

Omniglot *a guide to written language*

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Cyrillic alphabet (Кириллица)

Origin

The Cyrillic alphabet is named after St. Cyril, a missionary from Byzantium. It was invented sometime during the 10th century AD, possibly by St. Kliment of Ohrid, to write the [Old Church Slavonic](#) language. The Cyrillic alphabet achieved its current form in 1708 during the reign of Peter the Great. Four letters were eliminated from the alphabet in a 1917/18 reform.

The Cyrillic alphabet has been adapted to write over 50 different languages, mainly in Russia, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. In many cases additional letters are used, some of which are adaptations of standard Cyrillic letters, while others are taken from the Greek or Latin alphabets.

Development of the Cyrillic alphabet

10th century version, as used to write Old Church Slavonic

Аа	Бб	Вв	Гг	Дд	Ее	Жж	Сс	Зз/Зз	Ии	її
azŭ	buky	vědě	glagoli	dobro	estĭ	živěte	dzělo	zemlja	iže	i
a	b	v	g	d	e	ž	dz	z	i	i
[a]	[b]	[v]	[g]	[d]	[ε]	[ʒ]	[dz]	[z]	[i]	[i]
1		2	3	4	5		6	7	10	8
Ѣѣ	Кк	Лл	Мм	Нн	Оо	Пп	Рр	Сс	Тт	Уу/Уу
g'a/djerv	kako	ljidije	myslite	naši	onŭ	pokoji	rĭci	slovo	tvŕido	ukŭ
g'	k	l	m	n	o	p	r	s	t	u
[g]	[k]	[l]	[m]	[n]	[o]	[p]	[r]	[s]	[t]	[u]
	20	30	40	50	70	80	100	200	300	400
Фф	ѦѦ	Хх	Ѡѡ	Ѣѣ	Цц	Чч/Чч	Шш	Ъъ	Ыы/Ыы	
fritŭ	fita	xěrŭ	otŭ	šta	ci	červ	ša	jerŭ	jery	
f	θ	x	ō	št	c	ch	š	ŭ	y	
[f]	[t, θ, f]	[x]	[o:]	[ʃt]	[ts]	[tʃ]	[ʃ]	[ʌ]	[y]	
500	9	600	800		900	90				
Ьь	Ѣѣ	ѦѦ	Ѡѡ	Ѣѣ	Ѥѥ	ѦѦ	Ѩѩ	Ѱѱ	Ѳѳ	
jerĭ	jatĭ	ja	ęsŭ	qsŭ	jesŭ	jqsŭ	ksi	psi	ižica	
ĭ	ě	ja	ę	q	ję	jq	ks	ps	ŭ	
[ɨ]	[ja]	[ja]	[ɛ̃]	[ʒ]	[iɛ̃]	[iʒ]	[ks]	[ps]	[ɨ, y]	
			900				60	700	400	

1708 version

А а	Б б	В в	Г г	Д д	Е е	Ѕ ѕ	Ж ж	З з	И и
азъ	буки	вѣди	глаголь	добро	есть	зѣло	живѣте	земля	иже
[az]	[ˈbu.kʲɪ]	[ˈvʲe.dʲɪ]	[gɫ.ˈgɔɫʲ]	[dɑ.ˈbro]	[jesʲ]	[ˈzʲe.lə]	[zʲɪ.ˈvʲiɔ.tʲe]	[zʲɪ.ˈmʲɪ.lʲa]	[i.ˈzʲe]
1		2	3	4	5	6		7	8
Ө ө	І і	Ѹ ѹ	Й й	К к	Л л	М м	Н н	Ѡ ѡ	
вита	і	ѹ	и съ краткой	како	люди	мыслѣте	нашѣ	кси	
[ˈvʲi.tə]	[i.ˈ]	[i.ˈ]	[i.ˈs ˈkra.tkəj]	[ˈka.kə]	[ˈliu.dʲɪ]	[ˈmʲɪ.slʲe.tʲɪ]	[ˈnaʃ]	[ksʲɪ]	
9	10			20	30	40	50	50	
О о	П п	Р р	С с	Т т	У у	Ф ф	Х х	Ѳ ѳ	Ѵ ѵ
онѣ	покой	рцы	слово	твердо	укъ	ферть	хѣръ	пси	омега
[on]	[pɫ.ˈkoj]	[rʲtʲɪ]	[ˈslo.və]	[tvʲe.rdə]	[uk]	[ˈfʲert]	[çer]	[psʲɪ]	[ɫ.ˈmʲe.gə]
70	80	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800
Ц ц	Ч ч	Ш ш	Ѣ ѣ	Щ щ	Ъ ъ	Ы ы	Ь ь	Ю ю	Я я
цы	червь	ша	ять	ща	ерь	еры	ерь	ю	я
[tʲɪ]	[tʲerʲvʲ]	[ʃa]	[jɑtʲ]	[ʃʃa]	[jɛr]	[ˈjɛ.rɪ]	[jɛrʲ]	[ju.ˈ]	[ja.ˈ]
900	90								
Ѧ ѧ	Ѩ ѩ	Ѫ ѫ	Ѭ ѭ	Ѯ ѯ	Ѱ ѱ	Ѳ ѳ	Ѵ ѵ		
юсь большой	юсь малый	юсь большой	юсь малый	ютированный	ютированный	ютированный	ютированный		
[ˈjus blʲi.ˈfoj]	[ˈjus ˈma.lʲɪj]	[ˈjus blʲi.ˈfoj]	[ˈjus ˈma.lʲɪj]	[jɫ.ˈtʲi.rə.vən.nʲɪ]	[jɫ.ˈtʲi.rə.vən.nʲɪ]	[jɫ.ˈtʲi.rə.vən.nʲɪ]	[jɫ.ˈtʲi.rə.vən.nʲɪ]		

