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COLLOQUIAL

# Russian

Olga Sobolev, Natasha Bershadski,  
Svetlana le Fleming and Susan E. Kay

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# Colloquial Russian 2

The Next Step in Language Learning

Olga Sobolev, Natasha Bershadski,  
Svetlana le Fleming and Susan E. Kay

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# Contents

Acknowledgements	vii
How to use this book	viii
<b>Unit 1</b> Россия и русский язык Russia and the Russian language	<b>1</b>
<b>Unit 2</b> Поехали с нами! Путешествие на поезде Transport	<b>38</b>
<b>Unit 3</b> Туризм – лучший отдых, но отдых лучше туризма. Путешествие на теплоходе Tourism	<b>62</b>
<b>Unit 4</b> Миграция. «Добро пожаловать!» или «Посторонним вход воспрещён»? Migration	<b>85</b>
<b>Unit 5</b> О спорт, ты – мир! Sport	<b>109</b>
<b>Unit 6</b> Национальный характер и традиции. «Умом Россию не понять» National character and traditions	<b>132</b>
<b>Unit 7</b> Средства массовой информации (СМИ) The mass media	<b>153</b>
<b>Unit 8</b> Культурная жизнь России Cultural life in Russia	<b>177</b>
<b>Unit 9</b> Демография Demography	<b>202</b>
<b>Unit 10</b> Образование Education	<b>223</b>
<b>Unit 11</b> Российское общество. Средний класс Russian society. Middle class	<b>247</b>

<b>Unit 12</b>	<b>Экономика</b>	<b>267</b>
	Economics	
<b>Unit 13</b>	<b>Религиозное разнообразие</b>	<b>291</b>
	Religious diversity	
<b>Unit 14</b>	<b>Россия на международной арене</b>	<b>312</b>
	Russia in the international arena	
	Grammar reference	335
	Key to exercises	352
	Russian–English vocabulary	375
	Grammar index	410

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# How to use this book

*Colloquial Russian 2* is intended for students who, working on their own or with a teacher, have already completed a first-level course in Russian and want to continue their study (aiming at B1/B2 level of proficiency in Russian). The book starts with a revision unit which covers all the basic structures, including cases and aspects, so it is not a problem if you are a bit rusty.

This is a new revised edition of the book authored by Olga Sobolev and Natasha Bershanski; the grammar part is written by Svetlana le Fleming and Susan E. Kay. The book is thematically based and draws on sources from newspapers and magazines, as well as on interviews with experts on Russian politics, economics and social issues. The aim is to provide compelling and engaging information about contemporary Russian society at the same time as introducing new vocabulary and language points. It focuses on the communicative approach to language learning and addresses some of the particular problems of learning Russian, such as memorising vocabulary and contextual application of grammar. Each unit contains materials based on newspaper articles and interviews with experts in the relevant field, as well as various other written materials encountered in everyday life: advertisements, tables and graphs, questionnaires and blogs to discuss. The text is also illustrated by photographs, drawings and caricatures, which at times may be included in the language tasks. There are a variety of exercises, designed to test comprehension, practise the new language points and increase your Russian vocabulary. Key new vocabulary is given in each unit, and there is a cumulative Russian–English vocabulary, including all key words, at the end of the book. At the end of the book there is also a key to lexical and grammar exercises (for liaison, interpreting and translation, you can now find help through the relevant online applications i.e. Google Translate etc.), quick reference grammatical tables and an index of the language points covered in the course.

On the accompanying audio you will find not only dialogues but also comprehension exercises and exercises to practise the new language points in each unit.

# 1 РОССИЯ И РУССКИЙ ЯЗЫК

*Как уст румяных без улыбки,  
Без грамматической ошибки  
Я русской речи не люблю.<sup>1</sup>*

*А.С. Пушкин*

## In this unit you will:

- ▶ learn some facts about the history of Russia
  - ▶ revise the basic structures of Russian grammar including cases and aspects
- 

## Language revision ♦

### Rules of spelling

These rules apply throughout Russian and impact on all the other language points described below.

- 1 After г, к, х, ж, ч, ш, щ replace ы by и.
- 2 After ж, ч, ш, щ, ц replace unstressed о by е.
- 3 After г, к, х, ж, ч, ш, щ, ц replace я by а.
- 4 After г, к, х, ж, ч, ш, щ, ц replace ю by у.

### Cases

Understanding the case system is fundamental to a grasp of Russian. Cases hardly feature in English: there is only some differentiation in the use of pronouns. Contrast 'I like her' with 'She likes me'. The forms 'I' and 'she' are used when they are the subject of the verb, or nominative case, and 'her' and 'me' when they are the object, or accusative case.

In Russian, not just pronouns, but nouns and adjectives also proclaim their role in the sentence by changing their ending, and the number of cases extends beyond nominative and accusative to six in total.

*Comprehensive tables of the endings of nouns, adjectives and pronouns can be found in the Grammar Reference at the end of the book.*

## The nominative case

### Uses of the nominative case

- 1 The nominative is the case of the subject of the verb:

Москва процветает.  
Moscow flourishes.

- 2 It is also used as the complement of (i.e. following) the nonexistent present tense of the verb 'to be' and after **это** 'it is' and **вот** 'here is':

Москва – столица.  
Moscow is the capital.

**Вот Москва. Это столица**.  
Here is Moscow. It is the capital.

The nominative may also be found after the past tense of **быть**, where the permanence of a state is being emphasised:

**Пушкин был великий поэт**.  
Pushkin was a great poet.

## Endings in the nominative case

### Singular nouns

Masculine		Feminine		Neuter	
Consonant	президент president	-а	газета newspaper	-о	вино wine
-й	трамвай tram	-я	революция revolution	-е	здание building
-ь	кремль kremlin	-ь	возможность opportunity	-мя	время time

## Note

There are three genders of nouns in Russian, and in most instances the gender is indicated by the noun's final letter in the nominative singular. When a noun ending in **-а** or **-я** clearly refers to someone of male gender, the word is masculine: **мужчина** 'man'; **дядя** 'uncle'. In practice, this means that the word changes its endings like a feminine noun but that adjectives and verbs agreeing with it will have masculine endings.

