

**AP Research Paper**  
**AP English Language and Composition**  
**Ms. Clark**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**FINAL DUE DATE: April 13, 2016**

This letter is to inform you about the Research Paper for AP English Language and Composition.

- If the paper is turned in AFTER the above date or during another class period, it will be counted late ( 30 point deduction).
- Regardless of your attendance on April 13<sup>th</sup>, the paper is due. YOU MUST EMAIL THE PAPER IF YOU ARE NOT IN CLASS.
- If you are absent for any reason throughout the process, you are responsible for making up that assignment on schedule with all due dates. ALL DUE DATES WILL STAND REGARDLESS OF ATTENDANCE.

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Student Signature

DATE

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## **AP English Language & Composition Research Assignment**

You will be *creating* an AP Exam style Synthesis Question. The Synthesis Question gives you several sources, and asks you to combine (or synthesize) the sources with your own thoughts to create a cohesive essay. This is the same goal of a research paper. Throughout the process, use the sample Synthesis Questions to help with formatting.

**The project will be broken down into several steps outlined below:**

**Step 1** – Complete Research Contract and choose a topic from the attached list **Due March 30**

**Step 2** – Find 10 sources that will help to answer the Synthesis Prompt you have created. These sources must be diverse, and according to the guidelines specified. **March 30, 31 (some class time)**

**Step 3** – **(50 points)** Write a detailed Synthesis Question Prompt Page, including directions, introduction, and assignment. Follow the examples given. You are creating this Question Prompt Page with the realization that it may be modified as your project progresses. **Draft is Due April 4**

**Step 4** – **(100 points)** Complete an annotated bibliography for all ten sources. Each source citation must be formatted according to MLA format. These will range from a few sentences to a paragraph. **Due April 5**

**Step 5** – **(50 points)** Format and turn in copies of your sources **AND** final draft of Question Prompt Page in the format used on the AP Exam. Ex. Labeled, type listed, with citation, only excerpts, etc. **Due April 7**

**Step 6** – **(100 points)** Write a response to the Synthesis Question you created, synthesizing at least 5 of the sources you found. This will be the actual “paper.” You are expected to create an introduction, thesis, body paragraphs that contain elements of exposition and argument, as well as a conclusion. Your sources should be integrated meaningfully and cohesively into **YOUR OWN NEW OPINION**. The point is not just to repeat what the sources have said, but to “have a conversation,” in which you are a participant, not a reporter. Quotations must be integrated and properly cited within the text. No Works Cited page is necessary, as you have already turned in your annotated bibliography. **Due April 13**

*Each of the above steps will have its own guidelines, instructions, and rubrics as necessary.*

## AP English Language Research Project

### Step 1 – Choosing a Topic

Possible Topics taken from the NY Times website: <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate>

- [Afghanistan \(Afghanistan RSS Feed\)](#)
- [airlines and airplanes \(airlines and airplanes RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Asia \(Asia RSS Feed\)](#)
- [banks \(banks RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Business \(Business RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Congress \(Congress RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Culture \(Culture RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Economy \(Economy RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Education \(Education RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Environment \(Environment RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Extraordinary Rendition \(Extraordinary Rendition RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Europe \(Europe RSS Feed\)](#)
- [food \(food RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Health \(Health RSS Feed\)](#)
- [housing \(housing RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Immigration \(Immigration RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Internet \(Internet RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Law \(Law RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Mideast \(Mideast RSS Feed\)](#)
- [national security \(national security RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Muslim Americans \(Muslim American RSS Feed\)](#)
- [New Jersey \(New Jersey RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Obama \(Obama RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Pakistan \(Pakistan RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Politics \(Politics RSS Feed\)](#)
- [prisons \(prisons RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Religion \(Religion RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Republican Party \(Republican Party RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Science \(Science RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Sports \(Sports RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Supreme Court \(Supreme Court RSS Feed\)](#)
- [taxes \(taxes RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Tea Party movement \(Tea Party movement RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Technology \(Technology RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Terrorism \(Terrorism RSS Feed\)](#)
- [Transportation \(Transportation RSS Feed\)](#)

Of course, you can go beyond these current debatable topics. What resonates from the text you have chosen? What implications rise when discussing the topic of your text? Choosing a topic that you can fully develop is difficult, take your time and be thoughtful.

