



# Library Alphabet Soup: Tips and Resources When the Item in Hand is Not Written in the Latin Alphabet



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# What is the aim of this presentation?

- Tips and resources related to foreign language items (especially gifts)
- Suggestions for identifying languages with non-Latin writings systems
- Suggestions for finding OCLC records of items not in the Latin alphabet.





# Our Favorite Helps in Time of Need

- ISBN/ISSN  
These numbers are the most common help with these situations. (Although there are times when they are not sufficient!)
- Colleagues who know the languages

But what if these options are not available?



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# What do I do when I have an item in hand that is not in the Latin alphabet?

1. Identify the alphabet/writing system
2. Identify the specific language
3. Search for OCLC records in WorldCat for the item and use that information to help make a decision for selection purposes
4. Share the OCLC information with the cataloging librarians.





# Tip #1: Look up the Writing System

Online and/or print resources for identifying the alphabet or other writing system.

## Resources:

- Wikipedia article on writing systems

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_writing\\_systems](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_writing_systems)

Examples of print resources:

- Daniels, P. T. & Bright, W. (1996). *The world's writing systems*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Von Ostermann, G. F. (1952). *Manual of foreign languages for the use of librarians, bibliographers, research workers, editors, translators, and printers*. New York: Central Book Company.





# Question: Can you identify the language?

א בְּקֶרְמִין בָּרָא יי ית שמיא וית ארעא: וארעא הות צדיא  
 2 וריקניא וחשוכא על-אפי תהומא ורוחא מן-קדם-יי  
 3 מנשבא על-אפי מיא: ואמר יי יהי-נהורא ונהו-נהורא:  
 4 וחזא יי ית-נהורא ארי-טב ואפריש יי בין נהורא ובין  
 5 חשוכא: וקרא יי לנהורא יממא ולחשוכא קרא ליליא  
 6 ונהו-רמש ונהו-צפר יומא חד: ואמר יי יהי רקיעא  
 7 במציעות מיא ויהי מפריש בין מיא למיא: ועבד יי ית-  
 8 רקיעא ואפריש בין מיא די מלרע לרקיעא ובין מיא  
 9 די מעל לרקיעא ונהו-בן: וקרא יי לרקיעא שמיא ונהו-  
 10 רמש ונהו-צפר יום תנן: ואמר יי יתכנשון מיא מתחת  
 11 שמיא לאתר חד ותתחזו יבשתא ונהו-בן: וקרא יי  
 12 ליבשתא ארעא ולבית-בנישות מיא קרא ימי וחזא יי ארי-  
 טב: ואמר יי תדאית ארעא דתאה עשבא דבר-זרעיה  
 מזודרע אילן פרין עבד פרין לזניה די בר-זרעיה-ביה על-  
 ארעא ונהו-בן: ואפיקת ארעא דתאה עשבא דבר-זרעיה  
 מזודרע לזנוהי ואילן עבד-פרין דבר-זרעיה ביה לזנוהי

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: א  
 2 וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תְהוֹ וּבְהוֹ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ  
 3 אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי-אוֹר  
 4 וַיְהִי-אוֹר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאוֹר כִּי-טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים  
 5 בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאוֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ  
 6 לַיְלָה וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד: פ וַיֹּאמֶר  
 7 אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם וַיְהִי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לַמַּיִם:  
 8 וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הַרְקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת  
 9 לַרְקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לַרְקִיעַ וַיְהִי-בֶן: וַיִּקְרָא  
 10 אֱלֹהִים לַרְקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי: פ  
 11 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְווּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל-מְקוֹם אֶחָד  
 12 וְתֵרָאֵה הַיַּבֵּשֶׁה וַיְהִי-בֶן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לַיַּבֵּשֶׁה אֶרֶץ  
 13 וְלַמְּקוֹה הַמַּיִם קָרָא יַמִּים וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב: וַיֹּאמֶר  
 14 אֱלֹהִים תְּדַשׂא הָאָרֶץ דְּשֵׂא עֵשֶׂב מְזֻרֵעַ זֶרַע עֵץ פְּרִי עֵשֶׂה  
 15 פְּרִי לְמִינוֹ אֲשֶׁר זֶרַע-בוֹ עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי-בֶן: וַתּוּצֵא  
 16 הָאָרֶץ דְּשֵׂא עֵשֶׂב מְזֻרֵעַ זֶרַע לְמִינְהוּ וְעֵץ עֵשֶׂה-פְּרִי אֲשֶׁר

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# Answer: There are two languages here!

