

Implementation of the Problem-Based Learning Model to Improve Student Learning Outcomes in History Lessons for Grade XI

Yulfina¹, Arif Firmansyah²

¹ SMAN 8 Palu, Sulawesi Tengah, Indonesia

² Universitas Tadulako, Sulawesi Tengah, Indonesia

Correspondence email; yulfinaarif@gmail.com

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Abstract

History learning has an important role in shaping historical consciousness, national character, and students' ability to analyze the relationship between past events and present life. This research aims to improve student learning outcomes through the application of Problem Based Learning (PBL) to the material on the Arrival of Japan in Indonesia in History subjects in grade XI of SMA Negeri 8 Palu. The research method uses the Classroom Action Research (PTK) method with the Kemmis and McTaggart models which includes the planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection stages. The research was carried out in two cycles with 25 subjects in class XI. The research data was collected through observation, learning outcome tests, and documentation, then analyzed using qualitative descriptive and quantitative descriptive techniques. The results showed that the application of PBL was able to improve students' learning outcomes in the material of Japan's Arrival to Indonesia. The average class score increased from 74.40 in Cycle I to 86.20 in Cycle II, while classical learning completeness increased from 68.00% to 92.00%, thus exceeding the set success indicator of 85%. In addition to improving learning outcomes, the implementation of PBL also improves students' learning activities through activities of identifying historical problems, analyzing various historical sources, discussing collaboratively, presenting the results of analysis, and drawing conclusions based on historical evidence. The results of this study show that Problem Based Learning is effective in creating more active, contextual, and meaningful history learning and can be used as an alternative learning model to improve learning outcomes in the material of Japanese Arrival in Indonesia.

Keywords

History Learning; Learning Outcomes; Problem Based Learning; Senior High School; The Arrival of Japan in Indonesia



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INTRODUCTION

Education is a strategic means of forming human resources who have the ability to think critically, creatively, collaboratively, and are able to solve various life problems. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum requires a student-centered learning process,

so that students not only gain knowledge conceptually, but are also able to build understanding through meaningful learning experiences. In this context, teachers are required to choose a learning model that is able to encourage the active involvement of students during the learning process.

History learning has an important role in shaping historical consciousness, national character, and students' ability to analyze the relationship between past events and present life. History learning no longer only requires students to memorize facts, names of figures, and chronology of events, but must be able to develop historical thinking skills, critical thinking, and the ability to analyze various historical sources. Therefore, the history learning process needs to be designed to provide opportunities for students to investigate, discuss, interpret historical facts, and conclude various events based on available evidence.

One of the historical materials that has strategic value in shaping the ability to think historically is the arrival of the Japanese in Indonesia. This material not only discusses the chronology of Japan's entry into Indonesian territory in 1942, but also examines the background of the Asia-Pacific War, Japan's political and economic interests in Southeast Asia, the process of the collapse of Dutch colonial power, the Japanese military government policy, the formation of various organizations such as PUTERA, Jawa Hokokai, Seinendan, Keibodan, PETA, to the impact of the Japanese occupation on political, economic, social, cultural, and the growth of Indonesian nationalism. The complexity of the material requires students to be able to analyze cause-and-effect relationships, compare various historical perspectives, and evaluate the positive and negative impact of the Japanese occupation on the struggle for Indonesian independence.

However, the material of the arrival of the Japanese to Indonesia is often still taught through the lecture method that is oriented towards conveying information and memorizing the chronology of events. This condition causes students to receive more information passively than to analyze various historical facts learned. As a result, students have difficulty understanding the relationship between events, are less able to relate historical material to current living conditions, and show low participation in the learning process. One-way learning also has an impact on low learning motivation and student learning outcomes.

This problem is also found in history learning in grade XI of SMA Negeri 8 Palu. Based on the results of initial observation of history subjects, it is known that the learning process of Japanese arrival material in Indonesia is still dominated by simple lecture and question and answer methods. Most students tend to memorize the chronology of Japanese arrival without understanding the causative factors, occupation strategies, and influence of Japanese policies on the development of the struggle of the Indonesian nation. Discussion activities have not taken place optimally so that only a small number of students actively express their opinions, while other students are more waiting for the teacher's explanation. The impact of this condition can be seen in the results of the learning evaluation which shows that many students still get scores below the Learning Goal Achievement Criteria (KKTP).

