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## **ANALYSIS OF SIXTH-GRADE STUDENTS' ABILITY AT SD NEGERI 064976 IN LEARNING THE PAST TENSE**

### ***ANALISIS KEMAMPUAN SISWA KELAS ENAM DI SD NEGERI 064976 DALAM MEMPELAJARI PAST TENSE***

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#### Abstract

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menilai kemampuan siswa kelas VI di SD Negeri 064976 dalam memahami materi Past Tense sebagai bagian dari pelajaran bahasa Inggris dasar. Sebanyak 20 siswa terlibat dalam proses belajar dan diuji untuk mengukur pemahaman mereka terkait perubahan bentuk kata kerja serta penyusunan kalimat dalam bentuk lampau. Temuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa tingkat kemampuan siswa sangat bervariasi. Sekitar 10% siswa terklasifikasi dalam kategori tinggi, 40% masuk dalam kategori sedang, dan 50% sisanya berada di kategori rendah. Siswa yang tergolong tinggi umumnya sudah mampu mengenali bentuk verb kedua dan menggunakannya dengan tepat dalam kalimat sederhana. Sebaliknya, siswa dalam kategori sedang masih menunjukkan ketidakpastian, khususnya dalam mengidentifikasi kata kerja yang tidak teratur dan penempatan elemen dalam kalimat. Siswa di kategori rendah menghadapi lebih banyak kesulitan, terutama dalam memahami konsep perubahan bentuk kata kerja serta perbedaan antara bentuk sekarang dan lampau. Temuan ini menunjukkan perlunya penguatan pada konsep dasar tata bahasa, latihan yang terarah, serta pendekatan belajar yang lebih terstruktur agar pemahaman siswa tentang Past Tense dapat meningkat secara keseluruhan.*

***Kata kunci: kemampuan siswa, past tense, hasil belajar***

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#### Abstract

This research seeks to investigate how well sixth graders at SD Negeri 064976 grasp the Past Tense as a component of their foundational English grammar skills. A group of 20 students took part in the lesson and completed a test aimed at evaluating their comprehension of verb alterations and their capacity to form sentences in the past tense. The results reveal significant differences in the students' grasp of the subject matter. Ten percent of the students scored in the high range, forty percent were in the medium range, and fifty percent were classified as low. Those in the high group typically displayed a solid understanding of verb form changes and could accurately create simple past tense sentences. Meanwhile, students in the medium range showed some understanding, but they were inconsistent, particularly with irregular verbs and overall sentence structure. The students classified as low encountered more basic difficulties, such as struggling to differentiate between present and past forms and having a limited vocabulary for building sentences. These findings highlight the necessity for a more organized approach to grammar practice, planned learning sessions, and teaching methods tailored to the diverse readiness levels of students, aimed at enhancing their overall grasp of the Past Tense.

**Keywords: student performance, past tense, learning outcomes**



## INTRODUCTION

Learning English in the early stages in Indonesia is crucial for helping students establish strong communication skills. During this phase, learners are still gaining an understanding of how language functions, making the acquisition of grammar a slow and ongoing process. One of the grammatical concepts introduced in the higher grades of elementary education is the Past Tense. For students in the sixth grade, this often marks one of their initial realizations that English verbs change according to different time frames. Although this idea seems straightforward, many pupils find it difficult since shifting verb forms is rarely encountered in their everyday interactions in Indonesian.

In numerous Indonesian classrooms, grammar is typically presented through explanations and examples displayed on the board. Teachers demonstrate the forms, students replicate them, and subsequently, they engage in various exercises. This conventional method may work for some learners, but for others, it falls short in helping them thoroughly grasp the reasons behind and the mechanics of verb changes. Nursina (2014) points out that young students gain more when grammar topics are introduced in a gradual and nurturing manner, allowing them to internalize patterns progressively instead of trying to memorize everything at once. She asserts that children require repetition, clear demonstrations, and chances to apply what they've learned through simple tasks.

In addition, insights from Indonesian educational literature provided by Padri, Cicilia, and Nursalim (2020) stress that the development of students' grammar skills is heavily influenced by how significant the learning experience is. When grammar is only taught as something to remember, students are likely to forget it quickly. Conversely, when learners are motivated to use language to convey ideas—even basic ones—they start to grasp the intent behind the grammatical structures they are taught. Their research indicates that understanding of grammar becomes more reliable when students apply it in contexts that are meaningful to them.

