

<b>Chapter 27 Further learning</b>	<b>220</b>
27.1 Dutch grammars—intermediate and advanced	220
27.2 Dictionaries	221
27.3 Reading	223
27.4 The Internet	223
27.5 Other resources	225
27.6 Histories of the Dutch language	225
27.7 Books on the Netherlands and Flanders	226
<b>Strong and irregular verbs in common use</b>	<b>227</b>
<b>Key to the exercises</b>	<b>234</b>
<b>Dutch–English vocabulary</b>	<b>257</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>277</b>

# Preface

Continued demand for *Dutch: An Essential Grammar* has necessitated a new revised edition that not only provides some updating but addresses some features of the previous eighth edition that seemed to need revision and updating. In this ninth edition, the reader will find these changes:

- The reading passages that in the previous edition were called “**Practice texts**” are no longer part of the grammar. Today’s world offers a growing abundance of accessible written and spoken material through a widening variety of channels (see Chapter 27). This leads us to feel that a work striving to limit itself to presenting the “essential” first few steps in learning the language no longer needs to be in the business of providing reading material as well. An exception is the “**Three stories**” held over from the eighth edition.
- The traditional exercise material has been reduced to two or three sample exercises in each chapter, now found under the heading “**Let’s try it,**” that appear following the presentation of certain important points.
- A chapter devoted entirely to **prepositions** has been added.
- The vocabularies that appeared toward the end of each chapter have now been dropped. The reader will find all Dutch words used throughout the grammar in the general vocabulary at the end.
- In addition to a detailed **Contents**, this edition now includes an **Index**.

For recommendation of audio aids to both classroom and individual instruction, the reader is urged to consult Chapter 27, in which we discuss a wide variety of different ways to supplement this *Essential Grammar*. A regularly updated listing of electronic learning resources available on the Internet appears on the Routledge website at [www.routledge.com/9780415423076](http://www.routledge.com/9780415423076). A note of caution is appropriate here: the world of

publication and electronic availability changes so rapidly that what we offer here cannot be more than a few suggestions of places in which to look.

This grammar first appeared nearly fifty years ago in the Netherlands under the title *Introduction to Dutch*. At that time, to quote the words of the eighth edition, “there was little or no formal instruction in Dutch to be found in the U.S. There was need for a book that would provide clear, logical explanations for the many who wanted or needed to learn the language but could find no alternative to learning the basics by themselves. Today Dutch is taught throughout the world, including thirty or more college-level institutions in the U.S., and there is a variety of intensive courses in the Netherlands and Belgium. There are grammars, dictionaries, taped and audiovisual courses in abundance. *Dutch: An Essential Grammar* hopes to retain its membership in this realm of classroom instruction while never abandoning its usefulness to those still working alone. This is why it continues to be as compact and self-explanatory as possible.”

Our task of presenting only what is “essential” has been made considerably easier by the presence of the Routledge publication that can best serve as a sequel: Bruce Donaldson’s *Dutch: A Comprehensive Grammar* (1997; 2nd edition, 2007). The reader is urged to turn to that grammar for more detailed treatment and for the next few steps in the language. Chapter 27 includes a description of Donaldson’s book as well as other grammatical works.

For challenging both of us to keep trying to find better ways of presenting Dutch grammar, we are grateful to many generations of students to whom it has been our privilege to present the language and culture of the Netherlands and Flanders.

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