## AP English Language Research Project

### Step 2 – Finding Sources

The most effective Synthesis Prompts give test-takers a wide variety of sources to consider. These sources are of various types, various lengths, and various opinions. The diversity allows each test-taker to choose their own individual approach to the assignment, while providing them with tools to adequately synthesize the paper.

Therefore, when choosing your sources, keep several guidelines in mind:

1) Choose sources which cover a variety of viewpoints, making sure to keep sides “even.”

2) Choose sources from a wide variety of locations and formats. Use the list below as guidance; it is certainly not all-inclusive. Requirements are in CAPITAL letters. Beyond those required types, you may choose the rest of your sources at your discretion.

\*\* ACADEMIC JOURNAL

\*\* DATA

\*\* ENCYCLOPEDIA (ONLINE OR PRINT)

Essay by an expert

Field-Specific Magazine

Government Publication

Government Website (.gov)

Graph

\*\* IMAGE

Letter to editor

Local Newspaper

National Newspaper (online or print editions)

\*\* NEWS WEBSITE

Online Article (about.com, Wikipedia, etc.)

Opinion Piece from a Newspaper/Magazine

Poll Results

Popular Magazine (*People*, *Time*, *Newsweek*)

Primary Book Source

Private Web Page

Published letter from an individual

\*\*SECONDARY PRINT SOURCE

Transcript of Oral Commentary or Interview

- 3) Consider the validity of your sources. It is okay to have an opinion piece which could obviously be biased, but make sure that sources of that type are in the minority among your others.
- 4) Remember that ultimately you are going to be taking EXCERPTS (see examples), not an entire source. That means that you should choose your sources even more carefully, considering which PARTS of a source you may want to use.
- 5) Think “outside the box” when looking for sources. The most obvious choices are not always the best. Consider the example given of using a school’s daily bell schedule. Not an obvious source about individuality vs. conformity, but was still capable of being effectively synthesized into an essay.
- 6) Have fun! To create an assignment like this is challenging, but can also be very rewarding and is evidence of high-level thinking skills!

## **AP English Language Research Project Step 3 – Synthesis Question Prompt Page**

You will be creating an AP English Synthesis Question Prompt page. (See sample packet).  
Your Prompt Page will have three parts:

**Directions:** Same as sample for all, and it should read exactly as it does on the sample.

**Introduction:** This section will serve as an introduction to your topic. It should be one to two paragraphs in length. In this paragraph, you will want to give background information about the subject at hand. Keep in mind that this **Introduction** is read before the reader has read the **Assignment** section. Be careful to address each major potential side to the issue, so you do not “slant” the reader in one direction. You will need to determine what background information is **MOST** essential to the reader.

**Assignment:** Parts of this section may very closely resemble those on the sample prompts. Your prompt should require the student to include elements of both exposition and argument.  
Examples:

**A. Exposition Assignment:** Write an essay in which you examine which issues are involved when making decisions about Space Exploration.

**B. Argument Assignment:** Write an essay in which you agree or disagree with the necessity of Space Exploration.

**C. Both:** Develop a position about what issues should be considered most important in making decisions about Space Exploration

**A. Exposition Assignment:** Write an essay in which you examine the issues related to tension in schools between individuality and conformity.

**B. Argument Assignment:** Write an essay in which you support, refute, or qualify the notion that schools’ chief goals should be to promote individuality.

**C. Both:** Write an essay in which you use a chosen issue (dress code, mandatory classes, structure of the school day) to argue the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity.

\*At this point, you will not be able to list your sources on your Prompt Sheet the way you see them on the examples.

\*Please remember when writing your prompt, ask the student to synthesize at least **FIVE** sources for support.

## **AP English Language Research Project Step 4 – Create an Annotated Bibliography**

An annotated bibliography is essentially a Works Cited page that you will create. However, rather than simply refer to the sources used in your response, it will include all 10 of the sources that you have found for your project.