## Plural nouns

Masculine		Feminine		Neuter	
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
президент	президенты	газета	газеты	вино	вина
трамвай	трамваи	революция	революции	здание	здания
кремль	кремли	возможность	возможности	время	времена

## Notes

- 1 The spelling rule may require a change from **-ы** to **-и**: **книга – книги** 'books'.
- 2 Some masculine nouns have a nominative plural in **-а**: **берег – берега** 'banks'; **вечер – вечера** 'evenings'; **дом – дома** 'houses'; **город – города** 'towns'.
- 3 Nouns in **-анин** end in **-ане**: **англичанин – англичане** 'Englishmen' but **господин – господа** 'gentlemen'.
- 4 Other exceptions: **учитель – учителя** 'teachers'; **брат – братья** 'brothers'; **стул – стулья** 'chairs'; **друг – друзья** 'friends'; **сын – сыновья** 'sons'; **дерево – деревья** 'trees'; **ребёнок – дети** 'children'; **человек – люди** 'people'; **мать – матери** 'mothers'; **дочь – дочери** 'daughters'. (Note that all forms of **мать** and **дочь**, apart from the nominative and accusative singular, have **-ер-** before the ending.)
- 5 Some nouns, generally of foreign origin, are indeclinable. They never change their endings and do not even have a plural. Adjectives describing them will decline in the usual way, however. Their gender can generally be determined by their ending, as with declinable nouns, but note **такси** is neuter.

## Adjectives

There are two basic sets of adjective endings: hard and soft.

Masculine		Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Hard	<b>интересный</b> interesting	<b>интересная</b>	<b>интересное</b>	<b>интересные</b>
Soft	<b>древний</b> ancient	<b>древняя</b>	<b>древнее</b>	<b>древние</b>

## Notes

- 1 Adjectives with stressed endings have the masculine ending – **ой**: **крутой, крутая, крутое, крутые** ‘steep’.
- 2 Endings may be altered by the spelling rules: **русский, русская, русское, русские** ‘Russian’; **хороший, хорошая, хорошее, хорошие** ‘good’; **большой, большая, большое, большие** ‘big’.

## Pronouns

Singular		Plural	
<b>я</b>	I	<b>мы</b>	we
<b>ты</b>	you (singular and familiar)	<b>вы</b>	you (plural and polite)
<b>он</b>	he, it (masculine)	<b>они</b>	they (all genders)
<b>она</b>	she, it (feminine)		
<b>оно</b>	it (neuter)		
<b>кто</b>	who		
<b>что</b>	what		

Masculine		Feminine	Neuter	Plural
<b>мой</b>	my	<b>моя</b>	<b>моё</b>	<b>мои</b>
<b>твой</b>	your (singular and familiar)	<b>твоя</b>	<b>твоё</b>	<b>твои</b>
<b>наш</b>	our	<b>наша</b>	<b>наше</b>	<b>наши</b>
<b>ваш</b>	your (plural and polite)	<b>ваша</b>	<b>ваше</b>	<b>ваши</b>
<b>весь</b>	all	<b>вся</b>	<b>всё</b>	<b>все</b>

чей	whose	чья	чье	чьи
этот	this/these	эта	это	эти
тот	that/those	та	то	те

## Note

The third person forms are *indeclinable* and remain the same whatever the case gender or number of the noun they describe:

его	his, its ( <i>m</i> and <i>n</i> )
её	her, its ( <i>f</i> )
их	their

## Exercise 1

Pick out the nouns, adjectives and pronouns in the nominative case from the following passage.

### Москва – Moscow

Первое летописное упоминание о Москве относится к 1147 году. Основателем Москвы был суздальский князь Юрий Владимирович Долгорукий. Это он выбрал место для строительства города. Город рос быстро и уже в 14-ом веке стал центром русских земель. Москва оставалась столицей вплоть до 1713 года, когда Пётр Первый перенёс столицу в новый город – Петербург. Только в 1918 году уже после Революции Москва снова стала столицей сначала Советского Союза, а потом России.

For information on dates and other uses of ordinal numerals see Unit 4.

## Vocabulary

выбрать	to choose
князь	prince
летописное упоминание	chronicle reference
основатель	founder
оставаться	to remain
относиться к	to date from
перенести	to transfer

расти                                  to grow  
строительство                      construction

## Exercise 2

Answer the questions in Russian. One-word answers will suffice.

- 1 Какой город столица России?
- 2 Кто основал Москву?
- 3 Какой город стал столицей в 1713 г?
- 4 Кто перенёс столицу туда?
- 5 Какой город стал столицей в 1918 г?



The Moscow Kremlin

## Exercise 3

Put these phrases into the plural.

интересный московский музей; древний русский кремль;  
страшное историческое событие; сложная экономическая  
проблема; наш знаменитый историк.

## The accusative case

### Uses of the accusative case

- 1 The accusative is the case of the direct object of the verb:

**Юрий Долгорукий основал Москву.**  
Yuriy Dolgorukiy founded Moscow.

- 2 It is also used after certain prepositions: **в/во** ‘to, into’ (motion), ‘during’ (time); **за** ‘beyond, behind’ (motion), for; **на** ‘to, on to’ (motion), ‘for’ (time); **о/об/обо** ‘against’; **по** ‘up to, each’; **под** ‘under’ (motion); **про** ‘about’; **спустя** ‘after, later’; **через** ‘across, through, in (after a period of time)’.

