Czech

An Essential Grammar

*Czech: An Essential Grammar* is a practical reference guide to the core structures and features of modern Czech.

It presents a fresh and accessible description of the language and sets out the complexities of Czech in short, readable sections. Explanations are clear and free from jargon. Throughout, the emphasis is on Czech as used by native speakers today.

The *Grammar* is suitable for either independent study or for students in schools, colleges, universities and adult classes of all types.

Features include:

- focus on the morphology, basic syntax and word formation
- clear explanations of grammatical terms
- plentiful illustrative examples
- detailed contents list and index for easy access to information.

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Abbreviations

* non-standard spoken usage (esp. Prague, Bohemia)
*** markedly vulgar
> arrow head pointing forward to the perfective verb
< arrow head pointing back to the perfective verb
+ separates determinate and indeterminate verbs of motion

acc. accusative case
adj. adjective
anim. animate
colloq. colloquial
dat. dative case
dim. diminutive
esp. especially
f., fem. feminine gender
gen. genitive case
impf. imperfective verb
inan. inanimate
ins. instrumental case
lit. literally translated
loc. locative case
m., masc. masculine gender
ma. masculine animate
mi. masculine inanimate
n., neut. neuter gender
nom. nominative case
pf. perfective verb
pl. plural
sg. singular
voc. vocative case
This is styled an ‘essential’ grammar, and is certainly not anything like a comprehensive grammar (mluvnice) of Czech (čeština) – the Czech language (český jazyk), with its strong tradition of writing from the late thirteenth century onwards.

All kinds of choices have had to be made – especially about what to exclude! – either simply for reasons of space, or in order to try not to overburden readers who may still be at an elementary level in their knowledge of the language. (The dangers of over-simplification are of course ever-present, and the author is all too aware that he may have succumbed to these at times – he hopes not too often.)

Efforts have been made to separate the basic, core elements from those which are less central and vital.

Presentation of morphology (declension and conjugation) has been interspersed with material on usage. A work designed for trained linguists would arrange this material somewhat differently, no doubt, but it is hoped that the approach adopted here will be helpful to the general reader as well as informative for the more academic scholar.

I have tried to take account of readers’ likely unfamiliarity with various grammatical categories, and with linguistic terminology.

Czech grammatical terms have been infiltrated into the text as well, for those who go on to encounter them in their further studies or hear them from their teachers.

The author has no particular theoretical or systematic approach to offer – this may or may not be a weakness. He has simply tried to steer a reasonably pragmatic course through the often thorny jungle of this language – wielding, as he hopes, a not too crude machete in his fist.

### 1.1 Standard versus non-standard usage

A few words ought perhaps to be said at the outset about how non-standard spoken Czech is presented here alongside the standard written forms.
The standard written language (spisovná čeština) differs in various, at times rather obvious, respects from most Czechs’ everyday spoken language.

Wherever this book refers to non-standard forms of everyday colloquial language, it is broadly the spoken language of Prague and Bohemia that is being referred to.

People may refer to this variety as hovorová čeština ‘colloquial Czech’, while linguists often call it obecná čeština ‘common Czech’ (the former term has sometimes been used for a slightly relaxed version of the standard language, avoiding the more literary or ‘bookish’ features, but still more or less standard in phonetics and grammar).

Non-standard forms are often found in literature – in the texts, especially dialogues, of fiction and plays. They also occur on the radio and TV, especially in less formal contexts, and anyone living in the Czech Republic will soon notice these non-standard features even if they only have a rather basic command of the language.

Differences between written and colloquial usage will be pointed out throughout this book, rather than being hived off into a separate chapter. (Non-standard usage is marked by an asterisk.)

Much less attention is devoted to features which readers would mainly encounter when reading older texts, of the nineteenth century and earlier. Seventeenth-century Czech writings, such as those of Comenius (Komenský) are still very accessible to present-day Czech readers, but this grammar focuses mainly on the present-day language, which is spoken by around 10 million people in the Czech Republic, as well as by lesser numbers scattered over the globe.
The relationship between standard Czech spelling and Czech pronunciation is relatively straightforward, compared with a language like English.

Nevertheless, as with all languages, the beginner who wants to be able to pronounce the language properly will benefit from access to a native speaker or at least to some sound recordings.

The following is designed more for the layman than the trained linguist. The reader who wants a more specialised approach will need to consult other sources.

Czech rules about punctuation and capital letters are slightly different from the conventions of English, but the main features are not hard to grasp.

### 2.1 Vowels – samohlásky

Vowel letters a, e, i/y, o, u represent sounds which are quite close to the English vowel sounds in ‘tuck, tech, tick, tock, took’ respectively.

There’s no difference in sound between i and y, but the spelling affects the pronunciation of preceding d, t, n – see below.

With acute signs added (á, é, í/ý, ó, ú) these vowels are pronounced with longer duration: roughly like English ‘ah, eh, ee, aw, oo’.

The long vowel ú is normally spelt ŭ (with a kroužek ‘little circle’) except as the first letter in a word.

Word stress is on the first vowel (long or short).
Pronunciation and orthography

A, Á: ano, ale, dal, dál, málo, malá
E, É: ne, den, nese, krém, malé, milé
I, Í/Y, Ť: byl/bil, syn, sýr, bílý, milý, malý
O, Ő: ona, slovo, doma, gól, móda, haló
U, Ú/Ů: ruka, ruku, domu, dům, úloha, domů

There are also three diphthongs (diftongy, sequences of two vowels within a single syllable) in which the first vowel, pronounced as above, moves into a very short u or w sound.

The commonest is OU:
OU: bouda, malou, náhodou, nesou

The other two diphthongs appear in loanwords:
AU: auto car, automobile, autobus ‘bus’, restaurace ‘restaurant’
EU: pneumatika ‘(pneumatic) tyre’, neutralita ‘neutrality’

Other vowel letter sequences are pronounced as two syllables:
IE: Anglie ‘England’, as if spelt -ije (for J see below)
IO: rádio ‘radio’, as if spelt -ijo
AO: ‘a-o’ e.g. kakao ‘cocoa’

2.2 Consonants – souhlásky

Consonant letters b, d, f, g (as in ‘good’), h, k, l, m, n, p, s (as in ‘sun’), t (as in ‘stop’), x and z are pronounced much the same as in English. However:

K, P, and T lack the typical English ‘post-aspiration’, a slight puff of air following them, unless they come at the end of a word:

kilo, ruka, pil, koupil, ten, to, ta

but are post-aspirated in final position in words like: buk, lup, mít.

H is pronounced further back, more deeply, hollowly, than the English equivalent:
holit, haló, mnoho, nahý

CH must be distinguished from H, and is pronounced like Scottish ‘loch’ (not like a regular English CH):
chudý, chyba, ucho, chladno

R is briefly trilled, like a Scottish R, and pronounced in all positions:

rád, ruka, Karel, hora, pár, sestra, horko

Both R and L can act like vowels, creating syllables of their own:

krk, bratr, plný, nesl

One silly Czech tongue-twister suggests (misleadingly) that the language lacks vowels. The saying literally means ‘stick (your) finger through (your) neck/throat’:

Strč prst skrz krk.

QU and W turn up in occasional loanwords with retained foreign spelling.

western [vestern], WC [větsé], quasi- (pronounced and more often spelt kvazi-).

S is pronounced [z] in words for ‘-isms’ ending in -ismus and in a few other loanwords and names:

Josef [Jozef], feminismus [feminizmus] (now also spelt -izmus)

The letter X occurs in loanwords, where it is mostly pronounced [ks], e.g. extra ‘extra’, except in words beginning in ex- plus a vowel, if the ex- is not perceived as a tacked-on prefix. Here it is pronounced [gz], e.g. existovat ‘to exist’, exil ‘exile’, exotický ‘exotic’.

Z is as in English ‘zebra’, e.g. zebra, zima ‘winter’

### 2.2.1 Soft consonants – měkké souhlásky

For Czech spelling and grammar it is important to identify the so-called ‘soft’ consonants as a distinct group.

These are the consonant letters č, d’, ň, ř, š, t’, ž plus letters c and j.

All the soft consonants except for c and j are written with a diacritic sign over the letter, generally written and printedˇ , and called a háček ‘small hook’.

‘Soft’ t and d are also hand-written with a háček, but in lower-case print this is printed as t’, d’, using a closely linked apostrophe. The upper-case printed forms are T, D.

C is pronounced as one sound like ts in bats (not like K):

cesta, noc, práce, pecka = approx. [tsesta], [nots], [prátse], [petska]
J is like y in yes:
   jeden, ja, moje, ahoj

Č, Š and Ž are pronounced much like chin, shin, and vision respectively:
   čeká, Čech, Angličan, klíč
   šest, máš, špatný, pišeš
   žena, život, můžeš, muži

Dé‘, Žt‘ and Ň/ň are close to the sounds in British English duty, tune, new (when pronounced ‘dyooty’, ‘tyoon’, ‘nyoo‘):
   d‘ábel, Lád‘a, maďaršký
   t‘uknout, chut‘, kot‘ata
   píseň, promiň, koňak

The true Czech speciality is Ř, a single sound which is pronounced like an energetic briefly trilled R with additional contact from the tip of the tongue, producing some extra slightly ž-like friction. It can be heard in the name of the Czech composer Antonín Dvořák. It is voiceless at the end of a word (before a pause, see 2.5 below):
   Dvořák, řeka, říkat – lékař, keř, nekuř

The sound Ř also occurs after other consonants. It is also voiceless when it comes immediately next to a voiceless consonant:
   dříve, zavřít – tři, při, přece, kříčet

It also occurs sometimes between two consonants, but does not add its own syllable:
   hřbitov – křtitny (each two syllables only!)

It is necessary to distinguish Ř from R, e.g. hořký ‘bitter’ but horký ‘hot’, řvát ‘to roar’ but rvát ‘to tear’ (these two words are monosyllabic).

2.2.2 Consonant clusters

Czech is a language with many consonant-vowel-consonant-vowel sequences and some familiar consonant clusters which should not cause an English speaker any difficulties, e.g.
   máme, duby, matka, ostrý

But it does present some clusters which are unfamiliar, especially certain combinations of consonants in word-initial position:
mnoho, hluboký, kniha, psi, chci, chtěl
čtvrť, čtyři, vždyť', vždycky

Initial J occurs in spelling before s, d and m in words such as:

jsem 'I am', jsi 'you are', jste 'you plural are', jdu 'I go', jde 's/he goes', jmenovat 'to name'

In careful pronunciation a brief J sound may be uttered, not constituting its own syllable, but in ordinary speech this J is usually silent. However, it is pronounced when these words are negative, with the added negative prefix ne-:

nejsem, nejsi, nejste, nejdu, nejde, nejmenovat 'I am not' etc.

In ordinary speech these words, when positive, regularly turn into [sem], [si], [ste], [de] and [menovat]. Beginners can imitate this without sounding sloppy.

In words like dnes or ledna the D is also not fully articulated.

In words like ingot the N is pronounced, as in English, like an English ng sound, followed by G. Note that a final G is pronounced 'k' (with devoicing) in words like gong 'gong'.

2.2.3 Hard and ambivalent consonants

Most ‘non-soft’ consonants (i.e. those which are not listed above as ‘soft’) are traditionally labelled ‘hard’ (tvrdé).

Exceptions are the so-called ‘ambivalent’ consonants (obojetné souhlásky), which are b, p, m, v, f (the labials, formed with the lips) and l, s, z.

These ‘ambivalent’ consonants only need to be distinguished from the other ‘non-soft’ consonants for certain grammar and spelling reasons.

2.3 Soft i versus hard Y

After soft consonants the ‘i’ vowel is normally spelt with the letter i, called ‘soft i’ (měkké i), e.g. žil ‘he lived’.

The letter y, ‘hard y’ (tvrdé y), is pronounced the same, but only follows ‘hard’ consonants (or occasionally c, e.g. cynický ‘cynical’).

‘Ambivalent’ (obojetné) consonants b, p, m, v, f and l, s, z are followed by either letter i or letter y.

Certain words like this are differentiated only by their spelling, not by their pronunciation, e.g. byl means ‘he was’, but bil means ‘he beat’.
Pronunciation and orthography

2.4 Consonants before Ř and Į

Letter sequences bě, pě, vě, fě are pronounced as if they were spelt bje, pje, vje, fje. Compare the standard English sounds in ‘beauty’, ‘pure’, ‘view’ and ‘few’:

běhat, pět, věc, žíraře

The sequence mě is usually pronounced mňe (some speakers say mje):

mě (pronounced the same as mně), měsíc, mámě

The letter Ř also indicates that preceding d, t or n is to be pronounced d’, t’, ň. The vowel itself is simply pronounced like an ordinary Czech E:

dělat, tělo, Němec, vidět pronounced [d’elat], [t’elo], [ňemec], [vid’et]

Other consonants are never followed by č, but only by the letter e.

Before the ‘soft’ vowel i/i the letters d, t, n are also regularly pronounced ‘soft’, as d’, t’, ň.

vidím [vid’ím], lidi [lid’i], rádi [rád’i]

děti [d’et’i], tisíc [t’isíc]

nic [ňic], oni [oňi]

Notice what happens to the spelling when different endings are used with words or roots ending in one of these three soft consonants:

lod’ ‘boat’, but na lodi [lod’i] ‘on a boat’, lodě ‘boats’

vidět ‘to see’, but vidím ‘I see’

After ordinary d, t, n Czech habitually spells a ‘hard’ y/y. There are therefore sound differences between:

ti kamarádi (soft t’ and d’) and ty kamarády (ordinary t and d)

ti páni (soft t’ and ň) and ty pány (ordinary t and n)

ti studenti (soft t’ twice) and ty studenty (ordinary t)

Within foreign loanwords however the rule fails to apply, to avoid re-spelling. So you pronounce a ‘hard’ t, d and n in foreign words such as:

diplomat ‘diplomat’, politika ‘politics’, nikotin ‘nicotine’
2.5 Voicing and devoicing

This section deals with some details concerning pairs of related consonants and how they are pronounced in particular positions.

In the following pairs the first consonant is normally ‘voiced’ (produced with an onset of humming vocal cords), the second is its ‘voiceless’ pair:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b – p</th>
<th>v – f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d – t</td>
<td>d’ – t’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g – k</td>
<td>h – ch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z – s</td>
<td>ž – š</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dz – c</td>
<td>dž – č</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When any of these paired consonants are immediately next to one another, they share the same voice quality, ‘voiceless’ or ‘voiced’, regardless of the spelling. The quality takes its cue from the second consonant in the sequence, if there are two (and the last one, if there are more).

Typically, one consonant becomes ‘voiceless’ to match the next:

- včera pronounced [fčera], těžký [tʻeškí], lehký [lechki], sladký [slatki], Žuzka [Zuska]

But sometimes one becomes ‘voiced’ to match the next:

- kde pronounced [gde], kdo [gdo], prošba [prozba], leckdo [ledzgdo]

However, voiced v has no effect on preceding consonants:

- svůj, svoje, tvůj, tvoje

And words with the group sh are most often pronounced [sch] (however, this may be [zh] in Moravia):

- na shledanou [naschledanou] ‘goodbye’

The ‘voiced’ members of the list also typically ‘devoice’ when they come at the end of a word, before a pause:

- hrad pronounced [hrat], sníh [šních], už [uš], krey [kref]

Prepositions, like v ‘in’, s ‘with’, do ‘into’, are pronounced together with the next word. If they contain a vowel, they usually take the stress away from the following word:
v Praze [fpraze] ‘in Prague’, z Prahy [sprahy] ‘from Prague’
do Prahy [doprahy] ‘to/into Prague’

When a word starts with a vowel, there is in fact a slight glottal stop [?] before the initial vowel. This still applies when the word is preceded by the devoiced consonant of a preposition, especially in careful standard pronunciation:
v Olomouci [fˆolomouci] ‘in Olomouc’
but sometimes [volomouci]

2.6 Intonation – intonace

Learners will find it easiest to acquire intonation patterns by listening to the language as spoken by native speakers, and there are also regional variants.

However, a few extremely basic points may help, and you might try asking a native speaker to perform the examples below, along with some other similar sentences.

Statements have a basically falling (klesavá) intonation, preceded by a possible short rise on an emphasised word near the end. Notice also how Czech sentences like to start with known information and put key words of fresh information later. English relies on the intonation more fully for supplying any required emphasis, while Czech is able to adjust the word order with greater freedom:

Petr je tady. Je tady Petr. Petr is here.
Petr je tady. Je tady Petr. Petr is here. Petr is here.

Questions opening with question words have a similar falling pattern to plain statements, again with a short rise on a key word near the end. The question word itself makes it clear that this is a question, so no special pattern is required:

Kde je Petr? Where is Petr?

An exclamation will produce a greater rise on a key word near the end:

Petr je tady! Je tady Petr! Petr is here! Petr is here!

Questions without a question word will have either a type of rising (stoupavá) intonation, or, rather more distinctively (especially in Prague and Bohemia), a characteristic low-to-high rising and then falling (stoupavě klesavá) pattern or cadence across the final key word or phrase:
Je tady Petr? Je Petr tady?/ Is Petr here? Is Petr here? Petr je tady?

The question intonation patterns indicate incompleteness – the reply should complete the whole by supplying the requested answer.

Similarly, non-final clauses in a sentence will also have a (less prominent) form of rising intonation (e.g. preceding a comma which marks a pause), likewise indicating incompleteness:

Petr je tady, ale Jana je doma. Petr is here, but Jana is at home.

2.7 The alphabet

Alphabetical order in Czech is much the same as in English, but note that:

* ch comes after h in the dictionary (e.g. duch after duha)
* č, ř, š, ž also count as separate letters (after c, r, s, z)

Other letters (d’, ň, á etc.) are NOT treated separately. The position of ch after h is the difference most likely to throw new learners.

Letters may be read out as follows, e.g. when pronouncing abbreviations or spelling out a word:

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

OSN = [ó-es-en] = Organizace spojených národů, the United Nations
ČKD = [čé-ká-dé] = Českomoravská-Kolben-Daněk, name of a large firm making rolling stock, trams etc.

2.8 Capital letters

Czech uses fewer capital letters than English, especially in names for places, institutions etc. consisting of more than one word.

Often only the first word is capitalised, e.g.

Žitná ulice – Žitná Street
Ministerstvo školství – the Ministry of Education
Pražský hrad – Prague Castle
**Pronunciation and orthography**

Staroměstská radnice – the Old Town Hall  
Karlův most – the Charles Bridge  
Karlova univerzita – the Charles University  
Tichý oceán – the Pacific Ocean  
Divoký západ – the Wild West  
Středozemní moře – the Mediterranean Sea

However, more than one word is regularly capitalised in names of towns, quarters of towns, and cities, continents, and countries:

Karlovory Vary – Carlsbad  
Nové Město – the New Town  
Malá Strana – the Lesser Town  
Jižní Amerika – South America  
Nový Zéland – New Zealand

Unless (!) they contain a general word for state, republic, kingdom etc.:

Spojené státy americké – the United States of America  
Česká republika – the Czech Republic

Similarly, when a place name begins with a generic term for a location, this first word is not capitalised:

mys Dobré naděje – the Cape of Good Hope  
ulice Karolíny Světlé – Karolína Světlá Street

With names of houses, restaurants, pubs, streets etc. a preposition which is part of the name is capitalised if preceded in a sentence by the word for house etc., but otherwise not.

Such names themselves also now officially have capital letters, as recommended usage, on the first following word, even if this is not a proper name. Formerly (before the issuing of this recommendation for schools in 1993) the following word had either, depending on the name’s origin. City maps still often show the older, more difficult usage:

ulice Na Příkopě – or, as formerly, Na příkopě – street name  
restaurace U Tří koček – or, as formerly, U tří koček – the Three Cats Restaurant, called ‘At the Three Cats’  
Seděli jsme u Tří koček. – We sat in the Three Cats

Nowadays Vánoce ‘Christmas’ and Velikonoce ‘Easter’ are capitalised – until quite recently they were not.
2.9 Non-standard Czech

Non-standard variants of words and forms will be picked out with asterisks throughout this grammar. Those cited will mainly reflect the relaxed, informal everyday usage of Prague and Bohemia. Foreigners using these features may expect sometimes to attract criticism – even from Czechs who habitually speak like this themselves, or else from educated Moravians, who sometimes pride themselves on speaking a more standard variety of Czech than their Prague counterparts (while also having their own regional dialects).

Learners are advised to be a little cautious about using non-standard forms until they are competent enough to be able to adapt to the formality or informality of the situation in which they are speaking.

(a) Change of Ť to Ej

In non-standard usage the vowel represented in standard spelling by long Ť is sometimes altered to Ej. This feature is particularly common and prominent in the endings of adjectives (see sections 4.1.1, 4.3.3 etc.), but also occurs in other common words. In the wrong context this usage may come across as vulgar:

- dobrý – *dobrej ‘good’ (masculine singular)
- být – *bejt ‘to be’
- mýt – *mejt ‘to wash’
- výlet – *vejlet ‘excursion, trip’

Ej also occurs sometimes in place of standard Í after C, S, Z:

- cítit – *cejtit ‘to feel’
- sít – *sejt ‘to sow’
- zítra – *zejtra ‘tomorrow’

Also, more exceptionally, lit – *lejt ‘to pour’.

(b) Change of É to Ť/I

Similarly, the vowel represented in standard spelling by É is sometimes altered to Ť in everyday colloquial usage (sometimes spelt Í in the roots of words). Again, this is particularly common in the endings of adjectives, e.g.

- dobré becomes *dobyř ‘good’ (neuter sg., feminine pl. etc.)
- mléko – *mliko ‘milk’
- polévka – *polívka ‘soup’
In the case of the last two nouns the standard forms tend to sound a bit stiff and over-formal in everyday situations.

This change to Ť/Ť is less likely to be perceived as vulgar by speakers than the change to EJ above, doubtless because the results stand out less contrastively.

(c) Shortened [i] vowel

Present tense verb forms ending in -ím and adjective case forms ending in -ým, -ím commonly have a shortened [i] vowel:

\[
\begin{align*}
vím & \rightarrow *vim 'I know', 
\text{musín} & \rightarrow *musim 'I must', 
\text{malým} & \rightarrow *malým 'small', 
\text{prosím} & \rightarrow *prosim 'please' \text{ (lit. 'I ask, request')}
\end{align*}
\]

(d) Initial VO- for O-

Everyday words with initial O- are often pronounced VO- (a so-called prothetic v-). This usage, though common, is often perceived and criticised as vulgar, and should basically be avoided in more formal contexts:

\[
\begin{align*}
on, ona, oni & \rightarrow *von, *vona, *voni 'he, she, they' 
\text{okno} & \rightarrow *vokno 'window' 
\text{otevřít} & \rightarrow *votevřít 'to open' 
\text{oba, obě} & \rightarrow *voba, *vobě 'both'
\end{align*}
\]

This usage does not extend to more formal vocabulary, on the whole, e.g. not to organizace ‘organisation’, or even otec ‘father’ (informal usage is táta, tatínek ‘Dad’).

(e) OU- for initial Ú-

Certain words with initial Ú- retain occasional colloquial variants with initial OU-, though this feature is much less frequent than it was in the nineteenth century, e.g.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{úhoř} & \rightarrow *ouhoř 'eel' 
\text{úřady} & \rightarrow *ouřady 'offices, bureaucracy'
\end{align*}
\]

(f) Instrumental plural -ama etc.

Another prominent non-standard usage is the colloquial instrumental plural of nouns, ending in -ama, -ema, -ma (see section 3.4.8 etc.). Adjectives and pronouns have non-standard endings here also, e.g.
s *těma *malejma *dětma ‘with those small children’ – standard Czech has: s těmi malými dětmi.

Other non-standard features are pointed out elsewhere throughout the book.
We may like to think of a noun (podstatné jméno, substantivum) as basically a word for a living being or thing, including places, e.g. ‘boy, dog, Charles, Lucinda, table, house, London’.

However, nouns are also words for processes, qualities, abstract ideas and the like, which we treat (in language, at least) as if they were ‘things’, e.g. ‘love, levitation, playfulness, courage, existence’.

3.1 Gender – rod

Czech nouns have a feature of grammar (shared with other European languages, such as German, French and Latin) which we call gender. Grammatical gender does partly agree with our English idea of natural gender – men, boys and bulls are ‘masculine’; women, girls and milk-bearing cows are ‘feminine’ – but in Czech, grammatical gender applies to inanimate and abstract nouns as well, and these are not by any means all ‘neuter’.

Czech nouns are divided into three genders, masculine, feminine and neuter (mužský rod, ženský rod, střední rod), but in some situations we have to distinguish between masculine animates (mužský rod životný) and masculine inanimates (mužský rod neživotný).

Why is this gender classification so important?

One reason is that when describing a noun with an adjective or adding a word such as ‘that’ to it, you need to know a noun’s gender, because the ending of the adjective is affected by it, e.g.:

- ten velký hrad ‘that large castle’  basic phrase using the masculine noun hrad
- ta velká řeka ‘that large river’  basic phrase using the feminine noun řeka
- to velké město ‘that large town’  basic phrase using neuter noun město
In addition, categorising Czech nouns by gender helps to identify what endings they will use in different grammatical cases (for what ‘cases’ are, see below).

Very basic family terms show the general animate pattern, with feminines ending in -a, e.g.

**masculine:** otec ‘father’, syn ‘son’, bratr ‘brother’, dědeček ‘grandfather’, vnuk ‘grandson’

**feminine:** matka ‘mother’, dcera ‘daughter’, sestra ‘sister’, babička ‘grandmother’, vnučka ‘grand-daughter’ – plus rodina ‘family’

### 3.1.1 Rules for gender

Nouns for male persons are normally masculine, e.g. muž ‘man’, kluk ‘boy’. Nouns for female persons are normally feminine, e.g. žena ‘woman’, dívka ‘girl’.

Czech habitually distinguishes gender when labelling people by nationality, occupation etc., where English does not necessarily do so (with exceptions for occupations like ‘actor’ and ‘actress’), e.g.

**masculine:** Angličan ‘Englishman’, Čech ‘a Czech man’, překladatel ‘translator’

**feminine:** Angličanka ‘Englishwoman’, Češka ‘a Czech woman’, překladatelka ‘translator’

With some words for animals the gender is clearly specified for us by the meaning, e.g. býk ‘bull’. But assignation to gender is not as easy where we do not habitually identify the actual sex, e.g. myš ‘mouse’, which happens to be feminine.

Words for the young of animals are usually neuter, e.g. štěně ‘puppy’, kotě ‘kitten’. This even includes děvče, one of the more usual words for ‘girl’ (alongside dívka, which is feminine).

For other kinds of nouns you need to learn the gender as you go along. Luckily, most of the time there are some quite good rules about how to decide, or guess, this, according to how the noun ends.

Masculine animate nouns for human beings are usually deducible from the meaning, although it is also useful to know that their feminine equivalents will usually end in either -ka or -(k)yně.

Masculine animate nouns may end in various ways, usually in a consonant, also in -a, much less often -e or even -o, e.g.

‘teacher’ (učitelka ‘female teacher’), předseda ‘chairman’ (předsedkyně ‘chairwoman’), kolega ‘colleague’ (kolegyně ‘female colleague’), soudce ‘judge’ (soudkyně ‘female judge’), Ivo ‘the personal name Ivo’.

A pretty reliable rule of thumb for determining the gender of nouns other than human masculine animates, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>Most nouns ending in a consonant, e.g. hrad ‘castle’, kufr ‘suitcase’, vlak ‘train’, stroj ‘machine’, čaj ‘tea’</td>
<td>hrad, kufr, vlak, stroj, čaj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Some ending in a ‘soft’ or ‘ambivalent’ consonant are feminine, e.g. píseň ‘song’, tramvaj ‘tram’]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>Most nouns ending in -a, -e or the suffix -ost meaning ‘-ness’, e.g. voda ‘water’, lekce ‘lesson’, radost ‘joy, happiness’</td>
<td>voda, lekce, radost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[A few ending in -e are neuter, e.g. moře ‘sea’, pole ‘field’]</td>
<td>moře, pole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuter</td>
<td>Most nouns ending in -o or -í, e.g. město ‘town’, auto ‘car’, stavení ‘building’, náměstí ‘square’</td>
<td>město, auto, stavení, náměstí</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nevertheless, the gender of some nouns still has to be learnt individually.

A few animate nouns which refer to either males or females are grammatically feminine, e.g. osoba ‘person, character’ (and grammatical ‘person’) and stráž -e ‘guard’.

### 3.2 The plural – množné číslo

Most nouns have forms for both the singular (singulár, jednotné číslo) and the plural (plurál, množné číslo).

The plurals of nouns will be covered in proper detail later in this chapter. This is just an overview:

The commonest basic (nominative) plural ending for masculine inanimate and feminine nouns is -y, e.g. rohlík – rohlíky ‘rolls’, řeka – řeky ‘rivers’.

But masculine animate nouns typically have plural -i, e.g. kamarád – kamarádi [-d’i] ‘friends’. (Some have plural -ové or -é, e.g. pánové ‘men, gentlemen’, učitelé ‘teachers.’)
Neuter nouns in -o have plural -a, e.g. pivo – piva ‘beers’.

Nouns (other than masc. anim.) ending in a ‘soft’ consonant or -e mostly have plural -e, e.g. tramvaj – tramvaje ‘trams, tramcars’, ulice – ulice ‘streets’, večeře – večeře ‘suppers’ (i.e. sometimes basic plural = basic singular).

Some nouns are ‘plural-only’, often as in English, e.g. kalhoty ‘trousers’, nůžky ‘scissors’. Also (unlike English): noviny ‘newspaper’, záda ‘back’.

3.3 **Cases – pády**

Czech nouns change their endings for various purposes, not just for the plural, producing what are called different ‘cases’. To go through the various cases of a noun is called to ‘decline’ it, and the resulting table is a ‘declension’.

Cases are initially one of the hardest things for English speakers to master in the language. There are seven different cases in Czech, called nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, locative, instrumental and vocative. Cases have both singular and plural forms.

Here is a summary of what each case (pád) is used for, with the names Jana and David used as typical feminine and masculine examples.

The **nominative**, or basic (dictionary, default) form of a Czech noun, is used for the subject, agent, doer of a verb.


Jan|a je chytrá. David je chytrý. Jana/David is clever.

The **accusative** is primarily used for the object of a verb (the recipient of its action or state). It is also used after certain prepositions, e.g. pro ‘for’.


The **genitive** primarily means the same as English ‘of’. It also follows many prepositions, including basic ones such as do ‘into’, z/ze ‘out of’, od ‘from (a person)’.


The *dative* primarily means ‘to/for’. It also follows a few prepositions, especially *k/ke* ‘towards’.

**Napsal Janě dopis.**  
He wrote a letter to Jana/David.

**Napsal Davidovi dopis.**  
= He wrote Jana/David a letter.

**Jde k Janě.**  
S/he goes towards Jana/David.

**Jde k Davidovi.**

The *locative* often denotes a fixed location, and is used only after prepositions. It follows prepositions such as *v/ve* ‘in’, *na* ‘on’, *o* ‘about (a theme, subject)’. (The dative and locative singular endings are often the same.)

**Dopis o Janě.**  
A letter about Jana/David.

**Dopis o Davidovi.**

The *instrumental* means ‘by/with (a means or instrument)’. It also follows prepositions *s/se* ‘with (= accompanied by)’ and prepositions of relative location such as *za* ‘behind/beyond’, *pred* ‘in front of’.

**Jde tam s Janou.**  
S/he is going there with Jana/David.

**Jde tam s Davidem.**

Lastly, the *vocative* is used for addressing or calling people, e.g. *Jano! Jana! Adame! ‘Adam!’*. (There is no distinct vocative in the plural – just use the nominative plural form for this.)

**Jano! Pojď’ sem!**  
Jana/David! Come here!

See Chapter 8 on cases and prepositions for more details on usage.

### 3.4 Hard and soft declensions

In order to assign the correct case endings to a noun it is necessary to work with the correct declension type.

The main types may be classified as belonging either to a ‘hard’ pattern (*tvrdý vzor*) or a ‘soft’ pattern (*měkký vzor*). The ‘soft’ types in particular share some strong similarities.
Declension type depends on the consonant (and vowel) ending:

‘Hard’ consonants are d, t, g, h, k, n, r. ‘Ambivalent’ labials b, p, m, v, liquid l, and sibilants s, z mostly count as ‘hard’, but not always (examples below).

‘Soft’ consonants are č, d’, ň, ř, š, t’, ž (diacritic letters), c and j (but c is occasionally ‘hard’).

Hard nouns regularly end in a ‘hard’ or ‘ambivalent’ consonant, -a, or -o.

Soft nouns regularly end in a ‘soft’ consonant, -e, -ost or -í.

### 3.4.1 The genitive as a marker of declension

Dictionaries and glossaries habitually give the genitive sg., along with the gender, to mark the declension type, e.g. žen[a]-y f. ‘woman, wife’.

Typical hard types have genitive sg. -a (masculine animate or neuter), -u (masculine inanimate) or -y (feminine).

The most typical soft types have genitive sg. -e.

### 3.4.2 Fleeting -E-

Many nouns ending in a consonant drop a final -e- syllable when case endings are added.

In Czech this is called pohybné -e-. Fleeting -e- is particularly regular with suffixes -ek, -ec and (mostly feminine) -en.

Dictionaries should give the genitive sg., e.g. dědeček – dědečka ‘grandfather’, Němec – Němce ‘a German’, píseň – písňe ‘song’, also Karel – Karla = ‘Charles’.

### 3.4.3 Vowel shortening

Sometimes the vowel in the body of a noun undergoes shortening (krácení) before any case endings, e.g. mráz – mrazu ‘frost’. Again, dictionaries should indicate this by giving the genitive sg. Long ů shortens to o, e.g. dům – domu ‘house’, stůl – stolu ‘table’. Note also vítr – větru ‘wind’, sníh – sněhu ‘snow’.
In these tables of declension types the most essential ones are in block capitals. The nouns adopted as models are often used in Czech textbooks. The genitive sg. is indicated for each type. Further examples of each are given in the next two sections.

### Hard types

**Masculine Animate**
- type **PÁN** -a ‘gentleman, master’
  (a few ending in -o, e.g. **Iv**o -a)
- type **předseda** -y ‘chairman’

**Masculine Inanimate**
- type **HRAD** -u ‘castle’

**Feminine**
- type **ŽENA** -y ‘woman, wife’

**Neuter**
- type **MĚSTO** -a ‘town’

### Soft types

**Masculine Animate**
- type **MUŽ** -e ‘man’, type **soudce** -e ‘judge’

**Masculine Inanimate**
- type **STROJ** -e ‘machine’

**Feminine**
- type **RŮŽE** -e ‘rose’ and **PÍSEŇ** -sně ‘song’
- type **kost** -i ‘bone’ [some ending in other consonants]

**Neuter**
- type **moře** -e ‘sea’
- type **kuře** -ete ‘chicken’ (esp. young of animals)
- type **stavení** -i ‘building’

### Identifying hard types

Masculine animate:
- type **PÁN** -a ‘master’
  Most masculine animates ending in ‘non-soft’ consonants, e.g. **kluk** ‘boy’, **bratr** ‘brother’, **student** ‘student’, **býk** ‘bull’
  [a few ending in -o, e.g. the name **Ivo**]
Masculine animates ending in -a, e.g. kolega ‘colleague’, komunista ‘a communist’, táta ‘dad’, and many familiar forms of personal names, e.g. Tonda = ‘Tony’

**Masculine inanimate:**

**Type** HRAD -u ‘castle’

Most inanimates ending in ‘non-soft’ consonants, e.g. strom ‘tree’, papír ‘paper’, koncert ‘concert’.

Some have gen. sg. -a, e.g. les -a forest.

**Feminine:**

**Type** ŽEN|A -y ‘woman’

Most nouns ending in -a, e.g. řeka ‘river’, hora ‘mountain’, sestra ‘sister’, škola ‘school’

**Neuter:**

**Type** MĚST|O -a ‘town’

Most nouns ending in -o, e.g. auto ‘car’, okno ‘window’

### 3.4.6 Identifying soft types

**Masculine animate:**

**Type** MUŽ -e ‘man’

Masculine animates ending in ‘soft’ consonants (c, č, d’, j, ň, ř, š, t’, ž), e.g. otec – otce ‘father’, novinář -e ‘journalist’.

Those ending in the suffix -tel, e.g. učitel -e ‘teacher’, překladatel -e ‘translator’

A few others ending in ‘ambivalent’ consonants, e.g. král -e ‘king’

Proper names ending in -s, -x, -z, e.g. Francouz -e ‘Frenchman’, Alois -e, Klaus -e, Marx -e

**Type** SOUDC|E -e ‘judge’

A few masculine animates ending in -e, e.g. průvodce ‘guide’, správce ‘caretaker’, vůdce ‘leader’
Masculine inanimate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| STROJ -e | machine | Masculine inanimes ending in 'soft' consonants, e.g. kon|ec -nce 'end', klíč -e 'key', stroj -e 'machine', čaj -e 'tea', nůž – nože 'knife'

A few ending in 'ambivalent' consonants, e.g. py|tel -tle 'sack', zřetel -e 'viewpoint'

Feminine:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| RŮŽ|E -e | rose | Most nouns ending in -e, e.g. ulice 'street', duše 'soul', země 'earth, land', přítelkyně 'female friend'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| PÍ|SEŇ -ně | song | Feminine nouns ending in 'soft' consonants, e.g. tramvaj -e 'tram', skříň -ně 'cupboard', věž -e 'tower'

A few ending in 'ambivalent' consonants, e.g. postel -e 'bed', including a group ending in -ev, e.g. láhev -hve 'bottle', mr|kev -kve 'carrot'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| KOST -i | bone | Feminine nouns ending in the suffix -ost, e.g. radost -i 'joy, gladness'

A few others, e.g. část -i 'part', moc -i 'power', noc -i 'night', věc -i 'thing', řeč -i 'speech', sůl – soli 'salt', myš -i 'mouse'

Neuter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| MOŘ|E -e | sea | A few neuters ending in -e, e.g. pole 'field', srdce 'heart'

Nouns ending in -iště, e.g. letiště 'airport'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| KUŘ|E -ete | chicken | Nouns for the young of animals ending in -e, e.g. kotě 'kitten', štěně 'puppy', also děvče 'girl'

A few others ending in -e, e.g. rajče 'tomato'
Most nouns ending in -í, e.g. náměstí ‘square’, překvapení ‘surprise’, 
vzdělání ‘education’

### 3.4.7 Case numbering

In Czech schools cases are habitually named by number in a particular 
order. They also have Czech names similar to ours:

- **první pád** ‘1st case’ = **nominativ** nominative nom.
- **druhý pád** ‘2nd case’ = **genitiv** genitive gen.
- **třetí pád** ‘3rd case’ = **dativ** dative dat.
- **čtvrtý pád** ‘4th case’ = **akuzativ** accusative acc.
- **pátý pád** ‘5th case’ = **vokativ** vocative voc.
- **šestý pád** ‘6th case’ = **lokál** locative loc.
- **sedmý pád** ‘7th case’ = **instrumentál** instrumental ins.

The order of cases adopted in this grammar is different. One reason is 
to harmonise better with English learning habits for other inflected 
languages such as Russian and Latin. But this order also keeps together 
two pairs of cases which are often identical: (a) nominative and accusa-
tive, (b) dative and locative sg.

Nom., acc., gen., dat., loc., ins., voc.

Only acc. and voc. are ‘out of order’, from the traditional Czech stand-
point.

The Czech numbers have been added to the tables, for reference 
purposes.

Native speakers of course do not recite tables in order to speak their 
own language. They go directly to the forms required.

### 3.4.8 Declension of hard types – summary

The table summarises the case forms of the main hard types. Each will 
be considered in more detail further below. Only a few variants have 
been indicated here, for clarity’s sake.

Where accusative = nominative, the accusative form is not shown.

The order masculine, feminine, neuter is traditional, although the 
masculine and neuter types have various case endings in common.

(Masculine animate type předseda will be treated separately below.)
Nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>PÁN</td>
<td>HRAD</td>
<td>ŽENA</td>
<td>MĚSTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>PÁNA</td>
<td>= gen.</td>
<td>ŽENU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>pán</td>
<td>hrad</td>
<td>ženy</td>
<td>města</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>pánovi</td>
<td>hradu</td>
<td>ženě</td>
<td>městu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) pánovi</td>
<td>(o) hradě</td>
<td>(o) ženě</td>
<td>(o) městě,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>pánem</td>
<td>hradem</td>
<td>ženou</td>
<td>městem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 voc.</td>
<td>pane!</td>
<td>hrade!</td>
<td>ženo!</td>
<td>= nom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pl.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>PÁN</td>
<td>l, -ové</td>
<td>HRADY</td>
<td>ŽENY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>PÁNY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>pánů</td>
<td>hradů</td>
<td>žen</td>
<td>měst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>pánům</td>
<td>hradům</td>
<td>ženám</td>
<td>městům</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) pánůch</td>
<td>(o) hradech</td>
<td>(o) ženách</td>
<td>(o) městech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>pán</td>
<td>l,</td>
<td>hrad</td>
<td>l,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*-ama</td>
<td>*-ama</td>
<td>*-ama</td>
<td>*-ama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.9 Declension of soft types – summary

The main soft-stem types have much in common: genitive sg. in -e, dative/locative sg. -i, etc. The less essential type moře is also very similar.

Other types are treated separately below.
3.4.10 **Dative/locative ending -Ě or -E**

The dative/locative singular ending -ě or sometimes -e is standard with feminine nouns type žena. The same ending also occurs in the locative only with certain common masculine inanimates type hrad and neuters type město.

The effect of this case ending on preceding consonants needs to be studied carefully.

Labials (b, p, f, m, v) and dentals (d, t, n) simply change their pronunciation as indicated by the spelling form -ě:

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<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>MUŽ</td>
<td>STROJ</td>
<td>RŮŽE</td>
<td>PÍSEŇ</td>
<td>moře</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>MUŽE</td>
<td>RŮŽI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= gen.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>muži, -ovi</td>
<td>stroje</td>
<td>růže</td>
<td>písně</td>
<td>moře</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>muži, -ovi</td>
<td>stroji</td>
<td>růži</td>
<td>písní</td>
<td>moři</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) muží</td>
<td>(o) stroji</td>
<td>(o) růži</td>
<td>(o) písní</td>
<td>(o) moří</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>mužem</td>
<td>strojem</td>
<td>růži</td>
<td>písní</td>
<td>mořem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 voc.</td>
<td>muž!</td>
<td>stroji!</td>
<td>= nom.</td>
<td>písní!</td>
<td>= nom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pl.</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>MUŽ</td>
<td></td>
<td>STROJE</td>
<td>RŮŽE</td>
<td>PÍSNĚ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>MUŽE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>mužů</td>
<td>strojů</td>
<td>růží, ulic</td>
<td>písní</td>
<td>moří, letiště</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>mužům</td>
<td>strojům</td>
<td>růžím</td>
<td>písním</td>
<td>mořím</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) mužích</td>
<td>(o) strojích</td>
<td>(o) růžích</td>
<td>(o) písních</td>
<td>(o) mořích</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>muží, -ema</td>
<td>strojí, -ema</td>
<td>růží, -ema</td>
<td>písní, -ema</td>
<td>moří, -ema</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consonants r and the so-called ‘velars’ alter as follows, with the spelling -e:

- ra → -ře  sestra – sestře ‘to (my) sister’, klášter – v klášteře ‘in a monastery’
- ka → -ce  řeka – v řece ‘in the river’, rok – v roce ‘in the year’
- ga, -ha → -ze  Olga – Olze ‘to Olga’, Praha – v Praze ‘in Prague’
- cha → -še  střecha – na střeše ‘on the roof’

After l, s, z, and rarely soft consonants č, ř, š, ž, this ending is also spelt -e, e.g. škola – ve škole ‘in school’, les – v lese in the forest.

3.5 Masculine types

3.5.1 Masculine type pán

The commonest type of masculine animate noun ends in a hard consonant, e.g. pán ‘master, man, gentleman’.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>pán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>pána = gen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>pána</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>pánovi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) pánovi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>pánem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 voc.</td>
<td>pane! kluku!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note the irregular shortening in vocative pane! The short-vowel form pan is otherwise used for ‘Mr’, e.g. pan Novotný ‘Mr Novotný’.
Remember that the accusative singular of masculine animate nouns is regularly the same as the genitive.
The dative/locative regularly ends in -ovi, but when two (or more) are used in a series, all except the last normally use the shorter ending -u:

pan Novák – panu Novákoví to/for Mr Novák

Adam Novák – o Adamu Novákoví about Adam Novák

The vocative ending -u! is used after velars k, g, h, ch, e.g. kluk – kluku! ‘boy!’ (note also synu! ‘son!’). The consonant r becomes ř before vocative -e! if it follows a consonant, e.g. Petr – Petře!, but not after a vowel: profesor – pane profesore! ‘Professor!’ In the minor sub-type Iv|o -a, vocative = nominative.

The nominative plural sometimes ends in -ové or -é, instead of -i, see below.

Only masculine animate nouns distinguish between nominative and accusative in the plural (and the accusative plural form is just like an inanimate nominative):

**To jsou studenti – Češi, Irové a Angličané.**

*These are students – Czechs, Irish and English.*

**Učím studenty – Čechy, Iry a Angličany.**

*I teach students – Czechs, Irish and English.*

Nominative plural -i:

The basic nominative plural ending for this type is -i. Note how this ending changes the pronunciation of preceding d, t, n to d’, t’, ň:

**To je kamarád – To jsou kamarádi [-d’i].**

*That’s a friend – Those are friends.*

**To je student – To jsou studenti [-t’i].**

*That’s a student – Those are students.*

Before -i you also have to make changes to velars k, h, ch and to r:

k>c kluk – kluci ‘boys’

h>z vrah – vrazi ‘murderers’

ch>š Čech – Češi ‘Czechs’

r>ř doktor – doktoři ‘doctors’

Nominative plural -ové:

The ending -ové is typically used for human beings, hence vůl – vola ‘ox’ has the ordinary plural voli in the sense of ‘oxen’ but vůl – volové means ‘idiot(s)’. As a stylistic variant -ové may also add an air of solemnity:
páni for ‘masters’ has an alternative form pánové ‘masters, gentlemen’, also generally used in the phrase dámy a pánové ‘ladies and gentlemen’.

Those with nominative plural -ové include most nouns ending in g and nouns for human beings ending in ambivalent consonants (b/p, v/f, m, l, sometimes s, z): biologové ‘biologists’, Arabové ‘Arabs’, ekonomové ‘economists’, filozofové, generálové, Italové.

Some words for animals have alternative forms here, e.g. motlpal ‘butterflies’.

With nouns ending in -ch (but not hoch – hoši ‘boys’) the ending -ové is sometimes optional, e.g. Česi/Cechové ‘Czechs’, mniši/mnichové ‘monks’, but only duchové ‘spirits’ and živočichové ‘animals’.

Plural -ové is sometimes favoured with nouns ending in -ek, -ěk, though both forms occur, but is a bit less frequent with -ik, e.g. předek – předkovi/předci ‘ancestors’, svědek – svědkové/svědci ‘witnesses’, but more often historik – historici ‘historians’ and politik – politici ‘politicians’ (alongside -ové).


Nominative plural -é:

Some nouns have the nominative plural ending -é, mainly nouns with the suffix -an, but this tends to be replaced in relaxed speech by -i: Američan – Američané (-i) ‘Americans’, Angličanlě (-i) ‘English people’, Slovanlé (-i) ‘Slavs’.

Other examples are host – hosté (-i) ‘guests’, soused – sousedé (-i) ‘neighbours’, Žid – Židé ‘Jews’ (-i may be treated as insulting), anděl – andělé, manžel – manželé ‘married couple’ (manželové ‘husbands’), Španěl – Španělé ‘Spaniards’.

Plural of personal names:

Surnames have a special plural ending -ovi (acc. -ovy) for the family as a group, e.g. Novákoví ‘the Nováks’, and then Nováků, Novákům etc.

Otherwise personal names use the nom. pl. ending -ové, e.g. Čapkové, Václavové, Bohumilové, Lucemburkové.

Locative plural variants:

Masculine nouns ending in velars k, g, h, ch have loc. pl. -ich, preceded by consonant changes k->č and h/g->z, ch->š: kluk – kluci, o klucích ‘about the boys’, Čech – Češi, o Češích ‘about the Czechs’. In non-standard spoken usage the ending -ách sometimes occurs instead, e.g. o *klukách (not with Češi ‘Czechs’, however – Čechách is the loc. pl. of Čechy ‘Bohemia’).
The ending -ech is not to be used ever after velars, but it is used after r, e.g. profesorí – o profesorech ‘teachers, professors’.

### 3.5.2 Masculine type hrad

Type hrad ‘castle’ represents the commonest type of masculine inanimate noun, ending in a hard consonant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sg.</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>hrad</td>
<td>hradý</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>hradu</td>
<td>hradů</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>hradu</td>
<td>hradům</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(na) hradě, (o) hradu</td>
<td>(o) hradech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>hradem</td>
<td>hradly (*-ama)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 voc.</td>
<td>hrade! etc. (like pán)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the language as a whole, the majority of nouns of this type always (or usually) have the loc. sg. ending in -u. In addition, most abstract nouns, less basic and more recent nouns conform to this pattern, e.g. sport – o sportu ‘about sport’, kufř – v kufřu ‘in the suitcase’, hotel – v hotelu ‘in the hotel’, klub – v klubu ‘in the club’. Most nouns with a final velar k, g/h, h and r also have this ending, e.g. park – v parku ‘in the park’, taxík – v taxíku ‘in a taxi’, roh – na rohu ‘on the corner’.

However, the alternative locative sg. ending -e/ě (with its sound changes detailed in 3.4.10 above) remains standard usage with many basic nouns of this type, especially in common phrases, e.g. hrad – na hradě ‘in (lit. “on”) the castle’, les – v lesu ‘in the forest’, most – na mostě ‘on the bridge’, sklep – v sklepu ‘in the cellar’, stůl – na stole ‘on the table’.

Occasionally this ending even occurs after velars and r, e.g. rok – v roce ‘in the year’, jazyk – v jazyce ‘in the language’ (or v jazyku, and na jazyku for ‘on the tongue’), papír – na papíře/papíru ‘on paper’, kožich – v kožíšku/kožíchu ‘in a fur coat’.

However, even where locative -ě/-e occurs, -u is often either possible or equally frequent, especially after s and t: byt – v bytě/v bytu ‘in the flat’, dopis – v dopisu/v dopisu ‘in the letter’, autobus – v autobusu ‘in the bus’.
There is also a tendency to prefer locative -u after prepositions other than v ‘in’ and na ‘on, at’, e.g. na hradě ‘at the castle’ but more usually o hradu ‘about the castle’.

A special group of basic nouns of this type have genitive sg. -a. They include place names (and some other nouns) with the suffixes -ín, -ýn and -ov, e.g. Berlín, Londýn, Smíchov. They generally also have the locative sg. ending -e/ě, e.g. Berlína – v Berlíně, les – lesa – v lese ‘forest’, svět – světa – na světě ‘world’, ostrov – ostrova – na ostrově ‘island’, dvůr – dvora – na dvoře ‘yard, court’, kostel – kostela – v kostele ‘church’. However, the months of the year ending in -en and únor all have genitive -a but locative -u, e.g. leden – ledna ‘January’, v lednu ‘in January’, v únoru ‘in February’.

In standard usage nouns ending in velars k, g, h, ch have locative pl. -ích, with sound changes, just like animates, e.g. zámek – zámky, na zámčicích ‘at the chateaux’. However, the feminine ending -ách often replaces this in everyday domestic words or foreign borrowings: kousek – pl. kousky, v kouskách/v kouscích ‘in pieces’, tepláky – v teplákách ‘in a tracksuit’, doky – v docích/v dokách ‘in the docks’.

Locative pl. -ích also occurs after l, s, z, especially in les – v lesích ‘forests’ (nearly always), hotel – v hotelích/-ech ‘hotels’, kostel – v kostelích/-ech ‘churches’.

