Glossika Beginner’s Guide to
RUSSIAN
Grammar and Word Order
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About Glossika

Language learning requires a lot of planning, effort, training and practicing. Our vision at Glossika is to minimize the amount of planning and effort required and increase your exposure via native-speaker audio.

Since every language is unique and has its own set of difficulties, Glossika has developed methods to sort this complexity in a way that is easy to learn and acquire for students like yourself. We hope to level the playing field of difficulty between languages. By doing so we’re able to present a wide variety of languages and make them accessible to any kind of learner.

Russian may feel at first like an insurmountable challenge. We hope that Glossika becomes one of the most important tools in your toolbox for acquiring speaking and listening fluency.

To take full advantage of all that Glossika has to offer, sign up and start training your Russian today!

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Any questions or feedback? Contact us at support@glossika.com
Introduction

Welcome to your new adventure in learning Russian. I strongly recommend getting our companion guide "Russian Pronunciation and Grammar".

The goal of this book is not to teach you every conceivable grammar point in Russian, such as conjugations and changes in adjectives.

Instead this is supposed to give you an exploratory way to look at the structure of Russian sentences and how native speakers string ideas together. In what places do they put words? Why do certain words get chosen? Learning a language should be more about discovery rather than a teacher just telling you how everything works.

In this book we lay out over a hundred examples of sentence patterns highlighting how all the parts interact with each other through a special selection of colors.

Russian Word Order

The word order is very much like English: Subject Verb Object.

But you'll find very quickly that something seems very different. There seems to be fewer words in a sentence, negatives cause the endings of
words to behave differently, and nouns and verbs are often swapped compared to their English counterparts.

This guide should help you discover what's going on in Russian sentences. But first, we'd like to throw out the idea of subjects and objects and introduce you to an exciting new way to look at words and word groups.
Roles as Parts of Speech

At Glossika we use a standard way of analyzing sentence structures across all languages based on a concept called 'Role and Reference Grammar'.

There are two polar distinctions: the noun and the verb. Nouns represent stability; verbs instability.

Within Nouns, we differentiate: arguments, locations, and predicates.

Within Verbs, we differentiate core and non-core verbs:

Core Verbs: stative, causative, existential, active
Non-Core Verbs: modality, adverbs, time expressions

The purpose of Role and Reference Grammar is to give every part of the sentence a specific role based on its meaning and what it contributes to the sentence. This is a very different concept than just looking at the placement of subjects and objects.

It is often very confusing to students when a subject in English becomes an object in another language, or vice versa. It actually makes a lot more sense to look at the Role, and by understanding a language's inherent word order, it explains why subjects and objects may get switched. The divide and differences between English and Russian are great which can often feel disparaging, and this is why it is valuable to practice looking at phrases and meanings in terms of the Role.
Human language is based on two kinds of expression: 1) describing our world and 2) describing our feelings or thoughts. What exists in the world and what exists in our minds is always changing, unstable, and in fluctuation, which requires the verb. You start with the verb, and everything else follows from there.

Like computer languages, the verbs of human languages take arguments, which are essentially noun or noun phrases, where a phrase usually requires a preposition to start the phrase. A verb can have anywhere from zero to perhaps four or five arguments. These can appear all in a series before or after the verb, and frequently even before and after the verb, as in English!

When an event happens in the world, nothing is happening in a sequence, usually everything happens all at once. If you talk to your friend on the phone, you're talking, and your friend is talking, but you're both listening, and the phone or computer is transmitting, and it's all happening at once. You could describe each action one after the other in detail, but people don't talk like that and so our languages aren't normally structured that way. It's important for us to say a lot in as few words as possible. This is why each language has a slightly different word order. Now let's take a look at each of the Roles individually.

Noun arguments: agent, beneficiary, comitative, vocative, experiencer, theme, incorporative, causer, method, patient, predicate, reason, reciprocal, self. Location arguments: locative,
source, goal, oblique. Possessive arguments: genitive, kinship, partitive.

The verbal structure of a language is much more complex, and we provide examples of many kinds of variations in the sections that follow, covering stative verbs and their predicates, existential verbs, causative verbs, and active verbs, each in turn. Within each section we intermingle a variety of noun arguments and non-core verb combinations.

Each verb can be further identified with the following traits: negation, telicity, duration, accomplishment, achievement. Many of these traits are inherent to a verb's meaning, and the time expressions associated with it. This system has proven to be superior to one that focuses on verb tense. Since they are largely inherent, we do not need to mention these traits or verb tenses in the examples that follow. It's even possible to derive the verb tense almost perfectly just by knowing what the sentence structure, time expressions, and choice of verbs are.

