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# Úvodní lekce

## Základy češtiny

**BASIC INFORMATION**

*Czechoslovakia is a landlocked central European country surrounded by no less than five countries: Poland on the north, the Soviet Union on the east, Hungary and Austria on the south, and the Federal Republic of Germany and the former German Democratic Republic on the west. Czechoslovakia is about the size of New York State (area: 127, 896 sq. km. or 49, 381 sq. mi.). Its capital, Prague, has a population of 1,3 million; its next largest city, Bratislava, has a population of 413,000. Czechoslovakia contains two semi-autonomous republics: the Czech Republic (Bohemia and Moravia) and the Slovak Republic (Slovakia); these in turn are subdivided into ten administrative regions and two city administrations.*

*There are two official languages in Czechoslovakia: Czech and Slovak. Both languages are very similar and every Czech speaker understands Slovak and vice versa. Both are Slavic languages, closely related to Polish and Russian. With a structure very different from German or English, Czech is a highly inflected language with many case endings, suffixes, and a complex set of verb endings. However, there are several redeeming features to Czech for the non-native speaker. For example, it has only five vowels, which in pronunciation can have long or short duration. Its consonants differ a little from those of English, but most are not difficult to pronounce. In Czech, the accent is always on the first syllable of the word. Moreover, Czech verbs have only two or three tenses, which is quite different from the many tenses (twelve) of English.*

**THE AIM OF THE LESSON**

*In this lesson you will learn the Czech alphabet and the basics of Czech pronunciation. You will be able to say: Who is it? and What is it? etc. You will also learn about 50 words without memorizing, because they are the same or very similar both in Czech and English.*



**Basic Differences between Czech and English**

*In English, there are few endings: one example is the use of -s or -es for the plural of nouns; another is the use of -s for the third person singular in verbs. In contrast, Czech is a highly inflected language, with five of the nine word categories in Czech having their own sets of endings, reflecting case (grammatical usage), number (singular or plural), gender, or person.*

*Cases determine the relationships between nouns or pronouns--who does what to whom. A case is quite frequently preceded by a preposition, as in English, and further manifested by an ending on the noun or pronoun. Here is an example of inflection in Czech. Imagine that you have returned to pioneer days in the West and met some Czech settlers; you might hear sentences like these:*

Boseman je starý traper.	<i>Boseman is an old trapper.</i>
Srub toho starého traperera není daleko.	<i>The cabin of that old trapper is not far away.</i>
Nějaký Sioux dal tomu starému traperovi zlatý nuget.	<i>A Sioux gave that old trapper a golden nugget.</i>
Každý zná toho starého traperera.	<i>Everybody knows that old trapper.</i>
Sacramento Chronicle často píše o tom starém traperovi.	<i>The Sacramento Chronicle writes frequently about that old trapper.</i>
Šerif Wyatt Earp mluvil včera s tím starým traperem.	<i>Sheriff Wyatt Earp talked to that old trapper yesterday.</i>

*You have probably noticed that the English construction "that old trapper" does not change from one sentence to the next. However, the Czech equivalent "ten starý traper" has six variants. The difference is that in English the relationship between nouns or pronouns is governed by word order; this is not true in Czech. Compare the following examples:*

Šerif zná toho starého traperera.	<i>The sheriff knows that old trapper.</i>
Šerifa zná ten starý traper.	<i>That old trapper knows the sheriff.</i>

*Who knows whom is clearly determined by the endings in Czech, but by word order in English.*

*Another crucial feature in Czech is the gender of inanimate nouns (e.g. cabin, chronicle, lasso). In Czech, the word for "cabin" is masculine; the word for "chronicle" is feminine; and the word for "lasso" is neuter. Moreover, adjectives change with the gender of the nouns they modify:*

Ten starý srub je nalevo.	<i>That old cabin is on the left.</i>
Ta stará kronika je nalevo.	<i>That old chronicle is on the left.</i>
To staré laso je nalevo.	<i>That old lasso is on the left.</i>

*Unlike English, Czech does not have any articles (a, an, the). Their function is sometimes represented by the demonstrative pronoun, **ten, ta, to** (that), or a numeral, **jeden, jedna, jedno** (one).*

*Verbal aspect is a phenomenon which will be discussed in detail a little later in the course. Be*

prepared to see verbs having two different forms but the same meaning. There is an important difference between, for example, "he died" and "he was dying" that you need to pay close attention to in Czech. Furthermore, watch out for the so-called "double or triple" negative. Although it may sound very strange in English, in speaking Czech you will have to learn to say "I did not go never nowhere."

Unlike English, the Czech verb tense system is simple: present, future and past. The past tense construction, however, will reflect the gender and number of the subject. Compare these Czech and English verbs:

Ten starý traper žil v Kalifornii.

*That old trapper lived in California.*

Calamity Jane žila v Kalifornii.

*Calamity Jane lived in California.*

Fremont a Sutter žili v Kalifornii.

