

# The Netherlands





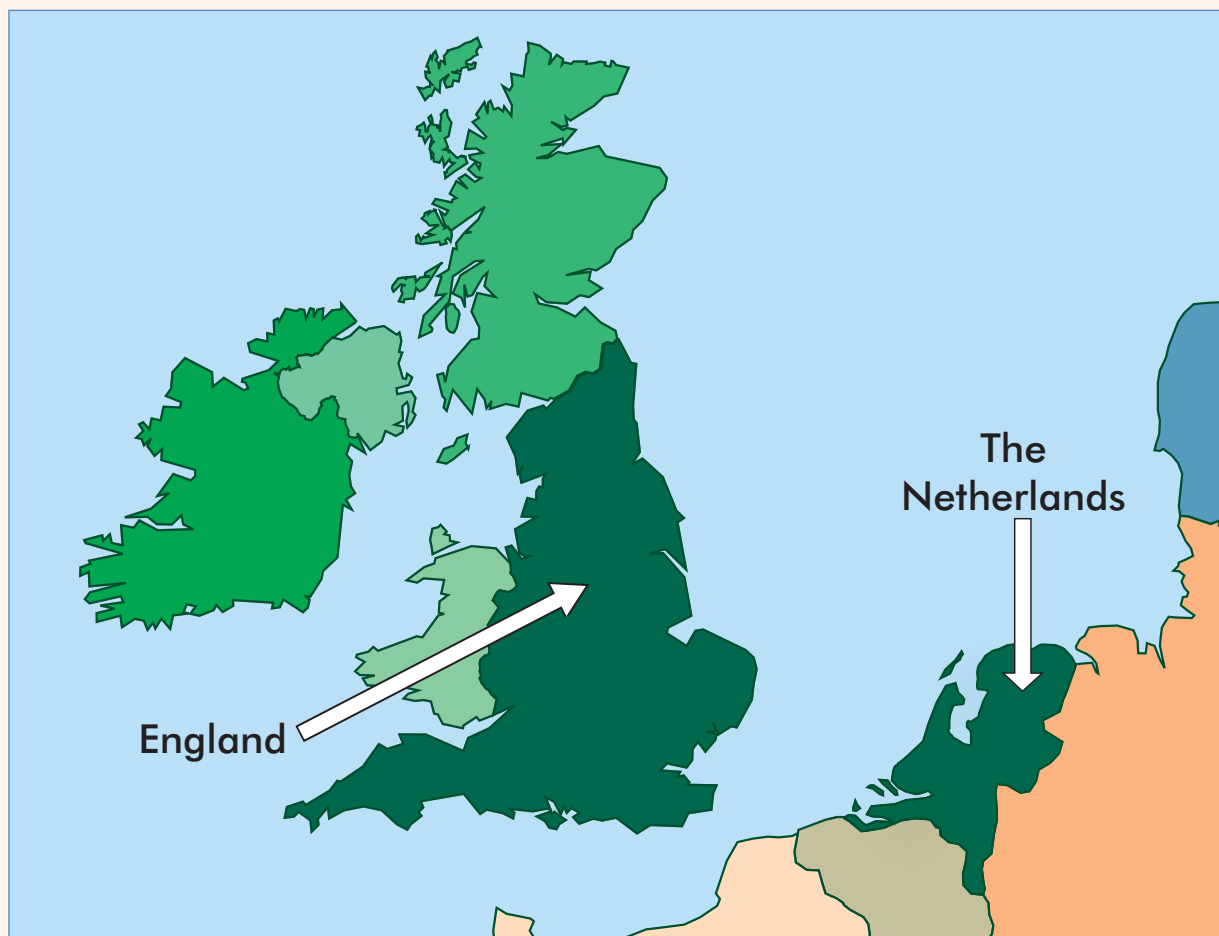
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Words that are in **bold** print are explained in the glossary.

# Introduction

The Netherlands is a country not too far from England. Sometimes people call it Holland, but the Netherlands is the proper name for the whole country.

**FACT**

The people in the Netherlands are called Dutch people. The main language they speak is also called Dutch.

**FACT**

It often rains in the Netherlands, and it can also be very windy.

## Water everywhere!

Water has always been an important part of people's lives in the Netherlands, because there is so much of it. There are many rivers and lakes, and a lot of the land is next to the sea.

Having water all around can cause problems. In the past, there were often **floods**, when water from rivers or the sea rushed onto the land and into streets and houses. People living in the Netherlands also had problems building on some of the land, because the land is very wet.

The Dutch people had to find ways of protecting themselves and their homes from all the water.



