



## Strategies and Challenges in Enhancing Critical Thinking for Writing Descriptive Text

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v11i3.2460>

Syifa Ul Aini, Misya Niftalia, Widyawati, Husnul Khatimah, Risa Miranti, Nifyatul Ahya, \*Misnawati<sup>abcde</sup>

<sup>1234567</sup>Universitas Almuslim, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: [misnawati1117@gmail.com](mailto:misnawati1117@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

Critical thinking is one of the essential learning outcomes in Education, particularly in enhancing students' writing ability. However, many students still face difficulties in applying critical thinking in writing descriptive text, especially in generating and organizing ideas. This research investigates the effectiveness of various strategies and identifies challenges in enhancing students' critical thinking in writing descriptive text. This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through classroom observation and writing tests. The findings revealed that the lecturer need to prioritize interactive approaches to foster critical thinking. The main challenges included limited vocabulary, difficulty in generating ideas, lack of coherence, grammatical errors, and unclear ideas. These strategies applied included encouraging reading, providing visual aids, and implementing innovative teaching methods. The mean score of tests was 64.94%, it is indicated students' difficulties. This study concluded that the effective strategies can improve students' critical thinking in writing descriptive text.

**Keywords:** *Critical thinking, Strategies and Challenges, Writing Descriptive Text*

#### Article History:

Received 29<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Accepted 26<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Published 28<sup>th</sup> May 2026



### INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking is crucial skills needed in a career in digital era, particularly in higher education, as it enables students to analyze, evaluate, and construct ideas effectively (Parico & Layco, 2020). In writing, critical thinking is essential because writing is not merely a process of arranging words into sentences, but also a cognitive activity involving ideas generation, analysis, evaluation, and organization. Through critical thinking, students are able to develop logical arguments, maintain coherence, select relevant information, and express ideas clearly and effectively. These abilities are fundamental in producing quality descriptive texts. However, many students still face difficulties in generating ideas, opinions, and arguments, as well as expressing their feelings and messages in written form to produce good compositions. The condition indicates the need to understand the challenges students face in descriptive texts (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). Some of students perceive writing as a difficult skill, which creates challenges for the lecturer in teaching writing effectively (Lim & Kim, 2021). Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop effective new strategies for teaching and learning descriptive text for both lecturer and students (Novrianti et al., 2023). In addition, students encounter various challenges in learning writing, such as; lack of vocabulary, which has become a significant obstacle in developing writing skill (Dekker, 2020). Consequently, exploring effective strategies and identifying challenges in enhancing critical thinking in descriptive writing is necessary. In the 21st century, one of the primary challenges in higher education is fostering critical thinking as an essential life skill for students (Sarigoz, 2024). Critical thinking enables students to build ideas, make independent decision, and express opinions and arguments effectively in writing descriptive text (Lina et al., 2026).

Although previous studies have examined the relationship between critical thinking and writing skills, most of them focus on argumentative or essay writing and general writing performance. Limited studies specifically investigate how lecturers implement strategies to enhance critical thinking in descriptive writing at the university level. Furthermore, the challenges students encounter in applying critical thinking during descriptive writing, such as vocabulary limitations, coherence, and idea generation in descriptive writing remains underexplored. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into effective strategies and students' challenges in descriptive writing contexts.

Yuan (2020) The broader involvement of the study program provided by many universities can accelerate the establishment of critical thinking skills between students. Therefore, this research, researchers expect to find out the effective strategies and challenges to enhance critical thinking in writing descriptive text. Strategies are share means of the goal a length to achieve and make the learning process can be active. The teaching-learning process strategy is series of activities which is designed to achieve particular educational goals (Maulidina, 2020). The lecturer can utilize the common strategies to overcome the difficulties in writing state that is effective writing, summarization, and peer support significantly improved writing quality (Alinda & Asnas, 2022). Thus, recognizing effective writing skill which builds fundamental is critical thinking skill to develop an important insight into strategies and challenges in descriptive text writing practice (Golden, 2023).

The students perspective on challenges connection to critical thinking in generating ideas and organize the sentence to become a good text in unity and coherence in writing descriptive (Samanhudi & Linse, 2019). Zuraini & Misnawati, (2023) claimed that the lecturer's strategies in instruction are important to boost the students' critical thinking in descriptive text. Think critically provides students to reflect on their thinking and the ideas that notify their decision. Wiwikananda (2022) concluded critical thinking involves independent thinking and the ability to organize opinions from different perspectives since critical thinking is higher order thinking skills (HOTS) to solve the problem solving, decision making and creative thinking was created by Bloom Taxonomy Bloom. Golden (2023) claimed that the escalation for critical thinking is achievable via intervention of model instruction. Various strategies applied to solve the problems were faced by the students in writing skills. This study tried learning paradigms model or strategies in critical thinking to elevate the students in writing, such as; problem based learning, discovery learning, gamification, and others (Hou et al., 2026).

Mastering writing descriptive text is obtained through various strategies of lesson in the university (Lu & Nguyen, 2022). Descriptive text feels difficult to the students (Mulyasin et al., 2023). Students often understand a story better when they read, hear, or watch it; however, they are not always able to explain the reasons behind their understanding (Aini, 2024). Stories with engaging actions and relatable characters tend to attract students' interest and increase their enjoyment (Widiati et al., 2023). However, when they attempt to write their own stories, they often struggle to develop detailed descriptions and fail to recognize how authors effectively use descriptive elements in literary works (Apoko & Chong, 2024). Nurfaizah et al. (2022) claimed that there are six elements for critical thinking, namely: focus, reason, inference, situation, clarity and overview. Otherwise, there are four indicators of critical thinking, namely: clarification, assessment, inference and strategies. Many studies were conducted previously to find the need to develop critical thinking in teaching and learning process (Bakhrullayevna, 2024; Bayou & Kitila, 2023; Budiman et al., 2026; Dekker, 2020; Johan, 2024; Lu & Nguyen, 2022). McKinley in Johan (2024) mentioned that argument based writing grained students optimally in critical thinking. Writing encourages the students to think and analyze which are included in critical thinking skill (Isro et al., 2021). Students are trained in to think critically to be able to make good reason, evaluate information, analyze, be logic, and consider rationally in their point of view before taking the decision and conclusion (Isro et al., 2021). A substantial of literature offers perspectives on the crucial important of structures, critical thinking and analytical depth in essay through give expression the complicated connection among cognitive process and writing skill (Rinaldy et al., 2023).