*Fremont and Sutter lived in California.*

You will also find a number of differences in the sounds of Czech. Some features are the same, such as many consonants, while vowels are different. Listen for long and short vowels. Czech pronunciation is precise, and spoken Czech is quite poetic. It is no accident that the literature and music of Czechoslovakia are of exceptional quality.

## CZECH PRONUNCIATION

Unlike English, Czech is for the most part spelled phonetically; that is, it is written almost entirely as it sounds. Like English, it uses the Latin alphabet, but it has, in addition, three diacritical signs: comma (ā - á), hook (č - č), and circle (u - ů). If you know how to pronounce each letter correctly, you should in most cases also be able to pronounce what you read. All Czech words are stressed on the first syllable; the stress has nothing to do with quantity or vowel length.

This is the Czech alphabet with the pronunciation of the letters and examples of equal or similar sounds in English. The letters marked with asterisks (\*) represent sounds which are rare or non-existent in English.

	A	a	(á)	nut	
	Á	á		father, halved	
	B	b	(bé)	boat	
	C	c	(cé)	oats	
	Č	č	(čé)	child	(#) - separate entry in dictionary
	D	d	(dé)	day	
(1)	Ď	d'	(dě)	due	(#) - no separate entry in dictionary
	E	e	(é)	set	
	É	é - ě		*	
	F	f	(ef)	factory	
	G	g	(gé)	good	
	H	h	(há)	have	
(2)	Ch	ch	(chá)	*	(#) - separate entry in dictionary
	I	i	(i)	sit	
	Í	í		seat	
	J	j	(jé)	you	

	K	k	(ká)	sick	
	L	l	(el)	little	
	M	m	(em)	my	
	N	n	(en)	no	
	Ň	ň	(eň)	new	(#) - no separate entry in dictionary
	O	o	(ó)	obey	
	Ó	ó		lawn	
	P	p	(pé)	pie	
	Q	q	(kvé)	question	
	R	r	(er)	*	
	Ř	ř	(eř)	*	(#) - separate entry in dictionary
	S	s	(es)	sober	
	Š	š	(eš)	ship	(#) - separate entry in dictionary
	T	t	(té)	hit	
(1)	Ě	ě	(tě)	Tuesday	(#) - no separate entry in dictionary
	U	u	(ú)	took	
	Ú	ú - ů		stool	
	V	v	(vé)	volume	
	W	w	(dvojité vé)	pronounced as v (victory)	
	X	x	(iks)	pronounced as ks (lexical)	
	Y	y	(ypsilon)	pronounced as i (sit)	
	Ý	ý		pronounced as i (seat)	
	Z	z	(zet)	was	
	Ž	ž	(žet)	pleasure	(#) - separate entry in dictionary

(\*) Don't have any equivalent in English

(1) The small letters *d* and *t* use ( ' ) while their capital equivalents use ( ˇ ).

(2) In English this sound does not appear in front of a vowel. However one can hear it in combination with a letter *K*, e.g.: to come (*kcham* in Czech transcription).

As you can see, the Czech alphabet has a few more letters than the English, but it is still easier to read than Russian or Arabic.

(#) In case you will be using Czech dictionaries, remember, that words starting with the consonants *č, ř, š, ž* are always listed separately following *c, r, s, z*, respectively. Words starting with *d', t', ň* are listed under *d, t, n*. Remember: the character *ch* represents a single sound and always follows *h* in alphabetical listing! The vowel *ě* is a variant of *e* and no Czech word starts with *ě*.

There are six basic vowels in Czech: *a, e, i, o, u, y*. Each of them can be pronounced in short or long duration, which you can recognize by the mark ( ˇ ) above the vowel. The pronunciation of *ì, í* and *y, ý* is the same, although it sometimes may affect the pronunciation of preceding consonants.

**Short variant:**

A a pas  
E e mile

**Long variant:**

Á á pás  
É é milé

I	i	vir	Í	í	vír
O	o	tonu	Ó	ó	tónů
U	u	dul	Ú	ú - ů	úl, důl
Y	y	byt	Ý	ý	být

The small circle above the u (ů) means the same as a comma (ú); the pronunciation is exactly the same. However, generally when the vowel is used at the beginning of the word, a comma (ú) is used; otherwise, a circle is used. Of course, as with almost every grammar rule, there are exceptions, but usually the comma and circle mean the same: long pronunciation.

