

## 001 – Russian alphabet: vowels А, О, У, Э, Ы

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Welcome to [Learn Russian Step by Step](#)! This is the place where you will start doing your first steps in the captivating journey of learning the Russian language. All you need is your motivation and a bit of patience and perseverance. Let's begin! 😊

We start our first lesson with the alphabet. Today you'll get familiar with the Russian alphabet and learn 5 of its vowels.

### Introduction to Russian language

[Russian language](#) belongs to the East Slavic group of the Indo-European family of languages. It's very close to the Belorussian and Ukrainian languages from the same group.

Russian is the most geographically widespread language of Eurasia and the most widely spoken of the Slavic languages. It is also the largest native language in Europe, with 144 million native speakers in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Russian language is considered to be the second most widespread language on the Internet after English.

We also recommend:

[Russian alphabet](#), pronunciation and hand-written Russian

Russian alphabet was derived from the Cyrillic one and includes 33 letters: 10 vowels, 21 consonants and 2 letters that neither one or the other. It will take you some time to get used to the Cyrillic letters, but fortunately, many of the letters will

be familiar to you as an English speaker. You can divide all of the Russian letters in four groups:

- letters that look and sound like in English (А, О, Т, М etc.),
- letter that look like in English but sound differently (Р [r], У [oo], В [v] etc.),
- letters that sound like in English but look differently (Ф [f], И [ee], Л [l] etc.),
- and the last group of Russian letters includes new to an English speaker sounds and looks (Ъ, ь, Ъ).

Despite the fact the some of the Russian sounds are close to the English ones, you should not forget that they are not absolutely identical. You will need some practice to get a perfect Russian accent.

## Start learning Russian alphabet

To help you to learn the [Russian alphabet](#) easier, we broke it down into a few lessons. In today's lesson we'll learn five out of ten Russian vowels.

Here are these vowels:

А а – [a] (like in 'far')

О о – [o] (like in 'not')

У у – [u] (like in 'book')

Э э – [e] (like in 'edit')

Ы ы – [ɨ] (has no equivalent in English)

Russian letter Ы causes a lot of trouble to those who does not have that sound in their native language. To pronounce the Russian Ы correctly, you need to place your tongue in the position between the positions for I in 'kit' and U in 'sugar'. Make

a sound, somewhat close to trying to say U with your lips opens for I. The correctly pronounced letter Ъ should remind you of sound that one makes being hit in the stomach. 😊

The audio track of this lesson includes the 5 letters we've learned today. Listen to the audio and practice the pronunciation with it.

Be sure you memorized today's vowels well before moving to the next lesson. In the next four lessons we'll learn:

- [Russian vowels: Я, Ё, Ю, Е, И](#)
- [Russian consonants \(1st. part\)](#)
- [Russian consonants \(2d. part\)](#)
- [Hard sign \(Ъ\) and soft sign \(Ь\)](#)