

Explanatory Synthesis Essay Assignment

Purpose:

The purpose of this essay assignment is to practice integrating or blending sources into your own writing. Up until now, your supporting ideas have come from your own experiences and observations. In this essay, you need to use source material to support your ideas.

Essay Prompt: After reading the articles for your topic, Option 1 or Option 2, think about an aspect that you want to explain to your reader. Write a 6 or 7 paragraph synthesis essay that shows the complexities of the issue. Use quotations from the sources to support your points, and cite your sources using MLA format.

Questions to Help You Brainstorm:

Plagiarism (Option 1)

1. Is any idea truly original?
2. What is the price of plagiarism? Price means: money, pride, values, opportunities, etc.
3. Who pays the price: authors, readers, students, educators, etc.?
4. How easy is it to "get away" with plagiarism?
5. How does the Internet affect the problem?
6. Why is this an important topic?
7. What are the motives of plagiarism?
8. What are some of the unexpected benefits that the court cases produce?

The Importance of Going to College (Option 2)

1. What do students gain from going to college?
2. What do students gain from not going to college?
3. Is there a difference in salary for college graduates and non-graduates?
4. Are there any stigmas about going to college or not going?
5. Do students ever regret their decision to go to college or not?
6. Do employers really care if a job applicant went to college or not?
7. Can the decision to go to college be made at a later time?
8. Does it matter where one goes to college if he decides to go?

Your typed Synthesis Essay should include:

- Short, fresh title
- Introduction paragraph: This should have an interesting opening and include general information. End your introduction with a thesis statement. The thesis should state the topic and the controlling idea, which is the point you want to make about the topic. For this short essay, the introduction should be 3-6 sentences.
- Body paragraphs with sources: Your body paragraphs should support the thesis statement. Start the body paragraphs with topic sentences. Then give several supporting ideas to support the topic sentence. After each supporting idea, give a detail or example to explain it further. **This is where you should use a quotation or paraphrase from your source materials.** Each body paragraph should be about 8-12 sentences long. Try to have at least 4 body paragraphs.
- Conclusion: Summarize briefly your major points. Don't introduce new ideas, and don't restate every point you already made. Give the reader a final thought. Keep the conclusion under 5 sentences.
- Works Cited page: This page follows the last page of your essay and should have a page number on it. All of the sources that you used should be listed alphabetically in the Works Cited page and should be properly formatted. You should have only a few sources for this paper.

Formatting: The essay should be about 3 typed pages, double-spaced, with 12 point font (Times New Roman or Arial). All margins should be 1 inch wide. Please use an academic tone.

*Do not over quote. Maximum three short quotes per body paragraph. Two quotes per paragraph is enough.

Follow these steps to get started:

1. Read all of your sources (the articles for Option 1 or Option 2)
2. Make sure you understand them
3. Choose a complex issue that you want to explain
4. Plan 4 or 5 body paragraphs that will show the reader the point you want to make
5. Write your rough draft with your ideas only (no source material)
6. Look for places to add supporting quotes or paraphrases
7. Choose the best information for support (be selective)
8. Cite your sources