

5 insider tips  
from recruiters  
on **how to brush  
up your Dutch  
language skills  
to get the most  
out of your life  
in the  
Netherlands**



How would you rate your current Dutch language skills? Are you able to say hello to your neighbor, order your meal in a restaurant, have a simple conversation in Dutch, watch Dutch TV- or have you not started to learn Dutch at all yet? Whichever level of Dutch you are currently able to comprehend, speak, read & write- there is always space for improvement. It is never too late to start learning, even if you're already in the Netherlands for a while.

Even though the Netherlands is a very open-minded country and incredibly expat friendly, as more than 90 percent of Dutch citizens speak English fluently, it's useful to learn Dutch in order to move away from feeling like a tourist in your new home country. If you work in an international company in the Netherlands, then the office language tends to be English, however, you'll have the desire sooner or later to connect with Dutch colleagues on a different level.

Our recruitment team at Abroad Experience is from all over the world, so we know what it's like to learn the Dutch language. Here are our top tips on how we improved our Dutch skills.

### **Tip #1: Language meetups**

It is very obvious that one of the best & most effective ways to learn a new language is to enroll in a language course - either online or in a face-to-face setting. But did you know that there is also a fantastic alternative to language courses and it's actually free?

In the Netherlands most cities offer "taal cafés" (In English: language cafés). Expats, refugees, students, old & young, from all around the globe come together to practice their language skills. Usually, these language meetups take place in libraries and are guided by Dutch volunteers. Everybody is in the same boat, wanting to improve their Dutch language skills. It's a great way to meet fellow internationals and to practice your speaking & writing skills.

For more information about Dutch language cafés, we can recommend you the following websites. There are plenty more language meetup groups, which can be found on Google.

<https://www.dutchnews.nl/features/2017/09/what-is-a-taalcafe-and-can-it-really-help-improve-your-dutch/>

<https://dutchlanguagecafe.com/>

<https://www.bibliotheekeindhoven.nl/Leren-en-Studeren/taal-en-digitale-vaardigheden/Language-cafe.html>

<https://koentact.nl/about-koentact/amsterdam-language-cafe/>

<https://www.languagecafeutrecht.nl/>

### **Tip #2: Read children books and watch Dutch TV shows**

Reading Dutch children books & noting down new words in a personal vocabulary notebook is another fantastic way to learn new phrases & words. Alternatively, you can also watch Dutch TV

shows- many of them have English subtitles. Or watch your favorite movies on Netflix and change the settings to Dutch subtitles to read along. There are also a number of Dutch movies on Netflix, if you are already located in the Netherlands- you can add English subtitles to the movies to follow along.

A great way to improve your Dutch, if you already have some basics, is to watch the Dutch 'Jeugdjournaal', which is a Dutch news show for children and teenagers. This way you can watch the news and practice your Dutch at the same time!

Find the show online on the website below and watch it for free. NOS also has other fun shows on this website that are a good challenge for learning new phrases/words

<https://jeugdjournaal.nl/>

### **Tip #3: Make it your mission and daily habit to learn new words/phrases/grammar**

Make it a daily habit to spend at least 5-10 minutes of your day practicing Dutch with a language app of your choice. There are tons of apps and lots of them are either free or charge a small amount, to improve your Dutch on a daily basis. Apps are a great way to improve your language skills in a playful and interactive manner.

### **Tip #4: Volunteer**

Working during the week but have some spare hours in the weekend to do something for a good cause, while practicing your Dutch?

If you are already located in the Netherlands, then you may have noticed already that volunteering is very popular. It's an easy way to meet Dutch & international people while practicing your language skills. Many internationals volunteer on farms, in secondhand shops, in community gardens, during sports events or animal shelters, for instance, to do something meaningful AND speak Dutch to fellow volunteers at the same time.

### **Tip #5: Let go of perfectionism and don't be afraid to make mistakes**

The only way to learn a new language is by practicing, practicing, practicing! Dutch people often have the tendency to reply in English when you order a drink in a restaurant or buy something at a local market etc. Don't let this hold you back from continuing to practice. Take a deep breath, smile and continue in Dutch, instead of switching back to English- eventually they pick up that you are practicing and would like to speak Dutch.

Don't worry about making mistakes! Dutch citizens really appreciate when somebody is making the effort to speak Dutch, no matter if your sentence structure and word choices are correct or not. You cannot learn a new language without trying. Learn to practice and allow yourself to get the experience. Letting go of judgement and letting in curiosity about using new phrases you learned recently will get you further.