Kuo et al., (2024) stated that writing involves not only creation the text but also present as a process of learning and thinking, enabling writers to expose their thoughts as they compose. It gives the time to think, explore ideas on the papers, selects the proper words, rethinks, revises, rearrange and most important is consideration of the impact on the reader. Through writing, individuals have the opportunity to refine their expression and find the most effective ways to convey the meaning (Deep and Chen, 2025). The more one delves into the art of writing, more proficiently they can utilize their writing time. Writing takes a long time and demand high level of concentration during the written process (Eslit, 2023). These considerations to promote the researchers' interest in conducting this study and of course also assisted by some previous studies that the difficulties of the students to explore the ideas, thought and feeling in writing descriptive text. The researchers formulated two research questions, namely:

*What are the strategies were used in enhancing students' critical thinking in writing descriptive text?*

*What are the challenges were faced by the students in enhancing critical thinking in writing descriptive text*

### **Critical thinking**

Critical thinking is way of identifying, analyzing, examining, and assessing situations, ideas and information to formulate appropriate to the problems (Heard et al., 2020). It plays an important role in problems solving and decision making, as it enables individuals to analyze information carefully and arrive at logical conclusions. Additionally, it requires gathering information about the topic and which do not, based on deductive reasoning. The ability to think critically helps students in both their academic achievement and future professional development, making it an essential competency in education (Din, 2020). Facione, 1990 in (Heard et al., 2020) state that critical thinking is:

*"... purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation and inference as well as an explanation if the evidential, conceptual, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based"*.

Heard et al. (2020) claimed that ability to think critically is a vital skill to determine success or failure. There were ten strategies to implement to enhance students' boost critical thinking in writing descriptive text, promoting class interactive learning practice, inquiry based learning strategies, and higher level cognitive competencies encompassing analysis, and interpretation as outlined in Bloom's Taxonomy, namely:

*Collaborative learning.*

This is a method to foster critical thinking skills. Students are working together in group to solve complex problems. The lecturer also can assist students to improve skills related to analysis, evaluation and interpretation.

*Questioning*

Using question is efficient method to inject the students in think critically in writing class. Open ended questions promote them to explore a topic thoughtfully and devise different viewpoints.

*Active listening*

When the students actively listen to each other, they are exposed to diverse perspectives and engage in careful and in depth analysis information, which helps foster their critical thinking skills.

*Good communication*

Good communication is important in critical thinking process. Students gathering information or convincing others, share their ideas, making conclusion, proper communication with them to get it the information and make suitable words.

*Analytical thinking*

The ability to accurately and precisely interpret information is aspect of critical thinking. It involves collecting and analyzing information as well as assessing data. Analytical thinking helps students to engage in analyzing and evaluating multiple viewpoints on a

*Strategies and Challenges in Enhancing Critical Thinking for Writing Descriptive Text*  
particular issue.

#### *Mind mapping*

Mind mapping allow students to construct ideas and analyze information.

#### *Gamification*

Gamification-based learning media has been proven effective and appropriate for enhancing students' critical thinking skills, as game-based learning actively involves students in problem solving, analytical thinking and evaluation processes.

#### *Problem based learning*

Problem based learning is an instructional that encourages students to solve problems actively. Students have the opportunity to solve problem in collaborative setting, mental for learning, self-directed learning habits through practice and reflection (Misnawati & Sylvia, 2019).

#### *Case studies*

A case study is the manner to boost students' critical thinking skill in real world situations.

#### *Creative thinking*

Creative thinking makes faster and more efficient. Its skill can be reinforced time and valuable in every level of students. The ability to discover specific information and establish connection between seemingly unrelated data enhances critical thinking. However, critical thinking embraces the questions stimulate students' ability to analyze, evaluate information, synthesize and ideas to ensure the students to prefer and utilize the most appropriate, consists words and paragraphs to convey message powerfully give the impact on the readers (Bayou & Kitila, 2023). Critical thinking consisted of clarity, credibility, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance and fairness as primary in intellectual encompass qualities (Chan, 2019). According to Schafeman, 1991 in Moge (2022) pointed that critical thinking refers to a systematic and structured cognitive process employed in various mental activities, including problem solving, decision-making, persuading, analyzing assumptions, and scientific inquiry. It involves the ability to formulate questions in a logical and organized manner. Within critical thinking, individuals are also required to engage in classification, which is the process of organizing ideas or objects based on their characteristics, functions, and relationships. Moge (2022) asserted that critical thinking invokes "correct thinking in the pursuit of relevant and reliable knowledge about the world. Another way to describe it is reasonable, reflective, responsible and skillful thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do". The objective for critical thinking is establishing a disciplined of high-level thinking of reason to observe and reconstruct in a more rational our thinking, feeling and doing (Bayou & Kitila, 2023).

