

# Russian Verbs

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# ЛОМАТЬ

**All You Need to Know: Conjugation, Usage, & More**  
Made Easy for English Speakers



# The Core Verb and Aspect

The verb "**ломать**" is fundamental in Russian, meaning "to break," "to snap," or "to shatter."

- Imperfective Aspect: **ломать**. Used for actions that are in process, repeated, habitual, or an attempt without focusing on the result.

Example: *Он **ломал** палку.* - He was breaking the stick. (Process)

- Perfective Aspect: **сломать**. Used for a single, completed action, focusing on the result or completion.

Example: *Он **сломал** палку.* - He broke the stick. (Result)



**Я сломал ногу  
неделю назад.**

I broke my leg a week ago.

# Conjugation

Both the imperfective **ломать** and the perfective **сломать** belong to the same conjugation pattern. The key difference is the use of the prefix **с-** and the resulting change in meaning (time/aspect).

## Present and Future Tense

я (с)ломáю	мы (с)ломáем
ты (с)ломáешь	вы (с)ломáете
он (с)ломáет	они (с)ломáют

## Past Tense

я (с)ломáл(а)	мы (с)ломáli
ты (с)ломáл(а)	вы (с)ломáli
он/она (с)ломáл(а)	они (с)ломáli

Learn to conjugate **ломать**, then simply put the prefix **с-** on it for **сломать**.

# The Verb Tense Forms

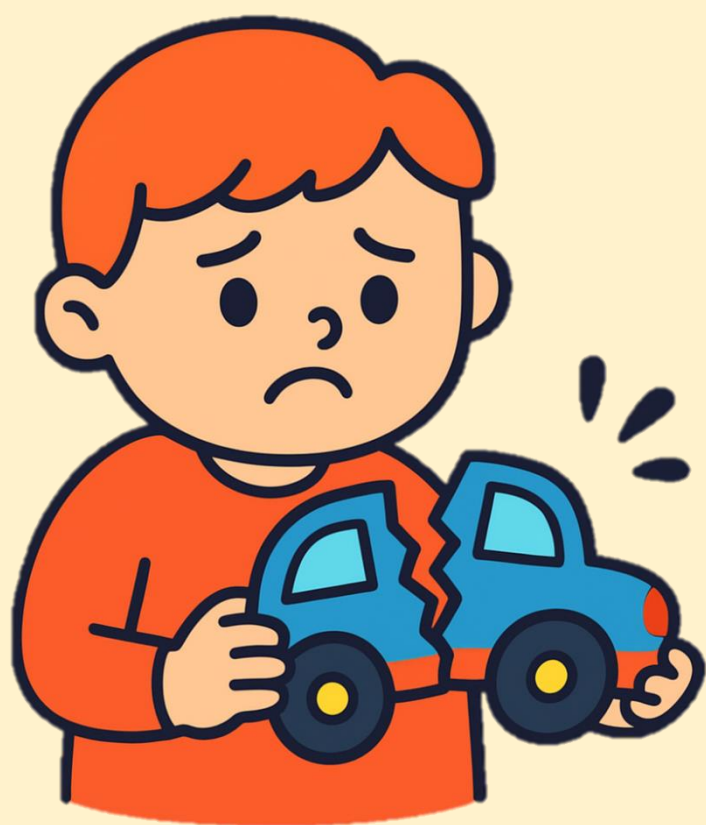
Understanding the different time forms of "ломать" is about knowing whether you are talking about the process (Imperfective: ломать) or the finished result (Perfective: сломать).

## Present Tense: ломать

The Present Tense always uses the Imperfective form. It describes an action happening right now or an action that happens regularly (a habit).

Action in progress: Смотри! Он ломает замок, чтобы войти внутрь. (*Look! He is breaking the lock to get inside.*)

Habitual action: Ты всегда ломаешь мой ручки. (*You always break my pens.*)



**Мой ребёнок всё время всё ломает.**

My child breaks everything all the time.

## Past Tense: ломáл vs. сломáл

The Past Tense distinguishes between an action that was ongoing and an action that was completed.

### ❶ Ломáл (*was breaking / used to break*) - Imperfective Past

This describes an action that was in process (e.g., when interrupted) or one that was repeated in the past. It focuses on the activity, not the final result.

Ongoing action: Я **ломáл** лёд на рекé, когда услы́шал крик. (*I was breaking the ice on the river when I heard a shout.*)

Repeated action: Раньше мы **ломáли** стáрые дóски для дров регуля́рно. (*We used to break old planks for firewood regularly.*)

### ❷ Сломáл (*broke*) - Perfective Past

This describes a single, completed action that achieved a definite result in the past (the item is now broken).

