

Pronunciation Course Supplement: Grammar Notes and Reading Practice

Lesson 1

1. There are no articles in either Russian or Church Slavonic.

2. Russian and Church Slavonic nouns decline, i.e. change their endings to indicate grammatical case. Declension helps “to string the words together” in a phrase or sentence. For the same purpose, in English we use prepositions: smiled *at* me, touched *by* a kind word, thanks *to* my friend, author *of* the book, etc. Similar phrases in Russian do not require a preposition because the relationship between the words is shown in their endings.

When something is addressed to or given to an object, person, or thing, in Russian we use the Dative case. Verbs like *speak to, give to, sing to, bring to, etc.*, are followed by the noun in the Dative case. The nouns in Dative answer the question *to whom? I’m bringing these flowers (to whom?) to my mother.* The endings for Dative vary depending on the gender of the noun. In masculine gender it requires *-y*: Слава Богу! Glory be to God!

Read aloud:

гла-гѡл	verb (modern Russian) word (Church Slavonic)
гѡ-лос	voice (modern Russian)
глас	voice (Church Slavonic)
блѡ-го	grace, blessing
слѡ-во	word
бо-го-слѡв*	theologian

* - a compound word, formed from **Бог** (God) and **слово** (word): **богослов** interprets the word of God. **o** in the middle joins the two words together.

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Lesson 2

1. Syntactically, Russian is more flexible than English: we can move the words around freely, depending on whether we want to put special emphasis on a certain part of the sentence/phrase, or for the purpose of poetic eloquence, etc.

In the part of the prayer «души наша» (*our souls*) the word «души» (*souls*) goes before the possessive pronoun «наша» (*our*) because it's the more "important" one in the phrase and adds more humility to our plea. In terms of grammar, however, both ways (possessive pronoun + noun, or noun + possessive pronoun) are correct. In modern Russian, as in English, we use the first option more often.

2. There is a grammatical case in Church Slavonic which modern Russian doesn't have. It is called the Vocative Case. It is used to directly address the person spoken to. For instance, in the sentences equivalent to English *My father helped me* and *Father, help me!* Church Slavonic would have used different forms of the word "father." Throughout the lessons of this course you'll see many examples of the Vocative case. When we pray to God we say **Боже** – Vocative for **Бог**; the Vocative form of **Господь** is **Господи**; Vocative of **Дева** (Virgin) is **Девѡ**.

Read aloud:

И-ѡ-на	Jonas
Пѡ-вел	Paul
Да-ви'д	David
Ан-на	Ann
же-нѡ	wife woman (Church Slavonic)

See if you remember what these words and phrases mean.

Слава	души
сила	Иже еси
спаси	спаси нас

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Lesson 3

«Да» is *yes* or, sometimes, *and*. But when the word is used at the very beginning of the sentence, before a verb (Да будет воля твоя. Thy will be done) it adds emphasis to the statement. This construction isn't commonly used in everyday speech.

Read aloud:

не-бе-са́	heavens
Би'б-ли-я	the Bible
плод	fruit
свет	light
лик	face of a saint
ка-ди'-ло	thurible, incense burner
Де́-ва	Virgin
пост	fasting

How do you say in Church Slavonic: *in heaven, save our souls, Thy name, unto the ages of ages?*

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Lesson 4

In Russian, there is a great variety of prefixes (attachments which go before the base of the word, as in *dislike*) and suffixes (attachments after the base of the word, as in *fruitful*). They each have a specific meaning and allow for innumerable (and often creative) ways of making new words. Both prefixes and suffixes can add a new meaning to a word, or change it completely. Suffixes can change one part of speech into another, or make an endearing, diminutive, pejorative, etc. form of almost any word.

Prefixes and suffixes make words longer. There might be, for example, a prefix (or even two), two suffixes and an ending attached to the same base word (root). For a student of Russian, it might be helpful to understand the meaning/grammatical purpose of different word “attachments.” When you break a long word into parts, it begins to make more sense, and it’s easier to pronounce/memorize.

The adjective «бессмертный» in your lesson has a prefix, suffix and ending. The root of the word is **смерт-** which means *death*.

бес смерт ный

бес- is a prefix which means *without*.

бес смерт ный

The suffix **-н-** is used to form an adjective.

бес смерт н ый

-ый is an ending which indicates masculine gender in adjectives:

бес смерт н ый

What is the difference between a suffix and an ending? The suffix doesn’t change its form, but the ending does, depending on gender and case. Compare: бессмертная душа (**-ая** is the ending for feminine), бессмертный Бог (**-ый** for masculine adjective).

