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# Introduction

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**A**s life has become global, knowing how to say at least a few words in other languages is becoming increasingly useful. Students do part of their studies abroad, and many businesses not only need overseas communication but travel as well. While English will do for business dealings in the Netherlands, people will open up if you know some words and phrases in Dutch. Wouldn't it be fun to talk to your neighbours, colleagues and new friends in Dutch and have a good laugh together?

Whatever your motivation is, *Dutch for Dummies, 2nd Edition* can help. An expert in teaching languages has produced a book that helps you to communicate in Dutch. You'll not only find materials for basic communication such as greeting or ordering a meal, but also for telephoning or writing an email. Grammar rules and tables provide you with the building blocks for your personal communication. *Dutch for Dummies, 2nd Edition* uses a clear and simple notation system for the pronunciation of each word, while pronunciation and accent come alive on the website that supplements the book.

## *About This Book*

This book is more than just a compilation of practical sentences and words. It will prove useful when your goal is to learn some words and phrases just to get around, but also when you intend to stay longer in the country and want to communicate with neighbours, new friends and colleagues. You can go through the book at your own pace and in your order of preference, reading and skipping as much or as little as you like. *Dutch for Dummies, 2nd Edition* is your personal guide: always ready for help.

**Note:** If you're a novice to Dutch, you may want to read the chapters in Part I, before you start talking. This part will give you the basics, such as how to pronounce the various sounds, which will help you taking the next steps.

## Conventions Used in This Book

To make this book easier to navigate through, we have set up a set of conventions:

- ✔ Dutch terms are set in **boldface** to make them stand out.
- ✔ Pronunciations are set in *italics*, following the Dutch terms. Stressed syllables are underlined.

Verb conjugations (lists that show you the forms of a verb) are given in tables in this order: the ‘I’ form, the ‘you’ (singular, informal) form, the ‘you’ (singular and plural, formal) form, the ‘he/she/it form’, the ‘we’ form, the ‘you’ (plural, informal) form, and the ‘they’ form. Pronunciations follow in the second column. Here’s an example of the verb **werken** (*vehr-kuhn*) (to work):

<b>The regular verb werken (<i>vehr-kuhn</i>) (to work)</b>		
<i>Conjugation</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Translation</i>
<b>ik werk</b>	<i>ik verk</i>	I work
<b>jij/je werkt</b> <b>werk jij/je</b>	<i>yeye/yuh verkt</i> <i>verk yeye/yuh</i>	you work (informal singular)
<b>u werkt</b>	<i>uw verkt</i>	you work (formal)
<b>hij/zij werkt</b>	<i>heye/zeye verkt</i>	he/she works
<b>wij werken</b>	<i>veye <u>vehr-kuhn</u></i>	we work
<b>jullie werken</b>	<i>yuh-lee <u>vehr-kuhn</u></i>	you work (informal plural)
<b>zij werken</b>	<i>zeye <u>vehr-kuhn</u></i>	they work

Language learning is a specialty, so this book includes a few elements that other *For Dummies* books do not. These are the new elements:

- ✔ **Talkin’ the Talk dialogues:** Most language is oral, or spoken, and most speaking is done in dialogues between two persons, so we include dialogues throughout the book. The dialogues come under the heading ‘Talkin’ the Talk’ and show you the Dutch words, their pronunciation and the English translations. A lot of these dialogues can be found on the website belonging to the book. You can download the tracks on [www.dummies.nl/downloads](http://www.dummies.nl/downloads).
- ✔ **Words to Know blackboards:** Memorizing words and phrases is also important in language learning, so we collect all the new words in the dialogues on a blackboard, under the heading ‘Words to Know’. Dutch nouns have a gender, which determines the (definite) article each noun takes. In the Words to Know lists, we include the article for each noun so that you memorize it together with the noun.

