

= Czech language =

Czech (/ ʧɛʃk / ; ʧɛʃtina Czech pronunciation : [ʧɛʃtina]) , formerly known as Bohemian (/ boʊhiːmiːn , bʰ- / ; lingua Bohemica in Latin) , is a West Slavic language strongly influenced by Latin and German . It is spoken by over 10 million people and is the official language of the Czech Republic . Czech 's closest relative is Slovak , with which it is mutually intelligible . It is closely related to other West Slavic languages , such as Silesian and Polish . Although most Czech vocabulary is based on shared roots with Slavic , Romance , and Germanic languages , many loanwords (most associated with high culture) have been adopted in recent years .

The language began in its present linguistic branch as Old Czech before slowly dwindling in importance , dominated by German in the Czech lands . During the mid 18th century , it experienced a revival in which Czech academics stressed the past accomplishments of their people and advocated the return of Czech as a major language . It has changed little since that time , except for minor morphological shifts and the formalization of colloquial elements .

Its phoneme inventory is moderate in size , comprising five vowels (each short or long) and twenty 5 consonants (divided into " hard " , " neutral " and " soft " categories) . Words may contain uncommon (or complicated) consonant clusters , including one consonant represented by the grapheme ʃ , or lack vowels altogether . Czech orthography is simple , and has been used as a model by phonologists .

As a member of the Slavic sub 18th family of the Indo 18th European languages , Czech is a highly inflected fusional language . Its nouns and adjectives undergo a complex system of declension for case , number , gender , animacy , and type of ending consonant (hard , neutral or soft) . Verbs (with aspect) are conjugated somewhat more simply for tense , number and gender . Because of this inflection , Czech word order is very flexible and words may be transposed to change emphasis or form questions .

= = Classification = =

Czech is classified as a member of the West Slavic sub 18th branch of the Slavic branch of the Indo 18th European language family . This branch includes Polish , Kashubian , Upper and Lower Sorbian and Slovak . Slovak is by far the closest genetic neighbor of Czech , and the languages are closer than any other pair of West Slavic languages (including Upper and Lower Sorbian , which share a name by association with an ethnic group) .

The West Slavic languages are spoken in an area classified as part of Central Europe . Except for Polish they differ from East and South Slavic languages by their initial 18th syllable stress , and Czech is distinguished from other West Slavic languages by a more 18th restricted distinction between " hard " and " soft " consonants (see Phonology below) .

= = = Mutual intelligibility = = =

Czech and Slovak have been considered mutually intelligible ; speakers of either language can communicate with greater ease than those of any other pair of West Slavic languages . Since the 1993 dissolution of Czechoslovakia mutual intelligibility has declined for younger speakers , probably because Czech speakers now experience less exposure to Slovak and vice versa .

The languages have not undergone the deliberate highlighting of minor linguistic differences in the name of nationalism as has occurred in the Bosnian , Serbian and Croatian standards of Serbo 18th Croatian . However , most Slavic languages (including Czech) have been distanced in this way from Russian influences because of widespread public resentment against the former Soviet Union (which occupied Czechoslovakia in 1968) . Czech and Slovak form a dialect continuum , with great similarity between neighboring Czech and Slovak dialects . (See " Dialects " below .)

In phonetic differences , Czech is characterized by a glottal stop before initial vowels and Slovak by its less 18th frequent use of long vowels than Czech ; however , Slovak has long forms of the consonants r and l when they function as vowels . Phonemic differences between the two languages

are generally consistent , typical of two dialects of a language . Grammatically , although Czech (unlike Slovak) has a vocative case both languages share a common syntax .

One study showed that Czech and Slovak lexicons differed by 80 percent , but this high percentage was found to stem primarily from differing orthographies and slight inconsistencies in morphological formation ; Slovak morphology is more regular (when changing from the nominative to the locative case , Praha becomes Praze in Czech and Prahe in Slovak) . The two lexicons are generally considered similar , with most differences found in colloquial vocabulary and some scientific terminology . Slovak has slightly more borrowed words than Czech .

