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## INCREASING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION SKILL USING LITERATURE: CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH AT SMAN 1 PAITON

### Abstrak

Studi ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan membaca siswa dalam teks sastra dengan memanfaatkan media lagu dalam proses belajar Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas yang mengikuti model Kemmis dan McTaggart, dengan empat fase utama: perencanaan, pelaksanaan, pengamatan, dan refleksi. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan di SMAN 1 Paiton, pada semester pertama tahun ajaran 2025/2026 dengan subjek penelitian dari siswa kelas XII SMAN 1 Paiton yang berjumlah 32 orang. Proses pembelajaran dilakukan melalui dua siklus menggunakan lagu berbahasa Inggris. Data diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara, tes membaca, dan dokumentasi. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam keterampilan membaca siswa, yaitu dari nilai rata-rata 63,4 sebelum tindakan menjadi 74,1 pada siklus I, dan 84,3 pada siklus II. Persentase kelulusan belajar meningkat dari 0% menjadi 90,6%. Selain itu, partisipasi dan minat siswa dalam kegiatan membaca juga melonjak hingga 87,5%.

**Kata Kunci:** Penelitian Tindakan Kelas, Lagu, Teks Sastra, Keterampilan Membaca, Motivasi Belajar.

### Abstract

This study aims to improve students' reading skills in literary texts by utilizing songs in the English learning process. This research uses Classroom Action Research following the Kemmis and McTaggart model, with four main phases: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. This research was conducted at SMAN 1 Paiton, in the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year with 32 students from class XII SMAN 1 Paiton as the research subjects. The learning process was carried out through two cycles using English songs. Data were obtained through observation, interviews, reading tests, and documentation. The research findings showed a significant improvement in students' reading skills, from an average score of 63.4 before the intervention to 74.1 in cycle I and 84.3 in cycle II. The learning pass rate increased from 0% to 90.6%. In addition, student participation and interest in reading activities also jumped to 87.5%.

**Keywords:** Classroom Action Research, Songs, Literary Texts, Reading Skills, Learning Motivation.

### INTRODUCTION

Reading ability is one of the basic skills that is very important in the learning process at the secondary school level. Students who have strong reading skills will find it easier to understand lessons, process information, and develop knowledge and other skills. However, in practice, many educational institutions in Indonesia, including in Probolinggo Regency and particularly at SMAN 1 Paiton, face a number of challenges related to students' reading skills, especially when reading literary texts that require comprehension of meaning, processing of ideas, and critical thinking skills.

In preliminary observations at SMAN 1 Paiton, English teachers reported that some students still had difficulty understanding the information contained in texts, both explicit and

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implicit, connecting the content of the text to their existing knowledge, summarizing the main ideas, and showing interest in complex literary readings. These difficulties contribute to low reading achievement in general and hinder the achievement of expected literacy competencies. Supporting evidence can be found in studies showing that the level of reading literacy amongst students in Indonesia is still low.

Maulida et al. (2025) states that the low reading ability of EFL students is caused by a lack of reading culture, teaching methods that overemphasize text analysis, and a limited selection of interesting and easy-to-understand reading materials (Maulida et al., 2025). Various reasons, such as a lack of interest in reading, inadequate facilities, and ineffective teaching methods. Support for this can be found in research showing that reading literacy levels among students in Indonesia are still low. Various reasons, such as a lack of interest in reading, inadequate facilities, and ineffective teaching methods, further exacerbate this situation.

Nuvianto et al. (n.d) states that the reading process is greatly influenced by students' background knowledge, experience, and emotional state, so teachers need to provide appropriate reading materials so that they can understand the text better (Nuvianto et al., n.d.). Specifically, the core problem in this classroom action research is: "How to improve the ability of students at Paiton 1 Public High School in reading literary texts through structured learning?"

Therefore, this study focuses on students' low ability to read literary texts, both in terms of understanding the main ideas, details, implications, and usage. To overcome this problem, a structured and planned learning approach based on classroom action research is needed. This method provides an opportunity for teachers and researchers to carry out cycles of planning, implementation, observation, and evaluation in order to continuously improve students' reading skills.

