

The Effect Of Word Search Puzzles Game On Students' Vocabulary Mastery Of Grade Xi At SMA Negeri 7 Tanjung Balai 2025/2026 Academic Year

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ABSTRACT

This research purposed to find the effect of Word Search Puzzles Game on students' vocabulary mastery of grade XI at SMA Negeri 7 Tanjung Balai 2025/2026 Academic Year. This research was conducted with an experimental design into pre-test, treatment, and post-test. This research focused on students from grade XI-1 and XI-2 at SMA Negeri 7 Tanjung Balai which consisted of 66 students, selected through random sampling. A multiple choice test was used to collect the data. The score of pre-test was conducted before giving the treatment. The results showed that the mean score of the experimental group was 70.75 in the pre-test and 86.96 in the post-test, while the mean score of the control group was 65.00 in the pre-test and 83.63 in the post-test. Statistical analysis using the t-test for the degree of freedom (df) 64 at the level of significance 0,05 where the t-table is 1,669. The result of the analysis showed that t-score is higher than t-table $2,0625 > 1,669$ at the level of significance 0,05 with the degree of freedom (df) 64. It means that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and the null hypothesis (H_o) was rejected.

Keywords: Effect, Word Search Puzzles Game, Vocabulary Mastery

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh Permainan Teka-teki Cari Kata terhadap penguasaan kosakata siswa kelas XI di SMA Negeri 7 Tanjung Balai pada Tahun Ajaran. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan rancangan eksperimen yang terdiri dari pra-tes, perlakuan, dan pasca-tes. Penelitian ini berfokus pada siswa dari kelas XI-1 dan XI-2 di SMA Negeri 7 Tanjung Balai yang berjumlah 66 siswa, yang dipilih melalui pengambilan sampel acak. Tes pilihan ganda digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Skor pra-tes dilakukan sebelum pemberian perlakuan. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa skor rata-rata kelompok eksperimen adalah 70,75 pada pra-tes dan 86,96 pada pasca-tes, sedangkan skor rata-rata kelompok kontrol adalah 65,00 pada pra-tes dan 83,63 pada pasca-tes. Analisis statistik menggunakan uji t dengan derajat kebebasan (df) 64 pada tingkat signifikansi 0,05 di mana nilai t tabel adalah 1,669. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa nilai t lebih besar dari nilai t tabel, yaitu $2,0625 > 1,669$ pada tingkat signifikansi 0,05 dengan derajat kebebasan (df) 64. Hal ini berarti bahwa hipotesis alternatif (H_a) diterima dan hipotesis nol (H_o) ditolak.

Kata kunci: Efek, Permainan Teka-teki Cari Kata, Penguasaan Kosakata.

INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a component of human ability to communicate verbally, but also a system or tool used by humans to understand one another (Suparlan, 2021). Language is often considered a bridge that unites people around the world. Due to the large number of languages that exist around the world, we must determine one language that can be used officially. English is one language that has helped people around the world communicate. English is one of the foreign languages for Indonesian students must study English from elementary school through college. This is regarded as a challenging subject for pupils because English is very different from Indonesian in terms of structure, pronunciation, and vocabulary. The English language curriculum states that teaching focuses on four skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Learning the elements of language, namely structure, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling, supports these four skills. To master each language skill, learners must master vocabulary. This means that English learners must master vocabulary if they want to master these four skills.

Vocabulary is an important component in language teaching because it is the main foundation of language proficiency and determines how well students read, write, speak, and listen. Vocabulary plays a very important role in shaping students understanding of the language they learn at school. It helps students speak well (Linda Sari Lubis, 2021).

In light of the findings from the interview with English teacher at the class XI SMA Negeri 7 Tanjung Balai, the vocabulary mastery issues were found at SMA Negeri 7 Tanjung Balai. Many eleven-grade students had difficulty learning vocabulary, which made it difficult for them to understand all the material taught by the teacher. The eleven-grade teacher at SMA Negeri 7 Tanjung Balai said that students were not motivated when the teacher conducted exercises or presented material in class. Some of the students remained silent and did not do anything the teacher asked them to do. The teacher did not know whether the students understood. This caused difficulties in English learning, especially in vocabulary teaching.

