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# Improving writing skills and abilities of students studying the Russian language

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**Abstract.** This article discusses the problems that a teacher faces when preparing students, both for writing various types of letters and written statements on given topics. Based on own experience of working with students, the author offers practical recommendations for improving the skills and abilities of writing among students studying the Russian language.

Key words: Style of speech, approach, creative writing, logicality of presentation, coherence of statement, verbosity, summary, statement.

### Introduction

In the process of Russian language learning, students should master orthographic literacy and be able to express their thoughts consistently, accurately and clearly, as well as grammatically correct.

Therefore, one of the most important tasks of learning the Russian language remains the formation of strong spelling skills among students, since spelling literate writing is an essential element of the general language culture and possession of it is necessary for every educated person, which is determined by the function of language as a means of communicating people with each other in various fields of activity.

Written speech, one of the essential aspects of which is orthography, is no less important than oral speech in the process of communication. In written speech it is necessary to observe not only orthographic, but also grammatical, punctuation and stylistic norms in order to understand the meaning of what is written.

The state of orthographic and speech literacy of students is not satisfactory in most universities until recently. The number of unsuccessful students in "Russian written" usually prevails and decreases very slowly. At the same time, the level of language culture in students' written works is also not satisfactory yet.

The low level of students' written speech culture is explained primarily by the fact that the practice of teaching Russian language still maintains such a situation, when the teaching of orthography is carried out in isolation from the development of speech and absorbs the maximum time allotted by the curriculum for the study of the Russian language, and the processes of

formation of orthographic and speech skills are developed in parallel, with little contact with each other.

In the process of teaching Russian, students should constantly and consistently develop their ability to express their thoughts in writing in Russian. In written work, not only literacy is assessed, but also richness and variety of vocabulary, logicality of presentation, coherence of the statement, composition and compliance with the stylistic norms of the studied language.

So, what are the challenges students face in mastering the required writing formats? Firstly, there is the struggle with verbosity. One and the same idea, expressed in many different ways, is often a reflection of anxiety about not being understood correctly, as well as an attempt to convey and defend one's point of view to the reader. Students need to be weaned from repetition and taught to articulate their arguments intelligently and logically. Secondly, many students are reluctant to use the so-called introductory words, and when assessing current and examination written works, the presence and correct use of introductory words, i.e. means of logical connection, is one of the criteria directly affecting the grade. The teacher is faced with the task of explaining the necessity of using the means of logical connection. Thirdly, there are problems with the division of the text into paragraphs, as a result of which the logicality of the statement is violated. Fourthly, due to a small stock of words, vocabulary is used incorrectly, some violations in the use of vocabulary can make it difficult to understand what is written. And extremely limited vocabulary does not allow to fulfil the communicative task at all. Finally, there are numerous grammar mistakes at the elementary level that students make due to inattention. In general, they do not make it difficult to understand the text, but they make a negative impression.

All the above-mentioned difficulties and related errors require careful work of the teacher to form students' abilities to build their written statements in accordance with the requirements of various formats of written tasks: short notes and e-mails, postcards and personal letters to friends and relatives; official letters: resumes, statements and complaints; essays with the statement of their own opinion; essays on books read and movies watched.

Let's consider the step-by-step preparation for the tasks of writing short notes, postcards and personal letters to friends and relatives; official letters; essays and narratives. At the first stage, students should study in detail the samples of postcards, notes, personal and official letters, which are offered in educational and methodical complexes. It is necessary to learn how to follow the rules of drawing up personal and official letters of different types accepted in the country of the target language. Students get acquainted with the structure of letters, their elements - introduction, main part, conclusion. Then they perform exercises in which they have to compose different types of letters from separate ready-made fragments.

