

**An-Najah National University
Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**The Influence of Group Work on Improving
the 11th Grade Students' Writing Skills in
Governmental Schools in Jerusalem**

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family. A special feeling of gratitude goes to my parents who never stop supporting me and who stand by my side all the time.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank God for giving me the patience and perseverance to carry out my study. I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to my supervisor Dr. Ahmed Awad for his non stop support and advice. Many thanks are to the internal and external examiners whose comments will enrich my thesis.

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Finally, I would like to thank the school principals, teachers and students for their cooperation in assisting me to accomplish this empirical research successfully.

الإقرار

أنا الموقعة أدناه، مقدمة الرسالة التي تحمل العنوان:

The Influence of Group Work on Improving the 11th Grade Students' Writing Skills in Governmental Schools in Jerusalem

**أثر العمل ضمن مجموعة في تحسين المهارات الكتابية لدى طلبة
الصف الحادي عشر في المدارس الحكومية في مدينة القدس**

أقر بأن ما اشتملت عليه هذه الرسالة إنما هو نتاج جهدي الخاص، باستثناء ما تمت
الإشارة إليه حيثما ورد، وأن هذه الرسالة كاملة، أو أي جزء منها لم يقدم من قبل لنيل أي درجة أو
لقب علمي أو بحثي لدى أي مؤسسة تعليمية أو بحثية أخرى.

Declaration

The work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, is the
researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other
degree or qualification.

Student's name:

اسم الطالبة:

Signature:

التوقيع:

Date:

التاريخ:

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**The Influence of Group Work on Improving the 11th Grade Students'
Writing Skills in Governmental Schools in Jerusalem**

By

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Supervisor

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating "the influence of group work on improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills. To achieve this, the researcher used an in depth observation and a writing test. This was applied to 126 female and male students from the scientific and literary streams; study sample was divided into four groups. The students were from Al-Ma'muniah Secondary School for Girls and The Promise School for Co-education. The researcher distributed the writing pre test and post test on the control group and the experimental group, but only the experimental group was taught writing by group work strategy.

One of the major findings of this research is that students in general have a positive attitude towards group work and have had better results after they were taught by group work strategy. In the light of this finding, the researcher recommends the integration of group work as a strategy for teaching writing at schools. Another recommendation was directed to researchers to conduct further research. Some recommendations were given to teachers to guide them how to apply group work strategy and to students to use it when writing. The rest of the recommendations were addressed to the Ministry of Education.

Chapter One

Introduction and Theoretical Background

Chapter One

Introduction and Theoretical Background

1.1 Introduction

For many years, the traditional views of education have controlled teachers' personal theories of teaching and influenced virtually all aspects of teachers' decisions about classroom instructions. However, these theories failed to reflect the active role of the learner or the influence of the social interactive contexts in the educational setting. The transmission of information limited the students' abilities and did not ensure that learners internalized the knowledge their teachers try to teach them. These theories left behind a gap that was not filled until education has gone under paradigm shift from behaviorism to cognitivism and then to constructivism.

This paradigm shift had positive effects on all domains of the education sectors. Moreover, it had noticeably influenced the acquisition of the English Language skills namely: reading, listening, writing and speaking.

Writing is a challenging production skill that plays an essential role in real life situations. In fact, it is an interactive mechanism between individuals whether they are known or unknown, close or distant from one another. Therefore, the ability to write has increasingly become on demand in all domains and aspects of our global community. As for the educational sector, writing is characterized as a type of language performance with a specific graphical system which suits not only expressing ideas, attitudes or

beliefs, but also fixing linguistic knowledge of language learners. It plays an important role in the development of foreign language school curriculum. Hence, it is beneficial to teach writing at schools by using effective strategies which help students in mastering grammatical and rhetorical devices as well as giving them a pooling of knowledge about the skill.

One of these strategies is group work. Writing in a group is a process where two learners or more collaborate to produce one written text in a sense of an interactive atmosphere full of enjoyment. It assists students in developing many skills as discussion and negotiation. It is also an effective strategy for breaking students' psychological barriers towards writing. It helps all members of the group to develop positive attitudes about their learning and to acquire a high sense of belonging. (Cooper, 1993).

1.2 Theoretical Background

Constructivists Learning Theory: Cognitive constructivism and social constructivism:

The first principle of constructivist education inspired by Piaget's theory is to develop a socio moral atmosphere in which mutual respect is continually practiced. The Piagetian constructivist teacher promotes a feeling of community in the classroom, makes it possible for children to make classroom rules and many decisions about life in the classroom, conducts discussions about social and moral issues, promotes conflict resolution, and consults children about what they want to learn. Vygotsky's

theory in education suggests that the child is not a passive recipient of adult guidance and assistance; in instructional programs, the active involvement of the child is essential. Both Piagetians and Vygotskians consider that curriculum should be based on children's interests and needs. They also emphasize the role of the social education in child development (Devries, 2000).

Constructivists believed that learners develop knowledge through active participation in their learning. However, Piaget believed that cognitive development is achieved through observation and experimentation whereas Vygotsky viewed it as a social process, achieved through interaction with more knowledgeable members of the culture. Piaget's theory of cognitive development suggested that humans are unable to automatically understand and use information, because they need to "construct" their own knowledge through previous personal experiences to enable them to create mental patterns. Therefore, the primary role of the teacher should be to motivate the learners to learn from their own knowledge through their own experiences. Vygotsky referred to this work as "social" constructivism. Vygotsky's theory was very similar to Piaget's assumptions about how children learn, but Vygotsky placed more importance on the social context of learning. Learning activities in constructivist settings are characterized by active engagement, inquiry, problem solving, and collaboration with others. So the teacher is a guide, a facilitator, and a co-explorer who encourages learners to question,

challenge, and formulate their own ideas, opinions, and conclusions (Weeger and Pacis, 2012).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

According to the researcher's experience in teaching English as a foreign language, the researcher has noticed that students generally face obstacles in learning English especially the writing skill. They lack the interest and motivation to writing in English; they encounter difficulties in using the correct vocabulary; they do not keep track of punctuation. These problems are due to the techniques teachers follow. Most teachers use traditional and non effective methods while teaching writing. Others use group work to develop the oral skills but not the written ones since they believe that writing is a skill learnt by rules. Therefore, the present researcher seeks to determine whether group work has an influence on improving students' writing skills and their academic results and whether learning writing by responding to the behavior of others in real social contexts is more effective than learning writing through rules as recipes.

1.4 Objective of the study

The objective of this study was to investigate the influence of group work on improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills (organization, development, cohesion, coherence, structure, vocabulary and mechanisms). It sought to determine whether group work would be more fruitful than using traditional approaches such as individual learning. In addition, this study tried to find out if there are any statistical significant differences in

the students' writing results in the writing tests after applying group work due to gender and academic stream.

1.5 Questions of the study

The aim of this study was to answer the following questions:

1. What is the influence of group work on improving the 11th grade students' writing skills in governmental schools in Jerusalem?
2. Are there any significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) level of significance in the influence of using group work on improving the 11th grade students' writing skills between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group?
3. Are there any significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) level of significance in the influence of group work on improving the 11th grade students' writing skills between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group due to gender?
4. Are there any significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) level of significance in the influence of group work on improving the 11th grade students' writing skills between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group due to the academic stream?
5. Are there any significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) level of significance in the influence of group work on improving the 11th grade students' writing skills in the post test for the experimental group due to gender?

6. Are there any significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) level of significance in the influence of group work on improving the 11th grade students' writing skills in the post test for the experimental group due to academic stream.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study investigated the influence of group work on improving the 11th grade students' writing skills in governmental schools in Jerusalem. This research is thus important because it was designed to explore in depth whether students produce better written texts when working in groups than when working individually. Nevertheless, it meant to introduce the implication of some active learning techniques through social interaction which involves a community where members acquire and share experiences and knowledge.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

This study considered the following limitations: topical, human, locative and temporal.

1. **Topical limitations:** This study examined the influence of group work on improving the 11th grade students' writing skills in governmental schools in Jerusalem.
2. **Human limitations:** This study was conducted on a sample of one hundred twenty six female and male students from the 11th grade in governmental schools in Jerusalem.

3. **Locative limitations:** This study was carried out on two governmental schools in Jerusalem.
4. **Temporal limitations:** This study was conducted in the scholastic year of 2016-2017 from the 10th of September to the 17th of December.

1.8 Definition of Terms

- The Zone of Proximal Development

The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development is one of the most widely and well known ideas associated with scientific production. It was first introduced by Vygotsky(1978) as part of general analysis about the child development. This concept is referred to in studies about teaching and learning in almost all the subject- matter areas. (Dunn and Lantolf,1998; Lantolf and Pavlenko, 1995).

Vygotsky defined it as "the distance between the actual development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers, or what a child is able to do in collaboration today, he will be able to do independently tomorrow." (Vygotsky,1978)

The concept "Zone of Proximal Development" has three main aspects. First is the general assumption which focuses on the idea that a person is able to perform a certain number of tasks alone, while in collaboration, it is possible to perform a greater number of tasks. The second aspect is that the assistance assumption which emphasizes how an

adult, a teacher and a more competent person should react with a child. (Berk,1997)

Whereas, the third aspect, which is the potential assumption, focuses on "properties of the learner", including notions of a learner's potential or readiness to learn. This aspect seems to inspire the idea that it will be possible to greatly accelerate or facilitate a child's learning if the zone can be identified properly. (Fabes and Martin, 2001). In brief, the zone of proximal development is the range of readability levels that will challenge a student without causing frustration or loss of motivation, and it is the easiest or most effortless form of learning for a child.

- Writing Skill

Writing is a method of representing a language in visual or tactile form, it is a system of more or less permanent marks used to represent utterances in such a way that can be recovered more or less without the intervention of the utterance. (Daniels, Peters, Bright and William, 1996)

Writing is a set of visible or tactile signs used to represent units of language in a systematic way with the purpose of recording messages which can be retrieved by everyone who knows the language. (Coulmas and Florian, 1990).

Writing is one of the important language skills in our life. Through writing, we can inform others, carry out transactions, persuade, infuriate and tell what we feel. However, we know that writing or learning to write

especially in the second language is not simply a matter of writing things. It is one of the most important productive skills by which the writer can give an idea or message on a piece of paper.(Wright,2012)

-Group Work

Group work is a method of social work that is utilized to help individuals enhance their social functioning through purposeful group experiences and cope more effectively with their personal, group and community problems. (Konopka,1963). It provides a context in which individuals help each other by sharing thoughts, ideas and activities. (Brown, 1994)

In classrooms, group work could be defined as a method where students help each other, exchange ideas, argue on behalf of different points of view, solve a problem, complete a particular task and collaborate to produce a collective summary of their work. (Sharan, 1989).

As for the researcher, group work is a method where students are active as bees working together in a collaborative atmosphere to get the best results. Each one of them is a dynamic contributor to both the learning and teaching processes. While as in writing classes, this method could be used to achieve a task where all students can surely be involved in imaginative and creative topics in which writing is seen as a social dialogue.