### 3.5.3 Masculine types muž/soudce and stroj

Animate types muž ‘man, husband’ and soudce ‘judge’, and inanimate type stroj ‘machine’ have a majority of endings in common. Type soudce only differs from muž where shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sg.</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>muž, soudc</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>muže = gen.</td>
<td>muže</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>muže</td>
<td>stroje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>muž</td>
<td>i, -ovi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) muž</td>
<td>i, -ovi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>mužem</td>
<td>strojem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 voc.</td>
<td>muži! but soudce!</td>
<td>strojí!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nouns ending in -ec have vocative -če, e.g. chlapec – chlapče! ‘boy!’

Animates sometimes replace dative/locative sg. -i by -ovi, especially names, e.g. Miloš – (o) Milošovi, but (o) Miloši Benešovi (where Miloš is within a series).

Some animates have nominative pl. -ové, e.g. otec – otcové ‘fathers’, král – králové ‘kings’, soudce – soudci or soudcové ‘judges’, zpravodaj -ové ‘news reporters’.

Animates ending with the suffix -tel have nom. pl. -é, e.g. učitel – učitelé ‘teachers’. Note irregular přítel – nominative pl. přátelé (!) ‘friends’, genitive pl. přátel, and obyvatel, genitive pl. obyvatel ‘inhabitants’.

### 3.5.4 Masculine type předseda

Type předseda ‘chairman’ broadly follows feminine type žena in the singular (see next section), except for its typically masculine dative/locative -ovi (always). The plural follows pán, but often with nominative pl. -ové or -é.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>předseda</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>předsedu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>předsedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>předsedovi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) předsedovi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>předsedou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 voc.</td>
<td>předsedo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After a soft consonant the genitive sg. is spelt -i, mostly with familiar forms of personal names, e.g. Pét’a – Péti ‘Pete’.

Many have nominative plural -ové: předseda – předsedové ‘chairmen’, kolega – kolegové ‘colleagues’. Others have nominative plural -é, especially nouns with the suffix -ista, though in fact this tends to be replaced by -i in ordinary speech: turista – turisté (-i) ‘tourists’, komunista – komunisté ‘communists’ (-i may sound disrespectful).

The locative pl. ending -ech is regularly replaced by -ích after velars g, h, ch, k, e.g. kolegové – o kolezích ‘about colleagues’.
3.6 | Feminine types

3.6.1 Feminine type žena

Type žena ‘woman, wife’ includes a very large number of both animate and inanimate feminine nouns ending in -a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg.</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>žena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>ženu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>ženy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>ženě</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) ženě</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>ženou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 voc.</td>
<td>ženo!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note the ‘zero’ ending (i.e. no ending at all) of the genitive plural, e.g. ženy – žen ‘women’, koruny – korun ‘of crowns’, jahody – jahod ‘of strawberries’. Occasionally there is vowel shortening with these, as in mouchy – much ‘of flies’, sily – sil ‘of forces’.

Where a noun with the ‘zero’ ending would end in two consonants an -e- is often inserted between the consonants, sestry – sester ‘of sisters’. This is particularly regular with nouns ending in a consonant + -ka: švestky – švestek ‘of plums’. But it does not apply with some ‘pronounceable’ combinations, such as -st- as in cesta – cest ‘roads, journeys’.

After a soft consonant the genitive sg. (and nominative/accusative pl.) ending is spelt -i, for spelling reasons. This mostly occurs with forms of personal names, e.g. Táňa – Táni, Dáša – Dáši, but also e.g. skica -i ‘sketch’.

Dative/locative sg. -i also occurs sometimes with nouns of this type after a soft consonant, e.g. gejša ‘geisha’ dative/locative sg. -i/-e.

3.6.2 Feminine types růže and píseň

There are only a few differences between types růže and píseň, so they are taken together here.
Feminines ending in -ie, pronounced [ije], also follow type duše, e.g. Anglie – do Anglie, v Anglii ‘to England, in England’. So do the rarer feminines ending in -ia, e.g. Slavia [slávija], do Slavie (football team).


A group of nouns ending in -ev belong here, e.g. láhev – genitive láhve/lahve ‘bottle’, mrkev – mrkve ‘carrot’, církev – církve ‘church (the institution)’. Some end in -l, e.g. postel -e ‘bed’.

### 3.6.3 Feminine type kost

These regularly end in the suffix -ost, meaning ‘-ness’, e.g. radost ‘joy, gladness’. Some other nouns also belong to this group, which is conventionally listed as type kost ‘bone’.
Nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg.</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom. kost</td>
<td>kosti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc. kosti</td>
<td>kostí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen. kosti</td>
<td>kostí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat. kosti</td>
<td>kostem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc. (o) kosti</td>
<td>(o) kostech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins. kostí</td>
<td>kost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 voc. kostí!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The typical genitive/dative/locative singular is the same as the nominative/accusative plural: kostí [kost’i] ‘of/to a bone’ or ‘bones’.

Nouns of this type not ending in -st often tend to switch at least optionally or partially to type píseň endings in the less common plural dative, locative and instrumental cases.

Various at least reasonably common further nouns ending in -st de-


A number have dat. and loc. pl. either -em or -im, -ech or -ích, but retain ins. pl. -mi, e.g. oběť ‘sacrifice’, zed’ – zdi ‘wall’, lest – lsti ‘trick, ruse’, mast ‘ointment’, past ‘trap’, pěst ‘fist’, paměť ‘memory’.

Moc ‘power’, nemoc ‘illness’, pomoc ‘help’ and velmoc ‘great power’ are the same, except that they have ins. pl. -emi.

A residual group may decline throughout like type píseň, retaining only gen. sg. and nom. -acc. pl. -i as alternative endings alongside -e/é, e.g. čtvrt ‘quarter’ and čtvrt’ ‘district, quarter’, hut ‘ironworks’, lod’

3.7 Neuter types

3.7.1 Neuter type město

Type město ‘town’ represents the commonest type of neuter noun, ending in -o.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sg.</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>město</td>
<td>města</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>města</td>
<td>měst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>městu</td>
<td>městům</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) městě (o) městech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>městem</td>
<td>městy (*-ama)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 voc.</td>
<td>= nom.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


However, as with masculine inanimates, the majority of nouns have locatives ending in -u. This includes (with few exceptions) nouns with a final velar k, g/h, ch, e.g. Německo – v Německu ‘in Germany’, ucho – v uchu ‘in the ear’, also most abstract nouns, and less basic or more recent vocabulary: rádio – v rádiu ‘on (“in”) the radio’. Even where -č/-e is regularly used, -u may be equally possible: kino – v kin ě, v kinu ‘in the cinema’, especially in non-set phrases, e.g. ve městě ‘in town’ but o městě/o městu Čáslav ‘about the town [of] Čáslav’.

The ‘zero’ ending for the genitive plural is the same as for feminines: auta – aut ‘cars’, města – měst ‘towns’, slova – slov ‘words’. Vowel shortening occurs in a few words, e.g. léta – let ‘summers, years’, díla –
děl ‘works (of art)’. Inserted -e- occurs here as for feminine nouns: jablka – jablek ‘apples’, okna – oken ‘windows’.

In standard usage neuters ending in velars have the locative pl. ending -ách: vajíčka – ve vajíčkách ‘in the eggs’ (exceptions are jablka – o jablkách or jablčích ‘apples’, and in normal standard written usage střediska – ve střediscích ‘centres’, stanovisko – v stanoviscích ‘standpoints’).

### 3.7.2 Neuter type moře

There is a relatively minor group of neuter nouns ending in -e, e.g. moře ‘sea’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sg.</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>moře</td>
<td>moře</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>moře</td>
<td>moří</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>moří</td>
<td>mořím</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>o moří</td>
<td>o mořích</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>mořem</td>
<td>moří (*-ema)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 voc.</td>
<td>= nom.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Nouns with the suffix -iště belong to this group and have a zero genitive plural, e.g. letiště – letišt’, ‘airports’, similarly hřiště ‘playing field, sports ground’, bydliště ‘place of residence’.


### 3.7.3 Neuter type kuře

This declension type is mostly used for nouns denoting the young of animals, and is traditionally represented by kuře ‘chicken’.
Neuter words for the young of animals regularly belong to this group, e.g. štěně ‘puppy’, hřibě ‘foal’, kotě ‘kitten’, tele ‘calf’ (plural štěnata, hříbata, kot’ata, telata). (Their diminutives end in -átko: kot’átko, štěnátko ‘little kitten, little puppy’.) Other animal words in this type include zvíře ‘animal’, prase ‘pig’.

Note also the human nouns děvče ‘girl’ (dim. děvčátko) and dítě – dítěte ‘child’. The usual plural for ‘children’ is děti, which is treated as feminine (see 3.8.2 below). Other human examples include kníže ‘prince, duke’, hrabě ‘count’ (these two are treated as masculine in the singular!), vnouče ‘grandchild’ and dvojče ‘twin’.

Only a few inanimate nouns belong to this neuter type, including especially: rajče – rajčete, pl. rajčata ‘tomato’, doupě ‘den’, koště ‘broom’, poupě ‘bud’.

### 3.7.4 Neuter type stavení

The relatively common neuter type stavení ‘building’ has only one different case form in the singular (the instrumental), and three in the plural. A large number of nouns of this type are derived from verbs, e.g. vzdělání ‘education’ or mytí ‘washing’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg.</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>kuře</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>kuřete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>kuřeti</td>
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<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>o kuřeti</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>kuřetem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 voc.</td>
<td>= nom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other common examples are nádraží ‘station’, náměstí ‘square’, století ‘century’, výročí ‘anniversary’, období ‘period, era’. The plural of století is either století or staletí.

Some are collective nouns, e.g. kamení ‘stone’, uhli ‘coal’, stromoví ‘trees’. Also zelí ‘cabbage’, září ‘September’, pondělí ‘Monday’.

### 3.8 Other miscellaneous types

#### 3.8.1 The dual – hands, legs, eyes and ears

Ruka ‘hand’, noha ‘leg’, oko ‘eye’ and ucho ‘ear’ have special forms called the ‘dual’ (duál, dvojné číslo), used for the plural of these paired parts of the body. All count as feminine in the plural.
Adjectives and determiners qualifying these nouns in the instrumental plural switch their own endings to -ma instead of -mi: těma čtyřma velkýma nohama ‘with those four big legs’. This is standard correct written usage (with other nouns these are colloquial forms).

In figurative senses standard plural forms occur, e.g. dvě ucha ‘two handles’, hrnc s dvěma uchý ‘a pot with two handles’, but mechanické ruce ‘mechanical arms’.

Diminutives for hands, legs, eyes and ears also have dual instrumental plural forms, e.g. ručička, pl. ručičky – ručičkama, nožička – pl. nožičký -ama, očíčko – pl. očičkja -ama, and ouško – pl. ouškja -ama.

The genitive/locative ending -ou is also used optionally by neuter nouns rameno ‘shoulder’, koleno ‘knee’. It is also standard with the plural-only neuter noun prsa ‘chest’ (contrast with prs -u masc. ‘breast’).

### 3.8.2 Lidé people and děti children

A standard noun for a ‘human being, person’, whether male or female, is člověk -a, grammatically masculine animate. It will also often translate as ‘man’. Colloquial English today sometimes uses ‘guy’ to refer to either sex in this way.

Note the forms sg. dat./loc. člověku, voc. člověče!

The noun lidé ‘people’, also masculine animate, serves as its plural. It declines mostly like feminine nouns type kost, and colloquially the accusative form lidi is also used for the nominative.

Similarly děti ‘children’, which actually counts as grammatically feminine, serves as the plural of the neuter noun dítě -ěte ‘child’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>lidé, *lidi m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>lidi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>lidí</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>lidem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) lidech</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>lidmi, *lidma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The diminutives lidičky ‘people’ and dětičky ‘children’ have feminine plural forms like žena: nom./acc. dětičky, gen. dětiček, dat. dětičkám etc.

However, the singular noun lid -u ‘the people’ is masculine inanimate, as is národ -a ‘nation’, e.g. milujeme český lid/národ ‘we love the Czech people’.
### 3.8.3 Types kámen and břemeno

Several masculine inanimate nouns ending in -en have some optional soft-type endings in the singular, e.g. kámen -e/-u ‘stone’.


A few neuters ending in -eno have similar optional endings and high-flown nom./acc. variant forms ending in -m, e.g. břemeno/břímě ‘burden’.


The regular modern singular forms are common, and the plurals are regular.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sg.</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>nom. kámen/břemeno, břímě</td>
<td>kameny/břemena</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>acc.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>gen. kamene, -u/břemene, -a</td>
<td>kamenů/břemen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>dat. kameni, -u/břemeni, -u</td>
<td>kamenům/břemenům</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>loc. (o) kameni, -u/ břemeni, -u</td>
<td>(o) kamenech/ břemenech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ins. kamenem/břemenem</td>
<td>kameny/břemeny (*-ama)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>voc. kamen!/= nom.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 3.8.4 Other irregular nouns

Some other common nouns with irregularities are particularly noted here:

Masculine:

Bůh – Boha ‘God’

dat./loc. Bohu, voc. Božel; pl. nom. bohové/bozi
**bratr** -a ‘brother’  
pl. regular nom. **bratři**, etc., but as ‘brethren’ also pl. nom./acc./gen. **bratří**, dat. **bratřím**, loc. **bratřich**, ins. **bratřími**

**kněz** -e ‘priest’  
pl. nom./acc./gen. **kněží**, dat. **kněžím**, loc. **kněžích**, ins. **kněžími**

**kůň – koně** ‘horse’  
pl. nom./acc. **koně**, gen. **koní**, dat. **koním**, ins. **koňmi**, or regular **koň** etc.

**rodič** -e ‘parent’  
pl. nom./acc. **rodiče**, gen. **rodičů** etc.

**syn** -a ‘son’  
sg. voc. **synul**; pl. nom. **synové**

**den – dne** ‘day’  
sg. dat./loc. **dnu/dni**, ve **dne**;  
pl. **dny (dni)**, gen. **dnů (dni)**, dat. **dnům**, loc. **dnech**, ins. **dny**

**týden – týdne** ‘week’  
sg. dat./loc. **týdnou**;  
pl. **týdny**, gen. **týdnů** etc.

**Feminine:**

**dcera** -y f. ‘daughter’  
sg. dat./loc. **dceři**

**paní** -i f. ‘Mrs, lady’  
sg. invariable; pl. nom./acc./gen. **paní**, 
dat. **-ím**, loc. **-ích**, ins. **-ími**

**studna** -y/studně -ě f. ‘well’  
sg. dat./loc. **studni**, pl. gen. **studní/studen**

### 3.8.5 Latin/Greek and related types

A number of nouns of Latin/Greek origin partially respect their linguistic antecedents in the way they decline.

Most often these are **neuter** nouns ending in (a) -um, (b) -eum, -ium, -io/-eo, and (c) -ma:

a **vízum** ‘visa’  
sg. gen. **víza**, dat./loc. **vízu**, ins. **vízem**;

b **muzeum** ‘museum’  
sg. gen. **muzea**, dat./loc. **muzeu**, ins. **muzeem**;
c drama ‘drama’ gen. dramatu (!), dat./loc. dramatu, ins. dramatem;
   pl. nom./acc. dramata etc. (like víza)


Some masculine foreign nouns ending in (d) -us, -os and (e) -ius behave similarly.

d cyklus ‘cycle’ sg. gen. cyklu, dat./loc. cyklem; 
   pl. nom./acc. cykly, gen. cyklů etc.


   e génius ‘genius’ sg. gen. génia, dat./loc. géniovi, ins. géniem, 
   voc. génie 
   pl. nom./acc. géniové, acc. génie, gen. géniů, dat. 
   géniům, loc. géniích, ins. génií

Similarly (d) romantismus -smu and other ‘-isms’ (now sometimes also spelt -izmus), kosmos – kosmu ‘cosmos’.

Others however have regular declensions, e.g. cirkus – cirkusu ‘circus’. ‘Virus’ exhibits various possibilities: virus – viru, or virus – virusu, or vir – viru.

   Some others: prézens – prézentu, ‘the present (tense)’, ion/iont – iontu ‘ion’, pankreas – pankreatu ‘pancreas’.

   Feminine examples include: bronchitis/bronchitida – bronchitidy ‘bronchitis’, sfínx/sfínga – sfíngy ‘sphinx’, and idea ‘idea’, which offers a mixture of forms:

   idea ‘idea’ sg. acc. ideu, gen. idey/ideje, dat./loc. ideji, 
   ins. ideou/idejí, voc. ideol pl. nom./acc. 
   idey/ideje, gen. idejí, dat. ideámi/idejím, 
   loc. ideách/idejích, ins. ideami/idejemi

Similarly: Korea, Odyssea ‘Odyssey’.

Nouns ending in -ja also produce variants: sója ‘soya’ has genitive sg. 
   -i (sometimes -e) and dative/locative sg. -i, Trója ‘Troy’ has genitive sg. 
   do Tróje, dative/locative k/v Tróji.


   Another awkward feminine noun is revue, pronounced [revý], which may decline sg. dat./loc. revui, ins. revuí, pl. revue revuí revuím revuích revuemi.
3.8.6 Foreign proper names

Foreign names of more recent origin can also present problems. Some nouns ending in -y or -i decline almost like adjectives in the singular, e.g.


Similarly Montgomery -yho, pony -yho ‘pony’ (or poník -a), sometimes the same is applied to names ending in -e, e.g. Rilke – Rilkeho/‘properly’ Rilka, similarly Goethe – Goetha.

Silent final consonants (e.g. in French) are pronounced before case endings, e.g. Manet [mane] – Maneta [maneta], Manetovi [manetovi]. Silent final e is dropped, e.g. Shakespeare – Shakespeara, Shakespeareovi, similarly Cambridge – do Cambridge [kembridže], v Cambridgi [kembridží].

Russian names ending in -oj and -ij are declined like adjectives, e.g. Tolstoj – Tolstého, Tolstému and Gorkij – Gorkého, Gorkému, Dostojevsklíj -ého.

3.9 Adjectival nouns – zpodstatnělá přidavná jména

Adjectival nouns are simply identical in form to adjectives of a particular gender and decline accordingly. Animates will normally have masculine and feminine variants:


inanimates, e.g. sports and meat dishes: kopaná ‘football’, košiková ‘basketball’, sekaná ‘meatloaf’, vepřová (pečeně) ‘roast pork’;
also zelená ‘green traffic light’, červená ‘red traffic light’;
and phrases na shledanou ‘goodbye, au revoir’, jako na zavolanou ‘as if summoned, in the nick of time’

Neuter money: vstupné ‘entrance fee’, spropitné ‘tip’
3.10 Plural-only nouns – podstatná jména pomnožná

Czech nouns with plural form but singular meaning include many place names ending in -any (masculine type hrad) and -ice (feminine type růže). Both types have zero genitive plurals:

Hradčany – Hradčan, Hradčanům, na Hradčanech, Hradčany
Budějovice – Budějovic, Budějovicím, v Budějovicích, Budějovici

The gender of nouns with no singular is not always clearcut. Some plural-only nouns have mostly regular masculine type endings, e.g.

teplák|y -ú, (v teplá|cích/teplák|ách) ‘tracksuit’, šach|y -ú
(o šachách) ‘chess’, korál|e -ů ‘coral necklace’

But more often they have regular feminine type endings:

dějín|y ‘history’ – dějin, dějinám, dějinách, dějinnami
kalhot|y ‘trousers’ – kalhot, kalhotám, kalhotách, kalhotami

Likewise:

noviny ‘newspaper’, plavky – plavek ‘swimsuit’, nůžky – nůžek
‘scissors’, varhany ‘organ’, narozeniny ‘birthday’, křtiny

Soft type housle ‘violin’ – houslí, houslí, houslích, houslemi

Likewise:

‘stepladder’

Some are treated as neuter, with typical nominative plural -a:

prsou ‘chest’ (i.e. prsa has a dual type gen./loc. prsou)

Other nouns hesitate in standard usage between different endings:

džín(s)y ‘jeans’ – džín(s)ů/džín, džín(s)ům/džín(s)ám,
džín(s)ech/džín(s)ách, džín(s)ami
dveře/dvéře f. ‘door’ – dveří, dveřím, dveřích, dveřmi
diminutive:

dvířka (small) door’ – dvírek, dvířkám/dvírkům, dvířkách,
dvířky/dvířkami
vrata n. ‘gate’ – vrat, vratům, vratech, vraty (regular)
diminutive:
vrátka ‘(small) gate’ – vrátek, vrátkům/vrátkám, vrátkách, vrátky/vrátkami
Vánoce (officially feminine) ‘Christmas’– Vánoc, Vánocům, Vánocích, Vánocemi/Vánocí
(similarly Velikonoce ‘Easter’)

3.11 Indeclinable nouns – nesklonná jména

Native nouns are hardly ever indeclinable, except for surnames of the type Janů, Martinů etc.
A few feminine personal names end in a hard consonant and are thus indeclinable (or usually so), e.g. Dagmar, Rút (Ruth), Miriam.
In general only those foreign nouns which end in a way which prevents the noun from following any set declension pattern are treated as indeclinable.
Unless the noun is animate, the gender of indeclinable nouns is most often neuter. The meaning of most of the words is obvious. These are only a few examples.

Masculine atašé, kakadu (or -ua) ‘cockatoo’

Feminine party, brandy (also neuter), whisky, revue, pronounced [revý] (or else it declines sg. dat./loc. revuí, ins. revuí, pl. revue, revuí, revuím, revuích, revuemí)

Neuter a few foreign nouns ending in -á, -é, -u, -y, -i, e.g. angažmá, aranžmá, apartmá, kupé ‘compartment’, filé, klišé, menu [meny], tabu, ragby, šery or sherry, alibi, taxi (or taxík -u); also interview ([intervjú], neuter/masculine), blues, rekviem, jidiš

A few neuters ending in -le, -re or -te are indeclinable except for ins. sg. -em, e.g. finále (ins. finálem), similarly skóre ‘score’, penále ‘penalty’, parte ‘death notice’.
Chapter 4

Adjectives and adverbs – přídavná jména a příslovce

4.1 The adjective – přídavné jméno

Adjectives are words which describe or qualify nouns, ‘big’, ‘small’, ‘old’ etc.

‘Attributive’ adjectives belong to the noun phrase itself, e.g. krásný les ‘a beautiful forest’.

‘Predicative’ adjectives act as the complement of a verb, typically the verb ‘to be’, referring back to the noun they qualify, e.g. les je krásný ‘the forest is beautiful’.

Czech adjectives habitually change their endings to match the gender, case and number of the nouns they refer to. This is called agreement. Both attributive and predicative adjectives do this:

krásná řeka – řeka je krásná ‘a beautiful river – the river is beautiful’

Adjectival nouns have the form and declension of adjectives, e.g. vrátný ‘porter (male)’, vrátná ‘porter (female)’, also many surnames, e.g. pan Novotný a paní Novotná ‘Mr Novotný and Mrs Novotná’.

4.1.1 Basic gender forms of adjectives

The basic, i.e. nominative singular, forms of hard and soft adjectives, along with the demonstrative ten, ta, to are as follows. The soft type (-í) does not make any gender distinction here.

The non-standard asterisked forms are common in everyday spoken usage (especially in Prague and Bohemia).
### 4.1.2 Position of adjectives

Attributive adjectives are normally placed *before* their nouns, just as in English, e.g. velký dům a large house, velká řeka a large river, velké město a large town.

However, occasionally attributive adjectives are placed *after* their nouns. Czech and English usage sometimes coincides here, e.g. Karel Veliký ‘Charles the Great’, Rudolf Hrušinský mladší ‘Rudolf Hrušinský junior/the younger’.

They may be placed after the noun for emphasis, or when pointing out a contrast:

Byl to nápad přímo geniální. It was an absolutely brilliant idea.

Modré šaty ti sluší lépe než šaty zelené. Blue clothes suit you better than green ones.

Emotive emphatic use can even involve using feminine adjectival agreement with a masculine animate noun:

Ty kluku líná! You lazy boy!

Adjectives are also placed after the noun in hierarchical terminologies (such as anatomy, zoology, botany and chemistry) and in some traditional phrases, often religious or historical, e.g.

4.2 English noun modifiers

In English it is common for nouns to be used like adjectives, to modify other nouns. In Czech adjectives derived from the nouns have to be used instead.

From place names such adjectives regularly end in -ský, -cký. Many others end in -ový (‘made of, of’), others in -ný (‘made of, containing, relating to’), and -ní (‘of the type, used for’).

Praha ‘Prague’ but Pražský hrad ‘Prague Castle’
(České) Budějovice but Budějovický kraj ‘the Budějovice region’
dub ‘oak’, dubový stůl ‘oak table’
počitač ‘computer’, počítačová technologie ‘computer technology’
chla ‘brick’, chlová zed ‘brick wall’
kámen ‘stone’, kamenná zed ‘stone wall’
žito ‘rye’, žitný chléb ‘rye bread’
koncert ‘concert’, koncertní síň ‘concert hall’
hudba ‘music’, hudební škola ‘music school’, cf. hudební nástroj ‘musical instrument’
škola ‘school’, školní budova ‘school building’

For more about the derivation of adjectives, see 10.4.

4.3 Standard adjectives – hard and soft types

Most Czech adjectives belong to one of two types, either ‘hard’ or ‘soft’, according to the vowels of their endings.

Adjectives are conventionally cited by their masculine nominative singular form.

If this form ends in the ‘hard’ long vowel -ý, the adjective belongs to the hard type, e.g. krásný ‘beautiful’, mladý ‘young’, starý ‘old’.

Here are a few common adjectives, all belonging to the basic hard type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>velký</td>
<td>big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>starý</td>
<td>old</td>
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<tr>
<td>dobrý</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>krásný</td>
<td>beautiful</td>
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<tr>
<td>malý</td>
<td>small</td>
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<tr>
<td>nový</td>
<td>new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mladý</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>špatný</td>
<td>bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zlý</td>
<td>evil, nasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ošklivý</td>
<td>ugly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
pěkný, hezký  pretty, nice
čistý  clean, pure  špinavý  dirty

Some colour adjectives (barva ‘colour’):

  hnědý ‘brown’, modrý ‘blue’, oranžový ‘orange’, růžový ‘pink’,
  šedý/šedivý ‘grey’, zelený ‘green’, žlutý ‘yellow’

If an adjective ends in the ‘soft’ long vowel -í, it belongs to the soft type, e.g. cizí ‘foreign’, inteligentní ‘intelligent’.

Soft adjectives for seasons and points of the compass, with their nouns:

  podzim – podzimní ‘autumn’
  ‘east’, západ – západní ‘west’

There is also a special category of possessive adjective ending in -ův or -in, similar in function to personal nouns with ‘apostrophe s’ in English, e.g. bratrův ‘brother’s’, sestřín ‘sister’s’, see 4.6 below.

Only a few foreign loanword adjectives lack adjectival suffixes and are thus indeclinable (invariable), e.g. blond ‘blond(e)’ (má blond vlasy ‘she has blond hair’), fajn (fajn kluk ‘a good lad, guy’), prima (prima kluk ‘a first-class, great guy’), khaki, senza (= senzační ‘sensational’).

There is also an indeclinable type of family-name possessive, used regionally, ending in -ovic, e.g. Mikulovic rodina ‘the Mikula family’.

Certain types of pronoun attach themselves to nouns in the same way as adjectives, e.g. possessives such as můj ‘my’, and demonstratives such as ten ‘that’.

The basic demonstrative ten is particularly common as the first element in noun phrases containing adjectives, so its forms have been added to the main tables below.

4.3.1 Standard case forms of adjectives

Adjectives have a whole set of case forms in the singular and plural. Most of the case endings are different from those of nouns, as the examples in the tables show.

Nominative forms are also used for the vocative case.

Masculine animate forms only differ from masculine inanimate ones in the accusative singular (= genitive) and in the nominative plural.

Neuter forms only differ from masculines in the nominative/accusative (singular and plural).
Note how the long vowel in the endings of soft adjectives is always í, which means that many case and gender forms turn out the same.

Examples = ‘that good/foreign student, house, car, woman’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Soft Adjectives</th>
<th>Long Vowel Adjectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sg.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>ten dobrý/cizí student, dům; to dobré/cizí auto</td>
<td>ta dobrá/cizí žena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>toho dobrého/cizího studenta (acc. = gen.)</td>
<td>tu dobrou/cizí ženu but otherwise acc. = nom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>toho dobrého/cizího studenta, domu, auta</td>
<td>té dobré/cizí ženy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>tomu dobrému/cizímu studentovi, domu, autu</td>
<td>té dobré/cizí ženě</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) tom dobrém/cizím studentovi, domě, autě</td>
<td>(o) té dobré/cizí ženě</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>tím dobrým/cizím studentem, domem, autem</td>
<td>tou dobrou/cizí ženou</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plural cases of adjectives do not distinguish between genders, except in the nominative/accusative forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pl.</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>ti dobří/cizí studenti; ty dobré/cizí domy, ženy; ta dobrá/cizí auta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>ty dobré/cizí studenty; otherwise acc. = nom.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>těch dobrých/cizích studentů, domů, aut, žen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>těm dobrým/cizím studentům, domům, autům, ženám</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) těch dobrých/cizích studentech, domech, autech, ženách</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>těmi dobrými/cizími studenty, domy, auty, ženami</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.2 **Masculine animate nominative plural**

Consonant changes occur before the masculine animate nominative plural ending -i, just as with masculine animate **nouns** before -i:

- e.g. **mladý kluk** – **mladí kluci** = [mlad̥í kluci]

Note the standard mutations **h** – **z**, **ch** – **š**, **k** – **c** and **r** – **ř**:

- e.g. **nahý** – **názi** ‘naked’, **tichý** – **tiší** ‘quiet’, **velký** – **velcí** ‘great, big’, **dobrý** – **dobří** ‘good’

(Similarly the relative pronoun **který** – **kteří** ‘who, which’.)

But also note the changes **-ck** to **-č** and **-sk** to **-šč**:

- e.g. **anglický** – **angličtí** ‘English’, **německý** – **němečtí** ‘German’, **český** – **čeští** ‘Czech’, **francouzský** – **francouzští** ‘French’

4.3.3 **Non-standard case forms – colloquial usage**

In colloquial usage the long vowel **ý** may become ***ej** (but not in the instrumental sg.) and **é** may become ***ý**. This affects many endings of hard-type adjectives.

The instrumental plural has a form ending in ***-ma**, instead of **-mi** (***dobrejma**, also soft-type ***cizíma**).

Genderless nominative/accusative plural forms of adjectives are also commonly used, e.g.

**ty** *velký* *americký/*český/*cizí kluci* (acc. kluky), holky, auta

Do not use the asterisked forms in standard writing as they will be regarded as incorrect, and note that non-standard forms may sound ‘vulgar’ in the wrong context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg.</th>
<th>1 nom.</th>
<th>4 acc.</th>
<th>2 gen.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ten dobřý</strong>/<em>dobrej</em>* student, dům; <strong>to dobří</strong>/<em>doby</em>* auto</td>
<td><strong>ta dobrá žena</strong></td>
<td><strong>toho dobrého</strong>/<em>dobyho</em>* studenta (acc. = gen.) but otherwise acc. = nom.</td>
<td><em><em>tě dobré/<em>ty</em></em> <em>doby</em></em> ženy**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>toho dobrého</strong>/<em>dobyho</em>* studenta, domu, auta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Adjectives and adverbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>tomu dobrému/*dobrýmu studentovi, domu, autu</td>
<td>té dobří/*tý *dobrý ženě</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) tom dobrém/*dobrým studentovi, domě, autě</td>
<td>(o) té dobří/*tý *dobrý ženě</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>tím dobrým studentem, domem, autem</td>
<td>tou dobrou ženou</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Pl.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>ti dobří studenti; ty dobré domy, ženy; ta dobrá auta/*ty *dobrý studenti, domy, ženy, auta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>ty dobré/*dobrý studenty, domy, ženy, auta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>těch dobrých/*dobrejch studentů, domů, aut, žen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>těm dobrým/*dobrejm studentům, domům, autům, ženám</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) těch dobrých/*dobrejch studentech, domech, aotech, ženách</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forms tím, malým and soft-type cizím are commonly pronounced with a shortened vowel.

### 4.4 Adjective rád

The adjective rád ‘glad’ is a special so-called short-form adjective which occurs only in the nominative, often in conjunction with být ‘to be’ and idiomatically with mít ‘to have’, in the sense of ‘to like (something)’:

- **Jsem rád(a).**  I am glad (masc., fem.)
- **Mám to rád(a).**  I like it.
- **Nemám to rád(a).**  I don’t like it.
Its forms neatly match the endings of the third-person pronouns, standard hard-type nouns, and past-tense forms of verbs:

- **On/student byl rád.** He/the student was glad.
- **Ona/žena byla ráda.** She/the woman was glad.
- **Ono/děvčátko bylo rádo.** It/the little girl was glad.
- **Oni/studenti byli rádi.** They/the students were glad.
- **Ony/ženy byly rády.** They/the women were glad.
- **Ona/děvčátka byla ráda.** They/the little girls were glad.

Colloquially the last two can be replaced by masculine plural forms:

- **Oni (= ženy, děvčátka) byli rádi.**

Rád is often used along with verbs in the sense of ‘like doing’:

- **Rád(a) zpívá.** He/she likes singing.

It also has a negative form **nerad**, with a shortened vowel:

- **Nerad(a) zpívá.** He/she doesn’t like singing.

(For more about ‘like’ and ‘prefer’ see 7.22.4)

### 4.5 Short-form adjectives – jmenný tvar

Certain other adjectives also have a predicative ‘short form’ (jmenný tvar), alongside their usual ‘long forms’. Many more are obsolete today, but you will find them in older texts.

The masculine sg. short form is formed by removing the final vowel of the long form, e.g. hotov ‘ready’, short form of hotový ‘ready, prepared’. Root vowel a may lengthen, e.g. starý – stár ‘old’, mladý – mlád ‘young’.

Sometimes an -e- syllable is inserted in a consonant group, e.g. mrtvý – mrtev ‘dead’, šťastný – šťasten ‘happy’, which is lost in other gender/number forms.

Short forms usually occur in the nominative, occasionally also in the accusative:

- **Sg.** nom. m. šťasten f. šťastna n. šťastno
  - acc. not used f. šťastnu n. ditto
- **Pl.** nom. ma. šťastni mi./f. šťastny n. šťastna
  - acc. ma. šťastny mi./f. ditto n. ditto

Accusative short forms occur, nowadays rarely, where a verb is modified by an accusative adjective, as well as the noun (accusative complement):
Rád tě vidím zdrávu (= zdravou). I am happy to see you (fem.) well (i.e. glad to see in a well state).

Rád tě vidím zdravého. I am happy to see you well (no masculine sg. short form).

Amongst those short-form adjectives still used in set phrases or in more formal style, are:

- **zdráv** ‘well’ (temporary state, **zdravý** = ‘healthy’ – general state),
- **laskavý** – **laskav** ‘kind’, **bosý** – **bos** ‘barefoot’, **jistý** – **jist** ‘certain’,
- **zvědavý** – **zvědav** ‘curious’, **mrtvý** – **mrtvá**, **mrtva** ‘dead’,
- **šťastný** – **šťasten**, **šťastná** ‘happy’, **spokojený** – **spokojená** ‘contented’, **živý** – **živá** ‘alive’

**Budíte tak laskav(a) (or hodný, -á) a zavřete okno.** Be so kind and close the window.

**Budí zdráv(a)!** Look after yourself! Goodbye!

**Je živ(a) a zdráv(a).** He/She is alive and well.

**Nejsem si jist(a) (or jistý, -á).** I’m not sure.

**Jsem zvědav(a) (or zvědavý, -á), co tomu řekne.** I’m curious/ wonder what s/he’ll say.

**Byl(a) na místě mrtev, mrtvá (or mrtvý, -á).** S/he was dead on the spot.

**Chodí bos, -a.** S/he is walking about barefoot.

The old neuter sg. forms have given rise to a special group of adverbs, e.g. **dáleko** ‘far away’, **blízko** ‘nearby’, **dávno** ‘a long time ago’ etc.

Relics of other case forms occur in various adverbs made with prepositions, e.g. **doleva** ‘to the left’, **doprava** ‘to the right’, **vlevo** ‘on/to the left’, **vpravo** ‘on/to the right’, **zčistajasna** ‘suddenly, out of the blue’.

Sometimes the neuter sg. forms have become nouns, e.g. **dobre** ‘good’ (i.e. ‘that which is good’), **zlo** ‘evil’, **nekonečno** ‘the infinite, infinity’.

### 4.6 Possessive adjectives – přivlastňovací přídavná jména

If the adjective ends in **-ův** or **-in**, it belongs to the special possessive type, used similarly to nouns with ‘apostrophe s’ in English.
Those ending in -ův refer to possession by a particular masculine person, e.g. bratrův ‘brother’s’, Karlův ‘Charles’s’.

Those ending in -in refer to possession by a particular feminine person, e.g. sestřín ‘sister’s’, Libušín ‘Libuše’s’.

Basic gender/number agreement is just like rád, ráda, rádo.

**Petrův, Evin bratr** Peter’s, Eva’s brother

**Petrova, Evina sestra** Peter’s, Eva’s sister

**Petrovo, Evino auto** Peter’s, Eva’s car

**Petrovi, Eviní bratři** Peter’s, Eva’s brothers

**Petrovy, Eviny sestry, domy** Peter’s, Eva’s sisters, houses

**Petrova, Evina auta** Peter’s, Eva’s cars

The other standard singular case forms resemble those of hard-type nouns of the same gender, except for the instrumental -ým.

Certain non-standard forms are also in common everyday use. These match the colloquial forms of standard adjectives, e.g. *Petrovýho, Petrovýmu, Petrovým* and *Evinýho* etc., where *-ým* is generally pronounced *-ým.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg.</th>
<th>Petrův, Evin bratr</th>
<th>Petrova, Evina sestra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>Petrův, Evin bratr, dům; Petrovo, Evino auto</td>
<td>Petrova, Evina sestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>Petrov[a, Evina]/*-ýho bratra</td>
<td>Petrov[u, Evin]/*-ý sestru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>Petrov[a, Evina]/*-ýho bratra, auta</td>
<td>Petrov[y, Evin[y]/*-ý sestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>Petrovu, Evinu/*-ýmu bratrovi, autu</td>
<td>Petrově, Evině/*-ý sestře</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>o Petrově, Evině/*-ým bratrovi, auté</td>
<td>o Petrově, Evině/*-ý sestře</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>Petrovým, Eviným bratrem, autem</td>
<td>Petrovou, Evinou sestrou</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The plural forms, apart from the nominative and accusative, are just like standard hard-type adjectives:
Adjectives and adverbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>Petrovi, Evini bratři</td>
<td>Petrovy, Eviny domy, sestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Petrová, Evina/l-řy auta</td>
<td>Petrovy, Eviny bratry; others = nom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>Petrovy, Eviny bratry; others = nom.</td>
<td>Petrových, Eviných/l-řejch bratrů, sester etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>Petrových, Eviných/l-řejch bratrů, sester etc.</td>
<td>Petrovým, Eviným/l-řejm bratrům, sestrám etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>Petrových, Eviných/l-řejch bratrech, sestrách etc.</td>
<td>Petrovými, Evinými bratry, sestrami/l-řejma bratrema, sestrama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjectives with the suffix -in require consonant mutations r – ř and h – ž (optionally g – ž), ch – š and k – č:


### 4.6.1 Use of possessive adjectives

Possessive adjectives regularly occur in street and place names.

- **Karlův most** ‘Charles Bridge’, **Karlov náměstí** ‘Charles Square’, **Karlová (ulice)** ‘Charles Street’ (named after the fourteenth-century Emperor Charles IV)

  *Bydlí ve Smetanově ulici.* S/he lives in Smetana Street.

  *Bydlí ve Smetanově [č. (= číslo)] 12 (= dvanáct).* S/he lives at [number] 12 Smetana Street.

- ** Mánesův most** ‘Mánes Bridge’ (after the nineteenth-century painter), **Libušina (ulice)** ‘Libuše Street’ (after the legendary pagan princess), **Nerudova (ulice)** ‘Neruda Street’ (after the nineteenth-century writer), **Masarykovo nádraží** ‘Masaryk Station’ (after the first President), **Smetanovo nábřeží** ‘Smetana Embankment’ (after the nineteenth-century composer).

The word ulice ‘street’ is generally omitted on town plans, when writing addresses etc.
Multiple-word names and adjectival names cannot form possessive adjectives. You use the genitive case instead:


4.7 The adverb – příslovce

Adverbs are words without gender, case or number. They qualify other words or whole clauses.

Often they are derived from adjectives, especially adverbs of manner. English often uses the suffix ‘-ly’ for this, while Czech regularly uses the suffix -e/-ě, e.g.


Adverbs of manner answer the question jak? ‘how?’

Related non-specific adverbs of manner include nějak ‘somehow’, jaksi ‘in some way or other’ (see 4.12.3), and demonstratives tak ‘like so, thus’, takhle/takto ‘like this, this way’.

A principal function of adverbs is to qualify verbs or whole clauses, where adjectives qualify nouns, e.g.

adjective: pěkná/strašná píseň ‘a nice/terrible song’
adverb: Eva zpívá pěkně/strašně ‘Eva sings nicely/terribly’

But adverbs can also qualify adjectives, quantity words, and even other adverbs, e.g.

strašně dobrá píseň ‘a terribly good song’, přibližně dvacet lidí ‘approximately twenty people’, zpívá strašně dobře ‘s/he sings terribly well’

4.7.1 Adverbs of degree

Adverbs of degree indicate degrees of quality or intensity, e.g.

strašně milý člověk a terribly likeable person
Mám strašně moc práce. I have an awful lot of work.
Mluví strašně rychle. S/he speaks terribly quickly/fast.
Many such adverbs are ‘primary’ adverbs, or not derived from adjectives in the regular way, e.g. velmi ‘very’, příliš ‘too, excessively’, tak ‘so’, docela ‘quite’:

velmi milý člověk ‘a very likeable person’, jsem velmi rád ‘I am very glad’, velmi to pomohlo ‘it helped a lot/very much’, mluví příliš/tak/docela rychle ‘s/he speaks too/so/quite quickly’, příliš mnoho lidí ‘too many people’

### 4.7.2 Modal adverbs etc.

Many adverbs have modal or similar adjusting functions in a clause, indicating probability, certainty, approximation, and so on:

snad ‘perhaps’, asi ‘probably’, ‘about (approximately)’, možná ‘maybe’, jistě ‘certainly’

They may also indicate restriction, addition, or express an emotional attitude:

jen, jenom ‘only’, také, colloq. taky ‘also’, právě ‘just, only’, tedy, colloq. teda ‘then, in that case’, přece ‘after all’, vždyt’ ‘besides’

Ale to přece není pravda! But that just isn’t true! (objecting)

Vždyt’ nemáme čas! Besides/After all we do not have time! (exclaiming)

Czech grammars and dictionaries use the term částice ‘particle’ for some of these usages, sometimes inconsistently. Further consideration is beyond the scope of this volume.

### 4.7.3 Adverbs of time and place

Adverbs of time and place indicate when or where an action takes place, e.g. včera ‘yesterday’, dnes ‘today’, zítra, *zejtra ‘tomorrow’, ted’, *ted’ka ‘now’, už ‘now, already’, už ne(-) ‘no longer’, ještě ‘still’, ještě ne(-) ‘not yet’, potom, pak ‘then, next’, tady ‘here’, tam ‘there’, venku ‘outside’. A phrase or clause can have the same function, e.g. minulý měsíc ‘last month’, když jsme přišli domů ‘when we arrived home’, za stromem ‘behind a tree’.

The Czech term may be one word, where English has two, e.g. doma ‘at home’.
4.7.4 Interrogative adverbs

Other basic adverbs ask questions, typically about manner, time or place:


4.8 Standard adverbs ending in -ě/e

Czech adverbs are regularly derived from adjectives by changing the final vowel of the adjective to -ě/-e.

In producing these adverbs the same consonant changes occur as in the dative/locative of feminine nouns (cf. řeka river – v řece in the river, see 3.4.10).

- pěkný – pěkně nice, pretty – nicely, prettily
- krásný – krásně beautiful – beautifully
- dobrý – dobře good – well
- špatný – špatně bad – badly
- strašný – strašně awful – awfully
- hrozný – hrozně terrible – terribly
- lehký – lehce light, easy – lightly, easily
- těžký – těžce heavy, difficult – heavily, with difficulty
- tichý – tiše quiet – quietly
- hlučný – hlučně noisy – noisily

4.9 Adverbs ending in -cky, -sky

Adjectives in -ský or -cký regularly form adverbs in -sky, -cky. So does hezký ‘nice, pretty’. Many are language adverbs:

Nemluví česky. S/he doesn’t speak Czech.

Mluví cynicky/hezky. S/he speaks cynically/nicely.

4.9.1 Language adverbs

To say ‘know (a language)’ you use umět ‘know how to’ followed by special language adverbs ending in -sky or -cky (short -y), e.g.

Pan Beneš umí jenom česky. Mr Beneš only knows Czech.
Ale Věra umí anglicky. But Věra knows English.

Similarly, with mluvit ‘to speak’: Jan mluví německy ‘Jan speaks German’.

### 4.10 Adverbs ending in -o

Some common adverbs, e.g. of time and place, end in -o:


Forms in -o often occur with the verb ‘to be’, often with je to ‘it is’:

- **Je to daleko.** It’s far (away). It’s a long way.
- **Je to blízko.** It’s near (by).
- **Už je to dávno.** It’s a long time ago now.

Sometimes English speakers might think an adjective was required:

- **Praha je daleko.** Prague is far away, a long way off.
- **Vesnice je blízko.** The village is near.

#### 4.10.1 Parallel adverbs ending in -o and -ěle

Sometimes adverbs ending in -o coexist with forms ending in -e/ě, related to the same adjective, but with different usages, e.g. *dlouho* ‘for a long time’ and *dlouze* ‘in a long/long-drawn-out manner’.

Similarly, *blízko* ‘near by’ and *blízce* ‘closely’, e.g. *blízce příbuzný* ‘closely related’, *blízce souviset* ‘to be closely dependent’.

Also *dalece* ‘far, extensively’: *Jak dalece tomu rozumí?* ‘How far does s/he understand this?’

Often the -o forms occur with the verb ‘to be’. Thus, alongside hlučně ‘noisily’ one finds hlučno in such contexts:
Mluvili hlučně. They spoke noisily.
V sále bylo hlučno. It was noisy in the hall.

4.10.2 Adverbs and the weather

Statements about počasí ‘the weather’ often begin:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Je \ldots \quad \text{It is} \ldots
  \item Bylo \ldots \quad \text{It was} \ldots
  \item Bude \ldots \quad \text{It will be} \ldots
\end{itemize}

Quite a lot of weather phrases use adverbs, as the complement of the verb ‘to be’. Often the forms ending in -o are used here, but not always. The choice is a matter of usage.

\begin{itemize}
  \item Bylo teplo, horko. \quad \text{It was warm, hot.}
  \item Je chladno. Bude zima. \quad \text{It is cool. It’ll be cold.}
  \item Je pěkně/hezky. \quad \text{It’s nice/lovely weather.}
  \item Bude krásně. \quad \text{It’s going to be beautiful.}
  \item Bylo ošklivo. \quad \text{It was nasty weather.}
  \item Venku je tma. \quad \text{Outside it’s dark.}
  \item Je ještě světlo. \quad \text{It is still light.}
  \item Dnes bude slunečno. \quad \text{Today it will be sunny.}
  \item Bude jasno. \quad \text{It will be bright.}
  \item Bude polojasno. \quad \text{It will be ‘semi-bright’, fair. Showers in}
  \text{Místy přeháňky. \quad \text{places.}}
  \item Je obláčno, zataženo. \quad \text{It’s cloudy, overcast.}
  \item Je mlha. Je mlhavo. \quad \text{There’s a mist. It’s misty/foggy.}
  \item Je větrno. \quad \text{It’s windy.}
  \item Je sucho. Je mokro. \quad \text{It’s dry. It’s damp.}
  \item Bude bouřka. \quad \text{There’ll be a thunderstorm.}
\end{itemize}

Other weather expressions use verbs:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Prší. Pršelo. \quad \text{It’s raining. It was raining.}
  \item Sněží. Sněžilo. \quad \text{It’s snowing. It was snowing.}
  \item Mrzne. Mrzlo. \quad \text{It’s freezing. It was freezing.}
  \item Svití slunce. \quad \text{The sun is shining.}
  \item Fouká vítr. \quad \text{A wind is blowing.}
\end{itemize}
4.10.3 Adverbs in idioms expressing feeling

Note the idiomatic phrase je jí smutno, lit. ‘it is to her sad’, which means ‘she’s feeling sad, she’s in a sad state of mind’. Similarly, you say je mi smutno, lit. ‘it is to me sad’, ‘I’m feeling sad.’

Similar phrases with the verb ‘to be’ with the dative of a pronoun and an adverb include:

- **Je mi pěkně/hezky/krásně.** ‘It is to me fine/great.’ = I feel fine/great.
- **Bylo mi špatně.** I felt ‘bad’ = ill, sick.
- **Není vám zima?** Aren’t you cold? Don’t you feel cold?
- **Není ti teplo?** Aren’t you warm?

4.11 Looking happy/sad etc.

The verb vypadat ‘to look’ is often followed by an adverb form ending in -č/ce, instead of an adjective.

- **Vypadá smutně/vesele/ustaraně/podezřele.** ‘S/he looks sadly/happily/worriedly/suspiciously.’ = S/he looks sad/happy/worried/suspicious.

4.12 Interrogatives, place and motion

4.12.1 Where? Where to? Here/there

Certain basic adverbs distinguish between ‘place’ and ‘motion towards a place’.

Amongst the most common are words for ‘where’ and ‘here’.

- **Kde je Honza?** Where is Honza?
  - **but: Kam jde?** Where is he going?
- **Je tady. Je zde.** S/he is here.
  - **but: Jde sem.** S/he is coming here.

The adverb zde is generally restricted to formal style, though a pupil may say it for example when the register is taken at school.

The usual colloquial word tady has a parallel colloquial emphatic form tadyhle ‘here, over here’, also non-standard *tajdle.
Another alternative expression is *tu* ‘here’, emphatic *tuhle*. The former can be used as an unstressed enclitic:

**Karel tu není.** Karel isn’t here.

The basic word *tam* for ‘there’ makes no distinction between place and motion to the place:

**Je tam.** S/he is there.

*but also: Jde tam.* S/he goes there.

*Tam* also has the more emphatic colloquial form *tamhle* ‘there, over there’.

### 4.12.2 Which way? Where from?

A further group of words speak of ‘motion by a certain route’ and ‘motion from a place’:

**Kudy šli?** Which way did they go?

Šli tudy. They went this way.

Šli tamtudy. They went that way.

**Odkud jste?** Where are you from?

Nejste odtud/odsud (*vocad’*). You are not from here.

Jste odtamtud. You are from over there.

### 4.12.3 Somewhere, sometime(s), nowhere, never

The element *ně* added to interrogatives gives the idea of ‘some’:

*nějak* ‘somehow’, *někde* ‘somewhere’, *někdy* ‘sometime(s)’, *někam* ‘to somewhere’, *někudy* ‘by some route’, *odněkud* ‘from somewhere’

The suffix -*si* produces rather similar adverbs meaning ‘some . . . or other’:

*jaksi* ‘somehow or other’, *kdesi* ‘somewhere or other’, *kamsi* ‘to somewhere or other’, *kdysi* ‘at some time or other (in the past), once’, *odkudsi* ‘from somewhere or other’

The contrasting element *ni*- gives the idea of ‘no’, and requires a negative verb, e.g.
Adjectives and adverbs

nijak ‘in no way’, nikde ‘nowhere’, nikam ‘to nowhere’, nikdy ‘never’

Nikdy tam nechodím. I never go there.

For related words see 5.6.3–5.6.4, 5.6.7, 5.8.