The similarities between Czech and Slovak led to the languages being considered a single language by a group of 19th @-@ century scholars who called themselves " Czechoslavs " (?echoslováci) , believing that the peoples were connected in a way which excluded German Bohemians and (to a lesser extent) Hungarians and other Slavs . During the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918 ? 1938) , although " Czechoslovak " was designated as the republic 's official language both Czech and Slovak written standards were used . Standard written Slovak was partially modeled on literary Czech , and Czech was preferred for some official functions in the Slovak half of the republic . Czech influence on Slovak was protested by Slovak scholars , and when Slovakia broke off from Czechoslovakia in 1938 as the Slovak State (which then aligned with Nazi Germany in World War II) literary Slovak was deliberately distanced from Czech . When the Axis powers lost the war and Czechoslovakia reformed , Slovak developed somewhat on its own (with Czech influence) ; during the Prague Spring of 1968 , Slovak gained independence from (and equality with) Czech . Since then , " Czechoslovak " refers to improvised pidgins of the languages which have arisen from the decrease in mutual intelligibility .

= = History = =

= = = Origins : Proto @-@ Czech and Old Czech = = =

Around the sixth century AD , a tribe of Slavs arrived in a portion of Central Europe . According to legend they were led by a hero named ?ech , from whom the word " Czech " derives . The ninth century brought the state of Great Moravia , whose first ruler (Rastislav of Moravia) invited Byzantine ruler Michael III to send missionaries in an attempt to reduce the influence of East Francia on religious and political life in his country . These missionaries , Constantine and Methodius , helped to convert the Czechs from traditional Slavic paganism to Christianity and established a church system . They also brought the Glagolitic alphabet to the West Slavs , whose language was previously unwritten . This language , later known as Proto @-@ Czech , was beginning to separate from its fellow West Slavic hatchlings Proto @-@ Slovak , Proto @-@ Polish and Proto @-@ Sorbian . Among other features , Proto @-@ Czech was marked by its ephemeral use of the voiced velar fricative consonant (/ ? /) and consistent stress on the first syllable .

The Czechs ' language separated from other Slavic tongues into what would later be called Old Czech by the thirteenth century , a classification extending through the sixteenth century . Its use of cases differed from the modern language ; although Old Czech did not yet have a vocative case or an animacy distinction , declension for its six cases and three genders rapidly became complicated (partially to differentiate homophones) and its declension patterns resembled those of Lithuanian (its Balto @-@ Slavic cousin) .

While Old Czech had a basic alphabet from which a general set of orthographical correspondences was drawn , it did not have a standard orthography . It also contained a number of sound clusters which no longer exist ; allowing ? (/ j ? /) after soft consonants , which has since shifted to e (/ ? /) , and allowing complex consonant clusters to be pronounced all at once rather than syllabically . A phonological phenomenon , Havlik 's law (which began in Proto @-@ Slavic and took various forms in other Slavic languages) , appeared in Old Czech ; counting backwards from the end of a clause , every odd @-@ numbered yer was vocalized as a vowel , while the other yers disappeared .

Bohemia (as Czech civilization was known by then) increased in power over the centuries , as its

language did in regional importance . This growth was expedited during the fourteenth century by Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV , who founded Charles University in Prague in 1348 . Here , early Czech literature (a biblical translation , hymns and hagiography) flourished . Old Czech texts , including poetry and cookbooks , were produced outside the university as well . Later in the century Jan Hus contributed significantly to the standardization of Czech orthography , advocated for widespread literacy among Czech commoners (particularly in religion) and made early efforts to model written Czech after the spoken language .

Czech continued to evolve and gain in regional importance for hundreds of years , and has been a literary language in the Slovak lands since the early fifteenth century . A biblical translation , the Kralice Bible , was published during the late sixteenth century (around the time of the King James and Luther versions) which was more linguistically conservative than either . The publication of the Kralice Bible spawned widespread nationalism , and in 1615 the government of Bohemia ruled that only Czech @-@ speaking residents would be allowed to become full citizens or inherit goods or land . This , and the conversion of the Czech upper classes from the Habsburg Empire 's Catholicism to Protestantism , angered the Habsburgs and helped trigger the Thirty Years ' War (where the Czechs were defeated at the Battle of White Mountain) . The Czechs became serfs ; Bohemia 's printing industry (and its linguistic and political rights) were dismembered , removing official regulation and support from its language . German quickly became the dominant language in Bohemia .

