



Improving Personal Letter Writing Skills Through Outlining Technique: A Quasi-Experimental Study at State Islamic Senior High School

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Received: 2026-06-01 Revised: 2026-06-18 Accepted: 2026-06-24</p>	<p><i>This study was conducted to prove that the use of outlining can improve the personal letter writing skills of eleventh grade students of State Islamic Senior High School. Despite the recognition of outlining as an effective pre-writing strategy, few researchers have examined the effectiveness of the strategy as a tool for teaching personal letter writing among secondary students. Personal letter writing is unique compared to other forms of writing in that students are expected to arrange their ideas systematically but also express their personal experience, emotions, and interpersonal relations effectively in the process. Thus, the present study was designed to measure the effectiveness of the outlining strategy in enhancing personal letter writing skills among students. This study utilized a quantitative research design where 43 participants were assigned into two groups; experimental group composed of 21 students and control group comprised of 22 students. In the experimental group, the outlining strategy was used as a tool while the conventional method was used among the control group students. It was noted that there was an increase in the mean score of the experimental group from 62.43 during the pre-test to 86.67 during the post-test, while the control group recorded scores of 66.77 during the pre-test and 76.09 during the post-test. In addition, the results from the independent-samples t-test suggested that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t = 6.282, p < .001$). Lastly, from the effect size analysis, the effect size value was found to be Cohen's $d = 1.92$, which indicates a large effect. Therefore, this shows that outlining is an effective instructional method for enhancing students' personal letter writing abilities. This study has established that English teachers should apply outlining as a useful instructional strategy to enable their students to write good personal letters. Moreover, this study has added to the existing body of knowledge on writing theory by proving empirically that outlining is an effective</i></p>
<p>Keywords: Outlining technique, Writing skill, Quasi-Experimental Design, Conventional Method, Eleventh Grade Students</p>	
<p>DOI: 10.24256/ideasv14i1.11166</p>	
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strategy for planning purposes.

1. Introduction

English writing skills have become an integral part of modern society that students should develop due to the age of globalization because English writing allows students to convey their ideas, messages, and experiences through language. One of the most difficult language skills to master is English writing since it forces students to come up with ideas and express them while using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.

As Harmer states, writing can be defined as a productive skill, which goes through such stages as planning, drafting, revision, and editing. In turn, according to Richards & Renandya, writing remains one of the most difficult skills for second language learners since it includes different components like content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Furthermore, according to recent research, many EFL learners continue facing problems in idea development and coherent expression.

In terms of senior high school learning, students are required to write different kinds of texts in order to develop communicative competence. But, despite this, numerous students still have problems with writing coherent and developed texts. As it is stated by Mamarajabova and Bakhriddinova (2023),

students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) commonly face difficulties when it comes to content development, coherence, and organizing the text itself. Similar results were obtained in Rosmiaty et al.'s (2023) study, which indicated poor performance and poor communication skills as a result of lack of planning.

One form of communication that contributes significantly to English education at the senior high school level is letter writing. Letters are a way of communicating personal experiences, emotions, attitudes, and other messages to particular readers using written language. Different from academic genres, such as essays and reports, personal letters focus on interpersonal communication, self-expression, and establishing social relations between the writer and the recipient. Even though personal letters may be less formal than other forms of communication used for academic purposes, it is important for students to present their thoughts clearly and coherently.

As per Brown (2004), effective writing entails having clear purposes, organizing ideas logically, and making good use of language. When evaluating personal letters at the educational institutions, the writing aspects that educators pay attention to include content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Despite the importance of these aspects, learners usually face problems when conveying emotions effectively, creating content with personal meaning, making connections between ideas, and choosing appropriate language to make personal statements. Problems associated with language use and idea development have been identified as common challenges affecting students' letter writing abilities (Ma'la & Ambarini, 2023). Consequently, students require appropriate guidance and planning before writing personal message.

In order to overcome the difficulties encountered in writing, one should apply various strategies of pre-writing which can be helpful in overcoming such problems. Among different techniques used for pre-writing, an outline has attracted many scholars' attention. With the help of an outline, students will be able to identify major topics, arrange details in a logical way, and prepare for writing. As stated by Weigle (2002), writing involves extensive planning before actual writing. Similarly, Harmer (2004) states that planning is an essential part of writing. Thus, outlining can play an important role in preparation for writing.

All previous research studies have shown that there is a positive influence of planning strategies on the academic performance of the learners in terms of their writing. The results of international studies showed that the use of planning tasks had a positive effect on the development of writing skills due to the importance of planning for text organization and its improvement. Wu & Ellis (2023) found that pre-writing planning had a positive impact on the quality of second-language writing due to the organization of ideas. Likewise, Tabari (2024) noted that planning had a positive effect on the learning process due to an increase in the effectiveness of the text writing process. Xu & Zhang (2023) found that learners could achieve better results with the help of planning since they generated

and organized ideas. Rizqiyani (2023) and Rochimah (2023) concluded that using outlining was essential for arranging the thoughts properly and improving text organization.