The plan to overcome the problems in this study involves several strategic and systematic steps. First, the researcher evaluates students' literary reading skills through preliminary tests and observations to understand their basic abilities before taking action. Second, the researcher designs literary learning that is interesting and appropriate to the needs of students at SMAN 1 Paiton, taking into account the selection of appropriate texts and active reading activities such as discussion, reflection, and content analysis. Third, the learning process is carried out in two action cycles, which include the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection, to improve reading skills and literary text comprehension. Fourth, the researcher and teachers conduct reflections to evaluate the results of each cycle and refine the learning strategies to be more effective in the next cycle. Finally, students' reading abilities were measured through final exams and performance analysis to determine the extent of progress achieved after implementing this literature-based learning method.

With this approach, it is hoped that not only will there be an improvement in students' reading skills, but also an increase in their interest and habit of reading more complex literary works. This study provides empirical evidence that well-designed learning can significantly improve the reading skills of high school students.

Based on the context and understanding presented, this study has several main objectives. First, to determine students' initial abilities in reading literary works at SMAN 1 Paiton before the educational intervention. Second, to design and implement a literary learning process that can effectively improve students' reading skills. Third, to evaluate the extent to which literary learning interventions can improve students' reading skills. Fourth, to foster interest and habits of reading literary works among students at SMAN 1 Paiton. With the achievement of these objectives, it is hoped that there will be improvements in various aspects, namely the cognitive aspect related to text comprehension, the affective aspect related to interest and attitude towards reading, and the habitual aspect, which includes the frequency and quality of reading literary works.

The Concept of Reading Ability and Literacy Reading ability is not merely the ability to recognize words, but also includes understanding, interpreting, and reflecting on the content of a text. A study by Yulianti (2024) shows that the application of action research-based reading literacy can significantly improve the reading comprehension of elementary school students (Yulianti, 2024). In addition, research by Maghribi et al. (n.d) states that the use of the Sharing Reading Literacy learning model has been proven effective in improving students' reading

comprehension of stories, as shown by an increase in the average score to 80.21 after the treatment was given by (Mahgriby et al., n.d.).

These findings demonstrate the effectiveness of classroom action research-based reading learning methods. Text literature includes various types of reading materials such as narrative stories, essays, popular scientific articles, and other long English song texts that require critical thinking skills. Research by (Azwar et al., 2024) proves that the use of the KWL (Know–Want–Learn) strategy combined with multimedia can help EFL students better understand report texts. Therefore, literary text learning must involve active student participation, the selection of relevant texts, and the use of media that supports deep understanding.

Classroom Action Research (CAR) Model The CAR method was chosen because it is reflective and focuses on immediate improvement in the classroom. The CAR cycle of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection allows teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of learning in real time. Research by Handayani (n.d) found that word cards can improve the reading skills of students with special needs by up to 40% from the first cycle to the second cycle (Handayani, n.d.).

These findings emphasize the importance of using active and innovative learning strategies. The expected results and benefits of this study are expected to provide a number of significant benefits. First, an improvement in students' reading abilities, which can be seen from an increase in pre-test to post-test scores and a better understanding of more complex texts. Second, a change in students' attitudes and interest in reading, so that they become more enthusiastic and accustomed to reading literature both inside and outside the classroom. Third, the development of an effective learning model that can be used as a reference for Indonesian language teachers in teaching literary texts. Fourth, this research will contribute to the school and enhance teacher professionalism, as the research results can be used as a basis for developing a more structured literacy program at SMAN 1 Paiton. Overall, this study is expected to improve reading literacy levels in educational institutions, encourage the formation of a reading tradition among students, and contribute to the advancement of text-based learning in Indonesia.

