

Verbs of motion

What are the verbs of motion and how do form a system?

How can prefixes be combined with the basic motion verbs and what changes occur?

Czech doesn't have a default verb *go*. **Going in Czech depends upon the kind of motion that you are engaged in: by foot or not by foot, in a specific direction with a goal in mind, motion without a goal, or repeated going** (every day or week, often, usually...). **Czech verbs of motion form a system with so-called determinate and indeterminate forms** for every basic verb.

<i>Determinate</i>	<i>Indeterminate</i>	
jít	chodit	to go by foot
jet	jezdit	to go by vehicle, ride
letět	létat (lítat)	to fly
běžet	běhat	to run
nést	nosit	to carry by foot
vést	vodit	to lead or take on foot
vézt	vozit	to carry or transport by vehicle

For conjugations, see the end of this guide.

Determinate verbs primarily denote a single act of moving in one direction toward a definite goal.

Jdeme do práce.	We're going to work.
Jedou na letiště.	They're going to the airport.
Letím nejdřív do Londýna.	First I'm flying to London.
Pejsek běží do parku.	The dog runs to the park.
Nesu knihy do knihovny.	I'm carrying (bringing) the books to the library.
Každá cesta vede do Říma.	Every path leads to Rome.
Cyklista vezl brambory.	The cyclist was transporting potatoes.

They can also be used for repeated motion where a goal is explicit.

Každý den si jdeme zaplavat.	Every day we go for a swim.
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In the past tense, the verbs *jít* and *jet* tend to capture the whole trip seen as a completed event (*I went to the store*).

Šli jsme na Václavák.	We went to Wenceslas Square.
V létě jsem jel do Ameriky.	In the summer I went to America.

Determinate verbs in the past tense also denote the in-transit moment of going from source to the goal (*I was going to the store when...*).

Když **jsem šla** na pódium, byla jsem nervózní.
When **I was going** to the podium, I was nervous.

Když **jme vezli** tetu k vlaku, kamarádka u nás čekala doma.
While **we were taking** our aunt to the train, our friend waited at our house.

Indeterminate verbs do not have a directional or goal-oriented focus and therefore denote movement without direction, regular or habitual going, or the ability to perform a movement. Translations into English necessarily vary.

Chodíme pozdě spát.

To dítě už **chodí**.

Jezdíme po vinárnách.

Běhám ráda pro kondici.

Listonoš **nosí** kopce dopisů.

Školy **vodí** děti k zubaři.

We go to bed late.

The child **is** already **walking**.

We're on a driving tour of wineries.

I gladly **run** to get in shape.

The postman **carries** mountains of letters.

Schools are **taking** kids to the dentist.

Both determinate and indeterminate verbs are aspectually imperfective. Determinate verbs serve the function of a perfective verb to indicate a completed event of motion in the past tense, inception of motion in the future via the *po-* forms, and for the purposes of an infinitive.

Letos v létě **pojedme** do Prahy.

Loni na jaře **jme jeli** do Prahy.

Chceme **jet** do Prahy!

Asi už **půjdu** domů.

Včera večer **jme šli** do divadla.

Nemůžeme tam **jít** bez tebe.

This summer **we're going** to Prague.

Last spring **we went** to Prague.

We want **to go** to Prague!

I'll probably just **go** home.

We went to the theatre last night.

We can't **go** there without you.

Specific transportation by vehicle is indicated through the instrumental case of the means of transport: *jet/jezdit vlakem, autobusem, metrem, tramvají, autem...* Note the exceptions: *jet/jezdit na kole, na motorce*.

V Amsterdamu každý **jezdí na kole**.

Pojedeme tramvají nebo **metrem**?

In Amsterdam everyone **rides a bike**.

Will we go by tram or **metro**?

Prepositions and motion verbs

Motion verbs combine with the prepositions *do* + genitive, *na* + accusative, and *k* + dative.

The preposition *do* + genitive is used for places that take *v* in the locative case to denote location. This covers the great majority of place names.

Děti běží do školy .	The children are running to school .
Prezident letí zpátky do Washingtonu .	The president is flying back to Washington .
V tomhle nikdy nechoďte do kanceláře .	Don't ever go to the office in that.
Když jsem ho potkala, šla jsem do divadla .	When I ran into him, I was going to the theatre .