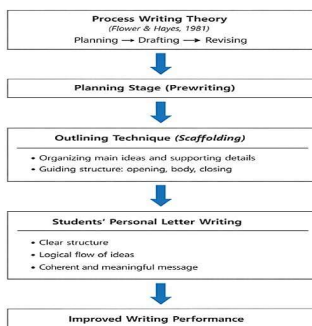
However, despite all the above-mentioned beneficial outcomes, most of the existing literature deals with academic writing genres such as argumentative essays, descriptive texts, recount texts, and other types of assignments that require task-oriented approach. Relatively little attention has been paid to the effectiveness of outlining in personal letter writing. Moreover, very few sources can be found on the use of outlines in personal letter writing in the EFL context of Indonesia, senior high school students being the subject of interest. This limitation is crucial due to the possibility that the role of outlines might be different in personal letter writing compared to academic genres.

Outlining in essays and recount texts serves for the purpose of organizing ideas and keeping the whole text structured. At the same time, in personal letter writing, besides the organizational purposes, outlining may help the students to express themselves and communicate their personal experience, emotions, and intentions to the reader in an effective manner. Indeed, since personal letters require interpersonally oriented communication, it is necessary to carefully plan not only the information but also its order in the letter.

What makes this research unique is the exploration of the usefulness of outlining in personal letters, which require students to find a compromise between being organized and expressive. In contrast to previous research that focused on examining the effectiveness of outlining in an academic setting, this research focuses on exploring how outlining can help organize thoughts and, at the same time, communicate one's experiences and emotions. This implies that this research is likely to advance current knowledge about outlining by showing how useful it is for communication writing.

This study will employ the application of Process Writing Theory by Flower and Hayes (1981) and Scaffolding Theory formulated by Vygotsky (1978). Process Writing Theory posits that writing is a cyclic process that involves the stages of planning, drafting, and revising, wherein the planning stage plays a crucial role in producing ideas. In contrast, Scaffolding Theory stresses the significance of instructional assistance to enable learners to engage in activities that are difficult to do on their own. In this study, outlining acts not only as a planning tool but also as scaffolding for the students. As a planning tool, it facilitates the production and arrangement of ideas prior to the actual writing process. At the same time, scaffolding is characterized by its capacity to guide learners to arrange ideas regarding the introduction, body, and conclusion in a personal letter.

Figure 1. Theoretical framework of Outlining Technique Based on Process Writing Theory and Scaffolding Theory



The conceptual framework of this study is shown in Figure 1. The conceptual framework highlights the link between outlining technique, which is an independent variable, and personal letter writing skills of the students, which is a dependent variable. With the implementation of outlining in the pre-writing process, it is expected that students will be able to identify their main ideas, organize supporting information, and arrange their thoughts in order to write a personal letter. Students are expected to write a personal letter in a better-organized way with a logical progression of ideas and effective communication. In this sense, it is expected that the use of outlining technique will positively affect students' personal letter writing skills.

As suggested by the gap analysis, the research question for this study is: “Does the use of the outlining technique help in improving the personal letter writing ability of the eleventh-grade students of State Islamic Senior High School?” Thus, the research attempts to examine if the outlined technique can be used effectively for the improvement of personal letter writing skills. The research will provide practical implications in terms of improving personal letter writing ability using the outlining technique.

2. Method

The study adopted the quantitative quasi-experimental research design, which is the non-equivalent control group design. Two groups of subjects were utilized in the research design for the study; these groups include the experimental group and the control group. For the experimental group, treatment was administered through the use of the outlining technique, whereas the control group was taught using a traditional approach. The traditional approach used in this study means that students were instructed on how to write a personal letter by the teacher through explaining the format and asking students to write without using the pre-writing strategy of outlining.

Population

The population of this research was comprised of all grade eleventh students of State Islamic Senior High School of the year 2025/2026. Purposive sampling was used to select samples for this research. Two classes which are Class XI REG B and Class XI REG C were chosen as samples of the research since they shared some commonalities such as having similar academic performance characteristics, following the same curriculum, and having the same teacher. In one class, the students were grouped into an experimental group and the other into a control group. Only two classes participated in this research because of its nature which was quasi-experimental research with intact classes.

