

Synthesis Package Assignment

The AP Synthesis question tests your ability to synthesize information given to you by the test makers. You have 15 minutes to read and digest the information in five to eight sources, both text and visuals, related to a topic chosen by the test writers and then to use a minimum of three of those sources to write an essay. You may also use your own knowledge about the subject matter.

Using a College Board sample synthesis essay as a model, you will create an original synthesis package, using your skills in research and document usage.

There are five steps to create your own synthesis assignment:

1. Pick an appropriate topic – one that lends itself to a range of opinions and information from a variety of sources.
2. Compile at least **six** sources related to your topic (including at least **two** visual sources -- photograph, cartoon, graph, etc.). No more than **two** sources may be taken from the “Room for Debate” series posted on *The New York Times*. Be sure to consult our subscription databases, particularly Opposing Viewpoints. Your combined sources should present information that addresses more than one side of the issue. You may use blogs or satirical selections, and not all sources need be of equal weight.
3. Edit those sources so that they are no more than one-half page long, and use MLA format to cite the source in your heading.
4. Create an annotated bibliography for each source (a one- to two-sentence explanation of the information contained within the source).
5. Create an essay question related to your topic and your sources.
6. Write an answer to your question using your sources (3-5 pages typed, double spaced).

POSSIBLE SYNTHESIS TOPICS:

Business

Fear Factor in the Work Place
The Weight of Executives' Personal Beliefs
How Can Bookstores Stay Alive?
The End of Cash
Style Matters: You Are What You Wear
Fair Trade Products – A Paradox?

Social Values

Doctors in the Death Chamber
There She Is, Miss America: What Value Beauty Contests?
To Tip or Not to Tip
Bystander or Upstander
Fan or Fanatic?
Collector or Hoarder?
Should Voting be Mandatory?
Which Holidays Should Be Government Holidays?
Saving Daylight, at What Cost?
Life After Gluten
Mandatory Calorie Information in Restaurants
Repatriation of Ancient Treasures
Ecotourism
Owning Exotic Pets
Zero Tolerance Policies
Value of Pets in Hospitals with Terminally Ill
Use of Surveillance Cameras in Public Places

Family

Should You Bribe Your Kids?
Should Kids Pick Their Own Punishments
Plastic Surgery for Teenagers
What Are Fathers For?
Another Year Older, Another Year Wiser?
In Adoption, Does Race Matter?

Education

Is Virtual School Really School?
The Value of Same-sex Colleges
The Value of a Gap Year
Is College Worth It?
Team Sports vs. Life Sports in Physical Education Classes
Cookery Classes and Other Practical Courses
The Nook for Kindles at Schools
Should Colleges Ban Fraternities?
Is Cursive Dead?
Skipping a Grade, Accelerating Classes
Rights of Transgender Kids in Schools

Technology

Do We Still Need Libraries?
Privacy and the Apps You Download
Sharing Passwords
The Benefits of Online Classes
Laptops or iPads? or Neither?
Should Website Access Be Reported?

English Language and Composition
Reading Time: 15 minutes
Suggested Writing Time: 40 minutes

Directions: The following prompt is based on the accompanying six sources.

This question requires you to integrate a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. *Refer to the sources to support your position; avoid mere paraphrase or summary. Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument.*

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations.

Introduction

[Introduce your topic and frame your discourse. Clearly explain the issue, define any key terms, provide any pertinent background information, and invite discussion on all sides of the issue. This section should be one or two paragraphs in length, depending on your topic.]

Assignment

Read the following sources (including any introductory information) carefully. **Then, in an essay that synthesizes at least [insert your number here] sources for support, take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim that [insert your claim here].**

Refer to the sources as Source A, Source B, etc.; titles are included for your convenience.

- Source A (author's last name)
- Source B (author's last name)
- Source C (author's last name)
- Source D (author's last name)
- Source E (author's last name)
- Source F (author's last name)

Synthesis Essay Evaluation Grid

<i>Item/Rating</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Strong</i>
Title indicates writer's attitude toward the topic				
The lead attracts the reader's attention				
Writer gives sufficient background on the topic				
Writer makes overall purpose clear				
Thesis statement is clear and prominent				
Each paragraph reveals author's purpose				
Writer identifies relationships between sources				
Writer provides support from sources in each paragraph				
Writer provides enough commentary in each paragraph				
Conclusion does more than summarize main points				
Writer includes parenthetical documentation				
There is a Works Cited page				

Comments: