

BELARUSIAN  
BASIC COURSE

TEXTBOOK  
Units 1-7

October 1995

Defense Language Institute  
Foreign Language Center

## Acknowledgement

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Belaruski Chas  
Chyrvonaya Zmena  
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Respublika

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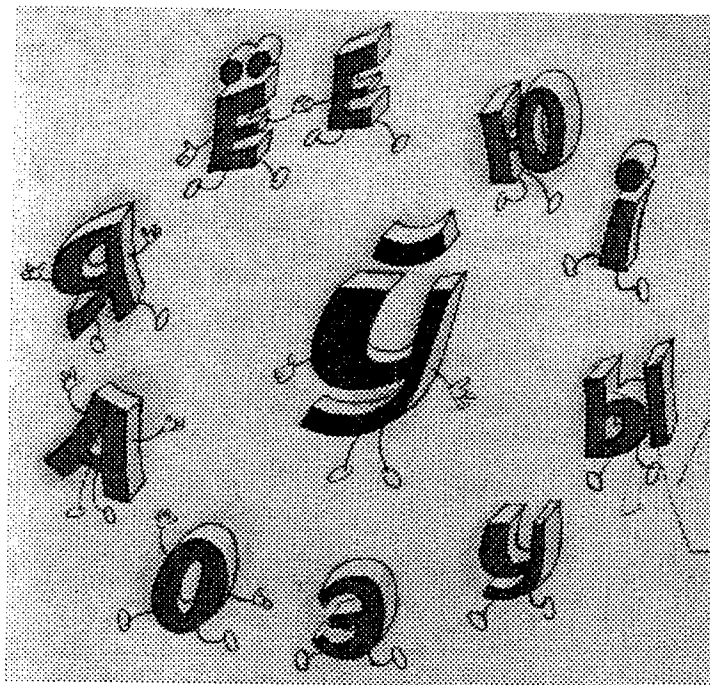
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## UNIT 1

### БЕЛАРУСКІ АЛФАВІТ



#### Абчым ідзе гаворка

- pronouncing words
  - names of people, cities, states
  - names of objects

#### Гэта вам дапаможа

- Belarusian alphabet and sound system
  - letters in print, italic, and cursive

#### Між іншым

- basic information on recent Belarusian history



### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

More than five billion people living on Earth speak about four thousand languages. 310 languages have more than a million native speakers. The Belarusian language takes the seventy-sixth place among them.

Belarusian is a national language of the Belarusian people. Together with Russian and Ukrainian it is part of the vast Slavonic subgroup of the Indo-European family.

The Belarusian literary language, the language of school, art, science, printing, radio, theatre, etc. differs from the Belarusian dialects by standard grammar, usage of words, and its style. All Belarusian national dialects are divided into three groups: North-east, middle Belarusian, and Northwest. Dialects are one of the sources of the enrichment of the Belarusian literary language.

## The Approximate English Sound of Belarusian Letters

Letter	Phonetic	Pronunciation	Letter	Phonetic	Pronunciation
А а	a	<u>f</u> ather	О о	o	<u>o</u> pen
Б б	b	<u>b</u> us	П п	p	<u>p</u> an
В в	v	<u>v</u> erb	Р р	r	<u>r</u> ear
Г г	g	<u>g</u> ulf	С с	s	<u>s</u> un
Д д	d	<u>d</u> og	Т т	t	<u>t</u> ie
Дж	dzh	<u>f</u> udge	У у	u	<u>z</u> oo
дж			Ў ў	w	<u>w</u> est
Дз дз	dz	<u>y</u> ards	Ф ф	f	<u>f</u> rom
Е е	e	<u>g</u> et	Х х	kh	<u>h</u> orse
Ё ё	io	<u>y</u> onder	Ц ц	ts	<u>g</u> ets
Ж ж	zh	<u>g</u> arage	Ч ч	ch	<u>ch</u> ess
З з	z	<u>z</u> oo	Ш ш	sh	<u>sh</u> op
І і	i	<u>e</u> ast	Ы ы	y	<u>b</u> uilding
Й й	i or y (after vowels)	<u>b</u> oy <u>o</u> il	Ь ь *	'	on- <u>i</u> on
К к	k	<u>k</u> iss	Э э **	e	<u>a</u> ny, <u>e</u> xit
Л л	l	<u>l</u> ace	Ю ю	you	<u>u</u> se
М м	m	<u>m</u> ilk	Я я	ya or ia	<u>y</u> ard
Н н	n	<u>n</u> ame			

Notes :

\* Soften the preceding consonant.

