

6. Dictionary skills

You will either have two dictionaries, or have one dictionary with two separate sections. These are:

- Indonesian–English (for looking up Indonesian words you don't know the meaning of)
- English–Indonesian (for finding out what the Indonesian word is that you want to know).

It is really easy to pick up the wrong dictionary and think the word you are looking for is not there. Before you decide the word you want is not in the dictionary, check that you're using the right one.

Indonesian–English dictionary: finding the meaning of Indonesian words

Affixes are extremely important. You should look up the base-word, not the prefix. For example, you would look up berlari in the L section of the dictionary, because ber- is a prefix.

The trickiest words to find are me- verbs. There is a specific section on finding the base word of me- verbs in the Pojok bahasa (Info sheet 10).

Other prefixes include:

- di-
- pe- (plus peng-, pem-, peny-, pen- which are added the same way as me-affixes)
- ke- (usually the word ends with the -an suffix as well)
- ter-

English–Indonesian dictionary: finding the meaning of English words

If you are looking for the Indonesian translation of an English word, you also need to look up the base-word of the English.

For example, to find the word 'throwing', or 'threw', you would look up 'throw'; to find the word 'saw' as in 'I saw my neighbour yesterday', look up 'see'.

You should also be aware of words that have more than one meaning, so you can choose the correct Indonesian word. For example, if you want to say 'I saw my neighbour', you need to make sure you choose the right word and don't say 'I tool for cutting up wood my neighbour'. In this case, a clue would be if the word had 'noun' or 'kb.' (abbreviation for kata benda, which is Indonesian for noun) next to it so you could see that it was a thing, and not an action.

If there are multiple words listed in the dictionary (and there often are) look for the word that in context – ie in a sentence – is closest to the meaning you want.

Be aware of the conventions of your dictionary

Different dictionaries will have different explanations. Some examples include:

- Often the noun form is the first word listed (eg bat – 'a bat' comes before 'to bat').
- Abbreviations are often used (eg *kb.* means *kata benda* or noun. It is not the translation of the word you are looking for).
- *Lih.* is short for *lihat* which means 'see'. So if you look up 'threw', it would say '*lih.* throw' (see throw).

Slashes are used to show you how to pronounce the word. They are not the translation. For example:

'Think /think/: pikir'.

The word for 'think' is pikir; 'think' describes how to say the word 'think'.