Think about this: when you describe 1) your world, or 2) your thoughts, you always come up with the right verb tense. But verb tenses vary wildly from language to language! That means a Russian person might use a different verb tense than you, just to describe the same 1) world event or 2) thoughts. In other words, if we know the ingredients of 1) the event, or 2) your thoughts, we can generate the verb tense. Paradoxically, we cannot translate an English verb tense into another language properly
without knowing the ingredients! So, we're going to present the ingredients to you here, and you'll see the verb tenses occur in their own forms naturally.

For example, in English I can say:
"I cleaned my room yesterday"

but I cannot say:
*"I have cleaned my room yesterday"

because the ingredients do not allow that verb tense.

I can only use that verb tense by changing the time expression:
"I have cleaned my room this week."

You'll notice in the Russian examples below that Russian uses the perfective verb construction (usually a prefix) (у́брался) with yesterday (вчера). This is why it's really important to practice your verb tenses in full sentences, otherwise you'll just end up saying random things that confuse native speakers.

In order to show the relationship of Roles between English and Russian sentences, we use colors. We've grouped several roles into a single color as they are not easily distinguishable beyond a few gradations. For more information about the color schemes and description of each of the roles, please refer to the section following the sample sentences called "Roles and Color Descriptions".
Romanization

The romanization used here is not merely a letter-by-letter transcription of each Cyrillic letter, but rather a faithful reproduction of the actual pronunciation of Russian as spoken by native speakers. We can call this a narrow phonetic transcription.

So although you may have seen the letter щ often described as "shch" or "šč" in most romanizations, in a survey from the 1960s, more than 80% of post WWII speakers were found to pronounce борш and щи as [borss] and [sší], and this trend has only continued to the present day. In our romanization we reserve {š,č,ž} for retroflex "hard" consonants and {ś,ć,ź} for palatal "soft" consonants. So the letter щ is a palatal "soft" consonant, rather than hard.

Our romanization demonstrates the following surface pronunciations:

1. Palatalization of consonants
2. Loss of palatalization in vowels (for example, endings of reflexive verbs and after immutable hard consonants: ѣ,ъ,ъ)
3. Stressed vowels marked with
4. 1st degree and 2nd degree reduction of weak vowels, without falling back on IPA symbols, so we use {a,u} instead of {ɐ,ʊ}
5. Assimilation of voicing and devoicing, within a word and across word boundaries
It is my hope that through careful study of the pronunciation provided here, you will be able to pick up the patterns for how to transfer Russian spelling to how people actually speak.

More comprehensive coverage of Russian pronunciation is given in our companion guide "Russian Pronunciation and Grammar".
Stative Verbs

Notice that sometimes there are more words that belong to a stative verb than just the verb itself.

ру: Новый ресторан очень хороший.
ru: nóvij ristarán óčim haróšij.
en: The new restaurant is very good.

ру: Она была замужем три раза.
ru: aná bilá zámužim tri rázə.
en: She's been married three times.

ру: Сколько это будет стоит?
ru: skólkə étə búdɪt stóit?
en: How much will it cost?

ру: Ты меня понимаешь?
ru: tɨ minâ panimáiš?
en: Do you understand me?

ру: Я был уставшим прошлой ночью.
ru: ja bil ustávšim próšləj nóću.
en: I was tired last night.
ру: Что ты имеешь ввиду?
ru: što ti imeš vvidú?
en: What do you mean?

ру: Я вернусь через неделю.
ru: ja vnúščerезnedelu.
en: I'll be back in a week.

ру: Йоши собирается купить новую машину.
ru: jóšisabrásteskupíténovújamášinu.
en: Yoshi's going to buy a new car.

ру: В этом ресторане очень тихо.
ru: v étm ristarančetího.
en: This restaurant is very quiet.

ру: Они живут в очень большом доме.
ru: aníživút v ócímbalšómdom.
en: They live in a very big house.

ру: Я родился в Лондоне.
ru: ja radíls čerrezlondóně.
en: I was born in London.

ру: Она прожила там всю свою жизнь.
ru: anápražílatamfsúsvajúžízni.
en: She's lived there all her life.
Note: in less than standard speech, the last letters of жизнь here may be devoiced resulting in a pronunciation of žisti.

ру: Меня здесь не будет завтра.
ru: ми́нá зд́éсí нí бúдит зáфтрé.
en: I won't be here tomorrow.

ру: Это зависит от тебя.
ru: étё завис́ит от тиб́я.
en: It depends on you.

ру: Наслаждáйся отпуском.
ru: нёсла́цáйся óтпuskаем.
en: Enjoy your vacation.

ру: Она живёт одна.
ru: анá žивóт аднá.
en: She's living by herself.

