



Learn Dutch: language courses, tips, and tools

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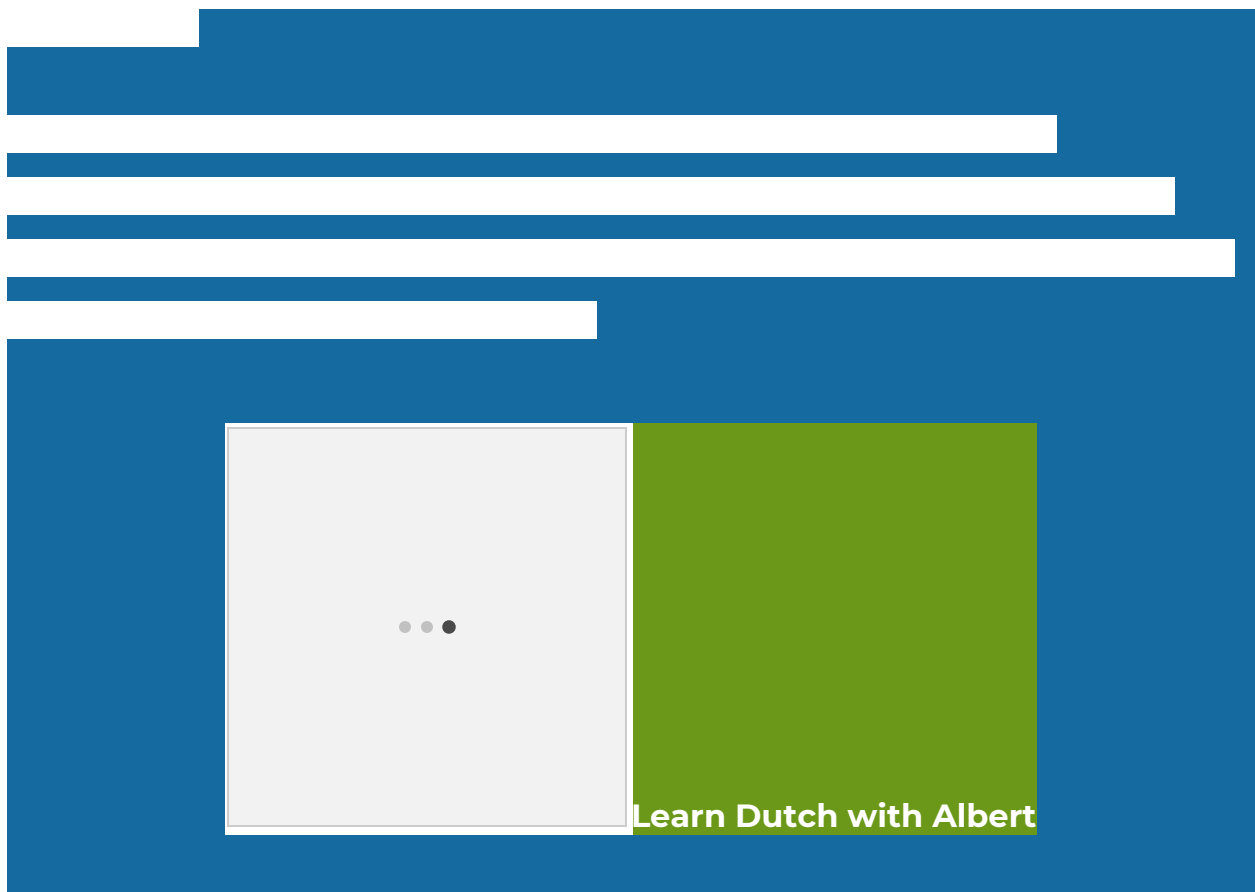
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One of the most effective ways to really feel at home in the Netherlands is by learning Dutch. There are so many options available, and this guide will help you to find the course or learning style that suits you.

Learning the language in the Netherlands will help you to settle into your new life more easily. It can help you to form new friendships and gives you more options in the job market. Day-to-day life becomes a lot easier, as well as getting around the country. It opens new opportunities in both your everyday and professional life.

There are many different ways to learn Dutch. If you learn best in an academic environment, there are plenty of language schools where you can follow courses. Others swear by **less traditional methods**. Whichever way of learning you choose, you'll soon be holding conversations with your new **Dutch friends**.

