

WRITING PRACTICE FILE (TS COPY)

A PANORAMA OF SYNTHESIS IN ACADEMIC WRITING

1. Synthesis in everyday life

The word “synthesis” might seem fancy at first glance, but it is something we often make in our everyday lives. Whenever you report to a friend the things several other friends have said about a film or CD, you engage in synthesis. People synthesize information naturally to help others see the connections between things they learn; for example, you have probably stored up a mental data bank of the various things you've heard about particular professors. If your data bank contains several negative comments, you might synthesize that information and use it to help you decide not to take a class from that particular professor.

2. Synthesis in academic writing

In academic context, making a synthesis is combining multiple sources or ideas into a whole, making use of the shared qualities between each individual part in order to understand a concept thoroughly. It searches for meaningful and insightful connections between different materials by the identification of common themes or traits.

It accurately reports information from the sources using different phrases and sentences.

When making a synthesis, you need to...

- read your sources or texts carefully
- understand the problem/matter/issue at hand
- decide from what perspective the sources tackle the issue (What purposes are the sources written for? To inform? To criticize? To defend?)
- select which information to include and not to include in the texts you are given; not all information and sentences work for your paper

To make sure you pick the necessary information from the texts, you should think about:

- in what ways the texts overlap
- whether they are in the same direction or in opposition
- how they stand up for the points they make
- whether those points match or correspond to each other
- how the texts relate to the overarching aspects or points made in the discussion

Once you have decided which information is appropriate for your paper,

- highlight key points to easily identify overarching ideas between / among the texts (e.g. arguments and counter-arguments)
 - organize your paragraphs in such a way that readers can immediately see where the information from the sources overlap.
- ❖ Your synthesis should make sense and help the reader understand each point in greater depth.

TOWARDS WRITING A SYNTHESIS PAPER

Locating and Reporting Information from Two Different Sources

1. Identifying Main Ideas and Key Points in Different Sources

Identifying the main ideas and key points in different sources is the first step in the path that will take you to the point where you can write a full synthesis paper.

- ❖ **In this framework (to stand as a starting point), this semester at Advanced English 1 course, you will learn how to locate key points in two sources and report them in your own words to compose the body paragraphs of an essay.**

2. Understanding the Final Writing Task in MDB1031

What will be given to you

- Two sources with differing standpoints on the same topic
- The introduction paragraph of an incomplete essay which aims to integrate information from these two sources

What you will be asked to do

- Read and understand the two sources
- Locate the main idea and the key points in each source
- Identify how the key points overlap/relate to/counter each other (Remember that the overlapping information might be in different forms such as argument/counter-argument or merit/demerit)
- Read the introduction paragraph of the target output
- Decide which piece of information to use from the two sources (choose TWO overlapping points)
- Write TWO body paragraphs that report two key points of discussion and describe how the two sources relate to/ counter each other

3. Practice

WIND POWER

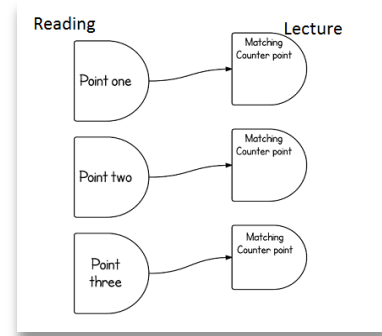
STEP 1: Analyzing the Sources

- Examine the two sources on wind power.
- The first source is excerpted from a book chapter and the second from a lecture.
- ❖ The highlighted sections in the two texts are the main ideas and the key points.

