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Russian in Use. An Interactive Approach to Advanced Communicative Competence.

New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007. ISBN: 0-300-10943-1. Includes text and DVD. Instructor's Manual available at www.yalebooks.com/russianinuse. \$50.00.

Russian in Use is intended for the advanced learner, or as a transition text from the intermediate to the advanced level. It addresses English-speaking, motivated students who can work independently. It consists of six chapters, one introductory and five context-based. Each addresses an important topic in contemporary society: geography, politics, education, ecology, and Russian views of American society. The units are fairly long and follow the same pattern: Vocabulary, Lexical Studies, Readings, Listening, Composition, Research Assignments, and Review.

Each vocabulary section contains approximately two hundred words with English equivalents. Some are obviously review words, or ones not in the student's active vocabulary. This section is accented, whereas the rest of the text is not. There are notes on words potentially confusing to the English-speaking student. The vocabulary is arranged in categories, which are not identified. The principal parts of verbs are included, along with distinguishing marks of nouns and adjectives. The vocabulary provides an introduction to themes and readings. However, since the words are not in alphabetical order, they are almost impossible to locate. The purpose of the list is not clear, although the author indicates in the *Instructor's Manual* that students learn them at the beginning of each unit.

The section on lexical studies, which includes Grammar and Stylistics, is quite lengthy. It reviews basic points and builds on them. The explanations, all in English, are clear and concise, and are illustrated by examples of simple Russian sentences translated into English. The author indicates that she herself chose them from contemporary Russian popular literature. The text places special emphasis on the verbal aspects and on the verbs of motion, normally a challenge to even the most advanced students. Lexical items often follow the theme of the chapter, such as the use of prepositions and cases with place names in the unit on geography. There are exercises after each major part of the grammar presentation, with occasional cumulative exercises, especially good for the verbs of motion. Many exercises require simple one-word answers, often a translation, but consist of unrelated sentences. Others are open-ended and invite creativity. Some take authentic texts and omit specific words related to the lexical explanations. Students can find the complete text in the appendix, and check their own work. There are multiple exercises, so that the instructor can choose or the student can reinforce work done in class.

The section on Readings uses contemporary authentic materials, primarily factual, related to the theme. They range from two to ten pages, with four texts in each chapter. The chapter on ecology presents disasters that have occurred in Russia as a result of environmental neglect. The chapter on geography addresses, among other subjects, the decline of the Russian population. The final chapter, *Америка чужими глазами*, contains a few humorous anecdotes about Russians' visits to America, among them, how Americans are always smiling at others! There is little formal pre-reading other than a brief introduction to the text. The post-reading contains questions about the texts and an exercise based on the reading and listening. On the whole, the readings are interesting and provide authentic cultural background on contemporary Russia.

The listening exercises on the DVD range from lectures given by an individual to conversations and debates. There are no visual aids except for the speaker and a map in the geography unit. However, most presenters speak clearly and distinctly. The chapter on ecology features a debate (audio only) that originally aired on Radio Mayak in 2002 on the ecosystem. The final chapter presents several young Russians who give their opinions about Americans. All had been in the United States or had met Americans. Their speech is rapid and colloquial. Each chapter ends with a cloze passage based on the listening. Because the DVD accompanies the book, students can listen to the recordings several times.

The *Сочинение*, or written exercises, is probably the most creative element. It features real-life scenarios, which students prepare at home, then discuss in groups, and finally present in class after completing their paper assignment. They include a promotional brochure about the student's home state for distribution in Russia, or a comparison of the Russian and American system of education for newly arrived Russian immigrants. The assignments come toward the end of the chapter, an excellent way for students to integrate their knowledge.

The book contains several other features. It directs students to materials from the Web, libraries, and newspapers, as well as to other resources. Also, it gives options for projects to do in and outside the classroom. One directs students to skim Russian newspapers to find articles pertinent to the topic of the unit. Another gives five sets of directions in Russian, such as how to make tea, or crochet. Students then demonstrate one to the class. Finally, there are brief grammatical tables, and Russian-English and English-Russian glossaries.

The Instructor's Manual (61 pages) accompanying the text is available on the Yale University Website. It includes the answers to all the exercises, the text of the listening passages, and pertinent comments by the author, in which she explains how she uses the text. She notes, for example, that she seldom does many grammar exercises in class, instead spending most of her class time on various communicative activities. She also provides the source of some materials. The manual is available on the Web; thus it is easy to make changes and suggest other reading and listening exercises, since contemporary articles become obsolete quickly.

The goal of the text is communication. Although the format does not follow a communicative approach (since it begins with memorization of vocabulary and lengthy grammar exercises), it does emphasize the use of the language in real-life

situations. The National Standards are evident throughout. The text stresses contemporary culture, often comparing Russian and American lifestyles. It also notes differences and similarities between Russian and English usage. By creating links between the Russian language and science, education, and politics, it addresses connections. Finally, it brings Russian into the community and the Russian community into the classroom through such features as the DVD, an ecological readiness survey in Russian, and a survey of Russian friends on current topics. *Russian in Use* should be a great asset in the advanced Russian classroom.

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