



Fante Handbook for Beginners

by Catherine Flaatten, ProGhana Volunteer 2009-20

Lesson 2: Useful Words and Phrases

This chapter covers days of the week, Fante names, and pleasantries. The former two items are grouped together because one's Fante name is dependent upon the day of the week of his or her birth, according to ancient Akan customs. The following table provides the names and pronunciations of each day of the week:

Day (English)	Da (Fante)	Pronunciation
Sunday	Kwesida	kway-see-dah
Monday	Dwowa	joh-dah
Tuesday	Benada	bay-nah-dah
Wednesday	Wukuda	woo-koo-dah
Thursday	Yawda	yaw-dah
Friday	Fida	fee-dah
Saturday	Memenda	may-mayn-dah

Now, let us determine our Fante names. If you don't know the day of the week on which you were born, I suggest you simply Google the date. Fante names differ not only according to day of birth but also gender, and some days provide two different Fante names for the same gender:

Da	Male Name(s)	Female Name(s)
Kwesida	Kwesi	Esi
Dwowa	Kwodwo	Adwowa
Benada	Kobina	Araba / Abena
Wukuda	Kweku / Abeiku	Ekuwa
Yawda	Yaw / Ekow	Yaa / Aba
Fida	Kofi / Fiifi	Efuwa
Memenda	Kwame	Ama



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As you can see from the table, each name uses a particular letter or sound of the corresponding day of the week. Take Fida: Kofi, Fiifi, Efuwa – they all feature *F*. You may find this to be a good memory trick. Another one is that almost all of the male names start with a consonant (*K* being the most common), while almost all of the female names start with a vowel (*A* or *E*). Learn to introduce yourself with your Fante name as native speakers will often be pleased by your appreciation for this custom.

Before we close this lesson, I will briefly introduce some common words and phrases that you have probably heard by now. Their use by you will delight many Ghanaians you meet. This will also be a good opportunity for you to practice what you know of the Fante alphabet by pronouncing these words on your own.

English Words	Fante Words
Welcome	Akwaaba
Thank you	Medaase
Foreigner (white person)	Obruni
Food	Edziban
Home	Fie
No	Nyew
Yes	Oho
Sorry	Kosɛ
Please	Mepa wo kyew



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English Q&A	Fante Q&A
How are you?	Ɔtse den?
-I am fine.	-Bɔkɔɔ/Oye/Mohoyie.
What is your name?	Wɔfre wo den?
-My name is ____.	-Wɔfre me ____.
How old are you?	Edzi mfe ahen?
-I am ____ years old.	-Meedzi mfe ____.
Where are you from?	Ifi hen?
-I am from ____.	-Mefi ____.
Where do you stay/live?	Etse hen?
-I stay/live at ____.	-Metse ____.
Where are you going?	Erokɔ hen?
-I am going home/to church/to Accra.	-Morokɔ fie/asɔr/Accra.

Notes:

