

**'MAGIC SLATE': An Intervention for Improving the Writing
Skill in English among Students of Upper Primary Level
(Individual Research Project of SCERT, Kerala)**

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STATE COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING (SCERT)

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DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the study entitled '**MAGIC SLATE**' : **An Intervention for Improving the Writing Skill in English among Students of Upper Primary Level** is done by us under the guidance of **Dr.Sreejith, Research Officer, SCERT** and no part of this report has been presented earlier for any Degree or Diploma or other similar title of any other University.

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ABSTRACT

'MAGIC SLATE' : An Intervention for Improving the Writing Skill in English among Students of Upper Primary Level

Reaching proficient levels of literacy is a universal goal for all learners. This objective is especially challenging for English language learners particularly in the domain of writing. There are four basic skills of language learning. These are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among these four languages skills, listening and reading are receptive skills and speaking and writing are productive skills. Writing is the final skill in the hierarchy of language skills. Its efficiency and commands come with the mastery in receptive and productive skills. Writing has been identified as one of the most essential skills because the world has become so text-oriented. Due to this change, teachers are in great demand of effective techniques to improve writing skills of their students. Learning the writing process is important for the students as it enables them to express their thoughts, knowledge and feelings efficiently. When students feel more confident and competent in their writing process, then they will express themselves efficiently.

It is an undeniable fact that writing is the most important and difficult of the four language skills. It has always occupied a place in most in the teaching and learning of English language. The writer must be able to organize the ideas, to construct the sentences, to use punctuation, and spelling well. Besides, they must be able to sequence their writing

cohesively and coherently. English is a language taught in our state and our government has taken several efforts, for increasing its proficiency in learners. English has been formally taught in all levels of schools starting from elementary up to university. It is of course as the consequence of the global era development where English is deeply needed as a means of communication.

The locality for carrying out our research project was two schools situated in two rural villages located in Thrissur District namely Thanikkudam and Kodakara. What is peculiar about the samples is that their only opportunity for the exposure to English Language is through classroom activities only. But it is worth mentioning that “Hello English” - an innovative programme to improve English Language has to a great extent improved the language skills like Speaking, Listening and Reading skills. There is much scope left for enhancing the writing skill of the students. It is in this context that researchers decided to make innovative interventions through Magic Slate to enhance the writing skill of the students.

Thus realizing the need for a novel and different strategy to improve the writing skill of the children, the researchers came forward with '*MAGIC SLATE*' : *An Intervention for Improving the Writing Skills in English Among Students of Upper Primary Level*. Magic Slate aims at creating interesting and imaginative activities mainly curriculum – oriented in order to frame an environment conducive for improving writing skill.

The main objectives are to identify the difficulties faced by the Upper Primary Students in writing English, to tackle the difficulties faced by the Upper Primary students in writing English through appropriate strategies and to enable the students build up confidence in writing English.

The experimental design used in this study was Pre test – Post test single group design. The population of the study was the primary school students of Kerala. The sample

consists of 63 students from Upper Primary school, Thanikkudam, and 24 students from Govt National Boys High School, Kodakara of Thrissur District.

Two tools are used for this study - 1) Rubrics (for evaluating Entry and Exit Behaviour in Writing Skills) 2) Module to enhance the writing skill of the students .

The expected outcomes will be the samples learn to use more accurate, entertaining and meaningful vocabulary in tune with the interests of the readers and coherence with the task. They will also learn to display ideas in a unique, interesting, clear and novel way. They learn to integrate ideas. The samples learn to use tenses with consistency and to use different forms of verbs as well. Their errors with subject – verb agreement will be reduced to some extent. After the interventions the errors with punctuation and full stops will be minimised. The use of capital letters with sentence beginning and proper nouns will be improved.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter includes the background, significance, objectives, scope and limitations of the project.

Research Topic:

'MAGIC SLATE' : An Intervention for Improving the Writing Skill in English among Students of Upper Primary Level

Reaching proficient levels of literacy is a universal goal for all learners. This objective is especially challenging for English language learners particularly in the domain of writing. There are four basic skills of language learning. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among these four language skills, listening and reading are receptive skills and speaking and writing are productive skills. Writing is the final skill in the hierarchy of language skills. Its efficiency and commands come with the mastery in receptive and productive skills. Writing has been identified as one of the most essential skills because the world has become so text-oriented. Due to this change, teachers are in great demand of effective techniques to improve the writing skill of their students. Learning the writing process is important for the students as it enables students to express their thoughts, knowledge and feelings efficiently. When students feel more confident and competent in their writing process, they will express themselves efficiently.

However, writing is not a naturally acquired skill; it is usually learned or acquired through constant practice. Further, the students face several difficulties and challenges in acquiring this skill in a second language. There can be many social, psychological and cognitive reasons like lack of exposure and motivation. Students may not be familiar with the basic rules and structural patterns of English. Some EFL teachers may be perplexed by such problems in their writing classes and are unable to find an efficient strategy to solve the issue. Besides the reasons mentioned above, another major obstacle that students face is the shortage of time to practise writing in the classroom. As any other skill, writing also requires plenty of practice to acquire fluency.

Background and Context of the Project

English language has been commonly accepted as an active global language. People who study English language consider it as their personal proficiency. Therefore, nowadays many people, particularly students, ought to master English language. Mastering English language is really significant in this era of globalization. By mastering the language the students can improve themselves both in academic and life skills. The language widely used as a means of communication in the world is English. So, it is important for people to learn it. By learning English, the students are expected to keep abreast with the development in any field. The teaching of English is focused on the ability of learners to be capable of mastering the four language skills, namely: listening speaking, reading, and writing (Depdiknas, 2003: 6). The learners should have abilities in reading and listening to support their speaking and writing. It is an undeniable fact that writing is the most important and difficult of the four language skills. The writer must be able to organize the ideas, to construct the sentences, to use punctuation, and spelling as well. Besides, they must be able to sequence their writing cohesively and coherently.

English is taught as a second language in Kerala and the government has taken several efforts for increasing its proficiency in learners. The innovative programme. 'Hello English' is one such endeavour. English has been formally taught in all levels of schools - from elementary up to university. It is of course as the consequence of the global era development where English is deeply needed as a means of communication.

The locality for carrying out our research project were two schools situated in two rural villages in Thrissur District namely Thanikkudam and Kodakara. What is peculiar about the samples is that the opportunity they have for the exposure to English Language is through classroom activities only. It is worth mentioning that 'Hello English Programme' has contributed much to improve the language skills like Listening Speaking and Reading. This programme also boosted up the confidence of children to use the language without much inhibition. There is certain scope left for enhancing the writing skill of the students. It is in this context that the researchers decided to make innovative interventions through Magic Slate to enhance the writing skill of the students.

Need and Significance

Teaching English as a second language, especially writing skill, can vary according to the cultural and academic environment. The situation in rural Kerala can be quite different from other parts of India due to the high literacy rate and interference of first language. Thus, a new paradigm will be needed to develop writing skills in this area, which is the major focus of the research project. Studies of second language writing are sadly lacking, and little research is done on the L2 writing process among indigenous populations. Students who have learnt to converse and write in vernacular in their school education, and rather minimally or not at all in English, would then find communication at the Secondary level rather difficult and frustrating, unless necessary help is provided to prepare them properly during the elementary level .

Acquiring skills in English, especially writing skill, varies according to the cultural, social and academic environment. While there are many courses to enhance the spoken English and oral communication, very little efforts are reported on how to improve the writing skills. There is a great need, therefore, to study the problems faced by the students and then develop suitable strategies to improve their writing skill in English, keeping in mind the dearth of time in the academic year.

Thus realizing the need for a novel and different strategy to improve the writing skill of the children, the researchers came forward with '*MAGIC SLATE*': *An Intervention for Improving the Writing Skill in English among Students of Upper Primary Level*. Magic Slate aims at creative, interesting and interactive activities, mainly curriculum – oriented, in order to frame an environment conducive for improving writing skill.

Scope and limitations

Research has shown that writing promotes learning and enhances critical- thinking skills. Improving writing skill is a significant challenge faced by the teaching fraternity regionally and nationally. The “not yet proficient” scores of the Pre – Test state that the writing ability of the students needs improvement. The students should be able to generate, draft, evaluate, revise, and edit ideas and forms of expressions in their writing. Students should also be able to display effective choices in the organization of their writing, including detail to illustrate and elaborate their ideas and using appropriate conventions of written English. Research indicates that students’ writing abilities need to be stronger. Writing is a critical literacy skill for students’ academic and future success. Methods for improving the writing of non-proficient students must be developed, implemented, and studied.

The limitations of the study are as follows.

- This experiment is limited to studying only the writing skills.
- The implementation of activities was limited to enhance the writing skill of seventh-grade students.
- This study will not attempt to examine the effects of writing across the curriculum on content-area learning.
- This study was conducted with a single group only.
- Testing may be another limitation. It is possible that students could show improvement on the post-test because of their experience with the almost similar pre-test.

Objectives

- To identify the difficulties faced by the Upper Primary Students in writing English.
- To enable the students build up confidence in writing English.
- To tackle the difficulties faced by the Upper Primary students in writing English through appropriate strategies.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

The credibility of any research extensively depends on the quality and suitability of the research design, method, tools, data collection, and data analysis. Methodology refers to the way in which research is conducted, in terms of the strategy employed and the tools utilised or developed, in collecting and analysing the data, in the pursuit of the goal of the research. The methodology followed in the present research project '*MAGIC SLATE*': *An Intervention for Improving the Writing Skill in English among Students of Upper Primary Level* at the various phases of the investigation is described in this chapter and is presented under the following headings.

The research design adopted for the study, selection of the variables, description of the tools, procedure for selection of samples, conduct of experimentation, data collection procedure and techniques used for processing the data are described in this section.

Research design

The experimental design used in this study was Pre test – Post test single group design.

Samples for the study

The population of the study was the primary school students of Kerala. The sample consists of seventh standard students, 63 from Upper Primary school, Thanikkudam, and 24 from Govt National Boys High School, Kodakara of Thrissur District.

Both the places are located in rural areas and students have no other opportunity to explore their language proficiency compared to those in urban areas

Tools and techniques

Two tools are used for this study - 1) Rubrics (for evaluating Entry and Exit Behaviour in Writing Skills) 2) Module to enhance the writing skill of the students. From the reviewed studies it was evident that there is no readily available module. So, through a thorough study a module to meet the objectives was prepared by consulting the experts.

1) Rubrics (for evaluating Entry and Exit Behaviour in Writing Skills)

This Rubrics was used for assessing Entry and Exit Behaviour in Writing Skills among the seventh grade students. This Rubrics includes Vocabulary, content, punctuation and spelling, cohesion and coherence and grammatical accuracy. (See Appendix 1)

2) Module to enhance writing skill

The module has two parts. The first part of the module includes Picture description etc which give exposure to the learners to read pictures, respond to the questions improve their imagination and introduce simple present and present continuous tense. The second part of the module includes illustrated stories, story cards etc and this enable the students to understand the sentence structure in past tense, to develop the skill of imagination and creativity and to write stories. (See Appendix 2)

Procedure

Administration of the Entry Behaviour in Writing Skill Test

The Entry Behaviour in Writing Skill Test was used to assess the level of the writing skills of the samples. This was intended to test the ability of the students to use appropriate vocabulary, tense form and appropriate punctuation and it was based on a descriptive picture to test the above mentioned abilities of the students. This test helps the researchers to understand what the students already know and what they need more. It also serves as a tool to find out the thrust areas and thereby prepare modules to rectify the errors and shortcomings of the students.

The Entry Behaviour in Writing Skill Test was conducted for 63 students of Upper Primary School, Thanikkudam and 24 students of Govt. National Boys High School, Kodakara. The time allotted was 30 minutes. The students were seated in comfortable positions so that they can attempt the test in a stress free manner. The researchers were so particular that no scaffolding was done so as the students were able to use their own thinking and creative talents.

The written works of the student were verified thoroughly. The main findings were as follows:

- Influence of the usages in mother tongue when dealing with the word order.(S.V.O pattern)
- Grammatical errors. (Tense, plural and singular, preposition etc.)
- Not leaving enough space in between the words in a sentence.
- Not using proper punctuation.
- Repetition of the same type of sentence patterns.
- Usage of incorrect spellings.

- Diversion from the main theme of the topic.
- Inadequate vocabulary strength.

The following strategies were used to overcome the above mentioned difficulties and to improve the writing skill. Workshops were conducted to plan and prepare the module. For this the investigators sought the advice for the content part from the experts and assistance from artists and graphic designer for preparing the interesting materials.

Strategies adopted to improve the writing skill using Magic Slate Module

The ‘Magic Slate’ module provides a range of activities that the teachers can adapt and use in classrooms to improve the writing skill of Primary school students. It contains a number of worksheets. It is more important for the children to have fun than to learn facts. If we do it right, they will learn through having fun. Teachers’ imagination must work twice as hard as the learners’ in order to accept their point of view. Therefore the teachers are free to modify the module to suit the needs and classroom contexts.

Each set of the worksheet in the module have three parts such as narration, picture interaction and slots for children’s creativity. Teacher presented the narrations which contained the activities and enjoyments of an assumed character ‘Miya’. The teachers had to carry out the narration with proper voice modulation and gestures.

❖ Riddles

The character Miya was introduced to the class. The teacher presented the narration with proper voice modulation and gestures. The teacher showed the images and interacted with the children. The teacher asked the group to present their riddles and megaphone the errors if any for editing. Constant encouragement and feedback were given. The learners were asked to write down the words used in the riddles to show the size, shape, ability and colour. They classified the words. Then they were asked to add more words in each category. The students were encouraged to find more words from their Course Book. They were also given opportunities to write many sentences beginning with “I have..., I am, I can..... .

Following that the learners prepared their own riddles. The learners were given worksheets for practice. This made them confident in making simple sentences in English.

Through this activity the students acquired

- Vocabulary enrichment
- Confidence in writing simple sentences.
- Imaginative capacity.

❖ **Picture descriptions**

The teacher narrated the passage in the class. Picture cards showing how Miya and her pet Catty spend their mornings in their garden are shown to the learners. An informal interaction was generated. Responses were elicited. The sentences were written on the blackboard. Teacher asked many interactive questions considering even the minute details seen in the picture and responses were elicited. Through these questions and answers, the learners made sentences using the correct word order and also the correct form of the verb. The rules regarding the subject- verb agreement were well presented at this stage through various examples. These concepts were fixed up in the minds of the learners through much more exercises. The learners got sufficient exposure through the exercises. Then worksheets with pictures under which blank spaces were left, were given to them. Under each picture they wrote meaningful sentences in correct word order and correct form of verb. At this stage, enough instructions regarding the need of including correct punctuation were given. The teacher appreciated the learners for their work. This helped a lot in mounting their level of confidence.

Picture Description Worksheets were given to the learners. The picture for description was followed by simple questions like “What does he do?/What is he doing? With proper scaffolding by the teacher the students wrote answers to those questions. Special attention was

given to punctuations. More worksheets were provided like these and students wrote the descriptions by themselves.

Then pictures which depict real life situations or familiar situations were given to the students. The picture series included village scenes, beach, railway station, parks, family and more were given to each learner. The teacher asked a series of thought provoking and hypothetical interactive questions to evoke their imagination. For example when they were shown a picture with family members working questions like ' Will you be happy to work with your parents in a garden?', 'Who will give you guidance in gardening?', 'What are the activities involved in gardening?', 'If you were one among the members which task would you do?' etc.

The learners were asked to write down the names of the things they saw in the pictures. And then they were asked to write the actions shown in the picture. The students were asked to recollect similar content in their course book and add more words to the list. The students were encouraged to prepare sentences using the naming words and action words they have already seen in the picture. Different sentences were elicited through informal interaction inside the classroom. After that they individually prepared the description. Special attention was given to help them practice paragraphing properly. After finishing each one, random presentations by the learners were done. A creative discussion was conducted. Common errors were pointed out and corrected. Following that they wrote the same description in a better manner individually.

Through this activity students learned to

- write correct sentences in Simple present and present continuous tense
- read pictures with imagination.
- interact with confidence.
- Paragraph properly.

❖ **Narrating Past Events**

The teacher presented the narration which tells about Miya's visit to her Grandmother's house during her previous holidays. Teacher showed the [pictures and interacted with students. The responses were elicited and wrote on the blackboard. Gradually the students understood the tense form to narrate the incidents in past. They got practice to write similar sentences through the following worksheets.

❖ **Picture Stories**

Picture-stories were introduced through the narration. After an informal interaction based on the given pictures, the students attempted on developing stories. Maximum encouragement was offered by the teachers to the students through interactive questions.

Enough work-sheets were made for each type of sentence (Present and past tenses). Teacher did not disclose the structural terms (like tense, parts of speech etc) in the class. Many more images, actions, gestures, situations etc also were given to make the children capable in writing sentences in the correct form. The learners expressed high spirit and interest in participating in these activities. At the end of these activities a visible improvement was seen in their works. Many of them showed more confidence and completed the suggested writing tasks .Still there were some students who needed more help. More samples and worksheets were introduced for those learners.

❖ **Creative writing strategies**

After getting sufficient exposure to write stories based on the given illustrations, the students were asked to write their own stories. Certain hints, word webs, pictures, beginning of the story etc were given as inputs. Gradually majority of the students acquired the skill to develop a story independently.

Administration of the Exit Behaviour in Writing Skill Test

The same Entry Behaviour in Writing Skill Test was used to assess the Exit Behaviour in writing skill Test of the samples.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Analysis of the Result of Entry Behaviour Test

Result of entry behaviour in writing skill test of GNBHS Kodakara

The following tables reveal the results 'Entry Behaviour in wring skill test'

Table 1 – Vocabulary

Grade	Vocabulary	
	No. of Students	Percentage
A	2	8.5
B	2	8.5
C	3	12.5
D	9	37
E	8	42

Figure 1 – Vocabulary

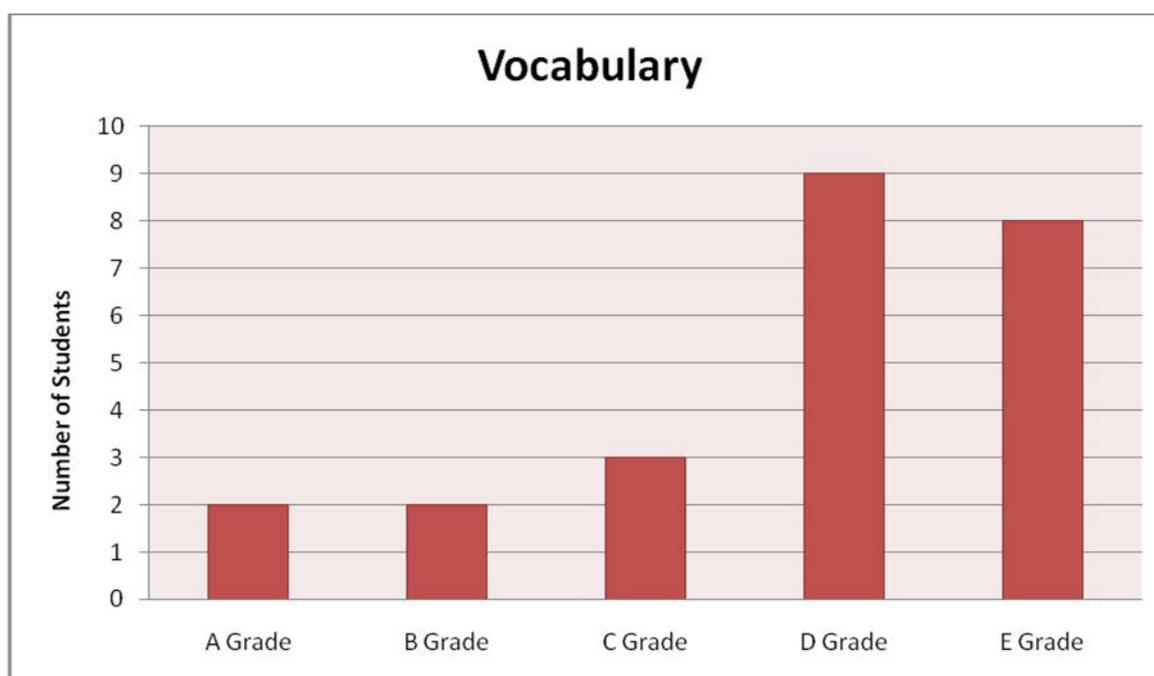


Table 2 - Content

Content		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	4	8.5%
B	2	8.5
C	3	12.5
D	8	33
E	7	46

Figure 2 - Content

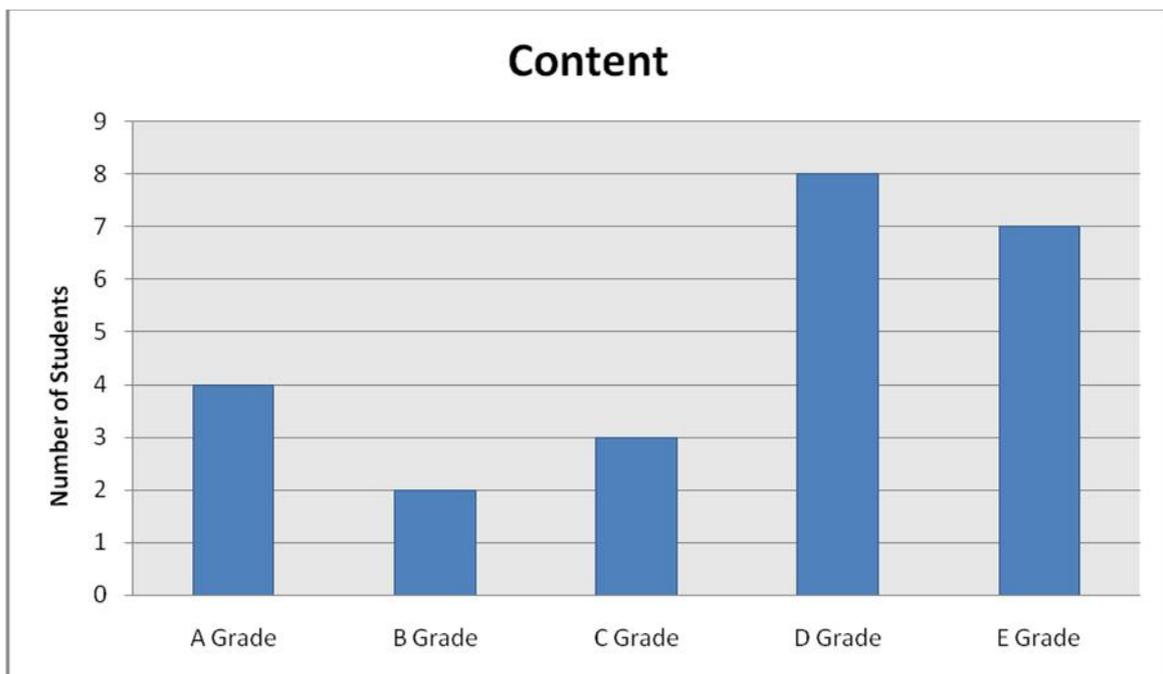


Table 3 - Grammatical Accuracy

Grammatical Accuracy		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	2	8.5
B	1	4
C	2	8.5
D	8	33
E	11	46

Figure 3 - Grammatical Accuracy

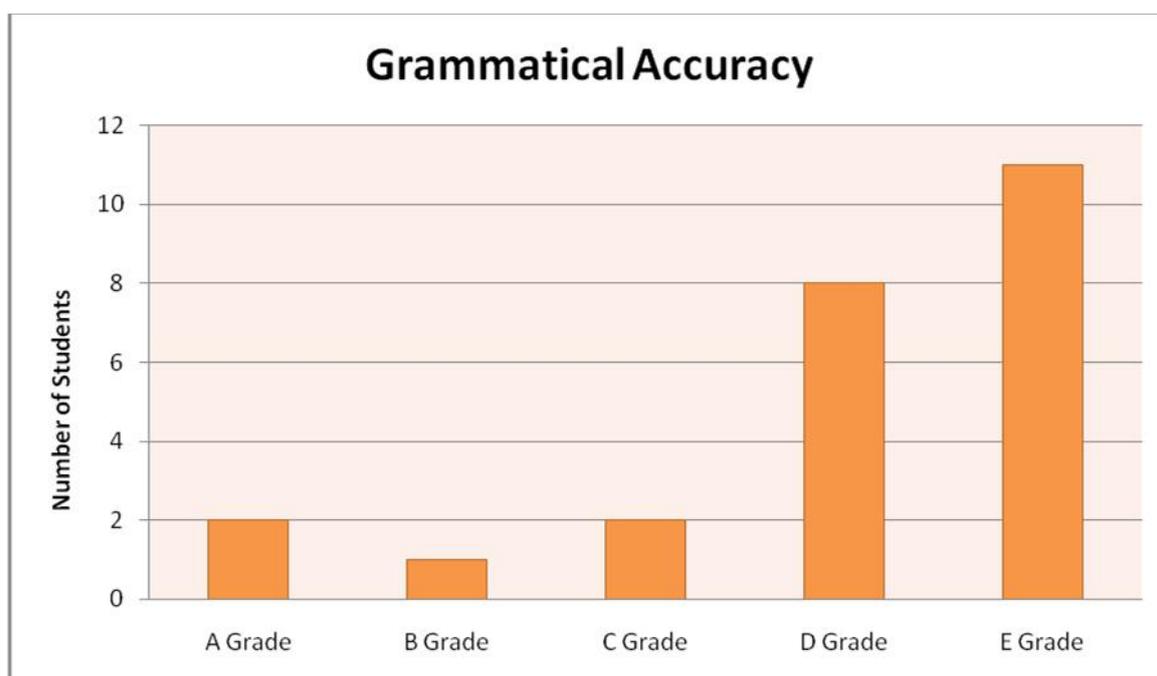


Table 4 – Cohesion and Coherence

Cohesion and Coherence		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	-	-
B	1	4
C	4	17
D	5	21
E	14	58

