

# AN ANALYSIS OF THE ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH AT SMK N 10 PADANG

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## ABSTRACT

This research is aimed to describe the eleventh grade students' ability in writing descriptive paragraph at SMK N 10 Padang. It used descriptive design which involved 20 students as sample selected through convenience sampling technique. Data were collected using writing test and analyzed using inter-rater scoring to find out the test reliability index (0.94). The result of data analysis also showed that in general 16 students (80%) had high ability while 4 students (20%) had low ability. Specifically, students' ability dealing with content was high (75%), organizing ideas was high (75%), using appropriate grammar was high (85%), using appropriate vocabulary was high (70%), and using the correct mechanics was high (65%). Based on the findings, it can be concluded that students' ability to write descriptive paragraph was high; however, continuous practice is recommended to maintain and improve their writing skills.

**Keywords:** *ability, writing, descriptive paragraph,*

## INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most important languages in the world today. It is used by people from many different countries to communicate in many areas like business, education, travel, technology, and international meetings. In the modern world, speaking and understanding English helps people connect with others across countries and cultures. According to Murmu (2022), English is nowadays a key part of progress in education and international communication<sup>[1]</sup>. In many countries, including Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language. It is not only a school subject, but also a skill that can help students in their studies and future jobs.

One of the four main language skills is writing. It is a productive skill that involves the way to generate and organize ideas in written form. The ability to write is one of the linguistic abilities that students need to develop. This is due to the fact that writing allows learners to communicate viewpoints,

perceptions, and emotions. Writing can also be used as a means to develop students' thinking and creativity (Humarani et al., 2023) <sup>[2]</sup>. Furthermore, Cahyadi et al (2019:79) state that writing is a process of arranging and organizing someone's thought<sup>[3]</sup>.

Writing can be categorized into several types, including paragraph writing, essay writing, creative writing, expository writing, persuasive writing, and technical writing. Each type follows distinct structures and serves different objectives. Among these, paragraph writing is the building block of written communication in academic and professional settings. A well-constructed paragraph enables writers to organize and express their ideas clearly and logically. It is often the first step in developing more complex compositions such as essays and research papers.

A paragraph is a cohesive unit of writing that focuses on a single idea or topic. It consists

of three main components: a topic sentence, which introduces the main idea; supporting sentences, which provide explanations, examples, or evidence; and a concluding sentence, which summarizes the idea or transitions to the next paragraph. Awalludin (2018) states that a paragraph is the essence of the pouring of the fruit thoughts in an essay<sup>[4]</sup>. A paragraph contains a unit of thought which is supported by all the sentences in the paragraph, starting from the introductory sentence, main sentence or topic sentence, sentence explanatory until the closing sentence.

Descriptive paragraph is a form of writing that aims to provide a vivid portrayal of a person, place, object, or event, enabling the reader to visualize the subject through detailed and sensory-rich language. This type of paragraph typically includes specific adjectives, sensory details, and figurative language to create a clear and engaging image. According to Sofyan et al. (2022), descriptive paragraphs help readers imagine or feel what is being described by using precise and compelling words<sup>[5]</sup>. For instance, describing a tree might involve detailing its height, the color and texture of its leaves, and the aroma it emits, thereby painting a comprehensive picture for the reader. The structure of a descriptive paragraph generally follows a specific pattern: it begins with a topic sentence that introduces the subject, followed by supporting sentences that elaborate on the details, and concludes with a closing sentence that summarizes the description or provides a final impression, the paragraph should maintain unity and coherence, and include transition words.

At SMK N 10 Padang, writing descriptive paragraphs is an important part of the English curriculum. This skill is expected to help students improve both their writing competence and overall language proficiency. However, preliminary observations and teacher reports reveal that many students still struggle to produce clear and engaging descriptive paragraphs. The difficulties often appear in generating ideas, organizing them coherently,

and choosing appropriate vocabulary. As a result, their writing sometimes lacks clarity and fluency, which may affect their academic performance and language development.

There are some studies related to this research. The first study was conducted by Mudea (2020). The purpose of this study was to know the second semester students' ability in writing descriptive paragraph at English Language Education FKIP UIR<sup>[6]</sup>. The second study was conducted by Mokosompit (2021). The purpose of this study was to reveal the students' ability in writing descriptive paragraphs and to describe their problems in writing at the eleventh grade of Madrasah Aliyah Al-Hikmah Mogutut Kotamobagu<sup>[7]</sup>. The third study was conducted by Wahyudi (2019). The purpose of this study was to describe the tenth grade students' ability in writing descriptive paragraph at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Pekanbaru<sup>[8]</sup>.

