

Russian FOR **DUMMIES®**

**by Andrew Kaufman, PhD, and
Serafima Gettys, PhD, with Nina Wieda**



WILEY

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Russian FOR **DUMMIES®**

**by Andrew Kaufman, PhD, and
Serafima Gettys, PhD, with Nina Wieda**



WILEY

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Russian For Dummies®

Published by
Wiley Publishing, Inc.
111 River St.
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774
www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2006 by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, 978-750-8400, fax 978-646-8600. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Legal Department, Wiley Publishing, Inc., 10475 Crosspoint Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46256, 317-572-3447, fax 317-572-4355, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, the Wiley Publishing logo, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, A Reference for the Rest of Us!, The Dummies Way, Dummies Daily, The Fun and Easy Way, Dummies.com and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and other countries, and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Wiley Publishing, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: THE PUBLISHER AND THE AUTHOR MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION WARRANTIES OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR EVERY SITUATION. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. IF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERSON SHOULD BE SOUGHT. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHER ENDORSES THE INFORMATION THE ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 800-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.

For technical support, please visit www.wiley.com/techsupport.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2006920617

ISBN-13: 978-0-471-78001-4

ISBN-10: 0-471-78001-4

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

1B/RS/QU/QW/IN



About the Authors

Andrew Kaufman, PhD, is currently a Visiting Lecturer in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Virginia. He holds a PhD in Slavic Languages and Literatures from Stanford University, and he has recognized success as both a published scholar and an innovative, award-winning teacher of Russian language, literature, and culture at some of the country's top universities. Dr. Kaufman has worked as a Russian language and literature expert for "Oprah's Book Club," he has discussed Russian literature and culture on the national television show *Democracy Now!*, and he has been heard as a featured guest on Talk America Radio and on Silver Rain Radio in Russia. A fluent speaker of Russian, Dr. Kaufman has lived extensively in Russia, where he studied at Moscow State University and also worked as an interpreter, translator, and management consultant. To learn more about Dr. Kaufman, please visit his website at www.professorandy.com.

Serafima Gettys, PhD, earned her doctorate degree in Foreign Language Education from Gertzen State Pedagogical University, Leningrad, USSR. She is currently a Coordinator of the Foreign Language Program at Lewis University, where she also teaches Russian. Prior to coming to Lewis University, she taught Russian at Stanford University. Gettys is also a member of a number of professional language associations.

Nina Wieda is a doctoral student in Slavic Languages and Literatures at Northwestern University in Chicago. She is committed to bringing Russian language and culture into the lives of her readers and students, because, as the Latin proverb goes, "With each new language, you live a new life." A trained linguist with an MA in Social Sciences, Nina also has a book of poetry published in Russian, and a number of scholarly articles on Chekhov and contemporary drama published in English.

Authors' Acknowledgments

Andrew Kaufman: First and foremost, I would like to thank my colleague, former Stanford professor, and co-author, Serafima Gettys, one of the most original and inspired Russian language teachers I know. Her grace, infectious love of Russian, and professionalism were instrumental in making this book happen — and a joy to write. A sincere thanks, too, to Nina Wieda, who stepped up to the plate when we needed her and who performed marvelously.

A hearty thanks to Georgette Beatty at Wiley for her expert guidance and her constant encouragement throughout the writing process, and to Tracy Boggier at Wiley for her supervision and coordination, and for making this book possible. I'd also like to thank Sarah Faulkner, the copy editor, and Thomas Garza, the technical reviewer, for helping to make sure that every sentence in the book is both accurate and readable.

An immediate and heartfelt thanks to my agent, Margot Maley-Hutchison of Waterside Productions, for trusting me with this book, and for her expert representation and skillful problem resolution throughout.

Thanks to all my colleagues and students in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Virginia for helping to create a supportive and stimulating environment in which to share our common passion for Russian language and culture.

I also owe a tremendous debt to my former professors at Stanford University (especially Professors Lazar Fleishman, Gregory Freidin, Joseph Frank, Monika Greenleaf, and Stephen Moeller-Sally) and at Amherst College (especially Professors Stanley Rabinowitz and Stephanie Sandler) for their mentorship and their faith in me, and for igniting my early passion for all things Russian.