Besides that, there were also no chances for the administration to change the classes to form two different classes. The two chosen classes were considered appropriate because of those reasons to investigate the effect of outlining technique in a natural setting. The number of students of the two classes was 43, where Class XI REG B comprised 21 students as the experimental group while Class XI REG C comprised 22 students as the control group. They ranged from 17-18 years old. In terms of sex distribution, 13 of them (30.23%) were male and 30 students (69.77%) were female. Based on their grade level, previous English learning experiences, and the English curriculum implemented at the school, all participants were considered to have an intermediate level of English proficiency. The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Analytic Scoring Rubric for Personal Letter Writing

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Range	17 years old	24	55.81
	18 years old	19	44.19
Gender	Male	13	30.23
	Female	30	69.77
English Proficiency Level	Intermediate	43	100.00
Total		43	100.00

The primary research tool utilized in this study was the writing test. In both pre-test and post-test, participants were asked to write a personal letter according to the topic given. During the pre-test, the task involved the writing of a personal letter to one’s best friend on his/her recent school life experience. The post-test involved the writing of a personal letter to a family member on his/her future plan after school.

In order to determine content validity, the writing test was constructed according to the learning objectives and indicators of personal letter writing included in the curriculum at grade eleven in English subject. The test was constructed to measure the students’ performance of writing in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Before using the test

instrument, the writing prompt together with the scoring rubric had been reviewed by two lecturers of English Education major. These validators checked whether the content of the test was relevant to the curricular objectives; whether the writing assignment was proper; the instructions were clear enough; and finally, the scoring criteria were appropriate or not. On the basis of their comments and suggestions, some revisions were made to improve the writing prompt and the rubric. In addition, they found that the test was appropriate to be used for measuring personal letter writing skills of the students.

Table 2. Content Validation Criteria

Aspect Evaluated	Purpose of Evaluation
Content Relevance	Alignment with curriculum objectives
Writing Task	Suitability for personal letter writing
Instructions	Clarity and comprehensibility
Scoring Rubric	Appropriateness of assessment criteria
Language	Clarity and accuracy of wording

The analytic rubrics for evaluating writing skills were based on those developed by Weigle (2002) and assessed five aspects of writing such as content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.

Table 3. Analytic Scoring Rubric for Personal Letter Writing

(Adapted from Weigle, 2002)

No	Component	Weight	Score	Criteria
1	Content	6	4	Fully relevant to the topic; clear purpose; ideas well-developed with sufficient details and personal reflection.
			3	Relevant to the topic; ideas adequately developed but lack depth.
			2	Partially relevant; ideas limited and insufficiently developed.
			1	Minimally relevant; ideas unclear and poorly developed.
2	Organization	6	4	Complete personal letter structure (date, salutation, opening, body, closing); ideas logically ordered and coherent.
			3	Mostly clear structure; minor problems with coherence or sequencing.
			2	Incomplete structure; weak logical flow.
			1	Disorganized; lacks recognizable personal letter format.

3	Vocabulary	4	4	Appropriate, varied, and precise vocabulary; word choice supports meaning effectively.
			3	Adequate vocabulary; occasional inappropriate word choice.
			2	Limited vocabulary; frequent word choice errors.
			1	Very limited vocabulary; errors significantly affect meaning.
4	Grammar	4	4	Accurate sentence structures; minor grammatical inaccuracies; correct tense usage.
			3	Some grammatical errors but meaning remains clear.
			2	Frequent grammatical errors that sometimes interfere with meaning.
			1	Dominant grammatical errors that make the text difficult to understand.
5	Mechanics	2	4	Correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization with minimal errors.
			3	Some mechanical errors but do not interfere with meaning.
			2	Frequent mechanical errors.
			1	Serious mechanical errors affecting readability.

The students' writing performance was assessed solely by the researchers using an analytic scoring rubric adapted from Weigle (2002). The decision to employ a single rater was based on the need to maintain consistency in the scoring process. Since all writing samples were evaluated by the same person using identical scoring criteria, variations that might arise from differences in raters' interpretations could be minimized.

Furthermore, the analytic rubric provided detailed descriptors for each writing component, namely content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics, which helped ensure objective and systematic scoring. Before the assessment, the researchers carefully reviewed the rubric and applied the same scoring procedures to all writing samples. Therefore, although the study did not involve a second rater, the use of a standardized analytic rubric and a consistent scoring procedure was considered sufficient to support the reliability of the assessment.

