

1.1

The simple sentence

A simple sentence in Dutch is structured around the subject and the main verb. The verb expresses the action. The subject is the person or thing that undertakes the action. These parts are inseparable.

The general sentence-structure is as follows:

subject	main verb	other parts	
Ik	bel	je	morgen.
I	phone	you	tomorrow.

In Dutch the main verb comes second in a simple sentence; all other verbs are placed at the end of the sentence. Note this is different to the word order in English, as shown below.

subject	main verb	other parts	other verb(s)
Ik	zal	je morgen	bellen.
* I	will	you tomorrow	phone.

Note that a reference to time is usually placed before a reference to place or direction. A reference to manner takes position between those two.

		time	manner	place/direction
Ik	breng je	morgen	op de fiets	naar het station.

Inversion

When the subject and verb change places, they are said to be inverted. In English inversion is mainly restricted to questions. In Dutch however, inversion also occurs when the sentence begins with a part other than the subject.

time/place	main verb	subject	
Morgen * Tomorrow	kom come	ik. I.	
Op de markt * At the market	koop buy	ik I	groente. vegetables.

1.2

The interrogative sentence

Most interrogative sentences are inverted. An inverted question begins either with the main verb or with an interrogative (e.g. *why*, *when*, *where*).

main verb	subject		
Mag * May	ik I	iets something	vragen? ask?
interrogative	main verb	subject	
Wanneer * When	kom come	je you	naar Nederland? to the Netherlands?

When the interrogative is the subject of the sentence, no inversion occurs.

Wie is daar?

Who is there?

1.3

The imperative sentence

The imperative can express a command, an instruction or an invitation. In this type of sentence the main verb comes first.

Pas op!
Kook de groente.

Watch out!
Cook the vegetables.

Exercise**1**

Split up the sentence into different parts and underline the subject and the main verb.

Example

Ik / reis / meestal / met de trein.

I / travel / mostly / by train.

1 John wacht op het station.

John waits at the station.

2 Wil je een appel?

* Want you an apple?

3 De kat slaapt in de stoel.

The cat sleeps in the chair.

4 Mijn vriend woont in Frankrijk.

My friend lives in France.

5 Morgen gaat de volgende trein.

* Tomorrow goes the next train.

6 Waar kom je vandaan?

* Where come you from?

7 Kom je met de trein naar huis?

* Come you by train home?

8 Ik ga bij de bakker brood halen.

* I go from the baker bread fetch.

9 Ik ga vanavond met een vriend naar de stad.

I go tonight with a friend to town.

10 Ik vind jou niet aardig.

* I find you not nice.

Exercise**2**

Change the sentences into questions. Change questions into simple sentences.

Example

Julian zwemt in het meer.

Julian swims in the lake.

Zwemt Julian in het meer?

* Swims Julian in the lake?

1 Tanja luistert naar de radio.

Tanja listens to the radio.

2 Komt hij uit Amsterdam?

* Comes he from Amsterdam?

3 Alle foto's zijn zwart-wit.

All photographs are black and white.

4 Ken je haar goed?

* Know you her well?

5 Hebben alle Nederlanders planten in huis?

* Have all the Dutch plants in their house?

6 Ze eten elke vrijdag vis.

They eat fish every Friday.

7 Ze komt vanavond laat thuis.

* She comes this evening late home.

8 Begint de cursus om acht uur?

* Starts the course at eight o'clock?

9 De tafel staat in het midden van de kamer.

* The table stands in the middle of the room.

10 Ligt Groningen in het noorden van

* Lies Groningen in the north of the Netherlands?

Nederland?

Change the word order by placing a reference to time, manner, place or direction at the beginning of the sentence.

Example

Ze gaat elke week naar de bioscoop.
Elke week gaat ze naar de bioscoop.

* She goes every week to the cinema.
* Every week goes she to the cinema.

- 1 Kitty koopt fruit op de markt.
 - 2 Hij vertelt dat verhaal elk jaar.
 - 3 Ze wonen sinds twee maanden in het dorp.
 - 4 We gaan vanmiddag naar de tentoonstelling.
 - 5 Meneer Albers fietst altijd naar het werk.
 - 6 Mevrouw Van Dam eet een broodje in de tuin.
 - 7 Marlies gaat met de taxi naar huis.
 - 8 Het monster van Loch Ness woont in Schotland.
 - 9 Piet geeft vanavond een concert.
 - 10 Mijn vrienden gaan straks naar Nijmegen.
- Kitty buys fruit in the market.
He tells that story every year.
* They live for the last two months in the village.
* We go this afternoon to the exhibition.
* Mr Albers cycles always to work.
Mrs Van Dam eats a sandwich in the garden.
* Marlies goes by taxi home.
* The monster of Loch Ness lives in Scotland.
* Piet gives tonight a concert.
* My friends go later to Nijmegen.

2.1

Personal pronouns

Ik zie hem.

I see him.