Word search puzzles require students to find listed words hidden in any direction: horizontally, vertically, diagonally, forwards, or backwards. Students will discover new ways to learn vocabulary and discover many new words in a fun way while playing this game. They will also improve their knowledge of words.

Teachers must find tools that help students learn vocabulary. Many internal and external factors can influence students low vocabulary mastery. Internal factors include motivation, interest, personality, language elements, and others. External factors include teacher skills and learning media.

Therefore, teachers must support student learning with a good teaching system and create a learning environment that helps students improve their language skills according to their ability level. In other words, teachers should pay attention to students' learning and interests rather than limiting their teaching to the classroom, but also using teaching media such as games, real objects, picture cards, charts, and pictures. Games not only help many students maintain their interest and

creativity, but also help teachers create an environment where language is useful and meaningful. Games will increase students' desire to learn English and make them enjoy the learning process.

Thus, it can be concluded that students' English vocabulary can be achieved effectively through the use of word search puzzles. Research conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah Buntok, SMP N 5 Padangsidempuan, and SMP Swasta Mars Pematangsiantar produced the same findings: students' average scores increased significantly after they learned using word search puzzles. Simply put, students became more interested in learning vocabulary through these games and did not get bored easily. Because the learning method was more like playing a game than memorizing, they were more active in searching for and recognizing new words. Additionally, the statistical test results (t-test) from each study showed that although the word search puzzle game improved student scores, this was not a coincidence; the use of this game truly had an impact on students' vocabulary skills.

From the explanation above this study was decided with the title "The Effect of Word Search Puzzles Game on Students' Vocabulary Mastery of Grade XI at SMA Negeri 7 Tanjung Balai 2025/2026 Academic Year". The identification of this research was: That the vocabulary mastery of the eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 7 Tanjungbalai was still low because the learning process had not been optimally supported by game-based learning. The limitation of the research was focused on: The Effect of Word Search Puzzles Game on Students' Vocabulary Mastery of Grade XI at SMA Negeri 7 Tanjung Balai 2025/2026 Academic Year.

Vocabulary is a fundamental component of the English language that English language learners must master in order to speak and communicate. Additionally, vocabulary is necessary for improving students English language skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Consequently, students who lack vocabulary will struggle to understand texts, speak, and write their ideas (Linda Sari Lubis, 2021). Vocabulary is a list of terms taught to students in English as part of the teaching and learning process, which involves all four English language skills. Therefore, vocabulary is considered very important in language teaching and learning (Barclay, 2022). To understand the many vocabulary words in the English textbook, you must study vocabulary. Vocabulary is a component of language that provides information or explanations for linguistic terms, and without it, no one can speak or understand a language (Rahmah, 2022).

Vocabulary mastery is one of the requirements for mastering English as a foreign language at the basic, intermediated, and advanced levels is vocabulary mastery. A person's knowledge or skill in understanding and mastering vocabulary is called vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary mastery is very important for learning English because it allows them to know more things (Nur Rahma, M. Tahir, 2023). Vocabulary mastery is one of the requirements for mastering English as a foreign language is vocabulary acquisition, which means students have the ability to understand and use words and their meanings. The more vocabulary students have, the better they will use the language. If students' vocabulary is limited, they will find it more difficult to master the language (Rizal, M. A., Suryani, R., & Hasanah, 2021). Acquiring and mastering a sufficient vocabulary is crucial for developing

English language skills. Adequate vocabulary mastery is also essential in the language learning process because a lack of vocabulary can hinder students' progress and prevent them from understanding and communicating effectively in the target language (Maulida Nuzula Firdaus, 2023).

“Word search puzzles” are much easier than other puzzles because they consist only of combinations of words. However, finding hidden words is a major problem because words are often hidden in the middle or located vertically or horizontally. In “word search puzzles,” students are asked to explore the space associated with the words. In addition, “word search puzzles” can help children improve their comprehension skills by teaching them what to look for, why things are connected and mentioned, when, who, what, and other questions related to the material in “word search puzzles” (Al Dulaimy, 2025). Word puzzles are games where you have to find words in a collection of randomly arranged letters, usually in a square shape. You can also find words horizontally, vertically, diagonally, or backwards. This game requires players to find all the words or terms hidden within a square of letters. After finding the first letter of the word, look for the second letter to the right, left, above, below, or diagonally that matches, until the row of letters found forms the word you are looking (Fitria, 2023). Word search puzzles are word games in which letters are arranged in a square or rectangular grid. Finding and marking every word hidden in the grid is the aim of these puzzles. Words can be ordered vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. Although more challenging riddles could require players to locate the hidden words on their own, a list of them is frequently supplied. There are themes associated with every concealed word in many word search puzzles. To improve communication skills, these games can be used to practice specific language features at certain stages of the learning process. In short, word search puzzles are games in which people play to find vocabulary in many words (Afra, 2024).