**These flats are next to a canal. A lot of Dutch people live near to water.**

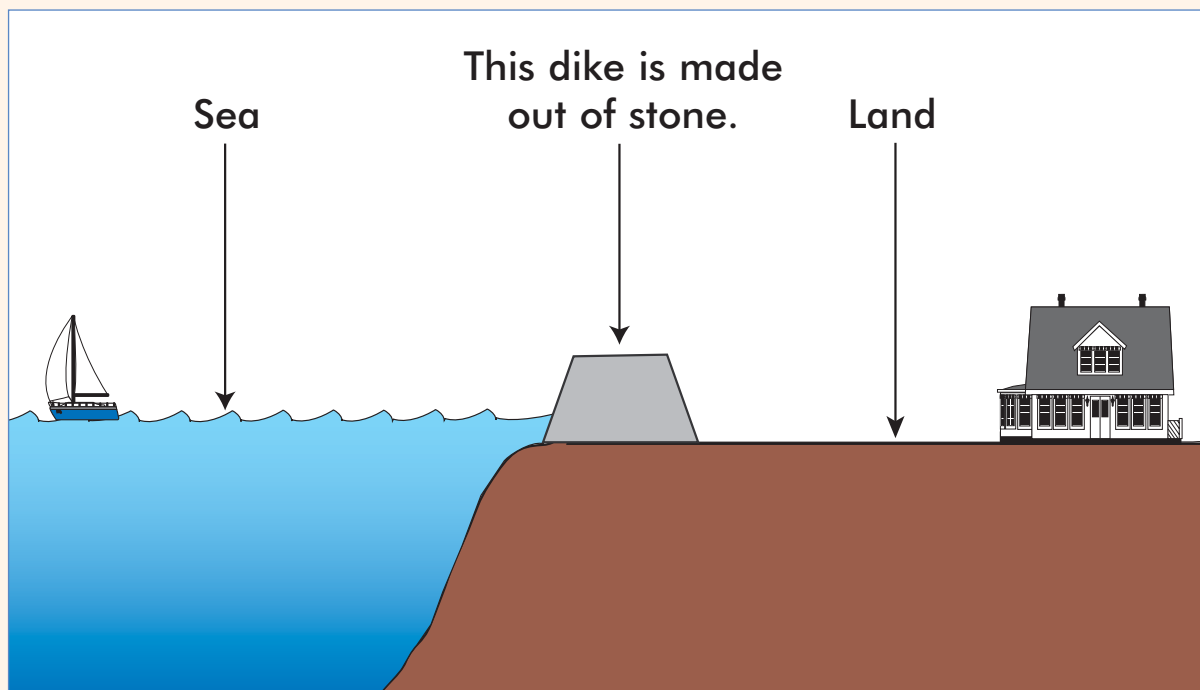
# Dikes

One way the Dutch people protected themselves from the water was by building **dikes**. Dikes are like walls that keep water away from land so the land does not flood.



Over the years, many dikes have been built in the Netherlands. Sometimes they were not strong enough to hold back the water, and heavy storms caused dikes to break.

Now, people have found ways of building stronger dikes. People living in the Netherlands don't have to worry so much about being flooded.

**FACT**

Without protection from dikes, more than half of the Netherlands would be under water.

**FACT**

The longest dike in the world is in the Netherlands. It was built in 1932, and is more than 30 kilometres long. You can even drive over it!

# Wind power

The power of the wind can be used in different ways to help people.

A **windmill** needs the wind to make it work properly. When the wind blows, the **sails** of the windmill start to turn. This makes the machinery inside the windmill work. People in the Netherlands have had windmills for many years.



There are still lots of old windmills in the Netherlands.

Different kinds of machinery are used inside windmills. This means that windmills can be used to do different jobs.

**FACT**

There used to be more than ten thousand windmills in the Netherlands.

Wind power can be used to **grind** grain and to make electricity.



## Windmills to grind grain

In the past, windmills were often used to grind grain to make **flour**. Grain from wheat was placed between huge round pieces of stone called **millstones**, which are inside the windmill. When the wind blew and turned the sails, the millstones turned and crushed the grain into flour, which is white and powdery. Then the flour was used for making bread. Even today, windmills are used in this way in some Dutch villages.

**FACT**

A person who works in a windmill and grinds grain is called a miller.



Many old windmills are still standing in the Netherlands, and people can visit them to find out what they are like inside and how they work. On Windmill Day, you can visit any windmill that is flying the Dutch flag.

## Windmills to make electricity

Now, modern windmills called wind turbines use the wind to make electricity. When these turbines are grouped together they are called wind farms.



**Wind turbines on a wind farm in the Netherlands.**

# Glossary

## **dike**

built to stop water going onto land

## **flood**

when land is covered with water

## **flour**

a powder made from grain that is used to make bread, cakes and other foods

## **grind**

to crush something until it becomes a powder

## **millstone**

a large, round, flat stone used to crush grain

## **sail**

part of a windmill that turns when the wind blows

## **windmill**

a building that uses the wind to power the machinery inside it

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