

English 12 Synthesis Essay - Writing Prompts

Directions: The following prompts require accompanying outside sources. This assignment requires you to integrate a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. *Refer to the outside sources to support your position; avoid mere paraphrase or summary. Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument. Remember to cite your sources using MLA format.**

Assignment:

Choose one of the following prompts. Remember that a prompt is designed “to prompt” your thinking and writing. Each of the following prompts can be approached from numerous sides and each side will have both supporters and detractors. **Research, locate, and read sources carefully** (I would suggest saving the articles as PDF files in your Cloud drive). **Then, in an argumentative essay that synthesizes at least two (2) outside sources for support, write an essay that defends, challenges, OR qualifies the claim discussed in the prompts.**

1. What should the government do concerning the opioid epidemic in the United States?
2. Is the culture of cyber-bullying out of control?
3. Should high schools drop football because too many players are getting injured?
4. Should college football players get paid?
5. Do violent video games make people more violent in real life?
6. What musician, band, actor, author, or artist should be extremely famous but isn't? Explain why.
7. Do we need more diverse role models?
8. Should the school day start later?
9. How concerned should people be about climate change? Why?
10. Is America headed in the right direction? Why or why not?
11. What steps should we take to help prevent future mass shootings?
12. Should marijuana be illegal?
13. Are there topics that should be off limits in comedy?
14. How pervasive is sexual harassment in U.S. culture? What should be done about it?
15. Which social or political movements are urgently necessary now and why? Examples might include the Black Lives Matter movement, LGBTQ rights, prison reform, tax reform, the Tea Party, etc.
16. Should the United States intervene in Syria?
17. Is there a political issue that you feel strongly about that is not on this list? If so, check first to see that there are at least two current sources you can use to support your argument and then come ask me about it.

** More information on (along with a template of) MLA citation will be provided. It will not be horrible.*

Handout – English 12 – Research Using the Alabama Virtual Library

To access databases for research, complete the following steps:

1. Go to Mr. McRae’s class website at
<https://bit.ly/mrmcrae>
2. FIND DOCUMENTS in the lower right corner.
3. **Open** the Works Cited Template. It should open in Microsoft Word.
4. In Word, **click** FILE → SAVE AS → Yourlastname Works Cited.docx in your OneDrive.
5. Open the browser on your computer (e.g., Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, etc.).
6. **Enter** the web address for the Alabama Virtual Library into the address field: www.avl.lib.al.us/
 - Please note that you and your computer must be physically in Alabama to use this resource.
7. **Find** the header “Alabama Virtual Library: Connecting you to a world of knowledge”
8. Directly under the words “Connecting You,” **click** on “View All Resources.”
9. These databases are listed in alphabetical order. **Look** in the **second column** for “Points of View Reference” and **click** on the link.
10. In the search box, **enter a keyword** related to your topic (for example, “climate change” or “Black Lives Matter”). **Click** “Search.”
11. In the list that appears, there will be sources that argue FOR and AGAINST your research topic.
12. **Look** for articles that **will support** your argument and **click** “HTML Full Text.”
13. **Note** the article and **look** at the bibliography at the end. It may have sources that you will want to use. Many will have links. Consider following one of the links.
14. Before you close the article, **look** for the **column on the right** that says “TOOLS.”
15. **Find** the icon labeled “CITE” and **click** on it.
16. **Scroll down** the window until you see the citation marked “MLA.”
17. **Highlight** the lines beginning with the author’s last name and ending in a long web address.
18. **Click CTRL and C** at the same time to copy the text.
19. **Open** the Word Document and **click** on the white space.
20. When you see the blinking cursor, **type CTRL and V** at the same time to paste the text.
21. Finally, **Click CTRL and S** to save the Word document.
22. **Repeat** this with each of your sources.
23. When you are finished, **PRINT** your "Works Cited" sheet to the "CIRCULATION" printer and **turn it in** to the teacher.
24. Remember to **SAVE** your Word Document before closing the document and exiting your session on the computer.