

A black and white photograph of a landscape. In the foreground, a spiderweb is stretched across the top and bottom of the frame. The background shows a wide river or lake, with trees and hills in the distance. The sky is bright and overcast. The text is overlaid on the image.

**DAMBRIŪNAS
KLIMAS
SCHMALSTIEG**

**INTRODUCTION
TO MODERN
LITHUANIAN**

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**INTRODUCTION TO MODERN
LITHUANIAN**

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Foreword

Lithuanian is the language of the people of Lithuania and of about a million Americans of Lithuanian origin. Along with Latvian (Lettish) and the now extinct Old Prussian it belongs to the Baltic branch of the Indo-European family of languages. The Baltic languages are noted for their extremely conservative and philologically interesting linguistic forms. Thus a knowledge of Lithuanian is almost a “must” for any linguist who works in comparative Indo-European linguistics. The need for such a book is felt both among language scholars who wish to familiarize themselves with Lithuanian and among those Americans of Lithuanian descent who wish to know something of the language of their ancestors. Up to now, unfortunately, the number of grammars of Lithuanian available has been very small indeed. There are not more than two or three available in English, and these are obsolete.

This grammar is designed not for young children, but rather for those who have already reached a certain stage of maturity. The method is traditional, but there are some conversations and pattern drills in the text and it would be possible to use the book with an audio-lingual approach.

The book has 40 lessons in its main part. A typical lesson has a reading selection, vocabulary list, grammar, exercises and a topical, usually connected conversation of 10 utterances. No effort was made to make the lessons even in length and difficulty. By reason of the grammatical topic, some lessons are very long (e.g. Lesson 24, where *all* cardinal numerals are discussed with examples), while others are rather short. With this kind of arrangement, the instructor will have all kinds of teaching possibilities: he can stress either the aural-oral approach, or the reading-grammar-translation method.

Each fifth lesson (i.e. Lessons 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40) is a “Review Lesson”. These lessons are “review” lessons only in the sense that they do not introduce any new grammatical material which the student should learn. But they vary very much in the supplementary reading items, lists, charts, graphs, etc. Almost every one of these review lessons has some drill

patterns (either *combination drill* or *variation drill* types mostly) which partly review some main grammatical points covered in the previous four lessons. If there is a need to supplement these drills, any teacher can devise a great number of them, using the basic patterns and vocabulary given. The review lessons may be omitted, if the student wishes only to get acquainted with the grammatical structure of Lithuanian.

After the 40 main lessons, there is the grammatical appendix where the total grammar of Lithuanian is given. It is presented in the "classical" pattern: the nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc. At the end there is a chapter on verbal prefixes and a chapter on verbal aspects.

Then follows a very short chapter of extra reading selections: a folk tale, a few short selections on Lithuanian history, an editorial from a Lithuanian newspaper, a few folk songs and poems. All these selections are heavily annotated, and their vocabulary is included in the Lithuanian-English vocabulary.

The next part comprises the Lithuanian-English vocabulary which includes all the words used in the lessons and in the readings. We have provided a rather large vocabulary, since, for some time at least, this grammar will have to be a primer, a review grammar, a little reader and . . . a dictionary.

The English-Lithuanian vocabulary contains only those words which are needed for the translations from English into Lithuanian.

The best way to get a good pronunciation is to try to imitate the pronunciation of a native Lithuanian. The descriptions of the sounds given in the text are only an approximation and nothing can replace the careful guidance of a trained native Lithuanian. It is suggested that the student make every effort to find someone to help him. Eventually it is hoped that tapes to accompany this textbook will be available for sale or hire.

In learning to converse in Lithuanian the student should try to memorize the conversations rather than the grammatical rules. After memorizing the conversations he may then learn exactly why each word is put in the form in which he finds it. He may then substitute other words having similar meanings. In doing the exercises the student should follow as closely as possible the examples given in the reading and the grammatical explanations. Initiative and originality have no place for the beginner in a foreign language. Parrot-like imitation is preferable to incorrect original formulations.

In the future, we plan to prepare a key to all the exercises in this book, which will be available for teachers and bona-fide self-teachers of Lithuanian. As mentioned above, tapes will also be made for the entire

book, i.e., for the pronunciation exercises of the introductory lesson, and for most of the basic reading selections, conversations, etc.

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