4.12.4 Elsewhere, everywhere

Another two groups are formed with the elements jin- meaning ‘other’ and vš- meaning ‘every, all’. The second group is less complete:

jinde ‘elsewhere’, jinam ‘to elsewhere’, jinudy ‘by another route’, odjinud ‘from elsewhere’

všude ‘everywhere’, odevšad ‘from everywhere’

4.13 More adverbs of place and motion

Other adverbs also make the distinction between ‘place’ and ‘motion to a place’:

Sedí doma. S/he is sitting at home.
but: Jde domů. S/he is going home.

Je venku. S/he is outside.
but: Jde ven. S/he is going out.

Je uvnitř. S/he is in/inside.
but: Jde dovnitř. S/he goes in/inside.

Je nahoře. S/he’s upstairs, up above.
but: Jde nahoru. S/he goes up(stairs).

Je dole. S/he’s downstairs, below.
but: Jde dolů S/he goes down(stairs).

Most of these also have adverbs denoting ‘motion away from, out of a place’:

zvenčí/zvenku ‘from outside’, zevnitř ‘from inside’

shora/seshora/odshora ‘from above’, zdola/zezdola/odzdola ‘from below’
but: z domova ‘from home’ (two words)
Other similar words make no distinction between ‘place’ and ‘motion’:

- **Je pryč.** S/he is away.  
- **Jde pryč.** S/he goes away.
- **Je zpátky.** S/he’s back.  
- **Jde zpátky.** S/he goes back.

### 4.14 Other forms of adverb

Occasionally the forms of adverbs are unexpected.

- **Rychlý** – **rychle** ‘quick – quickly’ is regular, but note **pomalý** – **pomalu** ‘slow – slowly’.

Note also **pozdní** – **pozdě** ‘late – adv. late’, and **raný** – **brzo/brzy** ‘early – adv. early’

Adjectives ending in -cí based on present participles sometimes form adverbs. These use the suffix -ně:

- **vroucí** – **vroucně** ‘fervent – fervently’

### 4.15 Comparison of adjectives – stupňování

In English we regularly make comparative adjectives by attaching ‘more’ or adding the suffix ‘-er’ to adjectives.

In Czech you usually form the comparative (komparativ, druhý stupeň ‘second degree’) by replacing -ý with -ější/-ejší, e.g. **pěkný** – **pěknější** ‘pretty – prettier, more pretty’.

Certain (especially some very common) adjectives have a shorter ending -ši.

- **zajímavý** – **zajímavější** interesting – more interesting
- **nový** – **novější** new – newer

*but:*

- **starý** – **starší** old – older
- **mladý** – **mladší** young – younger

Both types decline like regular soft adjectives:

- **Hledám staršího, zajímavějšího muže.**  
  I’m looking for an older, more interesting man.

- **Bydlím ve starším, v novějším domě.**  
  I live in an older, newer house.

‘Than’ in comparisons is **než**.
Jeho auto je novější než moje.  His car is newer than mine.
Pavel je starší než já.  Pavel is older than me.
Pavel je mladší než Petr.  Pavel is younger than Peter.

To say ‘much’ with comparatives add mnohem/o moc. Both mean literally ‘by much’,

Zuzana je mnohem/o moc mladší než Věra.  Zuzana is much younger than Věra.

Daleko ‘far’ may also be used with comparatives:

Petr je daleko lepší než já.  Petr is far better than I/me.

4.15.1 Irregular comparatives

Four essential comparatives are irregular:

malý – menší  – smaller
velký/veliký – větší  – bigger, greater, larger
dobrý – lepší  – good – better
špatný/zlý – horší  – bad/evil – worse

4.15.2 Consonant changes etc.

Certain consonant changes regularly take place in the formation of comparatives. These are not quite identical to those changes you met before, e.g. in forming basic adverbs.

r – ř:  chytrý – chytřejší  – cleverer
mokrý – mokřejší  – wetter
h – ž:  ubohý – ubožejší  – more wretched
ch – š:  suchý – sušší  – drier
k – č:  divoký – divočejší  – wilder
hezký – hezčí  – nicer, prettier
ck – čť:  cynický – cyničtější  – more cynical
sk – šť:  lidský – lidštější  – more humane

Adjectives based on present participles use the suffix -nější:

vroucí – vroucnější  ‘fervent – more fervent’ (compare the adverb vroucně)
4.15.3 *Essential adjectives and comparatives*

The following basic examples are grouped by meaning. Some are slightly irregular, and some end in -čí, instead of -ší.

- **vyšoký** – **vyšší**  
  higher
- **hluboký** – **hlubší**  
  deeper
- **nízký** – **nižší**  
  lower
- **široký** – **širší**  
  wider
- **úzký** – **užší**  
  narrower
- **těžký** – **těžší**  
  heavier, more difficult
- **lehký** – **lehčí**  
  lighter, easier
- **krátký** – **kratší**  
  shorter
- **dlouhý** – **delší**  
  longer
- **blízký** – **blížší**  
  nearer
- **daleký/vzdálený** – **vzdálenější**  
  further away, more distant

NB další = ‘further’ in the sense of ‘next in line’. In a shop for example: Další, prosím! ‘Next (customer), please!’

- **tenký** – **tenčí**  
  thinner (slice, layer)
- **hubený** – **hubenější**  
  thinner (person, body)
- **tlustý** – **tlustší**  
  fatter, thicker
- **měkký** – **měkčí**  
  softer
- **tvrdý** – **tvrdší**  
  harder
- **chudý** – **chudší**  
  poorer
- **bohatý** – **bohatší**  
  richer
- **drahý** – **dražší**  
  dearer, more expensive
- **levný** – **levnější**  
  cheaper
- **laciný** – **lacinější**  
  cheaper
- **tmavý** – **tmavší**  
  darker (**tma** darkness)
- **světlý** – **světlejší**  
  lighter (**světlo** light)
- **tichý** – **tiší**  
  quieter (**ticho** silence)
- **hlučný** – **hlučnější**  
  noisier (**hluk** noise)
- **slabý** – **slabší**  
  weaker
- **silný** – **silnější**  
  stronger
4.15.4 **Superlative prefix nej-**

To say ‘newest’, ‘oldest’, ‘youngest’, ‘most intelligent’ etc. you simply add nej- to the comparatives. The resulting form is called the superlative (superlativ, třetí stupeň ‘third degree’).


Pavel je starší než já. Pavel is older than me.

Ale Petr je nejstarší z nás. But Petr is the oldest of us. (note: z +gen. = ‘of, out of’)

Ivan je můj nejlepší kamarád. Ivan is my best friend.

The superlative may be intensified with zdáleka ‘by far’:

Petr byl zdáleka nejlepší. Petr was by far the best/much the best.

(But – with comparatives: byl daleko/mnohem lepší ‘he was far/much better’)

4.16 **Comparison of adverbs**

To say ‘more quickly’, ‘most quickly’ etc. you use the comparative adverb ending -čejí/-ejí, then add the prefix nej- for the superlative:

Pavel běhá rychleji než já. Pavel runs more quickly (quicker, faster) than me.

Ale Petr běhá nejrychleji. But Peter runs most quickly (quickest, fastest).

Adverbs in -ce have the comparative ending -čejí:
Marie zpívá sladce, pěkně. Marie sings sweetly, nicely.
Ale Jan zpívá sladčí, pěkněji. But Jan sings more sweetly, more nicely.

In spoken usage adverbs sometimes have the comparative ending *-čjc:

Přijdu později/*pozdějč. I'll come later.
Mluvte pomaleji/*pomalejč. Speak more slowly.

4.16.1 Common adverbs and their comparatives

Learn these common irregular examples:
dobře – lépe/líp ‘well – better’, špatně, zle – hůře(e) ‘badly – worse’

Umí to líp/hůř než on. S/he knows it better/worse than him.
Věra zpívá dobře, líp než já. Věra sings well, better than me.
Karel zpívá špatně, hůř než já. Karel sings badly, worse than me.

málo – méně/míň ‘little – less’, mnoho/hodně – více(e) ‘much/a lot – more’

Učí se více(e), méně/míň. He’s studying more/less.
blízko – blíž(e) ‘near – nearer’, daleko – dále(e) ‘far away – further’

Bydlí blíže/dále. He lives nearer/further away.
dlouho – déle, colloq. dýl ‘for a long time – longer’

Nechci tady zůstat déle/dýl. I don’t want to stay here longer.
vysoko – výš(e) ‘high up – higher’, nízko – níž(e) ‘low down – lower’

Letadlo letí výšníž. The plane is flying higher/lower.

hluboko – hlouběji do lesa. They went deeper into the forest.

draho/draze – dráž(e) ‘dearly – more dearly’

Je tam draho/dráž. It’s expensive/more expensive there.
brzo – dřív(e) ‘soon – sooner’, pozdě – později ‘late – later’

**Přijel dřív než ona.**  He arrived sooner than her.

**Karel přijel později.**  Karel arrived later.

spíš(e) – nejspíš(e) ‘more likely – most likely’

**Nejspíš nepřijde.**  Most likely s/he won’t come.
Chapter 5

Pronouns – zájmena

Pronouns are either very basic ‘noun-like’ words which denote or point to particular persons or things within the actual or speech context (‘I’, ‘you’, ‘she’) or else, in an ‘adjective-like’ way, they modify a noun in order to specify more narrowly what the noun is in a given context (‘this book’, ‘that book’, ‘his book’ etc.)

Often a particular word can be used in both ways.

5.1 Pronoun types

In their ‘noun-like’ role pronouns act as a kind of shorthand reference to persons or things within the actual or speech context, e.g. the personal pronouns já ‘I’, ty ‘you sg.’, on ‘he’, ona ‘she’.

Interrogative pronouns ask questions about a person or thing, e.g. kdo? ‘who?’, co? ‘what?’

‘Adjective-like’ pronouns (sometimes called ‘determiners’ in recent English grammars) identify more precisely what their noun is or refers to in the given context. They regularly precede any standard adjectives which may also be present, e.g. tahle dobrá kniha ‘this good book’, moje nová kniha ‘my new book’.

They can also act as interrogatives: která nová kniha? ‘which new book?’, jaká kniha? ‘what kind of book?’

English definite and indefinite articles (‘the’ and ‘a’) are similar to these, but Czech has no direct equivalent for them. When translating from Czech into English, you need to add whatever article is required (if any) according to the context:

Mám kufr. I have a suitcase.

Kufr je tady. The suitcase is here.

Often the same word can be either ‘noun-like’ or ‘adjective-like’ in the way it behaves.
This applies perhaps most obviously to demonstratives – basically words like ‘this’ or ‘that’ which point to people or things:

**Co je to?** What is that? [noun-like to]

**To auto je moje.** That car is mine. [adjective-like to]

Some Czech pronouns have forms which decline like standard adjectives, for example který m., která f., které n. ‘which?’ (which is also used as the relative pronoun ‘who, which’).

Others have special declensions, e.g. já ‘I’ and ten, ta, to ‘that’.

### 5.2 Personal pronouns – osobní zájmena

A personal pronoun refers to a person (or thing) already mentioned or known from the context of the speech or text.

‘I’ and ‘we’ are first-person pronouns, referring to the speaker or a group including the speaker. ‘You’ is a second-person pronoun, referring to the person(s) being spoken to or addressed. ‘He’, ‘she’, ‘it’ and ‘they’ are third-person pronouns, referring to other persons or things being spoken about.

The basic Czech personal pronouns are (in their subject/nominative forms):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Czech</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>já</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ty</td>
<td>you (singular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on</td>
<td>he, she, it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ona</td>
<td>she</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ono</td>
<td>it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oni</td>
<td>they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my</td>
<td>we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vy</td>
<td>you (plural, or formal singular)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Czech, subject pronouns are regularly omitted as the subjects of verbs, except where necessary or for emphasis, see further below.

#### 5.2.1 Saying ‘you’

There are two basic words for ‘you’, ty and vy.

Ty and its matching verb forms are used to address a child or a person you are on familiar terms with:

**Jak se máš?** How are you?

**A jak se máš ty?** And how are you?

Vy and its matching verb forms are used to address (a) more than one person, (b) one person who is a stranger, not well acquainted with
you, or a more senior person whom you wish to address with polite respect:

**Jak se máte?** How are you? (can be sg. or pl.)

**A jak se máte vy?** And how are you?

The easiest and safest rule is to address adult strangers as *vy*, switching to *ty* as appropriate if and when they suggest it to you.

Amongst personal friends, especially those roughly your own age, *ty* is normal usage, but use the *vy* forms when addressing strangers on the street, parents of friends, shop assistants, bank clerks, and so on.

The verbs *tykat* ‘to say *ty*’ and *vykat* ‘to say *vy*’ can be used when discussing this topic in conversation.

**Proč mi vykáš?** Why are you saying *vy* to me?

**Všichni mu tykají.** Everyone says *ty* to him.

In letter writing, all forms of the second-person pronouns are normally spelt with a capital letter, as are any corresponding possessives: *Ty/Vy* ‘you’, *Tob/Vám* ‘to you’, *Tv/Váš* ‘your’ etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milá paní Novotná!</th>
<th>Dear Mrs Novotná,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Děkuji Vám za Váš milý dopis.</td>
<td>Thank you for your kind letter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S pozdravem,</td>
<td>Yours sincerely,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josef Jungmann</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.2 **Third-person subject pronouns**

In everyday usage the nominative forms of the noun-like personal pronouns *on* ‘he’ and *ona* ‘she’ normally only refer to animate beings.

Similarly, the form *ono* ‘it’ as a noun-like pronoun may refer to a neuter animate noun, such as *dítě* ‘child’, *kotě* ‘kitten’, but will only rarely refer to a particular inanimate thing of neuter gender.

**Podívej se na to dítě. Ono spí!** Look at that child. It is asleep.

*Oni* ‘they’ is regularly used as a subject pronoun for all genders in the everyday spoken language.
But in standard written Czech oni has three gender forms, parallel to those of the past-tense verb forms (see 7.5):

\[ \text{ma. oni byli, mi./f. ony byly, n. ona byla} = \text{they were} \]

Thus, the form ony is used for a uniformly feminine (and occasionally masculine inanimate) ‘they’, e.g. to refer to ženy women. (Note how all these plural endings match – ony, ženy, byly.)

The rarer neuter plural form ona, identical to ona ‘she’, is mostly only used when referring to neuter animate beings, e.g. kot’ata kittens.

The third person pronouns also have widespread non-standard subject forms with an initial v-:

*von ‘he’, *vona ‘she’, *vono ‘it’, *voni ‘they’

Use of these may attract disapproval – they may be regarded as somewhat vulgar, especially in more polite or formal contexts.

### 5.2.3 Use and omission of subject pronouns

The subject pronouns já, ty, on etc. are only needed for extra emphasis or contrast, or in combinations.

- **Já mám kufr, ale ona nemá.** I have a suitcase, but she hasn’t.
- **Ty, já a Petr to uděláme spolu.** You, I and Petr will do it together.

Mostly the verb is sufficient to indicate the subject, and you can simply omit the subject pronoun:

- **Mám kufr.** I have a suitcase.
- **Má kufr.** S/he has a suitcase.
- **Máme kufry.** We have suitcases.
- **Mají kufry.** They have suitcases.
- **Znáš tuhle knihu?** Do you know this book?
- **Ano, je dobrá.** Yes, it is good.
- **Znáš její romány?** Do you know her novels?
- **Ano, jsou dobré.** Yes, they are good.

Third-person subject pronouns on, ona, ono ‘he, she, it’ and oni, ony, ona ‘they’ are rarely used for things or abstracts. Mostly no subject pronoun is needed for these, but for emphasis you can use the appropriate form of the demonstrative pronoun ten m., ta f., to n.:
Ano, ta je dobrá. Yes, that one/it (e.g. ta kniha ‘that book’) is good.

* Ano, ty jsou dobré. Yes, those/they (e.g. ty romány ‘those novels’) are good.

Normally ona je dobrá will mean ‘she is good’, not ‘it is good’.

5.2.4 **Empty subject words ‘it’ and ‘there’**

There is generally no subject pronoun present in Czech for ‘it’, if the thing has already been specified:


But also, where English has an empty subject word ‘it’, such as in statements about the weather, no subject word should be used in Czech:

* Je zima. It is cold.

* Prší. It is raining.

A similar context arises where an English ‘it’ refers to a following infinitive:

* Pracovat ve sněhu je těžké. It is difficult to work in the snow.

(English omits this ‘it’ if the order of elements is changed: ‘To work in the snow is difficult.’ ‘Working in the snow is difficult.’) English also has an empty grammatical subject word ‘there’, indicating existence or occurrence, where there is also no equivalent in Czech, e.g.

* V Praze jsou stovky kostelů. In Prague there are hundreds of churches.

* Najednou se ozvala rána. Suddenly a shot rang out. Suddenly there rang out a shot.

This use of ‘there’ is different from the adverbial use of ‘there’. Sometimes in English both occur together, but Czech will only have a single adverb of place:

* Je tam velký hotel. There is a large hotel there.

5.2.5 **Expressive use of ono/vono etc.**

The neuter third-person pronoun ono/vono ‘it’ can be used as an expressively emphatic empty ‘it’ subject for a verb which does not otherwise have a subject pronoun, with exclamatory or explanatory effect:
It can also buttress the neuter demonstrative to ‘that’:

Vono to není pravda, víš. That’s not actually true, you see.

The third-person subject pronoun forms can also be used emphatically with nouns or pronouns of matching gender:

Von Karel je prostě génius! He Karel is simply a genius!

5.2.6 Declension of personal pronouns

This section onwards assumes you understand the basics about the Czech case system, as discussed in the chapter on nouns. Pronouns have no distinctive vocative case – just use nominative forms instead, e.g. Ty! You!

Where more than one form is given below, those following a dash are reserved for use after prepositions or may be used as stressed forms. Forms which are more or less restricted to formal written style are shown in square brackets.

The first table gives forms for ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘we’, and also the reflexive pronoun ‘oneself’, since it closely matches the other two:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>1 nom.</th>
<th>4 acc.</th>
<th>2 gen.</th>
<th>3 dat.</th>
<th>6 loc.</th>
<th>7 ins.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>já l</td>
<td>ty you</td>
<td>– (one)self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>mě, [mne]</td>
<td>tě tebe</td>
<td>se sebe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>mě, [mne]</td>
<td>tě tebe</td>
<td>se sebe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>mí/mně – mně</td>
<td>ti tobě</td>
<td>si sobě</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>o mně</td>
<td>o tobě</td>
<td>o sobě</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>mnou</td>
<td>tebou</td>
<td>sebou</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>1 nom.</th>
<th>4 acc.</th>
<th>2 gen.</th>
<th>3 dat.</th>
<th>6 loc.</th>
<th>7 ins.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>my we</td>
<td>vy you (plural, formal sg.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>nás</td>
<td>vás</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>nás</td>
<td>vás</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>nám</td>
<td>vám</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>o nás</td>
<td>o vás</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>námi/^náma</td>
<td>vámi/^váma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the tables of third-person pronouns which follow, the most common forms are those listed first (before and after the dash). The forms after the dashes beginning with n- are obligatory after prepositions, but are not used on their own. The stressed variants used in isolation begin with a j- instead.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 nom.</th>
<th>on</th>
<th>he</th>
<th>ona</th>
<th>she</th>
<th>ono</th>
<th>n. it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>mu – němu/jemu</td>
<td>jí – ní</td>
<td>mu – němu/jemu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) něm</td>
<td>(o) ní</td>
<td>(o) něm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>jím – ním</td>
<td>jí – ní</td>
<td>jím – ním</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the accusative case the forms něho/jeho ‘him’ are masculine animate only.

The feminine accusative ji – ní ‘her’ has a short vowel, while the other case forms of ona have a long vowel, jí – ní.

Most of the neuter sg. forms are the same as the masculine ones, except for the older accusative forms je – ně. These are identical to the accusative plural forms for ‘them’, and usually avoided in ordinary speech.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 nom.</th>
<th>oni [ony mi./f., ona n.] they</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>je – ně them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>jich – nich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>jim – ním</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>o nich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>jimi – nimi and */dual jima – nima</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subject forms, when used, are always stressed. Non-stressed (‘en-clitic’) forms come roughly second position in a sentence, but after any auxiliaries, e.g. jsem/jsi, jsme/jsste, and the reflexive pronoun se/si:
5 Pronouns

Kdo mě hledá? Who is looking for me?
Kdo ti to řekl? Who told you that? Who said that to you?
Zeptali jsme se ho, We asked him whether he saw us in the
jestli nás viděl v kině. cinema.

An extra -e is added to some prepositions before mě/mne, mně and
mnou ‘me’:
beze mě (beze mne), ode mě (ode mne), ze mě (ze mne)
‘without, from me, out of me’
ke mně, ve mně ‘towards me, in me’
se mnou, přede mnou, nade mnou, pode mnou ‘with, in front
of, above, below me’

5.2.7 Stressed personal pronouns

The longer personal pronoun forms required for use after prepositions
can also be used on their own as stressed forms, when referring to
animate beings. In this context the third-person forms used for empha-
sis begin with j- instead of n-, e.g. masculine animate acc./gen. jeho and
dat. jemu.

Emphatic or stressed pronouns often come at the beginning of a
sentence. The ordinary forms are used for emphasis where there are no
special ones:
Tebe hledal? Was he looking for you?
Mě (Mne) nehledal. He wasn’t looking for me.
Nás nehledal. He wasn’t looking for us.
Jeho nevidím. ‘Him I don’t see.’ I don’t see him.
Jemu nic neřeknu. I won’t say anything to him.

In practice the form jeho occurs much more often as the possessive
‘his’: jeho kniha ‘his book’.

5.2.8 Non-subject ‘it’

Outside the subject position, inanimate nouns are properly referred to
by the corresponding gender of pronoun.
**5.3 Reflexive pronoun se – zvratné zájmeno**

The pronoun se ‘self, oneself’ refers back to any person of subject. Some verbs are always reflexive – that is to say, they always have se attached, e.g. ptát se ‘to ask’.

Other verbs are reflexive only in certain senses, e.g. učit se ‘to study’, literally ‘to teach oneself’, alongside non-reflexive učit ‘to teach’.

### 5.3.1 Reflexive si

The dative of se ‘oneself’ is si, meaning ‘to/for oneself’.

Many verbs commonly appear with si attached:

- **Kupuji si svetr.** I buy (for) myself a sweater.
- **Kupuješ si svetr.** You buy yourself a sweater.
- **Kupuje si svetr.** S/he buys herself/himself a sweater.
- **Kupujeme si svetr.** We buy ourselves a sweater.
- **Kupujete si svetr.** You buy yourselves a sweater.
- **Kupují si svetr.** They buy themselves a sweater.

Try not to confuse this word when you hear it with jsi meaning ‘you are’.

**Jsi doma?** Are you at home?
5.3.2 Each other

Se ‘oneself’ can also mean ‘each other’, in a reciprocal sense:

Mají se rádi. They like each other.
Nemají se rádi. They don’t like each other.

5.3.3 Declension of the reflexive pronoun

Se (dative si) has further (strong) case forms parallel to those of ty ‘you’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>acc./gen.</td>
<td>pro sebe</td>
<td>for oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>od sebe</td>
<td>from oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dat./loc.</td>
<td>(k) sobě</td>
<td>to(wards) oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o sobě</td>
<td>about oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ins.</td>
<td>s sebou</td>
<td>with oneself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Máš před sebou těžkou úlohu. You have a hard task in front of yourself.

Vařím pro sebe. I cook for myself.

5.4 Demonstratives – ukazovací zájmena

Demonstratives, e.g. ‘this, that’, as both ‘adjective-like’ or ‘noun-like’ pronouns, indicate that the nouns they refer to are located somewhere within the actual or speech context.

5.4.1 Demonstrative ten, ta, to

The basic Czech demonstrative ten, ta, to broadly corresponds to English ‘that/those’. It points to something or someone visibly not too far away in the immediate physical environment:

Kdo je ten kluk? Vídíš ho? Who is that boy? Do you see him?
Co je ta kniha? What is that book?
Čí je to auto? Whose is that car?
The same demonstrative can also point backwards within a speech or textual context (‘anaphoric reference’). Here it often matches English ‘this/these’ as well as ‘that/those’:

**Kam jsi dala ty peníze?** Where have you put that/this money?

**Potkal jsem dívku a ta dívka byla velmi krásná.** I met a girl, and that/this girl was very beautiful.

Sometimes it also points forwards (‘cataphoric reference’). Here it usually corresponds to ‘that/those’, or simply ‘the’:

**Omlouváme se těm studentům, kteří nedostali náš dopis.**
We apologise to those/the students who did not get our letter.

Ten, to, ta declines as follows:

| Sg. | ma. || mi. | f. | n. |
|-----|------|------|----|----|
| 1 nom. | ten | ta | to |
| 4 acc. | toho || ten | tu | to |
| 2 gen. | toho | té, *tý | toho |
| 3 dat. | tomu | té, *tý | tomu |
| 6 loc. | (o) tom | (o) té, *tý | (o) tom |
| 7 ins. | tím | tou | tím |
| Pl. | ma. || mi. | f. | n. |
| 1 nom. | ti, *ty || ty | ty | ta, *ty |
| 4 acc. | ty | ty | ta, *ty |
| 2 gen. | těch |
| 3 dat. | těm |
| 6 loc. | (o) těch |
| 7 ins. | těmi, */dual těma |

Note how in the plural both ti and ta may be replaced by ty in colloquial usage to produce a single nom./acc. pl. form.

**Kde jsou ti (*ty) kluci?** Where are those boys?
5.4.2 *Declension of onen and jeden*

The less common, often formal demonstrative *onen*, *ona*, *ono* meaning ‘that, the aforesaid, the one referred to’ also declines like *ten*, *ta*, *to* – compare *onoho* – *toho*, *onomu* – *tomu*, and *oné* – *tě*, and in the plural *oni* – *ti*, *ony* – *ty*, *oněch* – *těch* etc.

**Toho/Onoho léta bylo chladno.** That summer (genitive) it was cold.

The two are sometimes used contrastively, e.g. v té nebo oné formě ‘in this or that form’.

**Jeden**, **jedna**, **jedno** ‘one’ declines the same way (see also 6.1.1 and 6.12), with standard forms (as in the table above):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sg.</td>
<td>jednoho</td>
<td>jedni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jednomu</td>
<td>jedný</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jednom</td>
<td>jedně</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jedním</td>
<td>jedněmi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jednu</td>
<td>jedný</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jedné</td>
<td>jednou</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jeden ‘some’, **jedny**, **jedněch**, **jedném**, **jedněmi** (plural cases used for ‘one’ with plural-only nouns, e.g. **jedny kalhoty** ‘one pair of trousers’)

5.4.3 *‘This’ (Here) versus ‘that’ (there)*

For a more definite ‘this (here)’ you add an invariable -hle to the case forms of *ten*, *ta*, *to*, producing **tenhle**, **tahle**, **tohle**. Colloquially, this also occurs as *tendle*, *tadle*, *todle*. In formal standard Czech the invariable suffix -to is added instead.

**Tenhle (tento) časopis je velmi dobrý.** This magazine is very good.

**Tahle (tato) kniha je velmi dobrá.** This book is very good.

For greater emphasis you can add another *ten*, *ta*, *to* after -hle, producing the forms **tenhleten**, **tahleta**, **tohleto** (*tendleten*, *tadleta*, *todleto*):

**Tenhleten časopis se mi moc líbí.** I like this magazine very much.

**Tahleta kniha je moc dobrá.** This book is very good.

Sometimes **tuhle-** or **tadyhle-** ‘here’ is prefixed to *ten*, *ta*, *to* to emphasise the location instead:

**Tuhleten časopis je lepší.** This magazine here is better.

**Přečti si tadyhletu povídku.** Read this story here.
For an emphatic ‘that (there)’ add tam- or tamhle- on the front of ten, ta, to:

Tam(hle)ta kniha není moc dobrá.
That book there is not very good.

Vidíte tam(hle)toho studenta?
Do you see that student there?

Vidíte tam(hle)tu knihu?
Do you see that book there?

The less common demonstrative onen (see above) is sometimes used in a similar way, when pointing to a place, e.g. za oním/tamtím vysokým stromem ‘behind yonder/that tall tree (over there)’.

5.4.4 To, tohle etc.

The neuter sg. noun-like demonstrative pronoun to corresponds to the English noun-like pronoun ‘that’. It consists of the neuter sg. forms of the demonstrative tabled above.

It may also correspond to English ‘it’ or ‘this’ at times, depending on the precise context.

To refers to things or persons which are not defined – or not yet defined – by particular nouns. It often occurs in questions, and in defining statements, which may be answers to such questions. In such contexts English often uses ‘it’, which is less emphatic than ‘that’. When speaking of a person English also often uses ‘he’ or ‘she’, where Czech puts to ‘that’:

Co je to?
What is that? What is it?

Co to je?
What is that? (emphasis)

To je pomeranč.
That is an orange. It’s an orange.

Kdo je to?
Who is that? Who is it? Who is he?

To je Filip.
That is Filip. It’s Filip. He’s Filip.

Kdo je to?
Who is that? Who is it? Who is she?

To je Eva.
That is Eva. It’s Eva. She’s Eva.

NB: In the past tense the form of byl ‘was’ agrees with the noun defined, while to is again unaffected:

To byl Filip.
That was Filip.

To byla Eva.
That was Eva.
Singular *to* is also used when identifying plural things or persons:

**Co to jsou?**  
What are those?

**To jsou pomeranče.**  
Those are oranges.

**To byli jeho kamarádi.**  
Those were his friends.

*To* is often used as an equivalent for ‘that’ when commenting on a situation or a set of circumstances, again something which is not defined by a particular noun:

**To je dobré.**  
That’s good.

**To je smutné.**  
That’s sad.

**To nepomůže.**  
That won’t help.

**Nechci tomu věřit.**  
I do not want to believe that.

**Nebudeme o tom mluvit.**  
We won’t talk about that.

*To* also often corresponds to the less emphatic English ‘it’ in this kind of context, especially in the lighter non-initial position:

**Je to smutné, ale . . .**  
It is sad, but . . .

**Nepomůže to.**  
It won’t help.

For an emphasised ‘this’, referring to location nearby, the suffixed pronouns *tohle* (also *todle*), or *toto* (formal style) can be used:

**Co je tohle? (Co je toto?)**  
What is this?

**Kdo je tohle?**  
Who is this?

**Tohle je Pavel.**  
This is Pavel.

**Tomuhle nevěřím.**  
I don’t believe this (dat.).

**Tohohle si vážím.**  
I respect this.

There is also a stronger colloquial form *tohleto* (*todleto*) with an extra declinable -to added, which also produces other case forms:

**Co je tohleto (*todleto*)?**  
What is this?

**O tohleto nebudeme mluvit.**  
We won’t speak about this.

**ve srovnání s tímhletem**  
in comparison with this

_Tuhleto_ and _tadyhleto_ also occur for ‘this thing here’.

Conversely, for a more emphatic ‘that, that over there’, the suffixed forms _tamto_ and (colloquially) _tamhleto_ may be used:

**Co je tam(hle)to?**  
What is that? What is that over there?
Demonstratives can also be used as slightly emphatic third-person noun-like pronouns, referring to people and things already defined, and using the appropriate gender.

**Ten nám nic neřekl.** That one (he) didn’t tell us anything.

**Ta nám nic neřekla.** That one (she) didn’t tell us anything.

**Ti nám nic neřekli.** Those ones (they) didn’t tell us anything.

Vemte si nějaké pomeranče. Tyhle(ty) jsou moc dobré.
Take some oranges. These ones (here) are very good.

The demonstrative can also indicate a switch of grammatical subject, by referring unambiguously to the nearest preceding noun:

**Anna tam šla. A ona tam potkala Janu, a ta ji řekla, že jde zítra domů.**
Anna went there. And she (i.e. Anna) met Jana there, and she (i.e. that one, Jana) told her she was going home tomorrow.

**5.4.6 Demonstrative takový**

Another demonstrative is *takový*, formed like a normal hard-stem adjective, and derived from the adverb *tak* ‘so, like this’. It basically means ‘such’ or ‘of that type’.

In practice *takový* corresponds to a whole variety of words and phrases in English – ‘suchlike, of that kind, that kind of, like that, a kind of . . .’ etc.

It is attached to nouns used variously to denote people or things as being of a certain quality:

**Takoví přátelé jsou nebezpeční.** Such friends are dangerous.

**Takové auto jsem dlouho neviděl.** I haven’t seen a car like that for a long time.

In a slightly different sense:

**Filozofie jako taková ho nudí.** Philosophy as such bores him.

Takový may also anticipate the kind of person or thing defined in the noun or adjective which follows:
Takový Dostojevskij by to napsal líp.

Someone like Dostoevsky would have written that better.

Je takový divný.

He is kind of strange.

Byla tam taková bouda.

There was a kind of a hut there.

It can also be used in exclamations:

Taková krásá! Taková škoda!

Such beauty! Such a pity!

Just as tak ‘so’ has more emphatic variants takhle, formal takto ‘like this, in this way’, takový also has its own emphatic variant takovýhle (formal takovýto) ‘this kind of, of this kind’, using the same suffixes and referring to a closer, immediate context.

Takovito/Takovíhle přátelé jsou nebezpeční.

Friends like these (ones here, in this context) are dangerous.

Takovýhle případ jsem ještě nezažil.

I have never experienced such a case like this.

5.4.7 English definite and indefinite article

Czech has no direct equivalents for the definite article ‘the’ and indefinite article ‘a, an’. You just decide what is meant from the context.

Mám kufr.

I have a suitcase.

Kufr je tady.

The suitcase is here.

Pavel je jméno jeho otce.

Pavel is the name of his father.

But sometimes another word may take their place, the number jeden ‘one’ for the indefinite article, for example, or the demonstrative ten for the definite article.

Jeden můj kamarád mi to řekl.

A friend of mine/One of my friends told me.

Myslíš tu pani, kterou jsme viděli včera?

Do you mean the/that lady we saw yesterday?

Ten often stands for ‘the’ before a defining adjective or noun:

Filip byl ten vysoký/ten nejlepší.

Filip was the tall one/the best (one).

Dám si ten menší banán/ten menší.

I’ll take the smaller banana/the smaller one.
Possessives act typically as adjective-like pronouns, e.g. 

můj přítel ‘my friend’, 

tvůj dobrý přítel ‘your good friend’.

They can also be used in a noun-like fashion, e.g. ten hotel je můj ‘that hotel is mine’ (note how here English uses ‘mine’ instead of ‘my’).

Possessives můj ‘my’ and tvůj ‘your’ correspond in their meaning to personal pronouns já ‘I’ and ty ‘you’ (informal sg.).

The possessive svůj ‘one’s own’ corresponds to the reflexive pronoun se, sebe.

Possessives náš ‘our’ and váš ‘your’ correspond to my ‘we’ and vy ‘you’ (polite sg. and plural).

Tvůj means possession by someone you address as ty. Váš means possession by a person or people addressed as vy (plural, or formal).

Můj, tvůj and svůj share the same case endings. Náš and váš have another set of shared case endings. (See the table below.)

Jeho ‘his/its’ and jejich ‘their’ correspond to personal pronouns on/ono ‘he, it’ and plural oni/ony/ona ‘they’ and are indeclinable, i.e. they never alter their forms.

The possessive její ‘her’ corresponds to the personal pronoun ona. It declines like a soft adjective.

Mluvíme o jeho bratrovi, o jejich sestře, o jejím autě. 

We are talking about his brother, about their sister, about her car.

The possessive can generally be omitted for family members, when it is clear who is meant:

To je bratr. This is (my) brother.

To je matka. This is (my) mother.

To je manžel, manželka. This is (my) husband, wife.

Můj ‘my’ and náš ‘our’ show some differences in their case forms from normal adjectives.

Here is a full table of case forms, using as examples ‘my, our brother/house/car/sister’.

Most of the forms which are not the same as standard hard adjectives are parallel to the endings of the third person pronoun. Compare jeho and našeho, jemu and našemu, jí and naší, and so on.
### Pronouns

#### Sg.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>múj, nás bratr/dům</td>
<td>moje (má), naše sestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but</td>
<td>moje (mé), naše auto</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>mého, našeho bratra</td>
<td>moji (mou), naši sestru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rest</td>
<td>= nom.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>mého, našeho bratra</td>
<td>mojí (mé), naší sestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>mému, našemu bratrovi</td>
<td>mojí (mé), naší sestře</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loc.</td>
<td>(o) mém, našem bratrovi</td>
<td>(o) moji (mé), naší sestře</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ins.</td>
<td>mým, naším bratrem</td>
<td>moji (mou), naší sestrou</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Pl.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>moji (mí), naší bratři</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rest</td>
<td>= acc. pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>moje (mé), naše bratry/sestry/moje (má), naše auta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>mých, našich bratrů, sester etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>mým, naším bratrům, sestrám</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loc.</td>
<td>(o) mých, našich bratrech, sestrách</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ins.</td>
<td>mými, našimi bratry, sestrami/dual mýma, našima očima ‘eyes’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The bracketed variants can sound slightly solemn, while the form mojí is mildly colloquial.

The forms mé, mého, mému and mém may be replaced in speech by *mý, *mýho, *mýmu and *mým, and in the plural mé, mých, mým, mými by *mý, *mých, *mým, *mýma.

Tvůj and váš ‘your’ and svůj ‘one’s own’ have precisely parallel forms to múj, náš.
**Possessives**

Nezná tvého, vašeho bratra.

Hledám tvoji, vaši sestru.

Zná tvoje, vaše rodiče?

S/he doesn’t know my, your brother.

I’m looking for your sister.

Does s/he know our parents?

Possessives can be used immediately after demonstratives, unlike English, e.g.

- ten můj přítel
- that friend of mine

- ta vaše nová kolegyně
- that new female colleague of yours

The singular phrases ten můj, ta moje/ten tvůj, ta tvoje may refer, sometimes disparagingly, to a person’s husband and wife, while naši/ vaši can often be used on their own to refer to parents, or to sports teams, e.g.

- Naši šli někam ven.
  - Our folks have gone out somewhere.

- Naši prohráli.
  - Our team lost.

### 5.5.1 Possessive svůj

The reflexive possessive svůj ‘my own’ etc. (related to se ‘oneself’) only refers to possession by the subject. Its forms are parallel to můj and tvůj. It means ‘my’ if the subject is ‘I’, but ‘your’ if it’s ‘you’, and so on.

- Ztratil(a) jsem svůj sešit.

- Ztratil(a) jsi svoji tužku?
  - Have you lost your [own] pencil?

- Věra ztratila svoji knihu.
  - Věra has lost her [own] book.

- Karel ztratil svoje pero.
  - Karel has lost his [own] pen.

- Děti ztratily svého kamaráda.
  - The children have lost their [own] friend.

- Ztrátili jsme svoje poznámky.
  - We’ve lost our [own] notes.

Compare examples where the possessor is not the subject of the sentence:

- Ztratil moji knihu.
  - He lost my book.

- Irena ztratila její knihu.
  - Irena lost her (= another person’s) book.

- Petr ztratil jeho pero.
  - Petr lost his (= another person’s) pen.
The idiomatic negative nesvůj meaning ‘not himself’ occurs in the nominative, with the shorter forms only:

- Je nesvá. She is not herself.
- Jsou nesví. They are not themselves.

5.5.2 Vlastní own

The adjectival word vlastní ‘own’ only partially overlaps with svůj. It more specifically indicates personal ownership but need not refer to possession by the grammatical subject:

- To je jeho vlastní auto. That is his own car.
- Má vlastní auto. (Or: Má svoje auto. Or, more emphatically: Má svoje vlastní auto.) He has his own car. He has a car of his own.

5.6 Interrogatives – tázací zájmena

Interrogative pronouns ask about a person or thing, e.g. kdo? ‘who?’ co? ‘what?’

5.6.1 Kdo – who? and co – what?

To ask the question ‘who?’ you use the interrogative pronoun kdo. To ask ‘what?’ you use co, e.g.

- Kdo je to? Who is it?
- Co je to? What is it?

Interrogative kdo counts as grammatically masculine, as the past tense form shows, while co is neuter:

- Kdo tam byl? Who was there?
- Co tam bylo? What was there?

If ‘who?’ or ‘what?’ is the object kdo becomes koho, but co is unchanged, being inanimate:

- Koho hledáte? Who are you looking for?
- Co hledáte? What are you looking for?

The case forms of kdo and co are as follows:
Note how English commonly puts prepositions like ‘about’ and ‘for’ at the end of questions. This is not allowed in Czech:

- **O čem mluvíte?** What are you talking about? = About what . . . ?
- **O kom mluvíte?** Who are you talking about? = About whom . . . ?
- **Komu vaříš oběd?** Who are you cooking lunch for? = For whom . . . ?

The same two words also introduce what are called indirect questions, where the question is not asked directly, but referred to in a subordinate clause:

- **Nevím, kdo to je.** I don’t know who that is.
- **Nevím, co to je.** I don’t know what that is.

Note idiomatic use of co in:

- **Co je to za člověka?** What kind of person is that?
- **Co je to za zvíře?** What kind of animal is that?

### 5.6.2 Contracted -č, -ň

The masculine third-person pronoun is occasionally contracted to -ň and the interrogative pronoun co ‘what’ to -č after certain prepositions followed by the accusative, and do followed by the genitive:

- **doň, doč; naň, nač; oň, oč; proň, proč; veň, več; zaň, zač**

The interrogative proč? ‘why, for what reason?’ is the only high-frequency item. Much less common is nač? ‘for what purpose?’ There are also a few fixed idioms using forms with -č:
**5 Pronouns**

- **Proč mi to říkáte?** Why are you telling me this?
- **Nač bych tam chodil?** What would I go there for?
- **Nač si kazit odpoledne?** Why spoil one’s afternoon? (= to what purpose)
- **Děkuji. – Není zač.** Thank you. – It was nothing. (You’re welcome.)
- **Oč běží? O co běží?** What is going on? What is this all about?

The -ň forms are much rarer, and you really only need to recognise them:

- **Pak se doň zavěsila.** Then she linked arms with him.
- **Vrhala se naň celým svým tělem.** She hurled herself at him with her whole body.
- **Je sám, tak přijd’ si proň.** He’s alone, so come for him, i.e. come and fetch him.
- **Byla na cestě, aby se zaň provdala.** She was on the way to marry him.

### 5.6.3 Someone, something etc.

Indefinite pronouns refer to or identify a person or thing only vaguely. They are often formed from interrogatives by means of a prefix, e.g. někdo ‘someone’, něco ‘something’.

Indefinite pronouns are regularly produced by adding the prefix ně- ‘some-’ to an interrogative, e.g. někdo ‘someone, somebody’, něco ‘nothing’.

Někdo ‘someone, somebody’ changes to někoho if it is the object, but něco ‘something’ remains unchanged:

- **Je tam někdo?** Is somebody there?
- **Někoho hledám.** I’m looking for someone.
- **Něco hledám.** I am looking for something.

The indefinite pronouns have case forms identical to the interrogatives from which they are derived:

- někoho, někomu, (o) někom and někým ‘of someone’ etc.
- něčeho, něčemu, (o) něčem and něčím ‘of something’ etc.
A rather similar set of words is produced with the suffix -si meaning ‘some . . . or other’:

kdosi ‘a certain someone, someone or other’, cosi ‘a certain something, something or other’

There are adverbs of place and time with the same attached elements, e.g.

kde ‘where?’, někde ‘somewhere’, kdesi ‘a certain somewhere, somewhere or other’

kdy ‘when?’, někdy ‘sometimes, sometime’, kdysi ‘once, at some time in the past’

5.6.4 No one – nikdo, nothing – nic

The negative equivalents of kdo and co are nikdo ‘no one, nobody’ and (irregular form) nic ‘nothing’. They require negative verbs as well, so-called double negatives, and the results can be translated into English in two basic ways:

Nebyl tam nikdo. Nobody was there. There wasn’t anybody there.

Nebylo tam nic. Nothing was there. There wasn’t anything there.

Again they have parallel case forms:

nikoho, nikomu, (o) nikom and nikým ‘of no one’ etc.

ničeho, ničemu, (o) ničem and ničím ‘of nothing’ etc.

5.6.5 Genitive of quality following co, něco, nic

When co, něco and nic and other compounds of co (e.g. cokoli ‘anything’) are in their basic forms, they are followed by adjectives or adjectival words describing quality in the genitive:

Co je nového? What’s new?

Něco strašného. Something awful.

Něco takového. Something of the sort. Something like that.

Není nic nového. Nothing’s new.

(This does not happen with někdo, e.g. někdo nový ‘someone new’.)

In other inflected cases the genitive is not used, which is similar to what happens with numerals and other quantifiers:
Před něčím takovým člověk neví, co má dělat.
Faced with something like that one doesn’t know what to do.

5.6.6 Interrogatives jaký, jak and který

The common interrogative jaký -á -é? asks the question ‘what kind of?’, in English often ‘what . . . like?’ It declines like a standard hard-stem adjective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jaký je to román?</th>
<th>What kind of novel is it? What is the novel like?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jaký je?</td>
<td>What is it like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaká je to žena?</td>
<td>What kind of woman is she?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaká je?</td>
<td>What is she like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaké je to auto?</td>
<td>What kind of car is it? What is the car like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaké je?</td>
<td>What is it like?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The related interrogative adverb jak asks the question ‘how?’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jak to děláte?</th>
<th>How do you do that?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Both can also introduce exclamations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jaká škoda!</th>
<th>What a pity!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jak ten čas letí!</td>
<td>How time flies!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interrogative který -á -é similarly asks the question ‘which?’ It also declines like a standard adjective. Compare with the above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Které je to auto?</th>
<th>Which car is it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

These interrogatives can also be used in indirect questions, where the question is referred to in a subordinate clause, e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nevím, které je to auto.</th>
<th>I don’t know which car it is.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nevím, jaké je to auto.</td>
<td>I don’t know what kind of car it is. I don’t know what the car is like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevím, jak to děláte.</td>
<td>I don’t know how you do it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6.7 How, what kind of, some, any

Various words involving the idea of ‘some’ are derived from jak, jaký and který, as follows:
jak ‘how?’, nějak ‘somehow’, jaksi ‘in some way or other’ (adverbs)
jaký ‘what kind of?’, nějaký ‘some, any’, jakýsi ‘some certain kind or other of’

který? ‘which?’, některý ‘some, certain particular kind(s) of’, kterýsi ‘some particular kind or other of’

Distinguish:

Byly tam nějaké pomeranče? Were there some(any oranges there?
Byly tam nějaké pomeranče. There were some oranges there.
Dostali nějaké pomeranče. They got some oranges.

Byly tam/Dostali jaké pomeranče. Dostali jakési pomeranče. There were some kind (or other) of oranges there. They got some kind of oranges.

Některé pomeranče nejsou sladké. Some (certain particular kinds of) oranges are not sweet.

Některé (z nich) nebyly sladké. Some (of them) were not sweet.

The indefinite quantifier několik may also mean ‘some’ in the sense of ‘a certain number of, several’ (rather than ‘some kind of’). It is derived from kolik? ‘how much? how many?’, and is followed by the genitive case (details in 6.8):

Bylo tam několik pomerančů a několik jahod. There were several oranges there and several strawberries.

5.7 Relative pronouns – vztažná zájmena

Where English ‘who’ has nothing to do with a question, but refers to a preceding noun, it introduces what is traditionally called a relative clause. The relative clause further describes this preceding noun, habitually called its antecedent.

5.7.1 Relative pronoun který

Který -á -é functions as a relative pronoun ‘who, which’, as well as an interrogative, as discussed just above.

The gender and number of který have to match its antecedent, i.e. the particular noun it refers back to:
Pronouns

Mám bratra, který se učí česky. I have a brother who is learning Czech.

Mám sestru, která se učí anglicky. I have a sister who is learning English.

If the noun referred back to is a thing, který corresponds to English ‘which’ (which is often replaced by ‘that’ or omitted in English):

Auto, které tady vidíte, je výborné.
The car (which) you see here is excellent.

The case of který has to correspond to its function within its relative clause. Sometimes in English we also use the form ‘whom’ to indicate that the relative pronoun ‘who’ is not the subject of the relative clause. In this example kterého is the object of potkali, and therefore has to be in the accusative case. Moreover, the antecedent noun člověk to which který refers is masculine, and so the accusative of který has to be the masculine animate accusative singular:

To jen ten člověk, kterého jsme potkali včera.
That is that person [who(m)] we met yesterday.

Use this table to test your knowledge of Czech adjectives. Do you immediately know which gender form is which? If not, go and revise them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sg.</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>který, které, která</td>
<td>kteří, které, která</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>který/kterého, které, kterou</td>
<td>které, která</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>kterého, které</td>
<td>kterých</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>kterému, které</td>
<td>kterým</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>(o) kterém, které</td>
<td>(o) kterých</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>kterým, kterou</td>
<td>kterými, dual kterýma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spoken Czech often uses the genderless nom./acc. plural form *který.
Other non-standard usage is the same throughout as for adjectives, e.g.


You will also come across casual forms *kerej, *kerýho etc.
5.7.2 Colloquial relative co

In colloquial Czech the relative pronoun který is often replaced by co ‘what’. This resembles some people’s regional English usage:

**To je ten muž, co chodí denně do našeho parku.**
That’s that man ‘what’ comes every day to our park.

Co never alters in this usage. You get round any need for a preposition or another case by adding a pronoun phrase as if it was in a separate sentence:

**To je ten muž, co jsme o něm včera mluvili.**
That’s the man ‘what’ we were speaking about ['him'] yesterday.

= more formal style: . . . **o kterém jsme včera mluvili.**

**To je ta žena, co jsme o ní včera mluvili.**
That’s the woman we were talking about yesterday.

= more formal style: . . . **o které jsme včera mluvili.**

5.7.3 Relative use of kdo and co after pronouns

When you refer back to a pronoun, rather than a noun, kdo can be used as an animate relative, while co is inanimate. In colloquial Czech co can be used for both:

**Ten, kdo (colloq. co) mi to řekl, už odjel.**
The one who told me this has now left.

**To, co mi řikáte, je velmi důležité.**
That which you are telling me is very important.

**Řekni všechno, co umíš.**
Say everything you know.

Kdo and co may be treated as plural, if the antecedent pronoun is plural. Sometimes který is used in such circumstances instead:

**Všichni, kdo/kteří ho znali, chválili ho.**
All who knew him praised him.

**Ti, kdo/kteří ho znali, chválili ho.**
Those who knew him praised him.

5.7.4 Relative což

Note also což for ‘which’, referring back to a whole clause as its antecedent, rather than a particular noun:
Pronouns

Nerad se učí, což mě nepřekvapuje. He doesn’t like studying, which doesn’t surprise me.

The related temporal relative načez ‘whereupon’ is used rather similarly:

Odešel, načez začalo pršet. He left, whereupon it started to rain.

5.7.5 Relative pronoun jenž

In formal written style, another relative jenž also occurs as an alternative for the standard relative pronoun který, -á, -é ‘who, which’.

Problém, jenž (= který) stojí před námi, je velmi vážný. The problem which stands before us is a very serious one.

This pronoun is not normally used in everyday speech.

The case forms of jenž, apart from the nominative forms, are basically the same as the personal pronoun forms for ‘him, her, it’ (the stronger, more conservative forms, where these differ), with -ž stuck on the end.

| ma. || mi. (n.) | f. | m., f., n. pl. |
|-------|------------|----|---------------|
| 1 nom. | jenž (jež n.) | jež | již ma., jež others |
| 4 acc. | jehož || jejž (jež n.) | již | jež |
| 2 gen. | jehož | již | jichž |
| 3 dat. | jemuž | již | jímž |
| 6 loc. | o němž | o níž | o nichž |
| 7 ins. | jímž | již | jimiž, */dual jimaž |

The forms after prepositions have n- instead of j-, just like the forms of the corresponding personal pronouns.

Muž, do něhož (= do kterého) se zamilovala, byl její lékař. The man with whom she fell in love was her doctor.

Člověk, jemuž (= kterému) dala peníze, utekl do jižní Ameriky. The person to whom she gave the money ran away to South America.
## 5.7.6 Interrogative and relative ‘whose’

To ask the question ‘whose?’ you use the interrogative či?, which declines just like a soft adjective, although it most often occurs in the nominative or accusative.

