6

Complex sentences

In the grammar of Dutch, a sentence is best defined as a prosodic unit the end of which is marked by a distinct falling or rising tone (see section 2.6).

A sentence is said to be complex if it contains more than one clause, where a clause is defined as the maximal sentence constituent containing a single verb, or (in case there are more verbs, one of which is an auxiliary) a single combination of a lexical verb and an auxiliary. (See appendix 3 for a list of the members of the closed class of auxiliaries.)

Section 6.1 reviews the properties of subordinated clauses in Dutch. Section 6.2 discusses clausal coordination, as well as coordination more generally. Section 6.3 presents a number of apparent in-between cases between subordination and coordination, and section 6.4 deals with ellipsis.

6.1 Subordination

6.1.1 Diagnostics

Subordinated clauses in Dutch can be clearly distinguished from nondependent clauses by a number of characteristics. (I use the term 'embedded clause' as equivalent to 'subordinated clause,' and 'main clause' as equivalent to 'nondependent clause'; a 'matrix clause' is a main or embedded clause that contains an embedded clause.)

First, the verb in embedded clauses appears in clause-final position (i.e. the right bracket in the topological fields analysis; see (4.1)). It follows that the verb in embedded clauses need not be adjacent to the subject, and can be preceded by objects, adverbs, adverbial PPs, complement PPs, negation, verbal particles, secondary predicates, discourse particles, floating quantifiers, and stranded prepositions. If a clause contains just a subject and a verb, supplying any of these elements will reveal the status of the clause:

(6.1) (… dat) Tasman vertrok
C Tasman leave:PAST.SG
'(… that) Tasman left.'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

a. *Main clause*
Tasman (*niet) vertrok (niet)
Tasman NEG leave:PAST.SG NEG
'Tasman didn't leave.'

b. *Embedded clause*
… dat Tasman (niet) vertrok (*niet)
C Tasman NEG leave:PAST.SG NEG
'… that Tasman didn't leave.'

This test also works with nonfinite clauses, even if (as we have seen in section 4.2) nonfinite embedded clauses may be blended with the matrix clause, such that the verbs form a cluster:

(6.2) … dat de VOC Tasman laat vertrek-ken
C DEF.CG.SG VOC Tasman let:SG leave-INF
'… that the VOC [Dutch East India Company] allows Tasman to leave.'

An adverb modifying the event described in the embedded clause will still precede the verb of the embedded clause:

(6.3) … dat de VOC Tasman **morgen** laat **vertrek-ken**
C DEF.CG.SG VOC Tasman tomorrow let:SG leave-INF
'… that the VOC allows Tasman to leave tomorrow.'

(6.3) allows an interpretation where *morgen* 'tomorrow' modifies the leaving event, but not the permitting event (i.e. the permission may be granted today for a departure tomorrow).

Second, and following from the first property, embedded clauses never display subject–verb inversion. Compare:

(6.4) a. *Main clause*
Wanneer vertrek-t Tasman?
when leave-3SG Tasman
'When is Tasman leaving?'

b. *Embedded clause*
Ik vraag me af wanneer (*vertrek-t) Tasman
1SG.NOM ask:1SG OCL.1SG off when leave-3SG Tasman
(vertrek-t)
leave-3SG
'I wonder when Tasman is leaving.'

In (6.4a), fronting of the interrogative phrase *wanneer* 'when' triggers subject–verb inversion, but similar fronting in the embedded clause in (6.4b) does not.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

Third, the verb in main clauses is finite, while the verb in embedded clauses may be finite or nonfinite. Finiteness is morphologically expressed by tense marking and subject agreement on the verb:

(6.5) a. *Main clause*
Tasman vertrek-t
Tasman leave-3SG
'Tasman is leaving.'
cf. Tasman vertrok
Tasman leave:PAST.SG
'Tasman left.' (tense marking)
De Maori-s vertrek-ken
DEF.PL Maori-PL leave-PL
'The Maoris are leaving.' (subject agreement)

b. *Embedded clause*
(Tasman probeer-t) om te vertrek-ken
Tasman try-3SG C to leave-INF
cf. (Tasman probeer-de) om te vertrek-ken
Tasman try-PAST.SG C to leave-INF
'Tasman tried to leave.' (no tense marking)
(De Maori-s prober-en) om te vertrek-ken
DEF.PL Maori-PL try-PL C to leave-INF
'The Maoris try to leave.' (no subject agreement)

By these three tests, examples like (6.6) come out as embedded clauses, even in the absence of a matrix clause:

(6.6) En Tasman maar lach-en
and Tasman but laugh-INF
'Tasman was just laughing all the time.'

Here the verb *lachen* 'laugh' is an infinitive, unmarked for tense and agreement, and appearing in clause-final position (e.g. to the right of the discourse particle *maar*). As the translation indicates, the example has an imperfective flavor. Observationally, examples like these are main clauses with embedded clause morphology and syntax.

A fourth test distinguishing main and embedded clauses in Dutch involves the presence of a complementizer: main clauses lack a complementizer, while embedded clauses may or may not have a complementizer. Finite embedded clauses are always marked by a complementizer (*dat* 'that,' *als* 'if,' or *of* 'whether'), while nonfinite embedded clauses may or may not be marked by the complementizer *om*.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

This test, too, leads to problems when we take examples like (6.7), from spoken Dutch, into account:

(6.7) *Colloquial Dutch*

Tasman	zei	dat	hij	had	er	geen	zin	in
Tasman	say:PAST.SG	C	3SG.M	have:PAST.SG	LOC	NEG.INDF	appetite	in

'Tasman said that he didn't feel like it.'
(*er* is the locative realization of the object pronoun *het* 'it,' a shifted complement of the preposition *in* 'in')

In the embedded clause of (6.7), the finite verb *had* 'had' appears in the verb-second position, even though the complementizer *dat* 'that' is present. We may think of examples like this as embedded clauses with main clause morphology and syntax (see section 6.3).

Likewise, Dutch has exclamative clauses, which are not obviously embedded, but do feature a complementizer and have the verb in clause-final position:

(6.8)

Dat	hij	dat	niet	wil!
C	3SG.M	DEM:DIST.INAN	NEG	want:SG

'I'm amazed that he doesn't want that.'

6.1.2 Finite embedded clauses

Embedded clauses containing a finite verb are (or may be) marked by a complementizer. In declarative complement clauses, the complementizer is *dat* 'that'; it is never left out.

(6.9)

Tasman	dacht	**dat**	hij	het	Zuidland
Tasman	think:PAST.SG	C	3SG.M.NOM	DEF.N.SG	South Land
ge-zie-n	had				
GE-see-N	have:PAST.SG				

'Tasman thought he had sighted the South Land.'

In interrogative clauses the complementizer is *of*, which is obligatory in embedded yes/no-questions, but preferably left out in embedded wh-questions.

(6.10)

Tasman	wou	wet-en	**of**	hij	het
Tasman	want:PAST.SG	know-INF	C:WH	3SG.M.NOM	DEF.N.SG
Zuidland	ge-zie-n	had			
South Land	GE-see-N	have:PAST.SG			

'Tasman wanted to know if he had sighted the South Land.'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(6.11) Tasman wou wet-en welk land hij
Tasman want:PAST.SG know-INF which land 3SG.M.NOM
ge-zie-n had
GE-see-N have:PAST.SG
'Tasman wanted to know which land he had sighted.'

In colloquial Dutch and in the dialects, the complementizers *dat* or *of dat* may follow the wh-phrase introducing the complement clause:

(6.12) Tasman wou wet-en welk land (of) dat
Tasman want:PAST.SG know-INF which land C:WH C
hij ge-zie-n had
3SG.M.NOM GE-see-N have:PAST.SG
'Tasman wanted know to which land he had sighted.'

Embedded clauses that would be subjunctive in other languages have no special marking in Dutch (either in the verbal morphology or in the nature of the complementizer):

(6.13) a. Ik hoop dat hij kom-t
1SG.NOM hope:1SG C 3SG.M.NOM come-3SG
'I hope that he'll come.'

b. Ik be-twijfel of hij kom-t
1SG.NOM APPL-doubt:1SG C:WH 3SG.M.NOM come-3SG
'I doubt that he'll come.'

Finite adjunct clauses are introduced by a range of elements, often in combination with a true complementizer:

(6.14) a. *Temporal adjunct clause*
… voor (dat) Tasman Nieuw Zeeland ontdek-te
for C Tasman New Zealand discover-PAST.SG
'… before Tasman discovered New Zealand'

b. *Causal adjunct clause*
… om-dat Tasman Nieuw Zeeland ontdek-te
around-C Tasman New Zealand discover-PAST.SG
'… because Tasman discovered New Zealand'

c. *Resultative adjunct clause*
… zo-dat Tasman Nieuw Zeeland ontdek-te
so-C Tasman New Zealand discover-PAST.SG
'… so that Tasman discovered New Zealand'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

d. *Conditional adjunct clause*
… als Tasman Nieuw Zeeland ontdek-te
if Tasman New Zealand discover-PAST.SG
'… if Tasman discovered New Zealand'

Finite complement clauses appear in the final field, i.e. they follow the verb(s) in the clause final verb position:

(6.15) a. Jeroen wou bewer-en dat Tasman
Jerry want:PAST.SG claim-INF C Tasman
Nieuw Zeeland ontdek-t had
New Zealand GE:discover-ED have:PAST.SG
'Jerry wanted to claim that Tasman discovered New Zealand.'

b. Jeroen wou wet-en wie Nieuw Zeeland
Jerry want:PAST.SG know-INF who New Zealand
ontdek-t had
GE:discover-ED have:PAST.SG
'Jerry wanted to know who discovered New Zealand.'