1.9 Summary

This chapter introduced the main components of the thesis starting with the introduction of the study, mentioning some theories behind group work and stressing on the importance of the writing skill. It also included the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the questions of the study, the significance of the study, the limitations of the study and at the end it spotted the light on some of the terms used in the study.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter was basically conducted to provide theoretical background and empirical evidence to support the main argument of the study. It is the influence of group work on improving students' writing skills. In addition, it provides framework studies on the same topic. This chapter discusses the following: studies related to writing skill and its importance, studies related to writing approaches, studies related to writing problems, studies related to group work as a teaching pedagogy, studies related to the benefits of group work, studies related to critiques of group work, studies related to collaborative writing, previous experimental studies regarding group work and a summary.

2.2 Studies Related to Writing Skill and its Importance

Writing is a challenging production skill that plays an essential role in real life situations. In fact, it is an interactive mechanism between people whether they are known or unknown, close or distant from one another. Therefore, the ability to write has increasingly become on demand in all domains and aspects of our global community. As for the educational sector, writing is characterized as a type of language performance with a specific graphical system which suits not only expressing ideas, attitudes or beliefs, but also fixing linguistic knowledge of language learners. It plays an important role in the development of foreign language school

curriculum. Hence, it is beneficial to teach writing at schools by using effective methods which help students in mastering grammatical and rhetorical devices as well as giving them a pooling of knowledge about the skill.

Many researchers explored the significance of English language skills, but writing, despite its importance, did not receive adequate attention from these researchers and teachers. On the other hand, others considered writing as the most important gift given to human beings since it entails the capability to generate ideas and convert them into effective methods of communication. (Wright, 2012).

Fageeh (2011) considered writing as a channel for ideas and feelings. He indicated that learners need time to develop their writing skills, but he later stressed the fact that writing is an important constituent of second language learning. Mourtaga (2004), agreed with Fageeh and said that writing is a vital and critical means of communication. It is not just an outcome of thinking but a fruitful skill to feed the thinking process and give a deeper insight into the material at hand. One of the reasons why people often feel blocked when writing is the inherent assumption that they have to think very carefully about what they are going to write. As for Harmer (2004), he mentioned that writing is a motivating skill that provokes language development since students are required to focus on accurate language use and problem solving. While Tan (2012) added that writing opens the door to advancement in almost any field you might choose in the future. Chappell (2012) stressed the importance of writing as a job skill

which fosters the writer's ability to clearly explain a complex position to readers.

Hyland (2003) considered writing as one of the most complicated and prominent skills in EFL pedagogy. This socio-cognitive activity involves skills in both planning and drafting. Therefore, writing is regarded as a challenging and unmanageable skill. This leaves a massive responsibility on teachers who are expected to involve students in the learning process by giving them collective responsibility of their own work.

Negari (2011) added that writing is the most problematic language skill for foreign learners. Leki (2001) also indicated that large classes, teachers lack of competence in teaching English, as well as students' lack of interest in writing reveal a serious problem in the teaching of writing at schools.

Fulwiler (2000) and Chan (2001) defined writing as a complex activity which needs high competency and creativity. They agreed on the fact that writing is a consecutive way for conveying messages, ideas and information to readers. Urquhart and McIver (2005) stated that writing is a complex, recursive and productive process in which students revise and learn the various strategies of creativity and discovery by moving among the different stages of this process.

Brown (2001) believed that writing is a tool of reflecting what people have in their minds. He claimed that writing is a two –step process.

Understanding the meaning is the first process while the second one is transforming thoughts into words and later into a language. According to him, students are reluctant to write because they face obstacles when choosing the right words to produce sentences.

2.3 Studies Related to Writing Approaches

According to Reid (1993), there are three principle writing approaches: The product approach is mainly concerned with the form of the text, the genre approach mostly cares about the reader and the process approach which focuses on the writer himself/herself. The three approaches are described below in details since the purpose of this study is to determine the influence of group work on improving students' writing skills and knowledge.

2.3.1 Product approach

The product approach was developed before the process and genre approach. Its aim was to produce well written texts concentrating on the appropriate use of syntax, vocabulary and cohesive devices. Consequently, all researchers considered writing as a productive skill and thought that linguistic knowledge was a more essential component than linguistic skills.

Zamel (1983) defined the product approach as the traditional approach to writing which emphasizes on the composed products and neglects the composing products, the analysis of discourse into words , sentences and paragraphs, the strong concern with the usage (syntax,

spelling and punctuation) and with style (clarity). He believes that this approach increases the students' awareness while using grammar and helps them avoid grammatical errors.

Badger and White (2000) mentioned that this approach is concerned with knowledge about the structure of language, whereas Hyland (2003) claimed that the product approach is characterized by four stages which are a) familiarized writing, b) controlled writing, c) guided writing and d) free writing.

2.3.2 Genre approach (Goal oriented stage)

Hyland (2003) defined this approach as the staged social process of achieving interaction, so people use it for sharing some sets of communicative purposes as in telling a story, describing a technical process or conveying specific information to readers.

Badger and White (2000) stressed that the genre approach is regarded as the newcomer to English language teaching. In fact, it focuses on writing about various social contexts. Badger and White added that this approach has three stages. The first one is the stage of introducing the text by the teacher. In the second stage, the text is constructed by the students with some assistance from the teacher; whereas, the third is a stage when the text is fully accomplished by the student.

As for Slavin and Madden (1999), this approach examines different contexts. It moves from writing general essays to more particular essays

and from school-sponsored writing to read world content. The general essays involve writing in the classrooms, in testing situations or in laboratories .While the particular essays can include many genres; for instance : nursing notes , car plans , personal letters, research publication . textbooks and summaries.

According to Kay and Duddley (1998), the most beneficial feature of this approach of writing is that it gives a great deal of emphasis on the audience and the readers of the written texts. However, these researchers claimed that the genre approach has some negative sides because it is so restrictive especially in the hands of teachers, and this is likely to lead to shortage of creativity, so it could become boring or stereotyped if overdone or done incorrectly.

2.3.3 Process approach

The process approach, which mainly focuses on the writer, was first introduced in the mid 1960s. In this approach, there is a strong emphasis on writing skills (planning, revising and drafting) rather than on linguistic knowledge (spelling, grammar, punctuation and vocabulary) (Badger and White, 2000).

Teaching writing through the process approach is beneficial because it deals with the student as an independent producer of the text (Hyland, 2003). However, it does not place attention or emphasis on the reader who expects to acquire some knowledge from the text (Tribble, 2003).

According to Rohman as cited in Williams (2003), the process approach is classified into three stages: Prewriting stage, composing or drafting stage, the revising or reflecting stage and finally the editing. In this stage the attention is paid to grammatical , punctuation and spelling mistakes

2.4 Studies Related to Writing Problems

Writing is regarded as one of the most difficult skills in English language learning and teaching. Most researchers agree that it is neither an easy nor a spontaneous activity. Therefore, students consider writing as an unrewarding and even a punishing task. They feel that writing in a foreign language is more demanding than writing in one's own language on the basis that the target language needs more abilities and skills than in the mother language. (Hong,2009)

As for teachers, many report discomfort experiences while teaching writing. They feel that teaching writing poses a clear threat to them. Johnson (2006) classified the problems of writing into three categories: psychological, linguistic and cognitive problems.

2.4.1 Psychological problems

Arab learners of English language encounter many difficulties due to anxiety and lack of motivation, self –esteem and confidence.

According to Woolfolk (2004), learners of a foreign language may feel anxious and have a sense of tension because they fear to perform a

given task. Dornyei (2007) mentioned that studies show that anxiety is an inevitable feeling in education and that it has a correlation with the student's achievement including writing, so what is needed here is motivation. He considered motivation as one of the most effective ingredients in the writing learning process. Harmer (2004) considered anxiety while writing as the most destructive tool of the student's ability; it hinders the student's creativity and affects performance negatively. Others as Horwitz (2002) regarded competition in classrooms as one cause of language learning anxiety.

The lack of self-esteem and confidence seem to be one of the major reasons behind writing problems. They profoundly influence the ways in which students construct their new knowledge and tackle various tasks. (William and Burden, 1999). Teacher's encouragement and parental attention can play enormous role in helping students build confidence in their abilities. (Storch, 2005)

2.4.2 Cognitive problems

One of the difficulties that students face in the writing process is cognitive control which requires high memory capacity, long memory, text generation and self regulation. (Andrew and Lombardino, 2014).

Long memory helps students in performing a wide range of tasks such as exploring ideas and thoughts, whereas text generation requires mastery of mechanical skills of writing such as punctuation, capitalization and spelling problems. (Graham and Harris, 2000)

2.4.3 Linguistic problems

Linguistic problems of writing are classified into grammatical problems, problems of sentence structure and word choice.

A) Grammatical problems

Arab learners of English language face a number of problems in their attempt to write in English. Gebhard (2000) stated that students have problems with pronoun references, subject verb agreement and connectors.

B) Problems of sentences structure

Learners encounter difficulties in sentence structure. They use run on and incorrect fragmented sentences. Moreover, they produce long sentences which require subordination and coordination. (Kroll, 2003)

C) Problems of word choice

Well written texts and composition should include a wide and appropriate variation of vocabulary along with well structured sentences and proper grammar. When students practice the choice of words, the composition becomes more sensible to readers. (Littlewood, 2007)

2.5 Studies Related to Group work as a Teaching Pedagogy

Group work is a socio–cognitive and socio-cultural pedagogy which emphasizes the interaction between students working together in order to accomplish shared goals and maximize their own and peers' learning. Many

scholars and researchers stressed the importance of group work as a teaching pedagogy. The theory of group work underlies Vygotsky's theory of Zone of Proximal Development. In his theory, Vygotsky emphasized the important role education plays in giving children experiences by motivating and encouraging individual learning. Moreover, he argued that promoting children's language learning never occurs without the interaction with their peers in small groups. (Baleghizadeh and Rahimi, 2011).

In cooperative classrooms, students are given two responsibilities. Firstly, they are given the responsibility to learn the assigned material and secondly they have to make sure that all the others in the group do likewise. Thus, each student in the group seeks an outcome that is helpful not only to himself but also to his colleagues and realizes that he could fulfill his learning aims only if the others in the group also do so. In addition, a cooperative classroom is a setting where students are freely able to discuss the given material and assist one another to absorb it. . (Bowering, Leggett and Harvery, 2007)

Cooperative learning in group work is contrasted with individualistic and competitive learning. In competitive learning, students are regarded on a curve where they are required to work faster and against each other. They need to work more precisely to achieve a goal that only one or a few students can attain; therefore, each one of them seeks an outcome that is personally beneficial. In the individualistic classrooms, students are required to work by themselves to accomplish specific goals that are

unrelated to those of other students. (Bowering, Leggett and Harvery, 2007)

2.6 Studies Related to the Benefits of Group Work in Classrooms

Group work is a magical tool which creates a classroom where students motivated by their love to one another strive to learn and achieve. Hence, many researchers conducted research on the benefits that group work generates in classrooms.

