

## Russian Verbs

This lesson on Russian Verbs is one of the most important in order to rapidly improve the quality of your Russian skills. In any language, verbs play a crucial role in getting your message across to the other person. They add action to your sentences.

### The Basics

In the Russian language, verbs consist of two aspects (Imperfective and Perfective), two Conjugations (first-conjugation and second-conjugation), and three tenses (past, present and future tense).

Let's take a look at each of these areas and how they affect the use of verbs in the Russian language.

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## Lesson Overview

[1. Verbal Aspect](#) - What are Imperfective and Perfective Verbs, and when should you use them?

[2. Conjugation \(Changing Verb endings\)](#) - How and when to change them to correctly convey who is doing *what* to *whom*.

[3. Past, Present and Future Tense](#) - How to form the correct Russian verbs in each of these circumstances.

[4. The Verb "To Be"](#)

[5. The Imperative](#) - How to form correct verbs for giving instructions, such as "Sit down!", "Repeat, please", and "Call me then".

[6. Most Important Verbs](#) - List of the most important verbs for you to remember.

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### Verbal Aspect

Verbal Aspect clarifies whether the action described by the verb is ongoing, or if it was *completed* - that is, whether the action is/was/will be happening, or whether it is/was/will be happening *to completion*.

Russian is actually simpler than English in this regard. There are only two aspects to Russian Verbs - **Imperfective** and **Perfective**. Imperfective Verbs are those that describe actions that are ongoing or repetitive... Perfective Verbs are those that are done to completion.

## Russian Verbs

Use the lists of Imperfective and Perfective Verbs provided here as a great study guide you can refer to whenever you need.

(a) [List of Russian Imperfective Verbs](#)

(b) [List of Russian Perfective Verbs](#)

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### Conjugation

Conjugation refers to the change of verb-ending in order to indicate who/what is performing the action, and also the tense (past, present or future).

Luckily for us, there are two main "patterns" of conjugation. Most verbs use one of these 2 patterns, so once you know the pattern, you can apply it to all verbs that use that conjugation pattern. The two main conjugation patterns are simply referred to as *First-conjugation* and *Second-conjugation* verbs.

The following tables indicate the correct ending you should use in each particular instance. Notice that the ending is different depending on who is performing the action. To form the correct verbs, simply remove the ending from the regular form (known as the *Infinitive*) and replace with the appropriate ending. Follow the examples given to see how this is done. (In the verb lists you will see the numbers 1 and 2 to indicate which verbs follow these patterns. All other verbs have slightly different patterns that you will need to learn as you go.)

## Russian Verbs

### First-Conjugation (E-type) Verbs

Person	Russian	Verb Ending
I	Я	-у / -ю
We	Мы	-ем / -ём
You (familiar)	Ты	-ешь / -ёшь
You (formal / plural)	Вы	-ете / -ёте
He / She / It	Он / Она / Оно	-ет / -ёт
They	Они	-ут / -ют

### Second-Conjugation (И-type) Verbs

Person	Russian	Verb Ending
I	Я	-у / -ю
We	Мы	-им
You (familiar)	Ты	-ишь
You (formal / plural)	Вы	-ите
He / She / It	Он / Она / Оно	-ит
They	Они	-ат / -ят

### Example of First-Conjugation (E-type) Verbs

To read - **читать** - (*chi-tat'*)

I am reading - **Я читаю** - (*ya chi-ta-yoo*)

You are reading - **Ты читаешь** - (*ty chi-ta-yesh'*)

He is reading - **Он читает** - (*on chi-ta-yet*)

She is reading - **Она читает** - (*a-na chi-ta-yet*)

We are reading - **Мы читаем** - (*my chi-ta-yem*)

You are reading - **Вы читаете** - (*vy chi-ta-ye-tye*)

They are reading - **Они читают** - (*a-nee chi-ta-yoot*)

### Example of Second-Conjugation (И-type) Verbs

To speak - **говорить** - (*ga-va-reet'*)

I am speaking - **Я говорю** - (*ya ga-va-ryoo*)

You are speaking - **Ты говоришь** - (*ty ga-va-reesh'*)

He is speaking - **Он говорит** - (*on ga-va-reet*)

She is speaking - **Она говорит** - (*a-na ga-va-reet*)

We are speaking - **Мы говорим** - (*my ga-va-reem*)

You are speaking - **Вы говорите** - (*vy ga-va-ree-tye*)

They are speaking - **Они говорят** - (*a-nee ga-va-ryat*)

## Russian Verbs

### Verb Tense - Past, Present and Future

Verbs also change endings depending on the tense. Let's take a look at each tense, one at a time, and see how to use verbs correctly in each situation. Pay particular attention to the terms *Compound Future* and *Simple Future* tense, as you will hear these terms often.

