

A COMPREHENSIVE

RUSSIAN

GRAMMAR

Second Edition
Revised and Expanded

Terence Wade



A Comprehensive Russian Grammar

Second Edition, revised and expanded

Terence Wade

Edited by Michael J. de K. Holman



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Preface

The *Comprehensive Russian Grammar* is meant for English-speaking pupils and students of Russian at the post-introductory stage. It is also a reference aid for teachers, translators and interpreters and others who use the language in a professional capacity.

The first new reference grammar of Russian to have been published in the United Kingdom since the 1950s, it is based on personal research and observation, long experience of teaching Russian at all levels from beginners up to the Honours Degree and the Civil Service Interpretership, and on a close study of reference materials by Russian, British and American linguists.

The approach is descriptive throughout, and rules of usage are constantly measured against current practice as reflected in contemporary journalistic and literary sources. It is entirely practical in conception and design and has no pretensions to theoretical disquisition. Particular emphasis is laid on problems which are of especial difficulty for the English speaker.

The grammar provides comprehensive guidance to usage, with exhaustive tabulated material and succinct explanations. It is presented in 484 sections which are further subdivided to take account of finer points of usage. It provides mainstream rules for quick reference, as well as access to the subtleties of the language for those who need more detailed information.

The intention is to provide the essential facts of the language and to tackle perennial problems such as adverbs and pronouns in -то and -нибудь, agreement, animacy, conjugation, declension, gerunds, long and short adjectives, numerals, participles, the partitive genitive, verbs of

motion, and so on, as well as problems which have often received less attention: the gender of acronyms, alphabetisms, soft-sign nouns, the differences between *в/на* and other key prepositions, and between *тоже* and *также*, the use of capital letters, particles, the principles of word order etc. Treatment of verbal aspect differentiates usage in the past, future, imperative and infinitive, thus throwing the rules into sharper relief. Special emphasis is given to stress patterns.

Ease of reference is assured by comprehensive indexing of subject headings and Russian words, and by general adherence to the alphabetic principle throughout.

Preface to the Second Edition

A Comprehensive Russian Grammar was first published in 1992, since when the book has been reprinted eight times, on most occasions with minor amendments. The present, second, edition of the *Grammar* takes account of the very considerable changes, both social and linguistic, that have taken place in the post-Soviet period.

The transliteration system of the Library of Congress has been added to those enumerated in section 1, but that of the British Standards Institute continues to be used throughout the *Grammar*.

Amendments have been made to sections dealing with all parts of speech, with pronunciation, the noun, the adjective, the verb and the preposition most affected.

There are three entirely new, substantial sections on word formation in the Russian noun. These comprise sections 27 (general), 28 (prefixation) and 29 (suffixation), the sections that formerly bore these numbers having been conflated with earlier sections to make room for the new material. These sections have not been curtailed in any way.

Some sections on pronunciation have been amplified by additional examples, sometimes involving new lexis, e.g. принтер 'printer', Интернет 'Internet' and экстрасенс 'psychic' in section 7. Changes have also been made to sections 12, 13, and 15 (on the pronunciation of -чн-, consonants omitted in pronunciation, and stress, respectively).

Section 17 (on the use of capital and small letters in titles and names) has been completely rewritten in the light of changes that have occurred over the past few years. Many of the changes involve new names such as Российская Федерация 'Russian Federation' and Совет Федерации

‘Council of the Federation’, but historicisms such as *Советский Союз* ‘Soviet Union’ will clearly remain current for some time to come and have been retained. Other changes result from new official attitudes, affecting, for example, the spelling of the names of deities.

Other amended sections on the noun take account of recent neologisms, e.g. *флоппи* ‘floppy disk’, *папара́цци* ‘paparazzi’ (section 36), *ВИЧ* ‘HIV’, *СКВ* ‘freely-convertible currency’ (section 40), *забастко́м* ‘strike committee’ (section 42), etc. Most amendments have grammatical implications, e.g. the genitive plurals *байт* ‘byte’ and *бит* ‘bit’ (section 56), the plurals *техноло́гии* ‘technologies’ and *эконо́мики* ‘economies’ (section 48), the use of the accusative case in *заказа́л вино́* ‘ordered some wine’ (section 83), and so on, others reflect name changes of the past decade (e.g. the replacement of the former place name *Киров* ‘Kirov’, section 71).

Amendments to the sections on adjectives also reflect changes in nomenclature, e.g. *ду́мский* ‘Duma’ (adj.), or amplify extant categories, e.g. *ли́зинговый* ‘leasing’ (adj.) (both section 148).

Changes to the sections on the verb include an increase in the number of biaspectuals with alternative perfectives (e.g. *профинанси́ровать* ‘to finance’, section 237), and the amplification of other sections.

Section 404 on the buffer vowel -o in prepositions has been expanded, as has section 424 on *через* and *по* in the meaning ‘across’, and section 451 on *по* with nouns that denote means of communication (*по мобы́льному* ‘on a mobile’, *по фа́ксу* ‘by fax’), including variant usage in conjunction with *телеви́дение* ‘television’. The preposition *порядка* in the meaning ‘approximation’ has been added to section 445.

The bibliography has been expanded to include new dictionaries, grammars and other works of the mid- to late 1990s, especially those specifically describing the language at the end of the twentieth century (Comrie, Stone and Polinsky, Dulichenko, Karaulov, Kostomarov, Offord, Rakhmanova and Suzdal’tseva, Ryazanova-Clarke and Wade, Shaposhnikov and Zemskaya), as well as new journals, newspapers, magazines and prose works.

A glossary of grammatical terms has also been included in the new edition. The table of contents and indexes have been revised to take account of new material and revised pagination.

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I wish to thank my late mother, who first encouraged me to learn Russian.

The book is dedicated to my wife, May, who bore with me throughout the thousands of hours and nine drafts that went into this grammar.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the publishers of the books I was able to consult (see bibliography): Akademiya nauk, Birmingham University, Collets International, CUP, Dover Publications,

Durham University, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Hutchinson, Kniga, MGU, Nauka, Oliver and Boyd, OUP, Pan Books, Pergamon, Progress Publishers, Prosveshchenie, Russkii yazyk, Sovetskaya entsiklopediya, University of East Anglia, University of London Press, Vysshaya shkola.

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Acknowledgements to the Second Edition

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used:

acc.	accusative
adj.	adjective
cf.	compare
dat.	dative
f.	feminine
fig.	figurative
gen.	genitive
imper.	imperative
impf.	imperfective
infin.	infinitive
instr.	instrumental
lit.	literally
m.	masculine
n.	neuter
nom.	nominative
part.	participle
pf.	perfective
pl.	plural
prep.	prepositional
sing.	singular
theatr.	theatrical
trans.	transitive

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