And a very special and warm thank you to Professor Aida Borisovna Lominadze, whom I first met as a student at Moscow State University, and whose compassion, humanism, and extraordinary creativity have remained an inspiration to me throughout the years.

And finally, a loving thanks to my wonderful parents and to my family for their unwavering love and support, for their wisdom, and for their always impressive, behind-the-scenes marketing efforts on my behalf.

Serafima Gettys: Many thanks to Andy Kaufman for bringing this project to my attention and for taking on the responsibility of organizing and managing the project.

Many thanks go to Stanford University for bringing Andy and me together at an earlier point in our lives, first as a teacher and student, later as colleagues, and now finally as co-authors. Warm thanks also to my past and current students of Russian at various schools, both in Russia and the United States, who constantly challenge and inspire me and without whom this book would not have been written.

A loving thanks also to my family, husband Steve and daughter Anna. Their love has been an inspiration throughout.

Nina Wieda: Great thanks to Andy Kaufman and Serafima Gettys for making this project happen, and for being wonderful co-authors.

Many thanks to the Northwestern University Slavic Department for creating an excellent educational environment.

Special thanks to Andrew Wachtel for inspiring me to enter the field of Slavic Languages and Literatures, and to Elizabeth Elliott for awakening my pedagogical talents.

Great thanks to my mother, Alla, and my husband, John, for being a great team, and to my two-month-old daughter, Nadia, for being my muse.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register/.

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

Acquisitions, Editorial, and Media Development

Project Editor: Georgette Beatty

Acquisitions Editor: Tracy Boggier

Copy Editor: Sarah Faulkner

Editorial Program Coordinator: Hanna K. Scott

Technical Editor: Thomas J. Garza

Editorial Manager: Michelle Hacker

Editorial Assistants: Erin Calligan, Nadine Bell

Cartoons: Rich Tennant (www.the5thwave.com)

Composition Services

Project Coordinator: Kristie Rees

Layout and Graphics: Joyce Haughey,
Stephanie D. Jumper, Julie Trippetti

Proofreader: Mildred Rosenzweig

Indexer: Joan Griffitts

Special Help Jennifer Bingham, Josh Dials,
Her Voice Unlimited, LLC

Publishing and Editorial for Consumer Dummies

Diane Graves Steele, Vice President and Publisher, Consumer Dummies

Joyce Pepple, Acquisitions Director, Consumer Dummies

Kristin A. Cocks, Product Development Director, Consumer Dummies

Michael Spring, Vice President and Publisher, Travel

Kelly Regan, Editorial Director, Travel

Publishing for Technology Dummies

Andy Cummings, Vice President and Publisher, Dummies Technology/General User

Composition Services

Gerry Fahey, Vice President of Production Services

Debbie Stailey, Director of Composition Services

Contents at a Glance

Introduction	1
Part I: Getting Started	7
Chapter 1: You Already Know a Little Russian	9
Chapter 2: The Nitty Gritty: Basic Russian Grammar and Numbers	31
Chapter 3: Zdravstvuyte! Privyet! Greetings and Introductions.....	67
Part II: Russian in Action.....	79
Chapter 4: Getting to Know You: Making Small Talk.....	81
Chapter 5: Making a Fuss about Food.....	97
Chapter 6: Shopping Made Easy	119
Chapter 7: Going Out on the Town, Russian-Style	141
Chapter 8: Enjoying Yourself: Recreation and Sports.....	163
Chapter 9: Talking on the Phone and Sending Mail	181
Chapter 10: Around the House and at the Office	195
Part III: Russian on the Go.....	211
Chapter 11: Planning a Trip.....	213
Chapter 12: Getting Around: Planes, Trains, and More	227
Chapter 13: Staying at a Hotel.....	245
Chapter 14: Money, Money, Money	259
Chapter 15: Where Is Red Square? Asking Directions.....	271
Chapter 16: Handling Emergencies	285
Part IV: The Part of Tens	303
Chapter 17: Ten Ways to Pick Up Russian Quickly.....	305
Chapter 18: Ten Favorite Russian Expressions	309
Chapter 19: Ten Russian Holidays to Remember	313
Chapter 20: Ten Phrases That Make You Sound Russian.....	317
Chapter 21: Ten Things Never to Say or Do in Russia	321
Part V: Appendixes	325
Appendix A: Verb Tables	327
Appendix B: Mini-Dictionary.....	331
Appendix C: Answer Key	343
Appendix D: On the CD.....	349
Index	351

