

Benefits of Writing Longer Forms of English for  
Young Non-Native English Speakers

### Abstract

Longer forms of writing in English have a negative image for junior and high school students, especially those who are non-native. It is because they have to use academic language, and writing longer pieces requires a lot of effort. They also have to spend a huge amount of time on such assignments. From these points, they do not like to write longer forms of writing in English even though they have to work on those often. However, this experience has significant merits which will be beneficial in the future; for example, in college and the workplace. This essay explains why young non-native English speakers should work on longer pieces of writing in English. It points out three merits that they are able to achieve from working on these - improved English comprehension levels, critical thinking skills, and the ability to complete tasks - and shows how valuable writing longer pieces in English is for them.

### Benefits of Writing Longer Forms of English for Non-native Young English Speakers

It is common to work on writing in junior and high school as a key part of learning. Students have to do writing assignments in class or for homework for during their school lives. It seems that this situation makes writing a normal thing for students. However, many students hesitate to write in reality, especially longer forms of writing. Longer forms of writing refer to assignments such as term papers and essays. Students have negative feelings about these because of two reasons: writing a lot requires deep consideration, consumes large amounts of time, and thinking about a topic that that does not relate to them directly (Haley, n.d.). As can be seen, longer forms of writing require hard work. But there are some students who have to work even harder to write these. They are the students who are required to write in English because English is a compulsory subject even though they are non-native. It is much more difficult to complete these tasks using unfamiliar language. However, people can improve their second language by writing in that language for a short amount of time every day, like by using diaries (Thomas, 2012). Why do students have to write longer pieces then? This study shows that students do not need to write lengthy essays with a lot of pressures. In addition, people rarely write a lot these days. Most people just send short messages in everyday life. To resolve this, this essay explains three merits for writing a long piece. Today's young non-native English speakers should work on longer forms of writing in English to improve English comprehension levels, critical thinking skills, and to support their ability to complete tasks.

#### **English Comprehension Levels**

The first merit is to improve English comprehension skills. Writing a longer piece requires many hours of work. This means that students have to face English for a long time, which improves their level in writing, speaking, and reading.

Learning vocabulary through writing is better than just reading because it uses the out-put technique (Browne, 2003). Students can put new vocabulary to use while writing, which they learned a short time ago, so it is easy to consolidate. It is the same with grammar and expressions too. Students practice those by using them in their writing and then incorporate them into their own style (Able, n.d.). For speaking, writing provides familiarity with English. Non-native English speakers tend to hesitate in speaking English (Katayama, 2010). This is because of their negative feeling to it. They do not think that they can speak English well, so they avoid talking. To break through this, Tokai University Hokkaido Campus introduced the English Writing Course and made students write ten essays during one term (Katayama, 2010). The teacher increased the length of the essays little by little to make students engage with English longer. As a result, students learned useful expressions and vocabulary and became more familiar with English. This led them to develop a positive attitude toward English, and they began to speak it more often. Writing improves reading too as students use various English sentence patterns while working on it (Graham & Hebert, 2010). Sometimes, there are complicated sentences which are created by putting smaller units of writing together. Students become used to these complex sentences and go on to have a better understanding of written structures. This makes it easier for students to read publications, for instance, the articles and journals. It also leads to improved reading fluency. Writing is the foundation of English and longer forms of writing can improve language skills step by step.

English is no longer viewed as a foreign language today, especially in business, commerce, and technology (Postans, n.d.). He also stated “English also has a special status in over 75 countries with a total population of two billion speakers” (Postans, n.d., para 1). This shows that it is no longer special to speak English now. Furthermore, people will success if they have great English skills. From this, longer forms of writing are an effective way to gain

comprehensive English skills efficiently. Improvement of English comprehension levels is a merit of longer forms of writing.

### **Critical Thinking Skills**

The second merit is to improve critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is a highly cognitive skill which is important for people in many places such as universities or workplaces (Southampton Solent University, n.d.). The Critical Thinking Community (n.d.) define it as “ that mode of thinking — about any subject, content, or problem — in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing it” (para 2). People who have gained this skill can see things open-mindedly from different angles (Critical thinking community, n.d.). From this, critical thinking is very important, and writing can develop this.

