



RUSSIAN RHYTHMS

LEARN THROUGH
SONGS

VOL.
1



INTERMEDIATE

B1/B2

- 10 songs with
- lyrics
- translations
- vocabulary
- grammar
- exercises



Russian

Rhythms

Learn Through Songs

Vol. 1



lingualism

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Sample

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION iv

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK vi

TRACK 1 - Осталась тень 1

Song Title 1

Key Words 2

First Look at the Lyrics 5

Breakdown 7

Lyrics 12

Translation 13

TRACK 2 - Ну и ладно! 14

Song Title 14

Key Words 17

First Look at the Lyrics 17

Breakdown 19

Lyrics 22

Translation 23

TRACK 3 - Танцуй, как хочешь! 24

Song Title 24

Key Words 25

First Look at the Lyrics 26

Breakdown 27

Lyrics 32

Translation 33

TRACK 4 - Вместе навсегда 34

Song Title 34

Key Words 36

First Look at the Lyrics 38

Breakdown 39

Lyrics 43

Translation 44

TRACK 5 - Жизнь на районе 45

Song Title 45

Key Words 47

First Look at the Lyrics 49

Breakdown 50

Lyrics 55

Translation 56

TRACK 6 - Сильнее всех 57

Song Title 57

Key Words 58

First Look at the Lyrics 59

Breakdown 60

Lyrics 66

Translation 67

TRACK 7 - Ох уж этот русский! 68

Song Title 68

Key Words 69

First Look at the Lyrics 72

Breakdown_73

Lyrics_77

Translation_78

TRACK 8 - Ночь для нас 79

Song Title_79

Key Words_80

First Look at the Lyrics_81

Breakdown_82

Lyrics_87

Translation_89

TRACK 9 - Ты - моё сердце 91

Song Title_91

Key Words_94

First Look at the Lyrics_95

Breakdown_96

Lyrics_100

Translation_101

TRACK 10 - Это мой день 102

Song Title_102

Key Words_104

First Look at the Lyrics_106

Breakdown_107

Lyrics_112

Translation_114

INTRODUCTION

If you love music and you're learning Russian, this book is for you. With ten original, catchy songs written just for learners, you'll train your ear, boost your vocabulary, and finally start to understand real spoken Russian—while actually enjoying yourself. Whether you're into ballads, pop, rap, or upbeat dance tracks, there's something here for you.

This book is designed for **intermediate learners of Russian (around B1–B2 level)** who want to strengthen their listening skills through engaging, level-appropriate content. Popular Russian music can be a challenge—full of slang, fast speech, and complex grammar that often overwhelms learners. And using commercial songs would have meant dealing with prohibitive, restrictive licensing. So instead, we created something better suited to your needs.

The lyrics were written by Artem Orlov, with the help of AI to explore ideas and phrasing, and the music itself was generated using cutting-edge AI tools. Together, Artem and I (Matthew Aldrich) developed the book's content to guide you through each song, step by step.

The result is a unique listening experience:

- **A range of genres and moods**—from slow ballads to rap, upbeat dance to humorous storytelling.
- **A mix of repeated vocabulary**, to reinforce what you've learned, and **new words** in every track to expand your knowledge.

- A structure that helps you not just “hear” Russian, but actually understand how it works—vocabulary, grammar, and meaning.

We designed this book with **self-learners** in mind. Whether you’re learning on your own or supplementing another course, these ten tracks will train your ear, deepen your confidence, and help make Russian feel more natural, musical, and fun.

So grab your headphones, listen often, and enjoy the rhythm of learning!

Sample

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Each unit of this book is called a **Track**—just like on an album—and takes you through one original song, building your skills step by step. You can go through the tracks in order, as they gradually build listening strategies and reinforce patterns, **or jump around** and start with the songs that interest you most. It's up to you!

Here's how each Track works:

Song Title

A short intro to the title and key concepts in the line—sometimes grammar, sometimes culture, sometimes idioms.

First Listening

You'll listen without reading. Just get a feel for the music and see how much you can catch on your own.

Key Words

We highlight important words and phrases. You'll listen for them, guess meanings, and explore them more deeply—building vocabulary and context awareness.

