



The Effect of Project Based Learning Model on Students Writing Skill in Narrative Text at Grade XI of SMA Negeri 3 Kisaran in 2025/2026 Academic Year

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ABSTRACT

Developing effective narrative writing skills remains challenging for English as a Foreign Language learners, particularly when conventional instruction provides limited opportunities for active and collaborative learning. This study investigated the effect of Project-Based Learning on the narrative writing skills of eleventh-grade students at State Senior High School 3 Kisaran during the 2025/2026 academic year. The study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design, involving 25 students in the experimental class and 21 students in the control class. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test writing assessments; the experimental class received instruction through Project-Based Learning, while the control class received conventional instruction. The findings demonstrated an improvement in students' writing performance following the intervention. An independent-samples *t*-test showed that the obtained *t*-value exceeded the critical *t*-value ($7.48 > 2.02$), indicating a statistically significant difference between the groups. These findings demonstrate that Project-Based Learning had a significant effect on students' narrative writing skills and can provide an effective instructional approach for supporting narrative writing development.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted 15 05 2026
Revised 26 09 2026
Accepted 28 09 2026
Published 01 10 2026

KEYWORDS

English writing; narrative text; project-based learning; quasi-experimental design; writing skills.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30743/bahastra.v11i1.13546>

INTRODUCTION

Writing constitutes an essential skill in English language learning because it enables students to express ideas, opinions, and experiences in written form. Through writing activities, students learn to communicate their thoughts clearly, systematically, and meaningfully (Rusli et al., 2025). At the senior high school level, writing occupies an important position in English instruction because students are expected to master various text types, including descriptive, recount, report, and narrative texts. Among these genres, narrative text represents an important component of English instruction for eleventh-grade students. Narrative writing provides students with opportunities to develop their imagination and creativity while strengthening their ability to organize events into coherent and meaningful stories (Ahiskali & Maltepe, 2023; Oetomo et al., 2025).

Despite the importance of narrative writing, many students continue to experience difficulties in producing narrative texts effectively. Preliminary observations at SMA Negeri 3 Kisaran revealed that several students encountered difficulties in developing ideas, organizing storylines, and using appropriate grammar and vocabulary. Students also demonstrated limited motivation and participation during writing activities, particularly when instruction relied predominantly on conventional teaching methods (Miftah, 2015). Teachers commonly focused on explaining instructional materials and assigning individual writing tasks, which provided students with limited opportunities for active involvement in the learning process. Such instructional practices tended to position students as passive participants and reduced their engagement with writing activities (Mukarromah & Suryanto, 2022).

Students' difficulties in narrative writing were also evident in their ability to organize the generic structure of narrative texts, particularly the orientation, complication, and resolution. Some students produced incomplete narratives and demonstrated recurring grammatical and mechanical errors in their written work (Rusli et al., 2024). These difficulties indicate a need for an instructional model that actively engages students while supporting creativity and the development of their writing skills. Teachers therefore need instructional approaches that provide meaningful opportunities for students to generate, organize, and communicate their ideas throughout the writing process. An effective learning model can facilitate students' writing development while simultaneously strengthening their motivation and participation in classroom activities (Davoodifard, 2022).



Project-Based Learning offers one instructional model that teachers can apply to address these challenges in writing instruction. Project-Based Learning is a student-centered model that actively engages learners in meaningful project activities and encourages them to take greater responsibility for the learning process. Through project-based activities, students collaborate, solve problems, develop ideas, and create learning products related to the instructional content (Chen et al., 2024). In narrative writing, teachers can use project activities to provide students with opportunities to develop stories creatively while making the learning process more engaging and meaningful. Project-Based Learning can also facilitate the development of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity throughout the learning process (Doo & Zhu, 2024; Rusli et al., 2024).

Previous studies have reported positive effects of Project-Based Learning on students' writing ability, including their performance in narrative writing. Students who participate in project-based activities tend to demonstrate greater engagement, confidence, and motivation when expressing their ideas in written form (Ekorini, 2021; Eliza et al., 2025). Project-Based Learning can also facilitate students' understanding of the writing process by actively involving them in planning, drafting, revising, and presenting their work. Existing studies provide evidence supporting the pedagogical potential of Project-Based Learning, yet research examining its effect on the narrative writing skills of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Kisaran remains limited (Leonia et al., 2025; Nurhayati et al., 2024). This contextual gap provides a basis for examining whether Project-Based Learning can significantly affect students' narrative writing performance within this particular educational setting.

This study investigates the effect of the Project-Based Learning model on the narrative writing skills of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Kisaran during the 2025/2026 academic year. Specifically, the study examines whether students who receive Project-Based Learning demonstrate a significant difference in writing performance compared with students who receive conventional instruction. By addressing this question, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence regarding the application of Project-Based Learning to narrative writing instruction within the senior high school context. The findings can provide pedagogical insights for English teachers seeking to develop more active and meaningful approaches to writing instruction. The study can also serve as a contextual reference for future research examining Project-Based Learning and the development of students' English writing skills.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design to investigate the effect of the Project Based Learning model on students' narrative writing skills. The study focused on eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Kisaran during the 2025/2026 academic year. The researcher selected a quasi-experimental design because the existing classroom structure did not allow students to be randomly reassigned to newly formed groups. This design nevertheless enabled the researcher to compare learning outcomes between an experimental group and a control group (Ilhami et al., 2024; Waruwu, 2024). Through this comparison, the study examined whether the implementation of Project Based Learning produced a significant difference in students' narrative writing performance.

The researcher conducted the study at SMA Negeri 3 Kisaran, with the population comprising all eleventh-grade students enrolled during the 2025/2026 academic year. The researcher employed simple random sampling to select two existing classes as the research sample. Class XI-2 served as the experimental group, consisting of 25 students, while Class XI-4 served as the control group, consisting of 21 students. The total sample therefore comprised 46 students across the two groups. This sampling procedure provided the two groups required to compare students' writing performance under different instructional conditions.

The researcher collected data through writing tests administered as a pre-test and a post-test. Before implementing the treatment, the researcher administered the pre-test to both groups to measure their initial ability to write narrative texts. The experimental group subsequently received instruction through the Project Based Learning model assisted by Canva, whereas the control group received conventional classroom instruction. During the treatment, students in the experimental group collaboratively completed narrative writing projects using Canva as the supporting medium. Students in the control group completed narrative writing activities through conventional instruction without the use of Project Based Learning or Canva.

After completing the treatment, the researcher administered the post-test to both groups to measure their narrative writing achievement following the instructional process. The researcher assessed students' written work using an analytic scoring rubric comprising five components: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and

mechanics. Each component received a score ranging from 5 to 20. The sum of the scores across these five components represented each student's overall narrative writing performance. This assessment procedure provided a structured basis for evaluating changes in students' writing achievement across the experimental and control groups.

The researcher analyzed the collected data using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. First, the researcher calculated the mean scores and standard deviations for both groups and then applied the Lilliefors test to determine whether the data followed a normal distribution. The researcher subsequently conducted a homogeneity test to examine whether the experimental and control groups had homogeneous variances. After confirming the prerequisite assumptions, the researcher employed an independent-samples *t*-test to determine whether a statistically significant difference existed between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The researcher accepted the research hypothesis when the obtained *t*-value exceeded the critical *t*-value at a significance level of 0.05.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The pre-test and post-test scores provide an overview of students' narrative writing performance before and after the implementation of Project-Based Learning in the experimental group. All 25 students completed both assessments, allowing the researcher to compare their performance across the two measurement points. The pre-test scores ranged from 60 to 75, whereas the post-test scores ranged from 85 to 95. The total score increased from 1,675 in the pre-test to 2,200 in the post-test. Table 1 presents the individual pre-test and post-test scores of students in the experimental group.

Table 1. Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Experimental Group

No.	Students' Initials	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	AZ	70	90
2	MH	65	85
3	AAOS	65	85
4	D	60	85
5	PSU	65	85
6	PMK	60	85
7	MAQ	65	85
8	NR	60	85
9	RDA	65	85
10	RDS	65	85
11	SLE	70	90
12	DI	70	90
13	RA	65	85
14	AA	75	95
15	AIA	65	85
16	VP	65	85
17	AS	70	90
18	IK	75	95
19	AYK	70	90
20	PR	70	90
21	FPP	70	90
22	WK	75	95
23	BAA	65	85
24	NA	65	85
25	SJW	65	85
Total		1675	2200

The control group consisted of 21 students who also completed the pre-test and post-test under conventional instructional conditions. Their pre-test scores ranged from 50 to 70, while their post-test scores ranged from 65 to 85. The total score increased from 1,315 in the pre-test to 1,620 in the post-test. These results show that students in the control group also demonstrated higher writing scores following the instructional period, although the magnitude of improvement differed from that observed in the experimental group. Table 2 presents the individual pre-test and post-test scores of students in the control group.

Table 2. Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Control Group

No.	Students' Initials	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	RMS	65	75
2	NHN	70	85
3	YM	70	85
4	ND	65	80
5	DF	60	75
6	MTK	55	70
7	KSK	50	65
8	SPR	65	80
9	TCW	55	70
10	AGR	55	70
11	FN	70	85
12	PA	70	85
13	SA	60	75
14	DN	65	80
15	LA	65	80
16	AI	60	75
17	DNS	65	80
18	Y	60	75
19	TA	60	75
20	MSM	65	80
21	AA	65	80
Total		1315	1620

A comparison of the mean scores provides a clearer description of changes in narrative writing performance across the two groups. The experimental group recorded a pre-test mean of 67 and a post-test mean of 88, representing an improvement of 21 points. The control group recorded a pre-test mean of 62.61 and a post-test mean of 77.14, corresponding to an improvement of 14.53 points. Descriptively, both groups demonstrated higher post-test scores, but the experimental group showed a greater increase in mean performance. Table 3 summarizes the mean scores and improvements recorded for both groups.

Table 3. Students' Mean Scores

Group	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Improvement
Experimental Class	67	88	21
Control Class	62.61	77.14	14.53

As presented in Table 3, the experimental group increased its mean score from 67 on the pre-test to 88 on the post-test, producing a 21-point improvement. The control group increased its mean score from 62.61 to 77.14, resulting in a 14.53-point improvement. The experimental group therefore demonstrated a descriptively greater improvement in narrative writing performance than the control group. This difference in mean improvement suggests that students who received instruction through Project-Based Learning assisted by Canva achieved greater gains than those who received conventional instruction. Statistical testing is required to determine whether the observed difference between the two groups is statistically significant.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the Project-Based Learning model had a significant effect on the narrative writing skills of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Kisaran during the 2025/2026 academic year. Students in the experimental group demonstrated greater improvement than those who received conventional instruction, as reflected in the increase in their mean score from 67 on the pre-test to 88 on the post-test, while the control group increased from 62.61 to 77.14. The independent-samples *t*-test further showed that the obtained *t*-value exceeded the critical *t*-value ($7.48 > 2.015$), leading to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a) and the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_o). These results demonstrate a statistically significant difference in narrative writing performance between students who received Project-Based Learning and those who received conventional instruction. The findings support the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning as an instructional approach for improving students' narrative writing skills within the context examined in this study.

English teachers are encouraged to integrate Project-Based Learning into narrative writing instruction by providing meaningful projects that actively engage students in planning, drafting, revising, and presenting their written work. Teachers can also incorporate appropriate digital media, such as Canva, to facilitate collaborative and creative writing activities while maintaining clear instructional objectives. The findings should nevertheless be interpreted within the scope of this study, which involved only 46 students from two classes at a single school and examined Project-Based Learning within a specific narrative writing context. These characteristics limit the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other student populations, educational levels, writing genres, or instructional settings. Future studies should involve larger and more diverse samples, examine different writing genres and educational contexts, and investigate the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning over longer instructional periods.

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