

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

English is a compulsory subject in all Malaysian primary and secondary schools in accordance to its position as the second language after the official language, Bahasa Melayu. The Cabinet Committee Report on the Review of the Implementation of the Education Policy 1979 states that “to help school-leavers handle or manage daily activities and work situations as well as to pursue higher education” is one of the objectives of teaching English in schools. Hence, among the aims of the Malaysian English language curriculum for secondary schools, is “to obtain, process, and use information from various audio visual and print sources; and present the information in spoken and written form” (CDC(MOE), 2001,p.3). Malaysian secondary schools consist of 2 categories: Lower forms (Form 1, 2 and 3) and Upper forms (Form 4, 5 and 6). This research focuses on Form Four students only because at this level they will start learning more advanced English syllabus compared to what they have learned in the Lower forms.

The Form Four English Language syllabus includes three main elements (which are summarized in Appendix 1). They are Learning Outcomes, Language Content and Educational Emphasis. The Learning Outcomes comprise 3 main areas of language contexts: Interpersonal, Informational and Aesthetic purposes. Language Content covers Grammar, the Sound System, Word List and the Literature Component. And lastly the Educational Emphasis involves learning the skills as preparation for language use in the real world. The main issue discussed in this study is language for informational purposes, which comes under the Learning Outcomes element of the syllabus. The main purpose of

the Learning Outcome component is so students can obtain information from multiple sources and to process and apply the information for various purposes, and present it to a variety of audience. Furthermore, this study will also touch on the word list provided for Form Four students which falls under the Language Content element of the syllabus. By the end of the year, the students should be able to master the base words in the list which are related to the themes and topics from the textbook. The syllabus demonstrates that at the end the year students should be able to socialize with a range of people in different settings through effective use of the language both orally and in written form.

However, the students come from various linguistic and social backgrounds, therefore, to achieve this objective the teachers are expected to take into consideration some important considerations issues while teaching, such as:

- i) planning and organization of lessons according to the themes and topics
- ii) integration of the four skills (listening speaking reading and writing) in the lessons
- iii) repetition, reinforcement, consolidation and, mastery of language skills, vocabulary, grammar items and the sound systems.
- iv) effective teaching and learning activities
- v) classroom evaluation to keep track of the students' progress
- vi) awareness of the centralized assessment
- vii) emphasis on Malaysia as a setting and also nurture the norm and values of the country

The Curriculum Development Centre has organized the syllabus to include a balanced focus on all four major language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, and

therefore, ideally, students following this syllabus should be equally competent in the four skills. However, personal experience and observation of English language learning in several secondary schools in rural areas suggest that of the four skills, students performed least competently in writing. Informal interviews with teachers and personal experiences as a teacher also revealed that students found writing most challenging and the most frequently cited reason for the students' poor competence in writing is their lack of proficiency in grammar and vocabulary. Pillay (1998, p.3) found that those with lower levels of writing competence come from either rural schools or from low socio-economic groups in urban areas where exposure to English is limited. The lack of grammar and vocabulary due to their limited exposure and usage of the language, limits their ability to express and elaborate on their ideas when completing writing tasks.

Mayher and Brause (1986) state that "writing is dependent upon the ability to draw upon words to describe an event" (cited in Corona, Spangenberg, & Venet, 1989, p.18). In relation to this, Wilkins (1972, p.111) stressed four decades ago that "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". Without the ability to produce meaningful sentences, students are not confident of their writing skills and are not motivated to write. Chitravelu et al., (1995, p.141) summarizes students' lack of interest in writing: "Most of us find writing difficult. Writing is the skill most students are least proficient in. It also yields the least rewards because they have little use for it in the immediate present."

## **1.2 Statement to the problem**

E1119, a code name for an English subject in Malaysian schools, is a compulsory paper in the Malaysia Certificate of Education or Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM). It consists of two

papers: Paper 1 and Paper 2. The format of the E1119 and the allocation of marks for each section in both papers are provided in Table 1.1

**Table 1.1: Format of the SPM English Examination Paper (E1119)**

<b>PAPER</b>	<b>DURATION OF EXAM</b>	<b>SECTION</b>	<b>NO of QUESTIONS</b>	<b>MARKS</b>	<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>
Paper 1 (1119/1)	1hour 45 minutes	SECTION A : Directed Writing	1 Question	35	85
		SECTION B : Free/Continuous Writing	1 Question	50	
Paper 2 (1119/2)	2 hours 15 minutes	SECTION A : Multiple Choice Questions -(Graphic Materials, Short Texts, Sign and Notices/Phrases -Cloze Text	8 Questions	8	75
			7 Questions	7	
		SECTION B : Structured Response	10 Questions	10	
		SECTION C : Comprehension Summary	5 Questions 1 Question	10 15	
		SECTION D : Literature Components	3 Questions	25	

The questions in Paper 1 test the students' writing ability, whereas those in Paper 2 assess the students' other linguistic abilities. The marks obtained in each section will be totaled up and converted to percentage to get the final grade of E1119. Since the focus of this study is on the 'free writing' section, it will be discussed in further detail. It is called 'free writing' because in the exam, they are asked to choose one topic from a list of five which broadly cover the following genres of writing: descriptive, narrative, argumentative, and expository. This section requires students to write freely in 350 words on the topic of their choice and

the time allocated to complete this task is 1 hour (as suggested in the instruction). Table 1.1 shows that this section carries the highest score compared to the other sections. The implication here is that students are expected to put in more effort for this section as it carries the bulk of the marks. The syllabus expects that when they reach this level of their education, they should be able to write a composition in English well enough to get at least 50 % of the mark allocated for the section. From the observation of an English teacher with more than 10 years experience in marking the E1119 paper, students are able to pass the subject if they get about 40 -50 % of the allocated score for each section. However many are observed to be unable to reach that minimum mark. Schools' post-mortem analyses of students' performance in the free writing section revealed that generally their essays are usually too short, lack depth and cohesion. Furthermore, the common reports from the teachers indicated that the students' failure or low grades in the E1119 paper are mainly due to their poor performance in the free composition component.

For many students, especially those in rural areas and from non-English speaking family backgrounds, their limited exposure and opportunity to use English apart from what is provided in the classroom, is their biggest handicap. Much of their vocabulary comes sometimes solely from the textbooks and materials provided by their teachers. According to Oxford and Scarcella (1994) vocabulary learning has to be specifically taught and constantly reinforced so the words will stick in the students' schemata. Oxford and Scarcella listed some ill practices in vocabulary teaching:

1. Low recycling of vocabulary in course books. In other words, the words that the students are expected to learn are not reused in another exercise or even repeated in the same book.

2. Teachers are always too busy to go through and study the syllabus, so normally they just assume textbooks have dealt with the recycling of vocabulary adequately.
3. Teachers leave vocabulary learning to students and rarely teach vocabulary learning strategies and techniques. Dictionary skills in particular are rarely taught and vocabulary notebooks are not popular.
4. Most vocabulary teaching is from text emphasizing on single words rather than collocations or lexical phrases.
5. Teachers often teach too many words simultaneously, which can cause confusion and overloading among students.
6. Rare words are less favored over common words because those words are considered too difficult to be remembered.
7. Students' exposure to new words is limited by materials used by teachers. Therefore, words that are not in the materials get ignored.
8. For many teachers, vocabulary teaching is limited to definition, spelling or pronunciation, not deeper aspects of word learning, thus vocabulary goals are rarely met.
9. Most vocabulary exercises are text-oriented rather than learning oriented.

Compounding this lack of effective vocabulary teaching techniques in the English language classrooms, the students themselves are not motivated to improve. One of the reasons they provided for this low motivation to learn new words is that they find the prescribed textbooks boring (personal communication with students). The Form 4 English Language textbook, for example, contains outdated topics and some of the exercises are not in line with the national examination format. Students are not interested to learn the new words and terms since the issues or texts within which these words are presented are too isolated

from their daily experiences. Hence, teachers should turn to other teaching materials as the alternatives for textbooks. One alternative source of teaching material which is current and offers a wide range of topics is the newspaper. Maley (in Grundy: 1994.p:3) stresses that newspapers contain interesting ideas which could prevent boredom among the students. And the newspaper can also be referred to as a 'new material' as brought up in the curriculum design: "Language skills, vocabulary, grammar items and the sound system must be repeated often to maximize learning and bring about retention. To this end...items are reinforced. Repetition should be carried out using **new material** to avoid boredom" (CDC, 2003:5).

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This study seeks to provide research-based evidence on how *The Star* newspaper can be an effective resource in helping secondary school students in rural areas increase their vocabulary and at the same time improve their ability in writing narrative essay. Thus, the objectives of this study are:

1. To determine ways in which *The Star* can help the students increase their vocabulary.
2. To analyze how far the vocabulary gained from *The Star* can help students write better narrative essays.

It is the contention of this study that since *The Star* contains current local and international issues and news students can relate to, they would be better motivated to learn and eventually use the ideas and the newly acquired words to help them elaborate on their own ideas during essay writing. In this study, the 'narrative' genre has been selected as an essay type because it does not require knowledge of specific matter as it deals with the construction of an imaginary series of causally linked events, which may be partly based on

actual experiences. Langan (2008, p.203) defines narration as a “story telling whether we are relating a single story or several related ones”. Through narration, ideas are expanded through details. Furthermore, analysis of Malaysian students’ essays indicated that the narrative type is most popular because the students think since they are free to use their experiences and ideas they can therefore write better essays. In order to meet these two objectives, this study will firstly do pre-test to test out the students’ achievements in writing narrative essay. Secondly, a treatment will be carried out by using articles from *The Star* newspaper before testing them again in the post test. And lastly, their performance in the final essay (post-test) will be compared to that in the first essay (pre-test) to draw conclusions on the effectiveness of *The Star* to improve the students writing.

#### **1.4 The Research Questions**

As with the writing of any form, having a sound vocabulary is crucial in producing a good narrative essay. As such, before they could be taught the techniques of writing a good essay, the students should be helped to obtain a wider and larger range of vocabulary. This study will do so through the use of *The Star*. The study will therefore address the following research questions:

- i) In what ways can *The Star* help students increase their vocabulary?
- ii) To what extent can the vocabulary obtained from *The Star* help the students write better narrative essays?

The study contends that through the use of *The Star* as a teaching and learning resource, there will be improvement in the students’ vocabulary, which will lead to improvements in their writing skills which will in turn lead to increased confidence as well as a change in their attitude and beliefs on English language learning.



## **1.5 Scope and limitations**

The limitations of the study include:-

### **a- Participants**

The sample consists of 30 students from one Form Four class in a rural secondary school. This figure represents about 10% of the total number of Form Four students in this school which is 286 (based on the data obtained in July 2009)

### **b- Material used**

The material used is limited to *The Star*, a Malaysian mainstream daily newspaper (issues on 1/4, 22/4, 1/7 and 30/7). *The Star* is selected because the participants of this study are already subscribers; therefore, they are familiar with the newspaper. Only the *Main*, *Star Two* and *Star Metro* sections will be used as the national and international news reported in these sections contain the range of vocabulary relevant to the topics planned/prepared for the students' essay writings.

### **c- Focus Area**

This study will focus on how *The Star* can help students write better narrative essay. This is because analyses of essays written over the past years show that the narrative essay is the more popular choice of the students compared to the other genres (description, argumentation, and exposition), as they feel it is more manageable as they can use their imagination and personal experiences to enhance their writing.

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

This study is significant because the findings will add on to the literature on using newspapers as a learning resource for students besides textbooks in the effort of helping students increase their vocabulary as well as improve their essay writing. Moreover, it might inspire other teachers to further investigate on the usefulness of newspapers in

helping students to learn other components of language skills such as grammar and sound system. The study aims to highlight the positive implications for the teaching of writing in the classroom. It will also provide some insights on how newspapers can be exploited in the classroom in order to develop narrative writing skills. Therefore, teachers can use newspapers as one of the ways to overcome the difficulties they face in the teaching of narrative writing skill. The findings of this study has much significance for the upper secondary school students who are sitting for their SPM examination and in the long run can bring benefit to the students who want to continue their studies at the university level.

### **1.7 Summary**

This study was conceptualized based on the observation and awareness that prescribed textbooks do not seem to motivate students to learn English because they find these texts boring as the topics presented are too isolated from their daily lives and experiences. Furthermore, these texts were written in a way in which most of the new words presented are not recycled in another exercise or repeated over sufficient number of times in the same book that would reinforce students' vocabulary building. Since English newspapers are accessible and affordable, teachers and students can use it as an effective alternative teaching and learning material. Additionally, because the newspapers' contents are current, students are able to develop language and academic skills within a real and relevant context. Furthermore, the newspapers' physical characteristics are tailor-made for classroom use since they can be marked, cut, pasted, colored, and stored or discarded easily.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

Since writing requires content knowledge and language skills, second language learners would find it more difficult to write in the target language compared to native speakers. However, according to Rizg Ali (2003, p.1) students have “an inherent ability to write. There can be no grain of doubt that [the inability to write] comes as a result of the lack of adequate reading and practice.” Rizg Ali went on to say that “when they want to write they are handicapped because their minds are vacant”; they “need ideas and knowledge” in order to be able “to write automatically about any topic”. Rizg Ali also reported that most students only write when they are forced to by their teachers or parents and to fulfill academic requirements. His comments correspond with Wilkins (1972) who stressed that knowing only grammar without mastering vocabulary will hinder someone from presenting his/her ideas. Zimmerman (1997), reporting a quarter of a century after Wilkins (1972) indicated that the view on the importance of vocabulary to writing effective essays has remained strong. Zimmerman (1997) explained that vocabulary is central to language and is of critical importance to the typical language learner. Similarly, McCarthy (2001, p.5) provided further support to this stand “Vocabulary forms the biggest part of the meaning of any language, and vocabulary is the biggest problem for most learners”. From the views stated above, there is no doubt that vocabulary is plays a big role in understanding and mastering other language skills but in many school curricula, it has not been given due attention. Evidence indicate that is has not been considered important enough to be explicitly taught together with other skills

In the early nineteenth century, the grammar-translation method became the standard way of studying foreign languages. It involves detailed analysis of the grammar rules and translations of sentences and texts into and out of the target language. Words together with meanings were taught after pronunciation and grammar. For many years after World War II, the teaching of vocabulary was considered less important than the other language components such as grammar, reading and writing. It was virtually neglected under the widespread use of the audio-lingual approach during the 1950s and 1960s. As mentioned earlier, the audio-lingual approach placed greater importance on the teaching of structures and forms of languages and less on the meaning of the words. It was assumed that the mastery of new words would subconsciously commence after the complete comprehension of structures and forms. Furthermore, learning vocabulary initially was regarded as an obstacle to the process of learning grammar and, therefore, should be kept to a minimum or in the background. The linguist, Fries (1945, p.3), who set forth the audio-lingual principles in the *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language*, states that: "... in learning a new language, then, the chief problem is not at first that of learning vocabulary items. It is, first, the mastery of the features of arrangement that constitute the structure of the language." Oshima and Hogue (1991: xiii) also stated that good text in English requires good language rules and good organization. In short, these views obviously support the priority of phonology and grammar over lexicon. On the contrary, as mentioned by Wilkin (1972), vocabulary is the skill that is also needed to take into consideration because the learners need a wide range of words to express their views and feelings in the target language. And acquiring new vocabulary is not a simple task especially to the average learners who are slow in understanding the language.

## **2.2 Teaching and Learning Vocabulary**

It is important to find ways in which the students can be empowered with the relevant skills so they would not find essay writing so daunting. One of the ways to do this is to help students build a more functional vocabulary. Waring (2002) suggested some effective ways for ESL vocabulary teaching and learning:

1. Teachers should select words carefully, putting special focus on frequent and useful words as they carry the most in terms of meaning. Easy words are to be taught early to form a vocabulary foundation. However, difficult words should not be neglected. As proposed by Meara (1995), early emphasis on vocabulary growth within language teaching will help kick-start ESL learning.
2. New words should be repeated soon after initial contact, at intervals, many times in many contexts. Graded readers and listening to simplified recordings are recommended.
3. Students should not be given too difficult materials that they are unable to guess successfully the meanings of new words as this does not help increase their existing knowledge.
4. Students should be educated to be independent learners by guiding them to use learning strategies effectively and promoting an advantage of using the dictionary in their learning process.
5. Vocabulary exercises should focus on deepening and internalizing word knowledge and deal with collocations and multiple-word units.

