

## **Synthesised paragraphs**

syn·the·sis noun \ 'sin(t)-thə-səs \

something that is made by combining different things

To be a good writer, students must learn to synthesise ideas from multiple sources into one cohesive viewpoint. A synthesis combines information from two or more sources. It can help to explain your point of view or make your argument stronger. It is a good way to show your reader that you have done a lot of research and that you understand your topic. It is also a useful way to avoid plagiarism.

When you synthesise, you are combining information that is similar or saying the same viewpoint on a particular topic. But, you cannot just mix the information together and call it your own idea – you must reference each piece of information you use, both in-text and in an end-of-text reference list. It is kind of like doing a big summary about many articles – that is, you can select the main points and the most important information to support your argument.

There are some steps involved in synthesising. First, you must read the source information carefully and note down the key points. Secondly, you should make a record of the author and publication information (book title, date and place of publishing, page numbers etc). Next, you should make connections between the key points in your notes – can you see two different authors arguing the same opinion? After that, you should try to write a sentence or two that combines the words/ideas from both sources. In your writing you must also reference the original writer by including his name and the date of his writing in brackets.

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/synthesis>

<http://www.findingdulcinea.com/features/edu/Strategies-for-Synthesis-Writing.html> MUF0011

## **Should 'smacking' be illegal?**

- It should be up to individual parents whether or not they wish to smack their children (Brown, 2011).
- Hitting a child, for any reason, is unacceptable (Purple, 2011).
- Smacking provides a way for parents to teach their children that there are boundaries in life (White, 2012).
- The practice of smacking has declined in recent years, to the detriment of our society. Children need to be taught that there are limits to the behaviours that will be tolerated of them (Pink, 2012).
- Children learn from their parents. If their parents hit them when they do something wrong, what kind of message is this sending to them? (Grey, 2006)
- Generally speaking, Australian families are very reluctant to allow their government such control over their daily lives. For this reason, many parents are against the idea that smacking their children should become illegal (Blue, 2013).
- Children need to be properly disciplined in order to learn how to behave correctly in society (Black, 2002).
- It is the role of the government to pass laws that adequately protect their citizens from harm, therefore they absolutely should be looking towards making the physical abuse of children – under any circumstances – illegal (Green, 2010).
- Federal governments have no right to impose anti-smacking legislation on good Australian families (Orange, 2009).

## **Synthesis and Citations Example – should ‘smacking’ be illegal?**

Smacking is a controversial issue amongst parents, with both sides of the debate passionately arguing about ‘rights’. Supporters of smacking suggest that it is a parent’s right to discipline their child in any way they see fit (Brown 2011). Blue (2013) explains that there is a clear consensus in the pro-smacking camp that it is not the role of the government to dictate what parents are or are not allowed to do in terms of managing their children. This idea is echoed by Orange (2009) who asserts that the government has no right to tell parents what to do in this regard. Furthermore, Pink (2012) suggests that standards of behaviour in contemporary society are falling. To counter this phenomenon, both Black (2002) and White (2012) agree that smacking is a way of setting clear boundaries to children, better preparing them for life as adults.

On the other side of the debate, those that oppose smacking argue that it is a form of physical abuse that should not be tolerated (Purple 2011). Critics of smacking suggest that it is the role of the government to protect the rights of every citizen, including children (Green 2010). But it’s not just human rights arguments that anti-smackers focus on, with Grey (2006) explaining that using physical violence as a form of discipline sets a bad example to children.

### **Should students have homework?**

- Homework is necessary because students need to practise their skills (Smith, 2012).
- Homework teaches students to organise their time well (Brown, 2011).
- Homework is unfair as the families of students have very different expectations and facilities (Green, 2013).
- It is better for students to learn other skills in their out of school time- such as music or sports (Black, 2009).
- Adults do not have to work during the day and again during the evenings – why should children? (White, 2008)
- Some students need to have a part-time job, so have no time for homework (Yellow, 2014).
- There is too much work to be done in class, so it is necessary to complete it at home if students are to be prepared for exams (Red, 2008).
- Homework teaches independence (Blue, 2008).
- Some students may not have understood in class. How can they do the homework exercises > stress (Green, 2002).
- Students need to learn to think for themselves and take responsibility for their own learning. Homework teaches them to do this (Pink, 2013).
- Many students just copy their homework from others, so they learn nothing from doing it. (Orange, 2007)

### **Synthesis Example – should students have homework?**

There are many reasons why students should be given homework. As Brown (2011) says, homework teaches students how to organise their time well. As well, it teaches them how to learn independently (Blue 2008). Pink (2013) agrees. He believes that students must learn to think for themselves, taking responsibility for their own learning, which homework teaches them to do. And it is important that students get the chance to practise the skills they learn in class, as Smith (2012) points out.

However, there are also strong arguments against homework. Students have different home circumstances, as Green (2013) has indicated. Some parents are well-educated and have the skills and money to provide help for their children, while others are struggling financially, or are too busy. Other families believe that it is more important to develop different skills in out-of-school time (Black 2009). Music, sports and hobbies are also an important element of a student's education. Perhaps it is necessary for a student to have a part-time job, which limits the time available to do homework, as discussed by Yellow (2014). Students may wonder why they need to work at home as well as at school, while their parents have free time once work is finished (White 2008). If homework is just copied - as sometimes happens – what use is it to the student anyway? (Orange 2007). Students may want to copy the homework because they are stressed from struggling to understand the work being taught. As Green (2002) says, 'Some students may not have understood in class. How can they do the homework exercises?'