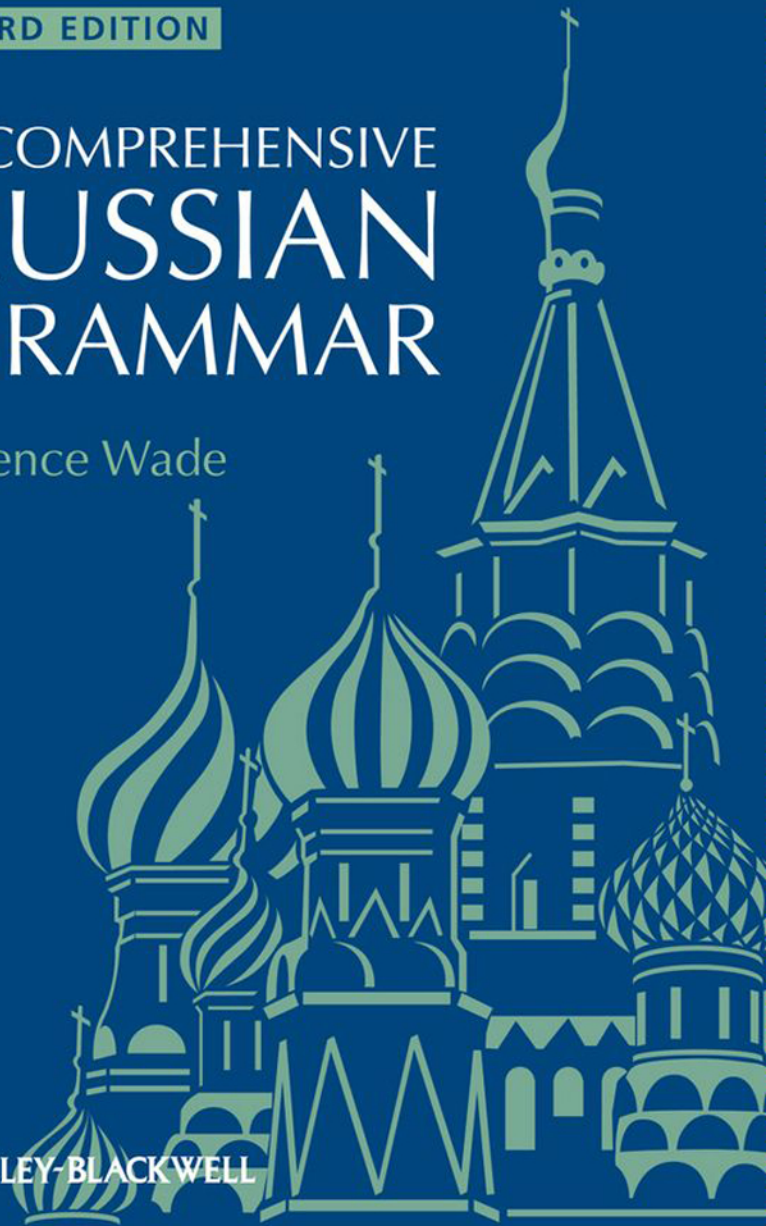


THIRD EDITION

A COMPREHENSIVE
RUSSIAN
GRAMMAR

Terence Wade

 WILEY-BLACKWELL



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Terence Wade

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To May

Preface

The *Comprehensive Russian Grammar* is meant for English-speaking pupils and students of Russian at the post-introductory stage. It is also a reference aid for teachers, translators and interpreters and others who use the language in a professional capacity.

The first new reference grammar of Russian to have been published in the United Kingdom since the 1950s, it is based on personal research and observation, long experience of teaching Russian at all levels from beginners up to the Honours Degree and the Civil Service Interpretership, and on a close study of reference materials by Russian, British and American linguists.

The approach is descriptive throughout, and rules of usage are constantly measured against current practice as reflected in contemporary journalistic and literary sources. It is entirely practical in conception and design and has no pretensions to theoretical disquisition. Particular emphasis is laid on problems which are of especial difficulty for the English speaker.

The grammar provides comprehensive guidance to usage, with exhaustive tabulated material and succinct explanations. It is presented in 484 sections which are further subdivided to take account of finer points of usage. It provides mainstream rules for quick reference, as well as access to the subtleties of the language for those who need more detailed information.

The intention is to provide the essential facts of the language and to tackle perennial problems such as adverbs and pronouns in -to and -нибудь, agreement, animacy, conjugation, declension, gerunds, long and short adjectives, numerals, participles, the partitive genitive, verbs of motion, and so on, as well as problems which have often received less

attention: the gender of acronyms, alphabetisms, soft-sign nouns, the differences between *в/на* and other key prepositions, and between *то́же* and *та́кже*, the use of capital letters, particles, the principles of word order etc. Treatment of verbal aspect differentiates usage in the past, future, imperative and infinitive, thus throwing the rules into sharper relief. Special emphasis is given to stress patterns.

Ease of reference is assured by comprehensive indexing of subject headings and Russian words, and by general adherence to the alphabetic principle throughout.

Preface to the Second Edition

A Comprehensive Russian Grammar was first published in 1992, since when the book has been reprinted eight times, on most occasions with minor amendments. The present, second, edition of the *Grammar* takes account of the very considerable changes, both social and linguistic, that have taken place in the post-Soviet period.

The transliteration system of the Library of Congress has been added to those enumerated in section **1**, but that of the British Standards Institute continues to be used throughout the *Grammar*.

Amendments have been made to sections dealing with all parts of speech, with pronunciation, the noun, the adjective, the verb and the preposition most affected.

There are three entirely new, substantial sections on word formation in the Russian noun. These comprise sections **27** (general), **28** (prefixation) and **29** (suffixation), the sections that formerly bore these numbers having been conflated with earlier sections to make room for the new material. These sections have not been curtailed in any way.

Some sections on pronunciation have been amplified by additional examples, sometimes involving new lexis, e.g. *п^ринтер* ‘printer’, *И^нтерне^т* ‘Internet’ and *э^кстрасенс* ‘psychic’ in section **7**. Changes have also been made to sections **12**, **13**, and **15** (on the pronunciation of -чн-, consonants omitted in pronunciation, and stress, respectively).

Section **17** (on the use of capital and small letters in titles and names) has been completely rewritten in the light of changes that have occurred over the past few years. Many of the changes involve new names such as *Росси́йская Федера́ция* ‘Russian Federation’ and *Совет Федера́ции*

'Council of the Federation', but historicisms such as *Советский Союз* 'Soviet Union' will clearly remain current for some time to come and have been retained. Other changes result from new official attitudes, affecting, for example, the spelling of the names of deities.

Other amended sections on the noun take account of recent neologisms, e.g. *флоппи* 'floppy disk', *папарацци* 'paparazzi' (section 36), *ВИЧ* 'HIV', *СКВ* 'freely-convertible currency' (section 40), *забастком* 'strike committee' (section 42), etc. Most amendments have grammatical implications, e.g. the genitive plurals *байт* 'byte' and *бит* 'bit' (section 56), the plurals *технологии* 'technologies' and *экономики* 'economies' (section 48), the use of the accusative case in *заказал вино* 'ordered some wine' (section 83), and so on, others reflect name changes of the past decade (e.g. the replacement of the former place name *Киров* 'Kirov', section 71).

Amendments to the sections on adjectives also reflect changes in nomenclature, e.g. *думский* 'Duma' (adj.), or amplify extant categories, e.g. *лизинговый* 'leasing' (adj.) (both section 148).

Changes to the sections on the verb include an increase in the number of biaspectuals with alternative perfectives (e.g. *профинансировать* 'to finance', section 237), and the amplification of other sections.

Section 404 on the buffer vowel -o in prepositions has been expanded, as has section 424 on *через* and *по* in the meaning 'across', and section 451 on *по* with nouns that denote means of communication (*по мобильному* 'on a mobile', *по факсу* 'by fax'), including variant usage in conjunction with *телевидение* 'television'. The preposition *порядка* in the meaning 'approximation' has been added to section 445.

The bibliography has been expanded to include new dictionaries, grammars and other works of the mid- to late 1990s, especially those specifically describing the language at the end of the twentieth century (Comrie, Stone and Polinsky, Dulichenko, Karaulov, Kostomarov, Offord, Rakhmanova and Suzdal'tseva, Ryazanova-Clarke and Wade, Shaposhnikov and Zemskaya), as well as new journals, newspapers, magazines and prose works.

A glossary of grammatical terms has also been included in the new edition. The table of contents and indexes have been revised to take account of new material and revised pagination.

Preface to the Third Edition

When Professor Terence Wade died in 2005, he was already well advanced in his plans to produce a third edition of *A Comprehensive Russian Grammar*. This would have included appendices on geographical terms, irregular verbs, irregular noun plurals, indeclinable nouns and abbreviations.

Since it remains unclear just what form these appendices would take I have chosen not to attempt to second-guess. Indeed, it remains my conviction that Professor Wade's grammar is the most comprehensive and illuminating of all Russian grammars currently available for student use. It would not be advisable to make it unwieldy or too detailed for its own good!

My purpose in preparing the third edition is not to seek to emulate Professor Wade's ambition, but rather to enhance the status and significance of the grammar throughout the scholarly world by consolidation and a few select additions. I have been guided by Professor Wade's own desire, in planning the third edition, to 'ensure that the essential balance of the book is maintained'. I have therefore chosen to expand the sources and reference materials used, including writers and texts from well-known modern Russian writers, as well as from the political and journalistic discourse of post-Soviet Russia. In only one or two cases have explanations been 'tweaked', but the grammar itself remains largely as Professor Wade presented it in the first edition in 1992.

I am indebted to colleagues from the Department of European Studies and Modern Languages of the University of Bath for their advice and support during my time spent working on this edition, and for their invaluable help with recent developments in the language, especially

vocabulary. My fellow teachers Natasha Zhuravkina and Elena Kidd have been particularly helpful. I would also like to thank staff and students of Moscow State University who have studied on short courses at the University of Bath in 2008 and 2009, especially Lidiia Polubichenko, Elena Aleksandrova and Maria Guzenko.

David Gillespie
Bath, November 2009

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I wish to thank my late mother, who first encouraged me to learn Russian.

The book is dedicated to my wife, May, who bore with me throughout the thousands of hours and nine drafts that went into this grammar.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the publishers of the books I was able to consult (see bibliography): Akademiya nauk, Birmingham University, Collets International, CUP, Dover Publications, Durham University, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Hutchinson, Kniga, MGU, Nauka, Oliver and Boyd, OUP, Pan Books, Pergamon, Progress Publishers, Prosveshchenie, Russkii yazyk, Sovetskaya entsiklopediya, University of East Anglia, University of London Press, Vysshaya shkola.

TW

Acknowledgements to the Second Edition

I am grateful to Russian colleagues who have helped with the new edition, particularly Professor V. G. Kostomarov, Rector of the Pushkin Institute, Moscow, for allowing me to carry out research at the Institute on a number of occasions.

I wish to thank Professor G. Corbett (University of Surrey) and Professor B. Scherr (Dartmouth College) for their valuable comments on the first edition of the *Grammar* and suggestions for improving the second.

I also wish to express my thanks to Mrs Nijole White, my colleague at the University of Strathclyde, who read the sections on word formation in the Russian noun and gave valuable advice on presentation.

I should also like to thank editorial and production staff at Blackwell: Tessa Harvey, Louise Spencely, Lorna Berrett, Brian Johnson, Helen Rappaport, and proof reader Penny Dole for their work in producing this second edition of the book.

Above all I am again indebted to my editor, Professor Michael Holman, of the University of Leeds, who has supplied unstinting supportive and professional assistance throughout, especially in preparing the new sections on word formation in the Russian noun.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used:

acc.	accusative
adj.	adjective
cf.	compare
dat.	dative
f.	feminine
fig.	figurative
gen.	genitive
imper.	imperative
impf.	imperfective
infin.	infinitive
instr.	instrumental
lit.	literally
m.	masculine
n.	neuter
nom.	nominative
part.	participle
pf.	perfective
pl.	plural
prep.	prepositional
sing.	singular
theatr.	theatrical
trans.	transitive

Introduction

1 The Cyrillic alphabet

(1) The Russian Cyrillic alphabet contains 33 letters, including 20 consonants, 10 vowels, a semi-consonant/semi-vowel (ѣ), a hard sign (ѣ) and a soft sign (ѣ).

(2) There are a number of different systems for transliterating the Cyrillic alphabet. Three of these, that of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), that of the British Standards Institution (BSI) (whose system is used throughout this *Grammar*), and that of the Library of Congress (LC) are listed alongside the Cyrillic alphabet, as well as the Russian names of the individual letters:

Cyrillic letters	Letter name	ISO	BSI	LC
Аа	[а]	a	a	a
Бб	[бэ]	b	b	b
Вв	[вэ]	v	v	v
Гг	[гэ]	g	g	g
Дд	[дэ]	d	d	d
Ее	[е]	e	e	e
Ёё	[ё]	ë	ë	ë
Жж	[жэ]	ž	zh	zh
Зз	[зэ]	z	z	z
Ии	[и]	i	i	i
Йй	[и краткое]	j	ï	ï
Кк	[ка]	k	k	k
Лл	[эль]	l	l	l

Cyrillic letters	Letter name	ISO	BSI	LC
Мм	[эм]	m	m	m
Нн	[эн]	n	n	n
Оо	[о]	o	o	o
Пп	[пэ]	p	p	p
Рр	[эр]	r	r	r
Сс	[эс]	s	s	s
Тт	[тэ]	t	t	t
Уу	[у]	u	u	u
Фф	[эф]	f	f	f
Хх	[ха]	h/ch	kh	kh
Цц	[цэ]	c	ts	\widehat{ts}
Чч	[че]	č	ch	ch
Шш	[ша]	š	sh	sh
Щщ	[ща]	šč	shch	shch
Ъъ	[твёрдый знак]	”	”	”
Ьы	[ы]	y	\bar{y}	y
Ьь	[Мягкий знак]	’	’	’
Ээ	[э оборотное]	ě	é	è
Юю	[ю]	ju	yu	\widehat{iu}
Яя	[я]	ja	ya	\widehat{ia}

Note

- Certain letters with diacritics and accents which appear in the standard BSI system (ě for э, ĭ for й, é for э, \bar{y} for ы) are used without diacritics and accents here.
- The ligatures used over certain combinations of letters in the standard LC system (\widehat{ts} , \widehat{iu} , \widehat{ia}) are often omitted by other users.
- An apostrophe (’) for the soft sign (ь) is used only in the bibliography.
- The endings -ый/-ий are rendered as -y in names.

2 The international phonetic alphabet (IPA)

The following symbols from the IPA are used in the Introduction for the phonetic transcription of Russian words.

Vowels

i	as in ил	[il]
ɨ	as in пыл	[pɨl]
ɪ	as the first vowel in игла́	[ɪ'gla]
ɨ	as the first vowel in дыра́	[dɨ'ra]

ε	as in лес	[lɛs]
e	as in весь	[vɛʂ]
a	as in рад	[rat]
æ	as in пять	[pæɫ]
л	as the first vowel in один	[l'ɔ̃ɪn]
э	as the first vowel in хорошó	[xɛɾl'ʃo]
o	as in моx	[moɫ]
ö	as in тѣтя	[tʲötʲə]
u	as in бук	[buk]
ü	as in ключ	[k ütʃ]

Semi-consonant/semi-vowel

j	as in бой	[boj]
---	-----------	-------

Consonants

p	as in пол	[pol]
p̣	as in пѣс	[p̣os]
b	as in бак	[bak]
ḅ	as in бел	[ḅel]
t	as in том	[tom]
ṭ	as in тем	[ṭem]
d	as in дом	[dom]
ḍ	as in день	[ḍeɲ]
k	as in как	[kak]
ḳ	as in кем	[ḳɛm]
g	as in гол	[gol]
g̣	as in гид	[g̣it]
f	as in флóра	[f'lorə]
f̣	as in фен	[f̣ɛn]
v	as in вот	[vot]
ṿ	as in винó	[ṿɪ'no]
s	as in сам	[sam]
ʂ	as in сев	[ʂɛf]
z	as in зуб	[zup]
ẓ	as in зѣбра	[ẓɛbrə]
ʃ	as in шум	[ʃum]
ʒ	as in жук	[ʒuk]
x	as in хам	[xam]
χ	as in хímик	[χimɪk]
ʃʃ	as in щекá	[ʃʃtʲ'ka]
ts	as in цех	[tsɛx]

tʃ	as in ЧИН	[tʃin]
m	as in МОЛ	[mol]
m̥	as in МЕЛ	[m̥ɛl]
n	as in НОС	[nos]
n̥	as in НЕТ	[n̥ɛt]
l	as in ЛАК	[lak]
l̥	as in ЛЯГ	[l̥ak]
r	as in РАК	[rak]
r̥	as in РЕКА́	[r̥u'ka]
j	as in Я́МА	[jama]

Pronunciation

3 Stressed vowels

Russian has ten vowel letters:

а	э	ы	о	у
я	е	и	ё	ю

(1) **А** is pronounced with the mouth opened a little wider than in the pronunciation of ‘a’ in English ‘father’, e.g. зал [zal] ‘hall’.

(2) **Э** is pronounced like ‘e’ in ‘end’, but the mouth is opened a little wider and the tongue is further from the palate than in articulating English ‘e’ in ‘end’, e.g. это [’ɛtə] ‘this is’.

(3) **У** is pronounced with the tongue drawn back and the lips rounded and protruding. The sound is similar to but shorter than the vowel in ‘school’, e.g. бук [buk] ‘beech’.

(4) **О** is also pronounced with rounded and protruding lips, but to a lesser extent than in the pronunciation of **у**. The sound is similar to the vowel in English ‘bought’, e.g. бок [bok] ‘side’.

(5) The vowel **Ы** is pronounced with the tongue drawn back as in the pronunciation of **у**, but with the lips spread, not rounded or protruding, e.g. сын [sɪn] ‘son’.

(6) The vowels **я** [ja], **е** [je], **ё** [jo] and **ю** [ju] are ‘iotated’ variants of а, э, о and у (i.e. they are pronounced like those vowels preceded by the sound [j]). The vowel **и** resembles ‘ea’ in English ‘cheap’, but is a ‘closer’ sound, that is, the centre of the tongue is nearer to the hard palate in articulation, e.g. мир [mɪr] ‘world, peace’. After a preposition

or other word ending in a hard consonant, however, stressed initial **н** is pronounced [ɨ]: от Игоря [л'т'игəřə], cf. also 4 (4) note.

Note

Vowels can be classified as:

- (a) **back** vowels (pronounced with the back part of the tongue raised towards the back of the palate): **у/ю, о/ё**;
- (b) **central** vowels (pronounced with the central part of the tongue raised towards the central part of the palate): **ы, а/я**;
- (c) **front** vowels (pronounced with the central part of the tongue raised towards the front of the palate): **и, э/е**.

4 Unstressed vowels

(1) Unstressed у, ю, и and ы

The sound of unstressed **у/ю** is similar to that of English 'u' in 'put': дугá [du'gá] 'arc', юлá [ju'la] 'top'. Unstressed **и** and **ы** are shorter and pronounced in a more 'relaxed' fashion than their stressed equivalents: игрá [t'grá] 'game', былá [bɨ'la] 'was'. Ё does not appear in unstressed position. The other vowels are 'reduced' in unstressed position.

(2) Reduction of о and а

(i) The vowels **о** and **а** are pronounced as [o] and [a] only when they appear in stressed position: дом [dom], зал [zal]. In unstressed position they are reduced, **о** being the vowel most affected by various forms of reduction resulting from its position in relation to the stress.

(ii) In pre-tonic position or as the unstressed initial letter in a word **о** and **а** are pronounced [ʌ]: потóm [pʌ'tom] 'afterwards', одѝн [ʌ'dɨn] 'one', парóm [pʌ'rom] 'ferry', акýла [ʌ'kulə] 'shark'. This also applies to pre-tonic prepositions: под мóрем [pʌ'd m ořum] 'under the sea', над дóмом [nʌ'd doməm] 'above the house'. The combinations **аа, ао, оа, оо** are pronounced [ʌʌ], e.g. сообразѝть [sʌʌbrʌ'zɨtʃ] 'to comprehend'.

(iii) In pre-pre-tonic position (except as initial letters, see (ii)) or in post-tonic position both vowels are pronounced [ə]: thus парохóд [pəřʌ'xot] 'steamer', молодóй [mələ'doj] 'young', рáно [rʌnə] 'early', вѝлка [vɨlkə] 'fork'. This also applies to prepositions (под водóй [pəd vʌ'doj] 'under water', над головóй [nəd gəl'voj] 'overhead') and to the initial letters of words governed by prepositions (в огорóде [v'əgʌ'rodɨ] 'in the market garden' (cf. огорóд [ʌgʌ'rot] 'market garden')).

Note

- (a) Unstressed **o** is pronounced [o] in a number of words of foreign origin (какáо ‘cocoa’, ráдио ‘radio’, хáос ‘chaos’), with an optional [o] in véто ‘veto’, досьé ‘dossier’, шоссé ‘highway’ and some other words. In certain cases, pronunciation is differentiated stylistically. The pronunciation [ʌ] in words such as поэт ‘poet’ and шоссé ‘highway’, said to be the more colloquial variant, has gained ground in educated speech and is found even in the pronunciation of foreign names such as Шопéн [ʃʌ'pɛn]/[ʃo'pɛn] ‘Chopin’, especially where these have gained common currency (e.g. Тольятти ‘Togliatti’). However, [o] is retained in words where it follows another vowel: трío ‘trio’.
- (b) The vowel **a** is pronounced [ɪ] in pre-tonic position after **ч** and **щ**: thus часы́ [tʃɪ'sɨ] ‘clock’, щадíть [ʃʃɪ'dɨtʲ] ‘to spare’. The pronunciation of unstressed **a** as [ɚ] after **ж**, **ш** is now limited for many speakers to жалéть [ʒɚ'lɛtʲ] ‘to regret’, к сожалéнию [kʂəʒɚ'lɛnɨju] ‘unfortunately’ and end-stressed plural oblique cases of лóшадь ‘horse’, e.g. gen. pl. лошаде́й [ləʃɚ'dɛj]. **Ца** is pronounced [tsɚ] in the oblique cases of some numerals: двадцатí [dvətɚ'tɨ] ‘twenty’ (gen.).

(3) Reduction of **e** and **я**

- (i) In pre-tonic position both **e** and **я** are pronounced [(j)ɪ]: язык [jɪ'zɨk] ‘language’, перевод [pɪvɪ'vot] ‘translation’. Thus, разре́дítь ‘to thin out’ and разря́дítь ‘to unload’ have the same pronunciation.
- (ii) In post-tonic position **e** is pronounced [ɪ] (пóле ['poɪ] ‘field’), while **я** is usually pronounced [ɚ] (ды́ня ['dɨɲɚ] ‘melon’). However, post-tonic **я** is pronounced [ɪ] before a soft consonant (па́мьятъ ['paɲɨtʲ] ‘memory’) and in non-final post-tonic position (вы́глянул ['vɨgɪnɪnɪl] ‘looked out’).

(4) Reduction of **э**

Э is pronounced [ɪ] in unstressed position (э́тап [ɪ'tap] ‘stage’).

Note

Unstressed initial **и** and **э** and conjunction **и** are pronounced [ɪ] after a preposition or other word ending in a hard consonant (see 3 (6)): в Ита́лию [vɪ'taɪɮju] ‘to Italy’, брат идёт к Ива́ну [bratɪ'dɔt kɪ'vanu] ‘my brother is on his way to see Ivan’, над экватором [nədɪ'kvatɔrəm] ‘above the equator’. **И** is also pronounced [ɪ] in certain stump compounds, e.g. Госизда́т [gostɪ'zdat] ‘State Publishing House’.

5 Hard and soft consonants

With the exception of **ж**, **ц** and **ш**, which are invariably hard, and **ч** and **щ**, which are invariably soft, all Russian consonants can be pronounced hard or soft.

(1) Hard consonants

(i) A hard consonant is a consonant which appears at the end of a word (e.g. the **м** in **дом** [dom] ‘house’, the **т** in **вот** [vot] ‘here is’) or is followed by **а**, **ы**, **о** or **у** (**э** appears only as an *initial* letter, except in acronyms such as **нэп** ‘NEP’ (New Economic Policy) and rare words such as **сэр** ‘sir’). Thus, the consonants in the words **голова́** [gəɫə'va] ‘head’, **мы́ло** [mɨlə] ‘soap’ and **ду́ма** [dumə] ‘thought’ are all hard.

(ii) Most hard consonants, e.g. **б**, **в**, **г**, **з**, **к**, **м**, **п**, **с**, **ф**, are pronounced in similar fashion to their English counterparts, i.e. ‘b’ in ‘bone’, ‘v’ in ‘van’, ‘g’ in ‘gone’, ‘z’ in ‘zone’, ‘c’ in ‘come’, ‘m’ in ‘money’, ‘p’ in ‘pun’, ‘s’ in ‘sun’, ‘f’ in ‘fun’. However, **к** and **п** (and **т**; see (iii)) lack the slight aspiration of ‘k’, ‘p’ and ‘t’.

(iii) In pronouncing the dentals **д** [d], **т** [t] and **н** [n], the tip of the tongue is pressed against the back of the upper teeth in the angle between teeth and gums.

(iv) **Р** is a moderately ‘trilled’ [r]. **Л** is pronounced with the tip of the tongue in the angle between the upper teeth and the gum, and the middle of the tongue curved downwards. The ‘l’ sound in English ‘bubble’ is a good starting-point for the pronunciation of this letter.

(v) **Х** sounds as ‘ch’ in ‘loch’ or German ‘acht’, but is formed a little further forward in the mouth.

(vi) Unlike other consonants, **ж**, **ц** and **ш** are always pronounced hard (see, however, note (b), below). This means in practice that the vowels **е** and **и** are pronounced as **э** and **ы** after **ж**, **ц** and **ш** (**жест** [zest] ‘gesture’, **жир** [zɨr] ‘fat’, **цех** [tsɛx] ‘workshop’, **цирк** [tsɨrk] ‘circus’, **шест** [ʃest] ‘pole’, **машы́на** [mɨ'ʃɨnə] ‘car’) while **ѐ** is pronounced as **о** after **ж** and **ш** (**жёлоб** [ʃoləp] ‘groove’, **ше́лк** [ʃolk] ‘silk’). A soft sign (as in **рожь** [roj] ‘rye’) has no softening effect on the pronunciation of **ж** or **ш**.

Note

(a) Neither a soft sign nor the vowel **ѐ** can be written after **ц**.

- (b) **Ш** is sounded hard in the loan words парашю́т [pəʁə'ʃut] 'parachute' and брошю́ра [brə'ʃurə] 'brochure', while **ж** is pronounced soft in жу́ри [ʒü'ri] 'jury'.

(2) Soft consonants

(i) A soft consonant is a consonant (other than **ж**, **ц** or **ш**) followed by a soft sign, e.g. **ль** in сталь 'steel', or by **я**, **е**, **и**, **ё** or **ю**. Thus, the initial consonants in мя́та [ˈmʲatə] 'mint', лес [lɛs] 'forest', пил [pʲil] 'was drinking', нёбо [ˈnʲobə] 'palate' and дю́на [ˈdʲunə] 'dune' are all soft.

(ii) Soft consonants are pronounced with the centre of the tongue raised towards the hard palate, as in articulating **и**, for example. Correct rendering of the vowels **я** [ja], **е** [jɛ], **и** [i], **ё** [jo] and **ю** [ju] will assist in the articulation of the preceding soft consonants. Soft [ʎ] as in то́лько 'only' is similar to 'll' in 'million', with the tip of the tongue against the teeth-ridge and the front of the tongue pressed against the hard palate.

(iii) Soft consonants may also appear at the end of words, e.g. **нь** and **ть** in топь [top] 'swamp' and мать [matʲ] 'mother'; the final sounds in these words are similar to those of the initial consonants in 'pure' and 'tune' (standard British English 'Received Pronunciation').

(iv) Unlike other consonants, **ч** and **щ** are always pronounced soft. In practice this means that the vowels **а**, **о** and **у** are pronounced as [ja], [jo] and [ju] following these consonants (час 'hour', чо́порный 'grim', чугу́н 'cast iron', поща́да 'mercy', щу́ка 'pike').

(v) The consonant **щ** is pronounced as a long soft **ш** [ʃʃ] (e.g. защи́щать [zəʃʃtʲɪ'ʃʃætʲ] 'to defend'); the pronunciation [ʃtʃ] is falling into disuse.

(vi) The double consonants **жч** (мужчи́на 'man'), **зч** (зака́зчик 'client'), **сч** (подпи́счик 'subscriber') are pronounced like **ш** [ʃʃ]. The pronunciation [ʃtʃ], however, is preferred in prefixed forms such as бесчи́сленный 'innumerable', расчлени́ть 'to dismember'.

(vii) **Жж** and **Зж** may be pronounced either as a double soft **ж** (with the front of the tongue raised towards the hard palate) in words such as во́жжи [ˈvɔʒʒɪ] 'reins', дро́жжи 'yeast', жжёт 'burns', жужжа́ть 'to buzz', брызже́т 'sprays', визжа́ть 'to scream', е́зжу 'I travel', поезжа́й! 'go!', по́зже 'later', especially in the speech of the older generation, as well as in that of actors and professionally trained announcers, or alternatively as a double hard **ж** [ˈvɔʒʒtɕ], a pronunciation preferred by very many younger speakers. **Зж** is invariably pronounced as hard [ʒʒ] across the boundary between prefix and stem: изжы́ть 'to

eradicate'. The cluster **жд** in **дождя́** 'of rain' etc. is pronounced as soft **жж** by some speakers and as [ʒd̪] by others.

(3) Use of hard and soft consonants to differentiate meaning

Hard and soft consonants may be used to differentiate meaning, cf. **лук** [luk] 'onions' and **люк** [lʉk] 'hatch', **мат** [mat] 'checkmate' and **мать** [mat̪] 'mother' etc.

6 Double palatalization

Some words contain two adjacent soft consonants, a phenomenon known as 'double palatalization' or 'regressive softening'. The following combinations of letters are involved:

(1) [d̪], [t̪] and [n̪] followed by other soft dentals or by [ʂ], [z̪], [tʃ], [ʃʃ] or [ʎ]: **о́ттепель** [ʰot̪t̪ɕɪ] 'thaw', **дни** [dn̪i] 'days', **ко́нчик** [ˈkɔ̃nʃɪk] 'tip', **го́нщик** [ˈgɔ̃nʃʃɪk] 'racer', **пя́тница** [ˈp̪ɛt̪n̪ɪtsə] 'Friday', **пе́нсия** [ˈp̪ɛnʃɪjə] 'pension'.

(2) [ʂ] or [z̪] followed by a soft dental, [ʂ], [z̪] or [ʎ]: **возни́к** [vɔ̃z̪n̪ɪk] 'arose', **разде́л** [rɔ̃z̪d̪ɛl] 'partition', **здесь** [z̪d̪ɛʂ] 'here', **снег** [ʂn̪ɛk] 'snow', **сте́на** [ʂt̪uˈna] 'wall', **вме́сте** [ˈvm̪ɛʂt̪ɪ] 'together'.

Note

In some words, single or double palatalization is possible: **две** [dv̪ɛ] or [d̪v̪ɛ] 'two', **дверь** [dv̪ɛɕ] or [d̪v̪ɛɕ] 'door', **зверь** [zv̪ɛɕ] or [z̪v̪ɛɕ] 'wild animal', **пе́тля** [ˈp̪ɛt̪l̪ə] or [ˈp̪ɛt̪l̪ə] 'loop', **свет** [ʂv̪ɛt] or [ʂ̪v̪ɛt] 'light', **след** [ʂl̪ɛt] or [ʂ̪l̪ɛt] 'trace', **че́тверть** [ˈtʃ̪ɛt̪v̪ɪɕ] or [ˈtʃ̪ɛt̪v̪ɪɕ] 'quarter'.

7 Non-palatalization of consonants in some loan words

(1) The consonants **т** and **д** are pronounced hard before **е** in certain loan words and foreign names (**те́рмос** [ˈt̪ɛrməs] 'thermos flask', **анте́нна** 'aerial', **апарте́йд** 'apartheid', **ате́лье** 'workshop', **би́фште́кс** 'beefsteak', **бу́тербро́д** 'sandwich', **оте́ль** 'hotel', **па́ртёр** 'stalls', **п́ринтер** 'printer', **сте́нд** 'stand'), in words with the prefix **интер-** (**И́нтерне́т** 'Internet'), **ко́декс** 'legal code', **моде́ль** 'model' **стюа́рдэсса** 'stewardess' and in many words with the prefix **де-** (**дегра́дация** 'degradation').

(2) Hard **з** has been retained in *безе* ‘meringue’; hard **м** in *консоме́* ‘consommé’, *резюме́* ‘résumé’; hard **н** in *кашне́* ‘scarf’, *бизнес* ‘business’, *киберне́тика* ‘cybernetics’, *тонне́ль* ‘tunnel’, *турне́* ‘tour’, *фонети́ка* ‘phonetics’, *эне́ргия* ‘power’; hard **п** in *купе́* ‘compartment’; hard **р** in *каба́ре* ‘cabaret’, *реле́* ‘relay’; hard **с** in *шоссе́* ‘highway’, *экстра́сенса́* ‘a psychic’; and hard **ф** in *кафе́* ‘cafe’.

Note

A hard consonant is more likely to be retained in foreign loan words immediately preceding the stressed vowel (e.g. *те́ннис* ‘tennis’). Dental consonants (**д, т, н**) are more likely to remain hard than labials (**б, п, м**).

8 Hard sign and soft sign

(1) The hard sign appears only between a hard consonant — usually at the end of a prefix — and a stem beginning **я, е, ё** or **ю**: *отъе́зд* [ɒ'tʲɛst] ‘departure’, *объя́снить* ‘to explain’.

(2) A soft sign appearing between a consonant and **я, е, ё** or **ю** indicates that the consonant is soft and that the sound **й** [j] intervenes between consonant and vowel: *се́мья́* [sʲɪ'mʲjɑ] ‘family’. See also 5 (2) (i) and (iii).

9 The reflexive suffix -сь/-ся

(1) The pronunciation of **сь** as [sʲ] is widespread: *бою́сь* [bɒ'lʲusʲ] ‘I fear’, *боя́сь* [bɒ'lʲasʲ] ‘fearing’ etc.

(2) The suffix **-ся** is usually pronounced [sə] in the infinitive (*мы́ться* ‘to wash’) and the present tense (*мо́ется* ‘he washes’), though an alternative soft pronunciation [sʲə] is also found in the second-person singular and first-person plural.

(3) [sʲə] is preferred in participles (*сме́ющийся* [sʲə] ‘laughing’), the imperative (*не сме́йся* ‘don’t laugh’) and the past tense (*он смея́лся* ‘he was laughing’) — except for forms in **-ссия́** or **-ссия́** (*па́сся* [pʲasʲə] ‘was grazing’).

10 Effect of a soft consonant on a vowel in the preceding syllable

(1) **Э** and **е** are pronounced [ɛ] and [jɛ] in stressed position when followed by a hard consonant (e.g. *э́то* [ɛ'tɒ] ‘this is’, *ле́с* [lɛs] ‘forest’),

but as [e] and [je] (similar to French ‘e acute’ [é]) when followed by a soft consonant (e.g. эти [‘eʲtʲ] ‘these’, весь [vʲesʲ] ‘all’).

(2) **Я** is pronounced as [æ], **ё** as [ö] and **ю** as [ü] preceding a soft consonant: мяч [mʲæʲtʲʃ] ‘ball’, тётя [‘tʲötʲə] ‘aunt’, ключ [kʲlʲütʲʃ] ‘key’.

(3) **А**, **о** and **ы** are also affected as the tongue is raised closer to the palate in anticipation of a following soft consonant (e.g. мать ‘mother’, ночь ‘night’, пыль ‘dust’, where **а**, **о** and **ы** are pronounced as if followed by a much-reduced **и** sound).

11 Voiced and unvoiced consonants

(1) Some consonants are pronounced with vibration of the vocal cords (‘voiced’ consonants), and others without such vibration (‘unvoiced’ consonants).

(2) There are six pairs of voiced and unvoiced equivalents:

Voiced	Unvoiced
б	п
г	к
з	с
д	т
в	ф
ж	ш

The eight other consonants include the unvoiced **ц**, **х**, **ч**, **щ** and the voiced sonants **л**, **р**, **м**, **н**.

(3) **Б**, **г**, **з**, **д**, **в**, **ж** are pronounced as their unvoiced counterparts when they appear in final position or before a final soft sign.

лоб ‘forehead’	is pronounced [lop]
луг ‘meadow’	is pronounced [luk]
раз ‘time’	is pronounced [ras]
сад ‘garden’	is pronounced [sat]
лев ‘lion’	is pronounced [lʲɛf]
муж ‘husband’	is pronounced [mʲuf]

(4) When a voiced and an unvoiced consonant appear side by side, the first assimilates to the second. Thus, voiced consonant + unvoiced

consonant are both pronounced unvoiced, while unvoiced consonant + voiced consonant are both pronounced voiced.

(i) **Voiced + unvoiced (both pronounced unvoiced)**

губка	‘sponge’	is pronounced [ˈgʊpkə]
загс	‘registry office’	is pronounced [zaks]
рэзко	‘sharply’	is pronounced [ˈrʲɛskə]
лодка	‘boat’	is pronounced [ˈlotkə]
входит	‘goes in’	is pronounced [ˈfxodʲɪt]
ложка	‘spoon’	is pronounced [ˈloʃkə]

Note

- (a) Devoicing also takes place on the boundary between preposition and noun or adjective: в комнате [ˈf komnɐtɨ] ‘in the room’, под столом [pət stɒˈlom] ‘under the table’.
- (b) The devoicing of a final consonant may in turn cause the devoicing of the consonant which precedes it: визг [visk] ‘scream’, дрозд [drost] ‘thrush’.
- (c) Г is pronounced as [x] in лёгкий ‘light, easy’, легче ‘easier’, мягкий ‘soft’ and мягче ‘softer’, as well as in Бог ‘God’ (only in the singular nominative case, however). The initial consonant in Господи! ‘Lord!’ is now usually pronounced as [g], though [h] is still heard. The noun бухгалтер ‘book-keeper’ is the only word in which хг is pronounced as [h].

(ii) **Unvoiced + voiced (both pronounced voiced)**

футбол	‘football’	is pronounced [fuˈdbol]
к дому	‘towards the house’	is pronounced [ˈgˈdomu]
просьба	‘request’	is pronounced [ˈprozʲbə]
также	‘also’	is pronounced [ˈtagʲzɨ]
машбюро	‘typing pool’	is pronounced [mazʲbuˈro]

Note

- (a) The voicing of consonants also occurs at the boundary between words, especially when the second word is a particle or other unstressed form: Я спас бы его [ˈspaz bɨ] ‘I would have saved him’. Ц is voiced as [dz] in such circumstances (Отец был дома [ɒˈtʲɛdz bɨ] ‘Father was in’) and ч as [dʒ] (дочь была [dodʒ bɨˈla] ‘the daughter was’).
- (b) В has no voicing effect on a preceding unvoiced consonant, e.g. твой [tvoj] ‘your’.

12 The pronunciation of -чн-

(1) **-чн-** is pronounced [ʃn] in certain words (конечно [кə'нʲɛʃnə] 'of course', нарочно 'on purpose', очечник 'spectacle case', прачечная 'laundry', скучно 'boring', яичница 'fried eggs'), as well as in the patronymics Ильинична 'Ilinichna', Саввична 'Savvichna' and Никитична 'Nikitichna'.

(2) However, the pronunciation [tʃn] is used in more 'learned' words such as алчный ['altʃntʃ] 'greedy', античный 'ancient' добавочный 'additional', and конечный 'ultimate'.

(3) **-чн-** is pronounced either as [ʃn] or [tʃn] in булочная 'bakery' and молочная 'dairy'. Коричневый 'brown' is pronounced with [tʃn].

Note

Ч is also pronounced [ʃ] in что 'that' and чтобы 'in order to'.

13 Consonants omitted in pronunciation

In some groups of three or more consonants one is omitted in pronunciation. Thus, the first **в** is not pronounced in здравствуйте! 'hallo!', чувство 'feeling' (however, it **is** pronounced in девственный 'virgin' and нравственный 'moral'), **д** is not pronounced in звездный 'starry', ландшафт 'landscape' поздно 'late', праздник 'festival' or сердце 'heart' (however, it **is** pronounced in бездна 'abyss'), **л** is not pronounced in солнце 'sun' (however, it **is** pronounced in солнечный 'solar') and **т** is not pronounced in грустный 'sad', известный 'well-known', лестный 'flattering', местный 'local', окрестность 'vicinity', частный 'private' and счастливый 'happy' (however, the first **т** in постлать 'to spread' **is** pronounced).

14 The pronunciation of double consonants

Double consonants are pronounced as two letters across the boundary between prefix and stem, e.g. оттащить [tt] 'to drag away'. When a double consonant appears within a stem, practice varies, cf. грамматика [m] 'grammar', группа [pp or p] 'group'. A single consonant is pronounced in final position: грамм [m] 'gram', грипп [p] 'influenza'.

15 Stress

(1) Stress in Russian is ‘free’, that is, in some words it falls on the initial syllable (дóлго ‘for a long time’), in others on a medial syllable (до́рога ‘road’) and in others on the final syllable (кара́ндаш ‘pencil’). The vowel *ë* is *always* stressed.

(2) A change in stress may indicate a change in meaning: о́рган ‘organ of the body’, оргáн ‘organ’ (musical instrument). A few words have alternative stress without a change in meaning: твoрoг (the commoner form)/твóрог ‘cottage cheese’.

(3) For stress patterns in individual parts of speech see nouns (57, 60, 62, 63 (4)), adjectives (164, 165), verbs (219, 223, 228, 232, 341, 343, 345, 350, 369) and prepositions (405).

(4) Secondary stress (a weaker stress marked here with a grave accent [`]) is found in some compounds, e.g. машíностроéние ‘engineering’ (in fast speech, however, the word is pronounced with one full stress only: машиностроéние). Secondary stress is particularly common in words with foreign prefixes (áнтикоммуни́зм ‘anti-communism’, ко́нтрмéры ‘counter-measures’, тра́нсатланти́ческий ‘transatlantic’, у́льтракорóткий ‘ultra-short’ (also in words with the prefix свèрх-: свèрхурóчные ‘overtime’), in technical terms (морóзоустóйчивый ‘frost-proof’), in compounds where there is a polysyllabic gap between the natural stresses in the components (врéмяпрепровождéние ‘pastime’) and in compounds consisting of a truncated word and a full word (гoсбюджéт (= гoсударственный бюджет) ‘state budget’). The use of secondary stresses is sometimes optional, varying with speaker and speech mode. Generally speaking, the newer a compound word is, the more likely a secondary stress (e.g. ки́ноценáрий ‘film script’). Tertiary stresses are found in some compounds: áвтомoтoклуб ‘car and motor-cycle club’.

(5) Some primary-stressed adverbs take secondary stress when used as prepositions: внyтрí/внyтрí ‘inside’, вoзле/вoзле ‘near’, вокрyг/вокрyг ‘around’, мíмо/мíмо ‘past’, oколо/oколо ‘close (to)’, пoсле/пoсле ‘after’.

Note

Stresses are marked in a Russian text only:

- (a) to resolve ambiguity, cf. Я знаю, что он говорит ‘I know that he is speaking’ and Я знаю, чтó он говорит ‘I know what he is saying’, большáя часть ‘a large part’, бoльшáя часть ‘a larger part’;

- (b) to denote archaic pronunciations (e.g. библио́тека for contemporary библиотéка ‘library’);
- (c) in rendering certain professional words, non-Russian words, dialect and slang words;
- (d) in verse, where normal stress is sometimes distorted in the interests of rhythm.

Orthography

16 Spelling rules

Spelling rule 1

ы is replaced by **и**, **я** by **а** and **ю** by **у** after **ж, ч, ш, щ** and **г, к, х**:

нога́, ‘leg’, gen. sing. **ноги́**

молча́ть, ‘to be silent’, first-person sing. **молчу́**, third-person pl.

молча́т

Note

Exceptions are found in some non-Russian words and names: брошю́ра ‘brochure’, Кызылкүм ‘Kyzylkum Desert’, Кяхта́ ‘Kyakhta’.

Spelling rule 2

о is replaced by **е** in unstressed position after **ж, ч, ш, щ, ц**:

не́мец ‘German’, instr. sing. **не́мцем**, gen. pl. **не́мцев**

Spelling rule 3

Initial **и** is replaced by **ы** following a prefix ending in a consonant:

impf. **игра́ть**/pf. **сыгра́ть** ‘to play’

интерéсный ‘interesting’, **небезынтерéсный** ‘not uninteresting’

(for exceptions see **28** (3)(c))

Spelling rule 4

The prefixes **без-/бес-**; **вз-, воз-/вс-, вос-**; **из-/ис-**; **раз-/рас-** are spelt with **з** before voiced consonants, voiced sonants or vowels and with **с** before unvoiced consonants: **беззубый** ‘toothless’ but **бесконéчный** ‘infinite’; **взлетáть** ‘to take off’ but **всходíть** ‘to rise’; **избíть** ‘to beat up’ but **испíть** ‘to sup’; **разобра́ть** ‘to dismantle’ but **расцепíть** ‘to uncouple’.

Spelling rule 5

Prefixes ending in a consonant (e.g. **под-, от-, раз-, с-**) are spelt **подо-, ото-, разо-, со-**:

- (i) In compounds of **-йти** (**подойти** ‘to approach’, **подошёл** ‘I approached’ etc.) (see **333** (2)).
- (ii) Before consonant + **ь** (**сошью** ‘I shall sew’) (see **234** (5)).
- (iii) Before certain consonant clusters (**разогнать** ‘to disperse’) (see **234** (1–4)).

Note

For spelling rules relating to prepositions see **404**.

17 Use of capital and small letters in titles and names

(1) In the names or titles of most posts, institutions, organizations, books, newspapers and journals, wars, festivals etc., *only the first word* is spelt with a capital letter: Всемирная федерация профсоюзов ‘World Federation of Trade Unions’, Европейский союз ‘European Union’, Министер́ство транспорта ‘Ministry of Transport’, Московский государственный университет ‘Moscow State University’, Политехни́ческий музéй ‘Polytechnical Museum’, Росси́йская акаде́мия нау́к ‘Russian Academy of Sciences’, Тверско́й муниципáльный суд ‘Tver Municipal Court’, Художественный теа́тр ‘Arts Theatre’, «*Война́ и мир*» ‘*War and Peace*’, *Нью-Йорк таймс* ‘*New York Times*’, Семилéтняя война́ ‘Seven Years’ War’ (but Вели́кая Оте́чественная война́ ‘Great Patriotic War’), Но́вый год ‘New Year’, Пёрвое ма́я ‘May Day’, Но́белевская прéмия ‘Nobel Prize’.

Note

Any word spelt with a capital letter in its own right retains the capital in extended titles: Государственный академиче́ский **Бо́льшой** теа́тр ‘The State Academic Bolshoi Theatre’.

(2) In geographical names, the names of administrative areas, local features and so on, the generic terms are spelt with a *small* letter and the descriptive words with a *capital*: о́зеро Байка́л ‘Lake Baikal’, Бе́лое мо́ре ‘the White Sea’, пу́стыня Го́би ‘the Gobi Desert’, мыс До́брой Наде́жды ‘the Cape of Good Hope’, трóпик Ра́ка ‘the Tropic of Cancer’, Се́верный Ледови́тый океа́н ‘the Arctic Ocean’, полу́остров

Таймы́р ‘the Taimyr Peninsula’, Ю́жный по́люс ‘the South Pole’, Тверска́я у́лица ‘Tverskaya Street’, Зи́мний дво́рец ‘the Winter Palace’, Исаа́киевский собо́р ‘St Isaac’s Cathedral’, Кра́сная пло́щадь ‘Red Square’, Ми́нский автомо́бильный заво́д ‘Minsk Car Factory’.

Note

Generic terms are spelt with a *capital* letter, however, if used in a non-literal sense: Зо́лотой Ро́г ‘the Golden Horn’ (a bay), О́гненная Зе́мля ‘Tierra del Fuego’ (an archipelago).

(3) Some titles consist of words, all of which have *capital* letters. These include the names of exalted governmental institutions and organizations, as well as a number of international bodies (and certain geographical names, e.g. Бе́лый Ни́л ‘the White Nile’, Да́льний Восто́к ‘the Far East’, Но́вая Зе́мля ‘Novaya Zemlya’): Генера́льная Ассамбле́я ОО́Н ‘the General Assembly of the UNO’, Междунаро́дный Кра́сный Крест ‘the International Red Cross’, Со́вет Федера́ции ‘the Council of the Federation’, including, as a rule, the names of states: Объединённые Ара́бские Эмира́ты ‘the United Arab Emirates’, Респу́блика Тата́рста́н ‘the Republic of Tatarstan’, Росси́йская Федера́ция ‘the Russian Federation’, Со́ветский Сою́з ‘the Soviet Union’, Соеди́ненное Коро́левство ‘the United Kingdom’, Соеди́ненные Шта́ты Аме́рики ‘the United States of America’.

Note

- (a) Госуда́рственная ду́ма *or* Госуда́рственная Ду́ма ‘the State Duma’
- (b) Па́ртия ‘party’ is not usually spelt with a capital letter: Коммунисти́ческая па́ртия Росси́йской Федера́ции [КПРФ] ‘Communist Party of the Russian Federation’, Либе́ра́льно-демократи́ческая па́ртия Росси́и [ЛДПР] ‘the Russian Liberal Democratic Party’.

(4) Unofficial titles, the names of foreign parliaments and some other titles consist of words, all of which are spelt with a *small* letter: моско́вский аэропо́рт ‘Moscow Airport’ (cf. official titles, now also used colloquially, e.g. аэропо́рт Вну́ково ‘Vnukovo Airport’), па́ртия большеви́ков ‘the Bolshevik Party’ (cf. official Росси́йская соци́ал-демократи́ческая рабо́чая па́ртия (большеви́ков) ‘Russian Social Democratic Workers’ Party (of Bolsheviks)’), пала́та о́бщин ‘House of Commons’, бундеста́г ‘the Bundestag’, сейм ‘the Sejm’.

(5) Nouns denoting nationality, town of origin etc., are also spelt with a *small* letter (англича́нин ‘Englishman’, москв́ич ‘Muscovite’), as are

the corresponding adjectives (английский ‘English’, москóвский ‘Moscow’), except where they form part of a title (Английский банк ‘the Bank of England’, Москóвский цирк ‘Moscow Circus’). This principle is also applied to the names of months, thus март ‘March’, октя́брь ‘October’, октя́брьский ‘October’ (adj.), but 8 Ма́рта ‘8 March’ (International Women’s Day), Октя́брь/Октя́брьская револю́ция ‘the October Revolution’; and to days of the week, thus пя́тница ‘Friday’, but Страстна́я Пя́тница ‘Good Friday’.

(6) The words земл́я ‘land’, луна́ ‘moon’, со́лнце ‘sun’ are spelt with capitals when they denote heavenly bodies: Земл́я ‘the Earth’, Лунá ‘the Moon’, Солнце ‘the Sun’.

(7) (i) Names of deities are spelt with capital letters: Аллáх ‘Allah’, Бог ‘God’, Бра́хма ‘Brahma’, Шй́ва ‘Shiva’.

Note

Of heathen gods, one of a number of gods, or figuratively, бог is spelt with a *small* letter: бог Аполло́н ‘the god Apollo’, бо́же мой! ‘my God!’ In certain contexts, however, a capital is possible:

“Как хорошо́ – сказа́ла жена́, ме́дленно натягивая на себя́ шёлковое одея́ло. – Сла́ва Бо́гу, сла́ва Бо́гу . . .” (Nabokov) ‘That is good’, said his wife, slowly drawing a silken blanket about her. ‘Thank God, thank God . . .’

(ii) Capitals are also used for religious festivals: Па́сха ‘Easter’, Рожде́ство ‘Christmas’, holders of exalted ecclesiastical offices: Святе́йший Патриа́рх Москóвский и всея́ Руси́ ‘His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia’, Па́па Ри́мский ‘The Pope’, and sacred texts: Би́блия ‘the Bible’, Корáн ‘the Koran’, То́ра ‘the Torah’, Талму́д ‘the Talmud’, Ве́ды ‘the Vedas’.

Division of Words

18 Division into syllables

(1) Each syllable in a Russian word contains a vowel and, in most cases, consonants peripheral to it, e.g. па́спорт.

(2) Russian distinguishes ‘open’ syllables, which end in a vowel (го-ло-ва́) from ‘closed’ syllables, which end in a consonant (нос).

(3) The principles of syllabic division are different in English and Russian, cf. E doc-tor/R до-ктор, E her-o/R ге-ро́й. Russian non-initial syllables are formed on the basis of an ascending level of ‘sonority’, vowels being the most sonorous letters, the voiced sonants (**р, л, м, н**) the next most sonorous and noise-consonants (the other sixteen consonants) the least sonorous.

(4) In practice, this means that the **syllable boundary** occurs either:

(i) **between a vowel and a following consonant:** со-ло́-ма, сте-пной, ка́-ска, ко-стю́м, ста-ле-ва́р, стра-на́, о-тбро́-силь, вра-жда́ etc.;

or:

(ii) **between a sonant and a following consonant** (including another sonant): су́м-ка, кон-ве́рт, боль-шой, ка́р-та, вол-на́, че́р-ный, кар-ма́н.

Note

Non-initial syllables cannot begin with the sequence sonant + noise-consonant (this sequence is possible, however, in an *initial* syllable, e.g. **мшй-стый**). Note, however, the sequences sonant + sonant (**во-льный**), consonant + consonant (**ме-сто**) and noise-consonant + sonant (**ме-тла́**). The syllabic boundary may occur *before* or *between* two sonants (**ка-рма́н** or **кар-ма́н**, **во-лна́** or **вол-на́**).

Syllabic division in a text

Я встал и на-де́л паль-то́. Же-на́ ре-ши́-ла, что я по-ше́л за си-га-ре́-та-ми, и ве-ле́-ла не су-ту́-ли-ться при хо-дье́. О-на́ ска-за́-ла, что ко-гда́ я хо-жу́, то ны-ря́-ю вниз го-ло-во́й, как при-стяж-на́-я ло́-шадь. Е-щё о-на́ ска-за́-ла, что я всё вре́-мя смо-трю́ вниз, бу́-дто хо-чу́ най-ти́ на а-сфа́ль-те мо-не́-тку (Tokareva).

19 Splitting a word at the end of a line

(1) Two basic criteria are observed in splitting a word at the end of a line:

(i) Syllabic division: **го-ловá** or **голо-ва́**.

(ii) Word structure: it is desirable, for example, not to disrupt monosyllabic prefixes etc. (**под-бежа́ть, со-гласе́н**) (cf. **пе-рево́д** and note that the rule does not apply when a prefix is no longer perceived as such: **ра́-зум, разо-ря́ть**).

(2) A word is normally split **after a vowel**: го́-род, го́-лоден or го́ло-ден, ребя́-та or ре-бя́та. Sometimes this involves splitting a two-vowel sequence: **чита́-ете**.

(3) A sequence of **two or more consonants** may also be split: ме́д-ленно, ро́д-ственники, проб-ле́ма, и́стин-ный etc.

(4) Other conventions include the following:

(i) A hard or soft sign must not be separated from the preceding consonant (**подь-э́зд, боль-шо́й**) and **й** must not be separated from the preceding vowel (**вой-на́**).

(ii) A single vowel should not appear at the end of a line or be carried over onto the next: **аги-та́ция** (*not* *а-гита́ция or *агита́ци-я).

(iii) Two identical consonants appearing between vowels should be split: **жуж-жа́ть, ма́с-са, ко́н-ный**.

(iv) A monosyllabic component of a stump compound should not be split (**спе́цде́жда**); nor should abbreviations (**ОО́Н, и т.д.**).

(5) Some words can be split in different ways, e.g. **се-стра́, сес-тра́** or **сест-ра́**.

Punctuation

20 Introductory comments

Rules of punctuation are, in general, more rigorously applied in Russian than in English. Differences of usage between the two languages relate in particular to the comma (especially in separating principal from subordinate clauses), the dash and the punctuation of direct speech.

21 The full stop, exclamation mark and question mark

Usage of the full stop, exclamation mark and question mark is comparable in the two languages:

Лю́ди и́щут сча́стья в любви́.
Кака́я прекра́сная пого́да!
Куда́ вы иде́те?

People seek happiness in love.
What magnificent weather!
Where are you going?

Note

- (a) There is a tendency to use exclamation marks more frequently in Russian than in English.
- (b) An exclamation mark may appear in the middle of a sentence: Так мне бЫло плóхо, так гóрько и постЫло! — хýже всякой болéзни (Rasputin) ‘I felt so bad, so bitter and wretched! — it was worse than any illness’.
- (c) Exclamation marks are also used in commands expressed other than by a grammatical imperative: Молчáть! ‘Shut up!’, За мной! ‘Follow me!’, Встáли! ‘On your feet!’.
- (d) An exclamation mark enclosed in parentheses (!) may be used to indicate irony or indignation.
- (e) Exclamation and question marks may appear together for special emphasis: Да что же это такóе?! ‘Now what’s all this?!’.

22 The comma: introductory comments

The comma is more frequently used in Russian than in English. In extreme examples a series of commas in a Russian sentence may have no English equivalents at all:

Мака́ренко пи́шет, что де́ти, кото́рые уме́ют труди́ться, уважа́ют труд дру́гих люде́й, стремя́тся прийт́и на по́мощь тем, кто в э́той по́мощи нужда́ется (Belyakova)

Makarenko writes that children who know how to work respect the labour of other people and strive to come to the assistance of those who need it

23 Uses of the comma

Correspondence with English usage

Commas are used, in Russian *and* English, to perform the following functions:

(1) To separate

(i) **two or more adjectives** which define one noun:

Он шéл по тёмной, грязной, шумной улице
He was walking down the dark, dirty, noisy street

(ii) **two or more adverbs** qualifying one verb:

Медленно, мучительно он встал с постели
Slowly, painfully he rose from the bed

- (2) To separate **items in a list**:

Плата за **квартиру, электричество, газ** составляет около 20 рублей
(Belyakova)
The rent, electricity and gas bills amount to about 20 roubles

- (3) To mark off words and phrases which stand **in apposition**:

Валентина Терешкова, рабочая девочка из старинного текстильного городка, стала первой женщиной-космонавтом
Valentina Tereshkova, a working girl from an ancient textile town, became the first woman in space

- (4) To mark off words which serve to **define and specify**:

Здание детского сада двухэтажное, **с большими светлыми окнами, с верандами для дневного сна** (Belyakova)
The building of the kindergarten is two-storey, with large light windows and verandas for a daytime nap

- (5) After **да** 'yes' and **нет** 'no':

Да, я согласен с вами/**Нет**, я не согласен
Yes, I agree with you/No, I don't agree

- (6) In **addressing people**:

Здравствуйте, Иван Иванович!
Hallo, Ivan Ivanovich!

- (7) After **interjections**:

— **Ой**, как неудачно. Вчера упал или сегодня? (Rasputin)
'Oh, what bad luck. Did you fall over yesterday or today?'

- (8) Between **repeated words**:

Ничего, ничего, утешал он себя, самое трудное позади (Abramov)
Never mind, never mind, he consoled himself, the worst is over

- (9) To mark off **participial phrases**:

По равнине, **освещённой поздним солнцем**, скакал табун диких лошадей
Over the plain, (which was) illuminated by the late sun, galloped a herd of wild horses

(10) To mark off **gerundial phrases**:

Я молчал, **не зная**, что делать (Rasputin)
I was silent, not knowing what to do

Note

In English, ‘and’ is often used as an alternative to a comma before the final element in enumerations and when two or more adjectives qualify a single noun or two adverbs a single verb (cf. (1) and (2) above).

Differences in usage between Russian and English

Russian *requires* the use of a comma in the following contexts, where usage in English is optional or inconsistent:

- (1) Between clauses linked by **co-ordinating conjunctions** (see **454** (2) (i) and **455–457**):

Оля знает буквы, **но** я пока помогаю ей читать (Belyakova)
Olya knows the letters, but for the time being I help her to read

Note

- (a) While a comma *always* appears before **но** (except when it is the first word in a sentence), the insertion of a comma before English ‘but’ depends largely on the length of the pause required by the context, cf. ‘He is young but experienced’ and ‘He is young, but everyone trusts him’.
- (b) A comma is used between clauses linked by **и** if the clauses have different subjects (Но волк был мёртв, **и** его сейчас никто не боялся (Abramov) ‘But the wolf was dead, and no one was afraid of him any more’), but not if they have the same subject (Разожгли костёр **и** сварили грибной суп (Belyakova) ‘They lit a fire and made mushroom soup’). In such contexts **и** may be replaced by a comma: Два дня он **не пил, не ел** (= не пил **и** не ел) (Abramov) ‘For two days he did not drink or eat’.
- (2) Between clauses linked by the conjunctions **и . . . и** ‘both . . . and’, **ни . . . ни** ‘neither . . . nor’, **или . . . или** ‘either . . . or’, **то . . . то** ‘now . . . now’:

На вѣчере выступали **и** мальчики, **и** девочки
Both boys and girls performed at the party

Нельзя **ни** спокойно почитать, **ни** сосредоточиться (Belyakova)
You can neither do a little quiet reading, nor concentrate

Это **или** собака, **или** волк
That is either a dog or a wolf

Она **то** смеётся, **то** плачет
Now she laughs, now she weeps

(3) Between a **principal** and a **subordinate clause** (see 458–467):

Я знаю, **что** конец будет не скоро
I know the end is still some way off

Мы не отдавали детей в ясли, **хотя** такая возможность была
(Belyakova)
We didn't put the children into a day-nursery, even though we had the opportunity to do so

Денис стал с нетерпением ждать лета, **чтобы** поехать с бабушкой к Чёрному морю
Denis waited impatiently for the summer, in order to go with his grandmother to the Black Sea

Он работал бы, **если бы** мог
He would work if he could

Она уходит, **потому что** она опаздывает
She is leaving because she is late

Note

The appearance of a comma between **потому** and **что** in Мы победим потому, что мы сильнее throws the element of cause into sharper relief: 'We shall win because we are stronger' (i.e. and for no other reason). This effect can be intensified by distancing **потому** from **что** (**Потому** мы победим, **что** мы сильнее), or by the addition of **лишь**, **только** or other intensifying words before **потому**.

(4) To separate **main from relative clauses** (see 123):

Я посещал город, **в котором (где)** провёл детство
I was visiting the town in which (where) I had spent my childhood

Note

English distinguishes *relative* clauses (which are marked off by commas) — 'Cats (i.e. *all* cats), who have excellent night vision, are nocturnal predators' — from *adjective* clauses (which are *not* marked off by commas): 'Cats (i.e. only *those* cats) who have no tails are called Manx cats'. In Russian, however, both types of clause are marked off with commas.

(5) To mark off **parenthetical words**:

во-первых/во-вторых in the first place/in the second place
допустим let us assume напpимёр for example

ка́жется	it seems	пожа́луйста	please
конечно́	of course	по-мо́ему	in my opinion
к сожа́лению	unfortunately	ска́жем	let us say
ме́жду про́чим	incidentally	с одно́й, друго́й	on the one, the
мо́жет быть	perhaps	сторон́ы	other hand
наве́рное	probably		

Он, **должно́ быть**, ушёл
He must have left

Нам, **конечно́**, удо́бнее, что де́ти сидят ти́хо (Belyakova)
Of course, it's more convenient for us if the children are sitting quietly

Не спорь, **пожа́луйста**, со мной, я знаю́ (Rasputin)
Please don't argue with me, I know best

Он сказа́л, что, **к сожа́лению**, нам придётся идти́ без него́
He said that unfortunately we would have to go without him

(6) In **comparisons**:

Он ла́зит по дере́вьям, **как обезья́на**
He scrambles about in the trees like a monkey

Кто́-то научи́л своего́ малы́ша пла́вать **ра́ньше, чем** тот стал
ходи́ть (Belyakova)
Someone taught his baby to swim before he could walk

Он спал беспробу́дным сном, **бу́дто** его́ ничто́ не трево́жило
He was sound asleep, as though without a care in the world

24 The colon. The semicolon. The dash

The colon.

The colon is used to perform the following functions:

(1) To **introduce a list**, in which case the colon is usually preceded by a generic term:

Моя́ семья́ состои́т из четырёх челове́к: **мой муж Ви́ктор, дво́е дете́й и я** (Belyakova)
My family consists of four people: my husband Victor, the two children and myself

(2) To introduce a statement which **elaborates on, supplements or indicates the cause** of the statement which precedes the colon:

И тут их ожида́ла но́вая беда́: **оте́ц пропа́л** (Abramov)
And now a new misfortune awaited them: father had disappeared

В нау́ке всегда́ должна́ быть то́чность: **ка́ждому нау́чному те́рмину должно́ соответствовать о́дно понятие́** (Vvedenskaya)
There should always be accuracy in science: a single concept should correspond to each scientific term

У́тром я со стра́хом смотре́л на себя́ в зе́ркало: **нос вспух, под ле́вым гла́зом синя́к** (Rasputin)
In the morning I gazed at myself in the mirror in horror: my nose had swollen up, there was a bruise under my left eye

(3) To **introduce direct speech, thought or other communication**:

В кинофи́льме «Дожи́вём до понеде́льника» подро́сток пи́шет: **«Сча́стье — это когда́ тебя́ понима́ют!»** (Kovaleva)
In the film *We'll survive till Monday* a teenager writes, 'Happiness is when people understand you!'

(4) To introduce a **quotation**:

По́мните, в «Евге́нии Оне́гине»:
Привы́чка свы́ше нам дана́:
Замена́ сча́стию она́
Do you remember, in *Evgenii Onegin*:
Habit is granted us from on high:
It is a substitute for happiness

The semicolon

The semicolon is used to **separate extensive clauses** which are **not linked by conjunctions**, especially if each clause is itself broken up by commas:

В Ленингра́де все хотя́т посмотре́ть на легендарную «Аврору», побыва́ть в пушкинских места́х, в многочисленных дворца́х; в Улья́новске познако́миться с места́ми, где жил и учи́лся В. И. Ле́нин; в На́бережных Челна́х проеха́ть по о́гро́мному молодóму го́роду, посмотре́ть КамАЗ (Vvedenskaya)
In Leningrad everyone wants to see the legendary 'Aurora', visit places associated with Pushkin, the numerous palaces; in Ulyanovsk to get to know the places where V. I. Lenin lived and worked; and in

Naberezhnye Chelny to drive through the enormous new town, see the Kamaz truck factory

Note

In 1991 Ленинград ‘Leningrad’ reverted to Санкт-Петербург ‘St Petersburg’ and Ульяновск ‘Ulyanovsk’ to Симбирск ‘Simbirsk’.

The dash

The dash is extremely widespread in Russian. It not only has a number of specific uses of its own but in some contexts substitutes for other punctuation marks, in particular the comma, the colon and parentheses.

(1) Specific uses of the dash.

(i) It separates **subject noun** from **predicate noun**, replacing the verb ‘to be’:

Мой отец — преподаватель вуза, а мама — врач (Belyakova)
My father is a college lecturer, and my mother is a doctor

Самое глубокое озеро мира — это пресноводный красавец Байкал (Vvedenskaya)
The deepest lake in the world is the beautiful fresh-water Lake Baikal

Note

(a) The subject may sometimes be an **infinitive**:

Самое тяжёлое при прощании — не оглядываться (Ogonek)
The hardest thing on parting is not to look back

(b) The dash is not normally used to replace the verb ‘to be’ when the subject is a pronoun: Он водолаз ‘He is a diver’.

(ii) In elliptical statements it replaces a word, usually a verb, which is ‘understood’:

Студент смотрел на профессора, профессор — на студента (Shukshin)
The student was looking at the professor, and the professor (was looking) at the student

(2) The dash is also used as a substitute for:

(i) The comma (when, for example, introducing an unexpected turn of events or sharp contrast):

Она сделала ещё попытку посадить меня за стол — **напрáсно** (=, **но напрáсно**) (Rasputin)
She made another attempt to seat me at the table, but in vain

Note

Generally speaking, the dash indicates a *more pronounced pause* than the comma, for example, in expressing apposition: Со мной был грузинский чай — моё единственное удовóльствие (=, моё единственное удовóльствие) ‘I had with me some Georgian tea, my only pleasure’.

(ii) The colon:

(a) in introducing an **enumeration**, following a generic term:

Иногда клуб приглашает гостей — **учёных, педагогов, врачей** (Belyakova)
Sometimes the club invites guests — scientists, teachers and doctors

(b) in **elucidating** a statement:

В Таджикистане гражданская война — бегут в Россию таджики. (Solzhenitsyn)
There is a civil war in Tadjikistan, (and so) Tadjiks flee into Russia.

(iii) Parentheses:

На территории Российской Федерации — **не забывайте о том, что она занимает одну седьмую часть всей суши Земли!** — тысячи рек и ручьёв
On the territory of the Russian Federation (do not forget that it occupies one-seventh of the Earth’s surface!) there are thousands of rivers and streams

25 The punctuation of direct speech

(1) If the introductory verb *precedes* the direct speech, the verb is followed by a *colon*, and the direct speech *either*

(i) appears on a new line, preceded by a *dash*:

Я промямлил:
— **Правда** (Rasputin)
‘It is true’, I mumbled

(ii) *or* runs on after the colon and is enclosed in *guillemets* (« »):

Сам хозяин рáза два кричáл с крыльцá «Эй, кто там?»
 The master himself shouted a couple of times from the porch,
 ‘Hey, who’s there?’

(2) If, however, the verb *follows* the direct speech, the latter is flanked by *dashes*:

— Уснул, — услужливо отвéтила Сима (Rasputin)
 ‘He’s fallen asleep’, answered Sima obligingly

(3) A **conversation** may be rendered as follows:

— Я знаю, почему ты все ещё живёшь со мной. Сказать?
 — Ну, почему?
 — Да просто лень тебе купить раскладушку. (S. Dovlatov)
 ‘I know why you still live with me. Shall I tell you?’
 ‘Well, why?’
 ‘You’re just too lazy to buy a camp bed.’

Note

- (a) A full stop, comma, semicolon or dash *follow* inverted commas.
 (b) Quotes within quotes may be distinguished as follows:
 «Крэйсер “Аврора” стоял на якорé» ‘The cruiser “Aurora”
 lay at anchor’.
 (c) In cursive script, inverted commas are rendered as follows: «Привéт!»
 ‘Greetings!’

26 Suspension points (многоточие)

Suspension points (. . .) indicate one of the following.

(1) **Hesitation:**

— Пройгрываешь, навёрное?
 — Нет, **вы . . . выигрываю** (Rasputin)
 ‘I suppose you lose?’
 ‘No, I – I win’

(2) An **unfinished statement:**

Знать бы нам, чем ёто всё кóнчится . . . (Rasputin)
 Had we but known how it would all end . . .

The Noun

Word Formation

27 Word formation in the noun I: general

(1) Nouns in Russian may be basic irreducible stems (e.g. **лес** 'forest') or form the basis of compound nouns (e.g. **лесору́б** 'wood cutter'). Compounding takes a number of different forms, involving *initial* components which may be the stems of:

- (i) nouns: **ледоко́л** 'ice-breaker' (**ле́д** 'ice', **ко́лоть** 'to split')
- (ii) adjectives: **чернозём** 'black earth' (**чёрный** 'black', **земля́** 'earth')
- (iii) numerals: **двуо́кись** 'dioxide' (**дву-** 'two', **о́кись** 'oxide')
- (iv) adverbs: **грёмкоговори́тель** 'loud speaker' (**грёмко** 'loudly', **говори́ть** 'to speak');

and *second* components which may be:

- (i) nouns: **тяжелове́с** 'heavy weight' (**тяжё́лый** 'heavy', **вес** 'weight')
- (ii) of verbal origin: **сенокóс** 'haymaking' (**се́но** 'hay', **ко́сить** 'to mow').

Note

- (a) Compounds may also be based on phrases: **иноплане́тjанин** 'extra-terrestrial' (cf. **и́ная пла́не́та** 'another planet'), **однофа́ми́лец** 'namesake' (cf. **о́дна фа́ми́лия** 'the same name');

(b) The components of a compound are usually linked by the infixes **-о-**: **снегопад** ‘snow fall’, **машинопись** ‘typing’, **самолёт** ‘aeroplane’, or (where the stem of the first component ends in a soft consonant or in **ж, ч, ш, щ** or **ц**) **-е-**: **общежитие** ‘hostel’, **овцевод** ‘sheep-breeder’, **пулемёт** ‘machinegun’ (cf. **пуля** ‘bullet’), **сталевар** ‘steel founder’ (cf. **сталь** ‘steel’), **пешеход** ‘pedestrian’. However, **-о-** sometimes appears as an ‘illogical’ link-vowel when the stem of the first component of a compound ends in soft **в** (e.g. **кровообращение** ‘circulation of the blood’, cf. **кровь** ‘blood’), soft **н** (e.g. **баснописец** ‘fabulist’, cf. **басня** ‘fable’), soft **р** (**зверолов** ‘trapper’, cf. **зверь** ‘animal’), or soft **т** (**честолюбие** ‘ambition’, cf. **честь** ‘honour’).

(2) A group of compounds with second components that denote persons or places is particularly common. Some of the elements are indigenous: **-вед**, as in **литературовед** ‘literature specialist’, **-вод**, as in **скотовод** ‘stock-breeder’, others international: **-граф**, as in **географ** ‘geographer’, **-дром**, as in **дельтадром** ‘hang-glider launch site’, **-лог**, as in **биолог** ‘biologist’, **-ман**, as in **балетоман** ‘balletomane’, **-тека**, as in **фонотека** ‘sound library’, **-фил**, as in **славянофил** ‘Slavophile’, **-фоб**, as in **англофоб** ‘Anglophobe’.

(3) While most second components in compounds tend to be truncated forms: **водопад** ‘waterfall’, **паровоз** ‘steam engine’, **пчеловод** ‘apiarist’, etc., some are suffixed: **монеторазмѣник** ‘change machine’, **пивоварня** ‘brewery’, **работоспособность** ‘efficiency’, **судостроение** ‘ship-building’.

(4) The relationships between initial and second components may be as follows:

(i) the first component may denote the object of the second: **бензовоз** ‘petrol tanker’ (cf. **возить бензѣн** ‘to transport petrol’), **книголюб** ‘book lover’, **нефтепровод** ‘oil pipeline’, **пылесос** ‘vacuum cleaner’;

(ii) the second component may denote an object designed for the first: **бензобак** ‘petrol tank’ (cf. **бак для бензѣна** ‘tank for petrol’), **детсад** ‘kindergarten’;

(iii) the action denoted by the second component may be performed in or over the area designated by the first: **вездеход** ‘cross country vehicle’ (cf. **ходить вездѣ** ‘to go everywhere’), **домосѣд** ‘stay-at-home’, **мореплыватель** ‘seafarer’;

(iv) the first component may qualify the second: **новострóйка** ‘new building’ (cf. нóвая стрóйка ‘new building’), **общежítие** ‘hostel’, **пятибóрье** ‘pentathlon’;

(v) the first component may denote the means by which the second is accomplished: **вертолёт** ‘helicopter’ (cf. вертёт(ь)ся ‘to rotate’, лёт ‘flight’), **газосвáрщик** ‘gas welder’, **парохóд** ‘steamer’.

Note

For the formation of compound *abbreviations*, see **39** (acronyms), **40** (alphabetisms), **41** (stump compounds), **42** (compound hyphenated nouns).

28 Word formation in the noun II: prefixation

(1) Prefixes, while fewer in number than suffixes, effect more radical change than suffixes are capable of. Thus, in the word **бесконфлiктность** ‘absence of conflict’ the suffix **-ость** merely denotes the abstract nature of the noun, while the prefix **бес-** fulfils a semantic role in denoting the absence of the quality denoted by the root noun (**конфлiкт** ‘conflict’).

(2) The following prefixes used with nouns are also commonly used with verbs (for the full range of their meanings, see sections **254** and **331**; for spelling rules see **16**, rules 3–5):

в- ‘into’:	вложéние ‘investment’
вз-/вс- ‘upwards’:	взлёт ‘take-off’
воз-/вос- (i) ‘upwards’:	восхóд сóлнца ‘sun-rise’
(ii) ‘re-’:	воссоединéние ‘reunification’
вы- ‘outwards’:	вýпуск ‘output’
до- ‘addition’:	дополнéние ‘supplementation’
за- (i) ‘beyond’:	зарубéжье ‘foreign countries’
(ii) ‘closing’:	закрýтие ‘closure’
из-/ис- ‘ex-, out’:	исклóчение ‘expulsion’
на- (i) ‘on, onto’:	наýшник ‘earphone’
(ii) ‘quantity’:	надóй ‘milk yield’
над- ‘above’:	надсмóтрщик ‘supervisor’
недо- ‘shortfall’:	недооцéнка ‘underestimate’
о-/об- (i) ‘encompassing’:	охвát ‘scope, range’
(ii) ‘avoidance’:	объезд ‘detour’
от- ‘away from’:	отъезд ‘departure’
пере- (i) ‘across’:	перехóд ‘crossing’

(ii) 'repeat':	переигрѳвка 'replay'
под- (i) 'support':	подсвѳчник 'candle-stick'
(ii) 'sham':	поддѳлка 'forgery'
пре- (i) 'trans-':	преобразѳвание 'transformation'
(ii) 'excess':	преувеличѳние 'exaggeration'
пред- 'pre-':	предыстѳрия 'pre-history'
при- (i) 'arrival, joining':	приземлѳние 'landing'
(ii) 'attachment':	приложѳние 'magazine supplement'
про- 'through, past':	прѳпуск 'pass'
раз-/рас- (i) 'spread':	распространѳние 'dissemination'
(ii) 'reversal':	разрѳдка 'dѳtente'
с- (i) 'together':	съезд 'congress'
(ii) 'down':	спуск 'descent'
у- 'away':	увольнѳние 'dismissal'.

(3) A further set of prefixes are used mainly with nouns, in some cases adjectives, and a few also with verbs (e.g. **без-/бес-**, **де-**, **дис-**, **ре-**). Many are loan prefixes and combine mostly with foreign roots, while some (**без-**, **между-**, **не-**, **по-**, **под-**, **пра-**, **пред-**, **само-**, **свѳрх-**, **после-**, **противо-**, **чрез-/чрес-**) are indigenous.

а- 'devoid of':	алогичность 'illogicality'
анти- 'opposed to':	антирѳночник 'opponent of a market economy'
архи- 'extreme':	архиплѳт 'arch villain'
без-/бес- 'deprived of':	бессѳница 'insomnia'
вице- 'deputizing for':	вицепредседѳтель 'vice-chairman'
гипер- 'extreme':	гиперинфляция 'hyper-inflation'
де- 'reversal':	децентрализация 'decentralization'
дез- 'removal':	дезодорѳнт 'deodorant'
дис- 'deprived of':	дисквалификация 'disqualification'
интер- 'international':	интердѳвочка 'hard-currency prostitute'
квѳзи- 'quasi-':	квѳзидемократия 'quasi-democracy'
кѳнтр- 'counter to':	кѳнтрразвѳдка 'counter-espionage'
между- 'intermediate':	междущѳрствие 'interregnum'
микрѳ- 'small':	микрѳорганизм 'micro-organism'
не- 'negation of':	нераспространѳние 'non-proliferation'
неѳ- 'revived':	неѳокапитализм 'neo-capitalism'
по- 'along':	пограничник 'frontier guard'
под (i) 'subordinate to':	подвид 'sub-species'
(ii) 'proximity':	Подмоскѳвье 'Moscow region'
после- 'following':	послеслѳвие 'epilogue'
пѳст- 'subsequent':	пѳстмѳдернизм 'post-Modernism'

пра- ‘great’ (in relationships)	прабабушка: ‘great-grandmother’
преди- ‘preceding’:	предислoвие ‘foreword’
про- (i) ‘supportive of’:	проамерикáнец ‘pro-American’
(ii) ‘deputizing for’:	прорéктор ‘vice-principal’
противо- ‘opposed to’:	противорéчие ‘contradiction’
псèвдо- ‘sham’:	псèвдoдемократия ‘pseudo-democracy’
ре- ‘re-’:	рèинтеграция ‘reintegration’
само- ‘self’:	самообслóживание ‘self-service’
свèрх- ‘extreme’:	свèрхдержáва ‘super-power’
суб- ‘subordinate’:	субпoдряд ‘subcontract’
супер- ‘extreme’:	суперзвездá ‘super-star’
ультра- ‘extreme’:	ультрареакционёр ‘ultrareactionary’
чрез-/чрес- ‘excessive’:	чрезмèрность ‘excessiveness’
экс- ‘former’:	экс-премьёр ‘the former premier’
	экс-вúце-президент ‘the former vice-president’
экстра- ‘beyond’:	экстрасéнс ‘psychic’.

Note

(a) A number of prefixes fall into definable categories:

(i) excess (**архи-, гипер-, свèрх-, супер-, чрез-**);

(ii) negation (**а-, без-, де-, дез-, дис-, не-**);

(iii) time (**нèо-, после-, пòст-, преди-, ре-, экс-**);

(iv) opposition/support (**анти-, кòнтр-, про-, противо-**);

(v) sham (**квáзи-, псèвдо-**).

(b) in some cases a prefixed word has been borrowed virtually in its entirety (e.g. **анемия** ‘anaemia’) and should thus be regarded as a non-derivative stem in Russian.

(c) spelling rule **16** (3), in accordance with which initial **и** is replaced by **ы** following a prefix ending in a consonant, does not apply to the loan prefixes **гипер-, дез-, пòст-, суб-, супер-** (thus **дезинформация** ‘misinformation’, etc.).

29 Word formation in the noun III: suffixation.

Introductory remarks

(i) Noun suffixes number over one hundred and play a fundamental role in the creation of nouns. Suffixed nouns may derive from verbs:

стрельба́ ‘shooting’ from **стреля́ть** ‘to shoot’; adjectives: **ма́льш** ‘child, small boy’ from **ма́лый** ‘small’; other nouns: **рыба́к** ‘fisherman’ from **ры́ба** ‘fish’; prepositions: **преди́к** ‘ancestor’ from **перед/пред** ‘before’; numerals: **тро́йка** ‘troika’ from **трёе** ‘three’; adverbs: **почему́чка** ‘inquisitive child’ from **почему́?** ‘why?’.

(ii) While little or no guidance can be offered on the selection of suffixes to convey particular meanings, familiarity with the range of suffixes available within each field of meaning can be beneficial.

(iii) Many loan suffixes are components of nouns that have been borrowed virtually in their entirety:

- аж** as in **тонна́ж** ‘tonnage’
- ант** as in **дилетта́нт** ‘dilettante’
- арий** as in **планета́рий** ‘planetarium’
- ат** as in **электора́т** ‘electorate’
- ент** as in **аге́нт** ‘agent’,
- ер** as in **тре́нер** ‘trainer’
- есса** as in **поэте́сса** ‘poetess’
- и́ада** as in **олимпи́ада** ‘Olympiad’
- изм** as in **социа́лизм** ‘socialism’
- ик** as in **диабети́к** ‘diabetic’
- ир** as in **банка́ир** ‘banker’
- иса** as in **актри́са** ‘actress’
- ист** as in **коммуни́ст** ‘communist’
- ит** as in **артри́т** ‘arthritis’
- итет** as in **приоритэ́т** ‘priority’
- ор** as in **агрессо́р** ‘aggressor’.
- тор** as in **авиато́р** ‘aviator’

Note

Some of the compounds are based on Russian stems: **ельцини́ст** ‘Yeltsin supporter’, **трудого́лизм** ‘workaholism’, in which case the suffixes (here, **-ист**, **-изм**) can be identified as separate formants.

(iv) Other suffixes cover broad categories of meaning (the most characteristic suffixes are listed here for each category; a full list appears under (vi), below, which enumerates fifty-two suffixes with their meanings):

(a) Abstract meanings (attitudes, feelings, qualities):

- ба**, **-ие/-ье**, **-изм**, **-ость/-есть**, **-ота**, **-ствие**, **-ство**, **-сть**.

(b) Actions (verbal nouns):

-ация/-изация, -ка, -ние, -ок, -ство, -тие.

(c) Animate beings (agents of actions, nationals, inhabitants, members of organizations, etc.):

-ак/-як, -анин/-янин, -арь, -ач, -ец, -ик, -ист, -ник, -ок, -тель, -ун, -щик/-чик.

(d) Collectives:

-ство, -ура.

(e) Objects/implements:

-ик, -ка, -ло, -ник, -ок, -тель, -щик/-чик.

(f) Places:

-ище, -ня, -ье.

(g) Quantity, dimension:

-ина, -ство.

Note

(a) Some suffixes have certain very specific meanings: **-ёнок/-онок** (young of animals), **-ика** (berries), **-ина** (types of meat), **-ки** (remnants), **-ница** (containers), **-ович/-(ь)евич/-ич** (patronymics), **-от** (sounds), **-ота** and **-уха** (medical conditions);

(b) The commonest feminine suffixes (in addition to **-есса, -иса**, which are listed under (iii)) are: **-иня/-ыня, -иха, -ица, -ка, -ница, -ша, -щица/-чица, -ья.**

(v) Most consonant changes in suffixed nouns affect the velar consonants. The following changes occur: **г: ж, к: ч** and **х: ш** before the suffixes: **-ество** (e.g. мона́х 'monk': мона́шество 'monks'), **-ие** (вели́кий 'great': вели́чие 'greatness'), **-ина** (горо́х 'peas': горо́шина 'pea'), **-инка** (снег 'snow': снежи́нка 'snow-flake'), **-ист** (шпа́га 'sword': шпажи́ст 'fencer' [but та́нк 'tank': танки́ст 'tank-driver']), **-иха** (ме́льник 'miller': ме́льничиха 'miller's wife'), **-ица** (во́лк 'wolf': волчи́ца 'she-wolf'), **-ник** (молоко́ 'milk': молочни́к 'milk-jug'), **-ница** (спичка́ 'match': спичечни́ца 'matchbox stand'), **-ня** ([in names of places] ко́нюх 'groom': коню́шня 'stable'), **-ок** (прыга́ть 'to jump': прыжо́к 'jump'), **-онок** (во́лк 'wolf': волчо́нок 'wolf-cub'), **-ье** (бе́рег 'shore': побере́жье 'coastline').

Note

Nouns in **-онок** also undergo the mutations **д: ж** (медве́дь 'bear': медвежо́нок 'bear-cub') and **ц: ч** (за́яц 'hare': зайчо́нок 'leveret'), those in **-ество** — **т: ч** (студе́нт 'student': студенче́ство 'student body'), those in **-ина** — **ск: щ** (треска́ться 'to crack': тресчи́на

‘crack’) and **ст: щ** (толстый ‘thick’: толщина ‘thickness’), those in **-иха** and **-ница – ц: ч** (пловец ‘swimmer’: пловчиха ‘female swimmer’, перец ‘pepper’: перечница ‘pepper-pot’). For consonant change in the verbal noun, see section on **-(е)ние** (28) (ii), below and for consonant change in nouns in **-анин**, see (2), below.

(vi) *Noun suffixes*

(1) **-ак/-як** (-чак after -ль)

Persons

(a) with particular physical characteristics or personality traits (based on adjs.):

бедняк ‘poor person’, **весельчак** ‘jolly person’, **пошляк** ‘vulgar person’, **смельчак** ‘daredevil’, **толстяк** ‘fat person’.

(b) practitioners (from nouns):

горняк ‘miner’, **моряк** ‘sailor’, **рыбак** ‘fisherman’.

(c) nationalities, inhabitants of certain ancient towns and cities:

пермяк ‘inhabitant of Perm’, **поляк** ‘Pole’, **словак** ‘Slovak’, **тверяк** ‘inhabitant of Tver’.

Note

сибиряк ‘Siberian’.

(2) **-анин/-чанин/-янин**

(i) nationals, inhabitants, members of social, religious and other groups:

армянин ‘Armenian’, **гражданин** ‘citizen’ (from град ‘town’), **крестьянин** ‘peasant’, **мусульманин** ‘Moslem’, **парижанин** ‘Parisian’, **рижанин** ‘inhabitant of Riga’ (from Рига ‘Riga’), **северянин** ‘northerner’, **славянин** ‘Slav’, **христианин** ‘Christian’, **южанин** ‘southerner’ (from юг ‘south’).

Note

Derivative **-чанин** (with infix **-ч-**) appears after **и** in **англичанин** (but **россиянин** ‘inhabitant of Russia’), **в** in **ростовчанин** ‘inhabitant of Rostov’, **харьковчанин** ‘inhabitant of Kharkov’ (but **варшавянин** ‘inhabitant of Warsaw’, **киевлянин** ‘Kievan’), **ль** in **сельчанин** ‘villager’, **м** in **сумчанин** ‘inhabitant of Sumy’ (but **рымлянин** ‘Roman’), **н** in **клинчанин** ‘inhabitant of Klin’, **т** in **датчанин** ‘Dane’ (but **египтянин** ‘Egyptian’, **израильтянин** ‘Israeli’), and replaces **ск** in **братчанин** ‘inhabitant of Bratsk’, **минчанин** ‘inhabitant of Minsk’, **норильчанин** ‘inhabitant of Norilsk’.

(3) **-анка/-янка/-енка**

Female nationals (from zero-suffixed m. forms and some in -ец):

гречáнка ‘Greek woman’ (cf. грек ‘Greek’), **индиáнка** ‘Indian woman’ (cf. инди́ец ‘Indian’, индеец ‘North American Indian’), **китай́нка** ‘Chinese woman’ (cf. кита́ец ‘Chinese’), **турчáнка** ‘Turkish woman’ (cf. ту́рок ‘Turk’), **францу́женка** ‘Frenchwoman’ (cf. француз ‘Frenchman’).

(4) -арь

(i) Practitioners:

(a) from nouns:

апте́карь ‘chemist’, **библиотéкарь** ‘librarian’, **вратáрь** ‘goalkeeper’.

(b) from verbs:

звона́рь ‘bell-ringer’, **пе́карь** ‘baker’, **то́карь** ‘turner’.

(ii) Objects (from nouns or adjs.):

буква́рь ‘primer’, **слова́рь** ‘dictionary’, **суха́рь** ‘rusk’.

(5) -ация/-изация/-фикация

Verbal nouns (from verbs in **-овать/-(из)ировать/-фицировать**):

демонстра́ция ‘demonstration’, **классифика́ция** ‘classification’,
приватиза́ция ‘privatization’, **рекоме́ндация** ‘recommendation’
роботиза́ция ‘robotization’.

Note

(a) **-яция** after л: **вентиля́ция** ‘ventilation’.

(b) some nouns in **-фикация** denote provision of facilities:
кинофи́кация ‘supplying with cinemas’ **электри́фикация** ‘electrification’.

(6) -ач

Persons:

(i) with particular characteristics:

(a) from adjs.:

бога́ч ‘rich man’, **лиха́ч** ‘reckless driver’, **ловка́ч** ‘dodger’.

(b) from nouns:

борода́ч ‘bearded man’, **сила́ч** ‘strong man’, **уса́ч** ‘man with large moustache’.

(ii) practitioners (from verbs or nouns):

врач ‘doctor’, **скрипа́ч** ‘violinist’, **труба́ч** ‘trumpeter’, **ткач** ‘weaver’.

(7) -ба

Verbal nouns (from impf. verbs):

борьба́ ‘struggle’, **жени́тьба** ‘marriage’, **про́сьба** ‘request’, **слу́жба** ‘service’, **стрельба́** ‘shooting’, **ходьба́** ‘walking’.

(8) -ёж

Verbal nouns in -ёж derive from verbs in -ить:

грабе́ж ‘robbery’, **куте́ж** ‘carousing’, **плате́ж** ‘payment’.

Note

галде́ж ‘din’, from **галде́ть** ‘to make a din’.

(9) -ёнок/-онок

The young of animals and birds:

медвежо́нок ‘bear-cub’, **львёно́к** ‘lion-cub’, **орле́нок** ‘young eagle’, **тигрёно́к** ‘tiger-cub’, **утёно́к** ‘duckling’.

(10) -ец

Persons:

(i) with personality traits (from adjs.):

горде́ц ‘arrogant man’, **мудре́ц** ‘wise man’, **счастли́вец** ‘happy person’, **хитре́ц** ‘cunning devil’.

(ii) agents of actions (from verbs):

боре́ц ‘wrestler’, **гребе́ц** ‘oarsman’, **певе́ц** ‘singer’, **продаве́ц** ‘salesman’.

Note

In -лец: **владеле́ц** ‘owner’, **кормиле́ц** ‘bread-winner’ and from verbal nouns in -ение: **переселе́нец** ‘settler’, **снабжение́ец** ‘supplier’.

(iii) many nationals:

америкáнец ‘American’, **испа́нец** ‘Spaniard’, **италья́нец** ‘Italian’, **кана́дец** ‘Canadian’, **не́мец** ‘German’, **норве́жец** ‘Norwegian’, **украи́нец** ‘Ukrainian’.

(iv) most inhabitants:

европе́ец ‘European’, **кавказе́ц** ‘Caucasian’, **ло́ндонец** ‘Londoner’, **новгоро́дец** ‘inhabitant of Novgorod’, **петербур́жец** ‘inhabitant of St Petersburg’.

Note

Infix -ов- in **донба́ссовец** ‘inhabitant of Donbass’, etc.

(v) members of organizations, including acronyms and indeclinable nouns (often with infix -ов-):

вузовец 'higher education student' (from *вуз* 'institution of higher education'), **динамовец** 'member of *Динамо*', **неделец** 'employee of *Nedelya*', **омоновец** 'member of *ОМОН*' (special police force), **обновец** 'UNO official'.

(11) -знь

States (based on verbs):

болéзнь 'illness', **бóязнь** 'fear', **жизнь** 'life', **неприя́знь** 'hostility'.

(12) -ие/-ье

Qualities (based on adjs.):

вели́чие 'greatness', **весéлье** 'gaiety', **здоровье́** 'health'.

Note

Usage in compound words: **долголётие** 'longevity', **остроумие** 'wit', **равноду́шие** 'indifference'.

(13) -изм

Policies, attitudes:

брежневизм 'Brezhnevism', **вещизм** 'acquisitiveness', **наплеви́зм** 'couldn't-care-less attitude', **плюрали́зм** 'pluralism'.

(14) -изна

Qualities (based on adjs.):

белизна́ 'whiteness', **дешевизна́** 'cheapness', **крутизна́** 'steepness', **новизна́** 'newness'.

Note

Infix **-ов-** in **дороговизна́** 'expensiveness'.

(15) -ик

(i) Persons:

(a) (based on adjs. in -н-):

вечёрник 'evening-class student' (cf. *вечёрний* 'evening'), **вино́бник** 'culprit', **шко́льник** 'schoolboy'.

Note

Some forms are based on adjs. in **-нный**: **тамо́женник** 'customs officer', adjs. in **-ственный**: **общество́нный** 'public figure', or verbs in **-ствовать**: **путеше́ственный** 'traveller'.

(b) practitioners, based on adjs. in:

-в-: **биржеви́к** ‘stockbroker’ (cf. биржево́й ‘stock-exchange’ [adj.]), **кроссови́к** ‘cross-country runner’, **оптови́к** ‘wholesaler’, **плано́вик** ‘planner’.

-н-: **глазни́к** ‘oculist’ (cf. глазно́й ‘eye’ [adj.]), **железнодоро́жник** ‘railway worker’, **пожа́рник** ‘firefighter’, **сезо́нник** ‘seasonal worker’.

(ii) Objects based on adjs. in:

-в-: **белови́к** ‘fair copy’ (cf. белово́й ‘fair’ [adj.]), **броневи́к** ‘armoured car’, **грузови́к** ‘lorry’, **чернови́к** ‘rough copy’.

-н-: **купа́льник** ‘bathing costume’ (cf. купа́льный ‘bathing’ [adj.]), **па́мятник** ‘monument’.

(16) -ика

Berries:

брусни́ка ‘red whortleberry’, **голуби́ка** ‘bilberry’, **земляни́ка** ‘wild strawberries’.

(17) -ин

Nationals:

болга́рин ‘Bulgarian’, **грузи́н** ‘Georgian’, **осети́н** ‘Ossetian’, **тата́рин** ‘Tatar’.

(18) -ина

(i) dimensions:

глуби́на ‘depth’, **дли́на** ‘length’, **толщи́на** ‘thickness’, **шири́на** ‘width’.

(ii) the results of actions or processes (based on verbs):

впа́дина ‘hollow’, **морщи́на** ‘wrinkle’, **ржа́вчина** ‘rust’, **тре́щина** ‘crack’, **цара́пина** ‘scratch’.

(iii) types of meat:

бара́нина ‘mutton’, **говя́дина** ‘beef’, **осетри́на** ‘sturgeon’, **свини́на** ‘pork’.

Note

Derivative **-яти́на/-яти́на**, based on the plural of young animals: **медвежа́тина** ‘bear meat’, **теля́тина** ‘veal’.

(iv) Singulatives:

бу́сина (from бу́сы ‘beads’) ‘bead’, **виногра́дина** ‘grape’, **горо́шина** ‘pea’, **солóмина** ‘straw’.

Note

Forms in **-инка**: **снежи́нка** ‘snowflake’, **чаи́нка** ‘tea-leaf’.

(19) -иня/-ыня

Feminine counterparts of zero-suffixed and some other nouns:

ба́рыня 'lady' (from ба́рин 'lord'), **геро́иня** 'heroine', **мона́хиня** 'nun'.

(20) -ист

Persons (based on nouns):

(a) musicians:

арфи́ст 'harpist', **виолончели́ст** 'cellist', **гитары́ст** 'guitarist', **пиани́ст** 'pianist'.

(b) sportsmen:

волейболи́ст 'volleyball player', **тени́сист** 'tennis-player', **футболи́ст** 'footballer', **хоккеи́ст** 'ice-hockey player', **шахмати́ст** 'chess-player'.

(c) drivers:

такси́ст 'taxi driver', **танки́ст** 'tank driver', **трактори́ст** 'tractor driver'.

(21) -иха

Feminine ending (based on m. counterparts):

(a) women with particular characteristics:

трусы́ха 'cowardly woman', **щегоо́лиха** 'showy dresser'.

(b) practitioners:

пловчи́ха 'female swimmer', **повари́ха** 'cook', **портни́ха** 'dressmaker', **ткачи́ха** 'weaver'.

(c) wives:

купчи́ха 'merchant's wife', **мельничиха** 'miller's wife', **полко́вничиха** 'colonel's wife'.

(d) animals:

зайчи́ха 'doe', **лоси́ха** 'female elk', **осли́ха** 'female ass', **слони́ха** 'cow elephant'.

(22) -ица

Feminine ending:

(a) counterparts of zero-suffixed m. nouns:

фельдшеры́ца 'female surgeon's assistant', **цари́ца** 'tsarina'.

(b) counterparts of nouns in -ец:

ревни́вица ‘jealous woman’, **сослужив́ица** ‘female colleague’, **счастли́вица** ‘happy woman’.

(c) animals and birds:

волчи́ца ‘she-wolf’, **льви́ца** ‘lioness’, **медве́дица** ‘she-bear’, **орли́ца** ‘female eagle’.

(23) -ич

Inhabitants of certain ancient towns and cities:

вятич ‘inhabitant of Vyatka’, **костромич** ‘inhabitant of Kostroma’, **москвич** ‘Muscovite’, **омич** ‘inhabitant of Omsk’, **пскович** ‘inhabitant of Pskov’.

(24) -ище

(i) places (from nouns or – particularly those in -лище – verbs):

вмести́лище ‘receptacle’, **жили́ще** ‘dwelling’, **кладби́ще** ‘cemetery’, **стрельби́ще** ‘firing range’, **убежи́ще** ‘refuge’.

(ii) handles:

ножеви́ще ‘knife-handle’, **кнутови́ще** ‘whip-handle’, **топори́ще** ‘axe-handle’.

(25) -ка

(i) verbal noun:

The suffix appears after vowel + consonant combinations, and derives from:

(a) some 2nd-conjugation verbs in -ить: **запра́вка** ‘refuelling’ (from **запра́вить(ся)** ‘to refuel’), **перевозка** ‘transportation’, **чи́стка** ‘cleaning’.

Note

Гла́жка ‘ironing’ from **глади́ть** ‘to iron’, **сле́жка** ‘tracking’ from **следи́ть** ‘to track’, and derivative **-ёжка/-овка** after vowel + two consonants: **бомбе́жка** ‘bombing’ (from **бомби́ть** ‘to bomb’), **сверло́вка** ‘drilling’.

(b) from some verbs in -ать: **заде́ржка** ‘delay’ (from **заде́ржать** ‘to delay’), **обрабо́тка** ‘processing’.

Note

-овка after vowel + two consonants: **переигро́вка** ‘replay’ from **переигра́ть** ‘to replay’.

- (c) from many verbs in **-овать:стыкóвка** ‘docking’ from **стыковáться** ‘to dock’; and **-ировать: меблирóвка** ‘furnishing’ from **меблировáть** ‘to furnish’.

Note

Some verbs in **-ировать** have alternative verbal nouns in **-ка** and **-ние**, e.g., **регулирóвка/регули́рование** ‘regulation’ from **регули́ровать** ‘to regulate’.

- (d) from some verbs in **-оть**, e.g. **кóбка** ‘chopping’ (from **колóть** ‘to chop’).
 (e) from a number of other verbs: **мóйка** ‘washing’ (from **мыть** ‘to wash’), **поймка** ‘capture’ (from **поймáть** ‘to catch’), **стри́жка** ‘hair-cutting’ (from **стричь** ‘to cut’).

(ii) feminine suffix (from many zero-suffixed m. nouns and many m. nouns in **-ент: -ец, -ин, -ист, -ич**):

грузи́нка ‘Georgian woman’, **ко́нькобе́жка** ‘skater’, **москв́ичка** ‘Muscovite’, **студéнка** ‘student’, **трактори́стка** ‘female tractor driver’.

(iii) contracted forms (from adj. + noun phrases):

вечё́рка ‘evening paper’, **Ле́нинка** ‘Lenin Library’, **откры́тка** ‘postcard’, **со́тка** ‘mobile phone’, **электри́чка** ‘suburban commuter train’.

Note

Some nouns in **-лка** denote rooms, e.g. **раздева́лка** ‘changing room’.

(iv) objects (in **-лка**, from impf. verbs):

вешáлка ‘stand’, **грéлка** ‘hot-water bottle’, **зажигáлка** ‘lighter’, **открыва́лка** ‘bottle-opener’, **точи́лка** ‘pencil sharpener’.

(26) **-ки**

Remnants:

обьéдки ‘scraps’, **опи́лки** ‘sawdust’, **очи́стки** ‘peelings’, **подóнки** ‘dregs’.

(27) **-ло**

Implements, agents of action (from impf. verbs):

крылó ‘wing’, **мы́ло** ‘soap’, **сверлó** ‘drill’, **точи́ло** ‘grind-stone’, **ши́ло** ‘awl’.

Note

N. pl. counterparts **черни́ла** ‘ink’, **уди́ла** ‘bit’.

(28) **-ние (-ание/-ение)**

Verbal nouns:

(i) in **-ание/-яние** (from many verbs in **-ать/-ять**):

вяза́ние ‘knitting’ (from **вяза́ть** ‘to knit’), **пая́ние** ‘soldering’ (from **пая́ть** ‘to solder’), including verbs in:

- овать/-евать** (**рисова́ние** ‘drawing’, **завоева́ние** ‘conquering’);
- ствовать** (**бо́дрствование** ‘keeping awake’);
- ировать** (**кло́нирование** ‘cloning’).

(ii) in **-ение**, from:

(a) many 2nd-conjugation verbs in **-ить**: **куре́ние** ‘smoking’ (from **кури́ть** ‘to smoke’), **сохране́ние** ‘preservation’;

(b) verbs in **-еть**, of either conjugation:

ста́рение ‘ageing’ (from **ста́реть** ‘to age’), **горе́ние** ‘burning’ (from **горе́ть** ‘to burn’)

Note

Consonant change applies to the following stem consonants:

б: **бл** **употребле́ние** ‘use’ (from **употреби́ть** ‘to use’);

в: **вл** **выздоровле́ние** ‘convalescence’ (from **выздорове́ть** ‘to convalesce’);

д: **ж** **броже́ние** ‘fermentation’ (from **броди́ть** ‘to ferment’);

д: **жд** **освобожде́ние** ‘liberation’ (from **освободи́ть** ‘to liberate’);

з: **ж** **отраже́ние** ‘reflection’ (from **отрази́ть** ‘to reflect’);

м: **мл** **оформле́ние** ‘lay-out’ (from **афо́рмить** ‘to lay out’);

п: **пл** **подкреплéние** ‘reinforcement’ (from **подкрепи́ть** ‘to reinforce’);

с: **ш** **приглаше́ние** ‘invitation’ (from **пригласи́ть** ‘to invite’);

ст: **щ** **упроще́ние** ‘simplification’ (from **упрости́ть** ‘to simplify’);

т: **ч** **кипяче́ние** ‘boiling’ (from **кипя́тить** ‘to boil’);

т: **щ** **посеще́ние** ‘visit’ (from **посети́ть** ‘to visit’);

ф: **фл** **графле́ние** ‘ruling of lines’ (from **графи́ть** ‘to rule lines’).

(c) Verbs in **-сть**, **-чь** and **-ти** (with present-future stem consonant in verbal noun):

нападе́ние ‘attack’, from **напа́сть** ‘to attack’ (cf. 3rd person sing. **нападёт**)

проче́ние ‘reading’, from **проче́сть** ‘to read’ (cf. 3rd person sing. **прочтёт**)

извлече́ние ‘extraction’, from **извлéчь** ‘to extract’ (cf. 3rd person sing. **извлечёт**)

пренебреже́ние ‘disdain’, from **пренебре́чь** ‘to scorn’ (cf. 3rd person sing. **пренебрежёт**)

введе́ние ‘introduction’, from **ввести́** ‘to introduce’ (cf. 3rd person sing. **введёт**)

спасе́ние ‘salvation’, from **спасти́** ‘to save’ (cf. 3rd person sing. **спасёт**)

погребе́ние ‘burial’, from **погrestí** ‘to bury’ (cf. 3rd person sing. **погребёт**).

Note

Derivative **-овение** (mainly from pf. verbs in **-нуть(ся)**): **возникнове́ние** ‘rise’, **исчезнове́ние** ‘disappearance’, **столкнове́ние** ‘collision’.

(29) **-ник**

(i) Animate nouns:

(a) agent nouns (many based on verbs):

защитник ‘defender’, **изме́нник** ‘traitor’, **охотник** ‘hunter’, **рабо́тник** ‘worker’.

(b) practitioners (based on nouns):

дво́рник ‘yardman’, **мяси́к** ‘butcher’, **плотник** ‘carpenter’.

Note

Some nouns in **-ник** denote animate beings *and* inanimate objects:

проводни́к (a) ‘guard on train’ (b) ‘electrical conductor’.

(c) nouns based on passive parts, (with retention of passive meaning):

воспи́танник ‘pupil’, **избра́нник** ‘chosen one’, **ста́вленник** ‘protégé’.

Note

Some forms in **-еник** are active, others passive: **му́ченик** ‘martyr’,

тру́женик ‘worker’, **уче́ник** ‘pupil’.

(ii) Inanimate nouns (based on nouns):

(a) groups of plants and trees:

е́льник ‘fir plantation’, **крапи́вник** ‘clump of nettles’, **мали́нник** ‘raspberry bushes’, **оси́нник** ‘aspen copse’.

(b) printed materials:

зада́чник ‘book of problems’, **разговоро́чник** ‘conversation manual’, **сбо́рник** ‘collection’, **сло́вник** ‘glossary’.

(c) other objects:

бага́жник ‘boot’, **гра́дусник** ‘thermometer’, **моло́чник** ‘milk-jug’, **спу́тник** ‘satellite’, **ча́йник** ‘teapot’.

Note

Objects in **-льник** take penultimate stress and derive from verbs:

будильник ‘alarm clock’, **холодильник** ‘refrigerator’.

(d) animal housing:

коро́вник ‘cow shed’, **куря́тник** ‘hen coop’, **пчёлъник** ‘apiary’.

Note

Forms in **-атник/-ятник** are based on the names of young animals:

гуся́тник ‘goose-run’, **крольча́тник** ‘rabbit-hutch’, **теля́тник** ‘calf shed’.

(30) **-ница**

(i) Feminine suffix:

шко́льница ‘school-girl’, **уча́стница** ‘participant’, **учи́тельница** ‘female teacher’.

(ii) Names of receptacles:

мы́льница ‘soap-dish’, **пéпельница** ‘ash-tray’, **пéречница** ‘pepper pot’, **са́харница** ‘sugar-bowl’.

(31) **-ня**

(i) verbal nouns (denoting energetic, protracted, sometimes irritating, activity):

бего́тня ‘rushing around’, **болтовня́** ‘chatter’, **возня́** ‘romping around’, **суе́тня** ‘fuss, bustle’.

(ii) animate groups:

ребя́тня ‘kids’, **родня́** ‘relatives’, **солдатня́** ‘soldiery’.

(iii) places (based on nouns):

колоко́льня ‘belfry’, **пекáрня** ‘bakery’, **тамо́жня** ‘customs house’.

Note

(a) Some nouns denote housing for birds: **голубя́тня** ‘dovecote’, etc.

(b) Forms in **-льня** derive from verbs: **купа́льня** ‘bathing-place’ (from **купа́ться** ‘to bathe’), **спа́льня** ‘bedroom’, **чита́льня** ‘reading room’.

Note

Also **ба́ня** ‘bath-house’, **бóйня** ‘slaughter-house’, **ку́хня** ‘kitchen’.

(32) -ович/-(ъ)евич

The suffixes **-ович/-(ъ)евич** are used to form masculine patronymics, **-ович** for first names ending in a consonant: **Алекса́ндрович** 'Aleksandrovich', **-евич** for names in **-ай/-ей**: **Андре́евич** 'Andre-evich', **Никола́евич** 'Nikolaevich', **-ъевич** for names in **-ий**: **Васи́льевич** 'Vasilevich', (but **Дми́триевич** 'Dmitrievich' from **Дми́трий** 'Dmitrii').

Note

- (a) f. equivalents: **Алекса́ндровна** 'Aleksandrovna', **Андре́евна** 'Andreevna', **Васи́льевна** 'Vasilevna'.
 (b) m. patronymics in **-ич** from first names in **-а/-я**: **Ильи́ч** 'Ilich' (from **Илья́** 'Ilya'), **Кузьми́ч** 'Kuzmich' (from **Кузьма́** 'Kuzma'), with f. in **-инична**: **Ильи́нична** 'Ilinichna', **Кузьми́нична** 'Kuzminichna'.

(33) -ок

- (i) Agents of actions (based on verbs):
ездо́к 'rider', **знато́к** 'expert', **игно́к** 'player', **стрело́к** 'marksman'.
 (ii) Verbal nouns (individual physical actions, based on unprefixed verbs):
бро́сок 'a throw', **глото́к** 'a swallow', **зево́к** 'a yawn', **звоно́к** 'a phone call', **прыжо́к** 'a jump', **свисто́к** 'a whistle', **скачо́к** 'a leap'.
 (iii) Objects (mostly based on prefixed verbs):
набро́сок 'sketch', **обло́мок** 'fragment', **оку́рок** 'cigarette end', **оско́лок** 'splinter', **пода́рок** 'gift'.

Note: Unprefixed **кипято́к** 'boiling water, boiled water'.

(34) -ость/-есть

- (i) Qualities (based on adjs. **-ый/-ий**):
ве́жливость 'politeness', **го́рдость** 'pride', **гру́бость** 'coarseness', **све́жесть** 'freshness', **хра́брость** 'bravery'.

Note

Some are based on passive parts: **сде́ржанность** 'restraint', **терпи́мость** 'tolerance'.

- (ii) Feelings:
жа́лость 'pity', **не́жность** 'tenderness', **радо́сть** 'joy', **ре́вность** 'jealousy'.

(iii) States, based on passive parts.:

(a) in -мость:

невесóмость 'weightlessness', **незави́симость** 'independence',
совмести́мость 'compatibility'.

(b) in -нность:

ангажи́рованность 'partisanship', **влюблённость** 'infatuation',
вседозво́ленность 'permissiveness'.

(iv) ratio or rate (based on passive parts.):

разводи́мость 'divorce rate', **рожда́емость** 'birth rate', **успева́емость**
'academic progress'.

Note

Сме́ртность 'death rate'.

(35) -от

Sounds (based on verbs):

гро́хот 'din', **ропо́т** 'murmur', **то́пот** 'clatter', **ше́пот** 'whisper'.

(36) -ота

(i) Qualities (based on adjs. in -ый/-ой):

добро́та 'kindness', **красо́та** 'beauty', **просто́та** 'simplicity', **чисто́та**
'cleanliness'.

(ii) States (based on adjs.):

(a) general:

бе́днота́ 'poverty', **тесно́та** 'cramped conditions', **пусто́та** 'emptiness',
тепло́та 'warmth'.

(b) disabilities and ailments (based on adjs. in -ой):

глухо́та 'deafness', **немота́** 'dumbness', **слепота́** 'blindness', **хромота́**
'lameness'.

Note

Based on *verbs*, in -ота: **дремо́та** 'drowsiness' (from дрема́ть 'to doze'),
зевота́ 'fit of yawning', **икота́** 'hiccuping'.

(37) -ствие

(i) Abstract states:

бе́дствие 'disaster', **споко́йствие** 'tranquillity', **сумасше́ствие** 'madness'.

(ii) Verbal nouns (from verbs in -ствовать):

пу́тешество́ние 'journey', **соде́йствие** 'cooperation', **соотве́тствие**
'accordance'.

(38) -ство

(i) Qualities (mostly from adjs. in **-ый**):

безу́мство 'foolhardiness', **досто́инство** 'dignity', **лука́вство** 'craftiness',
постоя́нство 'constancy', **упо́рство** 'stubbornness'.

Note

Some nouns in **-ничество** correlate with verbs in **-ничать**: **ло́дырничество** 'skiving' (cf. ло́дырни́чать 'to skive'), **скря́жничество** 'miserliness'.

(ii) States (based on nouns or adjs.):

а́вторство 'authorship', **бога́тство** 'wealth', **матери́нство** 'motherhood',
оди́нчество 'solitude', **пья́нство** 'drunkenness'.

Note

Some nouns in **-ничество** correlate with verbs in **-ничать**:

бро́дяжничество 'vagrancy' (cf. бро́дяжни́чать 'to be a tramp').

(iii) Verbal nouns:

бе́гство 'escape', **воровствó** 'thieving', **дежу́рство** 'being on duty',
уби́йство 'murder'.

Note

(a) Infix **-ов-** in **мотовствó** 'extravagance' (from мота́ть 'to squander'),
сва́товствó 'match-making', **хва́стовствó** 'boasting'.

(iv) Collectives (national, social, administrative or other groups):

госуда́рство 'state', **мини́стерство** 'ministry', **о́бщество** 'society',
пра́вительствó 'government', **студе́нчество** 'student body', **чело́вечество** 'mankind'.

(v) Quantity (based on adverbs):

большинствó 'majority', **ко́личество** 'quantity', **меньшинствó**
'minority', **мно́жество** 'multitude'.

(39) -сть

Feelings

за́висть 'envy', **не́нависть** 'hatred', **страсть** 'passion'.

(40) -тель

(i) Agents of actions (mainly based on verbs):

(a) **-атель** (stress as in infinitive):

избира́тель 'voter', **покупа́тель** 'customer', **пользова́тель** 'user',
слу́шатель 'listener', **чита́тель** 'reader'.

(b) -итель (stress on -и-):

грабитель ‘robber’, **житель** ‘inhabitant’, **зритель** ‘viewer’, **мыслитель** ‘thinker’.

(ii) Practitioners:

водитель ‘driver’, **писатель** ‘writer’, **строитель** ‘builder’, **учитель** ‘teacher’.

(iii) Objects (many from transitive verbs):

выключатель ‘switch’, **двигатель** ‘engine’, **загрязнитель** ‘pollutant’, **истребитель** ‘fighter plane’.

(41) -тие

Verbal nouns, from verbs, mainly transitive and prefixed, based on:

-**бить** (e.g. **разбитие** ‘smashing’)

-**быть** (e.g. **прибытие** ‘arrival’, but **добыча** ‘extraction’)

-**вить** (e.g. **развитие** ‘development’)

-**дуть** (e.g. **раздутие** ‘inflating’)

-**жать** (e.g. **сжатие** ‘compression’)

-**клясть** (e.g. **проклятие** ‘damnation’)

-**крыть** (e.g. **закрытие** ‘closure’)

-**лить** (e.g. **кровапролитие** ‘bloodshed’)

-**плыть** (e.g. **отплытие** ‘departure’)

-**пять** (e.g. **распятие** ‘crucifixion’)

-**чать** (e.g. **зачятие** ‘conception’)

-**(н)ять** (e.g. **принятие** ‘taking’).

Also **взятие** ‘capture’ (from **взять** ‘to take’).

Note

Correlation with perfective passive participles in -т- (e.g. **взятый** ‘taken’, **взятие** ‘taking’, etc. See 357–358).

(42) -ун

Agents of actions (from unprefixed impf. verbs):

бегун ‘runner’, **лгун** ‘liar’, **несун** ‘pilferer’, **опекун** ‘guardian, carer’, **плясун** ‘dancer’.

Note

-ун in the names of some animals: **грызун** ‘rodent’, **скакун** ‘racer’.

(43) -ура

Collectives:

адвокатура ‘the Bar’, **клиентура** ‘clientele’, **номенклатура** ‘*nomenklatura*’ (Soviet élite), **прокуратура** ‘staff of prosecutor’s office’.

(44) -уха

(i) Medical conditions (based on colour adjs.):

желту́ха 'jaundice', **золоту́ха** 'scrofula', **красну́ха** 'German measles'.

(ii) Contracted forms (usually with pejorative meaning):

группову́ха 'gang crime', **показу́ха** 'sham, façade', **порну́ха** 'pornography', **черну́ха** 'denigration'.

(45) -ча

Verbal nouns (from compounds of **-дать** and some others, e.g. **по́рча** 'spoiling', from **по́ртить** 'to spoil'):

вы́дача 'issue', **переда́ча** 'transmission', **разда́ча** 'distribution', **сда́ча** 'handing over'.

Note

(a) Some verbs in **-дать** have verbal nouns in **-дание** (e.g. **изда́ние** 'publishing'), **продáть** 'to sell' has **продáжа** 'sale'.

(b) **Добы́ча** 'mining' from **добы́ть** 'to mine' (some verbs in **-быть** have verbal nouns in **-тие**, e.g. **прибы́тие** 'arrival').

(46) -ша

Feminine suffix (especially from nouns in **-р/-рь**, colloquial):

(a) practitioners:

ба́рменша 'barmaid', **библиотéкарша** 'librarian', **касси́рша** 'cashier'.

(b) wives:

генерáльша 'general's wife', **министéрша** 'minister's wife', **профéссорша** 'professor's wife'.

(47) -щик (-чик after д, ж, з, с, т):

(i) Persons:

(a) general (from nouns or transitive verbs, often with a pejorative meaning):

обма́нщик 'deceiver', **отмы́вщик де́нег** 'money-launderer', **попу́тчик** 'fellow-traveller', **уго́нщик** 'vehicle thief'.

(b) practitioners:

áтомщик 'atomic scientist', **дальнобóйщик** 'long-distance lorry-driver', **лётчик** 'pilot', **перевóдчик** 'interpreter', **часовщи́к** 'watch-maker'.

Note

Some denote persons *and* implements: **счётчик** ‘census-taker’, ‘meter’.

Forms in derivative **-льщик** (with penultimate stress) derive from impf. verbs: **болельщик** ‘fan’, **чистильщик** ‘cleaner’.

(ii) objects:

автоответчик ‘answerphone’, **бомбардировщик** ‘bomber’, **передатчик** ‘transmitter’, **погрузчик** ‘loader’, **тральщик** ‘trawler’.

