

TIES

Thematic Investigation, Exposition and Synthesis

The Synthemic Essay

Purpose:

To provide the student with opportunities to read independently, study several related sources, examine common themes in varied works, synthesize content from those works, extend ideas from primary and secondary sources, use the internet as a research tool, articulate the purposes and differences of different forms of literature, compare the presentation of a universal theme across genres, and write a complex and effective response to literature.

Standards: Reading: 2.4-2.6, 3.1-3.3, 3.5, 3.7
Writing: 1.1-1.7, 2.2, 2.3a, 2.3b

Assignment:

Step 1: The student will choose one TIES bundle. Their choice should be based on their own personal interests. Before a bundle is chosen, the student will clear each element with their parents, to allow for rated-R movies and adult themes in literature.

Step 2: The student will find every element in the bundle without guidance from the teacher. They will need to scour local libraries, online booksellers, and search engines.

Step 3: After the student has collected every element in their selected TIES bundle, they will read -independently from their coursework- each element. As they read they will collect and consider thematic threads that weave through all of the works. By the end of their reading, the student should have chosen several possible threads in the works and narrowed their choices down to one common thread that will be interesting to explore in the essay.

Step 4: Once the student has familiarized himself or herself with the entire contents of the TIES bundle, they will compose an essay with the following contents:

I. Introduction

- A. Hook: grab the audience; introduce the topic in a general sense
- B. Works: introduce the works to the reader, authors, titles, dates
- C. Thesis: clear and simple, make sure to describe your chosen thread to discuss, quickly signpost the organization of the essay

II. Exposition

- A. summarize each element of the set; this can be one large paragraph or any number of smaller paragraphs; the order of the summaries should match the order of discussion in the next paragraphs (III.A) and the order in which they were introduced (I.B). Be careful to make sure that this is not repetitive and that descriptions of similar texts are not redundant.

III. Synthesis Part 1: Identify Thread

- A. identify and describe the thread common to all of the elements in the bundle; show how it works its way through them, tying them together, making

them connected; this can be one large paragraph or any number of smaller paragraphs; the order of the discussion should match the order of the summaries in the previous paragraph (II.A) and the order in which they were introduced (I.B)

IV. Synthesis Part 2: Relevance

A. demonstrate and persuade the reader of the significance and worth of the thread; why is this thread worth discovering?; why is it important that the authors explore this thread?; why should this concept be relevant to us all?; this can be one large paragraph or any number of smaller paragraphs. Think of the relevance as kind of a conclusion-before-the-conclusion, an opportunity to explain to the reader why the bundle and the thread are topics worthy of study.

V. Conclusion

A. restate the thesis and signpost

B. make a final appeal through the use of a short new argument or appeal to pathos

C. tie-in to the hook (I.A)

VI. Bibliography

A. Organize each element of the TIES bundle, and any additional works used by the student according to the current MLA format. This should be on a separate sheet of paper attached to the back of the essay.

Product:

Student will turn in a paper copy of the Synthemetic Essay with an attached bibliography and an electronic copy as well sent to the teacher's email.

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The Resource Guide

An essential element and by-product of the TIES assignment is experience in finding and accessing information on the internet. Developing and exercising internet search skills is an important aspect of the California Language Arts standards. This assignment fulfills several of the state's educational standards.

Finding the parts of the assignment, therefore, is part of the assignment. Your instructor will not tell you specifically where to find these parts.

However, we offer these suggested resources, which were used to develop the TIES bundles, to help you in your search:

www.google.com - the indispensable internet search tool.

www.gutenberg.org - depository of many books for which the copyrights have expired, provided free-of-charge. Many of the books and short stories which comprise the bundles are available here. If the book or short story you're looking for was published before the 1920s, look here for a free copy.

www.netflix.com - Most of the films in the bundles are available here, at a fairly low cost. Netflix has a promotion, through which you may be able to obtain the required films without cost.

www.amazon.com - Most of the books and films are available here, but they're not free.

www.abebooks.com - This website provides access to the inventory of small bookstores throughout North America. Used, and usually inexpensive, copies of most of the books are available here. Also, see **www.alibris.com**.

Alameda County Library - Most of the books and many of the videos are available through the library. Your local branch may not have them "in stock," but may be able to have copies sent over from other branches that do have them. Sometimes, your local library can borrow copies from other library systems for you to check-out. These services are free. We recommend you also try local University libraries. Make sure you return all borrowed library materials.