

Introduction to Indonesian verbs

Almost all Indonesian verbs consist of a base word to which a prefix or suffix or both have been added. Prefixes and suffixes are very complex in Indonesian. They are added to base words for a wide variety of reasons and you will learn more about them in future worksheets.

In this worksheet, you are going to learn some basic spelling conventions for verbs.

Remember the verb *membutuhkan* (to need) from Worksheet 3. Notice how it is made up of:

- the prefix *mem*
- the base word *butuh*
- the suffix *kan*

The two largest groups of Indonesian verbs begin with either the prefix **me~** or the prefix **ber~**. If you see a word beginning with either of these prefixes, you can be fairly certain it is a verb.

Verbs beginning with **meN~** prefixes:

Verbs in this group can begin with either a **me~**, **mem~**, **men~**, **meng~** or **meny~** prefix. In Indonesian, it is a convention that these five prefixes are referred to as the **meN~** group (with a capital 'N'). This is a convenient way of referring to all five forms of the prefix.

For example:

- the base **lihat** takes the prefix **me~**
- the base **butuh** takes the prefix **mem~**
- the base **dengar** takes the prefix **men~**
- the base **goreng** takes the prefix **meng~**
- the base **saksi** takes the prefix **meny~**

So, we say that all these verbs take the **meN~** prefix.

Identifying base words:

In order to look up a verb beginning with a **meN~** prefix in an Indonesian dictionary, you need to know the correct spelling of the base word. For example, the base **tulis** (write) takes the prefix **men~** but the **t** in **tulis** is dropped and the verb becomes **menulis**. So, if you want to look up **menulis**, you need to know to look under '**t**' for **tulis**.

The exercises in this worksheet will help you identify base words.

Exercises



1. Identify the verbs in the following sentences. Don't worry if you don't understand some of the words.
 - a) *Saya membutuhkan selimut.*
 - b) *Peter memerlukan handuk.*
 - c) *Pak Smart menulis namanya di formulir.*
 - d) *Peter melihat banyak mobil.*
 - e) *Ibu sedang mencuci piring.*
 - f) *Anna suka mendengarkan musik.*
 - g) *Anna menyurati temannya di Australia.*
 - h) *Ibu Smart menggoreng krupuk.*
 - i) *Pak Smart mengirim surat.*
 - j) *Anna sedang menjahit baju.*
 - k) *Penyanyi itu sedang merekam lagu.*



2. All of the verbs in Exercise 1 are made up of a base word and one of the *meN~* group of prefixes. Sometimes, a suffix has been added. To look up any of these verbs in an Indonesian dictionary, you need to know what the first letter of the base word is. Completing Exercise 2 will help you do this.

Match the base words below with their full form from the sentences in Exercise 1. You may notice some changes in the spelling of the base words. The first one has been done for you. Remember, the first letter of the base word may be different in the full form!

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| (i) <i>lihat</i> | d) <i>melihat</i> |
| (ii) <i>perlu</i> | _____ |
| (iii) <i>tulis</i> | _____ |
| (iv) <i>cuci</i> | _____ |
| (v) <i>butuh</i> | _____ |
| (vi) <i>surat</i> | _____ |
| (vii) <i>dengar</i> | _____ |
| (viii) <i>rekam</i> | _____ |
| (ix) <i>goreng</i> | _____ |
| (x) <i>jahit</i> | _____ |
| (xi) <i> kirim</i> | _____ |

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3. Look back at your answers from Exercise 2 and answer the following questions.

What do you think happens to the form of the prefix and the spelling of the base word if you:

a) add *meN~* to a base word beginning with the letter 't'?

b) add *meN~* to a base word beginning with the letter 'p'?

c) add *meN~* to a base word beginning with the letter 'l'?

d) add *meN~* to a base word beginning with the letter 'b'?

e) add *meN~* to a base word beginning with the letter 'd'?

f) add *meN~* to a base word beginning with the letter 's'?

g) add *meN~* to a base word beginning with the letter 'g'?

h) add *meN~* to a base word beginning with the letter 'k'?

i) add *meN~* to a base word beginning with the letter 'c'?

j) Add *meN~* to a base word beginning with the letter 'j'?

k) add *meN~* to a base word beginning with the letter 'r'?