(48) **-щина** (-чина after д and т),

Attitudes and trends (from adjs. and nouns, especially surnames, usually pejorative):

воённая ‘military attitude’, **обломовщина** ‘Oblomovism’, **сталинская** ‘Stalinism’.

Also specific historical periods:

ежовщина ‘the Yezhov terror’ (i.e. 1937–38), **ждановщина** ‘the Zhdanov repression’ (i.e. the years 1946–48 associated with Andrei Zhdanov’s cultural policies).

Note

-ов- infix in **дедовщина** ‘army brutality, hazing’ (from дед ‘senior soldier’), **митинговщина** ‘megaphone diplomacy’.

(49) **-щица**

Feminine counterparts to nouns in **-щик/-чик**:

буфетчица ‘bar-maid’, **крановщица** ‘crane-driver’.

(50) **-ыш**

Non-adults and some others (sometimes expressing sympathy or condescension, from adjs.):

коротыш ‘short person’, **крепьш** ‘sturdy child’, **мальш** ‘child, little boy’.

(51) **-ье**

Districts, areas, surroundings:

верховье ‘upper reaches’, **низовье** ‘lower reaches’, **побережье** ‘coastline’, **предгорье** ‘foothills’, **Подмосковье** ‘Moscow region’.

(52) **-ья**

Feminine counterparts to nouns in **-ун**:

бегунья ‘runner’, **лгунья** ‘liar’, **плясунья** ‘dancer’.

Note

For diminutive suffixes, see **105** 1–4 and **106** 1–2, for augmentative suffixes, **109** 1–2, for gender differentiation through suffixes, **43**.

Gender

30 Masculine, feminine and neuter gender

(1) Adjectives, pronouns and the past-tense forms of verbs have the same gender as the noun they qualify or stand for:

хоро́ший муж	a good husband
хоро́шая жена́	a good wife
хоро́шее де́ло	a good cause

Оте́ц дово́лен	Father is pleased
Ма́ть дово́льна	Mother is pleased

Где сто́л ? Вот о́н	Where is the table? There it is
Где ка́рта ? Вот о́на	Where is the map? There it is
Где окно́ ? Вот оно́	Where is the window? There it is

До́м сто́ял в це́нтре го́рода
The house stood in the city centre

Ё́лка сто́яла в це́нтре го́рода
The Christmas tree stood in the city centre

Зда́ние сто́яло в це́нтре го́рода
The building stood in the city centre

Note

- (a) There is no equivalent in Russian of the articles ‘a’ and ‘the’. Thus, for example, **до́м** means ‘a house’ and ‘the house’, the difference being resolved by context or word order (see **476** (1) note (b), as well as **126** (2) (i), **128** (2) note, **138** (1) (iii) (b), **143** (2) (i), **193** (4) (iii)). Note that such forms as **э́тот** ‘this’, **то́т са́мый** ‘the very’, **вы́ше упомя́нутый** ‘the above-mentioned’, **о́дин** ‘one’ etc. are sometimes used where an article would be used in English.
- (b) When the predicate precedes the subject and the subject consists of a number of nouns, agreement may be with the first noun only: **Ну́жно** терпе́ние, понима́ние, взаи́мная откры́тость и доброжелáтельность (*Komsomolskaya pravda*) ‘Patience, understanding, mutual openness and benevolence are necessary’ (pl. **нужны́** would also be possible, however).

(2) Grammatical gender (the assignment of gender to a noun in accordance with its ending) is distinguished from **natural** gender (the

assignment of gender in accordance with the sex of the being denoted by the noun, e.g. **мать** ‘mother’ (feminine), **дядя** ‘uncle’ (masculine)). Some nouns which can denote persons of either sex have **common** gender, that is, their gender varies in accordance with the sex of the person concerned (e.g. **сирота́** ‘orphan’ (masculine or feminine) see **35**).

(3) Gender affects only the **singular** of nouns; **plural** forms do not exhibit gender characteristics. The same adjectival endings, for example, are used for the plurals of nouns of *all* genders, cf.:

Singular	Plural
хоро́ший муж a good husband	хоро́шие мужья́ good husbands
хоро́шая жена́ a good wife	хоро́шие жёны good wives
хоро́шее де́ло a good cause	хоро́шие дела́ good causes

Note

Gender may, however, be revealed in, for example, a subordinate clause: хоро́шие мужья́, **ка́ждый** (masculine singular relative pronoun) из кото́рых помога́л по до́му ‘good husbands, each of whom helped around the house’.

31 Masculine nouns

The following categories of noun are masculine:

- (1) All nouns ending in a hard consonant, e.g. **заво́д** ‘factory’
- (2) All nouns ending in **-й**, e.g. **музе́й** ‘museum’
- (3) ‘Natural’ masculines in **-а/-я**. These include:
 - (i) Nouns which by definition denote males:

де́душка	grandfather
дядя́	uncle
мужчи́на	man
па́па	Dad
слуга́	male servant
юноша́	youth, young man

including a few obsolescent nouns, e.g. **воево́да** ‘commander’.

- (ii) Some masculine first names:

Ильѣ	Иуа
Никѣта	Nikita
Фомѣ	Foma

(iii) The familiar forms of many masculine first names:

Вѣня	Vanya (short for Ивѣн)
Волѣдя	Volodya (short for Владѣмир)
Сѣша	Sasha (short for Алексѣндр (<i>or</i> for feminine Алексѣндра)) etc.

(4) Diminutives and augmentatives based on masculine nouns:

домѣшко (from дом ‘house’)	little house
домѣна, домѣще (also from дом)	enormous house

(5) **Подмастѣрье** ‘apprentice’.

(6) Many nouns ending in a soft sign (see **33**).

32 Feminine nouns

Categories of feminine noun include the following.

- (1) Most nouns in **-а/-я** (see, however, **31** (3) and **34** (4)).
- (2) Many nouns which end in a soft sign (see **33**).

33 Soft-sign nouns

Some soft-sign nouns are feminine (approximately three-quarters of the total); the rest are masculine. It is possible to give guidelines for determining the gender of many soft-sign nouns.

(1) Feminine soft-sign nouns

(i) ‘Natural’ feminines: **дочь** ‘daughter’ (see also (ii)), **лань** ‘doe’, **мать** ‘mother’, **нѣтель** ‘heifer’, **свекрѣвь** ‘mother-in-law’ (husband’s mother).

(ii) All nouns in **-жь, -чь, -шь, -щь, -знь, -мь, -пь, -фь**.

(iii) All nouns in **-сть**, except for masculine **гость** ‘guest’, **нѣхристь** ‘infidel, rogue’ and **тѣсть** ‘father-in-law’ (wife’s father).

(iv) All nouns in

-бь except for masculine **гѣлубь** ‘dove’

- вь** except for masculine **червь** ‘worm’
- дь** except for masculine **вождь** ‘leader’, **гвоздь** ‘nail’, **Господь** ‘Lord’, **груздь** ‘milk-agaric’, **дождь** ‘rain’, **жёлудь** ‘acorn’, **лёбедь** ‘swan’, **медведь** ‘bear’ and a few historicisms
- зь** except for masculine **князь** ‘prince’, **ферзь** ‘queen’ (chess), **язь** ‘ide’ (fish of the carp family) and a few archaisms such as **вѣтязь** ‘knight’
- сь** except for masculine **гусь** ‘goose’, **кара́сь** ‘Crucian carp’, **ло́сось/лосось** ‘salmon’, **лось** ‘elk’
- ть** except for natural masculines (see (2) (i) below) and masculine **дѣготь** ‘tar’, **кóготь** ‘claw’, **ла́поть** ‘bast shoe’, **ло́коть** ‘elbow’, **ломо́ть** ‘slice’, **но́готь** ‘finger-nail’, **пу́ть** ‘way’, **та́ть** ‘thief’, **я́ть** ‘the letter *yat*’

(v) Nouns derived through deaffixation from adjectives: **высь** ‘heights’ (cf. **высо́кий** ‘high’), **гладь** ‘smooth surface’, **глубь** ‘depth’, **глушь** ‘backwoods’, **даль** ‘distance’, **зе́лень** ‘greenery’, **лень** ‘laziness’, **мель** ‘shallows’, **новь** ‘virgin soil’, **тишь** ‘quiet’, **уда́ль** ‘daring’, **ширь** ‘expanse’, **явь** ‘reality’.

(vi) Nouns derived through deaffixation from verbs: **гарь** ‘burning’ (cf. **горѣть** ‘to burn’), **мазь** ‘ointment’, **на́сыпь** ‘embankment’, **по́дпись** ‘signature’, **связь** ‘connection’, **смесь** ‘mixture’, **тварь** ‘creature’.

(vii) Deverbal nouns in **-ель**, e.g. **ги́бель** ‘ruin’ (cf. **ги́бнуть** ‘to perish’), **колыбе́ль** ‘cradle’, **мете́ль** ‘snow storm’.

(2) Masculine soft-sign nouns

(i) ‘Natural’ masculines: **го́сть** ‘guest’, **де́верь** ‘brother-in-law’ (husband’s brother), **зять** ‘son-in-law/brother-in-law’, **князь** ‘prince’, **кобе́ль** ‘male dog’, **коро́ль** ‘king’, **па́рень** ‘lad’, **се́лезень** ‘drake’, **тесть** ‘father-in-law’ (wife’s father), **ца́рь** ‘tsar’.

(ii) Deverbal agent nouns (animate and inanimate) in **-тель** (**созда́тель** ‘creator’, **выключáтель** ‘light-switch’) or **-итель** (**учи́тель** ‘teacher’, **краси́тель** ‘dye’).

(iii) Nouns in **-арь** derived from verbs (**пе́карь** ‘baker’), nouns (**врата́рь** ‘goal-keeper’) or adjectives (**дика́рь** ‘savage’).

(iv) The names of **months** ending in a soft sign.

(v) All names of birds ending in a soft sign except for feminine **выпь** ‘bittern’ and **неясыть** ‘tawny owl’; all names of insects ending in a soft sign except for feminine **мо́ль** ‘moth’.

The gender of other soft-sign nouns has to be learnt individually.

34 Neuter nouns

Categories of neuter noun include the following.

- (1) Nouns in **-о** (see, however, **31** (4)).
- (2) Nouns in **-е**. However, **ко́фе** ‘coffee’ is masculine (neuter in substandard registers only; see **36** (1) note (a)). See also **31** (4).
- (3) Nouns in **-ё**.
- (4) Nouns in **-мя**: **время** ‘time’, **имя** ‘first name etc. See **64**.
- (5) Other parts of speech functioning as nouns: **громкое** «ура́» ‘a loud “hurrah”’.

35 Common gender

A number of nouns in **-а** and **-я** have common gender. They can denote males or females, adjectival, pronominal and verb agreement varying with the sex of the person denoted by the noun, e.g. **го́рький** пьяница ‘confirmed drunkard’ (male), **го́рькая** пьяница ‘confirmed drunkard’ (female). Among the commonest of the nouns are бродя́га ‘tramp’, глава́ ‘head, chief’, кале́ка ‘cripple’, колле́га ‘colleague’, левша́ ‘left-handed person’, малю́тка ‘baby’, неве́жда ‘ignoramus’, неря́ха ‘litter-bug’, обжа́ра ‘glutton’, одино́чка ‘lone person’, пьяница ‘drunkard’, сирота́ ‘orphan’ (кру́глый/кру́глая сирота́ ‘person who has lost both parents’), уби́йца ‘murderer’, у́мница ‘clever person’:

Говори́те со мной, как с **кру́глым** неве́ждой (Grekoва)
 Speak to me as to a complete ignoramus

See also мать-одино́чка ‘single-mother’ (*Note*: отец-одино́чка, ‘single father’, is masculine)

36 Indeclinable nouns of foreign origin

(1) Most indeclinable loan-words in **-ао**, **-ау**, **-е**, **-и**, **-о**, **-оа**, **-оу**, **-у**, **-яа**, **-ю**, **-э** are neuter: какао́ ‘cocoa’; но́у-ха́у ‘know how’; ателье́ ‘workshop’, желе́ ‘jelly’, каба́ре́ ‘cabaret’, кафе́ ‘café’, кашне́ ‘scarf’, коммюнике́ ‘communiqué’, купе́ ‘compartment’, портмоне́ ‘purse’, резюме́ ‘résumé’, тире́ ‘dash’, фойе́ ‘foyer’, шоссе́ ‘highway’; ви́ски ‘whisky’, жу́ри ‘jury’, пари́ ‘bet’, пенальти́ ‘penalty’ (also masculine), ра́лли ‘rally’, такси́ ‘taxi’, шасси́ ‘undercarriage’; бистро́ ‘bistro’, бюро́ ‘office’, депо́ ‘depot’, кино́ ‘cinema’, метро́ ‘underground railway’, пальто́ ‘overcoat’, пиани́но ‘piano’, ра́дио ‘radio’; боа́ ‘boa’

(but боа ‘boa-constrictor’ is masculine); шоу ‘show’; рагу ‘ragout’; ампула ‘role’; интервью ‘interview’, меню ‘menu’, ревью ‘review’; каратэ ‘karate’, евро ‘the Euro’, вето ‘veto’, лобби ‘lobby’.

Note

- (a) **Кóфе** ‘coffee’ is masculine: Ляля спросила, не сделать ли **крéпкий** кóфе (Trifonov) ‘Lyalya asked if she should not make some strong coffee’, and масс-мéдиа, ‘mass media’ is feminine.
- (b) Only context can show the number (singular or plural) of an indeclinable noun: thus В шкафу **висят нóвое** пальто/**висят нóвые** пальто ‘A new coat is hanging/new coats are hanging in the cupboard’; **однó** пальто ‘one coat’, **дéсять** пальто ‘ten coats’.

(2) Some indeclinables assume the gender of the central or ‘generic’ noun. Thus, **торна́до** ‘tornado’ is masculine (cf. вéтер ‘wind’), likewise **пуштú** ‘Pushtu’, **урдú** ‘Urdu’, **хíнди** ‘Hindi’ (cf. язык ‘language’) and **флóппи** (cf. флóппи-диск) ‘floppy disk’. **Авеню́** ‘avenue’ is feminine (cf. у́лица ‘street’), as are **саля́ми** ‘salami’ (cf. колбасá ‘sausage’), **цецé** ‘tsetse fly’ (cf. мýха ‘fly’) and **цунáми** ‘tsunami’ (alternatively neuter) (cf. волна́ ‘wave’):

Цунáми **унесла́** его́ в океáн (Gagarin)
The giant wave carried him out to sea

(3) The gender of many indeclinable nouns which denote human beings follows the principle of natural gender. Thus, буржуа́ ‘bourgeois’, крупя́ ‘croupier’, мафиóзо/мафиóзи ‘mafioso’, маэстро́ ‘maestro’ and рефери/рефери́ ‘referee’ are masculine, while лэди́ ‘lady’ and мадам́ ‘madam’ are feminine. Some nouns have common gender (визави́ ‘counterpart’, *vis-à-vis*, протeжé ‘protégé(e)’, хиппи́ ‘hippy’), whereas атташэ́ ‘attaché’, инкóгнито́ ‘person who is incognito’ and конферансэ́ ‘comprère’ are masculine and папарáнци ‘paparazzi’ is plural only.

(4) Indeclinable names of animals also have common gender: гну́ ‘gnu’, кенгурú́ ‘kangaroo’, шимпанзé ‘chimpanzee’ etc. Nouns are treated as masculine when the sex of the animal is irrelevant (**рáненный** гну ‘a wounded gnu’), but feminine gender is assigned in ‘female’ contexts:

Шимпанзé **корми́ла** детёныша
The chimpanzee was feeding her baby

(5) The names of some birds are masculine (какадú́ ‘cockatoo’, марабу́ ‘marabou’, фламинго́ ‘flamingo’) while колибри́ ‘humming-bird’ is masculine or feminine.

37 Indeclinable place names

Indeclinable place names take the gender of the central ('generic') noun. Names of towns and islands are masculine (cf. *гóрод* 'town' and *óстров* 'island'): *Баку́* 'Baku', *Гла́зго* 'Glasgow', *Калé* 'Calais', *Óсло* 'Oslo', *Скóпье/Скóпле* 'Skopje', *Сóчи* 'Sochi' (also plural: *ста́рые Сóчи* 'old Sochi'), *Тбили́си* 'Tbilisi', *То́кио* 'Tokyo'; *Ка́при* 'Capri', *Та́йти* 'Tahiti'. Similarly, the names of rivers are feminine (cf. *река́* 'river'): *споко́йная Ми́ссисипи* 'the calm Mississippi'. *Ю́нгфрау* 'the Jungfrau' is feminine (cf. *гора́* 'mountain'). *Э́ри* 'Lake Erie' is neuter (cf. *óзеро* 'lake'). *Ма́ли* 'Mali' has alternative feminine and neuter gender (cf. *страна́* 'country' and *госуда́рство* 'state'). Despite exceptions to the rule, the 'generic' principle is the norm.

38 Titles of books etc.

The generic principle is usually applied in assigning gender to titles which are indeclinable: *ту́ргéневская «Муму́»* 'Turgenev's *Mumu*' (cf. *повéсть* (f.) 'tale'), *ло́ндонская «Та́ймс»* 'the London *Times*' (cf. *газéта* 'newspaper'). A title based on an oblique case may observe the generic principle (*го́рьковская «На дне»* 'Gorky's *Lower Depths*' (cf. *пьéса* 'play')) or take a neuter adjective (*го́рьковское «На дне»*). Otherwise, gender is determined by the gender and number of the title: *пу́шкинский «Евгéний Оне́гин»* 'Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*', *ту́ргéневское «Дворя́нское гнездо́»* 'Turgenev's *Nest of Noblemen*', *савра́совские «Грачи́ прилетéли»* 'Savrasov's (painting) *The Rooks Have Arrived*'.

Note

In order to avoid possible incongruence, a genre word may be introduced: *ромáн* Толсто́го «*А́нна Каре́нина*» 'Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina*'.

39 Acronyms

The gender of acronyms is usually determined by their ending. Thus, *бомж* (from *без определéнного мéста житéльства* 'without a definite place of residence') 'homeless person', *вуз* (from *вы́сшее учёбное заведéние* 'higher teaching establishment'), *загс* (from *отдéл за́писи áктов граждáнского состоя́ния* 'registry office') are masculine. However, the gender of the central noun may sometimes prove decisive.

Thus, **роно́** (from районный отдел народного образования ‘local education authority’) was originally neuter but is now usually treated as masculine.

Note

Loan acronyms such as **ла́зер**, from English ‘laser’ (light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation).

40 Alphabetisms

Alphabetisms consist of initial *capital* letters, many being pronounced as letters rather than words, and most are indeclinable, though there are exceptions among those assigned masculine gender (see 73). In terms of gender assignment, alphabetisms subdivide as follows:

(1) Those which retain the gender of the central noun:

(i) Masculine: **ВИЧ** [вич] (ви́рус иммунодефи́цита челове́ка) ‘human immunodeficiency virus’, **НИУ**, **МГУ** [эм-гэ-у] (Моско́вский госуда́рственный универси́тет) ‘Moscow State University’, **МХАТ** [мхат] (Моско́вский худо́жественный акаде́мический теа́тр) ‘Moscow Art Theatre’, **НИИ** [ний] (Нау́чно-иссле́довательский институ́т) ‘Scientific Research Institute’, **ОВИР** [ови́р] (Отде́л виз и регистра́ция иностран́ных гра́ждан) ‘Visa Department and Registration of Foreign Nationals’, **СКА** [эс-ка́ or ска] (спорти́вный клуб а́рмии) ‘Army Sports Club’.

(ii) Feminine: **АТС** [а-тэ-эс] (автомати́ческая телефо́нная ста́нция) ‘automatic telephone exchange’, **ГАИ** [гаи́] (Госуда́рственная автомоби́льная инспе́кция) ‘State Vehicle Inspectorate’ (see page 596), **ГЭС** [гэс] (гидроэлектри́ческая ста́нция/гидроэлектроста́нция) ‘hydroelectric power station’, **ООН** [оо́н] (Организа́ция Объединённых На́ций) ‘United Nations Organization’, **СКВ** [эс-ка-вэ́] (свободно конверти́руемая валю́та) ‘freely-convertible currency’, **ТЭЦ** [тэц] (теплова́я электроста́нция) ‘thermal power station’. **КПРФ** [кэ-пэ-эр-эф] (Коммуни́стическая па́ртия Росси́йской Федера́ции) ‘Communist Party of the Russian Federation’, **ЛДПР** [эл-дэ-пэ-эр] (Либе́рально-демократи́ческая па́ртия Росси́и) ‘Liberal Democratic Party of Russia’.

Здесь **рабо́тала** мо́щная ГЭС (*Sputnik*)

A mighty power station was in operation here

(iii) Neuter: **СНГ** [эс-эн-гэ́] (Содру́жество незави́симых госуда́рств) ‘Commonwealth of Independent States’, ‘CIS’, **СП** [эс-пэ́] (совме́стное предпри́ятие) ‘joint venture’, **ТЯО** [тяо́] (такти́ческое я́дерное ору́жие) ‘tactical nuclear weapons’.

(iv) Plural: **ЯКВ** [я-ка-вэ́] (я́дерные космо́ические воору́жения) ‘nuclear space armaments’.

(2) Some much-used alphabetisms acquire the gender implied by the ending. Thus, **Минздрав** (from Министер́ство здравоохране́ния ‘Ministry of Health’) is masculine, **Минобразова́ние** (from Министер́ство образова́ния ‘Ministry of Education’) is neuter. **МИД** [мид] (Министер́ство иностран́ных дел ‘Ministry of Foreign Affairs’), which was once neuter, is now masculine, **НЭП** [нэп] (но́вая эконо́мическая поли́тика ‘New Economic Policy’), which was once feminine, is now masculine and **ТАСС** [тасс] (Телегра́фное аге́нтство Сою́за ‘Telegraphic Agency of the Soviet Union’), (now replaced by **ИТАР-ТАСС**: Информа́ционное телегра́фное аге́нтство Росси́и – Телегра́фное аге́нтство сувере́нных стран ‘Information and Telegraphic Agency of Russia – Telegraphic Agency of the Sovereign Countries’), once neuter, also acquired masculine gender.

(3) Some alphabetisms differentiate gender stylistically. Thus, **ЖЭК** [жэк] (жилищно-эксплуата́ционная конто́ра ‘housing office’), initially feminine in written styles (cf. конто́ра), is commonly assigned masculine gender in everyday speech.

(4) Those based on the initials of *foreign* words tend to acquire gender in accordance with the ending. Thus, **ФИАТ** [фи́ат] (Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino) is masculine, **ФИФА** [фифа́] (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) is feminine and **НАТО** [на́то] (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) is neuter. **США** [сша/сэ-ше-а́] (Соедине́нные Шта́ты Аме́рики ‘United States of America’) is plural.

Note

Alphabetisms may be rendered phonetically, particularly in dialogue:

Вашу **эн-тэ-э́р** (НТР – нау́чно-техни́ческая револю́ция) я ви́дел (Grekova)

I have seen your scientific-technical revolution

Е́сли не в реме́сленное, то в **фе-зе-о́** (ФЗО – фабри́чно-заводско́е обуча́ние), мо́жет быть, возме́ут, сказа́л он. (Panova)

‘If I don’t get into trade school’, he said, ‘I might get accepted for factory apprentice training’.

41 Stump compounds

‘Stump compounds’ incorporate the truncated forms of one or more words: **забастко́м** (from забасто́вочный комите́т) ‘strike committee’, **колхо́з** (from коллекти́вное хозяй́ство) ‘collective farm’, **ликбе́з** (from ликвида́ция безгра́мотности) ‘elimination of illiteracy’, **собе́с** (from социáльное обеспе́чение) ‘social security’ (all masculine). Most nouns in this productive category take their gender from the ending of the stump compound. Those which denote people may have common gender, e.g. **управдо́м** (from управля́ющий/-ая до́мом) ‘house manager’ (управдо́м сказа́л, что дово́лен ‘the house manager said he was pleased’, управдо́м сказа́ла, что дово́льна ‘the house manager said she was pleased’) and similarly **за́вкáфедрой** (from заведу́ющий/-ая кáфедрой) ‘head of university department’. **Са́мбо** (from самообо́рoна без ору́жия) ‘unarmed combat’ is neuter, **сте́нгазе́та** (from сте́нная газе́та) ‘wall newspaper’ is feminine, **тере́кт** (from террористи́ческий акт) ‘terrorist outrage’ is masculine.

Note

The full title заведу́ющий кáфедрой ‘head of department’ is preferred to за́вкáфедрой in official contexts, referring to persons of either sex, and in contexts where the sex of the person is irrelevant, заведу́ющая being confined to colloquial registers or references to a particular person, cf.:

Собесе́дник назывáет Евге́нию Ива́новну Ду́рову, **заведу́ющую** гру́ппой биохими́ческих иссле́дований (*Pravda*)

The person I am speaking to mentions Evgeniya Ivanovna Durova, head of the biochemical research group

42 Compound hyphenated nouns

The gender of compound hyphenated nouns is determined by the gender of the central noun, which often precedes the qualifier: **автомобиль-иномáрка** (m.) ‘foreign car’, **га́лстук-ба́бочка** (m.) ‘bow-tie’, **дивáн-крово́ть** (m.) ‘divan-bed’, **крéсло-кача́лка** (n.) ‘rocking chair’, **раке́та-носи́тель** (f.) ‘carrier-rocket’, **шко́ла-интерна́т** (f.) ‘boarding school’. However, in some compounds the qualifier precedes the central noun: **автомáт-заку́сочная** (f.) ‘vending machine’, **шта́б-кварты́ра** (f.) ‘headquarters’ **веб-страи́ца** (f.) ‘web-page’, **пресс-конфере́нция** (f.) ‘press conference’, **сма́рт-ка́рта** (f.) ‘smart card’:

Автомáт-заку́сочная **отремонти́рована**

The vending machine has been repaired

13 ию́ля на ста́ртовом по́ле **появи́лась** дубли́рующая раке́та-носитель (*Russia Today*)

A reserve carrier-rocket appeared on the launch pad on 13 July

43 Differentiation of gender through suffixes

(1) Suffixes are used to distinguish male and female representatives of various occupations, professions, organizations, functions, nationalities etc. See also 29.

Male	Female	
армя́нин	армя́нка	Armenian
бегу́н	бегу́нья	runner
большеви́к	большеви́чка	Bolshevik
корми́лец	корми́лица	breadwinner
крановщи́к	крановщи́ца	crane operator
ле́тчик	ле́тчица	pilot
не́мец	не́мка	German
поэ́т	поэте́сса	poet
сто́рож	сторожи́ха	guard
супру́г	супру́га	spouse
уче́ник	уче́ница	pupil
учи́тель	учи́тельница	teacher

Note also стары́к ‘old man’, стару́ха ‘old woman’.

(2) The masculine form may, however, be used for persons of either sex:

(i) Where gender differentiation is of no significance in a particular occupation. Thus, библиотéкарь ‘librarian’, води́тель ‘driver’, касси́р ‘cashier’, конду́ктор ‘(bus-) conductor’ etc. can be used of men *and* women. The feminine suffix **-ша** (as in библиотéкариша, касси́риша, конду́кторша) has in any case been devalued by its earlier use in designating a woman in terms of her husband’s occupation: генера́льша ‘general’s wife’ (cf. купчи́ха ‘merchant’s wife’). In modern Russian **-ша** is reserved for some occupations practised predominantly by women (e.g. маникю́риша ‘manicurist’ (маникю́р means ‘manicure’)) or denotes a lower-prestige occupation (cf. секретáриша ‘shorthand typist’ and секретáрь ‘secretary’ (of, for example, a party committee)). See also 29 (46).

Note

Учи́тель tends to sound more prestigious than **учи́тельница** and may refer to a female as well as to a male teacher, especially where the subject is specified: Она́ **учи́тель** математи́ки ‘She is a mathematics

teacher’. Compare Она́ наилучший **учитель** в школе ‘She is the best teacher in the school’ (i.e. of all the teachers, male and female) and Она́ наилучшая **учительница** в школе ‘She is the best woman-teacher in the school’.

(ii) In cases where a plural covers male and female practitioners: профсоюз **рабóтников** транспорта ‘transport workers’ union’.

(3) Gender differentiation is retained, however, when male and female practitioners fulfil different functions: thus **актёр, актри́са** ‘actor, actress’ (playing, respectively, male and female roles). This also applies in most sports (where men and women compete against others of their own sex, not against each other): thus **ко́нькобе́жец/ко́нькобе́жка** ‘skater’, **плóвец/плóвчи́ха** ‘swimmer’, **че́мпии́он/че́мпии́онка** ‘champion’ (note, however, that only the more prestigious-sounding **че́мпии́он** is used in official titles).

(4) In cases where men take up a ‘female’ occupation, a male equivalent of the name of the profession may be created, e.g. **до́яр**, cf. до́ярка ‘milkmaid’ (however, both have been superseded in mechanized dairies by **опе́ра́тор** or **ма́стер маши́нного до́ения** ‘milking-machine operator’), **пере́писчик на маши́нке**, cf. **маши́ни́стка** ‘typist’ (маши́ни́ст ‘engine-driver’). Note also **меди́цинский бра́т** (or **сани́та́р**) ‘male nurse’ (cf. ме́дицинская се́стра ‘nurse’). The male equivalent of бале́рина ‘ballerina’ is **а́ртист ба́лэ́та**. However, there are seemingly no masculine equivalents for **мо́дистка** ‘milliner’ and **шве́я-мото́ри́стка** ‘sewing-machine operator’.

44 Professions

(1) Where professions which were almost exclusively male dominated before the Revolution are now also practised by women, the same designation is used for either sex. This applies to all professions in **-вед, -граф, -лог** (языковед ‘linguist’, биолог ‘biologist’, топограф ‘topographer’ etc.) and to **а́втор** ‘author’, **архите́ктор** ‘architect’, **ветерина́р** ‘veterinary surgeon’, **врач** ‘doctor’ (же́нщина-врач ‘woman doctor’ is no longer appropriate in a society where most doctors *are* women; cf., however, **же́нщина-космона́вт** ‘space-woman’ and **же́нщина-офице́р** ‘woman officer’), **ди́ктор** ‘announcer’, **дире́ктор** ‘director’, **до́ктор** ‘doctor’, **инжене́р** ‘engineer’, **компози́тор** ‘composer’, **мини́стр** ‘minister’, **парикма́хер** ‘hairdresser’, **повар** ‘cook’, **почта́льон** ‘postman’, **преде́латель** ‘chairman’, **продаве́ц** ‘sales assistant’, **профе́ссор** ‘professor’, **строите́ль** ‘builder’, **судья́** ‘judge’.

счетовод 'accountant', тренер 'trainer', шеф 'boss, head', экскурсовод 'guide' etc.

Note

- (a) Though some of the above have feminine equivalents which are also in use (e.g. **продавщица** 'sales-girl'), all *can* be used to designate either men or women. Masculine and feminine forms may, however, be distinguished stylistically, with masculine (**продавец** 'sales assistant', **секретарь** 'secretary' etc.) preferred in official contexts and feminine in conversation (Она работает **продавщицей** 'She works as a shop assistant').
- (b) The sex of an individual may be indicated by context: В клубе с родителями не раз **встречалась** профессор **А. А. Люблинская**, специалист по детской психологии (*Rabotnitsa*) 'Professor A. A. Lyublinskaya, a specialist in child psychology, met parents in the club on more than one occasion'.
- (c) In colloquial Russian, **историчка** refers to a female history teacher (cf. историк 'historian, history teacher'). **Электричка** (cf. электрик 'electrician') and **техничка** (cf. техник 'technician') mean respectively 'suburban commuter train' and 'cleaning lady'.
- (d) Male and female also share ranks in the services: **Рядовой** Вера Захаренко награждена орденом Отечественной войны (*Rabotnitsa*) 'Private Vera Zakharenko has been awarded the Patriotic War Medal'.

(2) The nouns are qualified by *masculine* attributive adjectives irrespective of sex:

Он хорóший врач He is a good doctor
Она хорóший врач She is a good doctor

Note

The use of feminine adjectives in such cases (e.g. **молодая** экскурсовод 'a young guide') is characteristic of 'relaxed' speech. **Молодой** экскурсовод is preferred for persons of either sex. In oblique cases masculine agreement is mandatory: Он подошёл к нашему экскурсоводу Ивановой 'He approached Ivanova, our guide'. Since there are some professions with which feminine adjectives may not combine (**агроном** 'agronomist', **учитель** 'teacher', **хирург** 'surgeon'), feminine agreement is best avoided altogether.

(3) The gender of **predicative** adjectives and past verb forms depends on the sex of the individual:

Врач **бóлен** The doctor (male) is sick

Врач **больна́** The doctor (female) is sick

Касси́р о́чень ве́жливо и о́чень прόсто всё **объя́сни́ла**
(*Izvestiya*)

The cashier explained everything very politely and very simply

Библиотéкарь **добáвила**: У нас 12 000 томóв (Nosov)

The librarian added 'We have 12,000 volumes'

45 Animals

(1) Most nouns denoting animals, birds, insects etc. refer to the species in general: **ёж** 'hedgehog', **жура́вль** (m.) 'crane', **ки́т** 'whale', **кры́са** 'rat', **мышь** (f.) 'mouse' and so on. Thus, there is no indication of the sex of the animal or bird in **Ёж скры́лся в лесу́** 'The hedgehog disappeared into the forest', **Лáсточка ви́ла гнездó** 'The swallow was building a nest'. Male and female can be differentiated where necessary by using the words **самéц** 'male' and **сáмка** 'female' followed by the genitive case of the name of the animal: **самéц/сáмка ежа́** 'male/female (of the) hedgehog' etc.

(2) Some animal names, however, do distinguish male and female: **волк/волчи́ца** 'wolf', **за́яц/зайчи́ха** 'hare', **лев/льви́ца** 'lion/lioness', **слон/слони́ха** 'elephant', **тигр/тигри́ца** 'tiger/tigress'. The male form also denotes the species in general (except for **кот/ко́шка** 'cat', where the female form **ко́шка** denotes the species in general).

(3) Male and female are differentiated in the names of farm animals: **барáн/овца́** 'ram/sheep', **бо́ров/свинья́** 'boar/sow', **бык/коро́ва** 'bull/cow', **козе́л/коза́** 'billy-/nanny-goat', **пету́х/кури́ца** 'cockerel/hen', **се́лезень/у́тка** 'drake/duck'.

(4) A few species have three names denoting (a) the species in general, (b) male and (c) female: **гусь** (m.) 'goose', **гуса́к** 'gander', **гуси́ня** 'goose'; **лоша́дь** (f.) 'horse', **жеребе́ц** 'stallion', **кобы́ла** 'mare'; **соба́ка** 'dog', **кобе́ль** (m.) 'male dog', **су́ка** 'bitch'.

Declension

46 Introduction

(1) Nouns decline according to one of three declension patterns. Most

masculine and neuter nouns belong to the first declension and most feminine nouns to the second, except for feminine soft-sign nouns, which belong to the third declension (see **63**).

(2) The first and second declensions contain both hard-ending nouns (e.g. first-declension **дом** ‘house’, **окно́** ‘window’, second-declension **ка́рта** ‘map’) and soft-ending nouns (e.g. first-declension **музе́й** ‘museum’, **гос́ть** ‘guest’, **мо́ре** ‘sea’, second-declension **ку́хня** ‘kitchen’). All nouns in the third declension are feminine and end in a soft sign.

(3) Some declension endings are affected by the rules of spelling (see **16** (1) and (2)).

(4) For *stress* changes in all three declensions, see **57**, **60**, **62**, **63** (4).

47 Animacy

(1) The accusative case of an animate **masculine** singular noun is identical with the genitive, (see **(51)**) cf.

дом **бра́та** (genitive) ‘my brother’s house’
ви́жу **бра́та** (accusative) ‘I see my brother’

Note

The differentiation of animate subject and animate object is important in a language where either may precede the other with virtually no change in meaning, cf. Оте́ц лю́бит сы́на ‘The father loves the son’ and Сы́на лю́бит оте́ц ‘The father loves the son’ (or ‘It is the father who loves the son’, see **475** (2)). The need to avoid ambiguity determines the accusative/genitive rule in animate masculine nouns.

(2) The following types of masculine singular noun are affected:

(i) Human beings: Оте́ц лю́бит сы́на ‘The father loves the son’.

(ii) Animals: Я ви́жу бы́ка ‘I see the bull’.

(iii) Common nouns used figuratively to denote human beings: болва́н ‘blockhead’, дуб ‘dunce’, куми́р ‘idol’, тип ‘type’ etc.:

Я ре́дко встреча́л тако́го болва́на/тако́го забавно́го ти́па
I have seldom met such a blockhead/such a funny character

Note

(a) Я ве́л «Москвича́» ‘I was driving a “Moskvich”’ (car) is more colloquial than Я ве́л «Москвѝч».

- (b) Usage with **рóбот**: cf. Инженёр конструирует **рóбот** ‘The engineer is designing a robot’ (i.e. an automaton), and figurative usage in превращать человека в **рóбота** ‘to turn a man into a robot’. However, the animate accusative/genitive is now normal in non-figurative contexts also:

Компáния «Мацусима» ужé испытáла рóбота (*Nedelya*)
The ‘Matsushima’ company has already tested a robot

- (iv) Some folk dances, e.g. плясáть **трепакá**, **гопакá** ‘to dance the trepak, the gopak’; animate beings in book titles, e.g. Держáл в руках «*Чапáева*» ‘In his hands he held *Chapaev*’ (a novel); playing cards, e.g. сбросить **валéта**, снять **тузá**, ‘to discard a knave, cut an ace’; billiards and snooker balls, e.g. положить **зелéного** (шарá) в лузу ‘to pocket the green’; chess pieces, e.g. взять **слонá**, **короля**, **ферзjá** ‘to take a bishop, the king, the queen’; the words **змея** ‘kite’ and **развэдчик** ‘reconnaissance aircraft’ (cf. animate connotations (‘serpent’ and ‘reconnaissance agent’ respectively)), e.g. пускáть **змéя** ‘to fly a kite’, сбить **развэдчика** ‘to shoot down a reconnaissance aircraft’. Analogous usage such as сбить **истребителя** ‘to shoot down a fighter’ and поставитъ **двóрника** ‘to fit a windscreen wiper’ characterizes professional colloquial speech but is otherwise regarded as substandard for usage with standard inanimate accusatives **истребитель** and **двóрник**.

Note

- (a) Collective nouns (e.g. нарóд ‘people’, полк ‘regiment’, скот ‘cattle’) are *not* treated as animate:

Вначáле тигр нападáет на **скот** (*Russia Today*)
First a tiger attacks the cattle

- (b) The nouns мертвéc ‘dead person’ and покóйник ‘deceased’ are treated as animate, while труп ‘corpse’ is not, cf.

Он взял **мертвещá** за плечó и повернул нá спину (*Nagibin*)
He took the dead person by the shoulder and turned him on his back
and

Он рассказáл, как он обнаружил **труп** (*Nagibin*)
He told how he had discovered the corpse

- (3) The following types of **plural** noun are affected by the rule.

- (i) Human beings and animals of *all* genders: (see **51**, **61**, **158** (6) (iv))

Она кóрмит **мáльчиков** и **дéвочек**
She is feeding the boys and girls

Он ко́рмит **осло́в** и **ове́ц**
He is feeding the donkeys and the sheep

Он ви́дит **живо́тных**
He sees the animals

Note

Лови́ть **ома́ров** ‘to catch (live, i.e. animate) lobsters’, but е́сть, покупа́ть **ома́ры** ‘to eat, buy (dead, i.e. inanimate) lobsters’. The distinction applies mainly to crustaceans, but is not consistently observed.

(ii) Toys fashioned in human form:

Там де́лают **матрёшек** Nesting dolls are made there
Де́вочка одева́ет **ку́кол** The little girl is dressing the dolls

Note

Марио́нетка ‘puppet’ also belongs in this category.

(iii) Plural equivalents of the singular categories listed above: чита́ть «**Бра́тьев** **Карама́зовых**» ‘to read *The Brothers Karamazov*’ (see (2) (iii) and (iv) above).

Note

- (a) **Бакте́рия** ‘bacterium’, **баци́лла** ‘bacillus’, **ви́рус** ‘virus’, **за́ро́дыш** ‘foetus’, **микрóб** ‘microbe’ are treated as inanimate: **Челове́к** **убива́ет ба́циллы** и **бакте́рии** ‘Man kills bacilli and bacteria’. Use of the accusative/genitive in such cases is regarded as somewhat old-fashioned but may be encountered in books on biology and medicine: **Изуча́ть бакте́рий, ви́русов, микрóбов** ‘To study bacteria, viruses, microbes’.
- (b) **Войска́** (pl.) ‘troops’ is treated as inanimate and has accusative **войска́**.
- (c) The animate accusative genitive rule also applies to adjectives, pronouns and certain numerals (see **193** (1 note (c)), **196** (2) and **200**).

48 Nouns which are used only in the singular

Some nouns have singular form only. They include nouns which denote:

- (1) **Qualities, sensations:** хра́брость ‘bravery’, грусть ‘sadness’.

(2) **Collectives:** бельё ‘linen’, листьв́а ‘foliage’ etc.

(3) **Substances, foods, cereals:** д́ерево ‘wood’, овёс ‘oats’ and so on. Note, however, that the plurals of some nouns in these categories are encountered in the meaning ‘brands’, ‘large quantities’: жи́ры ‘fats’. This also applies to certain **natural phenomena** normally found in the singular only: дожди́ ‘persistent rain’, морозы́ ‘persistent heavy frost’, снегá ‘heavy snow’. The names of some **vegetables and fruits** are also used in the singular only (виноград ‘grapes’, горо́х ‘peas’, изю́м ‘raisins’, капуста́ ‘cabbage’, карто́фель ‘potatoes’, лук ‘onions’, морко́вь ‘carrots’), a different word being used to denote ‘one onion’ (лу́ковица/голова́вка лу́ка or лу́ку): cf. виногра́дина ‘a grape’, горо́шина ‘a pea’, изю́мина ‘a raisin’, карто́фелина/клу́бень карто́феля ‘a potato’, коча́н капу́сты ‘a cabbage’, морко́вка ‘a carrot’. Compare also соло́ма ‘straw’, соло́мина ‘a straw’; шокола́д ‘chocolate’, шоколо́дка ‘a chocolate’.

(4) ‘Singularives’ are also used to create plural forms from abstracts and collectives which have no plural of their own: долг ‘duty’ (**обязанности** ‘duties’ (note that долг in the meaning ‘debt’ has a plural: дол́ги)), ложь ‘lie’ (**выдумки** ‘fabrications, lies’), ору́жие ‘weapons’ (pl. **ви́ды ору́жия**), поли́тика ‘policy, politics’ (полити́ческие **направле́ния** ‘policies’), промышле́нность ‘industry’ (**отрасли** промышле́нности ‘industries’), спорт ‘sport’ (**ви́ды спо́рта** ‘sports, events’). Note also that разли́чия can be used as the plural of ра́зница (which has no plural of its own).

(5) The names of animals, trees etc. may denote a whole species:

В на́шем лесу́ растёт то́лько **сосна́**
Only pine trees grow in our forest

Здесь ло́вят то́лько **лещá**
Only bream is caught here

(6) Names of professions and some other words can also be used collectively: День **шахтёра** ‘Miners’ Day’, Дом **кни́ги** ‘book shop’, Дом **учи́теля** ‘Teachers’ Club’.

Note

A number of nouns, once used only in the singular, have acquired plurals: риск ‘risk’, pl. ри́ски, техноло́гия ‘technology’, pl. техноло́гии, эконóмика ‘economy’, pl. эконóмики, etc.

49 Nouns which have a plural form only

(1) Many plural-only nouns denote objects comprising two or more essential components: **брюки** ‘trousers’, **ножницы** ‘scissors’. Others denote complex processes (**роды** ‘childbirth’), games (**прятки** ‘hide and seek’) etc.

(2) Morphologically, the nouns subdivide as follows.

(i) Plurals in **-ы/-и/-á**, genitive **-ов**:

аплодисменты ‘applause’ gen. **аплодисментов**

Similarly **бегá** ‘trotting races’, **весы** ‘scales’, **вы́боры** ‘election’, **дебáты** ‘debate’, **джинсы** ‘jeans’, **духи́** ‘perfume’, **за́морозки** ‘light frosts’, **консервы** ‘preserves’, **мемуа́ры** ‘memoirs’, **оста́нки** ‘human remains’, **очки́** ‘spectacles’, **переговóры** ‘negotiations’, **подóнки** ‘dregs’, **припа́сы** ‘stores’, **ро́ды** ‘childbirth’, **счёты** ‘abacus’, **тро́пики** ‘tropics’, **тру́сики/трусý** ‘shorts’, **штаны́** ‘trousers’, **щипцы́** ‘pincers, tongs’, **тали́бы**, ‘the Taliban’.

Note

Nouns ending in two vowels or unstressed **-цы** have gen. **-ев**: **обо́и**, **оббе́в** ‘wallpaper’ (likewise **побóи** ‘beating’, **помóи** ‘slops’), **плоскогýбцы**, **плоскогýбцев** ‘pliers’.

(ii) Plurals in **-ы/-и** with zero genitive ending:

ви́лы ‘pitchfork’ gen. **вил**

Similarly **Афи́ны** ‘Athens’, **брю́ки** ‘trousers’, **де́ньги** (gen. **де́нег**) ‘money’, **имени́ны** ‘name-day’, **кальсо́ны** ‘pants’, **кани́кулы** ‘holidays’, **носи́лки** (gen. **носи́лок**) ‘stretcher’, **но́жницы** ‘scissors’, **но́жны** (gen. **но́жен**) ‘sheath’, **опи́лки** (gen. **опи́лок**) ‘sawdust’, **панталóны** ‘knickers’, **пла́вки** (gen. **пла́вок**) ‘swimming trunks’, **по́хороны** (gen. **похоро́н**) ‘funeral’, **сала́зки** (gen. **сала́зок**) ‘toboggan’, **са́нки** (gen. **са́нок**) ‘sledge’, **сли́вки** (gen. **сли́вок**) ‘cream’, **су́мерки** (gen. **су́мерек**) ‘dusk’, **су́тки** (gen. **су́ток**) ‘24-hour period’, **у́зы** ‘bonds’, **хло́поты** (gen. **хлопо́т**) ‘trouble’, **ша́хматы** ‘chess’, **шо́ры** ‘blinkers’.

(iii) Plurals in **-а** with zero genitive ending:

воро́та ‘gate’ gen. **воро́т**

Similarly **дрова́** ‘firewood’, **кружева́** ‘lace’ (also sing. **кру́жево**), **не́дра** ‘bowels of the earth’, **пе́рыла** ‘railing’, **черни́ла** ‘ink’.

(iv) Nouns in **-и**, genitive **-ей**:

качѐли ‘swing’ gen. **качѐлей**

Similarly б́удни ‘weekdays’ (gen. also б́уден), вóжжи (gen. **вожжѐй**) ‘reins’, гра́бли ‘rake’ (gen. also **гра́бель**), джун́гли ‘jungle’, дро́жжи (gen. **дрожжѐй**) ‘yeast’, клѐщи (gen. **клещѐй**) ‘pincers’, кúдри (gen. **кудрѐй**) ‘curls’, пóмочи (gen. **помочѐй**) ‘braces’, сáни (gen. **санѐй**) ‘sledge’, щи ‘cabbage soup’.

Note

- (a) Прѐния, gen. **прѐний** ‘debate’, свѐдения, gen. **свѐдений** ‘information’.
- (b) Countable nouns in the series, e.g. сáни ‘sledge’, can denote one object (‘sledge’) or a number of objects (‘sledges’). Meaning is determined by context: Из санѐй в́ыскочил **солдáт** ‘A soldier jumped from the **sledge**’; Из санѐй в́ыскочил **цѐлый взвод солдáт** ‘A whole platoon of soldiers jumped from the **sledges**’.

50 Declension chart

The following chart shows, in simplified form, the declension pattern in all three declensions.

		Singular				Plural		
		m	n	f		m	n	f
N		cons. -й -ь	-о -е -ѐ	-а/-я	-ь	-ы/-и	-а/-я	-ы/-и
A	INAN	= N	= N	-у/ю	-ь	= N		
	ANIM	= G				= G		
G		-а/-я		-ы/-и	-и	-ов/-ев/-ей	zero/ей	
D		-у/-ю		-е	-и	-ам/-ям		
I		-ом/ str. ѐм	unstr. ем -ей	-ой/ -ѐй	-ью	-ами/-ями		
P		-е			-и	-ах/-ях		

51 First declension: masculine nouns

(1) Hard-ending nouns

Declension of **заво́д** ‘factory’ (inanimate) and **студе́нт** ‘student’ (animate):

	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
<i>Nom.</i>	заво́д	студе́нт	заво́д- ы	студе́нт- ы
<i>Acc.</i>	заво́д (=nom.)	студе́нт- а (=gen.)	заво́д- ы	студе́нт- ов
<i>Gen.</i>	заво́д- а	студе́нт- а	заво́д- ов	студе́нт- ов
<i>Dat.</i>	заво́д- у	студе́нт- у	заво́д- ам	студе́нт- ам
<i>Instr.</i>	заво́д- ом	студе́нт- ом	заво́д- ами	студе́нт- ами
<i>Prep.</i>	о заво́д- е	о студе́нт- е	о заво́д- ах	о студе́нт- ах

Note

- (a) Nouns in **г, к, х/ж, ч, ш, щ** have nominative and inanimate accusative plural **-и**: уро́к ‘lesson’, урб́ки; нож ‘knife’, но́жи (see 16 (1)).
- (b) Nouns ending in **ж, ч, ш, щ, ц** and with stem stress in declension have instrumental singular **-ем**: душ ‘shower’, ду́шем; ме́сяц ‘month’, ме́сяцем (see 16 (2)).
- (c) Nouns ending in **ж, ч, ш, щ** have genitive plural **-ей**: нож ‘knife’, gen. pl. но́жéй.
- (d) Nouns ending in **-ц** with stem stress in declension have genitive plural **-ев**: шпри́ц ‘syringe’, gen. pl. шпри́цев (see 16 (2)).
- (e) The genitive plural of some nouns is identical with the nominative singular (see 56).
- (f) **Год** ‘year’ has genitive plural **лет** (**годо́в** in denoting decades: мо́ды **50-х** **годо́в** ‘the fashions of the fifties’); cf. dative, instrumental, prepositional plural **года́м, годáми, о годáх**.

(2) Soft-ending nouns

(i) Nouns in **-й**

Declension of **музе́й** ‘museum’ and **геро́й** ‘hero’:

	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
<i>Nom.</i>	музе́й	геро́й	музе́- и	геро́- и
<i>Acc.</i>	музе́й (=nom.)	геро́- я (=gen.)	музе́- и	геро́- ев
<i>Gen.</i>	музе́- я	геро́- я	музе́- ев	геро́- ев
<i>Dat.</i>	музе́- ю	геро́- ю	музе́- ям	геро́- ям

<i>Instr.</i>	музѐ- ем	герó- ем	музѐ- ями	герó- ями
<i>Prep.</i>	о музѐ- е	о герó- е	о музѐ- ях	о герó- ях

Note

- (a) Nouns in **-ий** have prepositional singular **-ии**: гѐний ‘genius’, о гѐнии.
- (b) **Воробѐй** ‘sparrow’ is declined as follows: acc./gen. воробѐя, dat. воробѐю, instr. воробѐём, prep. о воробѐѐ; nom. pl. воробѐй, acc./gen. воробѐѐв, dat. воробѐям, instr. воробѐями, prep. о воробѐях. Similarly, муравѐй ‘ant’, соловѐй ‘nightingale’ and inanimate (acc. = nom.) репѐй ‘burdock’, ручѐй ‘stream’ and stem-stressed ўлей ‘bee-hive’.

(ii) Soft-sign nouns

Declension of **портфѐль** ‘briefcase’ and **тѐсть** ‘father-in-law’:

	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
<i>Nom.</i>	портфѐль	тѐсть	портфѐл- и	тѐст- и
<i>Acc.</i>	портфѐль (=nom.)	тѐст- я (=gen.)	портфѐл- и	тѐст- ей
<i>Gen.</i>	портфѐл- я	тѐст- я	портфѐл- ей	тѐст- ей
<i>Dat.</i>	портфѐл- ю	тѐст- ю	портфѐл- ям	тѐст- ям
<i>Instr.</i>	портфѐл- ем	тѐст- ем	портфѐл- ями	тѐст- ями
<i>Prep.</i>	о портфѐл- е	о тѐст- е	о портфѐл- ях	о тѐст- ях

52 The fleeting vowel

The vowel in the final syllable of many nouns which end in a hard consonant or soft sign does *not* appear in oblique cases. Vowels affected include the following:

- (1) ‘о’: рѐнок ‘market’

	Nom./Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
Singular	рѐнок	рѐнка	рѐнку	рѐнком	о рѐнке
Plural	рѐнки	рѐнков	рѐнкам	рѐнками	о рѐнках

Most nouns in **-ок** are similarly declined. Exceptions include **знатóк** ‘connoisseur’ (gen. **знатокá**), **игрóк** ‘player’, **урóк** ‘lesson’.

Note

Some other nouns also contain a fleeting **-о-**:

- (a) Hard-ending nouns: лóб ‘forehead’, gen. **лба**; моx ‘moss’; посóл ‘ambassador’; рот ‘mouth’; сон ‘sleep’; ўгол ‘corner’; шов ‘seam’.

(b) Soft-sign nouns: дѣготь, gen. дѣгтя ‘tar’; коготь ‘claw’; ломоть ‘slice’; ноготь ‘nail’; огонь ‘fire’; уголь ‘coal’, gen. угля/ўгля.

(2) ‘e’: конѣц ‘end’

	Nom./Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
Singular	конѣц	концá	концú	концѡм	о концѣ
Plural	концѣ	концов	концáм	концáми	о концáх

Most nouns in **-ец** are similarly declined. However, stressed **-ѣ-** is retained when preceded by a double consonant: близнѣц ‘twin’, gen. близнѣцá; кузнѣц ‘blacksmith’, gen. кузнѣцá.

Note

- (a) See 51 (1) notes (b) and (d) for the instrumental singular and genitive plural of stem-stressed nouns in **-ц**.
- (b) **-ле-** becomes **-ль-** in oblique cases: палец ‘finger’, gen. пáльца.
- (c) A fleeting vowel preceded by another vowel is replaced by **-й-** in oblique cases: бельгѣец ‘Belgian’, gen. бельгѣйца; китáец ‘Chinese’, gen. китáйца. Cf. заём ‘loan’, gen. зáйма; зáяц ‘hare’, gen. зáйца.

Other hard and soft nouns with a fleeting **-e-** include вѣтер ‘wind’ (gen. вѣтра), зáмысел ‘project’, ўзел ‘knot’ (gen. узлá), хребѣт ‘range of hills’; день ‘day’ (gen. дня), кáмень ‘stone’, кашель ‘cough’, кóрень ‘root’, ливень ‘downpour’, пáрень ‘fellow’, пень ‘stump’, ремѣнь ‘strap’, стѣбель ‘stalk’.

(3) ‘ë’: ковѣр ‘carpet’

Nouns with a fleeting **ë** include ковѣр ‘carpet’ (gen. коврá), козѣл ‘goat’, костѣр ‘bonfire’, котѣл ‘boiler’. Note that in some words **ë** is replaced by a soft sign following **л**, **н** or **р**: лёд ‘ice’ (gen. льда), конѣк ‘skate’ (gen. конькá), хорѣк ‘ferret’ (gen. хорькá).

53 Partitive genitive in **-у/-ю**

Some hard-ending masculine nouns and a few nouns in **-й** have an alternative genitive singular in **-у/-ю**. The nouns all denote measurable quantities, e.g. виногрáд ‘grapes’ (gen. виногрáда/виногрáду), чай ‘tea’ (gen. чáя/чáю). Other nouns with a partitive genitive in **-у/-ю** include:

жир	fat	сáхар	sugar
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квас	kvass	снег	snow
клей	glue	суп	soup
лук	onions	сыр	cheese
мёд	honey	таба́к	tobacco
мел	chalk	творо́г	cottage cheese
мех	fur	чесно́к	garlic
наро́д	people	шёлк	silk
песо́к	sand, castor sugar	шокола́д	chocolate
рис	rice		

Most genitives in **-у/-ю** appear only in quantitative expressions: кусо́к **сы́ру** ‘piece of cheese’, ча́шка **ча́ю** ‘cup of tea’. See also 84.

Owing to the colloquial nature of the genitives in **-у**, they are not found with nouns denoting rarer substances such as, for example, **молибде́н** ‘molybdenum’.

54 Prepositional/locative singular in **-у/-ю**

(1) Locative in **-у**

Some nouns have an alternative prepositional singular in stressed **-у**; it is used with the prepositions **в** and **на** to denote location, but not with other prepositions that take the prepositional case (о, по, при); cf. **в порту́** ‘in the port’ and **о порте́** ‘about the port’:

аэропо́рт	airport
бал	ball, dance
бе́рег	shore, bank
бок	side
бор	coniferous forest
бо́рт	side (of a ship, etc.)
	на бо́рту ‘on board’
ве́рх	top, summit
глаз	eye
До́н	the Don
Кли́н	Klin
Кры́м	the Crimea
ле́д	ice
	(на льду́ ‘on the ice’)
лес	forest
лоб	forehead
	(на лбу́ ‘on the forehead’)

луг	meadow
мост	bridge
мох	moss (во мху 'in the moss')
нос	nose, prow
плот	raft
пол	floor
полк	regiment
порт	port
пост	post (на посту́ 'at one's post')
пруд	pond
рот	mouth (во рту 'in the mouth')
сад	garden, orchard
снег	snow
тыл	the rear
угол	corner (в/на углу́ 'in/at the corner')
шкаф	cupboard

Note

- Some phrases denote state: **в бреду́** 'in a delirium', **в быту́** 'in everyday life', **в жару́** 'in a fever', **в плену́** 'in captivity'.
- Where **в** or **на** have non-locational meanings, the noun takes the ending **-е**: знать толк **в ле́се** 'to understand the forest'.
- The ending **-е** is also used in the names of books: **в «Вишнёвом са́де» Чéхова** 'in Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard*'.
- Sometimes both **-е** and **-у́** are possible, the form in **-у́** being the more colloquial variant: **в о́тпуске/отпуску́** 'on holiday', **в це́хе/цеху́** 'in the workshop'.
- The endings **-е** and **-у́** may be differentiated semantically and phraseologically, cf. в XX **ве́ке** 'in the twentieth century' and Много ви́дел я люде́й на своём **веку́** 'I have seen a lot of people in my time'; в **ви́де** исключéния 'by way of an exception' and имéть в **виду́** 'to bear in mind'; в **до́ме** 'in the house' and на **дому́** 'on the premises'; в спасáтельном **кргу́е** 'in a lifebelt' and в семéйном **кргу́у́** 'in the family circle'; трудíться в **пóте** лица́ 'to labour by the sweat of one's brow' and весь в **поту́** 'bathed in sweat'; в **ря́де** слúчаев 'in a number of cases' and в пéрвом **ряду́** 'in the front row'; умерéть во **цвéте** лет 'to die in one's prime'

and деревья в полном **цвету́** ‘the trees are in full bloom’; в **часе́** лёта от Москвы́ ‘an hour’s flight from Moscow’ and во втором **часу́** ‘between one and two o’clock’.

- (f) Note also жить в **ладу́** ‘to live in harmony’, куртка **на меху́** ‘furlined jacket’, **на каждом шагу́** ‘at every step’.

(2) Locative in -ю́

A few nouns in -ий and -ь have a locative singular in -ю́: бой ‘battle’, в бою́ ‘in battle’ (but о бое́ ‘about the battle’). Similarly рай ‘paradise’, строй (стоять в **строю́** ‘to stand in line’). Cf. на **краю́** ‘on the edge’, в родно́м **краю́** ‘on one’s native soil’, but в Краснода́рском **крае́** ‘in Krasnodar Territory’, на **пе́реднем крае́** оборо́ны ‘in the front line of defence’, from край ‘edge, territory, front line’. Хмель (a) ‘hops’ (b) ‘inebriation’ has a locative in -ю́ in meaning (b): во **хмелю́** ‘in his cups’, cf. о **хмеле́** ‘about hops’.

55 Special masculine plural forms

Some first-declension masculine nouns have special plural forms.

(1) Nominative plural in -а́/я́

- (i) Some hard-ending nouns have a nominative plural in stressed -а́: адрес ‘address’, pl. **адреса́**. Similarly:

бе́рег	shore	но́мер	number, issue
бок	side	обшля́г	cuff
бо́рт	side of ship	о́круг	district
бу́фер	buffer	о́рдер	warrant
ве́ер	fan	о́стров	island
век	age, century	па́рус	sail
вече́р	evening	па́спорт	passport
глаз	eye	пе́репел	quail
го́лос	voice, vote	по́езд	train
го́род	town	по́яс	belt
ди́ректор	director	профе́ссор	professor
до́ктор	doctor	ро́г	horn
дом	house	рука́в	sleeve
ко́локол	bell	со́рт	brand
лес	forest	сто́рож	watchman
луг	meadow	то́м	volume
ма́стер	craftsman	че́реп	skull

Note

- (a) Some plurals in **-а** and **-ы/-и** are differentiated semantically: кондукторá ‘bus-conductors’, кондúкторы ‘electrical conductors’; корпусá ‘corps, buildings’, кóрпусы ‘torsos’; мехá ‘furs’, мехи́ ‘bellows’; образá ‘icons’, о́бразы ‘forms’; орденá ‘orders, decorations’, о́рдены ‘monastic orders’; проводá ‘electric wires’, прóводы ‘send-off’ (no sing.); счетá ‘accounts’, счёты ‘abacus’ (no sing.); тонá ‘colour shades’, тóны (musical) ‘tones’; тормозá ‘brakes’, тóрмозы ‘hindrances’; хлебá ‘cereals’, хлеб́ы ‘loaves’; цветá ‘colours’, цветы́ ‘flowers’ (sing. цветóк).
- (b) Some plurals in **-ы/-и** are used in written styles, and their counterparts in **-á** in colloquial or technical contexts: год ‘year’, инспектор ‘inspector’, инстру́ктор ‘instructor’, коррèктор ‘proofreader’, крейсер ‘cruiser’, реда́ктор ‘editor’, цех ‘workshop’.
- (ii) A few nouns ending in **-й** or **-ь** have nominative plural **-я́**: край ‘edge’, pl. **края́** (gen. pl. **краёв**); вéксель ‘bill of exchange’, pl. **векселья́**. Likewise ла́герь ‘camp’ (but ла́гери ‘political camps’), то́поль ‘poplar’, учи́тель ‘teacher’ (but pl. учи́тели in the meaning ‘teachers of a doctrine’, e.g. учи́тели коммуни́зма ‘the teachers of communism’), шта́бель ‘stack’, шта́мпель ‘stamp’, я́корь ‘anchor’.

Note

Пе́карь ‘baker’, слéсарь ‘metal worker’ and то́карь ‘turner’ have standard plurals in **-и** and alternative, colloquial plurals in **-я́** (also used in professional parlance).

(2) Nominative plural in **-ья**

- (i) Stem-stressed: стул ‘chair’ (inanimate), брат ‘brother’ (animate).

Plural	Nom.	Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
	сту́лья	сту́лья	сту́льев	сту́льям	сту́льями	о сту́льях
	бра́тья	бра́тьев	бра́тьев	бра́тьям	бра́тьями	о бра́тьях

Similarly (all inanimate): брус ‘beam’, зуб ‘cog’ (cf. зуб ‘tooth’, pl. зу́бы, зубóв), клин ‘wedge’, клóк ‘shred’ (pl. **клóчья**, **клóчьев** ‘tatters’), кол ‘stake’, кóлос ‘ear of corn’ (pl. **колóсья**), ком ‘lump’, лист ‘leaf’ (cf. лист ‘sheet of paper’, pl. **листы́**, **листо́в**), лоску́т ‘scrap’ (pl. **лоску́тья** ‘rags’, cf. **лоскуты́** ‘scraps of paper’), о́бод ‘rim’ (pl. **обóдья**), по́вод ‘rein’ (pl. **пово́дья**, cf. **пово́ды** ‘causes’), по́лоз ‘runner’ (pl. **поло́зья**, cf. **пóлозы** ‘grass-snakes’), прут ‘twig’, струп ‘scab’, сук ‘bough’ (pl. **сучья**, **сучьев** or **сукы́**, **сукóв**). Note also the plural-only form **хло́пья** ‘flakes’.

- (ii) End-stressed in plural.

(a) **Дёверь** ‘brother-in-law’, **друг** ‘friend’, **муж** ‘husband’, **сын** ‘son’:

Plural	Nom.	Acc./Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
	деверья́	деверей	деверья́м	деверья́ми	о деверья́х
	друзья́	друзей	друзья́м	друзья́ми	о друзья́х
	мужья́	мужей	мужья́м	мужья́ми	о мужья́х
	сыновья́	сыновей	сыновья́м	сыновья́ми	о сыновья́х

(*But* мужи́ нау́ки ‘men of science’, сыны́ ро́дины ‘sons of the fatherland’.)

(b) **зять** ‘son-in-law, brother-in-law’, **кум** ‘godfather’:

Plural	Nom.	Acc./Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
	зятья́	зятьёв	зятья́м	зятья́ми	о зятья́х
	кумовья́	кумовьёв	кумовья́м	кумовья́ми	о кумовья́х

(3) Plural of nouns in -анин/-янин, e.g. англича́нин ‘Englishman’

Plural	Nom.	Acc./Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
	англича́не	англича́н	англича́нам	англича́нами	об англича́нах

Note the stress change in гражда́нин ‘citizen’, pl. гра́ждане, гра́ждан.

(4) Plural of ба́рин, болгарин, татарин, цыга́н

The plural of **болга́рин** ‘Bulgarian’ is: nom. болга́ры, acc./gen. болга́р, dat. болга́рам, instr. болга́рами, prep. о болга́рах. Similarly ба́рин ‘landowner’ (nom. pl. (demotic) ба́ры/ба́ре), татарин ‘Tatar’, цыга́н ‘gipsy’ (nom. pl. цыга́не).

(5) Plural of nouns in -ёнок/-онок

Nouns in -ёнок/-онок have plurals in -ята/-ата: котёнок ‘kitten’.

Plural	Nom.	Acc./Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
	котя́та	котя́т	котя́там	котя́тами	о котя́тах

Similarly волчо́нок ‘wolf-cub’, pl. волча́та, волча́т etc.

Note

- (a) Щенóк ‘puppy’ has alternative plurals **щеня́та**, **щеня́т/щенки́**, **щенко́в**.
- (b) Ребе́нок ‘child’ has plural **дети́** ‘children’, acc./gen. **детей**, dat. **детям**, instr. **детьми́**, prep. **о детях**. Colloquially, **ребя́та** is also used as a plural of ребёнок. **Ребя́та** can also mean ‘the lads’, cf. **девча́та** ‘the girls’ (also де́вушки и ребя́та ‘young men and girls’).

(6) Plural of сосед and чёрт

Сосед ‘neighbour’ and чёрт ‘devil’ have hard endings in the singular, soft endings in the plural: **соседи, сосёдей, сосёдым; чёрти, чертёй, чертя́м.**

(7) Plural of господи́н and хозя́ин

Господи́н ‘master’ and хозя́ин ‘owner, host’ have nominative plural **-а**:

Plural	Nom.	Acc./Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
	господа́	госпо́д	господа́м	господа́ми	о господа́х
	хозя́ева	хозя́ев	хозя́евам	хозя́евами	о хозя́евах

56 Nouns whose genitive plural is identical with the nominative singular

The genitive plural of some masculine nouns is the same as the nominative singular: глаз ‘eye’, пого́н ‘epaulette’, раз ‘time’, челове́к ‘person’ (after numerals: пять **челове́к** ‘five people’, cf. нет **люде́й** ‘there are no people’). Note the stress difference in во́лос ‘a hair’, gen. pl. **волос**. Categories also include:

(1) Footwear: боти́нок ‘shoe’, ва́ленок ‘felt boot’, носо́к ‘sock’ (gen. pl. also **носокóв**), сапо́г ‘boot’, чуло́к ‘stocking’.

(2) Nationalities (including some minorities in the former USSR): башки́р ‘Bashkir’, буря́т ‘Buryat’, грузи́н ‘Georgian’, ма́дьяр ‘Magyar’, осети́н ‘Ossetian’, румы́н ‘Romanian’, ту́рок ‘Turk’.

(3) The military: партиза́н ‘partisan’, солда́т ‘soldier’ and others.

(4) Measurements: ампе́р ‘ampere’, байт ‘byte’, бит ‘bit’, ватт ‘watt’, вольт ‘volt’, герц ‘cycle’, грамм ‘gram’, децибе́л ‘decibel’ (10 **ампе́р** ‘10 amperes’, 100 **ватт** ‘100 watts’, 5 **вольт** ‘5 volts’). The zero genitive plural is used in technical and scientific contexts, especially after numerals, and in colloquial speech, while **-ов** is normal in literary styles with some measurements, especially **грамм** ‘gram’ (Выпи́ли сто **гра́ммов** тёплой во́дки (Vanshenkin) ‘They drank 100 grams of warm vodka’), though here too the zero ending is making headway.

(5) Fruits (colloquial speech only): абрико́с ‘apricot’, апельси́н ‘orange’, баклажа́н ‘aubergine’, помидо́р ‘tomato’. In written Russian, however, the genitive plural **-ов** is preferred for these nouns.

57 Stress patterns in first-declension masculine nouns

There are three basic types of stress pattern in declension.

(1) Fixed stem stress

Стул 'chair', **герóй** 'hero', **автомобíль** 'car' etc.

Note

- With few exceptions (e.g. **дирéктор** 'manager', pl. **директорá**), nouns with medial stress have fixed stem stress in declension.
- Most nouns of three or more syllables have fixed stem stress throughout declension (**парохóд** 'steamer' etc.).
- All masculine nouns with unstressed prefixes or suffixes have fixed stem stress throughout declension (**разговóр** 'conversation', **мáльчик** 'boy' etc.).
- Only a limited number of monosyllabic masculine nouns have fixed stem stress throughout declension (e.g. **звук** 'sound').

(2) Fixed end-stress

(i) Hard ending:

	Nom./Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
Singular	стол	стол-á	стол-ý	стол-óм	о стол-é
Plural	стол-ы́	стол-óв	стол-áм	стол-áми	о стол-áх

(ii) Soft ending:

Singular	рублѣ	рубл-я́	рубл-ю́	рубл-ѣм	о рубл-é
Plural	рубл-и́	рубл-ей́	рубл-я́м	рубл-я́ми	о рубл-я́х

Note

- This category includes many hard-ending nouns, including almost all those with the stressed suffixes: **-áк/-я́к, -áч, -éж, -ѣж, йк, -и́ч, -у́н, -у́х**: бегу́н 'runner', моря́к 'sailor', платя́ж 'paument', рубя́ж 'boundary', скрипáч 'violinist', старя́к 'old man' etc.
- Soft-ending nouns include богаты́рь 'hero', вождь 'leader', вратáрь 'goalkeeper', дождь 'rain', журавль 'crane' (bird), календа́рь 'calendar', корáбль 'ship', кремль 'kremlin', ломóть 'slice', ноль/нуль 'nought', реме́нь 'strap', секретáрь 'secretary', словáрь 'dictionary' etc.

(3) Mobile stress

- Stem stress in the **singular**, end stress in the **plural**: дуб 'oak', бой 'battle'.

	Nom./Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
Singular	дуб	дуб-а	дуб-у	дуб-ом	о дуб-е
Plural	дуб-ы́	дуб-о́в	дуб-а́м	дуб-а́ми	о дуб-а́х
Singular	бой	бо́-я	бо́-ю	бо́-ем	о бо́-е
Plural	бо-и́	бо-е́в	бо-я́м	бо-я́ми	о бо-я́х

Note

- (a) Many nouns in the category have a prepositional-locative in **-ý/-jó**: **бой** ‘battle’, **круг** ‘circle’, **мост** ‘bridge’, **ряд** ‘row’, **сад** ‘garden’ etc. (see 54).
- (b) Other nouns in the category include many with plurals in **-ья́** (see 55 (2) (ii)) and in **-а́/-я́** (see 55 (1)).

- (ii) End stress in **oblique** cases of the **plural**: **порт** ‘port’, **жёлудь** ‘acorn’.

	Nom./Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
Singular	порт	по́рт-а	по́рт-у	по́рт-ом	о по́рт-е
Plural	по́рт-ы	порт-о́в	порт-а́м	порт-а́ми	о порт-а́х
Singular	жёлудь	жёлуд-я	жёлуд-ю	жёлуд-ем	о жёлуд-е
Plural	жёлуд-и	жёлуд-е́й	жёлуд-я́м	жёлуд-я́ми	о жёлуд-я́х

Note

This group comprises mainly soft-sign nouns: го́лубь ‘dove’, го́сть ‘guest’, гу́сь ‘goose’, зве́рь ‘wild animal’, ка́мень ‘stone’, ко́готь ‘claw’, ко́рень ‘root’, ло́коть ‘elbow’, но́готь ‘fingernail’, па́рень ‘lad’, сте́бель ‘stalk’ (gen. pl. also **сте́блей**). Hard-ending nouns include **во́лк** ‘wolf’ and **зуб** ‘tooth’.

- (iii) End stress in **oblique** cases of **singular and plural**: **гвоздь** ‘nail’.

	Nom./Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
Singular	гвоздь	гвозд-я́	гвозд-ю́	гвозд-ём	о гвозд-е́
Plural	гво́зд-и	гвозд-е́й	гвозд-я́м	гвозд-я́ми	о гвозд-я́х

Likewise ко́нь ‘steed’, уго́ль ‘coal’ (gen. sing. **угля́/угля**), червь ‘worm’.

Note

For all animate nouns acc. = gen. See 47.

58 First declension: neuter nouns in -o

- (1) Declension of **болото́** ‘swamp’.

	Singular	Plural
Nom.	болóт- о	болóт- а
Acc.	болóт- о	болóт- а
Gen.	болóт- а	болóт
Dat.	болóт- у	болóт- ам
Instr.	болóт- ом	болóт- ами
Prep.	о болóт- е	о болóт- ах

Note

- (a) Héбо ‘sky’, pl. **небесá**, gen. pl. **небés**, dat. pl. **небесáм**. Likewise **чýдо** ‘miracle’.
- (b) Сýдно ‘ship’, pl. **судá**, **судóв** (cf. сýдно ‘chamber-pot’, pl. **сýдна**, **сýден**).

(2) Buffer vowel in the genitive plural.

(i) In the ‘zero’ genitive plural of many nouns in **-о**, a ‘buffer’ vowel appears between two final consonants. This may be **-о-** (following **к**):

волокнó ‘fibre’ **волóкон**

Similarly **окнó** ‘window’, gen. pl. **óкон**; **стеклó** ‘pane of glass’, gen. pl. **стéкол**.

(ii) Otherwise the buffer vowel is **-е-**:

бедрó ‘hip’ **бёдер**

Others of this type include **бревнó** ‘log’, **ведрó** ‘bucket’, **веслó** ‘oar’, **зернó** ‘grain’, **кольцó** ‘ring’ (gen. pl. **колéц**), **крéсло** ‘armchair’ (gen. pl. **крéсел**), **крыльцó** ‘porch’ (gen. pl. **крылéц**), **письмó** ‘letter’ (gen. pl. **писем**), **полотнó** ‘canvas’, **пятнó** ‘stain’, **ребрó** ‘rib’, **ремеслó** ‘trade’ (gen. pl. **ремёсел**), **числó** ‘number’, **ядрó** ‘nucleus’.

Note

- (a) Vowel change from **е** to **ё** under stress.
- (b) **Нéдра**, **недр** (pl. only) ‘bowels of the earth’.
- (c) **Яйцó** ‘egg’, pl. **яйца**, **яйц**.
- (d) **Зло** ‘evil’ has only one plural form, genitive plural **зол**: **мéньшее** из **двух зол** ‘the lesser of two evils’.
- (e) Nouns in **-ство** have no buffer vowel in the genitive plural: **чýвствó** ‘feeling’, gen. pl. **чувств**.

(3) The following nouns have nominative plural **-и**: **вéко** ‘eyelid’, pl. **вéки**, **век**; **колéно** ‘knee’, pl. **колéни**, **колéней** (**колéн** in combination with prepositions and comparatives, e.g. **вýше**, **нйже колéн** ‘above, below the knees’, **до колéн** ‘to the knees’, **встáть с колéн**

‘to rise from one’s knees’, *зажать между колён* ‘to grip between the knees’); *о́ко* ‘eye’ (archaic), pl. *о́чи, очéй*; *плечó* ‘shoulder’, pl. *плéчи, плеч*; *у́хо* ‘ear’, pl. *у́ши, уше́й*.

Note

Except for *о́блако* ‘cloud’, pl. *облака́, облако́в*, all nouns in *-ко* have nominative plural *-и*: *блю́дечко* ‘saucer’, pl. *блю́дечки, блю́дечек*; *дрéвко* ‘shaft’, pl. *дрéвки, дрéвков*; *зе́рнышко* ‘small grain’, pl. *зе́рнышки, зе́рнышек* (likewise *пе́рышко* ‘small feather’); *колéсико* ‘small wheel’, pl. *колéсики, колéсиков* (likewise *ли́чи́ко* ‘small face’, *плéчи́ко* ‘small shoulder’ – pl. *плéчи́ки* also means ‘coat-hanger’); *озерко́* ‘small lake’, pl. *озерки́, озерко́в*; *очко́* ‘point’ (in a game), pl. *очки́, очко́в* (also ‘spectacles’); *око́шко* ‘small window’, pl. *око́шки, око́шек*; *у́шко* ‘small ear’, pl. *у́шки, у́шек* (cf. *ушко́* ‘eye of a needle’, pl. *ушки́, ушко́в*); *я́блоко* ‘apple’, pl. *я́блоки, я́блок*.

(4) Some nouns in *-о* have plural *-ья*: *звенó* ‘link’.

Plural	Nom./Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
	звén- ья	звén- ьев	звén- ьям	звén- ьями	о звén- ьях

The following nouns behave similarly:

(i) With initial stress in the plural: *крыло́* ‘wing’, pl. *кры́лья, кры́льев*; *перó* ‘feather’; *пи́ло* ‘awl’.

(ii) With medial stress in the plural: *де́рево* ‘tree’, pl. *дерéвья, дерéвьев*; *колéно* ‘joint in a pipe’ (cf. *колéно* ‘knee’, see (3) above and note that in the meaning ‘bend in a river’, ‘generation’ (in a genealogical table), ‘part of a dance or song’, *колéно* has the plural *колéна, колéн*).

(iii) *Дно́* ‘bottom’ (of a barrel), pl. *до́нья, до́ньев*.

59 First declension: nouns in *-е, -ье, -ё, -ьё*

(1) Declension of *мо́ре* ‘sea’ (likewise *по́ле* ‘field’):

	Singular	Plural
Nom.	мо́р- е	мор- я́
Acc.	мо́р- е	мор- я́
Gen.	мо́р- я	мор- е́й
Dat.	мо́р- ю	мор- я́м
Instr.	мо́р- ем	мор- я́ми
Prep.	о мо́р- е	о мор- я́х

Note

- (a) Nouns in **-це, -ще** replace **я** by **а**: thus блю́дце ‘saucer’, gen. sing./nom. and acc. pl. **блю́дца**. Similarly кладби́ще ‘cemetery’ etc.
- (b) Nouns in **-ье** (e.g. бельё ‘linen’) have instrumental singular **-ьем** and prepositional singular **-е́**.
- (c) Masculine augmentatives in **-ище** have nominative plural **-и**: доми́ще ‘large house’, pl. **доми́щи, доми́щ** (see 109 (2)).

(2) Nouns in **-е/-ье** and **-ё/-ье́** take a variety of endings in the genitive plural:

- (i) **-ев**: болóтце ‘little swamp’, **болóтцев**. Likewise окóнце ‘small window’.

Note

Some nouns in **-це** have alternative genitive plurals in **-ев** and zero ending: коры́тце ‘small trough’ (gen. pl. **коры́тцев/коры́тец**). Likewise одея́льце ‘small blanket’, щу́пальце ‘tentacle’.

- (ii) **-ей**: мо́ре ‘sea’, gen. pl. **морéй** (likewise по́ле ‘field’); ружьё ‘gun’, gen. pl. **ру́жей**.

(iii) **-ий**: побере́жье ‘coast’, gen. pl. **побере́жий**. Likewise варéнье ‘jam’, копьё ‘spear’ (gen. pl. **ко́пий**), ущéлье ‘ravine’.

(iv) **-ьев**: верхóвые ‘upper reaches’, gen. pl. **верхóвьев**. Likewise низóвые ‘lower reaches’, пла́тье ‘dress’, подмасте́рье (m.) ‘apprentice’, у́стье ‘river mouth’.

Note

Alternative genitive plurals **верхóвий** and **низóвий**.

(v) **Zero ending**: блю́дце ‘saucer’, gen. pl. **блю́дец**. Likewise зéркальце ‘small mirror’, полотéнце ‘towel’, сéрдце ‘heart’, gen. pl. **серде́ц**, as well as nouns in **-ище/-бище** (кладби́ще ‘cemetery’, gen. pl. **кладби́щ**).

Note

Дéревце/дере́вцо ‘small tree’ has genitive plural **дере́вцов** or **дере́вце́**; **остриё** ‘point’, gen. pl. **остриёв**.

60 Stress patterns in the plural of neuter nouns

Stress in the plural of many neuter nouns moves as follows:

- (1) From the ending on to the stem (**е** changes to **ё**): thus, **окно́** ‘window’.

Plural	Nom./Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
	о́кна	о́кон	о́кнам	о́кнами	о́б о́кнах

Similarly ведро́ ‘bucket’, pl. **ве́дра, ве́дер**; весло́ ‘oar’, pl. **вёсла, вёсел**; вино́ ‘wine’, pl. **ви́на, вин**; гнездо́ ‘nest’, pl. **гне́зда, гне́зд**; зерно́ ‘grain’, pl. **зе́рна, зе́рен**; колесо́ ‘wheel’, pl. **колёса, колёс**; кольцо́ ‘ring’, pl. **ко́льца, коле́ц**; копьё́ ‘spear’, pl. **ко́пья, ко́пий**; крыльцо́ ‘porch’, pl. **кры́льца, крыле́ц**; лицо́ ‘face’, pl. **ли́ца, лиц**; письмо́ ‘letter’, pl. **пи́сьма, пи́сем**; пятно́ ‘stain’, pl. **пя́тна, пя́тен**; ружьё́ ‘gun’, pl. **ру́жья, ру́жей**; стекло́ ‘pane’, pl. **сте́кла, сте́кол**; число́ ‘number’, pl. **чи́сла, чи́сел**; яйцо́ ‘egg’, pl. **яйца, яйц**.

(2) From the stem on to the ending: **де́ло** ‘matter’.

Plural	Nom./Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
	делá	дел	делáм	делáми	о делáх

Similarly зе́ркало ‘mirror’, pl. **зеркала́**; ме́сто ‘place’, pl. **местá**; мо́ре ‘sea’, pl. **моря́, морей́**; по́ле ‘field’, pl. **поля́, полей́**; пра́во ‘right’, pl. **права́**; се́рдце ‘heart’, pl. **сердца́, серде́ц**; сло́во ‘word’, pl. **слова́**; ста́до ‘herd’, pl. **стада́**; те́ло ‘body’, pl. **телá**.

61 Second declension: nouns in -а/-я

(1) Most second-declension nouns are feminine; some are masculine, e.g. **де́душка** ‘grandfather’, **дядя́** ‘uncle’; others are of common gender, e.g. **пья́ница** ‘drunkard’, **рази́ня** ‘gawper’ (see 35).

(2) Declension of **ка́рта** ‘map’, **же́нщина** ‘woman’:

	Singular		Plural	
Nom.	ка́рт-а	же́нщин-а	ка́рт-ы	же́нщин-ы
Acc.	ка́рт-у	же́нщин-у	ка́рт-ы	же́нщин (= gen.)
Gen.	ка́рт-ы	же́нщин-ы	ка́рт	же́нщин
Dat.	ка́рт-е	же́нщин-е	ка́рт-ам	же́нщин-ам
Instr.	ка́рт-ой/-ою	же́нщин-ой/-ою	ка́рт-ами	же́нщин-ами
Prep.	о ка́рт-е	о же́нщин-е	о ка́рт-ах	о же́нщин-ах

Note

- (a) **ы** is replaced by **и** after **г, к, х, ж, ч, ш** or **щ**; ви́лка ‘fork’, да́ча ‘villa’, gen. sing./nom. and acc. pl. **ви́лки, да́чи** (see 16 (1)).
- (b) **о** is replaced by **е** in unstressed position after **ж, ч, ш, щ** or **ц**: у́лица ‘street’, instr. sing. **улицей́**; кры́ша ‘roof’, instr. sing. **крышей́** (see 16 (2)).

- (c) Some nouns in **-жа, -ча, -ша** have genitive plural **-ей**: свечá ‘candle’, gen. pl. свечéй (but игра́ не сто́ит свеч ‘the game is not worth the candle’). Likewise бахча́ ‘water melon plantation’, левша́ ‘left-handed person’, ханжа́ ‘hypocrite’, чу́кча ‘Chukchi’, ю́ноша ‘youth’.
- (d) The genitive plural of мечтá ‘dream’ (and of мечтáние ‘reverie’) is мечтáний.
- (e) The instrumental singular in **-ою** (and **-ею**, see (3)) is the more ‘literary’ form and is commonly found in poetry.
- (3) Declension of дь́ня ‘melon’ and ня́ня ‘nurse’:

	Singular		Plural	
Nom.	дь́н-я	ня́н-я	дь́н-и	ня́н-и
Acc.	дь́н-ю	ня́н-ю	дь́н-и	нянь (= gen.)
Gen.	дь́н-и	ня́н-и	дынь	нянь
Dat.	дь́н-е	ня́н-е	дь́н-ям	ня́н-ям
Instr.	дь́н-ей/-ею	ня́н-ей/-ею	дь́н-ями	ня́н-ями
Prep.	о дь́н-е	о ня́н-е	о дь́н-ях	о ня́н-ях

Note

- (a) End-stressed nouns have **-ей** in the instrumental singular: земл́я ‘ground’, instr. земл́ей; стат́ья ‘article’, instr. стат́ьей.
- (b) *Stem*-stressed nouns in **-ья** have genitive plural **-ий**: го́стья ‘female guest’, gen. pl. го́стий.
- (c) *End*-stressed nouns in **-ья** have genitive plural **-ей**: сем́ья ‘family’, gen. pl. семéй; судья́ ‘judge’, gen. pl. судéй/судéй. Similarly до́ля ‘share’, gen. pl. долéй; дядя́ ‘uncle’, gen. pl. дя́дей (nom. pl. дя́дья́, gen. pl. дя́дьёв are also found); клешня́ ‘claw’ (of crustacean), gen. pl. клешне́й; ноздря́ ‘nostril’, gen. pl. ноздрéй; при́горшня ‘handful’, gen. pl. при́горшней/при́горшен; простыня́ ‘sheet’, gen. pl. просты́нь/простыне́й; ступня́ ‘foot’, gen. pl. ступне́й; тётя ‘aunt’, gen. pl. тётей/тётъ.
- (b) Nouns in **-ая/-ея** have genitive plural **-ай/-ей**: ста́я ‘pack’, gen. pl. стай; ше́я ‘neck’, gen. pl. шей.
- (4) Buffer vowel in the genitive plural.
- (i) **-о-** appears between a consonant (see, however, (4) (ii) (a)) and **-к-** (or **-к-** + consonant):

бе́лка ‘squirrel’

бе́лок

Similarly бу́лка ‘roll’, gen. pl. бу́лок; доска́ ‘board, plank’, gen. pl. досо́к; кукла́ ‘doll’, gen. pl. ку́кол. Note also кúхня ‘kitchen’, gen. pl. кúхонь.

(ii) **-e-** appears:

(a) Between **ж, ч, ш** and **-к-**: ба́бочка ‘butterfly’, gen. pl. ба́бочек; ко́шка ‘cat’, gen. pl. ко́шек; ло́жка ‘spoon’, gen. pl. ло́жек etc. (but кишкá ‘intestine’, gen. pl. кишко́к).

(b) Between pairs of consonants which do not include **к**:

сосна́ ‘pine tree’ **со́сен**

Likewise двéрца ‘car door’, gen. pl. двéрцев; десна́ ‘gum’, gen. pl. де́сен.

(c) In place of a soft sign: де́ньги (pl. only) ‘money’, gen. pl. де́нег; сва́дьба ‘wedding’, gen. pl. сва́деб; тю́рьма ‘prison’, gen. pl. тю́рем (but ве́дьма ‘witch’, gen. pl. ве́дьм, про́сьба ‘request’, gen. pl. про́сьб).

(d) In place of **-й-** in diphthongs followed by **-к-**: ча́йка ‘seagull’, gen. pl. ча́ек etc. (cf. война́ ‘war’, gen. pl. во́йн).

(e) Between two final consonants in the genitive plural of many nouns in **-я**: земля́ ‘land’, gen. pl. земе́ль; ка́пля ‘drop’, gen. pl. ка́пель; кро́вля ‘roof’, gen. pl. кро́вель; পে́тля ‘loop’, gen. pl. পে́тель; ца́пля ‘heron’, gen. pl. ца́пель.

Note

Most nouns in consonant + **-ня** have *no* soft sign in the genitive plural: ба́шня ‘tower’, gen. pl. ба́шен. Similarly ви́шня ‘cherry’, жаро́вня ‘brazier’, колоко́льня ‘belfry’, пе́сня ‘song’, со́тня ‘hundred’, спа́льня ‘bedroom’, чере́шня ‘cherry tree’, чита́льня ‘reading room’. Note, however, ба́рышня ‘young lady’, gen. pl. ба́рышень; дере́вня ‘village’, gen. pl. дере́вень.

(iii) **-ё-** appears in the genitive plural of a few nouns: кочерга́ ‘poker’, gen. pl. кочерёг; серьга́ ‘ear-ring’, gen. pl. серёг; сестра́ ‘sister’, gen. pl. сестёр.

(iv) Some clusters, many ending in **б, в, л, м, н, п, р**, have *no* buffer vowel in the genitive plural: бо́мба ‘bomb’, gen. pl. бомб. Likewise буква́ ‘letter’, волна́ ‘wave’, вёдра ‘otter’, зебра́ ‘zebra’, игла́ ‘needle’, игра́ ‘game’, изба́ ‘peasant hut’, и́скра ‘spark’, но́рма ‘norm’, служба́ ‘service’, тьквa ‘pumpkin’, у́рна ‘urn’, фо́рма ‘uniform’, ци́фра ‘figure’.

62 Stress patterns in second-declension nouns

Most nouns in stressed **-á/-я́** undergo stress change in declension (nouns in *unstressed* **-а/-я** are immune from stress change).

(1) Stem stress in the plural, e.g. **война́** ‘war’.

	Nom.	Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
Singular	война́	войну́	войны́	войне́	войно́й	о война́
Plural	во́йны	во́йны	воин	во́йнам	во́йнами	о во́йнах

Similarly волна́ ‘wave’ (alternative dat., instr., prep. pl. **волна́м, волна́ми, о волна́х**), глава́ ‘chapter’, заря́ ‘dawn’ (pl. **зо́ри, зорь**), змея́ ‘snake’ (pl. **зме́и, змей**), игра́ ‘game’, красота́ ‘beauty’ (pl. **красо́ты** ‘beauty spots’), овца́ ‘sheep’ (gen. pl. **ове́ц**), река́ ‘river’ (acc. sing. **рекы́/ре́ку**), сосна́ ‘pine’, страна́ ‘country’, струна́ ‘string’ (of instrument, racket) etc.

Note

e-ě mutation: десна́ ‘gum’, pl. **де́сны, де́сен**; жена́ ‘wife’, pl. **же́ны, же́н**; звезда́ ‘star’, pl. **звёзды, звёзд**; пчела́ ‘bee’, pl. **пчёлы, пчёл**; сестра́ ‘sister’, pl. **се́стры, сестёр**.

(2) Stem stress in accusative singular and nominative/accusative plural, e.g. **рука́** ‘hand, arm’:

	Nom.	Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
Singular	рука́	ру́ку	руки́	руке́	руко́й	о руке́
Plural	ру́ки	ру́ки	рук	рука́м	рука́ми	о рука́х

Similarly гора́ ‘mountain’, доска́ ‘board’ (gen. pl. **досо́к**), нога́ ‘foot, leg’, щека́ ‘cheek’ (acc. sing. **щёку/щекы́**, pl. **щёки, щёк, щекáм**), борода́ ‘beard’ (acc. sing. **бóроду**, pl. **бóроды, борóд, борода́м**), голова́ ‘head’, полоса́ ‘strip’ (acc. sing. **пóлосу/полосы́**), сторона́ ‘side’).

(3) Stem stress in nominative/accusative plural, e.g. **губа́** ‘lip’:

	Nom.	Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
Singular	губа́	губу́	губы́	губе́	губо́й	о губе́
Plural	гу́бы	гу́бы	губ	губáм	губáми	о губáх

Similarly волна́ ‘wave’ (see also (1) above) and железа́ ‘gland’ (pl. **же́лезы, желе́з, железа́м**).

(4) Stem stress in accusative singular and all plural forms, e.g. **вода́** ‘water’:

	Nom.	Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
Singular	вода́	во́ду	води́	воде́	водо́й	о воде́
Plural	во́ды	во́ды	вод	во́дам	во́дами	о во́дах

Similarly спи́на ‘back’, сте́на ‘wall’, це́на ‘price’.

(5) Stem stress in nominative/inanimate accusative, dative, instrumental and prepositional plural, e.g. **се́мья** ‘family’:

	Nom.	Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
Singular	се́мья	се́мью	се́мьи	се́мье	се́мьей	о се́мье
Plural	се́мьи	се́мьи	се́мей	се́мьям	се́мьями	о се́мьях

Likewise сви́нья ‘pig’, ска́мья ‘bench’ (pl. **ска́мьи/ска́мьи**), су́дья ‘judge’ (gen. pl. **су́дэй/су́дей**).

(6) Stem stress in accusative singular and nominative, accusative, dative, instrumental and prepositional plural, e.g. **зе́мля** ‘land’:

	Nom.	Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
Singular	зе́мля	зе́млю	зе́мли	зе́мле	зе́млей	о зе́мле
Plural	зе́мли	зе́мли	зе́мель	зе́млям	зе́млями	о зе́млях

63 Third declension: soft-sign feminine nouns

(1) Declension of **тетра́дь** ‘exercise book’ and **свекро́вь** ‘mother-in-law’ (husband’s mother):

	Singular		Plural	
Nom.	тетра́дь	свекро́вь	тетра́д-и	свекро́в-и
Acc.	тетра́дь	свекро́вь	тетра́д-и	свекро́в-ей (= gen.)
Gen.	тетра́д-и	свекро́в-и	тетра́д-ей	свекро́в-ей
Dat.	тетра́д-и	свекро́в-и	тетра́д-ям	свекро́в-ям
Instr.	тетра́дь-ю	свекро́вь-ю	тетра́д-ями	свекро́в-ями
Prep.	о тетра́д-и	о свекро́в-и	о тетра́д-ях	о свекро́в-ях

Note

я is replaced by **а** after **ж, ч, ш, щ**: thus ночь ‘night’, dat., instr., prep. pl. **ноча́м, но́чами, о но́чах**; likewise вещь ‘thing’, мышь ‘mouse’ etc.

(2) Declension of **ма́ть** and **до́чь**: ма́ть ‘mother’ declines in the singular nom./acc. **ма́ть** ‘mother’, gen./dat. **ма́тери**, instr. **ма́терью**, prep. **о ма́тери**, and in the plural nom. **ма́тери**, acc./gen. **матерéй**, dat. **матеря́м**, instr. **матеря́ми**, prep. **о матеря́х**. Similarly до́чь ‘daughter’ (instr. pl. **дочерьми́**).

(3) The fleeting vowel **-о-**. Genitive, dative and prepositional singular and all plural forms are affected, e.g. вошь ‘louse’, gen., dat. sing. **вши**,

instr. **вошью**, prep. **о вши**; pl. **вши**, acc./gen. **вшей**, dat. **вшам**, instr. **вша́ми**, prep. **о вшах**.

Note

- (a) Ложь ‘lie’ is found only in the singular (gen./dat. **лжи**, instr. **ложью**, prep. **о лжи**); likewise любовь ‘love’, рожь ‘rye’.
- (b) As a first name Любо́вь ‘Lyubov’ has gen./dat. **Любо́ви**, prep. **о Любо́ви**.
- (c) Це́рковь ‘church’ has soft endings in the singular (gen./dat. **це́ркви**, instr. **це́рковью**, prep. **о це́ркви**) and nominative/accusative and genitive plural (**це́ркви**, **це́рквей**), but hard endings in the other oblique cases of the plural (**це́рква́м**, **це́рква́ми**, **о це́рква́х**).

(4) Stress changes in declension:

(i) Some nouns have prepositional singular **-и́** when governed by the prepositions **в** and **на**:

дверь ‘door’ **на дверí** ‘on the door’

Likewise глубь ‘depths’, горсть ‘handful’, грязь ‘mud’ (**в грязи́** ‘covered in mud’), кровь ‘blood’ (**в крови́** ‘covered in blood’), мель ‘shallows’ (**на мелí** ‘aground’), печь ‘stove’, пыль ‘dust’ (**в пыли́** ‘covered in dust’), Русь ‘Rus’ (**на Руси́** ‘in Rus’), связь ‘connection’ (**в связи́ с** ‘in connection with’), сеть ‘net’, степь ‘steppe’, Тверь ‘Tver’ (**в Твери́** ‘in Tver’), тень ‘shadow’, цепь ‘chain’.

Note

- (a) *Stem* stress is used when these nouns combine with other prepositions (**о двéри** ‘about the door’), or when **в** and **на** do *not* denote location (Ему́ отказáли **в но́вой двéри** ‘He was refused a new door’).
- (b) Глушь ‘backwoods’ and грудь ‘chest, breast’ have end stress in genitive, dative (**глуши́**, **грудí**) and prepositional singular (**в глуши́**, **в грудí**).

(ii) Many nouns have end stress in plural oblique cases, e.g. **сеть** ‘net’:

Plural	Nom./Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
	сети́	сетéй	сетя́м	сетя́ми	о сетя́х

Likewise вещь ‘thing’, кость ‘bone’, мышь ‘mouse’ (acc./gen. pl. **мышéй**), но́вость ‘piece of news’, ночь ‘night’, о́бласть ‘oblast, province’, о́чередь ‘queue’, печь ‘stove’, пло́щадь ‘square’, скáтерть ‘tablecloth’, скóрость ‘speed’, смерть ‘death’, соль ‘salt’, степь ‘steppe’, тень ‘shade’, треть ‘third’, цепь ‘chain’, часть ‘part’, чéтверть ‘quarter’.

Note

- (a) Plural власти ‘the authorities’, gen. **властѣй**, dat. **властѣм**.
 (b) Дверь ‘door’ and лошадь ‘horse’ have alternative instrumental plural **дверями/дверьми** (colloquial), **лошадьми** or **лошадьями**.

64 Declension of neuter nouns in -мя

Declension of **имя** ‘name’:

	Singular	Plural
Nom./Acc.	им-я	имен-я́
Gen.	имен-и	имѣн
Dat.	имен-и	имен-я́м
Instr.	имен-ем	имен-я́ми
Prep.	об имен-и	об имен-я́х

Similarly время ‘time’, знамя ‘banner’ (pl. **знамѣна, знамѣн**), плѣмя ‘tribe’, сѣмя ‘seed’ (gen. pl. **семьян**), стрѣмя ‘stirrup’ and (sing. only) брѣмя ‘burden’, вымя ‘udder’, пламя ‘flames’ (cf. **языки пламени** ‘flames, tongues of flame’), тѣмя ‘temple’.

65 Declension of nouns in -ия/-ие

Declension of **станция** ‘station’, **здание** ‘building’:

	Singular		Plural	
Nom.	станци-я	здани-е	станци-и	здани-я
Acc.	станци-ю	здани-е	станци-и	здани-я
Gen.	станци-и	здани-я	станций	зданий
Dat.	станци-и	здани-ю	станци-ям	здани-ям
Instr.	станци-ей/-ею	здани-ем	станци-ями	здани-ями
Prep.	о станци-и	о здани-и	о станци-ях	о здани-ях

66 The masculine noun путь

Путь ‘way’ declines as follows:

	Singular	Plural
Nom./Acc.	путь	пут-ѣ
Gen.	пут-ѣ	пут-ѣй

Dat.	пут- ѣ	пут- ѣм
Instr.	пут- ѣм	пут- ѣми
Prep.	о пут- ѣ	о пут- ѣх

Note

Despite feminine endings in the genitive, dative and prepositional singular, путь is qualified by masculine adjectives: **Счастливого пути!** ‘Bon voyage!’.

67 The neuter noun дитя́

Дитя́ ‘child’ declines as follows:

Nom./Acc.	дит- я́
Gen./Dat.	дитя́т- и
Instr.	дитя́т- ей/-ею
Prep.	о дитя́т- и

Note

Дитя́ is now used only in some figurative expressions, e.g. **дитя́ ве́ка** ‘child of the age’, and, in some contexts, for emotional effect, e.g. Да он же ещё **дитя́!** ‘Why, he’s still just a child!’ For practical purposes it has been replaced by ребёнок ‘child’.

68 Де́ти and лю́ди

Де́ти ‘children’ (sing. ребёнок or дитя́) and **лю́ди** ‘people’ (sing. человек) decline in the same way:

Nom.	де́т- и	лю́д- и
Acc./Gen.	дет- ѣй	лю́д- ѣй
Dat.	де́т- ям	лю́д- ям
Instr.	деть- ми́	лю́дь- ми́
Prep.	о де́т- ях	о лю́д- ях

69 Declension of first names

First names ending in a consonant or **-ѣ** (e.g. Ива́н, Никола́й, Ю́рий) decline like first-declension nouns (see **51**), first names in **-а** and **-я** (e.g. О́льга ‘Olga’, Ната́лья ‘Natalya’) like second-declension nouns

(see 61). Patronymics (e.g. Ива́нович, Ива́новна) also decline like first- and second-declension nouns respectively.

70 Declension of surnames

(1) Surnames in **-ев, -ёв, -ин, -ов, -ын** decline partly like nouns and partly like adjectives, e.g. Турге́нев ‘Turgenev’:

	Masculine	Feminine	Plural
Nom.	Турге́нев	Турге́нев-а	Турге́нев-ы
Acc.	Турге́нев-а	Турге́нев-у	Турге́нев-ых
Gen.	Турге́нев-а	Турге́нев-ой	Турге́нев-ых
Dat.	Турге́нев-у	Турге́нев-ой	Турге́нев-ым
Instr.	Турге́нев-ым	Турге́нев-ой	Турге́нев-ыми
Prep.	о Турге́нев-е	о Турге́нев-ой	о Турге́нев-ых

Note

Foreign names in **-ин** have instrumental singular **-ом**: Ча́плин ‘Chaplin’, instr. Ча́плином; cf. Ге́рцен ‘Herzen’, instr. Ге́рценом.

(2) Surnames in **-ский, -ой** etc. decline like adjectives.

(3) Surnames in **-ко, -енко** (e.g. Громы́ко ‘Gromyko’, Шевче́нко ‘Shevchenko’) tend not to decline, though in speech they may decline like second-declension nouns in **-а** (Максиме́нко, acc. Максиме́нку, gen. Максиме́нки, dat. Максиме́нке, instr. Максиме́нкой, prep. о Максиме́нке) or (the less-preferred option) like first-declension nouns in **-о**.

(4) Surnames in **-аго, -яго** (e.g. Жива́го ‘Zhivago’), **-ово** (e.g. Дурново́ ‘Durnovo’), **-их, -ых** (e.g. Чутки́х ‘Chutkikh’) and stressed **-ко́** (Франко́ ‘Franko’) do not decline:

Ники́тин шага́л ря́дом с Кня́жко́ (Bondarev)
Nikitin strode along beside Knyazhko

(5) Masculine foreign surnames ending in a consonant (e.g. Шми́дт ‘Schmidt’) decline like nouns of the first declension, but they do *not* decline at all when they refer to a woman: Ка́тя пере́писывается с англича́нкой Джейн Сми́т ‘Katya corresponds with the Englishwoman Jane Smith’, cf.

Э́то нато́лкнуло Мелáнью Цати́нья́н на мы́сль напи́сать пьесе́у
(Sputnik)

This gave Melanya Tsatinyan the idea of writing a play

(6) Foreign surnames ending in **-е, -и, -о, -у** and in stressed **-а́** and **-я́** do not decline: Гариба́льди ‘Garibaldi’, Ге́те ‘Goethe’, Гюго́ ‘Hugo’, Дюма́ ‘Dumas’, Золя́ ‘Zola’, Шо́у ‘Shaw’. However, foreign names in

unstressed **-а** and **-я** *do* decline: картины **Гойи** ‘paintings by Goya’, песни **Окуджавы** ‘Okudzhava’s songs’. Вайда ‘Wajda’, Куросава ‘Kurosawa’ etc. also decline. Less-familiar Japanese names such as Танака ‘Tanaka’ do not normally decline.

71 Declension of place names

(1) Place names ending in a consonant or **-а** (Киев ‘Kiev’, Москва ‘Moscow’) decline like nouns of the first and second declensions respectively. Hyphenated Russian place names decline in both parts: в Петропавловске-Камчатском ‘in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky’. Place names in **-ин**, **-ов**, **-ын** have instrumental **-ом** (Пушкин ‘Pushkin’, Пушкином; Ростов ‘Rostov’, Ростовом), cf.:

Держал у себя дома, под Саратовом, моторную лодку (Trifonov)
He kept a motor boat at his home near Saratov

(2) Place names in **-ево**, **-ино**, **-ово**, **-ыно** tend *not* to decline (около Репино ‘near Repino’), especially where the names derive from a proper name (от Лермонтово ‘from Lermontovo’). The tendency not to decline such names was consolidated by practice in the 1941–45 War, designed to avoid ambiguity in place names such as Пушкин ‘Pushkin’ and Пушкино ‘Pushkino’, which would share declension endings. Despite instances of declension in written styles (e.g. в Пушчине ‘in Pushchino’ (*Russia Today*)), non-declension remains the recommended norm.

(3) Non-Russian place names in **-е**, **-н**, **-о**, **-у** do not decline, e.g. Скопье ‘Skopje’; Чили ‘Chile’; Брно ‘Brno’, Мехико ‘Mexico City’; Баку ‘Baku’. Бангладеш ‘Bangladesh’ does not decline either: из Бангладеш ‘from Bangladesh’. Татры ‘the Tatra’ declines like a plural noun (gen. Татр). Both nouns in a hyphenated compound decline where a river is involved: во Франкфурте-на-Майне ‘in Frankfurt-am-Main’. Compare, however, под Буэнос-Айресом ‘near Buenos-Aires’, в Алма-Ате ‘in Alma-Ata’ (now also Алматы), из Карл-Маркс-штадта ‘from Karl-Marx-Stadt’ (now Chemnitz).

72 Apposition in the names of publications, towns etc.

(1) Titles of books, newspapers etc. decline like nouns: в “Известиях” ‘in *Izvestiya*’; Он читал «Отцов и детей» ‘He has read *Fathers and*

Sons'. If, however, the genre of the work is mentioned, the title is not declined: в газете "*Известия*" 'in the newspaper *Izvestiya*', Он читал роман «*Отцы и дети*» 'He has read the novel *Fathers and Sons*'.

(2) In referring to the names of Russian towns, both город 'town' and the name decline (в городе **Москвѣ** 'in the city of Moscow') except:

(i) When confusion may arise, e.g. in the case of towns in **-ин** and **-ино**, where only the former declines: в городе **Пушкине** 'in the town of Pushkin', cf. в городе **Пушкино** 'in the town of Pushkino'.

(ii) When a town has a plural name: в городе **Великие Луки** 'in the town of Velikie Luki' (if город is omitted, however, the town name is declined: в **Великих Луках** 'in Velikie Luki').

(iii) When the place name consists of adjective + noun: в городе **Нижний Тагил** 'in the town of Nizhnii Tagil'.

(3) Similar criteria apply to river names: на **реке Днепрѣ** 'on the river Dnieper', but на **реке Северный Донец** 'on the river Severny Donets'. 'On the Moscow river' may be rendered as на **Москвѣ-реке/на реке Москвѣ**, cf. **вниз по Волге-реке/вниз по реке Волге** 'down the river Volga'.

(4) The names of well-known non-Russian towns decline (except for those ending in **-е** etc., see 71 (3)), whether they stand in apposition to город or not: в **Париже** 'in Paris', в городе **Париже** 'in the city of Paris'. Compare, however, близ **города Мэнстон** 'near the town of Manston' (which is unlikely to be known to Russians and is therefore left undeclined).

(5) With place names other than those of towns and rivers it is normal to decline only the generic term: у горы **Казбек** 'by Mount Kazbek', в деревне **Белкино** 'in the village of Belkino', на озере **Байкал** 'on Lake Baikal', рейсы между портами **Одесса и Новороссийск** 'trips between the ports of Odessa and Novorossiisk'.

(6) This also applies to foreign place names: над вулканом **Этна** 'above Mount Etna', в графстве **Сассекс** 'in the county of Sussex', на острове **Диэго-Гарсиа** 'on the island of Diego-Garcia', из порта **Гдыня** 'from the port of Gdynia', в штате **Алабама** 'in the State of Alabama'. Where the generic term is omitted, however, the place name declines: на острове **Кипр** 'on the island of Cyprus', but на **Кипре** 'on Cyprus'. In a few cases, where the generic term and the place name are of the same gender, both may decline: в пустыне **Сахаре/Сахара** 'in the Sahara desert'.

73 Declension of alphabetisms

(1) Only those alphabetisms decline which are masculine and have the form of first-declension nouns ending in a consonant (see **40** (1) (i) (2) (3)):

Долг **ВАЗа** бюджету действительно велик (*Komsomolskaya pravda*)

The Volga Car Factory's debt to the budget is truly substantial

Риск заразиться **СПИДом** выше у наркоманов (*Sputnik*)

The risk of contracting AIDS is greater in drug addicts

(2) Other alphabetisms are not declined: **ГАИ** [гай] (Государственная автомобильная инспекция) 'State Vehicle Inspectorate' (see page 596), **ГЭС** [гэс] (гидроэлектростанция) 'hydroelectric power station', **НАТО** [на́то] 'NATO', **НИИ** [ний] (научно-исследовательский институт) 'scientific research institute', **ООН** [оон] (Организация Объединённых Наций) 'UNO', **ОТК** [о-тэ-ка] (отдел технического контроля) 'technical control department', **ЦДА** [це-дэ-а] (Центральный дом архитектора) 'Central Architects' Club':

– Где ты работаешь? — спрашиваю.

– В одном **НИИ**. (Dovlatov)

'Where do you work?', I ask.

'In a scientific research institute'.

Можно связаться с ближайшим постом **ГАИ** (*Izvestiya*)

You can contact the nearest traffic police control point

В **НАСА** пока не решили, стоит ли соглашаться с требованиями законодателей (*Komsomolskaya pravda*)

NASA has not yet decided if it is worthwhile complying with the requirements of the legislators

Note

- (a) Though **ГЭС** (power station) and **ООН** (UNO) end in a consonant they are of feminine gender and undeclined. Some new *masculine* forms such as **ВИЧ** 'HIV' are also at present undeclined.
- (b) **ЖЭК** [жэж] (жилищно-эксплуатационная контора) 'housing office', now masculine, is either left undeclined or (in colloquial styles) is declined: в **нашем ЖЭКе**. Similarly **МИД** [мид] (Министерство иностранных дел) 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs'.

74 Declension of hyphenated noun co-ordinates

(1) The *first* element in the compound does not decline if it is:

(i) Indeclinable, a recent loan, an abbreviation or a letter of the alphabet: **а́льфа**-во́лны ‘alpha-waves’, **кафе́**-заку́сная ‘snackbar’, **конфе́ренц**-за́л ‘conference hall’.

(ii) Descriptive and qualifies the second element: **национа́л**-социали́сты ‘National Socialists’, **шта́б**-кварты́ра ‘headquarters’, **либе́рал**-демократи́ы ‘Liberal Democrats’.

(iii) The first component in a rank or occupation: **генера́л**-лейтена́нт ‘lieutenant-general’, **премьер**-мини́стр ‘prime minister’.

(iv) The first component in a measurement: **килова́тт**-ча́с ‘kilowatt-hour’, **во́льт**-ампе́р ‘volt-ampere’.

(2) The *second* element in the compound does not decline if its function is to qualify the first: **слова́рь**-**ми́нимум** ‘minimum vocabulary’.

(3) *Both* components decline, each being a full noun in its own right: **автомо́биль**-само́сва́л ‘tip-up lorry’, **ваго́н**-рестора́н ‘restaurant car’, **дива́н**-крово́ять ‘divan bed’, **же́нщина**-милицио́не́р ‘police-woman’, **заку́сная**-автома́т ‘vending machine’, **инжене́р**-строите́ль ‘construction engineer’, **раке́та**-носите́ль ‘carrier-rocket’. In speech, only the *second* noun may decline in commonly-used compounds: в **ваго́не**-рестора́не/**ваго́н**-рестора́не ‘in the restaurant car’, на **дива́не**-крово́яти/**дива́н**-крово́яти ‘on the divan bed’.

Note

In the following, only the *second* element is declined: **ма́тч**-турни́р ‘match tournament’, **пла́щ**-пала́тка ‘groundsheet’, **я́хт**-клуб ‘yacht-club’.

75 Agreement of ряд, большинство etc.

(1) **Ряд**

(i) **Ряд** traditionally combines with a singular predicate, especially in a passive construction:

Допу́щен **ряд** оши́бок

A number of mistakes have been made

(ii) **Ряд** may combine with a plural predicate when followed by a dependent **genitive plural**, particularly when the construction involves

an **animate** noun and an **active** verb:

Ряд штангистов занима́ли призовые места́
A number of the weight-lifters occupied medal positions

(2) **Большинствó** also traditionally takes a singular predicate:

(i) In passive constructions: **Большинствó** пи́сем доста́влено ‘Most letters have been delivered’.

(ii) Where it has no post-positive dependent form: **Большинствó** уча́ствует в о́бщественной жи́зни ‘Most participate in public life’.

(iii) Where the dependent form is in the genitive singular or is the genitive plural of an **inanimate** noun:

Большинствó населе́ния постра́дало от наводне́ния
Most of the population suffered as a result of the flood

Большинствó телефо́нов в го́роде безмо́лвствует (Tendryakov)
Most telephones in the town are silent

When, however, **большинствó** has a dependent form in the genitive plural of an **animate** noun, a **plural** predicate is possible:

Большинствó уча́щихся хоро́шо подгото́влены
Most of the pupils are well prepared

Большинствó сове́тских гра́ждан бы́ли уве́рены, что живу́т в са́мой счастли́вой и свобо́дной стране́ (V. Voinovich)
The majority of Soviet citizens were sure that they lived in the happiest and freest country

Note

Other collective nouns of this type behave in similar fashion. Compare

На площа́дке перед уса́дбой обы́чно останáвливаются мно́жество авто́бусов и автомоби́лей
A multitude of buses and cars usually stop on the area in front of the estate

and

Мно́жество люде́й пою́т э́ту пе́сню на ра́зных язы́ках
A great many people sing this song in different languages

Compare also

Часть пи́сем зате́рялась
A number of the letters went missing

Часть уча́щихся не яви́лись/не яви́лась
A number of the pupils did not turn up

76 Constructions of the type все повернули голову

(1) The singular of the object is regarded as the norm in constructions such as **Все повернули голову** 'Everyone turned their head(s)', where identical objects or parts of the body belong to or relate to each member of a group. A plural noun is recommended only when differentiation is essential: **Все подняли руку** 'Everyone raised their hand', cf. **Все подняли руки** 'Everyone raised their arms'. Otherwise the singular is the preferred form:

Собаки бежали, поджав **хвост**

The dogs were running along with their **tails** between their legs

Все со связанными за **спиной** руками (Рубakov)

All with their hands tied behind their **backs**

Мамаша, бабушка и папа в красных носках и с таким же красным **лицом** (Granin)

Mum, Gran and Dad in red socks and with similarly red **faces**

(2) However, there are signs of the alternative use of the *plural* in modern Russian:

Мужики слушали его, одобрительно кивая **головами** (Dovlatov)

The peasants listened to him, nodding their heads in approval

Они стояли с раскрытыми **ртами** (Kunin)

They stood with their mouths wide open

Мы пожали друг другу **руки** (Рубakov)

We shook hands

Хлопали друг друга по **спинам** (Aksenov)

They were slapping each other on the back

Собаки с поджатыми **хвостами** лезли в подворотни (Rasputin)

Dogs were slinking into the gateways with their tails between their legs

Вскрикивали, махали **шапками** (Trifonov)

They were screaming, waving their caps

(3) The singular is preferred for words denoting uniform:

В среднем катере стояли четыре человека в служебной полицейской и таможенной **униформе** (Kunin)

In the central launch stood four men in regulation police and customs officer uniforms

(4) A similar alternative use of singular and plural is observed in the case of the noun **жизнь** ‘life’ (though the singular is more common in Russian, and the plural is used *far* more sparingly than in English). Compare

Я был капитаном «Кальмáра» и отвечáл за их **жизнь** (Gagarin)
I was the captain of the ‘Kalmar’ and was responsible for their lives

and

Люба, Володя и их товарищи оперировали в полевых госпиталях, многим сохранили **жизни** (Rybakov)
Lyuba, Volodya and their comrades operated in the field hospitals and saved many people’s lives

Note

With numerals above four, only the genitive plural is possible (see **195**):

Болезнь, которая уже унесла почти 15 тысяч **жизней** (*Sputnik*)
A disease which has already claimed almost 15,000 lives

Case Usage

See **401–453** for prepositional usage.

77 The nominative

The nominative is used as follows.

(1) It denotes the subject of an action or state:

Мой брат читáет кн́игу
My brother is reading a book

Нáши дéти дово́льны подáрками
Our children are pleased with the presents

(2) It may be introduced

(i) by **это** ‘this is, these are’:

Э́то **моя́ жена́** This is my wife
Э́то **мои́ дéти** These are my children

(ii) by **вот** ‘here is, here are, there is, there are’:

Вот мой дом	There is my house
Вот книги	Here are the books

(3) It is used in possessive constructions:

У меня [есть] книга	I have a book
У него был брат	He had a brother

(4) It is used in comparative constructions after **чем**:

Я старше, чем моя сестра
I am older than my sister

(5) It is used in generalizing constructions after **как**:

в таких странах, как Нигерия
in countries such as Nigeria

Note

The meaning of the above example is ‘in countries such as Nigeria **is**’. **Нигерия** is therefore *not* in apposition to **странах**. Compare:

Наш завод специализируется по производству таких изделий, как шины и колёса
Our factory specializes in the manufacture of products such as tyres and wheels

(6) It is used in definitions:

Москва — столица России	Moscow is the capital of Russia
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(7) It is used in apposition to various generic terms (see 72):

Я читаю роман «Анна Каренина»
I am reading the novel <i>Anna Karenina</i>

78 The vocative

Vocative meanings are expressed by the nominative: **Иван Фёдорович!** ‘Ivan Fedorovich!’. Relics of the former vocative case survive only in certain ecclesiastical terms, now used as exclamations: **Боже мой!** ‘My God!’, **Господи!** ‘Good Lord!’. Some truncated familiar forms are used as vocatives in colloquial Russian: **мам!** ‘Mum!’, **Нин!** ‘Nina!’, **Вань!** ‘Vanya!’, **Коль!** ‘Kolya!’, **Петь!** ‘Pete!’ (also **дядь!** ‘Uncle!’ etc.).

79 The accusative

The accusative case is used as follows.

(1) It denotes the object of a transitive verb:

Он любит Мáшу	He loves Masha
Она́ учится водить мáшину	She is learning to drive a car

Note

In colloquial Russian the verb may sometimes be ‘understood’: Бúдьте добры́ (, попросите к телефóну) Зóю ‘Can I speak to Zoia, please’.

(2) It is used in certain impersonal constructions:

Дéвочку рвёт	The girl feels sick
Дом заглó мóлнией	The house was struck by lightning
Мне жаль (жáлко) сестру́	I feel sorry for my sister (for жаль + genitive, see 80 (8))
Мне бóльно ру́ку (colloquial)	My hand is sore

For other impersonal constructions with the accusative, see **295** (1).

(3) It denotes:

(i) Duration in time:

Всю зíму бýло хóлодно	It was cold all winter
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(ii) Duration in space:

Всю дорóгу они́ шли мóлча	They walked in silence all the way
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(iii) Repetition:

Он éто говорíл ты́сячу раз	He has said that a thousand times
Он болéет ка́ждую весну́	He is ill every spring

(iv) Cost, weight, measure etc.:

Кни́га сто́ит до́ллар	The book costs a dollar
Уго́ль вéсит то́нну	The coal weighs a ton

Note

(a) For the use of the accusative after negated transitive verbs, see **87** (4).

(b) Some verbs which have traditionally governed the genitive may take the *accusative* of animate nouns in colloquial Russian: Он

слу́шается **сестру́** ‘He obeys his sister’, Де́ти бо́ялись **ма́ть** ‘The children were afraid of their mother’, Дожида́лись **А́нну** ‘They were waiting for Anna’. See also **88** (1) (ii) (a) and (2) (i).

80 The genitive: possession and relationship

The genitive case is used to denote the following:

(1) Possession:

дом **бра́та** my brother’s house

(2) Relationships:

член **па́ртии** a member of the party

(3) The whole in relation to the part:

кры́ша **до́ма** the roof of the house

(4) The agent of an action or process:

высту́плéние **арти́ста** the artiste’s performance

(5) The object of an action or process:

убо́рка **урожа́я** the gathering in of the harvest

(6) Descriptive attributes:

час **обе́да** lunch time

бума́га **пе́рвого со́рта** first-grade paper

(7) The second item in a comparison:

Он мо́ложе **бра́та** He is younger than his brother (see also **182** (1) (ii))

(8) The object of regret (constructions with **жа́ль**):

Мне жа́ль **де́нег** I grudge the money

81 The genitive: quantity

The genitive is used with:

(1) **Ма́ло** ‘few’, **мно́го** ‘much, many’, **нема́ло** ‘not a little’, **немно́го** ‘not much, many’, **не́сколько** ‘a few’, **ско́лько** ‘how much, many’, **сто́лько** ‘so much, many’:

много денег	a lot of money
сколько лет?	how many years?
несколько человек	several people

(2) **Достаточно** ‘enough’, **недоставать** ‘to be insufficient’, **скопить** ‘to accumulate’, **хватать/хватить** ‘to be enough’: **Времени** хватает ‘There is enough time’, Ему недостаёт **рубля** ‘He is a rouble short’, достаточно **сил** ‘enough strength’:

Хватит ли им **бензина** для ночных блужданий? (Trifonov)
Will they have enough petrol for their nocturnal escapades?

(3) Collective nouns:

стадо овец	a flock of sheep
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(4) Nouns denoting measure:

литр молока	a litre of milk
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(5) Nouns denoting containers:

чашка молока	a cup of milk
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82 The genitive with adjectives

The following adjectives (and their short forms) govern the genitive: **достойный** ‘worthy’, **лишённый** ‘lacking in’, **полный** ‘full’, **чуждый** ‘devoid’:

корзина, полная яблок	a basket full of apples
Он достоин награды	He is worthy of an award
человек, чуждый честолюбия	a man devoid of ambition
Он лишён остроумия	He is lacking in wit

83 The partitive genitive

(1) The genitive is used to denote part of a substance or liquid (Он выпил **молока** ‘He drank some milk’) or to denote a quantity of objects (Он поёл **ягод** ‘He ate some berries’). The accusative denotes *whole* rather than part: Он выпил **молоко** ‘He drank **the** milk’.

(2) The partitive genitive appears only as the *object* of a verb, never as the subject, cf. Она налилa гостям **вина** ‘She poured her guests some wine’ and На столе́ есть **вино** ‘There is some wine on the table’.

(3) Except for constructions with verbs such as **хотѣть/захотѣть** ‘to want’ and **просить/попросить** ‘to request’, where either aspect may be used (Хочу **воды** ‘I want some water’, Он просит **мѣда** ‘He asks for some honey’), most partitive constructions involve *perfective* verbs only (Она принесла **дров** ‘She brought some firewood’, Он достал **денег** ‘He acquired some money’, Он отмерил **сатина** ‘He measured out some satin’). With many imperfectives the partitive genitive is never used: Он выпил **воды** ‘He drank some water’ but Он пил **воду** ‘He was drinking some water’; Он съел **хлѣба** ‘He ate some bread’ but Он ел **хлеб** ‘He was eating some bread’.

(4) Some perfectives with the quantitative prefix **на-** also take the partitive genitive: наѣсться **ягод** ‘to eat one’s fill of berries’, купить **книг** ‘to buy some books’, нарвать **цветов** ‘to pick some flowers’, нарубить **дров** ‘to chop some wood’.

(5) Containers and quantitative words also appear in partitive constructions: ложка **мѣда** ‘a spoonful of honey’.

(6) Examples of partitive genitives:

Гриша привѣз по еѣ просьбе **овощей** (Trifonov)
Grisha brought some vegetables at her request

Налила ребѣтам **молока** (Rasputin)
She poured the kids some milk

Денег на дорогу вышлю (Shukshin)
I’ll send some money for the journey

Я тебе дам **успокоительных капель** (Rybakov)
I’ll give you some tranquilizers

Note

The following are examples of the parallel availability, after verbs, of a relatively new phenomenon, a partitive *accusative*:

Хочешь, я тебе **чай** принесу (Marinina)
Would you like me to bring you some tea?

“Могú ли я воспользоваться вашим причалом и купить **прѣсную воду**?” (Kunin)
‘May I use your berth and buy some fresh water?’

Капитан сел у окна, заказал **вино** и шницель (Dovlatov)
The captain sat down by the window, ordered some wine and a schnitzel

84 The partitive genitive in -y/-ю

(1) Some masculine nouns, mainly those which denote substances, have genitives in **-a/-я** and in **-y/-ю**, e.g. *сáхар* ‘sugar’, **сáхара/сáхару**; *чай* ‘tea’, **чáя/чáю**. See 53.

(2) Other nouns with two genitives include *бензín* ‘petrol’, *виногрáд* ‘grapes’, *горóх* ‘peas’, *керосín* ‘paraffin’, *кипятóк* ‘boiling water’, *коньяк* ‘brandy’, *лук* ‘onions’, *мёд* ‘honey’, *мел* ‘chalk’, *песóк* ‘sand’, *суп* ‘soup’, *сыр* ‘cheese’, *табáк* ‘tobacco’, *творóг* ‘cottage cheese’, *шёлк* ‘silk’.

(3) Genitive **-y/-ю** appears only in partitive constructions: *налить чáю* ‘to pour some tea’, *тарéлка сýпу* ‘a plate of soup’:

Бáбушка послáла Вóвку пощипáть лúку (Belov)
Grandma sent Vovka to pick some onions

У́тром она́ взяла́ у хозя́ев кипяткú (Rybakov)
In the morning she fetched some boiling water from the proprietors

Достáл бутýлку коньякú
He got out a bottle of brandy

(4) If quantity is *not* implied, **-a/-я** are used: *запах и цвет табакá* ‘the smell and colour of tobacco’, *произвóдство сы́ра* ‘the production of cheese’, *цена́ чáя* ‘the price of tea’.

(5) Note that **-a/-я** are also used if the noun denoting the substance or liquid is qualified by an adjective: *стакáн крéпкого чáя* ‘a glass of strong tea’.

(6) The use of the partitive genitive in **-y/-ю** is decreasing, and **-a/-я** are now possible in all meanings and styles (*чáшка чáю/чáя* ‘a cup of tea’), with the commonest nouns (e.g. *сáхар* ‘sugar’, *чай* ‘tea’) most likely to be found with a genitive in **-y/-ю**. However, even with such nouns the partitive in **-a/-я** is usually acceptable:

Стоó в óчереди в кáссу и прики́дываю: килогрáмм сáхара,
пáчка чáя . . . (*Nedelya*)
I stand in the queue to the cash-desk and calculate: a kilogram of
sugar, a packet of tea . . .

(7) Genitive **-y/-ю** is most consistently found in end-stressed diminutives: *сварить кофейкú* (from *кофеёк*) ‘to boil some coffee’, *Хóчешь чайкú?* (from *чаёк*) ‘Would you like some tea?’ (others

include **коньячку́** from **конья́к/коньячо́к** ‘brandy’, **лучку́** from **лук/лучо́к** ‘onions’, **сырку́** from **сыр/сыро́к** ‘cheese’, **табачку́** from **таба́к/табачо́к** ‘tobacco’).

(8) Partitive constructions involving perfective verbs and genitives in **-у/-ю** are also very common: **доба́вить са́хару** ‘to add some sugar’, **зава́рить ча́ю** ‘to make some tea’, **пое́сть су́пу** ‘to eat some soup’, **положи́ть чесно́ку** ‘to put in some garlic’.

(9) **-у/-ю** are also found with **нет**, with indefinite numerals and with measures and containers: **килогра́мм виногра́ду** ‘a kilo of grapes’, **нет конья́ку** ‘there is no brandy’, **мно́го наро́ду** ‘many people’, **па́чка са́хару** ‘a packet of sugar’, **кусо́к сы́ру** ‘a piece of cheese’; **-а/-я** are also possible in such cases:

Оста́лось лишь полпа́чки ча́я (Povolyaev)
Only half a packet of tea remained

Only occasionally is the partitive governed by a frequentative *imperfective* verb:

И́зредка мать набива́ла творо́гу в ба́ночку (Rasputin)
Now and again mother would cram some cottage cheese into a little jar

85 Genitive in -у in set phrases

(1) Genitives in **-у** appear in certain idioms and set phrases:

до за́резу ну́жно	very necessary
ни ра́зу	not once
ни слуху ни ду́ху	neither sight nor sound
ни ша́гу наза́д	not a step back
с бо́ку на́ бок	from side to side
с гла́зу на́ глаз	tête-à-tête
танцева́ть до упа́ду	to dance till one drops
упуска́ть из виду́	to lose sight of

(2) The genitive in **-а/-я** has had very little impact on such phrases, except for **без про́маху/-а** ‘unerringly’ and **без разбóру/-а** ‘indiscriminately’.

(3) In some causal expressions **от** combines with **-а/-я** (**от го́лода** ‘from hunger’, **от испу́га** ‘from fright’, **от сме́ха** ‘with laughter’) and **с** with **-у/-ю** (**умере́ть с го́лоду** ‘to starve to death’, **кри́кнуть с испу́гу**

‘to scream with fright’, пры́снуть со́ **смеху** ‘to burst out laughing’, умереть со **стра́ху** ‘to die of fright’). Some forms in **-у/-ю** appear in spatial expressions: уй́ти́ из **дому́** ‘to leave home’ (cf. уй́ти́ из **до́ма** ‘to leave the house’), вы́йти из **лесу́** ‘to emerge from the forest’.

86 Genitive and negative

(1) **Нет** ‘there is not’, **не́ было́** ‘there was not’ and **не́ бу́дет** ‘there will not be’ combine with the genitive to denote **non-existence** or **non-availability**:

Нет де́нег	There is no money
Не́ было́ вре́мени	There was no time
Не́ бу́дет войны́	There will be no war

Note

- (a) Compare frequentative usage in **Все́ ча́ще Ли́ли не́ быва́ет до́ма** (Kazakov) ‘Lilya is out more and more often’.
- (b) Compare Lilya constructions which involve identification, where the **nominative** is used: **Э́то не́ мо́я же́на** ‘That is not my wife’, **Э́то не́ были́ мо́и де́ти** ‘Those were not my children’.
- (c) Constructions of the type: **Роди́тели** (nominative) **не́ до́ма** ‘The parents are out’ (for the normal **Роди́телей нет до́ма**) may be used when actual whereabouts are indicated: **Они́ не́ до́ма, а в гостя́х** ‘They are not in, but out visiting’.

(2) The genitive is also used in possessive phrases: **У меня́ нет́ компью́тера** ‘I have no computer’, **У нас не́ было́ дете́й** ‘We had no children’, **У вас не́ бу́дет пробле́м** ‘You will not have any problems’.

(3) Other negated verbs denoting non-availability, non-occurrence or non-appearance may be used in this construction: **Ле́звий не́ име́ется** ‘There are no blades in stock’, **Де́нег не́ оста́лось** ‘There was no money left’, **Таки́х люде́й не́ существве́ует** ‘Such people do not exist’, **Встре́чных маши́н не́ попада́лось** ‘No oncoming vehicles were encountered’.

(4) In some negative constructions a nominative indicates the absence of *specific* objects, a genitive the absence of *all* objects of a particular type, cf. **Докуме́нтов не́ сохра́нилось** ‘No documents were preserved’ (at all) and **Докуме́нты, о кото́рых шла́ речь, не́ сохра́нились** ‘The documents in question were not preserved’.

(5) The genitive construction is also used after **не́ ви́дно** ‘cannot be seen’, **не́ заме́тно** ‘cannot be discerned’, **не́ слы́шно** ‘cannot be heard’:

Из-за дыма **дверей** не видно (Abramov)
You can't see the doors for the smoke

Ни **собаки**, ни **голосов** не было слышно (Trifonov)
Neither the dog nor people's voices could be heard

(6) It is also used with **не надо**, **не нужно** etc.:

Не надо ни **дров**, ни **угля** (*Rabotitsa*)
Neither firewood nor coal is necessary

Note

Compare the use of the *genitive* case in the general statement: **Помощи** не нужно 'No help is required' and the *nominative* in the specific **Ваша помощь** не нужна 'Your help is not required'.

(7) The *genitive* case is used in negative passive constructions: **Книг** не выпускается 'No books are issued', **Подтверждения** не получено 'No confirmation has been received'.

(8) It is also used in time expressions:

И **пяти минут** не прошло (Orlov)
Not five minutes had passed

Мы поженились, когда мне ещё не исполнилось **восемнадцати**
(*Russia Today*)
We got married when I had not yet **turned 18**

87 The genitive and accusative after negated verbs

(1) Both the *genitive* and the *accusative* can be used after a negated transitive verb:

Он не посещал **город/города** He did not visit the town

(2) While in case of doubt it is advisable to use a *genitive*, there are situations where one case or the other is preferable.

(3) The **genitive** is preferred:

(i) In generalized statements:

Я не вижу **стола**
I don't see a (i.e. *any*) table

(ii) With compound negatives:

Он никогда и никому не говорил **неправды** (Trifonov)
He has never told lies to anyone

(iii) With the emphatic negative particle **ни**:

Он не прочитал **ни одной книги**
He has not read a single book

(iv) With abstract nouns: Она не скрывает **своего раздражения** 'She does not conceal her irritation'. Many set expressions are involved: не играть **роли** 'to play no part', не иметь **понятия** 'to have no idea', не иметь **права** 'not to have the right', не иметь **смысла** 'not to have any point', не обращать **внимания** 'not to pay any attention', не придавать **значения** 'not to attach significance to', не принимать **участия** 'not to take part', не производить **впечатления** 'to make no impression', не терять **времени** 'not to waste time'.

(v) With a negative gerund: не скрывая своей **радости** 'without concealing his joy', не дослушав **спора** до конца 'without hearing out the argument'.

(vi) With **это**: **Этого** я не допущу 'I won't allow that', and after negated verbs of perception: Он не знал **урока** 'He did not know the lesson', Он не понял **вопроса** 'He did not understand the question', Он не чувствовал **боли** 'he did not feel any pain'.

(4) The **accusative** is preferred:

(i) When a specific object or objects are involved:

Я не вижу **стол**
I do not see *the* table

Он не получил **письмо**
He did not receive *the* letter (cf. Он не получил **письма** 'He did not receive *a* letter')

(ii) When the object denotes a person:

Он не встретил **мою сестру**
He did not meet my sister

(iii) With 'false' negatives such as **едва не/чуть не**, 'almost', **не могу не** 'I can't help, cannot but':

Он чуть не пропустил **трамвай**
He almost missed the tram

Не могу не простить его **поведение**
I cannot but forgive his behaviour

(iv) When the noun is qualified by an instrumental predicate:

Я не считаю **эту статью** интересной
I do not consider this article interesting

(v) When a part of the sentence other than the verb is negated:

Он не **вполнѣ** усвоил урок
He has not **completely** assimilated the lesson

Не **я** придумал новый порядок
It was not **I** who devised the new set up.

(vi) In set phrases: **палец** о палец не ударить ‘not to do a stroke of work’.

(5) If none of the above criteria apply, then **either case** is usually possible. Factors which influence choice include:

(i) Word order, the accusative being preferred when the noun precedes the verb (**Идею** она не поняла ‘She did not understand *the* idea’) and the genitive when it follows (Она не поняла **идеи** ‘She did not understand the idea’).

(ii) An accusative is often regarded as the more colloquial alternative: Я не читал **вчерашнюю газету** ‘I have not read yesterday’s newspaper’.

(iii) Nouns in **-а** and **-я** are more prone to appear in the accusative case after a negated transitive verb than are other nouns.

(iv) When an infinitive appears between the negated verb and the object, the latter usually appears in the accusative:

Он не хотел смотреть **эту пьесу**
He did not want to see this play

Я не умею писать **стихи**
I can’t write verse

However, the genitive is also possible:

Вы же никому не даёте раскрыть **рта** (Trifonov)
Why, you don’t give anyone a chance to get a word in edgeways

Note

To avoid ambiguity, it is better to replace, say, Он не читает **книги** either by Он не читает **книгу** ‘He is not reading the book’ or by Он не читает **книг** ‘He does not read books’ (since it is otherwise not clear whether **книги** is genitive singular or accusative plural).

(6) In cases of doubt it is advisable to use the *genitive* after a negated transitive verb:

Пригну́вшись, что́бы не заде́ть голо́вой **по́толка́** (Zalygin)
 Stooping, so as not to hit his head on the ceiling

Note

Verbs which take a case other than the accusative are not affected by the negative-genitive rule: Он *помога́ет* б́ра́ту ‘He helps his brother’, Он *не* *помога́ет* б́ра́ту ‘He does not help his brother’; Он *горди́тся* сво́йм полко́м ‘He is proud of his regiment’, Он *не* *горди́тся* сво́йм полко́м ‘He is not proud of his regiment’.

88 Verbs that take the genitive

Verbs which govern the genitive case belong to four principal categories:

(1) Verbs of asking, waiting, seeking, achieving etc.:

(i) Verbs that take only the genitive. These include **добива́ться** ‘to strive for’, **достига́ть** ‘to achieve’, **жа́ждать** ‘to crave for’, **жела́ть** ‘to desire’, **заслу́живать** ‘to deserve’:

добива́ться	успе́ха	to strive for success
достига́ть	сво́ей це́ли	to achieve one’s aim
жа́ждать	сла́вы	to crave for glory
жела́ть	сча́стья	to desire happiness
заслу́живать	похва́лы	to deserve praise

Note

(a) The perfective **заслу́жить** ‘to earn’ takes the accusative: *заслу́жить до́верие* ‘to earn someone’s confidence’.

(b) **Жела́ть** ‘to wish’ is ‘understood’ in such phrases as **Счастли́вого пу́ти!** ‘Bon voyage!’ and **И вам то́го же!** ‘The same to you!’.

(ii) Verbs that take the genitive *and* the accusative. Generally speaking, such verbs take the genitive of nouns denoting general and abstract concepts, and the accusative of nouns denoting persons and specific inanimate objects. The verbs include:

(a) **Дожида́ться** ‘to wait until’.

Genitive	дожида́ться побе́ды	to wait till victory comes
Accusative	дожида́ться сестру́	to wait till one’s sister comes

(b) **Ждать** 'to wait for'.

Genitive	Жду отвѣта	I am awaiting an answer
	Жду приказа	I am awaiting an order
	Жду решения	I am awaiting a decision

Ждѣм **писем** о самых интересных клубов (*Russia Today*)
We are expecting letters about the most interesting clubs

Она ждала от меня **комплимента** (Avdeenko)
She was expecting a compliment from me

Accusative	Жду сегодняшнюю	I am waiting for today's
	почту	mail

Сидел за столом, занимался, ждал **жену** (Grekova)
He sat at the table, worked, waited for his wife

Note

Ждать **автобус** No. 5 'to wait for the number 5 bus' (a particular bus), but Жду **автобуса** 'I am waiting for a bus' (any bus; but Жду **автобус** is also possible, especially in spoken Russian).

(c) **Искать** 'to seek, look for'.

Genitive ('to try to achieve')

искать возможности	to seek an opportunity
искать помощи	to seek assistance

Accusative ('to try to find')

искать упавшую иголку	to look for a dropped needle
искать свое место в зале	to look for one's place in the hall
искать правду	to seek the truth
искать дорогу	to try to find the way

Note

Работа is found in either case (искать **работы/работу** 'to look for work'), with the accusative (the more usual form) referring to more specific work.

(d) **Ожидать** 'to wait for, expect'.

Genitive	ожидать случая	to wait for an opportunity
	ожидать автобуса	to wait for a bus (cf. ждать (b) note)

Втянул голову в плечи, будто ожидая **удара** со спины (Gagarin)
He hunched his shoulders, as if expecting a blow from behind

Accusative ожидать **ма́му** to wait for, expect Mum

(e) **Проси́ть** ‘to ask for’.

Genitive Прошу́ **по́мощи** I ask for assistance
(also прошу́ о по́мощи)
Прошу́ **проще́ния** I ask forgiveness

See **83** (3) for usage with the partitive genitive.

Accusative Прошу́ **де́ньги** I ask for the money
(cf. Прошу́ **де́нег**
‘I ask for **some** money’)
Прошу́ **ма́му** I ask Mum to open the
откры́ть окно́ window

(f) **Требова́ть** ‘to demand’.

Genitive требова́ть **внима́ния** to demand attention
требова́ть **приба́вки** to demand an increment
требова́ть **кни́г** to demand some books
Accusative требова́ть **свою́ кни́гу** to demand one’s book

(g) **Хоте́ть** ‘to want’.

Genitive Хоти́м **ми́ра** We want peace

See **83** (3) for usage with the partitive genitive.

Accusative Хочу́ **бу́лку** I want a roll

(2) Verbs of fearing, avoiding etc. Such verbs usually take the genitive of abstract, impersonal and inanimate nouns, but may now govern the accusative of animate nouns.

(i) **Бо́яться** ‘to fear’.

Genitive бо́яться **темноты́** to be afraid of the dark
бо́яться **грозы́** to be afraid of a thunderstorm

Он бо́ялся **го́рода**, не хоте́л в него́ (Rasputin)
He was afraid of the town, did not want to go there

Accusative бо́яться **ба́бушку** to be afraid of grandmother

(ii) Other verbs include дичи́ться ‘to be shy of’, избега́ть ‘to avoid’, опасáться ‘to fear’, остерега́ться ‘to beware of’, пугáться ‘to be scared of’, стесня́ться ‘to be shy of’, сторони́ться ‘to shun’, стыди́ться ‘to be ashamed of’, чужда́ться ‘to avoid’:

избега́ть **неприятностей** to avoid trouble

избегать тёщу	to avoid one's mother-in-law
опасаться осложнений	to fear complications
остерегаться заразы	to beware of an infection
пугаться грома	to be scared of thunder
стесняться общества	to shun society
сторониться недобрых людей	to shun wicked people
стыдиться своего вида	to be ashamed of one's appearance
чуждаться дурной компании	to avoid bad company

(3) Verbs of depriving etc.

лишать родительских прав	to deprive of parental rights
лишаться свободы	to be deprived of one's freedom

(4) Verbs denoting conformity or non-conformity. These include *держаться* 'to adhere to', *ослушиваться* 'to disobey', *придерживаться* 'to hold to', *слушаться* 'to obey':

держаться мнения	to stick to one's opinion
ослушиваться приказа	to disobey an order
придерживаться точки зрения	to hold to a point of view
слушаться совета	to heed advice

Note

In colloquial styles the accusative is possible with an animate object: *слушаться матери* or *мать* 'to obey one's mother'.

Other verbs that take the genitive include *касаться* 'to touch, touch on' and *стоять* 'to be worth':

касаться стола	to touch the table
касаться вопроса	to touch on a question
это стоит награды	that is worth an award

89 The dative as indirect object of a verb

The dative case denotes the indirect object of a verb, i.e. the person for whom an action is performed, the recipient or beneficiary: *давать деньги кассиру* 'to give the money to the cashier', *звонить сестре на работу* 'to ring one's sister at work', *отвечать соседу* 'to answer a neighbour' (cf. *отвечать на письмо* 'to answer a letter'), *писать*

письмо́ **бра́ту** ‘to write a letter to one’s brother’, плати́ть **дру́гу** ‘to pay one’s friend’, пожима́ть ру́ку **солда́ту** ‘to shake the soldier’s hand’, посла́ть де́ньги **сы́ну** ‘to send money to one’s son’ (note, however, use of the preposition **к** when the object sent is animate: отпра́вить дете́й **к ро́дственникам** ‘to send the children to stay with relatives’), сказа́ть **отцу́** пра́вду ‘to tell one’s father the truth’.

90 Verbs that take the dative

Verbs which take the dative denote:

(1) Conforming, rendering assistance or other service; conversely, causing a hindrance: **аккомпани́ровать** ‘to accompany’ (music), **аплоди́ровать** ‘to applaud’, **вреди́ть** ‘to harm’, **изменя́ть** ‘to betray’, **меша́ть** ‘to hinder’, **напомина́ть** ‘to remind’, **повинова́ться** ‘to obey’, **позволя́ть** ‘to allow’, **покрови́тельствова́ть** ‘to patronize’, **помога́ть** ‘to help’, **препятствова́ть** ‘to hinder’, **противоре́чить** ‘to contradict’, **служи́ть** ‘to serve’, **сове́товать** ‘to advise’, **соде́йствова́ть** ‘to cooperate’, **способствова́ть** ‘to foster’, **угожда́ть** ‘to please’.

Note

(a) **Запреща́ть** ‘to forbid’ and **разреша́ть** ‘to permit’ take the dative of the person (**запреща́ть/разреша́ть солда́там** **кури́ть** ‘to forbid/permit the soldiers to smoke’) and the accusative of an action or process (**запреща́ть/разреша́ть обго́н** ‘to forbid/permit overtaking’).

(b) **Учи́ть** ‘to teach’ takes the dative of the subject taught: **учи́ть дете́й му́зыке** ‘to teach the children music’. **Учи́ть** + accusative means ‘to learn’: **учи́ть ру́сский язы́к** ‘to learn Russian’. **Росси́ю** **постоя́нно учи́т** **демократи́и** (V. Putin) ‘Russia is constantly being taught democracy’.

(2) Attitude: **ве́рить** ‘to believe’, **грози́ть** ‘to threaten’, **доверя́ть(ся)** ‘to trust’, **досажда́ть** ‘to annoy’, **зави́довать** ‘to envy’, **льсти́ть** ‘to flatter’, **мсти́ть** ‘to take vengeance on’ (cf. **мсти́ть за** + accusative ‘to avenge someone’), **надоеда́ть** ‘to bore’, **подража́ть** ‘to imitate’, **поража́ться** ‘to be amazed at’, **ра́доваться** ‘to rejoice at’, **сочу́вствова́ть** ‘to sympathize with’, **удивля́ться** ‘to be surprised at’. Note also **смея́ться**, **улыба́ться шу́тке** ‘to laugh, smile at a joke’ (but **смея́ться над** **ке́м-нибу́дь** ‘to laugh at someone’).

(3) Other meanings: **насле́дова́ть** ‘to succeed’ (someone), **предше́ствова́ть** ‘to precede’, **принадлежа́ть** ‘to belong to’ (in the meaning of possession; cf. **принадлежа́ть к** ‘to belong to’ (a group, society etc.)), **равня́ться** ‘to equal’, **сле́дова́ть** ‘to follow’ (advice etc.).

Note

Many verbal and other nouns cognate with the above verbs also take the dative: обучение **ру́сскому языку́** ‘the teaching of Russian’, подража́ние **ска́зке** ‘imitation of a folk tale’, по́мощь **же́ртвам** землетрясе́ния ‘help for the victims of the earthquake’, служе́ние **нау́ке** ‘service to science’, соде́йствие **фло́ту** ‘co-operation with the navy’, сочу́вствие **чужо́му го́рю** ‘sympathy for others’ grief’, угро́за **ми́ру** ‘a threat to peace’.

91 Adjectives that take the dative

Adjectives (long *and* short forms) which take the dative include:

благодáрный	grateful to
ве́рный	loyal to
знако́мый	known to
изве́стный	well known to
подо́бный	similar to
послу́шный	obedient to
прису́щий	inherent in
рад (short form only)	glad (я рад гостя́м ‘I am glad to see the guests’)
сво́йственный	characteristic of, inherent in

Предусмотрите́льность **сво́йственна** э́тому челове́ку
Prudence is inherent in this person

92 Impersonal constructions using the dative

(1) Most impersonal constructions involving the dative case denote a state of mind, feeling, inclination or attitude:

Ученику́ весе́ло, гру́стно, ду́шно, жа́рко, лу́чше, ску́чно,
сты́дно, тепло́, удо́бно, хо́лодно, ху́же

The pupil feels cheerful, sad, stifled, hot, better, bored,
ashamed, warm, comfortable, cold, worse

(2) Some constructions involve verbs: **Бра́ту** ка́жется, что тепло́ ‘My brother thinks it is warm’, **Бра́ту** надо́ело раба́тывать ‘My brother is bored with working’, **Бра́ту** нездо́ровича ‘My brother feels off colour’, **Бра́ту** нра́вится танцева́ть ‘My brother likes dancing’, **Бра́ту** приходи́тся мно́го раба́тывать ‘My brother is obliged to work hard’,

Брату удалось достать деньги ‘My brother managed to get the money’,
Брату хотелось уйти ‘My brother felt like leaving’.

(3) Note also:

(i) Constructions with reflexive verbs that denote disinclination:

Сестре не поётся, не работается, не сидится
 My sister does not feel like singing, working, sitting still

(ii) The impersonal predicate **жаль** also combines with the dative:
Отцу жаль ‘My father feels sorry’ (for жаль with accusative see **79** (2)
 and for жаль with genitive see **80** (8)).

(4) The dative is also used in denoting age: **Сыну** (исполнилось) 20 лет
 ‘My son is (has turned) 20’.

93 The dative as the logical subject of an infinitive

(1) A noun or pronoun in the dative case may function as the logical subject of an infinitive: **Что детям** делать? ‘What are the children to do?’, **Не вам** решать ‘It is not for you to decide’, **Брату** нeкуда идти ‘My brother has nowhere to go’.

(2) The dative can also be used to express a peremptory command:
Всем сотрудникам собраться в час! ‘All employees meet at one!’

94 The instrumental of function

A noun is placed in the instrumental case to denote that the object it represents is being used to perform a function: **мыться горячей водой** ‘to wash with hot water’, **писать карандашом** ‘to write with a pencil’, **резать ножом** ‘to cut with a knife’, **рубить топором** ‘to chop with an axe’.

Note

- (a) Analogous use of the instrumental in **бросать камнями** ‘to throw stones’ (at a target), **говорить громким голосом** ‘to speak in a loud voice’, **дышать кислородом** ‘to breathe oxygen’, **платить английскими деньгами** ‘to pay in English money’.
- (b) Use of the instrumental of function (e.g. **резать ножом** ‘to cut with a knife’) must be distinguished from **с + instrumental** (‘with’ in the meaning ‘holding’): **он сидел с ножом** в руке ‘he sat with a knife in his hand’.

- (c) Кормить **рыбой** 'to feed on (= with) fish', награждать **премией** 'to reward with a bonus', наполнять **водой** 'to fill with water', снабжать **нефтью** 'to supply with oil' also belong in the category 'instrumental of function'.

95 The instrumental in constructions denoting movements of the body

The instrumental is used in constructions denoting movements of the body:

(1) Двигать **рукой** 'to move one's arm' (cf. двигать **стол** 'to move a table'), качать/кивать **головой** 'to shake/nod one's head', махать **рукой** 'to wave one's hand', мигать **глазами** 'to blink one's eyes', пожимать **плечами** 'to shrug one's shoulders', топтать **ногами** 'to stamp one's feet', щёлкать **языком** 'to click one's tongue'.

(2) The construction also applies to objects held with the hand (размахивать **палкой** 'to brandish a stick', хлопать **дверью** 'to slam a door', щёлкать **бичом** 'to crack a whip') and to the figurative expressions И **бровью** не повёл 'He did not turn a hair', шевелить **мозгами** 'to use one's brains'.

96 The instrumental in passive constructions

The instrumental is used to denote the agent in a passive construction:

Дом строится рабочими	The house is being built by workers
Гора покрыта снегом	The mountain is covered with snow
Ветром сорвало крышу	The roof was torn off by the wind

See also 359 and 360 (2) for the use of the instrumental with passive participles.

97 The instrumental in adverbial expressions

The instrumental is used to denote movement through time or space, or the manner in which an action is performed:

(1) Space: The type of route covered in a journey: **идти берегом** ‘to walk along the shore’, **ехать лесом** ‘to ride through the forest’, **морем** ‘by sea’, **ехать полем** ‘to ride through the fields’, **сухим путём** ‘overland’. Note also **идти своей дорогой** ‘to go one’s own way’ (fig.).

(2) Time:

(i) Parts of the day: **утром, днём, вечером, ночью** ‘in the morning, daytime, evening, at night’ (**глубокой ночью** ‘at dead of night’, **однажды утром** ‘one morning’, **вечерами** ‘in the evenings’, **ночами** ‘(at) nights’).

Note

Днём may also mean ‘in the afternoon’ (also rendered as **во второй половине дня**).

(ii) Seasons of the year: **весной, летом, осенью, зимой** ‘in the spring, summer, autumn, winter’ (**однажды зимой** ‘one winter’, **поздней осенью** ‘in late autumn’ etc.).

(iii) Others: **целыми часами/днями** ‘for hours/days on end’.

(3) The **manner** in which or the **means** by which an action is performed, in terms of:

(i) Position: **вверх дном** ‘upside down’, **вниз головой** ‘head first’, **стоять спиной к огню** ‘to stand with one’s back to the fire’.

(ii) Movement: **бегом** ‘at a run’, **шагом** ‘at walking pace’.

(iii) Group activity: **уехать семьёй** ‘to leave in a family group’, **пение хором** ‘singing in chorus’.

(iv) Utterance: **другими словами** ‘in other words’, **петь басом** ‘to sing bass’, **шепотом** ‘in a whisper’.

(v) Means of transport: **ехать поездом, лететь самолётом** ‘to go by train, by air’.

(vi) Degree of effort: **любой ценой** ‘at any cost’.

(vii) Quantity: **Домá не строили тысячами, как сейчас (Рыбаков)** ‘Houses were not built in thousands as they are now’.

(viii) Form, manner: **каким образом?** ‘in what way?’, **Снег падает на землю большими хлопьями (Распутин)** ‘The snow falls to earth in large flakes’.

98 Use of the instrumental to denote similarity

The instrumental is also used to express similarity: **выть вóлком** ‘to howl like a wolf’, **умереть герóем** ‘to die like a hero’, **шипеть змеёй** ‘to hiss like a snake’, **Снег лежит коврóм** ‘The snow lies like a carpet’, **лететь стрелóй** ‘to fly like an arrow’, **усы щётчóккой** ‘toothbrush moustache’:

За кустáрником **тёмной стеной** выростáло чернóлесье (Abramov)
Deciduous forest grew up beyond the bushes like a dark wall

99 Verbs that take the instrumental

Verbs that take the instrumental case denote:

(1) **Use or control:** **владеть** ‘to own, have a command of’ (a language), **дирижировать** ‘to conduct’ (an orchestra), **заведовать** ‘to be in charge of’, **злоупотреблять** ‘to abuse, misuse’, **комáндовать** ‘to command’, **обладать** ‘to possess’, **пользоваться** ‘to use’, **прáвить** ‘to rule’, **располагать** ‘to have at one’s disposal’, **распоряжаться** ‘to manage’, **руководить** ‘to run’, **управлять** ‘to control’.

(2) **Attitude:** **восхищаться** ‘to be delighted with’, **гордиться** ‘to be proud of’, **грозить** ‘to threaten with’, **довóльствоваться** ‘to be satisfied with’, **дорожить** ‘to value’, **интересоваться** ‘to be interested in’, **любоваться** ‘to admire’ (also на + acc.), **наслаждаться** ‘to delight in’, **обходиться** ‘to make do with’, **пренебрегать** ‘to disregard’, **увлекаться** ‘to be obsessed with’, **хвástаться** ‘to boast of’, **щеголять** ‘to flaunt’.

(3) **Reciprocal action:** **делиться** ‘to share’, **обмéниваться** ‘to exchange’.

(4) **Other meanings:** **болеть** ‘to be sick’, **жёртовать** ‘to sacrifice’ (cf. **жёртовать** + acc. ‘to donate’), **заниматься** ‘to busy oneself with’, **изобильовать** ‘to abound in’, **ограничиваться** ‘to limit oneself to’, **отличаться** ‘to be distinguished by’, **пáхнуть** ‘to smell of’, **прославляться** ‘to be renowned for’, **рисковать** ‘to risk’, **страдать** ‘to suffer from’ (chronically) (cf. **страдать от** ‘to suffer from’ (a *temporary* ailment)), **торговать** ‘to trade in’.

Note

Participial, verbal and other nouns cognate with many of the above also take the instrumental: **владение дóмом** ‘ownership of a house’ (but

владелец **дома** ‘house owner’), злоупотребление **властью** ‘abuse of power’, командование **армией** ‘command of the army’, командующий **армией** ‘army commander’ (but командир **дивизии** ‘divisional commander’), руководство **партией** ‘leadership of the party’ (as an action or process, cf. руководство **партии** ‘the leadership (i.e. ‘the leaders’) of the party’, руководитель **группы** ‘leader of the group’), торговля **наркотиками** ‘drugs trade’, увлечение **математикой** ‘obsession with mathematics’.

100 Adjectives that take the instrumental

These include long *and* (where available) short forms: беременная (**третьим ребёнком**) ‘pregnant’ (with her third child), богатый ‘rich in’, больной ‘sick with’, гордый ‘proud of’, довольный ‘pleased with’, известный ‘famous for’, обязанный ‘obliged’:

Своими успехами они были обязаны собственному трудолюбию (Рубаков)

They owed their success to their own industriousness

101 The instrumental of dimension

The instrumental is used to express dimension: гора **высотой** в 1 000 метров ‘a mountain 1,000 m high’, река **длиной** в сто километров ‘a river 100 km long’, человек **ростом** в метр восемьдесят ‘a man one metre eighty tall’.

Note

- (a) The preposition **в** may be omitted, especially in technical styles.
- (b) Questions to which these are the notional answers appear in the *genitive*: **какой высоты** гора? ‘how high is the mountain?’, **какой длины** река? ‘how long is the river?’, **какого он роста?** ‘how tall is he?’

102 The instrumental as predicate

(1) The instrumental is used as predicate to the infinitive, future tense, imperative, conditional and gerund of the verb **быть** ‘to be’: Я хочу **быть врачом** ‘I want to be a doctor’, если бы я был **врачом** ‘if I were

a doctor', Когда-нибудь вы будете **стариком** 'One day you will be an old man', Не будь **трусом** 'Don't be a coward', Не будучи **знатоком**, не могу судить 'Not being a connoisseur I cannot judge'.

Note

The *nominative*, not the instrumental, is used when no part of **быть** is present: Она врач 'She is a doctor'.

(2) In the *past* tense:

(i) The nominative denotes **permanent** state, occupation, nationality etc.: По профессии он был **ботаник** 'By profession he was a botanist', Она была **испанка** (Granin) 'She was a Spaniard', Смолянов был **саратовец** (Trifonov) 'Smolyanov was a native of Saratov'.

(ii) The instrumental denotes **temporary** status: Во время войны я был **офицером** 'During the war I was an officer' (the verb **быть** is sometimes omitted: Я потерял родителей (когда я был/будучи) **ребёнком** 'I lost my parents as a child').

Note

Permanent status may *also* be denoted by the instrumental: Она была **сестрой** Полевого (Проп), 'She was Polevoi's sister', Пушкин был **величайшим русским поэтом/величайший русский поэт** 'Pushkin was the greatest Russian poet'.

(3) Of two nouns (or noun and pronoun) linked by the verb **быть** the more specific appears in the nominative, the more general in the instrumental:

Ключом к успеху была грамотность
The key to success was literacy

В нашем доме немецкий был **третьим языком** (Rybakov)
In our house German was the third language

Одним из наших главных проблем был транспорт
One of our main problems was transport

Note

The subject may be an infinitive: **Учиться** будет его целью 'His aim will be to study', Первым её побуждением было **помочь** дочери 'Her first impulse was to help her daughter'.

(4) The rule described in (3) also applies to **являться** 'to be':

Основной формой работы в школе является урок (*Russia Today*)
The lesson is the basic form of work in school

(5) An instrumental predicate also appears with verbs such as **записываться** ‘to enrol’, **работать** ‘to work’, **служить** ‘to serve’:

Записался **добровольцем**, дали ему коня (Rybakov)
He signed up as a volunteer, and they gave him a horse

(6) A number of verbs which denote state, appearance or manner also take an instrumental: **выглядеть** ‘to look’, **казаться** ‘to seem’, **называться** ‘to be called’, **оказываться** ‘to turn out to be’, **оставаться** ‘to remain’, **расставаться** ‘to part’, **родиться** ‘to be born’, **состоять (членом)** ‘to be’ (a member), **становиться** ‘to become’, **считаться** ‘to be considered’, **чувствовать себя** ‘to feel’:

Ещё с войны она **вдовой** осталась (Shcherbakov)
She had been left a war widow

Он кажется **опытным инженером**
He seems to be an experienced engineer

В 2008-ом году **жертвами** насилия в России стали 126 тысяч детей (D. Medvedev)
In 2008 126,000 children became victims of violence

(7) The instrumental may also be predicate to the object of transitive verbs which denote appointment, naming, considering: **Сестру зовут Танией** (alternatively, especially in colloquial Russian, **Сестру зовут Тания**) ‘My sister is called Tanya’, **назначать Иванова председателем** ‘to appoint Ivanov chairman’, **Мак считают снотворным средством** ‘Poppy is considered to be a soporific’:

Он называет Тольятти «**экспериментальной лабораторией**» советского градостроительства (*Sputnik*)
He calls Togliatti ‘an experimental laboratory’ in Soviet town planning

Note

Тольятти ‘Togliatti’ was renamed Тольяттиград ‘Togliattigrad’ in 1991.

103 Nouns in apposition

When two or more nouns, pronouns or modifiers refer to the same object or person they appear in the same case:

Она жила в **Москве, столице** России
She lived in **Moscow, the capital** of Russia

Он знал моего отца, известного хирурга
He knew **my father, a famous surgeon**

Я читаю “*Аргументы и факты*”, одну из самых интересных еженедельных газет

I am reading *Argumenty i fakty, one* of the most interesting weekly newspapers

Diminutive and augmentative nouns

104 Meanings and functions of the diminutive

(1) Diminutive suffixes not only denote smallness (**сто́лик** ‘a small table’), but may also express emotional nuances such as affection (**дяденька** ‘dear uncle’), disparagement (**городíшко** ‘wretched little town’), irony (**идейка** ‘a paltry little idea’) etc. Depending on context the same diminutive phrase may convey a caring attitude (**Вот тебе горяченький супчик** ‘Here’s some nice hot soup for you’ (mother to child)) or be evidence of affectation.

(2) Diminutives are used mainly in colloquial speech. Many have acquired independent meanings, e.g. **ру́чка** ‘handle’, ‘pen’.

105 Masculine diminutives

The following diminutive suffixes may be affixed to the stems of masculine nouns.

(1) **-ец**.

-ец may express an affectionate or positive attitude (**бра́тец** from брат ‘brother’, **хле́бец** from хлеб ‘bread’), or alternatively disparagement (**анекдóтец** from анекдóт ‘anecdote’).

(2) **-ик**.

(i) **-ик** (*never stressed*) imparts the meaning of smallness to many masculine nouns: **до́мик** from дом ‘house’, **ко́врик** ‘mat’ from ковёр ‘carpet’.

(ii) Emotional nuances expressed by **-ик** include affection (**са́дик** from сад ‘garden’), and irony or scorn (**анекдóтик** from анекдóт ‘anecdote’).

(iii) Diminutives with independent meanings include **мóстик** ‘captain’s bridge’, **но́жик** ‘pen-knife’ and **стóлик** ‘restaurant table’.

(3) **-ок/-ёк/-ек.**

(i) **-ок/-ёк** (*always stressed*) express affection, irony or disparagement, as well as smallness. Velar consonants undergo mutation:

дружо́к from друг ‘friend’, **старичо́к** from старíк ‘old man’, **пастушо́к** from пастýх ‘shepherd’.

(ii) Other diminutives in **-ок** include **городо́к** from гóрод ‘town’, **лесо́к** from лес ‘forest’ etc. **Дурачо́к** from дура́к ‘fool’ and **женишо́к** from жени́х ‘fiancé, bridegroom’ express irony.

(iii) Nouns in **-ь** and **-й** take the suffix **-ёк**: **огонёк** from огóнь ‘fire, light’ (Нет ли у вас **огонька́**? ‘Do you happen to have a light?’), **чаёк** from чай ‘tea’ (Хотíte **чайкú**? ‘Have some tea?’).

(iv) Nouns with independent meanings include **волосо́к** ‘filament’, **глазо́к** ‘peephole’, **значо́к** ‘badge’, **конёк** ‘skate’, **кружо́к** ‘circle, club’, **молото́к** ‘hammer’, **носо́к** ‘sock, toe of shoe or stocking’, **язычо́к** ‘tongue of shoe, clapper of bell’.

Note

(a) Second-stage diminutives can be formed: друг ‘friend’, **дружо́к**, **дружо́чек**.

(b) Diminutives in unstressed **-ек** include **челове́чек** from человек ‘person’.

(4) **-чик.**

(i) **-чик** (*never stressed*) is affixed mainly to nouns ending in:

(a) **-л/-ль** (**автомобильчик** from автомоби́ль ‘car’, **журна́льчик** from журна́л ‘journal’).

(b) **-н** (**карма́нчик** from карма́н ‘pocket’).

(c) **-р** (**забо́рчик** from забо́р ‘fence’).

(d) **-й** (**трамва́йчик** from трамва́й ‘tram’).

(e) **-ф** (**шка́фчик** from шкаф ‘cupboard’).

(ii) The suffix may also express affection: **дива́нчик** from дива́н ‘couch’. Forms with independent meanings include **колоко́льчик** ‘bluebell’ from ко́локол ‘bell’.

(5) Examples of masculine diminutives expressing:

(i) Smallness:

На корме поблёскивал **мотóрчик** (Nagibin)
In the stern glinted a small engine

(ii) Animosity:

Я придумывал нóвый **вопрóсец** похлётче (Gagarin)
I was devising a more scathing question

(iii) Irony:

А муж считаёт, что ужé отвéтил на ётот вопрóс, надéв кольцо
на **пáльчик** своёй супрúги
Whereas the husband thinks he has already answered this question
by placing a ring on his wife's dear little finger

(iv) Disparagement:

Сыно́к профе́ссора. Чíстенький тако́й **пижóнчик** (Yakhontov)
A professor's pampered brat. A young fop, pure as the driven snow

106 Feminine diminutives

(1) **-ица**.

(i) The suffix **-ица** bears the stress in diminutives derived from nouns in stressed **-á**, **-я́** and in **-ь**: **вещи́ца** from вещь 'thing' (cf. **про́сьбица** from про́сьба 'request').

(ii) Second-stage diminutives in **-ичка** are also formed: вода́ 'water', води́ца, **води́чка** (both have the positive nuance typical of diminutives based on the names of food and drink); сестра́ 'sister', сестри́ца, **сестри́чка** (cf., from Russian folk-tale, **Лиси́чка-Сестри́чка** 'Sister Fox').

(2) **-ка**.

(i) The suffix may denote smallness (**кровáтка** 'cot' from кровáть 'bed') as well as affection (**до́чка** from дочь 'daughter') or irony (**иде́йка** from идея 'idea').

(ii) The stress in diminutives in **-ка** derived from end-stressed nouns falls on the syllable preceding **-ка**: **голова́** from голова́ 'head'. Some

diminutives are based on genitive plurals with the vowel **-е-**: **пéсня** ‘song’, gen. pl. **пéсен**, dim. **пéсенка**; **семья́** ‘family’, gen. pl. **семéй**, dim. **семéйка**.

(iii) Velar consonants and **ц** undergo mutation: **кни́жка** from **кни́га** ‘book’, **ре́чка** from **река́** ‘river’, **му́шка** from **му́ха** ‘fly’, **страи́чка** from **страи́ца** ‘page’.

(iv) The following have independent meanings: **голо́вка** ‘head of a nail’ (also **боеголо́вка** ‘war-head’), **доро́жка** ‘path’, **ёлка** ‘Christmas tree’, **кры́шка** ‘lid’, **маши́нка** ‘typewriter’, **но́жка** ‘leg of chair, table’, **плит́ка** ‘bar’ (of chocolate), **площа́дка** ‘stair landing, playground, launch pad’, **пти́чка** ‘tick’, **ру́чка** ‘arm of a chair’, **се́тка** ‘tennis net’, **спи́нка** ‘back of a chair’, **стрéлка** ‘clock-hand’, **тру́бка** ‘telephone receiver, pipe’.

(v) Second-stage diminutives in **-очка** are formed as follows: **минúта** ‘minute’, **минúтка**, **минúточка** (**Подождите минúточку!** ‘Wait a sec!’).

(vi) Nouns with a double consonant + **-а** form **first-stage** diminutives in **-очка**: **звездá** ‘star’, **звёздочка** ‘small star, asterisk’; **ка́рта** ‘card, map’, **ка́рточка** ‘greetings card’ (but **игла́** ‘needle’, **игóлка**, **игóлочка**).

107 Neuter diminutives

(1) **-ико**.

This suffix is used with very few nouns: **колёсико** from **колесó** ‘wheel’, **ли́чико** from **лицó** ‘face’, **плéчико** from **плечó** ‘shoulder’ (pl. **плéчки** also ‘coat-hanger’).

(2) **-ко**.

Stress is unpredictable in diminutives with this ending, cf. **ведёрко** from **ведрó** ‘bucket’, **озеркó** from **óзеро** ‘lake’. **К** and **ц** mutate to **ч**: **облачко** from **облако** ‘cloud’, **яйчко** from **яйцó** ‘egg’.

(3) **-цо/це; -цо**.

The suffixes **-цо/-це** appear after a single consonant, **-цо** after a double consonant: **зёркальце** from **зёркало** ‘mirror’, **письмецо́** from **письмó** ‘letter’. Stress is as in the source noun except for **сло́вцо** from **сло́во** ‘word’ and **дéревце/дере́вцо** from **дéрево** ‘tree’.

108 Other diminutive suffixes

(1) **-ашка** expresses slight disparagement or endearment, depending on context: **морда́шка** from *мо́рда* ‘mug’ (face), **старика́шка** from *ста́рик* ‘old man’.

(2) **-ишко** (inanimate)/**-ишка** (animate) express disparagement or irony: **воры́шка** from *во́р* ‘thief’, **домы́шко** from *до́м* ‘house’:

У меня́ до́ма **коньячи́шко** есть (Shukshin)

I’ve got a nice little bottle of brandy at home (nuance of affection)

(3) **-онка/-ёнка** express disparagement: **книжо́нка** from *кни́га* ‘book’, **лошадё́нка** from *ло́шадь* ‘horse’ (however, **сестрё́нка** from *сестра́* ‘sister’ denotes affection).

(4) **-ушка/-юшка** and **-енька/-онька** express affection: **доче́нька** from *до́чь* ‘daughter’, **избу́шка** from *изба́* ‘hut’.

(5) **-ышек, -ышко**: **ко́лышек** ‘tent-peg’ from *ко́л* ‘stake’, **го́рлышко** ‘neck of bottle’ from *го́рло* ‘throat’, **зе́рнышко** from *зе́рно* ‘grain’.

109 Augmentative suffixes

The suffixes **-ина**, **-ище** and **-ища** are attached to the stems of nouns to denote largeness. Augmentatives may also express emotive nuances: **идио́тина** ‘a blithering idiot’.

(1) **-ина**.

(i) **-ина** is affixed to the stems of masculine and feminine nouns: **зверы́на** (from *зверь*) ‘an enormous beast’, **ла́пина** (from *ла́па*) ‘a massive paw’.

(ii) The suffix is stressed if attached to the stem of a noun which has mobile stress in declension (**домы́на** ‘a vast house’) and is unstressed if attached to the stem of a noun which has fixed stress in declension (**ры́бина** ‘a large fish’).

(iii) Velar consonants undergo mutation: **дурачи́на** (from *дура́к*) ‘a great fool’, **оплеу́шина** (from *оплеу́ха*) ‘a hefty slap in the face’.

(2) **-ище/-ища**.

(i) These suffixes are far more productive than **-ина**. **-ище** is affixed to the stems of masculine and neuter nouns, **-ища** to those of feminine

nouns: **арбу́зице** (from арбу́з) ‘an enormous melon’, **боро́дища** (from борода́) ‘a massive beard’.

(ii) Stress position depends on the same principles as those described for -ина: **велика́нице** (from велика́н) (fixed stress in declension) ‘an enormous giant’, **голоси́ще** (from го́лос) (mobile stress in declension) ‘a mighty voice’.

(iii) Velar consonants undergo mutation: **волчи́ще** (from волк) ‘a large wolf’, **ручи́ща** (from рука́) ‘a mighty hand’.

The Pronoun

110 Personal pronouns

(1) The personal pronouns **я** 'I', **ты** 'you' (informal), **он** 'he, it', **она́** 'she, it', **оно́** 'it', **мы** 'we', **вы** 'you' (formal and plural), **они́** 'they' decline as follows:

Nom.	я	ты	он	он-а́	он-о́
Acc./Gen.	мен-я́	теб-я́	его́	её́	его́
Dat.	мн-е	теб-е́	ему́	ей	ему́
Instr.	мн-ой	тоб-о́й	им	ей/е́ю	им
Prep.	обо мн-е	о теб-е́	о нём	о ней	о нём
Nom.	м-ы	в-ы	он-и́		
Acc./Gen.	н-ас	в-ас	их		
Dat.	н-ам	в-ам	им		
Instr.	н-а́ми	в-а́ми	и́ми		
Prep.	о н-ас	о в-ас	о них		

Note

- (a) **Я** and **ты** have alternative instrumental forms: **мно́ю** and **тобо́ю**, used in verse and in some colloquial registers, are also found in passive constructions (**Э́то сде́лано мно́ю/мно́й** 'That was done by me').
- (b) **Его́́**, the accusative/genitive of **он/оно́**, is pronounced [jɪ'vo].

- (c) The alternative instrumental form of она́ (**ёю**) is preferred to **ей** in educated speech and is particularly important in passive constructions, avoiding possible confusion with the dative:

Револю́цией перестро́йку мо́жно назва́ть в си́лу радика́льности поста́вленных **ёю** це́лей (*Izvestiya*)

Restructuring can be called a revolution by virtue of the radical nature of the goals set **by it**

(**Ей** would imply a dative meaning: ‘the goals set **for it**’.)

- (2) The oblique cases of **он**, **она́**, **оно́**, **они́** take initial **н-** when governed by a preposition: от **него́** ‘from him’, к **ней** ‘to her’, с **ними́** ‘with them’ etc. However, some *compound* prepositions take a third-person pronoun *without* initial **н-**. They include:

(i) A number of derivative prepositions governing the dative: **благодаря́ им** ‘thanks to them’, **ему́** навстрéчу ‘to meet him’, на зло **ей** ‘to spite her’. Others include **вопреки́** ‘contrary to’, **наперекóр** ‘counter to’, **подо́бно** ‘similar to’, **согласно́** ‘in accordance with’.

(ii) Some which take the genitive: **вне́** ‘outside’, **в отноше́нии** ‘in relation to’. **Внутри́** ‘inside’ takes alternative forms with or without **н-**: **внутри́ их/них** ‘inside them’.

Note

When a declined form of the third-person plural pronoun combines with a declined form of **все** ‘all’, a pronoun with initial **н-** is the norm: смея́ться над все́ми **ними́** ‘to laugh at all of them’. **У/от неё** ‘She has/from her’ has an alternative form **у/от ней**, used nowadays mainly in verse.

111 Use of personal instead of possessive pronouns

(1) Personal pronouns are more usual than possessive pronouns in referring to parts of the body, articles of clothing, location etc.: Он пожа́л **мне** ру́ку ‘He shook **my** hand’, Он пришéл **ко мне** в ко́мнату ‘He came to **my** room’, Пла́тье **у неё** всё испáчкано ‘**Her** dress is all stained’. The reflexive pronoun (see 117) is used similarly: Он лёг **у себя́** в ко́мнате ‘He lay down in **his** room’ etc.

(2) Note also the idioms: **мне** пришлó в гóлову ‘it occurred to me’ (lit. ‘came into **my** head’), Красотá здáния брóсилась **ему́** в глаза́ ‘He was struck by the beauty of the building’.

112 Use of the nominative pronoun with это

In contrast to English, nominative pronouns are used in such phrases as Это **я** ‘It’s me’, Это **он** ‘It’s him’, Это **мы** ‘It’s us’ etc.

113 The pronoun я

(1) **Я** ‘I’ combines with first-person singular forms of the present and future of verbs: я **читаю́** ‘I read’, я **прочитаю́** ‘I shall read’, я **буду́ чита́ть** ‘I shall be reading’. The gender of predicative adjectives, of other pronouns and of past verbs depends on the sex of the speaker:

Я дово́лен, я оди́н, я пришёл

I am pleased, I am alone, I have arrived (of a **male** speaker)

Я дово́льна, я одна́, я пришла́

I am pleased, I am alone, I have arrived (of a **female** speaker)

(2) Compare also the oblique cases: Оста́вьте меня́ **одного́** ‘Leave me by myself’ (of a male), Оста́вьте меня́ **одну́** ‘Leave me by myself’ (of a female).

Note

- (a) ‘You and I’ is rendered as **мы с ва́ми**, ‘he and I’ as **мы с ним** etc. (also, in relevant contexts, though less usually, ‘you and ourselves’, ‘he and ourselves’).
- (b) **Я** as a noun may be qualified by neuter modifiers: **моё второ́е** я ‘my alter ego’.
- (c) **Я** is often omitted in everyday speech (**Начну́** сейча́с! ‘I’ll begin at once!’) and in official applications and announcements (**Прошу́** предоста́вить мне о́тпуск ‘I apply to be granted leave’). In spoken Russian, pronouns in general are often omitted, since present and future verb forms alone are sufficient to express person and number (i.e. **пишу́** is first-person singular, **пишешь** second-person

singular and so on), while past tense forms indicate gender and number. Thus, **Вы писали? Да, я писал** ‘Did you write?’, ‘Yes, I wrote’ could be rendered as **Вы писали? Да, писал** or **Писали? Писал**, depending on the degree of familiarity of the speech mode.

114 The pronoun мы

(1) **Мы** ‘we’ combines with first-person plural forms of the present or future tense of a verb (**мы говорим** ‘we speak’), with plural forms of the past tense (**мы говорили** ‘we were speaking’), and with plural adjectives and pronouns: **Мы одни** ‘we are alone’.

(2) **Мы** can also be used to refer to the whole of a social or other group, or all society etc.: **Я подчёркиваю слово «мы», ибо имею в виду всё общество в целом** ‘I stress the word “we” since I have in mind society as a whole’.

(3) **Мы** also expresses the royal ‘we’ (**мы, всероссийский император** ‘we, Emperor of all the Russias’), the authorial ‘we’ (**Мы пришли к следующим выводам** ‘We (i.e. I) have come to the following conclusions’) and the jocular paternal ‘we’ used by doctors (**Ну, сегодня нам лучше?** ‘Well, are we better today?’). **Мы** may also convey a nuance of mockery (**Мы улыбаемся!** ‘So we’re smiling!’) or contempt (**Видели мы таких!** ‘We’ve seen your type before!’).

115 The pronouns ты and вы

(1) Ты

(i) **Ты** ‘you’ (familiar) takes second-person singular forms of the present and future tenses of a verb (**ты говоришь** ‘you speak’ etc.). Like я, ты is of common gender: **Ты один** ‘You are alone’ (to a male), **Ты одна** ‘You are alone’ (to a female).

(ii) **Ты** is used in addressing a relation, a friend, a colleague of similar age and status, a child, God, nature, oneself, an animal etc. While ты is generally acknowledged as the ‘familiar’ form, older people are likely to restrict its use to a circle of close friends and colleagues, whereas young people are usually quicker to address members of their own age group as ты.

(iii) **Ты** may also be used in conveying generalized information or instruction (cf. English ‘you’), as in the following guidance for correct breathing in singing: **Ты** набираешь полную грудь воздуха, а потом мало-помалу выпускаешь его изо рта ‘You fill your lungs with air and then expel it little by little through your mouth’.

(2) **Вы**

(i) **Вы** is used to address any group of more than one person, or an adult who is not a relation, friend or colleague of similar age and status. When writing to someone, **Вы** is usually spelt with a capital letter.

(ii) **Вы** combines with plural forms of the verb, whether the pronoun represents an individual or a group: **вы читаете, вы читали** ‘you read, were reading’. When reference is to one person, the pronoun combines with the *singular* forms of long adjectives (**Вы такой добрый** (to a male), **Вы такая добрая** (to a female) ‘You are so kind’, **Я считаю вас умным** (to a male)/**умной** (to a female) ‘I consider you clever’), but with the *plural* forms of short adjectives and participles: **Вы правы** ‘You are right’.

(3) **Ты** or **вы**

Usage may depend on social status, age difference, education and context of situation (e.g. teachers may address each other as **вы** in the presence of pupils or students but as **ты** in their absence). Any transition from **вы** to **ты** is normally initiated by the senior in age or rank. **Вы** is used as a mark of respect to adult strangers, and by academic staff to students and (desirably, though many school teachers prefer to use **ты**) to senior pupils. Subordinates have traditionally used the formal **вы** to their superiors, but have been addressed by them with the familiar **ты**. This practice is still widespread, despite condemnation in official circles of its perpetuation in, for example, the armed forces, the health service and industry.

116 The third-person pronouns (**он, она́, оно́, они́**)

(1) **Он, она́** may replace nouns denoting persons *or* things of masculine and feminine gender respectively:

Где брат ?	Вот он	Where is my brother?	There he is
Где стол ?	Вот он	Where is the table?	There it is
Где моя́ сестра́ ?	Вот она́	Where is my sister?	There she is

Где **кни́га**? Вот **о́на** Where is the book? There it is

(2) **Оно́** replaces neuter nouns:

Где **крéсло**? Вот **оно́** Where is the armchair? There it is

(3) **Они́** replaces plural nouns denoting persons or things:

Где **ма́льчики**? Вот **они́** Where are the boys? There they are
 Где **кни́ги**? Вот **они́** Where are the books? There they are
 Где **крéсла**? Вот **они́** Where are the armchairs? There they are

(4) **Они́** may be used when the plural noun it replaces has been mentioned: Что **де́лают маляры́**? **Они́** **кра́сят** дом ‘What are the painters doing?’ ‘They are painting the house’. In impersonal constructions, however, the third-person plural of the verb is used *without* a pronoun: Здесь **стро́ят** общежи́тие ‘They (identity unspecified) are building a hostel here’ (or ‘A hostel is being built here’). This is in marked contrast with English, in which the pronoun ‘they’ is used in both personal *and* impersonal constructions. Note also the phrases: Здесь **не ку́рят** ‘No smoking’, **гово́рят** ‘they say, it is said’ etc.

(5) Verbs of yearning (**скуча́ть** ‘to miss’, **тоскова́ть** ‘to yearn’ etc.) and the verbs **стре́лять** ‘to shoot’ and **уда́рять** ‘to strike’ take the preposition **по** + the **prepositional** case of first- and second-person pronouns (Скуча́ли по **вас** ‘They missed you’, Стре́ляли по **нас** ‘They were firing at us’) and *either* the dative *or* the prepositional of third-person pronouns (Скуча́ли по **нему́/по нём** ‘He was missed’). Such verbs take **по** + the *dative* of nouns (e.g. **скуча́ть по му́жу** ‘to miss one’s husband’).

(6) ‘He and Sergei/she and Sergei’ etc. may be rendered as **они́ с Серге́ем** (also, in context, ‘they and Sergei’).

(7) The instrumental case of a third-person pronoun may be the equivalent of English ‘one’: Он стал вратарём, потому́ что реши́л **им** стать (Макаров) ‘He became a goalkeeper because he had made up his mind to become **one**’.

117 The reflexive pronoun **себя́**

(1) The reflexive pronoun **себя́** declines as follows:

Nom.	—
Acc./Gen.	себ- я́
Dat.	себ- е́
Instr.	соб- о́й /соб- о́ю
Prep.	о себ- е́

(2) The reflexive pronoun refers back to the subject of the clause or, more exactly, to the subject or agent of the nearest verb or adjective (it therefore has no nominative case, since it cannot *itself* be a subject). The same form is used for all persons (Она́ дово́льна **собо́й** ‘She is pleased with herself’, Мы дово́льны **собо́й** ‘We are pleased with ourselves’ etc.), there being no differentiation between singular and plural or between the genders.

(3) **Себя́** expresses more varied relationships than **-ся, -сь** (see also 285 and 286), e.g. the indirect object (Она́ купи́ла **себе́** кни́гу ‘She bought herself a book’) and government by preposition (Он смóтрит **на себя́** в зéркало ‘He looks at himself in the mirror’, Они́ разговáривают **между собо́й** ‘They are talking among themselves’).

(4) Считáть **себя́** гéнием means ‘to consider oneself a genius’, считáться гéнием ‘to be considered a genius’ (cf. лишáть **себя́** ‘to deprive oneself’ and лишáться ‘to be deprived’).

(5) Some verbs combine with **себя́** on a seemingly arbitrary basis: вести́ **себя́** ‘to behave’, представля́ть **собо́й** ‘to represent, be’, чу́вствовать **себя́** ‘to feel’.

(6) Ambiguity may arise when there are two verbs in a sentence: Ма́ть велéла сы́ну **нали́ть** себе́ ча́ю (ма́ть is the subject of the sentence, сы́н is the logical subject of **нали́ть**). The sentence should be taken to mean ‘The mother told her son to pour **himself** some tea’, but the following can be used to avoid confusion: Ма́ть велéла, чтóбы сын **налил себе́** ча́ю ‘The mother told her son to pour **himself** some tea’, cf. Ма́ть велéла, чтóбы сын **налил ей** ча́ю ‘The mother told her son to pour **her** some tea’.

(7) Russian is more consistent than English in the use of reflexive pronouns: Он разложи́л перед **собо́й** ка́рту ‘He spread out the map in front of **him**’, Она́ закры́ла за **собо́й** дверь ‘She closed the door behind **her**’, Возьми́те меня́ с **собо́й** ‘Take me with **you**’.

(8) The reflexive pronoun appears in a number of set phrases: так **себе́** ‘so-so’, Он хоро́ш **собо́й** ‘He is good-looking’, само́ **собо́й** разуме́ется ‘it goes without saying’.

(9) A reflexive pronoun may combine for emphasis with the emphatic pronoun **сам**: — Я тебя не понимаю. — Я **сам себя** не понимаю! ‘I don’t understand you’. ‘I don’t understand myself!’ (see 131 (1)).

118 The possessive pronouns **мой, твой, наш, ваш**

(1) The possessive pronoun **мой** declines as follows:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	мой	мо-я́	мо-ё	мо-и́
Acc.	мой/мо-его́	мо-ю́	мо-ё	мо-и́/мо-и́х
Gen.	мо-его́	мо-е́й	мо-его́	мо-и́х
Dat.	мо-ему́	мо-е́й	мо-ему́	мо-и́м
Instr.	мо-и́м	мо-е́й/-е́ю	мо-и́м	мо-и́ми
Prep.	о мо-ём	о мо-е́й	о мо-ём	о мо-и́х

Note

Твой ‘your’ (familiar) declines like **мой**.

(2) The possessive pronoun **наш** declines as follows:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	наш	на́ш-а	на́ш-е	на́ш-и
Acc.	наш/на́ш-его́	на́ш-у	на́ш-е	на́ш-и/на́ш-и́х
Gen.	на́ш-его́	на́ш-е́й	на́ш-его́	на́ш-и́х
Dat.	на́ш-ему́	на́ш-е́й	на́ш-ему́	на́ш-и́м
Instr.	на́ш-и́м	на́ш-е́й/-е́ю	на́ш-и́м	на́ш-и́ми
Prep.	о на́ш-ем	о на́ш-е́й	о на́ш-ем	о на́ш-и́х

Note

- Ваш** ‘your’ declines like **наш**.
- Like **мы** and **вы** (see 113 note (a)), **наш** and **ваш** can form compounds with other pronouns or nouns: **ва́ша с па́пой** маши́на ‘yours and Dad’s car’, **наш с тобо́й** дом ‘our house’ (i.e. yours and mine).
- The colloquial phrase **наш брат** means ‘people like us’: Зна́ю, что неರೆ́дко руга́ют **на́шего бра́та** за рва́чество (*Russia Today*) ‘I know that our sort are often cursed for self-seeking’.
- Phrases of the type **на́ша** те́ма ‘our theme’ (i.e. ‘the present topic’) are used by authors and lecturers (cf. 114 (3)).
- The use of possessive instead of personal pronouns is characteristic of casual speech: Он сде́лал бо́льше **моего́** (= бо́льше, чем я) ‘He did more than me’.
- Ваш** is spelt with a capital letter in correspondence.

119 The possessive pronouns **его́, её́, их**

Его́ ‘his’, **её́** ‘her’, **их** ‘their’ are invariable:

его́ сестра́	his sister
её́ кни́ги	her books
их брат	their brother
Я зна́ю его́ сестру́	I know his sister
Я дово́лен её́ бра́том	I am pleased with her brother

Note

- (a) **н-** is never affixed to the third-person possessives: cf. **письмо́** от **него́** (personal pronoun) ‘a letter from him’ and **письмо́** от **его́** (possessive pronoun) **бра́та** ‘a letter from his brother’ (see **110** (2)).
- (b) **Его́** is pronounced [jt'vo]. See also **110** (1) note (b).

120 The reflexive possessive pronoun **свой, своя́, своё, свои́**

(1) The reflexive possessive pronoun **свой** declines like **мой** (see **118** (1)).

(2) Like **себя́, свой** refers back to noun and pronoun subjects of any gender and either number (see **117** (2): **Я** по́мню **свою́** шко́лу ‘I remember my school’, **Ты** по́мнишь **свою́** шко́лу ‘You remember your school’, **Де́ти** по́мнят **свою́** шко́лу ‘The children remember their school’.

(3) In clauses which have a first- or second-person subject, **свой** can be used as an *alternative* to **мой, твой, наш** and **ваш** (**Я** говорю́ о **свое́й/моёй** рабо́те ‘I am talking about my work’, **Ты** продаёшь **свой/твой** дом ‘You are selling your house’, **Мы** моём **свою́/на́шу** маши́ну ‘We are washing our car’), though **свой** is commoner.

(4) Where there is a third-person subject, however, care must be taken to distinguish between **свой** and the possessive pronouns **его́, её́, их** (see **119**), when rendering ‘his’, ‘her’, ‘their’, in order to avoid ambiguity:

Он дово́лен **свои́м** ученико́м
He is pleased with **his** (own) pupil

Он не ло́бит Джо́на, но он дово́лен **его́** ученика́ми
He does not like John, but he is pleased with **his** (John’s) pupils

Note that in English ‘his’ is used in both examples, and context is relied upon to differentiate meaning. Russian **её** ‘her’ and **их** ‘their’ are similarly distinguished from **свой**:

Орловы любят **своих** детей
The Orlovs love **their** children

Он обнял её, она положила свою голову ему на плечо
(Litvinova)
He embraced her, (and) she put her head on his shoulder

Ивановы погибли в катастрофе, и Орловы усыновили **их** детей
The Ivanovs died in an accident and the Orlovs adopted their children

(5) It is important to remember to use the reflexive possessive pronoun even when it is distanced from the subject:

Он, правда, никому не даёт **своего** адреса (Trifonov)
It is true that he does not give **his** address to anyone

Он был свидетелем событий **своего** времени
He was a witness of the events of **his** time

(6) **Свой** cannot qualify the *subject* of a clause in this type of construction:

Он говорит, что **его** друг болен
He says that **his** friend (subject of new clause) is ill

Врач и **её** помощник совещаются
The doctor and **her** assistant (joint subjects) are consulting

(7) In a sentence with two verbs, **свой** refers back to the subject of the nearer of the two, cf:

Редактор попросил журналиста прочитать **свою** статью
The editor asked the journalist to read his (the journalist’s) article

and

Редактор попросил журналиста прочитать **его** статью
The editor asked the journalist to read his (the editor’s) article

To avoid possible ambiguity, an alternative construction can be used:

Редактор попросил журналиста, чтобы он прочитал **его** статью
The editor asked the journalist to read his (the editor’s) article

Note

When ownership is obvious from the context, Russian usually dispenses with a possessive pronoun: **Я мою** руки ‘I am washing **my** hands’ (it is

clear whose hands are being washed – mine), Он потерял **программу** ‘He has lost **his** (or ‘the’) programme’.

Пáрень опускаёт **ру́ки, го́лову**, закрывáет **глазá** (Rasputin)
The lad lowers his hands hangs his head, closes his eyes

(8) Свой appears in the *nominative* case in phrases that denote possession: У меня **сво́я** ма́шина ‘I have my own car’, У ру́сских — **сво́я** вь́страда́нная ку́льту́ра (Solzhenitsyn) ‘Russians have acquired their own culture through suffering’. Note: **Сво́я** рубáшка б́лиже к те́лу ‘Charity begins at home’, Он у нас **сво́й** челове́к ‘He is one of us’.

121 Declension of the interrogative/relative pronouns

Кто ‘who’, **что** ‘what’, **како́й** ‘what’ (adjective), **ко́торый** ‘which’ and **чей** ‘whose’ function as both interrogative and relative pronouns. **Како́й** and **ко́торый** decline like hard-ending adjectives (see 145 and 146 (3) note (b)). **Кто**, **что** and **чей** decline as follows:

			Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	к-о	чт-о	чей	чь-я	чь-ё	чь-и
Acc.	к-огó	чт-о	чей/чь-егó	чь-ю	чь-ё	чь-и/чь-их
Gen.	к-огó	ч-егó	чь-егó	чь-ей	чь-егó	чь-их
Dat.	к-ому́	ч-ему́	чь-ему́	чь-ей	чь-ему́	чь-им
Instr.	к-ем	ч-ем	чь-им	чь-ей/-ёю	чь-им	чь-ими
Prep.	о к-ом	о ч-ём	о чь-ём	о чь-ей	о чь-ём	о чь-их

122 Кто, что, како́й, ко́торый, чей as interrogative pronouns

(1) Кто

(i) **Кто** ‘who’ is used in both direct questions (**Кто** э́тот мужчи́на? ‘Who is that man?’, **О ком** вы говорíte? ‘Who are you talking about?’) and indirect questions (Он спроси́л, **кому́** вы даёте уро́ки ‘He asked whom you give lessons to’).

(ii) **Кто** takes a masculine predicate even when only females are involved: Кто **вь́шел** за́муж? ‘Who (in a group of women) got married?’ However, feminine agreement is possible if the subject contains a reference to a female exponent of an activity: Кто из

лы́жниц пришл́а пёрвой? ‘Which of the skiers (female) came in first?’.

(iii) Russian is consistent in using **кто** for people: **Кто** у вас роди́лся? **Ма́льчик** и́ли де́вочка? ‘What is it, a boy or a girl?’, **Кем** ты хóчешь бы́ть? ‘What do you want to be?’, cf.:

А **кем** мы ста́нем тепе́рь: друзь́ями и́ли врага́ми? (Gagarin)
And **what** will we become now, friends or enemies?

(iv) **Кто** may be amplified to **кто тако́й/тако́я/такіе?**: **Кто тако́й** э́тот па́рень? ‘Who is this fellow?’, **Кто тако́я** э́та де́вушка? ‘Who is that girl?’, **Кто такіе** э́ти мо́лодые лю́ди? ‘Who are these young people?’, **Кто вы тако́й?** (to a male)/**Кто вы тако́я?** (to a female) ‘Who are you?’

(2) Что

Что ‘what’ is used to ask about the identity of a thing or an animal (**Что** э́то — волк и́ли соба́ка? ‘What is that, a wolf or a dog?’) or the nature of an action (**Что** он де́лает? ‘What is he doing?’). **Что** may be expanded to **что тако́е?** (**Что** э́то тако́е? ‘What is that?’) or be extended by a genitive adjective (**Что но́вого?** ‘What’s new?’, **Что же тут оби́дного?** ‘What’s so offensive about that?’).

(3) Како́й

Како́й means ‘What, what kind of?’: **Како́й** у него́ го́лос? ‘What kind of a voice does he have?’, **Каку́ю** кни́гу вы чита́ете? ‘What book are you reading?’. **Что за** may be used as a synonym of **како́й**: **Что** се́годня **за** погóда? (= **Како́я** се́годня погóда?) ‘What is the weather like today?’.

(4) Кото́рый

(i) **Кото́рый?** means ‘which?’ (in a sequence) and appears in the phrases **Кото́рый** час? ‘What’s the time?’, **В кото́ром** часу́? ‘At what time?’ (now largely replaced in the speech of young people by **Ско́лько** вре́мени? and **Во ско́лько?**). **Кото́рый** can also mean ‘umpteenth’: **Кото́рый** раз спра́шиваю ‘I am asking for the umpteenth time’.

(ii) However, **како́й** is now more commonly used in questions, the answers to which contain an ordinal numeral: **Како́й** ряд? ‘Which row?’ **Пя́тый** ‘Five’.

(5) Чей

Чей means ‘whose?’: **Чей** это дом? ‘Whose house is that?’, **Чью** дачу вы покупаете? ‘Whose country cottage are you buying?’.

123 Который, какой, чей, кто and что as relative pronouns

(1) Который

(i) **Который** ‘who, which’ is used with animate and inanimate noun antecedents (кто and что are normally used as relatives to *pronoun* antecedents; see (4) and (5) below).

(ii) **Который** agrees with its antecedent in gender and number, but its *case* depends on the grammar of the relative clause:

Я познако́мился с молоды́м челове́ком, за кото́рого она́ вы́шла
за́муж

I made the acquaintance of the young man (whom) she married

Он вошёл в ко́мнату, кото́рая находи́лась ря́дом с кúхней

He went into the room which was next to the kitchen

(iii) The genitive forms **кото́рого** (masculine and neuter), **кото́рой** (feminine), **кото́рых** (plural) mean ‘whose’, and *follow* the noun:

Вот студéнт, рабо́ту кото́рого я проверя́ю

There is the student whose work I am correcting

Продали маши́ну, владе́льцы кото́рой обанкрóтились

They have sold the car whose owners have gone bankrupt

Нельзя́ не жалéть дете́й, родите́ли кото́рых поги́бли во вре́мя
блока́ды

You cannot but pity the children whose parents perished during the
blockade

(2) Какóй

Unlike **кото́рый**, which relates to specific objects and persons, **какóй** relates to things and persons of a particular *type*, cf.:

Вокру́г ви́дишь пере́мены, **какíе** возмо́жны то́лько здесь

All around you can see changes **of a kind which** are possible only here

and

Вокруг видишь перемены, **которые** возможны только здесь
All around you can see changes **which** are possible only here

Compare

Такое выражение отчаяния, **какое** бывает у людей только перед смертью (Simonov)

The **kind of** expression of despair **that** people have only at death's door

(3) Чей

The use of **чей** as a relative is a mark of a bookish or poetic style: писатель, **чьё** книгу ты изучаешь... 'the writer whose book you are studying...'. Normal usage is: писатель, книгу **которого** ты изучаешь... .

(4) Кто

(i) **Кто** functions as relative pronoun to **тот** (**тот, кто** 'he, the one who'), **те** (**те, кто** 'those who'), **никто** 'nobody' (**никто, кто** 'no one who'), **все** 'everybody' (**все, кто** 'everyone who'), **первый** 'the first' (**первый, кто** пришёл 'the first to come'), **единственный** 'only' (Он же **единственный, кто** на нас постоянно жалуется 'He is the only one who constantly complains about us').

(ii) **Кто** takes a masculine singular predicate: тот, кто **решил** задачу 'he who solved the problem'. ('She who' may be rendered as **та** (женщина), **которая: Та, которая** полнее, одета с большим вкусом (Zalygin) 'The one who is plumper is dressed with consummate taste'.)

(iii) When, however, there is a *plural* antecedent (**все** or **те**), **кто** may take *either* a singular *or* a plural verb: Все, кто **пришёл/пришли** на собрание, голосовали за меня 'Everyone who came to the meeting voted for me', cf.:

Среди тех, кто **остался**, был Иван Карлович, наш сосед (Rybakov)

Among those who remained was Ivan Karlovich, our neighbour

and

Те из нас, кто **читали** стихотворение, были в восторге
Those of us who read the poem were delighted

(iv) **Тот, кто** may be abbreviated to **кто**, with **тот** transferring to the beginning of a separate clause: **Кто** это видел, **тот** не забудет ‘Anyone who has seen that will not forget it’.

(5) **Что**

(i) **Что** may function as relative pronoun to a full noun (sing. or pl.), e.g.:

Дом, что сто́ит на углу́
The house that stands on the corner

but **ко́торый** should be regarded as the norm (see (1) (i) above).

(ii) **Что** as a relative pronoun is used mainly with:

(a) **Всё** ‘everything’:

Я скажу́ вам **всё, что** знаю́ I’ll tell you all I know

(b) Substantivized adjectives such as **гла́вное** ‘the main thing’, **пе́рвое** ‘the first thing’:

Пе́рвое, что броса́ется в глаза́ — а́втовокза́л
The first thing that strikes you is the bus station

(c) **То** ‘that’:

Вся́кая литерату́рная ма́тери́я де́лится на три сфе́ры:

1. То́, что а́втор хоте́л вы́разить.
2. То́, что он суме́л вы́разить.
3. То́, что он вы́разил, сам э́того не жела́я.

Тре́тья сфе́ра — са́мая интере́сная.

‘All literary material is divided into three spheres:

1. What the author wanted to express (i.e. ‘That which . . .’).
2. What he managed to express.
3. What he expressed without wanting this himself.

The third sphere is the most interesting.’ (S. Dovlatov)

Variants of **то, что** thus function as links between clauses:

Учи́тельницу оγόрчи́ло **то, что** де́ти не хоте́ли её слу́шать
The teacher was upset by **the fact that** the children did not want to listen to her

Мы принима́ем **то, от че́го** вы отка́зались
We accept **what** you refused

The construction is particularly important when the verb in the main clause governs an oblique case or prepositional phrase:

Он гордится **тем, что** он русский
He is proud **of being** Russian

Началось **с того, что** Колька отнял у меня книжку (Soloukhin)
It all began **with** Kolka **taking away** my book

То, что may be abbreviated to **что** for special emphasis, **то** transferring to the beginning of a separate clause:

Что нам просто кажется, **то** нашим предкам потом да мучой досталось
What seems simple to us was achieved through the sweat and toil of our ancestors

Что also functions as relative pronoun to a whole clause:

Он не приходил на вечер, **что** меня удивило
He did not come to the party, **which** surprised me (i.e. the fact that he did not come surprised me, *not* any particular noun)

124 Other functions of the interrogative/relative pronouns

(1) **Какóй** can also be used as an exclamation (**Какóй** позор! ‘What a disgrace!’) and, with negatives, can express quantity (**Какíх** только подарков ему не купили! ‘And the **presents** they bought him!’).

(2) **Кто** appears:

(i) In the phrase **не кто иной, как** ‘none other than’: Это был **не кто иной**, как мой брат ‘It was none other than my brother’.

(ii) In concessive constructions: **С кем** ни говори, все настроены легкомысленно ‘Whoever you speak to is in a carefree mood’.

(iii) In the meaning ‘some... others’ (also rendered as **одни... другие**): **Кто** за, **кто** против ‘Some are for, others are against’.

(iv) In the reduplicated pronoun **кто-кто́: Кому-кому́**, а ему-то грех было не реагировать (Zalygin) ‘For him of all people it was sinful not to react’.

(3) **Что** appears:

(i) In the phrase **не что иное, как** ‘nothing but’: **Это не что иное, как вымогательство** ‘That is nothing but extortion’.

(ii) In concessive constructions: **Что бы он ни делал, он не забывал своих друзей** ‘Whatever he did, he never forgot his friends’.

(iii) In quantitative contexts: **Чего только не было в истории человечества** (V. Putin) ‘Everything imaginable has happened in the history of mankind.’

(iv) In the reduplicated pronoun **что-что**: . . . **Уж что-что, а это никто у неё не отнимет** (Zalygin) ‘That of all things no one will take away from her’.

125 Declension of the demonstrative pronouns **этот, тот, такой, сей** and **экий**

Такой declines like a hard-ending adjective (see 146 (3) note (b)). **Этот, тот** and **сей** decline as follows:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	этот	эт-а	эт-о	эт-и
Acc.	этот/эт-ого	эт-у	эт-о	эт-и/эт-их
Gen.	эт-ого	эт-ой	эт-ого	эт-их
Dat.	эт-ому	эт-ой	эт-ому	эт-им
Instr.	эт-им	эт-ой/-ою	эт-им	эт-ими
Prep.	об эт-ом	об эт-ой	об эт-ом	об эт-их

Nom.	тот	т-а	т-о	т-е
Acc.	тот/т-ого	т-у	т-о	т-е/т-ех
Gen.	т-ого	т-ой	т-ого	т-ех
Dat.	т-ому	т-ой	т-ому	т-ем
Instr.	т-ем	т-ой/т-ою	т-ем	т-еми
Prep.	о т-ом	о т-ой	о т-ом	о т-ех

Nom.	сей	си-я	си-е	си-и
Acc.	сей/с-его	си-ю	си-е	си-и/с-их
Gen.	с-его	с-ей	с-его	с-их
Dat.	с-ему	с-ей	с-ему	с-им
Instr.	с-им	с-ей/с-ею	с-им	с-ими
Prep.	о с-ём	о с-ей	о с-ём	о с-их

Note

- (a) Except for usage in certain set phrases (see **129** (1)), **сей** is regarded as archaic and is used for purposes of irony.
- (b) **Экий** declines as follows: m. nom. экий, acc. экий/экогого, gen. экогого, dat. экоему, instr. эким, prep. об эком; f. nom. экая, acc. экую, gen. экой, dat. экой, instr. экой/-ою, prep. об экой; neut. экое, oblique cases as masculine; pl. nom. экие, acc. экие/эких, gen. эких, dat. эким, instr. экими, prep. об эких. It is found mainly in conversational registers.

126 The demonstrative pronouns этот and тот

(1) Этот/тот

- (i) **Этот** ‘this’ refers to something close to hand, **тот** ‘that’ to something further removed:

Это дерево такое же большо́е, как и **то**
This tree is just as big as that one

- (ii) **Это** is used in the meaning ‘this, that is’, ‘these, those are’: **Это** мой дом ‘This is my house’, **Это** мои́ де́ти ‘Those are my children’. Verbs agree with the noun, *not* with **это**: **Это были́** мои́ кни́ги ‘Those were my books’, **Это была́** его́ жена́ ‘That was his wife’.

Note

Что вы хоти́те э́тим сказа́ть? ‘What do you mean by **that**?’

- (iii) It is necessary to distinguish between

Этот дом	This house
Эта карти́на	This picture
Это окно́	This window
Эти кни́ги	These books

and

Это дом	This is a house
Это карти́на	This is a picture
Это окно́	This is a window
Это кни́ги	These are books

(2) Тот

- (i) **Тот** is sometimes used where English might use a definite article, especially when the pronoun is part of the antecedent to a relative clause:

Он ча́сто говори́л в **той** холо́дной мане́ре, в како́й нача́л разгово́р с Серпи́линым (Simonov)

He often spoke in **the** cold manner with which he had begun his conversation with Serpilin

Я смотре́л в **ту** сто́рону, отку́да должна́ была́ появи́ться лодка
I was looking in **the** direction from which the boat was expected to appear

(ii) **Тот** can also mean, ‘he, she, the latter’:

О прие́зде бра́твев Ли́за узна́ла от А́нки. **Та** прибежа́ла к те́тке, как то́лько пришла́ телегра́мма (Abramov)

Liza learnt of her brothers’ arrival from Anka. **She** (Anka) came running to her aunt as soon as the telegram arrived

Note

The use of **она́** instead of **та** in this example would imply that the first-named (Liza) had come running. **Тот** thus has an important role to play in avoiding ambiguity.

(iii) **Тот** is used as a pronoun antecedent to a relative pronoun:

Арка́дий пожа́л одни́м плечо́м, не **тем, на кото́ром** лежа́ла рука́ Ирúнчика (Zalygin)

Arkady shrugged one shoulder, not **the one on which** Irunchik’s arm lay

(iv) **Не тот** means ‘the wrong’ (cf. *непра́вильный* ‘incorrect’): Он взял **не ту** кни́гу ‘He took the wrong book’.

(v) **Тот же** (or **тот же са́мый**) means ‘the same’:

Гости́ница оказа́лась **той же**, в кото́рой оста́навливались пре́жде (Yakhontov)

The hotel turned out to be **the (same) one** they had stayed in before

Note

(a) **Тот же** can also mean ‘just the same as’: **Ведь ненави́сть — та же** любо́вь, то́лько с о́братным зна́ком (Zalygin) ‘After all hatred is **just the same as** love, but from the reverse side’.

(b) **В одно́ и то́ же** вре́мя ‘at one and the same time’.

(vi) **То** combines with the conjunction **что**:

Она́ приви́кла к **тому́, что** мужчи́ны на неё загля́дываются (Rybakov)

She was used to men feasting their eyes on her

It also appears in many time phrases: в **то** время, как ‘while’, с **тех** пор ‘since then’, до **тех** пор ‘until then’, после **того** как ‘after’, до **того** как ‘before’ (see also **466**).

127 Constructions of the type пример тому́

Пример, причина and some other abstract nouns combine with the dative of the pronoun **то** (and occasionally **это**):

Примером **тому́** является выступление артиста
The artiste’s performance is an example of this

Причиной **тому́** является его упрямство
His obstinacy is the cause of this

Да и фильм даёт наглядное **тому́** свидетельство
And in fact the film bears graphic witness to this

Примеров **этому** можно привести много (*Izvestiya*)
One can quote many examples of this

Note

- (a) These nouns normally combine with the *genitive* of a dependent *noun*: пример **мужества** ‘an example of courage’, причина **несчастного случая** ‘the cause of the accident’ (note also the use of the *genitive pronoun* where **причина** is defined by a prepositional phrase: Причина **этого** в демографическом взрыве ‘The cause of this is the population explosion’).
- (b) The dative reflexive pronoun appears in the expression знать **себе** цену ‘to know one’s worth’.

128 The demonstrative pronoun такой

(1) **Такой** ‘such’ combines with long adjectives: Погода **такая** хорошая (or **так** хороша) ‘The weather is so fine’.

(2) It can have a generalizing meaning: **Таких** марок, **какие** он собирает, очень мало ‘There are very few stamps **of the kind that** he collects’ (cf. **123** (2) ‘какой’).

Note

В **тако́м** слúчае ‘in **that** case’, Зада́м **тако́й** вопро́с ‘I shall ask **the following** question’, при **таки́х** обстоя́тельствах ‘in **the** circumstances’.

(3) **Тако́й же** means ‘the same, the same kind’: Ты **тако́й же**, как и все молодые люди твоего́ вóзраста ‘You’re just like all young people of your age’.

Note

Же is absent in the negative: Она́ не **така́я, как** была́ в дётстве ‘She’s not **the same** as she was in her childhood’.

129 The pronouns сей and экий

(1) **Сей** appears mainly in set phrases: по **сей** день ‘to this very day’, ни с тогó ни с сего́ ‘for no particular reason’, **сию́** мину́ту ‘this instant’ (Иди́ сюда́ **сию́** мину́ту! ‘Come here this instant!’), до **сих** пор ‘hitherto’ etc.

На **сей** раз в турни́ре не уча́ствовал наш сильне́йший теннисист (*Sputnik*)

This time round our best tennis player did not take part in the championships

(2) **Экий** ‘what a’ is a very colloquial form: **Экий** шалу́н ‘What a rogue’ (cf. also **этакий**: **этакая** неуда́ча ‘such a disaster’).

130 Declension of the determinative pronouns сам, са́мый, весь, всякий, ка́ждый, всяческий

Ка́ждый and **са́мый** are declined like hard-ending adjectives, **всякий** and **всяческий** like **ру́сский** (see 146 (3)). **Сам** and **весь** decline as follows:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	сам	сам-а́	сам-о́	са́м-и
Acc.	сам/сам-огó	сам-у́/сам-оё	сам-о́	са́м-и/сам-и́х
Gen.	сам-огó	сам-о́й	сам-огó	сам-и́х
Dat.	сам-ому́	сам-о́й	сам-ому́	сам-и́м
Instr.	сам-и́м	сам-о́й/-о́ю	сам-и́м	сам-и́ми
Prep.	о сам-о́м	о сам-о́й	о сам-о́м	о сам-и́х

Note

- (a) The accusative feminine **самоё** is the traditional literary form, but **саму́** is now found in all styles. **Самоё**, though obsolescent and ‘bookish’, is still common with the reflexive pronoun **себя́**: уничтожа́ть **самоё себя́** ‘to destroy oneself’.
- (b) Unlike **сам**, the oblique cases of which take *end stress* (**самого́** etc.), **са́мый** is *stem stressed* throughout declension (**са́мого** etc.)

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	весь	вс-я	вс-ё	вс-е
Acc.	весь/вс-его́	вс-ю	вс-ё	вс-е/вс-ех
Gen.	вс-его́	вс-ей	вс-его́	вс-ех
Dat.	вс-ему́	вс-ей	вс-ему́	вс-ем
Instr.	вс-ем	вс-ей/-е́ю	вс-ем	вс-е́ми
Prep.	обо вс-ём	обо вс-ей	обо вс-ём	обо вс-ех

131 Сам and са́мый

(1) Сам

(i) **Сам** is an emphatic pronoun: Я **сам** это сделаю ‘I shall do it myself’, Она́ **сама́** встала ‘She got up by herself’.

(ii) **Сам** may precede or follow a noun: Спроси́те учи́теля **самого́/самого́** учи́теля ‘Ask the teacher himself’. Note gender distinction in Я пе́редал письмо́ тебе́ **самому́** ‘I passed the letter on to you personally’ (to a male), Я пе́редал письмо́ тебе́ **самой** ‘I passed the letter on to you personally’ (to a female).

(iii) **Сам** can also add emphasis to the reflexive pronoun **себя́**: Вы губи́те **самого́/саму́/самих** себя́ ‘You are ruining yourself/yourselves’. It can also qualify *inanimate* nouns:

Сам зако́н заставля́ет алиме́нтщиков иди́ти на обма́н (*Nedelya*)
The law **itself** compels alimony payers to resort to deception

Note

Сам agrees with other pronouns which stand in apposition to it: **Ей** надо́ело **самой** носи́ть белье́ в пра́чечную ‘She is sick of taking the washing to the laundry **herself**.’

(2) Са́мый

(i) **Са́мый** indicates precise location: Он подошёл к **са́мому** обре́вцу ‘He went right up to the precipice’, в **са́мом** це́нтре го́рода ‘in the very

centre of the city'. Note also **Пóезд идёт до сáмой Москв́ы** 'The train goes all the way to Moscow', с **сáмого** начала 'from the very beginning' (for **сáмый** in superlative meaning, see also 185).

(ii) **Тот сáмый** means 'the very': Он купíл ту сáмую кн́игу, котóрую вы рекомендовáли 'He bought **the very** book you recommended'. **Тот же сáмый** means 'the same': У нас те же (сáмые) интерéсы 'We have **the same** interests'.

132 **Весь, цéлый, вся́кий, ка́ждый, любóй, вся́ческий**

(1) **Весь/цéлый**

Весь means 'all, the whole' etc.: **весь** мир 'the whole world', **Мы** ёздили по **всей** странé 'We travelled all over the country', **все** рабóчие 'all (the) workers'. **Цéлый** means 'a whole, whole', cf. Он съел **цéлое** я́блоко 'He ate **a whole** apple' and Он съел **всё** я́блоко 'He ate **the whole** apple', Голодáли **цéлые** сéмьи '**Whole** families starved' and **Все** сéмьи голодáли '**All the** families starved'. **Всё** also means 'everything' (**всё, что** я зная́ю 'everything I know'), while **все** can mean 'everyone', and takes a *plural* verb or adjective (**Все** **голосúют** 'Everyone votes'). Note the phrases **все** онí, **все** мы etc. 'all of them, all of us'.

(2) **Вся́кий/ка́ждый/любóй/вся́ческий**

(i) **Вся́кий** means 'all kinds of': Он торгúет **вся́кими** товáрами 'He trades in all kinds of goods', **Вся́кое** (adjectival noun) бывáет 'All kinds of things happen'. In combination with the preposition **без**, it may be rendered as 'any': без **вся́кого** сомнénия 'without any doubt', без **вся́кого** трудá 'without any trouble'. Note also во **вся́ком** слúчае 'in any case, at any rate' (cf. the precautionary на **вся́кий** слúчай 'just in case', 'to be on the safe side').

(ii) By comparison with **ка́ждый**, **вся́кий** expresses *totality* (**вся́кий** раз 'each and every time', **Вся́кому** ребéнку нужна́ лáска 'Every child needs affection'), while **ка́ждый** emphasizes *each one individually* (**ка́ждый** раз 'every time', **Ка́ждый** из ученикóв получил по кн́иге 'Each of the pupils received a book'). **Ка́ждый** is also used with numerals and with plural-only nouns: **ка́ждые** два дня 'every two days', **ка́ждые** сýтки 'every twenty-four hours', **ка́ждые** чéтверть часá 'every quarter of an hour'.

(iii) **Любо́й** has a strong nuance of *selectivity*: Запиши́ **любо́е** число́ ме́ньше 50 ‘Write down **any** number less than 50’. Купи́те газету́ в **любо́м** киоске ‘Buy the newspaper at any (but not every) kiosk’.

(iv) **Вся́ческий** is a synonym of **вся́кий** in the meaning ‘all kinds of’.

133 The negative pronouns **никто́**, **ничто́**, **никако́й**, **ниче́й**. The negative particle **не**

(1) **Никто́** ‘no one’, **ничто́** ‘nothing’, **никако́й** ‘none (whatsoever)’, **ниче́й** ‘nobody’s’ decline, respectively, like **кто**, **что**, **како́й** and **че́й** (see 121).

(2) The negative particle **не** appears between a negative pronoun and the predicate: **Никто́ не** рабо́тает ‘No one works’.

134 **Никто́**

(1) **Никто́** means ‘no one, nobody, not anybody’:

Никто́ не пришёл	No one has come
Он нико́го не лю́бит	He doesn’t like anybody
Она́ никому́ не ве́рит	She doesn’t believe anyone
Мы нике́м не дово́льны	We are not pleased with anyone

Note

The presence of **нет** or **нельзя́** renders **не** superfluous: **Никого́ нет** ‘No one’s here’, **Никому́ нельзя́** **входи́ть** ‘No one may enter’.

(2) **Никто́** takes a masculine predicate even when reference is exclusively to females (cf. 122 (1) (ii)), unless a feminine noun appears as part of the subject: **Никто́ из учени́ц, да́же Зо́я, не нашла́сь что сказа́ть** ‘None of the pupils, **not even Zoia**, could think of anything to say’.

(3) While English reverts to positive after the first negative, e.g. ‘No one **ever** says **anything** to **anyone**’, Russian can accumulate negatives: **Никто́ нико́гда́ ниче́го не** говори́т **никому́**.

(4) In prepositional constructions the prepositions appear between **ни** and the oblique form of **кто**:

Она́ ни с кем не игра́ет
She doesn’t play with anyone

Он **ни на ком** не собираётся жениться
He doesn't mean to marry anyone

В доме **ни у когó ни от когó** нет секретов (Rybakov)
No one in the house has any secrets from anyone

(5) 'Hardly anyone' is rendered as **почт́и никто́**.

135 Ничто́

(1) **Ничто́** can act as a subject to adjectives (**Ничто́** не вечно́ 'Nothing is eternal') and to *transitive* verbs (**Ничто́** не интересу́ет его́ 'Nothing interests him'). With intransitive verbs, however, **ничего́** is preferred: С ва́ми **ничего́** не случится́ 'Nothing will happen to you'.

(2) The same rules of grammatical government and 'accumulation of negatives' apply to **ничто́** as to **никто́** (see 134):

Он **ничего́ не** де́лает
He does nothing

Я **ничём не** дово́лен
I am not satisfied with anything

Никто́ никогда́ ничему́ не ве́рит
No one ever believes anything

Prepositions appear between **ни** and the relevant form of **что́**:

Никогда́ и **ни о чём** она́ Никола́я Демья́новича не проси́ла
(Trifonov)
She had never asked Nikolay Demyanovich for anything

(3) **Не** is omitted in certain set phrases: уйти́ **ни с чем** 'to come away empty-handed', поги́бнуть **ни за что́** 'to die for nothing', Но э́то бы́ло **ни к чему́** сейча́с (Zalygin) 'But this was irrelevant at the moment'.

(4) 'Hardly anything' is rendered as **почт́и ничего́/почт́и ничто́**.

Note the idioms: **Ничего́!** 'Never mind!', Муж у неё **ничего́** 'Her husband is not a bad chap', **ни за что́** на све́те 'not for anything in the world', **Ничего́ не** поде́лаешь 'It can't be helped'.

Нéкому писать There is no one to write **to**

(4) There are two variants of the construction:

(i) The impersonal:

Нéчего дéлать There is nothing to do

Нéкого послáть There is no one to send

(ii) The personal:

Мне нéчего дéлать I have nothing to do (the logical subject of an infinitive appears in the dative, cf. **93** (1))

Нéчего **мне** бóяться, за авáрию я не отвéтчик (Tendryakov)
I have nothing to fear, I am not responsible for the accident

Ленингрáд! Тумán и сýрость! **Людям** нéчем дышáть (Rybakov)
Leningrad! Fog and damp! People have nothing to breathe

(5) In prepositional constructions the preposition appears between **нé** and the pronoun:

Емú **нé к кому** обратíться за пóмощью
He has no one to turn to for aid

Ей **нé в чем** признавáться (Rybakov)
She has nothing to confess to

(6) The construction may also be used in the past and future: **Мне** нéчем **бýло** писать ‘I had nothing to write with’, **Мне** нéчем **бýдет** писать ‘I won’t have anything to write with’:

Комáнде **нé с кем** бýло игрáть (Vanshenkin)
The team had nobody to play against

(7) The *positive* equivalent of the construction involves present **éсть**, past **бýло**, future **бýдет**: **Éсть** чем горд́иться ‘There is something to be proud of’ (cf. **Нéчем** горд́иться ‘There is nothing to be proud of’):

Реб́ят остав́ить **бýло** с кем — как раз в éто врéмя прибеж́ала
Áнка нóвое плáтье показывáть (Abramov)
There **was** someone to leave the children with — Anka came running
up at that very moment to show her new dress

Note

Idiomatic usage in **Нéчего (нéзачем)** обиж́аться ‘There’s no point in taking offence’, **нéчего** и говор́ить ‘needless to say’, от **нéчего**

дѣлать ‘for want of something to do’, **Нѣ за что** ‘Don’t mention it’.

(8) In all the above examples, the case of the pronoun is determined by the infinitive: **Кого** послать? **Некого** послать ‘Whom to send? There is no one to send’.

However, in phrases of the type ‘There is no one to drive the car, look after the children’, ‘no one’ is the logical *subject* of the verb and therefore appears in the dative (see (4) (ii) above):

Некому о нём заботиться (Рубаков)
There is no one to care for him

Порядок навести **некому** (Рубаков)
There is no one to establish order

Дѣла **некому** объяснить мальчику уроки
There is no one at home to explain the homework to the boy

138 The indefinite pronouns **кто-то**, **кто-нибудь**, **кто-либо**; **что-то**, **что-нибудь**, **что-либо**; **какой-то**, **какой-нибудь**, **какой-либо**; **чей-то**, **чей-нибудь**, **чей-либо**

The particles **-то**, **-нибудь** and **-либо** can be attached to **кто**, **что**, **какой**, **чей** to form indefinite pronouns (for declension, see 121; note that they can also be attached to **где**, **как**, **куда**, **когда**, **почему**, see 395).

(1) **-то**

(i) **Кто-то**.

(a) **Кто-то** ‘someone’ denotes one particular person whose identity, however, is unknown to or has been forgotten by the speaker. Since reference is to a definite event, **кто-то** tends to be confined almost exclusively to the past or present tense (for use with the future, however, see (iv) below): **Кто-то** стучит в дверь ‘Someone is knocking on the door’ (i.e. a definite person, but the speaker does not know who it is), **Кто-то** позвонил из школы ‘Someone rang from the school’ (again, a definite person, but identity unknown (or possibly forgotten by the person who took the call)), Она помогала **кому-то** перейти дорогу ‘She was helping someone to cross the road’ etc.

(b) **Кто-то** can also be extended by an adjective: **кто-то высокий** ‘someone tall’.

(c) **Кто́-то** takes a masculine predicate even when reference is to a female: **Кто́-то** звони́л. **Э́то была́ кака́я-то де́вушка** ‘Someone rang. It was some girl or other’.

(ii) **Что́-то**.

(a) **Что́-то** ‘something’ likewise denotes a definite object or thing, details of which are unknown to the speaker: Он **что́-то** сказа́л, но я не расслы́шал, что́ и́менно ‘He said something, but I did not catch exactly what it was’, Она́ **что́-то** жуёт ‘She is chewing something’ (but the speaker does not know what it is), Он **че́м-то** недово́лен ‘He is displeased about something’, cf.:

На́дю о **че́м-то** спроси́л Михаи́л, она́ **что́-то** отве́тила — всё шёпотом (Rasputin)

Mikhail asked Nadya about **something**, she gave **some answer or other** — all in a whisper

(b) **Что́-то** can also be extended by a neuter adjective: Он бормота́л что́-то **непоня́тное** ‘He was mumbling something incomprehensible’. Note also **Э́то сто́ит миллио́н с че́м-то** ‘It costs something over a million roubles’.

(iii) **Како́й-то** and **че́й-то**.

(a) **Како́й-то** and **че́й-то** are used in similar fashion to **кто́-то** and **что́-то**: Он изуча́ет **како́й-то** язы́к ‘He is studying some (definite but unspecified) language or other’, Она́ проверя́ла **чьё-то** тетра́дь ‘She was correcting someone’s exercise book’.

(b) **Како́й-то** may sometimes render English ‘a’: Вас спра́шивала **кака́я-то** де́вушка ‘A girl (some girl or other) was asking for you’.

(iv) Forms with **-то** may be used in the future, but only if the identity of the person or thing referred to is already known: Я подарю́ тебе́ **что́-то** ко дню́ рожде́ния ‘I shall give you something for your birthday’ (meaning that I have already decided **what** to give. If I still have to make the choice, **что́-нибудь** must be used).

(2) **-нибудь**

(i) Unlike forms in **-то**, forms in **-нибудь** do not imply a particular person or thing, but someone or something indefinite, or one of an unspecified number, still to be decided or selected:

Я счастливее здесь, чем **в каком-нибудь другом месте**
I am happier here than **anywhere else**

The hypothetical nature of forms in **-нибудь** accounts for their usage in **questions**, in the **future**, after **imperatives** and in **conditional** and **subjunctive** constructions:

(a) Questions:

— Ты **в кого-нибудь** влюбился? (Nikolaev)
'Have you fallen in love with **someone**?'

— Кóля! **Что-нибудь** случилось? (Yakhontov)
'Kolya! Has **anything** (or **something**) happened?'

(b) Future:

Он придумает **какое-нибудь** неотложное дело (Koluntsev)
He is bound to think up **some** urgent business **or other**

(c) Imperative:

— Расскажите ещё **о чём-нибудь**, — попросила она ободряюще.

— О чём же?

— О чём хотите (Nosov)

'Tell me about **something** else', she asked encouragingly.

'About what, then?'

'About anything you like'

(d) Conditional and subjunctive.

Conditional:

Разве **кто-нибудь** в этом случае поступил бы иначе? (Kuleshov)
Do you really think **anyone** would have behaved differently in the circumstances?

Subjunctive:

Он хочет, чтобы **кто-нибудь** ему помог
He wants **someone** to help him

(ii) **-нибудь** is also used, irrespective of tense, when reference is to different people or things on different occasions. Thus, Я часто приглашаю **кого-нибудь** сделать доклад, 'I often invite **someone** to give a talk' (different speakers on different occasions), Я всегда дарю ей **что-нибудь** ко дню рождения 'I always give her **something** for her birthday' (a different present on each birthday), cf.:

У нас в отделе всегда **кто-нибудь** висел на телефоне (Avdeenko)

In our department **someone** (i.e. different people on different occasions) was always on the phone

Чудик обладал одной особенностью: с ним постоянно **что-нибудь** случалось (Shukshin)

Chudik had a peculiarity: **something** was always happening to him

— Дядь, проведiте на стадион, — просил я **какого-нибудь** доброго мужчину . . . (Makarov)

‘Mister, take me into the stadium with you’, I would ask **some** kind man **or other** . . .

Когда надо было перенести из склада **что-нибудь** тяжёлое, то помогал Кузьма (Rasputin)

Whenever **something** heavy had to be moved from the warehouse, Kuzma would help

(iii) **Какой-нибудь** can also denote:

(a) Approximation:

За **каких-нибудь** 70–80 лет на грани исчезновения оказалось 600 видов млекопитающих (*Selskaya zhizn*)

Over a period of **some** 70–80 years 600 species of mammals have found themselves on the verge of extinction

(b) Inferior quality:

Дам тебе не **какой-нибудь** учебник, а хороший

I won’t give you just **any old** textbook, but a good one

(3) -либо

Forms in **-либо** are similar in meaning to those in **-нибудь**, but imply an even greater degree of indefiniteness (‘anyone, anything you care to name’ etc.), functioning sometimes as a ‘bookish’ alternative to forms in **-нибудь**:

— Конечно, ты прав, — сказала она. — Менять **что-либо** поздно (Zalygin)

‘You’re right, of course’, she said, ‘It’s too late to change **anything whatsoever**’

И происходит это . . . без **какой-либо** волокиты (*Nedelya*)

And this happens . . . without **any** red tape **at all**

Разве любовь к своей команде оскорбляет **чьё-либо** достоинство (Makarov)

Does love for one’s team really offend **anyone’s** dignity

See also **395** (3).

139 The indefinite pronouns **кòе-кто́**, **кòе-что́**, **кòе-како́й**

(1) **Кòе-кто́**, **кòе-что́** and **кòе-како́й** decline like **кто**, **что** and **како́й** respectively (see 121 and 146 (3) note (b)). Note that **кòе-** does *not* decline. Though both **кòе-кто́** and **кòе-что́** take singular predicates, they have plural meaning (**кòе-кто́** ‘one or two people’, **кòе-что́** ‘a thing or two’; you know who; you know what’):

Кòе-кто́ на Западе задался целью заново «переписать» историю второй мировой войны (*Russia Today*)

One or two people in the West have set themselves the task of ‘rewriting’ the history of the Second World War

Надо **кòе к кому́** забежать

I need to pop in to see **a couple of people**

Кòе на что́ смотрели сквозь пальцы (Rybakov)

Some things they turned a blind eye to

(2) As the examples show, prepositions appear between **кòе** and the oblique case form. In constructions with **кòе-како́й**, however, prepositions may precede or follow **кòе**:

Он обратился ко мне **кòе с како́ими** (or **с кòе-како́ими**) предложениями

He approached me with **a number of** proposals

140 **Некто**, **не́что**

Некто ‘someone, a certain’ appears only in the nominative (**некто** Иванов ‘one Ivanov’) and **не́что** ‘something’ only in the nominative/accusative. The pronouns are usually qualified, e.g. **некто** в бѣлых перчатках ‘someone in white gloves’, **не́что** подобное ‘something similar’.

141 **Некоторый**

Некоторый declines like a hard adjective. It appears in a number of set phrases (в/до **некоторой** стѣпени ‘to a certain extent’, **некоторое** время ‘a certain time’, с **некоторого** времени ‘for some time now’), but usually takes plural form (**некоторые** ‘some, certain’). By

comparison with **несколько** it is selective rather than merely quantitative:

У неё в группе **несколько** иностранных студентов; **некоторые** из них блестящие лингвисты

There are **a few** foreign students in her group; **some** of them are brilliant linguists

142 Нёкий

(1) The indefinite pronoun **нёкий** declines as follows:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	нёк-ий	нёк-ая	нёк-ое	нёк-ие
Acc.	нёк-ий/нёк-оего	нёк-ую	нёк-ое	нёк-ие/нёк-оих or нёк-их
Gen.	нёк-оего	нёк-оёй/нёк-оёй	нёк-оего	нёк-оих/нёк-их
Dat.	нёк-оёму	нёк-оёй/нёк-оёй	нёк-оёму	нёк-оим/нёк-им
Instr.	нёк-оим/нёк-им	нёк-оёй/нёк-оёй	нёк-оим/нёк-им	нёк-оими/нёк-ими
Prep.	о нёк-оем	о нёк-оёй	о нёк-оем	о нёк-оих/нёк-их

(2) The pronoun's main function is to qualify surnames: **нёкий** Брагин 'a certain Bragin'.

(3) The contracted forms **нёким**, **нёкой**, **нёких**, **нёкими** are now preferred by many users of the language: У **нёкой** Ивановой нет паспорта 'A certain Ivanova has no passport'. However, the longer forms are still found:

Дом принадлежал **нёкоёму** Кислых (Granin)

The house belonged to a certain Kislykh

ссылаясь на **нёкоего** представителя в ООН (*Pravda*)

with reference to a certain representative at the UN

143 Other parts of speech which can also function as pronouns

Some other parts of speech can also function as pronouns. They include:

(1) **Данный** 'present': в **данный** момент 'at the present moment'.

(2) **Один**:

(i) 'A (certain)': К вам заходил **один** студент 'A student called to see you'.

(ii) 'The same': Они учились в **одной** школе 'They went to the same school'.

(3) The reciprocal pronoun **друг друга** 'each other', the first part of which is invariable, while the second part is governed by the verb or adjective. Only singular forms are involved, never plural:

Они любят **друг друга** (Uvarova)
They love each other

Они сигналили **друг другу** фонарями (Aytmatov)
They were signalling to each other with lanterns

Prepositions appear centrally, between **друг** and the declined form:

Они сели на свои кровати **друг против друга** (Yakhontov)
They sat down opposite each other on their beds.

This does not apply, however, to some secondary prepositions: **вблизи** друг друга 'near each other', **благодаря** друг другу 'thanks to each other', **вопреки** друг другу 'contrary to each other', **навстречу** друг другу 'to meet each other'.

Друг друга also functions as a possessive:

Знали о снежном человеке по рассказам **друг друга** (Povolyaev)
They knew of the yeti from each other's stories.

The Adjective

144 Introduction

(1) Adjectives may be attributive, either preceding the noun (e.g. ‘The **black** cat purred’) or following it and separated from it by a comma (‘A cat, **wet** with the rain, sat on the step’). Adjectives may also be predicative, following the noun and linked to it by a verb: ‘The cat **is wet**’.

(2) Adjectives also have comparative forms (‘My car is **newer** than yours’) and superlative forms (‘His house is the **oldest** in the street’).

(3) Most adjectives in Russian have *two* forms, a long (attributive) form (e.g. **краси́вый, краси́вая, краси́вое, краси́вые** ‘beautiful’) and a short (predicative) form (e.g. **краси́в, краси́ва, краси́во, краси́вы** ‘am, is, are beautiful’). This is also true of comparatives.

Note

Subsequently, ‘is, are’ are used to designate the short form.

The Long Form of the Adjective

145 The long adjective: hard endings

(1) Most long adjectives in Russian have **hard** endings, that is, the first vowel of the ending is **а, о** or **ы**, e.g.

Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
но́в- ый	но́в- ая	но́в- ое	но́в- ые ‘new’

(2) Hard-ending adjectives decline as follows:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	но́в- ый	но́в- ая	но́в- ое	но́в- ые
Acc.	но́в- ый/но́в-ого	но́в- ую	но́в- ое	но́в- ые/но́в-ых
Gen.	но́в- ого	но́в- ой	но́в- ого	но́в- ых
Dat.	но́в- ому	но́в- ой	но́в- ому	но́в- ым
Instr.	но́в- ым	но́в- ой/но́в-ою	но́в- ым	но́в- ыми
Prep.	о но́в- ом	о но́в- ой	о но́в- ом	о но́в- ых

Note

- (a) The instrumental feminine form in **-ою** survives mainly in poetry.
 (b) End-stressed adjectives (e.g. **молодóй**) decline like **но́вый** except in the masculine nominative singular and inanimate accusative singular, which have the ending **-óй**.
 (c) **-го** in adjectival endings is pronounced [və] ([vo] under stress).

146 ‘Mixed’ declension

(1) The ‘mixed’ declension involves adjectives whose final consonant is a velar consonant (**г, к** or **х**), a palatal sibilant (**ж, ч, ш** or **щ**) or **ц**.

(2) Endings are determined by the spelling rules (see **16** (1) and (2)):

- (i) **и** replaces **ы** after **г, к, х, ж, ч, ш** and **щ**;
 (ii) unstressed **о** is replaced by **е** after **ж, ч, ш, щ** and **ц**.

(3) Declension of **ру́сский** ‘Russian’:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	ру́сск- ий	ру́сск- ая	ру́сск- ое	ру́сск- ие
Acc.	ру́сск- ий/ру́сск-ого	ру́сск- ую	ру́сск- ое	ру́сск- ие/ру́сск-их
Gen.	ру́сск- ого	ру́сск- ой	ру́сск- ого	ру́сск- их
Dat.	ру́сск- ому	ру́сск- ой	ру́сск- ому	ру́сск- им
Instr.	ру́сск- им	ру́сск- ой/-ою	ру́сск- им	ру́сск- ими
Prep.	о ру́сск- ом	о ру́сск- ой	о ру́сск- ом	о ру́сск- их

Note

- (a) Adjectives in **-гий** and **-хий** (e.g. **до́лгий** ‘long’, **ти́хий** ‘quiet’) decline like **ру́сский**.

- (b) End-stressed adjectives have **-ой** in the masculine nominative singular and inanimate accusative singular, e.g. **другой** ‘other’, **какой** ‘which’, **сухой** ‘dry’.

- (4) Declension of **хороший** ‘good’:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	хорош- ий	хорош- ая	хорош- ее	хорош- ие
Acc.	хорош- ий/-его	хорош- ую	хорош- ее	хорош- ие/хорош-их
Gen.	хорош- его	хорош- ей	хорош- его	хорош- их
Dat.	хорош- ему	хорош- ей	хорош- ему	хорош- им
Instr.	хорош- им	хорош- ей/-ею	хорош- им	хорош- ими
Prep.	о хорош- ем	о хорош- ей	о хорош- ем	о хорош- их

Note

- (a) Adjectives in **-жий** (e.g. **свежий** ‘fresh’), **-чий** (e.g. **горячий** ‘hot’) and **-щий** (e.g. **настоящий** ‘real’) decline like **хороший**.
- (b) Adjectives in **-цый** (e.g. **куцый** ‘dock-tailed’) decline like **хороший** except in the masculine nominative singular and inanimate accusative singular, which end in **-ый**, the masculine and neuter instrumental singular (**куцым**) and the whole of the plural (**куцые, куцых** etc.). See 2 (ii) above.

- (5) Declension of **большой** ‘big’:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	больш- ой	больш- ая	больш- ое	больш- ие
Acc.	больш- ой/-ого	больш- ую	больш- ое	больш- ие/больш-их
Gen.	больш- ого	больш- ой	больш- ого	больш- их
Dat.	больш- ому	больш- ой	больш- ому	больш- им
Instr.	больш- им	больш- ой/-ою	больш- им	больш- ими
Prep.	о больш- ом	о больш- ой	о больш- ом	о больш- их

Note

Чужой ‘someone else’s’ declines like **большой**.

147 Soft-ending adjectives

- (1) Soft-ending adjectives comprise some forty adjectives in **-ний** and the adjective **карий** ‘hazel’ (eye colour).

Declension of **последний** ‘last’:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	последн-ий	последн-яя	последн-ее	последн-ие
Acc.	последн-ий/-его	последн-юю	последн-ее	последн-ие/последн-их
Gen.	последн-его	последн-ей	последн-его	последн-их
Dat.	последн-ему	последн-ей	последн-ему	последн-им
Instr.	последн-им	последн-ей/-ею	последн-им	последн-ими
Prep.	о последн-ем	о последн-ей	о последн-ем	о последн-их

(2) Adjectives in **-ний** subdivide into those which express:

(i) **Time:** весённый ‘spring’, вечерний ‘evening’, всегдашний ‘customary’, вчерашний ‘yesterday’s’, давний ‘long-standing’, давнишний ‘of long standing’, древний ‘ancient’, завтрашний ‘tomorrow’s’, зимний ‘winter’, летний ‘summer’, недавний ‘recent’, нынешний ‘present-day’, осенний ‘autumn’, поздний ‘late’, прежний ‘former’, прошлогóдный ‘last year’s’, ранний ‘early’, сегоднЯшний ‘today’s’, суббóтний ‘Saturday’s’, тепóрешний ‘present-day’, тогдАшний ‘of that time’, ўтренний ‘morning’.

(ii) **Location:** ближний ‘near’, верхний ‘upper, top’, внешний ‘external’, внутрєнный ‘internal’, дальний ‘far’, домашний ‘domestic’, задний ‘back’, здєшний ‘of this place’, крайний ‘extreme’, нижний ‘lower, bottom’, передний ‘front’, сосєдный ‘neighbouring, next’, тамошний ‘of that place’.

Note

(a) **Ближний** and **дальний** express relative distance: **ближний** ўгол ‘the near corner’, **дальний** ўгол ‘the far (*not* ‘the distant’) corner’, **Ближний** Востóк ‘the Near East’ (i.e. ‘the Middle East’), **Дальний** Востóк ‘the Far East’. Note that the counterpart to **дальний** рóдственник ‘distant relative’ is **рóдственник** ‘relative’ or **близкий** рóдственник ‘close relative’.

(b) **Последний** ‘last’ and **средний** ‘middle’ can refer to both time and space.

(c) Some soft endings relate only to compound adjectives: **новогóдный** ‘new year’ (cf. годовóй ‘annual’ from год ‘year’), **односторóнный** ‘unilateral’.

(iii) **Others:** дочєрный ‘daughter’s, daughterly’, замўжня ‘married’ (of a woman), йскрєнный ‘sincere’, лишний ‘superfluous’, порóжний ‘empty’, сийний (dark) ‘blue’, сынóвный ‘filial’.

148 Formation of adjectives from nouns: the suffixes **-н-**, **-ск-** and **-ов-/ев-**

(1) Unlike English, in which most nouns can also function as adjectives (e.g. ‘steel’ (noun) becomes ‘steel’ (adjective) in ‘**steel** bridge’), adjectives in Russian derive from nouns mainly through suffixation.

(2) The commonest suffix is **-н-**: thus, **чайный** from чай ‘tea’ (чайная чашка ‘tea cup’), **комнатный** from комната ‘room’ (комнатная температура ‘room temperature’), **местный** from место ‘place’ (местный наркоз ‘local anaesthetic’). **Г, к, х, ц** and **л** undergo mutation before suffix **-н-**:

Г : Ж	юг ‘south’	ю ж ный ‘southern’
К : Ч	река́ ‘river’	речнóй ‘river’ (adjective)
Х : Ш	во́здух ‘air’	возду́шный ‘air’ (adjective)
Ц : Ч	у́лица ‘street’	у́личн ы й ‘street’ (adjective)
Л : ЛЬ	шко́ла ‘school’	шко́льн ы й ‘school’ (adjective)

(3) The suffix **-ск-** is associated mainly with adjectives derived from the names of:

(i) People, thus : **мужско́й** ‘male’, **гражда́нский** ‘civic’ etc.

Note

Adjectives from some animate nouns have the suffix **-еск-**, e.g. **челове́ческий** ‘human’ from человек ‘human’. Adjectives derived from some proper names take the infix **-ов-**: **го́рьковский** from Го́рьков ‘Gorky’.

(ii) Towns, rivers etc. (note also **горо́дско́й** from го́род ‘town’, **се́льский** from село́ ‘village’): **донско́й** from До́н ‘the Don’, **москóвский** from Москóва ‘Moscow’.

Note

- (a) Some town names ending in a vowel have adjectives in **-инский**: **алма-ати́нский** from Алма́-Ата́ ‘Alma Ata’ (now also Алма́ты), **баки́нский** from Баку́ ‘Baku’, **ялти́нский** from Ялта́ ‘Yalta’ (note also **куби́нский** ‘Cuban’, cf. **куба́нский** from Куба́нь ‘the (river) Kuban’).
- (b) Adjectival stress differs in some cases from noun stress: **астраха́нский** from Астрахань ‘Astrakhan’, **новгоро́дский** from Но́вгород ‘Novgorod’.
- (c) Consonant mutation occurs in adjectives derived from the names of some towns, rivers, mountain ranges etc.: **во́лжский** from Во́лга

‘the Volga’, **пра́жский** from Пра́га ‘Prague’, **ри́жский** from Ри́га ‘Riga’, **ура́льский** from Ура́л ‘the Urals’.

(iii) Nationalities and languages: **ру́сский/росси́йский** ‘Russian’, **по́льский** ‘Polish’, including more recent formations such as **зимбабвийский** ‘Zimbabwean’. Note that **латвийский** ‘Latvian’ refers to the country (e.g. **латвийское** побере́жье ‘the Latvian coastline’), whereas **латы́шский** ‘Latvian’ refers to the people (e.g. **латы́шский** язы́к ‘the Latvian language’).

(iv) Organizations: **ду́мский** ‘Duma’ (adj.), **заводско́й** from заво́д ‘factory’, **на́товский** from НА́ТО ‘NATO’ etc.

(v) Months: **октя́брьский** ‘October’ etc. Note the absence of a soft sign in **янва́рский** ‘January’ and the infix **-ов-** in **августовский** ‘August’, **ма́ртовский** ‘March’.

(4) The suffix **-ов-/-ев-** is used to form adjectives from the names of many trees (e.g. **бу́ковый** from бук ‘beech’), fruits and vegetables (e.g. **оре́ховый** from оре́х ‘nut’), growing areas (e.g. **полево́й** from по́ле ‘field’), metals and alloys (e.g. **ци́нковый** from цинк ‘zinc’), certain other substances (e.g. **рези́новый** from рези́на ‘rubber’), animals (e.g. **слоно́вый** from слон ‘elephant’), suits of cards (e.g. **пи́ковый** from пи́ки ‘spades’), colours (e.g. **ро́зовый** ‘pink’ from ро́за ‘rose’), the names of some young people (e.g. **подро́стковый/подростко́вый** from подро́сток ‘adolescent’), synthetic materials (e.g. **нейло́новый** from нейло́н ‘nylon’), nouns in **-инг** (e.g. **ли́зинговый** from ли́зинг ‘leasing’), and other nouns (e.g. **звуково́й** from звук ‘sound’, **ра́ковый** from рак ‘cancer’ etc.).

149 Adjectival endings with specific meanings

Some adjectival endings have specific meanings. These include:

(1) **-ивый, -ливый, -чивый**

Adjectives with these endings denote characteristics: **лени́вый** ‘lazy’, **терпели́вый** ‘patient’, **разговóрчивый** ‘talkative’ etc.

(2) **-мый**

Adjectives with this ending denote potential qualities (cf. English **-ble**): **преодоли́мый** ‘surmountable’, **раствори́мый** ‘soluble’. Such adjectives are of participial derivation (see also 344).

(3) -атый

Adjectives with this ending denote possession of the object denoted by the root noun: **перна́тый** ‘feathered’, **рога́тый** ‘horned’.

(4) -астый

Adjectives with this ending denote possession of a prominent physical feature: **груда́стый** ‘busty’, **скула́стый** ‘high-cheek-boned’ etc.

(5) -истый

Adjectives with this ending denote abundance of the feature denoted by the root noun: **тени́стый** ‘shady’. They can also denote similarity: **золоти́стый** ‘golden’ (of colour etc.) (cf. **золото́й** ‘(made of) gold’).

(6) -чий

Adjectives with this ending denote various states: **вися́чий** ‘hanging’ (**вися́чий** мост ‘suspension bridge’), **сидя́чий** ‘sedentary’ etc. The adjectives are of participial origin.

150 Nouns with more than one adjective

Nouns with two or more derivative adjectives subdivide as follows:

(1) Different meanings of the same noun are involved. Thus, мир ‘world’ has the adjective **мирово́й** (мирова́я война́ ‘world war’), while мир ‘peace’ has the adjective **ми́рный** (ми́рный догово́р ‘peace treaty’).

(2) The adjectival endings express different qualities or properties of a noun. Thus, both **дру́жеский** ‘friendly’ and **дру́жный** ‘concerted, harmonious’ derive from друг ‘friend’, as does the official **дру́жественный** (Перегово́ры проходи́ли в дру́жественной обстановке ‘The talks were held in a cordial atmosphere’).

151 Possessive adjectives

Possessive adjectives fall into two categories:

(1) The type **во́лчий** ‘wolf’s’.

(i) **Во́лчий** is declined as follows:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	во́лчий	во́лчь-я	во́лчь-е	во́лчь-и
Acc.	во́лчий/во́лчь-его	во́лчь-ю	во́лчь-е	во́лчь-и/их
Gen.	во́лчь-его	во́лчь-ей	во́лчь-его	во́лчь-их
Dat.	во́лчь-ему	во́лчь-ей	во́лчь-ему	во́лчь-им
Instr.	во́лчь-им	во́лчь-ей/-ею	во́лчь-им	во́лчь-ими
Prep.	о во́лчь-ем	о во́лчь-ей	о во́лчь-ем	о во́лчь-их

(ii) Most adjectives in this category derive from the names of animals, birds, fish etc.: **ли́сий** ‘fox’s’, **ры́бий** ‘fish’s’ and so on. Some derive from the names of human beings. Consonant mutation operates as follows:

Г : Ж	бог	божий ‘god’s’
Д : Ж	медве́дь	медве́жий ‘bear’s’
К : Ч	соба́ка	соба́чий ‘dog’s’
	охо́тник	охо́тничий ‘hunter’s’
Х : Ш	черепа́ха	черепа́ший ‘tortoise’s’
Ц : Ч	овца́	ове́чий ‘sheep’s’
	деви́ца	деви́чий ‘maiden’ (e.g. деви́чья фами́лия ‘maiden name’)

(iii) A number of the adjectives appear in set phrases: волк в **ове́чьей** шку́ре ‘wolf in sheep’s clothing’, вид с **пти́чьего** полёта ‘bird’s eye view’.

Note

Тре́тий ‘third’ also declines like **во́лчий**.

(2) The type **ма́мин** ‘Mum’s’.

(i) **Ма́мин** declines as follows, combining adjective and noun endings:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	ма́мин	ма́мин-а	ма́мин-о	ма́мин-ы
Acc.	ма́мин/ма́мин-ого	ма́мин-у	ма́мин-о	ма́мин-ы/-ых
Gen.	ма́мин-ого	ма́мин-ой	ма́мин-ого	ма́мин-ых
Dat.	ма́мин-у	ма́мин-ой	ма́мин-у	ма́мин-ым
Instr.	ма́мин-ым	ма́мин-ой/-ою	ма́мин-ым	ма́мин-ыми
Prep.	о ма́мин-ом	о ма́мин-ой	о ма́мин-ом	о ма́мин-ых

(ii) Possessive adjectives of this type are formed by adding the suffixes **-ин**, **-нин** or **-ов** to the stems of nouns (ма́ма ‘Mum’ etc.): **ба́бушкин** ‘grandma’s’, **бра́тнин** ‘brother’s’, **де́дов** ‘granddad’s’, **дя́дин** ‘uncle’s’, **же́нин** ‘wife’s’, **ки́син/ко́шкин** ‘pussy’s’, **ма́мин** ‘Mum’s’, **му́жнин** ‘husband’s’, **ня́нин** ‘nanny’s’, **отцо́в/па́пин** ‘Dad’s’, **се́стрин** ‘sister’s’, **те́тин** ‘auntie’s’. They are used mainly within the family circle:

От **ма́миных** з́автраков он реши́л бежа́ть (Tendryakov)
He decided to escape from Mum's breakfasts

(iii) They also derive from the familiar forms of first names: **Ко́лин** 'Kolya's':

Я счита́ю, что **Ната́шина** ма́ма права́ (*Rabotnitsa*)
I consider that Natasha's Mum is right

(iv) The endings also appear in phrases deriving from mythology, the Bible etc. (**ахилле́сова** пята́ 'Achilles' heel'), geographical terms (**Бе́рингов** проли́в 'Bering Straits'), other phrases (**крокоди́ловы** слёзы 'crocodile tears') etc.

(v) Some forms in **-ин**, mostly denoting animals, have acquired long adjectival endings and decline like **но́вый: лебеди́ный** 'swan's', **лошади́ный** 'horse's' (**лебеди́ная** пёснь 'swan song', **лошади́ная** си́ла 'horse power').

152 Diminutive adjectives in **-енький/-онький**

(1) Most diminutive adjectives end in **-енький** (e.g. **но́венький** from но́вый 'new') and (after velar consonants) **-онький** (**высо́конький** from высо́кий, **лёгонький** from лёгкий 'light, easy', **ти́хонький** from ти́хий 'quiet'). The stress falls on the syllable preceding **-енький/-онький**.

(2) Diminutive adjectives may express smallness: **блédненькое** ли́чко 'a pale little face', **А́лька** передёрнула **у́зенькими** плеча́ми (Koluntsev) 'A spasm convulsed Alka's narrow little shoulders'.

(3) Like diminutive nouns (see **104–108**), diminutive adjectives may also express emotive nuances of sympathy, scorn etc.: **моло́денький** студéнтик 'a nice young student', **глу́пенький** мальчо́нка 'a stupid little kid'.

(4) Diminutive endings may also impart a meaning of intensity to an adjective: e.g. **прóстенький** 'very plain', **чи́стенький** ма́льчик 'spotlessly clean little boy', cf.:

Михаи́л принёс две **холо́дненькие** буты́лки моско́вского пивка́ (Abramov)
Mikhail brought two **ice-cold** bottles of Moscow beer

153 Diminutive adjectives in **-оватый/-еватый**

(1) The diminutive suffix **-оват(ый)/-еват(ый)** denotes incompleteness: **дороговáтый** ‘rather dear’, **кисловáтый** ‘rather sour’, **синевáтый** ‘bluish’.

Note

These diminutives cannot be formed from all adjectives. Thus, they are formed from **ста́рый** ‘old’ and **глу́пый** ‘stupid’ (**старовáтый**, **глуповáтый**), but not from their opposites **молодо́й** ‘young’ and **у́мный** ‘clever’.

(2) Such diminutives may acquire an evaluative nuance: **дороговáтая кварти́ра** ‘a rather expensive apartment’, **холодновáтая погóда** ‘weather somewhat on the cold side’.

(3) Maximum colloquial expressiveness is achieved by the addition of **-енький**: **глуховáтенький** ‘somewhat hard of hearing’.

154 Indeclinable adjectives

(1) Most indeclinable adjectives are loan words and *follow* the noun. Some denote colour (e.g. **ха́ки** ‘khaki’):

Два но́вых пла́тья: откры́тое, **беж** . . . и цве́та **бордо́** (Zalygin)
Two new dresses, an open-necked beige . . . and a deep red

(2) Others denote:

(i) Food and drink:

ко́фе мо́кко	mocha coffee
карто́фель фри	French fries

(ii) Styles of clothing:

пальто́ демисезо́н	spring or autumn coat
брю́ки клёш	bell-bottom trousers
ю́бка ми́ни (also ми́ни-ю́бка or ми́ни)	mini-skirt
пальто́ регла́н	Raglan coat

(iii) Languages (these adjectives *precede* the noun):

ко́ми за́ймствования	Komi loans
урду́ язы́к	Urdu
хи́нди язы́к	Hindi

Compare, however, язы́к **эспера́нто** ‘Esperanto’.

(iv) Various other meanings:

вес брутто	gross weight
вес нётто	net weight
часы пик	rush hour

Note

Some indeclinable adjectives also function as nouns: **джерси** ‘jersey material’, **макси** ‘maxi clothes’.

155 Attributive use of the long adjective

(1) The long adjective usually precedes the noun and agrees with it in gender, case and number:

	‘new house’		‘new book’		‘new armchair’	
	Masculine		Feminine		Neuter	
Nom.	нóв- ый	дом	нóв- ая	кнѳга	нóв- ое	крѳсло
Acc.	нóв- ый	дом	нóв- ую	кнѳгу	нóв- ое	крѳсло
Gen.	нóв- ого	дóма	нóв- ой	кнѳги	нóв- ого	крѳсла
Dat.	нóв- ому	дóму	нóв- ой	кнѳге	нóв- ому	крѳслу
Instr.	нóв- ым	дóмом	нóв- ой/-ою	кнѳгой	нóв- ым	крѳслом
Prep.	о нóв- ом	дóме	о нóв- ой	кнѳге	о нóв- ом	крѳсле

Plural

Nom.	нóв- ые	домá	нóв- ые	кнѳги	нóв- ые	крѳсла
Acc.	нóв- ые	домá	нóв- ые	кнѳги	нóв- ые	крѳсла
Gen.	нóв- ых	домóв	нóв- ых	кнѳг	нóв- ых	крѳсел
Dat.	нóв- ым	домáм	нóв- ым	кнѳгам	нóв- ым	крѳслам
Instr.	нóв- ыми	домáми	нóв- ыми	кнѳгами	нóв- ыми	крѳслами
Prep.	о нóв- ых	домáх	о нóв- ых	кнѳгах	о нóв- ых	крѳслах

Note

- (a) The animate accusative/genitive rule is applied: Знаю **нóвого учителя, нóвых учителей** ‘I know the new teacher, the new teachers’ (see 47).
- (b) An adjective or pronoun qualifying a masculine animate noun in **-а/-я** takes masculine endings, while the noun takes feminine endings: Я знаю **вáшего дядю** ‘I know your uncle’, дом **вáшего дяди** ‘your uncle’s house’, Вѳрю **вáшему дяде** ‘I trust your uncle’, Я довóлен **вáшим дядей** ‘I am pleased with your uncle’, о **вáшем дяде** ‘about your uncle’.

(2) The long adjective may also follow the noun, separated from it by a comma and agreeing with it in gender, case and number:

Он лежал на **траве, мокрой** от росы
He was lying on the grass, (which was) wet with the dew

Note

In certain contexts (e.g. in restaurant menus, with generic nouns) the long attributive adjective may follow the noun: кофе **натуральный** ‘real coffee’, Туризм — дело **полезное** ‘Tourism is a healthy pursuit’.

156 Use of the long adjective with predicative meaning

(1) In predicative position, the long adjective denotes characteristics which are inherent in or completely identified with the noun (cf. the predicative *short* form (see 166–174)), e.g.

Эта комната — **большая**
This room is **large** (is a large one)

(2) When linked to the noun by the past or future tense of the verb **быть**, the long predicative adjective appears:

(i) In the nominative case (the more *colloquial* variant):

Лес был **тёплый и спокойный** (Aksenov)
The forest was warm and serene

И я буду тогда **старая, некрасивая**, в морщинках (Kovaleva)
And by that time I shall be old, ugly, wrinkled

(ii) In the instrumental case (more typical of *written* styles):

Перестройка была **нелёгкой**, но она произошла (Kovaleva)
Restructuring was not easy, but it occurred

— Буду я когда-нибудь **богатым**? (Rubina)
‘Will I ever be rich?’

(3) When linked to the noun by the conditional, subjunctive, infinitive or imperative mood of the verb **быть**, the instrumental case of the adjective is the norm:

Если бы он был **высоким**, он поступил бы в милицию
If he were tall he would join the police

Главное, чтобы эти встречи были **регулярными**
The main thing is that these meetings should be regular

Эти догадки могут быть **правильными** или **ошибочными** (Rybakov)

These conjectures may be right or wrong

Будь всегда **вёжливым!**

Always be polite!

(4) After other verbs which take a predicate (**выглядеть** ‘to look’, **казаться** ‘to seem’, **притворяться** ‘to pretend’, **чувствовать** себя ‘to feel’ etc.), the adjective also appears in the instrumental case:

Улицы выглядели **грязными**

The streets looked dirty

Мой расчёт оказался **точным** (Nikolaev)

My calculation turned out to be accurate

Минфин РФ запретил крупному бизнесу притворяться **малым** (V. Putin)

The Russian Federation Finance Ministry has forbidden large-scale business from pretending to be small-scale

(5) An adjectival complement to intransitive and transitive verbs also appears in the instrumental:

Он начал **первым**

He began first, was the first to begin

Он оставил сейф **открытым**

He left the safe open

Я никогда не видел её **такой красивой** (Kazakov)

I had never seen her looking so lovely

157 Some uses of singular and plural adjectives

(1) A plural adjective is used to qualify two or more singular nouns if it relates to all the nouns named:

Маргарита с грохотом бросила **железные** совок и лопатку (Rubina)

With a clatter Margarita threw down an iron trowel and spade

Note

A *singular* adjective or pronoun may be used, however, if it is obvious that it relates to all the nouns named. The adjective or pronoun in such circumstances agrees with the first of the nouns: написать **свою** фамилию, имя и отчество ‘to write one’s surname, first name and patronymic’.

(2) A singular adjective is also used if it relates only to the *first* of the nouns named: **каменный** дом и гараж ‘a stone house and a garage’ (cf. **каменные** дом и гараж ‘a stone house and (a stone) garage’).

(3) Phrases comprising numeral and noun are qualified by a plural adjective: **каждые** два дня ‘every two days’. Adjectives which fulfil an emphatic role (e.g. **добрый, полный, целый**) appear in the genitive plural: **полных** три месяца ‘a full three months’, **целых** две тарелки ‘two whole plates’ (cf. also опоздал на **целых** полчаса ‘he was a whole half hour late’).

(4) Singular adjectives and nouns are used in the following phrases: **в разное время** ‘at various times’, **всякого рода** ‘all kinds of’ (**всякого рода** товары ‘all kinds of goods’), **разного рода** ‘of various kinds’.

158 Adjectival nouns

(1) An adjectival noun has the form of an adjective but functions as a noun (**белые** ‘the Whites’).

(2) Most adjectival nouns result from the omission of a word that can be understood from the context, e.g. **столовая** (комната) ‘dining room’.

(3) Adjectival nouns decline like adjectives (**в ванной** (from ванная) ‘in the bathroom’), behave like adjectives when governed by numerals (**два мороженных** ‘two ice-creams’ (see **194** (2) (v))) and can themselves be qualified by adjectives: **русское мороженое** ‘Russian ice-cream’.

(4) Most **masculine** adjectival nouns denote people: **рядовой** ‘private soldier’, **учёный** ‘scientist’, **часовой** ‘sentry’ etc.

(5) **Feminine** adjectival nouns denote:

(i) Lines: **кривая** ‘curve’, **прямая** ‘straight line’ (линия ‘line’ understood).

(ii) Rooms and other accommodation: **закусочная** ‘snack-bar’, **кладовая** ‘store-room’, **прачечная** ‘laundry’, **уборная** ‘lavatory’.

(6) **Neuter** adjectival nouns denote:

(i) The names of dishes: **первое** ‘first course’, **сладкое** ‘sweet’ etc. (блюдо ‘dish’ understood).

(ii) Time: **прошлое** ‘the past’, **настоящее** ‘the present’, **будущее** ‘the future’ (время ‘time’ understood).

(iii) Abstracts: **старое и новое** ‘the old and the new’.

(iv) Classes of animal: **животное** ‘animal’, **млекопитающее** ‘mammal’, **насекомое** ‘insect’, (существо ‘being’ understood).

(v) Grammatical terms: **прилагательное** ‘adjective’, **существительное** ‘noun’, **числительное** ‘numeral’ (имя ‘noun, nomen’ understood).

(7) **Plural** adjectival nouns denote money: **наличные** ‘cash’, **сверхурочные** ‘overtime’, **чаевые** ‘gratuities’ (cf. деньги ‘money’).

Note

(a) Many adjectival nouns are formed on a seemingly *ad hoc* basis: Она поступила в **архитектурный** (институт) ‘She has enrolled at the school of architecture’. Note also **борзая** (собака) ‘borzoi’, **выходной** (день) ‘day off’, **сборная** (команда) ‘combined team, international team’ etc.

(b) Some adjectival nouns function *only* as nouns (**вселенная** ‘the universe’, **запятая** ‘comma’, **мостовая** ‘roadway’), whereas others function as nouns or adjectives (cf. **рабочий** ‘worker’ and **рабочий день** ‘working day’ etc.).

The Short Form of the Adjective

159 Endings of the short form of the adjective

(1) Most adjectives have long forms and short forms (compare, however, 160).

(2) The short form derives from the long form by the removal of the

whole of the masculine ending and the final vowel of the feminine, neuter and plural endings, e.g. **суровый** ‘severe’:

	Long form	Short form
Masculine	суров- ый	суров
Feminine	суров- ая	суров- а
Neuter	суров- ое	суров- о
Plural	суров- ые	суров- ы

See also **161** on the use of buffer vowels.

160 Adjectives which have long forms only

(1) Some adjectives which denote **inherent characteristics** have long forms only. They include:

- (i) Adjectives of colour (except for **синий** ‘blue’).
- (ii) Adjectives with the suffix **-ск-**, e.g. **русский** ‘Russian’.

Note

Many adjectives in **-ический**, e.g. **драматический** ‘dramatic’, have synonyms in **-ичный**, e.g. **драматичный**, which *do* have short forms.

- (iii) Adjectives in **-ний** (except for **искренний** ‘sincere’ and **синий** ‘blue’).
- (iv) Adjectives of time (e.g. **месячный** ‘month’s’) and place (e.g. **местный** ‘local’).
- (v) Adjectives which denote materials or substances: **деревянный** ‘wooden’, **железный** ‘iron’ etc.
- (vi) Possessive adjectives of the type **волчий** ‘wolf’s’ (see **151** (1)).
- (vii) Ordinal numerals: **первый** ‘first’, **второй** ‘second’ etc.

(2) Some adjectives have short forms in certain meanings only. For example, **глухой** has short forms in the meaning ‘deaf’, but not in the meanings ‘blank’ (**глухая** стена ‘blank wall’), ‘remote’ (**глухая** провинция ‘remote province’) and ‘voiceless’ (**глухой** согласный ‘voiceless consonant’). **Видный** has a short form in the meaning ‘visible’ (see **161** (1)) but not in the meaning ‘prominent’.

161 The buffer vowels -e-, -o- and -ë- in the masculine short form

A buffer vowel is introduced between two or more final consonants in the *masculine* short form of many adjectives.

(1) The commonest of the buffer vowels is **-e-**:

Long-form masculine		Short forms
ва́жный	‘important’	ва́жен , важна́, ва́жно, ва́жны/ва́жны
ви́дный	‘visible’	ви́ден , видна́, ви́дно, видны́
голо́дный	‘hungry’	го́лоден , голодна́, го́лодно, голодны́/го́лодны
дли́нный	‘long’	дли́нен , длинна́, дли́нно, длинны́/дли́нны
слы́шный	‘audible’	слы́шен , слышна́, слы́шно, слышны́/слы́шны

Compare:

Сейча́с зага́р не **мо́ден** (Koluntsev)

Now a suntan is not fashionable

The buffer vowel **-e-** may replace a soft sign or the semi-consonant **й**:

больно́й	sick	бо́лен , больна́, больно́, больны́
дово́льный	pleased	дово́лен , дово́льна, дово́льно, дово́льны
спокóйный	calm	спокóбен , spokóйна, spokóйно, spokóйны

(2) The buffer vowel **-o-** splits clusters of consonants ending in **к, г**:

до́лгий	long	до́лог , долга́, до́лго, до́лги
ле́гкий	light, easy	ле́гок , легка́, легко́, легки́
у́зкий	narrow	у́зок , узка́, у́зко, узки́/у́зки

— По моёй статье́ предельный́ срок доста́точно **до́лог** (Koluntsev)

‘The maximum term for my offence is fairly long’

Note

However, **-e-** replaces a *soft sign* in such clusters: го́рький ‘bitter’, short form **го́рек**. It also appears in unstressed position between **ж, ч, ш** and **к**: тя́жкий ‘severe’, short form **тя́жек**.

The following adjectives also take **-o-**:

злой	wicked	зол , зла, зло, злы
пóльный	full	пб́лон , полна́, полно́, полны́
смешно́й	funny	смешо́н , смешна́, смешно́, смешны́

(3) The buffer vowel **-ë-** affects a small number of adjectives:

о́стрый	sharp, sharp-witted	остёр , остра́, остро́, остры́
си́льный	strong	силён , сильна́, си́льно, сильны́
у́мный	clever	умён , умна́, умно́, умны́
хи́трый	cunning	хитёр , хитра́, хитро́, хитры́

Note

Some adjectives with a stem ending in more than one consonant do *not* take a buffer vowel in the masculine short form. They include бо́дрый ‘cheerful’ (**бодр**), до́брый ‘kind’ (**добр**), го́рдый ‘proud’ (**горд**), ме́ртвый ‘dead’ (**ме́ртв**), пе́стрый ‘multicoloured’ (**пе́стр**).

162 Some special short forms

The following short forms should be specially noted.

- | | | |
|----------------|---------|--|
| (1) Большо́й | big | : вели́к , велика́, велико́, велики́. |
| (2) Досто́йный | worthy | : досто́ин , досто́йна, досто́ино,
досто́йны. |
| (3) И́скренний | sincere | : и́скренен , и́скренна, и́скренне (the
commoner alternative)/и́скренно,
и́скренни/и́скренны. |
| (4) Ма́ленький | small | : мал , ма́ла, ма́ло, ма́лы. |
| (5) Си́ний | blue | : синь , синя́, си́не, си́ни. |
| (6) Соле́ный | salted | : со́лон , со́лона́, со́лоно,
со́лонь/со́лоны. |

Note

- (a) **Рад**, ра́да, ра́до, ра́ды ‘glad’ has no long form (however, ра́достный means ‘glad, joyful’: ра́достное собы́тие ‘a joyful event’).

- (b) Какóв, какová, каковó, каковы́ are used predicatively in the meaning ‘what, what kind of’ (**Каковá** смéртность от ра́ка? ‘What is the mortality rate from cancer?’) and такóв, такová, такóвó, таковы́ in the meaning ‘such’ (**Такóвó** наше мнéние ‘Such is our opinion’). However, **как** and **так** are used to modify short adjectives: Он **так** добр/Она́ **так** добра́ ‘He is so kind/She is so kind’.
- (c) For meanings of **вели́к** and **мал**, see 169.

163 Masculine short forms of adjectives in -енный

- (1) The masculine short form of adjectives in unstressed **-енный** ends in **-ен**, e.g. бессмы́сленный ‘senseless’, short form **бессмы́слен**:

Разговóр был **бессмы́слен** (Trifonov)
The conversation was senseless

- (2) Adjectives in stressed **-éнный** have masculine short forms in **-éнен**, e.g. откровенный ‘candid’, short form **откровенéнен**:

А взгляд его́, пожа́луй, сли́шком **откровенéнен** (Koluntsev)
But I suppose his glance is too frank

Note

- (a) Some adjectives in unstressed **-енный** have alternative masculine short forms in **-ен** and **-енен**, e.g. естéственный ‘natural’, **естéствен/естéственен**, the form in **-ен** usually being preferred.
- (b) Some ‘high style’ adjectives in **-éнный** have masculine short forms in **-éн**, e.g. благословéнный ‘blessed’:

Благословéн ма́стер, достíгший верши́ны ма́стерствá
Blessed is the craftsman who has achieved the summit of
craftsmanship

164 Stress patterns

- (1) Very many adjectival short forms have fixed stem stress throughout:
краси́в краси́ва краси́во краси́вы (is, are) beautiful’
- (2) Short forms with mobile stress subdivide into the following:

(i) End stress in feminine, neuter and plural:

хоро́ш хороша́ хорошо́ хороши́ (is, are) ‘good’

Similarly **бóлен** ‘ill’, **горя́ч** ‘hot’, **лёгок** ‘light, easy’, **пóлон** ‘full’, **смешо́н** ‘funny’, **тяжё́л** ‘heavy’, **умён** ‘clever’.

Note

Some adjectives of this type (e.g. свеж ‘fresh’) have alternative end or stem stress in the plural (**свежи́/све́жи**); others (e.g. ширóк ‘wide’) have alternative end or stem stress in the neuter *and* plural (**широ́ко** or **широкó**, **широкí/широ́ки**).

(ii) End stress in the feminine:

жив жива́ живо́ живы́ (is, are) ‘alive’

Similarly **цел** ‘whole’ and, with alternative *end* stress in the plural, **блédен** ‘pale’, **гóлоден** ‘hungry’, **мил** ‘dear’, **слы́шен** ‘audible’, **стро́г** ‘strict’.

(iii) End stress in the feminine and plural:

виден видна́ видно́ видны́ (is, are) ‘visible’

Similarly **силён/си́лен** ‘strong’.

165 Divergence in stress between masculine, neuter and plural long and short forms

(1) A handful of adjectives switch from medial or end stress in the long form to initial stress in the masculine, neuter and plural short forms, with end stress in the feminine: весёлый ‘merry’, **вёсел**, **веселá**, **вёсело**, **вёселы**; голодный ‘hungry’, **гóлоден**, **голодна́**, **гóлодно**, **гóлодны/голодны́**; дешёвый ‘cheap’, **дёшев**, **дешевá**, **дёшево**, **дёшевы**; дорогой ‘dear’, **дóрог**, **дорогá**, **дóрого**, **дóроги**; короткий ‘short’, **кóроток**, **короткá**, **кóротко**, **кóротки/короткí**; молодой ‘young’, **мóлод**, **молодá**, **мóлодо**, **мóлоды**.

(2) Счастливый ‘happy’ has initial stress in all short forms: **сча́стлив**, **сча́стлива**, **сча́стливо**, **сча́стливы**.

166 The short form: usage. Introductory comments

(1) Both long and short forms may be used predicatively (see 156).

(2) However, there is usually a distinction in meaning, the long form denoting inherent permanent characteristics (Он **злой** ‘He is wicked’) and the short form relating to temporary states (Он **голоден** ‘He is hungry’) or to specific contexts or circumstances (Он **прав** ‘He is right’ (i.e. about a particular matter)).

(3) Usage depends to a considerable extent on the capacity or incapacity of a particular adjective to denote both permanent and temporary states. Thus, Он **больной** ‘He is (chronically) sick’ may be contrasted with Он **блен** ‘He is (temporarily) ill’. In adjectives, however, where no such distinction is possible, long and short forms are virtually synonymous: Он **умный**/Он **умен** ‘He is clever’.

(4) The difference between the two forms of the adjective may be stylistic, the short form reflecting a more ‘bookish’ style:

Психология личности **очень сложна́**

The psychology of the personality is very complex

and the long form being the ‘colloquial’ variant:

Психология личности **очень сло́жная**

167 Use of the short form to denote temporary state

While the long form implies *complete identification* of the quality expressed by the adjective with the person or thing it qualifies, the short form indicates a temporary state or condition, cf.

Река́ **бу́рная**

The river is a turbulent one (an inherent characteristic)

and

Сего́дня река́ **споко́йна**

Today the river is calm (the short form denoting a temporary state)

Similarly Он **очень весёлый, бо́дрый** ‘He is very jolly, cheerful’ (i.e. by nature), but Ты **был бодр и весел** и шутил всю доро́гу (Koluntsev) ‘You were cheerful and jolly and joked the whole way’, where the short forms refer to a person’s mood *on a particular occasion*.

168 Short forms: pairs of opposites

Many short forms comprise pairs of opposites and describe alternative states: hungry/full, healthy/ill etc.:

- (1) **гóлоден, голоднá, гóлодно, голоднýй/гóлодны** (is, are) hungry
сыт, сытá, сыто, сыты (is, are) full, replete
- (2) **здорóв, здорóва, здорóво, здорóвы** (is, are) healthy
бóлен, больнá, больно́, больны́ (is, are) sick

Note

- (a) Unlike **здорóв** and **бóлен**, which denote *temporary* states, **Он здорóвый** ‘He has a strong constitution’ denotes an *inherent* characteristic and **Он больно́й** ‘He is chronically sick, an invalid’ denotes a chronic state.
- (b) The colloquial forms **здорóв, здорóва, здорóво, здорóвы** mean ‘strong, good at’: **Ему́ удалóсь наконец вы́толкнуть её. — Ну, здорóва!** (Shukshin) ‘He finally managed to shove her out. “Gosh, she’s strong!”’
- (3) **счáстлив, счáстлива, счáстливо, счáстливы** (is, are) happy
несчáстен, несчáстна, несчáстно, несчáстны (is, are) unhappy
- (4) **жив, живá, живо́, живы́** (is, are) alive
ме́ртв, мертвá, ме́ртво, ме́ртвы (is, are) dead

Note

Он **живо́й** means ‘he is lively’ (an *inherent* characteristic).

- (5) **прав, правá, прáво, прáвы** (is, are) right
непра́в, неправá, неправó, неправы́ (is, are) wrong

Compare **Нáше де́ло прáвое** ‘Our cause is just’.

Note

Она́ **хорóшая** ‘She is good’ but Она́ **хорóшá (собóй/собóю)** ‘She is good-looking’; Он — **плохо́й** ‘He is bad’ but Он **плох** (здорóвьем) ‘He is poorly’.

169 Adjectives of dimension

The short form of an adjective of dimension relates the dimension to a particular set of circumstances, while the long form completely identifies the dimension with the noun it qualifies, cf.

- (a) Э́та ко́мната **большáя**
 This room is big/a big one

(b) Эта ко́мната **велика́**
This room is **too** big (i.e. for a particular purpose)

Э́тот пиджа́к **широ́к**
This jacket is too big (for a particular person)

Пла́тье ей **мало́**
The dress is too small for her

Compare Ю́бка **дли́нна** ‘The skirt is too long’, Рукава́ **коро́ткí** ‘The sleeves are too short’, Дверь **низка́** ‘The door is too low’, Костю́м **свобо́ден** ‘The suit is too loose-fitting’, Сапоги́ **тесны́** ‘The boots are too tight’, Брю́ки **узкí** ‘The trousers are too tight’, Но́ша **тяжелá** для ребёнка ‘The burden is too heavy for the child’ (cf. Но́ша **тяжёлая́** ‘The burden is a heavy one’).

Note

- (a) The idea of excess may be reinforced by the adverb **сли́шком** ‘too’:
Не **сли́шком** ли вы **моло́ды** для нас? (Rubina) ‘Don’t you think you are too young for us?’
- (b) The short form of adjectives of dimension can also be used *without* a relative nuance: **Широ́к** круг интере́сов у на́ших чита́телей (*Yunyi naturalist*) ‘Our readers’ range of interests **is broad**’.

170 Delimitation of meaning by the oblique case of a noun or pronoun

(1) When the meaning of a predicative adjective is ‘delimited’ by the oblique case of a noun or pronoun, the short form must be used. Compare

Како́е имее́т значе́ние, **симпати́чен** он **ей** и́ли нет? (Koluntsev)
What does it matter if she likes him or not?

where the quality denoted by **симпати́чен** is valid only for *her* (**ей**), with

Он о́чень **симпати́чный**
He is very good-looking/attractive

where the *long* form denotes an inherent trait.

(2) The short form can be ‘delimited’ by any of the oblique cases.

(i) Genitive:

Автóбус пóлон **на́рoду**
The bus is full **of people**

Note

Он пóлный means ‘He is over-weight’.

(ii) Dative:

Я **вам** благодарен
I am grateful **to you**

(iii) Instrumental:

Я дово́лен **ва́ми**
I am pleased **with you**

Э́тот край бога́т **не́фтью** и **пуши́ной** (*Sputnik*)
This territory is rich **in oil and furs**

171 Delimitation by a prepositional phrase

(1) The short form is also used when the quality expressed by the adjective is delimited by a **prepositional phrase**. Thus, while either long or short form may be used in

Лéкция была́ **интерéсная/интерéсна**
The lecture was interesting

the short form *must* be used in

Лéкция была́ интересна **по фóрме**
The lecture was interesting in form

since the adjective is ‘delimited’ by the phrase **по фóрме**. Compare:

Мы **безору́жны** перед мо́щью совреме́нной ра́диоаппарату́ры
(*Izvestiya*)
We are powerless in the face of the might of modern radio technology

Ра́ньше она́ была́ **равноду́шна** к лы́жам (Koluntsev)
She used to be indifferent to skiing

(2) Common prepositional phrases include **глух на** (ле́вое у́хо) ‘deaf in’ (the left ear), **гото́в к** ‘ready for’, **гото́в на** + acc. ‘ready for’ (in the meaning ‘desperate’), **до́бр к** ‘kind to’, **знако́м с** + instr. ‘familiar with’, **похо́ж на** + acc. ‘similar to’, **се́рдит на** + acc. ‘angry with’,

силён в (матемáтике) ‘good at’ (mathematics), **склóнен к** ‘inclined to’, **слеп на** (пráвый глаз) ‘blind in’ (the right eye), **согласен на** (услóвия) ‘agreeing to’ (conditions), **согласен с** ‘in agreement with’, **способен к** ‘good at’, **способен на** (обмáн) ‘capable of’ (deception), **характéрен для** ‘characteristic of’, **хром на** (пráвую нóгу) ‘lame in’ (the right leg).

Note

Used predicatively, the long forms of some of these adjectives denote inherent characteristics: Она **дóбрая** ‘She is kind’, Он **сильный** ‘He is strong’, Он **способный** ‘He is a capable person’.

172 Delimitation by a subordinate clause or an infinitive

The short form predicative is also used when the adjective is delimited:

(1) By a subordinate clause:

Я **сча́стлив**, что вас встречаю
I am happy to meet you

(2) By an infinitive, either:

(i) *with* **чтобы**

Он достáточно **умён, чтобы понять**, где раскáяние, а где игра
(Koluntsev)
He is intelligent enough to understand where remorse ends and
playacting begins

or:

(ii) *without* **чтобы**

— Ты не **способен понять**, чегó мне сто́ило прийти сюда
(Koluntsev)
‘You are incapable of understanding what it has cost me to come
here’

173 The short form as predicate to infinitives, verbal nouns and nouns with certain qualifiers

The short form is also used as predicate to the following.

(1) Infinitives and verbal nouns:

Пить/Употребление наркóтиков **вредно**
 Drinking/Use of drugs is **harmful**

(2) Nouns qualified by **всякий/каждый** ‘each, every’, **какой?** ‘what kind of?’, **любой** ‘any’, **такой** ‘such’ etc. (including the short form):

Любой совет **полéзен**
 Any advice is useful

Такого рóда комплименты **бесмысленны**
 Compliments of that kind are meaningless

Пáмьятъ о национальных трагéдиях так же **священна**, как пáмьятъ о побéдах (D. Medvedev)
 Memory of national tragedies is just as sacred as memory of victories

174 The short form in generalized statements

The short form appears in many generalized sayings, proverbs etc.:

Жизнь трудна́	Life is hard
Любóвь слепá	Love is blind
Мир тéсен!	It's a small world!

175 Position of the short form of the adjective

The short form of the adjective normally follows the noun:

Все великие истины **просты́** All great truths are simple

but may, for greater emphasis, precede it (see **484** (1) (i)):

Извéстна завéсимость доро́жных происше́ствий от вóзраста шофёра
 The connection between road accidents and the age of the driver **is well known**

The Comparative Degree of the Adjective

176 The comparative degree. Introductory comments

Most English adjectives have either

a comparative in -er (e.g. ‘harder’)

or

a comparative with ‘more’ (e.g. ‘more comfortable’).

By contrast, most Russian adjectives have two comparatives, each with a specific function.

177 The attributive comparative with **более**

(1) The attributive form of almost all comparatives comprises **более** + long adjective, e.g. **более красивый** дом ‘a more beautiful house’.

(2) **Более** is *invariable*, while the adjective agrees with the noun it qualifies:

(i) In gender and number:

более	красивый	дом	a more beautiful house
более	красивая	девушка	a more beautiful girl
более	красивое	дерево	a more beautiful tree
более	красивые	дети	more beautiful children

(ii) In case:

Нет **более красивого** сада
There is no more beautiful garden

Он подошёл к **более красивой** девушке
He went up to the more beautiful girl

(3) Comparatives with **более** may also be used predicatively:

Первичные парторганизации стали **более крупными** (*Pravda*)
The primary party organizations became larger

However, predicative forms in **-ее** or **-е** should be regarded as the norm (see 179–181).

(4) **Менее** ‘less’ is used to form a ‘reverse’ comparative:

Это **менее красивый** дом This is a less beautiful house

178 One-word attributive comparatives

Six adjectives have attributive comparatives consisting of one word:

хороший ‘good’	лучший ‘better’
плохой ‘bad’	худший ‘worse’

ста́рый ‘old’	ста́рший ‘older, senior’
молодо́й ‘young’	мла́дший ‘younger, junior’
большо́й ‘big’	бóльший ‘bigger’
ма́ленький ‘small’	ме́ньший ‘smaller’

Note

- (a) Ста́рший and мла́дший are used only with animate nouns and collectives, and usually imply seniority and juniority: **мла́дший/ста́рший** сын ‘younger/elder son’, **мла́дший/ста́рший** класс ‘junior/senior class’, **мла́дший/ста́рший** лейтенант ‘junior/senior lieutenant’ etc. The context may be amplified to resolve possible ambiguity: ста́рший **по во́зрасту/по служе́бному положению́** ‘older **in years/senior in rank**’, мла́дший **по во́зрасту/по до́лжности** ‘younger **in years/junior in position**’. For inanimate nouns, **бо́лее ста́рый** is used:

На эстра́де стоя́ло ста́рое пиани́но и лежа́ла ещё **бо́лее ста́рая** шта́нга (Kuleshov)

On the stage were an old piano and an even older lifting weight

- (b) **Мла́дший** and **ста́рший** can also mean ‘youngest’ and ‘eldest’, **ду́чный** and **ху́дший** ‘best’ and ‘worst’ (see **185** (3) notes (a) and (b)).
- (c) Some forms of **большо́й** ‘big’ and **бóльший** ‘bigger’ are distinguished only by stress: **больша́я** часть ‘a large part’, **бо́льшая** часть ‘the greater part’ etc.

179 Predicative comparative forms in -ee

- (1) The predicative comparative of most adjectives is formed by adding the ending **-ee** to the stem of the adjective:

краси́в-ее	(is, are) more beautiful
удобн-ее	(is, are) more comfortable

- (2) Comparatives in **-ee** are invariable, that is, they are used as predicates to nouns of any gender and either number:

сад краси́вее	the garden is more beautiful
карти́на краси́вее	the picture is more beautiful
де́рево краси́вее	the tree is more beautiful

цвѣты **красѣвее** the flowers are more beautiful

(3) Adjectives which have end-stressed **-á** in the feminine short form have end stress **-ѣе** in the comparative (see **164** (2)):

новѣе (is, are) newer
сложнѣе (is, are) more complex
тяжелѣе (is, are) heavier

Note

Здоровѣе, (is, are) 'healthier', despite feminine short form здоро́ва.

(4) An alternative comparative form in **-ей** is confined mainly to conversational styles, verse and the more casual prose styles:

Клубы дѣлают жизнь своих членов **полѣзней** (*Sputnik*)
The clubs make the lives of their members more useful

(5) The following types of adjective either have *no* comparative short forms or have forms which are very rarely used:

(i) Adjectives which denote concepts which cannot be manifested to a greater or lesser degree, e.g. **босой** 'barefoot', **братский** 'fraternal', **деревянный** 'wooden'.

(ii) Adjectives of colour.

(iii) Some others, e.g. **внѣшний** 'external', **гордый** 'proud'.

(6) Some adjectives with no short-form comparative (e.g. **драматический** 'dramatic') have synonyms which *do* have short forms (**драматичнее** 'is, are more dramatic', from драматичный).

(7) If an adjective *does* have a short-form comparative, the use of its long form in predicative meaning is regarded as 'bookish' (Эта книга **болѣе полезная** 'The book is more useful' (**полѣзнее** is the preferred form)) and may distinguish high style (Показатели **болѣе высѣкие** 'Indices are higher') from neutral style (Дом **выше** 'The house is taller'. See **180**(1)).

180 Comparative short forms in -e

(1) The final consonants of some adjectives undergo mutation in the comparative short form (note, however, that in some adjectives with

suffix **-к-** it is the *preceding* consonant that mutates, e.g. гла́дкий: гла́же). The resultant comparatives end in a single unstressed **-е**:

В : ВЛ дешёвый cheap дешёвле (is, are) cheaper

(However, но́вый ‘new’, comparative **новее** (is, are) ‘newer’.)

Г : Ж доро́гий dear доро́же (is, are) dearer
 стрóгий strict стрóже (is, are) stricter
 тугóй tight туже́ (is, are) tighter

Д : Ж гла́дкий smooth гла́же (is, are) smoother
 молодóй young моло́же (is, are) younger
 ре́дкий rare ре́же (is, are) rarer
 твёрдый hard твёрже́ (is, are) harder

(However, худóй ‘thin’, comparative **худее** ‘is, are thinner’.)

Note

‘Is, are younger’ is also rendered as **младше**, mainly in a family context: cf. Она́ **младше/моло́же** сестры́ ‘She is younger than her sister’ and Она́ **моло́же** начальника ‘She is younger than the boss’.

З : Ж бли́зкий near бли́же (is, are) nearer
 низкий low ни́же (is, are) lower
 узкий narrow у́же (is, are) narrower

К : Ч грóмкий loud грóмче (is, are) louder
 жа́ркий hot жа́рче (is, are) hotter
 кре́пкий strong кре́пче (is, are) stronger
 лёгкий light, easy лёгче́ (is, are) lighter, easier
 ме́лкий shallow ме́льче (is, are) shallower
 мя́гкий soft мя́гче (is, are) softer
 ре́зкий sharp ре́зче (is, are) sharper

С : Ш вы́сокий high вы́ше (is, are) higher

СК : Щ плóский flat плóще (is, are) flatter

СТ : Щ густóй thick гуще́ (is, are) thicker
 простóй simple прóще (is, are) simpler
 то́лстый thick то́льче (is, are) thicker
 ча́стый frequent ча́ще (is, are) more frequent
 чи́стый clean чи́ще (is, are) cleaner

т : ч	богáтый	rich	богáче	(is, are) richer
	корóткий	short	корóче	(is, are) shorter
	крутóй	steep	кру́че	(is, are) steeper

(However, святóй ‘holy’, comparative **святée** ‘is, are holier’.)

х : ш	сухóй	dry	су́ше	(is, are) drier
	тихий	quiet	ти́ше	(is, are) quieter

Note

(a) Though горький ‘bitter’ has the short-form comparative **горче**, **бóлее горький** (is, are) ‘more bitter’ is normally used in both attributive and predicative meanings.

(b) Adjectives which have no short-form comparative or a little-used comparative also form the predicate with **бóлее** : **вётхий** ‘ancient’, **гóрдый** ‘proud’, **зыбкий** ‘shaky’, **ли́пкий** ‘sticky’, **ста́рый** ‘old’ (of objects) etc.

(2) Irregular short forms include a number which end in **-ше**:

большóй	big	бóльше	(is, are) bigger
дóлгий	long	дóльше	(is, are) longer
мáленький	small	мéньше	(is, are) smaller
ста́рый	old	ста́рше	(is, are) older
то́нкий	thin	то́ньше	(is, are) thinner
хорóший	good	лу́чше	(is, are) better

Объём товарного хлеба был на 40% **бóльше**

The volume of marketable grain was 40 per cent greater

Note

Дáльше ‘further’ and **ра́ньше** ‘earlier’ are used only as adverbs.

(3) Other irregular short forms end in **-же**, **-ще**, **-е**:

глубóкий	deep	глуб́же	(is, are) deeper
плохóй	bad	ху́же	(is, are) worse
пóздний	late	пóзже	(is, are) later (also позднее)
сла́дкий	sweet	сла́ще	(is, are) sweeter
широ́кий	wide	ши́ре	(is, are) wider

Note

Unlike **позднее**, **пóзже** (here used as an adverb) also has an absolute meaning: Оперáцию ребята провели́ то́чно — ска́жет **пóзже** гла́вный геóлог (*Komsomolskaya pravda*) ‘“The lads carried out the

operation precisely”, the chief geologist was to say later’ (i.e. afterwards).

181 The short-form comparative in predicative meaning

The short-form comparative’s main function is predicative:

Его́ го́лос **гро́мче**
His voice **is louder**

Моя́ маши́на была́ **нове́е**
My car **was newer**

Её́ воспомина́ния бу́дут **интересе́нее**
Her reminiscences **will be more interesting**

Живы́е цветы́ ста́ли ещё́ **свеже́е**
The live flowers **became fresher** still

182 Constructions with the comparative

(1) Than

‘Than’ is rendered in one of the following ways:

(i) By **чем**, preceded by a comma. Both items for comparison must be in the same case:

Я **вы́ше, чем** он
I am taller than he is

У меня́ бо́лее све́тлые глаза́, **чем** у вас
I have lighter eyes than you do

or:

(ii) By the genitive of comparison. This construction is possible only when the first item for comparison is in the *nominative* case:

Я **вы́ше его́**
I am taller than he is

Я **ста́рше своёй** сестры́
I am older than my sister

Note

Only the **чем** construction is possible with attributive adjectives:

Это бо́лее краси́вый дом, **чем** наш
This is a more attractive house than ours

and when the second item for comparison has the form of a third-person possessive pronoun (его́, её, их)

Мой дом краси́вее, **чем** его́
My house is more beautiful than his

(2) Quantification of a difference

A difference is quantified in one of the following ways:

(i) By the preposition **на** + accusative case:

Он ста́рше меня́ **на три го́да**
He is three years older than me

(ii) (Less usually) with an instrumental:

Он **тремя́ годáми** ста́рше меня́
He is three years older than me

(3) Expression of comparison through a multiple

Comparison may also be expressed through a multiple (constructions with **в** + accusative):

Он **в два ра́за (вдво́е)** ста́рше меня́
He is twice as old as I am

(4) The ‘gradational’ comparative

Constructions of the type ‘the bigger the better’ are rendered by **чем . . . , тем:**

Чем бо́льше, **тем** лу́чше
The bigger the better

Note

Тем лу́чше ‘So much the better’.

(5) The expression of ‘much’ + comparative

‘Much’ in combination with a comparative is expressed by **намного**, **гораздо**, **куда** or **много**:

Его работа **намного** лучше/**гораздо** лучше, чем моя
His work is much better than mine

(6) As . . . as possible

‘As . . . as possible’ is rendered by **как можно** + comparative:

Купи бутылку **как можно более дешёвого** вина
Buy a bottle of the cheapest wine you can get

Note

This construction, however, is commoner with *adverbs* than with adjectives, in combination with which it can sound somewhat stilted (cf. also use of the *short* form in: Купи вина **подешевле** ‘Buy some cheaper wine’. See **183** (2).

(7) Repeated comparatives (e.g. ‘smaller and smaller’)

Repeated comparatives normally combine with **всё**:

Всё ближе и ближе роковой момент (Makarov)
The fateful moment gets nearer and nearer

Note

Unlike English, Russian may omit the second comparative: **всё ближе** ‘nearer and nearer’. However, the repetition of the comparative lends greater expressiveness. Cf. **всё большее** (и **большее**) **признание** ‘greater and greater recognition’.

183 The short-form comparative in attributive meaning

(1) In colloquial registers the short-form comparative is sometimes used attributively:

У тебя нет человека **ближе** (Aksenov)
There is no person closer to you

(2) This is particularly common with short forms prefixed **по-**:

Покажите платье **подешевле**
Show me a slightly cheaper dress

184 Other functions of the short-form comparative

(1) Short-form comparatives can function as introductory words:

Интереснее говорить, чем слушать
It is more interesting to speak than to listen

(2) Many short-form comparatives also function as adverbs (see 398):

Он едет **быстрее** He is driving faster
Она работает **больше** She works harder

Вожак всё **ниже и ниже** опускал голову к земле (Astafev)
The leader of the herd hung his head lower and lower to the ground

Note

In such cases the distinction between comparative adjective and comparative adverb is syntactic only, cf.: Эта книга **интереснее**, чем та ‘This book is **more interesting** (adjective) than that one’ and Эта книга написана **интереснее**, чем та ‘This book is written **in a more interesting way** (adverb) than that one’.

(3) Short-form comparatives are also used impersonally: **ветренее** ‘it is windier’, **прохладнее** ‘it is cooler’, **светлее** ‘it is lighter’, **темнее** ‘it is darker’, **теплее** ‘it is warmer’, **холоднее** ‘it is colder’.

Note

Adverbs of the type **более внимательно** ‘more attentively’ (for standard **внимательнее**) are rarely used.

The Superlative Degree of the Adjective

185 The superlative degree with **самый**

(1) The superlative degree is formed by combining **самый** with the positive adjective:

самый красивый дом	the most beautiful house
самая красивая машина	the most beautiful car
самое красивое здание	the most beautiful building
самые красивые дети	the most beautiful children

(2) **Сáмый** agrees with the adjective and noun in gender, number and case:

Он провёл пять лет в однём из **сáмых красíвых европéйских** городóв

He spent five years in one of the most beautiful European cities

Она живёт в **сáмом большóм** дóме на нáшей улице

She lives in the largest house in our street

(3) **Сáмый** also combines with the comparatives **лúчий** and **хúдший**:

сáмые лúчие пожелáния

the very best wishes

сáмое хúдшее, что мóжно себé предстáвить

the worst thing one can imagine

Note

(a) **Лúчий** and **хúдший** (see 178 note (b)) also function as superlatives in their own right: **лúчаяя** из жéнщин ‘the best of women’; в **хúдшем** слúчае ‘in the worst case, if the worst comes to the worst’.

(b) **Стáрший** and **млáдший** may also function as comparatives or superlatives: **стáрший** брат ‘elder/eldest brother’, **млáдшая** сестра ‘younger/youngest sister’. Outside the family or other hierarchy, however, ‘youngest’ and ‘oldest’ are rendered as **сáмый стáрый**, **сáмый млóдой**:

Мáслоз — кстáти, **сáмый млóдой** из полковóых нáчáльников (Вогomolov)

Maslov, incidentally, is the youngest of the regimental commanders (cf. **сáмый млáдший** ‘the most **junior**’)

(c) The phrases **сáмое бóльшее** ‘at most’, **сáмое мéньшее** ‘at the very least’: **сáмое бóльшее** 30 человек ‘30 people at most’.

(4) Superlatives with **сáмый** may also express an extreme manifestation of the quality denoted by the adjective:

Сáмые ширóкие круги учёных

The very widest circles of scientists

186 **Вы́сший and н́зший**

Вы́сший and **н́зший** are used mainly in technical and set expressions: **вы́сший/н́зший балл** ‘top/bottom mark’, **вы́сший/н́зший сорт** ‘superior/inferior brand’, **вы́сшая матемáтика** ‘higher mathematics’, **вы́сшее учёбное заведе́ние** ‘higher teaching establishment’, **в вы́сшей стéпени** ‘to the highest degree’.

Note

‘Highest’ and ‘lowest’ in the literal sense are rendered as **са́мый вы́сокий/н́зкий: са́мый вы́сокий/н́зкий** потоло́к ‘the highest/lowest ceiling’.

187 The superlative in **-ейший** and **-айший**

(1) Superlatives in **-ейший** are formed from a limited range of adjectives, mainly with monosyllabic roots: **важне́йший** ‘most important’, **крупне́йший** ‘largest, very large’, **мале́йший** ‘slightest’, **нове́йший** ‘latest, most recent’, **си́льнее́йший** ‘strongest’, **сложне́йший** ‘most complex’:

Нет ни **мале́йшего** сомне́ния
There is not the slightest doubt

Нове́йшие дости́жения нау́ки
The latest achievements of science

Чисте́йший вздор
The most arrant nonsense

(2) However, a number of superlatives derive from roots of more than one syllable: **вы́годнее́йший** ‘most favourable’, **интересе́нейший** ‘most interesting’ etc.

(3) The ending **-айший** is affixed to stems ending in a velar consonant, following mutation of **г** to **ж** (**строжа́йший** from **стро́гий** ‘strict’, **дража́йший** from **дорого́й** ‘dear’), **к** to **ч** (**высоча́йший** from **высо́кий** ‘high’, **кратча́йший** from **кратко́й** ‘short’, **легча́йший** from **лёгкий** ‘light’, **мельча́йший** from **ме́лкий** ‘small’, **редча́йший** from **ре́дкий** ‘rare’) and **х** to **ш** (**тиша́йший** from **тихо́й** ‘quiet’). Note also **ближа́йший** ‘nearest’ from **близко́й** ‘near’.

(4) Most superlatives in **-ейший** and **-айший** express an extreme manifestation of the quality denoted by the adjective:

Вернейшее средство
A **most reliable** remedy

С помощью лазеров проводятся **тончайшие** операции (*Russia Today*)
The **most delicate** of operations are carried out with the help of lasers

Распад Советского Союза было **крупнейшей** геополитической катастрофой 20-ого века (V. Putin)
The collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the 20th century

(5) However, forms in **-ейший** and **-айший** may also be true superlatives:

Ближайшая остановка
The nearest stop

Величайший поэт
The greatest poet (or ‘A very great poet’)

Кратчайшее расстояние
The shortest distance

Note

Дальнейший ‘further’ has comparative, not superlative, meaning.

(6) Forms in **-ейший/-айший** are often characteristic of high style: cf. **глубочайшие** мысли ‘the most profound thoughts’ and **самые глубокие** скважины ‘the deepest bore-holes’ (neutral style).

188 The superlative with **наиболее**

The superlative with **наиболее** is characteristic of a ‘bookish’ style. **Наиболее** is indeclinable and combines mainly with adjectives with roots of more than one syllable (**наиболее вероятный** исход ‘the most likely outcome’, **наиболее влиятельный** человек ‘the most influential person’, **наиболее желательный** результат ‘the most desirable result’) and with a number of adjectives with monosyllabic roots (**наиболее точный** ‘the most accurate’ etc.).

Note also **наименее** ‘the least’: **наименее точный** метод ‘the least accurate method’.

189 Other superlatives

(1) Other superlatives include **наибольший** ‘the greatest’, **наивысший** ‘the highest’, **наилучший** ‘the very best’, **наименьший**

'the smallest'. These forms are characteristic of newspaper style: **наибóльшая** вьгода 'the greatest benefit', **наилúчшее** решéние 'the best solution', **наимéньший** риск 'the smallest risk'.

(2) The prefix пре- is used to form colloquial superlatives of the type **преспокóйный** 'as cool as a cucumber'.

The Numeral

Cardinal, Collective and Indefinite Numerals

190 The cardinal numeral

The cardinal numerals are as follows:

0	ноль/нуль		
1	о́дин, одна́, о́дно; о́дни	50	пятьдеся́т
2	два/две	60	шестьдеся́т
3	три	70	се́мьдеся́т
4	четы́ре	80	во́семьдеся́т
5	пять	90	девяно́сто
6	шесть	100	сто
7	семь	200	двэ́сти
8	во́семь	300	три́ста
9	де́вять	400	четы́реста
10	де́сять	500	пятьсо́т
11	о́днна́дцать	600	шестьсо́т
12	двена́дцать	700	семьсо́т
13	трина́дцать	800	восемьсо́т
14	четы́рна́дцать	900	девяты́со́т
15	пяти́на́дцать	1,000	ты́сяча
16	шести́на́дцать	2,000	две ты́сячи
17	се́мна́дцать	5,000	пять ты́сяч
18	восемна́дцать	1,000,000	миллио́н
19	девяты́на́дцать	2,000,000	два миллио́на

20	два́дцать	5,000,000	пять миллио́нов
30	три́дцать	1,000,000,000	миллиа́рд/биллио́н
40	со́рок	1,000,000,000,000	триллио́н

Note

- (a) Each of the numerals 5–20 and 30 ends in a soft sign. The construction of the numerals 11–19 is based on the model **оди́н-на-дцать** ‘eleven’ (lit. one-on-ten) etc., that of 20 and 30 on the model **два́-дцать** and **три́-дцать** (lit. two tens and three tens), **-дцать** being a contraction of **деся́ть** ‘ten’. Of the numerals 11–19, only **оди́ннадцать** ‘eleven’ and **четы́рнадцать** ‘fourteen’ are *not* stressed on the penultimate **a**.
- (b) **Пятьдеся́т** and **шестьдеся́т** have end stress, **се́мьдесят** and **во́семьдесят** initial stress. All four numerals have a soft sign in the middle, but not at the end.
- (c) 300–900 subdivide formally into **три́ста** ‘three hundred’, **четы́реста** ‘four hundred’ (**три**, **четы́ре** + gen. sing. of **сто**) and **пятьсо́т** ‘five hundred’ through to **девятьсо́т** ‘nine hundred’ (**пять** etc. + gen. pl. of **сто**). The form **двэ́сти** ‘two hundred’ is a residue of the dual number.
- (d) Compound numerals are formed by placing simple numerals in sequence: **два́дцать четы́ре** ‘twenty-four’, **шестьсо́т пятьдеся́т два** ‘six hundred and fifty-two’, **со́рок четы́ре ты́сячи се́мьсо́т девяно́сто оди́н** ‘forty-four thousand seven hundred and ninety-one’ etc.
- (e) The inversion of numeral and dependent noun indicates approximation: **лет пять** ‘about five years’. Prepositions are placed between inverted noun and numeral: **лет че́рез пять** ‘in about five years’ time’.

191 Declension of cardinal numerals

The cardinal numerals decline as follows.

- (1) Но́ль/ну́ль ‘nought, zero, nil’

Но́ль/ну́ль declines like a masculine soft-sign noun with end stress in declension (see 57 (2) (ii)).

- (2) Оди́н/одна́/одно́/одни́ ‘one’

Одѣн/одна́/одно́/однѣ decline like ѣтот but with stressed endings, cf. 125:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nom.	одѣн	одн-а́	одн-о́	одн-ѣ
Acc.	одѣн/одн-огó	одн-ѣ́	одн-о́	одн-ѣ́/одн-ѣх
Gen.	одн-огó	одн-о́ѣ	одн-огó	одн-ѣх
Dat.	одн-омѣ́	одн-о́ѣ	одн-омѣ́	одн-ѣм
Instr.	одн-ѣ́м	одн-о́ѣ/-о́ю	одн-ѣ́м	одн-ѣ́ми
Prep.	об одн-о́м	об одн-о́ѣ	об одн-о́м	об одн-ѣх

(3) Полтора́ (m. and n.)/полторы́ (f.) ‘one and a half’

There is only one oblique case form: **полу́тора**, the genitive, dative, instrumental and prepositional of полтора́ *and* полторы́.

(4) Два (m. and n.)/две (f.) ‘two’, три ‘three’, четы́ре ‘four’

Nom.	дв-а/дв-е	тр-и	четы́ре
Acc.	дв-а, дв-е/дв-ух	тр-и/тр-ѣх	четы́ре/четы́р-ѣх
Gen.	дв-ух	тр-ѣх	четы́р-ѣх
Dat.	дв-ум	тр-ѣм	четы́р-ѣм
Instr.	дв-умя́	тр-емя́	четы́р-мя́
Prep.	о дв-ух	о тр-ѣх	о четы́р-ѣх

(5) Оба́ (m. and n.)/обе́ (f.) ‘both’

Nom.	о́б-а	о́б-е
Acc.	о́б-а/обо́-их	о́б-е/обе́-их
Gen.	обо́-их	обе́-их
Dat.	обо́-им	обе́-им
Instr.	обо́-ими	обе́-ими
Prep.	об обо́-их	об обе́-их

Note the phrase де́ти **обо́его** по́ла ‘children of both sexes’.

(6) Пя́ть ‘five’ (declension of numerals ending in a soft sign)

Nom./Acc.	пя́ть	ше́сть	се́мь
Gen./Dat.	пя́т-ѣ́	ше́ст-ѣ́	се́м-ѣ́
Instr.	пя́ть-ѣ́ю	ше́сть-ѣ́ю	се́мь-ѣ́ю
Prep.	о пя́т-ѣ́	о ше́ст-ѣ́	о се́м-ѣ́
Nom./Acc.	во́семь	двѣ́дцать	
Gen./Dat.	во́сьм-ѣ́	двѣ́дцѣт-ѣ́	

Instr.	ВОСЬМЬ-Ю́/ВОСЕМЬ-Ю́	двадцать-Ю́
Prep.	о ВОСЬМ-И́	о двадцат-И́

Note

- (a) 5–20 and 30 decline like soft-sign feminine nouns, 5–10, 20 and 30 with end stress in declension, 11–19 with medial stress in declension.
- (b) Instrumental *восьмью́* is characteristic of colloquial styles, *восемью́* of written styles.

(7) 50–80

Each of the numerals 50–80 declines like *two* feminine soft-sign nouns. The stress in oblique cases falls on the second syllable:

Nom./Acc.	пятьдеся́т	шестьдеся́т
Gen./Dat.	пяти́десят-и	шести́десят-и
Instr.	пяти́юдесять-ю	шести́юдесять-ю
Prep.	о пяти́десят-и	о шести́десят-и
Nom./Acc.	се́мьдесят	во́семьдесят
Gen./Dat.	семи́десят-и	восьми́десят-и
Instr.	семи́юдесять-ю	восьми́юдесять-ю
Prep.	о семи́десят-и	о восьми́десят-и

(8) Сорок ‘forty’, девяно́сто ‘ninety’, сто ‘hundred’

Each of these numerals has one oblique case ending only: *-a*.

Nom./Acc.	со́рок	девяно́ст-о	ст-о
Gen./Dat./Instr.	сорок-а́	девяно́ст-а	ст-а
Prep.	о сорок-а́	о девяно́ст-а	о ст-а

(9) 200–900

Nom.	двѐст-и	три́ст-а	пятьсо́т
Acc.	двѐст-и	три́ст-а	пятьсо́т
Gen.	двухсо́т	трѐхсо́т	пятисо́т
Dat.	двумст-а́м	трѐмст-а́м	пятист-а́м
Instr.	двумя́ст-а́ми	тремя́ст-а́ми	пятью́ст-а́ми
Prep.	о двухст-а́х	о трѐхст-а́х	о пятист-а́х

(10) **Ты́сяча** ‘thousand’, **миллио́н** ‘million’, **миллиа́рд** ‘thousand million’, **биллио́н** ‘billion’, **триллио́н** ‘trillion’.

Ты́сяча ‘thousand’ declines like second-declension *да́ча* ‘country cottage’, **миллио́н**, **миллиа́рд**, **биллио́н** and **триллио́н** like hard-ending masculine nouns of the first declension. However, **ты́сяча** has two forms of the instrumental: **ты́сячью** and **ты́сячей** (see 197 note (a)). The numerals also appear in multiples: *две ты́сячи* ‘two thousand’, *пять ты́сяч* ‘five thousand’, *двэ́сти пятьдеся́т одна́ ты́сяча* ‘251,000’, *четы́ре миллио́на* ‘four million’, *шесты́десят миллио́нов* ‘sixty million’, *два́дцать два миллиа́рда* ‘twenty-two thousand million’ and so on.

For declension of compound numerals see **198**.

192 Ноль/нуль. Meanings and usage

(1) **Ноль/нуль** ‘nought, zero, nil’ governs the genitive case of singular and plural nouns.

(2) The two forms are often stylistically and phraseologically differentiated. Thus:

(i) **Нуль** tends to be used in mathematics, in technical terminology and in indicating temperature:

нуль гра́дусов Це́льсия	zero degrees Celsius (n.b. gen. pl.)
ни́же ну́ля	below zero

(ii) **Ноль** is used:

(a) In colloquial contexts:

Игра́ ко́нчилась со счётом 5:0 (пять:**ноль**)
The game ended 5:0

Её телефо́н: 231-00-45 (двэ́сти три́дцать о́дин **ноль но́ль** со́рок пять)
Her telephone number is 231 00 45

(Also, in colloquial contexts, **ноль гра́дусов** ‘zero degrees’.)

(b) In decimals (see **205** (1)).

(c) In giving precise indications of the time:

шесть **но́ль-но́ль**
six hundred hours (six o’clock precisely)

(iii) Either numeral may be used to indicate the figure 0, though **нуль** is preferred in technical registers.

(iv) **Нуль** is used in the phrases начинать с **нуля́** ‘to start from scratch’ and сводиться к **нулю́** ‘to come to nothing’, **ноль** in **ноль внимания́** ‘no attention whatsoever’. Either is possible in стрижка под **ноль/нуль** ‘a close haircut’.

193 The numeral **один, одна, одно, один**

(1) The numeral 1 agrees with the noun in gender, number and case:

один стол ‘one table’ **одно** окно́ ‘one window’
одна́ карта́ ‘one map’ **один** часы́ ‘one clock’

Он по́днял штáнгу **одной** рукой́
 He lifted the weight with one hand

Note

- (a) The numeral is omitted in some time expressions: час дня́ ‘one o’clock in the afternoon’.
- (b) In counting, **раз** usually replaces **один**: **Раз** . . . два . . . три . . . ‘**One** . . . two . . . three . . .’.
- (c) The animate accusative/genitive rule applies: Вижу́ **одного́** ма́льчика ‘I see one boy’.

(2) The agreement of compound numerals ending in **один, одна, одно** is as follows:

(i) They take a singular noun: со́рок **один стул** ‘forty-one **chairs**’, cf.:

Бы́л день её рождéния, и я принёс **двадцать одну́** свечу́ (Gagarin)
 It was her birthday and I brought twenty-one candles

(ii) They take a singular predicate:

В éтом году́ **быд заде́ржан во́семьдесят один** наруши́тель пра́вил
 пожа́рной безопа́сности в лесу́ (*Russia Today*)
 This year eighty-one people have been arrested for breaches of forest
 fire safety precautions

В про́шлом году́ **поги́б 271 человек** (*Nedelya*)
 271 people died last year

У нас прожéточный мýнимум óчень нýзкий — **2121 рýбль** (V. Putin)
 In Russia the subsistence minimum is very low — 2121 roubles

(iii) Long adjectives and participles also appear in the singular:

Всего у Чосера двадцать **один рассказ, изложенный** простым языком (Propp)

Chaucer has twenty-one tales in all, told in simple language

(iv) However, *relative pronouns* normally appear in the plural:

Двадцать **один мальчик, которые** бежали по улице
Twenty-one boys who were running down the street

(3) The plural form **одни́** is used with plural-only nouns (see 49): **одни́** сánки ‘one sledge’, **одни́** носилки ‘one stretcher’ (also **двадцать одни́** сánки, носилки ‘twenty-one sledges, stretchers’).

Note

Compare also the colloquial **одни́** сли́вки ‘one cream’ (= one portion, packet of cream), heard in shops and buffets.

(4) Other meanings of **один, одна, одно́, одни́** include:

(i) ‘Alone, by oneself: Она́ **одна́** ‘She is all by herself’, Ему́ скучно **одному́** ‘He is bored by himself’.

Note

Compare the use of the nominative in Я был **один** ‘I was alone’ and the use of the instrumental in Я был **одним** из его́ друзе́й ‘I was one of his friends’.

(ii) ‘Only, nothing but’: Я **один (одна́)** зна́ю ‘Only I know/I alone know’:

— Наверное, остров. Тут **одни́** острова́ (Gagarin)
‘It’s probably an island. There are nothing but islands here’

(iii) ‘A’, ‘a certain’, ‘some’: У меня́ есть **один** знако́мый, кото́рый роди́лся в Росси́и ‘I have a friend who was born in Russia’, **Одни́** мои́ знако́мые неда́вно пере́ехали в друго́й го́род ‘Some of my friends recently moved to another town’.

(iv) ‘The same’: Мы учи́лись в **одной** шко́ле We went to the same school’.

(v) **Одни́ . . . други́е . . . трети́** render ‘some . . . others . . . others still’: **Одни́** молча́т, **други́е** красне́ют, **трети́** возмуща́ются ‘Some are silent, others blush, others still get indignant’.

Note

In some cases, potential ambiguity can be resolved only by context: Здесь растёт **одна** ель ‘One fir-tree grows here’ or ‘Only fir-trees grow here’.

See also 143 (2).

194 Полтора́/полторы́; два/две, три, четы́ре; оба/обе

The numerals **полтора́/полторы́; два/две, три, четы́ре; оба/обе** take the genitive singular of the noun, when the numerals themselves are in the nominative or inanimate accusative (for usage after *declined* forms of these numerals, see 196).

(1) **Полтора́** (m. and n.)/**полторы́** (f.) ‘one and a half’:

полтора́ часá	an hour and a half
полторы́ мину́ты	a minute and a half

(i) Other numerals which include a half are expressed as follows: два **с полови́ной** часá ‘two and a half hours’, пять **с полови́ной** часо́в ‘five and a half hours’ etc.

(ii) Полтора́- also appears in the compound numeral **полтора́ста** ‘150’ (oblique case полу́тораста).

(2) **Два** (m. and n.)/**две** (f.) ‘two’, **три** ‘three’, **четы́ре** ‘four’ (nom. and inan. acc.):

два ма́льчика	‘two boys’	три сту́ла	‘three chairs’
два окна́	‘two windows’	четы́ре страны́	‘four countries’
две горы́	‘two mountains’		

(i) **Ряд** ‘row’, **час** ‘hour’, **шаг** ‘step’, **шар** ‘sphere, globe’ have *end* stress in the genitive singular after два, три, четы́ре: два **часá** ‘two o’clock’, два **шара́** ‘two globes’, три **ряда́** ‘three rows’, четы́ре **шага́** ‘four steps’ (cf. *stem* stress with other forms: о́коло **ча́са** ‘about an hour’).

(ii) The accusative plural of the noun is used as an alternative to the genitive singular in certain set expressions: отпусти́ть на все четы́ре **стороны́/сто́роны** ‘to give complete freedom of movement’.

(iii) Nouns governed by the numerals **два/две, три, четы́ре** appear in the genitive *plural* if the noun *precedes* the numeral and is linked to it by a form of the verb ‘to be’ or other copula: **Стака́нов** бы́ло то́лько

два (Rasputin) ‘There were only two glasses’. Compare usage with 1: **Больниц** в городе **две**, а **школ** только **одна** ‘There are two hospitals in the town, and only one school’.

(iv) Compound numerals ending in **два/две, три, четыре** also take the genitive singular of the noun when the numerals themselves are in the nominative or inanimate accusative case:

сорок два дня	forty-two days
пятьдесят две минуты	fifty-two minutes
сто три окна	one hundred and three windows
девяносто четыре человека	ninety-four people

(v) **Два/две, три, четыре** take the *genitive plural* of an adjective qualifying a masculine or neuter noun and the *nominative plural* of an adjective qualifying a feminine noun:

два больших стакана/окна	two large glasses/windows
три бедные девушки	three poor girls

Note

- (a) A *genitive plural* adjective is preferred with a feminine noun after 2–4 when there is a stress difference between the genitive singular and nominative plural of the noun (три **высоких** горы ‘three high mountains’ (cf. nom. pl. **горы**)), when a distributive phrase is governed by the preposition **по** (по три **спелых** груши ‘three ripe pears each’) and in fractions and decimals (see **205** (1)).
- (b) Pre-positive adjectives appear in the *nominative plural*: **каждые** три минуты ‘every three minutes’, **последние** два дня ‘the last two days’. See, however, **157** (3).
- (c) Adjectival nouns behave like adjectives after 2–4: два **учёных** ‘two scientists’, три **гостиные** ‘three living-rooms’, четыре **животных** ‘four animals’. See **158**.

(3) **Оба** (m. and n.)/**обе** (f.) ‘both’:

(i) **оба/обе** behave like **два/две** ‘two’, taking a genitive singular noun and a plural adjective:

оба круглых стола/окна	both round tables/windows
обе круглые тарелки	both round plates

(ii) **оба** may also denote a male-female pair: И стали ои́ оба смотре́ть друг на друга . . . Не выдержала она́ его́ взгляда (Shcherbakov) ‘And

they both began looking at each other, . . . she could not withstand his gaze’.

Note

- (a) Accusative plural стороны is possible as an alternative to genitive singular стороны́ in the phrase в обе стороны/стороны: переводить в обе стороны/стороны ‘to translate both ways’.
- (b) Два ряда ‘two rows’ but оба ряда ‘both rows’.

195 Numerals five and above

The nominative and accusative of the numerals 5–999 take the *genitive plural* of the adjective and noun:

пять месяцев	five months
восемь часов	eight o’clock, eight hours
пятнадцать минут	fifteen minutes
двадцать важных писем	twenty important letters
сорок пять дней	forty-five days
семьдесят школ	seventy schools
сто семь грамм/граммов	one hundred and seven grams
триста просторных комнат	three hundred spacious rooms

Note

- (a) See **193** (2) (i) and **194** (2) (iv) for usage after compound numerals ending in 1–4.
- (b) 5–999 take the genitive plural **человек**, not **людей**: семь **человек** ‘seven people’ (if the noun is qualified by an adjective, however, **людей** is preferred: пять **познакомых людей** (or **лиц** or **человек**) ‘five unknown people’). Cf. also dat. **пяти человекам** ‘to five people’, instr. с **пятью человеками** ‘with five people’, etc.

196 Agreement of oblique cases of numerals полтора́/полторы́ to 999 with oblique plural forms of nouns

(1) Declined numerals from 1½ to 999 combine with nouns and adjectives in the same case of the *plural*:

(i) Genitive

около **полúтора часóв** about an hour and a half
 бóльше **трёх дней** more than three days

В течéние **двух–трёх мéсяцев** пóсле éтого Лúжина звáли Антóшей (Nabokov)
 For two or three months after this they called Luzhin Antosha

(ii) Dative

Она́ учит **трём языкáм**
 She teaches three languages

Он обратíлся к **четырёхстáм нóвым избирáтелям**
 He addressed four hundred new voters

(iii) Instrumental

Кудá она́ моглá дéться с **четырьмя детьмí?** (Rybakov)
 Where could she have got to with four children?

Он обеща́л ограни́читься **десятью сигарéтами** в день (Avdeenko)
 He promised to limit himself to ten cigarettes a day

(iv) Prepositional

В **двух шагáх** от кáмня сто́ял человек (Gagarin)
 At two paces from the stone stood a man

в **пятидесяти южных городáх**
 in fifty southern towns

(2) The **animate accusative/genitive rule** (see 47) applies to the numerals 2–4 and to ‘both’, the numeral appearing in the genitive (**двух, трёх, четырёх; обóих/обéих**), adjectives and nouns in the genitive *plural*:

Она́ приня́ла на кúрсы **трёх молодóых студéнтов**
 She accepted three young students on to the course

Она́ пригласíла **четырёх медсестёр**
 She invited four nurses

Она́ лóбит **обóих братьев и обéих сестёр**
 She loves both her brothers and both her sisters

Note

(a) The animate accusative/genitive rule does *not* apply to *compound* numerals ending in **два/две, три** or **четыре**: Она́ приня́ла на

- кўрсы **два́дцать три студэнта** ‘She accepted twenty-three students on to the course’.
- (b) Application of the animate accusative/genitive rule varies where animals, birds, quasi-animates etc. are concerned: Он поймáл **двух пт́ичек** (or **две пт́ички**) ‘He caught two small birds’, Он принёс **двух кўкол** (or **две кўклы**) ‘He brought two dolls’ (cf. alternative accusative forms of существó ‘being’: **двух существ** or **два существá**).
- (c) The animate accusative/genitive rule does *not* apply to the numerals 5–999: я встрéтил **пять/сóрок/сто** морякóв ‘I met five/forty/a hundred sailors’.

197 Т́ысяча ‘thousand’, миллиóн ‘million’, миллиáрд ‘a thousand million’, биллиóн ‘billion’, триллиóн ‘trillion’

Т́ысяча (pronounced т́ыща in colloquial speech), **миллиóн** and **миллиáрд** etc. take the *genitive plural* of the noun, regardless of their own case (see, however, note (a) below):

т́ысяча **рубл́ей**
a thousand roubles

с **трёмя́ т́ысячам** **рубл́ей**
with three thousand roubles

забóтиться о **миллиóнах** **дет́ей**
to care for millions of children

Ассигновáния равня́ются **сем́и миллиáрдам** **дóлларов**
Subsidies amount to seven thousand million dollars

Note

- (a) In its capacity as a noun of quantity, **т́ысяча** has instrumental **т́ысячей** + genitive plural (с т́ысячей **друз́ей** ‘with a thousand friends’), while in its capacity as a numeral it has instrumental **т́ысячью** + instrumental plural: с т́ысячью **рабóчими** ‘with a thousand workers’. **Т́ысячей** is regarded as the more literary form, **т́ысячью** as the more colloquial. While **т́ысячей** is the preferred instrumental in its function as a noun of quantity, **т́ысячью** is making inroads in this area also. In combination with *однóй*, however, **т́ысячей** is always used: с однóй **т́ысячей** солдáт ‘with one thousand soldiers’.
- (b) Т́ысяча, миллиóн, миллиáрд take genitive plural **человéк**: т́ысяча **человéк** ‘a thousand people’. However, **люд́ей** is

preferred when qualified by an adjective (ты́сяча **че́стных** люде́й ‘a thousand honest people’) and with **ты́сячи** ‘thousands’ (ты́сячи люде́й ‘thousands of people’) (emphasizing mass rather than precise quantity).

- (c) **Ты́сяча** may be written in figures as ‘1.000’, ‘1000’, or ‘1 000’ (commas are reserved for decimals, see **205** (1)).
- (d) **Ты́сяча** observes feminine singular agreement: Пя́тьдеся́т о́днá ты́сяча из них **больна́** наркома́нией (*Izvestiya*) ‘Fifty-one thousand of them are addicted to drugs’.

198 Declension of compound numerals

(1) In **written** Russian, all parts of a compound numeral are declined, the noun agreeing with the final element of the compound:

К трёхста́м три́дцати́ шести́ часа́м прибави́ть ещё́ сто́ шестьдеся́т четы́ре (Koluntsev)

Add another one hundred and sixty-four hours **to three hundred and thirty-six**

(2) In colloquial speech, however, it is common to decline either:

(i) the **final elements** of the numeral only:

представи́тели **пятьдеся́т о́днóй** страна́ы
representatives of **fifty-one countries** (cf. written norm **пяти́десяти**
о́днóй страна́ы)

с четы́реста **пятью́десятью́** **двумя́** руба́лями
with four hundred and fifty-two roubles (cf. written norm с
четы́рьмяста́ми . . .)

с ше́стьсо́т се́мьдесят **семью́** иллюстра́циями
with six hundred and seventy-seven illustrations (cf. written norm с
ше́стьюста́ми **семью́десятью́** . . .)

or:

(ii) the **first and final** elements only:

с **пятью́ ты́сячами** **пятьсо́т се́мьдесят** **четы́рьмя́** руба́лями with
five thousand five hundred and seventy-four roubles (cf. written
norm с **пятью́ ты́сячами** **пятью́ста́ми** **семью́десятью́** **четы́рьмя́**
руба́лями)

199 Cardinals as numerical 'labels'

(1) Cardinal numerals are widely used as indeclinable numerical 'labels' in addresses, both with нóмер 'number':

в кварти́ре нóмер **два́дцать семь**
in flat number 27

and without нóмер

Мичу́рина, **два́дцать семь**, кварти́ра **восемна́дцать** (Shukshin)
Flat 18, 27 Michurin Street

Она́ занима́ется у подру́ги в до́ме **четы́рнадцать** (Trifonov)
She is studying at her friend's house at number 14

(2) Cardinal numerals are also used with series of air/spacecraft (Салю́т-4 (**четы́ре**) 'Salyut-4', ТУ-104 (**сто четы́ре**) 'TU-104', ИЛ-62 (**шестьдеся́т два**) 'IL-62'), with the names of major international events, where the cardinal numeral denotes the year of occurrence (Олимпиа́да-88 (**во́семьдесят во́семь**) 'the 1988 Olympics'), with the names of airports (Шереме́тьево-оди́н 'Sheremetovo-1'), flight numbers (рейс **сто три́дцать семь** 'flight number 137'), ticket numbers (**два́дцать четы́ре ты́сячи сто се́мьдесят** (ticket number) '24170') and receipt numbers (**се́мьна́дцать два́дцать пять** '1725'). Telephone numbers are read in one group of three digits and two groups of two: **сто пятьдеся́т во́семь двена́дцать ноль четы́ре** (158-12-04).

Note

In other contexts (e.g. the numbers of trains, carriages, seats) the more colloquial **ordinal** is the norm: **во́сьмо́й** ваго́н 'carriage number 8', три́дцать **пя́тое** ме́сто 'seat number 35', се́мьдесят **второ́й** по́езд 'train number 72'. Compare **два́дцáтый** ряд, се́редина 'row 20, centre', в **пя́той** пала́те 'in ward 5' (rooms are numbered with cardinals or ordinals: **ко́мната пя́тая/пя́ть** 'room 5').

(3) Numerals may be left undeclined in measuring speed: **éхать со ско́ростью три́дцать** км/ч (киломе́тров в час) 'to travel at a speed of thirty kilometres per hour' (or **три́дцáти киломе́тров в час** or **в три́дцать киломе́тров в час**).

200 Collective numerals

(1) The collective numerals:

(i) Constitute a series from 2 to 10: **дво́е** ‘two’, **трё́е** ‘three’, **че́тверо** ‘four’, **пя́теро** ‘five’, **ше́стеро** ‘six’, **се́меро** ‘seven’, **во́сьмеро** ‘eight’, **де́вятеро** ‘nine’, **де́сятеро** ‘ten’. Collectives above **се́меро** ‘seven’ are little used now. The collectives decline as follows (**се́меро**, **во́сьмеро**, **де́вятеро**, **де́сятеро** decline like **ше́стеро**):

Nom.	дво́-е	трё́-е	че́твер-о
Acc.	дво́-е/- и́х	трё́-е/- и́х	че́твер-о/- и́х
Gen.	дво- и́х	трё- и́х	че́твер- и́х
Dat.	дво- и́м	трё- и́м	че́твер- и́м
Instr.	дво- и́ми	трё- и́ми	че́твер- и́ми
Prep.	о дво- и́х	о трё- и́х	о че́твер- и́х

Nom.	пя́тер-о	ше́стер-о
Acc.	пя́тер-о/- и́х	ше́стер-о/- и́х
Gen.	пя́тер- и́х	ше́стер- и́х
Dat.	пя́тер- и́м	ше́стер- и́м
Instr.	пя́тер- и́ми	ше́стер- и́ми
Prep.	о пя́тер- и́х	о ше́стер- и́х

(ii) They take the genitive plural of adjectives and nouns when they themselves are in the nominative/inanimate accusative.

(2) Collective numerals are used in four main constructions:

(i) With nouns used only in the plural (see 49). This applies especially to **дво́е** ‘two’, **трё́е** ‘three’ and **че́тверо** ‘four’, which, unlike the cardinal numerals **два**, **три**, **четы́ре**, govern genitive *plural* forms:

дво́е часо́в	two clocks
трё́е носи́лок	three stretchers
трё́е похоро́н	three funerals

Через че́тверо **су́ток** по́езд бу́дет в Москв́е (Trifonov)
In four days’ time the train will be in Moscow

Above four, collective numerals are the norm with plural-only nouns:

пя́теро сане́й	five sledges
ше́стеро воро́т	six gates

and cardinals a colloquial variant (**пять** сане́й etc.)

Note

- (a) The collectives can be used with 'paired' objects (e.g. **двѳе лыж** 'two pairs of skis', **трѳе нѳжниц** 'three pairs of scissors'), but constructions with **пѳра** 'pair' are preferred: **три пѳры нѳжниц** etc.
- (b) Compare also the colloquial **двѳе сльѳок** 'two creams' (= portions, packets of cream), heard in shops and buffets, **двѳе щей** 'two cabbage soups', **трѳе духѳв** 'three types *or* bottles of perfume' etc.
- (c) Collectives cannot appear in compound numerals. Thus, **день**, not **сѳтки**, is used in rendering '22 days' (**двѳдцѳть два дня**). Paraphrases with **штѳка** 'item', **колѳчество** 'quantity' and **пѳра** 'pair' are also found: **Прѳдано пѳтьсѳт сѳрок три штѳки сѳнок** *or* **Прѳданы сѳнки в колѳчестве пѳтисѳт сѳрокѳ трѳх** 'Five hundred and forty-three sledges have been sold', **сѳрок три пѳры санѳй/часѳв** '43 sledges/clocks'.
- (d) *Cardinal* numerals, *not* collectives, are used with the *oblique cases* of plural-only nouns: на **чѳтырѳх** (not ***чѳтверѳых**) сѳнках 'on four sledges'.

(ii) The collectives can be used with *animate masculine nouns*: **двѳе друзѳй** (= два дрѳга) 'two friends', **трѳе мѳльчиков** (= три мѳльчика) 'three boys'. As with animate forms in general (see below), the use of the collective numeral emphasizes the cohesiveness of the group, by contrast with the individualizing nature of the cardinals. Usage is particularly common:

(a) With nouns in **-ѳ/-я** (e.g. **мужчѳна**, **судья**, **юноша**) (**пѳтеро мужчѳн** 'five men', **трѳе судѳй** 'three judges', **двѳе юношей** 'two youths'), including nouns of common gender (**двѳе сирѳт** 'two orphans' (две сирѳты is preferred, however, if both orphans are female)).

(b) With **лѳди** 'people' and **лицѳ** 'person': **трѳе людѳй** 'three people', **пѳтеро незнакѳмых лиц** 'five strangers'.

(c) With adjectival nouns: **двѳе прохѳжих** 'two passers-by', **трѳе больнѳх** 'three patients', **чѳтверѳо знакѳмых** 'four acquaintances', **сѳмерѳ отдыхѳющих** 'seven holiday-makers'.

Note that either cardinals *or* collectives may be used in oblique cases:

Он вѳгрузил в Берѳзове **шѳстерѳх** (ѳг **шѳсть**) пассажѳров
(Zalygin)

He off-loaded six passengers in Berezovo

The use of collective numerals with *feminine* animate nouns (e.g. *четыре женщины* ‘four women’) is a mark of substandard colloquial Russian, cf. standard **четыре женщины**.

The collectives are not normally used with nouns denoting high rank: thus **два министра** ‘two ministers’ rather than *двое министров*; similarly, **два профессора** ‘two professors’, **четыре генерала** ‘four generals’.

(iii) The collectives are used with *дети* ‘children’: **двое детей** ‘two children’, **трое детей** ‘three children’, **четыре детей** ‘four children’, **пятеро детей** ‘five children’ (colloquially also *два ребёнка* ‘two children’ etc.). The series rarely proceeds beyond **семеро** ‘seven’, cf.

Супруги Никитины, у которых **семеро** детей (*Sputnik*)

The Nikitins, who have seven children

and

Она вспоминает свою мать, у которой было **девять** детей (*Russia Today*)

She recalls her mother, who had nine children

In oblique cases, either cardinal or collective numerals may be used, cf.

Мать **четырёх** детей . . . (Rybakov)

The mother of four children

and

Пятерых детей вырастила (Trifonov)

She raised five children

Note

The collective numerals are also used:

- (a) With **ребята**: **пятеро** ребят ‘five kids’, с **пятерыми/пятью** ребятами ‘with five kids’, cf. У него **пятеро ребятнишек** ‘He has five kiddies’.
- (b) With **внуки** ‘grandchildren’: За столом — **четыре детей и трое внуков** (Kovaleva) ‘At the table are four children and three grandchildren’.
- (c) With **близнецы**: **трое/четыре** близнецов ‘triplets/quadruplets’.
- (d) Colloquially, with the young of animals: **трое щенят/три щенка** ‘three puppies’.

(iv) The collective numerals are also used when an animate noun is absent from the construction: Нас было **двое** ‘There were two of us’,

Трое стояли на углу ‘Three people were standing on the corner’, **Эти пятеро** остались ‘These five stayed’, **Мы трое** протестовали ‘We three protested’, **Комната на троих** ‘A room for three’. Reference is to:

(a) Groups of males:

Их **шестеро** против наших **троих** (*Russia Today*)
There are six of them against our three

(b) Females:

Их **четверо**; все они машинистки высокого класса
There are four of them; they are all first-class typists

(c) Mixed company:

Нас **четверо**: мой приятель с девушкой, Лилия и я (*Kazakov*)
There are four of us: my friend and his girl-friend, Lilya and I

(v) The collectives are also used in some idioms: есть, работать за **троих**, ‘to eat, work enough for three’ etc., **на своих двоих** (colloquial) ‘on foot’.

201 Indefinite numerals

(1) Indefinite numerals include **достаточно** ‘enough’, **мало** ‘few’, **много** ‘many, much’, **немало** ‘not a few’, **немного** ‘not many, a few’, **несколько** ‘several’, **сколько** ‘how many’, **столько** ‘so many’.

(2) All the indefinite numerals may govern the genitive singular and plural: достаточно **продуктов** ‘sufficient provisions’, мало **солдат** ‘not many soldiers’ много **времени** ‘much time’, сколько **сахару?** ‘how much sugar?’, столько **денег** ‘so much money’.

(3) **Столько** and **сколько** often relate to each other, standing in adjacent clauses:

Старайтесь давать хомяку **столько** корма, **сколько** он в состоянии съесть (*Yunyi naturalist*)
Try to give the hamster as much food as it is able to eat

(4) **Несколько**, **сколько**, **столько** take genitive plural человек (**несколько человек** ‘a few people’), while **мало**, **много**, **немало**, **немного** take genitive plural людей (**много людей** ‘many people’ etc.).

Note

Сколько людей is used in emotive contexts: **Сколько людей**

получили в последние годы новые квартиры! ‘How many people have received new apartments in recent years!’, cf. the matter-of-fact *Ско́лько человек поги́бло?* ‘How many people died?’

(5) **Неско́лько** is distinguished from the ‘selective’ pronoun **некоторые** ‘some, certain’ (see also 141). Compare *В зале сидело несколько пасса́жиров* ‘In the hall sat several passengers’ and **Некоторые** из них были недово́льны ‘Some of them were dissatisfied’.

(6) **Неско́лько**, **ско́лько** and **сто́лько** decline like plural adjectives, agreeing with oblique cases of plural nouns:

Можно одновременно соединиться с **несколькими абонентами**
(*Izvestiya*)

It is possible to link up with several subscribers simultaneously

(7) **Ма́ло** implies negative quantity (*У него́ ма́ло денег* ‘He has not got much money’), while **немно́го** can imply negative *or* positive (*У него́ немно́го денег* ‘He has not got much money’ (negative)/ ‘He does have a little money’ (positive)). Since **ма́ло** does not decline, paraphrase is sometimes necessary: *в ре́дких слу́чаях* ‘in a few cases’, *с о́чень ма́леньким коли́чеством му́ки* ‘with very little flour’ etc.

(8) **Мно́го** (от **мно́гое**, pl. **мно́гие**) declines both in the singular (**Мно́гое** было́ скры́то от меня́ ‘Much was concealed from me’, **Я мно́гому** научи́лся у него́ ‘I learnt a lot from him’) and in the plural (**Мно́гие** так ду́мают ‘Many people think that’, **У мно́гих** рек пра́вый бе́рег вы́ше ле́вого ‘The right bank of many rivers is higher than the left’).

Note

(a) While **мно́го** means ‘a lot’ and is often used with passive or static verbs (*На собра́нии было́ мно́го учи́телей* ‘There were a lot of teachers at the meeting’), **мно́гие** implies ‘not all, a considerable proportion’, and is more common with verbs which denote action on the part of the subject (**Мно́гие** учи́теля голосо́вали за предложе́ние ‘Many teachers voted for the proposal’). **Мно́го** is commoner with inanimate nouns, unless the intention is to individualize, cf. *Снесено́ мно́го зда́ний* ‘Many buildings have been demolished’ and **Мно́гие дома́** восстано́влены в пре́жнем сти́ле ‘Many houses have been restored in their original style’, **Мно́гие** берё́зы уже́ без ли́сьев ‘Many birches are already without leaves’.

- (b) The animate accusative/genitive rule is not normally applied to indefinite numerals: thus, Я встрѣтил **нѣсколько** (rather than **нѣскольких**) студѣнтов.

202 Agreement of the predicate with a subject which contains a numeral

(1) It is difficult to formulate hard and fast rules for the agreement of a verb predicate with a subject which contains a numeral. In some instances the predicate appears in the *singular*, in others it appears in the *plural*.

(2) Factors which affect choice include word order, with a preference for the *singular* when the verb *precedes* the noun:

ЕгѠ **опередило** нѣсколько лыжников
He was overtaken by several skiers

and for the *plural* when the verb *follows* the noun:

Нѣсколько лыжников **опредѣлили** егѠ
Several skiers overtook him

(3) **Много** and **мало** almost invariably take a *singular* predicate: Там **было** мало народу ‘There were not many people there’, Во время пожара **погибло** много книг ‘Many books perished during the fire’.

(4) With cardinal and collective numerals, **нѣсколько** ‘several’ and **скѠлько** ‘how much’, the choice of a *singular* or *plural* predicate depends on a number of factors. Prime among these is the nature of the verb predicate.

(i) If this denotes state (**быть** ‘to be’, **существовать** ‘to exist’ etc.), then a *singular* predicate is preferred:

У неѣ **было** три брата
She had three brothers

Нас **было** двое
There were two of us

Нам **предстоит** нѣсколько трудных встреч с родителями
We face a number of difficult meetings with parents

(ii) A *singular* is also preferred with verbs which do not denote action

on the part of the subject:

В бою **поги́бло** со́рок солда́т
Forty soldiers perished in the battle

Во вре́мя налёта **уби́то** две же́нщины
Two women were killed during the raid

Издаётся 80 журна́лов
80 journals are published

Зарегистр́ровано бо́лее 130 ты́сяч люде́й (*Izvestiya*)
More than 130,000 people have been registered

in expressions of time

Ей ско́ро **исполнится** два́дцать лет
She will soon be twenty

Прошло́ три го́да
Three years have passed

До прихода́ почто́вого авто́буса **остава́лось** часа́ полтора́
(Abramov)
About an hour and a half remained to the arrival of the post bus

in expressing approximate quantity

Кварти́ры **получа́ет** око́ло трёхсо́т семе́й
About three hundred families receive apartments

and where a distributive phrase in **по** functions as subject (see also 448):

У ка́ждой двéри **стоя́ло** по солда́ту
At each door stood a soldier

(iii) A *plural* predicate will be used, however, if the numeral phrase is qualified by a demonstrative or other plural form (Э́ти пять лет **прошли́** незамётно ‘These five years have passed by imperceptibly’, Э́ти три до́ма **проданы́** неда́вно ‘These three houses have been sold recently’), or by a relative clause (cf. Со́рок мину́т **истекло́** ‘Forty minutes have expired’ and Со́рок мину́т, **о кото́рых вы проси́ли, истекли́** ‘The forty minutes that you requested have expired’).

(iv) A *plural* predicate is also preferred if the verb denotes action on the part of the subject:

Вошли́ трóе в шинéлях
Three people came in wearing greatcoats

Нéсколько человек **кíнулись** вслед бежавшему (Nikitin)
Several people dashed off after the running man

Note also use with fractions and decimals: В движéнии за сохранéние национа́льной самобы́тности и охрáну прирóды **учáствуют** соотвётственно 3,5 и 3,1 процéнта (*Komsomolskaya pravda*) ‘3.5 and 3.1 per cent respectively participate in the movement for the preservation of national identity and nature conservation’. Compare the use of the *plural* of an *active verb* in Сейчáс пóлгóрода **хóдят** в таких шмóтках (*Komsomolskaya pravda*) ‘Now half the town wears such gear’ and the use of the *singular* of a *passive reflexive verb* in Пóлдóма **ремóнтируется** ‘Half the house is being repaired’.

(v) A *plural* predicate is especially common where attention is drawn to separate activity on the part of individual members of a subject group:

Сóрок демонстрáнтов **разошл́сь**
The forty demonstrators dispersed

Егó три сестры́ **вы́шли** зáмуж
His three sisters got married

Note

This factor may affect even indefinite numerals like **мнóго**: Мнóго фаши́стских самолётов **бомб́или** испáнский гóрод Гёрника ‘Many Fascist aircraft bombed the Spanish town of Guernica’.

(vi) A *plural* predicate is also used with **óба/óбе**: Óба сы́на **верну́лись** ‘Both sons returned’.

(vii) *The plural* is normal if the predicate is a *short adjective*:

Нéсколько статéй в éтом сбóрнике **интерéсны**
Several articles in this collection are interesting

Ordinal Numerals

203 Formation of ordinal numerals

Apart from **пёрвый** ‘first’ and **вторóй** ‘second’, ordinal numerals derive from cardinals (see 190). They are as follows:

1st	пёрвый	51st	пятьдесят пёрвый
2nd	второй	60th	шестидесятый
3rd	трётый	61st	шестьдесят пёрвый
4th	чтвёртый	70th	семидесятый
5th	пýтый	71st	сёмьдесят пёрвый
6th	шестой	80th	восьмидесятый
7th	сдьмой	81st	восьмьдесят пёрвый
8th	восьмой	90th	девяно́стый
9th	девя́тый	91st	девяно́сто пёрвый
10th	деся́тый	100th	со́тый
11th	оди́ннадцатый	200th	двухсо́тый
12th	двена́дцатый	300th	трёхсо́тый
13th	трина́дцатый	400th	четырёхсо́тый
14th	четы́рнадцатый	500th	пятисо́тый
15th	пятна́дцатый	600th	шестисо́тый
16th	шестна́дцатый	700th	семисо́тый
17th	семна́дцатый	800th	восьмисо́тый
18th	восемна́дцатый	900th	девятисо́тый
19th	девятна́дцатый	1000th	ты́сячный
20th	двадца́тый	1001st	ты́сяча пёрвый
21st	два́дцать пёрвый	1002nd	ты́сяча второ́й
22nd	два́дцать второ́й	2000th	двухты́сячный
30th	тридца́тый	3000th	трёхты́сячный
31st	три́дцать пёрвый	5000th	пятиты́сячный
40th	сороково́й	1,000,000th	миллио́нный
41st	со́рок пёрвый	10,000,000th	десяты́миллио́нный
50th	пятидеся́тый		

Note

- (a) Ordinal numbers decline like hard adjectives in **-ый/-ой**, except for **трётый** (see **151** (1) note).
- (b) **Девя́тый** ‘ninth’, **деся́тый** ‘tenth’, **двадца́тый** ‘twentieth’, **тридца́тый** ‘thirtieth’ have medial stress, cf. the initially-stressed cardinals from which they derive.
- (c) Note the central **-и-** in 50th to 80th: **пятидеся́тый** ‘fiftieth’ etc.
- (d) In abbreviations, the final letter of the ending is used (**1-я** пятиле́тка ‘the first five-year plan’, **3-й** де́нь ‘the third day’, **20-е** го́ды ‘the twenties’), unless the penultimate letter of the ending is a consonant, in which case the final *two* letters are used (**5-го** ря́да ‘of row 5’).
- (e) In compounds, only the final component has the form of an ordinal and declines: **пятьсо́т четвёртый** биле́т ‘the five hundred **and** fourth ticket’, **в два́дцать пёрвом** ря́ду ‘in row 21’.

- (f) Roman numerals are used in denoting centuries (в **XX** (двадцá-том) вéке ‘in the 20th century’), Communist Party congresses (**XXII** (двадцáть вторóй) съезд ‘XXII Congress’), major international events (e.g. sessions of the General Assembly of the UNO), international congresses (**IX** (девyáтый) Конгрéсс МАПРyАЛ ‘the **IX** Congress of MAPRYAL’) and monarchs (Пётр I (Пёрвый) ‘Peter the First’).

204 Ordinal numerals: usage

- (1) Like adjectives, ordinal numerals agree in gender, case and number with the noun they qualify:

в пyáтом рядy in row five

- (2) For use in time expressions see **206**.

- (3) Ordinals are used with pages, chapters, TV channels etc.:

урóк пyáдесyáтый	lesson fifty
на стрáнище сeмнáдцáтой	on page seventeen
в тpидцáть сeдмóй глáвe	in chapter thirty-seven
по вторóй прoгрáмме	on channel two

and to denote clothes and footwear sizes

тyфли тpидцáть чeтвёртoгo рáзмeрa
size **thirty-four** shoes

See also **199** (2) note.

- (4) Ordinals cannot be extended by a superlative, as they can in English. Instead, prepositional phrases with **по** are used:

вторáя рeкá по длинé	the second longest river
трeтий гóрод по величинé	the third largest town

Special Functions of Numerals

205 Cardinals and ordinals in fractions and decimals

- (1) Both cardinals and ordinals are used in **fractions** and **decimals**. In Russian *commas* are used instead of decimal points:

(i) Fractions

одна пя́тая (часть or до́ля understood)	one-fifth
две пя́тых	two-fifths
пять восьми́х	five-eighths

Note the use of the genitive plural of the ordinal after 2–4 (cf. **194** (2) (v) note (a)).

(ii) Decimals

0,1 (одна́ де́сятая/но́ль це́лых и одна́ де́сятая)	0.1 <i>or</i> 1/10
0,05 (пять со́тых/но́ль це́лых и пять со́тых)	0.05
1,375 (одна́ це́лая и т́риста се́мьдесят пять т́ысячных)	1.375
2,4 (две це́лых и че́тыре де́сятых/два и че́тыре де́сятых)	2.4
57,365 (пятьде́сят се́мь це́лых, т́риста ше́стьдесят пять т́ысячных)	57.365

Note

(a) 1, 2 and compounds of 1, 2 take the gender of a following noun: два́дцать **оди́н** и одна́ де́сятая ме́тра ‘21.1 metres’, **две** и че́тыре де́сятых то́нны ‘2.4 tons’.

(b) Decimals/fractions are followed by the genitive singular of the noun:

12,5% (двена́дцать и пять де́сятых **проце́нта**)
12.5% (twelve point five per cent)

even if the decimal or fraction is declined:

Су́мма равня́ется пяти́ се́дьми́м **насле́дства**
The sum equals five-sevenths of the inheritance

(c) Треть ‘a third’, че́тверть ‘a quarter’ and полови́на ‘a half’ are commonly used instead of fractions: две **трéти**/две **трéти́х** ‘two-thirds’, три **че́тверти**/три **че́твёртых** ‘three-quarters’, три с **че́твертью** ‘three and a quarter’, два и **пять де́сятых** **проце́нта**/два с **полови́ной** **проце́нта** ‘two and a half per cent’.

(d) Temperatures are read as follows: т́ридцать ше́сть и ше́сть ‘36.6’ (normal body temperature).

(2) По́л- combines with the genitive singular of many nouns to denote half of something: **по́лго́да** ‘six months’, **по́лме́тра** ‘half a metre’, **по́лчасá** ‘half an hour’.

Note

(i) A hyphen separates **пòл-** from the noun component when the latter begins with an **л** or a vowel or has proper-noun status: **пòл-лїтра** ‘half a litre’, **пòл-яблока** ‘half an apple’, **пòл-Варшáвы** ‘half Warsaw’.

(ii) In oblique cases **пòл-** becomes **полу-**, while the noun component declines in the usual way:

Nom./Acc.	пòлчас-á
Gen.	получáс-а
Dat.	получáс-у
Instr.	получáс-ом
Prep.	о получáс-е

(iii) In colloquial speech, **-у-** is omitted in the declension of some compounds: в **пòл[у]стакáне** воды ‘in half a glass of water’, бóлее **пòл[у]миллиóна** ‘more than half a million’. The better-established of these oral forms have found their way into the written language as alternatives to forms with **полу-**: Емý нет и **пòлгòда/полугòда** ‘He is not even six months old’. **Пòл-** also appears in certain set phrases: **на пòлпути** ‘half-way’, **на пòлстáвки** ‘on half-pay’, **к пòлпéрвого** ‘by half past twelve’ etc.

(iv) Compounds in **пòл-** are qualified by plural adjectives (**пéрвые пòлчасá** ‘the first half-hour’), while oblique cases are qualified by singular adjectives (**пòсле пéрвого полугòда** ‘after the first six months’).

(v) **Полу-** is also used as an adjective and noun prefix: **полукрýг** ‘semicircle’, **полуфинал** ‘semi-final’, **получасовóй** ‘half-hour’ (adjective), **полушáрие** ‘hemisphere’.

206 Telling the time

(1) Numerals are used to answer the questions **котóрый час?/скóлько врéмени?** ‘what is the time?’ and **в котóром часý?/во скóлько?** ‘at what time?’

(i) On the hour, the question **Котóрый час?/Скóлько врéмени?** ‘What is the time?’ is answered as

час, два часá, три часá, четýре часá, пять часóв
 one, two, three, four, five o’clock

up to **двенáдцать часóв** ‘twelve o’clock’.

(ii) The 24-hour clock may be used in official contexts: **семна́дцать часо́в** ‘five p.m.’ Otherwise one distinguishes (apart from **двена́дцать часо́в но́чи** ‘twelve o’clock at night’ and **двена́дцать часо́в дня** ‘twelve noon’):

час/два часа́/три часа́ но́чи	one/two/three o’clock in the morning
четы́ре часа́ through to о́діннадцатъ часо́в утра́	four o’clock through to eleven o’clock in the morning
час/два часа́/три часа́/ четы́ре часа́/пять часо́в дня	one/two/three/four/five o’clock in the afternoon
шесть часо́в through to о́діннадцатъ часо́в вече́ра	six o’clock through to eleven o’clock in the evening

Note

- (a) **Четы́ре часа́ но́чи** ‘four a.m.’ and **пять часо́в вече́ра** ‘five p.m.’ are also found.
 (b) **Пóлдень** ‘midday’, **пóлночь** ‘midnight’.
 (c) Approximation is expressed by the preposition **о́коло**: **о́коло двух часо́в** ‘about two o’clock’, **о́коло полу́ночи** ‘about midnight’, **о́коло девяти́ вече́ра** ‘about nine p.m.’

(iii) Between the hour and half-hour, the time is rendered as ‘five, ten minutes’ etc. of the *next* hour (expressed as an ordinal numeral):

пять мину́т	} шесто́го	five	} past five
де́сять мину́т		ten	
че́тверть		quarter	
два́дцать мину́т		twenty	
два́дцать пять мину́т		twenty-five	
полови́на		half	

(Literally, ‘five minutes of the sixth’, ‘ten minutes of the sixth’ etc.)

Note

- (a) In spoken Russian **полови́на** can be replaced by **пóл-**: **пóлперво́го** ‘half past twelve’, **пóлдевя́того** ‘half past eight’.
 (b) **Мину́т** may be omitted in multiples of five (**два́дцать пять (мину́т) шесто́го** ‘twenty-five (minutes) past five’); otherwise **мину́ты/мину́т** must be included (**две мину́ты** трéтьего ‘two minutes past two’).
 (c) Ordinal numerals are used to denote unspecified times between hours: **второ́й час** ‘between one and two’ (usually closer to one

than two), **начало пятого** ‘just after four’ (lit. ‘the beginning of the fifth’) etc.:

Куда ж уходить? **Второй час**. На метро опоздала (Trifonov)
‘What’s the hurry? It’s **past one**. You’ve missed the last train on the Underground’

(iv) After the half-hour the time is rendered as ‘without five, ten minutes’ etc. one (o’clock), two (o’clock), three (o’clock), the hours being expressed as *cardinal* numerals:

без двадцати пяти (минут)	}	четыре	}	25 (minutes) to	}	four
без двадцати (минут)				20 (minutes) to		
без четверти				quarter to		
без десяти (минут)				ten (minutes) to		
без пяти (минут)				five (minutes) to		
без двух минут				two minutes to		

(Literally ‘without 25 minutes four’ etc.)

Note

Neuter agreement in **было** три часа/десять минут первого/половина шестого/без пяти минут три ‘it was three o’clock/ten past twelve/half past five/five to three’ etc.

(2) **В котором часу?/во сколько?** ‘at what time?’

(i) The construction **в** + accusative case is used up to the half-hour:

в час дня	at 1 p.m.
в пять минут шестого	at five past five

(ii) After the half-hour, however, **в** is omitted:

без четверти семь	at quarter to seven
без десяти два	at ten to two

It is also omitted when the time phrase is governed by another preposition or a comparative:

Вторую тóню мы заканчиваем **около двух часов** но́чи (Nikolaev)
We complete the second haul **at about 2 o’clock** in the morning

Он ложился всегда **не позже одиннадцати** (Yakhontov)
He always went to bed **no later than 11 o’clock**

(iii) **В** + prepositional case is used to denote unspecified times between hours (**в начале** седьмого ‘at just gone six’, **во втором часу** ‘between one and two’):

Однако **в одиннадцатом часу́** он сам занёрвничал (Trifonov)
 However, **after it had gone ten** he began to get the jitters himself

and for times on the half-hour:

В половине первого (colloquially **в полпервого**) пояс тёща
 побежала на Сóкол, к метрó — встречать (Trifonov)

At half past midnight mother-in-law rushed off to Sokol to meet
 them off the Underground

Note

The time may be given, both colloquially and in official contexts, using cardinals only: в три пятна́дцать ‘at three fifteen’, cf.:

Телевизио́нный репорта́ж по второ́й програ́мме смотре́йте в
се́мна́дцать часо́в два́дцать пять мину́т (radio)

Watch TV coverage on channel 2 at 5.25 p.m.

207 Giving the date

(1) The questions **Како́е (бы́ло, бу́дет) число́?** ‘What is (was, will be) the date?’ are answered by an ordinal numeral in the neuter nominative and the name of a month in the genitive:

Сего́дня пе́рвое февраля́	Today it is 1 February
Вчера́ бы́ло два́дцать пя́тое ма́рта	Yesterday was 25 March
Скóро бу́дет се́мна́дцатое ию́ня	Soon it will be 17 June

(2) The question **Како́го числа́?** ‘On what date?’ is answered by a genitive:

Междунаро́дный же́нский день — **восьмо́го ма́рта**
 International Women’s Day is **on 8 March**

(3) The question **Како́й год?** ‘Which year is it?’ is answered as follows:

Сейча́с **двухты́сячный год** ‘Now it is **the year 2000**’ etc.

(4) The question **В како́м году́?** ‘in which year?’ is answered as follows:

в ты́сяча девяти́со́том году́	in 1900
в ты́сяча девяти́со́т пятидеся́том году́	in 1950
в двухты́сячном году́	in the year 2000
в две ты́сячи пятна́дцатом году́	in 2015

Note

(a) Only the final component of the numeral declines (see **203** note (e)).

- (b) If any detail other than the year itself is added, the year appears in the genitive case:

в мае тысяча девятьсот девяносто **восьмого года** in May **1998**

в воскресенье третьего сентября тысяча девятьсот тридцать **девятого года**

on Sunday 3 September 1939

- (c) Plural forms may be involved: **в 1957–1963 годах** во всех республиках появились законы об охране природы (*Izvestiya*) ‘**Over the period 1957–1963** laws on nature conservation appeared in all republics’.
- (d) Note the use of **г.** (singular) and **гг.** (plural) in abbreviations: **в 1995 г.** ‘in 1995’, **в 1957–1963 гг.** ‘in 1957–63’.
- (e) In denoting decades, **в** is used with the accusative *or* prepositional case: **В пятидесятые годы/пятидесятых годах XX века** ‘In the 1950s’. Compare: В 90-х годах в Японии планируют выпустить новую семью компьютеров (*Nedelya*) ‘The Japanese are planning to manufacture a new family of computers **in the 90s**’ (see also 429 (2) (ii) note (c)).

