**Essay 2: Synthesis Essay**

**Topic: Writing about Writing**

**English 102**

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| **Video and visual resources for essay writing**  In these links, you will find the same information as in this assignment sheet presented with visuals (PowerPoint slides) as well as audio of my voice explaining each slide. These resources are designed to help you better understand the assignments and what I am looking for while I am grading.  **Essay sequence (1-4) and writing about writing:** This video and PowerPoint explains how each essay builds on the previous essay and gives an overview of the “writing about writing” topics. I designed this material to give the writer an overview of the course and the essays they will be asked to write throughout the semester.  [Video on YouTube](https://youtu.be/eUkhq4JPFow)  [Video with closed captions](https://plugin.3playmedia.com/host?mf=6751969&p3sdk_version=1.10.7&p=14704&pt=632&video_id=eUkhq4JPFow&video_target=tpm-plugin-rzhtztyy-eUkhq4JPFow)  [PowerPoint](https://pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/understanding-literacy-in-our-lives/wp-content/uploads/sites/111/2021/12/Essay-sequence-and-writing-about-writing-2.pptx)  **Essay 2 walkthrough:** This video and PowerPoint explain what is required for Essay 2 and how it is different from a “normal” essay that you write in an academic setting.  [Video on YouTube](https://youtu.be/CVIk43wwMTo)  [Video with closed captions](https://plugin.3playmedia.com/host?mf=6751976&p3sdk_version=1.10.7&p=14704&pt=632&video_id=CVIk43wwMTo&video_target=tpm-plugin-1fuzgpmt-CVIk43wwMTo)  [PowerPoint](https://pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/understanding-literacy-in-our-lives/wp-content/uploads/sites/111/2021/12/Synthesis-Walkthrough-Townsend.pptx) |

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| [**Student examples** published in *Understanding Literacy in Our Lives*](https://pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/understanding-literacy-in-our-lives/chapter/1-4-2-synthesis-essays-by-theme/) |

**Connection to previous and future assignments**

* This assignment asks writers to continue investigating topics relevant to writing studies and/or relevant to the literacy practices in their own lives.
* Writers may choose to continue to discover more about their topics from the argument from experience essay by reading and writing about scholarly publications. However, if writers want to change their topic, they may.
* This essay may be useful to writers for essay 3 (prospectus) and essay 4 (research article) because the scholarly research completed during this essay will help the writer to further understand how researchers discuss and research their topic. Writers will also be able to find different perspectives on their topics.

**Synthesis Description**

This 1,600-word academic summary and synthesis essay asks writers to find and report what researchers have found regarding reading, writing, communication, and/or learning in their chosen context. Writers will summarize and compare three academic articles and link their topic to Gee’s “What is Literacy?” This is NOT an argumentative essay. Please try to limit your searches to articles published in the last two years (if possible).

The synthesis essay is almost like the literature review section of an academic article. A literature review is where the writer of the study summarizes and connects around 15 to 20 of the most relevant existing studies to their own study. The literature review shows readers that the writer has read existing studies and understands how their study adds to the existing research and builds on knowledge in the specific field. However, instead of condensing 15 studies into a few paragraphs, the synthesis essay asks writers to summarize three academic articles and find a link to Gee’s “What is Literacy?” The link to Gee’s article connects the articles New Literacy Studies, making each synthesis relevant to writing studies.

This assignment asks writers to locate, read, and understand academic articles and to write about these articles in their own words and understanding. This assignment also asks writers to engage with key concepts from Gee’s “What is Literacy?” to see communication from the viewpoint of a literacy researcher.

**Getting Started**

Writers can type the following search terms into Google Scholar: “YOUR TOPIC and literacy”, “YOUR TOPIC and communication”, “YOUR TOPIC and writing”, or “YOUR TOPIC and reading.” For example: “health literacy”, “communication in dungeons and dragons”, “writing in high school Spanish”, or “reading Instagram.” Writers must find and download three full academic articles then read, take notes on, and summarize these three articles.