Learning vocabulary should go in line with other skills in learning English Language. For example, a rich vocabulary is a significant element in understanding the text and also reading ability. Laflamme (1997, p.373) stated that reading and writing are two analogous

and complementary processes in that both involve generating ideas, organizing ideas into a logical order, drafting them a number of times to achieve cohesion, and revising the ideas as is appropriate. There is a general agreement among vocabulary experts that there are two distinguishable types of vocabulary learning: direct (intentional) learning and indirect (incidental) learning (Nation, 1990; Hatch and Brown, 1995). Direct learning is defined in terms of the conscious effort made by learners to acquire new vocabulary items readily prepared and designed by the teachers or other teaching aids such as textbooks, tape recorders, and newspapers. These include doing various exercises such as guessing meanings from contexts, memorizing word lists and vocabulary games. Indirect learning on the other hand, involves students acquiring new words while doing other activities such as reading stories or listening to the news on the radio. In other words, an indirect vocabulary learner's attention is not focused towards consciously learning new lexical items. Supporting such learning, Krashen and Terrell states that "we acquire (not learn) language by understanding input that is a little beyond our current level of (acquired) competence" (1983:32).

For the purpose of this research, direct (intentional) learning has been selected as the base method to improve vocabulary learning among the participants because in this study the participants are provided with words selected from *The Star* to learn. Through the vocabulary enhancing activities designed, the study hypothesizes that the students will learn the selected words and be able to use these words when they write a narrative type essay at the end of the program.

Nation (1994) suggested that vocabulary activities should incorporate:

- i) relating new words to previous knowledge
- ii) creating a context for the word

- iii) drawing on a range of clues to recall the word
- iv) relating the word appropriately to a variety of aspects
- v) using the word in a goal directed activities like problem solving

Hence some of the activities planned for the current study somewhat include some of the items listed above. In order to reinforce a learner's growth in vocabulary, he/she should be provided with opportunities to become fluent with that vocabulary. Nation (1994) believed that vocabulary learning is not an end in itself; and that rich vocabulary makes the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing easier to perform. These studies suggested that students who possess a wider range of words are able to write easily because they can elaborate more about the topic. And at the same time, the learners can also be introduced or exposed to the different kinds of writing genres.

### **2.3 Genres of Written Texts**

The term 'genre' is used in various educational contexts to refer to the "recognizable and recurring patterns of everyday academic and literary texts that occur within particular cultures" (Hammond & Derewianka, 2001, p.186). Written texts can therefore be categorized into different genres. According to Britton and Black (1985), four major genres have usually been suggested by those who have classified prose in English composition and literary criticism. They are: narrative, expository, persuasive and descriptive. Texts may also comprise properties that are associated with more than one genre.

According to Charney and Carlson (1995), to write successfully in a genre, writers must be familiar with its conventions of content, structure, and styles as well as be able to fully understand the assumptions underlying these conventions. They need to be taught the different genres of written texts as it helps to increase consciousness in the generic structure of the specific genres. This will eventually help them produce the specific types of texts

required of a particular task. And, since the focus of this study is about improving the narrative writing, it will be further discussed in the ensuing sections.

### **2.3.1 Narrative Text**

Langan (2008,p.207) describes the main objective of “a narrative essay is to make a point by telling your audience a story with colorful details and interesting events that build up to a point of some kind to make narrative essay enjoyable for readers and writers alike”. He also reminds would be writers that the story should deal with a topic that will appeal to the audience. Furthermore, according to Martin and Rothery (1980, p.9; 1986, p.3), the social function of the narrative is to entertain others; it should therefore be written in a creative manner using a wide range of vocabulary. Using Labov and Waletzky’s (1967) terms, they (cited in Martin, Christie and Rothery 1987, p.143) use the following formula to describe its schematic structure:

**Orientation ^ [Complication ^ Resolution]\* ^ (Coda).**

**Key:** ^ - “is followed by”

\* - “recursive”

() - “optional”

[ ] - “domains of recursion or sequencing”

In Orientation, the story is set in time and space and the main characters are introduced. In Complication, a series of unexpected events or problems arise which lead to a crisis. In Resolution, the crisis is resolved, successfully or otherwise. In Coda, which is optional, the writer makes a comment on the story as a whole.

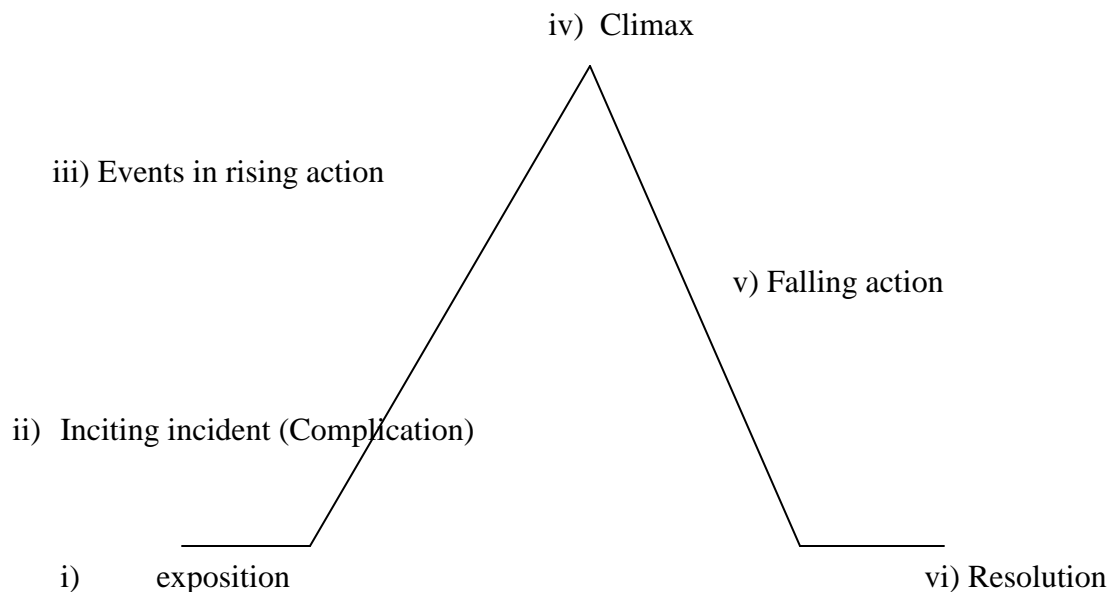
In the same light, Smith (1978,p.51) says that “stories should be well-written so that they sustain reader interest from start to finish. The structure of the plot, that is the sequence of



events or action in the story, will portray the overall quality and effect of the story.

Therefore Smith (1978) says, normally a story consists of the following elements:

- i) The **exposition** – opening which introduces the setting and characters in the story
- ii) The **inciting event or complication** – the first incident which changes the initial situation of the characters.
- iii) The **rising action and conflict** – the series of events through which the struggle (or conflict) of the characters is heightened. Conflict may occur more than once in a story.
- iv) The **climax** – the most dramatic moment in a story which resolve the destiny of the characters involved in the conflict.
- v) The **falling action** – the series of events after the climax. At this point the conflict lessens.
- vi) **Resolution** – absolute settlement of the conflicts has been reached.



**Figure 2.1: A chart depicting the development of a plot (Freytag's pyramid)**

(Source: Yap 2011, p.18)

This figure shows how the plot of the story is developed by the writer. The story that contains all these elements in it is called “fit the conventional structure of the story”. These elements will become one of the tools for the markers to determine the quality of the narrative essay written by the students at the end of the program.

#### **2.4 Newspapers as a Learning Resource to Acquire Vocabulary and Writing Skills**

Writing has always remained a complex and challenging task for most people. Moffett (1983) thinks that the only way to learn to write is by writing. As already discussed in the introductory chapter, not knowing what to write has always been the biggest stumbling block to writers. Students need ideas to explore and write about. While more skilled writers have established certain methods that help them to proceed, the less proficient writers need to be taught how to make use of prewriting strategies. Shaughnessy (1977,p.245) points out, “Instruction in writing must begin with the more fundamental processes whereby writers get their thought in the first place and then get them underway”. Therefore, students should be first taught how to find ideas in order to write.

Maley (as stated in Grundy’s book “*Newspaper*” (1993, p.3) stresses that “language learners find newspapers motivating because they offer interesting, relevant, topical, and varied information”. Newspapers offer important information about how the community operates, reports on politics, legal and social issues, employment, health care, and other aspects of society that are generally not discussed in textbooks; even if these issues are discussed, they are not current. Furthermore, it provides Low English Proficiency (LEP) students with a day-to-day representation of the less formal aspects of the mainstream culture. Besides that, students can gain new vocabulary from the articles in newspaper and use or apply the ideas in other contexts including in their essays.

Grundy (1993, p.7) listed the following points in support of the use of newspapers as a teaching and learning aid:

### **1. Availability**

English-language newspapers are readily available and plentiful whether in English or non-English speaking countries. They are cheap and accessible to almost everyone.

### **2. Variety**

Newspapers contain a lot of information covering a wide variety of text types from current news, entertainment, business, sports, to lifestyle.

### **3. The Reading habit**

Most people who are educated will read newspapers especially if it is in their mother-tongue. Newspapers can develop the reading habit among people, and this habit generates confidence and sense of familiarity which they feel when they pick up a paper in their own language and carried it over into the language classroom.

### **4. Reading for Information**

When we read newspapers, we also practice two important pre-reading skills: skimming and scanning. We practice these skills because of the nature and variety of the texts. We will read it as long as it remains interesting or we do close readings of the texts that we are interested in.

### **5. Content**

The news or the content in the newspaper bridges the gap between the outside world and the school.

### **6. Skills integration**

When people read newspapers, they will integrate the skills they have such as reading, listening and speaking. Most people will talk about what they read in the newspaper, and they make judgments about it. They also listen to judgments made by others.

## **7. The authentic response**

Our response to what we read in the newspaper is normally real, spontaneous and personal, even in the second language. We will state our opinions freely towards any issues that happen around us.

According to Betty L. Sullivan from the Newspaper Association of America Foundation, the first ongoing Newspaper in Education (NIE) was established in 1932 by *The New York Times* in response to the requests of New York City educators who asked if newspapers could be delivered to schools on the day of publication. Until 1993, about more than 700 ongoing programs were conducted through cooperative efforts of newspaper publishers, schools, universities and literature centers throughout North America and selected areas of other continents.

In Malaysia, NIE was introduced by the News Straits Times (NST) in 1984 and it brought a big impact on the school educational system when this program was officially launched by the then Minister of Education, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. With the two leading English dailies (*NST* and *The Star*) developing educational activities, the NIE programs looked set to be a lasting element in schools.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, newspapers can be a very helpful learning material in providing students with the vocabulary that can facilitate essay writing. Daily newspapers contain many authentic examples of narrative writing that illustrate the use of effective vocabulary and writing techniques. This is authenticated by Grundy (1993) who has explored extensively on the use of newspapers in language teaching. Grundy (1993,p.7) states that newspapers are useful teaching materials because they "...contain a

very wide variety of text types and enormous range of information”. More importantly, Grundy (1993,p.7) recommends the use of newspapers in the classroom because the “Newspaper is helpful for students in acquiring a second language because when one has learnt to read a newspaper in a foreign language, one begins to feel that one has gone some ways towards learning the second language successfully”.

Earlier support for the use of newspapers in the classroom includes Chimambo (1987) who studied the effectiveness of learning to write through the use of the *Malawi News* (the local weekend newspaper). Chimambo (1987, p.204) found that in order “to provide a genuine purpose and a genuine audience for writing, the *Letters to the Editor* of our local newspaper are valuable sources of stimulation”. She also advised teachers to encourage students to engage in genuine communication in the language classroom especially for writing skills. For her, reality was needed more in the writing class because communicating in writing is not part of most pupils’ daily lives.

In this study, Chimambo explored how *Letters to the Editor* can be used in teaching pupils how to write good arguments. The participants in her study were Form III students in a regular Malawi secondary school. She used examples of *Letters to the Editor* extracted from a local newspaper where all the issues were real for the pupils. She also constructed a series of exercises for the students to practice (i) identifying opinions, (ii) identifying supporting evidence, (iii) checking the logic of the arguments presented, (iv) producing their own opinions, (v) finding the appropriate evidence to support these opinions, and (vi) presenting their own logically argued letters to the Editor on the issues that they have discussed in class. After a term, the result showed that there was an improvement when several pupils in her class could comprehend the processes of presenting a strong argument.

Flora Grace (2006,p.11), states that “Newspapers are also linguistically rich and interesting. The different kinds of text types like narratives, letters, informal writing, advertisements, reports and cartoons express their linguistic features”. The main purpose of her study was to provide evidence that newspapers can be used as a good resource towards the acquisition of the English language. Specifically, her study set to find out the role of newspaper in relation to language learning and also how newspapers can be utilized as an authentic language learning material. She also examined the learners’ needs and the learning that can be achieved beyond the textbook. During the study, she prepared the activities which tested all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and also language content (Grammar, Content, Style and Vocabulary). Her participants were 35 Form Four mixed proficiency students from a semi-urban school. The research was carried out over 12 weeks. The findings of the study showed that writing and reading was an area that the students have indicated improvement. Vocabulary was also found to have improved where about 85% of the participants have shown an increase in their word power.

In 2001, *The Star* and Kolej Damansara Utama, a local private institute of higher learning conducted a joint survey which was headed by Dr. Gan Siowck Lee, the Director of the college, on the effectiveness of using newspapers as a teaching tool. The participants were 204 primary and secondary schools in Peninsular Malaysia. The survey was teacher-based and some of the findings showed that the majority of teachers reported that their students enjoyed the newspaper based lessons. The respondents also indicated that there was an improvement in the language learning skills through the use of the newspapers in language classroom.

The examples above show that newspaper is an effective learning material for students. The researcher is attracted to stress the usage of newspaper in learning and teaching process

where the students will be encouraged to use newspaper as an alternative besides workbook or textbook. Actually, the research school and the students are already exposed to the newspaper 'The Star' in class but the activities are free, not really focus on specific topic. However for the project, the activities will be arranged and organized in such a way that they will be effective in helping students to acquire new vocabulary which will facilitate them to write better.

## **2.5 A Brief Background of Newspaper in Education (NIE)**

### **2.5.1 About *The Star***

As one of the Malaysia's mainstream English Language dailies, (*The Star*) and Sunday (*Sunday Star*) newspapers are published in 4 editions:

- 1) Two editions that cover the northern peninsular states (Penang, Kedah, Perlis and northern Perak)
- 2) The other two editions that cover other states in the country. *The Star* is a daily 3-in-1 paper which originally comprised of the *Main Paper*, *StarBiz*, and *Star Two*.

Each section is set according to its focus and features:

- i) *Main Paper* - covers the latest in both local and international news.
- ii) *StarBiz* - covers business developments, market trends, financial reports and updates in the stock market.
- iii) *Star Two* - features articles on lifestyle, entertainment, health, parenting, social etiquette, science environment, fashion, food and others.

At the beginning of 2007, it underwent a revamp where attractive elements were incorporated into its various sections to give it a new, fresh and contemporary look. These additional sections are:

SECTION		DAY	ASPECTS
Weekly Sections	<i>Star Maritime</i>	every Monday	covers the shipping and sea-trade industry
	<i>Star-In-Tech</i>	every Tuesday and Thursday	focuses on computers and information technology
	<i>Youth 2</i>	every Thursday	features lifestyle and trends for the young
	<i>Star Weekend</i>	replaces Star Two on Saturday	offers articles on hobbies, holidays, leisure and weekend getaways
	<i>The Star BizWeek</i>	Every Saturday	weekly financial magazine that highlights issues, companies, personalities, developments and stocks that are likely to make news in the week ahead.
Regional Sections	<i>Star Metro</i>	Monday to Saturday	focuses on happenings and entertainment in the Klang Valley
	<i>North</i>	Wednesday to Friday	features the goings-on in the northern region
Special topic-based	<i>Clove</i>  <b>NIE (Newspaper in Education )</b>	Every second Thursday of the month	offers articles on family, fashion, beauty and relationships offers a fresh, new approach to the teaching and learning of English in secondary schools.