208 Age

- (1) The question **Сколько вам (ему, ей etc.) лет?** ‘How old are you (is he, she etc.)?’ is answered as follows:

Ему **двадцать один год** He is twenty-one

Ей **сорок два года** She is forty-two

Мне **восемнадцать лет** I am eighteen

Ребёнку ещё **нет двух лет** (ещё не исполнилось два года/двух лет)

The child is not yet two (has not had its second birthday)

The numeral may be used alone in more relaxed speech: **Мне двадцать пять (лет)** ‘I am 25’. Note also the following:

«Нашей Лёночке **четвёртый год**» (*Russia Today*)

‘Our Lenochka is **in her fourth year**’

Галке **шёл 17-й год** (Rasputin)

Galka was **in her seventeenth year**

Ему́ уже́ за со́рок or Ему́ **40** с че́м-то
He is **in his forties**

Ей ещё́ нет́ двадца́ти́
She is in her **late teens**

(2) To answer the question **В како́м во́зрасте?/Ско́льких лет?** ‘At what age?’ it is possible to use **в** + accusative:

Он у́мер **в се́мьдесят лет** He died at the age of 70

Alternatively, a genitive construction may be used:

Он у́мер (**в во́зрасте**) **семи́десяти лет**
He died at the age of 70

209 Quantitative nouns

Quantitative nouns include:

(1) The series **едини́ца** ‘one’, **дво́йка** ‘two’, **тро́йка** ‘three’, **четве́рка** ‘four’, **пяте́рка** ‘five’, **шесте́рка** ‘six’, **семе́рка** ‘seven’, **восеме́рка** ‘eight’, **девя́тка** ‘nine’, **деся́тка** ‘ten’. Their functions are as follows:

(i) The first five of the nouns figure in the five-point marking scale: **едини́ца** ‘fail’, **дво́йка** ‘two’ (unsatisfactory), **тро́йка** ‘three’ (satisfactory), **четве́рка** ‘four’ (good), **пяте́рка** ‘five’ (very good). Colloquially, cardinal numerals can also be used: **учи́ться на пять** ‘to get very good marks’.

(ii) The series can denote playing cards (**семе́рка бубе́н, пик** ‘seven of diamonds, spades’, **деся́тка черве́й, тре́ф** ‘ten of hearts, clubs’) as well as the numbers of buses etc. (Он прие́хал **на девя́тке** ‘He arrived on the no. 9’).

(iii) They also denote various other groups or objects consisting of several units: **тро́йка** ‘sleigh drawn by three horses’, ‘three-piece suit’, ‘three-man commission’; **четве́рка** ‘a rowing four’; **пяте́рка** ‘group of five persons’; **Бо́льшая восеме́рка** ‘the G-8 countries’ etc.

(2) The series **пято́к** ‘a five’, **деся́ток** ‘a ten’ (also **полтора́ деся́тка** ‘fifteen’, **два деся́тка** ‘a score’), **со́тня** ‘a hundred’ (**не́сколько со́тен** ‘several hundreds’): **пято́к яи́ц** ‘five eggs’, **деся́ток сига́ре́т** ‘ten cigarettes’, **деся́тки люде́й** ‘dozens of people’, **продава́ть яи́ца со́тнями** ‘to sell eggs in hundreds’ etc.

210 Numerals in arithmetic

Numerals are used in operating the four arithmetical processes (**четыре арифметических действия**):

(1) Multiplication (Умножение).

о́диножды три —	три	once three is three
два́жды три —	шесть	two threes are six
три́жды три —	де́вять	three threes are nine
четы́режды три —	двена́дцать	four threes are twelve
пя́тью три —	пятна́дцать	five threes are fifteen
ше́стью три —	восемна́дцать	six threes are eighteen
во́семью три —	два́дцать четы́ре	eight threes are twenty-four etc.

Note

Stress in **пя́тью**, **ше́стью** etc. differs from the normal end stress of the instrumental **пяты́ю**, **шесты́ю**.

(2) Division (деление):

два́дцать во́семь (разде́лить) на четы́ре — бу́дет семь
twenty-eight divided by four is seven

(3) Addition (Сложение):

к пяты́ прибави́ть два — бу́дет семь	} five plus two is seven
сложи́ть пять с двумя́ — бу́дет семь	
пять плю́с два — бу́дет семь	
пять да два — семь	

(4) Subtraction (Вычитание):

(вы́честь) два из пяты́ — бу́дет три	} five minus two is three
пять ми́нус два — бу́дет три	

Note

Два **в квадра́те** — четы́ре ‘The square of two is four’, Два **в ку́бе** — во́семь ‘Two cubed is eight’, **Кóрень квадра́тный** из четырёх — два ‘The square root of four is two’.

211 Numerals in compound nouns and adjectives

(1) With the exception of 1, 90, 100 and 1000 (see (2) below), numeral components of compound nouns and adjectives appear in the *genitive* case of the cardinal:

двухлётный	two year old
пятилётка	five-year plan
сорокапятка (colloquial)	forty-five (gramophone record)
двадцатипятиминутная пáуза	a 25-minute break

Note

A number of more abstract or technical terms take **дву-/тре-/четверо-** instead of **двух-/трёх-/четырёх-**: **двусложный** 'disyllabic', **двусторонний** 'bilateral', **двуязычный** 'bilingual' (note also **двоюродный брат** 'cousin'); **треугольник** 'triangle'; **четвероногий** 'quadruped'.

(2) 1, 90, 100 and 1000 assume the forms **одно-, девяносто-, сто-** and **тысяче-** in compound nouns and numerals:

одноэтажный дом	single-storey house
девяносто минутная игра́	a ninety-minute game
сто метрóвка	hundred metres race
сто пятидесятилетие	one hundred and fiftieth anniversary
тысяч елетие	millennium

The Verb

Conjugation

212 Infinitive-preterite stem and present-future stem

(1) Each Russian verb has:

(i) An *infinitive (infinitive-preterite) stem*, from which the past tense, the future imperfective, past participles and most perfective gerunds are formed.

(ii) A *present-future stem*, from which the present tense, the future perfective, the imperative, present participles, imperfective gerunds and some perfective gerunds are formed.

In some verbs the two stems coincide, in others they differ.

(2) The present-future stem of a verb is derived by removing the last two letters of the third-person plural of the verb:

Infinitive	Third-person plural	Present–future stem
понимáть 'to understand'	понимá-ют	понимá-
говорíть 'to say'	говор-я́т	говор-
сказáть 'to tell'	ска́ж-ут	скаж-

213 The conjugation of the verb

Each Russian verb conjugates in accordance with one of two patterns: the first (or **-е-**) conjugation and the second (or **-и/-я-**) conjugation. The following endings are added to the present-future stems of verbs:

First-conjugation endings	Second-conjugation endings
-ю	-ю
-ешь	-ишь
-ет	-ит
-ем	-им
-ете	-ите
-ют	-ят

Note

- (a) In first-conjugation verbs **у** replaces **ю** after a consonant (except after **л** and **р** in certain verbs, for example, verbs in **-отъ, слать** 'to send' and **стлать** 'to spread').
- (b) **ѐ** replaces **е** under stress.
- (c) **у** and **а** replace **ю** and **я** respectively after **ж, ч, ш** or **щ** (see 16 (1)).

214 The first conjugation

(1) The first conjugation contains:

- (i) Most verbs in **-ать/-ять**.
- (ii) Many verbs in **-еть**.
- (iii) All verbs with a monosyllabic infinitive in **-ить, почить**, compounds of **-шибить**.
- (iv) All verbs in **-отъ, -уть, -ыть, -сть, -зть, -ти, -чь**.

(2) First-conjugation verbs subdivide into:

- (i) Those with stems ending in **vowels**.
- (ii) Those with stems ending in **consonants**.

215 First-conjugation verbs with stems ending in a vowel

First-conjugation verbs with vowel stems comprise most verbs of the first conjugation in **-ать/-ять** (including all verbs in **-авать, -евать, -ивать, -овать, -увать, -ывать**), many in **-еть** and some in **-ить, -уть, -ыть**.

(1) Verbs in **-ать/-ять**

знать 'to know'	гулять 'to stroll'
я зна́-ю	гуля́-ю
ты зна́-ешь	гуля́-ешь
он зна́-ет	гуля́-ет
мы зна́-ем	гуля́-ем
вы зна́-ете	гуля́-ете
они́ зна́-ют	гуля́-ют

Note

- (a) Most vowel stems in **-ать/-ять** conjugate like **знать** and **гулять**. See, however, verbs in **-авать** and **-овать/-евать** ((2) and (3) below) and note that *stem-stressed* verbs in **-ять** lose **я** in conjugation (**се́ять** 'to sow': я се́ю, ты се́ешь), except for **ка́шлять** 'to cough': я ка́шляю, ты ка́шляешь.
- (b) **Смеяться** 'to laugh' conjugates смею́сь, смеёшься, смеётся, смеёмся, смеётесь, смеются.

(2) Verbs in **-авать**.

давать 'to give'
я да- ю́
ты да- ёшь
он да- ёт
мы да- ём
вы да- ёте
они́ да- ю́т

Note

Compounds of **давать**, **-знавать** (e.g. **узнавать** 'to recognize') and **-ставать** (e.g. **вставать** 'to get up') conjugate like **давать**.

(3) Verbs in **-овать/-евать**

ГОЛОСОВА́ТЬ 'to vote'	КОВА́ТЬ 'to forge'	ПЛЕВА́ТЬ 'to spit'
я голосо́у-ю	ку-ю́	плю-ю́
ты голосо́у-еши́	ку-ёши́	плю-ёши́
он голосо́у-ет	ку-ёт	плю-ёт
мы голосо́у-ем	ку-ём	плю-ём
вы голосо́у-ете	ку-ёте	плю-ёте
они́ голосо́у-ют	ку-ю́т	плю-ю́т

Note

- (a) All verbs in **-овать** with more than two syllables conjugate like **ГОЛОСОВА́ТЬ** (some are stem stressed, e.g. **тРЕ́бовать** 'to demand', **тРЕ́бую**, **тРЕ́буешь**).
- (b) Note the conjugation of the following:
- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| воева́ть 'to wage war' | вою́ю, вою́ешь |
| горева́ть 'to grieve' | гори́ю, гори́ешь |
| жева́ть 'to chew' | жу́ю, жуёшь |
| клева́ть 'to peck' | клю́ю, клюёшь |
| снова́ть 'to dart' | снү́ю, снүёшь |
| сова́ть 'to thrust' | су́ю, суёшь |
- (c) **Застре́вать** 'to get stuck', **затева́ть** 'to undertake', **здоровáться** 'to greet', **зева́ть** 'to yawn', **подозрева́ть** 'to suspect', **преодолева́ть** 'to overcome' and secondary imperfectives in **-дева́ть**, **-пева́ть**, **-спева́ть** conjugate like **знать**.

(4) Verbs in **-еть**

красне́ть 'to blush'
я красне́-ю
ты красне́-еши́
он красне́-ет
мы красне́-ем
вы красне́-ете
они́ красне́-ют

Note

- (a) Verbs in **-еть** which are derived from adjectives (e.g. **худе́ть** 'to slim' from **худой** 'slim') and nouns (e.g. **сироте́ть** 'to be orphaned' from **сирота́** 'an orphan') conjugate like **красне́ть**, as do **владе́ть** 'to own', **гре́ть** 'to heat', **жале́ть** 'to pity', **зре́ть** 'to ripen', **име́ть** 'to have', **мле́ть** 'to grow numb', **преодоле́ть** 'to overcome', **сме́ть** 'to dare', **спе́ть** 'to ripen', **тле́ть** 'to decay', **уме́ть** 'to know how to'.

(b) **Петь** ‘to sing’ conjugates пою, поёшь, поёт, поём, поёте, поют.

(5) Verbs in -ить

бить ‘to strike’	брить ‘to shave’	гнить ‘to rot’
я бь-ю	брé-ю	гни-ю́
ты бь-ёшь	брé-ешь	гни-ёшь
он бь-ёт	брé-ет	гни-ёт
мы бь-ём	брé-ем	гни-ём
вы бь-ёте	брé-ете	гни-ёте
они бь-ют	брé-ют	гни-ют

Note

(a) **Вить** ‘to weave’, **лить** ‘to pour’, **пить** ‘to drink’ and **шить** ‘to sew’ conjugate like **бить** (with ‘zero vowel’ in the present-future stem).

(b) **Почить** ‘to rest’ conjugates like **гнить**, but with stress on **-и-**: почию, почиешь.

(6) Verbs in -ыть

мыть ‘to wash’	
я мо́-ю	мы мо́-ем
ты мо́-ешь	вы мо́-ете
он мо́-ет	они мо́-ют

Similarly **выть** ‘to howl’, **крыть** ‘to roof’, **ныть** ‘to gnaw’ and **рыть** ‘to dig’.

(7) Verbs in -уть

Дуть ‘to blow’: дую, дуюшь, дует, дуем, дуете, дуют. Likewise **обуть** ‘to put shoes on someone’ and **разуть** ‘to take shoes off someone’.

216 First-conjugation verbs with consonant stems I

(1) Present-future and infinitive stems coincide

(i) Verbs in -ать, e.g. **ждать** ‘to wait’:

я жд-у
ты жд-ёшь

ОН ЖД-ѐТ
 МЫ ЖД-ѐМ
 ВЫ ЖД-ѐТЕ
 ОНѢ ЖД-УТ

Similarly:

врать 'to lie'	вру, врѐшь
жаждать 'to thirst for'	жажду, жаждешь
жрать 'to devour'	жру, жрѐшь
орать 'to yell'	ору́, орѐшь
рвать 'to tear'	рву, рвѐшь
ржать 'to neigh'	ржу, ржѐшь
сосать 'to suck'	сосу́, сосѐшь
стонать 'to groan'	стону́, стонешь
ткать 'to weave'	тку, ткѐшь

Note

The absence of velar/sibilant mutation in the conjugation of **ткать** is abnormal, cf. mutation in **лгать** 'to lie': лгу, лжѐшь, лжѐт, лжѐм, лжѐте, лгут.

(ii) Verbs in **-(н)уть**:

гнуть 'to bend' гну, гнѐшь,

Likewise all other verbs in **-нуть** (some with stem stress (**мѐрзнуть** 'to freeze': мѐрзну, мѐрзнешь) and a few with mobile stress, see 219 (3)(iv).

(iii) Verbs in **-оть**:

колоть 'to chop' колю́, колешь, колют

Likewise all other verbs in **-оть**: **бороться** 'to struggle', **молоть** 'to grind' (молю́, мелешь), **полоть** 'to weed', **пороть** 'to rip'.

(2) Present-future stem and infinitive stem differ

(i) Through the presence of a mobile vowel in conjugation:

брать 'to take'	беру́, берѐшь (likewise драть 'to flay')
звать 'to call'	зову́, зовѐшь
стлать 'to spread'	стелю́, стелешь, стелют

(ii) **-в-** appears in conjugation:

жить 'to live'	живу́, живѐшь
плыть 'to swim'	плыву́, плывѐшь (likewise слыть 'to have the reputation of being')

(iii) **-д-** appears in conjugation:

быть ‘to be’	б ^у ду, б ^у дешь
ехать ‘to travel’	эду, эдешь

(iv) **-м-** or **-н-** appears in conjugation:

взять ‘to take’	возьм ^у , возьм ^ё шь
деть ‘to put’	д ^е ну, д ^е нешь
жать ‘to press’	жму, жм ^ё шь
жать ‘to reap’	жну, жш ^ё шь
застрять ‘to get stuck’	застрян ^у , застрян ^е шь
мять ‘to crumple’	мну, мн ^ё шь
начать ‘to begin’	начн ^у , начн ^ё шь
понять ‘to understand’	пойм ^у , пойм ^ё шь
распять ‘to crucify’	распн ^у , распн ^ё шь
снять ‘to take off’	сним ^у , сним ^е шь
стать ‘to become’	стан ^у , стан ^е шь
стыть ‘to go cold’	ст ^ы ну, ст ^ы нешь

Note

Compounds of **-нять** with prefixes ending in a vowel (except for **принять** ‘to accept’: прим^у, прим^ешь) conjugate like **понять** ‘to understand’; those with prefixes ending in a consonant conjugate like **снять** ‘to take off’.

(v) Mobile vowel lost in conjugation (verbs in **-ереть**):

тереть ‘to rub’	тру, тр ^е шь (likewise compounds of -мереть, -переть)
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(vi) Others (**рев^еть**, **слать** and compounds of **-шибить**)

ошиб^иться ‘to err’	ошиб ^у сь, ошиб ^е шься
рев^еть ‘to roar’	рев ^у , рев ^е шь
слать ‘to send’	шлю, шл ^е шь, шл ^ю т

217 First-conjugation verbs with consonant stems II: verbs in **-ать** with consonant mutation throughout conjugation

(1) Verbs of this type:

(i) Undergo consonant mutation throughout conjugation.

(ii) Switch stress from the ending to the *stem* after the first-person singular, except for:

(a) **Алка́ть** ‘to crave’, **колеба́ться** ‘to hesitate’, **колыха́ть** ‘to sway’, which have stem stress *throughout* conjugation.

(b) Verbs with stem stress in the infinitive, e.g. **ма́зать** ‘to daub’.

(2) The following consonant mutations operate:

Д : Ж	Т : Ч	Т : Щ	З : Ж	С : Ш
глода́ть ‘to gnaw’	шепта́ть ‘to whisper’	клевета́ть ‘to slander’	вяза́ть ‘to tie’	писа́ть ‘to write’
я глож-у́	шепч-у́	клевецц-у́	вяж-у́	пиш-у́
ты глож-е ^{шь}	шепч-е ^{шь}	клевецц-е ^{шь}	вяж-е ^{шь}	пиш-е ^{шь}
он глож-ет	шепч-ет	клевецц-ет	вяж-ет	пиш-ет
мы глож-ем	шепч-ем	клевецц-ем	вяж-ем	пиш-ем
вы глож-ете	шепч-ете	клевецц-ете	вяж-ете	пиш-ете
они́ глож-ут	шепч-ут	клевецц-ут	вяж-ут	пиш-ут
Г : Ж	К : Ч	Х : Ш	СК : Щ	Б : бл/м : мл/ П : пл
двига́ть ‘to move’	пла́кать ‘to weep’	маха́ть ‘to wave’	иска́ть ‘to seek’	дрема́ть ‘to doze’
я движ-у	пла́ч-у	маш-у́	ищ-у́	дремл-ю́
ты движ-е ^{шь}	пла́ч-е ^{шь}	ма́ш-е ^{шь}	ищ-е ^{шь}	дремл-е ^{шь}
он движ-ет	пла́ч-ет	ма́ш-ет	ищ-ет	дремл-ет
мы движ-ем	пла́ч-ем	ма́ш-ем	ищ-ем	дремл-ем
вы движ-ете	пла́ч-ете	ма́ш-ете	ищ-ете	дремл-ете
они́ движ-ут	пла́ч-ут	ма́ш-ут	ищ-ут	дремл-ют

Note

- (a) **Двига́ть** ‘to move’ conjugates **двига́ю, двига́ешь** in figurative meanings (Им **двига́ет** самолю́бие ‘He is motivated by self-esteem’) and in technical contexts (Пружина **двига́ет** меха́низм ‘A spring activates the mechanism’), but **двига́ю, двига́ешь** in literal meaning (Он **двига́ет** ме́бель ‘He moves the furniture’). Note also the distinction between **По́езд двига́ется** ‘The train moves off’ and **По́езд двига́ется** ‘The train is in motion’.
- (b) Other verbs of this type include **алка́ть** ‘to crave’ (а́лчу, а́лчешь), **бормота́ть** ‘to murmur’ (бормочу́, бормоче^{шь}), **брызга́ть** ‘to spray, sprinkle’ (бры́зжу, бры́зжешь in intransitive meanings (Фонтан **брызжет** ‘The fountain plays’); бры́згаю, бры́згаешь in transitive meanings (Он **брызгает** во́лосы духа́ми ‘He sprays his hair with perfume’), **грохота́ть** ‘to rumble’ (грохочу́, грохочет), **каза́ться** ‘to seem’ (кажу́сь, каже^{шься}) (likewise compounds

of **-казать**), **капать** ‘to drip’ (каплю, каплешь; also капаю, -аешь), **клокотать** ‘to gurgle’ (клокочет), **колебаться** (колеблюсь, колеблешься) ‘to hesitate’, **колыхать** ‘to sway’ (колышу, колышешь), **лепетать** ‘to babble’ (лепечу, лепечешь), **лизать** ‘to lick’ (лижу, лижешь), **мазать** ‘to daub’ (мажу, мажешь), **метать** ‘to throw’ (мечу, мечешь), **мурлыкать** ‘to purr’ (мурлычу, мурлычешь; also мурлыкаю, -аешь), **пахать** ‘to plough’ (пашу, пахешь), **плескаться** ‘to splash’ (плещу, плещешь), **плясать** ‘to dance’ (пляшу, пляшешь), **полоскать** ‘to rinse’ (полощу, полощешь), **прятать** ‘to hide’ (прячу, прячешь), **резать** ‘to cut’ (режу, режешь), **роптать** ‘to grumble’ (ропщу, ропщешь), **рыскать** ‘to rove’ (рыщу, рыщешь), **скакать** ‘to gallop’ (скачу, скачешь), **скрежетать** ‘to grind’ (скрежещу, скрежешься), **сыпать** ‘to sprinkle’ (сыплю, сыплешь), **тесать** ‘to hew’ (тешу, тешешь), **топтать** ‘to trample’ (топчу, топчешь), **трепать** ‘to touse’ (треплю, треплешь), **трепетать** ‘to tremble’ (трепещу, трепещешь), **тыкать** ‘to prod’ (тычу, тычешь), **хлопотать** ‘to busy oneself’ (хлопочу, хлопочешь), **чесать** ‘to scratch’ (чешу, чешешь), **щебетать** ‘to twitter’ (щебечу, щебечешь), **щекотать** ‘to tickle’ (щекочу, щекочешь), **щипать** ‘to pinch’ (щиплю, щиплешь).

218 First-conjugation verbs with consonant stems III: verbs in **-ти, -сть/-зть, -чь**

(1) Verbs in **-ти**

Verbs in **-ти** subdivide in accordance with the following stem consonants:

-б-	-д-	-з-
гребти́ ‘to row’	идти́ ‘to go’	везти́ ‘to convey’
я греб- у́	ид- у́	вез- у́
ты греб- ёшь	ид- ёшь	вез- ёшь
он греб- ёт	ид- ёт	вез- ёт
мы греб- ём	ид- ём	вез- ём
вы греб- ёте	ид- ёте	вез- ёте
они́ греб- у́т	ид- у́т	вез- у́т

-с- нести́ 'to carry'	-т- мести́ 'to sweep'	-ст- расти́ 'to grow'
нес- у́	мет- у́	раст- у́
нес- ёшь	мет- ёшь	раст- ёшь
нес- ёт	мет- ёт	раст- ёт
нес- ём	мет- ём	раст- ём
нес- ёте	мет- ёте	раст- ёте
нес- у́т	мет- у́т	раст- у́т

Other verbs include:

блюсти́ 'to conserve'	блюду́, блюдёшь
бредти́ 'to wander'	бреду́, бредёшь
вести́ 'to lead'	веду́, ведёшь
обрести́ 'to acquire'	обрету́, обретёшь
паст́и 'to tend'	пасу́, пасёшь
плести́ 'to plait'	плету́, плетёшь
ползти́ 'to crawl'	ползу́, ползёшь
скрести́ 'to scour, claw'	скребу́, скребёшь
трясти́ 'to shake'	трясу́, трясе́шь
цвести́ 'to flower'	цвету́, цветёшь

(2) Verbs in **-сть/-зть**

Verbs in **-сть/-зть** subdivide in accordance with the following stem consonants:

-д- класть 'to place'	-н- клясть 'to curse'	-т- честь 'to consider'	-з- лезть 'to climb'
я клад- у́	клян- у́	чт- у	лэз- у
ты клад- ёшь	клян- ёшь	чт- ёшь	лэз- ёшь
он клад- ёт	клян- ёт	чт- ёт	лэз- ёт
мы клад- ём	клян- ём	чт- ём	лэз- ём
вы клад- ёте	клян- ёте	чт- ёте	лэз- ёте
они́ клад- у́т	клян- у́т	чт- ут	лэз- ут

Other verbs include the following:

грызть 'to gnaw'	грызу́, грызёшь
красть 'to steal'	краду́, крадёшь
пасть 'to fall'	паду́, падёшь
сесть 'to sit down'	сяду́, сядёшь

Note

Честь ‘to consider’ is now obsolete as an independent verb, but appears as a component of compound prefixed verbs such as **учесть** ‘to take into account’.

(3) Verbs in -чь

Verbs in **-чь** subdivide into **г**-stems (with mutation to **ж** before **е/ё**) and **к**-stems (with mutation to **ч** before **е/ё**).

-г-	-к-
беречь	печь
‘to look after’	‘to bake’
я береч- у́	пек- у́
ты берез- ёшь	печ- ёшь
он берез- ёт	печ- ёт
мы берез- ём	печ- ём
вы берез- ёте	печ- ёте
они́ берез- у́т	пек- у́т

Other verbs include the following:

влечь ‘to pull, draw’	влеку́, влечёшь, влеку́т
жечь ‘to burn’	жгу, жжёшь, жгут
лечь ‘to lie down’	лягу, ляжешь, лягут
мочь ‘to be able’	могу́, можешь, могут
напрячь ‘to strain’	напрягу́, напряжёшь, напрягу́т (similarly other compounds of -прячь)
пренебречь ‘to disdain’	пренебрегу́, пренебрежёшь, пренебрегу́т
сечь ‘to cut’	секу́, сечёшь, секу́т
стричь ‘to cut’ (hair)	стригу́, стрижёшь, стригу́т
течь ‘to flow’	течёт, теку́т

Note

Достичь (= **достигнуть**) ‘to achieve’: **достигну**, **достигнешь**. Both infinitives are standard forms. **Достичь** has a colloquial nuance and is commoner in the press; **достигнуть** is regarded as more ‘bookish’.

219 Mobile stress in the conjugation of first-conjugation verbs

(1) Stress change in the conjugation of verbs of more than one syllable

usually involves a shift of stress from the *ending* in the first-person singular to the *stem* in the other forms of the present tense or future perfective: **я пишу́** ‘I write’, **ты пи́шешь** ‘you write’; **я приму́** ‘I shall accept’, **ты при́мешь** ‘you will accept’ etc.

(2) Verbs with stem-stressed infinitives (e.g. **прятать** ‘to hide’) are not subject to stress change in conjugation.

(3) Stress change takes place in the conjugation of the following types of first-conjugation verbs with *consonant* stems:

(i) Verbs in **-ать** with end stress in the infinitive and consonant mutation throughout conjugation (see 217). Note that **алка́ть**, **колеба́ть[ся]** and **колыха́ть** take stem stress *throughout* conjugation.

(ii) **Стла́ть** ‘to spread’ (see 216 (2) (i)) and **стона́ть** ‘to groan’ (see 216 (1) (i)).

(iii) Verbs in **-оть** (see 216 (1) (iii)).

(iv) Compounds of **-гляну́ть**, e.g. **загляну́ть** ‘to peep in’ (**загляну́, заглянешь**), **обману́ть** ‘to deceive’, **тону́ть** ‘to drown’, **тяну́ть** ‘to pull’ (see 216 (1) (ii)).

(v) **Приня́ть** ‘to accept’ and compounds of **-нять** with prefixes ending in a consonant (see 216 (2) (iv) note).

(vi) **Мочь** ‘to be able’ (see 218 (3)).

220 Second conjugation: present-future stems

(1) The present-future stems of verbs in the second conjugation end in a *consonant* (with very few exceptions, which include **бо-я́ться** ‘to fear’, **сто-и́ть** ‘to cost’, **сто-я́ть** ‘to stand’, **стро-и́ть** ‘to build’).

(2) Second-conjugation verbs include:

(i) All verbs in **-и́ть** (except for those with monosyllabic infinitives (see 215 (5), 216 (2) (ii)), **почи́ть** ‘to rest’ and compounds of **-шиби́ть** (see 216 (2) (vi)).

(ii) Many verbs in **-е́ть**.

(iii) Some verbs in **-а́ть**.

(iv) Two verbs in **-я́ть**: **боя́ться** ‘to fear’, **стоя́ть** ‘to stand’.

221 Present-future endings in the second conjugation

Second-conjugation verbs conjugate as follows:

Verbs in -ить	Verbs in -еть	Verbs in -ать	Verbs in -ять
говори́ть 'to speak'	смотре́ть 'to look'	стуча́ть 'to knock'	стоя́ть 'to stand'
я говор- ю	смотре- ю	стуч- у́	сто- ю
ты говор- и́шь	смотре- и́шь	стуч- и́шь	сто- и́шь
он говор- и́т	смотре- и́т	стуч- и́т	сто- и́т
мы говор- и́м	смотре- и́м	стуч- и́м	сто- и́м
вы говор- и́те	смотре- и́те	стуч- и́те	сто- и́те
они́ говор- я́т	смотре- я́т	стуч- я́т	сто- я́т

(1) **ю** is replaced by **у** and **я** by **а** after **ж, ч, ш** or **щ** (see 16 (1)).

(2) Second-conjugation verbs in **-еть** include many verbs which denote sounds, and some others: **верте́ть** 'to spin' (верчу́, вёртишь), **ви́деть** 'to see' (ви́жу, ви́дишь), **висе́ть** 'to hang' (вишу́, виси́шь), **гляде́ть** 'to glance' (гляжу́, гляди́шь), **горе́ть** 'to burn' (горю́, горя́шь), **греме́ть** 'to thunder' (гремлю́, греми́шь), **гуде́ть** 'to buzz' (гуди́т), **звене́ть** 'to ring' (звеню́, звени́шь), **кипе́ть** 'to boil' (киплю́, кипи́шь), **лете́ть** 'to fly' (лечу́, лети́шь), **свисте́ть** 'to whistle' (свищу́, свисти́шь), **сиде́ть** 'to sit' (сижу́, сиди́шь), **скрипе́ть** 'to creak' (скриплю́, скрипи́шь), **смотре́ть** 'to look' (смотрю́, смотре́шь), **терпе́ть** 'to endure' (терплю́, терпи́шь), **храпе́ть** 'to snore' (храплю́, храпи́шь), **хрипе́ть** 'to wheeze' (хриплю́, хрипи́шь), **шипе́ть** 'to hiss' (шиплю́, шипи́шь), **шуме́ть** 'to make a noise' (шумлю́, шуми́шь). For consonant changes see 222 and for stress changes see 223.

(3) Second-conjugation verbs in **-ать** include:

(i) Many verbs associated with sound, with stems ending in **ж, ч, ш** or **щ**: **бренча́ть** 'to strum' (бренчу́, бренчи́шь); likewise **визжа́ть** 'to scream, squeal', **ворча́ть** 'to growl', **дребезжа́ть** 'to jingle' (third person only), **жужжа́ть** 'to buzz', **звуча́ть** 'to sound' (third person only), **крича́ть** 'to shout', **молча́ть** 'to be silent', **мыча́ть** 'to moo, bellow', **пища́ть** 'to squeak', **рыча́ть** 'to roar', **слы́шать** 'to hear', **стуча́ть** 'to knock', **греща́ть** 'to crackle'.

(ii) A number of other verbs: **гна́ть** 'to drive' (гоню́, гони́шь), **держа́ть** 'to hold' (держу́, де́ржишь), **дрожа́ть** 'to tremble' (дрожу́, дрожи́шь), **дыша́ть** 'to breathe' (дышу́, ды́шишь), **лежа́ть** 'to lie' (лежу́, лежи́шь), **спать** 'to sleep' (сплю́, спи́шь).

(4) **Бояться** 'to fear' conjugates бою́сь, бойи́шься.

222 Consonant change in the conjugation of second-conjugation verbs

A consistent feature of the second conjugation is the mutation of the consonant in the first-person singular of the present tense and future perfective of verbs in **-ИТЬ** and **-ЕТЬ**. This is regular for all second-conjugation verbs with stems ending in **-б-, -в-, -д-, -з-, -с-, -т-, -ф-** (verbs in **-ИТЬ** only), **-м-, -п-** and **-ст-** (verbs in **-ИТЬ** and **-ЕТЬ**).

б : бл	в : вл	д : ж	з : ж
люби́ть	ста́вить	гла́дить	ла́зить
'to love'	'to stand'	'to iron'	'to climb'

я люблю́	ста́влю	гла́жу	ла́жу
ты люби́шь	ста́вишь	гла́дишь	ла́зишь
он люби́т	ста́вит	гла́дит	ла́зит
мы люби́м	ста́вим	гла́дим	ла́зим
вы люби́те	ста́вите	гла́дите	ла́зите
они́ люби́ят	ста́вят	гла́дят	ла́зят

с : ш	т : ч	ф : фл
проси́ть	плати́ть	графи́ть
'to ask'	'to pay'	'to rule' (paper)

я про́шу	плачу́	графи́ю
ты про́сишь . . .	пла́тишь . . .	графи́шь . . .

м : мл

п : пл

корми́ть	шуме́ть	топи́ть	храпе́ть
'to feed'	'to make a noise'	'to heat'	'to snore'

я кормлю́	шумлю́	топлю́	храплю́
ты ко́рмишь . . .	шуми́шь . . .	то́пишь . . .	храпи́шь . . .

ст : щ

мсти́ть	свисте́ть
'to avenge'	'to whistle'

мщу́	сви́щу
мсти́шь . . .	свисти́шь . . .

Note

The mutation **т : щ** affects only certain perfective verbs (e.g. **прекрати́ть** ‘to cease’ (прекращу́, прекрати́шь).

For other verbs affected by consonant changes see **221** (2) and **223** (3) (i), (ii).

223 Stress change in the second conjugation

(1) Many second-conjugation verbs with end-stressed infinitives shift stress from the ending in the first-person singular to the stem in the rest of the conjugation, e.g. **кури́ть** ‘to smoke’ (куру́ю, ку́ришь, ку́рит). Verbs with *stem-stressed* infinitives (e.g. **ве́рить** ‘to believe’) do not undergo stress change in conjugation.

(2) Verbs in **-ить**, **-еть** and **-ать** which undergo stress change in conjugation include the following types:

вари́ть ‘to boil’	смотре́ть ‘to look’	держа́ть ‘to hold’
я ва́рю	смотрю́	держу́
ты ва́ришь	смо́тришь	де́ржишь
он ва́рит	смо́трит	де́ржит
мы ва́рим	смо́трим	де́ржим
вы ва́рите	смо́трите	де́ржите
они́ ва́рят	смо́трят	де́ржат

(3) Other verbs which undergo stress change include the following (those which also undergo *consonant* change (see **222**) are indicated with an asterisk):

(i) Verbs in **-ить**:

* броди́ть	‘to wander’	дружи́ть	‘to be friends’
* буди́ть	‘to awaken’	души́ть	‘to stifle’
* води́ть	‘to lead’	жени́ться	‘to marry’
* вози́ть	‘to convey’	* заблуди́ться	‘to get lost’
вскочи́ть	‘to jump up’	* кати́ть	‘to roll’
* гаси́ть	‘to cancel’	клони́ть	‘to incline’
* грузи́ть	‘to load’	* колоти́ть	‘to hammer’
* дави́ть	‘to press, crush’	* кopíть	‘to accumulate’
дари́ть	‘to present’	* корми́ть	‘to feed’
дели́ть	‘to share’	* кosíть	‘to scythe’
дрази́ть	‘to tease’	* крести́ть	‘to christen’

* купи́ть	'to buy'	* серди́ть	'to anger'
* лепи́ть	'to mould, sculpt'	служи́ть	'to serve'
лечи́ть	'to give treatment'	compounds of	* -станови́ть
* лови́ть	'to catch'	* ступи́ть	'to step'
compounds of	-ложи́ть 'to lay'	* суди́ть	'to judge'
* люби́ть	'to like'	суши́ть	'to dry'
мани́ть	'to entice'	тащи́ть	'to drag'
compounds of	-мени́ть 'to change'	* топи́ть	'to heat'
моли́ть	'to pray'	* торопи́ть	'to hasten'
* молоти́ть	'to thresh'	точи́ть	'to sharpen'
мочи́ть	'to wet'	* трудо́ться	'to labour'
* носи́ть	'to carry'	туши́ть	'to extinguish'
пили́ть	'to saw'	урони́ть	'to drop'
* плати́ть	'to pay'	учи́ть	'to teach'
получи́ть	'to receive'	хва́лить	'to praise'
прова́литься	'to fail'	* ходи́ть	'to go, walk'
* проглоти́ть	'to swallow'	хорони́ть	'to bury'
* проси́ть	'to request'	цени́ть	'to value'
* простуди́ться	'to catch cold'	* черти́ть	'to draw'
* пусти́ть	'to let go'	* шути́ть	'to joke'
* руби́ть	'to chop'	* яви́ть	'to display'
* свети́ть	'to shine'		

Note

Коси́ть 'to squint' has fixed end stress in conjugation.

Some verbs have alternative stress in conjugation:

до́ит or дои́т	'milks'
зу́брит or зубри́т	'swots'
кρόшит or кроши́т	'crumbles'
кרו́жит or кружи́т	'circles'
по́ит or пои́т	'waters'

(ii) Verbs in **-еть**:

* верте́ть 'to spin'	я верчу́	ты ве́ртишь
смотре́ть 'to look'	я смотрею́	ты смóтришь
* терпе́ть 'to endure'	я терплю́	ты те́рпишь

(iii) Verbs in **-ать**:

гна́ть 'to drive'	я гоню́	ты го́нишь
держáть 'to hold'	я держу́	ты де́ржишь
дыша́ть 'to breathe'	я дышу́	ты ды́шишь

224 Irregular verbs

A number of verbs conform to none of the above patterns, or combine elements of both conjugations. They include

бежа́ть 'to run'	есть 'to eat'	хоте́ть 'to want'	да́ть 'to give'
я бежу́	ем	хочу́	дам
ты бежи́шь	ешь	хоче́шь	дашь
он бежи́т	ест	хоче́т	даст
мы бежи́м	еди́м	хоти́м	дади́м
вы бежи́те	еди́те	хоти́те	дади́те
они́ бежу́т	едя́т	хотя́т	даду́т

as well as **читать** 'to honour' (чту, читаешь, читает, читаем, читаете, чтут/чтят).

225 Deficiencies in the conjugation of certain verbs

(1) The following verbs have no first-person singular: **затми́ть** 'to eclipse', **очути́ться** 'to find oneself', **побе́дить** 'to win', **убе́дить** 'to convince', **чуди́ть** 'to behave eccentrically'. However, paraphrases can be used: **могу́ очути́ться** 'I may find myself', **я смогу́ побе́дить** 'I shall win', **мне уда́стся его́ убе́дить** 'I shall convince him', **я не ду́маю чуди́ть** 'I have no intention of behaving eccentrically'. A paraphrase (e.g. **говори́ю де́рзости**) is also required for the first-person singular of **дерзи́ть** 'to be impertinent' (since **держу́**, as the first-person singular of **держáть** 'to hold', is not available).

(2) Some doubt remains about the first-person singular of **пылесоси́ть** (colloquial) 'to Hoover'; **пылесосу́** is recorded, but the paraphrase **убира́ю пылесосом** 'I Hoover' is often preferred.

(3) Some verbs have no first- or second-person singular or plural. They include **звучáть** 'to sound', **знача́ть** 'to mean' ('I mean', 'you mean' etc. are rendered as **хочу́ сказа́ть, хочешь сказа́ть**), **означа́ть** 'to signify', **течь** 'to flow'.

(4) The first and second persons of some other verbs (e.g. **горéть** 'to burn', **кипе́ть** 'to boil') appear in figurative meanings only: **горю́** желáнием у́ехать 'I am burning with a desire to leave', **киплю́** негодовáнием 'I am boiling with indignation'.

(5) **Кúшать** ‘to eat’ should not be used in the first-person singular or plural, while in the second-person singular and plural it can sound cloying, and the third-person forms are addressed mainly to children. ‘To eat’ is best rendered by the verb **есть** (see 224), except in the imperative, where **кúшай!**, **кúшайте!** are preferred. (Note, however, a mother’s strict instruction to her child: **Ешь** всё по порядку! ‘Eat everything in the right order!’ See 229 (2).)

(6) **Слы́хать** ‘to hear’ is used only in the infinitive and past tense (there are, however, no such restrictions on **слы́шать** ‘to hear’).

(7) **Мочь** ‘to be able’ and **хотéть** ‘to want’ are not normally found in the imperfective future. Instead, the perfectives **смочь**, **захотéть** are used, or, in the case of **мочь**, the paraphrase **быть в состоянии** ‘to be capable of’.

226 The verb ‘to be’

(1) The verb **быть** ‘to be’ has no present tense in Russian:

Я русский	I am Russian
Э́то мой муж	This is my husband

(2) A dash may be used for emphasis:

Я русский, а он — нет	I am Russian and he is not
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A dash also appears in definitions:

Москва́ — столица	Moscow is the capital of
Росси́и	Russia

(3) ‘It is’ has no equivalent in many impersonal expressions:

Интересно слу́шать ра́дио	It is interesting to listen to the radio
Темне́ет	It is getting dark
Холо́дно	It is cold

(4) The declarative ‘**there is/are**’ either has no equivalent in Russian or may be rendered by a dash:

На стене́ — карти́на	There is a picture on the wall
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Alternatively, На стене́ **есть** карти́на. See (5).

(5) **Есть**, a relic of a former verb conjugation, may be used for emphasis. **Есть** is particularly common:

Раздаются аплодисменты	There is applause
сидеть в тюрьме	to be in prison
служить в армии	to be in the army
состоять членом	to be a member
стоять на якорё	to be at anchor
Простираются леса́	There are forests
учиться в университете́	to be at university

(9) **Быва́ть** denotes repetition or frequency:

Я ча́сто **быва́ю** в Москвё
I am often in Moscow

В на́шем ресторáne **быва́ют** грибы́
You can sometimes get mushrooms in our restaurant

227 Formation of the imperative

(1) The *familiar* imperative is used in issuing commands to persons one normally addresses as **ты** (see 115). The *formal* imperative, which is used in addressing people whom one would normally address as **вы** (see 115), is made by adding **-те** to the familiar imperative.

(2) The familiar imperative is formed from imperfective and perfective verbs by adding **-й, -и** or **-ь** to the present-future stem (see 212).

(i) Imperative in **-й**

The letter **-й(те)** is added to present-future stems ending in a vowel.

Infinitive	Third-person plural	Stem	Imperative
петь	по-ю́т	по-	по́й(те)
постро́ить	постро́-ят	постро́-	постро́й(те)
рабо́тать	рабо́та-ю́т	рабо́та-	рабо́тай(те)

Note

- (a) The imperatives of **дава́ть** ‘to give’ and compounds of **-дава́ть**, **-знава́ть** and **-ставáть** are as follows: **дава́й(те)** ‘give’, **встава́й(те)** ‘get up’, etc.
- (b) **Бить** ‘to hit’ has the imperative **бей(те)**; **вить** ‘to weave’, **лить** ‘to pour’, **пить** ‘to drink’, **шить** ‘to sew’ form their imperatives in the same way.
- (c) Perfective compounds in **-éхать** (e.g. **приéхать**) have the same

imperative as imperfective compounds in **-ежж́ать** (e.g. **приежж́ать**):
приежж́ай(те)! ‘come!’

(ii) Imperative in -и

The letter **-и(те)** is added to the present-future stem of verbs with *final* or *mobile* stress in conjugation and with a present-future stem ending in a *consonant*.

(a) Final stress throughout conjugation:

Infinitive	Third-person plural	Stem	Imperative
вести́	вед-у́т	вед-	веди́(те)
взять	возь-му́т	возьм-	возьми́(те)
говорить	говор-я́т	говор-	говори́(те)

(b) Mobile stress in conjugation:

держáть	дэ́рж-ат	дэ́рж-	держи́(те)
получи́ть	полу́ч-ат	полу́ч-	получи́(те)
шепта́ть	ше́пч-ут	ше́пч-	шепчи́(те)

(iii) Imperative in -ь

A soft sign is added to the present-future stem of verbs which are *stem-stressed throughout conjugation* and whose present-future stem ends in a *single consonant*.

ве́рить	ве́р-ят	ве́р-	верь(те)
зажа́рить	зажа́р-ят	зажа́р-	зажа́рь(те)
ма́зать	ма́ж-ут	ма́ж-	мажь(те)
пла́кать	пла́ч-ут	пла́ч-	плачь(те)
поста́вить	поста́в-ят	поста́в-	поста́вь(те)

Note

- (a) Apart from many stem-stressed second-conjugation verbs (**знако́мить** ‘to acquaint’ (imper. **знако́нь**), **мно́жить** ‘to multiply’ (imper. **множь**) etc.), this category contains a number of first-conjugation verbs with consonant stems and stress on the stem throughout conjugation: **бы́ть** ‘to be’ (imper. **бу́дь**), **де́ть** ‘to put’ (imper. **де́нь**), **ле́зть** ‘to climb’ (imper. **ле́зь**), **ма́зать** ‘to daub’ (imper. **мажь**), **пря́тать** ‘to hide’ (imper. **пря́чь**), **ре́зать** ‘to cut’ (imper. **режь**), **сесть** ‘to sit down’ (imper. **сядь**), **ста́ть** ‘to stand’ (imper. **стань**). Note **лечь** ‘to lie down’, imper. **ляг** — a soft sign may not appear after a velar consonant.
- (b) Stem-stressed **по́мнить** ‘to remember’ has imperative **по́мни**,

since the stem ends in *two* consonants.

- (c) The third-person imperative is expressed by the particle **пусть** and the third-person singular or plural of the present tense or perfective future: **пусть (она́) пи́шет** ‘let her write’, **пусть (они́) придúт** ‘let them come’.

228 Stress in the imperative

With the exception of a number of monosyllabic imperatives, where the stress necessarily falls on the single syllable (**жди!** ‘wait!’, **пой!** ‘sing!’, **не сме́йся!** ‘don’t laugh!’), stress in the imperative falls on the same syllable as in the first-person singular.

Infinitive	First-person singular	Imperative
гнать	гоню́	гони́!
дыша́ть	дышу́	дыши́!
звать	зову́	зови́!
писа́ть	пишу́	пиши́!
получи́ть	получу́	получи́!
сказа́ть	скажу́	скажи́!
смотре́ть	смотрю́	смотри́!

229 Verbs with no imperative or a little-used imperative

(1) **Видеть** ‘to see’ and **слы́шать** ‘to hear’ do not have imperatives. However, **слу́шай!** ‘listen!’ and **смотри́!** ‘look!’ are commonly used.

(2) **Есть** ‘to eat’ has the imperative **ешь!** However, it is usually replaced by the imperative of **ку́шать**, since the latter has a courteous nuance absent in the rather familiar **ешь!** (see 225 (5)).

230 Formation of the past tense

(1) The past tense of verbs with infinitives in **-ть** and **-сть** is formed by replacing **-ть** or **-сть** by **-л** to give the masculine past:

кури́ть	он кури́л	‘he was smoking’
писа́ть	он писа́л	‘he was writing’
сказа́ть	он сказа́л	‘he said’

упасть	он упáл	‘he fell’
покраснеть	он покраснёл	‘he blushed’

(2) The feminine, neuter and plural are formed by adding **-а**, **-о** and **-и** respectively to the masculine:

он писáл/упáл	(masculine)
онá писáла/упáла	(feminine)
онó писáло/упáло	(neuter)
мы, вы, онí писáли/упáли	(plural)

(3) The past agrees with the subject of the verb in *number* (singular or plural) and *gender* (masculine, feminine or neuter):

я писáл	I was writing (male subject)
я писáла	I was writing (female subject)
ты писáл	you were writing (male subject)
ты писáла	you were writing (female subject)
он писáл	he was writing
онá писáла	she was writing
онó писáло	it was writing
мы, вы, онí писáли	we, you, they were writing

Note

Учётся ‘to take into account’, past учёл, учлá, учлó, учли́ (similarly other compounds of -честь).

231 Verbs with no -л in the masculine past tense

Some types of verb have no -л in the masculine past tense.

(1) Verbs in -ереть

тереть ‘to rub’: **тёр** тёрла тёрло тёрли

Similarly **запереть** ‘to lock’ (он зáпер/онá заперлá/онí зáперли ‘he/she/they locked’), **умереть** ‘to die’ (он ўмер/онá умерлá/онí ўмерли ‘he/she/they died’).

(2) Verbs in -нуть-

The suffix **-нуть-** is optional in the masculine past of *imperfective* stem-stressed verbs which indicate a change in state:

гáснуть ‘to be extinguished’: **гас/гáснул** гáсла гáсло гáсли

Similarly:

вѣзнуть	‘to stick fast’	крѣпнуть	‘to get stronger’
гѣбнуть	‘to perish’	мѣркнуть	‘to grow dim’
глохнуть	‘to go deaf’	пахнуть	‘to smell’
дохнуть	‘to die’ (of animals)	слѣпнуть	‘to go blind’
кѣснуть	‘to turn sour’	сохнуть	‘to become dry’

Note

- (a) Some imperfectives in **-нуть** are now often replaced by secondary imperfectives:

гаснуть	погасать	‘to be extinguished’
гѣбнуть	погибать	‘to perish’
мѣрзнуть	замерзать	‘to freeze’
сохнуть	просыхать	‘to become dry’
тухнуть	потухать	‘to be extinguished’

- (b) Stem-stressed *perfective* verbs in **-нуть** which indicate a change in state (**замѣрзнуть** ‘to freeze’, **привыкнуть** ‘to get used to’ etc.) do *not* have optional **-ну-** in the masculine past: он **замѣрз**, **привык** etc.
- (c) Verbs in **-ну-** which denote instantaneous actions (e.g. **прыгнуть** ‘to jump’) retain the suffix in all past forms: он **прыгнул** ‘he jumped’.

(3) Verbs in **-ти**

Verbs in **-ти** (except for those with present-future stems in **-д** and **-т**, e.g. **вести** ‘to lead’, past **вѣл**, **велá**, **велó**, **вели**; **мести** ‘to sweep’, past **мѣл**, **мелá**, **мелó**, **мели**).

б-stems	з-stems	с-stems	ст-stems
грести	везти	нести	расти
‘to row’	‘to convey’	‘to carry’	‘to grow’
грѣб	вѣз	нѣс	рос
грѣблá	вѣзлá	неслá	рослá
грѣблó	вѣзлó	неслó	рослó
грѣбли	вѣзли	несли	росли

Note

Пастѣ ‘to tend, graze’ (past **пас**, **паслá**), **ползти** ‘to crawl’ (**полз**, **ползлá**), **скрести** ‘to scour, claw’ (**скрѣб**, **скрѣблá**), **трясти** ‘to shake’ (**тряс**, **тряслá**).

(4) Verbs in **-зть**

These include **грызть** ‘to gnaw’ (past **грыз**, **грѣзла**, **грѣзло**, **грѣзли**)

and **лезть** ‘to climb’.

(5) Verbs in **-чь**

г-stems	к-stems
беречь	печь
‘to look after’	‘to bake’
берёг	пёк
берегла́	пекла́
берегло́	пекло́
берегли́	пекли́

The past of other verbs in **-чь** is as follows:

влечь ‘to pull, draw’	влёк, влекла́, влекло́, влекли́
достичь ‘to achieve’	достиг, достига́, достигло́, достигли́
жечь ‘to burn’	жёг, жгла́, жгло́, жгли́
лечь ‘to lie down’	лёг, легла́, легло́, легли́
мочь ‘to be able’	мог, могла́, могло́, могли́
напрячь ‘to strain’	напряг, напряга́, напрягло́, напрягли́
пренебречь ‘to disdain’	пренебрёг, -брегла́, -брегло́, -брегли́
сечь ‘to cut’	сёк, секла́, секло́, секли́
стеречь ‘to guard’	стерёг, стерегла́, стерегло́, стерегли́
стричь ‘to cut’ (hair)	стриг, стри́гла, стри́гло, стри́гли
течь ‘to flow’	тёк, текла́, текло́, текли́

(6) Compounds of **-шибить**

Perfective compounds of **-шибить** (e.g. **ушибить** ‘to bruise’) have past tense **-шиб**, **-шибла**, **-шибло**, **-шибли**.

232 Mobile stress in the past tense of verbs

Most past-tense forms from verbs in **-ть** have the same stress as the infinitive. There are, however, a number of verbs which have:

(1) End stress in the feminine past

Most of them are monosyllabic verbs and their prefixed derivatives:

(i) Unprefixed verbs

быть 'to be': был **была́** было **были**

Similarly **брать/взять** 'to take', **вить** 'to twine', **гнать** 'to drive', **дать** 'to give', **драть** 'to flay', **ждать** 'to wait', **жить** 'to live', **звать** 'to call', **лить** 'to pour', **пить** 'to drink', **плыть** 'to swim', **рвать** 'to tear', **слыть** 'to have the reputation of being', **спать** 'to sleep', **ткать** 'to weave'.

Note

- (a) **Дать** 'to give' has alternative neuter stress **да́ло** or **дало́**.
 (b) **Не** is stressed when combined with the masculine, neuter and plural past forms of **быть** (**не́** был, не **была́**, **не́** было, **не́** были) and *may* be stressed when combined with the masculine, neuter and plural forms of the verbs **жить** and **дать**: **не́** жил, не **жилá**, **не́** жило, **не́** жили *or* не **жи́л**, не **жилá**, не **жи́ло**, не **жи́ли**; **не́** дал, не **далá**, **не́** дало, **не́** дали *or* не **да́л**, не **далá**, не **да́ло**, не **да́ли**.

(ii) Prefixed verbs

- (a) **Собрать** 'to collect': **собра́л**, **собрала́**, **собра́ло**, **собра́ли**.

Similarly **взорва́ть** 'to blow up', **добы́ть** 'to acquire', **избра́ть** 'to elect', **разда́ть** 'to distribute', **сда́ть** 'to surrender', **сня́ть** 'to take off', **убра́ть** 'to clear away' etc.

- (b) **Заня́ть** 'to occupy': **за́нял**, **заняла́**, **за́няло**, **за́няли**.

Similarly **заперё́ть** 'to lock' (**за́пер**, **заперла́**), **нача́ть** 'to begin', **отперё́ть** 'to unlock', **подня́ть** 'to pick up', **поя́нить** 'to understand', **приня́ть** 'to accept', **умерё́ть** 'to die' (**у́мер**, **умерла́**) etc.

Note

Зада́ть 'to set' has alternative stem and prefix stress in the masculine, neuter and plural past: **за́дал**, **задалá**, **за́дало**, **за́дали**, *or* **зада́л**, **задалá**, **зада́ло**, **зада́ли**. Similarly **нали́ть** 'to pour', **обня́ть** 'to embrace', **отда́ть** 'to give back', **подня́ть** 'to raise', **поли́ть** 'to water', **продáть** 'to sell', **прожи́ть** 'to live, spend' (a certain time), **созда́ть** 'to create' etc. **Переда́ть** 'to hand over' has the past forms **пе́редал**, **передалá**, **пе́редало**, **пе́редали**.

- (2) End stress in the feminine, neuter and plural

This affects:

- (i) A number of reflexive verbs, e.g.

собра́ться 'to assemble': **собра́лся**, **собрала́сь**, **собра́лось**,
собрали́сь

Similarly **братъся/взяться** ‘to get down to’, **дождаться** ‘to wait until’, **оторваться** ‘to be torn away from’, **создаться** ‘to be created’, **удаться** ‘to succeed’ (план удался ‘the plan succeeded’, мне удалось ‘I succeeded’).

(ii) All verbs in **-ти**:

блюсти́ ‘to conserve’	блюл, блюла́, блюло́, блюли́
брести́ ‘to wander’	брёл, брела́, брело́, брели́
везти́ ‘to convey’	вёз, везла́, везло́, везли́
вести́ ‘to lead’	вёл, вела́, вело́, вели́
гrestí ‘to row’	грёб, грела́, грело́, грели́
идти́ ‘to go’	шёл, шла́, шло́, шли́
мести́ ‘to sweep’	мёл, мела́, мело́, мели́
нести́ ‘to carry’	нёс, несла́, несло́, несли́
обрести́ ‘to acquire’	обрёл, обрела́, обрело́, обрели́
паст́и ‘to tend’	пас, пасла́, пасло́, пасли́
плести́ ‘to weave’	плёл, плела́, плело́, плели́
ползти́ ‘to crawl’	полз, ползла́, ползло́, ползли́
расти́ ‘to grow’	рос, росла́, росло́, росли́
скрести́ ‘to scour’	скрёб, скрела́, скребло́, скребли́
трясти́ ‘to shake’	тряс, трясла́, трясло́, трясли́
цвести́ ‘to flower’	цвёл, цвела́, цвело́, цвели́

(iii) Most verbs in **-чь** (see 231 (5)).

(3) Reflexive endings stressed throughout

начаться ‘to begin’: **начался́, началась́, началось́, начались́**

Similarly **заняться** ‘to occupy oneself’ (with alternative masculine занялся).

233 Formation of the future (imperfective and perfective)

(1) The imperfective future

The compound future (imperfective) consists of the relevant form of the future tense of **быть** and the imperfective infinitive:

я б́уду отды́хать	I shall rest
ты б́удешь отды́хать	you will rest
он, она́, оно́ б́удет отды́хать	he, she, it will rest
мы б́удем отды́хать	we shall rest

ВЫ бўдете ОТДЫХАТЬ	you will rest
ОНИ бўдут ОТДЫХАТЬ	they will rest

Note

- (a) **Бўду** is also used as a future in its own right: Лѐтом он **бўдет** в Санкт-Петербургѐ ‘In the summer he will be in St Petersburg’.
- (b) In some contexts it implies suspicion (ВЫ кто **бўдете**? ‘Who might you be?’), approximation (Емў **бўдет** 50 лет ‘He must be about 50’) and is used in arithmetic (шѐстью шѐсть **бўдет** 36 ‘six sixes are 36’ (see 210)).

(2) The perfective future

The perfective future is expressed by conjugating a perfective verb. The same endings are used as those used with imperfective verbs in rendering the present tense:

я пишў	(impf.)	письмў	‘I am writing a letter’
я напишў	(pf.)	письмў	‘I shall write a letter’
она читает	(impf.)	статью	‘she is reading the article’
она прочитает	(pf.)	статью	‘she will read the article’

See 215–223 for conjugation patterns, 238–253 for the formation of aspects and 263–268 for differentiation of imperfective and perfective usage in the future.

234 The buffer vowel -o- in conjugation

In many verbs the vowel **-o-** appears between a prefix ending in a consonant and a verb form which begins with two or more consonants or with a consonant + soft sign. This may affect:

(1) *All* perfective forms:

Infinitive	Past	Future	Imperative
совр́ать ‘to lie’	совр́ал	совр́у	совр́и(те)
отосл́ать ‘to send away’	отосл́ал	отосл́ю	отосл́и(те)

(2) The **future, imperative and feminine, neuter and plural past**:

сжечь ‘to burn’	сжѐг	сожгў	сожги́(те)
	сожѓла		
	сожѓло		
	сожѓли		

(3) The **infinitive** and **past tense** only:

разобрáть	‘to discern’	разобрáл	разберу́	разбери́(те)
отозва́ть	‘to recall’	отозва́л	отзову́	отзови́(те)
разогна́ть	‘to disperse’	разогна́л	разгоню́	разгони́(те)

(4) The **future** and **imperative** only:

сжать	‘to compress’	сжал	сожму́	сожми́(те)
отперёть	‘to unlock’	отпер	отопру́	отопри́(те)

(5) The **future** only (compounds of -бить, -вить, -лить, -пить, -шить):

разб́ить	‘to smash’	разб́ил	разбью́	разбей́(те)
сши́ть	‘to sew’	сшил	сошью́	сшей́(те)

Aspect

235 The aspect. Introductory comments

(1) The Russian verb system is dominated by the concept of **aspect**.

(2) Most Russian verbs have *two* aspects, an **imperfective** and a **perfective**, formally differentiated in one of the following ways:

(i) By prefixation: imperfective писа́ть/perfective написа́ть.

(ii) By internal modification: imperfective забыва́ть/perfective забы́ть ‘to forget’; imperfective пуска́ть/perfective пусти́ть ‘to let go’.

(iii) By derivation from entirely different roots: imperfective говори́ть/perfective сказа́ть ‘to say’.

(iv) In a few instances, by stress: imperfective насыпа́ть/perfective насыпáть ‘to pour’; imperfective среза́ть/perfective среза́ть ‘to cut down’.

Note

Where aspect is differentiated by stress, the imperfectives are conjugated like **знать** and the perfectives like first-conjugation verbs with consonant stems (type II; see 217).

(3) *Both* aspects are used in the past and future, the imperative and the infinitive. However, only the *imperfective* is used in the present tense.

(4) Most verbs thus have five finite forms, e.g. imperfective **пить**/perfective **выпить** ‘to drink’:

	Past	Present	Future
Impf.	я пил	я пью	я буду пить
Pf.	я выпил	—	я выпью

(5) The fundamental distinction between the aspects is that the **imperfective**:

(i) focuses on **an action in progress**.

Он **пил/пьёт/будет пить** молоко
He **was, is, will be drinking** milk

(ii) denotes **frequency** of occurrence:

Он **часто пил, пьёт, будет пить** молоко
He often **drank, drinks, will drink** milk

The **perfective**, by contrast, emphasizes **successful completion and result**:

Я **выпил** молоко **I have drunk** the milk
Я **выпью** молоко **I shall drink** the milk

(Note, as a *result*, there is, will be no milk left.)

Note

The perfective past can render *both* perfect *and* pluperfect tenses. Thus, Он написал письмо can mean, in context, either ‘**He has** written a letter’ or ‘**He had** written a letter’.

(6) The aspects may also distinguish attempted action (imperfective) from successfully completed action (perfective). Compare

Он **уговаривал** (impf.) меня остаться
He **tried to persuade** me to stay

Он **уговорил** (pf.) меня остаться
He **persuaded** me to stay

Note

Aspectival usage is dealt with in **255–283**.

236 Verbs with one aspect only

(1) While most verbs have two aspects, some have an imperfective only:

госпóдствовать	‘to dominate’
завísеть	‘to depend’
изобíловать	‘to abound’
наблюдáть	‘to observe’
находíться	‘to be situated’
нуждáться	‘to need’
отрицáть	‘to deny’
повиновáться	‘to obey’
подлежáть	‘to be subject to’
полагáть	‘to assume’
предвídеть	‘to foresee’
предсто́ять	‘to be imminent’
предчу́ствовать	‘to have a premonition’
преобладáть	‘to prevail’
преслédовать	‘to persecute’
принадлежáть	‘to belong’
противорéчить	‘to contradict’
содержáть	‘to contain’
состоять	‘to consist’
сочу́ствовать	‘to sympathize’
стóить	‘to cost’
учáствовать	‘to participate’

Note

Утверждáть has no perfective in the meaning ‘to affirm’ but has perfective **утвердítь** in the meaning ‘to fix, establish’.

(2) Other verbs are perfective only (many though not all of these denote precipitate action):

воспрáнуть	‘to cheer up’
встрепену́ться	‘to start’ (with surprise)
грáнуть	‘to burst out, ring out’
очутíться	‘to find oneself’
пона́добиться	‘to be needed, come in handy’
хлы́нуть	‘to gush’

237 Bi-aspectual verbs

(1) Some verbs are bi-aspectual, that is, imperfective and perfective are represented by one verb form (though some also have alternative

imperfectives: **образовать** (imperfective and perfective) ‘to form’, alternative imperfective **образовывать**). There are many bi-aspectuals in **-овать** and **-изировать**. (Some of these have alternative perfectives, e.g. biaspectual **финансировать** ‘to finance’, pf. also **профинансировать**, similarly **инструктировать/проинструктировать** ‘to brief’, **координировать/скоординировать** ‘to coordinate’, **реставрировать/отреставрировать** ‘to restore’.)

(2) Among the commonest bi-aspectuals are **атаковать** ‘to attack’, **велеть** ‘to order, bid’, **воздействовать** ‘to have an effect on’, **гармонизировать** ‘to harmonize’, **жениться** ‘to marry’ (of a man marrying a woman – the perfective **пожениться** is used only when both partners are joint subjects of the verb: **Они поженились** ‘They got married’), **использовать** ‘to use’, **исследовать** ‘to research’, **казнить** ‘to execute’, **коллективизировать** ‘to collectivize’, **конфисковать** ‘to confiscate’, **крестить** ‘to christen’ (alternative perfective **окрестить**), **миновать** ‘to pass by’, **наследовать** ‘to inherit’ (alternative perfective **унаследовать**), **обещать** ‘to promise’ (alternative perfective **пообещать**), **оборудовать** ‘to equip’, **ранить** ‘to wound’, **родиться** ‘to be born’ (alternative imperfective **рождаться**), **сочетать** ‘to combine’.

(3) Thus, for example, **исследую** can mean both ‘I research’ and ‘I shall/will research’. Ambiguity may be resolved by contrastive adverbs, as follows:

Положение **постепенно** стабилизируется
The situation is gradually stabilizing

Положение **скоро** стабилизируется
The situation will soon stabilize

Note

Imperfective **бежать** ‘to run’ is also perfective in the meaning ‘to escape’; imperfective **приветствовать** ‘to greet’ is also perfective in the past tense; in the past tense, bi-aspectual **организовать** ‘to organize’ (imperfective also **организовывать**) is perfective only.

238 Formation of the aspects

Most pairs of verbal aspects arise in one of the following ways:

(1) Through the addition of a **prefix** to the imperfective to make the perfective:

читать (impf.) прочитать (pf.) ‘to read’

(2) Through **internal modification** involving:

(i) The insertion of a syllable into the stem infinitive:

завязать (pf.)	завязывать (impf.)	'to tie'
сосредоточить (pf.)	сосредоточивать (impf.)	'to concentrate'
разбить (pf.)	разбивать (impf.)	'to smash'

(ii) A change in conjugation, an *imperfective* first-conjugation verb in **-а/-я-** being paired with a *perfective* second-conjugation verb in **-и/-е-**:

бросать (impf.)	бросить (pf.)	'to throw'
загорать (impf.)	загореть (pf.)	'to acquire a tan'

239 Formation of the perfective by prefixation

(1) An imperfective verb may become perfective through the addition of a **prefix**:

писать (impf.)	написать (pf.)	'to write'
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(2) The conjugation of a perfective verb gives it **future** meaning:

Я напишú это письмо
I shall write this letter (= get it written)

(3) While the choice of perfective prefixes appears in most cases to be arbitrary, some prefixes are associated with particular meanings; for example, **на-** is associated with verbs of printing, writing and drawing (**напечатать**, **написать**, **нарисовать**), **у-** with verbs of perception (**увидеть**, **узнать**, **услышать**), and so on.

(4) All common prefixes (except for **в-** and **до-**) participate in the process of perfectivization:

Imperfective	Perfective	
кипятить	вскипятить	to boil
учить	выучить	to learn
платить	заплатить	to pay
купать	искупать	to bathe
писать	написать	to write
сиротеть	осиротеть	to be orphaned
редактировать	отредактировать	to edit
ночевать	переночевать	to spend the night
смотреть	посмотреть	to look

ждать	подождать	to wait
грозить	пригрозить	to threaten
читать	прочитать	to read
будить	разбудить	to awaken
петь	спеть	to sing
видеть	увидеть	to see

240 Functions of the perfective prefixes

(1) The perfective prefixes tend to be semantically neutral, that is, they change the *aspect* of a verb but *not* its meaning. Thus, both **будить** and **разбудить** mean ‘to awaken’, but **будить** describes the progress of the action, without any reference to result, whereas the perfective **разбудить** stresses the result:

Я его **будил**, **будил** и, наконец, **разбудил**
I tried and tried to wake him, and finally woke him

(2) The *imperfective* verb describes:

(i) A past, present or future action in progress:

Он **учил** урок/**учит** урок/**будет учить** урок
He **was learning/is learning/will be learning** the lesson

(ii) Repeated actions:

Она **платила/платит/будет платить** регулярно
She **paid/pays/will pay** regularly

(3) The *perfective* focuses on the *completion* of a single action in the past or future. Usually, a result is implied:

Она **написала** письмо
She has written a letter (it is ready to send)

Она **прочитала** книгу
She has read the book (now *you* can read it, or it can be returned to the library)

Она **заплатит** за электричество
She will pay the electricity (the account will be settled)

(4) Often the perfective denotes the *culmination of a process*:

Она **приготовила** ужин She cooked dinner

In this example the culmination of the action, expressed by the

perfective **пригото́вила**, will have been preceded by a process of indeterminate length (она́ **гото́вила** у́жин ‘she **was cooking** dinner’), the completion of which is denoted by the perfective.

241 Semantic differentiation of aspects

In some verbs it is possible to detect at least a minor measure of semantic differentiation between imperfective and perfective. Thus, the imperfective past of **видеть** ‘to see’ contains a nuance (‘to associate with’)

Я **ви́дел** его́ вчера́ I saw him yesterday

which the perfective **увидеть** contains in the future, but *not* in the past. Compare

Я **увиде́л** его́ вчера́
I caught sight of him (but *not* ‘saw, associated with him’) yesterday

and

Я **увиджу́** его́ за́втра
I shall see him (i.e. ‘meet, associate with him’) tomorrow

Я **увиджу́** его́, как то́лько он войдёт
I shall catch sight of him as soon as he comes in

242 Submeanings of perfectives

Apart from the resultative meaning (see **240** (3)), the perfective has a number of submeanings.

(1) **The inceptive**, denoting the beginning of an action. This meaning is often conveyed by the prefix **за-**:

заболе́ть	to fall ill
заговори́ть	to start speaking
закури́ть	to light up
замолча́ть	to fall silent
запе́ть	to burst into song
запла́кать	to burst into tears
засмея́ться	to burst out laughing
зацвести́	to blossom

Note

- (a) Only some of these verbs have imperfectives: **заболе́вать, закру́ривать, запевáть, зацветáть**. Where a verb has no imperfective, a paraphrase may be possible: **залива́ться сме́хом** ‘to burst out laughing’, **облива́ться слезáми** ‘to burst into tears’.
- (b) The meaning of inception also adheres to the perfective aspects of unidirectional verbs of motion (он **пошёл** ‘he set out’) (see also **326**) and to the perfectives **полюби́ть, понравиться**: Вы **любите литерату́ру?** Да, я **полюби́л** её ещё в шко́ле (Vasilenko) ‘Do you like literature?’ ‘Yes, **I took a liking to it** when still at school’. Compare Вам **пона́вится** фильм ‘You **will like** the film’.
- (c) Inception can also be expressed by the prefixes **вз-/вс-** and **раз/рас-**: **встрево́житься** ‘to get alarmed’, **рассерди́ться** ‘to get angry’.
- (2) The **instantaneous** or **semelfactive** submeaning:

Он **услы́шал** мой го́лос
He heard, caught the sound of my voice

Note

Instantaneous meanings are often expressed by perfectives with the suffix **-ну-**:

Он **чи́ркнул** спи́чкой He struck a match

Other semelfactives include **кри́кнуть** ‘to shout’, **махну́ть** ‘to wave’, **плюну́ть** ‘to spit’ etc.

- (3) The submeaning of **limited duration** (prefix **по-**):

поговори́ть	to have a chat
посиде́ть	to sit for a while
поспа́ть	to have a nap

Note

- (a) **По-** can impart the meaning of limited duration to verbs which form their ‘neutral’ perfectives with other prefixes:

написа́ть (neutral pf.)	пописа́ть ‘to write for a while’
прочита́ть (neutral pf.)	почита́ть ‘to read for a while’

- (b) See **249** for imperfective submeanings.

243 Formation of verbal aspects by internal modification

Many aspectual pairs are created as the result of internal modification,

(5) Of two adjacent vowels in a compound perfective, the second is replaced by **-ива-** in the imperfective: pf. отта́ять ‘to thaw out’ impf. отта́ивать (there are exceptions, e.g. pf. зате́ять ‘to undertake’, impf. затева́ть).

245 Vowel mutation in secondary imperfective verbs

(1) The vowel **e** becomes **ě** under stress in the secondary imperfective, thus (based on root verb **чеса́ть** ‘to scratch’):

причеса́ться (pf.)/приче́сываться (impf.) ‘to comb one’s hair’

Similarly,

завоева́ть (pf.)/завое́вывать (impf.) ‘to conquer’

(2) In similar circumstances, **o** becomes **a** in the secondary imperfective:

зарабо́тать (pf.)/зараба́тывать (impf.) ‘to earn’
раскопа́ть (pf.)/раска́пывать (impf.) ‘to excavate’

Note

The **o : a** mutation does *not* affect verbs in **-овать**: pf. образо́вать ‘to form’, impf. образóвывать.

246 Secondary imperfectives based on second-conjugation verbs

(1) A process similar to that described in **244** is used to form secondary imperfectives from second-conjugation verbs, but with the following differences:

(i) The suffix **-ив-** is used instead of **-ыв-**.

(ii) Consonant mutation operates, e.g. **с : ш** in

краси́ть (impf.)	→	окраси́ть (neutral pf.) ‘to paint’
↓		
перекраси́ть (pf. with new meaning ‘to repaint’)	→	перекра́шивать (impf. ‘to repaint’)

Note that **o** mutates to **a** in stressed position:

рассмо́т্রে́ть (pf.)/рассма́тривать (impf.) ‘to scrutinize’
приговори́ть (pf.)/приговáривать (impf.) ‘to sentence’

Similarly pf. заподóзрить ‘to suspect’, impf. заподáзривать; pf. закóнчить ‘to conclude’, impf. закáнчивать; pf. оспóрить ‘to dispute’, impf. оспáривать; подготóвить ‘to prepare, train’, impf. подготáвливать; pf. приспособóбить ‘to adapt’, impf. приспособáбливать.

Note

- (a) In some secondary imperfectives, **о** and **а** are stylistically differentiated, **о** being characteristic of literary style, **а** of a more conversational style: thus pf. сосредотóчить ‘to concentrate’/impf. сосредотóчивать or сосредотáчивать. Similarly, pf. обуслóвить, ‘to condition’, impf. обуслóвливать/обуслáвливать.
- (b) Some imperfectives retain **о**: pf. опорóчить ‘to discredit’, impf. опорóчивать; pf. отсрóчить ‘to defer’, impf. отсрóчивать; pf. подытóжить, ‘to sum up’, impf. подытóживать; pf. приурóчить ‘to time’, impf. приурóчивать; pf. уполномóчить ‘to authorize’, impf. уполномóчивать; pf. упрóчить ‘to consolidate’, impf. упрóчивать.

(2) Of two adjacent vowels in a compound perfective, the second is replaced by **-ива-** in the imperfective. The mutation **о : а** operates (pf. успокóбить ‘to reassure’, impf. успокáивать):

pf. приклéить ‘to stick to’	impf. приклéивать
pf. устрóить ‘to arrange’	impf. устрáивать

247 Consonant mutation in secondary imperfectives based on second-conjugation verbs

Standard consonant mutations are observed in deriving secondary imperfectives from second-conjugation perfective verbs.

б : бл	приспособóбить ‘to adapt’	impf. приспособáбливать
в : вл	выздороветь ‘to recover’	impf. выздорáвливать
д : ж	проследить ‘to track’	impf. прослéживать
з : ж	заморóзить ‘to freeze’	impf. заморáживать
м : мл	вскормить ‘to rear’	impf. вскармливать
п : пл	затопить ‘to heat’	impf. затáпливать
с : ш	взвэсить ‘to weigh’	impf. взвéшивать
ст : щ	вырастить ‘to grow’	impf. выращивать
т : ч	оплатить ‘to pay’	impf. оплачивать

Note

- (a) Absence of mutation in pf. захватить ‘to seize’, impf. захвáты-

вать, pf. проглот^{ить} ‘to swallow’, impf. проглат^{ывать}, pf. сброс^{ить} ‘to drop, throw down’, impf. сбрас^{ывать}.

- (b) ‘Reverse mutation’ (ч : к) in pf. выскоч^{ить} ‘to jump out’, impf. выскаки^{вать}, pf. перекрич^{ать} ‘to shout down’, impf. перекрики^{вать}.

248 Secondary imperfectives based on monosyllabic verbs

(1) Secondary imperfectives derive from the compound prefixed perfectives of many monosyllabic verbs by the insertion of the suffix **-ва-** after the root vowel of the perfective. Thus:

бить (impf) → поб^{ить} (neutral pf.) ‘to hit’
 ↓
 заб^{ить} (pf. with new meaning ‘to score’) → забив^{ать} (impf.) ‘to score’

Similarly,

pf. за ^{ить} ‘to heal’	impf. зажив ^{ать}
pf. над ^{еть} ‘to put on’	impf. надев ^{ать}
pf. нали ^{ть} ‘to pour’	impf. наливав ^{ать}
pf. откр ^{ыть} ‘to open’	impf. открыв ^{ать}

Note

The initial consonant of the syllable inserted into compounds of monosyllabic verbs in the formation of secondary imperfectives is often identical with that which appears in the first-person singular of the conjugation of the stem verb.

Perfective	Imperfective	First-person singular of stem verb
заж ^{ечь} ‘to ignite’	зажиг ^{ать}	жгу (from ж ^{ечь} ‘to burn’)
перес ^{ечь} ‘to intersect’	пересека ^{ть}	секу́ (from с ^{ечь} ‘to cut’)
сгр ^{ести} ‘to rake together’	сгреб ^{ать}	гребу́ (from гр ^{ести} ‘to row’)
сж ^{ать} ‘to compress’	сжим ^{ать}	жму (from ж ^{ать} ‘to squeeze’)
уч ^{сть} ‘to take into consideration’	учи ^{тывать}	чту (from ч ^{сть} ‘to consider’)

Note also pf. раз^{есть} ‘to corrode’, impf. раз^{еда́ть} (cf. -д- in, for example, ед^{а́} ‘food’).

(2) The suffix **-ы-** or **-и-** is inserted between two initial consonants in the stem verb to form the imperfective:

pf. вызвать ‘to call out, cause’	impf. вызыва́ть
pf. вырвать ‘to tear out’	impf. вырыва́ть
pf. отослать ‘to send away’	impf. отсыла́ть
pf. собрать ‘to collect’	impf. собира́ть

249 Submeanings of some prefixed imperfectives

Some imperfective verbs with the prefixes **пере-**, **по-** or **при-** have the following submeanings, as distinct from the standard imperfective meanings of duration and frequency:

(1) Reflexives with the prefix **пере-** denote joint action (mostly imperfective only): **переписываться** ‘to correspond’, **перестукиваться** ‘to communicate by knocking’, **перешёптываться** ‘to exchange whispers’.

Note

Some verbs of this type have perfectives: **переглядываться** (impf.)/**перегляну́ться** (pf.) ‘to exchange glances’, **перемигиваться** (impf.)/**перемигну́ться** (pf.) ‘to wink at each other’.

(2) Verbs in **по-** with the iterative ending **-ивать/-ывать** denote the intermittent performance of a short-lived action, e.g. **посвистывать** ‘to whistle every now and again’. The mutations **е:ё** and **о:а** operate: **поблёскивать** ‘to glint’ (cf. **блестеть** ‘to shine’), **посматривать** ‘to steal glances at’ (cf. **смотреть** ‘to look’). Compare

Голова́ у меня́ **побаливает**
I keep getting headaches

Шпиль **поблёскивает** на со́лнце
The spire glints in the sun

Ма́слово флегмати́чно **позёвывал** (Yakhontov)
Maslov kept yawning in a phlegmatic sort of way

Бе́режно, **постаны́вая** и **покряхты́вая**, он опуска́ется вниз
(Rasputin)
He descends cautiously, groaning and wheezing intermittently

Note

- (a) Verbs in this category have no perfective.
(b) Other verbs of this type include **поглаживать** from **гла́дить** ‘to stroke’, **подёргивать** from **де́ргать** ‘to tug’, **покашливать** from **ка́шлять** ‘to cough’, **помаргивать** from **морга́ть** ‘to blink’,

поси́живать from **сиде́ть** ‘to sit’, **посту́кивать** from **стуча́ть** ‘to knock’, **почи́тывать** from **чита́ть** ‘to read’.

(3) Verbs in **при-** with the suffix **-ва-** or **-ива-/ыва-** may denote actions accompanying other actions: **припева́ть** ‘to sing along’, **приплы́сывать** ‘to skip up and down’, **прито́пывать** ‘to stamp one’s feet’ (e.g. in time to music).

Note

Verbs in this category have no perfectives.

250 The differentiation of aspects by conjugation

(1) Many aspectual pairs consist of a first-conjugation imperfective in **-ать/-ять** and a second-conjugation perfective in **-ить** (or **-еть**). This affects:

(i) A number of unprefixated verbs (imperfectives first):

броса́ть	бро́сить	‘to throw’
конча́ть	ко́нчить	‘to finish’
лиша́ть	лиши́ть	‘to deprive’
реша́ть	реши́ть	‘to decide, resolve’

(ii) More especially, prefixed verbs:

включа́ть	включи́ть	‘to switch on’
выполня́ть	вы́полнить	‘to fulfil’
выступа́ть	вы́ступить	‘to appear, perform’
загора́ть	загоре́ть	‘to get sun-tanned’

Note

Покупа́ть, купи́ть ‘to buy’ (prefixed imperfective/unprefixated perfective).

(2) In many pairs the imperfective has *end* stress and the perfective *stem* stress: доверя́ть, дове́рить ‘to trust’; измеря́ть, изме́рить ‘to measure’; наруша́ть, нару́шить ‘to disrupt’; позволя́ть, позво́лить ‘to allow’; улучша́ть, улу́чить ‘to improve’ etc.

(3) The usual consonant mutations apply to many verbs of this type:

б : бл	pf. употреби́ть ‘to use’	impf. употребля́ть
в : вл	pf. оста́вить ‘to leave’	impf. оставля́ть
д : ж	pf. заряди́ть ‘to load’	impf. заряжа́ть
д : жд	pf. награди́ть ‘to reward’	impf. награжда́ть

з : ж	pf. отразить ‘to reflect’	imprf. отражать
п : пл	pf. прикрепить ‘to attach, fasten’	imprf. прикреплять
с : ш	pf. пригласить ‘to invite’	imprf. приглашать
ст : ск	pf. пустить ‘to let go’	imprf. пускать
ст : щ	pf. угостить ‘to treat’	imprf. угощать
т : ч	pf. заметить ‘to notice’	imprf. замечать
т : щ	pf. запретить ‘to ban’	imprf. запрещать

Note

- (a) Double perfectivization (imperfective first) in **вешать, повесить** ‘to hang’, **кусать, укусить** ‘to bite’, **ронять, уронить** ‘to drop’, **сажать, посадить** ‘to seat’ and **стрелять, выстрелить** ‘to shoot’.
- (b) Some prefixed derivatives of **менять** ‘to change’ are imperfective, with a perfective in **-менить: заменять/заменить** ‘to replace’, **изменять/изменить** ‘to alter’, **отменять/отменить** ‘to cancel’. Others acquire perfective meaning, with an imperfective in **-менивать: обменивать/обменять** ‘to exchange’, **разменивать/разменять** ‘to change’ (money to smaller denominations).

251 Aspectival pairs with different roots

The verbs in some aspectival pairs derive from different roots. These include (imperfective first) the following:

бить	ударить	‘to strike’
брать	взять	‘to take’
говорить	сказать	‘to say’
класть	положить	‘to put, place’
ловить	поймать	‘to catch’

252 Verbs which are reflexive in the imperfective aspect only

Some verbs are reflexive in the imperfective aspect only. These include:

- (1) Some verbs of sitting, lying and standing:

ложиться	лечь	to lie down
пересаживаться	пересéсть	to change seats, trains etc.
присаживаться	присéсть	to sit down for a while
садиться	сесть	to sit down
становиться	стать	to (go and) stand

(2) **Лопаться/лопнуть** ‘to burst, snap’ and **рушиться/рухнуть** ‘to collapse’.

253 Compounds of -ложить

Some perfective compounds of **-ложить** have imperfectives in **-кладывать**, while others have imperfectives in **-лагать**. Those with imperfectives in **-кладывать** have a more literal meaning (**прокладывать**, проложить *дорогу* ‘to lay a road’); those with imperfectives in **-лагать** are more abstract (**предлагать**, предложить ‘to propose’). The distinction is well marked in verbs which have both types of imperfective, with differing meanings: **вкладывать**, вложить *письмо в конверт* ‘to place a letter into an envelope’, **влагать**, вложить *душу во что-нибудь* ‘to put one’s heart into something’.

254 Meanings of verbal prefixes

Prefixes are important elements in Russian word formation. As many as sixteen prefixes may be attached to certain root verbs, each prefix imparting a different meaning; thus **вязать** ‘to tie’, **завязать** ‘to knot’, **отвязать от** ‘to untie from’, **привязать к** ‘to tie to’ and so on. Most prefixes are associated with particular prepositions, as follows.

Prefix	Preposition	Meaning
в-	в + acc.	into
вы-	из + gen.	out of
до-	до + gen.	as far as
за-	за + acc.	behind
из-	из + gen.	out of
на-	на + acc.	on to
от-	от + gen.	detaching
пере-	через + acc.	across
под-	к + dat.	approach
	под + acc.	under
при-	к + dat.	attaching
с-	с + gen.	down from
	с + instr.	together with

Note

(a) Prefixed verbs in some meanings also have non-prepositional government, or government through other prepositions.

- (b) Prefixes also impart meanings to parts of speech other than verbs: cf. **перелётный** 'migratory', **приложение** 'supplement', **съезд** 'congress' etc. See also 28.
- (c) Some prefixes have alternative spellings (**вз-/вс-**; **из-/ис-**; **раз-/рас-**), **вс-**, **ис-** and **рас-** combining with stems which begin with unvoiced consonants (**к, п, с, т, ф, х, ц, ч, ш, щ**), **вз-**, **из-** and **раз-** combining with other stems.
- (d) Compare also prefixes with verbs of motion (see 331).
- (e) Imperfectives are listed first in aspectival pairs.

(1) В(о)-

(i) Direction into:

включáть/включи́ть в спи́сок	to include in a list
вме́шиваться/вмешáться в спор	to interfere in an argument

(ii) Movement upwards (mainly with verbs of motion, e.g. **влезáть/влезть** на дере́во 'to climb a tree'):

вставáть/встать из-за столá	to get up from a table
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(2) Вз(о)-/вс-; воз-/вос

(i) Movement upwards:

взбирáться/взобрáться на́ гору	to climb a hill
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(ii) Disruption:

взрывáть/взорвáть мост	to blow up a bridge
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(3) Вы-

(i) Movement out of:

вырывáть/вы́рвать страи́цу из дневника́	to tear a page out of a diary
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(ii) Achievement through the action of the root verb:

выпра́шивать/вы́просить о́тпуск	to get leave on request
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(iii) Exhaustiveness of action (reflexive verbs):

выска́зываться/вы́сказаться	to have one's say
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высыпáться/выспáться
to have a good sleep

Note

As a perfective prefix, **вы-** is always stressed; as an imperfective prefix it is stressed only in **выглядеть** 'to look'.

(4) До-

(i) Completion of action already begun:

доживáть/дожítь до старости
to live to a ripe old age

дописывáть/дописáть письмó
to finish writing a letter

(ii) Achievement of hard-won result:

договáриваться/договорítься
to come to an agreement

дозвáниваться/дозвонítься (к) дрúгу
to get through to one's friend

(5) За-

(i) Movement behind:

заклáдывать/заложítь рúки зá спину
to put one's hands behind one's back

(ii) Process covering an area:

засáживать/засадítь сад дерéвьями
to plant a garden with trees

(iii) Absorption in an action (often detrimental (reflexives)):

засíживаться/засидéться в гостя́х
to outstay one's welcome

зачítываться/зачитáться
to get absorbed in reading

(iv) Acquisition:

завоёвывать/завоевáть to conquer

зарабáтывать/зарабóтать to earn

захвáтывать/захватítь to seize

(v) Fastening, securing:

завязывать/завязать гáлстук	to fasten a tie
закрывать/закрýть	to close
застёгивать/застегнýть пальтó	to fasten a coat

(vi) To spoil by excess:

закáрмливать/закорми́ть щенкá	to overfeed a puppy
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(6) Из(о)-/ис-

(i) Extraction, selection:

избира́ть/избра́ть	to elect
исключáть/исключи́ть	to exclude, expel

(ii) Action affecting whole area:

изорвáть (pf. only) рубáшку	to tear a shirt all over
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(7) На-

(i) Action directed on to:

нажимáть/нажáть (на) кнóпку to press a button	
наклéивать/наклéить мáрку на конвéрт to stick a stamp on an envelope	

(ii) Action performed to point of satisfaction:

наедáться/наéсться	to eat one's fill
насмотрéться (pf. only)	to have a good look

(iii) Quantity, accumulation:

нарубáть/наруби́ть дров	to chop some firewood
нарвáть (pf. only) цветóв	to pick some flowers

(8) Над(о)-

(i) Superimposition:

надстра́ивать/надстро́ить эта́ж to add a storey	
---	--

(ii) Detaching part of surface:

надкусывать/надкусить грушу
to take a bite out of a pear

(9) Недо- (opposite of 13 (v)).

Shortfall:

недооценивать/недоценить
to underrate

недосаливать/недосолить кашу
not to put enough salt in the porridge

(10) О-/об-/обо-

(i) Action affecting many:

опрашивать/опросить студентов
to canvas student opinion

(ii) Detailed comprehensive action:

обсуждать/обсудить to discuss
осматривать/осмотреть to examine

(iii) Action directed over whole area:

оклеивать/оклеить стены обоями to wall-paper
окружать/окружить to surround

(iv) Error:

оговариваться/оговориться to make a slip of the tongue
ошибаться/ошибиться to make a mistake

(v) Endowment with/acquisition of a quality or state:

облегчать/облегчить to lighten, relieve
оглушать/оглушить to deafen

Note

In some verbs the prefix appears only in the perfective: **вдоветь/овдоветь** 'to be widowed', **слепнуть/ослепнуть** 'to go blind'.

(vi) Outdoing:

обгонять/обогнать to overtake
обыгрывать/обыграть to outplay

(vii) Deception:

обманывать/обмануть to deceive
обсчитывать/обсчитать to short-change a customer
покупателя

(11) Обез-/обес-

Deprivation (bookish styles):

обесценивать/обесценить to devalue

(12) От(о)-

(i) Moving, receding a certain distance:

отставать/отстать от других
to lag behind the others

отступать/отступить
to retreat, digress

(ii) Detachment:

отрубать/отрубить ветку от дерева
to lop a branch off a tree

отрывать/оторвать листок
to tear off a sheet

(iii) Reversal of action:

отвыкать/отвыкнуть от курения
to get out of the habit of smoking

отменять/отменить
to cancel

(13) Пере-

(i) Movement across:

перепрыгивать/перепрыгнуть (через) канаву
to jump across a ditch

переставлять/переставить мебель
to move furniture round

(ii) Redoing:

перекрашивать/перекрасить
to repaint

переодеваться/переодеться
to change one's clothes

(iii) Division:

перепиливать/перепилить
to saw through

(iv) Action affecting many objects:

пересматривать/пересмотреть все фильмы
to see all the films

(v) Excess:

перегружать/перегрузить машину
to overload a vehicle

(vi) Reciprocal action:

переписываться (impf. only)
to correspond

(vii) Outdoing:

перекрикивать/перекричать толпу
to shout down a crowd

(14) Под(о)-

(i) Movement or position under:

подкладывать/подложить подушку под голову
to place a pillow under one's head

подписывать/подписать
to sign

(ii) Approach:

поддвигать/поддвинуть стул к стене
to move a chair up to the wall

(iii) Addition of substance or material:

подсыпáть/подсыпáть сáхару в чай
to add some sugar to one's tea

(iv) Furtive, underhand action:

поддélyвать/поддélyать
to forge, counterfeit

подслýшивать/подслýшать
to eavesdrop

(v) Supplementary action:

подв́инчивать/подвинт́ить кран немно́го
to tighten up a tap

(15) Пре- (mainly in bookish styles)

(i) Transformation:

преобразóвывать/преобразовáть
to transform

(ii) Termination:

прекращáть/прекрат́ить
to curtail

(iii) Excess:

преувели́чивать/преувели́чить
to exaggerate

превышáть/превы́сить
to exceed

(16) Пред(о)-

Anticipation:

предв́идеть (impf. only)
to foresee

предполагáть/предполож́ить
to presume

предупреждáть/предупред́ить
to warn, prevent

(17) При-

(i) Approach, arrival:

приближаться/приблизиться
to approach

приземляться/приземлиться
to land

(ii) Attachment:

привязывать/привязать собаку к дереву
to tie a dog to a tree

прикреплять/прикрепить фотографию к бланку
to attach, pin a photograph to a form

(iii) Addition:

прибавлять/прибавить
to add

приписывать/приписать несколько строк
to add a few lines

(iv) Limited action:

привставать/привстать
to half rise

приоткрывать/приоткрыть дверь
to open a door slightly

(v) Accustoming:

привыкать/привыкнуть к дисциплине
to get used to discipline

(18) Про-

(i) Through, past:

пропускать/пропустить
to miss, let past

просматривать/просмотреть
to look through

(ii) Harmful error:

проливать/пролить to spill
просыпаться/проспать to oversleep, sleep in

(19) Раз(о)-/рас-

(i) Separation, dispersal, disintegration, distribution:

раздвигать/раздвинуть занавёски
to part the curtains

размещать/разместить ракеты
to deploy missiles

распиливать/распилить ствол
to saw up a tree trunk

(ii) Reversal of an action:

развязывать/развязать to untie
раздеваться/раздеться to get undressed
раздумывать/раздумать to change one's mind

(20) С(о)-

(i) Removal:

свергать/свергнуть самодержавие
to overthrow an autocracy

снимать/снять пальто
to take off one's coat

(ii) Descent:

спускаться/спуститься на морское дно
to descend to the sea bed

(iii) Joining:

скреплять/скрепить to staple together
складывать/сложить to fold

(iv) Joint feeling or action:

сочувствовать (impf. only) to sympathize

(21) У-

(i) Removal:

удалять/удалить опухоль to remove a tumour

(ii) Imparting a quality:

улучша́ть/улу́чить	to improve
упроща́ть/упростíть	to simplify

255 The imperfective and perfective aspects

See also 235.

(1) The imperfective

(i) The imperfective may describe an action:

(a) In progress:

Он **за́втракал** (impf.) He was having breakfast

(b) Progressing towards the completion of a goal, represented by a perfective:

Он до́лго **вспомина́л** (impf.) мою́ фами́лию, и наконёц **вспомни́л** (pf.) её

He took a long time to recall my name, and finally he **did** recall it

(ii) Imperfectives may describe a number of actions occurring simultaneously or in an indeterminate order:

Говори́ли (impf.) мы сразу́, **перебива́ли** (impf.) друг друга́, **смея́лись** (impf.) (Shukshin)

We were all speaking at once, interrupting each other, laughing

Note

(a) The imperfective here does not *move* events, but describes actions as they *develop*, focusing on *circumstances* rather than completion. The imperfective therefore tends to be associated with conjunctions which imply development or continuity of action: **по мере́ тогó как** ‘in proportion as’, **чем . . . тем**, ‘the . . . the’ (with comparatives), **в то вре́мя как/пока́** ‘while’ etc. Compare

В то вре́мя пока́ он собира́лся (impf.), я успе́ла (pf.) **убра́ть** (pf.) всю́ посу́ду в шка́ф

While he was getting ready I managed to clear all the crockery away into the cupboard

Here the completed action (‘I managed to clear all the crockery away into the cupboard’ (pf.)) is set against the background of an action in progress (‘while he was getting ready’ (impf.)).

(b) In the following example two processes are seen developing in

parallel and are therefore rendered by imperfectives:

И чем бóльше Косíхин егó **слýшал** (impf.), тем грустнее емý **становíлось** (impf.) (Yakhontov)

And the more Kosikhin listened to him, the sadder he became

(iii) The idea of continuity of action can be reinforced by an adverb which either:

(a) Emphasizes action in progress:

Он рассказывал (impf.) **подробно**

He related his story in detail

or:

(b) Denotes the passage of time, thus underlining the durative meaning:

Он читáл (impf.) «Войну́ и мир» **три часа́**

He read *War and Peace* for three hours

Attention here is drawn to the *time* involved in the action, *not* its completion or result; hence the use of the *imperfective* aspect.

Note

For frequentative meanings see **256** (2) (ii), **257** (3), **266**, **269** (2), **274**, **276** (2) (i).

(2) The perfective aspect

(i) Unlike the imperfective, the perfective emphasizes **result**:

Он **дал** (pf.) ученикáм по учебнику

He **gave** each pupil a textbook (as a result, they have a copy, can prepare their homework, take a full part in the class work etc.)

(ii) The perfective **moves** events, advances the action step by step, unlike the imperfective, which describes an action in progress:

Вошédший **снял** (pf. 1) плащ, **сел** (pf. 2) за стол и **пóднял** (pf. 3) дневн́ик

The man who had come in **removed** his coat, **sat down** at the table and **picked up** the diary

Here emphasis is laid on the completion in sequence of a series of actions: perfective 1 is completed before perfective 2 takes place, perfective 2 is completed before perfective 3 takes place, and so on, each perfective moving events a stage further.

(iii) Verbs of different aspect may coexist in the same sentence, the

imperfectives **describing the scene** and the perfectives **advancing the action**:

Она **сняла** (pf.) пальто́, стоя́ла (impf.) спиной ко мне и **шелестела** (impf.) бума́гами (Kazakov)

She took off her coat and stood with her back to me, rustling the papers

(iv) An imperfective describing an action in progress can be succeeded by a perfective which denotes successful completion of that action:

Он до́лго **догоня́л** (impf.) меня́ и, наконёц, **догна́л** (pf.)

He chased me for a long time and finally caught me up

This exemplifies the comparison which has been made between the use of imperfectives and the filming of a scene, and between the use of some perfectives and a **snapshot**.

(v) The perfective tends to combine with conjunctions which imply the completion or the suddenness of an action (**до то́го как** ‘before’, **как то́лько** ‘as soon as’, **после то́го как** ‘after’ etc.), and with adverbs which imply immediacy or unexpectedness (**внеза́пно** ‘suddenly’, **сра́зу** ‘immediately’, **чу́ть не** ‘almost, within an ace of’ etc.).

(vi) Unlike the imperfective past, which is totally rooted in past time, the perfective may have implications for the present. This occurs when a **present state** results from a past perfective action or process (the so-called ‘pure perfect’):

Я **забы́л** (pf.)

I have forgotten, I **forget**

Он **опозда́л** (pf.)

He **is late** (but has arrived; cf. Он **опа́здывает** (impf.) ‘He is late’ (and has not yet arrived))

Я **привы́к** к э́тому (pf.)

I **am used** to this

Он **у́мер** (pf.)

He **is dead** (has died)

256 Aspect in the present tense

(1) The present tense has only one form, the imperfective.

(2) The present tense is used:

(i) To denote actions in progress:

Сейча́с я **пишу́** письмо́

At the moment I am writing a letter

(ii) To denote habitual actions:

По воскресеньям он **лóвит** рýбу в рекé
On Sundays he fishes in the river

(iii) To make general statements:

земля **вращáется** вокрýг Сóлнца
The Earth revolves around the Sun

(iv) To denote capabilities and qualities:

Зóлото не **ржáвет**
Gold does not tarnish

Note

Except for verbs of motion (see **315–325**), the present tense does not distinguish durative from habitual actions, thus: Я **готóблю** ўжин ‘I am **preparing/prepare** supper’

(v) To express intention to perform an action in the not too distant future. The verb involved is often a simple or compound verb of motion in the first-person singular or plural:

Сегóдня вéчером **идú** в кинó
I am going to the cinema this evening

Бúдущей зимóй **уезжáем** за гранíцу
We are going abroad next winter

Note

Other verbs found in this meaning include **возвращáться** ‘to return’, **встречáть** ‘to meet’, **начинáть** ‘to begin’ etc.

(vi) As a ‘historic present’. The use of the present tense with past meaning brings the action more graphically before the mind’s eye of the reader or listener. It is a device commonly found in literary works and is much more widely used in Russian than in English:

Приходíл он к нам чáсто. **Сидít**, бывáло, и **расскáзывает**
He would often come to see us. He **would sit** and **tell** us stories

(vii) To describe an action or state that *began* in the past and *continues* into the present (the ‘continuous present’):

Я **рабóтаю** здесь с прóшлого гóда
I **have been working/have worked** here since last year

Note

The use of the past tense in such contexts would be rendered by an English pluperfect: Она **была́** заму́жем уже́ 10 лет ‘She **had been** married for ten years’.

(viii) In reported speech (see also 265).

(a) In reporting a statement, the same tense is used as in direct speech. Thus the statement Я **люблю́** её ‘I love her’ is reported as:

Я сказа́л, что **люблю́** её
I said I loved her

or

Он сказа́л, что **лю́бит** её
He said he loved her

(b) This contrasts with English, where a past tense in the main clause (‘he said’) generates a past tense in the subordinate clause: ‘He said he *loved* her’. To use a past tense here in Russian would imply that the direct statement had contained a past tense. Thus, Он сказа́л, что **лю́бил** её means ‘He said he **had loved** her/**used to love** her’.

(c) The construction extends to reported knowing, asking, hoping etc., and can be introduced by **ду́мать** ‘to think’, **знать** ‘to know’, **наде́яться** ‘to hope’, **обеща́ть** ‘to promise’, **спроси́ть** ‘to ask’ etc.:

Ей каза́лось, что ма́льчик **спит**
She thought the child **was asleep**

Он писа́л, что **прово́дит** ле́то в Волгогра́де
He wrote that he **was spending** the summer in Volgograd

(d) The same principles of tense sequence apply, though *less rigidly*, to verbs of perception, cf. use of the *present* tense in

Шу́рка слы́шал, как в темноте́ **бе́гает** ёж (Vasilev)
Shurka heard a hedgehog running about in the dark

and the *past* tense in

Слы́шно бы́ло, как **мурлы́кал** Ку́стик (Belov)
You could hear Kustik purring

Бы́ло ви́дно, что он не **бо́ялся** холо́дной водо́й (Fadeev)
It was obvious that he was not afraid of cold water

In such contexts, the present tense is said to be more ‘vivid’ than the past.

257 Aspect in the past tense

(1) The durative meaning

(i) Past durative meanings, that is, descriptions of actions as they develop, are invariably rendered by the **imperfective** aspect:

Мы **составляли** (impf.) телеграмму в Москву
We **were composing** a telegram to send to Moscow

(ii) Passage of time may be indicated by an appropriate adverb or adverbial phrase:

Четверть века он собирал (impf.) всё, что относилось (impf.) к истории края (Granin)
He spent **a quarter of a century** collecting everything that related to the history of the area

(2) Endeavour contrasted with successful completion

(i) An action in progress (impf.) can be contrasted with its successful completion (pf.):

Мы долго **решали** (impf.) задачу — и наконец **решили** (pf.) её
We **spent a long time solving** the task and finally **solved it**

(ii) The imperfective denotes an *attempt* which may either:

(a) Fail:

Он **убеждал** (impf.) меня, что без согласия родителей мы всё равно не сможем быть счастливы (*Russia Today*)
He **tried to convince me** that we could not be happy anyway without our parents' consent

(b) Succeed, achievement being expressed by a perfective:

Я **пробивался** (impf.) к нему ровно неделю и наконец **пробился** (pf.)
I spent exactly a week **trying to force my way** into his office, and finally **succeeded in doing so**

(iii) Some aspectual pairs consist of *imperfectives* which denote attempt to achieve and *perfectives* which denote successful achievement:

Imperfective		Perfective	
добиваться	'to try to achieve'	добиться	'to achieve'

дока́зывать	'to contend'	доказа́ть	'to prove'
ловя́ть	'to try to catch'	пойма́ть	'to catch'
реша́ть	'to tackle'	решы́ть	'to solve'
сдава́ть	'to take'	сдать	'to pass'
	(an examination)		(an examination)
уверя́ть	'to try to assure'	уве́рить	'to assure'
уговáривать	'to try to persuade'	уговори́ть	'to persuade'

(3) Repeated actions in the past

(i) Repeated actions are normally expressed by the **imperfective**:

Он **звони́л** (impf.) нам по вечера́м
He used to ring us in the evenings

Быва́ло is sometimes added to emphasize repetition:

Он, **быва́ло**, звони́л (impf.) нам по вечера́м
He was in the habit of ringing us in the evenings

(ii) Frequency may also be stressed by an adverb or adverbial phrase of time: **всегда́** 'always', **иногда́** 'sometimes', **никогда́** 'never', **раз в неде́лю** 'once a week', **ча́сто** 'often':

Пото́м он **ча́ще всего́**, не разогрева́я, съеда́л (impf.) оста́вленный ма́терью обе́д (Vanshenkin)
Then, **more often than not**, he would eat the lunch left by his mother, without heating it up

Note

Secondary imperfectives (here, **съеда́ть**) are often preferred to *primary* imperfectives (cf. **есть** 'to eat') in frequentative constructions, in view of the durative connotations which adhere to primaries, cf. Он **сиде́л** (primary impf.) над статья́й не ме́нее трёх часо́в 'He **pored** over the article for no less than three hours', a reference to one durative action, and Он **проси́живал** (secondary impf.) над статья́й не ме́нее трёх часо́в 'He **would pore** over the article for not less than three hours at a time', a reference to a **series** of actions.

(iii) When reference is made to the **number of times** an action occurs:(a) The **imperfective** is preferred when the actions are repeated at irregular and spaced-out intervals:

Три ра́за о́ни **покида́ли** (impf.) борт ста́нции и **выходи́ли** (impf.) в откры́тый ко́смос (*Russia Today*)
Three times they left the space station and walked in space

Нéсколько раз я прогоня́л (impf.) его́. Он **сади́лся** (impf.) в отдалéнии, немно́го **пережида́л** (impf.) и снова́ **бежа́л** (impf.) за мной (Kazakov)

Several times I chased him away. He would sit down at a distance, bide his time and run after me again

(b) The **perfective** is preferred when a series of identical actions, repeated in swift succession, can be interpreted as **components of one multiple action**:

Вы́лез (pf.) из-под кры́ши крупный воробéй, **чиря́кнул** (pf.) **два́жды** и улетéл (pf.) (Belov)

A large sparrow emerged from under the eaves, **chirped twice** and flew off

Прибли́зившись к нему́, она́ доста́ла (pf.) из сýмочки пистоле́т и **три ра́за вы́стрелила** (pf.) в упóр

Approaching him she took a pistol from her bag and **fired three times** at point-blank range

Note

The imperfective is preferred for verbs of *beginning*, however, even when a number of actions occur in swift succession:

Он **начина́л** (impf.) письмо́ **раз двена́дцать**, рвал (impf.) листы́, **изне́рвничался** (pf.), **испихова́лся** (pf.) (Shukshin)

He began the letter about a dozen times, kept tearing up the sheets, got all hot and bothered, almost blew a fuse

258 Use of the imperfective past to express a 'statement of fact'

— Вы звони́ли (impf.) ему́?	'Have you rung him?'
— Да, звони́л (impf.)	'Yes, I have'
— Я где-то ви́дел (impf.) вас	'I have seen you somewhere'
— Вы чита́ли (impf.) «Це́мент»?	'Have you read <i>Cement</i> ?'
— Да, чита́л (impf.)	'Yes, I have'

(1) The imperfective is used in the above examples to denote an action in isolation, with no emphasis on its completion or non-completion, the circumstances in which it occurred, or other detail. The statements and responses show that a phone call has been made, that two people have met before, that *Cement* is one of the books read by a particular person. These are bald statements of fact, with no fleshing-out of the context

and no stress on the achievement of a result. This ‘submeaning’ of the imperfective is known as **констатация факта** ‘statement of fact’. It is particularly common in the past tense and is usually set in the vaguest of contexts:

- Этот человек вам знаком?
 ‘Do you know that man?’
 — Да, я однажды **встречал** (impf.) его
 ‘Yes, I met him once’

(2) The ‘statement of fact’ is common:

(i) In the imprecise context of an interrogative or in a situation where, for example, a check is being made to see whether a particular action has been carried out:

- Вы **провётривали** (impf.) комнату?
 Have you aired the room?

(ii) In enquiring about someone’s whereabouts:

- Вы не **видели** (impf.) Лёну?
 Have you seen Lena?

(iii) In delivering a reminder:

- Но ведь я **говорил** (impf.) вам об этом!
 But I told you about this!

(3) As the context is firmed up, however, or a result emphasized, the perfective comes into contention. Compare:

(i) Use of the *imperfective* in:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Я писал (impf.) ей | I wrote to her |
| Я рассказывал (impf.) вам об этом | I told you about that |
| Я звонил (impf.) ему | I have rung him |
| Мы уже встречались (impf.) | We have already met |
| Я читал (impf.) « <i>Чапаяева</i> » в школе | I read <i>Chapaev</i> at school |

(ii) Use of the *perfective* as the context is filled in:

- Я **написал** (pf.) ей **письмо**
 I wrote her **a letter**
- Я **только что** **сказал** (pf.) вам об этом
 I have **only just** told you about this
- Я **позвонил** (pf.) ему, **чтобы напомнить** ему о вечере
 I rang him to **remind him about the party**

Я встрéтил (pf.) егó в прóшлом годú на Чёрном мóре
I met him **last year on the Black Sea**

(4) It will be clear from the above examples that the imperfective is preferred where a fact is placed in a contextual vacuum, and that the perfective is preferred when the context is filled in, in terms of **what** action was carried out, **when, where** or **for what purpose**, or if the result or completion of an action is stressed. Thus, the question — Вы прочитáли (pf.) «Наканúне»? can be rendered as ‘Have you **finished** *On the Eve*?’ — completion of the action is important since, say, the person asking the question is waiting to read the novel. The answer to this question might be Прочитáл (pf.), возьмите, пожалуйста ‘Yes, I have; here you are’. The perfective would also be used if someone had been *told* to read the novel: Вы прочитáли (pf.) «Наканúне»? ‘**Did you read** *On the Eve*?’ (i.e. as you were told to).

259 Use of the imperfective past to denote an action and its reverse

(1) The imperfective past may be used to denote an action and its reverse:

Она брала́ (impf.) кнiгу в библиотеке
She had a book out of the library (*and has now returned it*)

Similarly, открывáл (impf.) can mean ‘opened **and closed again**’:

У меня́ в комнате́ так холодно́ сегодня́. Наверное́, кто-то открывáл (impf.) здесь окнó
It is so cold in my room today. Someone has probably **had the window open** in here

The implication of this example is that the window has been opened but is now shut again. By contrast, Кто-то **открыл** (pf.) окнó means that the window is still open ‘Someone has opened the window’, or refers to the single act of opening ‘Someone opened the window’.

(2) Other imperfective past forms of this type include:

включáл	‘switched on’ (and off again)
вставáл	‘got up’ (and sat or lay down again)
выключáл	‘switched off’ (and on again)
давáл	‘gave’ (and received back again)
закрывáл	‘closed’ (and opened again)
клал	‘put down’ (and took up again)

ложился	‘lay down’ (and got up again)
надевал	‘put on’ (and took off again)
поднимался	‘ascended’ (and came down again)
спускался	‘descended’ (and went up again):

Он **вставал** (impf.) нóчью
He got up in the night (and went back to bed again)

Ребёнок **просыпался** (impf.), но сейчáс он опýть спит
The child woke up, but now he is asleep again

(3) In fact, the imperfective past of *any* verb denoting an action which has an opposite action may be used in this way:

Одн́й из них **пóднял** (pf.) рýку. Их ли́ца понр́авились мне, и я остано́вился. Тот, кто **поднимáл** (impf.) рýку, просúнул в маши́ну смýглое ли́цо (Strugatskys)
One of them **raised his arm**. I liked the look of them and stopped. The one who **had raised his arm** thrust a dark-skinned face through the car window

Here, the perfective denotes a *one-way* action (**пóднял** рýку ‘raised his arm’) and the imperfective a *two-way* action, the action and its reverse (**поднимáл** рýку ‘raised his arm **and lowered it again**’).

260 Aspectival usage when emphasis is on the identity of the person performing the action

(1) If we examine the examples

Кто мыл (impf.) посúду?	Who washed the dishes?
Кто убирáл (impf.) кóмнату?	Who tidied the room?

then it is clear that the washing up has been done and the room tidied. Emphasis centres *not* on the *action*, but on the identity of the person who *performed* it. In such circumstances the *imperfective* is preferred:

Та́ня, э́то ты **разбирáла** (impf.) кн́иги в шкафу́?
Tanya, was it you who sorted the books in the cupboard?

Use of the imperfective may also imply that something (usually untoward) happened while the action was being carried out (e.g. papers were mislaid).

Вы не зна́ете, кто **открывáл** (impf.) окно́? На подокóннике лежа́ли мо́й бума́ги.

Do you know who opened the window? My papers were lying on the window-sill.

(2) The *perfective* is preferred, however:

(i) When the **quality** of the action is stressed:

Кто **так хорошо** убрал (pf.) книги в шкаф?
Who made such a good job of tidying the books into the cupboard?

or when the result is specially emphasized:

В комнате так чисто. Интересно, кто **убрал** (pf) её?
The room is beautifully clean. I wonder who tidied it?

(ii) When the verb denotes 'discovery':

Кто **изобрёл** (pf.) радио?
Who invented radio?

Кто **открыл** (pf.) Америку?
Who discovered America?

Кто **нашёл** (pf.) ключи?
Who found the keys?

(iii) When the action involved is not deliberate or has an untoward result:

Кто **разбил** (pf.) чашку?
Who broke the cup?

(3) The imperfective is also used when attention is directed to the **place** or **time** of an action rather than to the action itself:

Где вы **покупали** (imprf.) «Вечёрку»?
Where did you buy the evening paper?

— Я **показал** (pf.) ему чертёж
'I showed him the blueprint'

— Когда ты **показывал** (imprf.)?
'When did you show it to him?'

In these examples the questioner is interested in the place and time of the actions, **not** in their completion, which is in any case clear from the context (as in the first example) or explicitly stated (as in the second).

261 Use of the imperfective past to denote a forthcoming event

The imperfective past is used to indicate that an action was due to take place:

Пóезд **отходил** (impf.) в пять часóв
The train **was due to leave** at five o'clock

Он мнóго рабóтал, потому́ что в воскресéнье **выступáл** (impf.) перед большо́й аудиторией
He worked hard, because on Sunday he **was to appear** in front of a large audience

262 Negated verbs in the past

(1) Both aspects may be used to indicate non-performance of an action in the past, but while the negative imperfective indicates that the action **did not take place at all**, the negative perfective indicates that it took place but **was not successful**, thus:

Он не **решáл** (impf.) зада́чу
He **did not** do the sum (perhaps because he was off school)

Он не **решíл** (pf.) зада́чу
He **could not** do the sum (he tried but failed)

(2) The aspects may similarly be used to distinguish an action which has not yet begun (impf.) from one which has begun but is not yet completed (pf.):

Я ещё не **читáл** (impf.) éту статью́
I haven't **read** this article yet

Я ещё не **прочитáл** (pf.) éту статью́
I haven't **finished** this article yet

(3) The imperfective past is also used to negate a statement or supposition expressed by a perfective:

—Почему́ вы ушли́ из цýрка, почему́ вас **увóлили**? (pf.)
—Меня́ не **увольни́ли** (impf.), я ушла́ сама́ (*Ogonek*)
'Why did you leave the circus, why were you dismissed?'
'I was not dismissed, I left of my own accord'

(4) The imperfective past is also used to denote the continuation of a

negative state:

Он долго **не соглашался** со мной (impf.)
He **took a long time to agree** with me

(5) The **perfective** past is used when an expected event did not take place:

Меня никто не **встретил** (pf.)
No one met me (despite, for example, a promise or understanding that someone would)

Compare Меня никто не **встречал** (impf.), ‘No one met me’ — a simple statement of fact with no implication that the reverse was expected.

Мы не **посмотрели** (pf.) фильм
We **didn’t see** the film (though, for example, it is just the kind of film we might have been expected to see)

Compare Мы не **смотрели** (impf.) фильм ‘We **haven’t seen** the film’.

(6) The perfective past is also used when an expected or desired result has not yet materialized:

Он ещё не **пришёл** (pf.)
He has not arrived yet.

263 Aspect in the future

(1) The imperfective future focuses on the progress of an action, while the perfective future stresses expected result or successful attainment. Compare the two future forms, the first imperfective and the second perfective, in the following example:

Буду читать (impf.) статью, надеюсь, что **прочитаю** (pf.)
I shall **read/be reading** the article and hope I shall **get it finished**

(2) The imperfective is used when emphasis is placed on the way in which an action is carried out, *not* on its result or successful implementation:

Как бы **будете отправлять** (impf.) книги, простой или заказной бандеролью?
How will you be sending the books, as ordinary printed matter or registered?

(3) A perfective future may refer to a completed action within the framework of an action in progress, e.g.

Когда я **б́уду проходить** (impf.) мимо аптеки, **куплю** (pf.)
таблётки от кашля

When I pass the chemist's I shall buy some cough drops

Note

- (a) Perfectives often appear in sequence, each perfective advancing the action a stage further: Я **свяжусь** (pf.) со своими друзьями, всё **узнаю** (pf.), и **позвоню** (pf.) (Soloukhin) 'I shall contact my friends, get all the facts and give you a ring'.
- (b) A negated perfective future may be used to denote the impossibility of an action: Раскалённое железо го́лой рукой **не возьмёшь** 'You cannot take hold of red-hot iron with your bare hands'.

264 The 'logical' future

Unlike English, where the future tense is not used after conjunctions such as 'after', 'as soon as', 'before', 'until', 'when' etc., Russian uses an imperfective or perfective future to express future meaning in such contexts:

Когда вы **бу́дете ремонтировать** (impf.) машину, не забу́дете (pf.)
поменять свёчи

When you **are overhauling** the car, don't forget to change the plugs

Как то́лько он **приде́т** (pf.), поста́вим (pf.) чайник

As soon as he **arrives** we shall put the kettle on

265 The future in reported speech

An imperfective or perfective future in **direct** speech

—В э́том году́ я не **бу́ду отдыхать**
'This year I won't be having a holiday'

—Я **приду́**, е́сли успею́
'I shall come if I have time'

is expressed as a future in **reported** speech:

Он сказа́л, что в э́том году́ не **бу́дет отдыхать**
He said he **wouldn't** be having a holiday this year

Она обещала, что **придёт**, если **успёт**
 She promised she **would** come if she **had** time

Compare **256** (2) (viii).

266 Use of the future to express repeated actions

(1) Repeated actions in the future are usually expressed using the imperfective aspect:

Летом я **буду** регулярно **загорать** (impf.)
 In summer I shall sun-bathe regularly

(2) A perfective future may be used to stress the sequential nature of actions:

Когда питомцы **окрепнут** (pf.), их выпускают (impf.) в тайгу
 (*Sputnik*)
 When our small charges (baby sable) **grow strong enough** they are released into the taiga

The use of two imperfectives in this example would imply that the actions occur simultaneously, that the sable are released while they are still in the process of growing strong. The perfective (**окрепнут**) shows that the actions are sequential: first the sable get strong, then they are released. Compare

У меня был крохотный номер с телевизором, который **включался** (impf.), когда в автомат **опустишь** (pf.) сто иён (Granin)
 I had a tiny room with a television set which switched on when one inserted one hundred yen

In this example, too, the perfective (**опустишь**) indicates that the actions are sequential (first the money is inserted, then the set switches on), *not* simultaneous.

