

Bahasa Indonesia Language Course: What to call people

Terms of address and personal pronouns

Introduction

This topic covers the language for referring to people and discusses the most universal and common terms of address.

Pronouns

Saya (F)	- 'I/me'	Kita	- 'We/us' (inclusive/collective)*3
Aku (I)	- 'I/me'	Kami	- 'We/us' (exclusive)*4
Anda (F)	- 'You'	Dia	- 'He/she'
Terms of address*1		Kalian	- 'You' (pl.)
Kamu (I)	- 'You'	Mereka	- 'They'
Beliau (H)*2	- 'He/she'		

Terms of address

Instead of saying 'you', 'he' or 'she', to be polite, Indonesians use these terms of address:

Bapak	- 'Adult male'	Pak (+ name)	- 'Adult male'
Ibu	- 'Adult female'	Bu (+ name)	- 'Adult female'
Mas (+ name)	- 'Young adult male'*5	Mbak (+ name)	- 'Young adult female'*6
Abang/Bang	- 'Male'*7	Kakak/Kak	- 'Young adult female'*8
Ade/Dek	- 'Young person/child'*9		

*1 In Indonesian culture, rather than using the second person *Anda/Kamu*, it is more polite to use terms of address. E.g.: Ibu/Bapak sedang apa? ('*What are you doing?*') (F)

Mbak Yani lagi apa? ('*What are you doing?*') (I)

*2 Honorific. Used when referring to people of status/position.

*3 Includes second party.

*4 Excludes second party.

*5*6 Javanese originally but also heard in other regions especially when referring to a Javanese.

*7 Literally 'older brother', often used at home when addressing older brother. Commonly used in Jakarta and Sumatra and also used when talking to vendors and trade persons.

*8 Literally 'older sibling', often used at home when addressing the older sibling, especially older sister.

*9 Derivative of *Adik*. Literally 'younger sibling', often used at home when addressing the younger sibling.

Bapak, Ibu, Abang, Kakak and **Ade** are fairly universal and used in all regions. It is wise to find out the local terms of address when traveling there. Some other common regional terms of address are: **Kang** (Young adult male - West Java), **Neng** (Young adult female - West Java), **Bli** (Adult male - Bali), **Mbok** (Young adult female - Bali).