

## Evaluation of EAP Short Essay Writing Textbooks: An Analysis of Content Quality in Developing Academic Writing Skills

Dimas Aulia Arzaqi<sup>1</sup>, Diah Puji Siliwangi<sup>2</sup>, Abdul Syahid<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Institut Agama Islam Palangkaraya

E-mail: dimasauliaoke@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>, diah.puji.siliwangi06.04@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>, abdul.syahid@iain-palangkaraya.ac.id<sup>3</sup>

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**Abstract:** *A This study evaluates EAP (English for Academic Purposes) short essay writing textbooks, focusing on the quality of content and its role in developing students' academic writing skills. The analysis examines the alignment of textbook materials with academic writing standards, including structure, coherence, and argumentation. Through a systematic review of selected textbooks, the study identifies strengths and weaknesses in content presentation, instructional support, and relevance to learners' needs. The findings reveal critical insights into how these resources can enhance writing proficiency, offering recommendations for educators and curriculum developers. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the improvement of EAP instruction by providing a framework for assessing the effectiveness of educational materials in fostering essential writing competencies.*

## INTRODUCTION

Textbook evaluation is an important process that helps not only teachers but also curriculum designers and material developers in identifying and understanding the main features of textbooks, such as their approach, content, activities, tasks, and supplementary materials (Ahern & López-Medina, 2021). The importance of this evaluation becomes clear when considering the various learning needs and objectives present in today's educational environments. A well-designed textbook serves multiple purposes, one of which is to present knowledge in an accessible and organized way for learners. According to AbdelWahab (2013), "one of the basic functions of textbooks is to make the existing knowledge available and apparent to the learners in a selected, easy, and organized way." This structured presentation is vital for effective learning, especially in the context of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), where clarity and organization can significantly enhance students' understanding of complex concepts.

Textbooks play a crucial role in delivering educational materials, assigning tasks that align with learning objectives, and providing homework that connects to classroom activities (Budiarsih, 2022). These resources are not just supplementary; they are essential to the learning process. In the context of EAP, where students are required to develop specific academic skills, the quality of the textbook becomes even more important. Although EAP is a compulsory course for students from various majors, there is currently a lack of well-developed standard EAP textbooks (Solikhah,

2020). This gap highlights the need for evaluation and development of resources that can effectively meet the academic writing needs of students across different disciplines.

In this context, the role of textbooks in developing academic writing (EAW) is often overlooked. As noted by (Li & Cui, 2021), "textbooks are an important pedagogical tool which can mediate students' English Academic Writing (EAW) skill development," emphasizing the need to investigate how useful these resources are perceived to be by various stakeholders, including students and teachers. Therefore, the evaluation of textbooks should not only focus on content quality but also on their ability to create meaningful learning experiences and enhance students' writing skills. Extended writing production in high-stakes contexts is traditionally assessed using rating scales (Lukácsi, 2021), highlighting the importance of having well-structured resources to prepare students for such assessments.

Well-developed and designed textbooks significantly assist teachers in using texts with appropriate methodologies and approaches. Textbook analysis is useful in determining the material's usefulness within a specific context (Jahan et al., 2020). This analysis allows educators to understand how different textbooks can meet the needs of diverse learners while also addressing curriculum requirements. As key drivers of language learning, textbooks can take various forms, including informative, instructional, experiential, eliciting, or exploratory (Tomlinson, 2012); (Azarnoosh et al., 2018). The diversity of these forms indicates that textbooks can serve multiple roles, thus influencing the learning process in different ways. Given these diverse roles, it is the responsibility of educators to create a compatible combination of the strengths found in these different forms. As (Muhedeen, 2022) points out, "whatever forms they take, they have multiple roles in every course of instruction all over the world."

This introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive evaluation of EAP short essay writing textbooks, focusing on their content quality and effectiveness in developing academic writing skills among students. The subsequent analysis aims to provide insights into how these textbooks can be improved to better meet the needs of learners, thereby contributing to their academic success in an increasingly competitive educational landscape. By investigating the strengths and weaknesses of current resources, this study seeks to promote the development of high-quality EAP materials that are essential for nurturing proficient academic writers.

In today's classrooms, textbooks play a bigger role than just delivering information they guide students, foster critical thinking, and support teachers in creating meaningful learning experiences. This becomes especially important as education shifts to meet the needs of diverse learners. (Rubiyanti et al., 2020) highlight the importance of integrating critical thinking and scientific literacy into textbooks to help students develop independence in learning. By weaving these skills into textbook content, educators can create resources that not only teach concepts but also encourage students to think critically and apply their knowledge.

Textbooks should also reflect cultural and character education, as (Selvyanti et al., 2020)) suggest, preparing students for real-world challenges beyond the classroom. To do this effectively, educational materials need to meet specific quality standards, These standards provide a foundation for evaluating textbooks, ensuring they are clear, organized, and aligned with educational goals. Similarly, ensure that textbooks serve a broader purpose, connecting with the curriculum and enhancing students' academic journeys. Together, these guidelines remind us that textbook evaluation isn't just about assessing content; it's about building resources that genuinely support students and help them grow into critical thinkers and independent learners.

## **METHOD**

This study utilizes a qualitative research design to evaluate the content quality of the textbook

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with title “*How To Write Short Essay In EAW*” in the context of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) through systematic content analysis and questionnaire surveys targeting users. The research involves selecting a variety of EAP textbooks currently in use at higher education institutions, ensuring that these textbooks encompass diverse academic disciplines and teaching methods. Evaluation criteria will be established based on relevant literature, focusing on aspects such as content quality, instructional design, and usability. A thorough qualitative analysis will be conducted to assess the textbook, followed by the administration of a questionnaire to gather in-depth insights from students and instructors regarding their experiences and perceptions of the textbook's effectiveness. The qualitative data collected from both the content analysis and questionnaire responses will be thematically analyzed to identify key findings and trends, ultimately providing valuable recommendations for enhancing the quality of EAP resources in academic writing education.

a. Participant

The participants in this study will be third-year students enrolled in English language programs. Approximately 8 students who are taking courses in Academic Writing and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) will be selected for the survey. The selection will focus on ensuring that participants have sufficient experience in academic writing, allowing them to provide valuable feedback on the evaluated textbooks. All student participants will give their consent before taking part in the study. Their responses will be collected anonymously to maintain confidentiality, and participants can withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. This approach ensures that the evaluation of EAP textbooks is based on the experiences and opinions of third-year students actively developing their academic writing skills.

b. Data Source

The primary data source for this study will be a structured questionnaire designed to gather information about the evaluation of the EAP (English for Academic Purposes) short essay writing textbook titled “*How To Write A Short Essay In Englis Academic Writing*”. The questionnaire will be divided into several sections, each focusing on specific attributes and perceptions related to the textbook.

1) Physical and Utilitarian Attributes

This section evaluates the physical and utilitarian attributes of the EAP (English for Academic Purposes) textbook *How to Write a Short Essay in EAW*, with the intention that this evaluation will support the flexible checklist aimed at ensuring that the process of selecting an English language textbook is based on the needs and wants of both the learners and the educational institution (AbdelWahab, 2013). The evaluation focuses on three key areas based on the aforementioned criteria: General Appearance, Layout and Design.

a) General Appearance

The general appearance of the textbook will be assessed based on nine specific items, including the attractiveness and informativeness of the cover, the appropriateness of the font size and type, and the quality of the paper and binding. These aspects contribute to the overall appeal and usability of the textbook, impacting students' initial perceptions and willingness to engage with the material.

b) Layout and Design

The layout and design will be evaluated through twelve criteria, such as the variety and consistency of design elements, the clarity of titles and headings, and the logical organization of content. A well-structured layout enhances the learning experience by making information easily accessible and promoting effective navigation through the textbook.

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## 2) Usage of the Book "How To Write A Short Essay In EAW"

This section investigates how frequently and effectively students utilize the textbook *How To Write A Short Essay In EAW* in their academic writing practices. The usage of the book will be assessed through various criteria that explore its integration into students' coursework and assignments. Specifically, students will reflect on their frequency of engagement with the textbook, the extent to which they find the book helpful for understanding essay structures, and the applicability of the exercises and tasks provided within it. The questionnaire used for this section was developed based on Li and Cui (2021), which examined students' perceptions and use of the NHCE textbook. However, we modified it to align with the specific content and objectives of the textbook being evaluated. By gathering data on these aspects, the study aims to determine whether the textbook meets the practical needs of students and how it contributes to their writing development. Understanding how students use the textbook will provide insights into its effectiveness as a teaching tool and highlight any areas for improvement to better support their academic journeys.

