

# Russian Made *EASY!*



## Podcast



## Episode #4

NOTE: For the full episode audio, supplemental audio exercises, transcripts (and other great resources for learning Russian) head over to [RussianMadeEasy.com](http://RussianMadeEasy.com)



Welcome to this 4th episode of our Russian Made Easy podcast. If you're just joining me, please know that the episodes are cumulative. Each one builds on the material learned in all the previous episodes, so it's assumed you've mastered everything in those earlier ones.

Normally I start each podcast by reviewing the material from the previous episode, and we'll do that in a second. But I want to start by having you try to say the following:

здра

**[NOTE:** I've chosen to *not* sound out the Russian words in these transcripts using English letters. If you'd like to be able to read Russian (it can be learned in just a few days) I'll include a link at the bottom of this transcript to my course on reading Russian.]

It's the first part of one of the longest, trickiest yet most common words in Russian. It starts with three consonants in a row. Very Russian, and very brutal: A "Z", a "D", and an "R"...zuh-duh-rah  
Listen again to the native speaker:  
з-д-ра.....здра

Let's let that float around in your subconscious for a bit while we review the material from Podcast #3.

So, imagine you're introducing yourself and your friend to a new Russian acquaintance. How would a guy say:

I'm an American. He's an Australian.  
Я - американец. Он - австралиец.

How would a girl say:  
I'm an American. She's an Australian.  
Я - американка. Она - австралийка.

Say: My mom is an Englishwoman.  
Моя мама - англичанка.

My dad is a Canadian.  
Мой папа - канадец.

Ask: Your mom is an American, yes?  
Твоя мама американка, да?

Your dad is an Englishman?  
Твой папа англичанин?

Tell someone: This is my friend. He is an American.  
Это мой друг. Он - американец.

This is my female friend. She is a Canadian.  
Это моя подруга. Она - канадка.

And since we're reviewing, what was that tricky sound I had you pronounce at the start of this podcast?

ЗДРА

Excellent. OK..Then let's add an "st" sound to that, ready?

**ЗДРА(В)СТ.....(ВУЙТЕ)**

One more time: ZDRAST...

**NOTE:** You might notice a slight "f" sound in there, directly before the "st" sound. This is because I asked the speakers to sound out the whole word. But when spoken at normal speeds by a native speaker, the "f" sound is dropped.

We'll come back to the rest of this word a bit later. Right now, I'd like to work with introductions.

Pretend my name is Steve, and I've just become acquainted with a woman in a cafe. So she asks me:

Как Вас зовут?

And I answer:

Меня зовут Стив.

Based on my answer -- Меня зовут Стив -- what do you think she was inquiring about? She was, of course, asking my name. Notice that the question has three words in it. Repeat each one after our native speaker:

Как

Вас

Зовут

Spoken quickly, though, the "s" sound at the end of that second word, VAS, becomes part of the "z" sound at the start of the last word, "zavoot"....so it's more like, kak vahh....zovute

Now, as I mentioned in an earlier podcast, a lot of courses teach this next part incorrectly. They tell you that Kak vas zavoot means, "What's your name?"

Unfortunately, that's not very helpful. Because, although that *is* how we'd phrase it in English, she's not literally asking "what...is...your....name?" She's *literally* asking is:

(ME) как....вас....зовут ....how.....you.....they call?

In other words, "What do they call you?" But again, literally: **How**....you....they call?

Now you say it in Russian:  
Как Вас зовут?

And our answer was: Меня зовут Стив.  
Literally: Me....they call....Steve.

Here it is word by word:  
меня  
зовут  
Стив

Try it with your own name. I'll pretend my name is John.  
Меня зовут Джон.

If you're name is, I dunno -- **Sara** -- you don't have to russify the pronunciation of your own name. So it's fine to say: Меня зовут Sarah. But you can also try to say it the Russian way:

Меня зовут Сара.

Your Russian friends, though, will have trouble saying the American version of Sarah. They'll call you Саpa instead of Sarah. Or: Марк instead of Mark, and so on. Just a heads up, there.

So, let's try a back 'n' forth with these. How do you ask a Russian person his name?  
Как вас зовут?

How would he say:  
Me they call Nikolai.  
Меня зовут Николай.

You just asked him his name, now listen how he asks **you** the same question.

А как **Вас** зовут?

Did you catch how he added an "ah" sound at the start? And how he emphasized "вас" a bit more? Listen again:

А как **Вас** зовут?

In English, the exchange would be like this:

What's your name?

My name's Steve. And what's **your** name?

When the Russian person responds with: "А как **Вас** зовут?" that "ah" sound is functioning like that 'and'....."**and** what's your name?"

"a" doesn't **MEAN** "and"...they have a different word for that in Russian. That's just how it's functioning here.

Do you recall that bit of a Russian word we started learning earlier in this podcast? It started with a "z"?

ЗДРАВСТ....

Let's try the 2nd half of the word:...ВУЙТЕ

One more time: ВУЙТЕ

Give me just the first half again:

ЗДРАВСТ....

