

Polish Grammar in a Nutshell



by

Oscar E. Swan

Table of Contents

Introduction 5

1. The Polish Alphabet and Sounds 7

Sound Values of the Letters

Notes on Spelling and Pronunciation

2. Nouns 11

Preliminaries

Cases and Case Use

Chart of Regular Noun Endings

Supplements

3. Pronouns 32

Personal Pronouns

Possessive Pronouns

Demonstrative and Relative Pronouns

Intensive Pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns

Distributive Pronouns

4. Adjectives 38

Adjective Declension

Adjective-Noun Order

Comparison of Adjectives

Adjective Opposites and Their Comparatives

5. Adverbs 43

Formation of Adverbs

Non-Adjectival Adverbs

Notes

6. Numerals 47

Cardinal Numerals

Collective Numerals

Reified Numerals

Indefinite Numerals

Ordinal Numerals

7. Prepositions 58

English-to-Polish Prepositions

Polish-to-English Prepositions

Prepositions According to the Case Required

8. Conjunctions 66

Expressing *If... then...*

9. Verbs 68

The Infinitive

Finite Verb Categories

Pragmatic Personal Verb Categories

Present Tense

Imperative

Past Tense

Compound Future Tense

Perfective and Imperfective Aspect

Verbs of Motion

Conditional Mood

Participles, Gerunds, Verbal Nouns

Passive Voice

Depersonal Verbs

Reflexive Verbs

10. Important Sentence Constructions 91

Constructions Using the Infinitive

Modal Expressions

Introducing Sentences

Identity Sentences

Expressing *There Is*

Predicate Nouns and Adjectives

Yes-No Questions

Negation

Word Order

Sentence Intonation

Introduction

Polish Grammar in a Nutshell is intended for use as a short reference and review grammar at any level of Polish language study, from beginning to advanced. It can be used in conjunction with any of various currently available textbooks, or as a grammatical accompaniment to reading and translation courses. It covers sounds, spelling, pronunciation, conjugation and declension, verb aspect, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, the numeral and participle systems, and the basics of Polish syntax. As a whole, it summarizes the amount of grammar usually covered in a four-year undergraduate Polish program at the college level.

For current and continually updated information on Poland— its people, geography, politics, economy, and so on, consult the link

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pl.html>

Abbreviations Occasionally Used Here

1p, 2p, 3p	1st, 2nd, 3rd person	infin	infinitive
A(cc)	accusative case	inform.	informal
aj	adjective	L(oc)	locative case
an	animate	m(asc)	masculine gender
av	adverb	m.p.pl	masculine personal plural gender
comp	comparative	N(om)	nominative case
cond	conditional mood	n(eut)	neuter gender
conj	conjunction	pers	person, personal
D(at)	dative case	pf	perfective aspect
f(em)	feminine gender	pl	plural
form.	formal style usage	pron	pronoun
G(en)	genitive case	sg	singular
I(nst)	instrumental case	superl	superlative
imper	imperative	V(oc)	vocative case
impf	imperfective aspect	vb	verb



Poland, its neighbors, and its major cities.

1. The Polish Alphabet and Sounds

Here is the Polish alphabet: **a, ą, b, c, ć, d, e, ę, f, g, h, I, j, k, l, ł, m, n, ó, o, ó, p, r, s, ś, t, u, w, y, z, ź, ż.**

Sound Values of the Letters

Letter	Approximate English Sound	Examples
a	father	tak thus, so, yes, raz once
ą	dome	są they are, wąż snake
b	big	bok side, aby so that
bi-	beautiful	bieg course, run, race, tobie to you
c	fits	co what, noc night, taca tray
ch	hall	chata cottage, ucho ear, dach (roof)

The sound **ą** is pronounced like *om*, except that the lips or tongue are not completely closed to pronounce the *m*, leaving a nasal resonance instead.

The sound of *ch* is much raspier and noisier than English *h*.

ci-	cheek	ciasto cake, cicho quiet
cz	chalk	czas time, gracz player, tęcza rainbow
ć	cheek <i>s</i>	choć although, nićmi thread--Inst. pl.

The letters **ć** and **ci-** are pronounced the same. The combination **ci-** is used before a vowel. The letter **c** before **i** is pronounced like **ć/ci-**. The sound of **ć/ci-**, pronounced with the mouth in the position of English *y*, is different from that of **cz**, pronounced with the mouth in the position of English *r*.

d	do	data date, lada counter
dz	odds	cudzy foreign, wodze reins
dzi-	jeans	dziadek grandfather, ludzie people
dź	jeans	wiedźma witch, ludźmi people--Instr.pl
dż	jaw	dżez jazz, radża rajah

The letters **dź** and **dzi-** are pronounced the same. The combination **dzi-** is used before a vowel. The letters **dz** before **i** are pronounced like **dź/dzi-**. The sound of **dź/dzi-**, pronounced with the mouth in the position of English *y*, is different from that of **dż**, pronounced with the mouth in the position of English *r*.

e	ever	ten <i>this (masc.)</i> , ale <i>but</i> , Edek <i>Eddie</i>
ę	sense	gęś <i>goose</i> , tesknić <i>long for</i>

The sound **ę** is pronounced like *em*, except that the lips or tongue are not completely closed to pronounce the *m*, leaving a nasal resonance instead. At the

end of a word, the letter **ę** is normally pronounced the same as **e**: **naprawde** "naprawde".

f	<i>felt</i>	farba paint, lufa rifle-barrel, blef bluff
g	<i>get</i>	guma rubber, noga leg, <i>foot</i>
gi-	<i>ague</i>	gięda stock-market, magiel mangle
h	<i>hall</i>	hak hook, aha aha!

Pronounced the same as **ch** (see above), the letter **h** appears mainly in words of foreign origin.

i	<i>cheek</i>	list letter, igła needle
j	<i>you, boy</i>	jak as, raj paradise, zając hare
k	<i>keg</i>	kot cat, rok year, oko eye
ki-	<i>like you</i>	kiedy when, takie such (<i>neut.</i>)
l	<i>love</i>	las forest, dal distance, fala wave
ł	<i>wag, bow</i>	łeb animal head, był he was, ołówek pencil
mi-	<i>harm you</i>	miara measure, ziemia earth
m	<i>moth</i>	mama mama, tom volume
n	<i>not</i>	noc night, pan sir, ono it
ni-	<i>canyon</i>	nie no, not, nigdy never
ń	<i>canyon</i>	koń horse, hańba disgrace

The letters **ń** and **ni-** are pronounced the same. The combination **ni-** is used before a vowel. The letter **n** before **i** is pronounced like **ń/ni-**.

o	<i>poke</i>	pot sweat, osa wasp, okno window
ó	<i>toot</i>	ból pain, ołówek pencil

The letter **ó** is pronounced the same as **u**.

p	<i>pup</i>	pas belt, strap, łapa paw, cap billy-goat
pi-	<i>stop you</i>	piana foam, łapie he catches
r	<i>arriba (Spanish)</i>	rada advice, kara punishment, dar (gift)

The sound **r** is pronounced by trilling the tip of the tongue, as in Spanish, Italian, or Russian. However, it is less strongly trilled than in these languages.

rz	<i>pleasure</i>	rzeka river, morze se
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The letter-combination **rz** is pronounced the same as **ż**, more or less as in pleasure; see below.

s	<i>sad</i>	sam (the same)--masc., pas (belt), rasa (breed)
si-	<i>sheep</i>	siano hay, sito sieve
sz	<i>shark</i>	szal frenzy, duś sou
ś	<i>sheep</i>	oś axle, kwaśny sour, śpi he sleeps

The letters **ś** and **si-** are pronounced the same. The combination **si-** is used before a vowel. The letter **s** before **i** is pronounced like **ś/si-**. The sound of **ś/si-**, pronounced with the

mouth in the position of English "y", is different from that of *sz*, pronounced with the mouth in the position of English "r".

t	<i>top</i>	tam there, data date, kot cat
u	<i>toot</i>	but shoe, tu here, ucho ear
w	<i>vat</i>	wata cotton wadding, kawa coffee
y	<i>ill</i>	dym smoke, ty you--sg.
z	<i>zoo</i>	zupa soup, faza phase
zi-	<i>azure</i>	ziarno grain, zima winter
ź	<i>azure</i>	wyraźny distinct, źle (badly)
ż	<i>pleasure</i>	żaba frog, plaża beach

The letters *ê* and **zi-** are pronounced the same. The combination **zi-** is used before a vowel. The letter **z** before **i** is pronounced like **ź/zi-**. The sound of **ź/zi-**, pronounced with the mouth in the position of English "y", is different from that of **ź/rz**, pronounced with the mouth in the position of English "r".

Notes on Spelling and Pronunciation

1. The Polish alphabet has no **q**, **v**, or **x**, although these letters may be found in transcriptions of foreign names, and in a few borrowed words, e.g. **video**, **pan X** (*Mr. X*).

2. Polish "oral vowels" **a**, **e**, **i**, **y**, **o**, **u/ó** are all pronounced with exactly the same short length, achieved by not moving the tongue or the lips after the onset of the vowel, as happens, for example, in English vowel-sounds **ee** (*knee*), **oe** (*toe*), **oo** (*boot*). Only the nasal vowels are pronounced long, the length being due to rounding the lips and pronouncing the glide "w" at the end: **sa̧** is pronounced "sow," except that the glide is nasalized.

3. Polish consonant sounds may be pronounced slightly differently according to position in a word. Most importantly, voiced consonant sounds **b**, **d**, **dz**, **g**, **rz**, **w**, **z**, **ź**, **ż** are pronounced as unvoiced sounds (**p**, **t**, **c**, **k**, **sz**, **f**, **s**, **ś**, **sz**, respectively) in final position. For example, **paw** is pronounced "paf"; **chodź** is pronounced "choć."

voiced	b	d	dz	g	rz	w	z	ź	ż
voiceless	p	t	c	k	sz	f	s	ś	sz

4. The letters **ą** and **ę** are usually pronounced like **on/om** or **en/em**, respectively, before consonants. For example, **ład** is pronounced "lont"; **dąb** is pronounced "domp"; **tepy** is pronounced "tempy"; **dęty** is pronounced "denty"; and so on. Before **ć** and **dź**, **ę** and **ą** are pronounced **eń/óń**: **chęć** "cheńć", **ładzie** "łońdzie." Before **k** and **g**, **ą** and **ę** may be pronounced as **o** or **e** plus the English **ng** sound: **mąka**, **potęga**. The vowels **ą** and **ę** are usually denasalized before **l** or **ł**: **zdjęli** ("zdjeli"), **zdjął** ("zdjoł").

5. The stress in a Polish word falls on the next-to-last syllable: **sprawa** (SPRA-wa), **Warszawa** (War-SZA-wa), **gospodarka** (go-spo-DAR-ka), **zadowolony** (za-do-wo-LO-ny). As these examples show, Polish syllables tend to divide after a vowel. Words in **-yka**

take stress on the preceding syllable: **mateMAtyka**, **MU-zyka**. See also the word **u-ni-WER-sy-tet**. The past-tense endings **-yśmy/-iśmy**, **-yście/-iście** do not cause a shift in place of stress: **BY-lyś-my**.

Spelling Rules

1. So-called kreska consonants (**ć, dź, ń, ś, ź**) are spelled with an acute mark only at word-end and before consonants; otherwise, they are spelled as **c, dz, s, z, n** plus a following **i**: **dzień** (“dzeń”), **nie** (“ńe”). Before the vowel **i** itself, no extra **i** is needed: **ci** (“ci”/to you).
2. Certain instances of **b, p, w, f, m** are latently soft (**b', p', w', f', m'**), meaning that they will be treated as soft (in effect, as if kreska consonants) before vowels. In the spelling, they will be followed by **i**. Compare **paw** (*peacock*), plural **pawie** (*paw'-e/peacocks*).
3. The letter **y** can be written only after a hard consonant (see below) or after **c, cz, dz, rz, sz, ź**. The letter **i** after the consonants **c, dz, n, s, z** always indicates the pronunciations **ć, dź, ń, ś, ź**, respectively. Only **i**, never **y**, is written after **l** or **j**.
4. The letter **e** is usually separated from a preceding **k** or **g** by **i**, indicating a change before **e** of **k, g** to **k', g'**: **jakie** (“jak'e”), **drogie** (“drog'e”).
5. The letter **j** is dropped after a vowel before **i**: **stoję** (*I stand*) but **stoisz** (*you stand*); **mój** (*my*) but **moi** (*my--masc. pers .pl.*)

Sound Changes

1. When describing word formation, some consonants are counted as hard (H) and others as soft (S):

H	p	b	f	w	m	t	d	s	z	n	l	r	k	g	ch
S1	p'	b'	f'	w'	m'	ć	dź	ś	ź	ń	l	rz	c	dz	sz/ś j
S2													cz	ź	

Hard consonants can soften before certain endings. For example, **r** goes to **rz** before the Locative singular ending **-e**, as in **biur-'e: biurze** (*office*), from **biuro**.

As noted, the consonants **p, b, f, m, w** at the end of a word may turn out to be soft when not at the end of a word; cf. **paw** (*peacock*), pl. **pawie**.

2. One often observes vowel changes within Polish words depending on whether endings are added to them. The most important such changes involve an alternation between **o** and **ó, e** and **a, io/ia** and **ie**, and between **e** and nothing (fleeting or mobile **e**). These changes may be observed in the singular and plural forms of the following nouns: **stół stoly** (*table-tables*), **zab zęby** (*tooth-teeth*), **śasiad sąsiadzi** (*neighbor-neighbors*), **sen sny** (*dream-dreams*), **pies psy** (*dog-dogs*).

2. Nouns

Preliminaries

Lack of Articles

Polish does not have elements corresponding to English indefinite and definite articles *a, an, the*. One interprets a noun as definite or indefinite on the basis of context. Hence **dom** may be interpreted as “a house” or “the house.”

Noun Gender

Polish nouns have three genders: masculine, feminine and neuter. Grammatical gender has nothing to do with natural gender (sex). It is mainly of importance for purposes of grammatical agreement. For example, “feminine” nouns require that a modifying adjective have “feminine” endings, as in **dobra lampa** (*a good lamp*); compare to masculine **dobry stół** (*good table*) or neuter **dobre krzesło** (*good chair*). While names for males will be masculine in gender, and names for females will be feminine, and barnyard animals are often sexed, as **krowa** (*cow*), **byk** (*bull*), other objects in the world are divided up according to gender in an arbitrary way. For example, **nos** (*nose*) is masculine in gender, and **głowa** (*head*) is feminine; **słońce** (*sun*) is neuter, while **księżyc** (*moon*) is masculine.

Noun Stems

Nouns may end in a consonant or in a vowel; if in a vowel, the stem of the noun, to which endings are added, is obtained by subtracting the vowel, giving a consonant stem. For example, the stem of **głowa** (*head*) is **glow-**, while the stem of **nos** (*nose*) is **nos-**. The stem of **mieszkanie** (*apartment*) is **mieszkań-** (retracing in reverse the spelling rule **ń + e = nie**).

Masculine Noun Stems

Masculine nouns usually end in a consonant, for example: **nos** (*nose*), **stół** (*table*), **hotel** (*hotel*), **piec** (*stove*), **maż** (*husband*). Some masculine names of persons end in **-a**, for example, **kolega** (*colleague*), **dentysta** (*dentist*), and even **mężczyzna** (*man*). Often masculine nouns show different stems when there is no ending and when there is an ending, as **stół** (*table*), **stoły** (*tables*), or **maż** (*husband*), **mężowie** (*husbands*).

Plural of Masculine Nouns

Masculine non-personal nouns ending in hard consonants (see Chapter 1) usually form the plural in **-y**, for example **nos** --> **nosy** (*nose*), **stół** --> **stoły** (*table*). One writes **i** after **k** or **g**: **czek** --> **czeki** (*check*). Masculine nouns ending in soft consonants usually form the plural in **-e**, for example **hotel** --> **hotele** (*hotel*), **piec** --> **piece** (*stove*).

Plural of Masculine Personal Nouns

Masculine personal nouns often take special endings in the plural. Usually the ending is **-i/y**, preceded by the softening of the preceding consonant: **student** --> **studenci** (*student*), **Polak** --> **Polacy** (*Pole*), and so on. With titles and relations, the ending **-owie** often occurs: **pan** --> **panowie** (*sir*), **profesor** --> **profesorowie** (*professor*), **maż** --> **mężowie** (*husband husbands*); **brat** --> **bracia** (*brother[s]*) is quite exceptional. A few

masculine personal nouns have a plural in -*e*, as **Amerykanin** --> **Amerykanie** (*American*).

Feminine Nouns

Feminine nouns most often end in **-a**, for example, **lampa** (*lamp*), **kobieta** (*woman*), **krowa** (*cow*), **siostra** (*sister*), **mama** (*momma*), **torba** (*bag*), **ulica** (*street*). Some feminine nouns end in a soft consonant, for example, **twarz** (*face*), **kość** (*bone*), **noc** (*night*), **rzecz** (*thing*). A few feminine personal nouns end in **-i**, as **gospodyni** (*landlady*). The noun **osoba** (*person*) is feminine in gender, whether it refers to a man or a woman.

Plural of Feminine Nouns

Feminine nouns follow approximately the same rules as masculine nouns when forming the plural. Nouns ending in a hard consonant take **-y**, for example **kobiety** (*women*), **krowy** (*cows*), **siostry** (*sisters*), **torby** (*bags*). One writes **i** after **k** or **g**: **noga** --> **nogi** (*legs*). Feminine nouns whose stem ends in a soft consonant usually take **-e**, for example **koleje** (*rails*), **ulice** (*streets*), **twarze** (*faces*). Some feminine nouns ending in a soft consonant take **-y/i**, for example **rzeczy** (*things*), **kości** (*bones*).

Neuter Nouns

Neuter nouns end in **-o** or (after soft consonants) **-e**, for example **mydło** (*soap*), **koło** (*wheel*), **piwo** (*beer*), **morze** (*sea*), **pole** (*field*), **zdanie** (*opinion*). Exceptional are nouns like **imię** (*name*) and **zwierzę** (*animal*), which end in **ę**. Some neuter nouns, borrowed from Latin, end in **-um**, for example **muzeum** (*musuem*).

Plural of Neuter Nouns

Neuter nouns form the plural in **-a**, for example: **koła** (*wheels*), **piwa** (*beers*), **morza** (*seas*), **pola** (*fields*), **zдания** (*opinions*). Nouns like **imię** and **zwierzę** have plurals **imiona** (*names*), **zwierzęta** (*animals*). The plural of **muzeum** is **muzea** (*muzeums*). The noun **dziecko** (*child*) is of neuter gender. Its plural is **dzieci** (*children*). The nouns **oko** (*eye*) and **ucho** (*ear*) also have exceptional plurals: **oczy**, **uszy**.

Names for People and Their Plurals

babcia grandmother	babcie	mąż husband	mężowie
brat brother	bracia	narzeczona fiancée	narzeczone
chłopiec boy	chłopcy	narzeczony fiancé	narzeczeni
ciocia aunt	ciocie	ojciec father	ojcowie
córka daughter	córki	osoba person	osoby
człowiek man, human	ludzie	przyjaciel m. friend	przyjaciele
dziadek grandfather	dziadkowie	przyjaciółka f. friend	przyjaciółki
dziecko child	dzieci	sąsiad m. neighbor	sąsiedzi
dziewczyna girl	dziewczyny	sąsiadka f. neighbor	sąsiadki
kobieta woman	kobiety	siostra sister	siostry
koleżanka f. colleague	koleżanki	syn son	synowie
kolega m. colleague	koledzy	ta pani that lady	te panie
krewna f. relative	krewnie	ten pan that gentleman	ci panowie
krewny m. relative	krewni	wujek uncle	wujkowie
matka mother	matki	znajoma f. acquaintance	znajome
mężczyzna man	mężczyźni	znajomy m. acquaintance	znajomi

Cases and Case Use

Polish nouns have different forms for expressing GRAMMATICAL CASE, related to the function of the noun in a sentence. For each gender there are forms for the Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Instrumental, Locative, and Vocative cases - seven cases in all, in both singular and plural. In general, the Nominative case is used to express the SUBJECT of a sentence, the Dative to express the INDIRECT OBJECT (to or for whom something is done), the Accusative the DIRECT OBJECT (the item perceived by or acted on by the subject). The Instrumental expresses the MEANS BY WHICH something is done (for example, ride *by train*, write *with a pen*). The Genitive expresses POSSESSION and, in general, most meanings of *of*, for example *husband of my sister*, *top of the mountain*, *end of the film*, and so on. The Locative is used with certain prepositions, especially prepositions expressing the simple locational senses of *of*, *in*, *at*, *on*. The Vocative is used in direct address; it may usually be replaced by the Nominative. Here is a summary of the main Polish case uses. The pronominal questions with the corresponding forms of **co** (*what*) and **kto** (*who*) are given next to the case-name.

Nominative Case (*co? kto?*)

The Nominative case is used to express the:

1. Subject of finite verb

Jan kocha Marię. Jan-Nom. loves Maria.
Maria kocha Jana Maria-Nom. loves Jan.

2. Subject of existential *be*

Jan jest w domu Jan-Nom. is at home.
Czy jest szynka? Is there any ham-Nom?

3. Complement of the identifying phrase **to jest/są** (*that is/those are*)

To jest nowe muzeum. That is a new museum-Nom.
To są moje okulary Those are my eyeglasses.

4. Complement of a naming phrase:

Jestem Adam Wolak. I am Adam Wolak-Nom.

Genitive Case (*czego? kogo?*)

The Genitive case is used to express:

1. Almost all meanings of *of*, including possession

To jest dom mojego przyjaciela That's the house of my friend-Gen.
To jest koniec pierwszej lekcji That's the end of the first lesson-Gen.

2. After many prepositions, including **do** (*to*), **bez** (*without*), **dla** (*for*), **z** (*from, out of*), **od** (*from*), **u** (*at a person's place*), and others. For a fuller list, see under Prepositions.

Tu jest coś dla ciebie Here is something for you-Gen.

Idę do kina bez was I'm going to the movies without you-Gen

On jest starszy od siostry He is younger than (his) sister-Gen.

Wracam z Warszawy I'm returning from Warsaw-Gen.

3. After negated transitive (Accusative-requiring) verbs. Compare:

Mam nowy telewizor I have a new television set-Acc.

Nie mam nowego telewizora I don't have a new television set-Gen

Już skończyłem drugą lekcję I have already finished the second lesson-Acc

Jeszcze nie zacząłem drugiej lekcji I haven't begun the second lesson-Gen. yet.