## METHOD

This study applied Classroom Action Research (CAR). According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), CAR is a form of reflective research conducted by teachers in their classrooms with the aim of improving learning processes and outcomes. This research model was chosen because it was in line with the research objective, which was to improve students' reading skills through the use of music-based literature, specifically using the songs “Lemon Tree” and “Pretty Little Baby” as learning aids. The CAR model applied in this study refers to the Kemmis and McTaggart framework, which consists of four stages in each cycle, namely: Planning, Action Implementation, Observation, and Reflection. This study was planned in two cycles, with each cycle covering two meetings. If the results of the second cycle did not meet the success targets, the researcher could add another cycle. By following these stages, teachers can identify problems in students' reading skills, implement learning activities using song literature media, and reflect on the results to improve the next learning process. In addition to improving learning outcomes, this PTK design also aims to increase student participation and motivation in reading English texts, especially with an interesting and contextual literary approach.

This study was conducted at SMAN 1 Paiton, Probolinggo Regency, East Java, in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The subjects of this study were 32 students (18 female and 14 male) in grade XII at SMAN 1 Paiton. This class was selected based on preliminary observations and interviews with English teachers, which showed that the 12th grade class at SMAN 1 Paiton had varying reading abilities, with most students still having difficulty understanding the meaning of English texts. Therefore, this class was considered representative as a sample for action research based on the following reasons: 1. Students' reading skills were still below the Minimum Passing Grade (KKM 75); 2. Interest in reading activities was still low; and 3. Students showed positive responses to creative and music-based learning. This study also involved English teachers as collaborators who played a role in supporting researchers in conducting observations during the implementation of actions in the

classroom. Data collection techniques in this study were carried out using several methods, namely: Observations were conducted to see student activities during the learning process using the songs “Lemon Tree” and “Pretty Little Baby”.

The tools used include student activity observation sheets and teacher activity observation sheets. The purpose of this observation is to determine the level of student engagement in learning and the effectiveness of music literature media in improving reading skills.

Reading tests are conducted before the intervention (pre-test) and after each cycle (post-test). The tests are reading comprehension tests containing questions related to the content of the songs and literary texts used. The test consisted of five main aspects, namely: 1. Main ideas, 2. Detailed information, 3. Conclusions (deriving meaning), 4. Vocabulary in context, and 5. References (referring to words). The scores from this test were analyzed to assess the improvement in students' reading skills after the implementation of the intervention.

Followed by interviews and reflection Interviews were conducted with several randomly selected students and collaborating teachers to gather information about their perceptions, challenges, and reactions to learning that integrated songs. The results of these interviews were used in the reflection process to improve the quality of learning in the next cycle. Then, documentation was used to enrich the data by including photos of activities, student worksheets, teacher notes, and lists of pre-test and post-test scores. This documentation served as concrete evidence that the action had been carried out according to plan.

### Research Tools

The tools used in this study consisted of several components, namely: 1. Student and Teacher Activity Observation Sheet – used to record the level of engagement, motivation, and interaction during the learning process. 2. Reading Ability Test – used to assess students' reading comprehension before and after the intervention. 3. Interview Guide – used to find out the responses of students and teachers regarding song-based learning. 4. Literacy Song Media – two songs in English, namely “Lemon Tree” (Fool's Garden) and “Pretty Little Baby” (Connie Francis), were used as musical tools to improve text comprehension and interest in reading. These songs were chosen because they have clear lyrics, easy-to-understand vocabulary, and emotional values that can attract students' attention to English literary texts.

### Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this classroom action research uses descriptive analysis. Quantitative Data Analysis Quantitative data was obtained from the results of reading tests (pre-test and post-test). The average score and percentage of student learning completion were calculated using the following formulas: Average = number X divided by N and Percentage of Completion = number of students who passed divided by the total number of students multiplied by 100%. The success criteria were determined if  $\geq 80\%$  of students obtained a score of  $\geq 75$  (Minimum Mastery Criteria, KKM).

### Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data was obtained through observation, interviews, and reflective notes. The analysis was conducted by organizing the data, grouping the findings, interpreting the meaning of student behavior or responses, and drawing conclusions about the changes that occurred after the application of music literature in learning activities. The qualitative data analysis process follows the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, which includes: 1. Data reduction (selecting and focusing on relevant data), 2. Data presentation (compiling descriptions and tables of observation results), and 3. Drawing conclusions and verification. Research Success Indicators The success of this research is determined by two main aspects: 1. Cognitive Aspect: Students show an increase in reading ability with a class average score of  $\geq 75$  and at least 80% of students achieving the Minimum Passing Score (KKM). 2. Affective and Participatory Aspect: Students show improvement in their involvement in discussions, enthusiasm for learning, and ability to accurately interpret the meaning of literary texts (songs).

