# Dutch irregular verbs: the 100 most common, with their past forms

Most Dutch irregular verbs change their vowel in the past instead of adding -te or -de: lopen, liep, gelopen. Learn each one as three forms plus its auxiliary, hebben or zijn. Here are the 100 most common, in order of frequency, with the past singular and plural, the participle, hebben or zijn and the English meaning, then the vowel patterns that make them easier to learn. The whole list is also a free spreadsheet.

Download the 100 verbs as a spreadsheet (CSV). It opens in Excel, Google Sheets or Numbers, and a flashcard app such as Anki can import it. How to make the regular past and the perfect, with ’t kofschip, is on Dutch verb conjugation; this page is the list of verbs that do not follow those rules.

## What makes a Dutch verb irregular

A regular Dutch verb makes its past with -te or -de and its participle with ge- and -t or -d: werken, werkte, gewerkt. An irregular verb does something else. Dutch grammar books sort them into three groups.

- **Strong verbs (sterke werkwoorden) change their vowel.** The past gets a new vowel and no ending, and the participle usually ends in -en: schrijven, schreef, geschreven; drinken, dronk, gedronken. Most verbs in the table are strong, and most of those follow one of a few vowel patterns.
- **Irregular verbs (onregelmatige werkwoorden) change more than the vowel.** Kopen, kocht, gekocht and denken, dacht, gedacht change the vowel and the consonant and still end in -t. Zijn, was, geweest; hebben, had, gehad; gaan, ging, gegaan and the modal verbs change almost everything: kunnen, kon; moeten, moest; mogen, mocht; willen, with wilde or wou; and zullen, zou, which has no participle. They are the most common verbs of all, so they open the table.
- **Mixed verbs (gemengde werkwoorden) are half strong, half regular.** Vragen has a strong past and a regular participle: vroeg, gevraagd. Lachen does it the other way round: lachte, gelachen.

A verb with a prefix takes the forms of its base verb: verkopen, verkocht like kopen, bekijken, bekeek like kijken, vertrekken, vertrok like trekken. That includes the inseparable verbs with over- and voor-: overlijden, overleed, overleden like lijden, voorkomen, voorkwam, voorkomen like komen. Where ge- goes in a verb with a prefix is

explained on Dutch verb conjugation. The table lists the prefixed verbs that are common in their own right, such as begrijpen and verdwijnen.

### A regular past with an irregular participle

One small group of mixed verbs is easy to miss, because its past is regular and only the participle is strong: lachen, lachte, gelachen; heten, heette, geheten; bakken, bakte, gebakken; wassen, waste, gewassen; scheiden, scheidde, gescheiden. They are not in the table, which ranks the verbs with an irregular past. By frequency, two of them would make the top 100: heten (to be called) between sterven and besluiten, and lachen (to laugh) between bezoeken and zingen.

- **De vrouw heette Ria.** The woman was called Ria. (Saldo te laag, A2)
- **Zijn collega's hadden om zijn accent gelachen, en daarom zei hij al 60 jaar zo weinig mogelijk.** His colleagues had laughed at his accent, and that is why for 60 years he had said as little as possible. (Het briefje in het bibliotheekboek, B1)

## The 100 most common Dutch irregular verbs

The tables go in order of frequency, with the ranks of the 1,000 most common Dutch words: zijn is the fourth most common word in Dutch, verslaan (to defeat) is word 1,162. Each row gives the infinitive, the simple past singular (ik, jij, u, hij, zij) and plural (wij, jullie, zij), the past participle, the auxiliary of the perfect and the English meaning. Where two forms are both correct, both are given: wilde or wou.

Rows 1 to 91 are all among the 1,000 most common Dutch words, and all 100 are among the 1,200.

### Verbs 1 to 25

All 25 are among the 110 most common Dutch words, so learn these first. They include zijn and hebben, the five modal verbs (kunnen, zullen, moeten, willen, mogen) and gaan, komen, zien, zeggen, geven, nemen.

