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Polish

FOR

DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Speak Polish on the go in a variety of everyday situations
- Communicate confidently in Polish
- Get to grips with Polish grammar and vocabulary



Perfect your pronunciation
with the audio CD

Daria Gabryanczyk

Language teacher



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Polish For Dummies®

Visit www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/polishuk to view this book's cheat sheet.

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[About This Book](#)

[Why I Wrote This Book](#)

[Conventions Used in This Book](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[How This Book Is Organised](#)

[Part I: Getting Started](#)

[Part II: Polish in Action](#)

[Part III: Polish on the Go](#)

[Part IV: Polish in the Workplace](#)

[Part V: The Part of Tens](#)

[Part VI: Appendixes](#)

[Icons Used in This Book](#)

[Where to Go from Here](#)

[Part I: Getting Started](#)

[Chapter 1: Introducing Polish](#)

[Spotting the Polish You Already Know](#)

[The Polish Alphabet: Reciting Your ABCs](#)

Checking Out Consonant Pronunciation

C

Ć and Ci

Cz

Dz

Dź and Dzi

Dż

H and Ch

J

Ł

Ń and Ni

R

Ś and Si

Sz

W

Ż and Zi

Ź and Rz

Pronouncing Voiced and Silent Consonants

Saying Polish Vowels

Nasal vowels

The nasal ą and ę in the final position

Searching for Stress and Blending

Prepositions

Counting prepositions

Placing unusual stress

Some Basic Phrases to Know

Chapter 2: Getting Down to Essential Polish Grammar

The Case of Polish Cases

Nominative case

Genitive case

Dative case

Accusative case

Instrumental case

Locative case

Vocative case

Recognising Perfective and Imperfective Verbs

Finding Your Way in Polish Tenses

Being in the now with present tense

Remembering the past tense

Looking into the future tense

Part II : Polish in Action

Chapter 3: Dzień dobry! Cześć! Greetings and Introductions

Being Formal or Informal

Saying 'hi' and 'bye'

Avoiding trite greetings

Replying to 'How are you?'

Getting Introductions Right

Making informal introductions
Presenting yourself and enquiring about others formally
Presenting other people informally and formally

Describing Yourself and Others

Getting familiar with the verb być, to be
Saying goodbye to personal pronouns - except sometimes
Talking about countries and nationalities

Jumping In to mówię po polsku (Speak Polish)

Chapter 4: Getting to Know You: Making Small Talk

Asking Key Questions

Finding out who, what, where and 'how do you say . . .?'
Discovering the secret to forming 'yes'/'no' questions

Sharing Basic Contact Information

Living with mieszkać: The verb to live
Telling people how to reach you

Counting Numbers

Getting to Know People and Families

Showing ownership with possessive pronouns

Describing people and objects

Keeping an Eye on the Weather

Chapter 5: Dining Out and Going to the Market

Smaczego! Enjoy your Meal!

Is it time to eat yet? All about meals

Tackling table terms

Eating and drinking phrases

Using two verbs at the table: Jeść and pić

The Case of the Accusative Case

Objectifying masculine nouns and adjectives

Changing feminine endings

Tabling the accusative case

Eating Out: Trying Polish Food in a Restaurant

Making reservations

Arriving and being seated

Decoding the menu

Asking for what you want

Preferring, liking and disliking

Finding your way to the 'Ladies' and 'Gents'

