

STUDENTS' FOLDERS

1. HISTORY OF POLAND - compiled by Radoslawa Bociek

A SIP OF POLISH HISTORY

Poland came *into* being in *the 10th* century through *unification* of Slavic tribes by Duke Mieszko I. **The first King of Poland** was Boleslaw I (Boleslaus the Brave) crowned in 1025. The *outline* of Polish *territory* was changing constantly because Poland had strong and aggressive *neighbours just then with whom our homeland* was waging wars.

The Piast dynasty was the first sovereign dynasty, the second was Jagiellon dynasty. After death of the last king of Jagiellon dynasty, the king was chosen by the most important social group – *gentry in the form of elections*. In *the 16th* century Poland *became a territorial power*. This *upsurge* was called “Polish Golden Age”.

The last King of Poland was Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski who abdicated in 1795.

In the same year Poland disappeared from *the* European Map because *it* was scooped by Russia, Austria and Prussia. In 1918 Poland got back her independence, but *as early as in* 1939 it was attacked by *the* Third Reich and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic. *Between* 1945 and 1989 Poland was under influence of *the* USSR as *a socialist* country. *Since* 1989 *our motherland* has *been a* sovereign country. In 1997 Poland *joined* NATO and in 2004 *entered the* European Union.



The Polish history can boast 34 kings and princes out of whom the most outstanding are:

Casimir III the Great was one of the most outstanding lords of Poland and the last from the Piast dynasty. In 1333 he acceded to the

throne of Poland. He was waging very active foreign policy by developing contacts with the Teutonic Order, Czech, Hungary and Kievan Rus'. Casimir the Great strengthened the Polish country, founded 50 cities and walled about 30 of them. He *implemented* legislative reforms *in the terms of law.* In 1364 he founded the first Polish university and the oldest in Central Europe – Cracow's Academy. *Although he got married four times, he didn't have a successor.* His death was the end of *the* Piast dynasty on the Polish throne.

Jadwiga of Anjou (1373/4 – July 17, 1399) was **the Queen of Poland** from 1384 *until* her death. She came from the Second Angevin dynasty. She was ten years old when she acceded to the throne of Poland. At the age of twelve she got married to Grand Duke of Lithuania – *Ladislaus* Jogaila (Jagiello). She was very well-known *for* her beauty and *generosity.* She gave her jewellery for renovation of Cracow Academy, *whose (of which) name was changed to Jagiellonian University.* She died after childbirth in 1399. In 1997 she was *beatified to be* a saint.



POLISH OUTSTANDING BATTLES

The first was the **Battle of Grunwald** (or **1st Battle of Tannenberg**) which took place on 15 July 1410 between – on one side- the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, led by the Polish king **Władysław II Jagiełło**, - and on the opposite site - the Knights of the Teutonic Order, led by **the Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen**. It was the decisive engagement in the Polish-Lithuanian-Teutonic War (1409-1411) and an important battle in Medieval Europe because it prevented further expansion of the Teutonic Knights.



The second was the Battle of Vienna which was held on 12th September 1683 after Vienna had been besieged by the Ottoman Empire for two months. The battle broke the advance of the Ottoman Empire into Europe, and marked beginning of the political hegemony of the Habsburg dynasty in Central Europe. The large-scale battle was won by Polish-Austrian-German forces led by King of Poland John III Sobieski against the Ottoman Empire army commanded by Grand Vizier Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha.



The third was the **Battle of Warsaw** - sometimes referred to as the **Miracle at the Vistula** - was the decisive battle of the Polish–Soviet War, which began soon after the end of World War I in 1918 and lasted until the Treaty of Riga (1921). The battle of Warsaw was fought from August 13 to August 25, 1920 as Red Army forces commanded by **Mikhail Tukhachevsky** approached the Polish capital of Warsaw and nearby Modlin Fortress. On August 16, Polish forces commanded by **Józef Piłsudski** counterattacked from the south, forcing the Russian forces into a disorganised withdrawal eastward and behind the Neman River. It was an outstanding event as it stopped Bolsheviks' expansion.