A sample has been provided for your perusal.

An annotated bibliography consists of two parts: the citation and commentary about the source (the annotation).

First, create an accurate citation for each source. Do not rely on an online citation-maker to complete this task for you. The first question to ask is what type of source is it and where did you find it, so make sure you have that information available. You can use resources such as the MLA hand out from class, documentation provided by the database (EBSCO gives you a citation), or this valuable online resource:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Second, to accompany each citation, you will write an annotation which describes and evaluates that particular source. Annotations are usually between 150 and 200 words long. Include the following information for each annotation:

- Brief summary of source: What are the main points? Overview of examples? What side of the issue is it addressing?
- Evaluate the source: Why did you choose this source? How will it be useful to someone responding to your question? Is it reliable or biased?

Be sure to follow MLA Formatting for your Bibliography, exactly the same way it is in the example on our website:

- Use a hanging indent
- Entirely double-spaced, no extra spaces in between citations
- Make sure that an entire line of text is being used before jumping down to the next line.
- Do this far enough in advance so I can help you with formatting issues if they arise!

**TIP for Formatting:** Word 2007 has some strange default settings. Go into the paragraph formatting box before beginning your bibliography,

## **AP English Language Research Project**

### **Step 5 – Formatted Sources and Final Draft of Question Prompt**

Follow the examples given regarding how final copies of your sources should look.

1. Make sure that each is no more than one page long. Remember you are using excerpts.
2. Give Citation information at the top of each source.
3. Give “plain-English” background information about the source’s origins.

\*Since you may have made changes to your Prompt Page as you’ve acquired sources, turn in a final draft at this time with your sources.

## AP English Language Research Project Step 6 – Synthesis Response

You will write a sample response to your own Synthesis Prompt Question. Your question is required to have elements of both exposition and argument, so your response should also contain those elements.

Your book describes synthesis writing as “entering the conversation” that others are having, not simply recapping. Therefore, your essay should contain your original thoughts and ideas in your own words, just as your part in an actual conversation would. Think about it this way:

*If you come upon a group of people having a conversation about a particular topic, you will probably listen for a little while to understand what subject they are talking about and figure out where each of them stands. At some point, you will feel comfortable enough jumping in with your own opinion. The group may ask you why you feel that way and you can explain yourself. Then a certain group member may tell you that he totally disagrees, or he may simply raise another side to the issue. You would then respond either by re-asserting your opinion or adding to the train of thought.*

The above scenario is a model of the way a synthesis essay should be structured... except in this instance, you start with your own opinion because you have already listened to (read sources) of others.

- Take your stand in an introduction.
- Work your way into the exposition, potentially using examples from your sources.
- Re-assert your stance and back it up with solid reasons of your own explanation and from your sources.
- Conclude by clearly calling the audience to action on your topic.

**The important detail to remember is that you use your sources to support your own thoughts, NOT to report what they have to say. Recall, that’s how a conversation works. You wouldn’t participate in a conversation where you were simply repeating what everyone else had to say; that would be boring.**

Your paper should be MLA format, typed, double spaced. You must use at least five of your sources in your essay. Each time you refer to a document, whether it is by quotation, paraphrase or summary, you must cite your source. Since your source is no longer in a larger document with a page number, simply using the author’s last name in parentheses will suffice as a citation. Your annotated bibliography will be considered your Works Cited page.

## **AP English Language Research Project**

### **Step 7 – Reflection**

In a two page essay, please reflect on the research process, including the assignment, the product and your own participation in it. In a nutshell, what did you learn from this project?

Some topics to consider including in your reflection:

Do you think your prompt page was effective?

Is there anything you feel would help the test taker adequately answer your prompt?

Do you feel that your sources were diverse and appropriate?

Were they adequate in helping you write your essay?

Was there another source you would have found helpful?

Were there any sources that you found unhelpful or unrelated?

How well do you feel you did on the response?

Is there anything you would change if you were to do the project again?

You are certainly not limited to the above questions!