

DUTCH WORD ORDER

A one-page cheat sheet for beginners

Start by finding the **finite verb** - the conjugated verb. In a normal main clause, it occupies the **second sentence position**, which is not always the second word.

1. MAIN CLAUSES

THE FINITE VERB IS IN POSITION 2

first element + finite verb + rest

Ik woon in Amsterdam.

I live in Amsterdam.

Mijn beste vriend woont in Rotterdam.

My best friend lives in Rotterdam.

Remember: one position can contain several words. *Mijn beste vriend* is one sentence element.

2. MORE THAN ONE VERB

THE OTHER VERB(S) USUALLY GO AT THE END

subject + finite verb + middle + other verb(s)

Ik wil Nederlands leren.

I want to learn Dutch.

Wij hebben gisteren een film gekeken.

We watched a film yesterday.

Ik sta elke ochtend om zeven uur op.

I get up at seven o'clock every morning.

Separable verbs: the prefix goes to the end in a main clause: *sta ... op.*

3. INVERSION

WHEN SOMETHING OTHER THAN THE SUBJECT COMES FIRST

time/place + finite verb + subject + rest

Morgen ga ik naar school.

Tomorrow, I am going to school.

Na de les drinkt Eva koffie.

After class, Eva has coffee.

With jij/je: the extra -t normally disappears after the verb.

Jij werkt vandaag thuis.

Vandaag **werk jij** thuis. / **Werk jij** thuis?

4. QUESTIONS

YES/NO: VERB FIRST

finite verb + subject + rest?

Woon je in Amsterdam?

Do you live in Amsterdam?

QUESTION WORD: VERB SECOND

question word + finite verb + subject?

Waarom leer je Nederlands?

Why are you learning Dutch?

If the question word is the subject:

Wie woont hier?

Who lives here?

5. SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

THE VERB GROUP GOES TO THE END

linking word + subject + rest + verb(s)

Ik blijf thuis omdat ik ziek ben.

I am staying home because I am ill.

Ik denk dat zij Nederlands wil leren.

I think that she wants to learn Dutch.

Common linking words: dat, omdat, als, terwijl, hoewel, voordat, nadat, of (= whether).

6. CLAUSE FIRST & LINKERS

A SUBORDINATE CLAUSE CAN OCCUPY POSITION 1

Omdat ik ziek ben, blijf ik thuis.

Because I am ill, I am staying home.

Als ik tijd heb, ga ik naar de markt.

If I have time, I will go to the market.

Notice the inversion in the following main clause: *blijf ik, ga ik.*

EN, MAAR AND WANT KEEP MAIN-CLAUSE ORDER

Ik blijf thuis, want ik ben ziek.

I am staying home because I am ill.

QUICK FORMULAS

Main clause:

1st element + **finite verb** + ...

Question:

finite verb + subject + ...?

Subordinate clause:

linker + subject + ... + **verb(s)**

COMMON MISTAKES

Morgen ik ga -> Morgen ga ik

omdat ik ben ziek -> omdat ik ziek ben

Ik wil leren Nederlands -> Ik wil Nederlands leren

The finite verb controls the structure. Find it first.

THE 3-STEP CHECK

1. What is the finite verb?

2. Main clause or subordinate clause?

3. What occupies the first position?

Then place the remaining verb(s) at the end where needed.