

**Nina Potapova**

# **Learning Russian**

**I**

*Second Edition*



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**Нина Потапова**  
**Изучаем русский язык**  
(для говорящих на английском языке)

*Раздел 1*

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## FOREWORD

### 1. Structure of the Course

*Learning Russian* is designed for adult students of Russian; however, it can also be used to teach Russian to children of medium and higher school age. Its purpose is to help the learner acquire a working knowledge of Russian pronunciation, grammar, spelling and vocabulary.

The course comprises four small books.

**Book One** consists of fifty elementary lessons acquainting the student with the fundamentals of Russian phonetics, and teaching him to read and write Russian and to build easy sentences necessary in speaking and writing Russian. In the first twelve lessons attention is paid mainly to pronunciation, only the most elementary grammar being explained. In the following lessons, grammar themes necessary for the spoken language are gradually introduced in texts containing a carefully selected vocabulary. Exercises intended to provide practice in vocabulary and grammar and to develop correct speech habits are supplied with each lesson.

**Book Two** also contains fifty lessons and as far as grammar and vocabulary are concerned is a continuation of Book One. However, the structure of the lessons in this book is different: 25 of its fifty lessons deal with new grammar material; each grammar lesson is followed by one in which the main part is a text illustrating the grammar studied in the preceding lesson.

In the grammar lessons practice is provided by means of standard sentences widely used in conversational Russian, proverbs, sayings and short quotations.

The text lessons contain notes on word-building and vocabulary.

Vocabularies and exercises are supplied to each lesson in the book.

Both Book One and Book Two give about 2200 to 2300 words and the grammar needed to speak on everyday subjects and to understand simple texts.

**Book Three** has thirty-five lessons based on short stories by, or extracts from, Soviet authors. The emphasis is laid on vocabulary and phraseology. In Book Three there is a change in the method of work: the texts of the preceding books were specially designed to suit a particular grammatical or lexical theme; now, on the contrary, the author's text determines the grammatical and lexical explanations. Nevertheless, these explanations follow a definite system.

The purpose of Book Three is to teach the student to understand easy literary works in the original.

A large number of exercises in Book Three require a creative approach on the part of the learner. Their aim is to enrich the student's vocabulary and make his speech more fluent.

**Book Four** is in fact a book of reference. It contains Grammatical Tables, the Key to the Exercises, Russian-English and English-Russian alphabetical Vocabularies and a Grammar Index.

The Grammatical Tables sum up the entire grammar expounded in Books One, Two and Three. Only a few of the tables contain additional information. The tables can be used for reference throughout the whole course and for systematic revision.

The Key provides answers to most exercises in Books One and Two and to some in Book Three.

The Russian-English alphabetic Vocabulary contains all the words occurring in the Textbook, the English-Russian Vocabulary contains only words occurring in the translation exercises from English into Russian.

The Grammar Index sums up the grammar and refers the reader to the lessons in which the grammatical theme in question is explained. The Index is given in English and in Russian to enable the student to learn Russian grammatical terms.

## 2. How to Work at this Course

Below we shall try to answer some of the questions often asked by English teachers and students of Russian.

1. **May the lessons be studied in a different order?** — In the case of beginner students the order of the lessons should not be changed, for each lesson is based on the grammar and vocabulary given earlier.

Advanced students wishing to review some grammar theme or vocabulary or simply to brush up their spoken Russian may pick out lessons to suit their purpose.

**2. Is it necessary to supplement the lessons by additional material?**—Any additional material for beginners should be based on the grammar and vocabulary the student knows. Otherwise new material may even retard the progress of beginner students and discourage them. At a later stage, however, if additional material is needed, it may be chosen as required by the teacher. Additional texts may be borrowed from "Russian", an Elementary Course, by Nina Potapova, which is the nearest to the course in method and vocabulary, or scientific and technical articles from other books, newspapers and periodicals.

