

## DEVELOPING NARRATIVE CREAIVITY IN CLASS 8 AT UPTD SMP NEGERI 12 PEMATANGSIANTAR

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INFO ARTIKEL	ABSTRAK
<p>Sejarah Artikel: (Diisi Editor) Diterima: 05 Desember 2025 Direvisi: 25 Desember 2025 Disetujui: 30 Desember 2025 Tersedia Daring: 31 Januari 2026</p> <hr/> <p><b>Kata Kunci:</b>Penulisan Naratif, Pembelajaran Terarah; Penelitian Kualitatif; Studi Berbasis Kelas; Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris</p>	<p>Penulisan naratif tetap menjadi keterampilan yang menantang bagi siswa SMP yang belajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL), terutama dalam mengatur struktur cerita dan menggunakan bentuk lampau yang akurat. Penelitian ini bertujuan menguji efektivitas strategi pembelajaran terarah dalam meningkatkan keterampilan penulisan naratif di kalangan siswa kelas 8 di UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar. Desain penelitian deskriptif kualitatif berbasis kelas digunakan. Peserta penelitian adalah 30 siswa kelas 8 dari satu kelas. Intervensi dilakukan selama pelajaran bahasa Inggris reguler melalui aktivitas penulisan terstruktur yang dibimbing. Data dikumpulkan melalui tugas penulisan naratif pra- dan pasca-intervensi, pengamatan kelas, lembar kerja siswa, dan catatan lapangan. Analisis berfokus pada perubahan dalam struktur naratif, ketepatan tata bahasa, penggunaan kosakata, dan kejelasan ide. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan perbaikan yang signifikan setelah bimbingan: siswa menghasilkan narasi yang lebih koheren dengan orientasi, komplikasi, dan resolusi yang lengkap, menggunakan kata kerja lampau dengan lebih akurat, dan menggunakan kosakata yang lebih bervariasi. Pengamatan kelas juga menunjukkan peningkatan keterlibatan dan kepercayaan diri siswa dalam proses menulis. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa bimbingan penulisan naratif efektif dalam meningkatkan kinerja menulis dan partisipasi siswa di kelas. Studi ini merekomendasikan penerapan strategi penulisan terstruktur yang dibimbing dalam konteks pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di sekolah menengah pertama.</p>
<p><b>Keywords;</b> <i>narrative writing; guided learning; qualitative research; classroom-based study; English learning</i></p>	<p><b>ABSTRACT</b> <i>Narrative writing remains a challenging skill for junior high school EFL learners, particularly in organizing story structure and using accurate past tense forms. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of guided learning strategies in improving narrative writing skills among Grade 8 students at UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar. A descriptive qualitative classroom-based research design was employed. The participants were 30 Grade 8 students from one class. The intervention was conducted during regular English lessons through structured guided writing activities. Data were collected through pre- and post-narrative writing tasks, classroom observations, students' worksheets, and field notes. The analysis focused on changes in narrative structure, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary use, and clarity of ideas. The findings revealed noticeable improvement after guided instruction: students produced more coherent narratives with complete orientation, complication, and resolution, demonstrated more accurate use of past tense verbs, and used more varied vocabulary. Classroom observations also indicated increased student engagement and confidence in the writing process. These findings suggest that guided narrative instruction is effective in enhancing students' writing performance and classroom participation. The study</i></p>

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*recommends the application of structured guided writing strategies in junior high school EFL contexts.*

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## 1. Introduction

Narrative writing is a core component of junior high school English instruction because it requires learners to integrate linguistic accuracy, text organization, and creative idea development. Through narrative texts, students learn to structure events chronologically, apply past tense forms, and construct meaningful stories. Despite its importance in the curriculum, narrative writing remains a persistent challenge for EFL learners, particularly at the junior high school level. Recent studies indicate that many EFL students struggle with narrative structure, grammatical accuracy, and idea development due to limited scaffolding during the writing process (Rifda, 2023; Nguyen, 2024). Students often produce narratives with unclear orientation, weak complication, or missing resolution, and they frequently misuse past tense verbs. These difficulties are compounded when writing instruction relies on traditional methods, such as assigning writing tasks without explicit guidance or structured support (Basuki, 2024).

To address these challenges, recent research has emphasized the effectiveness of guided and scaffolded instruction in writing pedagogy. Genre-based and guided learning approaches have been shown to support learners in understanding text structure, organizing ideas, and improving language accuracy through step-by-step instruction and feedback (Ho, 2022; Siangsanoh & Chatpunnarangsee, 2024). Nguyen (2024) further argues that scaffolding enables EFL learners to gradually gain control over both textual organization and grammatical features in writing tasks. However, most existing studies focus on experimental or action research designs, while qualitative classroom-based evidence examining how guided learning influences students' narrative writing development in real instructional contexts remains limited, particularly in Indonesian junior high school settings. Moreover, there is a lack of detailed description of how guided instruction affects specific aspects of narrative writing, such as narrative structure and language accuracy, as observed through students' written work and classroom participation.

Based on these gaps, this study focuses on examining the implementation of guided learning strategies in teaching narrative writing to Grade 8 students at UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar. By employing a descriptive qualitative approach, this study aims to provide in-depth insights into students' writing development and learning engagement during guided narrative instruction. To address the research gap, this study is guided by the following research questions: How does guided learning influence the narrative structure of Grade 8 students' writing?, How does guided learning affect students' language accuracy, particularly in the use of past tense and vocabulary in narrative texts?

How do students respond to guided narrative writing activities during the classroom learning process?.

## 2. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative classroom-based research design. This design was chosen because the study aimed to describe in depth how guided learning strategies influenced students' narrative writing development and classroom engagement rather than to measure statistical differences. Descriptive qualitative research allows the researcher to examine learning processes, changes in students' written products, and classroom interaction within a natural instructional context. This approach is appropriate for classroom-based writing research that focuses on instructional practices and students' responses during guided narrative writing activities.

The participants of this study were 30 Grade 8 students at UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar in the academic year 2025/2026. One class was selected using purposive sampling based on the English teacher's recommendation, as the students experienced difficulties in writing narrative texts, particularly in organizing narrative structure, using past tense accurately, and expressing ideas clearly. All participants followed the same English curriculum and had similar learning backgrounds.

The research was conducted during regular English lessons through four instructional meetings. The procedures were carried out in the following stages:

**Pre-writing Stage (Pre-test)** In the first meeting, students were asked to write a narrative text individually based on a given topic. This task functioned as a pre-test to identify students' initial ability in narrative writing, focusing on story structure, grammar accuracy, vocabulary use, and clarity of ideas. Guided Learning Implementation Guided learning activities were implemented over two instructional meetings. During these lessons, the teacher introduced the concept and structure of narrative texts, including orientation, complication, and resolution. Students were guided through several activities, such as brainstorming story ideas, identifying characters and settings, planning story sequences, drafting narrative texts, and revising their drafts based on teacher feedback. Throughout the process, the teacher provided explicit explanations, model texts, and continuous guidance to support students' writing development.

**Post-writing Stage (Post-test)** In the final meeting, students were asked to write another narrative text individually. This post-test aimed to identify changes in students' narrative writing skills after the guided learning activities. The results were compared descriptively with the pre-test to observe improvement.

