

No Pain, No Exit

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Вход: entrance, door, input, admission

Вход (entrance) and выход (exit) are crucial words to know and among the first we foreigners master in Moscow.

In the earliest stages of my Russian language acquisition, I recall being aggrieved that the words were deceptively similar, distinguished from one another solely by the little squiggle of the letter “ы.” This was after I misread them at a metro station, and the ВЫХОД door I was trying to enter was smashed smartly in my face by a flood of departing passengers.

Pain is a great motivator. I never made that mistake again.

Like many common Russian words, вход and выход have multiple meanings that English conveys with a variety of words. To start with the basics, вход, from the verb *входить* (to enter), is any kind of door or entryway. It may be useful to know that what English-speakers call the front door is *входная дверь*, but a back door is either *чёрный* or *служебный вход*. If

you live in a fancier place than I do, your front door might be парадный вход (formal entrance), which is also the term used for the main or grand entrance to a theater or public building.

It's very important to know that the ubiquitous вход воспрещён sign means "no admittance" or "no trespassing." Its lengthier version, посторонним вход воспрещён is usually rendered as "no admittance to unauthorized personnel" in English. I take issue with the standard metro sign нет входа (literally, "no entrance"). It doesn't sound categorical enough. If I were queen of the metro, I'd paint big ВЫХОД signs on the door, to be mentally translated as "exit only."

Вход also refers to admission or entry to a place. In English, we ask: How much do tickets cost? In Russian you might ask: Сколько стоит вход? (How much is admission?)

There are lots of ways to get into a place in Russian: вход платный (there is an admission fee), вход свободный or бесплатный (entrance is free of charge), or вход по билетам (admission by ticket), по приглашениям (by invitation), по пропускам (by pass or employee/state ID), or строго по паспорту (only by passport).

If you're trying to get into a nightclub, in addition to фейс-контроль (face control) and дресс-код (dress code), you might be asked to pay плата за вход (cover charge).

On the computer, your e-mail program has directories for входящие and исходящие сообщения (incoming and outgoing messages). In the real world of offices, these files are often notebooks marked входящая and исходящая with the word корреспонденция (correspondence) understood. In English, these all might be referred to as the inbox and outbox. In the virtual world, after typing in your логин (login) and пароль (password) you hit a button labeled вход or войти. This is called вход для зарегистрированных пользователей, which in English is usually "for registered users only."

Вход is also used to describe any kind of arrival or entrance. When translating, it's often easier to turn the Russian noun вход into an English verbal phrase. Some entrances are risky, like вход на рынок новой фирмы (a new firm getting into the market). Some are delusional, like this not-so-grammatically correct claim: Возможен вход войск НАТО и США в Туркменистан под предлогом блокады Ирана (NATO and U.S. troops might be deployed in Turkmenistan under the pretext of a blockade of Iran).

Oh, wait — maybe I just entered an alternative reality.

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