**Dutch irregular verbs 1 to 25: past tense and participle**

**zijn**
Past singular: was
Past plural: waren
Past participle: geweest
Perfect with: zijn
English: to be

**hebben**

Past singular: had
Past plural: hadden
Past participle: gehad
Perfect with: hebben
English: to have

**worden**
Past singular: werd
Past plural: werden
Past participle: geworden
Perfect with: zijn
English: to become

**kunnen**
Past singular: kon
Past plural: konden
Past participle: gekund
Perfect with: hebben
English: can, to be able to

**gaan**
Past singular: ging
Past plural: gingen
Past participle: gegaan
Perfect with: zijn
English: to go

**zullen**
Past singular: zou
Past plural: zouden
Past participle: none
Perfect with: none
English: shall, will

**moeten**
Past singular: moest
Past plural: moesten
Past participle: gemoeten
Perfect with: hebben
English: must, to have to

**komen**
Past singular: kwam
Past plural: kwamen
Past participle: gekomen
Perfect with: zijn
English: to come

**doen**
Past singular: deed
Past plural: deden
Past participle: gedaan
Perfect with: hebben
English: to do

**willen**

Past singular: wilde or wou
Past plural: wilden or wouden
Past participle: gewild
Perfect with: hebben
English: to want

**zien**
Past singular: zag
Past plural: zagen
Past participle: gezien
Perfect with: hebben
English: to see

**vinden**
Past singular: vond
Past plural: vonden
Past participle: gevonden
Perfect with: hebben
English: to find, to think

**zeggen**
Past singular: zei
Past plural: zeiden
Past participle: gezegd
Perfect with: hebben
English: to say

**staan**
Past singular: stond
Past plural: stonden
Past participle: gestaan
Perfect with: hebben
English: to stand

**weten**
Past singular: wist
Past plural: wisten
Past participle: geweten
Perfect with: hebben
English: to know (a fact)

**geven**
Past singular: gaf
Past plural: gaven
Past participle: gegeven
Perfect with: hebben
English: to give

**krijgen**
Past singular: kreeg
Past plural: kregen
Past participle: gekregen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to get, to receive

**laten**

Past singular: liet
Past plural: lieten
Past participle: gelaten
Perfect with: hebben
English: to let, to leave

**houden**
Past singular: hield
Past plural: hielden
Past participle: gehouden
Perfect with: hebben
English: to hold, to keep; houden van: to love

**denken**
Past singular: dacht
Past plural: dachten
Past participle: gedacht
Perfect with: hebben
English: to think

**zitten**
Past singular: zat
Past plural: zaten
Past participle: gezeten
Perfect with: hebben
English: to sit

**nemen**
Past singular: nam
Past plural: namen
Past participle: genomen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to take

**blijven**
Past singular: bleef
Past plural: bleven
Past participle: gebleven
Perfect with: zijn
English: to stay

**kijken**
Past singular: keek
Past plural: keken
Past participle: gekeken
Perfect with: hebben
English: to look, to watch

**mogen**
Past singular: mocht
Past plural: mochten
Past participle: gemogen
Perfect with: hebben
English: may, to be allowed to

## Verbs 26 to 50

Verbs of every day: lezen, schrijven, eten, kopen, lopen, rijden. Here come the first verbs whose auxiliary depends on the sentence: lopen and rijden take zijn when the sentence says where to.

#### Dutch irregular verbs 26 to 50: past tense and participle

**liggen**
- Past singular: lag
- Past plural: lagen
- Past participle: gelegen
- Perfect with: hebben
- English: to lie, to be located

**beginnen**
- Past singular: begon
- Past plural: begonnen
- Past participle: begonnen
- Perfect with: zijn
- English: to begin, to start

**brengen**
- Past singular: bracht
- Past plural: brachten
- Past participle: gebracht
- Perfect with: hebben
- English: to bring

**vragen**
- Past singular: vroeg
- Past plural: vroegen
- Past participle: gevraagd
- Perfect with: hebben
- English: to ask

**lijken**
- Past singular: leek
- Past plural: leken
- Past participle: geleken
- Perfect with: hebben
- English: to seem, to look like

