

**Your handy guide
to everyday words and expressions**

Russian Phrases

FOR
DUMMIES

A Reference for the Rest of Us!

- ✓ Quick & easy approach gives you language fundamentals up front
- ✓ Words to Know sections help you find the right words fast
- ✓ Pronunciation key helps you talk the talk

Andrew Kaufman, PhD
Serafima Gettys, PhD
Nina Wieda
Coauthors of Russian For Dummies®



Russian Phrases For Dummies[®]

**by Andrew Kaufman, PhD, and Serafima
Gettys, PhD, with Nina Wieda**



WILEY

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Russian Phrases For Dummies®

Published by

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

111 River St.

Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2007 by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana

Published by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, 978-750-8400, fax 978-646-8600. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Legal Department, Wiley Publishing, Inc., 10475 Crosspoint Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46256, 317-572-3447, fax 317-572-4355, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, the Wiley Publishing logo, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, A Reference for the Rest of Us!, The Dummies Way, Dummies Daily, The Fun and Easy Way Dummies.com and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and other countries, and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Wiley Publishing, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: The publisher and the author make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this work and specifically disclaim all warranties, including without limitation warranties of fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales or promotional materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for every situation. This work is sold with the understanding that

the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If professional assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought. Neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for damages arising herefrom. The fact that an organization or Website is referred to in this work as a citation and/or a potential source of further information does not mean that the author or the publisher endorses the information the organization or Website may provide or recommendations it may make. Further, readers should be aware that Internet Websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.

For technical support, please visit www.wiley.com/techsupport.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2007932467

ISBN: 978-0-470-14974-4

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



About the Authors

Andrew Kaufman, PhD, is currently a Visiting Lecturer in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Virginia. He holds a PhD in Slavic Languages and Literatures from Stanford University, and he has recognized success as both a published scholar and an innovative, award-winning teacher of Russian language, literature, and culture at some of the country's top universities. To learn more about Dr. Kaufman, please visit his website at www.professorandy.com.

Serafima Gettys, PhD, earned her doctorate degree in Foreign Language Education from Gertzen State Pedagogical University, Leningrad, USSR. She is currently a Coordinator of the Foreign Language Program at Lewis University, where she also teaches Russian. Prior to coming to Lewis University, she taught Russian at Stanford University. Gettys is also a member of a number of professional language associations.

Nina Wieda is a doctoral student in Slavic Languages and Literatures at Northwestern University in Chicago. A trained linguist with an MA in Social Sciences, Nina also has a book of poetry published in Russian, and a number of scholarly articles on Chekhov and contemporary drama published in English.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register/.

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

Acquisitions, Editorial, and Media Development

Compiler: Laura Peterson-Nussbaum

Project Editor: Elizabeth Kuball

Acquisitions Editor: Tracy Boggier

Copy Editor: Elizabeth Kuball

Technical Editor: Maria Kuruskina

Editorial Manager: Michelle Hacker

Editorial Supervisor and Reprint Editor: Carmen Krikorian

Editorial Assistant: Erin Calligan Mooney, Joe Niesen, Leeann Harney, David Lutton

Cartoons: Rich Tennant, www.the5thwave.com

Composition

Project Coordinator: Heather Kolter

Layout and Graphics: Stephanie D. Jumper, Heather Ryan, Julie Trippetti Christine Williams Erin Zeltner

Anniversary Logo Design: Richard Pacifico

Proofreaders: Jacqui Brownstein, Charles Spencer

Indexer: Broccoli Information Management

Publishing and Editorial for Consumer Dummies

Diane Graves Steele, Vice President and Publisher, Consumer Dummies

Joyce Pepple, Acquisitions Director, Consumer Dummies

Kristin A. Cocks, Product Development Director, Consumer Dummies

Michael Spring, Vice President and Publisher, Travel

Kelly Regan, Editorial Director, Travel

Publishing for Technology Dummies

Andy Cummings, Vice President and Publisher, Dummies Technology/General User

Composition Services

Gerry Fahey, Vice President of Production Services

Debbie Stailey, Director of Composition Services

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"Honey, please! Be patient! How's anyone going to know what's wrong unless I find the Russian word for 'alligator'?"