*More detailed information about most of these prepositions is provided in later units: Unit 2 – на; Units 4 and 6 – в; Unit 8 – за; Unit 6 – о/об/обо, про; Unit 10 – по.*

**Столицу перенесли в Москву.**  
They moved the capital to Moscow.

The accusative is also used without a preposition to denote duration in time or space:

**Мы там жили всю зиму.**  
We lived there all winter.

**Всю дорогу домой она молчала.**  
She was silent the whole way home.

## Endings in the accusative case

### Singular nouns

Masculine		Feminine		Neuter	
	Acc.	Nom.	Acc.		Acc.
inanimate	as nom.	газета	газету	all nouns	as nom.
animate	as gen. (see below)	революция	революцию		
		возможность	возможность		



## Plural nouns

Masculine		Feminine		Neuter	
	Acc.		Acc.		Acc.
inanimate	as nom.	inanimate	as nom.	all nouns	as nom.
animate	as gen. (see below)	animate	as gen.		

## Adjectives and pronouns

Masculine		Feminine		Neuter	
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
inanimate as nom.	inanimate as nom.	интересную	inanimate as nom.	as nom.	as nom.
animate as gen.	animate as gen.	древнюю	animate as gen.		
		МОЮ, ТВОЮ			
		нашу, вашу			
		ВСЮ, ЧЬЮ			
		ЭТУ, ТУ			

Singular		Plural	
я	меня	мы	нас
ты	тебя	вы	вас
он/оно	его	они	их
она	её		
кто	кого		
что	что		

### Note

Его, её and их are preceded by **н-** after a preposition, as they are in all cases other than the nominative: **похож на него** 'like him'.

## The genitive case

### Uses of the genitive case

- 1 The genitive is the only case ending which English retains on nouns. It is the -'s ending used to denote possession. Similarly, in Russian, the genitive indicates possession or translates as 'of'.

**Путин – президент России.**

Putin is the President of Russia.

**Роль Президента очень сложная.**

The President's role (role of the President) is very complex.

- 2 The genitive is also used after a very large number of prepositions: **без** 'without'; **вдоль** 'along'; **вне** 'outside'; **внутри** 'inside'; **вперед** 'in front of, before'; **вместо** 'instead of'; **во время** 'during' (named events in history); **возле** 'by, near', **вокруг** 'around'; **в течение** 'during' (with words such as **неделя** 'week' or **год** 'year', indicating periods of time); **для** 'for (the sake of)'; **до** 'up to, until' (time or place); **из** 'from, out of'; **из-за** 'because of, from behind'; **из-под** 'from under'; **кроме** 'except'; **мимо** 'past'; **напротив** 'opposite'; **около** 'around, near'; **от** 'from'; **после** 'after'; **против** 'against'; **ради** 'for the sake of'; **с/со** 'from'; **среди** 'among'; **у** 'by, near, *chez*':

**во время переворота**  
during the coup

**против президента**  
against, opposed to the President

**ради Бога**  
for God's sake

**до распада Советского Союза**  
until the collapse of the Soviet Union

**после революции**  
after the revolution

*More detailed information is given about из-за in Unit 7; about the differences between из, от and с in Unit 5; and between с and со in Unit 12.*

The preposition **у** + genitive 'in the possession of' is used to translate 'to have' into Russian:

**У президента была большая власть.**

The President had great power.

Note that **большая власть** is the subject of this sentence; literally ‘Great power was in the possession of President’.

- 3 The genitive singular is used after **оба/обе** ‘both’ and the numerals **два/две** ‘two’; **три** ‘three’; **четыре** ‘four’ and compounds ending in those numerals. The genitive plural is used after all other numerals, except for **один/одна/одно/одни** ‘one’, which is an adjective agreeing with the noun it describes.

**двадцать три члена Думы**  
twenty-three members of the Duma

**пятнадцать членов Думы**  
fifteen members of the Duma

*There is much more detailed treatment of cardinal numerals in Unit 9.*

- 4 The genitive is used after expressions of quantity such as **много** ‘a lot’; **мало/немного** ‘a little, few’; **несколько** ‘several’, **сколько** ‘how many’; **большинство** ‘the majority’, and on its own as a partitive genitive, to indicate part of a substance or ‘some’:

**Политика вызывает мало интереса в России.**  
Politics arouses little interest in Russia.

**Мы выпили вина.**  
We drank some wine.

Contrast:

**Мы выпили вино.**  
We drank the wine.

- 5 The genitive is found in several negative constructions:

After **нет/не было/не будет** ‘there is not/was not, will not be’:

**У президента не было компетентных советников.**  
The president did not have competent advisers.

**В такой ситуации нет другого выхода.**  
In such a situation there is no other way out.

After **не видно/не слышно/не заметно** ‘cannot be seen/heard/discerned’:

Белого дома не видно отсюда.

The White House cannot be seen from here.

As the direct object of negative verbs:

Горбачёв не имел поддержки среди народа.

Gorbachev did not have support among the people.

However, when the object is more concrete, the accusative is preferred:

**Я не вижу его автомобиль.**

I don't see his car.

*There is much more detail about the negative in Unit 13.*

- 6 The genitive is also used as the direct object of certain verbs: желать/пожелать 'to wish'; достигать/достигнуть 'to achieve'. Expressions such as счастливого пути 'bon voyage' are in the genitive because the verb желать is understood. Some other verbs take either the genitive or the accusative: бояться 'to fear'; ждать 'to wait for'; искать/по- 'to seek, look for'; ожидать 'to expect'; просить/по- 'to ask for'; требовать/по- 'to demand'; хотеть/за- 'to want'. Generally the genitive is used if the object is abstract, and the accusative is used if it is a concrete object or a person: искать помощи 'to seek for help'; искать дом 'to look for a house'.