In addition to *The Star*, there is *The Sunday Star* which contains:

- an **Education** section that features careers, exam tips, advice on higher studies, comments by well-known educationists and NIE highlights.
- **StarMag** is a lifestyle magazine with the tagline “*Your Lifestyle Companion*”, covering travel, food, the arts, life, fashion, trends, books, motoring and living spaces.



Although *The Star* has many sections which are all beneficial to the learning of vocabulary, in this study only purposely selected articles from the *Main Paper* and *Star Metro* sections were used as materials in order to control the number of vocabulary learnt/used. This was also done to ensure that the students can give full attention to the articles assigned. Nevertheless, the students are encouraged to go through and read other sections during their leisure time.

## **2.6 Summary**

Students especially those who are weak in English language have difficulty to write essays because they lack the vocabulary to elaborate on their ideas. In the early nineteenth century, to learn English as a second language, the learners were first taught grammar and sentence structure. These skills must be mastered before they begin to acquire new words. In fact, the linguist, Fries (1945), suggests that learning the lexicon was considered an obstacle to the process of learning grammar.

Contradicting to that, Laflamme (1997) showed that learning the lexicon is also important because it helped the learners to read and write effectively. One of the vocabulary experts, Nation (1990) believes that there are two types of vocabulary learning: direct and indirect learning. In this research, direct learning is chosen because this technique is suitable with the research's instrument, articles from '*The Star*' newspaper. Some researchers such as Maley (1993) and Grundy (1993) suggest that newspaper can be one of the teaching aids to learn vocabulary because it contains a wide variety of written text and other information. Therefore, in this study, how the students use the words and ideas from the newspaper to create narrative writing is examined. The next Chapter presents the method and procedure used to carry out this examination.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, the objectives of this research are to determine ways in which *The Star* newspaper can help secondary students increase their vocabulary and to analyze how far the vocabulary gained from the *Star* can help students write better narrative essays. From these objectives, the following research questions are formulated:

- i) In what ways can *The Star* help students increase their vocabulary?
- ii) To what extent can the vocabulary obtained from *The Star* help students write better narrative essays?

In order to meet these objectives and answer the research questions, the qualitative approach is mainly used together with some simple quantitative procedures in the data gathering and analysis processes. The qualitative data, consisting of teacher's and students' responses will be gathered using informal structured interviews and the quantitative data will be obtained from the pre-test and post-test instruments. The scores of the two tests are compared and the difference between the scores will be used to determine the students' achievement in this study.

The teaching of English in a Malaysian rural Form 4 class closely follows the requirements of the Malaysian upper secondary English Syllabus as found in the '*Sukatan Pelajaran Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah*'- *Bahasa Inggeris Tingkatan 4 (2003)* (see Appendix 2) which is organized thematically into separate units. The syllabus covers a comprehensive range of language proficiency skills. This research, however, focuses

mainly on the acquisition of vocabulary items and the writing of the narrative essay. The relationship between vocabulary and writing is so close that the size and depth of a student's vocabulary will have a direct influence upon the quality of their writing. Corona, Spangenberg and Venet (1998:26) state that "At any level, written communication is more effective when a depth of vocabulary and command of language is evident." Therefore, it is the contention of this study that after the students have gained more vocabulary, they would be able to write better narrative essays.

In this quasi-experimental study, the treatment involving the use of newspapers in education as the teaching approach is provided to the students over a period of 6 weeks from the middle of June to the middle of August. During that time, 8 activity worksheets will be carried out with the students at a frequency of 2 or 3 times a week, depending on the availability of the participants (sometimes they have to attend the school's curricular and co-curricular activities which are carried out during school hours such as health or motivation talks, and interclass sports competitions). These activities are unpredictable because the school does not include them in its planner beforehand.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This study uses the pre-test and post-test design to measure improvements in vocabulary acquisition and narrative essay writing abilities. In particular, this research applies the Nation (1994) theory of vocabulary acquisition and language learning as the treatment programme. Nation (1994) recommended repetition of vocabulary which can be affixed to a course in numerous corresponding ways:

- By setting aside class time for revision, e.g. reviewing learners' vocabulary notebook

- By periodically and systematically testing previously seen vocabulary and following up on the results, and
- By planning the recycling of previously seen vocabulary through pair and group activities.

In designing the activity worksheets, the researcher has used some of Nation's suggestions as mentioned in Section 2.2. For example, the activities should contain exercises which link new words to the knowledge they have learnt before, drawing on a variety of clues to remember the word, and relating the words properly to a variety of contexts. Theoretically, these activities should be able to help the participants to acquire English vocabulary quickly and write narrative essay effectively.

In the Form Four Curriculum Specification, a suggested word list comprising 303 general words in alphabetical order is included (see Appendix 3). The words are taken from the themes and topics the students should be learning that year. Therefore, by the end of the year, it is expected that the students should know these words and understand how to use them in their daily interactions. In order to find out if the participants had come across these words before the start of the study, and whether they understood the meanings of these words, a survey was carried out (See Appendix 4A). The students were asked to tick their responses under the items given (3 categories: No, Not Sure, and Yes). This survey provided a measure of the students' vocabulary knowledge before further investigation was carried out. Through this preliminary step, it was found that on an average, the participants had not seen 83 of the words (27%) before and forgotten the meaning of 81 of the words (26%). It meant that they were familiar with 139 words (47%), which is less than half of the total number (303) in the list (See Result of the Survey in Appendix 4B). This survey also

shows that the majority of the participants have limited vocabulary based on the word list they are expected to know at their level of study. This finding strengthens the rationale for carrying out this study since vocabulary acquisition is one of the essential skills to master a language and to write a sufficiently good academic essay. However, for this particular study, the prescribed word list is not used as a reference/guidance because the most important thing is to introduce students to activities that can first attract their interest and hence encourage and help them acquire as many new words as possible.

### **3.3 The Participants**

The participants of this study comprise 30 Form Four students (eight boys and twenty two girls) in one secondary school in Sungai Buloh, which is categorized as a rural area in Selangor. They are from the same class (which is referred to as Form 4A in this study) of mixed proficiency level, whose grades range from A – E for the English subject in *Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR)*, which is a national examination compulsory to all students at the Form Three level. The school had used the 2008 PMR results to stream the Form Four students into science (4 classes), humanities (5 classes) and technical (1 class) categories. The research class (4A) is under humanities. At the time of data collection, the total number of students under humanities was 164 students. This meant that the sample for this study represents 18.29% of the total population (164) of the same stream. In this study, the students' grades for English Language were not taken as one of the criterion for selection because the study is not focusing on the acquisition of vocabulary and writing skills of specific groups of students but all students in the class. The teacher who is teaching the class under study is also included as a participant. A teacher interview was designed to obtain the teacher's comments and perception on the activities done with the students and also her suggestions to make the treatment (lesson using newspapers) more

meaningful. The teacher-participant has not had a lot of exposure in using newspapers to teach English as she has attended only one such workshop in 2002 and has not used newspapers extensively in her teaching. Nevertheless, she has been teaching English for about 24 years and is currently teaching English to three of the four classes at the school. Out of those years, she has 10 years experience in teaching upper secondary students. With her wide experience, she could contribute a lot of information and suggestions regarding teaching English Language. And her cooperation and view will be much needed during the activities and data collection process.

Form Four students are selected as participants because in this year they will learn how to write a free composition. Furthermore these students are chosen because they have had some exposure to English newspapers (specifically *The Star*) as part of their reading materials as the school has been subscribing to this daily since 10 years ago. Almost all English teachers have been using *The Star* in class as a supplementary teaching and learning aid alongside the prescribed textbook. However, no specific lesson plan on how to carry out the activities using newspapers has been provided by the English Department at the school concerned. The teachers, therefore, have been using their own initiatives to provide their students with alternative English Language newspaper-based activities in their classes.

### **3.4 Instruments**

The instruments used to obtain data on the participants' vocabulary and writing ability are a pre-test, a post-test and a set of interview schedules for the teacher and the students. In addition, a set of classroom activities based on *The Star* have been designed to be used as the treatment procedure. The following sections will describe these instruments in detail and present the rationale for using them.

### **3.4.1 The Newspaper**

*The Star* is used during the entire data collection duration as the main source of teaching-learning treatment in this study. The English Department of the school subscribes to this daily for the students at least once a month. The students are encouraged to read all the sections in *The Star*. However, since the research time is limited, only 3 sections of *The Star* are used: *Main*, *Star Two* and *Star Metro*. As mentioned in Section 2.5.1, the reasons for the selection are because these sections cover issues on current local and international news, sports, articles on lifestyle, entertainment, social and environmental issues, and also information on happenings in the Klang Valley. Bizarre or out of the ordinary news and stories which normally attract the readers are reported here, for example fatal/tragic accidents, murder or eccentric news about someone or something. Activities based on the articles from the newspaper will be designed especially for this study and the students themselves are provided with the copies of *The Star*.

The selected issues used are the 1/4/2009, 22/4/2009, 1/7/2009 and 30/7/2009 editions. The selection of the articles from the newspapers followed closely the lesson plan prepared by the school's English Department and in accordance to the themes set in the syllabus. The articles chosen are mostly about well-known people often featured in the local papers or television, such as the former prime minister, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and the Chinese film director-actor Jackie Chan, and also about accidents as well as crimes that happened within the mentioned period nationwide. These articles were chosen as they contain a wide range of vocabulary that the students can use to create their own stories later on.

### **3.4.2. The Activity Worksheets (Refer to Appendices 5A-5H)**

A total of 8 activity worksheets will be carried out with the students over a period of about 6 weeks. On the average, these tasks are carried out with the students at a frequency of 2 to 3 times a week (refer to the timetable in Appendix 6). All the worksheets are organized according to the selected units from the scheme of work and they are arranged in two stages: vocabulary building and narrative writing ability. The activities are prepared in a way that the students will not feel it as additional school work and they are designed to be completed within the allocated class time.

In the first stage, students are given 4 worksheets which require them to learn new words, such as in Worksheet 1 (Appendix 5A). In Worksheet 1, the students are to search for words that describe characteristics of people or things (adjectives) from the pictures given. Then find the noun form of the word. The following activity required them to change as many words as possible into its antonym (opposite meaning) from 5 selected headlines (Worksheet 2- Appendix 5B). Following that, they have to search for the latest interesting news and underline the keywords of these articles, find the synonym of the underlined words and present the story orally to their friends (Worksheet 3-Appendix 5C). Finally, for the last vocabulary activity, the students play word games where they guess the words by looking at the clues given (Worksheet 4-Appendix 5D) and the headlines. This last activity is carried out as a group competition and the winning group will be presented with tokens. Sometimes, the teacher provides tokens such as sweets or a small hamper to encourage students to take active part in the activities and volunteer responses to the questions asked. Behaviorists emphasize that behavior is directed by stimuli. An individual selects one response instead of another because of prior conditioning and psychological drives existing at the moment of the action (Parkay & Hass, 2000).



Throughout these activities, the students who take part in the study are asked to list those newly learnt words on mahjong paper pasted on the board. In this case, mahjong paper functions as a vocabulary list which is made available to the students later on. At the same time, students are also asked to copy those words into their exercise books for personal reference. Those words will be referred to in this study as ‘newspaper wordlist’. This is to encourage them to look through the words at home or to memorize the words and use them again in another context. After the vocabulary activities, their achievements of new vocabulary acquisition will be known through a word game called *Charades* (Worksheet 5-Appendix 5E).

In the second stage, the three activities prepared are geared towards encouraging students to write, for instance, writing a poem or a song (Worksheet 6-Appendix 5F). The first activity is quite simple because the participants only need to write short sentences of song lyrics or poem which can be based on any themes stated in the Form Four syllabus. During this activity, the teacher reminds them to use the words that they have learnt from the first stage. The next activity is a little more challenging where they are asked to write ideas in sequence, from the article “*Lawyer given drink of death*” (Worksheet 7 -Appendix 5G). The format of reporting news is different from that of writing an essay for examination purposes because normally the ideas in a newspaper report are not in sequence. Thus, their job is to rearrange the points according to main ideas and supporting details in a flow chart format. In order to accomplish the task, the students have to read the article closely to understand the ideas and its story line. This activity is aimed at gauging their ability to glean for main ideas and to organize these ideas into logical sequence.

The final activity is essentially a continuation of the previous work where they are required to write a summary of the same article used in the activities before (Worksheet 8 –

Appendix 5H). This activity should be manageable for them because they have already understood the ideas. They should read the article again and summarize the story in a paragraph. Eventually, this is used as the starting point to instill the ‘easy to write’ concept for the students who find writing essays difficult. For the writing activity, the participants are not assigned to write a long essay because the time is limited and the teacher wants the students to feel a sense of accomplishment from producing a complete essay. During this activity they are also taught the format of narrative writing. As pointed out before, the students are encouraged to use the vocabulary learned in the previous stage (Stage 2). From these activities, the students’ ability to write narrative essays by using the words they have learnt from the newspaper articles is tested.

#### **3.4.3. The Pre and Post-Tests**

In this study, the pre- and post-tests are the instruments used to measure the students’ ability in writing free composition. The pre-test will be given before the activities are carried out which is in Week 1 of the data collection period. In the pre-test they are given one hour to write a story based on the ‘line’/statement given. The task for this test is taken from the actual E1119 paper for 2003. Since this is a standardized test, it was not necessary to pilot it. They are asked to answer the question based on their creativity and previous vocabulary knowledge. The post-test, will be carried out in Week 13, after all the activities are completed. The question and instruction for the post-test are the same as those in the pre-test but this time they are reminded to use the words that they have gained from the newspapers (Refer to Appendix 7 for the newspaper wordlist). However, the usage of the words from the newspaper word list is not mandatory and not going to affect their marks. The post-test is conducted to investigate the student’s achievement in terms of vocabulary usage and also narrative writing proficiency. (Refer to Appendix 8 for the test question).

Three teachers are assigned to mark the students' scripts. These three teachers are:

- Marker 1 (M1): A Senior Assistant of Co-Curricular and also an English teacher in one of the secondary schools nearby. She has more than 10 years' experience in marking the E1119 paper.
- Marker 2 (M2): A teacher who has 13 years' experience in teaching English in secondary schools. She is one of the senior teachers in the research school.
- Marker 3 (M3): A teacher who has the experience of teaching upper secondary school English for more than 6 years.

Normally, to mark the free writing for the actual E1119 paper, the marker will use a holistic marking system (as shown in Appendix 9). Grade A to U (iii) is used to rate the student's overall proficiency in free writing and every grade contains 6 items to help the markers determine the mark for each of the essays written. These items are listed in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: List of items in each grade**

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
A to	1	The accurateness of language used
	2	<b>The width and aptness of vocabulary used</b>
	3	Organization (format and arrangement of ideas and paragraphs)
U (iii)	4	Sentence structure (length and type)
	5	<b>Treatment of the topic (relevancy of the points)</b>
	6	<b>Existence of arousal of interest in the composition and its sustenance</b>

However for the purpose of this project, only three items from the list will be used to mark the pre and post-tests because the focus here is on the vocabulary used and how the students write about the topic. The items selected are items 2, 5 and 6. Hence, the new marking

scheme with the 3 items selected is illustrated in Table 3.2. This marking scheme is developed after a discussion with the markers. It is more focused to the targeted criteria only and the grades provided are ranged from A to E only because this range is sufficient to measure the student's performance.