In the field of achievement, Barkley, Cross and Mayor (2005) claimed that students who work in groups produce better assignments than those who do not, due to the fact that people remember group discussion better. He added that learning within a group fosters comprehension. Manor (2000) considered that two heads are better than one, so students in groups have a greater well of resources because of the variety of different experiences and backgrounds. According to Williams (2003), small groups are obviously beneficial in most of the teaching activities including writing. Gillies and Ashman (2003) mentioned that group work has a beneficial set of effects on a large number of learning aspects like achievement, productivity, motivation and good relationships with other members. Graham (2005) studied the influence of group work on students' performances. He found that group work encouraged students to access others' minds, debate, discuss, disagree and enable them to be more interactive and prepared for the 21st century. Schmitz and Winskel (2008) studied the influence of partners on improving others' low achievement.

They concluded that peer collaboration assisted weak students in improving as well as in increasing self confidence. Roberts (2004) stated that group work develops interpersonal skills and he mentioned that students who work in groups have a tendency to learn more what is taught to them and retain it longer than those taught in different methods.

Group work is also effective for problem solving. Fawcett and Garton (2005) investigated the influence of group work on problem solving. The result showed that children who collaborated with their peers had higher scoring than those who didn't.

In the field of psychology, Cle'ment,Dorney and Noels, (1994) stated that group work assists in breaking students' psychological barriers such as the feeling of depression, anxiety and inadequacy. It creates a positive setting where students form a cohesive group, which in turn, enhances their motivation, self-esteem and confidence.

Burdett (2003) mentioned that students who are engaged in group work have a great deal of satisfaction about their decisions and are more committed to them. According to Watkins and Daly (2003) group work allows people to gain a better understanding of themselves and a clearer image of who they are. Therefore, the feedback they get helps them to better evaluate their interpersonal behavior. Hill (1990) asserted that group work enables students to achieve predetermined goals, develop their thinking and understanding, help them build self confidence, promote positive attitude about their learning and acquire a high sense of belonging.

Chen (2008) viewed group work as a process for establishing a mutually beneficial social setting where students develop their cognitive abilities and expand their conceptual potential through communicating with more proficient peers. As for Jiang (2009), he considered group work as an effective mode and force of second language acquisition. It serves teachers in enhancing students' cognitive skills and generating learning.

Barnes (1992) reported that learners who are engaged in group work are able to think aloud, develop testing hypotheses and enhance their own communicative competency as using language in communication interaction.

2.7 Studies Related to the Critiques of Group Work

Group work is a strategy that has emerged as an important concept within the field of language learning. Many researchers regarded group work as a necessity for education and listed various benefits of group work. However, others mentioned the demerits it has and considered the following critiques:

a. Students' attitude toward group work

In the area of classroom instruction and feedback, many research papers presented a pedagogical argument in favor of peer feedback rather than of teacher feedback. However, other studies pointed out that students who are not used to group work and had never been taught how to work with others are not expected to work effectively with the rest of the

members in their groups. Moreover, they do not prefer to listen to or interact with their peers who are possibly as linguistically weak as they are. Hence, they would rather relate to the teacher as the supplier of the knowledge. (Davis, 1997)

As for imposing their opinions, some students do not cope with having a conflict with their peers, so they conform to the majority opinion. This in turn affects their own personalities socially. (Beebe and Masterson, 2003)

Levin, (2002) suggested that teachers could overcome these by telling their students about the psychological, social and educational benefits of group work. However, they should make the assessment criteria explicit so that students are fully aware of the basics upon which their individual mark will be based. (Kagan, 1998)

b. The authoritative figure

Freeman and Greenacre (2011) mentioned the problem of the authoritative figure in which one student, who has a higher competency than others, dominates the discussion and accomplishes all the given tasks. This leads other members to a feeling of dissatisfaction.

According to Brooks and Ammons (2003), one way of solving this problem is by carefully considering the nature of the task and rewarding not only the effort of groups, but also that of individuals. However, this

needs a tremendous effort from teachers; tasks need to be designed and prepared to maximize each student's contribution.

c. The free-rider problem

The free-rider is defined as a non performing member who grabs the chance to benefit from the accomplishment of the other group members with little or no cost on his part. Moreover, he/she always attempts to obtain reward with less or no effort by relying on others. (Morris and Hayes, 1997)

Watkins, (2004) suggested that one way of solving this problem is to make every member aware of the objectives of the task and to assign a responsibility for each student.

d. The sucker effect problem

The sucker effect is a responding reaction to the free riders. Kerr (1983) stated that competent students try to avoid being "suckers" by reducing their own input in the tasks given to them. They find it difficult to cover for a member of the group who is unlikely to succeed by himself. Kerr also mentioned that the sucker effect problem is the cause of procrastination in all group work activities. One way of minimizing the effects of the sucker problem is by doing some ice break activities which help students to get to know each other better. This way, competent students will be inclined to feel like suckers.

e. Group formation

Another obstacle facing teachers in the implication of group work is group formation. Harmer (2004) stated that students may not like other people and may not get along with them especially if they do not know each other earlier. This can lead to a feeling of anxiety and lack of confidence.

To solve this problem, teachers need to pay attention to an important aspect of personality dimension that is of introversion and extroversion. Introverts are students who are not very sociable and do not like working with others while extroverts are sociable and active students who prefer being with others rather than learning alone. Therefore, teachers have to greatly regard this as they structure tasks.

f. The assessment of individuals within the groups

Assessing students within a group is one of the most challenging duties and the hardest burden on teachers since most of them lack the knowledge of how this is done fairly. In this regard, many effective solutions were employed to solve this problem. Brain (2004) suggested that teachers should firstly measure the productivity of each individual's abilities. Secondly, an assessment of the individual contribution is considered an important means before the final grading takes place. Thirdly, self, peer and group assessment can be extremely beneficial for both students and teachers in group work. Students who are engaged in

groups are generally aware of their own and others' contribution in the task. This awareness could be employed during the assessment process.

g. Time pressure

This is an increasing and constant worry for teachers who are required to stick to a fixed syllabus, where there is pressure on them to finish the teaching material on time. Most teachers believe that group work is a threat which wastes their precious time. Therefore, they try to avoid it and follow other traditional methods. (Dison and O'leary, 1984)

2.8 Studies Related to Collaborative Writing

Group work is a second language technique that depends on a theoretical background and a pedagogical perspective. With regard to the pedagogical perspective, a small group is based on the communicative approach which mainly emphasizes the importance of helping students to achieve progress in the acquisition of second language skills especially writing. (Storch, 2003)

Teaching writing in collaborative context has been a controversial topic among educators and scholars. Graham (2005) stated that writing in a group is a process where students collaborate to produce one written text in a sense of an interactive atmosphere full of enjoyment.

According to Noel and Robert (2003) collaborative writing is a process where multiple students work as a team to produce one document. Writing within a group assists students in developing many skills as

discussion and negotiation. Moreover, it is a tool for providing students with a better understanding of themselves.

Ballard and Clanchy (1992) claimed that constructing a collaborative writing classroom is not an easy task for teachers because teaching in a group setting needs a double amount of effort.

Elbow (1975) stated that drowning with others is better than drowning alone. He pointed out that collaborative writing classroom is mostly beneficial when a member is stuck in his/her writing. However, he stressed the fact that writing within a group is a complicated task for those who do not accept critiques from others. Yet, its importance is limited to the final stages such as revising and editing.

Some as Gebhardt (1980), on the other hand, believed that collaborative writing does not only have a positive influence on the final stage, but also on the starting stages such as brainstorming, planning, outlining and editing. He added that collaborative writing should be applied on some tasks such as finding a topic and generating details.

In the same sense, Storch (2005) claimed that collaborative writing strategy is effective in the beginning stages namely: brainstorming, discussion of the topic and also in the final stages such as others' feedback and editing. To prove his claims, Storch interviewed students to ask about their perceptions about collaborative writing. From the results, he found that most of them preferred collaborative writing as it encouraged them to

share responsibilities for deciding on aspects such as content, structure and language.

As for the importance of peers' review stage, Rice and Huguely (1994) suggested that peers' feedback is one way to improve students' final drafts. He added that peer response in this stage helps students to gain more experience in understanding the comments of others. However, Nelson and Carson (1998) stated that the peer review stage mainly concentrates on the product rather than on the process of writing such as finding mistakes. In this stage, students pay all of their attention to word correction, sentences problems, grammar and punctuation.

2.9 Previous Empirical studies regarding group work

This section shed light on previous experimental studies regarding group work. It emphasized the various beneficial effects collaborative learning has on language acquisition in many fields such as reading, listening, speaking, writing and social studies.

Gooden Jones (1996) examined the influence of group work on improving students' writing skills to pass the language proficiency exam. He selected eleven students form a college in New York and taught them writing for six weeks using group work. Upon following the collaborative writing approach, he used different evaluation tools such as observations, interviews, questionnaires and writing exams. After accomplishing the experimental work, the students retook the exam and eight of them passed it. Additionally, an analysis of the students' essays showed that

collaborative learning was an effective tool in improving students' writing skills.

Storch (1999) examined the influence of group work on improving students' grammatical fluency and accuracy in writing. He gave students three different exercises: a closed exercise, text reconstructing and text composition. Each exercise was done in two versions: one was done individually and the other collaboratively. Following a comparison of the three exercises that were completed by the students, the results revealed developments in some certain grammatical aspects and it was clear that collaborative writing had a positive effect on overall grammar accuracy.

In 2005, Storch has also carried out another study in which he compared between texts written in groups and texts written individually. He applied an experimental work on Australian students from different universities and gave them the choice of working individually or with others, so most of them preferred to work with others. He taught the class for four weeks; those who worked collaboratively used a tape-recorder to record their conversations while doing their compositions; they were interviewed individually and were asked to talk about their experiences during the collaborative writing process. Storch found that collaborative writing helped students in producing better written texts especially in grammar. Also, students who worked collaboratively produced more complex sentences.

As for the results of the interviews, Storch reported that collaborative writing enabled students to express themselves and to generate ideas better than those who were not engaged in collaborative writing.

Suzuki (2008) examined the importance of pedagogical differences between self-revisions and peer-revisions of written texts. She carried out her experimental work on middle class students who all had the same scores on the TOFEL test. She divided students into group A and B in terms of language proficiency, writing accuracy, gender and age. She used a variety of strategies to collect the data needed, such as observations and interviews. She asked students in the two groups to read any book and then to summarize what they had read. Students in group A were engaged in self revisions for fifteen minutes, while students in group B had peers' revisions. So each student was required to spend fifteen minutes revising his/her classmates' essays and then talk with his/her peers about their writings. Suzuki found out that the scores of those engaged in peers' revisions were higher than those engaged in self revisions. Moreover, the results indicated that those who were engaged in peers' revisions focused on meta- talk, content and ideas. Whereas those involved in self revisions paid attention to words choice, grammar correction and language form.