First Look at the Lyrics

Now it's time to look at the lyrics—and the English translation. Read through the Russian lyrics slowly (with or without the music) and see how much you can figure out from the context. Then, check the English translation to confirm your understanding and fill in any gaps. You might be surprised by how much you've already picked up just by listening! Try to resist the urge to reach for a dictionary—this is a chance to train your intuition and rely on what the song itself gives you.

Breakdown

This is where we go line by line and explain what’s happening in the Russian. We break down:

- Grammar points (like verb aspect, cases, and conjugation)
- Vocabulary (including short-form adjectives, reflexive verbs, slang, and more)
- Phrases and structures that might look strange at first—but make sense once explained

Some units include special exercises or quizzes, always with the goal of deepening your understanding and training your ear to listen with more accuracy and confidence.

You’ll learn best by listening **more than once**—try shadowing the singer, repeating key lines, and revisiting older tracks as you move forward. The more you listen, the more you’ll understand.

Enjoy your journey—and happy listening!



Free Accompanying Audio

Visit www.lingualism.com/audio, where you can find the free accompanying audio to download or stream.

TRACK 1

Осталась тень

Song Title

Before listening to the song, let's take a look at the title: **Осталась тень**

- **тень** – This noun means shadow or shade. It is **feminine**, as indicated by the soft sign (ь) at the end. Many feminine nouns in Russian end this way.
- **оста́лась** – This is a **perfective past tense verb**, meaning remained, was left, stayed. It is in the **feminine singular form** because it agrees with the noun **тень**. You may recognize the verb **оста́ться**, which is a **reflexive verb**.

Word Order in Russian

Unlike English, Russian word order is very flexible. Even though we might expect a sentence like Тень осталась (literally “The shadow has remained”), the words here are reversed. This is a common stylistic choice in Russian, especially in poetry and song lyrics.

Listen for These Lines

When you eventually listen to the song, you'll hear the title **Оста́лась тень** in the **third line**. Later, in the chorus, you'll hear:

Но лишь тень остаётся у меня́.

(But only a shadow remains with me.)

остаётся comes from **оставаться**, the **imperfective** counterpart of **остаться**

The **perfective past tense** suggests something was left behind as a result of a past event.

The **imperfective present tense** (**остаётся**) describes an ongoing state: the shadow continues to remain.

First Listening

Now, listen to the song. Don't worry if you don't understand everything yet. Instead, focus on recognizing the key lines we looked at above and see how they fit with the melody.

Also, try to catch other basic, familiar words, such as:

твой (your) **это** (this, it) **нет** (there isn't)

Enjoy the song and see how much you can pick up the first time round!

Key Words

Every song has certain words that carry its main emotions and ideas. By focusing on these, you can better understand the song's meaning, even if you don't catch every word. Below are ten important words from *Осталась тень* in the exact forms they appear in the lyrics. Many of them appear more than once and help create the song's atmosphere of longing, loss, and memory.

Second Listening

As you listen **for the second time**, don't worry about the meaning. You may already know some of these words, while others may be new to you. In any case, simply **try to catch them as you listen** and check the boxes on the next page:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> тепло́ | <input type="checkbox"/> в пустоте́ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> в се́рдце | <input type="checkbox"/> при́зрак |
| <input type="checkbox"/> грусть | <input type="checkbox"/> ни судьбу́ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> дождь | <input type="checkbox"/> мечту́ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> с ве́тром | <input type="checkbox"/> откры́та |

Even if you don't catch every word right away, just listening for them will help train your ear for Russian. After this step, we'll look at their meanings in more detail!

Understanding the Meanings

Now that you've listened for the words in the song, let's focus on their meanings. Below, you'll see the ten key words in their **base forms** (dictionary form). Next to each word, there's a blank space where you should write the correct English translation.

To help you, a box on the right contains all ten translations, but they are in random order. Match each word with the correct meaning!

Exercise: Write the English translations.

1. тепло́ _____
2. се́рдце _____
3. грусть _____
4. дождь _____
5. ве́тер _____
6. пустота́ _____
7. при́зрак _____
8. судьба́ _____
9. мечта́ _____
10. откры́тый _____

fate
rain
warmth
sadness
heart
emptiness
wind
dream
open
ghost

After you complete the exercise, check your answers below and see how many you got right!

Symbolism in the Song

Now that you know the meanings of the key words, let's go deeper into their symbolism in the song. Below, you'll see the ten words with their English translations. Each word has a deeper meaning in the lyrics, and these explanations are listed in **random order** below and continued on the next page, each labeled with a letter (A–J).