*There are more examples in Unit 11.*

## Endings in the genitive case

### Singular nouns

Masculine		Feminine		Neuter	
Nom.	Gen.	Nom.	Gen.	Nom.	Gen.
президент	президента	газета	газеты	вино	вина
трамвай	трамвая	революция	революции	здание	здания
кремль	кремля	возможность	возможности	время	времени

## Notes

- 1 Never forget the effect the spelling rules have on endings: **книга – книги**.
- 2 Remember that the accusative of masculine animate nouns is the same as the genitive:  
**Мы за сына и против отца.**  
 We are for the son and against the father.
- 3 Some masculine nouns also have alternative genitive endings in -y or -ю. They are most commonly found in the sense of ‘some’: **Купи чаю** ‘Buy some tea’. Note also the expression **много народу** ‘a lot of people’.

## Plural

Masculine		Feminine		Neuter	
Nom.	Gen. plural	Nom.	Gen. plural	Nom.	Gen. plural
президент	президентов	газета	газет	вино	вин
трамвай	трамваев	неделя 'week'	недель	море 'sea'	морей
кремль	кремлей	революция	революций	здание	зданий
		возможность	возможностей	время	времени

## Notes

- 1 Masculine nouns:  
**месяц – месяцев** ‘months’ (because of the spelling rule);  
**москвич – москвичей** ‘Muscovites’ (also nouns ending in -ж, -щ and -щ);  
**слой – слоёв** ‘layers’ (because of the stressed ending);  
**англичанин – англичан; брат – братьев; стул – стульев; друг – друзей; сын – сыновей; ребёнок – детей; человек – людей**.
- 2 Feminine nouns:  
**идея – идей** ‘ideas’; **семья – семей** ‘families’

Sometimes a vowel (-о-, -е- or -ё-) is inserted between the last two consonants of nouns ending in -а: студентка – студенток ‘female students’; девушка – девушек ‘girls’; nouns ending in -ня generally do not have a -ь: песня – песен ‘songs’, but there are exceptions: деревня – деревень ‘villages’; кухня – кухонь ‘kitchens’.

### 3 Neuter nouns:

дерево – деревьев ‘trees’

Sometimes a vowel is inserted between the last two consonants of nouns ending in -о: окно – окон ‘windows’; письмо – писем ‘letters’; кресло – кресел ‘armchairs’.

## Adjectives and pronouns

Masculine and neuter	Feminine	Plural
интересного	интересной	интересных
древнего	древней	древних
моего	моей	моих
твоего	твоей	твоих
нашего	нашей	наших
вашего	вашей	ваших
этого	этой	этих
того	той	тех
всего	всей	всех
чьего	чьей	чьих

## Notes

- Remember that the accusative plural of masculine and feminine animate nouns is the same as the genitive and that adjectives or pronouns agreeing with them will also take endings like the genitive:

**Я знаю этих русских женщин и их мужей.**

I know these Russian women and their husbands.

- The genitive of personal pronouns and кто is the same as the accusative. The genitive of что is чего.

## Dative case

### Uses of the dative case

- 1 The dative is the case of the indirect object of the verb:

**Горбачёв передал власть Ельцину в декабре 1991г.**  
Gorbachev handed over power to Yeltsin in December 1991.

- 2 The dative is also used after certain verbs that take a direct object in English: **верить/по-** ‘to believe’; **помогать/помочь** ‘to help’; **следовать/по-** ‘to follow’ (orders etc.); **советовать/по-** ‘to advise’; **угрожать, грозить** ‘to threaten’:

**России грозит переворот.**  
A coup threatens Russia.

*There is further information on verbs with the dative in Unit 5.*

Note the constructions with **учить** ‘to teach/learn’ and **учиться** ‘to learn’:

**Я учу его русскому языку.**  
I teach him Russian.

**Я учусь русскому языку.**  
I am learning/studying Russian.

But note:

**Я учу русский язык.**  
I am learning Russian.

*There is more information on verbs of teaching and learning in Unit 10.*

- 3 The dative is used with the prepositions **к** ‘towards (place), by (time)’ and **по** ‘according to, along, through, by’: **к вечеру** ‘by evening’; **к дому** ‘towards the house’; **по почте** ‘by post’; **по улице** ‘along the street’. *There is more information on the use of по in Unit 10.*
- 4 The dative is used with a large number of impersonal expressions: **нам интересно** ‘it is interesting for us’; **Президенту надо решить** ‘The President has to decide’. *These expressions are dealt with in detail in Unit 12.* Note also: **Он нам известен** ‘He is known to us’.
- 5 Note this use of the dative with the infinitive:

**Что мне делать?**  
What am I to do?

6 The dative may also be combined with certain reflexive verbs:

Лидеру приходится решать.

The leader has to decide.

Ему хотелось увидеть президента.

He wanted to see the President.

*These expressions are also covered in Unit 12.*

Note the construction with the reflexive verb **нравиться/по-** ‘to like’:

Им не нравилась политика Горбачёва.

They did not like Gorbachev’s policy – literally ‘Gorbachev’s policy was not pleasing to them’.

7 The dative is also used with the short adjective **нужен/нужна/нужно/нужны** to translate ‘to need’:

Ему нужна была помощь.

He needed help.

