

Table of Contents

About the Authors	15
Authors' Acknowledgments	16
Introduction	17
About This Book	17
Conventions Used in This Book	18
What You're Not to Read	19
Foolish Assumptions	19
How This Book Is Organized	19
Part I: Getting Started	19
Part II: Russian in Action	20
Part III: Russian on the Go	20
Part IV: The Part of Tens	20
Part V: Appendixes	20
Icons Used in This Book	20
Where to Go from Here	21
From "Диалектика" Publishing House	21
Part 1. Getting Started	23
Chapter 1. Russian in a Nutshell	25
Discovering How Easy the Russian Alphabet Really Is	25
Tackling Basic Grammar	26
Easing into Common Expressions	27
Counting on Numbers, Times, and Measurements	27
Speaking Russian around the House	28
Using Russian in Social Scenarios	28
Starting conversations	29
Finding your way around	29
Eating out and buying food	29
Going shopping	30
Exploring entertainment opportunities	30
Doing business and communicating	30
Enjoying sports, hobbies, recreation, and more	30
Getting a Handle on Travel Topics	31
Chapter 2. Checking Out the Russian Alphabet	33
Recognizing Russian Letters (It's Easier Than You Think)	33
Introducing the entire alphabet	34
I know you! Familiar-looking, same-sounding letters	38

Playing tricks: Familiar-looking, different-sounding letters	38
How bizarre: Weird-looking letters	39
Sounding Like a Real Russian with Proper Pronunciation	41
Understanding the one-letter-one-sound principle	41
Giving voice to vowels	42
Enunciating consonants correctly	43
Surveying sticky sounds	45
Chapter 3. Warming Up with Russian Grammar Basics	49
Beginning with Nouns and Pronouns	50
Defining a noun's gender	50
Making a noun plural	51
Replacing nouns with pronouns	52
The Case of Russian Cases: What Are They For?	53
The nominative case	53
The genitive case	53
The accusative case	54
The dative case	54
The instrumental case	55
The prepositional case	55
Putting Nouns and Pronouns in the Correct Cases	56
Checking out cases for singular nouns	56
Putting plurals into proper cases	59
Perusing the correct cases of pronouns	62
Decorating Your Speech with Adjectives	65
Making sure that adjectives and nouns agree	65
Putting adjectives into other cases	66
Surveying possessive pronouns	66
Adding Action with Verbs	69
Spotting infinitives	70
Living in the present tense	70
Talking about the past tense	71
Planning for the future tense	73
Using the unusual verb "to be"	74
Expressing possession with a special phrase	75
Helping yourself with modal verbs	76
Providing Extra Details with Adverbs	76
Describing how	77
Describing when and how often	77
Constructing Sentences Like a Pro	78
Enjoying the freedom of word order	78
Creating a Russian sentence step by step	78
Connecting with conjunctions	79
Forming questions	80

Chapter 4. Getting Started with Basic Expressions	83
To Whom Am I Speaking? Being Informal or Formal	83
Comings and Goings: Saying Hello and Goodbye	84
Saying hello to different people	85
Greeting folks at any time of day	85
Handling “How are you?”	85
Taking your leave	86
The Name Game: Deciphering Russian Names	87
Breaking the Ice: Making Introductions	88
Getting acquainted	89
Introducing yourself	89
Introducing your friends, family, and colleagues	90
You Can Say That Again: Using Popular Expressions	91
Speaking courteously	92
Excusing yourself	92
Arming yourself with other handy phrases	92
Talking about Talking: The Verb “To Speak”	93
Chapter 5. Getting Your Numbers, Times, and Measurements Straight	95
One by One: Counting in Russian	95
From zero to ten	96
From 11 to 19	96
From 20 to 99	97
From 100 to 999	98
From 1,000 to beyond	98
Special rules for counting things and people	99
Ordinal numbers	100
The Clock’s Ticking: Telling (And Asking About) Time	101
Counting the hours	101
Marking the minutes	101
Distinguishing day and night	102
Understanding the 24-hour clock	103
Asking for the time	103
It’s a Date! Checking Out the Calendar	105
Naming the days of the week	105
Talking about time relative to the present	106
Mentioning months and seasons	106
Delving into dates	107
Saying years	108
The Long and Short of It: Familiarizing Yourself with Metric Measurements	110
Chapter 6. Speaking Russian at Home	113
Taking a Tour of Your Home	113
The kitchen	114
The dining room	115

The living room	116
The bedroom	116
The bathroom	117
The laundry room	118
The garage	119
Home Is Where the Food Is	121
Get cookin': The verb "to cook"	121
Eat up: The verb "to eat"	121
Drink up: The verb "to drink"	122
Enjoying different meals	122
Describing your food and drink preferences with the verb "to like"	124
Engaging in Daily Activities	125
Discussing your household chores	125
Talking about all the places you go	126
Bantering about bedtime activities	127
Part 2. Russian in Action	129
Chapter 7. Getting to Know You: Making Small Talk	131
Let Me Tell You Something: Talking about Yourself	132
Stating where you're from	132
Talking about your nationality and ethnicity	133
Giving your age	136
Discussing your family	137
Telling what you do for a living	138
I'm Sorry! Explaining that You Don't Understand Something	141
Let's Get Together: Giving and Receiving Contact Information	141
Chapter 8. Asking for Directions	145
Using "Where" and "How" Questions	145
Asking where a place is	146
Inquiring how to get to a place	147
The Next Step: Understanding Specific Directions	148
Making sense of commands in the imperative mood	148
Listening for prepositions	149
Keeping "right" and "left" straight	149
Going here and there	151
Traveling near and far	154
Chapter 9. Dining Out and Going to the Market	157
Eating Out in Russia	157
Finding a place to eat	157
Making reservations on the phone	158
Ordering a meal	159
Having handy phrases for the wait staff	160
Receiving and paying the bill	161

Going Out for Groceries	163
Meats and fish	163
Fruits and vegetables	164
Dairy products and eggs	164
Baked goods	165
A Russian tradition: Hot cereal	165
Beverages	165
Chapter 10. Shopping Made Easy	169
Shopping with Confidence: The Verb “To Buy”	170
So Many Stores, So Little Time: The Shopping Scene in Russia	171
Looking at different types of stores and merchandise	171
Finding out when a store is open	172
Navigating a department store	173
You Are What You Wear: Shopping for Clothes	175
Seeking specific items of clothing and accessories	175
Describing items in color	176
Finding the right size	177
Trying on clothing	178
This or That? Deciding What You Want	178
Using demonstrative pronouns	179
Comparing two items	179
Talking about what you like most (or least)	180
You Gotta Pay to Play: Buying Items	180
How much does it cost?	180
I’ll take it! How do I pay?	181
Chapter 11. Going Out on the Town	185
Together Wherever We Go: Making Plans to Go Out	185
On the Big Screen: Going to the Movies	187
Picking a particular type of movie	188
Buying tickets	188
Choosing a place to sit and watch	189
It’s Classic: Taking in the Russian Ballet and Theater	191
Culture Club: Visiting a Museum	193
How Was It? Talking about Entertainment	194
Chapter 12. Taking Care of Business and Telecommunications	197
Looking Around Your Office	197
Indispensable office supplies	198
Rooms around the office	199
Simple office etiquette	199
Ringing Up Telephone Basics	200
Brushing up on phone vocabulary	200
Distinguishing different types of phones	201
Knowing different kinds of phone calls	201

