

## INTRODUCTION. RUSSIAN GRAMMAR PECULIARITIES

Russian is a Slavonic language which belongs to the family of Indo-European languages. To this family also belong such languages as English, German, French or Spanish.

In Russian Grammar we follow the traditional Latin division into 8 parts of speech, such as the noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, participle, adverb, preposition and conjunction.

Russian is known as a highly inflected language. This means that the endings of the words change governed by some factors or under certain conditions. This is true for nouns, adjectives, verbs, some participles, pronouns and numerals.

A lot of Russian words are rather long because the root of the word is often equipped with various prefixes, suffixes and endings serving different aims, for example, changing the meaning of the word, indicating the case and the number of the noun, or the person and the number of the verb.

Due to its specific nature, the Russian language does need to use any formal subjects, auxiliary verbs, compound verbal constructions or articles. And parts of Russian sentences are more movable than, for example, in English or German.

Note that the irregular forms are marked with an asterisk \*.

### CHAPTER 1

## GENDER AGREEMENT OF RUSSIAN NOUNS IN THE SINGULAR

### Unit 1

#### HOW TO ESTABLISH THE GENDER OF A NOUN

All Russian nouns are attributed to one of **three genders**:


  
**Masculine (M), Feminine (F) or Neuter (N).**

You will be glad to know that one can tell the gender of the majority of Russian nouns from the ending of the **dictionary form (nominative case)**. The gender of nouns is mostly a **formal thing**.

Now you will learn how to determine the gender of a noun.

- Nouns ending in **consonants** and **-й** are **masculine**:

ДОМ — house	друг — friend	музéй — museum
человéк — man	гóрод — city	Китáй — China

- Nouns ending in **-а, -я, -ья, -ия** are **feminine**:

ма́ма — mother	Во́лга — Volga
машíна — car	статья́ — article
неде́ля — week	фами́лия — surname
Росси́я — Russia	

- Nouns ending in **-о, -е, -ье, -ие** are **neuter**:

ме́сто — seat	здáние — building
мо́ре — sea	телеви́дение — TV
купе́ — compartment	здоровье́ — health

● But things are never that simple in languages: **irrespective** of the **feminine -а, -я** ending, a small group of nouns denoting **males** has the **masculine** gender agreement (so called «**natural masculines**»):

па́па — father, dad	де́душка — grandfather
му́жчина — man	дядя́ — uncle

*E.g.*

**мой (М.) + па́па**

- The following nouns are **neuter**:

вре́мя — time	жю́ри — jury	интервью́ — interview
и́мя — name	такси́ — taxi	ме́ню — menu

## Unit 2

### THE GENDER OF SOFT SIGN NOUNS

A large group of nouns ending in **-ь** (soft sign) could be either **feminine** or **masculine**. The gender of these nouns can be found in the dictionary.

- Nouns denoting **males** («**natural masculines**») are **masculine**:

го́сть — guest, водите́ль — driver, учи́тель — teacher,  
писа́тель — writer, ца́рь — tsar, коро́ль — king,  
вратáрь — goalkeeper, *etc.*

- Names of months ending in **-ь** are all **masculine**:

январь — January, февраль — February, *etc.*

- «**natural feminines**» are all **feminine**:

ма́ть — mother, дочь — daughter, *etc.*

- Nouns ending in **-знь, -ость, -сь** are **feminine**:

жизнь — life, но́вость — news, по́дпись — signature, *etc.*

The gender of other **soft sign** nouns has to be learned individually.

## Unit 3

### REPLACING SINGULAR NOUNS WITH PERSONAL PRONOUNS

A noun can be replaced with the following personal pronouns **depending on the established gender**:

Masculine nouns with **он** — he, it

Где **ваш друг?** ⇔ **Вот он.**

Где **ваш дом?** ⇔ **Вот он.**



Feminine nouns with **она́** — she, it

Где **ва́ша ма́ма?** ⇔ **Вот она́.**

Где **ва́ша маши́на?** ⇔ **Вот она.**



Neuter nouns with **оно́** — it

Где **ва́ше ме́сто?** ⇔ **Вот оно́.**

Где **э́то зда́ние?** ⇔ **Вот оно́.**

## Unit 4

### HOW TO ESTABLISH THE GENDER OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

All place names can be divided into 2 groups:

#### First group

Place names with endings which **formally fit** the Russian system of gender endings:

м. Кита́й, Таила́нд, Вьетна́м, Аму́р, Енисе́й — **он**

ф. Росси́я, Финля́ндия, Аме́рика, Во́лга — **она́**

н. Примо́рье — **оно́**

#### Second group

There are many place names which **do not fit** the Russian system of gender endings:

Баку́, Со́чи, Тбили́си, Хе́льсинки, Миссу́ри, Таи́ти, То́кио, Онта́рио

These words **exist only in this unchangeable (indeclinable) form**.

Their gender is established in a special way through **association** with the «generic» word, *for example*:

Со́чи — го́род — он — *masculine* → **но́вый Со́чи** (*m*)

## Unit 5

### PRINCIPLE OF GENDER AGREEMENT WITH NOUNS

Agreement in gender takes place:

between	long adjectives pronouns of the adjective type ordinal numerals cardinal numeral «one» long participles	and nouns
between	nouns or personal pronouns and personal pronouns and	short participles short adjectives verbs in the past tense form

I called the words preceding nouns in units — the **characterizing** words.

Principle of gender agreement with nouns: **The characterizing words have the same gender, number and case as a corresponding noun:**

## Unit 6

### FOREIGN INDECLINABLE NOUNS AND THEIR GENDER AGREEMENT

There is a group of nouns of **foreign origin** in Russian which do not change (decline), *for example:*

<b>шоссé</b> — highway	<b>ра́дио</b> — radio (set)
<b>метрó</b> — underground	<b>кинó</b> — cinema (hall)
<b>такси́</b> — taxi	<b>ательé</b> — workshop
<b>кафе́</b> — cafe	<b>бюро́</b> — office
<b>купе́</b> — compartment	<b>интервью́</b> — interview
	<b>пальто́</b> — overcoat, <i>etc.</i>

All these words are **neuter** and their gender agreement and pronoun replacement are **neuter**, *for example:*

**Ми́нское шоссé** — Minsk highway — **оно́**  
**интерéсное интервью́** — interesting interview — **оно́**  
**но́вое пальто́** — new overcoat — **оно́**

But: **горя́чий кофе́** — *masculine* — hot coffee;  
**оди́н евро́** — *masculine* — one euro