

<b>ОН</b>	he	} you met those in Lesson 3
<b>ОНА</b>	she	
<b>ОНО</b>	it	
<b>МЫ</b>	we	
<b>ВЫ</b>	you (when speaking to someone you do not know well or to more than one person). This pronoun is the polite or plural (pol/pl) you.	
<b>ОНИ</b>	they	

### 4.3 Verbs

To do things, you need verbs. A verb<sup>1</sup> is a word expressing an action or state, the kind of word which would fit in the gap in the sentence ‘She \_\_\_\_\_ in New York’, e.g. works, worked, was, lives, drives. In Russian dictionaries, verbs are listed in their infinitive<sup>1</sup> form (this corresponds to ‘to drive’, ‘to be’ etc. in English). Russian infinitive forms normally end **-ТЬ** (e.g. **курить** ‘to smoke’, **знать** ‘to know’).

### 4.4 Conjugation<sup>1</sup> of Verbs in the Present Tense. Type 1: **знать** ‘to know’

The present tense<sup>1</sup> describes actions taking place at the moment of speech (‘I *work* in Moscow’, ‘She *is walking* to school’). In Russian there is only one present tense, corresponding to both ‘I do’ and ‘I am doing’ in English.

The list of verb forms which go with the eight personal pronouns is known as the *conjugation*<sup>1</sup> of the verb. The form to which the personal endings are attached is called the *stem*<sup>1</sup> of the verb. Most (not all) **знать**-type verbs have a stem which is simply the infinitive form minus the **-ТЬ**. So **знать** has the stem **зна́-**. The endings are underlined.

<b>я</b> <b>зна́ю</b>	<b>[zná-yoo]</b>	I know
<b>ты</b> <b>зна́ешь</b>	<b>[zná-yesh]</b>	you (familiar) know
<b>он</b> <b>зна́ет</b>	<b>[zná-yet]</b>	he knows
<b>она</b> <b>зна́ет</b>	<b>[zná-yet]</b>	she knows
<b>оно</b> <b>зна́ет</b>	<b>[zná-yet]</b>	it knows
		} these three forms are always the same in the present tense of <u>all</u> verbs
<b>мы</b> <b>зна́ем</b>	<b>[zná-yem]</b>	we know
<b>вы</b> <b>зна́ете</b>	<b>[zná-ye-tye]</b>	you (polite/plural) know

**они знают** [zná-yoot] they know

Note: In colloquial (informal) Russian, the pronoun can be omitted, so that 'I know' can be simply **Знаю**. But remember that this is informal usage and rare in stylistically neutral Russian.

## EXAMPLES

**Мы знаем, где Ваня.** We know where Vanya is.

**Вы знаете меня?** Do you know me?

The majority of Russian verbs have this type of conjugation, and we shall call it the **знать** type or Type 1.

### 4.5 Type 2: говорить 'to speak'

The standard example of the second type of present-tense conjugation is **говорить** 'to speak'. The stem is **говор-**:

<b>я говорю</b>	I speak/am speaking
<b>ты говоришь</b>	you (familiar) speak
<b>он говорит</b>	he speaks
<b>она говорит</b>	she speaks
<b>оно говорит</b>	it speaks
<b>мы говорим</b>	we speak
<b>вы говорите</b>	you (polite/familiar) speak
<b>они говорят</b>	they speak

Note the ending **-ят** of the **они**-form.

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**Я говорю по-русски.** I speak Russian.

