

## English Essay Writing at SMA Negeri 1 Pulau Morotai

Dwi Budidarma Sutrisno<sup>\*1</sup>, Megawati Basri<sup>1</sup>, Jasmal Martora<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Pasifik Morotai

Email: [dwibudidarmasutrisno@gmail.com](mailto:dwibudidarmasutrisno@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

The objective of this current community service is to introduce and improve English essay writing skill to students at SMA Negeri 1 Pulau Morotai through four class meetings. 22 eleventh graders of high school students joined as participants throughout the whole session.. The class activities include lecture and game with one pre-test at the first meeting and one post- test at the fourth meeting. Written flashcards are integrated throughout the games in all meetings. Five topics discussed consist of vocabulary building, sentence writing, tenses writing, paragraph writing and essay writing. The result shows that (1) the students were successfully introduced to the concept of English essay writing considering the completion of all games throughout the meetings and overall increase of scores of post-test compared to pre-test, however, (2) the students' improvements can only be heavily found on word, sentence, and tenses level questions. In order words, students' difficulties on paragraph and essay level questions remained.

**Keywords:** Second Language Writing, English Paragraph Writing, English Essay Writing

### ABSTRAK

*Tujuan dari pengabdian kepada masyarakat kali ini adalah untuk memperkenalkan dan meningkatkan kemampuan menulis esai bahasa Inggris ke siswa-siswi di SMA Negeri 1 Pulau Morotai melalui empat pertemuan kelas. 22 siswa-siswi SMA kelas sebelas bergabung sebagai partisipan selama semua sesi. Aktivitas-aktivitas kelas mencakup kuliah dan permainan dan juga satu pre-test pada pertemuan pertama dan satu post-test pada pertemuan keempat. Kartu dengan tulisan diintegrasikan dalam semua permainan di semua pertemuan. Lima topik yang didiskusikan terdiri dari membangun kosakata, penulisan kalimat, penulisan kalimat berpola, penulisan paragraf, dan penulisan esai. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa (1) siswa-siswi sukses diperkenalkan kepada konsep penulisan esai bahasa Inggris mempertimbangkan penyelesaian semua permainan selama semua pertemuan dan peningkatan nilai post-test dibandingkan pre- test secara keseluruhan, akan tetapi, (2) peningkatan siswa-siswi kebanyakan hanya bisa ditemukan pada pertanyaan-pertanyaan tingkatan kata, kalimat dan kalimat berpola. Dengan kata lain, kesulitan siswa-siswi para tingkatan pertanyaan paragraf dan esai masih tetap ada.*

**Kata kunci:** Penulisan Bahasa Kedua, Penulisan Paragraf Bahasa Inggris, Penulisan Esai Bahasa Inggris

### INTRODUCTION

The English language teaching in Indonesia has always been put within the context of English as a foreign language due to the language diversity in Indonesia. Considering such context then it can be expected how less likely the frequency of English practice is possessed by Indonesian students. This community service aims to develop students' English language literacy specifically on the writing skill in a form of English essay writing for four class meetings. The word Essay is defined as "a short piece of writing on a particular subject, especially one done by students as part of the work for a course" (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). With that said, different class subjects require different essays based on each of the teaching and learning content delivered by the teachers. However, for English class in particular the essay can talk

about any topic in general without any exception as long as the essay is written in English. It can be argued that students who can write essays have good mastery of English writing skill.

Research from Marue & Pantas (2019) especially about essay writing on Indonesian high school students found that challenges faced by participants include grammatical comprehension, vocabulary mastery, essay mechanics and developing ideas. These findings show the complex problems when it comes to essay writing within students. While similar essay writing research with high school students participants from Liunokas (2020) revealed that difficulties are found more about the mechanics such as appropriate use of capital letters and punctuations in an essay.

Problems identified from primary observation at SMA Negeri 1 Pulau Morotai through communication with one of the English teachers show that students have been exposed to different tenses of English. In other words, students already grasped the idea of sentence level writing. In other words, there seems to be a good opportunity for further learning and discussion such as paragraph level and essay level writing. This is essential to develop their understanding of tenses based sentences into a more complex and practical use of English writing. There have been several community services conducted in the past related to English essay writing. First, Putri et al (2021) did “Pelatihan Penulisan Esai Sederhana di Yayasan Al-Kamilah Serupa Depok” specifically focusing on a simple essay writing training. Secondly, Djuaini & Arisandi (2023) held “Pelatihan Menulis Essai Bagi Santro di Pondok Pesantren Taqwimul Ummah Jemur Ngawinan Wonocolo Surabaya” with similar emphasis on essay writing training. Thirdly, Zulaiha et al (2024) initiated Workshop Comprehension Writing for Educational Purpose where the training is particularly situated for the types of writing suitable in educational settings.

