

LANGUAGE OF THE MONTH

Russian

**Acing Your
Language Class**

Tips & Best Practices

Первый блин — комом

"The first pancake is
always a flop."

**Student
Spotlight**

**Add to Your
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Russian Songs
and Movies

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Film Discussion**

**Eating Authentically
in Boston**

Restaurant
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and recipes to try

**Classic
Literature and
Plays**

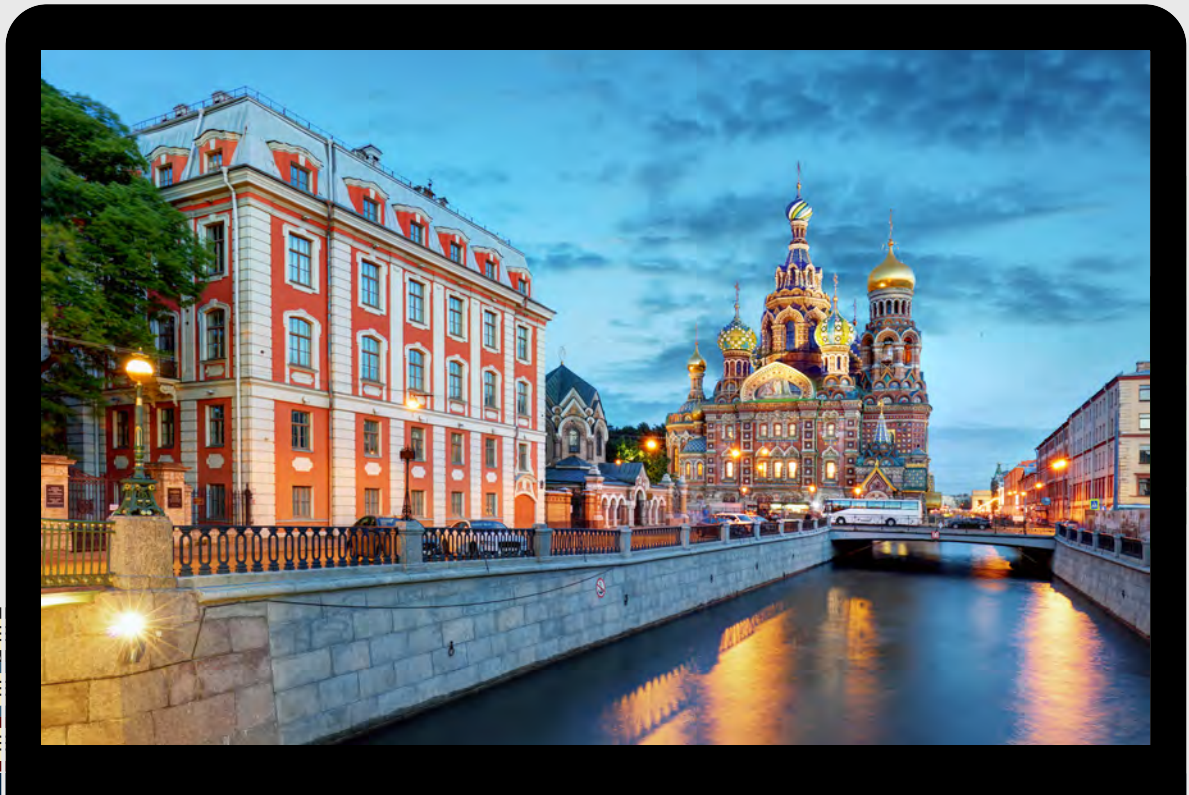
ISSUE NO. 5



Educational Resource Center

LEARN RUSSIAN

WITH THE ERC!



The ERC offers Language Link for Russian! Language Link hosts several informal, half-hour discussions over Zoom each week. Sessions are led by a native speaker and are offered at three different levels: novice, intermediate, and advanced. Sign up or learn more [here](#).



Study Russian at BU

The Russian Program at Boston University is a particularly active and close-knit group of students and faculty. The Russian Program offers beginning, intermediate, and advanced Russian courses, including blended mode first-year Russian.

Russian majors reach either an Intermediate-High or Advanced-Low level of proficiency and are expected to be able to communicate effectively in the language. Many of our students double major in Russian and other disciplines; students interested in studying Russian in conjunction with another major may also elect a minor in Russian language and culture.

Our students take part in a wide array of educational and entertaining activities, including poetry readings, invited speakers' lectures and workshops, making films in Russian, learning Russian cuisine.

