



Outlining and Writing Your Synthesis Paper

Keys to College Level Writing:.....	2
Highlights from the “High School Writing Manual and Style Guide”	7
Creating an Outline for the G/T Courses:.....	8
What is an outline?	8
What is the Thesis Statement?.....	8
Purpose:	8
Process:.....	9
Format:	9
Model Paper Outline	10
Rubric for Synthesis Paper Outline	12
Citations and Plagiarism	13
Plagiarism	14
CHECKLIST: Required Instances for Citing a Source	15
Types of Plagiarism.....	15
Creating your Synthesis Paper	17
What does a synthesis paper do?.....	17
Things to avoid:	17
Things to consider:.....	17
Formatting the Paper	18
Synthesis Paper: Contents and Sections.....	18
Submitting your Paper:	19
Verbs, Verbs, Verbs!	20

Keys to College Level Writing:

College level writing should display these abilities:

- **Ability to employ a variety of kinds of resources: print, electronic, and human, in relative proportions appropriate to the student's particular topic**

Are sources collected by the student writer current, reputable, unbiased? Can the student writer articulate the strengths and weaknesses of various kinds of sources? Is the student writer a skilful researcher?

- **Ability to put source material to the service of the argument rather than to offer up serial "book reports" restating what is already known**

Student writers should consciously consider the pros and cons of various note taking strategies and how to overcome the weaknesses of each system: color coded notes and coordinated color coded outlines, stacks of note cards indicating parts of an emerging outline, searchable notes saved in folders on a computer, etc.

The student writer should recognize how *Turnitin.com* makes visually obvious the skill with which he/she has employed notes

- **Ability to locate the most prominent experts and enough sources in order to demonstrate a real familiarity with "the lay of the land"**

Does the student writer know the major scholars in the field, ongoing research studies and where they are sited, current controversies?
Has the student writer vetted all sources? Has he/she read critically, analytically, and actively

- **Ability to state clearly and concisely a point of view/assertion of opinion that requires elaboration or is debatable**

The student writer should be able to distinguish between statements of fact, purely descriptive comments, and an assertion of opinion. (See examples below.)

"Parents of premature babies encounter multiple obstacles to parent/child bonding."

"Babies denied the opportunity to bond with their parents frequently develop emotional, intellectual, and social problems in later life."

- **Ability to recognize, forecast and provide the logically necessary parts of the elaboration/argument in a sequence the writer is consciously controlling**

A student writer should be able to develop a topic outline that clarifies how many parts the paper will have in addition to the introductory paragraph and concluding paragraph. Is the outline embedded in the introductory paragraph so the reader trusts the writer to be in control? (A reader is much more likely to be convinced by a writer's argument if the reader believes, right from the start, that the writer knows what s/he believes and wants to say.) (See example below.)

“This paper will *clarify* the importance of parent/child bonding to subsequent parent/child relationships, *name* the primary barriers to bonding typically encountered by parents of premature babies, *suggest* strategies for overcoming these barriers, and *outline* ways hospitals can support parents attempting to employ these strategies. *Finally* it *will emphasize* why bonding matters so much in our increasingly chaotic and impersonal society.”

- Assert
- Name/promise the parts
- Promise (and then supply) a “justifying” conclusion (Why should the reader care? If the reader doesn't care, the writer has failed.)
- Flag transitions each time a new topic is introduced

VERBS, VERBS, VERBS
TRANSITIONS, TRANSITIONS, TRANSITIONS

- **Ability to define key terms and to maintain consistency in using these terms**

“Babies born before the 9th month of gestation are considered ‘premature.’ Most of these babies will need to spend extended stays in a hospital neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) before finally being taken home by parents. While these babies are in the NICU, wired to monitors and connected to scary looking tubes, their mothers will live outside the hospital, often parenting other children, continuing their careers, and going on with schedules that, to a large extent, keep them separate from their babies.”