ру: Сегодня холодно.
ru: сёвóднё хóлэннё.
en: It's cold today.

ру: Зимой часто идут дожди.
ru: зимóй чástё идут да́здё.
en: It rains often in the winter.
ру: Клуб только для его членов.
ru: klup tólkə dlä jívó člénəf.
en: The club is for members only.

ру: Ты сообщил своим друзьям хорошие новости?
ru: ti saapššîl svaím druz'ám håróši h nóvəstɨ?
en: Did you tell (Have you told) your friends the good news?

ру: Эмиль и Лариса женаты.
ru: emílʲ i larísə žináti.
en: Emil and Larisa are married.

ру: Луиза и я друзья.
ru: luízə i ja druzá.
en: Luisa and I are friends.

ру: Во сколько мы сможем встретиться?
ru: va skólkə mi smóžim fstr'ětítsə?
en: What time should we meet?

ру: Я увижу с тобой днём, в среду, двадцать пятого, в декабре.
ru: ja uvížus\’ s tabój dnóm, f sřédu, dváttsęt pjátəvə, v děkabrě.
en: I'll see you at noon, on Wednesday, on the twenty-fifth, in December.

ру: Возможно я тебя завтра увижу.
ru: vazmóžnə ja tibá záftrə uvížu.
en: I'll probably see you tomorrow.
ру: Как пользоваться этой камерой?
ru: kak półzəvətsə étəj kámrəj?
en: How do you use this camera?

ру: Мне нужен совет.
ru: mnʲe núžin savʲet.
en: I need some advice.

Note: most of our sentences demonstrate the masculine form. It's easy to make the feminine form, simply add "-а" to predicate adjectives, modals, and past tense endings: Мне нужна совет. (And sometimes, as in this case, a fleeting -е- or -о- disappears.)

ру: Она говорит на четырёх языках.
ru: aná gəvərít na čɨtɾɨˈoh jɪzikáh.
en: She speaks four languages.

Modals: Ability

ру: Можешь ещё раз объяснить?
ru: móžiš jiʃʃiˈrəs abjɪsnʲɪt?
en: Can you explain it again?

Note: most of our sentences demonstrate the familiar "you" (ты) rather than the more respectful "you" (вы), which is also the plural "you". It's easy to make the change in any sentence; simply
change the verb ending to -те in the present or -ли in the past: 
Можете ещё раз объяснить?

ру: Я немного говорю по-русски.
ru: ja нямнóго гóвар̄ˈу па-ру́сск̄я.
en: I can speak a little Russian.

ру: Я тебя не слышу.
ru: ja т̣ьб̣á н̣а с́ли̑шу.
en: I can't hear you.

Note: the perfective verb слышать (слышать) indicates the ability 'to hear' which differs slightly from the imperfective слушать (слушать), the action 'to listen'.

ру: У меня проблемы с запоминанием имён.
ru: u м̣н̣я пр́облемы с з̢ап̣о̋м̣инани̋̌ем им̣̕н̣.
en: I have a problem remembering people's names.

Necessity

ру: Мне завтра рано вставать.
ru: ṃн̣е зáфтра рáн̣ə фстават̣г.
en: I have to get up early tomorrow.

Note: The use of impersonal мне here indicates that it is necessary to me.
**Expectation**

ру: Тебе стоит пойти спать.
ru: тибě я́ стó́ит пай́ти спá́ть.
en: You should go to bed.

ру: Джерард чувствует себя гораздо лучше после операции, но ему всё ещё нельзя поднимать тяжести.
ru: дžи́рáрд ́́ цу́ствут си́б’ý га́ра́зды́ лú́ц’í пóслí́ а́пи́рárтсí, но jí́мú фсиó јí́сí́ ни́лзя́пáднýмá́тí тý́а́жí́стí.
en: Gerard is feeling much better after his operation, but he’s still not supposed to lift anything heavy.

**Potential**

ру: Могу я задать вопрос?
ru: магу ́ я зáда́т вапрó́с?
en: May I ask a question?

**Attempt**

ру: Владельцы домов пытались протестовать, но всё было безрезультатно.
ru: влá́дэлькí́сí дамóф пitáлísí пры́тстáвá́тí, но фсиó би́лё би́зри́зультáтнё.
en: The owners of the houses tried to protest, but it was to no avail.
ру: Рашми больше не пытается похудеть.
ru: rášmɨ bólši nɨ pitáɨtsə pahudétı.
en: Rashmi has given up trying to lose weight.

ру: Я пытался продать свою машину, но никто не был заинтересован в том, чтобы купить её.
ru: ja pitálsə pradáɨ svajú mašinu, no nɪktó nɨ bil za'ɪntɨrisóvən f tom, štóbɨ kupitɨ jįjó.
en: I tried to sell my car, but nobody was interested in buying it.