בְּקֶרְמִין בָּרָא יי ית שְׁמַיָא וַיִּת אַרְעָא: וְאַרְעָא הוּת צְדַיָא  
 וְרִיקְנָיָא וְחִשׁוּבָא עַל-אַפֵּי תְהוּמָא וְרוּחָא מִן-קֶדֶם-יִי  
 מְנַשְׁבָּא עַל-אַפֵּי מַיָּא: וְאָמַר יי יְהִי-נְהוּרָא וְהוּהוּ נְהוּרָא:  
 וְחֹזָא יי יִת-נְהוּרָא אַרְי־טַב וְאַפְרִישׁ יי בֵּין נְהוּרָא וּבֵין  
 חִשׁוּבָא: וְקָרָא יי לְנְהוּרָא יִמְמָא וְלְחִשׁוּבָא קָרָא לִילְיָא  
 וְהוּהוּ-רִמְשׁ וְהוּהוּ-צֶפֶר יוֹמָא חָד: וְאָמַר יי יְהִי רְקִיעָא  
 בְּמַצִּיעוֹת מַיָּא וַיְהִי מִפְרִישׁ בֵּין מַיָּא לְמַיָּא: וְעַבְד יי יִת-  
 רְקִיעָא וְאַפְרִישׁ בֵּין מַיָּא דִּי מַלְרַע לְרִיקְנָיָא וּבֵין מַיָּא  
 דִּי מַעַל לְרִיקְנָיָא וְיִתְחַזְּקוּ וְיִתְחַזְּקוּ וְיִתְחַזְּקוּ וְיִתְחַזְּקוּ וְיִתְחַזְּקוּ  
 רִמְשׁ וְהוּהוּ-צֶפֶר יוֹם תַּנּוּן: וְאָמַר יי יִתְכַנְשׁוּן מַיָּא מִתַּחַת  
 י שְׁמַיָּא לְאַתְרַּ חָד וְתַתְּחוּי עֲבֻשְׁתָּא וְהוּהוּ-בֵין: וְקָרָא יי  
 לִיבְשֵׁתָא אַרְעָא וְלְבֵית-בְּנֵי-שׁוֹת מַיָּא קָרָא יִמִּי וְחֹזָא יי אַרְי־  
 טַב: וְאָמַר יי תְּדַאִית אַרְעָא דְתָאָה עֲשָׂבָא דְבַר-זֶרְעִיָּה  
 מוֹדְרַע אִילָן פְּרִין עַבְד פְּרִין לִזְנוּהִי דִּי בַר-זֶרְעִיָּה-בֵּיהַ עַל-  
 אַרְעָא וְהוּהוּ-בֵין: וְאַפִּיקַת אַרְעָא דְתָאָה עֲשָׂבָא דְבַר-זֶרְעִיָּה  
 מוֹדְרַע לִזְנוּהִי וְאִילָן עַבְד-פְּרִין דְבַר-זֶרְעִיָּה בֵּיהַ לִזְנוּהִי

בְּרִאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: \*  
 וְהָאָרֶץ הִיְתָה תְהוֹ וּבְהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ  
 אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי-אוֹר  
 וַיְהִי-אוֹר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאוֹר כִּי-טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים  
 בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאוֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ  
 חָדָיִם: וַיִּבְרָא לַיְלָה וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד: פ וַיֹּאמֶר  
 אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רְקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם וַיְהִי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לְמַיִם:  
 וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-רְקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם וּשְׁמַיָּא מִתַּחַת  
 לְרְקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֶת-רְקִיעַ וְיִתְחַזְּקוּ וְיִתְחַזְּקוּ וְיִתְחַזְּקוּ  
 אֱלֹהִים לְרְקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי: פ  
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְקוּוּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל-מְקוֹם אֶחָד  
 וְתִרְאֶה הַיַּבְשָׁה וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לַיַּבְשָׁה אָרֶץ  
 וְלַמְּקוֹה הַמַּיִם קָרָא יַמִּים וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב: וַיֹּאמֶר  
 אֱלֹהִים תְּדַשָּׂא הָאָרֶץ דְּשָׂא עֲשָׂב מוֹרִיע זֶרַע עֵץ פְּרִי עֵשָׂה  
 פְּרִי לְמִינוֹ אֲשֶׁר זֶרְעוּ-בּוֹ עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַתּוֹצֵא  
 הָאָרֶץ דְּשָׂא עֲשָׂב מוֹרִיע זֶרַע לְמִינְהוּ וְעֵץ עֵשָׂה-פְּרִי אֲשֶׁר

