**Synthesis Essay Overview**

Due Date:

**Requirements**

Word Count:

MLA Format:

Please check this at

*https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/*

**Essential Questions:**

What is NOSTALGIA?

WHY IS NOSTALGIA INTRINSIC TO HUMANITY?

Your answer to these questions is your thesis for your synthesis essay.

**Writing a Synthesis Essay**

1. What is a synthesis? **Definitely not work. Let’s not do work**

A synthesis is a written discussion incorporating support from several sources of differing views. This type of assignment requires that you examine a variety of sources and identify their relationship to your thesis.

2. Synthesis is used in:

• Analysis papers to examine related theories.

• For example a comparison between the theories of evolution or who shot JFK.

• Research papers to incorporate multiple sources.

• For example looking at economic and social effects of proposed legislation.

• Argument papers to compare differing views and support a coherent claim.

• For example, is Turn it in a violation of student’s rights? One side may argue that the company steals students’ papers while others claim that students agree to have their work

archived.

• Business reports to examine differing ideas and blend into a coherent plan.

• For example, what are some of the plans to improve Toledo’s waterfront to attract more

visitors and increase business opportunities?

3. Tips for an effective synthesis essay:

• Establish your purpose to shape the way you want to argue and form your thesis. The thesis is the main claim or idea of your essay.

• Select your sources and become familiar with them so that you can discuss them in relationship to your thesis and supporting argument(s). If you simply quote sources without evaluating them then the sources will control your paper and your audience will may misinterpret the information.

• Develop an organizational plan. Arrange more than just one source per point; multiple sources will increase your credibility. Look at how sources may agree or disagree with one another and evaluate which source has better logic or more credibility.

• Evaluate or interpret each source, then show the relationship between the sources and your thesis.

• Document each source; note the author and page number as well as listing the source on the Works Cited page to avoid plagiarism. This MUST be done if you quote, summarize or paraphrase a source.

4. Strategies for organization:

• Climactic order- arranges the most important/persuasive evidence last since this is what is remembered.

• Problem/solution-establishes the problem in the introduction, then offers a few solutions.

• Comparison and contrast-

• Summarizes each source and shows their similarities and differences

• Can move from point-to-point, back and forth between items being compared.

• Can be set into blocks, where one item is completely discussed before moving on to the

next.

5. Analyze the position of each source; you can use these verbs to note the author’s tone:

**Argumentative:**

affirms

argues

confirms

contends

denies

disagrees

believes

concedes

insists

rejects

responds

**Research:**

adds

reveals

states

mentions

finds

verifies

**Emphasis:**

alleges

warns

advises

admits

complains

holds

predicts

proposes

acknowledges

speculates

suggests

emphasizes

6. Which tense do I use?

MLA- use present tense: Shakespeare writes…

APA- use past tense: Dr. Bombay affirmed the value…

The following format works well:

**The introduction (usually one paragraph)**

1. Contains a one-sentence statement that sums up the focus of your synthesis.

2. Also introduces the texts to be synthesized:

(i) Gives the title of each source (following the citation guidelines of whatever style

sheet you are using);

(ii) Provides the name of each author;

(ii) Sometimes also provides pertinent background information about the

authors, about the texts to be summarized, or about the general topic

from which the texts are drawn.

**The body of a synthesis essay (multiple paragraphs!!):**

This should be organized by theme, point, similarity, or aspect of the topic. Your organization will be determined by the assignment or by the patterns you see in the material you are synthesizing. The organization is the most important part of a synthesis, so try out more than one format.

Be sure that each paragraph:

1. Begins with a sentence or phrase that informs readers of the topic of the paragraph;

2. Includes information from more than one source;

3. Clearly indicates which material comes from which source using lead in phrases and

in-text citations. [Beware of plagiarism: Accidental plagiarism most often occurs when students are synthesizing sources and do not indicate where the synthesis ends and their own comments begin or vice verse.]

4. Shows the similarities or differences between the different sources in ways that make the paper as informative as possible;

5. Represents the texts fairly--even if that seems to weaken the paper! Look upon

yourself as a synthesizing machine; you are simply repeating what the source says,

in fewer words and in your own words. But the fact that you are using your own

words does not mean that you are in anyway changing what the source says.

Conclusion.

When you have finished your paper, write a conclusion reminding readers of the most significant themes you have found and the ways they connect to the overall topic. You may also want to suggest further research or comment on things that it was not possible for you to discuss in the paper. If you are writing a background synthesis, in some cases it may be appropriate for you to offer an interpretation of the material or take a position (thesis). Check this option with your instructor before you write the final draft of your paper.