...and the 2nd half:

ВУЙТЕ

Then let's piece them together. Try to say:

здравствуйте

Again: здравствуйте

So what does it mean? It's simple: The first word you greet people with when you see them is здравствуйте

Once again, most courses will tell you that здравствуйте means Hello. It doesn't. Not even close. Yes, it's a Russian **greeting**, just like "Hello" in English, but what you are literally saying is a command to, "Be healthy!"

здравствуйте is a formal greeting you'd use with strangers, co-workers, your elders, your boss, and so on. You'd also use it when greeting two or more people at the same time.

There's an informal version of this greeting that we'll learn some other time. For now, it's best to just practice this version.

Let's try to put all this together. Imagine you've just arrived to Moscow, and your friend has met you in the airport. There's a man with her, and he sticks out his hand to shake yours. How will he greet you?

здравствуйте

Greet him as well:  
здравствуйте

Ask him his name:  
Как вас зовут?

How would he say, "Me they call Nikolai."  
Меня зовут Николай.

How will he ask:  
And how do they call you?  
А как ВАС зовут?

Tell him your name:

Your friend Robby is traveling with you. Say...  
This is my friend Robby.  
Это мой друг Робби.

Add: He is a musician.  
Он - музыкант.

Is he an American?  
Он - американец?

Say, He is an Englishman.  
Он - англичанин.

You're also traveling with a female friend of yours named Veronica. Introduce her by saying:

This is my friend Veronica.

Это моя подруга Вероника.

She is a student

Она - студентка

She is an American.

Она - американка.

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

I'd like to take a minute to share a great tip for maximizing your study time. This is gonna sound old school, and it is, but that doesn't make it any less powerful. I'm talking about flashcards. It's nearly blasphemy in this digital age to talk about something so analog as flashcards, but trust me, you'll want to start making them if you haven't already. One card for each word, and main construction you learn.

I usually buy those blank recipe cards, and cut them in half. On one side, write the English word, and on the other side, the Russian version. Be sure to include the SLT, too. And when you study your cards -- this is important -- make a small X in the corner each time you get it wrong. This let's you quickly see which ones you need more work with.

Another tip is, if you can't remember the answer, don't give in and read it. Instead, cover up the answer and reveal just the first letter. See if that jogs your memory. An important rule in developing your memory is the smaller the hint, the better.

And a final tip: Assuming you continue on and learn to read and write in Cyrillic, be sure to go through all your cards and add the Cyrillic version for every word. Again, this is an important part of learning a language...to physically write things down.

It's funny, though...I know some people will be shaking their heads. They've got their cool flashcard apps, they're not gonna bother actually writing OUT flashcards by **hand**. But what they don't realize is that the physical act of writing things down helps you learn words more deeply. It's due to something called kinesthetic learning. Your brain is basically like, "Oh yeah, I remember learning

this word. I remember **writing it down**. I remember the physical motion of the word."

So, if you want to just **tell** people you're learning Russian, by all means, download some flashcard apps and show them to all your friends. But if you actually want to **learn to speak Russian**, and do so in an organized and efficient manner, I highly recommend making flashcards.

Alright...my flashcard rant is over. Let's end with a cumulative review of the first four episodes of this podcast. Ready?

What's the Russian word we use to greet people?  
Здравствуйте!

Say: This is my mom. She is a doctor.  
Это моя мама. Она - доктор.

This is my dad. He's a businessman.  
Это мой папа. Он - бизнесмен.

In this next one we'll use that "ah" sound we learned earlier, this time to convey the word "whereas".

So say....

Dad is an American, **whereas** mom is an Australian.  
Папа американец, а мама - австралийка.

Say: This is my friend, Pavel. He is a student.  
Это мой друг Павел. Он - студент.

Is he an Englishman?  
Он - англичанин?

He is a Canadian.  
Он - канадец.

This is my friend Katya. She is an engineer.  
Это моя подруга Катя. Она - инженер.

She is a Canadian.  
Она - канадка.

Ask your Russian friend:



Is this my pizza?  
Это моя пицца?

Yes, this is your pizza.  
Да, это твоя пицца.

Is this my soup?  
Это мой суп?

Yes, this is your borscht.  
Да, это твой борщ.

One more time, we greet people with what word?  
Здравствуйте.

Tell someone your name:  
Меня зовут Джордж.

Ask: And what's your name?  
А как **Вас** зовут?

That's actually a lot of material we've covered. How are you feeling about things so far? Please send me an email and let me know how the pace is for you. Am I going too fast? Covering too much material? Not enough? I'd love to hear your input, so drop me a line at: [Mark@RussianMadeEasy.com](mailto:Mark@RussianMadeEasy.com)

In the next podcast we'll learn our first question words in Russian. Very useful. And I'll tell you the trick that memory experts use to remember tons of new words.

And as always, head over to <http://russianmadeeasy.com/> to download a transcript of this podcast plus all the exercises from today. I'll see you next time!