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About the Author

Margreet Kwakernaak is a language teacher and the director of the language school *Suitcase talen* in Almere, near Amsterdam, in the Netherlands. She is the producer of courses for Dutch as a Second Language, Dutch as a First Language, German, English, and Spanish. During her many years of teaching students of all ages and nationalities she has learned a lot about the needs of students and how to give them confidence to speak and write.

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Introduction

As life becomes more and more 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* can help. You'll not only find materials for basic communication such as greeting or ordering a meal, but also for telephoning or writing an e-mail. Some basic grammar provides you with the building blocks for your personal communication. *Dutch For Dummies* uses a clear and simple notation system for the pronunciation of each word, while pronunciation and accent come alive in the downloadable content 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* 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 to take 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** (to work):

Conjugation	Pronunciation
<i>ik werk</i>	ik vehrk
<i>jij werkt</i>	yay vehrkt
<i>u werkt</i>	uw vehrkt
<i>hij/zij/het werkt</i>	hay/zay/het vehrkt
<i>wij werken</i>	vay <u>vehr</u> -kern
<i>jullie werken</i>	<u>yuw</u> -lee <u>vehr</u> -kern
<i>zij werken</i>	zay <u>vehr</u> -kern

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 in the downloadable content that comes with the book.
- ✓ **Words to Know blackboards:** Memorising 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 memorise 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*. 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 organise 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 Organised

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 never to say, ten favourite Dutch expressions, 10 public holidays that you should not miss and ten phrases that make you sound professional.

Part V: Appendixes

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 in the downloadable content that comes with this book, so that you can find out where in the book those dialogues are and follow along. Finally, you'll find a mini-dictionary with both Dutch to English and English to Dutch formats. If you encounter a Dutch word that you don't understand or if you need to know the specific word in Dutch, you can look it up here.

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.

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 download the audio tracks and listen to a few dialogues. 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-der-lans vilt uw nay-der-lans praa-tern* (I’m studying Dutch, would you mind talking Dutch?).

Part I

Getting Started

The 5th Wave

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'Learning Dutch should be easy for you. A word sounding a lot like 'duh' seems to appear quite a bit.'

In this part . . .

You 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 some 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
- ▶ Pronouncing vowels
- ▶ Pronouncing Dutch diphthongs
- ▶ Trying the ‘ch’ and the ‘g’
- ▶ Pronunciation and stress
- ▶ Questioning and exclaiming

The 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 Know Already

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 recognise 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>
de arm	<i>der arm</i>	der Arm	the arm
de bank	<i>der bank</i>	die Bank	the bank
fantastisch	<i>fan-tas-tees</i>	fantastisch	fantastic
het glas	<i>het khlas</i>	der Glas	the glass
de hand	<i>der hant</i>	die Hand	the hand
de sport	<i>der sport</i>	der Sport	the sport
de tunnel	<i>der tuw-nerl</i>	der Tunnel	the tunnel
de wind	<i>der 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** (*der dee-khee-taa-ler tay-fay*) (digital TV) or **de megastore** (*der may-khaa-stoar*) (the megastore)! Some more frequently used words with small adaptations are:

de supermarkt (*der suw-per-markt*) the supermarket

de fitnessclub (*der fit-ners-klup*) the fitness club

Dunghlish

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 Dunghlish. For example, you might hear: **Ik ga dat even checken** (*ik khaa dat ay-fern cheh-kern*) (I'm going to check that) or **Het vliegtuig was overboekt** (*het fleekh-toaikh vas oa-fer-bookt*) (The plane was overbooked). The Dutch find it very difficult to write this kind of verb!

Some verbs that are used in sports:

fitnessen (*fit-ner-fern*) to go to a fitness centre

joggen (*jo-fern*) to jog

stretchen (*stret-shern*) to stretch

trainen (*tray-fern*) to train, to work out