

INTRODUCTION.

Mastering the Russian Alphabet Made Easier.

Is Russian difficult? It is more of a challenge for an English-speaking learner than French or German, but much easier than Japanese or Arabic. English and Russian have the same Indo-European linguistic origins, so there is a lot of grammar in common. Behind the exotic looking alphabet, which is based on Greek, there is a simple system of pronunciation and a large number of familiar words.

Try to read the following words:

KOT /kot/ cat

ATOM/atom/ atom

TOM/tom/ volume

Once you know the letters, you can read any word: Russian spelling is much easier than English. The Russian (Cyrillic) alphabet, which has 33 letters, is easy to learn if you follow the four steps:

Now you can read the following words: KOT(cat),TAM(there), MAK(poppy),TOM(volume),KAK(how).

1. The following five letters are almost identical in Russian and English. They are your “OLD FRIENDS”:

Aa-"ah" a as in **f**ather

Kk-"kah"- k as in **k**angaroo

Мм-"ehm" m as in **e**mpy

Oo-"oh" o as in **b**ottle

Тт-"teh" t as in **t**ent

Practice: KAK (how), MAK (poppy), MOT (spender), KOM (a snowball), TAM (there).

2. The following seven letters look like English ones but are pronounced differently. They are your “FALSE FRIENDS”:

Вв-"veh" v as in **v**ery

Ее-"yeh" ye as in **y**et

Нн-"ehn" n as in **e**nter

Рр-"ehr" r as in **e**rror

Сс-"ehs" s as in **e**stablish

Уу-"oo" oo as in **b**oot

Хх-"khah" h as in **h**ot

Practice:HET/nyet/ no, BOT/vot/ here it is, BEPX/verh/ (top), XOP/horr/(choir), BEPMYT/vermoot/ vermooth, CYMKA/sumka/ handbag.

To make the words easier to read, divide them into syllables with hyphens:

BEP-MYT, CYM-KA, ME-TPO.

3. The following 12 letters look unfamiliar, however they have familiar sounds. They are your “FRIENDS IN DISGUISE”:

Read the following words slowly, syllable by syllable:

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Бб-"beh" | b as bed |
| Гг-"geh" | g as in get |
| Дд-"deh" | d as in dentist |
| Ёё-"yo" | yo as in yolk |
| Зз-"zeh" | z as in zebra |
| Ии-"ee" | ee as in meet |
| Йй-"ee kratkoyeh""short ee" | y as boy |
| Лл-"ehl" | l as elbow |
| Пп-"peh" | p as in pepper |
| Фф-"ehf" | f as effort |
| Ээ-"eh" | e as fed |
| Юю-"yoo" | yoo as use |
| Яя-"yah" | ya as yard |

Practice: ДА/da:/(yes), БАНК/ba:nk/(a bank), ГАЗ/garz/ (gas), ДОМ/dom/ (a house, home) ЁЛКА/yolka/ (a fir-tree) ЗЕБРА/zebra/(a zebra), МОЙ/moy/ (my), ЛИФТ/lift/ (a lift), ПАРК /park/ (a park), СПОРТ /sporrt/(sport), ФОТО/foto/ (a photo), ЭТО/etah/ (this), ЛЮК/lyuk/ (hatch), ЯБЛОКО /yablaka/ (an apple), ТЕЛЕФОН/telefon/ (telephone), КИОСК /kiosk/ (kiosk),ВИСКИ/viski/ (whisky) .

Read: ФУТБОЛ, СПУТНИК, ДИПЛОМАТ, КАФЕ, Я(И), КИОСК, ТУАЛЕТ, ВОДКА, СУП, СТЕЙК, ТЕННИС, ПЕПСИ, БИЛЕТ(ticket), ВИЗА, ПАСПОРТ, ДОКТОР, СУПЕР, СУПЕРМАРКЕТ, СУПЕРМЕН, БИЗНЕС, ТУР, ТУРИСТ, ОПТИМИСТ, ПЕССИМИСТ, РЕАЛИСТ, БОСС, ДИРЕКТОР, БАЛЕТ, ОПЕРА.

