

## The Synthesis Paper

Synthesis means bringing ideas from many sources together into one essay or presentation. After reading several books, plays, and short works, your task is to analyze each work in terms of a theme or issue present in each selected work, making use of textual information (quotes, examples) in a logical way to explain, develop, and support your theme-based argument. Remember that a synthesis is NOT a summary, a comparison, or a review. Rather, synthesis is the result of an *integration* of what you heard/read and your ability to use this learning to develop and support a key thesis or argument. Learning to write this sort of analysis is a critical skill, crucial to organizing and presenting information in both academic and non-academic settings. Particularly when individual readings can over-simplify a theme or perspectives from a literary work, the synthesis paper guarantees that students recognize and grapple with the complexity of over-arching issues and big ideas.

### Your synthesis paper should

*Thoughtfully investigate a central theme and explain convincingly how it applies to selected major and minor works of literature we have studied this year;*  
*Analyze the significance of a theme and how it contributes to meaning in each of the student-selected works;*  
*Demonstrate how you (the student) possess the ability to read, write, and think critically and competently in response to literature;*  
*Show how you (the student) can successfully and artfully incorporate aptly chosen excerpts from the various works of literature discussed as specific support, as well as other details and examples from the text;*  
*Provide a thorough and meaningful review of several works of literature studied this academic year.*

### Your synthesis paper should **NOT**

*Merely summarize the plots of selected works of literature studied in this class;*  
*Include information or research gathered from periodicals, criticism, or other sources--the works themselves should be your only points of reference;*  
*Give the impression that you (the student) have given little attention or concern to providing specific details, examples, and textual references as support of your thesis;*  
*Plagiarize in any way--this paper must consist of 100% of your thoughts, your ideas, and your words/wording.*  
*Display writing that shows less than skillful organization, sentence structure, standard English usage, and mechanics.*

### Steps to Building Content—follow these, and complete each step *in this order!*

1. Select a prompt and develop a thesis statement. Use your chosen prompt to develop a thesis asserting how a particular theme appears in the works you will be discussing. Your thematic thesis statement will be the final sentence of your introductory paragraph.
2. About that introduction: this is a formal paper, and it needs a thoughtfully-developed introduction (more than two sentences—more like a minimum of five). Good introductions captivate the interest of the reader, while they also make the reader aware of the paper's topic and how the author views the topic. When written well, a quality introduction makes your audience want to continue reading the rest of your paper. Remember to begin the introduction with extremely general information that hints at the subject of the paper, build specificity with each subsequent statement, and end with your big thematic thesis statement.
3. Consider each of your major works carefully (you may have to do some review!); recall main points as they relate to the **theme** you are exploring. This is a time to remember both of the Big Fives: setting, plot, characterization, point of view, and conflict, as well as diction, imagery, detail, syntax, and language (among other elements/techniques). Consider how these literary elements support and reflect the theme you are exploring through all your works. Your teacher recommends that you not underestimate the time it will take to complete this step, and that you do some sort of pre-writing for

each of the works you will discuss. In that pre-writing, you should include quotes you intend to incorporate, and other specific information.

4. After pre-writing, you need to begin writing the body paragraphs, one work at a time. For major works, you must compose **three** well-developed paragraphs discussing how the theme applies to that particular work. For minor works, write **two** well-developed paragraphs.
5. After all the work with Steps 3 & 4, you will need to craft a stunning conclusion. Begin by re-wording and re-stating your thesis. From there, write a statement for each work you used, indicating the most obvious way this theme is revealed or supported. Finally, make a statement that applies the theme generally to the human experience, human relationships, or the world we are currently living in.

### **Format Guidelines—These are absolute and non-negotiable; please read carefully and follow exactly!**

1. All Rough Draft assignments are to be **hand-written** on the rough draft pages provided by your teacher. If you write your drafts in ink, please be sure the ink does not bleed through to the other side of the page. Word-processed rough drafts **will not receive credit or feedback**. Why do I do this? Because the AP Exam date draws near and it is time to practice legible handwriting. You are required to turn these portions in a second time **with** your final copy, so **keep track of all rough draft sections**.
2. The final copy must be typed, double-spaced, twelve-point, **Courier New** font, with one-inch margins on the left, right, top, and bottom of the pages. Any student who has trouble finding access to a computer may come in and type in my room before school (7:45 to 8:05), after school (until 4:00 p.m.), and during "A" or "B" lunch. I recommend using Google Drive before final printing, as it saves work approximately every 2 seconds, and can be accessed anywhere you are able to log into your Google Drive account.
3. You will need to make parenthetical citations when you quote from your major and minor works, which will necessitate a Works Cited list at the end of your paper. Keep track of page numbers when you incorporate quotes! We will follow MLA rules for citation of texts. We will go over constructing the Works Cited page in class, but there are many wonderful websites you can find with a simple Google search that will help you with this (easybib.com). **NO OTHER SOURCES/REFERENCES SHOULD BE USED IN COMPOSING YOUR SYNTHESIS PAPER.**
4. All deadlines are absolute for this assignment—as they are being set well in advance, please show honor and respect for yourself, your work, your fellow classmates, and your teacher by not asking for exceptions. If you know in advance that you are going to be absent (i.e. school business, college visits, etc.), make arrangements to have the work turned in **even though you are not in class. All assignments are due at the start of your AP English class on the date specified.** Remember, all deadlines will stand, regardless of your attendance—if you are going to miss class, make appropriate arrangements in order to receive credit!
5. Do not use first (i.e. "I" "Me" or "We") or second (i.e. "You" or "Your") person at any time in this paper.
6. **Do I need a Report Cover?** The final copy must be turned in with all graded portions of the rough draft in a two-pocket folder—rubric sheet + final copy in one pocket, all rough draft pieces in the other pocket. No other report holder is necessary. If any student cannot afford a two-pocket folder, see your teacher. I will keep the final copy that you turn in, but you will get your rough draft pieces and folder back when you receive your final copy grade.
7. Turn in your scoring rubric sheet with your final paper, with ALL appropriate fields completed.
8. Any form of plagiarism will result in a score of zero for the entire assignment. This includes the creative recycling of all or part of older synthesis papers.
9. Please be sure to treat all titles of works properly. Use italics for major works; quotation marks for minor works. Practice this so you will treat titles properly on the AP Exam!