**Table 3.2: Marking Criteria for Pre-Test and Post-Test**

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
A (41-50)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Vocabulary wide and apt, used expressively/precisely (use approximately 30 words from the vocabulary list)</li> <li>➤ Contents are good and relevant</li> <li>➤ Interest aroused and sustained throughout</li> </ul>
B (31-40)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Some width in vocabulary, and used quite aptly (use approximately 20 words from the vocabulary list)</li> <li>➤ Contents are relevant</li> <li>➤ Interest aroused and sustained throughout most of the composition</li> </ul>
C (21-30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Vocabulary wide but not so apt. Errors in use of more ambitious vocabulary (use approximately 10 words from the vocabulary list)</li> <li>➤ Contents are relevant</li> <li>➤ Interest aroused but not sustained</li> </ul>
D (11-20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Simple/Adequate vocabulary. More spelling errors will occur</li> <li>➤ Contents are mostly relevant</li> <li>➤ Composition lacks liveliness and interest value</li> </ul>
E (0-10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited vocabulary. Frequent mistakes in spelling</li> <li>➤ Partial treatment of subject matter</li> <li>➤ Composition is not interesting</li> </ul>

The following is the elaboration for each item:

**Item 2: The width and aptness of vocabulary used**

Essays which meet this description contain wide range of words which are precise in conveying the ideas. 'Wide' refers to the number of words used by the students from the newspaper wordlist (Appendix 7), as stated in 3.4.3. Basically, their usage of vocabulary is considered wide if they use around 30 words from the list. If the participants know how to use those words correctly, the sentence used will be marked as apt and appropriate. For the

post-test, the participants are assigned to use all the words they have learnt from the newspapers because those words can trigger ideas for their stories. Therefore, from their writing, it can be observed how the students use the vocabulary as well as their achievement before and after the test.

**Item 5: Treatment of the topic (relevancy of the points)**

In order to get high marks, the students should write the topic well by describing the points that are relevant to the topic and it has been agreed among the markers that the ideal length for continuous writing is about a page and a half of an A4 size paper or test paper. Not treating/writing the topic correctly or sufficiently cannot guarantee a high mark even if the student uses more than 30 words from the newspaper word list.

**Item 6: Interest aroused and sustained.**

The essay is considered good quality if the development of the plot can fit into the Freytag's pyramid presented in Figure 2.1 (Section 2.3.1), which consists of beginning, rising actions, climax, falling action and resolution. This conventional structure is structured to arouse the readers' interests and sustain their focus. In marking the pre and post-test, the teachers can recognize clearly if the essays written are using this conventional structure or not.

In the context of a holistic marking scheme, impression marking is applied whereby the students will be graded and given marks based on how they fulfill the descriptions of all the items mentioned under 'grade' in Table 3.2. For example, the grade or score will be high if the essay meets the grade A description. Whereas, the participants will get grade E if the essay does not fulfill the description required. While reading, the markers need to bear in

mind all the descriptions and decide on a fair grade to be given to the participant. For the test score, all the markers agree to put 50 as the highest possible mark for the test.

To avoid being biased in giving marks, the script of each student will be marked by the three markers separately. Then, the marks given by the markers will be totaled up and divided by three to get an average score. That average score is considered the final score for that particular script. This method is used for both the pre and post-tests. Then, the final scores of the pre-test and post-test of a participant will be compared to decide the student's achievement. The difference can be positive (+) or negative (-) and it determines the student's achievement as a whole. To determine the category of the student's achievement, all the 3 markers will set up a test descriptor as in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: The Test Descriptor**

<b>BANDS</b>	<b>SCORE DIFFERENCE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
A	10 and above	Improve a lot
B	4 - 9	Improve a little
C	3 and below	No improvement

'Bands' are used to represent the student's final grade and each band reflects his/her achievement/position in this project. Bands A and B describe those who have benefited from the activities. Band C describes the group that has not fully benefited from the program. The result of this procedure will answer Research Question 2.

#### **3.4.4. Informal Structured Interviews**

Two sets of interviews will be conducted with the teacher and students respectively after all the activities have been carried out. In this study, the student interview serves as a tool to

obtain information on the students' personal feelings and reactions concerning the activities conducted. The teacher interview is also a device that can help obtain information on the best way to teach students vocabulary from the teacher's observations of the participants.

Before the actual interviews are carried out, both interviews will be piloted on two teachers other than the teacher sample and 15 students from a different class (called 4F) under the same stream (humanities). Class 4F is selected because its students' 2009 mid-year examination results for English subject is the closest compared to that of the research class. The students of Class 4F are also those who have been exposed to the use of newspaper in teaching English before. The pilot study teachers are those who have had the experience of teaching Form Four students and have used *The Star* in class as an alternative teaching aid besides the textbook. They are also those who have been teaching English for more than 10 years. And from this pilot interview, it was found that the questions asked were not sufficient to obtain the information sought by the study. Therefore, three additional items, which were items 2, 5 and 8 were added to the pilot interview. Item 2 was added as a supplement to Item 1 as Item 1 did not yield adequate responses. Item 5 on the other hand was put in because the pilot study indicated that it is necessary to know specifically the students' responses on this type of essay writing. Finally, Item 8 was inserted in order to find out the student's overall progress after the activity (Refer to Appendix 10A and 10B for the pilot and revised interview schedules respectively).

From the interview session with the students, it was found that 4 of the items (Items 3, 4, 7, 8) should be reviewed in order to obtain exact responses from the students. For Item 3, the phrase 'good learning resource' was changed to learning aid because the pilot students could not give precise answers to that question. Item 4, was changed because the responses given were about the same with that of Item 3. The structure of Item 7 was rephrased so

that the students could give more precise answers. Finally, Item 8 was changed because students had difficulty in comparing the type of essays. They were not familiar with the terms even though the teacher has taught them these terms before (Refer to Appendix 11A and 11B for the pilot and revised interview schedules respectively).

For the actual interview session, 30% or 9 of the students will be selected from each band to represent the group. This percentage is believed to be sufficient to represent the group and can provide useful information and data needed. Fraenkel and Wallen (2008, p.99) state that “the researchers use their judgment to select a sample they believe, based on prior information, will provide the data they need”. The selected group consists of Malay and Indian students in order to also take into consideration other races’ (apart from the Malay) responses. (Note: there were no Chinese students in this population).

The interview is conducted with the students in order to obtain a more comprehensive description of the change in their level of abilities and their opinion regarding the usage of newspapers in class. The data obtained from the interviews will be analyzed specifically to answer Research Question 1. The sample teacher is interviewed to obtain her views on how *The Star* has helped students improve their ability in writing narrative essays.

### **3.5 Data Collecting Procedures**

The data gathering procedures will be carried out in several steps. First, the participants will be given a pre-test requesting them to write in one hour a narrative essay based on the ending line given. These first essays were collected and graded by the three teachers using the marking criteria in Table 3.2, as discussed in Section 3.4.3.



Next, they are given specific activities/worksheets aimed at helping them improve their vocabulary and writing skill. During these activities, the students will be observed informally by the teacher who will carry out the activities. The observation is focused mainly on the students' behaviors and the teacher will take field notes which will be referred to in reporting the students' achievements in vocabulary learning. Since the teacher is the facilitator who is always with the students throughout the program, she will be able to see and make links on how the students' responses to the vocabulary and writing activities, their reactions to the teacher's instructions, and the problems they face in performing the tasks.

These vocabulary activities (refer to Appendices 5A – 5E) are designed in such a way that the vocabulary used are common and quite familiar the students and should provide opportunities for meaningful use of the new vocabulary. During these activities, the students take turns to write the words they have learnt onto the mahjong paper provided each time they finish doing a worksheet. The mahjong paper is put up on the board and the students are encouraged to use those words every time the activities are carried out in order to get familiarize with them. The students can refer to the list anytime they feel it necessary to do so. At the same time the students are encouraged to copy the words into their exercise books, so that they can study them at home. However the students are not forced to copy and study the words at home if they refuse to do so because the main intention here is to encourage them to learn the language voluntarily.

The activities prepared (refer to Appendix 5F to 5H) provide the students with the opportunities to practice writing short sentences such as writing song lyrics or poems. They can in the beginning simply rearrange the words from the vocabulary list to create the lyrics

or poems. After that, they are required to write the ideas in a sequence (flow chart format) similar to that in the article given. They are then asked to write a summary in a paragraph. At this stage, they have already learnt how to arrange the ideas coherently and elaborate on them sufficiently. Following this, all the participants are given a post-test which is of similar structure and level of difficulty as the pre-test except that this time they are asked to use as many words as possible from the vocabulary list (refer to Appendix 10). Their essays will be marked by the same three markers.

After all the activities have been completed, nine students will be interviewed to find out their responses on using newspapers in class and its effectiveness in helping them write a narrative essay. Besides that, the teacher-participant will also be interviewed to obtain her comments and suggestions on the activities carried out and her students' proficiency level after the treatment.

### **3.6 Data Analysis Procedure**

When all the data has been collected, it will be analyzed systematically in accordance to the research objectives and questions set. The ensuing sections will discuss how this will be done. Following are the data to be evaluated.

#### **3.6.1 The Activity Worksheets**

As mentioned in 3.4.2, 8 worksheets are completed by the students and all of them are based on the articles found in *The Star*. Mostly, the topics cover current issues from local and international news. So, the suitability of the articles with the students' interests and their ability in absorbing/acquiring the vocabulary and the ideas in the articles are part of the analysis. The choice of these articles also can determine the effectiveness of the

activity. Furthermore, the ability of the students to complete the writing activity after they have learnt new words from the newspaper is analyzed. The analysis of the activity worksheets is important because it can illustrate the effectiveness of using newspapers as one of the teaching materials in class. The time spent for the activities will be analyzed too because of the influence it may have on the student's ability in acquiring new words and writing better narrative essays.

### **3.6.2 Pre and Post-tests**

The tests results will be evaluated to determine the students' achievements and also to see how many of them have benefited from the study. This involves several steps. First, the difference between the scores of the pre-test and post-test for each student and the bands obtained are checked. The result will be shown on a line chart. Second, the number of students who fall under each band (Bands A, B and C) is tabulated and descriptions of the different levels of achievements will be made amongst them. Finally, 30% of the students are selected to be interviewed. This group consists of students from all the bands, Band A, B and C, including those who scored the highest and lowest in difference.

### **3.6.3 Informal Structured Interview**

The last data analyzed is that obtained from the informal structured interview. There are two interview sessions; one is with the teacher and the other one is with the students. Interviews are important since they will provide detailed information regarding the study as a whole.

### **3.6.3.1 The Teacher Interview**

The responses from the teacher are analyzed to see her perception of the students' attitudes in learning the language, specifically the use of newspaper (NIE) as a learning material. The teacher's comments and suggestions are analyzed with respect to the efficiency of the activities for the students. The finding from this step will help to answer Research Question 2.

### **3.6.3.2 The Student Interview**

The responses are examined to know the students' opinions regarding the use of newspapers in class as a learning aid besides the textbook and how it can help them acquire vocabulary and write effective narrative essays. The consistency of the students' answers/opinions with their final test results and also the reason for particular student/s who give/s quite different answers from the others will be noted. The questions and responses here will help answer Research Question 1.

## **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

Since the samples in the research are students and teachers from a government secondary school in Selangor, permission will be first obtained from the State Education Department or Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Selangor (JPNS). After that, consent from the school principal will be attained. She is also the one who will give permission to other teachers to participate in the study. As for the students, permission was obtained from the parents who were provided with information about the study. All their names and identification numbers will be recorded but will not be mentioned in the report to maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the results of the analysis of the data collected from 30 Form Four students of a government secondary school in a rural area. The purposes of the study are to determine ways in which *The Star* newspaper can help secondary students increase their vocabulary and to analyze how far the vocabulary gained from the *Star* can help students write better narrative essays. The analysis of the data will be based on the two research questions:

1. In what ways can *The Star* help students increase their vocabulary?
2. To what extent can the vocabulary obtained from *The Star* help the students write better narrative essays?

#### 4.2 Analysis of the data

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methods are applied. The instruments used for gathering the quantitative data are the pre-test and post-test. Besides analyzing the test scores, the students' writings will also be discussed since the marks they obtained for their essays are used to represent the students' achievements. And the instrument used for gathering the qualitative data is the informal structured interview. The field notes from the observations carried out by the teacher during the activities in class will be referred to later in the chapter when discussing the students' accomplishments.

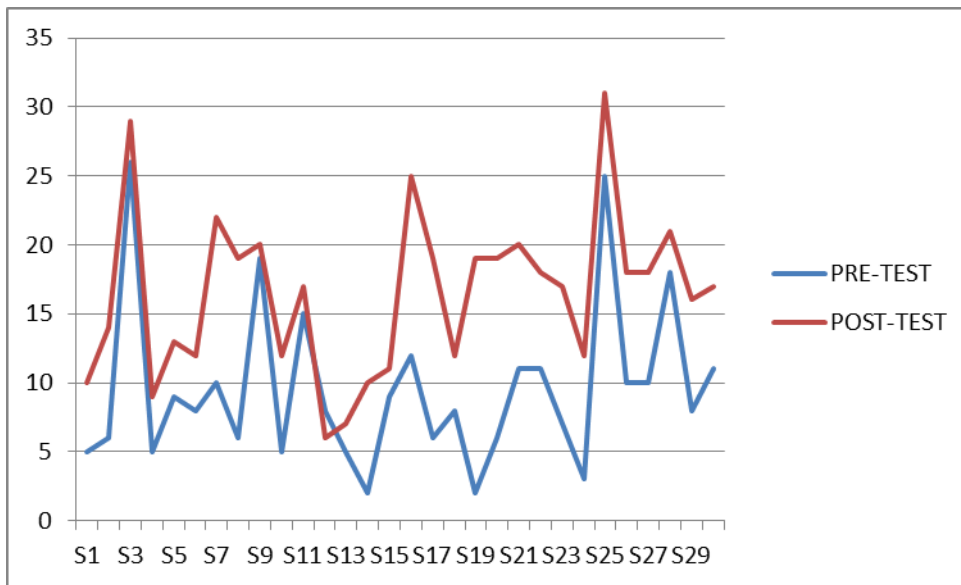
##### 4.2.1 Test Scores and Students' Essays

The participants' test scores and their scores for the essays will be discussed separately in

two sections. The results of their essay writing will be discussed as an elaboration of the results in the tests.

#### **4.2.1.1 Result from the Tests**

Table 4.1 (Appendix 12) shows the tests results of the 30 students who participated in the program. The students are coded as S1 – S30. The pre-test column shows their scores before the treatment, and the post-test column indicates their scores after they have completed all the eight worksheets provided. The difference between the pre and post-tests scores is presented in the diff (+/-) column. This column will indicate whether each participant's mark shows an improvement or not. Finally, the band represents the student's achievement (in terms of grade). On the whole, the scores indicate that 29 out of the 30 students have shown an increase in their scores. Figure 4.1 below shows the line chart which summarizes the students' achievements based on their results in the pre and post-test. The blue line symbolizes the participant's pre-test score and the red line represents their post-test score.



**Figure 4.1: The results of the pre and post-test**

The lines indicate that the score for post-test is greater than that of the pre-test for almost all participants. The outcome supports the positive results achieved by Flora Grace (2006). However, to know the students’ actual achievements in detail, their results (according to Band/Grade) will be discussed below. Table 4.1 shows the summary of the students’ grades.

**Table 4.1: Summary of the students’ grades**

<b>BAND</b>	<b>SCORE DIFFERENCE</b>	<b>NO. STUDENTS</b>	<b>OF</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>A</b>	10 and Above	6		20 %
<b>B</b>	4 - 9	17		57%
<b>C</b>	3 and below	7		23%

According to the passing level set by the 3 markers, only those who get an increase of at least 4 and above are considered to have completed the tasks successfully. Thus, by referring to the Test Descriptors in Table 3.3, 23 (6 + 17) students or 77% (20% + 57%) of them who are under Bands A and B, have benefited from the treatment because they have

shown a significant change in their essays. On the contrary, 23% of them (Band C) are considered to have not shown an improvement in their vocabulary acquisition and narrative writing skill. As mentioned before, the students' results are closely related to the students' performances in writing essays. Their achievements will be elaborated in details below together with the observation notes of the teacher.

#### **4.2.1.2 Students' Essays**

The students' performances in writing reflected to some extent, the students' knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes. It was observed that majority of students in this study who fell under Band A and B tried to follow the instructions and worked hard to accomplish the task when they were assigned to write essays,. They did attempt to write about tragedy, accident or theft cases even though their plots were not really outstanding. Their language use was not so good but their weaknesses in forming well-structured sentences and using correct grammar did not stop them from writing and they also attempted to use words which were not from the newspaper vocabulary list. As a result, their work showed improvements in terms of elaboration and length.