Dialing the Number and Making the Call	202
Arming Yourself with Basic Telephone Etiquette	203
Saving time by not introducing yourself	204
Asking for the person you want to speak to	204
Anticipating different responses	204
Leaving a message with a person	207
Talking to an answering machine	209
Using a Computer	210
Familiarizing yourself with computer terms	211
Sending e-mail	212
Sending Correspondence	212
Chapter 13. Recreation and the Great Outdoors	215
Shootin' the Breeze about Recreational Plans	215
What did you do last night?	216
What are you doing this weekend?	217
What do you like to do?	218
Surveying the World of Sports	219
Listing a few popular sports	219
Using the verb "to play"	220
Talking about other athletic activities	221
Reading All about It	223
Talking about what you're reading	223
Discussing genres	223
Sounding Off about Music	226
Taking note of a few popular instruments	226
Asking about instruments that others play	227
Wondering what kinds of music others like	227
Being Crafty	228
Rejoicing in the Lap of Nature	229
Part 3. Russian on the Go	231
Chapter 14. Planning a Trip	233
Where Do You Want to Go? Picking a Place for Your Trip	233
Checking out continents and countries	234
Visiting Russia	235
How Do We Get There? Booking a Trip	236
Don't Leave Home without Them: Dealing with Passports and Visas	239
Taking It with You: Packing Tips	241
Chapter 15. Dealing with Money in a Foreign Land	243
Paying Attention to Currency	243
Rubles and kopecks	244
Dollars, euros, and other international currencies	244

Changing Money	245
Using Banks	246
Opening an account at the bank of your choice	246
Making deposits and withdrawals	248
Heading to the ATM	249
Spending Money	249
Using cash	250
Paying with credit cards	251
Chapter 16. Getting Around: Planes, Trains, Taxis, and More	253
Understanding Verbs of Motion	253
Going by foot or vehicle habitually	254
Going by foot or vehicle at the present time	254
Explaining where you're going	255
Navigating the Airport	257
Using the verb "to fly"	257
Checking in and boarding your flight	257
Handling customs and passport control	258
Conquering Public Transportation	259
Taking a taxi	259
Using minivans	260
Catching buses, trolley buses, and trams	261
Hopping on the subway	261
Embarking on a Railway Adventure	262
Making sense of a train schedule	262
Surveying types of trains and cars	262
Buying tickets	263
Stocking up on essentials for your ride	263
Boarding the train and enjoying your trip	264
Chapter 17. Finding a Place to Stay	265
Finding a Hotel that's Right for You	265
Distinguishing different types of hotels	266
Making a reservation	266
Checking In	270
Enduring the registration process	271
Taking a tour of your room	274
Familiarizing yourself with the facilities	275
Meeting the staff	275
Resolving Service Problems Successfully	276
Reporting a broken item	276
Requesting missing items	276
Asking to change rooms	277
Checking Out and Paying Your Bill	277

Chapter 18. Handling Emergencies	281
Finding Help in Case of Accidents and Other Emergencies	281
Hollering for help	282
Making an emergency phone call	282
Reporting a problem	283
Requesting English-speaking help	285
Receiving Medical Care	286
Knowing parts of the body	287
Describing your symptoms	288
Understanding questions a doctor asks	289
Communicating allergies or special conditions	291
Seeing a specialist	292
Undergoing an examination and getting a diagnosis	292
Visiting a pharmacy	294
Calling the Police When You're the Victim of a Crime	295
Talking to the police	295
Answering questions from the police	295
Part 4. The Part of Tens	299
Chapter 19. Ten Ways to Pick Up Russian Quickly	301
Check Out Russian TV, Movies, and Music	301
Listen to Russian Radio Programs	302
Read Russian Publications	302
Surf the Internet	302
Visit a Russian Restaurant	303
Find a Russian Pen Pal	303
Teach English to a Russian Immigrant	303
Visit a Jewish Community Center	304
Travel to Russia	304
Marry a Russian!	304
Chapter 20. Ten Things Never to Say in Russian	305
Use the Right Form of "You"	305
Don't Rush to Say "Hi!"	306
Don't Switch to First Names Prematurely	307
Use "How Are You?" with Caution	307
Respond to "How Are You?" in a Culturally Appropriate Manner	308
Choose the Right Form of "Happy"	308
Watch Out When You Talk about Studying	308
Accent a Certain Verb Carefully	309
Know the Difference between a Bathroom and a Restroom	309
Don't Toast with the Wrong Phrase	309