Figure 4 – Cohesion and Coherence

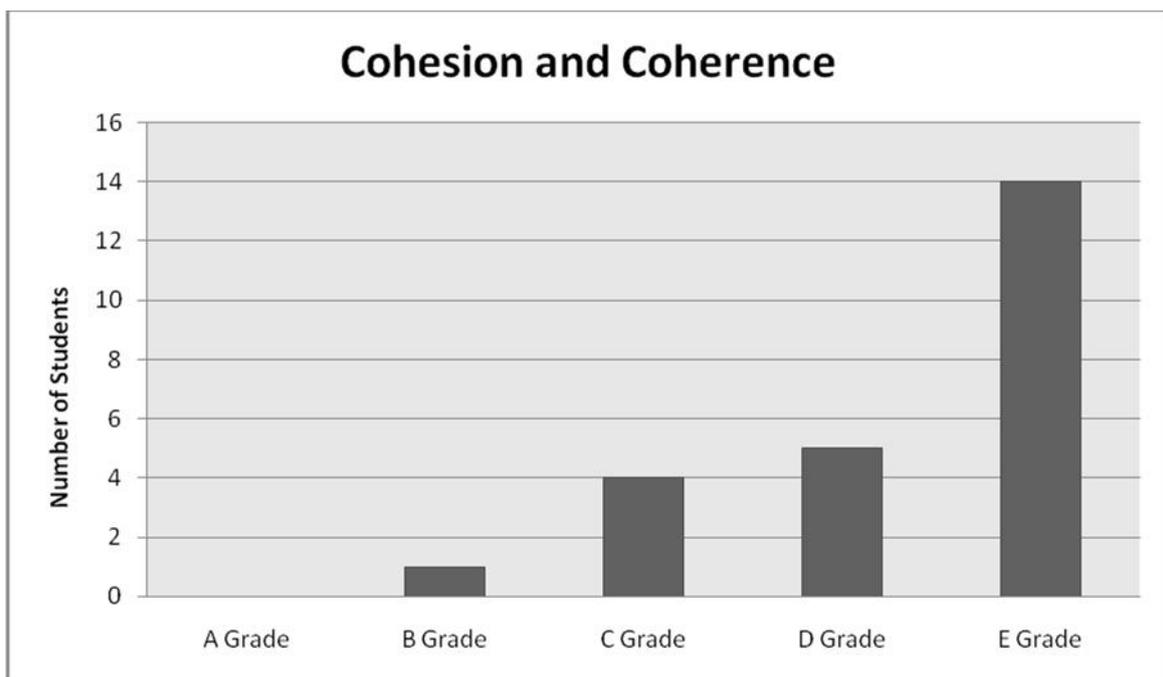
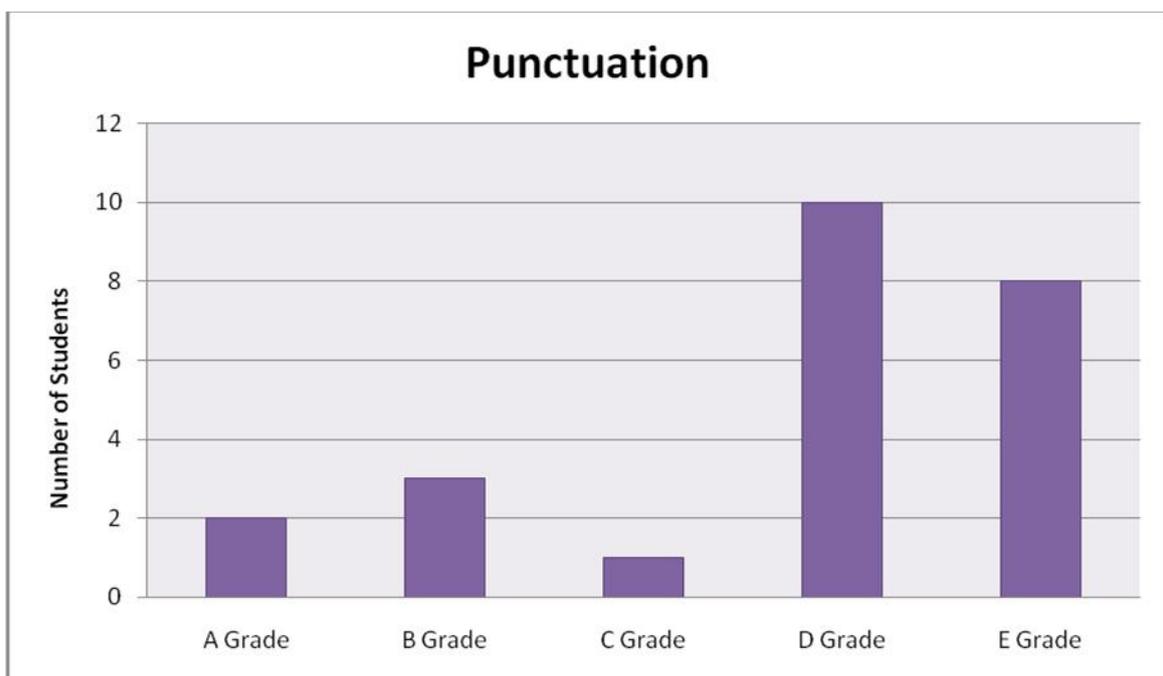


Table 5 – Punctuation and Spelling

Punctuation and Spelling		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	2	8.5
B	3	12.5
C	1	4
D	10	42
E	8	33

Figure 5 – Punctuation and Spelling



Analysis of the result of entry behaviour in writing skill test of GNBHS Kodakara

Vocabulary: Out of 24 students appeared for the test 2 students scored A grade in Vocabulary. When 2 students got B grade in Vocabulary, 3 students could score C grade in Vocabulary. 9 students scored D grade in Vocabulary. 8 students scored E grade in Vocabulary.

Content: Out of 24 students appeared for the test 4 students scored A grade in content area. When 2 students got B grade in content area, 3 students could score C grade in content area. 8 students scored D grade in content area. 7 students scored E grade in content area.

Grammatical Accuracy: Out of 24 students appeared for the test 2 students scored A grade in grammatical accuracy. When 1 student got B grade in grammatical accuracy 2 students could score C grade in grammatical accuracy. 8 students scored D grade in this area. 11 students scored E grade.

The researchers realized the need for implementing effective strategies to improve the grades in tenses and subject – verb agreement.

Cohesion and Coherence: Out of 24 students appeared for the test no student scored A grade in cohesion and coherence. When 1 student got B grade in cohesion and coherence 4 students could score C grade. 5 students scored D grade in this area. 14 students scored E grade.

Punctuation and spelling: Out of 24 students appeared for the test 2 students scored A grade in punctuation and spelling. When 3 students got B grade in punctuation and spelling 1 student could score C grade in grammatical accuracy. 10 students scored D grade in this area. 8 students scored E grade.

Result of entry behaviour in writing skill test of UPS Thanikkudam

The following tables reveal the result of Entry Behaviour in wring skill test'

Table 6 – Vocabulary

Vocabulary		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	8	12.5
B	8	12.5
C	16	25.5
D	10	16
E	21	33.5

Figure 6 – Vocabulary

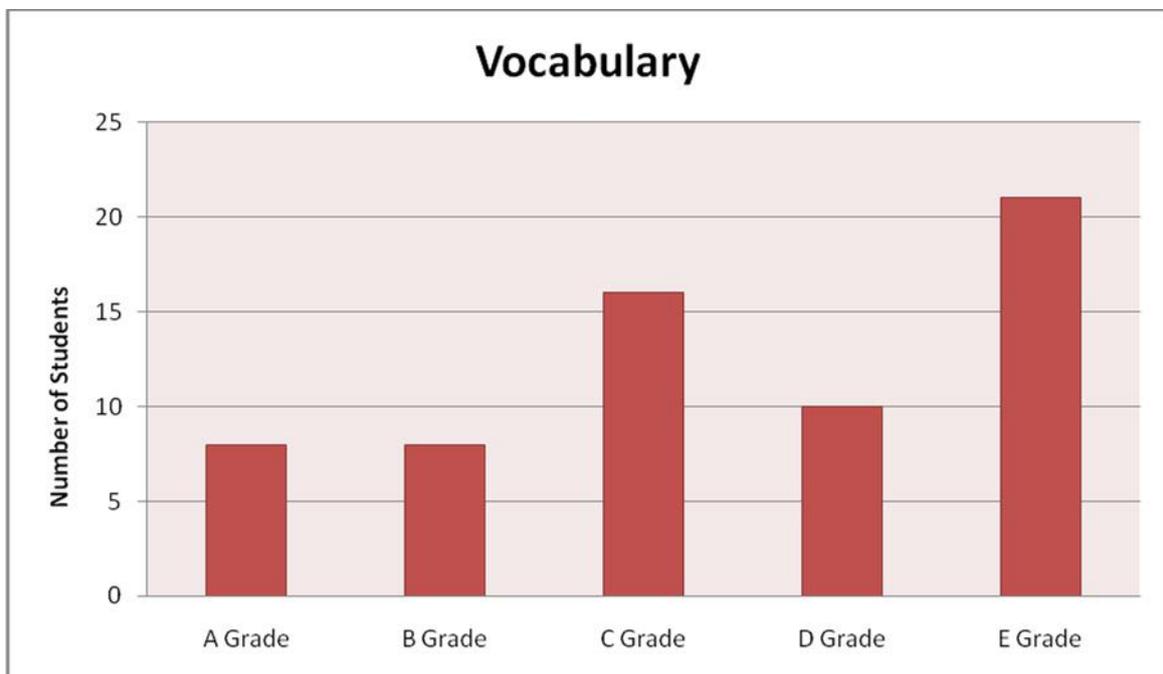


Table 7 - Content

Content		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	6	9.5
B	8	12.5
C	12	19
D	18	29
E	19	30

Figure 7 - Content

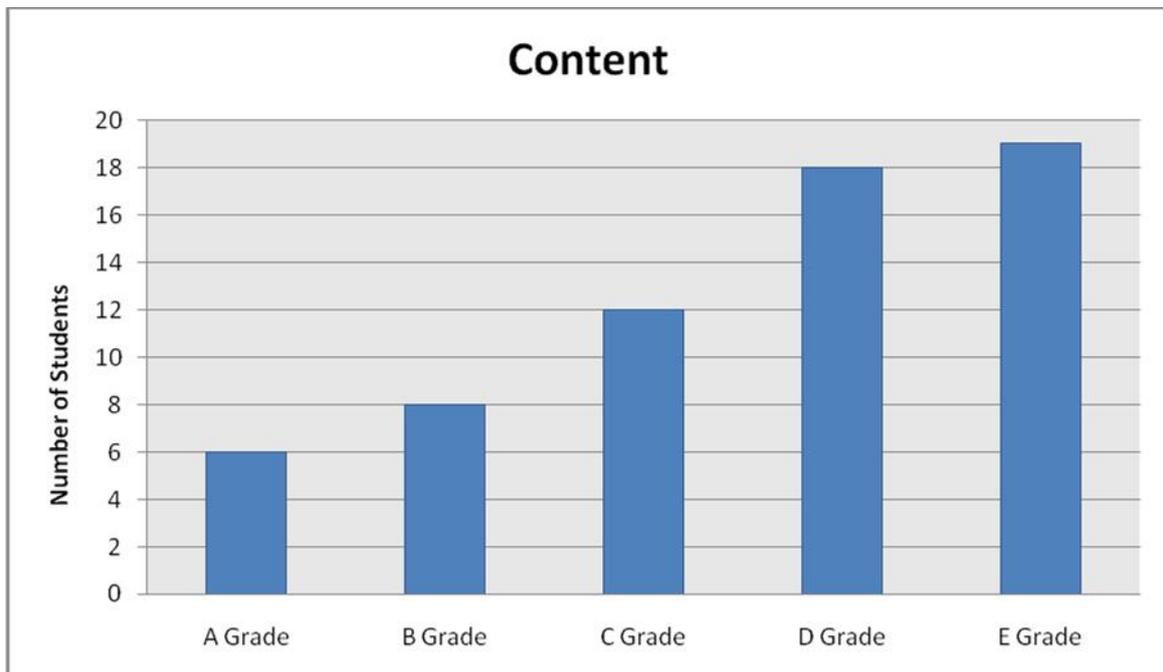


Table 8 - Grammatical Accuracy

Grade	Grammatical accuracy	
	No. of Students	Percentage
A	6	9.5
B	10	16
C	18	28.5
D	14	22
E	15	24

Figure 8 - Grammatical Accuracy

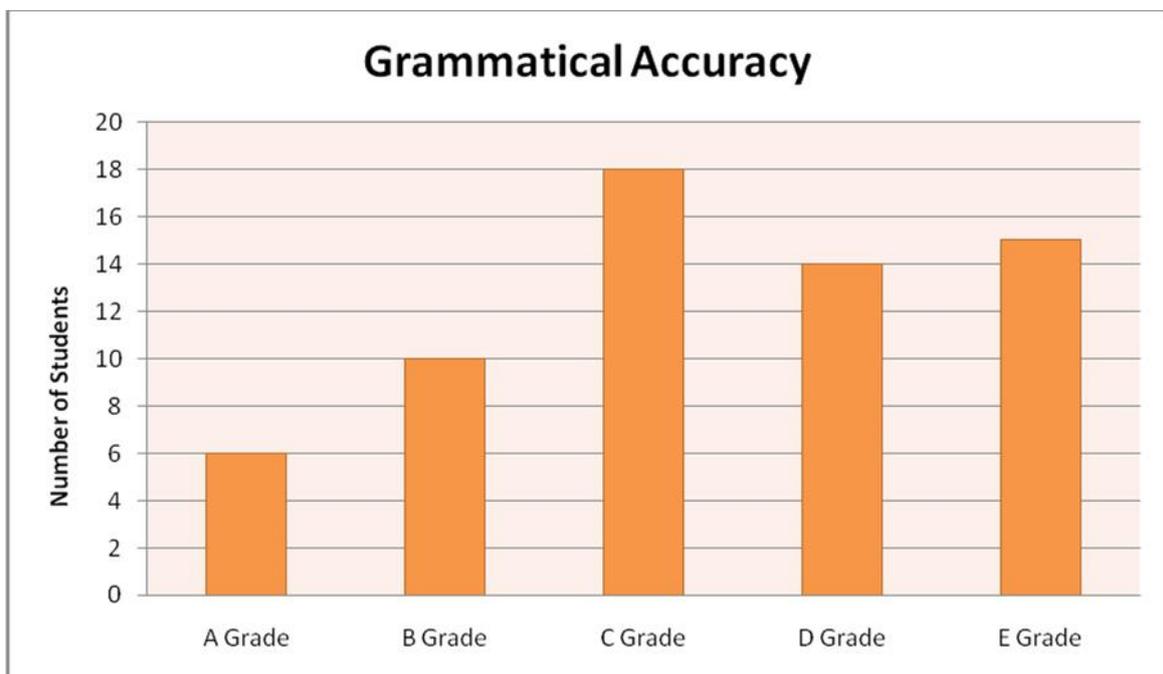


Table 9 – Cohesion and coherence

Cohesion and Coherence		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	5	8
B	11	17.5
C	13	20.5
D	17	27
E	17	27