*There are further examples of this construction in Unit 12.*

## Endings in the dative case

### Nouns

Masculine		Feminine	
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
президенту	президентам	газете	газетам
трамваю	трамваям	неделе	неделям
кремлю	кремлям	революции	революциям
		возможности	возможностям
Neuter			
Singular	Plural		
вину	винам		
зданию	зданиям		
времени	временам		



## Adjectives and pronouns

Masculine and neuter	Feminine	Plural
интересному	интересной	интересным
древнему	древней	древним
моему	моей	моим
твоему	твоей	твоим
нашему	нашей	нашим
вашему	вашей	вашим
этому	этой	этим
тому	той	тем
всему	всей	всем
чьему	чьей	чьим

Singular		Plural	
я	мне	мы	нам
ты	тебе	вы	вам
он/оно	ему	они	им
она	ей		
кто	кому		
что	чему		

## Instrumental case

### Uses of the instrumental case

- 1 The instrumental case is used to translate ‘by’ or ‘with’ referring to the instrument with which an action is performed: **писать карандашом** ‘to write with a pencil’; **окружать танками** ‘to encircle with tanks’. Note its use after certain verbs indicating movement of parts of the body: **махать рукой** ‘to wave (with) one’s hand’; **кивать/кивнуть головой** ‘to shake one’s head’;

пожимать плечами 'to shrug one's shoulders'. *There is further information on how the instrumental is used to translate 'by' in Unit 10.*

- 2 It is also used after certain prepositions:

за	behind, beyond, for (to fetch)
между	between
над	over
перед	in front of, before
под	under (place)
с	with (accompanied by)

*There is more information on the uses of за in Unit 8 and on с in Units 5 and 6.*

- 3 The instrumental is frequently used as the complement of **быть** 'to be' when this verb is in the past or future tense or the infinitive: **Он хотел быть президентом** 'He wanted to be president'.
- 4 The instrumental case is used after several verbs:

заниматься/заняться	to be engaged in, occupied with
интересоваться/за-	to be interested in
оказываться/оказаться	to turn out to be
оставаться/остаться	to remain as
пользоваться/вос-	to use, enjoy
становиться/стать	to become
увлекаться/увлечься	to be keen on
управлять	to control, manage, govern
являться	to seem, be

*There is information on these and other verbs with the instrumental in Unit 6.*

- 5 The instrumental occurs in certain adverbial expressions of time:

утром in the morning	днём in the daytime
вечером in the evening	ночью at night
весной in spring	летом in summer
осенью in autumn	зимой in winter
целыми днями for days on end	

and in some expressions of manner:

**шёпотом** in a whisper      **бегом** at a run

Note also the phrases **таким образом** ‘in that way, thus’ and **другими словами** ‘in other words’.

6 The instrumental is also used in defining dimensions:

**высотой** in height      **длиной** in length  
**ростом** tall      **шириной** in width

**река шириной в десять метров**  
a river ten metres wide

## Endings in the instrumental case

### Nouns

Masculine		Feminine	
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
президентом	президентами	газетой	газетами
трамваем	трамваями	неделей	неделями
роялем	роялями	революцией	революциями
кремлём	кремлями	возможностью	возможностями
Neuter			
Singular	Plural		
вином	винами		
зданием	зданиями		
временем	временами		

### Notes

1 Do not forget the possible impact of the spelling rule: **врач** – **врачом** ‘doctor’; **товарищ** – **товарищем** ‘comrade’; **гостиница** – **гостиницей** ‘hotel’.

- 2 If the ending is stressed, **-ем** and **-ей** are replaced by **-ём** or **-ёй**:  
земля – землёй ‘earth’.
- 3 The instrumental of masculine surnames ending in **-ов**, **-ёв**, **-ин**, **-ын** is **ым**: **Ельцин – Ельциным**. Otherwise they decline like nouns. *For the complete declension, including feminine and plural surnames, see the Grammar Reference at the end of this book.*

## Adjectives and pronouns

Masculine and neuter	Feminine	Plural
интересным	интересной	интересными
древним	древней	древними
моим	моей	моими
твоим	твоей	твоими
нашим	нашей	нашими
вашим	вашей	вашими
этим	этой	этими
тем	той	теми
всем	всей	всеми
чьим	чьей	чьими

Singular		Plural	
я	мной	мы	нами
ты	тобой	вы	вами
он/оно	им	они	ими
она	ей		
кто	кем		
что	чем		

## Prepositional case

### Uses of the prepositional case

The prepositional case is used after certain prepositions: **в** ‘in’ (place); **на** ‘on, at’ (place); **о/об/обо** ‘about, concerning’; **при** ‘at the time of,

in the presence of, adjoining'. *More information about в may be found in Units 4 and 12, about на in Unit 2 and about о/об/обо in Unit 6.*

## Endings in the prepositional case

### Nouns

Masculine		Feminine	
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
президенте	президентах	газете	газетах
трамвае	трамваях	неделе	неделях
кремле	кремлях	революции	революциях
		возможности	возможностях
Neuter			
Singular	Plural		
вине	винах		
море	морях		
здании	зданиях		
времени	временах		

### Note

Certain masculine nouns take the ending **-у** after the prepositions **в** and **на**, though not after other prepositions taking the prepositional case. These nouns include: **лес – в лесу** 'in the forest'; **берег – на берегу** 'on the bank'; **пол – на полу** 'on the floor'; **сад – в саду** 'in the garden'; **угол – в углу** 'in the corner'; **год – в прошлом году** 'last year'; **шкаф – в шкафу** 'in the cupboard'; **Крым – в Крыму** 'in the Crimea'.

### Adjectives and pronouns

Masculine and neuter	Feminine	Plural
интересном	интересной	интересных
древнем	древней	древних
моём	моей	моих

твоём	твоей	твоих
нашем	нашей	наших
вашём	вашей	ваших
этом	этой	этих
том	той	тех
всём	всей	всех
чьём	чьей	чьих

Singular		Plural	
я	мне	мы	нас
ты	тебе	вы	вас
он/оно	нём	они	них
она	ней		
кто	ком		
что	чём		



House of the Government of the Russian Federation.

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## Revision of case endings of nouns and adjectives

### Exercise 4

#### Распад СССР

*Кто не жалеет о распаде Советского Союза, у того нет сердца;  
кто хочет воссоздать его в прежнем виде, у того нет головы.*

*В.В. Путин*

Put the words in brackets into the required case (*with prompts*).

