

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

I Introduction for students

Welcome to this Routledge intensive textbook of Russian. Russian is a great and fascinating language to learn and study and the knowledge of Russian that you acquire in the course of this book – in fact, from the very start – gives you access to Russia and the Russian people, Russian life and culture, history and society.

The book is written for students of Russian, primarily for those studying at university, but for all who want to learn and are interested in Russian as well. Its main use is envisaged as part of a classroom-based course, but it may be used for independent study too. Indeed, in the context of a taught course your own study is a vital part of making progress. But beyond that the book is written for you to read, not just to follow in class and for you to read ahead either as needed or as interest leads you. In addition, an encouragement to develop awareness of how Russian works as a language is a key part of the book's approach.

The book can be taken at a range of paces, but it allows for intensive learning at an accelerated pace. It is intensive and covers a lot of ground, but it is not comprehensive: it does not develop active command of certain areas of advanced Russian and some topics are covered more fully than others. It is further expected that the book will be supplemented by material, especially for reading, from outside. You too can bring your knowledge and interests from outside to inform your study and learning of Russian: not only in developing areas of Russian that relate to your particular interests, but also in using knowledge of other languages, starting from English, to help you in learning Russian.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS

The book has three parts: Units 1–4 provide a foundation to get you going in Russian. Here you are given extra assistance through the translation of examples and the provision of word lists at the end of each unit. The central part of the book, Units 5–7, then takes you forward through intensive development. This part is hard work and represents a demanding challenge in terms of acquiring command of the material covered, something that also depends very much on your taking control of your own learning, for example in building up vocabulary. The final part, Units 8–10, incorporates both revision and further development. This part is less intensive in focus and aims for an exit from the book that is more relaxed but also outward and forward looking, with a view to your use of Russian beyond the book: in continued study, in the use of Russian to talk and write about Russian life, politics, history and culture and in going to Russia.

At the start of the book there is a glossary of grammatical terms. At the end there is a vocabulary for use with the book. The answer key can be found on the related website: www.routledge.com/textbooks/0415223008. Guidance notes for vocabulary learning are given in

the book, but, as mentioned already, success in this is very much down to you: no one else can learn Russian words for you. The vocabulary is followed by appendices which include: detailed information about Russian nouns and verbs, declension and conjugation patterns etc. and a list of common prepositions. The grammatical information in the appendices is for reference purposes: it is not an alternative to the gradual acquisition of Russian that you will gain through the book, but a supplement to it. Last of all, there is an index.

Progress in a language, perhaps especially in the early stages, can be thought of in a linear way primarily as progress forwards, but progress is also about ever wider command, ever widening circles if you like; it is also, fundamentally, about repetition, revision and consolidation. This book has been well tried out in use for a number of years and once a student referred to it as being like a snowball that is rolled and gradually builds up into something large, with each new layer adding onto what is there already. In aiming to develop your Russian in this way, this intensive course will take you far beyond the beginner's level and set you well on the way, as a confident user of Russian, to enjoying advanced command of the language; by the end you will have come a long way and Russian will be fully open to you.

II Notes for teachers

1 INTRODUCTION

This textbook is designed as an intensive course for students of Russian, primarily for those studying at university. It has been developed over a number of years into its current form that makes it suitable for an intensive or semi-intensive course that can be completed over 20–24 weeks. It aims to take students who have no prior knowledge of Russian to a point where (i) they have a broad awareness of Russian and a sound knowledge of its main structures and (ii) they are confident, accurate and effective users of Russian in a range of communicative contexts, so that (iii) they are ready to proceed to an advanced level of Russian. To this end, there is also a selected introduction to Russian grammatical terms. More generally, the book aims to foster an awareness of and interest in Russian life and culture, the context in which the language is embedded; here, of course, the extra input that is brought from the outside, by students and teachers alike, is both invaluable and indispensable.

The course is intensive, but it is not comprehensive. In terms of Russian grammar, it is quite comprehensive, although not exhaustive, and it does not practise all areas for active use. For example, participles and gerunds are introduced for awareness but only some occa-

sional use of past passive participle short forms is practised. Similarly, while a wide range of functions and topics is covered, not all topics are covered in equal detail and some only in an introductory or quite limited way. For example, free time, interests and social life are covered in detail, but the topic of house and home is less developed; expression of opinion etc. is introduced and developed over the second half of the book in preparation for the move to more extensive practice in discursive use of Russian at an advanced level beyond the scope of the book.