Figure 9 – Cohesion and coherence

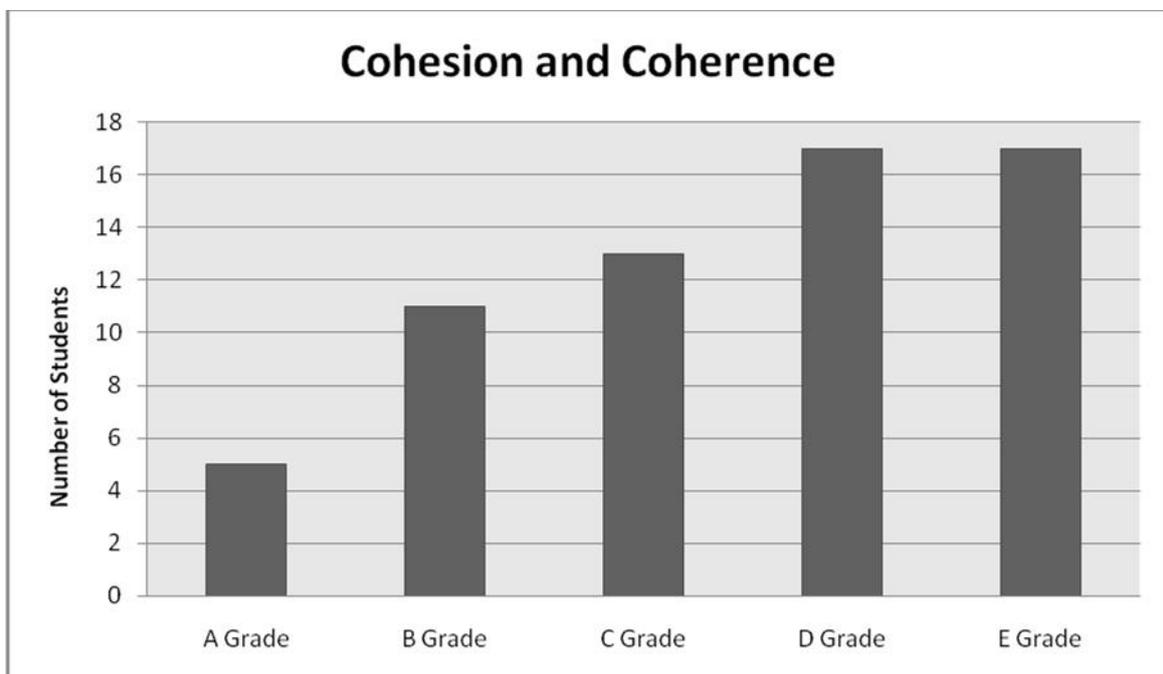
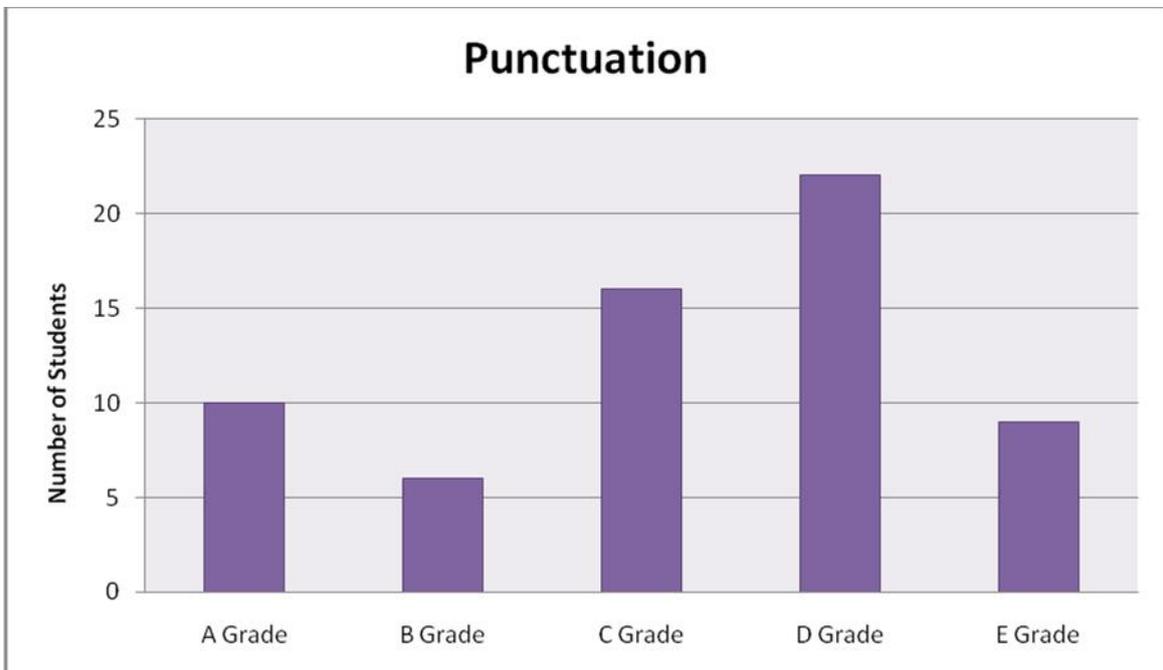


Table 10 – Punctuation and Spelling

Punctuation and Spelling		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	10	16
B	6	9.5
C	16	25.5
D	22	35
E	9	14

Figure 10 – Punctuation and Spelling



Analysis of the result of entry behaviour in writing skill test of UPS Thanikkudam

Vocabulary: Out of 63 students appeared for the test 8 students scored A grade in Vocabulary. When 8 students got B grade in Vocabulary, 16 students could score C grade in Vocabulary. 21 students scored D grade in Vocabulary. 10 students scored E grade in Vocabulary.

Content : Out of 63 students appeared for the test 6 students scored A grade in content area. When 19 students got B grade in content area, 12 students could score C grade in content area. 16 students scored D grade in content area. 10 students scored E grade in content area.

Grammatical Accuracy : Out of 63 students appeared for the test 6 students scored A grade in grammatical accuracy. When 10 students got B grade in grammatical accuracy 18 students could score C grade in grammatical accuracy. 14 students scored D grade in this area . 15 students scored E grade.

The researchers realized the need for implementing effective strategies to improve the grades in tenses and subject – verb agreement.

Cohesion and Coherence : Out of 63 students appeared for the test 5 students scored A grade in cohesion and coherence. When 11 student got B grade in cohesion and coherence 13 students could score C grade. 17 students scored D grade in this area . 17 students scored E grade.

Punctuation and spelling: Out of 63 students appeared for the test 10 students scored A grade in punctuation and spelling. When 6 students got B grade in punctuation and spelling 16 students could score C grade in grammatical accuracy. 22 students scored D grade in this area. 9 students scored E grade.

Analysis of the result of exit behaviour Test

Analysis of the result of exit behaviour in writing skill test of GNBHS Kodakara

Table 11 – Vocabulary

Vocabulary		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	9	37
B	9	37
C	4	17
D	2	8.5
E	-	-

Figure 11 – Vocabulary

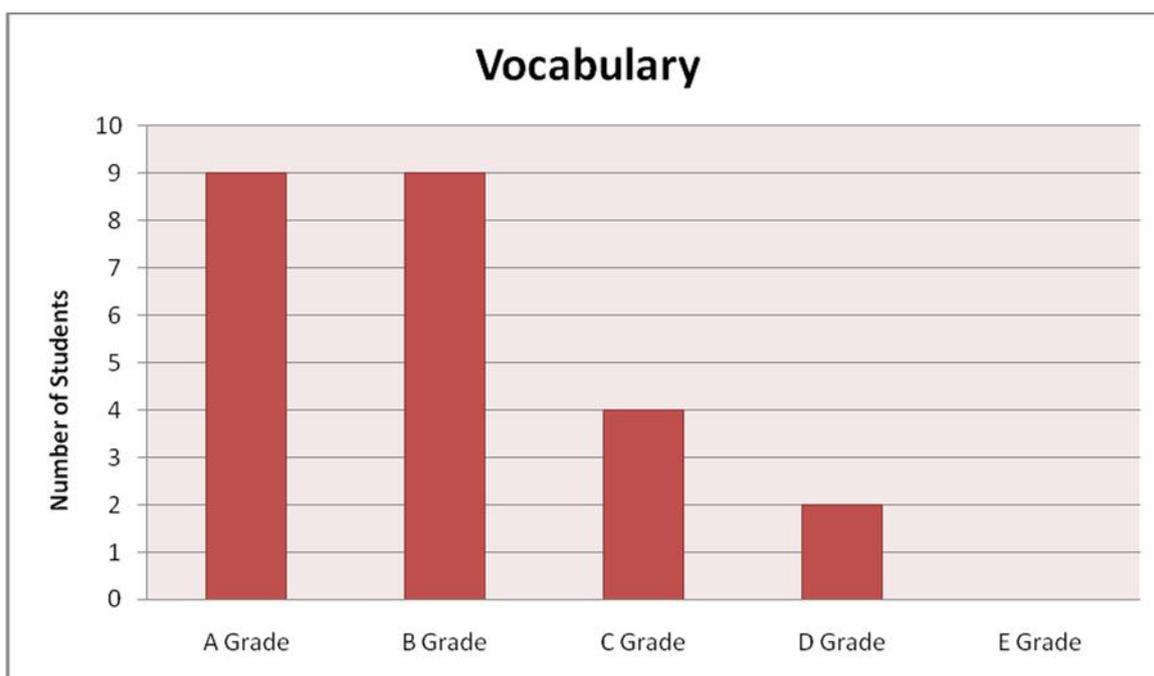


Table 12 - Content

Grade	Content	
	No. of Students	Percentage
A	10	42
B	8	33
C	4	17
D	1	4
E	1	4

Figure 12 - Content

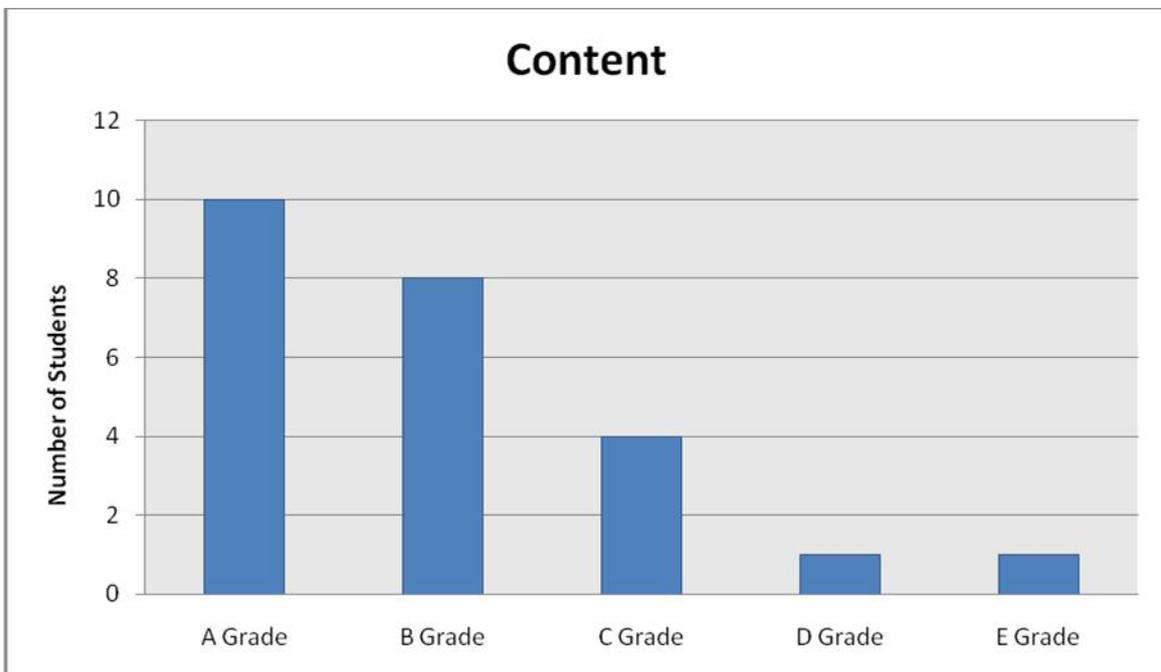


Table 13 - Grammatical Accuracy

Grammatical Accuracy		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	10	42
B	8	33
C	4	17
D	1	4
E	1	4

Figure 13 - Grammatical Accuracy

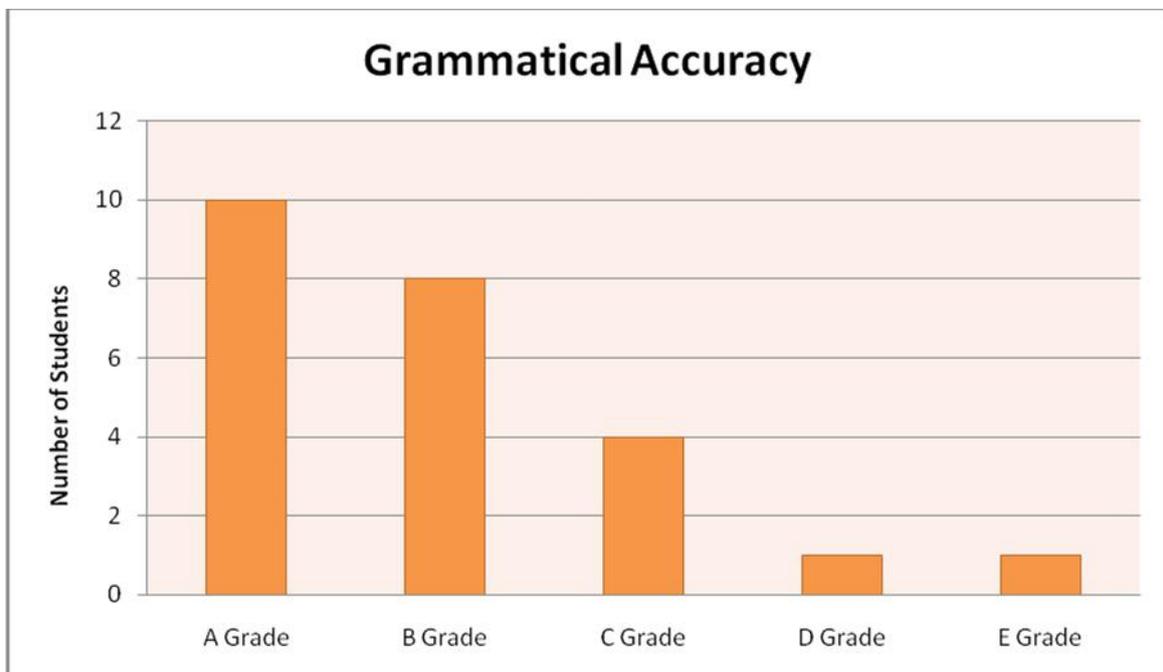


Table 14 – Cohesion and Coherence

Cohesion and Coherence		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	10	42
B	8	33
C	4	17
D	1	4
E	1	4