In the same field, Villamil and Guerrero (2000) investigated the importance of ZPD in peer revision on the acquisition of the second language. This study was carried out on two Spanish male students who participated in a writing development course. Both were instructed about

the methods of peer review and were taught how to revise a draft. During the experimental work, one student was randomly selected to be the reader while the other was the writer. They were also asked to tape their discussion during the revision session. After the experimental work was carried out, the results showed that the use of ZPD and peer reviews were helpful for both participants in managing their interaction, analyzing their written work and illustrating many grammatical issues.

Shull (2001) investigated the influence of group work including peer editing to improve the writing skills for two 11th grade classes in a high school in the USA. His aim was to determine whether group work was an appropriate strategy to solve students' problems in writing. One of the groups was taught writing by group work while the other was taught following a traditional method such as teacher –centered approach. Later, he conducted writing tests and found out that students who were taught through collaborative writing obtained better results than those who were taught through traditional methods.

As for the effectiveness of peer discussion during the pre-writing test stage, Shi (1998) conducted a study to determine whether peer talk has a positive influence on the pre –writing stage. He used observations and found out that peer work had a positive influence on improving essay writing. Moreover, it assisted students in immersing themselves into the social context as a result of getting scaffolding from their peers.

Mulryan (1994) investigated 48 students' perceptions toward working together. She conducted her study through interviewing students and teachers in three stages; at the beginning of the study, after observation of each lesson and at the end of the study. The study results showed that students believed that collaborative learning assisted them in minimizing their mistakes, in exchanging information with their peers and in giving them the freedom to solve their problems. In contrast, teachers showed positive attitudes toward collaborative learning.

As for this study, the researcher investigated the influence of group work on improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills. The study was carried out on one hundred twenty six female and male students from the literary and scientific streams. The control group and the experimental group did a pre test and a post test, but only the experimental group was taught writing collaboratively. The experimental work lasted for seven weeks.

The researcher believes that group work is an important strategy for helping students resolve disputes, it gives them an insight into real working world. Moreover, it reinforces some skills such as managing time, making plans, negotiating with others in the group, giving support to others, assigning roles, evaluating self, learning from others' perceptions and internalizing different social values. Also, it fosters learning. Students who work in groups retain more knowledge than those who are not involve in group work. In regard to problem solving, group work stimulates creativity.

As for psychology, group work allows people to gain a more accurate picture of themselves and of the way others see them. This in turn creates a confident and an independent student who will be able to tackle problems easily in the future.

2.10 Summary

This chapter shed light on previous literature reviews related to group work in teaching writing.

The different studies on group work and collaborative writing revealed that although it is not a new idea, group work is a beneficial and fruitful strategy needed in ESL classrooms.

The findings in most of the previous experimental work indicated the influences of using group work in language acquisition especially the writing skill which is the focal core of this study.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Research Design

Chapter Three

Methodology and Procedures

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to specify in details of the methodology and procedures used in carrying out the study objectives. It included study approach, methodology and study design, study questions, study instruments, techniques of data collection and analysis, study population study sample, validity and reliability of the instruments, study variables, pilot study, writing scoring rubrics, reliability of the English writing test, ethical issues and a summary.

3.2 Study Approach

The approach used in this study is a quantitative descriptive approach. The researcher conducted this study by using an experimental design. Therefore, pre and post tests were applied to find out the influence of group work on improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills.

3.3 Methodology and Study Design

The researcher used a quasi experimental study to achieve the main purpose of the study as well as to answer the research questions. It was conducted by dividing students into two groups: the experimental group and the control group.

The Experimental Group consisted of students who were treated by the collaborative approach.

The Control Group consisted of students who were taught by using any traditional method.

EG: O1X O2

CG: O1O2

O1: Pre Test

O2: Post Test

X : Treatment

3.4 Study Questions

As mentioned in chapter one and later in the discussion of the results.

3.5 Study Instrument

The instrument used in this study is a writing test including two tasks to be performed by students. In the first task, students were asked to write a made up or real story about a person who had a bad experience in life but later this experience turned out to be successful. In the second task, students were required to write a formal letter to the local Director of Education. The study tool was restricted to a pre and post test technique to investigate the influence of group work on improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills. In addition, the researcher adopted an in depth observation technique to investigate the influence of group work on improving the students' writing skills.

Pre and Post Test

The present study aimed at comparing between the experimental and control group to explore the influence of group work on improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills. In this sense, a pre test was carried on both groups at the beginning but only the experimental group has received the treatment, while the control group was taught using a traditional method. At the end of the experimental work, a post test was conducted on both groups. The results of the test were gathered as data of this study.

3.6 Techniques of Applying Group Work Strategy in Writing Classes

The researcher carried out a pilot study in August before she started the experimental work. The researcher did the study to make sure that the sample of the study is homogeneous and to modify the plan if necessary. During the pilot study, the researcher noticed that the plan needed some modifications. For example, the number of the students in each group was minimized into four students in each group. Also, the researcher realized the importance of assigning a role to each student and the importance of having a competent student in each group.

After getting permission from AlMa'muniah Secondary School for Girls and the Promise School for co-education, the researcher started implementing the experimental work. Firstly, the researcher designed a pre test and a post test which were checked by a jury of experts in the field of

teaching English as a Foreign Language; the researcher adapted Paulus' 1999 rubrics for evaluating writing tasks. Secondly, the researcher chose the sample of the study randomly. The researcher advertised for a course for improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills. All students who registered for the course were accepted as the sample of the study. Later, the researcher designed a seven – week plan for the experimental group whose members were 66 female and male students from the scientific and literary streams. These students were taught by a teacher from Al Ma'muniah School. Whereas the researcher taught the control group whose members were 60 female and male students from the scientific and literary stream.

The steps of applying the experimental work in writing lessons.

The First Week

During the first week, the teacher held two lessons. Each one of the lessons lasted for one hour thirty minutes. In the first lesson, both groups (the experimental and the control group) did the pre test. In the second lesson, the researcher started to teach the control group while her colleague started to teach the experimental group. The teacher emphasized the importance of group work; she focused on introducing group work elements needed for effective results. She told students that group work is like a beehive, so the failure of one member in the group means the failure of all the group. This way the teacher guaranteed that all members would cooperate to do the task successfully. Later, she explained that face to face

interaction has an essential role to assist students to exchange information and reduce the levels of anxiety. Next, the teacher clarified that students needed to communicate in the group, support each other and solve problems. Moreover, she told students that the more sociable they are, the higher the groups' achievement will be. By the end of the lesson, the teacher mentioned group work problems and disadvantages so that students could overcome them.

The Second Week

The teacher started the second week by structuring many activities to build a sense of class unity and assist group members get to know one another. The teacher wanted her students to realize that each one is a valued and valuable member of the class. Firstly, she divided her students into eight groups with four students in each group. Then, she assigned students to groups taking into consideration the students' competence in the language. After that, she told her students that they would work together till the end of the course and she arranged the students seating in a circular way so students could keep eye contact and share materials.

The teacher started the first lesson of the second week by an activity about group work. She asked each member in the group to tie his/her leg and then to tie it to the legs of the other members in his/ her group. After the students tied all their legs, she gave each group a task which they needed to do outside the classroom. For instance, she told one group to draw a picture about the dangers of smoking and to write a leaflet

convincing young people to quit it. During the lesson, the teacher noticed that students started to apply the elements of group work unconsciously. For example, they assigned roles to each member and when one failed to do his/her part, all members in his/her group tried to help him/her. After all groups accomplished their tasks, they were asked to give a feedback about their feelings toward the activity. The teacher asked students to stand in a circle. She held a wool ball, spoke about her feedback and then threw the wool ball to one of the members and asked him to give his feedback. She asked each member to give his/her feedback and pass the wool ball to anyone in the group until all members formed a spider web. At the end, the teacher left the wool ball and asked all students to do so until the spider web collapsed. She commented by saying that group work was almost like the spider web. If one member does not take his role, the task will not be accomplished successfully. In this stage, each student knew how important he /she was to the group.

In the second lesson, the teacher asked each student to sit with his/her group. She told all students that they were going to write a story together by answering her questions. So each student will answer a question and pass the paper to his/her classmate. The teacher told her students that they had seen an alien and they were going to write a story about what had happened. She started by asking when they saw the alien and where they? After the first student completed the answer for the first question, she/he folded the paper over so that his/her answer cannot be

seen and then he/she passed it to the student on his/her right. The teacher asked the following questions:

Who were you with?

What were you doing?

What did the alien look like?

What did you do when you saw the alien?

What happened in the end?

When each group completed the story, the teacher asked them to choose a member to read the story they came up with. The students read their stories in an atmosphere of fun and laughter. The teacher asked each group to type their story and bring it to class next time.

The Third Week

The teacher started the first lesson by displaying the students' stories on the board, using an overhead projector. She underlined the mistakes in each story and discussed the type of errors students had. For example, there were errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation and so on. She did not tell students the correct answers, but instead she asked students to rewrite their stories collaboratively. While students were writing, the teacher noticed that competent students played an important role in helping their peers to correct their mistakes. She also noticed that less competent students participated without feeling shy and that all members were supporting each

other. After students completed their stories, the teacher noticed that group members were able to correct most of the errors committed in the stories. As for the researcher who did the same task with the control group, she asked each student to write the story individually. After each student finished writing, the teacher corrected the papers and underlined the errors. Each student was asked to correct the errors but only few students were able to do so.

In the third week, the teacher started the lesson by reminding students of the steps of writing short stories. She asked students to start with the prewriting stage. She wrote the task on the board and asked students to start the writing.

The task was as follows:

A local magazine is paying \$50 for stories about happy events in people's lives. Write about a funny story that happened to you or someone you know.

Plan your story by making notes of the most important points and draft at least one paragraph of your own story. Then rewrite the final story, making sure all members proofread it.

The teacher noticed that the members of the groups started to gather information and ideas. Some of them started talking about the main character of the story (his appearance, actions, thoughts, likes and so on). Others started planning their writing by planning when, where and what. In other groups, some members started by creating the plot diagram.

The teacher also noticed that in some groups, competent female students tried to control the group members and took entire responsibility of accomplishing the task. The teacher interfered and told student that doing the task was a matter of collaboration but not a matter of individual duty.

The Fourth Week

During the first lesson of the fourth week, the teacher asked students to write a short story as follows

You saw an accident when you were in town centre last week. The police have asked you to write what happened. write about :

What you were doing when you saw the accident.

Who was involved in the accident and what happened.

What you and the other people in the street did.

During the lesson, the teacher was moving around between groups. She noticed that members of groups started to form strong relationships and they started to get used to each other. Also, she noticed that students were not only writing collaboratively, but were also enjoying their learning. After she corrected the papers, she noticed that they had less errors than in previous stories.

In the second lesson of the fourth week, the teacher told students that they were going to learn how to describe things, people and events. After

she explained different elements of describing things, she asked students to write about the following topic:

You read this on the school board:

Can you help?

We are looking for suggestions for day trips from our town or city. Can you tell me about a place you visited recently?

How did you go there? what did you see and what did you do ?

Other students would love to read about it.