4. Complement of negative existentials **nie ma** (*there isn't*), **nie było** (*there wasn't*), **nie będzie** (*there won't be*)

Nie ma masła There is no butter-Gen.

Marii jeszcze nie ma Maria-Gen isn't here yet.

5. After many verbs, for example the verb **szukać**:

Szukam ciekawego prezentu I'm looking for an interesting present-Gen.

Here is a list of common verbs that take the Genitive case: **bać się** (*be afraid of*), **napić się** (*have a drink of*), **nienawidzić** (*hate*), **pilnować** (*look after, tend, mind*), **potrzebować** (*need*), **słuchać** (*listen to*), **spodziewać się** (*expect*), **szukać** (*look for*), **uczyć się** (*study*), **uczyć** (*teach*), **używać** (*use, (make use of)*), **wymagać** (*require, demand*), **zapomnieć** (*forget*), **życzyć** (*wish, desire*).

6. After numbers 5 and above (Gen. pl.). Compare:

jedno świeże jajko one fresh egg

pięć świeżych jajek five fresh eggs-Gen.pl.

jedna szeroka ulica one wide street

sześć szerokich ulic six wide streets-Gen.pl.

jeden nowy hotel one new hotel

siedem nowych hoteli seven new hotels-Gen.pl.

7. After weights and measures and all kinds of quantifiers like **dużo**, **mało**, **trochę**:

trochę sera a little cheese-Gen.

kieliszek wina a glass of wine-Gen.

szklanka wody a glass of water-Gen.

dużo domów a lot of houses-Gen.pl.

mało mieszkań not many apartments-Gen.pl.

8. To express the sense *some, a bit of*:

Nalać ci herbaty? Should I pour you some tea-Gen?

9. Genitive of time:

tej nocy on that night

piątego stycznia on the 5th of January

Dative Case (czemu? komu?)

The Dative case is used to express:

1. Senses of *to* and *for* a person, especially the indirect object (naming the recipient or beneficiary, or sometimes the person negatively affected by an action).

Kup mi coś. Buy me-Dat. something.

Zepsułem ci samochód. I've ruined your car for you-Dat.

2. After verbs of communication:

Powiedz mi coś. Tell me-Dat. something.

3. In construction with certain verbs like **podobać się** (*be pleasing to*), **pomagać** (*help*), **powodzić się** (*be successful for*), **smakować** (*taste*), **dziwić się** (*be surprised at*), and others:

Twój kolega podoba mi się. Your colleague is attractive to me-Dat.

Dobrze mu się powodzi. He-Dat. is doing very well.

Muszę mu pomagać. I have to help him-Dat.

Dziwię się tobie. I'm surprised at you-Dat.

Zdaje ci się It seems that way to you.

4. As the subject of impersonal adverbs:

Jest mi zimno. I-Dat. am cold. (It's cold to me-Dat.)

Nam jest łatwo. It's easy for us-Dat.

5. After the prepositions **dzięki** (*due to*), **ku** (*toward*), **przeciwko** (*against*):

Wszystko, co wiem, to dzięki tobie. Everything I know is thanks to you-Dat.

Nie mam nic przeciwko temu. I don't have anything against that-Dat.

Accusative Case (co? kogo?)

The Accusative case is used to express:

1. The complement after transitive verbs

Mam brata i siostrę I have a brother (Acc.) and sister (Acc.)

Chcę kupić ser, masło, i cytrynę I want to buy cheese (Acc.), butter (Acc.), and a lemon (Acc.)

Chciałbym poznać twoich przyjaciół I'd like to meet your friends (Acc.pl.)

This use of the Accusative is called the direct-object use. In general, one chooses the Accusative after a verb unless there is a specific reason to use another case.

2. Various verb+preposition phrasal combinations take the Accusative case, for example **czekać na** (wait for), **patrzeć na** (look at), **pytać o** (ask about), **martwić się o** (worry about), **dbać o** (look after; care about):

Czekam na moją córkę. I'm waiting for my daughter-Acc.

Dbam o kondycję. I see to my fitness-Acc.

O co pytasz? What-Acc. are you asking about?

3. After the prepositions **przez** (across, through, by (means of)); **za** in the meaning (in/after a period of time) or in exchange for); after **na** in the meaning (for or to; and after **w** in the meaning 'into', and in various other expressions.

Pan Józef został zaangażowany przez pana Kowalczyka. Jozef was hired by Mr. Kowalczyk-Acc.

Będę gotowy za minutę. I'll be ready in a minute.

Dziękuję za prezent. Thanks for the present-Acc.

Idziemy do Warszawy na konferencję. We're going to Warsaw to a conference-Acc.

Wchodzimy w las. We're entering the forest-Acc. (*On a day of the week* is expressed with **w + A**: **w poniedziałek** [*on Monday*].)

4. After the usually Instrumental prepositions **nad**, **pod**, **przed**, **za** in the sense of "motion-to":

Jedziemy nad morze. We are going to the sea.

Taksówka podjechała pod dom. The taxi drove up to the house.

5. In expressing duration of time.

Pracowałem tam jedną godzinę. I worked there one hour-Acc.

Instrumental Case (czym? kim?)

The Instrumental case is used to express:

1. Predicate nouns (nouns after linking verbs like **być** [*be*], **zostać** [*become*]):

Jestem farmakologiem. I am a pharmacist-Inst.

Ona jest gwiazdą filmową. She is a movie star-Inst.

On został prezydentem. He became president-Inst.

2. Expressing *by means of*:

Jedziemy tam moim samochodem. We're going there in my car-Inst.
Piszę nowym długopisem. I'm writing with a new ball-point-Inst.

Here also goes the “Instrumental of Path”:

Niech pan idzie tą ulicą do rogu. Go along this street-Inst. to the corner.

3. Accompaniment of an action by a body movement:

Ona machnęła ręką. She waved (with) her hand-Inst.
On zareagował uśmiechem. He reacted with a smile-Inst.

4. Abstract causes:

Byłem zaskoczony jego szczerością. I was surprised by his sincerity-Inst.

5. With respect to:

On może jest starszy wiekiem ale nie usposobieniem. He maybe is older with respect to age-Inst. but not deportment-Inst.

6. Certain time periods:

zimą in the winter
nocą at night
wieczorem in the evening

7. After the static-location prepositions **między** (*between*), **nad** (*over*), **pod** (*under*), **przed** (*before*), **z** (*with*), **za** (*behind*):

Idę na koncert z moimi dobrymi przyjaciółmi. I'm going to a concert with my good friends-Inst.

8. After certain verbs, e.g. **interesować się** (*be interested in*), **kierować** (*direct*), **zajmować się** (*be busy with*), **władać** (*have power over, master*):

Interesuję się muzyką klasyczną. I'm interested in classical music-Inst.

Matka zajmuje się domem i dziećmi. Mother takes care of the house-Inst. and children-Inst.

Trzeba władać tym przypadkiem gramatycznym. One must master this grammatical case-Inst.

Locative Case (*o czym? o kim?*)

The Locative case is required after the prepositions **w** *in*, **na** (*on, at*), **o** (*about*), **po** (*after*), **przy** (*near, during, while*).

On jest teraz w domu He is at home-Loc. now.
Po zajęciach idziemy na kolację After classes-Loc. we are going to supper.
Muszę kupić znaczki na pocztę I have to buy stamps at the post-office-Loc.
Biblioteka stoi przy ulicy Pięknej The library is next to Piekna Street-Loc.

Note that in certain uses **w**, **na**, **po**, and **o** may take the Accusative.

Vocative Case

Usually, the Nominative case functions as a de facto Vocative: **Paweł, chodź tu!** (*Paweł-Nom., come here!*). However, in conjunction with titles, the Vocative is obligatory: **Dzień dobry, panie profesorze!** (*Hello, professor-Voc.!*). The Vocative case is usually used with diminutive (affectionate) forms of first names: **Kasiu! Grzesiu!** With other first names it is optional.

The Main Kinds of Nouns Phrases and the Cases They Usually Take

1. Subject of verb (Nominative case)

Ewa uczy się. Ewa-Nominative is studying.

2. Subject of existential verb (Nominative case, Genitive if negated)

Ewa jest. Ewa is here-Nominative.

Ewy nie ma. Ewa-Genitive is not here.

3. Complement in an identity sentence (Nominative case)

Ewa to (jest) moja dobra przyjaciółka. Ewa is my good friend-Nominative.

To (są) nasi nowi sąsiedzi. Those are our new neighbors-Nominative.

4. Predicate nominal (Instrumental case)

Ewa jest interesującą osobą. Ewa is an interesting person-Instrumental.

5. Direct object (Accusative case, Genitive if negated)

Ewa kupuje nową bluzkę. Ewa buys a new blouse-Accusative.

Ewa nie chce kupić tej bluzki. Ewa doesn't want to buy that blouse-Genitive.

6. Oblique object (various cases, depending on the verb)

Ewa pilnuje dziecka. Ewa looks after the child-Genitive.

Ewa pomaga Adamowi. Ewa helps Adam-Dative.

Ewa zajmuje się domem. Ewa takes care of the house-Instrumental.

7. Complement of a verb plus preposition (the case depends on the verb and preposition)

Ewa czeka na Adama. Ewa waits for Adam-Accusative.

Ewa cieszy się z prezentu. Ewa is glad of the present-Genitive.
Ewa zastanawia się nad problemem. Ewa considers the problem-Instrumental.
Ewa myśli o swoim psie. Ewa thinks about her dog-Locative.

8. Indirect object (Dative case):

Ewa mówi coś Adamowi. Ewa says something to Adam-Dative.

9. Beneficiary (**dla**+Genitive or Dative case)

Zrób to dla mnie. Do that for me-Genitive.
Pozmyłem ci naczynia. I washed the dishes for you-Dative.

10. Phrase of means (Instrumental case or **przy pomocy** +Genitive)

Ewa jeździ do pracy autobusem. Ewa goes to work by bus-Instrumental.
On chodzi przy pomocy laski. He walks with the aid of a cane-Genitive.

11. Complement of locational preposition (preposition plus, usually, either Locative or Instrumental case, depending on the preposition)

Ewa mieszka w Warszawie. Ewa lives in Warsaw-Locative.
Byłem na wystawie. I was at an exhibition-Locative.
Ewa stoi przed domem. Ewa stands in front of the house-Instrumental.

With people, the locational preposition is **u** plus the Genitive:

Byłem u lekarza. I was at the doctor's -Genitive.

12. Complement of verb of motion

A. Place to which (usually **do** plus Genitive or **na** plus Accusative case, depending on the kind of noun; see under Prepositions):

Ewa idzie do domu. Ewa is going home-Genitive.
Ewa idzie na koncert. Ewa goes to a concert-Accusative.
Idę do dentysty. I'm going to the dentist's-Genitive.

B. Place from which (usually **z** plus Genitive, or, with people, **od** plus Genitive):

Ewa wraca z pracy. Ewa returns from work-Genitive.
Wracam od mojego przyjaciela. I'm returning from my friend's.

13. Possessor (Genitive case)

To jest dom Ewy. That is Ewa's-Genitive house.

14. Head of a prepositional phrase of accompaniment or interaction (**z** plus Instrumental case):

Idę do kina z Ewą. I'm going to the movies with Ewa-Instrumental.

Zawsze kłóczę się z Adamem. I always quarrel with Adam-Instrumental.

15. Idiomatic bare-case phrases, in Genitive, Accusative, or Instrumental case, according to the expression:

następnego dnia next day-Genitive of time

wieczorem in the evening-Instrumental of time

całą noc all night long-Accusative of time

Chart of Regular Noun Endings

Here is a summary chart of regular noun endings. It will be noticed that in many instances there is a choice of ending, usually determined by the stem consonant (the consonant at the end of the word after the ending is subtracted). For rules on the distribution of endings, see further below. By **-0** is meant “no overt ending.”

		Feminine	Masculine	Neuter
Singular	N	-a (-i) or -0	-0	-o or -e
	G	-y/i	-u or -a	-a
	D	-'e or -y/i	-owi (-u)	-u
	A	-e or -0	= N or G	= N
	I	-ą	-em	-em
	L	= D	-'e or -u	-'e or -u
	V	-o or -y/i	= L	= N
Plural	NV	-y/i or -e	(-y/i or -'i) or -e	-a
	G	-0 or -y/i	-ów or -y/i	-0 (-y/i)
	D	-om	-om	-om
	A	= N	= N/G	= N
	I	-ami	-ami	-ami
	L	-ach	-ach	-ach

Consonants soften before **-'e** (DLsg. feminine and LVsg. masculine and Lsg. neuter, and before **-'i** (Npl. masculine persons). For chart of softenings and further discussion, see the chart below under Case Forms Involving Hard and Soft Consonants.

When there is a choice among endings in the above chart, follow these rules for the **distribution of endings**:

Feminine Nouns

1. **Hard stems.** Hard-stem feminines in **-a**, like **kobieta** (*woman*), take left-hand endings; soft-stem feminines in **-0** (zero), like **twarz** (*face*), take right-hand endings; soft-stems in

-a: *ulica* (*street*) or in **-i:** *gospodyni* (*landlady*) take underlined alternatives. For illustrations of full declensions, see further below.

2. **Soft-stems.** Soft-stem diminutive and affectionate names take Vsg. in **-u**, as **Basia** (*Barb*), Vsg **Basiu**.

3. **Dative/Locative Sg.** Before DLsg. **-'e**, consonants soften; thus, **nog-'e:** **nodze** (*leg-DLsg.*).

Masculine Nouns

1. **Genitive Sg.** Animate nouns take Gsg. in **-a**. Most inanimates take Gsg. in **-u**. There are many exceptions and minor rules. For example, masculine-gender names for tools: **młot** --> **młota** (*hammer*), card games (**poker** --> **pokera**); dances: **walc** --> **walca** (*waltz*); months: **listopad** --> **listopada** (*November*); serially produced food items: **pałczek** --> **pałczka** (*doughnut*); and most Polish towns: **Gdańsk** --> **Gdańska** take **-a**. Among important exceptions are the words **chleb** --> **chleba** (*bread*), **ser** --> **sera** (*cheese*); compare **miód** --> **miodu** (*honey*) and **szpital** --> **szpital** (*hospital*); compare **hotel** --> **hotelu** (*hotel*).

2. **Accusative Sg.** Animate nouns take Asg. like the Gsg. in **-a** **pies**, NAsg. **psa** (*dog*). Inanimates take Asg.=Nsg. in **-0** (zero): **zeszyt**, NAsg. **zeszyt** (*notebook*).

3. **Dative Sg.** A small handful of masculine nouns take Dsg. in **-u**, e.g., **pan** --> **panu** (*gentleman*), **chłopiec** --> **chłopcu** (*boy*), **kot** --> **kot** (*cat*), **ojciec** --> **ojcu** (*father*), **pies** --> **psu** (*dog*), **świat** --> **światu** (*world*).

4. **Locative/Vocative Sg.** Velar and soft stems take LVsg. in **-u**: **hotel** --> **hotelu** (*hotel*), **ręcznik** --> **ręczniku** (*towel*). Others take LVsg. in **-e** preceded by consonant softening, as **zeszyt-'e:** **zeszycie** (*notebook-LVsg.*).

5. **Nominative/Vocative Pl.** Hard-stem nouns take NVpl. in **-y/i**: **zeszyt** --> **zeszyty** (*notebook*). Personal nouns soften the stem consonant, as **student** --> **student-'y/i:** **studenci** (*students*). Soft-stem masculines take **-e**: **kraj** --> **kraje** (*country countries*). Names for titles and relations tend to take NVpl. in **-owie**, as **pan** --> **panowie** (*sir*), **syn** --> **synowie** (*son*), **ojciec** --> **ojcowie** (*father*), **mąż** --> **mężowie** (*husband*), and others.

6. **Genitive Pl.** Hard stems take Gpl. in **-ów**: **zeszyt** --> **zeszytów** (*notebook*). Most soft-stems take Gpl. in **-y/i**: **hotel** --> **hoteli** (*hotel*), although some, especially stems in **c**, **dz**, and **j**, take **-ów**: **kraj** --> **krajów** (*country*).

7. **Accusative Pl.** Personal nouns take Apl.=Gpl, as **student**, GApl. **studentów**. All others take Apl.=Npl., as **hotel**, NApl. **hotele**, **zeszyt**, NApl. **zeszyty**.

Neuter Nouns

1. **Nominative/Accusative/Vocative Sg.** Hard stem neuters take NAVsg. in **-o**: **drzewo** (*tree*). Soft-stem neuters take NAVsg. in **-e**: **pole** (*field*), **pytanie** (*question*).

2. **Locative/Vocative Sg.** Velar and soft stems take LVsg. in **-u**: **pole polu** (*field*), **łóżko łóżku**. others take LVsg. in **-e** preceded by consonant softening, as **biuro --> biur-'e: biurze** (*office*).

3. **Nominative/Accusative/Vocative Pl.** Neuter nouns take NAVpl. in **-a**: **drzewo --> drzewa** (*tree*), **mieszkanie --> mieszkania** (*apartment*), **zwierzę --> zwierzęta** (*animal*), **imię --> imiona** (*name*), **muzeum --> muzea** (*museum*). Exceptions: **dziecko --> dzieci** (*child*), **oko --> oczy** (*eye*), **ucho --> uszy** (*ear*).

4. **Genitive Pl. in -y/i.** Some soft-stem neuters with a collective meaning, or naming areas or spaces, take Gpl. in **-y/I**, as **wybrzeże --> wybrzeży** (*seacoast*), **narzędzie --> narzędzi** (*seacoast*).

5. **Genitive Pl. in -ów.** A very few neuters, most importantly those in **-um**, do not decline in the sg. and take Gpl. in **-ów**. See **muzeum** in the declensional illustrations to follow.

6. **Nominative/Accusative Sg. in -ę.** A few neuters have NAsg. in **-ę** and have soft stems in the sg., hard stems in the pl.; see **imię --> imienia**, pl. **imiona** (*name*), **zwierzę --> zwierzęcia**, pl. **zwierzęta** (*animal*) in the illustrations to follow.

Case Forms Involving Hard and Soft Consonants

The noun endings which take the most time to learn are those that depend on determining whether the stem consonant (the consonant before the Nominative sg. ending) is “hard” or “soft.” Endings depending on this distinction are a) the Locative sg. of all nouns, b) the Dative sg. of feminine nouns (which is like the Locative), c) the Nominative/Accusative pl. of masculine and feminine nouns, including masculine personal nouns, and d) the Genitive plural of masculine nouns. Much of the following information reorganizes material given earlier.

Here is the chart of Polish hard (or “plain”) and their corresponding soft consonants:

hard	p	b	f	w	m	t	d	s	z	n	ł
soft	p'	b'	f'	w'	m'	ć	dź	ś	ź	ń	l
r	k	g	ch	st	zd	śl	źl	sn			
rz	c	dz	sz/ś	śc	źdź	śl	źl	śń	cz	ż	j

Locative Singular

Here is the short description for forming the Locative sg. (and the Dative sg. of feminine nouns): hard stems take **-e** and soften the stem consonant, while soft stems take “the other ending” which, for feminine nouns is **-y/i**, and for masculine and neuter nouns is **-u**. Feminine declension treats **k**, **g**, **ch** as softenable, whereas masculine and neuter declension does not (hence they take the “other” ending, **-u**). Here are the details:

1. Masculine and neuter nouns form the Locative sg. by adding **-e** to a hard (= softenable) consonant and by softening the consonant. Remember that sounds like **p'** or **ć** are spelled

pi-, ci-: zeszyt --> zeszyt (notebook). Non-softenable consonants, including **k, g, ch**, take **-u**: hotel --> hotelu (hotel), mieszkanie --> mieszkaniu (apartment), ręcznik --> ręczniku (towel), pudełko --> pudełku (box). The Lsg. masc./neut. adjective ending is **-ym (-im)**: dobrym (good), drogim (expensive, dear), moim (my). Irregular Locatives include dom --> domu (house), pan --> panu (sir), syn --> synu (son).

2. Feminine nouns form the Locative and Dative sg. by adding **-e** to a softenable consonant (including **k, g, ch**) and softening the consonant: kobieta --> kobiecie (woman), książka --> książce (book). Non-softenable consonants take **-y (-i)**: ulica --> ulicy (street), rzecz --> rzeczy (thing), kość --> kości (bone). In the feminine Locative, **ch** goes to **sz**, as in mucha --> musze (fly).

Notes

Before the ending **-e** (**e** plus preceding softening), most nouns containing **ia** or **io/ió** in the root before **t, d, s, z**, change **ia** to **ie** and **io/ió** to **ie**, as in sąsiad LVsg. sąsiedzie (neighbor), kościół LVsg. kościele (church). The possible change of root **ą** and **ó** to **ę** and **o** in masculine nouns before all endings holds here too: mąż LVsg. mężu (husband), stół LVsg. stole (table). Mobile **e** occurs in many masculine noun stems, and is dropped before all endings: budynek GLVsg. budynku (building).

Nominative Plural

Here is the short description for forming the Nominative Pl. of nouns: neuter nouns take **-a**, and masculine and feminine nouns take **-y/i** if the stem is hard, and **-e** if the stem is soft. Masculine personal nouns soften the stem consonant before **-y/i**. Here are the details:

1. Neuter nouns form the NApI in **-a**: drzewo --> drzewa (tree[s]), mieszkanie --> mieszkania (apartment), muzeum --> muzea (museum[s]). Special types: imię --> imiona (name[s]), zwierzę --> zwierzęta (animal[s]). Exceptions: dziecko --> dzieci (child[ren]), oko --> oczy (eye[s]), ucho --> uszy (ear[s]).

2. Masculine non-personal and all feminine Nouns, personal or otherwise, usually form the NApI by adding **-y/i** to hard consonants (choose **i** after **k** and **g**) and **-e** to soft consonants: zeszyt --> zeszyty (notebook[s]), ołówek --> ołówki (pencil[s]), hotel --> hotele (hotel[s]), dziewczyna --> dziewczyny (girl[s]), książka --> książki (book[s]), ulica --> ulice (street[s]). Feminine nouns not ending in **-a** take either **-y/i** or **-e**: rzecz --> rzeczy (thing[s]), powieść --> powieści (novel[s]), twarz --> twarze (face[s]).

3. Masculine personal nouns take **-y/i** as expected, but they soften the stem consonant before this ending. In the Masculine Personal plural, **ch** and **sz** both go to **ś** (or to **s** before **i**): Czech --> Czesi (Czech), starszy asystent --> starsi asystenci (senior assistant). Many masculine personal nouns, especially names for relations, take **-owie**: pan --> panowie (gentleman), ojciec --> ojcowie (father), syn --> synowie (son). Irregular: brat --> bracia (brother), człowiek --> ludzie (men/people). A few ethnic names take **-e**, as Amerykanin --> Amerykanie (American), Cygan --> Cyganie (Gypsy).