**lezen**
- Past singular: las
- Past plural: lazen
- Past participle: gelezen
- Perfect with: hebben
- English: to read

**lopen**
- Past singular: liep
- Past plural: liepen
- Past participle: gelopen
- Perfect with: zijn with a destination, else hebben

English: to walk

**helpen**
Past singular: hielp
Past plural: hielpen
Past participle: geholpen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to help

**schrijven**
Past singular: schreef
Past plural: schreven
Past participle: geschreven
Perfect with: hebben
English: to write

**vallen**
Past singular: viel
Past plural: vielen
Past participle: gevallen
Perfect with: zijn
English: to fall

**bestaan**
Past singular: bestond
Past plural: bestonden
Past participle: bestaan
Perfect with: hebben
English: to exist

**zoeken**
Past singular: zocht
Past plural: zochten
Past participle: gezocht
Perfect with: hebben
English: to look for

**eten**
Past singular: at
Past plural: aten
Past participle: gegeten
Perfect with: hebben
English: to eat

**spreken**
Past singular: sprak
Past plural: spraken
Past participle: gesproken
Perfect with: hebben
English: to speak

**winnen**
Past singular: won
Past plural: wonnen
Past participle: gewonnen
Perfect with: hebben

English: to win

**rijden**
Past singular: reed
Past plural: reden
Past participle: gereden
Perfect with: zijn with a destination, else hebben
English: to drive, to ride

**kiezen**
Past singular: koos
Past plural: kozen
Past participle: gekozen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to choose

**kopen**
Past singular: kocht
Past plural: kochten
Past participle: gekocht
Perfect with: hebben
English: to buy

**dragen**
Past singular: droeg
Past plural: droegen
Past participle: gedragen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to carry, to wear

**verliezen**
Past singular: verloor
Past plural: verloren
Past participle: verloren
Perfect with: hebben
English: to lose

**sluiten**
Past singular: sloot
Past plural: sloten
Past participle: gesloten
Perfect with: hebben
English: to close

**vergeten**
Past singular: vergat
Past plural: vergaten
Past participle: vergeten
Perfect with: zijn; also hebben for something left behind or not done
English: to forget

**blijken**
Past singular: bleek
Past plural: bleken
Past participle: gebleken
Perfect with: zijn

English: to turn out

**begrijpen**
Past singular: begreep
Past plural: begrepen
Past participle: begrepen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to understand

**trekken**
Past singular: trok
Past plural: trokken
Past participle: getrokken
Perfect with: hebben; zijn when it means to travel to a place
English: to pull, to travel

## Verbs 51 to 75

Many verbs here have a prefix and follow their base verb: verkopen like kopen, bekijken like kijken, vertrekken like trekken, ontvangen like vangen.

#### Dutch irregular verbs 51 to 75: past tense and participle

**slapen**
Past singular: sliep
Past plural: sliepen
Past participle: geslapen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to sleep

**bieden**
Past singular: bood
Past plural: boden
Past participle: geboden
Perfect with: hebben
English: to offer

**bekijken**
Past singular: bekeek
Past plural: bekeken
Past participle: bekeken
Perfect with: hebben
English: to look at

**slaan**
Past singular: sloeg
Past plural: sloegen
Past participle: geslagen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to hit

**genieten**
Past singular: genoot
Past plural: genoten
Past participle: genoten
Perfect with: hebben

English: to enjoy

**overlijden**
Past singular: overleed
Past plural: overleden
Past participle: overleden
Perfect with: zijn
English: to die, to pass away

**voorkomen**
Past singular: voorkwam
Past plural: voorkwamen
Past participle: voorkomen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to prevent

**ontvangen**
Past singular: ontving
Past plural: ontvingen
Past participle: ontvangen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to receive

**verkopen**
Past singular: verkocht
Past plural: verkochten
Past participle: verkocht
Perfect with: hebben
English: to sell

**wijzen**
Past singular: wees
Past plural: wezen
Past participle: gewezen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to point, to show

**ontstaan**
Past singular: ontstond
Past plural: ontstonden
Past participle: ontstaan
Perfect with: zijn
English: to come into being, to arise

