



TEACHING PROJECTS

ST PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you're looking for a hearty cultural experience in a land where the hearts of the people are as big as the land itself, Russia is the place for you!

Russia has everything one could possibly want, culturally and intellectually.

"The sun hasn't stopped shining since I arrived, which could be a coincidence but I doubt it. I haven't found a single thing I dislike about the place (maybe the dust..) and there are loads of things I'm loving. My hostess is awesome, very funny and sweet although her English is almost as bad as my Russian. The city is just as good as it looks on paper, but you can't appreciate the scale everything is on - they super-size everything here. Favourite sight so far was walking into the Palace square with Irina - its very breathtaking." Matthew Trimmer

Russia is one of the most beautifully diverse countries in the world, and contains all of the major vegetation zones of the world, apart from tropical rainforest. The country is submersed in history and culture and you will be welcomed by a nation of generous and friendly people. This is an endearing country to visit!

TEACHING IN ST PETERSBURG

Your work will take place in language classes and/or in institutes and schools around the city, some private and some belonging to the State. All of the schools and institutes are extremely enjoyable, because you will normally help with classes ranging from 6-20 students. This gives you great scope to form quick friendships and a happy working environment.

Most of the schools and institutes where we work range in size from 100 – 300 students, and initially, you will sit in with a class to give you time to acclimatise to their way of teaching. However, there are times where you may be given control of a whole group straight away, but we try to stop this happening as much as possible. This isn't as daunting as it sounds though, because the school and their staff are extremely friendly and very helpful if you need any support. Before you begin you will have to sit down with our Russia organiser, and the school principle to distinguish a suitable working timetable for yourself and the school.

With most of the teaching placements in Russia, lessons are generally in the late afternoon, which gives you plenty of time in the day to visit the wonderful sites of this great city. There are also many one to one lessons from midday onwards, if you feel you will be more of a benefit with this kind of work.

My working hours are as follows:

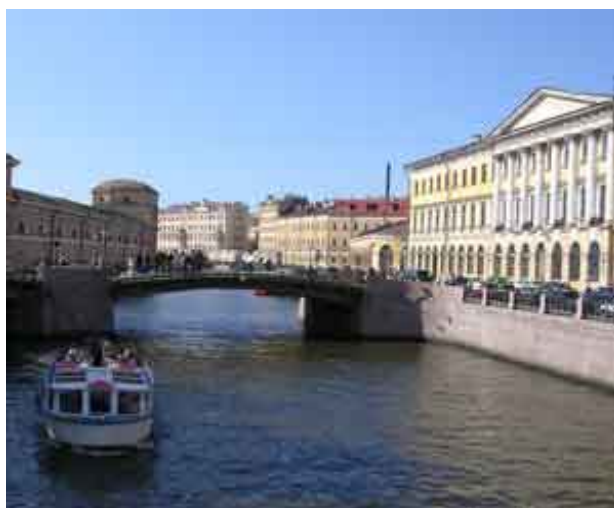
Monday - 4-6pm Kindergarten

Wednesday - 3-8pm Teaching at school

Thursday - 10-12 Kindergarten

Friday - 11-12 Teaching at school

Everything at school is going very well. I also teach a man on Friday mornings called Alexi who has invited me round his house once and taken me out with his son on several occasions. He has also invited me to go to Vyborg with him. This weekend John and I are going to Estonia and on the 4th May we both leave to go on the



Trans-Siberian railway through to Vladivostok. That should be a great laugh! Oh, almost forgot, the other week (12th) Katie 2, Lucy, John and I went to the final show of the British film festival. It was Calender Girls and Helen Mirren was there. Well, of course we introduced ourselves and got lots of pictures! She loved us! That's all the news for the mo, Cheers, Andi (Andrew Leung)

Throughout your placement you will probably be asked to help out with lessons from the institute's curricula textbooks, and for this you'll get the class to read passages and then discuss them or perhaps have a brief debate about the content. We provide you with a *Teaching Suggestions Guide* which Travellers has prepared for volunteers, but mostly you'll work from sections in a school textbook. The *Teaching Suggestions Guide* will, however, give you some hints and tips on how to teach

You will most probably also work a couple of times a week in a **kindergarten**, where you'll help to look after a small group of very young children. Most volunteers thoroughly enjoy this, and the work here ranges from trying to teach them some very basic English, to possibly helping them to feed themselves. Some of the time is also spent just playing with them! If you wish to participate on just the Kindergarten placement, then this is easily made possible.

