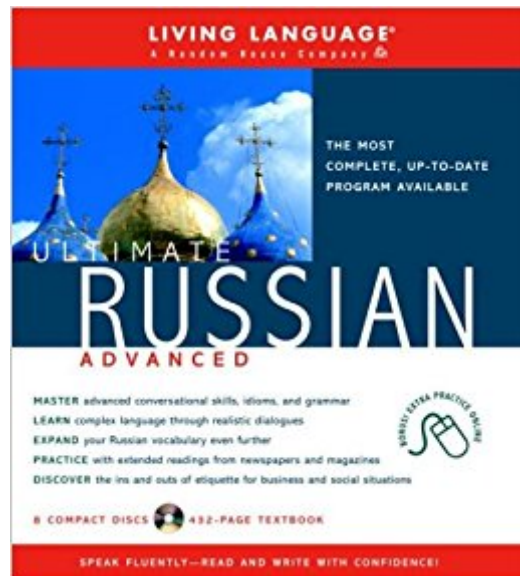


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Ultimate Russian Advanced (CD Pkg) (Ultimate Advanced)



Synopsis

Available September 2003 Created for the serious language-learner, our deluxe Ultimate Russian Advanced course has been revised and updated. It teaches a sophisticated level of conversation and grammar and is equivalent to two years of college study. Free additional exercises are now available on line! Perfect for the businessperson and anyone traveling or living abroad, Ultimate Russian Advanced course contains a 400+ page book with eight 60-minute CDs covering 20 lessons. Each lesson includes lively, up-to-date dialogues, vocabulary, exercises, culture notes, and detailed explanations of grammar and usage. KEY FEATURES: • Ideal for anyone planning to live or conduct business abroad • Includes extensive business vocabulary and details of business etiquette • Free extra practice on line with more than 100 additional practice sections • Updated with new vocabulary and information about culture and everyday life; and now include references to the euro • Now available on CD for ease in moving between lessons • “perfect for use in the car, at the gym, or anywhere you please

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Customer Reviews

• “A really great package for those who do not have the time to sit in a classroom, or the money to spend on two years in a foreign country.” • “Juergen Kempff, Ph.D., Curriculum Director, University of California-Irvine • “Authentic • enlightening and useful” I like the fact that the business section was closely related to the dialogue • makes the learning process more fun and realistic.” • “Marisa Castro Cid, World Trade Institute Language Center

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I bought Ultimate Russian Advanced several months ago hoping to improve my vocabulary, grammar, but most especially my listening comprehension. About the CD's: The book includes four CD's with very crisp, clear recordings of native Russians speaking to one another on topics likely to be encountered by a businessperson traveling and working in Russia, along with a few topics on cuisine, leisure and daily routines such as transportation and shopping. Each recording lasts around three minutes, and is followed by extract sentences from the dialogues that you've just listened to; after each extract sentence or phrase you have several seconds to repeat the native speaker's words and intonation. This type of exercise is very useful for boosting listening comprehension, and one's ability to repeat unfamiliar phrases. As a couple of reviewers noted, the English transcript can be a shade off in meaning from the Russian one, but overall I think the quality and content of the recordings is laudable, especially as this is to my knowledge the only textbook with listening exercises geared for an intermediate to upper-intermediate level student. About the book: I have been living in Russia for over two years and doing my best to learn the language. Frequently, when speaking with Russians, I hear what I think must be exceptions to grammatical rules, and this book has so far done a fine job of giving very practical, very straightforward explanations for many aspects of Russian grammar that had previously left me scratching my head, for example chto-nibud' versus chto-to and chto-libo, the difference between perfective and imperfective command forms, and many others. The grammatical explanations, which are backed up by concrete example from modern, colloquial Russian speech, illustrate these grammar points well. After the

grammar explanations follow written exercises including translation, word order exercises, and fill in the blank, which manage to review the key points from the chapter. While the exercises are useful, there are simply not enough of them- usually about twenty sentences in all, not nearly enough to reinforce knowledge of the grammar points they deal with, especially in chapters where two grammar points get covered. This problem is partly rectified by a link to internet exercises provided in the book, but the real solution would be to buy a separate grammar reference/ workbook to complete the ensemble. A few minor complaints:-One of the chapters refers to an appendix containing a table of Russian numerals declined in all cases, but this table has been for whatever reason left out- an annoying omission requiring some searching in the net for answers.-A few times the answer key and the transcript differ, chiefly on points where more than one answer is possible. A note explaining the difference in meaning between the two answers would be useful.-One point of grammar is omitted: the uncountable plural numerals, which are used with some common Russian nouns such as ochki (eyeglasses), djinsy (jeans), deti (children).-The very, very sticky point of whether to use the perfective or imperfective infinitive with modals is entirely omitted. But to be fair, that topic alone can fill an entire textbook. All told:-The text is useful both as a textbook and as a non-exhaustive reference work covering the most important points of Russian grammar, the CD's are incredibly helpful, and overall after completing a chapter with the listening exercises, one has the feeling of having solidified and expanded one's knowledge of Russian. A good buy.

I don't care if this review is helpful or not. Here are my comments:-The dialogues are often times poorly parsed. You'll be asked to repeat "spacebo" followed in the next line by seemingly the entire text of War and Peace. By the time you get to the end of the sentence, you'll forget half of it and end up faking it with Slavic sounding gibberish.-The dialogues are also, as others have noted, loosely translated. You'll need a dictionary to learn the literal translation. It would have been helpful if the translation accompanied the text, as it does in the Beginner-Intermediate. Also, where liberties are taken with translation, parenthetical call-outs would have been a good touch.-Many of the dialogues are seemingly geared toward the international businessperson. For instance, I do not know what an L/C is, and I don't care how to say it in Russian. I also doubt I will have a need to converse about the liquidity and market capitalization of my joint business venture. However, clearly the intent was to appeal to a wide audience, so the creators cannot be faulted for attempting to generate as wide an appeal as possible in this niche market.-A list of new vocabulary at the end of each chapter, as is present in the Beginner-Intermediate set, should have been included. Cutting these lists was not a good editing decision. All in all, a very helpful set, but the complexity of some of the words and

concepts, which are never fully explained or identified, will lead to some head scratching and hair pulling, which you are probably doing anyway, since you are trying to learn Russian.

The dialogues are both the greatest strength and the most frustrating element in this book. The good news is that the dialogues are interesting and reasonably current, covering a variety of important issues and circumstances that travelers in Russia are likely to encounter. But, as another reviewer noted, the translations are very loose, and sometimes the English reads like an abridged version of the Russian. Meanwhile, each chapter introduces new vocabulary at a prodigious rate, so you're drinking from a fire hose. I often found that I couldn't figure out exactly what a particular Russian word means by consulting the English translation. It did not help that many of the words in the dialogues are not in the glossary at the back of the book. I learned to ignore the glossary and use a dictionary instead, but that is an inconvenience. The "strictly business" sections at the back of each chapter are interesting and informative discussions of a variety of topics related to doing business in Russia, though they're gradually becoming outdated because a lot has changed since the book was written.

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