**sterven**
Past singular: stierf
Past plural: stierven
Past participle: gestorven
Perfect with: zijn
English: to die

**besluiten**
Past singular: besloot
Past plural: besloten
Past participle: besloten
Perfect with: hebben

English: to decide

**verdwijnen**
Past singular: verdween
Past plural: verdwenen
Past participle: verdwenen
Perfect with: zijn
English: to disappear

**verschijnen**
Past singular: verscheen
Past plural: verschenen
Past participle: verschenen
Perfect with: zijn
English: to appear

**verlaten**
Past singular: verliet
Past plural: verlieten
Past participle: verlaten
Perfect with: hebben
English: to leave (a place, a person)

**vertrekken**
Past singular: vertrok
Past plural: vertrokken
Past participle: vertrokken
Perfect with: zijn
English: to leave, to depart

**drinken**
Past singular: dronk
Past plural: dronken
Past participle: gedronken
Perfect with: hebben
English: to drink

**hangen**
Past singular: hing
Past plural: hingen
Past participle: gehangen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to hang

**vangen**
Past singular: ving
Past plural: vingen
Past participle: gevangen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to catch

**schieten**
Past singular: schoot
Past plural: schoten
Past participle: geschoten
Perfect with: hebben; zijn when it means to move fast (Hij is de kamer uit geschoten)

English: to shoot

**vliegen**
Past singular: vloog
Past plural: vlogen
Past participle: gevlogen
Perfect with: zijn with a destination, else hebben
English: to fly

**roepen**
Past singular: riep
Past plural: riepen
Past participle: geroepen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to call, to shout

**betreffen**
Past singular: betrof
Past plural: betroffen
Past participle: betroffen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to concern

**vechten**
Past singular: vocht
Past plural: vochten
Past participle: gevochten
Perfect with: hebben
English: to fight

## Verbs 76 to 100

From row 92 on, the verbs rank between 1,000 and 1,200 among all Dutch words: bespreken, vergelijken, verbieden. Bevinden almost always comes with zich: Het station bevindt zich in het centrum, the station is in the center of town.

#### Dutch irregular verbs 76 to 100: past tense and participle

**zich bevinden**
Past singular: bevond
Past plural: bevonden
Past participle: bevonden
Perfect with: hebben
English: to be (somewhere), to be located

**bezoeken**
Past singular: bezocht
Past plural: bezochten
Past participle: bezocht
Perfect with: hebben
English: to visit

**zingen**
Past singular: zong
Past plural: zongen

Past participle: gezongen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to sing

**breken**
Past singular: brak
Past plural: braken
Past participle: gebroken
Perfect with: hebben; zijn when it means to get broken
English: to break

**klinken**
Past singular: klonk
Past plural: klonken
Past participle: geklonken
Perfect with: hebben
English: to sound

**steken**
Past singular: stak
Past plural: staken
Past participle: gestoken
Perfect with: hebben
English: to stick, to put, to sting

**beschrijven**
Past singular: beschreef
Past plural: beschreven
Past participle: beschreven
Perfect with: hebben
English: to describe

**vervangen**
Past singular: verving
Past plural: vervingen
Past participle: vervangen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to replace

**verbinden**
Past singular: verbond
Past plural: verbonden
Past participle: verbonden
Perfect with: hebben
English: to connect

**bedenken**
Past singular: bedacht
Past plural: bedachten
Past participle: bedacht
Perfect with: hebben
English: to think up, to come up with

**lijden**
Past singular: leed
Past plural: leden

Past participle: geleden
Perfect with: hebben
English: to suffer

**stelen**
Past singular: stal
Past plural: stalen
Past participle: gestolen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to steal

**gelden**
Past singular: gold
Past plural: golden
Past participle: gegolden
Perfect with: hebben
English: to apply, to be valid

**voorzien**
Past singular: voorzag
Past plural: voorzagen
Past participle: voorzien
Perfect with: hebben
English: to provide (with), to foresee

**onderzoeken**
Past singular: onderzocht
Past plural: onderzochten
Past participle: onderzocht
Perfect with: hebben
English: to investigate, to examine