The letters in blue had fallen out of use by the 1800 century. The letters in red were eliminated in the 1918 reform.

1918 version

А а	Б б	В в	Г г	Д д	Е е	Ё ё	Ж ж	З з	И и	Й й
а	бэ	вэ	гэ	дэ	е	ё	жэ	зэ	и	и краткое
[a.ˈ]	[bɛ.ˈ]	[vɛ.ˈ]	[gɛ.ˈ]	[dɛ.ˈ]	[jɛ.ˈ]	[jo.ˈ]	[zɛ.ˈ]	[zɛ.ˈ]	[i.ˈ]	[i.ˈkra.tkəjə]
К к	Л л	М м	Н н	О о	П п	Р р	С с	Т т	У у	Ф ф
ка	эль	эм	эн	о	пэ	эр	эс	тэ	у	эф
[ka]	[ɛɫʲ]	[ɛm]	[ɛn]	[o.ˈ]	[pɛ.ˈ]	[ɛr]	[ɛs]	[tɛ.ˈ]	[u.ˈ]	[ɛf]
Х х	Ц ц	Ч ч	Ш ш	Щ щ	Ъ ъ	Ы ы	Ь ь	Э э	Ю ю	Я я
ха	цэ	чэ	ша	ща	твёрдый знак	ы	мягкий знак	э	ю	я
[χa]	[tʲɛ.ˈ]	[tʲɛ.ˈ]	[ʃa]	[ʃʃa]	[tvʲɔ.rdɔj ˈznak]	[ɨ.ˈ]	[ˈmiagkʲɪ ˈznak]	[ˈɛ.ə.bl. ˈro.tnəjə]	[ju.ˈ]	[ja.ˈ]

The names of the letters are in Russian.

Languages written with the Cyrillic alphabet

[Abaza](#), [Abkhaz](#), [Adyghe](#), [Avar](#), [Azeri](#), [Belorussian](#), [Bulgarian](#), [Dungan](#), [Kazak](#), [Kyrghyz](#), [Komi](#), [Macedonian](#), [Moldovan](#), [Mongolian](#), [Old Church Slavonic](#), [Russian](#), [Ruthenian](#), [Serbian](#), [Slovio](#), [Tajik](#), [Tatar](#), [Turkmen](#), [Ukrainian](#), [Uzbek](#), [Yakut](#)

Links

Further information about the history of the Cyrillic alphabet

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_alphabet

Free Cyrillic fonts

<http://babel.uoregon.edu/yamada/fonts/russian.html>

<http://www.brama.com/compute/index.html>

<http://www.funet.fi/pub/culture/russian/comp/fonts/ttf>

<http://clover.slavic.pitt.edu/~aatseel/fonts/wincyrillic.html>

Other alphabets

[Armenian](#), [Avestan](#), [Bassa \(Vah\)](#), [Beitha Kukju](#), [Coptic](#), [Cyrillic](#), [Elbsan](#), [Etruscan](#), [Fraser](#), [Georgian \(Asomtavruli & Nuskha-khucuri\)](#), [Georgian \(Mkhedruli\)](#), [Glagolitic](#), [Gothic](#), [Greek](#), [Hungarian Runes](#), [International Phonetic Alphabet \(IPA\)](#), [Irish](#), [Korean](#), [Latin](#), [Manchu](#), [Mongolian](#), [N'Ko](#), [Old Church Slavonic](#), [Ogham](#), [Old Italic](#), [Old Permic](#), [Orkhon](#), [Pollard Miao](#), [Runic](#), [Santali](#), [Somali](#), [Sutton SignWriting](#), [Tai Lue](#), [Thaana](#)

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