

Russian Pronunciation

Pronunciation Guide - Vowels

Vowel	Sound when Stressed (Example)	Sound when Unstressed (Example)
А	a/ah (long) Соба <u>а</u> ка (<i>sa-BA-ka</i>)	a (short) Да <u>в</u> ать (<i>da-VAT'</i>)
Е	ye От <u>е</u> ц (<i>a-T YETS</i>)	i (short) Ц <u>в</u> ети (<i>tsvi-TEE</i>)
Ё	yo Т <u>е</u> мный (<i>T YOM-niy</i>)	n/a - always stressed
И	ee Спаси <u>и</u> бо (<i>spa-SEE-ba</i>)	i (short) П <u>р</u> авильный (<i>PRA-vil'-niy</i>)
О	o Он (<i>on</i>)	a (short) О <u>н</u> а (<i>a-NA</i>)
У	oo (long) М <u>у</u> ж (<i>m oo zh</i>)	oo (short) Р <u>у</u> башка (<i>r oo -BASH-ka</i>)
Ы	iy (long) Р <u>ы</u> ба (<i>RIY-ba</i>)	iy (short) Закр <u>ы</u> вать (<i>za-kr iy -VAT'</i>)
Э	eh <u>Э</u> тот (<i>EH-tat</i>)	eh Э <u>л</u> егантный (<i>eh -li-GANT'-niy</i>)
Ю	yoo (long) <u>Ю</u> ность (<i>YOO-nast'</i>)	yoo (short) <u>Ю</u> рист (<i>yoo-REEST</i>)
Я	ya Гор <u>я</u> чий (<i>ga-R YA-chiy</i>)	i (short) / yi (short) Де <u>с</u> ять (<i>DYE-sit'</i>) / Я <u>з</u> ык (<i>yi-ZIYK</i>)

Pronunciation Guide - Consonants

There are 20 consonants broken up into 3 easy groups:

5 Hissing sounds

Ж Ш Ц Ч Щ These are all "hissing" noises.

9 Resonant sounds

Л Р Б В Г Д М Н З These consonants vibrate the vocal chords.

6 Voiceless

Х П К Т Ф С These do not vibrate the vocal chords.

Hard or Soft

1. Consonants can be pronounced "hard" or "soft" with the addition of the hard sign **ъ** or soft sign **ь**
2. The hissing sounds are never affected by hard or soft signs:
Always Hard Ж Ш Ц
Always Soft Ч Щ

Voiced or Voiceless

Some of the consonants are subject to special rules that change whether they are voiced or voiceless in certain circumstances.

For this purpose, the consonants can be described in another way:

4 Always Voiced Л М Н Р
4 Always Voiceless Х Ч Щ Ц

6 pair { Voiced Б В Г Д Ж З
 Voiceless П Ф К Т Ш С

1. At the end of a word - a voiced consonant is pronounced as its voiceless counterpart. Eg. Обед (a-BYET)
2. Before a voiceless consonant - a voiced consonant is pronounced as its voiceless counterpart. Eg. Заветра (ZAF-tra)
3. Before a voiced consonant - a voiceless consonant is pronounced as its voiced counterpart. Eg. Футбол (FUD-bol)
4. Rules 3 and 4 also apply for the last letter of a preposition, which is pronounced as one word together with the word that follows it. Eg. В кот^ором часу? (fka-TO-ram cha-SOO?)

Pronunciation Guide - Special Rules and Common Exceptions

- г A common exception, the letter Г is often pronounced as the letter В, (or english "v" sound).
Eg. сегодня (se-VOD-nya), его (ye-VO)
- тс / When these 2 letters appear together, pronounce as ц.
тьс Eg. Надеяться (na-DYE-yat'-sa)
- дц When these 2 letters appear together, pronounce as цц.
Eg. Двадцать (DVA-tsat')
- сч When these 2 letters appear together, pronounce as щ.
Eg. Счёт (shchot)
- ся Usually pronounced as "sya" but sometimes "sa".
Eg. Надеяться (na-DYE-yat'-sa)
- ст After с, the letter т is often (but not always) silent.
Eg. Грустный (GROOS-niy)

The Final Letter - Ё - "Half-vowel"... "Half-consonant"!

The letter Ё is sometimes referred to as a vowel, but in fact it is not. It sits on the fence... somewhere between a vowel and a consonant.

It's main "vowel-like" function is in the formation of diphthongs, which are combinations of 2 vowels that glide together, and have the appearance of one sound. Eg. Йогурт - ёо-гурт (yoghurt)