## Major Works List—Select Three

*A Doll's House*  
*Frankenstein*  
*Hamlet*

*Jane Eyre*  
*The Stranger*

***IF you read a book (and completed a quiz over it) for the summer assignment, you may choose that title.***

### **Minor Works—This part of the Synthesis Paper Task has changed!**

This year, the teacher will select a poem and short prose passage for each of the selected themes. These selections will offer ample opportunities for thoughtful analysis of theme that will contribute to the synthesis of the entire essay.

#### **Prompts (Select one for your paper):**

1. People say honesty is the best policy, but many works of literature contain a character who intentionally deceives others. The character's dishonesty may be intended either to help or to hurt. If you choose this prompt, you will ***analyze through thoughtful discussion how various characters' motives to deceive/deceptions reveal meaning (theme)***. The big thematic statement should reflect on why individuals deceive others, and the effects of deception.
2. "It's not fair!" All of us at some time have felt this way. Many characters we have studied respond in some significant way to injustice. If you choose this prompt, you will ***analyze through thoughtful discussion the character's understanding of justice, the degree to which the character's search for justice is successful, and how this search reveals meaning (theme)***. The big thematic statement should reflect on forms and effects of injustice, and motives for seeking justice..
3. Obsession. It isn't just a Calvin Klein fragrance. It has often been said that what we value can be determined by what we think about the most. If you choose this prompt you will ***analyze through thoughtful discussion an obsession or preoccupation a character experiences, what the obsession reveals about that character's values, and the impact/results of the obsession. Explain how the each character's obsession illuminates a larger meaning (theme)***. The big thematic statement should offer an assessment of the significance or effects of obsession.
4. "What the world needs now, is love, sweet love." One of the strongest human drives is to find acceptance and love. Write an essay in which you discuss how a character in each of your selected works struggles to be accepted and loved. Be sure to demonstrate in your essay how the author uses this need to enhance meaning in the work. If you choose this prompt you will ***analyze through thoughtful discussion how various characters strive for acceptance and love, and how their attitudes and behavior affect the plot and contribute to the meaning of the work as a whole***. The big thematic statement should reflect on the significance, and effects of experiencing acceptance and love or the significance and effects of NOT experiencing acceptance and love.
5. This year we have met quite a few characters who must deal with appearances. From assessing personal appearance to maintaining appearances to meet societal expectation, the central issue of appearance pertains to the way others perceive a person, group, place, or situation. If you select this prompt, ***you will analyze through thoughtful discussion the significance of appearances, and what attempting to maintain certain appearances suggests about human nature (that creates your general theme)***. The big thematic statement should reflect on how placing significance upon appearances influences individuals and groups of people (society in general).

## Synthesis Paper Timeline

**ALL** Deadlines must be met or no credit will be given for that portion of the assignment—NO Exceptions! The work assigned is due at the start of your AP English class on the date specified. Have it in your teacher's hands on or before that time—even if you are not present in class on these days.

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Thursday, March 16, 2017 | Prompt selection and list of major & minor works form is due (20 points)          |
| Tuesday March 28, 2017   | Introductory Paragraph Rough Draft is due (15 points)                             |
| Thursday, March 30, 2017 | 3 Rough Draft Body Paragraphs over 1 <sup>st</sup> major work are due (30 points) |
| Tuesday, April 4, 2017   | 3 Rough Draft Body Paragraphs over 2 <sup>nd</sup> major work are due (30 points) |
| Thursday, April 6, 2017  | 3 Rough Draft Body Paragraphs over 3 <sup>rd</sup> major work are due (30 points) |
| Tuesday, April 11, 2017  | 2 Rough Draft Body Paragraphs over 1 <sup>st</sup> minor work are due (20 points) |
| Thursday, April 13, 2017 | 2 Rough Draft Body Paragraphs over 2 <sup>nd</sup> minor work are due (20 points) |
| Friday, April 14, 2017   | Conclusion Paragraph is due (15 points)   |
| Friday, April 21, 2017   | Final Paper is DUE at the start of class (300 points)!*                           |

As you receive rough draft portions back from your teacher, you should be typing, typing, typing (and saving, saving, saving—in at least two secure places, such as a flash drive + Google Drive)! Do not wait to type the entire paper in one sitting unless **you** are very happy to type a lot.

\*There will be an opportunity for bonus points at the end of this assignment. If you turn in your final copy and draft copies according to the instructions (**with** all checked-out books) early, you will be awarded bonus points as follows:

If the paper is turned in on Tuesday, April 18, 2017: 30 bonus points

If the paper is turned in on Wednesday, April 19, 2017: 20 bonus points

If the paper is turned in on Thursday, April 20, 2017: 10 bonus points

Record the choices of works you will be writing about below:

Prompt Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Major Work #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Major Work #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Major Work #3: \_\_\_\_\_