Chapter 21. Ten Favorite Russian Expressions	311
Showing Strong Feelings	311
Using “Give” in Various Situations	312
Starting a Story	312
Taking “Listen!” to the Next Level	312
Describing Amazement about Food	313
Insisting that the Good Times Continue	313
Noting the Benefit of Silence	314
Saying that Two Heads Are Better Than One	314
Expressing that a Friend in Need Is a Friend Indeed	314
Understanding the Importance of Old Friends	314
Chapter 22. Ten Phrases That Make You Sound Fluent in Russian	315
Showing Off Your Excellent Manners	315
Paying a Compliment	316
Inviting Someone Over for Tea	316
Saying “Help Yourself”	316
Wishing “Bon Appétit!”	317
Embracing the Tradition of Sitting Down Before Leaving	317
Offering Hospitality	317
Wishing Good Luck	318
Signing Off with Kisses	318
Offering Unusual Congratulations	319
Part 5. Appendixes	321
Appendix A. Mini-Dictionaries	323
Russian-English Mini-Dictionary	323
English-Russian Mini-Dictionary	330
Appendix B. Verb Tables	337
Regular Russian Verbs	337
Irregular Russian Verbs	338
Appendix C. Audio course contents	341
Audio clip Listing	341
How to get audio clips	342
Appendix D. Answer Keys	343
Index	347



Chapter 4

Getting Started with Basic Expressions

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Using informal and formal versions of “you”
- » Knowing how to say hello and goodbye
- » Making sense of Russian names
- » Introducing yourself and others
- » Trying out some popular expressions

Just as in English, greetings and introductions in Russian allow you to establish contact with other people and make a good first impression. In this chapter, we cover the formal and informal versions of “you,” saying hello and goodbye, understanding Russian names, and introducing yourself and other folks. We also provide you with some handy everyday phrases that will help you win the hearts of Russians.

To Whom Am I Speaking? Being Informal or Formal

When you want to say hello in Russian, you need to consider who you’re talking to first. Unlike in English (but similar to some languages, like French, German, and

Spanish), Russian uses two different words for the word *you* — the informal **ТЫ** (tŭ) and the formal **ВЫ** (vŭ). (In English, no matter whom you’re talking to — your close friend, your boss, the President of the United States, or your dog — you use the word *you*.)



REMEMBER

Here’s how to know when to use which form of *you*:

- » **Informal:** Use the informal **ТЫ** *only* when you’re speaking to your parents, grandparents, siblings, children, and close friends. Use it only when you’re speaking to an individual, not to a group of people.
- » **Formal:** Use the formal **ВЫ** when you talk to your boss, acquaintances, older people, or people you don’t know very well, and anytime you’re speaking to more than one person.



WARNING

If you’re a young person, you can safely use **ТЫ** when addressing people your age, such as your classmates. However, don’t dare to use **ТЫ** when talking to your teacher, no matter how young she is! Using **ТЫ** to address an elderly woman or your teacher may be taken as extreme rudeness, unless people make allowances for the fact that you’re not a native Russian speaker.



REMEMBER

As a rule, you should use the formal **ВЫ** when addressing somebody you’ve never met before, an official, a superior, or someone who is older than you. As you get to know a person better, you may switch to the informal **ТЫ**. You even have a way of asking that person whether he’s ready to switch to **ТЫ**:

Можно на ты? (mož-nô nâ tŭ; May I call you informal “you”?)

If you’re at all unsure about whether to use **ВЫ** or **ТЫ**, use **ВЫ** until the person you’re addressing asks you to use **ТЫ** or addresses you with **ТЫ**.

Comings and Goings: Saying Hello and Goodbye

Being able to use greetings and goodbyes in a culturally appropriate manner is essential no matter where you are. In the following sections, we show you how to say hello in a variety of ways, give you a few greetings to use throughout the day, tell you how to ask and answer the perennial “How are you?” and wrap up a conversation with goodbyes.

Saying hello to different people

To greet one person with whom you're on informal **ТЫ** (tí) terms, use the word **здравствуй** (*zdra-stvuý*; hello). To greet a person with whom you're on formal **ВЫ** (ví) terms, use the longer word **здравствуйте** (*zdra-stvuý-tê*; hello). (We cover **ТЫ** and **ВЫ** in the previous section.)



GRAMMATICALLY
SPEAKING

Note that the first letter **в** in **здравствуй** and **здравствуйте** is silent. Otherwise, those words would be hard for even Russians to pronounce!

