



# Synthesizing Research

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## Synthesis is...

- ♣ Integration of support from more than one source for one idea/argument
- ♣ Identification of how sources are related

## Synthesizing research is important because...

- ♣ Research involves incorporating many sources to understand a research question.
- ♣ Sources support subtopics to prove the thesis statement and/or answer research question.
- ♣ Synthesis integrates information from two or more sources to demonstrate how the research *works* together.

## Types of Synthesis

- ♣ Similarity: demonstrates how two (or more) sources agree with one another.
  - Ex. Smith, like Taylor, argues that the Big Mac is better than the Whopper.
- ♣ Contrast: demonstrates how two (or more) sources support a main point in different ways.
  - Ex. Unlike Smith, Taylor argues the Big Mac has fewer calories.
- ♣ Accumulation: demonstrates how one source builds on the idea of another.
  - Ex. Smith adds to Taylor's point by noting that the Big Mac has more carbohydrates.
- ♣ Causation: demonstrates how one source discusses the effects of another source's ideas.
  - Ex. Though Smith identifies the addition of carbohydrates, Taylor posits that the Big Mac's carbohydrates are due to an increase in protein.

## What to integrate

- ♣ Material from several sources on the same question/research topic
- ♣ Compare/contrast important factors (assumptions, interpretations of results, theories, hypothesis, speculations, etc.)
- ♣ Bases of comparison by examining

## The bases of comparison by examining include

- ♣ Point of view
- ♣ Definition of terms
- ♣ Common ground
- ♣ Factors studied
- ♣ Issues that divide

## Tips for effective synthesis

- ♣ Strong, clear, precise thesis statement
- ♣ Discuss sources in relation to your thesis
- ♣ When using more than one quote/source, make sure you relate both sources to your main idea and to each other
- ♣ Use more than one source for each main point

## How do you know which attribution verb to use?

- ♣ The one that draws attention to the fact that the source has stressed a point, such as emphasize and insist
- ♣ The one that disagrees, such as allege and claim
- ♣ Depends upon context of paper

## Attribution Verbs

- |            |             |            |            |          |
|------------|-------------|------------|------------|----------|
| ♣ Add      | ♣ Confirm   | ♣ Exclaim  | ♣ Propose  | ♣ State  |
| ♣ Admit    | ♣ Criticize | ♣ Insist   | ♣ Question | ♣ Think  |
| ♣ Affirm   | ♣ Complain  | ♣ Mention  | ♣ Remark   | ♣ Verify |
| ♣ Allege   | ♣ Declare   | ♣ Note     | ♣ Respond  | ♣ Write  |
| ♣ Announce | ♣ Deny      | ♣ Observe  | ♣ Retort   |          |
| ♣ Argue    | ♣ Disagree  | ♣ Posit    | ♣ Reply    |          |
| ♣ Believe  | ♣ Emphasize | ♣ Predict  | ♣ Reveal   |          |
| ♣ Comment  | ♣ Estimate  | ♣ Proclaim | ♣ Say      |          |



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## Which tense to use with attribution verbs

- ♣ Regardless of citation method, maintain verb tense throughout essay
  - APA--Usually requires the use of past tense or present perfect tense
    - Ex. argued, has/have argued
  - MLA--Usually requires the use of present tense
    - Ex. argue or argues

## Discussing Specific Source Ideas/Arguments

- ♣ To debate with clarity and precision, you may need to incorporate the quote into your statement.
  - Ex. Jane Doe, a well-known war historian. "At the beginning of the Iraq war, most Americans believed the war would end quickly."
- ♣ To argue the claim, quote the part that you feel is questionable
  - Ex. Historian Jane Doe argues that "most Americans believed that the war would end quickly" (23). However, most servicemen reported feeling the opposite.

## Emphasizing Authoritative Sources

- ♣ Drawing attention to the definitive source or sources that clearly prove your point gives your paper and thesis credibility.
  - For example, you are providing new information on a current argument:
    - Ex. This fact is not new information. In *Errors and Expectations* Mina Shaughnessy points out this contradiction: "The fact that graduate schools, aware that their students would spend a good part of their professional lives teaching freshman English, made no effort to train students to teach writing (or to write themselves) only guaranteed that English teachers would be the last to see the limitations of the prescriptive approach to writing" (120-21).
      - Shaughnessy, Mina. *Errors and Expectations*. New York: Oxford U P, 1977.

## Analyzing an Author's Language

- ♣ Often, this occurs in literature, history, linguistic, and social science courses
- ♣ In literature, this includes the use of colloquial or vernacular
- ♣ The way certain things are said can be used as evidence for your claim
  - Ex. "Who we really are when we *speak* and to whom we *speak* when we *speak* and what we *say* when we *speak* and why we *speak* at all are factors not in the grouping of rules" (87, my emphasis).
    - ✱ Berlin, James. *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges 1900-1985*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois U P, 1987.

## Setting up and Following Quotations

- ♣ Remember, quotations should never just be dropped in a text.
- ♣ What precedes and follows a quote is just as important as the quote itself.
- ♣ Four steps to follow.
  - Choose attribution verb.
  - Provide a context for the quote
    - Do not assume the quote will speak for itself
    - Context possibly includes when, where, and under what conditions the quote was written or spoken
      - Ex. After the North defeated the South at the Battle of Gettysburg, President Lincoln reminded the United States, "Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" (wikipedia).
  - Provide a citation for the source of the quote (see APA, MLA, or Turabian handouts)
  - Explain the significance of the quotation
    - Why did you choose the specific quote for your paper
      - Ex. After the North defeated the South at the Battle of Gettysburg, President Lincoln reminded the United States, "Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" (wikipedia). Lincoln's Gettysburg address serves as justification for a war that took more American lives than any other US war.