

Russian Made *EASY!*



Podcast



Episode #29

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Привет! And welcome to episode 29 of Russian Made Easy. In today's podcast we're going to master the sixth and final verb conjugation in Russian. I mentioned this at the end of the last episode: Did you figure out which one we're missing?

First start by repeating this word:

ОНИ

One more time:

ОНИ

What does it mean? Well, here's the set up: You see the neighbors across the street, the Johnsons, pull into their driveway and get out of their minivan. You ask your wife, "Did the Johnson's take a trip?" And she says...

Да. Они были в Диснейленде.

She said, "Yes, oni were at Disneyland."

So, они is one of the Russian words for "they." By now, it's no surprise that it rhymes with all those other plural forms. Try saying:

You guys, we, they
Вы...мы...они

Вы...мы...они

Nor is it a surprise that они rhymes with the past tense, plural form of the verb. Listen...

They were...
они были...

они были...

How would you say:
They wanted pizza.
Они хотели пиццу.

They bought a car.
Они купили машину.

They said hi.
Они сказали Привет.

Try this:
He said, she said, they said
Он сказал, она сказала, они сказали

Try saying:
They gave me a present.
Они дали мне подарок.

So, using они with the past tense is easy. And for the most part, using the **present** tense is easy, too. Let's look for the pattern. First say...

I'll have the pancakes.
Я буду блины.

Now listen as he tells the waitress:
They'll have pizza.
Они будут пиццу.

So say just:
I'll have....they'll have...
Я буду...они будут

How do you say:
I live in Cleveland.
Я живу в Кливленде.

Any guess on how you might say:
They live in Oakland.
Они живут в Окленде..

Now just say:
I live....they live
Я живу...они живут

One more time:
Я живу...они живут

Say:
I don't know.
Я не знаю.

Now try saying:
They don't know.
Они не знают.

I know....they know.
Я знаю....они знают

One more time:

Я знаю....они знают

So, the plural form in the present tense ends with a "t" sound, and usually you're just adding it on to the Я form. Let's try one more:

I work in an office.
Я работаю в офисе.

They work in a store.
Они работают в магазине.

I work, they work
Я работаю...они работают

There are some exceptions to this, which we'll get to after this Tip of the Day...

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

As I mentioned in the last podcast, we now have learned all six verb forms, and all six grammatical cases. Let's do a quick run-down, first of the verb forms, using the verb "to know." Say...

I know.
Я знаю.

Ask your friend:
You don't know?
Ты не знаешь?

Let's ask a stranger on the street:
You wouldn't happen to know where the subway is?
Вы не знаете где метро?

John knows.
Джон знает.

We don't know.
Мы не знаем.

And today's form:
They know.

Они знают.

As I said, that's a huge accomplishment. And really, much more importantly, you've learned all six of the **grammatical cases** in Russian. And now that you know the case endings, just for fun, let's take a look at some of the fancy names linguists like to use for them. I don't expect you to memorize these. I just want you to have had some exposure to the terms. Ok, here goes:

Whoever or whatever is doing the action in the Russian sentence is considered to be in the **nominative** form. So, for example:

John wants beer.

Джон ХОЧЕТ ПИВО.

John is doing the action, so his name -- that word "Джон" is in the nominative form.

Now, which word in the following Russian sentence is in the nominative case?
Мне нравится **пицца**.

In the Russian sentence you just heard, the word pizza is doing the action, so it's in the nominative case. Nominative is also basically the dictionary form. When you look up a word in the dictionary, it's going to be in its nominative case.

Next:

When you do something to someone or to something, that thing goes into the **accusative** case. It's a bizarre term, but what can ya do? So..

Я хочу **пиццу**.

The word Я is the one doing the action, so it's in the nominative form. And we're doing something to the pizza, which is why it's in its accusative form: pizzu.