Contents

[Title](#)

[Introduction](#)

[About This Book](#)

[Conventions Used in This Book](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[Icons Used in This Book](#)

[Where to Go from Here](#)

[Chapter 1: I Say It How? Speaking Russian](#)

[Looking at the Russian Alphabet](#)

[Sounding Like a Real Russian with Proper Pronunciation](#)

[Chapter 2: Grammar on a Diet: Just the Basics](#)

[Making the Russian Cases](#)

[Building Your Grammar Base with Nouns and Pronouns](#)

[Decorating Your Speech with Adjectives](#)

[Adding Action with Verbs](#)

[Chapter 3: Numerical Gumbo: Counting of All Kinds](#)

[Counting in Russian](#)

[First, Second: Ordinal Numbers](#)

[The Clock's Ticking: Telling Time](#)

[Monday, Tuesday: Weekdays](#)

[Checking Your Calendar](#)

[Money, Money, Money](#)

[Chapter 4: Making New Friends and Enjoying Small Talk](#)

[To Whom Am I Speaking? Being Informal or Formal](#)

[Comings and Goings: Saying Hello and Goodbye](#)

[Break the Ice: Making Introductions](#)

[Let Me Tell You Something: Talking about Yourself](#)

[Talking about Family](#)

[Where Do You Work?](#)

[Let's Get Together: Giving and Receiving Contact Information](#)

[I'm Sorry! I Don't Understand](#)

[Chapter 5: Enjoying a Drink and a Snack \(or a Meal!\)](#)

[Focusing on Food Basics](#)

[Enjoying Different Meals](#)

[Going Out for Groceries](#)

[Eating Out with Ease](#)

[Chapter 6: Shop 'Til You Drop](#)

[Where and How to Buy Things the Russian Way](#)

[You Wear It Well: Shopping for Clothes](#)

[This or That? Deciding What You Want](#)

[You Gotta Pay to Play](#)

[Chapter 7: Making Leisure a Top Priority](#)

[Together Wherever We Go: Making Plans to Go Out](#)

[Going Out on the Town](#)

[Shootin' the Breeze about Hobbies](#)

[Reading All About It](#)

[Rejoicing in the Lap of Nature](#)

[Doing Things with Your Hands](#)

[Scoring with Sports](#)

[Chapter 8: When You Gotta Work](#)

[Searching for a Job](#)

[Communicating in the Workplace](#)

[Ringin' Up Telephone Basics](#)

[Sending a Letter, a Fax, or an E-Mail](#)

[Chapter 9: I Get Around: Transportation](#)

[Understanding Verbs of Motion](#)

[Navigating the Airport](#)

[Conquering Public Transportation](#)

[Asking “Where” and “How” Questions](#)

[Understanding Specific Directions](#)

[Describing Distances](#)

[Chapter 10: Laying Down Your Weary Head: House or Hotel](#)

[Hunting for an Apartment or a House](#)

[Settling Into Your New Digs](#)

[Booking the Hotel That’s Right for You](#)

[Checking In and Out](#)

[Chapter 11: Dealing with Emergencies](#)

[Finding Help in Case of Accidents](#)

[Receiving Medical Care](#)

[Calling the Police When You’re the Victim of a Crime](#)

[Chapter 12: Ten Favorite Russian Expressions](#)

[Oj!](#)

[Davaj](#)

[Pryedstav'tye Syebye](#)

[Poslushajtye!](#)

[Pir Goroj](#)

[Ya Tryebuyu Prodolzheniya Bankyeta](#)

[Slovo — Syeryebro, A Molchaniye — Zoloto](#)

[Odna Golova Khorosho, A Dvye — Luchshye](#)

[Drug Poznayotsya V Byedye](#)

[Saryj Drug Luchshye Novykh Dvukh](#)

[Chapter 13: Ten Phrases That Make You Sound Russian](#)

[Tol'ko Poslye Vas!](#)

[Vy Syegodnya Pryekrasno Vyglyaditye!](#)

[Zakhoditye Na Chaj!](#)

[Ugosh'ajtyes'!](#)

[Priyatnogo Appetita!](#)

[Syadyem Na Dorozhku!](#)

[Sadis', V Nogakh Pravdy Nyet](#)

[Ni Pukha, Ni Pyera!](#)

[Tseluyu](#)

[S Lyogkim Parom!](#)

Introduction

Speaking more than one language is like living more than one life, one of the ancient philosophers said. And it's true — traveling in a foreign country such as Russia suddenly becomes a lot more exciting when you can engage in elegant small talk with a hotel receptionist, compliment your tour guide's dress, or actually read the menu and order the food that you really want. Being able to ask for things instead of pointing at them, and being able to get directions from the locals instead of staring at a map, are some of the little things that make you feel at home.

You don't even need to cross the ocean to immerse yourself in Russian culture; you can find little Russian neighborhoods (or even pretty big ones!) in many American cities. Whether your colleagues, your neighbors, or your friends speak Russian, the best way to win their hearts is to speak their language to them.