Your Task: Match each word to the correct explanation by writing the corresponding letter next to it.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. теплó – warmth ____ | 6. пустотá – emptiness ____ |
| 2. сéрдце – heart ____ | 7. прíзрак – ghost ____ |
| 3. грусть – sadness ____ | 8. судьбá – fate ____ |
| 4. дождь – rain ____ | 9. мечтá – dream ____ |
| 5. вéтер – wind ____ | 10. открýтый – open ____ |

Explanation Bank (Random Order)

- A. Captures the emotional core of the lyrics.
- B. Represents the comfort and affection that has now faded into darkness.
- C. Symbolizes fleeting words, memories, and the passage of time.
- D. The final hopeful note, suggesting that despite loss, there is still a chance for return.
- E. Emphasizes the absence and emotional hollowness left behind.
- F. Used in contrast to reality, symbolizing what has been taken away.

- G. Tied to the theme of loss and the uncontrollable passage of time.
- H. A metaphor for memories that feel real but are no longer tangible.
- I. A recurring image linked to loss, longing, and searching.
- J. A key symbol of emotion, love, and inner pain.

After completing the exercise, check your answers below and see how well you understood the song's deeper meaning!

Answers: 1. B, 2. J, 3. A, 4. I, 5. C, 6. E, 7. H, 8. G, 9. F, 10. D

Listen Again with Understanding

Now that you've explored the key vocabulary and the deeper meanings behind the lyrics, it's time to listen again, this time with a **new perspective**.

As you listen:

- Pay attention to how these words are used in the song.
- Notice how the emotions and imagery connect to the music.
- Try to hear not just individual words, but the **bigger picture** they create together.

This step will help reinforce your understanding and allow you to experience the song **more fully**.

First Look at the Lyrics

Read Along

Now, let's read the lyrics **while listening to the song**. You're bound to recognize many words that you didn't catch when just listening. That's completely normal! Listening is generally harder

than reading in a foreign language, and this step will help reinforce what you've learned.

Refer to the full lyrics at the end of the unit (p. 12) and follow along as you listen again.

Study the Lyrics Without Music

Next, take a moment to read the lyrics **on your own**, without the music. See how much you can understand **without looking at the English translation just yet**.

- Try to recognize words and phrases you've already learned.
- Pay attention to verb forms, noun endings, and word order.
- Don't worry if you don't understand everything yet. This is part of the process!

Study the English Translation

Once you've read through the Russian lyrics, compare them with the **English translation** (on p. 13).

- This will help you understand even more.
- Some words or grammar structures may still be unclear. That's okay!
- You **don't need to match up every word perfectly** at this stage.

Breakdown

In this section, we'll **analyze the song line by line**. We'll break down:

- **Words and phrases**
- **Grammar points** (gender, cases, verb conjugations, etc.)
- **How the lines fit together in Russian**

This step will **fill in the gaps** and help you **fully grasp** the song's language and meaning!

Verse 1

Я помню гóлос твой, как э́хо в пустотé

- **Я помню** – I remember (1st person singular, present tense)
- **голос твой** – your voice (голос – masculine noun, твой – possessive pronoun for your)
- **как э́хо в пустоте** – like an echo in the void
 - **как** – like
 - **пустота** – emptiness or void (feminine noun, used in prepositional case: в пустоте)

Тепло́ твои́х рук раство́рилось в темнотé

- **тепло** – warmth (neuter noun)
- **твоих рук** – your hands (рука – hand is feminine; here in genitive plural: of your hands)
- **растворилось** – dissolved (past tense, neuter singular, referring to тепло)
- **в темноте** – in the darkness (темнота – darkness, in prepositional case)

Оста́лась тень от на́ших дней

- **Осталась** – remained (past tense, feminine, agreeing with тень)
- **тень** – shadow (feminine noun)
- **от наших дней** – from our days (дней is genitive plural of день, day)

А в се́рдце то́лько дождь и грусть тепе́рь

- **в сердце** – in (my) heart (сердце is neuter, prepositional case)
- **только дождь и грусть теперь** – only rain and sadness now
 - **дождь** – rain (masculine noun)
 - **грусть** – sadness (feminine noun)
 - **теперь** – now (contrasts past happiness with current sorrow)