Based on the researcher's observations during the teaching practicum conducted at SMK N 10 Padang on July 29th, 2024. It was revealed that the eleventh grade students were faced with an assignment to write a descriptive paragraph as part of the English curriculum. In the prior observation, it was also found that many students did not understand how to write descriptive paragraph well. This was reflected from the fact when the teacher asked the students to write a descriptive paragraph. Many students still had problems how to convey content and organize the ideas. They also had difficulty in writing descriptive paragraph in writing descriptive paragraph with correct grammar, appropriate vocabulary, and the correct mechanics of writing.

From the reasons above, the researcher is interested in conducting a research entitled "An Analysis of the Eleventh Grade Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Paragraph at SMK N 10 Padang". She wants to describe scientifically the students' ability in writing descriptive paragraph.

## METHOD

The researcher used descriptive quantitative method in this research. Gay et al. (2012) state that descriptive research is to describe or to tell the way things are<sup>[9]</sup>. According to Refnita (2018), descriptive research involves collecting data to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study<sup>[10]</sup>. The population of this research was the eleventh grade students at SMK N 10 Padang. The total number of population members of this research was 140 students which were grouped into six classes. Because the population was quite large, the researcher took 18% of the population, consisting of 20 students, as the sample by using convenience sampling technique. It means that the sample was selected based on availability and accessibility of the students.

This research used writing test as the instrument. The test was used to assess the students' ability in writing descriptive paragraph. The aspects that were assessed in the students' writing test were content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The researcher provided some topics and let the students choose one of them. The test was done by students in 60 minutes.

The researcher used content validity to measure the validity of the test, in which the test material was constructed based on the curriculum, syllabus, and teaching materials given to the eleventh grade students at SMK N 10 Padang. To analyze the reliability of the test, she used inter-rater technique. It means that there were two scorers (scorer 1 and scorer 2). The first scorer was the researcher and the second scorer was Rodiyah Joan Aprilliani. She asked her to be the second scorer because she had good competence in writing.

To find out the correlation index of two sets of scores, the researcher used Pearson Product Moment formula. After she analyzed the score, it was found that the test was reliable. It was supported by the fact that the coefficient

correlation was 0.94 which was categorized as very high correlation.

In analyzing the data, the researcher first calculated the average score from two scorers, then converted the scores, and classified the students' ability by using the KKM at SMK N 10 Padang (75). The students who scored  $\geq 75$  were categorized as having high ability, while those who scored  $< 75$  were categorized as having low ability. Finally, the researcher counted the percentage of students having high and ability. Finally, she interpreted the results of data analysis.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this research showed that most of the students had a high ability in writing descriptive paragraphs. It was supported by the data analysis which revealed that 16 students (80%) were categorized as having high ability, while only 4 students (20%) were categorized as having low ability. This indicates that in general, the majority of the students were able to write descriptive paragraphs that met the expected criteria. However, when analyzed in detail, the results showed variation across different aspects of writing.

In terms of content and organization, the analysis revealed that 15 students (75%) had high ability in each aspect, while 5 students (25%) were still low. This means that most students were able to describe the object clearly and arrange their ideas in a logical sequence with topic sentence, supporting details, and conclusion. However, some still lacked sufficient detail and were not able to present their ideas systematically, which made their writing less coherent.

In using grammar, the result was very satisfying. Nineteen students (95%) showed high ability, while only 1 student (5%) was low. This indicates that almost all students were able to apply correct grammatical structures, especially the simple present tense, although a small number still made errors in sentence structure and agreement.

In terms of vocabulary, the findings showed that 14 students (70%) had high ability,

while 6 students (30%) were low. This suggests that the majority of the students were able to use varied and suitable vocabulary, although some still relied on limited or inappropriate word choices. Their vocabulary use generally supported the clarity of their descriptive writing.

Finally, in the aspect of mechanics, the analysis revealed that 13 students (65%) had high ability, and 7 students (35%) were low. This means that more than half of the students could use spelling, punctuation, and capitalization correctly. Nevertheless, frequent mistakes in mechanics were still found in some students' writing, which reduced the overall quality of their paragraphs.

