



A Note to Parents and Teachers:

If your kids are interested in learning more about the Vietnamese language, learning the vowels and their sounds builds a good foundation. Diacritics perform the same basic function as diphthongs in English. The sounds they represent give Vietnamese a musical quality. The vowels are:

a á à ă ã ạ ă ấ ầ ẩ ậ ấ ầ ẩ ậ  
o ó ò ỏ ọ ô ồ ỗ ố ộ ớ ờ ở ợ  
e é è ẽ ẹ ê ể ể ể ệ  
u ú ù ũ ụ ư ừ ử ữ ự  
i í ì ỉ ị  
y ý ÿ ỷ ỵ

**Vowels with diacritics**

Level	a	ă	â	e	ê	i	o	ô	ơ	u	ư	y
Ma ghost	Mãng bamboo	Lân unicorn	Me tamarind	Lê pear	Xinh pretty	To big	Tô bowl	Mơ dream	Thu autumn	Sur monk	Ly glass	

High Rising	á	ấ	ấ	é	ể	í	ó	ố	ớ	ú	ử	ý
Má mother	Cắn bite	Phấn chalk	Té fall	Dế cricket	Bí pumpkin	Bó bundle	Đố bet	Sớ Scroll	Cú owl	Tứ four	Lý reason	

Glottalized falling:

ạ	ặ	ậ	ẹ	ệ	ị	ọ	ộ	ơ	ụ	ự	ỵ
Mạ Rice seedling	Lặn dive	Mận plum	Lẹ fast	Lệ tear	chị big sister	Cọ brush	Mộng dream	Sợ fear	Tụ gather	Mực ink	Tỵ snake

Low-Rising

ả	ã	ã	ẻ	ể	ỉ	ỏ	ố	ở	ủ	ử	ỷ
Mả tomb	Thẳng straight	Bẩn dirty	Lẻ odd	Kể tell	Nỉ wool	Tỏ bright	Nổ explode	Thở breath	Tủ cupboard	Gửi send	Tỷ billion

Glottalized rising:

ã	ã	ã	ẻ	ể	ĩ	ỗ	ố	ở	ũ	ử	ỷ
Mã horse	Sẵn ready	Mẫu acre	Vẽ draw	Dễ easy	Nghĩ think	Mỡ mine	Gỗ wood	Mỡ lard	Đũa chopstick	Dữ wicked	Mỹ America

In Vietnamese sentences, certain words can take the place of pronouns. For example, the word *anh* can be used to address or refer to an older brother, in place of “you” or “him.” It can also be used to address or refer to an older male in your own generation.

Age and relationship play a role in how Vietnamese people address one another in society and in the family.

Generic terms to address someone who might not be a relative but they are:

older than your parents: **Bác** (both male and female)

younger than your parents : **Chú** (male); Cô (female)

**Note** that students call their female teacher, **Cô** and their male teacher, **Thầy**. The teachers call very young students **Con** and older students **Em**.

Here is the list of proper pronouns to address the family members up to four generations in the three regions in Vietnam: the North, the Central, and the South.

**Great Grand Parents**  
**Ông Cố Nội** (Paternal great grandpa) and **Bà Cố Nội** (Paternal great grandma)  
**Ông Cố Ngoại** (Maternal great grandpa) and **Bà Cố Ngoại** (maternal great grandma)  
**Cụ Cố** (great grandparents-Northern dialect)

**Grand Parents**  
**Ông Nội** (Paternal grandpa) and **Bà Nội** (Paternal great grandma)  
**Ông Ngoại** (Maternal grandpa) and **Bà Ngoại** (maternal grandma)  
**Cụ** (grandparents- Northern dialect)

**Father**  
**Ba** or **Cha** (all regions)  
**Bố,Thầy** (Northern dialect)  
**Tía** (Southern dialect)

**Mother**  
**Má**  
**Mẹ, Mợ, Me** (French loan words mère), **U, Bu** (Northern)  
**Mạ** (Central)  
**Má** (Southern)

**Brother**  
**Anh** (your elder brother)  
**Anh Cả** (older brother-Northern)  
**Anh Hai** (older brother-Southern)  
**Em trai** (your younger brother)  
**Em út** (your youngest sibling)

**Sister**  
**Chị** (your elder sister)  
**Chị Cả** (older sister-Northern)  
**Chị Hai** (older sister-Southern)  
**Em gái** (your younger sister)  
**Em út** (your youngest sibling)

**Extended Family Members**  
Father’s older brother and his wife, **Bác**  
Father’s younger brother, **Chú** and his wife, **Thím**  
Father’s younger sister, **Cô, O** (Central) and her husband, **Chú, Dượng** (Northern and Southern)

Mother’s older brother and his wife: **Bác**  
Mother’s younger brother, **Cậu** and his wife **Mợ**  
Mother’s younger sister, **Di** and her husband **Dượng** (Northern and Southern)