



Dutchies to be
Learn Dutch with Kim

DUTCH SENTENCE STRUCTURE COURSE

Lesson 1: the basic principles for the Dutch word order

As in most languages, in Dutch we have different kinds of sentences. You can for instance make a standard declarative sentence, a question, or an imperative. You can say something directly or indirectly (“indirect speech”), you can make a passive sentence, et cetera. In this course, I am going to teach you all possible Dutch sentences and their structures. But in this class, I already want to give you some basic principles of the Dutch word order, which mainly focusses on where we place the verb(s) in the sentences. Because depending on what kind of sentence you make, it can be on the first, the second, or the last spot of the sentence.

In a yes-no question or an imperative, the finite verb is always at the first spot, see:

1. Closed questions: **Woon** je in Den Haag? **Heb** je pizza gegeten?
Do you live in Den Haag? Did you eat pizza?
2. Imperative: **Doe** de deur dicht! **Ga** maar zitten! **Eet** smakelijk!
Close the door! Take a seat! Enjoy your meal!

If you want to learn more about these two sentence structures and how to use them, see lesson 3 and 4 of this Sentence Structure Course.

What’s considered more difficult by many students is where to put the verb in “declarative” sentences because the place of the verb(s) differ(s) in *main sentences* and *subordinate clauses*. But first, in short, what is the difference between the two?

A main sentence (*hoofdzin*) is a sentence that can exist on its own. A subordinate clause (*bijzin*), on the other hand, always depends on the main sentence, and therefore cannot exist on its own, see:

3. Two hoofdzinnen: Ik **ga** naar buiten. Het **is** mooi weer.
I am going outside. The weather is nice.

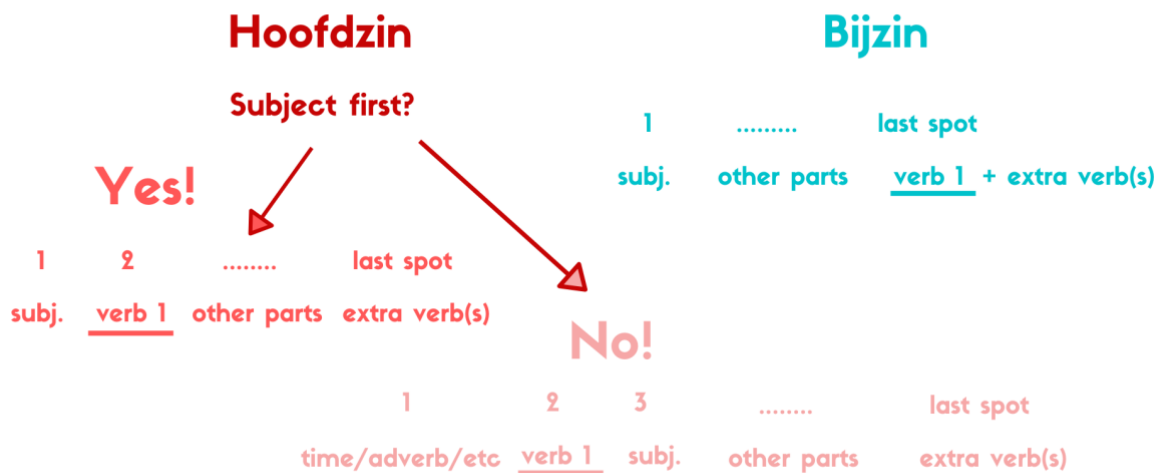


- 4. Hoofdzin + bijzin: Ik **ga** naar buiten, omdat het mooi weer **is**.
I am going outside because the weather is nice.
- 5. Bijzin: ...omdat het mooi weer **is**.
...because the weather is nice.

As you can see, the two **hoofdzinnen** can exist on their own (sentences 1 and 2), and the **bijzin** can exist when there is also a **hoofdzin** (sentence 2). However, to have only a **bijzin** (sentence 3) doesn't make any sense.

You might have noticed that the *finite verb* in **hoofdzinnen** is on the second spot and in the **bijzin** on the last spot. This is one of the main rules of the two different sentence structures. Another rule for **hoofdzinnen** is that the subject is always next to the verb. And lastly, that if there are more verbs, they go to the end of the sentence. See this figure for the basics of the word order:

Dutch word order



Overview of the course

In the rest of this sentence structure course, we will focus on different kinds of **hoofdzinnen**, and in the second part, we focus on different kinds of **bijzinnen**. In lecture 2, we start with “normal” or “declarative” hoofdzinnen. We will learn the basic **principles for the structure** because, in Dutch, we



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have a specific order of where we put different parts of the sentence. So, we are not only going to practice where we have to put the *finite/conjugated verb* and the *subject* of the sentence. No, we are also going to learn where other parts of the sentence are placed. And with that, I mean: *time, place, direct or indirect object*, and other verbs, such as an *infinitive* or a *past participle (participium/voltooid deelwoord)*, etc. Let me show you three examples also to clarify 4 of these grammatical terms with colors:

Ik	fiets	naar het strand.		I bike to the beach.
Ik	ben	naar het strand	gefietst.	I have biked to the beach.
Ik	ga	naar het strand	fietsen.	I will bike to the beach.

In the first part of the course, we're also going to learn about different kinds of **hoofdzinnen**. We will learn how to make **questions** (see examples 6 and 7), **imperatives** (see example 8), and the **durative** (example 9). We're also going to learn **conjunction words** for main sentences (example 10), we are going to practice with **inversion** (example 11), and we're going to make **passive sentences** (example 12).

6. Open questions: **Waar** woon je? **Wat** heb je gegeten?
Where do you live? What did you eat?
7. Closed questions: **Woon** je in Den Haag? **Heb** je pizza gegeten?
Do you live in Den Haag? Did you eat pizza?
8. Imperative: **Doe** de deur dicht! **Ga** maar zitten! **Eet** smakelijk!
Close the door! Take a seat! Enjoy your food!
9. Durative: Ik **ben** eten **aan het** maken. Ik **sta** eten **te** maken.
I am making food (2x).
10. Conjunction words: Ik ga vandaag niet werken, **want** ik ben ziek.
I am not going to work today because I am ill.
11. Inversion: **Vandaag** ga ik niet werken.
Today I am not going to work.
12. Passive: Mijn fiets **is gestolen**.
My bike has been stolen.



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In part 2 of the course, we're first going to look into the **fundamentals** of **bijzinnen**. After that, we will have three classes dedicated to different kinds of **conjunction words** for *bijzinnen* and a lesson about frequent adverbs. In the last three classes, we will learn about three other types of *bijzinnen*, such as **indirect speech** (example 13), **relative clauses & pronouns** (example 14), and the **om te + infinitive** construction (example 15).

13. Indirect speech: Ik **denk dat** je gelijk hebt.
 I think you're right.
14. Relative clause: Dit is **de man die** me altijd aan het lachen maakt.
 This is the man who always makes me laugh/smile.
15. Om te + infinitive: Het is nu te laat **om** nog uit **te gaan**.
 It's too late to go out now.