

## **An Analysis of Students' Ability in Writing Application Letter at Tenth Grade Students of SMAN 2 Muaro Jambi**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed to analyze the ability of tenth-grade students at SMAN 2 Muaro Jambi in writing application letters, with a specific focus on their content writing skills. This study employed a quantitative descriptive method. The subjects of the research were 35 tenth-grade students at SMAN 2 Muaro Jambi. The data collection technique used was a writing test. The research utilized descriptive statistics to analyze the data. The results show that 29% of students demonstrated very high ability, 20% high ability, 14% moderate ability, and 37% low ability in overall application letter writing. Regarding content specifically, 11% of students showed very high ability, 17% high ability, 0% moderate ability, and 72% low ability. The study concludes that while students showed varied abilities in overall application letter writing, a significant majority demonstrated low ability in writing the content of application letters.

**Keywords :** *Analysis, Writing Ability, Application Letter, Content Writing, Tenth Grade Students*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Harmer (2004) asserts that unlike speaking, writing is frequently not time-bound. According to Hanafi (2019), one of the brief functional texts is the announcement. When applying for a job, a cover letter, sometimes referred to as an application letter, is an essential document to include with your resume. Introducing yourself to the prospective employer, emphasizing your relevant experiences and talents, and expressing your excitement for the role and the business are its main goals.

The application letter functions as a customized story that enhances the factual information in your resume, giving you the opportunity to set the scene and go into further depth about how your experience fits the job specifications. An introduction that explains the job you're applying for and how you found it; a middle section that lists your qualifications and relevant experiences, with concrete examples to support your suitability; and a conclusion that restates your interest in the position, indicates that you're prepared for an interview, and thanks

the reader for reviewing your application are usually its main components. An application letter that is well-written not only highlights your qualifications but also your attention to detail and communication abilities, providing a strong argument for why you are the best person for the job.

Based on the researcher's experience in teaching practice during the internship program, which took place from 02 September to 02 November 2022 at SMAN 2 Muaro Jambi, several observations were made regarding the teaching of the material in the sixth chapter, "Application Letter," to the tenth-grade students. The researcher identified several factors that the students believe make understanding and writing application letters difficult. Firstly, the students struggled with the formal language and tone required for application letters. Many students are more accustomed to informal communication and found it challenging to adapt to the formal writing style needed in professional correspondence. First, students do not know what they are going to write or how to start writing. Second, the structure of an application letter posed difficulties for the

students. Understanding and correctly implementing the distinct sections of the letter—such as the header, introduction, body, and conclusion—was not straightforward for them. They often found it confusing to know what information should be included in each part and how to transition smoothly from one section to another. Third, students are afraid to make mistakes. Some students focus on not making grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes. The important parts of writing are grammar, punctuation, and spelling, but the most important part is how the author presents the sentence so that the reader can read it clearly.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Nature of Writing**

Hyland (2003) said writing is a way of sharing personal meanings and writing courses emphasize the power of the individual to construct his or her views on a topic. It means writing is one way to convey their opinion or thought about some topics. According to Hamer (2004), writing in language classes is often viewed as an extension of support for other skills. Writing skill is a written product which is completed after the process of thinking, planning, drafting and revising and also demands efforts and specialized skills of generating ideas, organizing them coherently, making use of the discourse markers and the rhetorical conventions, putting all of them into one, revising the content for a clearer meaning, and editing for accurate grammar into a final product. In the educational context, writing assignments are designed to enhance students' critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and communication skills (Graham et al., 2015). Moreover, it fosters their understanding of genre conventions and rhetorical strategies (Hyland, 2015). According to Hughes in Pratama explains that there are five components in writing text. They are

content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics (Pratama, 2009).

There are four writing processes (Harmer, J. 2004). You can learn more about the writing process in each step described below:

- a. Drafting is the process of getting your points and ideas down on paper and arranging them so they are easy to read.
- b. Revision is another important phase that overhauls the design.
- c. Editing is the stage where the author can make any necessary changes to improve the document.
- d. Publishing is the final stage when an author submits a work to a publisher.