Moreover, this current community service also functions as a continuation of previous ones that have been done before in the surrounding area. First, Sutrisno et al (2024) about “English Sentence Writing at SDN 1 Unggulan Pulau Morotai”. Secondly, Sutrisno et al (2025) focusing on “English Paragraph Writing at MTs Negeri 1 Morotai” This current community service shift to the English writing discussion into “English Essay Writing at SMA Negeri 1 Pulau Morotai”. Therefore, this community service proceeds the exploration of bringing more attention to the discussion of English writing. The objectives of four class meetings of this current community service are (1) introducing English essay writing and (2) improving students’ overall English writing skill including vocabulary, sentence, tenses and then finally essay

## **METHOD**

This current community service was held at SMA Negeri 1 Pulau Morotai. The community service took place in four different class meetings incorporating lectures at the beginning then followed by a different game using flashcards as scaffolding on each section. It is necessary to include traditional lectures at first to make sure the students are exposed to the concept and have a good understanding of the topic. Moreover, the game in each meeting is influential in order to test out the comprehension in a more engaging non-traditional way.

The four meetings include different topics and emphasis. For the first meeting, it was about pre-test before any treatments were given. After completing the pre-test then students learned about the first topic which was vocabulary building. The game on the first meeting was a memory call using flashcards. Then on the second meeting, the focus turned to sentence writing and tenses writing. The game on the second meeting was sentence building using flashcards. For the third meeting, the students finally learned about paragraph writing and essay writing. The game on the third meeting was paragraph and essay building using flashcards. The students then practice writing a paragraph and an essay on a flashcard in smaller groups. Finally on the fourth meeting the students went through post-test with the same questions as pre-test.

## RESULT

### First Meeting: Pre-Test & Vocabulary Building

The first meeting was started with a pre-test before any treatments were taken place. The series of questions consist of five sections (1) word level (2) sentence level (3) tenses level (4) paragraph level (5) essay level. Each component possessed 20 points making it 100 points in total. Pre-test is an essential part of community service. This component has also been implemented during another community service from the past done by Sutrisno et al (2025).



Figure 1 (Pre-Test)

The activity during the first session then followed by lecture and game. The lecture put the focus on vocabulary building by discussing all components of parts of speech. A series of words from parts of speech were written on the white board. The same words are also written down on the flashcards. The lecture started from the whiteboard then moving into the flashcards. Each of the flashcards with the word was pronounced together so that everyone had the same chance to remember the new words or be reminded of the words they already knew before the meeting.



Figure 2 (Vocabulary Building, Game, Group Picture)

Then the game started after finishing the lecture. The game was about memory calls. All of the students in the class were split into two groups, then making a line with a meeting point at the table placed in the center. Each of the team members took turns to come forward and get the random card that showed random words. Everyone was expected to mention the meaning of the word. A team with more members answered the meaning of the given random word won.

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### Tridharma Perguruan Tinggi: Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat

Dwi Budidarma Sutrisno, S.S.,M.A. (Universitas Pasifik Morotai)

Megawati Basri, S.Pd.,M.Pd (Universitas Pasifik Morotai)

Jasmal Martora, S.S., MISTM (Universitas Pasifik Morotai)

#### Name (Nama):

#### Word Questions:

- Match the 10 words with their meaning correctly (Cocokkan kata dan maknanya)

1. watch	a. menulis	6. harvest	f. melindungi
2. drink	b. meminum	7. collect	g. memanen
3. read	c. menonton	8. protect	h. mengunjungi
4. catch	d. membaca	9. visit	i. memanggag
5. write	e. menangkap	10. bake	j. mengumpulkan

- Write the meaning of these 10 words correctly (Tulis arti 10 kata ini dengan benar)

1. cook	(.....)	6. check	(.....)
2. buy	(.....)	7. do	(.....)
3. record	(.....)	8. sing	(.....)
4. capture	(.....)	9. eat	(.....)
5. sell	(.....)	10. submit	(.....)

#### Sentence Questions:

- Arrange these words into 10 correct sentences (Atur kata menjadi 10 kalimat benar)

movies / I / every weekend / to / with my family / like / watch.

glass / of water / she / a / before breakfast / drinks / always.

the newspaper / they / morning / every / read.

during the game / tried / boy / to / the / catch / ball / the.

name / please / paper / the top / your / at / write / of / the.

in / farmers / dry / harvest / season / the / rice.

loves / stamps / he / different countries / to / collect / from.

we / the environment / must / pollution / protect / from.

this Sunday / museum / my friends / visit / the / will.

likes / mother / cookies / my / for / bake / to / special occasions.

