

# Object pronouns, reflexives and indefinite pronouns

## 8.1 Object pronouns used for the object of a verb

	Singular				Plural		
1st pers.	<b>mij</b>	<b>me</b>		me	<b>ons</b>		us
2nd pers.	<b>jou</b>	<b>je</b>		you (informal)	<b>jullie</b>	<b>je</b>	you (informal)
	<b>u</b>			you (formal)			
3rd pers.	<b>hem</b>	<b>'m</b>	<b>die</b>	him	<b>hen/hun</b>	<b>ze</b>	them
	<b>haar</b>	<b>d'r/'r</b>		her	<b>die</b>		
	<b>het</b>	<b>'t</b>	<b>dat</b>	it			

**Geef mij het boek.**

Give me the book.

**Ik zie jullie helemaal niet.**

I don't see you at all.

**Heb je 'm gehoord?**

Have you heard him?

**Wij hebben d'r samen met Jan ontmoet.**

We've met her together with Jan.

Here, too, we have both stressed and unstressed forms of the pronouns.

- **mij**: this is usually the written form
- **jou** ordinarily stresses familiarity or used for special emphasis

*Note:* The verbal ending **-t** is not dropped when the **je** following the verb is the object:

**Hij ziet je elke dag om negen uur.**

He sees you every day at nine o'clock.

**Jij wast je 's ochtends met koud water.**

You wash (yourself) in the morning with cold water.

### 8.1.1 Some details about pronoun usage

The unstressed form *je* can replace *jullie* but only when the latter has already occurred in the sentence:

**Jullie gaan naar de stad, maar je koopt niets.**

You go into town, but you don't buy anything.

- *haar* (singular) is usually used only when the pronoun is stressed or as a written form. In Belgium, the unstressed form *d'r* is not used; often *ze* (referring to a person) is heard instead. However, this is not considered standard language.
- *het* is never used after prepositions: for example *over het* = **erover**, *op het* = **erop**, *uit het* = **eruit**. See Chapter 21 for more on this topic.
- *hem* is used for inanimate objects in the written language to refer to *de* words that indicate, for example, institutions, public bodies and so on. Normally, demonstratives are used instead. *hij*, however, is the only full form that may be used at all times to refer to anything other than people.

**Waar is mijn auto?**

Where is my car?

**O, hij staat in de garage.**

Oh, it is in the garage.

**Waar is mijn auto?**

Where is my car?

**O, die staat in de garage.**

Oh, it is in the garage.

### 8.1.2 *hun and hen*

*Hen/hun* as stressed forms can only refer to people; *die* refers to anything other than people:

**Zij gaan met hem naar een restaurant.**

They go to the restaurant with him.

**Hen haalt hij op om zeven uur.**

He picks them up at seven o'clock.

**Hij neemt onze slaapzakken mee op reis.**

He's taking our sleeping bags with him on his trip.

**Die haalt hij morgenochtend op.**

He is picking them up tomorrow morning.

There is an official rule as to when to use **hen** or **hun**: **hen** is used as a direct object and after prepositions, whereas **hun** is an indirect object. However, **hen** is used less and less, especially in spoken Dutch, because even native speakers of Dutch don't always know when to use which form:

**Ik geef hun het geld.** I give them the money.

**Ik geef het geld aan hen.**

**Hij ziet hen.** He sees them.

**Wij zien hen later.** We will meet them later.

**Jullie doen het voor hen.** You do it for them.

- In more familiar speech, the unstressed *ze* can be substituted in all cases; this is the only choice when the pronoun refers to things:

– **Daar staan Piet en Gerrit.** There are Piet and Gerrit.

+ **Ik zie ze niet.** I don't see them.

– **Geef ze het geld.** Give them the money.

+ **Okee, ik geef hun het geld.** Okay, I will give them the money.

+ **Nu zie ik hen.** Now I see them.

– **Heb je de enveloppen met geld?** Do you have the envelopes with money?

+ **Ja, ik heb ze bij me.** Yes, I have them with me.