The teacher asked each students to remember a trip he/she went to and really enjoyed. She told students who had never gone on a trip to imagine a place or think of a place that they really longed to visit.

The teacher noticed that students had long arguments on whose trip to pick, but after that she noticed that students agreed on one.

Students found it hard to describe the trip because it was their first time to write a descriptive task. She noticed that students picked the most adventurous trips.

The Fifth Week

The two lessons of the fifth week were a continuation of the second lesson of the fourth week. The teacher asked students to describe things. She reminded them of the strategy of writing descriptive tasks. She also

mentioned some of the errors students had in the first descriptive task. Some members took the responsibility to write down the errors that the teacher mentioned..

In the first lesson, the teacher asked students to write about the following:

You lost your mobile phone in school last week. Fill in the school's lost property form and include details such as :

Description of the phone

The time you arrived and left school

Which part of the school you were in when you lost your phone.

The teacher noticed that some students started to depend on their peers. She immediately asked the group to assign roles for each one, so as to make sure that everyone did their own task.

In the second lesson, the teacher gave the students the following task:

Write an article for your school magazine about a book or film that you enjoyed. Write about what happened in the story.

The teacher noticed that it was a good idea that she asked members to assign roles because the free riders accomplished the role assigned to them by the teacher. She also noticed that students, who took notes, were the most aware of the errors committed by the others and that he/she tried to correct them. Some students who were not very competent took the

responsibility of controlling the task and explaining ways of accomplishing it. This indicates that group work helps students to have more self satisfaction.

The Sixth Week

In this week, the teacher planned to teach writing letters both formal and informal.

She started the first lesson by explaining ways of writing formal and informal emails then she asked students to do the following task:

You made a resolution to learn English. Write a letter to a friend in Britain telling him about your resolution and asking him the following:

If he can help you.

Ways of improving English

What might go wrong.

In this stage, the teacher noticed that most members in the groups were more confident, participated more and were enthusiastic about the task.

In the second lesson, the teacher asked students to write about the following topic:

You are not satisfied with the food served in your school canteen. You talked to the seller many times, but he did not give you any attention

and did not take your comments into consideration. Write a letter to the school principal asking him to take action to solve the problem.

Plan your letter in the following way

First paragraph: introduce the problem.

Second paragraph: ask him to take an action to solve the problem.

Third paragraph: express your hope that the school principal takes your complaint into consideration.

The teacher noticed that some students were bored of working with their peers throughout the entire period, so they tried to move around and sit with other groups. She also noticed that students enjoyed writing informal letters more than formal letters.

The Seventh Week

The teacher ended the seventh week by asking students about their feedback on all weeks. Most students had positive feedbacks and said that they enjoyed group work and that it was an effective strategy that helped them to improve their writing. Others said that their peers' feedback was an excellent way for them to improve and not to feel embarrassed. Some students commented that group work did not help them to improve or to write better; these students did not get better results in their post tests.

In the second lesson of the seventh week, the experimental and control group did the post test.

3.7 Study Population

The population of this study is all the eleventh grade students in governmental secondary schools in Jerusalem for the scholastic year 2016-2017. The population contained 400 students from the scientific and literary streams.

3.8 Study Sample

The sample of this study was randomly selected, and it consisted of 126 female and male students from Al-Ma'muniah Secondary School for Girls and The Promise School for co-education. The control group consisted of 60 female and male students. As for the experimental group, it consisted of 66 female and male students.

The students were taught using an authentic valid exam from Trinity College in London. Both teaching and testing took place in the two schools in Jerusalem.

The sample was distributed according to one independent variable and two moderator variables. The tables 1, 2 & 3 show the distribution of the sample according to methodology, gender and academic stream.

A. Methodology

Table (1): Sample distribution according to methodology variable

Methodology	Frequency	Percent
Traditional	60	47.6%
Collaborative Approach	66	52.4%
Total	126	100%

The above table shows that the study frequencies are 60 students for the control group. Its members were taught using the traditional method. They represented 47.6% of the sample. The experimental group, which included 66 students taught by using the collaborative method, represented 52.4 %.

B. Gender

Table (2): Sample distribution according to gender variable

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	63	50%
Female	63	50%
Total	126	100%

The above table shows that the frequencies are 63 for the male participants and 63 for the female participants. This means that both male and female participants equally represented 50% of the study.

C. Academic Stream

Table (3): Sample distribution according to academic stream

Academic Stream	Frequency	Percent
Literary	63	50%
Scientific	63	50%
Total	126	100%

The above table shows that the study frequencies are 63 for the literary stream and 63 for the scientific stream. Each one of the streams represents 50% of the study.

3.9 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The English Writing test used in this exam was adopted from the Examination Department in Trinity College in London and was reviewed

by a jury in the field of teaching English as a foreign language at Bethlehem University and the Arab American University. One of the jury members suggested that points distribution should not be included in the form given to students because they are not interested in it. As for the researcher, students need to know the points distribution because it makes them to be more aware of their own writing and also more serious about the exam.

3.10 Study Variables

The study included the following variables:

- Dependent Variables

Students' writing skills

- Independent Variables

Group Work

- Moderator Variables

Gender (Male and Female Students)

Academic Stream (Scientific and Literary)

3.11 Pilot Study

The researcher did a pilot study to examine the instrument of the study. The purpose of this pilot study was to evaluate the quality of the

instrument so that it could be edited before the implementation. The pilot study was carried out on fourteen students on August 26th of the scholastic year of 2016-2017. These students were asked to write about a topic collaboratively. During the pilot study, the researcher noticed the following points:

1. It was important to minimize the number of students from seven to four or five in each group. The researcher noticed that a group of seven was inappropriate to achieve the aim of the study.
2. The researcher wanted to seek whether assigning a high-level student played a positive role in facilitating and improving the group work process.

3.12 Writing Scoring Rubrics

The major way for evaluating the two tasks in the pre and post test was based on Paula's 1999. Paulu's rubrics for evaluating was based on the scale from one to ten as the highest score for six categories of writing namely; organization, development, cohesion and coherence, structure, vocabulary, mechanism.

1. Organization: Organization refers to unity of paragraphs and ideas. The paragraphs should include an introduction, a body paragraph and a conclusion. The ideas should be clear and related to each other.
2. Developments: Development refers to the examples and supporting details used to develop the ideas.

3. Cohesion and Coherence: Cohesion is the way a sentence is connected to another in a paragraph or a paragraph to another in a text. A text can be cohesive through the use of repetition, transition, parallelism, antonym and synonym. Coherence means that the text is not complex and is easy to understand and read because the organization of ideas is systematical and logical.
4. Structure: Structure focuses on the grammatical issues such as comparative, superlative, active, passive and tenses.
5. Vocabulary: Refers to the list or collection of words used.
6. Mechanism: Refers to punctuation, capitalization and spelling.

3.13 Ethical Issues

This study was conducted on human subjects, so the researcher obtained permission from the Faculty of Graduate Studies at An Najah University. The permission was given to school principals. Moreover, a paper was attached with the pre and post test to inform students about the aim of the study. Students were told that doing the exam was optional and that any information would be confidential and would only be used for scientific research aims.

3.14 Summary

In chapter three, the researcher gave clear explanations of the methodology and procedures used to achieve the purpose of the study.

Chapter Four

Study Findings

Chapter Four

Study Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the findings of the research and the test results to investigate the influence of group work on improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills in governmental schools in Jerusalem.

4.2 Findings Related to the Homogeneity of the Sample

Table(4): Distribution of students according to gender and academic stream by control and experimental groups

		Control	Experimental
		Count	Count
Gender	Male	29	34
	Female	31	32
Stream	Literary	29	34
	Scientific	31	32

Homogeneity of the sample

Hypothesis: There are no statistical significant differences between the control group and the experimental group grade means in the pre-test exam at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance.

A test for differences using the independent samples t-test was used to determine if there are any statistical significant differences between the two groups. A summary of the result of this analysis is contained in table (5).

Table (5): Independent sample t-test for means of the control group and the experimental group in the pre-test

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test grade	control group	60	19.85	9.26	-.19	124	.84
	experimental group	66	20.18	9.43			

The results obtained, as shown in Table (5) indicate that (sig.=0.84> 0.05); hence, we accept the hypothesis and conclude that there are no differences in students grades for both control and experimental groups in the pre-test exam.

4.3 Findings Related to the Questions of the study

1. Findings Related to the First Question

What is the influence of group work on improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills in governmental schools in Jerusalem?

The hypothesis generated from the first question is: There is no statistical significant differences between the control group and the experimental group grade means in the post-test exam at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance.

A test for differences using the independent samples t-test was used to determine if there are any statistical significance differences between the two groups. A summary of the result of this analysis is contained in table (6).

Table (6) Independent sample t-test for means of the control group and the experimental group in the post-test

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Organization	Control	60	2.38	1.19	-1.480	124	.141
	experimental	66	2.67	.95			
Development	Control	60	2.48	1.22	-.162	124	.871
	experimental	66	2.52	.96			
cohesion and coherence	Control	60	4.05	2.13	-1.718	124	.088
	experimental	66	4.70	2.09			
Structure	Control	60	4.15	2.04	-2.197	124	.030
	experimental	66	4.95	2.06			
Vocabulary	Control	60	3.95	2.09	-2.413	124	.017
	experimental	66	4.82	1.94			
mechanism	Control	60	3.88	2.26	-2.126	124	.035
	experimental	66	4.77	2.41			
Post-test grade	Control	60	20.9000	9.40	-2.112	124	.037
	experimental	66	24.4242	9.30			

The results obtained, as shown in Table (6) indicate that (sig. >0.05) for the items organization, development and cohesion and coherence; hence, we accept the hypothesis for these items and conclude that there is no difference between students grades for both control and experimental groups in the post-test exam in the fields of organization, development, cohesion and coherence.

The results also show that (sig. <0.05) for the items structure, vocabulary and mechanism; hence, we reject the Hypothesis and conclude that there is a difference between students' grades for both control and experimental in the fields of structure, vocabulary and mechanics in favor of the experimental group.

Finally, The results show that (sig. <0.05) for the total post-test grade; hence, we reject the hypothesis and conclude that there is a

difference between students grades for both control and experimental groups in the post-test exam in favor of the experimental group, the mean of experimental group is 24.42 while it is 20.90 for control group.

2. Findings related to the second question

The hypothesis generated from the second question is: There are no statistical significant differences between the grade means of the pre-test and the post-test for the experimental group at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance.

A test for differences using the paired samples t-test was used to determine whether there are any statistical significance differences between the results of the two tests. A summary of the result of this analysis is contained in table (7).

Table (7): Paired sample t-test for means of the pre-test and the post-test for the experimental group

Test	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test grade	20.18	66	9.43	-12.16	65	.000
Post-test grade	24.42	66	9.30			

The results obtained, as shown in Table (7) indicate that (sig.=0.000< 0.05); hence, we reject the hypothesis and conclude that there is a difference between experimental group students' grades for pre-test and post-test exams in favor of the post-test exam; the mean of post-test exam is 24.42 while it is 20.18 for pre-test exam.