\*\* "Э" is a more open sound than "a" in English.

\*\*\*The sign ' is used in Belarusian to separate a consonant from the vowel following it. Thus, the word reads as if by syllable. (а**б'**ява /ab-ia<sup>'</sup>va/)

The Belarusian alphabet is based on the Cyrillic alphabet. There are 32 letters. Besides the alphabet letters the diagraphs **Дж, дж, Дз, дз** are used in the written language. The separation mark ' (the apostrophe), which is not a letter and does not influence the word order in dictionaries, is also used in the Belarusian language.

In the Belarusian alphabet there are 10 vowels, 2 semivowels and 22 consonants.

## GOING TO BELARUS

You are about to embark on an exciting journey. You are going to **Беларусь**. You are going to **Мінск**. Before leaving **Амерыка**, you have to get **віза і пашпарт**. Armed with these papers you are on the way to the **аэрапорт**. There you check your **багаж** and make your way to the plane. You see a beautiful **сцюардэса** who takes you to the seat. Good-bye **Вашынгтон і Нью-Йорк** ! You will be travelling in style and **камфорт**.

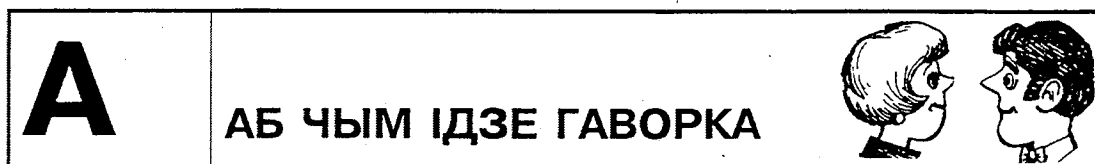
The trip is a long one and you get hungry. The **сцюардэса** brings you a **меню фром** from which you order a meal. Since by now you are really hungry you order **біфштэкс, салата, фрукты**. For **дэсерт** , you would like **торт, шакалад**.

Before serving dinner, the **сцюардэса** brings the drinks cart around. She has a large variety of drinks including **віно, віскі, шампанскае, кан'як** . You feel like having **віно**. After dinner, the **сцюардэса** offers you **кава, чай, лімон**. Afterwards you enjoy the **фільм** or listen to **музыка**.

In the Minsk airport you go through **пашпартны кантроль**. You catch a **таксі**. The **шафёр** puts your **багаж** in the trunk and you are off!

As you ride along the **праспекты і бульвары** and streets, you admire the **архітэктура** of the beautiful city. You pass the **універсітэт, стадыён, парк, кафэ, інстытут, планетары, манумент**. You seem to be approaching the **цэнтр**. There is an abundance of public **транспорт: аўтобусы, тралейбусы, трамваі**. The huge **М** you see so frequently, stands for **метро**. Near a large building with a sign «**ТЭЛЕГРАФ**» on it you see many **тэлефон** booths. You are very impressed with the beautiful city. Your first glimpse of **Мінск** is now over. You want to call **Інтурыст** and sign up for an **экскурсія**. You want to see other cities of the **рэспубліка: Брэст, Гомель, Віцебск, Гродна, Магілёў**. Welcome to **Беларусь!**





The Belarusian alphabet consist of letters which:

A. Look almost exactly like Latin letters and represent approximately the same sounds. They are:

<b>A, a</b>	- a
<b>O, o</b>	- o
<b>K, k</b>	- k
<b>M, m</b>	- m
<b>T, t</b>	- t

Exercise 1

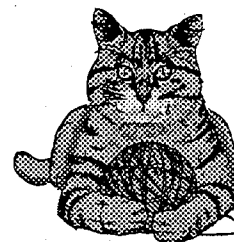
Read the following words.



мама



тата



КОТ

## Exercise 2

Listen to your tape and pronounce the following words:

там	мама	мак
Том	тата	то
Ака	Тома	ком
кот	так	Томка

## Exercise 3

Listen to the tape and circle the words you hear pronounced.

там, так, ком, мак, кот, мама, тата, Том, там, атам, Тома.

