

Letter to STARTALK Parents Sent by Email 8/4/2011

**Пожалуйста, дайте нам знать, если хотите прочитать это письмо по-русски.**

Dear STARTALK Parents,

Thank you so much for sending your children to our Russian STARTALK Student Program this summer! As you know, this is our very first year offering STARTALK summer language programs at the University of Washington -- and it's the first year nationally that STARTALK has funded Russian language programs for students.

### **Science, Technology, Engineering, Math -- STEM**

Our program is extra special because we are linking our Teacher and Student Programs so that the teachers in the Teacher Program have a chance to get direct teaching experience by presenting lessons in the Student Program. Our theme for the Teacher Program is "Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century." Part of being a successful language teacher in the 21st century is the ability to teach important content (especially Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math -- STEM) through the language. In our case, we are doing that through the "Voyage to Mars" theme. Already one of our Teacher Program teachers, Svetlana Abramova, has presented lessons on the Space Race and Space Station Mir. On Thursday, we will have a lesson on the International Space Station, presented by another of our Teacher Program teachers, Elena Petrova. Next week, another teacher (and UW graduate student), Lena Doubivko, will present her lesson on Mars. Then, on Wednesday, August 10, we will take all the students to the Museum of Flight where they will participate in the Challenger Learning Center program, "Voyage to Mars." They will also have a chance to interview U.S. Astronaut, Dr. Bonnie Dunbar, who studied in Russia and took the Space Shuttle to live on Space Station Mir.

We hope that your children have been sharing highlights of our program with you. But, in case they haven't yet, we are posting some of the presentation information, plus videos of the lessons on our UW STARTALK website:

<https://depts.washington.edu/startalk/russianstudentresources.php>. We continue to update the website every day. Here is a link to the page with the Space Station Mir lesson:

[https://depts.washington.edu/startalk/lessons/space\\_station\\_mir.php](https://depts.washington.edu/startalk/lessons/space_station_mir.php).

### **Interviews with Interesting People**

Meeting people in interesting jobs, who are also native speaker of Russian, is another important part of the program. The students have learned how to do introductions, ask engaging questions, acknowledge speakers, and write appropriate thank-you letters. We have posted some of the materials on our website:

[https://depts.washington.edu/startalk/lessons/howto\\_interview.php](https://depts.washington.edu/startalk/lessons/howto_interview.php).

### **Drama Production -- "Love, Russian Style"**

Of course, in addition to STEM and Interviews, our Student Program has a focus on DRAMA. The

students have been working very hard with our lead instructor, Valentina Zaitseva, and our drama consultant, Aleksey Pavlov, to produce a unique performance for you -- and all the Russian-speaking community -- on **August 11 at 7 pm** at Kane Hall 130 on the University of Washington Campus. Please plan to come and bring your friends, family, neighbors, and acquaintances to see the production. It is free -- funded by STARTALK.

There is more information about it on our website:

<https://depts.washington.edu/startalk/index.php>. Here is a link to a flyer in Russian that you can download and print:

[https://depts.washington.edu/startalk/documents/Startalk\\_Performance\\_Poster.pdf](https://depts.washington.edu/startalk/documents/Startalk_Performance_Poster.pdf). **If you need color copies to distribute, please let us know and we'll send more home with your child this week.**

Note: We are looking into the possibility of streaming the video of the live performance on August 11 so that Russian-speaking friends and family in other parts of the country (or world) can view it with audience. In any case, we expect to have copies of the video for you to view later.

### **Assignments**

The most important work of the program is what your students do by coming and participating every day. They **MUST** participate in the Voyage to Mars on August 10 and the Drama Performance on August 11 in order to receive credit for the course.

In addition, we have a variety of tasks for them to complete related to the lessons and interviews. They can earn points for each of the tasks they complete (including making corrections of something they have already posted). We have Russian teachers available in the afternoon to work individually with students to help them with grammar and writing questions they may have.

They can always find the links to their daily assignments on MOODLE. (Ask them to show you MOODLE.) In addition, we are now posting the daily schedules on the website so YOU can see what is expected of them: <https://depts.washington.edu/startalk/russianstudent.php>. (Here is the August 3 Schedule: [http://depts.washington.edu/startalk/documents/STARTALKStudentSchedule\\_2011.08.03.pdf](http://depts.washington.edu/startalk/documents/STARTALKStudentSchedule_2011.08.03.pdf).)

The more they read and write, the more they will improve their skills in Russian!

### **Assessments (Tests)**

We are also now reaching the time in the program when the students have the opportunity to take several assessments (tests) to help them demonstrate their proficiency in Russian. They each filled out this sheet to indicate which tests they wanted to take:

[http://depts.washington.edu/startalk/documents/STARTALK2011\\_Student\\_Assessments.pdf](http://depts.washington.edu/startalk/documents/STARTALK2011_Student_Assessments.pdf).

Here is the schedule:

Friday August 5 1:00-2:00 UW Slavic Department Russian Placement Test

Monday August 8 9:00-12:00 ACTFL OPIc (30 minutes) WPT (90 minutes)  
Please contact me if you have questions.

Thank you,

Michele

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