

## Chapter 1

# You Already Know Some Dutch

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ The Dutch you already know
- ▶ Useful responses and wishes
- ▶ Reciting your ABC
- ▶ Pronouncing vowels
- ▶ Pronouncing Dutch diphthongs
- ▶ Trying the 'ch' and the 'g'
- ▶ Pronunciation and stress
- ▶ Questioning and exclaiming

**T**he best way to learn a language is simply to start. In this chapter you jump into the Dutch language. This chapter shows you the Dutch you probably know already, explains how to pronounce Dutch words and introduces you to some popular Dutch expressions.

## *The Dutch You Know Already*

Dutch is an Indo-European language. Among the families of Indo-European languages, Dutch, like German and English, belongs to the German group. Many words are identical with German words or look-alikes. Though English is not as close a relative as German, English-speaking people will recognise many words as well. These words either have their roots in the same family or belong to the growing group of internationally used words.

### *Close relatives*

The words listed below are the same in Dutch, English, and German and mean the same. The only difference is the pronunciation and the spelling. German nouns start with a capital letter.

<i>Dutch</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>English</i>
<b>de arm</b>	<i>der arm</i>	der Arm	the arm
<b>de bank</b>	<i>der bank</i>	die Bank	the bank
<b>fantastisch</b>	<i>fan-tas-tees</i>	fantastisch	fantastic
<b>het glas</b>	<i>het khlas</i>	der Glas	the glass
<b>de hand</b>	<i>der hant</i>	die Hand	the hand
<b>de sport</b>	<i>der sport</i>	der Sport	the sport
<b>de tunnel</b>	<i>der tuw-nerl</i>	der Tunnel	the tunnel
<b>de wind</b>	<i>der vint</i>	der Wind	the wind

## *Kissing cousins*

More and more English words and phrases are used in Dutch, in an area such as sports but also in daily life. The Dutch usually make small adaptations, generally in spelling. Some elderly people and purists dislike the growing influence of English but all those who make use of new products and innovations cannot avoid the English expressions. There are no completely Dutch words for **de digitale tv** (*der dee-khee-taa-ler tay-fay*) (digital TV) or **de megastore** (*der may-khaa-stoar*) (the megastore)! Some more frequently used words with small adaptations are:

**de supermarkt** (*der suw-per-markt*) the supermarket

**de fitnessclub** (*der fit-ners-klup*) the fitness club

## *Dunghlish*

As Dutch-speaking people are internationally orientated, the Dutch use a lot of English verbs and expressions, especially in sports, IT, and business. They adapt the verbs to Dutch rules, which results in a combination of Dutch and English, or Dunghlish. For example, you might hear: **Ik ga dat even checken** (*ik khaa dat ay-fern cheh-kern*) (I'm going to check that) or **Het vliegtuig was overboekt** (*het fleekh-toaikh vas oa-fer-bookt*) (The plane was overbooked). The Dutch find it very difficult to write this kind of verb!

Some verbs that are used in sports:

**fitnessen** (*fit-ner-fern*) to go to a fitness centre

**joggen** (*jo-fern*) to jog

**stretchen** (*stret-shern*) to stretch

**trainen** (*tray-fern*) to train, to work out

Some words from the IT world:

**deleten** (*der-lee-tern*) to delete

**downloaden** (*down-loa-dern*) to download

**inloggen** (*in-lo-khern*) to log in/on

**printen** (*prin-tern*) to print

English is very popular in management and business. Check the following verbs:

**coachen** (*koa-tchern*) to coach

**managen** (*meh-ner-ger-n*) to manage

**marketen** (*mar-ker-tern*) to market

**pushen** (*poo-shern*) to push

Find more about the Dutch way of conjugating English verbs in chapter 8.