Each component was rated on a scale of 1–4 and assigned a different weight according to its importance in personal letter writing. Content and organization were weighted 6 points each, vocabulary and grammar were weighted 4 points each, and mechanics were weighted 2 points. The weighted scores from all components were summed to obtain the total raw score. Since the maximum

possible raw score was 88, the total raw score was converted into a scale ranging from 0 to 100 using the following formula:

$$\text{Final Score} = \frac{(C \times 6) + (O \times 6) + (V \times 4) + (G \times 4) + (M \times 2)}{88} \times 100$$

88

Maximum Score = 100

Where:

C= Content

O= Organization

V= Vocabulary

G= Grammar

M= Mechanics

For example, if a student obtains a score of 3 in Content, 4 in Organization, 4 in Vocabulary, 4 in Grammar, and 4 in Mechanics, the raw score is calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Raw Score} &= (3 \times 6) + (4 \times 6) + (4 \times 4) + (4 \times 4) + (4 \times 2) \\ &= 18 + 24 + 16 + 16 + 8 \\ &= 82 \\ \text{Final score} &= \frac{82}{88} \times 100 \\ &= 93.18 \\ &= 93 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the student's final writing score is 93.

The data collection procedure consisted of four stages: pre-test, treatment, post-test, and scoring. First, both groups were administered a pre-test to identify students' initial writing ability. Second, the experimental group received treatment using the outlining technique for six meetings, while the control group was taught using the conventional method. To maintain treatment fidelity, the outlining technique was implemented systematically and consistently throughout the treatment period.

The researcher followed the same instructional framework in each writing cycle, consisting of outlining, drafting, and revising stages. During the first cycle, students worked on the topic of Holiday, whereas in the second cycle they worked on the topic of School Exam. Although the topics differed, the instructional procedures remained identical. In Meetings 1 and 4, students were guided to create outlines by identifying the purpose, audience, main ideas, and supporting details of a personal letter. In Meetings 2 and 5, students developed their outlines into complete drafts while the researcher monitored the consistency between the outlines and the drafts. In Meetings 3 and 6, students revised their writing based on structured feedback focusing on content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

Throughout the treatment, the researcher used the same lesson plans, learning objectives, instructional materials, outlining procedures, feedback techniques, and assessment criteria to ensure consistency across meetings. These measures ensured that any improvement in students' writing performance could be attributed to the outlining technique rather than variations in instructional delivery. After the treatment, both groups were given a post-test to measure students' writing improvement. Finally, all students' writings were scored using the established rubric.

Table 4. Teaching Outline

Meetings	Topics	Activities	
		Teacher	Students
1st	Holiday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining the definition, purpose, characteristics, and general structure of personal letters (opening, body, closing). • Explaining key elements of personal letters (greeting, opening expression, purpose of writing, main message, closing statement, signature). • Explaining how to make an outline for a personal letter. • Providing a sample personal letter and guiding students to identify its structure and elements. • Instructing students to create an outline based on a given topic. • Reviewing students' outlines and giving brief feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to the explanation and taking notes. • Asking questions related to personal letters. • Identifying the structure and elements of the sample personal letter. • Discussing language features found in the text. • Understanding the assessment rubric. • Developing an outline for a personal letter. • Revising the outline based on teacher's feedback.
2nd	Holiday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing another sample personal letter and helping students analyze its elements. • Asking students to start writing the first draft based on the outline from meeting. • Monitoring students' writing progress. • Guiding students to develop ideas clearly and coherently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and analyzing the new sample personal letter. • Writing the first draft based on the outline. • Developing the main message and supporting details.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving suggestions without rewriting students' work. • Checking the consistency between the outline and the draft. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using appropriate language features of personal letters. • Ensuring the draft follows the outline.
3th	Holiday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving structured feedback focusing on organization, content, and clarity of ideas. • Demonstrating common errors and corrections (grammar, word choice, mechanics). • Guiding students step-by-step through the revision process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing teacher's feedback. • Revising the draft by improving organization, content, and language use. • Correcting grammatical and mechanical errors. • Submitting the revised draft.
4th	School Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing a new personal letter topic. • Reviewing outlining steps for personal letters. • Instructing students to create a new outline based on the given topic. • Observing students' work and providing light guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the new topic. • Creating a new outline for a personal letter. • Asking questions when facing difficulties. • Preparing ideas for writing.
5th	School Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking students to start writing the second draft based on the outline from Meeting 4. • Monitoring students' writing process. • Guiding students to improve message clarity and organization. • Giving suggestions without rewriting students' work. • Checking the consistency between the outline and the draft. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing the second draft based on the outline. • Improving message development and supporting details. • Applying appropriate expressions and language features. • Ensuring the draft follows the outline.
6th	School Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing structured feedback focusing on organization, content, language use, and mechanics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revising the personal letter based on feedback. • Improving flow, clarity, and closing.

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- Demonstrating clearer expressions and better transitions.
 - Guiding students through the final revision process.
 - Submitting the final draft.
 - Reflecting on their writing progress.
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Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the research process. Before conducting the study, the researcher obtained official permission from the principal of State Islamic Senior High School to carry out the research activities. Before the implementation of the study, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the procedures involved, and their role as research participants. Their participation was voluntary, and they were assured that the research activities would not affect their academic grades. To maintain confidentiality, students' names were replaced with codes during data collection, analysis, and reporting. Furthermore, all collected data were used solely for academic purposes.

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including mean, minimum score, maximum score, and standard deviation, were used to describe students' writing performance in both groups. Furthermore, inferential statistical analysis was conducted through normality testing using the Shapiro–Wilk test and homogeneity testing using Levene's test to ensure that the data met the assumptions for parametric testing.

After the assumptions were fulfilled, an Independent Sample t-test was applied to determine whether there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups after the treatment. The hypothesis was tested at a significance level of 0.05. If the significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) was lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted, indicating that the outlining technique significantly improved students' personal letter writing skills.

3. Result

Overview of The Research

This study was conducted to investigate whether the outlining technique could improve the personal letter writing skills of the eleventh-grade students of State Islamic Senior High School. The data were collected through writing tests administered before and after the treatment. Students' writing performance was assessed using an analytic scoring rubric adapted from Weigle (2002), which evaluated five writing components: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to determine the effectiveness of the outlining technique.

Pre-Test Equivalence Analysis

Before the treatment, an independent-samples t-test was conducted on the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups to determine their initial equivalence.

Table 5. Independent Sample t-test of Pre-Test Scores

Variable	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Pre-test Scores	-0.895	41	0.376	No significant difference

The result indicated that there is no statistically significant difference between the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups, $t(41) = -0.895$, $p = .376$. Since the significance value is greater than .05, the two groups are considered comparable at the beginning of the study.

Analysis Writing Components

To provide a more detailed understanding of students' writing development, the five writing components assessed in the rubric were analyzed separately. These components included content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.

Table 6. Improvement of Writing Components in the Experimental Group

Component	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Improvement	Percentage Gain
Content	2.71	3.57	0.86	31.73%
Organization	2.24	3.57	1.33	59.38%
Vocabulary	2.48	3.33	0.85	34.27%
Grammar	2.48	3.43	0.95	38.31%
Mechanics	2.43	3.19	0.76	31.28%

Table 6 shows that all writing components improved after the implementation of the outlining technique. The greatest improvement occurred in the organization component, which increased by 1.33 points or 59.38%. This finding is consistent with the primary function of outlining, namely helping students organize ideas, arrange supporting details, and establish a logical sequence before writing. Grammar showed the second-highest improvement (38.31%), followed by vocabulary (34.27%), content (31.73%), and mechanics (31.28%).

Figure 2. Percentage Improvement of Writing Components



The percentage gain revealed that improvements were observed in all writing components, organization showed the highest gain because outlining directly targets the planning stage of writing. Through outlining, students were guided to identify the purpose of the letter, arrange main ideas, and organize supporting details before drafting. As a result, students were able to produce personal letters with a clearer structure, more logical sequencing of ideas, and better coherence.

In contrast, grammar and mechanics showed smaller improvements because these components depend largely on students’ linguistic competence, including mastery of grammatical rules, sentence construction, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Unlike organization, which can be immediately improved through structured planning, grammar and mechanics generally require longer-term practice and continuous language exposure.

Therefore, the outlining technique exerted its strongest influence on the organization component, which is directly related to idea arrangement and text structure. Overall, these findings indicate that outlining contributed positively to all aspects of writing performance while producing its greatest effect on organizational quality.

a. Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were conducted to provide an overview of students’ writing scores in both the experimental and control groups before and after the treatment. The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 27.0.1. to ensure accurate and systematic calculation of the statistical values.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistic

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test Experiment	21	36	84	62.43	14.935
Post-Test Experiment	21	80	93	86.67	4.258
Pre-Test Control	22	30	89	66.77	16.801
Post-Test Control	22	66	89	76.09	6.495
Valid N (listwise)	21				

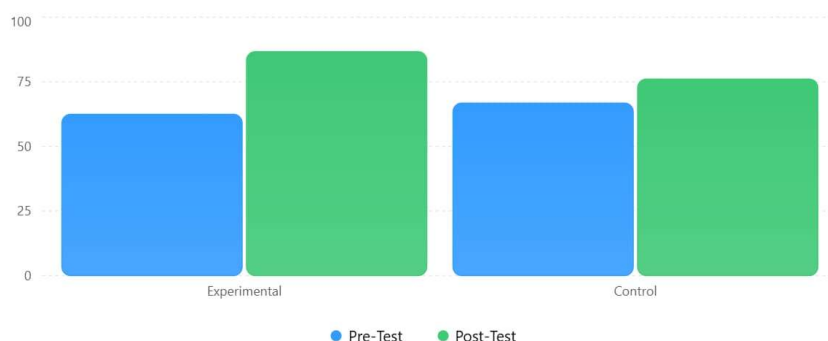
There was a significant improvement in the scores for both groups. In the experimental group, the average score went up from 62.43 to 86.67, producing a gain score of 24.24 points. In the control group, the average score rose from 66.77 to 76.09, producing a gain score of 9.32 points.