**8.2 Subject or object pronoun *die***

- A subject or object pronoun in the third person when stressed often turns up as *die*:

**Hij weet het wel.** He knows it all right.

**Die weet het wel.** *He* knows it all right.

**Ik ken haar (d'r/ze) niet.** I don't know her.

**Die ken ik niet.** I don't know *her*.

- *die* is used to refer to inanimate objects instead of **haar** and **hem**:

**Hij verkoopt de auto.** He sells the car. He sells it.

**Hij verkoopt die.**

**De auto? Die is verkocht.** The car? *It* has been sold.

A sentence with two objects: direct and indirect

### 8.3 A sentence with two objects: direct and indirect

When a sentence contains two objects, the direct (usually a thing) and the indirect (usually a person) occur in various sequences depending on whether they are pronouns or nouns. In the examples that follow, the direct object is underlined and the indirect object is in italics. You can observe in the examples how the objects can be replaced by pronouns:

**De man geeft het geld aan de vrouw.**

The man gives the money to the woman.

**De man geeft de vrouw het geld.**

The man gives the woman the money.

**Hij geeft het geld aan de vrouw.**

He gives the money to the woman.

**Hij geeft de vrouw het geld.**

He gives the woman the money.

**Hij geeft het aan de vrouw.**

He gives it to the woman.

**Hij geeft het geld aan haar.**

He gives the money to her.

**Hij geeft haar het geld.**

He gives her the money.

**Hij geeft het aan haar.** (*haar* gets the stress)

He gives it to her.

**Hij geeft het haar.** (*geeft* gets the stress)

He gives it to her.

**8.3.1** *Let's try it*

Take the **aan** out of the following sentences and adjust word order as necessary.

- 1 Vertel je verhaal aan je broer.
- 2 Schrijf een brief aan de ouders van je vrouw.
- 3 Hoeveel keer heb je dat aan je leraar verteld?
- 4 Geef een geschenk aan je verloofde voor Kerstmis.
- 5 De politieagent geeft een bekeuring aan de fietser.
- 6 Sinterklaas geeft cadeautjes aan de kinderen van de basisschool.
- 7 De vader leest elke avond een verhaaltje voor aan zijn kinderen.
- 8 Hij geeft een nieuwe auto aan zichzelf.

**8.4** **Reflexive pronouns**

When the object of a verb is the same person as the subject and when the subject acts on itself, the object is then called reflexive. There are two kinds of reflexive verb in Dutch: those that are (1) grammatically reflexive and (2) exclusively reflexive.

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1 <b>Hij wast zich.</b>    | He washes himself.   |
| <b>Hij wast zijn auto.</b> | He washes his car.   |
| 2 <b>Hij vergist zich.</b> | He makes an error.<br>(uncommon in English, but like verbs<br>such as he betakes himself, she<br>bethinks herself) |

The table shows the reflexive forms for all persons.

	Singular			Plural		
1st pers.	<b>me</b>	<b>ik was me</b>	myself	<b>ons</b>	<b>wij wassen ons</b>	ourselves
2nd pers.	<b>je</b>	<b>jij wast je</b>	yourself	<b>je</b>	<b>jullie wassen je</b>	yourselves
		<b>u wast zich</b>	yourself			
3rd pers.	<b>zich</b>	<b>hij wast zich</b>	himself/	<b>zich</b>	<b>zij wassen zich</b>	themselves
		<b>zij wast zich</b>	herself/			
		<b>het wast zich</b>	itself			

*Note:* Dutch adds *-zelf* to stress the reflexive idea only with verbs that are reflexive by nature:

**Hij wast zichzelf, niet zijn zoon**

He washes himself, not his son.

**8.4.1** *Examples of reflexive verbs*

*zich verbazen, zich verheugen op, zich vergissen, zich herinneren, zich veroorloven:*

**Zij verbaast zich over de mooie bloemen in het park.**

She is surprised by the beautiful flowers in the park.

**Wij verheugen ons op het feest.**

We look forward to the party.

**Hij vergiste zich in de naam.**

He made a mistake in the names.