METHOD

In this research is a quantitative research, there are two groups: the experimental group is XI-1 and the control group is XI-2. The researcher is using Word search puzzles game in experimental class. In the class control, the writer do not using Word search puzzles game. XI-1 Consist of 33 students and XI-2 Consist of 33 students, so the numbers of samples are 66 students.

Table 1. Research Design

Group	Pre-Test	Treatment	Post-Test
Experimental	X	Word search puzzles game	X
Control	Y	Conventional Model	Y

Where:

X= Using Word search puzzles game

Y= Using Conventional model

The Instrument used was a multiple choice vocabulary test. The data collection was carried out in line with the use of the research instruments as follow: (1) Pre-Test, Pre-test was conducted to find out the students mastery in vocabulary before having experiment. The pre-test was given to students and their task was scored. The result of the pre-test was considered as preliminary data. (2) Treatment **Pre-Teaching Activities**, before starting each new lesson, the teacher would ask one of the students to pray aloud for them. After that, the teacher evaluates students' readiness to learn based on their attendance records and decides whether they are ready or not. Before starting a new session on a different subject, teachers can inspire their students by reviewing the previous lesson with them and moving on to the next topic. **While-Teaching Activities**, during this part of the stage, the teacher not only presents the lesson, but also provides word search puzzles game media learning to help the teacher create an interesting learning process and help students in the process of vocabulary. **Post-Teaching Activities**, at this point in the process, teachers evaluate their students' level of understanding of the topic. Teachers provide feedback and incentives to students who have completed the learning process with a variety of different methods, such as by giving awards to game winners. This is done to motivate students who have completed the learning process. Afterwards, teachers and students shared their thoughts on what they had found as a result of their combined efforts and what they had learned as a result of those efforts. (3) Post-Test After the teaching presentation, the student of both experiment group and control group was given post-test. The data collected from this test enables comparison of vocabulary mastery between the experimental and control groups after receiving different treatments.

Table 2. Scoring Guide

SCORE	CATEGORY
90-100	Excellent
86-95	Very good
76-85	Good
66-75	Fairly good
56-65	Fair
36-55	Poor
0-35	Very poor

$$S = \frac{\text{right answer}}{20} \times 100 = \text{total score}$$

The validity is supported most convincingly by subsequent personal observation by teachers and peers. By far the most complex criterion of a good test is validity. To make it sure that the test was validated, the test was validated by checking by the English teacher of SMA N 7 Tanjung Balai. The formulation to measure validity test (Arikunto, 2010)

Where:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{\{N\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2\}\{N\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

A reliability test is a trusted and reliable tool that will produce reliable data. No matter how many times data is collected, the results will remain the same if the data is in accordance with reality (Arikunto P. D., 2018)

Where:

$$r_{11} = \frac{2r_{xy}}{1 + r_{xy}}$$

In order for the data to be complete and usable for t-test analysis, researchers must calculate the standard deviation of each group before using the t-test formula from Suharsimi Arikunto.

The formula of the mean as the follows:

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Formula of standard deviation:

$$SD_x = \sqrt{\frac{\sum X^2}{N}}$$

The research assessed the data from pre-test and post-test scores as part of data analysis technique. In order to analyze the data in this study, the research employed the t-test formula. According to Hartono, the t-test is one of the statistical tests used to determine whether or not two samples of mean in two variables have a significant influence. The t-test was used to determine whether there is a significant difference between students' vocabulary mastery taught with and without the Word search puzzles game. The data is analyzed by applying t-test, finally the significant of the sum, t-test and t-table would compare with the degree of freedom (df) of the test, t-test as follow:

$$t^t = \frac{M_x - M_y}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{\sum x^2 + \sum y^2}{N_x + N_y + 2}\right) + \left(\frac{1}{N_x} + \frac{1}{N_y}\right)}}$$

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the students' test can be seen on the following table score.

