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|  | Step #1: Identify relevant ideas in sources. |
| * For longer passages, skim and scan to get the gist or main idea first.
* Focus in on the information that is relevant to your prompt or research topic.
* As you read and highlight, try to identify subtopics or categories that your information might fit into.

Guiding questions: * Is this information useful in addressing my writing prompt or research question?
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|  | Step #2: Transfer relevant information into a synthesis matrix. |
| * The left column should list your sources. Put them in APA format now and you’ll save time later!
* The top row should list your subtopics, or areas of focus.
* Transfer your highlighted information into appropriate cells by topic and source. Some sources may have information for multiple topics. Some of your cells will remain empty.
* Paraphrase, summarize, or write information in note form to avoid plagiarizing later.
* With longer sources, you may wish to include page numbers next to the information you include so you can access that information again easily.

Guiding questions: * Did I record information in such a way that I will not accidentally plagiarize later? Will it be easy to describe the information in my own words when I begin writing?
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|  | Step #3: Combine into a continuous text. |
| * Synthesize similar or related points rather than listing the points separately.
* Use reporting language to identify sources and show relationships between author’s points.
* Include in-text citations and a reference page.

Guiding questions:* Am I simply listing summaries of articles one by one? Or am I combining, synthesizing, building, and contrasting my information?
* Did I provide in-text citations crediting the source(s) I pulled the information from?
* Do all the sources I cited appear in the reference list?
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|  | Step #4: Check work for accuracy and relevancy. |
| * Compare your essay with the information in your sources and check for accuracy.
* Make sure that you included only information that is relevant to your topic and purpose.

Guiding questions:* Does the information in my composition accurately reflect what the original sources said?
* Are there any inaccuracies?
* Did I ‘put words into the author’s mouth’ that the author didn’t actually say?
* Does the source information in my composition address my assignment prompt or research question?
* Did I include any irrelevant information?
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