Chorus

Ты ушла́, и мне не верну́ть

- **Ты ушла** – You left (past tense, ушла is feminine form of уйти)
- **и мне не вернуть** – and I can't bring (it) back
 - **вернуть** – to return, bring back (infinitive)
 - **мне не вернуть** – impersonal structure meaning I cannot return (it) (literally “to me, it is not returnable”)

Все слова́, что с ве́тром улетели́ в ночь

- **все слова** – all the words (слова – plural form of слово, word)

- **что с ветром улетели в ночь** – that flew away with the wind into the night
 - **с ветром** – with the wind (instrumental case)
 - **улетели** – flew away (past tense, plural, agreeing with слова)
 - **в ночь** – into the night (accusative case)

Я ищú тебя в каплях дождя

- **Я ищú** – I search for (1st person singular, present tense)
- **тебя** – you (accusative case)
- **в каплях дождя** – in the drops of rain
 - **каплях** – drops (prepositional plural of капля)
 - **дождя** – of rain (genitive singular of дождь)

Но лишь тень остаётся у меня

- **но лишь тень** – but only a shadow
- **остаётся у меня** – remains with me
 - **остаётся** – remains, stays (present tense, 3rd person singular)
 - **у меня** – with me (possessive structure using у + genitive)

Verse 2

Когда-то мир был пóлон свёта и огня

- **Когда-то** – Once (in the past)
- **мир был полон света и огня** – the world was full of light and fire
 - **полон** – full of (short-form adjective, agreeing with мир)
 - **света и огня** – of light and fire (both in genitive case)

Но без тебя здесь нет ни солнца, ни дня

- **Но без тебя** – But without you
- **здесь нет ни солнца, ни дня** – there is neither sun nor day here
 - **ни... ни...** – neither... nor...
 - **нет** – there is no (requires genitive case: солнца, дня)

Я закрываю глаза, вижу твой силуэт

- **Я закрываю глаза** – I close my eyes
- **вижу твой силуэт** – I see your silhouette
 - **вижу** – I see (1st person singular)
 - **силуэт** – silhouette (masculine noun)

Но это призрак, это не ты... больше нет

- **Но это призрак** – But it's a ghost
- **это не ты... больше нет** – It's not you... (you're) no longer here

Bridge

Знаешь, я не виню ни тебя, ни судьбу

- **Знаешь** – You know (2nd person singular, present tense)
- **я не виню ни тебя, ни судьбу** – I don't blame either you or fate
 - **виню** – I blame (1st person singular, present)
 - **судьбу** – fate (accusative case of судьба)

Просто время течёт, забирая мечту

- **Просто время течёт** – Time just flows
- **забирая мечту** – taking the dream away
- **забирая** – taking away (present participle, active)

- **мечту** – dream (accusative case of **мечта**)

Но ёсли вдруг ты вспóмнишь меня́

- **Но если вдруг** – But if suddenly
- **ты вспомнишь меня** – you remember me (**вспомнишь** – 2nd person singular, future/present)

Моя́ дверь для тебя́ откры́та всегда́...

- **Моя дверь** – My door
- **для тебя открыта всегда** – is always open for you
 - **открыта** – open (short-form adjective, feminine)

Sample

Lyrics

Осталась тень

Куплет 1

Я помню голос твой, как эхо в пустоте,
Тепло твоих рук растворилось в темноте.
Осталась тень от наших дней,
А в сердце только дождь и грусть теперь.

Припев

Ты ушла, и мне не вернуть
Все слова, что с ветром улетели в ночь.
Я ищу тебя в каплях дождя,
Но лишь тень остаётся у меня.

Куплет 2

Когда-то мир был полон света и огня,
Но без тебя здесь нет ни солнца, ни дня.
Я закрываю глаза, вижу твой силуэт,
Но это призрак, это не ты... больше нет.

(Припев)

Бридж

Знаешь, я не виню ни тебя, ни судьбу,
Просто время течёт, забирая мечту.
Но если вдруг ты вспомнишь меня,
Моя дверь для тебя открыта всегда...

(Припев)

Translation

Only a Shadow Remains

Verse 1
I remember your voice, like an echo in the void,
The warmth of your hands dissolved into the dark.
Only a shadow remains from our days,
And in my heart, only rain and sorrow now.

Chorus
You left, and I can't bring back
All the words that flew away with the wind into the night.
I search for you in the drops of rain,
But only a shadow remains with me.