Table 3 Score of Pre-Test and Post-Test Experiment Group

N o	Initia l Name	Score of Pre-Test (x)	Score of Post-Test (y)	X ²	Y ²	XY
1	AN	75	90	5625	8100	6750
2	AA	75	90	5625	8100	6750
3	AM	75	90	5625	8100	6750
4	AS	75	95	5625	9025	7125
5	BMH	75	90	5625	8100	6750
6	DS	75	95	5625	9025	7125
7	DSM	80	95	6400	9025	7600
8	FIA	65	95	4225	9025	6175
9	FN	65	95	4225	9025	6175
10	FAA	65	95	4225	9025	6175
11	GG	65	90	4225	8100	5850

1	HKV	65	80	4225	6400	5200
2						
1	KR	65	80	4225	6400	5200
3						
1	KDL	75	90	5625	8100	6750
4						
1	KM	80	90	6400	8100	7200
5						
1	MS	80	95	6400	9025	7600
6						
1	MKS	80	95	6400	9025	7600
7						
1	MAA	80	95	6400	9025	7600
8						
1	MFT	70	95	4900	9025	6650
9						
2	MI	70	80	4900	6400	5600
0						
2	MA	70	80	4900	6400	5600
1						
2	NP	70	80	4900	6400	5600
2						
2	NPR	70	80	4900	6400	5600
3						
2	NA	70	80	4900	6400	5600
4						
2	NF	70	80	4900	6400	5600
5						
2	SA	70	80	4900	6400	5600
6						
2	SS	70	80	4900	6400	5600
7						
2	SDW	70	80	4900	6400	5600
8						
2	TAL	70	90	4900	8100	6300
9						
3	WA	70	80	4900	6400	5600
0						
3	YCY	60	80	3600	6400	4800
1						
3	YL	60	80	3600	6400	4800
2						
3	ZL	60	80	3600	6400	4800
3						

Total	$\Sigma X=233$ 5	$\Sigma Y=287$ 0	$\Sigma X^2 =$ 166325	$\Sigma Y^2=$ 251050	$\Sigma XY=$ 203725
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Data was taken before giving a treatment and explanation material. It shown the highest and the lowest score in Pre-Test was:

- 1) Students who got 60 score was 3 students.
- 2) Students who got 65 score was 6 students.
- 3) Students who got 70 score was 12 students.
- 4) Students who got 75 score was 7 students.
- 5) Students who got 80 score was 5 students.

Data was taken after giving a treatment and used Word Search Puzzles Game. It shown the highest and the lowest score in Post-Test was:

- 1) Students who got 80 score was 15 students.
- 2) Students who got 90 score was 8 students.
- 3) Students who got 95 score was 10 students.

From the data above, it can be concluded that the students' scores in the pre-test were lower than those in the post-test. The mean score of the pre-test was 70,7, and after receiving treatment through the Word search puzzles game, the students' scores increased by 22,91%, reaching an average of 86,9 in the post-test.

Table 4 Score of Pre-test and Post-test of Control Group

N	Initial Name	Score of Pre-test (x)	Score of Post-test (y)	X ²	Y ²	XY
1	AA	75	90	5625	8100	6750
2	ASS	90	95	8100	9025	8550
3	AJ	90	95	8100	9025	8550
4	AP	75	95	5625	9025	7125
5	AZ	25	70	625	4900	1750
6	AS	25	70	625	4900	1750
7	AKN	30	85	900	7225	2550
8	AA	30	90	900	8100	2700
9	DTR	35	85	1225	7225	2975
10	DAH	40	85	1600	7225	3400
11	EM	75	90	5625	8100	6750
12	FMS	45	80	2025	6400	3600
13	HR	50	80	2500	6400	4000
14	IP	90	95	8100	9025	8550
15	JM	90	95	8100	9025	8550