Здравствуйте is also used to address more than one person. Use it when addressing two or more people, even if they're children, members of your family, or close friends (people with whom you're usually informal).



TIP

An even more informal way of saying *hello* in Russian is **привет** (*priv'et*). It's similar to the English hi. You should be on pretty familiar terms with a person before you use this greeting.

Greeting folks at any time of day

You have ways to greet people in Russian other than the bulky **здравствуй** or **здравствуйте**, but how you use these greetings depends on what time of day it is:

- » **Доброе утро** (*dob-rô-ýê ut-rô*; Good morning)
- » **Добрый день** (*dob-ríy d'en'*; Good afternoon)
- » **Добрый вечер** (*dob-ríy v'e-chêr*; Good evening)



REMEMBER

Note that Russians use these expressions only as greetings, not at leave-taking. (See the later section “Taking your leave” for details on good-byes.) You can also use these expressions without giving any thought to whether the person you greet should be addressed with **ТЫ** or **ВЫ**. No matter whom you greet, you can safely use any of these phrases.

Handling “How are you?”

The easiest and most popular way to ask How are you? is **Как дела?** (*kak dê-la*). It literally means *How are things (going)?* Pretty simple, right?



CULTURAL
WISDOM

A word of caution: In the English-speaking world, “How are you?” is just a standard phrase often used in place of a greeting. The person asking this formulaic question doesn't expect to get a full account of how you're

actually doing. But in Russia it's different. Russians want to know everything! When they ask you how you're doing, they are, in fact, genuinely interested in how you're doing and expect you to give them a more or less accurate account of the most recent events in your life.

How should you reply to **Как дела?** Although optimistic Americans don't hesitate to say "terrific" or "wonderful," Russians usually respond with a more reserved **хорошо** (hō-rō-sho; good) or **нормально** (nōr-mal'-nō; normal or okay), or even a very neutral **ничего** (ni-chê-vo; so-so; Literally: nothing) or **неплохо** (nê-plo-hō; not bad).



TIP

If you're truly feeling great, go ahead and answer **прекрасно** (prê-kras-nō; wonderful) or **великолепно** (vê-li-kō-'ep-nō; terrific). But beware that by saying *terrific* or *wonderful*, you're putting your Russian friend on guard: Russians know all too well that life is not a picnic. To a Russian, wonderful and terrific events are the exception, not the rule. To be on the safe side, just say either **ничего** or **неплохо**.

And don't stop there! Be sure to ask the person how she's doing. You simply say **А у вас?** (a u vas; And you? [formal]). If you want to be less formal, say **А у тебя?** (a u tê-b'a; And you?)

Taking your leave

The usual way to say *goodbye* in almost any situation is **До свидания!** (do svi-da-ni-ya), which literally means Till [the next] meeting. If you're on informal terms with somebody, you may also say **Пока** (pō-ka; Bye or See you later).

The phrase you use when leaving in the evening or just before bed is **Спокойной ночи** (spō-koý-nōý no-chi; Good night). The phrase works for both formal and informal situations.

Talkin' the Talk



PLAY THIS

(Audio clip 4, go.dialektika.com/russian4)



Sasha (**Саша**) bumps into her classmate Oleg (**Олег**) on the subway. Sasha is just about to get off.

Олег: **Саша, привет!**
sa-shâ pri-v'et
Sasha, hi!

Саша: **Ой, Олег! Привет! Как дела?**

oý ô-l'ek; pri-v'et; kak dê-la

Oh, Oleg! Hi! How are you?

Олег: **Ничего. А у тебя?**

ni-chê-vo; a u tê-b'a

Okay. And you?

Саша: **Неплохо. Ой, это моя станция. До свидания, Олег.**

nê-plo-hô; oý e-tô mô-ya stan-tsî-ya; do svi-da-ni-ya ô-l'ek

Not bad. Oh, this is my station. Goodbye, Oleg.

Олег: **Пока!**

pô-ka

Bye!

