

LESSON NOTES

Basic Bootcamp #1 Basic Greetings in Czech

CONTENTS

- 2 Czech
- 2 English
- 2 Vocabulary
- 3 Sample Sentences
- 4 Vocabulary Phrase Usage
- 5 Grammar

1

CZECH

1. Adam: Ahoj. Já jsem Adam. Jak se jmenuješ ty?
2. Mary: Ahoj Adame. Já jsem Mary.
3. Adam: Rád tě poznávám.
4. Mary: Já taky.

ENGLISH

1. Adam: Hello. My name is Adam. What's your name?
2. Mary: Hello Adam. My name is Mary.
3. Adam: Pleased to meet you.
4. Mary: Me too.

VOCABULARY

Czech	English	Class
dobrý den	hello (formal)	interjection
s	with, to	preposition
poznat / sejt se	to meet	verb
rád	glad	adjective
moc	very	
ty	you (informal)	pronoun
vy	you (formal)	pronoun

co	what	pronoun
být	to be	verb
jméno	name	noun
já	I	pronoun
ahoj	hello (informal)	interjection
mě taky	me too (formal)	phrase

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>Dobrý den, jak se máte? "Hello Mary, how are you?"</p>	<p>Začal podnikat s pouhou tisícovkou. "He started his business only with one thousand Czech Koruna."</p>
<p>Můžeme se sejít příští víkend? "Can we meet next weekend?"</p>	<p>Rád Vás poznávám. "Nice to meet you."</p>
<p>Ráda jsem Vás / tě poznala. "I'm happy to have met you."</p>	<p>Rád jsem si s Vámi / s tebou dal oběd. "It was nice to have lunch together."</p>
<p>Tohle jídlo je moc dobré. "This dish is very delicious."</p>	<p>Dovol mi představit mého kamarád. "Let me introduce you my friend."</p>
<p>Žena se na vás usmívá. The woman is smiling at you.</p>	<p>Jmenuji se Adam, a Vy? "My name is Adam and yours?"</p>
<p>Co si dáte? "What will you take?"</p>	<p>Co to je? "What is this?"</p>

Být muž. "To be a man."	Říkal, že se jmenuje Milan. "He said his name is Milan."
Já jsem Čech. "I'm Czech."	Já jsem Adam. "I'm Adam."
Ahoj Mary, jak se máš? "Hello Mary, how are you?"	A: Líbí se mi pop. / B: Mě taky "A: I like pop music./ B: Me too"

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

Rád literally means "to be glad" but can be often translated as "happy" in English depending on context. Czech people say "I'm glad to get to know you" which is equivalent to "Nice to meet you." in English. The Czech equivalent for "happy" (*šťastný*) is a word that is not suited to use at first time meeting somebody because *šťastný* is an adjective used to describe someone's feelings.

For example:

Female speech

1. *Jsem tak šťastná, že jsem se s tebou poznala*
"I'm so happy to get to know you (a very personal statement)"

Male speech

1. *Dneska jsem moc šťastný.*
"I'm very happy today."

Vy and **Ty** are the equivalents of the pronoun "you," but the first one is used as a polite, formal form and the latter as informal. They are both used on daily basis depending on the relationship between people. It is possible to use *ty* (informally addressing somebody who is much younger or who is around the same age), but it is necessary to use *Vy* in formal situations, with the elderly people, or somebody meeting for the very first time.

For example:

1. (formal) *Jak se jmenujete?*
"What's your name?"
(used to address anybody in formal situation or anybody older than you)
2. (Informal) *Jak se jmenuješ?*
"What's your name?"
(used for the same age, younger people or children)

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Basic Bootcamp Lesson Is How to Ask Somebody Their Name.

Jak se jmenuješ ty?

"What's your name?"

To ask someone their name, just ask *Jak se jmenuješ?* Literally, this means "What are you named?"

The first word, *Jak* means "what" or "how."

The next word *se* is a reflexive pronoun and means "self, oneself." Many Czech verbs are always followed by *se* and need to be learned like that. *Jmenovat se* literally means "to be named oneself."

The last word *jmenuješ* means "named."

All together we have: *Jak se jmenuješ?* (informal for same age group, much younger people and children)

The answer is *Jmenuju se* + your name, which literally means "I am named myself" For example: *Jmenuju se Blanka*, which literally means "I am named myself Blanka" but is understood as "my name is Blanka."

LESSON NOTES

Basic Bootcamp #2 Talking Nationality in Czech

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CZECH

1. Adam: Ahoj, jmenuju se Adam. Jsem Čech.
2. Mary: Ahoj, jmenuju se Mary. Jsem Britka.

ENGLISH

1. Adam: Hello. My name is Adam. I'm Czech.
2. Mary: Hello, I'm Mary. I'm British.

VOCABULARY

Czech	English	Class
Jmenuju se..	My name is... (literally, "I'm named...")	phrase
Čech/Češka	Czech male / female (nationality)	noun
Brit / Britka	British male / female (nationality)	noun
Já jsem	I am/I'm	pronoun
ahoj	hello (informal)	interjection

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Jsem studentka. "I am a student. (female)"	Jsem Britka. "I'm British (female)."
Jsem Čech. "I'm Czech."	Jsem Britka. "I'm British."

Ahoj Mary, jak se máš?

"Hello Mary, how are you?"

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

Já jsem is the equivalent of "I am/I'm" in English. This phrase can be followed by a noun indicating your name, your nationality or occupation. *Já* "(I)" can be omitted in this case.

Jsem Mary. - "I'm Mary."

Jsem Britka. - "I'm British."

Jsem studentka. - "I'm a student."

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is to Teach You How to Talk About Nationality

Jsem Čech.
"I'm Czech."

Let's take a look at the dialogue again.

Mary: *Ahoj. Já jsem Mary. Jsem Britka.*

We start with a self-introduction ("Hello, my name is Mary"). Then we say our nationality, *jsem Britka* ("I'm British")

To say you are a certain nationality, just say the phrase *Jsem*, which means "I am" and simply add your nationality in Czech after it. But be careful, you need to distinguish between male and female gender!

Sentence structure: *Jsem* + nationality

Examples of nationalities in Czech:

Czech (male/female)	English
<i>Jsem Vietnavec/ Vietnamka</i>	"I'm Vietnamese."

<i>Jsem Rus/ Ruska</i>	"I'm Russian."
<i>Jsem Američan/ Američanka</i>	"I'm American."
<i>Jsem Brit/ Britka</i>	"I'm British"
<i>Jsem Japonec/ Japonka</i>	"I'm Japanese"
<i>Jsem Číňan/ Číňanka</i>	"I'm Chinese"
<i>Jsem Francouz/ Francouzka</i>	"I'm French."
<i>Jsem Ital/ Italka</i>	"I'm Italian."

LESSON NOTES

Basic Bootcamp #3

Useful Phrases for Learning Czech

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- 6 Grammar

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CZECH

1. A: Promiňte, prosím, jak se řekne česky "Biscuit"?
2. B: Sušenka.
3. A: Promiňte, nezachytil jsem to. Můžete to zopakovat?
4. B: Sušenka.
5. A: Můžete mluvit pomaleji?
6. B: Su-šen-ka
7. A: Mohl / mohla byste mi to napsat česky?.

ENGLISH

1. A: Excuse me, how do you say "Biscuit" in Czech?
2. B: Sušenka.
3. A: I'm sorry, I didn't catch it. Could you repeat it?
4. B: Sušenka.
5. A: Could you speak slower, please?
6. B: Su-šen-ka.
7. A: Could you write it for me in Czech, please?

VOCABULARY

Czech	English	Class
mi	for me, to me	
pomaleji	a little slower	adverb
zopakovat	to repeat	verb
napsat	to write down	verb
prosím	please	expression
nezachytit	not to catch	verb
jak	how	adverb
říct	to say, to tell	verb
česky	in the Czech language	adverb
promiňte	Excuse me/ I'm sorry	interjection

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>Mohl byste mi pomoci tohle přeložit?</p> <p>"Can you help me to translate this?"</p>	<p>Prosím můžete mi pomoci najít cestu do....</p> <p>"Please can you help me to find way to..."</p>
<p>Můžete mi to zopakovat?</p> <p>"Could you repeat it for me?"</p>	<p>Učím se, jak to napsat česky.</p> <p>"I'm learning how to write it in Czech."</p>
<p>Promiňte prosím, kolik je teď hodin?</p> <p>"Excuse me please, what is the time now?"</p>	<p>Jak se čte tohle?</p> <p>"How do you read this?"</p>
<p>Řekněte mi jméno.</p> <p>"Tell me your name."</p>	<p>Jak se řekne česky 'Computer'?</p> <p>"How do you say 'computer' in Czech?"</p>

<p>Promiňte, že jdu pozdě. "I'm sorry, I'm late."</p>	<p>Promiňte prosím, můžu si půjčit Vaše? "Excuse me please, may I borrow your pen?"</p>
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VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

Promiňte/promiň (formal/ informal) means "excuse me" or "sorry" and can be used to either catch someone's attention or to apologise for something. When apologising, more emphasis is put on the word *promiňte/promiň*.

For example:

1. *Promiňte/promiň, kolik je hodin?*
"Excuse me, what time is it now?"
2. *Promiňte prosím, ještě jednu polévku.*
"Excuse me please, one more soup."
3. *Promiňte! Nevšiml jsem si Vás.*
"I'm sorry! I didn't notice you."
4. *Promiňte, kde jsou tady toalety?*
"Excuse me, where are the toilets here?"

Prosím Vás/ prosim tě (formal/informal) has more than one meaning in Czech language.

It can mean "excuse me" when starting a conversation, or it can function as "please" when making a polite request, or it can be used when offering something just like "here you are" in English. Lastly *prosím* is often used in reply to somebody's thanks, just like "you're welcome" in English.

Examples:

Getting attention:

1. *Prosím Vás/ tě, jak se vyslovuje tohle slovo?*
"Excuse me, how do you pronounce this word?"

Request:

1. *Prosím Vás, můžete/ můžeš nás vyfotit?*
"Please, could you take a photo of us?"

Offer of something:

1. *Veźměte/ vezmi si prosím (literal translation is "take some please")*
"Here you are, help yourself."

Reply to thank you:

1. A: *Děkuji za pomoc!*
B: *Prosím.*
A: "Thank you for your help!"
B: "You're welcome."

Trochu pomaleji "a bit slower." If you have difficulty understanding your companion, or you want someone to do something more slowly, you say the verb indicating the action, followed by this phrase.

1. *Mluvte/mluv trochu pomaleji, prosím. (formal/ informal)*
"Speak a bit more slowly, please"
2. *Můžete/můžeš jít trochu pomaleji? (formal/ informal)*
"Can you walk a bit more slowly, please?"

Pomozte mi/pomoc mi (formal/informal) is a verb phrase meaning "help me." It can be used to request some assistance or to exclaim in emergency situations

(please note that in the *formal* style, the written word *pomozte*, is spelled with "z," but when speaking, the pronunciation of "z" becomes "c...". *pomocte*.)

Formal:

1. *Prosím Vás, pomozte mi najít...*
"Please help me to find....."
2. *Prosím Vás pomozte mi se zavazadlem*
"Please help me with the luggage."

Informal:

1. *Prosím tě, pomoc mi najít....*
"Please help me to find....."
2. *Prosím tě, pomoc mi se zavazadlem*
"Please help me with the luggage."

Exclamation:

1. *Pomoc! Zranil jsem si nohu!*
"Help, I've injured my leg!"

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Boot Camp Lesson is to learn more Czech phrases by asking a question in Czech

Promiňte/ promiň prosím, jak se řekne česky _____?
"Excuse me please, how do you say _____ in Czech?"

The first word in this sentence means "excuse me" and is used to catch someone's attention and ask him/her a question. Then to ask "how do you say in Czech ___?" and you just put the English word you want to ask at the end of the question.

It is also possible to ask by putting "in Czech" at the end of the question, which is also grammatically correct. "Excuse me please, how do you say ___ in Czech?"

For example:

Promiňte/promiň prosím, jak se řekne česky "computer"? ("Excuse me please, how do you say "computer" in Czech?")

česky means "in Czech." When you want to ask about another language, just replace "česky" with that language, the rest remains unchanged.

Promiňte/ promiň prosím, jak se řekne japonsky "computer"? ("Excuse me, how do you say "computer" in Japanese?")

LESSON NOTES

Basic Bootcamp #4 Counting from 1-100 in Czech

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CZECH

1. Adam: jeden (1), dva (2), tři (3), čtyři (4), pět (5)
2. Adam: šest (6), sedm (7), osm (8), devět (9), deset (10)

ENGLISH

1. Adam: one, two, three, four, five
2. Adam: six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

VOCABULARY

Czech	English	Class
jeden	one	counter
dva	two	numeral
tři	three	numeral
čtyři	four	numeral
pět	five	numeral
šest	six	numeral
sedm	seven	numeral
osm	eight	numeral
devět	nine	numeral
deset	ten	numeral

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>Jedno kafe, prosím. "One coffee please."</p>	<p>Dva lástky do Prahy, prosím. "Two tickets to Prague, please."</p>
<p>Chtěl bych si (já) koupit tři knihy. "I would like to buy three books."</p>	<p>(Já) Budu v Praze čtyři dny. "I'll be in Prague four days."</p>
<p>(On) Čekal na letišti pět hodin. "He has been waiting for five hours at the airport."</p>	<p>Ještě šest minut do začátku koncertu. "There are six minutes left till the beginning of the concert."</p>
<p>(On) Žil sedm let v Praze. "He lived in Prague for seven years."</p>	<p>Lístek do kina stojí osmdesát korun. "The ticket to the cinema costs eighty Czech koruna."</p>
<p>(On) Byl v Čechách už devět krát. "He's been to the Czech Republic nine times."</p>	<p>Chtěl bych deset balení žvýkaček bez cukru. "I would like ten packs of sugar free chewing gums!"</p>

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

Numbers From Eleven to Twenty

As you can notice, *deset* is "ten." However, to form numbers from eleven up, you need to add the word **náct** to the basic numbers one, two, three...up to nine only. From twenty the style of counting changes, which will be explained later.

For example:

jeden + **náct** = *jedenáct* ("eleven")

dva + **náct** = *dvanáct* ("twelve")

tři + **náct** = *třináct* ("thirteen")

Exceptions are 14, 15, and 19. The spelling is a little different.

čtyři...but becomes **čtr** + **náct** = **čtrnáct** ("fourteen")

pět...but becomes **pat** + **náct** = **patnáct** ("fifteen")

devět..but becomes **devate** + **náct** = **devatenáct** ("nineteen")

Here are some more examples:

Czech	"English"
<i>jedenáct let</i>	"eleven years"
<i>dvanáct aut</i>	"twelve cars"
<i>šestnáctiletý</i>	"sixteen years old"
<i>dvacet lidí</i>	"twenty people"

The Multiples of Ten

Twenty, thirty and forty have a different suffix (added word at the end).

For these we have to add **cet** at the end of the word, which is a counter for numbers from twenty to forty only.

20 - *dva* + **cet** = *dvacet*

30 - *tři* + **cet** = *třicet*

40 - *čtyři* + **cet** = *čtyřicet*

From fifty and higher, the counting goes as follows:

50 - *padesát*

60 - *šedesát*

70 - *sedmdesát*

80 - *osmdesát*

90 - *devadesát*

.....

100 - *sto*

200 - *dvěstě*

300 - *třista*

400 - *čtyřista*

500 - *pětset*

600 - *šestset*

700 - *sedmset*

800 - *osmset*

900 - *devětset*

1000 - *tisíc*

Other Compound Numbers

We form other compound numbers in the same way we form the English numbers, that is, by placing numbers from one to nine after twenty, thirty, forty, fifty...ninety.

This is the same for all compound numbers after twenty and after one hundred.

$$20 + 4 = 24$$

dvacet + čtyři = dvacet-čtyři

For Example:

1. *dvacet-čtyři pohádek*
"twenty-four stories"
2. *čtyřicet-dva minut*
"forty-two minutes"
3. *osmdesát-šest procent*
"eighty-six percent"
4. *sto-jedna stránek*
"hundred-one pages"
5. *dvěstě-osm kilometrů*
two hundred-ten kilometers

GRAMMAR

The Focus of The Lesson is Czech Numerals

From the point of view of the word order, Czech numerals are the same like in English. The number comes first, followed by the the noun.

However, in Czech, you have to pay attention to genders. Each noun has a gender.

"male" (*ten*), "female" (*ta*), or "neutral" (*to*) and this reflects in numerals too, *jeden* ("one"), *jedna* ("one"), *jedno* (*jedno*).

Examples of Genders and Numbers

Male - *jeden dolar* ("one dollar")

Female - *jedna koruna* ("one crown")

Neutral - *jedno euro* ("one euro")

Examples of numeral noun phrases:

1. *jeden lístek*
"one ticket"
2. *tří lidé*
"three people"
3. *čtyřicet let*
"forty years"
4. *deset květin*
"ten flowers"
5. *šest deštníků*
"six umbrellas"
6. *dvanáct kuřat*
"twelve chickens"

Cardinal vs Ordinal Numbers

What we have learned above are cardinal numbers. Ordinal numbers in Czech

language have regular adjectival forms, but the ending of each ordinal number changes according to the following noun and its gender.

For example:

male - *druhý* - *druhý oběd* ("second lunch")

female - *druhá* - *druhá bota* ("second shoe")

neutral - *druhé* - *druhé pivo* ("second beer")

male - *desátý* - *desátý chlapec* ("tenth boy")

female - *desátá* - *desátá tužka* ("tenth pencil")

neutral - *desáté* - *desáté kuře* ("tenth chicken")

Exceptions are "first" and "third," where the form remains the same for all genders.

First is *první* and third is *třetí*.

For example:

male - "First man" - ***První muž***; "third man" - ***Třetí muž***

female - "First woman" - ***První žena***; "third woman" - ***Třetí žena***

neutral - "First child" - ***První dítě***; "third child" - ***Třetí dítě***

Czech Cardinal	Czech Ordinal	English Cardinal	English Ordinal
<i>jedna</i>	<i>první</i>	"one"	"the first"
<i>dvě</i>	<i>druhý</i>	"two"	"the second"
<i>tři</i>	<i>třetí</i>	"three"	"the third"
<i>čtyři</i>	<i>čtvrtý</i>	"four"	"the fourth"
<i>pět</i>	<i>pátý</i>	"five"	"the fifth"
<i>šest</i>	<i>šestý</i>	"six"	"the sixth"
<i>sedm</i>	<i>sedmý</i>	"seven"	"the seventh"
<i>osm</i>	<i>osmý</i>	"eight"	"the eighth"

<i>devět</i>	<i>devátý</i>	"nine"	"the ninth"
<i>deset</i>	<i>desátý</i>	"ten"	"the tenth"
<i>jedenáct</i>	<i>jedenáctý</i>	"eleven"	"the eleventh"
<i>dvanáct</i>	<i>dvanáctý</i>	"twelve"	"the twelfth"

LESSON NOTES

Basic Bootcamp #5 Counting from 100 - 1,000,000 in Czech

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CZECH

1. A: sto
2. B: dvěšestě
3. A: třiřta
4. B: čtyřřta
5. A: pětřset
6. B: šestřset
7. A: sedmřset
8. B: osmřset
9. A: devětřset
10. B: tisíc
11. A: pět tisíc
12. B: deset tisíc
13. A: padesát tisíc
14. B: sto tisíc
15. A: milión

ENGLISH

CONT'D OVER

1. A: one hundred
2. B: two hundred
3. A: three hundred
4. B: four hundred
5. A: five hundred
6. B: six hundred
7. A: seven hundred
8. B: eight hundred
9. A: nine hundred
10. B: one thousand
11. A: five thousand
12. B: ten thousand
13. A: fifty thousand
14. B: one hundred thousand.
15. A: one million

VOCABULARY

Czech	English	Class
sto	one hundred	numeral
sto tisíc	one hundred thousand	numeral
pět tisíc	five thousand	numeral
devět set	nine hundred	numeral
osm set	eight hundred	numeral
sedm set	seven hundred	numeral
šest set	six hundred	numeral
pět set	five hundred	numeral
čtyři sta	four hundred	numeral
tři sta	three hundred	numeral
dvě stě	two hundred	numeral
milión	one million	numeral

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>(On) Žil sto let.</p> <p>"He has lived one hundred years."</p>	<p>Já našel pět tisíc korun.</p> <p>"I found five thousand koruna"</p>
<p>Ta starožitnost byla devět set let stará.</p> <p>"The antique was nine hundred years old."</p>	<p>Vlakem do Kyota to stojí to sedm set jenů.</p> <p>"It costs seven hundred yen to go to Kyoto by train."</p>
<p>Ona má kolekci šest set párů bot.</p> <p>"She has a six-hundred-pair shoes collection."</p>	<p>V naší společnosti pracuje pět set pracovníků.</p> <p>"There are five hundred employees working in our company."</p>

V této soutěži se účastní čtyři sta soutěžících.

"There are four hundred participants in this competition."

To město je tři sta let staré.

"This city is three hundred years old."

Fakulta ekonomie má dvě stě studentů.

"The department of economics has two hundred students."

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

100

"One hundred" in Czech is *sto*. Unlike in English, it is not needed to say "one" in front of the word. *Sto* on its own already means "one hundred."

200

For two hundred, you need to add *stě* after the cardinal number *dvě* (two).

Dvě + stě becomes dvě stě ("two hundred").

300, 400

For three hundred and four hundred, you need to add *sta* after the cardinal number *tři* and *čtyři*.

Tři! + sta becomes tři sta ("three hundred")

Čtyři + sta becomes čtyři sta ("four hundred")

500 to 900...

For five hundred up to nine hundred, the ending is the same for all of them.

You need to add *set* after the cardinal number.

Pět + set becomes pět set ("five hundred")

Šest + set become šest set ("six hundred")

Devět + set becomes devět set ("nine hundred")

Czech	"English"
<i>sto</i>	"one hundred"
<i>dvě stě</i>	"two hundred"
<i>tři sta</i>	"three hundred"
<i>čtyři sta</i>	"four hundred"
<i>pět set</i>	"five hundred"
<i>šest set</i>	"six hundred"
<i>sedm set</i>	"seven hundred"
<i>osm set</i>	"eight hundred"
<i>devět set</i>	"nine hundred"
<i>tisíc</i>	"one thousand"

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is How to Learn Larger Numbers in Czech.

The easiest way to remember large Czech numbers is to understand their structure first. In the previous Boot Camp lesson, we covered the numbers from one to one hundred. As you can remember, the most important thing was to memorize the numbers from one to ten, and then build larger numbers by modifying endings, adding or dropping some parts, and so on. There are exceptions among the common rules, but in general, Vietnamese numbers have a strong logical system according to which the numbers are built.

1,000

One thousand in Czech is just simply *tisíc*.

After that, things are similar to counting in hundreds. You need to add words after the cardinal number.

We add *tisíce* ("thousands") to the end of "two," "three" and "four."

Dva tisíce ("two thousand"), *tri tisíce* ("three thousand"), etc..

We add *tisíc* from "five" to "nine."

Pět tisíc ("five thousand"), *šest tisíc* ("six thousand"), etc...

For Example:

From 1000 to 9000

Czech	English
<i>tisíc</i>	"one thousand"
<i>dva tisíce</i>	"two thousand"
<i>tři tisíce</i>	"three thousand"
<i>čtyři tisíce</i>	"four thousand"
<i>pět tisíc</i>	"five thousand"
<i>šest tisíc</i>	"six thousand"
<i>sedm tisíc</i>	"seven thousand"
<i>osm tisíc</i>	"eight thousand"
<i>devět tisíc</i>	"nine thousand"

Follow the same rule for bigger numbers. Just as in English, we add *tisíc* ("thousand") to the end of the numbers from ten to ninety, then we have numbers from 10000 to 100000.

Czech	English
<i>deset tisíc</i>	"ten thousand"
<i>dvacet tisíc</i>	"twenty thousand"
<i>třicet tisíc</i>	"thirty thousand"
<i>čtyřicet tisíc</i>	"forty thousand"
<i>padesát tisíc</i>	"fifty thousand"

<i>šedesát tisíc</i>	"sixty thousand"
<i>sedmdesát tisíc</i>	"seventy thousand"
<i>osmdesát tisíc</i>	"eighty thousand"
<i>devadesát tisíc</i>	"ninety thousand"
<i>sto tisíc</i>	"one hundred thousand"

All the way up to "nine hundred thousand," *devět set tisíc*. The system is logical and easy, like the English number system. Just remember that all the numbers are contracted into one long word. For example, "One hundred and thirty two thousand four hundred and ninety six" in Czech would be:

stotřicetdva tisíc čtyři-sta devadesát šest.

It may be overwhelming to read, but you'll gradually get used to it. Also notice that in English you put an "and" before the units digit of a number, but in Czech you won't need to add anything no matter how long it would be, just say the number in the order from the thousands, to the hundreds, to the tens and the units digit.

Exception would when dealing with money at a counter where people usually say, for example, *132 Koruna a 70 haléřů* ("132 Koruna and 70 haléřů"). *Haléř* is the smallest unit.

Same things work for even larger numbers. So "two thousand **and** eleven" would be *dva tisíce jedenáct*. "Ten thousand two hundred and eighty seven" is *deset tisíc dvěstě osmdesát sedm*.

1,000,000.

"Million" in Czech is *milión*. The same rule as "hundred" and "thousand" is also applied here. You add *milióny* after two, three and four.

For example "two million" is *tři milióny*, "four million" is *čtyři milióny*.

But you need to add *miliónů* from five to nine.

Pět miliónů ("five million"), *šest miliónů* ("six million") and so on.....

LESSON NOTES

All About #1

Top 5 Reasons to Learn Czech

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the History of the Czech Republic

I. Linguistics

Czech is the official language of the Czech Republic, spoken by about 96% of the population. Czech is the mother tongue of about twelve million of people. Most of them live in the Czech Republic while around one million Czech speakers live abroad. Czech belongs to the West Slavic group of languages. Czech is very similar to the Slovak language, so much so that these languages are mutually intelligible. Czech and Slovak usually understand both languages in their written and spoken form, although there are many local dialects in each language that might present difficulties in understanding each other completely. To a lesser extent, Czech is also similar to other Slavic languages, such as Polish, Bulgarian, Croatian or Russian. Until the 19th century, it was known as "Bohemian" in English.

The Czech language developed at the close of the 1st millennium from common West Slavic. The oldest stage of Czech as a separate language started at the end of the 10th century. The first literal evidence of its existence can be traced back to the 12th - 13th century when the letters of the Latin alphabet were used.

In the Middle Ages Czech started to expand and develop into a rich and elaborate language with a literature of many genres. With the expansion of the Bohemian state, the Czech language also spread beyond the borders of the country's national territory. The 15th century and so-called Hussite period marks an important period for the language. Around 1406 Jan Hus, who was a Czech priest, philosopher and reformer suggested a reform of the orthography (the so-called diacritic orthography) in his work *De orthographia bohémica*, which consequently brought major changes into the written language. He created the system of having one grapheme (letter) for every phoneme (sound) in the language by adding accents to some of the letters. These changes resulted in developing the characteristic difference between traditional standard written Czech and commonly spoken language, so-called Common Czech. This difference remains noticeable today.

During the Renaissance Humanistic period (16th to 17th century) and with the invention of printing, the grammar of the Czech language finally became solidified thanks to the first print and translation of the Christian Bible into Czech. The literary form of Czech was based on the Czech biblical text from here on. After the lost Battle of White Mountain in 1620 the development of the Czech language was affected by confiscation and emigration of the Czech scholars. The function of the literary language was limited, cultivated by Czech expatriates abroad. The German language predominated the environment.

The period from the 1780s to the 1840s is also referred to as the National Renaissance. In 1781 Joseph II abolished the serfdom which caused migration of country inhabitants to towns. The Czech national reformers started to implement the ideas for the renewal of the Czech language.

During the 20th century, elements of the spoken language (of Common Czech especially) penetrated literary Czech. Since the second half of the 20th century, Common Czech elements have also been spreading to regions previously unaffected, as a consequence of the media's influence. Since May 2004, Czech has been one of the 23 official languages in the European Union.

Czech is a fusional/inflecting language that uses the Latin alphabet with specific diacritic marks for writing. In comparison with other languages, the differences between standard written Czech and common Czech are quite striking. In particular, this is because it does not just concern a specific vocabulary, but primarily involves systemic changes influencing declension and conjugation.

II. About the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is a small inland country in Central Europe. The country borders Germany to the West, Austria to the South, Slovakia to the East and Poland to the North. The Czech Republic includes the historical territories of Bohemia and Moravia and a small part of Silesia.

Following the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy at the end of World War I, the independent country of Czechoslovakia was formed. The name reflected the union of the Czech and Slovak nations within the one country. At the end of 1992 Czechoslovakia separated into two independent nations: Czech Republic and Slovakia. The capital and largest city of the Czech Republic is Prague with 1.3 million inhabitants.

The Czech Republic has a temperate continental climate with four seasons. There are relatively hot summers and cold, cloudy and snowy winters. The temperature difference between summer and winter is relatively high, due to the landlocked geographical position. In winter, the temperature goes well below zero. The Czech Republic is especially famous for old historical places; twelve of them are listed in UNESCO's World Heritage list. The Czech Republic is also home to many beautiful nature spots.

III. Where Czech is Spoken

Czech is mainly spoken by over ten million people in the Czech Republic (96% of the total population) and over 1.5 million abroad. A large number of these Czech speakers are based in the United States, Canada, Australia and in European countries, including Germany, Austria, Poland, Slovakia, and the Ukraine.

IV. Writing System and Pronunciation

The current Czech language uses the Latin alphabet with specific diacritics as part

of its writing system. Its basic principles are "one sound, one letter." Czech consists of twenty-six Latin letters as in English plus letters with special diacritic accents. There are three types of those accents: the acute accent *čárka* (length mark) for indicating the length of vowels, *háček* (hook) for changing sound, and lastly *kroužek* (circle) indicating long pronunciation of the letter *u* only *ů*. Altogether, the alphabet includes forty-two characters. Once you learn the pronunciation of the whole alphabet, you can read any word in Czech. Every word is pronounced exactly how it is written.

V. Why it is Important: The Top Five Reasons to Learn this Language Are...

1. The Czech sense of humor especially is specific to the language: when you're conversing in and comprehending Czech, it can be fun to understand shared jokes! Particularly interesting are Czech movies that are worth seeing in the original language. Czechs particularly like drama, comedy, comedy/drama, war/drama and animations.

2. Czech is considered one of the gateway languages to business in Central Europe.

Learning the Czech language might bring you new business opportunities in Central Europe as well as new opportunities in your own country. Having a well developed industrial base, the Czech Republic offers opportunities for business especially in the automotive industry, industrial machinery industry, mining, electronics, glass manufacturing and in beer production. In recent years and thanks to high-tech industries being on the rise, business opportunities are arising, particularly in the areas of aerospace, nanotechnology and life science.

3. The Czech Republic is a beautiful country! It is rich in natural and cultural attractions and is a very popular and must-see tourist destination in the heart of Europe. Without exaggeration, Prague is considered one of the most beautiful cities in the world and attracts over five million visitor per year. The Czech Republic has several spa towns out of which Karlovy Vary is thought of as the Jewel of the West Bohemian Spa Triangle'. Every year, this city holds one of Europe's most important international film festivals, which has welcomed many movie stars from all over the world, including Hollywood stars.

4. Understand two languages by learning one!

Czech is in some ways similar to the Slavic languages. Both Czech and Slavic belong to the Western branch of the Balto-Slavic language group. The languages are therefore closely linked. By learning Czech it is possible to understand other Eastern European languages too, namely Slovak, Polish, Bulgarian, Croatian, and some Russian.

5. And finally...it's fun!

LESSON NOTES

All About #2

The Czech Writing System

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Czech Writing System

The Czech alphabet is easy to learn because it uses the same alphabet as English, plus some more letters with diacritics.

Alphabet

The Czech alphabet consists of 42 letters, inclusive of 26 letters as in English and 16 additional ones with diacritics. The letters *Q* and *W* are used in foreign words only, and are replaced with *KV* and *V* once the word becomes "naturalized."

There are three special diacritic accents: for the vowels it is the acute accent (*čárka*) and a small circle (*kroužek*) both indicating the length of vowels, and then a small hook (*háček*) that changes the pronunciation of the consonant letters a bit.

á, é, í, ý, ó, ú, ů,

These seven extra vowels are for sounds not found in the English alphabet by default. You can recognize them by the acute accent (*čárka*) indicating a slightly longer length of vowels. However, for historical reasons there is also another diacritical mark: the *kroužek*, or a little circle above the long **ů**. Basically there is no difference in pronunciation between **ú** and **ů**.

