

# The Ultimate Russian Grammar Guide for Brand New Learners

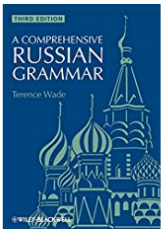
## Introduction

You're probably thinking *"I need more than a simple internet article."*

And maybe you're right. While you'll learn the basic, must-know rules here, a nice book or learning program will set you straight.

So, first, here are some [Amazon Russian Grammar](#) resources that you might want.

**My Amazon Picks**

 <p>Russian Grammar (Quickstudy Acade...</p> <p><b>\$6.95</b> ✓prime ★★★★☆ (152)</p>	 <p>A Comprehensive RUSSIAN GRAMMAR Terence Wade</p> <p><b>\$44.56</b> <del>\$57.95</del> ✓prime ★★★★☆ (39)</p>	 <p>Russian Grammar JAMES S. LEVINE, PhD</p> <p><b>\$15.94</b> <del>\$23.00</del> ✓prime ★★★★☆ (2)</p>	 <p>Oxford Russian Grammar &amp; Verbs</p> <p><b>\$13.76</b> <del>\$14.99</del> ✓prime ★★★★☆ (26)</p>
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**Alternatively**, if you don't want books but a full, digital Russian learning program, then I recommend:

- [RussianPod101.com \(click here\)](http://RussianPod101.com): It's my favorite Russian audio/video program. First, you set your level and then it gives you lessons teaching you how to speak and understand. As you get better, the program feeds you more challenging lessons.
  - **They do not teach grammar directly.** But, they do teach you conversations in every lesson where you're indirectly EXPOSED to grammar rules.



First, let's jump into word order.

## 1. Russian Word order

Word order in the Russian language is usually: **SUBJECT – VERB – OBJECT.**

- English is similar. I (the subject) eat (verb) apples (object). But, Russian can also be very, very flexible. It doesn't mean that you can arrange words in any order you like, but, still, it is much more flexible than in English.

How flexible?

Take a look below.

That sentence means “The dog caught the cat today.” There are 8 different variations! They all mean the same thing!

1. Сегодня собака поймала кота.

1. (Pronunciation: Sevodna sobaka poymala kota)
2. Собака поймала кота сегодня.
3. Поймала собака кота сегодня.
4. Сегодня собака кота поймала.
5. Собака кота поймала сегодня.
6. Поймала кота собака сегодня.
7. Кота поймала собака сегодня
8. Кота собака поймала сегодня

**Russian Grammar Guide**

**Tip #1**

**Russian Word Order is Very Flexible.**  
**1 Sentence with 8 Different Variations.**

- Сегодня собака поймала кота.
- Собака поймала кота сегодня.
- Поймала собака кота сегодня.
- Сегодня собака кота поймала.
- Собака кота поймала сегодня.
- Поймала кота собака сегодня.
- Кота поймала собака сегодня
- Кота собака поймала сегодня

[linguajunkie.com](http://linguajunkie.com)

Let's also look at this example!

- **I love you**
- Я тебя люблю (ya tebya lublu)
- Я люблю тебя (ya lublu tebya)

In the first sentence, we have the predicate after the object. In the second sentence, the predicate is before the object. The Subject "I" (Я) remains in

the same place in both cases. It would sound awkward to a native speaker if you put the subject in the particular case in another position.

Wait, it would sound awkward... unless there is a difference nuance!

In the “I love you” example, you’re just trying to state a literal “I love you.” If you rearranged the words, the nuance was different. For example:

- люблю тебя... я
- люблю я тебя

This can still make sense, in a poetic sort of way.

**But, some words *always* have fixed position in the sentence.**

For example, adjectives usually stand before the noun they modify:

**Жаркая погода** (zharkaya pogoda) – Hot weather

Here, “жаркая” (hot) is the adjective and “погода” (weather) is the noun it modifies.

What’s next in this Russian grammar guide for beginners?

Let’s talk tongues!

You’ll see what I mean.

## **2. Russian Palatalization**

The Russian language is very rich in palatal or, in other words, “soft” sounds.

Wait, what does that mean in plain English?

It's when you place your tongue against the ridge of the roof of your mouth. This makes sounds soft. Say the name "Linda." Notice how much your tongue touches the ridge. It's a light flick, right?

Now, say the word "leer" or "lean." Okay, notice there's more tongue action here and the L sounds "softer" because of the long "ee" sounds after it.

So, that's what it is!

Now, these "soft" sounds are tough for English speakers. Why? Well, because they are not in the English language. You are not used to them.

There are 5 vowel sounds and 10 vowel letters in Russian. They are plain and palatal indicators. Each of them makes the previous letter plain or palatal. See the table below:

<b><u>English sound</u></b>	<b><u>Plain indicator</u></b>	<b><u>Palatal indicators or "softeners"</u></b>	<b><u>Examples</u></b>
[o]	о	ё	ТОМНЫЙ / ТЁМНЫЙ
[e]	э	е	нэ / не
[i]	ы	и	мы / ми

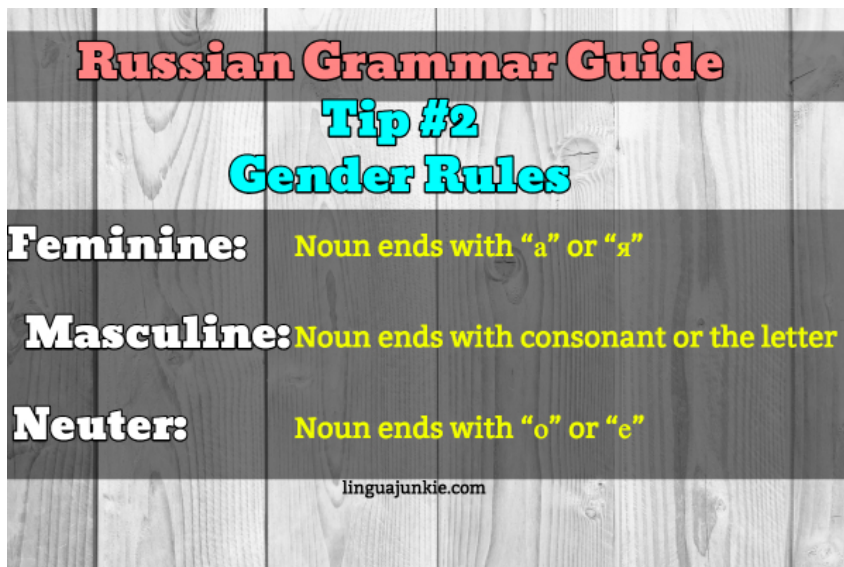
[u]	у	ю	пну / пню
[a]	а	я	Яна / Анна

Now that we talked about tongues...

Let's talk about "se..."....

I mean gender.

### 3. Gender in the Russian Language



There are 3 gender classes in Russian: Feminine, Masculine and Neuter.

So, every Russian noun has a gender. You may think it's confusing to remember all the words and their gender, right? But, there are some rules to make your life easier.

- If the word ends with “а” or “я” – the noun is feminine
- If the word ends with consonant or the letter “й” – the noun is masculine
- If the word ends with “о” or “е” – the noun is neuter

If the word ends with soft sign “ь” or the letter – the noun can be either feminine or masculine.

Here are a few examples:

<b>Russian word</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>English translation</b>
Девочка / яблоня	Devochka / yablonya	Feminine	Girl / Apple tree
Помидор / сарай	Pomidor / saray	Masculine	Tomato / Barn
Яблоко / море	Yabloko / more	Neuter	Apple / Sea
Дочь / стиль	Doch / stil	Feminine / Masculine	Daughter / Style

But of course. there are very few exceptions too.

Memorize these:

<b>Russian</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>English translation</b>
Дядя	Dyadya	Masculine	Uncle
Папа	Papa	Masculine	Dad
Дедушка	Dedushka	Masculine	Grandfather
Мужчина	Muzhchina	Masculine	Man
Кофе	Kofe	Masculine	Coffee

**Important tip:** Remember that the word for coffee, “Кофе,” is masculine, despite that fact that it ends with the neuter letter “e”.

The next time you want to say “The coffee is good” say “Кофе хороший” (kofe h’oroshiy).

Even native speakers make this mistake. So, if you use this word correctly you are definitely going to impress native Russians.

What’s next in this big, bad Russian grammar guide?

#### **4. Plural**

How do you make words plural?



When you want to make a noun plural in English you simply add s, es, or ies.

And Russian?

In Russian you have to change the last letter according to some rules. There are many of them, depending on the grammar case, but for simplicity's sake, I will describe only how nouns in the Accusative case are formed:

- Masculine Nouns

<b><u>Ending</u></b>	<b><u>Wh at do you do?</u></b>	<b><u>Exa mple  (sing ular)</u></b>	<b><u>Phon etics</u></b>	<b><u>Exa mpl e  (plu ral)</u></b>	<b><u>Phon etics</u></b>	<b><u>Engl ish tran slati on</u></b>
A conson ant	Add “ы”	Стол	stol	Сто лы	stoly	Tabl e / Tabl es
й	Rep lace with “и”	Сара й	satay	Сар аи	saray i	Barn / Barn s

ь	Rep lace with “и”	Стил ь	stil	Сти ли	stili	Style / Stayl es
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- Feminine Nouns

<b><u>Endi ng</u></b>	<b><u>Wh at you do do?</u></b>	<b><u>Exa mple  (sing ular)</u></b>	<b><u>Phon etics</u></b>	<b><u>Exa mple  (plur al)</u></b>	<b><u>Phon etics</u></b>	<b><u>Engl ish tran slati on</u></b>
я	Rep lace with “и”	Фант азия	fanta ziya	Фант азии	fanta ziyi	Fant asy / Fant asies
ь	Rep lace with “и”	Печь	pech	Печи	pechi	Ove n / Ove ns
а	Rep lace with “ы”	Ламп а	lamp а	Ламп ы	lampy	Lam p / Lam ps

- Neuter Nouns

<b><u>Endi ng</u></b>	<b><u>Wh at do you do?</u></b>	<b><u>Exam ple  (sing ular)</u></b>	<b><u>Phon etics</u></b>	<b><u>Exa mpl e  (plur al)</u></b>	<b><u>Phon etics</u></b>	<b><u>Engl ish tran slati on</u></b>
o	Rep lace with “a”	Окно	Okno	Окн а	Okna	Wind ow / Wind ows
e	Rep lace with “я”	Море	more	Мор я	mory а	Sea / Seas

## 5. Tenses

There are 3 main tenses in the Russian language. They are:

- Past
- Present
- Future

The table below gives you a general overview of the Russian tenses and its forms.

<u>Tense</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Phonetics</u>	<u>English translation</u>
Past	Вчера он <b>ходил</b> на футбольный матч	Vchera on <b>h'odil</b> na futbolniy mach	Yesterday he went to a football match.
Present	Он <b>смотрит</b> новый фильм	On smotrit noviy film	He watches a new movie.
Future	Я <b>пойду</b> в магазин вечером	Ya poydu v magazine vecherom	I'm going to the store in the evening.

Remember, verbs must agree with the other words in the sentence in number and gender.

**Russian Grammar Guide**

**Tip #3**  
**Tenses**

Past	Present	Future
Вчера он ходил на футбольный матч	Он смотрит новый фильм	Я пойду в магазин вечером
Vchera on h'odil na futbolniy mach	On smotrit noviy film	Ya poydu v magazine vecherom
Yesterday he went to a football match.	He watches a new movie.	I'm going to the store in the evening.

## 6. Capitalization

Want to learn Russian grammar rules?

Well, you'll need to learn some capitalization.

So, The English language uses capitalization more often than in Russian.

Now, in Russian, words begin with a capital letter in 4 cases:

- **At the beginning of the sentence.**
  - Я изучаю русский язык – Ya izuchayu russkiy yazyk – I learn Russian.
- **With proper nouns** (nouns of people and of places):
  - Наташа (Natasha), Америка (Amerika), Белград (Belgrad), Станислав (Stanislav)...
- **When saying “You” politely.**
  - The pronoun “Вы” always begins with a capital letter. “Вы” is the polite way to say “you” in Russian.
- **When using Possessive adjectives.**
  - Машина кукла – Masha’s doll; Наташин дом – Natasha’s house.

We don't use capital letters with:

- **Months:** июнь: June, декабрь – December
- **Days of the week:** понедельник – Monday, суббота – Saturday
- **Adjectives derived from proper nouns** (countries, names of cities etc.): американская мечта – American dream, британский футбол – British football

- **Languages:** русский язык – the Russian language, испанский язык – the Spanish language
- **Nationalities:** японец – Japanese, поляк – Polish, немка – German (female)
- **The Russian pronoun “I” – “Я”**

## 7. Russian Personal pronouns

## Learn Russian Personal Pronouns

я

ya

I/me

ты

ti

You

он

on

He

она

ana

She

оно

ano

It

мы

mi

We

вы / Вы

vi /Vi

You / Polite  
"You"

они

ani

They



It is always good to know the personal pronouns that are used in the language that you are learning. You can construct new simple and more complicated sentences with their help. So let's have a look at the basic nominative pronouns in the Russian language:

