

Dear Soon to be ETA,

Congratulations—you're coming to Indonesia!

When you applied to this program, you were not required to have any previous knowledge of the Indonesian language. Indeed, this may have been an early selling point for some of you—I will admit here that it was for me. I am writing this letter, however, to caution you against taking the lack of a language requirement to mean that learning Indonesian will not be critically important to your time here as an ETA.

Although your in-country orientation will include Indonesian language instruction, you will be doing yourself a great favor if you start studying before then. You should expect that most of the students and teachers at your school will not be communicatively competent in English. In some cases, even the English teachers you work with will struggle to communicate with you. The relationships you build within your school, then, will likely hinge on your proficiency in Indonesian. Beyond school, expect that all of your everyday transactions—from ordering a plate of *nasi goreng* to negotiating an appropriate price for your new motorcycle—will also demand at least a basic understanding of the language.

Here are a few places to start:

- Check out the Learning Indonesian podcasts to build up your basics pre-departure
- Tuttle Publishing makes good Indonesian-English dictionaries and phrasebooks
- Get in touch with former ETAs—they will be happy to share more language learning materials and tips with you

Selamat belajar!

Sincerely,

Sarah Munger
ETA 2010-2012, Sumbawa