Table of Contents

Introduction..... 1

About This Book.....	1
Conventions Used in This Book	2
Foolish Assumptions	3
How This Book Is Organized.....	3
Icons Used in This Book.....	4
Where to Go from Here.....	5

Part 1: Getting Started..... 7

Chapter 1: You Already Know a Little Russian 9

Scoping Out Similarities between English and Russian	9
Identifying Russian words in English	10
Recognizing English words in Russian	11
Watching out for words that may seem similar but aren't.....	13
Looking at the Russian Alphabet (It's Easier than You Think).....	15
From A to Ya: Making sense of Cyrillic	15
I know you! Familiar-looking, same-sounding letters.....	18
Playing tricks: Familiar-looking, different-sounding letters	18
How bizarre: Weird-looking letters.....	19
Sounding Like a Real Russian with Proper Pronunciation.....	20
Understanding the one-letter-one-sound principle.....	20
Giving voice to vowels	20
Enunciating consonants correctly	23
Surveying sticky sounds.....	24
Using Popular Expressions	26
Speaking courteously.....	27
Excusing yourself	27
Arming yourself with other handy phrases	27
Reading Russian with Ease	28

Chapter 2: The Nitty Gritty: Basic Russian Grammar and Numbers . . . 31

Making the Russian Cases.....	32
Nominative case	32
Genitive case.....	32
Accusative case	33
Dative case	33
Instrumental case.....	34
Prepositional case	34



Building Your Grammar Base with Nouns and Pronouns	34
Getting the lowdown on the gender of nouns	35
Checking out cases for nouns	36
Putting plurals into their cases	38
Picking out pronouns	42
Decorating Your Speech with Adjectives	46
Always consenting: Adjective-noun agreement	47
A lot in common: Putting adjectives into other cases	49
Nowhere to be found: The lack of articles in Russian	50
Adding Action with Verbs	50
Spotting infinitives	50
Living in the present tense	51
Talking about the past tense	52
Planning for the future tense	55
Using the unusual verb byt' (to be)	56
Providing Extra Details with Adverbs	57
Describing how	57
Describing when and how often	57
Constructing Sentences Like a Pro	58
Enjoying the freedom of word order	58
Selecting the noun (or pronoun) and adjective	58
Choosing the verb	59
Connecting with conjunctions	59
Forming questions	59
Counting in Russian	60
Numbers 0–9	60
Numbers 10–19	62
Numbers 20–99	62
Numbers 100–999	63
Numbers 1,000–1,000,000	64
Ordinal numbers	65

Chapter 3: Zdravstvujtye! Privyet! Greetings and Introductions . . . 67

To Whom Am I Speaking? Being Informal or Formal	67
Comings and Goings: Saying Hello and Goodbye	69
Saying hello to different people	69
Greeting folks at any time of day	69
Handling “How are you?”	70
Taking your leave	71
Not So Simple: Deciphering Russian Names	72
Break the Ice: Making Introductions	74
Getting acquainted	74
Asking for people’s names and introducing yourself	75
Introducing your friends, colleagues, and family	75

Part 11: Russian in Action79**Chapter 4: Getting to Know You: Making Small Talk81**

Let Me Tell You Something: Talking about Yourself.....	82
Stating where you're from	82
Talking about your nationality and ethnic background	83
Telling your age	88
Discussing your family.....	89
Describing your job.....	92
Let's Get Together: Giving and Receiving Contact Information	94
I'm Sorry! Explaining that You Don't Understand Something.....	95