- Write 10 correct sentences (Tulis 10 kalimat benar)

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....
7. ....
8. ....
9. ....
10. ....

**Tenses Questions:**

- Correct these 10 incorrect sentences (Perbaiki 10 kalimat salah)

1. school / goes / by bus / to / every day / she.
2. after class / they / football / play.
3. in / my father / works / bank / a.
4. east / rises / the sun / in / the.
5. last weekend / we / grandparents / visited / our.
6. movie / watched / he / yesterday / a.
7. clearly / explained / the lesson / teacher / the.
8. you / will / tomorrow / call / I.
9. travel / next month / will / to Japan / they.
10. for the exam / harder / will / study / she.

- Write 10 correct sentences using Simple Present/Simple Past/Simple Future (Tulis 10 kalimat benar menggunakan simple present/simple past/simple future)

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....
7. ....
8. ....
9. ....
10. ....

### Paragraph Questions

- Organize these sentences into 1 correct paragraph (Atur kalimat jadi 1 paragraf)

In addition, it allows learners from different places to connect and share diverse perspectives, creating a richer learning experience.

Therefore, online learning should be recognized as a more adaptable and inclusive approach to education in today's digital world.

Online learning is more effective than traditional classroom learning because it offers greater flexibility and accessibility. To begin with, students can learn at their own pace and schedule, which helps them balance education with work or personal responsibilities.

Although some argue that face-to-face interaction is lost in online classes, in fact, modern technology such as video conferencing and interactive platforms can successfully replicate that experience.

Moreover, online learning provides access to a wide range of resources, such as recorded lectures, discussion forums, and digital libraries, which enhance understanding and engagement.

- Write 1 correct English paragraph (Tulis 1 paragraf benar dalam bahasa inggris)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Essay Level:** Does social media have a more positive or negative impact on society?

- Outline ideas for the essay (Tulis garis besar ide-ide untuk esai)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



## Second Meeting: Sentence Writing & Tenses Writing

In the second meeting, the focus shifted into how to write independent and dependent sentences as well as how to write grammatically correct sentences in simple tenses. Students were introduced to the concept traditionally through the materials written down on the whiteboard. Then students have also been given the chance to experience exploration on constructing sentences with words on the flashcards. The goals were to emphasize on grammatically correct sentences and also a logically accepted meaning of the sentences.



Figure 3 (Sentence Writing & Tenses Writing)

For the game on the second meeting, the students were placed into four different groups randomly. Each of the team was called one after another to form as much as sentences from the provided flashcards with words written on them. Team one against team two and then team three faced team four. The winner from each battle then moved on to another round.



Figure 4 (Game & Group Picture)

In the final round, the two last groups as the winners from the previous round did the game together racing to form the sentences with the flashcards at the same time. All four groups showed good understanding of the sentence construction both grammatically and logically.



Figure 5 (Several results of the game)

### Third Meeting: Paragraph Writing & Essay Writing

In the third meeting, students learned about how to write a paragraph and an essay. An example of each paragraph and essay was written on the white board then discussed during the lecture. It was explained that a paragraph consists of a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence. An essay consisted of an introduction with a thesis statement, arguments located in body paragraphs, and then conclusions at the last paragraph of a complete essay.



Figure 6 (Paragraph Writing & Essay Writing)

After the lecture, students were grouped into two groups working on flashcards of a series of sentences to when put together in order would create a paragraph. Similar flashcards also applied for multiple flashcards that would form an essay when put together correctly. Then, the activity continued with smaller groups working on blank flashcards to write a paragraph and an essay. Group work still remained throughout the whole three class meetings in order to build collaborative learning. With that said, the individual work is only implemented for pre-test on the first meeting and the post-test on the fourth meeting to find out the learning progress.



Figure 7 (Game & Paragraph and Essay Writing in Groups)

The flashcards are written all over two sides, one side is filled with either one sentence or one paragraph while the others are the codes such as A,I,U,E,O. However, the order did not specify the correct order. The use of the five letters were only used as a code for an easier process of checking the answers of each group later after completing the game at the end of the session.



Figure 8 (Results of Paragraph and Essay Building)

#### Fourth Meeting: Post-Test & Closing

The last class meeting was dedicated to post-test. Pre-test was applied on the first day then the post-test was assigned on the fourth day in order to see the improvements of the students who participated throughout the whole community service meetings. The students are expected to show increased scores between pre-test and post-test. The questions on the pre-test and post-test are intentionally the same to make sure the improvements are as objective as possible.