## Talkin' the Talk

Don't think that the following conversation gives you an idea of how the average Dutchman talks. However, you might overhear a similar conversation between two young men in the street:

- Marcel: **Hi, hoe is 't? Hoe is je nieuwe job?**  
*hi hoo is het. hoi is yer nee-wer job*  
 Hi, how are you, how is your new job?
- Jacco: **Prima! Ik ben HR manager bij Lease Consult en leasing is een spannende business.**  
*pree-maa. ik ben haa-ehr meh-ner-ger bay lees kon-suhlt en lee-sing is ern spa-ner-der bis-nis*  
 Fine! I'm a Human Resource manager at Lease Consult and leasing is an exciting business.
- Marcel: **Echt waar? Lease Consult is een Major Account van ons!**  
*ekht vaar? lees kon-suhlt is ern may-ger er-kownt fan ons*  
 Really? Lease Consult is one of our Major Accounts!
- Jacco: **Ik kom je dus nog wel eens tegen in de Board Room.**  
*ik kom yer duhs nokh vel erns tay-khern in der bort room*  
 So we're bound to meet in the Board Room.
- Marcel: **Wie weet!**  
*vee vayt*  
 Who knows!
- Jacco: **En ben jij weer happy?**  
*en ben yay vayr heh-pee*

- Marcel: So, are you happy again?  
**Ja, maar Renate zit in een dip. Fulltime werken met een kid is nogal heavy en ze wil graag parttime werken.**  
*yaa maar rer-naa-ter zit in ern dip. fool-taim vehr-kern met ern kit is no-khal heh-fee en zer vil khraakh par-taim vehr-kern*  
 Yes, but Renate is in a dip. Working full-time with a kid is rather heavy and she wants to work part-time.
- Jacco: **Ik begrijp het. Is parttime werken een optie?**  
*ik ber-khrayp het. is par-taym vehr-kern ern op-see*  
 I see. Is working part-time an option?
- Marcel: **Op dit moment niet. Ze zitten midden in een reorganisatie.**  
*op dit moa-ment neet. zer zi-tern mi-dern in ern ray-or-kha-nee-saa-see*  
 Not at the moment. They are in the middle of a reorganisation.
- 

## Street language for Dummies



Young people in the street use their own language which changes everyday. This lingo is influenced by languages such as American English, Surinam, Antillean, Turkish, and Moroccan. Street language reflects the multicultural society, while trends from music (hip-hop) and TV give it an international sound. In the big cities you might overhear the following street language words:

<i><b>Dutch word</b></i>	<i><b>Pronunciation</b></i>	<i><b>Translation</b></i>
<b>nakken</b>	<u>na</u> -kern	to nick, to steal
<b>doekoe</b>	<u>do</u> o-koo	money
<b>flex</b>	fleks	OK, good
<b>loesoe</b>	<u>loo</u> -soo	away
<b>een chickie checken</b>	ernt <u>chi</u> -kee <u>cheh</u> -kern	to observe a girl

Family members, teachers, and bosses have adopted parts of the language of the youngsters they live and work with. You might hear them saying things like: **Wie is die weirdo?** (*vee is dee vayr-doa*) (Who is that strange person?).

Words from other languages have found their way in the **Van Dale Groot woordenboek van de Nederlandse taal** (the main dictionary of the Dutch language). Some 330,000 Surinam people live in the Netherlands and about 150 phrases from their language have found their way into the dictionary. Some funny ones are: **het okseltruitje** (*het ok-serl-troi-tyer*) (the sleeveless T-shirt) which literally means 'armpit T-shirt' and **de handknie** (*der hant-knee*)

(the elbow), literary translated ‘the hand knee’. Not only Surinam words, but also words from Japanese, like **tsunami** (*tsoo-naa-mee*) (seaquake), Belgian, like **onthaalouder** (*ont-haal- ow-der*) (host parent), Arabic, like **felouka** (*fer-loo-kaa*) (Egyptian sailboat) and Hebrew, like **bollebof** (*bo-ler-bof*) (chief of police) can be found in a Dutch dictionary.

## Useful Responses and Wishes

All language students get into the stage in which they understand a lot, but still speak poorly. People notice that you understand and they start talking to you, expecting a response. But you don’t know how to react! Learning by heart at least one positive and one negative response can be helpful in a difficult situation.