свят -ый is formed from the root **свят-** (holy) and **-ый**, ending for adjectives in masculine gender. For feminine it is **святая**.

креп -к- ий is formed from the root **креп-** (meaning “might, “power”), suffix **-к-** (which can be used for adjectives) and ending **-ий**. Note that ending **-ий**, not **-ый**, is used before **к** [k]. The feminine form of the adjective is **крепкая**.

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Lesson 4

If you are considering studying Russian, and like to take an analytical approach to learning, you might find a dictionary of Russian roots a great help. Knowing the basic roots and their meanings will enable you to understand the mechanics of word-building, learn about word etymology and memorize more easily.

Read aloud:

а́н-ге́л	angel
мо-ли́т-ва	prayer
ко́ло-кол	bell
Сын	Son
пре-сто́л	throne
про-ро́к	prophet

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Lesson 6

The word **Утешителю** (Vocative from Утешитель) is made from the verb **утешить** (to comfort).

У теш ител ю

-теш- is an old Slavic root which means “comfort, peace.”

У- is a prefix with many meanings, one of them is “to stand by something, someone.”

-итель is a suffix which has the meaning “the doer of the action.” The soft sign (ь) drops out as the following ending (-ю) already softens the consonant л.

-ю is an ending for the Vocative case.

The word **помилуй** consists of the prefix **по-**, root **-мил-** and ending **-уй**:

по мил уй

по- means “to bring to completion.”

-мил- means “grace, mercy, kindness.”

-уй is an ending for a verb in singular, used for requests and pleas.

The word **грешный** (**грешная**) in the prayer **Помилуй мя, грешного! Помилуй мя, грешную!** is basically an adjective used as a noun. (Compare to English “The meek shall inherit the earth.”)

Грешный is formed from the root **-грех-/греш-** (sin), adjective suffix **-н-** and ending **-ый** for masculine (**-ая** for feminine).

греш н ый

греш н ая

The endings **-ый** and **-ая** are changed according to the rules of declension. Have mercy on (whom?) me, a sinner. “Me, a sinner” will be in the Accusative case in Russian.

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Lesson 6

Read aloud:

про-ро́к Да-ни-и́л	prophet Daniel
про-ро́к И-ли-я́	prophet Elijah
ре-ка́ И-ор-да́н	the River Jordan
Де-я́-ни-я	The Acts
а-по́с-тол Анд-ре́й	Andrew the Apostle
е-ван-ге-ли́ст Лу-ка́	Luke the Evangelist
е-ван-ге-ли́ст И-о-а́нн	John the Evangelist
Да лю-би́-те друг дру́-га.	Love one another. (John 13:34)

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Lesson 7

Read aloud:

крест	crucifix, cross
крес-ти'ть	baptize
И-о-áнн Крес-ти'-тель	John the Baptist
мо-ли'т-ва	prayer
му́д-рость	wisdom
спа-се́-ни-е	salvation
Рож-де-ствó	Nativity
Е-ва́н-ге-ли-е	Gospel

See if you remember the meaning of all the phrases.

Святы́й Бессмертны́й

долги́ наша

милостив бу́ди мне

даждь́ нам днесь

мы оставляем должником нашим

во веки веков

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Lesson 8

Read aloud:

В на-ча́-ле бы'-ло Сло́-во, и Сло́-во бы'-ло у Бо́-га, и Сло́-во бы'-ло Бог.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
(John 1:1)

He	су-ди'-те,	да	не	су-ди'-мы	бу́-де-те.
don't	judge	and	not	judged	(you) will be

Judge not, lest ye be judged.
(Matthew 7:1)

How do you say in Church Slavonic: *have mercy on me, Holy Mighty, our bread, Son of God, Amen, Thy Name?*

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Lesson 9

Read aloud:

че-ло-вѣк	man
Тво-рѣц	Maker
И-о-áнн Пред-тѣ-ча	John the Forerunner
Свя-тѳй Мла-дѣ-нец	Holy Babe
Отѣц	Father
Отѣц Не-бѣ-снѳй	Heavenly Father
Егѳ же Цáр-стви-ю не бѳ-дет кон-цá.	

His Kingdom will have no end. (The use of *же* makes the statement more emphatic.)

See if you remember how to say this in Church Slavonic.

Thy will be done

we

the Lord is with Thee

our bread

forgive us our debts

the Holy Spirit

be merciful to me

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Lesson 10

Богородица is a compound word, formed by combining two words: **Бог** and **род**.

Бог о род ица

The root **-род-** means “birth, give birth”, **-ица** is the ending for feminine gender. **о** in the middle is used to join the two roots together.