Now, *Russian Phrases For Dummies* won't make you a fluent reader of Dostoevsky in the original (most Russians themselves need somewhat of a preparation for that). It will, however, equip you with phrases necessary to function in many real-life situations, from shopping to visiting the theater. So, buckle up, and good luck on your journey! Or, as the Russians like to say, **Zhelayem vam udachi!** (*zhih-lah-eem vahm oo-dah-chee*; We wish you good luck!)

About This Book

The best thing about *Russian Phrases For Dummies* is that you don't have to read all the way through it to get the information you need. You can open the table of contents, find the section that interests you at the moment, and start talking! You don't have to read the previous chapters to understand any of the sections of this book.

Another thing you don't need to do is memorize long vocabulary lists or grammar rules. We give you ready-made phrases; you just need to read them and start using them right away to impress your Russian friends!

Conventions Used in This Book

Here are some conventions that allow you to navigate through this book with maximum

ease:

- ✓ We present Russian phrases in transliteration (Russian sounds represented with English characters). You can see the Cyrillic alphabet in Chapter 1. Russian terms are easily found in the text because they're set in **boldface**.
- ✓ Each Russian word is followed by its pronunciation and English translation in parentheses. In each pronunciation, the stressed syllable is in *italics*.

A little example to give you an idea of what we mean: The phrase for "I love you" in Russian is **Ya tebya lyublyu**, (*ya tee-b'ah l'oo-bl'oo*; I love you).

Foolish Assumptions

When we started writing this book, we tried to imagine what our future reader was going to be like. In the end, we came up with a list of foolish assumptions about who we think wants to read this book. Do you recognize yourself in these descriptions?

- ✓ You know no Russian — or if you took Russian in high school or college, you don't remember a word of it.
- ✓ You're not looking for a book that will make you fluent in Russian; you just want to know some words, phrases, and sentence constructions so that you can communicate basic information in Russian.
- ✓ You don't want to have to memorize long lists of vocabulary words or a bunch of boring grammar rules.
- ✓ You want to have fun and learn a little bit of Russian at the same time.

Icons Used in This Book

For your convenience, we marked some information in this book with special icons. Check out this guide to the icons, and the next time you see one of them, you'll know what to expect!



From famous Russian writers to a polite way to decline an invitation, this icon marks a wide variety of curious and useful facts about Russian culture.



If you're curious about how the Russian language works, and if you want to expand your command of Russian to the extent of making up your own phrases, these bits of grammatical information may be of interest to you.



This icon points out some important information about Russian that's worth remembering.



This icon signals a useful bit of information that can make life easier for you, whether it's a handy way to remember a useful word or an insider's advice on how to better handle a certain situation.



This icon draws your attention to something you need to know to avoid a common mistake.

Where to Go from Here

Go ahead and start anywhere. You don't have to read in a specific order. Just choose a topic that seems appealing, find the corresponding chapter in the table of contents, and start speaking Russian!

If you've never taken Russian before, you may want to read Chapters 1 and 2 before tackling the later chapters. They give you some basics, such as how to pronounce the sounds.

Chapter 1

I Say It How? Speaking Russian

In This Chapter

- ▶ Understanding the Russian alphabet
 - ▶ Pronouncing words properly
 - ▶ Discovering popular expressions
-

Welcome to Russian! Whether you want to read a Russian menu, enjoy Russian music, or just chat it up with your Russian friends, this is the beginning of your journey. In this chapter, you get all the letters of the Russian alphabet, discover the basic rules of Russian pronunciation, and say some popular Russian expressions and idioms.

Looking at the Russian Alphabet

If you're like most English speakers, you probably think that the Russian alphabet is the most challenging aspect of picking up the language. But not to worry. The Russian alphabet isn't as hard as you think.

From A to Ya: Making sense of Cyrillic

The Russian alphabet is based on the Cyrillic alphabet, which was named after the ninth-century Byzantine monk, Cyril. But throughout this book, we convert all the letters into familiar Latin symbols, which are the same symbols we use in the English alphabet. This process of converting from Cyrillic to Latin letters is known as *transliteration*. We list the Cyrillic alphabet here in case you're adventurous and brave enough to prefer reading real Russian instead of being fed with the ready-to-digest Latin version of it. And even if you don't want to read the real Russian, check out Table 1-1 to find out what the whole fuss is about regarding the notorious "Russian alphabet."