Fronting into the initial field is also possible, preferably accompanied by insertion of the demonstrative *dat*:

(6.16) a. Dat Tasman Nieuw Zeeland ontdek-t had
C Tasman New Zealand GE:discover-ED have:PAST.SG
(dat) wou Jeroen niet bewer-en
DEM:DIST.INAN want:PAST.SG Jerry NEG claim-INF
'Jerry did not want to claim that Tasman discovered New Zealand.'

b. Wie Nieuw Zeeland ontdek-t had
Q.HUM New Zealand GE:discover-ED have:PAST.SG
(dat) hoef-de Jeroen niet te wet-en
DEM:DIST.INAN need-PAST.SG Jerry NEG to know-INF
'Jerry did not need to know who discovered New Zealand.'

Finite complement clauses rarely appear in the middle field, but those selected by factive verbs may be found there, albeit in a relatively high position (preceding negation, discourse particles, and adverbs):

(6.17) Jeroen heeft dat Tasman Nieuw Zeeland ontdek-t
Jerry have:3SG C Tasman New Zealand GE:discover-ED
heeft nooit ge-wet-en
have:3SG NEG-INDF:TIME GE-know-INF
'Jerry never knew that Tasman had discovered New Zealand.'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

Finite complement clauses in the final field need not be adjacent to the verb(s) in the clause-final verb position:

(6.18) Jeroen heeft ge-zeg-d tegen Annie dat Tasman
Jerry have:3SG GE-say-D against Annie C Tasman
Nieuw Zeeland ontdek-t heeft
New Zealand GE:discover-D have:3SG

Complement clauses in the final field may be linked to an element in the middle field, such as a degree marker (6.19) or an object pronoun (6.20):

(6.19) Tasman was *zo* ge-schrok-ken *dat* *hij*
Tasman be:PAST.SG SO GE-startle-N C 3SG.M.NOM
snel *verder* *voer*
quickly further sail:PAST.SG
'Tasman was so shocked that he quickly sailed on.'

(6.20) Tasman heeft *het* betreur-d *dat* *hij*
Tasman have:3SG OCL.SG.INAN GE:regret-D C 3SG.M.NOM
het *Zuidland* *niet* *kon* *vind-en*
DEF.N.SG South Land NEG can:PAST.SG find-INF
'Tasman regretted it that he was unable to find the South Land.'

Finite adjunct clauses appear in the middle field much more readily than finite complement clauses:

(6.21) Tasman is *zonder* *dat* *hij* *er* *erg* *in*
Tasman be:3SG without C 3SG.M.NOM LOC awareness in
had vlak langs het Zuidland ge-var-en
have:PAST.SG close along DEF.N.SG South Land GE-sail-N
'Tasman sailed right by the South Land without noticing it.'

Still, the final field seems to be the more natural position for finite adjunct clauses, and fronting into the initial field is also possible.

6.1.3 Nonfinite embedded clauses

Nonfinite complement clauses in Dutch either appear in extraposition (i.e. in the final field; see (4.1)), as in (6.22), or blend with the matrix clause, such that the nonfinite verb forms a cluster with the matrix verb, and the remaining material appears in the matrix clause middle field (6.23).

(6.22) Tasman heeft ge-probeer-d *(om)* *het* *Zuidland*
Tasman have:3SG GE-try-D C DEF.N.SG South Land

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

te vind-en
to find-INF
'Tasman tried to find the South Land.'

(6.23) Tasman heeft *het* *Zuidland* prober-en *te vind-en*
Tasman have:3SG DEF.N.SG South Land try-INF to find-INF
'Tasman tried to find the South Land.'

The type in (6.23) is referred to as 'verb raising' in the technical literature. It is characterized by the replacement of the expected participle *geprobeerd* 'tried' by the infinitive *proberen* 'try' (the Infinitivus Pro Participio [IPP] effect). A third type of construction (referred to as the 'third construction') involves no cluster formation (i.e. the IPP-effect does not show up) and placement of only some of the embedded clause material in the matrix clause middle field:

(6.24) a. *'Verb raising'*
Tasman heeft *de* *Maori-s* *(kral-en)* prober-en
Tasman have:3SG DEF.PL Maori-PL bead-PL try-INF
*(*kral-en)* *te gev-en*
bead-PL to give-INF
'Tasman tried to give the Maoris beads.'

b. *'Third construction'*
Tasman heeft *de* *Maori-s* *(kral-en)* ge-probeer-d
Tasman have:3SG DEF.PL Maori-PL bead-PL GE-try-D
(kral-en) *te gev-en*
bead-PL to give-INF
'Tasman tried to give the Maoris beads.'

See section 4.2 for the properties of the verb cluster, and appendix 4 for a list of verbs taking the various types of nonfinite complements.

The use of nonfinite embedded interrogatives is highly limited. It seems to be restricted to expressions meaning 'what to do':

(6.25) Tasman wist niet wat te doe-n
Tasman know:PAST.SG NEG Q:INAN to do-INF
'Tasman did not know what to do.'

This construction type never displays cluster formation. There are no nonfinite embedded yes/no-interrogatives in Dutch.

Fronting of infinitival complement clauses (whether to the middle field or to the initial field) is difficult. First of all, the verb cluster cannot be split by fronting:

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(6.26) *Het Zuidland (te) vind-en heeft Tasman niet
DEF.N.SG South Land to find-INF have:3SG Tasman NEG
prober-en
try-INF
(intended: 'Tasman did not try to find the South Land.')

Second, fronting of an infinitival clause seems to require that the complementizer *om* and the infinitival marker *te* are dropped:

(6.27) *(??Om) het Zuidland (??te) vind-en (dat)
C DEF.N.SG South Land to find-INF DEM:DIST.SG
heeft Tasman niet ge-probeer-d
have:3SG Tasman NEG GE-try-D
'Tasman did not try to find the South Land.'

See section 2.2 for the distribution of the infinitival complementizer *om*.

Infinitival adjuncts enjoy the same free distribution as finite adjunct clauses and adjunct PPs:

(6.28) a. Tasman is beroemd ge-word-en door het
Tasman be:3SG famous GE-become-N through DEF.N.SG
Zuidland te vind-en
South Land to find-INF

b. Tasman is door het Zuidland te vind-en
Tasman be:3SG through DEF.N.SG South Land to find-INF
beroemd ge-word-en
famous GE-become-N

c. Door het Zuidland te vind-en is Tasman
through DEF.N.SG South Land to find-INF be:3SG Tasman
beroemd ge-word-en
famous GE-become-N
(all) 'Tasman rose to fame by finding the South Land.'

The context of (6.28b), with the adjunct clause in the middle field, is the only context in which we find parasitic gaps in Dutch (see section 7.6.3).

6.1.4 Relative clauses

Relative clauses in Dutch are postnominal. They can be restrictive (6.29) or appositional (6.30).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(6.29) Tasmanië is een eiland dat door Tasman
Tasmania be:3SG INDF.SG island REL:N.SG through Tasman
ontdek-t is
GE:discover-D be:3SG
'Tasmania is an island that was discovered by Tasman.'

(6.30) Tasmanië, dat door Tasman ontdek-t is,
Tasmania REL:N.SG through Tasman GE:discover-D be:3SG
lig-t be-zuid-en Australië
lie-3SG APPL-south-EN Australia
'Tasmania, which was discovered by Tasman, lies south of Australia.'

Both types of relative clauses are introduced by a relative pronoun which agrees in number and gender with the head noun (see appendix 1) and display the embedded clause word order (with the verb in clause-final position). The gap in the relative clause cannot be filled by a resumptive element, and can appear in all argument and adjunct positions:

(6.31)

a. *Subject relative*
de man die Tasmanië ontdek-t heeft
DEF.CG.SG man REL:CG Tasmania GE:discover-D have:3SG
'The man who discovered Tasmania.'

b. *Object relative*
het eiland dat Tasman ontdekt heeft
DEF.N.SG island REL:N.SG Tasman GE:discover-D have:3SG
'The island that Tasman discovered.'

c. *Indirect object relative*
de Maori-s die Tasman de kral-en ge-gev-en had
DEF.PL Maori-PL REL:PL Tasman DEF.PL bead-PL GE-give-N have:PAST.SG
'The Maoris that Tasman gave the beads.'

d. *Adjunct relative*
het jaar dat Tasman Nieuw Zeeland ontdek-te
DEF.N.SG year REL:N.SG Tasman New Zealand discover-PAST.SG
'The year that Tasman discovered New Zealand.'

In adjunct relatives, the relative pronoun shows no agreement, and does not always have a clear gap associated with it. Compare:

(6.32) a. de reden dat Tasman vertrok
DEF.CG.SG REL:N.SG Tasman leave-PAST.SG
'the reason Tasman left'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

b. Tasman vertrok *(om) die reden
Tasman leave:PAST.SG around DEM:DIST.CG reason
'Tasman left for that reason.'

One might think that the relative pronoun *dat* used here is in fact the complementizer *dat*, but with locative adjuncts we find the locative interrogative *waar* 'where' instead of *dat*, which also features as a relative pronoun:

(6.33) a. het eiland waar de Maori-s won-en
DEF.N.SG island WH:LOC DEF.PL Maori-PL live-PL
'the island where the Maoris live'

b. De Maori-s won-en *(op) dat eiland
DEF.PL Maori-PL live-PL up DEM:DIST.INAN island
'The Maoris live on that island.'

If the gap in the relative clause is located inside a PP, the relative pronoun is from the interrogative pronoun paradigm and takes on locative morphology:

(6.34) het land {waar / *dat} Tasman naar
DEF.N.SG land WH:LOC / REL:N.SG Tasman towards
zocht
search:PAST.SG
'the land that Tasman was looking for'

The preposition may also be pied-piped (fronted along with the relative pronoun):

(6.35) het land waar-naar Tasman zocht
DEF.N.SG land WH:LOC-towards Tasman search:PAST.SG
'the land that Tasman was looking for'

Pied-piping of more inclusive phrases is also possible, albeit somewhat artificial:

(6.36) de baai *als naam waar-van* Tasman 'Moordenaarsbaai'
DEF.CG.SG bay as name WH:LOC-of Tasman 'Murderer's Bay'
koos
choose:PAST.SG
'the bay that Tasman picked the name "Murderer's Bay" for'

Relative clauses may appear adjacent to the head noun, or in extraposition:

(6.37) a. Ik wil *het eiland dat Tasman*
1SG.NOM want:SG DEF.N.SG island REL:N.SG Tasman
ontdek-t heeft bezoek-en
GE:discover-D have:3SG visit-INF

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

b. Ik wil *het* *eiland* bezoek-en *dat*
1SG.NOM want:SG DEF.N.SG island visit-INF REL:N.SG
Tasman *ontdek-t* *heeft*
Tasman GE:discover-D have:3SG
(both) 'I want to visit the island that Tasman discovered.'