Figure 9 (Post-Test)

The time allocated for the pre-test on the first day and the post-test on the last day is also precisely one hour long. Then the same number of students with the same names written on their exam papers are gathered and compared. It is also important to mention that some students who took pre-test might not have taken post-test due to personal reasons such as absence or sickness. Therefore, only the same names who took both pre-test and post-test will be recorded. Moreover, for privacy concerns, the names are kept anonymous. In other words, the real names are not presented, as a result the names are changed into code numbers representing each score.



Figure 10 (Group Picture)

The list of students' overall scores for those who participated throughout the four class meetings with pre-test and post-test can be found below. It can be seen from the scores that all the students experienced an increased post-test compared to their pre-test. However, almost all participants did not show any significant improvement when it comes to paragraph and essay writing.

Pre-Test & Post-Test Result Scores

No	Pre-Test						Post-Test					
	1	2	3	4	5	All	1	2	3	4	5	All
1	20/20	10/20	10/20	0/20	0/20	<b>40</b>	19/20	9/20	1/20	10/20	10/20	<b>49</b>
2	19/20	1/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>20</b>	19/20	0/20	4/20	0/20	0/20	<b>23</b>
3	19/20	10/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>29</b>	20/20	12/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>32</b>
4	19/20	9/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>28</b>	20/20	15/20	10/20	0/20	0/20	<b>45</b>
5	17/20	8/20	8/20	0/20	0/20	<b>33</b>	20/20	6/20	0/20	0/20	10/20	<b>36</b>
6	6/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>6</b>	20/20	7/20	0/20	0/20	1/20	<b>28</b>
7	15/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>15</b>	20/20	4/20	10/20	0/20	0/20	<b>34</b>
8	12/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>12</b>	17/20	7/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>24</b>
9	12/20	1/20	1/20	0/20	0/20	<b>14</b>	19/20	9/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>28</b>
10	12/20	2/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>14</b>	19/20	5/20	1/20	0/20	0/20	<b>25</b>
11	17/20	2/20	2/20	0/20	0/20	<b>21</b>	15/20	10/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>25</b>
12	19/20	0/20	2/20	0/20	0/20	<b>21</b>	19/20	4/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>23</b>
13	16/20	6/20	1/20	0/20	0/20	<b>23</b>	19/20	15/20	0/20	10/20	0/20	<b>44</b>
14	19/20	2/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>21</b>	19/20	1/20	1/20	0/20	0/20	<b>21</b>
15	10/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>10</b>	12/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>12</b>
16	17/20	8/20	1/20	0/20	0/20	<b>26</b>	19/20	14/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>33</b>
17	7/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>7</b>	19/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>19</b>
18	10/20	3/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>13</b>	20/20	6/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>26</b>
19	12/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>12</b>	20/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>20</b>
20	18/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>18</b>	19/20	2/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>21</b>
21	18/20	4/20	1/20	0/20	0/20	<b>23</b>	18/20	11/20	4/20	0/20	0/20	<b>33</b>
22	18/20	0/20	1/20	0/20	0/20	<b>19</b>	9/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	0/20	<b>9</b>

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the results of pre-test and post-test it can be concluded students had an overall increase of total scores with variations on which components and how much the indicated improvements.

In general, significant better scores are based on the word, sentence, and tenses level questions. While on the contrary, the paragraph and essay level questions did not show significant changes.

For the first objective about introducing English essay writing to the students participating at the community service, it can be said that some of the goals have been achieved. It can be seen through students' active engagements with every session during lecturers and games. For example, each and every group game through flashcards on the first, second, and third meeting have been successfully completed. Students memorize the vocabularies on the first meeting, organizing the random flashcards with words into grammatical and logical sentences. However, students showed difficulties on the third meeting by not being able to arrange the flashcards with sentences and paragraphs into a paragraph and an essay. Similar patterns can also be noticed on the third meeting when the students face challenges to write one paragraph and one essay.

While in terms of the second objective related to Improving students' English writing skills, similar findings can also be recognized. Even though students' showed improvements in answering more questions correctly compared to pre-test, these can only mostly be found on questions related to word level and sentence level with little improvements on tenses level. In other words, almost all paragraph level and essay level questions remained unanswered.

Several suggestions can be taken from this current community service including (1) other similar community service should consider to have more class meetings (2) paragraph and essay sections as the most challenging task should get more attention compared to other sections and (3) even though group game is considered fun but individual work is also equally important.

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