

## Lead-in

- 1 Which of the Russian sayings A-E are your favourites? Do you know their equivalents in English? What qualities must short phrases have to become sayings?

## Reading &amp; Listening

- 2 Read the four short extracts and decide which of the Russian sayings A-E best fits each of the gaps 1-4. One saying is not needed.

- A Бабушка надвое сказала.  
 B В гостях хорошо, а дома лучше.  
 C Всеми правдами и неправдами.  
 D Мягко стелет, да жестко спать.  
 E Рыбак рыбака видит издалека.

- 3 Translate the sayings A-E into English and then listen and check your translations.

- 4 a) Give the Russian equivalents of the following English sayings.
- 1 An early bird catches the worm.
  - 2 He laughs best who laughs last.
  - 3 Time and tide wait for no man.
  - 4 Out of sight, out of mind.
  - 5 Bad news travels fast.
  - 6 Better be safe than sorry.
  - 7 Don't trouble trouble until trouble troubles you.

## Speaking

- b) Explain the words in bold.

In pairs, translate a Russian saying into English and then let your partner guess what it was in Russian.

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It is not unusual for teams, even entire companies, to become unbalanced in their personnel **alignment** or their direction in the marketplace. Why? Because people **hire** people that they like and people like people who are like them. This practice can lead to 'a  culture' within the team. Since managers tend to hire people that they like and can **relate to** easily, other styles can be **irritating**.



Q1: You see a **magnificent** skirt in an expensive boutique. What do you do?

Choose an answer.

- I try to get the money  to buy it.
- I **suffer** for a day and then decide that I don't need it after all.
- I try to find a cheaper skirt like it in another shop.



Over sixty people make up the Nissan team, all united by the same passion, to help the eight drivers, all with strong personalities, who are guided by Andre Dessoude, the team manager.  Seemingly very gentle, he becomes firm once a decision has been made.



Holly Fox, 15 years old, from Great Britain, a **debutant** of Junior European Swimming Championships, is happy to win the competitions in Moscow.

Holly likes Moscow very much for its friendly atmosphere. As she said "  . I can't compare Russia to England, but if I had the chance of visiting Moscow as a tourist, I'd be happy to take it."



Jokes are a very special cultural **phenomenon**. Many are based on the **realities** of a nation, so, regardless of how accurate the **translation** is, they do not sound funny if the listeners

do not know these realities. Some jokes can't be translated as they are based on **word play**. Russian jokes are no exception to these rules. There is only a limited range of jokes which will make people who speak another language laugh. Here is a classification of Russian jokes.

**A Political jokes.** These are the **legacy** of the Soviet era, when people could not speak freely and had to express their political views in this way. Political jokes would have to be explained to most foreigners under 35.

**B Mother-in-law jokes.** In Russian jokes a son-in-law and a mother-in-law are always **on bad terms** with each other. It probably comes from the fact that a lot of young couples in Russia often have to live under the same roof as the wife's parents. This inevitably leads to problems and even to **hatred** between a husband and his mother-in-law.

**C Ukranian jokes.** Somehow Russians believe that Ukranians are (a) very greedy and (b) love to eat pork fat. This does not stop Russians from loving the Ukranians and their culture, though.

**D Traffic cop jokes.** All Russian jokes about traffic cops must have been written by drivers. In Russia all cars must be equipped with a **fire extinguisher**, an emergency sign and a first-aid kit. A Russian traffic cop can stop a car and **inspect** it to see if these items are available. If the driver is missing something, the cop can **fine** him.

**E 'New Russians' jokes.** New Russians are actually well-to-do Russians who have become rich recently. In jokes 'New Russians' always have a 'Mercedes-600' and a heavy gold chain around their necks.

1  – Is it true that under communism people could order food by phone?  
– Yes, but the delivery was by TV.

Two **people** meet, and one asks:  
– Hey, Vasya, where did you get that nice tie?  2   
– At the Valentino store. It cost \$2000.  
– Ha! – the other one says with contempt – I know where you can get exactly the same tie for \$5000!

A hungry **man**, if offered a truck load of apples would not be able to eat all of them, but he would definitely take a bite out of each one.  3

A pharmacist tells a customer.  
– In order to buy arsenic you need a legal prescription.  
A picture of **this woman** just isn't enough.  4

A **policeman** stops a driver and says: "You can hardly call this wreck a car!" And the driver answers: "I agree. So, you could hardly expect me to own a licence."  5

## Lead-in

- 1 Do you know any Russian jokes? Would they be funny to a foreigner?

## Reading & Listening

- 2 Listen and put the categories of people in the order you hear them.

- ..... nouveau-riche
- ..... policeman
- ..... daughter's husband
- ..... non-Russian
- ..... chauffeur

- 3 Read and match the jokes to the categories, then replace the highlighted words with the ones that you think were there originally. Explain the words in bold.

## Speaking

Translate your favourite joke into English and tell the class. How does it sound in English?