

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

# Russian Alphabet Made Easy #1

## True Friends: A and Ka

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# 1

Zdrastvuite, Ya Svetlana! Welcome to Russianpod101.com's Алфавит Made Easy!  
The fastest, easiest, and most fun way to learn the Russian Cyrillic alphabet: the Алфавит!

Over the next 20 lessons, you'll learn everything there is about the reading and writing of the Russian language. By the end, you'll be ready to dive into the world of Russian literature, make your way through Russian cities, and really accelerate your Russian study! Ready to start? Then let's go!

The Russian alphabet contains 33 letters. Seeing them laid out like this might seem intimidating, but the trick is to take it step by step -- character by character. Don't worry about how hard it looks now, just stick with me and in a few short lessons you'll see how easy it actually is.

I have some really good news for you: Russian is largely phonetic. This means words are usually pronounced exactly like they're written. Also, if you look at all the characters you will notice that many are exactly the same as English letters.

We'll use this similarity to English to tackle the Russian writing system. Let's separate the letters into four types:

**True Friends:** They look nice and they are nice! These are letters which look and sound just like English letters.

**False Friends:** They look nice, but don't be fooled! These look like English letters you're familiar with, but sound different.

**New Friends:** They might look scary, but you'll warm up to them easily. These are letters you haven't seen before, but they have familiar sounds.

**Strangers:** These will be the tricky ones! They look different from anything you've seen before and don't have similar sounds to English either.

We'll start nice and easy with some True Friends. So let's begin!

We'll start at the beginning: "А"!

So what sound does this letter make? That's easy, because the name of the letter almost always describes the sound that the letter makes! So it's pronounced "A". That's why this is a True Friend -- it looks like an English "A" and it sounds like an English "A".

What you see here are the printed forms. This is what you will see on signs, newspapers, and anywhere that letters are printed mechanically. As you can see, both the versions of "А" look the same as A in English.

Now it's time to take out your pencils! We're going to practice writing. Find some paper and follow along. Even though it *\*IS\** rare to see the printed version of Russian handwritten, we'll practice writing them so you can get used to the

shapes!

Ok! Here we go. Here's the uppercase A.

And the lowercase a.

Nice! Time for the next letter? Not yet... You just saw the printed version of A, however, when writing by hand Russians use cursive letters exclusively. This is the way Russians learn to write ever since elementary school. Even though you practiced writing in the print style, it's very rare to see that in the real world. When you write Russian, it's going to be in the cursive style.

The cursive uppercase "A" looks like this. While sometimes there is a big difference between the printed and cursive letters, "A" is pretty straightforward. It's one long stroke and then a short one in the middle. Now here's the lowercase handwritten "A". This is easy too! It's similar to the cursive A in English, and it's also very easy to connect to the next letter.

Now it's your turn! Here's the uppercase A

And the lowercase a

That's it for A! Let's keep moving.

The second letter we'll learn is another True Friend, "K". That means it's just like the English K. It always makes the K sound. In the printed forms, the only difference between the upper and lowercase is the size.

It's writing time. First the printed versions. Here's the uppercase K

And the lowercase k

As for the handwritten version, the uppercase is quite similar to the printed letter, but different from the English cursive style. The lowercase is identical except for the size.

Now, let's write the cursive versions. Here's the uppercase K

"K" has two strokes; that means that we have to pick up our pen or pencil after writing the first stroke, and then connect "K" to the next letter with the second stroke.

The lowercase version is the same k

Great! You've already learned two letters of the Russian alphabet. That means you're ready for your first Russian word!

First, look at the printed version and try sounding it out.

Did you read "kak"? Well you're right! This is how to write the word for "How" in Russian. Believe me, it's a lot better to learn new words in the original Russian rather than relying on Roman letters! This will be the first of many new words for you!

Now the fun part: we'll write it by hand. For words, I'll just do it in the cursive style *как*  
Congratulations! You've just written your first Russian word.

Now it's time for Svetlana's

Insights.

Practice writing these letters and words until you don't even have to think about it!

There's no better way to learn than to write the letters yourself!

It's a good idea to keep a notebook with the new letters and words we learn in each lesson.

Have you ever heard the Russian phrase “Кто там?” In the next Алфавит Made Easy Lesson you'll learn what it means, and most of all, how to write it! See you there! Пока  
Пока!