Dutch, like English, has personal pronouns: three persons in singular and in plural. The first person is the person speaking (*I; we*), the second person is the person spoken to (*you*), and the third person is the one you are speaking about (*he, she, it; they*). As in English each person has a subject-form (*I*) and an object-form (*me*).

The Dutch personal pronouns are:

	subject			object	
	1st person	2nd person	3rd person	me (mij)	me
singular	ik	je (jij), u *	hij, ze (zij), het	I you he she it	me (mij) je (jou), u* hem haar het
plural	we (wij)	jullie	ze (zij)	we you they	ons jullie ze

* *U* is the polite form of *you*. This form is normally used to address strangers and older people.

Some of these personal pronouns have two forms. One of them is the official form (in the table this is placed between brackets), the other form is the one that is commonly used. The official pronoun is used only to emphasise:

Ze gaat naar huis.
Zij gaat naar huis.

She goes home.
She goes home.

Regular verbs: the present tense

Ik fiets.

I am cycling. / I cycle.

The present tense of the verb is used if you want to indicate that something is taking place at this moment. This form is comparable with the present continuous in English (*I am walking*).

Almost all Dutch verbs end in *-en* (*werken*, *vinden*, *fietsen*, etc.). In order to conjugate the whole verb (the infinitive), you have to take away the *-en*. This gives you the main part of the verb, which is called ‘the stem’.

	infinitive: <i>werken</i> (to work)	stem: <i>werk</i>
singular	1 ik 2 je / u 3 hij / ze / het	werk (stem) werkt (stem + <i>-t</i>) werkt (stem + <i>-t</i>)
plural	1 we 2 jullie 3 ze	werken (stem + <i>-en</i>)

So there are actually three verb-forms in the present tense: the stem, the stem + *-t* and the stem + *-en*.

The main verb loses its *-t* after an inversion of the second person singular (*je/jij*). This rule is not to be applied to the polite *u*.

Jij werkt.

Werk **jij**?

Werkt **u**?

You are working. / You work.

Are you working? / Do you work?

Are you working? / Do you work?

Now simple sentences can be constructed:

Ik werk.

Hij fiets.

Kom je?

Het regent.

I work.

He cycles.

Are you coming?

It is raining.

Note that Dutch, as a general spelling-rule, never has two identical letters at the end of a word. Therefore the stem of the verb *rennen* is *ren*.

Furthermore, Dutch words never end in *-v* or *-z*. These letters are always spelled as *-f* and *-s* at the end of a syllable. Consequently, the stem of *reizen* is spelled *reis*.
Look at section 3.1 for other spelling-rules.

2.3

Irregular verbs: the present tense

Ik ga.

I am going. / I go.

A few Dutch verbs do not end in *-en*, but are otherwise regular. In order to find the stem *-n* is taken away instead of *-en*.

gaan	(to go)	Ik ga.	Je gaat.	etc.
slaan	(to hit)	Ik sla.	Je slaat.	etc.
staan	(to stand)	Ik sta.	Je staat.	etc.
doen	(to do)	Ik doe.	Je doet.	etc.
zien	(to see)	Ik zie.	Je ziet.	etc.

A number of verbs are irregular in the present tense, such as *hebben*, *zijn* and *komen*. A list of these verbs can be found in appendices 1 and 2.

2.4

The imperative

Ga weg!

Go away!

The imperative is used to express an order, an encouragement, an instruction or an invitation. The second persons singular and plural can be addressed by this form. However, the second person singular is the most commonly used. Note that the verb in that case loses its *-t*:

Luister goed.
Ga door!
Kook de groente.

Listen carefully.
Go on!
Cook the vegetables.

In the imperative form with *u* the verb retains its *-t*.

Komt u binnen.

Come in.

2.5

Reflexives

Ik was me.

I wash myself.

Reflexive verbs need an object which refers to their subject. This is called the reflexive pronoun.

You will find the conjugation of the reflexive verb *zich wassen* (*to wash oneself*) below.

	<i>subject</i>	<i>reflexive verb</i>	<i>reflexive pronoun</i>	
singular				
1	Ik	was	me.	I wash myself.
2	Je / U	wast	je / zich.	You wash yourself.
3	Hij / Ze / Het	wast	zich.	He / She / It washes himself / herself / itself.
plural				
1	We	wassen	ons.	We wash ourselves.
2	Jullie	wassen	je.	You wash yourselves.
3	Ze	wassen	zich.	They wash themselves.

For the exercises below you may need a dictionary. Verbs can not be found in a dictionary in conjugated form. Look for the infinitive.

Exercise

4

Give the stem of the following verbs and translate.

- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| 1 rennen | 6 begrijpen |
| 2 wassen | 7 roepen |
| 3 vinden | 8 vangen |
| 4 doen | 9 worden |
| 5 zitten | 10 hebben |

Exercise**5**

Translate the following sentences and find the infinitive of each verb.

