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Conjugation of Russian Verbs

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**CONJUGATION
OF RUSSIAN
VERBS**

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СПРЯЖЕНИЕ РУССКОГО ГЛАГОЛА

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FOREWORD

Conjugation of Russian Verbs is intended for English-speaking students of Russian who have mastered the fundamentals of Russian grammar and vocabulary and for Russian teachers. It is a strictly practical reference book, whose aim is to acquaint the advanced student with the derivation of the various forms of the most common of the Russian verbs and give him necessary information on the meaning and usage of these forms.

The book consists of an *Introduction, General Information on the Verb, 89 Conjugation Tables* of typical verbs and an *Alphabetic Vocabulary*.

The *Introduction* provides a justification of the system of classification of Russian verbs used in this book.

The *General Information* deals not only with the derivation of verb forms, but also with the various categories of Russian verbs and with the usage of verb forms, which accords with the requirements of contemporary methods of language teaching.

The *Tables* show the derivation of all the forms of typical verbs, with the peculiarities in the stress and sound alternations taken into account.

The *Tables* generally contain verbs of aspect pairs differing in a prefix. When there are no aspect pairs whose members differ in a prefix, the *Tables* present an imperfective and perfective verbs of the same type.

Some *Tables* contain either a perfective or imperfective verb because its counterpart of the other aspect does not exist.

The *Alphabetic Vocabulary* includes some 12,000 of the most commonly used Russian verbs, with the indication of the group each verb belongs to, its transitivity or intransitivity, and its stylistic field.

The second edition of this book includes a list of verbs beginning with the letters **А** and **П**, compiled by S. I. Makarova.

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INTRODUCTION

CLASSIFICATION OF RUSSIAN VERBS

The verb is one of the most important parts of speech; therefore it is essential that English-speaking students of Russian should know how conjugated and non-conjugated verb forms are obtained.

In practical Russian courses verbs are generally classified according to only two types of conjugation. The purpose of such a classification is to teach the student how to spell the verb endings and it is of little use in teaching Russian to foreigners, since it does not help them derive the necessary forms.

In theoretical Russian grammars all the verbs are divided into productive and unproductive classes, depending on whether new verbs can, or cannot, be formed on their pattern.

However, the principle of productivity/unproductivity is not so important for foreign students of Russian, since some of the unproductive verbs are frequently used and are as necessary to know as are the productive verbs; moreover, the division of verbs into productive and unproductive does not reflect verb inflexion.

Therefore, the classification followed in this book is based on a single principle; namely, the correlation between the infinitive, present/simple future, and past tense stems.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE VERB

§ 1. VERB ASPECT

The action of a verb is perceived by native Russian speakers either as a process or as a fact single in its occurrence. To convey different kinds of actions, Russian has **two verb aspects**: the **imperfective** and the **perfective**.

MAIN DIFFERENCE IN THE MEANING AND USAGE OF THE VERB ASPECTS

The imperfective aspect conveys an action as a process, an action in its development. It can be represented graphically as a line(-):

Дом *стро́или* в т́рудных усло́виях.

Скóро *бúдут стро́ить* но́вый кинотеáтр.

When an action is conveyed as a process, it is not connected with any result. However, the context may tell how the process went on:

- Вчeрá мы *игрáли* в шáхматы.
- Как проходíла игрá?
- Игрáли по всем п́равилам, óчень коррéктно.

Since the imperfective aspect conveys the action as a process, the

The perfective aspect conveys an action as a fact, as single in its occurrence. It can be represented graphically as a dot (.):

Дом *пострóили* рáньше намéченного срóка.

Но́вый кинотеáтр *пострóят* бýстро, за о́дин мéсяц.

When an action is conveyed as a fact, as single in its occurrence, it is always connected with its result. It has a more specific character and, therefore, requires an object or any other specifying words:

- Вчeрá мы *сыгрáли* нéсколько пáртий в шáхматы.
- И ка́ков результа́т? Кто выиграл?
- Игрá за́кончилась вничью́.

Since the perfective aspect conveys the action as a fact, as single

attention is centred on the action. Therefore, transitive verbs¹ may be used without the word denoting the object: the speaker's idea will be complete all the same:

Вчера мы читали—the idea is complete.