Table 1. Research Findings

No	Aspect	The Number of Students		Ability
		Number	Percentage	
1	The Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Paragraph	16	80%	High
		4	20%	Low
2	The Students' Ability Conveying Content	15	75%	High
		5	25%	Low
3	The Students' Ability to Organize Ideas	15	75%	High
		5	25%	Low
4	The Students' Ability in Using the Correct Grammar	17	85%	High
		3	15%	Low
5	The Students' Ability in	14	70%	High

	Using Appropriate Vocabulary	6	30%	Low
6	The Students' in Using the Correct Mechanics	13	65%	High
		7	35%	Low

### 1. The Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Paragraph

Based on the findings, the researcher found that most of the students had a high ability in writing descriptive paragraph. This is proved by the fact that 16 students (80%) were categorized as high and only 4 students (20%) were categorized as low. On the other hand, previous research conducted by Mokodompit (2021) entitled "An Analysis of Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Paragraph at Eleventh Grade in Madrasah Aliyah Al-Hikmah Mogutat Kotamobagu" showed that the majority of students had a low ability in writing descriptive paragraph.

### 2. The Students' Ability to Convey Content

Based on the findings, the students' ability to convey content was high (75%). It means that many students could express the content of descriptive paragraph clearly and appropriately. This result is in line with the research conducted by Mudea (2020) entitled "An Analysis of Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Paragraph of the Second Semester at English Language Education FKIP UIR". His study showed that the students' ability to convey content in writing descriptive paragraph was good.

### 3. The Students' Ability to Organize Ideas

Based on the findings, the students' ability to organize ideas was high (75%). It means that most of the students were able to arrange their ideas coherently by using topic sentences, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences. This finding is different from Wahyudi (2019) entitled "The Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Paragraph at the Tenth Grade of SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Pekanbaru". His study showed that the students' ability to

organize ideas was in the less category with an average score of 75%.

#### 4. The Students' Ability to Apply Grammar

Based on the findings, the students' ability to use correct grammar was very high (95%). It shows that almost all of the students had mastered grammar and were able to use it appropriately in descriptive paragraph. This finding is contrast with Wahyudi (2019), who found that the students' ability to use grammar in writing descriptive paragraph was in the less category, with an average score of 75%.

#### 5. The Students' Ability to Use Appropriate Vocabulary

Based on the findings, the students' ability to use appropriate vocabulary was high (70%). It indicates that most of the students could select suitable vocabulary to describe objects, people, or places clearly. This result is in line with Mudea (2020), whose study concluded that the students' ability to use vocabulary in writing descriptive paragraph was good.

#### 6. The Students' Ability to Use Appropriate Mechanics

Based on the findings, the students' ability to use mechanics was high (65%). It means that the majority of students applied punctuation, capitalization, and spelling correctly, even though some errors were still found. This result is different from the study conducted by Wahyudi (2019), who found that the students' ability to use mechanics in writing descriptive paragraph was in the less category with a percentage of 83.3%.

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the eleventh grade students' ability in writing descriptive paragraph at SMK N 10 Padang was high. This conclusion was supported by the findings that most students were able to organize ideas coherently, express content clearly, apply grammar correctly, use appropriate vocabulary, and apply mechanics properly. Among these aspects, grammar was the highest achievement, while mechanics and

vocabulary were relatively lower compared to other aspects.

Based on the conclusion, for the teachers, the researcher suggests that English teachers pay more attention to the students' difficulties in applying mechanics and vocabulary in descriptive writing, as these were the aspects with the lowest student achievement. Teachers are encouraged to provide more focused exercises on punctuation, capitalization, and spelling, as well as vocabulary enrichment activities. In addition, teachers should continue to guide students in organizing ideas and using grammar appropriately through regular practice and constructive feedback.

For the students, the researcher suggests that they practice writing descriptive paragraphs more frequently to improve their ability. They should focus especially on mastering mechanics and expanding vocabulary to describe objects or people more precisely. Students are also expected to read more descriptive texts in order to gain a deeper understanding of how ideas, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics are applied in writing.

The researcher also suggests that future researchers expand this study by involving a larger sample or comparing the ability of students at different grade levels. Furthermore, future studies could explore the specific factors that cause students' lower achievement in mechanics and vocabulary in writing descriptive paragraphs.

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