

Первый урок Lesson One

Dialogues: A: "Hi! How's it going?"
B: "What's up?"
Grammar: Informal vs. Formal Forms of Address
(Introduction)
No Verb *To Be* in the Present Tense
Russian to English: Fixed Expressions

Note: The English transcription given in square brackets below the Russian text is a very rough guide that will be used until the entire alphabet is presented. Listen carefully to your instructor and the recordings for the exact pronunciation.

Диалог

Dialogues

Диалог А. Привет! Как дела? Hi! How's it going?

Вэра <i>Véra</i>	1	Мíша, привёт! Как дела? [Mísha, privét! Kak delá?]	<i>Misha, hi! How's it going? (How are things?)</i>
Мíша <i>Mísha</i>	2	Хорошо. А у тебя? [Khoroshó. A u tebyá?]	<i>Good. And with you? (How about you?)</i>
Вэра <i>Véra</i>	3	Так себе. [Ták sebe.]	<i>So-so.</i>
Мíша <i>Mísha</i>	4	Извини, мне некогда. Пока. [Izviní, mne nékogda. Poká.]	<i>Sorry, I'm in a hurry. Later.</i>
Вэра <i>Véra</i>	5	Ну, ладно, до свидания. (Mísha walks away) Нахал! [Nu, ládno, do svidániya. (Misha walks away) Nakhál!]	<i>Well, OK, see you later. (Misha walks away) Jerk!</i>

Диалог Б. Что слышно? What's up?

Юра <i>Yúra</i>	6	Нíна, привёт! Что слышно? [Nína, privét! Chto slíshno?]	<i>Nina, hi! What's up?</i>
Нíна <i>Nína</i>	7	Не спрашивай. А у тебя? [Ne spráshivay. A u tebyá?]	<i>Don't ask. And with you?</i>
Юра <i>Yúra</i>	8	Ничего. [Nichevó.]	<i>Nothing. (Everything is pretty much OK.)</i>
Нíна <i>Nína</i>	9	Извини, мне некогда. Пока. [Izviní, mne nékogda. Poká.]	<i>Sorry, I'm in a hurry. Later.</i>
Юра <i>Yúra</i>	10	Ну, ладно, до свидания. (Nína walks away) Нахалка! [Nu, ládno, do svidániya. (Nina walks away) Nakhálka!]	<i>Well, all right, see you later. (Nina walks away) Jerk!</i>

Словáрь

Vocabulary

1	привéт	[privét]	<i>hi</i> (used only with friends and family)
1	как делá?	[kak delá?] two words – one stress	<i>how's it going? how are things?</i>
2	хорошó	[khoroshó]	<i>good; well</i>
2	а у теб'я?	[a u tebyá?]	<i>and you?</i> (lit: 'and by you?')
3	тáк себе	[ták sebe] two words – one stress	<i>so-so</i> (this is somewhat negative)
4	извинí	[izviní]	<i>excuse (me); pardon (me); sorry</i>
4	мне нéкогда	[mne nékogda]	<i>I'm in a hurry; I have to run</i> (lit: 'to me there is no time')
4	пока́	[poká]	<i>(see you) later</i>
5	ну	[nu]	<i>well...</i>
5	ладно́	[ládno]	<i>OK, all right (sign of agreement)</i>
5	до свидáния	[do svidániya] two words – one stress	<i>good-bye; see you later</i>
5	нахáл	[nakhál]	<i>rude person who does not think of others; jerk (male)</i>
6	что сл'ышно?	[chto slishno?]	<i>what's up?; what's new?</i> (lit.: 'what is audible?')
7	не спрашивáй	[ne spráshivay] two words – one stress	<i>don't ask</i>
8	ничегó	[nichevó]	<i>nothing</i> (Ничегó also has an adverbial meaning <i>not bad, OK.</i>)
10	нахáлка	[nakhálka]	<i>female version of нахáл</i>



(Numbers following words and phrases below refer to lines in dialogue)

1.A Informal vs. Formal Forms of Address (Introduction)

привéт! (1)

Bépa uses **привéт** *hi*, an informal greeting, with her friend Мíша. Russian, like many languages, distinguishes between formal and informal forms of address. Saying **привéт** to your professor would roughly be the same as saying *Hey, man, what's up?*, (not too advisable). We will see an example of a formal form of address in Lesson 3. Until then, speak Russian only to your friends.

1.B Russian Has No Verb *To Be* in the Present Tense

как делá (1); что слýшно (6)

Note that in **Как делá?**, the Russian equivalent of the question *How's it going?*, there is no verb; the sentence consists of just **как** = *how* and **делá** = *things; matters*. In Russian the present tense of the verb *be* (*am, are, is*) is not expressed. Some other examples:

Как <i>how</i>	∅ ¹ <i>Are</i>	делá? <i>things?</i>
Что What	∅ <i>Is</i>	слýшно? <i>audible (What's new?)</i>
Мíша <i>Misha</i>	∅ <i>Is</i>	нахáл. <i>(a) jerk.</i>

This explains why you may hear a Russian speaking English say, “I teacher. My husband engineer.”

¹ The ∅ (‘zero’) symbol will be used throughout this book to indicate the absence of a word or ending.

1.B Russian to English: Fixed Expressions

та́к себе *so-so* (3); до свидáния *good-bye* (5)

The dialogues and texts in this book contain numerous “fixed expressions.” In some cases the meaning of the phrase can be predicted more or less from the sum of the parts, e.g., до= *until* + свидáния = *meeting* (which is similar to the French *au revoir*). In other cases no such “addition” is possible, e.g., так = *so; thus* + себе = *to oneself*, yet together так себе means *so-so, not great*.

Below are expressions from the dialogues roughly in order of predictability of meaning:

Predictable	что <i>what</i>	+	слы́шно? <i>audible</i>	=	<i>what's up?</i>
↓	до <i>until</i>	+	свидáния <i>meeting</i>	=	<i>good-bye</i>
Somewhat predictable	у <i>by</i>	+	тебя́? <i>you</i>	=	<i>with you?</i>
↓	мне <i>to me</i>	+	не́когда <i>there is no time</i>	=	<i>I'm in a hurry</i>
Not predictable	та́к <i>so</i>	+	себе <i>self</i>	=	<i>so-so</i>

Just be aware that (obviously!) learning Russian is *not* simply a matter of translating English words into Russian words and vice versa.

Actually, Russian is not *that* different from English, and in many cases a literal word for word translation will result in a grammatical sentence – but not always. We will be sure to alert you in such cases.



NOTE ON CHAPTER ONE:

DON'T PANIC! Within the next two weeks you will be presented with no small amount of material. But here are some things to bear in mind during this time:

- The main goal of Chapter One is to master the Russian alphabet and sound system. The test for Chapter One will be almost exclusively on this.
- Practice everything you hear out loud in order to get accustomed to the sounds and intonation of the Russian language. By doing this, all the rules on spelling and sounds, which need to be memorized at the beginning, will soon become second nature.
- We also wanted to include some useful words and expressions (like asking how things are going or saying that someone is a jerk) and at least some basic grammatical concepts just to get you started. If there's anything you don't understand about grammar, rest assured that it will be reviewed and practiced thoroughly in later chapters.
- Don't give up! If you can get past Chapter One, you can accomplish anything in this class – and in life.