Avoidance

ру: Этот шум не даёт мне заснуть.
ru: étst šum nɨ da'jót mnɨə zasnútı.
en: The noise keeps me from falling asleep.

ру: Что помешало тебе прийти к нам?
ru: što pamɨšálə tɨbɨ prɨɨtɨ k nam?
en: What prevented you from coming to see us?

ру: Дождь не помешал нам насладиться нашим отпуском.
ru: doźdɨ nɨ pamɨšál nam nəsəl大大提高tə nášim ótpuskəm.
en: The rain didn't stop us from enjoying our vacation.

ру: Он попытался избежать ответа на мой вопрос.
ru: on papitálsə izbɨžáɨ atviétə na moj vaprors.
en: He tried to avoid answering my question.
Literally: *run away from the answer to my question.* Here, *otbema* is a genitive noun, rather than a verb.

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**Previous Habit**

ру: Раньше они жили на той же улице, что и мы.
ru: ránši aní žilí na toj ži úlitsí, što i mi.
en: They used to live on the same street as us.

ру: Раньше у Нади было пианино, но она продала его несколько лет назад.
ru: ránši u nádǐ bilə pənʲína, no aná prədalá jívó nʲeskəlʲkoлет nazát.
en: Nadya used to have a piano, but she sold it a few years ago.

ру: Я никогда не видел эти цветы раньше.
ru: ja nʲikagdá nʲi vʲídilʲ étii tʃfʃtii ránši.
en: I've never seen these flowers before.

ру: Это здание раньше было отелем.
ru: étə zdánʲi ránši bilə atélim.
en: This building used to be a hotel.

ру: Нет, она никогда его не встречала.
ru: nʲet, aná nʲikagdá jívó nʲi fstrʲiːcálə.
en: No, she's never met him.
Evidential

Examples in this category are statements that are apparent or obvious via deductive reasoning. Events in this category are those that could have been found out either from hearing or seeing an action oneself or through someone else telling about it.

ru: Ты, должно быть, голоден.
en: You must be hungry.

ru: Ты должен знать его.
en: You must know him.

ru: Похоже, она будто уже и не придёт.
en: It looks as if she isn't coming.

ru: Он должен быть хорошим.
en: It's supposed to be good.

ru: Есть вероятность, что Хаким забудет позвонить.
en: It's possible that Hakim will forget to call.
Note: the за- prefix is required on забудем in order to mean 'forget'. At the same time it is perfective, since 'forget' is an accomplished action only in the future or in the past. We mark the future of this action on the prefix, though the fact that the verb is conjugated in present tense, makes it future.

ру: Я слышал музыку, значит, в доме ктo-то должен быть.
ru: ja slišel múziku, znáct, v dómì któ-tə dólžin bití.
en: I heard music, so there must have been somebody at home.

**Whether**

This is for confirming the veracity of an event or state.

ру: Спроси, есть ли у него собака.
ru: sprasí, jesti li u nivó sabáka.
en: Ask if he has a dog.

ру: Спроси, продал ли он машину уже.
ru: sprasí, pradál li on mašínu uží.
en: Ask him if he has sold his car yet.

A very convenient way to master these sentence patterns during your busy schedule is by using the audio on Glossika. It’s hands-free, and builds up your listening and speaking skills.
Predicate Clauses

Some verbs connect more information in a sentence beyond just subject, object, or location. This additional information is the predicate. The simplest of predicates is one where the theme is equal to the predicate, such as "She is a doctor". "She" is the Theme and "a doctor" is the Predicate. Russian lacks an equative "be" verb, so such a sentence would not have a verb: Она доктор.

One of the most common and productive types of predicate is "Opinion Phrase Structure" which gives you great power in creating sentences:

Agent + ability, predicate, location, amount, time, frequency, method, reason:
I know: how to / who / what / where / how much / how many / when / how long / how often / how [something] is..., why

Stative Verb Predicate Clause
it's ____ that...
better: лучше
important: важно
impossible: невозможно
necessary: необходимо
a pity: жаль
possible: невозможно
seems: кажется
a shame: жаль
urgent: срочно
Agent Predicate Clause
I ____ that / to do...
accept: признать
acknowledge: признать
advise: советовать
agree: согласен (согласна) + perfective
anticipate: ожидать
appreciate: ценить
assume: предполагать
believe: считать
not bother: не потрудись + perf
catch: понимать
check: проверить
choose: решить + perf
consider: считать
conspire: сговориться + perf
dare: посметь + perf
decide: решить + perf
demand: требовать + perf
deny: отрицать
have desire: желать
be determined: настроен + perf
discover: обнаружить
discuss: обсуждать
doubt: сомневаться
expect: ожидать
find: считать
find out: узнать
forget: забыть + perf
guess: думать
hear: слышать
hesitate: колебаться + perf
hope: надеяться
imagine: думать
insist: настаивать + perf
intend: намереваться + perf
know: знать
learn: узнать
long for: хотеть
look forward to: с нетерпением ждать
I managed: Мне удалось + perf
mean: иметь в виду
motion: двигаться
notice: заметить
object: возражать
offer: предлагать + perf
be opposed: против того чтобы
plan: планировать + perf
prepare: подготовиться + perf
pretend: притворяться
have reason: есть причина + perf
reckon: считать
remember: помнить
see: видеть
seek: стараться + perf
state: сказать
struggle: изо всех сил стараться + perf
suggest: предлагать + perf
suppose: полагать
swear: кляться (я клянусь)
tend: стараться + perf
think: думать
threaten: угрожать + perf
wait: ждать
understand: понимать
volunteer: добровольно
want: хотите
wish: хотите
would like: бы хотел
Agent Beneficiary Predicate Clause

I ___ to you/тебе/вам that...

admit: признаться (в том), что
announce: объявить
assure: заверить
claim/утверждать
comment: прокомментировать
complain: пожаловаться
confirm: подтвердить
convince: убедить
explain: объяснить
inform: сообщить
mention: сказать
persuade: убедить
point out: указать
promise: обещать
prove: доказать
remark: сказать
remind: напомнить
repeat: повторить
reply: ответить
say: сказать
show: показать
tell: сказать
warn: предупреждать
Experiencer Predicate Clause
I ___ that / to do...
I dislike: Мне не нравится
I enjoy/like: Мне нравится
I feel like: Мне нравится
Don't mind: не против
I mind: возражаю против
I regret: сожалею
I deserve: заслуживаю
I prefer/I'd rather: предпочитаю

ru: Что означает это слово?
ru: što æznačáit éts slóvě?
en: What does this word mean?

ru: Женщина, которая живёт по соседству, - врач.
ru: žinśšānə, katórəvə živōt pa sasīētstvu, - vrać.
en: The woman who lives next door is a doctor.

ru: Сегодня очень хорошая погода.
ru: sɪvódní őcůmɨhарóšě pagóðə.
en: It's nice weather today.

ru: Все эти деньги - твои.
ru: fśe étĩ diěnigi - tvai̯.
en: This money is all yours.
ру: Было глу́по так гово́рить.
ru: bılə glúpə tak gəvarı́t̪i.
en: It was a stupid thing to say.

ру: Ты люби́шь читати́?
ru: ti lúbíš ćitáti?
en: Do you like to read?

ру: Я ду́маю, мы выигра́ем.
ru: ja dúməu, mi víigrəm.
en: I think [that] we'll win the game.

Note: The вы- prefix is required on выиграть in order to mean 'win', and when you 'win', it is accomplished, therefore the verb itself is already perfective, so this present tense conjugation actually means in the future. Likewise in English you can only 'win' in the future or in the past, not in the present. If you want the present tense "we are in the process of winning", it is possible in Russian to use the present tense of the imperfective verb: выигрыва́ем.

ру: Тёперь я сожа́лею о том, что сказа́л.
ru: tıp'ёр ja səzial'ə u a tôm, şto skazál.
en: I now regret saying [that] what I said.

ру: Дума́ешь, эту во́ду можно пить?
ru: dúməś, étu vódu móžnə pít?
en: Do you think [that] it's safe to drink this water?
Note: in Russian the word order is reversed which makes "safe" understandable by context: "Do you think, this water is able to drink?"

ру: Мне помочь вам с чемоданом?
ru: mnie pamódź van š ėmadánəm?
en: Can I help you with your suitcase?

ру: Я думаю, мне надо накопить больше денег.
ru: ja dúməu, mnie nádo nəkapídə bólši djënɨk.
en: I think [that] I should save more money.

ру: Она хотела знать, что я делаю в свободное время.
ru: aná hat'élə znatj, što ja djéləu f svabódnəj vr'émə.
en: She wanted to know what I did in my spare time.

ру: Я не думаю, что они поженятся.
ru: ja nʲ důməu, što aní pažínətsə.
en: I don't think [that] they'll get married.

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Existential Verbs

Existentials are verbs that describe a relationship between two things, like possession or kinship, or that something exists in space or time. Every language expresses "there is/are" with its own unique choice of words.

ru: Сегодня вечером ничего не идёт по телевизору.
ru: Сегодня вечером ничего не идёт по телевизору.
en: There's nothing on TV tonight.

ru: Поезд отправляется каждый час.
en: There's a train every hour.

ru: На столе книга.
en: There's a book on the table.

ru: У вас возникли проблемы?
en: Are there any problems?

ru: У него новая работа.
en: He has a new job.
ру: У Дэвида нет машины.
ru: u dévidə net mašini.
en: David doesn't have a car.

