

Synthesis Essay Instructions and Handouts

Online Course: *Introduction to Formal Writing: The Synthesis Essay*

STANDARDS:

- *RI (9-10.8) delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient*
- *RI (9-10.1) cite strong thorough textual evidence to support analysis of text*
- *W(9-10.4) produce clear, coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to the task, purpose and audience.*
- *W(9-10.1b) develop a claim and counterargument supplying evidence*

OBJECTIVES:

- *Apply close, **critical reading strategies** of complex non-fiction text in order to analyze and synthesize the information in order to evaluate its purpose, identify any bias and determine its validity.*
- *To produce a **well-organized arguments using textual evidence** from complex non-fiction texts while supporting a clear, concise claim.*

SYNTHESIS ESSAY ASSESSMENT INTRODUCTION:

Congratulations! All of your hard work throughout this course has prepared you for this final assessment. You now have the opportunity to apply your understanding of formal writing by completing each step to a synthesis essay. You are asked to complete four major steps of the writing process by submitting all worksheets, including the final essay, by the end of **one week**. Each of the worksheets described below are worth assessment points and have individual due dates throughout the week in order to assess your progress through the writing process. This is an **individual** assessment; thus, all questions and concerns should be shared with the teacher only! You should also review the *Synthesis Essay Rubric* to remind yourself of how your final draft will be graded.

DIRECTIONS:

First, read the *Introduction to Topic* in the *Synthesis Essay Assessment with Sources* packet to determine the topic and task. Then, carefully read through each source in the packet and complete the *Annotation Worksheet* for each source. Next, use your annotations to complete the *Brainstorming Worksheet* to determine the position you want to argue for your essay, including possible supporting ideas. Once you have brainstormed your position for the given topic, you should then complete the *Synthesis Essay Outline* to organize your thoughts and identify sources that could provide evidence for each supporting idea. Next, you should be able to draft your essay by completing the *Synthesis Essay Rough Draft Worksheet*. Finally, after editing your draft, revise your essay and submit the final draft electronically as a PDF.

DUE DATES:

Day 1: *Annotation Worksheet* due by 12am on _____ (15 points)

Day 2: *Brainstorming Worksheet & Synthesis Essay Outline* due by 12am on _____ (20 points)

Day 3: *Synthesis Essay Rough Outline* due by 12am on _____ (25 points)

Day 4: *Synthesis Essay Final Draft as PDF* due by 12am on _____ (40 points)

Synthesis Essay Rubric

Score: 7-6 (equivalent to an A)

- *The essay demonstrates in-depth document analysis and a balance between the use of documents and prior knowledge to develop an effective position*
- Thesis fully addresses the complexity of the question, takes a position, and provides organizational patterns for essay
- Supporting paragraphs have topic sentences, provide evidence with analysis, and have clincher or transitional sentences
- Essay contains a counter-argument
- Conclusion analyzes significance of evidence in relation to the question
- Control of language is impressive and contains insignificant errors

Score: 5 (equivalent to a B)

- *The essay demonstrates some document analysis and a less balance between the use of documents and prior knowledge to develop an effective position*
- Thesis fully addresses the question, takes a position, and provides some organizational patterns for essay
- Supporting paragraphs have topic sentences, provide evidence with some analysis, but may lack strong clincher or transitional sentences
- Essay contains a counter-argument
- Conclusion summarizes topic sentences
- Control of language is effective and contains minor errors that do not detract from the thesis

Score: 4-3 (equivalent to a C)

- *The essay demonstrates limited document analysis and/or may only paraphrase or quote documents. Contains limited prior knowledge in forming a position.*
- Thesis partially addresses the question, may or may not take a position, and may or may not provide organizational patterns for essay
- Supporting paragraphs have weak topic sentences, lack appropriate evidence and analysis, and clincher or transitional sentences are lacking or irrelevant
- Essay lacks a counter-argument
- Conclusion lacks relation to the thesis
- Control of language is inadequate and contains many errors that detract from the argument

Score: 2-0 (equivalent to a D or F)

- *The essay demonstrates little use of documents and/or misunderstands documents. Contains very little use of prior knowledge in forming a position.*
- Thesis does not address the question, take a position, or provide organization for essay
- Supporting paragraphs lack evidence
- Essay lacks a counter-argument
- Essay lacks a conclusion
- Control of language is not evident and contains major errors that detract from the argument

Synthesis Essay Annotation Worksheet

Topic of essay with position: _____

CITE Source	Circle POSITION of source	Annotations per source
Source A	FOR AGAINST NEUTRAL	Main idea of source: _____ _____ List 2 Direct Quotes from source: 1. 2.
Source B	FOR AGAINST NEUTRAL	Main idea of source: _____ _____ List 2 Direct Quotes from source: 1. 2.
Source C	FOR AGAINST NEUTRAL	Main idea of source: _____ _____ List 2 Direct Quotes from source: 1. 2.
Source D	FOR AGAINST NEUTRAL	Main idea of source: _____ _____ List 2 Direct Quotes from source: 1. 2.

