

# De, het & een (articles)

## Definite and indefinite articles

In this chapter, you will learn how to use the Dutch words *de*, *het* (the), and *een* (a/an). Dutch has two definite articles: *de* and *het*. There are no strict rules, so you learn them word by word.

## Dutch Articles: een / de / het

In Dutch, we use articles (like *a/an*, *the*) before nouns. There are three articles:

### een = a / an (indefinite article)

Use “een” when you're talking about something general or something for the first time.

- Ik heb een boek. → I have a book.
- We kopen een appel. → We buy an apple.

### Note!

“een” (article) = a/an

“één” (number) = one

Ik heb een boek. → I have a book

Ik heb één boek. → I have one book (emphasis on number)

### de / het = the (definite article)

Use “de” or “het” when you're talking about something specific or something you already know.

- Waar is de appel? → Where is the apple?
- Ik lees het boek. → I'm reading the book.

## But... When do you use “de” and when “het”?

Dutch nouns are either “de”-words or “het”-words. Unfortunately, you have to learn them — but here are some helpful tips:

About 70% of Dutch nouns are “de”-words.  
So if you're unsure, “de” is often a better guess than “het”.

### Use ‘de’ with:

- In plural, all nouns use “de”:  
**NO EXCEPTIONS!!!**  
de appel → de appels  
het boek → de boeken  
het huis → de huizen
- People and professions → de man, de vrouw, de dokter  
(except ‘het kind’....)
- Days, months, seasons → de maandag, de zomer

### Use ‘het’ with:

- All diminutives (words ending in *-je*) always use “het”  
**NO EXCEPTIONS!!!**  
de tafel → het tafeltje  
de man → het mannetje
- Most words starting with *ge-* → het gebouw, het geluid

### Tip:

When you learn a new Dutch word, **always learn it with its article**:  
Don't just learn *tafel*, learn **de tafel**.  
Don't just learn *boek*, learn **het boek**.

**Try free exercise here!**

[Free exercise de & het!](#)

**Great job! Ready for the next step?**

## After this exercise, you can:

Keep guessing or truly master the system

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