



PROJECT MUSE®

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## Foreword to the English version

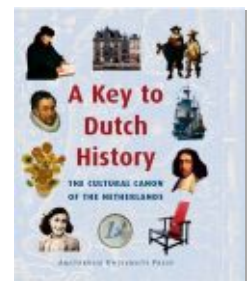
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# Foreword to the English version

What basic knowledge of Dutch history and culture should we pass on to future generations of Dutch citizens? This was the difficult question facing us when the Minister of Education, Culture and Science asked us to design the canon of the Netherlands in mid-2005.

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This is the result: a report in two sections. In section A, we explain the reasons and principles behind our design. Section B is the canon itself, in fifty windows. A wall chart and the *www.entoen.nu* website form part of our design.

In many ways, it has become a truly Dutch book. Mainly because it is about the Netherlands and is focused on the Netherlands – on the Dutch education system, and on mainly Dutch books and websites.

However, on closer examination you can see a third dimension: it has become a true Dutch canon because it was created in a typically Dutch way. It was not decreed by a central authority or a single lofty institution. Neither was it created by a majority vote in a referendum.

This canon was created by bringing together a number of specialists and allowing them to consult with one another and with a choice selection of interested individuals and stakeholders for a year. A website with a discussion forum allowed every Dutch citizen the opportunity to voice his or her opinion. The process brings to mind the way in which the Netherlands for centuries has succeeded in keeping its polders dry: collective craftsmanship.

The way in which this canon was created, therefore, could easily say as much about the Netherlands as do the fifty windows themselves.

6 January 2007  
On behalf of the committee,

Frits van Oostrom,  
Chair