**This assignment requires the following**

1.) Discuss [Gee’s “What is Literacy?”](https://csuohio.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/CollegeWritingIITemplate/EYWr2BEgKMJOrJ9kDPdTUyAB66xqXTIYwoYe9pRcnk4XJA?e=e1Vk3N)

a.) Discuss Gee’s “What is Literacy?” in relation to at least one of the academic articles that you are also writing about. For instance: how does the other academic article discuss primary discourse, secondary discourse, learning, acquisition, or literacy? These exact terms will not be used in the articles that you are reading, but as the writer, you will make the connection to how the article discusses a topic in Gee’s article. The terms in Gee’s ”What is Literacy?” can be applied across any discipline.

b.) Define Gee’s terms for a reader unfamiliar with the article. Assume that the reader has not read any of the articles.

2.) Fully discuss three academic articles on your topic. Make sure to explain the full article to the reader. Do not paraphrase from the abstract. This will be apparent to me, and you will not receive full credit. It’s also easy to accidentally plagiarize when you paraphrase the abstract.

a.) Where does the article you are summarizing fit with other academic articles that are in the same conversation? You can find this in the article’s introduction (literature review/background/introduction and conclusion).

b.) What is the point of the article? You can find this in the article’s introduction and conclusion.

c.) How did the authors of the study come to their findings? You can find this in the introduction and methods.

d.) What kind of findings did the authors come up with? You can find this in the findings, data, discussion, and/or conclusion sections.

e.) What is the meaning of the findings? You can find this in the conclusion.

f.) What studies are needed after the study that the authors did? You can find this in the conclusion or come up with your own answer after reading the article. What did the authors miss?

g.) How does this study relate to the other studies in your synthesis?

h.) Why is the information in this article relevant to your interests?

3.) Use introductions, organization, and transitions to help the reader follow along.

a.) Introduction

I.) You can use the word “I” in this essay (and all essays for this class).

II.) You could start with why you chose the topic and a summary of what you found in the data bases.

III.) How do you personally feel about what you found?

b.) Transitions

I.) How are the articles different or the same? How do both articles relate to Gee’s terms?

c.) Conclusion

I.) What did you take away from doing the essay? What did you learn about how academic researchers study the topic you chose?

4.) I am looking for correct citation and minimal direct quotes.

a.) Since this an essay all about sources, I am going to focus on your in-text citation.

b.) Use direct quotes sparingly (only twice for the essay with less than two lines per quote). I want to see the essay through your words and understanding, not through the author’s words. Tip: pretend like you are explaining the article to someone in sixth grade.

c.) Even for paraphrasing, reference the page number of where you found the information in your source. There should be a lot of page numbers throughout your essay in the in-text citation.

5.) Use recent articles by limiting your search results to publications within the past two years. For some topics, you might need to go back further if not much work is published on the topic. But try first to look for articles published within the last two years. This will be especially relevant for topics related to technology, social media, or a topic related to communication or health literacy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**How will it be Evaluated?**

**Literature Review Grade Breakdown**

*First Draft (800 words) due via SharePoint:*

*“Final” Draft (1,600 words) due via SharePoint:*

Requirements

1,600 words

Summarize and connect three academic articles and Gee’s “What is Literacy?”

Use APA or MLA in-text citation for paraphrasing and summary (including page numbers)

A Essays

\*Unique, detailed, and insightful response to the topic

\*Draw a living picture

\*Thesis idea evident, strong, convincing, and supported by entire essay

\*Thoroughly consider the impact your experience will have on others, what the reader may find interesting, what the reader may learn, how they will react or respond, or how they may relate

\*Organization that is clearly constructed and planned

\*MLA or APA format followed closely

\*Creative title

\*Analysis of argumentative strategies strongly apparent in writing

\*Strong command of grammar, punctuation, and usage

\*Library sources, database articles, and other research are used in an excellent manner

\*A wide variety of critical thinking strategies are used to dissect and incorporate sources into own writing

