English 11 – Research Paper / Synthesis Exercise

1) Go back to “301 Prompts for Argumentative Writing” and select a new question that interests you. If this is nothing there that you want to do, you may propose a different question. You will use both first and second-hand sources for this project, so be sure to pick something with which you or someone you know have had personal experiences.

2) Do a five-minute free write with your initial response to this question.

3. Read the full article that is linked to the excerpt on the topic. Start a new project in easybib for this topic, and put this article into your works cited list. Using the same template that we used for the first synthesis exercise, fill out the template below with your notes from this article. In addition, include three powerful quotations from the article and explain why you selected them.

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| summary sentence:  |
| What is the source?  | What kind of evidence does it use?  | How might you use this source in your argument?  |
|  |  |  |
| quotation | what is significant about this quotation?  |
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4. Find two more **secondary sources** (articles with facts, historical information, data, expert opinions, etc.) that will inform your understanding of this topic. For each source, read the article, fill out the info below, and create a new entry in your easybib project. Your summary sentence must identify the title, author, date, and source of the article.

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|  |  |  |
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| What is the source?  | What kind of evidence does it use?  | How might you use this source in your argument?  |
|  |  |  |
| quotation | what is significant about this quotation?  |
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5. Find two **first-hand** (things you experienced personally or that happened to someone you know) sources that you can use to inform your understanding of this topic. For each source, fill out the info below. If you conducted a formal interview, make an easybib entry, but if this is simply something you have experienced or something you have discussed with a friend, you do not need to make an easybib entry. These summary sentences and corresponding analysis will look very different from the ones from your second-hand sources. For example, an acceptable summary sentence could be: *I used to check facebook dozens of times a day and it made me miserable, but after I forced myself to only check it once a day, I found that I enjoyed it a lot more.* or *My friend Sarah went to a summer program specifically for teenage girls who are interested in science, and she came back more inspired than ever to be a physics major in college.*

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6. Now that you have read a variety of sources that have informed your sense of this topic, return to the central question that you started with. Your answer to this question should be slightly different from your initial answer in question one because you have a deeper understanding of the topic. Try to write a counterargument thesis statement (description and example below).

**counterargument thesis statement**: includes a summary of a counterargument, usually qualified by *although* or *but*, that precedes the writer’s opinion. A counterargument thesis statement has the advantage of immediately addressing and giving weight to the counterargument, which – in the end – may serve to give the primary argument more weight.

***Although the Harry Potter series may have some literary merit, its popularity has less to do with storytelling than with merchandising.***

7. Use the organizer below (continues onto the next page) to plan your argument essay. You should plan to use all five sources in some way or other. If you have a source that you do not want to include in your essay, you need to find a different source. Remember – your sources do not all need to support your thesis. A good strategy is to have some sources that will support your argument and at least one that you can argue against in your counter argument.

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| thesis: If your thesis is clearly stated in #6, write “see above” and highlight the thesis statement. If you want to revise it, use this space to do so.   |
| **SOAPS analysis** |
| subject: what is the general topic for this essay? | occasion: what situations in the world are going on that led to this being a topic worth considering?  | audience: imagine that your audience is an employer who wants to use social media for hiring. What is important to keep in mind about this audience?  | purpose: what are you trying to accomplish in this argument essay? What would need to happen for you consider your essay to be a success?  | speaker: how do you want to present yourself? What details about your own life are relevant and useful?  |
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| **Appeals –** consider and discuss how you will use all three of the Aristotelian appeals in your argument |
| ethos: Why should anyone listen to you on this subject?  | logos: Logic – if / then statements | pathos: appeal to emotion, to morality and a sense of right and wrong |
|  |  |  |
| **Evidence –** List at least three different CATEGORIES of evidence that you will use (historical evidence, current events, personal examples, data or studies, pop culture, etc.) For each category that you will use, briefly summarize the evidence that you will use for that category.  |
| category | brief summary of the evidence that you will use |
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8) Finally, write a short outline for your argument essay on a separate sheet of paper. How will you organize this information to best support your argument.? Your opening paragraph should include a broad introduction to the topic that presents most, if not all, of the information from your SOAPS analysis and your thesis. You should decide how best to present and organize the rest of the information. Do you want to write a Rogerian Argument that immediately and thoroughly considers and discusses the opposing viewpoint, or do you want to write a Classical Oration that leaves the counterargument for the end of the essay. For this essay, you may choose to mix and blend the two models. Remember to save a powerful point or idea for your concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraphs with pathos tend to be memorable and effective.