Chapter 5: Making a Fuss about Food97

Focusing on Food Basics.....	97
Eating up.....	97
Drinking up.....	99
Using utensils and tableware.....	100
Minding basic Russian table manners	101
Enjoying Different Meals in Russia.....	101
What's for breakfast? Almost anything!.....	102
Let's do dinner (not lunch)	103
A simple supper.....	105
Going Out for Groceries	108
Picking out produce	108
Surveying other grocery items	109
Eating Out with Ease.....	110
Deciding on a place to eat	110
Making reservations on the phone	111
The art of ordering a meal.....	112
Having handy phrases for the wait staff.....	113
Receiving and paying the bill.....	114

Chapter 6: Shopping Made Easy119

Shop 'Til You Drop: Where and How to Buy Things	
the Russian Way.....	119
Looking at different types of stores and departments	120
Calling for store hours	121
Navigating a department store	122
Asking for (or declining) assistance	123
You Wear It Well: Shopping for Clothes.....	126
Seeking specific items of clothing	126
Describing items in color	128
Finding the right size	129
Trying on clothing.....	130

This or That? Deciding What You Want.....	131
Using demonstrative pronouns	131
Expressing likes and dislikes	131
Comparing two items	132
Talking about what you like most (or least)	133
You Gotta Pay to Play: Buying Items.....	134
How much does it cost?	134
I'll take it!	135
Where and how do I pay?	136
Something Special: Cool Things to Buy in Russia.....	138

Chapter 7: Going Out on the Town, Russian-Style141

The Clock's Ticking: Telling Time	141
Counting the hours	142
Marking the minutes	143
Asking for the time	145
Knowing the times of the day	147
Distinguishing the days of the week	148
Talking about time relative to the present	149
Together Wherever We Go: Making Plans to Go Out	150
Do you want to go with me?.....	150
What time does it start?	152
On the Big Screen: Going to the Movies	152
Picking a particular type of movie	153
Buying tickets	153
Choosing a place to sit and watch	154
It's Classic: Taking in the Russian Ballet and Theater	156
Handy tips for ordering tickets.....	156
Things to do during the intermission	157
Culture Club: Visiting a Museum	158
How Was It? Talking about Entertainment	160

Chapter 8: Enjoying Yourself: Recreation and Sports163

Shootin' the Breeze about Hobbies	163
What did you do last night?	164
What are you doing this weekend?	165
What do you like to do?	166
Reading All About It	167
Have you read it?	168
What do you like to read?.....	169
Where do you find reading materials?.....	171
Rejoicing in the Lap of Nature	171
Enjoying the country house.....	172
Picking foods in the forest.....	172
Skiing in the Caucasus	173
Lying around at Lake Baikal	174
Taking a cruise ship down the Volga River	174

Doing Things with Your Hands	175
Being crafty	175
Playing music	176
Collecting Cool Stuff	177
Scoring with Sports.....	177
Chapter 9: Talking on the Phone and Sending Mail	181
Ringin' Up Telephone Basics	181
Brushing up on phone vocabulary.....	181
Distinguishing different types of phones	182
Knowing different kinds of phone calls	183
Dialing It In and Making the Call.....	183
Arming Yourself with Basic Telephone Etiquette	185
Saving time by not introducing yourself	185
Asking for the person you want to speak to	186
Anticipating different responses	186
Leaving a message with a person.....	189
Talking to an answering machine.....	191
Sending a Letter, a Fax, or an E-mail	192
Chapter 10: Around the House and at the Office	195
Hunting for an Apartment or a House	195
Talking about an apartment	195
Discussing a house.....	197
Asking the right questions	197
Sealing the deal.....	198
Settling into Your New Digs	200
Knowing the names of different rooms	200
Buying furniture.....	201
Searching for a Job.....	203
Discovering where to look.....	203
Contacting employers.....	204
Clarifying job responsibilities	205
Succeeding in the Workplace.....	206
Making your way around the office.....	206
Communicating in the workplace	208
Part III: Russian on the Go.....	211
Chapter 11: Planning a Trip	213
When Can We Go? Choosing the Date for Your Trip.....	213
Recognizing the names of the months.....	213
Talking about specific dates	214
Saying the year	215
Surveying the seasons	216