Many dialects show the possibility of combining a relative pronoun with a complementizer (see also Zwart 2000):

(6.38) *Kruiningen (Zeeuws; Dek 1934:14)*
't jongsje dat à histeren van 't dek
DEF:N.SG boy:DIM REL:N.SG C yesterday of DEF.N.SG roof
e-val-en is
GE-fall-N be:3SG
'the boy who fell off the roof yesterday'

Dutch has no nonfinite relative clauses, unless the prenominal infinitival gerunds were to be considered as such (see (5.12)):

(6.39) de te ontdek-ken eiland-en
DEF.PL to discover-INF island-PL
'the islands to discover'

Appositional relative clauses differ from restrictive relative clauses in many ways (see De Vries 2006). Prosodically, appositional relative clauses are set off from the head noun by an intonational break, which is absent in restrictive relative clauses:

(6.40) a. *Restrictive*
Een^{2} ei^{2}land^{2} dat^{2} door^{2} Tas^{3}man^{3} ont^{3}dekt^{3}
INDF.SG island REL:N.SG through Tasman GE:discover-D
is^{3} is^{3} Tas^{3}ma^{4}ni^{1}ë^{1}
be:3SG be:3SG Tasmania
'An island which was discovered by Tasman is Tasmania.'

b. *Appositional*
Tas^{2}ma^{3}ni^{2}ë^{23}, dat^{2} door^{2} Tas^{3}man^{2} ont^{2}dekt^{2}
Tasmania REL:N.SG through Tasman GE:discover-D
is,^{23} is^{2} een^{2} ei^{4}land^{1}
be:3SG be:3SG INDF.SG island
'Tasmania, which was discovered by Tasman, is an island.'

Semantically, appositional relative clauses lack the effect of restricting the reference of the head noun:

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(6.41) de eiland-en die door Tasman ontdekt zijn
DEF.PL island-PL REL:PL through Tasman GE:discover-D be:PL
restrictive: 'the islands (for) which (holds that they) were discovered by Tasman'
appositional: 'the (said) islands which (incidentally) were discovered by Tasman'

As a result, an appositional relative clause may be construed much more loosely with its antecedent, which in fact need not be a noun:

(6.42) Tasman ontdek-te Nieuw Zeeland, wat nog altijd
Tasman discover-PAST.SG New Zealand REL:N.SG still always
ge-vier-d word-t
GE-celebrate-D become-3SG
'Tasman discovered New Zealand, which is still being celebrated.'

In (6.42), the appositional relative clause specifies a property of the entire event referred to by the main clause (note that the relative pronoun *wat* must be taken from the interrogative pronoun paradigm in this case).

Syntactically, appositional relative clauses appear less close to the head noun than restrictive relative clauses:

(6.43) het eiland dat Tasman ontdek-te, dat
DEF.N.SG island REL:N.SG Tasman discover-PAST.SG REL:N.SG
later Tasmanië ge-noem-d zou word-en, …
later Tasmania GE-name-D MOD:SG become-INF
'the island that Tasman discovered, which would later be called Tasmania …'

In (6.43), both relative clauses can be interpreted as restrictive or appositional relative clauses, but only consistently (both restrictive or appositional) or in the order restrictive–appositional (i.e. if the second relative clause is restrictive, the first cannot be appositional).

Note that both restrictive and appositional relative clauses may appear in the final field (see (6.37b) for restrictives):

(6.44) Als kapitein werd *Tasman* aan ge-stel-d,
as captain become:PAST.SG Tasman on GE-position-D
die later Nieuw Zeeland zou ontdek-ken
REL:CG.SG later New Zealand MOD:SG discover-INF
'They appointed Tasman captain, who would later discover New Zealand.'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

Free relatives, lacking an antecedent to the relative pronoun, are illustrated in (6.45):

(6.45) De VOC was niet tevreden met *wat*
DEF.CG.SG VOC be:PAST.SG NEG satisfied with REL:N.SG
Tasman bereik-t had
Tasman GE:achieve-D have:PAST.SG
'The Dutch East India Company was not satisfied with the things Tasman had achieved.'

The relative pronoun in free relatives in Dutch must be taken from the interrogative pronoun paradigm. (Note that the transformation of *met wat* into *waar mee* does not take place in this configuration; see (5.69).)

6.2 Coordination

6.2.1 General remarks

Coordination in Dutch follows the general schema in (6.46), where *C* is a coordinating element, illustrated in (6.47) for noun phrase conjunction.

(6.46) *X* C *Y*

(6.47) Tasmanië en Nieuw Zeeland
Tasmania and New Zealand

There is reason to believe that the coordinating element (C) forms a constituent with the phrase following it (Y), to the exclusion of the element preceding it (X), as *C* and *Y* may be separated from *X* when placed in the final field:

(6.48) a. Tasman heeft *Tasmanië en Nieuw Zeeland* ontdek-t
Tasman have:3SG Tasmania and New Zealand GE:discover-D
b. Tasman heeft *Tasmanië* ontdek-t *en Nieuw Zeeland*
Tasman have:3SG Tasmania GE:discover-D and New Zealand
(both) 'Tasman discovered Tasmania and New Zealand.'

The split illustrated in (6.48) is only possible when *X* is focused, and *C-Y* are placed in the final field.

With coordination of more than two categories (X-Y-Z), the coordinating element between the first two (X-Y) may be zero (indicated by a comma):

(6.49) Australië {en / ,} Tasmanië en Nieuw Zeeland
Australia and / ∅ Tasmania and New Zealand

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

Prosodically, the final element in a string of coordinated elements receives the highest pitch.

The two major coordinating elements in Dutch are conjunctive *en* 'and' and disjunctive *of* 'or,' which may be used to coordinate elements from all lexical categories (including prepositions):

(6.50)

a. *Verbs*

Tasman	moest	het	Zuidland	**zoek-en**	**en**	**vind-en**
Tasman	must:PAST.SG	DEF.N.SG	South Land	seek-INF	and	find-INF

'Tasman had to look for the South Land and find it.'

b. *Adjectives*

een	**snel**	**en**	**wendbaar**	schip
INDF.SG	fast	and	maneuverable	ship

'a fast and maneuverable ship'

c. *Prepositions*

voor	**en**	**na**	de	reis
for	and	after	DEF.CG.SG	trip

'before and after the trip'

(In (6.50b), both adjectives display agreement with the noun; cf. PL *snel-le en wendbar-e schepen* 'fast and maneuverable ships.')

En and *of* are also used for coordination of phrases and clauses (see section 6.2.2). A third coordinating element with a similar distribution, but belonging to the formal register, is *noch* 'nor.' It contains an element of negation which has scope over both members of the coordination:

(6.51)

Tasman	heeft	Tasmanië	**noch**	Nieuw Zeeland	ontdek-t	
Tasman	have:3SG	Tasmania	nor	New Zealand	GE:discover-D	

'Tasman discovered neither Tasmania nor New Zealand.'

En, *of*, and *noch* can all be doubled, yielding the schema *C-X-C-Y* (called *reeksvorming* in the Dutch linguistic tradition). In addition there are a few designated doubling coordinators such as *zowel … als* 'both … and' (see (12.8)) and *hetzij … hetzij* 'either … or.' The doubled coordinators are both stressed:

(6.52)

EN	Tasmanië	EN	Nieuw Zeeland	
and	Tasmania	and	New Zealand	

'both Tasmania and New Zealand'

The use of the doubling coordination is limited considerably by the fact that doubling forces a distributive reading:

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(6.53) De landen die Tasman ontdekt heeft zijn
DEF.PL land-PL REL:PL Tasman GE:discover-D have:3SG be:PL
(*en) Tasmanië en Nieuw Zeeland
and Tasmania and New Zealand
'The countries discovered by Tasman are Tasmania and New Zealand.'

In (6.53), the coordination of *Tasmanië* and *Nieuw Zeeland* refers to the collective of countries discovered by Tasman, and double conjunction is excluded.

Dutch has no designated coordinating elements for noun phrase coordination, but it does have a number of designated clausal coordination elements: consecutive *dus* 'therefore,' causal *want* 'because,' and adversative *maar* 'but' (see section 6.2.2). These may also be used with adjectives:

(6.54) een prachtig maar gevaarlijk eiland
INDF.SG beautiful but dangerous island
'a beautiful but dangerous island'

Fronting of (and out of) members of coordinated constructions is impossible:

(6.55) **Tasmanië* heeft Tasman *en Nieuw Zeeland* ontdek-t
Tasmania have:3SG Tasman and New Zealand GE:discover-D
(intended: 'Tasman discovered Tasmania and New Zealand.')

Note, however, that when *en Nieuw Zeeland* is in the final field (see (6.48b)), *Tasmanië* may be fronted:

(6.56) *Tasmanië* heeft Tasman ontdek-t *en Nieuw Zeeland*
Tasmania have:3SG Tasman GE:discover-D and New Zealand
'Tasman discovered Tasmania and New Zealand.'

6.2.2 Clausal coordination

Clausal coordination and subordination in Dutch may be distinguished by the position of the finite verb, which is final in subordinated clauses (cf. section 6.1.1), but not necessarily in coordinated clauses. More precisely, the position of the verb in the second member of a clausal coordination covaries with the position of the verb in the first:

(6.57) a. Tasman **was** een Nederlander en Cook **was**
Tasman be:PAST.SG INDF.SG Dutchman and Cook be:PAST.SG
een Engelsman
INDF.SG Englishman
'Tasman was Dutch and Cook was English.'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

b. … dat Tasman een Nederlander **was** en dat Cook
c Tasman INDF.SG Dutchman be:PAST.SG and c Cook
een Engelsman **was**
INDF.SG Englishman be:PAST.SG
'… that Tasman was Dutch and that Cook was English.'

