

Пёрвы́й урoк

1

Диалoг:	Я рабoтала как вол!
Граммáтика:	1.A: Sound System: Paired Consonants 1.B: Spelling Basic {O} 1.B: Unpaired Consonants

Я рабoтала как вол *I worked like a dog*

Вiтiя	1 2	Зoя, привeт! Как дeлa? Как у тeбi прoшлo лeтo?	<i>Zoya, hi! How's it going? How was your summer?</i>
Зoя	3 4	Ничeгo. Ничeгo oсoбeннoгo. Я рабoтала как вол. А у тeбi?	<i>OK. Nothing special. I worked like a dog. And yours? (How about you?)</i>
Вiтiя	5 6	Тoжe ничeгo. Я eздил пo Еврoпe . Oтeц мнe пoдapил нoвый Мерсeдeс нa дeнь рoждeния.	<i>Not too bad either. I traveled around Europe. My father gave me (as a present) a new Mercedes for my birthday.</i>
Зoя	7	Мерсeдeс! Ничeгo сeбe! Я тeбe завидую.	<i>A Mercedes! Not too shabby. I envy you.</i>
Вiтiя	8	Мaшiнa кaк мaшiнa.	<i>It's just an ordinary car.</i>
Зoя	9	Скaжi, в кaкiх стpaнax ты был?	<i>So tell me, which countries were you in?</i>
Вiтiя	10 11 12	Снaчaлa в Гeрмaнии, в Мioнхeнe , (я тaм пoлучил мaшiну) a пoтoм я пoeхaл вo Фpaнцию. Нeдeли тpи прoвeл в Пapижe .	<i>First I was in Germany, in Munich (I got the car there), and then I went to (took off for) France. I spent about three weeks in Paris.</i>
Зoя	13	Нeплoхo. А ты гoвopишь пo-фpaнцyзски?	<i>Not bad. Do you speak French?</i>
Вiтiя	14	Чyть-чyть. А гдe ты рабoтала? Чтo ты дeлала?	<i>A little. So, where did you work? What did you do?</i>
Зoя	15 16 17	Я рабoтала в бaнкe нa Уoлл-стpи́т . Oбычнo я пpиxoдилa дoмoй с рабoты чacoв в дeсять вeчepa .	<i>I worked in a bank on Wall Street. I usually got home from work around 10PM.</i>
Вiтiя	18	Ничeгo сeбe! А дeнeг мнoгo зapaбoтала?	<i>Ouch! Did you earn a lot of money?</i>
Зoя	19	Гpex жaлoвaтьcя!	<i>I can't complain.</i>

Слoвapь

3	рабoтaй+ кaк вол	<i>work like a dog</i> (Literally: work like an ox)
5	Еврoпa	<i>Europe</i>
10	Мioнхeн	<i>Munich</i>
12	Пapиж	<i>Paris</i>
15	бaнк	<i>bank</i> (for keeping money; the word for <i>bank of a river</i> is different)
15	Уoлл-стpи́т	<i>Wall Street</i> (Note that this noun does not decline, unlike Пapиж and Мioнхeн. We have no great explanation for this.)
16	рабoтa (нa / c)	<i>work; job</i>
17	вeчepa / yтpa (днa / нoчи)	<i>PM / AM</i> (Use the genitive of the part of the day following the hour to express PM and AM.)
19	гpex жaлoвaтьcя	<i>I can't complain</i> (Literally: (it's a) sin to complain)
	гpex	<i>sin</i>
	жaлoвa+...cя	<i>complain</i>

Don't be frightened by what seems like (and actually is) the large amount of material contained in the first two lessons. It's (almost) all review from the first week of SLA101; there is (almost) nothing new. If you didn't quite get down the sound and spelling systems last year, now is the time to solidify your knowledge. If you did not take the first-year course at Princeton, it is very important that you become familiar with both the concepts and the specific notation used to describe the sound and spelling systems. Much of our descriptions of declension (nouns and modifiers) and conjugation (verbs) is based on the materials contained in these two lessons. Please do not hesitate to ask questions (either in or outside of class) about anything that you do not understand.

