

**Composition I**  
**ENGL 1013**  
**Essay Assignment 4: Argumentative Synthesis**

Your fourth major writing assignment is an argumentative synthesis of these articles:

[Source 1]

[Source 2]

You will need to begin researching the topic that the sources address in order to add at **least two more relevant sources** to these. Your instructor may require you to submit a **research proposal** before you begin preliminary research. In addition, before drafting your research paper, you may need to submit an **annotated bibliography**.

In an argumentative synthesis you present information as fairly as possible (as you did in the explanatory synthesis), but your evaluation of the sources (your critique) will help you take a position on the issue that they address. You will be arguing for a position on the basis of a reasonable consideration of the information and arguments presented by your sources. Be mindful that your own argument will require that you make an explicit claim, present adequate support for it, and articulate your assumption so that the relationship between your claim and its support is apparent (see ASAW pages 64-67, 122-124, and 149-150).

This major writing assignment requires that you put into practice the other skills you have heretofore acquired. In your essay, you will be expected to present information from these sources accurately and briefly (summarize), explain how the sources relate to each other (synthesize), and evaluate the rhetorical elements that the sources use to persuade readers (critique). Moreover, you will now look to promote a particular position, or *argue* for it. Your support for a particular position should be based on the overall consideration of the reasonableness of the argument your sources present and on your awareness of the consequences that position may entail.

This essay also requires that you **contribute original ideas** to inform the debate or enhance the understanding of your research topic. You do this by gathering information, considering its validity, endorsing it or rejecting it accordingly, and challenging those sources with your own questions on the matter. This rhetorical stance should lead you to take an active role in establishing the direction of the “conversation” and communicating the **importance of the research** to your readers. As you did in the previous writing assignment, you will be evaluating sources on the basis of the information and arguments they presented, but you will also be trying to ask and to answer questions your sources are not considering but should.

Once you have begun your research and have a sense of the issue/topic, begin by asking yourself the following questions: Is there a perspective/solution that is not being considered? What’s so particular about the nature of the issue or the way that scholars talk about it? How did this

problem/issue come about? What else do we need to know in order to endorse a position? Why should this issue/topic matter to the readers of my essay?

Be mindful that your own argument will require that you make an explicit claim (thesis) and present adequate support for it. You will also need to engage in analysis – an explanation of how something works (or acquires meaning) on the basis of its particular features (see *ASAW* pages 178-180, 182-186, and 188-189).

With this in mind, your essay should consider how authors establish their relationship with the reader on the basis of linguistic and imagistic means, present information in a particular order, make use of particular types of evidence, and rely on a particular line of reasoning (logical arguments or logical fallacies) to persuade readers.

### **Pre-Writing**

Refer to your **research proposal** and to your **annotated bibliography** if needed.

In this assignment, you will need to summarize and synthesize your sources in order to evaluate them in regards to your claim. Your claim should be a logical conclusion derived from your research. Research and evaluate your sources with the idea in mind that you need to argue a claim. You must take a position, which means that you agree, disagree, or agree with qualifications on an issue.

### **Introduction**

Begin your essay by introducing the specific topic that your essay concerns. Avoid trite and broad constructions, such as, “Since the beginning of time...” You can use several distinct strategies to engage your readers (e.g., quotation, rhetorical question, provocative statement, or anecdote). Refer to the resource titled, “Introductions and Conclusions.”

Your introduction should have a clear thesis or claim about an issue or topic; you can, also, choose to include an ‘essay map,’ which outlines the rest of your essay.

### **The Body**

Each body paragraph should support your claim through illustrations, examples, details, data, or evidence. Your support should come from your research. Your body paragraphs should, also, include an analysis of your evidence; in addition, you will contribute your own original ideas in your analysis.

The basic body paragraph should be the following, which is called the MEAT Strategy:

**Main Idea** – a topic sentence

**Evidence** – a quotation, paraphrase, or data that adds to your argument

**Analysis** – this explains your evidence

**Tie** – this sentence ties up the paragraph, a concluding statement.

**The Conclusion**

Write a conclusion that explains the significance of the topic. Leave your reader with something to think about. Avoid simply repeating your thesis and essay map.

**Revision**

Carefully revise the draft of your essay by reconsidering your ideas and your organization. Consider your tone and look for logical transitions between ideas. Finally, proofread your essay for errors in word usage, syntax (word-form and word-group order), and punctuation.

**Citation Style**

Use MLA style to attribute information and expression of ideas to your sources. Every time you quote or paraphrase from the sources provide the corresponding parenthetical citation. The last page of your essay should be a “Works Cited” page, which lists the sources to which you made reference in your essay.