Polish Paleography Seminar
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FamilySearch

Alphabet and Pronunciation
Aa Aą Bb Cć Dd EeĘĘ Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Łł Mm Nń Oó Pp Rr Sś Śś Tt Uu Ww Yy Zz Żż Źź

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>ather</td>
<td>ą</td>
<td>home</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>cats</td>
<td>ch, h</td>
<td>Bach (kh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ci, ć</td>
<td>cheek</td>
<td>cz</td>
<td>chalk</td>
<td>dz</td>
<td>odds</td>
<td>dzi, dź</td>
<td>jeans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dź</td>
<td>jaw</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>ever</td>
<td>ę</td>
<td>sense</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>eagle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>young</td>
<td>ł</td>
<td>wander</td>
<td>ź, ni</td>
<td>canyon</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>spoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ó, u</td>
<td>too</td>
<td>rz, ž</td>
<td>treasure</td>
<td>si, ś</td>
<td>sheep</td>
<td>sz</td>
<td>shed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>violin</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>pill</td>
<td>z, iż</td>
<td>azure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tools for identifying Polish names

Surnames
- https://nazwiska-polskie.pl/
- Słownik nazwisk współcześnie w Polsce używanych [Dictionary of surnames currently used in Poland] – see familysearch.org/books

Given names
- https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Polish_given_names
- Słownik imion by Wanda Janowowa, Aldona Skarbek, Bronisława Zbijowska, and Janina Zbiniovska **available at the Family History Library**
Tools for reading Polish records

- FamilySearch Wiki – “How to” Guides for Poland
- FamilySearch Wiki – Polish genealogical word list (also see the “Handwriting help” section)
- FamilySearch Wiki – Polish Gazetters
- Online dictionary: https://www.wiktionary.org/

Additional Polish Grammar helps

- Polish Grammar in a Nutshell by: Oscar E. Swan (University of Pittsburgh, 2003)
- Polish—an Essential Grammar by: Dana Bielec (Routledge, 1998)

Polish Grammar for Genealogy

Case uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nominative</th>
<th>Genitive</th>
<th>Instrumental</th>
<th>Locative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use</strong></td>
<td>This is the <em>subject</em> of the sentence.</td>
<td>This is the ‘<em>owner</em>’ of an item. (Indicated in English with ‘s or of.)</td>
<td>The instrument by which something is done.</td>
<td>This is used to specify <em>location</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also used after prepositions z (from), bez (without), etc.</td>
<td>Used after the prepositions <em>mędzy</em> (between), z (together with), etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Used after the prepositions w (in), na (on), przy (by), etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ex:</strong> Marianna jest córką Jana i Anny.</td>
<td>Marianna jest <em>córka</em> Jana i Anny.</td>
<td>W dniu dzisiejszym zawarte zostało małżeństwo religijne <em>mędzy</em> Janem a Anną.</td>
<td>Marianna zamieszkała <em>w</em> Kamionce.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|               | Marianna is the daughter of Jan and Anna. | Marianna is the daughter of Jan and Anna. | Today a religious marriage was performed *between* Jan and Anna. | Marianna resides *in* Kamionka. |
# Noun case endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nominative (base form)</th>
<th>Genitive (possessive, z [from])</th>
<th>Instrumental (after między or z)</th>
<th>Locative (location after w(e))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Feminine Singular**  | Marianna
 Kamionka
 Nidzica
 -a (-i) or no ending | Marianny
 Teofili
 -y or -i | Marianną
 Teofilą
 -ą | Kamionce
 Nidzicy
 -e or -y/i |
| **Masculine Singular** | Jan
 Nowodwór
 Uściług
 [no ending] | Jana
 Nowodworu
 -a or -u | Janem | Nowodworze
 Uściługu
 -e or -u |
| **Masculine Plural**   | (-y/i or ‘i) or -e | Czopów
 ów or -y/i | N/A | -ach [masculine & feminine] |

# Adjective case endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nominative (base form)</th>
<th>Genitive (possessive, z [from])</th>
<th>Instrumental (after między or z)</th>
<th>Locative (location after w(e))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Feminine Singular**  | Turalska
 -i(a) | zamarłej
 -ej | Turalską
 -i(ą) | dziesiątej
 -i(ej) |
| **Masculine Singular** | Turalski
 -i/-y | Turalskiego
 zamarłego
 -(i)ego | Turalskim
 -ym/-im | -ym/-im |
| **Plural**             | Turalski
 -i/-y or -(i)e | Turalskich
 zamarłych
 -ych/-ich | -ymi/-imi | -ych/-ich |