There were a small number of participants who were considered not serious in completing the task. The teacher noted that these students actually have quite a good command of English but they did not work seriously to improve their writing. For instance, 4 students from this group (S3, S9, S11 and S28) scored at least 15 marks in the pre-test, but their scores in the post test in the essay only increased by a few marks. Their scores' differences were not as high as expected. In other words, they did not benefit much from the treatment.



Another reason the students' achievements were not satisfactory was because the elaboration of the story plot was weak. M1, as an experienced marker, noted that many of the students wrote common and simple stories where the story lines or plots did not have the series of events through which the struggle (or conflict) of the characters is heightened. Even if there was an inciting event or complication, it was not fully elaborated. And the climax or the most dramatic moment in a story which resolves the destiny of the characters involved in the conflict were also not clearly written in most essays. As a result, their essays were classified as not interesting and did not grab the marker's attention. "Stories should be well-written so that they sustain readers' interest from start to finish" (Smith: 1978). Not only were their essays lacking in length, they were also writing uninteresting stories despite the fact that they were exposed to a variety of stories from the newspapers.

Furthermore, the analysis also revealed that the participants did not really follow the instructions as they did not fully make use of the vocabulary list they have developed over the 6 weeks of treatment. Prior to the post-test, the students were reminded to use as many words as possible from the newspaper wordlist. Analysis of the essays showed that only seven students (S9, S16, S18, S21, S24, S26, and S27) used 10% of the words (equal to 11 words) in their essays. Only two of them managed to get Band A, four obtained Band B and one fell under Band C. The rest of the participants used less than eleven of the words in their essays. Ironically, there were five students who had shown an improvement in their essay writing in terms of elaboration and length without really relying on the newspaper word list (S2, S5, S6, S8 and S19). They managed to get within the range of Bands A and B. This outcome showed that vocabulary from *The Star* did not play a major role in helping the participants write better narrative essays which answers Research Question 1: To what

extent can the vocabulary obtained from *The Star* help the students write better narrative essays?

#### **4.2.2. Data from the Informal Structured Interview**

The transcription of the interview with the teacher and the summary of the students' responses are presented in Appendix 13 and Appendix 14.

##### **4.2.2.1 Responses from the teacher**

As an icebreaker, the teacher was asked to describe the participants' language background and also their attitudes in learning the language. She explained that most of them did pass the English paper in *PMR* but they actually were not as good as their results show. They could write and do some exercises but they were not creative or show a good mastery of vocabulary knowledge. They were interested in learning English but when they were asked to do homework or exercises, they were reluctant and slow. They did not take it seriously because they had the attitude that Form Four is a 'honeymoon' year. This 'honeymoon' term is commonly used to refer to the school year in which there is no public exam. Further responses from the teacher regarding the usage of newspaper in class will be discussed according to the following topics.

##### **i) NIE , Vocabulary Acquisition and Writing Skills**

Normally, *The Star* newspaper is used once in two months at this school. However, it will be more often if the students are participating in the magazine competition organized by *The Star*. For the newspaper activities, the students are asked to find a few newspaper articles, read them and underline the difficult words. They will then find the meaning of the

words in the dictionary. Sometimes, they are assigned to do topical exercises provided in the NIE supplement. Essentially, in terms of acquiring vocabulary from the newspaper, it is found that it works because students who participate in this study learn new words from the article and also the newspaper worksheet. The teacher agrees that the methods used can help the students improve their vocabulary and this answers Research Question 1: In what ways can *The Star* help students increase their vocabulary?

Even though all the students are required to complete the work, their responses are not so good. Some students are not motivated and they have to be pushed to finish the work. Therefore, the teacher herself needs to spend more time monitoring the students' work because weak students tend to do the activities half way. For the writing skill, it was hard to teach students a full/complete free writing over a short period of time. First, the teacher needed to introduce the steps. Then, give them tips on how to elaborate the ideas and guide them on how to write effectively. Normally, more than 1 hour per week is needed to teach essay writing. So, to complete one essay it will take about one month. Since narrative writing is one of the written genres taught to the students, the teacher would also ask them to narrate a story. Some students like it and some do not because they do not know how to convey their ideas. For good students, they can apply or use the vocabulary from newspaper article to help them elaborate the ideas. But for weak students, the newspapers do not really help. They are quite creative but they just cannot convey the ideas. They do not know how to use the words taken from the newspapers to construct the correct sentences. This information answers the Research Question 2: To what extent can the vocabulary obtained from *The Star* help students write better narrative essays?

However, using newspapers to teach vocabulary might work or can be effective if the teacher is willing to spend more time monitoring and supervising the students' work.

## **ii) Students' Proficiency Levels**

For the narrative writing, the teacher said that some students in this class wrote longer than before even though it was hard to make them write at first. However, she noticed that asking students to use newspaper word lists in their writing would make their work more difficult to be accomplished because they took longer time to start the essay. They spent more time trying to fit all or as many of the words from the list as possible into their story plots.

The final question in the interview schedule was about the student's overall achievement; whether there had been any improvement after using newspapers in language teaching. She said that newspapers do help in improving the proficiency level. But in her opinion, if the teacher wants to get better results, more time is needed. For instance, the teacher can start doing the activities in Form 4 and continue into Form 5. Another important issue to consider is the ability of the teacher to make the lesson interesting because if the teacher can get them to be interested, they will learn and they will want to write. If the teacher continues to coach them, encourage them to write whatever they wanted to write, then they eventually would find it easier to write on their own. The aim should be to get them to start writing and to continue practicing.

### **4.2.2.2 Responses from the students**

The student interview revealed additional information that was not yielded by the test results. The participants initially did not open up to offer the information sought, as most of

them were not used to being interviewed especially in English. The interviewer had to initiate familiar ideas to encourage further responses to the questions asked. However, the interviewees were not told about their final result prior to the session. Thus, the students' insight, sincerity and truthfulness could be evaluated.

As mentioned in 3.4.4, 30% of the students were selected from each band to represent the group. So, two students represented Band A, five students represented Band B, and two students represented Band C which totaled up to nine students altogether. They were S2, S4, S11, S12, S17, S19, S22, S23 and S25. The findings will be discussed based on the topics stated below.

**i- General Questions**

Before asking them specific questions, the interviewees were first asked general introductory questions to make the participants feel comfortable during the session. They were asked if they like reading English newspapers and if they do, what type of newspapers they normally read. Table 4.2 shows their responses.

**Table 4.2: The Students' Responses to the General Questions**

<b>NO OF STUDENT</b>	<b>RESPONSE 1</b>	<b>RESPONSE 2</b>
<b>6</b>	Like reading	<i>The Star and The Sun</i>
<b>3</b>	Do not like reading	

As can be seen in Table 4.2, the participants who like reading English newspapers, preferred *The Star and The Sun*. Since they are already familiar with these newspapers, they show some interest in the newspaper activities carried out by teachers at school, for example, vocabulary activities and the magazine competition. Some students have been

exposed to *The Sun* because their parents subscribe to the paper. On the other hand, for those who do not like reading English newspapers, they said that it is because they do not understand the language and it hindered them from understanding the content.

## **ii- Newspapers In Education (NIE)**

In this section, students were asked regarding the usage of English newspapers in class as one of the learning aids besides the textbook. In general, all of them agreed that newspapers should be used in class as a learning aid because it is interesting, not 'heavy' compared to the textbook and newspapers contained a lot of current and interesting information. They said that they could learn more things and acquire new words. However, one participant (S12) said that newspapers should not be used frequently because some students might get bored. In terms of the newspapers' content, seven of them had the same opinion that all the contents in the newspaper are interesting but two students, S2 and S12, disagreed that all the contents were interesting.

On the section/topic they like the most, eight of them chose sports as their favorite section. Besides sports, current news regarding crime and accidents attracted their attention too. Three students said that they loved to read the gossip section which normally focused on entertainment and artists' lives. Finally, when asked about the relationship between NIE and vocabulary acquisition, all were of the same opinion that newspapers can be really helpful for students to acquire vocabulary. Most of them said that the simple activities such as reading, underlining difficult words and finding the meanings from the dictionary or asking the teacher helped them learn new English words. Their opinions answered Research Question 1: In what ways can *The Star* help students increase their vocabulary?

In addition to that, one student, S27, mentioned that the vocabulary from newspapers helped her in writing essay.

### **iii- Writing Skill**

When asked about the writing skill aspect, the students gave varied responses. Five of them mentioned that writing essays is very difficult since they do not know English words. On the other hand, four students said that they liked writing essays because writing could improve their English and they can come up with new ideas through their imagination. Given the various genres of writing, this study focused only on the narrative, so the participants were asked for their responses on this type of essay writing. Seven participants said that they preferred to write narrative essays because they are free to create their own plots and characters and they feel happy when their stories are read out. But two of them (S4 and S12) stated that they do not like narrative writing because they do not know how to write a story in English. Their lack of vocabulary prevented them from writing even though they might have ideas in their mind. As noted by Corona, Spangenberg and Venet (1998:26) “At any level, written communication is more effective when a depth of vocabulary and command of language is evident”.

And finally, the participants’ responses on the relationship between the newspapers and narrative writing revealed that they do not doubt that newspapers can help students write better narrative essays because newspapers contain many stories that they could refer to such as accidents, crime or uncommon cases. It seems that all of them agree that newspapers can provide very useful vocabulary to help them in writing a narrative essay, as stressed by Grundy (1993) that newspapers contain a lot of information which covers a wide variety of text types.

#### **iv- NIE and English Proficiency**

This section is about the effect of using newspapers in class towards English proficiency levels of the students based on the newspaper activities that they had done before (for the activities schedule, please refer to Appendix 9). Of the nine participants interviewed, seven agreed that the activities were difficult except 2 participants, S22 and S27. Five participants said that writing activities, such as writing a summary, a poem/song and sequence of events are relatively difficult to accomplish. And, there are two samples who found vocabulary activities difficult, for instance, the identification of adjectives, noun, antonyms, and synonym.

When they were asked whether they feel the newspaper activities carried out had helped in improving their (i) vocabulary and (ii) narrative writing, all interviewees agreed that newspapers helped them improve their word knowledge. And this answers Research Question 1: In what ways can *The Star* help students increase their vocabulary?

Since newspapers contained current issues and a variety of information with colorful pictures, they are attracted to read them. From reading, they acquired new words because to understand the whole story, they would look up the meaning of the difficult words. For narrative writing ability, seven participants said that there was a little improvement in their essays. They felt that their essays were better than before. However, S4 and S12 said that their essays had not improved. They still had difficulties in writing a story.



The next question was about the student's improvement in English proficiency due to the usage of newspapers in language learning. Six students, S17, S19, S2, S23, S27 and S11, felt that their writing had improved a little. And few of them also said the activities had improved their speaking skill. However, two participants, S4 and S12, consistently said that the newspapers activities did not help them with their writing skills and their answers were in accordance with that of the previous questions. It suggests that these two students needed a longer time to gain more English vocabulary in order to write essays.

The final issue was concerning the students' suggestions on how to use newspapers effectively for vocabulary building and narrative essay writing. Only two students (S2 and S22) gave positive responses whereby S22 suggested that students could create a folio of vocabulary items based on topics from the newspapers, and also recommended that the teacher could use headlines as the title to write a story. Furthermore, S2 proposed that the teacher do writing activities by asking students to write a story about any issues taken from newspapers. Seven respondents could not think of any activities which could be benefited from newspapers. It seemed that they totally depended on the teacher to utilize the newspapers.

One participant, S12, is interesting to be discussed in detail because his responses were quite different from other interviewees. He was the only one whose post-test result was less than that of the pre-test and was considered not to have benefitted from the treatment. Actually, this Malay boy is weak in English but very active in class; he likes to participate and gives responses (in poor English). Whenever the teacher gave out new newspaper issues, he looked so excited, scanning through the pages even though he said he does not like reading newspapers. During the newspaper activities, he took a long time to complete

the tasks and his excitement soon turned to boredom. However, during game activities he became excited again. In fact, he was the one who helped the teacher in organizing the game. During the interview session, he tried to answer in English. He agreed that the newspaper activities helped him improve his vocabulary but he did not know how to use those words when he writes. Most probably, that was the reason for his lowest result in the test.

### **4.2.3 Observation from activity worksheets**

The worksheets consisted of two types of activities: vocabulary building and narrative writing which were carried out in two stages. In the first stage, which focused on vocabulary building, it was quite difficult at first for some students to complete Worksheet 1 because they could not figure out which of the words belonged to the ‘adjective’ category from the pictures given. They did not know what word would describe others’ characteristics. However, once the teacher gave clues, they were able to list at least ten words. The same thing happened for the ‘nouns’ category. From the activities, it was found that they could not tell which word is an adjective or noun even though these parts of speech have been taught before. For the next activity, antonyms and synonyms, they could find the words with the help of a thesaurus. However most of the participants did not perform well in the presentations even though ample time was given for them to prepare. They were shy and seemed afraid to present their stories. The teacher needed to persuade them especially the boys to present their stories. Even when they presented, they used more Malay words than English words in their presentations. On the other hand, when it came to playing games such as *Word Guessing* and *Charades*, the students participated actively. Most of them liked to participate and compete with each other to answer the questions. It

was observed that most of them could find the correct answer very fast and they felt so frustrated when the teacher ended the session.

In the second stage, narrative writing, it was observed that the research students still had some difficulties to start writing short sentences for a song lyric or poem even though the activity was carried out as group work and the vocabulary list was pasted on the board as reference. They took their time to complete the work because they were afraid of making mistakes. Six groups of the nine managed to create a song or poem which included the words from the vocabulary list. The situation became easier and more do-able for the participants when they were asked to rearrange the ideas (Worksheet 7) and write a summary (Worksheet 8) of the story from the news articles because they had something to refer to.

In general, 89% of the students in this study enjoyed using newspapers in class as an alternative learning aid. They looked happy in class because flipping and scanning the pages, looking at the colorful pictures and advertisements, made them more relaxed and less stressed. They really enjoyed informal activities such as word guessing games and *Charades* (Worksheet 4 and 5). However, their mood changed when the teacher asked them to do more serious activities such as in Worksheet 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8. Nevertheless, as a whole, about 70% of the students were able to learn about 110 words by the end of the six weeks.

When the observations of the activity worksheet and interview responses were compared, a few issues could be argued especially regarding the students' test results and their opinions towards NIE. Firstly, in general most students agreed that teacher should use newspapers in

class as a learning aid but at the same time they did not enjoy doing newspaper-based exercises. Secondly, the same responses were given when asked about NIE and narrative writing. Almost everybody had the same opinion that newspaper contents could help them in improving narrative writing yet they refused to complete even a short writing task.

### **4.3 Summary**

To analyze the data, the results from the writing tests, the data from the informal interview with teacher and students and also the observation from the activity worksheets were cross-referenced.

From the test results and essay writing, it was found that 23 or 77% of the students have indicated at least a slight improvement in their vocabulary acquisition and narrative writing skills. Many of the students were able to write longer essays, for instance, from about 50 words to 200 or even almost 300 words even though a few of them did not fully use the words from the newspaper wordlist. Nevertheless, besides having written a longer essay, M1 mentioned that the students should get high results had they been creative in producing stories which include all the elements of a narrative writing such as inciting events/ complications, the rising action and conflict, and the climax or dramatic moments in it. Furthermore, the students could come up with longer and better essays if they were able to use the wordlist they had learnt from the newspapers effectively. However, the results show that seven (23%) students did not really benefit from the program.

Data obtained from the teacher's and student's interviews were also analyzed. From the teacher's interview, it could be concluded that newspaper activities would be effective for good students but not for weak students because weak students had problems in completing

the work. They could not start writing quickly or fully elaborate the points because they did not have enough words to convey their ideas. For the student's interview, nine samples were selected and they represented all bands (Band A, B and C). From their responses, it could be summarized that six of them like reading English newspapers and have been exposed to newspapers before. All agreed that the newspaper was a good learning aid because the contents were interesting and informative which would help them to gain more vocabulary. Even though a majority of the participants said that writing was not an easy task, they believed that newspaper would be an effective tool to help them write better.