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1 Hij houdt. | 6 Wij brengen. |
| 2 Ik zoek. | 7 Hij moet. |
| 3 Zij lachen. | 8 Ruik je het? |
| 4 Het hangt. | 9 Het blijkt. |
| 5 Ze doet. | 10 Wat zeg je? |

Exercise**6**

Translate into Dutch.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 1 He cycles. | 6 They help. |
| 2 I think. | 7 He answers. |
| 3 We work. | 8 Are you laughing? |
| 4 She sees. | 9 I watch. |
| 5 They wish. | 10 Do it! |

Exercise**7**

Complete the form.

Example

Zich gedragen (to behave oneself)

Jullie

Jullie gedragen je.

- 1 Zich verdedigen (to defend oneself)
- 2 Zich vergissen (to be mistaken)
- 3 Zich haasten (to hurry)
- 4 Zich wassen (to wash oneself)
- 5 Zich verslapen (to oversleep)
- 6 Zich schamen (to be ashamed)
- 7 Zich bedenken (to change one's mind)
- 8 Zich herinneren (to remember)
- 9 Zich verstoppen (to hide oneself)
- 10 Zich verwonden (to hurt oneself)

Hij	.....
Je	.....
Ze	.....
Ik	.....
We	.....
Jullie	.....
Ik	.....
We	.....
Hij	.....
Je	.....

3.1

Nouns

de lucht

the sky

Nouns refer to persons, animals or things. Sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.3 will explain how plural nouns and diminutives are formed. Section 3.1.2 covers the spelling of plurals.

3.1.1

Forming of plurals

de wolken

the clouds

A plural noun can be recognised by its ending. The most common ending is *-en* (e.g. *wolk* – *wolken*).

Most other nouns have a plural ending of *-s* or *-'s*, the general rules for which are given below.

- 1 Write an *-s* behind the noun if the noun ends in unstressed *-e*, *-el*,
-em, *-en*, *-er*.

vader	vaders	(father)
hondje	hondjes	(small dog)

- 2 Write *-'s* behind the noun if the noun ends in one vowel:

-a, -i, -o, -u OR -y		
auto	auto's	(car)
hobby	hobby's	(hobby)

A limited number of nouns have *-eren* as a plural ending. The ones most frequently used are listed below.

blad	bladeren	(leaf)
ei	eieren	(egg)
kalf	kalveren	(calf)
kind	kinderen	(child)
lam	lammeren	(lamb)
rund	runderen	(ox)

zoon, zonen**son, sons**

The spelling-rules presented in this section apply to the spelling of nouns and adjectives and can also be applied to verbs.

The key to correct spelling lies in the pronunciation of vowels. As a rule, vowels are pronounced the same in the plural as they are in the singular.

Syllables can end in a vowel (an open syllable) or in a consonant (a closed syllable). A vowel in an open syllable is pronounced long (*la*), whereas a vowel in a closed syllable is pronounced short (*man*). In order to get a long sound in a closed syllable, the vowel should be doubled (*maan, maand*).

In words consisting of more than one syllable, the pronunciation of the vowel (whether it is long or short) is determined by the number of consonants.

If a word in singular has a short vowel, then the doubling of the consonant ensures the vowel is pronounced the same in plural.

man

man-nen

If a word in singular has a long vowel, only one vowel and one consonant are necessary in plural.

maan

ma-nen

If a word ends in two different consonants, the pronunciation will not be affected by the addition of *-en*. This also applies to words that carry a diphthong.

maand

maan-den

boek

boe-ken

In the table below, in which the three last letters of a word are shown, *c* stands for consonant, *v* for vowel and *dd* for diphthong (i.e. a combination of two different vowels). Syllables are divided by a hyphen (-).

<i>singular</i>		<i>plural</i>	
cvc (<i>man</i>)	→	cvc + -en	(man-nen) (man)
vvc (<i>maan</i>)	→	vc + -en	(ma-nen) (moon)
vcc (<i>maand</i>)	→	vcc + -en	(maan-den) (month)
ddc (<i>boek</i>)	→	ddc + -en	(boe-ken) (book)

The letters *-v* and *-z* only occur at the beginning of a syllable. Elsewhere they are spelled as *-f* and *-s*.

wolf	wol-ven	(wolf)
brief	brie-ven	(letter)
reis	rei-zen	(journey)

A small number of plurals is irregular: the vowel either changes from short to long, or the vowel changes completely. The most important ones are:

dag	dagen	(day)
dak	daken	(roof)
glas	glazen	(glass)
gat	gaten	(hole)
weg	wegen	(road)
schip	schepen	(ship)
stad	steden	(city)
slot	sloten	(lock)

Exercise 8

Make plural nouns.