- **Či je to dopis?** Whose letter is that?
- **Či je to auto?** Whose car is that?

For ‘whose’ at the head of relative clauses there are three possibilities, depending on the gender and number of the antecedent noun:

- **jeho** ‘whose’ (masculine or neuter sg.):
  - **To je muž, jeho mínění si vážím.** That is a man whose opinion I respect. (vážit si + gen.)

- **její** ‘whose’ (feminine sg.):
  - **To je žena, jejího mínění si vážím.** That is a woman whose opinion I respect.

- **jejich** ‘whose’ (plural, all genders):
  - **To jsou lidé, jejich mínění si vážím.** Those are people whose opinion I respect.

## 5.8 Interrogatives and their derivatives

Here is a summary list of interrogatives, including a variety of others not discussed above.

Those which are not pronouns ending in -ý or -í have invariable forms, and can mostly be classified as adverbs, e.g. **kde?** ‘where?’

- **Kolik?** ‘How much/many?’ is a quantifier as well as an interrogative.

- **co?** what
- **Či je to?** What is it?
- **Čí?** whose?
- **Čí je ten kabát?** Whose is that coat?
- **jak?** how?
- **Jak se to dělá?** How is that done?
- **jaký?** what kind of?
- **Jaké máte auto?** What kind of car do you have?
- **kam?** where to?
- **Kam jdeš?** Where are you going?
- **kde?** where?
- **Kde jste?** Where are you?
- **kdo?** who?
- **Kdo jste?** Who are you?
Prónouns

Kdy? when?
Kdy přijedeš? When will you arrive?

Kolik? how much/many?
Kolik to stojí? How much does it cost?
Kolik studentů? How many students?
( genitive of quantity after kolik)

Kolikátý? ‘what number?’
Kolikátého je dnes? What’s today’s date?
( genitive date, e.g. pátého května 5th May)

Který? which?
Kterou knihu chcete? Which book do you want?

Kudy? which/what way?
Kudy šli? Which way did they go?

Odkud? where from?
Odkud jste? Where are you from?

Proč? why?
Proč mi nepíšeš? Why don’t you write to me?

The plain forms of some interrogatives can also correspond to English senses with an added ‘some-’ or (with negatives) ‘any-’ in combination with infinitives, or at least where an infinitive can be understood. This usage is in fact similar to interrogatives in indirect questions. The first example below concerns the question kam jít? where to go? and whether the answer to it is yes or no:

Má kam jít. S/he has somewhere to go.
Nemá kam jít. S/he doesn’t have anywhere to go.
Nemá kam. S/he has nowhere (i.e. to go).
Nemá kde bydlet. S/he doesn’t have anywhere to live. She has nowhere to live.
Nemá s kým. S/he doesn’t have anyone to go with.
Má co jíst. S/he has something to eat.
Nemá co jíst. S/he doesn’t have anything to eat. She has nothing to eat.
Nemá co dělat. S/he doesn’t have anything to do.

Various other closely related words are derived from these interrogatives using certain recurring prefixes and suffixes. This is not a complete list.
ně- some  
něco something, někdo someone  
někde somewhere, někam (to) somewhere  
někdy sometimes, at some time  
nějak somehow, nějaký some, some kind of  
některý some, certain, esp. plural

ni- no  
nic nothing, nikdo nobody  
nikde nowhere, nikam (to) nowhere  
nikdy never

bůhvi- God knows  
bůhvíco God knows what  
bůhvijak God knows how  
bůhvíkde God knows where

lec- various  
leckdo some people, leccos this and that

málo- few  
málokdo few people, málokde in few places  
málokdy seldom

-pak then  
kdopak? ‘who then?’ (emphatic)  
copak ‘what then?’

-si some . . . or other  
cosi something or other  
kdosi someone or other, kdesi somewhere or other  
kdysi sometime or other (in the past), once

-koli(v) any  
kdokoli(v) anyone, anybody, cokoli(v) anything  
kdykoli(v) any time  
kdekoli(v) anywhere, jakýkoli(v) any kind of

Similarly related are:

jin- other  
jinde elsewhere, jinam (to) elsewhere  
jindy another time, jinak otherwise, in another way

vš- all  
všude everywhere, vždy(cky) always

všeli- all kinds of  
všelijak in all kinds of ways, všeliják all kinds of
5.8.1 Interrogatives as relatives

Some interrogatives other than those already discussed can also sometimes function as relatives, introducing relative clauses and referring back to an antecedent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interrogative</th>
<th>Relative Clause</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jaký (the like of which)</td>
<td>jaký</td>
<td>To je přítel, jakých je málo. That is a friend, the like of which there are few.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kam (to) (where)</td>
<td>kam</td>
<td>Chodím (tam), kam chci. I go where I want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kde (where)</td>
<td>kde</td>
<td>To je dům, kde jsem se narodil. That is the house where I was born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kudy (by which)</td>
<td>kudy</td>
<td>Hledali cestu, kudy šli. They looked for the way they came.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kdy (when)</td>
<td>kdy</td>
<td>To je rok, kdy jsem se narodil. That’s the year when I was born.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But note that the basic conjunction for ‘when’ in an adverbial clause is když. Here there is no noun antecedent – unlike the relative clause example just above, where the relative kdy referred to rok.

Když odešel, začalo pršet. When he left, it started to rain.

5.9 Sám and Samý

Sám ‘himself’, sama ‘herself’, samo ‘itself’, also ‘alone’, has short adjective forms in the nominative and accusative, but long adjective forms in other cases. Long forms also occur sometimes in the accusative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Masculine (ma.)</th>
<th>Feminine (f.)</th>
<th>Neuters (n.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nom.</td>
<td>sám</td>
<td>sama</td>
<td>samo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acc.</td>
<td>sama,</td>
<td>samu,</td>
<td>samo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>samého</td>
<td>samou</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pl.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nom.</td>
<td>sami</td>
<td>samy</td>
<td>sama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acc.</td>
<td>samy,</td>
<td>samé</td>
<td>sama, samá</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other forms have standard long adjectival endings, e.g. samému, samém etc.

Sám emphasises the subject:

**Sám to víš nejlíp.** You know it best yourself.

**Napsal to sám král.** The king himself wrote it.

**Svědčí o tom sám fakt, že . . .** This is witnessed to by the fact that . . .

**Byla poctivost sama.** She was honesty itself.

**Sama operace byla jednoduchá.** The operation itself was simple.

It can also express independence, self-reliance:

**Udělal jsem to sám, sama.** I did it (by) myself.

**Udělal to sám.** He did it (by) himself.

**Udělala to sama.** She did it (by) herself.

**Opravíme si to sami.** We will correct it (by) ourselves.

**Dobré zboží se chválí samo.** Fine goods praise themselves.

(saying)

Or it expresses isolation:

**Cestoval sám.** He travelled alone.

**Zůstal tam sám.** He remained/was left there (by) himself, alone.

**Chodí všude sama.** She goes everywhere (by) herself, alone.

**Zůstali tam sami.** They were left alone there.

**Konečně byli sami.** At last they were alone.

In the isolation sense it is often replaced by the more emphatic samotný:

**Nechali ho tam sama/samotného.** They left him there alone/by himself.

**Nechali ji tam samu/samotnou.** They left her there alone/by herself.

**Nechali děti doma samy/samotné.** They left the children alone at home.
Colloquially also in the emphatic sense, and corresponding to English ‘the very’:

**Mě samého/samotného to zajímá.** That interests me myself.

Combined with the strong forms of the reflexive pronoun sebe it emphasises the subject of the verb. Notice how a preposition comes between the two words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Czech expression</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Udělal to sám od sebe.</td>
<td>He did it by himself, off his own bat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoléhej sám na sebe.</td>
<td>Rely upon yourself, lit. ‘yourself upon yourself’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sám sebe nenávidí.</td>
<td>He hates himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sama sebe nenávidí.</td>
<td>She hates herself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sám o sobě není zlý.</td>
<td>He himself, in himself, is not bad/nasty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sama o sobě není zlá.</td>
<td>She herself is not bad/nasty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomáhají sami sobě.</td>
<td>They help themselves/each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žili sami pro sebe.</td>
<td>They lived for themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To se rozumí samo sebou.</td>
<td>That is understood by itself. That goes without saying.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes it agrees in case with sebe, emphasising it (rather than the subject of the verb), particularly in the sense of ‘the self, one’s own self’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Czech expression</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milovatí budeš bližního svého jako sebe samého.</td>
<td>You will love your neighbour (lit. ‘near one’) as yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musíte zapomenout na sebe samého.</td>
<td>You have to forget your own self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatřila sebe samu/samou.</td>
<td>She saw herself, her own self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strašně ráda poslouchá sebe samu.</td>
<td>She just loves listening to herself, her own voice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For **ten samý** in the sense of ‘the same’ see the next section.

The long adjective form **samý** is also used in the sense of ‘nothing but’:
Kolem nich byla samá voda. Around them there was nothing but water.

Byli to samí studenti. They were all students, nothing else but students.

Jsou to samé lži. Those are nothing but lies.

Both the long or short form, or alternatively samotný, may be used in the sense of English ‘the very’ to emphasise a limit, boundary or quantity:

Sám/Samý/Samotný vrchol hory byl ještě daleko. The very summit of the mountain was still far off.

Na samém/samotném konci cesty. At the very end of the road.

Od samého/samotného počátku. From the very beginning.

Pro samé stromy nevidí les. S/he can’t see the wood for the (very) trees (themselves).

Pro samou práci se nestačí najíst. With all the work s/he doesn’t have time to eat.

5.10 The same

There is more than one way of saying ‘the same’ in Czech. You can use the adjective-type word stejný:

Stále dělá stejné chyby. He keeps making the same mistakes.

Je to stejný člověk. It’s the same person.

To je stejná píseň. That is the same song.

Many people also use the phrase ten samý for ‘the same’, ‘one and the same’, ‘the identical’, but this usage is often disapproved of in writing:

To je (jedna a) ta samá píseň. That’s (one and) the same song.

For a neuter pronoun meaning ‘the same thing’ you can use totéž, usually in the nominative/accusative only in ordinary usage.

Karel řekl totéž/to samé. Karel said the same (thing).
5.10.1 The same – týž/tentýž

Another adjective form týž/tentýž ‘(one and) the same’ is not usual in everyday speech, except for neuter sg. totéž in the noun-like sense of ‘the same thing’. This rather formal word has these case forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg.</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom.</td>
<td>1 nom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. týž/tentýž</td>
<td>ma. tíž/titíž</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. táž/tatáž</td>
<td>(rest = acc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. totéž</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td>4 acc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= nom.</td>
<td>= nom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m./f. tytéž</td>
<td>m./f. tytéž</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. táž/tatáž</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>2 gen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>téhož</td>
<td>též</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>též</td>
<td>týchž</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>3 dat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>témuž</td>
<td>též</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>též</td>
<td>týmž</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>6 loc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(o) témž(e)/</td>
<td>(o) téže</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tomtéž</td>
<td>(o) týchž</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>7 ins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>týmž/tímtéž</td>
<td>touž/toutéž</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>týmiž/dual týmaž</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that although the word též looks as if it might belong in this table, in fact it is a formal variant for také ‘also, likewise’.

5.11 Jiný etc. – other, another

The Czech equivalents for the English words ‘other, another’ need a bit of careful attention, even at the simplest level.

The adjectival word jiný means ‘another, other, different’. Odlišný means more specifically ‘distinct, different’ and is a full adjective with comparative and superlative forms, unlike jiný.

- Byli tam psi, kočky a jiná zvířata. There were dogs, cats and other animals there.
- To je jiná (odlišná) barva. That is another (a different) colour.
- To je jiná věc. That’s another thing/matter.
- Přešli na jiné téma. They moved on to another topic/theme.
The ‘other’ of two is **druhý**, which also means ‘the second, next’:

**Na druhé straně řeky je zámek.** There is a castle on the other side of the river.

**Přišel druhý den.** He came the next day.

‘Another’ or ‘other’ in the sense of ‘additional’ is **další**, lit. ‘further’:

**Dáme si další pivo, ne?** We’ll have another beer, shall we? (lit. ‘. . . no?’)

**Potom přišel další člověk.** Then another person arrived.

**Potom tam přišli další lidé.** Then some other people arrived there.

But ‘the other(s)’ in the sense of ‘the remaining, the rest’ is the soft adjectival word **ostatní**:

**Potom tam přišli ostatní (studenti).** Then the rest (of the students) came. Then the others (the other students) came.

---

**5.12 Všichni, všechno – all**

The word for ‘all’ is particularly frequent in the plural. Masculine animate forms are nominative **všichni**, accusative **všechny**, also used for ‘everyone’:

**Všichni ho znali.** Everyone knew him. They all knew him.

**Byli tam všichni kluci.** All the boys were there.

**Pozvali všechny kluky.** They invited all the boys.

For other genders you use **všechny** (written neuter form **všechna**) for both cases:

**Byly tam všechny ženy.** All the women were there.

**Pozvali všechny ženy.** They invited all the women.

The commonest singular form is neuter **všechno** ‘all, everything’.

Other forms of neuter **všechno** are shorter. In the singular they match **našeho, našemu** etc. ‘our’:

**Mluvila o všem.** She spoke about everything.

**Všemu rozuměla.** She understood everything.
In the plural the other case forms match těch, těm, těmi ‘those’:

**Mluvila se všemi o všech problémch.**
She spoke with everyone about all the problems.

Here is the complete table of singular and plural forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg.</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 nom. m. všechn, n. všeho</td>
<td>f. všehna, ma. všichni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 acc. (ma. = gen.) všeho</td>
<td>všeho, m./f. všehny, n. všehna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen. vši</td>
<td>vši</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat. vši</td>
<td>všem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc. (o) vši</td>
<td>(o) vši</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins. vši</td>
<td>všemi, */dual všena</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formal alternatives are neuter vše = všehno and rarer feminine vši = všehnu.

Other variants have a colloquial colouring, or are more or less obsolete (†). The commonest is neuter sg. všecko:

všecek and †všecken = všechn

všek-o -a, -u, -y and †všekno etc. = všehn-o -a, -u, -y

všicci and †všickni = všichni

also plural †všechnéch and †všechněch, †všechném(i) and †všechkném(i) = všech, všem(i)

A complete group of two is described as oba m., obě f./n. ‘both’, which declines just like the numeral dva m., dvě f./n. ‘two’ (see 6.1.6).

**Byli tam oba/oba dva.**
They were both there. Both of them were there. The two of them were there.

**S oběma/oběma dvěma byly potíže.**
There were difficulties with both (of them), with the two of them.

Note also the adjectival word veškerý ‘the entire’, which in formal usage sometimes has short forms, including an odd masculine nom.
sg. veškeren, e.g. veškeren svět ‘the entire world’, alongside veškera, veškero etc.

**Zaplatil veškeré výdaje.** He paid all the expenses, the entire expenses.

**Věnují veškéry volný čas studiu.** They devote all their spare time, their entire spare time to study.

### 5.12.1 Všechn, celý – all, the whole

Singular forms of masculine všechn, feminine všechna (acc. všechnu) are relatively rare, but are used with nouns for uncountable ‘stuff’:

**Snědl všechn salát, všechnu zeleninu.** He ate up all the salad/vegetable.

For nouns seen as unitary countable items, use celý for ‘all, (the) whole’:

**Zůstal tam celý den.** He stayed there all day, the whole day.

**Vypili celou láhev.** They drank the whole bottle, all of the bottle.

**Celý národ se radoval.** The whole nation rejoiced. All the nation rejoiced.

**Celé hodiny nemluvila.** She didn’t speak for whole hours on end.

**Byl celý bledý.** (Also possible is: Byl všecek bledý.) He was all pale, pale all over.

### 5.13 Každý – each, every

The word každý ‘each, every, everybody’ is another quantifier closely related in meaning to všichni ‘all’, but it is singular in meaning and puts the focus on a single example taken out of a whole group. It can be both ‘noun-like’ and ‘adjective-like’ in usage:

**Každý to říká.** Everyone says it.

Compare:

**Všichni to říkají.** They all say it.

**Každý den je jiný.** Every day is different.
5.14  **Jediný – only, sole**

The adjectival word *jediný* ‘sole, only, one and only, a single’ is used to indicate that the things or persons referred to form a complete set in the given context. It emphasises the lack of others.

- **Je to můj jediný bratr.** He is my only brother.
- **Byly to jediné básně tohoto autora.** These were the only poems of this author.
- **Bylo tam jen jediné okno.** There was only a single (one single) window.
- **Neměli ani jediný dobrý nápad.** They didn’t have a single good idea.

5.15  **Žádný – no, not any**

The opposite of ‘all’ is the adjectival word *žádný* ‘no, not any, none’. It is accompanied by a negative verb, and sometimes also stands for *nikdo* ‘nobody’, where it may be gender-specific:

- **Nemáme žádný čas.** We have no time. We don’t have any time.
- **Neměli žádné jídlo.** They had no food. They didn’t have any food.
- **To ti žádný neuvěří.** Nobody will believe you (in) this.
- **To ti žádná neřekne.** No woman will tell you this.

The less common alternative *níjaký* ‘no, none . . . of any kind’ is more emphatic:

- **To nemá na to níjaký (vůbec žádný) vliv.** That doesn’t have any influence on it (at all).
Chapter 6

Numerals and quantifiers – číslovky

A numeral (číslovka) is basically a word which expresses a number (číslo), e.g. cardinal numerals jeden ‘one’, dva ‘two’, tři ‘three’, but also ordinal numerals první ‘first’, druhý ‘second’, třetí ‘third’ etc.

Numerals are best considered as a separate class of word in Czech, for various reasons, and the way they behave in connection with nouns and verbs requires some detailed explanation.

A numeral is a precise kind of quantifier. Certain ‘indefinite quantifiers’ (neurčité číslovky) resemble numerals closely in the way they operate, words like několik ‘several’, mnoho ‘many’, málo ‘few’. These are also discussed in this chapter.

6.1 Cardinal numerals – základní číslovky

We look first at the cardinal numerals, corresponding to English ‘one, two, three, four, five . . . ’ In English these precede their nouns just as if they were adjectives: ‘one book, three books’ etc.

In Czech these numerals hesitate between the role of nouns and the role of adjectives.

Numerals one to four function as if they were adjectives, but Czech numerals from ‘five’ upwards behave like nouns followed by the genitive case, unless the whole phrase is in a case other than the nominative or accusative. Examples below.

6.1.1 One

The numeral jeden, jedna, jedno ‘one’ declines like the demonstrative ten, ta, to (see 5.4.1–5.4.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Czech</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jeden dolar</td>
<td>one dollar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jedna koruna (libra)</td>
<td>one crown (pound)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jedno pivo (euro)</td>
<td>one beer (euro)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mám jednoho bratra. I have one brother.
Mám jednu sestru. I only have one sister.
Řekl to jednomu člověku. He said it to one person.
Řekl to jedné kamarádce. He said it to one (female) friend.

When citing the number one on its own, the feminine form jedna is normally used, e.g. číslo jedna the ‘number one’.

### 6.1.2 Two to four

Nominative/accusative dva ‘two’ becomes dvě with feminine and neuter nouns. Nominative/accusative tři ‘three’ and čtyři ‘four’ do not alter. With numbers 2–4 plural forms of nominative/accusative nouns are used, as in English:

- dvě, tři, čtyři koruny two, three, four crowns
- dvě, tři, čtyři libry, eura two, three, four pounds, euros
- but dva ... dolary two etc. dollars (masculine)

### 6.1.3 Five upwards

Unlike the lower numbers, five and above are treated as nouns followed by the genitive case, if the number is in a context requiring the nominative or accusative case:

- Mám pět, šest, sedm ... korun. I have five, six, seven ... ['of'] crowns.
- osm, devět, deset ... liber, eura Eight, nine, ten ... ['of'] pounds, euros
- pět ... dolarů five ... ['of'] dollars

### 6.1.4 Numbers 1–20

For the ‘-teens’ basically just add -náct to numbers one to nine, but watch out for 14, 15 and 19.
### Cardinal numerals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cardinal number</th>
<th>Nominative/Accusative</th>
<th>Genitive Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jeden/jedna/jedno</td>
<td>jedenáct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. dva, f.n. dvě</td>
<td>dvanáct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tři</td>
<td>třináct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čtyři</td>
<td>čtrnáct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pět</td>
<td>patnáct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šest</td>
<td>šestnáct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sedm</td>
<td>sedmnáct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>osm</td>
<td>osmnáct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>devět</td>
<td>devatenáct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deset</td>
<td>dvacet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we have noted, nominative/accusative forms pět = five upwards are followed by the genitive plural. So you say:

**Mám čtyři koruny.** I have four crowns.

**but:**

**Mám pět korun.** I have five crowns.

Nominative/accusative phrases with five upwards are also treated as neuter singular for verb agreement:

**Přišlo deset kamarádů.** Ten friends came.
**but:** **Přišli tři kamarádi.** Three friends came.

**Přijde osm lidí.** Eight people will come.
**but:** **Přijdou čtyři lidé.** Four people will come.

**Bylo nás pět.** There were five of us.
**Je nás pět.** There are five of us.
**but:** **Jsme tři.** We are three.

If the phrase is qualified, e.g. by každý ‘every’, the qualifier agrees in case with the noun, but precedes the numeral, e.g.

**každé dva měsíce** every two months

**but:**

**každých šest měsíců** every six months
6.1.5 Higher cardinal numerals

The numerals for twenty up to a hundred are:

- 20 dvacet
- 30 třicet
- 40 čtyřicet
- 50 padesát
- 60 šedesát
- 70 sedmdesát
- 80 osmdesát
- 90 devadesát
- 100 sto

The hundreds are:

- 200 dvě stě
- 300 tři sta
- 400 čtyři sta
- 500 pět set
- 600 šest set
- 700 sedm set
- 800 osm set
- 900 devět set

1,000 is tisíc, 2,000/3,000/4,000 dva/tři/čtyři tisíce – but 5,000/6,000 pět/šest tisíc (NB) and so on.

‘A million’ is simply milion, then dva miliony . . . pět milionů . . .

Miliarda = ‘a thousand million’, dvě miliardy . . . pět miliard . . .

Intermediate numbers are easy enough:

- sedm set padesát tři 753
- devět set devadesát devět 999

The higher intermediate cardinal numerals, 21–29 etc. are simply combinations of numbers (for ‘one’ and ‘two’ always use jedna and dva):

- dvacet jedna 21
- dvacet dva 22 . . . dvacet devět 29

Sometimes reversed forms are used: jed(e)nadvacet ‘one and twenty’, dvaadvacet ‘two and twenty’ etc.

6.1.6 Case forms of numbers

In ‘non-basic’ number phrases – i.e. those which are not nominative-subject or accusative-object (or accusative after a preposition) – a numeral goes into the same case as the noun counted.

Jeden, jedna, jedno ‘one’ declines like the demonstrative ten, ta, to (see 5.4–5.4.1 and 6.1.1), e.g. po jednom roce ‘after one year’.

Dva, dvě ‘two’, tři ‘three’ and čtyři ‘four’ have special case forms as shown in the table below.

Pět ‘five’ has only one ‘non-basic’ form pěti, and other numbers 5–99 repeat this pattern:

Cardinal numerals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 nom.</th>
<th>dva m., dvě f., n.</th>
<th>tři</th>
<th>čtyři</th>
<th>pět</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 acc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen.</td>
<td>dvou</td>
<td>tři</td>
<td>čtyři</td>
<td>pěti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dat.</td>
<td>dvěma</td>
<td>třem</td>
<td>čtyřem</td>
<td>pěti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 loc.</td>
<td>dvou</td>
<td>třech</td>
<td>čtyřech</td>
<td>pěti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ins.</td>
<td>dvěma</td>
<td>třemi</td>
<td>čtyřmi</td>
<td>pěti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:

děti do dvou/tří/čtyř/pěti let

po dvou/třech/čtyřech/pěti letech

před dvěma/třemi/čtyřmi/pěti lety

Oba, obě ‘both’ also has forms like dva, dvě: gen./loc. obou and dat./ins. oběma, e.g. v obou zemích ‘in both countries’, s oběma přáteli ‘with both friends’.

Sto ‘100’ is invariable in the singular with a noun, but has its usual neuter endings in the plural. Tisíc ‘1,000’ usually has one ‘non-basic’ form tisíci, while milion and higher numerals behave like nouns:

před sto lety ‘a hundred years ago’, před dvěma sty lety ‘two hundred years ago’, před několika tisíci lety ‘several thousand years ago’ (but: před třemi miliony let ‘three million years ago’)

Jedna in compounds remains fixed: před dvacet jedna lety (or reversed forms may be used: před jednadvaceti lety).

### 6.1.7 Age and years

When speaking or writing about numbers of years, instead of roků ‘of years’ people regularly say and write let (lit. ‘of summers’). If asked Kolik let? ‘How many years?’ you say:

čtyři roky

but:

dvacet let

four years

twenty years (Less often: dvacet roků)
Numerals and quantifiers

Kolik je ti/vám let? How old are you? lit. ‘How many is to you of years?’

Je mi osmnáct (let). I am eighteen (years old).
Je mi dvacet jedna (let). I am twenty-one.

To state ‘in’ a calendar year you say either roku or v roce followed by the number as in English:

Narodila se roku 1986 (devatenáct set osmdesát šest). She was born in 1986.

Autor této učebnice se narodil roku (v roce) 1950 (devatenáct set padesát). The author of this textbook was born in 1950.

6.2 Ordinal numerals – řadové číslovky

Ordinal numerals have regular adjectival forms in Czech and therefore agree with the nouns they qualify in gender and number. Ordinal numerals up to ‘twelfth’ are clearly derived from the cardinals, except for first and second:


Note that první ‘first’ and třetí ‘third’ are soft adjectives. Druhý also means ‘other, another, next’, see 5.11.

6.2.1 Higher ordinals

The -teenths all end in -náctý, parallel to the ordinary numbers:

‘thirteenth’ třináctý, ‘fourteenth’ čtrnáctý, ‘fifteenth’ patnáctý,
‘sixteenth’ šestnáctý, ‘seventeenth’ sedmnáctý, ‘eighteenth’ osmnáctý, ‘nineteenth’ devatenáctý


Finally: ‘thousandth’ tisící, ‘two-thousandth’ dvoutisící, ‘three-thousandth’ třítisící and so on (like the hundredths), plus miliontý, miliardtý, and biliontý!!

For ‘twenty-first’ you say dvacátý první ‘twentieth first’, and so on, but for the initial parts over a hundred of higher complex ordinals you use ordinary numbers: ‘1,964th’ tisíc devět set šedesátý čtvrtý, ‘5,115th’ pět tisíc sto patnáctý.

You can also reverse the number order for twenty-first to ninety-ninth: jednadvacátý ‘twenty-first’ (‘one and twentieth’), rok osmašedesátý ‘year sixty-eighth’ (= 1968).

To refer to decades as ‘the sixties’ etc., ordinals are used with plural léta, e.g. šedesátá léta – v šedesátých letech ‘the sixties – in the sixties’.

6.3 X times – x-krát

To say ‘x times’ you can simply add -krát to the number:

jedenkrát (or jednou) ‘once’, dvakrát ‘twice’, tříkrát ‘three times’ . . . desetkrát ‘ten times’ . . . stokrát ‘a hundred times’

Similarly: několikrát ‘several times’, mnohokrát/mockrát ‘many times’, vickrát ‘more times’, also tentokrát ‘this time’, tenkrát ‘that time’ (or tehdy ‘then, at that time’).

When ordering things in a café or restaurant you regularly say ‘once’, ‘twice’, ‘three times’ etc. to stipulate the number of items. The item stays in the singular.

dvakrát pivo two beers, lit. ‘twice beer’
tříkrát řízek three schnitzels
pětkrát jahodovou zmrzlinu five strawberry ice-creams

6.3.1 For the x-th time

‘For the first time’ is poprvé. The rest of this series is formed with po- plus the neuter form of the ordinal numeral: podruhé/po druhé, potřetí/ po třetí, po čtvrté etc.

When listing points in an argument, ‘first(ly)’, ‘secondly’, ‘thirdly’ . . . you say za prvé, za druhé, za třetí . . .
6.4 Compound adjectives with numbers

Compound adjectives derived from a cardinal numeral plus a noun regularly use the genitive form of the numeral:

dvacetiletý muž ‘a 20-year-old man’, dvoudenní výlet ‘a two-day excursion’, osmdesátikilometrová rychlost ‘80-kilometre speed’ (but: stokilometrová rychlost ‘100-kilometre speed’)

6.5 Talking about numbered items

For items which are numbered, like buses or hotel rooms, Czech uses a special series of nouns ending in -ka. They also mean ‘a number three’ etc., referring to a numeral as a written sign (číslice).

1 jednička, 2 dvojka, 3 trojka, 4 čtyřka, 5 pětka, 6 šestka, 7 sedmička, 8 osmička, 9 devítka, 10 desítka 11 jedenáctka, 12 dvanáctka, . . . 20 dvacítka, 21 jednadvacítka, 22 dvadvacítka (reversed forms) 30 třicítka, 40 čtyřicítka 50 padesátka . . . 100 stovka, 120 sto dvacítka, 134 sto třicetčtyřka, . . .

Jezdím osmičkou nebo třiaďvacítkou. I go by the number 8 or 23.

Jezdím dvacítkou. I go by the number 20 (e.g. Prague tram).

Nasedla do stoosmnáctky. She got on a 118 bus.

Bydlí na/ve čtyřce. S/he’s living in room/flat 4.

Zaplatil stovkou. He paid with a hundred-crown note.

Jedenáctka is also a football ‘eleven’, desítka and dvanáctka are respectively 10 and 12-degree beer. Using the local system of ‘original gravity’, 12 degrees equals about 5 per cent alcohol.

Dvojka is also ‘second gear’ or ‘a mark of two’. Jednička is the best Czech school známka ‘mark’, pětka ‘five’, the worst.

6.6 Czech money

‘Coin’ is mince, ‘money’ is peníze m. pl. (gen. peněz), the abbreviation Kč = koruna česká ‘Czech crown’. The smaller unit haléř, colloq. halíř ‘heller’ (100 = koruna) is on its way out:
padesát haléřů 50 hellers

dvoukoruna ‘a two-crown coin’, pětikoruna ‘a five-crown coin’,
desetikoruna ‘a ten-crown coin’, dvacetikoruna, colloq. dvacka
‘a twenty-crown coin’, padesátikoruna ‘fifty-crown coin/note’.

‘Banknote’ is bankovka (banka ‘bank’):

stokoruna, colloq. stovka ‘a hundred-crown note’, dvoustovka
‘two-hundred-crown note’, pětistovka ‘five-hundred-crown note’,
tisícovka ‘thousand-crown note’

Mohl byste mi rozměnit pětistovku? Could you change me a
500-crown note?

6.7 Weights and measures

Phrases stating weight or other kinds of measurement are typically
followed by ‘of’ in English, and in Czech by the genitive case.

For describing weight the commonest measure words are kilo (kielogram, 2.2 lbs) and deko/deka (dekagram, 10 grams), as well as gram ‘gram’.

Deka is generally invariable, e.g. čtyři, pět, deset deka, however ‘one
decagram’ is regularly jedno deko.

For 2 to 4 kilos you say dvě/tři/čtyři kila, but for five upwards you
just use the basic form kilo, e.g. pět kilo, deset kilo.

Půl kila ‘half (of) a kilo’ is just over one pound. Čtvrt kila ‘a quarter
of a kilo’ is just over half a pound. Deset deka is a bit under a quarter
of a pound.

Koupil kilo/dvě kila cukru. He bought a kilo/two kilos of sugar.

Koupil pět kilo mouky. He bought five kilos of flour.

Koupil deset/dvacet deka sýra. He bought 10/20 dekagrams of
cheese.

For liquid measure you generally use litr (litre) and deci = decilitr
(a tenth of a litre). Deci is another invariable form.

Koupil litr/dva litry mléka. He bought a litre/two litres of milk.

Objednala si dvě deci vína. She ordered two decilitres (fifth of a
litre) of wine (a common measure
for one person).

Dejte mi deset litrů. Give me ten [of] litres.
6.8 Indefinite quantifiers – neurčité číslovky

Indefinite quantifiers, unlike numerals, give only a general idea of quantity. Czech grammars call them neurčité číslovky, lit. ‘indefinite numerals’.

Typical examples are mnoho ‘many’, hodně ‘a lot, lots of’ and málo ‘little, few’.

Their basic nominative/accusative forms are followed by the genitive case, just like cardinal numbers five and above.

- Má mnoho (hodně) studentů. S/he has many (a lot of) students.
- Má málo studentů. S/he has few students.
- Mám mnoho/hodně čas. I have much/a lot of time.
- Mám příliš mnoho čas. I have too much time.
- Mám málo čas. I have little time.

As with numbers five upwards, these phrases count as neuter. Another basic quantity term like this is the interrogative kolik? ‘how many?’:

- Kolik tam bylo lidí? How many (‘of’) people were there?
- Bylo tam málo lidí. There were few people there.
- Bude tam asi šest lidí. About six people will be there.

Other such words are několik ‘some, several’, tolík ‘so many’, více ‘more’, méně/míň ‘less, fewer’, trochu ‘a little, a bit’, moc ‘lots, too many’, pár ‘a couple’:

- Znám jenom několik/pár Čechů. I know only some/a couple of Czechs.
- Mirek zná více lidí než já. Mirek knows more people than me.

- Tolík lidí! So many people!

Some of these quantifiers have a unified ‘non-basic’ form, like numerals five and above. The following non-basic case forms end in -a, e.g.


The quantifier now behaves like an adjective:

- po mnoho letech ‘after many years’, po několika letech ‘after several years’
Other quantifiers are invariable with nouns in all or most cases, e.g.
pár ‘a couple of’, málo ‘few’ (except for genitive mála):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Czech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>po pár dnech</td>
<td>after a couple of days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trochu ‘a little, a bit’, and trošku ‘a little bit’, generally revert to their original status as feminine nouns trocha, troška in other cases:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mám trochu/trošku peněz.</td>
<td>I have a (little) bit of money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Přišel s trochou/troškou peněz.</td>
<td>He came with a (little) bit of money.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interrogative pronoun co ‘what’, used in an exclamatory sense, and něco ‘something’ can also behave as quantifiers, followed by the genitive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Czech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co tam bylo lidí!</td>
<td>What a number of people there were there!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ještě mám něco peněz.</td>
<td>I still have a bit of money.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.8.1 More and less

As indefinite quantifiers víc ‘more’ and nejvíc ‘most’ indicate degrees up from mnoho or hodně ‘much, a lot’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Czech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Má hodně/mnoho peněz.</td>
<td>S/he works a lot, has lots of money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Má (nej)víc peněz.</td>
<td>S/he has more, most money.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, méně/míň ‘less’ and nejméně/nejmíň ‘least’ derive from málo ‘little’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Czech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pracuje málo, má málo peněz.</td>
<td>S/he works little, has little money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Má (nej)méně/(nej)míň peněz.</td>
<td>S/he has less, least money.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.9 Telling the time

The basic measurements for periods of time up to a day are hodina ‘hour’, minuta ‘minute’ and vteřina/sekunda ‘second’.
To ask ‘What time is it?’ you say:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Czech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kolik je hodin?</td>
<td>lit. ‘How many is it of hours?’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For one to four o’clock you say:

**Je/byla/bude jedna hodina.** It is/was/will be one o’clock.

**Jsou/byly/budou dvě, tři, čtyři hodiny.** It is/was/will be two, three, four o’clock.

But from five up you say: **Je/bylo/bude [X hodin].**

**Je pět, šest, sedm, osm (hodin).** It is five, six, seven, eight o’clock.

**Bylo devět, deset, jedenáct, dvanáct (hodin).** It was nine, ten, eleven, twelve.

**Je půlnoc.** It’s midnight.

**Je poledne.** It’s midday.

Learn also:

ráno ‘in the (early) morning’, dopoledne ‘in the morning’, odpoledne ‘in the afternoon’, večer ‘in the evening’, dnes večer ‘this evening, tonight’, v noci ‘in the night’, ve dne ‘in the day(time)’

Other basic adverbs of time are:

dnes ‘today’, včera ‘yesterday’, zítra (*zejtra) ‘tomorrow’

předevečrem ‘the day before yesterday’, pozitří ‘the day after tomorrow’

### 6.9.1 At what time?

To ask ‘At what time?’ you say:

**Kdy přišel?** When did he come?

or: **V kolik (hodin) přišel?** At what time did he come?

For ‘at one o’clock’ you say:

**V jednu (hodinu).**

For ‘at two, three, four’ you say:

**Ve dvě, ve tři, ve čtyři (hodiny).**

And for ‘at five, six’ etc. you say:

**V pět, v šest, v sedm, v osm, v devět, v deset, v jedenáct, ve dvanáct (hodin).**
Note also:

V poledne. At midday.

but: O půlnoci. At midnight.

### 6.9.2 More about telling the time

Saying the quarter and half hours is a bit tricky. For ‘quarter past’ you say čtvrt na . . . and refer forward to the next hour;

- **Je (bylo) čtvrt na dvě.** It is (was) quarter past one = ‘quarter onto two’.
- **Je (bude) čtvrt na šest.** It is (will be) quarter past five = ‘quarter onto six’.
- **Je (bylo) čtvrt na jednu.** It is (was) quarter past twelve = ‘quarter onto one’.

For ‘half past twelve’ you say půl jedné ‘half of one’, also referring forward to the next hour:

- **Je (bylo, bude) půl jedné.** It is (was, will be) half past twelve = ‘half of one’.

Otherwise, for ‘half past . . .’ you say půl druhé, třetí etc., using the feminine genitive of the ordinal numeral you’ve just learnt (to agree with the absent word hodiny):

- **Bylo půl druhé.** It was half past one = ‘half of the second (hour)’.
- **Je (bude) půl třetí.** It is (will be) half past two = ‘half of the third’.

(půl čtvrté . . . půl dvanácté)

For ‘a quarter to’ you say tři čtvrté na (‘three-quarters to’):

- **Je (bylo) tři čtvrté na jednu.** It is (was) ‘three-quarters to’ one.
- **Je (bude) tři čtvrté na pět.** It is (will be) ‘three-quarters to’ five.

You can also add five-/ten-minute intervals to the above, using za +acc:

- **Je za pět minut osm.** It is five to eight = ‘in five minutes eight’.
- **Je za deset minut půl osmé.** It is twenty past seven = ‘in ten minutes half of the eighth’.
V +acc. is used for ‘at’.

**Přišli ve čtvrt na dvanáct.** They arrived at a quarter past eleven.

**Přišli v půl deváté.** They arrived at half past eight.

**Odešli ve tři čtvrté na pět.** They left at a quarter to five.

For v půl (e.g. deváté) ‘half past (eight)’ you can also say o půl (deváté). Omit v ‘at’ before za pět/deset minut:

**Za pět minut sedm zastavil před hotelom.**
(At) five minutes to seven he stopped in front of the hotel.

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### 6.9.3 The 24-hour clock

You may find it easier to say the time with numbers alone. This is standard with the 24-hour clock anyway.

- **Je sedm hodin a patnáct minut.** It is 7 o’clock and 15 minutes.
- **Je třináct deset.** It is 13.10.
- **Je pět hodin a deset sekund/vteřin.** It is 5 o’clock and ten seconds.
- **Vlak odjíždí (v) osm pět.** The train leaves (at) 8.05.
- **Chytil rychlík (v) sedmnáct třináct.** He caught the 17.13 express.

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### 6.10 Days of the week, months and date

The days of the week, some named by number, are:

- **pondělí, úterý, středa, čtvrtek, pátek, sobota, neděle**
  Monday (‘day after Sunday’), Tuesday, Wednesday (‘middle day’), Thursday (‘4th day’), Friday (‘5th day’), Saturday, Sunday (‘not doing day’)

- **v pondělí, v úterý, ve středu, ve čtvrtek, v pátek, v sobotu, v neděli ‘on Monday’ etc.**

- **do/od pondělí, od úterý, od středy, od čtvrtek, od pátku, od soboty, od neděle ‘till/from Monday’ etc.**
The names of the months are completely different from ours:

- **leden, únor, březen** January, February, March
- **v lednu, v únoru, v březnu** in...
- **duben, květen, červen** April, May, June
- **v dubnu, v květnu, v červnu** in...
- **červenec, srpen, září** July, August, September
- **v červenci, v srpnu, v září** in...
- **říjen, listopad, prosinec** October, November, December
- **v říjnu, v listopadu, v prosinci** in...

To say ‘from’ and ‘until, to’ use **od** and **do** + gen.:

- **od ledna do dubna** from January till April
- **od března do prosince** from March to December
- **od září do listopadu** from September till November

The date is always in the genitive, which mostly ends in -a, but note: **červenec** -nce, **prosinec** -nce, **září** -í and **listopad** -u. The standard question about the date also uses the genitive, with **kolikátý** ‘the how-manyeth’ asking the question:

- **Kolikátého je dnes?** What’s today’s date?
  - or: **Co je dnes?** What is today?
  - **Je třicátého ledna.** It’s 30th January.
  - **Přijeli prvního května.** They arrived on 1st May.

**Květen** is sometimes **máj**, as a festival, or in poetry.

### 6.11 Arithmetic

Simple arithmetical relations are expressed like this:

- **Tři plus deset je třináct.** Three plus ten is (equals) thirteen.
- **Dvanáct minus sedm je pět.** Twelve minus seven is five.
- **Sedm krát čtyři je dvacet osm.** Seven times four is twenty-eight.
- **Osmnáct děleno třemi je šest.** Eighteen divided by three is six.


6.11.1 Fractions – zlomky

A basic fraction (zlomek) takes the form of a noun: polovina ‘half’, třetina ‘a third’, čtvrtina ‘a quarter’, dvě třetiny ‘two-thirds’, tři čtvrtiny ‘three-quarters’. Others in numerical order (all with -ina) are pětina, šestina, sedmina, osmina, devítina, desetina/desítina . . . setina (100th) . . . tisícina (1,000th).

Shorter terms půl ‘half’ and čtvrt ‘quarter’ are used for simple measures: půl roku ‘half a year’, čtvrt litru ‘a quarter of a litre’. Čtvrt declines like type píseň, e.g. tři čtvrtě kilometru ‘three-quarters of a kilometre’ (nom./acc. tři čtvrtí also).

Půl, čtvrt and tři čtvrté behave like invariable quantifiers (see 6.8):

před čtvrt hodinou a quarter of an hour ago
před tří čtvrté hodinou three quarters of an hour ago
před půl rokem half a year ago, six months ago

Psa máme jen půl roku. We have had the dog for only half (‘of’) a year.

In singular nominative/accusative phrases with further qualification (e.g. každý ‘each’, necelý ‘not a whole’, i.e. less than) there may be no genitive after půl or čtvrt. The qualifier must agree with the noun:

Psa máme necelý půl rok/necelého půl roku.
We have had the dog for less than half a year.

Vlak jezdí každou půl hodinu/každé půl hodiny.
The train goes every half hour.

With plural tři čtvrté:

Trvalo to necelé tři čtvrté roku. It lasted for less than three quarters of a year.

Noun forms půlhodina, půlrok, čtvrhodina, čtvrtrok also occur.

For divisions of a larger whole viewed as items, e.g. half a loaf of bread, the noun terms půlka ‘a half’, čtvrtka ‘a quarter’, can be used, e.g.

půlka chleba/kuřete half a loaf of bread, half a chicken
druhá půlka roku the second half of the year

Percentages use the noun procento: jedno procento ‘1 per cent’, dvě procenta ‘2 per cent’, pět procent ‘5 per cent’, sto procent ‘100 per cent’.

Decimals are read as follow, using the term celá for ‘whole number’. (You don’t say ‘point’ – tečka is the word for ‘period, full stop’ – nor
do you say čárka ‘comma’, which is how the point is written). Adding
the word for ‘tenths’ etc. is optional:

\[
\begin{align*}
1.5 &= \text{jedna celá pět (desetin)} & \text{one whole five (tenths)} \\
3.1 &= \text{tři celé jedna (desetina)} & \text{three wholes one (tenth)} \\
9.2 &= \text{devět celých dvě (desetiny)} & \text{nine wholes two (tenths)} \\
0.05 &= \text{nula/žádná celá pět setin} & \text{zero whole five hundredths} \\
\text{or: nula celá nula pět} & \text{zero whole zero five}
\end{align*}
\]

6.12 Collective or set numerals – souborové číslovky

Czech has a special series denoting ‘x-sets/pairs-of’, called collective or
set numerals, souborové číslovky. Only the lowest ones are used with
any frequency.

They are most typically used with plural nouns which designate single
items, such as kalhoty ‘trousers’, noviny ‘newspaper’, nůžky ‘scissors’,
dveře ‘door(s)’, brýle ‘glasses, spectacles’:

‘one’ jedny, ‘two’ dvoje, ‘three’ troje, ‘four’ čtvery, ‘five’ patery,
‘six’ šestery, ‘seven’ sedmery, ‘eight’ osmery, ‘nine’ devatery, ‘ten’
desatery . . . similarly, kolikery? ‘how many?’ několikery ‘several’

Kupuju dvoje noviny. I buy two newspapers.
Mám dvoje brýle. I have two pairs of spectacles.
Mám jen jedny kalhoty. I have only one pair of
trousers.
Koupil troje startky. He bought three packets of
Start cigarettes.

Singular forms may occur with uncountable nouns, or nouns of the
neuter -í type, e.g.

dvoje řízení ‘dual control’, dvoje mínění ‘two opinions’, troje
teplé prádlo ‘three sets of warm underwear’

Jedny has other plural case forms parallel to ty ‘those’ to accompany
such nouns:

jedněch, jedněm, jedněch, jedněmi

Chodil celý rok v jedněch botách. He went about all year in one
pair of shoes.

Jední ma. also means ‘some’, in contrast to ‘others’:

Jedni souhlasili, jiní ne. Some agreed, others didn’t.
Occasionally a related neuter sg. form functions as a noun, e.g. Čtvero ročních období ‘The Four Seasons’.

6.13 **Generic numerals – druhové číslovky**

So-called generic numerals, *druhové číslovky*, are formed from two upwards, meaning ‘x kinds of’. These are usually regular adjectival forms parallel to the set numerals detailed in the previous section: *dvojí, trojí, čtverý* etc.

These adjectival forms also provide the non-basic case forms for the set numerals, e.g. *ve čtverých ponožkách* ‘in four pairs of socks’.

However, in the nominative/accusative we may distinguish:

- **kolikery šaty? – několikery šaty** how many dresses? – several dresses

  \[ \text{and} \]

- **kolikeré šaty? – několikeré šaty** how many kinds of dresses? – several kinds of dresses

But nominative/accusative generic forms are sometimes used as set numerals, e.g. *několikeré volání o pomoc* ‘several calls for help’, *tisíceré díky* ‘a thousand thanks’.
Verbs are words which notionally carry out *actions* (‘run’, ‘walk’, ‘make’, ‘write’) or represent *states* (‘sit’, ‘lie’).

### 7.1 Verb forms and categories

*Finite* forms of verbs act as central verbs of sentences or clauses. They occur in different *tenses*, representing time as *present*: ‘John runs, is running’, *past*: ‘John ran, has run’, or *future*: ‘John will run’.

Ordinary *active* verbs have *subjects*, i.e. agents or ‘doers’, those who carry out the action or state (‘John writes’). The *direct object*, if present, is the recipient of the action (‘John wrote a *letter*’). The *indirect object* indicates a person (less often a thing) also affected by the action (‘John wrote *Anne* a *letter*’). Verbs used with objects are called *transitive*, those without are *intransitive*.

Finite verbs may also distinguish the *person* of their subject. Czech verbs do this much more obviously than English verbs do, but compare the English *first person* form ‘I am’ from *second person* ‘you are’ (obsolete ‘thou art’) and *third person* ‘he, she, it is’.

*Auxiliary* verbs help to form the tenses of other verbs, e.g. ‘John *is* running’, ‘John *has* run’. In Czech this also happens in the past tense, and in the conditional.

The verb ‘to be’ on its own generally acts as a *copula*, connecting the subject with a noun or adjective *complement*, stating a category to which the subject belongs or a quality which it has, e.g. ‘John is a teacher’, ‘John is nice’.

Other, *non-finite* forms of verbs are also regularly formed and used in various other ways. These include *infinitives* (‘to write’, ‘to inflate’), *verbal nouns* (‘the writing of books’, ‘the inflating of balloons’) and *participles* (adjective-like forms of verbs, e.g. ‘an inflated balloon’, ‘a slowly inflating balloon’).
The verb

Modal verbs adjust the sense of other verbs in terms of necessity, desire etc. In Czech, as in English, these other verbs are typically added in the infinitive – in English this is often the infinitive without ‘to’ (‘John can write’, ‘John must write’), but sometimes also with ‘to’ (‘John wants to write’).

Negative verbs in Czech are normally prefixed with ne-, e.g. dělat ‘to do’, děláš ‘I do/make’, nedělat ‘not to do/make’, neděláš ‘I do not do/make’.

For passive verbs see 7.15, under the passive participle etc.

7.2 The infinitive – infinitiv

Verbs are conventionally cited and listed in dictionaries according to their infinitive forms, which correspond in meaning and in use to English verbs preceded by ‘to’. The infinitive of a Czech verb usually ends in -t preceded by a vowel. The most regular types are:

- at    dělat to do                      - ovat:  pracovat to work
- it    prosit to ask (request, beg)   - nout:  tisknout to press/to print
- et    trpět to suffer

A few infinitives end in -st, -zt, -ct (in older formal usage -ci) or a long vowel plus -t:

nést ‘to carry’, lézt ‘to climb/to crawl’, moct/moci ‘to be able, can’, spát ‘to sleep’, být ‘to be’, mít ‘to have’

In older formal usage the infinitive regularly ended in -ti instead of -t. You will now encounter this mainly when reading older texts only: dělati, prositi, nésti, býti and so on.

It is also useful to divide verbs into two groups, according to the number of syllables they have in the infinitive form (slabika – syllable): monosyllabic verbs (jednoslabičná slovesa) – verbs with infinitives of only one syllable, after subtracting the final syllable of older infinitive -ti, -ci and any added prefixes, e.g.

nést, lézt, spát, moct/moci, spát, but also prefixed compounds such as od|nést ‘to carry away’, po|moct ‘to help’, za|čít ‘to begin’
polysyllabic verbs (víceslabičná slovesa) – the rest, e.g.

dělat, prosit, pracovat, tisknout etc.

Regular verbs are generally polysyllabic, according to this definition, whereas verbs with forms which cannot be fully predicted from the infinitive are mostly monosyllabic.

Verbs and their infinitives are also categorised according to what is conventionally called their ‘aspect’, imperfective – describing an action in progress – or perfective – describing an action as something complete (see 7.6).

7.3 Reflexive verbs – zvratná slovesa

Czech verbs are also often ‘reflexive’. Reflexive verbs (zvratná slovesa, reflexiva) are accompanied either by the accusative form of the reflexive pronoun se ‘oneself’ or by its dative form si ‘to/for oneself’. This pronoun is the same for any person, so it corresponds to a whole range of words in English: ‘myself’, ‘yourself’, ‘ourselves’, ‘yourselves’, ‘themselves’ etc.

Many verbs are only reflexive in certain particular senses, e.g. učit se ‘to study’, literally ‘teach oneself’, alongside the plain verb učit ‘to teach’.

Certain very common verbs are permanently accompanied by se, and thus always reflexive, not always with any obvious logical reason, e.g. divat se ‘to look’, ptát se ‘to ask’ (a question), bát se ‘to fear, to be afraid’.

Some verbs with si also always occur in this form, e.g. umínit si ‘to make up one’s mind, take it into one’s head’. The reflexive pronoun indicates that the action affects the subject, its doer. Particularly common examples where si is normally present include sednout si ‘to sit down’ [‘for oneself’], lehnout si ‘to lie down’ [‘for oneself’].