One of the learning models that is considered to be able to overcome these problems is Problem Based Learning (PBL). This model places real problems as the starting point of learning so that students are encouraged to identify problems, seek information from various sources, analyze historical evidence, discuss alternative solutions, and draw conclusions based on the results of the investigation. In history learning, the application of PBL can be carried out through the presentation of various historical problems, such as why Japan received public support at the beginning of its arrival, how Japan's economic policies affected the lives of the Indonesian people, or the extent to which the Japanese occupation contributed

to the process of the birth of Indonesian independence. These problems encourage students to think critically, conduct causal analysis, and build a deeper understanding of history.

Various studies have shown that Problem Based Learning is effective in improving learning activities, critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and learning outcomes of students. In history learning, PBL allows students to explore various historical sources, compare different points of view, and formulate arguments based on historical evidence. Learning becomes more contextual because students not only memorize historical facts, but are also able to understand the meaning of historical events in the life of the nation and state. However, research on the application of Problem Based Learning through the Classroom Action Research approach on the arrival of Japanese to Indonesia at the high school level is still relatively limited, especially in the context of schools in Central Sulawesi. Most of the previous research used experimental designs or studied other subjects so that it did not provide an overview of the process of continuous learning improvement in certain historical materials. Therefore, this research has a novelty in the application of Problem Based Learning through Classroom Action Research to improve student learning outcomes in the material of Japanese arrival in Indonesia Even Semester Class XI SMA Negeri 8 Palu.

Based on this description, this study aims to describe the process of implementing Problem Based Learning and determine the improvement of student learning outcomes in the material of Japanese arrival in Indonesia through Class Action Research. The results of the research are expected to be an alternative solution for history teachers in creating more active, contextual, and meaningful learning so that it can improve learning outcomes as well as students' historical thinking skills.

METHODS

This study uses the Classroom Action Research (PTK) method by referring to the Kemmis and McTaggart models which include four stages, namely planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection (Kemmis et al., 2014; Mertler, 2022). Classroom action research was chosen because it aims to improve the quality of the learning process in a sustainable manner through concrete actions carried out by teachers in the classroom (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The research was carried out in two cycles, where each cycle consists of two learning meetings and one evaluation of learning outcomes. The results of reflection in the first cycle are used as a basis for improving the implementation of actions in the second cycle so that the learning process can take place more effectively (Mertler, 2022).

The research was carried out at SMA Negeri 8 Palu in the even semester of the 2025/2026 school year. The research subjects were all students in grade XI who took the subject of History. The determination of the research subject used a total sampling technique, because all students in one class were used as research subjects in accordance with the characteristics of Class Action Research (Sugiyono, 2022). The focus of action in this study is the application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model to improve students' learning outcomes in the material of the Arrival of Japan in Indonesia in the subject of History. The material includes the background of the arrival of the Japanese to Indonesia, the Japanese occupation process, the formation of organizations formed by Japan, the policy of the Japanese military government, and its impact on people's lives and the struggle for Indonesian independence. (Nurria et al., 2026).

The planning stage begins with the preparation of learning tools which include teaching modules, learning objectives, Student Worksheets (LKPD), learning media, observation instruments for teacher and student activities, and evaluation questions for learning outcomes.

In addition, the researcher coordinates with subject teachers as collaborators to prepare a schedule for the implementation of the research and equalize perceptions of observation procedures during the action (Kemmis et al., 2014).

At the stage of implementing actions, the learning process is carried out in accordance with the syntax of Problem Based Learning, namely orienting students to problems, organizing students in study groups, guiding individual and group investigations, developing and presenting problem-solving results, and analyzing and evaluating the problem-solving process (Arends, 2012; Savery, 2015; Nurria et al., 2026). The problems given are related to the historical material studied so that students are encouraged to seek information from various sources, discuss collaboratively, and present the results of their analysis in front of the class. During the learning process, the teacher plays the role of a facilitator who guides students in finding concepts through investigation activities (Tshewang & Wangdi, 2021).