Learn a positive term like: **prima** (*pree-maa*) (excellent), a neutral one that you can use in almost any occasion without insulting anybody, like **interessant** (*in-ter-rer-sant*) (interesting), and have one ready in case somebody tells you something negative: **wat jammer** (*vat ya-mer*) (what a pity). Here are some examples of useful responses and when to use them:

- ✓ **Wat vind je van dit restaurant? – Prima!** (*vat fint yer fan dit res-toa-rant. pree-maa*) (How do you like this restaurant? – Excellent!)
- ✓ **Heb je zin om dit weekend mee te gaan zeilen? – Fantastisch!** (*hep yer zin om dit wee-kent may ter khaan zay-lern. fan-tas-ees*) (Would you like to go sailing this weekend? – Great!)
- ✓ **Zullen we even pauzeren? – OK.** (*zuh-lern ver ay-fern pow-zayr-rern. oa-kay*) (Shall we take a short break? – Okay.)
- ✓ **Dit zijn foto’s van Amsterdam twintig jaar geleden. – Wat interessant!** (*dit zayn foa-toas fan am-ster-dam twin-tikh jaar kher-lay-dern. vat in-ter-rer-sant*) (These are photographs of Amsterdam 20 years ago. – How interesting!)
- ✓ **Het concert is afgelast. – Wat jammer!** (*het kon-sehrt is af-kher-last. vat ya-mer*) (The concert has been cancelled. – Too bad!)
- ✓ **Mijn auto is stuk. – Wat een pech!** (*mayn ow-toa is stuhk. vat ern pekh*) (My car broke down – Bad luck!)

In case somebody asks you to do something, you may use the next positive answers:

- ✓ **Help je me even? – Natuurlijk.** (*help yer mer ay-fern. naa-tuur-lerk*) (Can you help me for a moment? – Of course.)
- ✓ **Kunt u mij om 11 uur bellen? – Geen probleem.** (*kuhnt uw may om elf uur beh-lern. khayn proa-blaym*) (Could you call me at 11 o’clock? – No problem.)

In case you need a negative answer, try the next safe ones:

- ✓ **Bent u morgen op kantoor? – Nee, het spijt me** (*bent uw mor-khern op kan-toar. nay het spayt mer*) (Are you at the office tomorrow? – No, I am sorry.)
- ✓ **Gaan jullie met ons mee? – Misschien de volgende keer.** (*khaan yuu-lee met ons may. mi-skheen der fol-khern-der kayr*) (Are you accompanying us? – Maybe next time.)

For special occasions use one of the following wishes:

- ✓ **Fijne avond.** (*fay-ner aa-font*) (Have a nice evening.)
- ✓ **Goed weekend.** (*khoot vee-kent*) (Have a nice weekend.)
- ✓ **Goede reis.** (*khoo-der rays*) (Have a good trip.)
- ✓ **Veel plezier.** (*fayl pler-zeer*) (Have fun.)
- ✓ **Beterschap.** (*bay-ter-skhap*) (I wish you a speedy recovery.)
- ✓ **Sterkte.** (*stehrk-ter*) (All the best.)

When drinking alcohol in company you can raise your glass, saying:

**Proost!** (*proast*) (Cheers!)

As your understanding of Dutch grows and you're making friends, conversations may become more personal. In chapter 17 you'll find useful responses to confidential or hilarious stories.

## *A Mouthful of Pronunciation Rules*

The key to pronouncing a new language is overcoming your fear of sounding awkward and never getting it right. Don't be afraid to sound silly and do not think that you will never succeed!

In the beginning you won't understand a word when people are speaking a language you don't know, but after a while you'll start to distinguish sounds and repeating patterns. Later on you will recognise some of the patterns, like greetings and how people start and finish a phone call. Most language learners start imitating the popular patterns, repeating them as well as they can. As soon as they get a reaction, this stimulates them to go ahead and try more complex phrases. At this stage, pronunciation becomes important. The Dutch will not understand you when they don't recognise the words you're trying to say.

When mastering a language it speeds up the process when you learn some basic rules about how to pronounce the written words. On the road, in the streets and in the shops you will not only hear but also read words and when

you know how people pronounce them, you can add them to your personal vocabulary. The following sections present you the alphabet and some basic guidelines for proper pronunciation.

