

Utilization of Short Films in Teaching Writing Review Texts to Middle School Students

Muh. Safar¹

Universitas Muhammadiyah Bone, Indonesia ¹.

DOI: <https://doi.org/>

Abstract

This research is a qualitative literature study that examines the use of short films as a pedagogical medium to improve review writing skills in high school students in Indonesia. The gap between the curriculum demands of in-depth understanding, critical evaluation, and structured arguments and the descriptive nature of student writing emphasizes the need for authentic, engaging, and culturally relevant media. Short films, with their dense narratives, rich visual-auditorial stimuli, and measured duration, enable a holistic viewing experience that serves as the basis for specific assessments of plot, characters, cinematic style, and thematic messages. The proposed learning framework includes pre-viewing (schema activation, prediction), directed viewing/paused viewing (multimodal critical observation), post-viewing (evaluative discussion HOTS; think pair share; gallery critique), and review writing based on an analytical rubric (orientation, interpretation, evaluation, summary, filmic evidence). Literature data was obtained through database searches (Google Scholar, Garuda, DOAJ, ERIC), rigorously selected, and analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding with source triangulation. The findings synthesize evidence that short films improve motivation, multimodal literacy, writing structure, and argument quality, while also creating opportunities for differentiation, formative assessment, and technology/LMS integration to strengthen classroom practice and action research. The implications are that teachers can utilize transparent rubrics, incremental digital feedback, and youth-themed film resources to align writing instruction with the Pancasila Student Profile and encourage further classroom-based research.

Keywords: Short Film; Writing Review; High School.

Copyright (c) 2024 Muh. Safar

✉ Corresponding author: Muh. Safar

Email Address: safarmuhammad785@gmail.com

Received July 14, 2025, Accepted August 05, 2025, Published August 21, 2025

Introduction

Teaching writing review texts at the secondary school level often reveals a gap between curriculum demands and students' actual performance. Conceptually, review texts require in-depth comprehension, critical evaluation, and the development of structured arguments supported by evidence from the object being studied (e.g., literary works, films, or performances) (Joseph & Min-Hwa, 2018). However, in the classroom, students' written products often consist of descriptive summaries without a clear evaluative position. This phenomenon indicates that students have not been trained to differentiate between description, interpretation, and assessment; it also reveals the limitations of teachers' strategies in facilitating the higher-order thinking processes that should accompany review writing.

This problem is exacerbated by the lack of contextual, engaging, and culturally relevant learning resources for adolescents. Traditional printed materials, such as textbook examples, are often irrelevant



Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

to the media preferences of digital-generation students, thus failing to stimulate cognitive or affective engagement. As a result, some students write by imitation (copying patterns) rather than constructing critical responses. Within a constructivist pedagogical framework, the lack of authentic experience with the objects being assessed results in a weak conceptual schema that can be activated during writing (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Media that can bridge aesthetic experience and evaluative academic tasks are needed.

Short films offer significant pedagogical potential due to their dense narrative, rich visual-auditory stimuli, and measured duration, making them realistic for use in classroom settings. Their relatively short length allows teachers to facilitate a full, uninterrupted viewing experience, allowing students to fully grasp the plot, conflict, characterization, cinematic style, and thematic message (Prasetyani, 2021). This holistic experience is crucial for developing the evaluative dimension in review texts: students can refer specifically to scenes, camera techniques, key dialogue, or conflict resolution when constructing their evaluation arguments.

Furthermore, short films facilitate step-by-step analytical learning. Teachers can employ structured pauses (paused viewing) to guide critical observation: what is the narrative purpose of the scene? how does the visual composition support the meaning? is the editing rhythm effective? This practice builds a framework of assessment categories that are then transferred to writing review texts. Because films combine elements of storytelling (similar to narrative prose) and audiovisual technical elements, students are encouraged to integrate literary dimensions, visual communication, and personal responses, creating space for multimodal literacy that enriches the quality of writing (Darmansyah et al., 2023).

The need for innovation in Indonesian language teaching methods is reflected in the curriculum policy direction, which emphasizes active, collaborative, and reflective, learner-profile-based learning. Utilizing short films allows teachers to design sequential pedagogical steps: pre-viewing (schemata activation and prediction), guided viewing (focused analysis guidance), post-viewing (evaluative discussion), and review writing (argument-based final product) (Devi, 2018). Models such as think-pair-share, gallery critique, or rubric-based peer review can be integrated to enhance the depth of reflection and accuracy of academic language in the text.

Within a formative assessment framework, teachers can develop an analytical rubric that includes dimensions of evaluative content, the appropriateness of the review text's structure (orientation, interpretation, evaluation, summary), argument coherence, the use of specific evidence from the film, and language quality. When the rubric is distributed before a writing assignment, students have an explicit reference to guide the writing process; this aligns with the principles of evaluation transparency and objectives-based learning (Wijayanti & Pangesti, 2024). Rubric data can also be used for classroom action research (CAR) evaluating the effectiveness of film interventions in improving writing performance.

Technological advances have expanded access to repositories of local and international short films thematically relevant to youth issues: identity, friendship, diversity, digital ethics, and the environment. Online learning platforms and Learning Management Systems (LMS) allow teachers to embed videos, provide structured discussion forums, and digitally collect written drafts for immediate feedback (Iriani et al., 2025). The time-stamped commenting feature on some video platforms can also be used by students to note key scenes for use as evidence in written reviews (Pradnyana et al., 2024).

The integration of audiovisual media also opens up opportunities for differentiated learning. Students with visual or auditory learning styles gain a stronger understanding of the material; while students with high literacy skills can be encouraged to expand their analysis to aspects of film production, sociocultural discourse, or comparisons between works. The use of subtitles, dialogue scripts, or storyboards assists students who require additional linguistic support. Thus, the use of short films can be placed within the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, which provides diverse representation, engagement, and expression.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review study design to analyze the use of short films in teaching writing review texts in secondary schools. This approach was chosen because it can provide in-depth understanding through a critical synthesis of empirical research and relevant theories. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research allows researchers to explore meaning in

depth through the interpretation of texts and documents, making it highly suitable for analyzing data from various scientific literature.

The data collection process was conducted by searching scientific journals, proceedings, and research reports through academic databases such as Google Scholar, Garuda, DOAJ, and ERIC. Keywords used included "short film," "writing a review," and "short film review writing." Each article was selected based on its relevance, novelty, and methodological quality. The data was then extracted into a matrix containing the study's identity, research method, learning strategy, and key findings.

Data analysis was conducted through three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, to identify thematic patterns, such as the effectiveness of short films in increasing writing motivation, teacher strategies, and technology integration. To maintain validity, source triangulation and an audit trail were conducted during the literature selection process. The final result is a synthesis of findings that is expected to provide practical recommendations for teachers in utilizing short films as a learning medium for writing reviews.

Results and Discussion

1. The Effectiveness of Short Films in Improving Review Text Writing Skills

Short films are an effective medium for improving review writing skills because they provide a concise, engaging, and easy-to-understand learning experience. In a short duration, short films can clearly present story elements, from plot, characters, settings, to moral messages that can be used as material for student analysis. The advantage of short films compared to traditional text media lies in the combination of visual and audio elements that can make it easier for students to understand the content of the story without having to imagine complex narrative details (Ativa et al., 2025). Thus, short films become a concrete and rich learning resource, making it easier for students to develop ideas and arguments in review writing.

Writing a review requires not only sentence structure but also critical and analytical thinking skills. Short films provide concrete evaluation materials covering various aspects, such as cinematography, acting quality, storyline, and the message conveyed. Students can identify the film's strengths and weaknesses in a more focused manner, given that its short duration makes it easier for them to grasp the entire story. This aligns with research by Cahyani (2022), which states that using short films in language learning significantly improves students' analytical and critical thinking skills compared to solely text-based methods.

In addition to improving analytical skills, short films also play a role in motivating students to write. Modern visual formats that align with the interests of the digital generation create enthusiasm, encouraging students to express their ideas and opinions in the form of review texts. Short films also inspire students' creativity, both in terms of diction, language style, and sentence structure. By observing the variety of visuals, points of view, and character development in films, students can learn to present reviews with richer perspectives and argumentative content.

The effectiveness of short films in teaching review writing is also closely related to the concept of multimodal literacy. The multimodal literacy theory proposed by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) emphasizes the importance of combining text, images, and sound in supporting in-depth understanding and argument formation. Short films, with their diverse communication modes, enable students to process information comprehensively and train them to connect various narrative elements with the intended values (Van Leeuwen, 2020). This contributes to students' ability to compose critical, logical, and engaging reviews.

Furthermore, short films help students understand the structure of writing review texts. Having a clear object of study makes it easier for them to develop a writing framework, such as the film's identity, synopsis, analysis, strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations. Research by Wulandari (2022) found that students who wrote reviews based on short films tended to produce writing with better cohesion and coherence, and were able to convey their opinions in a systematic flow. This suggests that short films can be an effective stimulus for developing structured thinking patterns in writing.

However, the effectiveness of short films still requires the teacher's active role as a facilitator. Teachers need to provide clear analytical guidance to students, for example by preparing a list of aspects to consider when watching a film, such as theme, plot, filming techniques, and moral message. This guidance aims to encourage students not only to describe the film's content but also to conduct a critical

evaluation based on the structure of the review text. Thus, short films become not only a form of entertainment but also a source of meaningful learning.

Challenges that may arise in implementing short films as a learning medium include limited access, selecting films appropriate to students' maturity level, and students' tendency to focus too much on the story without considering the technical aspects. To address these challenges, teachers can use short films with themes relevant to the curriculum, provide analysis worksheets, and conduct guided discussions before writing activities. These steps can help students understand the film comprehensively before compiling it into a review.

Overall, the use of short films in teaching writing review texts aligns with the demands of 21st-century learning, which emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, and digital literacy (Dewi, 2025). Short films not only facilitate students' understanding of the subject matter but also hone their skills in evaluating media and expressing opinions with strong arguments. With proper management, short films can have a significant impact on improving the quality of language learning, particularly in writing review texts.

2. Pedagogical Strategies and Teacher Roles in Short Film-Based Learning

The teacher's role in short film-based learning is crucial because they act as the designers of structured pedagogical strategies, from the pre-viewing stage, during viewing, to the post-viewing stage. During the pre-viewing stage, teachers can activate students' prior knowledge through activities such as predicting the film's content, conducting initial discussions, or analyzing the poster of the upcoming film. This approach aligns with Ausubel's concept of an advance organizer, which emphasizes the importance of linking prior knowledge with new information for deeper understanding. Teachers can ask provocative questions to build curiosity and prepare students' attention to story elements and film techniques (Rajpopat, 2023).

During the viewing phase, the teacher acts as a facilitator, helping students focus on narrative and technical elements. Story elements, such as plot, characters, conflict, and setting, are analyzed alongside cinematic techniques like camera angles, lighting, sound effects, and visual symbols. To guide this process, the teacher can distribute observation sheets containing key points of analysis. This strategy not only enhances narrative comprehension but also develops students' audiovisual literacy, which is highly relevant in today's digital age (Munadi, 2025).

The post-viewing stage is the most critical phase in short film-based learning because students are invited to reflect on, interpret, and evaluate the film's content (Abbas, 2022). Teachers can initiate evaluative discussions with questions that stimulate higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), such as interpreting the moral message, connecting the story to social reality, or evaluating the film's technical quality. These reflective activities help students not only understand the story literally but also develop more complex critical analysis and information synthesis skills.

Collaborative approaches such as think-pair-share are highly effective in strengthening student analysis at this stage. Through individual thinking, partner sharing, and group discussions, students engage in in-depth social interactions. This aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, which emphasizes the importance of scaffolding, where teacher guidance and peer support help students achieve higher-level understanding. The teacher's role is to provide guidance or follow-up questions to deepen students' thinking.

Additionally, teachers can utilize clear evaluation rubrics to guide students in writing film reviews. This rubric usually contains orientation components (story summary), interpretation (message or meaning analysis), evaluation (assessment of the film's quality), and summary (conclusion). The existence of a rubric makes writing reviews more focused and objective, as well as practicing writing skills with a systematic structure (Nurizzati, 2023). In this way, students learn to understand how to organize critical opinions in a good academic format.

Short film-based learning also supports the development of multimodal literacy, namely the ability to understand messages conveyed through a combination of visual, audio, and narrative texts (Olvah et al., 2024). Teachers play a role in helping students analyze how cinematic elements, such as background music or lighting, enhance the atmosphere or emotion of the story. These skills are crucial for equipping students to become critical and creative learners in the digital media era, which is saturated with audiovisual content.

In line with Vygotsky's scaffolding theory, teacher support should be gradual and contextual. Initially, teachers provide intensive guidance through guiding questions or review examples, then

gradually reduce assistance as students' independence increases. This process allows students to develop their own analytical, evaluation, and interpretation skills without losing the direction of their learning.

Ultimately, well-integrated pedagogical strategies can develop students' higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) and creativity. Through the pre-watching, during-watching, and post-watching stages, students are trained not only to understand the story but also to explore its meaning, conduct critical analysis, and communicate their views in written form in the form of reviews. In this case, the teacher acts as a primary facilitator and motivator, supporting the achievement of 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (the 4Cs).

3. The Role of Technology and Challenges of Implementation in Secondary Schools

The role of technology in writing instruction in secondary schools is increasingly crucial with the widespread access to digital media, particularly short films that can be downloaded from various educational and general platforms. The principles of multimedia learning emphasize that the combination of text, images, and audio improves comprehension compared to text alone. Meta-analyses indicate a relatively high effect ($d > 1$), relevant for sparking students' creative ideas before writing. Studies in several high schools in Indonesia have shown that the use of short films can significantly improve short story writing skill scores, for example, from an average of 64.5 to 75.3 after intervention.

Despite increasing access to digital content, the device gap remains significant. A 2023 Statista survey noted that 97% of high school students own mobile phones, but only 36% own computers. At the school level, 7.6% of high school students lack computers, 63% lack notebooks, and 60% lack projectors, even though these devices are essential for group film screenings in class. Data from the Indonesian Education and Culture Agency (Dapodik) (2022) shows that nearly 29.4% of high schools are not yet connected to the internet, resulting in uneven distribution of digital film-based learning. Government assistance between 2020 and 2022 has distributed more than 1 million ICT devices to 70,000 schools, but optimal utilization remains a challenge.

Other technical challenges arise from slow internet connections, the availability of computer labs, and limited learning time. Many teachers are forced to have students watch films independently on their personal mobile phones, which reduces the quality of collective visual analysis (Hartawati & Karim, 2024). International studies highlight similar barriers, such as network reliability and resource constraints, which often hinder the integration of video media in the classroom (Moses et al., 2022). These conditions require more flexible learning schedules and the provision of shared devices.

Teacher preparedness is a key factor. A 2024 study by the Ministry of Education and Culture showed that approximately 22% of teachers lacked computer operating system skills, and 44% lacked basic application skills. These skills are essential for curating and organizing instruction. Incorporate short films into writing materials. A meta-analysis of technology integration courses shows that structured training has a large effect ($g \approx 1$) in improving teacher competency. Thus, continuing professional development programs are important. It is absolutely essential for audiovisual media to be truly effective in learning to write.

Digital platforms and Learning Management Systems (LMS) can be leveraged to overcome the limitations of face-to-face learning. Teachers can upload short films, worksheets, and assessment rubrics to the LMS, while students watch asynchronously and then upload drafts (Adawiah, 2022). The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology reports that more than 141,000 schools have accessed the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, with over 10 million users. This demonstrates a significant opportunity to utilize digital channels as a means of integrating short films into writing instruction.

Short films also play a role in fostering students' digital literacy. A 2022 survey by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and Katadata (Kominfo) showed Indonesia's digital literacy index at 3.54 (moderate), with a digital safety score of only 3.12. This indicates the need to emphasize ethics, copyright, and security when utilizing audiovisual content. Film-based writing lessons can be used as a tool to train students' ability to evaluate, cite, and produce digital content responsibly.

Besides technical factors, cultural and human resource challenges also pose obstacles. Some teachers and stakeholders still view films as entertainment, not a learning tool. The national teacher shortage, projected to reach 1.3 million by 2024, also limits the scope for innovation. Without structural support and a shift in perception, the use of short film-based technology in writing learning will struggle to reach its full potential.

Overall, these opportunities and challenges demonstrate the need for a comprehensive strategy. Device availability and connectivity must be balanced with teacher training, digital platform integration,

and creative writing assignments oriented toward digital literacy. Through this approach, secondary schools can leverage technology and short films as catalysts for improving the quality of writing instruction that is equitable, inclusive, and relevant to the demands of the 21st century.

Conclusion

Short films have proven to be an effective learning medium for improving review writing skills because they provide a concise, engaging, and easily understood learning experience for students. With their short duration but rich in meaning, short films provide space for analysis of plot, characters, setting, and relevant moral messages. The powerful combination of visuals and audio makes short films superior to text-based media, as they facilitate comprehension without the burden of complex imagination. Furthermore, short films encourage students to think critically and analytically through the evaluation of cinematographic elements, acting quality, and shooting techniques. Research shows that short films improve analytical skills while motivating students to write more creatively and argumentatively. The integration of multimodal literacy theory strengthens their effectiveness, as students are trained to connect various communication modes to construct logical and in-depth reviews. The role of teachers is crucial in designing learning strategies, from pre-viewing, during viewing, and post-viewing, so that students can comprehensively understand the content. Teachers need to provide analytical guidance and assessment rubrics to ensure more focused and objective review writing. Technical challenges, such as limited devices, internet access, and digital literacy, must be overcome by utilizing online learning platforms and providing adequate resources. Teacher training is also key to optimally utilizing short films in technology-based learning. Through appropriate pedagogical strategies, short films can hone higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) and foster students' creativity. Overall, short films can be a catalyst for writing learning relevant to 21st-century needs, provided they are supported by technology, teacher competence, and adequate digital literacy.

Bibliography

- Abbas, S. N. (2022). Penerapan Metode Pembelajaran Multisensori untuk Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Qur'an Hadits Peserta Didik di MTs PERGIS Campalagian (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Parepare).
- Adawiah, L. R. (2022). Learning Management System Blended Learning Menuju Pendidikan Terjangkau di Universitas Al-Azhar Indonesia (Master's thesis, Jakarta: FITK UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta).
- Ativa, W., Ntelu, A., & Agustin, P. D. (2025). Penerapan Metode Discovery Learning Berbasis Media Film Pendek dalam Pembelajaran Menulis Cerpen pada Siswa Kelas IX SMP Negeri 2 Bunobogu Tahun Pelajaran 2024/2025: Penelitian. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat dan Riset Pendidikan*, 4(1), 442-454.
- Cahyani, Y. D. (2022). KEMAMPUAN BERPIKIR KRITIS SISWA MELALUI FILM. *The GIST*, 5(2).
- Darmansyah, A. A., Amin, A., & Solahudin, I. (2023). Kemampuan menganalisis struktur teks ulasan cerpen pada siswa SMP melalui penggunaan media film pendek. *Prosiding Serimbi*, 1(2), 104-109.
- Devi, A. K. (2018). Peningkatan kemampuan menulis teks ulasan film pendek pada siswa dengan strategi think talk write. *Jurnal penelitian pendidikan*, 18(2), 109-123.
- Dewi, A. C. (2025). Transformasi Pembelajaran Menulis Melalui Media Visual Dalam Konteks Pembelajaran Abad 21. *Jurnal E-MAS (Edukasi dan Pembelajaran Anak Usia Dini)*, 1(2), 12-21.
- Hartawati, F., & Karim, M. (2024). Tantangan guru dalam implementasi kurikulum merdeka di Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP). *Literasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Bahasa, Sastra Indonesia Dan Daerah*, 14(1), 185-190.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62872/tyx5q590>

- Iriani, U., Hestivik, C., Fadila, Y., Sindo, P., & Afriza, A. (2025). Efektivitas Penggunaan LMS (Learning Management System) dalam Diklat Daring untuk Meningkatkan Pedagogik Guru. *ALACRITY: Journal of Education*, 908-921.
- Joseph, R., & Miin-Hwa Lim, J. (2018). Background Information in the Discussion Sections of Forestry Journals: A Case Study. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 18(1).
- Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *European journal of general practice*, 24(1), 9-18.
- Moses, C., Nghipandulwa, L. L. T., & Shikusho, S. P. (2022). Investigating the challenges faced by teachers in the implementation of digital technology in Secondary Schools in Rundu Circuit, Kavango East Region Namibia. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(9), 286-301.
- Munadi, F. (2025). Effectiveness of PBL Learning Model Based on Short Film in Learning Aqidah Akhlak in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. *Journal of Curriculum and Learning Technologies (JCLT-Krisno)*, 1(1), 1-16.
- Nurizzati, M. (2023). Model Asesmen Autentik Pembelajaran Kemampuan Mengapresiasi Teks Sastra Cerpen dan Drama-Rajawali Pers. PT. RajaGrafindo Persada.
- Olvah, M., Alfian, M., Nusantara, T., Suyitno, I., & Anggraini, A. E. (2024). Pemanfaatan Berbagai Media dalam Pembelajaran untuk Meningkatkan Literasi Siswa dalam Perspektif Multimodal Literacy. *JiIP-Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 7(7), 6391-6398.
- Pradnyana, P. B., Astuti, N. P. E., Darmayanti, N. W. S., Seran, Y. B., Bere, M. L., Wedyanthi, L. M. D., ... & Numertayasa, I. W. (2024). Pendampingan Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran Daring Kolaboratif di LMS (Learning Management System) ITP Markandeya Bali. *Madaniya*, 5(1), 77-86.
- Prasetyani, N. F. (2021). Penerapan Media Film Dalam Pembelajaran Penulisan Teks Ulasan Di Kelas VIII Wustha Subulussalam Surabaya Tahun 2020/2021. *Bapala*, 8(7), 20-27.
- Rajpopat, V. (2023). Use of film as a Teaching Resource: A literature review. *International Journal of Emerging Knowledge Studies*, 2(9), 225-233.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2020). Multimodality and multimodal research. *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods*, 2nd edition, Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 465-483.
- Wijayanti, D., & Pangesti, F. (2024). Pemanfaatan TikTok dalam Keterampilan Berbicara Pada Materi Teks Ulasan Siswa Kelas VIII. *Fon: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, 20(2), 394-408.