

# Guide to Russian Grammar Reference

The Russian Grammar Reference is a highly compact and simplified approximation of the language. Technically, it does *not* represent correct Russian, but it is incredibly close for the greatly reduced amount of memorization it requires. Using this Reference as a foundation will save you from memorizing mountains of irrelevant and distracting detail that will be learned naturally by experience at later stages.

## Abbreviations.

The classification defined here, sufficient to describe any inflected form of any part of speech, is used throughout the Reference.

Number:

s singular  
p plural

Gender-Number:

m masculine  
f feminine  
o neuter  
p plural

Case:

n nominative  
a accusative  
g genitive  
p prepositional  
d dative  
i instrumental

Noun: n *Number-Gender Case* [+–]

+,- animate, inanimate

Verb: v{d|id}{p|ip}{i|e{*Number* [123]|c[+–c]}}{t{ *Gender-Number* | c[+–c]}}|v  
*Number*}

i imperative (tense)  
e present (tense)  
t past (tense)  
v imperative (tense)  
c participle

[+–c] active, passive, adjectival participle

[123] first, second, third person

{d|id} definite, indefinite

{p|ip} base form imperfective, perfective, imperfective

Adjective: j *Number-Gender Case*

Parts of Speech:

p→Case preposition taking case

av adverb

## Alphabet.

The Cyrillic alphabet is constructed from the Roman, Greek, and Hebrew alphabets with some Cyrillic innovations thrown in. Phonetically, it is organized almost precisely as the Roman, with a small group of Greek insertions and a small group of Cyrillic insertions near the beginning, and all the remaining Cyrillic letters at the end. It is more easily memorized with this kept in mind.

## Orthography.

### Case.

The Russian cases are used in the Reference in an order that is different from the one traditionally used, because it places morphological similarities closer together.

In parts of speech that are masculine or neuter, the accusative case logically 'doesn't exist'. Animate parts become genitive and inanimate parts become nominative. This process is indicated by "\*" throughout.

### Nouns. Gender/Number.

Gender identity in plural form is obscured, so it makes sense to speak of a **gender-number**.

The gender-number of a noun can often be determined from its last letter.

The only ambiguity exists when a noun ends in 'б'.

### Verbs. Conjugation.

All the verbal forms are given for the main conjugations.

Some common exceptions are given on the right.

### Nouns.

The tables give the endings of the noun declensions for each gender-number, and for two frequent exceptions. [Is plural a party to the accusative case folding?] The ending of plural genitive nouns is unpredictable.

### Adjectives.

The table gives the endings of the adjective declensions for each gender-number. The top table lists the endings for the attributive form, the bottom table for the predicative. Note that adverbs have the same form as predicative adjectives.

### Definite and Demonstrative Pronouns.

The table gives the endings for the pronoun declensions for each gender-number.

### Interrogatives.

The diagram shows the construction of interrogative pronouns. The prefix is selected depending on whether the pronoun is animate or inanimate, and the suffix is selected depending on case.

### Personal Pronouns.

The table gives the declensions of the personal pronouns.

### Possessive Pronouns.

The diagram shows the construction of possessive pronouns, depending on the gender-number of the principal (the 'owner') and the gender-number and case of the referent (the 'thing owned').

If the principal is third-person, the pronoun is given by the top table. Otherwise, the pronoun is formed from a prefix which is selected by the gender-number of the principal, and a suffix which is selected by the gender-number of the referent and the case.

### Prepositions.

The table lists the most common prepositions, ordered by word length,

and the case they commonly take.

### Numerals.

The diagram shows how to construct number phrases. The lines at the top left show how to identify the case of the parts of the phrase. The table on the right shows how to find the nominative form of numerals. The table on the left shows the declension of numerals. Under the table on the right is an important exception.