This research lasted for eight weeks, which included the pre-action phase, Cycle I, reflection, and Cycle II. The activity schedule was adjusted to the academic calendar of SMAN 1 Paiton for the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year.

Activity Stages	Implementation Time	Description
Pre-Action	Week 1	Initial observation,

		interviews with teachers, and preparation of learning tools.
Cycle I	Weeks 2-3	Implementation of learning using the song "Lemon Tree".
Reflection I	Week 4	Evaluation of the results of the cycle.
Cycle II	Weeks 5-6	Learning activities using the song "Pretty Little Baby".
Reflection II	Weeks 7-8	Evaluation and drawing of final conclusions.

This research was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines in education. Before participating, all students were given an explanation of the purpose and benefits of the research, and their participation was voluntary without coercion. Data related to the learning process and student learning outcomes were kept confidential to protect their privacy and academic integrity. In addition, the researchers collaborated with subject teachers at every stage of the activity to avoid disrupting normal teaching and learning activities and to ensure that the research was conducted ethically and professionally.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted at SMAN 1 Paiton in two cycles using two types of music literature media, namely the song "Lemon Tree" (Fool's Garden) in the first cycle and "Pretty Little Baby" (Connie Francis) in the second cycle. Each cycle consisted of two meetings covering the planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages.

The results of the study showed progress in students' reading abilities from the initial stage to the first cycle and more significant progress in the second cycle. Student participation in reading activities using songs also appeared to increase over time. In the first cycle, the researcher chose the song "Lemon Tree" as the main learning tool. This song was chosen because the lyrics are simple but full of reflective meaning. The teacher played the song and gave copies of the lyrics to the students to analyze together. Students were asked to read the lyrics, listen to the song, and discuss the meaning, mood, and values contained in the song. The reading process focused on finding the main ideas, specific information, and implied meanings of the text.

Type of Test Average Score	Average Score
Pre-Action	63.4
Cycle I	74.1
Cycle II	84.3
Gain Score (g)	0.57

$$(g) = \frac{84,3 - 63,4}{100 - 63,4} = \frac{20,9}{36,6} = 0,57$$

### Interpretation

This score falls into the moderate to high category, indicating a significant improvement in students' reading ability after implementing song-based learning. The table above shows that the students' average score increased from 63.4 in the pre-intervention phase to 74.1 in the first cycle and 84.3 in the second cycle. This 20.9-point increase shows significant progress in their ability to understand English texts. This improvement indicates that the use of the songs "Lemon Tree" and "Pretty Little Baby" is effective in helping students understand meaning in context, expand their vocabulary, and increase their interest in reading. Therefore, literature-based learning through songs has been proven successful in improving students' reading skills at the high school level.

Observations showed a 68% increase in student participation, up from 35% in the initial phase. The average student score also increased to 74.1, with 68.7% achieving the minimum competency standard. However, some students still had difficulty understanding figurative

language and proverbs. Based on these findings, the researchers concluded that the use of songs was effective in increasing interest in reading, although improvements to the lyrics were needed. In the second cycle, the researchers used the song “Pretty Little Baby,” which has a clearer storyline and is easier to analyze.

This lesson focused more on understanding the narrative and deeper meaning using interactive reading methods, where students read together, discussed the meaning of phrases, and drew conclusions based on the song's content. Observations showed a significant increase in student engagement, with 87.5% actively participating in group discussions. The average score also increased to 84.3, with 90.6% of students meeting the minimum competency criteria. The final reflection showed that literature-based learning through songs not only improved reading skills but also increased students' motivation to learn. The conclusion from the two learning cycles showed that the use of the songs “Lemon Tree” and “Pretty Little Baby” significantly improved students' reading skills, both in terms of direct and inferential comprehension.

