

Synthesizing What You Read

0:00	Owl: Welcome to Synthesizing What You Read, an instructional video on reading comprehension brought to you by the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab.
0:12	Synthesis is the process of combining two or more things to create something new.
0:19	Synthesis occurs in nature all the time.
0:21	For instance, hydrogen and oxygen combine to form water.
0:27	Synthesis also happens when you read.
0:30	Reading introduces you to new ideas.
0:33	Synthesis occurs when you combine these ideas with your own or with ideas from other texts to produce new ideas.
0:40	This process might involve comparing or contrasting ideas from different points of view to draw a conclusion or make a critical evaluation.
0:49	For instance, imagine that you are researching a topic.
0:53	You will come across a variety of sources with different information and points of view.
0:58	An experienced reader will evaluate and compare this information, and draw his or her own conclusions.
1:05	This process leads to the synthesis of new ideas.
1:08	It may help to compare synthesizing to analyzing.
1:12	Whereas analyzing involves breaking down ideas into their parts, synthesizing involves combining ideas to form new ones.
1:21	Also, it's important to note that synthesis is not the same as summarizing.
1:25	Summarizing is about stating someone else's ideas in as few words as possible.
1:31	On the other hand, synthesis is a critical and creative process in which you compare or combine the ideas you've read to form new ones.
1:39	This process can involve summarizing ideas from other texts in order to compare them and draw a conclusion, but the result is a new idea.
1:48	Click here for more information on how to summarize.
1:53	Let's practice synthesizing what you read.
1:56	For this exercise, we'll read two passages with different points of view about bike lanes.
2:02	First, we'll summarize the authors' main ideas, and then we'll compare them and draw a conclusion.
2:08	Let's get started!
2:11	In the first passage, the author is in favor of bike lanes.

2:15	The author states:
2:16	Bike lanes are an essential feature of modern, urban life. Many urban residents have traded in their cars for bicycles. There are many benefits to bicycling. Bicycles don't get stuck in traffic, they don't run out of gas, and they don't break down often (and are cheap to repair when they do), they don't need insurance, they don't produce pollution, and they don't get parking tickets. Bicycles also offer an excellent way to add exercise to a busy schedule. Many cities across the nation have encouraged bicycling to cut down on traffic, accidents, and pollution. They've added bike lanes to downtown areas to provide safe and speedy thruways for bicyclists. The result is a win/win.
3:05	We can summarize this argument by pulling out some key words: bike lanes, beneficial, urban, traffic, accidents, pollution, inexpensive, safety, and exercise.
3:20	Putting it all together, we can summarize the author's argument with the following sentence:
3:25	Placing bike lanes in urban areas is beneficial because bicycling cuts down on traffic, decreases accidents, lowers pollution, and offers an inexpensive, safe, and healthy way to travel.
3:39	Now, let's look at the second passage.
3:42	In this passage, the author is against bike lanes.
3:46	The author states:
3:47	Bike lanes take away valuable space from already crowded inner-city streets. Urban areas already suffer from traffic and pedestrian congestion. Such overcrowding is worsened by the introduction of fleets of reckless bicyclists. Many bicyclists ignore street signs, causing additional accidents with cars and people. Furthermore, parked bicycles clutter congested sidewalks, making many areas impassable. These problems far outweigh the benefits of bicycling. Those who don't want to drive can hop on a bus or subway and gain many of the benefits of bicycling without taking up valuable space on the roads.
4:29	Some key words are: bike lanes, bad, urban, space, crowding, accidents, congested sidewalks, buses and subways.
4:44	We can summarize the author's argument with the following statement:
4:48	Placing bike lanes in urban areas is a bad idea because bicycles take up valuable space, create additional crowding, cause accidents, congest sidewalks, and can be replaced by better alternatives, such as buses and subways.
5:03	Now, let's practice synthesizing by combining the two summaries and drawing a conclusion:



5:10	In passage one, the author argues that placing bike lanes in urban areas is beneficial because bicycling cuts down on traffic, decreases accidents, lowers pollution, and offers an inexpensive, safe, and healthy way to travel.
5:25	On the other hand, in passage two the author contends that placing bike lanes in urban areas is a bad idea because bicycles take up valuable space, create additional crowding, cause accidents, congest sidewalks, and can be replaced by better alternatives, such as buses and subways.
5:46	These opposing points of view demonstrate that while bike lanes encourage a healthy, safe, and low-cost way to travel in cities, they also cause problems that need to be addressed through better urban planning.
5:58	The new statement synthesizes the two passages by combining and comparing the two summaries, and then drawing a conclusion that raises a new idea about the need for better urban planning to support bicycling.
6:12	I hope this video has helped you learn about the importance of synthesizing what you read and how to do it.
6:19	Thanks for listening to this instructional video on Synthesizing What You Read!
6:24	Visit the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab for more support with reading and writing skills.