Table 8. Gain Score Comparison

Group	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Gain Score
Experimental	62.43	86.67	24.24
Control	66.77	76.09	9.32

The comparison of gain scores indicates that students trained with the use of the outlining technique achieved about 2.6 times higher gain scores compared to the students who were taught according to the traditional approach. The result obtained means that the outlined technique contributed significantly to the development of writing skills of the students compared to regular writing lessons. At the same time, it is possible to note that the standard deviation in the experimental group decreased from 14.935 to 4.258, which means that the consistency of students' writing skills increased. The same pattern can be traced in the control group as well; however, to a lesser extent.

Figure 2. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Mean Scores



b. Normality Test

Prior to hypothesis testing, normality testing was performed using the Shapiro-Wilk test since there were less than 50 students in each group. The significance level adopted was 0.05, whereby normality is accepted if Sig. > 0.05 and non-normality if Sig. < 0.05.

Table 9. Normality Test

Student's Learning Result	Class		Shapiro-Wilk		
	Pre-Test	Experiment	Statistics	df	Sig.
	Pre-Test	Experiment	.936	21	.186
	Post-Test	Experiment	.924	21	.102
	Pre-Test	Control	.925	22	.095

(Conventional)					
Pre-Test	Control	.942	22		.219
(Conventional)					

The significance level used in this study was 0.05, where data are considered normally distributed if Sig. > 0.05. The SPSS results showed that all significance values for the experimental class (0.186 and 0.102) and the control class (0.095 and 0.219) were above 0.05, indicating that the data were normally distributed and the normality assumption was fulfilled. After this, a homogeneity test was conducted to determine whether the variances of both groups were equal before proceeding to the independent sample t-test.

c. Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test was conducted using Levene’s Test to determine whether the variances of the experimental and control groups were equal. The assumption of homogeneity is fulfilled if the significance value (Sig.) is greater than 0.05. However, if the significance value is less than 0.05, it indicates that the variances between the two groups are significantly different (not homogeneous).

Table 10. Homogeneity Test

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Students’ Learning Result	Based on Mean	3.342	1	41	.075
	Based on Median	2.832	1	41	.100
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.832	1	35.381	.101
	Based on Trimmed Mean	3.245	1	41	.079

Table 10 presents the homogeneity test results using Levene’s Test to determine whether the variances of the experimental and control classes are equal. With a significance level of 0.05, the data are considered homogeneous if Sig. > 0.05. The SPSS results show that all significance values based on the mean (0.075), median (0.100), median with adjusted df (0.101), and trimmed mean (0.079) are higher than 0.05, indicating that the variances are homogeneous. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity is fulfilled, and since both normality and homogeneity assumptions have been met, the data can proceed to the independent sample t-test.

Independent Sample t-test

The Independent Sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental group and the control group. This test was used to examine the effectiveness of the outlining technique compared to the conventional teaching method in improving students' personal letter writing skills. Since the homogeneity test indicated that the variances of both groups were homogeneous, the interpretation was based on the "Equal Variances Assumed" row.

The hypotheses were tested at a significance level of 0.05. The null hypothesis (H_0) stated that there was no significant difference between the post-test mean scores of students taught using the outlining technique and those taught using the conventional method. Conversely, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) stated that there was a significant difference between the post-test mean scores of the two groups.

Table 11. Independent Sample t-test

		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	df	Sig. (2-Tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Students' Learning Result	Equal Variances Assumed	6.282	41	<.001	10.576	1.683	7.175	13.976
	Equal Variances not Assumed	6.34	36.418	<.001	10.576	1.668	7.195	13.956

Table 11 presents the results of the Independent Sample t-test. The analysis showed that the t-value was 6.282 with 41 degrees of freedom ($df = 41$), and the significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) was less than 0.001. Since the significance value was lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. This result indicates that there was a statistically significant difference between the writing achievement of students in the experimental group and those in the control group.

Furthermore, the mean score of the experimental group was 86.67, whereas the mean score of the control group was 76.09. The mean difference between the two groups was 10.576 points, indicating that students taught using the outlining

technique achieved higher writing scores than those taught using the conventional method. In addition, the 95% confidence interval ranged from 7.175 to 13.976. Since the interval did not include zero, the difference between the two groups can be considered statistically significant.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the outlining technique was more effective than the conventional teaching method in improving students' personal letter writing skills. Therefore, the research question, "Can the use of the outlining technique improve the personal letter writing skills of the eleventh-grade students of State Islamic Senior High School?" was answered positively.

