

Writing Project Three

Synthesis¹ Essay

In college generally, the more one understands the interrelationships between viewpoints on the same issue, the more capable one can be as a student. The same applies beyond college. This assignment asks you to explore the interrelationships between two articles about male body image. This paper will help you practice generating ideas for researched position papers.

Your task for this assignment is to write a synthesis essay that incorporates Harrison Pope’s “Evolving Ideals of Male Body Image as Seen Through Action Toys” and Kim Franke-Folstad’s “G.I. Joe’s Big Biceps are Not a Big Deal.”

These readings are available to you through the course Blackboard site. Your essay should address a synthesis question that you formulate from your homework and/or conversations we have in class about the readings; summarize and analyze the views of both Harrison Pope and Kim Franke-Folstad; show how you have wrestled with the different perspectives on the question; and have synthesized these ideas to arrive at your new (or perhaps extended) view of the question.

In a sense, this assignment is like the previous paper, but it is also different. You are being asked to summarize what you read and to respond to it. However, you are being asked to use more than one reading. Thus, make sure to find a good question that both of the readings address and that can serve as the framework for your paper. This assignment also requires you to do a bit more than a strong response (although a strong response is certainly a part of this paper): please also extend your thinking into “new” territory regarding the issue. That is, please develop your opinion and ask new questions that go beyond your original opinion about male body image, action figures, the influences of media, or related topics that arise through your reading or our in-class discussions.

As you work with ideas from Harrison Pope and Kim Franke-Folstad, remember to use attribution for their work: quotation marks for any quoted passages, citations for any paraphrased sections, verbal cues to distinguish their ideas as separate from your own, and MLA documentation to distinguish your own points about the text from the authors’ ideas and language. It is crucial not only that you respond critically to our texts, but also that your ideas and those of the authors are portrayed distinctly in your paper.

Requirements

- Minimum four pages
- Double spacing with one inch margins
- 12 point standard font
- MLA format (no title page, 4 line heading upper left of first page, last name/page # in upper right of each page)

Goals of the Assignment

- Critical reading of secondary sources
- Application of ideas in secondary source(s) to analysis of an issue
- Effective integration and appropriate documentation of ideas from secondary source(s)
- Generation of new insight into the text/issue (for reader and perhaps for writer)

¹ The authors of our textbook define synthesis as “the skill of wrestling with ideas from different texts or sources, trying to forge a new whole out of potentially confusing parts. It is the principal way you enter into a conversation on a social, civic, or scholarly issue” (Ramage, Bean, and Johnson 346).

Grading Criteria

- Clear identification and discussion of the articles that the writer uses in the synthesis
- Builds text around a central theme such as a thesis statement or synthesis question
- Fully supported analysis, including detailed references to both articles
- Analysis yields some new insight or comes to some position on the synthesis/complexity of the issue
- Audience appropriate language, subject, tone, formatting; in short, writer demonstrates audience awareness and attempts to meet expected conventions (including citation and documentation of sources and editing/proofreading of final draft)

First Draft Due: Monday, August 1

Final Draft Due: Thursday, August 4