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NEVER BEFORE № 33



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MY FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF UNIVERSITY

It has already become a tradition for "Never Before" to publish our freshmen's first impressions of university life. Today we give the floor to the students of the Applied Mathematics and Mechanics and Computer Science Departments.

My university is an educational institution, which is the best in the Voronezh region according to official ratings. VSU was my first choice because I believe that it has the ability to provide me with a quality education.

I first visited VSU when I was only eight years old, on an excursion to its zoological museum. The most unexpected exhibit was an elephant. Despite it was just a model, I thought that its eyes were very kind. Indeed, after this excursion the university seemed to me to be an enormous mysterious castle from another world.

Now that I'm a student at this university it has already become a real home for me. I think this feeling is due to its special atmosphere and the cute symbol of VSU – the cat Lisa. Every student of this university knows that if you stroke the cat, you'll successfully pass exams. Now I know that's not just a twist of fate. There is a kind of magic in VSU that I have experienced. One day, when I was sitting in the reading-room and doing some Math exercises, Lisa sat on the chair next to me, and then all homework seemed to become very easy for me.

Every morning I'm afraid to be late for lectures because they are all very interesting and important for me. When it was my first day of studying in this university, I felt excited, but I was very nervous at the same time because many things were new for me. That day was wonderful, and I'm completely sure, that it was the beginning of the coolest part of my life.

So, I can say that my first impression from my childhood has changed from one of wonder to heart-warming after the previous visit that was ten years ago.

*Marina Agafonova
1st year student
of Computer Science Department*

There is a phrase that the years which we spend in university are the best years of our lives. I think that this is true. Since the very first days I have seen confirmations of this.

First of all, I am fond of my classmates. They are all interesting people. I am really happy to meet new people and our university gives me such an opportunity.

Certainly, my life rhythm has changed a lot. Here I have less subjects, but all of them are important for my future profession. I don't need



to learn such subjects as geography, chemistry, or physics. All my subjects are closely related because I learn only mathematics and programming. I am also learning Russian and attend physical culture lessons, but it introduces some diversity to my schedule.

In addition, I am really happy to learn English, because it is one of my hobbies. I like our classes that happen every Monday and Friday evening.

Of course, student life isn't only about learning. We spend time together outside the university too. For example, in mid-September we went to the so-called "Dedication to students". There we took part in a competition and at the end we became true students. It was really an exciting and interesting day.

So, I can say that I like my new life, new friends, and the emotions that the university provides me with.

*Anastasiya Synkova
1st year student of Applied Mathematics
and Mechanics Department*

It has been two months since I first stepped into the university. Of course, it is not a very long period of time, but one with lots of new experiences. However, I would say that I'm more mature than I was a few months ago. Probably, it is caused by how lecturers treat students here.

Studying at university is very different from what I experienced before because the process of education completely differs from the one we had at school. It is also harder sometimes and you have more responsibilities. However, with new responsibilities comes freedom. By this I mean the freedom to choose what is more important for you: academic success or all possible sorts of social or artistic activities. Also, it is up to you to decide what to study beside your course.

Speaking of activities, there are plenty of them. To tell the truth, I was somewhat surprised when I learned about all of them. Alongside subjects related to your course, the university provides you with a great variety of languages to study.

All these new opportunities that have suddenly opened to me seem so diverse and unlimited that, frankly speaking, I'm astounded. Undoubtedly, my first impression of the university is absolutely positive.

*Anton Voroshilin
1st year student
of Computer Science Department*

Getting Ready to Become an English Teacher

This fall, the 4th year students of the Department of Romance and Germanic Philology, for the first time in their lives, tried their hand at being teachers. Their practical training was organized in both schools and institutes of higher learning. Today they share their impressions of their first steps in the professional shoes of a teacher.

When I am asked about my practical training, the only thing that comes to mind is my desire to return to VSMU. This year our university gave us a chance to teach not only in schools as is normal, but in higher educational establishments too. At first, I really doubted my ability to teach there, but the professors and the students of the Voronezh Medical University completely changed my mind.

In medical university we had a chance to see how people whose profession doesn't require language skills study the language. I should say it was very inconvenient for the first time to teach both in Russian and English and to explain the things that seemed to be obvious for us as students of the Romance and Germanic Philology Department to those who had practically never dealt with English.