(3) The ‘historic perfective future’ may be used for graphic effect in past frequentative contexts, in literary and other written styles, to denote repeated quick movements:

Она то **вздохнёт** (pf.), то **охнет** (pf.)
 She would now sigh, now moan

Бывало serves to stress the past frequentative nature of the action:

Бывало, он заглянет (pf.) к нам
He was in the habit of looking in to see us

(4) The perfective future can also appear in frequentative contexts in combination with temporal adverbs such as **всегда** ‘always’:

Он вам **всегда** поможет (pf.)
He will always give you a hand

Note

The meaning of the perfective future in such contexts is ‘potential’ rather than frequentative, since its use does not imply a repeated action (cf. genuine repetition in *Каждый день она будет ему помогать* (impf.) ‘She will help him every day’), but rather constant readiness to perform an action if the need should arise, the element of repetition being expressed in terms of one typical action.

267 The perfective future in warnings

In colloquial Russian the first-person singular of the perfective future may be used to express a warning:

Я тебе **поспорю!** (pf.)
I’ll give you argue!
Я тебе **погуляю!** (pf.)
I’ll give you gallivanting around!
Я тебе это **припомню!** (pf.)
I won’t let you forget this!

268 Aspect in questions

(1) Questions about intended actions are more often than not couched in the imperfective:

Что вы **будете делать?** (impf.)
What are you going to do?
Что вы **будете заказывать?** (impf.)
What are you going to order?
Вы **будете пить** (impf.) чай или кофе?
Will you have tea or coffee?

unless special emphasis is laid on successful completion:

Вы **найдёте** (pf.) этот дом?
Will you find the house?

(2) Answers, however, can be in either aspect, depending on the context:

Я б́уду дочítывать (impf.) кн́игу/**дочита́ю** (pf.) кн́игу
I shall be finishing off the book/shall **get** the book **finished**

Я б́уду пить (impf.) ко́фе/**вы́пью** (pf.) ча́шечку ко́фе
I shall have coffee/**have** a small cup of coffee

Compare

— Ладно, я уйду́. А ты что **бúдешь де́лать** (impf.)?

— **Уложу́** (pf.) Светла́нку спать, а пото́м **б́уду реве́ть** (impf.)
 (Zalygin)

‘All right, I’ll leave. And what are you going to do?’

‘I shall put Svetlanka to bed and then cry my eyes out’

(3) The answer to the question **Что вы б́удете зака́зывать?** ‘What are you going to order?’ is likely to be perfective, however, since the *result* of the action is of particular importance (the diner will presumably get the dish he or she orders):

Я возьму́ (pf.) бульо́н
 I will have clear soup

Note

In colloquial Russian *negative* forms of the verb are frequently used in making requests: **вы на сле́дующей не выхо́дите?** (impf.) ‘Are you getting out at the next stop?’ Quite often the perfective future is used: **Вы не ска́жете** (pf.), ско́лько сейча́с вре́мени? ‘You couldn’t tell me the time, could you?’; **Вы не разреши́те** (pf.) **позвони́ть от вас?** ‘Would you mind if I used your phone?’

269 Some uses of the imperfective imperative

The imperfective imperative is used to express:

(1) General injunctions:

Береги́те (impf.) приро́ду!
 Conserve nature!

(2) Frequentative instructions:

Всегда́ относí (impf.) кн́иги в срок
 Always return your books on time

(3) Instructions to continue an action:

Пишите (impf.) *дальше!*
Carry on writing!

270 Use of the imperative in the context of a single action

(1) The **perfective** imperative is used to order the implementation of a single action:

Закройте (pf.) *окно!*
Shut the window!

Note

The addition of the particle **-ка** adds a nuance of familiarity to the command: **Запиши-ка!** (pf.) ‘Do jot it down!’

(2) The negated **imperfective** imperative is used to **forbid** an action:

Не **закрыва́йте** (impf.) *окно!* **Don’t shut** the window!

(3) Both aspects can appear in one sentence, the imperfective forbidding and the perfective ordering an action:

Если всё же что-то загорелось, **не теряйтесь** (impf.), **постарайтесь** (pf.) *сохранить хладнокровие (Rabotnitsa)*
If something really has caught fire, **don’t panic, try** to retain your composure

(4) If a perfective imperative has been ineffectual, then an imperfective may be used to impart a sense of urgency:

Запиши (pf.) *мой телефон. . . . Записывай* (impf.), *пожалуйста, я очень тороплюсь!*
Make a note of my telephone number. . . . **Would you mind writing it down**, please, I am in a terrible hurry!

271 Use of the imperative to exhort and invite

(1) The imperfective imperative is also used:

(i) In exhortations:

— **Вставай** (impf.), *сказала она* ‘Do get up’, she said

(ii) In expressing wishes:

Поправляйтесь! (impf.) Get well soon!

(iii) In conveying an invitation, in social or other conventional situations:

Проходите (impf.), пожалуйста!

Pass down the aircraft, please! (air-hostess to passengers)

Берите! (impf.)

Take one/some!

Кладите (impf.) сахар!

Have some sugar!

Раздевайтесь! (impf.)

Take off your hat and coat!

Садитесь! (impf.)

Sit down!

Снимайте (impf.) пальто!

Take off your coat!

(2) In a more formal or professional relationship, however, the **perfective** may be preferred:

Нюра, **сними** (pf.) с больно́го пижа́му, хладнокро́вно сказа́ла Ве́ра Ива́новна (Aksenov)

‘Nyura, remove the patient’s pyjamas’, said Vera Ivanovna coolly (doctor to nurse)

«Я тебе покажу́ фанта́зию! **Сядь** (pf.) как сле́дует!» (Trifonov)
‘I’ll give you imagination! Sit properly!’ (mother to child)

Note

- (a) The first-person plural of an imperfective or perfective verb may also be used to express wishes or appeals: **бу́дем наде́яться** (impf.), что ‘let’s hope that’, **Попробуем** (pf.) ‘Let’s have a go’. The addition of **дава́й/дава́йте** lends emphasis: **Дава́йте** бу́дем чита́ть (impf.) Пу́шкина! ‘Let’s read Pushkin!’, **Дава́й** сыгра́ем! (pf.) ‘Let’s have a game!’
- (b) The negative optative is usually expressed by an imperfective: **Не бу́дем зажига́ть** (impf.) све́та, ла́дно? — сказа́ла она́ (Kazakov) ‘“Do you mind if we leave the light off?” she said’, **Не бу́дем преувели́чивать** (impf.) ‘Let’s not exaggerate’, **Дава́йте не бу́дем спо́рить** (impf.) ‘Let’s not argue’.

272 A command arising naturally from context

The imperfective imperative is preferred when an instruction is the expected norm in particular circumstances. For example, a student at an examination knows the procedure: he selects a slip of paper with a question on it, prepares his answer and is invited to speak. The examiner’s instructions are therefore expressed in the imperfective:

Берите (impf.) билет! **Отвечайте!** (impf.)
Take a slip! Answer!

Similarly, standard recommendations and requests from a shop assistant will be in the imperfective:

Платите (impf.) в кассу! Pay at the cash-desk!

while non-predictable statements will be in the perfective:

Возьмите (pf.) эту кофточку! Она вам идёт
Take this blouse! It suits you

273 Negative commands/warnings

(1) A negative command usually appears in the imperfective aspect (see 270 (2)). When the imperative implies a **warning**, however, rather than a command, tempered with a nuance of apprehension that the action might occur inadvertently, then the **perfective** is preferred:

Не заболéй! (pf.)	Mind you don't fall ill!
Не поскользنىсь! (pf.)	Mind you don't slip!
Не пролéй (pf.) молоко!	Mind you don't spill the milk!
Не простудись! (pf.)	Mind you don't catch a cold!
Не уроните (pf.) вазу!	Mind you don't drop the vase!

Note

(a) These commands forbid actions which would not normally be performed deliberately, but might occur inadvertently or as the result of carelessness. It is in these circumstances that the negative perfective imperative is used, sometimes combined with **смотри(те)!** 'mind!':

Смотри, не забудь! (pf.)	Mind you don't forget!
Смотри, не обрежься! (pf.)	Mind you don't cut yourself!
Смотри, не опоздай! (pf.)	Mind you're not late!
Смотри, не упади! (pf.)	Mind you don't fall!

(b) Other perfective verbs whose negative imperatives may be used to express warnings include **испачкаться** 'to get dirty', **опрокинуть** 'to overturn, capsize', **потеряться** 'to get lost', **промахнуться** 'to miss the target', **проспать** 'to oversleep'. Compare «Умоляю, девочки, **не заразитесь** (pf.), будьте осторожнее!» (*Rabotnitsa*) 'I implore you, girls, don't get

infected, be more careful!’ Из сосѣдней комнаты, где шумѣли гости, тѣтя просила: “Ради Бѳга, **не потеряй** ничего!” (Nabokov) ‘From the next room, where the guests were making a din, my aunt could be heard asking: “For heaven’s sake, don’t lose anything!”’

Не пропади!

Mind you don’t get lost!

(2) The imperfective is used, however, when reference is to a protracted period rather than a single occurrence:

Смотри **не забывай** (impf.) нас!

Mind you don’t forget us!

274 Use of the perfective imperative with repeated actions

While a repeated action is usually associated with an imperfective imperative (See 269 (2).), the perfective is used when reference is made to the number of times an action is repeated in swift succession (cf. 257 (3) (iii) (b)):

Прослушайте (pf.) плѣнку **два раза/несколько раз**

Listen to the tape twice/several times

275 Use of the future and the infinitive to express peremptory commands

(1) Future perfectives may be used to express categorical commands:

Пойдѣшь к мамѣ, **возьмѣшь** у неѣ ключи от шкафа и **принесѣшь** посуду

You will go to mother, get the keys of the cupboard from her and bring the crockery

(2) A strict imperative may also be rendered by use of the infinitive:

Сидѣть смѣрно! Sit quietly!

276 Aspect in the infinitive. Introductory comments

(1) The perfective infinitive is used to denote the completion of a single action:

Мне надо **позвонить** (pf.) домой

I need to ring home

(2) The imperfective infinitive denotes:

(i) A repeated action:

Их надо **кормить** (impf.) три раза в день
They have to be fed three times a day

(ii) A continuous action:

Помогли ей **воспитывать** (impf.) девочку
They helped her to bring up the little girl

(3) An imperfective infinitive may simply name an action, with no implication of result or completion, while the perfective stresses intention to achieve a result. Compare

Мне сегодня нужно **разбирать** (impf.) книги
I must **spend some time sorting out** the books today

and

Мне сегодня нужно **разобрать** (pf.) книги
I must **get the books sorted out** today

277 Use of the infinitive to denote habitual actions

(1) The imperfective infinitive combines with verbs and other forms that imply habitual processes, tendencies, preferences etc.:

Рыбка **научилась** открывать (impf.) холодильник (*Yuni naturalist*)
Rybka (an otter) learned how to open the fridge

Я **привык** вставать (impf.) рано I am used to rising early
Он **умеет** рисовать (impf.) He knows how to draw

(2) Other words that combine with an imperfective infinitive include **надоест** ‘to be bored with’, **отвыкнуть** ‘to get out of the habit of’, **предпочитать** ‘to prefer’, **привычка** ‘habit’, **разучиться** ‘to forget how to’ (Я **разучился** играть (impf.) на пианино ‘I have forgotten how to play the piano’).

(3) Though **любить** ‘to like’ almost invariably combines with the imperfective infinitive, the perfective is possible in the meaning of ‘intermittent repetition’. Compare

Он **любит** **отдыхать** (impf.) в саду
He likes to relax in the garden

Он любит **отдохну́ть** (pf.) в саду́
He likes relaxing in the garden now and then

Note

Боя́ться ‘to fear’ is used with the perfective infinitive when it expresses apprehension that something might happen inadvertently: **Боя́сь заблуди́ться** ‘I am afraid of getting lost’. In the case of deliberate actions, use of aspect depends on context, cf: **Боя́сь купа́ться** (impf.) в о́зере ‘I am scared of bathing in the lake’ and **Боя́сь призна́ться** (pf.) ‘I am afraid to confess’.

(4) The perfective infinitive also appears in a frequentative context when the element of frequency relates to another word in the sentence, and *not* to the infinitive. Thus, in

Я всегда́ рад **помо́чь** (pf.) тебе́
I am always glad to help you

the meaning of frequency expressed by **всегда́** ‘always’ is ‘absorbed’ by the adjective **рад** ‘glad’. The construction: adverb of frequency + adjective or verb + *perfective* infinitive reflects standard practice:

Вы всегда́ мо́жете (impf.) **взять** (pf.) у меня́ словарь
You can always get a dictionary from me

Иногда́ мне удава́лось (impf.) **подста́вить** (pf.) ему́ но́жку
(Granin)
Sometimes I succeeded in tripping him up

Его́ неоднократно пыта́лись (impf.) **отпугну́ть** (pf.) (*Izvestiya*)
Several times they had tried to scare it (a tiger) off

278 Use of the imperfective infinitive after verbs of beginning, continuing and concluding

The imperfective infinitive is mandatory after:

(1) Verbs of beginning:

начина́ть/нача́ть	to begin
принима́ться/приня́ться	to get down to
ста́ть (pf. only)	to begin

Они́ приня́лись **выдвига́ть** (impf.) я́щики (Nagibin)
They set to work pulling out the drawers

(2) Verbs of continuing:

продолжа́ть to continue

Он продолжа́л **укла́дываться** (impf.)

He continued packing

Note

Perfective **продо́лжить** usually takes a direct object, *not* an infinitive: **продо́лжить** провер́ку ‘to continue the check’.

(3) Verbs of concluding:

броса́ть/бро́сить ‘to give up’

конча́ть/ко́нчить ‘to finish’

перестава́ть/переста́ть ‘to cease’

прекраща́ть/прекрати́ть ‘to desist’

Ли́дия Миха́йловна перестала́ **приглаша́ть** (impf.) меня́ за стол (Rasputin)

Lidia Mikhailovna stopped inviting me for meals

279 Inadvisable and advisable actions

(1) The imperfective infinitive combines with adverbs, impersonal expressions and other words which imply the inadvisability or deny the necessity of an action: **бесполе́зно** ‘it’s useless’, **вре́дно** ‘it is harmful’, **доста́точно** ‘that’s enough’, **заче́м?** ‘why?’, **не на́до** ‘you should not’, **не ну́жно** ‘it is not necessary’, **не сле́дует** ‘you ought not to’, **не сто́ит** ‘there is no point in’, **не́чего** ‘there is no point’, **сме́шно** ‘it is ridiculous’, **сты́дно** ‘it is disgraceful’:

Да и заче́м **меня́ть** (impf.) ку́зов? (*Sputnik*)

And anyway, why change the bodywork?

Не ну́жно **вызыва́ть** (impf.) врача́

There is no need to call the doctor

В ка́ждый дом **заходи́ть** (impf.) нет смы́сла (Rasputin)

There’s no point in calling into every house

Нехорошо́ **обижа́ть** (impf.) стари́ка (Nagibin)

It’s not nice to hurt an old man’s feelings

Note

Не до́лжен combines with the imperfective infinitive to denote inadvisability (Вы не должны́ **подава́ть** (impf.) заявле́ние ‘You shouldn’t apply’) and with the perfective infinitive to denote

supposition (Он не должен **опоздать** (pf.) ‘He is not likely to be late’) (see also **313** (1)).

(2) **Perfective** infinitives may be used to denote advisability:

Не следует ли **послать** (pf.) поздравление?
Don’t you think we should send our congratulations?

Почему не **спросить?** (pf.) Why not ask?

(3) **Нельзя** combines with the imperfective infinitive in the meaning of inadmissibility and the perfective in the meaning of impossibility:

Нельзя **входить** (impf.)
You can’t go in (i.e. it is forbidden)

Нельзя **войти** (pf.)
You can’t get in (because, for example, the door is locked)

280 A request to perform/not to perform an action

(1) A **perfective** infinitive is used after a verb denoting a request or intention to perform a single completed action:

Она попросила меня **уйти** (pf.) She asked me to leave
Он обещал **помочь** (pf.) мне He promised to help me

Other verbs denoting request or intention include **решать/решить** ‘to decide’, **советовать/посоветовать** ‘to advise’, **убеждать/убедить** ‘to convince’, **уговаривать/уговорить** ‘to persuade’.

(2) An **imperfective** infinitive is used, however, if **не** appears between the verb and the infinitive:

Она решила **не уходить** (impf.)
She decided not to go away

Он обещал **не приглашать** (impf.) Таню на вечер
He promised not to invite Tanya to the party

Note

(a) A negated **perfective** infinitive in such contexts expresses, not a request or undertaking to abstain from certain actions, but apprehension that an undesired action might inadvertently take place: **Стараюсь не сделать** (pf.) **ошибок** ‘I am trying not to make any mistakes’.

- (b) Verbs such as **отговáривать/отговорить** ‘to dissuade’ and **раздúмывать/раздúмать** ‘to change one’s mind’ contain a built-in negative meaning and combine with an imperfective infinitive:

Он отговорил меня **спрашивать** (impf.)
He dissuaded me from asking

Он раздúмал **ехать** (impf.)
He changed his mind about going (decided not to go)

281 Use of the infinitive after не хочú

- (1) Infinitives of either aspect are used after **не хочú** ‘I don’t want to’, **нет желания** ‘I have no wish to’, **я не дúмаю** ‘I do not mean to’, the imperfective being preferred after a categorical negative:

Я и не дúмал **отказываться** (impf.)
I didn’t dream of refusing

Note

The imperfective infinitive is virtually compulsory after the impersonal reflexive **не хотётся**: Домóй **уходить** (impf.) не хочётся (Abramov) ‘We don’t feel like going home’.

- (2) The use of a *perfective* infinitive after **не хочú** etc. may denote that an action *has* taken place, but *unintentionally*:

Я не хотёл его **обидеть** (pf.)
I did not mean to offend him

282 Use of the infinitive with порá

- (1) In the meaning ‘it is time to’, **порá** combines with the **imperfective** infinitive:

Порá **начинáть** (impf.) It is time to begin

- (2) In the meaning ‘it is necessary to’ it combines with the **perfective** infinitive:

Но ведь порá **понять** (pf.), что чúда не бúдет (*Nedelya*)
It is high time we realized that there isn’t going to be any miracle

283 Use of infinitives after verbs of motion

(1) The imperfective infinitive is used after verbs of motion to describe actions involving processes:

Сóня пошла́ **ста́вить** (impf.) чайник (Grekoва)
Soyua went to put on the kettle

Она́ ведёт ребёнка в поликлинику **проверять** (impf.) зрѐние
She is taking the child to the polyclinic to have his eyes tested

(2) If, however, result is emphasized rather than process, then the perfective is preferred:

Пошёл **почини́ть** (pf.) часы́
He has gone to get the clock mended

Reflexive Verbs

284 Reflexive verbs: conjugation

In conjugating a reflexive verb, the ending **-ся** is affixed to verb forms ending in a consonant or the semi-consonant **-й**, and to all active participles; **-сь** is affixed to forms ending in a vowel. The reflexive verb is thus conjugated as follows:

мýться 'to wash'	вернýться 'to return'
я мóюсь	вернóсь
ты мóешься	вернѐшься
он мóется	вернѐтся
мы мóемся	вернѐмся
вы мóетесь	вернѐтесь
онí мóются	вернóтся

Past tense

мýлся, мýлась	вернóлся, вернóлась
мýлось, мýлись	вернóлось, вернóлись

Imperative

мóйся, мóйтесь	верни́сь, верни́тесь
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For active participles, see **340** (2) and **342** (2).

285 The ‘true’ reflexive

(1) The number of ‘true’ reflexives, in which the agent ‘turns the action back’ upon himself or herself, is relatively small. The category contains a number of verbs which relate to personal grooming:

бриться/по-	to shave (oneself)
готовиться/при-	to get ready, prepare oneself
гримироваться/за-	to put on make-up
завиваться/завиться	to have one’s hair waved
краситься/вы-, по-	to dye one’s hair
краситься/на-	to make up one’s face
купаться/вы-, ис-	to bathe (oneself)
мыться/по-, вы-	to wash (oneself)
обуваться/обуться	to put on one’s shoes
одеваться/одеться	to dress oneself
переодеваться/переодеться	to change (one’s clothes)
причёсываться/причесаться	to do one’s hair, have one’s hair done
пудриться/на-, по-	to powder one’s face
раздеваться/раздеться	to get undressed
разуваться/разуться	to take off one’s shoes
умываться/умыться	to wash one’s hands and face

(2) Other ‘true’ reflexives include the following:

(i) **Бросаться/броситься** ‘to rush’, **защищаться/защититься** ‘to defend oneself’, **подниматься/подняться** ‘to ascend’, **приклоняться/приклониться** ‘to lean’, **спускаться/спуститься** ‘to descend’.

(ii) A number of verbs which are reflexive only in the **imperfective**:

ложиться/лечь	to lie down
пересаживаться/пересесть	to change places, trains etc.
садиться/сесть	to sit down
становиться/стать	to (go and) stand

Note

Усаживаться/усесться ‘to settle down’ is reflexive in both aspects.

286 Semi-reflexive verbs

Semi-reflexive verbs describe an action which the agent performs **for** rather than to himself or herself: **запасаться/запастись** ‘to stock up with’, **укладываться/уложиться** ‘to pack’ etc.

287 Intransitive reflexives

A reflexive ending may transform a transitive into an intransitive verb. Compare transitive **возвращать**

Он возвращает книгу в библиотеку
He returns the book to the library

with intransitive **возвращаться** in

Он возвращается домой
He returns home

Other examples include:

Земля вращается	The Earth rotates
Колесо вёртится	The wheel spins
Война кончается/кóнчилась	The war ends/ended
Стул ломается/ломáлся	The chair breaks/broke
Дом находится на берегу	The house is situated on the shore
Фильм начинается/начался	The film begins/began
Урок продолжается	The lesson continues
Болезнь распространяется/распространилась	The disease is spreading/spread
Положение улучшается/улучшилось	The situation improves/improved

Note

- (a) All the verbs in the above list can be used transitively without the reflexive endings: Учитель **вращает** глобус ‘The teacher rotates the globe’ etc.
- (b) While English uses many verbs both transitively *and* intransitively (‘She *grows* tulips’/‘Tulips *grow*’; ‘She *stops* the bus’/‘The bus *stops*’), Russian always distinguishes transitive from intransitive, either by using different verbs (Она **выращивает** тюльпаны/Тюльпаны **растут**) or by affixing a reflexive ending to convert a transitive into an intransitive verb (Она **останавливает** автобус/Автобус **останавливается**).

288 Reflexive verbs with passive meaning

(1) Reflexive suffixes impart **passive** meaning to many imperfective transitive verbs. There is usually a third-person subject:

Как это **делается**?
How is that done?

Симфония **исполняется** (оркестром)
The symphony is performed (by an orchestra)

(2) The possibility of indicating the **agent** of an action (usually in the form of an instrumental) distinguishes the passive from the intransitive construction. Compare:

Passive:

Книги **возвращаются** в библиотеку **учениками**
The books **are returned** to the library **by the pupils**

Intransitive:

Они **возвращаются** домой
They return home

Likewise, Колёса **двигаются** **водой** ‘The wheels are moved by water power’ (passive), Толпа **движется** по улице ‘The crowd moves down the street’ (intransitive).

Note

In general, only **imperfective** verbs function as reflexive passives: Проект **обсуждался** министрами ‘The project was being discussed by the ministers’, Как **пишется** это слово? ‘How is this word spelt?’ The **perfective** passive is normally rendered by a participle (see **359** (3)).

289 Reciprocal meanings

(1) A small number of reflexives denote reciprocal or joint action:

Они часто встречаются	They often meet
Мы собираемся	We gather
Скоро увидимся	We shall see each other soon

(2) Others include:

делиться/по-	to share
здороваться/по-	to say hello

мири́ться/по-, при-	to make it up
обнима́ться/обня́ться	to embrace
объединя́ться/объедини́ться	to amalgamate
проща́ться/прости́ться	to say goodbye
сове́товаться/по-	to take advice
 совеща́ться (impf. only)	to consult
срабо́таться (pf. only)	to achieve a working relationship
услáвливаться/услóвиться	to agree
целова́ться/по-	to kiss

(3) **С** + instrumental may combine with such verbs:

Делиться **с кем-нибудь** кусо́м хлéба
To share a crust of bread with someone

Совещаться **со специа́листами**
To consult experts

in which case the **subject** of the verb may be singular

Я здоро́ваюсь/проща́юсь с ним
I say hello/goodbye to him

or plural

Мы срабо́тались с ни́ми
We developed a good working relationship with them

In the absence of **с** + instrumental, however, the subject is always plural:

Друзья́ обня́лись	The friends embraced
Враги́ помири́лись	The enemies made it up

(4) Some reciprocal reflexives denote conflict and dispute:

Он со все́ми **брани́тся** He quarrels with everyone

Other verbs include: **би́ться** ‘to fight’, **боро́ться/по-** ‘to struggle’, **руга́ться/по-** ‘to abuse one another’, **ссора́ться/по-** ‘to quarrel’.

(5) Reflexive verbs of motion with the prefixes **раз-** and **с-** (**разбега́ться/разбежа́ться** ‘to disperse’, **слета́ться/слетéться** ‘to congregate’ (of birds) etc.) also express joint action (see 331).

Note

See 143 (3) (constructions with **дру́г дру́га** ‘each other’).

290 Reflexive verbs which express feelings and attitudes

A number of reflexive verbs express or reflect feelings and attitudes. They may be subdivided into:

(1) Those which appear only as reflexives: **боя́ться** + gen. 'to fear', **го́рдиться** + instr. 'to be proud of', **любова́ться/по-** + instr./**на** + acc. 'to admire', **наде́яться на** + acc. 'to hope for, rely on', **наслажда́ться** + instr. 'to revel in', **пра́виться/по-** + dat. 'to please', **опаса́ться** + gen. 'to fear', **распла́каться** (pf. only) 'to burst into tears', **рассмея́ться** (pf. only) 'to burst out laughing', **смея́ться/за-** + dat./**над** + instr. 'to laugh', **сомнева́ться/усомни́ться в** + prep. 'to doubt', **улыба́ться/улыбну́ться** 'to smile'.

(2) Those which, shorn of their reflexive endings, can be used as transitive verbs in their own right: **беспоко́биться/по-** 'to worry', **весели́ться/по-** 'to enjoy oneself', **волнова́ться/вз-** 'to get excited', **восхища́ться/восхити́ться** + instr. 'to be delighted', **печа́литься/о-** 'to grieve' **признава́ться/призна́ться в** + prep. 'to confess to', **пуга́ться/ис-** + gen. 'to be frightened', **ра́доваться/об-** + dat. 'to rejoice', **расстра́иваться/расстро́иться** 'to get distraught, upset', **серди́ться/рас-** **на** + acc. 'to get angry', **удивля́ться/удиви́ться** + dat. 'to be surprised'. Compare

Э́то меня́ беспоко́ит That concerns me

and

Я беспоко́юсь I am worried

291 Intense or purposeful action

The following reflexive verbs denote intense or purposeful action: **добива́ться/добы́ться** + gen. 'to achieve', **принимáться/приня́ться за** + acc. 'to tackle', **проси́ться/по-** 'to apply', **пыта́ться/по-** 'to attempt', **стара́ться/по-** 'to try', **стреми́ться** (impf. only) 'to strive', **стуча́ться/по-** 'to knock' (hoping to be admitted), **трудо́ться/по-** 'to labour'.

292 Reflexive verbs that emphasize thoroughness

(1) A number of reflexive verbs, mostly prefixed **вы-**, **до-** or **на-**,

emphasize thorough completion of an action: **высыпáться/выспáться** ‘to have a good sleep’, **доучивáться/доучи́ться** ‘to complete one’s studies’, **наедáться/нае́сться** ‘to eat one’s fill’, **напивáться/напи́ться** ‘to slake one’s thirst/get drunk’, **насмотрéться** (pf. only) ‘to look one’s fill’ etc.

(2) Reflexive verbs in **за-** denote absorption in an activity: **задúмывáться/задúмáться** ‘to be lost in thought’, **засмáтривáться/засмотрéться** ‘to be absorbed in looking at something’ etc.

293 Reflexive verbs that denote potential to perform an action

Some reflexives denote that the subject has the potential to perform some, usually harmful, action:

Корóвы бодáются	Cows butt
Крапíва жжéтся	Nettles sting
Собáки куса́ются	Dogs bite
Кóшки цара́паются	Cats scratch

Impersonal Constructions

294 Use of impersonal constructions to denote natural processes

(1) The third-person singulars of some verbs denote climatic or other natural processes:

Вечерéет	Evening is drawing in
Морóзит	Frost is in the air
Светáет	Dawn is breaking
Сквози́т	There is a draught
Смерка́ется рáно	It gets dark early
Темне́ет	It is getting dark

(2) In the past tense, the neuter is used:

Вечерéло	Evening was drawing in
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295 Impersonal constructions with an animate accusative or dative

Impersonal verbs may denote physical state, inclination or urge, the person affected appearing:

(1) In the accusative case:

Петра́ зно́бит	Petr feels shivery
Меня́ ко сну кло́нит	I feel drowsy
Ната́шу лихо́радит	Natasha feels feverish
Бо́льно́го рвёт	The patient vomits (Его́ вы́рвало ‘He threw up’)
Ма́шу тошнит	Masha feels sick (Ма́шу стошнiло ‘Masha vomited’)
Нас тяну́ло друг к другу (Gagarin)	We felt drawn to each other

Меня́ **зудило́** посмотре́ть, как они́ отнесу́тся к моему́ появле́нию (Rasputin)

I was itching to see how they would react to my appearance

(2) In the dative case (with a reflexive verb):

Мне нездорови́тся	I am feeling off colour
Ей не рабо́тается	She doesn’t feel like working
Ему́ не спи́тся	He doesn’t feel sleepy
Мне хо́чется пить	I feel thirsty

Про́бывал чита́ть, **не чита́лось**, лёг на кровáть, кури́л (Trifonov) He tried to read but **wasn’t in the mood for reading**, lay down on the bed, smoked

296 Impersonal constructions involving an external force

(1) In some impersonal constructions the object of a verb (usually in the neuter past tense) appears in the **accusative** and its inanimate agent, often a natural phenomenon or external force, in the **instrumental**:

Да́чу зажгло́ мо́лнией	The country cottage was struck by lightning
Подва́л за́лило водо́й	The cellar was flooded
Изу́бу занесло́ сне́гом	The hut was snow-bound
Его́ убило́ электри́чеством	He was electrocuted

Труп унесло рекой	The body was carried away by the river
Засыпало песком скважины (Trifonov)	The bore-holes got clogged with sand

Note

- (a) The agent of the action is not always indicated: Вчера на стройке **задавило** человека ‘A man was run over at the building-site yesterday’, Лодку **качало** ‘The boat was pitching and tossing’, За борт **смыло** судового повара (Gagarin) ‘The ship’s cook was washed overboard’.
- (b) An alternative construction is also possible, with the natural or other phenomenon in the nominative, as the subject of the action: Его **убила** молния ‘He was struck by lightning’.

(2) The incidents in this type of construction are **accidental**. Compare:

- (i) Use of the third-person **plural** for **intentional** occurrences:

Его **убили** в рукопашном бою
He was killed in hand-to-hand fighting

- (ii) Use of the third-person neuter **singular** for **accidental** occurrences:

Его **убило** в перестрелке He was killed in a skirmish

297 Expression of other meanings (chance, sufficiency etc.)

Some impersonal constructions are concerned with chance, success, sufficiency/insufficiency, the person affected appearing in the **dative**:

- (1) The verb denotes chance, luck, success:

Мне **везёт** в карты
I am lucky at cards

Мне **повезло**
I am in luck, have been lucky

Ученику **удалось** решить задачу
The pupil succeeded in solving the problem

Отцу **довелось** побывать на собрании
My father had occasion to attend a meeting

Note also **Вышло** иначе ‘It turned out differently’, where no personal

involvement is expressed, and **Что случилось/произошло?** ‘What has happened?’, where the person affected may appear in a prepositional phrase: **Что случилось с ним?** ‘What has happened to him?’ (cf. **У вас что-то с телефоном** ‘Something’s wrong with your telephone’).

(2) The verb denotes sufficiency/insufficiency, the quantifiable item appearing in the **genitive** case:

Брату недостаёт опыта	My brother lacks experience
Ему всегда не хватает денег	He is always short of money
Хватит бензину	There will be enough petrol

Note

Этого нам ещё не хватало! ‘That’s all we need!’

298 Constructions with the second-person singular

(1) Impersonal meanings can be expressed using the second-person singular of a verb (the equivalent of English ‘one’ or ‘you’):

Ко всему привыкаешь
You/one can get used to anything

Там не **увидишь** наших фильмов, не **прочтёшь** наших книг
(*Russia Today*)
You won’t see our films or read our books there (in the West)

(2) The second-person singular pronoun may be added for emphasis:

И только при условии, если **ты** будешь курить и пить — **ты** будешь пользоваться успехом. Если же **ты** не накрашена и не радуешься плоским шуточкам, мимо **тебя** проходят, как мимо пустого места (*Russia Today*)
And you’ll only get anywhere if you smoke and drink. But if you don’t wear make-up or laugh at their pathetic jokes, they’ll cut you dead

299 Constructions with the third-person plural

(1) The third-person plural is used (*without a pronoun*) to denote action taken by ‘the authorities’ or other third parties:

Говорят , что . . .	They say that . . .
Меня задержали	I was arrested
Его наградил	He was decorated

Прóсят не кури́ть You are requested not to smoke

Note

Как тебя́ **зову́т**? ‘What is your name?’

(2) Use of the plural may be purely conventional, as in the following examples, in which the subject of the action could be interpreted as singular:

Тебя́ **ждут**
Someone is/Some people are waiting for you

Вас **про́сят** к телефо́ну
You are wanted on the phone

Тебя́ **спра́шивают**
Someone’s asking for you

Note

The following example draws a clear distinction between the second-person singular, which identifies with the **individual**, and the third-person plural, which identifies with **authority**:

Са́мое ужáсное во всех шко́лах, так э́то то, что **сиди́шь** и **трясе́шься**, что **тебя́ спро́сят**, и **поста́вят**, наприме́р, тро́йку или дво́йку (*Russia Today*)

The worst thing in any school is sitting there trembling at the prospect of being asked a question and getting a bare pass or a fail

The Passive Voice

300 The passive voice. Introductory comments

(1) In a passive construction, the *natural object* of an action becomes the *grammatical subject*. Compare English:

(i) ‘They hate *him*’ (active construction, with ‘*him*’ the natural object of the verb).

(ii) ‘*He* is hated by them’ (passive construction in which ‘*he*’ has become the grammatical subject while remaining the natural object).

(2) Russian expresses passive meaning through reflexive verbs, the third-person plural, participles (see **359** and **360** (2)) and word order (see **478** (2) (i)).

301 The passive expressed by imperfective reflexive verbs

(1) The passive may be expressed by an imperfective reflexive verb:

Здесь **ловились** (impf.) селёдка и редкая рыба — кутум
(Lebedev)

Herring and a rare species, the kutum, **were fished for** here

(2) The agent of the action may be represented by an **instrumental**

Смета составляется **бухгалтером**

The estimate is being prepared **by an accountant**

or omitted

По радио **передавалась** новая пьеса

A new play **was being broadcast** on the radio

Обувь снималась у входа в храм (Granin)

Footwear was removed at the entrance to the temple

Note

A reflexive verb with an animate subject is often either a ‘true’ reflexive (Он **моется** ‘He is having a wash’ (not *‘He is being washed’, which should be rendered as Его **моют**)) or denotes joint action (Пассажиры **собираются** ‘The passengers congregate’). However, reflexive passives with animate subjects appear in examples such as Герои **награждаются** государством ‘Heroes **are rewarded** by the state’.

302 Passive meaning expressed by third-person plural verbs

The use of a third-person plural instead of a reflexive passive emphasizes the involvement of a human agent. Compare use of the reflexive in

Магазин **открывается** The shop opens

with the third-person plural, with its emphasis on human agency:

И вдруг он слышит, что дверь **открывают**. Но это ещё не
парень, это проводница (Rasputin)

And suddenly he hears the door **being opened**. But it’s not the boy back
yet, it’s the guard

303 Perfective reflexives with passive meaning

Perfective passives are normally expressed by a participle (see **359** and **360** (2) (ii)). However, passives may also be expressed by perfective reflexives that denote:

(1) Covering:

Вершіны **покрѣлись** снѣгом
The peaks became covered in snow

Note

This sentence describes an *action*. Compare the use of a participle to describe a *state*: Вершіны **покрѣты** снѣгом ‘The peaks **are covered** in snow’.

(2) Filling:

Таз **напѣлился** водѣй
The basin filled with water

(3) Illuminating:

Поля **осветѣлись** пѣздним сѣлнцем
The fields were illuminated by the late sun

(4) Others, for example ‘replacing’, ‘creating’, ‘breaking’:

Еѣ прѣжня радѣсть **сменѣлась** чѣвством крайнего раздражѣния
Her former joy yielded to a feeling of extreme irritation

Создалѣсь слѣжное положѣние
A complex situation developed

Разбѣлся стул
A chair got smashed

Note

Animate instrumentals are excluded from such constructions. They are possible only with a passive participle (see **359**), cf.:

Кружѣк **создалѣся/был сѣздан**
The club was set up

Кружѣк **был сѣздан** (but not *создалѣся) ученикѣми
The club was set up by the **pupils**

The Conditional and Subjunctive Moods

304 The conditional mood. Introductory comments

(1) If we compare the sentences

(i) If he *wakes* his wife she *will be* angry

(ii) If he *woke* his wife she *would be* angry

then it is clear that the situation described in (i) *may* occur, while the situation described in (ii) is *hypothetical*. The implication of statements of type (ii) is that the opposite situation obtains, e.g.

If I *knew* (the implication is that I do *not* know), I *would tell* you

(2) In the above examples, (i) is rendered in Russian by a verb in the future

Если он **разбуди́т** же́ну, она́ рассе́рдится

while the two examples under (ii) are rendered by the **conditional mood**:

Если **бы** он **разбудил** же́ну, она́ **рассердилась бы**
 Если **бы** я **знал**, я **сказал бы** вам

305 Formation of the conditional

A conditional construction comprises:

(i) A conditional clause (**если бы** + past tense of the verb).

(ii) A main clause (past tense of the verb + **бы**):

Если **бы** о́тец **был** жив, он **пора́довался бы** успе́хам сы́на
 If father **were** alive he **would rejoice** at his son's success

Note

(a) Alternatively, the main clause may precede the conditional:

Я **пошёл бы**, **если бы** меня́ **пригласи́ли**
 I **would go if** they **invited** me

(b) Conditionals can also have **pluperfect** meanings. Thus, the sentence under (a) could also be rendered as 'I **would have gone if** they **had invited** me'.

- (c) In the main clause, **бы** may precede the verb:

Я бы помо́г вам, е́сли бы вы меня́ попроси́ли

I would help you if you asked me (or **I would have helped** you if you had asked me)

- (d) The conjunction **то** ‘then’ may introduce a main clause that follows the conditional clause:

Е́сли бы она́ родила́сь в на́ше вре́мя, **то** ста́ла бы арти́сткой, и́ли ди́ктором, и́ли стюа́рдессой (*Russia Today*)

If she had been born in our time **then** she would have become a performer, or an announcer, or an air hostess

- (e) Sometimes the **е́сли** clause is omitted. The implication of such statements is ‘this is what I would do if I had my way’, as in the following example:

Я бы запрети́л шко́льникам появля́ться в обще́ственных места́х в ка́кой-либо ино́й оде́жде, крòме шко́льной фо́рмы (*Rabotnitsa*)

I would ban school-children from appearing in public places other than in school uniform

- (f) The conditional is used with either aspect, but is commoner with the perfective.

306 Use of (1) the imperative and (2) the preposition без to express conditional meanings

- (1) The **singular imperative** may be used colloquially with conditional meaning:

Доведи́сь мне (= е́сли бы мне довело́сь) встрети́ться с ним ра́ньше, всё **было бы** ина́че

If I had chanced to meet him earlier everything would have been different

Note

The singular imperative can also replace **е́сли** + future tense:

Разгори́сь (= Е́сли разгори́тся) а́томный пожа́р — и ока́жутся бессмы́сленными уси́лия люде́й до́брой во́ли (Lebedev)

If an atomic holocaust **breaks out**, the efforts of people of goodwill will be pointless

- (2) A prepositional phrase with **без** ‘without’ may also have conditional meaning:

Без Любы (= **Если бы не Люба**), я бы не получил высшего образования (Рубаков)

Had it not been for Lyuba I would not have received a higher education

307 Use of the particle **бы** to express desire

(1) The past tense + **бы** can be used to express desire on the part of the subject:

Завтра я с удовольствием **пошёл бы** в театр

I would very much **like to go** to the theatre tomorrow

(2) The phrase **хотёл бы** 'I would like to' is commonly used in this meaning:

Я хотёл бы пойти в кино

I would like to go to the cinema

Note

- (a) Note the expression of desire in constructions of the type **Скорей бы пришло лето!** 'Roll on summer!', **Поехать бы домой!** 'Oh, to go home!'
- (b) Past tense + **бы** is also used to express a mild injunction: **Помогли бы ей** 'You might give her a hand'. This is much less peremptory than the imperative: **Помогите ей!** 'Help her!'

308 Use of the subjunctive to express wish or desire

(1) In translating the sentences

(i) **I want to vote**

(ii) **I want you to vote**

the infinitive in (i), in which the subject is the **same** for both verbs, is rendered by a Russian **infinitive**

Я хочу голосовать

while the infinitive in (ii), in which the subjects of the two verbs are **different**

I want

you to vote

is rendered in Russian by a **subjunctive** (чтобы + past tense):

Я **хочу**, **чтобы** вы **голосовали**

Мы **хотим**, **чтобы** в мире **не было** ядерного оружия (B. Yeltsin)
We want the world to be without nuclear weapons

Compare

Он **не хочет**, **чтобы** я **танцевал** с Тамарой (Nikolaev)
He **does not want me to dance** with Tamara

Note

Чтобы is *never* used with the present or future tense, only with the *past*.

(2) Other words denoting desirability or undesirability may also appear in the main clause: **важно** 'it is important', **желательно** 'it is desirable', **за то** 'in favour of', **лучше** 'it is better', **настаивать/настоять** 'to insist', **против того** 'against', **требовать/по-** 'to demand':

Главное, чтобы спорт служил делу мира (Kuleshov)
The main thing is that sport should serve the cause of peace

Я **не против того**, чтобы он брал на себя часть хлопот на кухне
(*Russia Today*)
I do not object to his taking on some of the kitchen chores

Никто **не требует**, чтобы девушка сидела одна взаперти
(*Rabotnitsa*)
No one **demand**s that a girl should remain locked up in seclusion

Note

- (a) Desirability may also be implied by constructions with **сказать** 'to tell' (Мне мой приёмный отец **сказал**, **чтоб** я **запомнил** место, где рукописи закопаны (*Izvestiya*) 'My foster father **told me to remember** where the manuscripts are buried', **Скажите** вашему Витьке, чтобы он **за мной не ходил** (Rasputin) 'Tell your Vitka **to stop following me around**') and **предупредить** 'to warn' (**Я предупредил** его, чтобы он **не уходил** 'I warned him **not to go away**').
- (b) The idiomatic use of **чтобы** + past tense to issue a warning: **Чтобы** я этого больше **не слышал!** 'Don't ever let me hear you say that again!'
- (c) In colloquial contexts, **хотеть** may combine with a future verb: **Хотите**, я вам **скажу** 'Would you like me to tell you?'

309 The subjunctive of purposeful endeavour

(1) If we compare

(i) Я **хочу**, **чтобы он пришёл**

I want him to come

(ii) Я **добиваюсь** **того, чтобы он пришёл**

I am trying to get him to come

then the wish that he should come, expressed in (i) by the verb **хочу**, finds its counterpart in (ii) in purposeful endeavour (**добиваюсь**) to achieve the desired aim.

(2) Other words involved in this type of construction include **делать всё, чтобы** ‘to do everything to ensure that’, **заботиться о том, чтобы** ‘to take care that’, **следить за тем, чтобы** ‘to see to it that’, **смотреть, чтобы** ‘to mind that’, **стремиться к тому, чтобы** ‘to strive’:

Заботиться о том, чтобы вы не проспали, **будет** ЭВМ телефонной станции (*Izvestiya*)

The computer at the telephone exchange **will see to it that** you do not sleep in

Смотри, чтоб Кутузов тебя не поймал (Yakhontov)

Mind Kutuzov doesn't catch you

Note

Добиваться/добиться is used with the *subjunctive* to denote intent to achieve a purpose (Мы **добиваемся того, чтобы** она согласилась ‘We are trying to get her to agree’) and with the *indicative* to denote achievement (В конце концов председатель **добился того, что** она **согласилась** (Rasputin) ‘The chairman eventually got her to agree’).

310 Purpose clauses

A purpose clause describes an action which is taken with the aim of achieving a desired result. The result clause is introduced:

(1) By **чтобы + infinitive** if both clauses have the **same** subject:

Он встал, **чтобы открыть окно**

He got up **in order to open the window**

Я позвоню́ брату, **чтобы** напо́мнить ему́ о вёчере
I shall ring my brother **in order to remind him of the party**

(2) By **чтобы** + the **past tense** (the **subjunctive of purpose**) if the two clauses have **different** subjects:

Он встал, **чтобы она́ могла́ сесть**
He got up **so that she could sit down**

Я позвоню́ брату, **чтобы он знал**, что я приёхал
I shall ring my brother, **so that he knows** I have arrived

Челове́к снял лы́жи, **чтобы они́ не меша́ли** ему́ ползти́ (Nagibin)
The man removed his skis, **so that they should not prevent him** from crawling

311 The expression of hypothesis

(1) If we compare the sentences

- (i) I have not met *the man who swam the Channel*
- (ii) I have never met *a man who has not heard of Leo Tolstoy*

then it is clear that (i) refers to *an actual person* (the man who swam the Channel), while (ii) is dealing with *a hypothetical situation* (an imaginary person who has not heard of Leo Tolstoy).

(i) is expressed in Russian using the **indicative**:

Я не встреча́л челове́ка, **ко́торый пере́плыл** Ла-Ма́нш
I have not met the man who swam the Channel

(ii) is expressed using the **subjunctive of hypothesis** (past tense + **бы**):

Я не встреча́л челове́ка, **ко́торый бы не слыха́л** о Толсто́м
I have never met a man who has not heard of Tolstoy

Compare

Нет о́трасли промышле́нности, для ко́торой осво́ение
косми́ческого простран́ства **не оказа́лось бы** полёзным
(*Izvestiya*)
There is no industry which **has not benefited** from the conquest of
space

(2) A similar distinction is made in constructions with **случа́й** between:

(i) Incidents which *did* occur, where the indicative is used:

Скóлько у нас б́ыло слúчаев, когдá снимáли с машин стёкла
(*Literaturnaya gazeta*)

There have been umpteen **cases of car wind-screens being removed**

(ii) Incidents which did *not* occur, where the subjunctive is used:

Нé было слúчая, чтóбы он заблудился (Kazakov)

There was not a single instance **of his getting lost**

(3) The same principle applies to constructions with verbs of perception and statement: **видеть** 'to see', **замётить** 'to notice', **пóмнить** 'to remember', **сказáть** 'to say', **слы́шать** 'to hear' etc.

(i) The indicative is used to refer to an actual occurrence:

Ви́жу, как они́ игра́ют в футбо́л

I see **them playing** football

(ii) The subjunctive indicates that the subject did not witness or recall the incident and may doubt whether it in fact occurred:

Не по́мню, чтóбы она́ хоть раз взяла́ корку́ хлéба (Rasputin)

I do not recall **her** even once **taking** a crust of bread

Я не замéнил, чтóбы он упáл в óбморок

I did not notice **him fainting**

Use of the indicative here would constitute an acknowledgement that the incident occurred — but that the subject did not witness it:

Я не замéтил, что он упáл в óбморок

I did not notice **that he had fainted**

Note

(a) Hypotheses may also be introduced by the phrase **не то, чтóбы**,

И он не то чтóбы был недово́лен жízнью, счита́л себя́ неудáчником (Tendryakov)

It is not that he was dissatisfied with life, he just considered himself unlucky

or by negated verbs which imply an unreal situation:

Дня ведь не проходíло, чтóбы она́ не похва́лила невестку
(Zalygin)

Never a day passed **without her praising** her daughter-in-law

(b) **Боя́ться** 'to fear' combines either with the indicative (Бо́юсь, что он прова́лится 'I am afraid he will fail', Бо́юсь, что он не

придёт ‘I am afraid he won’t come’) or a subjunctive (note ‘illogical’ negative): **Боюсь, чтобы он не провалился** ‘I am afraid he may fail’.

312 Concessive constructions

(1) The particle **бы** also appears in concessive constructions (English ‘whoever’, ‘whatever’ etc.):

кто/что/как/где/куда/какой/сколько + бы + ни + past tense

Чего бы это мне ни стоило, на какие бы жертвы ни пришлось пойти — а своего добьюсь (*Rabomitsa*)

Whatever it costs, whatever sacrifices I may be called upon to make, I shall achieve my goal

Я видел, что черепахам плохо в неволе, **как бы я ни старался** хорошо за ними ухаживать (*Yunyi naturalist*)

I saw that the tortoises were ill at ease in captivity, **however much I might try** to look after them properly

(2) **Бы** may be omitted, in reference to an actual incident:

Сколько Носов ни тряс приёмник, голос диктора не зазвучал вновь (Povolyaev)

However much Nosov **shook** the receiver, the announcer’s voice remained silent

Как я ни боролся за её здоровье, всё напрасно (*Yunyi naturalist*)

No matter how much I fought to restore her to health, it was all in vain

(3) The future may be used to denote that all instances are covered:

Какую газету ни откроешь — всюду разговор о женщине (*Russia Today*)

Whichever paper you open, the talk is only of women

Note the set phrases

во что бы то ни стало

at any cost

как бы то ни было

however that might be

как это ни парадоксально

paradoxical as it may seem

как это ни странно

strange as it may seem

ЛЫ́жник **во что бы то ни ста́ло** хотёл продо́лжа́ть свой мучи́тельный путь (Nagibin)
 The skier was determined to continue his agonizing journey **come what may**

Constructions Expressing Obligation, Necessity, Possibility or Potential

313 The expression of obligation and necessity

Obligation and necessity can be expressed in the following ways:

(1) **Дóлжен** + infinitive

(i) **Дóлжен, должна́, должно́, должны́** have the endings of short-form adjectives and agree with the subject in gender and number:

я, ты, он дóлжен	‘I, you, he must’ (masculine subject)
я, ты, она́ должна́	‘I, you, she must’ (feminine subject)
оно́ должно́	‘it must’
мы, вы, они́ должны́	‘we, you, they must’

(ii) They also combine with past and future forms of **быть**:

я, ты, он дóлжен был	‘I, you, he had to’ (masculine subject)
я, ты, она́ должна́ была́	‘I, you, she had to’ (feminine subject)
оно́ должно́ было́	‘it had to’
мы, вы, они́ должны́ были́	‘we, you, they had to’

я дóлжен/должна́ буду́	‘I shall have to’
ты дóлжен/должна́ будешь	‘you will have to’
он дóлжен будет	‘he will have to’
она́ должна́ будет	‘she will have to’
оно́ должно́ будет	‘it will have to’
мы должны́ будем	‘we shall have to’
вы должны́ будете	‘you will have to’
они́ должны́ будут	‘they will have to’

(iii) **Дóлжен** expresses moral necessity:

Ка́ждый челове́к **дóлжен** труди́ться
 Every person must work

(iv) It is also used to express other modal concepts, the equivalents of 'should', 'ought to', 'is supposed to', 'is due to' etc.:

Цены **должны** быть гибкими (*Literaturnaya gazeta*)
Prices **should** be flexible

В различных странах мира хранятся великолепные памятники культуры, и мы **должны** знать о них (*Nedelya*)
Splendid monuments to culture are preserved in various countries of the world, and we **ought to** know about them

Пытаюсь бутылки из-под минеральной воды сдать, а пункт хоть и **должен** работать, но не работает (*Nedelya*)
I try to hand in some empty mineral-water bottles, but the collection point is not working, though it **is supposed to be**

Поезд **должен** прийти в час дня
The train is **due** in at 1 p.m.

Note

(a) Past and future usage:

Сейчас Мансуров **должен был** подойти к ней, обнять её
(Zalygin)
Now Mansurov **should have** come up to her and embraced her

Она **должна будет** помочь матери
She **will have to** help her mother

(b) The use of **должно быть**, in parenthesis, to denote supposition: Она, **должно быть**, заболела 'She must have fallen ill'; Он, **должно быть**, не понял 'He can't have understood'.

(2) **Нужно, надо**

(i) **Нужно, надо** refer to necessity:

Ему **нужно/надо было** преждевременно уйти на пенсию по слабости здоровья
He **had to** retire early due to ill health

(ii) They can also express the meaning 'ought to':

Больному **надо было** сделать переливание крови
The patient **ought to have** had a blood transfusion

(iii) Compare **не нужно** 'it is not necessary' and **не надо** 'one should not':

Не ну́жно запира́ть дверь
It is **not necessary** to lock the door

Не на́до запира́ть дверь
You **should not** lock the door

(3) Сто́ит, сле́дует, прійти́сь, вы́нужден, обяза́н

(i) **Сто́ит** refers to recommended action:

Сто́ит посмотре́ть э́тот фильм
It is worth seeing this film

(ii) **Сле́дует** is more categorical:

Не сле́дует так поступа́ть
One shouldn't behave like that

(iii) **Прійти́сь** implies reluctant acceptance of necessity:

Ему́ **пришлось** бежа́ть всю доро́гу
He had to run all the way

(iv) **Вы́нужден** means 'forced', **обяза́н** means 'obliged':

Пило́т **был вы́нужден** посади́ть самолёт в пусты́не
The pilot was forced to land the aircraft in the desert

Врач **обязана** помо́чь больно́му
The doctor is obliged to help the patient

314 The expression of possibility or potential

Possibility or potential may be expressed in the following ways:

(1) Мочь, смочь 'to be able'

Я могу́/смогу́ приня́ть ва́ше приглаше́ние
I can/shall be able to accept your invitation

Note

- (a) A distinction is made between **мочь** 'to be (physically) able' and **уме́ть** 'to be able, know how to'. Compare **Я умею** пла́вать 'I can/know how to swim' and **Сего́дня я не могу́** пла́вать: у меня́ рука́ бо́лит 'I can't swim today: I have a sore arm'.
- (b) The imperfective future of **мочь** is rarely, if ever, used. Instead, the future of **быть в состоя́нии** + the infinitive is preferred (see 225 (7)).

- (c) **Мочь** can also be the equivalent of English ‘may’, ‘might’, ‘could have’, ‘might have’:

Мне **могут** возразить: лучше по кооперативной цене, чем вообще отсутствие товара в магазине (*Literaturnaya gazeta*)

People **may** object: better at the co-operative price, than the unavailability of the product in the shops

В кассе **могут** быть билеты
There **might be** tickets at the box-office

Как он **мог** ответить иначе?
What other answer **could he have** given?

Если она решилась на это, значит, **могла** решиться и на другое (Zalygin)

If she made this decision, she **might** equally well **have** made a different decision

- (2) **Можно/нельзя**, (не)возможно

- (i) **Можно** and **нельзя** can denote:

- (a) Permission/prohibition:

— **Можно** сюда сесть?

— Нет, **нельзя**

‘May I sit here?’

‘No, you may not’

Note

Нельзя ли is used to express a very polite request: **Нельзя ли** сюда сесть? ‘Please, may I sit here?’ (cf. ‘neutral’ **Можно ли?**). Conversely, it may express irritation: **Нельзя ли** потише?! ‘Couldn’t you be a little quieter?!’

- (b) Possibility/impossibility:

Кислород **можно** получить из воды

Oxygen can be extracted from water

Нельзя согласиться с ним

One cannot agree with him

Note

- (a) **Можно** is often used with interrogative words: На каком автобусе **можно** доехать до центра? ‘Which bus do I take for the city centre?’

(b) See 279 (3) for the aspect of the infinitive with **нельзя́**. Note that the imperfective infinitive may be used with **нельзя́** in the meaning of impossibility in a **frequentative** context: **Нельзя́ мыть машину́ ка́ждый день** ‘It is impossible to wash the car every day’.

(ii) **Возмо́жно/невозмо́жно** denote only possibility or impossibility (*not* permission/prohibition):

Возмо́жно/мо́жно поста́вить то́чный диа́гноз
It is possible to make a precise diagnosis

Невозмо́жно/нельзя́ реши́ть э́ту зада́чу
It is impossible to solve this problem

Verbs of Motion

315 Unidirectional and multidirectional verbs of motion

Each of fourteen types of motion are represented in Russian by two **imperfective** verbs.

(1) One denotes **movement in one direction** (unidirectional verbs):

Я иду́ на заво́д I am on my way to the factory
Я шёл на заво́д I was on my way to the factory

(2) The other denotes **movement in more than one direction, movement in general, habitual action, return journeys** (multi-directional verbs):

Ка́ждый день он хо́дит в шко́лу
He goes to school every day

Она́ хо́дит по ко́мнате
She is walking up and down the room

Он хо́дит с па́лкой
He walks with a stick

Она́ ходи́ла в кино́
She went to the cinema

316 Conjugation of verbs of motion

The fourteen pairs of imperfective non-prefixed verbs are conjugated as follows (unidirectional first):

(1)	идти	иду́, идёшь, идёт, идём, идёте, идут	'to go, walk'
	ходить	хожу́, ходишь, ходит etc.	
(2)	ехать	еду́, едешь, едет, едем, едете, едут	'to travel, ride'
	ездить	эзжу́, эздишь, ездит etc.	
(3)	бежать	бегу́, бежишь, бежит, бежим, бежите, бегут	'to run'
	бегать	бегаю́, бегаешь, бегают etc.	
(4)	лететь	лечу́, летишь, летит etc.	'to fly'
	летать	летаю́, летаешь, летает etc.	
(5)	плыть	плыву́, плывёшь, плывёт etc.	'to swim, float'
	плавать	плаваю́, плаваешь, плавает etc.	
(6)	нести	несу́, несёшь, несёт etc.	'to carry'
	носить	ношу́, носишь, носит etc.	
(7)	вести	веду́, ведёшь, ведёт etc.	'to lead'
	водить	вожу́, водишь, водит etc.	
(8)	везти	везу́, везёшь, везёт etc.	'to convey,
	возить	вожу́, возишь, возит etc.	transport'
(9)	лезть	лэзу́, лэзешь, лэзет etc.	'to climb'
	лазить	лажу́, лазишь, лазит etc.	
(10)	ползти	ползу́, ползёшь, ползёт etc.	'to crawl'
	пóлзать	пóлзаю́, пóлзаешь, пóлзает etc.	
(11)	тащить	тащу́, тащишь, тащит etc.	'to drag'
	таскать	таскаю́, таскаешь, таскает etc.	
(12)	гнать	гоню́, гонишь, гонит etc.	'to drive, chase'
	гонять	гоняю́, гоняешь, гоняет etc.	
(13)	катить	качу́, катишь, катит etc.	'to roll'
	катать	катаю́, катаешь, катает etc.	
(14)	брести	бреду́, бредёшь, бредёт etc.	'to wander'
	бродить	брожу́, бродишь, бродит etc.	

Note

There are grounds for excluding **брести/бродить** from the series, since the two verbs differ somewhat in meaning: **брести** 'to walk along slowly, with difficulty', **бродить** 'to wander aimlessly'. **Бродить** differs from other multidirectional verbs in that it cannot denote motion towards a destination. However, the two verbs have traditionally been treated as verbs of motion, and are accordingly dealt with in this section.

317 Imperatives of verbs of motion

Imperatives of verbs of motion are formed according to the rules

formulated in **227**:

бегí!	run!
ведí!	lead!
идí!	go!
несí!	carry!

Note

Поезжай! ‘Go!’, the imperative of **по́ехать**, is used for single positive commands (**Поезжай** по́ездом! ‘Go by train!’), **ёзди!** for frequentative commands and **Не ёзди!** for negative commands (**Не ёзди** авто́бусом! ‘Don’t go by bus, i.e. ‘Never go by bus’).

318 Past tense of verbs of motion

(1) Verbs of motion in **-ать/-ять/-еть/-ить** have past tense forms in **-л**: **ходи́л**, **летéл** etc.

(2) The past tenses of other verbs of motion are as follows:

брести́:	брёл, брела́, брелó, брели́
везти́:	вёз, везла́, везло́, везли́
вести́:	вёл, вела́, велó, вели́
идти́:	шёл, шла́, шло, шли
лезть:	лез, лезла, лезло, лезли
нести́:	нёс, несла́, несло́, несли́

319 ‘To go’: **идти/ходить** and **ехать/ездить**

(1) ‘To go’ on foot is rendered in Russian as **идти́/ходи́ть**:

Она́ **идёт** в шко́лу
She **is going (is walking, is on her way)** to school

Она́ **ходи́т** в шко́лу
She **goes (walks)** to school

(2) ‘To go’ by some form of transport is rendered as **ехать/ездить**:

Она́ **едет** в шко́лу
She **is going (is riding, travelling, driving)** to school

Она́ **ёздит** в шко́лу авто́бусом
She **goes (travels)** to school by bus

(3) Thus, ‘I am going to town’ can be rendered as

Я **иду́** в го́род
‘I am going to town’ (on foot)

Я **еду́** в го́род
‘I am going to town’ (by some form of transport)

Substantial trips normally imply the use of **ехать/ездить**: Я **еду́** во Францию ‘I am going to France’.

Note

Идти/ходить is used with trains (Поезд **идёт** ‘The train is travelling along’), with ships, as an alternative to **плыть** ‘to sail’, and with road vehicles, as an alternative to **ехать** (Машина **идёт/едет** по дороге ‘The car is **driving** along the road’).

320 Functions of unidirectional verbs of motion

(1) Unidirectional verbs of motion denote movement in one particular direction, usually on one occasion:

В пресквёрном настроёнии шёл я по городу (Popov)
I walked through town in the foulest of moods

Три дня и три но́чи **нас везли́** в ареста́нтском ваго́не (Gagarin)
For three days and nights **we were transported** in a convict truck

often with a named destination:

Е́дем в го́род
We are driving to **town**

От пьедеста́ла до **раздева́лки** его́ несу́т на рука́х (Khrutsky)
They carry him shoulder-high from the rostrum to the changing-room

(2) The movement is not necessarily in a straight line:

Он шёл **зигза́гами** к до́му
He was **zigzagging** towards the house

but in all instances the verb advances the subject or object along a line of progression:

Он **плыл** прòтив вéтра и был слабéе нас (Nikolaev)
He **was swimming** against the current and was weaker than we were

Шурка долго **шёл** лесом, унося ежа подальше от жилья (Vasilev)
 Shurka **walked** through the forest for a long while, carrying the
 hedgehog further and further away from human habitation

(3) The destination or direction of the movement may be:

(i) unspecified, as in the last example,

(ii) specified, as in

К **заливу** шли через парк (Yakhontov)
 They were walking through the park **towards the bay**

(iii) more generally specified, e.g. in terms of points of the compass:

Поезд **шёл на восток**
 The train was on its way **east**

Note

The future of unidirectional verbs is far less common than the present and past: Когда мы **будем идти** мимо кинотеатра, мы **купим** билеты на завтра ‘When we **are passing** the cinema, we shall buy tickets for tomorrow’, **Будем вести** по очереди ‘We shall take it in turns to drive’.

321 Unidirectional verbs in frequentative contexts

(1) Unidirectional verbs usually describe movement in progress on one occasion:

Он **идёт, шёл** в школу He **is, was going** to school

while habitual actions are usually the province of the multidirectional verb (see 322 (3)).

(2) Unidirectional verbs are, however, used to express repeated actions:

(i) Where **movement in one direction** is particularly stressed:

Я **иду** на работу целых полчаса
 I **take** a whole half-hour **to get** to work

(Compare Каждый день я **хожу** на работу ‘Every day I **go** to work’ (and back).)

Обычно я **иду** с работы пешком, а на работу **еду** на автобусе
 I usually **walk home** from work but **go** to work on the bus

Письма 5–6 дней **идут** отсюда в Россию
Letters **take** 5–6 days **to get** from here to Russia

Note

A unidirectional verb is also used in Каждый день **летят** письма из страны в страну ‘Every day letters **wing their way** from country to country’ (since each individual letter progresses *in one direction only*).

Когда я **иду** на работу, я всегда покупаю газету
When I **am on my way** to work, I always buy a newspaper

Осенью журавли **летят** на юг
In the autumn the cranes **fly** south (*one-way (though repeated) flight* within the given time-span (осенью))

Каждое утро в 8.45 **иду** на автобусную остановку
Every morning at 8.45 I **walk** to the bus-stop (but not back again!)

(ii) Where reference is to actions or processes occurring **in sequence**:

Каждое утро встаю, завтракаю и **иду** на автобусную остановку
Every morning I get up, have breakfast and **go** to the bus-stop

Каждый год, как только наступает лето, я **еду** на море
Every year, as soon as summer comes, I **am off** to the sea-side

(Compare Каждый год **езжу** на море ‘Every year I go to the seaside’ (and back).)

322 Functions of multidirectional verbs of motion

As their name implies, multidirectional verbs denote **movement in more than one direction**. Meanings may be subdivided as follows:

(1) They denote the action in general, a capacity to perform it, to perform it in a particular way, to know how to perform it, to like performing it and so on:

Я хорошо **бегаю** на коньках
I **skate** well

Человек **ходит** на двух ногах
Man **walks** upright

Истребители **летают** быстро
Fighter-planes **fly** fast

Multidirectional infinitives frequently combine with verbs such as **любить** 'to like', **предпочитать** 'to prefer', **уметь** 'to know how to', **учиться** 'to learn how to' etc.:

Девчата любят **ходить** в рощу за цветами (Nikolaev)
The girls like **going** to the grove for flowers

Он предпочитает **ходить** пешком, она **ездит** в автобусе или в трамвае (Kovaleva)
He prefers **to walk**, she **goes** by bus or tram

А ты меня научишь так **лазить**? ... спросил мальчишка (Povolyaev)
'And will you teach me **to climb** like that?', asked the boy

Я умею **водить** машину
I know how **to drive** a car

(2) They denote movement **in various directions**, up and down, round and round, to and fro, backwards and forwards, and so on:

Всё своё внимание сосредоточил на противнике, который **гонялся** за ним по рингу (Salnikov)
He concentrated all his attention on his opponent, who **was chasing him round** the ring

В сарае **летали** белогрудые ласточки (Belov)
White-breasted swallows **were flying about** in the shed

А старухи до поздней ночи **ползали** по кладбищу, втыкали обратно кресты (Rasputin)
And the old women **crawled round** the cemetery until late at night, sticking the crosses back into the ground

Николай Иванович стал **ходить** по комнате (Proskurin)
Nikolai Ivanovich began to **walk up and down** the room

(3) They denote habitual action, expressed as return journeys:

По воскресеньям мы **будем ездить** за город
On Sundays we shall drive into the country

Автобусы **ходили** в самые дальние сёла (Rybakov)
The buses **would go** to the most remote villages

Я **хожу** в церковь
I **go** to church

323 Use of the past tense of a multidirectional verb to denote a single return journey

(1) The past tense (but **never** the present or future) of a multidirectional verb can be used to denote a single return journey:

На прошлой неделе она **éздила** в Лондон
Last week she **went** to London (and back)

Она недавно **возила** детей в Нью-Йорк
Recently she **took** the children to New York (and back)

(Compare Она **отвезла** детей в Нью-Йорк ‘She took the children to New York’ (and returned alone).)

Не обращайтесь на него внимания, — говорит она Кузьме. — Он опять в ресторан **ходил** (Rasputin)
‘Pay no attention to him’, she says to Kuzma. ‘He’s **been** to the restaurant again’

Пока я **бегал** за фотоаппаратом к машине, олень ушёл
By the time I **had run** to the car for my camera the deer had gone

Note

In this example **бегал** denotes running to the car *and back*. The use of the unidirectional **бежал** would imply that the deer escaped while the subject *was still running* towards the car.

(2) Sentences which refer to a return journey may also report what happened at the point of destination, between the outward and return legs of the trip:

Ходил с отцом в зоопарк и там **катался** на маленькой лошадке
(Belov)

I **went** with my father to the zoo, where I **had a ride** on a little horse

Note

This sentence comprises three actions: (a) went to the zoo, (b) rode on a little horse while there (c) came home again, (a) and (c) being represented by the verb **ходил**.

(3) The multidirectional verb is also used in interrogative and negative sentences which refer to return trips:

Ты ходил в школу сегодня?

Have you been/Did you go to school today?

Сегодня **я не ходил** в школу

I haven’t been/I didn’t go to school today

324 The verbs нести́, носить́; вести́, водить́; везти́, возить́

Нести́, носить́; вести́, водить́; везти́, возить́ may all mean ‘to take’:

- (1) **Нести́, носить́** means ‘to take (on foot), carry’:

Он **несёт** кни́гу в библиоте́ку
He **is taking** the book to the library (on foot)

Она́ **носи́ла** малю́тку по ко́мнате
She **was carrying** the baby up and down the room

- (2) **Вести́, водить́** means ‘to take, lead’ (persons or animals):

Она́ **вела́** дете́й в шко́лу
She **was taking** the children to school (on foot)

Она́ **води́ла** дете́й в цирк
She **took** the children to the circus

Note

Вести́/водить́ also means ‘to drive’ (a vehicle).

- (3) **Везти́, возить́** means ‘to take, drive, convey’ (in a vehicle):

Авто́бус **во́зит** тури́стов по А́нглии
The bus **is taking** the tourists round England

Она́ **везёт** ребёнка в коля́ске
She **is wheeling** the child in a pram

Note

- (a) While **нести́/носить́**, **вести́/водить́** and **везти́/возить́** denote the *specific* purpose of a journey, **брать/взять** ‘to take’ does not. Compare **Ведите́** дете́й в зооса́д ‘Take the children to the zoo’ (the specific reason for the outing) and **Возьми́те** меня́ с собо́й ‘Take me with you’ (the person addressed is going anyway).
- (b) A similar principle distinguishes **нести́/носить́** from **везти́/возить́** in contexts which involve travelling. Thus, a passenger in a train who is taking a picture to an exhibition may say — **Везу́** карти́ну на вы́ставку в Москвú, while of the briefcase he happens to be carrying he will say — **Несу́** портфе́ль, since it is *not* the object of his journey to transport the briefcase, which is simply an item of personal equipment.

325 Translation of 'to drive'

The verb 'to drive' can be rendered as follows:

- (1) **Ёхать/ёздить** 'to drive, travel':

Я ёду в гóрод
I **am driving** to town

- (2) **Везть/возить** 'to drive, convey, transport':

Я вёз багаж на стáнцию
I **was taking** (driving) the luggage to the station

- (3) **Вестть/водить** 'to drive' (a vehicle):

Я учусь **водить** машíну
I am learning **to drive**

Note

Гнать/гонять стáдо 'to drive' (a herd).

326 Perfectives of unidirectional verbs

- (1) The perfective infinitives of unidirectional verbs are formed with the prefix **по-**:

идть/ пойть	'to go'	ёхать/ по-	'to travel'
лететь/ по-	'to fly'	бежать/ по-	'to run' etc.

Note

Only **идть** undergoes modification (to **-йти**) in the formation of the perfective.

- (2) The perfectives of unidirectional verbs denote the beginning of movement, setting off for a destination etc.:

Он **пошёл** на пóчту
He **has gone** to the post office

(Compare Он **ходил** на пóчту 'He went/has been to the post office' (implying a return journey).)

Она **поехала** за гранíцу
She **has gone** abroad

(Compare Она **ёздила** за гранíцу 'She went/has been abroad' (and has returned).)

Он **понёс** книгу в библиотеку

He **has taken** the book to the library (and is not back yet)

Note

- (a) English ‘**went**’ can refer to one-way journeys (‘He **went** to China last week’), rendered by the perfective of a unidirectional verb:

На прошлой неделе он **поёхал** в Китай

or to return trips (‘**I went** on holiday to France last year’), rendered by a Russian multidirectional verb:

В прошлом году я **ёздил** на каникулы во Францию

- (b) Note the contrast between durative **шёл** and perfective **пошёл** in the following example: Он круто повернулся и **пошёл** навстрёчу противнику, который **шёл** на него уже без улыбки (Salnikov) ‘He turned sharply and **set off** towards his opponent, who **was bearing down** on him, no longer with a smile on his face’.

- (3) The future of unidirectional perfectives can be used independently (Я **пойду** с тобой ‘I will go with you’) or with the future perfective of another verb:

— **Пойду покурю**, — говорю я (Kazakov)
‘I’ll go and have a smoke’, I say

- (4) The unidirectional perfective may indicate a new phase of an action already in progress (e.g. a change in tempo):

Они шли медленно, потом **пошли** быстрее
They were walking along slowly, then **quickenened their pace**

Пловец почувствовал усталость и **поплыл** медленнее
The swimmer felt tired and **began to swim** more slowly

- (5) An English phrase may translate a unidirectional perfective:

Мы оттолкнулись от бакена и **поплыли** к берегу (Nikolaev)
We pushed off from the buoy and **struck out** for the shore

Он шёл по берегу, но **побежал**, увидев меня
He was walking along the shore but **broke into a run** on catching sight of me

327 Special meanings of **пойти**

Пойти can mean:

- (1) ‘To start walking’ of a toddler:

Он **пошёл** с десяти́ месяцев
He **started walking** at ten months

- (2) ‘To start school’ of an infant:

Ми́ша в э́том го́ду **пошёл** в шко́лу
Misha **started** school this year

Note also the ‘illogical’ use of the past in **Я пошёл!** ‘I’m off!’, **Поехали!** ‘Let’s go!’ etc.

328 Не пошёл and не ходил

- (1) **Не ходил** denotes that a journey did not take place:

Вчера́ мы никуда́ **не ходили́**
We didn’t go anywhere yesterday

- (2) **Не пошёл** implies an intention unfulfilled:

Вчера́ мы никуда́ **не пошли́**
We didn’t go anywhere yesterday (though we had planned to)

329 Perfectives of multidirectional verbs

- (1) The perfectives of multidirectional verbs are also formed with the prefix **по-**:

ходи́ть/**по-** ‘to walk’ э́здить/**по-** ‘to travel’ etc.

- (2) They denote an action of short duration in the past or future:

Он **полега́л** над го́родом и опусти́лся
He **circled** the town **for a while** and then landed

Оста́лось два ра́унда. **Походи́** немно́го, пото́м укро́йся
полоте́нцем и сиди́ здесь, жди́ меня́ (Salnikov)
There are two rounds left. **Walk around for a bit**, then wrap yourself
in a towel, sit here and wait for me

330 Figurative and idiomatic uses of verbs of motion

Verbs of motion have a number of figurative or idiomatic meanings. In most cases only one of a pair (either the unidirectional or the multidirectional) can be used in a particular figurative sense: the usual differential criteria between unidirectional and multidirectional do *not* apply when the verbs are used figuratively.

(1) Only **unidirectional** verbs can be used in the following:

(i) **Идёт** война́, уро́к, филь́м

A war, a lesson, a film **is on**

Э́та шля́па вам **идёт**

This hat **suits** you

Страна́ **идёт** к социа́лизму

The country **is moving** towards socialism

Идти́ прòтив во́ли больши́нства́

To go against the will of the majority

Идёт дождь, снег

It is raining, snowing

Иду́т часы́

The clock **is going**

Note

Часы́ **хóдят** is possible in certain contexts: Часы́ **давнó** не хóдят 'The clock has not gone **for a long time**'.

- | | | |
|-------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (ii) | вести́ войну́ | to wage war |
| | вести́ дневни́к | to keep a diary |
| | вести́ переписку́ | to carry on a correspondence |
| | Доро́га ведёт в лес | The road leads to the forest |
| | Ложь к добру́ не ведёт | No good can come of lying |
| (iii) | нести́ ответствéнность | to bear the responsibility |
| | нести́ поте́ри | to bear losses |
| | нести́ наказа́ние | to undergo punishment |
| (iv) | А́кции летя́т вниз | Shares are plummeting |
| | Вре́мя летит | Time flies |
| (v) | лезть в дра́ку | to get into a brawl |
| (vi) | Ему́ везёт/повезло́ | He is lucky/is in luck |

Повезло, что отыскали льдину толщиной 47 см. (Lebedev)
We were lucky enough to find an ice-floe 47 cm thick

(vii) Дни **бегут**; Кровь **бежит** The days **fly past**; Blood **flows**

(viii) Троллейбус **ползёт**, как черепаха
 The trolley-bus **is crawling along** at a snail's pace

(2) Only **multidirectional** verbs are used in the following:

- (i) **носить** звание, имя **to bear** a title, a name
носить отпечаток **to bear** the imprint
носить одежду **to wear** clothes (habitually: cf.
 Он **носит** шляпу 'He wears
 a hat' and Он **в шляпе** 'He is
 wearing a hat')
- (ii) **водить** за нос **to lead** up the garden path
- (iii) **ходит** слух/**ходят** слухи
 rumour **has it**/rumours **are rife** (also, though less commonly, **идут**
 слухи)
- (iv) **кататься** на коньках **to skate**
кататься на велосипеде **to go** for a cycle ride
кататься на лодке **to go** for a row

331 Compound verbs of motion

(1) All simple verbs of motion combine with up to fifteen different prefixes to form compound aspectual pairs, multidirectional verbs forming the basis of the imperfectives and unidirectional verbs the basis of the perfectives (see **332** for modified verb stems).

(2) These prefixed imperfective/perfective aspectual pairs lack the unidirectional/multidirectional dichotomy of the simple verbs.

(3) Most compound verbs of motion are intransitive and are linked to the following noun by a preposition (see (4)).

(4) Prefixed compounds of **-ходить/-йти**, for example, are as follows:

Imperfective	Perfective	Preposition	Meaning
входить	войти	в + acc.	to enter
всходить	взойти	на + acc.	to go up on to
выходить	выйти	из + gen.	to go out of
доходить	дойти	до + gen.	to go as far as
заходить	зайти	к + dat.	to call on someone

заходить	зайти́	в/на + acc.	to call in at a place
		в + acc.	to go a long way into
находить	найти́	+ acc.	to find
обходить	обойти́	вокруг + gen.	to go round
		+ acc.	to inspect/avoid
отходить	отойти́	от + gen.	to move away from
переходить	перейти́	через + acc.	to cross
		+ acc.	
подходить	подойти́	к + dat.	to go up to
приходить	прийти́	к + dat.	to come to see a person
		в/на + acc.	to come to/arrive at a place
проходить	пройти́	мимо + gen.	to pass
		+ acc.	to cover (a distance)
расходиться	разойти́сь	по + dat.	to disperse to (separate destinations)
сходить	сойти́	с + gen.	to come down from, step off
сходиться	сойти́сь	с + instr.	to come together with
уходить	уйти́	от + gen.	to leave a person
		из/с + gen.	to leave a place

Note

- (a) Alternative usage may be determined by context: Она́ вы́шла **в коридо́р/на у́лицу** ‘She came out **into** the corridor/**on to** the street’, Он ушёл **на рабо́ту** ‘He left **for** work’, Они́ пришл́и **от дире́ктора** ‘They have come **from** the manager’, Она́ сошла́ **на перро́н** ‘She got down **on to** the platform’ etc.
- (b) The choice of preposition with **заходить/зайти́** and **приходить/прийти́** depends on the type of location involved: Он пришёл **в шко́лу/на заво́д** ‘He arrived **at the school/factory**’ (cf. Он ушёл **из шко́лы/с рабо́ты** ‘He left **school/work**’). See **408** and **412**.
- (c) Some compounds in **на-** take **на + acc.**: **наехать на де́рево** ‘to run into a tree’.
- (d) Prefix and prepositional usage is similar to but not identical with usage with other verbs (see **254**).

332 Stems of compound verbs of motion

Prefixes are added to the following stems to make imperfective and perfective compounds. Stems which differ in form from the simple verbs of motion (for meanings, see **316**) are in **bold** type:

Imperfective	Perfective
-ходить	-йти́
-езжа́ть	-ехать́

-бегáть	-бежа́ть
-летáть	-летéть
-лезáть	-лезть
-плывáть	-плыть
-ползáть	-ползти́
-носíть	-нести́
-води́ть	-вести́
-вози́ть	-везти́
-та́скивать	-тащи́ть
-гоня́ть	-гнать
-ка́тывать	-кати́ть
-брéдáть	-брести́

Note

The stems **-бегáть** and **-ползáть** differ from the simple verbs of motion **бе́гать** 'to run' and **по́лзать** 'to crawl' only in stress.

333 Spelling rules in the formation of compound verbs of motion

(1) For **вз/-вс-**, **раз-/рас-**, see 16 (4).

(2) The vowel 'o' is inserted between a consonant and **-йти**:

войти́ (impf. **входи́ть**) to enter (future **войду́**; past **вошёл**)

Likewise **взойти́** 'to ascend', **обойти́** 'to go round', **отойти́** 'to move away from', **подойти́** 'to go up to', **разойти́сь** 'to disperse', **сойти́** 'to descend', **сойти́сь** 'to come together'.

(3) A hard sign is inserted between a prefix ending in a consonant and all forms based on the infinitive stems **-езжа́ть/-éхать**:

везжа́ть, вэ́хать to drive in etc.

334 Prefixed verbs of motion

The following examples illustrate the use of compound verbs of motion (for examples with **-ходи́ть/-йти́** see 331 (4)):

- (1) **К** подно́жью раке́ты **подъезжа́ет** авто́бус (*Russia Today*)
A bus **draws up to** the base of the rocket

- (2) Дети **выбега́ют из** мо́ря на пляж (Muraveva)
The children **run out of** the sea on to the beach
- (3) Их объединяет одна о́бщая цель – они́ должны́ **доплы́ть до** бе́рега (*Russia Today*)
They are united by a common aim – they must **reach** the shore
- (4) Кононов **отпо́лз** в уго́л пала́тки (Belov)
Kononov **crawled off** into the corner of the tent
- (5) Мяч залетéл на крýшу
The ball **sailed away on to** the roof
- (6) Она́ перелéзла **через** забóр
She **climbed over** the fence
- (7) Разбрéдались **по** вла́жному лéсу (Vanshenkin)
They **were wandering off through** the damp forest
- (8) Мяч **перекатýлся** **через** ли́нию
The ball **rolled over** the line
- (9) **Вы́ташили** лётчика **из** горя́щего самолёта
They **dragged** the pilot **out of** the burning aircraft
- (10) Мотóры их катерóв свёрхмóщные, ры́бинспéкторам не догна́ть (*Izvestiya*)
The engines of their launches are high-powered, the fisheries inspectors haven't a hope of **catching up with** them
- (11) **Перенёс** телефóн **на** тахту́ (Avdeenko)
He **carried** the telephone **over** to the divan
- (12) — Вот, матрóса тебе́ **привёл**, — сказа́л Куту́зов (Yakhontov)
'Look, I have **brought** you a sailor', said Kutuzov
- (13) Куту́зов сообщéл: яхты́ уже́ **привезли́** (Yakhontov)
Kutuzov reported that the yachts **had** already **been delivered**

335 Use of the imperfective past of a compound verb of motion to denote an action and its reverse

(1) The past tense of the imperfective aspect of a compound verb of motion can denote the action and its reverse (see also 259): Он **приходи́л** 'He came' (and has now gone away again), Он **уезжа́л** 'He went away' (and has now returned).

(2) The prefixes most frequently involved are **в-/вы-, за-, под-, при-/у-**:

Как-то она **приводила** своих детей на рентгѐн (Aksenov)
She **had** once **brought** her children for an X-ray

Какие красивые цветы! Кто-то, **должно быть, входил** в комнату без меня
What beautiful flowers! Someone **must have been** into the room when I was out

Жѐнщина, которая только что **подходила к** киоску за газетой, известная актриса
The woman who **has just been up to** the kiosk for a newspaper is a famous actress

336 Figurative and idiomatic uses of compound verbs of motion

Many compound verbs of motion have figurative or idiomatic meanings. The following list contains only a representative sample:

(1) Compounds in **-ходить, -йти**

входить/войти в моду	to come into fashion
выходить/выйти из строя	to break down
доходить/дойти до слѐз	to be reduced to tears
заходить/зайти слишком далеко	to go too far
переходить/перейти к другой теме	to switch to a different topic
подходить/подойти	to be suitable
приходить/прийти в голову (кому-нибудь)	to occur (to someone)
проходить/пройти	to pass (e.g. время, боль проходит 'time, pain passes')
расходиться/разойтись во мнениях	not to see eye to eye
сходить/сойти с ума	to go mad
сходиться/сойтись во мнениях	to see eye to eye

(2) Compounds in **-водить, -вести**

вводить/ввести в обращение	to bring into circulation
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выводить/вывести из терпения	to exasperate
доводить/довести до конца	to put the finishing touches to
заводить/завести часы	to wind up a watch
наводить/навести справки	to make enquiries
отводить/отвести душу	to unburden one's soul
переводить/перевести	to translate
подводить/подвести друга	to let a friend down
приводить/привести к	to lead to
проводить/провести время	to spend time
разводить/развести	to breed (livestock)
разводиться/развестись	to get divorced
сводить/свести к минимуму	to reduce to a minimum

(3) Compounds in -носить, -нести

вносить/внести вклад	to make a contribution
выносить/вынести приговор	to pass sentence
доносить/донести на + асс.	to denounce
зanosить/занести	to record, register
наносить/нанести поражение	to inflict a defeat
переносить/перенести зиму	to survive the winter
приносить/принести пользу	to bring benefit

337 Perfectives in c- based on multidirectional verbs

(1) Multidirectional verbs combine with the prefix **c-** to form perfectives: **сбегать, сходить, съездить** etc. They do not have imperfectives.

(2) Such verbs denote the performance of an action and its result, usually within a limited period of time:

Никон **сходил** (pf.) за дровами, затопил маленькую печку (Abramov)

Nikon **went to fetch** some firewood and lit the small stove

Note

Compounds with **c-** are preferred to the simple unprefixated multidirectional verb (e.g. он ходил, он ездил):

(a) where sequential actions are involved:

Съездил (pf.) за кни́гами и сел занима́ться
He **went to fetch** the books and sat down to study

(b) where a time element is involved:

Он **сходил** (pf.) за газе́той за **10 мину́т**
He **took 10 minutes to fetch** the newspaper

(3) Unlike the simple unprefixated multidirectional verb, which can describe single return journeys in the past tense only (see **323**), perfectives in **с-** can also express this meaning in the future, the infinitive and the imperative:

Да и лёгче, пожа́луй, **на Луну́ слета́ть** (pf.), чем придума́ть
тако́й вездехо́д (Abramov)
I do believe it would be easier **to fly to the Moon and back** than devise
a cross-country vehicle like that

Сходи́ (pf.) к Ма́йе и переда́й ей, что́бы она́ подошла́ за́втра по́сле
игры́ к газе́тному кио́ску (Trifonov)
Pop over to Maya's and tell her to come to the newspaper kiosk after
the game tomorrow

Note

It is important to distinguish perfectives **сходить**, **слетать**, **сбегать** from imperfectives **сходить**/perfective **сойти́** 'to go down', **слетать**/perfective **слететь** 'to fly down' and **сбегать**/perfective **сбежать** 'to run down'.

338 Perfectives in за-, из- and на- based on multidirectional verbs

За-, **из-** and **на-** also combine with multidirectional verbs to form compound perfectives (such verbs do not have imperfectives):

(1) **За-** (in the meaning 'beginning of an action')

Он в волне́нии **заходи́л** (pf) по ко́мнате
He **began walking about** the room in agitation

(2) **Из-** (in the meaning 'to cover the whole area')

Он **изъездил** (pf) всю страну́
He **has travelled the length and breadth** of the country

Он **избёгал** (pf). весь сад
 He **covered every inch** of the garden

(3) На- (in the meaning of time or distance covered)

Этот шофёр **наёздил** (pf.) 100 000 км.
 This driver **has clocked** 100,000 km.

Лётчик **налетал** (pf.) 1000 часо́в
 The pilot **has clocked** 1,000 hours

Note

It is important to distinguish perfective **заходить** from imperfective **заходить**/perfective **зайти** ‘to drop in’ and perfective **избегать** from imperfective **избегать**/perfective **избежать** ‘to avoid’.

Participles

339 Participles. Introductory comments

There are five verbal participles in Russian. The active participles, the imperfective passive and the long-form perfective passive decline like long adjectives and agree in case, gender and number with the nouns they qualify, while the short-form perfective passive functions like a short adjective:

the present active	чита́ющий	‘who is reading’
the past active (imperfective)	чита́вший	‘who was reading’
the past active (perfective)	прочита́вший	‘who read’
the imperfective passive	чита́емый	‘which is read’
the perfective passive (short form)	прочита́н	‘has been read’
the perfective passive (long form)	прочита́нный	‘which has been read’

Note

The participles are confined mainly to written styles, except for those used as adjectives and nouns and the perfective passive short form.

340 Present active participle. Formation

(1) The present active participle is formed by replacing the final **-т** of the third-person plural of the present tense by the endings **-щий** (m.), **-щая** (f.), **-щее** (n.), **-щие** (pl.):

бегу́т	бегу́щий	-ая	-ее	-ие	‘who is, are running’
крича́т	крича́щий	-ая	-ее	-ие	‘who is, are shouting’
танцу́ют	танцу́ющий	-ая	-ее	-ие	‘who is, are dancing’
чита́ют	чита́ющий	-ая	-ее	-ие	‘who is, are reading’

(2) In the case of reflexive verbs, **-ся** is used throughout:

смею́тся	смею́щийся	-аяся	-еися	-ияся	‘who is, are laughing’
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341 Stress in the present active participle

(1) The stress in present active participles formed from **first-conjugation** verbs is usually as in the third-person plural:

понима́ть	понима́ют	понима́ющий	‘who understands’
то́нут	то́нут	то́нущий	‘who drowns/is drowning’
иска́ть	и́щут	и́щущий	‘who looks for/is looking for’
течь	теку́т	теку́щий	‘which flows/is flowing’

Note

There are a few exceptions to this rule, e.g. **могу́щий** from **мо́гут**, third-person plural of **мочь** ‘to be able’.

(2) The stress in participles from **second-conjugation** verbs is usually the same as that of the **infinitive**:

буди́ть	бу́дят	будя́щий	‘who wakes, is waking’
води́ть	во́дят	водя́щий	‘who leads’
ката́ть	ка́тят	ката́щий	‘who is rolling’

(3) However, a number of participles from second-conjugation verbs have the same stress as the third-person plural: **ды́шащий** from дыша́ть ‘to breathe’, **леча́щий** from лечи́ть ‘to treat’ (medically), **лю́бящий** from люби́ть ‘to love’, **ру́бящий** from руби́ть ‘to chop’, **су́шащий** from суши́ть ‘to dry’, **те́рпящий** from терпе́ть ‘to endure’, **ту́шащий** from туши́ть ‘to extinguish’.

(4) A number of participles have alternative stress: **ва́рящий/варя́щий** from вари́ть ‘to boil’, **го́нящий/гоня́щий** from гнать ‘to drive’, **деле́ющий/деля́щий** from дели́ть ‘to share’, **су́дящий/судя́щий** from суди́ть ‘to judge’, **уча́щий/уча́щий** from учи́ть ‘to teach’, **хва́лящий/хваля́щий** from хвали́ть ‘to praise’, **шу́тящий/шутя́щий** from шути́ть ‘to joke’.

342 The past active participle. Formation

(1) The past active participle is formed from imperfective and perfective verbs by replacing the **-л** of the masculine past tense by **-вший** (m.), **-вшая** (f.), **-вшее** (n.), **-вшие** (pl.):

писáл	писáвший	-вшая	-вшее	-вшие	‘who was, were writing’
написáл	написáвший	-вшая	-вшее	-вшие	‘who wrote’

(2) In reflexive verbs, the suffix **-ся** is used throughout:

смея́вшийся ‘who laughed, was laughing’

(3) If the masculine past does not end in **-л**, the endings **-ший**, **-шая**, **-шее**, **-шие** are added to it to make the participle:

замёрз	замёрзший	-шая	-шее	-шие	‘who, which froze’
привы́к	привы́кший	-шая	-шее	-шие	‘who got used to’
у́мер	у́мерший	-шая	-шее	-шие	‘who died’

Note

(a) Unprefixed verbs with the suffix **-ну-**, e.g. **га́снуть** ‘to go out’ (past гас/га́снул), **ги́бнуть** ‘to perish’, **па́хнуть** ‘to smell’, and the prefixed verb **исчезну́ть** ‘to disappear’ (past исчéз) form the past participle with the suffix **-вш-**: **га́снувший**, **ги́бнувший**, **исчезнувший**, **па́хнувший**.

(b) **Досты́гнуть** ‘to achieve’ (past досты́г) has alternative participles: **досты́гший/досты́гнувший**. Likewise compounds of **-вергнуть**, e.g. **подвэ́ргший/подвэ́ргнувший** from **подвэ́ргнуть** ‘to subject’ (past подвэ́рг) and **втóргшийся/втóргнувшийся** from **втóргнуться** ‘to invade’ (past втóргся). **Воскрéсший** from **воскрéснуть** ‘to rise again’ (past воскрéс) is commoner than **воскрéснувший**.

(4) Verbs in **-ти** with a present-future stem in **-т-** or **-д-** have participles based on stems ending in these consonants:

идти́, past шéл	шéдший	-шая	-шее	-шие	‘who was, were going’
вести́, past вéл	вéдший	-шая	-шее	-шие	‘who was, were leading’
цвести́, past цвéл	цвётший	-шая	-шее	-шие	‘which was, were blooming’

Note

Произо́йти ‘to occur’ has alternative participles **происше́дший** and **произоше́дший**.

343 Stress in the past active participle

Stress is as in the masculine past, with the exception of **умёрший** ‘who died’ (cf. past **умер**).

344 The imperfective passive participle. Formation

(1) The imperfective passive participle is formed by adding adjectival endings to the first-person plural of an imperfective **transitive** verb:

First-person plural	Participle				
лю́бим	лю́бимый	-ая	-ое	-ые	‘who, which is, are loved’
це́ним	це́нимый	-ая	-ое	-ые	‘who, which is, are valued’
чита́ем	чита́емый	-ая	-ое	-ые	‘which is, are read’

(2) Many unprefixed transitive verbs (e.g. **жева́ть** ‘to chew’, **копа́ть** ‘to dig’) do not form the participle. However, participles can be made from most prefixed transitive secondary imperfectives and verbs in **-овать**:

испы́тываемый	-ая	-ое	-ые	‘which is, are (being) tested’
сжи́гаемый	-ая	-ое	-ые	‘which is, are (being) burnt’
тре́буемый	-ая	-ое	-ые	‘which is, are (being) demanded’
устрáиваемый	-ая	-ое	-ые	‘which is, are (being) arranged’

(3) Participles from transitive verbs in **-авать** are as follows: **дава́емый** ‘which is given/being given’, **признава́емый** ‘which is acknowledged’ etc.

Note

(a) The participle is also formed from a limited number of **intransitive** or **semi-transitive** verbs. Some of these take the dative: **предшествова́ть** ‘to precede’ (**предшество́емый**), **угрожа́ть** ‘to threaten’ (**угрожа́емый**). Others take the instrumental: **комáндовать** ‘to command’ (**комáндуемый**), **пренебрега́ть** ‘to scorn, take no heed of’ (**пренебрега́емый**), **руководи́ть** ‘to run’ (**руководи́мый**), **управля́ть** ‘to manage, guide’ (**управля́-**

емый). The series also includes **обитаемый** ‘inhabited’ (from intransitive **обитáть**).

- (b) Among verbs in **-ти**, only **вести** ‘to lead’ (**ведóмый** (**ведóмый** самолёт ‘wing-man’ (in an aircraft formation))) and **нести** ‘to carry’ (**несóмый**) form imperfective passive participles (see 346 (2)).

345 Stress in the imperfective passive participle

Stress in imperfective passive participles derived from **first-conjugation** verbs is as in the first-person plural: **используемый** ‘which is used’. In participles derived from **second-conjugation** verbs the stress falls on **-и-**: **гонимый** ‘which is driven’, from **гнать** ‘to drive’ (except for verbs with stem stress throughout: **слышимый** from **слышать** ‘to hear’).

346 Verbs which have no imperfective passive participle

Many verbs have no imperfective passive participle. These include the following:

- (1) Verbs in **-ереть, -зть, -оть, -сть, -уть, -чь**.
- (2) Verbs in **-ти** (except for **вести** ‘to lead’ and **нести** ‘to carry’ (see 344 (3) note (b))).
- (3) Very many monosyllabic verbs, including **бить** ‘to strike’, **брать** ‘to take’, **брить** ‘to shave’, **есть** ‘to eat’, **жать** ‘to press’, **ждать** ‘to wait for’, **звать** ‘to call’, **знать** ‘to know’, **лить** ‘to pour’, **мыть** ‘to wash’, **петь** ‘to sing’, **пить** ‘to drink’, **рвать** ‘to tear’, **ткать** ‘to weave’, **шить** ‘to sew’.
- (4) First-conjugation consonant-stem verbs of the type **вяза́ть** ‘to tie’, **писа́ть** ‘to write’, **пря́тать** ‘to hide’. However, **иска́ть** ‘to seek’ has the participle **иско́мый** (**иско́мая** величина́ ‘unknown quantity’) and **колеба́ть** ‘to shake’ has **колебле́мый** ‘which is being shaken’. See 217.
- (5) Many second-conjugation verbs: **благодаря́ть** ‘to thank’, **будя́ть** ‘to awaken’, **глади́ть** ‘to iron’, **гото́вить** ‘to prepare’, **держáть** ‘to hold’, **жа́рить** ‘to fry’, **корми́ть** ‘to feed’, **кра́сить** ‘to paint’, **лечи́ть** ‘to treat’ (medically), **находи́ть** ‘to find’, **плати́ть** ‘to pay’, **по́ртить**

‘to spoil’, **руб́ить** ‘to chop’, **смотре́ть** ‘to watch’, **ста́вить** ‘to stand’, **стро́ить** ‘to build’, **суши́ть** ‘to dry’, **тра́тить** ‘to spend’, **туши́ть** ‘to extinguish’, **учи́ть** ‘to teach, learn’, **чи́стить** ‘to clean’.

347 Formation of passive participles from secondary imperfectives whose primaries have no participle

Most imperfective passive participles derive from prefixed verbs. They include synonyms or cognates of a number of unprefixed verbs which have no participle (see 346). Thus, the verb **есть** ‘to eat’ has no participle, whereas its synonym, the secondary imperfective **сьеда́ть**, *does* have a participle: **сьеда́емый** ‘which is eaten’. Compare

жева́ть	=	разже́вывать	разже́ываемый	‘which is chewed’
жечь	=	сжигáть	сжигáемый	‘which is burnt’
пить	=	выпивáть	выпивáемый	‘which is drunk’
плати́ть	=	опла́чивать	опла́чиваемый	‘who is paid’
тере́ть	=	растира́ть	растира́емый	‘which is rubbed’

348 The perfective passive participle. Introductory comments

(1) The perfective passive participle has a **short** (predicative) form and a **long** (attributive) form. It is derived only from verbs which are (i) *perfective* and (ii) *transitive*.

(2) Most perfective passive participles contain the suffix **-н/-ен-**, while a minority contain the suffix **-т-**.

349 Formation (infinitives in -ать/-ять)

(1) The masculine short form of the participle derives from infinitives in **-ать** and **-ять** (except for a number of monosyllabic roots, see 357 (5)) by replacing **-ть** by **-н**, to give endings **-ан/-ян**. The syllable immediately preceding **-ан**, **-ян** bears the stress:

задержáть	заде́ржан	‘has been arrested’
избра́ть	и́збран	‘has been elected’
написа́ть	напи́сан	‘has been written’

Note

The perfective prefix **вы-** is always stressed: **выигран** ‘has been won’.

(2) **-e-** is liable to mutate to **-ě-** under stress:

завоева́ть	завоёван	‘has been conquered’
причеса́ть	причёсан	‘has had his hair done’

(3) The feminine, neuter and plural forms are derived from the masculine by the addition of **-а, -о, -ы**:

напи́сан	напи́сана	напи́сано	напи́саны
заде́ржан	заде́ржана	заде́ржано	заде́ржаны

350 Stress in the participles from **дать** and its compounds

(1) The short forms of the perfective passive participle of the verb **дать** ‘to give’ have end stress in the feminine, neuter and plural:

дан **данá** **данó** **даны́**

Им **данá** власть

Authority has been given to them

Similarly **сдать** ‘to hand over’.

(2) The short forms of other compounds of **дать** (e.g. **изда́ть** ‘to publish’) have prefix stress except in the end-stressed feminine (where prefix stress is, however, also allowable):

и́здан **и́здана́** **и́здано** **и́зданы** ‘has, have been published’

Similarly **отда́ть** ‘to return’, **передáть** ‘to convey’ (**пéредан**, **передана́**), **пода́ть** ‘to serve’, **прида́ть** ‘to impart’, **продáть** ‘to sell’, **разда́ть** ‘to distribute’ (**ро́здан**, **раздана́**, **ро́здано**, **ро́зданы**), **созда́ть** ‘to create’.

351 Formation of the long-form (attributive) participle from verbs in **-ать/-ять**

Long-form participles are made from verbs in **-ать/-ять** by adding **-ный, -ная, -ное, -ные** to the masculine short form:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
напи́сан	напи́санный	напи́санныя	напи́санное	напи́санные
				‘written’

352 Formation of the short-form participle from second-conjugation verbs in **-ить/-еть**

The masculine short form of the participle is derived from second-conjugation infinitives in **-ить/-еть** by replacing the infinitive ending by **-ен** or **-ён**:

(1) **-ен**

(i) Verbs with **fixed stem stress** or **mobile stress** in conjugation take the ending **-ен**.

(a) Fixed stem stress in conjugation: **заполнить** ‘to fill in’, **проверить** ‘to check’:

Бланк заполнен	The form has been filled in
Счёт проверен	The account has been checked

(b) Mobile stress in conjugation: **осмотреть** ‘to examine’ (**осмотрю**, **осмотришь**), **получить** ‘to receive’ (**получу**, **получишь**):

Больной осмотрен	The patient has been examined
Доклад получен	The report has been received

(ii) The feminine, neuter and plural forms derive from the masculine by the addition of **-а**, **-о** and **-ы**: **заполнен**, **заполнена**, **заполнено**, **заполнены**.

Анкета заполнена	The questionnaire has been completed
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Note

Принуждён from **принудить** ‘to compel’.

(2) **-ён**

(i) Verbs with **fixed end stress** in conjugation take the masculine short-form ending **-ён**: **решить** ‘to decide’ (**решу**, **решишь**), **включить** ‘to switch’ (**включу**, **включишь**):

Вопрос решён	The question has been decided
Телевизор включён	The TV has been switched on/is on

(ii) The feminine, neuter and plural endings are **end stressed**: **решён**, **решена́**, **решено́**, **решены́**:

Проблема решена́	The problem has been solved
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Note

A few verbs with *mobile* stress in conjugation take *end* stress in the participle:

изменить: изменён **-енá -енó -ены** ‘has, have been changed’

Likewise **осуждён** from осудить ‘to condemn’, **оценён** from оценить ‘to estimate’, **разделён** from разделить ‘to divide’, **склонён** from склонить ‘to incline’ (cf. **скло́нен, скло́нна** (adjective) ‘is inclined’).

353 Consonant mutation in participles from second-conjugation infinitives in **-ить/-еть**

The following consonant changes operate in the formation of perfective passive participles from second-conjugation verbs in **-ить/-еть** (for stress rules see 352):

б : бл	сруб и ть	сру б лен	has been felled
	употреб и ть	употреб л ён	has been used
в : вл	доста в ить	доста в лен	has been delivered
	удив и ть	удив л ён	is surprised

Note

Dual mutation in умер**щ**влён from умерт**в**ить ‘to mortify’.

м : мл	офо р мить	офо р млен	has been designed
п : пл	ку п ить	ку п лен	has been bought
	прикреп и ть	прикреп л ён	is pinned to
ф : фл	разграф и ть	разграф л ён	is ruled (with lines)
д : ж	заря д ить	заря ж ен/заря ж ён	is loaded
	оби д еть	оби ж ен	is offended

Note

The participle from уви**д**еть ‘to see’ is уви**д**ен.

д : жд	освободи т ь	освободи л ён	has been liberated
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Note

-жд- also appears in the imperfective infinitive (**освобождáть**) and the verbal noun (**освобождéние** ‘liberation’). Other verbs which undergo this mutation are mainly abstract and, like **освободи́ть**, have fixed end stress in conjugation: **подтверди́ть** ‘to confirm’, **убеди́ть** ‘to convince’ etc.

з : ж	загрузи́ть	загру́жен/загружён	is laden
	изобрази́ть	изображён	is depicted

Note

The mutation does not operate in some participles: **вонзён** from **вонзи́ть** ‘to plunge’, **пронзён** from **пронзи́ть** ‘to transfix’.

с : ш	пригласи́ть	приглаше́н	has been invited
	ско́сить	ско́шен	has been mown

Note

One or two participles do not undergo mutation: **обезле́сен** from **обезле́сить** ‘to deforest’.

ст : щ	запусти́ть	запу́щен	has been launched
	прости́ть	прощён	has been forgiven
т : ч	оплати́ть	опла́чен	has been paid, settled
т : щ	сократи́ть	сокращён	has been curtailed

Note

-щ- also appears in the first-person singular (**сокращу́**), the imperfective infinitive (**сокраща́ть**) and the verbal noun (**сокраще́ние** ‘curtailment’). Other verbs of this type, mainly abstract and with fixed end stress in conjugation, include **запрети́ть** ‘to ban’.

354 Formation of the long-form (attributive) participle from second-conjugation verbs in **-ить/-еть**

Long-form participles from second-conjugation verbs in **-ить/-еть** are derived by adding **-ный, -ная, -ное, -ные** to the masculine short form:

Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural	
запо́лненный	запо́лненная	запо́лненное	запо́лненные	‘completed’
вклучо́нный	вклучо́нная	вклучо́нное	вклучо́нные	‘switched on’

355 Formation of perfective passive participles (short form) from verbs in **-ти, -чь, -зть, -сть**

The masculine short form of perfective passive participles from verbs in **-ти, -зть, -сть** and **-чь** is derived by replacing the final **-т** of the third-person singular of the conjugation of the verb by **-н**:

Infinitive		Third-person singular	Participle			
перевести́	to translate	переведе́т	переведе́н	-е́на	-е́но	-е́ны
подмести́	to sweep	подметё́т	подметё́н	-е́на	-е́но	-е́ны
спасти́	to save	спасе́т	спасе́н	-е́на	-е́но	-е́ны
испече́ь	to bake	испече́т	испече́н	-е́на	-е́но	-е́ны
обже́чь	to scorch	обо́жжёт	обо́жжён	-е́на	-е́но	-е́ны
разгры́зть	to gnaw	разгры́зёт	разгры́зен	-е́на	-е́но	-е́ны
укра́сть	to steal	украде́т	укра́ден	-е́на	-е́но	-е́ны

Note

- (a) The participles from *найти́* ‘to find’ and *пройти́* ‘to cover’ (a distance) are, respectively, **на́йден** and **про́йден**.
- (b) *Достичь* ‘to achieve’ has no participle. However, a participle is formed from its synonym *достигнуть*: **достигну́т**. See 357 (2).
- (c) Stem stress in participles from some verbs in **-зть/-сть**.
- (d) For participles formed from compounds of **-клясть**, see 357 (5) note (a).
- (e) *Съесть* ‘to eat’ has the participle **съе́ден**.

356 Long-form participles from verbs in -ти, -чь, зть, -сть

The long form of participles from verbs in **-ти, -чь, -зть** and **-сть** is made by adding **-ный, -ная, -ное, -ные** to the short-form masculine, e.g. **переведе́н**:

Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
переведе́нный	переведе́нная	переведе́нное	переведе́нные ‘translated’

357 Perfective passive participles in -т

The masculine short form of the participle of certain categories of verb is made by removing the soft sign of the infinitive: *откры́ть* ‘to open’, participle **откры́т**. The feminine, neuter and plural forms derive from the masculine by the addition of the endings **-а, -о, -ы**. The following types of verb are involved:

- (1) Verbs in **-отъ** (note stress change in participle):

смоло́ть ‘to grind’

смо́лот, **-а, -о, -ы**

(2) Verbs in **-уть** (note stress change in participle):

протяну́ть ‘to stretch out’ **протя́нут, -а, -о, -ы**

Note

e is liable to mutate to **ě** under stress: заверну́ть ‘to wrap’, **заве́рнут**; застегну́ть ‘to fasten’, **засте́гнут**.

(3) Verbs in **-ыть**:

забы́ть ‘to forget’ **забы́т, -а, -о, -ы**

(4) Compounds of **бить, вить, лить, пить, шить**:

вы́шить ‘to embroider’ **вы́шит, -а, -о, -ы**

разбы́ть ‘to smash’ **разбы́т, -а, -о, -ы**

Note

(a) Зали́ть ‘to flood’: **за́лит, залита́, за́лито, за́литы** (likewise **проли́ть** ‘to spill’: **про́лит** etc.).

(b) Разви́ть ‘to develop’: **ра́звит/разви́т, развитá, ра́звито/разви́то, ра́звиты/разви́ты**

(5) Verbs which introduce ‘**н**’ or ‘**м**’ in conjugation (**взять** ‘to take’, compounds of **деть** ‘to put’, **жать** ‘to press’, **клясть** ‘to curse’ and **-нять, начать** ‘to begin’, **распять** ‘to crucify’):

Infinitive		First-person singular	Participle
взять	‘to take’	возьму́	взят, -á, -о, -ы
занять	‘to occupy’	займу́	за́нят, -á, -о, -ы
начать	‘to begin’	начну́	нача́т, -á, -о, -ы
одеть	‘to dress’	оде́ну	оде́т, -а, -о, -ы
распять	‘to crucify’	распну́	распя́т, -а, -о, -ы
сжать	‘to compress’	сожму́	сжат, -а, -о, -ы
сжать	‘to reap’	сожну́	сжат, -а, -о, -ы
смять	‘to crumple’	сомну́	смят, -а, -о, -ы

Note

(a) Прокля́ть ‘to curse’, first-person singular прокляну́, participle **про́клят, -á, -о, -ы**. Compare *stem* stress in the adjective **прокля́тый** ‘wretched’.

(b) Participles from all compounds of **-нять** have the same stress pattern as **за́нят** (except **снят, снята́, сня́то, сня́ты** from **снять** ‘to take off’).

(6) Verbs in **-ереть** (note loss of second **-e-** in formation of participle):

заперётъ	‘to lock’	за́перт, -а́, -о, -ы
стерётъ	‘to erase’	сте́рт, -а, -о, -ы
(7) Others:		
вы́брить	‘to shave’	вы́брит, -а, -о, -ы
спеть	‘to sing’	спет, -а, -о, -ы
прожítъ	‘to spend’ (time)	про́жит, прожитá, про́жито, про́житы

358 The long form of participles in -т

The long-form participle is formed by adding full adjectival endings to the masculine short form in **-т**, e.g. **оде́т**:

Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural	
оде́тый	оде́тая	оде́тое	оде́тые	‘dressed’

Note

Compare the participles **ра́звитый** (скóрость, **ра́звитая** тепловóзом ‘speed developed by a diesel locomotive’) and **развítый** (**развítая** пружíна ‘uncoiled spring’), and the adjective **развítый** (**развítая** промýшленность ‘highly-developed industry’).

359 Functions of short-form participles

(1) Only passive participles have short forms. Active participles have long forms only.

(2) The short form of the imperfective passive participle is rarely used:

Э́тот писáтель всéми **любíм, уважа́ем**
This writer is loved and respected by everyone

A reflexive verb or third-person plural is preferred instead:

Проéкты **финанси́руются** госуда́рством
Projects are financed by the state

Э́того писáтеля **любят и уважа́ют**
This writer is loved and respected

(3) The short form of the **perfective** passive participle is very much used. It functions as predicate to the noun, with which it agrees in gender and number, and denotes:

(i) The completion of an action:

Война́ объявлена	War has been declared
Флаг поднят	The flag has been hoisted
Письмо́ подписано	The letter has been signed

(ii) The existence of a state:

Дверь заперта́	The door is locked
Телевизор включён	The television is on

Note

(a) The participle may precede or follow the noun:

Укрощены́ некоторые опасные болезни (*Russia Today*)
Certain dangerous diseases **have been curbed**

Остров **превращён** в заказник (Lebedev)
The island **has been converted** into a nature reserve

(b) It may also combine with forms of the verb **быть**:

Он только что **был разбужен** громким голосом Солоухи
(Povolyaev)
He **had** just been **awakened** by Soloukha's loud voice

(Likewise Он **будет разбужен** 'He will be awakened', Он **был бы разбужен** 'He would be/would have been awakened', Работы должны **быть напечатаны** 'The essays have to be typed'.)

(c) The agent of the action may be rendered by an instrumental:

Письмо́ подписано **министром**
The letter is signed by a minister

360 Functions of long-form participles

Long-form participles, both active and passive, replace relative clauses beginning with **ко́торый** 'who', 'which'.

(1) Active participles

Active participles relate to and qualify nouns which are the subject of an action or state. A comma appears between the noun and the following participle which qualifies it.

(i) The **present** active participle denotes an action which is simultaneous with the action or state denoted by the main verb:

ВЫставки, **рассказывающие** о предупреждении несчастных случаев, всегда вызывают большой интерес
 Exhibitions **which describe** accident prevention always arouse great interest

Note

The main verb may denote present *or* past action: **Я видел/вижу** собаку, бегущую по берегу 'I saw/see a dog running along the shore'.

(ii) The **imperfective past** active participle denotes an action simultaneous with the action of a main verb in the *past tense*:

Женщина, **продававшая** яблоки, подошла к прохожему
 The woman **who was selling** apples approached a passer-by

(iii) The **perfective past** active participle denotes an action completed *prior* to the action of the main verb:

Медведя прогнал рабочий, **прибежавший** на берег с заряженным ружьём
 The bear was chased off by a worker **who had come running** on to the shore with a loaded gun

(2) Passive participles

Passive participles relate to and qualify nouns which are the natural **object** of the action denoted by the participle.

(i) The **imperfective** passive denotes an action which is simultaneous with the action of the main verb. The main verb may be in the present, past or future tense of either aspect. A *comma* appears between the noun and the participle which qualifies it:

Он писал статью	о предмете,	} изучаемом всеми учениками
Он написал статью	о предмете,	
Он пишет статью	о предмете,	
Он будет писать статью	о предмете,	
Он напишет статью	о предмете,	

(‘He was writing/wrote/is writing/will be writing/will write an article about a subject **studied** by all pupils’.)

Note

The meaning expressed by the participle may be durative:

программа, **передаваемая** по радио
 a programme **being broadcast** on the radio

or habitual:

пéсни, **любíмые** наро́дом
songs **loved** by the people

(ii) The **perfective** passive participle denotes an action completed prior to the action of the main verb. A *comma* appears between the noun and the following participle which qualifies it:

Пересма́тривается програ́мма, **о́добренная** министрaми
A programme **approved** by the ministers is being revised

В прода́жу поступи́ла ма́рка, **вы́пущенная** в Финля́ндии
A stamp **issued** in Finland has gone on sale

361 Agreement of long-form participle and noun

(1) The long-form participle agrees with the noun it qualifies in gender, number and case. It differs in this respect from the relative pronoun **ко́торый**, which agrees with the noun in gender and number but *not* in case (the case of **ко́торый** being determined by the function it fulfils in the relative clause it introduces. See 123 (1) (ii).)

(i) Present active participle

Я зна́ю ма́льчика, **пи́шущего** письмо́
I know **the boy (who is) writing** the letter

(ii) Past active participle

Я помога́ю учени́кам, **прова́лившимся** на экза́мене
I am helping **the pupils who failed** the examination

(iii) Imperfective passive participle

Э́то — де́вочка, **любима́я** все́ми
That is **the girl liked** by everyone

(iv) Perfective passive

Он пи́шет статью́ о **юношах, наказанных** за хулига́нство
He is writing an article about **the youths punished** for hooliganism

(2) Long participles may *precede* the noun:

(i) If the participle is the noun's only qualifier and functions as an adjective:

спя́щий ребёнок	a sleeping child
Спя́щая красáвица	Sleeping Beauty

замёрзшее озеро	a frozen lake
Развалины разбомблённых городов (Granin)	The ruins of bombed towns

Note

In some cases the participle may be qualified by an adverb:

хорошо оплачиваемые рабочие
well-paid workers

вновь вышедший роман
a novel which has been republished

(ii) A pronoun or noun may appear between the participle and the noun it qualifies:

спасённые **им** девочки the girls rescued **by him**

(iii) It is also possible, especially in literary and journalistic styles, for circumstantial detail to appear between the participle and the noun:

Сошедшие **с поезда** немногие пассажиры разошлись (Nosov)
The few passengers who had alighted **from the train** dispersed

передаваемые **по телевизору** прогнозы погоды
weather forecasts transmitted **on TV**

Двигался конвейер увиденных **в разное время** людей (Gagarin)
A panorama of people he had seen **at various times** passed before him

362 Participial synonymy

(1) The imperfective passive participle may be synonymous with the present active participle of the corresponding reflexive verb:

слова, употребляемые/употребляющиеся в речи
the words **used** in a speech

(2) The active participle is used if the verb (e.g. **строить** 'to build') has no passive participle:

строящееся здание a building **under construction**

(3) A 'true' reflexive cannot be used with passive meaning, however. Thus, одевающийся can only mean 'who is dressing' (but not *'who is being dressed').

(4) Where both types of participle are available, the passive participle is used when the *agent* is named:

слова́, **употребляемые** (not *употребляющиеся) ора́тором в публiчной рéчи
words **used** by an orator in a public speech

363 Participles as adjectives and nouns

Many participles are also used as adjectives or nouns.

(1) Present active

(i) Adjectives:

блестя́щий	brilliant
ведúщий	leading
выдаю́щийся	outstanding
далеко́ идúщий	far-reaching
подходя́щий	suitable
сле́дующий	next, following
соотве́тствующий	appropriate
теку́щий	current

(ii) Nouns:

куря́щий	smoker
начина́ющий	beginner
непы́ющий	tee-totaller
трудя́щийся	worker
уча́щийся	pupil, student

(2) Past active

(i) Adjective:

бы́вший	former
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(ii) Nouns:

пострада́вший	a casualty
сумасше́дший	a madman
уме́рший	the deceased
уцеле́вший	a survivor

(3) Imperfective passive

вообража́емый	imaginary
люби́мый	favourite
терпи́мый	tolerable
уважа́емый	respected

Note

Many have negative prefixes, cf. English equivalents in -ble:

невыно́сймый	unbearable
незабы́ваемый	unforgettable
необходи́мый	indispensable

A number derive from perfective stems

незаменя́мый	irreplaceable
(не)излечи́мый	(in)curable
неоспори́мый	indisputable
непобеди́мый	invincible
(не)совмести́мый	(in)compatible

or intransitive verbs

незави́симый	independent
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A few are used as nouns:

обвиня́емый	the accused
содержи́мое	contents (of a receptacle)

(4) Perfective passive

заклю́ченный	convict
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364 Participial adjectives

(1) A number of long adjectives of participial origin differ from long-form participles:

(i) In having no prefix.

(ii) In having one **-н-** instead of two:

варёное яйцо́	a boiled egg
жа́ренная карто́шка	fried potatoes
кра́шенный пол	a painted floor

(не)писанный закон	a(n) (un)written law
сушёные фрукты	dried fruit

Note

- (a) Adjectives based on second-conjugation verbs in **-ить** with mobile stress in conjugation tend to have suffix **-ён-**.
- (b) If circumstantial detail is added, *participles* must be used: **ра́ненный** в но́гу солда́т ‘a soldier wounded in the leg’ (cf. ра́ненный солда́т ‘wounded soldier’), **сва́ренное** в кастрю́льке яйцо́ ‘an egg boiled in a saucepan’ (cf. варе́ное яйцо́ ‘boiled egg’).
- (2) Some of the adjectives have the suffix **-т-**:

кры́тый ры́нок	covered market
небри́тое лицо́	unshaven face

К обе́ду мы яви́лись в **мя́той** оде́жде (Nikolaev)
We appeared for lunch in crumpled clothing

- (3) Others function as adjectival nouns: **кра́деное** ‘stolen goods’.

