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Grammatical terminology #1: word categories

In this first part of "grammatical terminology," we will look at grammatical terms used for different kinds of *word categories* for learning grammatical terminology. In this extensive PDF, I will elaborate more on the different types of categories with some examples. You can also find an overview with all terminology used in the other PDF.

In this first part, I'll teach you the Dutch, Latin, and English terminology for different word categories, using the following example sentence:

*De mooie vrouw gaat altijd met de fiets naar haar werk, want ze wil niet met de auto.
The beautiful woman always goes to work by bike, because she doesn't want to go by car.*

I. Lidwoord (Ned.) / artikel (Lat.) / article (Eng.)

In Dutch, we have the articles **de**, **het** and **een**. In Dutch we use the term **lidwoord**, and the Latin term is **artikel**. So, in the example sentence, we use the article **de** three times, and I also added **het** for *werk*:

*De mooie vrouw gaat altijd met **de** fiets naar haar (= **het**) werk, want ze wil niet met **de** auto.*

The articles **de** and **het** are both definite. This means that when you use either of these, you define the word you're using. In Dutch we call this **bepaald** and in Latin **definiēt**. **Een**, on the other hand, is an indefinite article. In Dutch we call this **onbepaald** and in Latin **indefiniēt**. For example:

1. **De** mooie vrouw – **een** mooie vrouw.
2. **Het** boek – **een** boek.

With **de** and **het** you refer to a specific woman and book (that's already known in the context), and with **een** you refer to a woman and book that's not known or defined yet. You usually use **een** to introduce something into a conversation.

If you want to learn more about the Dutch articles, you can watch these videos:

- Introduction of **de**, **het** and **een**: <https://youtu.be/2Za8N7Klz1U>
- Categories of **de**- and **het**-words: <https://youtu.be/3f6ppki9o54>



II. Zelfstandig naamwoord (Ned.) / substantief (Lat) / noun (Eng.)

A noun is a word that can exist by itself; that's why it's called **zelfstandig naamwoord** in Dutch because *zelfstandig* means "independent". The Latin term is **substantief**. You can use **zelfstandig naamwoorden** for things, people, animals, geographical places, and names are also seen as nouns. In the example sentence the following words were nouns:

*De mooie **vrouw** gaat altijd met de **fiets** naar haar **werk**, want ze wil niet met de **auto**.*

Characteristics of nouns is that they almost always take an article: some nouns take **de** and others take **het**. This is not the case for names, we cannot say "de Kim". Other features are that from most nouns you can make a plural and diminutives (making it small). So, for example:

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Diminutive</u>	<u>Plural</u>
vrouw	vrouwtje	vrouwen/vrouwtjes
fiets	fietsje	fietsen/fietsjes
auto	autootje	auto's/autootjes

The terms in Dutch and Latin are:

<u>English</u>	<u>Dutch</u>	<u>Latin</u>
singular	enkelvoud	singularis
plural	meervoud	pluralis
diminutive	verkleinwoord	diminutief

I didn't give **werk** as an example, because **werk** (in the sense of "work", "a job") is a general/abstract concept of which you cannot make diminutives or plurals. However, **werk** also can mean "a work of art" and in that case, it's a concrete object, and you can make the word "werkje" and "werken".

III. Bijvoeglijk naamwoord (Ned.) / adjectief (Lat.) / adjective (Eng.)

An adjective is a word that gives information about a noun. In Dutch we call this **bijvoeglijk naamwoord**, and in Latin **adjectief**. I use the term **adjectief** a lot.

In our example sentence we had one adjective:

*De **mooie** vrouw gaat altijd met de fiets naar haar werk, want ze wil niet met de auto.*



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This article **mooi** provides us with information about the woman's appearance; she is beautiful. We can also use other articles like: **lange** vrouw, **dikke** vrouw, **grappige** vrouw, **vervelende** vrouw, etc. These adjectives mean: **tall** woman, **fat** woman, **funny** woman, and **annoying** woman.

When we put the adjective in front of the noun, we usually add an **-e**. The base of the adjectives I used were **mooi**, **lang**, **dik**, **grappig** and **vervelend**. However, sometimes we don't use an **-e**, for example:

1. Een **mooi**, **lang**, **dik**, **grappig** en **vervelend** vrouwtje.
2. De vrouw is **mooi**, **lang**, **dik**, **grappig** en **vervelend**.

