

Russian Made *EASY!*



Podcast



Episode #21

NOTE: For the full episode audio, supplemental audio exercises, transcripts (and other great resources for learning Russian) head over to

RussianMadeEasy.com



Welcome to episode 21 of Russian Made Easy. If you're just joining us, please know that the episodes are cumulative. Each one builds on the material learned in all the previous episodes. Speaking of which, in that last episode, in that mid-term exam, we picked up quite a few new words and phrases, so I'd like to start by reviewing those.

Do you remember what it means when a native speaker tells you...

давай на ты

It's an invitation to speak informally with them. But remember, unless you're a

very high level speaker, it's usually best to let the native speaker extend such an invitation to speak casually. Of course, virtually all of our vocabulary thus far has been confined to the casual forms anyway, but that will change starting today.

Anyway, then we heard the word: *здесь*

Remember the situation we encountered it in? We asked our new friend Vlad where he works by saying...

А где ты работаешь?

And Vlad replied:

Здесь в Киеве. В центре.

So *здесь* is the Russian word meaning "here in this location." Imagine you're standing outside the building you work in. Tell your friend:

I work here.

Я работаю здесь.

Ask the waiter:

Is there Wi-Fi here?

Здесь есть Wi-Fi?

Then we heard: *кстати*

That has three consonants: A "k" sound, an "s" sound, and a "t"...*кстати*

The set-up there was you were at dinner with Vlad and his friends. You're talking and eating and then suddenly Vlad says...

Кстати, Антон....Тебе нравится джаз?

So, *кстати* is a word they use to introduce a new topic. It's the equivalent of us saying, "Oh, by the way..."

Imagine your Russian friend is giving you a tour of her town. She's talking about a nearby park when something occurs to her. How will she say...

By the way, my female friend lives here.

Кстати, моя подруга живёт здесь.

Then we heard the word девушка. The context for this word was that you noticed the woman sitting next to Vlad, so you asked him:

Is she your female friend?
Она твоя подруга?

And Vlad said:
Нет, не подруга. Она моя девушка.
No, not a female friend. She's my devushka.

The Russian word девушка literally means girl, or "young woman." So, imagine you're introducing your girlfriend. Say...
This is Polina. She is my girlfriend.
Это Полина. Она моя девушка.

As a sidenote, девушка is also the way Russians call out to a waitress.

Девушка!

In English, we're so used to saying, "Excuse me, waitress?" or maybe, "Excuse me, miss?" but in Russian it's proper to call out, "dyevushka!"

Another word we encountered that was new to these podcasts was пиво. When talking about drinks, Vlad asked you about пиво and you responded:

"Pivo"? What is this?
Пиво? Что это?

So Vlad explained....
Ну, Хайнекен, Будвайзер, Корона...или Балтика.

So, пиво is the Russian word for beer. It's also the Ukrainian word, the Czech word, the Polish word, the Croatian word, and so on. In Eastern Europe, пиво is пиво wherever you go. Anyway, ask your friend:
Want a beer?
Хочешь пиво?

How will he say, "No, I don't like beer."
Нет. Мне не нравится пиво.
Admittedly, that's one phrase you won't hear too often in Russia. But a word you will hear all the time is this:

Блин!

Do you remember when Vlad said it? He was trying to log on to the WiFi with his phone, but it wouldn't turn on. So he said...

Блин! Мне нужен интернет но мой телефон не работает.
Pancake! I need the internet but my phone doesn't work.

So Bleen! is a very mild curse word. You can use it anywhere. I promise you, you won't offend anyone with it.

Let's run through all those one more time.

How would your friend ask you if you have tea?

Lit: At you there is tea?

У тебя есть чай?

Say: No. But I have beer.

Нет. Но у меня есть пиво.

Let's say you're outside the building where your girlfriend works. Tell your friend..

By the way, my girlfriend works here.

Кстати, моя девушка работает здесь.

Imagine you've misplaced your cellphone. Say...

Dang! Where's my phone?

Блин! Где мой телефон?

V.O. And now, here's your Tip of the Day from Russian Made Easy...

With the exception of English, most languages -- including Russian -- have two ways of talking to people. There's casual speech that we use with friends or with children, and there's formal speech that we use with adults that we don't know, or with other people that we need to show respect towards. In other words, whether we're talking to our best friend, or to our boss, in English we'd use the same words to ask, for example: *Do you speak Russian?*

But in Russian, depending on who we're talking to, we have to use different words for the word "You" and for "speak". So if you're asking your friend, "Do you speak Russian?" you'd say it this way:

Ты говоришь по-русски?