At the second stage, students write their own letters, and the teacher supervises both the design and content of the letter, its style and length. Students think over their letters, make a plan and a list of necessary expressions and word combinations. For example, in short notes and postcards they demonstrate their knowledge of the most common abbreviations accepted in the Russian language. The plan of a personal letter should come from the stimulus letter. The task is to write a letter in which you should answer your friend's questions and ask him/her your own questions, ask for advice or share your experience, impressions, problems. One should not forget to follow an informal style - it is especially important that the address to close people, concluding phrases and signature are informal. When composing an official letter, it is also necessary to follow the rules of design - in this case, the address, vocabulary, closing phrases and signature should demonstrate an official style.

Finally, students should learn to independently check their letters, control the volume and structure of the letter. At first, students learn to compose thank-you letters, applications for a job advertised in the newspaper, CVs, complaints requesting a refund for low-quality goods. At the next stages of studying Russian, new types of writing tasks are added, for example, an advertisement announcement, a news report. Naturally, at each new stage, the written tasks become more complex and lexically rich. But the principle of work remains the same: careful study of the presented sample, training exercises, and composing one's own writing.

The essays and compositions test the ability to build a detailed statement in accordance with the communicative task in a given volume, express one's own opinion, argue one's point of view, draw conclusions, consistently and logically correctly build a statement, use appropriate means of logical connection, lexically, grammatically, orthographically and stylistically (neutrally) design the text. The essay assumes a sufficient vocabulary. It is impossible to teach students to write essays if no painstaking preparatory work has been done.

The final stage of preparation is writing their own statements: essays and narratives. The topic of the essay is always specified in the textbook after the sample, for example, "My favorite literary hero", "The happiest day", "Unforgettable holidays", "What to do about traffic jams on the roads", "Car or bicycle", "To live in the capital or in the suburbs", etc.

As for the preparation for writing compositions, it requires preliminary familiarization with the material for the composition. At the very beginning of the course, students listen to small texts of a humorous nature, prepare questions on the content of the texts listened to, prepare a retelling of jokes. Then they write a composition using the means of logical connection and the studied active vocabulary according to a pre-made plan. In the process of studying Russian, students write compositions based on videos, films and plays, stories and books they have read in class and at home. The material for compositions can be stories read in the "Home reading" module and films watched in the "Video course" module. At advanced stages of studying Russian, students write compositions based on books and films they have read on their own.

To relieve difficulties in Russian orthography and prepare for the transition to produced writing, one of the stages are dictations: visualized, auditory, dictations with different types of work (orthographic, lexical, etc.). Besides, free and creative dictations are actively used. In free dictation, the text is reproduced in writing according to one's own perception (first with the help of key words). Creative dictations assume that students are presented with only the beginning of the text. The continuation is created independently, which develops imagination, making the process creative and exciting.

Another step from dictation to composition is the retelling of a text in the form of a letter. They are offered tasks that can be conditionally called letters to a friend. On the basis of a familiar text ("Winter in Belarus", "My Day", etc.) students write to their friends. Thematically, letters to a friend are based on real events of their own, student's life in the conditions of a new society, that is why they arouse interest and increase motivation and at the same time prepare learners for writing outlines of unfamiliar texts, as well as creative works - essays and compositions. Letters to a friend also familiarize foreign speakers with the etiquette norms of greeting, gratitude, farewell, which are actively reproduced in oral speech.

It is relevant for foreigners to compose statements, which are characterized by a certain form of writing (designation of addressee, addressee, title of the document, expression of request, complaint, proposal, explanation of the problem, date and signature), the scheme of arrangement of the statement details, as well as the selection of linguistic means. Therefore, it is advisable to first present a written model - a sample statement, followed by writing a statement according to the sample, and then drafting your own version. For this purpose, a problem is proposed that is as close as possible to those existing in everyday life/study life (a deferment of payment of tuition fees is needed, a session needs to be passed early, I would like to change my room). The students' goal is to solve the problem by writing an application to the rector, dean, head of the dormitory.

Of course, in order to ensure that students' essays fully comply with the given formats, it is necessary to write a lot of written works during each year of study. The number of written works is specified in the work plans of a particular specialty.

Thus, teaching students to perform writing tasks of certain formats turns into the process of mastering writing as a productive communicative activity.

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