



## DUTCH FOR INTERMEDIATES

### Les 3: Past tenses in Dutch + conjugating regular verbs.

In Dutch, we have three past tenses, and there are several names for them. We have the imperfectum, perfectum and plusquamperfectum. Other words for these three terms are:

Latin term	Dutch term	English term
• Imperfectum	onvoltooid verleden tijd	past simple
• Perfectum	voltooid tegenwoordige tijd	present perfect
• Plusquamperfectum	voltooid verleden tijd	past perfect

Let me give you some examples of them. I will use the two regular verbs *fietsen* (to bike) and *rennen* (to run) to show you the forms, and we will start with the present tense.

#### Fietsen

1. Present: Ik **fiets** met mijn vriendin.  
I bike with my friend/girlfriend.
2. Imperfectum: Ik **fietste** met mijn vriendin.  
I biked with my friend/girlfriend.
3. Perfectum: Ik **ben** met mijn vriendin naar Amsterdam **gefietst**.  
I have biked with my friend/girlfriend to Amsterdam.
4. Plusquamperfectum: Ik **was** met mijn vriendin naar Amsterdam **gefietst**.  
I had biked with my friend/girlfriend to Amsterdam.

#### Rennen

5. Present: Wij **rennen** de hele middag.  
We run the whole afternoon.
6. Imperfectum: Wij **renden** de hele middag.  
We ran the whole afternoon.



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7. Perfectum: Wij *hebben* de hele middag *gerend*.  
We “have run” the whole afternoon.
8. Plusquamperfectum: Wij *hadden* de hele middag *gerend*.  
We “had run” the whole afternoon.

## I. The forms:

Now let's take a look at how we made the forms for the 3 past tenses:

- For the conjugation of the verb in the **imperfectum**, you first look for the *stam* (*the root*) of the verb,<sup>1</sup> and then you do the following:

**stam + de(n)** or **stam + te(n)**  
*ren + den* *fiets + te*

**-de** and **-te** are for the singular subjects and **-ten** and **-den** for the plural subjects. Why some verbs (like *fietsen* in sentence 2) get **-te(n)** and others (such as *rennen* in sentence 6) get **-de(n)**, I'll explain below.

- In the **perfectum** and **plusquamperfectum**, the *past participle* (*participium/voltooid deelwoord*) is formed as follows:

**ge + stam + d** or **ge + stam + t**  
*ge + ren + d* *ge + fiets + t*

Note that not all verbs get **ge-** in front of the *stam*. Scroll to the end of this lesson to see which verbs don't get **ge-**!

- In sentences 3 and 4, we use a conjugation of the verb *zijn* for the auxiliary verb, and in sentences 7 and 8 a conjugation of the verb *hebben*.

In this short intro, we are only going to look at the spelling of regular verbs. If you want to learn more about when to use **hebben** or **zijn** for the (plusquam)perfectum, go to lesson 4 of the Dutch intermediate course, or watch this video: [https://youtu.be/vVm\\_njBsu\\_I](https://youtu.be/vVm_njBsu_I)

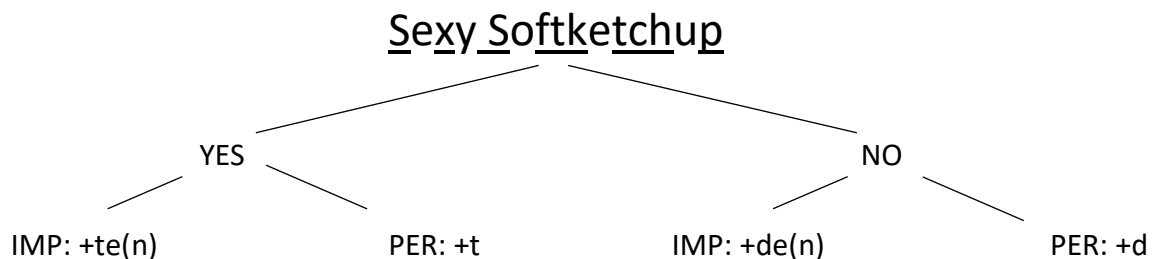
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<sup>1</sup> If you want to learn more about how to make the *stam*, watch this video: <https://youtu.be/UFLrX3cyioc>



## II. When to add a D or T?

The rule for adding a **d** or **t** is based on what I like to call the *Sexy softketchup* rule.<sup>2</sup> Look at the last letter of the *stam* (or the *ik-vorm* or in English the *root*) of the verb to see if it's in *Sexy softketchup*:



Whenever the *stam* ends on one of the *consonants* in *Sexy Softketchup* you add a **t**. In all other cases, you add a **d**. That's why the verb *fietsen* gets a **t** (root is *fiets*), and *rennen* gets a **d** (the root is *ren*). The **-de** and **-te** are for the singular subjects and **-ten** and **-den** for the plural subjects. It's important to keep two things in mind:

1. This applies to regular verbs. If you want to learn more about irregular verbs, go to lesson 5 of the intermediate course, or watch this video: <https://youtu.be/HAwNlOkTb4>
2. We have two categories of verbs that behave a bit strangely. Those are verbs with a **z** or a **v** in the infinitive that changes into an **s** or **f** in the *stam*. Think of *reizen* and *geloven* which become *reis* and *geloof* in the *stam*. However, the "underlying" stems of these verbs still end on a **z** and **v** (even though you don't write that), meaning that those letters are not in *Sexy softketchup*. The forms in the imperfectum and perfectum are therefore as follows:

Reizen > reis**de(n)** > gereis**d** (to travel)  
Leven > leef**de(n)** > gelee**fd** (to live)

<sup>2</sup> You can watch the video about this rule here: <https://youtu.be/VslsGrgaMVw>



### III. Verbs that don't get ge- in the past participle (*participium/voltooid deelwoord*).

Verbs that don't get **ge-** in the past participle in the perfectum & plusquamperfectum are starting with either one of these prefixes:

Prefix:	Example	Stam	Imperfectum	Past participle
Ge-	geloven (to believe)	geloof	geloofde(n)	geloofd
Her-	herkennen (to recognize)	herken	herkende(n)	herkend
Er-	erkennen (to acknowledge)	erken	erkende(n)	erkend
Ont-	ontmoeten (to meet)	ontmoet	ontmoette(n)	ontmoet
Ver-	veranderen (to change)	verander	veranderde(n)	veranderd
Be-	beloven (to promise)	beloof	beloofde(n)	beloofd

Now you probably also want to know when to use the imperfectum, perfectum, or plusquamperfectum. In this intermediate course, we will learn about when to use the imperfectum and perfectum in lesson 6, but not yet about the plusquamperfectum.<sup>3</sup> The plusquamperfectum will probably in the future be part of an advanced course.

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<sup>3</sup> Or go to the video here: <https://youtu.be/wVO94eFk0S4>