But if asking your boss "Do you speak Russian?" you'd say it this way:
Вы говорите по-русски?

That second version is also used when speaking to more than one person. English just doesn't have a good word to use when addressing a group of people. Where I grew up, in New York, we said, "You guys." Like, "You guys wanna go bowling?" In the American South, meanwhile, they say "Y'all." "Y'all wanna go to a party tonight?"

Anyway, the tip here is -- now that we'll be learning the formal way of speaking to people -- **it's important to bear in mind who you're speaking with.**

It's an American habit to be friendly with new people and speak casually. And that's great. But in Russia you could offend someone that way. When I first met my Ukrainian wife's parents, I thought I'd be friendly and talk to them on Ты. They didn't seem to mind, but when we left, she was furious. She was like, "What was all that? Why were you speaking to my parents on Ты?" The next day when we returned, I apologized for using Ты with them, and I haven't made the mistake since.

So, let's learn these formal forms. First, note -- as always -- the rhyme. Remember how to say, for example, the word "souvenirs" ...
сувениры

Or "pancakes"?
блины

In Russian, the basic plural form ends in that "ы" sound. And sure enough, the plural form of the word YOU rhymes with that:
Вы

Anyway, to get the verb ending for this formal version, it's easiest to go from the He/She form. For example. How do you say...

He'll have a beer.
Он будет пиво.

Now listen as our speaker asks his boss:
Will you have a beer?
Вы будете пиво?

So the "t" sound at the end of the He/She form (that word "budit") changes to a "tyeh" sound.
Listen again...

He'll have....You'll have
Он будетВы будете

Again, when saying the ВЫ forms, you need to imagine that you're speaking with an elder, or your boss...someone you need to be respectful towards. Let's try this with another verb. How do you say:

He speaks Russian.
Он говорит по-русски.

Now listen as the speaker asks a stranger on the street:
Do you speak Russian?
Вы говорите по-русски?

Let's try those side by side:
He speaks....You speak.
Он говорит Вы говорите

Let's try another verb.
Say: She lives in Moscow.
Она живёт в Москве.

Listen as our speaker asks the elderly woman standing near him:
You live in Moscow?
Вы живёте в Москве?

Sp say: She lives.....You live
Она живёт.....Вы живёте

Let's try that with the verb "to work." Say...

Mom works here.
Мама работает здесь.

Now imagine you're talking to an adult you don't know. How do you think you might ask them:

Do you work here?
Вы работаете здесь?

So say: He works.....You work
Он работает Вы работаете

So far so good? Now this next one is a weird exception.

How do you say: What does he want?
Что он хочет?

But now ask your boss:
What do you want?
Что Вы хотите?

So: He wants....You want
Он хочет.....Вы хотите

Let's run through those one more time. And again, imagine we're speaking with an adult we've just met, and so we're speaking respectfully to them.

You're in a cafe with this person and you'd like to order for them, so ask:
What will you have?
Что Вы будете?

Ask them: Do you speak English?
Вы говорите по-английски?

Ask: Where do you live?
Где Вы живёте?

Ask: Where do you work?
Где Вы работаете?

With just two words, ask respectfully:
Want tea?
Хотите чай?

Next, imagine you're at the home of your Russian friend. You and her speak informally to each other because you're friends, but her little sister will speak formally to you, to be respectful. So listen to how she asks you:

Do you like Moscow?
Вам нравится Москва?

Вам is the Russian word meaning "to you". She's asking, of course, To you is pleasing Moscow?

Imagine that a realtor is showing you an apartment you might rent in Kiev. How will he ask you:

Do you like the apartment?
Literally: The apartment to you is pleasing?
Квартира Вам нравится?

It seems like your boss's battery is dead on his cellphone. So hold out your phone and ask him:

Do you need a phone?
Вам нужен телефон?

Notice, by the way, that we still have that "v" sound: Вы and now Вам
And do you remember learning another form of the word *you* that also started with a V sound? Remember how to ask someone: What's your name?
Как Вас зовут?

Вас is another form of the word "you." And it's the one we use in the "Do you have" construction we learned in Podcast #19. Remember how to say:

I have a car.
У меня есть машина.

So ask your girlfriend's father:

Do you have a car?
Lit: At you there is a car?
У Вас есть машина?

Alright, that's the end of today's podcast. And from now on, **make sure you're clear about who you mean when you say "you."** Are you talking with a friend, or a stranger? Are you talking to a kid, or to your boss? and so on.

Next time we'll learn how to work with adjectives in Russian. This will really let you express yourself more fully. And we'll also learn what the heck *saló* is. Believe me, you'll want to know this. So tune in next time, and until then...keep practicing.

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