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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? | |
|  | 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? | |
|  | 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? | |
|  | 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? | |