

Russian



Russian is spoken by about 270 million people world wide, including Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, all countries of the former Soviet Union and former Eastern Block countries. It is written in the Cyrillic alphabet and has many dialects.

When it comes to grammar, Russian and English are very different. In English, meaning is usually expressed by adding words or changing word order. Russian has a complex system of changing word structure or adding prefixes and suffixes, (or word endings). There is no fixed word order in a Russian sentence, nouns are all categorized as either masculine or feminine, even objects like books and bridges, and there are no articles. These differences create major difficulties for a Russian learning English.

Although many letters in both alphabets are similar there may be difficulties in writing *s, r, i, h, l, f, b, t, j, I, G, Q, N*, which do not occur in the Cyrillic alphabet.

English auxiliaries *do, have, will* and *be* have no equivalent in Russian. So Russian speakers may say *I no like it* or *How you like it?*

There is no *er* sound in Russian. This is particularly troublesome when words start with *w*, e.g. *work* may be pronounced *wark* or sound like *walk*.

As well as there being a difficulty distinguishing between *v* and *w*, the *th* sounds in *there* and *thin* are unfamiliar to Russian speakers and they may replace the sounds with either *s* or *z*. There is also no *ng* sound as in *sing* and they may say *sig* or *sin*. *Tr, dr, br, pr* and *tw* are all difficult to pronounce for

Russian speakers.

Russian speakers tend not to use conversation fillers and instead give more direct answers than English speakers might expect.

Would you like to go to the movies? might get the response *No I wouldn't* instead of, *Thank you for asking I'm afraid I can't*. They may also say *of course* a lot when they mean *yes* which can sound a little aggressive to the English ear.

In Russian there is one word *pozhaluista* which can mean *please, thank you, sorry* and *don't mention it*.

Having come from multilingual environments, Russian speakers are often familiar with learning other languages and are usually enthusiastic about learning.

Russians are usually very expressive, and when conversing often sit or stand much closer together and touch each other more than New Zealanders might feel comfortable with. They use a lot of hand movements to make a point. One, when they mean



an emphatic *no* is to put the fingers into a clenched fist with the thumb extended between the index and middle fingers in 'I got your nose' style.

To indicate *help me* or *danger*, the fingers are fist with the index and middle fingers extended in a 'v' and placed on either side of the speaker's throat.

Where Westerners might find spitting offensive it has its place in Russian gestures and beliefs. To ward off bad luck or to express hope for continued good fortune, a person spits three times over the left shoulder.



Russian

**NOW YOU'RE
TALKING**
COMMUNITY LANGUAGE CARDS

GENERAL

ENGLISH	RUSSIAN	PRONUNCIATION
Hi/Hello.....	Здравствуйте/Привет.....	Zdravstvuite/Privet
Bye/Goodbye.....	До свидания/Пока.....	Do svidaniya/Poka
How are you?.....	Как дела?.....	Kak dela?
Fine/Well, and you?.....	Хорошо/В порядке, а у Вас?.....	Khorosho/V poryadke, a u vas?
Not so good.....	Неважно.....	Nevazhno
What's your name?.....	Как Вас зовут?.....	Kak vas zovut?
My name is.....	Меня зовут.....	Menya zovut
Pardon?.....	Извините?.....	Izvinite?
Yes.....	Да.....	Da
No.....	Нет.....	Net
I don't know.....	Я не знаю.....	Ya ne znayu
Please.....	Пожалуйста.....	Pozhaluista
Thank you.....	Спасибо.....	Spasibo

DURING THE LESSON

Good!.....	Хорошо.....	Khorosho
Do you understand?.....	Вы понимаете?.....	Vy ponimaete?
Try again.....	Попробуйте ещё раз.....	Poprobuite eshcho raz
Do you want some help?.....	Вам помочь?.....	Vam pomoch?
Don't worry, learning takes time.....	Не волнуйтесь, ученье требует времени.....	Ne volnuites, uchene trebuet vremeni
Shall we take a break now?.....	Давайте сделаем перерыв.....	Davaite sdelaem pereryv
Let's finish (the lesson) now.....	Давайте закончим урок.....	Davaite zakonchim urok
You're doing well.....	Вы делаете успехи.....	Vy delaete uspekhi
Can you say it now?.....	Теперь попробуйте сказать.....	Teper propobuite skizat
Can you answer (the question)?.....	Вы можете ответить на этот вопрос?.....	Vy mozhete otvetit na etot vopros?
Now you ask me.....	Теперь Вы меня спросите.....	Teper Vy menya sposite
See you next week.....	До встречи на следующей неделе.....	Do vstrechi na sleduyushchei nedele