

Synthesis Project

Due: March 16 @ 5pm

To turn in: before and after screenshots, 300-500 word descriptive paper

Instructions:

1. Choose an on-line encyclopedia article related to your topic of research. Students are encouraged (but not required) to choose a Wikipedia entry. Other encyclopedias should be pre-approved by your grading instructor. The article may be on your general topic, or on a more specific sub-topic of your research.
2. Take a screen shot of that encyclopedia entry and save as a .jpg. This is your “before” photo.
3. Using your expertise and research, improve the encyclopedia entry.**
4. Take a screen shot of the encyclopedia entry with your improvements and save as a .jpg. This is your “after photo.”
5. Write a brief paper (300-500 words) describing why the encyclopedia article you chose needed improvement, what you changed in the article, and why your revisions are improvements to the original.
6. Submit your short paper and the before and after screenshots to Sakai by Friday at 5pm.

**We realize that step 3 might need additional explanation.

First, you will need to register with Wikipedia or the encyclopedia of your choice in order to make those improvements “live” on the web. If you have chosen a non-wiki encyclopedia, you will need to find a creative way to show how you would change the encyclopedia entry.

Second, in terms of improving the Wikipedia entry, this project is designed to be open and free-form. You may choose a stub or incomplete entry, or a more complete entry that you believe needs improvement. It will be your task in your descriptive paper to persuade your grading instructor that the article you chose was in need of improvement and that the revisions you made did indeed make it a better encyclopedia entry.

As we learned from the book rep, the three reasons to revise textbook content are:

- A. to add or delete content based on relevance, accuracy, interest and availability
- B. to update content, based on new research, sources of information or developments in the field; and
- C. to change the way the information is presented, either visually or through language edits.

In revising an encyclopedia entry, it will be helpful to keep these types of revisions in mind.

Third, please remember that the emphasis of this assignment is synthesis. The most successful projects will be the ones that synthesize the information already present in the encyclopedia article with information from research sources and your own conclusions that you have drawn in the process of becoming an expert in your topic.

Remember, for the majority of the sources you have read, you have already begun the summary and analysis portion of the Summarize/Analyze/Strategize/Synthesize (SASSy) process that we discussed in class. You will need to determine what information from your annotated bibliographies will be relevant to your work, choose an appropriate organizational strategy that fits within the confines of an encyclopedia entry and use the information you have gathered to synthesize an argument about your chosen topic or subtopic.

For further guidance, posted on Sakai is the brainstorm from class listing the different kinds of revisions one can make to a document to improve it, as well as the basics of the encyclopedia genre.

Fourth and finally, keep in mind that this project is designed to provoke creativity and a problem-solving approaches to synthesis. This project is aimed at developing your analytical, revision and synthesis skills while familiarizing you with the expectations and inner-workings of the encyclopedia genre. (Plus, you get to play with Wikipedia, which professors almost never allow!) Please know that there might not be one correct way to engage with this project. Get creative, and have fun!