2. National Symbols of Poland – compiled by Weronika Mędrak

The flag of Poland consists of two horizontal stripes - the white above, red below. Apart from the flag, other important Polish symbols are crest and anthem.

The crest shows the white eagle in crown. The legend says that Lech - the alleged founder of Polish State has seen a nest of an eagle on his

way and decided *to* build a city in this *place*. The name of the oldest Polish capital - Gniezno - comes from *the* word "nest ", meanwhile *the* eagle became a symbol of state. *The* picture of the eagle underwent certain modifications *throughout* centuries..

Food Symbols

Bigos - is a traditional stew typical of Polish and Lithuanian cuisine that many consider the Polish national dish. A savory stew of cabbage, *meat and sausage blended with other ingredients like dried mushrooms or prunes and a glass of dry red wine*. There is no standard recipe, as recipes vary considerably from region to region and from family to family, depending on spices added according to someone's liking and local tradition.

Pierogi - dumplings usually filled with sauerkraut and / or mushrooms, meat, potato and / or savory cheese. *There is also a sweet version for gourmets: sweet curd cheese with a touch of vanilla, or other fruits, such as cherries, blueberries or strawberries, and sometimes even apples - optionally topped with sour cream and sugar.*

Wedding Delicacies

Poland is famous *for* unusually sumptuous weddings, which last two or even three days *in rural areas*. *A bride and a groom invite not only close and distant relatives but also neighbours so in all there are up to 200 guests*. During *this unique reception* people dance, drink, and sing – *simply enjoy themselves to remember this special festivity for many years to come, and Polish hospitality of course!*

Symbols of Flora and Fauna

Among flora for a special attention deserves **oak** called Bartek, which *is* 670 years old and it is the monument of nature. It's also worth mentioning the Polish unique **Bison** bonasus (aurochs) the biggest land mammal in Europe inhabiting the natural reserves as well as a **stork** which is inseparable element of our scenery.

Contemporary Symbols

Next Polish symbol is the *movement* „**Solidarity**”, which has become an

international symbol of battle *against communist ruling* about *democratic* rights and values.

Famous Poles:

John Paul the Second - was one of the largest Holy Fathers, by many considered as the greatest authority in history. The Pope - traveller, eternal defender of human rights and the most important values.

Robert Kubica - he is *the* first and sole so far racing driver F1 being Polish.

Alexander Wolszczan - he is Polish astronomer and discoverer of first planets from behind the solar system.

Mariusz Czerkawski - he is Polish hockey player, playing in famous foreign clubs. *What's* curious, *he* has gained (from unknown reasons) *the* nickname: Polish Prince.

3. POLES AT OLYMPIC GAMES compiled by Adrianna Szady

China welcomed the world to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games on Friday 8th of August with the roll of two thousand drums and a battering fireworks, smokes and varied lights. There were 91,000 people in the National Stadium, popularly known as the 'Bird's Nest'. It was a wonderful show.

The first success for Poland was achieved by **Tomasz Majewski**. He won the gold medal in shot put. Wins of handball and volleyball players also cheered up that day. Sunday 17th was the lucky day for our sportsmen. It brought four medals! Our quadruple sculls got a gold medal and four without coxswain received a silver medal.

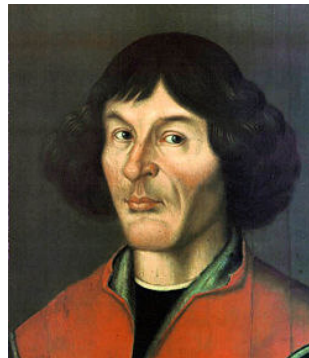
Moreover, **Agnieszka Wieszczek**, the debutant on an Olympic Games, won a brown medal in wrestling beating Maider Unda from Spain in final. But this was not the end. **Szymon Kolecki** became a vice master in weightlifting. Next day was also satisfying. The gold medal was awarded to **Łukasz Blanik** in artistic gymnastics. Polish team drew with France in handball, and men's volleyball team defeated Russians. The further day **Piotr Małachowski** deserved a silver medal in discus throw on Tuesday 19th It was the eighth medal for our representation.

