

LECTURE 2

Supplementary material

1. Soft and hard vowels
2. Soft and hard consonants
3. Voiced and voiceless consonants
4. Test yourself
5. Terminology

Section 1

SOFT AND HARD VOWELS

Hard vowels are: **А Э Ы У О**

Soft vowels are: **Я Е Ё Ю И**

Section 2

SOFT AND HARD CONSONANTS

The basic rule is that consonants are “soft” if they are followed by soft vowels or the soft sign. Consonants are “hard” if they are followed by hard vowels or the hard sign.

English speakers should find it easier to relate to the concept of “soft” and “hard” consonants. Consider the difference between hard and soft “d” in **do** versus **dew**, “f” in **fool** versus **fuel** and “p” in **poor** versus **pure**.

All Russian consonants can be pronounced as hard or soft, except **ж**, **ц** and **ш** which are **always hard**, and **ч** and **щ** which are **always soft**.

Exceptions:

Certain combinations of consonants such as **жч**, **зч** and **сч** are pronounced as **щ (shch)** as in the English word “sure”.

ДЧ and **ТЧ** are pronounced as **Ч (ch)** as in English word “chimp”.

ЧН in some cases is pronounced as **ШН (shn)**. Most common examples here are **конЕчно** (kanYЕshna) – “of course” and **скУчно** (skOOshna) – “boring”.

Section 3

VOICED AND VOICELESS CONSONANTS

All Russian consonants are divided into two types: **voiced** and **voiceless**.

As with English, several Russian consonants come in pairs where one letter is pronounced voiced and another one is similar but voiceless. The rest of the consonants do not have pairs and are either just voiced or voiceless.

Consider letters **б** and **п** and try saying **bat - pat**. “Voiced” means that your vocal chords vibrate when you are making a sound and it is the main difference between voiced and voiceless consonants in Russian.

Voiced & Voiceless pairs:

Б	П
В	Ф
Г	К
Д	Т
З	С
Ж	Ш

Other consonants do not have pairs and are either **only voiced** or **only voiceless**:

Only Voiced **М Н Р Л Й**

Only Voiceless **Щ Ч Ц Х**

RULE 2

1. Voiced consonants are pronounced as voiceless when they appear at the very end of the word.
2. Voiced consonants become voiceless when they are followed by other voiceless consonants.
3. **BUT**: voiceless consonants become voiced when they are followed by voiced consonants.

Consider:

Russian word	Meaning	Pronunciation	
ГО <u>Д</u>	year	ГО <u>Т</u>	got <u> </u> (see point 1)
БО <u>Г</u>	God	БО <u>Х</u>	boh (see point 1)
ФУ <u>Т</u> БОЛ	football	ФУ <u>Д</u> БОЛ	foodbOl (see point 3)
<u>В</u> ХОД	entrance	<u>Ф</u> ХОД	fhod (see point 2)

Section 4:

TEST YOURSELF*

1. Name all 5 soft vowels:
2. How would you pronounce the word шоколАд and why? (shokolAd - chocolate): a) "shakalaD" or b) "shakalaT"

3. Name the voiceless pairs for these 3 consonants - В Д З - and answer what happens to voiced consonants when they are followed by voiceless consonants?

Section 5:

TERMINOLOGY

алфавИт	alfavEEt	alphabet
глАсный звУк	glAsniy zvOOK	vowel sound
соглАсный звУк	saglAsniy zvOOK	consonant sound
мЯгкий/твёрдый	mYAhkeey/tvYOrdiiy	soft/hard
слОво	slOva	word
ударЕние	oodarYEneeeye	stress/accent

Answers to Section 4

* (1. Я Е Ё Ю И.

2. b) “shakalaT”, because voiced consonants are pronounced as voiceless when they appear at the very end of the word.

3. В – Ф, Д – Т, З – С. Voiced consonants become voiceless when they are followed by voiceless consonants.)