The exercises supplied in the course are quite sufficient for a concise course in Russian. Besides doing the exercises given at the end of each lesson, the student may copy the texts of the lessons, translate them into English and then back into Russian, do dictations on the text, learn some sentences by heart, compose sentences of his own using the grammar and vocabulary studied, ask questions on parts of the sentences in the text and analyse those sentences. If the student should feel that he needs additional exercises they may be borrowed from Russian, an Elementary Course, by Nina Potapova or from some other Textbook.

**3. Could not the Key to the exercises hinder serious study?**—We do not think so. The Key to the Exercises is of use primarily to those studying without a teacher. It will also be useful to those who have a teacher. The Key will help the student to observe language phenomena more attentively and to check on his knowledge. The teacher should not fear that the student will consult the Key, for there are many ways of ascertaining whether he knows the material.

All remarks and suggestions should be forwarded to the Progress Publishers, 21 Zubovsky Boulevard, Moscow, USSR.

*Nina Potapova*

## THE RUSSIAN ALPHABET

Letter		Pronounced approximately as in the English	Name of letter
Printed	Written		
А а	<i>А а</i>	a in 'after'	а (as pronounced)
Б б	<i>Б б</i>	b in 'book'	бэ (beh)
В в	<i>В в</i>	v in 'vote'	вэ (veh)
Г г	<i>Г г</i>	g in 'good'	гэ (geh)
Д д	<i>Д д</i>	d in 'day'	дэ (deh)
Е е	<i>Е е</i>	ye in 'yes'	е (as pronounced)
Ё ё	<i>Ё ё</i>	yo in 'yonder'	ё (as pronounced)
Ж ж	<i>Ж ж</i>	s in 'pleasure'	жэ (zheh)
З з	<i>З з</i>	z, s in 'zone', 'please'	зэ (zéh)
И и	<i>И и</i>	ee in 'meet'	и (as pronounced)
Й й	<i>Й й</i>	y in 'boy'	и краткое (ee short)
К к	<i>К к</i>	k	ка (kah)
Л л	<i>Л л</i>	l in 'full', 'gold' (cf. Lesson 6)	эл, эль (el)
М м	<i>М м</i>	m	эм (em)
Н н	<i>Н н</i>	n	эн (en)
О о	<i>О о</i>	o in 'pot'	о (as pronounced)

Letter		Pronounced approximately as in the English	Name of letter
Printed	Written		
П п	<i>Па</i>	p	пэ (peh)
Р р	<i>Рр</i>	r (cf. Lesson 2)	эр (err)
С с	<i>Сс</i>	s in 'sister'	эс (ess)
Т т	<i>Тт</i>	t in 'it' (cf. Lesson 1)	тэ (teh)
У у	<i>Уу</i>	oo in 'book'	у (oo)
Ф ф	<i>Фф</i>	f	эф (ef)
Х х	<i>Хх</i>	(cf. Lesson 3)	ха (khah)
Ц ц	<i>Цц</i>	tz in 'quartz'	цэ (tseh)
Ч ч	<i>Чч</i>	ch	чэ (chch)
Ш ш	<i>Шш</i>	sh	ша (shah)
Щ щ	<i>Щщ</i>	shch (cf. Lesson 11)	ща (shchah)
Ъ ъ	<i>Ъ ъ</i>	(cf. Lesson 12)	«твёрдый знак» (‘hard sign’)
Ы ы	<i>Ы ы</i>	(cf. Lesson 9)	ы (as pronounced)
Ь ь	<i>Ь ь</i>	(cf. Lesson 6)	«мягкий знак» (‘soft sign’)
Э э	<i>Э э</i>	e in 'men'	э
Ю ю	<i>Ю ю</i>	u in 'university'	ю (as pronounced)
Я я	<i>Я я</i>	ya in 'yard'	я

The Russian alphabet has 33 letters. Some of them represent sounds similar to those of the corresponding English letters, others represent different sounds and others again have no corresponding letters in English.

The names of the letters and their order in the alphabet are different in Russian and in English.

The letters **ы**, **ь**, **ъ** never begin a word.

The letter **й** is used to begin only a few words of foreign origin, such as **Йорк** (York).

Capital letters are used at the beginning of a sentence and for proper names. The use of capital letters in headlines differs somewhat in the two languages.