For more info, please contact:

Coordinator of Russian Language Program,
Svitlana Malykhina

Assistant Professor of Russian and Comp. Lit.,
Yuri Corrigan

Cultural Passes

Life Stories

Join us for a conversation in Russian with medical doctor, Harvard professor, poet, songwriter and performer

March 10, 2021
7-8 PM EST

Sponsored by World Languages and Literatures and the Russian Program.

Dr. Slava Gaufberg

Free and open to the public.



Cultural Passes are special events and lectures hosted by BU's Department of World Languages & Literatures and the Russian Program. On March 10, tune into **Life Stories**, hosted by Dr. Slava Gaufberg, a medical doctor, Harvard professor, poet, songwriter, and performer. Click [here](#) for more information on this virtual event. The lecture is free and open to the public.

The Russian Language

Russian is part of the **Slavic language family** and is most closely related to Ukrainian and Belarusian. Russian is written in the Cyrillic alphabet, which is based on a script developed in the 9th century by two monks, Cyril and Methodius.

Russian society is extremely diverse, with at least 120 ethnic groups and over 100 languages. Russian, however, serves as the common, official language of the country. Worldwide, Russian has approximately 258 million speakers, and it is one of the six official languages of the United Nations.



Pronunciation Tips



If you've come across Russian words written in English letters, you've probably wondered how to pronounce some of those consonant clusters! Ch and sh are familiar, but here are two that are more confusing:

- kh = similar to ch in **Loch** Ness or l'**ch**aim
- zh = like the s in meas**ure**

Russian vowels are equally important and can be confusing for English speakers!

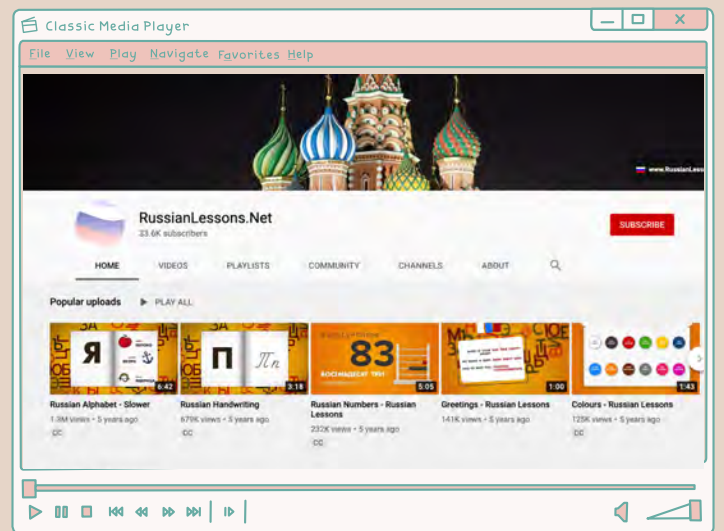
- u= always pronounced like the u in **du**ne.
- a= always pronounced like the a in **pa**pa.
- y= commonly used for the Russian letter **ы**, for which there is no English equivalent! It's close to the i in "**bi**t" but is a little further back in the mouth. Try saying "ee" then "oo" a few times, which will move your tongue backwards and forwards against the roof of your mouth. Then put your tongue right in the middle, between those two sounds. That's the Russian **ы**!

Click [here](#) to learn all the sounds of the Russian alphabet, then click [here](#) for more advanced pronunciation tips.

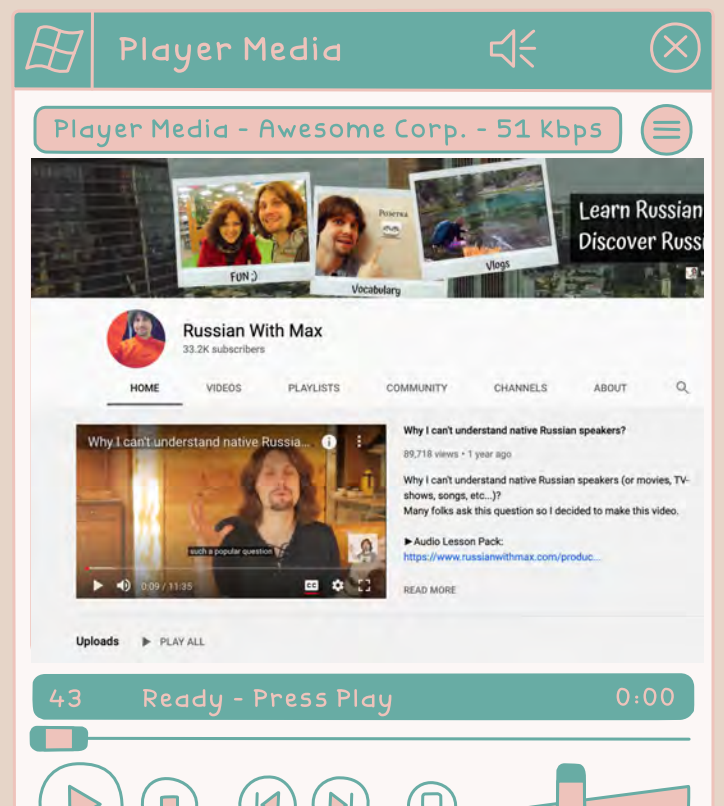
YouTube Channels for Learning Russian



RussianLessons.Net is a great resource for learning foundational grammar and vocabulary. Video lessons are grouped into three different playlists— Russian for Beginners (Immersion Lessons), Russian Comprehension Practice (Intermediate & Advanced), and Russian Language Vocabulary.



Russian with Max is an excellent resource for intermediate & advanced learners to delve deeper into Russian culture and contemporary life. Max speaks slowly and clearly in his videos to support listening comprehension. His channel features playlists with different learning opportunities, cultural experiences, authentic idioms, and colloquialisms, so you can speak like a real Russian!



Spotlight

RUSSIAN LANGUAGE LINK LEADER

Brianna SAR '24

Meet our Russian language link leader, Brianna, who loves Russian literature and helping other students connect with the Russian language!



Q & A

A CONVERSATION WITH RUSSIAN LANGUAGE LINK LEADER, BRIANNA SPIEGEL

Q: Why did you become a Language Link Leader?

A: I really wanted to become involved with Language Link because, you know I myself speak Russian, and I wanted to connect with that language and keep that passion going through college. I also wanted to inspire other people. I have a lot of students that I meet with who are learning Russian just for fun, and I think that's really incredible. I mean, I learned it growing up since my family immigrated from the Soviet Union. So, for me, it's truly a part of my family history. But, also, I think the idea of inspiring other people to enjoy the language and experience how wonderful it is... that's what makes it really special.

Q: What would you tell someone who's considering coming to Language Link for the first time?

A: Learning a language for the first time, you don't really know what to expect. But Language Link is really just an informal place. You can make mistakes in the language, and just have fun with it. It's just a way to talk with other students honestly, and it's a fun place.

Q: What's one tip you have for learning a new language?

Learning a new language is not easy. But, at the same time, I think if you have a reason for it, that makes it easier. Let's say you listen to some Russian music on TikTok. Now, you have a reason to figure out what the language means. Finding things like that will inspire you to keep pushing through this fight. The grammar or the Cyrillic alphabet might be unfamiliar and challenging, but you have to find fun things to keep you engaged.

Q: What's your favorite aspect of Russian culture?

A: I definitely think Russian food is incredible. But, also, I really love Russian literature. It's really incredible. Just the way the authors write... there's like nothing like it. It's a really beautiful language. Even, like, epic poetry in Russian is really amazing. The language has a lot of words and a lot of ways to express yourself. I think that's something to really be appreciated.



Celebrate

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day, March 8, celebrates gender equality and the achievements of women worldwide!



Historical Background

Early Strikes

International Women's Day can be traced back to February 1908, when thousands of New York City women went on strike to fight for better working conditions in the garment industry. Though officially proclaimed by the Socialist Party of America in 1909, International Women's Day gained prominence in the 1910s as part of women's suffrage movements in Europe. On March 8, 1917, women in Russia mobilized to hold protests and demonstrations against autocracy, paving the way for the Russian Revolution and the rise of the Soviet Union.

As a National Holiday

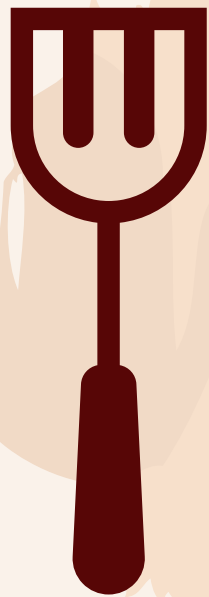
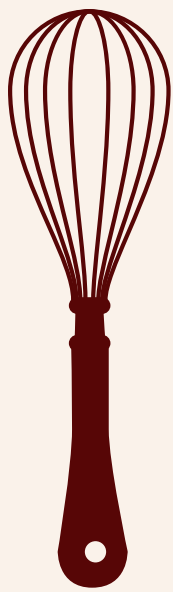
In the Soviet Union, International Women's Day was celebrated alongside May Day (May 1) and Revolution Day (November 7) as a major public holiday. However, the holiday gradually lost its revolutionary flavor.

Celebrating Today

Today, International Women's Day is celebrated in Russia similarly to Valentine's Day or Mother's Day in the US, with men gifting their mothers, grandmothers, sisters, teachers, etc. with flowers and chocolates. Instead of saying "Happy International Women's Day!" Russians simply wish each other, "С восьмым марта!" [s vos'mým marta], "Happy March 8!"



Check out more Soviet-era International Women's Day Posters [here](#).



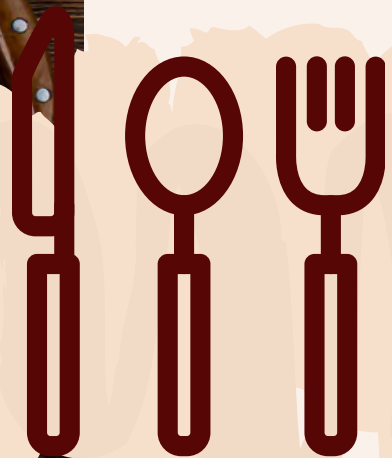
Recipe

Bliny

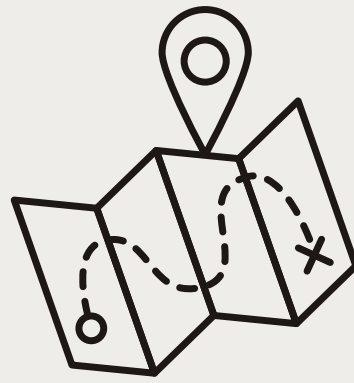
A beloved component of Russian cuisine, блины [bliný], are thin, crepe-like pancakes, which can be served sweet or savory.

Pouring and flipping bliny takes practice! There's even a Russian saying, "Первый блин — комом" [pérvy blin kómom], which literally means, "The first pancake is always a flop." Outside of the kitchen, this expression is widely used to reassure someone after a failed first attempt and encourage continued effort.

To find recipes for bliny and more, check out [Olga's Flavor Factory](#), [Natasha's Kitchen](#), and [Jennifer Eremeeva's blog](#)



Explore



East European Restaurants

- [Cafe St. Petersburg](#)
- [Moldova Restaurant](#)
- [Baltic Deli & Café – Polish cuisine](#)
- [Lithuanian Citizens' Association Restaurant & Bar](#)

Grocery Stores

- [BazaAr Supermarkets](#)
- [Baza](#)
- [Waban Market](#)
- [Berezka International Food Store](#)
- [Babushka Deli](#)

Bookstores

- [Book & Arts](#)
- [Petropol](#)



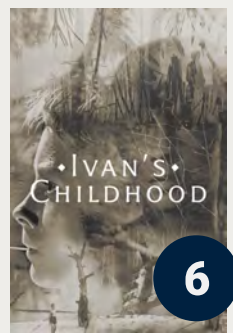
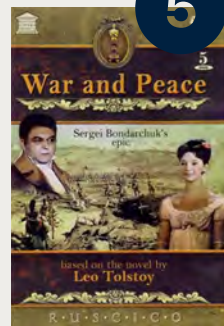
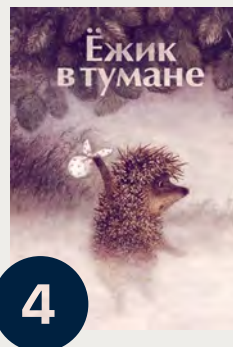
Museum

- [Museum of Russian Icons](#)

Theater

- [Theater on the Roof](#)
- [Arlekin Studios](#)

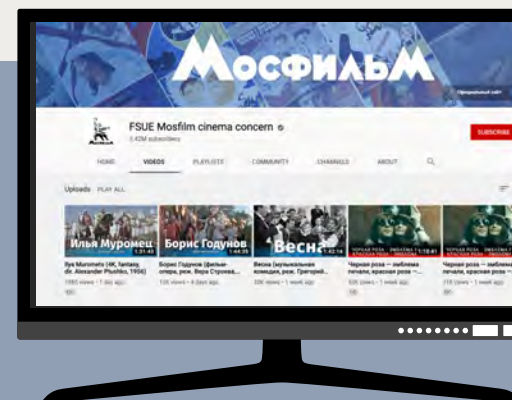
Watchlist



- 1 **Women's Day**, a documentary about the lives of various women, provides a powerful look at Russian feminism. Learn more at [Thea Films](#).
- 2 **Dovlatov** tells the story of writer Sergei Dovlatov through four days of his life, as he struggles to get published and is faced with a moral choice. Available via [Netflix](#).
- 3 **Stalker**, a Soviet science fiction art drama film, follows a group of adventurers into a post-apocalyptic wasteland. Available via [YouTube](#).
- 4 **The Hedgehog in the Fog** is a 10-minute animated film following a little hedgehog's journey through a thick fog. Available via [YouTube](#).
- 5 **War and Peace**, based on Tolstoy's classic book by the same name, focuses on people and history. Available via [Amazon](#).
- 6 **Ivan's Childhood** is a war drama that follows 12-year-old Ivan, who seeks to avenge his family's death at the hands of Nazi invaders. Available via [YouTube](#).
- 7 **Loveless** follows an estranged Russian couple and the dire circumstances that reunite them when their only child goes missing. Available via [YouTube](#).

Check out [Mosfilm](#)

on YouTube for hundreds of classic Russian films and TV shows. Mosfilm is a legendary Russian film studio, and many videos on their channel even have English subtitles.



Language of the Month Film Discussion



Elena

“A gripping, modern twist on the classic noir thriller. Sixty-ish spouses Vladimir and Elena uneasily share his palatial Moscow apartment--he's a wealthy businessman; she's his dowdy former nurse. Estranged from his own wild-child daughter, Vladimir openly despises his wife's freeloading son and family. But when a sudden illness and an unexpected reunion threaten the dutiful housewife's potential inheritance, she must hatch a desperate plan...” (Kanopy)

[WATCH VIA BU LIBRARIES](#)

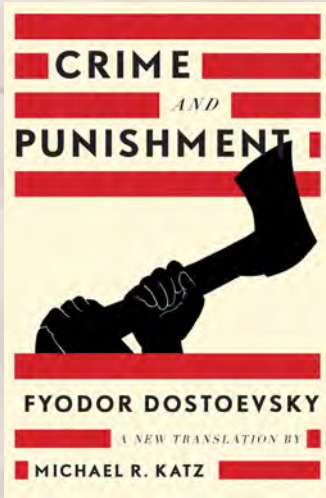
Discuss Elena with BU Libraries & the ERC

Thursday, March 26 at 4:00 PM ET via Zoom | Register [here](#)

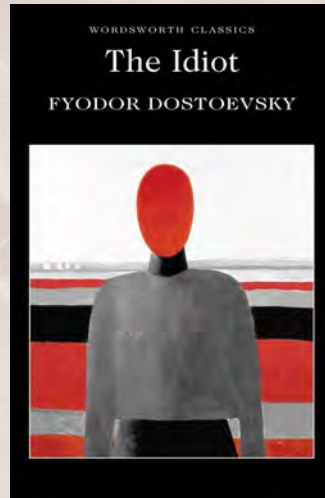
The discussion will be led by Dr. Svitlana Malykhina, Coordinator of the Russian program, World Languages and Literatures Department.

CLASSIC Literature

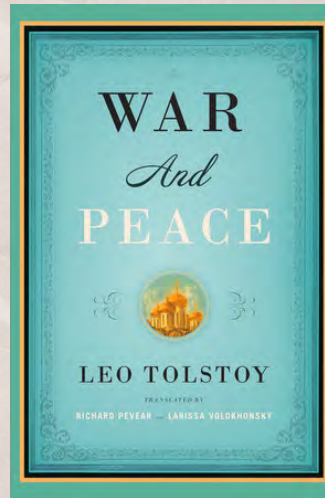
Click on the titles below to be redirected to online access or Mugar availability through BU Libraries.



[Crime and Punishment](#)
by [Fyodor Dostoevsky](#)



[The Idiot](#)
by [Fyodor Dostoevsky](#)



[War and Peace](#)
by [Leo Tolstoy](#)



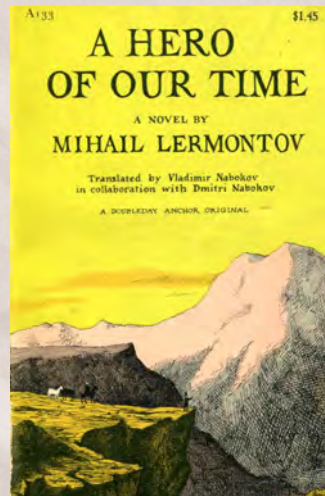
[Anna Karenina](#)
by [Leo Tolstoy](#)



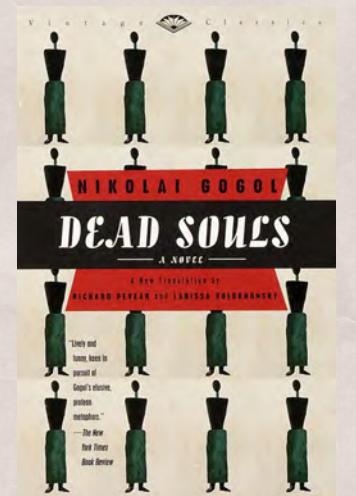
[The Master and Margarita](#)
by [Mikhail Bulgakov](#)



[Eugene Onegin](#) by
[Alexander Pushkin](#)



[A Hero of Our Time](#)
by [Mikhail Lermontov](#)



[Dead Souls](#)
by [Nikolai Gogol](#)



DRAMA (PLAYS)

Check out [Uncle Vanya](#) by Anton Chekov, [Marriage](#) by Nikolai Gogol, and [Masquerade](#) by Mikhail Lermontov (available via [Amazon](#)).

Listen



Russian songs you might recognize from popular memes:

- Седьмой элемент - VITAS ("7th Element" by Vitas)
- Судно - Молчат Дома ("Vessel" by Molchat Doma)
- Astronomia - Tony Igy

"Classic" Songs:

- Калинка ("Snowberry," a popular Russian folk song)
- Миллион алых роз - Алла Пугачева ("Million Scarlet Roses" by Alla Pugacheva)
- Мадонна - Александр Серов ("Madonna" by Alexander Serov)
- Луна луна - София Ротару ("Moon Moon" by Sofia Rotaru)

Spotify Playlists:

- Russian Indie Music
- Perestroika-era (80s and 90s) Music

Modern Songs:

- ВЕЩУШКИ - Тима
Белорусских
(Freckles by Tima Belorusskih)
- Сумасшедшая - Алексей Воробьев ("Crazy" by Alex Vorobyov)
- ДНК - Джиган
feat. Артем Качер ("DNA" by Dzhigan and Artem Kacher)
- Розовое вино - Элджей & Feduk
(“Rosé” by Eldzhei and Feduk)

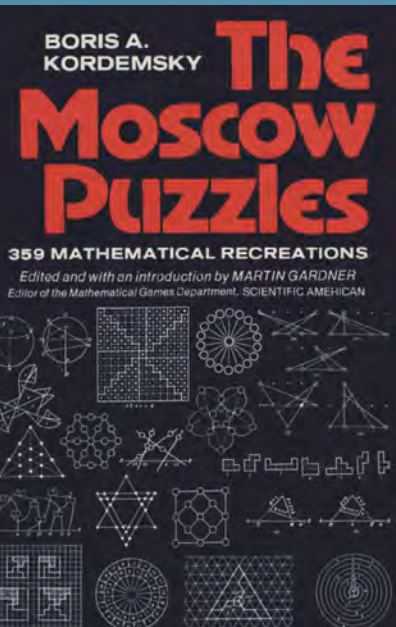
ACTIVITIES

CROSSWORD



Check out this advanced-level Russian [crossword](#).

RIDDLES & MATH/LOGIC PUZZLES



Check out this puzzle book composed by a Russian author during the Soviet era. Available in [PDF](#) form.

DID YOU KNOW?

About 10% of Russian words resemble English ones. Can you guess what these words mean?

- проблема [probléma]
- ресторан [restorán]

Check the bottom of the page for the English translations.

Russian is a very affectionate language! Like other Slavic languages, Russian has a rich system of diminutive suffixes, including -chik, -itsa, -ochka, -ulya, and more. These can be added to the end of almost any Russian word. When applied to humans and animals, diminutives express fondness and love. When applied to inanimate objects, they either that the object is small or that it is treasured.

Answers:
 problema = problem
 restoran = restaurant