Verse 2
Once the world was full of light and fire,
But without you, there is no sun, no day.
I close my eyes, I see your silhouette,
But it's just a ghost, it's not you... not anymore.

(Chorus)

Bridge
You know, I don't blame you or fate,
Time just flows, taking dreams away.
But if one day you remember me,
My door will always be open for you...

(Chorus)

TRACK 2

Ну и ладно!

Song Title

This song is playful, upbeat, and full of everyday frustrations turned into reasons to shrug and smile. The title **Ну и ладно!** can be translated in lots of ways: Oh well!, Whatever!, Let it go!, or No big deal! It's the kind of thing you say when you decide not to stress over the little things.

Not Just Words. It's an Idiom!

At first glance, “**Ну и ладно!**” might seem like just a string of basic words, but together, they form a **common idiom** that doesn't quite translate literally. Let's break it down **word by word** first, then look at the expression as a whole.

- **Ну** – A filler word, similar to well or so in English.
Example: Ну, пойдём! – “Well, let's go!”
- **и** – This is the basic conjunction and that you probably already know.
Example: Мама и папа – “Mom and Dad”
- **ладно** – A flexible word that can mean okay, fine, alright, depending on the context.
Example: Ладно, я согласен – “Alright, I agree.”

When learning a language, it's important to remember that idioms can't be understood by translating each word individually. Even if you know all the words in a phrase, the meaning as a whole may be completely different.

“Ну и ладно!” is one of those phrases. Word for word, it looks simple: “well and okay.” But together, it forms an idiomatic expression.

It carries the tone of brushing something off or deciding not to stress about it. Like many idioms, it needs to be learned and remembered as a set phrase, not pieced together word by word.

Other Similar Phrases in the Song

The song features several other phrases with a similar “whatever, it’s fine” attitude. These are all idiomatic expressions, so their **real meaning is different from the literal translation**. Pay attention to how they’re used in context:

- **Ну и пусть!** – So what! / Let it be!
(literally “Well and let [it]”)
- **Эх, что подéлать!** – Eh, what can you do!
(literally “Eh, what to do”)
- **Ай, да ладно!** – Ah, whatever!
(literally “Ah, yes okay”)
- **Ну и что?** – So what?
(literally “Well and what?”)
- **Ничегоо стра́шного!** – No big deal!
(literally “Nothing scary”)
- **Фиг с ним!** – Screw it! (colloquial)
(literally “A fig with him”) – a very informal way of saying “Forget it” or “Whatever!”

TRACK 3

Танцуй, как хочешь!

Song Title

The title **Танцуй, как хочешь!** literally means:

- **Танцуй** – Dance! (imperative of танцевать)
- **как хочешь** – how you want (literally “as you want”; хочешь is the 2nd person singular present of хотеть – to want)

Put together, the phrase means: “**Dance how you want!**”

It’s a clear command, but also an expression of **freedom, individuality, and confidence**. The title sets the tone for the entire song: be yourself, move your way, ignore the rules.

First Listening

This song is packed with **imperative verbs** (commands) that encourage action, movement, and self-expression. As you listen for the **first time**, focus on **hearing the commands** and **check them off** when you hear them:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Иди – Go / walk! | <input type="checkbox"/> Танцуй – Dance! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Слушай – Listen! | <input type="checkbox"/> Двигай – Move! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Забудь – Forget! | <input type="checkbox"/> Не прячь – Don’t hide! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Лови – Catch! | <input type="checkbox"/> Не смотри – Don’t look! |

Try to notice how these verbs **sound**, their **intonation, stress**, and the way they drive the rhythm of the song. They aren’t just grammar; they carry emotion.

TRACK 4

Вместе навсегда

Song Title

The title **Вместе навсегда** means “**Together Forever.**” It’s made up of two key adverbs:

- **вместе** – together
 - This adverb describes doing something **with someone**, in the same place or as a unit.
 - Example: Мы вместе гуляем. – We are walking together.
- **навсегда** – forever
 - This adverb expresses **permanence**, something that will last for all time.
 - It’s made up of на (for) + всегда (always).

Together, they carry a deep emotional meaning: a promise of lasting connection, no matter what.

Other Useful Adverbs in the Song

This song is full of **adverbs of time, place, and degree**, the kinds of words that give **emotion, rhythm, and nuance** to how we describe actions.