4. **Masculine Personal Adjectives.** An adjective modifying a masculine personal noun, whatever its stem, takes the softening **-y/i** ending with the same effects as with the noun: **dobry student --> dobrzy studenci** (*good student*), **młody urzędnik --> młodzi urzędnicy** (*young clerk*). Adjectives whose stem already ends in a soft consonant still take **-y/i**: **interesujący człowiek --> interesujący ludzie** (*interesting man/people*). Adjectives (including participles) in **-ony** change to **-eni**: **zmęczony --> zmęczeni** (*tired*). For further illustrations, see Chapter 4 Adjectives.

Genitive Plural

Here is the short description for forming the Genitive Pl. of nouns: In the noun ends in a vowel (**-a, -o, -e**) in the Nominative Sg., then the Genitive Pl. ending is **-0**. Otherwise, the ending is **-ów** for hard stems and **-y/i** for soft stems. Here are the details:

1. **Feminine and Neuter Nouns.** The Genitive plural of feminine and neuter nouns is usually **-0**, i.e., nothing: **kobieta --> kobiet** (*woman*), **drzewo --> drzew** (*tree*). Often the change of **ę** to **ą** and of **o** to **ó** will take place, as in **wstęga --> wstąg** (*ribbon*), **pole --> pól** (*field*). Mobile **e** often breaks up the final two stem consonants, as in **wiosna --> wiosen** (*spring*), **wiadro --> wiader** (*bucket*). This almost always happens before **k**, as in **książka --> książek** (*book*), **łóżko --> łózek** (*bed*). In a few exceptional instances, the ending **-y/i** occurs instead of **-0**, as in **skrzela --> skrzeli** (*gill*), **wybrzeże --> wybrzeży** (*seacoast*).

2. **Masculine Nouns.** The Genitive plural of masculine nouns is usually: **-ów** after hard stems, and **-y/i** after soft stems: **student --> studentów** (*student*), **hotel --> hoteli** (*hotel*). However, many stems in **dz, c,** and **j**, and some other random nouns, take **-ów** instead of expected **-y/i**: **kraj --> krajów** (*country*), **cel --> celów** (*goal, aim*). Masculine personal nouns with Npl. in **-owie** take GApl. in **-ów** no matter what the stem: **sędzia --> sędziowie** (*judge*), hence Gpl. **sędziów**. Note that with masculine persons, the Gpl. form is also used as the Accusative plural: **Widzę tych studentów.** (*I see those students*).

Illustrations of Noun Declensions

Here are the full declensions (sets of case endings) of some representative Polish nouns of all three genders. Remember that:

1. Masculine-gender animate nouns have the Accusative singular like the Genitive; inanimate nouns have the Accusative singular like the Nominative. In the plural, masculine personal nouns have the Accusative like the Genitive. All feminine, neuter, and masculine non-personal nouns have the Accusative plural like the Nominative plural.

2. Neuter-gender nouns have identical Nominative and Accusative forms in both singular and plural.

3. Feminine nouns have identical Dative and Locative forms in the singular, and identical Accusative and Nominative forms in the plural.

4. With rare exceptions, nouns have the same Dative, Instrumental, and Locative forms in the plural, regardless of gender, namely, **-om, -ami, -ach**.

5. The Vocative plural of all nouns is like the Nominative plural.

Masculine Nouns

Masculine Non-Personal

	Singular	Plural		Singular	Plural
	sklep	store (masc. hard-stem)		hotel	hotel (masc. soft-stem)
N	sklep	sklepy		hotel	hotele
G	sklepu	sklepów		hotelu	hoteli
D	sklepowi	sklepom		hotelowi	hotelom
A	sklep	sklepy		hotel	hotele
I	sklepem	sklepami		hotelem	hotelami
L	sklepie	sklepach		hotelu	hotelach
V	sklepie	sklepy		hotelu	hotele
	stół	check (hard-stem, ó: o)		gołąb	pigeon (anim., soft labial stem)
N	stół	stoły		gołąb	gołębie
G	stołu	stołów		gołębia	gołębi
D	stołowi	stołom		gołębiowi	gołębiom
A	stół	stoły		gołębia	gołębie
I	stołem	stołami		gołębiem	gołębiami
L	stole	stołach		gołębiu	gołębiach
V	stole	stoły		gołębiu	gołębie
	pies	dog (mobile e, anim., Dsg. in -u)		kot	cat (animate, Dsg. In -u)
N	pies	psy		kot	koty
G	psa	psów		kota	kotów
D	psu	psom		kotu	kotom
A	pies	psy		kota	koty
I	psem	psami		kotem	kotami
L	psie	psach		kocie	kotach
V	psie	psy		kocie	koty
	dzień	day (soft-stem with mobile e)		tydzień	week (soft-stem, irreg. stem)
N	dzień	dni(e)		tydzień	tygodnie
G	dnia	dni		tygodnia	tygodni
D	dniowi	dniom		tygodniowi	tygodniom
A	dzień	dni(e)		tydzień	tygodnie
I	dniem	dniami		tygodniem	tygodniami
L	dniu	dniach		tygodniu	tygodniach
V	dniu	dni(e)		tygodniu	tygodnie

rok year (exceptional plural)

miesiąc month (irregular Gpl.)

N	rok	lata	miesiąc	miesiące
G	roku	lat	miesiąca	miesięcy
D	rokowi	latom	miesiącowi	miesiącom
A	rok	lata	miesiąc	miesiące
I	rokiem	laty (-ami)	miesiącem	miesiącami
L	roku	latach	miesiącu	miesiącach
V	roku	lata	miesiącu	miesiące

Masculine Personal

student student (masc. personal)

lekarz doctor (m. pers. soft stem)

N	student	studenci	lekarz	lekarze
G	studenta	studentów	lekarza	lekarzy
D	studentowi	studentom	lekarzowi	lekarzom
A	studenta	studentów	lekarza	lekarzy
I	studentem	studentami	lekarzem	lekarzami
L	studencie	studentach	lekarzu	lekarzach
V	studencie	studenci	lekarzu	lekarze

brat brother (special pl. declension)

mąż husband (masc. pers.)

N	brat	bracia	mąż	mężowie
G	brata	braci	męża	mężów
D	bratu	braciom	mężowi	mężom
A	brata	braci	męża	mężów
I	bratem	braćmi	mężem	mężami
L	bracie	braciach	mężu	mężach
V	bracie	bracia	mężu	mężowie

przyjaciel friend (pers. spec. pl. decl.)

syn son (pers. spec. decl.)

N	przyjaciel	przyjaciele	syn	synowie
G	przyjaciela	przyjaciół	syna	synów
D	przyjacielowi	przyjaciółom	synowi	synom
A	przyjaciela	przyjaciół	syna	synów
I	przyjacielem	przyjaciółmi	synem	synami
L	przyjacielu	przyjaciółach	synu	synach
V	przyjacielu	przyjaciele	synu	synowie

człowiek man (suppletive pl.)

N	człowiek	ludzie
G	człowieka	ludzi
D	człowiekowi	ludziom
A	człowieka	ludzi
I	człowiekiem	ludźmi
L	człowieku	ludziach
V	człowieku	ludzie

ojciec father (irreg. stem, Dsg., Vsg.)

ojciec	ojcowie
ojca	ojców
ojcu	ojcom
ojca	ojców
ojcem	ojcami
ojcu	ojcach
ojcze	ojcowie

Feminine Nouns

kobieta woman (fem. hard-stem)

N	kobieta	kobiety
G	kobiety	kobiet
D	kobiecie	kobietom
A	kobietę	kobiety
I	kobietą	kobietami
L	kobiecie	kobietach
V	kobietę	kobiety

ulica street (fem. soft-stem)

ulica	ulice
ulicy	ulic
ulicy	ulicom
ulicę	ulice
ulicą	ulicami
ulicy	ulicach
ulico	ulice

noga leg, foot (velar-stem)

N	noga	nogi
G	nogi	nóg
D	nodze	nogom
A	nogę	nogi
I	nogą	nogami
L	nodze	nogach
V	nogo	nogi

ręka hand, arm (vel.-stem, irreg. pl.)

ręka	ręce
ręki	rąk
ręce	rękom
rękę	ręce
ręką	rękami
ręce (ręku)	rękach
ręko	ręce

rzeka river (velar stem)

N	rzeka	rzeki
G	rzeki	rzek
D	rzece	rzekom
A	rzekę	rzeki
I	rzeką	rzekami
L	rzece	rzekach
V	rzeko	rzeki

noc night (fem. in -0)

noc	noce
nocy	nocy
nocy	nocom
noc	noce
nocą	nocami
nocy	nocach
nocy	noce

kość bone (fem. in -o)

N	kości	kości
G	kości	kości
D	kości	kościom
A	kości	kości
I	kości	kości
I	kości	kości
L	kości	kości
V	kości	kości

gospodyni landlady (fem. in -i)

gospodyni	gospodynie
gospodyni	gospodyń
gospodyni	gospodyniom
gospodynię	gospodynie
gospodynią	gospodyniami
gospodyni	gospodyniach
gospodyni	gospodynie

Neuter Nouns

miasto town (neut. hard-stem)

NV	miasto	miasta
G	miasta	miast
D	miastu	miastom
A	miasto	miasta
I	miastem	miastami
L	mieście	miastach

zdanie opinion (neut. soft-stem)

zdanie	zдания
zдания	zdań
zdaniu	zdaniom
zdanie	zдания
zdaniem	zdaniami
zdaniu	zdaniach

oko eye (neut., unique pl.) **ucho** eye (neut., unique pl.)

NV	oko	oczy
G	oka	oczu
D	oku	oczom
A	oko	oczy
I	okiem	oczami
L	oku	oczach

ucho	uszy
ucha	uszu
uchu	uszom
ucho	uszy
uchem	uszami
uchu	uszach

muzeum museum (-um type)

NV	muzeum	muzea
G	muzeum	muzeów
D	muzeum	muzeom
A	muzeum	muzea
I	muzeum	muzeami
L	muzeum	muzeach

dziecko child (neuter, unique pl.)

dziecko	dzieci
dziecka	dzieci
dziecku	dzieciom
dziecko	dzieci
dzieckiem	dziećmi
dziecku	dzieciach

zwierzę animal (-ę -ęcia type)

NV	zwierzę	zwierzęta
G	zwierzęcia	zwierząt
D	zwierzęciu	zwierzętom
A	zwierzę	zwierzęta
I	zwierzędziem	zwierzętami
L	zwierzęciu	zwierzętach

imię first name (-ę -enia type)

imię	imion
imienia	imionom
imieniu	imiona
imię	imionami
imieniem	imionach
imieniu	imionach

Supplements

Days of the Week

poniedziałek Monday	w poniedziałek on Monday
wtorek Tuesday	we wtorek on Tuesday
środa Wednesday	w środę on Wednesday
czwartek Thursday	w czwartek on Thursday
piątek Friday	w piątek on Friday
sobota Saturday	w sobotę on Saturday
niedziela Sunday	w niedzielę on Sunday

Compass Directions

północ north	na północy in the north
wschód east	na wschodzie in the east
południe south	na południu in the south
zachód west	na zachodzie in the west

Months

styczeń January	w styczniu in January
luty February	w lutym in February
marzec March	w marcu in March
kwiecień April	w kwietniu in April
maj May	w maju in May
czerwiec June	w czerwcu in June
lipiec July	w lipcu in July
sierpień August	w sierpniu in August
wrzesień September	we wrześniu in September
październik October	w październiku in October
listopad November	w listopadzie in November
grudzień December	w grudniu in December

Irregular Country Names

Most Polish names for countries are regular and declined like any other nouns. The following names for countries are plural in form and belong to an archaic declension:

Country	Name	In the Country	To the Country
China	Chiny	w Chinach	do Chin
Czech Republic	Czechy	w Czechach	do Czech
Germany	Niemcy	w Niemczech	do Niemiec
Hungary	Węgry	na Węgrzech	na Węgry
Italy	Włochy	we Włoszech	do Włoch

Common First Names and Their Diminutives

Polish first names (typically, after an official saint on the Roman Catholic calendar) usually have, in addition to the formal variant of the name, a diminutive, or informal variant, used among friends. Often a diminutive of the second degree also exists, used affectionately, especially among intimates and with children.

Male

Adam, Adaś	Marcin, Marcinek
Andrzej, Jędrzek	Marek, Mareczek, Maruś
Bogdan, Bogdanek, Boguś	Marian, Marianek, Maryś
Bogusław, Boguś	Mariusz, Mariuszek
Bolesław, Bolek, Boluś	Mateusz, Mateuszek
Bronisław, Bronek	Michał, Michałek
Czesław, Czesiek, Czesio	Mieczysław, Mietek
Daniel, Danielek	Mikołaj, Mikołajek
Dariusz, Darek, Daruś	Miron, Mirek
Edward, Edek, Edzio	Mirosław, Mirek
Emil, Emilek, Milek, Miluś	Paweł, Pawelek
Eugeniusz, Gienek, Geniuś, Gienio	Piotr, Piotrek, Piotruś
Feliks, Felek, Feluś	Rafał, Rafalek
Filip, Filek, Filipek, Filuś	Robert, Robuś
Franciszek, Franek, Franuś, Franio	Roman, Romek, Romeczek, Romuś
Fryderyk, Frydek, Fryc	Ryszard, Rysiek, Rysio, Ryś
Grzegorz, Grzesiek, Grzesio	Sławomir, Sławek
Henryk, Heniek, Henio, Heniuś	Stanisław, Stasiek, Stasio, Staś,
Ignacy, Ignacek, Ignuś	Stacho
Jarosław, Jarek, Jaruś	Stefan, Stefek
Ireniusz, Irek, Iruś	Szymon, Szymek, Szymuś
Jacek, Jacuś	Tadeusz, Tadek, Tadzio
Jakub, Kuba, Jakubek	Tomasz, Tomek
Jan, Janek, Jasiek, Jasio	Wacław, Wacek
Janusz, Januszek	Waldemar, Waldek
Jarosław, Jarek	Walery, Walerek
Jerzy, Jurek, Jureczek	Wiesław, Wiesiek, Wiesio
Józef, Józek, Józeczek, Józio, Józus	Wiktor, Wiktorek
Julian, Julianek	Wincenty, Wicek, Wicuś
Juliusz, Julek	Witold, Witek, Wituś
Karol, Karolek	Władysław, Władek, Władzio
Kazimierz, Kazik, Kazio	Włodzimierz, Włodek
Konstanty, Kostek, Kostuś	Wojciech, Wojtek, Wojtuś
Krzysztof, Krzysiek, Krzyś	Zbigniew, Zbyszek, Zbynio, Zbysio,
Lech, Leszek, Lesio	Zbych
Lucjan, Lucek	Zdzisław, Zdzisiek, Zdziś
Ludwik, Ludek	Zenon, Zenek
Łukasz, Łukaszek	Zygmunt, Zygmuś
Maciej, Maciek	

Female

Agata, Agatka
Agnieszka, Agunia, Agusia, Aga
Aleksandra, Ola Ala, Oleńka, Olka
Alicja, Ala Alusia, Alka
Alina, Ala, Alusia, Alka
Aneta, Anetka
Aniela, Anielka
Anna, Ania, Hanka, Anka
Barbara, Basia, Baśka
Beata, Beatka
Bogdana, Bogdanka
Bogumiła, Bogusia
Bogusława, Bogusia
Bożena, Bożenka, Bożusia
Cecylia, Cyla, Cyłka
Danuta, Danusia, Danka
Dominika, Domiczka
Dorota, Dora, Dorotka
Edyta, Edytka
Elżbieta, Ela, Elunia
Emilia, Emilka
Ewa, Ewunia, Ewcia, Ewusia,
Ewka
Felicja, Fela, Felka
Gabriela, Gabrysia, Gabryśka
Grażyna, Grażynka
Halina, Hala, Halka, Halusia,
Halinka
Hanna, Hania, Hanusia, Hanka
Helena, Hela, Helenka, Helcia
Henryka, Henia, Heńka
Irena, Irenka, Ircia, Irusia, Irka
Iwona, Iwonka
Izabela, Iza, Izunia, Izka
Jadwiga, Jadzia, Jaga, Jadźka,
Jadwisia
Janina, Janka, Janinka
Joanna, Joasia, Aśka
Jolanta, Jola, Jolusia, Jolcia, Jolka
Józefa, Józia, Józka
Judyta, Judytka

Julia, Jula, Julcia, Julka
Justyna, Justynka
Karolina, Karolcia, Karolinka
Katarzyna, Kasia, Kasieńka, Kaśka
Kazimiera, Kazia
Klara, Klarusia, Klarcia
Krystyna, Krysia, Kryśka
Leokadia, Lodzia, Loda, Leosia
Lidia, Lidka
Liliana, Lila, Lilcia, Lilka
Lucyna, Luca, Lucusia, Lusia,
Lucynka
Ludwika, Lusia, Ludka
Magdalena, Magda, Madzia,
Magdusia
Małgorzata, Małgosia, Gosia,
(Mał)gośka
Maria, Marysia,
Marta, Marcia, Martunia
Maryl(ka), Mariol(ka) var. of Maria
Marzena, Marzenka
Miroslawa, Mirka, Mirusia
Monika, Moniczka, Monisia, Misia,
Nika
Natalia, Tala, Natalka
Olga, Ola, Oleńka, Olka
Regina, Reginka
Renata, Renia, Renatka
Róża, Rózia, Różyczka
Stanisława, Stasia, Staśka
Stefania, Stefa, Stefcia, Stefka
Sylwia, Sylwiunia
Teresa, Teresia, Renia, Terenia,
Tereska
Urszula, Ula, Urszulka
Wanda, Wandzia
Weronika, Weroniczka, Weronka
Wiesława, Wiesia, Wieśka
Wiktoria, Wika, Wiktorka
Zofia, Zosia, Zosieńka, Zośka

3. Pronouns

Personal Pronouns

Singular	Plural	Other
ja I	my we	co what
ty you (sg.)	wy you (pl.)	nic nothing
on he	oni they (masc. pers.)	kto who
ona she	one they (non-masc.pers.)	nikt no one
ono it		

The pronoun **oni** is used for both all-male and mixed male and female groups; **one** is used for groups not containing any male persons. Personal pronouns, especially first- and second-person pronouns, are normally not used as the subjects of verbs unless they are emphasized; hence one usually says **robię** (*I do*) instead of **ja robię** (*I do*). The pronoun **kto** always takes masculine agreement, even when referring to a group of women: **Kto jest głodny?** (*Who is hungry?*) The pronouns **nic** and **nikt** take a negated verb: **Nic nie rozumiem.** (*I don't understand anything.*) **Nikt tu nie mieszka.** (*No one lives here.*)

Pronouns of Polite, Formal Address

Singular	Plural
pan sir, you, Mr.	panowie sirs, you (masc. pers. pl.)
pani madam, you, Mrs., Miss, Ms.	panie madams, you (fem. pl.)
	państwo ladies and gentlemen, Mr. and Mrs.

The title **państwo** is a singular-looking form that nevertheless takes masculine personal plural verb and adjective agreement. It refers to a group of male and female persons individually referred to as **pan** and **pani**, and it also titles a married couple, as in **państwo Zielińscy** (*Mr. and Mrs. Zieliński*). The pronouns of polite, formal address show respect and distance. They are used when addressing a stranger, a person one does not know well, or a person of authority or status. The informal **ty** (*you*), and its plural **wy**, convey friendliness, closeness and familiarity. They are used to address family members, pets, and close friends. Its use with strangers or superiors is apt to sound rude. For more on pronoun use, see Chapter 9. Personal pronouns show a full range of case forms, summarized in the following charts.

Interrogative and Negative Pronouns

N	co what	nic nothing	kto who	nikt no one
G	czego	niczego, nic	kogo	nikogo
D	czemu	niczemu	komu	nikomu
A	co	nic	kogo	nikogo
I	czym	kim	nikim	nikim
L	czym	kim	nikim	nikim

First and Second Person Pronouns

N	ja I	ty you (sg.)	my we	wy you (pl.)
G	mnie	cię, ciebie	nas	was
D	mi, mnie	ci, tobie	nam	wam
A	mnie	cię, ciebie	nas	was
I	mną	tobą	nami	wami
L	mnie	tobie	nas	was

Longer forms **ciebie**, **tobie**, **mnie**, **tobie** are emphatic, and also occur automatically after prepositions.

Third-Person Singular Pronouns

N	on he, it	ono it	ona she, it
G	go, jego, niego	go, jego, niego	jej, niej
D	mu, jemu, niemu	mu, jemu, niemu	jej, niej
A	go, jego, niego	je, nie	ją, nią
I	nim	nim	nią
L	nim	nim	niej

Longer forms **jego**, **jego** are emphatic, and also occur automatically after prepositions. Also after a preposition, forms beginning in **i** or **j** lose **i** or **j** and take a preceding **ni-**:

bez + jej = bez niej
dla + ich = dla nich

Third Person Plural Pronouns

N	oni they (masc. pers.)	one they (other)
G	ich, nich	ich, nich
D	im, nim	im, nim
A	ich	je, nie
I	imi, nimi	imi, nimi
L	nich	nich

Third Person Pronouns of Formal Address

N	pan you (m. formal)	panowie--pl. of pan	państwo you (m.p.pl.)
G	pana	panów	państwa
D	panu	panom	państwu
A	pana	panów	państwa
I	panem	panami	państwem
L	panu	panach	państwu

państwo refers to a group of both male and female persons referred to individually as **pan** and **pani**. It also is used as a title equivalent to 'Mr. and Mrs.'

N	pani you (f. formal)	panie --pl. of pani
G	pani	pań
D	pani	paniom
A	panią	panie
I	panią	paniami
L	pani	paniach

Reflexive Pronoun

N	---
G	siebie
D	sobie, se
A	się, siebie
I	sobą
L	sobie

The Dative reflexive form **se** is restricted to highly informal speech.

Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns **mój moja moje** (*my/mine*), **twój twoja twoje** (*your/yours-sg.*), **nasz nasza nasze** (*our/ours*), **wasz wasza wasze** (*your/yours-pl.*) take a full set of agreeing gender-case endings. By contrast, the possessive pronouns **jego** (*his, its*), **jej** (*her/hers*), and **ich** (*their/theirs*). The possessive of **pan** (*you-masc.pers.formal*) is **pana**, and of **pani** (*your-fem. formal*) is **pani**, also indeclinable. The reflexive possessive pronoun **swój swoje swoja swoi** (*one's own*), with endings like **mój**, is used instead of any of the other possessive pronouns when modifying a noun in the complement of a sentence when the possessor is the subject of the sentence: **On idzie ze swoją narzeczoną** (*He is coming with his fiancée*). **swój swoje swoja swoi** is not used to modify the subject of a sentence, nor after the verb **być** (*be*).

mój moja moje my, mine

	Masc.	Neut.	Fem.	Masc. Pers. Pl.	Other. Pl.
N	mój	moje	moja	moi	moje
G	mojego	mojego	mojej	moich	moich
D	mojemu	mojemu	mojej	moim	moim
A	=N/G	=N	moją	=G	=N
I	moim	moim	moją	moimi	moimi
L	moim	moim	mojej	moich	moich

The possessive pronouns **twój twoja twoje twoi** and **swój swoja swoje swoi** are declined like **mój moja moje moi**.

nasz nasza nasze our, ours

	Masc.	Neut.	Fem.	Masc. Pers. Pl.	Other. Pl.
N	nasz	nasze	nasza	nasi	nasze
G	naszego	naszego	naszej	naszych	naszych
D	naszemu	naszemu	naszej	naszym	naszym
A	=N/G	=N	naszą	=G	=N
I	naszym	naszym	naszą	naszymi	naszymi
L	naszym	naszym	naszej	naszych	naszych

Like **nasz nasza nasze nasi** is declined **wasz wasza wasze wasi**.

Demonstrative and Relative Pronouns

Polish does not have indefinite and definite articles analogous to English (*a, an, the*). One concludes from the context whether or not a given noun is definite or indefinite. Thus, **stół** may mean either “a table” or “the table.” Often placement in a sentence will translate to “the” (initial position) or “a” (final position): **Stół stoi w kącie** (*The table is standing in the corner*), vs. **W kącie stoi stół** (*In the corner is standing a table*). Definiteness may be stressed by using the demonstrative pronoun **ten ta to** (*this, that*). Both demonstrative and relative pronouns have full case-and-number declensions.

ten ta to this, that (Demonstrative Pronoun)

	Masc.	Neut.	Fem.	Masc. Pers. Pl.	Other. Pl.
N	ten	to	ta	ci	te
G	tego	tego	tej	tych	tych
D	temu	temu	tej	tym	tym
A	=N/G	=N	tę	=G	=N
I	tym	tym	tą	tymi	tymi
L	tym	tym	tej	tych	tych

Final **ę** in **tę** is not denasalized. Colloquially, **tę** is often pronounced **tą**.

który która które which, who (Relative and Interrogative Pronoun)

N	który	które	która	którzy	które
G	którego	którego	której	których	których
D	któremu	któremu	której	którym	którym
A	=N/G	=N	którą	=G	=N
I	którym	którym	którą	którymi	którymi
L	którym	którym	której	których	których

jaki jaka jakie what, what kind (Relative and Interrogative Pronoun)

N	jaki	jakie	jaka	jacy	jakie
G	jakiego	jakiego	jakiej	jakich	jakich
D	jakiemu	jakiemu	jakiej	jakim	jakim
A	=N/G	=N	jaką	=G	=N
I	jakim	jakim	jaką	jakimi	jakimi
L	jakim	jakim	jakiej	jakich	jakich

The difference between **który które która** and **jaki jakie jaka** as a relative pronoun is one of specificity: **Który film chcesz obejrzeć?** (*Which movie do you want to see?*) asks about which movie out of a limited set, while **Jaki film chcesz obejrzeć?** (*What film do you want to see?*) does not limit the range of possible films.

Intensive Pronouns

sam samo sama self, same, very

Masc.	Neut.	Fem.	Masc. Pers. Pl.	Other. Pl.	
N	sam	samo	sama	sami	same
G	samego	samego	samej	samych	samych
D	samemu	samemu	samej	samym	samym
A	=N/G	=N	samą	=G	=N
I	samym	samym	samą	samymi	samymi
L	samym	samym	samej	samych	samych

The intensive pronoun is used in expressions like the following:

Czy robisz to sam? *Are you doing that yourself?*

Czy mieszkasz sama? *Do you live alone?*

To jest ten sam człowiek. *That is the same man.*

Reflexive Pronoun

The reflexive pronoun **siebie**, which has no Nominative case form, means 'oneself' (including 'myself', 'yourself', 'his self', 'her self'), 'each other', 'one another', as in:

Rozmawiają ze sobą. *They are talking with one another.*

Nie zapomnij o sobie. *Don't forget about yourself.*

N	---
G	siebie, się
D	sobie
A	siebie, się
I	sobą
L	sobie

Distributive Pronouns

The distributive pronoun **każdy każda każde** (*each, every*) is matched in the plural by **wszyscy wszystkie** (*all*):

	Masc.	Neut.	Fem.	Masc. Pers. Pl.	Other. Pl.
N	każdy	każde	każda	wszyscy	wszystkie
G	każdego	każdego	każdej	wszystkich	wszystkich
D	każdemu	każdemu	każdej	wszystkim	wszystkim
A	=N/G	=N	każdą	=G	=N
I	każdym	każdym	każdą	wszystkimi	wszystkimi
L	każdym	każdym	każdej	wszystkich	wszystkich

The negative of **każdy każda każde** is **żaden żadna żadne** (*no, none, not any*), always accompanied by **nie**:

Każdy stół jest zajęty. *Every table is occupied.*

Żaden stół nie jest zajęty. *No table is occupied.*

4. Adjectives

Adjective Declension

Adjectives have different gender-forms corresponding to the genders of nouns, as well as a full set of case endings in both singular and plural, except for the Vocative, which is always like the Nominative. An adjective agrees with the noun it modifies in gender, number, and case. The masculine singular ending is **-y**, as in **dobry** (*good*), **ładny**, (*pretty*), **mily** (*nice, kind*). This ending is spelled **-i** after **k** and **g**: **wielki** (*great*), **drogi** (*dear, expensive*); and after soft consonants (which are not common): **tani** (stem **tań-**) (*cheap*), **głupi** (stem **glup'-**) The feminine singular ending is **-a**, as in **dobra**, **ładna**, **mila**. The neuter singular ending is **-e**, as in **dobre**, **ładne**, **mile**, spelled **-ie** after **k** and **g**: **wielkie**, **drogie**. This is also the plural ending for adjectives modifying nonmasculine personal nouns. The masculine personal plural adjective ending is **-y/i**, before which a hard-to-soft consonant change occurs: **dobry dobrzy**, **ładny ładni**, **mily mili**, **wielki wielcy**, **drogi drodzy**; for more illustrations see further below.

Hence, one says:

Masc.	dobry hotel good hotel	dobre hotele good hotels
Masc. Pers.	dobry chłopiec good boy	dobrzy mężczyźni good men
Fem.	dobra dziewczyna good girl	dobre kobiety good women
Neut.	dobre dziecko good child	dobre krzesła good chairs

Here is the plain-stem adjective **dobry** (*good*) declined in all gender, number, and case forms:

	Masc.	Neut.	Fem.	Masc. Pers. Pl.	Other Pl.
NV	dobry	dobre	dobra	dobrzy	dobre
G	dobrego	dobrego	dobrej	dobrych	dobrych
D	dobremu	dobremu	dobrej	dobrym	dobrym
A	=N/G	dobre	dobrą	dobrych	dobre
I	dobrym	dobrym	dobrą	dobrymi	dobrymi
L	dobrym	dobrym	dobrej	dobrych	dobrych

Here is the velar-stem adjective **drogi** (*dear, expensive*):

	Masc.	Neut.	Fem.	Masc. Pers. Pl.	Other Pl.
NV	drogi	drogie	droga	drodzy	drogie
G	drogiego	drogiego	drogiej	drogich	drogich
D	drogiemu	drogiemu	drogiej	drogim	drogim
A	=N/G	drogie	drogą	drogich	drogie
I	drogim	drogim	drogą	drogimi	drogimi
L	drogim	drogim	drogiej	drogich	drogich

Here is the soft-stem adjective **tani** (*cheap*):

	Masc.	Neut.	Fem.	Masc. Pers. Pl.	Other Pl.
NV	tani	tanie	tania	tani	tanie
G	taniego	taniego	taniej	tanich	tanich
D	taniemu	taniemu	taniej	tanim	tanim
A	=N/G	tanie	tanią	tanich	tanie
I	tanim	tanim	tanią	tanimi	tanimi
L	tanim	tanim	taniej	tanich	tanich

Here is a list of adjectives exhibiting various stem consonants, followed by the masculine personal plural (m.p.pl.) form, illustrating possible stem-consonant replacements in this form:

b	slaby weak	slabi	p	tępy dull	tępi
c	lśniący glistening	lśniący	p'	glupi stupid	glupi
ch	lichy miserable	lisi	r	chory sick	chorzy
d	młody young	młodzi	s	łasy greedy	łasi
dz	cudzy foreign	cudzy	śl	kisły sour	kiśli
g	drogi dear	drodzy	sn	własny own	właśni
k	wysoki tall	wysocy	st	gęsty thick	gęści
l	mily nice	mili	sz	starszy older	starsi
m	stromy steep	stromi	t	bogaty rich	bogaci
n	ładny pretty	ładni	w	łatwy easy	łatwi
w	łatwy easy	łatwi	zł	zły bad	źli

Adjective-Noun Order

As in English, Polish adjectives are usually placed before the modified noun: **pracowity urzędnik** (*hard-working clerk*), **ciężka walizka** (*heavy suitcase*), **wysokie drzewo** (*tall tree*). However, if the adjective designates the type of a thing, rather than some characteristic, the adjective often follows the noun: **Bank Handlowy** (*Trade Bank*), **roślina wodna** (*aquatic plant*). Adjectives may also follow the noun in set expressions like **dzień dobry** (*hello*), **język polski** (*the Polish language*).

Comparison of Adjectives

The comparative form of most common adjectives is obtained by adding the suffix **-szy** (mas.), **-sza** (fem.), and **-sze** (neut.) to the adjective stem. The superlative form is created by adding the prefix **naj-** to the comparative. Comparative and superlative adjectives take a full set of endings, like any adjective:

miły nice, kind

Masc.	milszy kinder	najmilszy kindest
Fem.	milsza	najmilsza
Neut.	milsze	najmilsze
Pl. (M.P.)	milsi	najmilsi
Pl. (F., N.)	milsze	najmilsze

...and so on, for the other gender-case endings.

Adjectives ending in consonants plus **-ny** use the suffix **-iejszy**:

ładny pretty	ładniejszy prettier	najładniejszy prettiest
smutny sad	smutniejszy sadder	najsmutniejszy saddest

...and so on.

Irregular:

dobry good	lepszy better	najlepszy best
zły bad	gorszy worse	najgorszy worst

Some adjectives, and all participles (verbal adjectives) form the comparative periphrastically, using **bardziej** (*more*) and **najbardziej** (*most*):

chory sick	bardziej chory sicker	najbardziej chory sickest
zajęty busy	bardziej zajęty busier	najbardziej zajęty busiest
zmęczony tired	bardziej zmęczony tireder	najbardziej zmęczony tiredest

Adjectives of lesser comparison are created with **mniej** (*less*) and **najmniej** (*least*): **interesujący** (*interesting*), **mniej interesujący** (*less interesting*), **najmniej interesujący** (*least interesting*).

Adjective Opposites and Their Comparatives

Here is a list of common adjectives, arranged into pairs of opposites. To the right are given the comparative forms, meaning *prettier*, *uglier*, *larger*, etc.

	Positive	Comparative
beautiful, ugly	piękny, brzydki	piękniejszy, brzydszy
big, little	duży, mały	większy, mniejszy
clean, dirty	czysty, brudny	czystszy, brudniejszy
deep, shallow	głęboki, płytki	głębszy, płytszy
dense, sparse	gęsty, rzadki	gęstszy, rzadszy
diligent, lazy	pracowity, leniwy	bardziej pracowity, b. leniwy
dry, wet	suchy, mokry	bardziej suchy, mokrzejszy

early, late
easy, hard
expensive, cheap
far, near
fast, slow
first, last
flat, steep
free, busy
frequent, rare
full, empty
funny, sad
good, bad
great, small
happy, sad
hard, soft
heavy, light
high, low
hot, cold
interesting, boring
light, dark
long, short
new, old
young, old
open, shut
past, future
public, private
rich, poor
right, wrong
right (hand), left
sharp, dull
sick, well
simple, complex
smart, stupid
smooth, rough
straight, crooked
strong, weak
sweet, bitter
sweet, sour
tall, short
thick or fat, thin
thick, thin
urban, rural
warm, cool
wide, narrow

wczesny, późny
łatwy, trudny
drogi, tani
daleki, bliski
szybki, wolny
pierwszy, ostatni
płaski, stromy
wolny, zajęty
częsty, rzadki
pełny, pusty
śmieszny, smutny
dobry, zły
wielki, mały
szczęśliwy, smutny
twardy, miękki
ciężki, lekki
wysoki, niski
gorący, zimny
ciekawny, nudny
jasny, ciemny
długi, krótki
nowy, stary
młody, stary
otwarty, zamknięty
przeszły, przyszły
publiczny, prywatny
bogaty, biedny
słuszny, błędny
prawy, lewy
ostry, tępy
chory, zdrowy
prosty, złożony
mądry, głupi
gładki, szorstki
prosty, kręty
silny, słaby
słodki, gorzki
słodki, kwaśny
wysoki, niski
gruby, cienki
gęsty, rzadki
miejski, wiejski
ciepły, chłodny
szeroki, wąski

wcześniejszy, późniejszy
łatwiejszy, trudniejszy
droższy, tańszy
dalszy, bliższy
szybszy, wolniejszy
(lacking)
bardziej płaski, bardziej stromy
wolniejszy, bardziej zajęty
częstszy, rzadszy
pełniejszy, bardziej pusty
śmieszniejszy, smutniejszy
lepszy, gorszy
większy, mniejszy
weselszy, smutniejszy
twardszy, miękki
cięższy, lżejszy
wyższy, niższy
gorętszy, zimniejszy
ciekawszy, nudniejszy
jaśniejszy, ciemniejszy
dłuższy, krótszy
nowszy, starszy
młodszy, starszy
(lacking)
(lacking)
(lacking)
bogatszy, biedniejszy
słuszniejszy, błędniejszy
(lacking))
ostrzejszy, bardziej tępy
bardziej chory, zdrowszy
prostszy, bardziej złożony
mądrzejszy, głupszy
gładszy, bardziej szorstki
prostszy, bardziej kręty
silniejszy, słabszy
słodszy, bardziej gorzki
słodszy, kwaśniejszy
wyższy, niższy
grubszy, cieńszy
gęstszy (gęściejszy), rzadszy
(lacking)
cieplejszy, chłodniejszy
szerszy, węższy.

Many adjective opposites are formed with the prefix **nie-** (*un-*):

discriminating, undisc.	wybredny, niewybredny
distinct, indistinct	wyraźny, niewyraźny
exact, inexact	ściśly, nieściśly
fresh, stale	świeży, nieświeży
gracious, ungracious	łaskawy, niełaskawy
honest, dishonest	uczciwy, nieuczciwy
intentional, unintentional	umyślny, nieumyślny
interesting, uninteresting	ciekawny, nieciekawny
lucky, unlucky	szczęśliwy, nieszczęśliwy
polite, impolite	grzeczny, niegrzeczny

Almost any adjective can form a negated form with **nie-**. For example, **niedobry** means not exactly bad, but not good either.

5. Adverbs

Formation of Adverbs

Adverbs formed from adjectives end in **-o** or **-e** (with **e** preceded by softening), for example **gęsto** (*thickly*) from **gęsty** (*thick*), **tanio** (*cheaply*) from **tani** (*cheap*), **drogo** (*dearly*) from **drogi** (*dear*) **dobrze** (*well*) from **dobry** (*good*), **źle** (*badly*) from **zły** (*bad*). Generally speaking, adjectives whose stems end in a soft consonant or in **k, g, ch** take the ending **-o**; most others, especially adjectives with stems ending in a consonant plus **-ny**, take **-e**. However, many or even most common adjectives form adverbs in **-o** regardless of the general pattern, as **gęsty gęsto** above. Adverbs have comparative and superlative forms in **-ej** and **naj-** + **-ej**, respectively, as in

ciepły warm **ciepło** warmly **cieplej** more warmly **najcieplej** most warmly

Some formations are irregular. Here are the positive and comparative adverbial forms of some common adjectives:

Adjective	Adverb	Comparative	Superlative
biedny poor	biednie	biedniej	najbiedniej
błędny wrong	błędnie	błędniej	etc.
bliski near	blisko	bliżej	
bogaty rich	bogato	bogaciej	
brudny dirty	brudno	brudniej	
brzydki ugly	brzydko	brzydziej	
chłodny cool	chłodno	chłodniej	
chory sick	choro	bardziej choro	
ciekawy interesting	ciekawie	ciekawiej	
ciemny dark	ciemno	ciemniej	
cienki thin	cienko	cieniej	
ciepły warm	ciepło	cieplej	
ciężki heavy, difficult	ciężko	ciężej	
częsty frequent	często	częściej	
czysty clean	czysto	czyściej	
daleki far, distant	daleko	dalej	
długi long	długo	dłużej	
dobry good	dobrze	lepiej	
drogi dear, expensive	drogo	drożej	
duży large, big	dużo	więcej	
gęsty thick	gęsto	gęściej	
gładki smooth	gładko	gładziej	
głęboki deep	głęboko	głębiej	
głupi stupid	głupio	głupiej	
gorący hot	gorąco	goręcej	
gorzki bitter	gorzko	bardziej gorzko	
gruby thick, fat	grubo	grubiej	

jasny clear	jasno/jaśnie	jaśniej
krótki short	krótko	krócej
kwaśny sour	kwaśnie	kwaśniej
lekki sour	lekko	lżej
leniwy lazy	leniwie	leniwiej
łatwy easy	łatwo	łatwiej
mały small, little	mało	mniej
mądry wise	mądrze	mądrzej
miękki soft	miętko	bardziej miętko
młody young	młodo	młodziej
mokry wet	mokro	bardziej mokro
niski low, short	nisko	nżej
nowy new	nowo	bardziej nowo
nudny boring	nudno	nudniej
ostry sharp	ostro	ostrzej
otwarty open	otwarcie	bardziej otwarcie
płaski flat	płasko	bardziej płasko
 płytki shallow	 płytko	 płycej
pełny full	pełno	pełniej
piękny beautiful	pięknie	piękniej
późny late	późno	później
pracowity industrious	pracowicie	bardziej pracowicie
prosty simple	prosto	prościej
prywatny private	prywatnie	prywatniej
publiczny public	publicznie	publiczniej
pusty empty	pusto	puściej, bardziej pusto
rzadki rare	rzadko	rzadziej
silny strong	silno/silnie	silniej
słaby weak	słabo	słabiej
słodki sweet	słodko	bardziej słodko
ślusznym right, correct	śluszenie	śluszniej
smutny sad	smutno	smutniej
stary old	staro	starzej
stromy steep	stromo	stromiej
suchy dry	sucho	bardziej sucho
szeroki wide	szeroko	szerzej
szorstki rough	szorstko	bardziej szorstko
szybki quick, fast	szybko	szybciej
śmieszny funny	śmiesznie	śmieszniej
tępy dull	tępo	tępiej
tani cheap	tanio	taniej
trudny difficult	trudno	trudniej
twardy hard	twardo	twardziej
wąski narrow	wąsko	wężej
wczesny early	wcześniej	wcześniej
wesoły merry, gay	wesoło	weselej
wielki great	wielce	więcej
wolny slow	wolno	wolniej

wysoki tall, high
zły bad
zdrowy healthy
zimny cold

wysoko
źle
zdrowo
zimno

wyżej
gorzej
zdrowiej
zimniej

It is helpful to think of adjectival adverbs as being the gender-neutral form of the adjective, used when there is no specific noun with which the adjective agrees. This includes instances where reference is to the weather or general surroundings:

Jest tu bardzo duszno. It's very muggy here.

Zawsze jest przyjemnie z tobą rozmawiać. It's always pleasant to chat with you.

Łatwiej jest jechać samochodem. It's easier to go by car.

The verbs **czuć się** (*feel*) and **wyglądać** (*look, appear*) take the adverb:

Bardzo źle się czuję. I feel very bad.

Ona wygląda bardzo młodo. She looks very young.

Words often occurring with comparatives, both adjectival and adverbial, are **jeszcze** (*even more*), **coraz** (*more and more*), and **o wiele** (*by a lot*):

Ten dom jest duży, ale tamten jest jeszcze większy. That house is big, but that other one is even bigger.

Ona wygląda coraz młodziej. She looks younger and younger.

Klimat robi się coraz cieplejszy. The weather is getting warmer and warmer.

Ten nóż jest o wiele ostrzejszy, niż tamten. That knife is a lot sharper than that other one.

Non-Adjectival Adverbs

Non-adjectival adverbs play an important role in speech. Here is a list of important non-adjectival adverbs and adverbial phrases:

already

always

before, earlier

everywhere

for how long?

for how much

for some reason

for what reason?

from there/then

from where?

hardly ever

here

how

how come?

how many/much?

już

zawsze

przedtem

wszędzie

na jak długo?

za ile

z jakiegoś powodu

po co?

odtąd

skąd?

rzadko kiedy

tu, tutaj

jak

czemu?

ile?

so many, so much

somehow

sometime, once

sometimes

soon

sooner or later

still

that way

then

then, later

there

this way

to here, to there

today

tomorrow

tyle

jakoś

kiedyś

czasami

niedługo

prędzej czy później

jeszcze

tamtędy

wtedy

potem

tam

tędy

dotąd

dziś, dzisiaj

jutro

how often?	jak często?	too, too much	zbyt
in a moment	chwilczkę	usually	zwykle
never	nigdy	what for	po co
now	teraz	when?	kiedy?
nowhere	nigdzie	whenever	kiedykolwiek
often	często	where?	gdzie?
once	raz, kiedyś	where to?	dokąd?
rarely	rzadko	which way?	którędy?
rather	dość	why?	dlaczego?
right away	zaraz	yesterday	wczoraj
since when?	od kiedy?		

Notes

The negative forms **nigdzie** and **nigdy** require a negated verb:

On nigdy mnie nie rozumie. He never understands me.

The adverbs **jeszcze** (*still, yet*) and **już** (*already, yet*) function opposite each other, according to whether or not they are negated:

Czy jeszcze pracujesz? Are you still working?

Nie, już nie pracuję. No, I'm not working any more.

