

Grammar 1—Review of Basic Grammar

While we will spend most of our time in class practicing speaking rather than discussing grammar theory, you will still need a basic understanding of grammar in order to build sentences which make sense. Please review the information below and do the accompanying exercises.

Parts of Speech

It is important to understand the differences between the parts of speech because in Russian a word has one and only one part of speech. We cannot play fast and loose as we do in English. For example in English we can say “electric permit” when we mean “electrical permit”, but if we do that in Russian we will not be understood. Nor can we say “build site” when we mean “building site”. We must always use the correct part of speech. Make sure you can recognize them:

Noun—a word for a person, place or thing.

Examples: cat, television, generosity, John

Proper noun—a noun which designates a particular person, place or thing.

Examples: John, the Bible

Pronoun—a word which can take the place of a noun.

Examples: he, she, it, you, they

Adjective—a word which is paired with a noun in order to refine its meaning.

Examples: blue, hairy

Verb—a word which indicates an action.

Examples: read, live, entertain

Adverb—a word which is paired with a verb to indicate the quality of the action:

Examples: run slowly, finish quickly, reject completely

An adverb is also a word which is paired with an adjective in order to change its intensity:

Examples: a very blue sky, an excessively long lecture

Preposition—a word which can be placed in front of a noun to indicate its relationship to the action.

Examples: on the floor, in the pool, through the town, out the window, with my brother, without mercy

The Roles Which a Noun Can Play in a Sentence

You should be able to identify the role of each noun in a sentence. It may be helpful to recall how you diagrammed sentences in school. Some common roles:

Subject—the party performing the action of the verb.

Example: John sent me a letter.

Direct Object—the party which most feels the effect of the action.

Example: John sent me a letter.

Indirect Object—a third party affected by what the subject does to the direct object.

Example: John sent me a letter.

Object of a Preposition—a noun (possibly accompanied by adjectives and adverbs) which follows a preposition. The noun is the name of someone or something involved in the action. The preposition tells us how it was involved. Together they form a prepositional phrase.

Examples:

He slept in a large cardboard box.

We talked about the Bible.

Write it with a pencil.

We are going to Hartford.

