

RUSSIAN

COUNTRY: U.S.S.R.

POST: Moscow

Russian is part of the eastern group of the Slavic languages. It incorporates many dialects, but most of modern Russian stems from the Moscow dialect.

The Cyrillic alphabet, named after St. Cyril, apostle to the Slavs, who translated the Bible and the Greek Liturgy into Slavic in the 9th century, can be disorienting at first, but the main difficulties in learning Russian stem from its accent and its morphology. Every Russian word of more than one syllable has an accent, and the accentuated syllable is emphasized. Sometimes the position of the accent makes it possible to distinguish between different words. For example: mouká means flower, while mouka means torment. Very often, in the declension, the accent makes it possible to distinguish between different forms of a given word (for example: roukî – of the hand; rouki – the hands).

The opposition between hard and soft consonants is essential: it can convey two variations of a given declension. This is generally quite complicated.

The verb is really the heart of the statement, and it can be viewed as imperfective (describing the process, activity or state as unfinished) or perfective (expressing the process as finished), if it is preceded by a prefix.

Since there are no articles in Russian, gender and number are usually indicated by the ending.