= = = Revival : Modern Czech = = =

The consensus among linguists is that modern , standard Czech originated during the eighteenth century . By then the language had developed a literary tradition , and since then it has changed little ; journals from that period have no substantial differences from modern standard Czech , and contemporary Czechs can understand them with little difficulty . Changes include the morphological shift of í to ej and é to í (although é survives for some uses) and the merging of í and the former ejí . Sometime before the eighteenth century , the Czech language abandoned a distinction between phonemic / l / and / ʔ / which survives in Slovak .

The Czech people gained widespread national pride during the mid @-@ eighteenth century , inspired by the Age of Enlightenment a half @-@ century earlier . Czech historians began to emphasize their people 's accomplishments from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries , rebelling against the Counter @-@ Reformation (which had denigrated Czech and other non @-@ Latin languages) . Czech philologists studied sixteenth @-@ century texts , advocating the return of the language to high culture . This period is known as the Czech National Revival (or Renaissance)

During the revival , in 1809 linguist and historian Josef Dobrovský released a German @-@ language grammar of Old Czech entitled Ausführliches Lehrgebäude der böhmischen Sprache (Comprehensive Doctrine of the Bohemian Language) . Dobrovský had intended his book to be descriptive , and did not think Czech had a realistic chance of returning as a major language . However , Josef Jungmann and other revivalists used Dobrovský 's book to advocate for a Czech linguistic revival . Changes during this time included spelling reform (notably , í in place of the former j and j in place of g) , the use of t (rather than ti) to end infinitive verbs and the non @-@ capitalization of nouns (which had been a late borrowing from German) . These changes differentiated Czech from Slovak . Modern scholars disagree about whether the conservative revivalists were motivated by nationalism or considered contemporary spoken Czech unsuitable for formal , widespread use .

Adherence to historical patterns was later relaxed and standard Czech adopted a number of features from Common Czech (a widespread , informal register) , such as leaving some proper nouns undeclined . This has resulted in a relatively high level of homogeneity among all varieties of the language .

= = Geographic distribution = =

In 2005 and 2007 , Czech was spoken by about 10 million residents of the Czech Republic . A Eurobarometer survey conducted from January to March 2012 found that the first language of 98 percent of Czech citizens was Czech , the third @-@ highest in the European Union (behind Greece and Hungary) .

Czech , the official language of the Czech Republic (a member of the European Union since 2004) , is one of the EU 's official languages and the 2012 Eurobarometer survey found that Czech was the foreign language most often used in Slovakia . Economist Jonathan van Parys collected data on language knowledge in Europe for the 2012 European Day of Languages . The five countries with the greatest use of Czech were the Czech Republic (98 @.@ 77 percent) , Slovakia (24 @.@ 86 percent) , Portugal (1 @.@ 93 percent) , Poland (0 @.@ 98 percent) and Germany (0 @.@ 47 percent) .

Czech speakers in Slovakia primarily live in cities . Since it is a recognised minority language in Slovakia , Slovak citizens who speak only Czech may communicate with the government in their language to the extent that Slovak speakers in the Czech Republic may do so .

= = = United States = = =

Immigration of Czechs from Europe to the United States occurred primarily from 1848 to 1914 . Czech is a Less Commonly Taught Language in U.S. schools , and is taught at Czech heritage centers . Large communities of Czech Americans live in the states of Texas , Nebraska and Wisconsin . In the 2000 United States Census , Czech was reported as the most @-@ common language spoken at home (besides English) in Valley , Butler and Saunders Counties , Nebraska and Republic County , Kansas . With the exception of Spanish (the non @-@ English language most commonly spoken at home nationwide) , Czech was the most @-@ common home language in over a dozen additional counties in Nebraska , Kansas , Texas , North Dakota and Minnesota . As of 2009 , 70 @,@ 500 Americans spoke Czech as their first language (49th place nationwide , behind Turkish and ahead of Swedish) .

= = Dialects = =

In addition to a spoken standard and a closely related written standard , Czech has several regional dialects primarily used in rural areas by speakers less proficient in other dialects or standard Czech . During the second half of the twentieth century , Czech dialect use began to weaken . By the early 1990s dialect use was stigmatized , associated with the shrinking lower class and used in literature or other media for comedic effect . Increased travel and media availability to dialect @-@ speaking populations has encouraged them to shift to (or add to their own dialect) standard Czech . Although Czech has received considerable scholarly interest for a Slavic language , this interest has focused primarily on modern standard Czech and ancient texts rather than dialects . Standard Czech is still the norm for politicians , businesspeople and other Czechs in formal situations , but Common Czech is gaining ground in journalism and the mass media .