- **Ability to employ formal/adult language in writing. Use of the 3rd person.**

Formal/adult language avoids the use of vague pronouns. Using “I” makes you more vulnerable to criticism because you flag your opinions as yours, exclusively. The “I” is implied every time you make an arguable assertion, but if you leave out the “I” and, instead, support your assertion with references to experts, then others are more likely to agree with you and be persuaded by you. Similarly, the use of “you” in a formal paper makes it more conversational and acts as an invitation to retorts. It also makes writing unnecessarily wordy and indirect, therefore less clear and convincing.

- **Ability to enlist quotations and paraphrases of thoughtfully vetted published scholarship/criticism/analysis in order to elaborate key points and to lend authority and persuasiveness (borrowed from older, better educated experts) to the argument**

The student writer should support/elaborate/develop basic ideas. (See example below.)

“In contrast to Fred Fireman’s opinion, most clearly stated in his 1999 book, Babies Are Cool, that many babies separated from mothers at birth thrive early and long (Fireman 66), Joe Schmoe cites several studies documenting ‘anxiety disorders, an inability to commit to relationships, and an antipathy to parenthood’ in the adult lives of babies deprived of time to bond with mothers (Schmoe 35). The recent work of Harry Hairy supports Schmoe’s findings and further discredits Fireman’s early work (hairybabies@md.edu).”

- **Ability to demonstrate scrupulous honesty about the sources of information, ideas, opinions, language borrowed from others**

Student writers should be able to paraphrase and quote material in a graceful way that doesn’t undercut the flow of ideas.

The student writer should understand how *Turnitin.com* can function as a teaching tool (rather than a “gotcha” device). The student writer should understand the concept of intellectual property and the opportunity cost connected with scholarly activity.

Dear teacher,
 If almost everything I have to say is borrowed, what do I accomplish in writing this essay?
 Love,
 Your favorite G/T student

It is a creative and intellectually demanding activity to (1) locate and vet scholarly sources, (2) shape and limit the scope of a paper, (3) evaluate the validity and relevance of sources’ content to the particular limited topic selected, (4) decide on and clearly articulate an assertion the student believes and can support, (5) organize information and ideas in a way that elaborates and convinces the reader of the wisdom of that assertion, (6) make good judgments about what to include, how to include it (paraphrase, direct quotation), and how much to include, (7) gain and maintain the reader’s interest by writing clearly and effectively, and (8) conclude in a way that encourages the reader to take action or continue tracking the themes introduced in the essay.

- **Ability to conclude by making a convincing case for the importance of the argument/point of view**

(See example below.)

“More and more mothers are delaying having babies until they are well into their thirties. They thereby increase the likelihood of problem births resulting from infertility treatments and increase the possibility of babies’ exhibiting genetic anomalies. Additionally, in large urban areas, poverty, substance abuse, lack of appropriate prenatal care, and peer pressure to bear children at an early age conspire to make premature births ever more frequent. What will be the economic and human cost of more and more babies trying to make their way separated from the warm embrace of a reassuring mother who communicates to them the predictability and beneficence of the world into which they’ve just been thrust? Unless mothers and fathers are trained to employ the strategies outlined in this paper, more and more family units will be damaged by lack of bonding in the early months of life.”

- **Ability to employ bibliographic form correctly (parenthetical citations and an attached bibliography)**

Consider the ever evolving nature of bibliographic form, bibliographers as career professionals, the uses of bibliographies, how to determine what format to use, the pros and cons of various formats, the impact of technology on bibliographic form, and using software (Noodletools.com) to save time and achieve consistency, etc.

Others, not discussed in class:

- **Ability to delimit the scope of the argument**

The student writer should be able to silence the critics before they start trying to make him/her write the paper they wanted him/her to write. (See example below.)

“The scope of this paper will not allow discussion of the myriad complex emotions parents of premature newborns feel. Rather, it will focus on the bonding or attachment process that many psychologists assert is essential to a healthy parent/child relationship. Johns Hopkins Medical School professor Joe Schmoe asserts, in his groundbreaking 1996 study, Bond or Bale, ‘Unless parents and babies establish, through frequent close physical interaction, a deep emotional attachment to one another, the subsequent relationship between them will be fraught with problems, and the maturing child will exhibit characteristics likely to undermine his/her personal fulfillment (Schmoe 32).’”