# Hebrew Aramaic

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## Tip #2: Same alphabet does not mean the same language

- Most alphabets/writing systems are shared by more than one language.
- Remember this example: Dutch and English have same alphabet.
- Identify the writing system, THEN identify the specific language







## Tip #3: Look for place of publication to help identify a language

- Make a list of possible languages
- The city of publication can often help ID the language.
- Check the names of capitals and other major cities & see **how they are written in the language.**

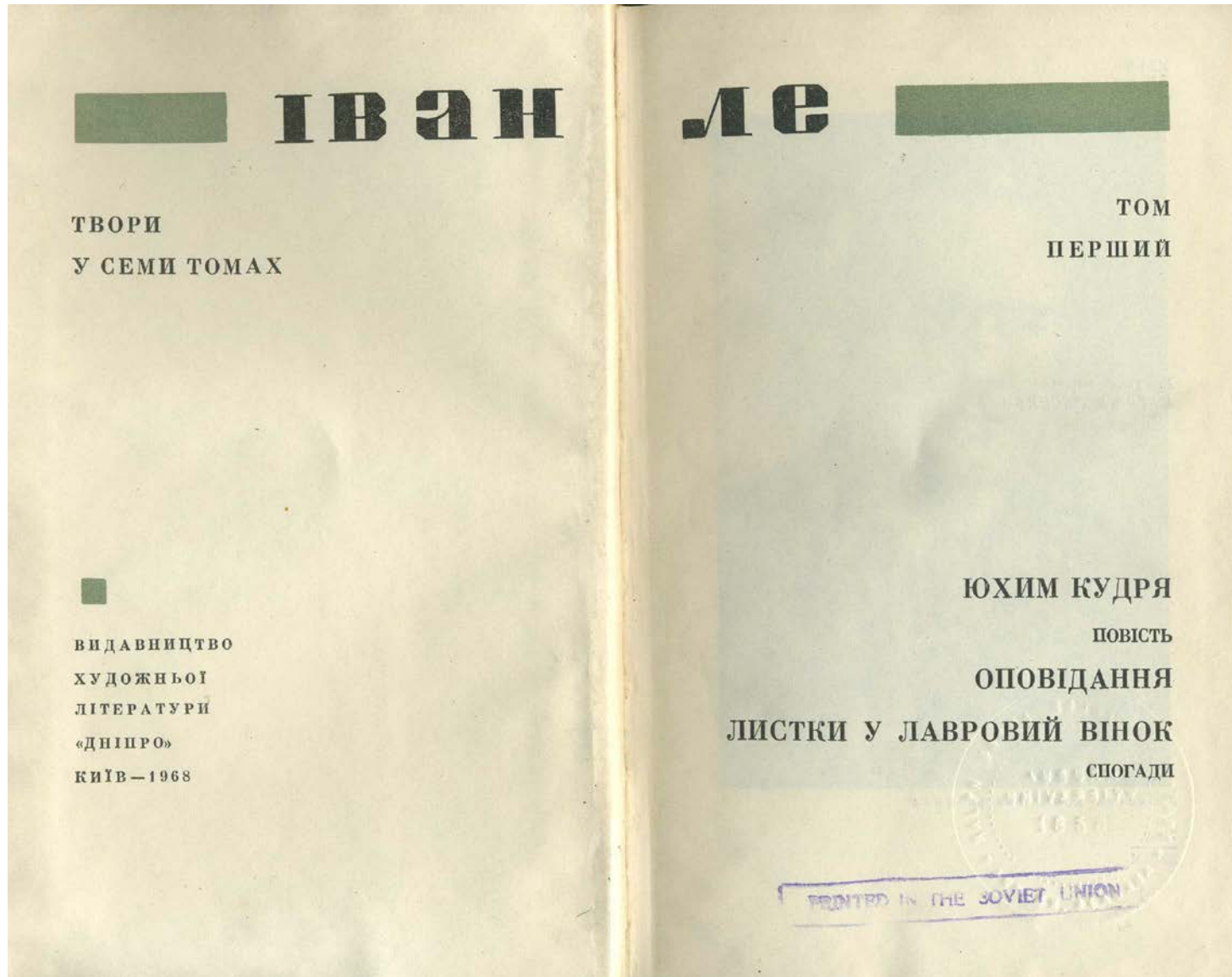
### **Resource:**

- Wikipedia usually gives the name of a city as it is written in the native language(s).





# Example: What language is this?





## Is it Russian?

It uses the Cyrillic alphabet, but a number of other languages use this alphabet too.

- Ukrainian
- Belarusian
- Serbo-Croatian
- Bulgarian
- Kurdish
- Tajik
- And many more!!

Maybe if I look for major cities (capitals) in some of these places I will find a match!