In (6.57b), the finite verb is final in each clause because the coordinated clauses happen to be embedded clauses. If we turn the first member into a main clause, the second member must also adopt main clause characteristics, as in (6.57a).

Clauses are coordinated using the general conjunction *en* 'and' and disjunction *of* 'or,' as well as by negative *noch* 'nor' (6.59), adversative *maar* 'but' (6.58), consecutive *dus* 'therefore' (6.58), causal *want* 'because' (6.58), and archaic *alsmede* 'as well' (*alsmede* is special in that it fails to coordinate main clauses).

(6.58) Dit is Tasmanië {maar / dus / want}
DEM:PROX.INAN be:3SG Tasmania but / so / because
dat is Nieuw Zeeland
DEM:DIST.INAN be:3SG New Zealand
'This is Tasmania {but / so / because} that is New Zealand.'

In coordinated main clauses, the finite verb generally occupies the second position (not counting the coordinating element), with few exceptions. For one, *noch* triggers subject–verb inversion in the second member:

(6.59) Tasman wist niet waar hij was **noch**
Tasman know:PAST.SG NEG WH:LOC 3SG.M.NOM be:PAST.SG nor
zag **hij** waar hij heen moest
see:PAST.SG 3SG.M.NOM WH:LOC 3SG.M.NOM towards must:PAST.SG
'Tasman did not know where he was nor did he see where he should go.'

This is regionally (namely in the southern dialects) also the case with the exclusive disjunctive *ofwel* (a strengthening of *of*). Finally, inversion could also accompany clausal conjunction with *en* 'and' in earlier stages of Dutch, and in written Dutch until the early twentieth century (cf. Van der Horst and Van der Horst 1999: 296–299; Zwart 2005: 20):

(6.60) *(out of use)*
Alles is nu reeds bepaal-d **en** **kan** **ik**
everything be:3SG now already GE:determine-D and can:SG 1SG.NOM
hierin tot mijn spijt moeilijk verandering-en mak-en
herein to POSS:1SG regret hardly change-PL make-INF
'Everything is already settled and it is regretfully difficult for me to make any changes.'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(from a Dutch letter by Jan Toorop [1858–1929]; Van der Horst and Van der Horst 1999: 298)

Another formal asymmetry between coordinated clauses occurs in the complement of the conditional complementizer *als* 'if.' *Als* triggers the embedded clause word order in the first conjunct, but may fail to do so in the second:

(6.61) als Tasman verstandig is en …
if Tasman sensible be:3SG and

a. … de Maori-s zich koest houd-en
DEF:PL Maori-PL REFL quiet keep-PL

b. … de Maori-s houd-en zich koest
DEF:PL Maori-PL keep-PL REFL quiet

(both) 'if Tasman is sensible and the Maoris stay calm'

A similar effect occurs with *omdat* 'because':

(6.62) Tasman voer verder omdat het eiland
Tasman sail:PAST.SG further because DEF.N.SG island
er verlaten uit zag en …
LOC deserted out look:PAST.SG and

a. … ze nog voldoende kokosnot-en had-den
SCL.3PL still enough coconut-PL have:PAST-PL

b. … ze had-den nog voldoende kokosnot-en
SCL.3PL have:PAST-PL still enough coconut-PL

(both) 'Tasman sailed on because the island looked deserted and they still had enough coconuts.'

Another asymmetry occurs with clausal disjunction in the complement of verbs like *zich afvragen* 'wonder,' which select the complementizer *of* 'if,' homophonous with the disjunction *of* 'or.' In this case, the second conjunct replaces the interrogative complementizer *of* by declarative *dat* 'that':

(6.63) Tasman vroeg zich af of hij zou
Tasman ask:PAST.SG REFL off C:WH 3SG.M.NOM MOD:SG
land-en of {dat / *of} hij verder zou var-en
land-INF or C / C:WH 3SG.M.NOM further MOD:SG sail-INF
'Tasman wondered if he should land or sail on.'

Semantically, clausal conjunction may generally be construed asymmetrically, indicating a temporal sequence or a cause-effect relation (Kehler 2002). However, Dutch lacks the quasi-serial conjunction type of English *go and buy*, *try and save*.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

On a cause-effect (implicative) construal, a declarative clause may be conjoined with an imperative:

(6.64)

Geef	ze	kral-en	en	de	Maori-s	zijn	gelukkig
give:IMP	OCL:3PL	bead-PL	and	DEF.PL	Maori-PL	be:PL	happy

'If you (as much as) give them beads, the Maoris will be happy.'

When the imperative clause contains a negation, the coordinator switches to disjunctive *of*:

(6.65)

Geef	ze	geen	kral-en	of	je	raak-t
give:IMP	OCL:3PL	NEG.INDF	bead-PL	or	SCL:2SG	end.up-2SG
die	Maori-s	nooit	meer	kwijt		
DEM:DIST.PL	Maori-PL	never	more	rid		

'Don't give them any beads, or you'll never get rid of those Maoris.'

This type of clausal disjunction with a negative first clause is called *balansschikking* 'balanced ordering' in the Dutch grammatical tradition (see section 6.3).

A further semantic asymmetry in clausal conjunction occurs where the second clause specifies a member of the first. This use is much more common in colloquial Dutch:

(6.66)

Tasman	had	een	bootsman	en	die
Tasman	have:PAST.SG	INDF.SG	boatsman	and	DEM:DIST:CG
heet-te	Schouten				
be.called-PAST.SG	Schouten				

'Tasman had a boatsman whose name was Schouten.'

This specificational use of *en* 'and' is also apparent with appositions introduced by *en wel*:

(6.67)

Ik	heb	een	boek	ge-kreg-en	en	wel
1SG.NOM	have:1SG	INDF.SG	book	GE-get-N	and	AFF
Het Journaal van Tasman						
'Tasman's Log'						

'I got a book, *Tasman's Log*.'

6.3 Unclear cases

This section briefly illustrates a few cases where the main vs. embedded status of clauses is not immediately clear.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

The first case is that of the colloquial Dutch embedded clauses with the verb in second position (repeated from (6.7)):

(6.68) *Colloquial Dutch*

Tasman	zei	dat	hij	had	er	geen	zin	in
Tasman	say:PAST.SG	C	3SG.M	have:PAST.SG	LOC	NEG.INDF	appetite	in

'Tasman said that he didn't feel like it.'
(*er* is the locative realization of the object pronoun *het* 'it,' a shifted complement of the preposition *in* 'in')

As in Frisian (cf. De Haan and Weerman 1986: 85f), embedded verb second is restricted to the complements of so-called bridge verbs, where the embedded clause contains the utterance's main assertion (in the sense of Hooper and Thompson 1973). A factive verb like *betreuren* 'regret' or a negative verb like *betwijfelen* 'doubt' instead of *zeggen* 'say' in (6.68) makes the sentence ungrammatical. The independent status of the embedded clause is underscored by the fact that the subject may not be enclitic to the complementizer (so *hij* in (6.68) may not be replaced by enclitic *ie*; nonenclitic weak subject pronouns like 2SG *je* are possible, though). Embedded verb second is also not possible in most adjunct clauses or in sentential subjects.

A common environment for embedded verb second clauses is found in degree resultatives:

(6.69) *Colloquial Dutch*

Tasman	was	zo	blij	dat	hij	kon
Tasman	be:PAST.SG	so	glad	C	3SG.M.NOM	can:PAST.SG
wel	jank-en					
AFF	cry-INF					

'Tasman was so happy he could cry.'

The salience of the result clause *dat hij kon wel janken* 'that he could cry' is suggested by the fact that it can be inverted with the main clause:

(6.70)

Hij	kon	wel	jank-en	zo	blij	was	Tasman
3SG.M.NOM	can:PAST.SG	AFF	cry-INF	so	glad	be:PAST.SG	Tasman

'Tasman was so happy he could cry.'

Again, a negative element in the main clause of (6.69) makes the embedded verb second impossible.

Another context in which we find embedded verb-second clauses is in the complement of *omdat* 'because,' but only if the reason given in the embedded clause is an established fact, not a conjecture. Consider:

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(6.71) Ik denk dat de bootsman het ge-daa-n
1SG.NOM think:1SG C DEF.CG.SG boatsman 3SG.N GE-do-N
heeft om-dat hij had schuld-en
have:3SG around-C 3SG.M.NOM have:PAST.SG debt-PL
'I think the boatsman did it because he was in debt.'

The adjunct clause *omdat hij had schulden* 'because he was in debt' (with verb second) can only be interpreted as giving a reason for my thinking that the boatsman did it, not as giving a reason for the boatsman to have done it. Without verb second, i.e. *omdat hij schulden had* 'because he was in debt,' the adjunct clause has the normal ambiguity of motivating either my thinking or the boatsman's actions. With verb second, the adjunct clause is interpreted as being outside the scope of the verb *denken* 'think,' hence as conveying an established fact.

Second, constructions of the type in (6.72), called *balansschikking* in the Dutch grammatical tradition, look like coordination, but in fact show many properties of subordination:

(6.72) Tasman kon geen eiland ontdek-ken of
Tasman can:PAST.SG NEG.INDF island discover-INF or
hij noem-de het naar zich-zelf
3SG.M.NOM name-PAST.SG 3SG.N to REFL-self
'Every island Tasman discovered he named after himself.'

Just like the implicative coordination in (6.65), the first member must contain a negative element, and the coordination must be disjunctive. The semantics, however, is not that of a disjunctive coordination, as the translation indicates. There is neither formal nor contentwise a parallelism between the two members of the coordination, and the second clause does not allow the kinds of ellipsis that an ordinary disjunctive coordination would:

(6.73) Tasman kon geen eiland ontdek-ken of
Tasman can:PAST.SG NEG.INDF island discover-INF or
*(hij) noem-de het naar zich-zelf
3SG.M.NOM name-PAST.SG 3SG.N to REFL-self
'Every island Tasman discovered he named after himself.'

