

Note on Transliteration

The system of transliteration from Cyrillic is meant to be reader-friendly to someone who does not know Russian. When a name is already familiar in English in a conventional spelling—Meyerhold, Eisenstein, Tchaikovsky, Chaliapin, Chagall—we have retained that spelling. “E” at the beginning of a name is rendered as “E” rather than as “Ye”—so Evreinov, not Yevreinov. The soft sign has been dropped from some names and words well known in the West, for example, from Gorky and Gogol, but not from Ol’ga, Bol’shoy, or Khar’kov.

Cyrillic	System used in this book	Pronunciation
Аа	a	<i>father</i>
Бб	b	<i>bank</i> ; (at the end of words) <i>top</i>
Вв	v	<i>vet</i> ; <i>towel</i> ; (at the end of words) <i>deaf</i>
Гг	g	<i>get</i> ; (at the end of words) <i>break</i>
Дд	d	<i>daddy</i> ; (at the end of words) <i>vet</i>
Ее	e	<i>met</i> ; <i>mitt</i> ; <i>yeah</i>
Ёё	ë	<i>border</i> ; <i>yore</i>
Жж	zh	<i>vision</i> ; <i>push</i>
Зз	z (except when it indicates a German s)	<i>zeal</i>
Ии	i	<i>cheese</i> ; <i>if</i>
Йй	y	unstressed vowel
Кк	k	<i>kept</i>
Лл	l	<i>log</i>
Мм	m	<i>mama</i>
Нн	n	<i>no</i>
Оо	o	(stressed) <i>order</i> ; (unstressed) <i>artistic</i>
Пп	p	<i>page</i>

Рр	r	rake
Сс	s	miss
Тт	t	ten
Уу	u	spoon
Фф	f	form
Хх	kh	hah; ach
Цц	ts	its
Чч	ch	chief
Шш	sh	shoe
Щщ	shch	fish chowder
Ъъ	omitted	no sound value
Ыы	y	phooey
Ьь	omitted	no sound value
Ээ	é	vet; day
Юю	yu	you; suit
Яя	ya	yahoo

Diphthongs

-ай	ay	eye
-ый	y	its
-ий	y	even
-ия	iya	trriage
-ье	‘e	yeah
-ьи	‘i	yip