**Classroom Observation** Classroom observations were conducted throughout the teaching and learning process. The observations focused on students' participation, engagement, responses to guided instruction, and interaction during narrative writing activities. Several instruments were used to collect data in this study. Students' narrative writing tasks from the pre-test and post-test served as the main source of data. These tasks provided evidence of students' narrative structure, language accuracy, vocabulary use, and overall writing development. Students' narrative texts were assessed using an analytic writing rubric designed for junior high school EFL learners. The rubric evaluates five

components of narrative writing: content, narrative structure, grammar accuracy (especially the use of past tense), vocabulary use, and mechanics. Each component is rated on a four-point scale ranging from poor to very good. The assessment rubric is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Narrative Writing Assessment Rubric**

Aspect	Score 4 (Very Good)	Score 3 (Good)	Score 2 (Fair)	Score 1 (Poor)
Content	Ideas are clear, relevant, and well-developed	Ideas are relevant but partially developed	Ideas are limited and unclear in parts	Ideas are very limited or irrelevant
Narrative Structure	Complete structure (orientation, complication, resolution) is clearly organized	Structure is mostly complete but not fully developed	Some narrative elements are missing or unclear	Narrative structure is unclear or incomplete
Grammar (Past Tense)	Past tense is used accurately with minimal errors	Some grammatical errors but meaning is clear	Frequent errors that affect clarity	Dominant grammatical errors that obscure meaning
Vocabulary	Varied and appropriate vocabulary	Adequate vocabulary with some repetition	Limited vocabulary use	Very limited and repetitive vocabulary
Mechanics	Correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization	Minor mechanical errors	Frequent mechanical errors	Dominant mechanical errors

### Observation Sheets and Field Notes

Observation sheets and field notes were used to record students' behavior, participation, motivation, and responses during guided learning activities. These instruments supported the interpretation of students' writing development and classroom interaction.

### Students' Worksheets

Students' worksheets completed during brainstorming and story planning activities were collected and analyzed to provide additional evidence of students' understanding of narrative structure and idea development.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were applied throughout the research process. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school principal and the English teacher of Grade 8 at UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar. Students participated voluntarily and were informed that the activities were part of regular classroom learning. All students' identities were anonymized in the data analysis and reporting, and the collected data were used solely for academic research purposes.

## 3. Result and Discussion (Hasil dan Pembahasan)

### 3.1. Improvement in Students' Narrative Writing Skills

The analysis of students' narrative writing showed clear improvement after the implementation of guided learning strategies. Based on the comparison between pre-test and post-test writing tasks, students demonstrated progress in narrative structure, grammar accuracy, vocabulary use, and clarity of ideas. Table 2 presents a descriptive summary of students' narrative writing performance before and after the guided learning activities.

**Table 2. Summary of Students' Narrative Writing Improvement**

Aspect	Pre-Test Condition	Post-Test Condition
Narrative Structure	Incomplete or unclear orientation and resolution	Complete and clearly organized narrative structure
Grammar (Past Tense)	Frequent tense errors	Fewer tense errors and clearer meaning
Vocabulary	Limited and repetitive	More varied and appropriate
Idea Development	Short and unclear ideas	More detailed and logical ideas
Overall Writing Quality	Low	Improved

Before the intervention, most students produced narratives with missing elements, especially in orientation and resolution. After guided learning, the majority of students were able to write complete narratives with clearer organization and improved language accuracy.

### 3.2. Development of Narrative Structure

One of the most noticeable improvements was observed in students' mastery of narrative structure. In the pre-test, many students wrote stories without a clear beginning or ending, and events were often presented in an unorganized manner. After guided instruction, students demonstrated better understanding of narrative elements. Most students were able to introduce characters and settings clearly, develop complications logically, and provide appropriate resolutions. This improvement was evident across the majority of students' post-test writing.

### 3.3. Improvement in Grammar and Vocabulary Use

Students' grammar accuracy, particularly in the use of past tense, improved after guided learning activities. In the pre-test, students frequently used present tense verbs to describe past events. In the post-test, these errors decreased, and students showed better control of verb forms. Vocabulary use also improved. Students began to use more descriptive words, action verbs, and time connectors, making their narratives clearer and more engaging. Although some errors remained, overall language accuracy showed positive development.

### 3.4. Student Participation and Classroom Engagement

Classroom observations revealed positive changes in students' participation during guided learning activities. At the beginning of the study, many students were passive and

hesitant to write. During the guided instruction, students became more active in brainstorming, planning stories, and revising drafts.