ру: Смотри! Произошла авария.
ru: smatrʲí! prəizašlá avárʲíə.
en: Look! There's been an accident.

ру: Поезд до города ходит каждый час.
ru: póizd da górdə hódit káždij ćas.
en: There's a train [that goes] to the city every hour.

ру: У Ганеша две сестры.
ru: u gánʲɪʃə dve sistrʲí.
en: Ganesh has two sisters.

ру: У Губерта болит голова.
ru: u gúbʲirtə balʲít gəlav.
en: Hubert has a headache.

| Literally: "the head of Hubert's hurts." |

ру: На твоём телефоне есть камера?
ru: na tvajóm tʲɪlʲfónʲi jestɨ kámʲɪrə?
en: Does your phone have a camera?
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Causative Verbs

Causatives are actions that change the state of an object. Examples:

1. **causer** kicks **ball** somewhere: somewhere is the new location.
2. **causer** paints **a house** white: white is the new state.
3. **causer** opens/closes **a door** shut: shut is the new state.
4. **causer** scares **someone** (with fear): many causatives do not state a final state, the verb itself indicates what the final state is.

Most causative verbs take objects, and most of these verbs can be paired with a stative verb that is intransitive. They can also be turned into passive sentences too. In each of the examples below, no matter where "ice" occurs in the sentence, it is the theme, likewise "I" and "me" are the causer:

The ice melts (away).
I melted the ice down the drain.
The ice was melted by me.
I turned on the heat in order to melt the ice.

List of common causative verbs:
accumulate, add, affect, afraid, assemble, betray, boil, borrow, break, brush, build, burn, change, close, combine, complete, complicate, connect, conserve, construct, convert, cook, correct, cover, create, cure, damage, deafen, deposit, destroy, develop, dilute, diminish, make disappear, disassemble, disconnect, disperse, disprove, dissolve,
dissuade, disturb, divide, get divorced, earn, enlarge, erase, establish, exchange, exclude, expel, fasten, feed, fill out, fix, fold, force, fry, harm, hide sth, hinder, hire, import, include, increase, inherit, install, interest, interrupt, intimidate, invent, involve, irritate, kick, kill, lend, liberate, lock, lose, lower, maintain, make up, manufacture, melt sth, memorize, mend, mix, move sth, offend, omit, open, organize, paint, plant sth, postpone, pour, preserve, press, print, produce, provoke, purify, raise, recover, reduce, release, remind, remove, repair, resume, ridicule, rouse, ruin, save, scare, sell, separate, set up, shave, shorten, show, make sth slow down, smash, smear, sort, spend, spill, spoil, spread, stimulate, make sth stop, straighten, make stronger, teach, tear up/down, throw, tie, make tired, torture, trade, transform sth, translate, unlock, untie, violate, wake sb, wash, waste, wipe, cause worry, wrap.

ру: Пауки страшные?
ru: paukʲ strášniʲi?
en: Are spiders scary?

ру: Я вчера убрался у себя в комнате.
ru: ja fčirá ubrálsə u subjá f kómnəti.
en: I cleaned my [own] room yesterday.

ру: Я вчера потерял свои ключи.
ru: ja fčirá patiral svaří kljućí.
ру: Недавний шторм принёс множество разрушений.
ru: nädávnij štorm prinjós mnóžistvə razrušénij.
en: Last week’s storm caused a lot of damage.

   Literally: 'brought a lot of damage'.

ру: Кто-то украл мой ключ.
ru: kót-ə ukrál moj kljuć.
en: Somebody has stolen my key.

Note: this sentence is different than the 'my room' and 'my keys' sentences above. In those sentences 'my' refers back to the causer role; the same person causing the change. In this sentence, the key belonging to me is different than the causer. So although in English they appear to both use 'my', in Russian one must use the correct word to refer back to the causer role. Because of this, the roles marked up in our syntax are different.

ру: Когда ты собираешься здесь прибраться?
ru: kagdá ti sabìráššə zdesj prìbrátə?
en: When are you going to get this place cleaned up?

ру: Мне нравится твой новый пиджак.
ru: mnìe nrávìtsə tvoj nóvij pìdžák.
en: I like your new jacket.
ру: Рок-звезда нуждается в телохранителе, чтобы защитить его от сумасшедших поклонников.
ru: rak-zvîzädá nuždáîtsə f tîləhörəntîlî, štóbî zaśštîtî jîvô at sumaśśêtših paklônnîkôf.
en: The rock star needs a bodyguard to protect him from crazy fans.