Czy już jesteś gotowy? Are you ready yet?

Nie jeszcze nie jestem gotowy. No, I'm not ready yet.

Similarly, **dość** (*rather*) and **nie zbyt** (*not too*) often work opposite each other:

Ona jest dość miła. She is rather nice.

Ona nie jest zbyt miła. She is not especially nice.

6. Numerals

Cardinal Numerals

0	zero	26	dwadzieścia sześć
1	jeden, jedna, jedno	27	dwadzieścia siedem
2	dwa, f. dwie, m.p.pl. dwaj	28	dwiedwadzieścia osiem
3	trzy, m.p.pl. trzej	29	dwadzieścia dziewięć
4	cztery, m.p.pl. czterej	30	trzydzieści, trzydziestu
5	pięć, pięciu	40	czterdzieści, czterdziestu
6	sześć, sześciu	50	pięćdziesiąt, pięćdziesięciu
7	siedem, siedmiu	60	sześćdziesiąt, sześćdziesięciu
8	osiem, ośmiu	70	siedemdziesiąt, -dziesięciu
9	dziewięć, dziewięciu	80	osiemdziesiąt, osiemdziesięciu
10	dziesięć, dziesięciu	90	dziewięćdziesiąt, -dziesięciu
11	jedenaście, jedenastu	100	sto, stu
12	dwanaście, dwunastu	200	dwieście, dwustu
13	trzynaście, trzynastu	300	trzysta, trzystu
14	czternaście, czternastu	400	czterysta, czterystu
15	piętnaście, piętnastu	500	pięćset, pięciuset
16	szesnaście, szesnastu	600	sześćset, sześciuset
17	siedemnaście, siedemnastu	700	siedemset, siedmiuset
18	osiemnaście, osiemnastu	800	osiemset, ośmiuset
19	dziewiętnaście, dziewiętnastu	900	dziewięćset, dziewięciuset
20	dwadzieścia, dwudziestu	1000	tysiąc
21	dwadzieścia jeden	2000	dwa tysiące
22	dwadzieścia dwa	10,000	dziesięć tysięcy
23	dwadzieścia trzy	1,000,000	milion
24	dwadzieścia cztery	1,000,000,000	miliard
25	dwadzieścia pięć		

Forms above in –u are both the Genitive and the masculine-personal form of the numeral. When enumerating a series, the word **raz** (*once*) is used instead of **jeden**: **raz, dwa, trzy**, etc.

Cardinal Numeral Syntax

The Polish numeral system strikes most people by its complexity. Indeed, the Polish system of numerals has probably never been exhaustively described, and usage can vary from speaker to speaker. Still, the outlines of the system are easy to state.

1. The number 1 takes the same endings as **ten ta to** (*this/that*), hence **jeden koń** (*one horse*), **jedna krowa** (*one cow*), **jedno drzewo** (*one tree*).
2. **Numbers 2, 3, 4.** In Nominative-case uses the numbers 2 (m/n. **dwa**, f. **dwie**, m.p. **dwaj**), 3 (**trzy**, m.p. **trzej**), 4 (**cztery**, m.p. **czterej**) take the plural of the noun: **dwa**

konie (*two horses*), **dwie krowy** (*two cows*), **dwaj chłopcy** (*two boys*). Numbers 2, 3, 4 take Nominative plural verb agreement:

Dwa konie stały. Two horses were standing.

Czterej chłopcy się bawili. Four boys were playing.

Male-only forms **dwaj, trzej, czterej** occur more often in writing. In speech they are often replaced with the Genitive forms **dwóch, trzech, czterech** plus the Genitive plural,

3. Numbers five and above are followed by the Genitive plural of the counted noun, as though one were saying ‘five of horses,’ and so on. See **pięć koni** (*five horses*), **sześć krów** (*six cows*), **siedem zeszytów** (*seven notebooks*). The masculine personal versions of numbers 5 and above end in **-u**, like the Genitive:

	Masc.-Fem.-Neut.	Males	Masc. Pers. Examples
5	pięć	pięciu	pięciu mężczyzn 5 men
10	dziesięć	dziesięciu	dziesięciu chłopców 10 boys

Numbers 5 and above take neuter singular verb agreement:

Pięć książek leżało. Five books were lying.

Sześciu studentów uczyło się. Six students were studying.

Predicate adjectives will be in the Genitive plural: **Siedmiu studentów jest gotowych.** (*Seven students are ready*). Before non-masculine personal subjects, possessive pronouns will usually be in the Nominal plural: **Moje pięć siostr jest zamężnych.** (*My five sisters are married*). Compare **Moich pięciu braci jest żonatych.** (*My five brothers are married*). Since such constructions are felt to be awkward, they are often avoided.

4. Compound numerals follow the lead of the final number. Numbers ending in 2, 3, 4 take the Nominative plural; while numbers ending in 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 0 take the Genitive plural: **dwadzieścia trzy zeszyty** (*23 notebooks*), **dwadzieścia pięć zeszytów** (*25 notebooks*). Compound numbers ending in 1 always end in **jeden**, no matter what the gender of the noun, and take the Genitive plural (and neuter singular verb agreement): **Dwadzieścia jeden zeszytów zostało** (*21 notebooks were left*).

One does not use **dwaj, trzej, czterej** in compound numerals; hence **dwudziestu dwóch chłopców**, not ***dwadzieścia dwaj chłopcy**.

Cardinal Numeral Declension

1. **The Number 1.** The number one, **jeden, jedna, jedno**, is declined like a pronominal adjective (like **ten, ta, to**). It agrees with the modified noun in gender, number, and case: **jeden kot** (*one cat*), Gsg. **jednego kota**; **jedno dziecko** (*one child*), Gsg. **jednego dziecka**; **jedna krowa** (*one cow*), Gsg. **jednej krowy**; and so on. The plural form **jedne** is used with plural-only nouns: **jedne drzwi** (*one door*). The word **jeden jedna jedno** is

also used in the sense “a certain”: **jeden człowiek** (*a certain man*). In this sense it may be used in the plural: **jedni ludzie** (*some people*).

2. Numbers 2, 3, 4 and *Both*

Dwa, Dwie, Dwa (*Two*)

	Masc./Neut.	Fem.	Masc.Pers.Pl.
NV	dwa	dwie	dwaj
GL	dwóch/dwu		
D	dwom/dwóm/dwu		
A	dwa	dwie	dwóch
I	dwoma	dwoma	dwoma

(Or, in all Instrumental uses, **dwu**.)

Trzy, Trzej (*Three*)

	Masc./Neut./Fem.	Masc.Pers.Pl.
NV	trzy	trzej
GL	trzech	
D	trzem	
A	trzy	trzech
I	trzema	

Cztery, Czerej (*Four*)

	Masc./Neut./Fem.	Masc.Pers.Pl.
NV	cztery	czterej
GL	czterech	
D	czterem	
A	cztery	czterech
I	czterema	

Oba, Obie, Obaj (*Both*)

	Masc./Neut	Fem.	Masc.Pers.Pl.
NV	oba	obie	obaj
GL	obu		
D	obu		
A	oba	obie	obu
I	oboma	obiema	oboma

(or, in all Instrumental uses, **obu**)

Notes on *Dwa, Trzy, Cztery, Oba*:

A. The forms **dwaj, trzej, czterej** are male-only forms. When referring to male-female combinations, the collective numeral is commonly used; see further below, 6.2. The Genitive forms **dwóch, trzech, czterech, obu** (plus the Genitive plural) suggest a possible mixed-gender group, but do not require it (it could also be all-male).

B. The form **dwu** is a possible form in the GDLI, and it is optional in the Accusative of masc. persons alongside **dwóch**.

C. **Dwom** is the recommended written Dative form of **dwa** (in all genders), but **dwóm** also frequently occurs, and **dwu** is also acceptable.

D. **Dwiema** and **obiema** are usual in the feminine Instrumental, alongside optional **dwoma, oboma** and **dwu, obu**.

E. In Nominative-case functions, the forms **dwóch** (or **dwu**), **trzech, czterech** plus the Genitive case may be used as alternatives to **dwaj, trzej, czterej**; hence either **dwaj chłopcy** or **dwóch (dwu) chłopców** (*two boys*). The Nominative forms **dwaj, trzej, czterej** tend to be used more in writing, the Genitive forms more in speech. In sum:

Male only: dwaj studenci two (male) students

Possibly mixed gender: dwóch (dwu) studentów two (male or female) students

Mixed gender: dwoje studentów two students (one male, one female).

F. **Obydwa, obydwie** is in practice more often used than **oba obie**.

3. Numbers 5-90

Pięć, Pięciu (*Five*)

Masc./Neut./Fem.		Masc.Pers.Pl.
NV	pięć	pięciu
GDL	pięciu	
A	pięć	pięciu
I	pięcioma (pięciu)	

Numerals **sześć, sześciu** (*six*), **siedem, siedmiu** (*seven*), **osiem, ośmiu** (*eight*), **dziewięć, dziewięciu** (*nine*), **dziesięć, dziesięciu** (*ten*) are declined like **pięć, pięciu**.

Jedenaście, Jedenastu (*Eleven*)

Masc./Neut./Fem.		Masc.Pers.Pl.
NV	jedenaście	jedenastu
GDL	jedenastu	
A	jedenaście	jedenastu
I	jedenastoma (jedenastu)	

Dwanaście, Dwunastu (*Twelve*)

Masc./Neut./Fem.		Masc.Pers.Pl.
NV	dwanaście	dwunastu
GDL	dwunastu	
A	dwanaście	dwunastu
I	dwunastoma (dwunastu)	

Note the change of **dwa-** to **dwu-** in oblique case-forms of **dwanaście** (and of **dwadzieścia** (*twenty*) described below: **dwunastu**, **dwudziestu**). Numerals **trzynaście**, **trzynastu** (*thirteen*), **czternaście**, **czternastu** (*fourteen*), **piętnaście**, **piętnastu** (*fifteen*), **szesnaście**, **szesnastu** (*sixteen*), **siedemnaście**, **siedemnastu** (*seventeen*), **osiemnaście**, **osiemnastu** (*eighteen*), **dziewiętnaście**, **dziewiętnastu** (*nineteen*) are declined like **jedenaste**, **jedenastu**.

Dwadzieścia, Dwudziestu (*Twenty*)

	Masc./Neut./Fem.	Masc.Pers.Pl.
NV	dwadzieścia	dwudziestu
GDL	dwudziestu	
A	dwadzieścia	dwudziestu
I	dwudziestoma (dwudziestu)	

Trzydzieści, Trzydziestu (*Thirty*)

	Masc./Neut./Fem.	Masc.Pers.Pl.
NV	trzydzieści	trzydziestu
GDL	trzydziestu	
A	trzydzieści	trzydziestu
I	trzydziestoma (trzydziestu)	

The number **czterdzieści**, **czterdziestu** (*forty*) is declined like **trzydzieści**, **trzydziestu**.

Pięćdziesiąt, Pięćdziesięci (*Fifty*)

	Masc./Neut./Fem.	Masc.Pers.Pl.
NV	pięćdziesiąt	pięćdziesięciu
GDL	pięćdziesięciu	
A	pięćdziesiąt	pięćdziesięciu
I	pięćdziesięcioma (pięćdziesięciu)	

The numerals **sześćdziesiąt** (“*szeździesiąt*”), **sześćdziesięciu** (*sixty*), **siedemdziesiąt**, **siedemdziesięciu** (*seventy*), **osiemdziesiąt**, **osiemdziesięciu** (*eighty*), **dziewięćdziesiąt**, **dziewięćdziesięciu** (*ninety*) are declined like **pięćdziesiąt**.

4. Numbers 100–900

Sto, Stu (*Hundred*)

	Masc./Neut./Fem.	Masc.Pers.Pl.
NAV	sto	stu
GDIL	stu	
(Optional I	stoma)	

Dwieście, Dwustu (*Two Hundred*)

	Masc./Neut./Fem.	Masc.Pers.Pl.
NAV	dwieście	dwustu
GDIL	dwustu	
(Optional I	dwustoma)	

Trzysta, Trzystu (*Three Hundred*)

	Masc./Neut./Fem.	Masc.Pers.Pl.
NAV	trzysta	trzystu
GDIL	trzystu	
(Optional I	trzystoma)	

Czterysta, Czterystu (*Four Hundred*)

	Masc./Neut./Fem.	Masc.Pers.Pl.
NAV	czterysta	czterystu
GDIL	czterystu	
(Optional I	czterystoma)	

The Instrumental forms in **-oma** above are optional alongside forms in **-u**; **czterysta** has the accent on the first syllable: “CZTE-ry-sta.”

Pięćset, Pięciuset (*Five Hundred*)

	Masc./Neut./Fem.	Masc.Pers.Pl.
NAV	pięćset	pięciuset
GDIL	pięciuset	

Note that the I of **pięćset** is **pięciuset**, not ever ***pięciomaset**: **z pięciuset pasażerami** (*with five hundred passengers*). The item **-set** does not trigger stress advancement to the next-to-last syllable; see **pięciuset** “PI -ciu-set,” **siedemset** “SIE-dem-set,” and so on. Similarly to **pięćset** are declined **sześćset sześciuset** (*six hundred*), **siedemset siedmiuset** (*seven hundred*), **osiemset ośmiuset** (*eight hundred*), and **dziewięćset dziewięciuset** (*nine hundred*).

5. Thousand, Million

Tysiąc (*Thousand*)

	Singular	Plural
NV	tysiąc	tysiące
G	tysiąca	tysięcy
D	tysiącowi	tysiącom
A	tysiąc	tysiące
I	tysiącem	tysiącami
L	tysiącu	tysiącach

Milion (*Million*)

	Singular	Plural
NV	milion	miliony
G	milion	milionów
D	milionowi	milionom
A	milion	miliony
I	milionem	milionami
L	milionie	milionach

The numbers 1,000, 1,000,000, and so on are declined as regular masculine nouns in both singular and plural, including when reference is to a masculine-personal group: **dwa tysiące zeszytów** (*2000 notebooks*), **pięć milionów ludzi** (*5,000,000 people*). In oblique cases, **tysiąc** and **milion** as head numerals always take the Gpl.: **Ta książka wyszła w kilku tysiącach egzemplarzy.** (*That book came out in several thousand copies-Gpl.*)

Collective Numerals

A set of collective numerals is used with animal young; with mixed male-female groups; and with plural-only nouns. In poetic use, collective numerals may be used with paired body parts such as eyes or hands. Most frequently used are the collective numerals 2-12:

2 dwoje dwojga	6 sześcioro sześciorga	10 dziesięcioro -rga
3 troje trojga	7 siedmioro siedmiorga	11 jedenaścioro -rga
4 czworo czworga	8 ośmioro ośmiorga	12 dwanaścioro -rga
5 pięcioro pięciorga	9 dziewięcioro dziewięciorga	

...and so on. Collective forms like **dwadzieścioro** (20), **trzydzieścioro** (30), and so on, may be used, but are not compounded. Nominative case uses of the collective numeral take the counted noun in the Genitive plural; see: **pięcioro dzieci** (*five children*), **czworo ludzi** (*four people*), **dwoje drzwi** (*two doors*). Note that with the number 1, plural-only nouns either take the form **jedne**, as in **jedne drzwi** (*one door*) or, if paired, use **para** (*pair*): **para nożyczek** (*a pair of scissors*).

Here is the declension of **dwoje** and **pięcioro**, with the case required on the following noun; the example is with **kurczęta** (*chicks*):

NV	dwoje	pięcioro	+ Gpl	kurcząt
G	dwojga	pięciorga	+ Gpl	kurcząt
D	dwojgu	pięciorgu	+ Dpl	kurczętom
A	dwoje	pięcioro	+ Gpl	kurcząt
I	dwojgiem	pięciorgiem	+ Gpl	kurcząt
L	dwojgu	pięciorgu	+ Lpl	kurczętach

Reified Numerals

Reified numerals, which are regular feminine-gender nouns ending in **-ka**, are used to refer to items by numerical designation:

1 jedynka	5 piątka	9 dziewiątka
2 dwójka	6 szóstka	10 dziesiątka
3 trójka	7 siedemka	11 jedenastka
4 czwórka	8 ósemka	12 dwunastka

...and so on. For example, **dziesiątka** could be used to refer to room number 10; a 10-millimeter wrench; a bus number 10; **polska jedenastka** (*the Polish eleven*) refers to a soccer team; and so on. Reified numerals may be used colloquially in place of collective numerals: **dwójka dzieci** (*a couple of kids*).

Indefinite Numerals

The following indefinite and questioning numerals have a declension similar to that of **pięć**:

ile ilu iloma how many, how much, as many, as much
wiele wielu wieloma many, much
kilka kilku kilkoma several
parę paru paroma a couple, several
tylę tylu tyloma so much, so many, as much, as many
kilkanaście kilkunastu kilkunastoma a dozen or so
kilkadziesiąt kilkadziesięciu kilkadziesięcioma several dozen
paręnaście parunastu parunastoma a couple dozen
parędziesiąt parudziesięciu parudziesięcioma several dozen

Counting People

Of most practical use is learning to count groups of people in the Nominative case. There are three options: a) the group is all-male; b) the group is all non-male; c) the group is mixed male and female; d) the group is possibly mixed male and female. The full range of options occurs only for the numbers 2, 3, 4, 'both'. Here are illustrations with numbers 2 and 5, using **student(ka)** (*student*):

	All Male	All Female	Mixed	Possibly
Mixed				
2	dwaj studenci	dwie studentki	dwoje studentów	dwóch studentów
5	pięciu studentów	pięć studentek	pięcioro studentów	pięciu studentów

Ordinal Numerals

Ordinal numbers are used in telling time, for referring to floors in buildings, and for counting other things that occur in series. They take regular adjective endings, e.g. **pierwszy pociąg** (*1st train*), **pierwsza noc** (*1st night*), **pierwsze piętro** (*1st floor*).

Ordinal Numerals 1-30

Most important are the ordinal numbers 1st through 31st (this covers all possible days of the month):

1st	pierwszy	17th	siedemnasty
2nd	drugi	18th	osiemnasty
3rd	trzeci	19th	dziewiętnasty
4th	czwarty	20th	dwudziesty
5th	piąty	21st	dwudziesty pierwszy
6th	szósty	22nd	dwudziesty drugi
7th	siódmy	23rd	dwudziesty trzeci
8th	ósmo	24th	dwudziesty czwarty
9th	dziewiąty	25th	dwudziesty piąty
10th	dziesiąty	26th	dwudziesty szósty
11th	jedenasty	27th	dwudziesty siódmy
12th	dwunasty	28th	dwudziesty ósmy
13th	trzynasty	29th	dwudziesty dziewiąty
14th	czternasty	30th	trzydziesty
15th	piętnasty	31st	trzydziesty pierwszy
16th	szesnasty		etc.

Note that both members of the compound go in the ordinal form, as though one were saying "twentieth first."

Also: **czterdziesty** (*40th*), **pięćdziesiąty** (*50th*), **sześćdziesiąty** (*60th*), **siedemdziesiąty** (*70th*), **osiemdziesiąty** (*80th*), **dziewięćdziesiąty** (*90th*), **setny** (*100th*), **tysięczny** (*1000th*).

Telling Time

Ordinal numerals are used in combination with **godzina** (*hour, o'clock*) for telling time: **godzina pierwsza** (*one o'clock*); and for giving dates: **pierwszy maja** (*the first of May*); see below.

One expresses *at* a given time of day with the preposition **o** plus the Locative case of **godzina** hour, which may be omitted, followed by the ordinal number: **o (godzinie) pierwszej** (*at one o'clock*). Minutes after the hour are expressed with the help of **po** plus the Locative case of the hour: **pięć po piątej** (*five past five*). Minutes before the hour are expressed with **za** plus the Accusative case of the minutes, followed by the Nominative case of the hour: **za dziesięć siódma** (*ten till seven*). Half hours are expressed with **wpół do** (*half till*) plus the Genitive case of the hour: **wpół do dziewiętej** (*half till nine, 8:30*). Quarter-hours may be expressed with **kwadrans**: **kwadrans po trzeciej** (*3:15*), **za kwadrans czwarta** (*3:45*). The notions A.M and P.M. are rendered with the phrases **rano** in the morning, **po południu** (*in the afternoon*), **wieczorem** (*in the evening*), and **nocą** (*at night*):

Jest godzina druga po południu. It's 2:00 A.M.

Film się zaczyna o siódmej wieczorem. The film begins at 7:00 P.M.

Dates

A date by itself is expressed with the masculine form of the ordinal numeral, followed by the Genitive of the month: **pierwszy maja** (*May 1st*), **jedenasty grudnia** (*December 11th*). "On the date" is expressed by putting the entire expression in the Genitive. If the number is compound (20 or above), both numerals appear in the ordinal form: **dwudziestego drugiego listopada** (*on November 21st*), **trzydziestego sierpnia** (*on August 30th*).

Years

Years are expressed in the following way:

The year itself: rok tysiąc dziewięćset sześćdziesiąty drugi 1962

In the year: roku tysiąc dziewięćset sześćdziesiątego drugiego-Genitive.

Alternatively: w roku tysiąc dziewięćset sześćdziesiątym drugim-Locative

One uses the Genitive construction more for historical events. In giving the year of one's birth, one would tend to use the Locative:

Urodziłem (urodziłam) się w roku tysiąc dziewięćset siedemdziesiątym czwartym. I was born in 1974.

The year 2000 is **rok dwutysięczny**. 2001 is **rok dwa tysiące pierwszy**; 2008 is **rok dwa tysiące ósmy**; and so on. In oblique cases, **dwa tysiące** is commonly replaced with the ordinal form **dwutysięczy**: **w roku dwutysięcznym dziewiątym** (*in the year 2009*).

Expressing *How Old*

In Polish one asks “How many years do you have?”: **Ile masz lat?** (formal: **Ile pan(i) ma lat?**) and answers “I have so many years”:

Mam osiemnaście lat. I am 18 years old.

Mam sześćdziesiąt jeden lat. I am 61 years old.

7. Prepositions

The letter next to the preposition refers to the case required on the following noun: G-Genitive D-Dative A-Accusative I-Instrumental L-Locative.