## Exercise 4

Listen to the tape and insert the missing letter in the appropriate space below.

- ама	- амок	а - а
т - та	- - ма	к - т
ат - маН	атак -	т - к

## Exercise 5

You have different sets of letters. Try to compose words you've come across in the above exercises. Write them down. Work in pairs.

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**B. These letters look like Latin letters, but they represent different sounds:**

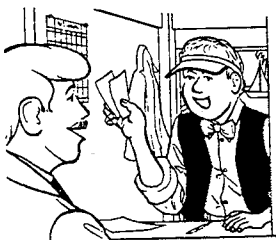
<b>Е,е</b>	- je
<b>І,і</b>	- e
<b>У,у</b>	- u
<b>В,в</b>	- v
<b>Н,н</b>	- n
<b>Р,р</b>	- r
<b>С,с</b>	- s
<b>Х,х</b>	- kh

Exercise 6

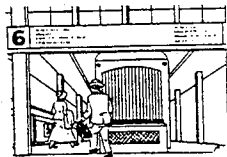
Look at the cards shown to you and name the letter. Work in pairs.

Exercise 7

Look at the pictures and read.



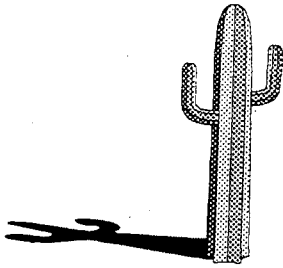
каса



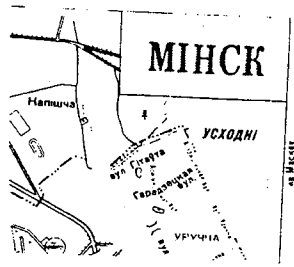
метро



трактар



кактус



Мінск



хор

Exercise 8

Listen and pronounce the words.

МОХ	-	МЕХ	-	СМЕХ	-	МАК
УХ	-	ВУС	-	СУК	-	МУХА
ОСА	-	НОС	-	САУНА	-	СМАК

Exercise 9

Listen to the tape and pronounce the words you hear.

Exercise 10

Now listen to the same tape and write down the words you hear.

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## Exercise 11

Listen to the tape. You will hear the words listed below pronounced. Insert the missing letters. Work alone.

Ва а	М тро	акн	н рма
с к	т к	т ст	ст л

## Exercise 12

You have a set of cards with letters. Work in pairs and put together as many words as you can imitating the words you've come across already.

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## Exercise 13

Work with the class as a whole. Alphabetize the words you have in ex.12. If you don't know some letters, ask your instructor for help.

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**C. The following letters look different from the letters of the Latin alphabet altogether. They are:**

<b>Й,й</b>	- ji
<b>Ы,ы</b>	- y
<b>Э,э</b>	- eh
<b>Ю,ю</b>	- you
<b>Я,я</b>	- ja
<b>Б,б</b>	- b
<b>Г,г</b>	- g
<b>Д,д</b>	- d
<b>Ж,ж</b>	- zh
<b>З,з</b>	- z
<b>Л,л</b>	- l
<b>П,п</b>	- p
<b>Ф,ф</b>	- f
<b>Ц,ц</b>	- ts
<b>Ч,ч</b>	- tch
<b>Ш,ш</b>	- sh

**Note:** Besides the letters of the alphabet, there are diagraphs **Дж,дж, Дз,дз**.  
Letter **Ў,ў** is called a short <y>.

## Exercise 14

Read the following groups of words aloud.

вуха	-	вушы	-	ух
тама	-	мама	-	тут
тата	-	атам	-	там
каса	-	аса	-	ах
квас	-	вас	-	ас
спор	-	сор	-	бор

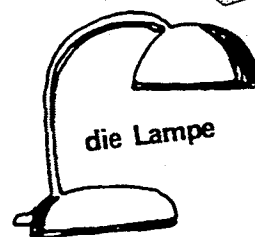
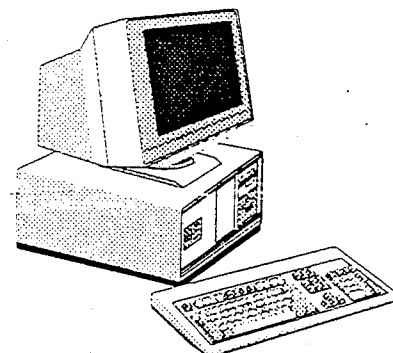
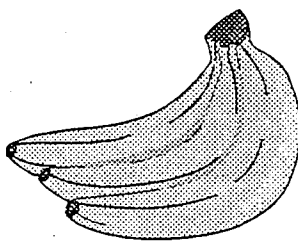
## Exercise 15