1 oor	(ear)	11 meisje	(girl)
2 kies	(molar)	12 jongen	(boy)
3 nagel	(nail)	13 vrouw	(woman)
4 lip	(lip)	14 neef	(nephew/cousin)
5 neus	(nose)	15 opa	(grandfather)
6 oog	(eye)	16 kind	(child)
7 been	(leg)	17 baby	(baby)
8 vinger	(finger)	18 man	(man)
9 bot	(bone)	19 tante	(aunt)
10 tand	(tooth)	20 ouder	(parent)

Make singular nouns.

1 fabrieken	(factories)	11 straten	(streets)
2 kantoren	(offices)	12 straatnamen	(street names)
3 gebouwen	(buildings)	13 nummers	(numbers)
4 flats	(flats)	14 wegen	(roads)
5 huizen	(houses)	15 pleinen	(squares)
6 kamers	(rooms)	16 rotondes	(roundabouts)
7 hallen	(halls)	17 stegen	(alleys)
8 villa's	(villas)	18 lantaarnpalen	(street lights)
9 garages	(garages)	19 grachten	(canals)
10 woonboten	(house boats)	20 bruggen	(bridges)

3.1.3 Diminutives

een dorpje

a small village

Dutch can add a suffix (*-je*) to the noun indicating that the object or subject is small or little. The new word which is formed this way is called a diminutive.

jas	(coat)	jaasje	(jacket)
kerk	(church)	kerkje	(small church)
brief	(letter)	briefje	(note)

If this causes difficulties in pronunciation then one or two extra letters are added. The main examples of this are listed below.

1 In the following cases *-tje* is added:

a After a long vowel or a diphthong.

idee	ideetje	(idea)
la	laatje	(drawer)
koe	koetje	(cow)

b After a long vowel or a diphthong followed by *-l*, *-n*, *-r* or *-w*.

verhaal	verhaaltje	(story)
schoen	schoentje	(shoe)
deur	deurtje	(door)
duw	duwtje	(push)

c	After words ending in unstressed -el, -en or -er.		
	tafel	tafeltje	(table)
	oven	oventje	(oven)
	kamer	kamertje	(room)

- 2 Add *-etje* after a short vowel followed by -l, -m, -n, -ng and -r.
Keep the spelling-rules in mind (section 3.1.2).

vel	velletje	(piece of paper/skin)
bom	bommetje	(bomb)
man	mannetje	(man)
ring	ringetje	(ring)
bar	barretje	(bar)

- 3 Add *-pje* to all other words ending in -m.

boom	boompje	(tree)
riem	riempje	(belt)
film	filmpje	(film)

Exercise 10

Give the diminutive.

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1 trap | 6 tuin |
| 2 schuur | 7 deur |
| 3 balkon | 8 dak |
| 4 dakgoot | 9 drempel |
| 5 kast | 10 raam |

Exercise 11

Translate into English.

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1 tafeltje | 6 minuutje |
| 2 kaartjes | 7 bureautje |
| 3 snoepje | 8 sneetje |
| 4 kraantje | 9 pompje |
| 5 broodje | 10 bootje |

Make plural diminutives.

- | | | | |
|----------|----------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1 messen | (knives) | 6 bekers | (mugs) |
| 2 vorken | (forks) | 7 kommen | (bowls) |
| 3 borden | (plates) | 8 schalen | (trays) |
| 4 lepels | (spoons) | 9 bakvormen | (baking shapes) |
| 5 koppen | (cups) | 10 pannen | (pans) |

3.2 Articles

de stad, het plein, een huis the city, the square, a house

Dutch has three articles. One of them is indefinite (*een*). It can be translated to the English *a* or *an*. The other two are definite (*het*, *de*). They are equivalent to the English *the*.

3.2.1 The indefinite article

een kamer

a room

The Dutch indefinite article is *een*. It makes the noun which it precedes indefinite, unspecified.

Daar zit **een kat.**

There is a cat.

Dutch drops the indefinite article before professions and nationalities.

In plural the sentence gets a generalising character.

Zij is student.

She is a student.

Ik ben Nederlander.

I am Dutch.

Kinderen kijken veel tv.

Children watch a lot of tv.

het huis, de kamer**the house, the room**

Unlike English, Dutch has two definite articles: *de* and *het*. They specify a person, animal or thing. *De* is used for feminine (*v*) and masculine (*m*) nouns and all plurals, *het* is used for neuter (*o*) nouns in singular.

	<i>m/v</i>	<i>o</i>
singular	de	het
plural	de	de

Most Dutch words are ‘*de*-words’. It is hard to give rules for the use of *de* and *het*. However, a few can be given.

- 1 Diminutives always have *het*.

de stoel	het stoeltje	(chair)
de tafel	het tafeltje	(table)

- 2 If the infinitive of a verb is used as a noun then the article is *het*.

het eten	(dinner)
het leven	(life)

- 3 Words in plural always have *de*.

het huis	de huizen	(house)
de pen	de pennen	(pen)
het stoeltje	de stoeltjes	(little chair)

- 4 Persons have *de*.

de vrouw	(the woman)
de tandarts	(the dentist)

There is one exception:

het kind (the child)

To be certain you use the right article, it is best to consult a dictionary. A good dictionary indicates the gender by placing an *m* (masculine), *v* (feminine) or *o* (neuter) behind the noun.

