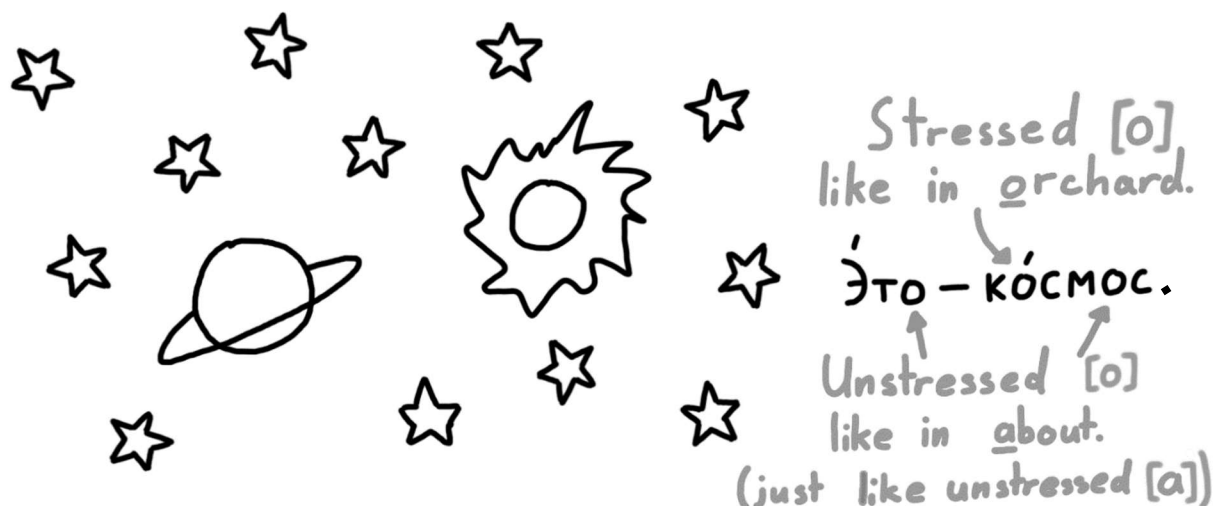




Unstressed [a]  
like in about.

ЭТО - МАСКА.

Stressed [a]  
like in father.

All three words on this page have something in common with the word **папа**: all of them have only two syllables. In all of these words, the first syllable is stressed and the second one is unstressed. The first reading rule in Russian says that all vowels sound the way they are named only when they are stressed. The second reading rule says that unstressed **a** and **o** in the syllable preceding the stressed syllable, both sound like short [u] sound like in *up* or *cup*. And the third reading rule says that in all other unstressed syllables (not the ones that are right before the stressed ones), the letters **a** and **o** both sound like reduced *a* sound like in the words *about* or *ago*. So, which of these three rules apply to the words **это**, **папа**, **мама**, **маска**, and **космос**? The first rule applies here because they all have a stressed syllable in which the letters **a** and **o** will sound just like they are named. The third rule will also apply here because we have letters **a** and **o** in the syllables after (not preceding) the stressed syllables. And the second rule is not applied. Why? Because none of these words have a syllable right before the stressed syllable.