

First Semester Core Vocabulary

The following list contains 289 words, organized into 7 tiers, which are, on the basis of their inclusion in multiple first-year Russian textbooks, absolutely essential for first-year, and particularly first-semester, students of Russian. These are all found on the active vocabulary lists for these texts -- that means that students are expected to conjugate the verbs, decline the adjectives and nouns, and remember rules pertaining to specific words, e.g. that нравиться requires a subject in the Dative case.

Other words, obviously, are required -- the average chapter in the books reviewed includes 55-100 active vocabulary words. However, many of these are topical (home, family, school, colors, numbers) or vary by textbook. For instance, students using Nachalo (Lubensky, Ervin, Jarvis, & McClellan, 2002) are introduced to автобус in Chapter 1 of Book 1 -- students using Golosa (Robin, Evans-Romaine, Shatalina, & Robin, 2002/2003) aren't introduced to transportation vocabulary until Book 2. These words are important for first semester students across several different textbooks.

Note: some schools use the two-parter books on different schedules. Some quarter schools use one book of Nachalo over two quarters (20 weeks); some semester schools use one book of Golosa over two semesters (32 weeks) -- but other schools try to get through all of one of these books much faster, i.e. one book of Golosa per semester, or much slower, i.e. one book of Nachalo over three quarters. I am using the most compressed schedule I have seen, i.e. one book per semester. However, I have dropped any vocabulary that doesn't appear at least twice, in at least two separate introductory texts. And I have organized the words into tiers.

Word **[Translation]**

Tier One

говорить	[to speak, say]
писать	[to write (imp.)]
смотреть	[to watch (imp.)]

Tier Two

делать	[to do, make (imp.)]
заниматься	[to study, to do homework (imp.)]
окно	[window]
рубль	[ruble]
сказать	[to say, tell (per.)]
стол	[table]
читать	[to read (imp.)]

Tier Three

большой	[large, big]
брат	[brother]
быть	[to be]
девушка	[young woman]
дом	[home, building]
жить	[to live]
знать	[to know]
имя	[first name]
книга	[book]
мать	[mother]
отец	[father]
слово	[word]
хотеть	[to want]

Tier Four

ваш	[your, formal, m.]
идти	[to go on foot (per.)]
какой	[what, which, m.]
мой	[my, m.]
наш	[our, m.]
твой	[your, familiar, m.]
чей	[whose, m.]
этот	[this, that, m.]

Tier Five

братъ	[to take (per.)]
восемь	[eight]
врач	[doctor]
газета	[newspaper]
год	[year]
два	[two]
девочка	[little girl]
девять	[nine]
день	[day]
десять	[ten]
дочь	[daughter]
жена	[wife]
журнал	[magazine]
институт	[institute]
интересный	[interesting]
карта	[map]
квартира	[apartment]
красивый	[pretty, beautiful]
лампа	[lamp]
лекция	[lecture]
любить	[to love]
муж	[husband]
неделя	[week]
новый	[new]
письмо	[letter]
продавать	[to sell]
пять	[five]
радио	[radio]
семь	[seven]
три	[three]
фамилия	[surname]
хлеб	[bread]
хороший	[good, nice]
человек	[person]
четыре	[four]
язык	[language]

Tier Six

взять	[to take (imper.)]
все	[everybody, everyone, everything]
где	[where]
город	[city]
друг	[friend]
есть	[to eat (per.)]
ехать	[to go by vehicle (per.)]
звонить	[to call (imp.)]
каждый	[every, each]
когда	[when]
купить	[to buy (imp.)]
мочь	[to be able]
музей	[museum]
обед	[lunch]
один	[one]
пить	[to drink (per.)]
плохой	[bad]
покупать	[to buy]
понимать	[to understand (imp.)]
потом	[then, afterwards]
прослушать	[to listen (per.)]
работать	[to work]
сколько	[how many, how much]
словарь	[dictionary]
слушать	[to listen to (imp.)]
так	[so, then, so much]
тогда	[in that case, then, at that time]
учиться	[to study, be a student, learn to do something (imp.)]
часто	[often, frequently]
что	[what, that]

Tier Seven

автобус	[bus]
Америка	[America]
американец	[American male]
американка	[American female]
американский	[American]
английский	[English]
англичанин	[Englishman]
апельсин	[orange]
бабушка	[grandmother]
белый	[white]
библиотека	[library]
быстро	[quickly]
в	[in, at]