Fill in the correct article. Use a dictionary if necessary.

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1 ... oma | 11 ... sport |
| 2 ... krant | 12 ... biertje |
| 3 ... ijsje | 13 ... geluid |
| 4 ... bussen | 14 ... werk |
| 5 ... huis | 15 ... fiets |
| 6 ... boek | 16 ... piano |
| 7 ... eten | 17 ... gitaar |
| 8 ... bureaus | 18 ... concert |
| 9 ... stoeltje | 19 ... kamer |
| 10 ... televisie | 20 ... winter |

3.3

Negations

Geen, niet

No, not

Dutch uses two words for negation: *geen* and *niet*. They are loosely comparable to the English negations *no* and *not*.

3.3.1

Geen

Ik heb geen geld.

I have no money.

Geen is used when the article is indefinite (*een*) or when there is no article at all. Put *geen* before the noun.

Ik heb een hond.

I have a dog.

Ik heb geen hond.

I do not have a dog.

Hij geeft haar bloemen.

He gives her flowers.

Hij geeft haar geen bloemen.

He does not give her flowers.

Ik ben niet gek.**I am not crazy.**

Niet is used to negate the whole sentence or a part of it: a verb, an adverb, an adjective or a reference to time, manner, place or direction.

In a main clause *niet* is usually placed directly after the combination main verb-subject and before the part of the sentence that is negated.

Ik werk niet.

I do not work.

De trein gaat niet regelmatig.

The train doesn't go regularly.

Mijn tuin is niet groot.

My garden is not big.

Ze gaat niet naar de stad.

She does not go into town.

Niet is usually placed after an object or a reference to time.

After an object:

We kopen het huis.

We buy the house.

We kopen het huis niet.

We do not buy the house.

After a reference to time:

Ze gaan volgend jaar naar Japan. Next year they will go to Japan.
Ze gaan volgend jaar niet naar Japan. Next year they will not go to Japan.

However, *niet* will never occur before subject and main verb.

Dat huis kopen we niet.

We do not buy that house.

Volgend jaar gaan ze niet naar Japan. Next year they will not go to Japan.

Negate.

- 1 Ik ga naar de stad.
- 2 's Avonds leest ze de krant.
- 3 We vinden de tekenfilm leuk.
- 4 De lamp is kapot.
- 5 Oom Harry maakt een lange wandeling.
- 6 De kat ligt op het bed.
- 7 Ik luister graag naar de radio.
- 8 We hebben een zwembad in de tuin.
- 9 Nederlanders fietsen veel.
- 10 Hij pakt het boek van de tafel.

3.4 Demonstratives

deze straat, dit plein

this street, this square

Dutch has four different demonstratives: *deze*, *die*, *dit* and *dat*.

Two of them are used for masculine and feminine nouns (*de*) and two for neuter singular nouns (*het*).

Demonstratives refer to the relative distance (close by or far away) between the person speaking and the object the speaker is talking about.

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
<i>de</i> -words (<i>m/v</i>)		
close (<i>this, these</i>)	deze	deze
far (<i>that, those</i>)	die	die
<i>het</i> -words (<i>o</i>)		
close (<i>this, these</i>)	dit	deze
far (<i>that, those</i>)	dat	die

Die school is groot en deze school
is klein.
Dat huis heeft een tuin.
Dit huis heeft een garage.
Die zijn grappig, deze niet!

That school is big and this school
is small.
That house has a garden.
This house has a garage.
Those are funny, these are not!

Note that if you want to refer to an object or subject in plural
which is mentioned in the same sentence, *dit* and *dat* are used.
In English this is translated by *they*, *these* or *those*.

Dit zijn mijn boeken.
Dat zijn aardige jongens.
Dat zijn grote planten.

These are my books.
They are nice boys.
Those are big plants.

Exercise

15

Give the plural.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1 deze kat | 6 die computer |
| 2 dit huis | 7 deze tango |
| 3 dat programma | 8 dit glas |
| 4 deze boom | 9 die buurman |
| 5 dit beeld | 10 dat ei |

Exercise

16

Translate into English.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Ze vindt die honden eng. | 6 Ze wil die scooter graag kopen. |
| 2 Deze fiets is erg snel. | 7 Geloof je dat smoesje? |
| 3 Dit huis is prachtig. | 8 Dat zijn vieze ramen. |
| 4 Die kinderen komen te laat. | 9 Ik vind dat gedrag niet normaal. |
| 5 Dat glas is te groot. | 10 Deze wegen zijn slecht. |

Translate into Dutch.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1 Those children are having fun. | 6 That is a good idea. |
| 2 I do not know those men. | 7 These are the neighbours. |
| 3 The library is not in this street. | 8 This time I win. |
| 4 This knife is sharp and that knife is blunt. | 9 Do you know that film? |
| 5 These questions are difficult. | 10 We prefer that house. |

3.5

Adjectives

groot

big

An adjective adds information to the noun. For instance, in the sentence 'That is a beautiful city.', *beautiful* says something about *the city*.