Single result: Он **сломáл** ру́ку, упáв с велосипéда. (*He broke his arm by falling off the bike.*)

Finished action: Дéти **сломáли** модель самолёта. (*The children broke the model airplane.*)

Онí **ломáли** вéтку, но не смогли́ **сломáть**.

*They were breaking (tried to break) the branch but they could not break it.*



## Future Tense: **бúду ломáть** vs. **сломáю**

The Future Tense clearly shows the difference between duration and completion.

### ❶ **Бúду ломáть** (*I will be breaking*) - Compound, Imperfective

This describes an action that will last for a duration or will happen repeatedly in the future.

Duration: Мы бúдем **ломáть** стéну нáшего гаражá, **пока́ не дойдём до элекتریческого ка́беля**. (*We will be breaking the wall of our garage until we reach the electric cable.*)

Repeated action: Мы бúдем **ломáть** стереотíпы, **пока́ нас не услы́шат**. (*We will be breaking stereotypes until they hear us.*)

### ❷ **Сломáю** (*I will break*) - Simple Future, Perfective

This describes a single, final action that will result in a completed outcome.

Ёсли ты нáдавишь сlíшком сíльно, ты **сломáешь** пружíну. (*If you push too hard, you will break the spring.*)

Подождí, я **сломáю** éту вéтку, она́ нам пригодíтся. (*Wait, I will break this branch; it will be useful to us.*)

# Reflexive Form

The addition of the suffix -ся (ломаться / сломаться) makes the verb reflexive, changing its meaning significantly.

To break (down/by itself): Телефон **сломался**. (*The phone broke down.*)

To resist / To be difficult / To act coy (informal): Не **ломайся**, пойдём с нами. (*Don't be difficult / play coy, come with us.*)

я (с)ломáюсь	мы (с)ломáемся
ты (с)ломáешься	вы (с)ломáетесь
он (с)ломáется	они (с)ломáются



У меня **сломался** компьютер.

My computer broke down.

# Imperative (Commands)

The imperative mood is used to give commands or instructions.

"**Ломать**" is an imperfective verb. Use its imperative forms when you want to tell someone to:

1. Do the action repeatedly: Don't stop breaking it.
2. Continue the action: Keep on breaking.
3. Perform an action in a specific way.

**Ломáйте** эти дóски осторóжно, онí ещё пригодя́тся.  
(Break these boards carefully, they will still be useful.)

One person (friend, child)	<b>ломáй</b>
Several people OR one person formally	<b>ломáйте</b>

For a single, completed action (e.g., Break this stick right now!), you must use the imperative of the perfective verb **сломáть**.

Осторóжно! Не **сломáй** мою́ игру́шку.

Careful! Don't break my toy.





# Participles and Gerunds

These forms are used to create complex sentence structures.

Form	Imperfective: <b>ломать</b>
Active Participle	Present: <b>ломáющий</b> Past: <b>ломáвший</b> <i>breaking (who is/was breaking)</i>
Passive Participle	Present: <b>лóмаемый</b> Past: <b>лóманный</b> <i>being broken (which is/was being broken)</i>
Gerund Present (Adverbial)	<b>ломáя</b> – while/by <i>breaking</i>

Not all of the listed forms are used frequently, even though they exist. The verb "**сломать**" has its own common forms.

- Past active participle: **сломáвший** (*who has broken, having broken, the one that broke*)
- Past passive participle: **слóманный** (*broken, that has been broken*)
- Gerund Past (Adverbial): **сломáв** (*having broken, after breaking*)

## Examples

Музыка́нт, **лома́ющий** музыка́льные граи́цы. (*A musician who breaks musical boundaries.*)

**Ломáющий** стереоти́пы челове́к всегда́ интере́сен. (*A breaking stereotypes person is always interesting.*)

Он провёл всю ночь, **лома́я** го́лову над сло́жной математическо́й зада́чей. (*He spent the entire night cudgeling his brain over the complex math problem.*)

Ребе́нок расстро́ился, случайно **сломáв** свою́ игру́шку. (*The child was upset after accidentally breaking their toy.*)

**Сломáвшая** но́гу спортсме́нка вы́нуждена была́ прекра́тить трениро́вки. (*The athlete who had broken her leg was forced to stop training.*)

**Сло́манные** часы́ нико́му не нужны́. (*Broken watches are useless to anyone.*)



Все сту́лья  
**сло́маны**. Нам  
не́где се́сть.