The observation stage is carried out simultaneously with the implementation of actions. Observations are carried out by collaborating teachers using observation sheets that have been prepared in advance to observe the implementation of learning, teacher activities, and student activities during learning. In addition to observation, the researcher also documents various learning activities as data to support the research. Furthermore, in the reflection stage, the researcher and the collaborating teacher analyze the results of observations and the results of student learning evaluation to identify the advantages and disadvantages of implementing actions. The results of these reflections are used as the basis for compiling learning improvements in the next cycle (Kemmis et al., 2014; Mertler, 2022).

The research instruments used include teacher activity observation sheets, student activity observation sheets, learning outcome tests, and documentation. Observation sheets are used to obtain data on learning implementation and student activity levels during the implementation of the Problem Based Learning model, while learning outcome tests are given at the end of each cycle to measure the level of mastery of the material that has been learned. Documentation is used to complete research data in the form of activity photos, student attendance lists, learning tools, and other supporting documents (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, tests, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2022). Observation is used to obtain information about the activities of teachers and students during the learning process. The test is used to determine the improvement in student learning outcomes after the implementation of actions in each cycle, while documentation is used as supporting data that strengthens the research results (Cohen et al., 2018). The data obtained is analyzed using qualitative descriptive and quantitative descriptive analysis techniques. The observation data are analyzed qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to describe the changes that occur during the learning process (Miles et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the learning outcome data is analyzed quantitatively by calculating the average score and percentage of students' learning completeness in each cycle (Sugiyono, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This class action research was carried out in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of the stages of planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection. The application of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model was carried out on the material of the Arrival of Japan in Indonesia in the subject of History to improve the learning outcomes of grade XI students of SMA Negeri 8 Palu which amounted to 25 people. The material studied included

the background of the arrival of the Japanese in Indonesia, the Japanese occupation process, the organization formed by Japan, the policy of the Japanese military government, and its impact on the life of the Indonesian people and the struggle for independence.

Problem Based Learning Activities on Japanese Arrival Materials in Indonesia

The implementation of learning in Cycle I was carried out by following the stages of Problem Based Learning (PBL) which were adjusted to the material of the Japanese Arrival to Indonesia. At each stage, students were directed to identify problems, collect information from various historical sources, discuss in groups, present the results of the analysis, and draw conclusions based on the historical facts obtained. The series of learning activities carried out during the application of the Problem Based Learning model in the material is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Problem Based Learning Activities on Japanese Arrival Materials in Indonesia

PBL Stage	Student Activities
Problem orientation	Analyzing the causes of the arrival of Japan to Indonesia
Learning organization	Group discussion on Japan-formed organizations
Research	Studying history books and digital resources
Presentation	Conveying the results of the analysis of the impact of the Japanese occupation
Evaluation	Summing up Japan's influence on the independence struggle

Based on Table 1, the learning process is carried out systematically in accordance with the syntax of Problem Based Learning. In the problem orientation stage, students are invited to analyze the factors behind the arrival of Japan to Indonesia so that they are able to build curiosity about the material learned. Furthermore, at the learning organization stage, students work together in groups to discuss various organizations formed by Japan, such as PUTERA, Jawa Hokokai, Seinendan, Keibodan, and PETA, along with their roles and influences on Indonesian society. In the investigation stage, students search information from history books, teaching modules, and relevant digital sources to obtain historical evidence that supports the results of their analysis. The results of the investigation are then presented in front of the class so that there is a process of discussion and mutual responses between groups. In the evaluation stage, students and teachers draw conclusions about the influence of the Japanese occupation on political, economic, and social life, as well as its contribution to the process towards Indonesian independence. These learning activities show that the application of Problem Based Learning not only encourages an increase in understanding of historical concepts, but also develops students' critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills before evaluating learning outcomes at the end of the cycle.