1.A The Sound/Spelling System: Paired Consonants Plus Vowels

1.A.1 Paired Consonants: One Letter for Two Distinct Sounds

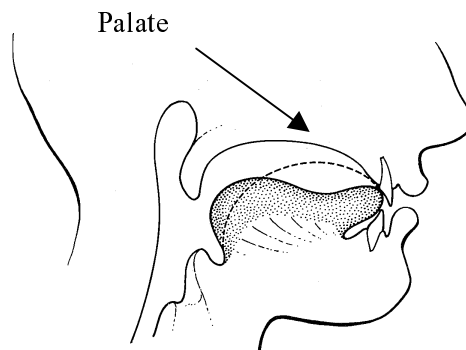
Each of the following 12 consonant letters can represent *two* distinct sounds, either *hard* (non-palatalized) or *soft* (palatalized). These are known as the *paired consonants* (since each letter represents a pair of sounds – duh!):

12 Paired Consonants: Hard or Soft

б^(б), в^(в), д^(д), з^(з), л^(л), м^(м), н^(н), п^(п), р^(р), с^(с), т^(т), ф^(ф)

When pronouncing a soft (or palatalized) consonant, you should arch the forward/middle part of your tongue (right behind the tip, but not the tip itself) toward the part of the palate that is located about 1-2 inches behind your front teeth (see diagram). When pronouncing a hard (or plain) consonant, the forward/middle part of the tongue is not raised. In the diagram below, the shaded area shows the position of the tongue when pronouncing **hard н** (as in **онá**), while the dotted line shows the position of tongue when pronouncing **soft н^б** (as in **онí**). Note that the *tip* of tongue is in the same position for both sounds; it is the position of the forward/middle of the tongue that creates the softness.

Position of Tongue for Hard H (Shaded) Versus Soft H^б (Dotted Line)



1.A.1a The “Smile” of Palatalization

A neat tip: When pronouncing soft consonants, it may help if you smile. Smiling helps to raise the tongue into the proper position.

1.A.2 Hard Л (Л, etc.) and Soft Л^Ь (Л^Ь, etc.) Differ As Much As Do *Sheep* and *Ship*

We emphasize that these 12 consonant letters can represent two *distinct* sounds, i.e., to a Russian ear, hard **л** (hard в, hard д, hard с, etc.) is a completely different sound from soft **л^Ь** (soft в^Ь, soft д^Ь, soft с^Ь, etc.). Thus, two different words can vary only in the hardness/softness of a single consonant. You could even say that hard **л** is no closer to soft **л^Ь** than it is to hard **с** or soft **п^Ь** or hard **т**. (Of course, hard **л** *does* sound more like soft **л^Ь** than like hard **т**, but still, hard **л** and soft **л^Ь** are two distinct sounds.) Here are some real examples of pairs of words that differ only in the hardness/softness of a single consonant (which is in **bold**):



Слушайте и повторяйте

Words Varying Only in the Hardness/Softness of a Single Consonant			
Hard Consonant		Soft Consonant	
стал	<i>became</i>	сталь	<i>steel</i>
мэры	<i>measures</i>	м ^Ь ры	<i>mayors</i>
говори́т	<i>speaks</i>	говори́ть	<i>to speak</i>
ма т	<i>mat</i>	ма ть	<i>mother</i>
ел	<i>ate</i>	ел ^Ь	<i>fir tree</i>
живо́т	<i>stomach</i>	живё т	<i>lives</i>
был	<i>was</i>	би л	<i>beat</i>
лу к	<i>onion</i>	лю к	<i>trap door</i>

It may be hard for you to hear the differences between these pairs, but to a Russian ear it's completely obvious. How obvious? As obvious as the difference between the vowels in *sheep* and *ship* (or *leave* and *live*, etc.) is to us as native speakers of English. We would never confuse these two words, which differ only in the quality of the vowel. Yet many Russians (and other non-native speakers of English) often cannot hear any difference between these two English vowel sounds.



Very Important Note About Our Notation

In our transcription, we will indicate a soft consonant with a raised **Ь** to the right of the letter: м^Ь/т^Ь/л^Ь = soft м/т/л, etc. If no **Ь** is found, the consonant is hard: д/з/с = hard д/з/с, etc.