All the chairs are broken.  
We have nowhere to sit.

# Prefixed Variations

The verb "ломать" is the base for numerous prefixed verbs, each adding a specific shade of meaning related to completion, direction, intensity, or metaphorical action.

**ПОЛОМАТЬ** to break (completely), often once

The reflexive form, **поломаться**, is highly common — especially when referring to objects or devices that have failed. It is typical language used by children.

Моя машинка **поломалась**. (*My little car broke down.*)

**ДОЛОМАТЬ (perf.) / ДОЛАМЫВАТЬ (imp.)** to finish breaking

This means to complete a breaking process that was already started. The object was already partially broken or damaged.

Эта одноно́гая кúкла была́ моёй любíмой, а ты её **доломáл!** (*This one-legged doll was my favorite, and you broke it even more!*)

**РАЗЛОМА́ТЬ (perf.) / РАЗЛА́МЫВАТЬ (imp.)** to break apart

This emphasizes separating an object into many pieces or breaking it apart entirely, often with considerable force or for the purpose of dismantling.

Он **разломáл** шокола́дку и подели́лся с друзья́ми.

*(He broke apart the chocolate bar and shared it with his friends.)*

In the case of a chocolate bar, as in the example, another form of the verb would also be suitable: "**разломíть**". It's also the perfective aspect, and this verb is more often used for single actions, when we break something in half. But if you mean "to break into several pieces," "to break everything," or "to destroy everything by breaking it into pieces," then it would be more appropriate to use "**разломáть**".

**НАДЛОМИ́ТЬ (perf.) / НАДЛА́МЫВАТЬ (imp.)** to break partially

It suggests inducing a deep crack or a partial fracture by bending or pressing without fully splitting the object.

Он **надломíл** вéтку, но не сломáл её до конца́.

*(He partially broke the branch, but didn't break it off completely.)*

## ПЕРЕЛОМА́ТЬ (perf.) / ПЕРЕЛА́МЫВАТЬ (imp.)

This has two main meanings: to break in half or break across (**переломить**) and to break many things or everything in a group (**переломать**).

Он **переломал** себе почти́ все ко́сти. (*He's broken almost every bone in his body.*)

Врач сказа́л, что у него́ **переломаны** рёбра. (*The doctor said his ribs were all broken.*)

The verb **переломить** also has a metaphorical meaning: to overcome or turn (a situation).

То́чным уда́ром в ко́рпус он **переломил** ход ма́тча. (*With a precise body blow, he turned the tide of the match.*)

## ПРОЛОМИ́ТЬ (perf.) / ПРОЛА́МЫВАТЬ (imp.) to break through

This implies breaking through something to create an opening or a passage.

Ему́ пришло́сь **проломить** стéну, что́бы вы́браться из горя́щего зда́ния. (*He had to smash through the wall to escape the burning building.*)



## ОБЛОМА́ТЬ (perf.) / ОБЛА́МЫВАТЬ (imp.)

The verb "ломать" with the prefix об- gives rise to two distinct perfective forms: **обломить** and **обломать**. While both relate to breaking off a part, they carry different focuses and scopes of action.

The verb **обломить** is the standard, single-action perfective form paired with the imperfective **обла́мывать**. It describes a single, definitive act of breaking off a protruding part, tip, or edge. The focus is on a sharp, specific break that separates one piece from the main object. You can think of it as a sudden snap.

Когда я вёшал гама́к, я случайно **обломил** то́нкую сухую ве́тку. (*When I was hanging the hammock, I accidentally snapped off a thin dry branch.*)

И вдруг под тяжёстью я́блок **обломился** один сук. (*Suddenly a branch full of apples snapped under its weight.*)

Note: The reflexive form of the verb "**обломить**" has its own figurative meaning. To fall into one's lap unexpectedly; to come as a sudden, unexpected piece of luck or easy gain.

Когда она́ улыбу́лась ему́, он подумал, что наконёц-то ему́ мо́жет что́-то **обломиться**. (*When she smiled at him, he thought they might finally get lucky.*)

The verb **обломать** implies a more extensive or multiple breaking action. Physically, it suggests breaking off several parts or breaking all around the object's edge.

**Вéтер обломáл все сухíе вéтки с дерéвьев.** (*The wind broke off all the dry branches from the trees.*)

Crucially, **обломать** is also widely used in a figurative (slang) sense. In modern colloquial Russian, this is its most common application, meaning to ruin someone's plans, enthusiasm, or expectations.

