



# How to Write a Synthesis Essay

A **synthesis essay** is an essay that uses information from multiple sources with different views in order to explain something or to support a new and original claim or idea.

- An **explanatory synthesis essay** uses information from different sources to explain a point of view. It compares and contrasts ideas without attempting to persuade the reader that one view or another is correct.
- An **argumentative synthesis essay** is structured like a basic argumentative essay. Its thesis makes a claim, and the body of the essay comprises an argument that supports that claim.

While the thesis in a synthesis essay can be subjective, its author uses objective evidence and data culled from research to argue and support their point.

*To write a synthesis essay, follow these steps:*

1. Gather all of your sources together.
2. As you review your sources, take notes and summarize each text. Be sure to note the necessary information about each source for citation purposes.
3. Analyze the relationships between the different texts. For example:
  - How/Where do they agree?
  - How/Where do they disagree?
  - Do they build on each other in some way?
  - What can you infer from the texts?
  - What new ideas does reading these texts give you?
4. Identify your thesis statement.
5. Outline your essay. Most synthesis essays follow a 5-paragraph structure. If your synthesis essay will be argumentative, follow an argumentative essay structure.