Slavic Names
Includes names from Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, and others

The following is an **overview of naming conventions in the Russian language** as well as in languages affected by Russian linguistic tradition. This relates to modern Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan and others.

It is obligatory for people to have three names: a given name, a patronymic, and a family name (surname).

Vladimir	**Vladimirovich**	**Putin**
first name	*patronymic*	*family name.*

They are generally presented in that order, e.g. Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, where "Vladimir" is a first name, "Vladimirovich" (his father's name is also Vladimir) is a patronymic, and "Putin" is a family name. The ordering is not as strict in languages other than Russian.

Patronymic

The patronymic of a person is based on the first name of his or her father and is written in all documents. If it is mentioned, it always follows the first name. A suffix (meaning either "son of" or "daughter of") is added to the father's given name—in modern times, males use *-ovich*, while females use *-ovna*. (In Ukraine the female patro-nymic ends with *-ivna*. The male version is the same as in Russian.) If the suffix is being appended to a name ending in "y" or a soft consonant, the initial *o* becomes a *ye* (*-yevich* and *-yevna*). There are also a few exceptions to this pattern; for example, the son of Ilya is always Ily*ich*, not Ily*evich*.

As an example, the patronymic name of Soviet leader Nikita *Sergeyevich* Khrushchev indicates that his father was named Sergey. Similarly, the patronymic name of Svetlana *Iosifovna* Stalina indicates that her father was named Iosif (in this case, Iosif (Joseph) Stalin).

When translating Russian-style names into English, it is important to remember that **the patronymic is NOT equivalent to an English middle name**, and follows different abbreviation conventions. The patronymic can be omitted (e.g. Vladimir Putin or V. Putin); both the first name and the patronymic can be written out in full (Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin); or both the first name and the patronymic can be abbreviated (V. V. Putin). However, writing out the first name and abbreviating the patronymic (e.g. Vladimir V. Putin), is stylistically **incorrect**.

Family Name (Surname)

Family names, like Putin, Yel'tsin or Gorbachyov, generally **function in the same manner that English family names do**. They are generally inherited from one's parents, although women may adopt the surname of their husband or (very rarely) vice versa. Another uncommon practice is creating a double surname (for example, Mr. Ivanov and Ms. Petrova in their marriage may take family names Ivanov-Petrov and Ivanova-Petrova, respectively).

As all Russian adjectives, **they have different forms depending on gender**—for example, the wife of Boris Yel'tsin is Naina Yel'tsin*a*. Note that this change of grammatical gender is a characteristic of Slavic languages, and is not considered to be changing the name received from a woman's father or husband. The correct transliteration of such feminine names in English is debated: sometimes women's names are given in their original form, sometimes in the masculine form (technically incorrect, but more widely recognized).

Forms of Address

Although everyone is required to have three names, the full three-name form is virtually never used in direct communication and it is generally reserved for documents and public speeches. In the media, the three-name form could be used for highly respected persons (e.g. leaders of the Soviet Union and Russia). Different combinations of names denote varying levels of respect. In speech, common forms of address include:

- First name, *diminutive form* — familiar
- First name, *full form* — formal
- First name, Patronymic — formal and respectful, could be used to address an older relative or a mentor
- Prefix, Last name — highly formal. During the Soviet era, a prefix 'tovarishch' (comrade) was universally used. Nowadays, common prefixes are *gospodín* or *pan* for *sir*, and *gospozhá*, or *páni* for *ma'am*. In some situations (e.g. by police officers) *grazhdanín/grazhdánka* (*citizen*) has been used since Soviet time.

There is also a special "patronymic-only" form of address used only among very close friends. In this form for men, a diminutive variant of the patronymic is usually used, with *-ovich* becoming *-ych*. For example, if Vasiliy Ivanovich Chapayev is a good friend of ours, we can call him just Ivan[ov]ich. By contrast, only full patronymic name is used for women, for example "Ivanovna", not "Ivanna".