

A Letter to Russian College Students

By [Paul Kindlon](#)

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As a professor who has been teaching at an American academic institute in Moscow for more than 16 years, I have witnessed every year a small number of Russian students who graduate and then emigrate to the West, usually the United States.

In the past two years, I have noticed a dramatic rise in the number of students hoping to emigrate to the United States.

I am strongly in favor of exploring other cultures and finding a place in the world that best suits one's own personality and character. However, before leaving Russia for the "promised land," you might want to check out some simple facts about the United States of America. Here are 20 real and simple facts:

1. Overall, educationally, the United States ranks 19th among 34 industrialized nations.
2. Out of those 34 countries, the United States ranks 14th in reading, 17th in science and 25th in math.
3. Almost 20 percent of Americans cannot find the United States on a world map. ("Hey,

man, I can just Google it!")

4. Two-thirds of Americans are either "overweight" (fat) or obese (grossly fat). This is the result of a number of factors, including a bad diet and a lack of exercise.
5. Almost 50 percent of the U.S. population is on prescription drugs.
6. More than a quarter of Americans (ages 18 and older) suffer from a serious mental illness.
7. Only 10 percent of Americans know what radiation is. (This, despite the fact that the United States is the only country to have used the atomic bomb. And by the way, after we saw what horrendous unprecedented death and destruction it caused, we did it again!)
8. The United States has bombed no fewer than 30 countries since the end of World War II. This statistic has to be changed fairly frequently, so stay tuned ...
9. U.S. government debt now comprises more than 90 percent of the country's gross domestic product. For those of you who do not understand economics, no, this is NOT good.
10. More than 15 percent of Americans believe that the sun revolves around the Earth.
11. Sixty-four percent of Americans have only \$1,000 or less in their bank accounts.
12. More than 100 million Americans are on welfare support of some kind.
13. The United States has not one, two or three intelligence agencies, but 16 of them.
14. Forty percent of Americans now work in low-wage service jobs.
15. In terms of press freedom among all nations, the United States ranks a mediocre 47th.
16. Fifty-five percent of Americans believe in the biblical story of creation.
17. Forty percent of Americans keep a gun in their homes. That's just the legal figure. The number of illegal guns owned is unknown.
18. The United States is the biggest debtor nation in the history of mankind.
19. More than 8 million Americans are working part-time because they can't get a full-time job.
20. In the United States, a man can be charged with sexual harassment for looking at a girl or woman for more than three seconds or if she simply feels "uncomfortable" when you do it. (Smart guys wear sunglasses.)

Obviously not everyone is immigrating to the United States. Some are moving to Europe — that other paradise. Not a bad idea, really. But to those of you who believe that "the West" is somehow more progressive, let me remind you of one historical fact: The most oppressive political regimes over the past 100 years were Western creations — they are called fascism and communism. Just sayin'.

Finally, a disclaimer: This information is not meant to dissuade anyone from moving to the United States or Europe. I simply am providing these facts to better inform you of the place you'll call home. Good luck!

Paul Kindlon is a professor of humanities at Moscow University Touro.

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