Notice that, in most cases, a transliterated letter corresponds to the way it's actually pronounced. As a rule, you may assume that the transliteration fairly well represents the actual pronunciation. The biggest exceptions to this are the letter **й**, which is transcribed as *j* but pronounced like an English *y*, and the soft sign **ь**, which is

transcribed as ‘ but only softens the preceding consonant.



Scholars do not agree on the letter **j**. Some believe that it’s a consonant; others think that it’s a vowel. We don’t want to take sides in this matter and are listing it both as a consonant and a vowel.



Consonants are pronounced softly if they are followed by **ye, yo, ya, or yu** (е, ё, я, ю). These letters (**ye, yo, ya, and yu**) preserve the *y* sound if they are at the beginning of the word (as in *yes, your, yard, and youth*).

Table 1-1 The Russian Alphabet in Cyrillic

<i>The Letter in Cyrillic</i>	<i>Transliteration (The Corresponding Letter or Sound in the English Alphabet)</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Vowel or Consonant</i>
-------------------------------	--	----------------------	---------------------------

Aa	A	<i>ah</i> if stressed as in <i>father</i> ; <i>uh</i> if appearing in any unstressed syllable, as in <i>human</i>	Vowel
----	---	---	-------

The Letter in Cyrillic	Transliteration (The Corresponding Letter or Sound in the English Alphabet)	Pronunciation	Vowel or Consonant
Бб	B	<i>b</i> as in <u>b</u> ook; <i>p</i> if at the end of the word	Consonant
Вв	V	<i>v</i> as in <u>v</u> ictor; <i>f</i> if at the end of the word	Consonant
Гг	G	<i>g</i> as in <u>g</u> reat; <i>k</i> if at the end of the word	Consonant
Дд	D	<i>d</i> as in <u>d</u> uck; <i>t</i> if at the end of the word	Consonant
Ее	Ye	<i>ye</i> as in <u>y</u> es if at the beginning of the word; <i>eh</i> as in <u>t</u> en if preceded by any consonant, making that consonant sound soft; <i>ee</i> as in <u>s</u> eek if appearing in any unstressed syllable before a stressed syllable; <i>eh</i> after a stressed syllable and at the end of the word, making the preceding consonant sound softly	Vowel
Ёё	Yo	<i>yo</i> as in <u>y</u> our	Vowel
Жж	Zh	<i>zh</i> as <u>m</u> ea <u>s</u> ure; <i>sh</i> if at the end of the word	Consonant
Зз	Z	<i>z</i> as in <u>z</u> ebra; <i>s</i> if at the end of the word	Consonant
Ии	I	<i>ee</i> as in <u>p</u> ee <u>k</u>	Vowel

The Letter in Cyrillic	Transliteration (The Corresponding Letter or Sound in the English Alphabet)	Pronunciation	Vowel or Consonant
Йй	J	very short <i>y</i> as boy or May	Vowel or Consonant
Кк	K	<i>k</i> as in <u>king</u>	Consonant
Лл	L	<i>l</i> as in <u>lamp</u>	Consonant
Мм	M	<i>m</i> as in <u>mommy</u>	Consonant
Нн	N	<i>n</i> as in <u>note</u>	Consonant
Оо	O	<i>oh</i> as in <u>as</u> in <u>talk</u> ; <i>ah</i> as in <u>park</u> , if appearing one syllable before the stressed syllable; <i>uh</i> as in <u>Mormon</u> , if appearing in any other unstressed syllable	Vowel
Пп	P	<i>p</i> as in <u>port</u>	Consonant
Рр	R	flap <i>r</i> , similar to trilled <i>r</i> in Spanish, as in <u>madre</u> , for example	Consonant
Сс	S	<i>s</i> as in <u>sort</u>	Consonant
Тт	T	<i>t</i> as in <u>tie</u>	Consonant
Уу	U	<i>oo</i> as <u>shoot</u>	Vowel
Фф	F	<i>f</i> as in <u>fact</u>	Consonant
Хх	Kh	<i>kh</i> like you're clearing your throat, or like the German <i>ch</i>	Consonant

