

# Learner Profile: Polish

This guide presents common challenges faced by Polish learners of English and typical features of language production. Please note, these guidelines are intended to advise teachers on areas where students may experience problems; however, native speakers may not all find the following points challenging.

## Facts

- **Language family:** Indo-European languages. The language is a West Slavic language of the Lechitic group.
- **Native speakers:** Approximately 45 million
- **Second language speakers:** Around 5 million
- **Location:** Poland, but the language is also native to Slovakia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, bordering regions of the Ukraine and Belarus. Due to emigration from Poland during certain time periods a vast number of Polish speaking individuals can be found in countries such as Israel, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States and New Zealand.
- **Writing system:** Latin script
- **Alphabet:** The Polish language adds 9 more letters (ą, ć, ę, ł, ń, ó, ś, ź, ż) to Latin alphabet.



# Learner Profile: Polish

## Pronunciation

- Native Polish speakers frequently encounter problems with pronouncing the 'th' sound in the English language, as this sound simply does not exist in Polish.
- Some Polish native speakers encounter trouble pronouncing the English smooth 'r'. In Polish, the letter 'r' is usually rolled.
- Some Polish learners of English struggle with the correct pronunciation of the letter 'o'. English is a non-phonetic language, which makes it difficult for learners to anticipate the pronunciation of words and letters. In English, the letter 'o' can be pronounced in 8 different ways, whereas in Polish there is only one way to pronounce it.

## Grammar

- The English language makes use of one definite and indefinite article, unlike the Polish language. In Polish, articles don't exist as number and gender are illustrated by the ending of the noun. This can lead to the common mistake of omitting or misusing articles by Polish learners.
- There might be confusion over when to use 'much' and when to use 'many', as there is no distinction in Polish.
- There are no perfect tenses in Polish, so many learners will try to substitute perfect tenses with past simple or present simple.
- Polish learners of English may adopt the Polish structure of question formulation, which leads to an inverted word order in questions.

# Learner Profile: Polish

## Vocabulary

- Polish learners may struggle with the correct verb choice in certain situations. For example, in English, there is a distinction between verbs such as ‘borrow’ and ‘lend’. However, in Polish the same word is used to express both. There are many more examples for this, which can lead to a misuse of verbs in English.
- Common false friends between Polish and English include:
  - *Ewentualnie* means ‘possibly’, not ‘eventually’.
  - *Aktualny* means ‘current’ not ‘actually’.
  - *Fabryka* means ‘factory’, not ‘fabric’.
  - *Sympatyczny* means ‘friendly’, not ‘sympathetic’.

## Recommended FlashAcademy® lessons and resources.

 Beginner > Phonics 1 > Set 4

 Beginner > Food & Drink > Articles

 Beginner > Work & School > Lend vs. Borrow

 <https://flashacademy.com/resources/vowels-and-articles/>

 <https://flashacademy.com/resources/articles-activity-sheet/>

 <https://flashacademy.com/resources/question-words-activity-sheet/>