

# Gamified Quizzes as Media to Enhance Students' English Reading Comprehension Skills

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## Abstract

*This study examines how gamified quizzes can support junior high school students in improving their English reading comprehension. Using a qualitative approach, the research gathered rich insights from 25 students through interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and weekly reflective journals. Throughout the lessons, students engaged with reading activities that included interactive game elements such as points, timers, and leaderboards. The findings show that these gamified quizzes helped students understand texts more effectively, especially when identifying main ideas, recognizing supporting details, and making inferences. Students reported that the instant feedback and engaging format made them more willing to reread passages and reflect on their answers. The study also found a noticeable increase in students' motivation. Many who previously felt bored or uninterested in reading became more enthusiastic when tasks were presented as challenges. In addition, students demonstrated stronger critical-thinking habits, such as analyzing information more carefully and discussing different interpretations with their peers. Overall, the study suggests that gamified quizzes not only make reading activities more enjoyable but also encourage deeper thinking and more consistent engagement. These results highlight the potential of gamification as a meaningful addition to traditional reading instruction.*

**Keywords:** Gamification; Reading comprehension; Gamified learning

## INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is the ability of a student to understand and interpret written texts by finding the main ideas, supporting details, and deeper meanings in the material. Reading comprehension is one of the most important academic skills (Lailiyatul & Taufiq, 2025; Listyarini et al., 2022). It helps students learn in all subjects and is important for their overall academic success. Students who actively participate in reading activities are more likely to understand difficult ideas and remember information for longer periods of time.

In addition, reading comprehension is not a single, simple skill but a complex cognitive process that involves several interconnected

components, such as vocabulary knowledge, grammatical understanding, background knowledge, and metacognitive awareness. Students must be able to recognize words accurately, understand sentence structures, and identify text organization patterns in order to construct meaning effectively. Without sufficient vocabulary and linguistic competence, students may struggle to grasp the intended message of a text, even if they can read the words fluently. Therefore, the development of reading comprehension requires systematic practice and meaningful exposure to various types of texts, including narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative texts.

Reading comprehension also plays a central role in fostering critical thinking skills, as it enables students to make connections, draw informed conclusions, and evaluate the credibility of the information they encounter. When students engage with texts meaningfully, they move beyond simple word decoding and construct deeper understanding by integrating new information with their prior knowledge and experiences. This cognitive process strengthens essential skills such as reasoning, problem-solving, and critical analysis, all of which support learning across disciplines.

Furthermore, effective reading comprehension encourages students to become independent learners. By applying strategies such as predicting, questioning, summarizing, and clarifying, students learn to monitor their own understanding and take responsibility for their learning process. These strategic behaviors enhance their ability to deal with challenging texts and unfamiliar topics. Consequently, strong reading comprehension abilities not only enhance performance in language-related tasks but also facilitate students' understanding of complex concepts in science, mathematics, and social studies, ultimately contributing to greater academic confidence and learner autonomy.

Phonemic awareness is a part of phonological awareness that helps students recognize, blend, and change sounds in words. It is one of the mental skills that helps people understand what they read. Students who are good at phonemic awareness often get better at reading fluency and recognizing words. Another important factor is having a good vocabulary. Students need both oral and reading vocabulary to understand texts and do well in school.

Critical thinking also helps students understand what they read better by letting them analyze, evaluate, and combine information instead of just understanding it on a surface level. Students can use critical thinking to connect new information to what they already know, spot biases, and figure out how reliable information is (Hanus & Fox, 2018)(Rabi'ah et al., 2025). Even though these cognitive skills are very important, many students still have trouble reading because they don't have a lot of vocabulary, aren't very motivated, have trouble finding relevant information, or have trouble understanding long or difficult texts (Balalle, 2024), (Okonkwo, 2023). These challenges underscore the complex nature of reading comprehension and the necessity for instructional strategies that encompass both cognitive and motivational elements. When students don't have the basic skills or the desire to read, their ability to think critically while reading is greatly limited. Consequently, they might depend on rote processing instead of more profound interpretive methods, which constrains their ability to derive meaning from intricate content. This shows

how important it is to use teaching methods that include explicit vocabulary development, strategies that boost motivation, and chances for guided critical thinking (Purnawan et al., 2022). Educators can help students build the cognitive resilience they need to better engage with a variety of difficult texts by making learning spaces that support these parts.

Because of these problems, technology is changing quickly and giving us new ways to help people learn. Gamification, which means adding game-like features like points, badges, and rewards to learning activities, is one promising approach (Hamuddin et al., 2024). Gamification has been shown to boost student motivation and engagement by making learning more interactive instead of passive. These features make people want to get involved and keep working hard (Al-dosakee, 2021).

Gamified quizzes are being used to help people understand what they read. They can meet the needs of different types of learners, encourage healthy competition, and even encourage teamwork through team-based challenges or leaderboards (Hussein, 2023). Setting different levels of difficulty for each student also helps them stay motivated without feeling too stressed. But for it to work, teachers need to get enough training and help.

Gamified quizzes integrate game elements such as points, badges, levels, timers, and instant feedback into assessment activities to make learning more engaging and interactive. Unlike traditional quizzes, which often focus solely on correct or incorrect answers, gamified quizzes provide immediate responses that help students identify their mistakes and understand the correct information. This instant feedback supports the development of reading comprehension because students can quickly clarify misunderstandings about vocabulary, main ideas, inference, and supporting details. As a result, learning becomes more dynamic and student-centered.

Moreover, gamified quizzes can increase students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The presence of rewards, rankings, and progress indicators stimulates students' curiosity and sense of achievement. When students feel challenged in a positive way, they are more willing to participate actively in reading tasks and discussions. This increased engagement encourages them to read more carefully and think more critically about the text. Over time, repeated exposure to comprehension questions in an enjoyable format can strengthen their analytical skills and deepen their understanding of various text types.

Gamified quizzes also promote collaborative learning when implemented in group settings. Through team-based competitions or cooperative problem-solving activities, students learn to exchange ideas, justify their answers, and negotiate meaning together. This social interaction enhances comprehension because students can benefit from different perspectives and clarify confusing parts of the text through discussion.

However, the successful implementation of gamified quizzes depends on thoughtful instructional design. Teachers need adequate training to select appropriate platforms, design meaningful questions aligned with learning objectives, and balance entertainment with educational value. Without clear pedagogical planning, gamification may become distracting rather than supportive. Therefore, when carefully

designed and supported by proper teacher preparation, gamified quizzes can serve as an effective strategy to enhance reading comprehension and create a more engaging learning environment.

Motivation is a key factor in understanding what you read. Studies show that students who are motivated tend to work harder, use better strategies, and stick with it longer when they read hard texts (Kautsarani & Putri, n.d.). Gamified quizzes boost students' motivation by giving them instant feedback and rewards, which help them feel like they've accomplished something, especially if they have trouble with reading tasks (Innovations, 2024)

Gamification helps with social learning as well as motivation. Group challenges and other features encourage students to talk to each other, learn from each other, and help each other out in school and in life. These kinds of interactions make for a good learning environment that can greatly improve how well people understand things.

Also, gamified learning fits with the ideas behind personalized learning. Adaptive features let quizzes automatically change the difficulty of questions based on how well students do, making sure that students are always challenged and that teachers can meet the needs of all their students. Gamification has a lot of potential, but it also has some problems. Limited digital literacy, technical issues, and a lack of resources can make it hard to put the plan into action. If not done carefully, too much reliance on outside rewards can also lower intrinsic motivation (Zhang & Crawford, 2024). So, when adding gamification to reading lessons, it's important to keep evaluating, giving feedback, and making sure teachers are ready.

In light of the theoretical foundations and previous findings discussed above, it is evident that reading comprehension is influenced not only by cognitive factors such as phonemic awareness, vocabulary knowledge, and critical thinking, but also by motivational and instructional elements. Although gamified quizzes have shown potential in enhancing engagement and supporting comprehension through interactive and adaptive features, further empirical investigation is necessary to determine their effectiveness in specific educational contexts. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the implementation of gamified quizzes in reading instruction and to analyze their impact on students' reading comprehension and motivation. By doing so, the research aims to provide evidence-based insights into whether gamified assessment strategies can serve as an effective pedagogical tool for improving reading outcomes.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study utilized a qualitative research design to examine the impact of gamified quizzes on students' English reading comprehension. The researcher opted for a qualitative methodology to attain a comprehensive insight into students' experiences, perceptions, and motivations while utilizing gamified quizzes as a pedagogical instrument. Rather than merely measuring score improvements, this approach aimed to explore how students interpreted the learning activities, how they responded emotionally to game elements, and how these experiences influenced their engagement with reading texts. Qualitative research allows the researcher to investigate participants' viewpoints in depth and to understand the

meanings they construct from their learning experiences. This approach helped to show how complicated students' learning processes are by gathering rich, detailed data that quantitative methods might not have shown (Renandya et al., 2022). By focusing on students' voices and classroom interactions, the study was able to capture subtle changes in motivation, confidence, and reading strategies that numerical data alone might overlook.