The necessity of balancing explanation with practical application is also emphasized by Tarigan (2015). He contends that grammar should not merely be delivered as information but as a skill that students gradually refine through relevant examples. For learners to genuinely comprehend a grammatical structure, they need to observe how it functions in real-life communication, even if the illustrations are simple and tailored to their proficiency. This method ensures that students recognize grammar as more than just a requirement in the classroom; instead, they see it as an integral part of practical language use.

Nonetheless, despite these recommendations, the actual situation in many schools reveals that students continue to struggle with fundamental grammar concepts. Teachers frequently note that elementary students may identify certain past tense forms like *went* or *played*, but they hesitate when asked to use less familiar verbs. Some learners tend to guess or mix verb forms due to not having fully grasped the rule. In SD Negeri 064976, a similar trend can be observed: while a few students demonstrate confidence, the majority still mix up present and past tenses or cannot recognize irregular verbs.

Another aspect that adds to this challenge is the lack of students' exposure to English beyond the classroom. English is rarely part of their everyday interactions, and most students do not come across real English outside of academic tasks. This prevents them from naturally recognizing



language patterns. As a result, the teacher's function becomes crucial in crafting relevant learning experiences that reinforce their grasp of grammar.

Under these circumstances, it is important to evaluate students' capacity to comprehend and utilize the Past Tense. Knowing their strengths and weaknesses assists educators in determining which areas of the lesson require further focus. It also helps to uncover if students face difficulties in grasping the rule itself, identifying verb forms, or constructing complete sentences. This information is valuable for organizing remedial exercises, enhancing teaching methods, or even modifying the pacing of future grammar lessons.

Consequently, this research intends to offer a comprehensive overview of the performance of sixth-grade students at SD Negeri 064976 in mastering the Past Tense. By analyzing their exam scores and frequent mistakes, this study aims to provide insights that can aid teachers in enhancing the educational process. The outcomes are expected to assist educators in crafting more effective grammar teaching and ensuring that students build a stronger foundation as they prepare to advance to the next level of their education.

## **METHOD**

This research adopts a descriptive methodology with the purpose of illustrating the proficiency of sixth-grade students in grasping Past Tense concepts. The study was carried out on Monday, October 3, 2025, at SD Negeri 064976, located on Jl. Kapten M. Jamil Lubis, Bandar Selamat, Medan Tembung District, Medan City, North Sumatra.

The research involved 20 sixth-grade students who participated in the learning activities and completed assessment assignments related to Past Tense concepts. Information was gathered through observation, interviews, and documentation.

During the interview phase, the researcher engaged in conversation with the homeroom teacher, Mrs. Rina Astuty, S. Pd., to gain insight into the learning behaviors of the students, their initial skill levels, and common difficulties encountered when studying English grammar. Subsequently, the researcher conducted direct observations while the students worked on assignments. The goal of this observation was to observe how students understand instructions, their approach to solving problems, and identify the areas that appeared most confusing to them.

The documentation technique was implemented by collecting photographs of the students' test results and the answer sheets they completed. These documents serve as the foundation for quantitatively evaluating the students' level of competence.

The collected data was analyzed by classifying student scores into three categories: high, medium, and low. The findings from the interviews and observations were utilized as supporting evidence to comprehend the reasons or patterns of errors that emerged during the completion of Past Tense assignments.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Presentation of Student Value Data

This information comes from the learning assessment given to the 20 students in class VI A. The purpose of presenting this data is to assess student comprehension of the material that has been covered and to evaluate their overall learning success.

The data on values is presented in tabular form to make it simple to read, compare, and use as a foundation for comparing the skills of each student. Sudjana (2019) claims that data presented in tables is easier to analyze and leads to more understandable findings.

Students' grades are divided into three categories—high, medium, and low in order to clarify the learning outcome. The purpose of this categorization is to allow teachers to see which students have already mastered the material, which have a decent understanding, and which still require assistance. The following criteria are used to determine the grade categories:

High if the value is 70 or more

Moderate value equals 56–69.

Low if the value is 55 or below

In their study Wahyuni & Hidayat (2021) also employed this kind of categorization, concluding that value classification aids in identifying the next steps in instruction in accordance with the students' abilities.

