

“Russian Sign Language [rsl] (A language of Russia)

- **Alternate Names:** Russkij Âzyk Žestov
- **Population:** 121,000 in Russian Federation (2010 census). 715,000 (2014 IMB).
- **Location:** Scattered. Moscow and Saint Petersburg are major centers.
- **Language Status:** 5 (Developing).
- **Dialects:** Reported historical connections to sign languages in Austria and France, but not obvious from extensive wordlist comparison (Bickford 2005). Higher lexical similarity to sign languages in Ukraine and Moldova (Bickford 2005). Significant dialect variation.
- **Typology:** One-handed fingerspelling (Cyrillic script).
- **Language Use:** Hundreds of residential schools for deaf; some vocational schools, mainly oralist. Deaf associations and athletic clubs. Signed interpretation required in court and used at important public events. Many sign language classes for hearing people. Organization for sign language teachers.
- **Language Development:** Films. TV. Videos. Dictionary.
- **Other Comments:** First school for the deaf opened at Pavlovsk near St. Petersburg in 1806. Reported to also be used in Federal Republics such as Chechnya; in countries formerly part of the Soviet Union, such as Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In some of these locations, other sign languages are also reported to be used; but it is not known to what extent these are separate distinct sign languages, related sign languages or dialects of RSL. Christian (Orthodox).”

Lewis, M. Paul, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.)

2015. Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Eighteenth edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.

Related Readings

Kimmelman, Vadim

2012 Word Order in Russian Sign Language. *Sign Language Studies* 12(4): 414-827.

Kimmelman, Vadim

2009 Parts of Speech in Russian Sign Language: The Role of Iconicity and Economy. *Sign Language & Linguistics* 12(2): 161.

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