К 1990 *dative* (год) идея *genitive* (перестройка) исчерпала себя. Верховный Совет СССР принял постановление «О *prepositional* (концепция) перехода к *dative* (регулируемая рыночная экономика)», затем последовало постановление «Основные направления по *dative* (стабилизация) *genitive* (народное хозяйство) и переходу к *dative* (рыночная экономика)». Идея *genitive* (реформирование) социализма была похоронена.

В 1991 *prepositional* (год) была отменена 6-я статья *genitive* (Конституция) СССР о *prepositional* (руководящая роль) КПСС.

Начался процесс формирования *genitive* (новые партии). Кризис КПСС в 1989–1990 *nominative* (годы), и ослабление её *genitive* (влияние) позволил отделиться *dative* (компартии) Литвы, Латвии и Эстонии.

С *genitive* (весна) 1990 года идет процесс потери *genitive* (власть) центра над *instrumental* (регионы) и *instrumental* (союзные республики).

В марте 1990 *genitive* (год) состоялся 3-й съезд *genitive* (народные депутаты) СССР, на котором *instrumental* (Президент) СССР избрали М.С. *accusative/genitive* (Горбачев).

Горбачев поднял вопрос перед *instrumental* (руководители) республик о *prepositional* (необходимость) заключения *genitive* (новый Союзный договор). В *prepositional* (апрель) 1991 года состоялись переговоры *genitive* (Президент) СССР с главами *genitive* (союзные республики). Почти все республики отвергли *accusative* (инициатива) Горбачева о сохранении *genitive* (многонациональное государство) на основе федерации *genitive* (субъекты).

## Vocabulary

распад  
воссоздать

disintegration  
to re-create

в прежнем виде	in its previous form
исчерпывать/исчерпать себя	to exhaust itself
постановление	regulation, ruling
направление	direction
народное хозяйство	national economy
хоронить/похоронить	to bury
отменять/отменить	to cancel, abolish
руководящий	leading
ослабление	weakening
влияние	influence
отделяться/отделиться	to break away
потеря	loss
необходимость	necessity
договор	agreement, treaty
переговоры	talks
отвергать/отвергнуть	to reject
сохранение	preservation



### Exercise 5

Put the words in brackets into the required case.

#### Попытка переворота

Перспектива *genitive* (потеря) власти над *instrumental* (республики) не устраивала *accusative/genitive* (многие) функционеров.



19 *genitive* (август) 1991 года группа *genitive* (высокопоставленные чиновники) воспользовались *instrumental* (пребывание) Горбачева на *prepositional* (отдых) и учредили Государственный комитет по *dative* (чрезвычайное положение) – ГКЧП. В *accusative* (Москва) были введены войска. Однако *dative* (путчисты) был дан отпор, прошли митинги *genitive* (протест), у здания *genitive* (Верховный Совет) РСФСР были построены баррикады.

Председатель Верховного Совета РСФСР Б.Н. Ельцин и его команда охарактеризовали действия ГКЧП как *nominative* (антиконституционный переворот).

Путчисты не получили поддержки со стороны *genitive* (народ) и *genitive* (военные). Члены ГКЧП были арестованы по *dative* (обвинение) в *prepositional* (попытка) *genitive* (государственный переворот). Горбачев вернулся в *accusative* (Москва).

## Vocabulary

устраивать/устроить	to suit
высокопоставленный чиновник	high official
пользоваться/воспользоваться	to use, to take advantage of
учреждать/учредить	to establish, to form
чрезвычайное положение	state of emergency
вводить/вести войска	to send troops
отпор	rebuff
переворот	coup
обвинение	charge, indictment
попытка	attempt
заявлять/заявить	to declare
военные	servicemen, military

## Reflexive pronouns

In addition to the personal pronouns and possessive pronouns referred to above, there is the reflexive pronoun **себя** and the reflexive possessive pronoun **свой**. **Себя** means myself, yourself, himself etc. referring back to the subject of the verb. In consequence, it has no nominative. The other forms, common to all genders, singular and plural are: **себя** (*acc/gen*); **себе** (*dat*); **собой** (*instr*); **себе** (*prep*):

**Идея перестройки исчерпала себя.**

The idea of perestroika exhausted itself.

**Она думает только о себе.**

She thinks only of herself.

The endings of **свой** are the same as those of **мой** and **твой**. It translates any possessive – ‘my’, ‘your’, ‘his’ etc., provided it refers back to ownership by the subject of the verb:

**Он любит свою работу.**

He loves his work.

To use **его** in this sentence would mean it was someone else’s work. In sentences with a first or second person subject, **свой** may be used as an alternative to the first or second person possessive:

**Мы любим нашу/свою работу.**

We love our work.

## сам

Сам is the emphatic pronoun ‘self’:

**Она сама сделала.**

She did it herself.

*The full declension is available in the Grammar Reference at the end of this book.*

## Short form adjectives

The adjectives referred to earlier are all long or attributive adjectives. There are also short or predicative adjectives. They are used only in the predicate of the sentence, separated from the noun or pronoun they describe by the verb ‘to be’:

**Книга была интересна.**

The book was interesting.

To form a short adjective remove the **-ый** or **-ий** from the long adjective. This gives you the masculine. For the feminine, add **-а**; for the neuter, **-о**; and the plural, **-ы**: **здоровый** ‘healthy’ – **здоров**, **здорова**, **здорово**, **здоровы**. If the masculine form ends in two consonants, a vowel is sometimes inserted between them: **интересный** – **интересен**.

Some adjectives, including those ending in **-ский**, have no short form.

## Adverbs

Adverbs are formed in the same way as neuter short form adjectives: **быстрый** ‘quick’ – **быстро** ‘quickly’, as in **он идёт быстро** ‘he is walking quickly’.