Only on Saturday 23rd we had an occasion to celebrate next and the last two silver medals. The first medal for **Maja Włoszczowska** in Cycling Mountain Bike and the second for **Aneta Konieczna i Beata Mikołajczyk** in K-2 500m kayak double.

And that's all. Olympic Games in Beijing were finished by Polish representation with **three gold, six silver medals and one brown medal**. There were nice surprises but also loses about which it is better to forget.

4. POLES' CONTRIBUTION INTO EUROPEAN HERITAGE **- compiled by Ewa Jędrzejowska**

Culture encompasses *all the spiritual aspect* of mankind, passed down from generation to generation. *Europe is not unimportant mainland because miscellaneous peoples inhabiting it over centuries like Greek, Roman, Judaic, Christian and Germanic, lay civilization grounds. Poles also have their own contribution to the creation of his Cultural Heritage.*



Maria Skłodowska Curie was born in 1867. *She spent the larger part of her life in France, where she finished chemical studies at Sorbonne University. She made a great contribution into the European science thanks to radioactivity research and discovery of two new elements: polonium and radium. She received Nobel Prize twice, in 1903 in the field of physics, in 1911 in the sphere of chemistry. She remains till today a sole prestigious woman honored with this prize twice. We owe her the evolution of a new science – radioactivity.*

Mikołaj Kopernik

Mirosław Hermaszewski – the sole Polish astronaut



Gen. bryg. **Mirosław Hermaszewski** (ur. [15 września 1944](#) w [Lipnikach na Wołyniu](#)) – polski [pilot](#) i [kosmonauta](#). Jak dotąd jedyny Polak, który odbył lot w [kosmos](#) ([Polska](#) jest czwartym krajem w historii, po [ZSRR](#), [USA](#) i [Czechosłowacji](#), którego obywatel odbył lot kosmiczny).

Jest członkiem Komitetu Wykonawczego Stowarzyszenia Kosmonautów i Astronautów Świata, członkiem Kapituły medalu Akademii Polskiego Sukcesu i członkiem Komitetu Badań Kosmicznych i Satelitarnych [PAN](#) oraz ASE – Stowarzyszenia Odkrywców Przestrzeni.



John Paul the Second was born in 1920 in Krakow. He was the first Polish Pope and the first bishop of Rome after 455 years, *who was not Italian*. In addition, he was also a poet, philosopher and mystic. During his pontificate, *he created 14 encyclicals, 3 apostolic letters. He has engraved his name in the memory of young people as their Pope*. His pontificate *was full of pilgrimages, during which he drove around the planet Earth several times*. He took it upon himself to start the dialogue with other religions, thus *was the first Pope in history who prayed in a mosque and under the Wall of Weeping in Jerusalem*.

Lech Wałęsa is a well-known *Polish* politician. As a leader of underground solidarity *he was awarded Peaceful Nobel Prize in 1983*. His activity has *affected the change of political situation in Poland and Europe*. *He has been elected the President of Republic of Poland after the rule of communist government*.

Andrzej Wajda is a known throughout the world Polish director. *In his movies he shows fates of people in important historic moments*. He received many prestigious awards such as: Gold Bear at the Berlin Festival; Golden Palm at Festival in Cannes for the motion picture entitled: Iron Man “Człowiek z Żelaza”. He was nominated for the Oscar for the film about Katyn. In 2000 *he was awarded Oscar for lifetime achievements*.

Adam Malysz is an outstanding Polish ski jumper who has *earned the title of champion of the world four times within his career*. He also was the Olympic champion and the winner of ski-jumping contest called Competition of four take-offs. To his achievements belong a triple victory in Nordic Competition and 19 titles of Polish Winter Champions.



5. ECONOMIC GROWTH compiled by Magdalena Bratek

Poland is considered to currently have one of the fastest growing economies in Central European nations, with an annual growth rate of over **6.0%**.

Poland has made a tremendous overall economic progress over the last decade, and now is ranked **21st** worldwide in terms of the GDP

The sources of GDP are: services (67%), industry(30%) and agriculture (3%).