#### **Strategies and challenges**

Descriptive writing is a difficult to learn. To become a good writing the lecturer must have various strategies to break the difficulties in writing descriptive text. Thus, the students can comprehend compose descriptive text better. Various strategies are available for engaging students in writing descriptive text. According to Haynes and Zacarian in Cahyaningrum (2022) stated that there are seven strategies in teaching writing, namely: 1) The lecturer have to teach slowly, using gestures and body language to convey meaning that make students comprehend the message being conveyed; 2) A visual learning style is a method using simple language of teaching and learning process in which information related to object discussed; 3) link new information, the lecturer must take the schema for each student character in learning in the class, culture, and all the experiences; 4) determine key concept. The key concept in the class is the lecturer and students are friendly; 5) A modify vocabulary instruction, in this strategy to provide the words and to teach them how to get new vocabulary, the students enrich and associate new words with visuals to reinforce meaning; 6) applied cooperative learning strategies. Cooperative learning encourages students to cooperate in accomplish common goals; and the last, 7) modify testing. Testing is providing students for comprehending of the subject..

Strategy is an extensive approach to perform idea, design, and implement activity during specific time frame (Mogea, 2022). Teaching strategy is the lecturer's action in teaching and learning process in implementing materials, objectives, strategy or models instruction and tools evaluation to obtain the goals of instruction (Munna & Kalam, 2021). Teaching-learning strategy is one crucial element in promoting self-regulated learning in classroom (Backers & Keer, 2025). Teacher's strategy is one of the primary methods for encouraging students to learn is through the implementation of effective teaching strategies (Abulhul, 2021). Their ability for creative thinking, problem-solving and become more active interaction and participation in learning process. Several strategies utilized in teaching writing include brainstorming; group work, demonstrations, games and independent research (Cahyaningrum, 2022). The strategies to make students' have a good writing are; the initial steps is lecturer guide the students are planning their writing, the lecturer encourage them to make draft, reflect and revise writing, and respond to their writing in which correct of the students' writing and give the right report or advise (Fitriani, 2020).

The lecturer should handle the challenges in teaching writing caused by several obstacles and difficulties. (Rashid et al. (2022) said that challenges in teaching writing when the process of teaching writing does not show teaching run well as the goal to achieve. (Soy et al., 2023) Challenges mean something that test strength, skill in interesting way (Mali, 2023). Challenges refer to the difficulties faced by the students and cause them frustrated in writing (Alinda & Asnas, 2022). Added, the challenges in writing students cannot explore the ideas or opinions in writing to develop ideas, good writing is impossible to get and that was caused the descriptive text to be of poor quality.

To address the challenges in improving critical thinking in writing descriptive text, various strategies can be employed (Novrianti et al., 2023). Critical thinking can empower the students to be motivated to learn more persistent and enthusiastic when faced heavy assignment (Golden, 2023). Therefore, providing challenges can motivate students to learn in getting more involved (Maulidina, 2020). The ability to write is looking for readiness for interaction and communication, science and technology absorption. The phenomenon underlines need for deeply comprehend about challenges for students face in their in writing descriptive text (Marue & Pantas, 2019). Additionally, students develop greater awareness of textual details and improve their ability to locate supporting evidence for literary analysis and essay responses. (Hemmler & Ifenthaler, 2024).

### **Writing descriptive text**

Language plays a crucial role in our daily lives as enables us to convey our thoughts and ideas. Language is the primary tool for everyone to express their feelings, desires, opinions and needs (Azlia & Misnawati, 2021), writing is an expressive activity where in students can articulate and explore the ideas and in their writing. It involves ability to effectively communicate thought through well-constructed sentence and coherent written compositions (Karima et al., 2022). Writing not only about linguistic skills, but also encompasses cognitive problem solving tasks. In writing, writer's need separate some process simultaneously, including generate content, unity, coherence, writer's readiness and awareness, readership awareness and linguistics choice (Yusuf, 2019). Writing is a multifaceted process to enables to explore concepts, ideas, make them visible and concrete (Moulidia, 2022). Descriptive text is describing, saying and explaining about anything to the reader (Fitriana & Syafitri, 2023). This text provides detail about people, animals, things and place w problem based learning ith clear explanation to provide readers a part of information about clearly the topic. Therefore, the reader can gain information about topic. The primary goals of explanation is to facilitate the reader to comprehend, convey knowledge, information and message through the text (Tefay & Hiluf, 2023). There were two fundamental of generic structures in descriptive paasage, namely: 1) Introduction which is identification is to identify and introduce phenomena; 2) Description, where students can describe the parts, characteristics and details of the subject (Misnawati, 2018).

The challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century education involve many aspects, included cultivation for critical thinking skills and proficiency for writing (Phyo et al., 2023). Problems of writing

*Strategies and Challenges in Enhancing Critical Thinking for Writing Descriptive Text*

include a lack of vocabulary, difficult to generate or explore the ideas, difficulties in constructing structure in the text, is not good in unity and coherence in writing, and insufficient in editing (Erna, 2022). The challenge is ability to lead the details and create vivid imagery (Mulyasin et al., 2023). A good writing descriptive text is consists of five components, such as; details, figurative language, dominant impression, precise language and careful organization (Zuraini, 2021). The sensory details is like paint a picture or things whose characteristics are truly explored and it evoke all the reader's senses of sight, hear, touch, smell and taste; figurative language such as metaphor, simile, personification and others; dominant impression contribute reader see what the writer describes; careful organization of sentence in paragraphs deal with logical order, such as; indicate the time, transition words, similarities and differences, and express reasons and result (Lu & Nguyen, 2022).

## METHOD

### Research design

The research methodology used a qualitative descriptive designed supported by quantiative data to investigate the strategies and challenges in enhancing students' critical thinking in writing descriptive texts. The qualitative descriptive research was used to explore classrooms interactions, teaching strategies, and students' responses during the writing process, while the qualitative data were used to support the findigs through students' writing test scores. This study was conducted in the Essay Writing course at the English Education Department of Almuslim University during the academic year 2025/2026. This design was considered appropriate because it allowed the researchers to describe the teaching-learning process naturally and analyze students' writing performance systematically.