Cycle I

The implementation of the action in Cycle I began with the presentation of problems regarding the arrival of the Japanese in Indonesia. The teacher presented case studies in the form of triggering questions, such as "Why did the Indonesian people initially welcome the arrival of the Japanese as elder brothers?" and "Why did there then change people's attitudes towards the Japanese government?". Students were divided into five groups consisting of five people each. Each group analyzed various historical sources regarding the background of the Japanese arrival, the policies of the Japanese military government, the formation of

organizations such as PUTERA, Jawa Hokokai, PETA, Seinendan, and Keibodan, and their impact on the lives of the Indonesian people. The results of the analysis were then presented in front of the class to obtain responses from other groups. The teacher divided the students into five groups consisting of five people each. Each group discussed the problems given, sought information from package books and digital sources, and then presented the results of the discussion. During the learning process, the teacher acts as a facilitator who guides the discussion and helps students when experiencing difficulties. Based on the results of observations, most of the students began to show involvement in the learning process. However, there are still some students who are less active in group discussions and have not dared to express their opinions. In addition, students' ability to analyze historical problems still requires the guidance of the teacher so that the learning process has not taken place optimally. The test results at the end of Cycle I show an increase in learning outcomes compared to the initial conditions, although classical learning completeness has not been achieved. For more details, please see the table below:

Table 1. Student Learning Outcomes in Cycle I

Remarks	Results
Number of students	25
Highest score	90
Lowest value	60
Average score	74,40
Students complete	17
Students have not completed	8
Classical completeness	68,00%

Based on Table 1, it is known that out of 25 students, there are 17 students (68.00%) who have achieved KKTP, while 8 students (32.00%) have not achieved completeness. The average class score is 74.40, so the research success indicator that sets a classical completeness of at least 85% has not been achieved. Therefore, the action is continued in Cycle II. The results of the reflection show several obstacles during the implementation of Cycle I, namely the low participation of several students in group discussions, the lack of optimal management of discussion time, and the uneven involvement of students in presentation activities. Based on the results of the reflection, several improvements were made in Cycle II, including the provision of more intensive guidance to each group, a clearer division of tasks to each group member, and motivation for students to be more active in expressing their opinions.

Cycle 2

The implementation of Cycle II was carried out by correcting the weaknesses found in Cycle I. In Cycle II, the teacher presented a more complex problem regarding the influence of the Japanese occupation on the process of the birth of Indonesian independence. Students were asked to analyze various historical sources to assess whether Japanese policies provided more benefits or losses for the Indonesian nation. Each group prepared an argument based on historical evidence, then presented the results of its analysis and provided responses to the opinions of other groups, then directed students to take advantage of various learning resources, and provided wider opportunities for all group members to participate in

discussions and presentations. During the learning process, student activities experienced a significant increase. Most of the students actively discussed, asked questions, responded to other group presentations, and were able to present the results of analysis based on the historical sources used. The learning atmosphere became more interactive and student-centered. The test results at the end of Cycle II showed a better improvement in learning outcomes compared to Cycle I. These results can be seen in the following table 2:

Table 2. Student Learning Outcomes in Cycle II

Remarks	Results
Number of students	25
Highest score	96
Lowest value	72
Average score	86,20
Students complete	23
Students have not completed	2
Classical completeness	92,00%

Based on Table 2, it is known that as many as 23 students (92.00%) have achieved KKTP, while 2 students (8.00%) have not achieved completeness. The average grade of the class increased to 86.20. Thus, the indicator of research success has been achieved because classical completeness has exceeded 85%.

Comparison of Learning Outcomes of Cycle I and Cycle II

Based on the comparison of learning outcomes in the two cycles, there was an increase in all observed indicators, both the average grade of the class, the number of students who achieved completeness, and the percentage of classical completeness. This improvement shows that the application of the Problem Based Learning model is able to improve the quality of the learning process while improving student learning outcomes in History subjects in grade XI of SMA Negeri 8 Palu as seen in table 3 below.

Table 3. Comparison of Student Learning Outcomes

Indicator	Cycle I	Cycle II
Average score	74,40	86,20
Highest score	90	96
Lowest value	60	72
Students complete	17	23
Classical completeness	68,00%	92,00%

