



The Effectiveness of Canva as a Digital Writing Tool in Improving Descriptive Writing Skill of the Eleventh-Grade Students at Senior High School

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-06-09 Revised: 2026-06-25 Accepted: 2026-06-30 Keywords: Canva, digital writing tool, descriptive writing, writing skills DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.11162 Corresponding Author: Nadya dyanadya372@gmail.com Universitas Tadulako	<i>The purpose of this study is to investigate the efficacy of using Canva as a digital writing tool in enhancing students' descriptive writing. Contrary to the other studies, the current research focuses on examining Canva's effectiveness as a digital writing tool to assist students in developing their descriptive writing skill. It should be stated that the main motivation for conducting the current study is the poor ability of students to organize ideas, lack of vocabulary, and lack of interest in writing descriptive texts. To conduct the research, researchers followed the quasi-experimental design, including pre-test and post-test with a control group. The participants of this study comprised of 31 eleventh-grade students studying at MAN 1 Palu, whereof 16 of them were placed in the experimental group while the other 15 students formed the control group. In order to perform the experiment, the researchers designed several activities during six sessions. Descriptive text writing test was employed as the data collection technique, which was later analysed using descriptive statistics and aided by the Independent Samples t-test in conjunction with the use of SPSS. Consequently, the following findings emerged as a result. The mean score for the experimental group was raised from 52.00 in the pre-test to 68.81 in the post-test. For the control group, the score increased from 49.40 to 56.60. From the results of the Independent Samples t-test, there was a significant difference between the two groups ($p = 0.002 < 0.05$). Additionally, the effect size showed a large effect (Cohen's $d = 1.236$), signifying practical importance.</i>

1. Introduction

Writing is one of the most basic English language skills because it is not only used as a tool to convey information through writing, such as in reports, messages, or instructions, but also as a fundamental tool for writers themselves to express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions in a systematic manner. Through the process of writing, writers are able to formulate ideas in a systematic way and convey the meaning they want to convey more effectively to readers. The time spent learning English as a second language. Research shows that writing skills are not solely the result of the learning process, but also serve as a driver for internalizing language structure, developing vocabulary, and advancing a deeper understanding of the language itself (Khudaverdiyeva, 2025).

One genre that is often taught in high schools includes descriptive texts. The purpose of a descriptive text is to describe a person, place, object, or phenomenon and help people create a vivid image of the discussed subject. Usually, a descriptive text consists of two main parts, namely, identification and description. The quality of a descriptive text may be evaluated according to five writing criteria including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics (Jacobs et al., 1981). At the same time, several pieces of research reveal that it is difficult for many students to generate ideas, organize information systematically, choose proper vocabulary, and write grammatically correct sentences when completing descriptive texts.

In the period preceding digital technologies, writing was facilitated through traditional media like blackboards, worksheets, and books. These means provided students with an opportunity to practice writing; however, they did not give enough support regarding idea organization and paragraph writing. In the current situation of digital learning, there are high expectations concerning digital writing tools. Digital tools should not only give an opportunity to work on texts but also facilitate the process of text structuring and improving. Many studies demonstrate the possibility of enhancing motivation and engagement among students because they offer more flexible and supportive environments for drafting, editing, and organizing ideas (Fidian, 2020).

Among various digital platforms, Canva has emerged as a useful digital writing tool in writing instruction. Through its templates, text boxes, and layout features, Canva provides a structured digital space that helps students organize their ideas when writing descriptive texts. Unlike other platforms such as Padlet or Google Docs, which mainly function as collaborative posting or text-editing tools, Canva allows students to arrange their written ideas in a more organized and guided format. Previous studies have reported that the use of Canva can increase students' confidence and engagement in writing, which contributes to better performance in descriptive writing tasks (Utami & Djamdjuri, 2021).

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed various aspects of education, including the way students learn to write. Integrating technology into the learning process can improve student learning outcomes, provided that the use of technology aligns with learning objectives and student needs (Koehler et al., 2013). Furthermore, digital literacy has become a crucial skill in modern education, as students are expected to use digital technology to communicate, manage information, and enrich their knowledge (Ng, 2012). Therefore, the use of digital tools in the writing learning process can provide students with additional support as they write.

As per Process Writing Theory, the writing process involves cycles comprising stages of planning, drafting, revision, and editing (Harmer, 2006). Hence, the students require learning aids that can assist them in facilitating the above-mentioned stages of the writing process. Rapid evolution in technological aids has paved way for incorporation of digital media in language learning. There is one digital tool that has become quite popular in learning English Canva. Although Canva is well known as a graphic tool, yet it provides several features like templates, layouts, text boxes, etc., that can aid students at different stages of the writing process.

This concept is consistent with Mayer's (2009) multimedia theory, which postulates that learning will become more efficient when verbal and visual information are processed together. Moreover, Constructivist Theory of Learning suggests that knowledge is constructed through meaningful learning processes by the learners themselves. Using Canva, students can individually explore and organize their ideas and thoughts, thus making the process learner-centered. In addition, Technology Acceptance Theory posits that acceptance of any kind of technology by the learners will be easier if it is perceived as being useful and easy to utilize.

A few previous works highlighted the contribution of Canva in improving language learning as well as writing skills of the students. According to Ruswandi et al. (2024), the application of Canva combined with Project-Based Learning resulted in enhancing students' descriptive writing skills significantly. As stated by Riesnawati and Susanti (2024), there was a significant enhancement of students' writing skills especially in organizing the writing content and enriching vocabulary. Similarly, Ramdhana and Syarfi (2024) found that Canva had made it possible to boost up students' participation as well as improve their learning outcomes concerning writing. Furthermore, Faiza et al. (2025) focused on Canva's influence on enhancing students' creativity, passion in learning, and confidence.

However, there are several issues that still need further investigation. Earlier studies have often concentrated on the presentation aspect, multimedia capabilities, or the project-based learning capabilities of Canva, but rarely considered it as a writing help software. Secondly, very few studies have considered

how Canva can help students during each phase of writing, starting from brainstorming, planning, drafting, to revising their work. Thirdly, the impact of using Canva on different writing skills such as content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics are less investigated. In addition, there are few studies investigating high school students' use of Canva in madrasah institutions in Indonesia. Such gaps imply that future research still need to be conducted regarding the impact of using Canva as a digital writing assistant on writing process.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to explore the extent to which Canva can serve as an effective digital writing tool for improving students' ability to write descriptive texts. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following research questions: Is Canva effective as a digital writing tool in improving the descriptive writing skills of eleventh-grade students at MAN 1 Palu?, Which writing components (content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics) show the greatest improvement after the implementation of Canva?

By examining Canva as a digital writing tool rather than merely as a design or presentation platform this study is expected to contribute to the development of research on the use of technology in English writing instruction and to provide practical insights for English teachers in implementing more innovative and effective writing instruction strategies.

2. Method

In this study, a quantitative approach using quasi-experimental research design was employed to explore the influence of the utilization of Canva as a digital writing tool in enhancing the descriptive writing skills of students. The study took place at MAN 1 Palu during the academic year of 2025/2026.

The target population for this study comprised all the students in class 11 of MAN 1 Palu. Two classes were randomly chosen and assigned as the experimental group comprising 16 participants and control group with 15 students. The age of participants ranged between 16-17 years and both the groups possessed similar English language competency based on their prior performance and test scores before instruction. Both the experimental and control groups were under the same teacher and used identical course content. However, the mode of writing instructions was different, whereas the experimental group used Canva as a digital writing tool and the control group used conventional techniques for learning writing.

To ensure the content is accurate and appropriate, the writing tests and assessment rubrics were reviewed by two English Language Education faculty members. They evaluated whether the topics addressed aligned with the research objectives and whether the assessment criteria were consistent with those objectives. Revisions were made based on the feedback provided before the instruments were used in the study.

Students' writing skills were assessed using the ESL Composition Assessment Profile developed by Jacobs et al. (1981). This profile covers five aspects: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. To ensure consistency in assessment, all written work was evaluated using the same rubric and procedures. Although inter-rater reliability was not statistically calculated, the use of a validated analytical rubric helped maintain consistency and accuracy in the assessment process.

The process-based writing strategy used a six-session implementation that comprised the writing process components of planning, drafting, revising, and editing. The writing process described by Harmer (2006) was applied in the experiment where the Canva application was introduced at each phase to assist learners in idea generation, organizing ideas in writing, and revising the written text. For fidelity of the treatment, the same procedure of learning, learning outcomes, learning resources, and time duration were utilized across all phases of the treatment period.

Data collected through participants were analyzed using SPSS. Writing skills of students were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Normality and homogeneity of variance were checked before performing parametric analysis. Post-test scores of experimental and control groups were analyzed using independent samples t-test. Pre-test scores of experimental and control groups were checked using independent samples t-test to check equivalence level of groups at beginning point. Alpha level of 0.05 was used for statistical test.

3. Result

The main purpose of this study was to find out whether Canva as an online tool can help improve the descriptive writing abilities of the students. This finding was based on the outcomes gotten from the pre-test and post-tests of both groups.

A. Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were applied in analyzing the pretest and posttest marks obtained by the subjects in the experiment and the control group respectively. The descriptive statistics involved N (the number of participants), minimum, maximum, average (mean) and standard deviation as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Tabel 1. Descriptive Analysis

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation
Pre-Test Experimental	16	40	70	52.00	9.274
Post-Test Experimental	16	50	85	68.81	11.297

Pre-Test Control	15	40	60	49.40	7.679
Post-Test Control	15	50	70	56.60	8.096
Valid N (listwise)	15				

As seen in Table 1, there was a remarkable improvement recorded in the scores of the experimental group through the teaching intervention using Canva. The mean score improved from 52.00 to 68.81 between the pre-test and post-test, an improvement of 16.81 points. The highest score also improved from 70 to 85, meaning that there were some students who scored highly in writing skills.

On the other hand, in the control group, there was an improvement in the score from 49.40 in the pre-test to 56.60 in the post-test, showing an improvement of only 7.20 points. The highest score also increased from 60 to 70, but there was a minor improvement in the standard deviation, which increased from 7.679 to 8.096.

The results show that, in general, there was an improvement in the descriptive writing skills of both groups as a result of the learning process. In this case, the experimental group improved more than the control group.

B. Gain Score Analysis

A gain score analysis was conducted to determine the extent of improvement in student learning outcomes.

Tabel 2. Gain Score Analysis

Group	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Gain Score	Percentage of Improvement
Experimental	52.00	68.81	16.81	32.33%
Control	49.40	56.60	7.20	14.57%

As depicted in Table 2, the experimental group obtained a gain score of 16.81, a 32.33% increase. On the other hand, the control group scored 7.20, a 14.57% increase.

Based on the results shown above, the improvement in writing skills among the experimental group members was more than double that of the control group, thereby indicating that Canva is more effective in developing descriptive writing skills.

C. Analysis of Writing Components

Students' writing skills were analyzed based on five components: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

Tabel 3. Analysis of Writing Components

Component	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Gain
Content	17.88	23.94	+6.06
Organization	10.19	13.13	+2.94
Vocabulary	9.94	12.81	+2.87
Language Use	10.00	12.94	+2.94
Mechanics	4.50	6.06	+1.56

It can be seen from the results that the most improved aspect was the content part, followed by organization and language usage. It shows that Canva is very effective in helping students think and organize their thoughts.

D. Normality Test

A normality test was conducted using the Shapiro–Wilk test because the sample size was less than 50 participants. The results of the normality test are presented in Table 2.

Tabel 4. Normality Test

Class				Shapiro-Wilk		
				<i>statistic</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>sig</i>
Student's Learning Result		Pre-Test	Experimental	.929	16	.235
		(Digital-Based Learning)				
		Post-Test	Experimental	.944	16	.395
		(Digital-Based Learning)				
		Pre-Test	Control	.849	15	.017
		(Conventional)				
		Post-Test	Control	.889	15	.065
		(Conventional)				

According to Table 5, the pre-test and post-test values of the experimental group are normally distributed since the significance level is higher than 0.05. The post-test values for the control group are normally distributed (Sig. = 0.065). Nonetheless, the pre-test values for the control group are not normally distributed (Sig. = 0.017). Despite an outlier in the values, the analysis is still conducted using parametric tests, considering the pattern of the entire distribution and sample size, among other considerations.

