Synthesis Study Sheet

Goals of this Study Sheet

Through this study sheet you will be able to understand what a synthesis is, know how to create one and the purpose of developing one within your paper. After breaking down the basics and applying it to your paper, you should be able to write a synthesis within your paper.

What is a Synthesis?

When writing a paper, perhaps your professor asks to write a synthesis paper; perhaps your professor asks you to include a synthesis within the paper. To get an idea of what it means to write a synthesis paper we must break down what the work means. A synthesis is building upon an idea based off of two or more sources. It’s a combination of sources to build up to the larger idea of your paper.

Ex: Imagine building something out of legos. The individual lego pieces represent the sources used to build the final product, which will represent the whole idea of the paper. In other words, just like how you would use legos to build a complete object, you use sources to build up to your whole point.

How is it different from an Analysis?

With an analysis you are breaking down a larger concept into smaller ideas. You see these a lot in literary analysis papers. To put it into perspective, with a main idea broken down through analysis from supporting evidence to show what the author may be conveying throughout their written works. Instead of taking different sources to build up to an idea, an analysis breaks down a larger meaning into a smaller parts.

Ex. With an analysis you want to think about taking something large and breaking it down to further view the in depth relation to the main idea. Think of it as your body
when it breaks down nutrients. The evidence that you put in your paper is like the food that’s inside of your stomach. An analysis breaks down the information given to explain the deeper meaning of the idea like when the food is broken down into smaller components to easily digest.

**Components of a Synthesis Paper**

The components of the developing a synthesis paper consist of applying factual information to build upon a central idea.

- Drafting a thesis
- Choosing your sources
- Annotate/Close
- Evaluation

**Drafting a thesis** - Once reading the prompt that your professor has provided for you, draft out a plausible thesis you might use to focus your paper on.

**Choosing your sources** - Make sure that your sources are relating to your topic. Depending on what is explained within your professors instructions, sources can range from being an article, film, podcast, book, journal, illustration, etc. Just make sure that your sources relate to the topic that you’ll be discussing within the paper, so the paper won’t go off topic.

**Annotate/Close Reading** -

Having identified your sources, it’s always a good idea to read over them. Take notes, highlight important key information, use pen to mark significance facts that will benefit your position for the paper. Doing a close reading helps strengthen your knowledge about the source to making evaluating it much easier.
Evaluating -
Evaluating sources will focus on the main ideas to justify your claim. Each source will have their own interpretation to what the main idea is, but it’s always good to think about how the sources relate to one another. It’s especially important in helping you construct your synthesis paper once you’ve found the relationship of the sources.

Purpose of Writing a Synthesis Paper
Writing a synthesis paper demonstrates the ability of an individual to connect a variety of sources together to prove the ‘whole’ of their claim. While analyzing shows capabilities of breaking down materials to prove an idea, synthesizing demonstrates skills of taking multiple works, finding their main connection, and applying it to a central idea.

In Conclusion
With a better grasp to what an synthesis is, you should be able to differentiate between an analysis and a synthesis paper, know what a synthesis is, how to make one, and the purpose of developing a synthesis paper. Gaining some basics about the writing a synthesis, hopefully this study sheet has made the process a little easier to starting it off.