

The Synthesis Paper

Synthesis means putting ideas from many sources together into one essay or presentation. After reading several books, plays, and short works, your task is to organize some of the information around a central theme or issue, make informed observations and analyses, and then present information (quotes, examples) in a logical way to support your theme-based argument. Remember that a synthesis is NOT a summary, a comparison, or a review. Rather, a synthesis is a 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 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) 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. Develop a thesis statement. Use your selected prompt to develop a thesis concerning how a particular theme is supported in the works you will be discussing. Your 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 finish with your big thematic thesis statement.
3. Consider each of your long and short works carefully (you may have to do some re-reading!); recall main points as they relate to the **theme** you are exploring. This is a time to remember the Big 5: setting, plot, characterization, point of view, and conflict, as well as diction, imagery, detail, syntax, and language. 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 **four** well-developed paragraphs discussing how the theme applies to that particular work. For minor works, write **three** 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. 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 ARE TO BE USED FOR 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 work 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

Frankenstein
Hamlet
Heart of Darkness
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—Select Two (one poem, one short prose selection)

Use the archived assignment descriptions to peruse the titles of short stories and poetry that we have examined this year (this includes poetry from PLOTTSS, multiple-choice practice, and poetry timed writings, as well as short fiction read for class and encountered in multiple-choice practice and prose passage timed writings).

Prompts (Select one only for your paper):

1. **Story telling.** There seems to be a nearly innate desire for individuals to share a story, usually their story. From Marlow to Victor to the Creature to the ancient mariner, to Jane Eyre to King Hamlet's Ghost, characters often appear to have a need to tell. If you choose this prompt, you will ***analyze through thoughtful discussion how various characters' needs to tell/confess/share reveals meaning (theme)***. The big thematic statement should reflect on why individuals often feel compelled to tell or share a personal story.
2. **Alienation.** Writers often highlight the values of a culture or society by using characters who are alienated or rejected for any number of reasons: gender, race, creed, class, appearance, etc. If you choose this prompt, you will ***analyze through thoughtful discussion how exclusion or alienation influences characters and action, and how the way this exclusion reveals meaning (theme)***. The big thematic statement should reflect on the causes and/or effects of alienation/rejection.
3. **Opposition.** The conflict created when the will or perspective of an individual goes against the majority is a recurring issue in many literary works. If you choose this prompt you will ***analyze through thoughtful discussion the importance of opposition/non-conformity to characters in your selected literary works, and the reasons for its continuing influence. Explain how the characters' ideas illuminate a larger meaning (theme)***. The big thematic statement should offer an assessment of the significance or effects of non-conformity or going against the majority.
4. **Injustice.** People often complain, "It's just not fair!" In a novel by William Styron, a father tells his son that life is "a search for justice." If you choose this prompt you will ***analyze through thoughtful discussion how various characters respond to events that are unfair, and how their responses to such injustice affect the plot and contribute to the meaning of the work as a whole***. The big thematic statement should reflect on the significance, causes, and/or effects of encountering injustice.
5. **The Past.** In many works of literature, past events can affect, positively or negatively, the present activities, attitudes, or values of a character. If you choose this prompt, you will ***analyze through thoughtful discussion how the past influences characters and action, and how its significance helps to reveal meaning (theme)***. The big thematic statement should reflect on the significance of the past on the thoughts, beliefs, and actions of an individual.

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.

Tuesday, March 17, 2015	Prompt selection and list of major & minor works form is due (15 points).
Thursday, March 19, 2015	Introductory Paragraph Rough Draft is due (15 points).
Tuesday, March 31, 2015	2 Rough Draft Body Paragraphs over 1 st major work are due (20 points)
Thursday, April 2, 2015	2 Rough Draft Body Paragraphs over 1 st major work are due (20 points)
Tuesday, April 7, 2015	2 Rough Draft Body Paragraphs over 2 nd major work are due (20 points)
Thursday, April 9, 2015	2 Rough Draft Body Paragraphs over 2 nd major work are due (20 points)
Tuesday, April 14, 2015,	2 Rough Draft Body Paragraphs over 3 rd major work are due (20 points)
Thursday, April 16, 2015	2 Rough Draft Body Paragraphs over 3 rd major work are due (20 points)
Monday, April 20, 2015	3 Rough Draft Body Paragraphs over 1 st minor work are due (30 points)
Wednesday, April 22, 2015	3 Rough Draft Body Paragraphs over 2 nd minor work are due (30 points)
Thursday, April 23, 2015	Conclusion Paragraph is due (15 points)
Friday, May 1, 2015	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 28, 2015: 30 bonus points

If the paper is turned in on Wednesday, April 29, 2015: 20 bonus points

If the paper is turned in on Thursday, April 30, 2015: 10 bonus points

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

Prompt Topic: _____

Major Work #1: _____

Minor Work #1: _____

Major Work #2: _____

Minor Work #2: _____

Major Work #3: _____