ž, š, č, ř, d', t', ň, ě plus ch

These 8 consonants are also not included in English alphabet although the sounds of them are sometimes similar to English. The small hook (*háček*) is a mark which usually makes the pronunciation of the letter a bit softer in a specific way.

Ch

The Czech alphabet has one special letter **Ch** which is made by *C* and *H* put together. However, the pronunciation is different from English.

LESSON NOTES

All About #3

Painless Czech Grammar

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Basic Czech Grammar

Czech is quite different from English in terms of grammar. In the very beginning it can be a bit challenging and tough but once you understand how the system works and have grasped the basics, the rest is just a piece of cake.

In these All About lessons, we are going to avoid all but the most basic grammar words. Introducing complex grammatical concepts in the early stages of language learning actually makes things much more difficult than they need to be.

Overview

Czech words are pronounced the way they are written. "One sound - one letter": this is the golden rule. Once you learn how to pronounce individual Czech characters, you will be able to pronounce any Czech word. You always put the stress on the first syllable of a word. In Czech there are also words that do not have vowels at all.

Verbs

Czech verbs do have tenses and infinitive forms. The types of verbs are somewhat similar to English verbs, which contain: auxiliary/lexical verbs, dynamic/stative verbs, transitive/intransitive verbs, and linking verbs. The good news is that the rules for using appropriate verb tenses are easier than in English, but the verb form usually depends on the number of persons and gender.

Time

There are three tenses in Czech: the future, the present and the past.

Gender

In Czech you have to pay attention to genders. There are three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter, with the masculine further subdivided into animate and inanimate.

Word Order

Word order in the Czech language is less fixed than in English. Individual words in a sentence do not necessarily need to be placed in a certain order and are more free to move around. The word order is very flexible and it allows you to play with the message and put stress on different parts of sentence along the way. Of course, a few logical rules have to be followed.

Declension

The most challenging thing in the Czech language is probably the declension of nouns, adjectives, pronouns and numerals depending on which one of seven cases you are using.

Pronouns

Personal pronouns in Czech are similar to the English language. The one different thing is using two kinds of "you" depending on who you are speaking with or whether you are using formal speech or not. Czech shares this characteristic with German. The formal type of "you" in Czech is *Vy* and the informal is *ty*. The difference, however, is mainly shown in verbs, as the verb changes accordingly to formal or informal speech. For the formal speech, the ending of a verb always changes to *te*.

For example:

Informal: *Jak se máš?* - ("How are **you** doing?") meaning "you my friend."

Formal: *Jak se máte?* ("How are **you** doing?") meaning "you Mr. or Mrs."..

Informal: *Co děláš?* ("What are you doing?")

Formal: *Co děláte?* - ("What are you doing?")

Please note that in Czech, the pronoun is often omitted and so the pronoun, gender and number can be recognized from the verb conjugation instead.

Plural

In Czech, the word form changes when using the plural. Nouns, verbs and adjectives all reflect plural endings.

In the case of plural pronouns such as "we," "you" or "they," the ending of the verb in its past tense is further divided depending on what group of people we are talking about. If the group consists of women only or children, the verb will end with *y*. If it is a group of men or a mixed group of men and women, the verb will always end in an *í*. In case of neutral plural gender, which is used for neutral pronouns, such as "kittens" (*kočata*), the verb will end with *a*.

For example:

	Neutral Gender Noun	Present Tense Verb	Past Continuous Verb
Singular	<i>kotě</i> (kitten)	<i>mňouká</i> (meowing)	<i>mňoukalo</i> (was meowing)

Plural	<i>koťata</i> (kittens)	<i>mňoukají</i> (meowing)	<i>mňoukala</i> (were meowing)
Singular	<i>auto</i> (car)	<i>houká</i> (hooting)	<i>houkalo</i> (was hooting)
Plural	<i>auta</i> (cars)	<i>houkají</i> (hooting)	<i>houkala</i> (were hooting)

LESSON NOTES

All About #4

Basic Czech Pronunciation

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2 Grammar

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Basic Czech Pronunciation

The great advantage of the Czech language is that, unlike in English, it is pronounced the same way as it is written. However, in order to pronounce all the sounds that the Czech language contains, additional letters with diacritics (small marks above the letter) are used in combination with the Roman alphabet. There are only a few diacritics - **háček** (hook), **čárka** (length mark), **kroužek** (circle) and they change the pronunciation of the letter. They look like this when written: *háček (č), čárka (á), kroužek (ů)*.

Before getting into the Czech sounds, let's recap the written system quickly just as an introduction to the pronunciation. The Czech alphabet consists of 42 letters out of which 26 are the same as in English, plus 16 additional ones with diacritics. Those are 8 extra vowels (*á, é, í, ý, ó, ú/ů, ě*) and 8 extra consonants (*ž, š, č, ř, ď, ť, ň*, plus "ch"). "Ch" in Czech alphabet counts as a single letter and has a special position after "h." Its pronunciation is different from English.

Consonants

The Czech consonants are divided into four categories:

hard - (*h, ch, k, r, g, d, t, n*)

soft - (*ž, š, č, ř, c, j, ď, ť, ň*)

ambivalent - (*b, f, l, m, p, s, v, z*)

unusual - (*q, w, x*). These are nearly exclusively used in foreign words only

This division is important in terms of declension (the way of changing the endings of nouns, pronouns and numerals in Czech) and ways of spelling.

Please note that the pronunciation of (*p, t, k*) in Czech does not come with an aspiration (a stream of air) like in English. Consequently, these sounds will have a sharper, more inverted, dryer sound than the usual aspirated *p, t, k* sounds in English and most other western European languages.

Pronunciation of *hard* consonants (the effect of rough sound)

h is pronounced like [h] in "Hard" (no aspiration)

ch is pronounced like [j] in the Spanish name "José"

k is pronounced like [k] in "King" (no aspiration)

r is pronounced like [r] in "Truck" but more trilled (the tongue vibrates as the r rolls off the tongue)

g is pronounced like [g] in "Grow" (not like in general!)

d is pronounced like [d] in "Dog" but a harder sound

t is pronounced like [t] in "Table" but a harder "t" sound

n is pronounced like [n] in "Norway"

Pronunciation of soft consonants (the effect of a gentle sound)

ž is pronounced like in "Version."

š is pronounced like in "Short."

č is pronounced like in "Czech."

ř is pronounced by pressing the tip of the tongue on the palate, while the rest of the tongue is free to vibrate.

d' is pronounced like in "Duke" but softer.

t' is pronounced like in "Tutor" but softer.

ň is pronounced like in "New" but softer.

c is pronounced like in "Streets."

j is pronounced like in "Yard."

To pronounce **d', t', ň**, the tip of the tongue needs to be placed against the back of the upper gum and above the front teeth. The sound should be similar to *d, t, n*, but much softer.

Pronunciation of ambivalent consonants

(can be either *soft* or *hard* depending on circumstance)

B is pronounced like [b] in "Big."

F is pronounced like [f] in "Farm."

L is pronounced like [l] in "Lonely."

M is pronounced like [m] in "Morning."

P is pronounced like [p] in "**P**ush" (no aspiration)

S is pronounced like [s] in "**S**imilar."

V/W is pronounced like [v] in "**V**ictim."

Z is pronounced like [z] in "**Z**oo."

Pronunciation of *unusual* consonants

(found in foreign loan words)

Q like [q] in "**Q**uick"

W like [v] in "**V**ictim"

X like [x] in "Complex"

Vowels

Czech has *long* and *short* vowels. Long vowels have to be pronounced longer than the short ones and the length must be noticeable. A long vowel is indicated by a long mark (*čárka*) placed above the letter. It looks like this: **á**, **í**, or in case of letter *u*, there are two types **ú** with a long mark (*čárka*) and **ů** with a small circle (*kroužek*). Both are pronounced the same.

Pronunciation of 7 short vowels (*a, e, i/y, o, u, ě*)

a is pronounced like [a] in "**B**ut."

e is pronounced like [e] in "**M**et."

i/y is also pronounced like [i] in "**S**it."

o is pronounced like [o] in "**O**mit."

u is pronounced like [u] in "**L**ook."

ě is pronounced like [y+e] in "**Y**es."

Pronunciation of 7 long vowels (*á, é, í/ý, ó, ú/ů*)

á is pronounced like [a] in "**F**ather"

é is pronounced like [e] in "**S**hed," but longer

í/ý is pronounced like [i] in "**C**heep."

ó is pronounced like [o] in "Fall."

ú/ů is pronounced like [u] in "School" but longer

Pronunciation of the Czech vowels soft **i / í** and hard **y / ý** are the same in terms of sound.

The vowels **ú / ů** are also pronounced the same way, although the spelling is different. This form of two different spellings is connected to the history of the Czech language development.

In terms of grammar, the vowel **ú** is always written at the beginning of the word (i.e. **úkol** = "task") or after a prefix (i.e. **zúročit** = "pay interest on something").

On the other hand, the vowel **ů** is always placed in the stem of the word (**kůže** = "skin") or at the end (**domů** = "going home").

When spelling out individual letters of the Czech alphabet, the sounds are as follow:

a [á], **b** [bé], **c** [cé], **č** [čé], **d** [dé], **d'** [dé], **e** [é], **f** [ef], **g** [gé], **h** [há], **ch** [chá], **i** [í], **y** [ý], **j** [jé], **k** [ká], **l** [el], **m** [em], **n** [en], **ň** [eň], **o** [ó], **p** [pé], **q** [qé], **r** [er], **ř** [eř], **s** [es], **š** [eš], **t** [té], **t'** [t'é], **u / ú / ů** [ú], **v** [vé], **w** [dvojité vé], **x** [iks], **y / ý** [ypsilon / ý], **z** [zet], **ž** [žet].

For example:

ČSAD = [čé-es-á-dé] = České autobusové dráhy ("Czech bus lines")

Diacritical marks are very important and cannot be omitted because they will often change the meaning of the word. If a word is pronounced too short or too long, the meaning becomes different. Here is an example of what can happen if pronounced incorrectly:

byt = "apartment/flat" X **být** = "to be"

žila = "(she) lived" X **žíla** = "blood vessel."

LESSON NOTES

All About #5

Top 5 Must-Know Phrases for Learning Czech

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is mastering the Top 5 Must Know Czech Phrases

Here we'll introduce five phrases in Czech that will take you a long way and help you out in a variety of situations!

1. *Ahoj* ("Hello!")

The most practical phrase in Czech is *Ahoj*. It means "Hello," or "hi." It can be used in informal situations only, particularly with people you have already become friends with. In daily conversation, Czech people often use **čau** ("hi!") between friends. It is a very casual greeting and cannot be used with anyone other than friends.

Dobrý den (literally meaning "good day")

This is used as a first greeting in formal situations. This is when speaking to somebody for the first time, or somebody you don't know, or an elderly person. It would be very rude to use ***ahoj*** to somebody you have just only met. ***Dobrý den*** is also used at the time of entering a shop, office, or enquiring over the phone etc. Depending on the time of day, phrases such as ***Dobré ráno*** ("Good morning"), ***Dobrý večer*** ("Good evening") are also used just like in English.

For Example:

A: *Ahoj!* - when speaking to a friend

B: *Dobrý den!* when speaking to the elderly or a stranger

Or

A: *Čau!* (very casual)

B: *Dobrý den!* (formal)

2. ***Děkuji / děkuju*** ("Thank you")

A well-placed and sincere "thank you" will always be appreciated when someone gives you a plate of food, a drink, or even a compliment. "Thank you" in Czech is ***děkuji*** or ***děkuju*** with the final letter changing into ***u*** in daily conversation. *Děkuji* is rather a written form, whilst *děkuju* is spoken. When using *děkuji* in spoken Czech, the feeling is more polite or more formal.

Please note that you will be likely to hear Czech people say ***díky*** or even ***dík***

instead. *Díky* is a shorter form of *děkuju* and sounds less formal. It can be compared to English "**thanks**." It is all right to use this phrase when leaving a grocery store or at less formal situations. It is not suitable for very formal situations. *Dík*, on the other hand is very informal. This phrase has an even more casual meaning than "thanks," it's probably like the English "ta" and is used exclusively between friends. Both phrases *díky* and *dík* are used in spoken language.

3. **Ne, děkuji / děkuju.** ("No, thank you")

This phrase can let you politely refuse anything offered to you. It's just like the English "**no, thank you**." When someone offers you something and you say **děkuji** or **děkuju**, it means "**Thank you**." Adding **Ne** in front makes this a "**no, thank you**."

4. **Prosím** ("Please")

It is likely that you may want to ask somebody for help. In that case, the phrase **prosím** ("**please**") is used. To make it more correct, **prosím Vás** is used instead of just **prosím**. The meaning of **prosím vás** is something like "**please, you Mr. or Mrs.**" The word **Vy** is an honorific expression used to address other adults who are not your friends or in formal situations. *Prosím Vás* is never used with children! It is only a polite form for adults.

For example:

1. *Prosím Vás ukažte mi cestu.* ("Please, Mr./Mrs., show me the direction" - *ukážete mi cestu* means "show me the direction")
2. *Prosím Vás, přečtěte mi tohle slovo.* ("Please read this word for me" - *přečtěte mi tohle slovo* means "read me this word")

The word **Prosím** has, however, more than one meaning. It is also used to offer something to somebody, just like in English "**here you are**," or as an answer to somebody's words of thanks like the English "**you're welcome**."

For example:

A: *Prosím, ochutnejte* ("here you are, taste this")

B: *Děkuji/děkuju* ("thank you")

A: *Děkuji/Děkuju!* ("thank you!")

B: *Prosím* ("you're welcome")

5. **Promiňte prosím / promiň prosím tě** ("Excuse me")

There are two ways to draw somebody's attention in Czech. One is the honorific version ***promiňte prosím Vás*** ("**excuse me please**") used in formal situations or when addressing other adults and elderly people. The other is ***promiň*** ("**excuse me**"), more casual used with friends or with very young people and children.

When you want to ask something, use *Promiňte prosím/Promiň prosím tě* then add your question.

It is also possible to draw attention by using ***Prosim vás*** at the beginning of the sentence. The meaning is not "please" like when asking for a favor, but "Excuse me."

For example:

1. *Promiňte prosím/Promiň prosím tě* ("Excuse me please, what time is it?). *Kolik je hodin?* means "What time is it?"
2. *Promiňte prosím/Promiň prosím tě* ("Excuse me please, can I borrow a pen?"). *Můžu si půjčit pero?* means "can I borrow a pen?"
3. *Prosim Vás* ("Excuse me, how do I find....?"). *Jak najdu...?* means "How do I find...?"

Promiňte / Promiň ("**I'm sorry**"/"**sorry**") In Czech, *promiňte/promiň* also means "sorry." When you really want to apologize for something, you say *promiňte* ("I'm sorry") in formal occasions or *Promiň* ("sorry") to a friend, younger person or to a child.

You may often hear the word ***pardon*** from other people too. This is an apology usually for stepping on somebody's foot, or hitting a shoulder on a crammed tram. It is also used for needing to squeeze through people and letting them know you are going through.

LESSON NOTES

All About #6

Can You Answer these 5 Questions About the Czech Republic?

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is a Quiz

Here are five things you have to know about The Czech Republic. Or you might know them already! It's time to test your knowledge of the Czech Republic.

Geography

In which part of Czech is Prague located?

1. The South
2. The East
3. The North-West

Correct answer: 3. The North-West

Prague is the capital of the Czech Republic, and its largest city.

The city of Prague has a borderline oceanic climate with relatively cold winters and warm summers. In winter snow can fall mainly between mid-November and late March and temperatures often drop down to minus 10-15 degrees. On average Prague is less rainy than Rome or Paris and its driest season is usually winter. Summers, although relatively sunny with temperature around 25 degrees, can experience heavy rains especially in the form of violent storms and showers. There are four seasons all year round (spring, summer, autumn and winter).

For years Prague has been a political, cultural, and economic centre of central Europe and home to a number of famous cultural attractions. One of the must-see destinations in Praha is the Old Town Square (Staré náměstí) an area of Prague's ancient architecture styles including Baroque Church St. Nicholas and Gothic Týn Church. With its many cozy restaurants, refreshment stalls and various seating areas it is also an oasis for the travellers tired by Prague's narrow cobble streets. It is a great place that offers a panoramic view of the whole Old Town from the top of the Old Town Hall. Besides, Prague is also famous for delicious traditional Czech cuisines which can satisfy even the most picky customers.