All of the staffs and students really appreciate your help, and they will show this with there friendly attitude and approach. This friendly attitude normally spills out into a social setting after lessons have finished, where strong bonds are then formed with the teachers, students, and especially with your host family who may also ask for some help with their English.

Whether it's the children, a student, or the adults trying to understand satellite TV, English is the language that all Russians want to know, and you will be inundated with questions and interest about you and your country.

School Holidays:

Spring Holiday: 22 March – 29 March

Summer Holiday: 1 June** – 1 September

Autumn Holiday: 4 November – 14 November

Winter Holiday: 1 January – 15 January

** Teaching is available in language centres throughout the summer holidays, but class sizes are normally smaller then the normal term time teaching**

You don't need any qualification for this placement except a very good command of the English language, but if you feel you would like to gain a little teaching knowledge, you can enroll in our 1-day intensive open teacher training course. This is optional for those who feel they will benefit from it.

FEEDBACK FROM KATHERINE LYALL ON HER TEACHING PLACEMENT:

"I really enjoy sharing stories with my students. We often laugh together at the strange habits of the Brits and the Russians. It's fun to compare and contrast the two cultures. I think I've learnt as much about my own race and country as I have about the Russians.

I love the friendliness of the Russian people. They have really helped me to settle in and feel at home. Some of the students regularly invite me to cafes, museums, the theatre, etc., which I think is lovely.

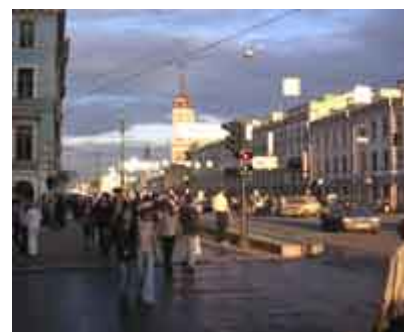
Would you recommend this placement to anyone else? Definitely! I think it's a great opportunity to discover yourself and another culture. It's fun to visit places on holiday, but I think it's better to be able to live in a place for a while - preferably with a local family. That way you can get to know a place and its culture a lot better. As they say, 'when in Rome, do like the Romans do!'

I think this placement has helped me to become more confident, independent and adaptable. After being at university, I felt that I already had these qualities, but living in a different country helps to improve such traits. I have also had the opportunity to try lots of new foods and activities, and to meet lots of different people."

ACCOMMODATION:

You will live with a family and they will look after you extremely well. They are always friendly and will accept you into their family immediately. Most host accommodation is centrally located, which gives you ample opportunity to explore this wondrous city.

Russians are truly renowned for their hospitality and possibly the most enduring thing our volunteers take with them from Russia is a feeling of warmth and friendship for the Russian people. Many develop very close friendship with our Russia manager, and almost everyone stays in contact with their Russian family for many years! Some volunteers have even



returned just to visit their Russian 'family'.

Food: Good Russian home-cooking takes advantage of what's available at sensible prices - potatoes, salami, tomatoes, cabbage, pickles, jam and good bread to name just a few. Vodka and good local beer are both cheap, so there is always ample available to socialize!

Trev, Greetings from SPB! It is colder than I had expected it would be for this time of year. Last week when I checked the online weather, SPB was in the high 20's! Wednesday it dropped below zero! That is how it is here in May I guess.

My hostess is a charming and hospitable woman. She lives alone and is an excellent cook. That alone eases some of my worries regarding this adventure. Many people imagine the food in Russia to be less than fantastic. That can be true as their restaurant culture is in it's infancy. They used to say the same thing about England too. However Russian home cooking is fantastic. When prepared by skilled hands it is even better. We start dinner with hot soup and fresh bread before moving onto the main course which is greatly varied. Last night I had some sort of a hot-pot affair with beef, French beans, onions and potatoes served over pasta (semi-stroganoff). Delicious!

Yesterday I went to the Russian museum. Gorgeous! The building itself is so beautiful it was hard to keep one's eyes on the artwork. This morning I got a call from George (another volunteer), we are meeting at another museum and then perhaps a few cheeky glasses of Russian beer! I'll keep you abreast of the activities here as they develop. Your man in St. Pete's, Rocky Durham

RUSSIAN COURSES:

If you would also like to coach sports and **learn Russian at the same time**, we can arrange a **combination placement** for you. The **combination course** will integrate your teaching/work experience placement and your Russian Course during your stay in St Petersburg. This is normally in groups at the St Petersburg University and follows the structure of the **Travellers Russian Course**. Please see our website for costs:

WHEN YOU ARRIVE:

On your arrival in Russia, our Organiser will meet you at the airport and take you to your host family. During your first few days in Russia you'll be given an induction by our Organiser. She will show you some of the sights and help you to familiarise yourself with the town, as well as with other useful local information, such as the currency, how to use the telephones, take taxis, buses, trains, etc.

VISA:

Russia has a very bureaucratic visa process:

Once you have booked a placement with us, it will take approximately 3 months to apply for your visa to work in Russia. We have to apply for an invitation letter for you to work in Russia. Once this has been received (almost 6 weeks after we have applied for it), it can take up to 15 working days for the visa to be processed while in England.

Visas will normally only last for the duration of your placement while in Russia. This is for legal and safety reasons on behalf of the schools where we work. They will not take liability for you while you are on independent Travel. If you wish any independent travel then you will have to apply for a tourist visa while in England or while you are in Russia. If you intend to take part on a placement for over 3 months then you will have to extend your visa while in the Russia. The extension is then based on an individual basis by the government. They may accept the extension, but then they may while decline it.

ABOUT ST PETERSBURG

St. Petersburg is a magnificent city, built by Peter the Great less than three centuries ago. The city lies on the Gulf of Finland and contains some wonderful palaces and squares. A network of canals run through the city which are surprisingly serene and peaceful. If Moscow is Europe's most Asiatic capital, then **St Petersburg** is Russia's most **European city**. Created by Peter the Great as his 'window on the West', it was built with 18th and 19th-century European pomp and orderliness. The result is a city that remains one of Europe's most beautiful; where Moscow intimidates, St Petersburg enchants.



The city sprawls across and around the mouth of the Neva River, at the end of the easternmost arm of the Baltic Sea. Between the Winter Palace and the Admiralty on the south bank is the city's heart; with Nevsky Prospekt is its main artery. This central area is a pedestrian's dream of waterside walkways and elegant streetscapes. One of St Petersburg's most famous attractions is the not-to-be-missed **Hermitage Museum**, probably the largest in the world with incredible exhibits. The **Winter Palace** is another sight not to be missed with its splendour and grandeur.

The **Kirov Ballet**, now known as the Mariinsky, is housed in St. Petersburg. To us in the West, it is probably most renowned for its three famous dancers, Rudolf Nureyev, Natalia Makarova, and Mikhail Baryshnikov, and their defection to the West.

St Petersburg is a year-round destination. Long days in summer and long nights in winter. In winter there are fewer tourists, but there's a twinkling magic about the winter sky. White Nights in mid-summer are beautiful, but it can be disconcerting to think it's about 8 pm when it's really 3 am!

Climate: Much milder than its extreme northern latitude would suggest. January temperatures average -8°C (17°F); a really cold day will get down to -15°C (5°F). It's a windy city with wind-chill so take a warm hat and scarf. Summer is cool, and in June and August temperatures reach 20°C (68°F). During these months the city is packed with foreign and Russian tourists.

Cuisine:

Russian cuisine is based on porridge, stews, and soups such as borshch (beetroot with vegetables and meat soup) or shashlik (shish kebab). For special occasions whole roast suckling pig, roast goose stuffed with buckwheat, and roast duck stuffed with apples are served.

HELPFUL COMMENTS MADE BY A TRAVELLERS VOLUNTEER IN ST PETERSBURG:

"Bearings: It shouldn't take too long to find your way around the centre of town. Basically most of the places you will end up will be on or off Nevsky Prospekt, the central boulevard - about two miles long - and monument to Russia's fast growing consumer culture.

At one end is the mighty river Neva, plus the Winter Palace and the Admiralty Spire which can be seen from most of Nevsky Prospekt and is thus useful for seeing which direction you're going in. As you walk away from the river, Nevsky is then transected by three waterways which conveniently divide up the area into manageable sections - the river Moyka, the Griboyedov canal, and then the river Fontanka.

Carry on down and (after crossing Liteiny Prospekt - home to Centre Vera) you will get to Ploschad Vosstaniya, which is where the Moscow station is situated (where you are likely to arrive from). Past the square you get to the bit known as 'old Nevsky' which is a bit run down, but a little less touristy and a bit more studenty, containing some funky little hangouts. This is also where the red light district is, if you're interested. Carry on down here and you will get to Ploschad Alexandrovo Nevskovo, the end of the road. Once you've sorted this out, you're pretty much okay - most places of interest are on Nevsky or down one of the canals.

Transport: Public transport is amazingly efficient and cheap and you will need to use it quite a bit. The Metro shuts at about 12.30, but up to this time you shouldn't have to wait more than three minutes for a train. It is clean, well organised, never stops inexplicably in the tunnel a la London Underground, and some of the stations are quite spectacular. The only problems are potential loss of limb in the ridiculously punishing slam of the carriage doors, and the depth of the lines underground, which sometimes makes you feel as if you are descending halfway to hell as you go down the escalators.



Trolleybuses and Trams should be 4 roubles a journey, and are often more convenient than the metro for shorter distances. There is also a herd of minibuses known as marshutkas that patrol the bus routes that can be hailed and got off at any point. They tend to be quicker than normal buses and are very useful.

Also, if you are in a rush, don't be afraid to just stick your thumb out - hitchhiking is pretty common and people will stop, usually expecting about 50 roubles, though you may have to haggle. Obviously, I would not advise this alone at night."

"The family I was staying with were lovely. They were helpful and hospitable and took good care of me and I soon felt part of the family. I was lucky in this respect, as I was introduced to lot of other Russians and also taken places I may not have thought of myself - driven to Vyborg and Peterhof, for example. I had my own room in a very comfortable flat on the outskirts of town."

We may be able to provide you with a TRAVEL PASS which will enable you to travel locally for **FREE** during your placement.

RUSSIA - HISTORY:

Once Part of the old USSR, it is said that its foundations were rocked when General Secretary Mikhail GORBACHEV, in charge during 1985-91, 'introduced glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring) in an attempt to modernize communism, but also inadvertently released forces that shattered the USSR into 15 independent republics in December 1991'. It has also been said that ever since 'Russia has struggled in its efforts to build a democratic political system and market economy to replace the strict social, political, and economic controls of the communist period'.

Moscow the capital city of Russia, is one of the world's great cities. Soviet Communists ruled half the world from the Kremlin - now all that has changed. Old Russia is rediscovering itself. and Moscow is a cosmopolitan city of great churches and museums, endless boulevards and vast suburbs of apartment blocks, parks and rivers, winter ice and lazy summers. **But the real flavour of this city is in its small nooks and crannies, each of them unique, and a superb to visit during your time on the placement.**

Apart from the economic struggle which continually faces Russia, it still manages to be one of the most endearing countries to visit, and its culture and people will make your stay one of the most enjoyable and memorable experiences of your live.

THE NEXT STEP

If you would like to join us on one of our exciting projects then please fill in either an online application form or one that is attached to our brochure. Once you have booked and confirmed your place we will send you detailed pack information regarding your placement and country.

I do hope you join us and please do call or email if you have any questions at all about this or any of our other projects – 01903 502595 or email info@travellersworldwide.com

If you would like to know more about Kenya in general, or about any of our other projects, please visit our website at www.travellersworldwide.com

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