The participants in this study were junior high school students engaged in English reading lessons featuring gamified quizzes. This educational level was selected because students at this stage are developing more advanced reading skills while still requiring strong motivational support. Participants were chosen via purposive sampling, considering their willingness to engage, access to digital learning resources, and varied educational backgrounds. The use of purposive sampling ensured that the selected students had direct experience with gamified quizzes and could provide meaningful insights into the phenomenon being studied. A total of about 25 students were involved to make sure that the qualitative analysis was both manageable and useful (Renandya et al., 2022). This number allowed the researcher to conduct in-depth data collection and analysis while maintaining diversity in perspectives. Ethical considerations were also taken into account, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring the confidentiality of participants' identities.

This study used several instruments to collect rich qualitative data about students' experiences with gamified quizzes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather students' personal reflections and to understand their feelings, motivations, and challenges while using the quizzes. The flexible structure of the interviews enabled the researcher to ask follow-up questions and explore unexpected themes that emerged during the conversation. To complement these individual insights, focus group discussions were held, allowing students to express their thoughts collectively and interact with peers, which helped reveal group dynamics and shared learning experiences. Classroom observations were also carried out to capture students' real-time behavior during the quiz activities, including their engagement, enthusiasm, collaboration, and problem-solving strategies. Field notes were taken systematically to document verbal and non-verbal interactions. In addition, students were asked to write weekly reflective journals, which provided continuous and honest accounts of how the gamified quizzes influenced their reading comprehension and attitudes over time. These journals allowed the researcher to trace developmental patterns and changes in perception throughout the study. Together, these instruments enabled data triangulation, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings and providing a well-rounded understanding of the learning process. Below is the process of data triangulation:

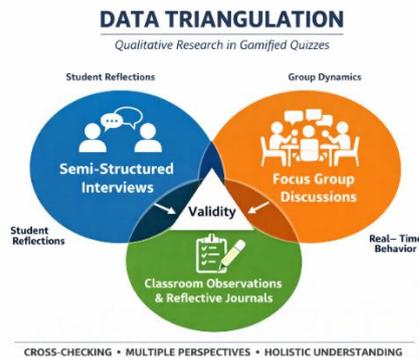


Chart 1. Data Triangulation

## FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

### FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed that the implementation of gamified quizzes in English reading classes positively influenced students' reading comprehension, motivation, and critical-thinking engagement. Based on data collected from interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and reflective journals, three major themes emerged: (1) improved comprehension processes, (2) increased learning motivation, and (3) enhanced critical-thinking behavior.

#### 1. Improved Reading Comprehension Processes

Students demonstrated noticeable improvement in identifying main ideas, recognizing supporting details, and making inferences. Many participants reported that the structured format of gamified quizzes helped them focus on essential information within the text. The presence of immediate feedback enabled students to recognize mistakes and correct misunderstandings directly after answering each question. Classroom observations further showed that students reread passages more frequently when answering quiz questions. They were more persistent in locating textual evidence before selecting answers, indicating more strategic reading behavior. Reflective journals confirmed that students became more confident in handling longer and more complex texts over time.

#### 2. Increased Learning Motivation

The integration of game elements such as points, timers, and leaderboards significantly enhanced students' enthusiasm toward reading activities. Students described the quizzes as "more exciting" and "challenging," which reduced feelings of boredom typically associated with traditional reading tasks. Participants who initially showed low interest in reading gradually became more engaged. Observation data indicated higher participation rates, quicker response times, and more active involvement during quiz sessions compared to conventional reading lessons. Weekly reflections revealed that students perceived reading tasks as achievable challenges rather than academic burdens.

#### 3. Enhanced Critical-Thinking Engagement

The findings also showed improvement in students' critical-thinking

behaviors. Students reported rereading texts to verify answers, analyzing alternative options carefully, and discussing interpretations with peers. These behaviors indicated deeper cognitive processing beyond surface-level comprehension. During focus group discussions, students demonstrated the ability to justify their answers using textual evidence. Classroom interactions reflected increased analytical dialogue, where learners compared interpretations and evaluated reasoning collectively. This suggests that gamified quizzes encouraged not only comprehension accuracy but also interpretative reasoning.