Cuisine

A most well-known Czech dish is:

1. *Vepřo-knedlo-zelo* (pork with dumplings and sauerkraut)

2. *Svíčková* (roast fillet of beef in cream sauce)
3. *Bramboračka* (potato soup seasoned with marjoram, caraway seed and pepper)

Correct answer: 1 Vepřo-knedlo-zelo

Vepřo-knedlo-zelo is one of the most traditional Czech dishes offered in most restaurants across the Czech Republic. Dumplings (made of flour, eggs and other ingredients shaped into a roll, boiled and sliced) are a very typical side dish in Czech cuisine. There is more than one variety. Sauerkraut is a stewed (usually red) cabbage served hot, which adds some pleasant sweetness to the whole meal. Although not exactly low in calories and carbohydrates, this dish is great to try if you like to experience something different, which you will not find in any other country.

Travel

Which are the most popular travel destinations in the Czech Republic?

1. Prague, Český Krumlov, Karlštejn
2. Brno, Český Štenberk, Plzeň
3. České Budějovice, Telč, Liberec

Correct Answer: 1. Prague, Český Krumlov, Karlštejn

All the places mentioned in the question are worth a visit because they are among the top tourist destinations in the Czech Republic. However, the three most popular places are:

Prague, the country's capital, is the most frequently visited city in the Czech Republic. The top destinations in Prague are the Old Town Square, Prague Castle, Charles Bridge, New and Old Jewish Cemetery, Vyšehrad, Wenceslas Square, National Museum, National Theatre, Franz Kafka Monument and the nearby Spanish Synagogue, The Mucha Museum and the Museum of Decorative Arts. Don't forget to try the most delicious Czech foods, especially the dishes mentioned above. The most ideal time to visit Prague is during spring and summer (May to August) as the weather is pleasantly warm and there is nothing better than a night stroll along the river Vltava.

Český Krumlov is a small, historical town in the Southern Bohemia—it is in fact the most visited place in all of Southern Bohemia. It is one of the main tourist

destinations in the country due to its amazingly well preserved historical sites that have been UNESCO World Heritage listed since 1992. Český Krumlov is considered a pocket-size version of Prague by some people. The beauty of Český Krumlov is not only its stunning Baroque buildings and the second largest castle in the country, but it is also a very picturesque town with river Vltava running through and lovely scenery around where you can relax, slipping away from the buzz of a large city. The best times to come are late September or May if you want to avoid the tourist crowds and queues because in summer the town becomes very busy.

Karlštejn, located only 29 km (18 miles) south west of Prague, the high Gothic castle Karlštejn is by far the most popular destination in the Czech Republic after Prague. Not far from Prague, this place is easy to reach on a one day trip, which is especially convenient if you cannot spare more time to travel to further places. The castle was built by Czech King and Roman Emperor Charles IV as a place for safekeeping of the royal treasures, especially the Emperor's collection of holy relics and the coronation jewels of the Roman Empire. What is really beautiful about Karlštejn's is the actual façade and environs rather than the castle itself. Therefore, to have a great view of the outside building, it is better to see it from some distance. This can be done if you take a stroll up the hill and look down.

Economy

The Czech Republic is the world's largest exporter in...

1. Chemicals and pharmaceuticals
2. Vehicles and components
3. Glass and pottery

Correct Answer: 2. Vehicles and components

The Czech Republic's auto industry remains the largest single industry, and, together with its upstream suppliers, accounts for nearly 24% of Czech manufacturing. The Czech Republic produces more than a million cars per year out of which over 80% is exported mainly to European countries, especially Germany. Across the whole of Europe, car components made in the Czech Republic are used in all major European car manufacturers. Joining in with other world-wide known car producers, the TPCA automobile company located in the Czech Republic makes Toyota Aygo, Peugeot 107 and Citroën C1.

Interesting Facts and Figures About the Czech Republic

1. Economy

Over the last three years to 2013, the Czech Republic's GDP annual growth rate averaged 3-5% and was listed as one of 43 growing economies among the top

100 major economies, according to *The World in 2050* by HSBC. According to the statistics of 269 NUTS-2 Region (province level) in the European Union, Prague has the twelfth highest GDP per capita (PPP) and the highest outside the UK, the Benelux, France, Germany, Austria and Sweden. Since May 2004, the country has been a part of the Schengen Area together with twenty-five other European countries, abolishing passport and immigration control at common borders with its neighbors: Germany, Austria, Poland and Slovakia.

2. Culture

The most prominent feature of Czech culture is its family orientation. The Czechs love their family and work often comes second to that. In companies, employers are understanding of family needs. Although Czechs are not a group-oriented nation, they insist on good behavior towards others. From an early age their children are taught to greet other people in the street, respect the elderly and give up a seat to people in need on trams and buses.

3. Education

The number of literacy in the Czech Republic is relatively high; 99% of the population is literate. The school system differs from most of the other European countries. Czech children start mandatory education at primary school from the age of 6 until 15 and upon completion they usually continue at secondary or high school for the next four years. They can also attend a vocational school or apprenticeship for 2-4 years. These, however, are not considered mandatory. The highest education available is a university degree that requires to pass a very competitive and strict entry examination.

4. Transportation

The major means of transportation in the Czech Republic is car. They are the most flexible type of transportation due to a good infrastructure that connects other cities in the Czech Republic and in Europe. The second most flexible and easily accessible transportation is railway, with a dense network all over the country. Public transportation is available in all major cities and includes trams, buses and trolleys. Additionally, the capital Prague also has a 4-line subway system.

5. Life satisfaction

According to the University of Michigan's World Values Surveys on the happiest countries in the world, the Czech Republic ranks 40th among 79 countries being surveyed in terms of subjective well-being. The result of a Eurobarometer survey on life satisfaction across Europe shows that on the same level with other European countries, the Czech Republic shows high satisfaction scores in terms of family life, home and neighborhood. However, being a post-communist country, there seem to be differences in life satisfaction between younger and older generation.

Since the end of communism, the country has experienced numerous changes,

such as freedom of travel, freedom of speech, democracy, consumerism, capitalism, different social and political structures and so on. However, according to the older generation, some of these changes are perceived as beneficial to the young ones and not to them. Unlike the younger generation, the elderly may find themselves struggling to adjust.

LESSON NOTES

All About #7

Top 5 Czech Dishes

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The Focus of This Lesson is Czech Cuisine

If you like to drink good beer or wine with your meal, then the Czech cuisine can offer you many good dishes to go with. Although not considered exactly low in calories, the Czech cuisine has many specialties that cannot be easily found elsewhere.

It is thought that in the past because of the harsh winters and in order to be able to survive, Czech meals tended to be rather heavy, primarily consisting of meats, potatoes or dumplings (bread-like looking food made from flour, eggs and yeast and boiled). It is not unusual to see a menu consisting of lots of poultry (goose, duck, chicken), venison, pork, beef and also rabbit. Fish is rather rare, but one can find grilled trout (a river fish) or carp (served exclusively at Christmas time). Vegetables used to be pickled to preserve them rather than serving fresh ones, but the trend of vegetables has been changing with the awareness of healthy lifestyle and desirable slim line. Many restaurants besides traditional meals would also offer fresh salad bowls that can be served as a main dish too.

Having said the above, traditional meals are not losing their appeal at all. On the contrary, suffering for a long time from a limited access to good quality foods in the socialist era, the Czechs like more and more to cook fresh, traditional and regional meals including food of "the poor" (in connection with the past when people had very little money), various delicious sauces, and anything that the Czech grandmothers used to cook. The freshness of the ingredients has also become an important part of the Czech cuisine and going to a farmer's market to buy potatoes or herbs is considered the best.

Although the variety of herbs used when cooking has increased over the years, the main ones regarded as very traditional are **kmín** ("caraway seed," used for example in bread, with boiled potatoes or grilled chicken), **kopr** ("dill") particularly suitable for pickled gherkins or dill sauce that is traditionally served with beef, **majoránka** ("marjoram") that tastes great in some thick sauces as well as Czech potato soup or potato pancakes, an indispensable part of the Czech cuisine.

Czech people are very hospitable, especially if they learn this is your first time visiting their country. They will always ask you if you already had this and this dish, and if not, they will probably invite you to have it. And of course to have a beer with them! It's easy to become friends over a pint of beer in a local pub. Although Czech people like to eat lunch or dinner in the company of others, or in a group, they do not tend to share their meal in the middle of the table as is common in some East Asian countries. The only exception would be parties where food may be provided on larger trays where everyone helps themselves. Otherwise, you eat what you order. It would be considered very impolite to reach into somebody's plate to taste their dish!

Popular Food Items

Polévka ("soup")

Talking about Czech cuisine, a good soup must never be missing at the table. In the old times, a good soup was a must before eating the main meal and this tradition still prevails. The most frequent soup on a menu is *bramboračka* ("potato soup") and *česnečka* ("garlic soup") or *hovězí vývar* ("beef broth") with thin short noodles. They often come with slices of bread or bread rolls for everybody to take. From the richer types of soups it would be the world-wide known *guláš* ("goulash") consisting of meat, sausages, onions and paprika.

Knedlíky ("dumplings")

They are many varieties of dumpling in the Czech Republic. They range from bread dumplings, to potato dumplings used as a side dish for main meals, but also sweet yeast dumplings filled with fruit that can be eaten as a dessert or a main dish. It's not so common in some other countries to have a sweet main meal, but *borůvkové knedlíky* ("blueberry dumplings") or *jahodové knedlíky* ("strawberry dumplings") are very popular; in fact, they are the pride of Czech cuisine. A specially made dough is flattened, cut into squares and each square filled with blueberries, or strawberries (it can be also plums or other fruit) and shaped into small balls. Those are then boiled in water. When boiled they are served hot, topped with grated quark (a common dairy product), a little sugar and melted butter. They taste amazing, especially in winter.

Chléb ("Bread")

Bread is one of the most frequently consumed food items in the Czech Republic. It not only accompanies soup and some other dishes, but it is also a main part of the daily breakfast in most Czech families. Bread can be eaten with spreads, such as butter, *pâté* or vegetables, or layered with cheese, salami and sliced vegetables. Children like it with jam or marmalade. The most typical Czech type of bread is dark rye and wheat, sunflower bread, wholemeal bread or bread with multiple kinds of seeds. Another kind is *rohlík* (a bread roll) that is smaller but has a longer shape. It's usually cut in half and the inside is filled similarly to a sandwich (butter, ham, egg, etc). Fried or toasted bread is known as *topinka*, traditionally spread with garlic and sprinkled with salt. It can also be eaten with some meat on the top or an egg omelette.

Houby ("mushrooms")

Mushrooms have a special place within the Czech cuisine. The main reason is that Czech people like to pick them themselves in a forest. It could be said that picking mushrooms is a national hobby. As soon as they start growing in the autumn, you can see people heading to the woods with woven baskets. However, it takes some knowledge to know which mushrooms are edible and which are not! In

biology classes, children are taught about edible mushrooms at school. Czech people like to make mushroom soup *houbová polévka*, or they make *smaženice* ("scrambled mushrooms") prepared from chopped mushrooms, eggs and onion and fried on a pan just like scrambled eggs. There is also a special dish of an old Czech name *houbový Kuba* ("mushroom Jacob") that is made just at Christmas time and consists of barley, onions, mushrooms and garlic. The mixture is baked in the oven.

***Bramboráky* ("potato pancakes")**

Most people would think that pancakes can be only eaten sweet with fruit, ice cream or cream. However, Czech people have their own variety that includes salty pancakes. *Bramboráky* ("potato pancakes") as the name suggests are made from potatoes which is the main ingredients. In order to fry them like a pancake, raw potatoes are grated and mixed with an egg and breadcrumbs, salt, black pepper, garlic, marjoram and flour are added. The mixture is then spread on a frying pan just like a large pancake and fried until golden. They can be eaten as they are, or they can be used as a side dish of a main meal. Czech people make them often at home too because they are cheap to make and they can feed the whole family from one bowl. Some varieties of potato pancake come with grated cabbage or zucchini, and meat varieties are also not unusual.

Seasonal Dishes

One seasonal dish that cannot be eaten at any other time but Christmas is *kapr* ("carp"). To prepare this dish, the head and tail of the fish is chopped off (a soup is made from these) and the flesh cut vertically into horseshoe looking-like slices. They are then covered in flour, egg and breadcrumbs and fried. Traditionally carp is served with chilled potato salad made from boiled and cubed potatoes, mixed together with mayonnaise and pickled vegetables, such as peas, carrot and pickled gherkins. Patted with a kitchen towel to get rid of excessive fat, the carp slices are drizzled with lemon juice and served with beer or white wine.

Table Etiquette

Not only in public, but also at home there are certain rules that should be followed when eating. The most basic ones are: do not speak with your mouth full, wipe off your mouth with a napkin after and in between meals and do not put your elbows on the table. However, there are few more important ones if you want to avoid any embarrassing moments in a restaurant, at a party or at a formal gathering.

1. Never lick your knife to clean it of remaining food. This is totally against Czech table etiquette.

2. Do not make loud noises when eating, and especially do not slurp or drink your soup! It is highly irritating and impolite.
3. If some food gets stuck in your teeth, do not try to get it out at the table where everyone can see. Excuse yourself and take a toothpick to the men's or ladies' room.
4. Don't forget to address people who are dining with you by saying *dobrou chut* before you start eating. Like other countries, Czech people also say something like "Bon appetit" before they eat.

The Top 5 Czech Dishes

Number 5: *Tatarský biftek* ("steak tartare")

The foundation of this delicious dish is raw meat of beef sirloin that is minced or very finely chopped with the tip of a sharp knife. It is served along with onion, mustard, salt, pepper and worcester sauce and according to one's taste sweet paprika, chilli or ketchup can be added. It is all topped with a raw egg and mixed well together. This mixture is then placed on the top of a well toasted/fried bread with garlic that is called *topinka*.

Tatarský biftek is most often served on a large oval plate or on a wooden board. Other ingredients to add more flavor are laid around the meat or in small dishes. The toasted or fried bread should be very crispy and fresh made.

Number 4: *Guláš* ("goulash")

Historically speaking goulash originates from Hungary where this dish is made like a soup from meat cubes soaked in onion sauce and seasoned with paprika. A long time ago this dish spread across the whole Europe from Hungary, but it was adjusted by adding flour to make it a thick sauce with meat rather than a soup. Therefore, the Czech version of goulash is different and could be compared to an English stew. It's usually made using beef or pork, but the meat is not limited to that and some people make goulash with venison or game. The basic ingredients are meat, onion, ground paprika, tomato paste, beef or venison bouillon. All of this is stewed in a large pot. To achieve the right thickness, flour, bread or corn starch can be added to the mixture and more seasoning to adjust flavour. For those who prefer spicy tastes, they can add chilli pepper. Making goulash is such a popular activity that since 2004 in a small Czech town Rakvice, there has been an annual competition called The Best Cooked Goulash.

Number 3: *Smažený sýr* ("fried cheese")

Among Czech main meals, a classic vegetarian dish available is *smažený sýr* ("fried cheese") typically served with boiled potatoes and tartar sauce. The type of cheese used for frying are Hermelín (Camembert) or Edam. They are thinly sliced, covered in flour, egg and breadcrumbs and quickly deep fried. This food is relatively easy to make and it's quick, so it can also be purchased as a fast food in the streets where the cheese is placed between slices of a rounded bread roll. At some restaurants, they will be happy to wrap it for you if you are on the go.

Number 2: *Svíčková na smetaně* (Steak sirloin in cream sauce)

If you travel to the Czech Republic, one of the must-eat dishes is *Svíčková na smetaně*. Although it's traditionally a winter dish because of its thick consistency, you can find it in most restaurants throughout the year, especially in the tourist areas to give people the opportunity to eat it at any time. In winter, however, if you come from the cold outside, this rich dish is exactly what you need to warm you up. The meat is cut from the best part of beef, marinated with vegetables (onion, carrots, parsley root and celeriac) and double cream in which the meat is also cooked along with spices (bay leaf, black pepper, allspice and thyme). Served with soft bread dumplings boiled and sliced, a spoonful of whipped cream and cranberries, this meal satisfies even the most picky of eaters. At home, Czech people enjoy this dish primarily on Sundays as a family meal.

Number 1: *Vepřo-knedlo-zelo* ("Pork-dumpling-cabbage")

This is the most popular traditional Czech food and *vepřo-knedlo-zelo* is a very colloquial title of this national dish. Roast pork with bread dumplings and steamed cabbage consists of three parts served together on one plate: roasted and sliced pork meat, bread or potato dumpling also sliced, steamed white or red cabbage, or sauerkraut. After these three items have been placed on the plate, the meat juice that was created during roasting is poured over. This way the dumplings are not dry and are easier to eat when soaked in the juice. The custom is to drink a pint of beer with this dish.