Мы уже хорошо переводим.

В будущем году будут много строить.

in its occurrence, the attention is centred on both the object and the circumstances (adverbial modifiers). Without specification the idea will be incomplete:

Вчера мы прочитали...—the idea is not complete.

Вчера мы прочитали рассказ.

Мы перевели...

Мы перевели статью.

В будущем году построят много новых зданий.

Only the imperfective aspect is used:

(a) to name an action when the speaker's attention is centred on the action as a process; in such cases questions with the verbs *делать* or *быть* are frequently used:

— Что вы вчера делали?

— Мы отдыхали.

— Что было на собрании?

— Обсуждали план работы.

(b) to convey an action taking place at the present time:

Сейчас мы готовимся к поездке в Ленинград.

(c) in phrases with the verbs *начинать*—*начать*, *продолжать*—*продолжить*, *кончать*—*кончить*, *стать*:

Мы начали заниматься с первого сентября.

Они продолжают изучать русский язык.

Они поздно кончили работать.

(d) in phrases with adverbial modifiers of time denoting the duration of action: *целый месяц*, *целую неделю*, *целое лето*, *два (три, etc.) часа*, *года*; *две (три, etc.) недели*:

Он читал рассказ целую неделю.

Он переводил текст два часа.

Он писал диссертацию полтора года.

SPECIFIC CASES OF ASPECTUAL USAGE

Imperfective aspect

1. To convey customary actions:

Обычно он берёт (брал) книги в библиотеке, быстро их читает (читал) и сдаёт (сдавал).

Perfective aspect

1. To convey single concrete facts:

Вчера он взял в библиотеке журнал, прочитал его и сдал.
(Завтра он возьмёт в библиотеке журнал, прочитает его и сдаст).

¹ For transitive and intransitive verbs, see § 4

(He will borrow a magazine from the library, read it and then return.)

Note.—The perfective aspect can also be used to convey customary actions, but with an obligatory indication of the consequent actions, the perfective verb taking the simple future; compare:

Обычно друзья *собираются* вместе по суббóтам.

Он всегда *покупает* газéты в éтом киóске.

2. To convey repeated actions, the reason or purpose being either indicated or not (the utterance having a neutral character):

Он *нёсколько раз читáл* éту повесть—the utterance does not require a specification, but such a specification may be present):

Он *нёсколько раз читáл* éту повесть, так она́ ему́ понравилась.

Обычно они́ *соберу́тся* в суббóту и обсуждают все но́вости.

Он всегда *ку́пит* газéту и тут же её читáет.

2. To convey repeated specific actions as a sum total of specific facts. In this case the reason, purpose or result of the action is either stated, or inferred from the context, or implies a question (the utterance having an emotional character):

Он *нёсколько раз прочита́л* éту повесть—the utterance requires a specification and implies the questions why? for what?

Он *нёсколько раз прочита́л* éту повесть,

a) потому́ что она́ ему́ понравилась;

b) что́бы лу́чше её запо́мнить;

c) пре́жде чем запо́мнил все де-та́ли.

ASPECTUAL USAGE IN THE IMPERATIVE MOOD

To express an injunction or invitation to perform an action, the **imperfective aspect** is used (the action is perceived as a process):

Чита́йте по-ру́сски!

Говори́те, пожа́луйста, грóмче, я пло́хо слы́шу.

To express advice or a request with a negated verb, the imperfective aspect is used, since there should be no action: though the action is merely named, still it may take place:

To express advice, a request or a command, the **perfective aspect** is used (the action is perceived as an integral one):

Прочита́йте рома́н А. С. Пу́шкина «Евге́ний Оне́гин».

Скажи́те, где вы были́ вчера́.

The perfective aspect of a negated verb is used to convey warning:

Не чита́йте эту кни́гу.

Не забудь́те биле́ты.

Не опозда́йте в теа́тр.

GRAMMATICAL DIFFERENTIATION OF THE ASPECTS

Two verbs—one imperfective, the other perfective—which differ only in their aspect, but have the same lexical meaning, form an **aspectual pair**. Formally the verbs of an aspectual pair differ either in a prefix or in a suffix.