Words to Know

привет	pri-v'et	hi
Как дела?	kak dê-la	How are you?
ничего	ni-chê-vo	okay
А у тебя?	a u tê-b'a	And you?
неплохо	nê-plo-hô	not bad
до свидания	do svi-da-ni-ya	goodbye
пока	pô-ka	bye

The Name Game: Deciphering Russian Names

The Russian word for name is **имя** (i-m'a), but you may not hear this word when people ask about your name. That's because what they actually ask is not "What is your name?" but literally, "How do people/they call you?" — **как вас зовут?** (kak vas zô-vut) in formal situations or **как тебя зовут?** (kak tê-b'a zô-vut) in informal situations. Consequently, when you answer the question, you say how people, in fact, call you — for example, if your name is John, you say

Меня зовут Джон. (mê-n'a zô-vut džon; My name is John; Literally: They call me John.)



Saying names in Russian is a bit more complicated than in English. The reason is that in introducing themselves, especially in formal situations, Russians use the *patronymic* (father's first name) right after the first name. The patronymic usually has the ending **-вич** (vich), meaning son of, or **-овна/-евна** (ov-nâ/ÿev-nâ), meaning daughter of. For example, a man named **Борис** (bo-ris) whose father's name is **Иван** (i-van) would be known as **Борис Иванович** (**Иванович**, pronounced i-va-nô-vich, is the patronymic). A woman named **Анна** (an-na) whose father's name is **Иван** (i-van) would be known as **Анна Ивановна** (**Ивановна**, pronounced i-va-nôv-nâ, is the patronymic). A Russian almost never formally addresses a person named **Михаил** (mi-ha-il) as just **Михаил** but rather as **Михаил** plus his patronymic with the suffix **-ович/-евич** (o-vich/ÿe-vich; for instance, **Михаил Николаевич** (mi-ha-il ni-ko-la-ÿe-vich) or **Михаил Борисович** (mi-ha-il bo-ri-so-vich).

You may say that Russians have three names. The first name is a baptismal name; the second name is his or her father's first name with the ending **-ович/-евич** for men or **-овна/-евна** for women; and the third is the last name, or the family name.

Men's last names and women's last names have different endings. That's because Russian last names have genders. Although many Russian male last names have the ending **-ов** (ov), female names take the ending **-ова** (o-vâ). Imagine that your new acquaintance, **Анна Ивановна Иванова**, is a married woman. Her husband's last name isn't **Иванова** (i-vâ-no-vâ), but **Иванов** (i-vâ-nov). (Yes, your friend Anna has a father and a husband with the same name: Ivan.)



TIP

No matter what your relation is to another person (either informal or formal), you can still address that person by his or her first name and patronymic. So if you're unsure whether you're on informal **ТЫ** or formal **ВЫ** terms with someone, go ahead and address the person by the first name and patronymic, just to be safe. When you're clearly on friendly terms with the person, you can switch to using the first name only.

Breaking the Ice: Making Introductions

Making a good first impression is important for the beginning of any relationship. Russians tend to be more formal than Americans in how they approach a person they've just met. In the following sections, we show you the best ways to introduce yourself to somebody you've just met. We also show you phrases to use when getting acquainted with someone, and the best way to introduce your friends, family, and colleagues to new people.

Getting acquainted



REMEMBER

In English, introducing yourself is the best way to start a conversation with somebody you don't know. Not so in Russian. When introducing themselves, Russians are a little more ceremonial. Russians like to suggest getting acquainted first, by saying “Let's get acquainted!” They have two ways to say this, depending on whether they're on formal **ВЫ** (vî) or informal **ТЫ** (tî) terms with the person (see “To Whom Am I Speaking? Being Informal or Formal” earlier in this chapter for info on these terms) as well as how many people they're addressing:

» **Addressing a person formally or addressing two or more people:**

Давайте познакомимся! (dâ-vaý-tê pò-znâ-ko-mim-s'a; Let's get acquainted)

» **Addressing a person informally:**

Давай познакомимся! (dâ-vaý pò-znâ-ko-mim-s'a; Let's get acquainted)

If somebody says one of these phrases to you, you should politely accept the suggestion. To respond, you can just use the first word of the question you were asked, which makes your task much easier:

» **If you were addressed formally or are in a group of people:**

Давайте (dâ-vaý-tê; Okay; Literally: Let's)

» **If you were addressed informally:**

Давай (dâ-vaý; Okay; Literally: Let's)

Introducing yourself

To introduce yourself in Russian, just say **Меня зовут** (mê-n'â zò-vut) plus your name. (See “The Name Game: Deciphering Russian Names,” earlier in this chapter, for how to ask others for their names.)