Compare:

(6.74) Tasman is ge-bor-en in Lutjegast of (hij)
Tasman be:3SG GE-be.born-N in Lutjegast or 3SG.M.NOM
heeft er zijn jeugd door ge-bracht
have:3SG LOC POSS:3SG.M childhood through GE-bring:D
'Tasman was (either) born in Lutjegast or (he) spent his childhood there.'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

Third, the specifying coordination of the type in (6.66), repeated here, though formally a clausal conjunction, resembles an (appositive) relative clause construction in some ways. Compare the specifying coordination in (6.75) and its relative clause variant in (6.76).

(6.75) Tasman had een bootsman (en) die
Tasman have:PAST.SG INDF.SG boatsman and DEM:DIST:CG
heet-te Schouten
be.called-PAST.SG Schouten
'Tasman had a boatsman whose name was Schouten.'

(6.76) Tasman had een bootsman, die Schouten
Tasman have:PAST.SG INDF.SG boatsman REL:CG.SG Schouten
heet-te
be.called-PAST.SG
'Tasman had a boatsman whose name was Schouten.'

The similarity is increased because the conjunction in (6.75) may be left out. But there are a number of differences between specifying coordinations and bona fide relative constructions (see also Gärtner 2001 for German). First of all, the element *die* in (6.75) is not a relative pronoun but a demonstrative pronoun. This can be seen in constructions where the relative and the demonstrative pronoun differ:

(6.77) a. *Relative clause*
Tasman ontdek-te een eiland
Tasman discover-PAST.SG INDF.SG island
{waar / *daar} Maori-s woon-de-n
REL:LOC / DEM:DIST.LOC Maori-PL live-PAST-PL

b. *Specifying coordination*
Tasman ontdek-te een eiland {daar / *waar}
Tasman discover-PAST.SG INDF.SG island REL:LOC / DEM:DIST.LOC
woon-de-n Maori-s
live-PAST-PL Maori-PL
(both) 'Tasman discovered an island where Maoris lived.'

Second, the noun phrase specified by the specifying coordination clause must be nonspecific, unlike in the relative construction:

(6.78) a. *Relative clause*
Tasman ontdek-te het eiland waar de
Tasman discover-PAST.SG DEF.N.SG island REL:LOC DEF.PL
Maori-s woon-de-n
Maori-PL live-PAST-PL
'Tasman discovered the island where the Maoris lived.'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

b. *Specifying coordination*

*Tasman	ontdek-te	het	eiland	(en)
Tasman	discover-PAST.SG	DEF.N.SG	island	(and)
daar	woon-de-n	de	Maori-s	
DEM:DIST.LOC	live-PAST-PL	DEF.PL	Maori-PL	

Third, the clause containing the noun phrase specified by the specifying conjunction must assert the existence of that noun phrase's referent. As a result, the first clause cannot be a question or command, or contain a negation or an intensional verb. No such restrictions apply to regular relative constructions:

(6.79) a. *Relative clause*

Ontdek-te	Tasman	een	eiland	waar	Maori-s
discover-PAST.SG	Tasman	INDF.SG	island	REL:LOC	Maori-PL
woon-de-n?					
live-PAST-PL					

'Did Tasman discover an island where Maoris lived?'

b. *Specifying coordination*

*Ontdek-te	Tasman	een	eiland	(en)	daar
discover-PAST.SG	Tasman	INDF.SG	island	and	DEM:DIST.LOC
woon-de-n	Maori-s?				
live-PAST-PL	Maori-PL				

These properties of specifying coordinations conspire to yield presentational existential constructions as a highly favorable context for their use (see Brandt 1990: 49). Indeed, in the dialect survey of Winkler (1894), where consultants were asked to retell the story of the prodigal son, many respondents replaced the target sentence (6.80a) with one of the variants in (6.80b):

(6.80) a. Iemand had twee zon-en
someone have:PAST.SG two son-PL
'Someone had two sons.'

b. Er was iemand (en) die had
LOC be:PAST.SG someone and DEM:DIST.HUM have:PAST.SG
twee zon-en
two son-PL
'Someone had two sons.'

Finally, the following constructions show unexpected subject–verb inversion in what are not obviously main clauses:

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(6.81) *Concessive*

Tasman	voer	door,	(ook)	al	**had**	
Tasman	sail:PAST.SG	on	also	albeit	have:PAST.SG	
hij	heimwee					
3SG.M.NOM	homesickness					

'Tasman sailed on, even if he was homesick.'

(6.82) *Comparative correlative*

Hoe	ver-der	Tasman	voer,	des	te	meer
how	far-COMP	Tasman	sail:PAST.SG	so	much	more
verlang-de	**hij**	naar	huis			
long-PAST.SG	3SG.M.NOM	towards	house			

'The farther Tasman sailed, the more he longed for home.'

In (6.81) the inversion of *had* and *hij* is obligatory, even if other concessive particles such as *hoewel* and *ofschoon* force the embedded clause word order (with the verb at the end). In (6.82) the embedded clause word order is an alternative possibility.

6.4 Ellipsis

6.4.1 General remarks

With the exception of ellipsis in noun phrases (section 6.4.2), and with few counterexamples, ellipsis in Dutch is restricted to coordination contexts. Dutch lacks verb phrase deletion of the type familiar from English, where a dummy auxiliary appears to license the empty verb phrase (*[e]*):

(6.83) Tasman came to Australia long before Cook did [e]

Related phenomena like antecedent-contained deletion (6.84) and pseudogapping (6.85) are also absent from the syntax of Dutch:

(6.84) Cook visited every island Tasman did [e]

(6.85) Tasman discovered Tasmania before Cook did [e] the Cook Islands

To express VP-anaphora, Dutch uses a form of the verb *do* plus demonstrative *dat* 'that,' as in:

(6.86)

Tasman	bereik-te	Australië	voor	Cook	*dat*	*deed*
Tasman	reach-PAST.SG	Australia	for	Cook	DEM:DIST.N.SG	do:PAST.SG

'Tasman reached Australia before Cook did.'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

But this strategy is not extended to antecedent-contained deletion or pseudogapping:

(6.87) *Cook bezocht elk eiland dat Tasman
Cook visit:PAST.SG each island REL:SG.N Tasman
(dat) deed
DEM:DIST.N.SG do:PAST.SG
(intended: 'Cook visited every island Tasman did.')

(6.88) *Tasman ontdek-te Tasmanië voor Cook (dat)
Tasman discover-PAST.SG Tasmania for Cook DEM:DIST.N.SG
de Cook-eilanden deed
DEF.PL Cook Islands do:PAST.SG
(intended: 'Tasman discovered Tasmania before Cook did the Cook Islands.')

Another construction resembling VP-deletion is illustrated in (6.89) with the modal verbs *kunnen* 'can' (abilitative) and *willen* 'want' (volitional):

(6.89) a. Tasman deed wat hij {kon /wou}
Tasman do:PAST.SG Q.INAN 3SG.M.NOM can/want:PAST.SG
'Tasman did what he could / wanted.'

b. Tasman voer zo hard hij {kon/wou}
Tasman sail:PAST.SG so hard 3SG.M.NOM can/want:PAST.SG
'Tasman sailed as fast as he could/wanted to.'

But these modal verbs do not allow VP-deletion in ordinary coordination contexts:

(6.90) Tasman kon niet zwem-men maar Cook
Tasman can:PAST.SG NEG swim-INF but Cook
kon *(dat) wel
can:PAST.SG DEM:DIST.N.SG AFF
'Tasman could not swim, but Cook could.'

As an aside, note the variant of the construction in (6.89) in (6.91), where the free relative is contained within a PP, the head of which is apparently elided (*over waarover* > *waarover*):

(6.91) Tasman praat waar-over hij wil
Tasman talk:SG Q:LOC-about 3SG.M.NOM want:SG
'Tasman talks about whatever he wants.'
(*waar* is the locative variant of *wat* 'what,' the complement of *over* 'about')

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

The reduction of the prepositions also occurs when the verb is repeated:

(6.92) Ik doe wat ik doe en ik praat
1SG.NOM do:1SG Q:INAN 1SG do:1SG and 1SG talk:SG
waar-over ik praat
Q:LOC-about 1SG talk:SG
'I do whatever I do and I talk about whatever I talk about.'

The kind of ellipsis we see in (6.91–92) is arguably a form of haplology, induced by the double presence of the preposition. Haplology is also evident in (6.63) and in examples like (6.93), where multiple occurrences of locative *er* are reduced to one:

(6.93) Tasman is er speciaal voor naar toe ge-gaa-n
Tasman be:3SG LOC special for towards to GE-go-N
'Tasman went there (*er*) especially for it (*er*).'

In (6.93), *er* is the locative variant of *het* 'it,' which functions as the complement of both *voor* 'for' and *naar toe* 'to, towards.'

To conclude this section, note that conjunction reduction (called *samentrekking* 'contraction' in the Dutch grammatical tradition), discussed in section 6.4.3, productively applies to parts of words in Dutch:

(6.94) a. land- en tuin-bouw
land and garden-culture
'agriculture and horticulture'
(the hyphen next to *land* is an orthographic convention indicating conjunction reduction below the word level)

b. in binnen- en buiten-land
in inside and outside-land
'at home and abroad'

Forward conjunction reduction of this type is more artificial and not clearly productive:

(6.95) dorp-s-strat-en en -plein-en
village-LNK-street-PL and square-PL
'village streets and (village) squares'
(the morpheme *-s-* is a linker used in one type of compounds)

Backward conjunction reduction also applies to a mixture of words and phrases:

(6.96) gemeente-(politiek) en provincial-e politiek
community-politics and provincial-CG.SG politics
'community and provincial politics'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

The remaining subsections discuss ellipsis in noun phrases (6.4.2), conjunction reduction (6.4.3), gapping (6.4.4), and residual cases of ellipsis (6.4.5).