English-to-Polish Prepositions

about o + L	for, in exchange for za + A	for, in favor of za + I
according to według + G		from, out of z(e) + G
after, along, up to po + L		from, since, than od(e) + G
against, opposed to przeciw(ko) + D		in view of wobec + G
against, up against o + A		in w(e) + L
alongside, next to obok + G		instead of zamiast + G
among wśród + G		near blizko + G
around, about około + G		near, at przy + L
as far as po + A		off, down from z + G
at przy + L, u + G, na + L		on, at na + L
before, in front of przed + I		out of, from z(e) + G
besides oprócz + G, poza + I		over, above nad(e) + I
between, among między + I		through, across przez(e) + A
beyond, behind za + I		to, until do + G
despite, in spite of mimo + G		toward(s) ku + D (rare)
due to, thanks to dzięki + D		under, beneath pod(e) + I
during w czasie + G, podczas + G		with, together with z + I
for (a time) na + A		without bez(e) + G
for (the benefit of) dla + G		

Polish-to-English Prepositions

bez(e) + G without	pod(e) + I under, beneath
blizko + G near	podczas + G during
dla + G for (the benefit of)	poza + I besides, beyond
do + G to, as far as, until	przeciw(ko) + D against, opposed to
dzięki + D due to, thanks to	przed(e) + I before, in front of
ku + D <i>rare</i> toward(s)	przez(e) + A through, across, due to
między + I between, among	przy + L at, near, next to u + G, na + L at
mimo + G despite, in spite of	przy + L near, at
na + A for (a time)	w + L in, at
na + L on, at	w czasie + G during
nad(e) + I over, above,	według + G according to
o + L about	wśród + G among
o + A against, up against	wobec + G in view of, toward(s)
obok + G alongside, next to	z(e) + G from, out of, off, down from
od(e) + G from, since, than	z(e) + I with, together with, along with
około + G around, about	za + A for, in exchange for

oprócz + G besides
po + A as far as, up to
po + L after, along

za + I beyond, behind, for, in favor of
zamiast + G instead of

Prepositions According to the Case Required

Genitive Only

Almost all prepositions which take the Genitive case take this case only. Genitive-requiring prepositions include:

bez(e) without
blisko near
dla for (the good of)
do to, up to, until
dokoła (dookoła) (all) around
koło around, about
obok next to, alongside
od(e) from, away from, than
oprócz, prócz besides
podczas during
podług according to
because of
of
pośród amongst

mimo despite
naokoło all around
naprzeciw(ko) across from
spośród from among, out of
u at (someone's), near
według according to
wobec regarding, in the face of
wokół, wokoło round, about
wskutek as the result of
wśród among, in the midst of
z(e) out of, from, down from, off,
za in the sense during the time or reign

Dative Only

The prepositions that take only the Dative case are:

dzięki thanks to, due to
ku toward

przeciw, przeciwko against
wbrew despite

Accusative Only

przez(e) through, across, by (the agency of), because of

Instrumental Only

poza besides

z(e) (together) with, accompanied by

The Instrumental preposition **z** should not be confused with its homonym **z** + G (*out of, off*).

Locative Only

przy while, during, at, next to

Locative or Accusative

	+ Locative (State)	+ Accusative (After Motion Verb)
w(e)	in, at	into (a large area)
na	on, at	onto, to (a meeting place)
po	after, over (the surface of)	for, after (to get, fetch), up to
o	about, at (a time), with*	against, for (as in "fight for")

*with in the sense of having a characteristic, as **dom o stromym dachu** (*house with a steep roof*).

Instrumental or Accusative

	+ Instrumental (State)	+ Accusative (Motion)
pod(e)	under, beneath, below	to under, beneath, below, during
przed(e)	before, in front of	to before, in front of
nad	over, above, on top of	to over, above, on top of
za	behind, in back of, beyond	to behind, in back of, beyond, in
	exchange for	
między	between, among	to between, among

The Instrumental-requiring prepositions form Genitive-requiring compounds with **z-/s-** to express motion-from: **spod** (*from below*), **sprzed** (*from in front*), **znad** (*from above*), **zza** (*from behind*), **spomiędzy** (*from among*). For example:

Ta szafa pochodzi sprzed wojny. That wardrobe dates from before the War.

Prepositions Expressing At, To, From

	Location	Motion to	Motion from
with people	u + G	do + G	od(e) + G
with containers*	w(e) + L	do + G	z + G
with surfaces	na + L	na + A	z + G
bodies of water	nad(e) + I	nad(e) + A	znad(e) + G
near towns	pod(e) + I	pod(e) + A	spod(e) + G

*"Containers" in the broadest possible sense, including most things, whether concrete or abstract, and places, for example, **w dobrym nastroju** (*in a good mood*), **w Warszawie** (*in Warsaw*). Containers with vague boundaries may take **w** + Accusative in motion-to uses, for example **w las** (*into the forest*). Examples:

u dentysty, do dentysty, od dentysty at/to/from the dentist's
w biurze, do biura, z biura in/to/from the office
na koncercie, na koncert, z koncertu at /to/from the concert

nad morzem, nad morze, znad morza at/to/from the sea-side
pod Warszawą, pod Warszawę, spod Warszawy near, to near, from near Warsaw

Expressions of Time

Examples using **rok** (*year*):

rok (bare Accusative) for a year('s length of time)

Byłem w Polsce jeden rok. I was in Poland a year.

do roku₁ (**do** + G) up to the (specific) year

Do zeszłego roku mieszkałem u rodziców. Up until last year I lived with my parents.

do roku₂ (**do** + G) up to a year('s length of time)

Dostał do roku więzienia. He got up to a year in prison.

na rok₁ (**na** + A) for a year (looking ahead)

Wyjeżdżam do Polski na rok. I'm going to Poland for a year.

na rok₂ (**na** + A) exactly a year before

Zbieramy się na rok przed obchodami. We're gathering a year before the celebration.

o rok (**o** + A) by a year

Przegapiliśmy jubileusz o cały rok. We missed the anniversary by an entire year.

od roku₁ (**od** + G) for the year (just past)

Od roku pracuję jako kelner. For the past year I've been working as a waiter.

od roku₂ (**od** + G) since the (specific) year

Pracuję tam od zeszłego roku. I've been working there since last year.

po roku (**po** + L) after a year (usually looking back)

Po tylko jednym roku mówisz zupełnie dobrze po polsku. After only one year you speak Polish quite well. (Compare with **za** + A.)

przed rokiem₁ (**przed** + I) a year ago

Przeprowadziliśmy się tu przed rokiem. We moved here a year ago.

przed rokiem₂ (**przed** + I) before the (specific) year

Przed rokiem siedemdziesiątym szóstym nie pracowałem. Before 1976 I didn't work. (More or less the equivalent of: **do zeszłego roku** up to last year.)

przez rok (**przez** + A) through the course of a year

Byłem chory przez cały rok. I was sick the whole year through. (This construction usually amounts to an emphatic version of the bare Accusative.)

w rok₁ (**w** + A) in the space of a year

Wszystko zdążyłem zrobić w rok. I managed to do everything in the space of a year. (More frequently used in about the same meaning is **w ciągu roku** in the course of a year.)

w rok₂ (**w** + A) a year (before)

To się stało w rok przed Śmiercią Wojtka. That happened a year before Wojtek's death.

w roku (**w** + L) in the (specific) year

Mam pojechać do Polski w tym roku. I'm supposed to go to Poland this year.

za rok (**za** + A) after a year (looking ahead)

Za jeszcze jeden rok będziesz już mówił po polsku zupełnie płynnie. After one more year you will speak Polish completely fluently.

Polish Translations of *For*

The English preposition *for* has a wide variety of translations into Polish, using various prepositions, several cases, and even the conditional of the verb. The most important correspondences of English *for* are given below:

1. **dla** + G

for the benefit of
easy/hard for
for the sake of

Czy te kwiaty są dla mnie? Are those flowers for me?
To łatwe dla mnie. That's easy for me.
sztuka dla sztuki art for art's sake.

2. **za** + A

in exchange for
that watch?

Ile zapłaciłeś za ten zegarek? How much did you pay for

responsible for
for his behavior.

Sprzedalem za grosze. I sold it for pennies.
Nie odpowiadam za jego zachowanie. I'm not responsible

in place of
of) you.

Niech ja to zrobię za ciebie. Let me do that for (instead

on behalf of
'mistake for'

za wolność for freedom

Miałem go za lekarza. I took him for a doctor.

aristocrat.

Uchodził za akrystokratę. He tried to pass for an

thank for, ask pardon for

Dziękuję za pomoc. Thanks for the help.

Przepraszam za kłopot. Excuse me for the bother.

3. **na** + A

intended for
of foreigners

bilet na samolot ticket for the airplane

podręcznik na użytek cudzoziemców textbook for the use

desire for
cold.

Mam ochotę na coś zimnego. I feel like having something

for naught

To wszystko pójdzie na nic. That'll all go for nothing.

for an event or time

bilet na godzinę ósmą ticket for 8 o'clock

spóźnić się na przedstawienie be late for the

performance

for a time yet to come

Wyjeżdżam na rok. I'm leaving for a year.

see exclamations like **na miłość boską** [*for God's sake!*].)

Rozstajemy się na zawsze. We're parting forever. (Also

4. **od** + G

for (a time just past)
in Warsaw for the past seven years.

Mieszkam w Warszawie od siedmiu lat. I've been living

5. przez + A

for a period of time **Przez ostatnie miesiące pracujemy pełną parą.** We've been working at full steam for the last several months.

This sense of *for* may also be expressed by the bare Accusative case: **Noszę ten kapelusz już jedenaście lat.** (*I've been wearing that hat for eleven years already.*) The expression "for periods of time on end" can be expressed by the bare Instrumental: **całymi dniami** (*for days on end*), although **całe dnie** or **przez całe dnie** is also correct.

6. po + A

go for **Wyskoczę po piwo.** I'll dash out for some beer.
o'clock. **Zajadę po ciebie o ósmej.** I'll drop by for you at eight

7. do + G

for (of specific application) **woda do picia** water for drinking
razor **maszynka do ogolenia** machine for shaving, electric
 pasta do zębów paste for teeth, toothpaste

8. o + A

(ask, fight) for **prosić o pomoc** ask for help
existence, equality **walczyć o istnienie (równouprawnienie)** fight for

9. u + G

for (be employed by a person) **Ona pracuje u dentysty.** She works for a dentist.

"Work for a company or firm" is translated by **w + L**: **Pracuję w banku.** (*I work for a bank.*)

10. jak na + A

for (of belittling comparison) **On nieźle mówi jak na cudzoziemca.** He speaks not badly for a foreigner.

11. z(e) + G

known for **On jest znany ze swoich wcześniejszych prac.** He is known for his earlier works.

12. **za** + I

long for **Tęsknię za tobą.** I miss you, long for you. (In older Polish, **po** + L: **Tęsknię po tobie.**)

13. **jeśli chodzi o** + A, **co do** + G

as for **Jeśli chodzi o brata, to on jest jeszcze w szkole.** As for my brother, he is still in school.

Co do twojego pomysłu, on jest zupełnie nierealny. As for your idea, it is totally impractical.

14. **The conditional.** The English use of *for* after a verb of request has a correspondent in the Polish conditional: **Prosimy, żebyśmy mniej hałasowali.** (*They asked for us to make less noise.*)

8. Conjunctions

Some important conjunctions are **a** (*and/but*), **i** (*and*), **i.... i...** (*both... and*), **ale** (*but*), **albo...albo...** (*either...or...*), **ani...ani...** (*neither...nor...*). English *and* is usually translated by **i**; however, if there is any contrast, i.e. if *and* can alternately be translated as *but*, it is translated by **a**:

Marek jest studentem, a Maria już pracuje. Marek is a student, but Maria is already working.

Warszawa i Kraków są dość duże. Warsaw and Krakow are rather large.

Jan jest i inteligentny i przystojny. Jan is both smart and good-looking.

To jest muzeum, ale nie jest zbyt ciekawe. That's a museum, but it's not too interesting.

To jest albo szpital, albo hotel. That's either a hospital or a hotel.

To nie jest ani szpital, ani hotel. That's neither a hospital nor a hotel.

Important conjunctions introducing subordinate clauses include **choć** (*although*), **bo** (*because*), **ponieważ** (*since*), **jeśli** (*if*), **to/wtedy** (*then*). The most important subordinating conjunctions are **że** (*that*) and **czy** (*whether*). The conjunction **że**, always preceded by a comma, may never be deleted, as it may be in English:

Słyszałem, że masz nową pracę. I heard (that) you have a new job.

The conjunction **jeśli** (*if*) is not used as a subordinating conjunction. Use **czy** instead:

Nie wiem, czy on jest zajęty. I don't know whether (not **jeśli** if) he is busy.

Questioning adverbs may serve as subordinating conjunctions:

Czy pamiętasz, gdzie ona mieszka? Do you remember where she lives?

Nie wiem, jak to powiedzieć. I don't know how to say that.

Expressing *If... then...*

The factual conditional conjunctions are **jeśli** (*if*) and either **to** or **wtedy** (*then*). The *then* component of the sentence is less often omitted in Polish than it is in English:

Jeśli będziesz tam tak siedzieć przed telewizorem, to (wtedy) ja pójdę spać. If you're to sit there in front of the TV, (then) I'm going to bed.

The counter-factual condition conjunctions are **gdyby** or **jeśliby** (*if*) plus either **to** or **wtedy**. The particle **by** is taken from the conditional form of the verb, and may take personal verb endings (**-m -ś -śmy -ście**). See Chapter 9 under Conditional Mood. In the counter-factual conditional, the conjunction expressing 'then' is often omitted:

Gdybym wiedział, że wybierasz się do miasta, poprosiłbym (or tobym poprosil) cię zawieźć mnie ze sobą. If I'd known you were headed into town, I would have asked you to take me with you.

Here is a list of major conjunctions and connectives:

although	choć	not until	dopóki nie
and	i. a	only just	co dopiero
as soon as	jak tylko	or	albo
as though	jak gdyby	since, as long as	skoro
as...as...	tak, jak...	since, for	ponieważ
at the time when	wtedy, kiedy...	so that, in order to	żeby. aby
because	dlatego, że...; bo	than	niż
before	zanim...	that (subord. conj.)	że
both...and...	i...i...	the way that	tak, jak...
but	ale. a	then	to; wtedy
either...or...	albo...albo...	therefore	dlatego
for, because, since	bo	until	zanim; aż
if	jeśli; gdy	whether	czy
if... then...	jeśli...to...	whether...or...	czy..., czy...
neither... nor...	ani...ani...		

9. Verbs

The Infinitive

The infinitive, or dictionary form of the verb, is translated as “to ask,” “to write,” and so on. Most Polish infinitives end in a vowel plus **-ć**, for example **писаć** (*to write*). Some end in **-ść** or **-źć**, as **nieść** (*to carry*), **znaleźć** (*to find*), and a few end in **-c**, for example, **móc** (*to be able*). Some verbs, called “reflexive,” occur together with the particle **się** (*self*), for example **bać się** (*to be afraid*). For the most part, Polish verbs occur in ASPECT PAIRS, consisting of “imperfective” (*impf*) and “perfective” (*pf*) partners, as **писаć** (*to write*)-*impf, pf* **napisać**. (See commentary to follow and under Perfective and Imperfective Aspect.)

It is common to cite the verb in the infinitive and the 1st and 2nd person sg. present, from which the other forms of the verb can usually be predicted. Often the 1st and 2nd pers. sg. forms are abbreviated, as, for example **pytać –am –asz** (*ask*), indicating that the verb belongs to the **pytać, pytam, pytasz** class, or Class 3. The full verb citation consists in listing both the imperfective (*impf*) and the perfective (*pf*) aspect form, as in **pytać –am –asz impf, pf** **zapytać** (*ask*). For a discussion of verbal aspect, see further below.

Finite Verb Categories

Here is a chart of the Polish finite verb system, i.e., the categories characterized by tense and/or person. The verb of illustration is **писаć –szę –szesz impf, pf** **napisać** (*write*).

	Imperfective	Perfective
Present	piszę I write, I am writing	---
Past	pisałem, fem. pisałam I wrote, I was writing	napisałem, fem. napisałam I got written, I finished writing
Future	będę pisał(a) I am going to write, be writing	napiszę I'll get written, finish writing
Imperative	pisz write, keep writing!	napisz write! finish writing!

Pragmatic Personal Verb Categories

Polish uses the 3rd-person titles **pan** (*Mr., sir*), **pani** (*madam, Mrs., Miss, Ms.*) and **państwo** (*ladies and gentlemen, Mr. and Mrs.*) as de facto 2nd-person forms of polite address, or what may also be called “titled address.” Titled address is used routinely with strangers, superiors, and with casual acquaintances. Practice varies in the workplace, but informal address among co-workers is the norm, as it is among classmates, whether at school or at the university. The pragmatic Polish conjugational system looks as follows. The illustration is in the present tense, but analogous observations hold for the past and future tenses. The verb of illustration below is **czytać –am –asz impf** “read.”

	Singular	Plural
1st Person	(ja) czytam I read, I am reading	(my) czytamy we read, we are reading
2nd Person Informal	(ty) czytasz you read, you-sg. are reading	(wy) czytacie you read, you-pl. are reading
2nd Person Titled	pan (pani) czyta you read, you are reading on (ona, ono) czyta he (she, it) reads, is reading	państwo czytają you read, you are reading oni (oni) czytają they read, they are reading

The titles **panowie** (*gentlemen*) and **panie** (*ladies*) may be used instead of **państwo** in 2nd person plural titled address. Relation-names are often used in titled address as a form of respect: **Czy mama nie rozumie?** (*Doesn't mother understand?*).

Lack of Auxiliary Verbs

Polish lacks any correspondent to the English auxiliary, or “helping,” verbs *be, have, do, used to* which, in English, are used to make compound verb expressions of the sort *I am asking, I have been running, do you smoke, we used to live*, and so on. In all such instances, Polish uses a single verb form. One interprets the nuance of the Polish verb on the basis of context. Thus, **pytam** could be interpreted as *I ask, I do ask, I am asking, I have been asking*; **mieszkaliśmy** could be interpreted as *we lived, we were living, we used to live, we have been living*.

Present Tense

The citation form of the verb (the form used by dictionaries) is the infinitive. For each infinitive, one must also learn the 1st person and 2nd person singular forms of the present. The other forms of the present tense can be predicted from these two forms. There are four classes (“conjugations”) of verbs, based on the given set of present-tense endings. The class of a verb is evident from the 1st person sg. and 2nd person sg. forms. The respective sets of present endings are as follows:

Class 1: Verbs in *-ę -esz*

	Singular	Plural
1st Person	-ę	-emy
2nd Person	-esz	-ecie
3rd Person	-e	-ą

Example:

chcieć want

chcę I want	chcemy we want
chcesz you want	chcecie you (pl.) want
chce he, she wants	chcą they want

If there is a change in the stem between the 1st person and the 2nd person, then the 3rd person plural will have the same stem as the 1st person singular. The other forms will have the same stem as the 2nd person singular. In other words, in order to predict the entire present-tense conjugation from the 1st and 2nd person sg. forms, one obtains the 3rd person pl. form by substituting **ą** for **ę**, and one obtains the other forms by substituting **-e**, **-emy**, **-ecie** for **-esz**. Here are some verbs with a stem change in the present tense:

móc be able

mogę I can	możemy we can
możesz you can	 możecie you (pl.) can
może he, she, it can	 mogą they can

brać take

biorę I take	bierzemy we take
bierzesz you take	 bierzecie you (pl.) take
bierze he, she, it takes	 biorą they take

iść go (on foot)

idę I go	idziemy we go
idziesz you go	 idziecie you (pl.) go
idzie he, she, it goes	 idą they go

In **iść**, the stem alternates between **d** in the 1st pers. sg. and 3rd pers. pl. and **dź** (spelled **dzi-**) in the other forms. Occasionally there will be a change in root vowel in addition to a change in stem consonant, as in

nieść carry

niosę I carry	niesiemy we carry
niesiesz you carry	 niesiecie you (pl.) carry
niesie he, she carries	 niosą they carry

Class 1 contains a relatively large number of subclasses, but these subclasses do not need to be learned as long as one memorizes the 1st person singular and the 2nd person singular alongside the infinitive.

Class 2: Verbs in -ę -y/isz, Infinitive in -y/ić or -eć

	Singular	Plural
1st Person	-ę	-y/imy
2nd Person	-y/isz	-y/icie
3rd Person	-y/i	-ą

Examples:

lubić like

lubię I like	lubimy we like
lubisz you like	lubicie you like
lubi he, she, it likes	lubią they like

As in Class 1, if there is a change in the stem between the 1st person sg. and the 2nd person sg., the 3rd person pl. will have the same stem as the 1st person sg., and the other forms will have the stem of the 2nd person sg.; see:

nosić carry

noszę I have to	nosimy we have to
nosisz you have to	nosicie you have to
nosi he, she, it has to	noszą they have to

In the above verb, the stem alternates between **sz** in the 1st person sg. and 3rd person pl. and **ś** (spelled **s** before **i**) in the other forms.

lecieć fly

lecę I fly	lecimy we fly
lecisz you fly	lecicie you fly
leci he, she, flies	leczą they fly

In the above verb, the stem alternates between **c** in the 1st person sg. and 3rd person pl. and **ć** (spelled **c** before **i**) in the other forms. Verbs with present in **-ę -ysz** do not have stem alternations; see:

uczyć teach

uczę I hear	uczymy we teach
uczysz you hear	uczycie you teach
uczy he hears	uczą they teach

słyszeć hear

słyszę I hear	słyszemy we hear
słyszysz you hear	słyszycie you hear
słszy he hears	słyszają they hear

In Class 2, the subtypes are more superficial than in Class 1, being mainly based on whether the infinitive ends in **-y/ić** or **-eć**, and on spelling differences.

Class 3: Verbs in *-am -asz*, Infinitive in *-ać*

	Singular	Plural
1st Person	-am	-amy
2nd Person	-asz	-acie
3rd Person	-a	-ają

Examples:

czekać wait

czekam I wait	czekamy we wait
czekasz you wait	czekacie you wait
czeka he, she, it waits	czekają they wait

Exceptional infinitive in *-eć*:

mieć have

mam I have	mamy we have
masz you have	macie you have
ma he, she, it has	mają they have

Irregular in the 3.p.pl.: **dać** give: **dam, dasz, dadzą**. Except for this verb, one may predict the other present-tense forms from the 1st person sg. in **-am**. There are no subtypes in Class 3, whether structural or spelling.