Our first important topic was "My Alma-Mater" which included the history of VSMU, its structure, departments, and facilities. I was sure that having no information about it I wouldn't be able to teach others. When I was first asking the future dentists what they knew about their University after studying there for a week, I had no idea what they were talking about. However, by the time of the second double-period with future nurses I was well-informed and by the time of the third class I could easily fake the impression of a person who had spent all their life inside VSMU. That's how the teaching profession works. You get the text, the information, or something else to later on give to your students, you read it attentively trying to get used to it, and then you are ready to share it with others.

It is somehow a feeling of being a magician when you explain everything and your student understands it. What's more, you feel your great importance and responsibility for giving good or bad marks.

But all things come to an end and after sharing our experience and knowledge about VSMU, healthy lifestyle, Great Britain, etc., with the medical students we had to return to our Alma-Mater and continue developing ourselves so we can become good and fair teachers.

Darya Kozelskaya, 4th year student



"The time spent with you was a luxury..." – told me the student when we met after my teaching training at the A.V.Koltsov Gymnasium. To tell the truth, I share the same feelings about this experience: I was lucky not only with the children and friendly atmosphere, but also with the range of technological tools that were available, which enabled me to make the educational process more effective and entertaining. However, despite the fact that today's students are digital natives and have advantages in learning new skills, they lag in terms of emotional development. Thus, as a future educator, I see it as my duty to attempt to change this.

I tried to follow the methods of influential researchers, who found solutions in drama-based education. In September my fourth graders had round-up lessons on topics like: "Weather", "Seasons", "Colours", "Animals", "Nature", "Food". As a result, we eventually made a summarizing mini-performance called "Autumn forest". The great achievement was that all the children took part in the organizational process: they made masks, thoroughly prepared their appearance, collected autumn leaves, decorated the classroom, and diligently learnt their roles. In other words, they faced the purpose with the highest degree of responsibility and enthusiasm. Everyone had to learn a poem about the animal they pretended to be and songs about autumn. This is how they reinforced the vocabulary and grammar knowledge they had acquired (the use of present simple tense). All in all, the result of the final lesson met all expectations. The children were happy to participate in such a creative lesson and apply their talents in learning English.

Each of us who had teaching training at school will definitely remember the very first lesson and the first signs of affection by our students. The latter, I suppose, is the most important achievement for young teachers. "We love you"; "Will you still teach us?"; "Why are you leaving us?"; "I keep in mind all the songs we learnt together"; "It was so interesting to learn English with you"; "The lessons with you were the best"; "I want to remember you forever, let's take a picture"; "We miss you so much. Please, don't forget us" – all these words are the answer to the question: "What is the reason to become a teacher?"

Maria Valuyskaya, 4th year student

English Drama Studio "CATS' House"

Voronezh University English Drama Studio "CATS' House" (Creative, Artistic, Talented Students' House) has announced its 4th season. The premiere is scheduled for May, 2018.

Today we publish the impressions of the participants of the previous seasons about the studio's activities and the opinions of spectators on the premiere of the 3rd season "Four Seasons with O'Henry".

BEHIND THE SCENES

We joined the studio two years ago after we had passed the Advance English Group test.

Back then, we could not even have imagined how many non-academic activities we would take part in, such as: April Fool's Day Performance, Amateur Video Contest, and the most remarkable, English Drama Studio. We heard about it from our English teachers and became interested. The volunteers were welcomed to join in preparations for the coming drama season.

We are now going to take a quick look at the behind-the-scenes activities to help you understand the atmosphere. Like a thousand mile journey begins with one step, our preparations began with the first rehearsal. We started the process very enthusiastically: everyone would put forward their ideas about scenarios, scenography, mise en scene, body language, decorations, stage costumes, etc.

Students were welcomed with their suggestions regarding the introduction or replacement of any tiny detail. It was clear that good relations within the team were the key to success. All the while we kept supporting each other to stay motivated and to overcome difficulties together. When we had reached a mutual understanding about the plot and acting, the time came to start working on the video and sound support and selecting props.

Of course, we started thinking of our stage costumes from the very beginning of the preparation process, so when decision time came, we had already figured out what stage costumes we should wear. Some of us went shopping to choose the best outfit to be worn, others rummaged through their wardrobes in search of better options. Though we'd had quite enough time to pick up the best garb, some of us kept changing our outfits till the end of the rehearsal process.

Before the final rehearsal we had to prepare all the decorations needed for the play. If you want to find the best equipment for a show, all you have to do is to use your imagination. Firstly, you can get a lot of different things from



your friends. You'll be surprised, but we found a car steering wheel this way. Secondly, you can make something by yourselves with tape, scissors, paints, a stapler, and paper. Moreover, you can buy some simple materials like cloth and cardboard and combine them to make or imitate full scale decorations. If nothing else can help you, some things may be bought in a shop.

Last but not least are the advertisements. It's very important to spread the news about the upcoming event. Our English teachers invited their colleagues and students to support us. The actors invited their friends and families to come and enjoy the show. The teachers organized the printing of librettos – little brochures which have a cover designed according to the theme of the show and which consist of different info about the performances, such as the names and plots of the plays, a list of actors and their roles, and a list of those who helped to stage the performance.

Finally, we moved on to the most spectacular part, the Premiere. The hall was full, the audience were eagerly awaiting the start of the show. Despite the long and thorough preparations, everyone was worrying in some way or other. Nevertheless the participants did their best and were a success. Undoubtedly, there were some setbacks because it's impossible to make absolutely everything go according to plan. But even when the actors faced some troubles they quickly found a way out of the situation.

After the performance there was a quiz on the show's scenarios. The most attentive spectators were awarded delicious prizes. At the end all the participants were invited to enjoy a very special cake. Its top layer had a picture of the performance's advertisement and it was made from delicious custard and fudge.

In conclusion we'd like to add that in spite of all the difficulties and obstacles we had fun and gained a lot of experience. We hope our studio will expand and thrive to keep on impressing our audience and involving enthusiastic makers of spectacles.

✍ Maria Laktionova, Inessa Kachevskaya, Artyom Romasev, Vladislav Vostrikov, Mark Lukin
3rd year students of Applied Mathematics and Mechanics Department

Jessica Gumucio, English Teacher Assistant, Fullbright:

This play was well put together and I admire the hard work from the whole group of actors, staff, and directors. I can't imagine how stressful and frightening it can be to learn a play in another language and congratulations



to students who went on stage, spoke their lines in English, and gave us a great show.

It was refreshing to see such creativity and thoughtfulness in so many ways throughout the play. The props were resourceful and innovative. The dedication to the different settings of each mini-story was clear through the inventiveness of the costumes of each character. I applaud the four directors, Marina Abramovna Sternina, Marina Anatoleevna Strelnikova, Natalia Marchenko and Marina Pankratova, for their leadership and attention to detail.

I thought that O. Henry was an exciting and excellent pick for show. I'm quite a fan, since his life was based in the town of Greensboro, about twenty minutes from where I live in North Carolina. His short stories are beautifully written and the directors did a great job of adapting them to the stage. While all the mini-stories were interesting in their own way, I think the student actors really portrayed the first and third stories masterfully with a high level of understanding of the underlying issues of life and society.

I'm glad to see students at VGU participating in such great extracurricular activities and I'm extremely proud to have seen some of my students in that group. I only expect the best from the theatre group in the coming years.

Rodrigo Bathory, English teacher at Lingvist International House:

I was invited to VGU in order to watch a play that was prepared by some teachers from the university and by students from different majors. Oh, in case I forget to mention, the whole play, or plays, were presented in English.

Everything there, from the props on the stage to the performance and the costumes amazed me. As someone who has always tried to become involved in drama-related activities, I know for a fact that these different aspects can be one of the biggest challenges, and it can even undermine the creativity and performance of everyone who is engaged. I was glad to see that it was not a problem.

In general, I can say that the collection of stories they performed by O. Henry was good. The preparation and care taken by the teachers and the students was evident. During two specific scenes I remember thinking that some

decisions made by the students/actors were highly professional.

Regarding the language, I do not see how it can be anything else but admired. It is extremely difficult to endure the pressure the stage and the audience can have upon you when you are up there, and it definitely does not get easier when you have to speak in a foreign language or have some technical issue during the play.

If I have one last thing to say, it is that I regret it happened only once, it was a pleasure to be there, and I certainly expect to see more like this in the near future.



News from English Lessons

In November, the first year students of the AMM advanced English groups held a contest of limericks. Today we publish two of them.



Drawing: Maksim Likhachev

There was a sly naughty cat,
Who got into the nearest flat.
The owners were a bit feared,
When all the meat disappeared,
But the thief felt incredibly glad.

✍ Margarita Kazartseva
1st year student of Applied Mathematics and Mechanics Department

There was a boy from Shanghai,
Who couldn't stand any lie.
He used to sit down,
Or bend to the ground,
When telling somebody a lie.

✍ Viktoriya Tyan
1st year student of Applied Mathematics and Mechanics Department



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