**bewijzen**
Past singular: bewees
Past plural: bewezen
Past participle: bewezen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to prove

**bespreken**
Past singular: besprak
Past plural: bespraken
Past participle: besproken
Perfect with: hebben
English: to discuss

**stijgen**
Past singular: steeg
Past plural: stegen
Past participle: gestegen
Perfect with: zijn
English: to rise

**springen**
Past singular: sprong
Past plural: sprongen

Past participle: gesprongen
Perfect with: zijn with a destination, else hebben
English: to jump

**ontwerpen**
Past singular: ontwierp
Past plural: ontwierpen
Past participle: ontworpen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to design

**vergelijken**
Past singular: vergeleek
Past plural: vergeleken
Past participle: vergeleken
Perfect with: hebben
English: to compare

**verbieden**
Past singular: verbood
Past plural: verboden
Past participle: verboden
Perfect with: hebben
English: to forbid, to ban

**dwingen**
Past singular: dwong
Past plural: dwongen
Past participle: gedwongen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to force

**treffen**
Past singular: trof
Past plural: troffen
Past participle: getroffen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to hit, to affect

**verslaan**
Past singular: versloeg
Past plural: versloegen
Past participle: verslagen
Perfect with: hebben
English: to defeat, to beat

All 100 verbs are also in the spreadsheet (CSV), in the same order.

### Notes on the table

- Zullen has no participle, so it has no perfect.
- Willen has two correct pasts: wilde and wou, plural wilden and wouden.
- Voorkomen is two verbs. With the stress on ko it means to prevent and is the row in the

table: voorkwam, heeft voorkomen. With the stress on voor it means to occur and is separable: Dat komt vaak voor, kwam voor, is voorgekomen. Its row is this high because the two share their forms.

- Bestaan and ontstaan take the forms of staan: bestond, ontstond. But bestaan (to exist) takes hebben and ontstaan (to come into being) takes zijn.

## Vowel patterns that help

Strong verbs are less random than they look. Most of them follow a pattern of three vowels, one each for the infinitive, the past and the participle, and the verbs of one pattern are easier to learn together. Eight patterns cover 73 of the 100 verbs in the table.

**Vowel patterns of the Dutch irregular verbs**

**ij, ee, ee**
Example: blijven, bleef, gebleven
More verbs from the table: krijgen, kijken, lijken, schrijven, rijden, blijken, begrijpen, overlijden, wijzen, verdwijnen, verschijnen, bekijken, beschrijven, lijden, bewijzen, stijgen, vergelijken

**ie or ui, oo, oo**
Example: kiezen, koos, gekozen
More verbs from the table: bieden, verliezen, genieten, schieten, vliegen, verbieden, sluiten, besluiten

**i, o, o**
Example: drinken, dronk, gedronken
More verbs from the table: vinden, beginnen, winnen, zingen, klinken, verbinden, bevinden, springen, dwingen

**e, o, o**
Example: trekken, trok, getrokken
More verbs from the table: vertrekken, vechten, treffen, betreffen, gelden

**e, a, e or e, a, o**
Example: geven, gaf, gegeven; nemen, nam, genomen
More verbs from the table: lezen, eten, vergeten; spreken, breken, stelen, steken, bespreken

**a, oe, a**
Example: dragen, droeg, gedragen
More verbs from the table: slaan, verslaan

**a, ie, a or a, i, a**
Example: laten, liet, gelaten; vangen, ving, gevangen
More verbs from the table: slapen, vallen, verlaten; gaan, hangen, ontvangen, vervangen

**-cht in the past and the participle**
Example: kopen, kocht, gekocht
More verbs from the table: brengen, denken, bedenken, verkopen, zoeken, bezoeken, onderzoeken

In most verbs the past plural just adds -en, and the spelling follows the same rules as the stem of a verb on Dutch verb conjugation: one letter for a long vowel in an open syllable

and two in a closed one, and an f or s at the end of the singular often becomes a v or z in the plural: bleef, bleven; koos, kozen; gaf, gaven; las, lazen. In the e, a patterns, and in lag, zat, zag and kwam, the short a of the singular becomes a long one in the plural: gaf, gaven; nam, namen; lag, lagen; kwam, kwamen.

