



Adjectives & Agreement

Noun gender, the endings adjectives take to match, and the words worth knowing first.

A Russian adjective changes its ending to match the noun it describes — its gender, its number, and its case. Once you can spot a noun's gender, the endings follow a small set of patterns.

Step one: what gender is the noun?

The nominative singular ending tells you, with one group to learn by heart.

Ends in	Gender	Examples
consonant or -й	masculine	дом (house), музей (museum), стол (table)
-о or -е	neuter	окно́ (window), мо́ре (sea), сло́во (word)
-а or -я	feminine	кни́га (book), неде́ля (week), маши́на (car)
-ь	either — learn it with the word	слова́рь (m.), дверь (f.), ночь (f.)

Exceptions worth knowing: men described by -а/-я words are still masculine (па́па, дядя́, мужчи́на).

Step two: match the adjective

Taking но́вый (new) as the model, in the nominative:

With a...	Ending	Example
masculine noun	-ый	но́вый дом — a new house
neuter noun	-ое	но́вое окно́ — a new window
feminine noun	-ая	но́вая кни́га — a new book
plural noun	-ые	но́вые кни́ги — new books

Adjectives with a stressed ending use -ой instead of -ый: большо́й дом, молодóй челове́к. Soft adjectives swap ы for и and о for е: си́ний, си́нее, си́няя, си́ние.

The full table

Case	Masc. / neut.	Feminine	Plural
Nom.	-ый / -ое	-ая	-ые
Acc.	like Nom. or Gen. / -ое	-ую	like Nom. or Gen.
Gen.	-ого	-ой	-ых
Dat.	-ому	-ой	-ым
Inst.	-ым	-ой	-ими
Prep.	-ом	-ой	-ых

Masculine and plural accusative follow animacy: a living thing borrows the genitive, an object keeps the nominative. Feminine is always -ую.

Adjectives worth learning first

но́вый	new	интерéсный	interesting
ста́рый	old	ску́чный	boring
большо́й	big	ва́жный	important
ма́ленький	small	бы́стрый	fast
хоро́ший	good	горя́чий	hot
плохо́й	bad	холо́дный	cold
краси́вый	beautiful	вкусный	tasty
молодо́й	young	у́мный	clever
дорого́й	expensive, dear	чи́стый	clean
дешё́вый	cheap	свобо́дный	free
лёгкий	easy, light	ру́сский	Russian
трудо́й	difficult	последний	last

In sentences

Это но́вая маши́на.

This is a new car. (feminine, nominative)

Я чита́ю интере́сную кни́гу.

I am reading an interesting book. (feminine, accusative)

Он живёт в большо́м до́ме.

He lives in a big house. (masculine, prepositional)

У меня́ нет свобо́дного вре́мени.

I have no free time. (neuter, genitive)

Я говорю́ с ру́сским дру́гом.

I am speaking with a Russian friend. (masculine, instrumental)

Это мои́ ста́рые друзья́.

These are my old friends. (plural, nominative)

The -oro ending is pronounced with a v

но́вого sounds like "NO-va-va", not "NO-va-ga". The same applies to -ero and to еро́ and се́годня. It is one of the few places where Russian spelling does not match the sound, and it catches every learner once.