3. Findings Related to the third Question

The hypothesis generated from the third question is: There are no statistical significant differences between the grade means of the pre-test and the post-test for the experimental group according to gender at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance.

A test for differences using the paired samples t-test was used to determine whether there are any statistical significance differences between the results of the two tests. A summary of the result of this analysis is contained in table (8).

Table (8): Paired sample t-test for means of the pre-test and the post-test for the experimental group according to gender

Gender	Test	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Male	Pre-test grade	19.38	34	9.56	-5.973	33	.000
	Post-test grade	22.17	34	9.55			
female	Pre-test grade	21.03	32	9.37	-16.003	31	.000
	Post-test Grade	26.81	32	8.54			

The results obtained, as shown in Table (8) indicate that (sig.=0.000 < 0.05); hence, we reject the hypothesis and conclude that there is a difference between experimental group students grades for pre-test and post-test exams in favor of the post-test exam for both male and female students.

4. Findings Related to the Fourth Question

The hypothesis generated from the fourth question is: There are no statistical significant differences between the grade means of the pre-test

and the post-test for the experimental group according to academic stream at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance.

A test for differences using the paired samples t-test was used to determine if there are any statistical significance differences between the results of the two tests. A summary of the result of this analysis is contained in table (9)

Table (9): Paired sample t-test for means of the pre-test and the post-test for the experimental group according to academic stream

Academic stream	Test	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Literary	Pre-test grade	19.58	34	9.28	-	33	.000
	Post-test grade	24.26	34	8.75	9.473		
Scientific	Pre-test grade	20.81	32	9.70	-	31	.000
	Post-test grade	24.59	32	10.0	7.761		

The results obtained, as shown in Table (9) indicate that (sig.=0.000 < 0.05); hence, we reject the hypothesis and conclude that there is a difference between experimental group students grades for pre-test and post-test exams in favor of the post-test exam for both literary and scientific stream students.

5. Findings Related to the Fifth Question

The hypothesis generated from the fifth question is: There are no statistical significant differences in the influence of group work between grade means in the post-test exam at $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance for the experimental group due to gender.

A test for differences using the independent samples t-test was used to determine if there are any statistical significance differences between the two groups. A summary of the result of this analysis is contained in table (10).

Table(10): Independent sample t-test for means of male and female students in the post-test

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Post-test grade	Male	34	22.17	9.55	-2.073	64	.042
	Female	32	26.81	8.54			

The results obtained, as shown in Table (10) indicate that ($\text{sig.}=0.042 < 0.05$); hence, we reject the hypothesis and conclude that there is a difference between students' grades in the post-test exam according to their gender in favor of female students. The grades mean of female students is 26.812 while it is 22.17 for male students.

6. Findings Related to the sixth Question

The hypothesis generated from the sixth question is: There are no statistical significant differences in the influence of group work between grade means in the post-test exam at $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance for the experimental group due to academic stream.

A test for differences using the independent samples t-test was used to determine if there are any statistical significance differences between the literary and scientific stream students. A summary of the result of this analysis is contained in table (11).

Table (11): Independent sample t-test for means of literary and scientific stream students in the post-test

	Stream	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Post-test grade	Literary	34	24.26	8.75	-.142	64	.887
	Scientific	32	24.59	10.00			

The results obtained, as shown in Table (11) indicate that (sig.=0.887 > 0.05); hence, we accept the hypothesis and conclude that there is no difference between students' grades in the post-test exam according to their academic stream.

4.4 Summary

This chapter showed the findings of the writing test results. The results revealed the positive influence group work leaves on improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills. The use of group work improved students' performance in writing in general and improved the students' performance in structure, vocabulary and mechanism in specific.

Chapter Five

**Discussion of the
Results, Conclusion, and
Recommendations**

Chapter Five

Discussion of the Results, Conclusion, and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This shows the results of the focal argumentation of the study. In addition, it explains in details the positive effects of group work on improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills. It clarifies the role of the moderator variables in changing the results of the experimental work. At the end, some recommendations were proposed to students, teachers, school principals and the Ministry of Education.

5.2 Discussion of the Study Results:

Findings Related to the First Question

- What is the influence of group work on improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills in governmental schools in Jerusalem?

The main objective of this study was to investigate whether or not group work has a positive influence on improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills. To get the results of the study, the researcher did an independent sample T- Test for means of the control group and the experimental group. The results of the main question showed that there was a positive influence of group work on improving the students' writing skills. The mean of the experimental group was 24.42 while it was 20.90 for the control group.

The result of the study was similar to that of some scholars and researchers. For instance, Kagan (1998) believed that group work makes students' environment more supportive. Also, it helps students to be more confident, which in turn affects their achievement in any academic task. As for Johnson and Johnson (1989), group work helps to create individual accountability. When students cooperate and take responsibilities about their learning, this strengthens every member of the group. This does not only affect his achievement, but also the way he sees himself tomorrow.

Johnson added that group work provides students with a feedback about their performances. This feedback helps students to improve themselves and reduces the level of anxiety and stress. He also stressed the important role group work has on social skills. He believes that group work helps students to trust each other, to reduce conflicts, to develop appropriate interpersonal skills and to achieve more. Therefore, the more the student is involved in group work, the higher his personal achievement will be.

Jiang (2009) said that group work brings great achievements in different language skills including writing. They asserted that group work enhances students' cognitive skills and generates learning.

Barkley et al (2005), Manor and William (2003) agreed that students who work in groups produce better assignments than those who don't, They also have a greater well of resources because of the variety of different experiences and backgrounds.

Gillies and Ashman (2003), Graham (2005), Schmitz and Winkle (2008) studied the influence of group work on improving students' performances. All of them found that group work prepares students for the 21st century and that partners' feedback improves students' low achievement.

Roberts (2004), Fawcett and Garton (2005) investigated the influence of group work on problem solving. The result showed that children who collaborated with their peers had higher scoring than those who didn't.

Hill (1990) and Chen (2008) asserted that group work enables students to achieve predetermined goals, develop their thinking, promote positive attitude and helps students to improve their achievement as well.

The results of the main question contradict with what Davis (1997) concluded. He believed that group work does not leave any positive effects on students' achievement. He said that group work does not help students who are not used to group work because these students do not prefer to listen or interact with their peers.

As for Beebe and Masterson (2003), they believed that group work affects students' social personalities negatively because students conform to the majority opinion as they do not want to have conflict with their peers.

The results of the study did not match with Moris' and Hayes' claims (1997) who believed that group work helps lazy students to grab the chance

and to rely on others to accomplish the tasks. This affects their performance in the group as well as their achievement.

Moreover, The results contradict with Harmer and Brain (2004) who stated that group work increases the student's feeling of anxiety and lack of confidence especially when they do not like the other people in the group. This anxiety may affect the student's performance and lead to failure in accomplishing the task.

Findings Related to Writing Skill Categories

The hypothesis is that there are no statistical significant differences between the control group and the experimental group grade means in the post test exam for writing categories (organization, development, cohesion, coherence, structure, vocabulary and mechanism).

The results obtained indicate that students' overall writing developed and the results of the writing post test for the experimental group were higher than those in the control group. As for the categories of writing, the results show that students' writing developed in some areas while in others, students' performances were not affected. Organization, development, cohesion and coherence were not developed and students' results didn't improve in these categories. In contrast, the results show that structure, vocabulary and mechanism noticeably improved.

This study is similar to Storch's study (2003). Storch stated that group work helps students in achieving progress in the overall categories of

writing. Elbow (1975) suggested that collaborative writing is beneficial especially when a member is stuck in his or her writing.

The results of this study contradict the conclusions of Noel's and Robert's study (2004); they concluded that collaborative writing improves organization and development. On the other hand, Ballard and Clanchy (1992) and Elbow (1975) stated that collaborative writing importance is limited to vocabulary, mechanism and structure. It does not improve organization, cohesion or coherence.

Storch (1999) examined the influence of group work on improving students' grammatical fluency and accuracy in writing. He gave students three different exercises: a closed exercise, text reconstruction and text composition. Each exercise was done in two versions: one was done individually and the other collaboratively. Following a comparison of the three exercises that were completed by the students, the results revealed developments in some certain grammatical aspects and it was clear that collaborative writing had a positive effect on overall grammar accuracy.

Findings Related to the Second Question

The second question underlies the following hypothesis:

There are no statistical significant differences between the grade means of the pre test and the post test for the experimental group at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance.

Following data analysis, the researcher found that there are significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ between the results of the pre test and the post test of the experimental group in favor of the post test. As illustrated in table (7), there was a noticeable improvement of the students' results after they participated in group work. This shows that group work strategy proved its effectiveness in improving students' writing skills. Gooden Jones (1996) examined the influence of group work on improving students' writing skills to pass the language proficiency exam. The eleven students did a pre test. During a period of six weeks, they were taught writing collaboratively. Later, students retook the exam, and eight of them passed; their results were completely different than the ones they got at first.

In another contradicting study conducted by Phipp, Kash and Higgin (2001), students' results were unexpected. Their pre test results were better than their post test results. Moreover, students showed dissatisfaction with group work.

Findings Related to The Third Question

The third question underlies the following hypothesis:

There are no statistical significant differences in the influence of group work on improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills between the pre test and the post test of the experimental group due to gender at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance.

The data analysis of the second hypothesis suggests that there are significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ between the results of the pre test and the post test of the experimental group due to gender in favor of the post test. The results show that male and female students' performances were strongly influenced after they participated in group work.

Findings Related to the Fourth Question

The fourth question underlies the following hypothesis:

There are no statistical significant differences between the pre test and the post test in the influence of group work on improving the eleventh grade students' writing skills of the experimental group due to academic stream at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance.

As illustrated in table (9) p.62, the data analysis of the third hypothesis suggested that there are significant differences between the results of the pre test and the post test of the experimental group due to academic stream in favor of the post test. Students' results in the writing test in both the literary and scientific stream were improved.

Findings Related to The Fifth Question

The fifth question underlies the following hypothesis:

There are no significant differences in the influence of group work grade means in the post test exam at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance group due to gender.

As illustrated in table (10) p.63, the data analysis of the fourth hypothesis suggests that there significant differences between the results of the post test in favor of female students. The mean for female students was 26.81, and it was 22.17 for male students.

The results in the post test for female students were higher than the results for male students.

The results of the study agree with various studies which show that female students prefer to work in a team rather than to perform a task individually. Female students show much higher confidence and positive expectations in their partners than male students do. That's why female students are more creative and collaborative in group work. Another study showed that female students concentrate when working with others and are capable of doing one task at the same time. On the other hand, a study revealed that male students prefer to work individually and perform perfectly when each works alone.

According to psychologists, female and male students react differently in group work. Female students seem to be more serious and are more disciplined than male students.

The researcher of the study believes that the results of the study are an indicator that female students will flock to positions involving collaboration rather than competition.

Findings Related to the Sixth Question

The sixth sub question underlies the following questions:

There are no significant differences in the influence of group work grade means in the post test exam at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance for the experimental group due to academic stream.

