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Харт, Д.К.

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Оригинал-макет: *В.В. Листова*
Обложка: *В.В. Листова*

Рецензент: д-р филол. наук, профессор *А.Д. Кривоносов* (СПб ГУЭиФ)

Учебное пособие предназначено для изучающих русский язык и владеющих им на уровне В1 и выше. В пособии представлен простой и удобный способ изучения и практического освоения акцентного разнообразия в русском языке. Принципы постановки ударений изложены в виде набора правил. В практической части даны задания для самостоятельной работы. Записи заданий можно послушать при помощи QR-кода рядом с заданием.

Given the seemingly bewildering variety of stress possibilities in Russian, a simple approach to understanding Russian stress has long been a goal of Russian pedagogy. This booklet presents a simple and straightforward way to understanding the Russian stress system. It shows that the location of stress in most Russian words can be determined by means of one simple rule.

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Preface

Given the seemingly bewildering variety of stress possibilities in Russian, a simple approach to understanding Russian stress has long been a goal of Russian pedagogy. This handbook presents a simple and straightforward way to understanding the Russian stress system. It shows that the location of stress in most Russian words can be determined by means of one simple rule.

This book has been written with the intermediate learner of Russian in mind. It assumes an understanding of the basics of Russian grammar and a desire by the reader to both learn how the system of Russian stress works and to practice these principles in their own speech.

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to my colleagues, Professors Michael Kelly Grant Lundberg, and Raisa Solovieva for critically reading earlier versions of this work and providing substantive suggestions for improvement. Much of the form of the present work is due to their detailed comments. I also want to thank my wife, LaRayne, for her precise editing of this work. Any remaining deficiencies in content or presentation are my own. Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues in the field whose interest in Russian stress, as expressed only partially in the bibliography at the end of this work, has provided a continual spark to my own investigations into Russian stress.


Introduction

One of the most interesting aspects of Russian is its stress system. Seemingly complex, it is for the most part fairly straightforward. Nearly all words fall into one of three stress categories. Once it can be determined which category a word belongs to, the determination of stress is fairly simple. The goal of this handbook is to explain the Russian system of stressing words and to present exercises which will help the reader master the stress of high frequency words and confidently predict the stress of new words. These skills are particularly useful in reading Russian for purposes of vocabulary development and language maintenance.

Compared to other European languages, such as French with regular final stress, or German with regular initial stress, Russian appears to present a plethora of bewildering stress possibilities. There are, however, a number of regularities that students learning Russian can look to in predicting where the stress falls on any given word. This guide covers the stress regularities of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Other parts of speech, such as verbal adverbs, follow the system outlined for verbs. We do not try to account for the stress of every Russian word or to explain every exception. While the generalizations presented do account for most stresses, the reader will certainly be able to think of, or will soon come across, exceptions to the generalizations given. The idea is to know what is regular so that when irregularities are encountered they stand out against the backdrop of what is normal. Irregularities can then be easily identified and remembered. For example, if one knows that stress usually precedes the suffix **-СТВО** (*дѣ́тство*, *госуда́рство*, *бога́тство* and more than a thousand others), then the stress of words such as *бо́льшинствó* should really stand out and therefore be more easily learned and remembered.

This handbook is intended for third- and fourth-year students of Russian. Since a basic understanding of Russian is assumed, words are not glossed. However, nearly all examples come from the list of 3,500 most commonly used words in Russian found V.V. Morkovkin's *Lexical Minimums of Contemporary Russian*. Exercises may contain words not on this list.

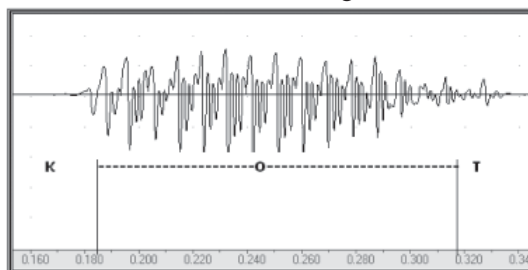
Chapter 1 discusses what stress is and explains how dictionaries express stress in various forms of words. It also reviews two spelling rules that play a role in predicting stress and the three main stress categories in Russian. Chapter 2 introduces default stress, which covers about 85% of all Russian words. Chapter 3 discusses the main deviations from default stress. Each chapter includes a series of exercises intended to help you master the stress of high

frequency words. Since stress is essentially a spoken and auditory phenomenon, all exercises are oral. The CD, which accompanies this text, serves as a key to most exercises and is intended to help the learner become accustomed to the pronunciation of stressed and unstressed syllables and the rhythm of Russian speech. The symbol  next to an exercise indicates the answer to this exercise can be found on the CD.

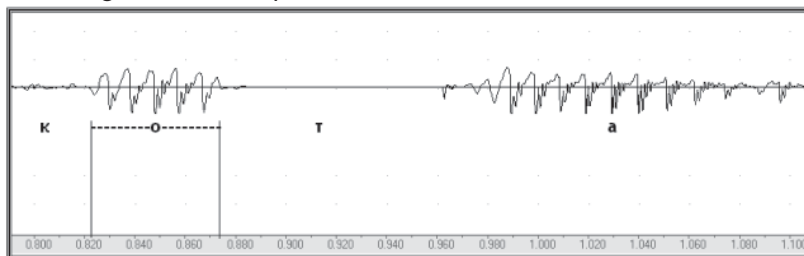
Chapter 1

1.1. What is Stress?

In Russian, nearly every word is stressed. Only vowels can be stressed. Vowels, such as **а, я, о, ё**, etc., are sounds that can be made longer or shorter. A stressed vowel is usually pronounced more clearly and is usually pronounced longer and sometimes slightly louder than its unstressed counterpart. Compare, for example, the waveforms of the following words: *ко́т*, *ко́та*.