Directly below we discuss how we represent vowel sounds.

1.A.3 Representing Hardness/Softness in the Spelling: Look to the Right

We've discussed the difference in *sound* between hard and soft consonants, but how is this hardness versus softness represented in Russian *spelling*? Unfortunately, the system is a bit backwards, though not really all that difficult to grasp. Instead of simply marking the consonant itself either hard or soft (as we do in our transcription), Russian uses the *following* letter (if any) to indicate hardness/softness. To see how this works in practice, we first need to take a look at the Russian vowel system.

1.A.4 Basic Vowel Sounds: Two Letters for One Basic Sound

In a word, the vowel system is the exact opposite of the consonant system. Instead of two sounds (hard/soft) for each letter (**б=б** or **б^b**), there are two letters for each basic vowel sound. (We'll explain what we mean by "basic" vowel sound below.) There are five basic vowel sounds in Russian, which we represent in our notation with upper-case Latin letters enclosed in curly brackets: {**A**}, {**E**}, {**I**}, {**O**}, {**U**}. Each of these basic vowel sounds can be represented by one of two (or three – see below about {**O**}) vowel letters in Russian. The choice of which of the two (three) letters to use (normally) depends on the hardness/softness of the preceding consonant.¹ Thus, we can identify two groups of vowel letters – **hard-indicating vowels** (following a hard paired consonant) and **soft-indicating vowels** (following a soft paired consonant). Remember, there are no hard or soft vowels, only hard- or soft-*indicating* vowels. It is the consonants that are actually hard or soft. Here are the five basic vowel sounds and their corresponding vowel letters:

BASIC VOWEL SOUND	HARD-INDICATING VOWEL LETTER	SOFT-INDICATING VOWEL LETTER
{ A }	а	я
{ E }	э*	е
{ I }	ы	и
{ O }	о	ё/e**
{ U }	у	ю

*With very few exceptions, paired consonants are *always soft before* {**E**}, i.e., you very rarely see a consonant followed by the letter э. The only common Russian words with the letter э are *это, этот* (and all declined forms), *поэтому therefore*, though note that in each case э does not follow a consonant.

So, with the exception of {**E**}, the choice of which vowel letter to write (hard- or soft-indicating) depends on the quality of the preceding (paired) consonant.

We'll discuss basic {O**} in greater depth in the next section.

1.A.5 Representing the Basic Sounds of Words

We can now use our notation to represent the basic sounds for actual words. (If this system is new to you, go over these examples carefully and be sure you understand exactly how our representation works. Don't hesitate to ask about anything that is unclear. Over the next week or so it will become clear just how important it is that you understand the system of basic sounds in Russian.)

SPELLING	BASIC SOUNDS
куплю	к{ U }пл ^b { U }
привёт	пр ^b { I }в ^b { E }т
адвока́т	{ A }дв{ O }к{ A }т
она́	{ O }н{ A }

SPELLING	BASIC SOUNDS
берёте	б ^b { E }р ^b { O }т ^b { E }
сын	с{ I }н
Та́ня	т{ A }н ^b { A }
они́	{ O }н ^b { I }

¹ There are several other factors besides the hardness/softness of the preceding consonant, which we will leave for tomorrow's lesson.

1.A.5a Hard or Soft? Look to the Right

It is simply impossible to determine the hardness/softness of a paired consonant without knowing what the following letter is. Thus, if the final letter of a five-letter word beginning **стал-** were to become illegible (hey, it could happen), it would be impossible to say whether the fourth letter, the **л**, were hard or soft. Without seeing the next letter, no Russian, not even Пúтин or Пúшкин (were he still alive), could determine whether the fourth letter represents **л** or **л'**. Thus, when you write out the basic sounds for a word (see Exercise 1 in the Домáшнее задание), be sure to “look to the right before you write.” (Hey, we should market that jingle.)