6.4.2 Noun ellipsis

Dutch uses various strategies for not spelling out a discourse-familiar head noun, comparable to the English cases in (6.97):

(6.97) a. a/the new *one(s)*
b. each *one*
c. that/these *one(s)*
d. all/both *[e]*
e. two *[e]*
f. Cook's *[e]*

Standard Dutch does not make use of the strategy that replaces the head noun by *one* (Dutch *één* [en]), except when a bare SG indefinite noun phrase is being replaced:

(6.98) a. Tasman ontdek-te een eiland
Tasman discover-PAST.SG INDF.SG island
'Tasman discovered an island.'

b. Tasman ontdek-te er één
Tasman discover-PAST.SG LOC one
'Tasman discovered one.'

As can be seen, the element *one* (*één*) in Dutch is accompanied by the locative element *er* 'there.' PL indefinite noun phrases are likewise replaced by *er een paar* [there a couple] 'some':

(6.99) Tasman ontdek-te er een paar
Tasman discover-PAST.SG LOC INDF.SG couple
'Tasman discovered some.'

The *er*-strategy is also applied with numerals and quantifiers (where English does not use *one(s)*):

(6.100) Tasman ontdek-te er {vier/veel}
Tasman discover-PAST.SG LOC four/many
'Tasman discovered four/many.'

With adjectives, Dutch simply leaves out the head noun:

(6.101) de nieuw-e
DEF:CG.SG/PL new-DEF/PL
'the new one(s)'

The schwa ending to the adjective found in the PL, in the definite SG and in the common gender indefinite SG, is retained under noun ellipsis. With an elliptical

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

neuter indefinite noun, the expected uninflected adjective (see (2.25)) is ungrammatical, and speakers appear unsure whether they can inflect the adjective with schwa or not (see Corver and Van Koppen 2009):

(6.102)

een	nieuw	eiland	>	een	*nieuw / ?nieuw-e
INDF.SG	new	island_{N}		INDF.SG	new / new-E

As discussed by Barbiers (2005), some Dutch dialects do use the *one* strategy in SG indefinite noun phrases with an adjective and an elliptical head:

(6.103) *Northern Brabantish*

ɣə	zèt	ən-ən	ariɣ-ən	in-nə
2SG	be:2SG	INDF-M.SG	funny-INDF.M.SG	one-M.SG

'You're a funny one.'

This is restricted to indefinite noun phrase ellipsis.

With possessives, no ellipsis takes place. The noun phrase is replaced by a demonstrative, and the possessor is expressed by a *van*-PP:

(6.104)

de	reis	van	Tasman	>	die	van	Tasman
DEF.CG.SG	voyage	of	Tasman		DEM:DIST.CG	of	Tasman
'Tasman's voyage'					'Tasman's'		

With indefinite noun phrases, *er één* ('LOC one') is used instead of a demonstrative. With prenominal possessors, no ellipsis or replacement is possible:

(6.105)

Tasman	z'n	reis	>	*Tasman	z'n	(die)
Tasman	PCL:M.SG	voyage		Tasman	PCL:M.SG	DEM:DIST.SG
'Tasman's voyage'				(intended: 'Tasman's')		

Likewise, noun phrases modified by a demonstrative show no ellipsis, but replacement by a bare demonstrative:

(6.106)

die	eiland-en	>	die
dem:DIST.PL	island-PL		DEM:DIST.PL
'those islands'			'those'

That this is not ellipsis but replacement is suggested by the observation that gender features may be lost in the process:

(6.107)

dat	schip	>	die /*dat
DEM:DIST.N.SG	ship_{N}		DEM:DIST.SG/DIST.N.SG
'that ship'			'that one'

Using *dat* when pointing to a ship means 'that thing I'm pointing to,' not 'that one.' Note that some dialects here combine the demonstrative with a determiner:

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(6.108) *Northern Brabantish*

(*dən)	die-ə	mens	>	dən	die-ən
DEF:M.SG	DEM:DIST-M.SG	man		DEF:M.SG	DEM:DIST-M.SG
'that man'				'that one'	

Another strategy avoiding ellipsis involves replacement by a pronoun and a floating quantifier. This strategy is used with noun phrases modified by the quantifiers *alle* 'all' and *beide* 'both.' The floating variants of these are *allemaal* 'all' and *allebei* 'both' (see section 4.3.3):

(6.109) Tasman heeft {alle / beide} eiland-en bezocht >
Tasman have:3SG all / both island-PL GE:visit:D
'Tasman visited { all the / both } islands.'
Tasman heeft ze {allemaal / allebei} bezocht
Tasman have:3SG OCL:3PL all/both:FQ GE:visit:D
'Tasman visited all/both of them.'

Ellipsis in noun phrases in coordination contexts is discussed in section 6.4.3.

6.4.3 Conjunction reduction

Conjunction reduction takes place when peripheral elements of coordinated phrases are expressed only once:

(6.110) a. *Forward reduction (i.e. the **peripheral element** is left out in the second member)*
Tasman werd ge-bor-en in Lutjegast
Tasman PASS.AUX:PAST.SG GE-give.birth-N in Lutjegast
en — stierf in Batavia
and die:PAST.SG in Batavia
'Tasman was born in Lutjegast and died in Batavia.'

b. *Backward reduction (i.e. the **peripheral element** is left out in the first member)*
Tasman heeft Tasmanië — en Cook heeft
Tasman have:3SG Tasmania and Cook have:3SG
de Cook-eilanden **ontdek-t**
DEF.PL Cook Islands GE:discover-D
'Tasman discovered Tasmania and Cook discovered the Cook Islands.'

Conjunction reduction is impossible when the element left out is not peripheral (with the exception of the case of (9.42b) discussed in section 9.2):

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(6.111) a. In Lutjegast werd **Tasman** ge-bor-en en
in Lutjegast PASS.AUX:PAST.SG Tasman GE-give.birth-N and
*(Tasman) stierf in Batavia
Tasman die:PAST.SG in Batavia
'Tasman was born in Lutjegast and died in Batavia.'

b. Tasman heeft *(ge-probeer-d) Tasmanië te ontdek-ken
Tasman have:3SG GE-try-D Tasmania te discover-INF
en Cook heeft ge-probeer-d de Cook-eilanden
and Cook have:3SG GE-try-D DEF.PL Cook Islands
te ontdek-ken
to discover-INF
'Tasman tried to discover Tasmania and Cook tried to discover the Cook Islands.'

Not to be confused with conjunction reduction is gapping, illustrated in (6.112), where the element left out need not be peripheral:

(6.112) *Gapping*
Tasman ontdek-te Tasmanië en Cook (ontdek-te)
Tasman discover-PAST.SG Tasmania and Cook discover-PAST.SG
de Cook-eilanden
DEF.PL Cook Islands
'Tasman discovered Tasmania and Cook (discovered) the Cook Islands.'

See the next subsection (6.4.4) for gapping in Dutch.

In forward conjunction reduction (6.110a) the peripheral element is on the left, and in backward conjunction reduction (6.110b) the peripheral element is on the right. In forward conjunction reduction, the peripheral element need not be a constituent:

(6.113) **Tasman is** in Lutjegast ge-bor-en en — in
Tasman be:3SG in Lutjegast GE-give.birth-N and in
Batavia ge-storv-en
Batavia GE-die-N
'Tasman was born in Lutjegast and died in Batavia.'

The string *Tasman is* in (6.113) does not pass any constituency tests, while the string *is in Lutjegast geboren* does (for instance, in allowing substitution by *ook* 'also'). Conversely, the nonreduced part (the 'residue') in forward conjunction reduction must be a constituent:

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(6.114) *Tasman **heeft** **twee** reiz-en ge-maak-t en —
Tasman have:3SG two voyage-PL GE-make-D and
eiland-en ontdek-t
island-PL GE:discover-D
(intended: 'Tasman made two voyages and discovered two islands.')

In (6.114), *reizen gemaakt* 'made voyages' does not make a constituent without the numeral *twee* 'two' modifying *reizen* 'voyages,' and forward conjunction reduction is impossible with *twee* a part of the peripheral element (i.e. understood as part of the left-out material in the second member, hence modifying *eilanden* 'islands' as well as *reizen* 'voyages').

The fact that the residue must be a constituent in forward conjunction suggests that coordination in this type of construction takes place at the residue constituent level, and not at the clause level. If so, forward conjunction reduction involves no ellipsis.

In contrast, backward conjunction reduction requires neither the peripheral element nor the residue to have constituent status:

(6.115) Tasman heeft twee — en Cook heeft drie
Tasman have:3SG two and Cook has:3SG three
reiz-en **ge-maak-t**
voyage-PL GE-make-D
'Tasman made two voyages and Cook three.'

Here, neither the peripheral element *reizen gemaakt* 'made voyages' (crucially missing the numeral *twee/drie* 'two/three' modifying *reizen* 'voyages') nor the residue *Tasman heeft twee* 'Tasman has two' (or *Cook heeft drie* 'Cook has three') forms a constituent.

