

INTRODUCTION

Advanced Russian: From Reading To Speaking is intended for English-speaking learners of Russian with at least two years of Russian language study at the college level. The course was designed with a broad range of advanced learners in mind and, as such, can be used:

- in college courses for English-speaking students;
- by independent learners studying the language outside the classroom setting;
- by heritage learners who need practice and review in reading and speaking grammatically and stylistically correct Russian.

With its strong emphasis on internalizing vocabulary in context, the course aims to help students overcome speaking inhibitions, increase fluency, and advance their lexicon and grammar to a significantly more sophisticated level. The book's Grammar Supplement brings into focus important topics and structures generally underused by advanced English-speaking students.

The complete package includes:

- *Advanced Russian* TEXTBOOK (Book 1): stories, assignments, writers' biographies, and dictionary.
- *Advanced Russian* GRAMMAR SUPPLEMENT (Book 2): grammar exposition and exercises, answer keys for Book 1 assignments, and answer keys for the grammar exercises.
- An interactive multimedia DVD-ROM for use on Windows® and Macintosh®.
- A set of three video DVDs entitled *Russian Stories on Your Screen* that can be played on any DVD player.

These components complement each other and are most effective when used together. Because the DVD-ROM comes with a detailed introduction, we are focusing here on the printed materials and how best to integrate the components of the package.

FLEXIBILITY

The package can be used as a complete course or in conjunction with other materials. Each chapter is structured around an individual story. The arrangement of chapters in the textbook reflects a progression in length, linguistic challenge, and general complexity of the stories. We recommend that the chapters be used in sequence. However, any chapters or supplementary reading can be used separately. In the same way, assignments accompanying the stories and exercises provided in the grammar supplement may be used selectively.

Our approach to vocabulary management is much the same. Words or phrases selected for active learning in early chapters are often reactivated in subsequent chapters. This allows instructors to select those chapters that are best suited to a given group of students while avoiding lexical dependence on preceding chapters.

THE TEXTBOOK STRUCTURE

Advanced Russian TEXTBOOK contains six chapters. All of the stories in the chapters are written by well-known contemporary Russian authors and none are simplified. With the writers' permission, some have been abridged slightly while preserving the original language. All

principal and supplementary texts are identical in the book and on the disc. When selecting the texts, we looked for stories that

- engage the reader;
- center on a single topic, with each story representing a different topic;
- contain important and frequently used lexical items;
- reflect culturally significant situations and phenomena;
- exhibit a variety of styles.

Each chapter offers one or more texts for additional reading. These additional texts either supplement or develop the theme of the main story and are not necessarily written by the same author. In the last two chapters, the principal texts are supplemented by songs (Chapter 5) and poems (Chapter 6) that contribute to a deeper understanding of the story and its cultural context.

CHAPTER STRUCTURE

All chapters are identical in structure: each is built around the principal story and consists of six segments with supplementary reading material. The number and length of assignments per segment varies according to the length and complexity of the story.

Segment 1, **СЛОВО И ТЕКСТ**, offers pre-reading activities designed to help students understand the general direction of a story, develop reading strategies, and become familiar with some of the new vocabulary.

The story itself appears in Segment 2, **ТЕКСТ**. For convenience, each story is divided into excerpts (indicated by numbers in the margins). In addition to the story itself, Segment 2 offers *Explanatory Notes*, which provide cultural comments, historical background, and linguistic explanations; *Idioms and Phrases* occurring in the story along with their English equivalents; and *Comment on Style*, which highlights the stylistic distinctiveness of the story. *Explanatory Notes* and *Comment on Style* are presented in English.

Segment 3, **ТЕКСТ И ЕГО СМЫСЛ**, contains post-reading assignments designed to assess comprehension of the story. Here we have in mind not only global understanding, but also the details and sequence of events in the story.

Segment 4, **СЛОВО И КОНТЕКСТ**, incorporates a variety of techniques to promote active lexical acquisition with the goal of bringing students to a level where the use of newly acquired vocabulary items becomes automatic.

In Segment 5, **ТЕКСТ И РЕЧЬ**, which is entirely in Russian, we use vocabulary that is not limited to the story alone. This segment aims to bring students closer to near-native fluency. It features an array of creative assignments intended primarily for stronger students. They can easily be used selectively, however, at the discretion of the instructor who wishes to adapt them for students of any level. With their focus on in-depth analysis and text interpretation, these assignments challenge students to work with the details of the excerpts and offer their own interpretation of story events, characters' motives, and even the authors' choice of words. The assignments were designed with an eye to helping students develop conversation strategies.