Two smaller groups are worth knowing too. Lopen, liep, gelopen and roepen, riep, geroepen go back to their first vowel in the participle; helpen, hielp, geholpen, sterven, stierf, gestorven and ontwerpen, ontwierp, ontworpen end with an o. The rest, such as zijn, hebben, komen, doen, zien, zeggen, weten and the modal verbs, have to be learned one by one, but they are also the verbs you meet most.

## Hebben or zijn with these verbs

Being irregular says nothing about the auxiliary of the perfect. Of the 100 verbs, 76 take hebben, 15 always take zijn, and 8 take one or the other depending on the sentence; zullen has no perfect. The general rule, with more examples, is on Dutch verb conjugation.

- **Always zijn:** zijn, worden, gaan, komen, blijven, beginnen, vallen, blijken, overlijden, ontstaan, sterven, verdwijnen, verschijnen, vertrekken, stijgen. Most of them are about movement or a change: De trein is vertrokken. Het water is gestegen.
- **Zijn with a destination, hebben without:** lopen, rijden, vliegen, springen and trekken. Ik ben naar Rome gevlogen, I flew to Rome; but Ik heb nog nooit gevlogen, I have never flown. Schieten takes zijn when it means to move fast: Hij is de kamer uit geschoten, he shot out of the room.
- **Breken:** hebben when someone breaks something (Ik heb mijn arm gebroken), zijn when something breaks (Het glas is gebroken).
- **Vergeten:** zijn when you no longer know something (Ik ben zijn naam vergeten). When you left something behind or did not do something, both are correct: Ik heb mijn paraplu vergeten or Ik ben mijn paraplu vergeten.
- **Staan, zitten, liggen and hangen** take hebben in the Netherlands (Ik heb een uur in de rij gestaan); in Belgium you also hear zijn. Hebben is correct in both countries.

Three sentences from the free texts show the difference:

- **Hij had deze trap tien keer op en neer gelopen, en de sleutel van de brievenbus had niet gepast.** He had walked up and down these stairs ten times, and the key to the mailbox had not fit. (lopen without a destination: hebben. De borg, B1)
- **Na de scheiding waren ze bij hem gebleven.** After the divorce they had stayed with him. (blijven: always zijn. Het pakje voor nummer 12, A2)

- **‘Is de vuilniswagen mij vergeten?’ denkt hij.** “Has the garbage truck forgotten me?” he thinks. (vergeten with zijn. De grijze bak, A1)

## Irregular verbs in the free texts

The free texts on this site use these verbs the way Dutch does. Each sentence below is quoted word for word from its text.

- **Ze hield zijn kaart tegen haar apparaat en las wat erop stond.** She held his card against her device and read what was on it. (houden, hield; lezen, las; staan, stond. Saldo te laag, A2)
- **Hij bleef nog even in de deur staan, maar zij liep al terug naar haar eigen deur.** He stayed in the doorway a moment longer, but she was already walking back to her own door. (blijven, bleef: ij, ee, ee; lopen, liep. Het pakje voor nummer 12, A2)
- **Toen ze eindelijk om de hoek kwamen, reed de bus net weg.** When they finally came around the corner, the bus was just pulling away. (komen, kwamen; rijden, reed. Storing, A2)
- **Ze kocht kaas, brood en een bos tulpen voor op tafel. Daarna dronk ze koffie op het terras van een café aan het water.** She bought cheese, bread and a bunch of tulips for the table. Then she drank coffee on the patio of a café by the water. (kopen, kocht: -cht; drinken, dronk: i, o, o. De verloren portemonnee, B1)
- **Bij de kaaskraam en op het terras vroeg ze of iemand een portemonnee had gevonden.** At the cheese stand and on the patio she asked if anyone had found a wallet. ( vragen, vroeg, a strong past; vinden, gevonden. De verloren portemonnee, B1)
- **In de middag van 1 februari steeg het water opnieuw, en toen braken er nog meer dijken.** On the afternoon of 1 February the water rose again, and then even more dikes broke. (stijgen, steeg: ij, ee, ee; breken, braken. De watersnood van 1953, B1)
- **In Izmir kochten haar collega's op haar verjaardag altijd een taart, en om tien uur zong iedereen voor haar.** In Izmir her colleagues always bought a cake on her birthday, and at ten o'clock everyone sang for her. (kochten, the plural of kocht; zingen, zong. Trakteren, B1)

