

Jana Hejtmánková

Czech for English Speakers

Čeština pro anglicky mluvící



CD

sound track with phonetic
exercises, phrases,
texts and dialogues

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grammar
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exercises

Jana Hejtmánková

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Czech for English Speakers

Čeština pro anglicky mluvící

JANA HEJTMÁNKOVÁ

Odborná korektura: Duncan Hendy

Jazyková korektura: Sabina Konečná

Ilustrace: Věra Foltýnová

Sazba: Lea Kaláčková

Obálka: Martin Sodomka

Odpovědná redaktorka: Eva Mrázková

Technický redaktor: Jiří Matoušek

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Mluvčí: Petra Bučková, Sylva Siničáková, Cyril Drozda, Martin Siničák

Režie a editace zvuku: Mario Buzzi

Hudba: Mario Buzzi

Objednávky knih:

www.albatrosmedia.cz

eshop@albatrosmedia.cz

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ÚVOD

Učebnice *Czech for English speakers* je určena pro anglicky mluvící zájemce o český jazyk, kteří chtějí v krátkém časovém období dosáhnout úrovně A1 v Evropském referenčním rámci. Text je určen především pro začátečníky, vedené učitelem. Zaměřuje se zejména na rozvíjení řečových dovedností, které jsou součástí každodenních situací. Cílem učebnice je pomoci studentům, aby získali základní jazykové kompetence a schopnost komunikovat v běžných situacích na určité úrovni. Gramatický výklad je omezen na minimum, není možné jej vyloučit úplně, učebnice proto obsahuje i velmi jednoduchou prezentaci gramatických struktur českého jazyka, která může sloužit pro vytváření větných vzorců. Na jejich základě mohou studenti vytvářet další české věty.

Knihla obsahuje šest lekcí; jsou tematicky řazeny tak, aby korespondovaly s reálnými životními situacemi, s kterými se cizinec setkává na začátku svého pobytu v cizí zemi. Materiál obsahuje rovněž klíč ke cvičením, česko-anglický a anglicko-český slovník výrazů prezentovaných v jednotlivých lekcích. Na závěr je v tabulkách uveden přehled základních gramatických jevů.

Úvodní lekce se zaměřuje na hláskosloví; systém českých samohlásek, souhlásek a dvojhlásek je srovnáván s anglickým a pozornost je věnována rovněž rozdílům ve výslovnosti. Slovní zásoba této lekce není určena k osvojení, je pouze součástí fonetických cvičení, lekce proto neobsahuje slovník. Následující lekce jsou zaměřeny především na poslech, čtení a mluvení, jsou zde však zařazena i krátká písemná cvičení. Každá lekce rovněž obsahuje fráze k danému tématu, různá cvičení, závěrečné shrnutí slovní zásoby a test, který slouží nejen k procvičení, ale i ke kontrole, jak jsou dané jevy každé lekce osvojeny.

Obrázky a ilustrace slouží jednak jako ilustrační materiál, jednak jsou součástí zadaných úkolů, mohou však být také vhodnou motivací a inspirací pro rozvíjení další konverzace.

Učebnice je doplněna CD s fonetickými cvičeními, frazeologismy, dialogy a dalšími poslouchovými texty.

INTRODUCTION

The textbook *Czech for English speakers* is meant for the English speaking persons that want to reach A1 level according to the Common European Framework within quite a short time, preferably with the help of a teacher. It concentrates on the development of spoken skills that are part of everyday situations. The aim is to help the students to acquire basic language competence and an ability to communicate in common situations. Dealing with grammar is limited, however, it is impossible to omit it completely. Therefore, the material contains very simple presentations of Czech grammar structures that may serve as an aid for generating sentence patterns according to which students may form other sentences.

The textbook consists of six lessons ordered topically according to the real life situations that foreign students may experience at the beginning of their stay abroad. At the end, the material incorporates a key to the exercises, and Czech-English and English-Czech dictionaries. In conclusion, an overview of basic grammar phenomena is presented in tables.