Based on the activity worksheets, it was found that most students had difficulty to complete the activities for the vocabulary building without the teacher's help. They could not tell the parts of speech such as adjective or noun. They also depend a lot on the dictionary or thesaurus to find the synonyms and antonyms of the words. And, they tend to use more Malay words during the presentation of newspaper article. For writing skill activities, it was hard for them to write sentences or a summary on their own. The activities done during the study also were not helpful to some of the weak students because they could not utilize the vocabulary obtained from the newspapers into their writing. As a result, they could not accomplish their work. However, for completing the flow chart, it was much easier because they just referred to the article provided and wrote. However, the participants enjoyed doing game activities such as charades and word guessing game. On the whole, seven of them stated that the activities were quite difficult especially writing sentences and summary writing. However, they believed that the activities would help them to improve their narrative writing except two participants, S4 and S12.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss in detail the findings obtained from the test results and the students' essays, the teacher's and students' informal interviews as well as the observation of the students' behaviors/responses to the activities prepared for them. These findings will show the students' achievements in this study. Based on the findings also, a conclusion will be drawn and some recommendations for further research will be provided.

#### 5.2 Findings and Discussion

The findings will be discussed according to the following two research questions.

##### 5.2.1. In what ways can *The Star* help students increase their vocabulary?

Based on the test scores analysis in Chapter 4, 77% of the students provided evidence that *The Star* newspaper is another significant teaching aid to help students improve their vocabulary acquisition. Besides textbooks and handouts prepared by the teachers, *The Star* is a good learning source because it consists of useful information for the research students. As Alan Maley (1993) mentioned that in learning the language, the students will find newspapers motivating because they contain recent and interesting information, and the topics are up to date and relevant to the students.

From the interview, the teacher strongly agrees that one of the ways to gain vocabulary from newspapers is through reading the newspaper articles and looking up the meanings of the difficult words in the dictionary. It sounds boring and traditional but the method is more

practical and convenient because as a teacher who has more than 10 years experience in education, the researcher believes that most teachers nowadays are very busy with many other responsibilities such as class management, administration duties and co-curricular activities. Thus, they do not have much time to prepare the activities beforehand. The students also share the same opinion with the teacher because that activity is the simplest way to learn new words.

Besides the regular activity above, the teacher also uses the NIE supplement provided by *The Star* which contains lower and upper levels worksheets of various topics that are in line with the syllabus set by the government. Basically, the activities allow the students to search or look for pictures or articles according to certain themes which involve language learning skills such as reading and writing. In the process of completing the work, they will always look for the meanings from the dictionary. But still, in order to get the exact meaning, the teacher is always there to help them. When interviewed, the students also agree that the method used by the teacher is simple and easy to carry out.

However, from the teacher's observation, she reported that the vocabulary activities such as listing the possible adjectives and nouns from the pictures were difficult to accomplish because this particular students were not good in parts of speech. Some of them could not identify the word and they did not know the particular word belongs to which category. They could only perform this task after getting help from the teacher. The teacher found that the students reacted negatively to the writing activities. They took a longer time to complete these activities and it can be concluded that these activities were not helpful. They would try to finish only after being pushed by the teacher.

### **5.2.2. To what extent can the vocabulary obtained from *The Star* help the students write better narrative essays?**

All the nine participants interviewed agreed that they gained more vocabulary through *The Star* which should help them to write better narrative essays. But the essay analysis showed that only seven students attempted to use more than 10% of the newspaper wordlist in writing their stories. The others did not include those words, or if they had done so, less than 10% of the words were used. It showed that only a small number of the students followed the teacher's suggestion and made an effort to apply what they had learnt into their writing, whereas the others were not motivated to use the new words in their essay.

The words from the newspapers are useful if they can help students improve their writing. The teacher said that some good students who have good understanding in parts of speech are able to use the words correctly in elaborating their ideas because they know when and where to put the words in a sentence. In fact, they can write longer essays because those words help them in expanding their story plot. With the words they can be more creative too. Sometimes, students need clues to produce a certain story, so the new vocabulary managed to trigger their minds to be more creative. However, weak students who always have problems in constructing correct sentences hesitated to use the words because they are not sure how to apply them. It is difficult for them to use the new words in their essays since they have only just acquired the words. It was a task that was doubly hard for them because at the same time they had to think very hard to produce a story. Actually, this group needs more time to practice writing. At least, they need to understand the parts of speech and write sentences correctly by using the new words again and again. As Oshima and Hogue (1991: xiii) had stated that in learning the language, the learners need to master the structure of the language first. In other words, acquiring more vocabulary as well as



learning correct sentence structure is the skills the students need to master in order to write a long and good essay.

Some of the participants are good in sentence structures but they do not apply the newspaper wordlists into their essays. Even though the teacher keeps reminding them to use the newspaper wordlist, they do not feel that the list is significant to them. It seems that the wordlist does not help them to produce a better story. Most probably, this happens because they do not know how to utilize the words in their story plot and it seems that those words restrict them from writing smoothly. If they are given more time to practice, they may be able to adjust to this method. And this group will not worry the teachers because they actually have basic skills in writing. Oshima and Hogue (1991: xiii) stated that good writing in English requires good grammar and good organization. The findings of this study provide evidence to support this claim as only a few of the participants managed to get Band B in the post test.

It can therefore be concluded that this treatment using newspapers as an alternative teaching aid to the textbook is effective for good students in improving their narrative writing, whereas it does not work well to the weak students. If more time is given, there is a high possibility that weak students can also benefit from the approach. It can also be concluded that if the students have good understanding in parts of speech, *The Star* newspaper activities should be able to help them use new vocabulary in their narrative essays.

### **5.3 Implications to the teachers**

From the teacher's experience, it is not easy to teach writing because sometimes some students refuse to write. To build in them an interest to write, the teacher should use *The Star* newspaper. It provides a really good source for teaching aid and can be used effectively. *The Star* newspaper covers many issues from all over the world. And the news articles and NIE supplement are very useful for language learning. However, the teachers need to create activities that are suitable to the students' proficiency levels.

### **5.4 Implications to the students**

The students need to equip themselves with many words in order to write about 350 words in the examination. They always complained that they have difficulty in writing the essay because their vocabulary is insufficient to elaborate the ideas. The newspaper is one of the significant learning aids besides text books or magazines to acquire new words. It is possible to write a long and better essay but students need to be serious and committed in learning. They must try to write because in the SPM examination, better and longer essays will carry a good result. 'Practice makes perfect' is a good method for both the good and weak students. However, weak students definitely would need a longer time because they should learn grammar skills besides improving their vocabulary.

### **5.5 Recommendation**

From the interviews with the teacher and students and also the observation during the activities, a few amendments can be made to improve the method of the treatment or the worksheet designs. Generally speaking, newspapers more or less do help improve the student's knowledge especially in acquiring new vocabulary. However, the teacher said that it might be better if the activities were not classified according to certain categories or types

of speech such as nouns and adjectives. Those activities were too complicated because some of the students were not good in parts of speech. It should be easier or more practical if the possible adjectives or nouns are provided, so the students can make a choice or guess the correct word. They can then find the meanings of the new words using the dictionary.

Moreover, most probably the students regard NIE as an informal and not serious activity and they will enjoy the lesson more if the newspaper is used as games. For example, the responses were great when the teacher did two games with them, *guessing words* and *Charades*. And tokens were given to the winners of the games. It is believed that if incentives were also provided for the writing activities, the participants will be more motivated to write. Also, there is a high possibility that they will try to use the words from the wordlist to elaborate their ideas.

The students need to be closely guided by the teacher during the activities. Even though the instructions to do the activities are simple and clear but some students are weak. They do not understand what they should do and how. In addition, if more time is spent with the students, they can gain more words.

Finally, the two student interviewees provided good ideas when they suggested that the students can produce a folio out of *The Star* newspaper or use one of the headlines as a title for an essay.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

The need to master a language especially English is crucial for the students who participated in this study, as mastering the language would help increase their overall success in the language.. English is the first international language widely spoken by

millions of people from different countries. From the implications and recommendation discussed above, it can be concluded that the findings of this study would be of help to the teachers who are often unable to motivate the students to put in more effort in learning English. The use of *The Star* newspaper allows the teachers to use an up-to-date and affordable teaching aid which has a lot of potential in arousing the students' varied interests, and thus expose them to a more interesting presentation of the English Language. The teachers can generate activities which are not only interesting to the students but also effective and can be carried out successfully within the limited time allocated by the curriculum.. They also can try other skills to be studied such as grammar, reading or communication. However, there should be a proper plan on how to use the material since the classes at this school consist of both good and weak students. Awareness of the students varied abilities, especially when planning for writing activities is necessary to ensure the students feel a sense of accomplishment. The findings of this research, provides some encouragement for both teachers and students as it shows that all under study students are able to produce good narrative writing if they are given enough time to practice using the new words until they are familiar with those words.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### FORM FOUR ENGLISH LANGUAGE SYLLABUS

The Form Four English Language syllabus consists of three main elements:

##### I- Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes require learners to perform tasks and achieve outcomes both in oral and written form. It contains 3 main areas of language use:

##### 1.0 Language Use for Interpersonal Purposes

It refers to the use of language when:

- 1.1. making friends and keeping friendships
- 1.2. taking part in social interaction in a society
- 1.3. obtaining goods and services (in the oral and written medium)

##### 2.0 Language Use For Informational Purposes

It involves:

- 2.1. obtaining information for various purposes
- 2.2. processing the information
- 2.3. presenting it to a variety of audience

##### 3.0 Language Use For Aesthetic Purposes

It is about the ability to:

- 3.1. listen to, read, view and respond to literary texts.
- 3.2. express themselves creatively and imaginatively

In all the interactions and activities above, moral values and good citizenship should be integrated by the teachers.

## II- Language Content

### 1.0 Grammar

The grammar items listed below are provided for the English teachers to teach the students:

#### 1.1 Noun

#### 1.2 Articles

#### 1.3 Adjectives

#### 1.4 Pronouns

#### 1.5 Verbs

#### 1.6 Adverb

#### 1.7 Preposition

#### 1.8 Connectors

#### 1.9 Sentences

#### 1.10 Directed Indirect Speech

#### 1.11 Punctuation

### 2.0 The Sound System

Types of sound system are listed as a guide for teachers to enable learners to pronounce words correctly as well as to observe word stress, intonation and rhythm correctly.

### 3.0 The Word List/Vocabulary

There are about 303 words in the list to be mastered by Form 4 students. These words are related to the theme and topics from the prescribed textbook. They are base words and teachers are encouraged to use them during teaching and learning process. Nouns are listed in their singular form and verbs are given in their base

word. The teachers are encouraged to add prefixes and suffixes to the word or teach various parts of speech if the context requires.

#### 4.0 Literature Component

The students are expected to follow the story-lines of 5 short stories and understand 6 poems. It is hoped that they can instill the values from literature components and broaden their viewpoints.

### III- Educational Emphases

#### 1.0 Thinking Skills

#### 2.0 Learning How to Learn Skills

#### 3.0 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Skills

#### 4.0 Values and Citizenship

#### 5.0 Multiple Intelligences

#### 6.0 Knowledge Acquisition

#### 7.0 Preparation for the Real World

## Curriculum Specifications for English Form 4

### CONTEXTS FOR TEACHING

The themes and topics stipulated for Form 4 are listed below. Some of these have been delineated into further areas to enable learners to talk, read, and write about them. Learners are not expected to have a comprehensive academic knowledge of these topics. Rather, these topics serve as the subject matter through which the three areas of language use are taught and meaningful tasks and activities are set. Since values are embedded in these themes and topics, teachers should take every opportunity to discuss socio-cultural and moral values related to them as well as in the functions and activities that are set. Words related to these themes and topics are found in the accompanying word list.

People : Intercultural understanding at national and international levels  
e.g. customs, lifestyles  
Relationship with parents and friends

Environment : Conservation e.g. water  
Pollution (e.g. air, water, sea, greenhouse effect)

Social Issues : Care of the old folk and disabled children  
Consumerism – misleading advertisements, defective products, complaints, rights of the consumer  
Drug Abuse – causes, damage, prevention

Values : Patriotism and citizenship ( understanding debatable national issues  
e.g. building dams in areas that may endanger Orang Asli settlements  
Love for world peace and harmony, cooperation and respect

Health : Diseases and illnesses (e.g. AIDS, virus outbreaks) Impact on society, preventive measures

Science &  
Technology : Malaysian industries  
(e.g. the making of fertilizers, silicon chips)

## Word List (Form Four)

No	Word	No	Word	No	Word
1	absolutely	55	comfort	109	doubt
2	actual	56	command	110	eager
3	advance	57	commerce	111	earnest
4	advantage	58	committee	112	earthquakes
5	amuse	59	companion	113	effect
6	annoy	60	complicated	114	elder
7	anxious	61	compose	115	else
8	applaud	62	concern	116	employ
9	appoint	63	condition	117	empire
10	approve	64	confess	118	enclose
11	arise	65	confident	119	encourage
12	arrest	66	confuse	120	entire
13	artificial	67	conquer	121	envy
14	aside	68	conscience	122	essence
15	association	69	conscious	123	essential
16	astonish	70	consider	124	except
17	autumn	71	content	125	excess
18	avenue	72	control	126	exchange
19	average	73	convenient	127	excite
20	awkward	74	conversation	128	expect
21	baggage	75	co-operate	129	expense
22	bar	76	copper	130	experience
23	bare	77	cottage	131	experiment
24	barrel	78	council	132	explain
25	beam	79	course	133	explode
26	berry	80	cream	134	explore
27	besides	81	creature	135	express
28	beyond	82	creep	136	extend
29	bind	83	deal	137	extort
30	blade	84	debt	138	extraordinary
31	bless	85	decay	139	extreme
32	board	86	deceive	140	faith
33	bold	87	declare	141	fake
34	bound	88	decrease	142	familiar
35	boundary	89	deed	143	fancy
36	brass	90	delicate	144	fault
37	breadth	91	delight	145	favour
38	calculate	92	demand	146	feast
39	canal	93	department	147	fellow
40	cape	94	depend	148	figure
41	carriage	95	descend	149	fire
42	cause	96	desire	150	firm
43	caution	97	despair	151	fit
44	chance	98	destroy	152	fix
45	character	99	detail	153	flame
46	charge	100	determine	154	flash
47	charm	101	different	155	fond
48	chemical	102	discount	156	forbid
49	cheque	103	disease	157	force
50	civilise/civilize	104	disgust	158	foreigner
51	claim	105	dismiss	159	formal
52	cliff	106	disappoint	160	former
53	colony	107	distinguish	161	forth
54	combine	108	district	162	freedom

163	frequent	220	native	277	rescue
164	funeral	221	nature	278	resign
165	gather	222	neglect	279	rise
166	general	223	noble	280	rival
167	generous	224	nonsense	281	rule
168	glad	225	nuisance	282	sacrifice
169	glory	226	observe	283	sales
170	govern	227	occasion	284	scratch
171	gradual	228	offend	285	seize
172	grain	229	omit	286	share
173	grateful	230	oil	287	slope
174	grave	231	operate	288	smoke
175	grease	232	opinion	289	soil
176	harbour	233	opportunity	290	sore
177	harvest	234	ordinary	291	sow
178	haze	235	organize	292	spare
179	heaven	236	ornament	293	succeed
180	highland	237	origin	294	suggest
181	hollow	238	ought	295	suit
182	host	239	overcome	296	supply
183	human	240	overdose	297	surface
184	hunger	241	owe	298	surround
185	imagine	242	patriot	299	temper
186	immediate	243	peace	300	terrible
187	improve	244	perform	301	threaten
188	include	245	permanent	302	tide
189	increase	246	pirate	303	ward
190	influence	247	plough		
191	inform	248	poet		
192	inquire	249	poison		
193	instead	250	pollute		
194	intend	251	poverty		
195	introduce	252	practice/practice		
196	judge	253	price		
197	keeper	254	pride		
198	kind	255	prison		
199	landslide	256	private		
200	lead	257	procession		
201	legal	258	produce		
202	lift	259	profession		
203	liquid	260	prompt		
204	list	261	proof		
205	literature	262	property		
206	lone	263	purpose		
207	mandatory	264	public		
208	manufacture	265	recommend		
209	master	266	reduce		
210	mention	267	reflect		
211	mere	268	refresh		
212	minister	269	relation		
213	miserable	270	relieve		
214	moderate	271	remain		
215	moment	272	remedy		
216	motion	273	remind		
217	multiple	274	represent		
218	murder	275	reputation		
219	nation	276	request		

Survey of the Vocabulary Knowledge

NAME:

Do you understand the meaning of the following words? Read carefully and tick (/) your answer under the item listed.

