

Mastering the Essay Lesson 13 - Essay Synthesis, Part 2

Readings

- **The White Rose, A Lesson in Dissent** (Jacob G. Hornberger, Jewish Virtual Library)
- **The Fourth and Sixth Leaflets** (The White Rose Society, 1943)

Discussion Questions

- What do you find the easiest part of the process of writing an essay? Why is it the easiest? Is there something you do that makes it go smoothly?
- What's an area you feel more experienced in or grew in your writing skills over the course of the class? What helped you grow? What strategies could you recommend to others who want to grow in the same area?
- Are there some things you have changed or practices you have stopped when it comes to writing essays? Why did you stop? Would you recommend it to others?
- What part of the essay writing process do you usually find most difficult? Can other students offer ideas that might make it easier?
- Topics you might want to revisit during this class (choose many you find relevant, either for new instruction or as review): Outlining (recommended, since students will turn in an outline this week), Brainstorming, Time management, The theory of argument, analysis and persuasive technique, Refining the thesis/research topic, Essay structure (intros, bodies, conclusions, topic sentences, transitions, etc.), Conciseness and clarity, Use of quotations, Formatting pages, cover pages, bibliographies, etc., Citation styles, The process of researching effectively, Clear logic and avoiding fallacies, Plagiarism and academic honesty.
- This might be a good class to talk about the most common "writing ailments" you encounter as a tutor. Without naming names, you could give examples of common traps, and ask students for the best strategies to overcome them. This could be an effective way of getting them to process things they have been learning in tutorials.
- Discuss turning in a rough draft.
- **Make sure if you are ever asked to turn in a rough draft that you make sure you know exactly what your instructor expects.** Some expect a completed essay which you will then polish based on their recommendations. Some expect a nearly complete essay with some holes here and there. Some expect you will simply turn in something, even if only a few paragraphs, so they can check on your progress.
- In any event, it is important that if you have to turn in a rough draft, you should make the most progress you can on it before turning it in. You should not let it become a source of stress for you, or worry that the rough draft has to be perfect, but neither is it fair to turn in a rough draft only a few sentences long or that is unreadable for lack of proofreading.
- In a rough draft, you should try to get down your major ideas in some form, even if you are still figuring out the best way to structure the argument. Even in the rough draft stage, the thesis should be clear and concrete (no longer just the topic

question you had in your proposal) and the instructor should have a sense of your arguments and analysis.

- **Even if you are not asked to do so, turning in your outline at the same time as your rough draft can help the instructor better understand your project, and therefore give more specifically helpful advice.**
- If you are not expected to turn in a “complete essay” rough draft, consider annotating it with little explanations of what is missing. For example you could include a note in brackets like these ones:
 - [Insert evidence about Al Capone’s childhood.]
 - [Transition from talking about the effect of trains to the effect of automobiles on Canada’s history.]
 - [Flesh out conclusion.]

Assignment

Continuing your 1,000-word persuasive essay project, **submit BOTH a thumbnail AND a detailed/Oxford-style outline (including evidence) for the paper and a rough draft.**

Outline: The Oxford-style outline should be clearly organized along standard lines, using numbering and lettering to distinguish the different sections. Each heading should include the sub-thesis for that paragraph/section. You should include at least two pieces of evidence for every paragraph. (You may wish to refer back to the example outlines from Week 2’s Readings.)

Make sure the thesis is clear, and that the outline communicates a strong sense of your plan for convincing the reader of the truth of your position with lots of support, using information you have found in your research. The outline must be complete.

Rough draft: If you have not already done so, **begin writing the actual essay**, using your research, common sense, and outline to guide you. Make sure you write your argument in such a way that it is properly and adequately covered in the projected scope of words (1,000). Please try to turn in as complete of a rough draft as you can so that next week you can truly spend time revising. This is for your own sake, but you will not be graded on whether or not the essay is complete. If there are holes in your rough draft, annotate them with short notes in brackets, telling briefly what you need to add in.