## Verbs

Compared with English, Russian has very few tenses: one present, two future and two past. Verbs fall mostly into two conjugations, or patterns of endings: first and second. First conjugation verbs may often be recognised by their infinitive ending in **-ать** or **-ять**: **делать** ‘to do, make’; **терять** ‘to lose’. Second conjugation verbs more often end in **-ить** or **-еть**: **говорить** ‘to speak’; **смотреть** ‘to look at’. However, there are a small number of second conjugation verbs ending in **-ать** and **-ять** and irregular first conjugation verbs ending in **-ить**, **-еть**, **-ти**. *Note that tables of verb endings are given in the Grammar Reference at the end of the book.*

## Formation of the present tense – first conjugation

For regular first conjugation verbs ending in **-ать** or **-ять**, remove the **-ть** from the infinitive and add: **-ю**, **-ешь** **-ет**, **-ем** **-ете**, **-ют**:

делать	
я делаю	мы делаем
ты делаешь	вы делаете
он/она/оно делает	они делают

Remember that, as there is only one present tense in Russian, **я делаю** may translate as either ‘I do’ or ‘I am doing’, depending on the context.

In addition to regular first conjugation verbs, there are also verbs which take regular first conjugation endings, but their present tense stem is different from the infinitive stem, so it has to be learnt. Where

the present tense stem ends in a vowel, the endings are the same as on **делать**, and where the stem ends in a consonant, the endings are **-у, -ешь, -ет, -ем, -ете, -ут**. If the ending is stressed, **е** is replaced by **ё**:

**мыть** 'to wash'

<b>я мою</b>	<b>мы моем</b>
<b>ты моешь</b>	<b>вы моете</b>
<b>он/она/оно моет</b>	<b>они моют</b>

**писать** 'to write'

<b>я пишу</b>	<b>мы пишем</b>
<b>ты пишешь</b>	<b>вы пишете</b>
<b>он/она/оно пишет</b>	<b>они пишут</b>

**идти** 'to go'

<b>я иду</b>	<b>мы идём</b>
<b>ты идёшь</b>	<b>вы идёте</b>
<b>он/она/оно идёт</b>	<b>они идут</b>

Verbs with infinitives ending in **-авать** drop the syllable **-ав-** in the present tense; verbs ending in **-овать** replace the **-ов-** by **-у-** and those ending in **-евать** replace the **-ев-** by **-ю-**:

**давать** 'to give'

<b>я даю</b>	<b>мы даём</b>
<b>ты даёшь</b>	<b>вы даёте</b>
<b>он/она/оно даёт</b>	<b>они дают</b>

**советовать** 'to advise'

<b>я советую</b>	<b>мы советуем</b>
<b>ты советуешь</b>	<b>вы советуете</b>
<b>он/она/оно советует</b>	<b>они советуют</b>

**воевать** 'to wage war'

<b>я воюю</b>	<b>мы воюем</b>
<b>ты воюешь</b>	<b>вы воюете</b>
<b>он/она/оно воюет</b>	<b>они воюют</b>

Watch out for the effect of the spelling rules on such verbs:

**танцевать** 'to dance':

<b>танцую, танцуешь, танцует,</b>
<b>танцуем, танцуете, танцуют</b>

## Second conjugation

Remove the last three letters from the infinitive and add the endings: -ю, -ишь, -ит, -им, -ите, -ят. Some second conjugation verbs are also affected by the spelling rules:

говорить 'to speak'	
я говорю	мы говорим
ты говоришь	вы говорите
он/она/оно говорит	они говорят

держать 'to hold'	
я держу	мы держим
ты держишь	вы держите
он/она/оно держит	они держат

If the stem of a second conjugation verb ends in the consonants -д, -т, -с, -з, -ст, that consonant will change in the first person singular (я form) *only*. Other forms are regular. If the stem ends in -б, -в, -п, -ф and -м, an -л- is inserted between the stem and the ending in the first person singular *only*:

водить 'to lead'	я вожу	ты водишь
платить 'to pay'	я плачу	ты платишь
просить 'to ask'	я прошу	ты просишь
возить 'to convey'	я вожу	ты возишь
свистеть 'to whistle'	я свищу	ты свистишь
любить 'to love'	я люблю	ты любишь

## Irregular verbs

There are a small number of irregular verbs in Russian:

мочь 'to be able'	могу	можем
	можешь	можете
	может	могут
бежать 'to run'	бегу	бежим
	бежишь	бежите
	бежит	бегут
хотеть 'to want'	хочу	хотим
	хочешь	хотите
	хочет	хотят
есть 'to eat'	ем	едим
	ешь	едите
	ест	едят

## Reflexive verbs

Add -ся after a consonant or -ь and -сь after a vowel:

встречаться 'to meet'	встречаюсь	встречаемся
	встречаешься	встречаетесь
	встречается	встречаются

*There is much more information about reflexive verbs in Unit 4.*

## The verb 'to be'

**Быть** has no present tense. *For alternative ways of translating 'to be', see Unit 6.*

## Use of the present tense

In addition to a straight translation for one of the English present tenses, Russian uses the present tense in some additional circumstances. Actions which started in the past and are continuing in the present are conveyed in Russian by the use of the present tense:

**Я уже четыре года занимаюсь русским языком.**

I have been studying Russian for four years already.

In indirect speech or questions, Russian uses the tense in which the original statement or question was made. This frequently means that Russian uses the present tense where English uses the past:

**Я спросила его, занимается ли он русским языком.**

I asked him whether he was studying Russian.

**Он сказал, что он занимается русским языком.**

He said that he was studying Russian.