Also note that, because each language has its own ways of expressing ideas, the English translation that we provide for the Dutch terms may not be a literal one. We want you to understand the gist of what someone is saying, not just the words that are being said. For example, you can translate the Dutch phrase 'Ik moet nu snel weg' literally as 'I have to leave soon' but the phrase really means 'I have to go now'. This book gives you the 'I have to go now' translation.

## *Foolish Assumptions*

To write his book, we had to make some assumptions about who you are and what you want from a book called *Dutch for Dummies, 2nd Edition*. Here are some assumptions that we have made about you:

- ✔ You know little to no Dutch – and if you do know some words and phrases, you don't know how to organize them.
- ✔ You are not looking for a book that will make you fluent in Dutch: you just want to know some words, phrases and sentence constructions so that you can communicate basic information in Dutch.
- ✔ You want to learn real-life Dutch for real-life use, in a life that you have already started or will start soon. You make your own choices of the material that the book offers, not only deciding which parts and how much, but also when, where and how you study.
- ✔ You want to have fun and learn some Dutch at the same time.

If these statements apply to you, you have found the right book!

## *How This Book Is Organized*

This book is divided by topics into five parts. Each part is divided into chapters. The following sections will show you what types of information you can find in each part.

### *Part I: Getting Started*

This part is not to be missed, as it's like the foundations of a house. As the ground work is never as exciting as what comes later, you might prefer to start with some real communication like greeting. Do as you like, and go back to the basics when you notice that you need them. In Part I you'll find Dutch words that you probably already know, as well as the alphabet, pronunciation and some 'first aid' expressions. It gives you the structure of verbs, tenses and sentences and all you need to know about numbers, time, the days of the week and the different seasons.

## ***Part II: Dutch in Action***

In this part you begin learning and using Dutch. Instead of focusing on grammar points, this part focuses on everyday situations, such as talking to people, enjoying a meal, shopping, leisure and work.

## ***Part III: Dutch on the Go***

This part hands you the tools you need to find your way in Dutch in a bank, in a hotel, on the road, on a plane, a train or a taxi. This part covers all aspects of getting around in the Netherlands, and includes a chapter on handling emergencies.

## ***Part IV: The Part of Tens***

If you're looking for small, easily digestible pieces of information about Dutch, this part is for you. Here, you can find ten ways to learn Dutch quickly, five things you should never do, ten favourite Dutch expressions and ten phrases that make you sound professional.

## ***Part V: Appendices***

The last part of the book includes important information which you can use for reference. It starts with Verb tables, which show you how to conjugate regular verbs as well as those that don't fit into any pattern. You'll also find a list of the tracks that appear on the website belonging to this book, so that you can find out where in the book those dialogues are and follow along. Also, you'll find a mini-dictionary with both Dutch to English and English to Dutch formats. In the last appendix, grammar terms that are used in this book, are explained.

## ***Icons Used in This Book***

You may be looking for particular information while reading this book. To make certain types of information more easily accessible, you'll find the following items in the left-hand margins widely throughout the book:



This icon highlights tips that can make learning Dutch easier.



This icon points to some grammar rules that are not essential but 'nice to know'.



If you're looking for information and advice about culture and how to deal with the Dutch, look for these icons.



The website belonging to this book gives you the opportunity to listen to native Dutch speakers. This will increase your understanding of spoken Dutch. The icon marks the Talkin' the Talk dialogues which you can find on the website. You can download the tracks on [www.dummies.nl/downloads](http://www.dummies.nl/downloads).

## *Where to Go from Here*

Learning a language is all about jumping in and just trying. So start now! You can start reading at the beginning, pick a chapter that interests you, or listen to a few dialogues on the website. Who knows, in a short time you may ask a Dutchman talking to you in English: **Ik studeer Nederlands, wilt u Nederlands praten?** (*ik stuw-dayr nay-duhr-lants vilt uw nay-duhr-lants pra-a-tuhn*) (I'm studying Dutch, would you mind talking Dutch?).

## *One Last Thing ...*

You may find it odd that this book contains no references to Flanders, the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium. Flemish is spoken by some six million people.