Users of the book may/will want to develop certain topics or areas further and/or to draw attention – as the book itself does for areas of grammar – to the need for further development in the future. The same may/will apply in relation to the skill areas and, in respect of reading, it is envisaged that the book will be supplemented by further material, from the very beginning if so desired. Since the book is predicated on awareness as well as active use, a variety of reading material that includes grammar not yet practised can readily be introduced alongside the course and will further its overall aims. The book does include a range of reading material, including material for reading comprehension in the earlier units, material for reading and intensive language work based on a text from Unit 4 onwards and a number of poems; the last two units include longer extracts of the kind that students will meet or use in their wider reading and/or for language work based on texts at an advanced level. Nevertheless, experience in reading more extensively, as well as the variety that comes from additional material, will be a very valuable addition to the course.

3 ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

3.1 Unit structure

The book is organized into ten units, which are grouped in three parts; each unit contains a number of lessons, typically four to six, subdivided into sections.

3.2 Tripartite structure

3.2.1 Part 1

The first part, Units 1–4, provides a foundation that gets the students going in Russian. In this part, extra assistance is given through the translation of examples and the provision of wordlists at the end of each unit. By the end of Unit 4 nouns in all cases except for dative and instrumental, pronouns in all cases except instrumental, adjectives and adverbs, demonstratives, possessives etc., and verbs of both conjugations are in use. The part ends with a lesson that combines revision with information that looks forward (e.g. on the past tense and aspect); a wider range of supplementary reading material, including texts using the past tense, can be introduced from now on, if not before. Although this first part has

four units, work on it may occupy no more than one third of the time needed to complete the course.

3.2.2 Part 2

The central part of the book, Units 5–7, is concentrated on intensive development and it is demanding in terms of the material covered; the topics covered in these three units are largely gathered around student life – interests, social life, daily routine etc. – to provide continuity at this level in the context of intensive development. By the end of this part all the cases have been met and used, in singular and plural, although full practice of the genitive plural comes in Unit 8; aspect has been covered, the past and future tenses; verbs of motion are covered progressively through these three units (also in Unit 9); time constructions have been practised and summarized etc. As part of the move towards increasing the role of the student's own, independent learning, vocabulary is no longer given at the end of each unit, but the vocabulary at the end includes an indication of which unit words feature in. Work on this central part will occupy rather more than one third of the time needed to complete the course.

3.2.3 Part 3

The final part, Units 8–10, incorporates both revision and further development. This part aims for an exit from the book that eases off in terms of intensity but that is also outward and forward looking, with a view to the student's use of Russian beyond the book: in continued study, in the use of Russian to talk and write about Russian life, politics, history and culture and in going to Russia.

Some flexibility could be introduced in the order of the material in this part, in particular by bringing forward material from Unit 10, from either or both lessons, to cover the topic of study and/or to move sooner to the introduction to Russian in discursive use. The very final listening text and exercise could then fit neatly at the end of Unit 9.

3.3 Spiral design

Underlying the book's tripartite structure is a spiral design that progresses forward while also encompassing the circles of gradually wider command.

3.3.1 Looking back and forward

This design involves both looking back, with a system of reference to earlier sections for revision, and looking forward. While the former consolidates what has already been practised and is now being developed further, the latter fosters awareness and can offer practice through given examples in advance of active use. Selectively, this reflects the process of working with language material more generally.

The forward-looking aspect operates in a range of related ways. For example, language elements may appear, with a brief note and reference forward, in advance of the section where active use is practised: thus, Unit 1 already includes some examples of adjectives and possessives that are then practised in Units 3 and 4 respectively; through Units 6 and 7 there are examples of time constructions that are summarized and practised at the end of Unit 7 (and then recur subsequently for consolidation). At a more global level, the case system as a whole and the main uses of the different cases are introduced at the beginning of Unit 2. When the genitive, dative and instrumental cases are introduced the uses to be practised at this stage are supplemented by a summary of further uses, with references forward; this gathering of information also facilitates subsequent revision. As for aspect, a brief preliminary introduction is given at the end of Unit 4 at a stage where the question of aspect begins to beg itself (if not before) while full coverage of aspect comes at the start of Unit 6. In general, students may look or be referred forward as appropriate.

