'i' vs 'kan' verbs (memasuki vs memasukkan, etc)

With many verbs there is a neat contrast between -i and -kan. Look below:

Ari memasuki *mesjid*. Ari entered the mosque.

Ari memasukkan *koin*. Ali inserted a coin.

The Undergoer of “memasuki” is the mosque. *The mosque stays where it is*, while Ari enters it.

The Undergoer of “memasukkan” is the coin. *The coin moves*, when Ari inserts it.

**Typically, with an “-i” verb: the Undergoer stays where it is, while the action is directed towards it.**

**Typically, with a “-kan” verb: the Undergoer moves from one place to another, while it is caused to do or used to do the action.**

This contrast between -i and -kan applies to many verbs. It is a useful ‘rough rule.’

Another example of it:

Bu Ani *menawari* tamu itu *teh*. Bu Ani offered the guest tea.

Bu Ani *menawarkan* teh *kepada* tamu. Bu Ani offered tea to the guest.

The Undergoer of “menawari” is “tamu itu”. The guest stays in one place, while this action “menawari” is directed at him/her.

The Undergoer of “menawarkan” is the tea. The tea moves, as this action “menawarkan” is done.

To see that the Undergoer moves with a “-kan” verb, sometimes you need a little imagination. Examples:

- Mereka *meneriakkan* yel-yel. They shouted chants. (*teriak* = to shout)

  The chants move because they fly through the air.

- Dia *menulis* kata “Merdeka!” pada tembok. S/he wrote the word “Merdeka!” on the wall.

  The word “Merdeka” moves from the pen onto the wall.

When you use Passive, the same rule applies. But now the Undergoer, i.e. the thing which moves or doesn’t move, is on the left of the verb. E.g.

Passive → Ari memasuki *mesjid*. Ari entered the mosque.

Mesjid itu dimasuki oleh Ari. The mosque was entered by Ari.

Passive → Ari memasukkan *koin*. Ari inserted a coin.

Koin itu dimasukkan oleh Ali. The coin was inserted by Ali.

---

1 The endings -i and -kan do not always contrast in this way. On a few verbs -i and -kan have the same meaning. Examples: *menyesalkan* (‘to regret something’); *menyakitkan* (to hurt someone); *menamakan* (to name someone)

© Tim Hassall 2012

*(May be reproduced for private study or for classroom use, with acknowledgement of author)*
Exercise 1: Choose -i or -kan. [Use a di- form of the verb when directed]

1. tawar: a) Dia __________ menawari__ tamu itu teh.  
   b) Dia __________ menawarkan_ teh kepada tamu itu.  
   She offered the guest tea.
2. masuk: a) Ida __________ surat ke dalam kotak.  
   b) Pak Halim __________ halaman.  
   She put the letters into the box.
3. dekat: a) Dia __________ kursi-nya meja.  
   b) Ikan hiu itu __________ Yusuf.  
   She moved her chair closer to the table.
4. tidur: a) Saya __________ ranjang saya yang baru.  
   b) Dia __________ anaknya.  
   I slept in my new bed.
5. duduk: a) Mereka __________ kursi belakang.  
   b) Siti __________ adiknya dulu.  
   They occupied the back seats.
6. naik: a) Bu Gah __________ harganya.  
   b) Ari __________ tangga pelan-pelan.  
   Bu Gah raised his prices.
7. pinjam: a) Dia __________ teman sepedanya.  
   b) Yudi __________ uang pada Hadi.  
   Ari climbed the steps slowly.
8. beban: a) Dia __________ kami dengan tugas.  
   b) Dia __________ tugas pada adiknya.  
   He burdens us with tasks.
   b) Pak Agus tidak __________ rapat tadi.  
   We can get Pak Agus here later.
10. kawin: a) Dia __________ anaknya dengan Pak Pian.  
    b) Dia __________ pacar sekolahnya.  
   She married her daughter off to Pak Pian.
11. ludah: a) Dia __________ muka Riko.  
    b) Dia __________ biji pepaya.  
   She spat in Riko’s face.
12. jauh: a) Anak itu di _________ dari sungai.  
    b) Sungai itu harus di _________ .  
   That river should be stayed away from.
    b) Slogan yang di _________ itu kasar.  
   The thief was shouted at by the residents.
    b) Beras itu di _________ dari India.  
   The kampung was visited by officials.
15. tulis: a) Kata “tolong” di _________ nya.  
    b) Dinding itu di _________ slogan.  
   The word “help” was written on her.

Exercise 2: Complete the sentence, using -i or -kan. [Use the di- form of the verb when directed]

1. They __________ on his car in big letters.  
   [tulis]
   Mereka __________ menulis__ mobilnya __________ dalam huruf besar.
2. She __________ her child on a chair near the door.  
   [duduk]
   Dia __________ di dekat pintu.
3. We had to __________ the fridge onto the truck.  
   [naik]
   Kami __________ ke atas truk.
4. They all __________ at the driver.  
   [teriak]
   Mereka semua __________
5. Jono __________ Lina, because he’s shy.  
   [jauh]
   Jono __________ , karena dia pemalu.
   [tawar]
   Bu Dulah __________ pekerjaan.
7. The tiger slowly __________ the farmers.  
   [dekat]
   Harimau itu __________ dengan pelan-pelan.
8. You have to __________ a card (karta) first.  
   [masuk]
   Anda __________
9. I __________ by someone from the Census Office.  
   [datang]
   _________ di dari Kantor Sensus.
10. The money __________ to Bu Lisa for school fees.  
    [pinjam]
    _________ di kepada Bu Lisa untuk biaya sekolah.
11. She __________ by a villager.  
    [ludah]
    Dia __________

© Tim Hassall 2012
(May be reproduced for private study or for classroom use, with acknowledgement of author)
Answer Key

Exercise 1
2a) memasukkan 2b) memasuki 3a) mendekatkan 3b) mendekati 4a) meniduri 4b) menidurkan
5a) menduduki 5b) mendudukkan 6a) menaikkan 6b) menaiki 7a) meminjamkan 7b) meminjam
8a) membebani 8b) membebankan 9a) menghadirkan 9b) menghadiri 10a) mengawinkan
10b) mengawini 11a) meludahi 11b) meludahkan 12a) dijauhkan 12b) dijauhi
13a) diteriaki 13b) diteriakkan 14a) didatangi 14b) didatangkan 15a) dituliskan 15b) ditulis

Exercise 2
2) mendudukkan anaknya 3) menaikkan lemari es 4) meneriaki sopir 5) menjauhi Lina
6) menawari Anwar 7) mendekati petani itu 8) harus memasukkan kartu 9) Saya didatangi
seorang 10) Uang itu dipinjamkan 11) Dia diludahi seorang desa.