A detailed 2003 estimate from the Czech Statistical Office counts the following dialects :

Ná?e?í st?edo?eská (Central Bohemian dialects)

Ná?e?í jihozápado?eská (Southwestern Bohemian dialects)

Podskupina chodská (Chod subgroup)

Podskupina doudlebská (Doudleby subgroup)

Ná?e?í ?eskomoravská (Bohemian ? Moravian dialects)

Ná?e?í st?edomoravská (Central Moravian dialects)

Podskupina ti?novská (Ti?nov subgroup)

Ná?e?í východomoravská (Eastern Moravian dialects)

Podskupina slovácká (Moravian Slovak subgroup)

Podskupina vala?ská (Moravian Wallachian subgroup)

Ná?e?í slezská (Silesian dialects)

Ná?e?í severovýchodo?eská (Northeastern Bohemian dialects)

Podskupina podkrkno?ská (Krkono?e subgroup)

The main colloquial Czech dialect , spoken primarily near Prague but also throughout the country , is known as Common Czech (obecná ?e?tina) . This is an academic distinction ; most Czechs are unaware of the term or associate it with vernacular (or incorrect) Czech . Compared to standard Czech , Common Czech is characterized by simpler inflection patterns and differences in sound distribution .

The Czech dialects spoken in Moravia and Silesia are known as Moravian (morav?tina) . In the Austro @-@ Hungarian Empire , " Bohemian @-@ Moravian @-@ Slovak " was a language citizens could register as speaking (with German , Polish and several others) . Of the Czech dialects , only Moravian is distinguished in nationwide surveys by the Czech Statistical Office . As of 2011 , 62 @,@ 908 Czech citizens spoke Moravian as their first language and 45 @,@ 561 were diglossal (speaking Moravian and standard Czech as first languages) .

Beginning in the sixteenth century , some varieties of Czech resembled Slovak ; the southeastern Moravian dialects , in particular , are sometimes considered dialects of Slovak rather than Czech . These dialects form a continuum between the Czech and Slovak languages , using the same declension patterns for nouns and pronouns and the same verb conjugations as Slovak .

In a 1964 textbook on Czech dialectology , B?etislav Koudela used the following sentence to highlight phonetic differences between dialects :

= = Phonology = =

Czech contains ten basic vowel phonemes , and three more found only in loanwords . They are / a / , / ? / , / ? / , / o / , and / u / , their long counterparts / a? / , / ?? / , / i? / , / o? / and / u? / , and three diphthongs , / ou ? / , / au ? / and / ?u ? / . The latter two diphthongs and the long / o? / are exclusive to loanwords . Vowels are never reduced to schwa sounds when unstressed . Each word usually has primary stress on its first syllable , except for enclitics (minor , monosyllabic , unstressed syllables) . In all words of more than two syllables , every odd @-@ numbered syllable receives secondary stress . Stress is unrelated to vowel length , and the possibility of stressed short vowels and unstressed long vowels can be confusing to students whose native language combines the features (such as English) .

Voiced consonants with unvoiced counterparts are unvoiced at the end of a word , or when they are followed by unvoiced consonants . Czech consonants are categorized as " hard " , " neutral " or " soft " :

Hard : / d / , / ? / , / ? / , / k / , / n / , / r / , / t / , / x /

Neutral : / b / , / f / , / l / , / m / , / p / , / s / , / v / , / z /

Soft : / c / , / ? / , / j / , / ? / , / r ? / , / ? / , / ts / , / t? / , / ? /

This distinction describes the declension patterns of nouns , which is based on the category of a noun 's ending consonant . Hard consonants may not be followed by i or í in writing , or soft ones by y or ý (except in loanwords such as kilogram) . Neutral consonants may take either character . Hard consonants are sometimes known as " strong " , and soft ones as " weak " .

The phoneme represented by the letter ? (capital ?) is considered unique to Czech . It represents the raised alveolar non @-@ sonorant trill (IPA : [r ?]) , a sound somewhere between Czech 's r and ? (example : " ?eka " (river)) , and is present in Dvo?ák .

The consonants / r / and / l / can be syllabic , acting as syllable nuclei in place of a vowel . This can be difficult for non @-@ native speakers to pronounce , and Str? prst skrz krk (" Stick [your] finger down [your] throat ") is a Czech tongue twister .

