

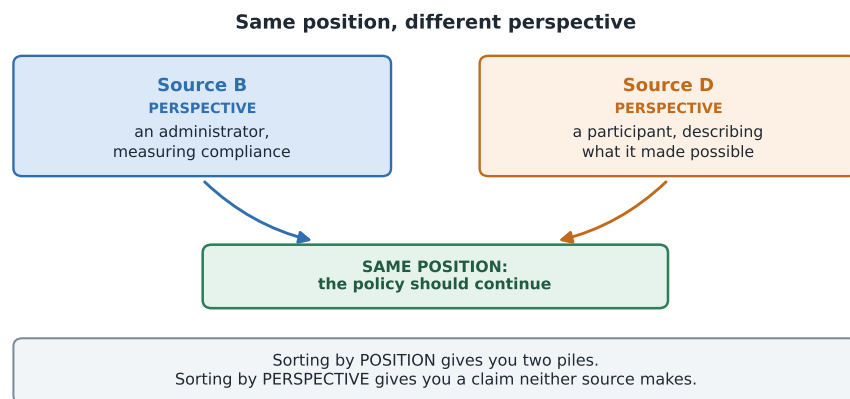
Evidence, Thesis, and Stylistic Choices

AP English Language and Composition

Identifying Claims and Evidence

Unit 6 is the synthesis unit, and it contains the single sharpest distinction in the course.

- When **synthesising**, writers **draw on arguments from multiple sources**, strategically select the most relevant information, and integrate it into their own argument.
- A source **provides information** for an argument, and **some sources are more reliable or credible than others**.
- A **position** and a **perspective** are different. Sources may hold the **same position** on a subject and yet each come from a **different perspective**.
- The strongest arguments **recognise and acknowledge the other positions** that exist.
- The degree to which a source considers other positions reflects the degree to which that source is credible - a test you can apply to any source on the exam.



Two sources can agree and still be doing completely different work in your argument

THE VERB	WHAT IT COMMITS YOU TO	USE IT WHEN
<i>states, reports</i>	nothing — you are relaying	the fact is not in dispute
<i>argues, contends</i>	that this is a position, and defensible	you will engage with it
<i>claims, asserts</i>	quiet doubt — a position without shown support	you are about to qualify it
<i>concedes, admits</i>	that this costs the source something	it is evidence against their own side
<i>demonstrates, shows</i>	that the source has proved it	you are building on it, not testing it

Says wastes the slot. The verb positions the source **before** your commentary begins, and costs no extra words

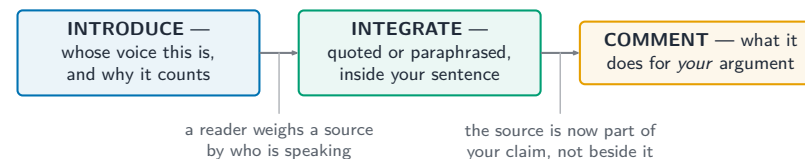
Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence

The position-and-perspective distinction is what makes synthesis possible. If you sort the sources only by position, you get two piles - for and against - and a paragraph per pile. If you sort them by **perspective**, you can say things like:

Both the economist and the teacher support the measure, but they support it for reasons that do not survive together: one values the measurable gain, the other the change in what students attempt.

That sentence is synthesis. It uses two sources, is grounded in what each actually says, and produces a claim neither source makes.

Also examinable: use the credibility test. A source that never acknowledges any other position is, by the CED's own standard, less credible - and saying so about a source is legitimate evidence in your essay.



A synthesis essay is not a tour of the sources. Move three is where the **synthesis** happens, and it is the one most often missing

Identifying the Overarching Thesis

A short but load-bearing point: **consideration and use of new evidence may require revision of the thesis statement and/or changes to the line of reasoning.**

Reading a text, this means a writer's thesis may be *responsive* - shaped by the evidence rather than imposed on it. Look for where an argument turns.

Writing a Thesis Statement

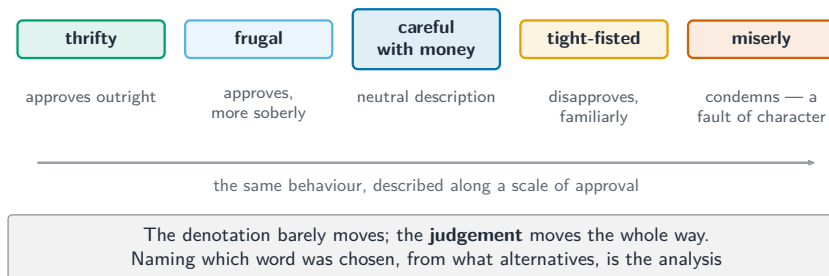
Writing under time pressure, this is permission you should use. If, while drafting, you find the evidence does not support the thesis you began with, **change the thesis**, not the evidence. Examiners reward an argument that fits its evidence; there are no marks for having predicted your own conclusion.

In practice, spend the first minutes reading sources and sketching claims *before* fixing the thesis. A thesis written after the evidence is nearly always better than one written before it.

Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax

- A writer's **tone** 语调 is the writer's **attitude or feeling about a subject**, conveyed through word choice and writing style.
- Readers **infer** tone from word choice - especially from the **positive, negative, or otherwise charged** associations of the words chosen.
- A writer's **shifts in tone** 语调转变 from one part of a text to another may suggest **qualification, refinement, or a change in perspective.**

The third is the analytical gold. A tone shift is a visible event in a text: something changed at that point, and explaining what the writer wanted the reader to do differently after it is exactly the kind of answer that scores.



Using Words and Syntax for Tone and Style

In your own writing, tone should be **consistent and controlled**, and deliberately shifted only where the argument turns - for example when moving from stating your position to conceding part of an opposing one.

Worked example (a real AP exam task). On a synthesis prompt, compare two uses of the same two sources. Weak: “*Source B agrees with Source D that the policy should continue.*” That is position-sorting, and it produces nothing. Strong: “*Sources B and D both defend the policy, but B defends it as an administrator measuring compliance while D defends it as a participant describing what it made possible - so the agreement is thinner than it appears, and the case rests on whether we are measuring the policy’s operation or its effect.*” Same two sources, but the **perspectives** are doing the work, and the claim belongs to the writer.

Exam tips

- **Position and perspective are different.** This one distinction lifts most synthesis essays out of the middle band.
- Sort sources by **perspective**, not by side. Sorting by side produces a paragraph per pile and no argument.
- Use the CED’s **credibility test**: a source that ignores all other positions is weaker, and you may say so.
- If the evidence does not fit the thesis, **change the thesis**. There are no marks for consistency with your first idea.
- A **tone shift** is a visible event. Say what changed and what the reader was meant to do after it.
- Keep your own tone controlled. Shift it only where the argument genuinely turns.