

Key tips to Mastering Synthesis

Synthesis is a way of incorporating two different authors into each of the key points in your argument.

Basically when incorporating synthesis in your argument you need several key components:

First, you introduce the source or author! The first time you introduce the author you have to use their full name and show how they are credible.

Ex: Shyann Spurbeck, a writer lab consultant, states, “.....”

Ex: Shyann Spurbeck, author of Key Tips to Mastering Synthesis, states, “.....”

If you were to use the same author again in another main point of your argument you would not have to use the first name of the source just their last name and you no longer need to show how they are credible since you have done it previously. This would be enough to introduce .

Ex. Spurbeck informs, “.....”

Second, you give the quote or paraphrase, but remember if you paraphrase watch out for plagiarism. The paraphrase needs to be in your own words, however, it still needs to be cited in text and in the works cited page, even though its in your own words you are still using that authors idea.

Third, you have to explain the quote or paraphrase to your argument. How does this source help out your argument? What is the author saying? Why did you feel this source is important for you to include in your argument? These are a few questions to keep in mind when explaining the quote.

Fourth, you now introduce a new author. Introduce the same way as you would for the first author.

Fifth, you either give their quote or paraphrase. Sometimes if you have a real long quote it might be easier to just paraphrase the quote.

Sixth, you then explain this quote to your argument. Keep the questions I had mentioned earlier in mind.

Seventh, you need to show how these authors agree or disagree with each other and connect to your thesis statement.

Ex: Spurbeck and Dole agree by saying synthesis is a process and can be mastered in time. Therefore, if you work hard at synthesis it can be possible. The underlined portion is how you would tie it into your thesis.

To make this easier as you proofread your paper you can use this checklist to make sure you have all the components needed for effective synthesis

Introduce the author

Give quote or paraphrase

Explain the quote or paraphrase to your argument

Introduce a new author

Give quote or paraphrase

Explain the quote or paraphrase to your argument

Show how the two authors either agree or disagree

Tie back to your thesis statement

Some students have trouble in paraphrasing in fear that they might plagiarize.

One way you can go about paraphrasing is by writing out all the key ideas in the quote then put the quote away and then incorporate the ideas into your own words. This will make it easier for you to paraphrase so you will not get tempted to use the authors exact words. Also, by changing only a few words is also considered plagiarizing. The paraphrase must be in your own words.

~Created by: Shyann Spurbeck, Writers Lab Consultant