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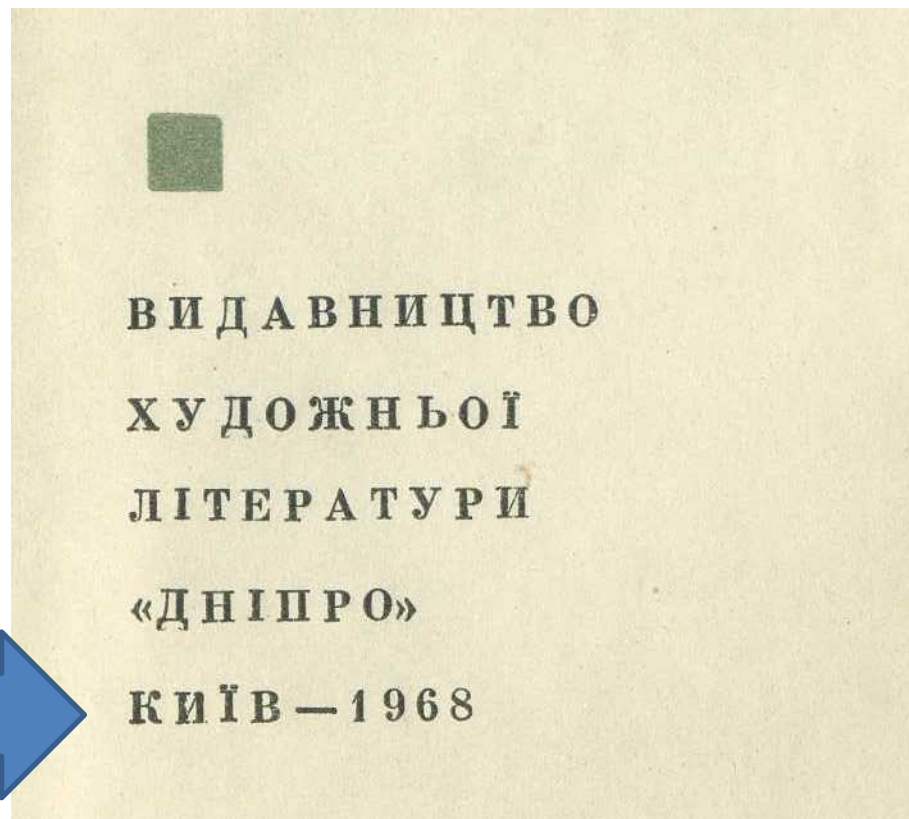


# Yes! We have a match!

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

*This article is about the capital of Ukraine. For other uses, see Kiev (disambiguation, Kiev (/ˈkiːɪf, -ɛv/)<sup>[7]</sup> or Kyiv (Ukrainian: Київ [←] Russian: Киев [ˈkʲiɪf]) is the Dnieper River. The population in July 2013 was 2,847,200<sup>[1]</sup> (though higher estimated n*

**Kiev** is the capital of **Ukraine** and its name is written in **Ukrainian** on the title page. So it is safe to believe that this book is in **Ukrainian**





## Tip #4: Learn the unique letters or characters of the language(s) you often encounter

It is not necessary to:

- Take language classes
- Become an accomplished reader of the language

Learn to spot the key identifiers

- Does the language have any letters not found in other languages using same alphabet?
- Are there any features that distinguish the written language(s)?





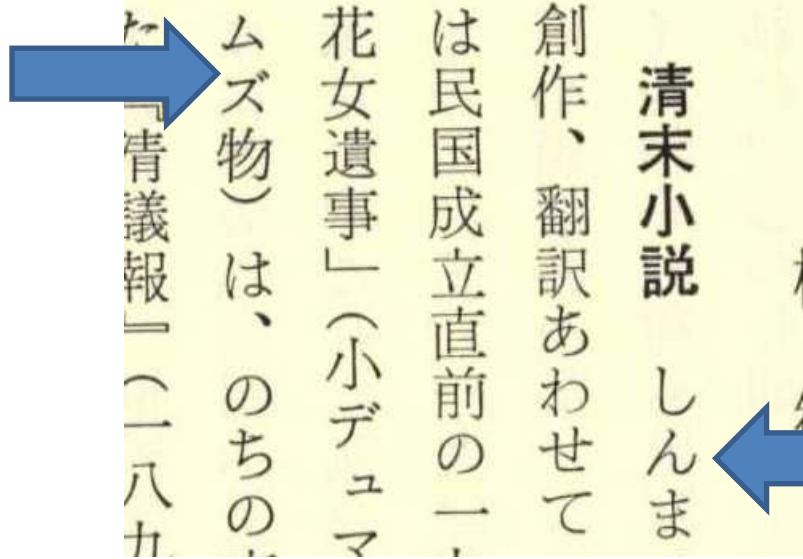
# Chinese, Japanese, or Korean?

Chinese uses traditional or simplified versions of its logographic characters.

Ex. 三体 : "地球往事"三部曲之一

Japanese and Korean both use traditional Chinese characters together with their own particular writing systems.

**Katakana**



Learning to recognize **Hiragana** and **Katakana** helps to identify this language as **Japanese**

**Hiragana**

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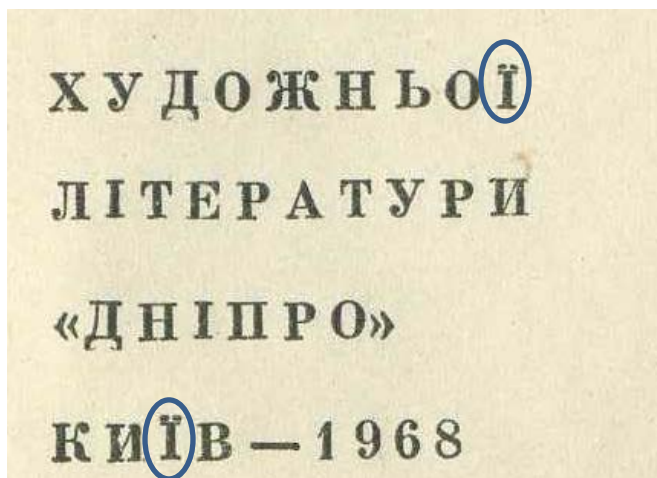


## Example: Russian, Ukrainian, or Belarusian? Look for the unique letters.

Ukrainian's unique letters: Є є & І і

- Unique letters do not always ID the language for certain
- Make note of the most common languages that you will have to distinguish

Ex. Russian vs. Ukrainian





## Example: Russian, Ukrainian, or Belarusian? Look for the unique letters.

Belarusian's unique letter: Ў ў

М

МІНСК з'яўляецца адным са старажытнейшых гарадоў  
даўленне аб ім адносіцца да другой палавіны XI ста  
час Полацкаму княству.

Полацкі князь Усяслаў вёў міжусобную вайну суп  
У 1067 годзе Усяслаў напаў на Ноўгарад і разграбўя  
Мінск. Вясной таго ж года дружына Усяслава ўступіў



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## Tip #5: Use transliteration to search for records in OCLC

**Resource:** (<http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/roman.html>)

When possible, use the ALA-LC Romanization Tables to transliterate key bibliographic data in OCLC.



**Example:**

Tvortsi i  
suvremennost

<http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/bulgarian.pdf>

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# Example: Search in OCLC using Transliterated Words

**Search** **Clear**

**Search in database:** WorldCat (Updated: 2016-04-08)  
OCLC catalog of books and other materials in libraries worldwide

**Search for:** Tvortsi i suvremennost **Title**

**and**  **Keyword**

**and**  **Keyword**

**Limit to:** Year  (format: YYYY-YYYY)  
Language Bulgarian [how all languages ...](#)  
Number of Libraries All **?**

**Limit type to:** match any of the following

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Books</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Serial Publications</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Articles</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Visual Materials</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Sound Recordings</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Musical Scores</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Computer Files</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Archival Materials</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Maps</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Internet Resources</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Continually Updated Resources</b>	<b>?</b>

**Subtype limits** Any Audience  Any Content  Any Format  **?**

**Limit availability to:** match any of the following  **Items in my library** (AAA, Auburn University) **?**

**Library Code**  [Find codes ...](#)

**Rank by:** Number of Libraries **?**

**Search** **Clear**



## Example: Find Item in Results

1.



### [Tvortsi i suvremennost. Lit. kritika.](#)

**Author:** Dishev, Atanas.

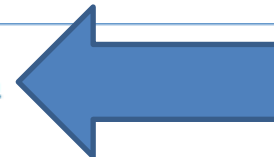
**Publication:** Sofia, Bulg. pisatel, 1970

**Document:** Bulgarian : Book

**Libraries Worldwide:** 15  **Auburn University**

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2.



### [Tvortsi i suvremennost Lit. kritika.](#)

<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/20079108.html>

**Author:** Dishev, Atanas. **Publication:** Sofia, Bulg. pisatel, 1970

**Document:** Bulgarian : Internet Resource  Computer File

**Libraries Worldwide:** 2

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# Be language specific with transliteration!

The same letter from an alphabet may be transliterated differently in individual languages.

Example:

The Cyrillic letter “Г” is transliterated as

- **H** in Ukrainian, Belarusian, & Rusyn
- **G** in Russian, Bulgarian, Kurdish, and in most all other languages that use the Cyrillic alphabet

**Make sure you use the correct transliteration guide**



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## Tip #6: For logographic writing, develop some skills using character dictionaries

### Resources:

- Chinese, Japanese and Korean dictionaries often have instructions inside on how to use them to search for characters.
- Look for online videos that demonstrate these skills too. (Ex. *YouTube*).
- Use dictionaries to find a Romanized version of the words.





# Example: Search Characters in Dictionary

Book Title: 三体

三 (sān) ← three; third; ~ 倍  
三 three times; threefold; triple / ~ 幕喜剧  
comedy in three acts / ~ 岁小孩 a child of  
three 2. (多数; 多次) more than two; sever-  
al; many

体 [體、軀] (tǐ) ← body;  
part of the body 2. (物

Romanized: san ti

Citation for this publication is provided on handout





# Example: Search in OCLC using Transliterated Words

Search Clear

Search in database: WorldCat (Updated: 2016-04-07)  
OCLC catalog of books and other materials in libraries worldwide

Search for: san ti Title

and Keyword

and Keyword

Limit to: Year (format: YYYY-YYYY)

Language Chinese

Number of Libraries All

Limit type to: match any of the following

- Books
- Visual Materials
- Computer Files
- Internet Resources
- Serial Publications
- Sound Recordings
- Archival Materials
- Continually Updated Resources
- Articles
- Musical Scores
- Maps

Subtype limits: Any Audience Any Content Any Format

Limit availability to: match any of the following

Library Code Find codes ...