365 Distinction between short-form adjectives and short-form participles

Certain short adjectives differ from short-form participles in having the suffix **-ни-** in their feminine, neuter and plural forms by contrast with **-н-** in the participle:

озабо́чен, озабо́ченна, озабо́ченно, озабо́ченны (adjective)
озабо́чен, озабо́чена, озабо́чено, озабо́чены (participle)

Compare

Глаза́ его́ бы́ли **озабо́ченны** (adj.)
His eyes were troubled

and

Она́ была́ **озабо́чена** (part.) отъе́здом ма́тери
She was upset by her mother’s departure

Likewise Его́ речь была́ **сде́ржанна** (adj.) ‘His speech was restrained’, but Вода́ была́ **сде́ржана** (part.) плоти́ной ‘The water was contained by a dam’. A similar distinction is made between **образо́ван, -а, -о, -ы** ‘has been formed’ (part.) and **образо́ван, -нна, -нно, -нны** ‘educated’ (adj.), **ограни́чен, -а, -о, -ы** ‘limited’ (part.) and **ограни́чен, -нна,**

-нно, -нны ‘hide-bound’ (adj.), **рассеян, -а, -о, -ы** ‘dispersed’ (part.) and **рассеян, -нна, -нно, -нны** ‘absent-minded’ (adj.).

366 Impersonal function of short-form participles

(1) The neuter short forms of the perfective passive participles of certain verbs can be used impersonally:

— Здесь зányто?	Is this place occupied?
За всё заплáчено	Everything has been paid for
В вагóне бýло биткóм набýто	The carriage was packed
В зáле накúрено	The hall is smoke-filled
Кúшать пóдано	Dinner is served
С доскí стёрто	The board has been cleaned
С вéчера не убрано бýло со столá (Rasputin)	The table had not been cleared since the previous evening
Вам откáзано в прóсьбе	Your request has been refused

(2) Imperfective participles of this type are found in colloquial speech (mainly in the negative):

Давнó **не тóплено**
The heating has not been on for a long time

Compare Пол **не мыт** ‘The floor has not been washed’, Бельё **не гла́жено** ‘The washing has not been ironed’.

Note

Impersonal usage in **Прикáзано** остáться ‘We have been instructed to stay’, **Кому́ это скáзано?** ‘How many times do I have to tell you?’, and the phrase **Скáзано — сде́лано** ‘No sooner said than done’.

Gerunds

367 The gerund. Introductory comments

(1) Gerunds (or ‘verbal adverbs’) are *indeclinable* forms of the verb that substitute for co-ordinate or adverbial clauses in ‘and’, ‘when’, ‘since’, ‘by’, ‘without’ etc.

(2) Gerunds, like active participles, have English equivalents in ‘-ing’, but participles are adjectival in form, agree in gender, case and number with the noun they qualify and replace relative clauses in **котóрый** (see 360), while gerunds are invariable. Compare the use of the *participle* in

the **weeping** boy (= the boy **who is weeping**): **пла́чуший** ма́льчик

with the use of the *gerund* in

he sits **weeping** (= **and weeps**): он сиди́т, **пла́ча**

(3) There are imperfective and perfective gerunds.

368 Formation of the imperfective gerund

Most imperfective gerunds are formed by adding **-я** (**-а** after **ж, ч, ш** or **щ**) to the present-tense stem of the verb (see 212):

говоря́т	говор-	говоря́	‘speaking’
дышат	дыш-	дыша́	‘breathing’
несу́т	нес-	неся́	‘carrying’
пла́чут	плач-	пла́ча	‘weeping’
требу́ют	требу-	требуя́	‘demanding’
чита́ют	чита-	чита́я	‘reading’

Note

(a) **Давать** and compounds, compounds of **-знава́ть**, **-става́ть** form gerunds as follows: **встава́я** ‘rising’, **дава́я** ‘giving’:

— Извини́те, у меня́ дела́, — сказа́л Неша́тов, **встава́я** со сту́ла (Grekoва)

‘Excuse me, I have something to attend to’, said Neshatov, **getting up** from his chair

(b) The gerund from **махáть** ‘to wave’ has alternative forms: **махáя** and **маша́**. Similarly **брызга́ть**, **брызжа́** ‘playing’ (of a fountain), **брызга́я** ‘sprinkling’ (water on ironing etc.). **Ка́пать** ‘to drip’ has **ка́пая**, **сы́пать** ‘to strew’ has **сы́пя**.

(c) **Быть** has the gerund **бу́дучи** ‘being’:

Он прие́хал в Ло́ндон да́вно, ещё́ **бу́дучи** солда́том

He arrived in London long ago **when he was** still a soldier

(d) **Е́дучи** from **еха́ть** ‘to travel’ is sometimes found in poetic or folk speech; **припева́ючи** is used in the phrase **жить припева́ючи** ‘to live in clover’.

- (e) Imperfective gerunds from reflexive verbs take the ending **-сь**: **жа́луясь** from жа́ловаться ‘to complain’.

369 Stress in the imperfective gerund

Stress in the gerund is normally as in the first-person singular:

голосова́ть	‘to vote’	голосу́ю	‘I vote’	голосу́я	‘voting’
держáть	‘to hold’	держу́	‘I hold’	держá	‘holding’
кура́ть	‘to smoke’	курю́	‘I smoke’	кура́	‘smoking’
смотре́ть	‘to look’	смотрю́	‘I look’	смотре́я	‘looking’
шепта́ть	‘to whisper’	шепчу́	‘I whisper’	шепча́	‘whispering’

Note

Глядя́ ‘looking’, **ле́жа** ‘lying’, **си́дя** ‘sitting’ and **сто́я** ‘standing’ have *stem* stress despite *end* stress in conjugation: Бараба́нов, **сто́я** на однё́м колéне, дошнурóвывал бóтсы (Vanshenkin) ‘Barabanov was kneeling to finish lacing his boots’.

370 Verbs with no imperfective gerund

Many verbs have no imperfective gerund. These include the following:

- (1) **Бежа́ть** ‘to run’, **бита́** ‘to strike’, **вита́** ‘to twine’, **врата́** ‘to lie’, **гни́ть** ‘to rot’, **дра́ть** ‘to flay’, **е́сть** ‘to eat’, **éхать** ‘to travel’ (see, however, 368 note (d)), **жа́ждать** ‘to hunger for’, **жата́** ‘to press’, **жда́ть** ‘to wait’, **лгáть** ‘to lie’, **лезть** ‘to climb’, **лита́** ‘to pour’, **мя́ть** ‘to crumple’, **петь** ‘to sing’, **пить** ‘to drink’, **рвáть** ‘to tear’, **слáть** ‘to send’, **стона́ть** ‘to groan’, **тка́ть** ‘to weave’, **хотéть** ‘to want’, **шить** ‘to sew’.

Note

Gerunds from some other verbs are rarely used: **беря́** from брать ‘to take’, **гоня́** from гнать ‘to drive’, **зовя́** from звать ‘to call’, **плывя́** from плыть ‘to swim’. **Нося́** from носить ‘to carry’ and **ходя́** from ходить ‘to go’ are rarely found; cf., however, compound **принося́** ‘bringing’ etc.

- (2) First-conjugation consonant-stem verbs with **с:ш**, **з:ж** mutation (e.g. **писа́ть** ‘to write’, **рэза́ть** ‘to cut’, see 217 (2)).

- (3) Verbs in **-чь**.

(4) Verbs in **-ереть**.

(5) Verbs with the suffix **-ну-** (**гáснуть** ‘to go out’ etc.).

371 Compensation for the lack of an imperfective gerund

(1) If a primary verb has no imperfective gerund it is often possible to form one from its synonym. Thus, **мочь** ‘to be able’ has no gerund, but **быть в состоянии** ‘to be capable of’ does: **бúдучи в состоянии** ‘being able to’. Likewise, **хотеть** ‘to want’ has no gerund, but **желать** ‘to wish’ does (**желая** ‘wishing, wanting’):

Желая скорée уехать, он торопился закончить работу

Wishing to get away as soon as possible he hastened to finish his work

(2) Other primaries with no gerund have a synonymous secondary imperfective from which a gerund may be formed:

Primary verb	Secondary imperfective	Gerund	
есть	сѣдáть	сѣдáя	‘eating’
ѣхать	проезжáть	проезжáя	‘travelling’
ждать	ожидáть	ожидáя	‘waiting’
жечь	сжигáть	сжигáя	‘burning’
петь	распевáть	распевáя	‘singing’
пить	выпивáть	выпивáя	‘drinking’
рвать	разрывáть	разрывáя	‘tearing up’
слать	посылáть	посылáя	‘sending’
тереть	вытирáть	вытирáя	‘wiping’

Кóстя Пимурзýя весь извѣлся, **ожидáя** нас (Nikolaev)

Kostya Pimurzya suffered agonies waiting for us

372 The perfective gerund: formation (verbs in **-ть, -сть** (д-stems))

(1) The perfective gerund is formed from verbs in **-ть** by replacing the perfective infinitive ending by **-в**:

написáв having written
пострóив having built

промо́кнув having got soaked

(2) Likewise gerunds from verbs in **-сть** (д-stems only: **присе́сть** ‘to sit down for a while’, **укра́сть** ‘to steal’, **упа́сть** ‘to fall’):

присе́в having sat down for a while

373 Reflexive perfective gerunds

Reflexive perfective gerunds have the ending **-вшись**:

верну́вшись having returned

умы́вшись having washed

Note

Оперши́сь from **опере́ться** ‘to lean on’ (cf. figurative usage: **опере́вшись** на инициати́ву масс ‘relying on the initiative of the masses’); similarly **вто́ргшись** ‘having invaded’ from **вто́ргнуться**, **выте́ршись** ‘having dried oneself’, **заперши́сь** ‘having locked oneself in’.

374 Perfective gerunds with alternative forms in **-я/-а**

(1) Some perfective gerunds have alternative forms in **-в** and **-я/-а**, the forms in **-в** generally being preferred in written styles:

заме́тив/заме́тя having noticed

увиде́в/увидя́ having seen

(2) The forms in **-я/-а** are common with reflexive verbs: **возврати́сь/возврати́вшись** (**верну́вшись**) ‘having returned’, **встре́ться/встре́тившись** ‘having met’, **прищу́рясь/прищу́рившись** ‘screwing up one’s eyes’:

Я ждал, **прислоня́сь** к стене́ (Granin)

I waited, **leaning** against a wall

Возврати́вшись к себе́ на кварти́ру, она́ се́ла в своё́ люби́мое кресло́ у окна́. (Litvinova)

Returning to her flat, she sat in her favourite armchair by the window

375 Gerunds from perfective verbs in **-ти** and **-сть**

Gerunds from most perfective verbs in **-ти** and (except for д-stems, see 372) **-сть** are formed by replacing the final two letters of the third-person plural of the verb by **-я**:

пройд-ут	пройд-я́	‘having passed’
сойд-ут	сойд-я́	‘having descended’

Likewise **изобретя́** ‘having invented’ from изобрести́, **подметя́** ‘having swept’ from подмести́, **принеся́** ‘having brought’ from принести́, **разбредя́сь** ‘having wandered off in different directions’ from разбрести́сь (cf. also **учтя́** ‘having taken into consideration’ from учести́):

Принеся́ самова́р и заварив ча́й, Да́рья наконце́ заговори́ла (Rasputin)

Having brought in the samovar and made the tea Darya finally began to speak

Note

Compounds of грести́, пасти́, расти́ and цвести́ have perfective gerunds in **-ши**: **вы́росши** ‘having grown up’ from вы́расти, **расцвётши** ‘having blossomed’ from расцвести́, **сгрёбши** ‘having raked together’ from сгрести́, **спáсши** ‘having saved’ from спасти́.

376 Gerunds from perfective verbs in **-чь** and **-зть**

Gerunds from perfective verbs in **-чь** and **-зть** are formed by adding **-ши** to the masculine past tense of the verb: **вы́лезши** ‘having climbed out’ from вы́лезть, **испéкши** ‘having baked’ from испéчь, **сжéгни** ‘having burnt’ from сжечь.

377 Functions of the gerunds

Gerunds replace co-ordinate clauses or adverbial clauses of time, manner, cause, condition etc. They are found mainly in written Russian, co-ordinate or adverbial clauses (English equivalents enclosed in parentheses in the following examples) being preferred in speech.

(1) Imperfective gerunds

The imperfective gerund denotes an action which is simultaneous to the action of the main verb. Either the two actions run in parallel or one interrupts the other. The following meanings are conveyed by the gerund:

Он сиди́т, **чита́я**
He sits **reading** (= and reads)

Он бежит, тяжело дыша́

He is running along, **breathing** (= and breathes) heavily.

Читая́, записы́ваю незнако́мые слова́

When reading (= when I read) I make a note of words I do not know

Поднима́ясь по ле́стнице, она́ упала́

While going up (= when/while/as she was going up) the stairs, she fell

Занима́ясь аэро́бикой, укреплю́ здоро́вье

By doing aerobics (= if I do) I shall improve my fitness

Бо́ясь грозы́, я поспеши́л домо́й

Fearing (= since I feared) a thunderstorm I hurried home

На ста́нции, ко́гда д́вери расќрылись, она́ вы́скочила и побежа́ла по платфо́рме, **не переставая́** крича́ть (Litvinova)

At the station, when the doors opened, she jumped out and ran along the platform, shouting all the time

(2) Perfective gerunds

(i) The perfective gerund describes an action which is completed prior to the action denoted by the main verb:

Написа́в письмо́, он лёг спать

Having written (= when, after he had written) the letter he went to bed

Не поня́в вопро́са, она́ растеря́лась

Not having understood (= since she had not understood) the question she got confused

Примени́в но́вый ме́тод, брига́да смо́жет перевы́полнить но́рму

By using (= if it uses) the new method, the work-team will be able to over-fulfil its norm

(ii) The perfective gerund may also denote a state resulting from the completion of an action:

Он сиде́л, **вытянув** но́ги

He sat, **stretching out** (= having stretched out) his legs

Note

Care must be taken to resolve English ambiguity in rendering verb forms in -ing. Compare

Stepping (= as she was stepping) off the pavement she tripped and fell

Сходя́ (imperfective gerund) с троту́ара, она́ споткн́улась и упала́

and

Stepping (= **having** stepped) off the pavement she crossed the road
Сойдя́ (perfective gerund) с троту́ара, она́ перешла́ доро́гу

378 Special features of constructions with gerunds

Certain features are characteristic of constructions with gerunds:

(1) The subject of the gerund and the subject of the main clause are the same:

Верну́вшись домо́й, он поста́вил самова́р
Having returned home he put on the samovar

Возвраща́ясь домо́й, я попа́л под дождь
While returning home I got caught in the rain

Note

- (a) In this example the main clause could *not* be replaced by the synonymous *Меня́ засти́г дождь* ‘I got caught in the rain’, since this would involve a change in subject.
- (b) The gerund is not normally used in conjunction with an impersonal phrase; thus one should write *not* ***Подходя́** к ле́су, мне ста́ло хо́лодно, but *Когда́ я подходи́л к ле́су, мне ста́ло хо́лодно* ‘As I approached the forest I felt cold’. Impersonal constructions involving *infinitives* may, however, sometimes combine with gerunds: **Выполня́я** э́то упражне́ние, **мо́жно по́льзоваться** словарём ‘When doing this exercise you may use a dictionary’. (Note, however, that an alternative rendering: **Выполня́я** э́то упражне́ние, **обраща́йтесь к словарю́** ‘When doing this exercise, consult the dictionary’ observes the principle of identity of subject in both clauses.)
- (c) A gerund should be avoided when the subject of the main clause appears in a passive construction, since in such cases the *grammatical* subject of the main clause is not the *logical* subject. Thus *После́ того́ как он переле́з* (rather than *Переле́зши*) *через забо́р, он был заде́ржан сторожа́ми* ‘Having climbed over the fence, he was detained by guards’.

(2) A comma separates the main clause from the clause in which the gerund appears:

Он **говори́л, стара́ясь** сохра́нять хладнокро́вие
He spoke, trying to retain his composure

Прочита́в письмо́, он **спря́тал** егó в ящик
Having read the letter he hid it in a drawer

(3) The verb in the main clause may be in any tense and either aspect:

Возвраща́ясь с заво́да, я **встреча́л/встрети́л/встреча́ю/бúду**
(ча́сто) **встреча́ть/встрéчу** Ёру
When returning from the factory **I used to meet/met/meet/will** (often)
meet/will meet Ira

Верну́вшись домо́й, он **ста́вил/постáвил/ста́вит/бúдет ста́вить/**
постáвит самова́р
Returning home, **he used to put on/put on/puts on/will put on the**
samovar

Compare

Он **просыпа́лся** по утра́м и, **откры́в** фо́рточку, **начина́л** в ри́тме
разма́хивать рука́ми (Трофи́мов)
He **would wake up** in the morning and, **opening** the casement window,
begin rhythmically to swing his arms

Note

The use of the perfective gerund **откры́в** shows that the actions of opening the window and swinging the arms were sequential (imperfective **открыва́я** would suggest that they were simultaneous).

379 Reversal of the sequence of actions expressed by main verb and gerund

Occasionally the action denoted by the verb in the main clause *precedes* that denoted by the gerund:

Он **вы́шел, хлопну́в** двéрью He went out, slamming the door

This construction should *not*, however, be regarded as the norm.

380 Gerunds as other parts of speech

Some gerunds or former gerunds also function as other parts of speech, in particular prepositions and adverbs.

(1) **Imperfective:**

благодаря	thanks to (+ dat.; cf. благодаря as gerund + acc.)
исключая	excluding, except for
крадучись	stealthily
молча	silently
не считая	not counting
не теряя времени	without delay
судя по	judging by (cf. gerund судя)

Note

- (a) Some phrases are compounded with the gerund **говоря: откровенно говоря** 'frankly speaking', **строго говоря** 'strictly speaking', **не говоря уже** 'let alone, to say nothing of' etc.:

Общество предоставляет им библиотеки, музеи, **не говоря уже** о театрах и кино (Kovaleva)

Society puts at their disposal libraries and museums, to say nothing of theatres and cinemas

- (b) Other phrases include **отвечать не задумываясь** 'to answer without hesitation', **говорить заикаясь** 'to stammer', **не покладая рук** 'tirelessly', **не спеша** 'unhurriedly', **нехотя** 'reluctantly'.

(2) **Perfective** (mainly in set phrases involving gerunds in **-я/-а**; see 374):

слушать разиня рот	to listen open-mouthed
сказать положа руку на сердце	to say hand on heart
работать спустя рукава	to work in a slipshod fashion
согласиться скрепя сердце	to agree reluctantly
сидеть сложя руки	to sit twiddling one's thumbs

Note also the preposition **спустя**: неделю **спустя** 'a week later'. See 439 (2)(i).

The Adverb

381 Introductory comments

(1) Adverbs are indeclinable forms that modify verbs ('he writes *well*'), adjectives ('*surprisingly* good'), other adverbs ('*extremely* quickly') or nouns ('reading *aloud*').

(2) They answer questions such as '**where?**', '**when?**', '**how?**', '**why?**', '**for what purpose?**', '**to what extent?**'

(3) A feature of Russian adverbs is that they all derive from other parts of speech (though in the case of most primary adverbs (**так** 'thus', **там** 'there', **тогда́** 'then' etc.) the principle of their formation is no longer clear).

(4) The most productive types of adverb are those which derive from **adjectives**. They also derive from **nouns**, **verbs**, **numerals** and **pronouns**.

382 Adverbs derived from adjectives

(1) Adverbs in -o/-e

(i) Most adverbs derived from descriptive adjectives are identical with the neuter adjectival short form in **-o/-e** (see **159**, **161**, **164**):

Long adjective

Adverb

высо́кий 'high'

высоко́ 'high up'

гладкий ‘smooth’	гладко ‘smoothly’
красивый ‘beautiful’	красиво ‘beautifully’
внешний ‘external’	внешне ‘externally’
искренний ‘sincere’	искренне ‘sincerely’
крайний ‘extreme’	крайне ‘extremely’

(ii) In some cases, however, there is a difference in stress, cf. **больно́** (neuter short adjective) ‘is sick’ and **боле́но** (adverb) ‘painfully, it hurts’; **мало́** (neuter short adjective) ‘too small’ and **ма́ло** (adverb) ‘not much’.

Note

- (a) Soft-ending adjectives **да́вний** ‘long-standing’, **по́здний** ‘late’ and **ра́нный** ‘early’ have hard-ending adverbs **давно́** ‘long ago’, **по́здно** ‘late, it is (too) late’, **ра́но** ‘early, it is (too) early’. Note that whereas **ра́нный** has double **н**, **ра́но** has only one.
- (b) Adverbs in **-о/-е** also derive from participles: **неожиданно** ‘unexpectedly’ from **неожиданный**, **угрожающе** ‘threateningly’ from **угрожающий**.

(2) Adverbs based on **по-** + dative singular of the adjective

Adverbs of manner of the type **по-** + the dative masculine/neuter singular of the adjective derive from adjectives in **-ый/-ий/-ой** which have no adverb in **-о/-е** (e.g. **друго́й** ‘different’, **но́вый** ‘new’, **пре́жний** ‘former’):

по-друго́му	in a different way
по-настоя́щему	in a proper fashion
по-но́вому	in a new way
по-пре́жнему	as before
по-ра́зному	in various ways

(3) Adverbs in **-и**

(i) Adverbs from adjectives in **-ский/-цкий** (mostly adverbs of manner) take the ending **-и**: thus **бра́тски** ‘fraternally’, **дура́цки** ‘foolishly, in a foolish way’, **логи́чески** ‘logically’ etc.

(ii) Those with animate connotations, including all which denote nationality, may take the prefix **по-**: **ко́фе по-ту́рски** ‘coffee Turkish style’, **по-ле́нински** ‘after the style of Lenin’, **по-ру́ски** ‘in Russian, in the Russian style’.

(iii) In some contexts, prefixed and unprefixed variants are synonymous: **бра́тски/по-бра́тски** **похло́пать по плечу́** ‘to slap on

the shoulder in a brotherly fashion', **герóйски/по-герóйски** весті себя 'to behave in a heroic way', **дétски/по-дétски** доверчивый 'as trusting as a child':

В Нóвый год осóбенно сердéчно и **по-дру́жески/дру́жески** мы вспомина́ем со́тни имéи знако́мых люде́й

At New Year we recall, in a particularly cordial and friendly way, the names of hundreds of acquaintances

(iv) In most cases, however, choice is dictated by usage: **дру́жески** подмигну́ть 'to wink in a friendly manner', **звéрски** голо́дный 'ravenously hungry', **по-дétски** обиделся 'he took childish offence'.

Note

- (a) While forms with **по-** answer the implied question **по́добно кому́/чему́?** 'similar to whom/what?', forms without **по-** answer the questions **как/какі́м о́бразом?** 'how/in what way?'
- (b) Adverbs in **-ически** cannot combine with **по-**.

(4) Adverbs in -ьи

Adverbs from adjectives of the type **во́лчий** 'wolf's' (see 151 (1)) take the ending **-ьи**, and are prefixed **по-**: Он **по-медвѣжьи** неуклю́ж 'He is as clumsy as a bear', Он **по-соба́чьи** пре́дан своему́ хозя́ину 'He displays a dog-like devotion to his master'.

(5) Adverbs based on preposition + the oblique case of an adjective

(i) Most adverbs of this type consist of a preposition + the fossilized oblique case of a short adjective, run together to form a single word (e.g. с + old genitive ***права** = **спра́ва** 'on, from the right'). The adverbs denote variously location, time, manner and extent:

вскóре	soon
(раздева́ться) догола́	(to strip oneself) naked
(вытира́ть) до́суха	(to rub) dry
издалека́	from a distance
сле́ва	on, from the left
сно́ва	again

(ii) A smaller number of adverbs consist of the preposition **в** + the feminine accusative of a long adjective:

вплотну́ю	right up close to
вручну́ю	by hand
(летéть) вслепу́ю	(to fly) blind

383 Adverbs derived from nouns

(1) Adverbs based on the oblique cases of nouns

(i) Many adverbs have the form of the **instrumental singular** of a noun. The adverbs denote location or manner:

вeрхóм	on horseback
дáром	free, for nothing
рjáдом	next door, adjacent
шeпóтом	in a whisper

Note

(a) End stress in the adverb **кpугóм** ‘around’ and stem stress in the instrumental of the noun **кpуг (кpúгом)** and in the phrase **голова́ идёт кpúгом** ‘my head is spinning’.

(b) Some adverbs derive from no-longer extant nouns: **óптом** ‘wholesale’, **óщупью** ‘gropingly’, **пешкóм** ‘on foot’, **укрjáдкой** ‘furtively’.

(c) Instrumentals are also used to denote the time of day and the season of the year (see **97** (2) (i), (ii)).

(ii) Other adverbs derived from nouns include **вчeрjá** ‘yesterday’ (also **позавчeрjá** ‘the day before yesterday’), **дóма** ‘at home’, **домóй** ‘home(wards)’, **зjáвтра** ‘tomorrow’ (also **пóслезjáвтра** ‘the day after tomorrow’), **óчень** ‘very, very much’ (**Я óчень люблю моро́женое** ‘I am very fond of ice-cream’), **сeгóдня** ‘today’.

(2) Adverbs based on preposition-noun phrases

(i) The preposition appears as a separate word in some phrases (**в пpидjáчу** ‘into the bargain’, **на днях** ‘the other day’, **на ходjу** ‘while on the move’), but in most cases preposition and noun are run together. The prepositions **в, на, по** + dative, **с** + genitive are particularly common in this type of formation. All oblique cases are represented:

(a) Accusative:

влух	aloud
наоборóт	on the contrary

(b) Genitive:

jздали	from afar
свeрху	from above

(c) Dative:

кста́ти	apropos
поблі́зости	in the vicinity

(d) Instrumental:

сли́шком	too
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(e) Prepositional:

вме́сте	together
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(ii) Some adverbs appear in pairs, one denoting location and the other destination or goal:

вда́лі/вда́ль	in/into the distance
вни́зү/вни́з	downstairs (location/direction)
вну́трі/вну́трі	inside (location/direction)
впе́реді/впе́ред	in front/forwards
за гра́нціей/за гра́нціу	abroad (location/direction)
наве́рхү/наве́рх	upstairs (location/direction)

Note

Compare **за́мужем за** + instrumental ‘married to’ and **выходи́ть/вб́йти за́муж за** + accusative ‘to get married’ (of a woman).

(iii) Some prepositional phrases involve *two* nouns:

бо́к о́ бок	cheek by jowl
вре́мя от вре́мени	from time to time
лицо́м к лицу́	face to face

384 Adverbs derived from verbs

Some adverbs are based on imperfective gerunds (see also **380** (1)):

кра́дучись	stealthily
не́хотя	reluctantly

Others are based on perfective gerunds, often as part of an adverbial phrase:

сломя́ го́лову	at breakneck speed
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See also **380** (2).

385 Adverbs derived from numerals

Adverbs derived from numerals include the series

вдвоём/втроём/вчетверём . . .

two/three/four together . . .

во-пéрвых/во-вторых/в-трéтых . . .

in the first/second/third place . . .

однажды/дважды/трижды . . .

once/twice/thrice . . .

as well as **впервые** ‘for the first time’, **наединé** ‘in private, alone (with)’, and the phrase **один на один** ‘tête-à-tête’.

386 Adverbs derived from pronouns

A number of adverbs are based on:

(i) The demonstrative pronouns **этот** ‘this’, **тот** ‘that’, **сей** ‘this’:

затём	afterwards
потóm	then, afterwards
поóтому	for that reason, therefore
сейчáс	now
с тех пор/до тех пор/до сих пор	since then/until then/hitherto

Note

- (a) **Потóm** and **затём** are synonymous in referring to sequential actions, though **потóm** is commoner: **Куплю билет, потóm/затём зайду к приятелю** ‘I shall buy a ticket, then call on a friend’. **Потóm** is also used in the meaning ‘afterwards, in a little while’: **Я сделаю это потóm** ‘I’ll do that later’. In colloquial registers it can be governed by a preposition (отложить **на потóm** ‘to put off until afterwards’) and can also be used colloquially in the meaning ‘besides’: **Не хочу я ехать, а потóm у меня и времени нет** ‘I don’t want to go, and besides I don’t have any time’. **Затём** can also denote purpose: **Поговорим, ведь я затём и пришёл** ‘Let’s talk, after all that’s the reason I have come’, **Я пришёл (затём), чтобы поговорить** ‘I have come (in order) to have a chat’.
- (b) **Теперь** ‘now’ is more limited in meaning and usage than **сейчáс**, which can refer to the past and future, as well as to the present: **O**

чём они́ говори́ли **сейча́с**? ‘What were they talking about **just now**?’, Я бу́ду с ва́ми **сейча́с** ‘I’ll be with you **in a minute**’, Что вы де́лаете **сейча́с/тепе́рь**? ‘What are you doing **now**?’

- (ii) The pronoun **что** ‘what’: **за́чем**? ‘for what purpose?’, **почему́**? ‘why?’ Compare

За́чем вклю́чили свет? — **Что́бы** мо́жно бы́ло чита́ть
Why have you switched on the light? So as to be able to read
(purpose)

and

Почему́ вклю́чили свет? — У́же темно́
Why have you switched on the light? Because it’s dark (cause)

- (iii) The possessive pronouns **мой, твой, свой, наш, ваш**:

по-мо́ему/по-тво́ему	in my opinion/in your opinion (familiar)
по-на́шему/по-ва́шему	in our opinion/in your opinion (formal)

Note

- (a) The difference in stress between **по-мо́ему, по-тво́ему**, and the dative case of the possessive pronouns (**моему́, твоюму́**).
(b) ‘In his/her/their opinion’ are rendered as **по егó/её/их мнени́ю**.
(c) **По-сво́ему** means ‘in one’s own way’: Он всё де́лает **по-сво́ему** ‘He does everything in his own way’.

- (iv) **Весь** ‘all’:

везде́/всю́ду; отовсю́ду	everywhere; from everywhere
весьма́	extremely
совсе́м	quite

Note

Compare **Э́то не совсе́м пра́вда** ‘That’s **not quite** true’ and **Э́то совсе́м не пра́вда** ‘That’s **not at all** true’.

387 Primary spatial adverbs

- (1) **Где** ‘where’, **здесь** ‘here’ and **там** ‘there’ denote location:

Где вы раба́таете?	Where do you work?
Я раба́таю здесь ; Он раба́тает там	I work here; He works there

Note

Тут ‘here’ is more colloquial than **здесь** and can also have a temporal meaning, e.g. **Тут** рассказчик замолчал ‘Here the narrator fell silent’.

(2) **Куда** ‘where’ (to), **сюда** ‘here’ and **туда** ‘there’ indicate direction:

Куда вы идёте?	Where are you going?
Идите сюда!	Come here!
Туда идёт автобус нóмер пять	The number 5 bus goes there

(3) **Откуда** ‘from where’, **отсюда** ‘from here’ and **оттуда** ‘from there’ indicate withdrawal:

Откуда он пришёл?	Where has he come from?
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Note

Откуда вы знаёте? ‘**How** do you know?’

388 Primary adverbs of time

(1) **Тогда** ‘then’

Тогда ‘then, at that time’ must be differentiated from **потом/затем** ‘then, afterwards’. Compare

Тогда я жил на севере
I lived in the north **then**/at that time

and

Сначала думай, **потом** говори
First think, **then** speak

(2) **Когда/как** ‘when/as’

(i) **Когда** or **в то время как** are preferred to **как** in rendering ‘as’ (= ‘when’) in clauses of time:

Когда/в то время как я шёл по дороге, я встретил старого знакомого
As I was walking down the road I met an old acquaintance

(ii) However, **как** is used with verbs of perception (**видеть** ‘to see’, **слышать** ‘to listen’, **слышать** ‘to hear’, **смотреть** ‘to watch’):

Смотрим, **как** дети играют
We watch the children playing

Я слýшаю, **как** она́ поёт
I listen to her singing

(iii) **Ждать** ‘to wait’ and **любить** ‘to like’ govern object clauses introduced by **когда́**:

Жду, **когда́** вы ко́нчите
I am waiting for you to finish

Люблю, **когда́** ты поёшь наро́дные пёсны
I like you to sing folk songs

Note

For constructions with **слýчай** ‘case’ see 311 (2).

(3) Как/как вдруг ‘when suddenly/than’

(i) **Как** (or **как вдруг**) is used to introduce a sudden or unexpected action, often interrupting another action:

Я как раз гла́дил брю́ки, **как вдруг** погас свет
I was just ironing my trousers **when suddenly** the light went out

(ii) The main clause in such constructions is often introduced by a negative:

Не прошёл он и десяти́ шаго́в, **как** раздался в́ыстрел
He had not taken ten paces **when** a shot rang out

(iii) Frequently the verb (**не**) **успеть** or the conjunction **едва́** is involved in such constructions:

Не (or **Едва́**) **успёл** я нажа́ть кно́пку, **как** дверь распахну́лась
I had not had time (had hardly had time) to press the button when the door flew open

Едва́ я вы́шел на ўлицу, **как** пошёл си́льный дождь
Hardly had I gone out on to the street **than** it began raining heavily

Note

See also 466–467 for further examples of adverbial clauses of time.

389 Ужé, ужé не

(1) **Ужé** ‘already’ is far commoner in Russian than ‘already’ in English, which often has no equivalent in indicating the early implementation or completion of an action:

Он пришёл **уже** вчера
He arrived yesterday/as early as yesterday

(2) **Уже** is particularly important in clarifying tense sequence:

Демонстранты **уже** разбежались, когда приехала оперативная машина
The demonstrators **had already** dispersed when the squad car arrived

Note

Without **уже** the above sentence means ‘The demonstrators dispersed **when** the squad car arrived’.

(3) **Уже не** (or **больше не**) means ‘no longer, not any more’: Он **уже не/больше не** работает здесь ‘He doesn’t work here any more’.

Note

Уже нет replaces **уже не** in the absence of a predicate: Он работает здесь? **Уже нет** ‘Does he work here? Not any more’.

390 **Ещё, ещё не**

(1) **Ещё** ‘still/yet’, **ещё не** ‘not yet’ can be used with temporal meaning:

Ребёнок **ещё** (or **всё ещё**) спит
The child is still asleep

Ещё девочкой она лишилась матери
She lost her mother when she was only a little girl

Она **ещё не** пришла
She hasn’t arrived yet

Note

Ещё нет replaces **ещё не** in the absence of a predicate: Она пришла? **Ещё нет** ‘Has she arrived?’ ‘Not yet’.

(2) **Ещё** can also mean ‘additional’, compare:

Дай **ещё** чашку чаю
Give me another (= an additional) cup of tea

and

Дай **другую** чашку
Give me another (= a different) cup

(3) It can also be synonymous with **уже́** in a temporal context:

Он у́ехал **ещё/уже́** на про́шлой неде́ле
He left last week

Note

- (a) The use of **ещё́** with comparatives, as an adverb of degree: **ещё́** лу́чше ‘still/even better’.
- (b) **Ещё́ раз** ‘once more’, referring to a repeated action (but not a repeated state): Я позво́ню **ещё́ раз** ‘I’ll ring again’. Compare **сно́ва**, which may denote resumption rather than repetition: По́сле боле́зни он **сно́ва** стал хо́дить в кино́ ‘After his illness he has begun going to the cinema again’. **Опять** may be used as a synonym of **сно́ва** (**Сно́ва/опять** пошёл дождь ‘It began raining again’), but may also have emotional overtones, sometimes expressing irritation (**Опять** по́езд опáздывает! ‘The train is late again!’).

391 The temporal adverbs **долго́**, **давно́** and **неда́вно**

(1) **Долго́** denotes a definite but unspecified period of time:

Он **долго́** одева́ется
He takes a long time to dress

(2) **Давно́** ‘for a long time’ (it also means ‘a long time ago’) implies an unfinished action or process:

Он **давно́** рабо́тает здесь
He has been working here for a long time (and still is)

Он **давно́** жил там
He **had** been living there for a long time

Note

- (a) Cf. **256** (2) (vii).
- (b) Cf. tense usage in *negative* contexts: Я **давно́** не **курю́** ‘I haven’t smoked for some time’ (have given it up) and Я **давно́** не **курил** ‘I haven’t smoked for some time’ (but may do so again).
- (3) **Неда́вно** refers to a recent event

Он у́мер **неда́вно**
He died **recently**

while (**в/за**) **последнее́ вре́мя** ‘recently, of late’ refers to a process or

state extending over a period of time. Absence of a preposition represents more colloquial usage:

Последнее время не было дождя
There hasn't been any rain **recently**

392 Primary adverbs of manner and extent

(1) **Как** and **так** may denote:

(i) Manner:

Вот как надо писать!	That's how to write!
Надо вести себя так	You should behave like that

Note

(a) **Как** also combines with the verb **любить** 'to like' in expressing manner: Люблю, **как** ты готовишь еду 'I like the way you cook'.

(b) **Не так** may mean 'wrongly': Вы **не так** меняете пробку 'You're not changing the fuse the right way' (cf. неправильно 'incorrectly').

(ii) Degree or extent:

Как хорошо она играет!	How well she plays!
Я так много ходил, что устал	I have walked so much that I am tired

(2) In comparisons, the particle **же** usually follows **так**:

Он так же умён, как я	He is just as clever as I am
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but this does not occur in a negative comparison

Он не так умён, как я	He is not as clever as I am
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When two qualities relate to the same person, the particle **и** is used for emphasis:

Он так же умён, как и добр	He is as clever as he is kind
--	-------------------------------

(3) **Как?** is used as the equivalent of English 'what?' in establishing personal and other details:

Как твоё имя?/твоё отчество?/твоя фамилия?
What is your first name?/your patronymic?/your surname?

Как тебя зовут?
What is your name?

Как ваш адрес?
What is your address?

Note also the phrase **Как** это по-русски? ‘What is the Russian for that?’

393 Interrelating adverbs

Interrelating adverbs

там, где
туда, куда
туда, откуда
тогда, когда
так, как etc.

may be used when no specific referent of place, time or manner is named:

Я работаю **там, где** он работал раньше
I work **where** (lit. ‘**there, where**’) he used to work

Помню, как побежали мы **туда, куда** нас вела густая толпа людей (Grekova)
I recall how we ran **to where** a dense crowd of people led us

Любая работа только **тогда** увлекает, **когда** ты в ней уже какие-то тайны открыл (*Yuny naturalist*)
A job only becomes absorbing **when** you have discovered some of its secrets

Он поступил **так, как** я ему велел
He acted **as** I told him to

394 Тоже, также

(1) Both **тоже** and **также** mean ‘also, as well, too’. **Тоже** may be regarded as the more colloquial variant, **также** as the more official:

Он тоже/также поедет	He will go too
Мы тоже/также согласны	We also agree

Note

(a) **Тóже/тáкже не** means ‘not . . . either’: Он **тóже/тáкже** не поéдет ‘He won’t go **either**’.

(b) See 472 (9) for **тóже** as a particle.

(2) **Тóже** is preferred in contexts which express identification with an action, state or attribute already referred to:

Вы зáняты? Я **тóже**
Are you busy? **So** am I

— Я óчень хочú пойтí на концéрт
‘I am very keen to go to the concert’

— Она́ **тóже** хочéт пойтí
‘She wants to go **too**’

У стéны стоял бéлый стол и четы́ре стúла, **тóже** бéлых
A white table and four chairs, **also** white, stood by the wall

(3) **Тáкже** is preferred when providing additional or supplementary information (in the meaning **крóме тогó, ещé и** ‘apart from that, in addition’):

Я нáчал, крóме книг, читáть **тáкже** и журнáльные стáтьи
I began to read magazine articles **as well as** books

Он óчень хитёр, не хúже брáта; но он **тáкже** óчень талáнтлив
He is very cunning, no less so than his brother; but he is **also** very talented

Существúют **тáкже** стереотíпы маскулíнности и феминíнности
(*Nedelya*)
There **also** exist stereotypes of masculinity and femininity

(4) **Тáкже** is particularly common with the conjunction **а**:

Речь шла в основнóм о проблéмах двусторóнних отношéний,
а тáкже о положéнии в Ливáне
It was basically a question of problems of bilateral relations, **and also** the situation in the Lebanon

Note

A never combines with **тóже**.

(5) Compare the contrasting usage of **тóже** and **тáкже** in the following:

Он **тóже** вы́разил готóвность помóчь
He **also** expressed his willingness to help (emulating **someone else’s** willingness to help)

Он **та́кже** вы́разил гото́вность помо́чь
 He **also** expressed his willingness to help (in addition to **other action** he had agreed to take)

395 Indefinite adverbs (adverbs in -то, -нибудь, -либо and кòе-)

Adverbs in -то, -нибудь and -либо are adverbial counterparts to the indefinite pronouns (see 138). They include:

где-то	somewhere	где-нибудь	somewhere, anywhere
куда-то	somewhere (direction)	куда-нибудь	somewhere, anywhere (direction)
как-то	somehow	как-нибудь	somehow, anyhow
когда-то	once, at one time	когда-нибудь	at any time, ever
почему-то	for some reason	почему-нибудь	for some, any reason

All the adverbs can also combine with -либо. Кòе- combines with где, как, когда and куда́.

(1) Adverbs in -то

Где-то/куда-то denote a particular but unidentified place, когда-то a particular but unidentified time, почему-то a particular but unidentified cause. The adverbs relate predominantly to the past or present tense:

Вор прячется где-то поблизости
 The thief is hiding **somewhere** nearby

Он как-то справился с задачей
Somehow he coped with the task

— Это мой друг, играли когда-то в футбол (Vanshenkin)
 ‘That is my friend, we used to play football **at one time**’

Третьий пассажир тоже есть, но, видно, куда-то вышел (Rasputin)
 There is a third passenger too, but he must have gone out **somewhere**

Он почему-то недоволен нашим решением
For some reason he is displeased with our decision

(2) Adverbs in -нибудь

Adverbs in -нибудь are used:

(i) In **questions**:

Вы **когда-нибудь** отдыхали на Чёрном море?
Have you **ever** holidayed on the Black Sea?

(ii) In the **future**, implying a choice still to be made:

Через годик **куда-нибудь** переберусь: в Харьков, Киев,
Днепропетровск (Rybakov)
In a year or so I shall move **somewhere**: to Kharkov, Kiev,
Dnepropetrovsk

(iii) After **imperatives**:

Загляни ко мне **когда-нибудь**
Pop in to see me **some time**

(iv) In referring to **different** circumstances on different occasions, irrespective of tense:

По воскресеньям мы всегда ездим **куда-нибудь** на машине
We always go for a drive somewhere on Sundays (different places on
different occasions)

(v) In contexts where the adverb implies inferior quality:

Я стал коммунистом. И не **где-нибудь**, а в Средиземном море
(*Russia Today*)
I have become a Communist. And not **any old where**, but in the
Mediterranean

(3) Adverbs in **-либо**

Adverbs in **-либо** express an even greater degree of indefiniteness than adverbs in **-нибудь**. They denote 'anywhere' (at any place you like to name), 'ever' (at any time you like to name) etc.:

Это была сильнейшая команда, которая **когда-либо** выигрывала
чемпионаты мира (*Sputnik*)
It was the strongest team that had **ever** won world championships

(4) Adverbs in **кõе-**(i) **Кõе-где** means 'in various places':

Кõе-где в нашем городе проводились демонстрации
Demonstrations were held **at various localities** in our town

(ii) **Кõе-как** means 'with great difficulty'

Мы **кòе-кáк** добрались домой
Somehow we struggled home

or ‘carelessly’

Работа сделана **кòе-кáк**
 The work has been done **any old how**

Note

Кòе-когда́ means ‘occasionally’, **кòе-куда́** ‘to a particular place’.

396 The negative adverbs **нигде́, никуда́, ниоткуда́, никогда́, никаќ, ниско́лько**

(1) Negative adverbs are formed by affixing **ни-** to the adverbs **где** ‘where’, **как** ‘how’, **когда́** ‘when’, **куда́** ‘where to’, **откуда́** ‘from where’, **ско́лько** ‘how much’:

нигде́	‘nowhere’	никуда́	‘nowhere’ (direction)
ника́к	‘in no way’	ниоткуда́	‘from nowhere’
никогда́	‘never’	ниско́лько	‘not at all’

Note

‘Hardly ever’ is rendered as **почти́ никогда́**, ‘hardly anywhere’ as **почти́ нигде́** etc.

(2) Like negative pronouns (see 133), negative adverbs combine with the particles **не/нет**:

Он нигде́ не рабо́тает	He does not work anywhere
Он никуда́ не и́дёт	He isn’t going anywhere
Ниоткуда́ нет пи́сем	There are no letters from anywhere
Она́ никогда́ не лжёт	She never tells lies
Она́ ника́к не реагировала	She did not react at all
Я ниско́лько не оби́делся	I wasn’t at all offended

Note

Нельзя́ also combines directly with a negative adverb: **Ника́к нельзя́ согласи́ться с ним** ‘One can in no way agree with him’.

(3) It is possible to accumulate negatives within one sentence:

Никто́ никогда́ никуда́ не е́здит
 No one ever goes anywhere

Де́ти никогда́ ниче́го не узна́ют о них (Zalygin)
 The children will never learn anything about them

Note

Ни разу ‘not once’ and **не раз** ‘more than once’. Compare:

Он **ни разу** не прибрал в комнате у *Андерсена* (Paustovsky)
Not once did he tidy Andersen’s room

and

О недостатках **не раз** уже писалось
 These shortcomings have been written about **more than once**

397 The negative adverbs **нигде**, **некуда**, **никогда**, **ниоткуда**, **низачем**

(1) Like the ‘potential’ negative pronouns (see 137), the ‘potential’ negative adverbs appear in infinitive constructions: (**Нам**) **нигде** жить ‘There is nowhere (for us) to live’. The series comprises

нигде	‘there is nowhere to’
низачем	‘there is no point’
никогда	‘there is no time to’
некуда	‘there is nowhere to’ (direction)
ниоткуда	‘there is no place from where’

Note

Никогда can also mean ‘once, at one time’.

(2) There are two variants of the construction:

(i) The **impersonal**:

Утерётся было **ничем**, переодётся **нигде** (Vanshenkin)
 There was nothing to dry oneself on and nowhere to change

Копать могилу было **никогда** и **низачем** (Rybakov)
 There was no time to dig a grave and no point in doing so

(ii) The **personal**, with the logical subject appearing in the dative case (see 93):

Ему нигде работать	He has nowhere to work
Ей никогда было разговаривать	She had no time to converse
Нам некуда будет ехать	We shall have nowhere to go

Note

As with the ‘potential’ negative pronouns, there is a positive counterpart to this construction involving **е́сть** (present tense), **бы́ло** (past) and **бу́дет** (future), e.g.

Е́сть/бы́ло/бу́дет куда́ пойти́
There is/was/will be somewhere to go

398 Comparative adverbs

(1) The comparatives of adverbs in **-ol-e** are identical with short-form comparative adjectives (see **179** and **180**):

Всё сильнее и глубже осознаём духо́вное родство́ с други́ми наро́дами (Kostomarov)
We are **more and more intensively** and **profoundly** conscious of our spiritual kinship with other nations

Note

Adverbs with more than two syllables have an alternative comparative in **боле́е: вы́годнее/боле́е вы́годно** ‘more beneficially’, cf. **ме́нее вы́годно** ‘less beneficially’. The form with **боле́е** is the *norm* for comparatives of adverbs other than those in **-ol-e: боле́е логи́чески** ‘more logically’ (cf. **ме́нее логи́чески** ‘less logically’).

(2) Comparative adverbs appear in the same types of construction as comparative adjectives (see **182**), i.e. constructions:

(i) With **чем** ‘than’:

Но сильне́й, **чем** заво́д, любил Пётр Телепнёв свой сад (Trifonov)
But Petr Telepnev loved his garden **than** the factory

(ii) With the **genitive**:

Трени́р ча́ще **други́х слов** употребле́ляет сло́во «рабо́та» (Salnikov)
The trainer uses the word ‘work’ more often **than other words**

(iii) With **гора́здо** ‘much’ (also **мно́го, намно́го, куда́**):

Он верну́лся домо́й **гора́здо** по́зже
He returned home **much** later

(iv) With **чем . . . тем** ‘the . . . the’:

Чем больше я отдыхал от футбола, **тем** сильнее хотелось играть

The more I rested from football **the** more I wanted to play

(v) With the prefix **по-** ‘a little’:

Ночью капитан **потуже** затягивался ремнём (Gagarin)

At night the captain would tighten his belt **a little**

(vi) With instrumental or **на** + accusative in quantifying a difference:

Я вернулся **на пять минут/пятью минутами** раньше, чем ожидал

I arrived **five minutes** earlier than I had expected

(vii) With **как можно** ‘as . . . as possible’:

Мы ехали **как можно** медленнее

We were driving **as slowly as possible**

399 Variant forms of some comparative adverbs

Some comparative adverbs have variant forms:

(1) Больше/более ‘more’; меньше/мэнее ‘less’

(i) These may be differentiated stylistically, the comparatives in **-ше** belonging to the ‘neutral’ register and those in **-ее** to a more ‘bookish’ style (**больше/более тридцати** ‘more than thirty’).

(ii) Only **больше/мэньше** are used to denote extent or degree: Он лóбит дочь **больше** (*not* более), чем сына ‘He loves his daughter more than (he loves) his son’.

(iii) **Более** and **мэнее** are mainly used in the formation of long comparative adjectives and adverbs (see 177 and 398 (1) note), and in a number of set phrases: **более или мэнее** ‘more or less’, **более того** ‘furthermore’ etc.

(2) Дáльше/дáлее ‘further’

Apart from its spatial meaning, **дáльше** ‘further’ also implies subsequent action (А **дáльше** что случилось? ‘And what happened next?’) or encouragement (Ну — **дáльше!** ‘Well, go on!’). **Дáлее** is limited mainly to the phrase **и так дáлее (и т.д.)** ‘and so on’.

400 The superlative adverb

(1) A superlative adverb consists of a comparative adverb in **-e** or **-ee** + **всего́** (for **internal** comparison) or **всех** (for **external** comparison):

Я рабóтаю лúчше **всего́** вéчером
I work best of all in the evening (i.e. compared with other times)

Я рабóтаю лúчше **всех** вéчером
I work best in the evening (i.e. compared with other people)

Compare

Мы все старéли, А́да Ефíмовна — **мéньше всех** (Grekoва)
We were all ageing, Ada Efimovna **least of all** (= **less than anyone**)

(2) **Наибóлее** can also be used in the formation of superlative adverbs (**наибóлее свобóдно** ‘most freely, fluently’ (cf. **наимéнее свобóдно** ‘least fluently’), and this is the *norm* with adverbs which do not end in **-o/-e**, e.g. **наибóлее логíчески** ‘most logically’.

The Preposition

401 Introductory comments

(1) A preposition is a part of speech which expresses the relationship of one word to another: колодец **без** воды 'a well without water', добр **к** детям 'kind to children', прыгнуть **через** забор 'to jump over the fence'.

(2) Each Russian preposition governs a noun or pronoun in an oblique case. Some prepositions govern two or even three cases.

(3) Prepositions may be subdivided as follows:

(i) Primary: **в** 'in', **до** 'as far as', **на** 'on' etc.

(ii) Adverbial: **близ** 'near', **вдоль** 'along' etc.

(iii) Prepositions derived from nouns (e.g. **в пользу** 'in favour of', **насчёт** 'on account of') and from verbs (**благодаря** 'thanks to' etc.).

402 Primary prepositions and cases

The primaries (central meanings only) can be arranged in a grid, as follows.

Preposition	Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
(1) без		'without'			
(2) в	'into'				'in'

Preposition	Acc.	Gen.	Dat.	Instr.	Prep.
(3) для		'for'			
(4) до		'as far as'			
(5) за	'behind' (motion)				'behind'
(6) из		'out of'			
(7) из-за		'from behind'			
(8) из-под		'from under'			
(9) к			'towards'		
(10) кро́ме		'except for'			
(11) между					'between'
(12) на	'on to'				'on'
(13) над					'above'
(14) о	'against'				'about'
(15) от		'from'			
(16) перед					'in front of'
(17) по	'up to'		'along'		'after'
(18) под	'under' (motion)				'under'
(19) при					'in the presence of'
(20) про	'about'				
(21) ра́ди		'for the sake of'			
(22) с	'approximately'	'down from'			'with'
(23) у		'at'			
(24) через	'across'				

Note

- (a) Though not strictly speaking primary prepositions, **из-за** and **из-под** are usually included in the series.
- (b) See 419 (1) (i) Note for **между** + *genitive* case.
- (c) **о** is written as **об** before words beginning with **а, э, и, о** or **у** (e.g. **об Англии** 'about England') and as **обо** in combinations such as **обо всём** 'about everything' and **обо мне** 'about me'.

403 Repetition of prepositions

The repetition of prepositions is optional, compare:

В Москвѣ и нѣкоторых другіх городѣх . . . (*Izvestiya*)
In Moscow and certain other cities . . .

and

Он был **в** пижаме и **в** домашних туфлях (*Zalygin*)
He was wearing pyjamas and slippers

except where two or more items governed by the same preposition appear in different clauses, when repetition is mandatory:

Я надеялся не только **на** неё, **но** и **на** него
I relied not only on her, but also on him

404 The buffer vowel -o

Primary prepositions which end in a consonant acquire a final **-o** when followed by certain clusters of consonants. These subdivide as follows:

(1) Clusters which affect many prepositions:

(i) **Вр-** (mainly *время* ‘time’): *во время* ‘during’, *ко времени* ‘by the time’, *со времени* ‘since the time’.

(ii) **Вс-** (mainly declined forms of *весь* ‘all’): *во всѣм* ‘in everything’, *изо всех сил* ‘with all one’s might’ (but *из всех моих друзей* ‘of all my friends’), *обо всѣм* ‘about everything’, *со всех концов* ‘from all parts’ (*над*, *перед*, *от* are not affected).

(iii) **Вт-** (mainly *вторник* ‘Tuesday’ and *второй* ‘second’): *во вторник* ‘on Tuesday’, *ко вторнику* ‘by Tuesday’, *со вторника* ‘since Tuesday’; *во втором* ‘in the second’, *со второго* ‘since the second’.

(iv) **Дн-** (mainly oblique cases of *день* ‘day’ and *дно* ‘bottom’): *ко дню* ‘for the day’, *со/с днём* ‘with the day’, *со дня* ‘since the day’, *изо дня в день* ‘daily, constantly’; *ко дну* ‘to the bottom’.

(v) **Мн-** (mainly oblique cases of *я* ‘I’ and *многое/многие* ‘many’): *во мне* ‘in me’, *ко мне* ‘to me’, *надо мной* ‘above me’, *передо мной* ‘in front of me’, *подо мной* ‘below me’, *со мной* ‘with me’, *обо мне*

‘about me’; во мнóгом ‘in many ways’, со мнóгими ‘with many people’ (*but* из мнóгих ‘of many people’, от мнóгих ‘from many people’).

(2) Clusters that affect only certain prepositions; the cluster often repeats the final consonant of the preposition or its unvoiced/voiced/mutated counterpart: во Владивостóке ‘in Vladivostok’, во МХАТе ‘in the Moscow Art Theatre’, во Пскóве ‘in Pskov’, во флóте ‘in the navy’, во Фрáнции ‘in France’; со злóсти ‘out of malice’, со скóростью ‘at a speed’, со средý ‘since Wednesday’, со стáнции ‘from the station’, со стeнý ‘from the wall’, со столá ‘from the table’, со штáтом ‘with a staff’; подо льдом ‘under the ice’, etc.

Note

Also во Вьетна́ме ‘in Vietnam’, во двoре́ ‘in the yard’, во избежа́ние ‘in avoidance of, во и́мя ‘in the name of’, во ско́лько? ‘at what time?’ and clusters in monosyllabic oblique case forms whose nominatives contain a fleeting vowel: во рту ‘in the mouth’ (from рот ‘mouth’), со лба ‘from the forehead’ (from лоб ‘forehead’), со льдом ‘with ice’ (from лёд ‘ice’).

405 Stress in primary prepositions

(1) Prepositions are usually unstressed; however, some primaries, in particular **за, на, по, под** and, to a lesser extent, **до, из** and **о/об**, take the stress when combined with certain nouns and numerals. Many such combinations are characteristic of colloquial registers.

(2) The types of noun involved include parts of the body (e.g. головá ‘head’), geographical features (бе́рег ‘shore’), other locations (го́род ‘town’), time words (год ‘year’) and some others (вид ‘view’). All nouns and numerals involved are monosyllables or have *initial* stress in the declined form.

(3) The commonest case involved is the accusative, but others are also found.

(4) Among the commonest combinations are the following:

(i) **До** + genitive: до́ дому ‘as far as home’, (с утра́) до́ ночи (from morning) ‘till night’, до́ смерти (испугáлся) (was scared) ‘to death’.

(ii) **За** + accusative: за́ бoрт ‘overboard’ (direction), за́ волосы ‘by the hair’, за́ год ‘in a year’, за́ голову ‘by the head’, за́ город ‘into the

country', за горы 'beyond the mountain' (direction), за два (го́да), две (неде́ли), три (го́да), пять, шесть, семь, восемь, девять, десять, сто (лет) 'in two (years/weeks), three, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, a hundred' (years), за день 'in a day', за зиму 'during the winter', за косу/косы 'by the plait/plaits', за лето 'during the summer', за море 'beyond the sea' (direction), за ногу/ноги 'by the leg/legs', за нос 'by the nose', за ночь 'during the night', за плечи 'by the shoulders', за полночь 'beyond midnight', за реку 'beyond the river' (direction), за руку/руки 'by the hand/hands', за спину 'behind the back' (direction), (держаться) за стену (to hold) 'on to the wall', за угол 'round the corner' (direction), за ухо/уши 'by the ear/ears', (ущипну́ть) за щеку (to pinch) 'on the cheek'.

Note

Alternative noun/numeral stress is found in за во́лосы, го́лову, два/две, три, пять, шесть, семь, во́семь, де́вять, де́сять, сто, ле́то, мо́ре, плéчи.

(iii) **За** + instrumental: за городом 'in the country' (cf. за го́родом 'beyond the town'), за морем (от за мо́рем) 'overseas', за ухом 'behind the ear'.

(iv) **Из** + genitive: из виду 'from sight', из дому 'out of the house' (one's own house, cf. из до́ма 'out of someone else's house', e.g. из до́ма Са́ши 'from Sasha's house'), из лесу 'from the forest' (also из ле́са), из носу 'from the nose' (also из но́са).

(v) **На** + accusative: на берег 'on to the shore', на бок 'on to one's side', на борт 'on board' (direction), (спустить) на воду (to launch) 'on to the water' (cf. смотре́ть на во́ду/на воду 'to look at the water'), на год 'for a year', на голову 'on to the head', на гору 'onto the hill', на два (numerals behave as with за + accusative (see (ii) above)), на день 'for a day', на дом 'to the premises' (but смотре́ть на дом 'to look at the house'), на зиму 'for the winter', на лето 'for the summer', на море 'to the sea', на ногу/ноги 'on to the leg/legs, foot/feet', на нос 'on to the nose', на ночь 'for the night', на пол 'on to the floor', на реку 'to the river', на руку 'onto the hand'/на руки 'into the arms', на спину 'on to the back', на стену 'on to the wall', (шепта́ть) на ухо (to whisper) 'into the ear' (cf. наце́пить на у́хо 'to attach to the ear').

Note

The following take alternative noun/numeral stress: на бе́рег, го́лову, два (and other numerals), ле́то, мо́ре, ре́ку, стéну.

(vi) **На** + prepositional: на́ море/на мо́ре 'on the sea, at the seaside'.

(vii) **О/об** + accusative: (бóк) ó бок ‘(side) by side’, óб пол/об пól ‘against the floor’, (рукá) óб руку (hand) ‘in hand’.

(viii) **По** + accusative: пó два/две, двое, три, трое, сто ‘two, three, a hundred each’ (with alternative numeral stress: по два ‘two each’ etc.).

(ix) **По** + dative: пó лесу/по лéсу ‘through the forest’, пó морю/по мóрю ‘over the sea’, пó полю/по пóлю ‘over the field’.

(x) **Под** + accusative: пóд воду/под вóду ‘under the water’ (direction), пóд гору ‘downhill’, пóд ноги ‘under one’s feet’ (direction), пóд руку/руки ‘by the arm/arms’.

(xi) **Под** + instrumental: пóд боком/под бóком ‘close at hand’.

(xii) **Прí** смерти ‘at death’s door’.

Note

Alternative stress is possible in many literal contexts, while idioms retain prepositional stress: лезть нá стену/на стéну ‘to climb up on to the wall’, but лезть нá стену (fig.) ‘to go berserk’. Compare положá руку нá сердце ‘hand on heart’ and жáловаться на сéрдце ‘to complain of heart trouble’.

406 Adverbial prepositions

Adverbial prepositions take the following forms.

(1) One-word prepositions (all + genitive unless otherwise indicated): б́лиз ‘near’, в́близí ‘close to’, в́глубь ‘into the depths of’, в́дóль ‘along’, в́замén ‘in exchange for’, в́мéсто ‘instead of’, в́нè ‘outside’, в́нутрí ‘inside’ (location), в́нұтрь ‘inside’ (direction), в́óзле ‘close to’, в́окрұг ‘around’, в́опрекí + dative ‘contrary to’, в́передí ‘in front of’, в́рòде ‘like’, м́ймо ‘past’, нáвстрéчу + dative ‘towards’, нáканұне ‘on the eve of’, нáперекóр + dative ‘counter to’, нáпрóтив ‘opposite’, óколо ‘near’, óтнóсítельно ‘with regard to’, пóдле ‘by the side of’, пóдóбно + dative ‘similar to’, пóзадí ‘behind’, пóперéк ‘across, athwart’, пóсле ‘after’, пóсредí ‘in the midst of’, прóтив ‘opposite’, свéрх ‘above’, св́ыше ‘more than’, сзáди ‘behind’, сквóзь + accusative ‘through’, соглáсно + dative ‘according to’, с́редí ‘among’.

(2) Compounds involving a primary preposition: в́близí от ‘close to’, в́далí от ‘far from’, в́мéсте с + instrumental ‘together with’, в́плóть до ‘right up to’, в́след за + instrumental ‘after’, незáвísимо от

‘irrespective of’, рядом с + instrumental ‘next to’, согласно с + instrumental ‘in accordance with’.

407 Prepositions derived from nouns and verbs

(1) Compound prepositions derived from nouns comprise:

(i) One-word prepositions (all + genitive): порядка ‘of the order of’, посредством ‘by means of’, путём ‘by dint of’.

(ii) Those that combine with one primary preposition (all + genitive): в виде ‘in the form of’, ввиду ‘in view of’, в интересах ‘in the interests of’, в качестве ‘in the capacity of’, в направлении ‘in the direction of’, во время ‘during’, в пользу ‘in favour of’, в продолжение ‘in the course of’, в результате ‘as a result of’, в силу ‘on the strength of’, вследствие ‘in consequence of’, в сторону ‘in the direction of’, в течение ‘during the course of’, в ходе ‘during the course of’, в целях ‘for the purpose of’, за счёт ‘at the expense of’, на протяжении ‘during’, с целью ‘with the object of’.

(iii) Those that combine with two primaries: в зависимости от ‘depending on’, в отличие от ‘unlike’, в связи с + instrumental ‘in connection with’, по направлению к ‘in the direction of’, по отношению к ‘in relation to’, по сравнению с + instrumental ‘by comparison with’.

(2) Most prepositions derived from verbs are based on gerunds: благодаря + dative ‘thanks to’, включая + accusative ‘including’, начиная с + genitive ‘beginning with’, несмотря на + accusative ‘despite’, не считая + genitive ‘not counting’, спустя + accusative ‘after’, судя по + dative ‘judging by’. See also 380.

Note

Спустя may follow or precede the noun: две недели **спустя/спустя** две недели ‘two weeks later’.

Spatial Prepositions

408 В and на + prepositional/accusative, из/с + genitive

(1) В/на + prepositional

(i) The central meaning of **в** + prepositional is ‘in, inside’:

Игрушки **в ящике** The toys are **in the drawer**

(ii) The central meaning of **на** + prepositional is ‘on, on top of’:

Книги **на полке** The books are **on the shelf**

(2) **В/на** + accusative

В and **на** + accusative are used to denote, respectively, direction **into** or **on to**:

Я кладу игрушки **в ящик** I put the toys **in(to) the drawer**
Я ставлю книги **на полку** I stand the books **on(to) the shelf**

(3) **Из/с** + genitive

Из ‘out of’ and **с** ‘down from’ + genitive denote withdrawal. They are the ‘opposites’, respectively, of **в** and **на**:

Я **вынимаю** игрушки I take the toys **out of the drawer**
из ящика
Я беру книги **с полки** I take the books **off the shelf**

Note

- (a) The oppositions **в/из** and **на/с** are consistently observed, though there are exceptions: Я лежу **в постели** ‘I am lying in bed’ but Я встаю **с постели** ‘I get out of bed’ (**из** постели is used with verbs prefixed **вы-**: Он **выскочил из постели** ‘He leapt out of bed’). For other exceptions, see 411 (2).
- (b) Nouns which normally combine with **из**, e.g. **из города** ‘from the town’, combine with **с** when qualified by **весь**: **со всего города** ‘from all over the town’ (the meaning is ‘from the whole area’ not ‘from inside’, cf. **со всех концов** ‘from all parts’, **со всех сторон** ‘from all sides’).
- (c) **В** also combines with the prepositional case of nouns denoting articles of clothing etc.: Он **в ботинках** ‘He is wearing shoes’, Она **в белом платье** ‘She is wearing a white dress’, Он **в очках** ‘He is wearing glasses’ (cf. **носить** ‘to wear habitually’).
- (d) **В** and **на** + accusative are used after nouns such as билет and дверь: билет **в театр/на оперу/на поезд** ‘a theatre/opera/train ticket’, дверь **в комнату** ‘the door to the room’. Compare вид **на море** ‘a view of the sea’.

409 The use of **в** and **на** with geographical terminology and the names of organizations, buildings and parts of buildings

With certain categories of noun the distinction between **в** and **на** is not always clear cut.

(1) Countries

(i) **В** is used for almost all countries: **в Великобритании** ‘in Great Britain’, **в России** ‘in Russia’.

(ii) **На** is used with some states which are also islands: **на Кубе** ‘in Cuba’. Note also **на родине** ‘in the homeland’, **на Руси** ‘in Rus’ (but **в древней Руси** ‘in ancient Rus’) and **на чужбине** ‘in a foreign land’.

(2) Republics and other territories in the former USSR

(i) The names of former Soviet Republics and other major territories take **в**: **в Армении** ‘in Armenia’, **в Сибири** ‘in Siberia’.

(ii) Note **на (в) Украине** ‘in Ukraine’ (but **в Западной Украине** ‘in Western Ukraine’) and the use of **на** with areas ending in **-щина**: **на Днепро́вщине** ‘in the area of the Dnieper’. **В Украине** is becoming increasingly acceptable.

(3) Natural features and climatic zones

(i) **В Арктике** ‘in the Arctic’, **в пустыне** ‘in the desert’, **в степи** ‘in the steppe’, **в тайге** ‘in the taiga’.

(ii) **На возвышенности** ‘in the highlands’, **на лугу** ‘in a meadow’, **на низменности** ‘in the lowlands’, **на полюсе** ‘at the Pole’, **на поляне** ‘in a glade’, **на проросеке** ‘in a forest cutting’, **на равнине** ‘in the plain’, **на целине** ‘in the virgin soil’.

(4) Mountain ranges

(i) **В** is used with plural **горы** ‘mountains’ (**в горах** ‘in the mountains’) and with ranges that have plural names: **в Альпах** ‘in the Alps’, **в Андах** ‘in the Andes’, **в Карпатах** ‘in the Carpathians’ etc. (Exceptions include **на Балканах** ‘in the Balkans’ and **на Воробьёвых горах** ‘on the Sparrow Hills’.)

(ii) **На** is used with ranges that have singular names: **на Алта́е/Кавка́зе/Пами́ре/Ура́ле** ‘in the Altai/Caucasus/Pamirs/Urals’. (**Тянь-Ша́нь** ‘Tien-Shan’ is used with either **в** or **на**: **в/на Тянь-Ша́не**.)

Note

В replaces **на** when the noun is qualified by an adjective: **в Восточном Памире** ‘in the Eastern Pamirs’ (except for **Кавказ** *Caucasus*): **на Восточном Кавказе** ‘in the Eastern Caucasus’).

(5) Islands, archipelagoes, peninsulas

(i) **На** is the norm: **на Аляске** ‘in Alaska’, **на Гавайях** ‘in Hawaii’, **на Кипре** ‘in Cyprus’, **на Корсике** ‘in Corsica’, **на Крите** ‘on Crete’, **на Мальте** ‘in Malta’, **на Таймыре** ‘on the Taimyr peninsula’, **на Яве** ‘in Java’.

(ii) However, **в** is used in **в Крыму** ‘in the Crimea’ and with islands ending in **-ия**: **в Гренландии** ‘in Greenland’, **в Сардинии** ‘in Sardinia’, **в Сицилии** ‘in Sicily’ (cf. **на острове Сардиния/Сицилия** ‘on the island of Sardinia, Sicily’ etc).

(6) Points of the compass

На is used with points of the compass: **на востоке/западе/юге/севере** ‘in the east/west/south/north’, **на юго-востоке/северо-западе** ‘in the south-east/north-west’. Political **на Западе** ‘in the West’ (i.e. ‘in Western countries’) is distinguished from geographical **на западе** ‘in the west’. Compare **на Ближнем/Дальнем Востоке** ‘in the Near/Far East’.

(7) Towns

(i) Town names, many parts of towns and most regions of Moscow combine with **в**: **в Москвѣ** ‘in Moscow’, **в переулке** ‘in a side-street’, **в пригороде** ‘in a suburb’, **в Останкино** ‘in Ostankino’, **в Черёмушках** ‘in Cheremushki’.

(ii) **На** is used as follows:

(a) **На окраине** ‘in the outskirts’, **на площади** ‘in the square’, **на улице** ‘in the street’ (**в** is possible only when narrowness is emphasized: **в узких улицах** ‘in the narrow streets’). Note **в/на сквере** ‘in the small public garden’.

(b) With some Moscow regions: **на Арбате** ‘in the Arbat’, **на Пресне** ‘in Presnya’, **на Соколе** ‘in Sokol’.

(8) Buildings (and parts of buildings), areas and workplaces

(i) Most names of buildings and organizations take **в**: **в аптеке** ‘at the chemist’s shop’, **в аэропорту** ‘at the airport’, **в колхозе** ‘at the collective farm’, **в цирке** ‘at the circus’, **в школе** ‘at the school’ etc.

(ii) Combinations with **на** relate especially to areas historically associated with open spaces or complexes of buildings rather than single structures. Thus, both **почта** ‘post office’ and **станция** ‘station’ take **на** by association with the pre-Revolutionary **почтовая станция** ‘relay station’, an area with stables, administrative offices and sleeping accommodation, where travellers could obtain fresh horses. Combinations with **на** include the following:

(a) **На аэродроме** ‘at the aerodrome’, **на базе** ‘at the base’, **на вокзале** ‘at the main station’, **на выставке** ‘at the exhibition’, **на даче** ‘at the country cottage’, **на заводе** ‘at the plant’, **на почте** ‘at the post office’, **на почтамте** ‘at the main post office’, **на предприятии** ‘at the enterprise’, **на рынке** ‘at the market’, **на складе** ‘at the warehouse’, **на спортивной площадке** ‘at the sports ground’, **на стадионе** ‘at the stadium’, **на станции** ‘at the station’, **на строительстве/стройке** ‘at the building site’, **на фабрике** ‘at the factory’, **на ферме** ‘at the farm’, **на ярмарке** ‘at the trade fair’.

(b) Certain parts of buildings and organizations: **на балконе** ‘on (theatr. ‘in’) the balcony’, **на галёрке** ‘in the gallery’ (theatr.), **на кафедре** ‘in the (university) department’, **на факультете** ‘in the faculty’, **на чердаке** ‘in the attic’, **на ярусе** ‘in the circle’ (theatr.).

Note

В доме ‘in the house’, but **на дому** ‘on the premises, at home’: Он зарабатывает и **на дому** ‘He earns extra money at home’ (cf. Заказ доставлен **на дом** ‘The order has been delivered to the door’). Compare also **в театре** ‘in the theatre’ and **Работаю на театре/радио/телевидении** ‘I work in the theatre/in radio/on TV’ (professional parlance).

(9) Miscellaneous

На дереве ‘in a tree’, **на корме** ‘in the stern’, **на носу** ‘in the prow’, **на рейде** ‘in the roads’ (of a harbour), **на сковороде** ‘in a frying-pan’.

410 Nouns which may be used with **в and **на**, but with different meanings**

Many nouns may be used with either **в** or **на**, with negligible difference

in meaning: **в/на кварти́ре** ‘in the flat’, **в/на коню́шне** ‘in the stable’, **в/на кúхне** ‘in the kitchen’, **в/на фло́те** ‘in the navy’ etc.

Other nouns combine with **в** and **на**, but with a *difference* in meaning.

(1) Автóбус (and other vehicles)

(i) **В автóбусе** ‘in the bus’ is used if there is emphasis on the vehicle as a scene of activity: Уро́ки я в́ыучила **в автóбусе/в по́езде/в метрó** ‘I did my homework in the bus/the train/on the underground’.

(ii) **На** is preferred when emphasis is on travel (though either preposition *may* be used): две останóвки **на метрó** до Арба́та ‘two stops on the underground to the Arbat’. Only **на** is possible with the names of ships: **на пароходе́** ‘on the steamer’. Public transport vehicles may appear in the instrumental case, as an alternative to a prepositional construction: до́ехать **трамва́ем** ‘to get there by tram’, до́стáвить груз **самолётом/парохо́дом** ‘to deliver a load by aircraft/by steamer’. However, this does not apply to **велосипе́д** ‘bicycle’, **ло́дка** ‘boat’, **метрó** ‘underground’, **мотоци́кл** ‘motorcycle’, **такси́** ‘taxi’, which appear only with prepositions (éхать **на велосипе́де/на такси́** ‘to ride a bicycle/go by taxi’ etc.).

(2) Во́здух

(i) **В во́здухе** means ‘up in the air, pervading the air’: Самолёт **в во́здухе** ‘The aircraft is up in the air’, **В во́здухе** повис запа́х табака́ ‘The smell of tobacco hung in the air’.

(ii) **На во́здухе** means ‘out in the open air’: **на све́жем/откры́том во́здухе** ‘in the fresh/the open air’. Compare the use of **на** in other outdoor contexts: Зна́мя колы́шется **на ветру́** ‘The flag flutters in the breeze’, сиде́ть **на со́лнце** ‘to sit in the sun’ etc.

(3) Высотá/глубина́

(i) **В** is used in the absence of quantification: **в прозра́чной высотé** ‘in the translucent heights’, **в морско́й глубинé/в океа́нских глубина́х** ‘in the ocean depths’. Note also **в глубинé** за́ла ‘at the back of the hall’, **в глубинé** ле́са ‘in the depths of the forest’, **в глубинé** са́да ‘at the bottom of the garden’.

(ii) **На** is used when quantification is stated or implied: **на высотé** двух киломе́тров/**на** э́той **высотé** ‘at a height of two kilometres/at this height’, **на глубинé** трёх сантимéтров ‘at a depth of three centimetres’.

(4) Глаза́

(i) **В** is used in contexts of emotion or opinion: выражение страдания **в глазах** ‘an expression of suffering in the eyes’, Каким болваном я выглядел **в её глазах** ‘What an idiot I appeared in her eyes’.

(ii) **На** denotes:

(a) ‘On the surface’: Контактные линзы остаются **на глазах** месяцами ‘Contact lenses stay in the eyes for months on end’.

(b) ‘Swiftly/in the presence of’: Города рождаются **на наших глазах** ‘Towns spring up before our very eyes’.

Note

Either preposition may be used in the context of tears: **В/на глазах** показались слёзы ‘Tears appeared in her eyes’.

(5) Горá

В гóру means ‘uphill’: идти **в гóру** ‘to go uphill’. **На гору** refers to a specific hill or mountain: забраться **на гору** ‘to climb a mountain’.

Note the mining term **на-горá** ‘to the surface’.

(6) Двор

(i) **Во дворе́** ‘in the yard’ refers to an area surrounded by houses or a fence: **Во дворе́** было две покрышки ‘There were two tyre covers in the yard’.

(ii) **На дворе́** denotes:

(a) A specific kind of yard: **на ко́нном дворе́** ‘in the stable yard’.

(b) ‘Outside’: **На дворе́** зима́ ‘It is winter outside’.

(7) Мéсто

(i) **В мéсте** is used to denote:

(a) Part of a whole: Книга порвана **в однё́м мéсте** ‘The book is torn in one place’.

(b) A three-dimensional area: **в тёмном мéсте** ‘in a dark place’.

(c) ‘Together’: всё собрать **в однё́м мéсте** ‘to collect everything in one place’.

(d) ‘The same’: Мы всегда́ встречались **в однё́м мéсте** ‘We always met in the same place’.

(e) A locality: **в чудёсном месте** 'in a delightful spot'.

Note

В is also used in certain adjectival combinations: **в другом месте** 'somewhere else', **в разных местах** 'in various places'.

(ii) **На месте** is used to denote:

(a) 'The proper place': Все вещи **на месте** 'Everything is in its proper place'.

(b) Immobility: стоять **на месте** 'to stand still'.

(c) Possession: Я сижу **на твоём месте** 'I am sitting in your place'.

(d) Former whereabouts: Дёньги лежат **на прежнем месте** 'The money is lying where it was'.

(e) Replacement: **На месте** пустырей выросли жилые кварталы 'Blocks of flats have sprung up in place of waste ground'.

(f) Flat areas: **на ровном месте** 'on a level stretch of ground'.

(g) Preferred conduct: **на вашем месте** 'if I were you'.

(h) Scale of priorities: **На втором месте** — жилищные условия 'Housing conditions are in second place'.

Note

На местах 'in the provinces': Пёрвый тур проводится **на местах** 'The first round is being held in the provinces'.

(8) Море

(i) **В море** denotes:

(a) Activity or location beneath the surface: Э́ти рыбы водятся **в Чёрном море** 'These fish are found in the Black Sea'.

(b) Out at sea, on a voyage etc.: Кора́бль уже давно **в море** 'The ship has been under way for some time'; compare also **в открытом море** 'in the open sea'.

(ii) **На море** denotes activity or location on the surface of the sea (приключёния на су́ше и **на море** 'adventures on land and sea') or on the seashore (Ялта находится **на Чёрном море** 'Yalta is on the Black Sea').

(9) Не́бо

Either preposition is used to denote the location of natural phenomena

(огромное солнце **в/на чистом небе** ‘an enormous sun in the clear sky’), while **в** is preferred for birds, aircraft, sounds etc. (Варя увидела **в небе** два вертолёта ‘Varya saw two helicopters in the sky’, **В небе** слышался рёкот ‘A low rumble was heard in the sky’).

(10) Окно́

(i) **В окне́** means ‘visible at the window’: **В окне́** показала́сь его́ голова́ ‘His head appeared at the window’.

(ii) **На окне́** means ‘on the window/the window-sill’: **На окне́** стоя́ли цветы́ ‘There were flowers on the window-sill’. Note also **На окна́х** ро́зовые занавёски ‘There are pink curtains at the windows’.

(11) По́ле

(i) **В по́ле** means ‘out in the fields’: **В дере́вне** пу́сто, все **в по́ле** ‘The village is deserted, everyone is out in the fields’.

(ii) **На по́ле** denotes a specific area or plot: **На по́ле** стоя́л тра́ктор ‘In the field stood a tractor’, **На поля́х** рабо́тали лю́ди ‘People were working in the fields’, **на карто́фельном по́ле** ‘in a potato field’, **на по́ле бо́я** ‘on the battle field’, **на ле́тном по́ле** ‘on the flying field’, **на футбо́льном по́ле** ‘on the football field’.

Note

На поля́х also means ‘in the margin’.

(12) Разве́дка

В разве́дке refers to military intelligence, **на разве́дке** to prospecting: Он рабо́тает **на разве́дке** не́фти ‘He works in oil prospecting’.

(13) Рука́/ру́ки

(i) **В руке́/рука́х** means ‘in the hand/hands’: У Арсе́ния **в руке́х** аво́ська ‘Arseny is holding a string-bag’.

(ii) **На руке́/рука́х** means ‘in the arm(s)’: **На одной́ руке́** у неё ребёнок ‘She has a child in one arm’, Она́ подошла́ с Ви́ткой **на руке́х** ‘She came up with Vitka in her arms’.

Note

Кни́га **на руке́х** ‘The (library) book is out’, У него́ семья́ **на руке́х** ‘He has a family to support’.

(14) Свет

(i) **В свете** means ‘in the light/bathed in light’: **В жёлтом свете** фонарём толпились девушки ‘The girls crowded in the yellow light of the lanterns’. Note also figurative usage: **в свете** новых открытий ‘in the light of recent discoveries’.

(ii) **На свете** means ‘in the world’: Сколько видов слонов **на свете**? ‘How many species of elephant are there in the world?’. **На свету** is used when something is examined: Она осматривала одежду **на свету** ‘She was examining the clothes in the light’.

(15) Селó

В селé means ‘in a village’, **на селé** ‘in country areas’: роль интеллигенции **на селé** ‘the intelligentsia’s role in country areas’.

(16) Среди́на

В or **на** are used to denote the centre of an area: Трактор **в/на середине** поля ‘The tractor is in the middle of the field’. **В середине** denotes enclosure, ‘in between’: **в середине** толпы ‘in the middle of a crowd’.

(17) Стúдия

В is used for an artist’s studio, and for radio and recording studios (**в радиостúдии/в стúдии** звукозаписи), whereas **на** is used with film studios (фильм дублирован **на киностúдии** ‘The film has been dubbed at the film studio’).

(18) Суд

В суде́ means ‘in the court-room’: **В суде́** сегодня многолюдно ‘The court-room is crowded today’; **в/на суде́** ‘at the trial’.

(19) У́хо

На́ ухо is the norm: шепну́ть **на́ ухо** ‘to whisper in someone’s ear’. **В у́хо** may be used to emphasize directed sound: шепну́ть прямо **в у́хо** ‘to whisper directly into someone’s ear’.

(20) Ша́хта

В ша́хте means ‘down the mine’, **на ша́хте** ‘at the mine/colliery’.

411 Special uses of с + genitive

(1) The nouns enumerated in **410** combine with:

(i) **В/на** + accusative to denote direction:

Шахтёр спусти́лся **в шахту**
The miner went down the mine

Она́ подхвати́ла ребёнка **на руки**
She gathered the child up in her arms

(ii) **Из/с** + genitive to denote withdrawal:

Монета́ вы́пала **из её рук**
The coin fell from her hands

Он упáл **с большо́й высоты́**
He fell from a great height

(2) Some nouns combine only with **с** + genitive to denote withdrawal, even where location is expressed by **в** + prepositional: cf.

Самолёт **в во́здухе**
The aircraft is in the air

Самолёт **с (not из!) во́здуха** заме́тил те́рпящих бе́дствие
The aircraft spotted the victims of the disaster from the air

Compare also

с горы́	downhill
со двора́	from the yard
с моря́	from the sea
с неба́	from the sky
с поля́/поле́й	from the field/fields

412 Uses of в and на when the dependent noun denotes an activity, event

(1) **На** combines with the prepositional of nouns which denote activities or events: **на войне́** ‘at the war’, **на концерте́** ‘at a concert’, **на матче́** ‘at a match’, **на рабо́те** ‘at work’, **на сва́дьбе** ‘at a wedding’, **на собра́нии** ‘at a meeting’, **на уро́ке** ‘at the lesson’.

(2) **На** + accusative/c + genitive denote, respectively, movement towards and withdrawal from these activities, thus

Иду́ на рабо́ту	I am going to work
Иду́ домо́й с рабо́ты	I am going home from work

Note

В combines with nouns that denote a performance (a) if the performer is the subject of the verb (петь **в óпере** ‘to sing in an opera’) and (b) in references to the *content* of a work (**В э́той óпере** мно́го краси́вых а́рий ‘There are many beautiful arias in this opera’).

413 **В** and **На**: extension of the spatial meanings

A number of meanings of **в** and **на** can be regarded as extensions of the spatial meanings.

(1) **В** + prepositional

(i) ‘Covered in’:

Па́льцы у меня́ в цара́пинах	
My fingers are covered in scratches	

(ii) Distance:

В киломе́тре от ГЭС — большо́е о́зеро	
A large lake is situated a kilometre from the power station	

Он живёт в пяти́ мину́тах ходьбы́ от ста́нции	
He lives five minutes’ walk from the station	

Note

‘At what distance?’ is rendered as **на како́м расто́янии?** (See 415 (2) for **за** + accusative in the meaning of distance.)

(iii) A group to which the subject belongs:

Он в гостя́х	He is on a visit
остава́ться в живы́х	to survive

Note

The idea of plurality in phrases of this type is often an abstraction, since **в гостя́х**, for example, can be used even if the subject is the only guest (cf. also идти́ **в го́сти** ‘to go visiting’).

(iv) Various physical states:

в её прису́тствии	in her presence (cf. в её отсу́тствии ‘in her absence’)
в пу́ти	<i>en route</i>
в хоро́шем состо́янии	in good condition

(v) Various mental states:

Он в востóрге	He is delighted
Она́ в хоро́шем настроéнии	She is in a good mood

Note

The phrase **в са́мом де́ле** implies confirmation (Он говори́т, что он кита́ец, и **в са́мом де́ле** он кита́ец ‘He says he is Chinese, and he **really is** Chinese’), while **на са́мом де́ле** implies contrast (на вид такие ми́лые, а **на са́мом де́ле** злы́е ‘seemingly so nice, but **in fact** spiteful’).

(2) На + prepositional

На + prepositional is used in a number of phrases:

ката́ться на конька́х	to skate
ходи́ть на лы́жах	to ski
рука́ на пере́вязи	an arm in a sling

including some which denote state:

на во́ле/свобо́де	at liberty
быть на пен́сии	to be on a pension, retired
на второ́й/тре́тьей ско́рости	in second, third gear
на ра́нней ста́дии	at an early stage

Prepositions that Denote the Position of an Object in Relation to Another Object (Behind, in Front of, Below, on Top of etc.), or Movement to or from that Position

414 За + instrumental/accusative, из-за + genitive

(1) За + instrumental

(i) **За** + instrumental means ‘behind, on the other side of, beyond’ etc.:

за дóмом	behind the house
за мостóм	on the other side of the bridge
за рекóй	beyond the river

Note

Сзàди and **позади́** + genitive are synonymous with **за** + instrumental in the meaning ‘behind’: **сзàди, позади́** дóма ‘behind the house’. **Сзàди меня́** ‘behind me’ lacks the idea of close proximity that adheres to **за мной**.

(ii) The following phrases are particularly common:

за бóртом	overboard
за́ городом	in the suburbs, in the country
за гра́ницей	abroad
за двéрью	behind, outside the door
за окнóм	outside the window (from the inside), inside the window (from the outside)
за рулём	at the wheel
за столóм	at the table (also за обéдом ‘at lunch’ etc.)
за углóм	round the corner

Note also **за́мужем** ‘married’ (of a woman): **Она́ за́мужем** за ру́ским ‘She is married to a Russian’.

(2) **За** + accusative

За + accusative is used to denote movement to these positions:

поéхать	за́ город	to drive out of town
éхать	за гра́ницу	to go abroad
спря́таться	за дверь	to hide behind the door
сесть	за стол	to sit down at the table
зайти́	за́ угол	to go round the corner

Note also **за́муж**: **Она́ вы́шла за́муж** за актёра ‘She married an actor’.

(3) **Из-за** + genitive

Из-за + genitive denotes withdrawal from these positions:

Он верну́лся	из-за гра́ницы	He returned from abroad
Она́ встáла	из-за столá	She got up from the table
Они́ показáлись	из-за угла́	They appeared round the corner

415 За + instrumental/accusative: extension of the spatial meanings

Other spatial meanings of **за** are as follows:

(1) **за** + instrumental

(i) Sequence:

Самолёты взлетели **один за другим**
The aircraft took off one after the other

(ii) An object followed or pursued:

гнаться	за мячом	to chase the ball
охотиться	за тигром	to hunt a tiger (for the zoo, cf. охотиться на тигра 'to hunt (to kill) a tiger')
слéдовать	за экскурсоводом	to follow the guide

(iii) Occupation with an activity:

проводить вечер **за игрой** to spend the evening playing

(2) **За** + accusative

За + accusative may denote distance from a point:

За пять километров отсюда сегодня свадьба
There is a wedding today five kilometres from here

Note

В пяти километрах could also be used here (see **413** (1) (ii)), but only **за** is possible:

(a) When movement to a goal is implied:

бежать **за восемь километров** домой
to run eight kilometres home

(b) When **за** combines with **до** to distinguish two spatial points:

За пятьсот метров **до** финиша подтянулся англичанин
Five hundred metres from the finish the Englishman rallied

(c) When distance is expressed in terms of **дверь** 'door', **дом** 'house', **квартал** 'block':

За два дома до этого угла в 20-е годы было общежитие (Рапова)

There was a hostel two doors down from this corner in the 1920s

416 Перед + instrumental, вперёд + genitive

(1) **Перед** means ‘in front of’:

перед домом in front of the house

Note

(a) Unlike **за**, **перед** cannot take the accusative to denote movement to a position, cf. Он повесил пальто **за дверь** ‘He hung the coat behind the door’, but Он поставил миску **перед собой** ‘He put the bowl in front of him’.

(b) Note figurative usage: **Перед нами** большая задача ‘A major task faces us’.

(2) **Вперёд** + genitive ‘in front of, ahead of’ is usually associated with animate nouns or moving objects: ехать **вперёд автобуса** ‘to drive ahead of the bus’. Unlike **перед**, it does not imply closeness: Дети бежали **далеко вперёд взрослых** ‘The children were running far ahead of the adults’.

417 Под + instrumental/accusative, из-под + genitive

(1) **Под** + instrumental

(i) The central meaning of **под** is ‘under’:

плавать под водой	to swim under water
стоять под мостом	to stand under the bridge
под мышкой	under one’s arm
поле под рожью	a field under rye

Note the phrases

под носом, под рукой	near by, close at hand
под горой	at the bottom of the hill
под дождём	in the rain
под потолком	from the ceiling (Лампы висят под потолком ‘The lamps hang from the ceiling’)

(ii) **Под** also denotes proximity to towns:

бои **под Москвой** the battles near Moscow

(iii) **Под углом** means ‘at an angle’:

Улица выходила **под углом** к трамвайной остановке
The street went off at an angle to the tram stop

(iv) **Под** is also used figuratively: **под арестом, влиянием, давлением, контролем, угрозой** ‘under arrest, the influence, pressure, control, threat’, cf.:

Эксперименты проводятся **под руководством** учёных
The experiments are carried out under the guidance of scientists

Note

Что вы понимаете под этим словом? ‘What do you understand by this word?’

(2) **Под** + accusative

Под + the accusative denotes:

(i) Movement to a position underneath something:

Они сели под дерево	They sat down under a tree
Он спрятал руки под стол	He hid his hands under the table

Compare also the phrases

спускаться под гору (= с горы)	to go downhill
Она попала под дождь	She got caught in the rain
обработать поле под пшеницу	to put a field under wheat

(ii) Movement to a position near (a town):

Мы переехали под Санкт-Петербург	We moved to near St Petersburg
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(iii) Transfer to a state:

ставить под угрозу	to place under threat
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(3) **Из-под** + genitive

(i) **Из-под** means ‘from underneath, from near’ (a town):

Он вь́лез **из-под** столá

He climbed out from under the table

Он верну́лся **из-под** Ростóва

He has returned from near Rostov

(ii) It is also used figuratively:

Маши́на вь́шла **из-под** контро́ля

The car went out of control

Она́ вь́шла **из-под** его́ влия́ния

She escaped from his influence

418 Над + instrumental, пове́рх + genitive

(1) **Над** means ‘over, above’:

над голово́й
overhead

Самолёт летит **над** го́родом
The aircraft is flying over the town

над у́ровнем мо́ря
above sea level

Note

- (a) Unlike **под** (see 417 (2)(i)), **над** does *not* take the accusative to denote movement to a position: Повеси́ли ла́мпу **над** столóм ‘They hung the lamp over the table’.
- (b) **Над** is also used figuratively: побе́да **над** фаши́змом ‘victory over Fascism’, рабо́тать **над** рома́ном ‘to work on a novel’, сжа́литься **над** сирото́й ‘to take pity on an orphan’, смея́ться **над** дурако́м ‘to laugh at a fool’, суд **над** Э́йхманом ‘the trial of Eichmann’.

(2) **Пове́рх** means ‘over, over the top of, on top of’: смотре́ть **пове́рх** очко́в ‘to look over the top of one’s spectacles’, Он надел свите́р **пове́рх** руба́шки ‘He put his sweater on over his shirt’.

419 Ме́жду + instrumental, среди́, посреди́, напра́тив, прòтив, вдóль, вне́, внутри́, вну́тръ, вокру́г, мй́мо + genitive

(1) Ме́жду/среди́

(i) **Между** means ‘between’

между магази́ном и доро́гой
between the shop and the road

Между дома́ми есть забор
There is a fence between the houses

между на́ми
between you and me

Note

Между governs the instrumental singular and the instrumental or (less frequently) *genitive* plural (**между дере́вьями/дере́вьев** ‘between the trees’); the *genitive* is found mainly in poetic speech and idiomatic phrases (**между двух огнёй** ‘between the devil and the deep blue sea’, **читать между строк** ‘to read between the lines’).

(ii) **Среди/посреди́** means ‘in the middle’ (of an area):

Среди/посреди́ поля стоя́ло не́сколько кусто́в
In the middle of the field stood several bushes

Note

Среди́ (but *not* **посреди́**) can also mean ‘among, surrounded by’:

Среди́ дере́вьев стои́т дом
A house stands among the trees

(2) **Напроти́в/проти́в**

Напроти́в/проти́в mean ‘opposite’, combining with verbs of state *and* movement:

Я живу́ **напроти́в/проти́в** заво́да
I live opposite the factory

Кре́сло поста́влю **напроти́в/проти́в** телеви́зора
I shall put the chair opposite the TV set

Note

Проти́в (but not **напроти́в**) also has the meaning ‘against, opposed to’: **идти́ проти́в ве́тра** ‘to walk into the wind’, **плыть проти́в тече́ния** ‘to swim against the current’, **проти́в часовой́ стрелки́** ‘anti-clockwise’.

(3) **Вдо́ль, вне́, внутри́, вну́брь, вокру́г, мимо́**

(i) **Вдо́ль** means ‘along, alongside’:

идти **вдоль шоссе**

to walk alongside the highway (cf. ехать **по шоссе** ‘to drive **along** the highway’)

Вдоль забора посажены деревья

Trees are planted along(side) the fence

Note

See also 424 (1) (d) for **вдоль** in the meaning ‘along the surface of’.

(ii) **Вне** means ‘outside’:

Часть дня он проводит **вне дома**

He spends part of the day outside the house

Note

Figurative usage: **вне опасности, очереди** ‘out of danger, out of turn’.

(iii) **Внутри** and its directional counterpart **внутрь** mean ‘inside’:

внутри города

inside the town

проникать **внутрь помещения**

to penetrate inside the building

(iv) **Вокруг** means ‘round’:

Земля вращается **вокруг**
своей оси

the Earth rotates round its axis

Они сидели **вокруг стола**

They sat round the table

(v) **Мимо** means ‘past’:

идти **мимо дома**

to go past the house

Prepositions that Denote Spatial Closeness to an Object, Movement Towards or Away from an Object, or Distance from an Object

420 У + genitive, к + dative, от + genitive

(1) У + genitive case

(i) The central meaning of у + genitive is ‘at, by, near’ an object:

остановиться у **самой двери**

to stop right by the door

сидеть у **окна**

to sit by the window

Note

- (a) For prepositions denoting proximity to a *person*, see **421**.
 (b) Figurative usage: **БЫТЬ у власти** ‘to be in power’.

(ii) **У** also means ‘at the house of, with, at’ (the doctor’s etc.):

Она отдыхает **у сестры́** в деревне
 She is relaxing at her sister’s place in the country

Сегодня́ Саша был **у врача́**
 Today Sasha was at the doctor’s

у нас
 at our place, in our country

(2) **К** + dative case

(i) **К** is used in the meaning ‘towards’ (a place), ‘to see’ (a person):

Я побежал к вы́ходу	I ran towards the exit
Она́ идёт к го́роду	She is going towards the town (cf. идти́ по направле́нию к го́роду, в направле́нии го́рода/к го́роду ‘to walk in the direction of the town’)
Он пошёл к врачу́	He has gone to see the doctor

Note

- (a) Он пришёл **к власти́** ‘He came to power’, путь **к сча́стью** ‘the path to happiness’.
 (b) **Идти́ навстрéчу дру́гу** ‘to go to meet a friend’, and figurative usage: **идти́ навстрéчу всем опа́сностям** ‘to face up to all kinds of dangers’.

(ii) **К** can also denote bodily attitude:

Я стоя́л бо́ком к мосту́	I stood sideways on to the bridge
Он сиде́л спиной ко мне	He sat with his back to me

(3) **От** + genitive case

The central meaning of **от** is ‘away from’:

Он шёл от реки́	He was walking away from the river (cf. Он шёл со стороны́ реки́ ‘He was walking from the direction of the river’)
Она́ ушла́ от му́жа	She left her husband

421 Близ, близко от, возле, недалёко от, неподалёку от, около, подле + genitive; близко к, ближе к + dative; рядом с + instrumental

Of these prepositions, *подле* ‘beside’ is rarely used, while **близ, возле** and **около** ‘near, close to’ are commonly used to denote proximity to a person or an object:

близ/возле/около дома near the house

Note

- (a) **Возле** may imply *greater* proximity: Он живёт **возле нас** ‘He lives very near us’. Additional emphasis may be imparted by the pronoun **самый**: **возле самого леса** ‘hard by the forest’.
- (b) **Около** ‘near’ expresses a greater degree of proximity than **недалёко от** ‘not far from’. **Неподалёку** is more colloquial than **недалёко**.
- (c) **Близко от** ‘close to’ is used to denote passage at close quarters, as well as close location: Птица пролетела **близко от него** ‘The bird flew past very close to him’.
- (d) **Рядом с** means ‘next to, next door to’: Дом **рядом с** парком ‘The house is next to the park’.
- (e) **Близко/ближе к** denote direction towards: Он подошёл **близко/ближе к** дому ‘He went up close/closer to the house’.
- (f) For **под** + instrumental/accusative and **из-под** + genitive in meaning of proximity see **417** (1) (ii), (2) (ii), (3) (i).

422 При + prepositional

При + prepositional:

- (i) combines with the following nouns in the meaning of proximity: **вход/въезд** ‘entrance’, **выход** ‘exit’, **дорога** ‘road’:

Дача стояла **при дороге**
The country cottage stood at the roadside

повесить объявление **при входе**
to hang a notice at the entrance

поставить часовых **при въезде** в туннель
to post sentries at the entrance to the tunnel

(ii) combines with the names of the sites of battles: **бйтва при Сталинграде** ‘the battle of Stalingrad’ (cf. **бой за Великобританию** ‘the Battle of Britain’).

(iii) denotes attachment: **При университете** есть поликлиника ‘There is a polyclinic attached to the university’, **прачечная при общежитии** ‘a laundry attached to the residence’.

423 Вдали от, далеко от, подальше от + genitive

Both **вдали от** and **далеко от** mean ‘far from’: **вдали/далеко от родного города** ‘far from one’s home town’. However, **вдали от** never denotes movement: Он отошёл **далеко от** (but not **вдали от**) деревни ‘He moved far away from the village’. ((**По**)**дальше от**, however, is used in such contexts: Сел **подальше от** окна ‘He sat down a little further away from the window’.)

See also **413** (1) (ii) and **415** (2) (**в** + prepositional, **за** + accusative, **на** + prepositional in the meaning of distance).

Prepositions that Denote Along, Across, Through a Spatial Area

424 По + dative; через, сквозь + accusative; поперёк, вглубь, вдоль + genitive

(1) **По** means ‘over the surface/along/up/down’ etc.:

идти **по берегу**
to walk along the shore

плыть вверх **по течению**
to sail upstream

Капли дождя стекают **по стеклу**
Raindrops stream down the pane

По коридору мать прошла на кухню
Mother proceeded down the corridor to the kitchen

Note

(a) Movement may be in more than one direction: кататься **по кругу**

- ‘to skate in a circle’, Меня возíли **по всей Болгáрии** ‘I was driven all over Bulgaria’.
- (b) The distinction between **идти** по улице ‘to walk down the street’ and **ходить** по улице ‘to walk up and down the street’ (see also **320** and **322** (2)).
- (c) **По** may also denote location at or movement to various points in space: Пéрепись населéния провeли **по всем населённым пúнктам** ‘The census was carried out throughout all populated areas’, Весь день я ходил **по магази́нам** ‘I spent all day walking round the shops’.
- (d) In combination with **доро́га** ‘road’, **у́лица** ‘street’ and nouns that denote other lines of progress (**бе́рег** ‘shore’, **опу́шка** ‘outskirts’ etc.), **по** + dative is synonymous with the instrumental or **вдо́ль** + genitive: **идти по бе́регу/бе́регом/вдо́ль бе́рега**.
- (e) Either **по** or **через** may be used to denote movement across an inhabited area: проéхать **по всей Москвe/через всю Москвú** ‘to travel right across Moscow’ (**через** implies crossing and emerging from the other side of the city).
- (2) The central meaning of **через** is ‘through’, ‘across’, ‘from one side to the other’ (often with a verb prefixed **пере-**: **перебежа́ть** через доро́гу ‘to run across the road’), ‘over’, ‘via’:

В шко́лу мы ходи́ли через лес
We used to go to school through the forest

Он переле́з через забóр
He climbed over the fence

éхать в Ки́ев через Москвú
to travel to Kiev via Moscow

мост через ре́ку
a bridge over the river

Note

- (a) **Через** implies a direction or destination and therefore does not combine with verbs such as **броди́ть** ‘to roam’, **гуля́ть** ‘to stroll’, **по** + dative being preferred: мы гуля́ли **по лесу** ‘we were strolling through the forest’.
- (b) **Через** in the meaning ‘across’ is not normally repeated within a sentence, thus: Маши́ны **переезжа́ют через ре́ку, по краси́вому мосту́** ‘The cars drive across the river over a handsome bridge’

(cf., used in isolation, synonymous **идти́ через мост** and **идти́ по мосту́** ‘to walk across a bridge’)

(c) **Через** may also denote:

- (i) A spatial interval: **Через два дома́ живёт её дочь** ‘Her daughter lives two doors down’, **Километров через пять нашли́ скалу́** ‘Some five kilometres on they found the rock’.
- (ii) A recurrent interval: **через правильные промежутки** ‘at regular intervals’, **спотыкаться через каждые два шага́** ‘to stumble at every two paces’, **печатать через строчку** ‘to type double-spaced’.
- (iii) An intermediary: **разговаривать через переводчика́** ‘to converse through an interpreter’.

(3) **Сквозь** implies difficulty of accomplishment, resistance etc.:

смотреть **сквозь щель**
to peer through a crack

Сквозь крышу́ протекала вода́
Water was leaking through the roof

пробираться **сквозь толпу́**
to push one’s way through the crowd

Note

- (a) **Через** in such contexts implies less resistance in passing through: **Лучи́ солнца́ проникали **сквозь/через** листьву́** ‘The rays of the sun were penetrating/passing through the foliage’.
- (b) Only **сквозь** (*not* **через**) is possible with a noun that denotes a climatic feature: **Солнце́ пробивало́сь **сквозь метель/туман/тучу́**** ‘The sun was forcing its way through the snow storm/mist/cloud’.
- (c) Figurative usage: **смотреть **сквозь пальцы́** на что́-нибудь** ‘to turn a blind eye to something’.

(4) **Поперёк** means ‘transversely across, athwart, crosswise’:

лечь **поперёк постели́**
to lie across the bed

Грузови́к сто́ял **поперёк доро́ги** и тормозил движе́ние
The lorry was blocking the road, impeding the traffic

(5) **Вглубь** means ‘deep into’:

вглубь лесов into the heart of the forest

вглубь материка́ inland

Prepositions that Denote Spatial Limit

425 До + genitive, по + accusative

(1) **До** + genitive means ‘as far as’: Автобус идёт только **до Арбата́** ‘The bus only goes as far as the Arbat’.

(2) **По** + accusative denotes the limit of an action or process, up to and including a point in space represented by:

(i) A part of the body:

обнажённая **по локоть** рука́
an arm bared to the elbow

Он вошёл в воду **по пояс**
He waded into the water up to his waist

(ii) Other spatial points:

дома́, **по окна́** занесённые снегом
houses buried up to the windows in snow

Note the idioms **занят по горло́** ‘up to one’s eyes in work’, **сыт по горло́** ‘fed up to the back teeth’, **влюбляться по уши́** ‘to fall madly in love’, **по уши́ в долгах́** ‘up to the ears in debt’.

Temporal Prepositions

426 Telling the time

The question **В котóром часу́?/Во ско́лько?** ‘At what time?’ is answered as follows:

(1) **В** + accusative on the hour and up to the half-hour:

в час/два часа́ . . .	at one o’clock/two o’clock . . .
в пять мину́т шестóго	at five past five
в полдень/в полночь	at midday/midnight

(2) **В** + prepositional on the half-hour:

в половине первого at half past twelve (colloquially
в полпервого)

(3) **By без** + genitive after the half-hour:

без пяти пять at five to five

Note

- (a) **В** + prepositional and **около** are used to denote approximate time: **в восьмом часу** ‘between seven and eight’, **в начале девятого** ‘just after eight’, **около двух часов** ‘at about two o’clock’.
- (b) In colloquial Russian, prepositions may be juxtaposed: **До какого часа вы работаете сегодня? До без четверти восемь** ‘What time do you work until today?’ ‘Until a quarter to eight’.
- (c) **В** + accusative is usual in phrases with **миг/мгновение** (**в последний миг/в последнее мгновение** ‘at the last instant’), **минута** (**в последнюю минуту** ‘at the last minute’, **в последние минуты** ‘in the final minutes’), **момент** (**в последний момент** ‘at the last moment’) and **час** (**в поздний час** ‘at a late hour’).
- (d) However, **на** + prepositional is used in sporting contexts: **На шестой минуте** польская команда открыла счёт ‘The Polish team opened the score in the sixth minute’, **на первых/последних минутах** матча ‘in the opening, closing minutes of the match’. Compare similar usage in chess: **Партия завершилась на 16-м ходу** ‘The game finished at the 16th move’.

See 206 for a detailed account of how to tell the time.

427 Days

(1) **В** combines with the accusative of **день** and the days of the week:

в какой день/в какие дни?	on what day/on what days?
в понедельник, во вторник	on Monday, on Tuesday
в среду, в четверг, в пятницу	on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
в субботу, в воскресенье	on Saturday, Sunday
в этот, прошлый, будущий понедельник	this, last, next Monday

(2) While **в** is used with days qualified by **первый** (**в первый день/в первые сутки** ‘on the first day’), **на** + accusative is used with ordinal numerals above **первый** (**на третий день/третьи сутки** ‘on the third day’, **на второй день** после отъезда ‘on the second day after

leaving’), and with **друго́й, сле́дующий**: **на друго́й/сле́дующий** день ‘on the next day’ (cf. **в друго́й** день ‘on **another** day’).

(3) **По** combines with the dative plural to denote recurrent points in time: **по среда́м** ‘on Wednesdays’, **по суббо́там у́тром** ‘on Saturday mornings’.

Note

- (a) **День** itself is used in this meaning only in certain phrases: **по чётным/нечётным дням** ‘on even/odd days’ etc.
- (b) An alternative construction with **в** + accusative plural is possible in certain combinations: **по будням/в будни** ‘on weekdays’, **по выходным дням/в выходные дни** ‘on days off’ **по пра́зднакам/в пра́здники** ‘on holidays’. In some expressions only **в** + accusative is possible: **в обы́чные дни** ‘on normal days’.
- (c) **По** + dative plural also indicates temporal continuity: **по це́лым часа́м/дням** ‘for hours/days on end’ (also **це́лыми дня́ми/часа́ми**).

428 Parts of a day

(1) Nouns that denote part of a day (**у́тро** ‘morning’ etc.) usually appear in the instrumental: **у́тром** ‘in the morning’ etc. (but **пять часо́в утра́** ‘five o’clock in the morning’; see **97** (2) (i) and **206** (1) (ii)).

(2) However, **в** + accusative is used with nouns denoting parts of a day which are qualified by pronouns or adjectives (including **пе́рвый** ‘first’): **в пе́рвый/последний ве́чер** ‘on the first/the last evening’, **в ту ночь** ‘that night’, **в это́ воскресе́ное у́тро** ‘on that Sunday morning’.

(3) When nouns which denote part of a day are qualified by **друго́й/сле́дующий** or ordinals above **пе́рвый**, however, they combine with **на** + accusative: **на сле́дующий ве́чер/сле́дующую ночь/друго́е у́тро/тре́тье у́тро** ‘on the next evening/the next night/the next morning/the third morning’.

(4) **По** + dative plural denotes recurrent points in time: **по вечера́м/ноча́м/утра́м** ‘in the evenings/at nights/in the mornings’; **по нача́м он не спит** ‘he doesn’t sleep at nights’.

Note

В сýмки/сýмерках ‘at dusk’, but **на восхо́де** ‘at sunrise’, **на заката́** ‘at sunset’, **на за́ре/рассвете́** ‘at dawn’.

429 Weeks, months, years and centuries

(1) **На** combines with the prepositional of **неделя** ‘week’:

на этой, прошлой,	this, last, next week
будущей неделе	

(2) **В** combines with the prepositional of:

(i) **Месяц** ‘month’ and the names of calendar months:

в январé, февралé мартé . . .	in January, February, March . . .
в éтом, прошлом,	this, last, next month
будущем мéсяце	

Note

- (a) All names of months are masculine and are spelt with a small letter. The six months from **сентябрь** ‘September’ through to **февраль** ‘February’ take end stress in declension: **в сентябрé** ‘in September’ etc. The other six, from **март** to **август**, have fixed stress in declension.
- (b) ‘This March, last April, next December’ are rendered as **в мартé этого гóда, в апрéле прошлого гóда, в декабрé будущего гóда**.
- (c) The use of **на** + prepositional in contexts relating to pregnancy: Он оставил её **на седьмом мéсяце** беременности ‘He abandoned her in the seventh month of her pregnancy’.
- (d) The use of consecutive dates in **ночь с 11-го на 12-е января** ‘the night of 11 January’.

(ii) **Год** ‘year’:

в éтом, прошлом, будущем	this, last, next year
годú	
в тýсяча девятьсóт	in 1998
девяно́сто восьмо́м годú	
в двухты́сячном годú	in the year 2000

Note

- (a) **В слéдующем годú** is also used, especially with a reference point in the past: **В слéдующем годú** овладéли частью Финля́ндии ‘In

the following year they captured part of Finland’.

- (b) The prepositional case is also used with years in the plural: **в 1920–1921 годах** ‘in 1920–1921’.
- (c) With decades, the accusative is preferred for processes extending over a period: **В 1960-е годы** здесь продавались русские книги ‘Russian books were sold here in the 1960s’. The prepositional is preferred for an event occurring at a point within a decade: **Магазин закрылся в 1970-х годах** ‘The shop closed in the 1970s’.

(iii) **Век/столетие** ‘century’ and **тысячелетие** ‘millennium’:

в этом, прошлом,	this, last, next century
будущем веке/столетии	
в XX (двадцатом) веке	in the twentieth century
в третьем тысячелетии	in the third millennium

Note

- (a) When qualified by modifiers other than **этот, прошлый, будущий**, **в** combines with the accusative of **неделя, месяц, год**: **в первую, последнюю неделю** ‘in the first, the last week’, **в первые недели осени** ‘in the first weeks of autumn’, **в первый месяц курса** ‘in the first month of the course’, **в первый/последний год войны** ‘in the first/last year of the war’, **в год рождения** ‘in the year of my birth’, **в послевоенные годы** ‘in the post-war years’. (This also applies to the seasons, cf. **осенью, зимой** ‘in the autumn, winter’ but **в ту осень** ‘that autumn’, **в трудную зиму** ‘in a difficult winter’.)
- (b) With ordinal numerals above **первый**, **на** + accusative is the norm: **на четвертый месяц** ‘in the fourth month’, **на вторую неделю** ‘in the second week’, **на четвертый год** ‘in the fourth year’ (but **на четвертом году** перестройки ‘in the fourth year of restructuring’, where reference is to a stage in a process).

430 General time words

В governs the accusative case of nouns which denote time in general or an indefinite period of time (**век** ‘age’, **время** ‘time’, **эпоха** ‘epoch’ etc.):

в а́томный век/сре́дние века́	in the atomic age/the middle ages
в ми́рное вре́мя	in peace time
во времена́ Петра́ I	during the time of Peter I
в пери́од социализма́	under socialism
в зи́мнюю пору́	in winter time
в зи́мний сезо́н	in the winter season (also в зи́мнем сезо́не)
в стари́ну	in the old days
в течéние	during the course of
в на́шу эпо́ху	in our era

Note

- (a) **Во вре́мя** is used with activities/events (**во вре́мя уро́ка** ‘during the lesson’), but *not* with words of time. **В течéние** can be used with either, thus: Репортажи бу́дем передава́ть **в течéние** всей конферен́ции ‘We shall be transmitting reports **throughout** the whole conference’, **в течéние** сле́дующих не́скольких неде́ль ‘during the next few weeks’.
- (b) **Во времена́** is used for the distant past: **во времена́** крепо́стного пра́ва ‘during serfdom’, **во времена́** Шекспі́ра (= при Шекспі́ре/при жи́зни Шекспі́ра) ‘in Shakespeare’s time’ (see 442 (2) for **при** in temporal meaning). **Во времена́** is preferred to **при** when the events are distant in time *and* (from a Russian viewpoint) location. Compare Росси́я европеизи́ровалась **при** **Петре́ Пёрвом/во времена́ Петра́ Пёрвого** ‘Russia was Europeanized in the reign of Peter the First’ (an event distant in time) and **Во времена́ Петра́ Пёрвого** А́нглия бы́ла вели́кой морско́й держа́вой ‘Britain was a great naval power during the time of Peter the First’ (a historical fact distant in time *and* location).
- (c) **В хо́де** is common in scientific and journalistic literature, combining with a noun that denotes a process: **в хо́де обсу́ждения** (= **в проце́ссе обсу́ждения/при обсу́ждении**) ‘during the discussion’.
- (d) **За** + accusative denotes the period during which an event occurs or events occur: Он встре́чал **за это́ вре́мя** не бо́лее 60 други́х автомоби́лей ‘During this period he encountered no more than 60 other cars’.
- (e) **На протя́жении** is used with longish periods of time: **на протя́жении не́скольких веко́в** ‘over the course of several centuries’.

431 Nouns that denote stages in a process

В is used in temporal meaning with the prepositional case of:

(1) The nouns **про́шлое** ‘past’, **насто́ящее** ‘present’, **бу́дущее** ‘future’:

в про́шлом, насто́ящем, бу́дущем in the past, present, future

(2) The nouns **коне́ц** ‘end’, **нача́ло** ‘beginning’, **сере́дина** ‘middle’:

в нача́ле, сере́дине, конце́ at the beginning, in the middle, at the end

Note the phrase **в конце́ конце́в** ‘eventually/in the end’.

(3) Nouns that denote stages in life:

в младе́нчестве, де́тстве in babyhood, childhood
в мо́лодости, ста́рости in youth, old age
в глубо́кой ста́рости at a ripe old age (but **на ста́рости лет** ‘in old age’)

Note

(a) **В во́зрасте** ‘at an age’: Приуча́ться к ко́фе **в её во́зрасте** нежелáтельно ‘It is undesirable to get used to drinking coffee at her age’. ‘At my age’ may be rendered as **в моём во́зрасте/в мо́й го́ды**. ‘At the age of seven’ is expressed as follows: **в во́зрасте семи́ лет/в семилéтнем во́зрасте/в семь лет/семи́ лет**.

(b) Use of **на** in Он **на 76-м годú** потеря́л зрèние ‘He lost his sight in his 76th year’, **на 6-м де́сятке** ‘in one’s fifties’, **на моём ве́ку** ‘in my lifetime’.

(4) Nouns that denote a stage in an activity or event:

в антра́кте, в перерыве́ in the interval, at break-time
в тре́тьем пери́оде in the third period (ice-hockey)
во второ́м тайме́ in the second half
в последнем ту́ре соревнова́ния in the final round of a competition

432 The weather

В + accusative is used to describe the weather:

в плохую погоду
in bad weather

Самолёты **в туман** прикованы к землё
In fog the aircraft are grounded

Note

Во время can also be used in more general meanings (**во время метели** ‘during the snowstorm’), cf. **в** + accusative with its implications of time and circumstance (**В метель** они сбились с пути ‘They lost their way in the snowstorm’). Nouns such as **жара** ‘heat’, **погода** ‘weather’, **холод** ‘cold’ combine only with **в** + accusative.

433 Festivals

The names of some festivals combine with **в** or **на** + accusative: **в/на Новый год** ‘at New Year’. **В** is commoner (**в Праздник Победы** ‘at the Victory Festival’, **в новогодний праздник** ‘at the new year festival’, **в майские праздники** ‘at the May festivities’), but **на** persists with religious festivals (**на Пасху** ‘at Easter’, **на Рождество** ‘at Christmas’).

The Use of Prepositions to Denote Action in Relation to Various Time Limits

434 The use of **с** + genitive, **до** + genitive/**по** + accusative to denote terminal points in time

(1) **С** + genitive denotes ‘since/from’ a point in time:

С субботы мы вместе	We have been together since Saturday
с давних пор	since time immemorial
с тех пор	since then

(Начиная) **с апреля** Венгрия перейдёт на летнее время
(With effect) from April Hungary will switch to summer time

Note

Со времени, со дня, с момента etc. combine with nouns that denote the names of activities or events:

Два десятилѣтия прошлѡ **со времени побѣды**
Two decades have passed **since the victory**

со дня новосѣлья
since the house-warming

с момѣнта получѣния вѣшего письмѧ
since receipt of your letter

Note also **со времѣн**: **со времѣн Ивѧна III** ‘since the time of Ivan III’.

(2) **До** means ‘until’:

ждать до вѣчера	to wait until evening
Я бѹду здѣсь (вплѡть)	I shall be here (right up) until
до пятѣ часѡв	five o’clock
до сих пор	up till now, hitherto

Note

‘Not until’ is rendered by **тѡлько** ‘only’: **тѡлько** пѡсле полѹночи ‘not until after midnight’.

(3) **По** + accusative means ‘up to and including’: **по шестѡе мѧя** (or **до шестѡго мѧя включѣтельно**) ‘up to and including 6 May’; **по сѣй дѣнь** ‘up to the present day’.

С and **до/по** denote the terminal limits of an action:

Он отдыхѧет **с 26 мѧрта до пѣрвого апрѣля**
He is on holiday from 26 March to 1 April (reporting back on 1 April)

Он отдыхѧет **с 26 мѧрта по пѣрвое апрѣля**
He is on holiday from 26 March to 1 April inclusive (reporting back on 2 April)

Note the phrases **со дня нѧ дѣнь** ‘any day now’, **с минѹты на минѹту** ‘any minute now’, **с чѧсу на чѧс** ‘any time now’.