According to Lincoln and Denzin in Samanhudi and Linse (2019), qualitative research focus on interpretive and naturalistic approaches to understanding social phenomena. In this study, quantitave data were used to support the qualitative findings by analyzing students' writing test scores. Although, qualitative research primarily emphasizes interpretation rather than statistical measurement, it may incoperate supportive quantitative data ro strengthen the findings. Methodological strategies that ensure transparency, systematic procedure, and evidence-based analysis were applied to ensure credibility and validity of the data (Veronika et al., 2023). This study focused on identifying teaching strategies applied by the lecturer and challenges faced by students in developing critical thinking in descriptive writing.

### Respondents

The parcticipants of this study were nineteen students at the second semester of English Department at Almuslim University and one English lecturer. The participants were selected using total sampling, as all students in the writing class were involved in the study. The students consisted of four males and fifiteen females, aged between 20 and 21 years old. They were selected because they were actively taking an essay writing course and had experience in learning descriptive text writing.

Table 1. The demographic information of the research participants

Participants/variables		
Gender:	Male	4
	Female	15
Age (year):		20-21
Learning experiences	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester	Essay writing
Background of study	Bachelor	English Education

### Instruments

In this study, the researcher used two instruments for data collection: an observation checklist and a writing test. The observation checklist was used to identify the strategies implemented by the lecturer and the challenges faced by students during the teaching and learning process. The writing test was used to assess students' critical thinking in writing

descriptive texts. In the test, students were asked to watch a video of the Ratoeh Jaroe dance and write a descriptive text based on their observations. Students' writing was assessed using a writing rubric adapted from J.B. Heaton.

Test to know the students become understanding of the critical thinking in enhancing descriptive text. The researchers provided the test through video of *Ratoeh Jaroe* dance. The researcher asked students to describe what they watch the dance in order for them to write into descriptive text. Test is considered to evaluate the students' mean score of descriptive text.

Table 2. Scoring Profile

Aspect	Score	Description
<b>Content</b> (Topic & Supporting sentences)	9-10	The topic is complete and clear and the details are relating to the topic.
	7-8	The topic is complete and clear but the details are almost relating to the topic.
	5-6	The topic is complete and clear but the details are relating to the topic.
	3-4	The topic is not clear to the topic.
<b>Organization</b> (Identification & Description)	9-10	Identification is complete and descriptions are arranged with proper connectives
	7-8	Identification is almost complete and descriptions are arranged with almost proper connectives
	5-6	Identification is not complete and descriptions are arranged with few misses of connectives
	3-4	Identification is not complete and descriptions are arranged with misses of connectives
<b>Method</b> (order the steps logically, write each step on new line, each step includes sufficient detail)	23-30	Includes all 3 elements, logical and coherence.
	15-22	Includes 2 elements, logical and lack coherence
	7-14	Includes 1 elements, lack coherence and steps are unclear
	4-6	No element include, fragmented important and steps are missing
Language Features	16-20	Clear and precise language used. A variety of action word used as sentence beginnings. Communicative tenses used. Linking words and technical term used consistently.
	11-15	Clear language used. A variety of sentence beginnings used. Communicative tenses used. Linking word and technical term used.
	6-10	Attempt to use clear language. Some variety in sentence beginning used. Communicative tenses used. Some evidence of linking word and technical term.
	4-6	Language not clear. Sentence beginning repetitive. Communicative tenses not use. Little evidence of linking words or technical terms
Spelling, punctuation and grammar	16-20	No grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors
	11-15	Almost no grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors
	6-10	A few grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors
	1-5	Many grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors

(Adapted from Writing English Language Test by Heaton, 2008:146)

### Data analysis

Sugiyono in Misnawati & As'ari, (2023) technique of data analysis used descriptive qualitative. Data analysis is process to find out and compile data systematic obtained from observation, interview, field notes and others materials, so can be easy to comprehend and the results can be communicated to people . The qualitative data obtained from classroom observation were analyzed using the inductive model of Matthew B. Miles and Michael Huberman, which consists of data analysis process in the research as follows;

#### Data reduction

The data reduction involves the process of choosing, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data found in written filed notes. The data get is documented of report or detail data. The data was reduced by researchers which to the objectives of the study on critical thinking strategies and challenges in enhancing writing descriptive text.

#### Data display

Data display is to organized, compressed assembly of information that enables of drawing conclusion and the action. During the process of the reducing and displaying data based on the formulation of the research problem. This step is presenting a set of information that is structured and drawing conclusions, because the data obtained during the process of

qualitative research usually in the form of narration, thus requiring simplification without reducing its contents after displaying the data, a conclusion is drawn.

#### *Conclusion drawing/verification*

The third stage of qualitative data analysis is conclusion drawing and verification. Data analysis involves clarification of symbols used in communication, utilizing criteria in clarification and employing analysis techniques in prediction. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The average score the students will be counted and described. Data collection explained using formula of Winarsunu cited by Misnawati et al., (2024) as below:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

Notes:

$\bar{x}$  = Mean Score

$\sum fx$  = Total Score of all students.

N = Number of students.

### **Trustworthiness**

This study findings in qualitative method used of data sources, namely; observation and test. This study demands a technique to check the validity of the data. This research used triangulation to check the validity of the data. Moeloeng states that there are four types of triangulations, such as; utilizing sources, methods, researchers, and theories (Alinda & Asnas, 2022). Triangulation is one the strategies to boost qualitative research involves differential perspectives, not only use to enhance the credibility and validity of research, theories, and data sources but also to enable comprehending of analyzing event various perspectives, thus considering the complexity of the study (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). Nevertheless, the triangulation is as sources and theoretical. Triangulation is to specify the data validity with compiling information of sources. In this study, the triangulation of sources carried out from observations was to compare with the result of test from the second semester students at Almuslim University. The data obtained triangulation of theories was analyzed based on the theories to support the study. It can be concluded that the study was analyzed by the data obtained about the critical thinking in strategies and challenges for enhancing writing descriptive text based on the results of data validity.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Writing Test Results**

The result of the writing test showed that students' critical thinking ability in writing descriptive text was still at a moderate level. The students' scores are presented in Table 1.