As illustrated in table (11) p.64, the results obtained show that there are no difference in the students' post test results due to academic stream.

The researcher expected different results in favor of students from the scientific stream. Students in the scientific stream are used to group work because they work in the school labs. So the researcher expected them to have better results. But in fact, group work seemed boring to them because they said it was not something new to them. As for students in the literary stream, group work was a new exciting experience, so they interact more positively than students from the scientific stream.

5.3 Conclusion

As mentioned before, many previous studies were conducted with regard to group work and its effect on improving students' achievement. These studies proved that collaborative work as a learning strategy is an effective way to foster the learning of language skills. It scaffolds less component students to develop by getting help from their skillful peers.

As for this study, the researcher, based on data analysis and discussion, concluded that group work for teaching writing skills is an effective method. The statistical analysis revealed that there are significant differences in students' writing skills between the experimental and the control group. So the mean of the post test scores of the experimental group was higher than the mean of the post test scores of the control group.

The results of the present study showed that group work strategy helped students to improve their writing skills in some writing categories such as structure, vocabulary and mechanism. On the other hand, students results did not show any improvements in other categories such as organization, development, cohesion and coherence,. In this sense, the researcher recommends that researchers conduct longitudinal studies to investigate the influence of writing on these categories. The observations revealed that group work is a fruitful strategy for reducing students' fears and anxiety. Fear was reduced as students were working within groups because students felt that they were responsible for their own learning. The assigning of a skillful student in the group provided the others with a feeling of security about the quality of the accomplished task.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher presented some recommendations to students, teachers, researchers and the Ministry of Education.

Recommendations For Students

Students are the main component of the learning teaching process. So the researcher thinks that some recommendations should be given to students, so they can take responsibility for their own learning.

1. Students who are involved in group work are advised to assigning a role for each member of the group. (see p.28)
2. Students are advised to be serious with the free rider of the group and give him a task to do. (see p.27)
3. Students are advised to take the teacher's feedback into consideration. They should learn from their mistakes and correct them.
4. Students are advised to think about group work beyond school. Group work helps students realize their potential abilities for working with others. This may affect their choices of their future professions.

Recommendations For Teachers

1. The researcher encourages teachers to use group work strategy not as a way of gathering students to do a task , but also as a way for eternalizing collaboration among them , so students who have limited language proficiency could improve.
2. Teachers are also recommended to use group work as it increases their options. Group work allows teachers to structure lessons so that language barriers disappear.

3. Teachers are advised to follow group work strategy. If teachers follow different techniques in teaching writing, students will take a more active part in the process of writing.
4. Teachers are advised to structure strategies when applying group work in classes. They should follow group work structuring rules and group work elements. Moreover, they should follow group work elements to train their students to work collaboratively.
5. Teachers are advised to give feedback on students' writing essays and encourage students themselves give feedback to their peers.

Recommendations For Further Research

1. The researcher advises other researchers to conduct similar studies to show the influence of group work on improving writing skills due to academic stream because the findings were not expected compared with the researcher's predictions.
2. The researcher advises researchers to do more experimental studies over a longer period of time. This helps to give more reliable and general results.
3. Researchers are also advised to investigate the influence of group work on improving these categories of writing: organization, development, cohesion and coherence because students' post test results did not show any improvement in these categories.

4. This study used a qualitative method as the main data collected. Hence the researcher advises researchers to employ quantitative research. Researchers can design a questionnaire to obtain a deeper insight into the students' and teachers' perceptions. They can also interview students from the experimental group to determine whether they benefit from group work.

Recommendations For The Ministry of Education

The researcher advises decision makers in the Ministry of Education to include more collaborative writing exercises in the curriculum and to hold regular workshops for teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix (A)**Writing Pre and Post Test**

Dear students,

This examination paper is a tool to facilitate the researcher's task in collecting the necessary data needed for accomplishing a study entitled “The Influence of Group Work on Improving the 11th Grade Students' Writing Skills in Governmental Schools In Jerusalem.

This examination consists of three parts. The first part is for personal information where you are required to provide your full name, gender and stream. Whereas the second part will include the exam directions and points distribution. In the third part, you will be needed to complete two writing tasks.

The researcher would be grateful if you complete both tasks fully. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and used for the study purposes only.

Thank you for your cooperation

The researcher

Part 1: Personal Information

Full Name:_____.

Please put the mark (x) in the space that applies to you.

Stream:

() a. scientific stream () b. literary stream

Gender :

() a. female () b. male

Part Two : The Examination Directions

- Please answer **both** questions.
- Write your answers in pen **not** pencil.
- You may **not** use dictionaries.
- You may **not** use correction fluid.
- Time allowed : 70 minutes.

Points Distribution

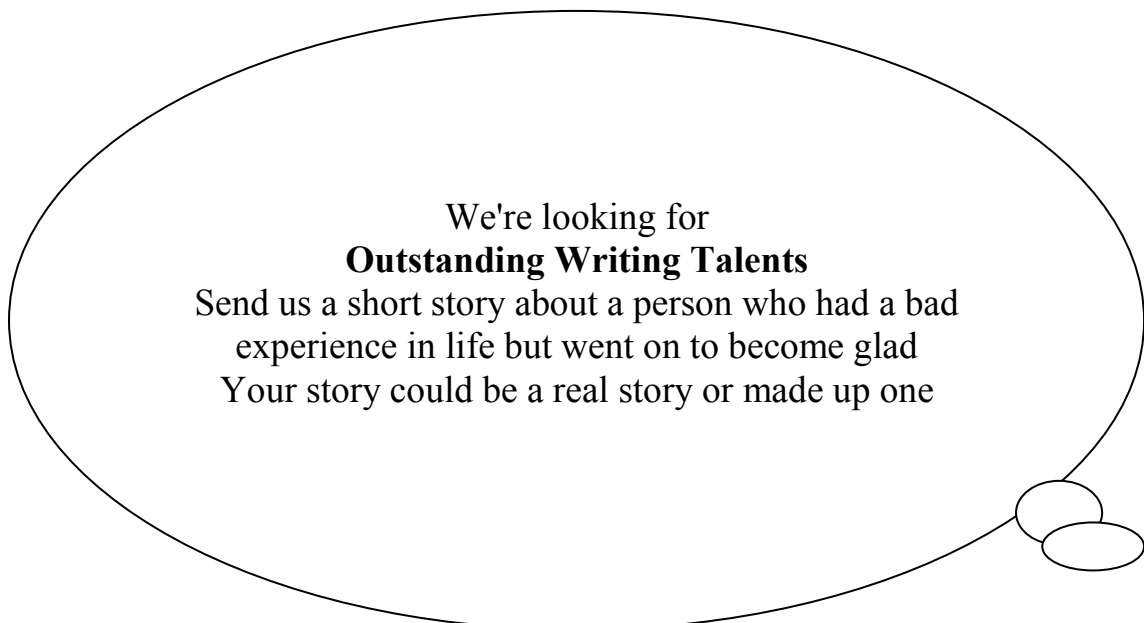
Examiner's use only	
Task one & Task two	Mark
organization	0 1 2 3 4
development	0 1 2 3 4
cohesion& coherence	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
structure	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
vocabulary	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
mechanism	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Total	40

Part Three:

This part has two tasks, Please complete both tasks.

Task One :

You have found this advertisement in a popular magazines website



You decide to join this competition. Write your story below. (about 150 words)

Task Two

You have recently been worried about the way a child you know very well has been treated by older pupils at school. Although the class teacher and Headmaster have become involved, you still feel that bullying is happening on a daily basis and is being ignored.

You decided to write a polite but firm letter to the local Director of Education. Your letter should be designed in the following order:

- Explain the situation.
- Complain about the lack of co-operation from the school.
- Ask the director to take immediate action to deal with the problem.

Write your letter to the Director of Education below: (about 200 words)

Appendix (B)**The Validation Committee for the English Writing Test**

1. Dr. Ahmed Awad	An-Najah National University
2. Dr. Graham Stott	The Arab American University
3. Dr. Aysar Yassin	The Arab American University
4. Dr. Khader Jum'a	Bethlehem University

Appendix (C)

Permission from Al-Ma'muniah Secondary School for Girls

An-Najah
National University
Faculty of Graduate Studies



جامعة
النجاح الوطنية
كلية الدراسات العليا

التاريخ: 2016/10/11م

حضرة مديرة مدرسة الثانوية المختلطة القدس
تحية طيبة وبعد،،،

الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة الطالبة نيرة باسم رشيد رقم تسجيل (11457510)، تخصص ماجستير اساليب لغة إنجليزية

تخصص ماجستير اساليب لغة إنجليزية

يرجى من حضرتكم تسهيل مهمة الطالبة نيرة باسم رشيد، رقم تسجيل 11457510، تخصص ماجستير اساليب لغة إنجليزية في كلية الدراسات العليا، وهي بصدد أداء الأملوحة الخاصة بها يرجى من حضرتكم تسهيل مهمتها في إجراء المقابلات وجمع التوثيق، نشكركم لكم ضمن تعاونكم.

مع دة الاحترام،،،

رئيسة قسم الدراسات العليا للعلوم الإنسانية

د. فواز عزام



Appendix (D)

A Sample of a Student's Piece of Writing

Writing Pre Test

Dear students,

This examination paper is a tool to facilitate the researcher's task in collecting the necessary data needed for accomplishing a study entitled "The Influence of Group Work on Improving the 11th Grade Students' Writing Skills in Governmental Schools In Jerusalem .

This examination consists of three parts. The first part is for personal information where you are required to provide your full name, gender and stream. Whereas the second part will include the exam directions and points distribution. In the third part , you will be needed to complete two writing tasks .

The researcher would be grateful if you complete both tasks fully . Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and used for the study purposes only.

Thank you for your cooperation

The researcher

Part 1: Personal Information

Full Name: 20

Please put the mark (x) in the space that applies to you .

Stream :

a. scientific stream ☐ b. literary stream ☒

Gender :

b. female ☒ b. male ☐

Part Two : The Examination Directions

- Please answer **both** questions .
- Write your answers in pen **not** pencil.
- You may **not** use dictionaries.

- You may **not** use correction fluid.
- Time allowed : 70 minutes .