3.3.2 Sequencing and gradual consolidation

Central to the design of the book is also a sequencing that incorporates, through the circles of the spiral, continuous and gradually widening consolidation of language structures and forms. This lies at the heart of the book as an intensive, rather than extensive, course: it applies particularly to command of case forms; it applies to command of Russian verbs too, in terms of both aspect and conjugation patterns, but this is seen as an ongoing process that extends well beyond the confines of a course such as this. In terms of case, while the course starts with the singular of nouns – nominative, accusative, prepositional in Unit 2, animate accusative, genitive (and also nominative/accusative plural) in Unit 3 – already in Unit 4 the prepositional plural is introduced along with the prepositional singular and plural of adjectives, demonstratives etc. When the instrumental and dative are covered, both singular and plural of nouns and adjectives are introduced. To start with, the main concentration is on the singular of nouns, with the chance to practise the use of plurals and adjectives, but over the subsequent units there is a gradual shift to consolidate wider command.

3.4 Vocabulary

In relation to vocabulary, initial assistance – as noted earlier – is given through the provision of wordlists at the end of the first four units, while the vocabulary at the end of the book indicates which unit words feature in; guidance is also given on the recording and sorting of vocabulary. Beyond that, however, as the Introduction for students points out, the good habit of regular vocabulary learning is principally down to the student.

4 CONTENTS

4.1 Presentation, explanation, exercises

The standard format of each lesson in a unit is as follows. The lesson begins with a dialogue or dialogues that present material to be covered in the lesson: grammar, notions, topics and functions. The presentation is guided by questions relating to the dialogues. The main body of the lesson then contains the explanation of the material, with exercises for practice. These exercises are of various types, but with an emphasis on drills; the exercises may be appropriate for pair, group or individual work.

4.2 Additional material and tasks

4.2.1 Listening

At the end of the lessons there may be additional listening material, which is presented for listening comprehension (although the texts can serve other purposes too); supplementary tasks such as dictation, transcription etc. may be added as appropriate (as may supplementary material).

4.2.2 Reading

As noted already, the reading material included in the book is restricted (and it is envisaged that it will be supplemented); it includes material for reading comprehension and derived tasks, poems and texts (see later).

4.2.3 Working with texts

From Unit 4 onwards, each unit includes a text or texts that are integral to the aims of the book through practice in detailed working with Russian language material, moving from comprehension through tasks based on or around the text to the use of texts (along with the dialogues) as source material and stimulus to generate the student's own creative use of Russian. The development of skills in working with a text is again incremental. To start with, the texts are more concentrated, with a predominance of core material, while in the last units, as already noted, they are more extensive and require a more varied approach in processing the material.

4.2.4 Speaking

Each lesson contains a number of speaking tasks. These tasks include: structured shells for question and answer dialogues or role plays; stimulus-based question and answer or transactional dialogues; stimulus-based narration; information seeking or more open conversation, discussion, reporting or narration. This material can be adapted as desired

for games and further role plays (e.g. circular games, partial information etc.), as well as supplemented.

4.2.5 Writing

Each unit concludes with writing tasks. In the first half of the book these include the guided writing of dialogues based on those in the unit; in Units 1 and 2, there is also a task to complete rhyming sequences as a taster of the way that structure and creativity can go hand in hand. From Unit 3 onwards, there is a range of guided but increasingly open writing tasks, including some that are/can be collaborative, based on the material in each unit (and especially on the working with texts). From Unit 4 onwards, there is also a task for translating from English into Russian based on reworking material in the unit.

4.3 Appendices, vocabulary and index

At the start of the book there is a glossary of grammatical terms. At the end there is a vocabulary for use with the book. An answer key can be found at the related website: www.routledge.com/textbooks/0415223008. The vocabulary is followed by appendices which include: detailed information about Russian nouns and verbs, declension and conjugation patterns etc. and a list of common prepositions. Last of all, there is an index.