5 Fun Facts about Czech food culture

Number 5: *Czechs have the largest consumption of beer per capita*

According to the Euro Beer Statistics 2012, the Czech Republic consumes more beer per capita than any other country in the world. In 2011, the number was 145L per person, which is more than Germany, Great Britain or France. The most famous beer brands made in the Czech Republic are Pilsen (Pilsner), Budějovický budvar (Budweiser), Staropramen, Krušovice, Bernard, Velkopopovický kozel.

Number 4: *A delicacy is pickled sausages called Utopenec ("drawn man")*

This is a slightly odd title for a food item considered a delicacy to nibble whilst

drinking beer. Have you ever eaten a "drawn man?" You can do so in the Czech Republic. Sausages pickled in vinegar, salt, sugar, mustard, slices of onion and all sorts of spices are stuffed into a big jar where they stay for 4-7 days to achieve the best taste. The color of the sausage is rather pale, perfectly reflecting its name. Many Czechs like to eat these sausages along with bread and a beer.

Number 3: Czech people eat red cabbage with sugar

For most nations a sweet cabbage might sound strange, but Czech people like to make their red cabbage sweet. They add cranberries, bay leaves, red vinegar and a little red onion to the steamed cabbage and some sugar after. It's a perfect side dish for poultry, especially goose, because according to the Czech custom, a goose dish cannot be served without deliciously fruity flavored cabbage.

Number 2: Meat is consumed with whipped cream and cranberries

One of the most traditional Czech meals Beef Sirloin with Cream Sauce is for many other nationalities surprisingly served with a heap of sweet whipped cream and cranberries on the top of the meat. The unusual combination of sweet and meat flavor takes many by surprise, especially if they consider that sweets are only eaten as a dessert following the main meal. Nevertheless, the fruity sweetness of cranberries along with rich cream complements the richness of this dish extremely well.

Number 1: In Prague, beer is cheaper than bottled water

Out of all European countries, the Czech Republic is the only one where beer is cheaper than water.

It's a paradox, but it's true that currently in Prague you can purchase a pint of beer for some 25-30 Czech koruna, while a small 3dcl bottle of water costs about 35 Czech koruna. The locals are used to it, foreigners are surprised. However, a new upcoming legislation from the Ministry of Health fighting addictive issues of alcohol and cigarettes is about to put an end to this unusual phenomenon.

LESSON NOTES

All About #8

Top 5 Things You Need to Know About Czech Society

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The Focus of This Lesson is the Top 5 Things You Need to Know about Czech Society

Society is a very broad topic, and this cannot be summarized in a single lesson. That's why we're narrowing it down to the top five most important aspects of the Czech society!

Major Cities

Prague

Located in the north-west of the Czech Republic, Prague is the capital and the country's largest city with a total population of 1.262 million people. Over the last twenty years Prague has undergone a great urban development changes that reflect important social changes—these took place after the 1989 Velvet Revolution, a period of upheaval and non-violent transformation of the then communist Czechoslovakia into a democratic state. From a relatively gray and dead city surrounded by cement walls of uniform blocks of flats, Prague has changed into an internationally famous metropolis that attracts many tourists and business. Freedom in business and architecture especially have been reflected in the latest urban development with both positive and negative consequences. As a city with more than thousand years of tradition, changes have been carried into the urban and architectural development showing many time layers. Each period of time has more or less left some marks on the picture of Prague.

Brno

Located in the south-east of the Czech Republic, Brno is the second largest city in the country and the capital of South Moravia. Being the centre of Judicial Authority, the Supreme Court, Constitutional Court and Supreme Administrative Court are all located there. Brno has about 400,000 residents, but counting the nearest surrounding areas and villages, the number goes up to 730,000. Brno is also a city of education and has the second largest university in the country with about 90,000 students and 190 departments. Although modernized with plenty of business going on, Brno still preserves Moravian customs, such as national costumes worn at festivals, folk music, dance and related exhibitions or other traditional activities. Brno has also a World Heritage Site approved by UNESCO and other historical buildings worth seeing.

Ostrava

Located 360 km north-east from Prague, Ostrava is the third largest city in the

Czech Republic close to the Polish and Slovakian borders. In the past, Ostrava was a center of heavy industry, including mining and steelmaking, which attracted many migrants from Poland and Germany who came here to work. The city was nicknamed "the steel heart of the Republic." Due to the political and economic changes after 1989, the heavy industry gradually diminished, except the iron and steel industry which now focuses on machine engineering. Besides technical sights and historical museums, the city has much more to offer; the 13th century Silesian-Ostrava Castle is a place to see permanent exhibitions showing the story of Ostrava, The Johann Palisa Observatory and Planetarium invites visitors to enjoy a relaxing time under the starry sky, or the Ostrava Zoo and Botanical gardens.

Family Life

According to Demographic Research, the latest phenomenon among young people and families in the Czech Republic is that fewer people are getting married and families are also having fewer children. Marriage and children are getting postponed to a later age and nuclear families these days usually consist of only three members. It is not unusual to see couples cohabiting and bringing up a children without marital status. Among the European countries, the Czech Republic is now the second lowest in child birth rate. These dramatic changes appeared after the fall of communism mainly due to the new opportunities in life that are directly in competition with the life of a family; young people now spend more time in higher education, and finally finding a work opportunity has also become a challenge. The economic instability also plays an important role: young people worry about being able to support themselves, let alone a whole family.

Work Culture and Economy

Since the Czech Republic joined the EU in 2004, its economy has been stable and prosperous. However, in 2012 the Czech Economy fell into a recession due to a decreasing demand from other Western European countries and relatively small domestic spending. Because the Czech economy heavily depends on export to Germany and Western Europe, any negative changes in the western economy have an impact on Czech production. In order to revive, a more stable foreign environment and general stabilisation among the eurozone is needed. The Czech Economy Forecast for 2013 is that recovery is going to happen, but only gradually, driven mainly by net exports and some gross capital formation. The GDB is expected to stagnate in 2013 and to increase by 1.2% in 2014 (Czechinvest Group basic data).

In terms of work culture, Czech people are generally hard working and seem to have a good work ethic. However, deeply rooted in the Czech culture, family has the foremost and top priority over anything including work and therefore, through the eyes of other nations, Czechs may not seem to have such a strong work drive.

Within the work environment, communication is more formal than it is common, for example, in Anglo-saxon countries and subordinates tend to keep more distance from their superiors. It has been noted that those who work on flexible rates and bonuses tend to stay at work longer than those who work on fixed rates.

Politics

The Czech Republic is a sovereign, integrated and democratic state with democratic political system. Its guiding principle is that the State of the Czech Republic abides by the rule of law, based on respect for the rights and freedoms of humankind and citizens.

The Czech Republic has a multi-party system with the Socialist Democracy party being the largest, occupying 22.08% of election results. Function-wise, it can be compared to the British Labour Party. It is a pro-European Union party with a strong emphasis on social market democracy, privatization process of institutions such as banks and foreign investment.

The two main representatives of executive power within the country are the President of the Republic and the Czech Government. The President is the head of the state and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, but he only has limited power. The President gets elected for five years and can be re-elected only once. It is the Czech Government with the Prime Minister on top who executes supreme power in the country. The Czech Government has full control of other main ministries and their administration, central bodies and legislation within the country. It also controls the state budget.

Law and legal regulations are mostly all handled by the Supreme Court of the Czech Republic, which is the supreme judicial body within the jurisdiction of the courts. Exceptions are matters that are dealt with by constitutional court or supreme administrative court.

Generational Trends

As a consequence of consumerism, the Czech Republic too has been exposed to quick technological developments. Although the Internet still remains an important technological advantage, what is changing for the Czech people is the way they use the Internet. More and more people are turning to portable Internet because they need to use it out of their homes. The rapid development of technology has enabled them to use smart phones, tablets, ultra mobile PC and other wireless portable devices on a daily basis. 67% of the Czech Republic has Internet networks and Internet access and there are 2.6 million mobile Internet users. About 23% of the population owns smart phones and 5.5% are tablet users (according to Marketing News.cz).

According to Mediaresearch (a Czech company of marketing and media analysis)

growing popular activities are now online shopping, listening to music and using search engines for information mainly through Google, Seznam or Bing. Although social networks are still very popular, instant messaging on social sites such as MSN or ICQ has been decreasing since 2010. Instead, there is a new trend of using the Whatsapp application that enables instant messaging internationally along with sending photos directly from a mobile phone.

LESSON NOTES

All About #9

Top 5 Important Dates During the Czech Calendar Year

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Top 5 Dates During the Calendar Year

Oh, dear, oh, dear! How to choose among so many!

Number 1: Christmas Eve and New Year's (24th and 31st December)

Christmas Eve in the Czech Republic is celebrated on 24th December and it is the last day of the Christmas preparations.

Christmas Eve means a very merry day especially for children who look forward to the arrival of *Ježíšek* (this character has the same looks and function as Santa Claus) and the presents they will be given. Traditionally families visit each other and in the evening bigger children decorate a Christmas tree.

One of the customs on Christmas day is to have a fasting lunch without meat. The traditional Christmas lunch dish is made from mushrooms (*Houbový Kuba*), or mushrooms with peeled grains of barley (*Muzika*). In the evening, the whole family gathers by the dinner table to eat a traditional carp meal with chilled potato salad, although some families replace carp with other types of fish or chicken cutlets. Throughout the whole Christmas time, people like to eat sweet treats such as home-made cookies made at the preparation time. After the meal, children expect *Ježíšek* to bring them presents.

New Year's is a holiday and celebration of the new year's beginning. The Czech people call the day *Silvestr* and the celebration starts in the evening of 31st December. Usually the celebrations go on until the early hours of the next day.

Nowadays it is less common for people to send traditional Christmas card wishes as those have been replaced by mobile messages and emails. The substance of the new year messages, however, remains the same. It is to wish people happiness and good health in the following year. Some people make new year resolutions of what they will or will not do next year.

There are many things going on in the streets at this time. We have beautiful Christmas markets in Prague and other cities and on the evening of New Year's, people come out to celebrate, awaiting midnight to watch the fireworks organized by most cities and to wish each other all the best in the following year. After midnight, young people especially tend to visit night clubs, local bars or other pubs to continue the joyful night until early hours. The next day is a national holiday.

Number 2: Easter and Easter Monday (*Velikonoce/Velikonoční pondělí*)

Easter is one of the most important Christian holidays of the year. Historically, this tradition is a celebration of spring and the rebirth of Jesus. In the Czech calendar,

Easter does not have a fixed date, but the date changes each year according to the calculations of the "big night" when Jesus was revived.

For Czech people, Easter means a few days' holiday and if the date happens to be just after the weekend, they can get as many as 4-5 days off. Nearly all offices, local shops and other business are closed and public transport operates on a Sunday timetable. People spend this time with their families and in preparation for Easter Monday that has been linked to many traditional activities. One of the typical ones is that boys make whips from willow sticks and the girls paint Easter Eggs. The Easter eggs, a symbol of fertility and health, are then given to the boys when they come to the house to (symbolically) whip the girls whilst carol-singing. According to the tradition, the boys lightly whip girls so that they don't "dry out" and stay healthy for the next year. The traditionally hand-painted or in other ways decorated eggs are recently being replaced by chocolate eggs or other sweets. At home, people eat *Velikonoční beránek* (Easter Ram), a baked sponge cake in the shape of a ram or *Vánočka*, a homemade sweet bread with almonds and raisins.

Number 3: Liberation Day (8th May) (*Den osvobození*)

8th May is connected with one of the most important historical events in the Czech Republic as well as in Europe. It was 8th May 1945 when Germany surrendered to the pressure of the Soviet Red Army, which brought an end to WW2. Although in some parts of the world the war still continued (i.e. Japan/America), Prague was liberated on the morning of 8th May.

This day is recognised as a national holiday in the Czech Republic and people commemorate the day by putting flowers on the memorials of the fallen victims. The President and other representatives of the government officially pay their respects which is usually live broadcasted.

Number 4: Independent Czechoslovak State Day (28th October) (*Den vzniku samostatného československého státu*)

The Czechoslovak State declared its independence on 28th October 1918, at the end of the First World War. The state was one of the successors of the collapsed Habsburg Empire (Austria/Hungary). Thanks to the first president Tomas Garyk Masaryk, who worked on the formation of the state and its independence, Czechoslovakia was later recognised and declared an independent state. The official title Czechoslovakia lasted until 1989 when Czech and Slovak split into two separated states.

28th October is a national holiday and people who have done something special are officially awarded by the President.

For example, in 2012 Czech Professor Ladislav Bařinka (now 85) who is one of the top Czech plastic and reconstruction surgeons received a medal for his work and development of new surgical methods, operational procedures and patents. Besides the Czech Republic, he also worked in the USA, Great Britain, Austria and

Syria. Prof. Bařinka is an author of a large scientific project and an outstanding professor who brought up three generations of plastic surgeons.

Number 5: Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day (17th November) (*Den boje za svobodu a demokracii*)

This day means two important events for the Czech people.

The first event in 1939 was an invasion by the Nazis into Czechoslovakia that was then declared the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. All universities were closed on 17th November by the Nazis after the student Jan Opletal protested against the invasion by burning himself to death. His act, perceived as resistance to the enemy, led to the execution of another nine key students.

The second important event was 17th November 1989, when students in Prague started protesting against the communist regime. Their protest was violently suppressed by the police in the streets. This day was the beginning of the so called *Velvet Revolution* which led to the end of communism in Czechoslovakia. The name "Velvet Revolution" was created by journalists and reflects the peaceful nature of the protest that did not involve any violence from the students side but was based on mutual dialogue. The most significant person of the whole revolution was the future president Václav Havel.

This day is a national holiday and people commemorate the events by lighting candles and placing flowers in the streets where the protests took place.

LESSON NOTES

All About #10

Top 5 Things You Need to Know About Czech Pop Culture

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of this Lesson is Czech Music, Pop Culture, Sports and Media

Popular TV

The largest broadcaster in the Czech Republic is the privately owned commercial TV Nova, which has the highest number of viewers in the country. Established in 1994, it soon reached the largest market share in the Czech Republic. Since 2012, the number of viewers has been slightly higher than of the public Czech TV (*Česká televize*) thanks to Nova's good strategic investments in programs and launching new thematic stations that complement each other. Nowadays Nova can also be watched in high definition via satellite or cable TV.

The second largest TV broadcaster is the public television *Česká televize*, with four main programs ČT1, ČT2, ČT24 news channel and ČT sport. This TV primarily broadcasts Czech movies, news and family films on its ČT1 channel, whilst ČT2 provides documentaries, daily news and culturally related programs. Original English version programs or films are mostly subtitled or dubbed.

Satellite or cable TV services are provided by the main provider UPC, and most properties in the Czech Republic have access to them. Broadcasting programs are mainly Czech or German, but it is also possible to watch international programs in English, such as Animal Planet, BBC Prime, Cartoon Network, CNN, Discovery, Eurosport, MTV, VH1 and National Geographic.

In the past, it was popular to watch international programs or their Czech remakes that were brought as novelties on to Czech TV. TV shows such as *Britain's Got Talent* or *CSI Miami* are, however, no longer in demand. Currently the most popular programs to watch in the Czech Republic are series, films, children fairy tales, dramas or any other domestically produced programs. These days people give priority to watching good old Czech movies, trusted faces and favorite Czech actors.

Popular Czechs Abroad

It is in classical music and literature where the Czechs have been the most successful abroad. The most outstanding people include Czech composer Bedřich Smetana (1824 - 1884), said to be the father of Czech music thanks to his development of a new musical style that is considered a reflection of his country longing for freedom. Outside of the Czech Republic, he has been most famous for his works, such as opera *The Bartered Bride* (*Prodaná nevěsta*), symphonic cycle *My Fatherland* (*Má vlast*), which portrays the history, legends and landscape of the composer's native land, and *First String Quartet* from his work *My Life*.

The second most famous composer of classical music is Antonin Dvořák

(1841-1904) whose most recognisable works are *Symphony No. 7* (written for London), *New World Symphony*, the *American String Quartet* and the opera *Rusalka*. Dvořák moved to the United States in 1892 where he became director of the National Conservatory of Music of America in New York City.

A nominee for the Nobel Prize in literature is the most recognised Czech writer Milan Kundera (1929-present), who, although born and educated in the Czech Republic, now lives and writes in France. In 1981 he took the French citizenship by naturalisation and regards himself as French. His most recognisable works translated into other languages are *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1979) and *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984).