= = Vocabulary = =

Czech vocabulary derives primarily from Slavic , Baltic and other Indo @-@ European roots . Although most verbs have Balto @-@ Slavic origins , pronouns , prepositions and some verbs have wider , Indo @-@ European roots . Some loanwords have been restructured by folk etymology to

resemble native Czech words (hřbitov , " graveyard " and listina , " list ") .

Most Czech loanwords originated in one of two time periods . Earlier loanwords , primarily from German , Greek and Latin , arrived before the Czech National Revival . More recent loanwords derive primarily from English and French , and also from Hebrew , Arabic and Persian . Many Russian loanwords , principally animal names and naval terms , also exist in Czech .

Although older German loanwords were colloquial , recent borrowings from other languages are associated with high culture . During the nineteenth century , words with Greek and Latin roots were rejected in favor of those based on older Czech words and common Slavic roots ; " music " is muzyka in Polish and ?????? (muzyka) in Russian , but in Czech it is hudba . Some Czech words have been borrowed as loanwords into English and other languages ? for example , robot (from robota , " labor ") and polka (from polka , " Polish woman " or from " p?lka " " half ") .

= = Grammar = =

Typical of Indo @-@ European languages , Czech grammar is fusional ; its nouns , verbs , and adjectives are inflected by phonological processes to modify their meanings and grammatical functions , and the easily separable affixes characteristic of agglutinative languages are limited . Slavic @-@ language inflection is complex and pervasive , inflecting for case , gender and number in nouns and tense , aspect , mood , person and subject number and gender in verbs .

Other parts of speech include adjectives , adverbs , numbers , interrogative words , prepositions , conjunctions and interjections . Adverbs are primarily formed by taking the final ý or í of an adjective and replacing it with e , ? , or o . Negative statements are formed by adding the affix ne- to the verb of a clause , with one exception : je (he , she or it is) becomes není .

= = Sentence and clause structure = = =

Because Czech uses grammatical case to convey word function in a sentence (instead of relying on word order , as English does) , its word order is flexible . As a pro @-@ drop language , in Czech an intransitive sentence can consist of only a verb ; information about its subject is encoded in the verb . Enclitics (primarily auxiliary verbs and pronouns) must appear in the second syntactic slot of a sentence , after the first stressed unit . The first slot must contain a subject and object , a main form of a verb , an adverb or a conjunction (except for the light conjunctions a , " and " , i , " and even " or ale , " but ") .

Czech syntax has a subject ? verb ? object sentence structure . In practice , however , word order is flexible and used for topicalization and focus . Although Czech has a periphrastic passive construction (like English) , colloquial word @-@ order changes frequently produce the passive voice . For example , to change " Peter killed Paul " to " Paul was killed by Peter " the order of subject and object is inverted : Petr zabil Pavla (" Peter killed Paul ") becomes " Paul , Peter killed " (Pavla zabil Petr) . Pavla is in the accusative case , the grammatical object (in this case , the victim) of the verb .

A word at the end of a clause is typically emphasized , unless an upward intonation indicates that the sentence is a question :

Pes jí bagetu . ? The dog eats the baguette (rather than eating something else) .

Bagetu jí pes . ? The dog eats the baguette (rather than someone else doing so) .

Pes bagetu jí . ? The dog eats the baguette (rather than doing something else to it) .

Jí pes bagetu ? ? Does the dog eat the baguette ? (emphasis ambiguous)

In portions of Bohemia (including Prague) , questions such as Jí pes bagetu ? without an interrogative word (such as co , " what " or kdo , " who ") are intoned in a slow rise from low to high , quickly dropping to low on the last word or phrase .

In Czech syntax , adjectives precede nouns . Relative clauses are introduced by relativizers such as the adjective který , analogous to the English relative pronouns " which " , " that " , " who " and " whom " . As with other adjectives , it is declined into the appropriate case (see Declension below) to match its associated noun , person and number . Relative clauses follow the noun they modify ,

and the following is a glossed example :

English : I want to visit the university that John attends .