## How to learn Dutch irregular verbs

Say each verb as one line of three forms, out loud: lopen, liep, gelopen. When the perfect takes zijn, say it with the participle: gaan, ging, is gegaan. Learn the first 25 before the rest, then one table at a time, and take the verbs of one vowel pattern together. The spreadsheet

imports into a flashcard app such as Anki.

A list only takes you so far: the forms stay when you meet them in stories. Read texts told in the past at your level and notice the verbs. The free A2 texts and B1 texts have many stories in the simple past, and Dutch grammar for readers has the twelve rules that carry the rest of a sentence.

## Where the list comes from

The order and the ranks are those of the 1,000 most common Dutch words. They come from wordfreq, a free frequency list by Robyn Speer that counts Dutch in Wikipedia, film and TV subtitles, news, websites and social media. A frequency list counts word forms, like loopt, liep and gelopen, so the forms were grouped into words, like lopen, with UD Dutch Alpino, a collection of Dutch sentences annotated by hand. The verb forms come from the list this site checks its texts against, which was checked against the list of strong and irregular verbs in the ANS (Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst), the reference grammar of Dutch. The English meanings were written for this page.

Some verbs share a form with another word, so the order is close, not exact: reden is also the noun reason, gevangene is a prisoner. Five verbs are left out because most of their count belongs to another word: varen (voer is also animal feed), ervaren (mostly the adjective, experienced), treden (mostly de treden, steps, and optreden), betrekken (mostly betrokken, involved) and verdenken (mostly de verdachte, the suspect).

You may share and adapt the list, also for your classes, under the CC BY-SA 4.0 license: credit wordfreq (Robyn Speer) and Dutch Readers, and share your version under the same license.

## Read next

Het pakje voor nummer 12 is an A2 story told in the past, about a woman who keeps taking in packages for a neighbor who is simply at home, with a glossary. Many of its verbs come from the first 50 rows of the table: kwam, bracht, bleef, liep, kreeg, dacht, schreef. Read it once for the story, then again and find the infinitive of every past form. At B1, De verloren portemonnee does the same with a wallet lost in Leiden.

#### How many irregular verbs does Dutch have?

There is no fixed number. Counts of the strong and irregular verbs without a prefix run from about 150 to 250, depending on what is counted. With every prefixed verb (begrijpen,

verdwijnen, opstaan) there are hundreds. The 100 here are the most common; the first 25 are among the 110 most common Dutch words.

**What is the difference between strong, irregular and mixed verbs?**
A strong verb changes its vowel in the past and adds no ending: schrijven, schreef, geschreven. An irregular verb changes more than the vowel: kopen, kocht, gekocht; zijn, was, geweest. A mixed verb is half strong and half regular: vragen, vroeg, gevraagd; lachen, lachte, gelachen. For a learner the names matter little, because all three have to be learned as words.

**Do Dutch irregular verbs take hebben or zijn?**
Most take hebben, like regular verbs: 76 of the 100 in the table. Fifteen always take zijn, such as gaan, komen, blijven and worden, and eight take either, depending on the sentence. The table gives the auxiliary for every verb.

**Which Dutch irregular verbs should I learn first?**
The first 25 in the table: zijn, hebben, worden, gaan, komen, the modal verbs and the other verbs of daily life. After that, learn the verbs of one vowel pattern together, such as blijven, bleef, gebleven and schrijven, schreef, geschreven.

**Can I use this list in my lessons?**
Yes. The list and the spreadsheet are free under CC BY-SA 4.0: print them, copy them into your own materials, change them. Credit wordfreq (Robyn Speer) and Dutch Readers, and share your version under the same license.