Class 4: verbs in *-em -esz*:

	Singular	Plural
1st Person	-em	-emy
2nd Person	-esz	-ecie
3rd Person	-e	-eją

Example:

umieć know how

umiem I know how	umiemy we know how
umiesz you know how	umiecie you know how
umie he, she, it knows how	umieją they know how

Class 4 contains very few verbs. As in class 3, their forms, too, may be predicted from the 1st person sg., here in **-em**, and there are no subtypes. The endings of class 3 and class 4 verbs are the same except for the preceding **a** or **e**. These three verbs are irregular in having **dz** in the 3rd pers. pl.:

wiedzieć know (information): **wiem, wiesz, wie, wiemy, wiecie, wiedzą**
powiedzieć say *pf*: **powiem, powiesz, powie, powiemy powiecie, powiedzą**
jeść eat: **jem, jesz, je, jemy, jecie, jedzą**

Irregular Verb **być** (*be*):

The verb **być** (*be*) is irregular in the present tense:

być *be*

jestem I am	jestę I am	jestem I am	jestemy we are
jestes you are	jestes you are	jestes you are	jestecie you are
jest he, she, it is	jest he, she, it is	jest he, she, it is	są they are

The verb **być** is the only verb with a specific future tense:

będę I will	będę I will	będziemy we will	będziemy we will
będiesz you will	będiesz you will	będziecie you will	będziecie you will
będzie he, she, it will	będzie he, she, it will	będą they will	będą they will

Imperative

Formation of the Imperative

The imperative or command form of the verb is usually equivalent to the stem of the 3rd pers. sg. present tense form of the verb, obtained by dropping **-e**, **-ie**, **-y**, **-i**, or by adding **j** to **-a**:

	Present	Imperative
pisać	piszę, piszesz, pisze	pisz write!
iść	idę, idziesz, idzie	idź go!
kończyć	kończę, kończysz, kończy	kończ finish!
kupić	kupię, kupisz, kupi	kup buy!
czekać	czekam, czekasz, czeka	czekaj wait!

Occasionally there will be an **o**: **ó** stem-vowel shift in the imperative, as in

robić	robię, robisz, robi	rób do!
otworzyć	otworzę, otworzysz, otworzy	otwórz open!
But: chodzić	chodzę, chodzisz, chodzi	chodź come!

Verbs ending in consonant plus **n** or **rz** add **-y/ij**:

ciągnąć	ciągnę, ciągniesz, ciągnie	ciągnij pull!
ściąć	zetrę, zetrzesz, zetrze	zetrzyj wipe off!

The above are singular forms, and they are informal, i.e., used with close acquaintances and family members. The plural is formed from the singular by adding the ending **-cie**: **idźcie** (*go!-plural*). The ending **-my** can be added to form a first-person plural form of exhortation: **czekajmy** (*let's wait!*) **chodźmy** (*let's go!*)

Exceptional imperative forms include verbs in **-awać –aję –ajesz**, whose imperatives end in **-awaj**, e.g., **wstawać wstawaj**, imperative **wstawaj** (*get up*), and the following:

być	jestem, jesteś, jest, jesteście	jestem, jesteś, jest, jesteście, e są , imperative bądź	be!
jeść	jem jesz, je, 3.pl. jedzą	jedz	eat!
pośłać	poślę pošlesz, pośle	poślij	send!
powiedzieć	powiem, powiesz, powie	powiedz	say!
rozumieć	rozumiem, rozumiesz, rozumie	rozum	understand!
wziąć	wezmę, weźmiesz, weźmie	weź	take!

The formal imperative is formed with the particle **niech** (*let*) plus the 3rd pers. form of the verb: **Niech pani usiądzie**. (*Why doesn't madam sit down?*) **Niech pan się nie śmieje** (*Don't laugh, sir!*)

The imperative, whether formal or informal, is often accompanied by the word **proszę** (*please*): **Proszę wejdz** (*Please come in*). **Proszę niech pan poczeka** (*Please wait a moment, sir*).

When forming the imperative, positive commands usually occur in the perfective aspect, while negative commands occur in the imperfective (regarding aspect, see further below):

- Otwórz okno.** Open-perfective. the window.
- Nie otwieraj okna.** Don't open-imperfective the window.

A negated perfective imperative is apt to be taken as a warning:

- Nie otwórz drzwi!** Watch out, don't open the door!

The Pragmatic Imperative System

The system of actual pragmatic implementation of the imperative differs from what is suggested by formal charts. Because of the use of the hortatory particle **niech** with 3rd-person pronouns of polite address, and occasionally with 1st-person pronouns, the system can be considered to consist of eight forms instead of only three:

Formal System

	Singular	Plural
1st Person	---	napiszmy
2nd Person	napisz	napiszcie
3rd Person	---	---

Pragmatic System

	Singular	Plural
1st Person	niech napiszę why don't I write	napiszmy let's write
2nd P. Informal	napisz write!	napiszcie write!
2nd P. Formal	niech pan napisze why don't you write, sir	niech państwo napiszą why don't you write, ladies and gentlemen
3rd Person	niech on napisze why doesn't he write	niech oni napiszą why don't they write

The 1st-person sg. use with **niech** is not common. As the chart suggests, constructions using **niech** often translate into English as *Why don't...*: **Niech ja to zrobię.** (*Why don't I do that?*) **Niech pani to kupi.** (*Why don't you buy that, madam?*) and so on.

Past Tense

The past tense is formed from the infinitive stem. Its formation does not differ according to the present-tense conjugational type. The rules for forming the past tense differ slightly according to whether the infinitive ends in a) a vowel plus **ć**, for example, **czytać** (*read*), **umieć** (*know how*), **lubić** (*like*), **uczyć** (*teach*), **psuć** (*spoil*), **ciąć** (*cut*); or b) in **-ść**, **-źć**, or **-c**, for example, **nieść** (*carry*), **leźć** (*crawl*), **piec** (*bake*).

For verbs having infinitives in vowel plus **ć**, the 3rd person past tense is formed by dropping **-ć** and adding **-ł** (masculine) **-ła** (feminine) **-ło** (neuter), **-li** (masculine personal plural), or **-ły** (other plural). One forms the 1st and 2nd person past-tense from the 3rd-person by adding personal endings to them. In practice, the past-tense personal endings, which are similar to the present-tense endings of **być** (*be*), are as follows:

	Singular	Plural
1st Person	-m	-śmy
2nd Person	-ś	-ście
3rd Person	---	---

With masculine forms the link-vowel **e** is added before **-m** and **-ś**, creating the endings **-em**, **-eś**.

Here is the past tense of **dać** (*give*):

Singular

dałem (masc.)	dałam (fem.) I gave	
dałeś (masc.)	dałaś (fem.) you (sg.) gave	
dał he gave	dała she gave	dało it gave (neut.)

Plural

daliśmy (Masc.Pers.) **dałyśmy** (fem.) we gave
daliście (Masc.Pers.) **dałyście** (fem.) you (pl.) gave
dali (Masc.Pers.) **dały** (fem., neut.) they gave

Verbs ending in **-eć** change **e** to **a** in all forms other than the masculine personal plural; see **mieć** have:

Singular

miałem (masc.) **miałam** (fem.) I had
miałeś (masc.) **miałaś** (fem.) you (sg.) had
miał he gave **miała** she had **miało** it had (neut.)

Plural

mieliśmy (masc.pers.) **miałyśmy** (fem.) we had
mieliście (masc.pers.) **miałyście** (fem.) you (pl.) had
mieli (masc.pers.) **miały** (fem., neut.) they had

Verbs ending in **-ać** change **a** to **e** in all forms other than the masc. sg.; see **zacząć** begin:

Singular

zaczęłam (masc.) **zaczęłam** (fem.) I began
zaczęłeś (masc.) **zaczęłaś** (fem.) you (sg.) began
zaczął he gave **zaczęła** she began **zaczęło** it began (neut.)

Plural

zaczęliśmy (masc.pers.) **zaczęłyśmy** (fem.) we began
zaczęliście (masc.pers.) **zaczęłyście** (fem.) you (pl.) began
zaczęli (masc.pers.) **zaczęły** (fem., neut.) they began

Verbs with infinitives in **-ść**, **-źć**, and **-c** add past-tense endings to stems similar to those found in the 1st pers. sg. present. For example, here are the past tense forms of **nieść** *niose*, *niesiesz* (*carry*) and **móc** *mogę*, *możesz* (*can, be able*):

Singular

niosłem (masc.) **niosłam** (fem.) I carried
niosłeś (masc.) **niosłaś** (fem.) you (sg.) carried
niósł he gave **niosła** she carried **niosło** it carried (neut.)

Plural

nieśliśmy (masc.pers.)	niosłyśmy (fem.) we gave
nieśliście (masc.pers.)	niosłyście (fem.) you gave
nieśli (masc.pers.)	niosły (fem., neut.) they gave

Singular

mogłem (masc.)	mogłam (fem.) I could
mogłeś (masc.)	mogłaś (fem.) you (sg.) could
mógł he could	mogła she could mogło it could (neut.)

Plural

mogliśmy (masc.pers.)	mogłyśmy (fem.) we could
mogliście (masc.pers.)	mogłyście (fem.) you (pl.) could
mogli (masc.pers.)	mogły (fem., neut.) they could

With **nieść** and **móc**, note the change of **o** to **ó** in the 3.p.sg. masculine. With **nieść**, note the change of **o** to **e** in the masculine personal plural.

The following verbs have an irregular past-tense formation:

3rd-Person Past Forms

iść, idę, idziesz go-det.	szedł, szła, szło, szli, szły
jeść, jem, jesz, jedzą eat	jadł, jadła, jadło, jedli, jadły
usiąść, usiądę, usiądziesz sit down-pf.	usiadł, usiadła, usiadło, usiedli, usiadły
znaleźć, znajdę, znajdziesz find-pf.	znalazł, znalazła, znalazło, znaleźli, znalazły.

Compound Future Tense

The compound future tense is formed with the auxiliary verb **będę, będziesz, będzie, będziemy, będziecie, będą**, plus the 3rd pers. past form OF AN IMPERFECTIVE VERB ONLY. For example, here is the future of the verb **czytać** (*read*):

Singular

będę czytał (masc.),	będę czytała (fem.) I am going to read
będziesz czytał (masc.)	będziesz czytała (fem.) you are going to read
będzie czytał (masc.)	będzie czytała (fem.) he/she is going to read

Plural

będziemy czytali (masc.pers.)	będziemy czytały (fem.) we are going to read
będziecie czytali (masc.pers.)	będziecie czytały (fem.) you (pl.) are going to read
oni będą czytali (masc.pers.)	one będą czytały (fem.) they are going to read

Instead of the past-tense forms, one may also use the infinitive; hence also **będę czytać** (*I am going to read*). The use of the past-tense forms is slightly more colloquial, and is in any case practically obligatory with males.

Perfective and Imperfective Aspect

Polish verbs can be either perfective or imperfective. Most verbal notions are expressed by a pair of verbs, one of which is imperfective (*impf*), and the other perfective (*pf*). Usually the members of these aspect pairs are transparently related, but sometimes they are not, as in the instance of **brać biorę, bierzesz impf, pf wziąć wezmę, weźmiesz** (*take*).

The future-tense construction with **będę** is formed only from imperfective verbs. With perfective verbs, which have no present-tense meaning, the present-tense form by itself generally expresses future meaning. For example, the verb **kupić** (*buy*) is perfective, hence its present forms have future meaning:

kupię I will buy
kupisz you (sg.) will buy
kupi he, she, it will buy

kupimy we will buy
kupicie you (pl.) will buy
kupią they will buy

Verbs that are perfective will have a related imperfective verb in order to express present meaning. With the perfective verb **kupić** buy, the corresponding imperfective verb is **kupować**, whose present-tense forms are the following:

kupuję I buy, I am buying
kupujesz you (sg.) buy, are buying,
kupuje he/she buys, is buying

kupujemy we buy, are buying
kupujecie you (pl.) buy, are buying
kupują they are buying, they buy

Perfective verbs are often formed from imperfective verbs by adding a prefix. Here are some common simplex verbs with their primary perfective prefix:

budować build	zbudować	myć się wash (self)	umyć się
chcieć want	zechcieć	mylić się err	pomylić się
cieszyć się be glad	ucieszyć się	nieść/nosić carry	odnieść
czekać wait	zaczekać	płacić pay	zapłacić
czytać read	przeczytać	plakać cry	zaplakać
dziękować thank	podziękować	pić drink	wypić
dziwić się be surprised	zdziwić się	pisać write	napisać
gotować prepare	przygotować	pytać ask	zapytać
gotować cook	ugotować	robić do	zrobić
grać play	zagrać	rozumieć understand	zrozumieć
iść/chodzić go (on foot)	pójść	słyszeć hear	usłyszeć
jeść eat	zjeść	siedzieć sit	posiedzieć
jechać/jeździć go, ride	pojechać	śmiać się laugh	zaśmiać się
kończyć finish	skończyć	śpiewać sing	zaśpiewać
leżeć lie	poleżeć	tańczyć dance	zatańczyć
lecieć fly	polecieć		

Sometimes, when there is felt to be no logical perfective idea corresponding to the simplex (unprefixed) imperfective, prefixation will only slightly alter the meaning of the word, as in **żyć** (*live*), *pf* **przeżyć** (*live through, survive*); **grać** (*play*), *pf* **zagrać** (*begin to play*), **pograć** (*play a bit*). Often, perfective prefixation is used both to form a perfective verb and to create a verb in a new (and often unpredictable) meaning. For example, **wygrać** (*win*), **przegrać** (*lose*) are based on **grać** (*play*).

Imperfective verbs are typically formed from prefixed perfective verbs in new meanings by adding a suffix and, usually, by changing the conjugation type, usually to class 3, but sometimes to class 1. Here are some examples:

Perfective

dać *dam dasz dadzą* give
otworzyć *-rzę -rzysz* open
pokazać *-że -żesz* show
pomóc *-mogę -możesz* help
poznać *-am -asz* meet
przypomnieć *-nę -niesz* remind
spotkać *-am -asz* meet
ubrać się *-biorę -bierzesz* dress
użyć *-yję -yjesz* use
wygrać *-am -asz* win
zacząć *-nę -niesz* begin
zamknąć *-nę -niesz* close, shut
zamówić *-wię -wiesz* order
zaprosić *-szę -siesz* invite
zdarzyć się *-y* occur
zdjąć *zdejmę -miesz* take off
zostawić *-wię -isz* leave behind

Derived Imperfective

dawać *daję dajesz*
otwierać *-am -asz*
pokazywać *-uję -ujesz*
pomagać *-am -asz*
poznawać *-znaję -znajesz*
przypominać *-am -asz*
spotykać *-am -asz*
ubierać się *-am -asz*
używać *-am -asz*
wygrywać *-am -asz*
zaczynać *-am -asz*
zamykać *-am -asz*
zamawiać *-am -asz*
zapraszać *-am -asz*
zdarzać się *-a*
zdejmować *-uję -ujesz*
zostawiać *-am -asz*

A few verbs have highly irregular, or even etymologically unrelated aspect partners:

Imperfective

brać *biorę, bierzesz* take
kłaść *kładę, kładziesz* put, place, lay
kupować *-puję -pujesz* buy
mówić *-wię -wiesz* say, speak, talk
oglądać *-am -asz* view, watch
widzieć *-dzę -dzisz* see
wkładać *-am -asz* put on
znaleźć *znajdę, znajdziesz* find

Perfective

wziąć *wezmę, weźmiesz*
położyć *-żę -żysz*
kupić *-pię -pisz*
powiedzieć *-wiem -wiesz -wiedzą*
obejrzeć *-rzę -rzysz*
zobaczyć *-czę -czysz*
włożyć *-żę -żysz*
znajdować *-duję -dujesz*

Summary: The Polish Tense-Aspect System

	Imperfective	Perfective
Present	robię I do, am doing	
Past	robilem I did, was doing (masc.)	zrobiłem I did, got done
Future	będę robił I will do, be doing	zrobię I'll do, get done

Verbs of Motion

Polish distinguishes between movement on foot and movement by conveyance. In either case, the simple verbs for motion distinguish on-going (determinate, *det*) activity from frequentative (indeterminate, *indet*) activity. This distinction holds in the imperfective aspect only. Here are the most important verbs concerned:

	Determinate	Indeterminate
go on foot	iść <i>idę, idziesz</i>	chodzić <i>-dę -dzisz</i>
go by conveyance	jechać <i>jadę, jedziesz</i>	jeździć <i>jeżdżę, jeździsz</i>
carry on foot	nieść <i>niosę, niesiesz</i>	nosić <i>noszę, nosisz</i>
carry by conveyance	wieźć <i>wiozę, wieszysz</i>	wozić <i>wożę, wozisz</i>
run	biec <i>biegnę, biegniesz</i>	biegać <i>biegam, biegasz</i>
fly, rush	lecieć <i>lecę, lecisz</i>	latać <i>latam, latasz</i>
sail, swim	płynąć <i>płynę, płyniesz</i>	plywać <i>plywam, pływasz</i>

Look at the following examples:

Gdzie teraz idziesz? Where are you going now?

Czy często chodzisz do kina? Do you go to the movies often?

Jadę do Warszawy pociągiem. I'm going to Warsaw by train.

Zwykle jeżdżę do Warszawy pociągiem. I usually travel to Warsaw by train).

Przepraszam, ale muszę lecieć. Excuse me, but I have to run.

Nie lubię latać. I don't like to fly.

When prefixed, verbs of motion lose the determinate vs. indeterminate distinction. The determinate and indeterminate forms will have a single prefixed perfective partner, formed on the determinate verb. Here are the prefixed perfectives of the above verbs, most formed with **po-**:

	Imperfective	Perfective
go on foot	iść, chodzić	pójść
go by conveyance	jechać, jeździć	pojechać
carry on foot	nieść, nosić	zanieść
carry by conveyance	wieźć, wozić	powieźć
run	biec, biegać	pobiec
fly, rush	lecieć, latać	polecieć
sail, swim	płynąć, pływać	popłynąć

Here are the most important prefixed perfective forms of **iść** and **jechać**, and their derived imperfective aspect partners:

	Perfective	Imperfective
arrive, come on foot	przyjść	przychodzić
leave on foot	wyjść	wychodzić
go away from	odejść	odchodzić
approach, come up to	podejść	podchodzić
arrive by vehicle	przyjechać	przyjeżdżać
leave by vehicle	wyjechać	wyjeżdżać
drive away from	odjechać	odjeżdżać
approach, come up to	podjechać	podjeżdżać

Conditional Mood

The conditional mood is used to express conditional or suppositional senses which, in English, are typically expressed with *would*, *could*, *should*, *might*. The conditional is also used to refer to contrary-to-fact situations, and is required after indirect commands and requests. The conditional is formed by using the 3rd-person past-tense forms of the verb in conjunction with the conditional particle **by**, which is either attached to the verb or, preferably, to some intonationally minor item occurring earlier in the sentence. Personal endings are attached to the particle **by**. Here are the conditional forms of **pomóc** *pomogę*, *pomożesz* (*help*)-pf.:

Singular

	Masc.	Fem.	
1st Person	pomógłbym	pomogłabym	I would help
2nd Person	pomógłbyś	pomogłabyś	you-sg. would help
3rd Person	pomógłby	pomogłaby	he/she would help

Plural

	Masc. Pers. Pl.	Other Pl.	
1st Person	pomoglibyśmy	pomogłybyśmy	we would help
2nd Person	pomoglibyście	pomogłybyście	you-pl. would help
3rd Person	pomogliby	pomogłyby	they would help

When **by** is attached to another word, it is usually to a subordinating conjunction such as **że** (*that*) or **gdy** (*if*):

Singular

	Masc.	Fem.	
1st Person	gdybym pomógł	gdybym pomogła	if I would help
2nd Person	gdybyś pomógł	gdybyś pomogła	if you -sg. would help
3rd Person	gdyby pomógł	gdyby pomogła	if he/she would help

Plural

	Masc. Pers. Pl.	Other Pl.	
1st Person	gdybyśmy pomogli	gdybyśmy pomogły	if we would help
2nd Person	gdybyście pomogli	gdybyście pomogły	if you-pl. would help
3rd Person	gdyby pomogli	gdyby pomogły	if they would help

The conditional is primarily used:

1. In clauses of purpose:

Powtórzę to jeszcze raz, żebyś to dobrze zrozumiała. I'll repeat that one more time, so that you understand it correctly.

2. In contrary to fact clauses:

Pomogłabym ci, gdybym nie była tak zajęta. I would help you if I were not so busy.

Although a past contrary-to-fact conditional can theoretically be formed by adding the 3rd prson past of **być**, as in **gdybyśmy pomogli byli** (*if we had helped*), in practice the regular condition can have either future or past reference.

3. After verbs of request, command, desire, when the subject of the incorporated clause is different from the person doing the requesting, commanding, desiring:

Proszę cię, żebyście nie robili takiego hałasu. I'm asking that you not make such a racket.

4. To discuss hypothetical possibilities:

Czy mógłbyś mi pomóc? Could you help me?

5. To discuss vague wonderings and suppositions:

Nie sądzę, żeby on był teraz w domu. I don't think he would be at home now.

Participles, Gerunds, Verbal Nouns

Polish has a well developed system of verbal adjectives (participles), verbal adverbs (gerunds), and verbal nouns, in both Perfective and Imperfective aspects. The verb of illustration in the chart below is **pisać** *piśle piesz impf, pf napisać* (write).

	Imperfective	Perfective
Gerund	pisząc while writing	napisawszy having written
Active Participle	piszący (who is) writing	- - -
Passive Participle	pisany written (impf)	napisany written (pf)
Verbal Noun	pisanie the writing (impf)	napisanie the writing (pf)

Gerunds

A gerund is a verb form without personal endings, the person of the verb being inferred from context. The IMPERFECTIVE GERUND can often be translated as “while doing something”; thus **pisząc** means “while writing.” The PERFECTIVE GERUND usually means “after having done something”; thus **napisawszy** means “after having written.” Gerunds are used to incorporate one sentence into another when the subject of both sentences is the same:

Czytając gazetę, palił fajkę. While reading the paper, he smoked a pipe.
Zjadłszy kolację, on wstał i wyszedł. Having finished supper, he stood up and left.

Gerunds do not take any endings.

The Imperfective Gerund

The Imperfective Gerund may be formed by adding **-c** to the 3.pers.pl. of an imperfective verb only: **czytają**, hence **czytając** (*while reading*); **idą**, hence **idąc** (*while going*).

The Perfective Gerund

The Perfective Gerund may be formed from the 3.pers.sg.masc. past tense of a perfective verb. After vowel + **ł**, replace **ł** with **-wszy**: **przeczytał**, hence **przeczytawszy** (*having read*); **zrobił**, hence **zrobiwszy** (*having done*). After consonant+**ł**, add **-szy**: **wyszedł**, hence **wyszedłszy** (*having left*), **wyniósł**, hence **wyniósłszy** (*having carried out*). The Perfective Gerund is going out of use, and is hardly ever used in speech.