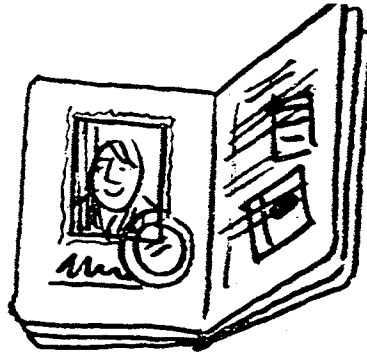
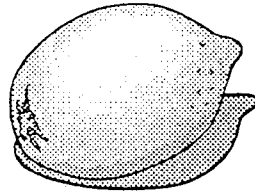
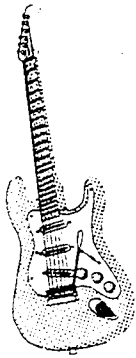
Read the following words and translate them orally into English.

віно, казіно, доктар, радыё, Рым, сістэма, універсітэт,  
камітэт, мінімум, максімум

## Exercise 16

Match the following words with the pictures below.





**Words for use:** банан, лимон, лямпя, радыё, кампютар, стул, доктар, пашпарт, гітара.

Now list these words alphabetically:

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**МІЖ  
ІНШЫМ**

**БЕЛАРУСЬ** is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe, bordered to the North and East by **Расія**, to the South by **Україна**, to the West by **Польшча**, and to the Northwest by **Літва** and **Латвія**. Important land and air routes pass through the Republic, and communication lines connect the West and East, and North and South of the European continent.



Exercise 17

Look at the map of Eastern Europe below. Listen to the tape. You will hear the names of the countries surrounding Belarus. Number them in the order you hear them.




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Exercise 18

Continue listening to the tape. Now you will hear a country and its capital. Write down the names of the countries and their capitals in Belarusian.

Counties	Capitals
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Exercise 19

Write down the names of the countries bordering Belarus in the right column. Start from the North. Then write the names of the capitals of those countries in the left column.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

МІЖ  
ІНШЫМ

**МІНСК**, the capital of **БЕЛАРУСЬ**, has 1.8 million inhabitants. **Мінск** is also a coordinating center of the Commonwealth of Independent States (C.I.S.). The largest cities in **Беларусь** are **Брэст**, **Віцебск**, **Гомель**, **Гродно**, and **Магілёў**, in which the administrative centers of the republic are located.



Exercise 20 **Get acquainted with the Belarusian cities !**

Read the following list of names of Belarusian cities grouped by administrative division. Then circle each city on the map above.

**Брэст** - Баранавічы - Кобрын - Лунінец - Пінск

**Віцебск** - Лепель - Наваполацк - Орша - Полацк

**Гомель** - Добруш - Жлобін - Калінкавічы - Мазыр - Рагачоў - Рэчыца - Светлагорск

**Гродна** - Ваўкавыск - Ліда - Навагрудак - Слонім - Смаргонь

**Магілёў** - Асіповічы - Бабруйск - Горкі - Крычаў

**Мінск** - Барысаў - Вілейка - Джяржынск - Жодзіна -  
Заслаўе - Маладзечна -Салігорск - Слуцк

Exercise 21

Read through the list of Belarusian cities with a population of more than 50,000 people. Practice writing the names of the cities.

Мінск

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Гомель

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Магілёў

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Віцебск

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Гродна

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Брэст

---

Бабруйск

---

Баранавічы

---

Барысаў

---

Орша

---

Пінск

---

Мазыр

---

Салігорск

---

Наваполацк

---

Маладзечна

---

Ліда

---

Полацк

---

Рэчыца

---

Светлагорск

---

Слуцк

---

Жлобін

---

Жодзіна

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## Exercise 22

Now listen to the tape and circle the names of the cities on the list above when you hear them.

## Exercise 23

Read the names of the Belarusian poets below. Write them in alphabetical order first by their first names and then by their last names.

Міхась Машара, Максім Танк, Якуб Колас, Янка Купала, Анатоль Астрэйка, Іван Мележ, Кандрат Крапіва, Максім Багдановіч, Іван Шамякін, Паўлюк Трус

a. by first names

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b. by last names

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Minsk area



**В****ДАВАЙЦЕ РАЗМАЎЛЯЦЬ**

## Exercise 1

a) Read the list of names below. Then listen to your cassette. You will hear several short dialogs in which Belarusians introduce themselves. Circle the names on the list when you hear them.

## Men's names

Ігар

Кірыл

Алесь

Антось

Слаўка

Міхась

## Women's names

Тамара

Ірына

Алеся

Каця

Вера

Зося

## Exercise 2

a) Write the name of the city where you grew up on the blackboard in Belarusian. Ask your instructor how it is spelled when it follows the word **з**. Then write the city name correctly after the word **з**.

## Grammar Note

In Belarusian names of cities have endings when they follow the word **з**.

**Example:**

**з Сан-Францыска**  
**з Нью-Йорку**

b) Work with a partner. Start up a conversation in Belarusian. Introduce yourself and then say where you are from.

**Model:**

- Я Джон. Я з Сан-Францыска.
- Я Раян. Я з Мантэрэя.
- ог
- Я Мэры. Я з Чыкага.
- Я Мішэл. Я з Нью-Ёрку.

### Exercise 3

Look at the illustration below. Take turns introducing each of the Belarusians. The correct forms for the name of the cities are given below.

**Model:** Яна Тамара. Яна беларуска. Яна з Беларусі,  
з Мінска.

Ён Алесь. Ён беларус. Ён з Беларусі, з  
Брэста.

#### Names of the cities

#### Corresponding Form

Мінск	з Мінска
Гомель	з Гомеля
Гродна	з Гродна
Брэст	з Брэста
Магілёў	з Магілёва
Віцебск	з Віцебска



#### Exercise 4

Work with a partner and find out some information about him/her. Talk about yourself using the previous model and the words below. Then report your findings to the class.

#### Useful Vocabulary:

амерыканец, амерыканка, студэнт, студэнтка,  
Амерыка

#### Model:

Імя(name) Нік. Ён амерыканец. З Мантаны, з Білінгзу. Ён студэнт.

Імя Нікол. Яна амерыканка. З Каліфорніі, з Сан Францыска. Яна студэнтка.

## Exercise 5

Read the following information about a person from Belarus. Then fill in corresponding information about yourself in the space provided.

Імя:	Алесь
Прозвішча:	Бачыла
Нацыянальнасць:	беларус
Краіна:	Рэспубліка Беларусь
Горад:	Мінск

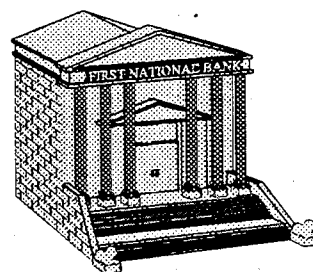
Імя:	_____
Прозвішча:	_____
Нацыянальнасць:	_____
Краіна:	_____
Горад:	_____

**С** **ДАВАЙЦЕ ПАЧЫТАЕМ** 

Exercise 1

You are in Belarus. You see different signs on the streets. Analyze the words and place them in categories. Write in Belarusian in the space provided.

- a. АПТЭКА
- б. ТЭЛЕФОН
- в. СТОП
- г. БУФЕТ
- д. РЭСТАРАН
- е. Бар
- ё. ІНСТЫТУТ
- ж. **МЕТРО (М)**
- з. Б А Н К
- і. ГАТЕЛЬ
- к. КАФЭ



Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

## Exercise 2

The following Belarusian words are cognates. They sound like their English counterparts. Match the Belarusian and English words. Work alone.

_____ кампутар	1. coffee
_____ тэлефон	2. lemon
_____ радыё	3. zebra
_____ тэлевізар	4. computer
_____ банан	5. telephone
_____ кава	6. zebra
_____ лямон	7. giraffe
_____ жырафа	8. radio
_____ зебра	9. television

**МІЖ  
ІНШЫМ**

The Republic of Belarus became independent in 1991 following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Along with democratic changes it also began a series of economic reforms to move towards a free-market economy. These reforms are a significant departure from economic policies of the past.