Segment 6, **АКТИВНАЯ ЛЕКСИКА**, is a list of words and phrases selected for active mastery. Students may wish to use these lists for self-checking, while instructors are likely to find them helpful when preparing tests. The lists in Segment 6 present verbs as aspectual pairs. Verbs and predicatives are given with basic government information. Prepositional government and short-

form adjectives are also provided where warranted. The entries are not glossed, but the glosses--together with examples--can be found in the end-of-book dictionary.

Answer Keys are provided for all assignments in Segments 1, 3, & 4 except for those that are open-ended. In the case of Segment 5, where almost all assignments are open-ended, Answer Keys suggest the textbook authors' interpretation of the story--its developments, characters, and language.

Supplementary reading texts, which are included in each chapter, are not accompanied by assignments. They are recommended for reading and discussion both on their own and in conjunction with the principal texts. They can also be used as sources of topics for additional essays.

METHODOLOGY AND VOCABULARY LEARNING

We carefully selected vocabulary items for active learning, providing ample opportunity for repeated encounters with each item. Listed in Segment 6, these items are recycled several times within the chapter. Initially, they are introduced in passive assignments, such as the pre-reading activities (Segment 1) and assignments emphasizing understanding of the text (Segment 3). They are later reinforced as learners are required to match words with their synonyms and antonyms as well as with their meanings. Finally, new phrases and words recur in active assignments where students are required to use them in speech within various contexts that are not limited to the story itself. For additional reinforcement, the vocabulary items marked for active learning have been incorporated in the grammar exercises.

Vocabulary items for active learning include a large number of multiword units--set phrases and idiomatic expressions. An idiom or phrase is marked in the text by small dots (as in: ·Ha cáмом дэле· всё б́ыло прóще). Some of the idioms and phrases selected for activization are consistently introduced in pre-reading assignments in Segment 1. Initially, students are to read the story and try to understand the gist of it without looking up words or idioms. Prior to and/or during their second reading, they may scan *Idioms and Phrases*, concentrating on items which are entirely unfamiliar and rereading the excerpt in which a given phrase occurs. Not all idioms and phrases are selected for active use, but learners are encouraged to expand the list of active ones, relying on the context of a given story for correct contextual application.

Synonyms and antonyms are generally presented in assignments as phrases rather than individual words. This approach allows students to see a word in context and helps them avoid grammatically correct but non-idiomatic collocations.

Ideally, students should read the story in its entirety at least twice before tackling the first group of assignments, which address global comprehension of the story (Segment 3). They should then reread it, this time more closely--excerpt by excerpt--before moving to the assignments that focus on comprehension of story details and the sequence of events.

The assignments in Segments 3 and 4 are presented in a sequence that alternates passive and active assignments to help learners reach a level of active communication. Passive assignments are better suited for homework, while active assignments, particularly those that are open-ended, are likely to prove more beneficial in the classroom setting. Many of the active assignments take the form of dialogues, which students can do in pairs. While essays and compositions are obviously intended as homework, a great many assignments--especially those in segments 1 and 3--can be handled either way, i.e., as homework or class work.

Many assignments afford the instructor the opportunity to follow up with additional questions that serve to connect the assignment and new vocabulary items to the students' world--their tastes and preferences, books they have read, films they have seen, and so on.

Assignments in Segment 5 should be covered in the sequence in which they are presented. Depending on the students' level, the instructor may opt to use some of these assignments as independent work--as outlines for class presentations, for example. In addition to writing compositions and essays, students might also be asked to submit audio recordings of oral reports on related topics. The Answer Keys to the assignments in Segment 5 suggest only one of several possible interpretations of the story, a sample that the instructor might use as a learning tool. Students may or may not agree with the textbook authors' interpretation of the story. They should be encouraged to provide supporting statements, whether they choose to reiterate the main points of the suggested interpretation or come up with an interpretation of their own.

THE END-OF-BOOK DICTIONARY & THE RUSSIAN DICTIONARY TREE

The end-of-book dictionary, which includes lexical items occurring in the principal texts, is designed to play a larger role in the learning process than a simple glossary. The dictionary goes beyond glossing only those meanings of multiple-meaning words that occur in the stories: it is a learner's dictionary that offers a balanced picture of word meanings with examples of typical usage. When a word occurs in a story in its peripheral meaning, this peripheral meaning is presented together with its principal meaning(s). Dictionary entries include the grammatical information necessary to use a given item in speech. Numerous Russian examples are provided together with their English equivalents. The majority of examples are linked to the vocabulary of the stories. (See additional information on approach and labels in the introduction to the dictionary.)