*Verbs of motion have two different present tenses, which have some similarities to the two present tenses in English. This is explained fully in Unit 2.*

## Aspects

There are, in the overwhelming number of cases, two Russian verb infinitives for every English one. For example, 'to do' may be **делать** or **сделать**. The first of these is the imperfective infinitive, or the infinitive of the imperfective aspect, and the second is the perfective

infinitive, or the infinitive of the imperfective aspect. The present tense is formed from the imperfective infinitive. There are both imperfective and perfective past and future tenses formed from the respective infinitives.

### Formation of the imperfective future

The imperfective future is formed from the future tense of **быть** ‘to be’ + the imperfective infinitive:

<b>я</b> буду делать	<b>мы</b> будем делать
<b>ты</b> будешь делать	<b>вы</b> будете делать
<b>он/она/оно</b> будет делать	<b>они</b> будут делать

The formation is exactly the same for the second conjugation and for irregular verbs: **я буду говорить**, etc.; **я буду есть**, etc.

### Formation of the perfective future

The perfective future is formed in the same way as the present tense, but using the perfective infinitive. Note the irregular perfective **дать**:

сделать ‘to do’	сделаю	сделаем
	сделаешь	сделаете
	сделает	сделают
дать ‘to give’	дам	дадим
	дашь	дадите
	даст	дадут

### Formation of the imperfective and perfective past

Both the imperfective and perfective past are formed in the same way, but from their respective infinitives. Where the infinitive of a Russian verb ends in **-ть**, the past tense is generally formed by removing the **-ть** and replacing it by: **-л** (masculine singular), **-ла** (feminine singular), **-ло** (neuter singular), **-ли** (plural all genders):

делать	–	делал	делала	делало	делали
сделать	–	сделал	сделала	сделало	сделали

Note, however, the following exceptions:

– Verbs ending in **-ереть**:

умереть ‘to die’				
умер	умерла	умерло	умерли	

– Some verbs ending in **-нуть** drop the **-нуть** in the masculine:

привыкнуть ‘to get used to’				
привык	привыкла	привыкло	привыкли	
возникнуть ‘to arise’				
возник	возникла	возникло	возникли	

but note:

крикнуть ‘to shout’				
крикнул	крикнула	крикнуло	крикнули	
прыгнуть ‘to jump’				
прыгнул	прыгнула	прыгнуло	прыгнули	

– Verbs ending in **-сть** remove the **-сть** before adding the past tense endings:

пасть ‘to fall’	пал	пала	пало	пали
есть ‘to eat’	ел	ела	ело	ели

– Verbs ending in **-ти**:

идти ‘to go’	шёл, шла, шло, шли
нести ‘to carry’	нёс, несла, несло, несли
вести ‘to lead’	вёл, вела, вело, вели
расти ‘to grow’	рос, росла, росло, росли

– Verbs ending in **-чь**:

течь ‘to flow’	тёк, текла, текло, текли
лечь ‘to lie down’	лёг, легла, легло, легли
мочь ‘to be able to’	мог, могла, могло, могли
достичь ‘to achieve’	достиг, достигла, достигло, достигли



## Imperfective and perfective pairs

The perfective is often differentiated from the imperfective by the addition of a prefix. Common prefixes include:

вы-, за-, на-, о-, от-, пере-, по-, под-, при-, про-, с-, у-:

пить/выпить 'to drink'

читать/прочитать 'to read'

писать/написать 'to write'

делать/сделать 'to do'

Other pairs are differentiated by a suffix:

решать/решить 'to decide'

посещать/посетить 'to visit'

вставать/встать 'to get up'

давать/дать 'to give'

собирать/собрать 'to collect'

надевать/надеть 'to put on'

or by the presence of the infix **-ыв-** or **-ив-** in the imperfective: подписывать/подписать 'to sign'. For more about verbs of this type, see Unit 14.

Говорить has two perfectives: сказать 'to say, tell' and поговорить 'to talk, speak'. Some other unusual perfective pairs include: брать/взять 'to take'; покупать/купить 'to buy'; становиться/стать 'to become'.

More imperfective and perfective pairs you come across in this unit:

принимать/принять (закон) 'to pass a law'

следовать/последовать 'to follow'

терять/потерять 'to lose'

строить/построить 'to build'

позволять/позволить 'to allow'

идти/пойти 'to go'

запрещать/запретить 'to ban'

## Imperfective and perfective pairs of reflexive verbs

начинаться/начаться 'to begin'

отделяться/отделиться 'to break away'

присоединяться/присоединиться 'to join'

пользоваться/воспользоваться 'to take advantage of'

возвращаться/вернуться 'to return'

## Difference in usage between the imperfective and perfective aspects

### Imperfective aspect

- 1 Unfinished or continuous actions:

**Он целый день смотрел телевизор.**  
He was watching/watched television all day.

**Завтра я буду работать в саду.**  
Tomorrow I will work in the garden.

- 2 Habitual or repeated actions:

**Мы часто играли в теннис этим летом.**  
We often played/used to play tennis that summer.

**Они будут плавать в море каждый день.**  
They will be swimming/will swim in the sea every day.

- 3 Emphasis on the process of the verb:

**Я люблю кататься на лыжах.**  
I love skiing.

- 4 After the verbs **начинать/начать** and **стать** 'to begin'; **кончать/кончить** 'to finish'; **продолжать** 'to continue' and some other verbs with similar meanings, the imperfective infinitive is always used:

**Я только что кончила работать над этой книгой.**  
I have only just finished working on this book.

*For other verbs meaning 'to stop', see Unit 14.*

### Perfective aspect

- 1 Emphasis on completion or result. This may be a single action:

**Он кончил работу.**  
He finished the work.

**Вы должны прочитать эту книгу сегодня.**  
You must read (finish reading) that book today.

or a series of actions, each one completed before the next one starts:

**Я встану, приму душ и оденусь.**  
I will get up, take a shower and get dressed.