

Synthesis Essay

Introduction

A synthesis essay is a written discussion that draws on one or more sources. It follows that your ability to write syntheses depends on your ability to infer relationships among sources—essays, articles, fiction, and also non-written sources, such as lectures, interviews, observations. This process is nothing new for you, since you infer relationships all the time—say, between something you’ve read in the newspaper and something you’ve seen for yourself, or between the teaching styles of your favorite and least favorite instructors. In fact, if you’ve written research papers, you’ve already written syntheses. In an academic synthesis, you make explicit the relationships that you have inferred among separate sources.

Body Paragraphs

1. Understanding Your Topic:

- Define your topic clearly. Understand the concepts and arguments presented in your sources.
- Identify keywords and core themes related to your topic.

2. Gathering Your Sources:

- Collect a variety of sources related to your topic. These can include articles, books, scholarly journals, and credible online resources.
- Ensure that your sources are reliable and provide diverse perspectives on the topic.

3. Analyzing and Comparing Sources:

- Analyze each source critically. Look for strengths, weaknesses, and biases.
- Find common themes or contrasting viewpoints among the sources.
- Make connections between the sources, drawing on their similarities and differences.

4. Developing a Thesis Statement:

- Your thesis statement should convey your unique perspective or argument.
- It should be a reflection of the synthesis of the information you have gathered from your sources.

5. Organizing Your Essay:

- Choose a structure that best suits your argument—either thematic, point-by-point, or by source.
- Outline your essay, organizing your main points logically.

6. Writing the Essay:

- Begin with an engaging introduction that includes your thesis statement.
- Develop each body paragraph around a single point, supporting it with evidence from your sources.
- Use transitions to smoothly connect ideas and sources.
- Conclude by summarizing your main points and restating your thesis in a new light.

7. Citing Your Sources:

- Properly cite all the sources used in your essay to avoid plagiarism.
- Follow the required citation style (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) as specified by your instructor or publication.

8. Proofreading and Revising:

- Review your essay for any grammatical or spelling errors.
- Ensure that your argument flows logically and that your sources effectively support your thesis.
- Seek feedback from peers or instructors to refine your essay.

Conclusion

Writing a synthesis essay involves the ability to digest information and present it in an organized fashion. This skill is essential in a wide range of academic and professional areas. By following this guide, you can develop a comprehensive, well-structured, and compelling synthesis essay that effectively communicates your understanding and analysis of your chosen topic.