Overall, the findings indicate that gamified quizzes contributed to both cognitive and motivational aspects of reading comprehension development.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study align with existing theories and previous research on gamification, motivation, and reading comprehension. First, the improvement in students' comprehension skills supports the view that reading comprehension involves active cognitive processing, including identifying main ideas, making inferences, and integrating prior knowledge. As emphasized by Renandya, effective language instruction should facilitate deeper processing rather than rote learning. The gamified quizzes in this study encouraged students to reread texts, analyze answer choices, and engage in evidence-based reasoning, indicating meaningful cognitive engagement.

The motivational impact observed in this study is consistent with gamification theory, which suggests that elements such as points, competition, and immediate feedback can enhance learner engagement. Previous studies by Hanus and Fox (2018) found that gamified environments can influence students' effort and classroom participation. Similarly, this study demonstrated that students became more enthusiastic and persistent when reading tasks were presented as interactive challenges. The competitive yet supportive nature of leaderboards and timed quizzes appeared to stimulate sustained engagement.

Moreover, the increase in critical-thinking behaviors aligns with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes active knowledge construction. The opportunity to discuss quiz answers and reflect on feedback promoted social interaction and collaborative meaning-making. This finding is supported by research conducted by Zhang and Crawford (2024), who reported that gamified formative assessments can enhance learners' motivation and reflective engagement in EFL contexts.

Importantly, the findings suggest that gamified quizzes did not merely function as external motivational tools but also facilitated intrinsic engagement with texts. Students' increased willingness to reread passages and verify information indicates a shift toward strategic reading practices. This supports the argument that gamification, when thoughtfully implemented, can integrate motivational and cognitive dimensions of learning.

However, consistent with previous literature, the success of gamified learning depends on careful instructional design. Overreliance on extrinsic

rewards may risk diminishing intrinsic motivation if not balanced with meaningful learning objectives. Therefore, teachers must ensure that game elements serve pedagogical goals rather than distract from comprehension development.

In conclusion, the discussion confirms that gamified quizzes contribute to reading comprehension improvement through enhanced motivation, sustained engagement, and deeper cognitive processing. These findings reinforce the potential of gamification as a complementary strategy in English reading instruction, particularly for learners who struggle with engagement in traditional classroom settings.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **CONCLUSION**

This study investigated the implementation of gamified quizzes as a medium to enhance junior high school students' English reading comprehension. The findings indicate that gamified quizzes positively influenced students' comprehension skills, learning motivation, and critical-thinking engagement.

First, students demonstrated improved ability to identify main ideas, recognize supporting details, and make inferences. The structured and interactive nature of gamified quizzes encouraged students to reread texts, verify answers using textual evidence, and engage in more strategic reading behaviors. These processes reflect deeper cognitive engagement rather than surface-level comprehension.

Second, gamified elements such as points, timers, and leaderboards significantly increased students' motivation and classroom participation. Reading tasks were perceived as engaging challenges rather than routine academic obligations. This shift contributed to greater persistence and sustained attention during reading activities.

Third, the study found that gamified quizzes promoted analytical reasoning and collaborative discussion. Students were more inclined to justify their answers, consider alternative interpretations, and reflect on feedback. This suggests that gamification can integrate motivational support with higher-order thinking processes.

Overall, the study concludes that gamified quizzes serve not only as engaging instructional tools but also as effective pedagogical strategies that foster both cognitive development and learner motivation in reading instruction.

### **SUGGESTION**

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed.

First, English teachers are encouraged to integrate gamified quizzes into reading instruction as a complementary strategy to traditional methods. However, game elements should be carefully designed to support learning objectives rather than merely emphasize competition or rewards. Balanced implementation is essential to maintain students' intrinsic motivation.

Second, schools should provide adequate technological infrastructure and teacher training to ensure effective use of gamified

platforms. Teachers need professional development opportunities to design meaningful, level-appropriate, and adaptive quiz content that aligns with curriculum standards.

Third, future researchers are recommended to expand this study by employing mixed-method or experimental designs to measure the long-term impact of gamified quizzes on reading achievement quantitatively. Larger participant samples and different educational levels may also provide broader generalization of findings.

Finally, further investigation is needed to explore how gamification influences other language skills such as writing, listening, and speaking, as well as its impact on diverse learner characteristics.

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