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NEVER BEFORE

№ 29



In this issue: ❖ News from English lessons ❖ Introducing ETA Andrew Swafford
❖ First University impressions ❖ Summer experiences

More than 4000 freshers joined our University family this September. We asked the first year students of different University departments to share their first impressions of University life.

First University impressions

The first 3 months at the university have passed. At the beginning everything seemed to be so strange and unusual: unknown people, unknown disciplines, unknown atmosphere.

On the first day we were told that some disciplines, such as Phonetics, may seem to be unimportant and useless, though in reality it isn't so. In time Phonetics turned out to be one of the hardest disciplines. There are a lot of terms such as "low fall", "high rise", "lateral plosion", "occlusive, plosive consonants". All in all, it is very interesting but rather difficult. Studying at the faculty of Romance and Germanic Philology has already given me a wonderful opportunity to become familiar with ancient foreign literature, history, with unexplored depths of the English language that seemed to be so well-known before.

Moreover, I can say without any doubt, that I have great group mates. We are friendly and we do enjoy studying together. So I hope that my University life will be exciting and inspiring.

Darya Kozelskaya, 1st year student of the Department of Romance and Germanic Philology



I didn't expect so many subjects, which made me crazy everyday. Furthermore I didn't expect a lot of homework. To tell the truth, now I find it very challenging. Great thanks to the sofa on the ground floor, which helps to relax on these hard days.

Matvey Malik, 1st year student of the Applied Mathematics and Mechanics Department

I really loved my school and didn't want to leave it. When I finished it I couldn't believe that this was the beginning of a new step in my life.

My school is situated near the Voronezh State University. Every weekday before and after lessons I saw it on my way home. I don't know

why but I was always sure that I would study there, namely, in the main building.

I am sure that our thoughts may materialize one day. And this happened to me – now I'm a student of the Faculty of Applied Mathematics, Informatics and Mechanics. And I'm so happy! Here we have more freedom than we had at school. Students who want to get knowledge do it; others will be fairly estimated during the session.

Of course now we spend much more time studying, and our subjects are really difficult, but I like it. I feel myself grown up, I meet interesting people and I have some life goals which the university is helping me to reach. I am very thankful to destiny for giving me a chance to get my education at VSU!

Zhikhareva Mariya, 1st year student of the Applied Mathematics and Mechanics Department

Almost three months of my studies at the Voronezh State University have passed. I can't believe it! It seems like just yesterday I had my school life, which was really boring, by the way, and now we have already learnt the quickest way from the canteen to the annex, memorized our teachers' names and spent a lot of money in coffee machines.

I'm so lucky to study at the AMM faculty. I will never regret I made such a choice. There are lots of interesting people here. And I'm exited to talk with them as we have similar interests. I also like the public life of our faculty. Being only a first year student, I became a member of some student communities. I'm proud of being a part of an amateur talent group. We have already performed on the stage of the University Hall at the festival called "Pervokursnik". We spent more than a month preparing. We had stressful rehearsals, had to spend a day in the forest when it was cold but all of that wasn't in vain. And our seniors are so talented! They did everything they could to make our performance great and I believe that we didn't let them down.

I'm looking forward to the next festival, which will take place in spring. But the time of exams is coming and we shouldn't forget about our studies. And there is so much to learn! But it is really absorbing.

Life was never so full of events. That's awesome!

Ilya Ageyev, 1st year student of the Applied Mathematics and Mechanics Department

On the day I had to go to the university for the first time, I thought "It doesn't differ much from school". Later I found out that my prediction was far from being true.

There is a huge difference between school and university: you are finally treated like an adult and your study initiative gets more approval. I remember that once my school teacher said to me during a class: "Don't ask me about this, because I haven't taught it yet". In contrast, university tutors and lecturers support student's passion for knowledge. They insist that we ques-

tion everything we hear or read. They want us to ask any questions without a shadow of a doubt.

Needless to say, people here are great. My classmates are amazing and we have a lot of fun together.

There are also some cool things which simplify the process of studying. For example, I can always access the faculty system and know up-to-day home tasks. In addition, the university has a library with a vast number of books. Among them there are books which are hard to find anywhere else and you can borrow to use at home. I'm happy to have such an opportunity.