Participles

A participle is an adjective derived from a verb, which still retains many of the the properties of the verb, for example, both aspect and the ability to take a complement. The imperfective active participle is often translated as a relative clause: “who or what is doing,” and it is often separated from the noun it modifies by its complement:

Czytający gazetę człowiek nic nie zauważył The man reading the paper noticed nothing.

Participles take a full set of gender-number-case endings, as any adjective.

The Imperfective Active Participle

The Imperfective Active Participle may be formed by adding adjective endings to the imperfective gerund: **czytając**, hence **czytający czytająca czytające**, masc.pers.pl. **czytający** (*who is reading*); **idąc**, hence **idący idąca idące**, masc.pers.pl. **idący** (*who is going*).

Passive Participles

Passive participles describe objects on which an action has been carried out. The imperfective passive participle **czytany** means “being read.” The perfective passive participle **przeczytany** means “having been read.” The latter is the more frequently used, often in construction with the verb **zostać**:

Ta książka została już przeczytana. That book has already been read.

See further below under Passive Voice.

The Passive Participle is formed from the infinitive stem, as follows:

1. Verbs with infinitives in **-ać** and **-eć** form the Passive Participle in **-any -ana -ane -ani**: **napisać** (*write*), hence **napisany napisana napisane**, masc.pers.pl. **napisani** (*written*); **widzieć** (*see*), hence **widziany widziana widziane**, masc.pers.pl. **widziani** (*seen*).

2. Verbs with infinitives in **-ić** and **-yć** form the Passive Participle in **-ony -ona -one -eni**, added to a stem like that of the 1st person sg. present: **zawstydzić -dzą -dzisz** (*embarrass*), hence **zawstydzony zawstydzona zawstydzone**, masc.pers.pl. **zawstydzeni** (*embarrassed*). Monosyllabic verbs in **-ić** and **-yć** like **pić**, **myć**, and their derivatives like **wypić** (*drink*) and **umyć** (*wash*), do not follow this rule; see below, 4.

3. Verbs with infinitives in **-ść, -źć, -c** form the Passive Participle in **-ony -ona -one -eni**, added to a stem like that of the 2.pers.sg. present: **wynieść -niosę -niesz** (*carry out*), hence **wyniesiony wyniesiona wyniesione**, masc.pers.pl. **wyniesieni** (*carried out*); **przegryźć -zę -ziesz** (*bite through*), hence **przegryziony przegryziona przegryzione**, masc.pers.pl. **przegryzieni** (*bitten through*); **upiec -piekę -pieczesz** ‘bake’, hence **upieczony upieczona upieczone**, masc.pers.pl. **upieczeni** (*baked*). Irregular: **znaleźć -znajdę -znajdziesz** (*find*), **znaleziony znaleziona znalezione**, masc.pers.pl. **znalezieni** (*found*).

4. Verbs with infinitives in vowels other than **a** and **e** plus **ć**, and monosyllabic verbs in **-ić** and **-yć** drop **ć** and add **-ty -ta -te -ci**: **zepsuć -uję -ujesz** (*spoil*), hence **zepsuty zepsuta zepsute**, masc.pers.pl. **zepsuci** (*spoiled*); **użyć -yję -yjesz** (*use*), hence **użyty użyta użyte**, masc.pers.pl. **użyci** (*used*). Verbs in **-nąć** form the Passive Participle in **-nięty (-a -e)**: **zamknąć -nę -niesz** (*lock, shut, close*), hence **zamknięty zamknięta zamknięte**, masc.pers.pl. **zamknięci** (*locked, shut, closed*). Other verbs in **-ąć** form the Passive participle in **-ęty -ęta -ęte -ęci**: **zacząć -cznę, -czniesz** (*begin*), hence **zaczęty zaczęta zaczęte**, masc.pers.pl. **zaczęci** (*begun*).

Verbal Nouns

A verbal noun is a noun derived from a verb which still retains many of the properties of the verb, including aspect. Both **czytanie** and **przeczytanie** are usually translated as 'reading', the first referring to the action, the second to the accomplishment. Verbal nouns often occur with the prepositions **przy** (*while, during*), **przed** (*before*), and **po** (*after*), and they are often followed by a noun in the Genitive case: **Po przeczytaniu tej książki pójdę spać** (*After reading that book-G I'll go to bed*). Additionally, verbal nouns often occur in phrases following the preposition **do**, as in **woda do picia** *drinking water*, **nic do zrobienia** *nothing to do*, and so on.

The Verbal Noun is formed on a stem like that of the masculine personal plural of the passive participle. This means that participles in **-ony** form the Verbal Noun in **-enie**: **podniesiony**, masc.pers.pl. **podniesieni**, hence **podniesienie** (*elevation*). Participles in **-ty** form the Verbal Noun on **-cie**: **zatruty**, masc.pers.pl. **zatruci**, hence **zatrucie** (*poisoning*).

Gerunds and participles formed from verbs in **się** retain **się**, while verbal nouns formed from verbs in **się** sometimes lose the **się**: **golić się** (*shave oneself*), **goląc się** (*while shaving oneself*), but usually **golenie** (*shaving*), although **golenie się** is not wrong.

Some verbs rarely form the verbal noun but, instead, use an independent noun. For example, **obawa** (*fear*) is the de facto verbal noun of **bać się** (*be afraid*) or **obawiać się** (*fear*).

Passive Voice

An active-transitive sentence (a sentence with a subject, verb, and direct object) can be transformed into the passive voice, using a passive participle, which presents the action from the point of view of the direct object. Compare English *John is frying an egg* (active) vs. *An egg is being fried by John* (passive). In this sentence, *fried* is the passive participle, linked to the object with the verb *be*. In Polish, the link verb is **być** with imperfective verbs, and **zostać** *zostanę* *zostaniesz* with perfective verbs:

Imperfective

	Active:	Passive
Present	Jan czyta książkę. Jan reads (is reading) a book.	Książka jest czytana przez Jana. The book is read (is being read) by Jan.
Future	Jan będzie czytał książkę. Jan is going to read the book.	Książka będzie czytana przez Jana. The book is going to be read by Jan.
Past	Jan czytał książkę. Jan read (was reading) a book	Książka była czytana przez Jana. The book was (was being) read by Jan

Perfective

	Active:	Passive
Future	Jan przeczyta książkę. Jan will read the book.	Książka zostanie przeczytana przez Jana. The book will be read by Jan.
Past	Jan przeczytał książkę. Jan read the book.	Książka została przeczytana przez Jana. The book was read by Jan.

The original subject may be preserved by placing it after the preposition **przez** +A: **przez Jana** (*by Jan*). If the original subject was a force of nature, it may be placed in the Instrumental:

Drzewo zostało obalone wiatrem. The tree was knocked down by the wind.

The practical effect of passive voice is often expressed by reversing the order of subject and object. For example, **Książkę czyta Jan** <book-Acc. reads Jan-Nom.> has about the same effect as **Książka jest czytana przez Jana** (*The book is read by John*).

Depersonal Verbs

There is a difference in Polish between a verb which has a definite subject which is simply not expressed, and a verb which has no subject to begin with, called “depersonal.” The Polish depersonal verb system is well developed. For the most part it is based on the third-person neuter forms of the finite verb, with the particle **się** functioning as the de facto subject:

	Imperfective	Perfective
Present one reads	czyta się	- - -
Past one read, one used to read	czytało się or czytano przeczytano	przeczytało się or
Future one will read	będzie się czytało	przeczyta się

The construction **czyta się** means “one reads, reading is going on.” A form like this takes direct objects just as a personal verb does: **Czyta się książkę.** *One reads a book, a book is being read.* In the past tense, the forms based on **się** plus the past tense are usually replaced with forms based on the passive participle stem plus the ending **-o**: **Czytano książki.** *One read books; books were being read.*

Reflexive Verbs

By “reflexive verbs” in a broad sense are meant verbs occurring with the reflexive particle **się**. In colloquial speech, the particle **się** tends to occur before the verb; however, it can never occur in initial position in a clause. Hence one says:

Bardzo się śpieszę. I'm in a big hurry.

But:

Śpieszę się. I'm in a hurry.

Following are the most important functions of the particle **się**.

Literal Reflexive Use

The basic meaning of the reflexive particle **się** is “oneself” in literal reflexive uses (where the action comes back upon the actor). This is not necessarily the most frequent usage of this particle, but it is the one on which most other uses are based. Frequently encountered are verbs of personal grooming:

czesać (się) czeszę, czeszesz comb (oneself)

kapać (się) kąpię, kąpiesz bathe (oneself)

myć (się) myję, myjesz wash (oneself)

golić (się) golę, golisz shave (oneself)

Compare the two sentences:

Muszę umyć ręce. I have to wash my hands. (Transitive without **się**.)

Muszę się umyć. I have to wash up. (Reflexive with **się**.)

Verbs of this sort, i.e., verbs of personal grooming, occur with **się** more often than not:

Codziennie się kąpię. I take a bath every day.

Golę się przed śniadaniem. I shave before breakfast.

Reciprocal Use

The reflexive particle **się** can be used with any verb where the action can be considered reciprocal (back and forth), in which case the particle **się** takes on the sense “each other,” “one another”:

Dobrze się znamy. We know each other well.

Bardzo się lubimy (kochamy). We like (love) each other a lot.

Często się spotykamy. We meet each other often.

The verb must have Accusative syntax for the **się** construction to be possible in this use. Otherwise, one uses the appropriate case-form of the reflexive pronoun. For example, since **pomagać -am -asz** (*help*) takes the Dative case, one expresses “help one another” with the Dative reflexive **sobie**:

Często sobie pomagamy. We often help one another.

Intransitivization

Polish is sensitive to whether a given verb is used transitively (with a direct object), or intransitively (without a direct object). If a verb can be used transitively in its basic sense,

its intransitive counterpart will be formed with **się**. Three subtypes of such use may be distinguished, consisting of uses with persons, things, and events.

1. With persons:

Transitive

nazywać -am -asz call, name
śpieszyć -szę -szysz hurry (someone)

Intransitive

nazywać się be called
śpieszyć się be in a hurry.

Jak oni nazywają swoją żaglówkę? What do they call their sailboat?

Jak ich żaglówka się nazywa? What's their sailboat called?

2. With things:

Transitive

otwierać -am -asz open
zamykać -am -asz close

Intransitive

otwierać się
zamykać się

Zamykamy książki. We are closing our books.

Drzwi się zamykają. The door is closing.

3. With events:

Transitive

kończyć -czę -czysz end, finish
zaczynać -am -asz begin

Intransitive

kończyć się
zaczynać się

Zaczynamy/kończymy lekcję. We are beginning/ending the lesson.

Lekcja się zaczyna/kończy. The lesson is beginning/ending.

Depersonalization

With the 3rd pers. sg. form of the verb, the particle **się** can express the idea of impersonal “one,” as though it were the subject of the sentence. Its occurrence in this use is frequent, much more so than the corresponding use of “one” in English.

Jak to się mówi/pisze? How does one say (write) that?

Jak tam się idzie/jedzie? How does one go there?

Tam zawsze długo się czeka. One always waits a long time there.

Impersonal verbs take the Accusative of a direct object the same way as other verbs:

Kiedy się ma temperaturę, trzeba zostać w domu. When one has a temperature, one should stay at home.

A sentence can be depersonalized by adding **się** and putting the subject in the Dative:

Przyjemnie mi się z tobą rozmawia. It's pleasant talking with you.

In English the 2nd pers. sg. form of the verb is often used impersonally, as in *How do you say that?* The comparable use should not be used in Polish, since it is apt to be taken for informal speech. Hence it is safer to express the phrase *How do you get to Lodz?* as in **Jak się jedzie do Łodzi?** or **Jak można dostać się do Łodzi.**

Impersonal Verbs

The particle **się** is used with some verbs to derive impersonal verbs (verbs which in English have as subject an empty "it"):

wydawać się *wydaje się* +**D** it seems
chcieć się *chce się* +**D** it feels like to me, I feel like
rozumieć się *rozumie się* it is understood

...and others. Such verbs often take Dative complements:

Wydaje mi się, że skądś znam tę panią. It seems to me I know that lady from somewhere.

Nie chce mi się iść do miasta. I don't feel like going to town.

Reflexive Verbs of Emotion

A number of verbs of emotion take **się**, a use which has no good translation into English. Among such verbs are:

bać się *boję się, boisz się* be afraid
bawić się *-wię -wiesz* play
cieszyć się *-szę -szysz się* be glad
dobrze się bawić have a good time
denerwować się *-wuję -wujesz* be upset
dziwić się *-wię -wiesz* be surprised
martwić się *-wię -wiesz* worry
nudzić się *-dzę -dzisz* be bored
przejmować się *-muję -mujesz* be upset
wstydzić się *-dzę -dzisz* be embarrassed

The following negated imperative forms of reflexive verbs of emotion are common:

nie bój się ("nie **BÓJ** się") don't be afraid
nie martw się ("nie **MARTW** się") don't worry
nie denerwuj się don't be upset
nie przejmuj się don't be concerned
nie wstydz się don't be embarrassed

Reflexive-Only Verbs

Some verbs occur only with **się**, at least in the given meaning, for example:

bać się *boję się, boisz się* be afraid, fear
dziać się *dzieje się* go on, happen
podobać się *-a +D* be pleasing
starać się *-am -asz* try
śmiać się, *śmieję się, śmiejesz się* laugh
wydawać się *wydaje się* seem
zdarzyć się *zdarzy się* happen, occur (pf.)

10. Important Sentence Constructions

Constructions Using the Infinitive

A number of common verbs form phrases in construction with the infinitive. One of the most useful such verbs is the verb **chcieć** *want*, especially when used in the conditional in the sense 'I'd like', as in

Chciał(a)bym zamówić rozmowę. I'd like to place a call.

Some common verbs followed by the infinitive include **chcieć** **chcę**, **chcesz** (*want*), **mieć** **mam**, **masz** (*be supposed to*), **musieć** **muszę**, **musisz** (*must, have to*), **starać się** **staram się**, **starasz się** (*try*), **umieć** **umiem**, **umiesz** (*know how*), **woleć** **wolę**, **wolisz** (*prefer*). Three other useful words, **można** (*one may*), **trzeba** (*one ought*), and **wolno** (*it is permitted*), are also followed by the infinitive of the verb and can be used to form a wide variety of impersonal statements and questions:

Można tu usiąść? May one sit down here?

Tu nie wolno palić. One may not smoke here.

Trzeba to zrobić. It's necessary to do that.

Modal Expressions

The most important modals (items referring to duty, need, obligation), arranged according to the most common English gloss, are the following. All of these items are followed by the infinitive of the main verb.

must, have to	musieć, muszę, musisz or mieć, mam, masz
need to, should	musieć, muszę, musisz or trzeba
supposed to	mieć, mam, masz
ought to, should	powinienem, powinnam, powinniśmy

The full conjugation of the last item is as follows:

	Masc.	Fem.	Masc. Pers. Pl.	Fem. Pl.
1st person	powinienem	powinnam	powinniśmy	powinnyśmy
2nd person	powinieneś	powinnaś	powinniście	powinnyście
3rd person	powinien	powinna (n. -no)	powinni	powinny

Examples:

Muszę się uczyć. I have to study.

Trzeba go zapytać. One should ask him.

Powinnaś się śpieszyć. You-fem. ought to hurry.

Mam być w domu o ósmej. I'm supposed to be at home by 8:00.

Introducing Sentences

One introduces an identity-noun into conversation with the expression **to jest** (*that/this is*) or **to są** (*those are*), followed by the noun being introduced:

To jest mój kolega. This is my colleague.
To jest dobra książka. That's a good book.
To są moje okulary. Those are my eyeglasses.

The expression **tu jest** (*here is*), pl. **tu są**, is also often used:

Tu jest dobra nowa książka. Here is a good new book.
Tu są nasi nowi sąsiedzi. Here are our new neighbors.

Identity Sentences

When two nouns are joined in an identity relation, the verbal link is **to jest**, plural **to są**; the verb **jest/są** may be omitted, but the **to** is obligatory:

Warszawa to (jest) stolica Polski *Warsaw is the capital of Poland.*
Ci państwo to (są) nasi nowi sąsiedzi *Those people are our new neighbors.*

This is a different construction from the Predicate Noun construction (see below), which does not contain **to** and which requires the Instrumental case. Often the two constructions are more-or-less interchangeable, hence either

Zosia to wspaniała sekretarka.

Or:

Zosia jest wspaniałą sekretarką. Zosia's an excellent secretary.

Expressing *There Is*

The verb **jest**, plural **są**, is often used by itself to express whether someone is "there" or whether an item is in stock:

Czy jest Marta? Is Marta there?
Czy jest sok? Is there any juice?
Czy są państwo Kowalczykowie? Are Mr. and Mrs. Kowalczyk here?
Czy są świeże pączki? Are there any fresh doughnuts?

These questions would be answered affirmatively by **Jest** (*there is*), **są** (*there are*), or **Nie ma** (*there isn't*). **nie ma** takes the Genitive case:

Nie ma soku There is no juice-Gen.
Nie ma Marty Marta-Gen is not here.

The past of **nie ma** is **nie było**, and the future is **nie będzie**, both always neuter singular, and both taking the Genitive:

Nie było państwa Kowalczyków. Mr. and Mrs. Kowalczyk were not there.
nie było świeżych pączków. There weren't any fresh doughnuts.

Predicate Nouns and Adjectives

A predicate noun or adjective is a noun or adjective linked to the subject with a form of the verb *be* (**być**). In Polish, predicate nouns are expressed in the Instrumental case, while predicate adjectives are expressed with the Nominative case:

Janek jest dobrym studentem. Janek is a good student-Inst.
Ewa jest wymagającą nauczycielką. Ewa is a demanding teacher-Inst.

In principle, the Predicate-Noun construction, as opposed to the Identity construction (above), expresses set-inclusion, as though one is saying, above, that Janek belongs to the set of good students, or that Ewa belongs to the set of demanding teachers.

Adam jest chory. Adam is sick-Nom.
Marysia jest zdenerwowana. Marysia is worried-Nom.

Yes-No Questions

Polish often forms questions to be answered by **tak** (*yes*) or **nie** (*no*) with the help of the question-word **czy** (literally, *whether*), placed at the beginning of the sentence:

Czy pan jest gotowy? Are you ready?
Czy to jest dobry film? Is that a good movie?
Czy to nie jest Jan? Isn't that Jan?

When a yes-no question revolves around a verb, it is often answered with the verb, not with **tak** or **nie**:

--**Czy wypiliśmy mleko?** Did you drink the milk?
--**Wypiliśmy.** I drank it.

Negation

When a verb is negated, the negative particle **nie** is always placed immediately in front of it. Nothing can separate a verb from the negative particle **nie**.

Nie mam czasu. I don't have time.
Nie kupię tego. I won't buy that.

When placed before one-syllable verbs, the particle **nie** takes the stress: **NIE chcę**, **NIE wiem**, **NIE dam**.

When using words like *nothing, never, nowhere*, and so on, Polish also uses **nie** before the verb, creating the impression of a “double negation”:

Nic nie mam I don't have anything.

Nikt tu nie mieszka. No one lives here.

Nikt nic nikomu nie mówi. No one says anything to anyone.

Another common word that occurs together with **nie** is **żaden, żadna, żadne** (*none, not any*), as in **żaden stół nie jest wolny** (*No table is free*).

Verbs which ordinarily take the Accusative case take the Genitive case when negated:

Oglądam telewizję. I'm watching television-Accusative.

Nie oglądam telewizji. I'm not watching television.

The negation of *be* in its existential sense of *there is/are* is expressed by **nie ma** (past **nie było**, future **nie będzie**) plus the Genitive case:

W sklepie jest piwo. There is beer in the store.

Nie ma piwa w sklepie. There is no beer in the store.

Nikogo interesującego tam nie było No one interesting was there.

Word Order

Word order in Polish tends to reflect the increasing informational prominence of the elements in a sentence as one proceeds from left to right. Items placed at sentence-end typically carry logical stress and respond to the implicit question statement answers. For example, in

Jan kocha Marię. Jan-nom. loves Maria-Acc.

the sentence answers the question “Whom does Jan love?” (Maria). The same sentence with the subject and object reversed,

Marię kocha Jan. (in effect, “Maria is loved by Jan.”)

answers the question “Who loves Maria?” (Jan). Polish often makes use of the device of subject-object reversal to express what is the equivalent of passive voice:

Obudził mnie telefon. I-Acc. was awakened by the telephone-Nom.

Background information is typically placed in the first part of a sentence. Note the difference between Polish and English in this regard:

Jutro wieczorem w tej sali odbędzie się zebranie studentów. There will be a meeting of students in this room tomorrow evening.

Manner adverbs in Polish tend to be placed earlier in a sentence rather than later. Note here too the difference between Polish and English:

On dobrze mówi po polsku. He speaks Polish well.

Sentence Intonation

Sentence intonation refers to the slight rise or fall in pitch of the voice while speaking. Polish sentences utilize three levels of intonation: mid, high, and low. Sentences can end on a rise, on a fall, or be level at the end. High and low intonation is not radically different from mid intonation. Polish creates the impression of a moderately intoned language.

1. **Statement Intonation.** A typical Polish declarative sentence opens at mid level, possibly rises slightly just before the end, but then drops to low level at the end. Here, boldface represents mid-level, capitals represent a rise, and plain type represents a fall.

On nie jest tak miły, jak się wy-DA-je. He's not as nice as it appears.

2. Yes-No Questions, that is, questions expecting an answer of either yes or no, usually begin at mid level and end on a rise to high, possibly with a slight dip just before the rise:

Czy je-steś za-do-wo-lo-NY? Are you satisfied?

Czy pa-ni mie-szka w War-sza-WIE? Do you live in Warsaw?

3. WH Questions, that is, questions asking 'how', 'why', 'when', 'where', 'who', 'what', 'what kind', 'which' typically begin with high level on the question word, and then fall to a low level for the remainder of the question.

GDZIE pa-ni mieszka? Where do you live?

JAK się pa-ni na-zy-wa? What is your name?

For a more emphatic question, high level may be maintained until the end of the sentence, with a slight rise on the next to last syllable, then a dip to low:

DLA-CZE-GO PA-NI TAK SIĘ ŚPIE-szy? Why are you in such a hurry?

It is important not to give WH questions the intonation of a Yes-No question by ending on a high pitch. Aside from needing to learn this one rule, speakers of English are inherently predisposed to have natural-sounding intonation in Polish.

4. Manner Adverbs. Adverbs of manner do not usually occur at the end of a sentence, but rather before the verb, where they are emphasized intonationally:

On DOBRZE mówi po polsku. He speaks Polish well.