- Learn more about declining adjectives: <https://youtu.be/oYbYiVq2QF0>

- Learn common adjectives: <https://youtu.be/2DjBQayso08>

You can also compare the characteristics of things with each other, and then we can make comparatives or superlatives from these adjectives. I will give three examples and I've written down the Dutch and Latin terms behind them.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Dora is dik .
<i>Dora is fat.</i> | Bijvoeglijk naamwoord (adjectief) |
| 2. Dora is dikker <i>dan</i> Bea.
<i>Dora is fatter than Bea.</i> | Vergelijkende trap (comparatief) |
| 3. Olga is <i>het</i> dikste .
<i>Olga is the fattest.</i> | Overtreffende trap (superlatief) |

Learn more about the comparative and superlative

- Video #1: <https://youtu.be/aGHsDnebilk>

- Video #2: <https://youtu.be/ZDwrY1ZFhAc>

IV. Bijwoord (Ned.) / adverbium¹ (Lat.) / adverb (Eng.)

An adverb (in Dutch **bijwoord** and in Latin **adverbium**) says something about the entire sentence, about a verb, about an adjective, or about another adverb. Some words can grammatically be an adjective or an adverb, but the difference is that an adjective only gives information about a noun and an adverb doesn't. An adverb provides information about everything else.

¹ The plural of the Latin word "adverbium" is "adverbia".



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For example:

1. De **mooie** vrouw gaat met de fiets naar haar werk. (adjective = info about *vrouw*)
The **beautiful** woman goes to work by bike.
2. De vrouw zingt heel **mooi**. / De vrouw kan **mooi** zingen. (adverb = info about *zingen*)
The woman sings **beautifully**. / The woman can sing **beautifully**.
3. Ik vind de vrouw **mooi**. (adverb = info about *vinden*)
I find the woman **beautiful**.

In sentence 2, **mooi** doesn't say something about "de vrouw" but about the verb "zingen", and in sentence 3 about the verb "vinden". When a word like **mooi** functions as an adverb, you can also not decline it with **-e**, but you CAN make a comparative or superlative!

In our example sentence, we have two adverbs:

*De mooie vrouw gaat **altijd** met de fiets naar haar werk, want ze wil **niet** met de auto.*

Other examples are:

4. De vrouw gaat **nooit** met de fiets naar haar werk.
The woman **never** goes to her work by bike.
5. De vrouw gaat **graag** met de fiets naar haar werk.
The woman **gladly** goes to her work by bike.
6. **Misschien** gaat de vrouw morgen met de fiets naar haar werk.
The woman **might** go to work by bike tomorrow.
7. De vrouw wil niet met de auto, **daarom** gaat ze met de fiets naar haar werk.
The woman doesn't want to go by car; **therefore** she goes by bike to her work.
8. De vrouw is **heel** mooi.
The woman is **very** beautiful.
9. We hebben vandaag **veel** gedaan.
We did **a lot** today.

I have made a couple of videos about different kinds of adverbs:

- Daarom, daardoor, daarna, daarvoor = https://youtu.be/Ko72d77zN_s



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- Heel & veel: <https://youtu.be/O44MCfWJCus>
- Graag, liever, liefst: <https://youtu.be/XIKx1KdEtr4>
- Niet & geen*: https://youtu.be/GvSlC_ZhPxs

* **Niet & geen** are words for *negation*. In Dutch we call this **ontkenning** and in Latin **negatie**.

V. Werkwoord (Ned.) / verbum (Lat.) / verb (Eng.)

A verb tells something about the action or state of the sentence. In Dutch we call this **werkwoord**, and in Latin **verbum**. I never use the word **verbum**, but just so you know.

In our example sentence we have two:

*De mooie vrouw **gaat** altijd met de fiets naar haar werk, want ze **wil** niet met de auto.*

Gaat and **wil** in this sentence both are verbs that are conjugated in the present tense. The infinitives (complete verbs) are **gaan** and **willen**.

There are also different kinds of terms for the role of the verbs in the sentence. I will list them below:

1. De vrouw **fietst** naar haar werk. (finite verb & main verb)
The woman **bikes** to her work.
2. De vrouw **is** gisteren naar haar werk **gefietst**. (auxiliary verb + past participle)
The woman **biked** to her work yesterday.
3. De vrouw **wilde** gisteren naar haar werk **fietsen**. (modal verb + infinitive)
The woman **wanted to bike** to her work yesterday.

The Dutch and Latin terms are:

English	Dutch	Latin
main verb	hoofdwerkwoord	**
finite verb	vervoegde werkwoord	finiet verbum
auxiliary verb	hulpwerkwoord	**
past participle	voltooid deelwoord	participium
modal verb	modaal werkwoord	**
infinitive	hele werkwoord	infinitief

** I've not added these terms because they are hardly ever used (and I NEVER use them).



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There is a lot more to tell about verbs. So, below I listed all the videos that you can watch per topic:

- Conjugating verbs present tense: <https://youtu.be/UFLrX3cyioc>
- Conjugating regular verbs past tense: <https://youtu.be/VslsGrgaMVw>
- Conjugating irregular verbs past tense: <https://youtu.be/HAwNlOkTb4>
- Hebben & zijn: <https://youtu.be/35qyPffZ70>
- When to use perfectum or imperfectum: <https://youtu.be/wVO94eFk0S4>
- When to use hebben or zijn with perfectum: https://youtu.be/vVm_njBsu_l
- Reflexive verbs: <https://youtu.be/OW2hS1s7GEA>
- Separable verbs: <https://youtu.be/ko4LDthj4Eo>
- Introduction modal verbs: <https://youtu.be/Y3g2xfrYUg>
- Moeten & mogen: <https://youtu.be/dOJLcTC33Bw>
- Willen & zullen: <https://youtu.be/EbCAhSFNMNg>
- Zullen & gaan (future tense): <https://youtu.be/wjXtFr62DC4>
- Zullen & zouden: <https://youtu.be/MJaraa2VdKl>
- Zouden + modale werkwoorden: <https://youtu.be/Pp4EBYP8HGo>
- Durative: https://youtu.be/WOkn_tQaH0Q

VI. Voorzetsel (Ned.) / prepositie (Lat.) / preposition (Eng.)

Prepositions are these very annoying little words that connect parts of sentences (word groups). In Dutch we call them **voorzetsels**, and in Latin **preposities**.

*De mooie vrouw gaat altijd **met** de fiets **naar** haar werk, want ze wil niet **met** de auto.*

In Dutch we have a lot of prepositions. Some say something about a position, some about a relation, some about a time, a direction, etc. Then there are also lots of verbs with fixed prepositions. I've made the following videos about prepositions:

- Prepositions for positions: <https://youtu.be/lIsJtRu5stl>
- Verbs with fixed prepositions: <https://youtu.be/1bkm7pkQaaw>
- 21 short videos about 20 prepositions: <https://youtu.be/n9kioR1kXZo>

I also made a free mini-course in which you can practice with all these prepositions:
<https://courses.learndutchwithkim.com/p/dutch-prepositions>



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VII. Voornaamwoord (Ned.) / pronomen (Lat.) / pronoun (Eng.)

There are several categories of *pronouns*. In Dutch we call them **voornaamwoorden** and Latin **pronomens**. I will list them here below:

- Bezittelijk voornaamwoord (Ned.) / possessief pronomen (Lat.) / possessive pronoun (Eng.)

In our example sentence, we had one possessive pronoun (Dutch = **bezittelijk voornaamwoord** and Latin = **possessief pronomens**). A possessive pronoun states a *possession*:

*De mooie vrouw gaat altijd met de fiets naar **haar** werk, want ze wil niet met de auto.*

Learn more about all possessive pronouns: <https://youtu.be/LtB-z6vpLLc>

- Persoonlijk voornaamwoord (Ned.) / personale pronomens (Lat.) / personal pronoun (Eng.)

Personal pronouns (**persoonlijke voornaamwoorden/personale pronomens**) can be subdivided into pronouns for the *subject* of a sentence and for the indirect or direct *object* of a sentence. In Dutch and Latin we call a *subject*: **onderwerp** (Dutch) and **subject** (Latin). The *indirect object* is **meewerkend voorwerp** in Dutch and **indirect object** in Latin. And the *direct object* is **lijdend voorwerp** in Dutch and **direct object** in Latin.

We didn't have any of them in the example sentence, but for instance:

1. **Zij** gaat elke dag met de auto naar haar werk. (subject)
She goes to work by car every day.
2. **Ik** geef het boek aan **hem**. (subject + indirect object)
I am giving him the book.
3. **Ik** geef **het** aan **hem**. (subject + object + indirect object)
I am giving it to him.

If you want to learn more about personal pronouns, you can watch the following videos:



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- Personal pronouns subjects: <https://youtu.be/hR9qHBek8y8>
- Personal pronouns objects: <https://youtu.be/GKyrB8lsPKg>

Important to know is that the words **er** and **het** are also personal pronouns! If you want to learn more about these words:

- ER #1: <https://youtu.be/CGFhy-0reqQ>
- ER #2: <https://youtu.be/qVfMLIopxXQ>
- HET as subject: <https://youtu.be/Ei3CmhP928g>

- Aanwijzend voornaamwoord (Ned.) / demonstratief pronomen (Lat.) / demonstrative pronoun (Eng.)

With demonstrative pronouns you demonstrate something or point at something. In Dutch we call them **aanwijzende voornaamwoorden** and in Latin **demonstratieve pronomens**.

For example:

1. **Deze** broek vind ik niet zo mooi, maar **die** daar vind ik wel mooi!
These pants I don't like that much, but **those** over there I do like!
2. **Dat** is een goed idee!
That's a good idea!
3. **Dit** zijn pepernoten.
These are pepernoten (particular Dutch small cookies for Sinterklaas).