At the moment, I'm completely satisfied with my studies at the VSU and I hope my opinion won't change.

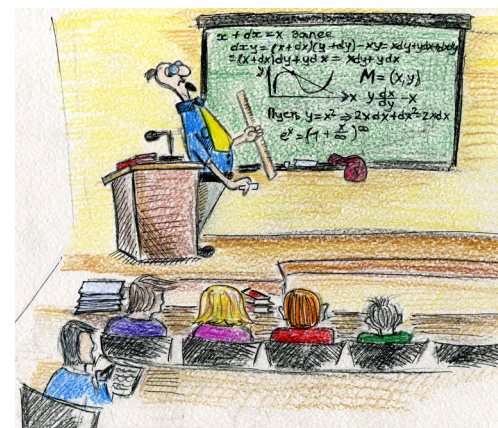
Mariya Zaharchenko, 1st year student of the Computer Science Department

University life doesn't let us get bored
You can feel it with your bones and your flesh
When the lecturers write on a board
With the speed of incredible Flash

English and programming are really exiting.
History teacher gives us a smile.
But mathematics is deadly frightening,
It doesn't let us relax for a while

The session is coming
Whether you like it or not,
And students prepare their arming
Cause they are kind of S.W.A.T.

Anton Perminov, 1st year student of the Applied Mathematics and Mechanics Department



I love to study at the University. At school six lessons dragged on endlessly, but here free or four pairs tick like a flash. I can not say that learning is easy, but I know that I like the things I do. Here nobody forces you to learn. As for me, this freedom gives a sense of responsibility. I also like my group. It is interesting to communicate with them. Someone likes dancing, someone likes sport or music... It is really great!

I am sure I made the right choice when I entered this University.

Nikolai Avdeev, 1st year student of the Computer Science Department

NEWS

FROM ENGLISH LESSONS

1st year students of the Advanced English Group of AMM department were to make up fables which had to have a moral at the end. Nikita Makarov pleasantly surprised both the teacher and his group mates as he wrote a poem – funny but up to date. We hope that our readers will enjoy it.

A fable about browsers

There was one day in warm July,
When all the forest tried to catch
The animal, who stole the food supply
Despite the fact: there was a latch.

Some buzzes appeared quickly,
With lightning speed of yellow press:
The food that disappeared weekly,
Was taken by the wolf, who was playing chess.

He was such a smart and cunning person
That he could crack the lock again.
I use "again": he was in prison
Because of theft – such an awful fame!

The mayor's speech was very strong,
Big Grizley promised everyone,
That the cracker would be banished for long,
Even if he proved to be his loving son.

And all the traps were set,
And all the cameras were placed.
With the coming of purple sunset,
The action near the storage took place.

No one could believe his eyes,
There was a big figure on the screen,

Visibly, it wasn't a wolf, without lies,
It was a bear, Big Grizley's son,
And he was clearly seen.

After the catch, on the other day,
The father asked his shy son in goggles
Who had taught him to be a cracker.
"Oh, dad, I just typed it in Google..."

It's better not to make your children
Wear warm wool trousers.
I only recommend you sometimes
Check the history of your kids' browsers.

*Nikita Makarov,
1st year student of AMM department*



A New ETA

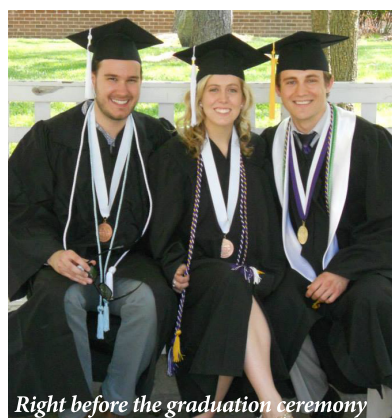
Hello! My name is Andrew Swafford and I am the Fulbright program's English Teaching Assistant this year at Voronezh State University. I arrived in Voronezh in late September and began teaching classes in Applied Mathematics and Mechanics, Computer Science and International Relations departments. I have been very impressed with many of my students' knowledge of English. I was not sure what to expect when I came to VSU, but now that I have spent a couple months teaching and interacting with students I must say that most of them have quite a strong grasp of the language and will definitely be assets to their future employers because of their language skills. Since I am not a real teacher by profession, I have had to learn how to teach as I go along. Sometimes it is difficult, such as when I have not properly gauged the level of my students' comprehension of a topic or when I have underestimated their knowledge of a topic (which is more common), but I do generally enjoy it. I like seeing students show off their English skills in the classroom. When they use interesting or more advanced vocabulary I am always impressed,

