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Stocking Up on Character, or a Multi-Purpose Russian Word

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Склад: warehouse, mindset

In my never-ending search for the most confusing aspects of the Russian language, I've stumbled across this: one word that means both a warehouse and a way of thinking, and has a verb that can mean adding, making up, putting together or storing. Pretty cool, right?

The word is
склад, which comes from the verb
класть (to place). The storehouse part is
obvious – it's a place where things are put: Книги на складе нет и в ближайшее время не ожидается (We don't have that book in the warehouse and don't expect to get it any time soon.)

Small tricky thing: in the plural, the stress stays on the first syllable. So now you know how

to say this properly: На складах издательств пылятся миллионы экземпляров непроданных книг (Millions of unsold books are gathering dust in the publishing house's book depositories.)

Склад isn't just the storehouse. It can also be the things being stored: Склад оружия обнаружен полицией в
московской квартире (A stockpile of arms was discovered by the police in a Moscow apartment.)

You can also talk about
складские помещения (warehouses) or use the handy verb
складывать, which is what you do with things in a
склад: Крестьяне складывали сено
(The peasants were stocking up hay.) But the notion of "grouping things together" that is at the heart of складывать takes some interesting turns. It can mean to add up:
Учёные
знают показатели российской экономики и умеют складывать цифры (The scholars know Russian economic indicators and know how to add up the figures.) Or to place things in a particular way:
Они складывают картинки из мозаики (They make pictures out
of mosaics.) Or fold in a special way:
Как складывать салфетки: 60 способов (How to fold
napkins: 60 different ways.) And you can even put together stories: О нём
складывали легенды (People made up legends about him.)

And then there is
склад in the sense of the character of something or someone, a way of
thinking. Here it's a stretch to see how the original sense of placing or putting morphed into mentality. Perhaps it's the notion of how information or emotions are put together in your mind — how you're wired, as it were. In any case, it can mean a type of person:
Север
формирует людей особого склада (The northern climate casts people from a certain mold.) Or a certain way of thinking about things: Начальником медицинской части он ни по складу, ни
по духу своему не был (He wasn't meant to be the head of medical corps — he didn't have the right mindset or spirit.) Причина её
снисходительности к невестке заключалась в совершенно чуждом складе ума (The reason she was condescending to her daughter-in-law was that she had an entirely different mentality.) Приехали работать люди очень разных складов. (Very different types of people came here to work.)

And this is dated, but you still might hear it:
склад in the sense of a syllable: Она читать-то
по складам едва научилась (She could barely read by sounding out the word syllable by syllable.) Small tricky thing, part two: when you use
склад in this sense in the plural, the
stress is on the suffix.

To sum up: Складывается впечатление, что в складе хранится склад идей для людей одного склада ума (You get the sense that in the storehouse there is a store of ideas for people of the same mindset.)

Got it?

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