

## The Effectiveness of Graphic Organizers as a Strategy in Comprehending Narrative Reading Texts for Senior High School Students

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh penggunaan graphic organizers sebagai strategi terhadap kemampuan siswa dalam memahami teks naratif. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuasi-eksperimental dengan format kelompok kontrol pretest-posttest. Sampel terdiri dari dua kelas 10 dari sebuah sekolah menengah atas di Gresik, yang dipilih melalui convenience sampling. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan uji-t, dan ukuran efek dihitung dengan menggunakan rumus eta kuadrat ( $\eta^2$ ). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan pengatur grafis memiliki dampak yang signifikan terhadap pemahaman siswa terhadap teks naratif ( $p = 0,02 < 0,05$ ). Berdasarkan hasil perhitungan manual, diperoleh nilai  $\eta^2$  sebesar 0.1305, yang mengacu pada kriteria (Cohen, 2007), termasuk dalam kategori pengaruh yang kecil. Meskipun masuk dalam kategori efek kecil, perubahan positif tetap terlihat, yang menandakan bahwa graphic organizers dapat menjadi alternatif metode pembelajaran yang mendukung proses membaca pemahaman. Kelompok eksperimen menunjukkan bahwa mereka memiliki keunggulan dalam membaca pemahaman, yang dapat dilihat dari kemampuan mereka dalam mengidentifikasi dan menjelaskan ide utama dengan kata-kata mereka sendiri, secara efektif menemukan informasi pendukung melalui diskusi kelompok dan latihan soal, dan membuat kesimpulan logis dengan menghubungkan informasi dalam teks dengan pengetahuan yang telah dimiliki sebelumnya. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa guru bahasa Inggris dapat mempertimbangkan untuk menggunakan strategi berbasis pengorganisasian grafis sebagai metode pembelajaran yang efektif, terutama untuk memahami plot, karakter, dan konflik dalam teks. Sekolah dapat mendukung pendekatan strategi ini dengan menyediakan pelatihan guru dan sumber daya yang diperlukan. Dari sudut pandang teoritis, pendekatan ini terbukti dapat meningkatkan kemampuan literasi siswa dan memiliki potensi sebagai dasar untuk penelitian di masa depan di berbagai konteks dan jenis teks.

**Kata kunci:** Pengatur Grafis, Pemahaman Membaca

### Abstract

This study aims to determine the effect of using graphic organizers as a strategy on students' ability to understand narrative text. The study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group format. The sample consisted of two 10th-grade classes from a high school in Gresik, selected through convenience sampling. Data analysis was conducted using a t-test, and the effect size was calculated using the eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ) formula. The findings showed that the use of graphic organizers had a significant impact on students' comprehension of narrative texts ( $p = 0.02 < 0.05$ ). Based on the results of manual calculation, the  $\eta^2$  value of 0.1305 was obtained, which, referring to Cohen (2007) criteria, is included in the small effect category. Although it falls into the small effect category, the positive change is still visible, which indicates that graphic organizers can be an alternative learning method that supports the reading comprehension process. The experimental group showed that they had an advantage in reading comprehension, which can be seen from their ability to identify and explain the main idea in their own words, effectively find supporting information through group discussions and practice questions, and make logical inferences by connecting information in the text with prior knowledge. The findings suggest that English teachers can consider using graphic organizers-based strategies as an effective learning method, especially for understanding plot, character, and conflict in texts. Schools can support this strategy approach by providing teacher training and the necessary resources. From a theoretical point of view, this approach is proven to improve students' literacy skills and has potential as a basis for future research across different contexts and text types.

**Keywords:** Graphic Organizer, Reading Comprehension.

### INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension plays a pivotal role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning as it equips learners with the ability to extract, interpret, and integrate

information from texts. Reading comprehension is the ability to understand a text. Readers read to grasp the main ideas or opinions in the text. According to Woolley (2011) reading comprehension is about understanding the meaning of the text as a whole, not just individual words

or sentences. According to Nuttal (2000) identifies five key aspects of EFL reading comprehension: identifying the main idea, locating references, understanding vocabulary, making inferences, and extracting detailed information. These aspects can serve as steps or strategies to help students improve their reading comprehension.