Backward conjunction reduction is possible across categories:

(6.116) *Noun phrase*
Tasman z'n eer-st-e — en Cook
Tasman PCL:3SG.M ere-SUP-DEF.SG and Cook
z'n twee-d-e **reis**
PCL:3SG.M two-ORD-DEF.SG voyage
'Tasman's first and Cook's second voyage'

(6.117) *Verb phrase*
(Tasman heeft) snel Tasmanië — en nog snel-ler
Tasman have:3SG quick Tasmania and still quick-COMP
Nieuw Zeeland **bereik-t**
New Zealand GE:reach-D
'Tasman reached Tasmania quickly and New Zealand even quicker.'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(6.118) *Adjective phrase*
(een) in de og-en van Tasman goed — maar in de
INDF.SG in DEF.PL eye-PL of Tasman good but in DEF.PL
og-en van de VOC slecht **uit-ge-voer-d-e** (opdracht)
eye-PL of DEF.CG.SG VOC bad out-GE-lead-D-INDF.CG.SG assignment
'an assignment that was executed well according to Tasman, but poorly according to the VOC [Dutch East India Company]'
(*uitvoeren* 'execute,' lit. 'export'; *uitgevoerd* is an adjectivalization; see section 5.4)

(6.119) *Preposition phrase*
opdracht-briev-en van — en rapport-en aan **de** **VOC**
assignment-letter-PL of — and report-PL on DEF.CG.SG VOC
'letters of assignment by and reports to the VOC [Dutch East India Company]'

Forward conjunction reduction is also generally possible across categories, although the resulting construction may appear somewhat contrived (I'm not including cases where a head takes a coordinated complement, although these are the same if forward conjunction reduction does not involve ellipsis):

(6.120) *Noun phrase*
de **divers-e** koraalrif-fen voor de kust en —
DEF.PL diverse-PL coral.reef-PL for DEF.CG.SG coast and
eiland-en verder-op
island-PL further-up
'the various coral reefs before the coast and islands further out'

(6.121) *Verb phrase*
(Tasman heeft) **snel** het anker ge-licht en —
Tasman have:3SG quick DEF.N.SG anchor GE-weigh:D and
de zeil-en ge-hes-en
DEF.PL sail-PL GE-hoist-N
'(Tasman) quickly weighed the anchor and hoisted sail.'

(6.122) *Adjective phrase*
(Tasman was) **erg** blij met de kokosnot-en en —
Tasman be:PAST.SG very glad with DEF.PL coconut-PL and
tevreden over de varken-s
satisfied over DEF.PL pig-PL
'Tasman was very happy with the coconuts and very pleased with the pigs.'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(6.123) *Preposition phrase*

enkel-e	**mijl-en**	ten	westen	van	Nieuw Zeeland	en	—	
single-PL	mile-PL	to.the	west-NML	of	New Zealand	and		
ten	oost-en	van	Australië					
to.the	east-NML	of	Australia					

'a few miles west of New Zealand and east of Australia'

In each of the examples (6.120–123) the peripheral (boldface) element may be interpreted as modifying both members of the coordinated construction following it (so that in (6.122), for instance, Tasman was very happy *and* very pleased). But that reading is lost when *en* 'and' is doubled (see (6.52)), and the first *en* is placed before the peripheral element:

(6.124)

(Tasman was)	EN	**erg**	blij	met	de	kokosnot-en	
Tasman be:PAST.SG	and	very	glad	with	DEF.PL	coconut-PL	
EN	tevreden	over	de	varken-s			
and	satisfied	over	DEF.PL	pig-PL			

'Tasman was both very happy with the coconuts and (not: very) pleased with the pigs.'

With some forward conjunction reduction examples, *en* doubling is possible, but then the first *en* must be placed after the peripheral material (with examples like (6.122) the result is less felicitous):

(6.125)

(Tasman heeft)	**snel**	EN	het	anker	ge-licht	EN	
Tasman have:3SG	quick	and	DEF.N.SG	anchor	GE-weigh:D	and	
de	zeil-en	ge-hes-en					
DEF.PL	sail-PL	GE-hoist-N					

'(Tasman) quickly both weighed the anchor and hoisted sail.'

In (6.125), as in (6.121), the adverb *snel* 'quickly' modifies both the weighing and the hoisting event. The placement of the doubling conjunctions again suggests that forward conjunction reduction involves coordination at the residue constituent level.

Doubling conjunction with backward conjunction reduction is also possible, illustrated in (6.126), but here the placement of the conjunctions does not allow for any conclusions as to the constituent status of the residue (i.e. the peripheral material may be included in the second conjunct and elided in the first).

(6.126)

EN	Tasman	z'n	eer-st-e	—	EN	Cook
and	Tasman	PCL:3SG.M	ere-SUP-DEF.SG		and	Cook
z'n		twee-d-e	**reis**			
PCL:3SG.M		two-ORD-DEF.SG	voyage			

'both Tasman's first and Cook's second voyage'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

6.4.4 *Gapping*

Gapping in Dutch is illustrated in (6.127), repeated from (6.112).

(6.127)
Tasman **ontdek-te** Tasmanië en Cook — de Cook-eilanden
Tasman discover-PAST.SG Tasmania and Cook DEF.PL Cook Islands
'Tasman discovered Tasmania and Cook (discovered) the Cook Islands.'

In (6.127), the finite verb *ontdekte* 'discovered' is missing from the second of the two coordinated clauses. In contrast with conjunction reduction, neither the gap nor its antecedent needs to be peripheral in its clause. It also follows that the residue need not be a constituent.

What is crucially missing from the gapped clause is the element of finiteness. Gapping of a nonfinite verb, while retaining the finite auxiliary, is impossible:

(6.128) *Tasman heeft Tasmanië **ontdek-t** en Cook heeft
Tasman have:3SG Tasmania GE:discover-D and Cook have:3SG
de Cook-eilanden —
DEF.PL Cook Islands
(intended: 'Tasman discovered Tasmania and Cook (discovered) the Cook Islands.')

In conjunction reduction, finiteness plays no role (see (6.115)).

Other elements may be gapped in addition to the finite verb. There is no requirement that the gaps be contiguous:

(6.129) Tasman **heeft** Tasmanië **ontdek-t** en Cook — de
Tasman have:3SG Tasmania GE:discover-D and Cook DEF.PL
Cook-eilanden —
Cook Islands
'Tasman discovered Tasmania and Cook (discovered) the Cook Islands.'

(6.130) Tasman **gaf** de Maori-s **kral-en** en Cook —
Tasman give:PAST.SG DEF.PL Maori-PL bead-PL and Cook
de Tahitian-en —
DEF.PL Tahitian-PL
'Tasman gave the Maoris beads and Cook the Tahitians.'

As the examples show, the gapped clause (i.e. the residue) may contain a string of phrases. The only requirement on the string appears to be that each member of the string must present an alternative to a focused element in the first clause (a 'focus alternative'). If the gapped clause contains other material, in addition to focus alternatives, the result is ungrammatical:

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(6.131) … dat Tasman Tasmanië ontdekt-te en (*dat) Cook
C Tasman Tasmania discover-PAST.SG and C Cook
de Cook-eilanden
DEF.PL Cook Islands
'… that Tasman discovered Tasmania and Cook the Cook Islands.'

In (6.131), the gapped clause may not contain the complementizer *dat* 'that,' which is not a focus alternative to an element in the first clause.

As noted by Hankamer (1971) for English and Neijt (1979: 23f) for Dutch, gapping is subject to island conditions, in the sense that the gapped material may not be part of a coordinate structure, subject clause, or complex noun phrase (cf. Ross 1967; see section 7.6.2). The following example illustrates (cf. (6.127)):

(6.132) *[Dat Tasman Tasmanië **ontdek-te**] **is een**
C Tasman Tasmania discover-PAST.SG be:3SG INDF.SG
feit en [(dat) Cook de Cook-eilanden —] —
fact and C Cook DEF.PL Cook Islands

In (6.132), the gapped material *ontdekte is een feit* 'discovered is a fact' contains *ontdekte* 'discovered,' which is part of the subject clause *dat Tasman Tasmanië ontdekte* 'that Tasman discovered Tasmania.'

Gapping in Dutch always operates forward (with the gap in the second clause):

(6.133) * Tasman — Tasmanië en Cook **ontdek-te**
Tasman Tasmania and Cook discover-PAST.SG
de Cook-eilanden
DEF.PL Cook Islands
(intended: 'Tasman discovered Tasmania and Cook (discovered) the Cook Islands.')

(6.133) differs from (6.127) only in that the gap and its antecedent *ontdekte* 'discovered' have changed places. In embedded clauses, both forward and backward gapping appear to be possible, but on closer inspection 'backward gapping' (6.134b) shows the properties of backward conjunction reduction.

(6.134) a. … dat Tasman Tasmanië **ontdek-te** en Cook
C Tasman Tasmania discover-PAST.SG and Cook
de Cook-eilanden —
DEF.PL Cook Islands

b. … dat Tasman Tasmanië — en Cook de
C Tasman Tasmania and Cook DEF.PL
Cook-eilanden **ontdek-te**
Cook Islands discover-PAST.SG

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(both) '… that Tasman discovered Tasmania and Cook (discovered) the Cook Islands.'

That (6.134b) is different from gapping can be shown when we add a postverbal element (a clause or a PP). While this leaves the acceptability of (6.134a) unaffected, (6.134b) becomes ungrammatical:

(6.135) a. … dat Tasman Tasmanië **ontdek-te** in 1642 en
c Tasman Tasmania discover-PAST.SG in 1642 and
Cook de Cook-eilanden — in 1773
Cook DEF.PL Cook Islands in 1773
'… that Tasman discovered Tasmania in 1642 and Cook the Cook Islands in 1773.'

b. *… dat Tasman Tasmanië — in 1642 en Cook de
c Tasman Tasmania in 1642 and Cook DEF.PL
Cook-eilanden **ontdek-te** in 1773
Cook Islands discover-PAST.SG in 1773
(the PP *in 1642* must be positioned to the right of the gap because of the required parallelism with the second clause)

In (6.135) the element triggering the gap (*ontdekte* 'discovered') is not peripheral, which is required in conjunction reduction but not in gapping. Other tests confirm the conjunction reduction status of 'backward gapping' in Dutch. First, the gap must correspond to a constituent in forward gapping, but not in 'backward gapping' / conjunction reduction:

(6.136) a. *… dat Tasman Tasmanië voor **de** **Spanjaard-en**
c Tasman Tasmania for DEF.PL Spanish-PL
ontdek-te en Cook de Cook-eilanden na —
discover-PAST.SG and Cook DEF.PL Cook Islands after
(intended: '… that Tasman discovered Tasmania before the Spanish, and that Cook discovered the Cook Islands after the Spanish.')

b. … dat Tasman Tasmanië voor — en Cook de
c Tasman Tasmania for and Cook DEF.PL
Cook-eilanden na **de** **Spanjaard-en** **ontdek-te**
Cook Islands after DEF.PL Spanish-PL discover-PAST.SG
'… that Tasman discovered Tasmania before the Spanish, and that Cook discovered the Cook Islands after the Spanish.'

