

# Synthesis AP Essay Scoring Guide

## **A+ / B+ 9 / 8 / 7**

- This essay begins by contextualizing the issue at hand for readers, explaining to them briefly why educated, informed people ought to read on.
- Generally, the thesis in a high-scoring essay does justice to the complexity of the issue being considered while foregrounding the writer's position.
- This essay provides an extended consideration of the sources referenced - going beyond merely citing sources to assaying their significance to the thesis being developed and forging connections between the writer's position and that of the author of the source.
- A writer of a top essay enters into conversations with the sources chosen rather than being overwhelmed by them.
- This essay attributes information gained from sources rather than simply appropriating this information.
- This essay provides conclusions that do not merely summarize but address the "so what?" issue: How should educated, informed individuals continue to think about the issue at hand? How will it continue to influence the readers' lives?

## **B / C+ 6 / 5**

- This essay generally provides a relatively brief contextualizing statement that helps readers understand why they should engage with the issue at hand.
- The writer presents a strong thesis, but it is generally rather bald and straightforward and does not do much to accommodate the complexity of the issue.
- The writer quotes source material and comments on it briefly in order to connect it to the thesis.
- The writer forges links between his or her own position and those represented by the sources, but the links are often either very literal or strained.
- The conclusion tends to be a bit repetitive, often returning to language very similar to the thesis.

## **C / F 4 / 3 / 2 / 1**

- This essay often seems overwhelmed by the sources: Rather than entering into a conversation with other writers, this essay is dominated by them.
- This writer tends to leap directly into summarizing or describing the source material rather than contextualizing the issue at hand.
- The writer either has no recognizable thesis or a weak one that tends to become lost in consideration of the sources.
- The essay generally either makes rather slight reference to the sources and comments on them only obliquely or paraphrases the sources with little analysis.
- The sources are not always cited, making real synthesis (which requires acknowledging the ownership of ideas being examined) impossible.
- Occasionally the essay suggests that the writer misunderstands the sources.
- Sometimes the essay incorporates large, directly-quoted excerpts from the sources with little or no commentary or explanation.

## **Citation Rubric**

**100 / 90** In-text citation is smoothly integrated and parentheses are punctuated perfectly. The works cited are formatted according to MLA and all required information for that source is included. Not a comma or end-mark is missing or misplaced.

**89 / 75** In-text citation may be awkward but is never omitted; parentheses may have extra commas or abbreviation in them, but quotations are properly punctuated with end-stops inside quotation marks. Works cited may be called "bibliography" and MLA form may be imperfect with fewer than three flaws.

**74 / 65** In-text citations are oblique ("it was once observed"), missing, or riddled with format errors. There is no works cited section/page or there is merely a list with no formatting of any kind. If there is a works cited page, it is riddled with four or more errors.

**0** There are no in-text citations nor a works cited page.