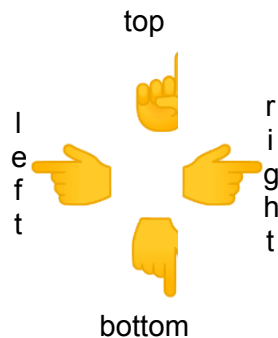




Page navigator



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first line — For most of my life, I was intimidated from

second line learning Russian. I heard too often that Russian is impossible to learn as a foreigner and that it is silly to even start. Therefore, I was thirty eight years old when I began learning my fifth foreign language, Russian. I decided to define my own path to fluency which does not necessitate living in a society which speaks the target language: by practicing daily with a teacher by telephone. I wonder if the severity of learning Russian is because of the complication of the language, or because of the design of the available curricula. Because I work at my own speed and sometimes with my own methods, and because I compare Russian to several other foreign languages, I have collected a list of wishes for curricula for adult learners of Russian.

I was fortunate to discover the curriculum by Tatiana Esmantova entitled "Russian Language: Five Elements". Indeed, it was the careful typesetting and generally high quality of "Five elements" which, along with my teachers and other successful factors, motivated me to continue learning for three years, resulting in my B1 certificate this year. My notes here should not

second-to-last line compete with Five elements, but hopefully, will be

last line incorporated in future curricula for adult learners.

Modern technology allows us to speak with each other worldwide, incurring no charges for the communication. Individuals with poor internet connections can train their pronunciation even alone, using speech recognition software. However, most adult language learners can find and regularly speak with private tutors online. Financial hardship in this context can be overcome by offering tandem exchanges between learners of paired languages. Video conferencing is popular, but it is an unnecessary distraction when learning to be understood and to understand spoken speech. Unless the pupil is hearing impaired, the pupil should not rely on lip-reading or gesticulations when learning a foreign language. Indeed, non-Russophone astronauts conclude their formal education of Russian language with a test conducted by telephone.

— But how should this modern language curriculum be adapted for learning by telephone? The textbook will initially serve as a script from which the student reads verbatim. At the beginning of my studies of Russian I simply read aloud the textbook. The teacher corrected my mispronunciations in Russian. It was the sheer regularity of the lessons which assured progress. After simple read-alongs, every and any normal text becomes a lesson.

In order to retain the student's interest and participation, it is helpful that the student chooses subsequent texts.

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