## 3) Perception of the Usefulness of the Book "How To Write A Short Essay In EAW"

This section focuses on students' perceptions regarding the usefulness of the textbook *How To Write A Short Essay In EAW* in enhancing their academic writing skills. Participants will evaluate their overall satisfaction with the content, noting perceived improvements in their writing abilities since using the book. They will also consider the relevance of the material to their specific academic needs, assessing how well it prepares them for the challenges of writing essays in their respective fields. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to provide recommendations based on their experiences, offering valuable feedback that could inform future iterations of the textbook. By analyzing students' perceptions of the textbook's usefulness, the study seeks to highlight its strengths and identify areas that may require further refinement, ensuring that the resource effectively supports EAP students in their writing endeavors.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### a. General Apparance

The first area we looked at was the visual design and physical quality of the book. Most respondents felt that the book cover was both informative and visually appealing, which is important in attracting the reader's attention and giving a good first impression of the content inside. Respondents were also generally satisfied with the font size and type, noting that it was appropriate and easy to read. Similarly, the paper quality was seen as good by most respondents, with many feeling that it was durable and comfortable for frequent use in a learning environment.

Moving on to the structure of the content, most respondents agreed that the titles and subtitles were clear and helped in understanding the topics discussed in the book. Well-organized headings are important for guiding the reader through the material and ensuring that they can easily navigate the content. Respondents also appreciated the inclusion of white space, which helped make the book visually comfortable to read. White space helps separate the text, making it less dense and easier to digest, contributing to a more pleasant reading experience.

However, one area that stood out for further improvement was the use of images in the textbook. While many respondents felt that the book included a sufficient number of images, some suggested that more could be added. Images can be an effective way to clarify concepts or bring the material to life, and increasing their number or variety could enhance the overall appeal of the book. Although the book already uses images, incorporating more could make the content more engaging and easier to understand.

Finally, the price of the book was evaluated, and most respondents felt that the price of IDR

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38,000 was quite reasonable given the quality of both the content and physical design. The price point is considered affordable, especially for students who are looking for good-quality learning materials that don't break the bank. This suggests that the book offers good value for money and is accessible to a wide range of readers.

**b. Layout And Design**

One of the standout strengths of the textbook is its consistency in formatting. Respondents agreed that elements like headings, icons, labels, and other design features are used consistently throughout. This makes the textbook easier to navigate and helps readers understand its structure. Additionally, the book offers a clear and detailed overview of the functions and structures taught in each unit. While most respondents appreciated this aspect, a few neutral responses suggested there's room to improve, especially in the vocabulary sections.

The textbook also scored well on its supporting features, such as the table of contents and bibliography. Most respondents felt the table of contents was well-organized and detailed, making it easier to grasp the material's scope. The titles of units and lessons were also seen as appropriate and relevant. However, some respondents felt that the bibliography could be more comprehensive, even though the majority were satisfied with it.

The review sections and exercises included in the textbook were another highlight. Respondents agreed these activities provide sufficient practice for applying the theories discussed, helping to strengthen practical writing skills. However, opinions about the textbook's physical durability were mixed. While many respondents felt the book seemed sturdy, a few expressed concerns, indicating that the materials could be improved.

One of the most appreciated aspects was how easy the textbook is to understand. Respondents noted that using Indonesian made the material more accessible, especially for learners who might struggle with English. This feature adds to the textbook's value as an inclusive learning tool. That said, while the vocabulary list and glossary were generally well-received, some neutral feedback suggested these sections could be expanded to offer even more support.

**c. Usage of the Book "How To Write A Short Essay In EAW"**

This study focuses on evaluating the quality of the textbook *"How to Write a Short Essay in EAW"* in developing short essay writing skills, particularly for students studying English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The textbook is designed to help learners understand and master essential aspects of writing high-quality short essays, including structure, language use, and critical thinking techniques. The research explores how effectively the textbook achieves these educational goals based on user feedback.

The survey results reveal that most respondents feel confident using the textbook to understand the structure of short essays, including introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions. This finding indicates that the textbook provides clear guidance on the key elements of essay writing, which are considered fundamental to academic writing. Additionally, the book is perceived as effective in introducing various genres of short essays, offering users a broader understanding of different academic writing styles.