3.5.1

The inflection of adjectives

een grote stad

a big city

If an adjective is used before a definite noun, it is formed (inflected) by adding an *-e* in singular as well as in plural.

het grappige kind
de mooie jongens

the funny child
the good-looking boys

When a neuter noun has an indefinite article or no article at all, no *-e* is added in the singular.

een groot huis
koud water

a big house
cold water

noun		
de-word	<i>de</i> <i>een</i>	adjective + -e
het-word	<i>het</i> <i>een</i>	adjective without -e

Adjectives based on materials (e.g. gold, iron, wood) end with *-en*. They are unchangeable.

de gouden ring
een houten huis

the gold ring
a wooden house

Links (left) and *rechts* (right) end in *-er* when they are placed in front of the noun. Furthermore they are always written as one word.

mijn linkerhand
aan de rechterkant

my left hand
on your right

If an adjective is not placed directly before the noun, it is not inflected:

Het kind is grappig.
De jongens zijn mooi.

The child is funny.
The boys are good-looking.

3.5.2

The comparative

Deze stad is groter.

This city is bigger.

The ending of the comparative is *-er(e)*. Apply the rules for the adjectives to form the comparative.

dun – dunne
groot – grote
kort – korte

dunner(e)
groter(e)
korter(e)

(thinner)
(bigger)
(shorter)

Add a *-d* before the comparative ending if the adjective ends in *-r*:

duur	duurder	(more expensive)
zwaar	zwaarder	(heavier)
ver	verder	(further)

To form a comparison you use the construction *adjective + -er(e) + dan*.

Deze stoel is groter dan die.
Het bos is kleiner dan de stad.

This chair is bigger than that one.
The forest is smaller than the city.

If you want to indicate that two things or persons are equal, you use the construction *net zo / even + adjective + als*.

Hij is net zo groot als zijn vader.
Ze fietst even hard als haar broer.

He is (just) as big as his father.
She cycles (just) as fast as her brother.

3.5.3 The superlative

de grootste stad

the biggest city

The ending of the superlative is *-st(e)*.

Zij is het grootst.
Daar staat de oudste boom.

She is the biggest.
Over there is the oldest tree.

As in English a few comparatives and superlatives are irregular:

	<i>comparative</i>	<i>superlative</i>	
graag	liever	liefst	(like – prefer – prefer the most)
goed	beter	best	(good – better – best)
veel	meer	meest	(many/much – more – most)
weinig	minder	minst	(little – less – least)

Fill in.

1 geel	Een jasje.	..... jasjes.	Het jasje is
2 blauw	Deze jurk.	Een jurk.	De jurken.
3 zwart	Die broek.	..... broeken.	De broeken zijn
4 wit	Dat truitje.	Een truitje.	De truitjes zijn
5 groen	Deze .....jas.	..... jassen.	De jassen zijn
6 rood	Deze hoed.	Een hoed.	Die hoed is
7 paars	Dit overhemd.	Een overhemd.	Dat overhemd is
8 bruin	Deze schoen.	..... schoenen.	Die schoenen zijn
9 grijs	Een pak.	Het pak.	Dit pak is
10 kleurrijk	Een jack.	Het jack.	Dat jack is

Form comparative and superlative.

comparative

superlative

- 1 aardig
- 2 lekker
- 3 veel
- 4 dik
- 5 laat
- 6 druk
- 7 goed
- 8 gezellig
- 9 slecht
- 10 ver

Find a mistake in each of the following sentences.

- 1 De lucht is vandaag blauw dan gisteren.
- 2 In het gezellig restaurant kunnen jullie kleurige drankjes krijgen.
- 3 Die goedkoop winkel heeft lekkere broodjes.
- 4 In het mooie park staat een lelijke standbeeld.
- 5 Dure schoenen lopen niet altijd goede.
- 6 De buurman heeft een klein wondje aan het linkse oor.
- 7 Het meisje krijgt een goude ring.
- 8 Deze tafel hier is veel zwaer dan die tafel daar.
- 9 De Brugstraat is de tweede straat aan uw linker hand.
- 10 Zijn jongste broertje heeft een grotere hoofdje dan zijn oudere zusje.

langzaam

slowly

An adverb adds information to a verb or an adjective.

Hij loopt *snel*.

He walks quickly.

Het is een *erg* mooi boek.

It is a very nice book.

An adverb can also add information to another adverb. It then either indicates a degree or intensifies the other adverb.

De baby slaapt *bijna* nooit.

The baby hardly ever sleeps.

Ze loopt *erg* langzaam.

She walks very slowly.