### **Concept of Writing Ability**

According to Hyland (2003), writing is seen as an extension of grammar. It is a means of reinforcing language patterns through habit formation and testing a learner's ability to produce well-formed sentences. Writing skills are important in the field of writing because the goal is to convey information in the language with which the reader and writer are proficient. Zain in Yudi in Sisilia (2016) states that ability is the ability, skill, strength that we are trying to be ourselves". Whereas according to Webster in Sisilia "students; ability is the quality or state of being able, power to do something and competence in doing". It means the ability of students can be seen from their writing abilities especially in writing announcement text.

### **Application Letter**

An application letter, also known as a cover letter, is a formal document that accompanies a resume or curriculum vitae (CV) when applying for a job. Its primary function is to introduce the applicant to the potential employer and provide additional context to their qualifications, experiences, and motivations for applying for the specific

position (Rosalina et al., 2023). The application letter typically includes several key components: an introduction where the applicant states the position they are applying for and how they learned about it, a body section where they elaborate on their relevant qualifications and experiences, and a conclusion where they express their enthusiasm for the role and request an interview (Ulfa et al., 2023).

Application letters, commonly known as cover letters, come in various forms, each tailored to different job application scenarios. The most common types are solicited application letters, unsolicited application letters, and referral application letters. A solicited application letter is written in response to a specific job advertisement (Maiharani et al., 2023). Each type of application letter requires a different approach, but all aim to effectively communicate the applicant's qualifications and enthusiasm for the role or company (Hidayanti, 2020). There is a format in writing a business application letter. According to George and Julia, the correct form as follow heading, inside address, salutation, body, closing and signature. The generic structure of Application Letter in English text can be seen below heading, opening, introduction paragraph, highlighting paragraph, conclusion and closing. The language features of application letter using formal language, using pronoun, using simple present tense and using simple past tense.

### **Review Related Studies**

There were some reviews previous studies related to writing announcement. The first one by Fitriani Nasution (2013) had done research in State Institute of Islamic Studies (STAIN) Padangsidempuan with the title "An Analysis on Students' Ability in Writing Application Letters at Grade XI Secretary Class SMK Negeri 1 Sipirok". After analyzing the data, She was gotten that the analysis students' ability in writing application letter at grade XI secretary class

SMK Negeri 1 Sipirok can be categorized enough. It can be known from the calculating that the students' ability in writing application letter at grade XI secretary class SMK Negeri 1 Sipirok was 52.63%.

The concept of writing ability has been subject to extensive investigation within educational research. Hayes & Flower (2016) proposed a cognitive model of writing, while Kellogg (2008) emphasized the role of automaticity and fluency in writing ability. Moreover, recent research by Graham & Harris (2005) has emphasized the social and contextual dimensions of writing ability.

Silvia and Roza (2022) state that this study aims to analyze the mistakes made by students in writing job application letters at level XII at SMK 1 Ranah Batahan. This research conducted an analysis of various aspects that are often the source of errors in writing job application letters. The results of this research can provide valuable insight into the mistakes that often occur in writing job application letters by level XII students at SMK 1 Ranah Batahan. The information obtained from this study can be the basis for developing more effective learning strategies in improving the ability to write job application letters among students. Thus, this research has an important emphasis in the context of curriculum development and learning in vocational high schools.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The kind of this research is quantitative research by using descriptive method. The researcher used descriptive design for this research. According to L.R. Gay and Airasian, quantitative descriptive method is a method which describes condition of the present time naturally, descriptive is carried out to obtain information about the references, attitudes, practices or interest some groups of people. In this study, the objective population consisted of the 10th-grade students of SMAN 2 Muaro Jambi.