Rank by: Number of Libraries

Search Clear



# Example: Find Item in Results

Limit results: Any Audience ▾ Any Cont

- 1.  [Jiao feng : dang dai Zhongguo san ci si xiang jie fang shi lu /](#)  
Author: Ma, Licheng.; Ling, Zhijun.  
Publication: Beijing : Jin ri Zhongguo chu ban she, 1998  
Document: Chinese ([Show non-Roman characters](#)) : Book  
[Libraries Worldwide](#): 72  
More Like This: [Search for versions with same title and author](#) | [Advanced options ...](#)  
 [See more details for locating this item](#)
- 2.  [Cong yu yan xue kan wen xue : Tang Song jin ti shi san lun /](#)  
Author: Cao, Fengfu, 1942-  
Publication: Taipei Shi : Zhong yang yan jiu yuan yu yan xue yan jiu suo, 2004  
Document: Chinese ([Show non-Roman characters](#)) : Book  
[Libraries Worldwide](#): 70  
More Like This: [Search for versions with same title and author](#) | [Advanced options ...](#)  
 [See more details for locating this item](#)
- 3.  [San ti /](#)  
Author: Liu, Cixin, author.  
Publication: Chongqing : Chongqing chu ban she, 2014. ©2008  
Document: Chinese ([Show non-Roman characters](#)) : Book  
[Libraries Worldwide](#): 60  [Auburn University](#)  
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- 4.  [Zhongguo wen hua shi san bai ti /](#)  
Publication: Shanghai : Shanghai gu ji chu ban she : Xin hua shu dian Shanghai fa xing suo fa xing, 1987  
Document: Chinese ([Show non-Roman characters](#)) : Book  
[Libraries Worldwide](#): 56  
More Like This: [Advanced options ...](#)  
 [See more details for locating this item](#)
- 5.  [Rain dropping on the banana tree](#)  
Publication: Cambridge, Mass. : Rounder, 1996, 1902  
Document: Chinese : Sound Recording : Music : Folk music :  Compact disc  
[Libraries Worldwide](#): 56

When provided, the option to see the non-Roman characters is helpful!







# Example: Verify Words in the Language




三体 /

San ti /

刘慈欣, author.

Cixin Liu

2014, ©2008 Di 1 ban.



Chinese  Book : Fiction ii, 302 pages ; 21 cm.

Edition: 第1版.

ISBN: 9787536692930 7536692935

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  - [Find this item at Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America](#) (Bookseller)
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**Find Items About:** [San ti](#) (1); [Liu, Cixin](#). (1)

Title: 三体 /

San ti /

Author(s): 刘慈欣, author.

[Liu, Cixin](#), author.



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## Tip #7: Use OCLC & other web information to review the item

- Look at the subject headings and item classification
- For the more frequent languages, make note of key literary terms as you encounter them.  
Examples from Russian:  
Собрание сочинений (Collected Compositions),  
Избранное (Favorites), Повести и рассказы  
(Novellas and short stories), etc.
- Search the web about the author(s) and the work
- Make sure to share the OCLC numbers of any potential records with the cataloger(s). They will appreciate it!





# Study OCLC Record for Key Information

Title: **Повести и рассказы /**

**Povesti i rasskazy /**

Uniform Title: Works. Selections. 1988

Author(s): Odoevskii, V. F. kniāz', 1804-1869. (Vladimir Fedorovich),

Publication: Moskva : "Khudozh. lit-ra",

Year: 1988

Description: 382 pages ; 21 cm.

Language: Russian ([Hide non-Roman characters](#))

Series: Russkaiā klassicheskaiā literatura; Klassiki | sovremenniki; **Variation:** Russkaiā klassicheskaiā literatura.; Klassiki | sovremenniki.

Standard No: ISBN: 5280000248; 9785280000247

## SUBJECT(S)

Descriptor: Short stories, Russian.

Russian language materials.

Note(s): Includes bibliographical references (pages 374-381).

Class Descriptors: LC: PG3337.O3; Dewey: 891.7



# Summary

- Know your specific needs and develop your skills accordingly.
- Learn the keys to identify language and locate information.
- Share what you learn with interested colleagues

Please take a handout which has the tips & resources presented here.

There is also an online guide related to this presentation with links to additional resources:

[http://libguides.auburn.edu/Library\\_Alphabet\\_Soup](http://libguides.auburn.edu/Library_Alphabet_Soup)

# Thank you!



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