



Polish cases cheat sheet

Seven cases, core triggers, model phrases, and the endings to recognize first

The seven cases at a glance

Case	Question	Use it for	Common trigger	Model phrase
Nominative mianownik	kto? co?	subject, naming, dictionary form	to jest; subject of the sentence	Kawa jest dobra. The coffee is good.
Genitive dopełniacz	kogo? czego?	absence, need, quantity, possession, origin	nie ma, potrzebować, dużo, do, bez, dla, od, z-from	Nie mam biletu. I do not have a ticket.
Dative celownik	komu? czemu?	receiver, beneficiary, experiencer	dawać, pomagać, dziękować, podobać się	Pomagam mamie. I am helping Mom.
Accusative biernik	kogo? co?	direct object, motion toward	mieć, widzieć, pić; na/w with motion	Piję kawę. I am drinking coffee.
Instrumental narzędnik	z kim? z czym?	companion, means, tool, transport, role	z-with; być + role; transport without a preposition	Jadę tramwajem. I am going by tram.
Locative miejscownik	o kim? o czym?	static location, topic; always with a preposition	w, na, o, po, przy	Jestem w sklepie. I am in the shop.
Vocative wołacz	direct address	calling or addressing someone	names, family words, titles	Anno! Panie doktorze! Anna! Doctor!

A fast decision path

1. Find the governor	2. Name the noun's job	3. Classify the noun	4. Choose and check the form
Look first for a preposition or a verb that requires a case: do, bez, pomagać, potrzebować.	Is it the subject, direct object, receiver, quantity, location, means, or person addressed?	Record gender, number, and for masculine nouns, animacy or personhood.	Apply the likely ending, then compare it with a reliable phrase or dictionary form.

Best beginner order: accusative -> genitive -> instrumental -> locative -> dative. Keep nominative as the base form and learn vocative through common address phrases.



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Singular endings to recognize first

Case	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Watch for
Genitive	-a or -u	-y or -i	-a	Masculine -a/-u must often be learned with the noun.
Dative	-owi; sometimes -u	-e, -y, or -i	-u	Common -u forms include psu, bratu, ojcu, panu.
Accusative	= nom. or gen.	-ę; sometimes unchanged	= nominative	Animate masculine singular usually looks genitive: psa.
Instrumental	-em or -iem	-ą	-em or -iem	High-value frames: z mamą, tramwajem, studentem.
Locative	-e or -u	-e, -y, or -i	-e or -u	Always follows a preposition; stem changes are common.
Vocative	-e or -u	-o, -u, -y, or -i	often = nominative	Common in names and titles: Marku, Anno, panie.

Prepositions that predict the case

Case	High-frequency triggers	Examples
Genitive	do, od, z/ze (from), bez, dla, u, obok	do sklepu; bez cukru; z Polski
Dative	dzięki, przeciw/przeciwno, ku, wbrew	dzięki tobie; przeciwko temu
Accusative	przez; na/w with movement toward	przez park; na pocztę
Instrumental	z/ze (with); nad, pod, przed, za, między for static relation	z mamą; przed domem
Locative	w, na, o, po, przy	w domu; na poczcie; o pracy

Three contrasts that prevent common mistakes

Contrast	Form 1	Form 2	What changed
Location vs motion	Jestem na poczcie.	Idę na pocztę.	Locative marks static location; accusative marks movement toward.
With vs from	Idę z mamą.	Wracam z Polski.	z + instrumental means with; z + genitive means from/out of.
Inanimate vs animate	Mam bilet.	Widzę psa.	Masculine inanimate accusative = nominative; animate = genitive.

Use this sheet to identify the case. For exact forms, check the governing word, the noun's gender and number, and a reliable dictionary or the full guide at zapiekanka.app.