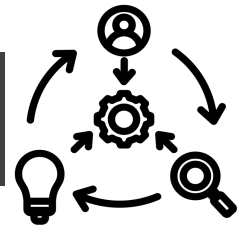


Mini-Synthesis to Thesis Essay



WHAT is this assignment?	WHY this assignment?
You will synthesize two specific points from two sources of your choice in order to uncover a more multifaceted perspective. In other words, you will put two authors' ideas "in conversation" with each other with the goal of broadening / deepening those perspectives. The synthesis you do will result in you articulating a "working" stance / thesis for your Synthesis Essay.	College research essays often require students to communicate their stance (a thesis statement or claim) and to use sources to support that stance. Too often, though, student writers initiate the research process by first determining their stance on a subject, and then they hunt for sources that support their already determined stances. But isn't research supposed to be about learning and inquiry? About discovering something new and unknown? About broadening or deepening our perspectives? Real research involves starting with an idea, question, or hypothesis. Then, researchers study their topic, gathering and combining evidence until a finding, conclusion, or claim emerges. This is synthesis.



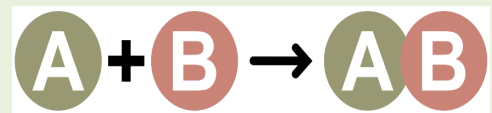
Your mini-essay should be **500-625 words** (2-2.5 pgs) long. You should include at least **two quotes** and a **Works Cited page**. You will start writing this in class (with notes).

What is Synthesis?



You might remember "synthesizing" in science classes. *Syn* means "together" (think synchronized swimming), and *thesis* means "a proposition to be proved."

When you **synthesize in source-based essays**, you're combining different ideas (from your sources: A & B) to formulate a new proposition (your claim: AB).



Synthesis is thus distinct from "stacking" evidence to support claims.
Synthesis instead "weaves" evidence together to uncover a new stance/thesis.

Strategies for Synthesizing Sources

You can follow or adapt these steps to get acquainted with synthesis. You'll see that it takes time (and space on the page) to synthesize! Spend the time! And enjoy watching how quickly your pages fill up. You'll reach the page requirement quicker than you think! 🙌

STEP 1: Find and read two sources that present (slightly) different perspectives on your topic.

STEP 2: Identify two passages (one from each of your two sources) that you want to connect. Use the [Synthesis Practice Worksheet](#) to brainstorm connections with your ideas / perspectives.

STEP 3: Start writing by introducing one of your sources. Use the [Integrating Sources into Your Writing](#) handout. Be sure to 1) introduce and summarize your sources so that an unfamiliar audience would understand, 2) emphasize your perspectives and stance, too.

STEP 4: Transition to the other source by naming the connection between the two ideas. Transitions are key for you guiding your reader to see the ideas and connections you want them to see. Sometimes a short phrase works; other times, you'll need a few sentences. Try this:

[Author 2] **extends / challenges / complicates** [Author 1]'s idea that [summarize idea].



Extends – agrees but goes further or considers other supporting issues



Challenges – counters and / or provides an opposing point of view



Complicates – agrees but adds nuance, like saying, “yes, but don’t overlook...”

STEP 5: Repeat Step 3 for your second source, providing for your reader enough information to begin seeing the connections you want them to see.

STEP 6: Explain the connections you see between texts, emphasizing your stance. Be explicit and “hand hold” readers to help them understand what you see. Be sure to also join the conversation by extending, challenging, or complicating your sources’ points. This is the time to elaborate on your perspective / stance or any new questions you now have as a result.