

ESSAY 4 – Synthesized Independent Research Argument

Dr. Ethan T. Jordan

GSW 1120

Draft Due 11/13, Final Draft 11/25

For this essay, you will be making an argument of your own using your own source material. As with the other multiple source essay, you will be synthesizing the multiple viewpoints you discover as you research independently using the library databases and other resources. Also, remember that while you are using source material, the most important element to remember is that this is YOUR argument, not the source authors'. Just as a reminder, this essay must receive a passing grade in order to pass this course, so I would highly suggest approaching this assignment in the following way:

Step 1 – Use your Essay 3 as the jump off point! You just did a ton of work on this essay, and you should use it to your advantage - change your topic as needed to go bigger or more in-depth with a certain idea. Add more sources if needed! Re-read and annotate sources carefully, focusing on synthesis and common themes, and find other gaming texts or examples if needed

Step 5 – Begin to outline your essay, incorporating relevant source material where you believe it will be most helpful – think about how sources speak to each other (agree with, disagree with, agree and disagree, elaborate or expand upon, etc.). In other words, a single paragraph should not deal with a single source – instead, it should deal with a particular idea, one which several sources may either agree upon, or one that lacks consensus. Also, be sure to include only relevant sources – make them work for you, not the other way around. Synthesis is vital to this essay, just as it was with the Multiple Source Essay.

Step 6 – Once again, there is no set organizational structure for this essay. Work to develop a thesis that is arguable (has no clear yes or no/right or wrong answer, but you are finding a way to answer it using your sources). Also, like the previous MSE essay, I suggest structuring your paper into concepts or ideas that support your argument once you've done some research and have an understanding of the concepts and ideas that are being discussed currently with regard to your topic. Once you get a sense of the topics, you'll better be able to organize and structure your essay.

Also, going with a specific paper genre like a proposing a solution essay will yield more complex results than a simple arguing a position paper alone – try to work on combining a “solution” paper with a “position” paper, or combining a “causes” with a “solution” paper, for instance.

(The individual elements below may be part of individual sentences/paragraphs/sections, so this is NOT an outline. Think of this as a checklist!)

An **introduction** that gives the context for the argument you are going to make, and describes the question you will answer. You should also indicate your purpose for the essay – what do you hope to accomplish (or what are you arguing?) Have a thesis statement that answers your question and indicates your main supporting points (go for 3 or more).

Argument – you are attempting to persuade readers of your point of view, rather than simply reporting facts or summarizing others' viewpoints. Instead, you want to use others' information as support for your own claims. This is vital, since you may feel drowned out by the inclusion of other's work in your own – overquotation or paraphrasing will make it seem as if your views are unimportant – instead, make your claims the focus of the paper, not the sources' claims.

Synthesis of the sources you decide to use to support your argument. This involves using multiple sources in a single paragraph in order to show that your claim is valid. You can use sources that agree with your point of view in order to lend weight to your claims, or you can use sources that disagree in order to refute outside viewpoints (also known as counterargument). Also, do not place sources together that have no relation to each other, or don't create false relationships between sources. Use MLA citation to include relevant quotations or paraphrasing (if you are paraphrasing an author's unique concept or language, this still needs cited). Synthesis is vitally important to the success of this essay, so **focus on including more than one source in most instances.**

Counterargument of opposing viewpoints or sources that contradict your views. If a source is on the opposing side, what have they ignored/missed/left out that you are highlighting? What makes their claims less persuasive than your own? You'll want to refute this counterargument to show that while it may be valid in some ways, it does not take away from your argument. Once again, this does not need to appear at the end of the essay – I suggest bringing up and responding to readers' objections as they arise, that way, you can use other viewpoints to respond to them and make your own arguments more persuasive.

A **conclusion** that reinforces your thesis based on the material you've discussed.

In other words, you'll want to show, once more, how your argument is sound and supported by the research. Also, you can point to some future action (although you can do this in many ways, you should resist the urge to directly address the reader, as in "Now get out there and work!").

Step 7 – Give the paper a good read-through out loud – it may seem silly, but it really works. If you are not the reading-out-loud type, save your paper as a separate document and change the font to something unfamiliar to you and read!

Final Advice:

Avoid copying an organizational structure or argumentative structure from the source essays – this means that you are simply rewriting an already-written essay.

Organize your body paragraphs **by concept/idea**, not by author. Ordering the essay author by author will not create synthesis, since each source will have no other support or opposition.

Use **metadiscourse** to refer back to your thesis main points – remind readers why what you are presenting demonstrates your thesis. (We don't know unless you show us what you are saying...)

When in doubt, cite it! Doing so will help you avoid plagiarism, and if you are using too much source material, it can always be cut... Don't forget your Works Cited page!

Consider the **audience** for the essay – who will read this? What are they expecting to see? Do they agree or disagree with your views? Would they be inclined to agree already? Imagine their doubts, questions, and opposing arguments and deal with them effectively.

Pull quotations from your notes to make your work easier. Create your own synthesis worksheet (just as we did in class), so that when it comes time to write, you can copy and paste.

Make your title work for you. Your title should not be a secret for the audience to decode. Instead, indicate what your paper will do.

Avoid the second-person "you" at all costs! This creates an awkward relationship between you and your readers which can create a hypothetical situation or can alienate readers to which your statement doesn't apply.

Timeline:

Your **first draft** is due on **11/13/2013** via email. (Late drafts forfeit the right to instructor feedback.)

Your **final draft** is due on **11/25/2013** at the start of class.

You are able to revise this essay again once you receive your grade. If you choose to do so, you'll need to conference with me beforehand. Also, please be aware that if you do not turn in a rough draft for this assignment, you cannot revise for a better grade. You have until 12/6/2013 to revise this essay if you choose to do so.

Length:

This paper should be 3000-3500 words (roughly 8 pages or longer) typed and double spaced. (Longer papers generally do better for this one, so go for the high count.) Double space your essay, use 1-inch margins, and Times New Roman font (or something similar). Center the title of your essay, and please do not create a title page.

Final Packet Contents:

For the final draft of this essay, you will need to turn in:

- peach page for this essay (Audience and Values Exploration from portfolio)
- first draft of the essay with my comments (printed)
- final version of the essay (printed)
- goldenrod rubric page filled out with your name and paper info at top (from portfolio)

Need Additional help?

Bounce ideas off of the writing consultants at the Learning Commons.
Make an appointment with me during office hours.

GOOD LUCK!