Here are a few you’ll hear:

- **рядом** – nearby, close by
Она всегда рядом со мной. – She’s always close by.
- **вместе** – together
Мы работаем вместе. – We work together.

TRACK 5

Жизнь на районе

Song Title

The title of this song, **Жизнь на районе**, literally means “**Life in the Hood.**” But to fully understand its meaning (and its tone), we need to look more closely at the grammar and slang behind the phrase.

На районе vs. В районе

In standard Russian, the phrase would usually be:

в районе – in the district / neighborhood

But here, the song uses **на районе**—a **nonstandard, slangy version**.

Why is this important? Because **switching the preposition from “в” (in) to “на” (on)** changes more than just the grammar. It changes the **feel** of the word **район**.

- **в районе** is neutral and formal, how you’d describe a neighborhood on a map or in a real estate ad.
- **на районе** is informal and rooted in **urban slang**. It’s how people from the streets talk about their neighborhood, their turf.

This is exactly what makes **на районе** feel more like “**in the hood**” than just “in the neighborhood.”

TRACK 7

Ох уж этот русский!

Song Title

The title **Ох уж этот русский!** translates to “Oh, This Russian!” – a phrase that perfectly captures the frustration every Russian learner knows all too well. You’ve probably cursed the seemingly unnecessarily complicated grammar: the verb conjugations, the use of cases, the countless irregularities, and of course, the ever-shifting stress. This song embraces that struggle with humor, honesty, and a whole lot of determination.

Let’s break it down:

- **Ох** – an exclamation, like “Oh!” or “Ugh!” depending on tone.
- **уж** – a little filler word that adds emphasis, hard to translate directly, but it reinforces frustration or intensity.
- **этот русский** – this Russian (meaning the language, not a person).

So the full phrase has a tone of **playful exasperation**. The singer is clearly struggling, but he’s still in the game!

Russian can feel like a wild puzzle: **stress that moves, verbs with pairs, cases that change everything**, and words that seem impossible to pronounce. This song taps into that feeling: the confusion, the mistakes, the “Wait... why is it люди and not челове́ки?” moments.

TRACK 8

НОЧЬ ДЛЯ НАС

Song Title

The title **Ночь для нас** means “A Night for Us.” Simple, right? But it’s also a great reminder of how Russian handles pronouns after prepositions, something learners often forget.

Let’s break it down:

- **но́чь** – night (feminine noun, in the nominative case here)
- **для** – for (a preposition that always takes the **genitive case**)
- **нас** – us (genitive form of мы)

So even though “we” in Russian is мы, after для it becomes нас. It’s a completely different form (and one that often trips learners up), but it’s used **all the time** in natural Russian.

Here’s a quick refresher on **personal pronouns in the genitive case** (used after prepositions like для, у, без, от, etc.):

Pronoun	Nominative	Genitive
I	я	меня
you (sing.)	ты	тебя
he	он	него
she	она	неё
we	мы	нас
you (pl.)	вы	вас
they	они	них



This is a great warm-up before reading the lyrics. You'll be surprised how much you recognize once you've given your ears a chance to adjust!

Next up, we'll take a closer look at the lyrics themselves.

First Look at the Lyrics

Well! You've already seen all the lyrics... just in a very different format, **scattered in a word cloud**.

Now it's time to see them in order, in their full emotional context.

Don't worry about understanding everything. This first listen is just about **getting a feel** for the rhythm, tone, and everyday life described in the lyrics.

Ready? Hit play and enjoy!

Key Words

Imperfective and Perfective Verbs

This song follows a typical day, from morning routine to evening relaxation, and it gives us a great chance to observe **how Russian uses verb aspects** to describe different kinds of actions.

Imperfective Verbs = Ongoing or Repeated Actions

Most of the verbs in the song are **imperfective**. That's because they describe **routine** or **habitual** actions, things the speaker does regularly, or activities that are in progress when we "see" them in the song.

For example:

- **я проыпáюсь** (I wake up)
- **я чйщу зúбы** (I brush my teeth)
- **я слúшаю мýзыку** (I listen to music)

These aren't dramatic, one-time events. They're just part of everyday life.

Perfective Verbs = One-Time, Completed Actions

But not everything in the song is repetitive! The speaker also mentions a few **specific, completed actions**, things that will happen once and be done.