

Language Generator 3—Кому как (How is it to Whom)

When Russians talk about how their environment affects them, they use the dative case. The dative case answers the question to whom. For example, instead of saying “I am cold.” they would say “To me it is cold.” This is because to a Russian it seems illogical to make oneself the subject of a sentence about one's environment. In fact, they would understand “I am cold.” to mean “I am cold to the touch.”

Practice using the universal language generator below to make sentences which use the dative case to say how something is to someone.

Affected Party (in dative case)	Optional Modifier	Condition
Кому́ To whom	не not	холо́дно? cold?
Кому-нибу́дь To anyone	о́чень very	жа́рко? hot?
Мне To me	не о́чень not very	ску́чно? boring?
Нам To us	сли́шком too	ма́ло? little?
Тебе́ To thee	не сли́шком not too	мно́го? much?
Вам To you	дово́льно rather	доста́точно? sufficient?
Ему́/Ей To him/To her	немного a little	нра́вится? pleasing?
Им To them		не нра́вится? displeasing?
Ива́ну To John		проти́вно? repellant, off putting?
А́нне To Anna		бы́стро? quickly?
		ме́дленно? slowly?
		мно́го со́ли? much salt?

The sentences built using this generator can be either questions or statements depending on the intonation. For example, this is a question followed by an answer:

Вам холо́дно?

Мне не холо́дно.

Note that the modifier не negates the word which comes right after it. If you were to move it in front of a different word, you would produce a different meaning. For example:

Мне не холо́дно. To me it is not cold. (I am not cold.)

Не мне холо́дно. It is not to me that it is cold. (I am not the one who thinks it is cold.)

Dative case expressions like these are often the best way to translate the word *for*. Use one when “for you” means “from your point of view”. “Is it too fast for you?” should be translated “Вам сли́шком бы́стро?” Beginners often say “Для Вас сли́шком бы́стро?” but that would mean “Was it for you (as a favor) that they made it too fast?”