# Hard and Soft Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hard</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>w</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>z</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>st</th>
<th>zd</th>
<th>sn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soft</td>
<td>pi</td>
<td>bi</td>
<td>fi</td>
<td>wi</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>ć</td>
<td>dz</td>
<td>ś</td>
<td>ż</td>
<td>ń</td>
<td>śc</td>
<td>żdż</td>
<td>śń</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hard</th>
<th>ł</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>k</th>
<th>g</th>
<th>ch</th>
<th>śl</th>
<th>zł</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soft</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>rz</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>dz</td>
<td>sz</td>
<td>śl</td>
<td>żl</td>
<td>cz</td>
<td>ż</td>
<td>j</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*when used before a vowel, the consonants with accents lose the accent and add an i.  
Ex: ś → si, śc → sci
• Genitive case
  o Used to show possession
  o Dates: when expressing ‘on the date’ and ‘in the year’, as is seen at the beginning of many Polish civil records, Genitive case is used.
    ▪ Ex: Dnia dwunastego lutego tysiąc sześćdziesiątego drugiego roku (on the 12th day of February in the year 1862)
  o Used after the phrase w obecności (in the presence of) and after prepositions such as z (from, out of), bez (without), etc.

• Noun declension pattern
  ▪ Masculine singular: add -a (for animate things) or -u (for inanimate things)
    • Ex: Jan → Janą; Józef → Józefą; Andrzej → Andrzejem
  ▪ Feminine singular: -y, -i (after words ending in -k/-y or soft consonants)
    • Marianna → Marianną; Agnieszka → Agnieszką; Teofila → Teofil
  ▪ Feminine/Neuter plural: usually no ending
  ▪ Masculine plural: add -ów after hard stems, and -y/-i after soft stems
    • Ex: Czop → Czopów

• Adjective declension pattern
  ▪ Masculine singular: -ego
    • Ex: zamarł → zamarłego (of the deceased [man])
    • Ex: Kaminski → Kaminskiego
  ▪ Feminine singular: -ej
    • Ex: zmarła → zmarłej (of the deceased [female])
  ▪ Plural: -ych (-ich if the word ends in -k/-g)
    • Ex: Kaminski → Kaminskich
    • Ex: zmarli → zmarłych (of the deceased people)

• Instrumental case
  o Among other things, it expresses “by means of”.
  o Commonly seen in marriage records after the prepositions między (between) and z (with, together with, along with).
  o Noun declension pattern
    ▪ Masculine singular: add -em
      • Ex: Stefan → Stefanem; kawaler (bachelor) → kawalerem
    ▪ Feminine singular: -ą
      • Ex: Marianna → Marianną; panna (maiden) → panną

• Adjective declension pattern
  ▪ Masculine singular: add -im
    • Turalski → Turalskim

• Locative case
  o Primarily used to express location.
  o Used after the prepositions w (in), na (on), po (after), przy (near, during), o (about)
  o Time of day: preposition o + godzinie (locative form of the word godzina [hour]) + the ordinal number (using the locative adjective ending) + rano (in the morning) / po południu (in the afternoon) / wieczorem (in the evening) / nocą (at night)
    • Ex: o godzinie dziesiątej rano [at 10:00 in the morning]
  o Noun declension pattern
- Masculine/neuter singular: add -e to a softenable consonant and soften the consonant. Non-softenable consonants (including k, g, ch) take -u.
  - Ex: in Nowodwór → w Nowodworze
  - Ex: in Uściług → w Uściługu; in Raciąż → w Raciążu
- Feminine singular: add -e to a softenable consonant (including k, g, ch) and soften the consonant. Non-softenable consonants take -y (-i).
  - Ex: in Nidzica → w Nidzicy
  - Ex: in Kamionka → w Kamionce
- Plural: -ach
  - Ex: in Hajki → w Hajkach
  - Ex: in Mordy → w Mordach
- Adjective declension pattern
  - Masculine/neuter singular: -ym (-im)
    - Ex: in Mokrelipie → w Mokrymlipiu
    - Ex: in Czarnylas → w Czarnymlesie [note: a → e is a normal vowel switch, see Polish--an Essential Grammar by: Dana Bielec]
  - Feminine singular: -ej
    - Ex: dziesiąty (10th) → dziesiątej (10th when referring to a feminine noun such as the word godzina [hour])
    - Ex: in Stara wieś → w Starej wsi [note: the word wieś [village] is an exception in the locative case and does not get a separate ending. Instead the ś softens to si and the e fleets (disappears).]
  - Plural: -ych (-ich)