For the vocabulary encountered in Segment 5, supplementary readings, and some of the examples, students will need to supplement the end-of-book dictionary with a standard dictionary, e.g. Kenneth Katzner's *English-Russian Russian-English Dictionary*.

The disc provides clickable links to complete dictionary entries for all the words in all texts on the disc. The dictionary entries are included in *The Russian Dictionary Tree* by Richard L. Leed and Slava Paperno--complete with exhaustive grammar information and numerous examples. Innovative terms introduced by the authors of *The Russian Dictionary Tree* and gratefully borrowed for the end-of-book dictionary include *pfv-begin*, *pfv-once*, and *pfv-awhile* (their meaning is explained in the introduction to the dictionary).

GRAMMAR SUPPLEMENT

Grammar Supplement offers a detailed treatment of selected grammar topics along with numerous exercises for each topic. Each chapter includes two to four grammar topics. We chose to present topics that a) are relevant to a given story; b) pose a challenge to English speakers; c) are rarely covered at length in English-language grammars of Russian; and d) play an important role in the development of advanced communicative skills. The detailed treatment of grammar topics we offer in the *Grammar Supplement* is reinforced in many of the assignments that deal with reading comprehension and vocabulary building.

The examples featured in grammar explanations are either taken directly from the stories or are based on the vocabulary of the stories. In order to avoid distracting students from the Russian text with side-by-side English translations, examples are presented only in Russian.

Similarly, grammar exercises are based on the lexicon of the related story. For the most part, they are microtexts reflecting the situations in the story or, in some cases, going beyond them. Because they are based on the active vocabulary of the story, work with the *Grammar Supplement* should begin only after students have learned active vocabulary and started to internalize it, i.e., not before Segment 4. The grammar supplement includes *Answer Keys to Grammar Exercises*.

THE TEXTBOOK, DVD-ROM, and VIDEO DVDS

The textbook, DVD-ROM, and video DVDs are most effective when used together. Complementing each other, they help students master all four language skills while enriching knowledge of Russian culture and history. The video DVDs are appropriate for both group and individual viewing of the stories performed by professional actors. They include no glosses, comments, or assignments. The DVD-ROM is to be used for viewing video recordings as well as reading, translating, and preparing assignments. Some of the segments in the book and on the disc present the same material, though not always in the same way; other segments are included only in the book or on the disc, and still other segments approach similar material differently--and, in some cases, in different languages. Cultural and linguistic notes, contributed by different authors for the book and the disc, may highlight different aspects of the same phenomenon or reflect different points of view.

A detailed description of the similarities and differences between the book and the discs can be found on the DVD-ROM in the section entitled "The book and the discs." What follows is a brief summary of that description.

BOTH THE BOOK AND THE DVD-ROM:

- Principal and supplementary texts, which are identical in the book and on the disc.
- Cultural and linguistic comments (*Explanatory Notes*) that follow the principal text in the textbook, and linguistic and background notes on the disc. Some background notes on the disc are presented in Russian.

THE BOOK ONLY:

- A great number of varied assignments for developing communicative competence.
- Answer keys for communicative competence assignments and samples of answers for open-ended assignments.
- Writers' biographies with photographs.
- End-of-book dictionary containing entries for all vocabulary in the principal texts. While this dictionary is less inclusive than the dictionary on the disc, its examples are closely linked to the vocabulary of the stories.
- A detailed treatment of select grammar topics.
- Exercises for each grammar topic.
- Answer keys to grammar exercises.

THE DVD-ROM ONLY:

- Clickable links to complete dictionary entries for all words in all texts.
- A variety of annotated multimedia materials, including video recordings of professional readings of all texts along with their transcripts, video excerpts from interviews, short video excerpts from Russian feature films, recordings of songs related to the text, and annotated photographs of some of the authors.
- Assignments for supplementary readings and assignments related to the video that do not duplicate any of the work in the book and are typically based on the recording.
- The onscreen dictionary covering the vocabulary of multimedia materials.
- Guided Reading: a unique series of notes and exercises based on V. Pelevin's story "Nika."

THE VIDEO DVDS:

- High quality video recordings of all texts made by professional actors (also included on the DVD-ROM) that can be viewed on large-screen TVs.