It's true that there are differences between Flemish and Dutch as spoken in the Netherlands, but they do not impede mutual understanding. The vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation rules explained in this book will help you get along in Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges, just as well as in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague!

Those who speak French and want to learn Dutch for Flanders only, may use the French version of *Dutch for Dummies: Le Néerlandais pour les Nuls* by Margreet Kwakernaak, Michael Hofland and Theodoor Puttemans (Nouvelle Edition, Editions First-Gründ, ISBN 978-2-7540-3146-2).

**Part I**

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# **Getting Started**

### *In this part ...*

**Y**ou have to start somewhere, but we bet that you already jumped in. This part is a lifeboat that you can use whenever you fear that drowning is near. This part contains the alphabet, pronunciation and most basic grammar – why not check your lifeboat before trying out the rest of the book?



## Chapter 1

# You Already Know Some Dutch

.....

### *In this chapter:*

- ▶ The Dutch you already know
  - ▶ Useful responses and wishes
  - ▶ Reciting your ABC's
  - ▶ Pronouncing vowels
  - ▶ Pronouncing Dutch diphthongs
  - ▶ Trying the 'ch' and the 'g'
  - ▶ Pronunciation and stress
  - ▶ Questioning and exclaiming
- .....

**T**he best way to learn a language is simply to start. In this chapter you jump into the Dutch language. This chapter shows you the Dutch you probably know already, explains how to pronounce Dutch words and introduces you to some popular Dutch expressions.

## *The Dutch You Already Know*

Dutch is an Indo-European language. Among the families of Indo-European languages, Dutch, like German and English, belongs to the German group. Many words are identical with German words or look-alikes. Though English is not as close a relative as German, English-speaking people will recognize many words as well. These words either have their roots in the same family or belong to the growing group of internationally used words.

## Close relatives

The words listed below are the same in Dutch, English and German and mean the same. The only difference is the pronunciation and the spelling. German nouns start with a capital letter.

<i>Dutch</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>English</i>
<b>de arm</b>	<i>duh arm</i>	der Arm	the arm
<b>de bank</b>	<i>duh bank</i>	die Bank	the bank
<b>fantastisch</b>	<i>fan-tas-tees</i>	fantastisch	fantastic
<b>het glas</b>	<i>het khlas</i>	der Glas	the glass
<b>de hand</b>	<i>duh hant</i>	die Hand	the hand
<b>de sport</b>	<i>duh sport</i>	der Sport	the sport
<b>de tunnel</b>	<i>duh tuh-nuhl</i>	der Tunnel	the tunnel
<b>de wind</b>	<i>duh vint</i>	der Wind	the wind



## Kissing cousins

More and more English words and phrases are used in Dutch, in an area such as sports but also in daily life. The Dutch usually make small adaptations, generally in spelling. Some elderly people and purists dislike the growing influence of English but all those who make use of new products and innovations cannot avoid the English expressions. There are no completely Dutch words for **de digitale tv** (*duh dee-khee-taa-luh tay-fay*) (digital TV) or **de megastore** (*duh may-khaa-stoar*) (the megastore)! Some more frequently used words with small adaptations are:

<b>de supermarkt</b>	( <i>duh suw-puhr-markt</i> )	the supermarket
<b>de gym</b>	( <i>duh khim</i> )	the gym

## Dunqlish

As Dutch-speaking people are internationally orientated, the Dutch use a lot of English verbs and expressions, especially in sports, IT and business. They adapt the verbs to Dutch rules, which results in a combination of Dutch and English, or Dunqlish. For example, you might hear: **Ik ga dat even checken** (*ik khaa dat ay-fuhn cheh-kuhn*) (I'm going to check that) or **Het vliegtuig was overboekt** (*het fleekh-toaikh vas oa-fuhr-bookt*) (The plane was overbooked). The Dutch find it very difficult to write this kind of verb!