No	Word	No	Not Sure	Yes	No	Word	No	Not Sure	Yes
1	absolutely				49	cheque			
2	actual				50	civilise/civilize			
3	advance				51	claim			
4	advantage				52	cliff			
5	amuse				53	colony			
6	annoy				54	combine			
7	anxious				55	comfort			
8	applaud				56	command			
9	appoint				57	commerce			
10	approve				58	committee			
11	arise				59	companion			
12	arrest				60	complicated			
13	artificial				61	compose			
14	aside				62	concern			
15	association				63	condition			
16	astonish				64	confess			
17	autumn				65	confident			
18	avenue				66	confuse			
19	average				67	conquer			
20	awkward				68	conscience			
21	baggage				69	conscious			
22	bar				70	consider			
23	bare				71	content			
24	barrel				72	control			
25	beam				73	convenient			
26	berry				74	conversation			
27	besides				75	co-operate			
28	beyond				76	copper			
29	bind				77	cottage			
30	blade				78	council			
31	bless				79	course			
32	board				80	cream			
33	bold				81	creature			
34	bound				82	creep			
35	boundary				83	deal			
36	brass				84	debt			
37	breadth				85	decay			
38	calculate				86	deceive			
39	canal				87	declare			
40	cape				88	decrease			
41	carriage				89	deed			
42	cause				90	delicate			
43	caution				91	delight			
44	chance				92	demand			
45	character				93	department			
46	charge				94	depend			
47	charm				95	descend			
48	chemical				96	desire			

97	despair				154	flash			
98	destroy				155	fond			
99	detail				156	forbid			
100	determine				157	force			
101	different				158	foreigner			
102	discount				159	formal			
103	disease				160	former			
104	disgust				161	forth			
105	dismiss				162	freedom			
106	disappoint				163	frequent			
107	distinguish				164	funeral			
108	district				165	gather			
109	doubt				166	general			
110	eager				167	generous			
111	earnest				168	glad			
112	earthquakes				169	glory			
113	effect				170	govern			
114	elder				171	gradual			
115	else				172	grain			
116	employ				173	grateful			
117	empire				174	grave			
118	enclose				175	grease			
119	encourage				176	harbour			
120	entire				177	harvest			
121	envy				178	haze			
122	essence				179	heaven			
123	essential				180	highland			
124	except				181	hollow			
125	excess				182	host			
126	exchange				183	human			
127	excite				184	hunger			
128	expect				185	imagine			
129	expense				186	immediate			
130	experience				187	improve			
131	experiment				188	include			
132	explain				189	increase			
133	explode				190	influence			
134	explore				191	inform			
135	express				192	inquire			
136	extend				193	instead			
137	extort				194	intend			
138	extraordinary				195	introduce			
139	extreme				196	judge			
140	faith				197	keeper			
141	fake				198	kind			
142	familiar				199	landslide			
143	fancy				200	lead			
144	fault				201	legal			
145	favour				202	lift			
146	feast				203	liquid			
147	fellow				204	list			
148	figure				205	literature			
149	fire				206	lone			
150	firm				207	mandatory			
151	fit				208	manufacture			
152	fix				209	master			
153	flame				210	mention			
211	mere				263	purpose			





Result of the Survey

## FORM 4A

NO	NAME	ID	PMR result	NO	NOT SURE	YES
1	ABDUL RAHMAN IBRAHIM	S1	C	47	93	163
2	AMINUDDIN AWALUDDIN	S2	C	94	61	148
3	DZULKAMAL MOHD SHAFIE	S3	A	21	167	115
4	INTANKU FATIHAH ABDULLAH	S4	D	93	110	100
5	IZZANI MOHAMMAD MOHAINI	S5	D	80	80	143
6	KHAIRUL ANWAR ISMAIL	S6	B	81	41	181
7	MAIMUNAH MAMMU KUTTY	S7	D	144	43	116
8	MAISARA ABU SAMAH	S8	D	94	107	102
9	MOGANA A/P MAHENDREM	S9	C	68	16	219
10	MOHAMMAD ASYRAF MAHADAN	S10	B	61	53	189
11	MOULINAA A/P PETAR	S11	D	82	65	156
12	MUHAMMAD AFIQ HAMDAN	S12	C	64	110	129
13	MUHAMMAD FAIZ BUSRI	S13	C	117	69	117
14	MUHAMMAD LUQMANUL HAKIM	S14	D	142	70	91
15	NIK SITI AISHAH ZULKIFLI	S15	D	86	91	126
16	NOOR ISMA ASRINAWATI JASRI	S16	C	117	88	98
17	NOR SYAHIRAH AZIZI	S17	C	84	65	154
18	NORAZIZAH NORDIN	S18	C	96	111	96
19	NORRAYME JUSLIN	S19	E	127	102	74
20	NUR AFIQAH OSMAN	S20	C	85	90	128
21	NUR ALIAH MOHD RASUL	S21	C	82	101	120
22	NUR AMYLIA ABDULLAH	S22	B	59	108	136
23	NUR FARHANAA NOORDIN	S23	B	101	44	158
24	NUR HANA ADILLAH AZMAN	S24	D	74	63	166
25	NUR ZULAIKA ZULKIFLI	S25	C	62	111	130
26	NURAINI RUSLIAH	S26	E	129	95	79
27	PRITAH A/P SUBRAMANIAM	S27	B	74	34	195
28	ROZIMAH ZAMRI	S28	D	99	81	123
29	SOFEA IDAYU SULAIMAN	S29	C	92	49	162
30	SRI SHARMILA A/P P.K.S. PANDIT	S30	C	50	84	169
31	SYAZWANI ZAKARIA	S31	C	34	102	167
32	UMMU KALTHUM HASBULLAH	S32	B	32	74	197
33						
	AVERAGE			83	81	139

## WORKSHEET 1

Name :

Date :

**PICTURE THIS**

Activities:

1. "A picture paints a thousand words". Find a picture in The Star that contains a lot of information. Cut it out and paste it on a piece of paper.
2. Write down in a table below everything that you can see in the picture, under the headings of Character and Adjective. For each character , think of an adjective, for example:

No	Adjective	Character
e.g.	happy	wife
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		

3. Find the nouns for some of the adjectives given above

No	Adjective	Noun
e.g.	happy	happiness
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		





WORKSHEET 2

Name :

Date :

**OPPOSITES/ANTONYM**

Activities:

1) Scan a copy of The Star to find about 5 interesting headlines. Change some of the words in the headlines to their opposites. Then, rewrite each headline with its new wordings below.

(For this activity, you are advised to use thesaurus)







WORKSHEET 3

Name :

Date :

**SYNONYM**

Activities:

- 1) Scan through The Star and search news that happened recently. Cut the article and paste it below.
- 2) Read the news and underline words that give you an idea about the main idea in the story.
- 3) Write the synonym of the words underlined.
- 4) Present the story or ideas to your friend.

## WORKSHEET 4

Name :

Date :

**GUESSING GAME**

Activities:

1) Group work. Use The Star as a reference.

2) Guess the word from the headline by referring to the following page. The point will be given to the first group that answers correctly.

- i)        \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (N3)
- ii)       \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (W33)
- iii)      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (W35)
- iv)       \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (N3)
- v)        \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (S55)
- vi)       \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (N4)
- vii)      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (W30)
- viii)    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (W30)
- ix)       \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (S52)
- x)        \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (S48)
- xi)       \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (N3)
- xii)      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (S52)
- xiii)     \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (N3)
- xiv)      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (M4)

WORKSHEET 5

Name :

Date :

**CHARADE**

Activities:

- 1) Group work. Teacher will appoint a student to mime the word shown.
- 2) Each group will take turn to guess the word. 1 mark for each correct word.

WORKSHEET 6

Date :

Name :

**WRITE A SONG OR POETRY**

Activities:

1) Study the vocabulary list (from previous activities)

2) Work in group. Create your own song or poem by using the words that you have learnt.

WORKSHEET 7

Name :

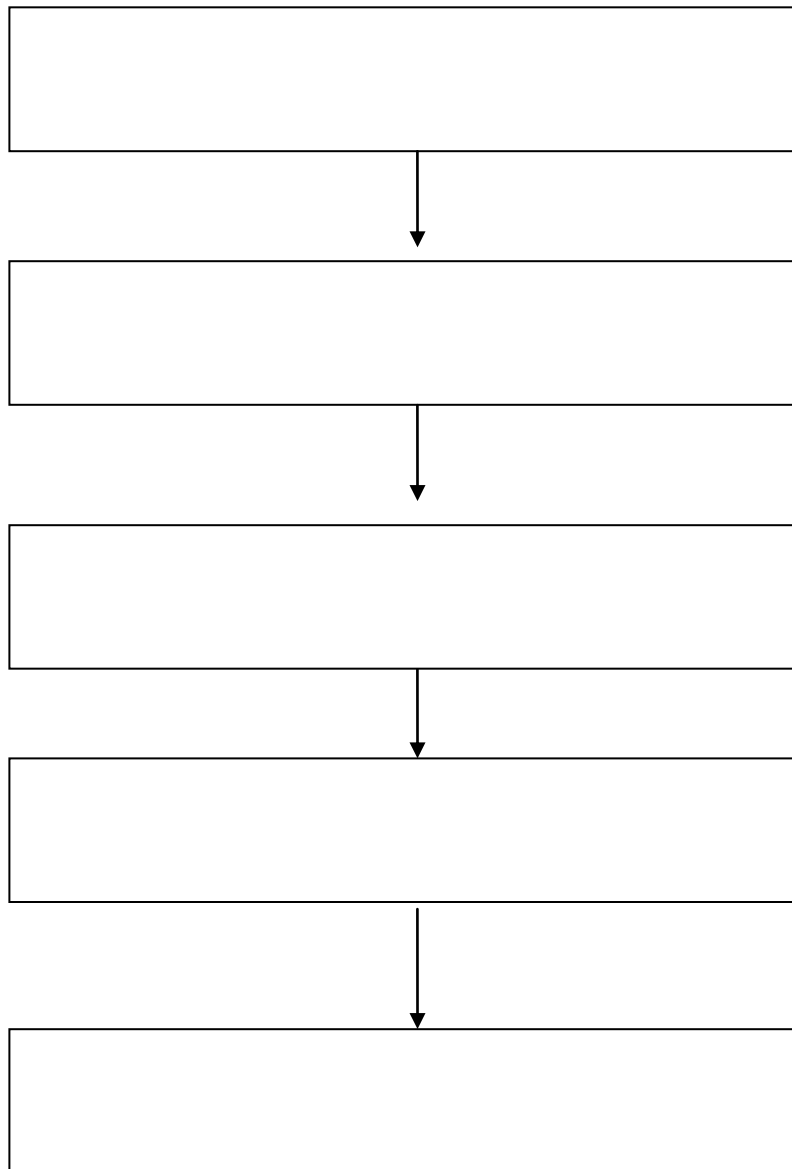
Date :

**SEQUENCE OF EVENTS**

Activities:

1) Read the article given carefully. Work in pair; put the events in the order in which they actually occurred. (You can write the event in one sentence)

Headline: .....  
.....





WORKSHEET 8

Name :

Date :

**SUMMARIZE THE IDEAS**

Activities:

Read the article given and write the summary of the story/ideas in about 30 – 50 words.

Article 1

Headline : .....

Summary

## TIMETABLE FOR THE ACTIVITIES

NO	DATE / DAY	ACTIVITIES	WORKSHEET NO	DATE OF ISSUE
1	16 .6. 2009 (Tuesday)	PRE-TEST	-	-
2	22.6.2009 (Monday)	ACTIVITY 1: - Adjective	1	1.4.2009
3	25.6.2009 (Thursday)	ACTIVITY 2: - Noun	1	1.4.2009
4	30.6.2009 (Tuesday)	ACTIVITY 3: - Antonym	2	22.4.2009
5	2.7.2009 (Thursday)	ACTIVITY 4: - Synonym	3	1.7.2009
6	7.7.2009 (Tuesday)	ACTIVITY 5: - Presentation	Refer to Worksheet 3	1.7.2009
7	9.7.2009 (Thursday)	ACTIVITY 6: - Presentation (Continue)	Refer to Worksheet 3	1.7.2009
8	16.7.2009 (Thursday)	ACTIVITY 7: - Game – Word Guessing	4	1.7.2009
9	28.7.2009 (Tuesday)	ACTIVITY 8: - Word Games - Charade	5	-
10	29.7.2009 (Wednesday)	ACTIVITY 9: - Write a Song/Poem	6	-
11	31.7.2009 (Friday)	ACTIVITY 10: - Rearrange Ideas	7	30.7.2009
12	3.8.2009 (Monday)	ACTIVITY 11: - Write Summary	8	30.7.2009
13	10.8.2009 (Monday)	POST-TEST	-	-



VOCABULARY LIST (OBTAINED FROM *THE STAR*)

1	arrest	33	dash	65	lose	97	trainer
2	anchovy	34	defender	66	motionless	98	talkative
3	assembly	35	defer	67	moustache	99	terrifying
4	advice	36	derailment	68	nearby	100	treasure
5	active	37	entrance	69	needy	101	turned down/rejected
6	anonymous	38	engulf	70	nabbing	102	tracking
7	burden	39	enthusiast	71	pull out/withdraw	103	treated
8	beneficiary	40	evacuate	72	property	104	unmarried
9	brave	41	explosion	73	pollution	105	underprivileged
10	burns	42	eligible	74	patients	106	victim
11	blast	43	equipped	75	post-mortem	107	wagon
12	bold	44	eliminate	76	piercing	108	woeful
13	bribe	45	flu	77	payment	109	worried
14	cop/policeman	46	flame	78	promotion	110	wrinkle
15	claim	47	fitness	79	quarantine		
16	culprit	48	fellow	80	qualify		
17	coherent	49	fearful	81	reckless		
18	crumple	50	flipped	82	rejected		
19	combat	51	greedy	83	rapist		
20	contain	52	giving birth	84	ransom		
21	crowd	53	hardware	85	renewed		
22	crafters	54	hot spot	86	reported		
23	cardiovascular	55	hectic	87	returned		
24	compact	56	humble	88	reduce		
25	confiscated	57	involved	89	rampant		
26	consume	58	improve	90	spread		
27	cornered	59	investigation	91	scare		
28	donate	60	injured	92	stuntman		
29	donor	61	kidnap	93	scheme		
30	dead	62	kids/children	94	snatch theft		
31	declare	63	languish	95	syndicate		
32	deceased	64	liquefied	96	sanctions		

## PRE-TEST/POST-TEST QUESTION

Write a composition of about 350 words on the following topic:

Write a story that ends with:

“If only I had listened to his/her advice”

You have one hour to complete the task.