In the word **Пресвятáя** the prefix **пре-** means “the most, to the highest degree,” **-свят-** is “holy”, **-ая** – ending for the adjective in feminine gender:

Пре свят ая

Read aloud:

Кто и-ме́-ет у́-ши слы́-шать, да слы́-шит.

Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.
(Matthew 13:9)

И́-бо где двó-е и-ли трó-е со́-бра-ны во И́-мя Мо-é, там
For where two or three are gathered in Name My there
together

Я по-сре-ди́ них.
I (am) amongst them

For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.
(Matthew 18:20)

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Lesson 11

1. **Благодатная** is a compound word, formed from roots – **благ-** (grace, blessing) and **-дат-** (give). **-н-** is an adjective suffix, **-ая** is the feminine ending. **о** is used to join two roots together.

Благ о дат н ая

Another adjective in this lesson is also a compound word: **благословен** (masculine)/**благословенна** (feminine). The roots – **благ-** (grace) and **-слов-** (word) combine into the meaning “receiving blessings by the Word (of God),” or “blessed.” You don’t find the usual **-ый/-ая** adjective endings in **благословен/благословенна** because they are “short adjectives,” i.e. the endings of the “full adjectives” (**благословенный, благословенная**) were dropped. Short adjectives are used primarily in literature or a poetic style of expression.

2. **Спаса родила еси душ наших** is a good example of the flexibility of Russian syntax. The word-by-word translation is:

Спаса	родила еси	душ	наших
to the Savior	(Thou) has given birth	souls	of our

The most important word, **Спас**, the Savior, begins the sentence. And other words follow after, the possessive pronoun *our* being the last one, as we’ve seen before. Note that there is no subject in this part of the sentence; it’s already clear whom we are addressing: **Ты** (Thou) occurred at the beginning of the sentence. In English we include the subject: *Thou hast given birth to the Saviour of our souls*, to make the sentence complete. **еси** is an auxiliary verb that is not used in modern Russian. **родила еси** is the verb form meaning *hast given birth*.

Read aloud:

ар-ха́н-гел Гав-ри-и́л	archangel Gabriel	ми-ло-се́р-ди-е	mercy
бла-го-да́ть	grace	ча́-ша	chalice
пра-во-сла́в-ный	Orthodox	ал-та́рь	altar

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Lesson 12

1. The word **беззакония** consists of the prefix **без-** (*without*), root **-закон-** (*law*) and the plural noun ending **-ия**. Literally it means “acts without regard to the law (of God).”

без закон ия

2. The words **избави** (deliver from), **посети** (visit), **исцели** (heal) are used in the Imperative mood, a grammatical form that involves a request, command, or – as in our case – a plea. The Imperative mood is formed by dropping the Infinitive ending **-ть**:

избавить (to deliver) → **избави**

посетить (to visit) → **посети**

исцелить (to heal) → **исцели**.

Read aloud:

за́-по-ведь	commandment
За́-по-ве-ди бла-же́н-ства	The Beatitudes
Соз-да́-тель	Creator
Из-ра́-иль	Israel
я-зык	language
свя-ще́н-ник	priest
ще́д-ро́-та	generosity
це́р-ковь	church

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Lesson 14

Read aloud some of the Beatitudes (Заповеди блаженства).

Бла-же́н-ны крѳт-ки-е, и́бо они́ на-сле́-ду-ют зѳм-лю.
blessed meek for they shall inherit Earth

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.

Бла-же́н-ны ми́-ло-сти-вы-е, и́бо они́ по-ми́-ло-ва-ны бу́-дут.
blessed merciful for they pardoned shall be

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Бла-же́н-ны чи́-сты-е се́рд-цем, и́бо они́ Бо́га уз-ря́т.
blessed pure of heart for they God shall see

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
(Matthew 5:3-12)

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Lesson 15

Read aloud:

Ца́р-ство Бо́-ж-ие за-кдю-че-но́ в се́рд-це че-ло-ве́-ка.
Kingdom (of) God is contained in heart (of) a man

The Kingdom of God resides in a man's heart.
(St. Seraphim of Sarov)

И-та́к бу́дь-те ми́-ло-серд-ны, как и Оте́ц ваш ми-ло-се́р-ден.
therefore be merciful as Father your (is) merciful

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.
(Luke 6:36)

А те-пе́рь пре-бы-ва́-ют сии три: ве́-ра, на-де́ж-да, лю-бо́вь;
and now abide these three faith hope love

но лю-бо́вь из них бо́ль-ше.
but love out of them (is) greater

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.
(1 Corinthians 13:13)

Конец и Богу слава!