E. Homogeneity Test

Homogeneity test was carried out using Levene's Test to ascertain if there was equality of variances between the experimental and control groups. The outcome of the homogeneity test is provided in Table 3.

Tabel 5. Homogeneity Test

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Student's Learning Result	Based on Mean	1.848	1	29	.184

From Table 5, it can be observed that the significance value (Sig.) derived using Levene's test is 0.184, which is higher than the level of significance of 0.05. From this, it can be inferred that the variance does not have any significant difference in the experimental and control groups. Therefore, the data are found to be homogeneous and are eligible for an Independent Samples t-test.

F. Independent Sampel t-test

a. Independent Sampel t-test Pre-test

Before the treatment was administered, an independent samples t-test was conducted to ensure that the initial abilities of both groups were at comparable levels.

Tabel 6. Independent sampel t-test pre-test

		Levene's Test for equality of variabel				t-test for Equality of Means				
		f	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2- tailed	Mean difference	Std.Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Student's Learning Result	Equal variances assumed	.249	.622	.847	29	.404	2.600	3.070	-3.678	8.879

The analysis results show that the significance values of 0.404 is greater than 0.05. This indicates that there is no significant difference between the initial writing abilities of students in the experimental group and the control group.

Thus, both groups can be considered to have equivalent initial abilities before the treatment was administered. Therefore, the differences in results that emerged in the post-test can be interpreted as the effect of the treatment administered during the study.

Effect Sizes Analysis Pre-Test

An effect size analysis was conducted to determine the magnitude of the difference in initial writing ability between the experimental group and the control group before the intervention was administered. The results of the analysis using Cohen's *d* are presented in table 8.

Tabel 7. Effect Sizes Pre-Test

		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Student's	Cohen's	8.541	.304	-.407	1.011
Learning Result					

Based on Table 7, a Cohen's *d* values of 0.304 indicates a small effect size. This result suggests that the difference in pre-test scores between the experimental and control groups is relatively small. Additionally, the 95% confidence interval (-0.407 to 1.011) includes zero, suggesting that both groups had relatively equivalent initial writing abilities before the intervention was administered. This finding supports the results of the Independent Samples *t*-test on the pre-test, which showed no significant difference between the two groups.

b. Independent Sampel T-Test Post-Test

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental group and the control group after the treatment was administered.

Tabel 8. Independent Sampel t-test post-test

		Levene's Test for equality of variabel				t-test for Equality of Means				
		f	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std.Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Student's	Equal	1.848	.184	3.439	29	.002	12.212	3.552	4.949	19.476
Learning	variances									
Result	assumed									

According to Table 8, a significance value of 0.002 was attained, which is below 0.05. This implies that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. With a mean difference of 12.212, it can

be stated that students in the experimental class scored significantly higher than those in the control class.

Moreover, the confidence interval level of 95% lies between the positive values of 4.949 and 19.476. It should be noted that the confidence interval does not fall on the zero line. This confirms that there is a significant difference between the two classes. Therefore, the use of Canva has a significant impact on descriptive writing skills of students.

Effect Sizes Analysis Post-Test

In addition to testing statistical significance, this study also calculated the effect size to determine the extent of Canva's influence on students' writing skills.

Table 9. Effect Size Post-Test

		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Student's	Cohen's	9.882	1.236	.455	1.999
Learning Result					

The analysis results show that the values of Cohen's d is 1.236. Based on Cohen's criteria (1988), this value falls into the category of a large effect size ($d > 0.80$). Thus, Canva not only has a statistically significant effect but also has a substantial practical impact on improving students' writing skills.

Additionally, the effect size was calculated using Eta Squared (η^2) using the formula:

$$\eta^2 = t^2 / (t^2 + df)$$

Based on the calculation, the values of η^2 is 0.29. This value indicates that approximately 29% of the variation in students' writing skills can be attributed to the use of Canva in the learning process. According to Cohen's criteria (1988), this value falls into the category of a large effect.

Overall, the combination of a low significance level ($p = 0.002$), a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.236$), and an Eta Squared values of 0.29 provides strong evidence that Canva is an effective digital writing tool for improving students' descriptive writing skills.

4. Discussion

From the result of this research, it is obvious that the use of Canva as digital writing tools significantly enhances the writing skill of students. This is because there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group ($p = 0.002 < 0.05$). Moreover, the experimental group obtained a gain score of 16.81 while the control group gained 7.20 points. A big effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.236$) further suggests the impact of Canva on students' writing ability.

The improvement in students' writing skills can be explained by how Canva supports the writing process. The available visual templates, layouts, and organizational features help students generate ideas and organize information more effectively. Consequently, students can focus more on developing the content of their writing rather than struggling to organize their ideas. Canva also functions as a form of scaffolding that provides a clear structure, thereby helping students compose descriptive texts systematically. Through repeated use, students become more independent and confident in completing writing tasks.

The writing component analysis shows that the greatest improvement occurred in the content aspect (+6.06), followed by organization (+2.94), language use (+2.94), vocabulary (+2.87), and mechanics (+1.56). The highest improvement in the content aspect indicates that Canva is highly effective in helping students generate and develop ideas. Meanwhile, the improvement in the organization aspect indicates that Canva's visual features help students structure information in a more coherent and logical manner.

These findings align with several previous studies. Ruswandi et al. (2024) found that Canva helps students organize their ideas more effectively during writing activities. Similarly, Ramdhana et al. (2024) reported that Canva can enhance student engagement and creativity. Additionally, Dyah Ayu Riesnawati and Susanti (2024) concluded that Canva has a positive impact on students' writing outcomes through a more interactive learning environment. This study supports these findings and demonstrates that Canva makes a significant contribution, particularly to the development of content and the organization of descriptive texts.

Nevertheless, the improvement in students' writing skills observed in this study was likely not solely due to the use of Canva. Other factors, such as teacher guidance, increased student motivation, and the novelty effect of using new technology, may also have contributed to the results. Therefore, the findings of this study should be understood as a combination of technological support and the learning processes that took place during the study.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings of this study help expand our understanding of technology-enhanced writing instruction, as they demonstrate that digital writing tools not only assist in the production of written work but also facilitate the thought processes that occur while writing. The significant improvements in content and organizational structure indicate that the visual support and organizational management features available in Canva can help students develop their ideas and structure their texts more effectively.

These findings contribute to the advancement of research in digital writing education by demonstrating that technology can serve as a learning support that helps students manage complex writing tasks. Thus, Canva functions not only as a learning tool but also as a resource that aids the thinking process and enhances students' writing skills in a more structured manner.

The findings of this study indicate that Canva can be effectively integrated into English writing instruction to help students generate ideas, organize text, revise, and edit their writing. However, this study has several limitations, namely a relatively small sample size (31 students), being conducted at only one school, and a limited intervention duration of six sessions.

Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a larger sample, be conducted at multiple schools, and use a longer intervention duration to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Canva's effectiveness in writing instruction. Another limitation of this study is that inter-rater reliability was not statistically evaluated. Future research is recommended to involve multiple raters and calculate the inter-rater reliability coefficient to enhance the reliability of the assessment results.

5. Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that Canva is an effective digital writing tool for improving students' descriptive writing skills. Students who learned using Canva achieved better results than those who learned through conventional methods, particularly in terms of content development, idea organization, and text structure.

The results of the Independent Samples t-test also show a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group, indicating that the use of Canva contributes positively to improving students' writing skills. Additionally, Canva helps students generate ideas, organize information, and convey their ideas more clearly during the writing process.

Suggetion

Based on these findings, English teachers are advised to integrate Canva into writing instruction, particularly for descriptive text materials. Students are also advised to utilize Canva as a tool for independent writing practice to enhance their creativity and writing skills. Furthermore, future researchers may examine the effectiveness of Canva on language skills or different text types by involving a larger sample size to obtain more comprehensive results.

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