4. The last 8 letters are your “NEW FRIENDS”; it may take you a little longer to remember them:

Read the following words:

Жж-"zheh" zh as in **pleasure**
 Цц-"tseh" ts or tz as in **quartz**
 Чч-"cheh" ch as in **check**
 Шш-"shah" sh as **shall**
 Щщ-"schyah" shch as in **Welsh sheep**, a longer, softer sound than the previous Ш
 Ъ this rare letter is called "tvoyordiy znahk" “ **hard sign**”, it has no sound
 It is used to separate a consonant from the following /y/ sound(like in lettersЮ/yoo/, Я/yah/, Е/yeh/. The effect of a very brief pause; it is like a slight break between a consonant and a vowel. For example ВЪЕХАЛ(drove in) should be pronounced /v-yehal/with a slight break between/v/ and /y/
 Ы i as in **bit**, but with the tongue tip a little further back
 Ь "myagkeey znahk"- “**soft sign**” (similar to y and canyon). It is pronounced simultaneously with the preceding consonant, making the consonant “soft”. In Russian “soft” means it is pronounced with a simultaneous /y/ sound.
 Practice: ЖУРНАЛ/jurnarl/ (a journal), ЦЕНТР/tsentr/ (centre), УЛИЦА/ulitsa/ (a street), ШАПКА/shapka/ (a hat), ЩИ/shchi/ (Russian vegetable soup with cabbage), ВЫ /vi/ (you), МЫ/mi/ (we), ЧАЙ/chai/ (tea), ОБЪЕКТ /ob-yekt/ (object),СЫН /sin/ (a son),КРЕМЛЬ /kremly/ Kremlin), ЛЕНЬ /leny/laziness), КОШКА /koshka/(cat), БОРИЩ(borshch-Russian beet and vegetables soup),

ВЪЕЗД/v-yezd/ (entrance for cars), ПЕЛЬМЕНИ /pelymeni/ (Russian dumplings), БОЛЬШОЙ/bolyshei/ big, ФРУКТЫ/frukti/(fruit), ПРОДУКТЫ /produkti/(food), ВЫХОД(exit).

Read: МАКДОНАЛЬДС, МЕНЕДЖЕР, КУРЬЕР, БАГАЖ, МАССАЖ, ШОУ, ЧЕК, ФИНИШ, ШОК, ШОКОЛАД.

Now compare Russian and English words:

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 1. АКТ | АСТ |
| 2. БАГАЖ | BAGGAGE |
| 3. ВИЗА | VISA |
| 4. ДОКТОР | DOCTOR |
| 5. ЖУРНАЛИСТ | JOURNALIST |
| 6. ИДИОТ | IDIOT |
| 7. КОФЕ | COFFEE |
| 8. КАФЕ | CAFE |
| 9. ЛИФТ | LIFT |
| 10. МАФИЯ | MAFIA |
| 11. ОПТИМИСТ | OPTIMIST |
| 12. ПАСПОРТ | PASSPORT |
| 13. ПЕССИМИСТ | PESSIMIST |
| 14. РЕАЛИСТ | REALIST |
| 15. СЕКС | SEX |
| 16. ТЕЛЕФОН | TELEPHONE |
| 17. ТУРИСТ | TOURIST |
| 18. ФОТО | PHOTO |
| 19. ХУЛИГАН | HOOLIGAN |
| 20. ЧЕК | CHEQUE |
| 21. ЧЕМПИОН | CHAMPION |
| 22. ЭТИКЕТ | ETIQUETTE |

| БАР. | КАЗИНО | АЭРОПОРТ |
|------|--------|----------|
| | | |

Find the words in the list below related to the above places and put them in the appropriate section

ТУРИСТ. ТЕЛЕФОН. МИЛЛИОНЕР. ВОДКА. ВИЗА. ВИСКИ. РУБЛЬ.
МАФИЯ . ДОЛЛАР. ТАКСИ. ПАСПОРТ .БАГАЖ. ВИНО.РУЛЕТКА.

Read more about the Russian phonetics at <https://learnrussian.rt.com>

Recommended books:Russian-English-Russian Oxford Dictionary

Websites: www.practicerrussian.com

Get your Russian email address at www.rambler.ru or www.yandex.ru