### 2. Diagram and Table

This diagram and table shows the distribution of student score categories in Class VI A.

**Table of Students' Scores**

No	Name	Score
1.	Abinda Khumairoh Siregar	54
2.	Abimad Albi P	56
3.	Alda Rianjani HTB	56
4.	Alex Ander Parluhutan	48
5.	Amirra Putri Hanifah	54
6.	Alazyi Sepultura	54
7.	Assyira Ramadhani P	58
8.	Lidi Awla Putra	78
9.	El Adrean Sihombing	79
10.	Fransiska Damayanti	68
11.	Jeriko L. Eben	48
12.	Osee Prando Tarigan	45
13.	M. Majid Dawlay	55
14.	Putra Rizky Kurniawan	55
15.	Risky Nabilia	75
16.	Sarah Meliana	60
17.	Sultan Rahmat	80
18.	Tri Mutiara Wardani	88
19.	Zahra Aminah	62
20.	Zaki Ar Rahmat	68

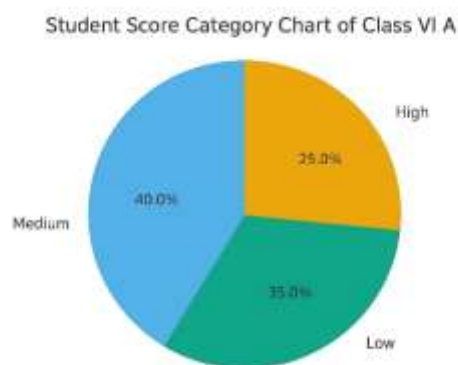


Diagram 1. Student score category chart of class VI A

### 3. Discussion of Learning Outcomes

The assessment score indicates that students in the same class continue to have varying levels of learning ability. Students in the high category are already able to comprehend the material well and answer questions accurately. Students in the middle group already have a basic grasp but still need more practice to improve. However, the low group suggests that some students still need individualized care and attention from their instructors in order to grasp the material completely.

This result also demonstrates the uneven learning outcomes of pupils, as there are more students in the medium and low categories than in the high category. Tri Mutiara Wardani received the highest score of 88, while Osee Prando Tarigan received the lowest score of 45. The significant difference in value between these numbers suggests that there are disparities in learning capacity across a class. This may also happen since each student learns at a different pace, under different circumstances, and at different times (Wahyuni & Hidayat, 2021).

Tomlinson (2021) argues that variances in learning outcomes in a class are natural since not all students learn in the same way. As a result, teachers must understand their students' learning style in order to tailor the learning experience to their talents.

### 4. The Factors That Affect a Student's Grade

The following are some possible reasons why students learn at different rates:

- a. Different people have different learning capacities.
- b. Some students continue to have a low level of motivation to learn.
- c. The home learning environment is not conducive to learning
- d. Not all students may benefit from the teacher's method of instruction.

According to Arifin (2023), learning outcomes are influenced by the student's self, the environment, and the learning activities provided by the instructor.

### 5. Improvement Strategies

Here are some suggestions for enhancing students' learning outcomes:

- a. The instructor offers more assistance to students in the lower grades.



- b. Forming diverse study groups consisting of students from high, middle, and low achievement levels
- c. Utilizing engaging and simple to understand learning resources
- d. Provide practice questions in a systematic and gradual manner.
- e. Encouraging, praising, and providing children with constructive support

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of grade VI A students' scores, three learning ability categories were identified: high, medium, and low. Of the 20 students, 5 (25%) were in the high category, 8 (40%) in the medium category, and 7 (35%) in the low category. These results indicate that overall, the majority of students fall into the medium category, but the number of students in the low category is still quite large, resulting in uneven learning achievement within the class. These differences in scores also indicate that not all students have fully grasped the material, necessitating further action to optimally improve learning outcomes.

## Suggestions

1. Teachers are advised to provide additional guidance or special remedial classes for students in the lower categories so they can catch up on their understanding of the material.
2. Learning methods or media that are more engaging, interactive, and tailored to students' learning styles need to be implemented to make the learning process more effective.
3. Collaborative learning through group discussions can be implemented by combining students from the high, medium, and low categories to facilitate knowledge transfer.
4. Parents are expected to provide support, motivation, and supervision of learning at home so that students develop better study habits.
5. Learning evaluations should be conducted periodically to monitor student learning progress and determine further corrective actions.

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