<i>The Letter in Cyrillic</i>	<i>Transliteration (The Corresponding Letter or Sound in the English Alphabet)</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Vowel or Consonant</i>
Цц	Ts	<i>ts</i> as in <u>cats</u>	Consonant
Чч	Ch	<i>ch</i> as in <u>chair</u>	Consonant
Шш	Sh	<i>sh</i> as in <u>shock</u>	Consonant
Щщ	Sh'	soft <i>sh</i> , as in <u>sheep</u>	Consonant
Ъ	"	hard sign (makes the preceding letter hard)	Neither
Ыы	Y	<i>ih</i> (similar to <i>i</i> in <u>big</u>)	Vowel
Ь	'	soft sign (makes the preceding letter soft)	Neither
Ээ	E	<i>e</i> as in <u>end</u>	Vowel
Юю	Yu	<i>yu</i> as in <u>use</u> if at the beginning of the word; <i>oo</i> as in <u>tooth</u> if preceded by any consonant, making that consonant sound soft	Vowel
Яя	Ya	<i>ya</i> if stressed as in <u>yard</u> ; if at the beginning of the word; <i>ah</i> if preceded by any consonant, making that consonant sound soft; <i>ee</i> if unstressed and not in the final syllable of the word; <i>uh</i> if unstressed and in the final syllable of the word	Vowel

I know you! Familiar-looking, same-sounding letters

You may notice that some of the Russian letters in the previous section look a lot like English letters. The letters that look like English and are pronounced like English letters are

✓ Aa

✓ Kk

✓ Mm

✓ Oo

✓ Ty

Whenever you read Russian text, you should be able to recognize and pronounce these letters right away.

Playing tricks: Familiar-looking, different-sounding letters



Some Russian letters look like English letters but are pronounced differently. You want to watch out for these:

✓ Bb : It looks like English Bb, at least the capital letter does, but it's pronounced like the sound *b* as in *victor* or *vase*.

✓ Ee : This one's a constant annoyance for English speakers, who want to pronounce it like *ee*, as in the English word *geese*. In Russian, it's pronounced that way only if it appears in an unstressed syllable. Otherwise, if it appears in a stressed syllable, it is pronounced like *ye* as in *yes*.

✓ Ee : Don't confuse this with the letter Ee. When two dots appear over the Ee, it's considered a different letter, and it's pronounced like *yo* as in *your*.

✓ Hh : It's not the English Hh — it just looks like it. Actually, it's pronounced like *n* as in *nick*.

✓ Pp : In Russian it's pronounced like a trilled *r* and not like the English letter *p* as in *pick*.

✓ Cc : This letter is always pronounced like *s* as in *sun* and never like *k* as in *victor*.

✓ Yy : This letter is pronounced like *oo* as in *shoot* and never like *y* as in *yes*.

✓ Xx : Never pronounce this letter like *z* or *ks* as in the word *Xerox*. In Russian, the

sound it represents is a coarse-sounding, guttural *kh*, similar to the German *ch*. (See “Surveying sticky sounds,” later in this chapter, for info on pronouncing this sound.)

How bizarre: Weird-looking letters

As you’ve probably noticed, quite a few Russian letters don’t look like English letters at all:

✓ Бб

✓ Гг

✓ Дд

✓ Жж

✓ Зз

✓ Ии

✓ Йй

✓ Лл

✓ Пп

✓ Фф

✓ Цц

✓ Чч

✓ Шш

✓ Щщ

✓ ь

✓ Ыы

✓ Ь

✓ Ээ

✓ Юю

✓ Яя



Don’t panic over these letters. Just because they look weird doesn’t mean they’re any harder to say than the others. It’s just a matter of memorizing their proper pronunciations. (Refer to Table 1-1 for details on how to say each letter.)

You may recognize several of these weird letters, such as *Ф, Г, Э, Л, П*, from learning the Greek alphabet during your fraternity or sorority days.

Sounding Like a Real Russian with Proper Pronunciation

- [*Microinteractions: Designing with Details.pdf, azw \(kindle\)*](#)
- [50 Great Myths of Human Sexuality online](#)
- [click Son Of Interflux here](#)
- [**The Ladybird Book of the Hipster \(Ladybirds for Grown-Ups\) pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub**](#)
- [download online The Mystery of the Pantomime Cat \(The Five Find-Outers, Book 7\) here](#)
- [download .NET 4.0 Generics Beginner's Guide](#)

- <http://www.netc-bd.com/ebooks/Raising-Stony-Mayhall.pdf>
- <http://wind-in-herleshausen.de/?freebooks/50-Great-Myths-of-Human-Sexuality.pdf>
- <http://www.netc-bd.com/ebooks/Black-Stats--African-Americans-by-the-Numbers-in-the-Twenty-first-Century.pdf>
- <http://test.markblaustein.com/library/Consumer-Culture-and-Postmodernism--Published-in-association-with-Theory--Culture---Society-.pdf>
- <http://www.1973vision.com/?library/The-Mystery-of-the-Pantomime-Cat--The-Five-Find-Outers--Book-7-.pdf>
- <http://weddingcellist.com/lib/The-Herschel-Objects-and-How-to-Observe-Them--Astronomers--Observing-Guides-.pdf>