Table 3. Students' Writing Test Scores

No	Students name by code	score
1	APR	75
2	DN	78
3	HLP	78
4	IDM	50
5	IM	55
6	IF	75
7	LS	60
8	MK	75
9	NAZ	78
10	NS	60
11	NAZI	75
12	RR	55
13	SR	50
14	SYK	58
15	WJ	78
16	DV	58
17	IN	60

*Strategies and Challenges in Enhancing Critical Thinking for Writing Descriptive Text*

18	MR	58
19	RS	58
<b>Total score</b>		<b>1234</b>
<b>Mean score</b>		<b>64.94</b>

Total score: 1234

The mean score was calculated as follows:

$$= \frac{1234}{4619}$$

$$= 64.94$$

The mean score of the test was 64.94 indicates that students' critical thinking ability in writing descriptive texts was still moderate. The analysis of students' writing revealed recurring difficulties in vocabulary use, idea development, coherence, organization, and grammatical accuracy. Although some students demonstrated better performance in generating ideas and organizing descriptions, most students still struggled to produce logical and coherence texts. This finding suggests that students need continuous practice and instructional support to improve their critical thinking and writing performance.

### **Critical thinking is enhancing writing descriptive text.**

Based on the observation, the researchers found the important in teaching writing skill, especially in descriptive text how to think critically, such as: firstly, almost of the students is not active when the teaching and learning process in writing class. Many of students were not paying attention, the students were not focus to listen about material was given by the lecturer, when the lecturer asks some questions; it is very rare of students to respond. The students did not think critically at all, even though in writing courses. The students demanded to think critically and explore their brilliant ideas in creating a high quality in writing. The basic of critical thinking knows how to hear carefully and pay attention to the lecturer. It is probably prudent to begin ask the factual questions to ensure students have to pay attention. Moge (2022) stated that question can be asked in the class, the students must receivers a lot of information provided the lecturer to encourage students to discuss and have the confidence in their own thoughts regarding the course. Secondly, the students find the difficult in selecting appropriate words in writing; they also have trouble to organized the text. Thirdly, almost of student faced the same cases in organizing ideas. They were not unable to develop ideas well because they lack of vocabularies; it caused the students be unable explain object or something that is described in a descriptive text.

Fourthly, lecturer is presenting contextual problems. Problem based learning makes students motivated in the learning process. The lecturer should facilitate students to collaborate to investigate deeply the information and helps students to ensure the solution. Giving the chance for students to share and explore their ideas or arguments become critical thinkers in writing descriptive text that coherence, unity and good writing, so they can solve the problems in writing. Fifthly, evaluate the students' assignment is important. They can know the progress of their writing. Examination should require that students think and to write it. It can be concluded that the students were directed to improve their critical thinking, raise their value and ideas more quickly. But, some of them have to struggle to develop their critical thinking and need strategies and challenges in enhancing writing descriptive text.

### **Strategies and challenges in writing skill**

The findings identified several challenges faced by students in enhancing critical thinking descriptive writing. The first challenge was limited vocabulary, which restricted students' ability to express ideas clearly and elaborate descriptions effectively. The finding supports (Dekker, 2020), who found that vocabulary limitation significantly affects students' writing performance.

The second challenge was students' lack of awareness and understanding of critical thinking. Some students reported that they had ever been introduced explicitly to critical thinking in writing classes. One student stated:

*"I did not have any experience with critical thinking when learning writing. Critical thinking was new issue for me and my classmate"*. This finding indicates that students' unfamiliarity with critical thinking affected their ability to analyze, evaluate, and organize ideas in writing. This support

Mogea (2022), who argue that critical thinking requires systematic cognitive process in analyzing and evaluating information.

The finding also showed that students experienced difficulties in generating and developing ideas logically. One student explained, *"I had difficulties starting to write because I did not have enough ideas"*. This finding demonstrates that idea generation remains a major obstacle in descriptive writing. This result is in line with Mulyasin et al. (2023), who found that students often struggle to generate and expand ideas in writing tasks.

In addition, the study found digital technology played an important role in supporting students' writing development. Students used digital tools and artificial intelligence (AI) to assist in grammar correction, vocabulary selection, and idea development. The use of technology should function as a supporting tool rather than replacing students' independent thinking. This finding supports the technological tools are relatively enhancing writing skill, such as; kahoot, quizzes, TPACK, etc. TPACK knowledge of the dynamic interactions between technology, pedagogy, content, and knowledge is necessary for effective technology-based instruction (Erazo & Gonzalez, 2016). In addition, researchers find out the students used artificial intelligence (AI) to help them to write. AI also provides the correction of grammar, spelling, ideas and help students to correct human errors in writing. Technology AI made students optimize of their writing descriptive text. However, lecturer has to guide students in using AI so not miss use the technology (Mulyasin et al., 2023).