Table 3 shows an increase in learning outcomes in each indicator. The average score increased by 11.80 points, while classical completeness increased from 68.00% in Cycle I to 92.00% in Cycle II or an increase of 24.00%. These results show that the application of the Problem Based Learning model is able to improve student learning outcomes in History subjects in grade XI of SMA Negeri 8 Palu. The improvement in learning outcomes occurs because the Problem Based Learning model provides opportunities for students to learn actively through problem identification, discussion, finding information from various sources, and presenting research

results. In addition, the improvement shows that students are increasingly able to understand important concepts in the material of Japanese arrival in Indonesia. In Cycle II, most students have been able to explain the factors that caused the Japanese occupation, identify various Japanese-formed organizations and their functions, distinguish the positive and negative impacts of Japanese policies on Indonesian society, and analyze the relationship between the Japanese occupation and the process towards the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence. These analytical skills develop through problem-solving activities, group discussions, and presentations which are the main characteristics of Problem Based Learning learning. The learning process encourages students to build understanding independently so that learning materials are easier to understand and remember. In addition, interaction between students during group discussions also increases confidence, communication skills, and responsibility for the tasks given. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the application of the Problem Based Learning model has succeeded in improving the learning outcomes of grade XI students of SMA Negeri 8 Palu in the subject of History.

Discussion

The results of the study show that the application of Problem Based Learning (PBL) is able to improve student learning outcomes in History subjects in grade XI of SMA Negeri 8 Palu. This increase can be seen from the increase in the average grade of the class from 74.40 in Cycle I to 86.20 in Cycle II. In addition, the percentage of classical learning completeness has also increased from 68.00% to 92.00%, so that it has exceeded the research success indicator set by 85%. These findings show that the application of PBL not only improves students' academic achievement, but is also able to improve the quality of the learning process through the active involvement of students in each stage of learning.

The improvement in learning outcomes occurs because the Problem Based Learning model provides opportunities for students to build knowledge through learning experiences centered on problem solving. In each learning activity, students no longer only receive information from the teacher, but are required to identify problems, collect information from various sources, discuss with group members, and present the results of their analysis in front of the class. These activities encourage students to connect historical concepts with various events that occur in real life so that their understanding of the material becomes more deep. In the *material Japanese Arrival to Indonesia*, this activity can be seen when students analyze the factors behind the entry of Japan into Indonesia, examine the policies of the Japanese military government, compare the functions of organizations formed by Japan such as PUTERA, Jawa Hokokai, Seinendan, Keibodan, and PETA, and evaluate the impact of the Japanese occupation on people's lives and the process towards Indonesian independence. The analysis process makes students not only memorize the chronology of events, but are able to understand the cause-and-effect relationship and historical significance of every policy implemented by Japan during the occupation. This condition is in line with the characteristics of PBL which places students as active subjects in the learning process so that knowledge is built through meaningful learning experiences.

The improvement of learning outcomes from Cycle I to Cycle II also shows that the reflection process in Classroom Action Research makes an important contribution to the success of the action. In Cycle I, several obstacles were still found, such as low student courage

in expressing opinions, lack of optimal group cooperation, and ineffective management of discussion time. Based on the results of this reflection, teachers made various improvements in Cycle II, including providing clearer instructions on problem-solving steps, dividing the role of each group member in a more structured manner, providing more intensive assistance during discussions, and providing equal opportunities for all students to express their opinions. These improvements have an impact on increasing student participation during learning so that the learning outcomes obtained have also improved. Improvements in learning strategies in Cycle II also have an impact on increasing students' ability to analyze historical sources about the Japanese occupation. If in Cycle I some students still have difficulty explaining the relationship between Japanese policies and the growth of the spirit of nationalism, then in Cycle II they have been able to put forward arguments supported by historical facts from various learning sources.

The characteristics of *the Japanese Arrival to Indonesia material* are very suitable to be applied using Problem Based Learning because this material contains various historical problems that can be analyzed from various perspectives. Students are not only required to understand the chronology of Japan's entry into Indonesia, but also analyze the causative factors, Japanese military government policies, the role of Japanese-formed organizations, and its impact on people's lives and the struggle for Indonesian independence. Through the presentation of contextual problems and the analysis of various historical sources, students have the opportunity to build a deeper understanding of history while developing historical thinking skills.

The results of this study support various previous studies that state that Problem Based Learning is an effective learning model in improving learning outcomes. Tshewang and Wangdi's (2021) research shows that the application of PBL in history learning is able to improve students' critical thinking skills and involvement because learning is based on contextual problem solving. The findings of this study are also in line with Nurria et al. (2026) who concluded that PBL contributes to improving 21st century skills, including critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and student learning outcomes. In addition, Wiyono et al. (2026) explained that the application of PBL in history learning is able to improve historical thinking skills through historical source analysis, group discussions, and collaborative problem solving.