**Jullie herinneren je niets meer van die reis.**

You can't remember a thing from that trip.

**U kan zich niet veroorloven zo'n fout te maken.**

You can't afford to make such a mistake.

**8.5** **Indefinite pronouns**

- *allen*: formal language. It means “all people” and is used for people only:

**De ministers zitten allen in het kabinet.**

The ministers are all part of the cabinet.

**We gaan met z'n allen naar de bioscoop.**

We are all going to the cinema.

- *alles*: “everything”:

**Alles zit in de koffer.**

Everything is in the suitcase.

- *alle, al de*: “all the.” Always followed by a common gender noun or a plural:

**Alle/al de kleren zitten in de koffer.**

All the clothes are in the suitcase.

**Ik heb alle melk opgedronken.**

I finished all the milk.

- **allemaal**: only marked as informal language in sentences with a reference to a relatively large amount of something, mostly spread over a large surface. Always in combination with a personal pronoun or a noun:

**We zagen allemaal eendjes in de vijver.**

We saw all these ducks in the pond.

**Er was allemaal zand in het huis.**

There was all this sand in the house.

**Wat is dat allemaal?**

What in the world is going on?

Otherwise, it means “all of them”:

**Ze komen allemaal.**

All of them are coming.

**Wij hebben ze allemaal ontmoet.**

We've met all of them.

- **allebei, beide, beiden**: “both of them” (people or objects). **Beiden** is only used for people:

**Beide boeken gaan over grammatica.**

Both books are about grammar.

**Beide gaan over grammatica.**

Both of them are about grammar.

**Beide studenten geven hun mening.**

Both students give their opinion.

**Beiden geven hun mening.**

Both of them give their opinion.

**Ze komen allebei naar het feest.**

Both of them are coming to the party.

**We hebben ze beiden ontmoet.**

We met both of them.

**Wie van hen komt?** – **Beiden.**  
Which ones of them are coming? – Both.

- iedereen: “everybody,” “everyone,” “anyone”:

**Iedereen is aanwezig.**

Everybody is present.

*Note:* The verb is singular.

- (n)iemand: “nobody,” “anybody”

**Ik ken hier niemand.**

I don’t know anybody here.

**Niemand weet het.**

Nobody knows.

**Is er iemand die het antwoord weet?**

Is there anybody who knows the answer?

- de meeste: “the most”

**De meeste mensen doen hun voordeur op slot.**

Most people lock their front door.

**Ik zie het meeste van allemaal.**

I see more than anybody else.

- de meesten: “most of the people” (only used for people):

**De meesten blijven logeren.**

Most of the people stay overnight.

*Note:* When you add an **-en** to adjectives such as **blank**, **zwart**, **oud**, **gehandicapt**, etc., you turn the adjective into a noun that has the meaning “people who are . . .”:

**De zwarten leven vreedzaam samen met de blanken in deze streek.**

The black people live in peace with the white people in this area.

**Er zijn gratis parkeerplaatsen voor gehandicapten in de stad.**

There are free parking spaces for the handicapped in the city.



**8.5.1** *Let's try it*

Replace the noun in parentheses by a pronoun or follow guidelines:

- 1 Kijk naar (**de man**), hij verkoopt (**theedoeken**).
- 2 Geef (**de paprika's**) aan (**de vrouw**).
- 3 Betaal (**de kaasboer**), anders krijg je geen kaas van (**de kaasboer**).
- 4 Zij laten (**de huisdieren**) aan (**je tante en mij**) zien.
- 5 Kijk uit! (**De groenteboer**) ziet (**jou en je vriendin**) niet!
- 6 Zie je (**de appels**)?
- 7 (**Tante Tine**) neemt (**Kaatje**) op schoot [= lap] en ze zegt: "Kaatje, vertel (**Tante Tine**) eens over de kanarie."
- 8 Ik ga met (**mijn vrienden**) op de fiets naar de markt.
- 9 Zoveel mensen kopen niet bij. [you informal]
- 10 Professor, ik zeg [you formal]: het is de beste kaas in Nederland!