

## Synthesis

A synthesis is an important part of research. In a synthesis several sources on the same topic are read and analyzed critically to discover the authors' viewpoints and then to weave together those opinions to create new knowledge. To write a synthesis, follow the steps below:

1. Respond to the sources by writing down what you think the authors are saying. Do you agree or disagree? Are the opinions narrow or do they open new views? Do you understand the points made or do you need more information? What questions do the sources pose for you?
2. Connect the sources by linking similarities and noting differences. Are the differences concerning theory or interpretation? Does one source clarify another by giving more information or support? Are there studies referred to that support your own view? Do the authors imply their opinions or are the opinions obvious.
3. Consider your own insight and view by thinking about what your opinion is and how the sources have supported, clarified, or provided points, facts, theories, studies that you had not known before. Can you draw conclusions or must you infer or interpret?
4. Use your sources to support your own ideas. In longer research the responses, connections, and insights you form through synthesis will lead you to answer your starting research question with a statement of your thesis. They will also lead you to the main ideas supporting your thesis---conclusions you have drawn from your synthesis of sources, forming the main divisions of your paper. When drafting the paper, make sure each paragraph focuses on an idea of your own, with the support for the idea coming from your sources. In this way, your paper will synthesize the work of others into something wholly your own.
5. When you are writing the shorter synthesis paper, you need to consider the topic of the sources (2-3 articles or essays). Then in your paper make the connections among the sources as noted earlier.

## Synthesis Worksheet

What is the main topic of each of the articles?

What is similar in the writers' viewpoints?

What are some differences in the viewpoints?

Write the names of your resources including all of the bibliographic information using MLA (Modern Language Association) style of documentation.

Which article was the clearest and why?

Writing Center