In the context of narrative texts, comprehension goes beyond decoding words; it requires recognizing story structures, character development, and cause-effect relationships to construct coherent meaning (Anderson & Anderson, 2002). However, empirical findings indicate that many senior high school students face difficulties in understanding narrative texts due to limited vocabulary, lack of effective reading strategies, and insufficient background knowledge. These challenges often manifest in students' inability to identify main ideas, infer implied meanings, and connect textual elements, which ultimately impedes their literacy development (Deliany & Cahyono, 2020).

From a theoretical standpoint, reading comprehension is an interactive process between the reader, the text, and the reading activity (Snow, 2002). Cognitive and schema theories suggest that comprehension depends on activating prior knowledge and strategically organizing textual information (McNamara, 2007). In narrative texts, this involves mapping story elements into mental frameworks to achieve deeper understanding. Yet, without explicit instructional scaffolding, students often struggle to integrate these components, particularly in EFL classrooms where linguistic and cultural barriers further complicate comprehension (Klingner, 2007).

Empirical evidence highlights a gap in current teaching practices. Traditional methods in many senior high schools emphasize textbook reading and comprehension questions, focusing on surface-level recall rather than deeper comprehension. This approach has been shown to limit students' ability to identify key ideas and establish logical connections within texts (Cho, 2019; Yang & Tseng, 2021). Therefore, pedagogical strategies that provide cognitive and visual support are necessary to enhance students' engagement and understanding of narrative texts.

One strategy that has demonstrated promise is the use of graphic organizers. Defined as visual tools for representing relationships between concepts, graphic organizers facilitate comprehension by helping learners organize key ideas and their connections systematically (Burke, 2002). In narrative text instruction, tools such as story maps, flowcharts, and concept maps enable students to visualize plot progression, character relationships, and sequence of events, fostering coherent mental representations of stories (Hibbard & Wagner, 2003).

A Graphic Organizer helps students organize and structure information, which can improve their learning outcomes, both in recalling information and comprehending readings and the material (Ponce, 2020). This strategy helps arrange information, so it's easier to understand and remember. When students actively use this strategy, they are more likely to remember important ideas and understand the material better. Lambe (2023) stated that graphic organizers are a strategy that helps structure and simplify complex information, making it easier to understand and analyze. By using labels, it is easy to identify and connect elements related to the concept or topic being studied. This not only deepens their understanding of the material but also helps them remember the information better. Studies with different types of graphic organizers show promising results (Barwasser, 2025). They help to organize information in a more structured and clear manner (Yang & Tseng, 2021). Thus, graphic organizers can be an effective strategy in the learning process, especially in terms of reading comprehension.

Several studies have confirmed the effectiveness of graphic organizers in improving reading comprehension. Sidik (2019) reported significant gains in students' ability to identify main ideas and supporting details when using graphic organizers in narrative spoof texts. Rahat, (2020) demonstrated similar improvements in secondary school students' understanding of drama texts, noting increased engagement and confidence. Syarif (2021) found that graphic organizers enhanced students' active participation and comprehension of narrative structures in classroom action research. At the elementary level, Kurniaman et al (2020) showed that graphic organizer-based materials improved comprehension and retention of story elements.

Despite this growing body of evidence, important gaps remain. Many previous studies have either focused on expository or drama texts (Ramos, 2022; Rahat, 2020) or applied graphic organizers at the elementary or vocational school level (Kurniaman, 2020). Research specifically targeting senior high school EFL learners and general narrative genres such as fables, legends, and fairy tales remains limited. Moreover, while Sidik (2019) explored narrative texts, the study focused on spoof stories, which differ structurally and thematically from the narrative texts typically found in high school curricula. This gap underscores the need to investigate how graphic organizers support comprehension of more complex narrative genres with moral and educational elements.

Therefore, this study also employs graphic organizer to graphic organizer to improve reading comprehension, especially for narrative text. Narrative text is a story to entertain and amuse the audience, and the content of the

story follows a climax and also a resolution at the end of the story. Then, the narrative text narrates about fictional and non-fictional (Tribble, 1996). According to Arisman & Haryanti (2019) here are several types of narrative text. They are mystery, fable, legend, science fiction, romance, fairy tales, and myth.

In teaching reading of narrative text, the teacher only uses traditional methods that only use textbooks; this method creates boredom for students and makes them lose their interest in reading. Therefore, this current study aims to investigate the effectiveness of using graphic organizers in improving reading comprehension and to support learners in understanding academic content, especially for narrative text. It is suggested that graphic organizers assist students in analyzing the complex elements of narrative text into more easily organized parts, thus improving their ability to organize ideas and produce a clear and coherent story. Therefore, an experimental study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of the Graphic Organizer strategy in improving students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. The result of this study is in line with the previous studies that already explored the use of a Graphic Organizer on reading comprehension; the results indicate that there are significant improvements in reading comprehension, and the students became more active and confident during learning (Kurniaman, 2020; Rahat, 2020; Sidik, 2019; Syarif, 2021).

## **METHODS**

This study adopted a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group format. The design was selected because it enables examination of the effect of using graphic organizers on students' comprehension of narrative texts without requiring full random assignment, which is often impractical in school settings (Creswell, 2014). Two intact classes were assigned as the experimental and control groups to compare outcomes, with the experimental group receiving instruction using graphic organizers and the control group taught through conventional textbook-based methods. This design aimed to ensure that any differences in post-test scores could be attributed to the intervention implemented.

The data were collected from tenth-grade students at a public senior high school in Gresik during the 2024–2025 academic year. The study population comprised 11 classes with approximately 36 students per class, totaling 345 students. The sample was selected using convenience sampling based on accessibility and teacher recommendations regarding the equivalence of language proficiency. Two classes were chosen: Class X-8 as the experimental group (36 students) and Class X-9 as the control group (36 students), resulting in a total sample of

72 participants. The selection was also based on initial observations indicating students' low engagement and limited reading comprehension performance in narrative texts, making the site appropriate for testing the intervention.

The primary data collection instrument was a multiple-choice reading comprehension test consisting of 30 items. The items were designed to measure eight aspects of narrative reading comprehension: identifying the main idea, supporting ideas, inferences, stated details, unstated details, idiomatic expressions, grammatical features, and vocabulary in context. The same test served as both the pre-test and post-test to ensure measurement consistency before and after the intervention. Content validity was established through expert judgment involving one senior English language lecturer and one experienced English teacher. Revisions were made based on feedback, particularly in balancing grammatical and contextual comprehension items. Instrument reliability was assessed via a pilot test with 10 students of similar level, and Cronbach's Alpha was calculated using SPSS, yielding  $\alpha = 0.617$ , which exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.6 (Creswell, 2012), indicating internal consistency.

Data collection was conducted over five sessions for each group. In the first session, both groups completed the pre-test to assess baseline reading comprehension. The experimental group then underwent four treatment sessions where the teacher introduced the concept and purpose of graphic organizers, demonstrated their application to narrative texts, and guided students in constructing story maps and flowcharts collaboratively and individually. Students worked with different types of narrative texts and were encouraged to visually map key story elements such as plot structure, characters, conflicts, and resolutions. In contrast, the control group received instruction through traditional methods consisting of teacher explanations of narrative text features, followed by reading exercises and comprehension questions without the use of visual tools. In the fifth session, both groups completed the post-test under the same conditions as the pre-test to measure learning gains.

Throughout the implementation, the teacher acted as the primary instructor while the researcher maintained a non-intrusive observational role to monitor procedural fidelity. The researcher ensured that both groups received equivalent content and instructional time, with the use of graphic organizers as the only differing variable. Observational notes were taken to document classroom interaction and student engagement during the sessions. Data analysis involved several stages. Descriptive statistics were first computed to summarize pre-test and post-test scores for both groups. To meet the assumptions of parametric testing, normality was examined using the

Shapiro-Wilk test and homogeneity of variance was verified using Levene’s Test. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the mean scores between groups for both pre-test and post-test data. The effect size of the intervention was calculated using eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ) to determine the magnitude of the treatment effect independent of sample size (Cohen, 2007). This combination of descriptive and inferential statistics was employed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of graphic organizers on reading comprehension.

The study took place over a three-week period, including preparation, permissions, and data collection phases. All sessions were conducted within the school’s regular English class schedule to maintain ecological validity and reflect authentic EFL classroom conditions. The researcher’s presence was limited to observation and ensuring adherence to the experimental design to minimize bias. Internal validity was supported by using equivalent pre-test scores to establish group comparability and by standardizing materials across groups except for the intervention. External validity was addressed by documenting the instructional context in detail to enable replication in similar educational settings.

By detailing the research design, data sources, participant characteristics, instruments, procedures, and analytic techniques, this method section provides sufficient information for replication in other senior high school EFL contexts. The systematic integration of quasi-experimental procedures and rigorous statistical analysis offers a reliable framework for assessing the effectiveness of graphic organizers in enhancing narrative text comprehension.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the effectiveness of graphic organizers as a strategy to enhance the reading comprehension of narrative texts among 10th-grade EFL students. The research was guided by the primary question: *Is there a significant difference in students’ narrative reading comprehension between those who are taught using graphic organizers and those who are not?* The findings, obtained through a quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test control group design, are presented below using descriptive and inferential statistics, followed by interpretation in light of existing theories and previous studies.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test Scores

Pre-test	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control	36	36	100	79.39	15.772
Experiment	36	59	93	78.69	8.956
Valid N (listwise)	36				

To determine baseline comparability, descriptive statistics were computed for the pre-test scores of both groups. As shown in Table 1, the experimental group (N = 36) had a mean pre-test score of 78.69 (SD = 8.96), while the control group (N = 36) had a slightly higher mean of 79.39 (SD = 15.77). These results suggest that both groups had comparable comprehension abilities prior to treatment, and this was statistically confirmed by an independent samples t-test.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-Test for Pre-Test Scores

Pre-test	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Experiment and Control group	0.230	70	0.819	0.694

The independent samples t-test conducted on pre-test scores produced a p-value of 0.819 (Table 2), indicating no significant difference between groups before treatment. This ensures that any differences observed after the intervention can be reasonably attributed to the use of graphic organizers.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Post-Test Scores

Post-test	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control	36	33	96	80.17	15.951
Experiment	36	66	96	82.78	8.855
Valid N (listwise)	36				

Following the implementation of the instructional intervention using graphic organizers, post-test data revealed a positive trend. The experimental group demonstrated improved reading comprehension scores with a mean of 82.78 (SD = 8.86), compared to the control group’s mean of 80.17 (SD = 15.95). Though the mean difference appears modest, inferential analysis indicated it was statistically significant.

Table 4. Independent Samples t-Test for Post-Test Scores

Post-test	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Experiment and Control Group	-3.242	70	0.002	-9.222

A subsequent independent samples t-test on post-test scores yielded a p-value of 0.002 (Table 4), which is well below the 0.05 significance level, confirming that the graphic organizer strategy had a significant effect on students' narrative text comprehension.

To understand the practical impact of this finding, the effect size was calculated using eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ), resulting in a value of 0.1305. According to Cohen's (2007) guidelines, this is classified as a small effect size. Nonetheless, in classroom-based educational research, even small effect sizes can have meaningful implications, especially when considering the short intervention duration and the potential for long-term development of reading strategies.

These findings directly address the research question and support the alternative hypothesis: there is a significant difference in students' narrative reading comprehension between those who are taught using graphic organizers and those who are not. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

The improvement in the experimental group's post-test scores can be attributed to the structured visual support provided by graphic organizers. Graphic organizers help readers map the structural elements of narrative texts—including orientation, complication, rising action, resolution, and moral value—which aligns with the narrative structure defined by Anderson & Anderson, (2002). Students in the experimental group demonstrated enhanced ability to extract and organize main ideas, supporting details, and character development, indicating deeper engagement with the text.

This enhancement reflects (Nuttal, 2002) view that effective comprehension includes identifying main ideas, making inferences, understanding vocabulary, locating references, and extracting specific information. Students taught using graphic organizers showed improved proficiency across these dimensions, particularly in making inferences and summarizing main points. This result is in line with McNamara (2007) assertion that comprehension involves connecting explicit and implicit meanings within texts.

The strategy also appears to have functioned as a metacognitive tool, enabling students to monitor their own understanding and organize thoughts visually. This

finding supports Lambe (2023) argument that strategy-based instruction enhances learners' autonomy and cognitive control. By the third session, students were able to construct graphic organizers independently, indicating an internalization of the process as a cognitive habit.

Moreover, the application of graphic organizers in this study aligns with the interactive model of reading proposed by Snow, and Chair (2002), which emphasizes the interplay of reader, text, and activity. In this context, graphic organizers acted as the mediating activity that bridged students' prior knowledge and new textual information. Students did not merely read passively but engaged actively with the structure and meaning of the narrative, embodying the principles of constructivist learning theory.

This study also supports findings from prior research. Ramos (2022) and Robillos (2023) found that the use of graphic organizers improves comprehension and encourages student participation. Similarly, Sidik (2019) and Syarif (2021) showed that this strategy boosts confidence and engagement in EFL classrooms. While those studies explored either general reading or spoof texts, the present study contributes uniquely by applying the graphic organizer strategy to general narrative texts, such as legends, fables, and fairy tales, which are commonly used in Indonesian high school curricula.

Additionally, the data in Table 3 show that the minimum score in the experimental group increased to 66, whereas the control group had a minimum of only 33. This suggests that graphic organizers may help lower-achieving students perform at a higher baseline, thus reducing performance gaps and promoting more equitable outcomes in the classroom. This aligns with the pedagogical emphasis on differentiated instruction and supports Burke (2002) claim that graphic organizers enhance critical thinking and content access for diverse learners.

From a curriculum development perspective, these findings indicate that teaching methods focused on visual and strategic learning—such as graphic organizers—can offer a viable alternative to traditional, text-heavy reading instruction. Rather than emphasizing rote recall or isolated question-answer formats, graphic organizers engage students in analysis, synthesis, and evaluation—higher-order thinking skills as described in Bloom's Taxonomy.

Despite its strengths, this study is not without limitations. The intervention was conducted over a relatively short period—only four sessions—which may limit generalizability and long-term impact. Moreover, the use of multiple-choice tests to assess comprehension may not capture the full depth of students' interpretive or critical reading skills. Future research should consider integrating qualitative data, such as student reflections or open-ended comprehension responses, and extending the

intervention over a longer term to examine sustained effects.

In light of these results, it is recommended that English teachers integrate graphic organizers more systematically into reading instruction, especially when teaching narrative texts. Training programs and professional development initiatives can equip teachers with practical knowledge on how to design and implement graphic organizer-based activities. In addition, policymakers may consider supporting such pedagogical innovations through curriculum design and resource allocation.

Theoretically, this study reaffirms the value of strategy-based instruction in EFL contexts and extends its application to narrative comprehension. It also strengthens the empirical foundation of constructivist and interactionist theories of reading by providing measurable outcomes that support active and visually supported learning. In this way, the graphic organizer becomes not only a teaching aid but also a bridge between pedagogical theory and classroom practice.

This study provides compelling evidence that graphic organizers are an effective strategy for improving students' narrative reading comprehension. The statistically significant improvement in the experimental group, combined with greater score consistency and reduced lower-bound scores, demonstrates the utility of this approach in real classroom settings. Though the effect size was small, the educational impact was meaningful, especially for students who previously struggled with narrative texts. These results support the integration of graphic organizers into reading instruction and highlight their potential to foster more engaged, independent, and successful EFL learners.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the use of graphic organizers significantly improves students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. Students in the experimental group, who received instruction through graphic organizers, outperformed those in the control group, as evidenced by higher post-test scores and more consistent performance. This suggests that graphic organizers function effectively as instructional scaffolds that help students organize narrative structure, identify key information, and engage more actively with the text.

In light of these results, it can be concluded that graphic organizers are a beneficial strategy in EFL reading instruction, particularly for narrative text comprehension. Their integration into classroom practice is recommended to support learners' cognitive development and textual understanding. Future studies may expand this research by exploring their application across different genres, proficiency levels, and longer instructional periods.

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