



## Teaching English writing with fun to elementary students

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Elementary school students often complain on writing assignments from their teachers. As a consequence, the elementary students are not enthusiastic about understanding English writing.

**Purpose:** This study aims to identify the technique of teaching English writing for elementary students.

**Design and methods:** The method used is library research method as an activity carried out systematically to collect, process, and conclude data using certain methods/techniques.

**Results:** The study reveals elementary students in low grade (I, II, III) uses creative writing, media word games and high class (IV, V, VI) uses collaborative writing.

**Keywords:** teaching writing; elementary writing, writing skills

### Introduction

Learning English needs to be taught in elementary schools, namely so that students are able to communicate well both orally and in writing. In early childhood, language learning is easier to grasp, and in the current digital 21st century where all living systems use English, with English in elementary schools, it is easier to accept the technology used. One of the focus of learning English skill is writing. Writing is a communication activity in the form of delivering messages (information) in writing to other parties using written language as a tool or medium (Dalman, 2014). Through writing, a person can communicate, convey ideas and ideas to others. Tarigan, argues that writing is like speaking, is a productive and expressive skill (Tarigan, 2008). The difference is that writing is not face-to-face (indirect) communication, whereas speaking is face-to-face (direct) communication. In principle, the main function of writing is as an indirect communication tool.

Characteristics of children who prefer things that are displayed. Children are more interested in learning to write if demonstrated with fun techniques, so children prefer learning English, inspiring the need to present visualization effects in the classroom. It is hoped that this writing technique will be able to provide a very pleasant situation or atmosphere for children which will ultimately increase their enthusiasm for learning. In elementary school English learning, both lower level (grade I, II, III) or upper level (IV, V, VI) writing is one of the competencies that must be taught to students by using. The hope is that elementary students are capable; understand written English. Copying and spelling of very simple English vocabulary precisely and accepting with correct spelling, and completing sentences and thickening the English vocabulary is very simple appropriately and acceptably. Scott & Ytreberg (2003) stated that the characteristics of elementary school

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students are that they prefer playing activities, prefer activities that involve their physical aspects, are faster. The ability of early childhood in learning English is higher, because early childhood is in a critical thinking period to learn language, because of excellent brain development, learning to write in English is not a complicated thing, but also not easy. That means, learning to write English requires appropriate and fun techniques and strategies.

Soenjono (via Mukminatun, 2008) states that language teaching for children has failed. This is due to philosophical errors in the understanding of language itself and the way the teacher teaches it. However, the fact is that elementary students often complain, saying that it is difficult if the teacher gives assignments to students to write and elementary students are less enthusiastic in understanding English writing. Even students say they can't even though it hasn't started yet. Students appear not confident when given writing assignments. Elementary school students are afraid of not being able to complete a writing assignment, because they do not know what to write, how to start and end it. In teaching English to elementary school age children, the teacher must first know the characteristics of the child he is going to teach. This is necessary so that teachers can use English writing techniques for elementary students, because each age level has different characteristics, especially in the cognitive aspect. Seeing the above conditions, the writer tries to use word games and learning techniques that are fun and varied to make English learning more interesting and meaningful so that the above problems can be resolved.

Writing is an activity as well as an integrated skill, even writing is always present in every lesson, the same as reading (Zainurrahman, 2011). Writing is part of talent, but it is mostly a skill. And like other skills, writing skills will not come automatically, but must be improved through lots of practice and regular practice (Meyers, 2005). Writing skills activities should be adjusted to the age and level of students' ability to use English. This is in learning to write according to low and high classes with different learning techniques according to age.

This study aims to investigate the techniques of teaching writing for elementary students. Elementary school is less enthusiastic in understanding written English, so the authors apply various teaching techniques so that the goals that have been set can be achieved optimally. Learning techniques are a way that teachers take to create learning situations that are truly enjoyable and supportive for the smooth learning process so that satisfying student learning achievement is achieved. This research is focused on students' English learning techniques. It is hoped that this learning technique can be developed through the selection of fun and varied learning stages using word game media.

## Methods

The method used in the study of teaching techniques to write English for elementary students is the library research method library research is as an activity carried out systematically to collect, process, and conclude data using certain methods/techniques to find answers on the problems faced (Khatibah, 2011). The validity technique is used by analyzing journals, book research and English syllabus. The data that has been collected were analyzed using the Library Research Method.

## Findings & Discussion

Learning English as a foreign language must of course be done in a fun way so as not to create a boring language learning atmosphere. For this reason, writing skills must really be considered, especially in elementary schools, in that way the teacher can make students have good and correct language skills. One alternative to learning English in a fun way is through

play. Playing is very important for children because by playing students can actualize themselves. Besides that, it is also important for the growth and development of students.

Play is the most influential factor in the period of children's self-development, including the physical, social and communication systems world. Children aged 5-8 years cannot distinguish between physicality and reality. In a learning process they have a very short concentration power. When studying, students prefer to play and do fun things. Students also find it easier to understand what they can see, hear, and feel. Children will have difficulty when they have to imagine a new concept that students are not familiar with. Children will understand easily when the teacher explains objects, food, or items around them.

### ***English writing teaching techniques for students of lower grade (I, II, III)***

Learning to write requires extra attention and energy from the teacher to encourage early childhood to be enthusiastic about writing in English. At the writing learning stage, children need to explain a lot of English vocabulary, so that they have the material capital to write.

To create a comfortable atmosphere in learning to write for early childhood, there are several techniques and methods to encourage early childhood to be more enthusiastic in writing as follows.

*Use an attractive image*; In learning to write, children are presented with learning to use pictures that are around them, favorite activities, food, favorite places to be one of the pictures that children like. The teacher can ask the children by reading what pictures they see, from that picture the teacher asks the students to write the pictures, using the English pictures they see, this is where the child's enthusiasm for writing increases.

*Motivating Students*; Encourage children to feel comfortable in learning to write, by conveying learning to provide a learning atmosphere for children so that children will be sure that they will finish their writing.

*Creative writing* is a writing technique using creative ideas. This strategy can be used as an ice breaker, students are given the freedom to write anything, given one word / one topic and developed into writing. Creative writing for the young learner level, aged 7-9 years, on the material "Objects in the classroom" with a processing time of 30 minutes.

The first step of learning, the teacher prepares the objects in the class, the teacher gives a word/topic that is interesting to the child. For example, objects in class, the teacher asks students to write or describe the word. For example, the teacher gives the word "white board". The child is asked to write and describe the word. As a follow-up, the children can display their writing in front of the class. To motivate them, the teacher can give gifts in the form of candy or chocolate. And the Teacher can see their writing progress from the book while still providing direction for good writing techniques.

In helping students write in English, the teacher must prepare appropriate and interesting material so that it is able to make early childhood enthusiastic about writing. The teacher must use *Word games as media*. Word games are fun activities and there is a task that students must do to achieve the goals of language learning. Here are some examples of materials that can be used in learning to write with word games such as (Flashcards, Word Scramble Game, Crossword Puzzle, Fill in the Blank, Pictures).

#### *Flashcard*

Flashcard for students so that it is easy to play has a significant effect on improving the English vocabulary skills of elementary school students, it can improve letter recognition and improve the ability to write English through picture media. See figure 1.

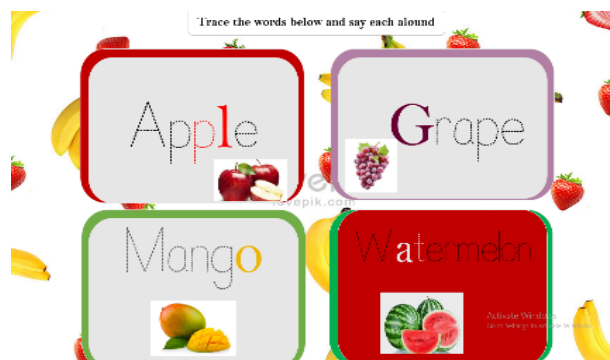


Figure 1 Flashcards are cards containing images with striking colors and written vocabulary in English.

How to use flashcard media; The teacher opens today's learning material with ice breaking written text, distributes 3 different cards with his friends, the teacher invites all students to see what picture is on the card? then the teacher asks the students to repeat aloud the name of the picture 3 times, and the teacher exemplifies the writing by neatly thickening the dotted lines on the card. Then the students were asked to finish their assignments neatly in thickening the lines, after which the teacher asked the children to see the results and stood up, the teacher asked the students from the front to the back row to say what words they got, the teacher asked all the children to give a lively applause. Then the teacher asks students to open the English material book because in the material book there is only one text to thicken the writing, the teacher says the picture aloud and asks the child to repeat it for 3 times, after that students are asked to thicken the lines neatly, and collect the results of their assignments, and assess the progress of their writing.

#### Word Scramble Game

Word scramble is a game of arranging sentences from randomly located words so that they form a certain word and are equipped with pictures. The word scramble game technique creates an atmosphere of learning to write that is both fun and meaningful for students. see figure 2

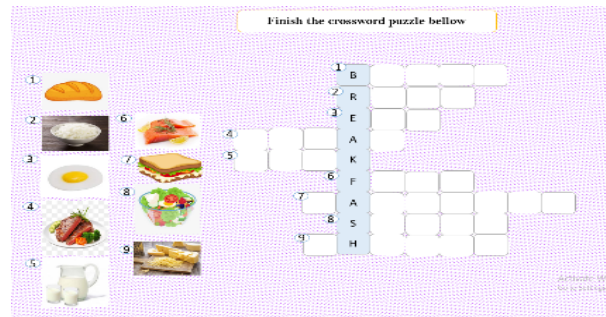


Figure 2 Word scramble games

How to use word scramble game media; The teacher does ice breaking, writing material what they will do and gives encouragement. After that the teacher gives an example in front of the class on how to complete one word, and draws the word to the appropriate picture. Then students are asked to find pairs of groups, work on questions and look for suitable answers. Students are required to be able to compose answer words, rewrite the correct words and draw lines on the pictures that match the words, and the student work results are collected to the teacher.

### *Crossword Puzzle*

Crossword Puzzle, is learning that has been proven to provoke an active response from students in writing or better known as Crossword Puzzles, (TTS) is an entertainment / game media in the form of boxes that are black and white, consisting of two lanes, namely horizontal and descending. Also equipped with clues (instructions) for what words should be entered into each box. See Figure 3.



*Figure 3 Crossword puzzle with pictures*

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How to use crossword puzzle media; The teacher did an ice breaking, writing material what to do and gave encouragement, then students were asked to work together with a classmate, the teacher gave an example in front of the class, and finished a word guessing problem. After that the teacher mentions the vocabulary and asks the students to repeat it 3 times. Students are asked to work together with their partners carefully, precisely, and orderly, and write on the contents of the empty boxes. After that, if they have finished the word essay, the pair will close the results of their assignments that do good job yells and the teacher gives rewards, then the assignments are collected to the teacher.

### *Fill in the Blank*

Fill in the blank is a type of question or phrase in the material that completes the blank words, but is assisted by story questions about their daily activities, and is equipped with pictures to complement the blank words with the right answers. See Figure 4.

How to use fill in the blank media; The teacher does ice breaking, by telling stories about their daily activities, students are asked to tell about their activities at school / at home, students take turns from front to back, then students give applauses to friends who are difficult to appear, after which the teacher speaks vocabulary and asks students to repeat as many times as 3x, students are asked to do their writing assignments, after which the teacher asks students to submit their assignments and the teacher gives reward.

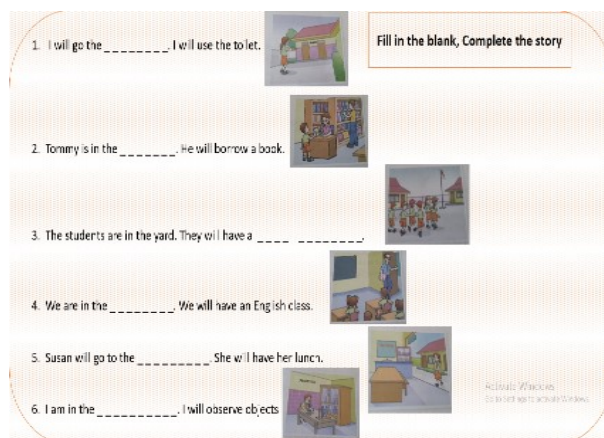


Figure 4 Cloze sentence with pictures hint

### Pictures

Pictures (pictures), is defined as a display of an object into the image media. Learning to use pictures in writing vocabulary helps students complete writing assignments quickly because they see what they are going to write See Figure 5

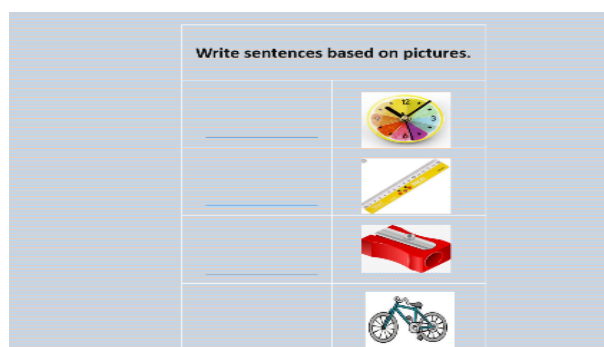


Figure 5 sentence based on pictures

How to use Media Pictures (pictures); The teacher starts doing ice breaking, today's lesson, students are asked to name what 3 objects are around them, the teacher says the vocabulary of today's material using good English and asks students to repeat 3 times, and students are asked to complete their assignments to write down accordingly. the picture on the side, after that students are asked to submit assignments to the teacher.

### English writing teaching techniques for students of higher grade (IV, V, VI)

In the learning process, children aged 10-12 years have shown the ability to understand abstract things and understand symbols and generalize situations. Children aged 8- 10 years can enjoy reading books and are able to interpret the meaning of paragraphs from the books they read and are able to write stories. Learning techniques are a way that teachers take to create learning situations that are truly enjoyable and supportive for the smooth learning process so that satisfying student learning achievement is achieved. Teachers can see their writing progress from the book while still providing directions for good writing techniques, upper class learning to improve student writing with collaborative writing, namely this strategy has been proven to improve students' writing skills;

*Collaborative writing*, another fun learning strategy, collaborative writing, is writing with friends, with a Late Young Learner level, at 10-12 years, 45 minutes' completion time with the material "Description of tourist attractions". The work step, the teacher prepares a worksheet consisting of two columns, then asks the children to write a story, after which the

teacher gives each a paper containing 2 columns. The first column is for students who start writing the beginning of the story, then the second column is continued by the next student, and this activity is only done by 2 children, their idea can be put together more easily. To motivate them, the teacher provides excellent stickers with interesting expression characters, and the teacher can see their writing progress from the book while still providing directions for good writing techniques.

We can also look back at how games are more than just a fun addition. Students also provide opportunities to use and process language in a real way while the mind is focused on the task of playing a game. In this way the game is a very effective opportunity for indirect learning. Therefore, students should not be considered a waste of time. Students are real jobs, a central part of the process of mastering a language. This may be equally good because children have a very strong sense of play and fun, because children have such a great capacity to discover and have fun.

## Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that the use of English writing teaching techniques for elementary students in low grade (I, II, III) uses creative writing, media word games and high class (IV, V, VI) uses collaborative writing. In lower classes using Creative writing, according to Vishu S Rai (2012), quoted from Akhter (2017), said that Creative writing breaks the concept of boredom in learning to write in class. Creative writing helps students learn language in a fun way, to foster self-confidence to write. With the media word games, Larcon (2002) said that this game is believed to help students achieve their learning goals, learning vocabulary because it can motivate them to reduce boredom. In Nulanda's (2017) study, it was revealed that flashcards have a significant effect on improving the English vocabulary skills of elementary school students. Flashcards can help students learn to be more focused and can recognize words easily. Azizah (2020) shows an increase in the ability to write English through image media. In the upper class, Collaborative writing learning is defined as concepts and techniques to add value to interaction between students (Reid, 1993). In the writing process, collaborative writing can increase students' self-awareness and self-confidence (Duin in Haley, 1999). According to Blanton (1992), collaborative writing has a positive impact on the quality of students' writing compared to individual writing.

Thus, it can be concluded that this technique helps the development of students in writing in class and the teacher can see their writing progress from the learning outcomes while still providing direction for good writing techniques. English writing techniques need creativity in material development and fun children's learning activities. This is because the media used is more attractive. Children feel attracted to the colorful letters printed on the picture card, so that it is easier for children to remember the sounds of the letters that make up the words. This is proven when the teacher asks the child again for the word order, the child immediately sounds the word according to what he wrote, and mentions the letters and syllables that make it up. Because this word games media has a significant influence on the skills and enthusiasm of writing English in elementary students.

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