Main Idea: wind power as a promising source of energy	<p><i>The following is excerpted from a book chapter, Power Engineering by Simon Atkins, about power plants.</i></p> <p>Wind power has been suggested as a renewable energy source that could one day be used to power homes and business. By using large fan blades that rotate in the wind, entire towns may one day be powered without the need for other power sources such as fossil fuels. Indeed, there are three reasons why wind power is perhaps the most promising source of the world's energy.</p> <p>First, wind power does not pollute the environment like many other sources of power. Wind power is what is referred to as a clean energy source. It does not emit harmful greenhouse gases – the gases that cause global warming – into the atmosphere like many other power sources do. Thus, wind power is far healthier for the environment than other energy sources. In addition, wind power is very efficient, meaning that with just a small amount of wind, enough power can be generated to provide electricity to a small town. When many fuels are burned, a lot of energy is lost in the form of heat. This means that not all of the energy produced is converted to useable power. With wind power, much more of the energy created can be used to provide electricity.</p> <p>Lastly, wind power is sustainable; in essence, wind power will never run out. The world is currently facing a shortage of energy sources such as fossil fuels. However, because the wind is always present on the earth, wind power will always be available. It will never run out.</p>	Reading 1
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Main Idea: wind power as an inadequate solution to energy crisis	<p><i>The following is excerpted from a lecture by Dr. Rose Lind, University of Toronto, on wind power plants.</i></p> <p>It is clear that wind power simply does not live up to its potential. Unfortunately, with all of the promise that wind power has, there are a number of problems with wind power that make it an inadequate solution to the energy crisis.</p> <p>The first problem is that wind power does indeed pollute the environment. While it does not produce the greenhouse gases that fossil fuels do, it emits a different kind of pollution: noise. You see, when the large fan blades rotate, they create a lot of noise. So much noise that many residents of towns refuse to live near where they are making wind power. It is that bad.</p> <p>Second, wind power really is not as efficient as many people believe it is, and it simply will not be able to create enough power to replace fossil fuels. Most wind turbines today struggle to operate at thirty-five percent efficiency. Let me explain: thirty-five percent efficiency means that only thirty-five percent of the power created by the wind can actually be used as electricity. Now, thirty-five percent is a very small number. Even with thousands and thousands of turbines worldwide, we would never be able to provide enough electricity for even one country.</p> <p>Last, wind power is not particularly sustainable. While it is true that the wind will never stop blowing altogether, it certainly changes day by day. We all know how weather can change: one day it can be windy; one day it will not be windy. So what happens if you, say, have a few days in a row that are not windy? Well, you have no power. So you can only really say that wind power is sustainable in the few places in the world that get constantly strong winds.</p> <p>So wind power doesn't really fulfil all of those hopes that many people had for it. It seems that we will have to continue searching for a suitable replacement.</p>	Reading 2
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- ✓ The key points represent shared or overlapping information in the two sources.
- ✓ The two readings oppose each other. Reading 1 makes a claim about wind power. It includes three supporting reasons. Reading 2 (which is taken from a lecture) challenges this claim with three supporting reasons.



STEP 2: Locating Key Points of Discussion

Source 1 (promoting wind power as an alternative energy source)		Source 2 (rising against the idea that wind power is an adequate solution to energy crisis)	Key Points of Discussion
• clean	✗	• not clean	• pollution • efficiency • sustainability
• efficient	✗	• inefficient	
• sustainable	✗	• unsustainable	

- ✓ The two sources discuss wind power in terms of pollution, efficiency, and sustainability.

STEP 3: Analyzing the Introduction of the Target Output

INTRODUCTION

- introducing the topic (wind power)
- introducing general/background information on wind power
- pointing at the controversy; is wind power of enough capacity and effective?

Wind power has grown into advanced and frequent uses as technology develops. Now we make use of the power of the wind to provide us with the electricity to fulfill world's energy needs. However, opting for wind power for energy needs has been a subject of controversy among scholars. In this context, both the author of *Power Engineering*, Simon Atkins, and the lecturer Dr. Rose Lind from University of Toronto discuss whether wind power is a good replacement for fossil fuels.

STEP 4: Writing the Body Paragraphs

For each body paragraph:

- Start with a topic sentence – tell the reader which key point of discussion the paragraph will be based on
- Report what is argued in the first source by paraphrasing from the original.
- Report how the points developed in the first source are countered by the arguments developed in the second by paraphrasing from the original.
- ❖ *Do not forget to use linkers and signpost language appropriately.*

BODY

Paragraph 1

Topic Sentence – gives info on what point of discussion the paragraph will deal with:	← The two scholars first discuss whether wind power causes pollution or not. Simon Atkins states that wind power is good for the environment because it does not pollute the air. Conversely, Dr. Lind expresses her concern over regarding wind power as a clean source of energy. She contends that turbines used to make wind power pollute the environment with noise, which is known as 'noise pollution'.
what one of the two parties, the proponent, says about pollution	←
what the other party, the opponent, says about pollution	←

Paragraph 2

Topic Sentence – gives info on what point of discussion the paragraph will deal with:	← Another point of discussion is the sustainability of wind power. It can clearly be drawn from what Atkins puts forward that wind power is sustainable because it never runs out. Wind blows and that is the only thing we need to utilize wind power. Dr. Lind, though, asserts that wind power is only sustainable in places or areas that receive a lot of wind.
what one of the two parties, the proponent, says about	←
what the other party, the opponent, says about	←

CONCLUSION

wrapping up the main points made in the body paragraphs (optional)	In conclusion, though it may seem logical that wind power may successfully stand as an alternative for fossil fuels, from what Dr. Lind reports, wind power remains open to question as it might not be as good a replacement for fossil fuel as Atkins states.
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- ❖ *Note that there is no single format for this essay structure because the structure might change according to how the essay writer makes use of the sources given. However, most synthesis essays have similar body paragraph formats as in this model essay.*

MODEL ESSAY - WIND POWER

Wind power has grown into advanced and frequent uses as technology develops. Now we make use of the power of the wind to provide us with the electricity to fulfill world's energy needs. However, opting for wind power for energy needs has been a subject of controversy among scholars. In this context, both the author of *Power Engineering*, Simon Atkins, and the lecturer Dr. Rose Lind from University of Toronto discuss whether wind power is a good replacement for fossil fuels.

