THE DUTCH
COACHING STUDIO

The Dutch Companion

A practical guide to understanding and using Dutch



A1-A2

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Find what you need

Follow the book from the beginning, or go straight to the question you have today. The chapter numbers stay the same throughout.

01 You And Your Dutch

01 Your goal 7

02 New language, familiar ground 8

02 From Words To Sentences

03 Building your sentences 10

04 Using the present tense 13

05 De, het and een 15

06 Deze, die, dit and dat 17

07 From one to more 18

08 Small forms you'll hear often 19

09 Ik, mij and mijn 20

10 Referring to people and things 22

11 Describing people and things 24

12 Comparing and choosing 25

13 Starting with time or place 26

14 What is the question asking? 27

15 Saying what is not the case 29

03 More To Say

16 What you can, want or need to do 33

17 Verbs in two pieces 35

18 When the action comes back to you 36

19 Where it is, where it goes 37

20 Giving, getting and borrowing 40

PREVIEW | Selected pages from the full 87-page book

More to explore

03 More to say (continued)

21 Time, dates and amounts 42

22 A little word between verbs 47

23 Talking about what happened 50

24 Talking about the past 52

25 Talking about plans 55

26 Connecting your ideas 57

27 A question inside a sentence 60

28 The small word er 62

29 Words that work together 64

04 Quick reference

30 Pronunciation 71

31 Spelling and word endings 73

32 Verb forms and tenses 76

33 Sentence patterns 79

34 Grammar words 80

Find and follow up

Find it quickly 82

Sources and further reading 84

PREVIEW | Selected pages from the full 87-page book

New language, familiar ground

Languages you already know can help you recognise Dutch words and patterns. Start with those connections, then check how Dutch uses them.

Words you recognise

Dit weekend is er een gratis concert in het park. Op het programma staan jazz, soul en pop. Meer informatie vind je op de website.



Words such as **weekend, concert, park** and **website** give you clues to the message without translating every word.

Some are English loanwords; other similarities go back further, such as Dutch **hand** and English **hand**. Similar spelling does not always mean similar pronunciation.

Grammar you can work with

The following chapters explain Dutch patterns through examples. Use familiar structures as a starting point, but check the Dutch word order. Grammar terms are explained when they first help you.

Grammar words: pages 80–81.

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De, het and een

When you learn a new noun, learn its article with it. Remember **de trein** and **het station** as complete combinations. You'll use them again and again.

Words for people, things, places and ideas are **nouns**. Examples include **de trein** (the train), **het station** (the station), **de vraag** (the question) and **het antwoord** (the answer).

Which article do you need?

Meaning	Article	Examples
a / an	**een**	een fiets · een huis
the, with a singular noun	**de** or **het**	de fiets · het huis
the, with a plural noun	**de**	de fietsen · de huizen

Around 75% of Dutch nouns are de-words. Many everyday words still take het, so learn the article with each word. The patterns on the next page can help you.

From een to de or het

Ik heb **een fiets**. **De fiets** staat buiten.

I have a bicycle. The bicycle is outside.

een fiets → de fiets



First, you introduce a bicycle. In the next sentence, it is clear which bicycle you mean. Use **een** for one countable person or thing you haven't identified. Use **de** or **het** when it is clear which one you mean, either from an earlier sentence or from the situation.

When you leave the article out

With a plural, **een** disappears. **Ik koop een boek** becomes **Ik koop boeken** (I'm buying books).

For things you don't count individually, you often use no article. **Ik drink water** (I drink water) and **Ik zoek werk** (I'm looking for work). One job is countable, so it is **Ik zoek een baan**.

When you name a profession after **zijn**, you usually leave out **een**. **Zij is docent** means "She is a teacher".

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What is the question asking?

You may understand every word in a question and still be unsure what to say. The question word tells you what kind of information is missing.

Question	What it asks for	An answer
Wie helpt je?	a person	Mijn collega.
Wat zoek je?	a thing or information	Mijn sleutel.
Waar woon je?	a place	In Leiden.
Waar ga je naartoe?	a destination	Naar mijn werk.
Waar kom je vandaan?	an origin	Uit Spanje.
Wanneer begint de les?	a moment	Morgen.
Waarom neem je de bus?	a reason	Het regent.
Hoe ga je naar je werk?	a way or means	Met de fiets.
Hoeveel dagen werk je?	a number	Vier dagen.

A small addition changes hoe

Hoe laat begint de film? Om acht uur.

What time does the film start? At eight.

Hoe lang duurt de film? Twee uur.

How long is the film? Two hours.

Hoe vaak ga je? Eén keer per maand.

How often do you go? Once a month.

Hoe duur is het kaartje? Twaalf euro.

How much is the ticket? Twelve euros.



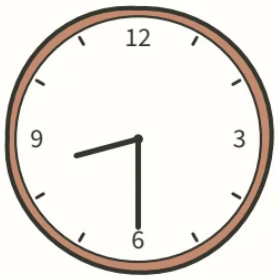
In a conversation, these short replies can be enough. If the other person needs more context, make a full sentence: **Ik werk vier dagen per week.** / I work four days a week.

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Half negen is 8:30

Dutch half-hours look towards the next hour. **Half negen** is halfway to nine, so it means 8:30.

Time	What you can hear
08:00	acht uur
08:15	kwart over acht
08:20	tien voor half negen
08:25	vijf voor half negen
08:30	half negen
08:35	vijf over half negen
08:45	kwart voor negen



08:30

You can also read a digital time directly: **acht uur twintig**. Context tells you whether it is morning or evening. **20:00** is **acht uur 's avonds**.

Parts of the day

's ochtends
in the morning

's middags
in the afternoon

's avonds
in the evening

's nachts
at night

Say it back

Not sure about a time? Try: Dus om half negen?

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Verb forms to find quickly

The past columns show the simple past. The perfect column completes **ik …**. Meanings show common uses.

Infinitive	Meaning	Past: singular	Past: plural	Perfect: ik …
beginnen	begin	begon	begonnen	ben begonnen
blijven	stay	bleef	bleven	ben gebleven
brengen	bring	bracht	brachten	heb gebracht
denken	think	dacht	dachten	heb gedacht
doen	do	deed	deden	heb gedaan
drinken	drink	dronk	dronken	heb gedronken
eten	eat	at	aten	heb gegeten
gaan	go	ging	gingen	ben gegaan
geven	give	gaf	gaven	heb gegeven
hebben	have	had	hadden	heb gehad
helpen	help	hielp	hielpen	heb geholpen
kijken	look / watch	keek	keken	heb gekeken
komen	come	kwam	kwamen	ben gekomen
kopen	buy	kocht	kochten	heb gekocht
krijgen	receive / get	kreeg	kregen	heb gekregen
lezen	read	las	lazen	heb gelezen
liggen	lie	lag	lagen	heb gelegen

Notice shared patterns

drinken → dronk; zingen → zong; vinden → vond
kijken → keek; schrijven → schreef; blijven → bleef
kopen → kocht; zoeken → zocht

These are memory aids, not rules for every verb with the same vowel.

More verbs: page 77. Regular forms: pages 51–52.

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