- **Ability to recognize and acknowledge operative assumptions**

(See example below.)

“The nuclear family enjoys a generally unquestioned status as the idealized norm in our society. Nevertheless, not all babies have caring parents. Some babies will

have to fend for themselves because of their fathers' absence or inattention, their mothers' reluctant approach to motherhood, substance abuse, death, or other factors preventing the establishment of the idealized family triad. In these circumstances, surrogates must play the roles normally played by biological parents."

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ANNOTATED SOURCE LIST AND THE PAPER?

Paper topic ideas emerge organically from the patterns that become apparent in the annotated source list. (What subtopics are catching the student's eye? What patterns/hot topics become obvious? Is there plenty of material to work with?)

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TOPIC OUTLINE AND THE PAPER?

The topic outline enables the student writer to set limits, impose logic on the argument, and see where further research needs to be conducted. If the paper deviates from the outline, a new outline should be generated and assessed for logical coherence.

Highlights from the “High School Writing Manual and Style Guide”

STRATEGIES FOR INTRODUCTIONS

- Introductions should catch the reader's attention and include the thesis statement.
- Begin with a question related to the topic.
- Begin with a definition. Warning! Do not quote from the dictionary!
- Begin with a fact or statistic.
- Begin with a quotation from the text or from a related topic.
- Begin with an anecdote, a brief story that is related to the topic.
- Begin with a startling statement: "Man is doomed!"
- Begin by telling why the subject is important.
- Begin with a generally accepted belief.

THESIS STATEMENT

- Establish the purpose for writing the essay (the “controlling idea”)
- Appears in the Introduction
- Identifies a topic and expresses a position or point of view

STRATEGIES FOR CONCLUSIONS

- Conclusions should provide closure and leave the reader satisfied. Conclusions should NOT introduce new or distracting information.
- Summarize the ideas and points made in the essay.
- Reflect on what you have written.
- Add a future suggestions for research.
- Offer a solution or make a prediction.
- Reshape or restate your thesis, using new words.

ACTIVE OR PASSIVE VOICE

- Writers prefer active voice, resulting a concise and direct style of writing.
 - Active: Dr. Frankenstein conducted tests on the muscles of his monster.
 - Passive: Scientific tests were conducted to determine the cause of the fire.

Creating an Outline for the G/T Courses:

You are going to create a phrase/topic outline. Before you complete your outline, generate your **thesis statement** (see samples). Discuss this with Dr. Kiehl before it is due. In your final copy, you should include your first paragraph and last paragraph in your outline, even though the rest of the outline employs only phrases. Your first paragraph should lay out the basic structure of your paper and include the thesis statement. The outline should reassure yourself and me that you have plenty of material available to “flesh out” the basic parts of the paper with information and elaboration.

What is an outline?

An outline is a tool which helps you organize ideas for papers and speeches. When properly developed, an outline shows logical relationships between ideas.

What is the Thesis Statement?

A good thesis statement declares what you believe and what you intend to prove. Here’s an example of how to develop one:

Select a topic – for instance, television violence and children.

Ask a question: What are the effects of television violence on children?

Read the research, revise what you learn, make an argument – for instance, violence in television cartoons increases aggressive behavior in preschool children.

An effective thesis should:

- 1) take some sort of stand
- 2) justifies discussion
- 2) inspire the reader to ask “How?” or “Why?”
- 2) avoid statements that no one will react to, or that a reader would react with, “Who cares?”
- 3) avoid general or extreme words or phrases
- 4) lead the reader to the subtopics

Often your thesis in a research paper will begin with the phrase, “This paper will”

Thesis Statement Examples . . . see Power Point.

Purpose:

An outline assists you in the process of writing or speaking by helping you:

- organize your ideas.
- make logical connections between your ideas.
- construct an overview of your paper or speech

Process:

Before beginning to write your paper, you should determine your purpose (for example, to tell a story, to give information, to evaluate, to persuade), your thesis, and your audience. Once these points are established in your mind, you are ready to start your outline

1. Brainstorm ideas. On a sheet of paper, put down all of the ideas that might fit into your topic area. Don't worry if it seems like there are too many ideas; you'll eliminate a lot of them once you narrow your focus.
2. Organize your ideas into groups that seem to relate to each other. Now is the time to arrange ideas by similarity or categories.
3. Logically arrange the ideas in each group into major and minor details.
4. Make main and subtopic headings; be sure to write each level in parallel form.
5. Parallel form is a balance of two or more similar words, phrases, or clauses. Match a noun with a noun, a verb with a verb, a phrase with a phrase, etc.

For example:

- She likes swimming, dancing, and hiking.
- The cable runs across the roof and down the north wall.
- I admire people who have strong convictions and who think for themselves.

Note in each sentence the similarity between the statement of ideas. In an outline, major ideas should be expressed in parallel form.

Format:

The most important thing to remember when making an outline is to maintain consistency in outlining form.

A topic outline uses words or phrases for all entries. This type of outline gives a very brief overview of what your paper or speech will say.

The outlines you will write will use Roman numerals and Arabic letters and numbers. The Roman numerals will mark the major points of your outline, while the letters and numbers will mark minor supporting details. An outline for a paper with three main points would look like this:

- I. Main Point # 1
 - A. Supporting Detail # 1
 1. Detail
 2. Detail
 - B. Supporting Detail #2
- II. Main Point # 2
 - A. Supporting Detail # 1
 1. Detail
 2. Detail
 2. Detail

- B. Supporting Detail #2
- III. Main Point # 3

Here are some other things to remember about topic outlines:

- Main headings should be the most important information about a group of related points that ties all of the following points together.
- The subheads are the related topics that expand on the idea presented in the main heading.
- It is usually better if your outlines do not get more detailed than the third subhead, because this causes them to be harder to read and more confusing

Whether you break down your ideas to the 1,2,3 level or a,b,c depends on the amount of material you have. Be careful when you divide, and remember that you always **need at least two parts to divide something**; there will never be an A without a B, a 1 without a 2, or an a without a b. Finally, be sure that each main point and each major subdivision contains just one idea; then you can see more easily if each of your ideas really fits your thesis statement.

(Adapted from: http://www.kishwaukeecollege.edu/learning_skills_center/online_writing_center/outline.shtml)

Model Paper Outline

- I. Names matter. One of the most creative acts possible is to assign a name to something or someone. Most religions and mythological systems emphasize the importance of naming. For example, The Christian Bible, begins, “In the beginning was the Word...” This paper will explore how personal and family names affect individuals’ emotional well-being, academic success, and economic opportunities. It will also discuss how names are affected by migration and shifting tastes based on influences such as media, historical events, and cultural proficiency. Finally, it will predict how naming behaviors may change in the near and far future if current cultural and historical trends continue.
- II. Emotional well-being
 - A. Belonging to a family
 - 1. Acknowledging offspring
 - 2. A tradition of values
 - 3. Social class
 - B. Emulating a role model
 - 1. Juniors and II’s, etc.
 - 2. Saints’ names
 - 3. Historical figures
 - C. Having historical roots
 - 1. Claiming an admired past
 - 2. Ethnic identity (again)
 - D. Magical thinking
 - 1. Beautiful princess
 - 2. Gift of God
 - E. Ethnic solidarity (appearance, foods, holidays, stories, humor, etc.)

1. Race
 2. Religion
 3. Ethnicity
 - F. Gender identification/confusion
 1. Genderless names
 2. Gender stereotypes
 - G. Body type/personality
 1. Big Bertha versus Crystal
 2. Hank versus Leslie
- III. Academic success
- A. Cultural stereotypes
 1. Who's good at math and science?
 2. Name demographics of advanced classes generally
 3. Calling on the ethnic kids/ face time with students
 4. Identifying the gifted
 - B. Alphabetized seating
 1. Front or back of the room/line
 2. Best friends/strangers
 - C. Gender stereotypes
- IV. Economic Opportunities
- A. Cultural stereotypes and resumes/initial interview
 1. Who gets access
 2. Interpreting behaviors and language
 - B. Gender stereotypes and resumes/initial interviews
 1. Who gets access
 2. Interpreting behaviors and access
 - C. Harassment
 1. Keeping people in their "place"
 2. Hostile environments
- V. Names and migration
- A. First generation and after
 - B. Juggling two names
- VI. Shifting Tastes
- A. Media influences
 - B. Historical events
 - C. Cultural proficiency
- VII. What the future holds
- A. Polyglot world

1. Sean Horowitz
 2. Hyphenated names
 3. Apple, Lampshade, Gouda
- B. Gender equality
1. Women brain surgeons and engineers
 2. Male flight attendants and nurses

VIII. Naming will always matter. Being creative feels good, because it gives us a sense of power over our ever more chaotic, alienating world. Even as families become more separated and unstable, we crave the sense of belonging and ties to an admirable past that names can give us. Buffeted by economic and political forces beyond our control, we are likely to cling to the magical thinking that explains many naming traditions. We turn to our names for comfort when we feel isolated and unsure. As migration and intermarriage proceed and gender roles become ever more blurred, many of the name-based stereotypes that currently inform the decisions and judgments we make will begin to break down. Even so, our names will remain inextricably connected to our belief that it mattered that we were here.

Rubric for Synthesis Paper Outline

- _____/10 First paragraph catches reader's attention, is well-edited, and clear
- _____/10 First paragraph promises all parts of the paper in the order in which you will cover them (thesis)
- _____/15 Outline includes all promised parts of the thesis and is presented in the promised order
- _____/15 Level of detail in the outline is appropriate for writing an 8-10 page paper
- _____/5 For every A there is a B, for every 1 there is a 2, etc.
- _____/5 If citations are necessary, they are included and correct
- _____/10 Outline is well-edited and clear
- _____/10 Last paragraph is well-edited and clear, firmly reasserts the importance of the topic just covered, and indicates implications
- _____/10 Overall, outline indicates student is prepared to write the Synthesis Paper
- _____/10 Outline follows required format

Total _____/100

Citations and Plagiarism

- Remember to cite **anything you didn't know before you began writing** your paper, even if you're paraphrasing rather than quoting.
- To cite **in text**, use the following conventions:

MLA - <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/02/>

APA - <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/>

From the "High School Writing Manual and Style Guide":

APA STYLE

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO APA STYLE

The American Psychological Association has its own rules for documenting the sources used in a paper. These rules are commonly used in the social sciences such as psychology, sociology, education, and journalism. The differences between MLA and APA style are mostly in the order that information is presented and in some punctuation.

Many college programs require APA style. Your instructors will advise you which style is to be used for a particular subject.

A Few Rules for Documenting Sources

	MLA	APA
bibliography page is titled . . .	Works Cited	References
one author	Walker, Robin.	Walker, R.
two authors	Walker, Robin, and John Keller.	Walker, R. & Keller, J.
publication date	placed at end of citation	placed after the author(s) names(s) Walker, R. (2007). Keller, J. (2006, November 27).
titles	Capitalize the first letter of all major words in any title: book, article, journal, magazine. (<i>Great Expectations</i> , <i>Poetry to Read Aloud</i>)	Capitalize only the first letter of the first word for all titles except journals. (<i>Great expectations</i> and <i>Poetry to read aloud</i> but <i>Journal of the American Psychological Association</i>)
samples	Goode, Mary, Jennifer Friend, and Harry Best. <i>How to Write an Excellent Paper</i> . Chicago: First Publishing, 2008. Print.	Goode, M., Friend, J. & Best, H. (2008). <i>How to write an excellent paper</i> . Chicago: First Publishing.

Parenthetical Notation

MLA	APA
(Walker 33)	(Walker, 2007)
author's last name, NO comma, page number	author's last name, comma, date of publication

- It's better to **over-site than under-site**. Citations show that you are honest, speaking with the authority of experts behind you, and smart enough to synthesize information to argue your own idea.
 - MLA:** If a paragraph includes several quotations/paraphrases from a single source, a single parenthetical reference may be placed at the end of the paragraph. Page

numbers should be included for each quotation organized by placement in the paragraph.

- **APA:** Use either parenthetical citation or attribution within the essay's content for each quote or paraphrase.

- **Plagiarism** –If scholarship is this valuable, then using it without attributing credit to the author is obviously stealing.

Plagiarism

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work, or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

According to the *Merriam-Webster OnLine Dictionary*, to "plagiarize" means

- 1) to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
- 2) to use (another's production) without crediting the source
- 3) to commit literary theft
- 4) to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of *fraud*. It involves both **stealing** someone else's work and **lying** about it afterward.

But can words and ideas really be stolen?

According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. In the United States and many other countries, the expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some media (such as a book or a computer file).

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules)

Attention! **Changing the words of an original source is *not* sufficient to prevent plagiarism.** If you have retained the essential idea of an original source, and have not cited it, then no matter how drastically you may have altered its context or presentation, *you have still plagiarized*

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.

CHECKLIST: Required Instances for Citing a Source

- An original idea derived from a source, whether quoted or paraphrased.
 - Genetic engineering raises for one source 'memories of Nazi attempts in eugenics' (Riddell 19).
- Your summary of original ideas by a source.
 - Genetic engineering has been described as the rearrangement of the genetic structure in animals or in plants (Rosenthal 19-20).
- Factual information that is not common knowledge within the context of the course.
 - Genetic engineering has its risks: a nonpathogenic organism might be converted into a pathogenic one or an undesirable trait might develop as a result of a mistake (Madigan 51).
- Any exact wording copied from a source.
 - Kenneth Woodward asserts that genetic engineering is "a high stakes moral rumble that involves billions of dollars and affects the future" (68).

Types of Plagiarism

Anyone who has written or graded a paper knows that plagiarism is not always a black-and-white issue. The boundary between plagiarism and research is often unclear. Learning to recognize the various forms of plagiarism, especially the more ambiguous ones, is an important step in the fight to prevent it.

I. SOURCES NOT CITED

- 1) "The Ghost Writer"
The writer turns in another's work, word-for-word, as his or her own.
- 2) "The Photocopy"
The writer copies significant portions of text straight from a single source, without alteration.
- 3) "The Potluck Paper"
The writer tries to disguise plagiarism by copying from several different sources, tweaking the sentences to make them fit together while retaining most of the original phrasing.
- 4) "The Poor Disguise"
Although the writer has retained the essential content of the source, he or she has altered the paper's appearance slightly by changing key words and phrases.
- 5) "The Labor of Laziness"
The writer takes the time to paraphrase most of the paper from other sources and make it all fit together, instead of spending the same effort on original work.
- 6) "The Self-Stealer"
The writer "borrows" generously from his or her previous work, violating policies concerning the expectation of originality adopted by most academic institutions.

II. SOURCES CITED (but still plagiarized!)

1) “The Forgotten Footnote”

The writer mentions an author’s name for a source, but neglects to include specific information on the location of the material referenced. This often masks other forms of plagiarism by obscuring source locations.

2) “The Misinformer”

The writer provides inaccurate information regarding the sources, making it impossible to find them.

3) “The Too-Perfect Paraphrase”

The writer properly cites a source, but neglects to put in quotation marks text that has been copied word-for-word, or close to it. Although attributing the basic ideas to the source, the writer is falsely claiming original presentation and interpretation of the information.

4) “The Resourceful Citer”

The writer properly cites all sources, paraphrasing and using quotations appropriately. The catch? The paper contains almost no original work! It is sometimes difficult to spot this form of plagiarism because it looks like any other well-researched document.

5) “The Perfect Crime”

Well, we all know it doesn’t exist. In this case, the writer properly quotes and cites sources in some places, but goes on to paraphrase other arguments from those sources without citation. This way, the writer tries to pass off the paraphrased material as his or her own analysis of the cited material.

Creating your Synthesis Paper

Writing a paper is an intellectual **process**. All the **reading** beforehand is part of the process. **Evaluating** and **sorting** sources is part of the process. Carrying on an **intellectual conversation with the sources** is part of the process. **Situating yourself in relationship to the sources** is part of the process. **Taking control** of the material and presenting it in a way which indicates that you have **selected, judged, responded to, shaped, and used the material** is part of the process. Finding the **clearest, most concise language** to express your opinions based on knowledge of the material is a process.

What does a synthesis paper do?

- Integrates (weaves together) information and ideas culled from multiple sources
- Uses this information and these ideas to elaborate and support an assertion of opinion (an arguable thesis statement) that the student has formulated
- Employs linking devices and transitions to lead the reader through the logic of the exposition of the assertion (thesis statement)
- Commands the reader's attention
- Justifies the importance of its content
- Employs paraphrases and direct quotations from vetted sources to lend authority to assertions
- Takes a stand on some aspect of the research topic and develops it through exposition
- Demonstrates extensive knowledge of a topic and extensive thinking about the topic

Things to avoid:

- Serial summaries of your reading
- Plagiarism
- Over-reliance on one or two kinds of sources (Students should use books, interviews, articles in magazines and newspapers, Web pages, pamphlets from professional organizations, etc.)
- Informal diction (see reference to adult language)

Things to consider:

Consider using **appendices** if you find that your paper is becoming too wordy, or your reader will need to reference something in order to understand your argument. Appendices go before works cited, but after the paper. They often include a glossary, charts, diagrams, and/or samples of work (i.e. your survey). Each unique object is a unique appendix. They are all labeled by letter (i.e. Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.)

Beginnings and Endings are the key to sounding convincing. The first paragraph has to have the following elements:

- A hook that makes the reader believe this topic is incredibly important and worth reading about.
- A promise of what the paper will cover and in what order. The absolute key to this is carefully chosen verbs. “This paper will verb, verb, and verb (or however many more verbs you intend to do.)” This kind of sentence is completely acceptable in most academic settings, but if you or your students feel it’s too heavy-handed or formulaic, you can substitute three or more assertions you intend to elaborate with reference to the work of multiple experts. Making a conscious decision about the order in which you intend to address these assertions is pivotal. This is the **thesis statement** – it identifies the theme of the paper.

The conclusion should include the following elements:

- Restating the main idea; ties up loose ends; explains consequences; explains the importance/value of the paper; makes projections about the future.

When documenting your sources, include **parenthetical documentation** throughout the paper. Seek formatting advice for your particular style of formatting (APA or MLA) through Owl at Purdue. Whenever you use a quote or introduce knowledge that is clearly not your own (i.e. statistics), it should be followed by documentation.

- Remember that long quotes, more than four lines in length, should be moved to a new line, and the entire quote should be indented by 1 tab mark.

Formatting the Paper

- Readable font, like Times New Roman, size 12, double spaced
- 8-10 pages
- Internal Citations and a Works Cited page (not your annotated sources, just citations)
- Page numbers must be included

Synthesis Paper: Contents and Sections

Layout:

- Cover Sheet - title of the paper, your name, my name, your advisor’s name, and the date you hand in the paper
- Abstract (in final version only)
 - This should be titled “Abstract”.
 - This should be on its own page.
 - This page should not be numbered.
- Paper – the revised body of the paper that follows the Basic Formatting guidelines above.
 - The final paper should reflect all suggestions from Dr. Kiehl and your advisor/mentor.
- Appendices (if necessary)
- Bibliography – including only what you utilized for the paper and without annotations.
- Knowledge Base Paper Checklist – due with final version.
 - This should be signed by your advisor/mentor and indicates they have read the paper.

Submitting your Paper:

You will submit your first draft of your paper to me by the date indicated on your Grades and Assignments sheet. I will read the paper and provide you with feedback. After you make the necessary edits to the paper, you will submit it to your mentor/advisor. Before submitting your paper, ask each of the following questions. If you and your mentor/advisor agree that the answer to every question is “yes,” then the mentor/advisor should send me an email to that effect. You will be given this sheet as a handout that will be sent with your paper to your mentor/advisor for their signature.

Does writing this paper contribute to/relate to the success of your larger project?

Does this paper demonstrate that you have increased your knowledge base substantially since the beginning of the year?

Are the sources you consulted current, ample, varied, appropriate to your topic?

Does this paper demonstrate that you have mastered the skills necessary to complete a research paper successfully?

Have you integrated a variety of sources into a coherent, understandable, elaborated line of thought? (Keep in mind that a good paper does not involve a series of summaries of undigested sources strung together in a sequence.)

Is the parenthetical documentation where it belongs and in the correct format?

Have you used adequate and accurate documentation? (Give credit for all information and ideas you didn't know when you started researching. Be precise about crediting paraphrased information and punctuate direct quotations correctly.)

Does the paper have an introduction that establishes what you intend to cover/accomplish in the paper, how many parts the paper will have in what order, and make a claim for the importance of the topic?

Does the paper have a conclusion that makes explicit the reasons why what you've written is important/worth knowing and offer a call to action, a summary of the limitations of current research findings and recommendation for further studies, or a prediction of what the future holds on this topic?

Does the text meet high standards of editing and revision? Is the text free of spelling, punctuation and sentence structure errors?

Is there an obvious logic to the sequence in which you present your ideas/information?

Verbs, Verbs, Verbs!

Concise writing requires precise, active verbs. Use this list and **add favorite verbs of your own** as you employ clear, active verbs in your writing of the synthesis paper.

Additionally, convincing, clear writers make their train of thought obvious to the reader. Use the following list of possibilities strategically to establish the relationship between each part of your paper and the next. Don't overuse transitions.

Active Verbs:

Apply
Assert
Argue
Analyze
Conceal
Convey
Create
Cite
Criticize
Comment
Comprehend
Compare
Contrast
Compile
Compose
Deconstruct
Demonstrate
Define
Distinguish
Distribute
Employ
Exhibit
Exploit
Examine
Evaluate
Emphasize
Entertain
Generalize
Hypothesize
Inform
Investigate
Integrate
Include
Interpret
Infer

Imply
Justify
Judge
Narrate
Notify
Outline
Parody
Present
Predict
Perform
Publish
Persuade
Quote
Reform
Reference
Remind
Recall
Reveal
Record
Reconstruct
Revise
Show
Share
State
Suggest
Satirize
Summarize
Sequence
Take
Tell
Utilize
Use
Undermine

Transitions for Narration or Storytelling:

After
Afterwards
As
At the same time
Before
During
Finally
First
Later
Meanwhile
Next
Now
Then
Until
When
While

Transitions for Description:

Above
Across from
Also
Before me
Below
Beyond
Further
Here
In the distance
Nearby
Next to
Over
Overhead
On my left/right

Opposite to
To the left/right

**Transitions for Adding
Ideas Already Stated:**

Again
Also
Another
At the same time
Besides
Finally
First...second...finally
For example
For instance
Furthermore
In addition

Likewise
Moreover
One example of ...
Another example of ...
Similarly
Such

**Transitions for
Showing Cause and
Effect Relationships:**

Accordingly
As a result
At last
At this point
Because
Consequently
Hence

Since
Therefore
Thus
To sum up

**Transitions for
Contrasting Ideas:**

Although
But
However
Nevertheless
On the one hand...yet on
the other hand
Otherwise
Still