Learn more:

- Demonstratives (1): <https://youtu.be/P9hSZMTGD80>
- Demonstratives (2): <https://youtu.be/tiI3hgQqnNg>

- Wederkerend voornaamwoord (Ned.) / reflexief pronomen (Lat.) / reflexive pronoun (Eng.)

We use reflexive pronouns with reflexive verbs. In Dutch we call them **wederkerende voornaamwoorden** and in Latin **reflexieve pronomens**.

1. Mijn broertje herinnerde **zich** mijn verjaardag niet meer.
My brother didn't remember (**oneself**) my birthday.



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- Ik heb **me** erg vermaakt vandaag!
I have really enjoyed **myself** today!

Learn more about reflexive pronouns: <https://youtu.be/OW2hS1s7GEA>

- Betrekkelijk voornaamwoord (Ned.) / relatief pronomen (Lat.) / relative pronoun (Eng.)

A relative pronoun introduces a relative subordinate clause, which provides more information about a person or thing. In Dutch we call them **betrekkelijke voornaamwoorden**, and in Latin **relatieve pronomens**. Examples are:

- Dit is de student **die** meer wil leren over grammaticale termen.
This is the student **who** wants to learn more about grammatical terminology.
- Het biertje **dat** ik heb besteld, smaakt niet zo lekker.
The beer (**that**) I ordered doesn't taste that good.

Learn more about relative pronouns: https://youtu.be/HHCdkWhD_YE

- Vragend voornaamwoord (Ned.) / interrogatief pronomen (Lat.) / question pronoun (Eng.)

With question pronouns you can ask open (WH-) questions. I usually just call these *question words*. In Dutch we say **vraagwoorden**. The Latin term (**interrogatief pronomen**) is hardly ever used.

- Wat** ga jij vandaag doen?
What are you going to do today?
- Welke** schoenen vind je het mooist?
Which shoes do you think are the most beautiful?
- Waarom** leer je Nederlands?
Why are you learning Dutch?

Learn more about question words: <https://youtu.be/BBe9vCH0T7o>



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- Onbepaald voornaamwoord (Ned.) / indefiniet pronomen (Lat.) / indefinite pronoun (Eng.)

These pronouns are not defining a specific person, object, or place, and therefore are called *indefinite*. In Dutch we call them **onbepaalde voornaamwoorden**, and in Latin **indefinieta pronomens**.

For example:

1. Heb je vandaag nog **iets** gedaan?
Did you do **something/anything** today?
2. **Niemand** houdt van mij ☹️
No one/nobody loves me ☹️
3. Gaan we nog **ergens** naartoe vandaag?
Are we still going **somewhere/anywhere** today?

Other indefinite pronouns are: *iedereen, iemand, alles, overal, wat, men, niets*, etc.

We also have the two *negation words*, **niet & geen**, but those are technically adverbs (**bijwoorden/adverbial**).

- Learn more about negation: <https://youtu.be/8eLPusKMBtU>

VIII. Voegwoord (Ned.) / conjunctiewoord (Lat.) / conjunction word (Eng.)

Conjunction words are words that conjunct two sentences. In Dutch we call them **voegwoorden**, and the Latin term is **conjunctiewoorden**.

They can conjunct a main sentence with another main sentence, or a main sentence with a subordinate sentence. The five most frequently used conjunction words for main sentences are: **want, en, dus, of, and maar**. We also saw **want** in the example sentence:

*De mooie vrouw gaat altijd met de fiets naar haar werk, **want** ze wil niet met de auto.*

You can see that **want** conjuncts "ze wil niet met de auto" with the previous sentence.



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There are many conjunction words for subordinate clauses (for example: **omdat, nadat, hoewel, zoals, etc.**), and there are also a couple of different categories, so if you want to learn more, you can watch the following videos:

- 5 conjunction words main sentences: <https://youtu.be/X0jG2LY5dbM>
- 8 conjunction words subordinate clauses: <https://youtu.be/FKS2kjAMCk>
- Conjunction words subordinate clauses for TIME: <https://youtu.be/tGTn2pYjF7I>

IX. Other

There are some other terms for word categories that I've never used before, so I just want to list them briefly below:

- Telwoord (Ned.) / numerale (Lat.) / numeral (Eng.)

These are words like: één, twee, drie, honderd, vijftigduizend, etc. In English we call them cardinals. And then there are numerals, for example: eerste, tweede, derde, honderste, vijftigduizendste. In Dutch we just all call them **telwoorden**.

- Wederkerig voornaamwoord (Ned.) / reciprook pronomen (Lat.) / reciprocal pronoun (Eng.)

In Dutch this is the word **elkaar**. Variants are: **mekander** and **mekaar**:

1. Ik heb ze aan **elkaar** voorgesteld.
I've introduced them to **each other**.
2. Ze kennen **mekaar** nog niet zo goed.
They don't know **each other** that well yet.