

Basic Dutch on Campus: Dutch language and culture

Semester in Amsterdam / 2025-2026 / semester II (Spring 2026)

Course dates	17 February – 26 May 2026	
No classes	23 - 27 March (exam week)	
Course length	14 weeks	
Time table	- Classes are from 18.00-20.30 - 14 Language classes once a week on Tuesday evenings - 3 Workshops on Dutch culture on Wednesday evenings - The final test is on Tuesday 26 May.	
Assignments	A minimum of 4 hours per week	
Exam	A portfolio, culture assignments and a language exam	
EC points	6 EC (passing all requirements and attendance requirement (80%)) The EC points reflect the study load of the course. <i>You will receive a certificate at the end of the course, including EC points and grade.</i>	
Teachers	to be announced	to be announced
Contact	VU-NT2 Dutch as a second language: vu-nt2@vu.nl	
<i>Included</i> course material	Dutch: LINK+ 0 -> A2 online license and textbook. <i>The course material is included and will be handed out during the first class.</i>	

Who should join this course and why?

Are you (temporarily) studying in the Netherlands? It is interesting, useful and fun to learn to speak Dutch at a basic level and to learn about Dutch culture and society. Is being able to speak Dutch not a necessity for your study, but would you like to have conversations with Dutch relatives or friends, be able to shop and order a beer or a coke? And are you interested in the Dutch culture and society? Join our practical, non-intensive evening course 'Basic Dutch on Campus'. Within 14 weeks you will learn to use and understand the basics of the Dutch language. In short, Dutch for everyday purposes. You will also acquire some basic understanding about Dutch history and culture and how the Dutch perceive themselves.

Learning objectives

In the course '*Basic Dutch on Campus*', you will learn to speak and understand the Dutch language at a basic level, CEFR A1. At the end of this course you will be able to join a basic conversation, using general expressions and basic sentences. For example, you will be able to meet and greet in Dutch, order a meal or a drink in the campus pub, go shopping, say whether you like something or someone, which you can practice in real life!

The cultural part of the course will allow you to learn about the Dutch and their culture within an international context. Besides the essentials of Dutch history and culture, you will discover recurrent themes in Dutch history and find out how the natural environment shaped Dutch society and vice versa.

Method and course content

In the course '*Basic Dutch on Campus*' you will learn to speak and understand the Dutch language at a basic level (Common European Framework of Reference CEFR level A1). The course is very interactive in nature. You will work on your speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, including vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. During classes you will use video, audio and computer software. And of course, you will practice a lot in small groups, which is a fun and effective way to try your newly learnt sentences. At home, you prepare online for the classes, to ensure you know the vocabulary needed to perform the tasks in class. After class you practice online what you discovered in class. NT2 (DSL)¹ lecturers teach our language classes and will personally guide you through the program.

'*Basic Dutch on Campus*' is not only a language course. You will also learn about Dutch culture and society. In this part of the course, you will explore some of the highlights of Dutch history and culture: what was so special about that famous Dutch 'Golden Age' and have the Dutch really always battled against the water? We will also discuss the stereotypes that exist about the Netherlands and Dutch culture and place them within a historical context. Some of the stereotypes you may have had before starting the course, considering the tolerant and liberal attitude towards drugs, sexuality and immigration in the Netherlands, might be in need of some serious revaluation afterwards!

Required level of education

Anyone who has completed secondary education (comparable to havo/vwo in the Netherlands) is welcome. If you don't speak any Dutch at all, some knowledge of the English language (A2 level) is necessary.

Passing Requirements

The assessment for this course is based on practical assignments and active participation. To successfully complete the course, participants must meet the following requirements:

1. Practical Assignments:

- During the course, participants will complete practical assignments focusing on writing and speaking skills.
- A minimum of six writing and speaking assignments must be completed at a satisfactory level.

2. Attendance:

- Participants must attend at least 80% of the classes.
- In case of absence, notify your teacher and copy your student advisor (Semester in Amsterdam) in your message.

¹ NT2: Nederlands als tweede taal = DSL: Dutch as a second language

- Arriving more than 15 minutes late will be counted as an absence.
- 3. Homework:**
 - All assigned homework, including online and written tasks, must be completed to a satisfactory level.
- 4. Culture assignments:**
 - Participants must deliver culture assignments as part of the course requirements.
 - The presentation should meet the following criteria:
 - 5-8 minutes, in English.
 - Cover highlights of Amsterdam/Dutch culture.
- 5. Language-immersion activity (taaldorp):**
 - Instead of a formal language test, participants will demonstrate their Dutch language proficiency at A1 level during an interactive language-immersion activity. This interactive simulation will assess students' ability to use and understand Dutch in practical, real-life situations.
 - The language test contains the following skills: listening, speaking, and conversational ability.
 - Participants will be granted a grade in the scale 1-10; passing grade is 5.5 (the calculation of the Dutch grade to an American grade will be done by International Office)

Certificate:

Attendance:	pass / fail
Homework:	pass / fail
Practical assignments:	pass / fail
Culture:	pass / fail
Language-immersion activity:	students will receive an overall final numerical grade (1–10) on their NT2 transcript based on their performance in the language-immersion activity and course requirements.

Course outline

week	day	date	Time	N/C	Subject / Onderwerp
1	Tuesday	17 Feb	18.00-20.30	NL1	Introduction to the course LINK+ Thema 1: 'Wie ben je?' (<i>Introducing yourself</i>)
2	Tuesday	24 Feb	18.00-20.30	NL2	LINK+ Thema 1: 'Wie ben je?'
3	Tuesday	03 Mar	18.00-20.30	NL3	LINK+ Thema 2: 'Boodschappen doen' (<i>Buying groceries</i>)
4	Tuesday	10 Mar	18.00-20.30	NL4	LINK+ Thema 2: 'Boodschappen doen'
5	Tuesday	17 Mar	18.00-20.30	NL5	LINK+ Thema 3: 'Hoe gaat het?' (<i>How are you doing?</i>)
	Wednesday	18 Mar	18.00-20.30	C1	Culture class 1
No classes during exam week (23 - 27 March)					
6	Tuesday	31 Mar	18.00-20.30	NL6	LINK+ Thema 3: 'Hoe gaat het?'
7	Tuesday	07 Apr	18.00-20.30	NL7	LINK+ Thema 4: 'Lekker!' (<i>Tasty!</i>)
8	Tuesday	14 Apr	18.00-20.30	NL8	LINK+ Thema 4: 'Lekker!' LINK+ Thema 5: 'Dit is mijn huis' (<i>This is my house</i>)
	Wednesday	15 Apr	18.00-20.30	C2	Culture class 2
9	Tuesday	21 Apr	18.00-20.30	NL9	LINK+ Thema 5: 'Dit is mijn huis'
10	Tuesday	28 Apr	18.00-20.30	NL10	LINK+ Thema 6: 'Hoe reis jij?' (<i>How do you travel?</i>)
11	Wednesday	6 May	18.00-20.30	NL11	LINK+ Thema 7: 'Naar de dokter' (<i>To the doctor</i>)
12	Tuesday	12 May	18.00-20.30	NL12	LINK+ Thema 8: 'Huis, straat en buurt' (<i>Neighbourhood</i>)
	Wednesday	13 May	18.00-20.30	C3	Culture class 3
13	Tuesday	19 May	18.00-20.30	NL13	LINK+ Thema 9: 'Waar heb je die laptop gekocht?' (<i>Buying and returning</i>) Cursusevaluatie (<i>Course evaluation</i>)
14	Tuesday	26 May	18.00-20.30	NL14	Language-immersion activity (<i>Final test Dutch - CEFR A1</i>)