The hook (ˇ) above the letter means that the pronunciation is generally softer than without. It can be used with following consonants:

**Compare:**

c	co	č	čokoláda
d	do	d'	d'ábel, děti, divadlo (*)
n	ne	ň	oheň, někdo, nikdo (*)
r	realita	ř	řeka
s	systém	š	škola
t	to	t'	t'uk, dítě, děti(*)
z	zóna	ž	žena

(\*) Sometimes the hook (ˇ) is not necessary for soft pronunciation of letters d, t, n. Combination with ě (this is the only Czech vowel which can be written with hook) or ě have the same effect:

dě	děti	di	divadlo
tě	dítě	ti	děti
ně	někdo	ni	nikdo

Except d, t, n, you can write ě also after b, f, p, v, and m, and it also affects the pronunciation:

bě	obě	= bje
fě	žirafě - (very seldom)	= fje
pě	pět	= pje
vě	devět	= vje

*But in case of mě the pronunciation is a bit different:*

mě měsíc = mně

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### ***Hard, soft and neutral.***

*Czech consonants are traditionally divided into two groups called "hard" and "soft". The remaining consonants are called "neutral":*

<i>Hard consonants</i>	<i>Soft consonants</i>	<i>Neutral consonants</i>
H	Ž	B
Ch	Š	F
K	Č	L
R	Ř	M
D	Ď	P
T	Ť	S
N	Ň	V
	C	Z
	J	

*Vowels can be also divided:*

<i>Hard vowels</i>	<i>Soft vowels</i>
A	E
O	I
U	
Y	

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For the next exercise you will need to memorize a few Czech words: pan - (Mr), je - (is), kdo - (who). With these words we can already ask and answer some questions:

Kdo je pan Bush?  
Who is Mr. Bush?

Pan Bush je prezident.  
Mr. Bush is a president.

Pair up the names on the left with the words on the right using the following model:

Kdo je pan \_\_\_\_\_?

Pan \_\_\_\_\_ je \_\_\_\_\_.

Bush	republikán
Byrd	generál
Baker	konzul
Reagan	ministr
Jackson	prezident
Haig	demokrat
Nunn	doktor
Wright	student
Dukakis	senátor
Quaile	diplomat
Kissinger	kongresman
Carlucci	komunista
Hall	politik
Rockefeller	historik
Miller	filozof
Greenspan	dramatik
Kennedy	bankéř
Shultz	ekonom
Volcker	kapitalista
Lendl	tenista
Forman	režisér
Kojak	detektiv
Vojtyla	katolik
Husák	profesor
Havel	viceprezident
Adamec	milionář

## Words which you already know

Here are some words which you probably know. On the right try to write out the correct English meaning and then try to pronounce the words as well as you can after the teacher.

akcelerace  
atmosféra  
kategorie  
demokracie  
invaze  
fotografie  
reakce  
socialismus  
tradice  
systém  
fakt  
kino  
armáda  
džús  
koka-kola  
biftek  
dolar  
džungle  
kamera  
kamión  
kultura  
metoda

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## USEFUL PHRASES

### Greetings and Courtesies

Dobrý den	<i>Good morning. Good afternoon. Hello.</i>
Dobré ráno	<i>Good morning (for early morning)</i>
Dobré odpoledne	<i>Good afternoon (for afternoon)</i>
Ahoj!	<i>Hello! Hi! (informal). Bye! Good-bye!</i>
Nazdar!	<i>Hello! Hi! (informal)</i>
Dobrý večer	<i>Good evening</i>
Dobrou noc	<i>Good night</i>
Nashledanou	<i>Good-bye (more formal than Ahoj)</i>
Haló	<i>Hello! Yes? (used on the telephone, also to catch a distant person's attention)</i>
Děkuju	<i>Thank you</i>
Prosím	<i>You are welcome (reply to Děkuju). Please. Excuse me? What was that you said?</i>
Dík (díky)	<i>Thanks (less formal)</i>
Ano	<i>Yes</i>
Jo	<i>Yes (colloquially)</i>
Ne	<i>No</i>
Pardon	<i>I beg your pardon. Sorry. Pardon me.</i>
Promiňte	<i>Excuse me. I am sorry. Forgive me.</i>
Pozor!	<i>Careful! Watch out!</i>
Na zdraví!	<i>Cheers! To your health!</i>
Dobrou chut'!	<i>Bon appétit! (said at meals before eating)</i>
Šťastnou cestu!	<i>Bon voyage! Have a good journey!</i>

**Numbers 1 -10**

*Try to practice your pronunciation on these basic numbers:*

0	nula
1	jeden (jedna, jedno)
2	dva (dvě)
3	tři
4	čtyři
5	pět
6	šest
7	sedm
8	osm
9	devět
10	deset

**Exercise 1:**

*Try to remember the following words which will be necessary for the next activity:*

co	<i>what</i>
je	<i>is</i>
to	<i>it</i>
tady	<i>here</i>
tam	<i>there</i>
napravo	<i>on the right</i>
nalevo	<i>on the left</i>
nahoře	<i>up</i>
dole	<i>down</i>
vepředu	<i>in front</i>
vzadu	<i>in back</i>

**Excercise 2:**

Co je to?	To je	auto
<p>Co je tady?                      Co je tam?                      Co je napravo?                      Co je nalevo?                      Co je nahoře?                      Co je dole?                      Co je vepředu?                      Co je vzadu?</p>	<p>Tady je                      Tam je                      Napravo je                      Nalevo je                      Nahoře je                      Dole je                      Vepředu je                      Vzadu je</p>	<p>papír                      hotel                      klub                      lampa                      bar                      restaurace                      univerzita                      rádio                      televize                      problém                      program                      kurs                      materiál                      plán                      adresa                      film                      motel                      banka                      automobil                      telefon                      text                      park                      muzeum</p>