In terms of Czech cinema, director Miloš Forman (1932-present) is the most well-known director and screenwriter abroad having won an Academy Award for Best Director and all five major Academy Awards (Best Picture, Actor in Lead Role, Actress in Lead Role, Director, and Screenplay) for his movies *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Amadeus*. Another very famous work of his while working in the US is *The People vs. Larry Flynt*.

Another well-known Czech person abroad is Karel Roden, a very respected Czech actor who appeared in John Herzfeld's action movie *15 Minutes* alongside Robert de Niro. His next appearance in other international movies was in *Blade II* (2002), *Bulletproof Monk* (2003), *The Bourne Supremacy* (2004), *Hellboy* (2004), *Running Scared* (2006), *Largo Winch* (2008), *RocknRolla* (2008), and *Orphan* (2009).

In sports, the Czech Republic has produced some outstanding hockey and tennis players. The best ones are hockey player Jaromír Jágr who played for NHL teams in the USA and Canada, and goalkeeper Dominik Hašek whose efforts brought Olympic Gold to the Czech team in Nagano. Czech tennis school has also shown amazing results, Martina Navrátilová being the most successful one winning 164 titles in total from various international tournaments and nine times at Wimbledon.

Popular Music

The Czech music scene has been largely influenced by the political changes of the 20th century in the Czech Republic. Genres that were previously either suppressed or forbidden by the Nazi or communist regime have especially flourished (*rock, hardcore, alternative music, folk and country*). Czech people like to do their own music and many new bands appeared on the scene, performing live in local rock clubs or at open-air festivals.

Dance and Electronic music has a special position in the Czech Republic. In the communist era it was nearly impossible to import any instruments that are needed to create dance music. Thus, after opening the borders, a massive boom of dance music in the country occurred. *Drum and bass* was one of the first most popular genres. It is still very fashionable to go to dance parties and nightclubs and there are many options for dance music fans to choose from. These days going back to 'retro' style has been one of the latests techno music phenomenons.

Free of any political influence, jazz in the Czech Republic has been progressing very well since the 50s. Nowadays there are countless numbers of jazz bands and jazz clubs one can choose from, especially when visiting Prague. Established in 1964, an International Jazz Festival is held annually in Prague. Artists who participate in this festival play traditional as well as contemporary jazz music. Jazz has been very popular among the younger generation too and if you stroll across Prague in summer you can see young jazz bands playing at many places outside and very often on Charles Bridge too.

From the newer genre, *hip-hop* is one of the quickest to develop after the Velvet Revolution addressing many young people. The greatest influence on the further development of hip-hop in the Czech Republic has had a three-day long festival held since 2001 that has been devoted solely to this genre. There is a large community of hip-hop fans, whose lifestyle has been closely connected with snowboarding and skateboarding.

Popular Sports

Playing sports has always been one of the most popular pastimes in the Czech Republic.

Having good conditions for both winter and summer sports, Czech people like to spend their winter holidays on ski and summer by swimming, diving, cycling and lately by extreme sports, such as rock climbing or paragliding.

As for team sports, football and ice-hockey are the most popular sports among Czechs who tend to be very patriotic when it comes to international matches with big rivals such as Germany, Russia, Canada or Sweden. In the world, the Czech ice hockey team has been one of the top five ones, winning their first Olympic Gold medal in Nagano in 1998 and the latest gold medal in 2010 in Men's World Ice Hockey Championship. In football, the Czech Football Association with its best team Sparta has been very successful domestically as well as in European contests. The most important and closely watched events for the Czechs are Ice Hockey World Championship, Olympic Ice Hockey Tournament, European Football Championship and Football World Cup. Most people watch them on TV at the time of happening and the most loyal fans travel to support their favourite team in person.

In recent years, Czech Republic has had some outstanding results in skiing and tennis competitions too, Šárka Záhrobská being a gold medal winner in World Championship in slalom skiing (2007) and tennis player Petra Kvitová winning the 2011 Wimbledon Championship.

Some other popular sports are shooting, canoeing, basketball, volleyball, handball, squash, and kickball.

International Pop Culture

After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the Czechs have always been up-to-date on international pop culture, thanks to their interest in arts and music and thanks to the

open market. Over the last 26 years, popular international music has been streamed by Czech radio stations or live concerts shown on TV, following mainly top US and Great Britain's music charts. International artists ranging from pop to rock, funky or alternative music often performed live many times in Prague Arena. There are also annual international music festivals held in Praha or other larger cities, few examples being the International Jazz Festival Praha or multi-genre International Music Festival Český Krumlov. Participants are worldwide known artists including Czech artists and new faces.

International TV programs are available on Czech TV through cable or satellite, especially sought by English speaking expats living in the Czech Republic or other people who like to watch and tune in to programs in their original English version.

LESSON NOTES

All About #11

Top 5 Most Useful Tools for Learning Czech

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The Focus of This Lesson is the Top 5 Most Useful Tools for Learning Czech

Entertainment

Language is not just an academic pursuit. The purpose of any language is to communicate with others, and that is more often done through stories and video than through academic papers. Besides, these sources of reading and listening pleasure provide excellent examples of how native speakers actually use the language, something no textbook can copy. Some great sources for Czech language learners of all levels are YouTube and Radio Praha (<http://www.radio.cz/cz>). You can study Czech by watching short films, listening to songs and audio news, or reading featured articles about all aspects of life in the Czech Republic. Just type in anything of interest and you'll be able to get to know more about the Czech Republic and at the same time improve your Czech language.

Dictionary

Using bilingual dictionaries is always advisable. There are a lot of Czech-English/English-Czech dictionaries available on the web, but the two most user-friendly are the <http://glosbe.com/> and <http://www.seznam.cz/>. Just type in a word, and the equivalent plus explanation will be provided. The great thing about *Glosbe* is that it also includes other languages, so it is also convenient for non-native English speakers, too. Dictionary *Seznam.cz* translates from Czech to English, German, French, Italian and Spanish. Google translate is another option but please note that it is best used for translating single words only. Figurative phrases will only be translated literally. If you type a phrase, only the literal translation will come out and sometimes it makes no sense.

Czech-Speaking Friends

This is potentially the most efficient and most rewarding source of learning Czech. Friends who speak to you in Czech can give you more insight, understanding, and help you feel the heart of Czechs. With their help, you'll learn to express yourself in Czech and understand others in ways that none of the tools previously mentioned can even approach. If you have a Czech friend or a friend who speaks Czech well, catch up with him or her regularly. It's the best and quickest way to mastering the Czech language.

Social Networking

If you have no Czech-speaking friends, you can make use of some language learning forums or social networking site. One of the best is called Lang-8 (<http://lang-8.com/>) or My Language Exchange (<http://www.mylanguageexchange.com/>).

This site is different from other language learning sites in that it provides a free connection for native speakers of a language to correct writings of people who are studying that language. For example, a native English speaker can correct a Czech person's English writing and a native Czech speaker can correct a native English speaker who is studying Czech. It's quite helpful because it offers a free service for people to correct each other's writings. It's a great place to see how a native person might write a particular sentence, paragraph, or short writing sample.

And if you want to meet even more Czech people, the best place is Facebook. I am sure you are familiar with it. It's been around since 2004 and like in most countries, has skyrocketed in the Czech Republic. It is even more popular among Czechs than any other Czech social network. So it's easy to find Czech people on Facebook. Your best bet would be to look for Czech study groups and pages as there is always a helpful Czech trawling those places in search of people who need help with their studies.

Pen and Paper

Ultra-low tech and ultra cheap, pen and paper are still the king of speed and flexibility in note taking. No one will mug you for a notebook (but they might for that three hundred dollar smart phone or one thousand dollar laptop), and it doesn't matter if it gets wet—let it dry and keep on using it, or throw it out and get a new one. Journalists still use good old fashioned pen and paper for note-taking because it's just plain faster. For example, you're at the store and you have a good idea about something to study, but when you have time to study, you can't remember what it was. Has this happened to you? Instead, write down all your ideas and then choose what you want to study from your list. That way, you study what you want, when you want, and you aren't wasting time trying to remember your great idea.

Czech newspapers are a great way to learn. *Deník* contains most important regional and international news in Czech language while the newspaper *iMetro* is free to pick up anywhere in the underground stations when travelling across Prague. Another popular one is *Mladá Fronta Dnes* (for short MF Dnes), the most popular Czech daily newspaper that also has been affiliated with an Internet portal, *iDnes.cz*, often having the same articles and news.

Next up is the magazine *Respekt*, a prestigious magazine that was several times nominated the magazine of the year. It contains columns with commentary, home news, economy, international news, interviews, civilization and culture topics. Another good Czech magazine for people who like travel is called *Lidé a země*, a geological travel magazine, and finally the magazine *Ego* containing articles on lifestyle.

Note: Also don't forget you can get several good magazines, leaflets and other very useful material related to the Czech Republic or travel to the Czech Republic for free at any Czech Embassy. In order to promote the Czech Republic and its culture, they have lots of interesting material ready for their visitors!

Some other good links include:

<http://www.czechtourism.com/home/>

<http://www.expats.cz/>

<http://www.czech.cz/en>

<http://www.myczechrepublic.com/>

<http://www.prague-guide.co.uk/>

LESSON NOTES

All About #12

Top 5 Tips for Avoiding Common Mistakes in Czech

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Tips to Help Overcome Some Common Errors That Learners of Czech language make Make

Tip #1: Do pay attention to some prepositions

Many foreign learners of the Czech language get mixed up when it comes to prepositions.

The most important ones are the prepositions **do** ("into"), **na** ("to") and **k/ke** ("to").

Generally speaking, these prepositions have two uses: *do* is used for motion into, such as into closed or limited places, whilst *na* is used for the purpose of actions and activities. *K* then is used as a motion to a point or in connection with visiting a person/people.

It is not always easy to distinguish for learners of Czech language which preposition is a motion to a point or an activity and so on. But the learning becomes easier as you listen to native speakers and how they use them in which situation.

do - motion into:

1. *Jdu do krámu*
"I'm going **into** a shop"
2. *Jdu na divadla*
"I'm going **to** a theater"

na - purpose, action, activity:

1. *Jdu na poštu*
"I'm going **to** the post office"
2. *Letím na Jamajku*
"I'm flying to Jamaica"
3. *Jdu na zápas*
"I'm going [to see] a match"

k/ke - visiting people, motion to a point:

1. *Jedu **k** dědovi*
"I'm going to grandpa's"
2. *Jdeme **k** řece*
"We are going to the river"
3. *Jdu **ke** kamarádovi*
"I'm going to my friend's"

Do not say *jdu **do** záchodu* ("I'm going **into** the toilet"), but say *jdu **na** záchod* ("I'm going **to** the toilet").

Tip #2: Don't mix up genders

Czech uses genders for all objects to distinguish male (*on/ten*), female (*ona/ta*) and neutral (*ono/to*). The most important thing is not to mix male and female genders when referring to yourself or other people as it may sound funny or be confusing who you are talking about.

For example:

If you are a male, do not say *by**la** jsem* ("I was"), say *ale by**l** jsem* ("I was").

Any verb in its past tense form ending with [**l**] only refers to a **male gender**, For example:

*pracov**al** jsem* ("I was working"), *nap**sal** jsem* ("I wrote"), *vař**il** jsem* ("I cooked"), *sp**al** jsem* ("I slept").

Any verb in its past tense form ending with [**la**]' refers to the **female gender**. For example:

*pracov**ala** jsem* ("I was working"), *nap**sala** jsem* ("I wrote"), *vař**ila** jsem* ("I cooked"), *sp**ala** jsem* ("I slept").

Tip #3: Learn basic classifiers

In English, a noun phrase relating to the number of an item is formed by using number, followed directly by the plural form of the noun. But in Czech, the cardinal numbers change depending on gender and the nouns according to quantity. English users often forget about the genders as well as that plurals change the form of nouns.

For example:

Gender and numerals:

Male gender - *Jeden pes* ("one dog")

Female gender - *Jedna kočka* ("one cat")

Neutral gender - *Jedno kuře* ("one chicken")

Pivo ("beer") is a neutral gender in Czech (*to pivo*).

When counting, the numerals go as follows:

jedno pivo = one beer

dvě piva = two beers

tři piva = three beers

čtyři piva = four beers

....but.....

pět piv = five beers

šest piv = six beers

sedm piv = seven beers

osm piv = eight beers

devět piv = nine beers

deset piv = ten beers

Tip #4: Learn pronunciation instantly

Don't delay! We've dedicated an entire lesson series to pronunciation because it's that important in Czech. It doesn't matter how well you know the grammar, if you don't pronounce it right, Czechs won't understand you.

Tip #5: Be careful when using personal pronouns

As we've learned that personal pronouns are very important in Czech, using an inappropriate one may sound very rude. It is **not** common for Czech people to ask about the other person's age when first meeting so you need to remember to use the honorific title *Vy* for addressing anybody older than yourself and people you meet for the first time. Unless it is indicated to you to use the more friendly title *Ty* at a later stage, it is advisable to keep using the more polite form. Never use the honorific title *Vy* for a child, for the child will be totally puzzled by you.

LESSON NOTES

All About #13

Top 5 Phrases Your Teacher Will Never Teach You

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The Focus of This Lesson is Common Czech Expressions That You Might Not Learn From a Czech Teacher

Phrase 1: *Počkej chvíli* ("Wait a moment")

This has the same meaning as "wait a moment" or "wait a minute." You can also just say *počkej*, which sounds more like "hold on" in English.

Phrase 2: *Co se děje?* ("What's going on?")

Literally this is translated as "What is happening?" This phrase can also be used as a "What is happening here?!" with emphasis.

Young people often use **co je?** to have the same meaning as "what's up?" which in Czech language is very informal. Depending on the situation, it's better to use it with care or else it can also be considered rude.

Phrase 3: *Hustý!* ("Cool")

Literally translates as "Thick!" It is used to compliment something that is very good or great or to respond to good news. For example if your friend says, "I've just bumped into a Hollywood star! I never thought this could happen to me," then you can reply with *hustý!* It is a very colloquial expression.

Phrase 4: *Vážně?* ("seriously!?")

More or less the same usage as in English. If you can't believe what you're hearing you usually respond with "seriously!?" and the same is in Czech *Vážně!?* Another more slangy version of this is **Fakt, jo!?** *Fakt, jo!?* is very informal and is pronounced with an element of surprise. *Fakt* is just like the English "fact," and *jo* is added as a question to what one is hearing, something like "is this true?" This phrase is used in daily conversation all the time.

Phrase 5: *Jasně/jasný...* ("I see/I understand/ok!")

You will hear Czech people saying this very often, especially the younger generation and middle aged people. This phrase is used as a confirmation that you agree, or understand what somebody else is telling you. The phrase can also be used to give permission to somebody to do something, for example if a friend asks you "can I have a look at your photos?" and you can answer *jasně* or *jasný* to say you have no problem with that. This expression is colloquial.

LESSON NOTES

All About #14

Top 5 Czech Classroom Phrases

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of this Lesson is Useful Czech Phrases For the Classroom

Phrase 1: *Co znamená...?* ("What does ... mean?")

Co znamená...? is a phrase that literally translates to "What does mean...?" This is a very useful phrase in the classroom because you can ask your teacher what certain words, ideas, or places, mean in Czech. You would use this phrase by adding the item you want to know before it.

For Example:

1. *Co znamená stránka?*
"What does *stránka* mean?" (*stránka* means "page")
2. *Co znamená kniha?*
"What does *kniha* mean?" (*kniha* means "book")
3. *Co znamená učit se?*
"What does *učit se* mean?" (*učit se* means "to study")

Phrase Two: *Otevřete si učebnice* ("Open your textbooks.")

Otevřete si učebnice literally means "Open your textbooks." Your teacher might use this phrase to tell the class to open their textbooks to begin reading. But as you have learned, Czech people generally address other people by the honorific title *Vy* when speaking to an individual. In this case, to address the whole classroom, such an honorific title is omitted. *Otevřete* with *te* at the end can indicate both polite form when speaking to an individual or normal form used for a group of people. When speaking to a friend, the sentence would be *otevři si učebnici*.

Phrase Three: *Já nerozumím* ("I don't understand.")

Já nerozumím is the exact equivalent of "I don't understand" (*Já* means "I," *ne* is a word to negate a verb, *rozumím* means "understand," *Nerozumím* = "I don't understand"). The personal pronoun *Já* ("I") is better omitted in this case. It is enough if you say *nerozumím*. You would use this phrase if your teacher explains something or says something that you don't/didn't understand.

Phrase Four: *Ještě jednou.* ("One more time.")