 B Essays

\*A clear response to the essay prompt

\*Draw a clear picture

\*Thesis idea clear, but not supported by every element of essay=Briefly consider the impact your experience will have on others, what the reader may find interesting, what the reader may learn, how they will react or respond, or how they may relate

\*Organization is planned, but not followed the entire time

\*MLA format followed for the most part (a few mistakes)

\*Creative title

\*Analysis of argumentative strategies apparent in writing

\*Command of grammar, punctuation, and usage

\*Library sources, database articles, and other research is used in a proficient manner

\*A variety of critical thinking strategies are used to dissect and incorporate sources into own writing

C Essays

Have a thesis and are missing one element from B essays

D Essays

Have a thesis and are missing two elements from B essays

Failure

No thesis statement/and or missing three elements from B essays

**Reading Required**

-Three scholarly articles or book chapters that you find relating to your topic and the study of writing, communication, and/or literacy.

-James Gee’s “[What is Literacy?”](https://csuohio.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/English102-Spring2021-Townsend/EQqssyBIjvNLlzJpX5vt1iQBLKmHzd4eXgbDv4nruyx8ZQ?e=EvaBE5)

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| **Learning Objectives** for your reference only; you do not need to explicitly answer these questions in any place. \*Signifies a course goal stated on the syllabus  -Create a search term that combines your interests and communication, reading, writing, and/or literacy  -Locate and download full academic articles (preferably no older than 2 years old) using Google Scholar or the CSU library database  -Identify relevant resources\*  -Evaluate these resources critically and utilize them successfully\*  -Understand what constitutes plagiarism in order to avoid it in their writing\*  -Select an appropriate documentation style and use it consistently to cite sources\*  -Communicate effectively the results of this research in written form consistent with the practices and skills of college-level English\*  -Determine the nature and extent of the information needed in their writing\*  -Access needed information effectively and efficiently\*  -Evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into their knowledge base and value system\*  -Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose\*  -Understand many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and access and use information ethically and legally\*  - Identify various rhetorical features of an academic text\*  -Describe rhetorical features of an academic text\*  -Demonstrate an understanding of rhetorical appeals\*  -Organize an academic text based on audience awareness\*  -Evaluate the rhetorical choices made in various and diverse readings\*  -Compose a text that follows all rhetorical expectations for academic writing\*  -Recognize bias/subjectivity in an academic text\*  -Restate the major and supportive claims in an academic text\*  -Examine multiple positions on a topic by multiple authors\*  -Distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources\*  -Argue a topic persuasively and accurately\*  -Compose a text that incorporates deliberately chosen and trustworthy research materials\*  -Organize assignments with the steps of the writing process in mind\*  -Distinguish between higher- and lower- order concerns in the writing process\*  -Model the writing process in various formal essays\*  -Prioritize higher- and lower-order issues in the revision stage of the writing process\*  -Compose formal academic prose in a variety of genres by utilizing the writing process\*  -Choose appropriate documentation style for academic writing\*  -Recognize accepted ethical and legal standards of academic writing\*  -Employ academic writing conventions in essays of various genres\*  -Illustrate mastery of conventions of style, voice, correctness, and citation\*  -Verify the reliability of sources through multiple means\*  -Compose essays in various genres that are error-free, organized, and clear\*  -Rewrite essays based on feedback and self-reflection\*  -Demonstrate effective strategies for rewriting and revision\*  -Modify ineffective writing strategies and processes\*  -Prioritize revision choices based on both external feedback and personal choice\*  -Recognize the agency required to produce effective writing\*  -Identify ways personal choice guides writing and revision\*  -Give examples of successful writing from the course\*  -Identify assumptions about an author’s creative role\*  -Weigh the relationship between the author’s and audience’s needs in writing\*  -Integrate authorial voice and agency in multiple essays and various genres\*  -Compare data collection and analysis from different articles  -Summarize Gee’s “What is Literacy?”  -Link your topic to Gee’s “What is Literacy?”  -Compare your academic articles with one another  -Analyze your peers’ summaries and connections with peer review  -Analyze how your peers’ articles relate and differ from your articles  -Analyze how your peers writing about the academic articles |