Figure 14 – Cohesion and Coherence

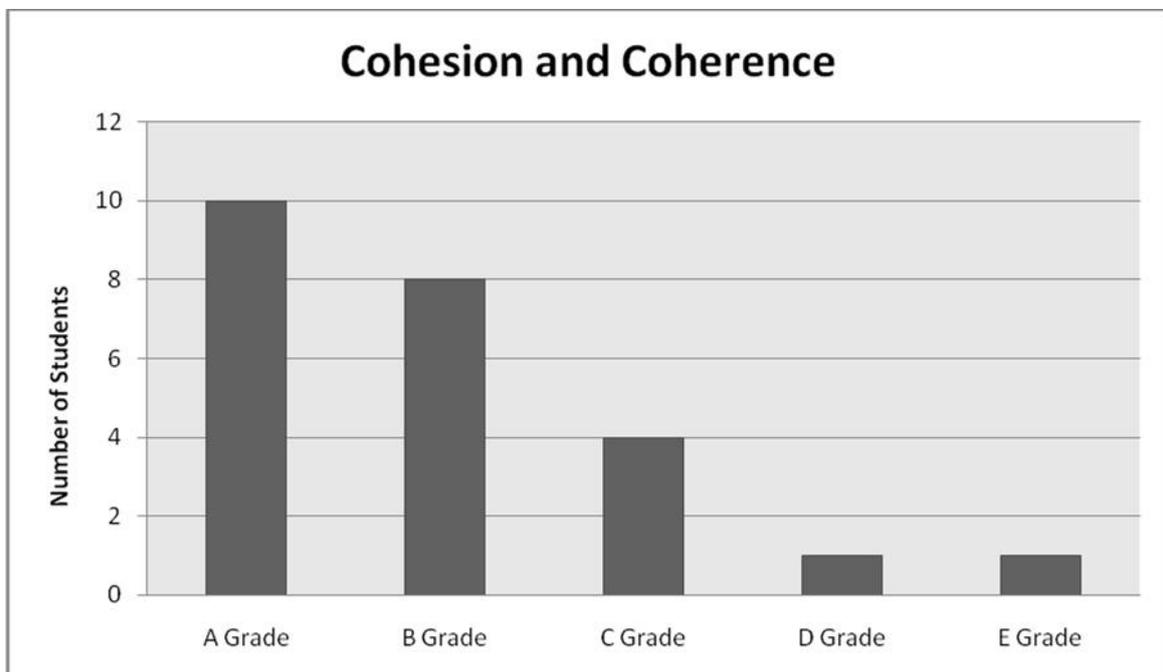
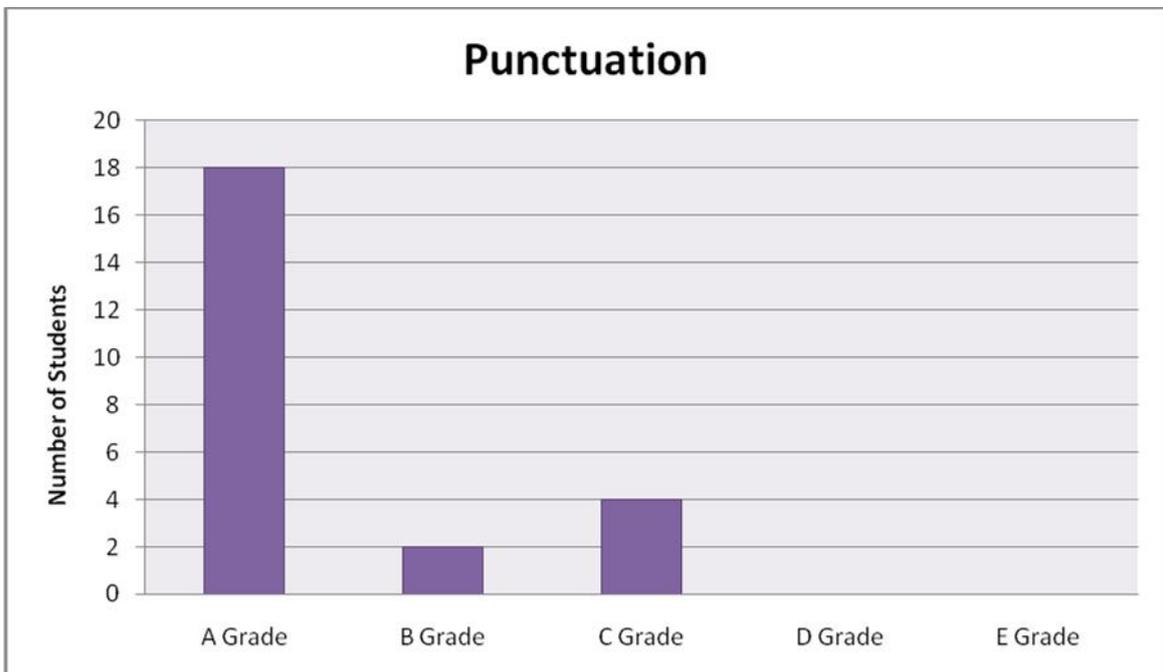


Table 15 – Punctuation and Spelling

Punctuation and Spelling		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	18	75
B	2	8
C	4	17
D	-	-
E	-	-

Figure 15 – Punctuation and Spelling



Analysis of the result of exit behaviour in writing skill test of GNBHS Kodakara

Vocabulary: Out of 24 students appeared for the test 9 students scored A grade in Vocabulary. When 9 students got B grade in Vocabulary, 14 students could score C grade in Vocabulary. 2 students scored D grade in Vocabulary. No student scored E grade in Vocabulary.

Content: Out of 24 students appeared for the test 10 students scored A grade in content area. When 8 students got B grade in content area, 4 students could score C grade in content area. 1 student scored D grade in content area. 1 student scored E grade in content area.

Grammatical Accuracy: Out of 24 students appeared for the test 10 students scored A grade in grammatical accuracy. When 8 students got B grade in grammatical accuracy 4 students could score C grade in grammatical accuracy. 1 student scored D grade in this area. 1 student scored E grade.

The researchers realized the need for implementing effective strategies to improve the grades in tenses and subject – verb agreement.

Cohesion and Coherence: Out of 24 students appeared for the test 10 students scored A grade in cohesion and coherence. When 8 student got B grade in cohesion and coherence 4 students could score C grade. 1 student scored D grade in this area. 1 student scored E grade.

Punctuation and spelling: Out of 24 students appeared for the test 18 students scored A grade in punctuation and spelling. When 2 students got B grade in punctuation and spelling 4 students could score C grade in grammatical accuracy. No student scored D and E grade in this area.

**Analysis of the result of exit behaviour in writing skill test of UPS Thanikkudam
Table 16 – Vocabulary**

Vocabulary		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	20	32
B	22	35
C	12	18
D	5	8
E	4	6

Figure 16 – Vocabulary

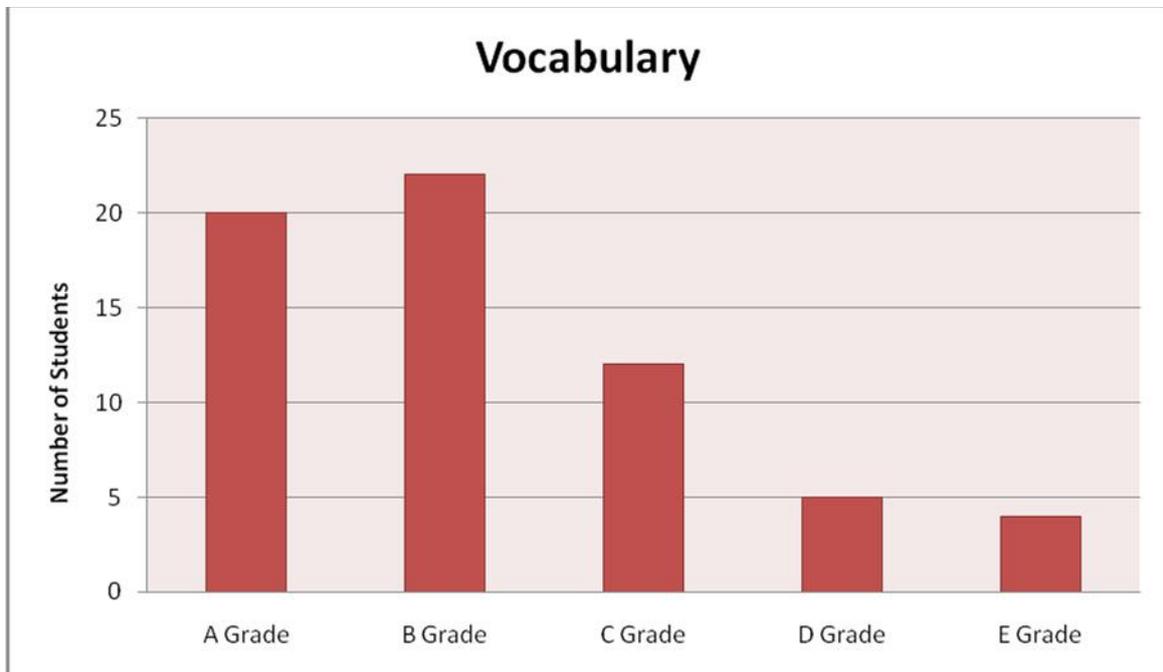


Table 17 - Content

Grade	Content	
	No. of Students	Percentage
A	24	38
B	15	25
C	13	20
D	8	12
E	3	5

Figure 17 - Content

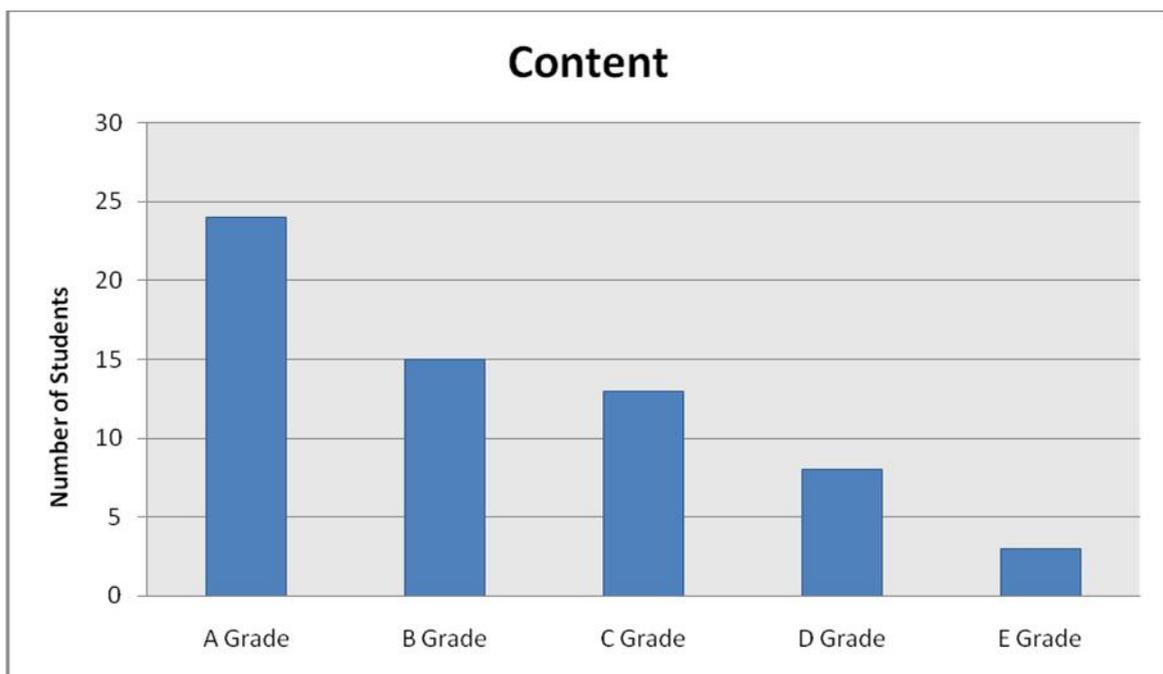


Table 18 - Grammatical Accuracy

Grammatical Accuracy		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	18	29
B	20	32
C	12	18
D	8	13
E	5	8

Figure 18 - Grammatical Accuracy

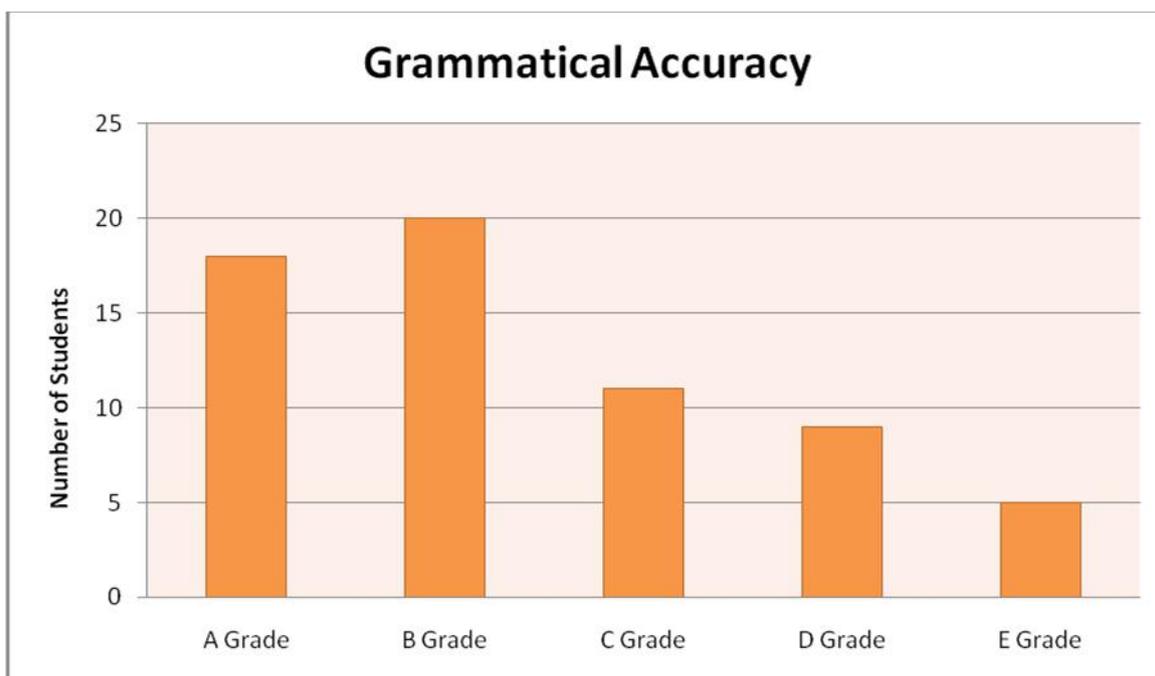


Table 19 – Cohesion and Coherence

Cohesion and Coherence		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	20	32
B	22	35
C	13	21
D	4	3
E	4	6

Figure 19 – Cohesion and Coherence

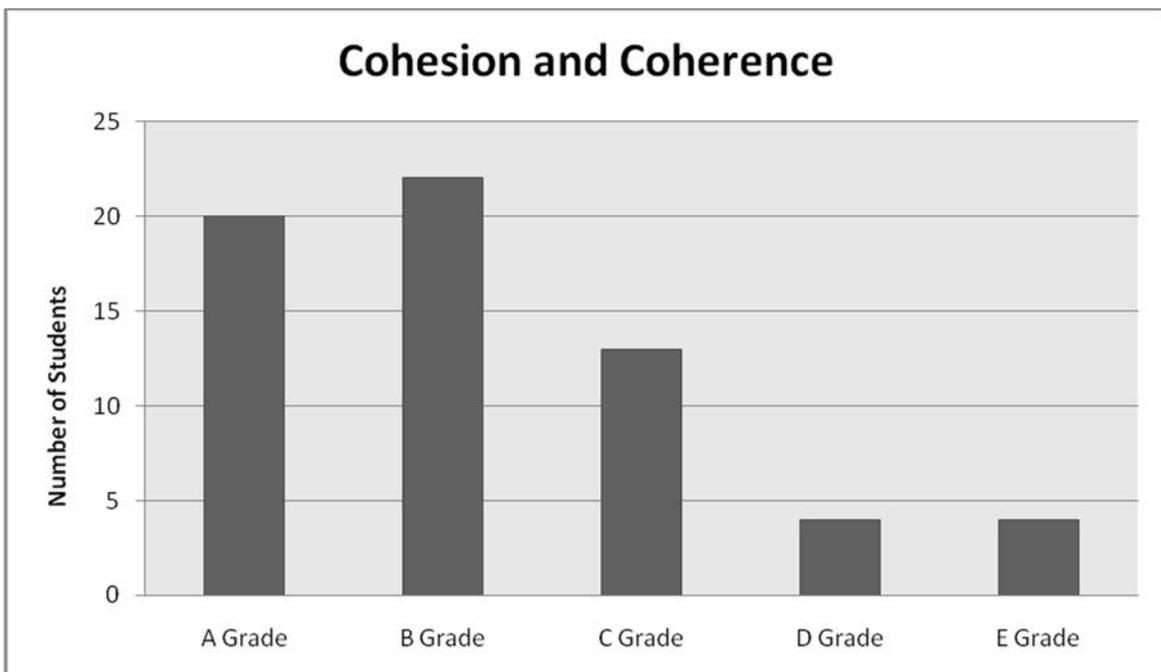
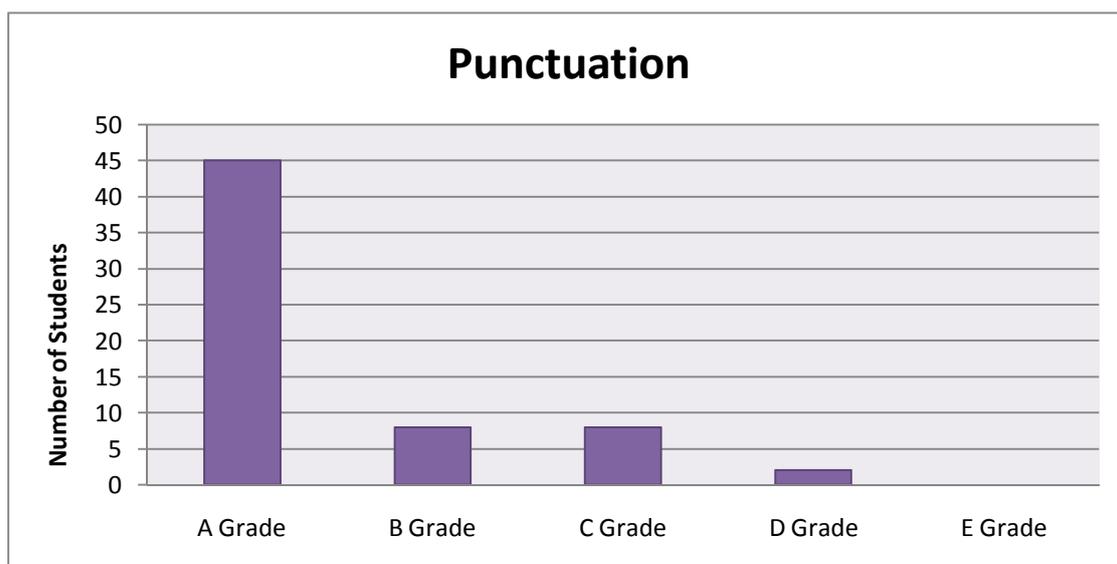


Table 20 – Punctuation and Spelling

Punctuation and Spelling		
Grade	No. of Students	Percentage
A	45	71
B	8	13
C	8	13
D	2	3
E	-	-

Figure 20 – Punctuation and Spelling



Analysis of the result of exit behaviour in writing skill test of UPS Thanikkudam

Vocabulary: Out of 63 students appeared for the test 20 students scored A grade in Vocabulary. When 24 students got B grade in Vocabulary, 13 students could score C grade in Vocabulary. 5 students scored D grade in Vocabulary. 3 students scored E grade in Vocabulary.

Content: Out of 63 students appeared for the test 24 students scored A grade in content area. When 18 students got B grade in content area, 12 students could score C grade in content area. 6 student scored D grade in content area. 3 students scored E grade in content area.

Grammatical Accuracy: Out of 63 students appeared for the test 18 students scored A grade in grammatical accuracy. When 20students got B grade in grammatical accuracy 11 students could score C grade in grammatical accuracy. 9 students scored D grade in this area. 5 students scored E grade.

The researchers realized the need for implementing effective strategies to improve the grades in tenses and subject – verb agreement.

Cohesion and Coherence: Out of 63 students appeared for the test 20 students scored A grade in cohesion and coherence. When 22 student got B grade in cohesion and coherence 13 students could score C grade. 4 students scored D grade in this area. 4 students scored E grade.

Punctuation and spelling: Out of 63 students appeared for the test 45 students scored A grade in punctuation and spelling. When 8 students got B grade in punctuation and spelling 8 students could score C grade in grammatical accuracy. 2 students scored D and no one scored E grade in this area.

Chapter 4

Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion

The written works of the Entry Test of students were verified thoroughly. The main findings were as follows

- learners couldn't use the correct spelling
- Left enough space in between the words in a sentence.
- Couldn't use proper punctuation.
- Committed grammatical errors

After intervention, these drawbacks were corrected. The details are given below.

- While making a comparison between scores of Entry Behaviour Writing Skill test and those of Exit Behaviour Writing Skill Test it was found out that so far as Vocabulary is concerned, the samples learned to use more accurate, entertaining and meaningful vocabulary in tune with the interests of the readers and coherence with the task. The results show that more than half of the samples showed excellence in the use of Active and Passive Vocabulary.
- After the necessary interventions made by the researchers it was found that the samples learned to display ideas in a unique, interesting, clear and novel way. They learned to integrate ideas. They learned to present abstract ideas in a concrete and entertaining way. Almost three – fourth of the samples showed development of their imaginative skill. More than half of the samples showed development of thinking faculty.
- After the implementation of appropriate strategies it was found that the samples learned to use tenses with consistency and to use different forms of verbs as well.

Their errors with subject – verb agreement were reduced to some extent. Almost half of the learners learned subject – verb agreement.

- After the interventions the errors with punctuation and full stops were minimised. The use of capital letters with sentence beginning and proper nouns showed improvement. Paragraph alignment and spacing showed considerable improvement after the intervention.

Suggestions and recommendations

- The strategies employed through Magic Slate may be incorporated with the normal teaching – learning process in the classroom.
- All the students of the elementary section may be benefitted from this innovative project.
- The study may be continued throughout the academic year to determine if with increased time much improvement in students' writing skill will occur.
- More activities in par with the objectives may be included in the content area classes.
- Students may be given small writing assignments daily.

Conclusion

This chapter contains conclusion based on the research findings discussed in the previous chapter. The difficulties faced by the students in writing English were identified through Entry Behaviour Writing Skill Test. The difficulties were analysed and appropriate strategies were designed to bring in desirable changes. The different strategies like Riddle Cards, Picture Cards, Picture Description, Illustrated Story Cards etc. were implemented through interactive activities. After the proper intervention with the strategies the results of Entry Behaviour Writing Skill Test and Exit Behaviour Writing skill test was compared. It found that desirable changes were visible with the use of appropriate vocabulary, unique and clear description, imaginative writing, usage of tenses with consistency and use of punctuation as well. These observations led to the conclusion that these strategies are appropriate in enhancing the writing skill of the students at Primary Level.

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APPENDIX

Appendix -1

Rubrics for assessing entry and exit behaviour in writing skill.

GRADE	INDICATORS
VOCABULARY	
A	Very appropriate words and phrases are used that draw pictures in the reader's mind.
B	Appropriate words and phrases are used that draw pictures in the reader's mind in a natural way.
C	Quite appropriate words and phrases are used that draw pictures in the reader's mind in a natural way occasionally.
D	Less appropriate words and phrases are used that draw pictures in the reader's mind in a natural way rarely.
E	Inappropriate words and phrases are used that draw pictures in the reader's mind in a natural way.
CONTENT	
A	Content is very much in accordance with the theme.
B	Content is in accordance with the theme.
C	Content is fairly in accordance with the theme.
D	Content is much less in accordance with the theme.
E	Content is not in accordance with the theme.
PUNCTUATION AND SPELLING	
A	No spelling and punctuation errors that it interferes with the meaning.
B	A few spelling and punctuation errors that it interferes with the meaning.
C	Frequent spelling and punctuation errors that it interferes with the meaning.
D	Rare spelling or punctuation errors that it interferes with the meaning.
E	Many spelling or punctuation errors that it interferes with the meaning.
COHESION AND COHERENCE	
A	Well organized and logical writing and uses a variety of cohesive devices effectively.
B	Some attempts to organize ideas in a logical way and to use some cohesive devices effectively.
C	Ideas generally not organized in a logical way and limited use of cohesive devices

D	Ideas generally not organized in a logical way and inaccurate use of cohesive devices
E	Ideas are not organized in a coherent way.
GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY	
A	Student has made less than two grammatical errors or mistakes in tenses and subject – verb agreement.
B	Student has made three of four grammatical errors or mistakes in tenses and subject – verb agreement.
C	Student has made five or six grammatical errors or mistakes in tenses and subject – verb agreement.
D	Student has made seven to eight grammatical errors or mistakes in tenses and subject – verb agreement.
E	Student has made more than nine grammatical errors or mistakes in tenses and subject – verb agreement.

Appendix 2

MAGIC SLATE

An Intervention for Improving the Writing Skill in English among Students of Upper

Primary Level

MODULE

Objectives

- to create a learning environment conducive to writing
- to motivate the learners to write without any inhibition
- to give basic awareness on the basic sentence structure in English .
- to help learners construct meaningful sentences independently in any context

PRE-TEST

Instructions to the teachers.

- The time allotted is 30 minutes.
- The students are seated in comfortable positions, so that they can attempt the test in a stress-free manner.
- The teachers are strongly advised that no scaffolding is done so that the students are able to use their own thinking and creative talents.
- Ask the students to perform the task, as per the given worksheet.
- Make an assessment of entry behaviour using the given rubrics.

PRE-TEST

Worksheet

Name of the student

Describe the following picture in your own words.



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To the teacher

The ‘Magic Slate’, a Module developed as a part of Individual research project of SCERT Kerala, provides you a range of activities that you can adapt and use in your classrooms to improve the writing skill of Primary school students. It contains a number of worksheets. It is more important for the children to have fun than to learn facts. If we do it right, they will learn through having fun. Our imagination must work twice as hard as the learners’ in order to accept their point of view. Therefore you are free to modify the module to suit the needs and classroom contexts.

Each sets of the worksheet in this module have three parts such as narration, picture interaction and slots for children’s creativity. Teacher presents the narrations which contains the events and enjoyments of an assumed character ‘Miya’. The teachers have to carry out the narration with proper voice modulation and gestures.

When working with children...

- We are trying to foster their imaginations, so nothing a learner suggests is “incorrect”- unless it is emotionally or physically harmful.
- We don’t want to stress out any learner. We will try to find something to praise each learner about: willingness to respond to the questions, imagination, quick thinking, clarity of communication, etc.
- We have to create an effective language atmosphere in the classroom.

Continuous assessment of each student is an important part of this programme. Initial assessment can be general. Later, a portfolio can be used for assessing the gradual improvement in their writing. Presentation of students writing in the classroom and peer assessment and editing play a significant role to understand and correct the learner’s errors.

INTERVENTION

1. Who am I?

Aim: to give practice for the students to introduce themselves and describe things and animals.

Instructions to the teacher

- Introduce the character Miya to the class.
- Presents the narration with proper voice modulation and gestures.
- Show the images and interact with the children.
- Divide the students in groups for the last activity.
- Let the group present their riddles and megaphone the errors if any for editing.
- Give constant encouragement and feedback.

Narration

This is Miya. She is 10 years old. She is living with her parents. She has an elder brother and a sister.

She has a pet too.

Do you want to know who Miya's pet is? Listen, what Miya's pet talks about himself.



I have four legs
I have long **fluffy tail**
I have whiskers
Milkman is my friend
Mouse is my enemy
Who am I?

Can you tell who Miya's pet is? Yes, it's a cat. She calls him 'Catty'. You can also call him 'Catty'.



Every day Miya walks to her garden in the morning. Catty also accompanies her. Wow! Look at her garden. How beautiful it is!

Miya has a favourite plant in her garden. Can you guess what it is? I will give you some clues. Can you recognize the plant?



It has many petals.

It has sweet smell.

It is of different colours.

It has thorns.

What is it?

It's a rose plant.

You have listened to Miya's story and recognized her pet cat and favourite Rose plant. Now, I will give you some clues. Can you recognize what they are?

- * I am a bird
- * I am black in colour
- * I keep your courtyard clean
- * I am clever and cunning

- * I am thorny outside
- * I am sweet inside
- * I am sticky as well
- * I am full of seeds

Worksheet

a) Can you fill up these riddles.

I have.....

I love.....