## *Dealing with pronunciation in this book*

Throughout this book, you can find the pronunciation of a Dutch word next to it in parenthesis, which we call *pronunciation brackets*. Within the pronunciation brackets, we separate all the words that have more than one syllable with a hyphen, like this: **goedemorgen** (*khoo-der-mor-khern*) (good morning). An underlined syllable within the pronunciation brackets tells you to accent, or stress, that syllable. You'll find more about stress in the section 'Pronunciation and Stress' in this chapter.

In this book the phonetic script (the script that shows you how to pronounce a word) uses letter combinations that are the English equivalents of the Dutch letter's pronunciation.

## *Reciting Your ABC*

The Dutch alphabet has the same number of letters as the English and German alphabets, 26. However, many of the letters are pronounced differently. English-speaking people will find the Dutch G difficult to pronounce. You'll find some extra words to exercise.



Track 1 on the CD gives you the sounds of the Dutch letters.

The Dutch alphabet:

**A** ah      **H** hah

**B** bay      **I** ee

**C** say      **J** yay

**D** day      **K** kah

**E** ay      **L** el

**F** ef      **M** em

**G** khay      **N** en

<b>O</b> oa	<b>U</b> uw
<b>P</b> pay	<b>V</b> fay
<b>Q</b> kuw	<b>W</b> way
<b>R</b> ehr	<b>X</b> ix
<b>S</b> es	<b>Y</b> ehy
<b>T</b> tay	<b>Z</b> zet

## Pronouncing Vowels

Dutch has many vowel and diphthong (combined vowels) sounds, and some will be unfamiliar to your ear. We give the best approximation here, but listening to Dutch speakers will help you to get a more accurate picture. Check out Table 1-1 for the full story.

The vowels **a**, **e**, **i**, **o** and **u** can have both long, drawn-out vowel sounds and shorter vowel sounds. Luckily, there are some general rules that apply:

- ✓ A vowel is short when it's followed by one or more consonants at the end of a word or a syllable (a part of a word), as in *de dag* (der dakh) (the day), *geld* (khelt) (money), *ik* (ik) (I), *kort* (kort) (short), *druk* (druhk) (busy).
- ✓ A vowel is long when it's doubled, as in *gaan* (khaan) (to go) *geen* (khayn) (no), *ook* (oak) (too) and *uur* (uwr) (hour).
- ✓ A vowel is long when it's the last letter of a syllable, as in **dragen** (*draa-khern*) (to carry), **eten** (*ay-tern*) (to eat), **roken** (*roa-kern*) (to smoke), **juni** (*yuu-nee*) (June).

## The vowel a

The **a** has a short sound in closed syllables, that is if they are followed by one or more consonants at the end of a word or syllable. Try out the sound of these words:

- ✓ **de bal** (*der bal*) (the ball)
- ✓ **de dag** (*der dakh*) (the day)
- ✓ **het gras** (*het khras*) (the grass)



A single letter **a** in an open syllable, that is at the end of a syllable or word, is pronounced like a long, drawn-out vowel sound. Try out the sound of these words:

- ✓ **dragen** (*draa-khern*) (to carry)
- ✓ **de dagen** (*der daa-khern*) (the days)
- ✓ **de lanen** (*der laa-nern*) (the lanes)

Whether it occurs in a closed syllable or a long syllable, **aa** (double a) always gives that same long, drawn-out sound. Try practising the sound with these words:

- ✓ **gaan** (*khaan*) (to go)
- ✓ **staan** (*staan*) (to stand)
- ✓ **de laan** (*der laarn*) (the lane)

## Open and closed syllables



Words can be divided into parts or syllables. Syllables are essential when you are willing to spell and pronounce words well. Knowing how to divide words in syllables will speed up your learning process, as well as knowing how to distinguish an **open syllable** from a **closed syllable**.

A syllable is a part of a word and you can find it by clapping your hands when pronouncing the word. Each clap is a syllable. You can also have a look in your dictionary. A good one will show you the words divided in syllables.

In order to be able to distinguish an open syllable from a closed syllable, you need to remember the difference between **vowels** and **consonants**. Vowels are the letters that form the central sound in a word: **a, e, i, o, and u**. The other letters of the alphabet are called **consonants**. These letters accompany the vowels: **b c d f g h j k l m n p q r s t v w x z**.