Motion followed by *na* + accusative is used for places that take *na* in the locative case. This is a **limited list that must be memorized**, and the list includes (but is not limited to!) the following:

<i>Location (na + locative)</i>	<i>Motion (na + accusative)</i>	
na univerzitě	na univerzitu	to the university
na hodině	na hodinu	to class
na přednášce	na přednášku	to the lecture
na koleji	na kolej	to the dorm
na hradě	na hrad	to the castle
na náměstí	na náměstí	to the square
na nádraží	na nádraží	to the train station
na letišti	na letiště	to the airport
na parkovišti	na parkoviště	to the parking lot
na sídlišti	na sídliště	to the housing complex
na stadioně	na stadion	to the stadium
na zastávce	na zastávku	to the (tram or bus) stop
na výletě	na výlet	on a day trip
na pláži	na pláž	to the beach
na chalupě	na chalupu	to the cottage
na chatě	na chatu	to the country house
na venkově	na venkov	to the countryside
na Moravě	na Moravu	to Moravia
na Slovensku	na Slovensko	to Slovakia
na ostrově	na ostrov	to the island
na koncertě	na koncert	to the concert

na filmu	na film	to the film
na hře	na hru	to the play
na návštěvě	na návštěvu	for a visit
na severu	na sever	northward
na jihu	na jih	southward
na východě	na východ	eastward
na západě	na západ	westward

Učitel běží na hodinu češtiny.	The teacher is running to Czech class .
Proč ptáci létají na jih ?	Why do birds fly south ?
Bouřky přinesly na Moravu i krupobití.	Storms brought to Moravia even hail.
Jedeme do Prahy na koncert Lady Gaga!	Let's go to Prague to Lady Gaga's concert !

The preposition **k + dative** is used for movement to people (or people's homes) as well as in certain fixed expressions where we go up to a place but not into it (*k moři, k řece...*). This preposition also indicates movement towards or in the direction of (*směrem k...*) a location.

Děti půjdou k babičce .	The children will go to their grandmother's .
Kdo v létě jede k moři ?	Who's going to the seaside in the summer?
Přijdu k tobě kdykoli.	I'll come to you any time.
Lukáš jde lesem k řece .	Lukáš is walking through the forest to the river .
Turisté jdou směrem ke Karlovu mostu .	The tourists are heading in the direction of Charles Bridge .

Prefixed verbs of motion

Verbs of motion can also take a range of prefixes to specify the exact nature of the movement (*into, out of, across, through...*).

When a prefix is added to a determinate verb, the verb becomes perfective. A prefix added to an indeterminate verb results in an imperfective verb.

When prefixed, all indeterminate verbs (with the exception of *létat*) modify their stems; this is true also for the determinate verb *běžet*, the stem of which modifies to *-běhnout* when prefixed. These changes are illustrated below with the prefix indicating arrival (*při-*).

Translations of these prefixed verbs into English vary depending on the specific context, but in general an entirely different word is used that captures the meaning of the prefix.

<i>Prefixed perfective</i>	<i>Prefixed imperfective</i>	
přijít	přicházet	to arrive by foot
příjet	přijíždět	to arrive by vehicle
přiletět	přilétat	to arrive by flying
přiběhnout	přibíhat	to arrive by running
přinést	přinášet	to bring by carrying on foot
přivést	přivádět	to bring by leading on foot
přivézt	přivážet	to bring by transporting

Common prefixes for motion verbs are: *při-* (arrival); *od-* (motion away, departure); *v-* (motion into); *vy-* (motion out of); *pře-* (motion across); *pro-* (motion through); *do-* (motion up to or reaching); *ob-* (motion around). Translations vary depending on the context, especially when these verbs are used metaphorically and not to describe literal motion.

Návštěvníci už **přicházejí**.
The guests **are** already **arriving**.

Kolik jí bylo let, když **odjela** do Anglie?
How old was she when she **left** to live in England?

Česko **vyváží** do ciziny stále více zboží.
The Czech Republic **exports** abroad more and more goods.

Metro **projíždí** Malostranskou, protože nefungují eskalátory.
The metro **is passing through** the Malostranská station because its escalators aren't working.

