicate the characteristics of each letter when it is true to its sound in the alphabet.

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