**Они говорят по-французски.** They speak French.

**Вы говорите по-английски?** Do you speak English?

4.6 Type 1B: **éхать ‘to go (by transport)’, жить ‘to live’**

The third (and last) type is a variant of the **знать** type. These verbs have much the same endings as the **знать** type, but the problem is to predict the stem' from the infinitive'. Our first example is the verb **éхать** 'to go (by transport), to ride'. The stem happens to be **éd-** (you just have to learn that, you couldn't guess it) and the conjugation' is:

<b>я еду́</b>	I go/am going	<b>оно́ едет</b>	it goes
<b>ты едешь</b>	You (familiar) go	<b>мы едем</b>	we go
<b>он едет</b>	he goes	<b>вы едете</b>	you (polite/plural) go
<b>она́ едет</b>	she goes	<b>они́ едут</b>	they go

You can see that the **я** and **они́** forms have **-у** where the **знать** type has **-ю** but otherwise the endings are the same.

Here is another example, the verb **жить** 'to live' (despite its **-ить** ending, it is a **éхать**-type verb). The unguessable stem is **жив-** [zhiv] (2.7) and the conjugation is:

<b>я живу́</b>	I live/am living	<b>оно́ живёт</b>	it lives
<b>ты живёшь</b>	you (familiar) live	<b>мы живём</b>	we live
<b>он живёт</b>	he lives	<b>вы живёте</b>	you (polite/plural) live
<b>она́ живёт</b>	she lives	<b>они́ живут</b>	they live

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**Он едет домой.** He's going home.  
**Я живу́ в Лондоне.** I live in London.

The endings are the same as the endings of **éхать** except for the change of **е** to **ё**. This change is conditioned by the place of the stress: if the letter **е** in a verb ending is stressed, it always turns into **ё** (though remember that Russians don't normally write the dots – see 1.2c).

Another useful example of the **éхать** type is the verb **звать** 'to call', whose stem is **зов-**. The first two forms are a **я зову́**, **ты зовёшь**, but the one to remember is (**они́**) **зову́т** '(they) call', which turns up in the idiomatic question:

**Как вас зову́т?** 'How you (they) call?' (= What's your name?).

**Вас** is the accusative 'case' of **вы** 'you'; the details of the accusative are in Lesson 6.

These three sets of similar endings in 4.4–4.6 give the present tense of nearly all Russian verbs. These endings don't take long to learn; the main problem is remembering the stem (and the stress pattern) of verbs like **éхать**, **жить** and **звать**. Although most verbs are like **знать** or **говорить**, there are many irregular infinitives like **жить**. In the vocabularies, we give the **я** and the **ты** form of each verb (since you can work out the other forms from these two).

#### 4.7 Verb Summary Table

Infinitive	<b>знать</b> (1)	<b>говорить</b> (2)	<b>жить</b> (1B)	<b>éхать</b> (1B)
Stem	<b>зна-</b>	<b>говор-</b>	<b>жив-</b>	<b>éd-</b>
<b>я</b>	<b>-ю</b>	<b>-ю</b>	<b>-у</b>	<b>-у</b>
<b>ты</b>	<b>-ешь</b>	<b>-ишь</b>	<b>-ёшь</b>	<b>-ешь</b>
<b>он/она/оно</b>	<b>-ет</b>	<b>-ит</b>	<b>-ёт</b>	<b>-ет</b>
<b>мы</b>	<b>-ем</b>	<b>-им</b>	<b>-ём</b>	<b>-ем</b>
<b>вы</b>	<b>-ете</b>	<b>-ите</b>	<b>-ёте</b>	<b>-ете</b>
<b>они</b>	<b>-ют</b>	<b>-ят</b>	<b>-ют</b>	<b>-ут</b>

Stress notes. (1) A few **знать**-type verbs are stressed on the end, so each **е** turns into **ё**. An example is **давать** 'to give' (12.4), which has the stem **да-**. The stressed endings are: **даю**, **даёшь**, **даёт**, **даём**, **даёте**, **дают**. (2) Many **говорить**-type verbs are stressed on the stem (see 4.9), but the spelling is not affected.

#### 4.8 Negation ('not')

To make a verb negative ('I don't know') simply put **не** 'not' in front of the verb:

**Я не знаю.**

I don't know.

**Он не понимает.**

He doesn't understand.