

## WRT 205: Unit 1 Assignment: Synthesis Essay



This unit, we've discussed what technology is and how it connects to cultural and material contexts, with a particular focus on how digital technology affects our "writing" and communicating. For your project, you will summarize and synthesize sources and comment on particular patterns and implications that seem to emerge from the conversation.

### Project Description

For this project, you will revisit our past readings and any relevant information—what "they say"—and point out particular patterns and implications. To do so, you should revisit class sources and any other relevant additions from outside sources, class conversations, interviews, etc., and try to find the main concepts, central arguments, and possible implications. Questions below will help you do this.

At a more nuts-and-bolts level, though, I expect 5+ sources, with some or all coming from in class, though interviewing, independent source gathering, etc., are also acceptable. The project should represent your sources as a type of data. In other words, what are people saying about this topic? What patterns emerge across sources? What are the big ideas? Who are the major players? Etc. At the end of the synthesis, include a discussion of **potential applications of this examination of the data**. Which audiences might benefit from knowing this information, and why? Which genres might you consider in order to present this information to those audiences, and why?

Though I have no required length, I would imagine around **1,200-1,500 words worth of effort**. That said, this project could take a variety of forms depending on your goal or comfort. It could take the form of a more traditional analytic piece, a blog-like think piece, a thoughtful TED talk video, etc. Any form is fine, as long as you address the central goals.

### Questions to Consider

Feel free to consider the following questions **for your synthesis**. You do not need to answer all of them, nor are you limited to them as long as you meet the general design of the assignment:

1. What are the main “sides” or positions?
2. What are the core concepts, frames, or findings?
3. Are there any agreements or disagreements among sources, implicit or explicit?
4. Can you make any particular connections across sources, implicit or explicit?
5. What sort of authors and audiences are taking part in this conversation?
6. Who does this topic affect and why might this matter?
7. How is research being used or not used in this particular topic?
8. How do different genres affect the conversation?

Questions for **your application section**:

1. Which audiences might benefit from knowing this information, and why?
2. Which genres might you consider in order to present this information to those audiences, and why?

**What I’m Looking For:**

	Positive	Negative
Assignment Goals	Actively uses the questions and assignment description. Stays on task. Includes both synthesis and applications section.	Strays away from the assignment focus.
Summation	Includes accurate and relevant summaries—enough information, but not too much—told in clear ways.	Does not engage with sources or does so in ineffective ways. Misrepresents sources.
Synthesis	Goes beyond mere summary and looks for engaging patterns to form larger conclusions.	Merely describes or only does surface-level exploration or analysis.
Applications	Considers the application of this data and the synthesis that you make using the questions above.	Does not consider the application.
Sources	Effectively incorporates 5+ sources through quotes, summaries, and/or paraphrases. Cites them.	Does not use sources or does so in a shallow, “fly-by” fashion without any meaningful engagement.
Organization	The assignment forms a largely cohesive whole with a clear structure and focused paragraphs.	Lacks cohesion, scattered paragraphs, a lack of structure or throughline.
Grammar and Style	Relatively free of sentence-level or document errors.	Shows obvious lack of proofreading.

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