



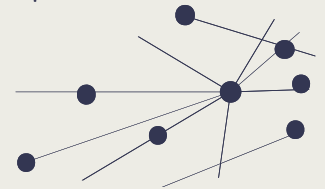
Synthesis & Making Connections for Strong Analysis



What does synthesis mean?

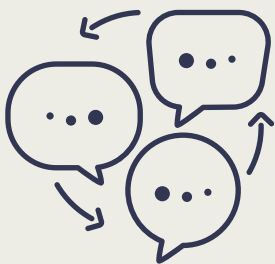
Synthesis is when a writer draws from multiple sources on a topic to come to a conclusion or unique perspective for their own argument or purpose. The sources may have agreements and disagreements, but the writer's job is to seek the relationships between these sources to come to specific conclusions. Synthesis is most often used in research papers and literature reviews.

One way to think of synthesis is making meaningful, thoughtful connections between your sources or different ideas/perspectives on a topic. It is not summarizing sources side by side.



Joining the conversation through synthesis

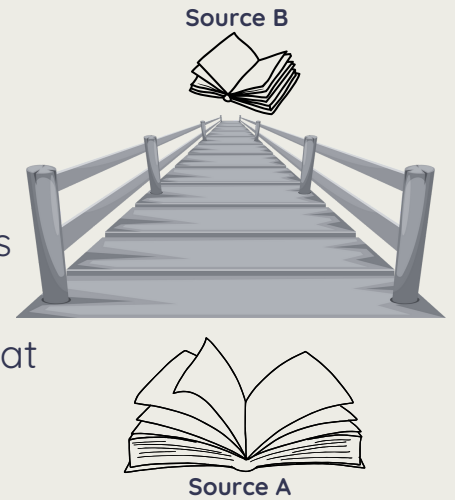
When we perform synthesis in our writing and engage with making connections, we are joining a wider conversation. We are seeing what has already been said about the topic, seeking out what these many perspectives and viewpoints have in common and/or how they differ, and then interpreting these relationships to form our own input to the conversation. We must directly engage with our sources to draw meaningful conclusions and share what we think as a result.



Building the bridge



Another way to think about synthesis is **building the bridge between your sources for the reader**. To synthesize or make connections, we must figure out how we get from one source to the other. In other words, we cannot present our sources in isolation (this wouldn't help create any new meaning). We need to build the bridge between source A and source B so that our readers can understand what the two, together, suggest about our understanding of a topic. Then, we build a bridge from this new understanding to source C and source D, and so on.



Nesting Dolls



Lastly, you can also visualize synthesis as **nesting dolls**. Each time we dig into a source, we're searching for all the nuances of that source's ideas-- their thesis/argument, their reasons, their criticisms, their weaknesses, etc. Each time we dig deeper and open up the source more, we unearth something new (even if it's the finer details). We want to pay attention to all of this as we look for the agreements and disagreements between our sources. We want to see how these sources **fit together**, so that we can understand the broader conclusions you're drawing from these sources nestling together.

Remember: Synthesis is all about meaningful connections. Before you make larger claims about a topic, make sure you build those bridges between the sources you found through research. Move beyond summary. Then, you can create an interesting and compelling argument.