Ik vind het *te* warm.

I find it too hot.

Unlike adjectives, from which adverbs are often derived, adverbs never change their form.

Most adverbs indicate a time, a manner, a place or a degree.

's Morgens eet ik *altijd* brood.

I always eat bread in the morning.

Ik herinner me het *levendig*.

I remember it vividly.

U gaat bij het kruispunt *rechtdoor*.

You go straight on at the crossing.

De baby slaapt *bijna*.

The baby is almost asleep.

A list of frequently used adverbs can be found in appendix 4.

Exercise**21**

Translate into Dutch.

- 1 My aunt lives downstairs.
- 2 Are you ready?
- 3 I usually eat bread in the morning.
- 4 There are too many people.
- 5 Is it really true?
- 6 He weighs very little.

- 7 We are nearly home.
 8 She never sleeps.
 9 They watch too much tv.
 10 He wants about 4 kilos of apples.

3.7

Possessives

mijn

my

There are several ways in Dutch to indicate possession of an object or subject. This section shows how.

3.7.1

The possessive pronoun

mijn vriend

my friend

Possessive pronouns cannot be inflected, except for *ons / onze* (this possessive follows the rules given for adjectives – see section 3.5.1).

<i>personal pronoun subject form</i>	<i>personal pronoun object form</i>	<i>possessive pronoun</i>	<i>independent possessive pronoun</i>
1 ik	me / mij	mijn	de / het mijne
2 je / zij u	je / jou u	je / jouw uw	de / het jouwe de / het uwe
3 hij ze / zij het	hem haar het	zijn haar zijn	de / het zijne de / het hare de / het zijne
1 we / wij 2 jullie 3 ze / zij	ons jullie hun	ons / onze jullie hun	de / het onze de / het hunne

Is dit jouw jas?
 We doen het op onze manier.
 Heb je ons adres?

Is this your coat?
 We do it our way.
 Do you have our address?

■ 3.7.2

The construction using *van*

een vriend van mij

a friend of mine

Van is used with the object-form of the personal pronoun.

Is deze jas van jou?

Dit huis is veel groter dan dat van
jullie.

Is this coat yours?

This house is considerably bigger
than yours.

■ 3.7.3

The independent possessive pronoun

de jouwe

yours

As in English, Dutch possessives can be used on their own (independently). This is achieved by adding an *-e* and using the definite article.

'Van wie is die jas?'

'Dat is de mijne.'

'Whose coat is that?'

'That is mine.'

■ 3.7.4

Names

Johns buurman

John's neighbour

Generally, if you want to use the name of a person in a possessive construction, simply add an *-s* to that name.

Wanneer is Piets verjaardag?

When is Piet's birthday?

Dutch never has two of the same consonants or vowels (except -ee) at the end of a word. Names ending in -s therefore get an apostrophe instead. This rule also applies to names of a foreign origin ending in -z or -x.

Hans' kamer is te huur.
Inez' hond blaft veel.

Hans' room is for rent.
Inez's dog barks a lot.

Names that end in a vowel (-a, -i, -o, -u, -y) are followed by -'. The apostrophe here is a substitute for the extra vowel you need to ensure that the preceding vowel is pronounced long.

Mario's accent is bijna weg.
We gaan met Tanja's auto.

Mario's accent is almost gone.
We're going with Tanja's car.

Exercise

22

Fill in.

- 1 Dat is hoed. (ik)
- 2 We gaan vanavond naar verjaardag. (hij)
- 3 Heb je paspoort al? (je)
- 4 vriendin gaat vanavond naar de film. (Peter)
- 5 pen ligt op tafel. (Anja)
- 6 Waar zijn boeken? (jullie)
- 7 Wat is lievelingssport? (u)
- 8 We gaan met auto. (zij)
- 9 Dit zijn ouders. (Nienke)
- 10 brommer maakt veel lawaai. (Alex)

Exercise

23

Translate into Dutch.

- 1 Is this one yours?
- 2 Whose book is this?
- 3 My bike has no brakes.
- 4 Your brother is too late.
- 5 They work a lot in their big garden.

- 6 Tony's new discman is broken already.
- 7 Do you have your sunglasses?
- 8 Her hair is very long.
- 9 That is our fault.
- 10 Our girl is no angel.

■ 3.8

Interrogatives

Wat zeg je?

What are you saying?

Interrogatives introduce questions. They usually take the first position in the interrogative sentence.

■ 3.8.1

Wie

Wie zegt dat?

Who says that?

The interrogative *wie* refers to persons only. It can be used with or without a preposition.

a Wie without preposition

Wie is used for persons, in singular as well as in plural.

Wie loopt daar?

Who is walking over there?

Wie kan ik helpen?

Who(m) can I help?

Wie zijn jullie?

Who are you?

b Wie with preposition

Wie can be used in combination with a preposition; place the preposition in front of it.

Met wie spreek ik?

Who(m) am I speaking to?