I can

I am



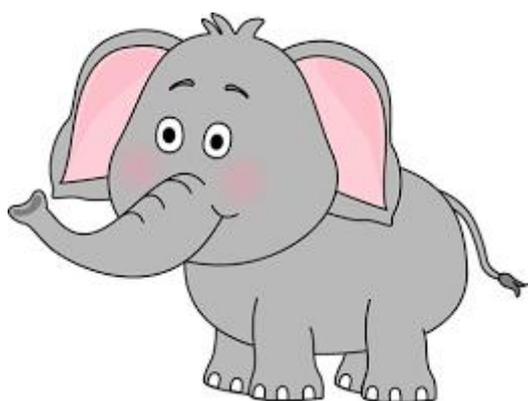
b) It is a big animal

It.....

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Who is it?

c) Can you make your own riddles. It can be about your favourite fruit, bird, animal or anything else.

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ii)

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2. Miya's mornings

Aim: to give practice for the students to write about daily activities
to familiarize the use of simple present tense

Instructions to the teacher

- Narrate the passage in the class
- Picture interaction
- Ask the learners to observe the pictures and actions
- Elicit responses from the learners and write the sentences on the blackboard
- Give as many examples as possible to make them understand the use of 'Simple Present Tense' and construct their own sentences.

Narration

Every morning Miya wakes up early. Then she goes to garden with Catty.



They walk among the plants.
them.



Miya touches flowers and smells
them.



She plays with butterflies.



They go back to home after sometime.

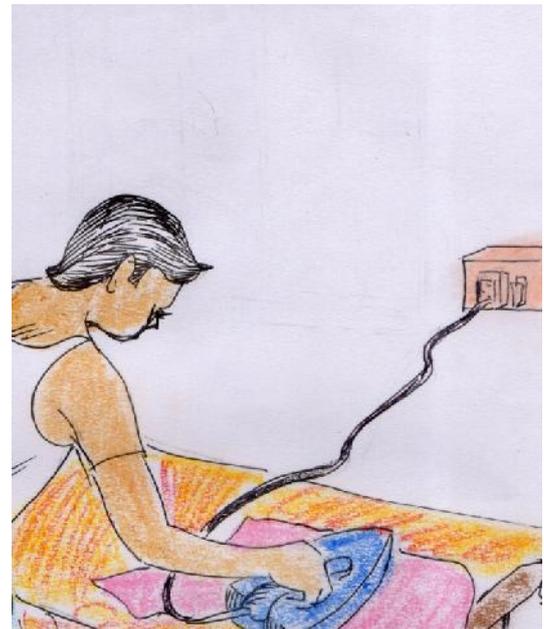
Worksheet

Now look at the following pictures and write down what Miya's brother Varun and her sister Neha do in the morning



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3. To School ...

Aim: to familiarize the use of Present Continuous and give practice in it.

Instructions to the teacher

- Present the narration
- Use the picture and interact with the children
- Motivate the children to identify the actions
- Write the sentences on blackboard
- Supply more examples to make them understand the concept.
- Motivate the children to write sentences using the given pictures.

Narration

Well, Now it's nine in the morning. It's the time to go to school. Look here, Miya is walking to school with her friend. There is a stream on their way.



- The ducks are swimming in the stream.
- A man is fishing
- Two small birds are sitting on the branch of the tree.
- A dog is sleeping under the tree.



My friend Tarun is riding a bicycle to school.



The children are playing.

Worksheet

Miya reached her school. Can you write down what all things are going on there.



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4. At the Park

Aim: To give practice in picture description using simple present and present continuous tense.

Instructions to the teacher

- Present the narration
- Use the picture and interact with the children
- Motivate the children to identify the actions
- Elicit responses and write the sentences on blackboard
- Make them understand that a picture can be described in both the ways.
- Teacher may ask the following questions to motivate the children to describe the pictures.

What can you see in this picture?

How is the weather?

Whome do you see there?

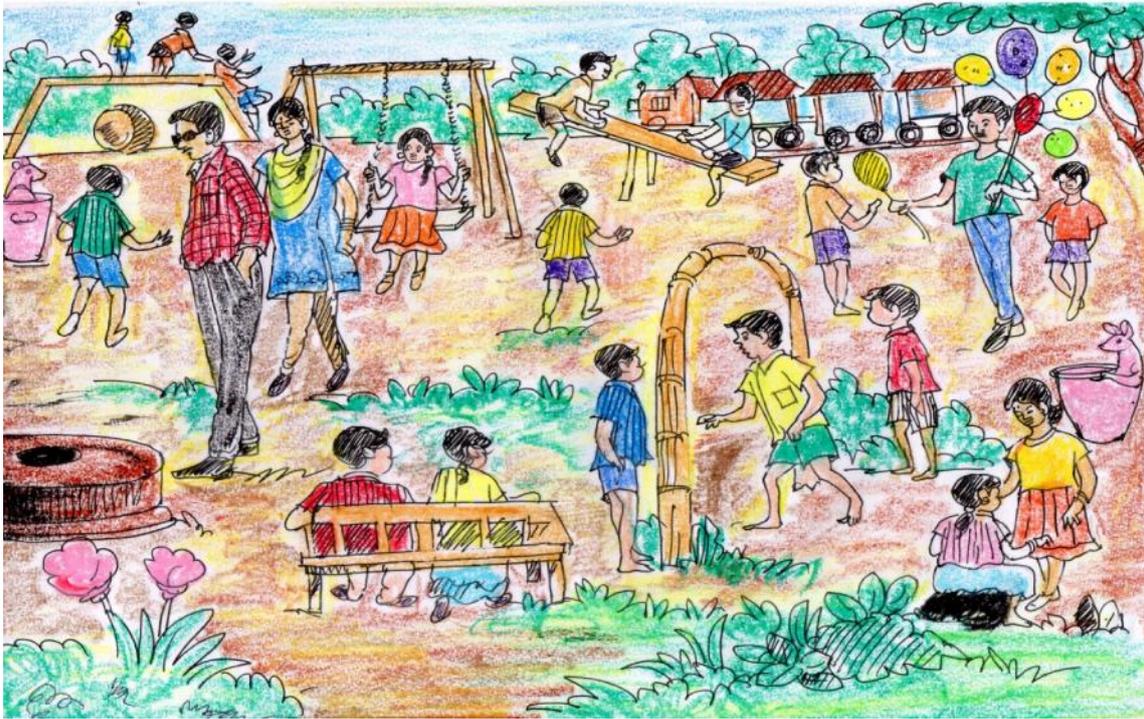
What are they doing?

Are they happy? Why?

- Ask the learners to do the worksheet first individually. Then do group/ pair refinement, presentation and editing.
- Assess the description using the indicators given in the rubrics
- Give sufficient feedback and encouragement.

Narration

There is a park close to Miya's house. She likes to go there. In the evening Miya goes to the park with her brother. Look at the picture. What all things can we see there? Let's describe the place.



(a) This is a clean and beautiful park. There are many trees. Slides, See – Saw and toy trains are there. Many dustbins in the shape of kangaroos are placed here and there. Many people are walking in the park . Children are playing on the swings and slides. Some boys are running. A man is selling balloons of different colours. Kids are standing around him with wide opened eyes. Some people are sitting on the benches talking with each other.

(b) This is a clean and beautiful park. There are many trees. Slides, See – Saw and toy trains are there. Many dustbins in the shape of kangaroos are placed here and there. Many people walk in the park. Children play on the swings and slides. Some boys run. A man sells balloons of different colours. Kids stands around him with wide opened eyes. Some people sit on the benches talking with each other.

Narration

Every evening Miya and her brother spend one hour in the park. Then they go back to their home. Miya likes to read stories. She has a new story book with her. Let’s see some of the pictures from her book. Can you describe these pictures?

Worksheet

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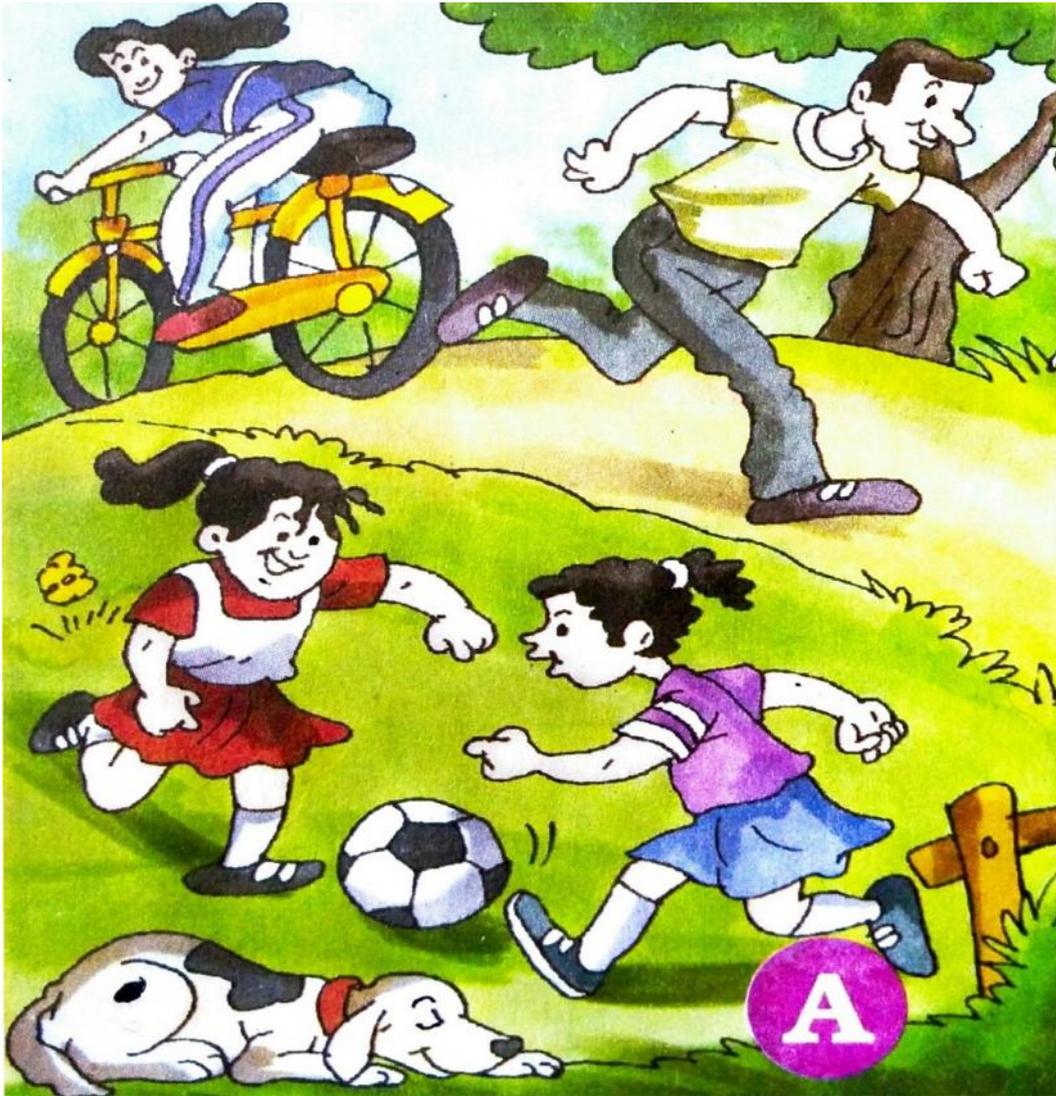
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5. Funs at Grandma's House

Aim: To give practice in simple past tense

Instructions to the teacher

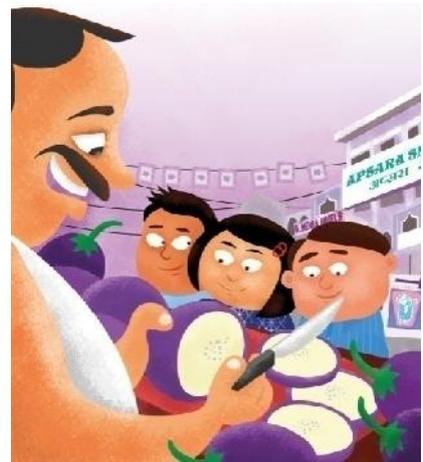
- Present the narration
- Distribute the picture cards first and interact.
- Narrate the events and write sentences on the BB
- Ask the students to observe the pictures and read the sentences.
- Tell them this is how past events are described.
- Elicits more examples from the children.
- More worksheets may be given.

Narration

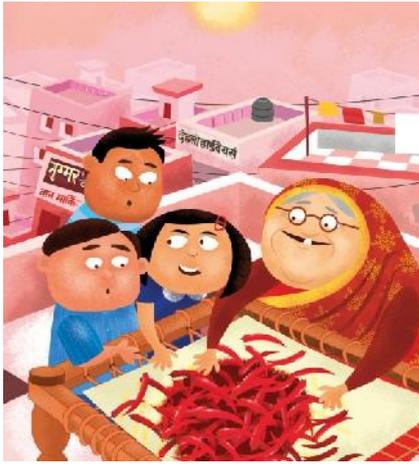
Haven't I told you about Miya's grandma? She lives in another town. Miya went there during the last summer vacation. One day she went to the market with her Grandma and cousins – Sonu, Tina and Sam. It was a big market. Miya and grandma bought some clothes. Do you want to know what her cousins purchased?



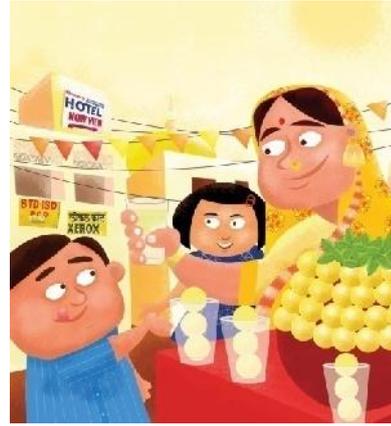
Sonu, Tina and Sam walked through the street.



They met Bholu, the brinjal seller



They bought some red chillies.



Sonu felt thirsty. He drank lime juice.



Tina tasted an ice stick.



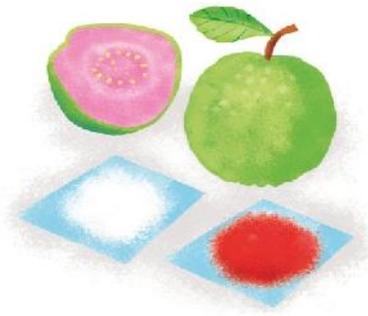
Sam tried a kulfi.



They purchased some dates.



