

Old Friends

Look-alike Russian Letters: A E K M O T (and C)

Why “Old friends”?

These letters are friendly because they *look* and *sound* almost the same as their English counterparts, so they’re the easiest to learn first.

Letter	Handwriting	Name (RU)	Sound [IPA]	Approximate English Sound
A a	A a	a	[a]	father
E e	E e	e	[je], [e]	yes / met
K k	K k	ka	[k]	kite
M m	M m	эм	[m]	man

Letter	Handwriting	Name (RU)	Sound [IPA]	Approximate English Sound
O o	O o	o	[o] / [a]	more (stressed)
C c	C c	эс	[s]	center
T t	T t	тэ	[t]	top

Notes: E e can be “ye” (*yes*) or “e” (*met*).

O o is “o” when stressed; often reduced toward “a” when unstressed.

In Russian, K is always [k] and C is always [s] (unlike English where C can be *cat* vs. *center*).

Reading Practice — Cognates

These are *cognates* (they sound like English words). Can you guess what they mean?

Tip: To remember the 7 “true friend” letters, memorize these two Russian words — they use only A, E, K, M, O, T, C:

КОМЕТА 🚀

КОСМОС 🌌

More easy cognates to practice (stress mark shows the stressed syllable):

ма́ма 🧑‍👩

тома́т 🍅

текст 📄

кот 🐱

а́том ⚙️

ма́ска 🎭

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