The population of this research is the first year students at SMAN 2 Muaro Jambi. The number of population members are 288 students, and they are distributed into 8 classes. In this research, the researcher uses cluster random sampling technique to select the sample of this research. This research used writing test to be instrument. This test used to know the ability of students in writing application letter. The researcher used content validity to know the validity of the test, in which the test material was constructed based on the curriculum, syllabus, and teaching material given to the tenth grade students at SMAN 2 Muaro Jambi.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Findings**

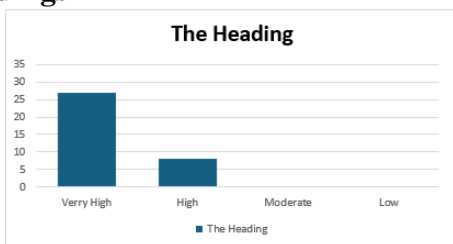


Figure 1. The Heading

The data in Figure 1 indicates that, in the heading category of drafting application letters, 8 students obtained a score of 3, while 27 students received the maximum possible score of 4. Not a single pupil had a score lower than 3.

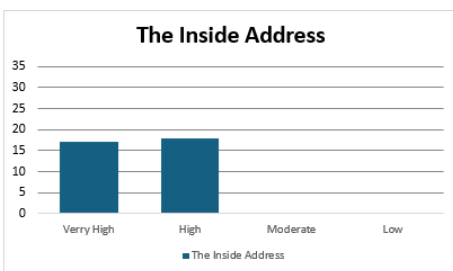


Figure 2. The Inside Address

According to the statistics in Figure 2, 17 students scored a 4 in the interior address category, whereas 18 students scored a 3. For

this component, no student received a score of 1 or 2.

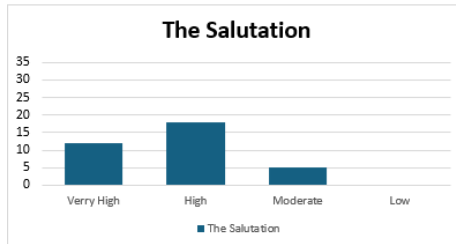


Figure 3. The Salutation

Figure 3 displays the data, which indicates that 12 students scored a 4 in the greeting category, 18 students scored a 3, and 5 students scored a 2. For this component, no students scored as low as 1.

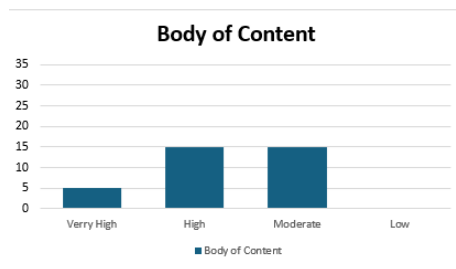


Figure 4. Body of Content

For the body of content category, five students scored four, fifteen received three, and fifteen received two, according to the statistics in figure 4. For this component, no student obtained the lowest possible score of 1.

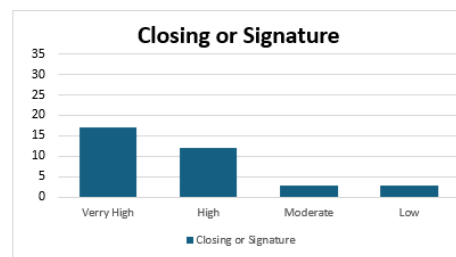


Figure 5. Closing of Signature

The data in the figure 5 shows that for the closing or signature category, 17 students received a score of 4, 12 students received a score of 3, 3 students received a

score of 2, and 4 students received a score

Categories	Ability	Number of students	The percentage of students
89-100	Very high	4	11%
77-88	High	6	17%
64-76	Moderate	0	0%
<64	Low	25	72%
	<b>The total of students</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100%</b>

of 1.

### Data Analysis

Table 1. The Percentage of the Ability of Tenth Grade Students in Writing Application Letter at SMAN 2 Muaro Jambi

The researcher initially tallied the students' overall scores to determine the tenth graders' proficiency in drafting application letters. Data analysis revealed that 10 students (29%) had really good application letter writing skills. Additionally, seven students (20%) demonstrated strong application letter writing skills. Five students, or 14% of the total, demonstrated a moderate level of proficiency in drafting application letters. Thirteen students (37%) then demonstrated poor application letter writing skills. Refer to Appendix 7.

Table 2. The Percentage of the Ability of Tenth Grade Students

Categories	Ability	Number of students	The percentage of students
89-100	Very high	10	29%
77-88	High	7	20%
64-76	Moderate	5	14%
<64	Low	13	37%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100%</b>

Following data analysis, the researcher discovered that 4 students (11%) had extremely good application letter content usage skills. Six pupils (17%) also demonstrated a high level of proficiency with the application letter's content. In the

meantime, 0% of students shown a moderate ability to use the application letter's content. Then, 25 students (72%) struggled to use the application letter's content (see Appendix 8).

### Discussion

"How is the ability of tenth grade students in writing application letters at SMAN 2 Muaro Jambi?" is the first study question. According to the test findings, a considerable 72% of pupils exhibited low ability, while just 28% showed very high or high ability (11% very high and 17% high). This suggests that there is room for significant growth in the students' overall application letter writing skills. Most students are having trouble writing application letters that are successful. The second question is, "How is the ability of tenth grade students to use content in writing application letters at SMAN 2 Muaro Jambi?" requires us to look at how well the students perform in different application letter components. With regard to the heading, 27 students (77%) received a very high grade as they included the date, the sender's address, and the contact details. Eight students (23%) who usually left out one component, like contact details, were given good scores. The implication is that the majority of students comprehend the fundamental format of the header of an application letter.

Nearly equal numbers of people attended the indoor address. Seventeen students (49%) showed extremely good ability by giving accurate and comprehensive recipient information, such as the entire address, job title, recipient's name, and company name. The remaining 18 students (51%) demonstrated high ability, albeit they lacked some recipient details, such as their name or job position. This suggests that although students understand the inner address concept in general, there is still a need for growth in terms of making sure all pertinent information is provided.

More different outcomes were seen for the greeting component. Using very appropriate and official greetings, like "Dear Mr./Ms. [Name]" or "Dear Hiring Manager," twelve students (34%) received outstanding grades. 18 pupils (51%) were given high marks for adopting polite but vague greetings such as "Dear Sir/Madam." A moderate score was obtained by five students (14%) who used less formal or suitable greetings. This shows that although most students know that a formal greeting is necessary, some find it difficult to decide on the best format for a letter of application for a job.

Students found the most difficult part to be the body of content. Nine students (26%) showed exceptionally high proficiency in creating thorough and convincing text that included all pertinent details, including the job for which they applied, their qualifications, relevant experience, and motivations for applying. Eight students (23%) had great talent; their writing was informative but lacked persuasiveness and detail. Due to missing or irrelevant information, eight more students (23%) were given a moderate score. The remaining pupils were probably classified as having poor ability. Given the importance of the body of content in conveying credentials and motivation to prospective employers, these findings point to a major area for development.

Finally, 17 students (49%) showed extremely high ability in the closing or signature portion by utilizing proper closings, such as "sincerely" or "best regards," followed by their complete name and signature. High skill was demonstrated by twelve students (34%) who used suitable closings but might have lacked formality or a signature. Four students (11 percent) scored poorly, either forgetting to include a closure or using one that was inappropriate for a formal application letter, while three students

(9 percent) obtained a mediocre score for using less acceptable or incomplete closings. This part demonstrates that although a lot of pupils are aware of the fundamentals of concluding a letter, consistency and formality still need to be improved.

This study concludes by offering a more thorough analysis of various elements of drafting an application letter, highlighting unique difficulties that were not previously noted. Students struggle greatly to provide relevant and convincing content for their application letters, even while they demonstrate proficiency with formatting components like headings and addresses. These results highlight how crucial it is to teach application letter writing in a thorough manner, paying special attention to the body of the letter and professional communication techniques. The goal of future educational initiatives should be to close this gap by assisting students in mastering the format of application letters as well as the writing and critical thinking abilities required to produce engaging content that successfully communicates their credentials and motivations to prospective employers.

## **CONCLUSION**

After analyzing the data, the researcher made the following conclusions:

1. The tenth grade students at SMAN 2 Muaro Jambi had low ability in writing application letter. It was proven by fact that 13 student (37%) had low ability in writing application letter.
2. The ability of tenth grade students to use content of announcement was low. It was proven by fact that 25 students (72%) had low ability to use content of application letter.

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