

Global Feminisms Project Pronunciation Guide

Russia Interviewee Names

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Naming Conventions. Since the mid-19th century, Russians have traditionally possessed three names: a *first name*, a *patronymic*, and a *surname*. In official documents, the surname always precedes the name and patronymic, but in all other contexts, the order is name, patronymic, surname.

Until the early 20th century, ethnic Russians, most of whom were Russian Orthodox, chose *first names* for their children based on the Orthodox Calendar of Saints. The parents would choose from the names of saints assigned to that child's birthday. Many of these names were from Greek or Hebrew by way of Greek, such as Elena, Natal'ia, Ivan, Vasili, Mariia; others were from Swedish, such as Ol'ga and Oleg; and some Slavic in origin, such as Vladimir and Vladislav. Many Russians in the early 20th century cast off these naming traditions and instead named their children neologisms drawn from revolutionary figures. With the death of Stalin in 1953, traditional names returned, but they were dissociated from Christianity and became part of a common Russian and Soviet culture.

The *patronymic* is not chosen by the parents but rather formed from the child's father's name. For men, the endings -ovich or -evich are typically added to the father's name. For women, the patronymic is formed by adding -ovna or -evna to the father's name. Orphans or those whose fathers were unknown would typically be given the patronymic Ivanovich or Ivanovna.

The most common Russian *surnames* for all classes end in -ov, -ev, or -in. For women, an "a" is added to the -ov/-ev/-in ending, such that it becomes -ova/-eva/-ina. The surnames of many Russians with noble ancestry, such as Dostoevskii, often end in -skii for men and -skaia for women. Other noble names were sometimes simply adjectives, such as Tolstoi for men and Tolstaia for women. The surnames of many denizens of the Russian north are formed as adjectives with endings in either -ykh or -ikh. These surnames are the same for both men and women.

From the 16th century on, Russia has been a multinational empire and therefore has a long history of various and ad hoc incorporations of non-Russian identities into Russian naming conventions. Under the Soviets, various state-led projects were undertaken to Russify surnames. In the 1920s, a "v" was added to Ukrainian surnames ending in "-enko," producing the more Russian sounding "-enkov." In the 1930s, Central Asians of the Soviet Union, who, until that time, only had recognized surnames if they had extensive interaction with the Russian state, were given surnames formed from their father's name plus "-ov" or "-ev." As a result, this first generation had coincident patronymics and surnames, for example, Abdullaevich Abdullaev.

Pronunciation. There are two key difficulties in the pronunciation of Russian words for English speakers. The first is the role of stress in Russian words. Much like in English, each Russian word has a single stressed syllable which receives emphasis; however, in Russian the vowel quality of unstressed syllables is reduced. In particular "a" and "o," when not under stress, are

reduced to sound like “ə” (an “uh” sound) and “ə” or “a” respectively. Likewise, the letters “ia” and “e,” when not under stress, are reduced to “i” when preceding the stressed symbol, and to “yə” and “i” when following a stressed syllable. The second difficulty is the palatalized consonants of the Russian language. English possesses palatalized consonants, which are pronounced with the tongue close to the hard palate, but they are not phonemic, i.e. they do not differentiate words. For example, the word “key” contains a palatalized “k,” but a speaker would recognize “key” pronounced with an unpalatalized “k” as a mispronunciation rather than a separate word. Russian, on the other hand, possesses the words “*ugol*” (corner) and “*ugol*” (coal), differentiated by an unpalatalized and palatalized “l” respectively.

Below we list the transliterations of the names of the Global Feminisms Project Russian interviewees with a corresponding guide to pronunciation. Syllables in capital letters indicate that the syllable is under stress. An apostrophe (') indicates that the preceding consonant is palatalized and should be pronounced almost as if you are putting a “y” sound in front of the succeeding vowel, so the demarcation “t'a” would sound like “tya.” In the below guide, “y,” when it constitutes a syllable, is pronounced as a close central unrounded vowel. This is a sound that English does not possess, but it is somewhere in between the “ey” in “hockey” and the “oo” in “boom.” Finally, “kh” is a voiceless velar fricative not used in English words but recognizable to English speakers from Scottish and Yiddish borrowings. “Kh” is pronounced like the “ch” in “loch” or the “ch” in “Chanukah,” and “chutzpah.”

One final note on the transliterations below. “E” in the Library of Congress transliteration can be used to represent both the Russian letters “e” and “ë,” which denote the sounds “ye” and “yo” respectively. This is because Russians do not normally denote graphically the distinction between “e” and “ë,” writing “e” for both. For example, the name “Pushkareva” is pronounced “Push-kə-R'O-və” with an “o” sound.

Library of Congress Transliterated Names	Pronunciation
Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova	yɛ-L'EN-ə YAR-skə-yə-sm'ir-NOV-ə
Natal'ia Iur'evna Kamenetskaia	nə-TAL'-yə YUR'-yev-nə kə-m'i-N'ETS-kə-yə
Elena Viktorovna Kochkina	yɛ-L'EN-ə V'IK-tər-əv-nə KOCH-k'i-nə
Mariia Grigor'evna Kotovskaia	mə-R'I-yə gr'i-GOR'-yiv-nə ka-TOV-skə-yə
Marina Mikhailovna Malysheva	mə-R'I-nə Mi-KHAY-ləv-nə MAL-y-she-və
Mariia Viktorovna Mikhailova	mə-R'I-yə V'IK-tər-əv-nə m'i-KHAY-lə-və
Marianna Georgievna Murav'eva	mə-r'i-AN-nə G'i-OR-g'i-yiv-nə mu-rə-V'O-və
Natal'ia L'vovna Pushkareva	nə-TAL'-yə L'VOV-nə push-kə-R'O-və

Natal'ia Mikhailovna Rimashevskaja nə-TAL'-yə M'i-KHAY-ləv-nə r'i-mə-SHEV-skə-yə

Liubov' Vasil'evna Shtyleva l'u-BOV' və-S'IL'-iv-nə shty-L'O-və

Ol'ga Aleksandrovna Voronina OL'-gə al'-ik-SAN-drəv-nə va-RO-n'i-nə