Syllables that end with one or more consonants are **closed syllables**. For instance, both syllables in the word **paspoort** (*pas-poort*) (passport) are closed syllables.

Syllables that end with a vowel are **open syllables**, as the first syllable in the word **model** (*moa-del*) (model) or the first syllable in the word **euro** (*u-roa*) (euro).

The difference between open and closed syllables is the key to understanding the pronunciation of Dutch words: open syllables have long vowels, and, when only one vowel is written in a closed syllable, the vowel sounds short.

Also, when you start writing Dutch, understanding open and closed syllables helps you to know when to write double vowels and consonants.

## The vowel *e*

When followed by one or more consonants at the end of a word, the **e** has a short sound. Try it out on these words:

- ✓ **gek** (*khek*) (mad)
- ✓ **het geld** (*het khelt*) (the money)
- ✓ **de herfst** (*der hehrfst*) (autumn)

When the **e** is at the end of a syllable you pronounce it like a long, drawn-out vowel sound. Try the sound in these words:

- ✓ **geven** (*khay-fern*) (to give)
- ✓ **eten** (*ay-tern*) (to eat)
- ✓ **beter** (*bay-ter*) (better)

Note that when in an unstressed syllable, the **e** sounds like the English vowel sound in *sister*. It is transcribed *-er*.

Whether or not it's a long syllable or a closed syllable, **ee** always gives a long sound. Try it, practising on these words:

- ✓ **geen** (*khayn*) (no)
- ✓ **geel** (*khayl*) (yellow)
- ✓ **de neef** (*der nayf*) (the nephew/cousin)

## The vowel *i*

When followed by one or two more consonants at the end of a word or syllable, **i** has a short vowel sound. Try it out on these words:

- ✓ **ik** (*ik*) (I)
- ✓ **het ding** (*het ding*) (the thing)
- ✓ **dicht** (*dikht*) (closed)

When you find the **i** at the end of a word or syllable, you pronounce it like a long, drawn-out vowel sound. Try practising the sound on these words:

- ✓ **juni** (*juw-nee*) (June)
- ✓ **de activiteit** (*der ak-tee-vee-tayt*) (the activity)

As we have seen, the four vowels **a**, **e**, **u**, **o** are sometime doubled (**aa**, **ee**, **uu**, **oo**) to spell the long version of the vowel. Now you might suppose that the long **i** will be written as **ii**. Sadly, the Dutch happen to be less rational than you are: they don't spell **ii**, but instead they spell **ie**.

- ✓ **drie** (*dree*) (three)
- ✓ **het bier** (*het beer*) (the beer)
- ✓ **de fiets** (*der feets*) (the bike)

## The vowel o

When followed by one, two or more consonants at the end of a syllable the **o** has a short sound. Try to pronounce these words:

- ✓ **op** (*op*) (on)
- ✓ **kort** (*kort*) (short)
- ✓ **de pot** (*der pot*) (the pot)

When you find **o** at the end of a word or a syllable, you pronounce it like a long vowel sound. Try practising the sound on these words:

- ✓ **boven** (*boa-fern*) (above)
- ✓ **roken** (*roa-kern*) (to smoke)
- ✓ **het document** (*het doa-kuw-ment*) (the document)

**Oo** is always a long vowel, as in the next words:

- ✓ **ook** (*oak*) (also)
- ✓ **mooi** (*mooy*) (beautiful)
- ✓ **de persoon** (*der per-soan*) (the person)

## The vowel u

When followed by one more consonants at the end of a syllable or word the **u** has a short sound. Try the next list of examples:

- ✓ **dun** (*duhn*) (thin)
- ✓ **de hulp** (*der huhlp*) (the help)
- ✓ **de club** (*der klup*) (the club)

When you find the **u** in a syllable that ends in a vowel, you pronounce the **u** like a long, drawn-out vowel sound. Try out the sound practising on these words:

- ✓ **u** (*uw*) (you, formal)
- ✓ **de studie** (*der stuw-dee*) (the studies)
- ✓ **juni** (*juw-nee*) (June)

**Uu** always gives a long vowel sound. Try to pronounce these **uu** words:

- ✓ **het uur** (*het uur*) (the hour)
- ✓ **het excuus** (*het ek-skuws*) (the excuse)
- ✓ **het kostuum** (*het kos-tuwm*) (the costume)

## Pronouncing Dutch Diphthongs

Diphthongs are combinations of two vowels in one syllable. Dutch has a lot of them, and, depending on your native language, some will be difficult for you as you don't know them in your own language. Different sounds create different words, so Dutch people might not understand you if you don't know how to pronounce the sounds. Observe how the Dutch do and ask them to help you!