A university in the Pacific Northwest researched this by dividing biology students into two groups in one academic year (Kurtz & Quiadamo, 2007). The writing group involved 152 students who worked whose weekly laboratory meetings included writing tasks. The non-writing group included 158 students and their meetings were based on questions. The writing group wrote essays that had five paragraphs with supporting thesis statements for three consecutive quarters. This means that they worked on longer forms of writing every week. Both groups took the California Critical Thinking Skills Test in order to measure the changes. At the beginning of the course, they took the pretest. The posttest was carried out nine weeks after that. As a result, the writing class’s national percentile rank in pretest was 45.17 and improved to 52.54 in the posttest. On the other hand, the nonwriting group’s rank was 42.06 but declined to 39.97. This shows that longer forms of writing affect critical thinking.

In addition, it is necessary for young English speakers to play an active role globally in order to attain critical thinking skills. Japanese universities also know that and are trying to

teach critical thinking, but in reality, they focus on memorizing many facts (Emoni, 2008). The classes' centers are the teachers and students just have to absorb information (Sheffner & Jean, 2005). This present situation will make students' perspective narrow and weaken their critical thinking. Japanese universities have to do something to address this and help students to be globalized. It is hard to change the entire curriculum, but it is easy to make students write more. Their thinking surely improves then and it is good for their future. From this, writing longer forms of writing develops critical thinking and is a merit for young English speakers.

### **Ability to Complete Tasks**

The third merit is to improve students' ability to complete tasks. Longer forms of writing as assignments require the students to consider many things, for instance, the time they have left before handing it in. It is challenging to worry about these things and write at the same time, but it improves time management skills. While writing, organized students think about the time available before the due date. Then they create a schedule to finish the assignment smoothly and begin their writing based on it. Other students who don't do this still have the essay ready before the deadline by considering the time they have left.

Managing time effectively is necessary, especially when writing longer pieces in English because many difficulties exist when working in a second language. If something happens contrary to the writer's expectations, they need to readjust the schedule accordingly. From this process, students get better at keeping their time in charge. People who have effective strategies to plan time can keep everything under control (University of Sussex, n.d.). Time management is an important skill for people's future lives.

Students also have to consider the word limit while writing. This means that they cannot write anything and everything. They need to select the strongest and most salient points and disregard other information. They are also required to construct clear and

persuasive paragraphs within the word limit. In addition, longer forms of writing improve the ability to sustain focus on those strong points all the time (Grove, n.d.). This can also improve the skill to explain those points carefully and in detail. From this, students can develop the skills to complete work concisely.

To summarize, longer forms of writing in English can assist in developing many useful skills. By using these skills, people are able to do their best work in a restricted environment. This is very useful because this kind of situation exists in various places, for example, workplaces and schools. In workplaces, people have to make persuasive documents and power points in a short time in order to succeed in their dealings. If they fail to meet the deadline are unable to make the presentation on time that influences others as well. For instance, both inside and the outside of the working relationships would collapse which would take long time to fix. Clients also have to put their work hold which have deadlines as well (Meilan, 2013). In school, students have to write long important pieces like graduation theses. If they write them without focusing on key points, they cannot argue or assess their themes and get bad grades (Wright, 2011). Based on the points above, writing longer forms of writing improves students' ability to complete tasks and is a merit for young English speakers

### **Conclusion**

Overall, longer forms of writing in English have many merits for young non-native English speakers. They might not understand the importance and tend to focus on the effort that they have to put in while writing. But this big task provides them with valuable language and builds character. Writing longer forms of writing in English is an effective way to improve entire English level. English is a global language all over the world and a key way to communicate with people in many countries. It is becoming a normal thing to have a functional knowledge of English these days. But on the other hand, this situation means that

people cannot do anything if they are unfamiliar with English. They are going to have difficulty in workplaces or on trips. It is hard to overcome it in the short term. To have a standard or higher level of English is necessary both today and in the future. In addition, companies want people who can contribute to making profits and work well. Therefore, people who have critical thinking skills and the ability to complete tasks are welcomed. If they have critical thinking skills, they can see things from many perspectives and have the potential to break new ground or find fatal errors. This will provide benefits to companies. Moreover, people with the ability to complete tasks can finish work efficiently, so they can complete several tasks to a high standard when compared with others. To summarize, this writing experience enables people to gain English knowledge and become valuable staffs in the long term. Writing a long piece is preparation for students' good futures and it is a worthwhile thing to do. It should be done in school. For improved English comprehension levels, critical thinking skills, and an ability to complete tasks, young non-native English speakers must be required to write long pieces in English.

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