

## Synthesis Essays

- Students are used to regurgitation of sources
  - Repeating what is said and how it's said
  - Using info **ONLY** how source used it
- There is a right way to write/explain things
  - the teacher's way

## Synthesis Essays

- Synthesis does **NOT** presume a right way
- Synthesis **frees** the writer to combine the information how **THEY** see it combining
- Still required to cite, but not limited to sources' way of seeing/thinking

## Synthesis Essays

- Synthesis = combining separate elements to create a new element different from the original components
- H<sub>2</sub> synthesized with O<sub>2</sub> creates H<sub>2</sub>O
- Water is definitely different from H<sub>2</sub> or O<sub>2</sub>
- But can **ALSO** become Hydrogen Peroxide

## Synthesis Essays

- Synthesis isn't about creating the **RIGHT** combination
- It's about combining in various ways to see what happens
- Never based on just **ONE** source

## Synthesis Essays

- Synthesis writing focuses on one main idea:
- **YOUR ARGUMENT-THEIR INFORMATION**
- **NOT** a report – not just repeating information
- You need to analyze and understand the information/ideas and put them together

## Synthesis Essays

- Not plagiarism because you cite the ideas
- Synthesis prefers paraphrasing because that's **YOUR** version of the information
- Quotes need to be kept to a minimum - always

### Wrong Way to Synthesize

- “String of Pearls” argument – organized around/according to the sources
- 1<sup>st</sup> ¶ comes entirely from source A
- 2<sup>nd</sup> ¶ comes entirely from source B
- 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> ¶s come entirely from source C
- And so on...

### Wrong Way to Synthesize

- This has your sources in control of the flow
- Usually leads to repetition of ideas
- NOT YOUR argument – it’s just a report

### Correct way to Synthesize

- YOU decide what your thesis is
- YOU decide what your supporting arguments are
- YOU decide the order that the arguments need to go in

### Correct way to Synthesize

- Then, and only then, do YOU go through your sources to find ideas/information to support YOUR arguments.
- YOUR argument – THEIR information

### Synthesis Essays

- Two primary styles of synthesis
  - Explanatory
  - Persuasive
- Both use sources to support an argument
- Primary difference is in purpose
- Explanatory is more objective
- Persuasive is more opinionated

### Explanatory Synthesis Essays

- Objective writing about what was learned
- Writer presents the information as s/he has understood it
  - Schizophrenia has been treated many different ways over the years
- Writer still interprets information--subtly
  - What evidence is chosen
  - how it’s presented
  - what is important

## Persuasive Synthesis Essays

- Emphasizes preference for one view over others
  - Schizophrenics have been misdiagnosed and mistreated over the years
- Evidence and analysis is all focused on
  - Supporting preferred view or
  - Countering opposing views
- Must build argument based on evidence and data, not just writer's opinion/feelings