Other verbs are frequently accompanied by se or si, but in a much looser way, e.g. mýt se ‘to wash, wash oneself’, and mýt si ruce ‘to wash one’s hands’, lit. ‘wash to oneself the hands’. Here, unlike in the examples above, the reflexive pronoun can be replaced by another noun or pronoun, without any change in grammar, e.g. mýt auto ‘to wash the car’, mýt někomu ruce ‘to wash someone’s hands’.

Reflexive forms of verbs are also used in certain passive constructions (see 7.15.4).

Those with the accusative pronoun se mostly require non-accusative objects, e.g. bát se něčeho/psz ‘to be afraid of something/a dog’, ptát se Jany ‘to ask [“of”] Jana’. This logical rule is only regularly broken by a couple of common verbs, e.g. učit se češtinu ‘to study Czech’, do(z)vědět se něco ‘to get to know, find out something’.

133
The present tense – přítomný čas

The one and only Czech present tense corresponds to several present tense forms in English, e.g. ‘I make, I am making’.

The personal forms of the present tense are expressed by endings attached to the root of the verb. These personal endings can usually be predicted, if the verb has a polysyllabic infinitive. (Subject pronouns are only added for emphasis or clarification.)

If the verb is perfective (which often means that a perfectivising prefix has been added) the present tense form basically acts as a future tense, e.g. udělat is the perfective equivalent of dělat, and udělám means ‘I’ll do it, I shall do it’, where dělám means ‘I am doing it, I do it’ (more about this later).

7.4.1 Být – to be

The present-tense forms of být ‘to be’ (colloquially often *bejt) are unlike those of any other verb, but of course absolutely essential. The initial j is silent in ordinary pronunciation:

| (já)       | jsem | I am          | (my) | jsme | we are        |
| (ty)       | jsi, *(j)seš | you are | (vy) | jste | you are      |
| (on, ona)  | je   | he, she is   | (oni)| jsou | they are     |

As with all tense forms of Czech verbs, the subject pronouns já, ty etc. are usually superfluous, except when giving a certain emphasis or in order to make clear distinctions.

Jsem doma. I am at home.

Já jsem doma, ale ona je v práci. I’m at home, but she is at work.

The non-standard form *seš/jseš is commonly used in everyday speech instead of jsi for ‘you are’. (But it is never used as an auxiliary form in the past tense.)

Another form jest ‘(it) is’ only occurs as an archaism, for example as an equivalent for the abbreviation tj. ‘i.e.’ = to jest/to je ‘id est, that is’, or, solemnly, tak jest! ‘it is so!’

For the negative, you add ne- (as for other verbs), but the negative of je is není. In these negative forms the j is always pronounced:
The basic verb **mít** ‘to have’ has the following personal forms in the present tense:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Present Tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>mám</strong></td>
<td>I have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>máš</strong></td>
<td>you have (familiar sg.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>má</strong></td>
<td>he, she has</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>máme</strong></td>
<td>we have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>máte</strong></td>
<td>you have (pl./polite sg.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mají</strong></td>
<td>they have</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, the subject pronouns já, ty, on etc. are only needed for greater emphasis or contrast.

- **Má kufr.** She/he has a suitcase.
- **On má kufr, ale ona nemá.** He has a suitcase, but she hasn’t.

Spoken English often uses ‘have got’ instead of ‘have’:

- **Mám zmrzlinu.** I have an ice-cream. I’ve got an ice-cream.
- **Mají tři kufry.** They have three suitcases. They’ve got three suitcases.

To make the verb negative you just add **ne-** to any of the forms:

- **Nemám kufr.** I don’t have a suitcase. I haven’t got a suitcase.
- **Nemají kufry.** They don’t have (any) suitcases.

Czech sometimes uses ‘have’ where English prefers ‘is’, e.g. **Máte tady dopis** ‘There’s a letter here for you’, lit. ‘you have here a letter.’
7.4.3 Classification of verbs – třídění sloves

Czech grammars continue to disagree about how best to classify Czech verbs into types (třída – ‘class, type’, e.g. pátá třída ‘fifth class, type 5’). The following (basically quite traditional) method matches different third-person singular present-tense endings to the most regular infinitive types:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3sg. present infinitive</th>
<th>‘he/she/it does’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type 5: -at -á</td>
<td>dělat – dělá does, makes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 4: -it, -et -í</td>
<td>prosit – prosí asks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>trpět – trpí suffers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3: -ov-at -u-je</td>
<td>kupovat – kupuje buys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2: -nout -ne</td>
<td>tisknout – tiskne presses, prints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 1: -st, -zt, -e</td>
<td>nést – nese carries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-ct/-ci</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbs with infinitives -st, -zt, -ct usually belong to Type 1, but you should learn the present-tense types of monosyllabic verbs individually. (Lists will be given later, see 7.23 and 7.24.)

7.4.4 Present tense – types 5 and 4

These types are characterised by long vowels -á- or -í- in their endings and have first person singular forms ending in -ám or -ím.

7.4.5 Type 5 – dělat

dělat to do, make
děláš you do, make
dělá he/she/it does, makes
děláme we do, make
děláte you pl. do, make
dělají they do, make
Examples: říkat ‘to say’, čekat ‘to wait’, dávat ‘to give’, divat se ‘to look’, hledat ‘to look for’, volat ‘to call’. This is a very common type with few complications.

### 7.4.6 Type 4 – prosit, trpět

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>prosít</th>
<th>prosím</th>
<th>prosíme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to ask, request</td>
<td>I ask</td>
<td>we ask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prosíš</td>
<td>you ask</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prosí</td>
<td>he/she/it asks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples: mluvit ‘to speak’, vařit ‘to cook, boil’, chodit ‘to walk, go’, cítit ‘to feel’, věřit ‘to believe’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>trpět</th>
<th>trpím</th>
<th>trpíme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to suffer</td>
<td>I suffer</td>
<td>we suffer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trpiš</td>
<td>you suffer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trpí</td>
<td>he/she/it suffers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples: běžet ‘to run’, držet ‘to hold’, slyšet ‘to hear’, sedět ‘to sit’, ležet ‘to lie’, vidět ‘to see’.

### 7.4.7 Type 4a – sázet

Subtype with infinitive -et and third person plural -ejí:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sázet</th>
<th>sázím</th>
<th>sázíme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to plant, bet</td>
<td>I plant</td>
<td>we plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sázíš</td>
<td>you plant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sází</td>
<td>he/she/it plants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third person plural -ejí will regularly be matched by imperatives -ej! -ejte! This can sometimes help establish in one’s mind whether a particular verb belongs to this subtype.

Most commonly encountered verbs of this subtype are prefixed imperfectives, e.g. odcházet ‘to go away’ (with negative imperative
The verb neodcházej! – the imperfective counterpart of odejít ‘to arrive’. Similarly, přinášet ‘to bring’, the imperfective counterpart of přinést ‘to bring’. Likewise, they are often imperfectives derived from a more basic perfective counterpart, e.g. házet ‘to throw’ from pf. hodit ‘to throw’, vracet (se) ‘to return, give back’ (reflexive: ‘come/go back’), derived from the more basic perfective infinitive vrátit (se).

Others of this subtype include umět ‘to know how’, rozumět ‘to understand’.

There are also some perfective verbs derived from adjectives in this category, e.g. zlidovět ‘to become’ lídový ‘popular’ (e.g. of a song becoming a well-known folksong).

Although many people use the third personal plural ending -í for these verbs also, this is traditionally regarded as stylistically inferior.

With certain verbs both possible third person plural forms traditionally occur, e.g. bydlet ‘to live (in a place)’, muset ‘to have to, must’, myslet ‘to think’. These three verbs also have alternative (now less frequently used) infinitives bydlit, musit and myslit.

In non-standard and widespread colloquial usage, particularly in Bohemia, the third person plural ending -ejí may be applied to all Type 4 verbs, in a form usually pronounced -ej, e.g. *prosej, *trpej, *uměj.

### Present tense – Types 3, 2 and 1

These types have present-tense endings characterised by the vowel -e- and first person singular forms ending in -u/-i.

### Type 3 – kupovat, hrát

Note how the -ov- in the infinitive becomes -u- before the present-tense endings here.

| kup|ov|at | kup|ulji, kup|ulju | kupu|j|eme, *kupujem |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------------|
| to buy | kupuješ you buy | kupuje you buy |
| kupuje he/she/it buys | kupu|j|i, *kupujou they buy |

‘to show’, milovat – miluje ‘to love’, organizovat – organizuje ‘to organise – organises’ (many loanwords belong to this category).

The alternative forms are colloquial, least markedly so in the 1st person singular.

Certain monosyllabic verbs fit into this type, where j precedes the endings, but the colloquial forms are both less noticeably so and often replace the other forms in writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>hrát to play</th>
<th>hrají, hraju</th>
<th>play</th>
<th>hrajeme, *hrajem</th>
<th>we play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hraješ you play</td>
<td>hrajete you play</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hraje he, she, it plays</td>
<td>hrají, *hrajou they play</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4.10 Type 2 – tisknout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tisknout tisknu</th>
<th>press</th>
<th>tiskneme, *tisknem</th>
<th>we press</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to press tiskneš you press</td>
<td>tisknete you press</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiskne he/she/it presses</td>
<td>tisknou they press</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


7.4.11 Type 1 – nést, chápat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nést</th>
<th>nesu</th>
<th>carry</th>
<th>neseme, *nesem</th>
<th>we carry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to carry neseš you carry</td>
<td>nese you pl. carry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nese he/she/it carries</td>
<td>nesou they carry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Only a few polysyllabic verbs with infinitive -at belong to Type 1, e.g. chápat – chápe ‘to understand, grasp’, plavat – plave ‘to swim’.
The verb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chápu I understand</td>
<td>chápeme, *chámem we understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chápeš you understand</td>
<td>chápete you pl. understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chápe he, she, it understands</td>
<td>chápou they understand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second person plural reduced ending -em is substandard again for this group, but common in ordinary speech.

The first-person singular ending -i and third-person plural ending -í also occur as formal variants in certain Type 1 verbs, following a soft consonant which is produced by a consonant change between the infinitive and present tense:

- psát ‘to write’ – píši/píšu ‘I write’, píše, píše; píšeme, píšete, píší/píšou ‘they write’
- ukázat pf. ‘to show’ – ukáží/ukážu ‘I’ll show’, ukážeš, ukáže, ukážeme, ukážete, ukáží/ukážou ‘they’ll show’

7.5 The past tense – minulý čas

Czech has one basic and rather straightforward way of forming the past tense of a verb. This past tense may correspond to any of the past-tense forms of English, e.g. ‘he did’, ‘he was doing’, ‘he has done’, ‘he has been doing’ etc.

To describe or view actions or states in the past in different ways, Czech employs verb pairs termed imperfectives and perfectives, rather than different tense formations as in English. (See section 7.6 on aspect and aspectual pairs below.)

To obtain the third-person-singular (‘he’) past-tense form of most verbs, you replace the -t of the infinitive by -l. Verbs with infinitives ending in -nout replace this by -nul after a vowel, but have a shorter -l form in standard usage after a consonant (see 7.5.4 below).
The -l form agrees with its subject in gender as well as number. For ‘she waited’ you use the ending -la, for ‘it waited’ you use -lo:

| Singular |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| masc. Igor/autobus čekal    | fem. Jana/tramvaj čekala    |
| neuter auto čekalo          |

For ‘they waited’ you use the ending -li for masculine animate subjects, but -ly for any others, except that in writing there is a neuter plural ending -la. Note how these endings exactly match the basic plural forms of regular hard-type nouns:

| Plural |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| masc. anim. studenti čekali | fem. vlaky čekaly           |
| masc. inan./fem. ženy čekaly | neuter auta čekala (colloq. čekaly) |

Endings -li and -ly are pronounced identically. With mixed-gender plural subjects the masculine animate form -li takes precedence over -ly and -la:

Pavel a Zuzana čekali. Pavel and Zuzana waited.

but:

Jana a Zuzana čekaly. Jana and Zuzana waited.

If any two or more inanimate subjects are present, the ending -ly should also be used, even if the nouns are neuter (!):

Auta a kola čekaly. The cars and bicycles waited.
Present forms of the verb být ‘to be’ are added to the -l forms as an auxiliary verb to indicate singular subjects ‘I’, ‘you’ and plural subjects ‘we’, ‘you’.

So the simple full table of the past tense looks like this:

| čekal -a jsem       | I waited                        |
| čekal -a jsi        | you waited = familiar sg. sense |
| čekal, čekala, čekalo| he, she, it waited              |
| čekalji -y jsme     | we waited                       |
| čekalji -y jste     | you waited = plural sense       |
| čekal -a jste       | you waited = polite sg. sense   |
| čekalji, -y (neuter -a) | they waited                 |

Add ne- to the -l form to make a past-tense verb negative. Never add the negative prefix to the auxiliary verb:

Nečekal(a) jsem. I didn’t wait.
Nečekal. He didn’t wait.
Nečekali jsme. We didn’t wait.

Note that the -l verb form for singular ‘you’ is always singular, even when the polite singular form of address uses the auxiliary jste:

Čekal-a jste. You (polite sg.) waited.

The familiar second-person sg. jsi may be reduced to -s:

Čekals, čekalas. You (familiar sg.) waited.

### 7.5.1 Past tense – word order

When jsem, jsi (-s) and jsme, jste are used in past forms they are normally placed in the second possible position or ‘slot’ in a clause. This happens for example when a subject pronoun is added for emphasis. In colloquial usage the auxiliary is sometimes omitted in the first person (only), if the subject pronoun is present:

| já (jsem) čekal-a | I waited                        |
| ty jsi čekal-a    | you waited                      |
| (or tys čekal-a)  |                               |
| on čekal, ona čekala | s/he waited                 |
| my (jsme) čekali -y | we waited                     |
| vy jste čekali, -y | you waited                    |
| (polite sg. vy jste čekal -a) |             |
| oni čekali, ony čekaly | they waited          |
And if there’s a question word or phrase:

**Jak dlouho jsi čekal-a?**  How long did you (sg.) wait?

The auxiliary jsi may be reduced to -s, attached to a preceding pronoun:

**Co jsi dělal(a)? or Cos dělal(a)?**  What were you doing?

**Ty jsi tam nebyl(a). or Tys tam nebyl(a).**  You weren’t there.

**To jsi mi neřekl(a). or Tos mi neřekl(a).**  You didn’t tell me that.

If se/si ‘oneself’ is needed, it is placed after jsem, jsi, jsme, jste:

**My jsme se učili.**  We studied/were studying.

**Kde jste se učil-a?**  Where did you study?

Familiar sg. jsi + se, si regularly become ses and sis:

**Učil-a ses?**  Were you studying?

**Zpíval-a sis?**  Were you singing (to/for yourself)?

If other personal pronouns are present, they come after the reflexive pronoun:

**My jsme se ho na to nezeptali.**  We didn’t ask him about that.

### 7.5.2 Past tense – was and had

The -l form of být ‘to be’ is byl and the personal forms are entirely regular:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>byl -a jsem</td>
<td>I was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byl -a jsi</td>
<td>you were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byl, byla, bylo</td>
<td>he, she, it was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byli -y jsme</td>
<td>we were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byli -y jste, polite sg. byl -a jste</td>
<td>you were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byli, byly (n. -a)</td>
<td>they were</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Byl, byla doma.  S/he was at home.
Nebyli doma.  They weren’t at home.
Kde jste byli?  Where were you (pl.)?
The -l form of mít ‘to have’ is měl and the other forms are entirely regular also:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>měl -a jsem</td>
<td>I had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>měl -a jsi</td>
<td>you had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>měl, měla, mélo</td>
<td>he, she, it had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mělí-y jsme, mělí -y jste, mělí -y jste (n. -a)</td>
<td>we had, polite sg. you had, they had</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Měl/měla knihu. S/he had a book.
Měli auto. They (male/mixed) had a car.
Měly auto. They (female) had a car.
Neměli jsme čas. We didn’t have time.

7.5.3 Past tense – monosyllabic verbs and vowel shortening

The long vowels of monosyllabic infinitives usually shorten in the past -l forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>á – a:</td>
<td>dát – dal gave, psát – psal wrote, spát – spal slept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>é – e:</td>
<td>nést – nesl carried, vést – vedl led</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>í – ě:</td>
<td>mít – měl had, chtít – chtěl wanted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but also í – i:</td>
<td>pít – pil drank, bít – bil beat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ou – u:</td>
<td>plout – plul floated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ų – ų:</td>
<td>růst – rostl grew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ý – y:</td>
<td>být – byl was, kryt – kryl covered, mýt – myl washed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But sometimes -á- remains long. This particularly applies to Type 3 verbs which have an extra syllable in the present tense:


but also e.g. zdát se – zdá se – zdálo se ‘it seemed’.
The same shortening or non-shortening of long -á- occurs whenever a syllabic prefix is added to such a verb:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{psát} & - \text{psal} \quad \text{and} \quad \text{napsat} - \text{napsal} \\
\text{dát} & - \text{dal} \quad \text{and} \quad \text{vydat} - \text{vydal} \\

\text{but hrát} & - \text{hrál} \quad \text{and} \quad \text{zahrát} - \text{zahrál}
\end{align*}
\]

The most irregular past tense form is šel, šla, šli/šly, the past-tense -l form of jít ‘to go’:

- Pavel šel domů. Pavel went/has gone home.
- Jana šla domů. Jana went/has gone home.
- Šli jsme domů. We went home.

### 7.5.4 Past tense – verbs with infinitive -nout

Verbs with infinitives ending in -nout regularly have past tense forms ending in -nul if a vowel precedes this ending:

- mi\|nout – minul, minula, minuli missed, passed
- ply\|nout – plynul, plynula, plynuli flowed
- tr\|nout (vocalic r) – trnul, trnula, trnuli become stiff, numb

Similarly, some monosyllabic verbs with a single consonant preceding (and their compounds), e.g.

- hnout (se) – hnul, hnula, hnuli moved pf.

Other verbs ending in -nout preceded by a consonant have shorter past-tense forms ending in just -l, -la, -li. The -l of the masculine sg. form is pronounced as a separate syllable:

- sed\|nout si – sed\|l si, sedla si, sedli si to sit down pf. – he, she, they sat down
- leh\|nout si – leh\|l si, lehla si, lehli si to lie down pf. – he, she, they lay down

Colloquially the masculine sg. -l syllable can be dropped. But in colloquial spoken Czech it is also common to substitute longer -nul forms, especially for the masculine sg.:

\[
\begin{align*}
\ast\text{sed si, *sednul si} & \quad \text{he sat down} \\
\ast\text{leh si, *lehnul si} & \quad \text{he lay down}
\end{align*}
\]
Other forms such as *sednula si, *sednuli si also occur, but are usually associated with a lower stylistic register.

Occasionally the -nul masculine sg. form is standard, or at least optionally so. This is basically where the pronunciation would otherwise be awkward in some way:

- mrznout – mrzl or mrznul then mrzlo etc. froze
- zestárnut – zestárl or zestárnuł then zestárla etc. grew old pf.
- zblbnout – zblbl or zblbnul then zblbla etc. become silly pf.
- schnout – schnul only, then schla, schli dried
- vyschnout – vyschl or vyschnul then vyschla, vyschli dried pf.

7.6 Imperfective and perfective aspect – nedokonavý a dokonavý vid

Czech verbs mostly come in pairs: one ‘imperfective’, the other ‘perfective’. A pair of this kind is called an aspectual pair (vidová dvojice). Both verbs in the pair mean basically the same thing, from the point of view of an English verb, but differ in their ‘aspect’ – i.e. in whether their sense is seen as a completed whole or not.

An imperfective verb (nedokonavé sloveso) denotes ongoing or general activity, without reference to its completion. The verb may refer to a single state or action in progress, or to the indefinite repetition of a state or action.

A perfective verb (dokonavé sloveso) denotes a complete act (or complete set of acts).

Most unprefixed basic verbs are imperfective. To make the imperfective verb psát ‘to write’ perfective you add the prefix na- (basically ‘on, onto’) and obtain the perfective verb napsat (with a shortened syllable -a-).

Compare:

- Chci psát dopis. I want to write a letter. (activity)
- Chci napsat dopis. I want to write a letter. (complete act)

Other prefixes added to the same basic verb will change the meaning to create a perfective compound verb, a ‘new verb’ or ‘lexical item’ (in terms of the dictionary), e.g. podepsat ‘to sign’, popsat ‘to describe’.

These compounds are perfective, just like napsat. As a result, they (not very surprisingly) require imperfective counterparts. These are produced by a change of suffix, which alters the ending and type of verb.

The imperfective counterparts of podepsat ‘to sign’ and popsat ‘to describe’ are podepisovat and popisovat, each using the suffix -ovat.
Different compounds formed from the same root will normally share the same suffix for this purpose.

The two main types of aspectual pair, *prefix* pairs and *suffix* pairs, look like this:

**prefix**

- *psát* impf. – *napsat* pf.
- *podepsat* pf. – *podepisovat* impf.

In the second type the more basic form is, as a rule, the perfective one.

### 7.6.1 Prefix pairs

In *prefix* pairs the perfectives add a prefix to the imperfectives, as in *psát* – *napsat* ‘to write’, *dělat* – *udělat* ‘to do, to make’.

In the first example the perfective form is analogous to English ‘write down’, except that English does not need to add ‘down’ to indicate a complete act of writing.

In order simply to perfectivise a given verb a relatively neutral prefix is used which does not shift the verb away from the required sense. The most commonly used are:

- *na-*, *o-*, *po-*, *u-*, *vy-*, *s-*, *z-*, *za-*

Other prefixes occur in this role, but much less often, though certain examples are very frequent, e.g. *přečíst* read.

If the prefix adds a new syllable then long -á- in a monosyllabic infinitive will shorten, unless it does not shorten in the past tense, e.g. *psát*, *psal* – *napsat* but *hrát*, *hrál* – *zahrát*.

The prefix used is not predictable enough for easy rules to be provided, so this is basically a matter of vocabulary learning:

- *přečíst* ‘to read’ (‘across’, ‘through’), *u-vařit* ‘to cook’, *po-děkovat* ‘to thank’, *zvát* – *po-zvat* ‘to invite’, *za-platit* ‘to pay’, *u-dělat* ‘to do’, *vy-pít* ‘to drink’ (‘up’), *s-níst* ‘to eat’ (‘up’), pf. of *jíst* ‘to eat’

In prefix pairs the basic imperfective verb is mostly a simple root verb, with no prefix of its own.

For more details, see section 10.9.5 Forming prefix pairs.

### 7.6.2 Suffix pairs

In *suffix* pairs the two forms end with different suffixes. In this type of pair the perfective form is, as a rule of thumb, derivationally primary, and also shorter.
Most of these verbs are compound verbs, that is to say, those which have a permanently attached prefix which is part of their intrinsic meaning, e.g. vydělat pf. ‘to earn, make (money)’, podepsat pf. ‘to sign’, i.e. ‘write your name under’:

- vydělat pf. – vydělávat impf. ‘to earn, make (money)’
- podepsat pf. – podepisovat impf. ‘to sign’.

In such pairs the imperfective infinitives will normally have one of these suffixes:

-(á)vat, -ovat, -et or -at

Alongside these typical compound verbs, a few unprefixed verbs have a basic meaning involving immediate completion or instantaneous action which has caused the primary form to be perfective, e.g. dát pf. ‘to give’ and koupit pf. ‘to buy’. These produce pairs of the suffix type as well:

- dát pf. – dávat impf.
- koupit pf. – kupovat impf.

For more details, see section 10.9.6 Forming suffix pairs.

7.6.3 Irregular aspectual pairs

Some aspectual pairs involve different roots for the two variants. Note especially:

- brát, bere, bral impf. – vzít, vezme, vzal pf. ‘to take’ with compounds based on brát, e.g. vybrat pf. – vybírat impf. ‘to choose’
- klást, kladn, kladl impf. – položit pf. ‘to put (in a lying position)’ with compounds such as skládat impf. – složit pf. ‘to put together, compose’

Other pairs involve relatively minor or lesser irregularities, e.g.

- čekat impf. – počkat, počkám pf. ‘to wait’
- stavět impf. – postavit pf. ‘to build’

7.6.4 Expressing the past with aspectual pairs

Perf ective and imperfective verbs form past tenses in the same way, but differ in their precise meaning.
Psalm: I wrote/was writing a letter. (process)
Napsal jsem dopis. I wrote/have written a letter. (complete act)

English has a wide range of past forms with different distinctions. ‘Was writing’ can be treated as clearly imperfective, but ‘wrote’ can correspond to either aspect.

Včera psala dopis. Yesterday she was writing/wrote a letter.
Psala ho celý den. She was writing/wrote it all day.
Už ho napsala. Now she has written it.
Dnes napsala další. Today she wrote/has written another one.

An action which clearly was completed but where the main focus is on the type of action rather than conveying the notion of its completion may be expressed by an imperfective verb:

Tento obraz maloval Rembrandt.
Viděl jsem ho včera. I saw him yesterday.

**7.6.5 Imperfective-only verbs**

Some imperfective verbs lack (or usually lack) perfective counterparts. These include imperfectives for fixed states, such as ležet/ležím ‘to lie, be lying’, sedět/sedím ‘to sit, be sitting’. (Equivalent changes of state are most often perfective, e.g. lehnout si ‘to lie down’, sednout si ‘to sit down’.)

Other such imperfectives are být ‘to be’, moci ‘to be able’, muset ‘to have to, must’, and chtít ‘to want’.

Some verbs which are normally perfective can be imperfective in a particular sense:

hodit pf. ‘throw’, but hodit se impf. ‘be suitable’ (future: bude se hodit ‘will be suitable’)

**7.6.6 Perfective-only verbs**

Some verbs are perfective only, e.g. nadchnout se ‘become enthused’. These include some verbs derived from adjectives and denoting a change of state, e.g. onemocnět ‘fall ill’, otěhotnět ‘become pregnant’.
### 7.6.7 Bi-aspectual verbs

Some verbs are ‘bi-aspectual’, i.e. they can be used as perfective as well as imperfective verbs, e.g. *jmenovat* ‘to name, appoint’, *organizovat* ‘to organise’, *věnovat* (se) ‘devote (oneself)’, *obětovat* (se) ‘sacrifice (oneself)’.

Such verbs typically have an imperfective present tense and a past tense which is either perfective or imperfective according to the context:

**Organizuje náš seminář.**  
S/he is organising our seminar.

**Organizovala náš seminář.**  
S/he organised our seminar.

Many are loanwords: *informovat* ‘inform’, *analyzovat* ‘analyse’, *dezinfikovat* ‘disinfect’, *konstruovat* ‘construct’, *riskovat* ‘risk’.

Some of these loanwords also have optional prefixed perfectives, often with *z*, e.g. *zorganizovat*, *zkonstruovat*.

### 7.7 Perfective present and future

Only imperfective verbs have a present tense referring to something going on here and now:

**Píšu dopis.**  
I am writing a letter. (process)

**Kupuju knihu.**  
I am buying a book.

**Ted’ dělá svou práci.**  
Now I am doing my work.

The same tense forms are used for referring to repeated or habitual actions:

**Piše romány.**  
S/he writes novels.

**Kupuje knihy.**  
S/he buys books.

However, the present tense forms of perfective verbs can also correspond to an English present tense, if a complete action is described:

**Někdy přečte celou knihu za pár hodin!**  
Sometimes s/he reads a whole book in a couple of hours!

**Někdy to udělá za pět minut!**  
Sometimes s/he does it in five minutes!

Narratives can also be delivered at least partly in the present tense, in which case you can use perfective present forms to refer to complete actions which took place in the past:
Přijde domů, sedne si a hned usne. S/he comes home, sits down and falls asleep immediately.

Perfective present forms also regularly occur in stage directions for plays and the like.

However, these basically present-tense forms of perfective verbs are also the standard way to refer to complete actions or completion of acts in the future:

Zítra napíšu dopis. Tomorrow I will write a letter. (complete act)

Zítra koupím knihu. Tomorrow I will buy a book.

Udělám to zítra. I’ll do it tomorrow.

In terms of formation, there is really no such thing as a perfective future tense in Czech. The forms used are the same as those of the present tense (and moreover, as we have seen, do not even always have to refer to future events).

7.8 Imperfective future – budoucí čas nedokonavý

To express ongoing actions or states in the future, requiring the use of imperfective verbs, a special future form of the verb být ‘to be’ is used, followed by the imperfective infinitive of the verb required.

The verb ‘to be’ uses this special future form on its own. This consists of the root form bud-, which gives future meaning, followed by standard present-tense endings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Form</th>
<th>Future Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>budu</td>
<td>I shall/will be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budeš</td>
<td>you will be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bude</td>
<td>s/he will be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budeme</td>
<td>we shall/will be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budete</td>
<td>you will be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budou</td>
<td>they will be</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is never followed by the infinitive být!

Budeš bohatý/-ál! You’ll be rich!

Nebudou doma. They won’t be at home.

To make an imperfective future of other verbs, but only (!!!) imperfectives, just add the infinitive of the verb to the personal forms of budu:
The verb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb form</th>
<th>English equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>budu psát</td>
<td>I shall/will write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budeš psát</td>
<td>you will write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bude psát</td>
<td>s/he will write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budeme psát</td>
<td>we shall/will write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budete psát</td>
<td>you will write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budou psát</td>
<td>they will write</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Budu psát dopis. I’ll write/be writing a letter. (process)

The negative prefix ne- is attached to the forms of budu:

Nebudeme otvírat okno. We won’t open/be opening the window.

Remember: the perfective future is simply (and only!) the perfective present:

Napišu dopis. I’ll write a letter.
Neotevřu okno. I won’t open the window.

7.9 The conditional tense – kondicionál/Podmiňovací způsob

The conditional corresponds to the English tense ‘would do, would make’ etc.

It is formed on parallel lines to the past tense, combining its -l form with a special set of auxiliary forms (originally a tense of the verb ‘to be’, no longer used on its own).

The basic set of forms is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form</th>
<th>English equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>čekal-a bych</td>
<td>I would wait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čekal-a bys</td>
<td>you would wait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čekal-a -o by</td>
<td>he/she/it would wait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čekali-y bychom/ *bysme</td>
<td>we would wait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čekali-al-i, -y byste</td>
<td>you would wait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čekali-y by</td>
<td>they would wait</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The form *bysme is usual in relaxed usage, where bychom may sound too formal.

Mohli bychom/bysme jít na koncert. We could go to a concert.

The more markedly non-standard forms *bysem = bych and *bysi = bys also occur. (This is the result of a tendency to bring the forms of
the conditional closer to by + the past-tense forms with jsem, jsi etc. where the j is normally silent.)

Note also the special standard forms for the ‘you’ sg. ty form combined with reflexive pronouns se, si:

- **učil(a) by ses** you’d study (i.e. ‘teach yourself’)
- **koupil(a) by sis** you’d buy for yourself

The conditional tense can be formed from both imperfective and perfective verbs, on the same lines as the past tense:

- **psal bych** ‘I would write’ (process, repetition – imperfective)
- **napsal bych** ‘I would write’ (complete act – perfective)

Conditionals on their own typically occur in questions and answers.

- **Co byste udělali?** What would you do?
- **Kam byste šli?** Where would you go?
- **Šli bychom domů.** We would go home.

The conditional tense is also used in ‘if’ clauses using kdyby ‘if’ and with aby ‘in order that, so that’. In these cases the auxiliary is written as one word with the preceding syllable, i.e. kdybych = kdy + by, abychom = a + bychom and so on.

- **Kdybych měl čas, šel bych do kina.** If I had (‘would have’) time, I would go to the cinema.
- **Pospíchali jsme, abychom nezmeškali vlak.** We hurried, so that we wouldn’t miss the train.

See 9.11.2 and 9.13 on kdyby and aby for more details.

### 7.9.1 Expressing wishes with the conditional etc.

The conditional can also express a wish, or a polite enquiry:

- **Něco bych snědl!** I’d like to eat something!
- **Šel/šla bys se mnou?** Would you go with me?
- **Přeložil(a) byste mi tohle slovo?** Would you translate this word for me?

Wishes are also often expressed by rád by ‘would like, would be glad to’, chtěl by ‘would wish, would like’, and mohl by ‘could’:
Rád bych něco snědl! I’d like to eat something!
Chtěl(a) bys jít se mnou? Would you like to go with me?
Mohl(a) byste mi přeložit tohle slovo? Could you translate this word for me?

Similarly, with být ‘to be’:
Byl(a) bych rád(a). I would be glad.

Aby can also introduce an exclamatory wish:
Jen abych nespadl! If only I don’t fall! Hope I don’t fall!
Už aby ta zima skončila! Would that winter were over! I wish . . .

A wish may also be expressed by kéž, with or without the conditional:
Kéž by přestalo pršet! Kéž přestane pršet!
If only it would stop raining!

7.10 Synopsis of main tenses

Here is the basic scheme of tenses, as described above, taking aspect into account. Past and conditional forms are given as masculine animate only, for clarity’s sake.

The first example shows the prefix pair impf. dělat – pf. udělat ‘to make, to do’. Remember: the future with budu occurs only with imperfectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Present/pf. future</th>
<th>Impf. future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(u)dělat</td>
<td>(u)děláme</td>
<td>budu dělat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(u)děláte</td>
<td>budeme dělat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(u)dělal</td>
<td>bude dělat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(u)dělali</td>
<td>budeste dělat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>Condition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(u)dělal i jsem</td>
<td>(u)dělal i jsme</td>
<td>(u)dělal bych</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(u)dělal i jste</td>
<td>(u)dělal i jsme</td>
<td>(u)dělal by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(u)dělal</td>
<td>(u)dělali</td>
<td>(u)dělal by</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second example, abridged, illustrates the suffix pair impf. dávat – pf. dát ‘to give’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Present/pf. future</th>
<th>Impf. future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dávat/dát</td>
<td>dávám/dám etc.</td>
<td>budu dávat etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>Conditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dával jsem/dal</td>
<td>dával bych/dal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jsem etc.</td>
<td>bych etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third example illustrates the suffix pair impf. kupovat – pf. koupit ‘to buy’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Present/pf. future</th>
<th>Impf. future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kupovat/</td>
<td>kupuji/koupím</td>
<td>budu kupovat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koupit</td>
<td>etc.</td>
<td>etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>Conditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kupoval jsem/</td>
<td>kupoval bych/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>koupil jsem etc.</td>
<td>koupil bych etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.11 Past conditional – kondicionál minulý

To talk about what might have been in the past (but wasn’t), you can add byl or byl býval to the conditional, making a ‘past conditional’, corresponding to ‘would have done’ in English.

**Byl bych (býval) koupil nové auto.** I would have bought a new car.

For the past conditional of the verb být ‘to be’ use byl býval.

These past conditionals usually occur with ‘if’ clauses. (See 9.11.2.)
7.12 **Pluperfect – předminulý čas/plusquamperfektum**

Occasionally a pluperfect tense meaning ‘had done, had bought’ etc. can be formed by adding *byl* to the usual past tense, but this is nowadays semi-obsolete:

- **Stalo se, jak byl král přikázal.**
  - It happened, as the king had commanded.

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7.13 **Reported/indirect speech – nepřímá řeč**

When reporting speech in Czech you don’t change the original tense of the verb as you do in English. Often ‘would’ comes out as ‘will’.

If Karel said:

- **Přijdu zítra.**
  - I will come tomorrow.

This is reported as:

- **Karel řekl, že přijde zítra.**
  - Karel said that he ‘will’ (= would) come tomorrow.

Similarly, if Karel said:

- **Mám hlad.**
  - I’m hungry.

This is reported as:

- **Karel řekl, že má hlad.**
  - Karel said he ‘is’ (= was) hungry.

Note how ‘that’ is often omitted before reported speech in English.

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7.13.1 **Reported perceptions**

The same procedure as for reported speech applies to reported perceptions. If Marie sees Karel and thinks:

- **Stojí před Evou.**
  - He is standing in front of Eva.

- **Zpívá.**
  - He is singing.

This is reported in the past as:

- **Viděla ho, jak stojí před Evou.**
  - She saw him as he ‘stands’ (= stood) in front of Eva. = She saw him standing in front of Eva.

- **Slyšela ho, jak zpívá.**
  - She heard him as he ‘sings’ (= sang). = She heard him singing.
After verbs of perception an infinitive can be used instead. English can also use an infinitive, but only without ‘to’:

**Viděla ho stát před Eva.** She saw him stand in front of Eva.

**Slyšela ho zpívat.** She heard him sing.

### 7.14 The imperative – *imperativ/rozkazovací způsob*

The imperative issues orders or instructions: ‘Read!’ ‘Work!’

The verb may be either imperfective or perfective, depending on whether the activity or a complete act is meant.

The basic imperative is like the present without any ending – more precisely, without the ‘they’ ending -í/-ou.

**mluvit – mluví**

- **Mluv!** Speak!

Verbs of the regular á-type have -ej!

**zavolat – zavolají**

- **Zavolej!** Call!

**dát – dají**

- **Dej!** Give!

Verbs of the -ovat type have -uj!

**pracovat – pracují**

- **Pracuj!** Work!

Long vowels shorten in the last syllable (note ou → u). Final d, t, n are always d’, t’, ň.

**koupit – koupí**

- **Kup!** Buy!

**vrátit – vrátí**

- **Vrat’!** Return! Give back!

**zaplatit – zaplatí**

- **Zaplat’!** Pay!

Follow the ‘they’ form of the present, if there is any divergence from the infinitive:

**psát – pišou**

- **Piš!** Write!

**pít – pijí**

- **Pij!** Drink!

For the plural (and formal) imperative you just add -te! To say ‘let’s’ add -me!

**Mluvte! Mluvme!**

- **Speak! Let’s speak!**

**Zavolejte! Zavolejme!**

- **Call! Let’s call!**

**Zaplat’te! Zaplat’me!**

- **Pay! Let’s pay!**
Czech also has a longer imperative ending in -i! It is used where the imperative would otherwise end in two consonants or lack a syllable. Parallel plural forms are -ěte/-ete! and -čme/-eme!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Longer Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>myslet</td>
<td>Myslí! Myslete!</td>
<td>Think!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spát</td>
<td>Spí! Spěte!</td>
<td>Sleep!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>číst</td>
<td>Čt! Čtěte!</td>
<td>Read!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>otevřít</td>
<td>Otevř! Otevřete!</td>
<td>Open!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zavřít</td>
<td>Zavř! Zavřete!</td>
<td>Close!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vzít</td>
<td>Vezmi! Vezměte!</td>
<td>Take!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>říct</td>
<td>Řkni! Řkněte!</td>
<td>Say!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, a few consonant sequences are allowed, especially -st’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Longer Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pustit</td>
<td>Pust’ mě!</td>
<td>Let me go!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.14.2 Some irregular imperatives

Note especially:

- **bud’!** ‘be!’, **měj!** ‘have!’, **jez!/pf. sněz!** ‘eat!’, **stůj** ‘stand! cost!’
- **Nebud’ smutný/-á!** Don’t be glum! Cheer up!
- **Nebuď takový/-á!** Don’t be like that!
- **Měj se (dobře)!** Have a nice time! lit. ‘have yourself well!’
- **Nejez to!** Don’t eat that!
- **Sněz to!** Eat it (up!)
- **Nestůj tam!** Don’t stand there!
- **Stůj co stůj!** Whatever it costs! lit. ‘cost what cost!’

Vědět has the relatively uncommon věz! ‘know!’ Pomoc ‘to help’ has pomoz! ‘help!’, commonly expressed by the noun pomoc!

- **Vidět** has viz! ‘see’ (e.g. introducing cross-references). Podívej(te) se! ‘look! see!’ is a neutral equivalent.
- Colloquial **hele! heleďte!** ‘look, look here!’ invites attention, along-side formal **hle!** ‘behold!’

**Poslyš!** ‘hear! listen!’ corresponds to **slyšet** ‘to hear’.
7.14.3 Negative instructions

Negative instructions tend to be imperfective (unlike positive instructions to carry out a single act), since imperfectives refer to the general activity:

Nekupuj to! Don’t buy it! but: Kup to! Buy it!

Nečekej na mě! Don’t wait but: Počkej na mě! Wait for me!

7.14.4 Other command-like constructions

Instead of an imperative a plain future verb is often used to express firm or peremptory instructions and commands:

Půjdeš hned domů a umyješ se pořádně!
You go straight home and wash yourself properly!

Nezabiješ! Thou shalt not kill!

The infinitive is also used for some brisk, exclamatory, military-style commands:

Stát rovně! Stand up straight!

Dokouřit! Finish smoking!

Zastavit stát! Halt! lit. ‘Stop stand’!

Sedět! Stay sitting!

But imperatives occur also for military commands, e.g.

Pal! Palte!
Fire! (pálit ‘to fire’)

Stůj!
Stand!

A forcefully expressed wish can be introduced by at’, providing a kind of third-person imperative:

At’ je mír! Let there be peace!

At’ si dělá, co chce. Let him do what he wants.

At’ can also introduce a warning, and the verb need not be third person (for at’ in subordinate clauses see 9.13.2):

At’ nepřijdeš pozdě! May you not be late! = Take care not to be late!
A participle combines the meaning – *participates* in the meaning – of both a verb and an adjective. Participles are fundamentally adjectival in form. In Czech they have to agree in gender, case and number with the nouns or pronouns to which they refer.

They may also be *active* or *passive*, distinguishing between active voice (aktivum, slovesný rod činný) and passive voice (pasívum, slovesný rod trpný):

English verbs form *active* participles in ‘ing’, which are adjective-like forms referring to a noun, e.g. ‘the screaming child’, ‘the child running in the park’, etc. Here the noun described by the ‘-ing’ participle is the doer or agent of the action.

English verbs also form *passive* participles in ‘-ed’, e.g. ‘inflated’ from ‘inflate’. Again the participle can modify a noun (‘an inflated balloon’), or it can be used like a predicative adjective (‘the balloon is now inflated’). The noun described by this kind of participle is the passive recipient of the action of the verb, hence the form is termed *passive*. (Some English passive forms are irregular, e.g. ‘broken’ from ‘to break’, as in ‘a broken window’.)

The English ‘-ed’ participle and its Czech equivalent are also both used with the verb ‘to be’ to form *passive* verb constructions.

In these the object of an active verb becomes the grammatical subject of the passive one. The agent may either be omitted, e.g. ‘The balloon was inflated yesterday,’ or added, in English using ‘by’, e.g. ‘The balloon was inflated by John’ = ‘John inflated the balloon’.

### 7.15.1 The passive participle – příčestí trpné

Czech passive participles mostly have long adjectival forms ending in -ný, e.g. zavřený ‘closed, shut’, otevřený ‘open’, but a minority end in -tý (especially if derived from infinitives ending in -nout):

- **Okno je zavřené, otevřené.** The window is closed/shut, open.
- **Zapomenutý hrob.** A forgotten grave.

These decline like regular standard adjectives. Their forms are usually predictable according to the infinitive:
Before -ený (mostly verbs with infinitive -it) there are sometimes (but not always) consonant changes d>z, t>c, s>š and z>ž, which have to be learnt for particular roots:


Passive participles derived from monosyllabic verbs mostly have a shortened root vowel, as in the past tense. Some further -tý forms (e.g. some, but not all monosyllabic Type 3 verbs) just have to be learnt pretty much individually:

zavřít – zavřený ‘closed’, but zabít – zabity ‘killed’

Type 1 verbs with infinitives -st, -zt, -ct/-ci have passive participles ending in -ený. Again, the forms need to be learnt individually:


Passive participles are derived from both perfective and imperfective verbs, depending on the precise meaning.

Imperfective forms can refer to a type or category of thing, rather than the result of an action, e.g. vařené nudle ‘boiled noodles’, smažená vejce ‘fried eggs’, pečený pstruh ‘baked trout’, nově otevíraný supermarket ‘the newly opened supermarket’ (which might be closed, if it is after opening hours).

If the participle is qualified by another phrase it usually follows the noun, as in English, e.g. dům opuštěný před dvaceti pěti lety ‘the house abandoned twenty-five years ago’.

Some participles have become fully fledged adjectives, even to the extent that they form comparatives and superlatives (which proper participles do not normally do), e.g. vzdělaný – (nej)vzdělanější ‘(well-)educated – more/most well-educated’, otevřený – otevřenější ‘open – more open’ (referring to human behaviour).
Passive participles also have ‘short forms’ (krátké/jmenné tvary) which regularly occur as the complement of the verb ‘to be’. These decline like short-form adjectives (see 4.5).

To make short forms you just drop final -ý, but change -an to -án:


The short forms nowadays compete with the more colloquial long forms in the complement position, and in speech the long forms predominate:

Okno je zavřeno (zavřené/zavřený). The shop is closed.

Dveře jsou otevřeny (otevřené/otevřený). The door (pl.) is open.

Sometimes the complement is hardly distinguishable from a passive construction with no agent expressed, and long forms also occur colloquially here as well:

Dopis byl napsán (napsaný/napsanej) včera. The letter was written yesterday.

Byli pozváni (pozvaný/pozvaný) na oběd. They were invited to lunch.

In fact, only the neuter sg. short forms in -o are common in everyday spoken usage, outside certain set phrases. They are commonly used in impersonal phrases requiring neuter agreement such as:

Je otevřeno/zavřeno. It’s open/closed.

Also, idiomatically, after the verb ‘to have’:

Máme otevřeno/zavřeno. We are open/closed, lit. ‘We have (it) open/closed.’

Máte vybráno? Have you chosen? lit. ‘Do you have (it) chosen?’

Máte zaplaceno? Have you paid? lit. ‘Do you have (it) paid?’

For proper passive constructions, where primarily an action is referred to, rather than a resultant state, the standard language prescribes the
short-form participles. Here the agent may also be expressed, with a noun phrase in the instrumental case:

**Báseň byla napsána [Seifertem] v roce 1922.**
The poem was written [by Seifert] in 1922.

Where the participle is used more like an adjective to express a resultant state, rather than an action, then the long forms may also be used. In English this distinction can be occasionally made through usage of particular words, e.g. adjective ‘open’ versus passive participle ‘opened’:

**Dveře byly otevřeny/otevřené.** The doors are/were open.

*but:*

**Dveře byly hned otevřeny a šli jsme dovnitř.**
The doors were immediately opened (= action), and we went inside.

Everyday spoken Czech tends to avoid passive constructions using participles (unlike English). Instead, Czech exploits its use of inflected cases. You can simply say ‘Seifert wrote the poem’, but reverse the order of words. The meaning is clear, since ‘Seifert’ will be in the nominative case, not the accusative, and so is clearly the subject of the verb:

**Báseň (object) napsal Seifert (subject) v roce 1922.**
= The poem was written by Seifert in 1922.

So it is often best to avoid passives when speaking Czech. Similarly:

**Tuto knihu mi dal Petr.**
= This book was given to me by Petr.

Where an active verb has an object which is not in the accusative case, but (for example) the genitive, the passive construction leaves the object in that case and makes the verb neuter singular:

**Použili různých metod.** They used various methods.

**Bylo použito různých metod.** Various methods were used.

This is again formal standard usage.

### 7.15.4 Reflexive passive

Another important, widespread and also more colloquial way of making a passive construction in Czech is to use a third-person reflexive verb (zvratné sloveso), with no stated agent:
The verb

Jak se to píše? How is that written?
lit. ‘How does that write itself?’

Kde se prodávají lístky? Where are the tickets sold?
lit. ‘Where do tickets sell themselves?’

To se nedělá. That is not done.

Compare some other reflexive examples, where English could (at least conceivably) use either an active or a passive verb:

Obchod se zavírá v šest. The shop closes (‘itself’) at six, is closed at six.

Polévka se začíná vařit. The soup is starting to boil (‘itself’), to be boiled.

In these examples alternative constructions with participles would be very awkward.

7.15.5 Subjectless constructions

‘Subjectless constructions’ take a step further beyond the kind of reflexive passive construction outlined above.

This first example is simply a passive construction, as above:

Tady se pije pivo. Beer is drunk here, lit. ‘Beer drinks itself here.’

But if we remove the subject word pivo ‘beer’, we get a construction, widely used in Czech, where the verb has no specific subject, is ‘subjectless’. Compare English statements with ‘one’, ‘people’, or even ‘we’ (like the French use of on, and German mann):

Tady se pije. Here drinking goes on. = One drinks here. People drink here.
lit. ‘[It] is drinking itself here.’

Tady se nekouří. One doesn’t smoke here.

Even intransitive verbs may occur in such constructions:

Jde se domů. We’re going home. People are going home, lit. ‘[It] goes itself home.’
7.16 Verbal nouns – podstatné jméno slovesné

English can form verbal nouns in ‘-ing’ from almost any verb, e.g. ‘reading’ from ‘to read’. Their direct Czech equivalents end mainly in -ní, but sometimes in -tí.

Their forms are normally parallel to those of the passive participle ending in -ný/-tý. They can also be either imperfective or perfective, according to meaning (impf. for process, pf. for complete act).

Some correspond in use to other kinds of noun in English, i.e. not simply English nouns ending in ‘-ing’:

- at: -ání čekat: čekání waiting
- it, -et: -ení vařit: vaření cooking
  ležet: ležení lying
- ovat: -ování opakovat: opakování repeating, repetition
- nout: -nutí zapomenout: zapomenutí forgetting, oblivion

Verbal nouns are not necessarily listed in dictionaries, as nearly all verbs form them, but normally they should be listed whenever they have become independent items of vocabulary, e.g.

cvičení ‘an exercise’ (cvičit ‘to exercise’), vzděláni ‘(an) education’ (vzdělat se < vzdělávat se ‘to educate oneself’), rozhodnutí ‘a decision’ (rozhodnout ‘to decide something’).

The same irregularities of formation occur as with passive participles. Where English has special ‘gerund’ forms of verbal nouns, which can have objects, Czech usually expresses the idea in another way, without using a verbal noun, e.g.

He likes singing songs. Rád zpívá písně.
lit. ‘He glad[ly] sings songs.’

Translating novels is hard work. Překládat romány je těžká práce.
lit. ‘To translate novels is hard work.’

7.17 Frequentatives – slovesa opakovací

Czech verbs sometimes form so-called ‘frequentatives’ ending in -vat (especially -ávat from infinitives ending in -at, and -ívat from -it). These refer to repeated tendencies:

být – bývat to be often, tend to be
mít – mívat to have often, tend to have
dělat – dělávat to tend to make, make often
The verb

Bývá ospalý.  He is often/tends to be sleepy.
Mívá problémy s češtinou.  He often has problems with Czech.
Dělává chyby.  He tends to make mistakes.

Even indeterminate verbs may form frequentatives, e.g. chodit ‘to go regularly’ has a form chodívat meaning ‘to go from time to time’:

Ano, chodívám do kostela.  Yes, I go to church now and again.

In the past these verbs mean ‘used to do’:

Býval příjemnější.  He used to be more pleasant.
Míval problémy.  He used to have problems.
Chodíval do kostela.  He used to go to church.

More participles

7.18.1 Present active participle – příčestí činné

English participles ending in ‘-ing’ have Czech adjectival equivalents ending in -oucí or -ící.

You form them by adding -cí to the third-person plural present form of an imperfective verb, e.g. běžící ‘running’ from běží ‘they run’, jedoucí ‘going, moving’ from jedou ‘they go, ride’.

Where a verb has a more formal third-person plural present form, after a soft consonant, the ‘-ing’ adjective will regularly match this formal written variant, and use the suffix -ící:

píšou/píší gives píšící writing

*hrajou/hrají gives hrající playing

These participial forms can replace a ‘who/which’ relative clause:

Žena sedící u okna je moje sestra.  The woman sitting by the window is my sister.
Žena, která sedí u okna, je moje sestra.  The woman who is sitting by the window is my sister.

They are also commonly used simply as verbal adjectives:

běžící pás ‘a running belt’, jedoucí vlak ‘a moving train’, překvapující účinek ‘a surprising effect’, vedoucí úloha ‘a leading role’

Some are also employed as adjectival nouns, e.g. vedoucí ‘a manager’, cestující ‘a passenger, traveller’.
Remember, however, that English tenses involving ‘-ing’ participles correspond to simple tenses in Czech. You must not use any present participles here!