In (6.136), *de Spanjaarden* 'the Spanish' forms a constituent with the preposition *na* 'after,' not with the verb *ontdekte* 'discovered.' While this affects the possibilities of (forward) gapping in (6.136a), 'backward gapping' (6.136b) remains

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

possible. As we saw in the previous subsection (see (6.115)), backward conjunction reduction does not require the elided material to form a constituent.

'Backward gapping' is also impossible when the gaps are not contiguous, unlike true gapping:

(6.137) a. … dat Tasman **de** **Maori-s** kral-en **gaf**
C Tasman DEF.PL Maori-PL bead-PL give:PAST.SG
en Cook — spiegel-s —
and Cook mirror-PL
'… that Tasman gave the Maoris beads and Cook (gave the Maoris) mirrors.'

b. *… dat Tasman — kral-en — en Cook **de**
C Tasman — bead-PL — and Cook DEF.PL
Maori-s spiegel-s **gaf**
Maori-PL mirror-PL give:PAST.SG
(intended: same as a.)

With conjunction reduction, the gap and its antecedent must both be peripheral (modulo cases like (9.42b)), hence neither may be discontinuous.

Finally, the gap in 'backward gapping', unlike (forward) gapping, may include material that crosses island boundaries:

(6.138)
a. *… dat (EN) [dat Tasman Tasmanië **ontdek-te**] **waar** **is**
C and C Tasman Tasmania discover-PAST.SG true be:3SG
EN [dat Cook de Cook-eilanden —] —
and C Cook DEF.SG Cook Islands
(intended: '… that both that Tasman discovered Tasmania is true and that Cook discovered the Cook Islands is true.')
(brackets indicate the clausal subjects *inside* the two coordinated clauses)

b. … dat (EN) [dat Tasman Tasmanië —] — EN [dat Cook
C and C Tasman Tasmania and C Cook
de Cook-eilanden **ontdek-te**] **waar** **is**
DEF.SG Cook Islands discover-PAST.SG true be:3SG
'… that both that Tasman discovered Tasmania is true and that Cook discovered the Cook Islands is true.'

As a final point, note that gapping (GP) and conjunction reduction (CR) may easily be combined in a single sentence:

(6.139) Tasman **heeft** Tasmanië — en Cook — de
Tasman have:3SG Tasmania CR and Cook GP DEF.PL

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

Cook-eilanden **ontdek-t**
Cook Islands GE:discover-D
'Tasman discovered Tasmania and Cook discovered the Cook Islands.'

Likewise, gapping (GP) may be combined with noun ellipsis [e]:

(6.140) Tasman **heeft** twee eiland-en **ontdek-t** en Cook —
Tasman have:3SG two island-PL GE:discover-D and Cook GP
drie [e] —
three GP
'Tasman discovered two islands and Cook three.'

Without gapping, the second clause in (6.140) looks like in (6.141) (cf. 6.98b)), where the focus alternatives are *Cook* and *drie [e]* 'three.'

(6.141) Cook heeft er drie [e] ontdek-t
Cook have:3SG LOC three GE:discover-D
'Cook discovered three.'

6.4.5 Other ellipsis phenomena

This subsection briefly notes some cases of reduction in the complement of a propositional verb (*say*, *think*, *wonder*, etc.).

First, the clausal complement of a propositional verb may be reduced to a statement of pure negation or affirmation, as in English *I think not*. In Dutch, such reduction involves the negative and affirmative adverbs (*niet* and *wel*), not the negative and affirmative single answer responses (*nee* and *ja*). In addition, the preposition *van* 'of' must be inserted:

(6.142) a. Tasman dacht van niet / wel
Tasman think:PAST.SG of NEG / AFF
'Tasman {didn't think so / thought so}.'

b. Tasman zei van niet / wel
Tasman say:PAST.SG of NEG / AFF
'Tasman {denied/affirmed}.'

An alternative formulation of (6.142a) involves an object clitic *het* 'it,' but this alternative is not available elsewhere (cf. (6.143b)):

(6.143) a. Tasman dacht het niet / wel
Tasman think:PAST.SG OCL.N.SG NEG / AFF
(ambiguous) 'Tasman {didn't think so / thought so}.'
'Tasman {didn't/did} have these thoughts.'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

b. Tasman zei het niet / wel
Tasman say:PAST.SG OCL.N.SG NEG / AFF
(unambiguous) (not: 'Tasman {denied / affirmed}.')
'Tasman {didn't/did} say these things.'

The complement of a propositional verb may also be reduced to a single focused constituent:

(6.144) a. Ik dacht dat TASMAN Tasmanië ontdek-t
1SG.NOM think:PAST.SG C Tasman Tasmania GE:discover-D
had >
have:PAST.SG

b. Ik dacht TASMAN
1SG.NOM think:PAST.SG Tasman
'I thought that Tasman discovered Tasmania.' > 'I thought Tasman.'

(6.144b) would be a normal answer (apart from the hedging) to the question *Who discovered Tasmania?*.

This type of reduction is possible only with those verbs that take embedded complements with main clause word order (i.e. with the finite verb in second position; see section 6.3). It follows that the main assertion in (6.144b) is the embedded part *Tasman*, not the main part *I thought*. Note in connection with this that (6.144b) has the distribution of a noun phrase, e.g. in that it may be used as a subject (6.145a) or in the complement of a preposition (6.145b):

(6.145)
a. Ik dacht TASMAN heeft Tasmanië ontdek-t
1SG.NOM think:PAST.SG Tasman have:3SG Tasmania GE:discover-D
'I guess it was Tasman that discovered Tasmania.'

b. Tasmanië is ontdek-t door ik dacht TASMAN
Tasmania be:3SG GE:discover-D through 1SG.NOM think:PAST.SG Tasman
'Tasmania was discovered by Tasman, I guess.'

Sluicing (reduction of a complement clause to a wh-phrase) in Dutch is illustrated in (6.146):

(6.146) a. Iemand heeft Tasmanië ontdek-t maar ik
someone have:3SG Tasmania GE:discover-D but 1SG.NOM
weet niet **wie**
know:SG NEG Q:HUM
'Someone discovered Tasmania, but I don't know who.'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

b. Tasman heeft verschillend-e eiland-en ontdek-t maar
Tasman have:3SG various-PL island-PL GE:discover-D but
ik zou niet wet-en **welk-e**
1SG.NOM MOD:PAST.SG NEG know-INF which-PL
'Tasman discovered a number of islands, but I wouldn't know which.'

The boldface wh-element in (6.146) (the 'sluice') displays number and gender agreement when understood to be construed with a noun, as in (6.146b). With singular neuter nouns, the *-e* ending must be absent, unlike in noun ellipsis contexts, where speakers are unsure what to do (cf. (6.102)):

(6.147) Tasman heeft een eiland ontdek-t maar ik
Tasman have:3SG INDF.SG island_{N} GE:discover-D but 1SG.NOM
weet niet welk-(*e)
know:SG NEG which-E
'Tasman discovered an island, but I don't know which.'

In fragment replies, the schwa ending may be present or absent (with an understood indefinite singular neuter noun, elsewhere it is always present), depending on whether the referent of the noun is present or not. Compare:

(6.148) [no islands on display]
A: Tasman heeft een eiland ontdek-t.
Tasman have:3SG INDF.SG island GE:discover-D
B: O ja? Welk-(*e)?
O AFF which-E
A: 'Tasman discovered an island.'
B: 'Is that so? Which?'

(6.149) [islands are on display, say on a map or from a plane]
A: Tasman heeft één van deze eiland-en ontdek-t
Tasman have:3SG one of DEM:PROX.PL island-PL GE:discover-D
B: O ja? Welk-*(e)?
O AFF which-E
A: 'Tasman discovered one of these islands.'
B: 'Is that so? Which one?'

This suggests that a distinction be made between reduction in sluicing and in fragment replying.

Sluicing with prepositional phrases requires that the preposition be included in the sluice:

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008

(6.150) Tasman hield een journaal bij, maar ik
Tasman hold:PAST.SG INDF.SG log by but 1SG.NOM
weet niet waar *(van)
know:SG NEG WH:LOC of
'Tasman kept a log, but I don't know what of.'
(*waar* is the locative realization of *wat* 'what'; *bij-houden* 'keep')

In unreduced clauses, both stranding and pied-piping are possible:

(6.151) (same context as (6.150))
… maar ik weet niet waar (van) hij
but 1SG.NOM know:SG NEG WH:LOC of 3SG.M.NOM
een journaal (van) bij hield
INDF.SG log of by hold:PAST.SG
'…but I don't know what he kept a log of.'

Another difference between sluicing and unreduced complements is that in sluicing the replacement of a gender-marked demonstrative by a locative (e.g. *wat* > *waar*) in the context of a preposition is not obligatory:

(6.152) (same context)
… maar ik weet niet van wat (*hij
but 1SG.NOM know:SG NEG of WH:N 3SG.M.NOM
een journaal bij hield)
INDF.SG log by hold:PAST.SG
'…but I don't know what he kept a log of.'

A final phenomenon to be noted in connection with sluicing, reported and discussed in Van Craenenbroeck (2004), is that some dialects add a (stressed) demonstrative to the sluice (a similar phenomenon is reported for Frisian by J. Hoekstra 1993):

(6.153) *Southern Brabantish* (*Van Craenenbroeck 2004: 13*)
Jef eid iemand ge-zie-n, mo ik weet nie
Jef have:3SG someone GE-see-N but 1SG.NOM know:SG NEG
wou da
who DEM:N
'Jeff saw someone, but I don't know who.'

As Van Craenenbroeck (2004: 17–19) notes, the demonstrative appears only with 'minimal wh-phrases' (wh-pronouns or wh-pronouns in combination with a preposition), and is incongruous when the statement introducing the sluice represents a known fact.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 14 Nov 2026 at 11:47:52, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977763.008