Effect Size Analysis

In addition to the Independent Sample t-test, an effect size analysis was conducted to determine the magnitude of the effect of the outlining technique on students' personal letter writing skills. The effect size was calculated using Cohen's d based on the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups.

Table 12. Effect Size Analysis

		95% Confidence Interval			
		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	Lower	Upper
Students' Learning Result	Cohen's d	5.518	1.921	1.182	2.635
	Hedges' correction	5.622	1.881	1.160	2.587
	Glass's delta	6.495	1.628	.884	2.389

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Glass's delta uses the control group's sample standard deviation.

The effect size analysis revealed a Cohen's d value of 1.92, indicating an exceptionally large effect of the outlining technique on students' writing achievement. According to Cohen (1988), effect sizes of 0.20, 0.50, and 0.80 represent small, medium, and large effects, respectively. Therefore, the obtained effect size substantially exceeds the conventional criterion for a large effect. This finding suggests that the difference between the experimental and control groups was not only statistically significant but also educationally meaningful. In practical terms, students who received instruction through the outlining technique demonstrated considerably higher writing performance than those taught through conventional methods.

The large effect size indicates that outlining provided substantial support in organizing ideas, developing logical sequences of information, and producing more coherent written texts. Consequently, the technique may help students overcome

common writing difficulties, such as generating ideas, maintaining organization, and connecting supporting details. The magnitude of this effect suggests that the outlining technique has strong potential for classroom implementation and may serve as an effective instructional strategy for improving students' writing skills in secondary school contexts.

Furthermore, the 95% confidence interval for Cohen's d ranged from 1.182 to 2.635. This interval indicates that the true effect size in the population is likely to fall within the range of large to very large effects. Since the lower bound of the interval (1.182) remains well above the benchmark for a large effect (0.80), the practical significance of the intervention can be considered robust. This result strengthens the conclusion that the outlining technique consistently contributes to students' writing improvement and that the observed effect is unlikely to be due to sampling variability alone.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the outlining technique contributes positively to students' writing skills in personal letters. Students who were taught using the outlining technique performed better than those taught using conventional methods. This improvement suggests that outlining helps students organize their ideas before writing, which leads to clearer and more structured texts. In line with Process Writing Theory proposed by Flower and Hayes (1981), planning is an essential stage that supports the development of coherent writing.

During the teaching process, it was observed that many students initially experienced difficulties in generating and organizing ideas. Some students struggled to start writing, while others produced texts without a clear structure, resulting in disorganized paragraphs. However, after the implementation of outlining, students became more guided in developing their ideas. By identifying the structure of a personal letter, including the opening, body, and closing sections, and arranging key points in an outline, students were able to write more systematically and confidently.

From the perspective of writing components, the improvement was more visible in organization and content development. Students' writing became more coherent because ideas were arranged logically from introduction to conclusion. In addition, content quality improved as students were able to expand their ideas more clearly. However, improvement in language accuracy, such as grammar and vocabulary use, was less dominant, indicating that outlining mainly supports idea organization rather than linguistic accuracy.

The effectiveness of the outlining technique can be explained through both cognitive and theoretical perspectives. Writing is a complex process that requires students to generate ideas, organize information, monitor text development, and apply appropriate language forms simultaneously. These multiple demands often create a high cognitive load, particularly for EFL learners. The outlining technique

helps reduce cognitive load by separating the planning stage from the drafting stage, allowing students to focus on one task at a time. Through outlining, students can first generate and organize ideas before transforming them into complete texts. Furthermore, outlining promotes metacognitive planning because students are encouraged to consider the purpose, audience, and structure of their writing before drafting. As a result, students become more aware of how their ideas are organized and are better able to monitor the coherence and development of their writing.

The findings are further supported by the exceptionally large effect size obtained in this study (Cohen's $d = 1.92$), indicating that the influence of the outlining technique extends beyond statistical significance and reflects substantial educational impact. According to Flower and Hayes (1981), planning is a critical stage that determines the quality of subsequent writing processes. The large effect observed may be attributed to the structured planning opportunities provided through outlining, which enabled students to organize and sequence ideas effectively before drafting. In addition, from the perspective of Vygotsky's (1978) Scaffolding Theory, the outline functioned as temporary support that guided students through writing tasks that might otherwise exceed their current level of competence. Therefore, the substantial effect of outlining may be explained by the combined influence of cognitive support, metacognitive planning, and instructional scaffolding.

