

MUNI  
CJVV

# Czech letters & pronunciation

also in textbook, p. 10; appendix, p. 206

# Letters. Alphabet / sounds

## – Latin Alphabet Letters

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k
l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v
w	x	y	z							

## – Czech Letters: Consonants

č	d'	ch	
ň	ř	š	t'
ž			

## – Czech Letters: Vowels

á	é / ě	í
ó		úů
ý		

# Vowels — short

- A — maminka, Masarykova univerzita, ano (*yes*)
- E — telefon, ne (*no*), den (*day*)
- I, Y — prsty (*fingers*), pivo (*beer*), byt (*apartment*)
- O — nos (*nose*), oko (*eye*), noha (*leg*)
- U — ucho (*ear*), žaludek (*stomach*), ruka (*hand*)

# Vowels — long

- Á — máma, dobrá (*good*), nová (*new*)
- É — lépe (*better*), milé (*nice*), krásné (*beautiful*)
- Í, Ý — bílý (*white*), moderní, dobrý, být (*to be*)
- Ó — gól, móda, pól
- Ú, Ů — dům (*house*), stůl (*table*)

# Vowels — short × long

- long vowels are about 1,75× longer
- length is meaning-bearing
  
- byt (*apartment*) × být (*to be*)
- bílý (*white*) × bily (*[women] were beating [someone]*)

# Difthongs

## – OU, AU, EU

- dobrou noc (*good night*), na shledanou (*good-bye*)
- auto, autobus, automatická
- euro, euthanasie

# Consonants: hard × soft × ambiguous

- **hard:** H, CH, K, R, G, D, T, N
- **soft:** Ž, Š, Č, Ř, Ď, Ť, Ň; C, J
- **ambiguous:** B, F, L, M, P, S, V, Z
  
- distinctions **hard × soft** is important for some grammar rules
- ambiguous: only in writing (on advanced levels)

# Consonants: hard

## – H, CH, K, R, G, D, T, N

- hlad (*hunger*), nohy (*legs*), hýbat se (*to move*)
- ucho (*ear*), dýchat (*to breathe*)
- koleno (*knee*), oko (*eye*), kontrolovat (*to check*)
- ret (*lip*), brada (*chin*), trup (*chest*)
- gynekologie, guma
- tvrdý (*hard*), mladý (*young*)
- týden (*week*), tabule (*board*), prst (*finger*)
- noha (*leg*), nos (*nose*), rameno (*shoulder*)



# Consonants: soft

Ž, Š, Č, Ř, Ď, Ť, Ň; C, J

- žebro (*rib*), žíla (*vein*), žít (*to live*)
- slyšet (*to hear*), uši (*ears*)
- močit (*to urinate*), čelo (*forehead*), česky × český (*czech*)
- d'ábel (*devil*)
- cesta (*way, trip*)
- já (*I*), jahoda (*strawberry*)

# Consonants: Ď, Ť, Ň

D/T/N + Ě = [ĎE], [ŤE], [ŇE]

D/T/N + I/Í = [ĎI], [ŤI], [ŇI] / [ĎÍ], [ŤÍ], [ŇÍ]

- dítě (*child*), děti (*children*), dělat (*to do*)
- něco (*something*), nic (*nothing*)

# Consonants: ambiguous

## – B, F, L, M, P, S, V, Z

- bratr (*brother*)
- fyzioterapie
- levný (*cheap*)
- Martin
- pivo (*beer*)
- soda
- vlevo (on the left)
- brzy (soon)

# Special pronunciation

- bě – pě – vě [bje – pje – vje]: oběd (lunch), pět (five), věda (science)
- mě [mnje]: město (city), měsíc (month)

# Special pronunciation: consonant at the end

- d → t: oběd (*lunch*) → [objɛt]
- d' → t': teď (*now*) → [tɛtʰ]
- v → f: Václav → [vácɫaf]
- z → s: kvíz → [kvís]
- ž → š: když (*when*) → [gdiš]
- h → ch: vrah (*murderer*) → [vrach]
- g → k: song → [sonk]
- b → p: Jakub → [jakup]

# Pronunciation in general

- the only way to learn to pronunciation is to use the language
- try to speak czech as much as possible
- try to listen to czech people, instructions on buses/trams, movies, TV series etc.