<b>Russian pronoun</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>
Я	ya	I
Ты	ti	You
Он	on	He
Она	ana	She
Оно	ano	It
Мы	mi	We
Вы / Вы	vi /Vi	You / Polite "You"
Они	ani	They

**Examples of Russian personal pronouns in action:**

- Он знает русский
  - on znaet ruskiy



- He knows Russian
- Мы часто играем в футбол
  - mi chasta igraem v futbol
  - We often play football
- Не могли бы Вы мне помочь?
  - ne mogli by Vi mnye pomoch
  - Could you help me?
- Мы знаем, куда нам надо идти
  - mi znam, kuda nam nado iti
  - We know where we have to go

## 8. Cardinal Numerals

You can't learn Russian grammar without knowing how to count from at least from 0 to 10.

Let's see how [we count in Russian](#).

But, here's something you should remember. The numerals 1 and 2 have masculine, feminine and neuter forms and you'll have to learn them by heart. The rest are pretty simple and have only one single form for all genders.

Number	Russian	Phonetics
0	ноль	noI'
1	один	adin
	одна	adna

	одно	adno
<b>2</b>	два	dva
	две	dve
<b>3</b>	три	tri
<b>4</b>	четыре	chetyri
<b>5</b>	пять	pyat'
<b>6</b>	шесть	shest'
<b>7</b>	семь	sem'
<b>8</b>	восемь	vosem'
<b>9</b>	девять	devyat'
<b>10</b>	десять	desyat'

Examples:

- Две машины
  - dve mashini

- Two cars
- Девять яблок
  - devyat' yablak
  - Nine apples
- Пять обезьян
  - pyat' abez'yan
  - Five monkeys

## 9. The most commonly used Russian prepositions

Russian prepositions are an important part of Russian grammar.

The prepositions play a very significant role in building up new sentences.

We are going to observe only the most commonly used ones, here they are:

<b>Russian preposition</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>
с / со	s / so	With / from / since
из	iz	From
в / во	v / vo	In, into, to, at
о / об	o / ob	About
на	na	On / onto / to

у	u	By
от	at	From
за	za	Behind / beyond
для	dlya	For
до	do	Until / before
без	bez	Without

You have probably noticed that both “от” and “из” have got the same meaning.

Their meanings are slightly different:

- Я из Москвы
  - ya iz maskvi
  - I'm from Moscow
- Она вышла из дома
  - ona vishla iz doma
  - She left home (Word for word translation: She stepped/went out of her home)
- Он стоит далеко от него
  - on stait daleko at nevo
  - He stands far from him
- Поезд отправляется от главной станции

- o poezd atpravlyaetsa at glavnoy stantsii
- o The train is disembarking from the main station

So basically “из” means “from some specific place.” Then, “от” means “from or away from something.”

Try and remember this because they are not interchangeable like in English!

## 10. Russian Question words

It's very difficult to construct a question without knowing the Russian question words. We call them “вопросительные слова” (voprositel'nye slava) in Russian.

They are presented down below:

Question word	Phonetic s	English
Что?	shto?	What?
Кто?	kto?	Who?
Где?	gde?	Where?
Как?	kak?	How?
Куда?	kuda?	(to) where?

Откуда?	atkuda?	(from) where?
Почему?	pachemu?	Why?
Сколько?	skol'ka?	How much / many?
Какой? (masculine)	kakoy?	Which one? / What sort of?
Какая? (feminine)	kakaya?	
Какое? (neuter)	kakoe?	
Чей? (m)	chey?	Whose?
Чья? (f)	chiya?	
Чьё? (N)	chiyo?	
Когда?	kagda?	When?

You see that some questions are similar to the ones we have in English, but there are also some that might be new to you.

The following examples will help you to understand them better:

- Куда ты идешь?

- kuda ti idyosh? – Where are you going to?
- Откуда ты вылетаешь завтра?
  - atkuda ty vylitaesh zavtra? – Where are you going to take your flight from?

Can you see the difference? I'm sure you can now.

- Какое у нее платье?
  - какое у neyo platye? – What sort of dress does she have?
- Чей этот кот?
  - chey etot kot? – Whose cat is this?

And that's it for this quick Russian grammar guide.

Now, you're a tad acquainted with Russian grammar.

Yes, you're scratching the surface here but no worries.

Scratch enough and you'll go deep and get a grip on these rules.

Want to start learning and speaking this language already? Check out my recommendation below or check out these 5 minute ways to learn.

- [\*\*How to Learn Russian in 5 Minutes \(Free Study Tools Inside\)\*\*](#)