Sonu ran towards the guava seller.



They ate guavas with salt and chilly powder. They enjoyed well and came back home.

Image Source: <https://storyweaver.org.in/>

Worksheet

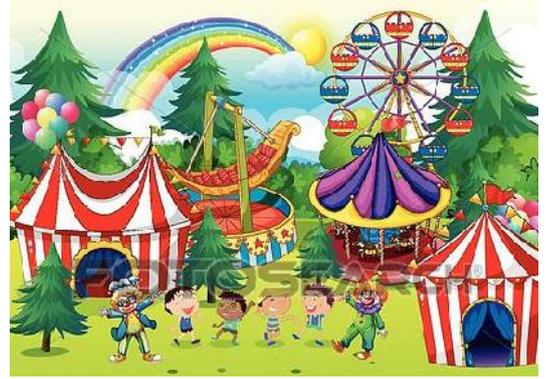
- a) We read about Miya's visit to her grandma's home and their visit to market. Now look at the pictures and write how Miya's friend Akhil and her sister Diva spent their holidays. They did many exciting tasks.



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b) Write down the incidents happened to Chandu when he visited the Onam fair. you can make use of the words given in the worksheet.



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Image Source: <https://storyweaver.org.in/>



6. At the beach

Aim: To give practice in past continuous

Instructions to the teacher

- Present the narration
- Picture interaction
- Narrate the events and write sentences on the BB
- Ask the students to observe the pictures and read the sentences.
- Elicits more examples from the children.
- More worksheets may be given.

Narration

Yesterday Miya's grandma came to her house. Miya went to the railway station to pick her grandma with her father. When they reached there ...



The train was arriving to the station.

Many people were waiting at the station.

A man was carrying luggage.

A woman was walking through the platform.

Two boys were talking.

The ticket examiner was standing near the train.

A girl and her mother were standing near the coffee shop.

Worksheet

- a) Miya went to the railway station yesterday at 6.30 am. Can you write down what were you doing yesterday at 6.30 am?

I was.....
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See what Miya's friends were doing?



Ajay was singing.



Diva was skipping



John



Tara



Minu and her friends



Ken and Pinky

Pooja



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What were you and your friends doing when the teacher entered in the classroom today?



7. Miya's Story Book

Aim: To give practice in writing stories using the correct sentence pattern

Instructions to the teacher

- Present the narration
- Motivate the children for picture reading
- Interact with the children to express their imagination and thoughts
- Elicit responses from them and add their ideas and imagination while narrating the story
- Narrate the events and write it on the blackboard.
- Ask the students to observe the pictures and read the story from the story card
- More worksheets may be given.

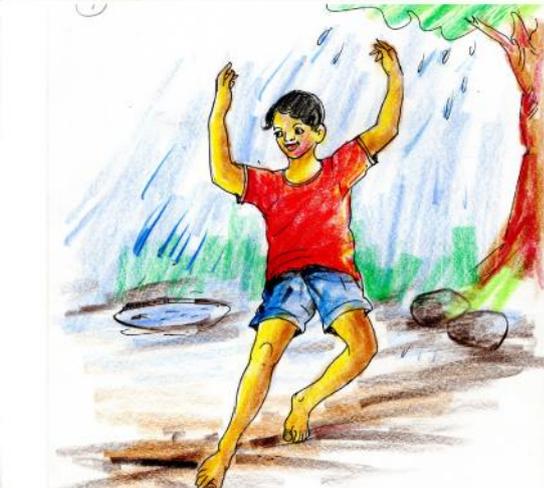
Narration

Miya's grandma tells so many stories. Yesterday she told Miya some stories from her new story book. There are many illustrated stories in that book. Lets read one.

Worksheet

Did you like the story? Now I will show you some picture sequences. Can you write stories based on the pictures?

a)



b)

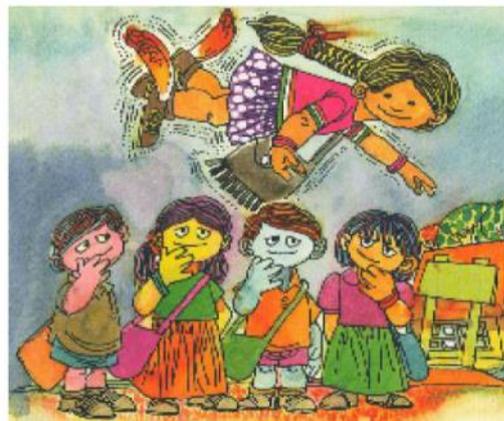
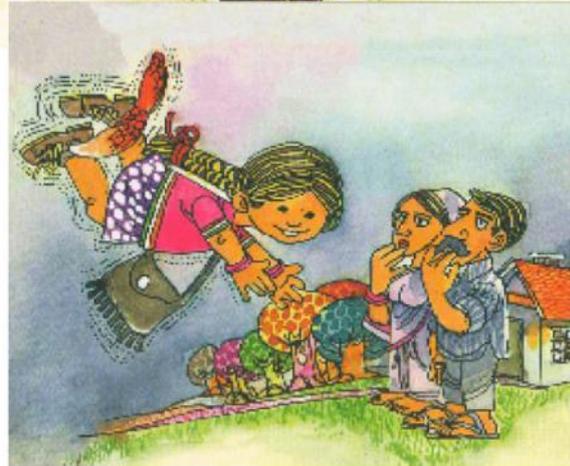
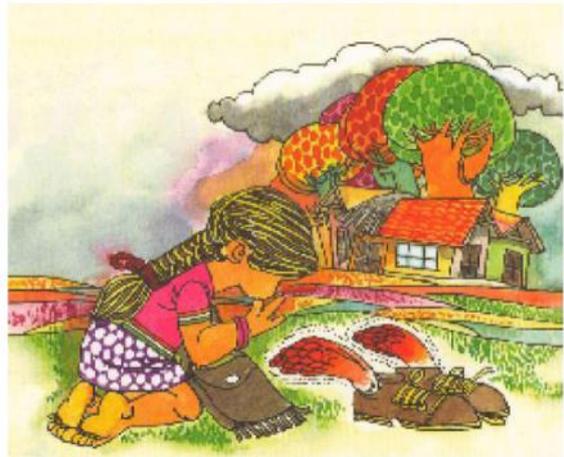


Image Source: <https://storyweaver.org.in/>

Worksheet

Write stories based on the hints given below.

- a) Arjun made a beautiful kite. It flew over the hills, fields and sea shore. Kite was very happy. One day they went to a forest. Arjun was running and the kite was flying. Suddenly a tear drop fell on Arjun's hand. He looked up.

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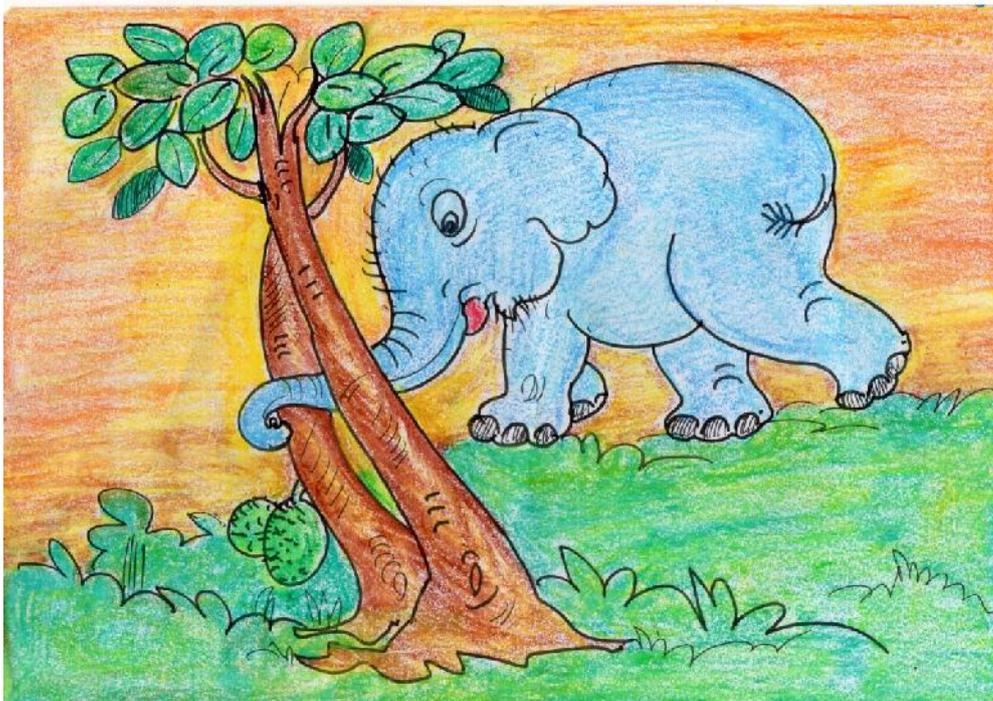
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b) Where is the sweet smell from? I want jackfruit. Manu elephants mouth watered. He raised his trunk to pluck the jackfruit. “oh God! My trunk!” Manu elephant’s trunk got stuck in between the branches of the jackfruit tree.



.....“Help....help”. He began to cry. At that time

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c) Look at the picture. What can you see there? Who are there in the tree? Can you see anyone under the tree? What is the mother bird doing? Are they in trouble? Can you write a story based on the picture?



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d) Noyal and Joyel are best friends. Noyal is kind hearted and Joyal is naughty one. Once they were walking on a street. They saw a handicapped man struggling himself to reach home.

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e) Hai.... A mango !!Ramu ran towards the mango tree happily. Oh... what a tasty mango! “ I will plant this seed”. Ramu thought. He took the seed and planted it in his backyard. Months and years passed.....

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f) Go away from my garden. I won't allow anyone to come inside. The old man shouted. The children from the garden ran away. They decided to teach the old man a lesson.

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g) Tony and Teena were friends. One day they were playing in the courtyard of Teena's house suddenly they heard a sound . A big black dog was chasing a small bird. The bird was tired . It couldn't fly. Tony took a stone and threw it on the dog. With a bark the dog ran away. Teena moved towards the bird.....

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h) I wake up at night feeling thirsty. I want to get some water. I start looking for my slippers under the bed.

Oh my God! There is a tiger under my bed.

Now what should I do?

Should I call Mom?

What if the tiger roars ?

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POST – TEST

Instructions to the teacher

- The time allotted is 30 minutes.
- The students are seated in comfortable positions, so that they can attempt the test in a stress-free manner.
- The teachers are strongly advised that no scaffolding is done so that the students are able to use their own thinking and creative talents.
- Ask the students to perform the task, as per the given worksheet.
- Make an assessment of entry behaviour using the rubrics given in the toolkit

Write a story based on the illustrations given below.



Image Source: <https://storyweaver.org.in/>

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Appendix 3

Pre-test & Post-test Samples

Activity-1 - Picture Description | Anjana.05
VII B

Picture so many people more works
take one man garden cleaning, one girl
watering the flowers, two child play.
one child cycle rounding, man machine
grass home up blue sky, wonderful
Picture. childrens are playing, father's and
mummy's working the garden, children
Playing soil in the home friend.

'My own Story'

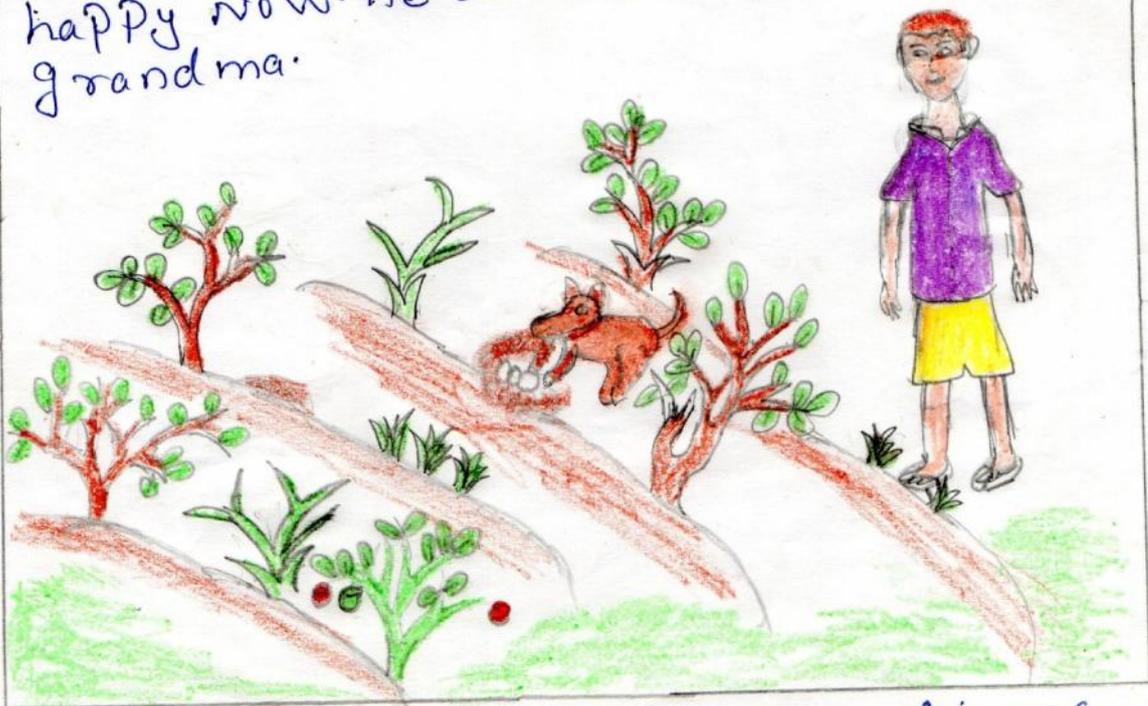
Hiding Potatoes

Balu is collecting vegetables from the garden. He has collected red tomatoes, fresh brinjals and green lady's fingers. Grandma says, "well done, Balu! Go and get some Potatoes too"

Balu looked at all the plants, creepers and trees. Not a single potato could be seen.

He went to the other side of the garden. kaloo, his pup followed him. Balu is looking for potatoes. He looked at every plant.

kaloo, his pup is playing in the soil. kaloo made a big hole in the ground. suddenly Balu looked at kaloo. He is surprised very much. under the ground he saw some potatoes He is very happy now. He took them and run to grandma.



Arjana. O.S.