Dutch Sentence Builder

Every Dutch sentence in six boxes. 19 sentence types, from your first sentence to long sentences with omdat, die and dat.

19
sentence types, each with its own boxes

76
exercises, with all the answers at the back

A1–B2
for inburgering, the Staatsexamen and daily life

1 Amir	2 moet	3 morgen	4 zijn paspoort	5 bij de gemeente	6 halen

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The seven main box orders on one page. Keep it next to you when you write.

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One page for each sentence type: only the boxes and one example. Make your own sentences.

Answers 65

The basic sentence

De gewone zin

A1 Chapter 1

A Dutch sentence is a row of boxes. Each word group has its own box, and the boxes almost always come in the same order. Learn these six and you can build most sentences.

The boxes

1 Subject who	2 Verb 1 conjugated	3 Time when	4 Object what	5 Place where	6 Verb 2 infinitive
Amir	moet	morgen	zijn paspoort	bij de gemeente	halen
Mijn zus	brengt	elke ochtend	de kinderen	naar school	
Ik	werk	vandaag		thuis	

Amir moet morgen zijn paspoort bij de gemeente halen.
Amir has to collect his passport from the gemeente (municipality) tomorrow.

Mijn zus brengt elke ochtend de kinderen naar school.
My sister takes the children to school every morning.

Ik werk vandaag thuis.
I'm working from home today.

Verb 1 and verb 2

Verb 1 is the verb that changes with the person: *ik werk, hij werkt*. In this sentence and with the time first (p. 10), it always goes in box 2. A second verb is the whole verb, as in a dictionary (*halen, doen*), and it goes in box 6, at the end. Moet, kan, wil and gaat are often verb 1.

Which boxes do you need?

- Box 1 and box 2 are always filled: *Ik werk*. The other boxes can stay empty.
- Time (box 3) comes before place (box 5).
- Boxes 5 and 6 are often swapped when the place is a location: *Amir moet morgen zijn paspoort halen bij de gemeente*.
- A pronoun like het, hem or haar as the object often comes before the time: *Ik bel haar morgen.*

TIP A question (p. 12) or a sentence that starts with the time (p. 10) changes the first boxes. The boxes after that stay the same.

Common mistakes

Wrong	Right	Why
~~Ik morgen werk thuis.~~	**Ik werk morgen thuis.**	Verb 1 goes in box 2.
~~Amir moet halen zijn paspoort.~~	**Amir moet zijn paspoort halen.**	Verb 2 goes to the end, in box 6.

Time first: inversion

Tijd vooraan: inversie

A1 Chapter 2

Dutch sentences often start with the time. Verb 1 stays in box 2, so the subject moves to box 3, right after the verb. This is called inversion.

The boxes

1 Time when	2 Verb 1 conjugated	3 Subject who	4 Object what	5 Place where	6 Verb 2 infinitive
Morgen	moet	Amir	zijn paspoort	bij de gemeente	halen
Elke zaterdag	doet	Fatima	de boodschappen	op de markt	
Vanavond	kookt	mijn man	pasta		

Morgen moet Amir zijn paspoort bij de gemeente halen. — Amir has to collect his passport from the gemeente tomorrow.

Elke zaterdag doet Fatima de boodschappen op de markt. — Fatima does the shopping at the market every Saturday.

Vanavond kookt mijn man pasta. — My husband is cooking pasta this evening.

What moves?

Compare it with the basic sentence (p. 8): *Amir moet morgen …* becomes *Morgen moet Amir …* The time jumps to box 1. Verb 1 stays in box 2. The subject moves to box 3. The object, the place and verb 2 stay where they were.

Watch out

- Count the parts, not the words. *Elke zaterdag* is one part, so verb 1 comes right after it.
- Only one part goes before verb 1. Not: Morgen Amir moet …
- When jij or je comes after the verb, the -t drops: *Jij fietst naar je werk.* → *Morgen fiets jij naar je werk.* With hij, zij and u, the -t stays.

TIP A place can also go in box 1: *Thuis spreek ik Arabisch.* The rule is the same: verb 1 second, then the subject.

Common mistakes

Wrong	Right	Why
~~Morgen ik ga naar de markt.~~	**Morgen ga ik naar de markt.**	Verb 1 stays in box 2. The subject goes to box 3.
~~Vanavond wil ik zien een film.~~	**Vanavond wil ik een film zien.**	Verb 2 stays at the end, in box 6.
~~Vandaag werkt jij thuis.~~	**Vandaag werk jij thuis.**	Jij comes after the verb, so the -t drops.

Time first: inversion

Tijd vooraan: inversie · explanation on p. 10

A1 Chapter 2

Exercise 1

Write each part of the sentence in the right box. Answers on p. 65.

1. Vanavond schrijft Priya een brief.
2. Zondag gaan wij de keuken schilderen.
3. Op dinsdag werkt mijn vader in Den Haag.

1 Time when	2 Verb 1 conjugated	3 Subject who	4 Object what	5 Place where	6 Verb 2 infinitive
1.					
2.					
3.					

Exercise 2

The boxes are mixed up. Write the sentence in the right order.

3 ik | 1 Morgen | 6 bellen | 2 ga | 4 de tandarts

5 in de bibliotheek | 3 Sanne | 2 studeert | 1 Elke avond

4 een nieuwe jas | 2 wil | 1 Deze winter | 6 kopen | 3 mijn zoon

Exercise 3

Start the sentence with the time in brackets.

1. Jij begint morgen om negen uur. (morgen)
2. Mijn dochter zwemt elke woensdag. (elke woensdag)
3. Wij gaan zaterdag naar de bioscoop. (zaterdag)

Exercise 4

Each sentence has a mistake in the word order. Write it correctly.

1. Vandaag de bus is te laat.
2. Morgen ik moet vroeg werken.
3. Vanavond wij eten bij mijn ouders.

Say it out loud. Scan the code to open the Parrot in the Dutch Daily app. Say your sentences from this page and hear them back in Dutch.