

Synthesis is the result of comparing ideas. In academic writing it is often necessary for writers to consider different points of view and decide whether to support one point of view, the other point of view, a combination of them, or neither of them. This can be followed by and support the writer's opinion. In the following example, notice how the writer summarizes the arguments of the two authors before giving the synthesis with a topic sentence. These are very simplistic arguments and examples to help you learn. This example uses two authors and is intended only to get you acquainted with the idea of synthesis.

This study has therefore revealed that children who play computer games on a regular basis experience a number of medical problems. The evidence suggests that the most serious problem is crooked posture, which is caused by their being hunched over their computers for considerable periods of time. Another common problem associated with playing computer games over long periods (when the same moves are constantly repeated) is that of pain in the hands. (extracted from p. 241) Brown, M.J. (2000). The impact of computer games on children's physical health. <i>Journal of Physical Health</i>, 23(1), 129-242.	It is claimed that computer games have negative physical effects on eyesight, hands and posture. However, all of these are caused by the computer hardware and equipment, not by the software. The same physical effects occur from prolonged usage of computers for any reason, such as word-processing. In fact, carpal tunnel syndrome was identified as a workplace ailment caused by office programs, not games. These physical effects can all be reduced or eliminated by better hardware and more attention to ergonomics, such as higher-resolution and higher-contrast screens, and supportive furniture. (Extracted from page 116) Smith, A. J. (2003). <i>Synthesis</i>. Retrieved November 13, 2012 from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, The English Language Centre Web site: http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/CILL/eap/synthesis.htm
Synthesis Example 1. The effects of playing computer games on physical health are controversial. Although	

Brown **states that** computer games can cause physical problems such as bad posture and pain in the hands (241). Smith **argues that** these problems are caused by the hardware, not the games (116). **In my opinion**, Smith's argument is weak because the same hardware or computer equipment is typically used by most computer users. Thus, the difference between the origination of the problem is largely irrelevant.

Example 2.

The effects of playing computer games on physical health are controversial. Brown **suggests that** computer games can cause physical problems such as bad posture and pain in the hands (241). **However**, Smith **points out that** these problems are caused by the hardware, not the games (116). **I believe that** the physical health problems **are causally connected to the** games **as** they encourage long periods of computer use on harmful hardware.

Example 3.

The effects of playing computer games on physical health are controversial. **According to** Brown, computer games can cause physical problems such as bad posture and pain in the hands (241). Smith **disagrees, and argues that** these problems are caused by the hardware, not the games (116). **I contend that** the physical health problems **are due to** the long periods of computer use on harmful hardware which occur when children are playing computer games.

The words in **red** are useful for synthesising.

Practice Exercise

Write your synthesis in the box, then, click the 'Check this Answer' button to see a possible answer. Your language and content do NOT have to be the same as the possible answers, and the possible answers are only intended as suggestions for content and examples of correct grammar.

Question 1.	
As was noted earlier, the majority of computer games produced today have violence as their principal theme. Despite the growing concerns of parents and teachers in the past decade, it would appear from my research that violence in computer games is becoming increasingly realistic and explicit. We are thus faced with the familiar question: Does playing violent computer games lead to aggressive behaviour in young people? This is clearly a highly complex issue. Research conducted in the past decade has revealed that young people who regularly play violent computer games have a tendency to be more aggressive than those who do not. Perhaps not surprisingly, my findings tend to support this position. (Extracted from page 122) Walker, A. "Computer games and adolescent aggression." <i>Research into the effects of computer games</i>, 2006, p. 108-124, London: St Martin's Press.	On the issue of violence, the modern media surrounds us with violence. Movies such as 'The Matrix', television programs such as the news, newspaper reports of sports such as boxing, and radio dramas often involve violence. It is difficult to watch TV for one evening without seeing an explosion, car chase, death or violence. Children's programs are especially violent, as is shown by Tom and Jerry. If young children are expected to realise that it is only a cartoon, teenagers playing computer games can also recognise that it's only a game. In addition, many computer games are non-violent, for example, 'The Sims' is a very popular game of social interaction, and football playing and management games involve almost no violence. (Extracted from page 111) Smith, A. J. <i>Computer Violence and our Children</i>. Oxford: Clarendon, 1975. Print.