This academic year English Chair for Science Departments of Voronezh University hosts a new English Teacher Assistant Andy Swafford. Today Andy introduces himself to our readers.

since many Americans do not properly use those kinds of words. For example, when I asked a group of students for words and phrases to describe someone's personality, one student offered the beautiful word "gregarious." I thought that was just amazing because I have never heard another English speaker use that word, aside from in literature. Because I have been so impressed by the level of my students this semester, I am excited to see what next semester's groups have to offer.

Now a little bit about me. I am 23 years old and I recently graduated from Truman State University this May. I attended a small liberal arts university in a small town in northeast Missouri where my major was Russian (language, literature, history, culture, etc.) and I completed minors in Linguistics and English. I also studied French for a couple years at university. That is not where I started my Russian studies, though. I began studying the language in high school, so all together I have eight years of experience with Russian. This might sound like a lot of time to study a language and that I should be rather fluent by now, but unfortunately

that is not the case. I love the Russian language and I think it is fascinating, but it is indeed very difficult to learn, so I am not as fluent as I should be. But as the Russian saying goes, "повторение – мать учения."



Right before the graduation ceremony

When I was not at university, I lived with my family in St. Louis, Missouri. It is a beautiful city famous for the enormous steel Gateway Arch which stands as a memorial of the original settlers' expansion into the western half of the country. The city is situated on the banks of the Mississippi River, which famous American authors such as Mark Twain wrote about. It is also famous for

successful professional sports teams and for the Anheuser Bush brewery which makes such beers as Budweiser, Bud Light, Stella Artois, and many others. We have excellent science, art, and history museums, all of which are completely free and open to the public. And St. Louis is home to one of the best zoos in the nation (which is also free). The Jazz and Blues music scenes are very popular in St. Louis and well-known musicians such as Chuck Berry continue to play at historical music venues all over the city. We are also known for our delicious style of barbecue and there are certain foods that one can only find in St. Louis. We have a special kind of cheese called Provel which we eat on a uniquely thin style of pizza; we make a soft, sweet, buttery cake called Goopy Butter Cake which you must taste in order to understand; and we fry ravioli and dip them in marinara sauce. Aside from the large Anheuser Busch Brewery, there are also many smaller craft beer breweries. You could drink a different kind of beer every day for a year in St. Louis and you still would not have tried them all!

My favorite thing to do at home is to go out with my friends to coffee shops, especially late at night. St. Louis has many interesting cafes and there are always new shops opening up which sell gourmet and specialty coffee. On a typical Friday night we

might go to our favorite coffee shop in a vibrant neighborhood full of young, interesting people around 9 pm and after spending a couple hours there chatting and drinking coffee, we might go to a nearby bar and have a couple craft beers. On the weekends we might go see a Cardinals baseball game at the stadium in the heart of downtown St. Louis or catch a concert at one of the hip music venues in the city. Not far outside the city, though, there are several beautiful state parks. Sometimes we decide to drive about an hour to Meramec Caverns to see the large, intricate system of caves, or to one of the nearby locations in Illinois to watch the eagles fly. There is so much to do in and around the St. Louis area that it is difficult to be bored.

My family and I have always lived in St. Louis and we love it. My father works as a policeman and my mother is a programmer. My younger sister who is 19 started her first year at college this Fall. She goes to the University of Central Missouri and studies Psychology. Since this is not my first visit to Russia, my family is no longer afraid of sending me off to this far, mysterious land. They know that I am safe and having a good time here in Voronezh. This is my third visit to Russia and by far the longest, but I am excited to see what else I will learn and what else I can teach my students in the rest of my time here.