=== Declension ===

In Czech , nouns and adjectives are declined into one of seven grammatical cases . Nouns are inflected to indicate their use in a sentence . A nominative ? accusative language , Czech marks subject nouns with nominative case and object nouns with accusative case . The genitive case marks possessive nouns and some types of movement . The remaining cases (instrumental , locative , vocative and dative) indicate semantic relationships , such as secondary objects , movement or position (dative case) and accompaniment (instrumental case) . An adjective 's case agrees with that of the noun it describes . When Czech children learn their language 's declension patterns , the cases are referred to by number :

Some Czech grammatical texts order the cases differently , grouping the nominative and accusative (and the dative and locative) together because those declension patterns are often identical ; this order accommodates learners with experience in other inflected languages , such as Latin or Russian . This order is nominative , accusative , genitive , dative , locative , instrumental and vocative .

Some prepositions require the nouns they modify to take a particular case . The cases assigned by each preposition are based on the physical (or metaphorical) direction , or location , conveyed by it . For example , *od* (from , away from) and *z* (out of , off) assign the genitive case . Other prepositions take one of several cases , with their meaning dependent on the case ; *na* means " onto " or " for " with the accusative case , but " on " with the locative .

Examples of declension patterns (using prepositions) for a few nouns with adjectives follow . Only one plural example is given , since plural declension patterns are similar across genders .

This is a glossed example of a sentence using several cases :

English : I carried the box into the house with my friend .

=== Gender and animacy ===

Czech distinguishes three genders ? masculine , feminine , and neuter ? and the masculine gender is subdivided into animate and inanimate . With few exceptions , feminine nouns in the nominative case end in -a , -e , or -ost ; neuter nouns in -o , -e , or -í , and masculine nouns in a consonant . Adjectives agree in gender and animacy (for masculine nouns in the accusative or genitive singular and the nominative plural) with the nouns they modify . The main effect of gender in Czech is the difference in noun and adjective declension , but other effects include past @-@ tense verb endings : for example , *dělal* (he did , or made) ; *dělala* (she did , or made) and *dělalo* (it did , or made) .

=== Number ===

Nouns are also inflected for number , distinguishing between singular and plural . Typical of a Slavic language , Czech cardinal numbers one through four allow the nouns and adjectives they modify to take any case , but numbers over five place these nouns and adjectives in the genitive case when the entire expression is in nominative or accusative case . The Czech *koruna* is an example of this feature ; it is shown here as the subject of a hypothetical sentence , and declined as genitive for numbers five and up .

Numerical words decline for case and , for numbers one and two , for gender . Numbers one through five are shown below as examples , and have some of the most exceptions among Czech numbers . The number one has declension patterns identical to those of the demonstrative pronoun , *to* .

Although Czech 's main grammatical numbers are singular and plural , a vestigial dual number remains . Some nouns for paired body parts have a dual form : *ruka* (hand) ? *ruce* ; *noha* (leg) ? *nohy* ; *oko* (eye) ? *oči* , and *ucho* (ear) ? *uši* . While two of these nouns are neuter in their

singular forms , all dual nouns are considered feminine . Czech has no standard declension pattern for dual nouns , and their gender is relevant to their associated adjectives and verbs .

= = = Verb conjugation = = =

Czech verb conjugation is less complex than noun and adjective declension because it codes for fewer categories . Verbs agree with their subjects in person (first , second or third) and number (singular or plural) , and are conjugated for tense (past , present or future) . For example , the conjugated verb mluvíme (we speak) is in the present tense and first @-@ person plural ; it is distinguished from other conjugations of the infinitive mluvit by its ending , me .

= = = Aspect = = =

Typical of Slavic languages , Czech marks its verbs for one of two grammatical aspects : perfective and imperfective . Most verbs are part of inflected aspect pairs ? for example , koupit (perfective) and kupovat (imperfective) . Although the verbs ' meaning is similar , in perfective verbs the action is completed and in imperfective verbs it is ongoing . This is distinct from past and present tense , and any Czech verb of either aspect can be conjugated into any of its three tenses . Aspect describes the state of the action at the time specified by the tense .

The verbs of most aspect pairs differ in one of two ways : by prefix or by suffix . In prefix pairs , the perfective verb has an added prefix ? for example , the imperfective psát (to write , to be writing) compared with the perfective napsat (to write down , to finish writing) . The most common prefixes are na- , o- , po- , s- , u- , vy- , z- and za- . In suffix pairs , a different infinitive ending is added to the perfective stem ; for example , the perfective verbs koupit (to buy) and prodat (to sell) have the imperfective forms kupovat and prodávat . Imperfective verbs may undergo further morphology to make other imperfective verbs (iterative and frequentative forms) , denoting repeated or regular action . The verb jít (to go) has the iterative form chodit (to go repeatedly) and the frequentative form chodívat (to go regularly) .

