

How I met SFU: international students tell about university life

July, 2020, Siberian Federal University summed up the results of the How I met SibFU competition for international students.



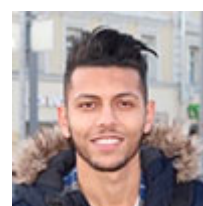
In total, 12 stories were sent to the competition, the winners were:

- Laurent Thiebo-Koulemou, School of Mining, Geology and Geotechnology;
- Radi Youcef, Postgraduate Department;
- Ma Huixin, student of Russian as a Foreign Language, preparatory department of the School of Philology and Language Communication.

✖ *“We invited our students to recall their first meeting with the university and the campus, their first day or vivid impressions of meeting new people,” said **Sofiia Egorova**, head of the International Student and Staff Support Office of Siberian Federal University. “The students published their Stories in Russian and English and even in the native language on social networks with the tags #studyatsibfu #supportsibfu. First of all, we evaluated the originality of the story, the photo and the number of likes in the posts in our community. It was difficult for us to choose the winners because all the stories were fascinating.”*

You can read the stories in [the official SibFU's community in VK](#).

Mazen, Egypt: *“I have been living in Russia for a year and a half and I can boast that I could speak Russian before studying at SibFU. But my teacher helped me learn Russian better, as well as understand the grammar. Since March I have been studying at the preparatory faculty. It seems to me that Krasnoyarsk teachers use the most modern methods in communicating with students.*



I arrived in Krasnoyarsk at the beginning of the pandemic. Self-isolation began, so I don't know the city at all. But the study group has become a family — we respect each other, and so does the teacher. Thanks to the language courses, I have made good friends. It became easier for us to communicate, when we'd learned the language better. We even have started joking in Russian.

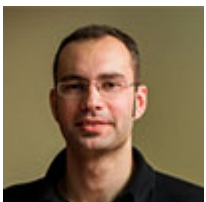
The guys studied online for most of the semester, but the pandemic did not affect the warm relations in the group.”



Jing, China: *"I came to Russia three years ago to get my master's degree. I am living in Krasnoyarsk. The city is located on the banks of the mighty Yenisei River. Krasnoyarsk is almost 400 years old and is the capital of Krasnoyarsk Territory. I used to love snow, but now it seems to me that I will never want to see it again."*

I started learning Russian at SibFU in October last year. I've learned a lot since then and found friends from different countries. They are kind and nice, I like studying with them. They have their own favourite words. Nastya often says "может быть, наверное" (maybe, probably). Elena says Nastya is her usual self. Oday often says "азвину" (instead of извини, which means sorry), можно вопрос?" (may I ask you a question?), he is very polite. Mai often asks the question "что" (what?). Hedi often says "я не знаю, как сказать, я не понимаю" (I don't know how to say, I don't understand) but he is the smartest person in our group. He is like a walking encyclopedia because he knows a lot that we don't.

Elena is our teacher, a cheerful and beautiful girl, and caring and responsible, and patient to us. She always helps to deal with learning problems. I am glad that I met such a wonderful teacher and I am happy to study in my group."



Simon, Germany: *"I arrived in Krasnoyarsk on February 1. I was very cold and surprised when I found out that this year the winter was much warmer than usual. My acquaintance with the city began with a walk along Mira Avenue. It was snowing that day. I got to the embankment and saw the huge Yenisei. Plus, then I found out which coffee shops serve fragrant cappuccino."*

I came to Krasnoyarsk to learn Russian better. A significant part of my classmates had already studied at SibFU, but I quickly adapted. We all came from different countries, so our talks were interesting — I liked learning new things about other cultures. Elena, our teacher, discussed not only grammar with us, but also other stuff — this helps in learning the language.

The building in which we studied is called "Pyramid" because its glass roof is built in the shape of a pyramid. During the break, Nastya and Sota and I usually went to the cafeteria, drank coffee, ate pie and chatted.

And here is the "Pyramid".

At the end of March, self-isolation began, so our training switched to a distant mode. Sometimes it was embarrassing — meetings always began with the words "Hello, can you hear me?" This semester I learned a lot and met interesting people. When everything [self-isolation] is over, I will definitely go to The Stolby National Park."

Nastya, Vietnam: *"I will soon be 21. I came from Vietnam. At first, I wanted to come to Russia to change my passport, but then I decided to stay and study Russian at SibFU. I have already been to Russia, but it is my first time in Krasnoyarsk. It is bigger and more beautiful than Norilsk, where I have been before."*



I have been studying here since September. At that time, there were only Chinese students in my group, and I felt lonely, but soon there were more new comers and we got along. When I first came to the classroom and saw Elena, our teacher, I thought she was also a student. She is beautiful, sweet and interesting. I respect her patience in working with students.

I went to visit Katya and Nadya and we had dinner together. We took the same bus home every day. They are good-natured and always speak at the same time.

Hedi is cute, especially in those moments when he tries to explain something, but in the end he says "He знаю" (I don't know.) I hope we learn French so we can get to know him better. Christina is a special girl. She has curly hair and an unforgettable laugh. Mai is a mysterious and interesting person. Double has been my deskmate from the first day. She is a good girl with exquisite taste. Simon and Sota are my friends in the group, we often have lunch together. Sota is a quiet guy, but his laugh is soothing. He is a true friend with cool long hair. Simon is a cute, tall, interesting and funny guy who loves jokes and coffee. He tried to teach me how to skate, but nothing really came of it.

Oday and Mazen were new. I like it when Oday speaks Russian and makes mistakes, and Elena corrects him, it seems that he is in a panic and constantly says "Извиняюсь" (I am sorry.) When Mazen and I shared a textbook, we forced each other to do assignments. We laughed at each other when we made mistakes. It was great to spend every day with them. Thanks to the training, I learned more than I had thought, not only about other cultures but also about the connection between languages and people. I am proud that I have good friends from other countries.

I do not plan to stay here next year, but I am sure that SibFU will remain my favourite place. I want the pandemic to end sooner, and we could see the group and Elena in real life to take a group photo."

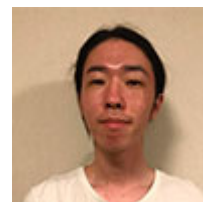


Oday, Iraq: *"In mid-March, I became a student in the preparatory department.*

I was in Russia three years ago and even achieved my master's degree. But this time, when I came to Krasnoyarsk, they helped me to learn the language and grammar better. Thanks to the language courses, I met good people.

Unfortunately, after my arrival in Krasnoyarsk, the coronavirus pandemic began. Due to self-isolation, I had not got a chance to see the city at all. In my opinion, distance learning is very boring. I could not concentrate because I was used to the usual format."

Sota Muto, Japan: *"I had been studied Russian in Japan for 2 years. In September, I still did not understand Russian well, but then I changed the group, where there was a different level of study, which only had a positive effect on my learning.*

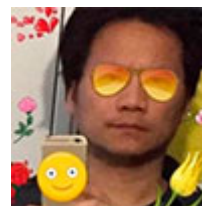


I lived in Krasnoyarsk for 8 months, but due to the pandemic, I had to return to my homeland. In Russia, I went out every day and felt the kindness of people. If you need help, here they will always help you. And in Japan, for example, they almost never ask for directions, but in Russia, I often encountered such cases.

The best thing that I got in Russia is friends! At the university, I studied with good students. Despite the fact that I changed the group more than once, everybody in each group was kind and wonderful. A tradition has developed in our group: when a teacher asks us and everyone

is silent, in 80% of cases someone says my name, and I answer."

Mai, Taiwan: *"I am studying Russian at SibFU. I like Krasnoyarsk for the friendliness of the people, but the city architecture didn't really inspire me. I would also recommend Russian TV channels to follow the example of English-speaking countries and make subtitles. They would help foreigners to learn Russian."*



And now about the campus. Finding the right room in SibFU is quite difficult, it was not always possible.

In March, we switched to distance learning. Online courses only work well if you study 1-3 times a week. At home, everyone is usually lazy. The last two weeks of study should be as intense as possible in order to memorize as many Russian words as possible."



Fan Bei, China: *"I am glad to study in Krasnoyarsk. I have very interesting classmates. Nastya is sweet and interesting to talk to. Sota is smart and friendly, he is always first. Hedi is also very smart and knows a lot of things, but due to the language barrier, he always says, "Я не знаю" (I don't know.) Simon loves to improvise. Oday is actively answering questions. Mazen speaks good Russian, and Mai is always silent. Nadya and Katya have a very vivid body language. I really like our group and our teacher*

Elena, there is always a special friendly atmosphere in the class during training.

Groupmates and their teacher Elena Demina."

Hedi, Tunisia: *"I arrived in Krasnoyarsk two years ago. Now I am finishing my master's degree at the School of Petroleum Engineering. I was pleasantly surprised by the weather in Siberia. When I first arrived here, it seemed to me that it was always cold here. But soon I realized that the weather in Krasnoyarsk is not so severe: summer is warm, and winter is very beautiful. I've never seen so much snow! The city is quiet and calm. I like walking in parks and forests, there are many of them here."*



In my last semester, I took a course of Russian as a foreign language. There were many students from different countries in my group, so it was interesting for me to learn more about their culture and character. I liked that in our lessons we communicated as in real life, and our teacher Elena talked to us as to her friends.

We were not afraid to make mistakes and improved our knowledge of Russian. When we started studying online, we got another student — Rouble. This is a cat that lives in a room with my groupmates. I also liked that everyone could express their opinion on a topic and say whether they agree or not. Thank you all for the interesting time and useful knowledge!"



Nadya, China: *"Three years ago I came to Krasnoyarsk to learn Russian. After this course, I already speak it well and feel like a fish in water here. I like living and studying in Krasnoyarsk."*

There are 10 students in our group. They came from different countries: Japan, China, Iraq, Egypt, Vietnam, Tunisia and Germany. They are very kind, polite and intelligent. I enjoy learning with them. Our teacher's name is Elena, she is a very smart, beautiful and kind girl. She helps me to learn Russian, I am glad to learn from her. It seems to me that she is not only my teacher but is also a good friend.

Our group has a very interesting student. His name is Oday and he is from Iraq. He speaks very fast like he does the rap. Once, he wanted to ask the teacher a question and said, "Алёна, можно задать вопрос?" (Alyona, can I ask a question?) Everyone laughed as he mispronounced the name:

"Меня зовут Елена, а не Алёна." (My name is Elena.)

"Извините, Алёна!" (Sorry, Alyona.)

"Елена!" (It's Elena.)

"Хорошо, Алёна!" (I see, Alyona.)

"Ну ладно." (Ah, well...)

I often remember this situation and then laugh. I love our group, but our lessons will be over soon. I will miss them."

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