The students are reading.   = Studenti si čtou.
The children were playing.   = Děti si hrály.
The children will be reading. = Děti si budou číst.

7.18.2 Present adverbial participle – přechodník přítomný

In the written language you will sometimes encounter short forms of the present active participles ending in -íc or -oucí, corresponding to long forms -ící or -oucí respectively.

These are the feminine and neuter sg. forms of what is called the present přechodník or adverbial participle, used for ‘doing’ in the sense of ‘while doing’.

The masculine sg. form looks rather different. It ends in -ě/a (instead of -íc) and in -a (instead of -oucí).

The plural forms are -íce and -ouce respectively, for all genders. Examples:

Leží na trávě, popíjí víno. Lying/While lying on the grass he drank wine.
Čte noviny, zapomněl na čas. Reading the paper he forgot the time.
Leží na trávě, popítěla víno. Lying on the grass she sipped some wine.
Čtoucí noviny, zapomněla na čas. Reading the paper she forgot the time.
Ležíce na trávě, popijeli víno. Lying on the grass they sipped some wine.
Čtoucí noviny, zapomněli na čas. Reading the newspaper they forgot the time.

This přechodník has to agree with the subject of the main verb in gender and number. In today’s usage it is nearly always imperfective.

The parallel English constructions with or without ‘while’ are much more common than their Czech equivalents. Normally, in both spoken and written Czech, you would simply use two clauses connected by ‘and’:

Leželi na trávě a popijeli víno.
Četli noviny a zapomněli na čas.
Don’t use přechodníky when speaking or writing the language in an ordinary relaxed style.

Some have become adverbs or prepositions, and ignore gender/number agreement:

- takřka ‘so to speak, as it were’, (ne)počítají/(ne)počítaje
  +acc. ‘(not) including’, vyjíma/vyjímaje/vyjímají + acc. ‘excepting’,
  začínaje/začínajíc + ins. ‘starting with’, končí/končíč + ins. ‘ending with’; also všedě ‘sitting, in a sitting position’, v(e)stoje ‘standing, in a standing position’

[7.18.3] Past adverbial participle – přechodník minulý

There is also a past přechodník, corresponding to English clauses opening with ‘Having . . .’ and restricted to very formal writing. It is nearly always formed from a perfective verb, when it occurs, and expresses a complete action preceding the main action. (The Bible is a good place for finding examples of přechodníky.)

Form this přechodník by replacing the -l of the past-tense form with -v (masculine), -vši (feminine, neuter), and -vše (plural):

**Položiv dopis na stůl, vyšel z pokoje.** Having laid the letter on the table, he left the room.

**Položivší dopis na stůl, vyšla z pokoje.** Having laid the letter on the table, she left the room.

**Položivšě dopisy na stůl, vyšli z pokoje.** Having laid/Laying the letters on the table, they left the room.

(English often uses a present participle instead, keeping things simpler.)

The verb být also has the forms byv, byvši, byvše ‘having been’. The consonant v is omitted after a consonant, so the forms corresponding to přivěst, přivedl ‘to bring, brought’ are:

**přived, přivedší, přivedše** having brought

Compounds of jít ‘to go’ have forms with -šed etc.:

**přišed, přišedší, přišedše** having arrived

Verbs with infinitive -nout have forms with -nuv etc., e.g. stisknout:

**stisknuv, stisknuvší, stisknuvšě** having pressed, squeezed

Occasionally a long-form participial adjective ending in -vši is derived from the přechodník minulý:
Muž položivší dopis na stůl byl její otec.
The man who-had-put the letter on the table was her father.

7.18.4 Passive equivalent of adverbial participles

Passive equivalents of the přechodník construction can be produced by using forms from the verb ‘to be’ as auxiliaries:

* jsa, jsouc, jsouce ‘being’
* or:
  * byv, byvši, byvše ‘having been’,

These are then accompanied by a short-form passive participle, e.g.

* Jsa překvapen/Byv překvapen . . . ‘Being surprised/Having been surprised . . .’

However, this is stiff and ultra-formal. Normally the passive participle is used on its own:

* Překvapen jejím příchodem, zapomněl vypnout proud.
  Surprised by her arrival, he forgot to switch off the current.

7.19 Modal verbs – modální slovesa

Modal verbs adjust the sense of another verb in terms of necessity, desire etc., requiring this other verb to be in the infinitive.

In English the verb linked with the modal verb also follows in the infinitive, but often without ‘to’, e.g. ‘John can write’, ‘John must write’, but ‘John wants to write’.

7.19.1 Can, be able, could, is possible

Moct (in formal use also the older infinitive moci) meaning ‘to be able, can’ is a slightly irregular e-type verb. The older ‘I’ and ‘they’ forms mohu and mohou are more formal than mùžu and mùžou.

| můžu/mohu | I can, am able | můžeme | we can |
| můžeš | you can | mùžete | you can |
| může | s/he can | mùžou/mohou | they can |
Past tense: mohl ‘could, was able’

- **Můžeš jít.** You can go.
- **Nemůžu pracovat.** I can’t work. I’m not able to work.
- **Můžeme čekat.** We can wait.
- **Mohli pracovat.** They were able to work. They could work. Also: They could have worked.
- **Nemohli pracovat.** They couldn’t work. They weren’t able to work.

For a polite ‘could’ use the conditional tense:

- **Mohl(-a) bych mluvit s Helenou?** Could I speak with/to Helena?
- **Nemohl(-a) bys mluvit s Láďou?** Couldn’t you speak with/to Láď’a?
- **Mohli bychom/bysme jít na koncert.** We could go to a concert.

English ‘can’ followed by a passive infinitive often corresponds to dá se ‘it is possible’:

- **Dá se to koupit prakticky všude.** It can be bought practically anywhere.
- **Nedá se nic dělat.** Nothing can be done. It’s not possible to do anything.
- **To se nedá říct.** That cannot be said. It’s not possible to say that.

A more formal alternative is lze ‘it is possible’, with the more frequent negative nelze ‘it is impossible, not possible’. In the present tense the verb ‘to be’ is omitted.

- **Nelze (less formally: Nedá se) to změnit.** It cannot be changed. It is impossible to change.
- **Nebylo lze (or: Nedalo se) to změnit.** It could not be changed. It was impossible to change.

Another fairly formal alternative for ‘it is possible’ is je možno, using the neuter short form of the adjective možný ‘possible’ (long form možné also occurs):

- **Je/Není možno to změnit.** It is/It is not possible to change it.
The adverb možná which usually means ‘possibly, perhaps’ also occurs as ‘possible’ in the idiomatic exclamatory phrase (to) není možná! ‘it’s not possible’, alongside the expected to není možné!

Colloquially jde lit. ‘it goes’ and šlo ‘it went’ can also be used to express something that was or was not achievable, possible to do.

- **Jde to.** It’s possible. It can be done.
  (Also: It’s OK. Things are OK.)
- **To nejdé. To se nedá.** That’s not possible. It can’t be done.
- **To nešlo. To se nedalo.** That wasn’t possible. That couldn’t be done.
- **To by docela šlo.** That would be perfectly ‘do-able’, OK.
- **Okno nešlo (se nedalo)** zavřít. The window couldn’t be closed.

### 7.19.2 Know how to

Sometimes ‘can’ means ‘know how to’. Distinguish the use of umět ‘know how’ from mohť ‘can, may’:

- **Umí číst.** S/he can read (knows how to).
- **Může číst.** S/he can read (may, has the possibility to).
- **Neumím vařit.** I don’t know how to cook.
- **Nemůžu vařit.** I can’t cook (due to some particular circumstances).

### 7.19.3 Manage to, be capable of, succeed

Related to the above are other verbs such as dověst – dovede – dovedl and dokázat – dokáže – dokázal ‘to manage’. The second perhaps conveys a stronger sense of overcoming obstacles or resistance.

- **Nedovede pracovat.** He can’t manage to work.
- **Ta to s dětmi dovede.** She knows how to manage with children.
- **Myslíš, že to dokážeš?** Do you think you can/will manage it?
- **Nedokáže mlčet.** He can’t (manage to) keep quiet.

Note also být schopen ‘to be able, capable’ and být s to ‘be up to’.
Nebyl schopen mluvit. He was incapable of speaking.
Nebyl s to pracovat podle plánu. He wasn’t up to working according to a plan.

‘Succeed’ is often expressed impersonally by podařit se, with the person in the dative:

Podařilo se mu najít nové zaměstnání. He succeeded in finding new employment, lit. ‘[It] succeeded to him to find new employment.’

### 7.19.4 Expressing necessity

Muset (or musit) ‘to have to, must’ is used to express necessity/obligation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>musím</th>
<th>I must, I have to</th>
<th>musíme</th>
<th>we must</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>musíš</td>
<td>you must</td>
<td>musíte</td>
<td>you must</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>musí</td>
<td>he, she, it must</td>
<td>musí, musejí</td>
<td>they must</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Musím vařit oběd. I have to cook lunch. I must cook lunch.

Musíte poslouchat rádio. You have to listen to the radio.

Watch the meaning of the negative!

Nemusíte kouřit. You don’t have to smoke. You needn’t smoke.

Other ways of expressing necessity include:

Je/Bylo třeba/potřeba/nutno (něco udělat). It is/was necessary (to do something).

### 7.19.5 Expressing permission/prohibition

Smět, smí, směl ‘to be allowed, may’ expresses the idea of permission:

Smím kouřit? May I smoke? Am I allowed to smoke?

Smím prosit? May I ask (for the next dance)?
Moct ‘can’ is often substituted:

**Smím kouřit? Můžu kouřit?** May I smoke? Can I smoke?

**Můžu si zapálit?** Can I light up?

The negative nesmět means ‘mustn’t, not allowed to’:

**Nesmíte tady kouřit.** You mustn’t (aren’t allowed to) smoke here.

**Tam nesmíš!** You mustn’t go there!

**To se nesmí!** That is not allowed!

**Tady se nesmí kouřit!** You mustn’t smoke here!

**Nesměla jít ven.** She wasn’t allowed to go out.

Note also zakázaný, short form zakázán ‘forbidden’:

**To je zakázané/zakázáno.** That is forbidden.

**Kouření zakázano.** Smoking (lit. ‘to smoke’) forbidden.

**Vstup zakázán!** Entry forbidden!

---

**7.19.6 Am to, ought to, should**

‘Am to, am supposed to’ can be expressed by mát ‘to have’:

**Co mám dělat?** What am I (supposed) to do?

**Máš jít domů.** You are (supposed) to go home.

Contrast with muset ‘to have to, must’:

**Musíš jít domů.** You have to go home. You must go home.

Conditional měl bych means ‘ought to, should’:

**Co bych měl(a) dělat?** What ought I to do? What should I do?

**Měl(a) bys jít domů.** You ought to/should go home.

**Neměl(a) bys tady zůstat.** You ought not to/shouldn’t stay here.

Contrast: Musel(a) bys jít domů. You would have to go home.
The verb

7.19.7 Want, wish, would like, feel like

Chtít ‘to want’ resembles a Type 1 verb, but note chci ‘I want’ and chtějí ‘they want’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>chci</th>
<th>chceme</th>
<th>chcete</th>
<th>chceme</th>
<th>chcete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want</td>
<td>we want</td>
<td>you want</td>
<td>s/he want</td>
<td>they want</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Past tense: chtěl ‘wanted’

It is followed by infinitives or by nouns:

- Jestli chceš, můžeš spát. If you want, you can sleep.
- Chceme jít do kina. We want to go to the cinema.
- Nechtěli jít domů. They didn’t want to go home.
- Nechci mléko, chci kávu. I don’t want milk, I want coffee.
- Co chcete? What do you want?
- Chci nové kolo. I want a new bike.

Often it is more polite to say ‘wish’, using přát si/přeju si:

- Co si přejete? What would you like?
- Co si přejete k pití? What would you like to drink?

To express a polite wish the conditional of chtít ‘to want’ is frequently used:

- Chtěl(-a) bych mluvit s panem Bednářem. I would like to talk with Mr Bednář.
- Chtěl(-a) byste jít s námi? Would you like to come with us?

To say a person ‘feels’ or ‘doesn’t feel’ like doing something the reflexive chce se may be used, with the person in the dative:

- Chce se mi spát. I feel like sleeping, lit. ‘It wants itself to me to sleep.’
- Nechtělo se mu jít do práce. He didn’t feel like going to work.
7.20 Phase verbs – start and stop

Verbs začít, začne, začal < začínat ‘begin’ and přestat, přestane, přestal < přestávat ‘stop, cease’ are also followed by infinitives:

Začal zpívat. He started singing/began to sing.

Přestal zpívat. He stopped/finished singing.

Začínám tomu rozumět. I am starting to understand this.

Infinitives after these phase verbs are always imperfective. Modal and phase verbs can also be combined:

Musím přestat pít. I have to stop drinking.

7.21 Verbs of motion – slovesa pohybu

Several basic verbs of motion do not form imperfective/perfective aspectual pairs. These are simple verbs for ‘going’, ‘carrying’, ‘leading’ etc.

Instead of forming impf./pf. pairs they distinguish between:

(a) ‘determinate’ (determinovaný) or single, one-directional, goal-directed, action

and

(b) ‘indeterminate’ (indeterminovaný) or repeated, habitual, multi-directional, and general (non-goal-directed) activity

Pairs of this kind are indicated in this book by a plus sign, e.g. jít + chodit ‘to go’.

Another distinction made within this group is between (a) motion on foot, and (b) riding or motion in a vehicle, e.g. jít + chodit ‘to go on foot’, jet + jezdit ‘to ride, go by vehicle’.

7.21.1 Jít + chodit, Jet + jezdit

The basic verb jít/jdu ‘to go on foot’ should be distinguished from jet/jedu ‘to go by vehicle, to ride’. Both are Type 1 verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>jdu</th>
<th>go</th>
<th>jdeme</th>
<th>we go</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jdeš</td>
<td>you go</td>
<td>jdeš</td>
<td>you go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jde</td>
<td>s/he goes</td>
<td>jdeš</td>
<td>s/he goes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Past tense: šel, šla, šli ‘went’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>jedu</th>
<th>ride</th>
<th>jedeme</th>
<th>we ride</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jedeš</td>
<td>you ride</td>
<td>jedete</td>
<td>we ride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jede</td>
<td>s/he rides</td>
<td>jedou</td>
<td>they ride</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Past tense: jel, jela, jeli ‘went, rode, drove’

When using jít the j in jd- can be omitted in casual speech, but not in the negative:

- Jde domů. He is going home.
- Nejde domů. He isn’t going home.

Jít and jet can also both also mean ‘come’ – i.e. the ‘going’ can be in either direction:

- Jde/Jede tam. S/he is going there.
- Jde/Jede sem. S/he is coming here.

Each of these two ‘determinate’ verbs has a parallel ‘indeterminate’ verb which refers to habitually repeated or multiple, multidirectional activity:

- chodit ‘to go’ (generally, repeatedly etc.)
- jezdit ‘to ride, go by vehicle’ (generally, repeatedly etc.)

Basically, jít and jet refer to single acts:

- Dnes jdu pěšky. Today I’m going on foot.
- Včera jela vlakem. Yesterday she went by train.
- Vlak jede pomalu. The train is going slowly.

Chodit and jezdit denote repeated, habitual activity, or the activity in general:

- Chodí do školy. S/he goes to school.
- Chodíme často do divadla. We often go to the theatre.
- Jezdíme metrem. We (habitually) go by metro.
- Evička se teprve učí chodit. Evička is just learning to walk.
The futures of jit and jet are special. You add pů- to jdu, and po- to jedu:

Zítra půjdu do školy. Tomorrow I'll go to school.
Půjdeš se mnou? Will you go with me?
Zítra pojedu do Brna. Tomorrow I'll go to Brno.
Pojedeš se mnou? Will you go with me.

The futures of chodit and jezdit just use budu:

Budu chodit do školy. I'll be going to school.
Budu jezdit autobusem. I'll be going by bus.

Imperatives Jdi! Jďete! mean ‘Go!’ while Pojd’! Pojd’te! mean ‘Come!’

Jdi pryč! Jďete pryč! Go away!
Pojd’ sem! Pojd’te sem! Come here!
Pojd’me! is ‘Let’s go!’
Pojd’me do kina! Let’s go to the cinema!

Negative ‘Don’t go!’ uses chodit:

Nechod’! Nechod’te tam! Don’t go! Don’t go there!

7.21.2 Other determinate/indeterminate pairs

Like jít + chodit ‘to go’, and jet + jezdit ‘to ride’, several other ‘determinate’, single-action verbs have ‘indeterminate’ or ‘iterative’ variants for repeated, habitual or general activity.

Two are verbs for speedy movement, ‘run’ and ‘fly’:

běžet + běhat ‘to run’, letět + létat/colloq. lítat ‘to fly’

Three are verbs for ‘carry, take’:

nést, nese, nesl + nosit ‘to carry’ (by lifting)
vést, vede, vedl + vodit ‘to lead’
vézt, veze, vezl + vozit ‘to carry, convey (by vehicle)’

Again these determinate verbs normally form a future with po-:

Compare the following:

**Obvykle jezdí tramvají.** S/he usually goes by tram.
**Dnes jde pěšky.** Today s/he’s going on foot.
**Nerad(a) běhá.** S/he doesn’t like running.
**Dnes běží do školy.** Today s/he’s running to school.
**Často létá/lítá do Paříže.** S/he often flies to Paris.
**Dnes letí do Ameriky.** Today s/he’s flying to America.
**Obvykle nosí aktovku.** S/he usually carries a briefcase.
**Dnes nese kufr.** Today s/he’s carrying a suitcase.
**Vozí je často do lesa.** S/he often takes them to the forest.
**Dnes je veze na koupaliště.** Today s/he’s taking them to the bathing-place.
**Obvykle je vodí po městě.** S/he usually takes them about town.
**Dnes je vede do muzea.** Today s/he’s taking them to the museum.

To these we may add *hnát* + *honit* ‘to chase, drive’. Note the irregular present tense of *hnát* – ženu, ženeš, žene. When reflexive the verb means ‘rush’.

**Honi krávy na pastvu.** S/he (regularly) drives the cows to the pasture.
**Děti se honily po zahradě.** The children rushed about the garden (this way and that).
**Žene ho do práce.** S/he chases him to work.
**Žene se do práce.** S/he rushes to work.

The indeterminate form *honit* also means ‘hunt’.

A couple of other verbs apply the determinate/indeterminate distinction less consistently, e.g. *táhnout* ‘pull’ and *tahat* ‘tug, repeatedly pull’.

A few other verbs also have an optional future with *po-*: e.g. *růst*, *rostl* ‘to grow’ – *poroste* ‘will grow’, *kvést*, *kvet*, *kvetl* ‘to flower, blossom’ – *pokvete* ‘will flower’.

**7.21.3 Prefixed verbs of motion**

Prefixed compounds of the verbs of motion discussed above simply have normal aspectual pairs, of the suffix type.
The patterns are as follows (in the order perfective – imperfective), using as examples verbs with the prefix od- ‘away from’:

- *jít* + *chodit* ‘go’
- *jet* + *jezdit* ‘ride’
- *běžet* + *běhat* ‘run’
- *letět* + *létat* ‘fly’
- *nést* + *nosit* ‘carry’
- *vést* + *vodit* ‘lead’
- *vést* + *vozit* ‘convey’
- *hnát* + *honit* ‘drive, chase’

The opposite prefix při- ‘reach, come near’ produces compound pairs on identical lines, e.g. *přijít* – *přicházet* ‘arrive, come’, *přijet* – *přijíždět* ‘arrive, come (riding, by vehicle)’, *přinést* – *přinášet* ‘bring (by carrying)’, *přivést* – *přivádět* ‘bring (by leading)’.

Jana ještě nepřijela. Jana hasn’t come/arrived yet.
Autobus už odjel. The bus has left.
Přinesl jí kytici. He brought her a bouquet.
Odvezl ji domů. He took her home.
Přivezl ji do kanceláře. He brought/led her into the office.

### More verbs

#### 7.22 Take and get

The most general verb for ‘take’ is *brát*, bere, bral, with its anomalous perfective *vzít*, vezme/colloq. *veme*, vzal.

But three other verbs discussed above can also correspond to English ‘take’:

- *nést* + *nosit* ‘to carry’
- *vézt* + *vozit* ‘to convey (by vehicle)’
- *vést* + *vodit* ‘to lead (on foot)’

The meaning of English ‘take’ is very broad, while *brát/beru* basically means ‘pick up and take or use’:
The verb

Beru knihu ze stolu a čtu. I take/pick up a book from the table and read.

Beru aspirin. I take/use aspirin.

Nesu oběd do pokoje. I take/carry, bring the lunch into the room.

Vezu Ivana do města. I take/convey, drive Ivan into town.

Vedu Ivana do pokoje. I take/lead, bring Ivan into the room.

‘Get’ in the basic sense of ‘receive’ is generally expressed by dostat, dostane, dostal < dostávat, in more formal usage it may be replaced by perfective obdržet:

Dostal/Obdržel můj dopis včera. He got/received my letter yesterday.

Dostává hodně dopisů. He gets/receives a lot of letters.

In the sense of ‘get somewhere’ reflexive dostat se may be used, especially if there is some sense of difficulty or achievement. Otherwise přijít or přijet for ‘arrive’ may be used:

Jak se tam dostanu? How do I get there? How will I get there?

Jak se dostanu k nádraží? How do I get to the station?

Dostal se k břehu. He got to the river bank.

but:

Přišel domů v pět hodin. He got (arrived) home at five o’clock.

7.22.2 Wear

Nosit ‘to carry’ also means ‘to wear (repeatedly, habitually)’. For single occasions use mít ‘to have’ or mít na sobě ‘to have on (oneself)’:

Obvykle nosí brýle. S/he usually wears spectacles.

Dnes nemá brýle. Today s/he’s not wearing spectacles.

Co má na sobě? What is s/he wearing? What has s/he got on?

Dnes má na sobě ten hrozný kabát. Today s/he’s wearing that awful coat.

Another expression for ‘wear’, in the sense of ‘put on’, is vzít si (na sebe), lit. ‘to take (onto oneself)’:
Co si mám vzít na sebe? What should I put on/wear?
Mám si vzít kravatu? Should I (‘have I to’) wear a tie?

### 7.22.3 Know and understand

Vědět/vím ‘to know/I know’ is an irregular Type 4 verb. Only the ‘they’ form of the present matches the infinitive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vím</th>
<th>I know</th>
<th>víme</th>
<th>we know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>viš</td>
<td>you know</td>
<td>vítě</td>
<td>you know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>víš</td>
<td>s/he knows</td>
<td>vědí</td>
<td>they know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Past tense: věděl knew

This verb is used for knowing facts and information:

**Víme, co děláme.** We know what we are doing.

**Nevědí, kde je pan Beneš.** They don’t know where Mr Beneš is.

Don’t confuse it with vidět/vidí ‘to see’.

**Nevidíte ho? Nevíte, kde je?** Don’t you see him? Do you know where he is?

To say you ‘know, are familiar with’ a person or place use znát, zná, znal instead:

**Znáte Prahu?** Do you know Prague?

**Znáte Karla?** Do you know Karel?

**Ne. Karla neznáte.** No. You don’t know Karel.

Another verb umět is used for ‘know how to’:

**Pan Beneš neumí vařit.** Mr Beneš doesn’t know how to cook.

**Věra umí číst.** Věra knows how to read.

**Neumějí vařit.** They don’t know how to cook.

Rozumět/rozumím ‘to understand’, a compound of umět ‘to know how’, is followed by the dative:
The verb

**Nerozumíte mi?**

Don’t you understand me?

**Rozumím ti.**

I understand you (understand what you are saying).

It is often used with language adverbs.

**Rozumíte česky?**

Do you understand Czech?

**Nerozumějí anglicky.**

They don’t understand English.

The verb chápat, chápe – pochopit ‘to grasp/understand’ overlaps somewhat in meaning with rozumět, but it is followed by the accusative case. It can also mean ‘understand’ in the sense of ‘have fellow-feeling, sympathy for’:

**Nechápu, proč odešla.**

I don’t understand why she left.

**Chápu tě. Chápu tvoji situaci.**

I understand you. I understand your situation.

### 7.22.4 Like and prefer

There are two competing ways of saying ‘to like’, using mít rád or líbit se.

The phrase mít rád ‘to like’ (lit. ‘to have glad’) is used to express a general, habitual liking for a thing or person. Rád is a short-form adjective (see 4.4).

**Igor má rád tenis.**

Igor likes tennis.

**Věra má ráda hokej.**

Věra likes ice-hockey.

**Dítě rádo spí.**

The child likes sleeping.

**Rádi spí.**

They like sleeping.

The usual negative is nemít rád:

**Věra nemá ráda tenis.**

Věra doesn’t like tennis.

With people the meaning can be rather strong, so be careful!

**Mám tě rád/Mám tě ráda.**

I really like you. I love you.

You can also express active ‘dislike’ with nerad, nerada (short -a- !):

**Věra má tenis nerada.**

Věra dislikes tennis.

To say that you ‘like’ or ‘dislike’ doing something you use rád or nerad with the activity verb (which is NOT in the infinitive):
I like to listen to the radio.

I don’t like cooking.

The competing expression líbit se ‘to please/be pleasing’ expresses a more immediate response of liking or not liking than the more fixed, habitual quality of mít rád ‘to like/love’. The person is expressed in the dative:

Prague pleases/doesn’t please me = I don’t like it.

Brno pleases Karel = he likes it.

Mother doesn’t like this sweater.

How do you like it here?

I like it here very much.

To say you ‘prefer doing’ or ‘like doing better/best’, use (nej)raději, colloquially also (nej)radší (short i!) and (nej)radějč.

I quite like watching TV, but I prefer reading and I like sleeping best.

With a thing, use mít (nej)radší or (nej)raději. Sometimes the verb mít is omitted:

I like cotton better/best. I prefer cotton.

I like wine better than beer.

For immediate preference, again use líbit se (nej)víc ‘to please more/most’:

I like that red shirt better/best. víc/nejvíc.

Mít ‘to have’ is used in a number of other idiomatic phrases. Reflexive mít se means ‘to be getting on’ in phrases such as:

How are you?

I am well.
Other idioms include:

Mám hlad. I am hungry, lit. ‘I have hunger.’
Máte hlad? Are you hungry?
Mám žízeň. I am thirsty, lit. ‘I have thirst.’
Mám pravdu. I’m right, lit. ‘I have truth.’
Nemám pravdu. I’m not right. I’m wrong.

Mít zpoždění, literally ‘to have a delay’, is used for ‘to be late, delayed’:

Vlak má zpoždění. The train is late, delayed.
Máme dvacet minut zpoždění. We are twenty minutes late.

For a person being/arriving late simply use jít/přijít pozdě:

Jdu pozdě. I am late.
Přišel jsem pozdě. I arrived late.

7.22.6 Eat and drink

Jíst ‘to eat’ is a slightly irregular Type 4 verb (note the related noun jídlo ‘food’):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>We</th>
<th>You</th>
<th>S/He</th>
<th>They</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jím</td>
<td>jíme</td>
<td>jítě</td>
<td>jí</td>
<td>jedí (!)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Past tense: jedl ‘ate’
Imperative: jez! ‘eat!’

Perfective sníst, sní, snědl ‘eat up’ or najíst se ‘eat one’s fill’.

Dát si, literally ‘to give oneself’ is often used when talking about choosing food:

Co si dáte? What will you have?
Dám si . . . I’ll have . . .

Note also the commonly used verbs snídat ‘to have breakfast’, obědvat ‘to have the midday meal, lunch’, and večeřet ‘to have the evening meal, supper’.
Kdy snídáte? V šest (hodin).

When do you have breakfast? At six (o’clock).

Kdy obědváte? Ve dvanáct.

When do you have lunch? At twelve.

Kdy večeříte? V sedm.

When do you have supper? At seven.

Perfectives of these take the form nasnídat se ‘eat one’s fill of breakfast’ or posnídat ‘have some breakfast’.

Pít, pijí, pil ‘to drink’ is a Type 3 verb, with perfectives vypít ‘to drink up’ or napít se ‘to have a sufficiency of drink’.

‘Drink’ in general is pití. ‘Something to drink’ is něco k pití, but ‘a drink, beverage’ is nápoj.

7.22.7 Reflexive usage – wash and dress

Verbs often add se ‘oneself’ when the action is devoted to the subject/self, e.g. mýt, myje, myl ‘to wash’, perfective umýt:

Myju se.
I wash. I wash myself.

but:

Myju nádobí.
I wash the dishes.

‘To wash’ of clothes is prát, pere, pral, pf. vyprat:

Peru košile.
I’m washing some shirts.

When the action of mýt ‘to wash’ is devoted to the subject/self, but an associated object is also present, se is replaced by si:

Myju si ruce.
I wash ‘for myself’ the hands. I wash my hands.

Compare oblékat ‘to dress, put on’, svlékat ‘to undress, take off’:

Oblékám se.
I dress myself, get dressed, put on my clothes.

Oblékám si kabát.
I put on ‘to self’ the coat, I put on my coat.

Pavel se svléká.
Pavel gets undressed, takes off his clothes.

Pavel si svléká svetr.
Pavel takes off his sweater.
Similarly, obouvat ‘to put on shoes’, zobuat ‘to take off shoes’:

Obouvám se. Obouvám si boty. I put on my shoes.

Zouvám se. Zouvám si boty. I take off my shoes.

7.22.8 Say and tell

Perfactive říct (older říci), řekne, řekl is the basic verb for ‘to say, tell’:

Já mu to řeknu. I’ll tell him (say it to him).

Řekl mi to včera. He told me (said it to me) yesterday.

Its imperfective is říkat:

Co říkáš? What are you saying?

Note the passive use of the reflexive:

Jak se řekne . . . ? How do you say . . . ? lit. ‘How is said . . .?’

Jak se řekne ,,school“? How do you say ‘school’?

Jak se řekne anglicky ,,škola“? What’s the English for ‘škola’?

7.22.9 Marry and divorce

The verb ženit se, oženit se [s +ins.] is only used of a man getting married:

Pavel se žení. Pavel’s getting married.

Pavel se oženil [s Marcelou]. Pavel got married [to Marcela].

Vdát se, vdávat se [za +acc.] (pf. also provdat se) is only used of a woman:

Marcela se vdává. Marcela’s getting married.

Marcela se (pro)vдala [za Pavla]. Marcela got married [to Pavel].

Phrases with brát, vzít ‘to take’ are applicable generally:

Pavel a Marcela se vzali. Pavel and Marcela got married, lit. ‘married each other.’
Pavel si vzal (za ženu) Angličanku.
Eva si vzala (za muže) Italka.
To these we may add rozvést se, rozvádět se ‘to get divorced’:
Pavel a Marcela se rozvedli.

7.22.10 Remember and forget

Two verbs for ‘remember’ and ‘forget’ are related compounds. ‘Remember’ mostly has si attached:

vzpomenout si, vzpomínat si to remember, to recall
zapomenout, zapomínat to forget

Both have special past forms vzpomněl si and zapomněl (though vzpomnil and zapomnil also occur).
Both are followed by na +acc. when they mean ‘remember/forget about’, ‘think/not think about’:

Vzpomněl si na sestru. He remembered (about), recalled his sister.
Zapomněl na sestru. He forgot (about) his sister.
Vzpomíná si na Prahu. He remembers (about), recalls Prague.
Zapomíná na Prahu. He is forgetting (about) Prague.

But when some item is lost from the memory, ‘forget’ is followed by a direct object:

Zapomněl adresu. He forgot the address.

Another verb pamatovat si > zapamatovat si +acc. ‘to remember’ refers to storage in the memory (rather than active recall):

Pamatuje si adresu. He remembers the address.
Zapamatoval si adresu. He remembered the address.
Pamatovat se na +acc. (with se!) can be used similarly to vzpomínat si na:

Pamatuje se na Prahu. He remembers (about) Prague.

Compare paměť -ti f. ‘memory’ and vzpomínka ‘a memory, a recollection’:
Mám dobrou/špatnou paměť. I have a good/bad memory (ability).
Mám na něj pěknou vzpomínku. I have a nice memory of him.

7.22.11 Fear and hope

Bát se/bojím se ‘to fear’ and mít strach ‘to be afraid’ (lit. ‘to have fear’) may be followed by either aby or že. After aby the verb is negative!

Bojím se, že spadnu. I’m afraid I’ll fall.
Bojím se, abych nespadl. I’m afraid I might fall (i.e. hope I don’t).

A weaker fear can be expressed by obávat se:

Obávám se, že přijdu pozdě. I’m afraid that I’ll arrive late.

‘To hope’ is doufat (but the noun is naděje ‘hope’).

Doufám, že nespadnu. I hope I won’t fall.

7.22.12 Happen and become

The basic imperfective verb for ‘to be happening’ is dít se, děje se, dělo se:

Co se děje? What is going on?

But the basic perfective for ‘to happen’ is stát se, stane se, stalo se:

Co se stalo? What happened?
Co se stane? What will happen?

This has an imperfective counterpart stávat se, but this means ‘happen repeatedly, regularly’:

To se stává. That happens.

The pair stát se < stávat se is also used for ‘to become’, often followed by a noun in the instrumental:

Stal se ředitelem firmy. He became manager of the company.
or: Stal se z něho řiditelní firmy.

Stalo se to zvykem. It became a habit.
Distinguish from stát – stojí – stál ‘to stand, cost’, with a long vowel in the past tense.

Kolik to stojí? Kolik to stálo? How much does it – did it cost?

### 7.23 Basic/irregular verbs

This list, and the next, assumes an ability to recognise tenses etc.

- **Být**
  - jsem, jsme
  - jsi, jste
  - je, jsou, byl I am . . . , was
  - není isn’t, there isn’t
  - colloq. (j)seš = jsi you are

- **Buď!**
  - be! bytí being

- **Buďu**
  - budeme

- **Buđeš**
  - budete

- **Buđe**
  - budou shall, will be

- **Zbýt, zbude** (colloq.) zbyde, zbyl < zbývat be left (over)

- **Mít**
  - mám, máme
  - máš, máte
  - má mají měl I have . . . , had
  - měj have! k mání to be had, available

- **Chtít**
  - chci, chceme
  - chceš, chcete
  - chce chtějí chtěl I want . . . , wanted

- **Jíst**
  - jím, jíme
  - jí, jíd, jedl I eat . . . , ate
  - jez! eat!

- **Sníst, sním, snědl** pf. eat up

- **Najíst se, najím se, najedl se** pf. eat your fill

- **Moct, -ci**
  - můžu, můžeme
  - můžeš, můžete
  - může můžou mohl I can . . . , could, was able
formal: **mohu, mohou** I can, they can
**mohl by** could, would be able

**pomocí, pomoci < pomáhat** help
**pomoz!** help!

**vědět** vím vime
**to know** viš vítě
ví vědí věděl I know . . . , knew
věz! know!

**povědět, povím, pověděl** pf. tell
**odpovědět, odpovím < odpovídat** reply

### 7.24 Monosyllabic/irregular verbs

Here is a selection of the commoner verbs. Most monosyllabic verbs you encounter will follow similar patterns. Under Type 1 there are also polysyllabic infinitives ending in **-at** (see 7.4.11).

Forms are given in the order: infinitive, third-person singular present tense, past tense. Certain participles/verbal nouns are noted in brackets. Arrowheads point to the perfective form.

**Type 5 verbs:**

**-át:**
- **dát, dá, dal < dávat** give, put
- **podat < podávat** pass
- **prodat < prodávat** sell
- **vydat < vydávat** publish

**pojčkat, počká, počkal < čekat** wait

**tkát, tká, tkal (tkaní) > utkat** weave
- **pojtkat, potká, potkal < potkávat** meet, encounter
- **setkat se < setkávat se** (s +ins.) meet up with

**ptát se, ptá se, ptal se (ptání) > zeptat se** ask

**zdát se, zdá se, zdál se (zdání)** seem

**znát, zná, znal** know

**poznat < poznávat** recognise, get to know
Type 4 verbs:

-át: bát se, bojí se, bál se fear
    spát, spí, spal (spaní) sleep
    vyspat se pf. have a (good) sleep
    stát, stojí, stál (stání) stand, cost
    (see also stát se, stane se below, Type 2)
-ět: smět, smím . . . směji, směl may, be allowed to
-íť: pohřbít, pohřbí, pohřbil (pohřbený) < pohřbívat bury
    křtí, křtí, křtil (křtění) > po- christen
    snít, sní, snil (snění) dream
    znít, zní, zněl (znění) > za- ‘ring out, sound’

Type 3 verbs:

áť: hrát, hraje, hrál (hraní) > zahrát play
    vyhrát < vyhrávat win
    prohrát < prohrávat lose
    hřát, hřeje, hřál (hřátí/hřání) > o-, za- warm
    ohřát < ohřívat warm up
    přát, přeje, přál (přání) wish
    smát se, směje se, smál se > za- (zasmání) laugh
    usmáť se < usmívat se smile
-ěť/-ět: chvět se, chvěje se, chvěl se (chvění) tremble
-íť: bít, bije, bil (bití) > uhdít, udeřit hit
    zabít (zabití) < zabíjet kill
    dít se, děje se, děl se (dění) happen, be going on
    hnít, hnie, hnil (hnití) > s- rot
    líť/líje, líje/líje, lili (lití) pour
    nalít < nalévat pour out
    pít, pije, pil (pití) > napít se, vypít drink
    opít se < opíjet se get drunk
    sít, seje, sel|sil (setí) > na-, za-, vy- sow
    šít, šije, šil (šití) > u- sew
    vyšíť < vyšívat embroider
The verb

zrát, zraje, zrál (zrání) > u- ripen

žít, žije, žil live
  užít (užití) < uživat use

-out: objout, obuje, obul (obutý) < obouvat (se) put on (shoes)
  zout < zouvat (se) take off (shoes)
plout, pluje, plul (plutí) float, sail
  odpout < odpouvat float, sail away

-ýt: kryt/*krejt, kryje/*kreje, kryl (krytý) cover
  skryt/*skrejt < skryvat conceal, hide
mýt/*mejt, myje/*meje, myl > umýt (umytý) wash
  rýt/*rejt, ryje/*reje, ryl (rytí) dig, engrave

Type 2 verbs:

-át: stát se, stane se, stal se < stávat se become, happen
  dostat (dostání) < dostávat get
  přestat < přestávat stop, cease
  vstát < vstávat get up, stand up
  zůstat < zůstávat stay

-ít: vzít, vezme/*veme, vzal (vzatý, vzeti) < Type 1 brát take
  začít, začne, začal < začínat begin, start
  počít, počne, počal (počatý, početí) conceive, begin

-out: dotknout se, dotkne se, dotkl se (dotknutí/dotčení) < dotýkat touch
   hnout, hne, hnal (hnutí) < hýbat, hýbu (se) move
     vyhnout se < vyhýbat se +dat. avoid
   přijmout, přijme, přijal (přijatý, přijetí) < přijímat receive
     objijmout, objijme, objal/objejmul (objetí/objejmutí) < objímat embrace, hug
   zamknout, zamkne, zamkl (zamknutí/zamčení) < zamykat lock
     odemknout < od(e)mykat unlock
zalpnout, zapne, zapnul (zapnutý) < zapínat fasten, switch on
  rozipnout < rozipínat unfasten, undo
  vypnout < vypínat switch off
tnout (†tíť), tne, tnu/t’al (tnut, tnutí/t’at, †tětí) cut, slash
žnout (†žít), žne, žnul/žal (žat/žnut, žnutí) reap, mow
  -ct/ci: řict/říci, řekne, řekl (řečený) < říkat say, tell

Type 1 verbs:

-át:  brát, bere, bral (braní) > Type 2 vzít take
  vybrat < vybírat choose
hnát, žene, hnal (hnaní) + honit drive
  vyhnanat < vyhánět drive out
lhát, lže, lhal (lhaní) > zalhat lie = tell lies
prát, pere, pral (praní) > vyprat wash clothes
psát, píšu/i . . . píšou/i, psal (psaní) > napsat write
  podepsat < pod(e)pisovat sign
  popsat < popisovat describe
poslat, pošle, poslal (poslání) < posílat send
rvát, rve, rval (rvaní) tear
řvát, řve, řval (řvaní) > za- ‘roar’
  *** srát, sere, sral (sraní) > vysrat se shit
zvát, zve, zval (zvaní) > pozvat invite
  nazvat < nazývat call, name

-at:  česat, češe/česá, čsal (česání) > učesat comb
hýbat, hýbe/-á, hýbal > hnout (se) move, bend
chápat, chápe chápal (chápání) > pochopit understand
kašlat, kašle, kašlal > zakašlat cough
kázat, káže, kázal preach
  ukázat < ukazovat show
klamat, klame, klamal > oklamat deceive
  zklamat pf. disappoint

Mono-syllabic/irregular verbs
The verb

koupat, koupe/-á, koupal (koupání) > vykoupat (se) 
bathe
lámat, láme, lámal > zlomit 
break
mazat, maže, mazal > na- etc. 
spread, oil
plakat, pláče, plakal 
cry, weep
plavat, plave, plaval (plavání) > zaplavat (si) 
swim
skákat, skáče, skákal (skákání) > skočit 
jump
vázat, váže, vázal > s-, u- 
tie, bind

-ët/-et: 
jet, jede, jel + jezdit 
ride, go
přijet < přijíždět 
arrive
odjet < odjíždět 
leave
přejet (přejetí) < přejíždět 
run over

-ít: 
jít, jde, šel/shla/shli + chodit 
go
přijít < přicházet 
arrive
odejít < odcházet 
leave, go away

mlít, mele, mlel (mletý) > u- 
grind
opřít (se), opře, opřel (opřený) < opírat 
lean, prop
otevřít, otevře, otevřel (otevření) < ot(e)vírat 
open
zavřít < zavírat 
close
unmířit, umře, umřel (umření) < umírat 
die

-ct/-ci: 
moct|moci, může, mohl be able, can
1sg. mohu/můžu, 3pl. můžou/mohou
pomoc < pomáhat +dat. help
pěct/*píct/péci, peče, pekl (pečený, pekoucí) > upéct
bake
téct/*týct/téci, teče, tekl (tečení, tekoucí) flow
utéct < utíkat run away
tlouct/tlouci, tluče, tloukl (tlučení, tlukoucí) thump
vléct/*vlíct/vléci, vleče, vlékl (vlečený, vlekoucí) drag
objléct/*(v)oblíct/oblíci, obleče, oblekl (oblečený)
or regular obléknout/*(v)oblíknout < oblékat/
*oblíkat (se) put on (clothes)
svléct\(^{/}\)svlíct/svléci, svleče, svlekl (svlečený)
or regular svléknout\(^{/}\)svlíknout < svlékat\(^{/}\)svlíkat (se)
take off (clothes)

-st: číst, čte, četl(a)/čtla, četl (čtení) > přečíst read
klást, klade, kladl (kladení) > položit put, lay
krást, krade, kradl (kradení) steal
pf. ukrást/ukradnout, ukradne, ukradl (ukradení)
kvést\(^{/}\)kvíst, kvete, kvetl (kvetení) blossom, flower
nést\(^{/}\)nýst, nese, nesl (nesení) + nosit carry
  přinést < přinášet bring
plést\(^{/}\)plíst, plete, pletl (pletení) > uplést knit, confuse
růst, roste, rostl grow
třást (se), třese, třásl (třesení) shake
vést\(^{/}\)víst, vede, vedl (vedení) + vodit lead
  přivést < přivádět bring

-zt: lézt\(^{/}\)lízt, leze, lezl (lezení) climb, crawl
  nalézt, nalezne, nalezl < nalézat find
vézt\(^{/}\)vízt, veze, vezl (vezení) + vozit convey (by vehicle)
  přivézt < přivážet bring
The basic roles of the seven cases were introduced in Chapter 3, but will now be considered in a little more detail. Their functions are often covered by prepositions in English.

A preposition (předložka) is a word like ‘on’, ‘onto’, ‘for’, ‘across’, which links up with nouns to define place, time, purpose etc.

Czech prepositions are always followed by nouns in particular cases.

The first part of this chapter focuses on the use of cases themselves, without prepositions.

8.1 The nominative case

The basic (dictionary) form of a Czech noun is the subject form, habitually called the nominative case. This is used for the subject (agent, doer) of a verb:

Otec vaří. Father is cooking.

Voda je dobrá. The water is good.

8.2 The accusative

A noun directly affected by the action or other meaning of a verb is called its object. If you say ‘The dog bites Peter’ then the object is Peter. But if you say ‘Peter bites the dog’, then the object is the dog.

Masculine inanimate and neuter nouns always stay the same in the accusative case:

Máme kufr. Máme auto. We have a suitcase. We have a car.

Otec vaří oběd. Father is cooking lunch.
The accusative and genitive of masculine animate nouns are normally identical:

**Znáte Igora. Dopis od Igora.** You know Igor. A letter from Igor.

Note that the verb ‘to be’ is *not* followed by the accusative! It is usually followed by the nominative case:

**To je Jana/David.** That is Jana/David.

Adverbially, the accusative expresses time duration:

**Mluvil celou hodinu.** He spoke for a whole hour.

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### 8.3 The genitive

To say ‘of’ you regularly use the genitive case on its own:

- **voda – sklenice vody** glass of water
- **víno – sklenice vína** glass of wine
- **autor – jméno autora** name of the author
- **papír – kousek papíru** piece of paper

The preposition *z* ‘out of’ + genitive may be required when ‘of’ means ‘out of’ a group. Compare:

**Dva studenti šli domů.** Two students went home.

**Dva ze studentů šli domů.** Two of the students went home.

Genitive phrases do not normally precede the nouns they accompany, except in poetical usage, e.g. **lásky čas** ‘love’s time’.

An exception is when possession is expressed using an adjectival noun, or other nouns which cannot form possessive adjectives (see 4.6):

**Škvoreckého romány** ‘Škvorecký’s novels’ – cf. **Kunderův román** ‘Kundera’s novel’

Certain verbs, especially reflexive verbs are followed by the genitive case, where an English speaker might expect the accusative, e.g. **bát se** ‘to fear, be afraid of’, **ptát se** ‘to ask’, **všimnout si** ‘to notice’:

**Bál se trestu.** He was afraid of punishment.

**Všimli si jeho strachu.** They noticed his fear.

**Zeptal se Jany (genitive), kde je Karel.** He asked Jana where Karel was.
S/he respects her opinion.

She reached a great old (lit. ‘high’) age.

They achieved very good results.

They took advantage of a suitable moment.

She enjoyed the fine weather.

Sometimes the genitive expresses ‘some, a (notable) quantity of’. This may occur in everyday colloquial phrases:

That one got [a lot] of presents!
What a lot of presents she got!

What a lot of people there are here!

In fixed phrases after a negative verb the genitive occasionally denotes ‘not any’. This usage is largely confined to idioms in present-day speech:

He didn’t say a word. He said not a word.

It’s no wonder.

The dative

The dative basically means ‘to/for’ and corresponds to what is habitually called the ‘indirect object’ in English grammar.

Used without a preposition the dative case has its basic meaning of ‘to/for’, e.g. giving ‘to’ or doing ‘for’:

I’m giving a book to Věra.
I’m cooking lunch for Igor.

Note that in English instead of saying ‘to Věra’ and ‘for Igor’ you can say ‘I give Věra the book’ and ‘I cook Igor lunch.’

Some Czech verbs are followed by a dative where ‘to/for’ is never used in English, e.g. pomáhat ‘to help’, věřit ‘to believe’:

We’re helping (giving help ‘to’) Honza.
We believe (give trust ‘to’) Dad.

Sometimes the dative actually means taking something ‘from’ someone, someone ‘to’ whom the thing belonged or was associated:
He stole fifty crowns from my friend. 

He also took from him his passport and wallet.

He took his measure/temperature.

The dative of the person also occurs in ‘impersonal’ verb constructions, where the verb is given a subjectless third-person sg. form with neuter agreement, e.g.

Je/Bylo mi (dative) Věry (genitive) líto. I was sorry for Věra, lit. ‘It was to me of Věra sorry.’

Podařilo se Věře (dative) utéct. Věra succeeded in running away. Věra managed to run away, lit. ‘It succeeded itself to Věra to run away.’

Nechtělo se Věře jít domů. Věra did not feel like going home, lit. ‘It did not want itself to Věra to go home.’

8.5 The locative

The locative case is used only after prepositions – especially to denote location, but also for time or topic.

Igor bydlí v Ostravě. Igor lives in Ostrava.
Prague je na Vltavě. Prague is on the Vltava.
Po obědě spí. After lunch s/he sleeps.
Mluvíme o Evě. We are talking about Eva.

8.6 The instrumental

On its own the instrumental case denotes the means or instrument ‘by’ or ‘with’ which something is done:

vlak, auto – Cestujeme vlakem, we travel by train, by car.
autem.
nůž – Krájíme chleba nožem. We cut bread with a knife.
pero – Pišeme perem. We write with a pen.
tužka – Pišeme tužkou. We write with a pencil.
The instrumental can also have the spatial meaning ‘through’:

**Půjdeme parkem.** We’ll go through the park.

Some verbs are habitually followed by the instrumental, e.g. hnout pf. ‘to move’, stát se pf. ‘to become’, jmenovat impf./pf. ‘to appoint’, chlubit se ‘boast of’:

- Nemohl hnout rukou. He couldn’t move his hand.
- Stal se důležitým politikem. He became an important politician.
- Jmenovali ho předsedou. They appointed him (as) chairman.
- Chlubil se svými známostmi. He boasted of his acquaintances.

Moving a thing or part of the body may also be expressed by the instrumental:

- Mávl rukou. He waved his hand.
- Nehnul ani prstem. He did not move even a finger.
- Pokrčil rameny. He shrugged his shoulders.
- Hodil po něm kamenem. He threw a stone at him. He used a stone to throw at him.
  
  **but:** Hodil knihu na stůl. He threw the book on the table.

The instrumental may also be used after the verb ‘to be’ instead of the nominative, to indicate that something or someone acts ‘as’ or occupies some role:

- Kniha je vždycky dobrým dárkem. A book is always a good present.
- Výhodou je levná cena. The advantage is the cheap price. The cheap price acts as an advantage.
- Čím byl váš otec? What (instrumental) was your father?
- Otec byl učitel(ém). Father was a teacher.

A number of instrumental forms have become adverbs, e.g. náhodou ‘by chance’, většinou ‘mostly’, cestou ‘on the way’, mimochodem ‘by the way’.

Others have become prepositions with the genitive, e.g. během ‘during’, kolem ‘around’, pomocí ‘with the help of, by means of’, prostřednictvím ‘through, by means of’.
8.7 The vocative

For addressing one person (masculine or feminine), the vocative must regularly be used. In English we simply use intonation: ‘Tom’!


In informal usage a masculine surname may be left in the nominative when preceded by pan ‘Mr’, e.g.

pane Novák! – in formal standard usage: pane Nováku!

Czechs use titles when addressing people more than is the habit in English, e.g.

pane inženýre! ‘Mr engineer!’ paní inženýrko! ‘Mrs engineer!’
pane doktore! ‘Mr doctor!’ paní doktorko! ‘Mrs doctor!’

8.8 Prepositions

Czech prepositions are always followed by nouns in particular cases. For example, the accusative case is used after:

na in the sense of ‘for (a purpose)’ or ‘onto’

Čekám na Věru, na Milana. I’m waiting for (on, ‘onto’) Věra, Milan.

Dávám oběd na stůl I put (‘give’) lunch onto the table.
(acc. = nom.).

pro meaning ‘for’ in the sense of ‘for the benefit of’

Kniha pro Irenu, pro Igora. A book for Irena, for Igor.

přes meaning ‘across, despite’

Most přes řeku. A bridge across the river.

8.8.1 On – onto, in – into

Sometimes the case taken by a preposition changes its meaning. One common example is na ‘on’ or ‘onto’.

When na means location ‘on’ it takes the locative, but when it means ‘onto’ (with motion towards the place) it takes the accusative:

Kniha leží na stole. The book is lying on the table.
Dávám knihu na stůl. I give/put the book onto the table.
However, for ‘in’ and ‘into’ you normally use two different prepositions. V + locative means location ‘in’, while do + genitive means motion ‘into’:

Marta je v Brně.  Marta is in Brno.
Marta jede do Brna. Marta goes to/into Brno.