The introductory lesson deals with Czech phonetics; the Czech system of vowels, consonants, and diphthongs is compared to the English one. Attention is drawn to the differences in pronunciation. Czech words are part of the phonetic exercises which is why they are not included into the vocabulary overview. In the following lessons, all the four skills – listening, reading, speaking and writing are developed. Each lesson includes phrases related to the given topic, various exercises, concluding summaries of vocabulary, and tests that are used not only for practice, but also for the checking of lesson acquiring.

The pictures and illustrations function as illustrative material and part of the tasks or they can help in motivation or inspiration for further discussions.

The textbook is accompanied by a CD with listening exercises, dialogues, phrases, vocabulary and other texts.

SOME NOTES BEFORE YOU START

Czech is spoken by about 10 million people in the Czech Republic, and by a few million other people of Czech origin living in various countries such as in the USA, Canada, Germany, Austria, Croatia, etc. forming Czech national minorities there. Finally yet importantly, many foreigners that have come to live and work in this country speak it.

Czech belongs to the Indo-European language family together with the majority of European languages (cf. English and Czech words: *mother – matka, sister – sestra, three – tři, eat – jíst*), and to the Western Slavonic language group together with Polish and Slovak. The given languages are so similar that the speakers are usually able to understand each other in common everyday situations. As for the language typology concerned, it is as an inflective type with a richly developed system of verbal conjugation and noun, pronoun, adjectival and numeral declension, meaning that the words change by the addition of a suffix or prefix to the stem of a word, eg. *dívka – dívky, pán – pána, mladý – mladého, tři – třemi, číst – přečíst*. This phenomenon enables Czech to be a language with a flexible word order.

It is also a synthetic language, which means that there is a tendency to express grammar categories by a synthetic expression whereas English belongs to analytical languages with a tendency towards analytical words (cf: *I do not have – nemám, by plane – letadlem*). Czech words are usually longer than the English ones because of the usage of prefixes, suffixes and even some infixes.

In Czech there are no articles. The reason is its flexible word order. The information that has been already mentioned or is otherwise known is usually located in the initial position of a sentence in the case where English uses the definite article. New information is usually located in the final position, while in English it is expressed by the indefinite article.

The language has only three tenses – Past, Present and Future. The concepts expressed by perfect and continuous tenses in English are mostly expressed by the developed verbal aspectual system. Unlike in English, there are only a few irregular verbs in Czech.

The alphabet was adapted from Latin, being supplemented by diacritical marks (‘, ˇ, °). In Czech, the orthography is phonetic, i.e. words are pronounced in the same way as they are written.

Czech has a few variants. Standard Czech is the form of the national language that is mostly spoken in schools, government offices, in media, etc., and is the only form for written communication. Common Czech is a spoken variant of standard Czech with some deviations in grammar and vocabulary, i.e. it serves mostly for spoken communication. Below you can see some examples.

Common Czech

děkuju

bysme

dobrej den

jseš

bejt

jo

Standard Czech

děkuji

bychom

dobrý den

jsi

být

ano

Nowadays, local dialects are disappearing especially because of media influence.

ABBREVIATIONS

Grammar genders:

M	Masculine
Min	Masculine inanimate
Ma	Masculine animate
F	Feminine
N	Neuter

Cases:

Nom.	Nominative
Gen.	Genitive
Dat.	Dative
Acc.	Accusative
Loc.	Locative
Instr.	Instrumental

Parts of speech:

N	Noun
Adj.	Adjective
Adv.	Adverb
Prep.	Preposition
V	Verb

Number:

sg.	singular
pl.	plural

Others:

cf.	compare
coll.	colloquial
e.g.	for example
etc.	and so on
i.e.	that is
lit.	literally
Pf.	Perfective
Impf.	Imperfective
F	formal
Inf.	informal
st	something
sb	somebody
inf.	infinitive