In this waveform of the word *ко́т*, the stressed **о** is a little more than 10/100 of a second long. However, when the genitive singular of the same word is pronounced, *ко́та*, with an unstressed **о**, the following waveform is produced.



In this waveform the unstressed **о** is about 5/100 of a second long or less than half as long as when it was pronounced under stress.

Stress phenomena are marked in writing or in print in two ways. The most common stress mark is the acute mark (´) over a vowel: *ко́та*. The vowel letter *ѐ*, however, is always stressed and so the two dots (¨) over this letter constitute a stress mark. The letter *ѐ* is never written with the acute stress mark. In Russian, stress is shown in writing in some elementary school textbooks, in books for foreigners, and in most dictionaries. Finally, even when stress is marked, it is common not to mark stress at all on monosyllabic words: *кот*, *ма́ть*, *друг*, since it is understood that stress falls on the only vowel available. Stress rarely falls on prepositions. The absence of a stress mark on a monosyllabic preposition implies no stress (e.g., *о* *шко́ле*). However, when a preposition does have a stress mark then the noun which it accompanies has no stress (e.g., *за́ городом*).

1.2. Stress in Dictionaries

Since stress may shift from one vowel to another in various inflected forms of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, dictionaries use a system to show what the stress of any form of a given word will be. Since space restrictions preclude simply listing every form of every word, dictionaries often use the following system, based on the assumption that the user knows the case endings for nouns and adjectives, and the conjugation forms for verbs. That given, only as much information that is needed to predict the stress of each form of the word is provided. The location of stress always copies that of the **last (or only)** form given. Thus, the Oxford Russian-English dictionary entry for *квартира*:

кварти́р|а -ы

shows that this word has the gen sg ending **-ы**: *кварти́ры*. (The symbol | indicates that part of the word where changes, such as the addition of different endings, occur.) The entry also indicates that this word has stress on the **и** in all its forms. Since no other form of this word with a different stress is given, we understand that stress in all forms of this word follows that of the nom sg: *кварти́ры*, *кварти́ру*, *кварти́ре*, etc. Similarly,

игра́|ть -ю

has stress on the **а** in all of its conjugated forms. Since stress does not move around in this word, there is no need to give other forms of

the word. The **-ю** is given simply to show how the verb is conjugated. Consider, however, the following partial dictionary entry:

враг -á.

In this entry the nominative form is *враг*, with no ending, so the symbol | is not used. The genitive form, however, is *врага́*, with stress on the ending. Since the last form given has stress on the ending, we understand that **all** the other case forms of this word follow that of the last form given, namely final stress of the genitive singular.

Acc sg	<i>врага́</i>
Prep sg	<i>враге́</i>
Dat sg	<i>врагу́</i>
Instr sg	<i>враго́м</i>
Nom pl	<i>враги́</i>
Acc/gen pl	<i>враго́в, etc.</i>

Note

Throughout this text, paradigms are given in the order: nom, acc, gen, prep, dat, instr. This order allows us to make use of the syncretisms (commonalities) between cases, such as masc acc sg anim = gen sg. The traditional order of nom, gen, dat, acc, inst, prep does not allow for this simplification.

Here is a partial dictionary entry for the verb *писа́ть*:

пи|са́ть -шу́, -шешь.

The entry indicates two facts: 1) the **с** shifts to **ш** in this word when it is conjugated, and 2) stress jumps back one syllable after the 1st person sg form. Here is the full present tense paradigm of this verb.

пишу́	пи́шем
пи́шешь	пи́шете
пи́шет	пи́шут

As you can see, stress jumps back one syllable in the **ты** form of this verb, and this is indicated in the dictionary entry. All the other forms follow the stress of the final form of the dictionary entry. Later you will learn ways to predict whether or not a verb has this stress pattern.

Practice

🔊 1. Read out loud the following partial dictionary entries. Then compare your reading with that of a native found on the CD accompanying this text. Then read through the exercise again.

02



Nouns	Prep sg	Inst sg	Nom pl	Prep pl
раб, -á	рабе	рабом	рабы	(о) рабах
бúкв а -ы	букве	буквой	буквы	буквах
дожд ь -я	дожде	дождём	дожди	дождях
вдов á -ы́, <i>pl</i> -ы́	вдове	вдовой	вдовы	вдовах
от éц -цá	отце	отцом	отцы	отцах
лиц ó -á, <i>pl</i> -á	лице	лицом	лица	лицах
волн á -ы́, <i>pl</i> -ы́	волне	волной	волны	волнах
волк, -а, <i>pl</i> ð и	волке	волком	волки	волках

Verbs	Я	Ты	Он <i>past</i>	Они <i>past</i>
дúма ть -ю	думаю	думаешь	думал	думали
читá ть -ю	читаю	читаешь	читал	читали
рáд овать -ую	радую	радуешь	радовал	радовали
рис овáть -ýю	рисую	рисуешь	рисовал	рисовали

Adjectives	Gen sg masc	Inst sg fem	Nom pl	Gen pl
готó вый	готового	готовой	готовые	готовых
тём ный	тёмного	тёмной	тёмные	тёмных
дík ий	дикого	дикой	дикие	диких
бол ьно́й	больного	больной	больные	больных
плох óй	плохого	плохой	плохие	плохих