Dobrovolní hasiči **přivedli** vodu na náměstí.
Volunteer fire-fighters **brought** water to the square.

Starostové **donesli** do sněmovny petice.
The mayors **delivered** petitions to parliament.

Odletím v 17.00.
I fly out at 5pm.

Čína **dováží** stále více vína.
China **imports** more and more wine.

Banky **obcházejí** zákon, uznal stát.
Banks **are getting around** the law, admitted the government.

Pilot **vletěl** do mlhy a havaroval.
The pilot **flew into** the fog and crashed.

Do Polska **převezli** tělo mrtvého polského prezidenta.
They **transported** the body of the dead Polish president **back** to Poland.

Prefixed verbs of motion present a complex and sophisticated instance of the Czech motion system, and meanings and usage will necessarily be learned gradually.

Conjugations

Determinate verbs tend to have conjugational idiosyncracies while indeterminate verbs are regular. Only determinate verbs have *po-* futures.

jít = to go by foot (det)

<i>Present tense</i>		<i>Past participles</i>	<i>Future in po-</i>
jdu	jdeme	šel, sla, šlo	půjdu, půjdeš...
jdeš	jdete	šli, šly	
jde	jdou		

chodit = to go by foot (indet)

<i>Present tense</i>		<i>Past participles</i>
chodím	chodíme	chodil, chodila, chodilo
chodíš	chodíte	chodili, chodily
chodí	chodí/chodějí	

jet = to go by vehicle, ride (det)

<i>Present tense</i>		<i>Past participles</i>	<i>Future in po-</i>
jedu	jedeme	jel, jela, jelo	pojedu, pojedesh...
jedeš	jedete	jeli, jely	
jede	jedou		

jezdit = to go by vehicle, ride (indet)

<i>Present tense</i>		<i>Past participles</i>
jezdím	jezdíme	jezdil, jezdila, jezdilo
jezdíš	jezdíte	jezdili, jezdily
jezdí	jezdí/jezdějí	

letět = to fly (det)

<i>Present tense</i>	<i>Past participles</i>	<i>Future in po-</i>

letím	letíme	letěl, letěla, letělo	poletím, poletíš...
letíš	letíte	letěli, letěly	
letí	letí		

létat (spoken Czech: lítat) = to fly (indet)

Present tense

Past participles

létám	létáme	létal, létala, létalo
létáš	létáte	létali, létaly
létá	létají	

běžet = to run (det)

Present tense

Past participles

Future in po-

běžím	běžíme	běžel, běžela, běželo	poběžím, poběžíš...
běžíš	běžíte	běželi, běžely	
běží	běží		

běhat = to run (indet)

Present tense

Past participles

běhám	běháme	běhal, běhala, běhalo
běháš	běháte	běhali, běhaly
běhá	běhají	

nést = to carry on foot (det)

Present tense

Past participles

Future in po-

nesu	neseme	nesl, nesla, neslo	ponesu, poneseš...
neseš	nesete	nesli, nesly	
nese	nesou		

nosit = to carry on foot (indet)

Present tense

Past participles

nosím	nosíme	nosil, nosila, nosilo
nosíš	nosíte	nosili, nosily
nosí	nosí	

vést = to lead or take by foot (det)

<i>Present tense</i>		<i>Past participles</i>	<i>Future in po-</i>
vedu	vedeme	vedl, vedla, vedlo	povedu, povedeš...
vedeš	vedete	vedli, vedly	
vede	vedou		

vodit = to lead or take by foot (indet)

<i>Present tense</i>		<i>Past participles</i>
vodím	vodíme	vodil, vodila, vodilo
vodíš	vodíte	vodili, vodily
vodí	vodí	

vézt = to carry or transport by vehicle (det)

<i>Present tense</i>		<i>Past participles</i>	<i>Future in po-</i>
vezu	vezeme	vezl, vezla, vezlo	povezu, povezeš...
vezeš	vezete	vezli, vezly	
veze	vezou		

vozt = to carry or transport by vehicle (indet)

<i>Present tense</i>		<i>Past participles</i>
voším	vošíme	vozil, vozila, vozilo
vozíš	vozíte	vožili, vozily
vozí	vozí	