ČESKÁ ABECEDA

VÝSLOVNOST

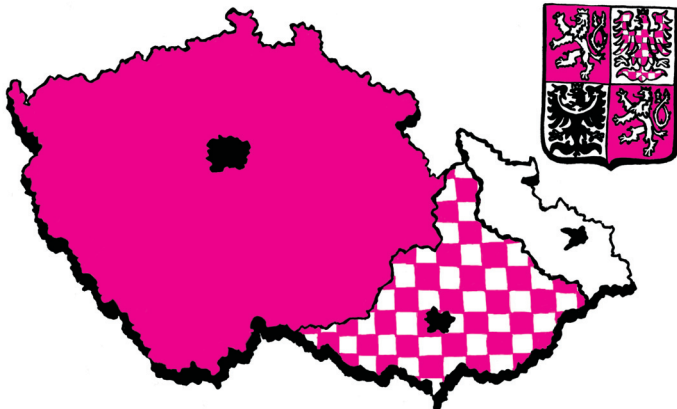
The Czech alphabet Pronunciation

In the lesson you will learn

- how to pronounce Czech phones,
- how to pronounce Czech words,
- how to stress Czech words.

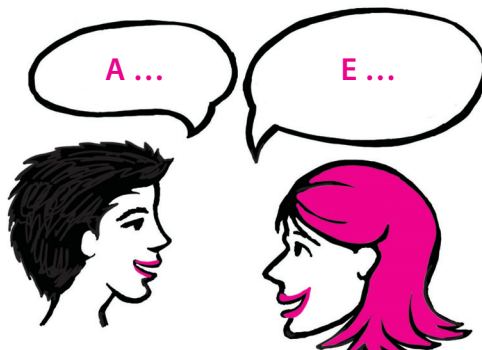
In the lesson you will find

- the Czech alphabet,
- Czech diacritic symbols,
- Czech vowels and consonants,
- Czech diphthongs,
- Czech stress.



Česká abeceda

The Czech alphabet



1. Czech phones

České hlásky

Czech phones are divided into vowels, diphthongs and consonants.

The Czech alphabet was borrowed from the Latin one and was supplemented by some letters with diacritics:

consonants – č, ř, š, ž, and *ch* which is considered a single letter

vowels – á, é, ě, í, ó, ú, ů, ý.

The letters you know:

Po 1/1

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

The Czech letters:

Po 1/2

consonants

č d' ch ě ř š t' ž

vowels

' - marks length of a vowel

á é ě í ó ú/ů ý

diphthongs

au, ou, eu

All the letters in the Czech alphabet

a/á, b, c, č, d, d', e/é/(ě), f, g, h, ch, i/í, j, k, l, m, n, ň, o/ó, p, q, r, ř, s, š, t, t', u/ú/ů, v, w, x, y/ý, z, ž

Names of the letters

Po 1/3 

In Czech, spelling names is not as common as in English because the orthography is phonetic, i.e. words are pronounced in the same way as they are written, e.g. *ekonomický* [ekonomický].

Letters	letter name – pronunciation	Letters	letter name – pronunciation
A a	[á]	O o	[ó]
B b	[bé]	P p	[pé]
C c	[cé]	Q q	[kvé]
Č č	[čé]	R r	[er]
D d	[dé]	Ř ř	[eř]
Ď ě	[dě]	S s	[es]
E e/ě	[é/jé]	Š š	[eš]
F f	[ef]	T t	[té]
G g	[gé]	Ť ť	[tě]
H h	[há]	U u	[ú]
Ch ch	[chá]	V v	[vé]
I i	[í (měkké i)]	W w	[dvojité vé]
J j	[jé]	X x	[iks]
K k	[ká]	Y y	[ypsilon (tvrdé y)]
L l	[el]	Z z	[zet]
M m	[em]	Ž ž	[žet]
N n	[en]		
Ň ň	[eň]		

2. Diakritické symboly

Diacritic symbols

Diacritic symbols give the letter a new phonetic meaning.