ру: Я положил сумку на стол.
ru: ja pəlažîl súmkû ná stol.
en: I put my bag on the table.

### Causative Commands

ру: Открой окно.
ru: atkrój aknó.
en: Open a window.

### Modal Causatives

ру: Я не могу открыть дверь.
ru: ja nî magû atkrîdî dvîrî.
en: I can't open the door.

ру: Хочешь, чтобы я закрыл окно?
ru: hóčïš, štóbî ja zakrîl aknô?
en: Do you want me to close the window?
Missing Causative

ру: Дома сносятся.
ru: damá snósítsø.
en: The houses are being torn down.

ру: Машина была повреждена.
ru: mašínə bilá pavrždëná.
en: The car's been damaged.

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Action Verbs

Action verbs also include what are known as verbs of motion. Russian verbs of motion, like other verbs, come in pairs. However, the pairs are unidirectional and multidirectional, which then each have imperfective and perfective forms.

Here is a list of base pairs in imperfective. Each of the verbs below can be made perfective by prefixes to add more layers of meaning. For more information on verbs of motion, see our accompanying book "Russian Pronunciation and Grammar".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIDIRECTIONAL</th>
<th>MULTIDIRECTIONAL</th>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>бежать</td>
<td>бегать</td>
<td>to run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>брести</td>
<td>бродить</td>
<td>to stroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>вести</td>
<td>водить</td>
<td>to lead/drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>везти</td>
<td>возить</td>
<td>to carry by vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>гнать</td>
<td>гонять</td>
<td>to drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ехать</td>
<td>ездить</td>
<td>to go by vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>катить</td>
<td>катать</td>
<td>to ride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лезть</td>
<td>лазить</td>
<td>to climb/crawl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>лететь</td>
<td>летать</td>
<td>to fly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>нести</td>
<td>носить</td>
<td>to carry (hands/body), wear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>плыть</td>
<td>плывать</td>
<td>to swim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ползать</td>
<td>Ползать</td>
<td>To crawl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Таскать</td>
<td>Таскать</td>
<td>To pull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Идти</td>
<td>Ходить</td>
<td>To go by foot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ру: Куда они идут?
ru: kudá aní idút?
en: Where are they going?

ру: Я не был ни в одном из тех ресторанов.
ru: ja nʲé bil nʲi v adnóm is tʲeh rʲístaránɔf.
en: I haven't been to either of those restaurants.

**Habit**

ру: Он [] ходит пешком.
ru: on [] hódít pʲiškóm.
en: He usually walks [on foot].

*Note: hódít (ходит) as a verb already indicates frequent motion on foot, so "usually" can be left unstated. And pʲiškóm (пешком) merely stresses on foot but also can be omitted. So "Он ходит" works perfectly fine as a translation.*
Commands

ру: Не стой здесь как столб!
ru: nỳ stoj zdësʲ kak stolp!
en: Don't just stand there doing nothing.

Note: the English range for "here" is extremely limited and does not translate well into other languages. Normally, English speakers only use "here" for things that are within arm's reach. Most languages use "here" for anything that can be seen in the vicinity. This also applies to "this" and "that". Most languages, including Russian, would prefer to say "here/здесь" since translating English "there/там" literally would put a great deal of distance between the speaker and listener.

ру: Возьми с собой зонтик.
ru: vazʲmʲ s sabój zóntik.
en: Take an umbrella with you.

Near Tense

ру: Нет, он только что ушёл.
ru: nʲet, on tólʲkə što ušól.
en: No, he just left.
Certainty

ру: Ты мне поможешь, да? — Да, конечно, помогу.
en: You'll help me, won't you? — Yes, of course I will.

Experience

ру: Я никогда не ездил на лошади.
ru: ja nǐkagdá ná jéždšl na lóšdť.
en: I've never ridden a horse.

Start and Finish

ру: Я начал работать в девять и закончил в четыре тридцать.
ru: ja náćšl rabótšl v dévšťi i zakónčšl f čtířš trištšštši.
en: I started [to] work at nine and finished at four thirty.

Incorporation

ру: Я всегда езжу на работу на автобусе.
ru: ja fṣ̌ígdá jéžžu na rabótu na aftóbusť.
en: I always go to work by bus.
Давай поедем на поезде.

Let's ride the train.

Возьмём такси?
Should we take a taxi?

Let's try something different.

Let's not go out.

We can go to either restaurant.

Chris had to wait a long time.
Алану не нужно работать очень усердно.
Алан doesn't have to work very hard.