The average student score increased from 63.4 in the pre-action phase to 84.3 in the second cycle, indicating that the use of songs as a medium in reading instruction is highly effective. This improvement occurred because songs serve as an audio-visual medium that provides a rich and emotional context for meaning. Songs also provide an enjoyable linguistic experience that is relevant to students' lives, thereby strengthening their understanding of vocabulary and sentence structure. The fact that students find it easier to understand texts through songs can be explained by multimodal literacy theory, in which understanding is achieved through a combination of visual, audio, and linguistic elements.

In this context, songs act as a means of presenting literature in a lively and interactive way, allowing students to understand not only the meaning of the words, but also the tone, emotions, and cultural context that accompany them. With two songs that have different themes and levels of complexity, students successfully honed their interpretive and inferential thinking skills as part of advanced reading skills.

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This study is also in line with the findings of previous studies. According to Syatriana (2022), the use of Personalized Background Music in the reading process can improve students' focus and calmness, thereby positively affecting their reading comprehension skills to (Syatriana, 2022). Arianto et al. (2024) states that singing can increase students' enthusiasm in the learning process because singing makes the learning atmosphere more enjoyable and interactive (Huljannah Arianto et al., 2024).

On the other hand, a study states that songs can create a pleasant learning atmosphere, making students more motivated to learn English journal (Farhansyah et al., n.d.). Another study states that the use of literature-based reading instruction can improve students' reading skills because literary texts encourage emotional engagement and critical understanding, as well as increasing students' interest in reading activities (Tahir & Wijaya, 2024).

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Rosenblatt's reader-response theory needs to be developed for the context of 21st-century learning. Students today interact not only with written texts but also with multimodal texts such as songs. Music-based learning allows students to build emotional and reflective connections with texts, resulting in a deeper understanding. This supports the concept of experiential reading, which is reading as an aesthetic experience, not just an academic activity.

Based on the overall findings, literacy learning that relies on songs has a positive impact on various parties. For teachers, songs can serve as authentic teaching materials that enrich reading experiences and increase student engagement. For students, this method encourages motivation, confidence, and critical thinking skills. For future researchers, the results of this study can be used as a reference in designing music-based multimodal literacy learning models at various levels of education.

Overall, this study shows that the application of song-based literature, “Lemon Tree” and “Pretty Little Baby,” is effective in improving the reading skills of students at SMAN 1 Paiton. Learning through songs not only strengthens understanding of the text content but also increases students' interest in learning and interpretation skills. Therefore, the music literature approach can be considered an innovative strategy to improve reading skills and English comprehension at the high school level.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CONCLUSION

From the results of classroom action research conducted over two cycles at SMAN 1 Paiton, it can be concluded that the use of a literary approach in learning, using the songs “Lemon Tree” and “Pretty Little Baby,” has a significant positive impact on the reading skills of 12th grade students. This improvement was seen in cognitive aspects (reading comprehension), affective aspects (motivation and interest), and participatory aspects (participation in discussions and reading activities). Numerically, the average reading score of students increased from 63.4 in the pre-action phase to 84.3 in the second cycle, representing an increase of 32.9%. In addition, the percentage of students who successfully met the Minimum Passing Criteria ( $KKM \geq 75$ ) also increased from 0% in the pre-intervention phase to 90.6% in the second cycle, while the level of student engagement in learning activities increased to 87.5%. These findings indicate that learning through songs is highly effective in motivating students to read and understand English texts. Therefore, songs can be considered an innovative strategy in secondary school literature learning, as they combine audio, visual, and linguistic elements that support multimodal literacy theory. Second, songs can increase interest and motivation to learn because they offer a fun, contextual learning experience that is relevant to students' daily lives. Third, the use of songs encourages active engagement and interaction among students, especially during group discussions and reflections on the content of the text. Fourth, the use of songs also enriches critical and interpretive thinking skills, as students engage in interpreting the symbols, emotions, and cultural values contained in song lyrics. Songs serve not only as a means of entertainment, but also as a contextual tool that enriches the reading experience and strengthens language comprehension.

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