**Мой нача́льник обломáл мне óтпуск, заста́вив рабо́тать сверхуро́чно.** (*My boss ruined my vacation by making me work overtime.*)

**ОТЛОМИ́ТЬ (perf.) / ОТЛА́МЫВАТЬ (imp.)** to break off

Means to separate a part from a larger, rigid whole by breaking it away with force, typically using your hands. The focus is on the physical detachment of a piece.

**Де́ти случа́йно отломíли вéтку сирéни.** (*The children accidentally snapped off a lilac branch.*)

**Отломí мне кусо́чек хлéба.** (*Break off a piece of bread for me.*)

**Она́ всегда́ отла́мывала кусо́чек, что́бы попрóбовать.** (*She always broke off a little piece to taste it.*)

**ВЗЛОМА́ТЬ (perf.) / ВЗЛА́МЫВАТЬ (imp.)** to break into, to hack

This prefix implies breaking into something by force, overcoming a barrier or defense. It is used for both physical objects (locks, safes) and, very commonly, digital systems.

Вор **взломáл** дверь и прони́к в кварти́ру. (*The thief broke into the apartment by forcing the door open.*)

Мой акка́унт был **взло́ман** мошенниками. (*My account was hacked by scammers.*)

**УЛОМА́ТЬ (perf.) / УЛА́МЫВАТЬ (imp.)** to talk into, to cajole

This is a purely metaphorical colloquial use, meaning to break someone's resistance. It is not a physical action.

Я до́лго **ула́мывал** ме́неджера дать мне вы́ходной.  
(*I spent a long time persuading the manager to give me a day off.*)

В конце́ концов, я их **уломáл**. (*I talked them into it in the end.*)

## НАЛОМА́ТЬ to break a lot

Physically, **наломать** means to break or gather a large amount of a breakable material, often wood (twigs, branches, firewood).

**Мы наломали** тóнких вéток, чтóбы разжéчь костёр.  
(*We broke a lot of thin branches to start the bonfire.*)

The most frequent use of **наломать** is within the fixed, widely known idiom: "**наломать дров**" (literally: to break firewood). This means to make serious mistakes, to blunder badly, or to mess things up figuratively.

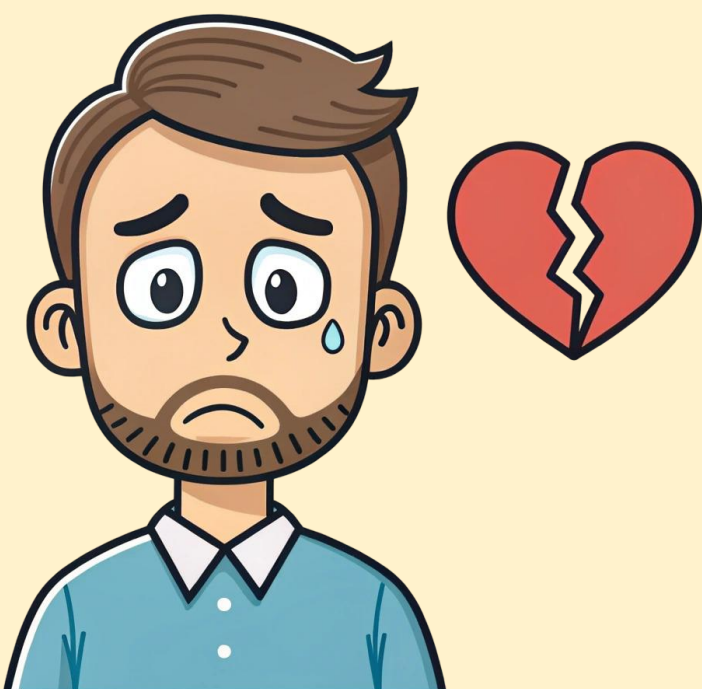
## Important Note

"Ломать" ("сломать") is not always a direct synonym for "to break" because Russian uses a separate, distinct verb, "разбить" ("разбивать"), to describe a specific type of damage.

The verb **ломать** is used for damaging objects that are rigid, structural, or mechanical, such as a stick, a bone, or an engine. The damage makes the object snap in half or cease to function.

The verb **разбивать** (to smash/shatter) is used for objects that are fragile, crystalline, or hollow, such as glass, ceramics, or a mirror. This damage involves violent impact and causes the object to shatter into many small, sharp fragments.

Essentially: You use **ломать** to describe a snap or a mechanical failure, and you use **разбивать** to describe a shatter or a smash.



Она **разбила**  
мне сердце!

She broke my  
heart!



# That's It

I hope this guide helped you understand how the verb ломать works – and maybe even made Russian verbs a little less scary!

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