

Generic Rubric for any Synthesis Essay

The synthesis question, offered starting in 2007, will give you about five passages, including possibly one "visual" which may be a photo, a drawing, a cartoon, or a statistical graph. You must use three or more of the sources in assembling a purposefully argued essay on the subject stated in the essay prompt. The following generic rubric is a guide to the close reading, critical thinking, writing, and grading of any synthesis essay.

Generic Rubric for Each Synthesis Question

9: Essays earning a score of 9 meet all the criteria for 8 papers and, in addition, are especially full in their understanding of the complex ideas presented in each of the documents chosen. Essays earning a score of 9 are especially apt in their ability to synthesize the information in 3 or more documents in assembling a purposefully argued essay. They also demonstrate particularly impressive control of language.

8: Essays earning a score of 8 demonstrate an excellent understanding of the complex ideas presented in each of the documents chosen. These essays effectively synthesize the information in 3 or more documents in assembling a purposefully argued essay. These essays refer to the documents chosen implicitly or explicitly, synthesizing each important idea, correctly grouping more than one source together under the same subtopic. The prose of an 8 essay demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing, but it is not flawless.

7: Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of 6 essays but employ more complete synthesis or demonstrate a more mature writing style.

6: Essays earning a score of 6 demonstrate an adequate understanding of the complex ideas presented in each of the documents chosen. These essays adequately synthesize the information in 3 or more of these documents in assembling an adequately argued essay. They refer to the documents chosen implicitly or explicitly, synthesizing most of the important ideas. They group more than one source together under the same subtopic, but sometimes they do so incorrectly. Their writing may contain a few lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

5: Essays earning a score of 5 misunderstand parts of the evidence. They synthesize the sources, but their discussion is uneven or inconsistent. They may offer superficial arguments or confused organization. Some important ideas may be omitted. Although the writing may contain a few lapses in diction or syntax, it usually conveys ideas adequately.

4: Essays earning a score of 4 respond to the essay prompt inadequately. They totally misread the evidence, omitting large chunks of significant ideas. They may misrepresent the writer's stance on the issue of self. The prose generally conveys the writer's ideas but may suggest immature control of writing.

3: Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but are less perceptive, or they are less consistent in controlling the elements of writing.

2: Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in understanding the material or in synthesizing the documents. These essays may offer vague generalizations about the subject of self. They may lack development or stray from the evidence contained in the chosen documents. The prose often demonstrates consistent weakness in writing, such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or lack of control.

1: Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for a score of 2, but are especially simplistic in their discussion or weak in their control of language.

0: Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt.

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