TIP

When you're introducing yourself, formality doesn't matter. **Меня зовут** and the other Russian phrases in this section are appropriate in both formal and informal situations.

After you're introduced to someone, you may want to say *Nice to meet you*. In Russian, you say **очень приятно** (ò-chên' pri-ýat-nò; Literally: very pleasant). The person you've been introduced to may then reply **мне тоже** (mn'e to-že; same here).

Introducing your friends, family, and colleagues

Everyday, common introductions are easy in Russian. When you want to introduce your friends, all you need to say is **Это...** (*e-tô...*; This is...). Then you simply add the name of the person (see “The Name Game: Deciphering Russian Names” earlier in this chapter for more info about names).

As in English, the same construction (**Это** + *the person you’re introducing*) applies to a broad circle of people, including your family members. For example, to introduce your mother, you say

Это моя мама. (*e-tô mô-ya ma-mâ*; This is my mother.)

To introduce your brother, you just say

Это мой брат. (*e-tô moy brat*; This is my brother.)

To introduce other members of your family, see Chapter 7, where we provide words indicating other family members.

You can use the same simple method to introduce anybody. For example, when introducing your co-worker, you may want to say

Это мой коллега, Антон Александрович. (*e-tô moy kô-l'e-gâ ân-ton â-lêk-sand-rô-vich*; This is my colleague, Anton Aleksandrovich.)

Talkin’ the Talk



PLAY THIS

(Audio clip 5, go.dialektika.com/russian5)



Анна (**Анна**) is approached by her friend, Viktor (**Виктор**), and his acquaintance, Boris Alekseevich (**Борис Алексеевич**).

Виктор: **Ой, привет, Анна!**

oý pri-v'et a-nâ

Oh, hi Anna!

Анна: **Привет Виктор! Как дела?**

pri-v'et vik-tôr; kak dê-la

Hi, Viktor! How are you?

Виктор: **Ничего. А у тебя?**

ni-chê-vo; a u tê-b'a

Okay. And you?

Анна: **Неплохо.**

nê-plo-hô

Not bad.

- Виктор:** **А это Борис Алексеевич.**
 a e-tô bô-ris â-lêk-s'e-ýe-vich
And this is Boris Alekseevich.
- Анна:** **Здравствуйте! Давайте познакомимся!**
 zdra-stvuý-tê; dâ-vaý-tê pô-znâ-ko-mim-s'a
Hello! Let's get acquainted!
- Борис Алексеевич:** **Давайте! Меня зовут Борис.**
 dâ-vaý-tê; mê-n'a zô-vut bô-ris
Let's! My name is Boris.
- Анна:** **Очень приятно!**
 o-chên' pri-ýat-nô
Nice to meet you!
- Борис Алексеевич:** **Мне тоже.**
 mn'e to-že
Nice to meet you, too. (Literally: Same here.)

Words to Know

это	e-tô	this is
Давайте познакомимся!	dâ-vaý-tê pô-znâ-ko-mim-s'a	Let's get acquainted!
меня зовут	mê-n'a zô-vut	my name is
Очень приятно!	o-chên' pri-ýat-nô	Nice to meet you!
мне тоже	mn'e to-že	likewise

You Can Say That Again: Using Popular Expressions

Using popular expressions is one way to make a great first impression when speaking Russian. We recommend that you memorize the phrases in the following sections, because they can come in handy in almost any situation.