Points Distribution

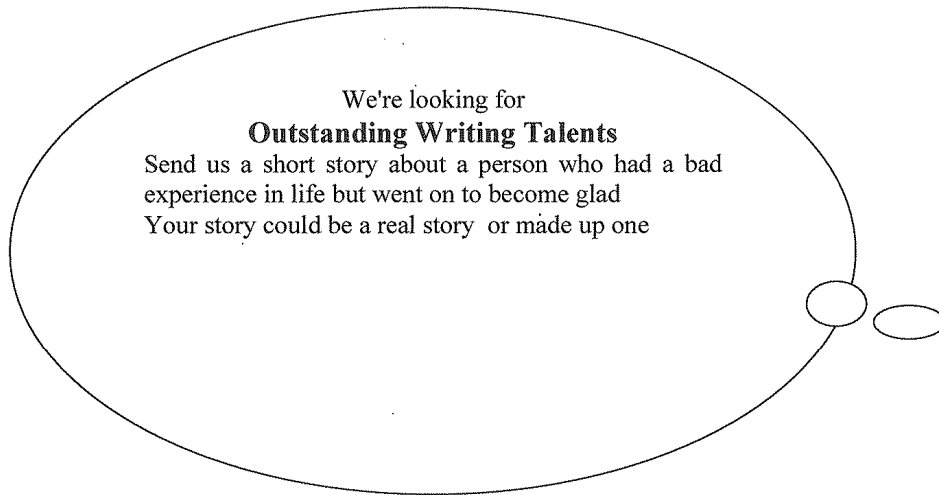
Examiner's use only	
Task one & Task two	Mark
organization	0 1 ② 3 4
development	0 1 ② 3 4
cohesion& coherence	0 1 2 3 ④ 5 6 7 8
structure	0 ① 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
vocabulary	0 1 ② 3 4 5 6 7 8
mechanism	0 ① 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Total	12 / 40

Part Three:

This part has two tasks , Please complete both tasks .

Task One :

You have found this advertisement in a popular magazines website



You decide to join this competition . Write your story below. (about 150 words)

They always say that life is not easy. One ^{structure} (up) a time,
there was a daughter who lives with her mother
because her parents ^{mechanism} (divorced) when she was young very
young. Her mother ^{structure} (is) very poor and she ^{tense/structure} (has) no money.
This girl worked in the streets to help her mother
by selling dolls. One day she was sexually abused.
From this day her life ^{tense/structure} (changed) and she
not trust any body again. At the age of ^{mechanism} (sixteen)

(V.)

She went to live with ^{father} school work. At that time,
 her teacher (noticed) that the ^{talent} she has in
^{mechanism} acting, so she ^{mechanism} took a scholarship to college
 to study television ~~in a famous station~~ but

Then after that, she ^(v) employed in a famous
 station, but ^{spelling} unfortunately the manager (don't) ^{structure}
 like her and ^{structure} fire her. After that she
 employed in another station and became
 very very popular

Task Two:

You have recently been worried about the way a child you know very well has been treated by older pupils at school. Although the class teacher and Headmaster have become involved, you still feel that bullying is happening on a daily basis and is being ignored.

You decided to write a polite but firm letter to the local Director of Education.

Your letter should be designed in the following order:

- Explain the situation.
- Complain about the lack of co-operation from the school.
- Ask the director to take immediate action to deal with the problem.

Write your letter to the Director of Education below: (about 200 words)

Dear Director of education ^{mechanism}
 I am a student from a secondary school in Jerusalem ^{mechanism}
 (V) I see a problem in my school. This problem
 (V) is happening everyday. Boys in the school saying
 bad words about a boy (a) hitting (b) (When) ^{structure}
 (this) boy sees him, they start ^{structure} telling he ^{structure}
 bad words and talking he sandwiches. He is
 structure younger and don't do anything. I went
 and told my teachers and no one did
 structure nothing. They said no word and told me this
 is not my problem. I went to the head teacher
 but next she did nothing and only talked
 to the bad boys. So, I send you a letter
 ask you to take an immediate action ^{mechanism}

Annotations:
 structure (multiple instances)
 Cohesion and coherence (multiple instances)
 mechanism (multiple instances)

help this young child and poor because
if you don't take an action this boy
will be destroyed. Please Please help this
boy love school again

Thank & For your help.

Writing Post Test

Dear students,

This examination paper is a tool to facilitate the researcher's task in collecting the necessary data needed for accomplishing a study entitled "The Influence of Group Work on Improving the 11th Grade Students' Writing Skills in Governmental Schools In Jerusalem .

This examination consists of three parts. The first part is for personal information where you are required to provide your full name, gender and stream. Whereas the second part will include the exam directions and points distribution. In the third part , you will be needed to complete two writing tasks .

The researcher would be grateful if you complete both tasks fully . Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and used for the study purposes only.

Thank you for your cooperation

The researcher

Part 1: Personal Information

Full Name: 20

Please put the mark (x) in the space that applies to you .

Stream :

a. scientific stream ☐ b. literary stream ☒

Gender :

b. female ☒ b. male ☐

Part Two : The Examination Directions

- Please answer **both** questions .
- Write your answers in pen **not** pencil.
- You may **not** use dictionaries.

- You may **not** use correction fluid.
- Time allowed : 70 minutes .

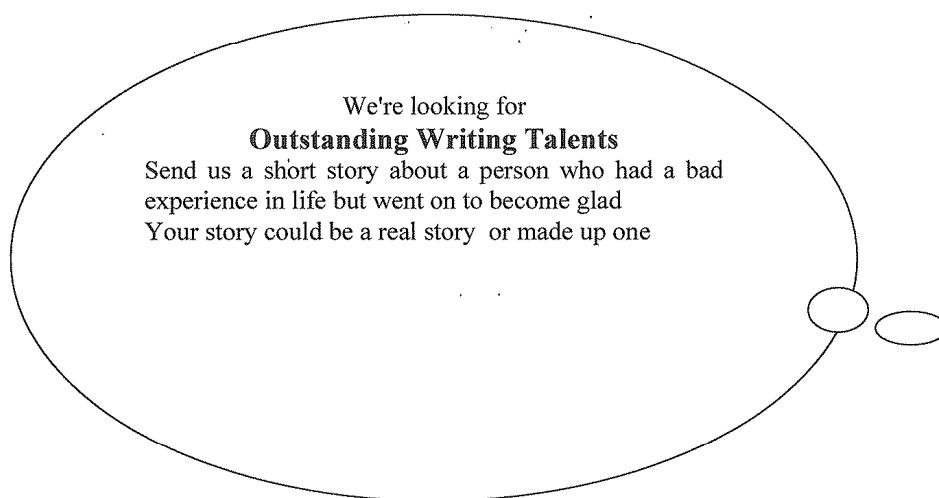
Points Distribution

Examiner's use only	
Task one & Task two	Mark
organization	0 1 2 3 4
development	0 1 2 3 4
cohesion& coherence	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
structure	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
vocabulary	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
mechanism	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Total	29/40

This part has two tasks , Please complete both tasks .

Task One :

You have found this advertisement in a popular magazines website



You decide to join this competition . Write your story below. (about 150 words)

life they say isn't easy. So some people are born
 with a silver spoon in their mouth ^{mechanism} while others
 don't have immediate access to the spoon until
 they work hard. This ^{structure} reminds me by a story
 I read three years ago about a girl.
 This girl had a rocky start in life. Her parents
 got divorced when she was only three.
 That's why, ~~that~~ she had to work to help
 her mother who had a very low income.
 The girl worked in streets, selling dolls and

other things. Unfortunately, someone abused her one night. From that moment her life changed and she didn't trust people anymore. When she became fifteen, she decided to move to another state to live with her father who helped her focus on her schooling. One of the teachers noticed her talent in television and she was given a scholarship to study at university. After she graduated from university, she was hired to a famous television station but things didn't go so easily. She was fired because the producer said she is unfit for television. Later, she took a position in another station.

Her show was overrated. This led to the success she achieved. She always used to say that success is going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.

Task Two:

You have recently been worried about the way a child you know very well has been treated by older pupils at school. Although the class teacher and Headmaster have become involved, you still feel that bullying is happening on a daily basis and is being ignored.

You decided to write a polite but firm letter to the local Director of Education.

Your letter should be designed in the following order:

- Explain the situation.
- Complain about the lack of co-operation from the school.
- Ask the director to take immediate action to deal with the problem.

Write your letter to the Director of Education below: (about 200 words)

Dear Director of Education,

I am writing to you to explain a situation that a child goes through at my school. My young neighbour and I study in the same school, so we go to school together everyday. This young boy is calm, funny and polite. I have recently noticed that he started to change. So when I asked him about the reason, he told me that some older boys at school hit him, tease him and take his sandwiches everyday. Therefore, he preferred to stay at home and not to go to school. I made up my mind to help this poor boy. So I

talked to my teacher. Unfortunately,
 she didn't show any hand of help
 and she said that she couldn't do anything.
 After my teacher's reply, I made up my
 mind to tell the head teacher. But to
 my surprise, the head teacher didn't take
 any serious action. To be honest, I
 was ~~advised~~ disappointed by their actions.
 until someone advised me to write to you.
 spelling First I ask you to take an immediate
 action to deal with the problem and to
 prevent these students from behaving like
 this. I also look forward to seeing
 the punishment for the teacher and
 head teacher. I hope to hear from you
 as soon as possible.

With all my respect

جامعة النجاح الوطنية

كلية الدراسات العليا

أثر العمل ضمن مجموعة في تحسين المهارات الكتابية لدى طلبة الصف الحادي عشر في المدارس الحكومية في مدينة القدس

إعداد

نيره باسم بدر الرشق

إشراف

د. أحمد عوض

قدمت هذه الأطروحة استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في برنامج أساليب
تدريس اللغة الانجليزية، بكلية الدراسات العليا في جامعة النجاح الوطنية، نابلس، فلسطين.

2017م

ب

أثر العمل ضمن مجموعة في تحسين المهارات الكتابية لدى طلبة الصف الحادي عشر في
المدارس الحكومية في مدينة القدس

إعداد

نيره باسم بدر الرشق

إشراف

د. أحمد عوض

الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة لمناقشة أثر العمل التعاوني في تحسين المهارات الكتابية لدى طلبة الصف الحادي عشر في المدارس الحكومية في مدينة القدس. ولتحقيق هذا الغرض قامت الباحثة باستخدام اختبار كتابي طبق على 126 طالب وطالبة من الفرعين العلمي والأدبي من الصف الحادي عشر موزعين على مجموعتين؛ ضابطة وتجريبية.

قدمت الباحثة الاختبار القبلي لجميع الطلبة بغاية إتمام المعلومات اللازمة لتحقيق غرض الدراسة كما وقامت الباحثة بتطبيق إستراتيجية العمل التعاوني على طلبة المجموعة التجريبية لقياس أثر هذه الإستراتيجية.

اعتمادا على التحليل الإحصائي بين نتائج المجموعتين القبليّة و البعدية بعد تطبيق التجربة، أظهرت النتائج وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى الدلالة ($\alpha=0.05$) لصالح المجموعة التجريبية، الأمر الذي اثبت فعالية استخدام إستراتيجية العمل التعاوني في تحسين مهارات الكتابة لدى الطلاب.

في ضوء نتائج الدراسة أوصت الباحثة معلمي اللغة الانجليزية باستخدام هذه الإستراتيجية التي يتيح للطلبة المجال في تحسين المهارات الكتابية وتحد من مخاوفهم وقلقهم تجاه استخدام اللغة الانجليزية، أوصت الباحثة أيضا الطلبة بالالتزام بالنشاطات التي تطرحها هذه الإستراتيجية من اجل تحسين مهاراتهم في الكتابة ، كما أوصت بإجراء دراسات أخرى حول اثر العمل التعاوني في تحسين مهارات الكتاب لدى الطلاب.