Logical and critical thinking skills are another focus of the evaluation. Many respondents acknowledge that the textbook helps them improve logical thinking when structuring essays. However, some respondents gave neutral responses, indicating that not all users find the book optimal for fostering critical thinking skills. This suggests room for improvement, such as including more examples or exercises that encourage deeper analytical thinking.

Regarding language use, the textbook is appreciated for helping users understand appropriate

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language patterns and the use of linking words in essays. Respondents noted that the book enhances the coherence of their writing. However, some neutral feedback indicates that readers might benefit from additional explanations or exercises related to these aspects.

Furthermore, the development of analytical and summarizing skills was another key area of evaluation. The textbook is considered effective in supporting users to build these skills, with many respondents affirming that it provides sufficient guidance for analyzing information and summarizing it effectively. Nevertheless, neutral responses from a few participants suggest that the user experience with the book varies, depending on individual comprehension levels and learning styles.

d. Perception of the Usefulness of the Book "How To Write A Short Essay In EAW"

The evaluation of the textbook "*How To Write A Short Essay In EAW*" highlights its strengths and potential areas for improvement based on feedback from respondents. The study explored how well the book supports the development of short essay writing skills, focusing on its impact on analytical and critical thinking, understanding essay structures, effective use of language, and overall writing proficiency.

One of the textbook's most praised features is its practicality. Many respondents agreed, or strongly agreed, that the book significantly helps in enhancing their short essay writing skills. This underscores its value as a learning resource, especially for those who need structured guidance in writing. Learners appreciated its step-by-step approach, which simplifies complex writing tasks and offers clear examples and exercises tailored to real academic challenges.

A major strength of the book is its ability to improve analytical and critical thinking. Respondents noted that the book encourages them to think deeply when constructing arguments, helping them present ideas more logically and persuasively. While the majority found this aspect highly beneficial, some neutral feedback suggests that more targeted exercises could further strengthen critical thinking development.

Another key feature is the book's effectiveness in teaching essay structures. Respondents found its explanations and guidelines on organizing essays clear and systematic. This was especially helpful for those struggling to understand how to build well-structured essays. By breaking down essay components into manageable parts, the book equips learners with the tools to confidently create cohesive and logical essays.

The textbook also excels in guiding users on appropriate language patterns for academic essays. Respondents appreciated the relevant and practical examples provided, which make academic writing more approachable. However, a few suggested that adding more examples or exercises could deepen their understanding and give them more opportunities to practice.

The book's section on linking words received slightly mixed feedback. While many found it helpful for learning how to create smoother transitions in their writing, some respondents felt this section could be expanded. Linking words are essential for improving the flow and cohesion of essays, so enhancing this part could further boost the book's usefulness.

Finally, when evaluating its overall impact on writing skills, most respondents agreed that the book is a comprehensive resource for improving their proficiency. However, some neutral feedback pointed out that while the book effectively covers the basics, it could go further in addressing advanced writing techniques or more complex academic writing scenarios.

In conclusion, "*How To Write A Short Essay In EAW*" is a valuable resource for learners looking to improve their short essay writing skills. It stands out for its clear guidance on essay structures, support for critical thinking, and practical language examples. To make it even better, the book could benefit from enhancements in areas like linking words, critical thinking exercises,

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and advanced writing support. These improvements would make the textbook an even more essential tool for students aiming to excel in academic writing.

## RESULT

The evaluation of the EAP textbook "How To Write a Short Essay in EAW" highlights its strengths in supporting academic writing skill development. Respondents appreciated its clear structure, logical organization, and practical exercises, which helped improve their ability to structure essays, use linking words effectively, and construct coherent arguments. The physical attributes, including the attractive cover design, appropriate font, and durable paper quality, were positively received. However, feedback on visuals and white space was mixed, with suggestions to include more diverse and meaningful illustrations to enhance engagement. Additionally, the book was praised for its affordability, making it accessible to a wide range of learners.

While the textbook demonstrates significant value, there are areas for improvement. Incorporating more visuals, expanding the glossary, and adding advanced writing exercises would address gaps in the current material. To further support learners, integrating interactive elements, such as real-world examples and collaborative tasks, could enhance engagement and practical application. These enhancements would ensure the textbook remains an effective and versatile resource for developing academic writing skills in diverse educational contexts.

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