#### Past Tense

1. Remove **-ТЬ** ending
2. Replace with **-л** (masculine) / **-ла** (feminine) / **-лю** (neuter) / **-ли** (plural)

#### Present Tense

Regular conjugation patterns.

NB. You cannot use Perfective verbs in present tense as it is not possible to have completed something that is currently taking place.

#### Future Tense

For Imperfective verbs, use the conjugated version of the verb **БЫТЬ** plus the infinitive (unconjugated) imperfective verb. This is also referred to as the **Compound Future**.

Eg. I will read = **Я буду читать**

For Perfective verbs, use the regular conjugation patterns.

This is also referred to as the **Simple Future**.

Eg. I will call you = **Я позвоню тебя**

### The Verb "To Be"

The Verb "To Be" is used in the Compound Future tense, as you will have seen in the above example. Please note that this verb also needs to be conjugated according to who is doing the action. See the following table for the conjugation pattern that you need to use for this verb.

## Russian Verbs

### The Verb "To Be" - **БЫТЬ**

Person	Russian	Verb Ending
I	<b>Я</b>	<b>буду</b>
We	<b>Мы</b>	<b>будем</b>
You (familiar)	<b>Ты</b>	<b>будешь</b>
You (formal / plural)	<b>Вы</b>	<b>будете</b>
He / She / It	<b>Он / Она / Оно</b>	<b>будет</b>
They	<b>Они</b>	<b>будут</b>

### The Imperative

The Imperative refers to a verb which is instructional, or in other words it is an order or instruction for someone to follow. "Sit down!", "Stop!", and "Listen!" are common examples of Imperative verbs.

In Russian, it is very easy to form the Imperative. You do not need to worry about tense, as there is no notion of time associated with an instruction. To form the Imperative, simply remove the ending from the regular (Infinitive) form, and use the appropriate ending as indicated in the following table. The only distinction you need to make is whether to use the formal or informal version, depending on how well you know the person you are speaking with. Always use the formal version if you are speaking to more than one person, or if you are addressing someone who is older than you, or that you do not have a close personal relationship with.

## Russian Verbs

### How to Form the Imperative

Step 1 - Take the first person singular verb conjugation

Step 2 - Remove the conjugated ending, leaving only the "stem"

Step 3 - Add the appropriate ending as follows:

- If the stem ends in a vowel, add **й / йте** (refer Group 1)
- If the stem ends in two or more consonants, add **и / ите** (refer Group 2)
- If the stem ends in a single consonant, and the stress falls on the end, add **и / ите** (refer Group 2)
- If the stem ends in a single consonant, and the stress does not fall on the end, add **ь / ьте** (refer Group 3)

Verb > (1st p. Conjugation)	Imperatives - Group 1	
	(Informal) й	(Formal) йте
Читать > <b>Читаю</b> Слушать > <b>Слушаю</b>	<b>Читай</b> <b>Слушай</b>	<b>Читайте</b> <b>Слушайте</b>
Verb > (1st p. Conjugation)	Imperatives - Group 2	
	(Informal) и	(Formal) ите
Говорить > <b>Говорю</b> Писать > <b>Пишу</b>	<b>Говори</b> <b>Пиши</b>	<b>Говорите</b> <b>Пишите</b>
Verb > (1st p. Conjugation)	Imperatives - Group 3	
	(Informal) ь	(Formal) ьте
Забывать > <b>Забуду</b> Встать > <b>Встану</b>	<b>Забудь</b> <b>Встань</b>	<b>Забудьте</b> <b>Встаньте</b>

### Most Important Russian Verbs

We have compiled a list of the most important verbs - [Click here for the Top 100 Verbs](#). Use this as your study-guide while you gradually increase your vocabulary. And don't forget to see the comprehensive lists of Imperfective and Perfective verbs including phonetics:

[List of Russian Imperfective Verbs](#)

[List of Russian Perfective Verbs](#)

### Verbs of Motion

Most of us have heard the expression "*Every rule has an exception*". And, as any language-lover will know... Russian does too! Verbs of motion are treated slightly differently than other verbs, and deserve a discussion of their own. [Click here to continue this lesson on Russian Verbs of Motion](#).