## Measures & units

If you have never been in Europe, you will need some help in converting from the English system of measure to the metric system, learning to think in terms of meters, kilometers, grams, and kilograms, instead of yards, miles, pounds, and gallons. Here is a rough orientation:

1 inch is	2.54 centimeters	1 gallon is	4 liters
1 yard is	1 meter	0° Celsius is	32° Fahrenheit
1 mile is	1.6 kilometers		

A pleasant summer's day has a temperature in the twenties Celsius; above 30° C is pretty hot; under 0° C you will freeze and at around -20° C you will start to understand what winter is like in Russian Siberia.

Electrical voltage in Czechoslovakia is 220 volts AC, and the frequency is 50 Hz. Both voltage and frequency are not very stable; voltage can move between 200 - 250 V and frequency is usually a bit under 50 Hz, especially during the winter energy load. As a result your plug-powered clocks, radios, VCRs, or microwave ovens could usually be late or slow. Also count on brownouts and blackouts, especially if you will be using a computer. Czech plugs are quite different from those in the U.S., so be prepared to change your plugs on the electric appliances you bring from home.

Check and compare US and West European prices of small appliances (irons, toasters, hair dryers, vacuum machines etc.), because for U.S. 110 V ones you will need quite powerful transformers to change Czech 220 V for U.S. 110 V. Maybe it will be cheaper for you to buy them overseas.

Telephone jacks have four wires and four screws. Your touch tone phone will probably work, if you can switch it into a pulse mode. Officially you can use only Czech-made or approved phones. The same holds true for answering devices, fax machines, and modems, but if you can get them to work, which should not be a problem, no one will bother you. Be careful with cordless phones and CB radios, because every device (including wireless toys and walkie-talkies) which broadcasts with more than 0.1 W of power needs special permission.

Czech radio and TV work under the East European OIRT norm instead of the West European CCIR norm. For radio the difference is only in FM. OIRT has the band of 65-73 MHz, but now the government is starting to broadcast also on 88 - 108 MHz because they want foreign tourists and visitors, and quite a number of Czechs who have Western radios, to listen to their broadcasting instead of to Western broadcasting. Listening to shortwave radio (SW) is much more common in Czechoslovakia than in the U.S.

TV is broadcast on the OIRT norm too, which means that the color system is not American NTSC, but the French SECAM. By the way, all Czech government TV studio equipment is in PAL and all editing is done in PAL too; only just before broadcast is the signal converted into SECAM. You can receive PAL signals on SECAM TV and vice versa, but you will lose color. Another problem between CCIR and OIRT TV signals is sound. The difference between the picture and sound parts of the signal is 1 MHz (5.5 vs. 6.5 MHz), so you need a small converter to be able to receive the other norms' sound. Take this into consideration if you choose to bring your own TV.

It seems the government may be slowly giving up on its OIRT radio norm because they are already broadcasting on CCIR wavelength. There are also some positive signals that something similar will be done about the TV signal. The first step is production of TV sets which can receive both CCIR and OIRT TV signals in PAL and SECAM, which has already started in Czechoslovakia. Another strong impetus for change is VCRs, because most of the available recorded tapes are in CCIR PAL.

Most of them are VHS systems, but there are also plenty of Beta systems. There is a big black market in VCRs and in videocassettes, blank or with movies. People are copying everything they can get hold of and selling it, trying to make some money. Nobody worries about copyrights.

The same holds true for music records and CD's and, of course, computer software. Czechoslovakia is one of the biggest software jungles in the world, and there is not one protected program that has not been broken and copied. The most common small computer among Czechs is the Sinclair ZX Spectrum, somewhat similar to the old Timex 2000. Throughout the country, there are an estimated 10,000 games and utility programs available free of charge for this small computer. There is a smaller number of programs available for Commodore 64, more for Atari, and IBM PC and compatibles.

## Lekce 1

# Seznámení

### THE AIM OF THE LESSON

*In this lesson you will learn how to introduce yourself, greet others, respond to their greetings and use your limited knowledge of Czech as a way to slow down somebody who talks to you too fast or in too complicated Czech.*

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### CULTURAL NOTES

#### Greetings

*There is an old Czech proverb, "Liná huba - holé neštěstí," which roughly can be translated, "Lazy lips--complete disaster," and means in essence, "Nothing can be had without asking." Please remember this proverb when you are in Czechoslovakia. Every relationship starts with greetings. Try to greet everybody; be friendly and shake hands with adults, as it is common. Try to use professional titles (Doctor, Professor, Director, etc.) before his or her last name, especially with people in higher positions.*