1.A.5б Vowel Letters Perform “Double Duty”

Recall that a vowel letter conveys the following two pieces of information, and can thus be said to perform “double duty”:

- 1) The basic vowel sound. Thus, the letter **я** represents basic {**A**}, and not {**E**} or {**I**} or {**U**}, etc., while **ы** represents basic {**I**}, and not {**A**} or {**E**} or {**O**}, etc.
- 2) The hardness/softness of the preceding consonant. Thus, the **ы** in **мы** indicates that the **м** is hard, while the **ю** in **Тáню** indicates that the **н** is soft.

1.A.6 Basic Sound ≠ Actual Sound (At least not always)

Why do we use the term “basic” vowel sound? Could there be a vowel sound that is not “basic”?

Sort of. Recall that, due to vowel reduction (and other factors), vowels are often not pronounced exactly as written. For example, in the word **молоко́**, the same vowel ({**O**}) appears throughout, yet there are three different pronunciations of this same “basic” vowel. The first **o** is pronounced like a “schwa,” similar to the *a* in *sofa*. The second **o** is also pronounced like an “a,” but not quite as reduced, similar to the *a* in *father*. Only the final **o** is pronounced like a “true o,” similar to the *o* in *note*.

Another example: The nominative singular **де́ло** is pronounced exactly like the genitive singular **де́ла**, despite the fact that the former ends in {**O**}, while the latter ends in {**A**}. Context nearly always makes it clear which form is being used.

To be perfectly honest, the exact rules for vowel reduction can get rather complicated, so we’ll leave this question open for now.

Throughout our descriptions of declension and conjugation we will refer to “basic” vowel sounds. The actual pronunciation may be quite different from what is written.

1.A.7 Consonants Not Followed By a Vowel

In our discussion of how the hardness/softness of a consonant is indicated, we only described cases where a consonant was followed by a vowel. But there are two other possibilities: 1) when a consonant is at the end of the word; 2) when a consonant is followed by another consonant.

- 1) **At end of word** If a word-final consonant is hard, just write it as is: **дом, стол, ётот**. If the consonant is soft, you must write a soft sign: **словáрь, лошáдь, готóвить**. These last examples prove that it is the consonant, and not the vowel, that is soft. Think about why this is so – we’ll ask you in class.
- 2) **Preceding another consonant** First, the easy part, Before a hard consonant, the preceding consonant(s) [underlined in the examples] are also hard: **второй, здравствуйте, структура**. Before a soft consonant, things can get very complicated, depending on various factors, which we won’t go into here. Just an example of what we’re talking about: In the word **взять**, is the **в** pronounced hard or soft preceding the **з**? (It’s actually not a simple question.) In any case, it really doesn’t make much difference as far as the grammar is concerned, so we’ll leave this whole question open (but invite you to investigate it, if you wish).

It is also possible to find a soft consonant preceding another consonant (either hard or soft). For example in **мáленький** (before soft **к**), **мáленькая** (before hard **к**), etc., a soft sign must be used to indicate that the **н** is soft.

Probably the most common occurrence of a soft consonant followed by another consonant is found in stem-stressed imperative forms. (Don’t worry, we’ll review the imperative in detail later on.) Some examples: **вэрьте, готóвьте**. (Recall that **-те** is a suffix used in the polite/plural form.)

Here are the basic sound representations of several more words.

SPELLING	BASIC SOUNDS
стал	ст{ A }л
вэрьте	в ^b { E }р ^b т ^b { E }

SPELLING	BASIC SOUNDS
сталь	ст{ A }л ^b
мáленьком	м{ A }л ^b { E }н ^b к{ O }м



Question: What about the hard sign (Ѣ)? What is it used for?

Answer: First, we can tell you that before the spelling reform of 1918, the hard sign was written following all word-final hard consonants. (See example below.) However, since this letter was not pronounced, it was determined that it really was not needed, and was thus no longer written in word-final position.

Still, there are some words in Russian that do have a hard sign. But to understand the use of the hard sign, you need to understand the sound **ѣ**, which we won’t get to until tomorrow’s lesson. Stay tuned.

Below is an example from a 1915 edition of «Война и мир». (You may notice a “strange letter” appearing in the final position of the second word of the text. If you’re interested, we can give you the details on this letter.)