Notice how with some places you say ‘on’, and then ‘onto’ for motion, instead of ‘in, (in)to’:

Slovensko, Morava: Jsou na Slovensku, na Moravě.  They are in (lit. ‘on’) Slovakia, Moravia.
Jedou na Slovensko/na Moravu.  They are going to Slovakia/ Moravia.
poštá. Je na poště.  S/he’s at the post-office.
Jdu na poštou.  I’m going to the post-office.

Ulice ‘street’ uses either, depending on whether the houses are included, but náměstí ‘square’ always uses na ‘on’:

Čekám na ulici/na náměstí.  I am standing on the street, on the square.
Bydlím v Karlově ulici/na Karlově náměstí. I live in ‘Charles Street’/on ‘Charles Square’.

Similarly, with districts of Prague such as Žižkov, Smíchov:

Bydlím na Žižkově, na Smíchově.  I live in Žižkov, in Smíchov.
Jedu na Žižkov, na Smíchov.  I’m going to Žižkov, to Smíchov.

Various places which are not considered as enclosed spaces use na, whereas those which are treated as buildings or enclosed spaces use v instead:

na koncertě at the concert — na koncert to the concert
v kině at the cinema — do kina to the cinema

It is ultimately just a matter of usage.

8.8.2 Prepositions — case usage and forms

Many prepositions are followed by one case only, but some are followed by more than one case. We have listed these below under the case which for practical purposes we may consider the basic one for the preposition concerned.
Many prepositions have a fundamentally spatial meaning, but are used also for other purposes, such as designating time.

Certain prepositions which you may like to think of as basically ’+ locative’ or ’+ instrumental’ switch to being ’+ accusative’ when they describe motion relative to the place described.

The most essential prepositions are listed in capitals. Only a selection of usages beyond the most basic are listed here.

Some non-syllabic, i.e. single-consonant, prepositions often have an appended -e. Generally this occurs as follows:

before a consonant cluster, e.g. ve škole ‘in school’, ze školy ‘from/out of school’

before an identical consonant, e.g. ve vodě ‘in the water’,

ze zahrady ‘from/out of the garden’

or its voiced/voiceless pair, e.g ve filmu ‘in the film’, se Zorou ‘with Zora’

Some ending in consonants add -e before mě, mne, mně ‘me’ and case forms of všeho, všeho etc. ‘all’, e.g. ode mě ‘from me’, ode všeh ‘from all’.

### 8.8.3 Prepositions + accusative only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Usage</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mimo</td>
<td>outside, apart from, except for</td>
<td>Bydlí mimo Prahu. He lives outside Prague.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Všichni tam byli mimo něho. Everyone was there apart from him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ob</td>
<td>every other</td>
<td>Chodili ob dům. They went to every other house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ob týden. Every other week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRO</td>
<td>for (sake, benefit of)</td>
<td>Tohle je pro tebe. This is for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Četba pro děti. Reading-matter for children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for, due to (a reason)</td>
<td>Pro nemoc zavřeno. Closed for illness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jdu pro mléko. I’m going for some milk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for (to fetch)</td>
<td>Rozhodli se pro druhou možnost. They decided in favour of the second option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jsem pro. I am in favour.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


8.8.4 Prepositions + genitive only

**BEZ** without

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bez kávu bez cukru.</td>
<td>I drink coffee without sugar.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bez mě.</td>
<td>Without me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DO** into, to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jdu do města.</td>
<td>I'm going into/to town.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zůstanu do ledna.</td>
<td>I'll stay till January.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OD** away from, from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>odešla od okna.</td>
<td>She went away from the window.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dostal dopis od Petra.</td>
<td>He got a letter from Petr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ode mě.</td>
<td>From me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**U** at (house, place of)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bydlím u tety.</td>
<td>I live at my aunt’s.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedí u okna.</td>
<td>S/he sits at the window.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Z, ZE** out of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vyšel z pokoje.</td>
<td>He went out of the room.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ze mě.</td>
<td>Out of me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kniha spadla ze/se stolu.</td>
<td>The book fell off the table.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.8.5 Prepositions + dative only

**K, KE** towards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jdu ke kostelu.</td>
<td>I go towards the church.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jak se dostanu k řece?</td>
<td>How do I get to the river?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**to**
to (house, place of) Jdu k tetě. I'm going to my aunt's.
AŽ K(e) as far as Jdu až ke kostelu. I go as far as the church.
PROTI against, opposite Jste proti mně. You are against me.

8.8.6 Preposition + locative only

při at, during Při obědě mlčeli. At lunch they were silent.

8.8.7 Prepositions + locative/accusative

NA on Kniha leží na stole. The book is lying on the table.

**NA + accusative**

onto Položil knihu na stůl. He put the book on(to) the table.

on (instrument) Hraji na housle. I play the violin.

for (purpose) Čekám na tramvaj. I'm waiting for the tram.

Kartáček na zuby. A brush for your teeth. A toothbrush.

for (intended time) Jsem tu jen na týden. I'm here only for a week.

O about (topic) Mluví o politice. They're talking about politics.

at, in (certain fixed time phrases) O víkendu. At the weekend.

O prázdninách. In the holidays.
**O + accusative**

- on, against: **Opírá se o stůl.** He is leaning on the table.
- by (difference): **Jsi o rok starší než já.** You’re a year older than me.
- for, after, in (with certain verbs): **Starala se o matku.** She looked after/cared for her mother.
- **Zajímám se o kulturu.** I am interested in culture.

**PO + accusative**

- after: **Po obědě četl noviny.** After lunch he read the paper.
- **Toužil po ní.** He yearned after her. He longed for her.
- along: **Běžela po ulici.** She ran along the street.
- about, around, all over: **Běhala po zahradě.** She ran about the garden.
- ... each: **Dala jim po koruně.** She gave them one crown each.

**V, VE**

- in: **Sedím v autě.** I’m sitting in the car.
- **Byl ve straně.** He was in the party.
- in (month etc.): **V lednu sněží.** In January it snows.
**V(e) + accusative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Czech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>on (day)</td>
<td><strong>V pondělí.</strong> On Monday.</td>
<td><strong>Ve středu, ve čtvrtek.</strong> On Wednesday, Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in (with some verbs)</td>
<td><strong>Nevěříš v Boha?</strong> You don’t believe in God?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**8.8.8 Prepositions + instrumental/accusative etc.**

Most of these also require the **accusative** in some senses, see below. **ZA** is also followed by the **genitive**.

- **MEZI**  
  between  
  among(st)  
  **Mezi oknem a stolem.** Between the window and the table.  
  **Mezi kamarády.** Amongst friends.  
- **NAD** above, over  
  **Letěl nad městem.** He flew over the town.  
  **Nade mnou.** Above me.  
- **POD** below, under  
  **Stál pod hradem.** He stood below the castle.  
  **Pode mnou.** Below me.  
- **PŘED** in front of  
  before  
  ago  
  **Stál před domem.** He stood in front of the house.  
  **Před válkou bydlel v Brně.** Before the war he lived in Brno.  
  **Byl tu před rokem, před týdnem.** He was here a year ago, a week ago.  
- **S, SE** with  
  **Jdu tam s Petrem.** I’m going there with Petr.  
  **Se školou.** With the school.  
  + acc. in idioms only:  
  **Nejsem s to (rozhodnout se).** I am not up to (deciding), able (to decide).
Cases and prepositions

+ gen. ‘down from’ more often Z(e)

Jeli s/z kopce dolů. They drove down the hill.

ZA behind, beyond

Stoji za stromem. S/he is standing behind a tree.

after (following after)

Běžela za ním. She ran after him.

### ZA + accusative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>for (in exchange for)</td>
<td>Koupil to za pět korun. He bought it for five crowns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in (time taken)</td>
<td>Udělám to za hodinu. I’ll get it done in an hour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in (after time elapsed)</td>
<td>Přijdu za hodinu. I’ll come in a hour’s time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ZA + genitive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>during the time of</td>
<td>Za války byl doma. During the war he was at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Za Karla Čtvrtého. In the reign of Charles IV.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MEZI, NAD, POD, PŘED and ZA are also followed by the accusative when they mean ‘motion towards’ the place:

Spadl mezi židle. He fell between the chairs.
Spadl pod stůl. He fell under the table.
Vyběhl před dům. He ran out in front of the house.
Schovala se za strom. She hid behind a tree.

Figuratively also nad ‘above, more than’ and pod ‘below, less than’:

8.8.9 More prepositions

Most other prepositions take the genitive:


A few take the dative:

- díky ‘thanks to’, kvůli ‘for the sake of, because of’, naproti ‘opposite’, navzdory ‘despite’, vůči ‘towards, with respect to’.


Chapter 9

Syntax and conjunctions – syntax a spojky

9.1 Sentences – věta a souvětí

A sentence (věta) may be said to be simply a string of words containing at least one finite verb, ending in a full stop (tečka), e.g.

- Ptáci létají. Birds fly.
- Prší. It is raining.

If there is more than one finite verb, then each forms its own ‘clause’, in Czech also called věta. The more complex sentence is now called souvětí.

The following sentence has two clauses, connected by a conjunction (spojka), which here is the word a ‘and’:

- Ptáci létají a lidé chodí. Birds fly and people walk.

Syntax (syntax f., skladba) is the study of how words are put together to form different kinds of clauses and sentences.

9.2 Yes and no

The basic words for yes and no are:

- Ano./colloquially Jo. Yes.
- Ne. No.

‘Yes’ with questioning intonation can also act as a response, as in English, e.g.

- Ano? Jo? Yes?

Another common colloquial term for ‘yes . . .’ or ‘mmh . . .’ is no . . ., expressing agreement, often to a list of things or statements, with level or rising intonation. The concluding yes might switch to jo instead, with a dropping intonation.
Tenhleten salám? – This salami? – Mmh . . . /Yes . . .
Takovýhle kus? – A piece like this? – Mmh . . . /Yes . . .

Or, with a rising intonation, no! might express an emphatic, satisfied agreement:

Máš to s sebou? – No! Do you have it with you? – I do! Yes I do!

Otherwise no is commonly used as ‘well, um’, with varying intona-
tions, and in the common phrase no jo ‘oh well’.

No, nevím. Well, I don’t know.
No jo. Ale ted’ musím domů. Oh well. But now I have to go home.

Emphatic positives are terms such as:

Ano! Jo! Yes!
Samozřejmě! Ovšem! Obviously! Of course!

An emphatically rejecting negative is:

Kdepak! No! Definitely not!

Also:

Vůbec ne! Absolutely not! Not at all!
Ovšemže ne! Of course not!
Samozřejmě že ne! Obviously not!
Jistěže ne! Certainly not! Indeed not!

A slightly lengthier answer than simply yes or no may be dealt with by
repeating the verb in the question, which can be the past-tense -l form,
modal verb on its own or future auxiliary bude:

A máš čas? – Ano, mám. And do you have time? – Yes, I do.
A musel odejít? – Ne, nemusel.

And did he have to leave? – No, he didn’t.
And will you be going there every day? – Yes, I will.

9.2.1 Negative clauses – záporné věty

To make a verb in a clause negative you just add ne-:

Nečekám. I’m not waiting.
Nemám čas. I don’t have time. I haven’t got time.

Negative adjectives also add the prefix ne-, e.g. neinteligentní ‘unintelligent’. In other contexts, when negating a single word, ne can be a separate word for ‘not’ (as well as ‘no’, the opposite of ano ‘yes’).

Ne dnes, zítra. Not today, tomorrow.

Note how Czech uses double negatives, unlike standard English. Verbs in sentences with ni- words have to be made negative:

Nikoho nemá rád. lit. ‘He doesn’t like nobody.’ = He likes nobody/He doesn’t like anybody.
Nemluví o ničem. lit. ‘He doesn’t talk about nothing.’ = He talks about nothing/He doesn’t talk about anything.

A contrastive word for ‘but’ following a negative clause is nýbrž, though ale does also occur:

Nejel domů, nýbrž do města. He did not go home, but into town.

The word sice ‘albeit’, placed second in its clause, sets up a following clause of concession with a less contrastive ale for ‘but’:

Nejel sice domů, ale hned tam zavolal. He didn’t [albeit] go home, but he did telephone there immediately.

Nemá [sice] hodně peněz, ale má hodně štěstí. He doesn’t have a lot of money, but he has plenty of good luck.

9.2.2 Neither . . . nor, either . . . or

The negative contrast of ‘neither . . . nor’ is regularly expressed by ani . . . ani:
Nejel ani domů ani do města.
He went neither home nor to town.

The first ani may be omitted, for a less explicit contrast:

Nejel domů ani do města.
He didn’t go home or go to town.

The parallel pair ‘either . . . or’ is often expressed by bud’ . . . nebo:

Bud’ jel domů nebo do města/Jel bud’ domů nebo do města.
Either he went home or to town.

Nebo (sometimes occurring as anebo) is also used independently:

Jel domů nebo do města.
He went home or to town.

9.2.3 No, not . . . any

‘No, not . . . any’ with a noun is usually expressed by žádný, with a negative verb (see also 5.15):

Nemá žádné jídlo.
S/he has no food. S/he doesn’t have any food.

9.3 Questions – otázky

Questions without a question word at the beginning can be expressed simply by a change of intonation, signalled in writing only by the question mark (otazník):

Máš kufr?
Do you have a suitcase?

Vy jste Jana?
You are Jana? Are you Jana?

Jste Angličanka?
Are you English?

Nejsou doma?
Aren’t they at home?

Sometimes the order of subject and verb is reversed, as in English questions with ‘is’. This can add a more emphatic questioning tone:

Věra je Češka?/Je Věra Češka?
Is Věra (a) Czech?

To je hrad?/Je to hrad?
Is it a castle?

Věra má dceru?/
Does Věra have a daughter?

Má Věra dceru?
An emphatic question is sometimes introduced by copak, an enquiring, wondering one by zdalipak or jestlipak:

**Copak nevíš, že Robert je už zase doma?**
Don’t you know that Robert is back at home again?

**Zdalipak/Jestlipak se na mě ještě pamatuješ?**
Do you still remember me, I wonder?

### 9.3.1 Polite questions

In Czech the negative form of an enquiry is often politer.

**Promiňte. Nevíte, kde je nádraží?**
Excuse me. Do you know where the railway station is?

Unless this is delivered with an emphatic intonation, this does not correspond to the slightly scornful English question ‘Don’t you know where the station is?’ In Czech a question which suggests that the person ought to know can however be positive:

**Víte, kde je nádraží?**
You know where the station is?

A negative question in Czech can often mean the same as the corresponding positive question in English:

**Nevíte, kde je pan Beneš?**
Do you know where Mr Beneš is?

**Neřekl byste mi, kdo to je?**
Could you tell me who that is?

In English ‘Don’t you know . . . ?’ etc. would express surprise or even sarcasm.

The difference between negative and positive questions is however often reduced or even neutralised when some other form of politeness is present, e.g. by saying ‘could you’ etc. Intonation also has to be taken into account, not surprisingly:

**Nemohl/Mohl byste mi (laskavě) říct, kdo to je?**
Could you (kindly, possibly) tell me who that is?
9.3.2 Question tags

English often tags a whole variety of little phrases on to questions, which ask for a response of agreement or disagreement, e.g. ‘are you?’ , ‘aren’t you?’ , ‘does he?’ , ‘doesn’t he?’ , ‘will they?’ , ‘won’t they?’ , ‘would she?’ , ‘wouldn’t she?’

The briefest Czech equivalents for all of these tags are simply: 

žá? or vid’, both amounting to ‘is that not so?’

But you can also say, more explicitly:

žá ano?/colloquially žá jo? if the expected answer is yes
žá ne? if the expected answer is no

Vy mě neznáte, žá?/žá ne? You don’t know me, do you?
Nechce jít domů, žá?/žá ne? S/he doesn’t want to go home, does s/he?

David je nemocný, žá?/žá ano/jo? David is ill, isn’t he?
Přijeli jste včera, žá?/žá ano/jo? You arrived yesterday, didn’t you?

Notice how in English the tag is positive if the preceding verb is negative, and vice versa. This does not happen in the equivalent Czech tags.

A slightly different usage of ano?/jo? and ne? at the end of sentences is used to turn what started out as a suggestion into a brief question. There isn’t a great deal of difference here between adding a negative or a positive tag, but the negative tag suggests more strongly that the person being asked should agree to the suggestion:

Půjdeme domů, ne? We’ll go home, shall we not?
Let’s go home, no? Let’s go home, OK?

Půjdeme domů, ano/jo? We’ll go home, is that all right?

9.4 Exclamations – zvolací věty

As in English, exclamatory statements (zvolací věty) are habitually indicated in speech by intonation, and in writing by an exclamation mark (vykřičník).

Nemám čas! I have no time!
9.5  Word order – slovosled

Znáte Karla?  Do you know Karel?

Ne. Karla neznáte.  No. You don’t know Karel.

Note the flexible word order of Czech. You habitually put the word or phrase you want to emphasise more at the end. This is normally the new information.

Sentences and clauses usually begin with what is already known from the context, the ‘theme’ – téma, or ‘starting point’, and go on to deliver what is new, the ‘rheme’ – réma, or main point of the statement or utterance.

There can be several word-order variants of the English sentence ‘Pavel killed Petr’, depending on the previous context. This is enabled by the case system of the language, which puts Petr in the accusative form Petra, as the object of the verb. As a result the word Petr does not need to be in a particular position in the word order simply to indicate that it is the object. Its position depends on the known context and what is new information.

If we know that Pavel killed someone, but the question is ‘Who did Pavel kill?’, the new information is Petr and the sentence might come out as:

Pavel zabil Petra.  Pavel killed Petr.

On the other hand, if we know that Petr was killed, but not who did it, then the sentence would come out as:

Petra zabil Pavel.  Pavel killed Petr. = It was Pavel who killed Petr. = Petr was killed by Pavel.

(Note how English can use a passive construction to achieve this re-ordering of sentence elements. Czech does not need to do this.)

If we know about Pavel (our starting point) and also that he has done something to Petr, but we don’t yet know exactly what, then the statement could come out as:

Pavel Petra zabil.  Pavel killed Petr.

Similarly, if we have the same information, but take Petr as our starting point, the statement could also come out as:

Petra Pavel zabil, ale Jiřího jenom zranil.

Petr was killed by Pavel, but Jiří was only wounded by him.

The arrangement of sentence and clause word order dependent upon context is termed Functional Sentence Perspective – Funkční větná perspektiva or Aktuální členění větěné.
9.5.1 Enclitics – příklonky

An enclitic (příklonka) is a word which does not normally carry its own stress, but follows after another stressed word.

Enclitics in Czech are typically unstressed auxiliary verbs and pronouns, which are habitually placed early in the sentence or clause, following an initial stressed word or phrase.

When jsem, jsi (-s) and jsme, jste are used in past-tense forms they normally come in the second possible position in a sentence. So, if a subject pronoun is added for emphasis, you say:

Já jsem čekal-a. I waited.

If there’s a question word or phrase:

Jak dlouho jsi čekal-a? How long did you wait?
Co jsi dělal-a? or Cos dělal-a? What were you doing?

If se/si ‘oneself’ is needed, it is placed after jsem, jsi, jsme, jste:

My jsme se učili. We studied/were studying.
Kde jsme se učil-a? Where did you study?

Familiar sg jsi + se, si regularly become ses and sis:

Učil-a ses? Were you studying?
Zpíval-a sis? Were you singing (to/for yourself)?

The position for other personal pronouns is also after the auxiliary, but also after any reflexive pronoun se/si:

Věra ji hledala. Věra was looking for her.
Jan se ho pořád ptal, kam chce jít. Jan kept asking him where he wanted to go.

‘Him’/‘her’/‘it’ come after ‘me’/‘you’/‘us’:

Dejte mi ho! Já vám ho nedám! Give me him/it! I won’t give you him/it!
Dej mi ji! Já ti ji nedám! Give me her/it! I won’t give you her/it!

Demonstratives regularly follow after the other pronouns. The typical order of enclitics, taking account of the above, is thus:
Syntax and conjunctions

9.6 Conjunctions — spojky

A conjunction (spojka) is a word which connects two clauses together (cf. spojit pf. connect, join).

Coordinating conjunctions connect together principal or main clauses which could be independent sentences on their own:

Šel do města a koupil lístky do divadla.
He went to town and bought some theatre tickets.

Subordinating conjunctions, e.g. když ‘when’, ‘that’, introduce subordinate clauses, which, as their name indicates, are subordinate to the main clause to which they are attached and modify it in some way.

Often such clauses are adverbial in function, e.g. they may indicate the time of an action in the main clause:

Když přišel domů, našel její dopis.
When he got home, he found her letter.

They may also have the function of a noun phrase, e.g.

Co (object) řekl Petr?
What did Petr say?

Řekl, že nemá čas.
He said that he didn’t have time.

9.6.1 Enclitics with conjunctions

Normally conjunctions will count as the first word in a clause, and enclitics will follow after them, in their usual internal sequence:

Když jsem ho včera viděl, stál před divadlem.
When I saw him yesterday, he was standing in front of the theatre.

Coordinating conjunctions meaning ‘and’ or ‘but’, however, may be regarded as standing outside the clause which follows them. Some other
word or phrase must precede the enclitics in such clauses, as if the clause were standing on its own:

- **Přišel jsem domů a řekl jsem jí, co se mi stalo.**
  I came home and told her what had happened to me.

- **Šel jsem do obchodu, ale neměl jsem s sebou peníze.**
  I went into the shop but I did not have any money with me.

The subordinating conjunction **že** is regularly followed by any enclitics, but sometimes a stressed word, especially a stressed pronoun or noun, may also precede the enclitics:

- **Řekl mu, že Jana mu řekla (or: že mu Jana řekla), že ho navštíví zítra.**
  He said that Jana had told him that she would visit him tomorrow.

### 9.7 Commas – čárky

The use of the comma (čárka) is more rigidly codified in Czech than in English.

Subordinate clauses are regularly demarcated by commas, at both ends if one of these does not coincide with the beginning or end of the sentence. This happens regardless of whether there would be a pause in speech:

- **Starý dům, který stál na náměstí, shořel.**
  The old house which stood on the square has burnt down.

- **Zavolám, až přijdu.**
  I’ll call when I arrive.

- **Řekl, že nebude mít čas.**
  He said that he wouldn’t have time.

- **Řeknu mu, aby ti zavolal.**
  I will tell him to call you.

However, subordinate clauses connected by a ‘and’ are not themselves divided by commas:

- **Řekl, že nebude mít čas a že zítra odjíždí.**
  He said that he wouldn’t have time and that he was leaving tomorrow.

An adverb or similar qualification may precede a subordinating conjunction, without being followed itself by a comma:

- **Tepře když prišel domů, uvědomil si, že ztratil klobouk.**
  Only when he reached home did he realise that he had lost his hat.

There is usually no comma before a ‘and’ (unless there is a very long narrative chain of clauses repeatedly connected by a ‘and’):
Kluci šli domů a máma jim uvařila oběd.
The boys went home and mum cooked them lunch.

This also normally applies to phrases and clauses connected straightforwardly, non-contrastively, with i ‘and also’, nebo/anebo, či ‘or’, ani ‘or’ (used after a negative verb):

- **Smál se i plakal.** He laughed and also wept.
- **Chodili se koupat nebo hráli tenis.** They went bathing or played tennis.
- **Hrál si anebo četl.** He played or read.
- **Nejedl ani nepil.** He did not eat or drink.

But when used with a noticeable pause, or if another clause linking word follows, e.g. a tak/proto ‘and so/therefore’, a přece ‘and yet’, commas are added:

- **Nechtěl jít domů, a čekat v dešti také nechtěl.** He didn’t want to go home, and he also didn’t want to wait in the rain.
- **Chceš kávu, nebo čaj?** Do you want coffee, or tea?
- **Půjdemo, nebo zůstaneme doma?** Shall we come, or stay at home?
- **Napíšu, anebo zavolám.** I will write, or else I will phone.
- **Bylo už jaro, a přece ještě mrzlo.** It was spring now, and yet it was still freezing.

Also with ani . . . , ani ‘neither . . . , nor’:

- **Nemám ani čas, ani chut’.** I have neither the time, nor the appetite. I do not have either the time, or the appetite.

Ale ‘but’ requires a comma:

- **Navštívil jsem ho, ale nebyl doma.** I visited him, but he wasn’t at home.

### 9.8 Quotation marks – uvozovky

Quotation marks are usually printed like this: „takto“

Double ones are frequently used to mark direct speech:

- „Nemám čas,“ řekl pan Novák. ‘I don’t have time,’ said Mr Novák.
Single quotation marks may be used inside a pair of double ones:

„Takové cocktail parties vůbec nemám rád,“ řekl Libor.
‘I really don’t like “cocktail parties” of that kind,’ said Libor.

9.9 Reported speech – nepřímá řeč

Direct speech (přímá řeč) simply is, or purports to be, the actual words spoken.

Reported or indirect speech (nepřímá řeč) is typically introduced by ‘that’, in Czech by the conjunction že.

When reporting speech in Czech you do not alter the original tense of the verb as you do in English. If Karel said:

Přijdu zítra.
I will come tomorrow.

this is reported, using the same tense, as:

Karel řekl, že přijde zítra.
Karel said (that) he ‘will’ (= would) come tomorrow.

Note how in English ‘that’ is often omitted before reported speech.

9.10 Time

9.10.1 When

Když is the usual word for ‘when’, introducing an adverbial clause of time.

Když přišla, začali pracovat.
When she came, they started to work.

With future reference, až is used instead (když means ‘if’ in such a context):

Až odejdou, začnu pracovat.
When they leave, I’ll start to work.

Questions however require the interrogative form kdy?

Kdy přijde?
When will s/he come?

Nevím, kdy přijde.
I don’t know when s/he will come.

Kdy is only used for non-questions if a time word precedes it, introducing a relative clause, not an adverbial one:

Přišel čas, kdy museli začít.
The time had come when they had to begin.
**9.10.2 Until and before**

Až often means ‘until’, referring to an oncoming boundary point, after a verb with future reference:

**Počkám, až bude mít čas.**  I'll wait until s/he has (‘will have’) time.

Otherwise, dokud . . . ne- (i.e. with a negative verb) is regularly used for ‘until’, in the sense of ‘while something is not yet the case’ and may be more emphatic:

**Počkám, dokud nebude mít čas.**
I'll wait until s/he has time (i.e. as long as necessary, while s/he is not yet free).

**Dokud nezavoláš, nepřijdou.**  I will not come until you call me.
**Dokud nezavolala, nevěděla, kde je.**
Until he called, he did not know where she was.

Another word for ‘until’ is než, in the temporal sense of ‘before and until’:

**Zůstal na nástupišti, než odjel vlak.**
He stayed on the platform until the train left.

**or: . . . dokud neodjel vlak.**

It may also translate as simply ‘before’:

**Než odjel vlak, šel si koupit noviny.**
Before the train left, he went to buy a newspaper.

This is a shortened form of dřív než, literally ‘earlier than’:

**Dřív než odjel vlak, jeho přítelkyně už byla doma.**
Before the train had left, his girlfriend was already back at home.

**9.11 Conditions**

**9.11.1 If and when**

Když ‘when’ also often carries a sense of ‘if’:

**Když jsme měli čas, šli jsme do kina.**
When (if) we had time, we went to the cinema.

In fact, in talking about the future když only means ‘if and when’ (followed by a future verb). To say a clear ‘when’ in the future use až instead:
Když budeme mít čas, půjdeme do kina.
If we have (‘will have’) time, we’ll go to the cinema.

Až budeme mít čas, půjdeme do kina.
When we have (‘will have’) time, we’ll go to the cinema.

9.11.2 If and would

‘If’ is often expressed by kdyby. This consists of kdy- followed by the conditional tense, where the forms of by are fused with kdy- in a single word:

- kdybych if I
- kdybys if you
- kdyby if he/she/it
- kdybysme if we
- kdybyste if you
- kdyby if they

Kdyby is used for ‘if’ when the main statement has a conditional ‘would’, referring to something which is seen as not necessarily ever going to be true.

Kdybych měl čas, šel bych do kina.
If I had time, I would go to the cinema.

Kdyby měla peníze, koupila by dům.
If she had money, she’d buy a house.

Co byste dělali, kdybyste neměli peníze?
What would you do, if you didn’t have money?

To talk about what might have been in the past (but wasn’t), you may add byl or byl býval to the conditional, making a ‘past conditional’ (section 7.11):

Kdybych byl (býval) měl peníze, byl bych koupil nové auto.
If I had had (‘would have had’) money, I would have bought a new car.

Kdyby byl býval rychlejší, byl by chytil vlak.
If he had been quicker, he would have caught the train.

There is a tendency however not to use two past conditionals in a row, which seem clumsy, but replace one (or both) by an ordinary conditional:

Kdybych (byl býval) měl peníze, koupil bych nové auto.
### 9.11.3 If and would with the infinitive

Another (colloquial) way of saying ‘if’ is with the infinitive:

- **Mít čas, šel bych na ten film.** ‘To have time’ = If I had time, I’d go to that film.
- **Být na tvém místě, šel bych domů.** Were I in your place, I’d go home.

After **být** you find persons in the instrumental:

- **Být tebou, já bych to nedělal.** If I were you, I wouldn’t do it.

After negative **nebýt** you use the genitive:

- **Nebýt jeho, chytili by vlak.** Were it not for him, they’d have caught the train.

### 9.11.4 Other words for if

Where there is no ‘would’, ‘if’ may be conveyed explicitly by **jestli, jestliže** or -li:

- **Jestli(že) bude pršet, zůstaneme doma.** If it rains (‘will rain’), we’ll stay at home.
  
  or:

  **Bude-li pršet, zůstaneme doma.**

But ‘if’ in the sense of ‘insofar as’ is very often **pokud:**

- **Pokud bude pršet, zůstaneme doma.** If it rains, we’ll stay at home.
- **Pokud budeš mít čas, přijd’ mě navštívit.** If you have time, come and visit me.

‘As long as’ may be expressed by **dokud,** which carries a different meaning. In the following example the rain is falling, not merely anticipated as a possibility:

- **Dokud bude pršet, zůstaneme doma.** As long as it is raining/carrying on raining, we’ll stay at home.

### 9.12 If meaning whether

‘If’ in the sense of ‘whether’ (regarding a question) is normally expressed by **jestli** (and *not* by **jestliže**):
He asked me if I would come. (The question was: Přijdete? Will you come?)

I don’t know if he will come. (Přijde? Will he come?)

In formal usage, jestli is replaced by zda, or an appended -li:

Nevědělá, zda přijdou/ přijdou-li. She did not know whether they would come.

9.13 Aby etc.

9.13.1 Expressing purpose with aby

Aby means literally something like ‘that/in order that . . . would’, and is used to express purpose. Like kdyby, it is shaped from a- followed by the conditional auxiliary bych etc., producing:

abych that I . . . abychom/colloq. abysme that we . . .

abys that you . . . abyste that you . . .

aby that he/she/it . . . aby that they . . .

Aby is never followed by infinitives! In English however we usually say ‘to’ or ‘in order to’ to express purpose:

Potřebuji peníze, abych si koupil dům. I need money to buy a house (lit. ‘in order that I would buy a house’).

Šel tam, aby mu řekl pravdu. He went there to tell him the truth (lit. ‘in order that he would tell him the truth’).

A plain infinitive can be used in Czech after a verb of motion:

Přišel jsem tě navštívit. I have come (in order) to visit you.

A related use of aby is with the phrase je čas ‘it is time’, in the sense of ‘the time is ripe for this purpose’:

Už je čas, abych šel domů. It is time for me to go home now.

The infinitive may occur if the person is not expressed:

Je čas jít domů. It is time to go home.
9.13.2 Instructions and wishes with aby and at'

Aby 'that would/should' is also used for instructions, wishes and advice, after verbs of wanting or telling:

- **Chci, abys přišel.** I want you to come (lit. ‘that you would come’).
- **Chtěji, abych studoval medicínu.** They want me to study medicine.
- **Řekli mu, aby si koupil nové auto.** They told him to buy a new car.

But with verbs meaning ‘want’ the infinitive is used, not aby, where both verbs have the same subject:

- **Chci přijít.** I want to come.

After imperatives at’ is often used in the sense of a warning:

- **Řekni mu, at’ nepřijde pozdě.** Tell him not to be late.

9.13.3 Infinitive versus aby

Sometimes the infinitive and a clause with aby can be alternative constructions. The infinitive may sometimes be preferable where the statement is briefer, aby where it is longer and more elaborate.

- **Radila nám, abychom už radši hned šli domů.** She advised us to go home preferably right away.
  *or:* **Radila nám jít domů.** She advised us to go home.
- **Požádala ho, aby do Francie jel v létě spolu s ní.** She asked him to go together with her to France in the summer.
  *or:* **Požádala ho jet spolu s ní.** She requested him to go with her.

Dovolit < dovolovat ‘allow’ and zakázat/zakáže < zakazovat ‘forbid’ often occur with infinitives.

- **Lékař mu zaká zal kouřit.** The doctor forbade him to smoke.
- **Učitel mu taky nedovolí kouřit.** The teacher also won’t let him smoke.

But aby may also be used:

- **Nedovolila mi/Zakázala mi, abych tam jel spolu s ní.** She did not allow me/she forbade me to go there with her.
Dovolit is commonly used with aby in phrases of introduction (lit. ‘allow me to . . .’):

Dovolte, abych se (vám) představil. May I introduce myself.

Já jsem/Jmenuj u se Jean Smith. I am/My name is Jean Smith.

– Těší mě. Pleased to meet you.

Dovolte, abych vám představil svého kolegu pana Millera. Let me introduce you to my colleague Mr Miller.

9.14 List of coordinating conjunctions

These conjunctions join together equally important words, phrases or clauses:

- **a** and
  - Jedli a pili. They ate and drank.
  - Měli pivo a víno. They had beer and wine.

- **i** and also
  - Měli pivo i víno. They had beer and wine also.

- **i...i** both . . . and
  - Měli i pivo i víno. They had both beer and wine.

- **ale** but
  - Petr je tady, ale Jana je doma. Petr is here, but Jana is at home.

- **nebo, anebo** or, or else
  - Chcete červené nebo bílé víno? Do you want red or white wine?

- **bud’ . . . nebo** either . . . or
  - Bud’ mu zavolej, nebo napiš. Either call him, or write.

- **at’ . . . nebo** whether . . . or
  - At’ mladí, nebo staři, všichni se smáli. Whether young or old, everyone was laughing.

- **ani . . . ani** neither . . . nor
  - Nemám ani víno, ani pivo. I have neither wine nor beer.
9.15 List of subordinating conjunctions

These introduce subordinate clauses of time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conjunction</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>když</td>
<td>when</td>
<td>Když přišel, začalo pršet. When he came, it started to rain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kdykoli(v)</td>
<td>whenever</td>
<td>Kdykoli přišel, začalo pršet. Whenever he came, it started to rain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>až</td>
<td>until</td>
<td>Počkám, až přijdeš. I'll wait till you come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>až</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dokud</td>
<td>while, as long as</td>
<td>Rozhodni se, dokud je čas. Decide while there's time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dokud ne</td>
<td>until</td>
<td>Dokud nepřijdeš, zůstane tady. Until you come, I'll stay here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>než</td>
<td>until</td>
<td>Zůstal tam, než přišla. He stayed there till she came.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>než</td>
<td>before</td>
<td>Než přišla, začalo pršet. Before she arrived, it started to rain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>od té doby, co</td>
<td>(ever) since</td>
<td>Prší od té doby, co přišla. It's rained ever since she came.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>po té, co</td>
<td>after</td>
<td>Po té, co odešla, začalo sněžit. After she left, it started to snow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sotva(že)</td>
<td>scarcely</td>
<td>Sotva odešla, začalo sněžit. Scarcely had she left when it started to snow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jakmile</td>
<td>as soon as</td>
<td>Jakmile zavoláš, přijdu. As soon as you call, I'll come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jen co</td>
<td>as soon as</td>
<td>Přijdu, jen co tohle napišu. I'll come as soon as I've written this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>mezitímco</td>
<td>while</td>
<td>Mezitímco/zatímco psala dopis, uvařil jí čaj. While she wrote the letter, he made her some tea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zatímco</td>
<td>= mezitímco</td>
<td>Pokud měl peníze, utrácel. As long as he had money, he spent it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pokud</td>
<td>as long as</td>
<td>Pokud měl peníze, utrácel. As long as he had money, he spent it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These indicate purpose, reason, condition, result etc.:

- **aby** in order to: Šel domů, aby se umyl. He went home in order to wash.
- **aby, at’** to: Řekni mu, aby přišel/at’ přijde. Tell him to come.
- **protože, poněvadž** because: Vrátil se, protože zmeškal vlak. He returned because he had missed the train.
- **nebot’** for: Zůstal doma, nebot’ pršelo. He stayed at home, for it was raining.
- **s tím, že** on the grounds that, saying that: Odmítl s tím, že nemá čas. He refused, saying that he didn’t have time.
- **když** if (and when): Když budu mít čas, přijdu. If I have time, I’ll come.
- **kdyby** if: Přišel bych, kdybych měl čas. I’d come if I had time.
- **jestli(že), -li** if: Jestli(že) máš čas/Máš-li čas, přijď’. If you have time, come.
- **jestli, zda, -li** if, whether: Zeptal se, jestli (zda) půjdu s nimi/půjdu-li s nimi. He asked if I would go with them.
- **i když, ač(koli)(v)** although: Ačkoli/I když pršelo, šli ven. Though it was raining, they went out.
- **třebaže** even though: Šel pěšky, třebaže ho bolely nohy. He went on foot, even though his feet were hurting.
přestože despite the fact that **Byla mu zima, přestože svítlo slunce.** He was cold, despite the fact that the sun was shining.

aniž without, though not **Šel tam, aniž (by) ho pozvali.** He went there without being invited, though they hadn’t invited him.

jak how **Vyprávěl, jak zmeškal vlak.** He told how he missed the train.

colloq. if **Jak budeš zlobit, nepůjdeš nikam.** If you’re bad, you’re not going anywhere.

jako by as if **Šel dál, jako by mě nepoznal.** He walked on as if he didn’t recognise me.

jen(om)že only **Šla bych s tebou, jenže nemám čas.** I’d go with you, only I don’t have time.

kdežto whereas **Ráda plavala, kdežto on se vždycky bál.** She liked swimming, whereas he was always afraid.

zatímco while **Ráda plavala, zatímco on se vždycky slunil.** She liked swimming, while he always sunbathed.

pokud as far as **Pokud vím, není tady.** As far as I know, s/he isn’t here.

if, insofar as **Pokud budeš mít čas, přijde.** If you have time, come.

takže so (that) **Pršelo, takže jsme nemohli jít ven.** It was raining, so we couldn’t go out.

že that **Řekla mi, že přijde.** She told me that she would come.

(proto), že that, because (often preceded by proto ‘for the reason’) **Urazil se (proto), že ho nepozvali.** He was insulted (for the reason) that they had not invited him/because they hadn’t invited him.
Many Czech words can be analysed into three elements:

prefix + root + suffix

e.g. před- + -škol- + -ní ‘pre-school’

= prefix ‘pre’ + root ‘school’ + adjectival suffix

Not all elements are necessarily present. Less common are compound words containing more than one root, e.g.

**knih|kup|ec** ‘book merchant, bookseller’

derived from **kniha** ‘book’ (**knih** ‘of books’) + **kup|ec** ‘merchant’

where **kup|ec** is itself derived from the root **kup**- in **kupovat** ‘to buy’

Sometimes certain sounds regularly alternate in words derived from the same root. For example, the same root **kup**- ‘buy’ has a variant form **koup**-, found in the noun **koup|č** ‘a purchase’ and the perfective verb **koupit** ‘to buy’.

### 10.1 Vowel alternations

Alternations between long and short vowels have been mentioned in other chapters of this book, e.g. **dům** ‘house’ – **domu** ‘of the house’, **být** ‘to be’ – **byl** ‘was’.

These alternations also often occur in related words with common roots, e.g.

- **á – a:** **láska** ‘love’ – **laskavý** ‘kind, loving’
- **é – e:** **jméno** ‘name’ – **jmenovat** ‘to name’
- **í – i:** **knížka** dim. ‘(little) book’ – **kniha** ‘book’
í – e/e: svítit ‘to shine’ – světlo ‘light’

dítě ‘child’ – děti ‘children’, dětský ‘children’s’

dívka ‘girl’ – děvče ‘girl’

hlídat ‘to watch, guard’ – hledat ‘to look for’

jízda ‘a ride’, jízdenka ‘travel ticket’ – jezdit ‘to ride, go’

ou – u: koupit pf. ‘to buy’ – kupovat impf. ‘to buy’
kousek dim. ‘(small) piece’ – kus ‘piece’

ú – u: účes ‘hairdo’ – učesat pf. ‘to comb’

ú – o: dům ‘house’ – doma ‘at home’, domácí ‘domestic’

hrůza ‘horror’ – hrozný ‘horrible’

ý – y: být ‘to be’ – byt ‘flat, apartment’

jazýček dim. ‘(little) tongue’ – jazyk ‘tongue’

Prefixes na-, pro-, při-, u-, vy- and za- sometimes have lengthened vowels. Prefixed nouns often have this when derived from verb roots with a masculine zero suffix or the feminine suffix -a:


Only a few verbs have lengthened prefixes themselves, e.g. závidět impf. ‘to envy’, nenávidět impf. ‘to hate’.

Less obvious are some root alternations involving č/e (sometimes lengthened to í) alongside forms with a or á, e.g.

devět nine devítka a number nine devátý ninth
devatenáct nineteen devadesát ninety

pět five – pátý fifth

pětka a number five patnáct fifteen padesát fifty

úřední official řídit to direct, drive úřad office

úředník an official pořádek order

Inserted -e-, as in the genitive plural of nouns, is another common feature, e.g.

kapsa ‘pocket’ – kapesní ‘pocket’ adj., kapesník ‘(pocket-)handkerchief’

barva ‘colour’ – barevný ‘coloured’
Finally, colloquial variants of long vowels (see 2.9) occur in certain words, sometimes co-existing in standard usage with formal variants, e.g.

é – ý/í: polévka 'soup' – informal polívka
okno 'window', formal diminutive okénko – usually okýnko
kámen 'stone', formal diminutive kamének – usually kamíněk

ý – ej: brýle 'spectacles' – often brejle

ú – ou: úřad ‘office’ – colloq. ouřada 'bureaucrat' (pejorative)
uchů ‘ear’ – diminutive ouško (only)

10.2 Consonant alternations

Some alternations of consonants have also been detailed in earlier chapters. The following are particularly relevant to word formation:

soudruh ‘comrade’ – soudružka ‘female comrade’

k – č: ruka ‘hand’ – ruční ‘hand’ adj., ručník ‘(hand-)towel’
park ‘park’ – dim. parčík

ch – š: strach ‘fear’ – strašný ‘fearful, terrible’
suchý ‘dry’ – sušenka ‘biscuit’, sušit ‘to dry’
Čech ‘Czech’ – čeština ‘Czech language’

noc ‘night’ – noční ‘nocturnal’
konec ‘end’ – konečný ‘final’

d – z: narodit se pf. ‘to be born’ – narození ‘birth’, narozeniny ‘birthday’
chodit ‘to walk’ – chůze ‘gait, walk’

t – c: psát ‘to write’ – psací ‘writing’ adj., psací stroj ‘typewriter’

s – š: vysoký ‘tall, high’ – výše ‘height’

z – ž: vozit ‘to convey, cart, carry’ – přivážet ‘to bring’
sk – št’: český ‘Czech’ – čeština ‘Czech language’
ck – čt’: německý ‘German’ – němčina ‘German language’
anglický ‘English’ – angličina ‘English language’

10.3 Forming nouns

For recognising the meaning and derivation of nouns and adjectives a knowledge of suffixes is particularly useful.
Prefixes are particularly typical of verb derivation. Those attached to nouns and adjectives are often part of the verb from which they are derived, but see also 10.10.

10.3.1 Holders of occupations

Czech personal nouns usually have separate male and female forms. Female forms usually add -ka, e.g. ředitel, ředitelka ‘manager, director’. Some terms for occupations (práce ‘work’, zaměstnání ‘employment’) are close to English:


With others, it helps to note how related words have shared roots:

lékař, -ka ‘physician, doctor’ – lék ‘a medicine’
novinář, -ka ‘journalist’, nový ‘new’, noviny ‘newspaper’
právník, právnička ‘lawyer’ – právo ‘law, justice, right’
překladatel, -ka ‘translator’ – překládat ‘to translate’
učitel, -ka ‘teacher’ – učit ‘to teach’, učit se ‘to learn’
podnikatel, -ka ‘entrepreneur’ – podnik ‘an enterprise’

Some female forms end in -ice or -yně:

dělník, dělnice ‘worker, industrial worker’ – dělat ‘to do, make’
pracovník, pracovnice ‘worker, employee’ – pracovat ‘to work’
hudebník, hudebnice ‘musician’ – hudba ‘music’
umělec, umělkyně ‘artist’ – umění ‘art’

Nouns for languages end in -ina:


Jazyk ‘language/tongue’ may also be used with the adjectives, e.g. český jazyk ‘the Czech language’.

The Czech Republic, Česká republika, is also called Česko – in fact there is no other acceptable one-word form, although some speakers still dislike this term. Other country names commonly end in -sko, -cko or -ie [-ije]:


Note Amerika ‘America’ and Spojené státy ‘the United States’.

The names for the Czech historic provinces are: Čechy (plural!) ‘Bohemia’, Morava ‘Moravia’, Slezsko ‘Silesia’.

Nouns for members of nationalities often have masculine forms ending in -an, sometimes -ec, less often -ák, and most have female forms in -ka:


Similarly, cizinec/cizinka ‘a foreigner, a stranger’, from cizí ‘foreign’.

Language adverbs are formed from -cký, -sky adjectives with -cky, -sky, e.g. česky ‘(in) Czech’, anglicky ‘(in) English’ etc.

Mluvíte český? Umíte anglicky? Do you speak Czech? Do you know English?
To say ‘in the Czech manner’ etc. the preposition po can be used with a special, originally short-form ending -cku, -sku, e.g. vařit po česku ‘to cook in the Czech manner, like a Czech’.

### 10.3.3 Masculine noun suffixes

Most masculine suffixes produce animate nouns; some also produce inanimates.

- **-áč/-ač, -eč, -ič** agent nouns (esp. manual jobs), tools, instruments (the suffix vowel follows the verb type)
  - hráč ‘player’ – hrát ‘to play’
  - prodavač ‘salesman, shop assistant’ – prodávat ‘to sell’
  - řidič ‘driver’ – řidit ‘to drive’

- **-ák** agent nouns, inhabitants (mostly colloq.), bearer of qualities
  - divák ‘spectator, onlooker’ – divat se ‘to look’
  - kuřák ‘smoker’ – kouřit ‘to smoke’
  - Polák ‘Polish’ – Polsko ‘Poland’
  - Pražák colloq. ‘Praguer’ (= Pražan) – Praha ‘Prague’
  - chudák ‘poor thing, poor fellow’ – chudý ‘poor’
  - zpěvák ‘singer’ – zpívat ‘to sing’
  - otvírák ‘opener’ – otvírat ‘to open’

- **-an** inhabitants of countries and towns etc. (-ák is more colloquial for towns)
  - Marxák – ‘Marxism-Leninism’
  - zdroják – ‘source code’ (computers)

  - Pražan ‘Praguer’ (colloq. Pražák) – Praha ‘Prague’
Brňan ‘someone from Brno’ (colloq. Brňák) – Brno
Angličan ‘Englishman’ – Anglie ‘England’, anglický
‘English’
Evropan ‘a European’ – Evropa ‘Europe’
-ář, -ař agent nouns, long -ář in monosyllabic nouns and those with
three or more syllables; in two-syllable words usually short
-ař following a long syllable, either form following a short
syllable, but short -ař usually in newer words
lhář ‘liar’ – lhát ‘to lie’
funkcionář ‘functionary, official’ – funkce ‘function’
houbař ‘mushroom picker’ – houba ‘mushroom’
pekař ‘baker’ – péct ‘to bake’
rybář ‘fisherman’ – ryba ‘fish’
čtenář ‘reader’ – čtení ‘reading’, číst, čte ‘to read’
filmař ‘film maker’ – film ‘film’
related suffixes in some other words, e.g.
malíř ‘painter’ – malovat ‘to paint’
bankéř ‘banker’ – banka ‘bank’
-ce agent nouns, less frequent
vůdce ‘leader’ – vodit ‘to lead’
průvodce ‘guide’ – provést, provádět ‘to guide’
soudce ‘judge’ – soudit ‘to judge’
-čí some agent nouns, adjectival nouns
krejčí ‘tailor’ – krájet ‘to cut’
průvodčí ‘guard, conductor’ – cf. průvodce ‘guide’
(above)
rozhodčí ‘referee, umpire’ – rozhodnout ‘to decide’
-ec agent nouns, bearers of qualities, some bearers of
nationalities
herec ‘actor’ – hra ‘a play’ (gen. pl. her)
stařec ‘old man’ – starý ‘old’
slepec ‘blind man’ – splepý ‘blind’
zaměstnanec ‘employee’ – zaměstnaný ‘employed’
Japonec ‘a Japanese person’ – Japonsko ‘Japan’
Word formation

-(n)ík agent nouns, bearers of qualities, things

dělník ‘manual worker’ – dělat ‘to do, work’
básník ‘poet’ – báseň ‘poem’
mladík ‘young man, youth’ – mladý ‘young’
rychlík ‘express train’ – rychlý ‘fast’
rohlík ‘crescent shaped roll’ – roh ‘horn, corner’

-tel agent nouns, generally non-manual

učitel ‘teacher’ – učit ‘to teach’
ředitel ‘manager’ – řídit ‘to direct, manage’
změstnavatel ‘employer’ – změstnávat impf. ‘to employ’

10.3.4 Feminine noun suffixes

-ka feminine equivalents of masculine animate nouns, commonest suffix for ‘gender switching’ (přechylování)

kamarádka – kamarád ‘friend’
kuřáčka – kuřák ‘smoker’
Pražanka, colloq. Pražáčka – Pražan, Pražák ‘Praguer’
prodavačka ‘saleswoman’ – prodavač ‘salesman’
čtenářka – čtenář ‘reader’
herečka ‘actress’ – herec ‘actor’
Němká ‘German woman’ – Němec
Češka ‘Czech woman’ – Čech
učitelka – učitel ‘teacher’

-ina languages, activities etc.