Agriculture plays an important role in Poland's economy. Agricultural land accounts for approx. 54 % of the total area of the country, 38 % of the Polish population live in rural areas. However the contribution of agriculture to the GDP represents only 3%.

Main types of industry: machine building, iron and steel, mining, shipbuilding, automobiles, furniture, textiles and apparel (clothes), chemicals, food processing, glass, beverages.

Poland is an exporter of **processed fruit and vegetables, meat, and dairy products**.

Our homeland is the leading producer in Europe of **potatoes and rye** and is one of the world's largest producers of **sugar beets** and is a significant producer of **rapeseed, grains, hogs (pork), and cattle**.

STATISTICS:

Investment (gross fixed): 18.4% of GDP (2004 est.)

Inwestycje

Agriculture - products: potatoes, fruits, vegetables, wheat, poultry, eggs, pork

Exports - commodities: machinery and transport equipment 37.8%, intermediate manufactured goods 23.7%, miscellaneous manufactured goods 17.1%, food and live animals 7.6% (2003)

Artykuły na eksport

Imports - commodities: machinery and transport equipment 38%, intermediate manufactured goods 21%, chemicals 14.8%, minerals, fuels, lubricants, and related materials 9.1% (2003)

Artykuły importowane

Unemployment: 7.3% July 2008

bezrobocie

Industrial production growth rate: 17.8% (2006)

Tempo wzrostu produkcji przemysłowej

POLISH EXPORT PRODUCTS

Polish dairy products, meat, vegetables and fruit are export winners. Competitive prices, high quality as well as punctual deliveries are much valued by our foreign trade partners.

- ❖ Many Polish firms engaged in fruit and vegetable processing, have been doing exceptionally well on the foreign markets. The Rolnik company exported its products to the Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia, Latvia and to the United States. The Roleski company is one of the leading producers of ketchups, sauces, mustard and mayonnaises in Poland.
- ❖ Polish dairy products are also becoming competitive on the EU market. Last year, besides powdered milk (up to now a Polish speciality) yoghurts and cheese have also been selling very well. After entry into the EU the demand for Polish meat rose abruptly. Beef and poultry are proving to be the most popular meats.

6. UNEMPLOYMENT IN POLAND – compiled by Joanna Działo

Unemployment *has* been one of the biggest problems of Polish *society* since 1989. *Just then it also started* to be a subject of psychological and social researchers, *too*.

In 2008 total urban and rural employed population reached 15.7 mln. By the end of 2007, the registered **unemployment rate in the urban areas was 7.1 percent**, and the number of registered jobless *city-dwellers* was 1 422 900.

The biggest problems with finding a job have large working-age population whose average educational level is relatively low. *It's worth noticing that* woman, elderly, inexperienced youth, people living in *the* country and *the* disabled are *disadvantaged at work*. Most of employees work in transport, industry, construction *and* educational system. *The* best opportunities for employment *are* nowadays offered by private industry, small and medium-size-companies.

Some *professions* could have difficulties *in* finding a job, especially: fishermen, farmers, foresters, gardeners. It's connected with small *demand for this sort of* employees. *What's more, some jobs disappear for example a postman, whereas new ones such as an interior or green area designer appear.*

As for remuneration, average pay amounts to about 2,900 PLN (Polish zlotys). The best wages are in mining industry – about 6400, and *the highest salaries* in finance – *approx.* 5,200 PLN monthly.

There is high demand for such skills as technical abilities *in the fields of construction engineering.*

Poles working abroad constitute a big part of Polish labour-force.. There are 14 – 17 mln Polish *people* officially working *overseas*, mostly in *the* USA (6 – 10 mln), Great Britain (0, 5) and Germany (0,25 mln). Also about 10% of them work illegally abroad.

The government *has been trying* to solve *the problem* of unemployment *in Poland*; however it isn't easy at all. Polish people should be more open *to* new kinds of jobs like *for instance*: strong management or leadership.

Employment structure (2004 year)

Agriculture 16,8%

Industry 27,6%

Services 55,6%

THE END