1.5 Three Ways To Spell Basic {O}: O / Ě / E

As you well recall from last year, the basic vowel {O} is unique in that it may be represented by *three* letters (o/ě/e), instead of just two like the other basic vowels ({A}= а/я, {I}= и/и, etc.) Actually, if you wanted, you could say that {O} also has just *two* possible spellings (o/ě) and add the rule that ě > e when not under stress, which is really what is going on. The problem is that the unstressed vowel letter e is potentially ambiguous.

When you see either the letters o or ě (the latter is always stressed) it's obvious that the vowel is basic {O}. No problem. However, when you see an unstressed letter e, you can't be certain what the basic vowel is – it could be either {E} or {O}. To find out which basic vowel unstressed e represents, there are two possible strategies to take:

- 1) Find a different form of the same word where the stress falls on the e. (Recall that, annoyingly, stress can move around between different forms of the same word in Russian). If e “changes” to ě when stressed, you had a basic {O} “camouflaged” as e. If e stays e when stressed, it's a basic {E}.

Some examples of unstressed e and stressed e/ě. (Don't worry about which forms are involved here):

Form With Unstressed E	Form With Stressed E/Ě
делá	дéло (= underlying {E})
мestá	мéсто (= underlying {E})
сестрá	сĕстры (=underlying {O})
звездá	звĕзды (=underlying {O})

- 2) The second strategy requires that you can identify certain *grammatical endings* (all of which we had last year). If a different word with the same grammatical form has either o or ě in the same position as unstressed e, then you have basic {O}; if the ending is always spelled e, then it's basic {E}.

Form With Unstressed 'E'	Form With Same Grammatical Ending With 'O/Ě' or 'E'	Form / Ending
хорóш <u>ее</u>	бол ^ь ш ^о е, н ^о в ^о е	neuter nominative/accusative singular adjective / {O}e
с ^и н ^е м ^у	к ^р ас ^н о ^м у, ч ^{уж} о ^м у	neuter/masculine dative singular adjective / {O}му
знá ^е т	да ^е т, жив ^е т	third-person singular present tense / {O}т
здá ^н и ^е	окн ^о , руж ^ь ĕ	neuter nominative singular noun / {O}
Пр ^и н ^с тон ^е	Моск ^в ĕ	prepositional singular noun / {E}

If the stress *never* falls on the **e** in any form (either a different form of the same word or in the ending of a different word), we'll just say it's basic {**E**}, since we can never prove that it's underlying {**O**}.

Forms With Permanently Unstressed 'E'
телефо́н (= { E })
говори́те (= { E })

Understanding how basic {**O**} works allows you to recognize that **хоро́шее**, **си́нее**, and **красно́е** all have the same basic ending: {**O**}e – for neuter singular nominative/accusative adjectives. The difference in spelling between **си́нее** and **ново́е** is entirely predictable; the stem for **си́нее** happens to end in a soft consonant (**н^b**), which requires that a soft-indicating vowel be used as the first letter of the ending. Since the stress does not fall on the ending, we write **e**. If the stress did fall on the ending, we would have written **ě**. (Curiously, there are no soft adjectives that are end-stressed. Not a single one. So the adjectival endings -**ěe**, -**ěm**, -**ěmu** simply do not occur.) On the other hand, the stem for **красно́е** ends in a hard consonant (**н**), after which we use the hard-indicating vowel letter **o**.



Question: How can you *predict* which consonant stems are soft?

Answer: To some extent, you cannot predict. Thus, there was no way to know ahead of time that the word for *blue* would have a soft stem (in **н^b**), while the word for *red* has a hard stem (in **н**). However, as we'll see later on (and as we saw last year), almost all soft-stem adjectives end in **н^b**, and the vast majority of them are related to *time* or *space* (**последний**, **средний**). Still, there are a few completely unpredictable soft adjective stems, which you simply need to memorize. Like **си́ний**, for example.

The reason that we write **e** in **хоро́шее** is not entirely predictable in the way that it is in **си́нее**, as we will see tomorrow when we discuss the spelling rules.

1.B Unpaired Consonants

Our discussion above has focused on the 12 paired consonants, but there are a total of 21 consonants in Russian. The other nine consonants are *unpaired*, i.e., they do not have both a hard and soft pronunciation – sort of. Let's explain.

