

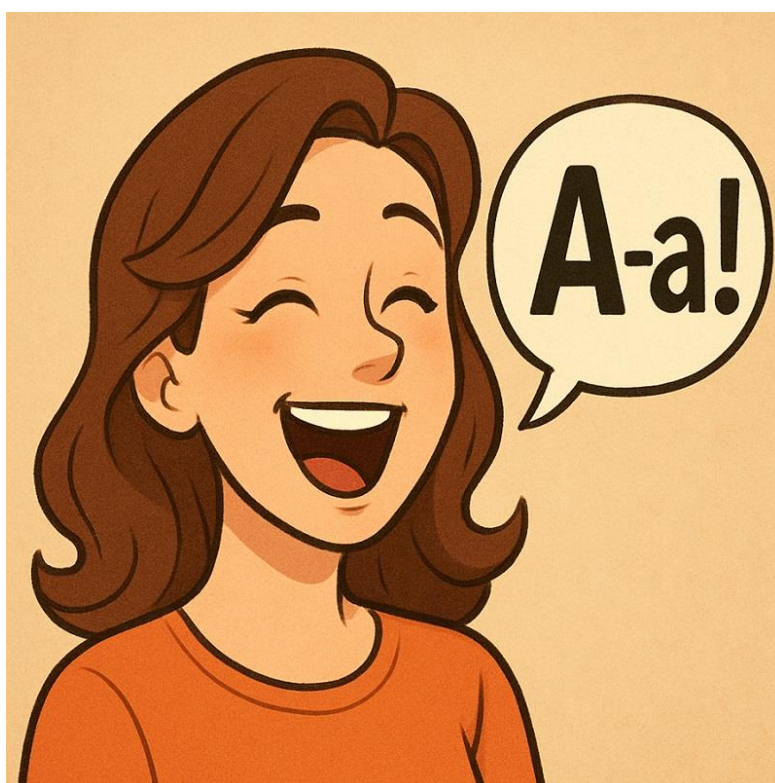
LESSON 1

Let's start from the very beginning!



The first letter of the Russian alphabet is **А** [a]. You already know it – it's the same in many languages.

We often use this letter as an interjection. For example, when you suddenly realize or remember something. Imagine this: someone tells you some incredible news, you are surprised, and then they say it's just a joke. Your reaction:



We also use this sound when we suddenly remember something important:



This is the simplest letter in Russian. It can also be a separate word! The word “a” is a conjunction, something between “and” and “but”. But we will talk about that later.

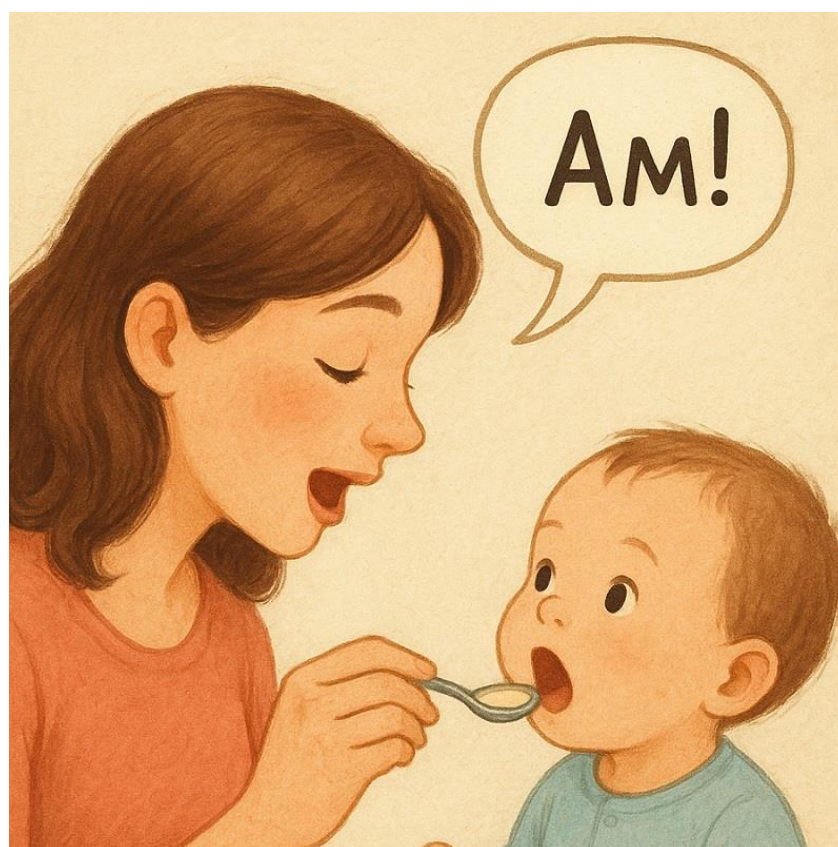
To start making words, let’s add a few more letters – not in alphabetical order.



M [m] – this one is also familiar. In Russian, the small and capital “м” look almost the same.

Combine A and M: **am**.

This is the sound we often make when eating, especially when talking to small children.



And if we swap the letters? We get **ma**. Double this syllable and we get our first word – the same one many children say first: **мама!**



Now let's add another consonant – **п**.

This one is a bit trickier – you probably can't guess how to read it yet. It's the Russian equivalent of the English "p". (We also have a letter that looks like this but sounds different – you'll see it later.)

Let's combine А and П: **ап**.

This is not really a word in Russian, although it exists as a kind of interjection, used by animal trainers in the circus. It also literally reads as "up", so it is used online in this sense – for example, to "bump" a forum thread.

Now swap the letters: **па**. Double it, and we get another word: **папа**.

Now you know how to call your parents in Russian!

*Always remember the **stress marks**, because in Russian there are no strict rules for that. Unfortunately, there is nothing you can do about it.*

We have already learned three letters: **А, М, П**.

We often use it as a playful sound in songs: **пам-пам-пам**.



Let's add one more letter to finish this lesson – **Я** [ya].

Я (looks like a backward R, right?) is the last letter of the Russian alphabet, but a very important one. It is the word we use to talk about ourselves – it means I.



Now we have enough letters to make our first sentences!

In Russian, when we describe ourselves (“I am this, I am that”), we don’t need a verb like “to be”! We just take the word **я** and add the noun.

For example, if you are a mom, you simply say: **Я мама.**

If you are a dad, you say: **Я папа.**

And one more word with our letters: **яма** (which means “pit” or “hole”). If you read it backwards, you get **Мая** – this is a real Russian name.

Just four letters learned, and you can already build your first little dialogue!