Shopping for Food

Shopping at the supermarket and other grocery shops

Finding what you need

Knowing the measures: Weight, volume and package

The Case of the Genitive Case

Owning masculine nouns and adjectives

Showing possession of neuters

Generating feminine genitives

Tabling the genitive case

Making plurals

Chapter 6: Shopping Made Easy

Introducing Places to Shop

Shopping for Clothes

Getting assistance and trying clothes on

Colour me Polish

Checking fabrics and patterns

Identifying yourself by what you're wearing

Making Comparisons: Good, Better, Best and More

Comparing with the comparative degree

Besting the superlative degree

Dealing with irregular comparatives and superlatives

Paying Compliments

Chapter 7: Going Out on the Town

Understanding that Timing Is Everything

Counting ordinal numbers

Using the 24-hour clock

Splitting the day and talking about the future

Listing the Days of the Week

Inviting and Being Invited

Making the Most of the Nightlife

Enjoying yourself at shows and events

Purchasing tickets

Discussing the show

Chapter 8: Enjoying Yourself: Recreation

Liking the Verb Lubić

Being Interested in the Reflexive Verb

The Case of the Instrumental Case

Using 'Often' Often: Adverbs of Frequency

Exploring the Outdoors

Hiking in the mountains

Sunbathing on the beach

Going to the countryside

Skiing in the mountains

Sailing in the summertime

Going camping

Chapter 9: Talking on the Phone

Dealing with the Preliminaries

Asking who you're talking to
Making the connection

Leaving Messages

Asking someone to repeat themselves
Setting up your voicemail greetings

Making Appointments

Part III : Polish on the Go

Chapter 10: Money, Money, Money.

Cashing In with Some Basic Info about Money.

Spending złoty and grosz
Operating cash machines

Exchanging Currency

Chapter 11: Asking Directions

Finding Your Way Around
Understanding the Answer
Knowing How Far You Go
Mapping the Place
Going with the Four Verbs 'To Go'
Travelling by Car or another Vehicle
Describing a Position or Location

Locating the locative case
Exploring prepositions of location and position

Chapter 12: Checking into a Hotel

Choosing a Hotel

Describing the room you want
Making a reservation
Discussing services and facilities

Checking into a Hotel
Checking Out

Chapter 13: Getting Around: Planes, Trains, Taxis and More

Arriving in Poland by Air

Dealing with customs
Sorting out check-in and boarding

Travelling Around in the City

Finding a taxi
Taking a train or bus
Renting a car

Scheduling Issues: Running Late, Being Early or Arriving on Time

Chapter 14: Planning a Trip

[Making Travel Plans with a Travel Agent](#)
[Timing Your Trip](#)
[Mastering Visas and Passports](#)
[Packing For Your Visit](#)
[Taking Your Computer Along](#)

[Chapter 15: Help! Handling Emergencies](#)

[Shouting for Help – Pomocy!](#)
[Handling Health Problems](#)

[Helping out](#)
[Giving advice](#)
[Expressing pain when you're hurt](#)
[Braving the dentist](#)
[Ensuring that you get reimbursed](#)

[Dealing with Car Accidents](#)
[What Bad Luck! Getting Help with Legal Problems](#)

[Reporting to the police](#)

[Dealing with Domestic Emergencies](#)

[Part IV: Polish in the Workplace](#)

[Chapter 16: Using Polish in the Office](#)

[Finding Your Way around the Office](#)

[Office furniture and accessories](#)
[Dealing with faulty office equipment](#)

Planning Your Day

Arranging a meeting

Setting a date

Cancelling meetings and apologising

Getting Down to Business with Business

Travelling

Leaving for Good

Chapter 17: Polish on the Worksite

Getting Hired and Getting Fired

Talking about how much you work

Getting fired

Getting Familiar with Workers and their Tools

Getting down to tools and construction equipment

Dealing with problems at home

Health and Safety

Reporting Accidents

Chapter 18: Polish for Public Servants and Professionals

Talking About Your Job

The verb pracować (to work)

Industries and departments

Working in a Hospital or Pharmacy
Working for the Police and Fire Department
Connecting People

Part V : The Part of Tens

Chapter 19: Ten Ways to Pick Up Polish Quickly

Reading Polish Magazines and Easy Books
Watching Polish Films
Using Stickers or Flashcards
Listening to Polish Music and Radio
Surfing the Internet
Using Language CDs and Computer Programs
Looking Up Words in the Dictionary
Visiting Poland
Mingling with Poles
Taking Polish Classes

Chapter 20: Ten Everyday Polish Expressions

No
Pa/Pa,_pa
Smaczniego!
Na zdrowie!
To niemożliwe!
Chyba
Naprawdę
Dokładnie
Masz rację
Palce lizać!/Pycha!/Mniam,_mniam!

Chapter 21: Ten Polish Holidays to Remember

Polish Weddings
Name Days
Fat Thursday
Easter
Prima Aprilis
Constitution Day – 3 May 1791
All Saints' Day
Independence Day
St Andrew's Day
Christmas

Chapter 22: Ten Phrases That Make You Sound Fluent in Polish

Nie ma mowy!
Nie ma sprawy
Być może and Może być
Wszystko (mi) jedno
Nie mam (zielonego/białego) pojęcia
O co chodzi?
Szkoda!/Jaka szkoda!
Co za pech!
Pozdrów go/ją ode mnie
Udanej zabawy!

Part VI : Appendixes

Appendix A: Mini-Dictionary
Appendix B: Verb Tables

Regular Polish Verbs
Irregular Verbs

[Verbs with No Perfective Form](#)

[Modal verbs](#)

[Conditional mood](#)

[Appendix C: Polish Facts](#)

[Appendix D: Audio Tracks](#)

[Cheat Sheet](#)

[Download CD/DVD Content](#)

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by Daria Gabryanczyk



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About the Author

Daria Gabryńczyk has been teaching Polish literature and Polish as a foreign language for almost a decade. She holds an MA in Polish Language and Literature from the University of Łódź. Daria is a teacher and an examiner for the Ministry of Defence Language Examinations Board and the University of Westminster. She has worked as a language teacher for the European High Commission, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom Environmental Law Association and University College, London. Daria provides Polish Business Etiquette and Culture Training for Businesses. She is also an author of the *Polish Easy Readers* series and runs a school of Polish in London.

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Introduction

Society is becoming ever more international in nature – low-cost airfares make travel abroad a more realistic option, global business environments necessitate overseas travel, friends and neighbours may speak another language. Knowing how to say at least a few words in other languages becomes increasingly useful. You may also want to get in touch with your heritage by learning a little bit of the language that your ancestors spoke.

Whatever your reason for acquiring some Polish, this book can help. *Polish For Dummies* gives you the skills you need for basic communication in Polish. I'm not promising fluency, but if you want to greet someone, purchase a ticket or order something from a menu in Polish, you need look no further than *Polish For Dummies*.

About This Book

This book isn't a class that you have to drag yourself to twice a week for six weeks. You can use *Polish For Dummies* however you want to, whether your goal is to learn some words and phrases to help you get around when you visit Poland, or you simply want to be able to say *Hello* to a Polish-speaking friend. This book can help you reach moments of true understanding in a different language. Use the text as a language and cultural guide for those moments when you really need to know how and why things are done.

Go through this book at your own pace, reading as much or as little at a time as you like. Also, you don't have to trudge through the chapters in order; you can just read the sections that interest you.

The only way to know and love a language is to speak it. Throughout the book are lots of words, phrases and dialogues, complete with pronunciations you can use to practise the language. The audio tracks provide you with a broad sample of spoken dialogues, which you can use to improve your pronunciation and inflection.

Remember that you don't need to chew through this book all at once. So you don't need to read it cover to cover. Just pick a chapter that interests you and you can find cross-references to other parts of the book.

Why I Wrote This Book

Language exposes you to every aspect of the human condition, allowing you to study the past, understand the present and ponder the future. Language sometimes changes the ways in which people express various emotions and conditions. People are connected through their ability to speak, but you can go one step further – to understanding – by being able to communicate in another language. Very few things are as exciting as that!

The best way to discover a new language is to immerse yourself in it. Listen to the way Polish sounds, concentrate on the pronunciation and look at how it's written. By listening and repeating, you enter a new world of ideas and peoples. Acquiring Polish through immersion really does feel like a sort of magic.

Conventions Used in This Book

To make this book easy for you to navigate, I set up a few conventions:

- ✓ Polish terms are set in **boldface** to make them stand out.
- ✓ Pronunciations, set in brackets in *italics*, follow the Polish terms. The translations, again in parentheses, follow the pronunciations.
- ✓ Verb conjugation tables (lists that show you the forms of a verb) follow this order:
 - ja: the *I* form
 - ty: the singular, informal *you* form
 - on, ona, ono: the *he, she, it* form
 - my: the *we* form
 - wy: the plural, informal *you* form
 - oni, one: the *they* form for a group with at least one man; the *they* form for a group with no man

A typical verb conjugation table has columns for the pronoun forms, the Polish verb, the pronunciation and the translation, as in the following table:

<i>Form</i>	<i>Polish</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Translation</i>
(ja)	czyta- m	(<i>chih-tam</i>)	I read/am reading
(ty)	czyta- sz	(<i>chih-tash</i>)	you read/are reading
on/ona/ono	czyta- ø	(<i>chih-ta</i>)	he/she/it reads/is reading
(my)	czyta- my	(<i>chih-ta-mih</i>)	we read/are reading
(wy)	czyta- cie	(<i>chih-ta-ch'ye</i>)	you read/are reading
oni/one	czyta- ja	(<i>chih-ta-yohN</i>)	they read/are reading



As you may notice, the personal pronouns **ja**, **ty**, **my**, **wy** (*ya*, *tih*, *mih*, *vih*) are in brackets. That's because you don't actually say those pronouns when you're speaking Polish, so I put them in brackets in all conjugation tables in this book. I explain the pronoun issue in detail in Chapter 3.



Unlike English, Polish uses special formal forms to address people in official situations. (I write more about how to address people in Chapter 3.) So, the *you* form has the following formal equivalents in Polish:

- ✓ **pan, pani:** **pan** (*pan*) is the formal *you* to address a man and **pani** (*pa-n'ee*) the formal *you* to a woman (singular).
- ✓ **państwo, panowie, panie** (*pan'-stfo pa-no-v'ye pa-n'ye*): the formal, plural *you* form to address a mixed group, a group of men and a group of women, respectively. **Państwo** also means *ladies and gentlemen*, **panowie** are *gentlemen* and **panie** translates as *ladies* (plural).

When reading verb tables or conjugating verbs, remember that **pan** takes on the same verb form as **on** (he) and **pani** the same verb form as **ona** (she); the third person singular. In the present tense, the plural **państwo**, **panowie** and **panie** take on a verb in the third person plural (the same as **oni** (*they* male or mixed) and **one** (*they* female)). However, in the past tense and the future that uses past tense forms, **państwo** and **panowie** follow **oni**, while **panie** follows **one** in the choice of a verb form. Chapter 2 explains verbs in more detail.

Studying a language is a peculiar beast, and so this book includes a few elements that other *For Dummies* books don't:

- ✓ **Talkin' the Talk dialogues:** The best way to improve with a language is to see and hear how it's used in conversation, and so I include dialogues throughout the book. The dialogues come under the heading 'Talkin' the Talk' and show you the Polish words, the pronunciation and the English translation.
- ✓ **Words to Know blackboards:** Memorising key words and phrases is also important in language, and so I collect the important words that appear in a chapter (or section within a chapter) and write them on a 'blackboard' under the heading 'Words to Know'.
- ✓ **Fun & Games activities:** If you don't have Polish speakers with whom to practise your new language skills, you can use the Fun & Games activities to reinforce what you're discovering. These word games are fun ways to gauge your progress.

Also, because each language has its own ways of expressing ideas, the English translations that I provide for the Polish terms may not be literal. I want you to know the gist of what's being said, not just the words being said. For example, you can translate the Polish phrase **wszystko w porządku** (*fshih-stko fpo-zhon-tkoo*) literally as *everything in order*, but the phrase really means *fine*. This book gives the *fine* translations.

Foolish Assumptions

To write this book, I had to make some assumptions about you and what you want from a book called *Polish For Dummies*:

- ✓ You know no Polish.

- ✓ You're not looking for a book to make you fluent in Polish; you just want to know some words, phrases and sentence constructions so that you can communicate basic information in Polish.
- ✓ You don't want to have to memorise long lists of vocabulary words or a load of boring grammar rules.
- ✓ You want to have fun and discover a bit of Polish at the same time.

If these statements apply to you, you've found the right book!

How This Book Is Organised

This book is divided by topic into parts, and then into chapters. The following sections tell you what types of information you can find in each part.

Part I: Getting Started

You get your feet wet in this part as I give you some Polish basics: how to pronounce words, what the accents mean and so on. I even boost your confidence by reintroducing you to some Polish words you probably already know. In addition, I outline the basics of Polish grammar that you may need to know when you turn to the more detailed chapters of the book.

Part II: Polish in Action

In this part, you begin practising and using Polish. Instead of focusing on grammar points, as many language textbooks do, this part focuses on everyday situations in which you may find