Ještě jednou literally means "Again once." You can expect your teacher to say this when they want you to repeat something or you can also use this when you want

your teacher to explain something again. For that you just need to add *prosím* ("please") at the end of the sentence to make it more polite toward your teacher: *ještě jednou, prosím.*

Phrase Five: *Rozuměl jsi/rozuměl jste?* ("Did you understand?")

Rozuměl jsi is the same as "Did you understand?" Teachers use this question to make sure the students understand what they are explaining. But again, Czech teachers would use the polite form when teaching adults, thus the phrase would be *rozuměl jste?* instead of the informal *rozuměl jsi?* If this question is for all the students, then *l* is added after *l* in the word *rozuměl*, which is the second person plural. Altogether, this becomes *rozuměli jste?* (Did you all understand?).

LESSON NOTES

All About #15

Top 5 Czech Phrases From the Hosts

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Top 5 Useful Phrases from Your Hosts

Phrase 1: *Jak máš?/Jak se máte?* ("How are you doing?")

These two phrases are commonly used to ask how a person is doing after having been away from them for some time. The first phrase *Jak se máš?* literally means "How are you doing?" and is used with a person who became a friend of yours and there is no need to be formal. The second phrase means "How are you (Mr./Mrs.) doing?" used with the honorific **te** at the end of the verb.

For example:

1. *Jak se máš, Tome?*
"How are you doing, Tom?"
2. *Jak se máte, pane Blake?*
"How are you doing, Mr. Blake?"

Phrase 2: *Díky, fajn/Děkuju, dobře.* ("I'm good")

These phrases are the answers to the above two questions respectively. *Díky, fajn* means "I'm fine, thanks" (an informal answer) and *Děkuju, dobře* means "I'm doing well, thank you" (formal answer).

Phrase 3: *Kde je...?* ("Where is...?")

This phrase means "Where is...?" It is a useful phrase, short, concise, and easy to use, and you normally use it for things you are having difficulty finding. The order of words in this Czech question is the same as in English.

For example:

1. *Kde je pošta?*
Where is the post office? (*Pošta* means "post office")

Phrase 4: *Pro boha!* ("Oh my god")

This phrase means exactly the same as "Oh my God." You say it when something unfavorable happens and it's like a start of a complaint. It is a very common phrase in daily Czech, although Czech people tend to use a more colloquial exclamation ***ježíš maria!*** more often. *Ježíš* stands for "Jesus" and *maria* for "Mary."

Phrase 5: *Jasný* ("Sure")

This is another way to say "yes" to a question and it is used in the same way as "yeah, sure" in English. It shows that you willingly and happily agree to the question.

For example:

1. *Nepůjdem dneska do kina? Jasný.*
"Shall we go to the cinema tonight? Yeah, sure."

LESSON NOTES

Pronunciation #1

The Pronunciation of Consonants in Czech

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Syllables and Native Consonant Sounds That Make Up the Czech Language

Introduction

As you may know, the Czech alphabet consists of 42 letters, 8 of which are consonants with special diacritics not found in English (*ž, š, č, ř, d', t', ň*) plus extra one "ch." There are only a few diacritics—*háček* ("hook"), *čárka* ("length mark"), *kroužek* ("circle") and they change the pronunciation of the letter. They look like this when written: *háček (č), čárka (á), kroužek (ů)*.

Consonants in the Czech language are divided into 8 hard (*h, ch, k, r, d, t n*), 9 soft (*ž, š, č, ř, d', t', ň, c, j*), 8 ambivalent (*b, f, l, m, p, s, v, z*) and 3 unusual (*q, w, x*).

The pronunciation of each consonant sound is as follows.

Initial Consonants

Single hard consonants:

1. **h** is called **há** and pronounced like "h" in "hunger" (for example: *hlad* meaning "hunger")
2. **ch** is called **chá** and pronounced like "ch" in Scottish "loch" (not like in regular English "CH"), (for example *chvíle* meaning "moment")
3. **k** is called **ká** and pronounced like "k" in "key," (for example *klíč* meaning "key")
4. **r** is called **er** and pronounced like "r" in "problem" but it is not a rolled "r," rather it is briefly trilled "r" (for example *rubín* meaning "ruby")
5. **d** is called **dé** and pronounced like "d" in "donkey" (for example *dobry* meaning "good")
6. **t** is called **té** and pronounced like "t" in "timber" without aspiration (for example *tenis* meaning "tennis")
7. **n** is called **en** and pronounced like "n" in "son" (for example *nehoda* meaning "accident.")

In Czech, **p**, **t**, and **k** are not followed by an aspiration like in English, unless they

are at the end of the word!

For example: *chrup* ("set of teeth"), *být* ("to be"), *hluk* ("noise"),

Single soft consonants:

ž is called **žet** and pronounced like "-sion" in English "version" (for example *žirafa* meaning "giraffe" or *židle* meaning "chair.")

š is called **eš** and pronounced like "sh" in English "shoe" (for example *škola* meaning "school" or *šipka* meaning "arrow")

č is called **čé** and pronounced like "ch" in English "check," (for example *černý* meaning "black" or *čas* meaning "time").

ř is called **eř** and it is a single sound pronounced like a strong trilled "r" with the tip of the tongue touching behind upper teeth. It requires a lot of practice to achieve the right pronunciation. This sound is non-existent in English.

ď is called **dé** and can be compared to the sound of "duke" or "durable" in English, (For example *dábel* meaning "devil" or *dolík* meaning "dent.")

ť is called **té** and can be compared to the sound of "tune" or "tube" in English. (For example *koťata* meaning "kittens" or *chuť* meaning "taste.")

ň is called **eň** and can be compared to the sound of "new" in English. (For example *promiň* meaning "sorry" or *tíseň* meaning "anxiety").

c is called **cé** and is pronounced like "ts" in "streets" in English (not like "K!"). (For example *konec* meaning "end" or *cukr* meaning "sugar.")

j is called **je** and pronounced like in "y" in "yard" in English. (For example *ahoj* meaning casual "hi" or *jedna* meaning "one.")

Single ambivalent consonants:

b is called **bé** and pronounced like "b" in "big." (For example *bota* meaning "shoe" or *babička* meaning "grandma.")

f is called **ef** and pronounced like "f" in "farm." (For example *flaška* meaning "bottle" or *fabrika* meaning "factory.")

l is called **el** and pronounced like "l" in "lonely." (For example *kolo* meaning "bicycle" or *led* meaning "ice.")

m is called **em** and pronounced like "m" in "morning." (For example *mléko* meaning "milk" or *máma* meaning "mother.")

p is called **pé** and pronounced like "p" in "push" (no aspiration). (For example

palec meaning "thumb" or *opera* meaning "opera.")

s is called *es* and pronounced like "s" in "**s**imilar." (For example *sníh* meaning "snow" or *vesnice* meaning "village.")

v/w is called *vé / dvojité vé* and pronounced like "v" in "**v**ehicle" (no aspiration). Pronunciation of both "v" and "w" is the same. (For example *vlak* meaning "train" or *western* meaning "western.")

z is called *zet* and pronounced like "z" in "**z**oo." (For example *zelí* meaning "cabbage" or *zubař* meaning "dentist.")

Single unusual consonants:

These are used in word that come from other languages (loanwords).

q is called *qvé* and pronounced like "q" in "**q**uick." (For example *quijotský* meaning "quixotic.")

w is called *dvojité vé* and is pronounced like "v" in "**v**iolin" (no aspiration). (For example *worčestr* meaning "worcester sauce" or "Werich" a name of a Czech actor.)

x is called *iks* and pronounced like "x" in "com**x**." The pronunciation sounds more like "ks," "eks" or "iks." (For example *xylofon* meaning "xylophone" pronounced as *ksilofon* or *extra* meaning "extra" but pronounced as "ekstra.") In some words with "x," the pronunciation becomes more like "gz." For example *existovat* ("exist") pronounced as *egzist* or *exil* ("exile") pronounced as *egzil*.

Non-English Sounds

In Czech, there are eight consonant that do not exist in English, although most of their sounds can be pronounced in English. Except *ch*, these consonants are all part of the *soft consonants* group mentioned above.

č is called *čé* and pronounced like "ch" in English "**ch**eck," (for example *černý* meaning "black" or *čas* meaning "time").

ch is called *chá* and NOT pronounced like English "ch," but like Scottish "ch" in "lo**ch**." (For example *chleba* meaning "bread" or *blecha* meaning "lice.")

ř is called *eř* and it is a single sound pronounced like a strong trilled "r" with the tip of the tongue touching behind upper teeth. It requires a lot of practice to achieve the right pronunciation. This sound is non existent in English.

š is called *eš* and pronounced like "sh" in English "**sh**oe" (for example *škola* meaning "school" or *šipka* meaning "arrow")

ž is called **žet** and pronounced like "sion" in English "version" (for example *žirafa* meaning "giraffe" or *židle* meaning "chair.")

d' is called **d'é** and can be compared to the sound of "duke" or "durable" in English, (For example *d'ábel* meaning "devil" or *d'olík* meaning "dent.")

t' is called **t'é** and can be compared to the sound of "tune" or "tube" in English. (For example *koťata* meaning "kittens" or *chuť* meaning "taste.")

ň is called **eň** and can be compared to the sound of "new" in English. (For example *promiň* meaning "sorry" or *tíseň* meaning "anxiety").

It is important to distinguish between **r** and **ř** because of different meaning of words.

Examples are *řvát* ("roar") but *rvát* ("tear"), *horký* ("hot") but *hořký* ("bitter").

How to Shape your Mouth to Pronounce **d', t', ň**

Put the tip of your tongue against the back of your upper gum and above the front teeth and pronounce the usual *d*, *t*, *n*, but much softer. It helps a lot if you slightly open your mouth into a smile when pronouncing the soft **d', t', ň**.

When to pronounce **d', t', ň**:

- In a text where you see **d', t', ň**: (i.e. *d'ábel* meaning "devil," *promiň* meaning "sorry," *Pilzeň* meaning "Pilsen")
- In a text where you see a combination of **d, t, n + ě**: (*děkuju* meaning "thank you," *tělo* meaning "body," *Němec* meaning "German")
- In a text where you see a combination of **d, t, n + i / í**: (*divadlo* meaning "theater," *díra* meaning "hole," *tíkat* meaning "ticking," *tíha* meaning "heaviness," *nic* meaning "nothing," *nízko* meaning "low")

In case of foreign loan words **d', t',** and **ň** are pronounced as hard consonants **d, t, n**.

Examples *diploamat* ("diplomat") reads as "dyplomat," *politika* (politics) reads as *polytika*, *nikotin* ("nicotine") reads as *nykotin*.

Syllables

In Czech there are often sequences of these syllables, such as: **bě, pě, vě, mě**

They should be pronounced as *b'ye*, *p'ye*, *v'ye*, *mn'ye*.

For example:

běhat ("run") read as **b'yehat**

pěstovat ("to grow something") read as **p'yestovat**

věda ("science") read as **v'yeda**

měsíc ("moon") read as **mn'yesíc**

Assimilation in the Czech Language

Assimilation means that the pronunciation of the end of the word (the last voiced consonant) is pronounced as if voiceless (i.e. *v* becomes *f*), or in the case of two consonants following each other, one of them changes (i.e. *kdo* "who"...becomes *gdo*) in the spoken form.

You need to know the difference between *voiced* and *unvoiced* consonants when learning Czech.

Voiced consonants are...*b, v, d, ḍ, z, ž, g, h*

Unvoiced consonants are...*p, f, t, ṭ, s, š, k, ch*

When speaking they can look like this:

b becomes *p* - *chléb* - **chlép** ("bread")

v becomes *f* - **včera** - **fčera** ("yesterday")

d becomes *t* - **odkud** - **otkut** ("from where")

z becomes *s* - **přez** - **přes** ("over")

g becomes *k* - **kde** - **gde** ("where")

h becomes *ch* - **shody** - **schody** ("staircase")

There are two simple rules how to understand assimilation:

Rule one:

A voiced consonant changes at the end of the word into voiceless:

For example, written **zub** becomes **zup** ("tooth"),

and *krev* becomes *kref* ("blood")

Rule two:

When two consonants occur next to each other in a word, regardless of whether they are voiced or not, one consonant will change its sound in order to match the other one.

In other words, one consonant becomes voiceless in order to match the other.

Examples of voiced consonant into unvoiced

written *tužka* becomes *tuška* ("pencil") in spoken language.

written *nashledanou* becomes *naschledanou* ("goodbye") in spoken language.

Examples of unvoiced consonant into voiced

written *kde* becomes *gde* ("where") in spoken language.

written *prosbá* becomes *prozba* ("plea") in spoken language.

Assimilation is also noticeable in terms of *prepositions* when a preposition becomes part of the following word. In other words, the two are pronounced together. This applies particularly to prepositions **v** ("in"), **s** ("with") and **do** ("to"/"into").

For example:

v Praze ("in Prague") becomes **fPraze**.

s tebou ("with you") becomes **stebou**.

do práce ("to work") becomes **dopráce**.

LESSON NOTES

Pronunciation #2

Basic Czech Vowels and Diphthongs

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The Focus of This Lesson is Czech Basic Vowels and Diphthongs

Vowels

As we learned in Lesson 4 of the All About series, there are 13 single vowels, which we divide into 7 short vowels *a, e, i, y, o, u, ě* and into 7 long vowels *á, é, í, ý, ó, ů / ú*.

Long vowels have to be pronounced longer than the short ones and the length must be noticeable. A long vowel is indicated by a long mark called *čárka* that is placed above the letter. It looks like this: **á, í**.

In case of letter *u*, there are two types: **ú** with a long mark *čárka* and **ů** with a small circle called *kroužek*. Both are pronounced the same, but **ú** is used in the beginning of a word and **ů** in the root of the word.

Pronunciation of the 7 short vowels (*a, e, i/y, o, u, ě*)

a is pronounced like "a" in "But" (for example *mapa* meaning "map")

e is pronounced like "e" in "Met" (for example *epizoda* meaning "episode")

i/y is also pronounced like "i" in "Sit" (for example *list* meaning "leaf" or *byt* meaning "flat")

o is pronounced like "o" in "Omit" (for example *obloha* meaning "sky")

u is pronounced like "u" in "Look" (for example *ulice* meaning "street")

ě is pronounced like "y+e" in "Yes" (for example *pět* meaning "five")

Pronunciation of 7 long vowels (*á, é, í/ý, ó, ú/ů*)

á is pronounced like "a" in "Father" (for example *krása* meaning "beauty")

é is pronounced like "e" in "Shed," but longer (for example *létat* meaning "to fly")

í/ý is pronounced like "i" in "Cheep" (for example *jíst* meaning "to eat" or *zlý* meaning "bad")

ó is pronounced like "o" in "Fall" (for example *balón* meaning "balloon")

ú/ů is pronounced like "u" in "School" (for example *úl* meaning "beehive" or *nůž*)

meaning "knife")

In terms of grammar, the vowel **ú** is always written at the beginning of the word (For example, **úkol** = "task") or after a prefix (For example, **zúročit** = "pay interest on something").

On the other hand, the vowel **ů** is always placed in the stem of the word (**kůže** = "skin") or at the end (**domů** = "going home").

The vowels **ú/ů** are pronounced the same way, although the spelling is different. This form of two different spellings is connected to the history of the Czech language's development.

Pronunciation of the Czech vowels soft **i / í** and hard **y / ý** are also the same in terms of sound.

In some Czech words you can notice these pairs of vowels:

ia, ie, ii, io, iu.

We read them like this:

ia like "**iya**" in *fialka* ("violet")

ie like "**iye**" in *Itálie* ("Italy")

ii like "**iyi**" in *v Anglii* ("in England")

io like "**iyο**" in *rádio* ("radio")

iu like "**iyu**" in *v rádiu* ("on the radio")

Diphthongs

Czech also contains sequences of two vowels within one syllable, which are called diphthongs. Czech has only three:

1. **au**

2. **eu**

3. **ou**

1. **Au** and 2. **Eu**

are used with foreign words or words that come from other languages (loanwords).

For example: *Auto* ("automobile"), *Eutanázie* ("Euthanasia"), *Audio* ("audio").

3. **Ou**

is the most frequently used diphthong in Czech.

Here are some examples of words:

klouzat ("slide"/"slip"), *bouře* ("thunderstorm"), *louže* ("paddle").

The sound of Czech diphthongs is created by firstly pronouncing the first and the second vowel separately then gradually increasing the speed until you can hear them combined in one sound.

The pronunciation of these three Czech diphthongs can be compared to English pronunciation in the following words:

au as in English "**ou**t"

ou as in English "**ow**ner"

eu does not have an equivalent sound in English, but try to pronounce it using the abovementioned method. Say "e" and "u" separately and then speed up the pronunciation to join the two letters together. You should get the same sound of the Czech *eu*.