If the difference between the verbs of an aspectual pair lies in a prefix, they belong to one and the same group and, consequently, their present/simple future tenses also differ in the prefix.

Imperfective Aspect		Perfective Aspect	
Infinitive	Present Tense	Infinitive	Future Tense
<p>де́лать</p> <p>чита́ть</p> <p>писа́ть</p> <p>ви́деть</p> <p>вари́ть</p> <p>ме́рзнуть</p>	<p>де́лаю</p> <p>чита́ю</p> <p>пишú</p> <p>ви́жу</p> <p>варю́</p> <p>ме́рзну</p>	<p>сде́лать</p> <p>про́читать</p> <p>напи́сать</p> <p>уви́деть</p> <p>свари́ть</p> <p>заме́рзнуть</p>	<p>сде́лаю</p> <p>про́читаю</p> <p>напи́шу</p> <p>уви́жу</p> <p>сварю́</p> <p>заме́рзну</p>

If the difference between the verbs of an aspectual pair lies in the suffix, they more often than not belong to different groups¹.

Imperfective Aspect		Perfective Aspect	
Infinitive	Present Tense	Infinitive	Future Tense
<p>Group I</p> <p>конча́ть</p> <p>реша́ть</p> <p>повторя́ть</p> <p>оформля́ть</p> <p>отвеча́ть</p>		<p>Group II</p> <p>ко́нчить</p> <p>реши́ть</p> <p>повтори́ть</p> <p>офо́рмить</p> <p>отве́тить</p>	
<p>рассказа́ывать</p> <p>показа́ывать</p>		<p>Group III</p> <p>рассказа́ть</p> <p>показа́ть</p>	
	<p>конча́ю</p> <p>реша́ю</p> <p>повторя́ю</p> <p>оформля́ю</p> <p>отвеча́ю</p> <p>рассказа́ваю</p> <p>показа́ваю</p>		<p>ко́нчу</p> <p>решу́</p> <p>повтори́ю</p> <p>офо́рмлю</p> <p>отве́чу</p> <p>расскажу́</p> <p>покажу́</p>

¹ For the groups, see § 9.

Note.—Unprefixed Group I and Group II verbs and prefixed Group I verbs with the suffixes **-ыва-** and **-ива-** are always imperfective. Most Group II verbs ending in **-ить** and Group III verbs ending in **-нуть** are perfective.

A number of aspectual pairs are made up of verbs having different roots.

Imperfective	Perfective	Imperfective	Perfective
говори́ть	сказа́ть	класть	положи́ть
брать	взять	веша́ть	повеси́ть
входи́ть	войти́	сади́ться	сесть
переводи́ть	перевести́	ложи́ться	лечь

Imperfective verbs denoting a position in space (*стоя́ть, лежа́ть, висе́ть, следя́ть*) and also verbs of motion (*ходи́ть, е́здить, лета́ть, пла́вать*) have no perfective counterparts, since they represent the action exclusively as a process. The prefix **по-** attached to these verbs introduces the additional meaning “a little”, “for some time”; for example:

Вече́ром х́очется отдохну́ть: *посиде́ть, почита́ть, погово́рить*.
 Когда́ он устае́т, е́му х́очется *походи́ть* по ко́мнате.

§ 2. VERB TENSE

The Russian verb has three tenses: **the present, the past and the future.**

Imperfective verbs have the present, past and compound future tenses; for example: *чита́ю, чита́л, бу́ду чита́ть*.

Perfective verbs have the past and simple future tenses; for example: *прочита́л, прочита́ю*.

In the present and future tenses verbs change for person, the 3rd person having the same form for the masculine, feminine and neuter genders:

Present Tense		Future Tense	
Я говорю́	бу́ду	} говори́ть	погово́рю
Ты говори́шь	бу́дешь		погово́ришь
Он (она́, оно́) говори́т	бу́дет		погово́рит
Мы говори́м	бу́дем		погово́рим
Вы говори́те	бу́дете		погово́рите
Они́ говори́т	бу́дут		погово́рят

According to the types of the endings verbs fall into two conjugations: the first and the second.