Van wie is dit broodje?

Whose sandwich is this?

■ 3.8.2

Wat

Wat doe je?

What are you doing?

- a *Wat* without preposition

Wat is used for things. In most cases it is like the English *what*.

Wat zeg je?
Wat betekent dat?

What are you saying?
What does that mean?

- b *Wat* with preposition

Wat changes into *waar* when combined with a preposition. Put the preposition at the end of the sentence or, if the sentence contains more than one verb, before the last verb(s).

Waar denk je aan?
Waar gaan ze over praten?

What are you thinking of?
What are they going to talk about?

■ 3.8.3

Welk(e)

Welke dag van de week is het? Which day of the week is it?

Welk(e) is often used before a noun. It is similar to *which* or *what*. Add an *-e* to *welk* unless it is used before a neuter, singular noun.

Welk programma vind je het leukst? What programme do you like most?
Welke programma's vind je leuk? Which programmes do you like?
Welke trein neem je? Which train do you take?
Welke kies je? Which one do you choose?

Waarom?**Why?**

There is another group of words introducing a question: interrogative adverbs. They cannot be inflected and must be placed at the beginning of the sentence.

Waarom gaat Kitty niet met de trein? Why doesn't Kitty go by train?

Wanneer kom je thuis? When are you coming home?

Waar ligt Groningen? Where is Groningen situated?

Hoe kom ik in Groningen? How do I get to Groningen?

Hoe can be extended in many ways. In a few cases they are spelled as one word:

Hoelang

How long

Hoeveel

How much

Hoever

How far

Hoe groot

How big

etcetera

Exercise**24**

- Correct the word order of the sentence. Start with the subject.
- Make a question using an interrogative instead of the underlined part of the sentence.

Example

De trein naar Groningen / over vijf minuten / vertrekt.

- De trein naar Groningen vertrekt over vijf minuten.
- Hoe laat / wanneer vertrekt de trein naar Groningen?

1 in de vakantie / Karina / graag / fietst

2 dit jaar / gaat / naar België / ze

3 met de auto / gaat / ze / waarschijnlijk

4 ze / alleen / gaat

5 gaat / naar de Ardennen / ze

6 ze / daar / blijft / twee weken

7 daar / haar vriend / woont

8 een week / logeren / ze / gaat / bij hem

9 dat / vindt / ze / heel leuk

10 ze / vaak / aan hem / denkt

Exercise

25

Translate into Dutch.

- 1 Where are my keys?
- 2 What are you making?
- 3 How many sausages do you want?
- 4 What are you waiting for?
- 5 Which do you want, this one or that one?
- 6 Why can't you sleep?
- 7 Who wants another drink?
- 8 Whose bag is this?
- 9 When are they ready?
- 10 Which cup is yours?

3.9

Mixed exercises Chapter 1, 2, 3

Exercise

26

Improve the word order of the following sentences.

- 1 Ze is in Groningen vorige week geweest.
- 2 We graag willen koffie.
- 3 Ik ga hem brengen naar het station straks.
- 4 Volgende week hij is jarig.
- 5 Ik ga met de trein altijd.
- 6 Elke morgen ik ga naar de stad.
- 7 Marieke vanavond op de fiets gaat naar het theater.
- 8 In Frankrijk we wonen niet meer.
- 9 Je kom morgenavond op haar feest?
- 10 De auto niet is kapot.

Find the mistake in the sentences below.

- 1 Het kleinste vogeltje pikt vlug alle de broodkruimels.
- 2 Dag mijnheer, hoe gaat het met u/vrouw?
- 3 Wie ziet hier ergens die groen jas van mij?
- 4 Aan uw rechtse hand ziet u het gebouw van de Tweede Kamer.
- 5 Die man zit elke avond aan dezelfde tafeltje.
- 6 's Avonds zij loopt niet graag op straat.
- 7 In welk straat woont de tandarts?
- 8 Hoe gaat het met jij?
- 9 Sommige mens eten elke dag aardappels.
- 10 Een klein vuurtje veroorzaakt een grote brand.

Translate into Dutch.

- 1 A lot of men are going to the concert tonight.
- 2 Where does your eldest brother live?
- 3 Which book is yours?
- 4 He knows Harry's sister.
- 5 We prefer to drink black coffee.
- 6 This classical music is simply better than your loud music.
- 7 She does not swim very often.
- 8 We do not have computer games.
- 9 The little chairs are in the largest room.
- 10 He makes a lot of noise in the quiet park.
- 11 How many eggs do you want?
- 12 We are not going into town tonight.
- 13 That is my uncle and this is my cousin.
- 14 My bike is in a small shed behind the house.
- 15 This tea is very cold!
- 16 My friend and I are going to Mary's party tomorrow.
- 17 We are the best team; we are a lot better than they are!
- 18 They never go to the cheaper shops.
- 19 Almost everyone is here now.
- 20 Why do I always forget that programme?