Next:

The recipient of something, like someone who receives a gift or receives a phone call, is in the **dative** case. Again...what kind of name is that? I would've called it the recipient case. But anyway...

I gave the present to John.

Я дал подарок **Джону**.

John is receiving the gift, so his name has to go into the dative form, which is

Johnu.

Next:

To represent the idea of being in a particular location, the actual location word has to go into the **prepositional** case. So...

I live in New York.

Я живу в **Нью Йорке**.

...we add that "yeh" sound to the end of New York, because that word needs to be in its prepositional form.

Four down, two to go.

Ler's talk about the **genitive** case now.

Remember how we said that the small words, called prepositions, have a big effect on the words that follow? Well, each little word forces different cases, and one was this. Listen...

У **меня** есть кошка.

Literally we're saying: AT me there is a cat.

The word "меня" is actually the genitive form of Я, and it was forced into that by the little word "У".

By the way, English also uses the genitive case. After all, we don't say:

Steve drove I home.

The word "I" has to go into the genitive case, and so we say:
Steve drove me home.

And finally, there's the **instrumental** case. Think of this as the "with" case, as in:
I want coffee....with milk.

Я хочу кофе с **молоком**.

To say "with milk" the word moloko has to change to molokom.

Or this: They were talking with Robert.

Они говорили с **Робертом**.

The word "Robert" has to go into its instrumental form, which is Robertom, with an "om" at the end.

And that's it. All six grammatical cases in a nutshell. Sorry for covering all this so lightly. I just wanted to do the briefest overview, so that the names of the cases are no longer foreign to you.

So, why was this in the tip of the day? Well, my tip is -- as you continue to use Russian and learn Russian beyond this podcast -- **try to keep these cases in mind**. Not the names, so much, as the underlying principle for each one.

For example, if you know that the word for "jam" is a cognate:

джем

...you can then try to speak grammatically if you're in a cafe trying to order pancakes with jam.

I would say:

Я буду блины с джемом.

If you live in Phoenix, even if you've never heard the word "Phoenix" in its prepositional form, you can still try to guess the ending. Try saying...

I live in Phoenix.

Я живу в Финиксе.

Alright, before getting back to our new verb form that we've been working with today, please repeat the following new word:

мёд

One more time

мёд

What is it? Well, the deliciously sweet, yellow substance that bees make is called мёд.

So, мёд is the Russian word for honey. And it's clearly related to the English word "mead" ..m-e-a-d.

Mead is basically an alcoholic honey drink. From mead, you get:

мёд

So imagine you're with your two children in a Russian cafe. Gesturing to your two kids, tell the waitress:

They'll have the pancakes with honey.
Они будут блины с мёдом.

Did you remember to put the word "honey" into its instrumental form...the "with" form?

Try saying: With honey...
С мёдом

As I mentioned earlier, usually we just add a "t" sound to the end of the Я form, to get the ОНИ form, but not always. Listen to this:

They speak Russian.
Они говорят по-русски.

There's still a "t" at the end, but listen to the difference:

I speak...they speak
Я говорю...они говорят

If I were to give you a 2nd tip for the day, it would be this: **Don't be afraid to guess**. Don't be afraid to apply the pattern to new situations. Yes, you never know when there's going to be an exception, but it's no big deal. A native speaker will understand that you're applying the general pattern, and will gently correct you. So if you accidentally said:

Они говор...ют?

A native speaker would just correct you and say: Говорят

No big deal.

Try asking:
Do they speak English?
Они говорят по-английски?

Alright, that's the end of today's lesson. And as I mentioned last time, that's actually the end of new material for quite some time. I'm going to be consulting on some new language courses which I'm really excited about, plus I'm organizing some new Russian language workshops on location in Ukraine and

in the U.S.. But I really hope you continue your studies with my Russian Accelerator course. With video you really can learn so much faster, and on a deeper level.

Anyway, brace yourself for the final exam coming up in our last podcast, and I'll see you then.