### Pronouncing the diphthongs ei and ij

The diphthong **ei** is a sound which does not occur in English, nor in any other major European language, and it may be a bit hard to pronounce. You will come close if you take the sound of *ay* in English *day*. Try to open your mouth a little bit more than you would do in English. Some examples of this sound:

- ✓ **het ei** (*het ay*) (the egg)
- ✓ **mei** (*may*) (may)
- ✓ **klein** (*klayn*) (small)

The same sound is represented with the letter combination **ij**. At the beginning of a word or in an open syllable, **ij** sounds exactly the same as **ei**:

- ✓ **mij** (*may*) (me)
- ✓ **mijn** (*mayn*) (my)
- ✓ **ijs** (*ays*) (ice)

When **ij** occurs at the end of a word in a closed syllable, the sound is reduced and you pronounce it like *er* in English *her*:

- ✓ **heerlijk** (*hayr-lerk*) (delicious)
- ✓ **makkelijk** (*ma-ker-lerk*) (easy)
- ✓ **moeilijk** (*mooy-lerk*) (difficult)

## The diphthong *oe*

The diphthong **oe** sounds like the letter combination *oo* in English *too*. Try to pronounce these examples of **oe**:

- ✓ **hoe** (*hoo*) (how)
- ✓ **het boek** (*het book*) (the book)
- ✓ **genoeg** (*kher-nookh*) (enough)
- ✓ **de broer** (*der broor*) (the brother)

## The diphthongs *ou* and *au*

The letter combinations **ou** and **au** are two ways of spelling one and the same sound. This sound is fairly easy to produce: just like *ow* in English *cow*:

- ✓ **gauw** (*khow*) (soon)
- ✓ **blauw** (*blow*) (blue)
- ✓ **lauw** (*low*) (lukewarm)
- ✓ **oud** (*owt*) (old)
- ✓ **bouwen** (*bow-ern*) (to build)
- ✓ **trouwen** (*trow-ern*) (to marry)

The diphthong eu

The diphthong **eu** is another funny Dutch diphtong that doesn't occur in most European languages. It approximates the sound of the letter *u* in English *pure*. Try to pronounce the diphthong **eu** a bit more in the front of your mouth than you would do in English:

- ✓ **de keuken** (*der ku-kern*) (the kitchen)
- ✓ **de neus** (*der nus*) (the nose)
- ✓ **de sleutel** (*der slu-terl*) (the key)

The diphthong ui

Another diphtong belonging to the Dutch language is **ui**. We won't even bother to compare it to any existing sound in English. The sound approximates that of 'eu' in the French 'peu'. Take in mind the letter combination *oai* and don't move your lips while breathing out.

- ✓ **buiten** (*boai-tern*) (outside)
- ✓ **vuil** (*voail*) (dirty)
- ✓ **juist** (*voaist*) (right)

For many people it's hard to hear the difference between **eu** and **ui**, and it's even harder to actually produce these sounds. Listening intensively to the CD accompanying this book may help. Also, in case you happen to meet the Dutch football legend Johan Cruijff, ask him to demonstrate the **ui**-sound featured in his name:

**Johan Cruijff** (*yoa-han kroaif*) Johan Cruijff

When you have finally mastered the sound, celebrate it by ordering a hamburger with **ui** (*oai*) (onion) on it.