435 Use of **к** + dative and **под** + accusative to denote temporal approach

(1) **К** + dative means ‘by’:

к концѹ недѣли	by the end of the week
к понедѣльнику	by Monday

(2) **Под** + accusative denotes:

(i) ‘Towards, approaching’ a time, in combination with **вечер** ‘evening’, **воскресенье** ‘Sunday’, **праздник** ‘festival’, **старость** ‘old age’, **утро** ‘morning’ etc.:

Он вернётся под вечер	He returned towards evening
под конец сентября	towards the end of September
Я встал под утро	I got up in the early hours

(ii) ‘On the eve of’ a holiday or festival (a synonym of **накануне** + genitive):

под Новый год	on New Year’s Eve
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436 Use of **в/за** + accusative to denote the time taken to complete an action

Both **в** and **за** + accusative denote the time taken to complete an action:

Смена паровозов была произведена **в две–три минуты** (Век)
The switch of locomotives was carried out in 2–3 minutes

Он окрасил кухню **за четыре дня**
He painted the kitchen in four days

Note

- (a) If the *duration* of an action is emphasized, *not* its completion, the accusative is used *without* a preposition: Он читал роман **четыре часа** ‘He read the novel for four hours’. Compare Он прочитал роман **за/в четыре дня** ‘He read the novel in four days’.
- (b) **За** is sometimes preferred to **в** in order to avoid possible ambiguity: Он составил доклад **за три часа** ‘He compiled the report in three hours’ (**в три часа** could mean ‘at three o’clock’).
- (c) **За** is also usually preferred when the time appears excessive in relation to the task: В электросварке **и за полгода** не разберёшься! (Kochetov) ‘You won’t get the hang of arc-welding even in six months!’.
- (d) **В** appears in the phrases: **в два счёта** ‘in two shakes’, **в мгновение ока** ‘in the twinkling of an eye’, **в считанные минуты** ‘in a few brief minutes’.

437 Use of **в** + accusative to denote the period during which an action occurs a stated number of times

В combines with the accusative of a time word to denote the period during which an action occurs a stated number of times:

Он **ѐздит** на **Кубу** He goes to Cuba 4 times a year
4 рѐза в год

438 Use of **на** + accusative to denote the time for which something has been arranged

На + accusative denotes the time for which an event has been arranged:

Собрѐние **назначено на седьмѐе мѐрта**
 The meeting has been arranged for 7 March

Отложѐть **на бѐдущую неделю**
 To postpone to next week

Note

- (a) Other verbs which appear in the construction include **заказѐть (на срѐду)** ‘to order’ (for Wednesday), **перенестѐи (на четврѐг)** ‘to carry over’ (till Thursday).
- (b) The elliptical construction **На десятое билѐтов ужѐ нет** ‘There are no tickets left for the tenth’.

439 Use of prepositions to denote sequence in time (before, after etc.)

(1) Prepositions denoting precedence in time

(i) **До** means (any time) ‘before’:

до войны before the war

(ii) **До** also combines with **за** + accusative where one event precedes another by a stated time interval:

Прѐверили **моторы за час до вьлѐта**
 They checked the engines an hour before take-off

Note also the adverb **задóлго**: **задóлго до войны** ‘long before the war’.

(iii) **Перед** means ‘just before’:

перед сном	before going to bed
переодéться перед ўжином	to change for (just before) dinner

Note

- (a) The noun can be qualified by **сáмый**: **перед сáмым отъёздом** ‘just prior to departure’.
- (b) The comparative **рáньше** is restricted to usage with animate nouns and nouns that denote deadlines: **Он пришёл рáньше меня, рáньше врéмени** ‘He arrived before me, ahead of time’.

(iv) **Назáд** + accusative ‘ago’ is now more commonly used than the pronoun + adverb formation **томú назáд**: **недéлю (томú) назáд** ‘a week ago’.

(2) Prepositions denoting subsequent action

(i) **Пóсле, через**

Пóсле means ‘after’ an event (**пóсле заня́тий** ‘after lessons’), while **через** is used with words of **time** to denote ‘after the expiry of/in/later’, with reference to the past, present or future:

Начнём через час	We shall begin in an hour’s time
Мы начали через час	We began an hour later

Note

- (a) The preposition must not be separated from its noun: **мéнее, чем через час** ‘in less than an hour’s time’ (or ‘less than an hour later’).
- (b) **По истечéнии** ‘on expiry of’ is synonymous with **через** in this meaning. Compare **спустя́**, which combines mainly with past tense verbs: **Он ўмер спустя́ мéсяц/мéсяц спустя́** ‘He died a month later’.
- (c) **Пóсле** replaces **через** when the time word is extended by a genitive: **через год** ‘after a year’, but **пóсле гóда разлúки** ‘after a year’s separation’.

Both **через** and **пóсле** are used in constructions which denote the temporal relationship of sequential events:

Через восемь дней после Рождества наши начали наступление
Our lads went on the offensive eight days after Christmas

Note

- (a) **Через** is *optional* in such contexts (cf. **за . . . до** (1) (ii) above, where **за** is *compulsory*).
- (b) **Спустя** may replace **через** in such constructions: **спустя 8 дней/8 дней спустя после Рождества**.

Через is also used to denote a recurrent temporal interval:

Пароход останавливается здесь **через раз**
The steamer stops here every other time

Автобусы ходят **через каждые десять минут**
The buses run every ten minutes

(ii) **По + prepositional**

По + prepositional is synonymous with **после** in official and scientific styles, in combination with verbal and some other abstract nouns:

по возвращении (= после возвращения) домой	on returning home
по окончании университета	on graduating
по получении письма	on receipt of the letter
по приезде	on arrival
по его смерти	on his death

(iii) **За + instrumental**

За + instrumental denotes sequence in time:

год за годом, день за днём year after year, day after day

(iv) **В + accusative**

В + ordinal numeral + **раз** defines an event's place in a series:

Она голосует **в первый раз**
She is voting for the first time

(v) **На + accusative**

На + accusative is used to denote the time subsequent to the **completion** of an action:

Он **на́ год** поёхал за граи́цу
He has gone abroad for a year

Она́ прятала **на ле́то** зи́мние ве́щи
She would put her winter things away for the summer

Он встал с постёли **на 5 ми́нут**
He got out of bed for 5 minutes

Note

- (a) The accusative *without* a preposition denotes the time spent *performing* an action. Compare:

Он шёл в шкóлу **10 ми́нут**
He took 10 minutes to get to school

and

Он выключа́ет свет **на 10 ми́нут**
He puts the light out for 10 minutes

where the 10 minutes *follow the completion* of the action of putting out the light, and the result (darkness) is effective throughout that time. Intention is implied.

- (b) The accusative without a preposition is therefore used with durative verbs (**Я три неде́ли отды́хал** в Я́лте ‘I holidayed in Yalta for three weeks’ (time and action coincide)), while **на** + accusative is used with verbs that denote completed actions (**Пья́ниц сажа́ют в ка́меру на́ ночь** ‘Drunks are put in a cell for the night’ (the time is subsequent to the completion of the action)).

Note also the adverb **надо́лго**: Она́ уёхала **надо́лго** ‘She went away for a long time’.

440 Temporal prepositional phrases as attributes to nouns: за + accusative, от + genitive

- (1) **За** + accusative is used to denote a journal publication date:

«*Метáлл*» **за апрéль э́того го́да** the journal *Metall* for this
April

- (2) **От** + genitive denotes the date of a document:

письмо́ **от пе́рвого áвгуста** a letter of 1 August

441 Positioning an event within a time span: **среди** + genitive, **между** + instrumental

Среди denotes ‘in the middle of’: **среди но́чи** ‘in the middle of the night’ (note also **среди́ бела́ дня** ‘in broad daylight’). **Между** positions an event between two other events: **между двумя́ война́ми** ‘between two wars’, **он отды́хал ме́жду обе́дом и у́жином** ‘he relaxed between lunch and dinner’.

442 Coincidence in time: **при** + prepositional

При is used in a number of contexts denoting coincidence in time:

(1) ‘In the presence of’:

при свиде́телях in the presence of witnesses

(2) ‘In the (life-)time of’, ‘during’ (see **430** note (b)):

при жи́зни А́ни in Anya’s lifetime

при Ста́лине in Stalin’s time, under Stalin

(3) It governs:

(i) The nouns **вид**, **звук**, **мысль**, **сло́во/слова́**:

при ви́де Петро́ва (= **когда́** я уви́дел Петро́ва)
at the sight of Petrov (= **when** I saw Petrov)

при зву́ке звонка́
at the sound of the bell

Он содро́гнулся **при одно́й мы́сли** о пораже́нии
He shuddered at the mere thought of defeat

При э́тих слова́х она́ побледне́ла
She grew pale at these words

(ii) Nouns that denote a source of light:

Он чита́л **при све́те ла́мпы/при ла́мпе**
He was reading by the light of a lamp

(iii) The noun **возмо́жность** ‘opportunity’:

при ка́ждой/пе́рвой возмо́жности
at every/the first opportunity

(iv) Nouns denoting various types of state or circumstance:

при таких обстоятельствах
in the circumstances

при температурѣ тридцать градусов
at a temperature of thirty degrees

(v) Verbal and some other abstract nouns:

При взлёте уровень шумов достигал 112 децибел
On (= during) take-off engine noise reached 112 decibels

При перевозке мебели было разбито несколько стульев
Several chairs were broken during the move

(vi) Nouns that denote a social order:

при социализме	under socialism
при советской власти	under Soviet power
при этом режиме	under this regime

Note

При смерти ‘at death’s door’.

Other Meanings

443 Prepositions with causal meaning

The following prepositions are used to denote the cause of an action or state:

(1) **Из-за** + genitive/благодаря + dative

Из-за and **благодаря** are used when the cause of an action is *external* to the subject, **из-за** being preferred when the outcome is unfavourable and **благодаря** when it is favourable:

Поезд опоздал **из-за тумана**
The train was late because of the fog

Я провалился **из-за тебя**
I failed because of you

Благодаря вам я выжил
Thanks to you I survived

Note

The distinction between **из-за** and **благодаря́** is sometimes blurred, **благодаря́** being used on occasion as a synonym of **из-за**, in particular when the outcome is neutral from the subject's point of view.

(2) **От** + genitive in the meaning 'physical cause'

Phrases with **от** + genitive denote the physical cause of a state or process:

доро́га, мо́края от дождя́	a road wet with rain
боль от ожо́га	pain from a burn
Он у́мер от ра́ка	He died of cancer

(3) **От/из** + genitive in the meaning 'emotional cause'

Both **от** and **из** combine with nouns of feeling which provoke a reaction on the part of the subject:

(i) Phrases with **от** imply an **involuntary or spontaneous reaction**:

Он запла́кал от ра́дости	He wept with joy
Она́ дрожи́т от стра́ха	She is trembling with fear
Он покрасне́л от стыда́	He blushed with shame

(ii) Phrases with **из** denote that the feeling experienced motivates a **deliberate action** on the part of the subject:

уби́йство из ре́вности	murder motivated by jealousy
Он солга́л из стра́ха	He lied out of fear
Он отказа́лся из упря́мства	He refused out of obstinacy

(4) **От/с** + genitive

(i) **С** + genitive expresses causal meanings similar to those expressed by **от**. Often the prepositions are interchangeable when the dependent noun denotes:

(a) A feeling: пла́кать **от стра́ха/со стра́ха/со стра́ху** 'to weep with fear'.

(b) A physical sensation or state: умере́ть **от го́лода/с го́лоду** 'to starve to death'.

Note

In such examples the phrases in **с** incline towards the *colloquial*.

(ii) **С** + genitive is common in figurative usage: умирать **со скуки/со смеху** 'to die of boredom/laughing'.

(iii) It also appears in certain set expressions:

устать с дороги	to get tired from the journey
с непривычки	due to lack of practice
ни с того ни с сего	for no particular reason

(5) По + dative

Phrases with **по** + dative case express causal meaning:

(i) When the dependent noun itself is causal (**причина** 'cause' etc.):

По какому поводу вы об этом вспомнили?	What made you think of that?
по какой причине?	for what reason?
по финансовым соображениям	for financial considerations

(ii) When the dependent noun denotes handicaps or drawbacks associated with:

(a) Ill-health:

по болезни
due to sickness

По слабости здоровья он почти не покидает города
Because of poor health he hardly leaves the town

(b) Age or inexperience:

Сын **по молодости** не понимает её
Her son does not understand her because of his youth

Нигде уже не работал **по старости**
He had stopped working altogether due to old age

(c) Negative character traits:

Мальчик это сделал **по глупости**
The boy did this out of stupidity

Note

Из-за would be used, however, if there was a change in subject:

Из-за его глупости пострадали его друзья
His friends suffered because of his stupidity

(d) Error, ignorance:

По винé водителя происходит	Eight out of ten road accidents
8 из 10 авáрий	are caused by driver error
по ошйбке, недосмóтру	by mistake, due to an oversight

Note also брак **по расчёту** ‘marriage of convenience’.

(6) За + instrumental

(i) The spatial origins of the causal meanings of **за** + instrumental are evident in examples such as **За стéной** не вйдно ‘You can see nothing for the wall’ (lit. ‘behind the wall’).

(ii) **За** also combines with nouns that denote:

(a) Absence:

Лаборатóрия не рабóтает **за неимéнием** лаборáнта
The laboratory is not functioning for want of a laboratory assistant

Его оправдáли **за отсутствием** улик
He was acquitted for lack of evidence

(b) Worthlessness:

бросить **за негóдностью**
to discard as worthless

Прóдали **за ненáдобностью**
It was sold as surplus to requirements

Note also the compound causal prepositions **в результате** ‘as a result of’ and **вслéдствие** ‘in consequence of’. Both take the genitive case.

444 Prepositions that denote the object of feelings and attitudes

(1) К + dative

К is used to denote the object of many feelings and attitudes:

Она вéжлива	ко всем	She is polite	to everyone
Он добр	к живóтным	He is kind	to animals
интерéс	к этимолóгии	interest	in etymology
любóвь	к рóдине	love	for the homeland
относйться	к	to relate to, to	treat (someone)
презрéние	к врагú	scorn	for an enemy

Note

С + instrumental is used in certain combinations: Лára **вэжлива со всэми** 'Lara is polite to everyone' (cf. вэжлива ко всем, above), Я была с **ва́ми груба́** 'I was rude to you', Суд был **строг с** подсудимыми 'The court was hard on the defendants'. Compare **обра́щаться с** + instrumental 'to treat'.

(2) На + accusative

На + accusative denotes the object of anger and similar emotions:

Он негодова́л	на неё	He was indignant	with her
Я оби́делся	на его́ слова́	I took offence	at his words
Он серди́т/зол	на меня́	He is angry	with me
Я та́йла	на неё мно́го оби́д	I nursed many grudges	against her

(3) Перед + instrumental

Phrases with **перед** denote the object of feelings of guilt, duty, responsibility, fear, embarrassment, ingratiating, defiance etc.:

Я винова́т	перед ва́ми	I owe you an apology
долг	перед ро́диной	duty to the homeland
за́йскивать	перед нача́льником	to ingratiate oneself with the boss
Он извини́лся	перед ни́ми	He apologized to them
Отвеча́ю	перед роди́телями	I am responsible to the parents
страх	перед сме́ртью	fear of death
Ему́ сты́дно	перед са́ми́м собо́й	He is ashamed of himself

(4) По + dative

Phrases in **по** + dative denote the object of yearning, grieving etc.:

скупа́ть	по де́тям	to miss the children
тоска́	по ро́дине	homesickness
Она́ в тра́уре	по му́жу	She is in mourning for her husband

(First- and second-person pronouns appear in the *prepositional* case after such verbs: **скупа́ли по нас, вас** 'they missed us, you'. Third-person pronouns appear in the dative or prepositional.)

Note

The compound prepositions **в отноше́нии** + genitive, **по отноше́нию к:** щепети́льный **в отноше́нии** своих обяза́нностей/**по отноше́нию к** своим обяза́ностям 'punctilious **with respect to** his obligations'.

445 Prepositions that denote extent

Some prepositions denote extent in its various forms: the dimensions of an object, quantitative difference and so on.

(1) В + accusative

В + accusative is used to quantify a dimension:

(i) In terms of objects:

ка́бели толщи́ной **в ру́ку** cables the thickness of one's arm

(ii) In terms of conventional units of measurement:

река́ глуби́ной	в три ме́тра	a river	three metres deep
гора́ высотóй	в ты́сячу ме́тров	a mountain	1,000 metres high
площа́дь шири́ной	в пятьдеся́т ме́тров	a square	50 metres wide

Note

- The dimension word appears in the instrumental in such constructions, but questions about dimension are posed in the genitive: **Како́го он ро́ста?** 'How tall is he?'
- The dimension word can be omitted altogether where it is obvious which dimension is meant: турби́на (мо́щностью) **в двести ты́сяч ки́ловатт** 'a 200,000-kilowatt turbine', места́ (сто́имостью) **в се́мьдесят ру́блей** '70-rouble seats'.
- Conversely, **в** may be omitted where the dimension word is retained, especially in journalistic, colloquial and technical styles: гора́ высотóй (**в**) **пять ты́сяч ме́тров** 'a mountain 5,000 metres high'.

В + accusative is also used in comparative constructions with **раз**:

Его́ дом **в три ра́за** бо́льше моего́
His house is three times bigger than mine

(2) В + prepositional

(i) **В** governs the prepositional of nouns that denote extent, scale etc.:

в круп́ном масшта́бе	on a large scale
в како́й-то ме́ре	in some measure

Приро́да изу́чена **в тако́й стéпени**, что неожíданности вря́д ли возмо́жны

Nature has been studied to such a degree that surprises are hardly possible

(ii) In some constructions with **стéпень**, **в** and **до** are synonymous: **в/до некоторой стéпени** 'to a certain extent', **в/до такой стéпени** 'to such a degree', but **в** is preferred in the lower and comparative ranges: **в мáлой стéпени** 'to a small extent', **в бóльшей стéпени** 'to a greater extent', **в рáзной стéпени** 'to varying degrees'.

(3) До + genitive

(i) The central meaning of **до** is 'limit' or 'extent':

родители, имеющие человек детей	до пяти	parents having up to five children
накуриваться	до тошноты	to smoke to the point of nausea
доводить	до слёз	to reduce to tears

Note also the set expressions

Он промок нитки	до костей/до последней	He got soaked to the skin
Он эгоист	до мозга костей	He is an egoist to the core
в́шпить всё	до последней капли	to drain to the last drop
танцевать	до упа́ду	to dance till you drop

(ii) **До** also combines with **стéпень** (see (2) (ii) above).

(4) За + accusative

The preposition is used in constructions that denote excess:

Мороз уже	за тридцать	There are already over thirty degrees of frost
Бýло	за полночь	It was past midnight
Емý	за сорок	He is over forty
Давление перевалило атмосфер	за сто	The pressure exceeded 100 atmospheres

(5) На + accusative

На + accusative case denotes quantification:

(i) With comparatives (see also **182** (2) (i)):

Порядка + genitive denotes approximate numerical quantity:

Цены **порядка двадцати–тридцати долларов**
Prices of the order of 20–30 dollars

До ближайшей деревни **порядка пятидесяти километров**
(*Moskovskii komsomolets*)
It is about fifty kilometres to the nearest village

(8) С + accusative

С + accusative expresses many types of approximation (cf. (6)):

Он прожил там	с месяц	He spent about a month there
Он ростом	с сестру	He is about the same height as his sister
мина величиной	с тарелку	a mine about the size of a plate

446 Prepositions that denote purpose

Many prepositional phrases denote the purpose for which an action is performed or for which an object is designed:

(1) В + accusative

В + accusative appears in a number of phrases which denote the purpose of an action:

Он выступил	в защиту своих прав	He spoke up in defence of his rights
Я поднял обе руки	в знак примирения	I raised both arms as a token of reconciliation
Посадили дерево	в память о павших воинах	They planted a tree in memory of soldiers who fell in battle
Устроили приём	в честь отца	They arranged a reception in honour of father

(2) Для + genitive ‘meant for/designed for’

папка	для бумаг	a file for documents
общежитие	для студентов	a residence for students

Note

(a) **Для** can also govern a verbal noun: Учёные собрались **для**

обсуждения ряда вопросов (= чтобы обсудить ряд вопросов)
‘The scientists gathered for a discussion of a number of questions’.

- (b) The set phrases **для верности** ‘just to make sure’, **для вида** ‘for the sake of appearances’, **для разнообразия** ‘for a change’.

(3) За + accusative

За + accusative denotes the object of struggle, competition etc.:

бороться	за независимость	to struggle for independence
сравниваться	за высокие урожаи	to compete for high-yield harvests

(4) За + instrumental in the meaning ‘for/to fetch’

идти	за водой	to go	for water
Я зашёл	за своим другом	I called	for my friend
очередь	за хлебом	a queue	for bread

Note usage in abstract contexts: Он обратился ко мне **за советом/помощью** ‘He turned to me for advice/help’.

(5) На + accusative

На + accusative denotes:

- (i) A profession aspired to (constructions with **учиться**):

учиться на инженера to study to be an engineer

- (ii) A quality, the presence/evaluation of which is the object of testing:

испытывать новый шлем **на прочность**
to test a new helmet for strength

- (iii) The purpose of a precautionary measure (constructions with **случай**):

Она взяла с собой зонтик **на случай дождя**
She took an umbrella with her in case of rain

Note

На всякий случай ‘just in case/to be on the safe side’:

Спустился в овраг, **на всякий случай** с ножом в руке (Aitmatov)
He descended into the gully with a knife in his hand, just to be on the safe side

(6) О + prepositional

О + prepositional can denote the purpose of a request or plea:

крик, призыв о помощи a cry, an appeal for help
просьба о деньгах a request for money

(7) По + dative (constructions with **дело/дела́** ‘business’)

Éду в го́род **по делу/делам** I am going to town on business

(8) Под + accusative

Под + accusative denotes the function for which an area is designated:

Да́ли зе́млю **под огоро́ды**
They allocated land for market gardens

ко́мнаты, отве́дённы́е **под музéй**
rooms ear-marked for a museum

Note also **в интере́сах** ‘in the interests of’ and **в це́лях** ‘for the purpose of’ (both + genitive): **в це́лях** повыше́ния произво́дительно́сти тру́да ‘for the purpose of increasing labour productivity’ (cf. **с це́лью** ‘with the aim of’, which normally combines with a verbal noun or an infinitive).

447 Concessive meanings expressed by prepositions

(1) **Несмотря на** + accusative ‘despite’ is the commonest of the concessive prepositions:

Несмотря на плохую погóду, о́ни игра́ли в те́ннис
Despite the bad weather, they played tennis

(2) **Вопреки́** + dative ‘contrary to’, **незвирáя на** + accusative ‘despite, regardless of’, **напереко́р** + dative ‘in defiance of’ relate to more official styles: **вопреки́ прика́зу** ‘contrary to orders’.

(3) **При** may also be used with concessive meaning, especially in combination with **весь** ‘all’:

При всём своём тала́нте он не годíтся в ми́нистры
For all his talent he is not cut out to be a minister

При всём желáнии не мо́гу вам помо́чь
Much as I would like to I cannot help you

448 По + dative/accusative in distributive meaning

In distributive meanings **по** combines:

(1) With the dative of singular nouns:

Он дал ученикám **по учебнику**
He gave the pupils a book each

В 25% семéй бýло **по одному́ ребёнку**
25% of families had one child each

(2) With the accusative of two, three and four (also 200, 300 and 400):

Мы в́пили **по две ча́шки** We drank two cups each

(3) With the dative *or* accusative of other numerals, the dependent noun appearing in the *genitive plural*:

Нам да́ли **по пяти́/по пять тетра́дей**
They gave us five exercise books each

Note

The accusative, formerly confined mainly to colloquial styles, is now freely used in written styles also:

За столáми сидéло **по дéсять студéнтов**
At each of the tables sat ten students

Рабо́тают **по семь часóв** в день
They work seven hours a day

Тро́йм из них бýло **по трина́дцать** (Marinina)
Three of them were thirteen years old

(4) Indefinite numerals are found in either case:

Э́ти слова́ имéют **по нéсколько/нэско́лку** значéний
These words have several meanings each

Note

A distributive phrase in **по** may function as:

(a) The subject

По óбе стороны́ парáдной имéлось **по балкóну**
There was a balcony at either side of the main entrance

(b) The object:

Сжимáл в кáждой рукé **по пистолéту**
He gripped a pistol in each hand

(c) A temporal expression:

Останáвливаются два пóезда в сýтки, кáждый **стоит по три минúты**
Two trains a day stop here, each for three minutes at a time

(d) An attribute:

Четы́ре билéта **по двáдцать рублéй**
Four tickets at twenty roubles each

Note the colloquial phrase **По чéм?** ‘how much?’ (each): По чéм я́блоки?
‘How much are apples?’ (each).

Other Important Meanings Expressed by Prepositions

449 Prepositions that take the accusative

(1) **В**

В + accusative denotes:

(i) The target of throwing, knocking, shooting etc. (see also **451** (2) (iv)):

Он брóсил	в меня́	поду́шку	He threw a pillow	at me
Он вы́стрелил	в цель		He fired	at the target
Он рáнен	в гóлову		He is wounded	in the head
стучáть	в дверь		to knock	on/at the door
Он удáрил меня́	в чéлюсть		He punched me	on the jaw

(ii) A game (constructions with **игрáть**; see also **453** (2) (i)):

игрáть **в футбол/прýтки** to play football/hide and seek

(iii) The object of belief/infatuation:

вéрить **в социáлизм** to believe in socialism
Он влюбíлся **в медсестрý** He fell in love with a nurse

(iv) An object looked/shouted into or through:

Он **в бинóкль** рассмáтривает рéку
He examines the river through binoculars

смотреть на себя	в зéркало	to look at oneself in the mirror
смотреть	в окнó	to look out of the window
крикнуть	в мегафóн	to shout through a megaphone

(v) A professional or other group (note that what appears to be the nominative plural in these constructions is historically an *accusative*):

Он не годится	в музыкáнты	He is not cut out to be a musician
идти	в гóсти	to go visiting
произвести	в офицéры	to commission

Note that the idea of plurality is lost in many such expressions: Он годится ей в отцы́ 'He is old enough to be her father'.

(2) За

Constructions with **за** involve:

(i) Thanking, paying, rewarding, punishing for:

медаль	за отва́гу	a medal	for bravery
Его́ наказáли	за оши́бку	He was punished	for the mistake
Она́ платит ему́	за молоко́	She pays him	for the milk
продава́ть	за 1000 рублéй	to sell	for 1,000 roubles
спаси́бо	за сове́т	thanks	for the advice

(ii) Identifying, evaluating as:

Он вы́дал себя́ **за специа́листа**
He passed himself off **as an expert**

Принимáли её **за мою́ де́вушку**
They took her **for my girl friend**

Он слывёт **за знатокá**
He passes **for a connoisseur**

(iii) Seizing, holding, leading by:

Я взял Ёнку **за́ руку** I took Inka **by the hand**
Он схватился **за́ голову** He clutched **his head**

(iv) Feelings experienced on behalf of someone else:

Она́ бо́ится **за меня́** She is afraid **for me**
Я рад **за тебя́** I am glad **for you**

(v) The meaning 'in favour of':

Я голосовал за вас	I voted for you
пить за здоровье отца	to drink to father's health

Note

Что за in the meaning **какой** does not affect the case of the dependent noun: **Что за муча!** 'What torment!', **Что это за друзья?** 'What kind of friends are those?', **Что за книгу** она купила? 'What kind of book did she buy?'

(3) На

(i) **На** has many literal and figurative meanings which denote various forms of direction, allocation, expenditure etc.:

жаловаться на питание	to complain about the food
заказ на платье	an order for a dress
лес на постройку	timber for building
мода/спрос на иностранные машинны	fashion/demand for foreign cars
надяться на успех/на брата	to hope for success/rely on one's brother
обменять квартиру на дачу	to exchange a flat for a country cottage
обращать внимание на совет	to pay attention to advice
оказывать давление на кого-нибудь	to put pressure on someone
охотиться на волка	to hunt a wolf
право на отдых	the right to relaxation
производить впечатление на друга	to make an impression on a friend
работать на семью	to work for one's family
рецепт на лекарство	a prescription for medicine
смотреть на карту	to look at a map
тратить время на пустяки/ деньги на конфеты	to spend time on trifles/money on sweets
что на обед?	what's for lunch?

(ii) The main verb or adjective may denote resolve:

Он готов на всё	He is prepared to go to any lengths
идти на риск	to take a risk

Note

Гото́в на implies desperate resolve, **гото́в к** only preparedness.

(iii) The main verb, adjective or noun may express reaction:

отвеча́ть на вопро́с	to answer a question
реа́кция на крѝтику	reaction to criticism

(4) **О**

О + accusative denotes the object of collision, friction, pressure etc.:

Волны разби́ваются о рѝфы	The waves smash against the reefs
Она́ споткну́лась о ка́мень	She tripped over a stone
Он уда́рился ного́й о стул	He struck his leg against a chair

(5) **Под**

Под + accusative implies:

(i) ‘Support’ for the dependent noun (usually **рука́** or **ру́ки**):

Его́ подде́рживали **под руки́**
They were supporting him by the arms

Они́ прогу́ливаются **под руку́**
They are strolling about arm in arm

(ii) ‘Accompaniment’:

танцева́ть под оркѝстр	to dance to an orchestra
Она́ села́ под бу́рные аплодисме́нты	She sat down to tumultuous applause

(iii) ‘Imitation’, ‘adaptation to style’ etc.:

Он пел **под Шаля́пина**
He sang in imitation of Shalyapin

комо́д **под кра́сное де́рево**
an imitation mahogany sideboard

стри́чься **под ма́льчика**
to have one’s hair cut like a boy’s

450 Prepositions that take the genitive

(1) **Для**

Для can have a comparative/relative meaning:

Тепло́ для **нояб́ря**

It is warm for November

(2) Из

Из denotes source:

Э́то я узна́л

из газе́т

I learnt that from the papers

Он

из рабо́чей семье́

He is from a working-class family

посу́да

из гли́ны

crockery made of clay

Оди́н

из нас помо́жет

One of us will help

Со́лнце состо́ит

из водоро́да и гели́я

The sun consists of hydrogen and helium

(3) Из-под

Из-под denotes the former content of a container:буты́лка **из-под** **молока́**

a milk bottle/empty milk bottle

Compare буты́лка **молока́** 'a bottle of milk'.

(4) От

(i) **От** appears in contexts involving protection, evasion, riddance etc.:**возде́рживаться****от** голосова́ния

to abstain from voting

защища́ть го́род**от** врага́

to defend the town against an enemy

избавля́ться**от** приви́чки

to get rid of a habit

Она́ **отказа́лась****от** обе́да

She refused lunch

(ii) This also applies in curative contexts:

лека́рство

от ка́шля

cough medicine

лечи́ть ма́льчика

от дифте́рита

to treat the boy for diphtheria

(5) С

С + genitive is used:

(i) With verbs of beginning:

Их дру́жба **нача́лась с** **дра́ки**

Their friendship began with a fight

(ii) To indicate the spelling of initial letters:

писа́ть сло́во **с большо́й/ма́лой бу́квы**
to spell a word with a capital/a small letter

Note

Через is used with *non*-initial letters: Сло́во ‘пара́шют’ пи́шется **через ю** ‘The word пара́шют is spelt with a ю’.

(iii) To denote ‘permission’:

Приезжа́йте еше́ — то́лько **с разреше́ния роди́телей**
Come again, but with your parents’ permission

(6) У

У denotes the person from whom something is bought, borrowed, stolen, from whom lessons are taken, of whom a request is made etc.:

Беру́	у него́ уро́ки	I take lessons from him
заказа́ть костю́м	у портно́го	to order a suit from a tailor
Он занима́ет	у них де́ньги	He borrows money from them
Я купи́л дом	у дяди	I bought the house from my uncle
Я мно́гому научи́лся	у этого́ па́рня	I learnt a lot from this chap
Я попро́сил	у него́ ру́чку	I asked him for a pen
Спроси́те доро́гу	у милиционе́ра	Ask a policeman the way
У меня́ укра́ли часы́		I had my watch stolen

Note

- (a) **От** is used, however, when the subject is a passive recipient (Я получи́л письмо́ **от отца́** ‘I received a letter from my father’) and **с** + genitive in contexts denoting the exaction of due payment, tax etc. (собира́ть нало́г **с ча́стников** ‘to collect tax from private owners’, Ско́лько **с меня́**? ‘How much do I owe you?’).
- (b) **Узна́ть** ‘to learn, find out’ combines with either **от** or **у**, **от** implying passive, **у** active participation: Э́то я узна́л **от неё́** ‘I heard that from her’, Э́то я узна́л **у неё́** ‘I found that out from her’.

451 Prepositions that take the dative

(1) К

К is used:

(i) To relate a part, component or supplement to the whole:

увертю́ра к «Пи́ковой да́ме» the overture to *Queen of Spades*

(ii) With **ГОТОВ** ‘ready’, **ГОТОВИТЬСЯ** ‘to prepare’, **ГОТОВНОСТЬ** ‘readiness’:

ГОТОВ к труду́ и оборо́не ready for labour and defence

(iii) With nouns that denote emotional reaction to an event or impression:

к сожалéнию unfortunately
к сча́стью fortunately
к моемú удивлéнию to my surprise

(2) По

По is used:

(i) With nouns that denote means of communication:

по железной доро́ге by rail
по (а́виа)по́чте by (air)mail
по второ́й програ́мме on channel two
**по ра́дио, по телеви́зору/
 телеви́дению** on the radio, on TV
 (also **на телеви́дении**)

Разговóр на э́ту те́му состо́ится **по городско́му ка́бельному
 телеви́дению** (*Argumenty i fakty*)

A conversation on this subject will take place on municipal cable television

по телефо́ну on the telephone
по мобíльному on a mobile
по фа́ксу by fax

Note

бродíть по Интерне́ту ‘to surf the Internet’, but **в Интерне́те** ‘on the Internet’, **на Интерне́т-са́йте** ‘at a web-site’.

(ii) In the meaning ‘according to’, ‘by’ etc.:

по приглаше́нию by invitation
по про́сьбе at the request of
по расписа́нию, пла́ну according to the timetable, the plan
По мо́им часа́м (or на мо́их часа́х) уже́
 по́лночь By my watch it’s already midnight

(iii) To denote a criterion for judgment:

Врач судит о здоровье ребёнка **по цвету** его лица
A doctor judges the health of a child by its complexion

(iv) To denote a target, especially a moving or diffuse target (cf. **449** (1) (i)):

Открыли огонь	по врагу	They opened fire on the enemy
стрелять	по демонстрантам	to fire on the demonstrators

Compare also **стучать по столу** ‘to bang on the table’ and **стучать в дверь** ‘to knock at the door’ (see **449** (1) (i)).

(v) To define the ‘frame of reference’ of persons, groups, objects etc.:

инженёр	по профессии	engineer by profession
чемпион	по боксу	boxing champion
экзамен	по истории	history examination

(vi) With ordinal numerals, to denote position in a scale of dimensions or priorities:

Африка — **второй по величине** материк
Africa is the second largest continent

452 Prepositions that take the instrumental

(1) За

За links verbs of observation, supervision to their objects:

Котёнок наблюдала	за собакой	The cat was observing the dog
Он следил	за развитием техники	He was following the development of technology

(2) С

(i) The central meaning of **с** is ‘with/together with/accompanied by’ etc.:

мальчик	с удочкой в руке	a boy with a rod in his hand
человек	с красивым лицом	a man with a handsome face

Я согла́сен	с ва́ми	I agree with you
Он говори́т	с акце́нтом	He speaks with an accent
Она́ слу́шала	с интере́сом	She listened with interest
Он реши́л зада́чу	с трудо́м	He had difficulty in solving the problem

Note

- (a) **Со ско́ростью** ‘at a speed’: Он е́хал **со ско́ростью** пятьдеся́т киломе́тров в час ‘He was driving at a speed of fifty kilometres per hour’.
- (b) **Развести́сь с** ‘to divorce’, **расста́ться с** ‘to part with’, while denoting separation, retain the meaning of joint involvement.
- (c) Nouns and pronouns can be linked by **с: мы с ва́ми** ‘you and I’, **они́ с сестро́й** ‘he and his sister’, **оте́ц с ма́терью** ‘father and mother’. Note also **хлеб с ма́слом** ‘bread and butter’. A plural verb is used if the nouns are of equal status: Оте́ц с ма́терью **отказа́лись** помо́чь ‘Father and mother refused to help’. Otherwise a singular verb is used: Ма́ть с ребё́нком **пошла́ в** больни́цу ‘The mother went to the hospital with the child’.
- (d) A nuance of purpose: **обраща́ться к кому́-нибудь с про́сьбой** ‘to make a request of somebody’, Премье́р-мини́стр прие́хал в Герма́нию **с визи́том** ‘The prime minister arrived in Germany on a visit’.
- (e) See **94** for constructions in which ‘with’ is rendered by a simple instrumental (писа́ть **карандашо́м** ‘to write with a pencil’).
- (ii) **С** is used with the names of public service vehicles when these are qualified by adjectives:

прие́хать **с ра́нним, с двухчасовы́м** по́ездом
to arrive on the early, the two o’clock train (cf. **прие́хать по́ездом** ‘to arrive by train’)

453 Prepositions that take the prepositional(1) **В**

- (i) **В** links verbs, adjectives, nouns denoting ‘guilt’, ‘suspicion’, ‘confession’, ‘certainty’, ‘doubt’, ‘reproach’ to their objects:

Всех шесте́рых **обвиня́ли во взры́ве коменда́туры**
All six were accused of blowing up the commandant’s office

Он бы́л аресто́ван **по подо́зрению в кра́же**
He was arrested on suspicion of theft

Он призна́лся	в уби́йстве	He confessed to the murder
Я сомнева́юсь	в э́том	I doubt that
Она́ уве́рена	в себе́	She is sure of herself
Его́ упрека́ют	в ле́ни	He is reproached with laziness

(ii) The dependent noun may also define the context of forms such as **беда́** ‘trouble’, **де́ло** ‘matter, fact’, **причи́на** ‘cause’ etc.:

Беда́ в том, что он её **лю́бит**
The trouble is that he loves her

Де́ло в том, что он **ненаде́жный**
The fact is that he is unreliable

(2) На

The dependent noun may denote:

(i) A musical instrument:

игра́ть **на скри́пке** to play the violin

(ii) A language:

Он **говори́т на трёх язы́ках** He speaks three languages

(3) О

The central meaning of **о** + prepositional is ‘concerning’, ‘about’:

ду́мать	о пла́не	to think about the plan
зако́н	о разво́де	divorce law
напомина́ть	о до́лге	to remind someone of their duty
кому́-нибудь		
мысль	о сча́стье	the thought of happiness

Note

Про + accusative is a colloquial synonym of **о** ‘about’.

(4) При

При can mean ‘in view of’, ‘thanks to’, ‘with’, ‘given’:

При тако́м тала́нте он ста́нет знаменито́стью
With talent like that he will become a celebrity

При её обжа́нии не ка́ждая же́нщина помешала́ бы ей блиста́ть
With her charm not every woman would be able to prevent her from standing out

The Conjunction

454 Introductory comments

(1) Conjunctions fulfil a cohesive function in linking words and concepts to create connected speech.

(2) They fall into the following broad categories:

(i) **Co-ordinating conjunctions** link words and clauses of comparable status (bread *and* butter, young *but* experienced etc.). They subdivide into connective, adversative and disjunctive.

(ii) **Subordinating conjunctions** introduce statements that are dependent on the main clause (he said *that* he had no objection; I called the doctor, *because* I felt unwell; I want to play tennis, *if* the weather improves etc.). They subdivide into explanatory, causal, conditional, concessive, comparative and temporal conjunctions, and conjunctions of purpose and result.

Many compound conjunctions, traditionally separated by a comma, can now also be written without: *ввиду того (,) что* 'in view of the fact that'; *до того (,) как* 'before'; *из-за того (,) что* 'because of the fact that'; *после того (,) как* 'after'; *с тех пор (,) как* 'since' etc. The use of a comma throws the meaning expressed by the subordinate clause into greater relief.

Co-ordinating Conjunctions

455 Connective conjunctions

(1) **И** 'and'

И links:

(i) Like parts of speech:

Брат и сестра	Brother and sister
Она́ поёт и игра́ет	She sings and plays

(ii) Compatible ideas:

Свети́ло со́лнце, **и** бы́ло жа́рко
The sun was shining and it was hot

(2) **И . . . и** 'both . . . and'

(i) **И . . . и** lend greater emphasis than **и**:

Он **и** спосо́бный, **и** трудолю́бный
He is both capable and industrious

(ii) The same meaning may be expressed:

(a) **Ву как . . . так и** (a mark of a more literary style):

Такие вопро́сы интересу́ют мно́гих специа́листов **как** в Росси́и,
так и в зарубе́жных страна́х
Such questions interest many specialists both in Russia and abroad

(b) With still greater emphasis, by **не то́лько . . . но и** (also characteristic of a bookish style): Он говори́т **не то́лько** по-кита́йски, **но и** по-япо́нски
'He speaks not only Chinese but also Japanese'.

(3) **Ни . . . ни** 'neither . . . nor'

У люде́й не́ было **ни отча́яния, ни стра́ха** (V. Putin)
People had neither despair nor fear

Note

(a) The second **ни** ('nor') is preceded by a comma.

- (b) **He** is normally required only when there is a single predicate: Ни он, ни она́ **не играёт** (single predicate) на флэйте ‘Neither he nor she plays the flute’. Compare the absence of **не** in Она́ ни играёт, ни поёт ‘She neither plays nor sings’ and Он ни русский, ни поляк ‘He is neither a Russian nor a Pole’, where there are two predicates (**играёт/поёт; русский/поляк**). **He** is retained, however, in constructions involving the past or future of **быть** ‘to be’ (or other copula): Вчера́ **не было/завтра не будет** ни холодно, ни жарко ‘Yesterday it was not/tomorrow it will neither be cold nor hot’. Note also usage with **нельзя́**: С ним **нельзя́** ни хитрить, ни шутить (Zalygin) ‘With him you can neither pretend nor joke’.
- (c) If there are two subjects, the predicate must be compatible with both: Ни он, ни она́ **не знает** ‘Neither he nor she knows’ (знаёт agrees with он and with она́), but Ни он, ни она́ **не знали́** ‘Neither he nor she knew’, Ни он, ни она́ **не довольны́** ‘Neither he nor she is pleased’, Ни он, ни я **не говорим** по-польски ‘Neither he nor I speak Polish’.

456 Adversative conjunctions

- (1) A ‘and, but, whereas’

The conjunction **а**:

- (i) links ideas which contrast without conflicting. The same parts of speech usually appear on either side of the conjunction:

Он сидит,	а я стою́	He sits and I stand
Это кошка,	а это собака	That is a cat and that is a dog

- (ii) introduces a positive statement via a preceding negative:

Природа́ не храм,	а мастерская́	Nature is not a temple, but a workshop
Он не пишет,	а читает	He is not writing but reading
Книга́ не белая,	а красная	The book is not white, but red

Note

The order of the clauses may be reversed:

Астрахань, Саратов — города́ на Во́лге, **а не** на Дону́
(Vvedenskaya)
Astrakhan and Saratov are towns on the Volga and not on the Don

(iii) introduces a supplementary statement or question:

А где другіе гóсти? And where are the other guests?

Note the phrase **а вдруг?**: **А вдруг** он не вóвремя придёт? ‘Suppose/What if he doesn’t get here in time?’

(iv) introduces parenthetical statements:

Появлéние зрítелей, **а** их бýло человек 80, снóва мобилизовáло актёров (Garin)

The appearance of the audience, and they were about 80 in number, again stirred the actors into action

(2) Но ‘but’

(i) **Но** links clauses which express incompatible ideas, e.g.

Маши́на стáрая, **но** хорóшая

The car is old *but* good (an arguably unexpected combination)

(ii) The conjunction is often close in meaning to **одна́ко** ‘however’, **несмотря́ на это́** ‘despite this’ (note, however, that **одна́ко** can *replace* **но**, while **несмотря́ на это́** *combines* with it, except when it appears at the beginning of a new sentence):

Ему́ захотéлось позвонítь в больни́цу, **но** (= **одна́ко/но несмотря́ на это́**) он сдержáл себя́ и позвонíл то́лько ўтром (Рапова)

He was tempted to ring the hospital **but** (= despite this) restrained himself and didn’t ring until morning

Мы овладéли сложнéйшими мéтодами познáния, **но** ещé плóхо понима́ем другíх людéй и самíх себя́ (Kron)

We have mastered the most complex methods of cognition, **yet** still have an imperfect understanding of other people and ourselves

Note

Всё же means ‘all the same’, **зато́** ‘on the other hand’:

Дóрого, **зато́** хорóшая вещь

It’s expensive, **but then** it is a quality article

(3) И, а and ио

Learners sometimes experience difficulty in selecting the appropriate conjunction, especially where **а** and **но** are concerned. The following examples, each of which begins in the same way, illustrate their usage:

(i) **И** introduces additional information:

Он молодóй **и энергичный**
He is young and (he is also) energetic

Она лóбит кóшек **и собáк**
She likes cats and (she also likes) dogs

(ii) **А** introduces information which contrasts with but does not conflict with the first statement:

Он молодóй, **а она старáя**
He is young, and (= whereas) she is old

Она лóбит кóшек, **а он лóбит собáк**
She likes cats, and he likes dogs

(iii) **Но** introduces information which is in antithesis to the first statement:

Он молодóй, **но опытный**
He is young, but (i.e. despite this, nevertheless) experienced

Она лóбит кóшек, **но не лóбит собáк**
She likes cats, but she does not like dogs

Note

А and **но** sometimes appear in the same context, **но** expressing a stronger antithesis than **а**: Он хóчет, **а** я не хочú ‘He wants to, and I don’t’; Он хóчет, **но** я не хочú ‘He wants to, but I don’t’.

457 Disjunctive conjunctions

(1) **Или** ‘or’

Или presents alternatives:

Это собáка **или** волк? Is that a dog or a wolf?

Note

(a) **Или** does not normally appear in negative contexts. Thus, ‘He doesn’t like football or tennis’ is rendered as Он не лóбит **ни** футбóла, **ни** тénниса (or ни футбóл, ни тénнис).

(b) ‘Or’ (= ‘or else’, ‘otherwise’) may be rendered as **а то/а не то/иначе**:

На останóвках не выходíte, **а (не) то** загуля́етесь
Don’t get out at the stops **or** you’ll get lost

(2) **И́ли . . . и́ли** (less commonly **ли́бо . . . ли́бо**) ‘either . . . or’

И́ли я пойду́ к нему́, **и́ли** он приде́т ко мне
Either I will go to him or he will come to me

Note

As in constructions with **ни . . . ни** ‘neither . . . nor’ (see **455** (3) note (c)), a compatible predicate must be found for subjects of different gender: **Сёмьи, где появи́лись и́ли но́вая ма́ма и́ли но́вый па́па** (*Semya*) ‘Families in which a new mummy or a new daddy has appeared’.

(3) **Не то . . . не то** ‘either . . . or’

Не то . . . не то may imply difficulty of identification:

Ма́ть её, Наде́жда, по фами́лии не́ то Куку́шкина, не́ то Христаню́к (Ророн)
Her mother, Nadezhda, has the surname Kukushkina, or it could be Khristaniuk

(4) **То . . . то** ‘now . . . now’

Он **то** красне́ет, **то** бледне́ет
Now he blushes, now he grows pale

(5) **То ли . . . то ли** ‘maybe . . . maybe’

То ли . . . то ли implies an element of conjecture:

И ско́лько лет ему́, сказа́ть бы́ло невозмо́жно — **то ли** под три́дцать, **то ли** за со́рок (Трифонов)
And it was impossible to say how old he was – **maybe** getting on for thirty, **maybe** in his forties

Subordinating Conjunctions

458 Explanatory conjunctions

(1) **Что** ‘that’

(i) **Что** is used after verbs of saying, thinking etc.:

Он сказа́л, **что** он мне помо́жет
He said (**that**) he would help me

Note

Что should *not* be omitted in such contexts, cf. English: ‘I think (that) he’s out’ and Russian Я ду́маю, **что** его́ нет до́ма.

(ii) (**То**), **что** also renders the English (**preposition** +) ‘-ing’:

(a) **Извѣстен** + instrumental:

Она́ изве́стна **тем, что** переплыла́ проли́в Ла-Ма́нш
She is famous **for having** swum the Channel

(b) **Наказа́ть за** + accusative ‘to punish for’:

Ма́льчика наказа́ли **за то, что** разби́л окно́
The boy was punished **for breaking** the window

(c) **Нача́ть с** + genitive ‘to begin by’:

Она́ нача́ла **с того́, что** привѣтствовала́ госте́й
She began **by welcoming** the guests

(d) **Обвини́ть в** + prepositional ‘to accuse of’:

Его́ обвини́ли **в том, что** он укра́л часы́
They accused him **of stealing** the watch

(e) **Поздра́вить с** + instrumental ‘to congratulate on’:

Я поздра́вил его́ **с тем, что** он сдал экза́мен
I congratulated him **on passing** the examination

(f) **Привы́кнуть к** ‘to get used to’:

Он приви́к **к тому́, что** его́ уважа́ют
He is accustomed **to being** respected

Note

То, как; то, где; то, когда́ etc. are also possible with some verbs, e.g. **зави́сеть**: это́ зави́сит **от того́, что** он ска́жет/где он живѣт/**как** он себя́ чу́вствует/**когда́** он ко́нчит, ‘it **depends what** he says/**where** he lives/**how** he feels/**when** he finishes’.

(2) **Что́бы**

Чтобы + past tense is used after verbs of request, command or warning:

Скажи́ ему́, **чтобы** он не уходил
Tell him not to leave

Она́ предупреди́ла его́, **чтобы** он не купался в о́зере
She warned him not to bathe in the lake

Она́ проси́ла, **чтобы** все вытира́ли но́ги у двéри
She asked that everyone should wipe their feet at the door

Он приказáл, **чтобы** нас пусти́ли во дворéц
He ordered that we should be admitted to the palace

See also **308** (2) note (a).

Note

Проси́ть, по-/приказыва́ть, приказáть, **чтобы** are preferred in impersonal constructions. Compare use of the **infinitive** when the verbs take a direct or indirect object: Он попроси́л меня́ **откры́ть** дверь 'He asked me to open the door', Он приказáл солда́там **стреля́ть** 'He ordered the soldiers to shoot'.

(3) **Будто/будто бы** 'as if, that', **якобы** 'allegedly, supposedly'

Будто, будто бы, якобы question the truth of a statement: Он уверя́ет, **будто** сам ви́дел 'He alleges that he saw it with his own eyes'. Compare:

Арти́сты, ты́сячный раз игра́я пьёсу, де́лают вид, **будто** им неизвёстно — чем ко́нчится (Zalygin)
Actors performing a play for the thousandth time pretend they do not know how it will end

Он её убежда́л, **будто бы** её но́вая физионо́мия лу́чше ста́рой (Zalygin)
He tried to convince her that her new face was better than her old one

Он утвержда́ет, **якобы** прика́з отменён
He alleges that the order has been rescinded

See **464** (2) (i) for **будто** as a comparative conjunction.

459 Causal conjunctions

(1) Благодаря тому́ что

Благодаря́ тому́ что is associated with favourable circumstances (see 443 (1)):

Она́ сдала́ экза́мен **благодаря́ тому́ что** рабо́тала усердно
 She passed the examination **thanks to having** worked industriously

(2) Ввиду́ того́ что

Ввиду́ того́, что ‘in view of the fact that’, like **вследствие́ того́, что** ‘in consequence of the fact that’ and **в си́лу того́, что** ‘on account of the fact that’, belongs to official styles:

Ввиду́ того́, что я во вре́мя о́тпуска был бо́лен, прошу́ продли́ть мне о́тпуск
In view of the fact that I was ill while on holiday I request an extension of leave

(3) Из-за того́ что

Из-за того́ что, like **из-за** (see 443 (1)), is often associated with unfavourable circumstances:

Из-за того́ что я в ука́занный срок не верну́л книг в библиотéку, у меня́ были́ неприятности
 I got into trouble **for not returning** the library books on time

(4) Оттого́ что

Like **от** (see 443 (3) (i)), **оттого́ что** is associated with involuntary cause:

Бы́ло нелóвко **оттого́, что** егó заподо́зрили в желáнии порисова́ться (Granin)
 He felt awkward **at being suspected** of wishing to show off

(5) Поско́льку ‘as long as’

Поско́льку ты согла́сен, я не бу́ду возража́ть
 As long as you agree I won’t object

(6) Поско́му́ что ‘because’

Его исключили из команды, **потому́ что** он не присутствовал на тренировках
 He was left out of the team because he had not attended training sessions

Note

- (a) A comma separates **потому́** and **что** when the cause is emphasized, usually by the addition of **бúдто бы** ‘as if’, **ещё и** ‘also’, **мóжет быть** ‘perhaps’, **тóлько** ‘only’ etc. (see also 454 (2) (ii)):

ещё и потому́, что	also because
мóжет быть потому́, что	maybe because
потому́ бúдто бы, что	seemingly because
тóлько потому́ (or потому́ тóлько), что	only because

Его пригласили **потому́ тóлько, что** он племянник режиссёра
 They **only** invited him **because** he is the producer’s nephew

- (b) Emphasis may also be expressed by distancing **потому́** from **что**:

Потому́ бúдто бы его́ и пригласили, **что** он племянник режиссёра
 The reason why they seem to have invited him is that he is the producer’s nephew

- (7) Так как ‘because, since’

Американский учёный встретился с учёными университета, **так как** круг проблем, над решением которых они работают, родни́ темам его́ работ
 The American scientist met scientists in the university since the problems they are working on are akin to his own areas of interest

Note

- (a) **Потому́ что** and **так как** are virtually identical in meaning. However, clauses beginning with **потому́ что** always *follow* the main clause, while clauses in **так как** can precede or follow: Мы устали, **так как** работали без перерыва ‘We were tired since we had worked without a break’ or **Так как** работали без перерыва, мы устали ‘Since we had worked without a break we were tired’.
- (b) **Под предлогом что/под тем предлогом что/под предлогом тогó что** ‘on the pretext that’ denote pretended cause; **и́бо** ‘for’ relates mainly to high style or scientific contexts.

460 Conjunctions of purpose

Чтобы 'in order to/in order that'

See also 309–310.

(i) **Чтобы** is used:

(a) With an **infinitive** if the subject of both clauses is the same:

Я взял ведро, **чтобы набрать** в родникé воды (Kazakov)
I took a bucket **in order to** draw some water from the spring

(b) With the **past tense** if there is a change in subject:

Я дал ей ведро, **чтобы она могла** набрать в родникé воды
I gave her the bucket **so that she could** draw water from the spring

(ii) **Для того/с тем чтобы** throw the meaning of purpose into greater relief:

Грузы перетаскивались в склады, . . . **для того, чтобы (с тем, чтобы)** на товары не лил дождь (Semushkin)
The freight was dragged over to the warehouses **so that** the merchandise should not get rained on

(iii) **Чтобы** combines with prepositional phrases and verbs which denote purpose or desire: **добиваться/добиться** + genitive 'to achieve', **заботиться о** + prepositional 'to be concerned about', **за то** 'in favour of', **настаивать/настоять на** + prepositional 'to insist on', **против того** 'against', **стремиться к** 'to strive for':

Мы **добиваемся того, чтобы** все голосовали на выборах
We are trying to get everyone to vote at the election

Я **за то (против того), чтобы** все учились русскому языку
I am in favour of (against) everyone learning Russian

Государство **заботится о том, чтобы** граждане не голодали
The state is concerned that its citizens should not go hungry

Он **настаивает (на том), чтобы** я остался ночевать
He insists I should stay the night

Мы **стремимся к тому, чтобы** кит был объявлен видом, находящимся под угрозой исчезновения
We are striving to get the whale declared an endangered species

(iv) **Чтобы** is normally *omitted* after verbs of motion and their equivalents if there is no change in subject: Он пришёл поговорить ‘He came to have a chat’. However, **чтобы** is *retained* after verbs of motion:

(a) When the action expressed by the **чтобы** clause represents the purpose expressed by the main clause *but is not subsequent to it in time*:

Я вышел из комнаты, **чтобы** доказать своё безразличие к разговору
I left the room in order to show my indifference to the conversation

(b) When the **чтобы** clause contains a negative subordinate infinitive:

Я вышел из комнаты, **чтобы не разбудить** ребёнка
I left the room so as not to awaken the child

(c) When the subordinate infinitive is accompanied by adverbial modifiers:

Я забрался на гору, **чтобы оттуда как следует** оглядеть окрестность
I climbed the hill so as to survey the surrounding district properly

(v) **Вместо того чтобы** ‘instead of’ implies choice of a preferred alternative:

Вместо того, чтобы отдыхать на пляже, он пошёл на концерт
Instead of relaxing on the beach he went to a concert

Note

Чтобы does not *always* denote purpose:

Посетители уехали с тем, **чтобы** через час явиться ещё раз
The visitors left, only **to turn up again** an hour later

461 Conjunctions of result

Так что ‘so/so that’

Он провалился, **так что** ему пришлось пересдавать экзамен
He failed, so he had to resit the examination

The conjunctions **вследствие чего** ‘in consequence of which’ and **в результате чего** ‘as a result of which’ are used in official registers.

462 Conditional conjunctions

(1) Если ‘if’

Если (бы) is dealt with in **304–305**.

Note also the precautionary **на слўчай если** ‘just in case’:

Она мне дала свой телефон, **на слўчай если** придётся что-нибудь передать

She gave me her telephone number **just in case** a message needed to be passed on

See also **446** (5) (iii).

(2) Если не ‘unless’

Он уйдёт, **если вы не** помешаете ему

He’ll go away unless you stop him

(3) При услóвии что ‘on condition that’

Она выйдет замуж за него **при услóвии, что** он уедет из Англии

She will marry him on condition that he leaves England

(4) Раз ‘if, since, now that’

Раз has passed from conversational into literary style:

Раз дал слóво, надо его сдержать

Now that he’s given his word he should keep it

(5) Кóли/кóль; кóль скóро ‘if’

Кóли/кóль is a colloquial and obsolescent synonym of **если** (**кóли** на то пошлó ‘for that matter/if that’s the way it is’) and is rarely found in written styles. **Кóль скóро** may be used in polemic, where it raises the emotional tension:

И уж **кóль скóро** люди держат живóтных, **то** несовершенство слўжбы ветерина́рной пóмощи «бьёт» прёжде всего по владельцам (*Semya*)

And since people keep animals, imperfections in the veterinary service hit their owners hardest

(6) Достáточно (it is) ‘sufficient/all it needs’

Достаточно ‘it is sufficient’ may acquire a conditional nuance:

Достаточно было одной из пуль попасть в мину, **и** (or **как**) она взлетела бы на воздух (Stepanov)

All it needed was for one of the bullets to hit the mine and it would have exploded

463 Concessive conjunctions

(1) **Хотя/хоть** ‘although’

Хотя (= **несмотря на то, что**) он такой молодой, его избрали депутатом Государственной Думы

Although (= ‘despite the fact that’) he is so young he was elected a member of the State Duma

The main clause may be introduced by **а** ‘but’, **зато** ‘on the other hand’, **но** ‘but’, **однако** ‘however’:

Фёдор **хоть и** начальник, **но** всё-таки сосед (Zhukhovitsky)

Although Fedor is the boss, he is a neighbour just the same

(2) **Пусть** ‘even if, albeit’

Пусть (**пускай**) is characterized by colloquial or emotive nuances:

Люди всегда будут стремиться к вершинам, **пусть** даже с риском для жизни

People will always aim for the heights, albeit at risk to their lives

For concessive constructions with **ни** see 312.

464 Comparative conjunctions

(1) **Как** ‘as, like’

(i) **Как** can be used to introduce a comparison:

Вершины колыхались, **как** гребни волн

The summits swayed **like** the crests of waves

(ii) For additional emphasis, **так же как** or **точно так же как** is used:

Их надо обучать этому, **так же как** их учат читать и писать

They have to be taught this, **just as** they are taught to read and write

(2) **Бўдто/как бўдто/слўвно/тўчно** ‘as if’

(i) **Бўдто** introduces statements which are seemingly at variance with reality:

Вцепился глазами, **бўдто** следил за раздумьями Дробышева (Granin)

He fastened his eyes on him as if he were following Drobyshev’s meditations

See **458** (3) for **бўдто** as an explanatory conjunction.

(ii) **Как бўдто (бы)/слўвно/тўчно** are used to compare similar situations:

Он перецеловался со всеми, **как бўдто** уезжал на несколько лет

He exchanged kisses with everyone, as if he were going away for several years

Уснула так, **как бўдто бы** она что-то совершила (Zalygin)

She fell asleep as if she had accomplished something

Слушать его было тяжело, **тўчно** больного, который не желает сознавать безнадежность своего положения (Granin)

It was distressing to listen to him, like listening to a sick person who is reluctant to acknowledge the hopelessness of his situation

465 Temporal conjunctions. Introductory comments

(1) Some English temporal prepositions, e.g. ‘before’, ‘after’, ‘until’, ‘since’ etc., also function as conjunctions:

Preposition	Conjunction
before dinner	before he arrived
after the lesson	after the lesson finished
until Thursday	until we turned the corner
since May	since he left

(2) This does *not* apply, however, to their counterparts in Russian.

(i) The temporal prepositions are dealt with in **434** and **439**:

English	Russian
before dinner	до ужина, перед ужином
after the lesson	после урока
until Thursday	до четверга́
since May	с ма́я

(ii) The equivalent conjunctions are as follows:

before	до того́ как/прежде чем
just before	перед тем как
after	после того́ как
until	(до тех пор) пока́ . . . не
since	с тех пор как

Note

English conjunctions such as ‘when’, ‘if’, ‘until’, ‘as soon as’ do not normally combine with the future tense, even when reference is to the future: ‘when he *arrives*’, ‘if he *gets* here in time’, ‘I’ll wait until you *finish/have finished*’, ‘I’ll leave as soon as the clock *strikes* 12’ etc. In Russian, however, future *meaning* is expressed by the future of the verb in such contexts: когда́ он **приде́т** ‘when he arrives’, Подожду́, пока́ вы не **кони́чите** ‘I’ll wait until you finish’. (See also 264.)

466 Temporal conjunctions which render ‘before’, ‘after’, ‘by the time that’, ‘until’, ‘since’

(1) До того́ как ‘before’

До того́, как мы вам рассказáли о Венесу́эле, вы, вероятно, и не подозрева́ли, что её назва́ние связа́но с назва́нием Вене́ции (Vvedenskaya)

Before we told you about Venezuela you probably had no idea its name was associated with that of Venice

Note

Заблго до того́ как ‘long before’, **ещё до того́ как** ‘even before’.

(2) Перед тем как ‘just before’

Она зажгла свечи **перед тем как** гости сели за стол
 She lit the candles just before the guests sat down to table

Note

- (a) An *infinitive* may be used in the time clause if the subject of both clauses is the same: Она надела новое платье **перед тем как** спуститься на встречу с гостями 'She put on a new dress before going down to meet the guests'.
- (b) **Перед тем как** retains the meaning of close proximity to the event which is expressed by the preposition **перед** (see 439 (1) (iii)), and can combine with adverbs and adverbial phrases which stress immediacy: **в последний момент перед тем как** 'in the final moment before', **как раз перед тем как** 'just before', **непосредственно перед тем как** 'immediately before' etc.

(3) Прежде чем 'before'

Прежде чем is a synonym of **до того как** in strictly temporal meanings. However, *only* прежде чем may be used in contexts that denote:

(i) Precaution:

Каждый раз птицы улетают, **прежде чем** я успею подойти к ним
 (Aramilev)
 Every time the birds fly away before I have time to approach them

(ii) Inexpediency:

Прежде чем осуждать соседа, надо присмотреться к самому себе
 Before condemning one's neighbour, one should take a hard look at oneself

(iii) The dependence of the time clause on the main clause:

Надо самому что-то знать, **прежде чем** учить других
 You must know something yourself before teaching others

(4) После того как 'after'

После того как дети легли спать, она поставила самовар
 After the children had gone to bed she put on the samovar

Однажды **после того, как** отчим очень сильно его ударил, Володя даже обратился в милицию (*Semya*)
 Once, after his stepfather had hit him with particular force, Volodya even went to the police

A perfective gerund may be used instead of a conjunction if the subject of the temporal clause is the same as that of the main clause: **Сдав (= после того как она сдала)** приёмные экзамены, она поступила в МГУ ‘Having passed the entrance examinations she enrolled at Moscow University’.

(5) Пока́

Пока́ means:

(i) ‘By the time’: **Пока́** приехали пожарные, пла́мя удалось потушить
 ‘By the time the fire brigade arrived the fire had been put out’.

(ii) ‘While’:

(a) When two actions or processes are running parallel:

Пока́ я занимаюсь, де́ти игра́ют в саду́
 While I am studying the children play in the garden

Пока́ вы в пути́, помеще́ние прогре́ется (*Izvestiya*)
 While you are on your way the building will warm up

(b) When one action or process interrupts another:

Пока́ мы собира́лись в доро́гу, ста́ло темно́
 While we were getting ready for the journey it grew dark

Note

Пока́ may be replaced by **в то вре́мя как** in these meanings. ‘While’ (= ‘whereas’) is rendered by **в то вре́мя как/тогда́ как**: Он за но́вый режём, **в то вре́мя как/тогда́ как** я решительно́ прòтив ‘He is in favour of the new regime, while I am emphatically against it’. **Пока́** is also used in ‘opportunist’ contexts: Переидём доро́гу, **пока́** маши́н нет ‘We’ll cross the road while it’s clear’.

(6) Пока́ . . . не ‘until’

Пока́ . . . не can be used with future and past tense forms:

Я подожду́, пока́ он не **вернётся**
I shall wait until he returns

Я подожда́л, пока́ маши́на не **вышла** на пло́щадь
I waited until the car came out on to the square

Note

- (a) The conventional negative in **пока́ . . . не**.
(b) Compare Жду, **когда́** вы ко́нчите ‘I am waiting for you to finish’.

(7) С тех пор как ‘since’

С тех пор как он живёт в но́вом до́ме, мы ни ра́зу не встреча́лись
Since he has been living in his new house, we haven’t once met

467 Other conjunctions of time

(1) **Когда́** ‘when, as, whenever, after’

Когда́ вы ко́нчите, бу́дем чай пить
When (after) you have finished we shall drink tea

Когда́ я возвраща́лся до́мой, я встрети́л своего́ бы́вшего учи́теля
As I was returning home I met my former teacher

(**Ка́ждый раз**), **когда́** маши́на оста́навливается, ребёнок просыпа́ется
Whenever the car stops the baby wakes up

Note

- (a) For English present tense rendered by a Russian future, see **264** and **465 Note**.
(b) A gerund may be used instead of **когда́** + finite verb if the subject of both clauses is the same: **Возвраща́ясь** до́мой, я встрети́л своего́ бы́вшего учи́теля ‘While returning home I met my former teacher’.
(c) **Когда́** is also used with **ждать** and **люби́ть**: Мы жда́ли, **когда́** кто́-нибудь из девча́т поя́вится на доро́ге (Nikolaev) ‘We were waiting for one of the girls to appear on the road’; — А тво́я-то, зна́чит, не о́чень люби́т, **когда́** ты пьёшь? (Rasputin) ‘So your old woman isn’t very keen on you drinking?’

(d) Constructions with **случай** 'case':

Иногда сообщают **о случаях, когда** водители нарушают правила из-за того, что дорожные знаки плохо видны (*Nedelya*)

Sometimes there are reports of drivers committing an offence because road signs are not easily visible

(2) Как 'as, when'

(i) **Как** 'as, when' is not used independently in temporal meaning, **когда** being preferred (see above). Alternatively, **как** may be modified to **в то время как** 'while': **В то время как** докладчик говорил, я делал записки 'While the speaker was giving his talk I made notes'. The addition of **как раз** lends a sense of immediacy: Он резко обернулся **как раз в то время как** она открыла дверь (German) 'He turned abruptly just as she opened the door'.

(ii) **Как** is also used to denote suddenness/unexpectedness:

(a) A negative verb often appears in the main clause:

Не прожили и двух лет, **как** получили квартиру

They had spent less than two years there **when** they received a flat

in particular **не успеть** 'not to have time to, not to manage':

Не успел я добраться до двери, **как** свет погас

I hadn't managed to reach the door **when** the light went out

(b) The conjunction **едва** 'hardly' may also appear in the main clause:

Едва мы добрались до леса, как пошёл дождь

Hardly had we reached the forest **than** it began raining

(c) **Стоит, стоило** 'hardly, no sooner than' also appear:

Стоило ему свернуть на просёлочную дорогу, **как** мотор заглох

No sooner had he turned on to a country road **than** the engine cut out

Note

Стоит/стоило combine only with *perfective* infinitives.

(3) Как вдруг 'when suddenly'

Как вдруг introduces an action which interrupts the action of the main clause:

Он застёгивал воротник, **как вдруг** оторвалась пуговица
He was fastening his collar when suddenly a button came off

(4) Как только 'as soon as'

Как только он вернётся, будем проверять работы
As soon as he returns we shall correct the papers

Как только поблизости появляется враг, пингвины выскáкивают из воды
As soon as an enemy appears in the vicinity the penguins jump out of the water

(5) По мере того как 'as, in proportion as'

The conjunction **по мере того как** '(in proportion) as' links two actions or processes advancing in parallel ('gradational' meaning):

По мере того как поднималось солнце, день теплел (Bunin)
As the sun rose the day was becoming warm

The Particle

468 The particle. Introductory comments

(1) Particles are parts of speech which impart additional semantic nuances to other words, phrases or sentences, in most cases having no independent meanings of their own. Some, however, are polysemantic (see 473), precise translation often being possible only within a wider context.

(2) Particles are, in the main, a feature of colloquial Russian, where they are used to express a variety of emotions, subjective attitudes and assessments, imbuing individual speech with emotive colour and expressive spontaneity, sometimes in combination with other emotional intensifiers such as diminutives: **Ну, давайте, мужички,** поднимем за счастье молодых (Shcherbakov) ‘Come on, chaps, let’s raise our glasses to the happiness of the young couple’.

(3) The effect of a particle may be varied or intensified by intonation. Thus, for example, **Петь так петь** ‘If we’re going to sing, let’s sing’ can, depending on the intonational pattern with which the phrase is uttered, denote an eagerness to sing or a reluctant acceptance of the inevitable.

(4) Some particles are formally identical with conjunctions (e.g. **а, да, же**), others with adverbs (e.g. **ещё, только, уже**) or pronouns (e.g. **то**). Some are of verbal origin (e.g. **ведь, мол, пусть, хоть**). There is considerable overlap between particles and certain interjections: **Ох уж эти мне родственники!** ‘Oh, these relations!’, **Ну и мороз!** ‘Quite a frost!’

469 The position of the particle in the sentence

(1) Some particles always *precede* the word they qualify:

Да здравствует мир!	Long live peace!
Ну, поехали!	Right, let's go!
Пусть скажет	Let him tell us
Что за безобразие!	How disgraceful!

(2) Others always *follow* the word they qualify:

Расскажи же	Come on, tell us all about it
Помолчи-ка	Do be quiet
Ты ли это сделал?	Was it you who did that?

Теперь-то я понял весь ужас своего положения
It was now that I realized the full horror of my situation

(3) Others still may stand at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence (or occasionally at the end of a sentence):

Ведь он ошибается *or* Он **ведь** ошибается
He is wrong, you know

(4) Some, e.g. **так**, may occupy a central position between two forms:

Пить **так** пить, — тихо сказала Галка (Gagarin)
'If we're drinking, let's drink', said Galka softly

470 The use of particles to impart different nuances of meaning

A phrase such as, for example, *Это не подлежит сомнению* 'That's not open to doubt', can combine with a number of different particles, each of which imparts to it a different emphasis. Thus:

(1) **Ведь** may be used to introduce a self-evident fact or to issue a gentle reminder:

Ведь это не подлежит сомнению
You know, that's not open to doubt

(2) **Вот** cites the statement as an example:

Вот это не подлежит сомнению
Now this, for instance, is beyond doubt

(3) **Да** implies that the statement can be taken for granted:

Да это не подлежит сомнению
Of course that is beyond doubt

(4) **Же** introduces a more categorical emphasis:

Это **же** не подлежит сомнению
Now that really isn't open to doubt

(5) **-то** indicates that the subject has been referred to before:

Это-**то** не подлежит сомнению
Now there's something that is beyond doubt

(6) **Уж** rules out any possibility of contradiction:

Уж это не подлежит сомнению
That is definitely not open to doubt

471 Some of the principal meanings expressed by particles

Particles are used:

(1) To **point out**:

Вот дом	Here is/There is the house
Дом вон там	The house is over yonder

(2) To **define or make more precise**:

Почему именно он протестует?	Why exactly is he protesting?
Ровно в час	Exactly at one
Эти ботинки ему как раз впору	These shoes are exactly the right size for him

(3) To **express approximation**:

Я почти готов	I am almost ready
Он едва не помешался	He almost went out of his mind
Она чуть не умерла с горя	She very nearly died of grief

Note

Чуть не/едва не combine mainly with verbs.

(4) To **restrict or exclude**:

Только он смóжет решить эту проблему
Only he will be able to solve this problem

Note

- (a) **Только** immediately precedes the word it qualifies: Он смóжет решить **только** эту проблему ‘He will be able to solve only **this** problem’.
- (b) It may also be used idiomatically: А он **только** знает, что посмéивается ‘All he can do is keep sniggering’.

472 Modal functions of particles

Particles also fulfil modal functions:

(1) **Desirability:**

Отдохнóть бы!	Oh for a rest!
Лишь бы побóльше врéмени	If only there were more time

(2) **Command or exhortation:**

Дава́й останóвимся!	Let’s make a halt!
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(3) **Confirmation:**

— Ты лóбишь óперу?	‘Do you like opera?’
— Ещё бы!	‘I’ll say!’

(4) **Negation:**

Нет , он не читáет кнóгу	No , he is not reading the book
Нет ни минóты врéмени	There’s not a spare moment

Note

- (a) The particle **не** ‘not’ *precedes* the word it qualifies, thus:

Не óн читáет кнóгу
He is not the one who is reading a book

Не кнóгу он читáет
It’s not a book he’s reading

- (b) If the negated form is *not* a verb, the negative/genitive rule does *not* apply: cf. Я не ви́жу **стола́** ‘I don’t see a table’ and Не **стóл** я ви́жу ‘It’s not a table I see’. The negated word in such constructions (here, **стол**) bears the logical stress and is

Вряд ли он придёт	He's hardly likely to come
Едва ли можно согласиться с ним	One can hardly agree with him

(8) **Comparison or similarity:** *бúдто/как бúдто/как бы/слóвно* are used to compare similar events, actions etc.:

Мóжет быть, пыль пусти́л в глаза́? — Нет, **как бúдто** и взапра́вду у́ехал (Azhaev)

Maybe he was having us on? No, he **really does seem** to have gone

(9) **Emotional nuances:** *пря́мо, то́-то, так, уж* render emotional and expressive nuances (enthusiasm, resignation, determination, irony etc.):

Пря́мо стра́шно!	Simply terrifying!
То́-то бы́ли ра́дости!	We were over the moon!
Éхать так éхать!	If we're going, let's go!
То́же у́мник нашёлся!	Some genius we have here!
Вот онí, рабо́тнички!	Some workers!

473 The meanings of individual particles

While some particles convey one meaning only, others are polysemantic.

(1) A

A is used:

(i) In prompting an answer:

Я́блоко дать, а?	I'll give you an apple, shall I?
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(ii) In making a request:

Помоги́ мне немно́жко, а?	Give us a hand, would you?
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(iii) In stating the apparently obvious:

— Чтó же мне тепе́рь де́лать?	Whatever should I do now?
— А о́чень прóсто	Why , it's very simple

(iv) In a conversational exchange:

— Ми́тю мо́жно?	'Can I speak to Mitya?'
— А он на рабо́те	' I'm afraid he's at work'
— А когда́ он бу́дет?	' And when will he be in?'
— А кто егó спра́шивает?	' Now , who is this asking for him?'

(2) Было

Было is used to denote:

(i) The immediate cancellation or reversal of an action:

Пёс поднял **было** голову и снова опустил (Abramov)
The hound raised its head and lowered it again

(ii) The reversal or abandonment, often through interruption, of an action or process which has just begun:

«Скорая помощь» тронулась **было** вперёд, но вахтёр вдруг суетливо замахал шофёру, и машина остановилась (Tendryakov)
The ambulance **had begun** to move off, but the porter suddenly began waving to the driver in agitation and the vehicle stopped

(iii) The abandonment of a projected action:

Он поднял **было** стакан, но раздумал
He **was about** to pick up the glass, but changed his mind

Note

(a) The verb in such constructions is almost invariably perfective. The only imperfective forms commonly found are **собираться** and **хотеть**, which are followed by a *perfective* infinitive: Он собирался/хотел **было попросить** разрешения выйти, но испугался 'He was **on the point** of asking permission to go out, but took fright'.

(b) **Было** also combines with perfective participles and gerunds:

У Тихоокеанского побережья вновь наблюдают **исчезнувших было** серых китов (*Selskaya zhizn*)
Grey whales, which **had been on the verge of extinction**, are again being sighted off the Pacific coast

Остановившись было у перекрёстка, шофёр всё-таки поехал на красный свет
Having been on the point of stopping at the crossroads, the driver jumped the lights instead

(3) Ведь

Ведь is used:

(i) To explain or justify:

Конечно, умею стрелять из винтовки, служил **ведь** в армии

Of course I can fire a rifle, **after all** I did do my army service

(ii) To prompt a desired answer:

Ведь ты пойдёшь в магази́н?

Now you are going to the shop, **aren't you**?

(iii) To issue a gentle reminder:

Ты **ведь** обеща́л

You did promise, **you know**

(iv) To administer a mild reproof:

— Кто́ это, «мы»?

— Но́вые ру́ские!

— Но **ведь** я — еврейка, — засмеялась она́. (Рогов)

‘Who do you mean, “us”?’

‘New Russians.

‘But I’m Jewish,’ she laughed.

(4) Вот

See also **471** (1). **Вот** can be used:

(i) In combination with interrogative words:

Вот где я живу́

That’s where I live

Вот почему́ он ушёл

That’s why he left

(ii) For contrast:

С Ваней я дружу́, а **вот** с Ни́ной никак не ла́жу

I’m friends with Vanya, but I **just** can’t get on with Nina

(iii) In warnings:

Вот всем расскажу́ об э́том

Now I’m going to tell everyone about this

(iv) In expressing feelings such as amazement, indignation etc.:

Вот дура́к!

What an idiot!

(5) Да

Да is used:

(i) In self-exoneration:

Да я молчу́!

But I am being quiet!

(ii) In consolation:

Да ты не расстраивайся!

Now don’t upset yourself!

(iii) In indefinite answers:

Да я не знаю!

Oh, I don't know!

(6) Ещё

Ещё is used to express:

(i) Outrage or indignation:

Ещё учёным назывáется!

And he calls himself a **scholar**!

(ii) Emphatic affirmation:

— Брат играёт в шахматы?

'Does your brother play chess?'

— **Ещё** как!

'**I'll say** he does!'

(iii) Emphatic denial:

— Вы голодны?

'Are you hungry?'

— **Ещё** чего! Я только
что позавтракала!

'**Hungry!** I've only just
had breakfast!

(iv) A warning or threat:

Ещё увóлят!

You'll get the sack (**if you don't
watch out!**)

(7) Же

(i) **Же** denotes categorical, insistent affirmation, often stressing the indisputability of a statement:

Ты **же** обеща́л!

But you promised!

(ii) When qualifying interrogative words, **же** imparts a peremptory nuance, implying astonishment, indignation, disapproval etc.:

Куда **же** ты идёшь?

Where do you think **you're** going?

Кто **же** так поступаёт?

Now whoever behaves like **that**?

(iii) The particle can also specify precisely a place or time denoted by an adverb or adverbial phrase, e.g. здесь **же** 'at this very spot':

Приеду сегодня **же**

I shall come **straightaway**

Там **же** живёт мой брат

That's where my brother lives

Тогда **же** было произнесено главное слово современной биологии
— ген (*Russia Today*)

It was precisely at **that** point that the most important word in modern biology was uttered — gene

(iv) With demonstrative pronouns **же** conveys meanings of identity or similarity:

Мы идём по **той же** улице
We are walking down **the same** street

Он одёт в **такой же** пиджак
He is dressed in the **same kind of** jacket

(v) **Же** imparts an insistent or impatient nuance to imperatives:

Стой **же** спокойно, наконец! Now, **will** you stand still!

(vi) The set phrase **надо же!** expresses extreme indignation:

— Это он так написал?! — громко возмущилась Попова. —
Нахалюга! **Надо же!** . . . Ну **надо же!** (Shukshin)
'He wrote that?!', shouted Popova indignantly. 'The impudent puppy!
What a nerve! What a confounded nerve!

(8) И

(i) **И** may lend emphasis to the word which *follows* it:

Я **и** стараюсь! I **am** trying!

(ii) It can also mean 'even/also/too/as well':

Он говорит **и** по-китайски He speaks Chinese **as well**

(iii) In negative statements it means 'either':

И я не знаю I don't know **either**

(9) -ка

(i) **-ка** may combine with the first-person perfective future of a verb to denote mild resolve:

Пойдú-**ка** домой I **think I might** go home

(ii) It softens the force of an imperative, expressing:

(a) Gentle exhortation:

Дай-**ка** спички, Стас (Gagarin)
'**Do** give me the matches, Stas'

(b) Feelings of admiration, scorn etc.:

Смотрí-**ка**, какие кни́жки он чита́ет!
Just look what books he is reading!

(iii) Alternatively, it may contain a note of indignant challenge:

Посто́й-**ка** под холо́дным ду́шем!
Just you try standing under a cold shower!

(10) Ну

Ну is used:

(i) In exclamations:

Ну, уста́л!	Am I tired!
Ну и ну!	Well, well!

(ii) In emphasis:

Ну, моро́з!	Quite a frost!
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Note

Sometimes there is an element of sarcasm:

Ну, геро́й!	Some hero!
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(iii) With the perfective future to denote grudging consent:

Ну пойдём, е́сли ты так хо́чешь!
All right, let's go, if you are so keen!

(iv) To express impatience:

Ну, хва́тит!	That's enough of that!
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(v) To express a peremptory imperative:

Ну, говори́!	All right , out with it!
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(11) -то

(i) **-то** may be used to express diffidence, a reluctance to be categorical:

— Тут у вас в́ипить-**то** мо́жно?
 'Are you allowed to have a **drink** here?'

— Воо́бще-**то** не по́ложено
 '**Actually** it's not normally allowed'

(ii) It is frequently used to refer to something already mentioned:

to have kept your mouth shut'

(iv) **Вот ещё/вот уж:**

— Надо бы его разыскать — сказал Пётр.

— **Вот ещё.** — нахмурилась Лёля. — Больше тебе делать нечего? (Uvarova)

'I suppose we ought to go looking for him', said Petr.

'**Come off it**', said Lelya with a frown. 'Have you nothing better to do with your time?'

Вот уж не знаю.

I haven't the **foggiest**

(v) **Да и/да уж:**

А костёр горёл-горёл **да и** спалил 1 700 гектаров леса (*Russia Today*)

And the bonfire burnt on and on and **went and** destroyed 1,700 hectares of woodland

Да уж и сама-то хороша! (Shcherbakov)

She's a fine one to talk!

(vi) **Ещё бы/ещё как:**

Весело на душе! **Ещё бы:** сбылась мечта (Sobolev)

I'm overjoyed! **You bet**, my dream has come true

Согласится? **Ещё как согласится!**

Will he agree? **I'll say he will!**

(vii) **Как это:**

Обидится? **Как это** обидится!

Take offence? **Not a chance!**

(viii) **Не то чтобы уж:**

А Клавдия была **не то чтобы уж** красавица . . . (Shcherbakov)

And Claudia was **not exactly** what you might call a raving beauty . . .

(ix) **Ну и; ну уж; ну уж и; ну-ка; ну что ж:**

Ну и баба! — бормотал он (Grekova)

'**What a woman!**', he murmured

Ну уж не сердись, я не хотела тебя обидеть
Come on, don't get angry, I didn't mean to offend you

Ну уж и придумал!
 That's a tall story **if you like!**

Ну-ка, попробуй мою походку, — сказал Кондрат (Shukshin)
 'Go on then, do my walk', said Kondrat

Правда, не стал ни поэтом, ни певцом . . . Ну что ж, не всем быть поэтами! (Kazakov)
 It's true I became neither a poet nor a singer . . . **Oh well**, not everybody can be a poet!

(x) Так и; так уж:

Я так и не понял I simply **didn't** understand

Не буду я так уж расхваливать эти фильмы (*Russia Today*)
 I'm not **exactly** going to give these films rave notices

(xi) Хоть бы/хотя бы/лишь бы:

Хоть бы кто-нибудь мимо прошёл . . . (Gagarin)
If only someone passed this way . . .

Она рада была бы любому попутчику, хотя бы технику Мишэлю (Zalygin)
 She would have been glad of any travelling companion, **even if** it was only the technician Michel

(xii) Что же, что ж:

Что же ты не целуешь меня? — слабо шепчет она (Kazakov)
 'Why **ever** don't you kiss me?', she whispers faintly

(2) Particles may appear separately, at different points in the statement:

(i) Ведь . . . же:

Знаменитые спортсмены: боксёр Геннадий Шатков, конькобежец Борис Стенин — кандидаты наук. Но **ведь** это же единички. Исключение (*Russia Today*)
 There are famous sportsmen who have doctorates: the boxer Gennady Shatkov, the skater Boris Stenin. **But you know**, these are isolated exceptions

(ii) **Ведь . . . -то:**

Опозда́ем **ведь** на по́езд-**то**

You know, we're **going to go and** miss that train

(iii) **Ну . . . же:**

Ну, ну, — сердито доба́вил он. — **Я же** сказа́л, что иду́
(Proskurin)

'**All right**', he added angrily, 'I said I was coming, **didn't I**?'

— **Ну**, обнимите́сь **же**

— **Come on then**, give each other a hug

(iv) **Уж . . . -то:**

Уйде́т. **Уж** о́н-**то** её зна́ет! (Koluntsev)

He'll leave. **After all**, he knows her **if anyone does!**

(3) Feelings such as indignation can generate whole strings of particles:

Ну да ведь и дура́к же он!

Well, really, you know, the man is a complete idiot!

(4) The phrase **куда́ там** can appear either with or without **уж**:

Про́бовали её учи́ть програ́ммированию — **куда́ там**. Си́нус
пу́тала с инте́ралом (Grekoва)

They tried to teach her programming. **Some hope**. She confused sines
with integrals

— Те́перь та́ких мужико́в и нет, как мой стары́к, — говори́т
стару́ха.

— **Куда́ уж там!** (Rasputin)

'They don't make them like my old man any more', says the old woman.

'**No way!**'

Word Order

475 Introductory comments

(1) The inflected nature of Russian allows greater flexibility of word order than is possible in English, where only rigid order of words differentiates the meaning of sentences such as ‘Ivan loves Masha’ and ‘Masha loves Ivan’.

(2) In Russian, by contrast, inflexional endings indicate the functions of words irrespective of their position in the sentence. Thus, the feminine noun accusative ending **-y** in **Мáшу** identifies Masha as the object of the verb both in **Ивáн лóбит Мáшу** ‘Ivan loves Masha’ and **Мáшу лóбит Ивáн** ‘It is Ivan who loves Masha’, the difference between the two sentences being one of emphasis rather than meaning.

(3) Word order in Russian, though flexible, is by no means arbitrary, however; any disruption of the accepted or ‘neutral’ order throws the displaced elements into sharp relief.

(4) Questions of word order are ideally considered within the wider context of a narrative, since the order of elements in a sentence is often determined by what has gone before (see **476**) (3) (ii)).

476 ‘New’ and ‘given’ information

(1) ‘New’ information

Each statement contains *new* information. Except in emotionally charged language, where different criteria apply (see 484), this *new* information appears at or towards the *end* of a statement in Russian, in contrast with English, where it usually appears at or near the *beginning*. Thus, in the sentence

В Женёве состоялся фестиваль A festival took place in Geneva

the festival (**фестиваль**), as the nucleus of the new information, occupies the *final* position, while the verb **состоялся** ‘took place’ is also new but of secondary significance. **В Женёве** ‘in Geneva’, as incidental or ‘*given*’ information (see (2)), appears in *initial* position.

Note

- (a) The reverse order: **Фестиваль состоялся в Женёве** answers the question **Где состоялся фестиваль?** ‘**Where** did the festival take place?’ and can be rendered as ‘The festival took place in Geneva’.
- (b) In English, nouns which are the subject of *new* information are usually preceded by ‘*a*’: ‘There is **a** dog in the garden’ (**В саду есть собака**). Nouns which are the subject of *given* information are usually preceded by ‘*the*’: ‘**The** dog is in the garden’ (**Собака в саду**).

(2) ‘Given’ information

Most statements contain an item or items of ‘*given*’ information, that is, information which is either known or presumed to be known to the reader, has been mentioned before, can be assumed from the context, or is entirely incidental to the event being described. *Given* information is never the point of the utterance. It is often circumstantial, taking the form of an adverb of time, place or manner:

Здесь удобно It’s comfortable **here**

5 октября в Женёве в непринуждённой обстановке начались переговоры по разоружению
Disarmament talks began **in a relaxed atmosphere in Geneva on 5 October**

(3) ‘Given’ and ‘new’ information

- (i) The order ‘given’ information + ‘new’ information (with less essential preceding essential new items) is standard in a Russian sentence:

От реформы цен никто не пострадает (*Ogonek*)

No one will suffer from the price reform

In this example, price reform (**реформа цен**), as a matter of common knowledge ('given' information), occupies initial position, while **никто не пострадает** 'no one will suffer' is *new* information and appears in final position.

(ii) An utterance must be considered within its overall context. Thus, in the following extracts, the *new* information at the end of each successive sentence becomes the *given* information at the start of the next:

В то время я жил в маленьком северном городе. **Город** стоял на берегу **рек**. **По реке** плыли белые пароходы (Kazakov)

At that time I lived in a small northern **town**. **The town** stood on the bank of a **river**. **Down the river** sailed white steamers

На площади возле решётки стоят **столбы**. **К столбам** прикреплены железные **таблички**. Везде этих **табличек** останавливаются автобусы (Soloukhin)

On the square close to the railing stand **pillars**. To **these pillars** are attached iron **plaques**. Buses stop close to **these plaques**

Note

The principle that 'given' information precedes 'new' allows the differentiation of ostensibly synonymous statements such as На столе **ваза** 'There is a **vase** on the table' (answering the question **Что** на столе? 'What is on the table?') and Ваза **на столе** 'The vase is **on the table**' (answering the question **Где** ваза? 'Where is the vase?').

(iii) Sometimes the relative status of items is implied by context. Thus, in

Я включил радио и услышал **знакомую балладу**. **Пела** Алла Пугачёва

I switched on the radio and heard a **well-known ballad**. **It was being sung** by Alla Pugacheva

the reference in the first sentence to a well-known ballad (*new* information) determines the status of **пела** 'it was being sung' as *given* information at the start of the second. **Алла Пугачёва**, as new information, appears in *final* position, since the point of the statement is to establish, not that someone was singing a ballad (that is known from the first sentence), but *who* was singing it.

477 Relative position of subject and verb

The order of the items in an utterance containing a subject and a verb depends on which is *new* information and which is *given*.

(1) Subject + verb

In the following example the subject (**оте́ц**) represents *given* information and precedes the verb (**у́мер**), which reports *new* information:

Оте́ц у́мер	Father has died
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(2) Verb + subject

The reverse order (verb + subject) is found in the following contexts; in each of them the *new* information is represented by the *noun*, which accordingly occupies *final* position:

(i) Impersonal statements, statements about the weather etc.:

Иде́т дождь	It is raining
Дул све́жий ве́тер	A fresh breeze was blowing

(ii) Statements in which the verb denotes existence, non-existence, coming into existence, beginning, continuing, finishing etc.:

Наступи́ла о́сень	Autumn arrived
Иде́т фи́льм	A film is on

Проходи́т день, **начина́ется** друго́й — ни зву́ка (*Literaturnaya gazeta*)
One day passes, another dawns; not a sound is heard

(iii) Statements in which the verb denotes occurrence, state, process etc.:

Произоше́л несча́стный слу́чай	An accident happened
Родила́сь дочь	They have had a daughter
У меня́ боли́т го́рло	I have a sore throat
Зазвони́л телефо́н	The phone began to ring

(iv) Constructions which involve the quotation of direct speech:

— Кто така́я? — **спроси́л он** впло́госа (Grekoва)
‘Who is she?’, he asked *sotto voce*

Note

This also applies to statements which indicate a **source of information**:
 Как **сообщает ИТАР-ТАСС** . . . ‘As **ITAR-TASS reports** . . .’.

(v) Questions introduced by an interrogative word:

Где живёт ва́ша дочь ?	Where does your daughter live?
Когда открыва́ется магази́н ?	When does the shop open?

Note

- (a) The order interrogative word + subject + predicate is compulsory with a *pronoun* subject (Почему́ **он** **пришёл**? ‘Why has he come?’), but optional with a *noun* subject (Куда́ **летит** **самолёт**/Куда́ **самолёт** **летит**? ‘Where is the aircraft flying to?’).
- (b) Questions which are *not* introduced by an interrogative word have the same order as a direct statement. Compare Она́ передала́ вам **письмо́** ‘**She passed** the letter to you’ and Она́ передала́ вам **письмо́**? ‘**Did she pass** the letter to you?’ Alternatively, **ли** may appear as second element after the operative word (or words) in the question: Передала́ **ли** она́ вам **письмо́**? ‘Did she pass the letter to you?’ Compare **Она́** **ли** вам передала́ **письмо́**? ‘Was it **she** who passed the letter to you?’, **Письмо́** **ли** она́ вам передала́? ‘Was it a **letter** she passed to you?’ The order operative word + **ли** is also used in reported questions: Он спроси́л, **передала́** **ли** она́ вам **письмо́** ‘He asked if she had passed the letter to you’.

478 Subject, verb, object

(1) Subject + verb + object

The order subject + verb + object is encountered in the vast majority of sentences which contain these three elements:

Пётр купи́л кни́гу	Peter has bought a book
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Note

- (a) A *pronoun* object may precede (or follow) the verb: — Я **вас** не понима́ю, товарищ генера́л (Grekoва) ‘I don’t understand you, comrade general’; Он **ничего́** не ест ‘He isn’t eating anything’.
- (b) The order *subject + object noun + verb* places unusual emphasis on the verb (or object noun): Пётр Ната́шу **уважа́ет** ‘Peter **respects**

Natasha' (even though he may not, for example, **like** her); Мы **дом** купили 'We have bought a **house**'. This order is found predominantly in spoken Russian.

- (c) The order *subject + verb + object* is virtually mandatory when the accusative case of subject noun and object noun is the same as the nominative, since a reversal of the order would change the meaning, cf. Клі́мат ме́няет ра́стительность 'The climate alters vegetation' and Ра́стительность ме́няет клі́мат 'Vegetation alters the climate', Ма́ть лю́бит дочь 'The mother loves her daughter' and Дочь лю́бит ма́ть 'The daughter loves her mother'.

(2) Object + verb + subject:

- (i) The order object + verb + subject

Кни́гу купі́л Пётр

in which the subject (**Пётр**) is central to the *new* information, is rendered in English by a passive construction ('The book **was bought** by Peter') or by a construction introduced by 'It is . . .' ('**It is Peter** (and not someone else) who bought the book').

- (ii) This order is also common:

- (a) With an **inanimate** subject:

Ме́ня разбу́дила гро́за
I was awakened by a thunderstorm

А́нну Каре́нину задави́л по́езд
Anna Karenina was crushed by a train

- (b) In sentences which contain set phrases in which the noun component is **qualified**:

Бо́льшо́е значе́ние имее́т уче́бный проце́сс
The teaching process is of great significance

Су́щественную ро́ль игра́ли профсою́зы
A significant role was played by the unions

- (c) In impersonal constructions involving the third-person plural: Ово́щи уже́ **выгружа́ют** 'The vegetables are already being unloaded', Вас **про́сят** к телефо́ну 'You are wanted on the phone', Её́ **зову́т** Ната́лья 'She is called Natalya'.

(3) Object + subject + verb

Other variants in word order depend on the relative weighting of elements in a particular context. Thus, in the example

Эту работу Генеральный секретарь хорошо понимал (*Literaturnaya gazeta*)

This was work the General Secretary understood well

the *subject* (Генеральный секретарь) and *object* (эту работу) are *given* information, while *adverb* + *verb* (хорошо понимал) are *new* information and appear in final position.

479 The position of the adjective

(1) The long (attributive) adjective

(i) An attributive adjective normally precedes the noun it qualifies:

И вот — один из **солнечных июньских дней** (Tokareva)

And now it was one of those sunny June days

Note

(a) See **484** (1) for stylistic variants.

(b) The attributive adjective may follow the noun in menus, stock lists etc. (кофе **натуральный** ‘real coffee’, ромашка **садовая** ‘garden camomile’) and where the noun is generic (Елена — девушка **умная** ‘Elena is an intelligent girl’).

(c) The long adjective follows the noun when used in **predicative** meaning: Он **очень молодой** (or **молод**) ‘he is very young’.

(ii) Contrary to English practice, circumstantial information may be placed in parenthesis between the attributive adjective and the noun:

Они жили в большом, **с тремя этажами и со многими окнами,** особняке

They lived in a large detached house **with three floors and many windows**

(iii) As in English, the adjective may follow the noun, standing in apposition to it and separated from it by a comma:

На нарах лежал полушубок, **новенький,** очень **нарядный** (Vogomolov)

On the bunk lay a sheepskin coat, brand-new, very smart

(2) The short adjective

A short adjective normally follows the noun, as its predicate.

Note

See **484** (1) (i) for stylistic variants and **359** (3) (ii) note (a) for the position of short-form perfective passive participles.

480 The position of the adverb

As a class which tends to convey *less essential* rather than *new* information, adverbs more often than not *precede* the verb. The adverb is usually positioned next to the verb it qualifies; in other positions it is thrown into sharp relief, since it then normally conveys new, not given, information and moves towards the end of the statement.

(1) Adverbs and adverbial phrases of time

(i) Adverbs of time usually *precede* the verb:

Он **всегда́** ошиба́ется He always gets it wrong
Он **ещё не** просну́лся He has not woken up yet

Вы **до́лго** жда́ли? — спроси́л Кривору́чко (Rybakov)
'Did you have long to wait?', asked Krivoruchko

(ii) In descriptions of incidents and events, the adverb of time is usually in initial position, followed by verb + subject, which jointly convey the *new* information:

Вдруг разда́лся вы́стрел (Rybakov)
Suddenly a shot rang out

(iii) However, adverbs and adverbial phrases that convey essential *new* information appear in *final* position: e.g. the question **Когда́** экипа́жи соверши́ли пе́рвый совме́стный полёт? 'When did the crews make the first joint flight?' can be answered as follows:

Экипа́жи соверши́ли пе́рвый совме́стный полёт **в ию́ле 1975**
го́да
The crews carried out the first joint flight in July 1975

(2) Adverbs and adverbial phrases of place

(i) Adverbs and adverbial phrases of place also normally appear in initial position as incidental or *given* information, preceding the *new* information conveyed either by the subject alone or by the verb +

subject:

В городе два театра
There are two theatres **in the town**

Из служёбного здания вышел высокий вялый человек (Grekova)
A tall sluggish-looking man left **the service building**

(ii) However, adverbs of place that report *new* information appear in *final* position: e.g. the question **Где** расположена Красная площадь? ‘Where is Red Square situated?’ can be answered as follows:

Красная площадь расположена **в центре Москвы**
Red Square is situated in the centre of Moscow

(3) Adverbs and adverbial phrases of manner and degree

(i) Adverbs of manner and degree in **-о/-е** usually precede the verb or adjective:

Он **хорошо** говорит
He speaks well

— А вы откуда? — **дружелюбно** спросил Тёткин (Grekova)
‘And where are you from?’, asked Tetkin amicably

Она **искренне** рада нам
She is genuinely glad to see us

Compare also adverbs of the type по-дружески: Он **по-дружески** пожал мне руку ‘He shook my hand in a friendly manner’. However, adverbs of nationality and language normally *follow* the verb: Он понимает **по-русски** ‘He understands Russian’.

(ii) A number of other adverbs of manner and degree, e.g. **вообще не** ‘not at all’, **едва** ‘barely’, and analogous prepositional phrases also precede the verb, cf.:

Она **в спешке** забыла поднять книгу
In her haste she forgot to pick up the book

481 Sentences that contain more than one adverb or adverbial phrase

The normal sequence for different types of adverb and adverbial phrase

appearing within the same sentence is as follows:

- 1 adverbs/adverbial phrases of *time*
- 2 adverbs/adverbial phrases of *place*
- 3 other types of adverb/adverbial phrase (*manner, cause* etc.):

Среди но́чи к переднему краю оборо́ны тайко́м подкра́лся
солда́т-разве́дчик

In the middle of the night a reconnaissance scout stealthily crept up
to the front line

Ка́ждый час в на́шей стране́ от боле́зни се́рдца умира́ет 80 челове́к
(*Ogonek*)

Every hour 80 people in our country die of heart disease

Неда́вно в Москв́е проводи́лся кинофестива́ль

A film festival was held recently in Moscow

В Росси́и бы́стро вы́росли города́ и се́ла

Towns and villages sprang up quickly in Russia

482 The position of the noun or pronoun in impersonal constructions

The accusative or dative noun or pronoun normally occupies initial position in impersonal expressions, with *new* information in final position:

Бра́та лихора́дит	My brother is feverish
Дом зажгло́	The house caught fire
Та́нюшке во́семь лет	Tanyushka is eight years old
Мне хо́лодно	I feel cold
Ей пришло́сь бежа́ть	She had to run
Нам нельзя́ бы́ло кури́ть	We were not allowed to smoke

Note

The same order applies to constructions with **пра́виться/по-** and with **ну́жен, нужна́, ну́жно, нужны́**: **Взро́слым** понравился фильм ‘The adults liked the film’, **Студэ́нту** нужны́ де́ньги ‘The student needs money’. Reversal of this order throws the noun or pronoun into sharp relief: **Фильм** понравился **взро́слым** (, **но не де́тям**) ‘The **adults** liked the film (, but the **children** didn’t)’; **Де́ньги** нужны́ **мне** (, **а не ей**) ‘I need the money (, and she **doesn’t**)’.

483 The position of particles in the sentence

For the position of particles see 469.

484 Word order in expressive styles

A departure from neutral word order may create an expressive, emotionally charged style which is particularly characteristic of *spoken* Russian. Most parts of speech are involved:

(1) Adjectives

(i) In expressive styles short predicative adjectives may *precede* the noun, while in neutral style they *follow* the noun:

Лёгко вопро́с, **незначительна** фигу́ра студёнта (Рубаков)

The question is simple, the figure of the student insignificant (cf. neutral word order **Вопро́с лёгко**, **фигу́ра студёнта незначительна**)

(ii) This also applies to short-form participles:

Решён вопро́с о вы́ходе диспётчеров на пёнсию в вóзрасте 55 лет (*Literaturnaya gazeta*)

The question of retirement for air traffic controllers at age 55 has been resolved (cf. neutral order **Вопро́с решён**)

(iii) Conversely, attributive adjectives may *follow* the noun in expressive styles, whereas in neutral style they precede it:

В те дни жа́ра в Москвё стоя́ла **невероятная** (V. Voinovich)

At the time the heat in Moscow was unbelievable

Compare also displacement of the adjective in:

— Да, **комфортабельной** эту маши́ну не назовёшь (Grekova)

‘No, you wouldn’t exactly call this vehicle comfortable’

(iv) Another expressive device is to place the verb between the attributive adjective and the noun:

Уда́чная бы́ла охо́та! That **was** a successful hunt!

(2) Verb + subject

In expressive styles, *new* information may precede *given*, a reversal of neutral order:

У меня **голова́ бо́лит**

I have a headache (cf. neutral У меня бо́лит голова́)

Кто звони́л? **Ма́рина звони́ла**

Who rang? Marina rang (cf. neutral Звони́ла Ма́рина)

(3) Adverbs

(i) The order of adverbs/adverbial phrases may be reversed in expressive styles:

Хо́лодно се́годня

It is cold today (cf. neutral Се́годня хо́лодно)

Ста́льной зу́б сверка́л у него́ во рту (Рубаков)

A steel tooth glittered in his mouth (cf. neutral У него́ во рту сверка́л ста́льной зу́б)

(ii) Compare also the displacement of adverbs in their function as introductory words:

Смотре́ть э́тот филь́м **стра́шно и сты́дно** (*Ekran detyam*)

It is terrible and embarrassing to see this film (cf. neutral Стра́шно и сты́дно смотре́ть э́тот филь́м)

(4) Pronouns

The pronoun may *follow* the predicate in expressive styles, often with a concomitant change of emphasis:

— Хоро́шая пе́сня, — сказа́л Марк.

— То́лько **поёте вы́** её пло́хо, замети́ла Со́фья Алекса́ндровна (Рубаков)

‘Nice song’, said Mark.

‘Except that **you** don’t sing it very well’, remarked Sofia Aleksandrovna (cf. neutral вы пло́хо её поёте)

Что сде́лал **ты́**?

What did **you** do? (cf. neutral Что ты сде́лал?)

Glossary

The glossary contains brief definitions of the most important grammatical terms used in the book. Additional information may be obtained through the subject index.

Acronyms — words formed from the initial letters of other words: **вуз** from **вы́сшее учебное заведе́ние** ‘higher educational institution’ (HEI).

Adjectival nouns — words that have the form of adjectives but function as nouns: **сто́ловая** ‘dining room’.

Adjectives — parts of speech that qualify or describe a noun or pronoun: **большо́й** дом ‘a large house’ (long, attributive, form), она́ **голоднá** ‘she is **hungry**’ (short, predicative, form).

Adverbs — parts of speech that modify a verb: он бежа́л **бы́стро** ‘he ran **quickly**’, an adjective: **неожи́данно** хоро́ший ‘**unexpectedly** good’, or another adverb: **кра́йне** ме́дленно ‘**extremely** slowly’.

Agent nouns — nouns denoting persons who perform an action: **писа́тель** ‘a writer’.

Agreement — convention that (a) adjectives, pronouns and numerals should be in the same *case* as the noun they qualify: они живу́т в **двух большо́их палáтках** ‘they live in two large tents’; (b) adjectives, nouns, pronouns and verbs should share the same *gender*: **ста́рая соба́ка спалá** ‘the old dog was asleep’, and *number* (singular or plural): **э́тот ма́льчик бы́л до́ма** ‘**this boy was** at home’, **э́ти ма́льчики бы́ли** до́ма ‘**these boys were** at home’.

Alphabetisms — words comprising initial capital letters which are pronounced as letters of the alphabet: РФ [эр-эф] (Российская Федерация) ‘RF’ (Russian Federation) or as words: ВИЧ [вич] (вирус иммунодефицита человека) ‘HIV’.

Apposition — a situation in which a series of nouns or noun phrases denote the same object or person and thus share the same grammatical case: она замужем за моим братом Иваном ‘she is married to **my brother Ivan**’.

Aspect — a grammatical feature of the Russian verb that distinguishes repeated or durative actions (expressed by the **imperfective** aspect: он пьёт ‘he **drinks**’, она писала ‘she **was writing**’) from actions that denote initiation (он заплакал ‘he **began weeping**’), conclusion or result (она заведёт часы ‘she **will wind up** the clock’), or short duration (дети поспали ‘the children **had a nap**’).

Attributive adjective — the full (long) form of an adjective, usually appearing before the noun, qualifying it and agreeing with it in gender, case and number: она добра к младшему брату ‘she is kind to **her younger brother**’, она довольна прилежными учениками ‘she is pleased with the **diligent pupils**’.

Augmentative nouns — suffixed nouns that denote largeness: рыб-ина ‘a **large fish**’.

Cardinal numerals — the basic numbers denoting quantity: один дом ‘**one** house’, два карандаша ‘**two** pencils’, etc.

Case — the form of a noun, pronoun or adjective that shows its grammatical relationship to other words in the sentence: он смотрит на мою сестру ‘he is looking at **my sister**’ (accusative case), она сидела в самом удобном кресле (prepositional/locative case) ‘she was sitting in **the most comfortable armchair**’, etc.

Collective nouns — nouns that denote a collection or group of beings or things: скот ‘cattle’, листва ‘foliage’.

Comparative degree — the second degree of comparison in the series ‘positive’ (e.g. умный ‘clever’), ‘comparative’ (e.g. более умный ‘cleverer’) and ‘superlative’ (e.g. самый умный ‘cleverest’).

Compound — a word created by joining together two or more other words or forms: книголюб ‘book-lover’, виноградосоковыжималка ‘grape-juice squeezer’.

Conditionals — verb forms that express conditions or hypotheses: если бы я знал, я сказал бы вам ‘if I knew, I would tell you’.

Conjunctions — parts of speech that join words, phrases or clauses: собáки **и** ко́шки ‘dogs **and** cats’, молодóй, **но** о́пытный ‘young **but** experienced’, го́лоден, **потому́ что** не за́втракал ‘hungry **because** he hasn’t had breakfast’, etc.

Declension — the process of adding endings to the stems of nouns, adjectives, pronouns and numerals to indicate their grammatical relationship to other words in the sentence: цвет кро́в-**и** ‘the colour of blood’, разошл́сь по ра́зн-**ым** прич́н-**ам** ‘separated for various reasons’, обе́дал с пять-**ю** друзь-**ями** ‘dined with five friends’.

Diminutives — suffixed forms of nouns and adjectives that denote smallness: блéдн-**енькое** ли́ч-**ико** ‘a pale little face’.

Direct object — noun or pronoun that denotes the person or thing affected by the action of a verb: она́ показывае́т **его́** ‘she punishes **him**’, он чита́ет **кни́гу** ‘he is reading **a book**’.

Fleeting vowels — vowels that interrupt a sequence of consonants but are lost in declension: ры́нок ‘market’ (genitive ры́нка).

Gender — the classification of words, in accordance with their endings, as masculine (дом ‘house’, музе́й ‘museum’ [zero endings]), feminine (маш́и́н-**а** ‘car’, недел-**я** ‘week’) or neuter (окн-**о́** ‘window’, по́л-**е** ‘field’).

Gerund (verbal adverb) — indeclinable verb form that fulfils an adverbial function, replacing a co-ordinate or adverbial clause: он сиди́т, чита́я ‘he sits **reading**’ (= and reads), прочита́в кни́гу, я поста́вил её на по́лку ‘**having read** (= after I had read) the book I put it on the shelf’.

Imperative — verb form used to express commands: **Слу́шай!** ‘**Listen!**’

Imperfective verb — a verb that denotes a past, present or future action (a) in progress: она́ **вела́** маши́ну ‘she **was driving** a car’, я **бу́ду отды́хатъ** ‘I **will be relaxing**’ or (b) repeated: он **звони́т** ей раз в неде́лю ‘he **rings** her once a week’.

Impersonal constructions — constructions that have no subject: **холо́дно** ‘it is cold’, ему́ **повезло́** ‘he is in **luck**’, **говора́т, что** ‘**it is said** that’, etc.

Indefinite numerals — numerals that denote an imprecise quantity: **мно́го** де́нег ‘**a lot of** money’, **не́сколько** челове́к ‘**a few** people’.

Indefinite pronouns — pronouns that refer to unspecified persons or things: **кто-то** ‘someone’, **что-нибудь** ‘something, anything’.

Indirect object — person or object indirectly affected by an action, e.g. benefiting from it: он подарил куклу девочке ‘he gave the doll [direct object] **to the little girl** [indirect object]’.

Infinitive — the basic form of a verb: **читать/прочитать** ‘to read’.

Intransitive verbs — verbs that do not require an object in order to express their meaning: он лежал на полу ‘he **was lying** on the floor’.

Modals — forms that denote necessity, possibility or impossibility: он **должен** работать ‘he **must** work’, ей **нужно** отдыхать ‘she **needs** to relax’, он **не мог** ответить на вопрос ‘he **could not** answer the question’.

Mood — the manner in which the action of a verb expresses itself, allowing the action to be judged as real or unreal. Of the four moods, the **indicative** states a fact: он **копал** в саду ‘he **was digging** in the garden’, the **imperative** expresses a command: **Сотри** с доски! ‘**Clean** the board!’, the **conditional/subjunctive** expresses a state, event or action as possible, conditional or desirable: **скорее бы лето** ‘roll on summer’, and the **infinitive** denotes the action of the verb in its most abstract form, without relation to person, time or number: **читать** ‘to read’.

Morphology — the study of linguistic forms: the declension of nouns, adjectives, pronouns and numerals, the conjugation of verbs, etc.

Mutation — sound changes caused by adjacent morphemes or words: **т:ч** in лететь ‘to fly’/лечу ‘I am flying’.

Nouns — words that name a person, thing or quality: **отец** ‘father’, **стол** ‘table’, **любовь** ‘love’.

Number — grammatical category that distinguishes whether a noun is singular (**книга** ‘book’) or plural (**книги** ‘books’).

Numerals — figures or words used to represent numbers, e.g. **три (3)** ‘three’.

Oblique case — any case form of a noun, pronoun or adjective except for the nominative.

Ordinal numerals — numerals that express order or position in a series and are adjectival in form: **третий** урок ‘**the third** lesson’.

Palatalization — the softening of a consonant by raising the centre of the tongue towards the hard palate during pronunciation. A palatalized or soft consonant is indicated by a following soft sign (ь), я, е, и, ё or ю: **ма́ть** ‘mother’, **пя́тёрка** ‘a five’, **лю́ди** ‘people’.

Particles — indeclinable words that impart emotive or expressive nuances of meaning to other words, phrases or whole sentences: **Что же ты де́лаешь?** ‘whatever are you doing?’, **Уж** приду́мал! ‘Now pull the other one!’.

Participles — verb forms that take the form of adjectives and (a) replace relative clauses: **Ма́льчик, пи́шущий** письмо́ (= **ко́торый пи́шет** письмо́) ‘A boy **writing** a letter (= **who is writing** a letter’), **Да́ча, по́строенная** сосе́дями (= **ко́торую** сосе́ди по́строили) ‘A country cottage **built** by the neighbours’ (= **which** the neighbours **built**), or (b) function as predicates: **Вопро́с решён** ‘The question **has been solved**’.

Partitive genitive — a genitive that indicates that only part of a substance is involved in an action or state: она́ **выпи́ла** **моло́ка** ‘she drank **some milk**’.

Passive constructions — constructions in which the grammatical subject is the object of the action: **во́дка де́лается** из карто́феля ‘**vodka is made** from potatoes’, он **был спасён** пожа́рником ‘he **was saved** by a fireman’.

Perfective verb — verb that describes a completed action in the past (она́ **подпи́сала** письмо́ ‘she **signed** the letter’) or anticipates its completion in the future (я **закро́ю** окно́ ‘I **will close** the window’).

Possessive pronouns — pronouns that denote possession: **мой** телефо́н ‘**my** telephone number’, **её** компью́тер ‘**her** computer’.

Predicate — that part of a sentence or phrase that conveys information about the subject: **оте́ц бо́лен** ‘father **is ill**’, **де́ти пе́ли** **пе́сню** ‘the children **were singing** a song’, **мой брат** **стал** **солда́том** ‘my brother **became a soldier**’.

Prefix — form added to the beginning of a word to create a new word with a different meaning: **перече́хать** ‘to **reread**’, **спуск** ‘descent’ or a different aspect: **напи́сать** ‘to **write**’.

Prepositions — words that precede a noun (or pronoun), expressing its relation to another word in the sentence: она́ **из** Росси́и ‘she is **from** Russia’, я разгово́ривал **с** гостя́ми ‘I was conversing **with** the guests’.

Pronouns — words used instead of nouns, to avoid repetition: где Пётр? Вот **он** ‘Where is Peter? There **he** is’.

Reflexive constructions — constructions in which subject and object refer to the same person or thing: он **мо́ется** ‘he **washes (himself)**’.

Reflexive pronouns — pronouns that refer to the same person as the subject of the sentence: он дово́лен **собо́й** ‘he is pleased with **himself**’, она́ смóтрит на **себя́** в зéркало ‘she looks at **herself** in the mirror’.

Relative pronouns — pronouns that refer back to a preceding noun (the antecedent): де́вочка, **ко́торая** сдала́ экза́мен ‘the girl **who** passed the examination’, кни́га, **ко́торую** все чита́ют ‘a book (**that**) everyone is reading’.

Root — an irreducible element of language from which other words are formed: **-да-** as in **да́ть** ‘to give’, **изда́тель** ‘publisher’, **прода́жа** ‘sale’, etc.

Semantics — the study of the meanings of words, morphemes, word groups, etc.

Stem — the root of a word, to which prefixes, suffixes and endings may be added: **-сух-** as in **за́суха** ‘drought’, or the root and its variants: **-зр-** as in **зри́тельный** ‘visual’/**-зер-** as in **зе́ркало** ‘mirror’/**-зор-** as in **обзóр** ‘survey’, etc.

Stump compounds — abbreviations based on the abridged form of one or more words: **драгмета́лл** (from **драгоценный мета́лл**) ‘precious metal’, **спецхра́н** (from **специальное храни́лище**) ‘special storage area’.

Subject — the person about whom or the thing about which the sentence conveys information: **пóезд** остано́вился ‘**the train** stopped’, **её́ сестра́** вы́шла за́муж ‘**his sister** got married’, **мы** гото́вы ‘**we** are ready’.

Subjunctive mood — a verb structure that presents a state, event or act as something desired: он **хо́чет, что́бы я голосо́вал** ‘he wants **me to vote**’, or hypothetical: я не по́мню, **что́бы он** хоть раз **оши́бся** ‘I don’t remember **him** even once **making a mistake**’.

Suffixes — forms added to the end of a word or stem to create a new word: **социализ́зм** ‘socialism’.

Superlative degree — *see* Comparative degree

Syntax — the set of rules that determines the grammatical arrangement of words in a sentence to show their relationship to each other (e.g. the

relationship of verbs, adjectives and prepositions to the case of the noun they govern: **подражать** 'to imitate' + dative, **довóлен** 'satisfied' + instrumental, **из** 'from' + genitive, etc.).

Tense — verb form that denotes the time of an action (past, present or future): онí **выиграли** 'they won', я **слушаю** 'I am listening', мы **начнём** 'we will begin'.

Transitive verbs — verbs which can express their meaning only through government of a direct object: он **снимáет пальтó** 'he takes off his coat'.

Transliteration — representation of the spelling of a word using the letters of a different alphabet: **perestroika** (transliteration of перестрóйка 'restructuring'), **Solzhenitsyn** (transliteration of Солжени́цын).

Unvoiced (voiceless) consonants — consonants pronounced without vibration of the vocal cords: **п, к, с, т, ф, ш** and others.

Verbs — parts of speech that denote an action (он **печа́тает** 'he is typing') or state (она́ **жила́** на юге 'she lived in the south').

Voiced consonants — consonants pronounced with vibration of the vocal cords: **б, г, з, д, в, ж** and others.

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Note

Some quotations in this book have been taken from standard grammars of the Russian language.

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Word Index

The *Word Index* does not include every word that appears in the *Grammar*. It is intended to interact with the *Contents* and the *Subject Index* to facilitate access to all parts of the book. It contains all verbs with a difficult conjugation, all prepositions, conjunctions, particles, verbs and adjectives which take an oblique case, prefixes, many suffixes and other endings, and additional words and forms which illustrate significant grammatical points.

Words which appear in lists are not normally included. Thus, instead of enumerating nouns which have a locative in -ý, only the ending -ý appears in the *Word Index*, as a guide to relevant nouns. This principle is adhered to throughout the *Word Index*.

Many verb forms can be traced through their infinitives, and the forms of many nouns, pronouns, adjectives and numerals through their nominative case.

The *Word Index* contains references to stress patterns, except for stress in prepositions (for prepositional stress see pages 419–21).

All references are to page numbers.

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Note

ГАИ [гай] (Госуда́рственная автомоби́льная инспе́кция) ‘State Vehicle Inspectorate’ (see pp. 61 and 99) has now been replaced by **ГИБДД** [ги-бэ-дэ-дэ] (Госуда́рственная инспе́кция безопа́сности доро́жного движе́ния) ‘State Road Traffic Safety Inspectorate’.