Нам вчера вечером пришлось идти пешком.
We had to walk home last night.

Что бы нам съесть на ужин?
What should we have for dinner?

Ему не стоит есть слишком много.
He shouldn't eat too much.

Мне следуют позвонить тебе вечером?
Should I call you tonight?

Возможно, я буду поздно сегодня вечером.
I might be late tonight.

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Comparing Time

ру: Чем ты занимался после окончания школы?
ru: ĉem ti zanîmâlsâ póslî əkançânlî škóli?
en: What did you do after finishing school?

ру: Её доставили, пока он завтракал.
ru: jijó dastâvîlî, pakâ on záfrâkəl.
en: It came while he was having breakfast.

ру: Мне пришлось уехать, когда собрание ещё только начиналось.
ru: mnîe prišlósî ujéhî, kagdá sabránîji jiššî tólîkə nãîmâlsoj.
en: I had to leave just as the meeting was getting started.

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Roles and Color Descriptions

Colors Used in Sample Sentences:

Agent, Comitative, Self | Experiencer | Possessor, Partitive | Beneficiary | Theme, Reciprocal | Predicate | Stative Verb | Action Verb | Causative Verb | Existential Verb
| Modifying Verbs | Causer | Method Adverbs | Location, Source, Goal, Oblique | Incorporative, Instrument | Amount | Degree | Frequency | Time

**Theme Role**

The theme of the sentence can either be a subject or object. The theme doesn't act on the verb, and the verb doesn't act on or affect the theme. In our analysis, the Theme role also includes the Patient, so the Theme can be the direct object of a causative verb, stative verb, or the subject of a stative predicate. The theme is one of the most common roles you'll see.

**Agent Role**

The agent is usually in subject position and is the one that carries out an action.

**Amount**

An amount indicates a quantity of something. If it is an adjective contained inside of another role, or if it is a predicate, then we normally don't mark it as amount.
Beneficiary Role

The beneficiary is the recipient of an action, the one who gains something from the action.

Causer Role

A causer differs from an agent, but is similar. When a verb increases its agent valency, one of the roles is given the causer role: "she goes > he told her to go". The causer is also the agent of a causative verb and is usually omitted in passive sentences where the theme appears in subject position.

Comitative Role

Both the words "and" and "with" both apply as comitative roles. The comitative adds an additional person to the theme or agent or a number of other roles. For example:

- I listen to music with John: experiencer roles (John and I)
- I write a book with the professor: agent roles (professor and I)
- I got married with her: theme roles she and I
- The priest married her and me: theme roles her and me

Degree

Degree is an adverbial describing how intense an action is.
Experiencer Role

The experiencer is the role that experiences feelings. It may be in the subject position, but it doesn't always act like a subject. For example, saying "I'm hot" in English is equivalent to saying "it feels hot to me". Since the feeling of heat occurs to you, we call it experiencer.

Incorporation / Instrument

Incorporation means that an action is not carried out directly, but via a tool, which changes the actor to an experiencer, such as, "I'm flying to New York" because what really happens is that "you sit on an airplane that [which] is flown to New York" whereas "A bird flies itself to New York". An instrument is the tool that is used to carry out an action: "I'm flying to New York by helicopter".

Location Roles

There are four kinds of location: location at, direction towards, direction from, some other oblique direction like around or through.

Measurements

We delineate amounts and frequencies by measurements or cycles in certain phrases like "once per week", "thirty degrees Celsius".
**Method of Doing**

Method is an adverbial that describes how an action is done.

**Nature Role**

Nature usually appears as a theme, or reduced to a generic pronoun, as in English.

**Partitive Role**

A partitive is something that belongs to something else, such as the wheels on a car. In this case a car doesn't own the wheels, as it is not human.

**Possessor Role**

The possessor in most languages has special grammar, sometimes known as the genitive. A possessor is usually human or animate, and acquires possessions through purchasing or obtaining, and then by keeping. We use separate markup grammar to indicate kinship relationships since "having a mother/sister" isn't true possession. This also includes expressions like "we have a queen/boss". The same is true for body parts whereas ailments change the human into an experiencer role: "I have two hands. / I have a fever."
**Reciprocal Role**

Certain kinds of verbs bind the subject and object together into the same action and affect both equally. Many verbs such as "meet" and "marry" have reciprocal arguments and may include words such as "each other" and "one another".

**Self Role**

Self Role refers back to one of the people mentioned in the sentence. This could be a theme, agent, causer. It depends.

**Time**

Time expressions include four kinds: Point in Time (ago, previously, since, in/on/at), Duration (atelic length, telic past/future duration), Frequency (repetitive, iterative), and Juxtaposition (simultaneous, consecutive).

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