Do not forget that the Czech **e** is pronounced like "e" in English "**le**ns" and the Czech *u* like "u" in English "**coo**l," but shorter.

LESSON NOTES

Pronunciation #3

Czech Intonation

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The Focus of This Lesson is Czech Intonation

Intonation

Czech is not a tonal language, so melodies and tones are not applicable here, but intonation has some importance because it helps to distinguish between a simple statement and a question in sentences where word order remains the same.

In Czech, the word order in a sentence is more flexible than in English and some sentences can look the same, although they are different types of sentence. Intonation helps to recognise which type of sentence they are. Below are examples of sentences that are the same in terms of word order and vocabulary, but that differ based on intonation. Rising intonation is on the underlined words:

1. Statement: *Ona to řekla.* ("She said that.")
2. Question: *Ona to řekla.* ("She said that?")
3. Exclamation: *Ona to řekla.* ("She said that!?!")

1. Statement

When making a statement, the intonation is naturally *falling down*. Only when emphasizing a word within the sentence, your voice may rise up a little, putting stress on that particular word.

For example:

Statement: *Babička je tady.* ("grandma is here")

Je tady babička. ("grandma is here")

Exclamation: *Babička je **tady**.* ("grandma is **here!**")

*Je tady **babička**.* ("**grandma** is here!")

2. Questions

Intonation in question sentences differs depending on whether the sentence starts with a question word, such as *kde* ("where") or *kdo* ("who"), or "not."

Sentences starting with a question word mostly have *falling* intonation because the question word already indicates it is a question sentence. At the end of the sentence only, there can be a small rise of voice.

For example: *Kde je **babička**.* ("where is **grandma**?")

Sentences without a question word have more *rising* intonation toward the end of the sentence or they show a pattern of *low to high* intonation and then falling down voice at the end.

For example: *Je tady **babička**?*

*Je **babička** tady?*

***Babička** je tady?*

LESSON NOTES

Pronunciation #4

Czech Regional Dialects

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of this Lesson is Regional Variations of Czech Pronunciation found in Bohemia, Middle, South and North Moravia

Preface

There are differences in Czech pronunciation between *standard* and *non-standard* (colloquial) Czech language and differences in dialects. There are four main dialects in the Czech Republic; the *Central dialect* in the Bohemian part of the Czech Republic linked mainly to the capital city of Prague, the Central Moravian dialect, the South Moravian *Hanák* dialect and the North Moravian *Lach* dialect. Czech dialects vary in both the sound and vocabulary. Out of the four dialects, the Bohemia Central dialect is considered the standard Czech and is spoken by most foreigners learning Czech.

The core difference among Czech dialects lies in the vocabulary and specific terminology that has been connected with the traditional agricultural way of living in the countryside. This, however, is slowly disappearing with time. At some point in the future, this vocabulary may be found only in archives.

Standard Versus Colloquial Czech

There are variations in vowel pronunciation between the standard Czech language and the non-standard (colloquial) Czech. Vowels that are used in the standard Czech spelling often change in the spoken colloquial use. This frequently happens specifically with endings of adjectives and with the middle part of nouns and verbs.

For example:

1. Written **ý** tends to change into **ej** when speaking.

Adjectives

- *Studený* - *studenej* ("cold")
- *Malý* - *malej* ("small")
- *Druhý* - *druhej* ("second")

Nouns

- *Výlet* - **vejlet** ("trip")
- *Výška* - **vejška** ("height")
- *Brýle* - **brejle** ("glasses")

Verbs

- *Mýt* - **mejt** ("to wash")
- *Plýtvat* - **plejtvat** ("to waste")
- *Být* - **bejt** ("to be")

Changes also occur after the letters C, Z, S

- *Cítit* - **cejtit** ("to smell")
- *Sítko* - **sejtko** ("a strainer")
- *Zítbra* - **zejtra** ("tomorrow")

2. Written **é** changes into **ý** or **í** when speaking.

Adjectives

- *Sladké* - **sladký** ("sweet")
- *Lehké* - **lehký** ("light")
- *špinavé* - **špinavý** ("dirty")

Nouns

- *Mléko* - *mlíko* ("milk")
- *Polévka* - *políffka* ("soup") here *v* also becomes *f*

Verbs

- *Létat* - *lítat* ("to fly")
- *Kvést* - *kvíst* ("to blossom")
- *Zamést* - *zamíst* ("to sweep")

It needs to be mentioned that if you use the standard Czech pronunciation in daily speech, you will sound a bit awkward and stiff to a native speaker. Thus, using the colloquial form in spoken language sounds more natural. However, it is advisable to be careful about situations in which you want to use it, as sometimes the outcome may come across too vulgar.

For example:

The greeting *dobrý den* (used as a usual greeting during the daytime) can be changed into *dobřej den* in colloquial Czech. However, if you use it at an occasion where it is not suited, it will definitely come across as vulgar. For example entering a bank or an office requires the standard greeting form. On the other hand, it is all right to use the colloquial form when visiting somebody's home where you need to use politeness, but you want to sound friendly at the same time.

3. written **o** changes into **vo** when speaking

This is the most common form of colloquial Czech, but should be definitely avoided in formal situations.

Adjectives

- *Opilý* - *vopilý* ("drunk")
- *Ostrý* - *vostrý* ("sharp")

- **Ospalý** - **vospalý** ("sleepy")

Nouns

- **Okno** - **vo**kno ("window")
- **Oko** - **vo**ko ("eye")
- **Omáčka** - **vo**máčka ("sauce")

Verbs

- **Osušit** - **vosušit** ("to dry something")
- **Otrhat** - **vo**trhat ("to pluck something")
- **Ostříhat** - **vo**stříhat ("to clip," "cut," "trim something")

Caution!

Not all words in the Czech language that begin with *o* are pronounced as *vo*.

The change is not applicable to formal vocabulary containing words such as:

organizace ("organisation"), *oceánie* ("Oceania"), *ofenzíva* ("offensive"), etc...

An exception is also word *otec* ("father"), which becomes *táta* or *taťka* in colloquial speech, but NOT *votec*.

Regional Dialects

1. Central Bohemian dialect

By Central Bohemian dialect we mainly mean the non-standard Czech language or, in other words, the colloquial expressions of daily speech that is used in central Bohemia and the surrounding areas. The Central Bohemian dialect is mostly connected with Prague and its people. The dialect contains all the things mentioned

above in the standard (written) versus non-standard (spoken) language.

In the central and west part of Bohemia, it is quite likely you might come across vocabulary you have never heard of and you cannot find it in the dictionary. This is specific terminology (slang) used in the particular area and differs from other regions of the Czech Republic.

Slang in Central Bohemia:

Tramvaj is called *elektrika* meaning "a tram" in English.

Peněženka is called *šrajtofle* meaning "a wallet"

Spěchat is called *chvátat* meaning "to be in a hurry"

Obchod is called *krám* meaning "a shop"

Příkop is called *pangejt* meaning "a ditch"

Plechovka is called *piksla* meaning "a can or tin"

Pažitka is called *šnitlik* meaning "chives"

Poprchávat is called *krápat* meaning "raindrops falling"

Zákaz jít ven is called *mít zaracha* meaning "to be forbidden from going out" (children)

Uhodit se is called *binknout se* meaning "to hit yourself on to something"

Furthermore, in *West Bohemia*, demonstrative nouns (nouns that are used for pointing out something close to the speaker) are different from the standard Czech language. These nouns broadly correspond to the English "**this/this one**" or "**that/that one,**" and "**these.**"

Gender	Standard Czech	West Bohemia
Male gender	ten/tenhle ("this/this one")	tuten
Female gender	ta/tahle ("this/this one")	tuta
Neutral gender	to/tohle ("this/this one")	tuto
Plural	tyhle ("these/these ones")	tuty

2. Central Moravian (Hanák) dialect

Nowadays the dialect is called *Central Bohemian dialect* rather than *Hanák dialect*, but the origin of this dialect comes from *Haná*, a region located in the central Moravia.

What is interesting about the *Hanák* dialect is the different use of vowels.

A)

Instead of the standard Czech *u* and *ú*, this dialect uses *o* and *ó*.

Budu becomes *bodo* ("I will be")

Pijú (nowadays *pjíí*) becomes *pjó* ("they drink")

B)

Instead of the standard Czech *ý* and *í* and *ej*, this dialect has *é*.

strýc becomes *stréc* ("uncle")

prosím becomes *proém* ("please")

vejce becomes *véce* ("egg")

C)

Instead of the standard Czech *y* and *i*, this dialect has *e*

učitel becomes *očetel* ("teacher")

ryby becomes *rebe* ("fish") plural

D)

Instead of the standard Czech *šť* this dialect has *šč*

ještě becomes *ešče* ("yet/still")

E)

Soft pronunciation is used before *e* in the Past Participle Passive and Infinitive

mláčen becomes *mlát'enej* ("threshed")

házet becomes *had'et* ("to throw")

F)

Letters **h** and **v** are added to the beginning of word

Olomouc becomes **Holomóc** ("name of a town in Moravia")

okno becomes **wokno** like in the "colloquial" Czech ("window")

G)

Long vowels in the middle of words change into short vowels

Skála become *skala* ("rock")

kráva becomes *krava* ("cow")

3. South Moravian (Moravian-Slovak) dialect

South Moravia has more than one dialect. It can be said that each village within South Moravia has their own dialect, however, they are all mutually intelligible.

It would be a neverending list to write them all here, but the basic differences compare to standard Czech language are written below.

A)

Hard **ý** changes to soft **í**

býk becomes *bík* ("bull")

B)

Diphthong **ou** becomes **ú**

nesou becomes *nesú* ("they carry")

řežou becomes *řežú* ("they cut")

(In the area of *Moravská Kopanice*, near the *Slovak* borders, they do not use letter *ř*, but *r* instead.)

C)

Unlike in colloquial Czech, the vowel **é** does NOT change into **ý** but follows the written standard Czech language.

pěkné ("pretty," "nice")

úzké ("narrow")

mléko ("milk")

létat ("to fly")

D)

Instead of the standard Czech *í*, this dialect often uses *é / ě / e*

lít becomes *lét* ("to pour")

říct becomes *řéct* ("to tell")

chtít becomes *chtět* ("to want")

jíst becomes *jest* ("to eat")

mít becomes *mět* ("to have")

E)

The sound of *sh* assimilates into *zh*.

shodit becomes *zhodit* ("push/knock down")

shrnout becomes *zhrnout* ("to sum up")

shýbat se becomes *zhébat se* ("to bend down")

F)

Instead of *e* at the end of words, this dialect often uses *a*

moje becomes *moja* ("my") possessive noun

tvoje becomes *tvoja* ("yours")

G)

Voiceless consonants become voiced in front of other consonants

Voiceless *k* becomes *g* in this sentence:

k nám becomes *g nám* ("to our place")

H)

Long vowels are pronounced short

práh becomes *prah* ("door step")

rána becomes *rana* ("wound")

bláto becomes *blato* ("mud")

dát becomes *dat* ("give")

pít becomes *pit* ("drink")

bít becomes *bit* ("to beat/hit")

The *South Moravian* dialect also preserves pronunciation of soft *l*.

4. North Moravia (Lach) dialect

The *Lach* dialect is spoken in the North Moravian region located close to the Polish and Slovak borders. This dialect is actually a transition from Czech to Polish due to the close borders with Poland and with some features of Eastern Slovak language.

The main feature of the *Lach* dialect is that there are no long vowels.

Other changes are in the use of letters....

A)

z is swapped for syllable dz

mezi becomes *medzy* ("between")

B)

s and z swapped for soft ś and ź

soused becomes *suśed* ("neighbor")

zima becomes *źima* ("winter")

C)

t' and d' are swapped for c and dz

vedete becomes *vedžeće* ("you lead")

bude becomes *budze* ("will be")

vydat becomes *vydać* ("give out/ to issue")

D)

št is swapped for šč

ještě becomes *ešče* ("still, yet")

*kleš***tě** becomes *kleš***če** ("pliers")

E)

a is swapped for o

*vol***ám** becomes *vol***om** ("calling")

F)

e is swapped for a or ia

*kuř***e** becomes *kuř***a** ("chicken")

(pronounced *kurča* in Slovak language and *kurcze* in Polish)

*trp***ět** becomes *trp***ia**t ("to suffer")

LESSON NOTES

Pronunciation #5

Common Czech Pronunciation Mistakes

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Five Most Common Mistakes People Make When They Pronounce Czech

#1: Final consonants and unvoicing

Final consonants in Czech language are fully pronounced, including letter *h*, which is most of the time voiceless in English.

In terms of voiced consonants (*b, v, g, d', z, ž, h*) that are at the end of the word, they need to be unvoiced when speaking. This is often a problem for English speakers who forget to unvoice them.

I.e. *Led* ("ice") needs to become *let*, *hrad* ("castle") needs to become *hrat*, *hlad* ("hunger") becomes *hlat*, etc....

Voiced *h* as a final consonant needs to become *ch* in speech.

*bato**h*** ("rucksack") becomes *bato**ch***, *sní**h*** ("snow") becomes *sní**ch***, etc....

Voiced *ž* becomes devoiced and sounds like *š* (*sh*) at the end of a word.

*Vě**ž*** ("tower") becomes *vě**š***, *le**ž*** ("a lie") becomes *le**š*** and so on.....

The opposite rule happens with unvoiced consonants found in the middle of a word.

If the unvoiced consonant is followed by another consonant, it needs to be voiced.

*Sva**t**ba* ("wedding") written with "t" will become *sva**d**ba* in spoken Czech.

*Pro**s**ba* ("request") written with "s" will become *pro**z**ba* in spoken Czech.

#2: Unaspirated *k, t, p* versus aspirated final consonants *k, t, p*

Unlike English "k" and "t" which are aspirated, Czech *k* and *t* are pronounced unaspirated anywhere in the word except at the end. When they are at the end of a word *k, t, and p* are pronounced with slight puff of air (post-aspiration) like in English.

Words such as *hlu**k*** ("noise"), *žít* ("to live"), or *su**p*** ("vulture") have post-aspirated *k, t, and p*.

#3: Letters *ch, r* and clustered consonants

Ch is a problematic letter that foreigners tend to pronounce as English "k," but they should not. *Ch* as a single letter in the Czech alphabet needs to be pronounced through the throat. The best comparison how to pronounce it is to listen to a native speaker and try to repeat it, or if you are familiar with Spanish language, then *ch* has the same pronunciation as "j" in Spanish (i.e. Jose).

R does not have the typical English rolling sound, but should be pronounced with your tongue touching the upper gums behind your teeth and then vibrate shortly. It should not be a rolling sound made deeper in your mouth.

Clustered consonants can be problematic for foreigners to pronounce. There are Czech words that contain many consonants in a row, which is not easy to say...

prst ("finger") or *strčit* ("to push/or to plug into") consist mostly of consonants.

čtvrtek ("Thursday") has *č, t, v, r* consonants in a cluster

With short letters it helps to try to spell each letter in the word and then speed up the pronunciation a little. You should get the right result. With longer letters, divide the pronunciation in half. Say the first half first and then the second half. It will become easier to get the pronunciation right.

#4: Sound marks

Sound marks (or diacritics) are the marks applied above a letter to create additional sounds other than those in the English alphabet (*ž, š, č, ř, d', ě, ň*).

Whilst *š, č, d', ě,* and *ň* can be pronounced quite well by English speakers because we can find similar sounds in English, *ř* and *ž* on the other hand are very hard for some people.

Ř specifically gets wrongly pronounced as *ž* by foreigners because of the difficult articulation they need to master. *Ř* is a single sound pronounced like a strong trilled "r" with the tip of the tongue touching behind upper teeth. It may feel like speaking with a lisp at first, but through repetitive practice, you will reach the goal.

#5: Pronunciation of soft consonants *d', ě, ň* and *di, ti, ni*

These soft consonants are often pronounced as hard consonants by foreigners as they just simply do not know what to do with them.

Especially *di, ti,* and *ni* will be often pronounced as *dy, ty, ny* because these sounds don't exist in English.

To articulate the right pronunciation of *d', ě,* and *ň,* put the tip of your tongue against the back of your upper gum and above the front teeth and pronounce the usual *d, t,* and *n,* but much softer. It helps a lot if you slightly open your mouth into a smile when pronouncing the soft *d', ě,* and *ň.* After that add letter *i* to each of the soft consonants and you will get the sound of *di, ti,* and *ni.*