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Why Learn the Dutch language?

Around 24 million people across the **Netherlands, Belgium, Suriname, and the Netherlands Antilles** speak Dutch as a first language. There are also communities of Dutch speakers in the US, Canada, and Indonesia. Around **17 million** of those Dutch-speakers reside in the Netherlands. It takes **about 575 hours, or 23 weeks** to achieve professional working proficiency in Dutch, which makes it one of the 'easiest' languages for an English speaker to learn.

There are so many reasons to learn Dutch. Here are just a few:

- Employment prospects – Not only does being able to speak Dutch offer you an advantage over other expats in the job market, but being able to communicate with coworkers and clients will make your experience more rewarding.
- Integration – it's also a way to get to know your neighbors, join in local activities, and maybe even start a new hobby.
- **Citizenship requirements** – if you want to become a Dutch citizen by naturalization, you might need to take the *Inburgeringsexamen*, which tests Dutch to A2 (elementary) level. There are exceptions for those who already hold other diplomas or qualifications that certify their knowledge of the Dutch language.

Learning Dutch before moving to the Netherlands

Learning Dutch before you arrive in the Netherlands can make life a lot easier once you're here. You will get a headstart on learning the language, so while you're organizing housing, employment, and settling in, arranging lessons can take a back seat. If you already know some basic Dutch, these processes will be a lot easier.

International Language Schools

- **Language Study International:** LSI is an internationally renowned language school that offers courses in Dutch in London, New York, Paris, and Zurich. They provide individual lessons, classes in small groups, and in-house or in-company lessons.
- **Cactus Language:** Although their classes take place in Central London, Cactus Language offer private lessons in various locations. Get in touch for a quote.
- **Lernbrücke Sprachenunterricht:** if you live in or near Berlin, this language school has courses in an impressive range of languages, and Dutch is one of them.
- Local universities: Make sure to check the universities near you to see if they offer Dutch language courses. For example, the **University of Leicester** offers classes at several levels of Dutch.

If you want a more independent start to your language learning journey, there are also plenty of online resources such as **Learn Dutch Online** by the Language Academy, or apps such as **Babbel** or **Duolingo**.

Learning Dutch in the Netherlands

Once you're in the Netherlands, it becomes a lot easier to learn the language. For a start, there are plenty of people to practice with, even though it can take some work to convince Dutch people to speak Dutch with you. But in the end, it will help you to feel more at home.

Language schools in the Netherlands

- **Taalhuis** offers Dutch language courses across the Netherlands. They provide both group and in-company lessons and have locations in 8 different cities, including Amsterdam, Leiden, and Den Bosch.

- **Talencoach** is run by Albert Both, who is also known as Mr. Dutch Brainwash. His intensive courses run for 7 days in Amsterdam and are a unique way to learn the Dutch language.

[Check our Directory for more language schools in the Netherlands](#)

Learning Dutch for free in the Netherlands

- Some *gemeentes*, such as the City of Amsterdam, offer free courses to candidates who meet specific requirements (such as EU citizenship or whether you have completed the civic integration course).
- Many city libraries offer the chance to practice Dutch with other learners. In The Hague, you can visit Taalhuis, where you can borrow resources and talk with volunteers. There is also Taalcafé in Delfshaven library Rotterdam, which can help you to improve your Dutch skills.
- **Taal voor het leven** is an organization that focuses on difficulties that adults face with language. Basic knowledge of Dutch is necessary to follow courses. Still, if you have specific issues (such as with job applications or reading legal Dutch), this could be a useful free service.
- Many meetup groups are dedicated to helping non-native Dutch speakers to learn Dutch. You can find these on [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) or on Facebook.

Learn Dutch online

Another (often free) option for learning Dutch is to follow online classes.

- **Learn Dutch Online** publishes a free weekly Dutch lesson. Bart de Pau teaches Dutch through video lessons, and the website includes plenty of vocabulary resources as well as blogs about learning Dutch. There are also premium options which give access to a considerable number of grammar lessons.