SUMMER EXPERIENCES

WINTER HAS ALREADY COME, BUT WE STILL REMEMBER OUR WONDERFUL SUMMER TRIPS. TODAY THE STUDENTS OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF ROMANCE AND GERMANIC PHILOLOGY AND APPLIED MATHEMATICS AND MECHANICS SHARE THE IMPRESSIONS OF THEIR TRIPS TO GREAT BRITAIN AND THE USA.

A Trip to the USA

Last year I decided to talk to my parents about my dream – they were not against it. But what about companions? Almost all of my friends had problems with English or they just didn't want to go. Finally I found people who shared my desire to work and travel the whole summer.

There were five of us: me and four of my friends. It was not easy to find a place, where we could live and work together, so we didn't have much choice. That is why we went to Texas.

We lived on Galveston, a small island near Houston on the bank of the Gulf of Mexico and worked at a prestigious fish restaurant Gaidos together with students from different parts of the world, including Russia, Ukraine and Moldova.

To be honest, I didn't like my job at all. I had to work in the kitchen and use an oven a lot, because we made bread every day. When I found four or five burns on my hands, I decided that I would never work as a cook. But then, when I got acquainted with some Americans, I understood that this work taught me some things, which will definitely be of use in the future.

The interesting fact is that Texas is a 'stealing' state. I had three bikes stolen: near my home, near my work and near a food store. With a key or not – it didn't matter, Americans found a way to get it.

A lot of my friends ask me about the relationship with Russians. Well, it differs. I was so much impressed when I had a little problem with my bike and one aged woman in the street offered me her help without asking any

questions. Is it a normal action in my country? Unfortunately, not.

In two months, when we earned some money, we started our American journey. Chicago, Washington, and of course, the Big Apple – New York. We visited a lot of places: the Willis tower – one of the tallest buildings in the world and the tallest building in America; we walked nearby the White House and the Capitol and of course took photos of the Statue of Liberty.



In Chicago

I had time to see everything I wanted: skyscrapers, art museums, Times Square, Brooklyn Bridge, Cloud Gate in Chicago, I even tried Chicago's pizza that looks like a pie and I was also lost in New York subway.

Finally I can say, that this summer in America taught me a lot of things: to value money, friends, and to understand what independent life looks like.

I would like to go to America again and get more experience.

Mary Khots,

2nd year student of AMM department

Bath 2014

Studying at the University of Bath has always been our cherished dream. When we learnt that we had been given the grant for the summer course, we were beaming with joy and couldn't wait to start our journey to this wonderful place.

The city impressed us with its Georgian architecture and English character brimming from each house, pub and corner shop. Our classes started in the morning and were a mixture of fun and studies. Working in groups with other overseas students, we talked about issues important for British society and compared them with the situation in our countries. The teachers were always ready to answer our questions and provided first-hand information about Britain. They prepared creative activities, so that we could apply our language skills.

One of the most interesting tasks was our "Project Work" which gave us a chance to develop confidence in using English and to work in teams. Choosing from a list of topics, we had to research a particular area of the British culture, for example "Pubs" or "Shops" and present the results to other students. In our groups we designed questionnaires and interviewed local people. All of them were friendly and eager to share their experience with us.

As students of Bath University we were given library cards that allowed us to use all the university facilities including the 24/7 library with free access to the Internet and the Sports Training Village with tennis and squash courts and a 50-m swimming pool where some of the teams trained for the London 2012 Olympics.

Apart from being one of the most prestigious universities in Britain, the University of Bath was ranked as one of the most welcoming for students and the best for student satisfaction. Our group was warmly welcomed by student helpers who not only organized parties and sports activities but also gave us practical advice about shops, food, bus timetables and were happy to tell us more about life in Bath.

As a part of our social program, we went on guided tours to such well-known places as Oxford, Stratford-upon-Avon and London and visited some local villages. One of the most memorable trips was the one to Lacock village and Abbey where BBC's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* were filmed.



Stourhead

If you are looking for an English course that will help you to improve your English and find friends, then Bath is the destination for you. Apply for the course and gain an unforgettable experience studying in Bath.

Liliya Zavyalova,

Elena Sanzhirovskaya

4th year students of the Department of Romance and Germanic Philology



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