Diacritic symbols used in Czech are the following:

ˇ **háček** – hook

ě, č, š, ž, ě, ě, ř

´ **čárka** – length mark

á, é, í, ó, ú, ý

° **kroužek** – circle

ů

The symbols denote the length of the vowels, softness of the vowels -ě- and some other consonants:

Po 1/4 

- ' **čárka** *máma, táta, káva, dává, délka, bílý, jídlo, pití, rohlík, gól, tón, tuberkulóza, úkol, úzký, úsměv, úterý, týden, tlustý, výstava*
- ° **kroužek** *dům, stůl, kůň, dvůr, hůl, růže, půjdu, tvůj, můj, půl, dolů*
- ˇ **háček** *město, děti, pět, čaj, čas, černý, šest, škola, šofér, večer, ďábel, teď, žena, muž, oheň, Plzeň, dobře, řeka, řídký*

3. České samohlásky, dvojhlásky a souhlásky

Czech vowels, diphthongs and consonants

A) Samohlásky

Vowels

Ten vowels (short and long)

Five short vowels

Five long vowels

Vowels	Short	A a	E e	I i/y Y	O o	U u
	Long	Á á	É é	Í í/Ý Y	Ó ó	Ú ú/Ů Ů

Pronunciation of short vowels:

Po 1/5 

A	similar to <i>one</i>	ano	Ě	similar to <i>yes</i>	pět
E	similar to <i>men</i>	ne	O	similar to <i>lot</i>	moc
I/Y	similar to <i>sit</i>	pivo, byt	U	similar to <i>look</i>	univerzita

Pronunciation of long vowels:

Á	similar to <i>father</i>	já	Ó	similar to <i>call</i>	móda
É	similar to longer <i>let</i>	léto	Ú/ů	similar to <i>good</i>	úl, dům
Í/Ý	similar to <i>meet</i>	mít			

Vowel length

is marked by two symbols – length mark and circle:

- ' **čárka**
- ° **kroužek**

The pronunciation of the long vowels is approximately twice longer than the pronunciation of the short ones.

Po 1/6 

Ú/ú (long) is used only at the beginning of a word or after prefixes:
úspěch, bezúročný, neúspěšný

ů (long) is used only in the middle or at the end of a word:
stůl, dům, průmysl, můj, tvůj

The length of vowels is significant in Czech because it can change the meaning of a word,
 e. g. *rada × ráda (advice × glad F), byt × být (flat × to be).*

e/ě

Po 1/7 

used after the consonants

d, t, n, b, p, v, f, m

spelling

dě, tě, ně, bě, pě, vě, fě, mě

Pronunciation is soft unlike hard pronunciation of syllables without the hook ˇ:

de, te, ne, be, pe, fe, me

jdeme, teta, ne, pevný, fenka, menovat se

ě - in connection with **d, t, n**, (*dě, tě, ně*) softens the previous consonant:

děda, tě, těsto, někdo, něco

In connection with **b, p, v, f** (*bě, pě, vě, fě*), the syllable is pronounced with j [*bje, pje, vje, fje*]:

oběd, zpěv, běhat, květ, pět

In connection with the consonant **m** (*mě*), the syllable is pronounced as [*mňe*]:

město, mě, měsíc, země

Vowels alternation

It is characteristic of Czech that the short and long vowels alternate within one word:

á/a, e/é, í/í, y/ý:

dát – dal pít – pil být – byl nést – nesl

In some words different vowels may alternate:

í/e, ou/u, ů/o:

říčka – řeka kousek – kus dům – doma

B) Dvojhlasíky

Diphthongs

diphthongs: ou

au

eu

The diphthongs are pronounced together and both the vowels form one syllable:

*au*to, *dlouhý*, *eu*kalypt

C) Souhlásky

Consonants

The twenty seven consonants may be:

hard soft ambiguous voiced unvoiced

hard	<i>g, h, ch, k, r, d, t, n</i>	voiced	<i>b, d, d', g, h, v, z, ž</i>
soft	<i>ž, š, č, ř, c, j, d', t', ň</i>	unvoiced	<i>p, t, t', k, ch, f, s, š</i>
ambiguous	<i>b, f, l, m, p, s, v, z</i>		

Pronunciation of hard consonants:

Po 1/8 

G	similar to <i>leg</i>	gymnastika
H	similar to <i>hello</i> (not aspirated)	hodina
Ch	like German <i>ch</i> as in <i>Bach</i>	vchod
K	similar to <i>key</i> (not aspirated)	káva
R	similar to <i>red</i> (more roaring)	ruka
D	similar to <i>do</i>	dům
T	similar to <i>take</i> (not aspirated)	tady
N	similar to <i>nice</i>	ne

Pronunciation of soft consonants:

Ž	similar to <i>pleasure</i>	žena
Š	similar to <i>she</i>	šok
Č	similar to <i>Czech</i>	Čech
Ř	put the tip of the tongue to the palate	tři
J	similar to <i>yellow</i>	já

Pronunciation of ambiguous consonants:

They may be hard or soft, it depends on the word meanings.

B	similar to <i>be</i>	být
F	similar to <i>fee</i>	foto
L	similar to <i>low</i>	vlevo
M	similar to <i>my</i>	my
P	similar to <i>pot</i> (not aspirated)	pas
S	similar to <i>sister</i>	sestra
V	similar to <i>village</i>	voda
Z	similar to <i>zero</i>	záchod

Pronunciation of other consonants:

C	similar to <i>puts</i>	co
Ď	similar to <i>due</i>	ďábel
Di, Dě	similar to <i>due</i>	dík, děkuju
Ť	similar to <i>tube</i>	ťukat
Ti, Tě	similar to <i>tube</i>	platit, tělo
Ň	similar to <i>new</i>	daň
Ni, Ně	similar to <i>new</i>	nic, něco

Pronunciation of rare consonants:

W	similar to <i>very</i>	wolfram
X	similar to <i>six</i>	sex



Some notes to spelling

Po 1/9 

- after consonants **h, ch, k, r, d, t, n, g** **-y/ý** is written
the pronunciation is hard: *nohy, Čechy, kyselý, ryba, dým, týden, nyní, gymnázium*
after **h, k, ch, r** only in words of foreign origin **-i** is written:
h_istorik, g_igant, k_ino, ch_irurg, r_iziko
- after consonants **ž, š, č, ř, c, j, d, t, ň** **-i** is written:
c_izí, č_istota, ž_ivot, š_il, t_ři, j_iskra

At the beginning of a word before consonants, **j** is not often pronounced (especially in informal Czech):

<i>jsem</i>	<i>jsi</i>	<i>jsou</i>	<i>jdu</i>	<i>jdeš</i>	<i>jdou</i>	<i>jméno</i>	<i>jmenuju se</i>
[sem]	[si]	[sou]	[du]	[deš]	[dou]	[méno]	[menuju se]

- after consonants **d, t, ň** **-i** is written:
háček ˇ is not used, however, the pronunciation remains soft.
děti, dítě, tisíc, nikdo
- after consonants **b, f, l, m, p, s, v, z** either **-i** or **-y** is written:
byl – bil, list – lýko, myš – milý, pivo – pytel, syn – silný, vysoko – rovina, zima – jazyk;
In Czech there is a list of words in which **-y** must be used. The list is important for the spelling as well because the meaning of words with **-i/-y** can differ, e.g. *bít* and *být*, the former with the meaning to *beat*, the latter to *be*.

The explanation of where to put down an **-i** or **-y** requires good knowledge of the historical grammar of Czech.

- In Czech **r, l** may have syllabic function:
v_itr *k_rtek* *brat_r* *pr_st* *kr_k* *kufr*
vl_na *vl_k* *sl_za* *Vltava* *Brno*

- Voice assimilation

Assimilation of voice is an important feature of Czech pronunciation. In pronunciation only, in certain circumstances, the voiced consonants are realized unvoiced and vice versa. This rule is not applied orthographically. The pronunciation is influenced by the last consonant.

Remember that the groups of consonants that have voiced/unvoiced pairs are pronounced all either voiced or unvoiced, e.g. *hezky* [heskí].

At the end of a word before unvoiced consonants or vowels, voiced consonants are usually pronounced unvoiced whereas unvoiced consonants before voiced are pronounced as voiced:

Po 1/10 

b → [p] *zub* [zup] **h** → [ch] *sníh* [sních]