- **The University of Groningen** has an 8-week online course that includes direct contact with a teacher via Skype. Courses require 8-10 hours per week and are available from A0-C1. They cost €250-€300 depending on your level.
- **Oefenen.nl** provides online classes that you can follow at your own speed. The lessons cover practical aspects of everyday life, rather than the intricacies of the language itself. A good option for situational Dutch if you're short on time.
- **Michel Thomas** offers purchasable Dutch lessons for beginner and intermediate levels of Dutch. These cost from €90-€152 and can take between 3 hours to 20 hours, depending on your goal.

Other handy online Dutch-learning resources

Courses provide in-depth knowledge, but the following list offers some more resources for complementing your Dutch language journey:

- Online dictionaries such as **WordReference**, **Linguee** and **Reverso**
- If you can never tell whether it's 'de' or 'het,' bookmark **Welk Lidwoord**. For more grammar, check out **taalthuis.com**, which provides lengthy explanations of almost every grammar topic imaginable.
- Podcasts are a great way to learn everyday Dutch. **Echt Gebeurd**, in which people tell interesting, exciting, or funny anecdotes, is very popular in the Netherlands.

Learn Dutch with a computer or smartphone app

For inexpensive, on the go apps, the most popular smartphone apps include:

- **Babbel**
- **Duolingo**
- Memrise

- AnkiApp
- Triplingo

If you're a technology-lover, why not discover the wealth of software that provides unique ways to learn? The following list contains some well-known software with Dutch language options:

- Tell Me More Dutch
- Rosetta Stone Dutch
- Instant Immersion Dutch
- Pimsleur Comprehensive
- Transparent Language

Learning Dutch outside the classroom

Learning from books doesn't suit everyone – many people find it much more rewarding to learn in a more practical setting. After all, it's people in your everyday life who you'll be talking to. There is no end of opportunities, whether you want to start a new hobby, insist on speaking Dutch, or just entertain yourself by watching Dutch language television. Insider's tip: go see movies in their original English-language version at the cinema, and read the Dutch subtitles. You'll still understand the film but learn plenty.

Dutch language cafés and meetup groups

There is a plethora of meetup groups in the Netherlands for those who want to practice their Dutch. For example, Leiden Language Exchange runs a weekly meeting, and there are numerous language café events in libraries across the Netherlands. Check Facebook to find Expat groups with more recommendations and activities.

Official language examinations and qualifications in the Netherlands

If you want to make your Dutch language skills official, here are some of the exams you might consider doing:

- *Staatsexamen NT2*: This is for people who have moved to the Netherlands and want to apply for jobs that require a certain level of Dutch. *Programma I* tests to B1 level and is for job seekers, while *Programma II* tests to B2 level and is for candidates who want to study at a Hogeschool or research university. Both programs assess reading, speaking, writing, and listening skills. It costs €180 in total (€45 per language skill). You can register for the exam on the DUO website.
- *Certificaat Nederlands als Vreemde Taal*: This exam is to certify Dutch language skills for those living abroad who wish to obtain a Netherlands residence permit or citizenship. It is possible to take the *CNaVT* at 5 levels: from A2 to C1. It combines reading, speaking, writing, and listening in three parts. There are exam centers **all over the world**, and prices vary from center to center.
- *Inburgeringsexamen*: If you want a Dutch residence permit or citizenship, it is also possible to take the *Inburgeringsexamen*. Some candidates prefer to take the *Staatsexamen NT2*, but the *Inburgeringsexamen* also tests knowledge of Dutch culture and only tests Dutch language knowledge to A2 level. If you want to take the exam before moving to the Netherlands, this is possible by contacting the Dutch embassy or consulate general in your current country of residence. Otherwise, there are 6 locations to take the exam: Amsterdam, Eindhoven, Rijswijk, Rotterdam, Utrecht, and Zwolle. The exam is in six parts and costs a total of €290.

Useful resources

Other useful resources include **Google Translate**, which helps translate short texts like signs and messages. You can also use its text-to-talk feature for pronunciation practice. For vocabulary, **Anki** and **Memrise** are handy flashcard apps – note down any new words you hear and review the cards in spare moments.

The best way to learn everyday vocab is to live like a Dutch person – make sure to download popular apps such as **Buienradar** to practice your weather-related vocab – and, accessorially, to avoid rain showers. Newspaper apps such as **De Volkskrant** can also keep you up-to-date with current affairs and discussion topics. Above all, the most valuable resource is other people. Real practice and real conversation are essential, so get out there and get learning Dutch.