

Dutch Sentence Structure series - Part 1 of 4

Dutch Sentence Structure

Part 1: Normal Word Order & Inversion

What you will learn in this course:

- ✓ The basic building blocks of every Dutch sentence
- ✓ The correct word order: subject · verb · time · object · place
- ✓ Why Dutch verbs work differently from English verbs
- ✓ What inversion is and when to use it
- ✓ How to place time expressions correctly
- ✓ Practice exercises with answer key

LEVEL	FORMAT	PAGES
A0-A2	PDF Workbook	17 pages

Introduction

If you've ever struggled to form a correct Dutch sentence, you're not alone. Word order is one of the most common challenges for Dutch learners and also one of the most important things to get right.

The good news? Once you understand the basic structure, everything else becomes much easier. Most Dutch sentence types are simply variations of the same foundation.

This course covers two essential sentence structures:

1. **Normal word order** → is the standard Dutch sentence structure
2. **Inversion** → starts a sentence differently

PREVIEW — Dutch and You

How to use this workbook

Read each explanation carefully and study the examples before attempting the exercises. Don't skip ahead. Each section builds on the previous one. The answer key is at the end of this workbook.

Part 1 - Normal Word Order

1.1. The Foundation: Subject and Verb

Every Dutch main sentence needs two things: a subject and a verb. These are the foundation of the sentence; you cannot build a correct Dutch sentence without them. Everything else is optional.

SUBJECT	VERB
Ik	werk
<i>I</i>	<i>work</i>

1.2 The Full Sentence Structure

When we add more information to a sentence, Dutch follows a specific order. Learning this order is the key to speaking and writing correct Dutch.

SUBJECT	VERB 1	TIME	WHO/WHAT	WHERE	VERB 2/3
Ik	ga	morgen	mijn vriend	in Amsterdam	bezoeken
<i>I</i>	<i>am going</i>	<i>tomorrow</i>	<i>my friend</i>	<i>in Amsterdam</i>	<i>to visit</i>

I am going to visit my friend in Amsterdam tomorrow.

Important: Time comes directly after the first verb!

This is very different from English. In English, time often goes at the end of the sentence. In Dutch, time comes right after the first verb, in position 3.

English: I am going to the gym this afternoon.

Dutch: Ik ga vanmiddag naar de sportschool.

Part 2 - Inversion

2.1. What is Inversion?

Inversion means that the normal order of subject and verb is switched. This happens when something other than the subject comes first in a sentence.

The most important rule to remember:

The first verb NEVER moves. It always stays in position 2.

What changes is the subject's position. It moves to position 3, directly after the verb.

2.2 The Most Common Inversion: Starting with Time

The most common type of inversion happens when we **start the sentence with a time expression**. This is very natural in Dutch and used in everyday speech.

NORMAL ORDER	INVERSION (starts with time)
Ik ga morgen naar Amsterdam	Morgen ga ik naar Amsterdam.
<i>I am going to Amsterdam tomorrow.</i>	<i>Tomorrow I am going to Amsterdam.</i>