ванная	[bathroom]
вечером	[in the evening]
висеть	[to hang]
вместе	[together]
внук	[grandson]
вода	[water]
воскресенье	[Sunday]
время	[time]
вторник	[Tuesday]
вы	[you (formal/plural)]
готовить	[to prepare, cook (imp.)]
да	[yes]
даже	[even]
двенадцать	[twelve]
дверь	[door]
дедушка	[grandfather]
дети	[children]
диван	[couch]
днём	[in the afternoon]
Добрый вечер!	[Good evening!]
Добрый день!	[Good afternoon!]
документ	[document]
должен	[must]
дорогой	[dear, expensive]
другой	[other, another]
думать	[to think (imp.)]
его	[his]
ее	[hers]
есть	[there is]
ещё	[still, yet, else]
завтра	[tomorrow]
завтракать	[to eat breakfast (imp.)]
заказывать	[to order (imp.)]
здесь	[here]
Здравствуйте.	[Hello (formal)]
и	[and]
из	[from, of, made of]
изучать	[to study]
иногда	[sometimes]
их	[their]
кажется	[it seems]
колбаса	[sausage]
кошка	[cat]
красный	[red]
кресло	[armchair]
кровать	[bed]

кто	[who]
курс	[class (year in college)]
кухня	[kitchen]
магазин	[store]
магнитофон	[tape recorder]
маленький	[small, little]
мальчик	[boy]
мама	[mom]
машина	[car]
мебель	[furniture]
Меня зовут...	[My name is...]
месяц	[month]
младший	[younger]
можно	[it is possible]
Молодец!	[Well done!]
молодой	[young]
молодой человек	[young man]
молоко	[milk]
Москва	[Moscow]
музыка	[music]
мы	[we]
надо	[it is necessary]
назад	[ago (colloq.)]
налево	[on the left]
написать	[to write (per.)]
направо	[on the right]
не	[not]
невозможно	[impossible]
недавно	[recently]
недалеко	[not far]
нельзя	[forbidden]
немного	[a little]
неплохо	[pretty well]
нет	[no]
никогда	[never]
ничего	[nothing]
но	[but]
ночью	[at night]
нравиться	[to please (imp.)]
о(б)(бо)	[about]
общежитие	[dormitory]
обычно	[usually]
одиннадцать	[eleven]
он	[he, it]
она	[she, it]
они	[they]

оно	[it]
отлично	[excellent]
отчество	[patronymic]
очень	[very]
папа	[dad]
пенсия	[pension]
писатель	[writer]
плохо	[poorly]
подруга	[friend (female)]
показать	[to show, reveal (per.)]
пол	[floor]
получать	[to receive (imp.)]
помогать	[to help]
понедельник	[Monday]
по-русски	[in Russian]
последний	[last]
посмотреть	[to watch (per.)]
похож на	[resembles]
почему	[why]
практика	[practice]
пригласить	[to invite (per.)]
приготовить	[to prepare, cook (per.)]
продукты	[groceries]
Простите!	[Excuse me!]
профессия	[profession]
прочитать	[to read (per.)]
пятница	[Friday]
размер	[size]
рассказать	[to tell, narrate (per.)]
родители	[parents]
русский	[Russian]
рядом	[alongside]
салат	[salad]
свой	[one's own]
сделать	[to do, make (per.)]
сегодня	[today]
сейчас	[now]
семья	[family]
сестра	[sister]
симпатичный	[nice, likeable]
слышать	[to hear (per.)]
сначала	[at first]
собака	[dog]
совсем не	[not at all]
сосед	[male neighbor]
спальня	[bedroom]

Спасибо.	[Thank you.]
среда	[Wednesday]
старый	[old]
стена	[wall]
стоить	[to cost]
столовая	[dining room]
стоять	[to stand, to be located]
страна	[country, nation]
студент	[student (male)]
студентка	[student (female)]
стул	[chair]
суббота	[Saturday]
сын	[son]
такой	[such, so, a real]
там	[there]
телевизор	[television]
теперь	[now]
тоже	[also]
только	[only]
тот	[that, those]
тридцать	[thirty]
трудно	[difficult]
туалет	[bathroom]
тут	[here]
туфли	[shoes]
ты	[you (informal)]
ужинать	[to have dinner (imp.)]
улица	[street]
университет	[university]
урок	[class, lesson]
утром	[in the morning]
учитель	[male teacher]
ходить	[to go on foot (roundtrip)]
хорошо	[fine, good]
час	[hour, o'clock]
четверг	[Thursday]
шапка	[cap, fur hat]
шесть	[six]
этаж	[floor, story]
это	[this/that is, these/those are]
я	[I]