

## How to write a **SYNTHESIS**

A synthesis is a **neutral** report about several documents (= **do not give your opinion**).

### What you **MUST NOT** do:

- DO NOT write a series of summaries (text 1 is about ..., and then text 2 is about, etc.)
- DO NOT write a synthesis without a 'red line': make your problematic explicit from the start = what is the **main issue** common to all the documents?
- **DO NOT copy-paste** parts of the documents. It's illegal!
- Use the **key words only**.
- Use quotation marks ("...") whenever quoting a sentence from the documents (once or twice only).
- You must write your synthesis **in your own words**.

### What you **MUST** do:

- **Start by DEFINING clearly what the topic is** (= what is the **main issue** common to all the documents? what is the context of this issue?)
- **Announce your OUTLINE** in your **introduction**: you must have a clear structure and announce it.

➤ A synthesis should include an introduction, a development with different parts and subparts, and a conclusion.

Please, do NOT write sentences such as “~~I will start with an introduction~~” and “~~I will conclude by the conclusion~~” !) – Be specific!!

↳ Note that there are **CATEGORIES** which are often present in syntheses such as:

- Phenomenon/phenomena / Problem(s) – their definitions, some facts and figures
- Cause(s)
- Consequence(s): positive / negative – Advantage(s) / Drawback(s) – Reaction(s)
- Solution(s) / Limits to solutions – Alternative(s), etc.

↳ For each category: think of **different PERSPECTIVES** such as: Scientific / Economic / Political / Ethical points of view, etc.

Use **clear paragraphs** for each group of ideas.

➤ **Use ALL the documents** (for a CLES exam, remember the videos as well)

➤ And **stick to the documents** = no personal opinion and no other references, however relevant and interesting they may be

➤ **DO NOT get lost in details** (the report is rather short = do not use too many examples which usually are not essential)

→ **PRIORITISE the information**: what is essential?

=> A synthesis must contain all the **key words** from the initial documents.

=> You must also focus on the **logical links** between the main ideas and make sure you reproduce the main parallels, restrictions, oppositions, etc. clearly.

=> There must be **no repetitions**.

=> A synthesis must be very **precise**. It is not a list of vague ideas about a subject.

=> A synthesis is a **formal document**: there are **NO contractions** in it (it ~~isn't~~ → it is not / they ~~can't~~ → they cannot)

## Some Tips about how to proceed

### **Start when reading the documents:**

➤ **Highlight** the **main ideas**

➤ and **define** what **type of information** they correspond to (write it down notes on the documents)

☞ This will help you:

-find the main categories you will use for your outline

-find the information back quickly to organize it

**NB:** If you have difficulties **prioritising the information:** try "the bubble technique"

-Draw as many bubbles as there are documents and make them intersect

-Then complete the different parts starting with the centre (where all the documents intersect):

->this way you will isolate the main information/ issue common to all documents

then proceed from the centre to the margins = from the most relevant information to the least and leave aside the information that appears only marginally