To address the challenges, the lecturer used some strategies to solve the problems of students in enhancing descriptive text, namely: 1) the students must read many references related to the critical thinking in writing skills. A visual reference as videos is one of strategies in helping students to describe the writing descriptive text when they explore ideas and allowed the readers can image more deeply. 2) Writing practice by paid attention to aspects of writing, namely; grammar, exploring ideas, vocabulary, outlining, unity and coherence to make good writing skills. 3) Teaching through ask the question to the students to improve their skills in writing by the lecturer. 4) The lecturer must develop innovative strategies in teaching writing in order to ensure the learning process in writing skill effectively and creatively. 5) The lecturer has to use various the models of in teaching writing, such as: problems-based learning, using video, photograph, and guided question strategy, ice breaking, and so on. 6) Using discussion. 7) The lecturer must correct and evaluate the writing text, provide feedback to review for students' assignment and motivate them. 8) The lecturer and students complicating to promote critical thinking in educational settings, especially in writing skill.

Finally, based on the observation was conducted show that almost students had faced the same difficulties and problems in writing. Consistent of the challenges, students can enhance their skill, explore ideas, choose appropriate words, and keep the coherence and unity in writing. Furthermore, with practice the students can develop accuracy and precision in describing the object in detail. Zhao et al. (2025) stated that strategy to encourage and develop writing skills consistently.

## Discussion

### Critical thinking is enhancing writing descriptive text.

Critical thinking is important for in elevating students' intellectual growth, especially in writing skill, empowering students in higher education levels and addressing them in facing complex challenges of the 21st century. Despite of the challenges posed by traditional teaching process is not interactive, creative and innovative. The researchers highlighted the ineffectiveness in critical thinking of lecturing in teaching writing skill. Based on the observation, the researchers noted that teaching writing. The researchers found problems for critical thinking in writing descriptive text, namely: the students in learning passive, lack of awareness about critical thinking, the students difficult in selecting the appropriate words when students write the text or composition, they were not unable to improve ideas, the students write the descriptive text was not coherence and unity. The impact of fostering critical

thinking extends beyond the class of essay writing. Students should have skill to think critically.

### Strategies and challenges in writing skill

The researchers of this study concluded that several strategies and challenges in enhancing critical thinking for writing descriptive text, namely: first, the challenges identified were students' difficulty in effectively writing task due to lack of vocabulary and clarity of ideas. Second, students lack experience, students faced challenges to explore ideas. Third, the integration of digital technology was recognized as both challenges and opportunity in enhancing writing skills. Fourth, the lecturer encourages students to read various references related to critical thinking and providing visual aids such as videos to aid in expressing and exploring ideas. Additionally, innovative teaching strategies, such as problem-based learning and group discussions were suggested to promote critical thinking effectively. Fifth, evaluate students' writing was deemed essential in fostering critical thinking skills. Overall, while improvement and develop faster and successful compared to others for critical thinking in strategies and challenges in enhancing writing descriptive text at second semester of English department at Almuslim University.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study concluded critical thinking plays an important role in improving students' descriptive writing skill, particularly in generating and exploring ideas, organizing information, and maintaining coherence in writing. The findings revealed that students still faced several challenges, including lack of vocabulary and the usage of it, clarity of ideas, coherence, unity, and grammatical errors, and limited understanding of critical thinking in writing activities. The writing test result showed the average score was 64.94%, it indicated that students' difficulties in critical thinking for enhancing writing descriptive text was still at a moderate level and needed improvement. The study also found that several instructional strategies, such as reading activities, visual aids, guided questioning, problem-based learning, classroom discussion, and continuous feedback, were effective in supporting students' critical thinking development and writing performance. These findings highlight the importance of interactive and innovative teaching strategies in helping students improve their critical thinking and produce better descriptive texts.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge and express our gratitude to the second semester students at English Department of Almuslim University, the lecturer and head of English study program for participating and helped in the research process; so, it runs well and success.

## REFERENCES

- Abulhul, Z. (2021). Teaching strategies for enhancing student's learning. *Journal of Practical Studies in Education*, 2(3), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.46809/jpse.v2i3.22>
- Aini, R. N. (2024). Students' Perceptions of the Use of Story Mapping in Reading Comprehension of Descriptive Text. *Journal of Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 4778(3), 2415–2433. <https://doi.org/10.2456/ideas>.
- Alinda, S., & Asnas, M. (2022). *The academic writing challenges faed by Indonesian undergraduate EFL learners at University of Islam Malang*. Universitas Islam Malang.
- Apoko & Chong, S. L. (2024). EFL students' learning motivation and descriptive essay in the context of blended learning design. *Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies*, 11(1), 429–451. <https://doi.org/10.30762/jeels.v11i1.2656>
- Azlia, L. M. (2021). Expressing opinions and giving reasons as a strategy to increase the students' speaking performance. *Journal of English Education and Social Science (JEES)*, 1(1), 23–31.
- Backers, L., & Keer, H. Van. (2025). Implementing self-regulated learning in classrooms: Connecting what primary school teachers think and do through video-based

