

Рассказ - Часть Третья Story - Part Three (Grammar)

Грамматика:	A. Introduction to Ellipsis Б. The Position of Nouns vs. Pronouns В. Sample Sentences
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Рассказ - Часть Третья: Грамматика

3A. Leaving Words Out in Russian: Introduction to Ellipsis

In Russian, as in English (and probably every language in the world), it is sometimes possible to omit certain words when the meaning is clear from context. The fancy term for this is **ellipsis**. Here are a few examples from English, with the words omitted in parentheses:

verb	I went to Boston, John (went) to Chicago.
subject (+ verb)	(Are you) having a good time?
preposition	+ Would you like that with fries or onion rings? – (With) fries, пожалуйста. (<i>Always be polite when asking for fries!</i>)

In Russian, given the right context, it is possible to leave out just about any element in the sentence (except the Preposition – see below). If you're reading something in Russian, and it just doesn't make sense, quite often a word (or two or three) may have been omitted. So you need to get used to mentally "filling in" what's missing.

Here are some examples of various elements that can be left out:

Subject

+ Где Маша?	+ <i>Where's Masha?</i>
– (Я) не знаю.	– <i>I don't know.</i>
(Ты) хочешь кофе?	<i>Do you want some coffee?</i>
+ Нина дома?	+ <i>Is Nina at home?</i>
– Да, (она) сидит на диване и смотрит телевизор.	– <i>Yes, she's sitting on the sofa and watching TV.</i>

***Subject ellipsis is *not required* in Russian, as it practically is in Spanish. In some cases, you must include the subject. We can't give any exact rules for this, because so much is dependent on the context. In general, when you begin a conversation, you cannot leave out the subject. When it is absolutely clear who the subject is, it *may* be possible to omit it (or it may not).

In case you're interested, linguists have a special term to refer to the dropping of a subject consisting of a Pronoun: *pro-drop* (very creative, no?). So, *pro-drop* is practically required in Spanish, while in Russian *pro-drop* is sometimes possible, sometimes not.

Verb

Recall that the very first fixed phrase we learned had no verb: **Как дела?** Other, “regular” verbs, not just *to be* can be omitted. For example, in Part 2 of the story, Митя says to Сára, **Давай на «ты»**, which literally means *let's to you-informal*. The verb left out is “switch to”. Here are some other examples of verb ellipsis:

Мáша купíла полотéнца, а я ничего (не купíла) *Masha bought towels, but I didn't buy anything.*

Откуда́ ты (идёшь)? *Where are you coming from? (This is a different question than the phrase with the same two words which we saw in Lesson 34. In this context, you run into someone obviously coming from somewhere, and you wish to find out from where.)*

Direct Object

In Russian it is possible to omit the various objects (direct, indirect), something that is not normally done in English. Notice that you cannot omit the direct objects in the English, even though it is perfectly clear from context what is being referred to.

+ Ты ви́дел Дíму?
– Да, ви́дел (его́). + *Did you see Dima?*
– *Yes, I did.*

Also note in the above example that in Russian the *main* verb (**ви́дел**) is repeated in the answer, while in English an auxiliary verb (**did**) is used. Russian has no auxiliary verbs in the past and present. We'll see an auxiliary verb when we examine the future tense.

Он купíл вóдку и сра́зу вы́пил (её́). *He bought vodka and quickly drank it up. (The prefix **вы-** indicates a one-time completed action.)*

+ Где твой но́утбук?
– (Я) Прóдал (его́). + *Where's your notebook / laptop (computer)?*
– *I sold it.*

In these last two examples, note that the English contains the pronoun *it* in the second clause. In Russian, it is theoretically possible to insert **его́/её́** in the second clause, but most of the time no pronoun would be used.

Do Not Omit Prepositions in Russian

The one element that you *cannot* omit in Russian (as opposed to English) are **Prepositions**. (This was discussed in Lesson 36)

+ Откуда́ вы?
– Из Петербу́рга. + *Where are you from?*
– *Petersburg.*

+ В когó он влюби́лся?
– В Мари́ну + *Whom did he fall in love with?*
– *Marina*

Conclusion: Ellipsis is Complicated

Giving precise “rules” governing ellipsis is next to impossible. (A few years ago a graduate student did her dissertation just on direct object ellipsis.) The most important thing is that you get used to “filling in” what’s missing, either when you’re reading or listening to a Russian speaker. It takes time to introduce ellipsis into your own speech, but eventually you will get used to it.



Try your best to figure out what words will be omitted. Keep in mind that context determines a lot, so don’t worry if your answer doesn’t match the recording.)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. + Do you want to dance? – No, I don’t want to. | 2. Where’s your new red car? I sold it. |
| 3. Where are you coming from? | 4. Where are you from? I’m from New York. |
| 5. I want to quit smoking but I can’t. | 6. He likes vodka, but I like red wine. |
| 7. Was Borya at the party? Yes, he was there. | 8. Do you have a computer. Yes, I have one. |
| 9. Who is he looking at? Nina. | 10. Lena bought a printer, but I didn’t buy anything. |

3Б. More On Word Order: Full Nouns Follow / Pronouns Precede

As a very general rule (to which there are many exceptions), when used as a Direct Object, Indirect Objects or Object of a Preposition *full* Noun Phrases (**Ма́шу, егó нóвую немéцкую ма́шину, [от] моéй млáдшей сестрѝ́**) normally *follow* the Verb, while Pronouns (**еѝ́, ему́, [от] негó́**) *precede* the Verb.

Full Noun – After the Verb	Pronoun– Before the Verb
Я терпéть не могу́ Ва́дика .	Я егó́ терпéть не могу́.
Где она́ нашлá эту́ доро́гую кнѝ́гу?	Где она́ еѝ́ нашлá?
Я поличѝ́л óчень скúчное письмо́ от моего́ бѝвшегo му́жа Грѝши .	Я от негó́ поличѝ́л óчень скúчное письмо́.
Мы помогли́ Вѝриному́ отцу́ (Dative) .	Мы ему́ помогли́.

Of course, when used as the Subject, both full Nouns and Pronouns normally appear in initial position:

Ми́ша жéнится в éту суббóту.	Он жéнится в éту суббóту.
Лéна и Дѝма игра́ли в ша́хматы.	Онѝ́ игра́ли в ша́хматы.

Also, question phrases, which often contain a Pronoun, normally appear in initial position:

Когó́ она́ лóбит?
Для когó́ Миша купѝ́л éти полотéнца?

Giving simple “rules” about word order is next to impossible, in large part because context and intonation play such an important role in determining the exact meaning (intent) of a phrase.

Story – Part 3 Grammar



Translate into Russian. Pay special attention to word order.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Do you know my father's brother? | 2. Do you know him? |
| 3. Where did Lena buy that brown backpack? | 4. Where did Lena buy it (brown backpack)? |
| 5. Marina bought a printer for him. | 6. Marina bought a printer for Gleb. |
| 7. I can't stand green towels. | 8. I can't stand them. |
| 9. How are things with (by) your younger sister? | 10. How are things with her? |

3B. Example Sentences With the New Vocabulary

с одной стороны...а с другой стороны...	1. С одной стороны, она прекрасно учится, а с другой стороны, она не очень добрая.	1. <i>On the one hand, she's a great student, but on the other hand, she's not very nice.</i>
конвэрт	2. У тебя есть конвэрт?	2. <i>Do you have an envelope?</i>
от + GEN	3. Где письмо от Наташи?	3. <i>Where's the letter from Natasha?</i>
зányт -а, -о, -ы	4. Она всегда очень зányта.	4. <i>She's always very busy.</i>
курсовáя	5. Я не хочу писать курсовóю!	5. <i>I don't want to write a JP / Senior Thesis.</i>
мíлый	6. Какáя ты мíлая!	6. <i>You are so sweet!</i>
стáн+ + Infinitive	7. Лéна стáла пить и курíть.	7. <i>Lena started to smoke and drink.</i>
вмéсте	8. Рáньше мы жíли вмéсте.	8. <i>We used to live together.</i>
помог+´ (End-stressed Greasy Zeke)	9. Он мне вчерá помóг.	9. <i>He helped me yesterday.</i>
емú	10. Емú нéкогда.	10. <i>He's in a hurry. (To him there is no time.)</i>
помогáйт+	11. Лíза всегда помогáет мне.	11. <i>Liza always helps me.</i>
всём	12. Я знáю всё обо всём.	12. <i>I know everything about everything.</i>
да	13. Да, нет!	13. <i>Of course not!</i>
литератúра	14. Я очень люблú русскую литератúру.	14. <i>I really like Russian literature.</i>
стихí	15. Мой отéц рáньше писáл неплохие стихí.	15. <i>My father used to write some decent poetry.</i>
поёт	16. Пúшкин – мой любíмый поёт.	16. <i>Pushkin is my favorite poet.</i>
посмотрё+	17. Она посмотрéла на негó.	17. <i>She took a look at him (it).</i>
другóй	18. Я хочу другóю машинóу.	18. <i>I want a different car.</i>
пóчерк	19. У тебя красíвый пóчерк.	19. <i>You have beautiful handwriting.</i>
дорогóй	20. Дорогóй Вáня, я люблú тебя!	20. <i>Daer Vanya, I love you!</i>
обíде+	21. Ты её óчень обíдела!	21. <i>You really offended her.</i>
прáвда	22. Я хочу знáть всю прáвду.	22. <i>I want to know the whole truth.</i>
дáльше	23. Он подúмал и стал писáть дáльше. (Recall that the prefix по- can indicate for a while: Сára решíла один семéстр пожить в Москвé)	23. <i>He thought for a bit, and started to write further.</i>

Домашнее задание



Exercise 1 Answer the questions on the recording, using full sentences

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Домашнее задание



Exercise 2 Use the following new vocabulary items in a sentence NOT related to the story

1. с одной стороны... а с другой стороны
2. мильй
3. зányт
4. пóчерк
5. литератúра



Exercise 3 Переведите на русский

1. This is a different camera.
2. When did you (F) start to listen to rap music?
3. Misha and I usually study together.
4. I don't have a favorite poet. (*Think!*)