Students showed greater confidence in expressing ideas and responded positively to teacher feedback. The classroom atmosphere became more interactive and supportive, indicating increased engagement in the writing process. This study focused on improving the narrative writing skills of Grade 8 students at UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar through guided learning strategies. The findings showed that students experienced improvement in writing narrative texts after the implementation of step-by-step guidance. Students were able to organize stories more clearly using orientation, complication, and resolution, apply past tense more accurately, and express ideas more logically. In addition, students became more active and confident during the learning process. Based on these results, guided learning is considered effective in supporting students' narrative writing development and classroom engagement.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study indicate that guided learning strategies positively influenced students' narrative writing skills. The improvement in narrative structure suggests that explicit instruction and step-by-step guidance helped students understand how to organize stories effectively. This finding is consistent with previous studies which emphasize that scaffolding supports learners in mastering text organization in EFL writing (Ho, 2022; Nguyen, 2024).

The reduction of grammatical errors, particularly in past tense usage, demonstrates that guided instruction allowed students to focus on language form while developing ideas. This supports Nguyen's (2024) argument that scaffolded writing instruction improves learners' control of grammatical features through repeated modeling and feedback. Improved vocabulary use further indicates that guided activities such as brainstorming and drafting provided students with opportunities to expand their lexical choices. Similar results were reported by Basuki (2024), who found that structured guidance helps students produce richer and more varied vocabulary in narrative texts.

In addition to writing improvement, guided learning also enhanced student engagement and participation. Students became more active and confident during the learning process, supporting Rifda's (2023) findings that guided and interactive writing activities increase learners' motivation. This suggests that guided learning is not only effective for improving writing outcomes but also for creating a supportive classroom environment.

From a classroom perspective, these findings imply that narrative writing instruction should move beyond traditional task-based assignments without guidance. Teachers are encouraged to implement structured steps such as brainstorming, modeling, drafting, revising, and providing feedback. These steps help students develop narrative writing skills gradually and meaningfully, particularly in junior high school EFL contexts.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study examined the implementation of guided learning strategies to improve the narrative writing skills of Grade 8 students at UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar. Based on the findings, guided learning was effective in enhancing students' narrative writing performance and classroom engagement. Students demonstrated clearer narrative structure, improved use of past tense, more appropriate vocabulary, and better idea development after receiving step-by-step instructional guidance. In addition to writing improvement, guided learning positively influenced students' participation in the learning process. Students became more active, confident, and responsive during narrative writing activities, indicating that structured guidance supports both cognitive and affective aspects of learning in EFL classrooms. Despite these positive outcomes, this study has several limitations. First, the research involved only one class consisting of 30 students, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Second, the duration of the intervention was relatively short, conducted over four instructional meetings. Third, the study did not include a control group for comparison, as it employed a descriptive qualitative design. Finally, the assessment of students' writing relied on rubric-based qualitative judgment, which may involve a degree of subjectivity. Future research is recommended to address these limitations by involving larger samples and multiple classes, applying guided learning strategies across different grade levels or text genres, and extending the duration of the intervention. Comparative studies employing experimental or mixed-method designs may also provide deeper insight into the effectiveness of guided narrative instruction compared to other instructional approaches.

#### 5. Acknowledgement

The researcher would like to express sincere gratitude to all parties who contributed to the completion of this research. First, deepest appreciation is extended to the English teacher and the principal of UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar for granting permission and providing support during the data collection process in the classroom. Their cooperation and guidance made it possible for the research to run smoothly. Special thanks are also addressed to the students of Class 8 who participated actively in the learning activities and narrative writing tasks. Their responses, efforts, and enthusiasm became valuable data that supported the success of this study. The researcher is also grateful to the lecturers from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar, for their advice, encouragement, and academic support throughout the process of writing this article. Their suggestions were essential in improving the quality of this research. Finally, the researcher would like to thank family and friends for their moral support, motivation, and prayers during the completion of this work. Without the help of all these parties, this research would not have been completed successfully.

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