

RUSSIAN – General Characteristics
(Adapted and used with permission from David Alan Stern’s Acting With An Accent: Russian)

For more in-depth study, see Stern’s CD and booklet

Listen to the following example from the International Dialects of English Archive web site:

<http://web.ku.edu/~idea/europe/russia/russia6.mp3>

GENERAL FOCUS OF TONE: Back in throat.

VOWEL SUBSTITUTIONS:

i becomes ɪə as in: *feet, seem, dream*

ɪ becomes ɪə as in: *sit, within, rip*

ε becomes ɪə as in: *when, get, sentence*

eɪ becomes εə as in: *great, waiting, save*

æ sometimes becomes ε as in: *hammer, catalog, back*
 and sometimes becomes ɑ as in: *laugh, romance, chance*
 and sometimes becomes a as in: *hammer, catalog, back*

ʌ becomes ɒ as in: *mother, rudder, blood*

u becomes ʊə as in: *blue, shoes, sooner*

ou becomes ə as in: *go, boast, toast*

ɑ becomes ɔ as in: *rocket, sonic, honor*

CONSONANTS:

r is trilled or tapped as in: *red, rose, remember*

Voiced consonants in the final and sometimes medial positions, become unvoiced, as in: *Bob, wedding, wise*

v and w are often reversed; and some speakers use a sound that is a blend of each, as in: *very, wishing, wonderful*

θ becomes t and the sound is dentalized, as in: *think, thin, Thursday*

ð becomes d and the sound is dentalized, as in: *these, them, those*

Initial h has a throaty, aspirated quality, as in: *happy, helpful, harmony*