Table 1-1 Pronouncing Vowels and Diphthongs				
Letter	Pronunciation	Symbol	Example	Phonetics
a	between <i>u</i> as in <i>cup</i> and <i>a</i> as in <i>cat</i>	<i>a</i>	<b>dag</b>	<i>dakh</i>
aa	<i>ar</i> as in <i>market</i>	<i>aa</i>	<b>gaan</b>	<i>chaan</i>
i	<i>i</i> as in <i>b/t</i>	<i>i</i>	<b>in</b>	<i>in</i>
ie	<i>ee</i> as in <i>seen</i>	<i>ee</i>	<b>drie</b>	<i>dree</i>

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Pronunciation</b>	<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>
<b>e</b>	<i>e</i> as in <i>red</i>	<i>e</i>	<b>bed</b>	<i>bet</i>
<b>ee</b>	<i>ay</i> as in <i>say</i>	<i>ay</i>	<b>bleek</b>	<i>blayk</i>
<b>ei</b>	<i>ay</i> as in <i>day</i>	<i>ay</i>	<b>klein</b>	<i>klayn</i>
<b>ij</b>	<i>er</i> as in <i>mother</i> or <i>ay</i> as in <i>day</i>	<i>er</i> <i>ay</i>	<b>lelijk</b> <b>wij</b>	<i>lay-lerk</i> <i>way</i>
<b>o</b>	<i>o</i> as in <i>not</i>	<i>o</i>	<b>pot</b>	<i>pot</i>
<b>oe</b>	<i>oo</i> as in <i>too</i>	<i>oo</i>	<b>hoe</b>	<i>hoo</i>
<b>ou/au</b>	<i>ow</i> as in <i>now</i>	<i>ow</i>	<b>koud, blauw</b>	<i>kowt, blow</i>
<b>oo</b>	<i>oa</i> as in <i>boat</i>	<i>oo</i>	<b>ook</b>	<i>oak</i>
<b>eu</b>	<i>u</i> as in <i>pure</i>	<i>u</i>	<b>keuken</b>	<i>ku-ken</i>
<b>u</b>	<i>u</i> as in <i>fur</i>	<i>uh</i>	<b>bus</b>	<i>uhs</i>
<b>u, uu</b>	<i>u</i> as in <i>new</i>	<i>uw</i>	<b>nu, muur</b>	<i>nuw, muwr</i>
<b>ui</b>	no English equivalent	<i>oai</i>	<b>buiten</b>	<i>boai-ten</i>

## Pronouncing Consonants

Consonants tend to sound the same in English and Dutch. You will soon master any few differences that you might find. Table 1-2 gives you the low-down.

<b>Table 1-2 Pronouncing Dutch Consonants</b>				
<b>Letter</b>	<b>Pronunciation</b>	<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>
<b>b c f h k l m</b> <b>n p q r x y z</b>	as in English			
<b>ch</b>	<i>ch</i> as in <i>loch</i>	<i>kh</i>	<b>nacht</b>	<i>nakht</i>
<b>d</b>	<i>d</i> as the English <i>t</i> at the end of a word	<i>d/t</i>	<b>bed</b>	<i>bet</i>
<b>g</b>	<i>ch</i> as in <i>loch</i> rarely <i>zh</i> as in <i>pleasure</i>	<i>kh</i> <i>zh</i>	<b>groot</b> <b>genre</b>	<i>khroat</i> <i>zhen-rer</i>
<b>j</b>	<i>y</i> as in <i>yes</i>	<i>y</i>	<b>ja</b>	<i>ya</i>

*continued*

Table 1-2 (continued)

Letter	Pronunciation	Symbol	Example	Phonetics
<b>r</b>	<i>r</i> rolled or in the back of the mouth	<i>r</i>	<b>rijst</b>	<i>reyst</i>
<b>s</b>	always hard as in pass	<i>s</i>	<b>stop</b>	<i>stop</i>
<b>sch</b>	<i>s</i> followed by <i>ch</i> as in <i>loch</i>	<i>skh</i>	<b>schaal</b>	<i>skhaal</i>
<b>v</b>	as an English <i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<b>vader</b>	<i>faa-der</i>
<b>w</b>	as an English <i>v</i>	<i>v</i>	<b>water</b>	<i>vaa-ter</i>

There is a great variety in the pronunciation of the letter **r** among Dutch speakers. People from Belgium and the northern provinces use a ‘rolling *r*’ like in Italian, others use a ‘throat *r*’ like in French, and yet others employ an ‘American *r*’. Many people mix them up, beginning words with a ‘rolling *r*’, and ending them with a ‘throat *r*’.

