

## SYNTHESIS ESSAYS

A synthesis essay uses a variety of sources to form a new idea, answer a question, or defend an argumentative thesis statement. A synthesis does not summarize but shows the connections among the different sources and the writers' ideas. A successful synthesis essay overviews research on the chosen topic, highlights the connections among sources, and from that information presents a thesis statement or research question.

### STEPS FOR WRITING A SYNTHESIS ESSAY

Below are steps to help guide you with writing a synthesis essay. However, if you are trying to synthesize sources for a research essay, these steps will also come in handy.

#### Step 1: Read and Plan

Before reading any sources, carefully read the assignment guidelines to ensure that you understand the expectations and requirements for the paper. Look for specific questions that you need to answer in your essay. As you read your sources, annotate them; identify differences and similarities and take notes on ideas that are related to your interests or relevant to the questions or requirements of the assignment.

Do not take a position on your topic before reading your sources. Be sure to read objectively. Remember reading texts more than once will help you draw stronger connections between the sources.

#### Step 2: Define Your Position

After reading and annotating your sources, you should define a position or make an argument about your topic. Using this position, create a thesis statement that sets up an arguable claim.

With your thesis statement in mind, review your notes and annotations and re-read your sources to find evidence to support your claim. Look for the connections between your sources and your claim; this is vital to synthesis essays.

#### Step 3: Organize Your Ideas

Identify topics or themes that each source is saying about the ideas by using a synthesis matrix. Use the matrix to group similar ideas and then build your paragraphs. Keep in mind you are building your paragraphs around each idea instead of each source.

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	SOURCE #1	SOURCE #2	SOURCE #3
MAIN IDEA A			
MAIN IDEA B			

### Step 4: Organize Your Essay

With your thesis statement, evidence, and organized topics begin thinking about how you would like to structure your essay. Remember to organize your paragraphs by topic/theme, not by source.

It is important to remember your voice and ideas should dominate the discussion while drawing connections to the sources. Present your ideas and explain how the sources support/are connected to your claims.

### EXAMPLE OF A SYNTHESIS ESSAY

In the following synthesis essay, the writer read five sources and used ideas from those sources to support the thesis statement. The guiding ideas of the paper are highlighted.

Improving education outcomes requires that we engage students in the class. Faculty plays a vital role in the learning experience of each student, so using technology to give a lesson or to teach a class will be beneficial because millennials are tech savvy (Cress and Sax,1998). Student learning can improve if teachers use technology as part of their teaching strategies<sup>i</sup>.

Technology can give working individuals flexibility. Millennials strive to have freedom and flexibility in their professional and personal goals (Jenkins, 2018)<sup>ii</sup> which makes technology a great tool for millennials because it will allow them to have a balance in their personal and professional lives<sup>iii</sup>. They will be able to accomplish their schoolwork from anywhere they seem fit. They will no longer be tied to one specific workspace because they can take their technology, like laptops or smartphones, to different locations and complete their work.<sup>iv</sup> Multiple studies (Gulek & Demirtas, 2005; Spires, Lee, Turner, & Johnson, 2008; Edwards, 2007) found that when technology was incorporated, millennials' concentration and participation increased. These studies found that with the use of technology, students were a) more willing to work with teams, b) more likely to work in projects, c) saw their writing and analysis skills improve, d) had more access to information, and e) completed more homework (Gulek & Demirtas, 2005; Spires, Lee, Turner, & Johnson, 2008; Edwards, 2007). When dealing with millennials, technology is vital to improve their learning.

<sup>i</sup> Here the writer states their thesis statement/ the claim they will be arguing in their paper

<sup>ii</sup> The writer introduces one of their sources

<sup>iii</sup> This is the synthesis portion, the writer draws the connection between the source and their claim

<sup>iv</sup> This again is the writer's voice, further explaining their thesis statement and connecting the source to their ideas