

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?

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

Диалог Б. Что слышно? What's up?

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

Слова́рь

Vocabulary

1	приве́т	[privét]	<i>hi</i> (used only with friends and family)
1	как дела́?	[kak delá?] two words – one stress	<i>how's it going? how are things?</i>
2	хорошо́	[khoroshó]	<i>good; well</i>
2	а у тебя́?	[a u tebyá?]	<i>and you?</i> (lit: 'and by you?')
3	та́к себе	[ták sebe] two words – one stress	<i>so-so</i> (this is somewhat negative)
4	извини́	[izviní]	<i>excuse (me); pardon (me); sorry</i>
4	мне не́когда	[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	ла́дно	[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	наха́л	[nakhál]	<i>rude person who does not think of others; jerk (male)</i>
6	что слы́шно?	[chto slíshno?]	<i>what's up?; what's new?</i> (lit.: 'what is audible?')
7	не спра́шивай	[ne spráshivay] two words – one stress	<i>don't ask</i>
8	ничего́	[nichevó]	<i>nothing</i> (Ничего́ also has an adverbial meaning <i>not bad, OK.</i>)
10	наха́лка	[nakhálka]	<i>female version of наха́л</i>



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

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

приве́т! (1)

Bépa uses **приве́т** *hi*, an informal greeting, with her friend Ми́ша. Russian, like many languages, distinguishes between formal and informal forms of address. Saying **приве́т** 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 слы́шно (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 <i>What</i>	∅ <i>is</i>	слы́шно? <i>audible (What's new?)</i>
Мйша <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.B Russian to English: Fixed Expressions

тáк 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., **тáк** = *so; thus* + **себе́** = *to oneself*, yet together **тáк 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	тáк <i>so</i>	+	себе́ <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.

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

**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! And don't drop the course either. If you can get past Chapter One, you can accomplish anything in this class – and in life.