*When two Americans meet and greet each other, they use phrases like "How do you do?" or "How are you?" even with people they do not know. Americans do not expect answers to these questions--it is simply an American custom. Such a question would be too personal for a Czech. In meeting people a simple "Dobrý den" (literally: Good day) is entirely sufficient. It cannot be used, however, like in English, when one parts. Czechs don't ask personal questions of people they don't know. And if they do ask such a question, they expect some answer, even if a joke, such as "Do you really want to know?" etc. Another typical joke answer would be something like "Where are those beautiful days, when everything was just plain bad?"*

#### Interesting Czech Habits

*When you go to visit a Czech family--let's say you are invited for dinner--don't forget to bring something. Generally some flowers for the hostess (but only an odd number of them. 3, 5, 7 ...) is a good idea. You don't have to do it all the time, but if you are an American diplomat, you have to live up to what people expect of you.*

*When you enter the apartment, be prepared to see the Czechs taking off their shoes. In the new suburbs of Prague, this habit has gone so far that in the big concrete complex in Jižní město, which has hundreds of tiny (to an American) apartments, people leave their shoes in the corridor in front of the apartment.*

*When Czechs start to eat, they wish one another "Dobrou chut'!" which means "Good*

appetite!" During the course of dinner you will be expected to eat and drink quite a lot, and you will be urged to help yourself to more. A polite excuse, such as dieting, may come in handy.

If you get a chance, try to visit some village marriage or christening or "zabíjačka," a party celebrating the killing and cooking of a big pig. You might find this to be a very interesting experience. "Vinobraní," a vintage celebration or wine fest, is also a good experience in some parts of the country. Make friends with local people, show them your interest, and they will invite you or arrange an invitation. To have a guest from America is an experience for them, especially in rural areas, where you will have the best time.

Something unknown to Czechs is the surprise party--so you can really surprise some Czech with one! Czechs not only celebrate birthdays, which are parties similar to those in America, but they also celebrate "svátek," which is their name day. Name days are determined by the Czech calendar, which has one first name for each day. So for instance, someone whose name is Václav would celebrate his name day on September 28. In offices, name day is observed religiously, because it gives people another opportunity for drinking and partying. Consumption of alcohol is officially forbidden at work, but . . . . If a Czech has a "svátek," you can wish him or her all the best and, if you are a bit closer to your friend, you can give him/her a small present: flowers and/or cosmetics for the secretary; drink or cigarettes for the driver, etc.

In the U.S., dinner is usually considered the main meal of the day. In Czechoslovakia it is lunch, especially on Sundays or on holidays. Generally Czechs don't eat very big breakfasts. Cereals are practically unknown and juices are too expensive for the average Czech. A usual lunch is soup and some meat with dumplings or potatoes or rice, and not very many vegetables. Dinner is usually not so big: no soup, some meat and again dumplings, rice, or potatoes. Sometimes dinner is cold--a sandwich. Generally the eating habits of Czechs would be considered quite unhealthy from an American point of view.

During Christmas Czechs give and receive presents on Christmas Eve. The presents are found under the Christmas tree, wrapped in Christmas paper with the name of the person who will receive the present.

Smokers will probably find a bit more smoking freedom there compared to U.S. Open hunting season on smokers anywhere and anytime is slowly starting even in Czechoslovakia, but it is still much weaker than in U.S. and definitely will not catch up in the near future.

There are quite a few things which can at least surprise or even offend an average American dealing with an average Czech. First, some Czechs can speak more loudly than is common here. Moreover, when two Czechs talk with each other, there is less physical distance between them than there is between two Americans. So don't be surprised, when somebody comes very close to you and starts to "shout" at you. He/she is probably only trying to be a little bit more polite than usual and wants to be sure that you will understand him/her.

Also don't be surprised, if even a complete stranger, who sees you doing something, comes up to you and starts to advise you how to do it "better, faster, cheaper, etc." from his point of view. He is only trying to help and be polite in a particularly strange Czech way.

You will also see more lines than in U.S., where you usually only wait in line for the coming Metro bus. In Prague you will get used to queuing, but you will also be able to see line cutting and line fighting, which can sometimes be a real spectacle.





## SETTING THE SCENE 1

*The first few days after your arrival you will probably not be forced to speak Czech, but you will have at least some chance to do it and we strongly recommend you do so, because as an old Czech proverb says: "Opakování je matka moudrosti" which in English means, "Repeating is the mother of wisdom." One of the chances can be at a cocktail party at the embassy, where there are usually at least some Czechs present and you can try to introduce yourself.*

## HEARING IT

*With books closed listen to the dialogue twice. Try to guess what is going on.*



## SEEING IT

*Look at the dialogue silently while listening to the tape. You will be asked to comment.*

- A: Dobrý den. Já se jmenuju John Reindle. Pracuju na americkém velvyslanectví v Praze.
- Č I: Těší mě. Já jsem František Kučera z ministerstva kultury. Jak se vám líbí Československo?
- A: Československo se mi moc líbí.
- Č I: A jak se vám líbí Praha?
- A: Praha je moc hezká.
- Č I: Moment prosím, tamhle je moje žena, hned vám ji představím. Jarmilo, to je pan Reindle z amerického velvyslanectví.
- Č II: Dobrý den. Já jsem Jarmila Kučerová. Jsem ráda, že vás poznávám.
- A: Dobrý den. Já jsem John Reindle.
- Č II: Jak dlouho jste v Československu, pane Reindle?
- A: Jenom týden.
- Č II: Kde jste se naučil tak dobře česky?
- A: Promiňte, já jsem cizinec a neumím moc česky.
- Č II: Ale já vám rozumím docela dobře.



