

DUTCH

COUNTRIES: Netherlands
Belgium (Belgian or
Northern Flanders)
France (Dunkirk and Hazebrouck)
Surinam
Dutch West Indies
Indonesia

POST: La Haye

Dutch is more easily learned by those who speak German and English than by those who speak French. It originated in the Low German dialects of the Scheldt Delta, the Meuse and the Rhine. Its phonetics, morphology and lexicology are distinctly different from German. Its vocabulary and suffixal morphology have been greatly influenced by Latin and French.

The Dutch language is rich in colour and sound. Many foreigners are perplexed by the Dutch pronunciation of the initial "g" or the "sch." The Dutch have a predilection for diminutives. For example, they will refer to their cherished glass of gin as a "borreltje" – a little glass – and not simply a "borrel."

Afrikaans, which developed in South Africa from the Dutch spoken by sailors and farmers from Holland and Zeeland, is easy to learn once Dutch has been mastered.

Dutch and Flemish are both Netherlands dialects. The former is spoken in the Central and northern parts of Holland, and the latter in the Zeeland, Western and French parts of Flanders.