- observations and interviews. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(12), 1–31.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15121627>
- Bakhrullayevna, T. (2024). *Enhancing critical thinking skills in education: Strategies, challenges and*. 35–37.
- Bans-Akutey, A., & Tiimub, B. M. (2021). Triangulation in research. *Academia Letters*, October.  
<https://doi.org/10.20935/al3392>
- Bayou, Y., & Kitila, T. (2023). The promotion of critical thinking in writing classes: University students' perceptions and critical thinking performance in writing. *Journal of English Language Studies*, 8(2), 232–248.  
<https://jurnal.untirta.ac.id/index.php/JELS/article/view/19677>
- Budiman, M. A., Wahyuni, S., Wisnu, M. F., Rahman, A., Kharrisma, M., Kholid, I., & Zidnal, M. (2026). Enhancing Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Self Confidence through Inquiry Based Learning in Secretaryship Courses. *Journal of English Language and Education*, 11(2), 156–165. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v11i2.2193>
- Cahyaningrum, N. (2022). *The strategies of teaching writing descriptive text at eighth grade of MTSN 1 Purbalingga*. Universitas Profesor Kiai haji saifudiin Zuhra Purwokerto.
- Chan, C. (2019). Children and Youth Services Review Using digital storytelling to facilitate critical thinking disposition in youth civic engagement: A randomized control trial. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 107(September), 104522.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104522>
- Deep, Promethi Das; Chen, Y. (2025). The Role of AI in Academic Writing: Impacts on Writing Skills, Critical Thinking, and Integrity in Higher Education. *Societies*, 15(247), 1–19.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/soc15090247>
- Dekker, T. J. (2020). Teaching critical thinking through engagement with multiplicity. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 37(May), 100701. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2020.100701>
- Din, M. (2020). Evaluating university students' critical thinking ability as reflected in their critical reading skill: A study at bachelor level in Pakistan. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 35(March), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2020.100627>
- Erazo, Gonzalo; Gonzalez, V. (2016). *Teaching and Learning in digital worlds: strategies and issues in higher education* (G. Bullen (ed.); First, Issue June). Universitat Rovira i Virgili.
- Erna, N. (2022). An analysis on the english teacher's strategies in teaching descriptive writing through online class. *Enormous: English Education Journal*, 1(1), 36–45.  
<http://ojs.unsamakassar.ac.id/edj/article/view/41/98>
- Eslit, E. R. (2023). *Writing in the digital era: The amazing evolution of pen and paper to screens and keyboards*. <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202305.1197>
- Fitriana, E. A., & Syafitri, D. (2023). Using make a match technique in teaching descriptive text to the seventh grade students of smp negeri 2 lubuklinggau. *ELite Journal: International Journal of Education, Language, and Literature*, 3(2), 109–121.  
<https://journal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/elite>
- Fitriani. (2020). *An analysis on the english teacher's strategies in teaching descriptive writing through online class at the seventh grade of SMP N 3 gubug*. IAIN Salatiga.
- Golden, B. (2023). Enabling critical thinking development in higher education through the use of a structured planning tool. *Irish Educational Studies ISSN:*, 42(4).  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2023.2258497>
- Heard, J., Scoular, C., Duckworth, D., Ramalingam, D., & Teo, I. (2020). Critical thinking: Skill development framework. In *The Australian Council for Educational Research Ltd* (pp. 1–23). The Australian Council for Educational Research Ltd 19.
- Hemmler, Y. M., & Ifenthaler, D. (2024). Self-regulated learning strategies in continuing education: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review*, 45(August), 100629. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2024.100629>
- Hou, C., Zhu, G., Liu, Y., Sudarshan, V., Leng, J., Chong, L., Yifan, F., Yong, M., & Tan, H. (2026). Computers & Education The effects of critical thinking intervention on reliance behaviors, problem-solving quality, and creativity during human-Generative AI collaborative learning. *Computers & Education*, 247(January), 105576.

- <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2026.105576>
- Isro, L., Ulung Anggraito, Y., & Harnina Bintari, S. (2021). Description of students' critical thinking skills in integrated pjbl stem learning environmental change material. *Journal of Innovative Science Education*, 10(3), 237–243. <http://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/jise>
- Johan, A. (2024). *An analysis of critical thinking skills through argumentative essay writing*. 2010, 36–45. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33197/ejlutama.v8i1.232>
- Karima, Tayaa; Hellalet, S. (2022). *The use of language learning strategies to develop learners' vocabulary knowledge and writing proficiency*. December. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366581954%0AThe>
- Kuo, H., Chang, C., Wang, J., & Linjun, E. (2024). Creating my own story : Improving children's creative thinking and composition creativity through a three-staged individual-group-individual story writing framework. *Cognitive Development*, 72(October), 101513. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2024.101513>
- Lim, S., & Kim, D. (2021). International Journal of Educational Research Open English learners' science-literacy practice through explicit writing instruction in invention-based learning. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 2(January), 100029. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2020.100029>
- Lina, Y. R., Luthfi, A., & Haris, H. (2026). The Effect of Inquiry- Based Learning on Students' Writing Skills at Senior High School 1 Kampar Utara. *Journal of English Language and Education*, 11(2), 107–115. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v11i2.1953>
- Lu, S. N. T., & Nguyen, H. B. (2022). University students' critical thinking skills: teachers' perceptions and practices in argumentative essays. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*, 7(4), 69–87. <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejel.v7i4.4417>
- Mali, Y. (2023). EFL students' challenges in writing research proposals. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Learning*, 25(1), 132–148. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v26i1.5296>
- Marue, M. G., & Pantas, M. B. (2019). Challenges in descriptive essay writing : A case of indonesian EFL leaners. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 8(12), 88–103. [https://www.ijcc.net/images/vol8iss12/81205\\_Marue\\_2019\\_E1\\_R.pdf](https://www.ijcc.net/images/vol8iss12/81205_Marue_2019_E1_R.pdf)
- Maulidina, hanifah. (2020). *Teacher's startegies to enhance students higher order thinking skills in teaching reading to the sventh garde students of SMP Al-Islam 1 Surakarta*. IAIN Surakarta.
- Misnawati; As'ari, C. (2023). Error analysis in completing structure section of TOEFL test. *Exposure: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 12(November), 366–381. <https://doi.org/10.26618/exposure.v12i2.12848>
- Misnawati; Sylvia, R. (2019). Enhancing students' writing skill through problem based learning strategy to the second yearstudents of SMA NegerI 2 Bireuen. *Jurnal Pendidikan Almuslim*, VII(2), 75–82.
- Misnawati, M. (2018). Improving students' ability in writing descriptive text trough draw label caption (DLC) technique to the second year students of SMPN 1 Peudada (A collaborative classroom action research). *Jurnal Pendidikan Almuslim*, 6(1), 20–27. <http://jkip.umuslim.ac.id/index.php/jupa/article/view/333>
- Misnawati, M., Misnar, M., & Dewi, S. L. (2024). *Understanding varieties and essential components in relative clauses*. 1(1). <https://ojs.unimal.ac.id/mijeshi/MICESHI Vol.>
- Mogea, T. (2022). Students' critical thinking ability in english teaching and learning. *Jupensi*, 2(3), 159–171. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.55606/jupensi.v2i3.977>
- Moses, R. N., & Mohamad, M. (2019). Challenges faced by students and teachers on writing skills in ESL contexts : A Literature review. *Scientific Research Publshing*, 3385–3391. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2019.1013260>
- Moulidia, L. al. (2022). *Upgrading the students' ability in writing skill through implementation of directive feedback method*. 2(2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.51179/jeess.v2i2.1530>
- Mulyasin, M. A., Zamzam, A., Putera, L. J., Amin, M., & Arfah, H. (2023). The challenges and strategies in writing descriptive text on local places in the efl essay writing course. *Jurnal*

