

The Russian Alphabet

All 33 Cyrillic letters: sounds, transliteration, false friends & cursive

ALPHABET (А–Я), PART 1

letter	Latin	example
А а	a	а́збука
Б б	b	бра́т
В в	v	вода́
Г г	g	го́д
Д д	d	до́м
Е е	ye	Евро́па
Ё ё	yo	ёж
Ж ж	zh	жу́к
З з	z	зу́б
И и	i	и́ли
Й й	y	ча́й
К к	k	ко́т
Л л	l	ла́мпа
М м	m	мо́ре
Н н	n	но́с
О о	o	окно́
П п	p	па́рк

ALPHABET (А–Я), PART 2

letter	Latin	example
Р р	r	ры́ба
С с	s	сы́р
Т т	t	то́рт
У у	u	у́тро
Ф ф	f	фо́то
Х х	kh	хле́б
Ц ц	ts	це́вет
Ч ч	ch	ча́с
Ш ш	sh	шко́ла
Щ щ	shch	щи́
Ъ ъ	—	сье́зд
Ы ы	y	сы́н
Ь ь	—	со́ль
Э э	e	э́то
Ю ю	yu	ю́г
Я я	ya	я́

FALSE FRIENDS (LOOK LATIN)

1. В в looks like Latin B, but it's like v in van.
2. Е е looks like Latin E, but it's like ye in yes.
3. Н н looks like Latin H, but it's like n in note.
4. Р р looks like Latin P, but it's a rolled r, like Spanish perro.
5. С с looks like Latin C, but it's like s in sun.
6. У у looks like Latin Y, but it's like oo in boot.
7. Х х looks like Latin X, but it's like ch in Scottish loch.

CURSIVE TRAPS

- Д д: Lower-case cursive д looks like a Latin g.
- И и: Cursive и looks like a Latin u, not the printed shape.
- Й й: Cursive й is the u-shape of и with a curved hat on top.
- Л л: Cursive л begins with a little hook before the main stroke.
- М м: Cursive м also starts with a hook; it is not the two peaks of the printed M.
- П п: Lower-case cursive п looks like a Latin n.
- Т т: Lower-case cursive т looks like a Latin m.
- Ш ш: Cursive ш is three humps; a small line is often drawn under it so it is not read as и + extra strokes.
- Щ щ: Like cursive ш, but with a tail that drops below the line.

THE TWO SIGNS (NO SOUND)

1. Ъ ъ (tvjordiy znak, hard sign): no sound of its own, a hard break before a soft vowel
2. Ь ь (myagkiy znak, soft sign): no sound of its own, it softens the consonant before it