The Spelling Rules

Certain consonant-vowel combinations in Russian are illegal, and you will *NEVER* see them written in correct Russian, unless the word is a transliteration of a foreign word or an unusual proper name. Because the spelling rules always apply, errors involving them are considered to be a sign that the writer is ignorant of a basic agreement that all writers accept, sort of like ignoring some basic rules of personal interaction or hygiene that we learn in preschool. So don’t make these errors. Ever!!! Don’t bring shame on yourself, on me, your teacher, City College, the mayor, our dear city, the state of California and your country!

Learn the rules.

Here they are:

**The 7-letter Spelling Rule**

*After* к г х │ ш ж ч *thou shalt not write* ы. *Write* и *instead.*

**The 5-letter Spelling Rule**

*After* ш щ ж ч │ ц *thou shalt not write* unstressed о. *Write* e *instead."

**The 8-letter Spelling Rule**

*After* к г х │ ш ж ч │ ц *thou shalt not write* я or ю. *Write* a or y *instead.*

Memorizing these letters is immensely easier if you memorize the consonants within each block, and put the blocks in order. Reading from left to right:

- the first group (к г х) consists of consonants you make at the back of your mouth—gargling consonants;
- the second group (ш ж ч) consists of hissing consonants;
- the third group (ц) consists of one definitive consonant, almost like an exclamation point.

The 5-letter Spelling Rule is the ONLY one that has anything to do with stress, which means it will kick in with forms of хоро́шый, but not большо́й. Stress does not affect the letter о following к г х because those letters are not covered by this rule.