

## ‘-kan’ to make transitive verbs and benefactive verbs

‘-kan’ is used to form many transitive verbs.

For one large group, *-kan* is simply needed for the verb to be formed correctly. Although the *-kan* has no obvious meaning it must be there. Examples:

|                                  |                                     |                                  |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Kami <b>memikirkan</b> hal itu.  | We <b>thought about</b> the matter. | [not: “ <i>memikir</i> hal itu”] |
| Mereka <b>membicarakan</b> seni. | They <b>discussed</b> art.          | [not: “ <i>membicara</i> seni”]  |
| Gina <b>mengerjakan</b> PR-nya.  | Gina <b>did</b> her homework.       | [not: “ <i>mengerja</i> PR-nya”] |

Some of this group have a matching *intransitive* verb without “-kan”. Example:

|      |                   |          |                              |
|------|-------------------|----------|------------------------------|
| Kami | <b>memikirkan</b> | hal itu. | We thought about the matter. |
|      | <b>berpikir</b>   | tentang  |                              |

In such pairs, the transitive “-kan” verb has an advantage over its intransitive ‘twin’; namely, it allows you to focus on either the Actor *or* the Undergoer. So (e.g.) you can say either:

|                                 |    |                                       |
|---------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------|
| <u>Kami</u> memikirkan hal itu. | OR | <u>Hal itu</u> kami pikirkan.         |
| [= focus on the Actor: “Kami”]  |    | [= focus on the Undergoer: “Hal itu”] |

But if you use the intransitive verb, like ‘berpikir’ you cannot focus on the Undergoer. There is no Undergoer. So you could not begin with “Hal itu...”. Instead, you must focus on the Actor, and say “KAMI berpikir tentang hal itu.”

‘-kan’ can also be added to some verbs that are *already* transitive. In these cases, *-kan* shows that the action is done for someone. E.g.

|                                        |                                           |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Edy membeli koran <b>untuk</b> ibunya. |                                           |
| OR                                     | Edy bought a paper <b>for</b> his mother. |
| Edy membelikan ibunya koran.           |                                           |

|                                                 |                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Saya membawa secangkir kopi <b>untuk</b> Ririn. |                                             |
| OR                                              | I brought a cup of coffee <b>for</b> Ririn. |
| Saya membawakan Ririn secangkir kopi.           |                                             |

Look more closely at this type of sentence.

| Actor | verb + <i>-kan</i> | person it is done for | the object |
|-------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Edy   | membelikan         | ibunya                | koran.     |

When it is obvious whom the action is done for, that person is often not mentioned. Examples:

Wayan mengetuk dua kali, dan Bu Tuti membukakan pintu. (i.e. opened it *for* Wayan).

(to a waiter): Tolong bawakan sebotol bir. (i.e. bring it *for* us)

*Note:* Very often when speaking, Indonesians use both ‘-kan’ and ‘untuk’ to show that the action is done for someone else (e.g. “Edy membelikan koran **untuk** ibunya.”). But not all educated speakers regard this as correct.

Exercise 1. Use *-kan* to make a correctly formed transitive verb from each word below:

|                           |                         |                         |                            |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>ada</b> (there is/are) | <b>bicara</b> (to talk) | <b>pikir</b> (to think) | <b>tinggal</b> (to remain) |
| <b>butuh</b> (need)       | <b>lupa</b> (to forget) | <b>peduli</b> (to care) | <b>ingin</b> (to want)     |
| <b>tanya</b> (to ask)     | <b>kerja</b> (to work)  | <b>laku</b> (a deed)    |                            |

- |                                                   |                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Kita harus <u>mengerjakan</u> latihan 3 dan 4. | We have to do exercises 3 and 4.      |
| 2. Mereka _____ kemerdekaan.                      | They want independence.               |
| 3. Dia _____ kursus Bahasa Italia.                | She asked about Italian courses.      |
| 4. Mereka _____ obat-obatan.                      | They need medicine.                   |
| 5. Sri sudah _____ pacarnya yang dulu.            | Sri has forgotten her old boyfriend.  |
| 6. Dia _____ pembunuhan itu.                      | He carried out that murder.           |
| 7. Kami mau _____ pesta minggu depan.             | We'll hold a party next week.         |
| 8. Dia tidak _____ keluarganya.                   | He doesn't care about his family.     |
| 9. Kami _____ masalah kesehatan.                  | We discussed health problems.         |
| 10. Bu Subroto _____ suaminya.                    | Bu Subroto left her husband.          |
| 11. Endah jarang _____ masa depan.                | Endah rarely thinks about the future. |

Exercise 2. Say it two ways, using a transitive *-kan* verb.

- |                                              |                            |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 a) Saya harus <u>memikirkan soal itu</u> . | I have to think about that |
| b) Soal itu <u>harus saya pikirkan</u> .     | problem. [PIKIR]           |
| 2 a) Saya _____.                             | I can't forget that        |
| b) Kecelakaan itu _____.                     | accident. [LUPA]           |
| 3a) "Nasib kita _____"!                      | "They don't care about     |
| b) "Mereka tidak _____"!                     | our fate!" [PEDULI]        |
| 4a) Anda harus _____ sekarang.               | You have to do that job    |
| b) Tugas itu _____ sekarang.                 | now. [KERJA]               |
| 5a) Banyak orang yang _____.                 | A lot of people ask about  |
| b) Wanita itu _____.                         | that woman. [TANYA]        |
| 6a) Apa yang _____?                          | What are we going to       |
| b) Kita akan _____?                          | discuss? [BICARA]          |

Exercise 3. Use '*-kan*' instead of '*untuk*' to say that the action is done *for* someone.

- |                                                 |                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1. Saya meminta sebuah karcis untuk Hadi.       | Saya memintakan <u>Hadi sebuah karcis</u> . |
| 2. Dewi membuka pintu untuk Anwar.              | Dewi _____                                  |
| 3. Saya mengambil makanan untuk kakek.          | Saya _____                                  |
| 4. Pak Agus membeli sepeda untuk anaknya.       | Pak Agus _____                              |
| 5. Tono brought a glass of tea for his brother. | Tono _____                                  |
| 6. Sri wrote an essay for Hadi.                 | Sri _____                                   |

7. Bu Murti looked for a husband for her child. Bu Murti \_\_\_\_\_
8. Ida makes clothes for her sisters. Ida \_\_\_\_\_

Exercise 4. Use *-kan* to show that the action is for someone else, but do not mention that person.

1) ~~bringing papers for him~~. 2) to get him some cigarettes. 3) bought two books for me. 4) looked for a house for her. 5) open the door for me. 6) bring one more chair for us. 7) wash these clothes for me. 8) look for my child for me!

1. Sekretaris masuk kantor Presiden *membawakan kertas-kertas*.
2. Jon meminta anak itu \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Di Sydney dia \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Sebelum Dewi pindah kota, temannya \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Tolong \_\_\_\_\_.
6. (to a waiter): Tolong \_\_\_\_\_.
7. (to hotel servant): Tolong \_\_\_\_\_.
8. (to police officer): Tolong \_\_\_\_\_!

### Answer Key

Exercise 1. 2) menginginkan 3) menanyakan 4) memerlukan 5) melupakan 6) melakukan  
7) mengadakan 8) mem(p)edulikan 9) membicarakan 10) meninggalkan 11) memikirkan

Exercise 2. 2a) melupakan kecelakaan itu 2b) bisa saya lupakan 3a) tidak mereka pedulikan  
3b) mem(p)edulikan nasib kita 4a) mengerjakan tugas itu 4b) harus Anda kerjakan 5a).menanyakan wanita itu  
5b) ditanyakan oleh banyak orang 6a) akan kita bicarakan 6b).membicarakan apa

Exercise 3. 2) membukakan Anwar pintu 3) mengambilkan kakek makanan 4) membelikan anaknya sepeda 5)  
membawakan kakaknya segelas teh 6) menuliskan Hadi sebuah esai 7) mencarikan anaknya suami 8)  
membuatkan adiknya baju

Exercise 4. 2) membawakan / mengambilkan rokok. 3) membelikan dua buku 4) mencarikan rumah  
5) bukakan pintu 6) tolong bawakan satu kursi lagi 7) tolong cucikan baju ini 8) tolong carikan anak saya  
[Note: the “*meN-*” verb prefix tends to be dropped in imperatives, i.e. in commands, as in items 5—8 here.]