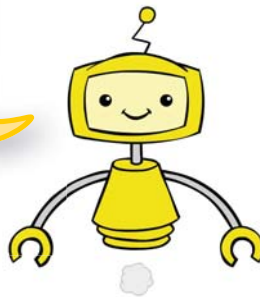


Excuse me!

'Hey you!'

No! You can't say that — it isn't polite. Let's learn how to attract attention or apologise properly. You need to get this one right!



LINKS TO:

Stage 2, Module 1

Learning Object 3: Now you'll look the part

PRIOR LEARNING:

Stage 1

Module 10 Work Sheet 4: Can I try this?

Module 7 Work Sheet 4: Ordering food in a restaurant

Module 4 Work Sheet 5: Softening the imperative



1 Attracting attention

1

▶ The word **maaf** means 'sorry', and has two main purposes:

- to apologise. (You will learn about apologising later)
- to attract someone's attention politely.

Maaf, Bu. Excuse me, Madam.

Maaf, Pak. Excuse me, Sir.

▶ Another word that can be used instead of *maaf* is **permisi**.

Permisi, Pak. When addressing an older man.

Permisi, Bu. When addressing an older woman.

Hint! Unlike *maaf*, which can be used for attracting attention *and* apologising, *permisi* is not used for apologising. You will learn other uses for *permisi* later.

Note:

Words such as *maaf*, which contain double vowels, are usually pronounced with a glottal stop* between the two vowels. Consequently, they are often written with an apostrophe separating the two vowels, *ma'af*.

*A glottal stop is a speech sound articulated by a momentary, complete closing of the glottis in the back of the throat. An example in English would be 'uh-oh!'

2 Help!

2

The question '*Boleh minta tolong?*' consists of three words you have already learnt.

- **boleh** means 'may I ...'
- **minta** means 'to request' or 'ask for'.
- **tolong** is used to soften imperatives.

Stage 1, Module 10, Work Sheet 4, *Can I try this?*

Stage 1, Module 7, Work Sheet 4, *Ordering food in a restaurant*

Stage 1, Module 4, Work Sheet 5, *Softening the imperative*

▶ This time, though, *tolong* means 'help' or 'assistance'.

So the question *Boleh minta tolong?* means, 'May I ask for help?' or 'Could you help me please?'

For example:

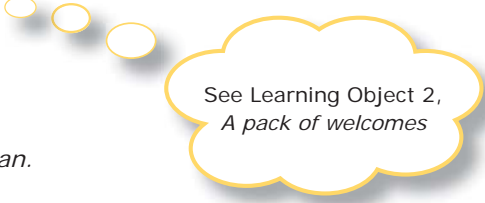
Maaf, Pak. Boleh minta tolong?
Excuse me, Sir. Could you help me please?

Permisi, Bu. Boleh minta tolong?
Excuse me, Madam. Could you help me please?

Exercise 1

Do you remember when Peter Smart needed to obtain some items that were missing from his welcome pack? Peter made his way around the school asking for help. Here are three of his requests:

- 1.1 *Maaf, Bu, saya mau mengambil kartu pelajar.*
- 1.2 *Permisi, Pak, saya mau mengambil kartu perpustakaan.*
- 1.3 *Maaf, Bu, saya mau mengambil kunci loker.*



See Learning Object 2,
A pack of welcomes

Rewrite these sentences using the alternative *boleh minta tolong* structure.

1.1 _____

1.2 _____

1.3 _____

Exercise 2

In each of the situations described, decide the best word to use, either *maaf* or *permisi*.

Explain the reasons for your choice.

2.1 You are sitting at the dinner table with your parents and accidentally spill a glass of water on the table.

2.2 You have checked your supermarket docket and realise there is an error that you wish to bring to the attention of the Customer Service counter attendant.

(continued on following page)

2.3 You are returning a friend's calculator that you borrowed the previous day but forgot to return.

2.4 The school principal is talking to your teacher at the entrance to your classroom and you wish to walk past them to enter the room.

2.5 You arrive at your class 15 minutes late while the teacher is in the middle of explaining something.

2.6 You arrive at your class 15 minutes late to find the other students working quietly on their own and the teacher sitting at his desk.

2.7 You are seated at a restaurant, ready to order, and you wish to attract the attention of a waiter.

Exercise 3

Write down some generalisations about when you would use *maaf* and when *permisi* is more appropriate.

Exercise 4

Hint! Peter is having difficulty understanding algebra and asks his maths teacher, Pak Harsono, for some help:

Permisi, Pak Harsono. Boleh saya minta tolong.

Bagaimana cara menjawab persamaan $2x^2=32$?

Peter would ask this question differently depending whom he was talking to. Peter may choose to use some slang terms in his conversation with his friend, Ardi, but it is inappropriate for him, as a child, to use slang with an unfamiliar adult.

Some examples of slang are: *nih* (this), *Aku bingung, nih* (I'm confused) and *dong* (*dong* is a particle used in requests to imply that what has to be done should be obvious to the person to whom the request is directed).



Rewrite Peter's question using the appropriate register, for each of the three different situations, by selecting from the options at right.

4.1 To his friend Ardi, while they are working together on their mathematics homework at Ardi's home.

4.2 To Ardi's father, when Ardi is unable to help him solve the equation.

4.3 To his own father, after returning home from Ardi's house.

Note:

Di is short for *Ardi*. It is common for Indonesians to abbreviate names by using either the first or final syllable of a person's name.