## Pronouncing the Dutch ‘*g*’

Now we get to a major obstacle for most foreign language learners: the letter **g**. The corresponding sound doesn’t exist in English, although other languages like French and Arab do employ it. Here is the key to the **g**: make it sound like *kh*. Try to prolongue a **k** in order to realise this guttural sound which happens to be a basic characteristic of Dutch.

- ✓ **gaan** (*khaan*) (to go)
- ✓ **geen** (*khayn*) (no)
- ✓ **graag** (*khraakh*) (please)

Don’t be afraid if your **g** doesn’t sound quite correct, just remember that some English native speakers call Dutch ‘an illness of the throat’. Your neighbour, your boss and your colleagues will appreciate it when you’re trying to speak Dutch, and in return they will rasp an admiring **goed gedaan!** (*khoot kher-daan*) (well done!). **G** is a popular letter in Dutch, and to make it even worse, the letter combination **ch** should sound exactly the same. Train them in the next words:

- ✓ **slecht** (*slekht*) (bad)
- ✓ **wachten** (*vakh-tern*) (to wait)
- ✓ **voorzichtig** (*foar-zikh-tikh*) (careful)



## Pronunciation and Stress

Can you believe that you're actually looking for stress? In Dutch, the right stress at the right time is a good thing, and fortunately stress in Dutch is easy to control.

The general rule is that Dutch words carry the main stress on the first syllable. Some words, however, don't carry the main stress on the first syllable. For instance, many foreign words (often borrowed from English or French) stress a later syllable.

Try the stress pronunciation of the following words, concentrating on getting the stress right. Pronounce the underlined syllable with more emphasis (i.e. louder) than the others.

- ✓ **de vader** (*der faa-der*) (the father)
- ✓ **bouwen** (*bow-ern*) (to build)
- ✓ **heerlijk** (*hayr-lerk*) (delicious)

Now look at some words that have been borrowed from French, and hence have a different stress:

- ✓ **de activiteit** (*der ak-tee-fee-tayt*) (the activity)
- ✓ **de persoon** (*der per-soan*) (the person)
- ✓ **actief** (*ak-teef*) (active)

Another notable exception to the 'first syllable rule': the prefixes **be-**, **ge-**, **her-**, **er-**, **ont-** and **ver-** are never stressed. Instead, words with these prefixes, stress the second syllable. Try to pronounce the next list:

- ✓ **bestellen** (*ber-steh-lern*) (to order)
- ✓ **gelukkig** (*kher-luh-kikh*) (happy)
- ✓ **herinneren** (*heh-ri-ner-rern*) (to remember)
- ✓ **ervaren** (*ehr-faa-rern*) (to experience)
- ✓ **ontmoeten** (*ont-moo-tern*) (to meet)
- ✓ **vergeten** (*fer-khay-tern*) (to forget)

## Questioning and Exclaiming

Questions start with a verb or a question word, like **wie** (*vee*) (who), **wat** (*vat*) (what), **waar** (*vaar*) (where), **hoe** (*hoo*) (how) or **wanneer** (*va-nayr*) (when?). Even without knowing this, you will notice a question by the way it sounds: at the end of the question the voice rises. In the sentence **Ga je naar huis?** (*khaa yer naar hoais*) (Are you going home?) the voice rises toward the last word. The same, although earlier, happens in the sentence **Hoe heet ze?** (*hoo hayt zer*) (What's her name?).

Sentences that end in an exclamation mark do the same, though the tone is slightly different. In the sentence **Ik ga naar huis** (*ik khaa naar hoais*) (I am going home) the voice goes down with the last word, but in the sentence **Ik ga naar huis!** (*ik khaa naar hoais!*) (I am going home!) all words are pronounced in a higher tone and this tone goes slightly up in the last word. In the sentence **Ze heet Cilla** (*zer hayt si-laa*) (Her name is Cilla) the tone descends in the last word. **Ze heet Cilla!** (*zer hayt si-laa!*) (Her name is Cilla!) sounds totally different: the tone of the whole sentence is higher and it goes up in the last word.