## TRANSLATION

A: Hello. My name is John Reindle. I work at the American Embassy in Prague.

Č I: Glad to meet you. I'm František Kučera from the Ministry of Culture. How do you like Czechoslovakia?

A: I like Czechoslovakia a lot.

Č I: And how do you like Prague?

A: Prague is very beautiful.

Č I: Just a second, please, here is my wife, I'll introduce her to you. Jarmila, this is Mr. Reindle from the American Embassy.

Č II: Hello. I'm Jarmila Kučerová. I'm glad to meet you.

A: Hello. I'm John Reindle.

Č II: How long have you been in Czechoslovakia, Mr. Reindle?

A: Only a week.

Č II: Where did you learn Czech so well?

A: Excuse me, I'm a foreigner and I don't understand Czech all that well.

Č II: But I understand you quite well.

---

## FILLING IN THE BLANKS

In the "Filling in the blanks" exercises the number of dashes is equal to the number of letters which were omitted. In case of omitting two or more words, a bigger space indicates the end of one and the beginning of the next.

Listen to the dialogue once more and fill in the blanks with the missing words.

A: Dobrý \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ se jmenuju John Reindle. Pracuju na americkém \_\_\_\_\_ v Praze.

Č I: Těší \_\_\_\_\_. Já jsem František Kučera z \_\_\_\_\_ kultury. Jak se vám líbí \_\_\_\_\_ ?

A: Československo se mi moc \_\_\_\_\_ .

Č I: A \_\_\_\_\_ se vám líbí Praha?

A: \_\_\_\_\_ je moc hezká.

Č I: \_\_\_\_\_ prosím, tamhle je moje \_\_\_\_\_, hned vám ji představím. Jarmilo, to je \_\_\_\_\_ Reindle z \_\_\_\_\_ velvyslanectví.

Č II: \_\_\_\_\_ den. Já \_\_\_\_\_ Jarmila Kučerová. Jsem \_\_\_\_\_, že vás poznávám.

A: \_\_\_\_\_ John Reindle.

Č II: Jak \_\_\_\_\_ jste v Československu pane Reindle?

A: Jenom \_\_\_\_\_.

Č II: \_\_\_\_\_ jste se naučil tak dobře česky?

A: Promiňte, já jsem \_\_\_\_\_ a neumím moc česky.

Č II: Ale já vám \_\_\_\_\_ docela dobře.

### TAKING IT APART

First as a group, then individually, repeat each item in Czech after the instructor, always checking the English meaning. The instructor will then select English or Czech words and ask you to translate them.

a	and
ale	but
čizinec	foreigner
Československo, v Československu	Czechoslovakia, in Czechoslovakia
česky	Czech
den	day
dlouho	long
dobry	good
dobře	well
hezká	nice
hned	right away
já	I
jak	how
já se jmenuju	my name is
je	is
jenom	only
ji	her
jsem	I am
jste	you are
kde	where
kultury	of culture
líbí se mi	I like

mi	to me
ministerstva	of ministry
moc	a lot, much
moje	my
moment	moment
na	on
na Americkém velvyslanectví	at the American Embassy
naučil	did learn
neumím	I don't know
pan, pane	Mr., Mr. (when you address somebody)
poznávám	I meet
pracuju	I work
promiňte	excuse me
prosím	please
představím	I will introduce
ráda	glad
rozumím	I understand
se	(reflexive particle)
tak	so
tamhle	over there
těší mě	nice to meet you
to	it
týden	week
v	in
vám	to you
vás	you
v Československu	in Czechoslovakia
velvyslanectví	embassy
z	from
z amerického velvyslanectví	from the American Embassy
že	that
žena	woman, wife

---

## SETTING THE SCENE 2

*You have just moved into your new apartment outside the embassy compound. You are the only foreigner in the whole building and you don't know anybody there. You are just coming home from work, trying to open the door of your apartment, when you see a Czech coming out of the apartment next to you.*

## HEARING IT

*With books closed listen to the dialogue twice. Try to guess what is going on.*

---



## FILLING IN THE BLANKS

Listen to the dialogue once more and fill in the blanks with the missing words.

