

THE SPEAK CLEARLY METHOD

FREE PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

English Pronunciation for Polish Speakers

dla osób mówiących po polsku · built around your first language

/θ/ TH

W vs V

endings

vowels

the R

NG

You don't have to lose your accent.

You have to be understood.

by Evangeline Smith & Miriam Smith · authors of Speak Clearly

THE PRACTICAL ENGLISH SERIES

English Pronunciation for Polish Speakers

A Speak Clearly Method guide

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Companion to "Speak Clearly: A Practical Guide to English Pronunciation."

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Built for Polish speakers

Your accent isn't random — it's Polish, a precise and powerful language, showing through in English. Because Polish follows clear rules, the places it shapes your English are predictable. And predictable means fixable.

This guide skips the sounds you already handle well and goes straight to the handful that most affect whether English listeners understand you the first time.

The promise

This is not about erasing your accent or sounding American. Only about 1 in 4 English speakers learned it as a first language — you're the majority, not the exception. We keep your accent and fix only what gets in the way of being understood.

How to use it

Read the strengths on the next page first, then work through the fix cards one at a time. Say everything OUT LOUD — into your phone's recorder or a mirror. A sound only counts when it survives outside the page.

Sounds you already own

Polish gives you one of the biggest head starts of any language. Sounds that defeat learners elsewhere are already yours — and Polish clusters make English rhythm easy.

sz → SH

Your sz in szkoła, kosz is exactly English “sh” in she, wash.

cz → CH

Your cz in czas, czekam is exactly English “ch” in cheese, watch.

ż / rz → measure

Your ż in żaba, rzeka is the tricky /ʒ/ in measure, vision.

dż → J

Your dż in dżem gives you English “j” in jam, join, page.

Consonant clusters

Polish handles źrebię and względnie — English ‘strengths, texts’ hold no fear.

Start from these. When a new English sound feels hard, remember how many you already make perfectly.

Fix cards · 1 of 3

W V

/w v/

W vs V**POLISH HABIT**

Polish w is /v/, so “west” becomes “vest” and “wine” becomes “vine.”

THE FIX

For W, round your lips like a kiss — no teeth touch at all. For V, top teeth on bottom lip.

west/vest

wine/vine

we/V

TH

/θ ð/

The TH sound**POLISH HABIT**

Polish has no TH, so “think” becomes “sink/tink” and “this” becomes “dis/zis.”

THE FIX

Put your tongue tip between your teeth and push air. In a mirror you should see it.

think

three

this

mother

-d -g

voicing

Keep the ending voiced**POLISH HABIT**

Polish devoices final consonants, so “bad” becomes “bat,” “dog” becomes “dok.”

THE FIX

Keep your voice buzzing right to the end. Hand on throat: “bad” must still buzz on the d.

bad

dog

his

prize

Fix cards · 2 of 3

i:

/ɪ i:/

Ship vs Sheep

POLISH HABIT

Polish has one 'i' quality, so short "ship" and long "sheep" sound the same.

THE FIX

Short /ɪ/: relaxed and quick. Long /i:/: spread your lips like a smile and hold it longer.

ship/sheep

live/leave

fill/feel

æ

/æ e/

Cat vs bet

POLISH HABIT

Polish has 'e' but not English /æ/, so "cat" becomes "ket" and "bad" becomes "bed."

THE FIX

For /æ/, open your mouth wider and smile — more open than the Polish e.

cat/bet

bad/bed

man/men

NG

/ŋ/

The NG sound

POLISH HABIT

Final 'ng' tends to gain a hard g: "sing" becomes "sing-g."

THE FIX

Let the air out through your nose and stop — no hard g. Pinch your nose: "sing" should stop.

sing

singer

running

Fix cards · 3 of 3

R

/r/

The English R

POLISH HABIT

The Polish r is a tap or trill. The English r touches nothing — a tapped r sounds foreign.

THE FIX

Curl your tongue up and back and let it FLOAT — no contact anywhere. Round your lips slightly.

red

right

car

around

' ə

stress

Stress & the weak vowel

POLISH HABIT

Polish stresses the second-to-last syllable and keeps vowels full. English moves the beat and weakens the rest.

THE FIX

Hit ONE strong beat per word and relax the others. baNAAna, comPUter, aBOUt.

banana

computer

about

PRACTISE

Your 7-day plan

Ten minutes a day. Record yourself on day 1 and day 7 — hearing your own progress is the most motivating thing you'll do.

DAY
1

W vs V

Round lips for W, teeth for V. Drill west/vest, wine/vine. Record 3 sentences.

DAY
2

TH

Tongue between teeth: think, three, this. In the mirror.

DAY
3

Endings

Keep the voice on: bad, dog, his, prize. Hand on throat.

DAY
4

Vowels

ship/sheep and cat/bet. Open wider for 'cat'.

DAY
5

NG

Nose test: sing (not sing-g), singer, running.

DAY
6

R & stress

Float the r; one strong beat per word (baNAna).

DAY
7

Together

Re-record your day-1 sentences. Compare. Pick your hardest sound to keep polishing.

WHEN YOU'VE GOT THESE

Ready for all 22 sounds?

This guide covers the sounds Polish speakers most need. Speak Clearly — the full book — covers all 22 sounds and speech patterns, with minimal pairs and tongue twisters for every one, guides for six first languages, and a complete 30-day plan.

Speak Clearly

A Practical Guide to English Pronunciation

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Powodzenia! You don't have to lose your accent — just be understood.

THE SPEAK CLEARLY METHOD

**Speak clearly.
Speak as yourself.**

Mów tak, jak czujesz.

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