Students' responses during the learning process also provide additional insight into the effectiveness of outlining. Many students reported that outlining made writing easier because they did not have to think about all ideas at once. Instead, they could focus on expanding each point in the outline. However, some students also noted that preparing an outline required additional time and felt repetitive, particularly for relatively simple writing tasks. This suggests that although outlining is beneficial, its effectiveness may vary depending on task complexity and students' writing habits.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research. Rizqiyani (2023) and Rochimah (2023) found that outlining improves students' ability to organize ideas in writing tasks. Similarly, Basri et al. (2023) and Bongga et al. (2021) reported that outlining helps students produce more structured texts. More recent studies by Azzah et al. (2025) further confirm that pre-writing planning techniques are effective in improving writing performance. In addition, broader writing strategy research by Sundari and Febriyanti (2022), Fajrina et al. (2023), Fan (2024), Fan and Ma (2024), Liu and Zhao (2023), and Marzuki et al. (2023) collectively supports the view that successful writing depends heavily on effective planning and idea organization before drafting.

Although the findings of the present study support many previous studies, contradictory evidence also exists. Uludag et al. (2021) reported that different prewriting planning conditions did not significantly improve students' integrated

writing scores, although they affected the amount of time students spent planning before writing. This contrast suggests that planning activities alone may not automatically improve writing performance. The positive results observed in the present study may be attributed to the structured nature of outlining, continuous teacher guidance, and repeated practice throughout the treatment sessions. Therefore, the effectiveness of planning strategies appears to depend not only on the presence of planning activities but also on how those activities are implemented in classroom instruction.

The findings also extend previous research by applying outlining specifically to personal letter writing. Unlike many earlier studies that focused on descriptive, narrative, or recount texts, this study demonstrates that outlining is also effective in helping students' structure personal letters, particularly in organizing the opening, body, and closing sections. This expands the application of outlining within EFL writing classrooms and contributes additional evidence regarding its usefulness across different writing contexts.

The findings of this study also have important pedagogical implications for English language teaching. In terms of curriculum design, outlining can be incorporated as a structured pre-writing activity within writing units, particularly in genres that require clear organization and idea development. In classroom instruction, teachers can guide students to identify the purpose, audience, main ideas, and supporting details before drafting. Furthermore, teacher training programs may benefit from including practical instruction on process-based writing approaches and outlining techniques, enabling teachers to provide more effective support during the planning stage of writing. Therefore, outlining has the potential to be integrated not only as a classroom strategy but also as a component of curriculum planning and teacher professional development.

Despite these positive findings, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study was conducted in a single school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational settings. In addition, the sample size was relatively small, involving only 43 students from two intact classes. The intervention was also conducted over a relatively short period of six meetings. A longer treatment period and a larger sample may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term effects of outlining on students' writing development, particularly in areas such as grammar, vocabulary, and writing fluency. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the context of these limitations.

Future research should explore several areas to broaden understanding of the effectiveness of outlining in writing instruction. Researchers may investigate the use of digital outlining tools, such as graphic organizer applications, mind mapping software, and AI-assisted writing platforms, to determine whether technology enhanced outlining can further improve students' writing performance and engagement. Future studies could also examine collaborative outlining, in which

students work together to generate and organize ideas before writing, to explore its potential benefits for peer learning, idea development, and writing achievement. In addition, researchers are encouraged to investigate the effectiveness of outlining across different genres of writing, including narrative, descriptive, argumentative, expository, and academic writing, to determine whether the technique produces similar benefits in various writing contexts. Such investigations may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how outlining can be adapted to meet diverse instructional needs in EFL classrooms and further strengthen the evidence regarding its effectiveness as a pre-writing strategy.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the outlining technique is effective in improving the personal letter writing skills of the eleventh-grade students of State Islamic Senior High School. The results of the data analysis show a significant difference between the experimental and control groups, indicating that students who were taught using the outlining technique achieved better writing performance. This improvement is reflected in their ability to organize ideas, structure their writing more systematically, and express their thoughts more clearly in personal letters. However, this conclusion is limited to the context of this study, particularly the sample size, level of students, and type of writing used. Therefore, the findings cannot be fully generalized to all writing contexts or educational levels without further supporting research

6. Suggestion

Based on the results of this study, it is suggested that English teachers apply the outlining technique in teaching writing, especially in personal letter writing, because it helps students generate and organize ideas more effectively and improves the overall quality of their writing. For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct studies with a longer treatment duration to obtain more generalizable and reliable results. In addition, further studies may also consider combining the outlining technique with other strategies such as brainstorming, guided writing, or peer feedback to explore its effectiveness more deeply and to enhance students' writing development more optimally.

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