1.B.1 Inherently Hard (Ш, Ж, Ц) / Inherently Soft Consonants (Ч, Щ, Ъ)

Of the nine unpaired consonants, six are either inherently hard (**ш**, **ж**, **ц**) or inherently soft (**ч**, **щ**, **й**) – that's just the way they are always pronounced.

Inherently Hard Consonants	Inherently Soft Consonants
Ш, Ж, Ц	Ч, Щ, Ъ

It makes no difference what vowel letter (or sign) follows these consonants, the pronunciation is fixed. As a result, often a “misleading” spelling combination can be found: an inherently hard consonant may be followed by a soft-indicating vowel or a soft sign. Alternatively, an inherently soft consonant may be followed by a hard-indicating vowel.²

² There are no occurrences of inherently soft consonants followed by a hard sign.

Examples of “Misleading” Spelling Combinations

Inherently Hard Consonant Followed By a Soft-Indicating Vowel	Inherently Soft Consonant Followed by a Hard-Indicating Vowel
шѐл жить ѐльцин	чай слѐдующую

Since the hardness/softness is fixed for these letters, we will not use ^b in our transcription (though it’s certainly not “wrong” to include a ^b after an inherently soft consonant). Some more basic sound representations:

SPELLING	BASIC SOUNDS
шѐл	ш{O}л
жизнь	ж{I}зн ^b
цѐны	ц{E}н{I}

SPELLING	BASIC SOUNDS
часы	ч{A}с{I}
щак	щ{A}х (Locative of щи)
чѝстых	ч{I}ст{I}х

1.B.2 The Velars: К, Г, Х (Hard or Soft – Depending on the Following Vowel)

The other three unpaired consonants (к, г, х – known collectively as the *velars*, because they are pronounced back in the mouth, near the velum) are mixed, i.e. they are pronounced either hard or soft, depending on the following vowel. Before the vowels {A}, {O}, and {U}, they are always pronounced hard (and only the hard-indicating vowels а, о, and у are written – more on this tomorrow). Before the vowels {E} and {I} they are always pronounced soft (and only the soft-indicating vowels е and и are written):

Pronunciation (and Spelling) of К, Г, Х (Velars)

Always Hard Preceding	Always Soft Preceding
А, О, У	Е, И

Thus, there are no “misleading” spellings involving the velars.

As for transcription of the velars, there are two schools of thought. С одной стороны, since the hardness/softness is predictable based on the following vowel, there is no need to use the ^b before е and и. А с другой стороны, it can’t really “hurt” to include the ^b, given that the velars alternate between hard and soft – unlike the other unpaired consonants discussed above. We’ll follow the second school of thought and write ^b.

SPELLING	BASIC SOUNDS
капуста	к{A}п{U}ст{A}
ногу	н{O}г{U}
хорошо	х{O}р{O}ш{O}

SPELLING	BASIC SOUNDS
Мѝнске	м ^b {I}нск ^b {E}
гитары	г ^b {I}т{A}р{I}
хѝтрый	х ^b {I}тр{I}й

In tomorrow’s lesson we’ll review the very important spelling rules that apply to the unpaired consonants.

**Упражнение 1**

Give the “basic” sound representation for the following words. Provide special commentary for the final word.

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. телеви́зор | 2. Ва́ню |
| 3. ку́пит | 4. купи́ть |
| 5. поче́му | 6. де́нь |
| 7. сы́ре | 8. кнѐги |
| 9. ча́са | 10. шѐл |
| 11. гото́вьте | 12. де́нь■ (final letter is obscured) |

**Упражнение 2**

Using your knowledge of related words (or other forms of the same word) indicate which of the following words contain basic {O}. *Explain your answers, providing the relevant forms where appropriate!!!*

- | | |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 1. сестра́ | 2. дела́ |
| 3. си́нее | 4. синѐе (<i>think!</i>) |
| 5. кем | 6. зна́ет |
| 7. шѐл | 8. хоро́шей |
| 9. дека́брь | 10. общежи́тие |