## CRITERIA FOR WRITING ASSESSMENT (English 1119)

### Section B: Continuous Writing Maximum 50 marks

Grade	Mark Range	Descriptors
<b>A</b>	44 - 50	Language entirely accurate Maybe occasional first draft slips. Varied sentence structures in length and type. Vocabulary wide and apt. Punctuation and spelling accurate. Paragraphs well-planned and well-linked. Topic addressed with consistent relevance. Interest aroused and sustained throughout.
<b>B</b>	38 - 43	Language accurate Occasional errors are either minor or first draft slips. Vocabulary wide and used quite aptly. Sentences show some variation. Punctuation accurate. Spelling almost always accurate. Paragraphs show some planning. Interest aroused and sustained throughout most of the composition.
<b>C</b>	32 - 37	Language largely accurate. Accurate simple structures but errors may occur when more sophisticated structures are attempted. Vocabulary wide but not so apt. Tendency to use one type of structure giving a monotonous effect. Correct spelling of simple words but errors occur when spelling difficult words. Paragraphs may show some unity but links may be absent. Interest aroused but not sustained.
<b>D</b>	26 - 31	Language sufficiently accurate. Meaning clear. Patches of clarity when simple vocabulary and structures are used. Some varieties of sentence type and length. Adequate vocabulary. More spelling errors will occur Paragraphs lack unity and planning. Composition lacks liveliness and interest value.
<b>E</b>	20 - 25	Meaning never in doubt but errors hamper reading. Simple structures may be accurate. Limited vocabulary. Frequent mistakes in spelling and punctuation. Paragraphs lack unity. Partial treatment of subject matter.
<b>U(i)</b>	14 - 19	Limitation of subject matter due to lack of linguistic skills. Meaning fairly clear. Many serious errors mainly of one-word type. Communication established but errors may cause blurring. Sentences simple and often repetitive. There may be no paragraphs.
<b>U(ii)</b>	8 - 13	Errors multiple in nature, requiring the reader to read and re-read before being able to understand. High incidence of error makes meaning blur. Maybe short of required number of words. Able to get some sense.
<b>U(iii)</b>	0 - 7	Script almost entirely impossible to read. Full of multiple-word errors. Whole sections may make little or no sense. Where occasional patches of clarity occur marks should be awarded. "0" is awarded only <b>if</b> no sense at all from beginning to <b>end</b> .

PILOTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (TEACHER)

## STRUCTURED INFORMAL INTERVIEW (TEACHER)

Date: .....

## A. Personal Information

1. Teacher's name : .....
2. Experience of Teaching English : .....years
3. Experience of Teaching Form Four : .....years
4. Have you attended any workshops concerning the use of newspaper in language teaching? For example NIE

## B. Newspaper in Education (NIE) and writing skill

1. Do you use newspaper in language teaching?
2. How helpful is the newspaper for students to acquire vocabulary?
3. How often do you give essay writing exercises to your students?
4. How effective is newspaper as a resource to teach narrative writing to your students? Would you explain further?
5. In what ways do you feel that the activities carried out for the past few weeks improve the student's:
  - a) vocabulary
  - b) narrative essay

REVISED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (TEACHER)

STRUCTURED INFORMAL INTERVIEW (TEACHER)

Date: .....

A. Personal Information

1. Teacher's name : .....
2. Experience of Teaching English : .....years
3. Experience of Teaching Form Four : .....years
4. Have you attended any workshops concerning the use of newspaper in language teaching? For example NIE.

B. NIE and Vocabulary

1. Do you use newspaper in language teaching? How do you use it?
2. How do your students respond to the newspaper activities that you do with them in class?
3. How helpful is the newspaper for students to acquire vocabulary?
4. How often do you give essay writing exercises to your students?
5. Do your students enjoy writing story (narrative essay)?
6. How effective is newspaper as a resource to teach narrative writing to your students? Would you give an example?

C. Student's proficiency level

7. In what ways do you feel that the activities carried out for the past few weeks improve the students':
  - a) vocabulary
  - b) narrative essay
8. As a whole, has the student's English proficiency level improved after using newspaper in language teaching?

PILOTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (STUDENT)

## STRUCTURED INFORMAL INTERVIEW (STUDENTS)

Date: .....

Student ID: .....

## A. Personal Information

1. Race : \_\_\_\_\_

2. Score : Pre-test: \_\_\_\_\_; Post-test: \_\_\_\_\_

## B. General questions:

1. Do you like reading newspapers?

Yes                      No                            

2. Which newspaper/s do you read?

## C. Newspaper in Education (NIE)

3. In your opinion, is newspaper a good learning resource besides textbook?

.....

4. Do you think the contents in the newspaper are interesting? Can you give 1 at least reason?

5. Is newspaper helpful for students to acquire vocabulary? How does it help the students?

## D. Writing Skill

6. Do you like writing essays? Why?

7. How about writing narrative essay?

8. Can you tell the difference of narrative writing compared to other type of writing?

9. Do you find difficulties in participating some of the activities? If yes, give example.

10. Based on your learning experience before, do the newspaper activities give you some ideas on how to improve your

a) vocabulary

b) narrative writing?

11. How have you improved your English language proficiency by using newspaper in language learning?

12. Can you suggest on how to use newspaper effectively for narrative essay writing?

REVISED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (STUDENT)

## STRUCTURED INFORMAL INTERVIEW (STUDENTS)

Date: .....

Student no: .....

## A. Personal Information

1. Race : \_\_\_\_\_
2. Score : Pre-test: \_\_\_\_; Post-test: \_\_\_\_; Band: \_\_\_\_

## B. General questions:

1. Do you like reading newspapers?
2. Which newspaper/s do you read?

## C. NIE and Vocabulary Acquisition

3. Do you think teacher should use newspaper in class as learning aid besides textbook? Why?
4. Are all the contents in the newspaper interesting? Which topic that you like the most?
5. Is newspaper helpful for students to acquire vocabulary? How does it help the students?

## D. NIE and Writing Skill

6. Do you like writing essays? Why?
7. Do you enjoy writing a story (narrative essay)? Would you explain further?
8. Does newspaper help you to write better narrative essay?

## E. NIE and English Proficiency

9. From the activities that you have done for the past few weeks, do you find those activities difficult to do? Which activities that bothered you?
10. Based on your learning experience before, do you feel the newspaper activities help you improve your
  - a) vocabulary?
  - b) narrative writing?
11. By using newspaper in language learning, how have you improved your English language proficiency?
12. Can you suggest on how to use newspaper effectively for:
  - a) vocabulary building
  - b) narrative essay writing

**Table 4.1: The students' final results**

NO	STUDENT'S ID	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	DIFF (+/-)	BAND
1	S1	5	10	5	B
2	S2	6	14	8	B
3	S3	26	29	3	C
4	S4	5	9	4	B
5	S5	9	13	4	B
6	S6	8	12	4	B
7	S7	10	22	12	A
8	S8	6	19	13	A
9	S9	19	20	1	C
10	S10	5	12	7	B
11	S11	15	17	2	C
12	S12	8	6	-2	C
13	S13	5	7	2	C
14	S14	2	10	8	B
15	S15	9	11	2	C
16	S16	12	25	13	A
17	S17	6	19	13	A
18	S18	8	12	4	B
19	S19	2	19	17	A



20	S20	6	19	13	A
21	S21	11	20	9	B
22	S22	11	18	7	B
23	S23	7	17	10	B
24	S24	3	12	9	B
25	S25	25	31	6	B
26	S26	10	18	8	B
27	S27	10	18	8	B
28	S28	18	21	3	C
29	S29	8	16	8	B
30	S30	11	17	6	B

## TRANSCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHER

## B. NIE and Vocabulary Acquisition

1. How often do you use newspaper in language teaching? How do you use it?

Madam Norliza normally uses newspaper once in two months. However, it also depends on the order or activities planned by the English Department. During English lesson, she would ask the students to read the newspaper and collect some articles. They would look for the difficult words and find the meanings of the words from dictionary. Sometimes, she would use the worksheet from NIE supplement and ask them to do the activities in group.

2. How do your students response to the newspaper activities that you do with them in class?

So far, the students were pushed to do the activities. Some of them sometimes did not complete the work.

3. How helpful is the newspaper for students to acquire vocabulary?

It could be helpful but the teacher needed to work hard in making them do the activities because the students did not read newspaper or magazine at home.

4. How often do you give essay writing exercise to your students?

Once a month.

5. Do your students enjoy writing story (narrative essay)?

Some of them did enjoy but some didn't. However, it was better than asking them to write directed writing. Normally, they have ideas and creative too but the big problem is they cannot convey their ideas, don't know how to write, to use the correct word and to construct the correct sentences. That's why their essays mixed up with words in Bahasa Melayu or their L1.

6. How effective is newspaper as a resource to teach narrative writing to your students?  
Would you give an example?

In certain extent, it is effective but if you were to carry out this activity, you need to study the whole class first. I'm sure if you have it with good students (class), it will be fine but for average class (like class 4A), and I think you have to work harder. More time is needed to make sure the students are able to acquire the words/vocabulary

7. In what ways do you feel that the activities carried out for the past few weeks improve the students' : a) vocabulary                      b) narrative writing

I think they might help. When you do the activities and classified them according to certain categories like adjective, noun , antonym and synonym, those activities became dull and boring to them because they found them so complicated. If they have to write but they cannot write properly because they don't write correctly.

When you assigned them to write by using the words given, they think the activities were difficult.

For the directed writing, there is not much problem because you (the students) are given the ideas. For the narrative writing, students have ideas but when the teacher requests them to use certain vocabulary, it makes them slow to finish the story. And then what happen is that they will take longer time to even start the essay.

8. As a whole, has the student's English proficiency level improved after using newspaper in language teaching?

I think it does help in improving their proficiency level. But in my opinion if you want to get better result you need more time. If you do it in Form 4 and continue until Form 5, they will be better.

Another thing is making the class very interesting . You need to interest them in things that you want them to learn. If they are interested, they will learn

And they want to write. They don't have interest in writing is not because they not good. If you keep coaching them, encourage them to write whatever they want to write, then they find easy to write. The aim here is making them start writing. In the exam they won't write anything if they don't feel like writing.

Do you mean that if we ask them to write something on certain topic, they cannot write better essay because we control them?

A : They have this concept , if you do not write good essay, you do not write at all. So what I normally do in class is I make them write even though it is not good

SUMMARY OF THE STUDENTS' RESPONSES/  
ANSWERS IN THE INTERVIEW SESSION

B. General Questions

Q1. Do you like reading newspaper?

Q2. Which newspaper/s do you normally read?

STUDENT	RESPONSE – Q1	RESPONSE – Q2
S17	Yes	Berita Harian, The Star, Kosmo, Metro
S19	Yes	Berita Harian, The Sun, The Star
S2	Yes	The Star
S4	No	Berita Harian, The Star, Sinar, Metro
S22	Yes	Metro, The Star
S23	No	NST and Sinar
S27	Yes	The Star
S11	Yes	Berita Harian, The Star
S12	No	Kosmo, Sinar and NST

C. NIE and Vocabulary Acquisition

Q3. Do you think teacher should use newspaper in class as learning aid besides textbook? Why?

STUDENT	RESPONSE	REASON
S17	Yes	Newspaper is not heavy compared to the textbook
S19	Yes	It can add my English language
S2	Yes	Easy to learn from newspaper. Besides that most students like to read it.
S4	Yes	Newspaper has many information and can understand more words
S22	Yes	The teacher should use newspaper in the class to improve our learning.
S23	Yes	Newspaper interesting, textbook boring
S27	Yes	Can learn more things and important news, such as world news
S11	Yes	Can understand more words.
S12	Sometimes only	Students feel bored with newspaper

Q4. Are all the contents in the newspaper interesting? Which topic that you like the most?

STUDENT	RESPONSE	FAVOURITE TOPIC
S17	Yes	Crime, sports, gossip
S19	Yes	Sports and gossip
S2	Not all	Fashion, recipes and about accidents
S4	Yes	Sports, local news and gossip
S22	Yes	Sports, current and world news
S23	Yes	Entertainment and Sports
S27	Yes	Sports
S11	Yes	Sports
S12	No, not all	Sports

Q5. Is newspaper helpful for students to acquire vocabulary? How does it help the students?

STUDENT	RESPONSE	EXPLANATION
S17	Yes, helpful	Newspaper has a lot of information and new words
S19	Yes	Newspaper has more new words and information
S2	Yes	Teacher gives activities like cut and paste. Find the difficult words
S4	Yes	Many new words
S22	Yes	The newspaper has more vocabulary, so students can take vocabulary from newspaper
S23	Yes, helpful	Underline the words and check the meaning from dictionary
S27	Yes	Find articles from newspaper and find new words. It helped me in writing essay
S11	Yes	Find many different words, new words
S12	Yes, helpful	I read newspaper, find difficult words and find the meanings from dictionary

#### D. Writing Skill

Q6. Do you like writing essay? Why?

STUDENT	RESPONSE	EXPLANATION
S17	No, I don't like	Difficult to write and many words that I don't know
S19	No	Difficult
S2	I think yes	Writing an essay I use imagination
S4	No	I don't know English
S22	Yes	It can give me ideas
S23	No	I don't like English
S27	Yes	I like to write new words

S11	Yes	By writing can improve language
S12	I don't like	Sometimes my ideas not come to help me

Q7. Do you enjoy writing a story (narrative essay)? Would you explain further?

STUDENT	RESPONSE	EXPLANATION
S17	Yes	I like writing narrative essay than factual. Narrative essay we can create the ideas
S19	Yes	I like to story about my life and school
S2	Yes	I can use my imagination. From newspaper I can get more words to write an essay
S4	No	I don't know to write story in English
S22	Yes	I can give more ideas, create new ideas from the story
S23	Yes, I like	Write the story makes me happy, story has plots
S27	Yes	It is more interesting when someone read your story
S11	Yes	Because story can write own words
S12	No, I don't like	I only like structured question only



Q8. Does newspaper help you to write better narrative essay?

STUDENT	RESPONSE	EXPLANATION
S17	Yes	From the newspaper I can find new words and also the latest news.
S19	Yes	Vocabulary/word from newspaper
S2	Yes	Newspaper has many stories about country, cartoon, and many other things
S4	Yes	Many words that I can find
S22	Yes	After I use newspaper, it can help me to write better. I always see dictionary to find new words.
S23	Yes	I read news about accidents
S27	Yes	The word that I learnt from newspaper helped me to write essay, especially thrill story, tragedy, accident and etc.
S11	Yes	It helped me to write essay
S12	I think it helps	When I want to do essay, I look to the newspaper

E. NIE and English Proficiency

Q9. From the activities that you have done for the past few weeks, do you find those activities difficult to do? If yes, which type of activities?

STUDENT	RESPONSE	TYPE OF DIFFICULT ACTIVITIES
S17	Yes	Writing a summary
S19	Yes	Writing the summary
S2	Yes	I think writing a poem/song
S4	Yes	antonyms
S22	Not so difficult	Find the words(adjectives) from the pictures given
S23	Yes	Presentation, I feel shy to my friends
S27	No	However, for the presentation I feel quite scared

S11	Yes	Writing poem/song and synonym
S12	Yes	Write sequence of events and write summary

Q10. Based on your learning experience before, do you feel the newspaper activities help you improve your: a) vocabulary? , b) narrative writing?

STUDENT	a) Vocabulary	b) Narrative Writing
S17	Yes, a little bit	Yes, a little bit
S19	Yes	Yes, a little bit
S2	Yes	Yes
S4	Yes	No
S22	Yes	Yes, better than before
S23	Yes	Yes
S27	Yes, improve a lot	Improve a lot
S11	Yes	Yes
S12	Yes, improve a little bit	No, not improve at all

Q11. By using newspaper in language learning, how have you improved your English Language proficiency?

STUDENT	RESPONSE
S17	Improve in writing
S19	Improve a little in writing and speaking
S2	Improve especially narrative writing. Speaking a little bit.
S4	When I see new words, I look up the meaning from dictionary.
S22	Improve, mostly in reading and speaking

S23	Improve in writing
S27	Not much, improve a little bit in writing and speaking
S11	Can understand new words, so improve writing
S12	In speaking, yes, a little bit, but in writing not a lot. And, I only know only two to three new vocabulary.

Q12. Can you suggest on how to use newspaper effectively for:

- a) Vocabulary building
- b) Narrative essay writing

STUDENT	a)Vocabulary	b)Narrative essay
S17	No idea	Don't know
S19	No idea	No idea
S2	No idea	Teacher tells the story from the newspaper and asks the students to write it, and teacher asks questions about the news from newspaper.
S4	No idea	No idea
S22	Create folio of vocabulary from newspaper articles	Teacher can use headline as title to write an essay
S23	No idea	No idea
S27	No	No
S11	Everyday must read newspaper	No idea
S12	No idea	I don't have any idea