**Table of the Endings
of the Present/Simple Future Tenses**

1st Conjugation				2nd Conjugation
Gr. I, Gr. III, Gr. IV, Gr. V, Gr. VI, Gr. VII				Gr. II
Unstressed	Stressed			Stressed or Unstressed
Singular	1st person	-у, -ю	-ý, -jó	-у, -ю
	2nd person	-ешь	-ěшь	-ишь
	3rd person	-ет	-ěт	-ит
Plural	1st person	-ем	-ěм	-им
	2nd person	-ете	-ěте	-ите
	3rd person	-ут, -ют	-ут, -ют	-ат, -ят

The compound future tense of imperfective verbs is obtained by means of the future tense of the auxiliary verb **быть** plus the infinitive of the conjugated verb (see the tables).

In the past tense verbs change only for gender and number.

(Я, ты) он читáл, говорíл, писáл
 (Я, ты) она́ читáла, говорíла, писáла
 (Я, ты) оно́ читáло, говорíло, писáло
 (Мы, вы) они́ читáли, говорíли, писáли

§ 3. THE MOOD

The Russian verb has three moods: the indicative, the imperative and the subjunctive (conditional).

THE INDICATIVE MOOD

The indicative mood conveys actions which take place in reality, which are really carried out. A verb in the indicative mood has three tenses: the present, the past and the future (simple or compound); for example:

Вели́кий ру́сский поэ́т А. С. Пу́шкин *ро́дился* в 1799 го́ду.

Весь сове́тский наро́д *читит* па́мять вели́кого по́эта.

Его́ произведе́ния с глубо́ким интере́сом *бу́дут чита́ть* и гря-
ду́щие поколе́ния.

THE IMPERATIVE MOOD

The imperative mood conveys the speaker's request, command or injunction to perform an action; for example:

Прочита́йте «По́вести Бе́лкина» А. С. Пу́шкина.

Чита́йте по-ру́сски.

Оде́ньтесь тепле́е—сего́дня хо́лодно.

Подчеркни́те глаго́лы.

Сдела́йте э́ту рабо́ту бы́стро.

The basic form of the imperative is the 2nd person singular (for its formation, see § 9) or plural (to obtain the imperative plural, the particle *-те* must be added to the singular form):

Singular: чита́й, говори́, учи́сь

Plural: чита́йте, говори́те, учи́тесь.

The 2nd person singular of the imperative can also be used to convey a condition, the verb in this case never changing for person and number; for example:

Прочита́й я (ты, он, она́, мы, вы, они́) э́ту статью́, вопро́с был бы я́сен.

Зна́й я реме́сло—жил бы в го́роде. (Го́рький)

The imperative with this meaning and the subjunctive are synonymous.

To convey a request or command given through an intermediary, the 3rd person present or simple future is used preceded by the particle *пусть*.

Пусть чита́ет Петро́в.

Пусть студе́нты *принесу́т* на за́нятие сло́варя.

In colloquial speech the particle *пуска́й* is also used:

Пу́скай э́то сде́лает Ко́ля.

In elevated style the particle *да* is used:

Да здра́вствует со́лнце!

Да скрбе́тся тьма!

(Пу́шкин)

To convey an injunction to an action in the fulfilment of which the speaker will take place together with other people, the 1st person plural is used, pronounced with a special intonation of invitation to perform a joint action:

Оста́немся ещё на о́дин де́нь!

Поё́дем, Ма́ша, домо́й!

In colloquial speech this form of the imperative with the verb *дава́й* is widely used:

Дава́й сде́лаем э́ту рабо́ту бы́стрее!

In a polite injunction the ending (particle) *-те* is added to this form:

— Ну, тепе́рь *пойде́мте* в гости́ную,— ла́скowo проговори́л Ради́лов. (Тургéнев)

— *Буде́мте* друзья́ми,— говори́л он, пожима́я мою́ ру́ку. (Го́рький)

When the injunction relates to numerous listeners, this particle is never used:

Рассмо́трим сле́дующие вопро́сы.

Пере́йдем к рассмотре́нию но́вого вопро́са.

To express categoric commands, orders or appeals, the infinitive is used, pronounced with a special imperative intonation:

Не разгово́ривать!