1	KS	75	85	5625	7225	6375
6						
1	KRM	70	85	4900	7225	5950
7						
1	KUA	80	90	6400	8100	7200
8						
1	KH	75	90	5625	8100	6750
9						
2	MRP	70	90	4900	8100	6300
0						
2	MHP	75	90	5625	8100	6750
1						
2	MRF	70	90	4900	8100	6300
2						
2	MJ	80	90	6400	8100	7200
3						
2	MS	80	90	6400	8100	7200
4						
2	RFA	70	80	4900	6400	5600
5						
2	RD	75	80	5625	6400	6000
6						
2	SS	75	95	5625	9025	7125
7						
2	SN	70	80	4900	6400	5600
8						
2	SNM	70	80	4900	6400	5600
9						
3	TP	70	85	4900	7225	5950
0						
3	ZN	70	85	4900	7225	5950
1						
3	ZS	75	80	5625	6400	6000
2						
3	ZT	75	80	5625	6400	6000
3						
	Total	$\Sigma X=2145$	$\Sigma Y=276$	$\Sigma X^2=$	$\Sigma Y^2=$	$\Sigma XY=$
			0	150375	239550	187775

Data was taken before giving explanation material. It shown the highest score and the lowest score in pre-test was:

- 1) Students who got 25 score was 2 students.
- 2) Students who got 30 score was 2 students.
- 3) Student who got 35 score was 1 student.
- 4) Student who got 40 score was 1 student.

- 5) Student who got 45 score was 1 student.
- 6) Student who got 50 score was 1 student.
- 7) Students who got 70 score was 8 students.
- 8) Students who got 75 score was 10 students.
- 9) Students who got 80 score was 3 students.
- 10) Students who got 90 score was 4 students.

Data was taken after giving explanation. It shown the highest score and the lowest score in Post-test was:

- 1) Students who got 70 score was 2 students.
- 2) Students who got 80 score was 8 students.
- 3) Students who got 85 score was 7 students.
- 4) Students who got 90 score was 10 students.
- 5) Students who got 95 score was 6 students.

From the data score was the lowest score 25 increased to 70 so the score was increased 45 score and the highest score 90 increased to 95 so the score was increased 5 score.

Hypothesis Testing To test the hypothesis, the formula of t-test and distribution of t-table are applied the result show that t-critical must higher that t-table, the hypothesis testing is done in order to know whether is acceptable or rejected.

After analyzing the data into t-test, it was score that t-score was $2.0625 > 1.669$, if this consulted to critical score product moment degree of freedom (df) N_1+N_2-2 or $33+33-2=64$. The critical score of t-score $>$ t-table.

So, this research has been successfully, H_a is accepted and it revealed that hypothesis using Word search puzzles game on Vocabulary Mastery effective because using Word search puzzles game as a media in learning.

The application of media to experimental group and control group helped the teacher to design teaching materials. These media's were applied to the experimental group, the achievement was different. It could be proven from the scores obtained by the students where the experimental group was higher scores than the control group. The average students' score on the post test of the experimental group was 86, while the average students' score on the post test of the control group was 83.

The average scores of the both those groups not prove that the higher mean score was the high score in T-test also. T-test proved that experimental group was not high score than control group, although the average of experimental group was higher than the mean of control group.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the use of teaching media has a significant impact on student learning outcomes. The results showed that student achievement in the experimental group was higher than that of the control group after being given the treatment. This is evident from the higher average post-test score in the experimental class compared to the average post-test score in the control class. Based on statistical calculations, the t-value is 2.0625,

indicating that the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected. This means that there is a significant influence of the teaching media used in the experimental class on student learning outcomes. The improvement in student grades demonstrates that the learning process using the applied media is more effective in helping students understand the material. Students become more active, engaged, and motivated during the learning process. Therefore, it can be concluded that the media used in this study positively contributed to improving student grades. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Allah SWT, the Almighty, for His countless blessings, guidance, health, and mercy that have enabled me to complete this thesis. Peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who has guided mankind to the path of truth. The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the support and assistance of many individuals. The researcher would like to thank the principal of SMA N 7 Tanjungbalai for the permission and support provided, which enabled the researcher to conduct the study within the school environment. Thank you to the English teacher for actively and patiently assisting with the study in the classroom. Thanks are also extended to all students in Class XI Fase F at SMA N 7 Tanjungbalai who gladly contributed and don't forget I would like to convey my deepest appreciation to my advisor, Dian Anggraini Harahap, for her valuable guidance, advice, and time throughout the process of writing this thesis. I am also truly grateful to my family, friends, and colleagues for their continuous support, prayers, and encouragement. May all the kindness and assistance given be rewarded abundantly by Allah SWT. Finally, I hope that this thesis will be beneficial for myself and contribute to the advancement of knowledge.

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