- Č: Dobré \_\_\_\_\_ . Vy jste náš nový \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
pokud se nemýlím?
- A: Já jsem cizinec a \_\_\_\_\_ moc česky. Mluvte prosím  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- Č: Cizinec? A \_\_\_\_\_ jste?
- A: Já se \_\_\_\_\_ John Reindle a pracuju na  
\_\_\_\_\_ velvyslanectví.
- Č: \_\_\_\_\_ Josef Patočka a dělám na ministerstvu  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- A: Jsem \_\_\_\_\_ , že vás poznávám \_\_\_\_\_ Patočka
- Č: Já \_\_\_\_\_ pane Reindle. Pokud budete něco  
\_\_\_\_\_ , tak na mě klidně \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
rád vám \_\_\_\_\_ .
- A: \_\_\_\_\_ vám. Určitě \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Č: \_\_\_\_\_ zač. Tak \_\_\_\_\_ nashledanou.
- A: \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 

## TAKING IT APART

First as a group, then individually, repeat each item in Czech after the instructor, always checking the English meaning. The instructor will then select English or Czech words and ask you to translate them.

budete	you will be
děkuju	thank you
dělám	I do, I work
dobré	good
klidně	easily
mluvte	speak (imperative)
na ministerstvu zahraničí	at the ministry of foreign affairs
nashledanou	so long, good-bye
náš	our
něco	something
nemáte	you don't have
nemýlím se	I am not mistaken
není zač	don't mention it
nerozumím	I don't understand

nový	<i>new</i>
odkud	<i>from where</i>
odpoledne	<i>afternoon</i>
pokud	<i>if</i>
pomalů	<i>slowly</i>
pomůžu	<i>I will help</i>
potřebovat	<i>to need</i>
pracuju	<i>I work</i>
přijdu	<i>I will come</i>
rád	<i>glad</i>
soused	<i>neighbor</i>
taky	<i>also</i>
určitě	<i>surely, certainly, sure</i>
vy	<i>you</i>
zatím	<i>meanwhile, for the time being</i>
zazvoňte	<i>ring (imperative)</i>

## Introductions

Dovolte, abych vám představil ...	<i>Allow me to introduce ...</i>
Těší mě.	<i>Pleased to meet you. How do you do?</i>
To je pan ...	<i>This is Mr. ...</i>
To je paní ...	<i>This is Mrs. ...</i>
To je slečna ...	<i>This is Miss , (Ms)*...</i>
Dovolte, abych se představil.	<i>Let me introduce myself.</i>
Jmenuju se ...	<i>My name is ...</i>
Jak se máte?	<i>How are you. How are things?</i>
Děkuju, dobře.	<i>Thank you, I am well.</i>
Vítám vás!	<i>Welcome!</i>
Já jsem Američan.	<i>I am American. (masculine)</i>
Já jsem Američanka.	<i>I am American. (feminine)</i>
Já nejsem Čech.	<i>I am not Czech. (masculine)</i>
Já nejsem Češka.	<i>I am not Czech. (feminine)</i>
	<i>*There is no equivalent of the English Ms in Czech.</i>

**USEFUL PHRASES**

Já jsem František Kučera.	<i>I am František Kučera.</i>
Praha je moc hezká.	<i>Prague is very beautiful.</i>
To je pan Reindle.	<i>This is Mr. Reindle.</i>
Já jsem cizinec.	<i>I am a foreigner.</i>
Vy jste náš nový soused.	<i>You are our new neighbor.</i>

=====

**LANGUAGE NOTES**

These are the forms of the verb **být - to be**:

(*)	<b>být - singular</b>	<b>být - to be</b>	(*)	<b>singular</b>	<b>negative</b>
(já)	jsem	<i>I am</i>	(já)	nejsem	<i>I am not</i>
(ty)	jsi	<i>you are</i>	(ty)	nejsi	<i>you are not</i>
(on)	je	<i>he is</i>	(on)	není	<i>he is not</i>
(ona)	je	<i>she is</i>	(ona)	není	<i>she is not</i>
(ono)	je	<i>it is</i>	(ono)	není	<i>it is not</i>
(*)	<b>být - plural</b>	<b>být - to be</b>	(*)	<b>plural</b>	<b>negative</b>
(my)	jsme	<i>we are</i>	(my)	nejsme	<i>we are not</i>
(vy)	jste	<i>you are</i>	(vy)	nejste	<i>you are not</i>
(oni)	jsou	<i>they are (m.)</i>	(oni)	nejsou	<i>they are not</i>
(ony)	jsou	<i>they are (f.)</i>	(ony)	nejsou	<i>they are not</i>
(ona)	jsou	<i>they are (n.)</i>	(ona)	nejsou	<i>they are not</i>

(\*)The personal pronouns (in brackets) are usually omitted. Instead of **ono**, **to** is very often used. The 2nd person singular **ty jsi** is used informally (see the old English **thou**), among friends, relatives, children, students, young people and also among members of Communist party. The 2nd person plural **vy jste** is used as a singular for polite, respectful address.

Verb negation in Czech is very simple. The prefix **ne-** is put in front of the verb (rozumím - nerozumím). Note, however, the irregular form in the 3rd person singular: **je - není**.



## Czech Nouns

Czech nouns, adjectives, and pronouns have three genders: masculine (m), feminine (f), and neuter (n). The gender is partly natural--human beings and animals of male sex are masculine, those of female sex are feminine. Gender of all other nouns has to be memorized.