Убра́ть урожа́й без поте́рь!

THE SUBJUNCTIVE, OR CONDITIONAL MOOD

The **subjunctive mood** conveys a desired, or possible action, or an action the fulfilment of which is possible given a certain condition.

Мне хочется играть... Я *сыграла бы* что-нибудь. (Чехов)

Если каждый человек на куске земли своей *сделал бы* всё, что он может, как прекрасна *была бы* земля наша. (Чехов)

The subjunctive mood is used to convey advice or request with a nuance of gentleness, delicacy or indecision. In this meaning the subjunctive and the imperative are synonymous.

Папаша, вы *бы поговорили* с Александрой... (Горький)

Ты *бы не философствовал*, а думал. (Горький)

The subjunctive mood is obtained by the addition of the unstressed particle **бы** to the past tense forms. The particle **бы** may stand after the verb, before it or after the word which bears the logical stress.

Я *послушал бы* хорошую музыку.

Я *бы послушал* хорошую музыку.

Я с *удовольствием бы* слушал хорошую музыку.

Хорошую бы музыку я слушал с удовольствием.

Russian has only one form of the subjunctive, used in all the tenses, which are inferred from context.

Вчера мы пошли бы на экскурсию, если бы не было дождя.

Сегодня мы пошли бы в театр, если бы вы купили билеты.

Завтра мы пошли бы в театр, если вы купите билеты.

§ 4. TRANSITIVE AND INTRANSITIVE VERBS

Verbs which convey actions directed at some object and which must have a grammatical direct object are called **transitive**; for example:

знать изучать	}	кого? or что?	{	книгу, журнал, человека, историю, язык, etc.
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The nouns or pronouns related to a transitive verb take the accusative case without a preposition (see the above examples). In the Alphabetic Vocabulary the transitive verbs are labelled *n*.

All the other verbs are **intransitive**. Russian intransitive verbs include a small group of verbs whose meaning requires a direct object, but this direct object does not take the accusative, but the genitive, dative or instrumental instead; for example:

владеть заведовать злоупотреблять командовать + I. обладать руководить управлять	}	достигать жаждать желать избегать + G. лишать требовать хотеть	}	мешать подражать помогать противодействовать + D. симпатизировать содействовать способствовать
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§ 5. THE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE FORMS OF THE VERB

The **active form** of the verb conveys an action performed by the person or object which fulfils the function of the subject of the sentence; for example:

Студент слушает лекции.

Во время отпуска *мы* много путешествовали.

Both transitive and intransitive verbs have the active form.

The **passive form** of the verb shows that the person or object which fulfils the function of the subject of the sentence does not perform the action, but is subjected to the action performed by somebody/something else; for example:

Лекции внимательно слушаются (всеми студентами).

Only transitive verbs have the passive form.

When used in a sentence as the predicate, passive transitive verbs convey an action performed by the subject or an action directed at the subject; for example:

Active Form

Passive Form

Братья Анциферовы написали трёхтомную «Книгу о городах».

Братьями Анциферовыми была написана трёхтомная «Книга о городах».

Города изучают специалисты.

Города изучаются специалистами.

If the predicate is a passive verb form, the subject is the logical object of the sentence, the logical subject in this case is usually not indicated; for example:

Эта картина написана в семидесятые годы.

Собрание посвящено знаменательной дате.

Договор подписан.

Информация изучается.

If the logical subject is indicated, it is conveyed by a noun or pronoun in the instrumental:

Эти картины написаны известным художником.

В последние годы им написано несколько новых картин.

The passive form of an imperfective verb is obtained by adding the particle **-ся** to the verb and it takes the 3rd person singular or plural present or past tense:

Active Form: читать подчёркивать отклонять

Passive Form: читаться подчёркиваться отклоняться
 читается подчёркивается отклоняется

Perfective verbs have a special form of the passive, which is called a **short passive participle**. We shall call it the perfective passive form or a short participle. The short participle has gender and number forms, like a past tense verb:

Active Form: прочитать установить принести взять

Passive Form: прочитан установлен принесён взят

For the formation of the perfective passive, see § 9.