Source E	FOR AGAINST NEUTRAL	Main idea of source: <hr/> <hr/> List 2 Direct Quotes from source: 1. 2.
Source F	FOR AGAINST NEUTRAL	Main idea of source: <hr/> <hr/> List 2 Direct Quotes from source: 1. 2.
Source G	FOR AGAINST NEUTRAL	Main idea of source: <hr/> <hr/> List 2 Direct Quotes from source: 1. 2.

Synthesis Essay T-Chart BRAINSTORMING WORKSHEET

Directions- After reading all articles, list supporting ideas for each position of the topic. Then, formulate arguments and supporting details from the ideas listed.

Topic:	
PRO	CON
<i>Using the ideas above, formulate arguments with supporting details here...</i>	
PRO Argument 1	CON Argument 1
PRO Argument 2	CON Argument 2

Synthesis Essay Outline

I. Introduction = Thesis (topic and position are clearly stated with supporting arguments, 1 sentence only)

II. Body paragraph 1 = 1st supporting Argument

a. Cite Source _____

b. Cite Source _____

III. Body paragraph 2 = 2nd supporting argument

a. Cite Source _____

b. Cite Source _____

IV. Body paragraph 3 = Opposing view (mention an argument for the position opposite of yours)

a. Cite Source _____

V. Body paragraph 3 = Rebuttal (attack the opposing view)

a. Cite Source _____

VI. Conclusion = Big Idea

Synthesis Essay ROUGH DRAFT

Formal Writing Tips:

- NO "I" statements!! Avoid use of 1st person pronouns!
- Form a clear, complete and concise thesis statement
- Cite all evidence used and punctuate quotes correctly ("...")
- Analysis of evidence should show depth of knowledge, it should NOT repeat what the evidence already states!

I. Paragraph#1: **Introduction:**

A. Get the reader's attention by using a "hook." (Present the topic in general terms- ?, factual statement, quote)

B. Background information of the *topic* is necessary.

C. Thesis must clearly state *your position* and 2 *supportive arguments* that show why you have that position.

II. Paragraph #2: **Body Paragraph #1-** first argument that **supports** your position presented in the thesis:

A. Topic sentence explaining your first argument/claim.

B. Evidence from article that supports your topic sentence- direct quote or paraphrased information

(You MUST cite your source parenthetically OR →) According to _____, _____

C. Elaboration/analysis that explains how the evidence supports your first argument/claim

D. Evidence from article that supports your topic sentence- direct quote or paraphrased information

(You MUST cite your source parenthetically OR →) _____ states, _____

E. Elaboration/analysis that explains how the evidence supports your first argument/claim

F. Transition: Use transitional phrases to *introduce* your next argument/claim. (ex. *In addition, as well as, also*)

III. Paragraph #3: **Body Paragraph #2-** second argument that **supports** your position presented in thesis

A. Topic sentence explaining your second argument/claim.

B. Evidence from article that supports your topic sentence- direct quote or paraphrased information

(You MUST cite your source parenthetically OR →) According to _____, _____

C. Elaboration/analysis that explains how the evidence supports your second argument/claim

D. Evidence from article that supports your topic sentence- direct quote or paraphrased information

(You MUST cite your source parenthetically OR →) _____ states, _____

E. Elaboration/analysis that explains how the evidence supports your second argument/claim

F. Transition: Use transitional phrases to *introduce* your opposing views. (ex. *However, In contrast, Although*)

IV. Paragraph #4: **Body Paragraph #3: Opposing Views** (State an opposing view that challenges your position, then have a counter argument to it. Evidence can be used for the opposing view, rebuttal, or both)

A. Opposing point(s) to your argument.

B. Evidence and Elaboration to back up your opposing view

(You MUST cite your source parenthetically OR →) According to _____, _____

C. Your rebuttal/counter-argument to the opposing view; re-emphasize your position on the topic.

D. Evidence and Elaboration to back up your rebuttal

(You MUST cite your source parenthetically OR →) _____ states, _____

E. Transition: Use transitional phrases to *conclude* the paragraph (*ex. Nevertheless, Above all, Yet*)

V. Paragraph #5: **Conclusion:**

A. Restate thesis statement.

B. Final statement/Big Idea. Personal comment or a call to action.