- Strategies and Challenges in Enhancing Critical Thinking for Writing Descriptive Text*  
*Educatio*, 9(4), 2086–2092. <https://doi.org/10.31949/educatio.v9i4.6017>
- Munna, A. S., & Kalam, M. A. (2021). Teaching and learning process to enhance teaching effectiveness: literature review. *International Journal of Humanities and Innovation (IJHI)*, 4(1), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.33750/ijhi.v4i1.102>
- Novrianti, A., & Alimin, A; Husain, D. (2023). Teacher's strategies to cope with students' problems in writing descriptive text at SMA Negeri 1 Napabalano. *Journal of Teaching of English*, 8(2), 41–47. <https://doi.org/10.36709/jte.v8i2.37>
- Nurfaizah; Putro, Khamim Zarkasih; Tejaningrum, D. (2022). Students ' Critical Thinking Skills in the Learning Strategy Course. *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Pendidikan*, 15(1), 46–54. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21831/jpipfip.v15i1.41689>
- Parico, A., & Layco, E. (2020). A descriptive analysis of the critical thinking and argumentation skills of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics students. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 14(8). <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.13209.03684>
- Phyo, WM; Nikolov, Marianne; Hodi, A. (2023). Doctoral students ' english academic writing experiences through metaphor analysis. *Heliyon*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e13293>
- Rashid, Harun, Md; Ye, T. et all. (2022). Analyse and challenges of teaching writing among the english teachers. *Academic Writing, Challenge Writing, English Teachers, L2 Writer, Teachers Problems.*, 6(August 2021), 199–209. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v6nS2.2004>
- Rinaldy, A., Pratiwi, Y., Andajani, K., Numertayasa, I. W., Suharti, S., & Darwis, A. (2023). International journal of educational research open exploring artificial intelligence in academic essay: higher education student ' s perspective. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 5(September), 100296. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2023.100296>
- Samanhudi, U; Linse, C. (2019). *Critical thinking-related challenges to academic writing : A case of Indonesian postgraduate students at a UK University*. 13, 107–114. <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v13i1.5122>
- Sarigoz, O. (2024). Teaching the 21st century learning skills with the critical thinking technique based on the argumentation method. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, 18(March 2023), 196–218. <https://doi.org/10.29329/epasr.2023.525.9>
- Soy, S., Maisarah, I., Sovann, L., & Maisarah, I. (2023). Students ' perceptions of literary texts , challenges in learning , and Learning strategies. *Journal of English Teaching and Learning*, 6(2), 81–94. <https://doi.org/10.21043/jetli.v6i2.19925>
- Tesfay, H., & Hiluf, B. (2023). International journal of educational research open using need-based writing instruction through self-reflection to improve students ' writing difficulties : A counterbalanced design. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 5(September), 100293. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2023.100293>
- Veronika, R., Camelia, C., Febriliana, R., & Yapen, Y. E. (2023). Digital Literacy As a Social Mobilization and Learning Platform. *SEIKAT: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik Dan Hukum*, 2(3), 228–241. <https://doi.org/10.55681/seikat.v2i3.544>
- Widiati, U., Intan, T., Tengku, S., & Hanifiyah, L. (2023). Reading engagement of Indonesian secondary EFL teachers as literacy indicators perceived over reading resources and pleasure reading. *Ijal: Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 12(3), 828–839. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v12i3.45559>
- Wiwikananda, S. K. S. S. A. (2022). Improving students' critical thinking skills through digital story telling on narrative text. *Pioneer: Journal of Language and Literature*, 14(2), 356–375. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36841/pioneer.v14i2.1685>
- Yuan, R. Y. S. (2020). Enhancing undergraduates ' critical thinking through research engagement: A practitioner research approach. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 38(December), 1–7. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2020.100737>
- Yusuf, Q. et all. (2019). Cooperative learning strategies to enhance writing skills among second language learners. *International Journal of Instruction*, 12(1), 1399–1412. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2019.12189a>

- Zhao, G., Sheng, H., Wang, Y., Cai, X., & Long, T. (2025). Generative artificial intelligence amplifies the role of critical thinking skills and reduces reliance on prior knowledge while promoting in-depth learning. *Education Sciences*, 15(554), 2–19.
- Zuraini & Misnawati. (2023). Pengembangan modul e-learning berbasis learning management system sebagai media interaktif pada complex english rrammar. *JIIP (Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan)*, 6(3), 1957–1968.  
<https://jiip.stkipyapisdmpu.ac.id/jiip/index.php/JIIP/article/view/1552>
- Zuraini, et all. (2021). Boosting the students in mastering writing skill through the implementation of PPPIE (Point, Presentation, Illustration, Explanation) Technique. *Jurnal CULTURE (Culture, Language, and Literature Review)*, 8(1), 100–111.  
<https://doi.org/10.53873/culture.v8i1.230>