



Alphabet 1

Tips and notes

[START LESSON](#)

We'll start with some simple sentences right away. Russian does not have articles, nor does it normally use the verb "to be" in the Present tense.

AN EM-DASH IS USED INSTEAD OF "THE VERB "TO BE" BETWEEN THE TWO NOUNS: «MOKKA — КОФЕ» ("A MOCHA IS COFFEE").

Russian uses a version of the Cyrillic Alphabet. Many letters look similar to their Latin counterparts. As Cyrillic typography was remodeled around 300

years ago, both alphabets have a similar style.

For information on how to install a Russian keyboard layout, please click [here](#).

To switch Duolingo from Latin transliterations to Cyrillic, click the little **Аа-Яя** switch near the top of the screen during a lesson.

Letters and Sounds

К, О, М, Т, А sound similar to their Latin counterparts (to be more precise, "o" is the sound in "more"). However, in handwriting and typed italics, the letter **Т** can look rather like a lower case 'm' in the Latin alphabet. E.g. in the verb *просить* (to ask for, to request), *м* = т.

Е actually sounds more like "ye", as in "yell", not as in "Hear ye, hear ye!" (this will work for now; it's more complicated after a consonant).

are included in the table below:



Ёё ⁰ (your)	Вв (vase)	Бб (bed)
Ээ (red)	Нн ¹ (nap)	Дд ¹ (dab)
Уу (soon)	Хх ² (Bach)	Гг (gap)
Ии (meet)	Йй (yes)	Лл ¹ (nil)
Юю (you)	Рр (trilled R)	Пп (poor)
Ыы ³ (hit)	Сс (Sam)	Зз (zebra)
Яя (yard)	Фф (photon)	Цц (cats)
Жж ⁴ (seizure)	Шш ⁴ (shun)	Щщ ⁴
Чч (cheer)		Ъ and Ъ ⁵

- ⁰ Ёё The umlaut-like double dots are optional in writing. Syllables containing this letter are always stressed.
- ¹ Т, Д, Н, Л are pronounced near your teeth
- ² х('kh') is somewhat similar to the H in "hue". It is like making the "sh" sound, only it is pronounced where you make the "K" sound.
- ³ Ы has no equivalent in English. It is an "eeh"-like sound, but less distinct, sounds closer to "e" in "lover", and has your tongue deeper than in "heat" or "hit".
- ⁴ for Ш and Ж your tongue is lower than in English and slightly bent back. Щ has all your tongue raised—it is a longer and more hissy sound. Ч corresponds to щ (i.e. a bit different than "ch")
- ⁵ Ъ and Ъ are separators and have no sound.

Л can have a flat top, like П, or a pointy top like А (it comes from the Greek Λ). Д and Л have a similar top in many fonts, though it's up to the designer. Handwritten Д looks like *D*, and д like a *g* or a *δ* (the last two affect the italic shapes).

An Italic Г in lower case usually looks this: *г*.



That's it with the introduction! We will discuss reading words in more detail in



P.S. In our notes, we use an accute accent to show you the stress (e.g., ра́дио). It is a standard practice in Russian textbooks for little children or

foreign learners—and, generally, the most common way of marking the position of the stress.