Many verbs have only one aspect , and verbs describing continual states of being ? být (to be) , chtít (to want) , moci (to be able to) , ležet (to lie down , to be lying down) ? have no perfective form . Conversely , verbs describing immediate states of change ? for example , otěhotnět (to become pregnant) and nadchnout se (to become enthusiastic) ? have no imperfective aspect .

= = = Tense and mood = = =

Although Czech 's use of present and future tense is largely similar to that of English , the language uses past tense to represent the English present perfect and past perfect ; ona běžela could mean she ran , she has run or she had run .

In some contexts , Czech 's perfective present (which differs from the English present perfect) implies future action ; in others , it connotes habitual action . As a result , the language has a proper future tense to minimize ambiguity . The future tense does not involve conjugating the verb describing an action to be undertaken in the future ; instead , the future form of být (as shown in the table at left) is placed before the infinitive (for example , budu jíst ? " I will eat ") .

This conjugation is not followed by být itself , so future @-@ oriented expressions involving nouns , adjectives , or prepositions (rather than verbs) omit být . " I will be happy " is translated as Budu šťastný (not Budu být šťastný) .

The infinitive form ends in t (archaically , ti) . It is the form found in dictionaries and the form that follows auxiliary verbs (for example , můžu ti slyšet ? " I can hear you ") . Czech verbs have three grammatical moods : indicative , imperative and conditional . The imperative mood adds specific endings for each of three person (or number) categories : -Ø / -i / -ej for second @-@ person singular , -te / -ete / -ejte for second @-@ person plural and -me / -eme / -ejme for first @-@ person plural . The conditional mood is formed with a particle after the past @-@ tense verb . This mood indicates possible events , expressed in English as " I would " or " I wish " .

= = = = Classes = = = =

Most Czech verbs fall into one of five classes , which determine their conjugation patterns . The future tense of být would be classified as a Class I verb because of its endings . Examples of the present tense of each class and some common irregular verbs follow in the tables below :

= = Orthography = =

Czech has one of the most phonemic orthographies of all European languages . Its thirty @-@ one graphemes represent thirty sounds (in most dialects , i and y have the same sound) , and it contains only one digraph : ch , which follows h in the alphabet . As a result , some of its characters have been used by phonologists to denote corresponding sounds in other languages . The characters q , w and x appear only in foreign words . The há?ek (?) is used with certain letters to form new characters : ? , ? , and ? , as well as ? , ? , ? , ? , and ? (the latter five uncommon outside Czech) . The last two letters are sometimes written with a comma above (? , an abbreviated há?ek) because of their height . The character ó exists only in loanwords and onomatopoeia .

Unlike most European languages , Czech distinguishes vowel length ; long vowels are indicated by an acute accent or , occasionally with ? , a ring . Long u is usually written ú at the beginning of a word or morpheme (úroda , neúrodný) and ? elsewhere , except for loanwords (skútr) or onomatopoeia (bú) . Long vowels and ? are not considered separate letters .

Czech typographical features not associated with phonetics generally resemble those of most Latin European languages , including English . Proper nouns , honorifics , and the first letters of quotations are capitalized , and punctuation is typical of other Latin European languages . Writing of ordinal numerals is similar to most European languages . The Czech language uses a decimal comma instead of a decimal point . When writing a long number , spaces between every three numbers (e.g. between hundreds and thousands) may be used for better orientation in handwritten texts , but not in decimal places , like in English . The number 1 @,@ 234 @,@ 567 @.@ 8910 may be written as 1234567 @,@ 8910 or 1 234 567 @,@ 8910 . Ordinal numbers (1st) use a point as in German (1 .) . In proper noun phrases (except personal names) , only the first word is capitalized (Pra?ský hrad , Prague Castle) .

= = Sample text = =

According to Article 1 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights :

Czech : V?ichni lidé se rodí svobodní a sob? rovní co do d?stojnosti a práv . Jsou nadáni rozumem a sv?domím a mají spolu jednat v duchu bratrství .

English : " All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights . They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood . "