

ТЕКСТ ДЛЯ АУДИРОВАНИЯ

Audioscript

Listening comprehension

For items 1–10 listen to a talk about famous people who tried to learn Russian and decide whether the statements (1–10) are TRUE or FALSE according to the text you hear. You will hear the text twice.

You have 20 seconds to study the statements.

(pause 20 seconds)

Now we begin.

Over the past centuries, the melodic and lyrical Russian language has charmed quite a few people. They admired it and complained about its complexity and challenges but nevertheless persisted in their attempt to learn and speak “the great and mighty Russian language”. One of these people was Otto von Bismarck. Bismarck spent three years in Russia as Prussia’s envoy. He took his posting seriously, and learned the Russian language on his own. Upon his arrival in St. Petersburg, he continued his studies, but with a private teacher. Once a week, he postponed all his duties to dedicate at least two hours to studying Russian grammar and syntax. At first, he complained that dealing with the Russian parts of speech was harder than battling the French army.

However, in almost no time he was able to read Ivan Turgenev’s novel, ‘Home of the Gentry’ in the original. At the time, he hardly told anyone that he had mastered the language. It became known only when Alexander II took note of Bismarck closely following his conversation with Alexander Gorchakov, the foreign minister at the time. Bismarck was forced to admit his language skills. Yet, the emperor didn’t get angry about the diplomat’s reticence; instead, he complimented the envoy on the speed with which he had learnt Russian.

Prosper Mérimée was another one who tried to learn Russian. The writer started learning Russian after he had read Nikolay Karamzin’s ‘History of the Russian State’. Mérimée was known to be a polyglot, fluent in Greek, Latin, English, Italian, German and Spanish. As for the Russian language, it genuinely stunned him.

Bibliographer Sergey Sobolevsky introduced the French writer to Varvara, the former maid of honor of Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna. Varvara taught him Russian, with their studies being so successful that Mérimée soon started to translate from the new language. This is how the French public saw translations of Pushkin’s ‘Queen of Spades’ and his poetry, as well as Nikolay Gogol’s comedy ‘The Government Inspector’. Mérimée referred to Russian as “the most amazing of all European languages, as though specially meant for expressing the minutest shades of meaning”.

Lewis Carroll also endeavored to master the Russian language. The well-known mathematician and writer set out to Russia in the company of his friend, theologian Henry Liddon. For Carroll, his trip to Russia appeared to be a real challenge, which he successfully

faced and solved. He was repeatedly daunted by remarks that Russian was too difficult and contained multiple long, unpronounceable words. However, he started mastering the language, step by step, with the help of a dictionary and phrasebook. First, he put down unknown words, then tried to learn whole phrases. Although at the end of the day he spoke Russian with a dictionary close at hand, he did it rather skillfully: he could even haggle at local markets!

You have 20 seconds to check your answers. (pause 20 seconds)

Now listen to the text again. (text repeated)

You have 20 seconds to check your answers. (pause 20 seconds)

<p><i>For items 11–15 listen to the dialogue. Choose the correct answer to answer questions 11–15.</i> <i>You will hear the text once.</i></p>
--

You now have 25 seconds to study the questions.

(pause 25 seconds)

Now we begin.

Steve: Thank goodness it's Friday! This week's been dragging on forever.

Kelly: Tell me about it! So, what are you up to this weekend?

Steve: Oh, nothing special, really. This evening, I'm just going out for dinner with my parents.

Kelly: Oh, that should be nice.

Steve: Yes, we're going to this little French place near where I live. The food's great there, and then tomorrow I've got to get up really early – at least for me! – and do some cooking, because I've got some people coming over in the afternoon. And I'll have to give the place a really good clean as well. And, I'm not sure, but I think we'll probably be going out after that – to see a film or something. We haven't really planned anything. What about yourself?

Kelly: Well, tonight I'm supposed to be going out with some people from my old job, but I don't really feel like it any more. I'm feeling really tired.

Steve: So, you're just going to stay in, then?

Kelly: Yes, because tomorrow night I'm going to my friends Pete and Rachel's party. It's on a boat.

Steve: Oh, that sounds great. Whereabouts?

Kelly: Down by the river. You know, in the docks.

Steve: Oh yes, I know where you mean. I went to a party there myself a while ago.

Kelly: Right. Is it OK down there?

Steve: Yes, it's great, but it's not all that big. There's not that much room on the boat.

Kelly: Mm, sounds cozy!

Steve: Oh, yes, you can get really close to people! Lots of sweaty bodies!

Kelly: I don't think it's going to be that sort of party!

Steve: Well, you never know. If you're lucky, it might become one! No, I'm only joking, it's actually a great place for a party. You have 1 minute to complete your answer. (pause 1 minute)

This is the end of the listening comprehension part.