Masculine nouns are divided into two groups: a) Masculine animate (ma) - (animate being understood as denoting human beings or animals), b) Masculine inanimate (mi) - (inanimate objects). The nouns of all 3 genders are further divided into hard and soft. This usually depends on the ending of the noun.

The basic form, the one you find in the dictionary, is called the nominative form. It also appears after the verb **být** - to be. Czech nouns decline--they change their endings according to their case or role in the sentence (subject, object, indirect object, etc.). The nominative case is also used after the questions: **kdo?** - **who?** and **co?** - **what?**:

Kdo je tam?

Who is there?

Tam je soused Patočka.

There is the neighbor Patočka.

## Declension types

gender	noun ending in	example
ma mi	hard * consonant	soused slovník
ma mi	soft * consonant	muž stroj
f	-a -e / ě soft * consonant	žena ulice garáž
n	-o -e / ě -í	město parkoviště velvyslanectví

\* See Lesson 0, page 6.

## Czech Adjectives

Czech adjectives must agree with the nouns they modify in gender, case, and number. They may be used either attributively: **americký klub**; or predicatively: **Klub je americký**. The nominative singular masculine forms of all Czech adjectives end either in - **ý** (hard adjectives) or - **í** (soft adjectives):

Dobrý den.	(m)	Hello.
To je nový soused.	(m)	This is the new neighbor.
Praha je hezká.	(f)	Prague is beautiful.
To je americké velvyslanectví.	(n)	This is the American Embassy.
Dobré odpoledne.	(n)	Good afternoon.

Compare the difference between hard and soft adjectives in connection with gender:

Gender	Hard adjectives	Soft adjectives
<i>m</i>	americký klub	moderní klub
<i>f</i>	americká žena	moderní žena
<i>n</i>	americké město	moderní město

## Demonstrative pronouns

Gender	Example
<i>m</i>	ten klub
<i>f</i>	ta škola
<i>n</i>	to město

Demonstrative pronouns **ten**, **ta**, **to** often correspond to the English definite article "the." **Ten**, **ta**, **to** are used when there is no doubt which object or subject we mean.



## Exercise 1:

Ten	program	je kulturní
<p>Ten Ta To Tento Tato Toto Tenhle Tahle Tohle Tamten Tamta Tamto</p>	<p>klub film škola pero město lekce bar žena soused systém muzeum cizinec Američan Čech diplomat kolega kolegyně ráno papír revoluce politika problém organizace situace</p>	<p>je sportovní je televizní je universitní je americké je hezké je nová je moderní je mladá je starý je demokratický je národní je inteligentní je normální je revoluční je kulturní je objektivní je praktická je dobré je čistý je politická je sociální je historický je komunistická je kritická</p>

## Exercise 2:

Ona	je	studentka
Já		profesor - profesorka
Ty		republián - republikánka
On		konzul - konzulka
Ona		demokrat - demokratka
Vy		šofér - šoférka
Paní Navrátilová	jsem	doktor - doktorka
Pan Husák	jsi	student - studentka
Paní Kučerová	je	senátor - senátorka
Pan Jakeš	jste	filozof - filozofka
Pan Reindle	nejsem	tenista - tenistka
Slečna Veselá	nejsi	režisér - režisérka
Pan Patočka	není	prezident - prezidentka
Slečna Nováková	nejste	terorista - teroristka
Pan Adamec		komunista - komunistka
Pan Tomášek		víceprezident - víceprezidentka
		diplomat - (!)
		historik - historička
		ekonom - ekonomka
		katolík - katolička
		politik - politička
		kosmonaut - kosmonautka

Now with the instructor's help, you will work on the structures that appear in the dialogue and subsequent notes. Use appropriate endings. Concentrate on the American's lines.

1. Practice introducing yourself.

John Reindle.	Jsem rád, že vás poznávám. (masc.)
Já jsem John Reindle.	Jsem ráda, že vás poznávám. (fem.)
Jmenuju se John Reindle.	Moc mě těší.

---

2. Practice introducing two (or more) people to each other.

To je (můj kolega) pan .....

To je (moje kolegyně) paní .....

Dovolte, abych vám představil pana .....

Dovolte, abych vám představila paní .....

---

3. Practice variants of greetings and introductions.

Dobrý den.	Nashledanou.
Dobré ráno (jítro).	Sbohem.
Dobré odpoledne.	Nazdar.                      Ahoj.
Dobrý večer.	Dobrou noc.

---

4. Practice making sure you understand someone's name.

Promiňte, já jsem nerozuměl.	Promiňte, já jsem nerozuměla.
Promiňte, nerozuměla jsem.	Mluvte prosím pomalu.
Promiňte, já jsem cizinec a neumím moc česky. (masc.)	
Promiňte, já jsem cizinka a nerozumím moc česky. (fem.)	
Prosím, opakujte to ještě jednou.	
Promiňte, co jste říkal?	Promiňte, co jste říkala?

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