The results of this study also strengthen the research results of Labibatussolihah et al. (2021) who stated that history learning will become more meaningful if students are given the opportunity to analyze various historical facts through research activities. Similarly, Masfiyah et al. (2024) reported that the application of PBL is able to improve learning outcomes because students gain a more active learning experience compared to conventional learning. The similarity of these results shows that the success of PBL does not only occur at one level of education or one specific subject, but can also be applied effectively to history learning at the secondary school level.

The improvement in learning outcomes obtained in this study can be explained through the theory of constructivism which emphasizes that knowledge is actively built by students through interaction with the learning environment. In the application of PBL, students have the opportunity to discover historical concepts for themselves through the process of

investigation, discussion, analysis of various sources, and the preparation of solutions to the given problems. In this study, the process is seen when students analyze various historical sources regarding the background of Japan's arrival in Indonesia, the policy of the Japanese military government, the formation of organizations such as PUTERA, Jawa Hokokai, PETA, Seinendan, and Keibodan, as well as their impact on the struggle for Indonesian independence. Through these activities, students not only understand the chronology of events, but are also able to explain the cause-and-effect relationship, compare various Japanese policies, and draw conclusions based on the historical evidence found. This process makes it easier for students to understand the material because knowledge is obtained through direct learning experiences, not just memorizing the information conveyed by the teacher. Therefore, learning becomes more meaningful and student learning outcomes are improved.

In addition to improving learning outcomes, the implementation of Problem Based Learning also has a positive impact on student learning activities. During Cycle II, students were seen to be more active in asking questions, responding to friends' opinions, working together in groups, and presenting the results of discussions with more confidence. This condition shows that PBL is able to create a more interactive and student-centered learning atmosphere. Increased learning activities are one of the factors that contribute to improving learning outcomes because students get wider opportunities to develop understanding through social interaction and group cooperation.

Although this study showed positive results, the research still has some limitations. The research was only carried out in one class with a relatively limited number of students and took place in two learning cycles. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized to all school characteristics. In addition, this study only focuses on improving learning outcomes so that it has not studied in depth the influence of Problem Based Learning on other aspects, such as historical thinking ability, learning motivation, creativity, or students' collaboration skills. Further research is suggested to involve a larger sample number, longer implementation time, and integrate measurements of various competencies in the 21st century in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of Problem Based Learning in history learning.

Overall, the results of the study prove that the application of Problem Based Learning is an effective learning alternative to improve student learning outcomes in History subjects in grade XI of SMA Negeri 8 Palu. This success is shown by the increase in class averages, the percentage of learning completeness, and student activities during the learning process. Thus, the Problem Based Learning model is worthy of consideration as one of the innovative learning models that can be applied by history teachers to create more active, meaningful, and competency-oriented learning for students.

CONCLUSION

The application of Problem Based Learning (PBL) in the material of Japanese Arrival in Indonesia has been proven to be able to improve the learning outcomes of grade XI students of SMA Negeri 8 Palu. This increase is shown by the increase in the average grade point of the class from 74.40 in Cycle I to 86.20 in Cycle II, as well as the increase in classical learning completeness from 68.00% to 92.00%, so that it has exceeded the research success indicator set

by 85%. These results show that the application of PBL not only contributes to improving academic achievement, but also encourages students to be more active in identifying problems, analyzing various historical sources, discussing collaboratively, and communicating the results of analysis during the learning process.

The characteristics of the Japanese Arrival in Indonesia material that require an understanding of the cause-and-effect relationship, the analysis of the Japanese military government's policies, the role of Japanese-formed organizations, and its impact on people's lives and the struggle for Indonesian independence make Problem Based Learning a suitable model to be applied. Through the presentation of contextual problems and historical source-based investigations, students gain a more meaningful learning experience so that they are able to build a deeper understanding of history. Therefore, Problem Based Learning can be recommended as an alternative learning model for history teachers to improve learning outcomes while developing students' historical thinking skills in materials that have similar characteristics.

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