Speaking courteously

Don't forget the manners your mother taught you when you're with a Russian speaker. Try out these simple phrases:

- » **пожалуйста** (pô-žal-stâ; please or you're welcome in response to thank you)
- » **Да, пожалуйста.** (da pô-žal-stâ; Yes, please.)
- » **Спасибо.** (spâ-si-bô; Thank you.)
- » **Нет, спасибо.** (n'et spâ-si-bô; No, thank you.)
- » **Спасибо большое.** (spâ-si-bô bôl'-sho-ýe; Thank you very much.)



TIP

You often use the word **пожалуйста** just after the verb when making a polite request, as in the following sentences:

Повторите, пожалуйста. (pôf-tô-ri-tê pô-žal-stâ; Please repeat what you said.)

Говорите, пожалуйста, медленнее. (gô-vô-ri-tê pô-žal-stâ m'ed-lê-nê-ýe; Please speak a little more slowly.)

Excusing yourself

In English you say *sorry* to apologize for something you've done wrong and *excuse me* when you want to attract somebody's attention or make an interjection. Russian uses two words to express either meaning: **извините** (iz-vi-ni-tê) or **извини** (iz-vi-ni; sorry or excuse me; *formal/informal*).



TIP

To be even more polite when you excuse yourself in Russian, you can add the word **пожалуйста** (pô-žal-stâ; please), as in the following sentences:

Извините, пожалуйста, мне пора. (iz-vi-ni-tê pô-žal-stâ mn'e pô-ra; Excuse me, it's time for me to go.)

Извините, пожалуйста, я не понимаю. (iz-vi-ni-tê pô-žal-stâ ya n'e pô-ni-ma-ýu; Excuse me, I don't understand.)

Arming yourself with other handy phrases

Someone new to speaking Russian (in Russia or anywhere else in the world) may want to know these common phrases:

- » Добро пожаловать! (dôb-ro pô-ža-lô-vât'; Welcome!)
- » Поздравляю! (pô-zdrâv-l'a-yû; Congratulations!)
- » Желаю удачи! (že-la-yû u-da-chi; Good luck!)
- » Всего хорошего! (vsê-vo hô-ro-shê-vô; All the best!)
- » Приятного аппетита! (pri-yat-nô-vô â-pê-ti-tâ; Bon appetit!)
- » Жалко! (žal-kô; Too bad!)
- » Можно задать вам вопрос? (mož-nô zâ-dat' vam vô-pros; Can I ask you a question?)

In addition to the preceding phrases, Russians often use the following words to express a wide range of emotions, such as fear, surprise, delight, anger, and more (the expressions are interchangeable):

- » Ой! (oý; Oh!)
- » Ай! (aý; Ah!)

Talking about Talking: The Verb “To Speak”

If you’ve checked out all the expressions we provide earlier in this chapter, you may be wondering how to say *to speak* in Russian. That’s easy; it’s **говорить** (gô-vô-rit'; to speak). It’s one of those second-conjugation verbs we mention in Chapter 3. This is how it conjugates in the present tense:

<i>Conjugation</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>
Я говорю	ýa gô-vô-r'ú
Ты говоришь	tî gô-vô-rish'
Он/она говорит	on/ô-na gô-vô-rit
Мы говорим	mî gô-vô-rim
Вы говорите	vî gô-vô-ri-tê
Они говорят	ô-ni gô-vô-r'at

To find out whether your Russian conversation partner speaks English, you may simply ask

Вы говорите по-английски? (vî gô-vô-ri-tê po ân-gliý-ski; Do you speak English?)

Keep in mind that you should use the formal version of *you* in this question!



Fun & Games

Practice saying hello in Russian to the following people. Should you use **Здравствуй** (*zdra-stvuý*) or **Здравствуйте** (*zdra-stvuý-tê*)? Circle the correct choice in each of the following instances. Find the answers in Appendix D.

1. Your close friend **Здравствуй** **Здравствуйте**
2. Your boss **Здравствуйте** **Здравствуй**
3. Your teacher **Здравствуйте** **Здравствуй**
4. Your doctor **Здравствуйте** **Здравствуй**
5. Your pet **Здравствуйте** **Здравствуй**
6. A group of friends **Здравствуйте** **Здравствуй**
7. Several children **Здравствуйте** **Здравствуй**