

# Polish Language - 1

The main language of Polish born people is Polish. Polish belongs to a Slavic group of languages, as do Czech, Slovak, Russian, Ukrainian, Belarussian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, Macedonian and Bulgarian. Although there are some similarities between these languages, they are quite different, often using different alphabets and linguistic concepts. The analogy could be made with Aboriginal languages.

The Polish alphabet and pronunciation differ from English, as does the grammar and context of some common phrases.

Polish is a richly inflected language with feminine, masculine and neuter nouns. The spelling is to a great extent phonetic, i.e.: one writes what one hears. W is pronounced as V (eg. surname such as Krakowski is pronounced Krakovski), J is pronounced as Y (eg. first name Joanna is pronounced Yoanna), I like E (eg. Iwona is pronounced Evonah).

Socially appropriate phrases such as "How are you?" could be viewed by some Poles as artificial, as use of such phrases is uncommon in the Polish language, and it could be regarded as a genuine enquiry of one's state of health or being. Generally, the subtleties of English can be often misunderstood by an inexperienced English speaker, as the communication in Polish is commonly quite direct, eg.: to say "Would you like to close the door!" could be taken to mean an enquiry and could be answered with a "No", meaning "No, I would prefer it to remain open, thank you for asking". So, one can easily see how a perception of arrogance could be formed in the speaker's mind. As opposed to the Anglo-Saxon rule of 'not asking personal questions', the Polish community is, generally speaking, comfortable with directness, and may pose these sorts of questions as a form of affection, genuine interest and/or being hospitable.

Whilst most Polish born people speak reasonable English, many may have problems with written English, particularly with filling out forms.

"Sto lat" ("May you live a hundred years") – one of the most popular Polish songs, sang during birthday parties etc, similar in meaning to "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow".

The image shows a musical score for the Polish song "Sto lat". It consists of three staves of music with lyrics in Polish and English. The first staff has the lyrics: "Sto lat, sto lat niech ży-je, ży-je nam, sto lat, sto lat" and "Good luck, good cheer may you live a hundred years, good luck, good cheer". The second staff has the lyrics: "niech ży-je, ży-je nam. Jeszcze raz, jeszcze raz" and "may you live - a hundred years. Good luck, good cheer". The third staff has the lyrics: "niech ży-je, ży - je nam! Niech ży - je nam!" and "may you live a - hundred years! One - hundred - years!".

