

# English First To Teach Russian Olympians

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A craftsman adding the finishing touches to an Olympic medal.

Language school English First will give 700 Russian Olympic athletes the chance to learn English to enhance their communication skills before the upcoming games, the company said in a statement.

The Kremlin is counting on the 2014 Sochi Games to give a major boost to Russia's image abroad, and improving athletes' English skills could help make them more accessible to a world audience.

Athletes selected for the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics and the 2016 Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro will take part in the program, Russian Olympic Committee head Alexander Zhukov said, according to the English First statement.

"Our Olympians need English to travel to training camps, communicate with colleagues and

give interviews to foreign press," Zhukov said.

Those taking part in the program would have access to all the latest resources and would be taught by native English-speaking teachers, the statement said.

According to the company's English Proficiency Index, Russia ranked last among European countries in terms of English-language skills last year and placed 29th out of 54 countries globally.

For the Sochi Games in February, English First will also provide language training for employees, suppliers and contractors of the Sochi Organizing Committee, as well as for 25,000 volunteers.

The company also recently provided language training to volunteers at the 2013 Universiade, the international collegiate sporting games that are due to begin in Kazan on Saturday.

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