čeština ‘Czech’ – český ‘Czech’ adj.
angličtina ‘English’ – anglický ‘English’
řečtina ‘Greek’ – řecký ‘Greek’
dřína ‘drudgery’ – dřít se ‘to drudge, work hard’

-na rooms, buildings, enclosed spaces

koupelna ‘bathroom’ – koupel ‘a bath’, koupat se ‘to bathe’
Forming nouns

-jídelna ‘dining room’ – po-jídat ‘to eat (a bit)’, jíst, ji, jedl ‘to eat’
čekárna ‘waiting room’ – čekat ‘to wait’
knihovna ‘library’ – kniha ‘book’
herna ‘gaming room’ – hra ‘game’ (gen. pl. her)

-ná
-adjectival nouns, native words for sports
kopená (= fotbal) ‘football’ – kopat ‘to kick’
odbíjená (= volejbal) – odbíjet ‘to hit away’
házená ‘handball’ – házet ‘to throw’
similarly, košíková (= basketbal) – košík ‘small basket’

-(n)ice
-feminine equivalents of masculine animates, esp. from -ník
dělnice – dělník ‘(industrial) worker’
lvice ‘lioness’ – lev ‘lion’
tygrice ‘tigress’ – tygr ‘tiger’

-ost
-quality, nouns derived from quality adjectives, very common prefix
hloupost ‘silliness, stupidity’ – hloupý ‘silly, stupid’
slabost ‘weakness’ – slabý ‘weak’
(ne)trpělivost ‘(im)patience’ – (ne)trpělivý ‘(im)patient’,
cf. trpět ‘to suffer’

-(k)yně
-some feminine equivalents of masculine animates
přítelkyně – přítel ‘friend’
průvodkyně – průvodce ‘guide’
žákyně – žák ‘pupil’
mistryně – mistr ‘sports champion’
zaměstnankyně – zaměstnanec ‘employee’

10.3.5 Neuter noun suffixes

-dlo
-means, instruments, tools etc.
mýdlo ‘soap’ – mýt ‘to wash’
umývadlo ‘washbasin’ – umývat ‘to wash’
sedadlo ‘seat’ – sedět ‘to sit’
divadlo ‘theatre’ – dívat se ‘to look’
pravidlo ‘rule’ – pravý ‘true’
letadlo ‘plane’ – letět ‘to fly’
prostěradlo ‘sheet’ – prostírat ‘to stretch out’

-í, -oví

collective nouns

listí ‘foliage’ – list ‘leaf’
kvítí ‘flowers, blossom’ – květ, květina ‘flower’
dříví ‘(quantity of) timber’ – dřevo ‘timber, wood’
kamení ‘stones’ – kámen ‘a stone’
uhlí ‘coal’ – uhel ‘a coal’
stromoví ‘group of trees’ – strom ‘tree’
křoví ‘shrubbery, bushes’ – keř ‘bush’

-isko

points

hledisko ‘point of view’ – hledět ‘to look’
stanovisko ‘standpoint’ – stanovit ‘to establish’, stát ‘to stand’
ohnisko ‘focus’ – oheň ‘fire’

-iště

open place, site

nástupiště ‘platform’ – nastoupit ‘to board’
hřiště ‘playground, playing field’ – hrát ‘to play’
letiště ‘airport’ – letět ‘to fly’
pracoviště ‘workplace’ – pracovat ‘to work’
parkoviště ‘car park, parking lot’ – parkovat ‘to park’

-ivo

materials for a purpose, collective nouns

topivo ‘fuel’ (for heating) – topit ‘to heat’
palivo ‘fuel’ (for burning) – pálit ‘to burn’
pečivo ‘bakery goods’ (rolls, pastries, biscuits) – péct, peče, pekl ‘to bake’
zdivo ‘masonry’ – zed ‘wall’

-ní, -tí

verbal nouns and their derived senses

překvapení ‘surprise’ – překvapit ‘to surprise’
pití ‘something to drink, a drink’ – pít ‘to drink’

-ství, -ctví

abstract qualities, professions, industries, shops, often with associated adjectives ending in -ský, -cký
Adjective suffixes

Adjective suffixes include the following (there are plenty more):

-či

denotes function (derived from infinitives)

psací stroj ‘typewriter’ – psát ‘to write’

plnicí pero ‘fountain pen’ – plnit ‘to fill’

-čí

derived from from nouns with suffixes -ec, -ce

vůdčí ‘leading’ – vůdce ‘leader’

also adjectival nouns (see also above)

mluvčí ‘speaker, spokesman’ – mluvit ‘to speak’
-í

generic adjectives from animal words

ptáčí ‘bird’s’, e.g. ptáčí hnízdo ‘a bird’s nest’ – pták ‘bird’
čapí ‘stork’s’ – čap ‘stork’
líví ‘lion’s’, e.g. líví podíl ‘lion’s share’ – lev ‘lion’
also dívčí ‘girl’s’ – dívka ‘girl’

-ící, -oucí

present participial adjectives, and derived senses

překvapující ‘surprising’ – překvapovat ‘to surprise’
vedoucí ‘leading’ – vést, vede ‘to lead’

-lý

derived from past tense forms ending in -l

zestárlý ‘aged’ – zestárnout ‘to age’
zastaralý ‘antiquated’ – zastarat ‘to become antiquated’
zvadlý ‘withered’ – zvadnout ‘to wither’

-ní

extremely common suffix, often noun attributes in English

lesní ‘forest’ adj. – les ‘forest’
školní ‘school’ adj., e.g. školní budova ‘school building’ – škola ‘school’
hudební ‘music(al)’ – hudba ‘music’
hlavní ‘main’ – hlava ‘head’
střední ‘middle, neuter’ adj. – střed ‘centre, middle’

-ný

also common, used in various ways

bolestný ‘painful’ – bolest ‘pain’
silný ‘strong’ – síla ‘strength’

-ový

‘of, made of’, highly productive, often noun attributes in English

kovový ‘metal, metallic, made of metal’ – kov ‘metal’
lidový ‘popular, of the people’ – lid ‘the people’, lidé ‘people’

-ský, -cký

typical for nationalities, towns and places, many loanwords

český ‘Czech’ – Čechy ‘Bohemia’
ruský ‘Russian’ – Rus ‘a Russian’
americký ‘American’ – Amerika ‘America’
Adverbs

Adverbs are mostly derived regularly from adjectives using the suffix -e/-ě as detailed in Chapter 3, e.g. dobrý ‘good’ – dobře ‘well’, špatný ‘bad’ – špatně ‘badly’.

The suffix -sky/-cky is used however for adjectives ending in -ský/-cký, e.g. cynický ‘cynical’ – cynicky ‘cynically’, český ‘Czech’ – česky ‘in Czech’.

See also 7.15 for adjectival past participles ending in -ný, -tý:

překvapený ‘surprised’, vzdělaný ‘educated’, zapomenutý ‘forgotten’

See 10.7 for diminutive adjectives such as maličký ‘tiny little’.

Loanwords often use suffixes -cký, -ní, -ový:

fyzický ‘physical’, mediální ‘media’, individuální ‘individual’, golfový ‘golf’ etc.
Some less regular adverbs use the neuter sg. short form of the adjective ending in -o, e.g. daleký ‘far’ – daleko ‘far away’, dlouhý ‘long’ – dlouho ‘for a long time’.
Others are derived from prepositional phrases with short-form adjectives, e.g. odedávna ‘from time immemorial’ (dávný ‘ancient’, dávno ‘long ago’).

### 10.6 Foreign suffixes

A good number of foreign suffixes are used in noun and adjective formation, but most of these are common to many European languages, and easy for English speakers to recognise, e.g.

- ace navigace ‘navigation’
- ační navigační ‘navigational’
- olog archeolog ‘archeologist’, biolog ‘biologist’
- ologický archeologický ‘archeological’, biologický ‘biological’
- ologie archeologie ‘archeology’, biologie ‘biology’, geologie ‘geology’
- ální individuální ‘individual’, mediální ‘media’, globální ‘global’
- ista materialista ‘a materialist’, feminista ‘a feminist’ (but feministka, if female!)
- istic ký materialistický ‘materialist’, feministický ‘feminist’
- ismus/-izmus feminismus ‘feminism’, materialismus ‘materialism’, komunismus ‘communism’

### 10.7 Diminutives – zdrobněl iny

Nouns ending in -(č)ek, -(č)ka, or -(č)ko are regularly used for something small(er). They are termed ‘diminutives’ (zdrobnělina – diminutive). They express basically either (a) ‘smallness’, or (b) ‘niceness, affection, endearment’.

Their gender matches the nouns from which they are derived.
Familiar forms of personal names are often diminutives. ‘Double’ diminutives end in -ček, -čka, -čko. These may (but do not always) intensify the expression of ‘smallness’ or ‘endearment’.
Masculine diminutives end in -ek/-ík or -eček, -iček:

Feminines end in -ka or -čka, -ička:


Neuters end in -ko or -(e)čko:


Some adjectives, occasionally other words, have similar diminutive forms:

malý – maličký, malinký ‘(nice) little, tiny’
sladký – slad‘ounký ‘nice and sweet’
trochu – trošku, trošičku ‘(just) a little bit’

Diminutives may have particular neutral meanings:

list – lístek ‘little leaf’ = ‘ticket’, jídelní lístek ‘menu’
ruka – ručička ‘little hand’ = ‘clock/watch hand’
strom – stromeček ‘little tree’, vánoční stromeček ‘Christmas tree’

Diminutives turn up a lot in folksongs. Speech involving children tends to be full of them. Waiters often say řízeček for řízek ‘schnitzel’, pivko for pivo ‘beer’ etc. Diminutives are conveniently mainstream in declension, e.g. sluníčko ‘sun’ as opposed to slunce, ručičky ‘hands’ as opposed to ruce. They are also used similarly to lovey-dovey language in English, to express endearment and intimacy.

10.8 Personal names

Many common personal names have familiar shortened variants with the suffix -a (either masculine or feminine). They also have diminutives, often several of these.
Such names are used familiarly, casually, between friends, family and
closer colleagues. The diminutives especially tend to express affection
(they may also be used with irony or sarcasm, of course). They can be
used more or less neutrally when referring to small children.

Some (mostly the less obvious) English equivalents are shown in the
lists below. Some sample familiar forms follow in brackets.

Certain Slav names (revived in the nineteenth century) consist of two
elements. These may have shared familiar forms as follows:

Names with the initial element **Bohu-** (= ‘to God’) may have familiar
forms **Bohuš, Boža, Božka.**

Names with the initial element **Miro-** or final element **-mír(a)**
(= ‘peace’) may have familiar forms **Mirek, Míra, Mirka.**

Names with **Milo-** or **-mil(a)** (= ‘dear’) may have **Milek, Míla,
Milka.**

Names with **Slavo-** or **-slav(a)** (= ‘glory’) may have **Slávek, Sláva,
Slávka.**

Those forms are additional to any given below.

Male personal names:

- Alexandr (Saša), Antonín (Tonda, Toník), Bohumil (Bohuš
eetc.), Bohumír (Mirek etc.), Bohuslav (Slávek etc.), Břetislav
(Břet’a), Čeněk = Vincent, Dalibor (Borek, Libor), David
(Davídek), Eduard (Eda), Emil (Emilek), Ferdinand (Ferda),
Filip (Filípek), František = Francis, Franz (Franta, Fráňa,
Fanda), Hynek = Ignatz, Ignatius, Ivan, Jakub = James (Kuba,
Kubík, Kubiček), Jan = John (Jeník, Jeniček, Honza, Honzik,
Jenda), Jaromír (Jarda, Jára, Mirek), Jaroslav (Jarda, Jára,
Slávek), Jindřich = Henry (Jindra), Jiří = George (Jirka), Josef
(Pepa, Pepík, Pepiček, Josífek), Karel = Charles (Karlík),
Ladislav (Láďa), Libor/Lubor (Borek), Lubomír (Luba,
Mirek), Ludvík = Louis, Lewis (Luděk), Lukáš = Luke (Lukášek),
Marek = Mark, Martin, Matěj = Matthew, Michal (Míša), Milan,
Miloslav, Miloš, Miroslav, Mojmír, Oldřich = Ulrich (Olda),
Ondřej = Andrew (Ondra), Otakar (Ota), Pavel = Paul (Pavlík),
Petr (Pěťa, Petřík) = Peter, Přemysl, Radomír (Radek),
Rostislav (Rost’a), Řehoř = Gregory, Stanislav (Stáňa, Standa),
Svatopluk (Sváťa, Svatek), Šimon (Šimek), Štěpán = Stephen,
Tomáš = Thomas (Tomášek), Václav = Wenceslas, Wenzel (Váša,
Vašek, Vaněk), Vilém = William (Vilda), Vítězslav (Vít’a,
Vitek), Vladimír (Vláďa), Vladislav (Vláďa), Vlastimil
(Vlasta), Vlastislav (Vlasta), Vojtěch = Adalbert (Vojta),
Vratislav (Vrát’a), Zbyněk, Zdeněk (Zdena).
Female personal names:

Alena (Alenka, Lenka), Alexandra (Saša), Alžběta = Elizabeth (Eliška, Líza, Běta), Anna (Anička, Andulka, Anka, Anča), Barbora ( Bára, Bárlka, Baruška), Blanka, Bohdana, Bohumila, Božena (Božka, Boženka), Daniela (Dana), Drahomíra, Elena, Eva (Evíčka, Evinka, Evka), Hana, Irena, Ivana, Jana, Jarmila, Jiřina, Jitka = Judith, Julie, Karolína, Kateřina = Catherine (Katka, Kát’a, Káča), Klára, Lidmila/Ludmila (Lída), Lucie (Lucka, Lucinka), Magdalena (Magda, Madla, Madlena, Léna, Lenka), Marcela, Marie = Mary (Máňa, Mařenka, Maruška, Máša), Milada, Milena, Naděžda (Nad’a), Olga (Olinka), Petra (Petruška), Renata, Růžena = Rose, Soňa, Sylvie, Šárka, Tat’ána (Táňa), Tereza, Vendula (Vendulka), Věra, Vlasta, Zdeňka/Zdenka, Zuzana = Susan(na) (Zuzka), Žofie = Sophia (Žofka).

10.8.1 Surnames

Masculine surnames are either nouns or adjectival nouns, e.g. Beneš, Novotný.

Female surnames ending in -ová are derived from their masculine equivalents and behave like adjectives. Male adjectival surnames ending in -ý have female forms ending in -á.

pan Beneš a paní Benešová Mr Beneš and Mrs Benešová

pan Novotný a paní Novotná Mr Novotný and Mrs Novotná

Only a few surnames are indeclinable, notably those like Martinů, Janů, which have no feminine variants.

10.9 Derived verbs

Verbs are formed from other simpler verbs using prefixes and suffixes. Compound verbs are derived from simple verbs using prefixes. Verb prefixes and suffixes are both involved in the formation of aspectual pairs. These are all treated separately further below.

Verbs derived from other parts of speech regularly use one or other of the standard infinitive types. The -ovat type is productive for foreign loanwords and other new formations, the -nout type is common for changes of state (‘become, turn’) and perfective momentary actions.
-at červenat se ‘blush’ – červený ‘red’
-et slzet ‘weep, drop tears’ – slza ‘tear’
   zlidovět pf. ‘become popular’ – lidový ‘popular’
-it rybařit ‘go fishing, be a fisherman’ – rybář ‘fisherman’, ryba ‘fish’
-nout blednout > z- ‘turn pale’ – bledý ‘pale’
   rudnout > z- ‘turn red, blush deeply’ – rudý ‘red’
   risknout pf. ‘risk, take a risk’
-ovat lyžovat ‘to ski’ – lyže ‘skis’
   organizovat ‘organise’
   telefonovat ‘telephone’
   riskovat impf./pf. ‘risk’

10.9.1 Baby verbs

It is notable that a group of childish verbs used in ‘baby’ language – i.e. initially when children are learning to speak Czech – belong to the highly regular -at type, e.g. papat ‘to eat’, bumbat ‘to drink’, spinkat ‘to sleep’, čurat ‘to pee’ and kakat ‘to do a poo’. (The adult equivalents are more irregular.)

10.9.2 Perfectivising prefixes

Any of the following prefixes will normally make an imperfective verb perfective:

   do-, na-, nad-, o-/ob-, od-, po-, pod-, pro-,
   pře-, před-, při-, roz-, s-, u-, v-, vy-, vz-, z-, za-

Each adds its own meaning to the verb (though less obviously so where a neutral perfective is formed from a simple verb). They are fundamental to the way in which Czech verbs are formed and used.

If the prefix adds a new syllable then long -á- in the simple infinitive will shorten, unless it does not shorten in the past tense, e.g. psát, psal ‘write’ – podepsat, podepsal ‘sign’, but hrát, hrál ‘play’ – vyhrát, vyhrál ‘win’.

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10.9.3 Prefixed compound verbs

English verbs often have words like ‘in’/‘out’ after them: ‘He went out. He came in.’ Often these verb phrases have idiomatic meanings, e.g. ‘He shut up. He piped down.’

In Czech prefixes are habitually attached to the front of verbs instead, just like many English verbs of Latin origin, e.g. ‘circumnavigate’ = ‘sail round’ etc.

Most of the prefixes in use are the same as, or closely related to, certain basic common prepositions.

In the list which follows the first example is most often a perfective compound of jít ‘to go’. Most of these have imperfective counterparts with -cházet.

The first meanings given for each prefix are basic, usually spatial, ones, followed by further examples (all perfectives) illustrating some other relatively frequent and easily identifiable areas of usage.

Many have imperfective counterparts, formed in ways outlined in the immediately following section on suffixes.

For full details of each verb you will need a good dictionary, preferably one which properly records the aspectual pairs (unfortunately not all do this).

**do-** ‘finish/reach’

dojít, dojde, došel < docházet ‘reach, go for/fetch’

**Došel do školy.** He reached (finished the journey to) school.

**Došel pro chleba.** He went to get/fetch some bread.

similarly: dodat ‘add, deliver’, dojet ‘reach’ (by vehicle, riding), donést ‘bring’, doručit ‘deliver’, ‘complete (final phase of)’:

dočíst ‘finish reading’, dojíst ‘finish eating’, dodělat ‘finish, complete making’

‘achieve’:

dohodnout se ‘reach an agreement’, dokázat ‘prove’, dosáhnout ‘achieve’

**na-** ‘upon, onto’

najít, najde, našel < nacházet ‘come upon, find’
Našel jsem pěknou knihu. I found a nice book.
similarly, but more literally: nastoupit ‘get on, board’, natřít ‘paint’
‘stretch, fill, extend’:
  natáhnout ‘stretch out’
‘quantity’, with se ‘enough, sufficiently’:
  nacpat ‘stuff (a quantity)’, napadnout ‘fall (in a quantity)’, napéct
  ‘bake a quantity’
  najíst se ‘eat one’s fill’, napít se ‘drink one’s fill’
‘partially, a bit’, often occurs as adjectives from -l forms of verbs
  nakousnout ‘bite into’, nahnout se ‘bend over a bit’
  nahluchlý ‘a bit deaf’, nahnilý ‘a bit rotten’

nad(e)- ‘over, above, up’

nadejít (si), nadejde, nadešel < nadcházet ‘get ahead (via a shortcut);
come (of time)’
  Nadešel mu uličkou. He overtook him via a side-street.
  Nadešel si pěšinou. He took a shortcut via a path.
  Nadešla chvíle, kdy se musíme rozhodnout. The time has come for us to decide.
similarly: nadjet ‘take a shortcut (by vehicle, riding)’ and, more liter-
ally, nepsat (stránku) ‘head (a page, write at the top of it)’, nadhodit
‘throw up, toss’, nadskočit ‘leap up a bit, bounce’

ne- ‘not’, also shortens -á- in a following infinitive syllable; does not
perfectivise

nejít, nejde, nešel + nechodit ‘not to go’
similarly: nepsat ‘not to write’ (psát ‘write’), nedbat ‘not to heed’ (dbát
‘heed’) and, less obviously, zanedbat pf. ‘neglect’; nechat pf. ‘let, leave
alone’ is also said to be negative in origin, though it has no positive
counterpart
also nedo- ‘insufficiently, incompletely’
nedoslýcháte be hard of hearing

**o-, ob(e)- ‘round’**

obejít, obejde, obešel < obcházet ‘go round’

**Obesel dům.** He went/walked round the house.

Similarly: objet ‘drive round, bypass’, hence objížd’ka ‘a detour’, obklopit ‘surround’, otočit (se) ‘turn (around)’

Also: ‘around the surface’

ohřát ‘heat up, warm up’, okopat zeleninu ‘dig around vegetables’, okopat boty ‘kick and damage shoes’, obložit chléb ‘garnish bread’, i.e. make sandwiches (obložené chlebičky), obtěžovat ‘encumber, trouble’

‘concerning, about’

**oplakat** ‘lament, weep over’

Intransitive verbs from adjectives, with changes of human state:

onemocnět ‘fall ill’, oběhotnět ‘get pregnant’, osířet ‘be orphaned’

**od(e)- ‘away, away from’** (opposite of při- ‘up near, arrive’)

odejít, odejde, odešel < odcházet ‘go away, leave, depart’

**Karel už odešel.** Karel has now left, departed.

**Anna odejde zítra.** Anna will go away, leave tomorrow.

Similarly: odjet ‘go, drive, ride away’, odnést carry/take away’, oddělit ‘separate’, odstoupit ‘step away, step aside’

‘respond’, ‘off, get done’

odpovědět ‘reply’ (hence odpověď ‘an answer’), odepsat ‘write back, write off’, odříkat báseň ‘recite a poem’, odčinit ‘undo, redress, make up for’, odbýt ‘get rid of, get done’, odkvěst ‘finish blossoming’, odbít ‘finish striking’ (bells)

pa- ‘as a substitute, falsely’, which does not perfectivise
padělat impf./pf. ‘forge, fake, make falsely’

**po-** ‘over a surface’

popsat < popisovat ‘to cover with writing, describe’

- **Popsal všechen papír.** He wrote all over the paper.
- **Popsal život na venkově.** He described life in the countryside.

similarly, often damaging: pokrýt ‘cover’, podpat ‘trample’, pomalovat ‘paint’, pošpinit ‘dirty’

‘a bit’

- **poodejít** ‘go off, move away a bit’, **poopravit** ‘correct slightly, adjust’, **pootevřít** ‘open a bit’, **poblednout** ‘turn a bit pale’, **pohráti** ‘play about, fiddle’, **posnídat** ‘have some breakfast’, **poobědovat** ‘have some lunch’, **povečeret** ‘have some supper’, **poohlédnout se** ‘have a look around’, **pootčít klikou** ‘turn the handle a bit’, **povyskočit** ‘leap up a bit’

with reflexive *si*: ‘enjoy a certain quantity of, have a (good)’

- **počist si** ‘have read’, **popovídat si** ‘have a chat’, **posedět si** ‘have a sit’

‘successively, one after another’

- **poblednout** ‘lock one after another’, **pomřít** ‘die off’

‘to make, -ise’, transitive verbs from adjectives

- **počestit** ‘Czechise’, **poněmčit** ‘Germanise’

In special senses with -*jít*:

- **pojít, pojde, pošel** (pf. only) ‘die’ (of animals), ‘snuff it’ (vulgar, of humans)
- **pocházet** (impf. only), ‘come from, originate from’

- **Pes nám pošel.** Our dog has died.
- **Je tu nuda, že by člověk pošel.** It’s deadly boring here.
- **Pochází z Brna.** He comes from Brno.

**popo-** ‘a little bit’ (= **po-** + **po-**)
popojít, popojde, popošel < popocházet ‘move along a bit’

Popošel k oknu. He moved up a bit closer to the window.

similarly: popojít ‘inch along a little (in a vehicle)’, poposednout ‘move away a bit, to another seat’

pod- ‘under’ in various senses

podejít, podejde, podešel (pf. only) ‘go under’

Podešla most. She went under the bridge.


also: podnapít se ‘get a bit drunk, tipsy’, podcenit ‘underestimate’, podniknout ‘undertake’

pro- ‘through’

projít, projde, prošel < procházet ‘go through’, projít se ‘have a walk’

Prošla tunelem. She walked through the tunnel.

Šla se projít. She went to have a walk.


‘lengthen, extend’

prodloužit ‘lengthen, extend’, protáhnout se ‘stretch oneself’

‘wear out, through’

prošlapat ‘wear out (shoes, by walking)’, prosedět ‘wear out (trousers, by sitting)’

‘through and through, thoroughly’

pročist ‘read through’, proměnit ‘transform, alter, change’

‘here and there, partly’

Prošedivět, vlasy mu His hair became streaked with grey.
prošedivěly.
‘be rid of, lose’

prodat ‘sell’, prohrát ‘lose (match, game)’, prominout ‘forgive, excuse’, promárnit ‘squander, waste’

‘get to place or achieve by passing through’

probojovat se ‘fight one’s way through’

**pře-** ‘across, over’

přejít, přejeď, přešel < přecházet ‘go across, cross’

**Přešli most/přes most.** They crossed the bridge.


‘move across, transfer’


‘too far, too much, over’

přelít se přes břehy ‘spill over, overflow its banks’, přezrát, ovoce přezrálo ‘the fruit overripened’, přepepřít ‘overpepper’, přesolit ‘oversalt’, přelidnit ‘overpopulate’

‘re-, again’


‘get over, get upper hand’

přebolet ‘stop hurting’, přelstít ‘trick’, přemoc ‘overcome’

**před(e)-** ‘in front of, before’

předejít, předejde, předešel pf. ‘overtake, pass, forestall’, also předcházet impf. ‘precede’

**Předěšla ho u pokladny.** She beat him getting to the till.

**Pýcha předchází pál.** Pride comes before a fall.

similarly: předjet ‘pass (driving), overtake’, přednášet ‘hold forth, lecture’, předpovědět ‘predict, forecast’
přijít, přijde, přišel < přicházet ‘come, arrive’

Karel ještě nepřišel. Karel hasn’t come/arrived yet.

Přijd’te zítra! Come tomorrow!

similarly: přijet ‘come, arrive (by vehicle, riding)’, přinést ‘bring by carrying’, přistoupit ‘step, walk up to’
‘bring right up to’

přistrčit (stůl k oknu) ‘push up (the table to the window)’, přihrát mič ‘play the ball to’

‘attach, add’

přidat ‘add’, přiložit ‘attach’, přišpendlít ‘pin on’ (špendlík ‘a pin’), přivydléat si ‘earn a bit extra’, přisolit ‘add salt’, připsat ‘ascribe’

‘do a little’

přivřít ‘partly close’, přičesat ‘comb a bit’, přihřát ‘heat up a bit’ (trochu ohřát), připít ‘drink to’

rozejít se, rozejde se, rozešel se < rozcházet se ‘part, separate’

Rozešli se u stanice metra. They separated, parted at the metro station.

similarly: rozjet se ‘drive off in different directions’, rozkrájet ‘cut up into pieces’, rozprodat ‘sell off’, rozpustit ‘dismiss, dissolve’

‘disperse, damage’

rozdupat ‘trample’, rozladit ‘put out of tune, annoy’, rozčarovat ‘disenchant’

‘untie, resolve, settle’

rozvázat ‘untie’, rozhodnout (se) ‘decide, resolve’
Word formation

‘get going, start’

*rozesmát* ‘make laugh’, *rozesmát se* ‘burst out laughing’,
*rozveselit* ‘cheer up, make happy’, *rozjet* ‘set in motion’, *rozjet se* ‘drive off, start moving’

**Auto se hned rozjelo.** The car set off immediately.

s(e)- ‘together’ (esp. reflexive, opposite of roz(e)- ‘apart’),
sometimes sou;- ‘down’ (opposite of vy- ‘up’)

sejít se, sejde se, sešel se < scházet se ‘come together, meet’

Sešel se s kamarádem. He met with a friend.

Sešli se před divadlem. They met in front of the theatre.

similarly: sběhnout se ‘run together’, shodnout se ‘agree’, spojit ‘join, connect’, složit ‘put together, compose’, skoupit ‘buy up (all together)’

sejít, sejde, sešel < scházet ‘go/come down’

Sešli dolů. They went down.

Sešla ze schodů. She went down the stairs.

similarly: sjet ‘drive down’, sklonit ‘bend, droop’, sklesnout ‘fall, drop down’, snést z půdy ‘bring down from the loft’, svést ‘lead down, seduce’

spolu- ‘co-, jointly, together’ (adverbial prefix – does not perfectivise)

spolupracovat ‘cooperate’, spolupůsobit ‘contribute’

u- ‘off, away’ (abrupt, dynamic)

ujít, ujde, ušel < ucházet ‘get away, escape’ (+dat.)

Ušel smrti. He escaped death.

Ucházi plyn. Gas is escaping. There is a gas leak.

Vlak nám ujel. We have missed the train, lit. ‘The train has left on us.’

‘cover a distance, manage to do’

*ujet sto kilometrů* ‘drive a hundred kilometres’, *unést* ‘manage to carry’

‘smooth, settle’

*urovnat* ‘straighten’, *uklidit* ‘tidy up’, *ulehčit* ‘lighten’, *usnout* ‘fall asleep’

‘wear away, harm’

*umazat* ‘soil, stain’, *unavit* ‘tire’, *usmrtít* ‘kill, cause death of’,
*umřít* ‘die’, *upít se* ‘drink oneself to death’

‘do a little’

*usmávat se* ‘smile’, *upít* ‘sip’

occasionally = v-:

*umístit* ‘place, locate, put’

\[ v(e)- \text{‘into’ (opposite of vy- ‘out, out of’)} \]

vejít, vejde, vešel < vcházet ‘go/come in, enter’

**Vešel dovnitř.** He went in(side).

**Vešla do obchodu.** She went into the shop.

**Právě vcházeli do domu.** They were just going into the house.

similarly: vložit ‘put in, insert’, vnutit své názory ‘impose one’s own views’

= vz- in:

*vstát* ‘get up, stand up’

\[ vy- \text{‘out, out of’ (opposite of v(e)- ‘into’); ‘up’ (opposite of s(e)- ‘down’)} \]
vyjít, vyjde, vyšel < vycházet ‘go/come out, exit; go up’

Vyšla ven. She went out.

Vyšel z obchodu. He came out of the shop.

Právě vycházel z domu. They were just coming out of the house.

similarly: vyjet ‘drive out’, vynést ‘carry out’, vyběhnout ‘run out’, 
vystoupit ‘step out of, get off, alight; appear (on stage)’, also vyměnit 
‘exchange, take out and change, replace’

Vyšel do prvního patra. He went up to the first floor.

Vyšli nahoru. They went up.

similarly: vyskočit ‘jump up’; vyrůst ‘grow up’, vynést na půdu ‘carry up to the loft’, vyhrnout rukávy ‘roll up sleeves’, vystoupit (na kopec) ‘go up, ascend, climb up (a hill)’

‘pick out, separate off, enumerate one by one’

vybrat ‘choose, select’, vyjmenovat ‘list, name’

‘empty out, use up, complete’

vylidnit ‘depopulate’, vyhubit ‘wipe out, exterminate’; vplakat
si oči ‘cry one’s eyes out’, vystudovat ‘complete one’s studies, 
graduate in’

‘fill’

vyplnit ‘fill, fill in, fulfil’, vykrmit ‘feed up, fatten’

‘achieve by effort, create’

vydělat ‘earn, make (money)’, vyhrát ‘win (game, match)’, vyžebрат
si ‘scrounge, get by begging’, vyběhat ‘obtain by effort, by running about’, vynalézt ‘invent’, vyrobit ‘produce, manufacture’

vz- ‘up’, but more dynamic/abrupt than vy- in the sense of upwards

vzejít, vzejde, vzešel < vzcházet ‘come up, sprout (e.g. a crop); arise’

Vzešla pšenice. The wheat came up, sprouted.

Ze schůze vzešel návrh. A proposal arose from the meeting.

similarly: vzletět ‘fly up’, vznést se ‘rise up, be carried up’
also: vzdychnout ‘sigh’, vzpomenout si ‘remember’, vzplanout ‘flare up’, vzniknout ‘arise’

‘up against’, followed by proti ‘against’

vzbouřít se ‘rebel, rise up (like a storm)’, vzepřít se ‘resist, oppose’

z(e)- rarely ‘out of’, but usually just perfectivises, carries out the action

zběhnout pf. ‘desert, run away’
also: zříct se ‘renounce, give up’, zbýt ‘be left (over)’, zbít ‘thrash, beat up’
pf. verbs from adjectives denoting a change of state:


perfective multiple action, ‘one after another’

zpřeházet ‘throw into disorder, jumble’, zpřetrhat ‘sever, cut off one after another’

occasionally = vz-:

zvednout ‘lift, pick up’, zdvihnout ‘lift up, raise’
also, not infrequently: zjne- ‘mis-, make un-, not’


za- behind, off (as in going offstage, out of the field of view)

zajít, zajde, zašel < zácházet ‘go behind, go in (for a purpose)’

**Zašel za strom.** He went behind a tree. (**za** + acc. = motion ‘behind’)

**Zašel za roh.** He went round (‘behind’) the corner.

**Slunce zašlo.** The sun has set (gone down/behind).

**Zašli si na pivo.** They went in, called in, popped in for a beer.
similarly: zajet ‘go behind (riding, by vehicle)’
‘turn aside into, get into’

ezahnut ‘turn’ (doleva ‘left’), zabodnout ‘stab’, zamílovat se ‘fall in love’
only occasionally ‘begin’:
začít ‘begin’, zatopit ‘kindle, light’ (v kamnech ‘stove’), zapálit
‘light, ignite’
‘put away, lose, destroy’
ezahodit ‘throw away’, zapomenout ‘forget’, založit ‘put away’,
zabít ‘kill’, zastřelit ‘shoot and kill’
‘cover over, block’
ezarůst ‘become overgrown’, zabalit ‘wrap up’, zakrýt ‘cover’,
zamalovat ‘paint over’, zastínit ‘overshadow’, zakouřit ‘make
smoky’, zastoupit někomu cestu ‘block someone’s way’, zastavit
(se) ‘stop’
‘instead of, in place of’
ezastoupit ‘stand in for, represent’, zaměnit ‘mix up, swap’
with si, to do with zest, with enjoyment, s chutí:
zaplavat si ‘have a swim’, zatánčit si ‘have a dance’, zakouřit si
‘have a smoke’

10.9.4 Aspectual pairs

Aspectual pairs were introduced in basic outline in Chapter 7, espe-
cially sections 7.6–7.6.2. The following assumes a general grasp of the
two types described there.

The sign > is used here to point forwards to the perfective

The sign < is used to point back to the more basic perfective form

prefix pairs – imperfective verbs (mostly simple) with prefixed perfectives

\textit{e.g.} psát > napsat ‘write’, číst > přečíst ‘read’, zpívat > zazpívat
‘sing’

suffix pairs – perfective verbs, usually prefixed (but sometimes not),
with suffixed imperfectives

\textit{e.g.} popsat < popisovat ‘describe’, dát < dávat ‘give’, koupit <
kupovat ‘buy’
10.9.5 **Forming prefix pairs**

Prefixes used to make a simple verb perfective often restrict or further qualify the meaning in some way, and their employment for this purpose draws on the lexical senses outlined in the section above.

Sometimes, as a result, there is no neutral perfective, and one simple verb has to be thought of as having more than one prefixed perfective, each with a different meaning, e.g. **pít – vylít ‘drink up’, napít se ‘drink one’s fill’**.

In other verbs there are alternative perfectives, with no very clearly distinct or obvious differences between them, at least in some contexts, e.g. **končit > dokončit, skončit, ukončit, zakončit (práci) ‘end, finish (work)’**

No hard and fast rules can be laid down for which prefix will be used with a given verb. The following account attempts to identify certain more widespread patterns, but in the end these pairs are simply a matter of usage and vocabulary learning.

The most commonly used prefixes for this purpose are **na-, o-, po-, u-, vy-, s-, z-, za-**, but a few others also occur, e.g. **číst – pěčíst ‘to read’**.

**NA-** is used for recording onto a surface, or providing a sufficient quantity (reflexive perfective where the subject is affected):

- psát > napsat ‘write’, na|kreslit ‘draw’, na|malovat ‘paint’, na|diktovat ‘dictate’
- naplnit ‘fill’, naličit ‘pour (drink)’, pít – napít se ‘drink’, jíst > napijít se ‘eat’, obědovat > na|obědovat se ‘have lunch’, snídat > na|snídat se ‘have breakfast’, večeřet > na|večeřet se ‘have supper’

Others: na|učit ‘teach’, na|učit se ‘learn’, na|rodit se ‘be born’

**O-** may occur for an action around or over a surface:

- o|holit ‘shave’, o|razitkovat ‘rubber-stamp’, o|slepnout ‘go blind’, o|sprchovat se ‘have a shower’, o|mládnout ‘grow younger’

**PO-** indicates a certain (modest) quantity of action, is often used with verbs involving an evaluative response, and frequently with other common verbs:

- po|snídat ‘have (some) breakfast’, po|obědovat ‘have (some) lunch’, po|večeřet ‘have (some) supper’
for’ (also za|litovat), po|gratulovat ‘congratulate’, po|blahopřát ‘congratulate’

do|vít se ‘look’, zvát > pozvat ‘invite’, čekat > počkat ‘wait’,
do|trvat ‘last’, po|sloužit ‘serve’, po|starat se ‘take care of’,
ho|vořít ‘talk, chat’, po|bavit ‘amuse’, po|tešit ‘please’, po|prosit ‘ask, request’

S- may indicate using up/destroying, or other kinds of completeness (phonetically it is identical to the commoner prefix Z- before voiceless paired consonants, and this can lead to confusion, if one is not careful enough about spellings):

jíst > sníst ‘eat, eat up’, s|hořet ‘burn down’, s|pálit ‘burn’,
|končit ‘end, finish’, s|trávit ‘spend (time)’, s|tvořit ‘create’

U- indicates achievement of a result, actions involving dirt or harm, and is used with some other common verbs:

|končit ‘finish, end’, u|zrát ‘ripen’, u|věřit ‘believe’ u|vitat ‘welcome’ (or při|vitat)

u|špinout (also po-, za-, ze-) ‘dirty’, u|škodit ‘harm, damage’,
u|mazat ‘make greasy’

also: u|slyšet ‘hear, suddenly hear’, u|vidět ‘see, catch sight of’,
u|cítit ‘feel’ (also po|cítit)

VY- may be used for more extended, elaborate achievements, and for emptying/using up:

vy|pěstovat ‘cultivate’, vy|tvořit ‘form, create’ (also u|tvořit),
vy|řešit ‘solve’ (also rozřešit), vy|luštit ‘decipher, solve’ (also rozluštit), also vy|čístit ‘clean, brush (teeth)’

vy|pít ‘drink up’, vy|kouřit ‘smoke’

Z- occurs often, for negative actions, change of state (-nout) verbs, and many loanwords (often -ovat):

z|kazit ‘spoil’, z|klamat ‘disappoint’, z|děsit ‘horrify’, z|rušit ‘annul’,
z|ničit ‘destroy’

z|blednout ‘turn pale’, ze|stárnout ‘grow old’, z|bohatnout ‘become/grow rich’, z|mrznout ‘freeze’

z|komplikovat ‘complicate’, z|korumpovat ‘corrupt’, z|likvidovat ‘liquidate’, z|rentgenovat ‘X-ray’, z|organizovat ‘organise’

also: ptát se – ze|ptat se ‘ask’, z|měnit ‘change’, z|opakovat ‘repeat’
ZA- is often used for a certain duration of sounds or sights, also for killing:

- za|šeptat ‘whisper’, za|kašlat ‘cough’, za|křičet ‘shout’,
- za|telefonovat ‘telephone’ (by analogy with za|volat), za|hřmít ‘thunder’, za|troubít ‘trumpet’, za|znít ‘resound’

- za|tmít se ‘be darkened’, za|rdít se ‘blush’, za|červenat se ‘blush’,
- za|chvět se ‘tremble’

Also: za|platit ‘pay’, za|hrát ‘play’, za|chovat se ‘behave’, lhát >

- zalhat ‘lie, tell lie’
- za|vraždit ‘murder’, za|škrtit ‘strangle’

10.9.6 Forming suffix pairs

Czech dictionaries often list suffix pairs under their more basic, usually shorter, perfective forms.

In suffix pairs the imperfective infinitive will normally have one of these suffixes:

- -(á)vat, -ovat, -et or -at

Each suffix type is quite strongly associated with certain kinds of perfective verb.

Related verbs of the suffix-pair type also tend to form little families with parallel aspectual forms. The pairs can be predicted more and more reliably, as one’s vocabulary grows.

The sign < is used here to point back to the perfective form.

(a) suffix type (-á-)vat, typically goes with Type 5 infinitives ending in -at or -át:

- vydělat < vydělávat ‘earn, make (money)’
- dát, dá, dal < dávat ‘give’
- vydat < vydávat ‘publish’
- objednat < objednávat ‘order (food, things)’
- přeconat < přeconávat ‘overcome’
- potkat < potkávat ‘meet, encounter’
- získat < získávat ‘gain’
- zanedbat < zanedbávat ‘neglect’
- poznat < poznávat ‘recognise, come to know’
- přiznat < přiznávat ‘confess, admit’
Also verbs of other types with infinitive -at, -át and -ovat:

- **vyhrát, vyhraje, vyhrál < vyhřávat**: 'win'
- **prohrát < prohřávat**: 'lose'
- **stát se, stane se, stal se < stávat se**: 'become'
- **dostat, dostane < dostávat**: 'get, obtain'
- **vstát, vstane, vstal < vstávat**: 'get up'
- **přestat, přestane, přestal < přestávat**: 'stop, cease'

**přepracovat < přepracovávat**  'rework, redo'
**zpracovat < zpracovávat**  'process'

Various other verbs have similar forms with -vat, e.g.

- **usmáti se, usměje se, usmál se < usmívat se**: 'smile'
- **skrýt, skryje, skryl < skrývat**: 'hide'
- **užít, užije, užil < užívat**: 'use'
- **zbýt, zidue, zbyl < zbývat**: 'be left (over)'
- **obout, obuju, obul < obouvat (se)**  'put on (shoes)'
- **zout < zouvat (se)**  'take off (shoes)'
- **přezout < přezouvat (se)**  'change (shoes)'

(b) **Suffix type -ovat, typically goes with Type 4 infinitives ending in -it:**

- **dokončit < dokončovat**  'finish, complete'
- **představit < představovat**  'present, represent'
- **vysvětlit < vysvětlovat**  'explain'
- **zjistit < zjist’ovat**  'find out, ascertain'
- **přesvědčit < přesvědčovat**  'convince'
- **překvapit < překvapovat**  'surprise'
- **půjčit < půjčovat**  'lend'
- **vypůjčit < vypůjčovat**  'borrow'
- **koupit < kupovat**  'buy'
- **spojit < spojovat**  'join, connect, unite'
- **slíbit < slíbovat**  'promise'
But also with other types, e.g.

- podepsat, podepiše, podepsal < pod(e)pisovat ‘sign’
- popsat < popisovat ‘describe’
- ukázat, ukáže, ukázel < ukazovat ‘show’
- rozhodnout (se) < rozhodovat (se) ‘decide’
- obsáhnout < obsahovat ‘contain’
- dosáhnout < dosahovat ‘reach’

(c) Suffix type -et goes with some other Type 4 infinitives ending in -it:
- vrátit (se) < vracet (se) ‘return’
- obrátit < obracet ‘turn’
- ztratit < ztrácet ‘lose’
- pustit < pouštět ‘let go’
- vypustit < vypouštět ‘let out’
- otočit < otáčet ‘turn, rotate’
- pokusit se < pokoušet se ‘try, attempt’
- zkusit < zkoušet ‘try out’
- probudit (se) < probouzet (se) ‘awaken’

But also sometimes with other types, e.g.:

- zabít, zabije, zabil < zabijet ‘kill’
- opít, opije, opil < opijet ‘intoxicate’
- prohlédnout < prohlížet ‘look through’

The third-person plural present-tense ending -ejí is preferable in standard usage for these derived imperfectives, e.g. ztrácejí ‘they lose’.

(d) Suffix type -at, goes especially with infinitives ending in -nout:

- vzpomenout si, vzpomene, vzpomněl < vzpomínat si ‘remember’
- zapomenout < zapomínat ‘forget’
- připomenout < připomínat ‘remind’
- padnout < padat ‘fall’
- vzniknout < vznikat ‘arise’
10
Word formation

ezvednout < zvedat
všimnout si < všimnout si
hnout (se) < hýbat (se)
obléknout < oblékat (se)
svléknout < svlékat (se)
převléknout < převlékat (se)

‘raise, lift’
‘notice’
‘move’
‘put on (clothes)’
‘take off (clothes)’
‘change (clothes)’

Others include:

poslat, pošle, poslal < posílat
nazvat, nazve, nazval < nazývat
umřít, umře, umřel < umírat
vybrat, vybere, vybral < vybírat
začít, začne, začal < začínat
říct, řekne, řekl < říkat
pomocí, pomůže, pomohl < pomáhat
otevřít, otevře, otevřel < otevírat
zavřít, zavře, zavřel < zavírat
odpovědět, odpoví, odpověděl < odpovídat
nalézt, nalezně, nalezl < nalézat
utéct, uteče, uték < utíkat
přijmout, přijme, přijal < přijímat
dotknout se, dotkne se, dotkl se <

‘send’
‘name, call’
‘die’
‘choose’
‘begin’
‘say’
‘help’
‘open’
‘close, shut’
‘answer’
‘find’
‘run away, flee’
‘receive’
‘touch’

10.9.7 Single/momentary versus multiple action

Sometimes the range of perfective verb forms available allows a distinc-
tion to be made between single and multiple (repeated) actions.

In particular, the suffix -nout often forms a perfective verb express-
ing a single/momentary event, e.g.

riskovat impf./pf. ‘risk’ – risknout pf. ‘risk (something once)’
bodat impf. ‘stab’ – bodnout pf. ‘stab (once)’
Sometimes alternative perfective counterparts to a verb are produced as a result:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{probodávat} & \quad \text{impf.} \text{ ‘stab through’} & \quad \text{probodnout} & \quad \text{pf.} \text{ (once)}, \\
\text{probodat} & \quad \text{pf.} \text{ (multiple action)}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{křičet} & \quad \text{impf.} \text{ ‘shout’} & \quad \text{zakřičet} & \quad \text{pf.} \text{ ‘shout’ (for a certain complete length of time)} \\
\text{křiknout} & \quad \text{pf.} \text{ ‘give a single shout’}
\end{align*}
\]

Another example occurs with compounds of the pair hodit < házet ‘throw’, where pf. hodit stands for the single action. Perfective compounds may be formed by adding prefixes to each of these, but there is only one corresponding imperfective, using the suffix type -ovat:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{vyhazovat} & \quad \text{impf.} \text{ ‘throw out’} & \quad \text{vyhodit} & \quad \text{pf.} \text{ ‘throw out’ (single act)} \\
\text{vyházet} & \quad \text{pf.} \text{ ‘throw out’ (multiple act, e.g. one after another)}
\end{align*}
\]

### 10.9.8 Overlapping pairs

Perfectivising prefixes often restrict or colour the meaning of a simple verb, so that different prefixes have to be used for different senses. These may also form their own derived imperfectives, which then retain that narrower meaning:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{dělit} & \quad \text{‘divide, separate’} > \quad \text{rozdělit} & \quad \text{‘divide’, oddělit} & \quad \text{‘separate’} \\
\text{rozdělit} & \quad < \quad \text{rozdělovat} & \quad \text{‘divide’} \\
\text{oddělit} & \quad < \quad \text{oddělovat} & \quad \text{‘separate’}
\end{align*}
\]

Sometimes derived verbs which seem superfluous are produced:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{blížit se} & \quad \text{přiblížit se} & \quad \text{přiblížovat se} & \quad \text{‘approach, come near’} \\
\text{budit (se)} & \quad \text{probudit (se)} & \quad \text{probouzet (se)} & \quad \text{‘awaken, wake, wake up’} \\
\text{vzbudit (se)} & \quad \text{vzbouzet (se)} & \quad \text{ditto} \\
\text{but vzbudit} & \quad \text{vzbouzet} & \quad \text{‘arouse (interest, mistrust, love)’} \\
\text{končit} & \quad \text{dokončit} & \quad \text{dokončovat} & \quad \text{‘end, complete, bring to an end’} \\
\text{ukončit} & \quad \text{ukončovat} & \quad \text{‘end, finish’}
\end{align*}
\]
Word formation

skončit skončovat ditto, also: ‘end up’

zakončit zakončovat ditto

Such verbs often hardly differ in their essential meaning, or differ in minor ways which may not be simple to define.

10.10 Prefixes with other parts of speech

Prefixed elements used with nouns, adjectives and adverbs are often again those derived from basic prepositions. Others are compounding elements using independent parts of speech, e.g. mnoho-, málo-, samo-.

The following alphabetical list mingles the various types. Use a dictionary to identify the basic words from which the examples are derived.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>arci-</td>
<td>‘arch-’</td>
<td>arcibiskup ‘archbishop’, arcivévoda ‘archduke’, archilotr ‘arch rogue’, arcídiló ‘great masterpiece’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do-</td>
<td>‘up to, until’</td>
<td>dopoledne ‘morning’, doživotní ‘life(long)’ doživotí ‘life imprisonment’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jedno-</td>
<td>‘mono-, uni-, single’</td>
<td>jednoslabý ‘monosyllabic’, jednoduchý ‘simple’, jednotvárný ‘monotonous, uniform’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>málo-</td>
<td>‘little’</td>
<td>málomluvný ‘taciturn’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mezi-</td>
<td>‘between, inter-’</td>
<td>mezipatro ‘mezzanine floor’, mezistupeň ‘intermediate stage’, mezinárodní ‘international’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>místo-</td>
<td>‘deputy, vice-’</td>
<td>místopředseda ‘vice-chairman, deputy chairman’, místopředsedkyně ‘vice-chairwoman’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prefixes with other parts of speech

mnoho- ‘poly-, multi-, many’
mnohomluvný ‘talkative’, mnohobarevný ‘multi-coloured, polychromatic’, mnohoslabičný ‘polysyllabic’

na-, ná- ‘on, upon, somewhat, slightly’
nábřeží ‘embankment, quay’, nahnilý ‘partly rotten’

nad(e)- ‘over, above, super-’

ne- ‘not, non-, un-, in-’

nedo- ‘insufficiently, incompletely’, usually verb roots
nedouk ‘half-educated person’, nedopalek ‘cigarette end’

nej- ‘most, -est’, superlative prefix, added to comparatives (see 4.15.4)
nejlepší ‘best’, nejstarší ‘oldest’, nejdřív ‘first of all, soonest’

o-, ob(e)- ‘around, every other’
okvětí ‘outer part of a flower, perianth’, obden ‘every other day’, občas ‘from time to time’

od(e)- ‘from, since’
odvěký ‘age-old’, odpoledne ‘(in the) afternoon’

pa- ‘substitute, false, inferior, pseudo-’
paklíč ‘master key’, pavěda ‘pseudoscience’, pachut ‘aftertaste’, padělek ‘forgery, fake’

po- ‘after, post-; along; somewhat, a bit’
poválečný ‘postwar’, pobřeží ‘shore’, pobledlý ‘somewhat pale’
pod- ‘sub-, under’


pra- ‘pre-, ancient, original state, proto-, very (negative or ancient), great- (relations)’


reduplicated: prapradědeček ‘great-great-grandfather’

proti- ‘against, anti-, counter-’


pře- ‘over, very’

přesila ‘superior strength, superiority’, překrásný ‘magnificent, very fine’, převaliký ‘very great’, přemíra ‘surfeit, excess’

před- ‘in front of, before, pre-, fore-’


přes- ‘over, excessive’

přesčas ‘overtime’, přespolní ‘cross-country, from out of town, from the next village’, lit. ‘from across the fields’

při-, pří- ‘at, near, attached, partial, weak, semi-’

Prefixes with other parts of speech

roz- ‘separate, asunder’
rozcestí ‘parting of the ways, crossroads’
samo- ‘self-’
sou- ‘with, con-’
spolu- ‘co-’
spolupracovník ‘fellow-worker, colleague’, spoluautor ‘co-author’, spolubydlící ‘room-mate’, spolužák ‘fellow pupil, student’
ú- can represent the prefix v- ‘in’ as well as u- ‘at’, and it is not always clear which it is
úrok ‘interest (payment)’, údolí ‘valley’, úpatí ‘foot’ (kopce ‘of a hill’), úplný ‘entire, complete’, území ‘territory’
vele- ‘great, superior’
vý- ‘out’
výročí ‘anniversary’, výsluní ‘sunny place, sunny side’
zá-, za- ‘beyond’
zahraničí ‘foreign countries, abroad’, zákeřný ‘insidious’, lit. ‘behind a bush’ (keř ‘bush’), záňadří ‘bosom’, zámořský ‘overseas’

There are also compound words where a neuter short-form adjective is the first element, e.g.
velkostatek ‘large farm, estate’, velkoobchod ‘wholesale trade’, maloobchod ‘retail trade’, maloměšťák ‘petty bourgeois’,

The list above omits prefixes in loanwords, often instantly recognisable to English speakers, e.g. rekonstrukce ‘reconstruction’, postgraduální ‘postgraduate’, interpretace ‘interpretation’. Some do not match their English equivalents, e.g. interpunkce ‘punctuation’, interrupce ‘abortion’.
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