The two scholars first discuss whether wind power causes pollution or not. Simon Atkins states that wind power is good for the environment because it does not pollute the air. Conversely, Dr. Lind expresses her concern over regarding wind power as a clean source of energy. She contends that turbines used to make wind power pollute the environment with noise, which is known as 'noise pollution'.

Another point of discussion is the sustainability of wind power. It can clearly be drawn from what Atkins puts forward that wind power is sustainable because it never runs out. Wind blows and that is the only thing we need to utilize wind power. Dr. Lind, though, asserts that wind power is only sustainable in places or areas that receive a lot of wind.

In conclusion, though it may seem logical that wind power may successfully stand as an alternative for fossil fuels, from what Dr. Lind reports, wind power remains open to question as it might not be as good a replacement for fossil fuel as Atkins states.

Useful Vocabulary & Structures to Introduce Who does What

Attribution	Endorsement
Attributing or projecting claims to outside authorities in a specific or general way	Attributing claims with more or less support or certainty
According to _____ _____ argues (that) _____ discusses _____ states (that) _____ shows (that) _____ expresses _____ proves (that) _____ explains (that) _____ suggests (that) _____ demonstrates _____'s argument _____'s statement _____'s claim _____'s thesis _____'s position In _____'s view As (argued) by _____ There is (widespread) agreement that ... There is (strong) evidence to {suggest} A number of researchers (_____ 1995; _____ 2003) A study by _____ {found} that ... The researchers {suggest} that ... _____'s {claim} (that)	[neutral] reports states notes describes explains illustrates argues shows finds outlines maintains persuades In the view of According to [positive] affirms agrees stresses asserts demonstrates emphasizes makes clear [negative] claims assumes suggests proposes believes in his opinion overlooks

Useful Vocabulary & Structures To Introduce Congruent or Contrary Information/Ideas

To compare and contrast		
Similarly, ...	In the same way ...	Likewise, ...
In comparison ...	Complementary to this ...	Then again, ...
However, ...	This is in contrast to ...	In contrast, ...
And yet ...	Nevertheless, ...	Conversely, ...
On the contrary, ...	On the other hand, ...	Notwithstanding ...
Whereas ...	In contrast to ...	That aside, ...
While this is the case disputes ...	Despite this, ...

To add ideas		
Also, ...	Equally important ...	Subsequently, ...
Furthermore, ...	Moreover, ...	As well as ...
Next ...	Another essential point ...	Additionally, ...
More importantly, ...	In the same way ...	Another ...
Then, ...	In addition, ...	Besides ...
Then again, ...	Firstly, ... secondly, ... thirdly, ... finally, ...	To elaborate, ...

Exercise 1: Organizing Information and Paraphrasing

ADULT INTERFERENCE IN CHILDREN'S PLAY

Step 1: Read the following passage written by psychologist Jessica Griffin. Predict how the lecture may contrast with the reading. Then look at the note diagram and fill in the missing information.

Many adults want to protect children from all negative influences. However, this natural desire to protect children often interferes with the freedom of play. Adult interference in children's playing is problematic for three reasons. First, adult interference in children's playing can hurt children's creativity. Children who have the freedom of unstructured playtime often create rules for themselves and their playmates. They imagine complex worlds and share colorful fantasies. This helps them develop their creativity and imagination. When an adult interferes with a child's play, it can have the detrimental effect of stunting their creativity. Second, children need to develop positive peer role models and relationships. Part of childhood is learning how to relate to one's peers. This complex process involves imitating peers, learning socially acceptable communication, and negotiating to get one's needs and wants met. Developing positive peer relationships, particularly among young children, is something learned during playtime. When adults interfere in children's playing, they can delay or hamper the development of these important social skills. Finally, children need to learn how to stand up for themselves. Just like adults, children must learn how to deal with difficult peers. One of the main reasons adults, especially parents, interfere in children's playing is to protect children from bullies or other difficult children. The problem is that children often suffer more when an adult intervenes on their behalf. Children will never learn to resolve these situations themselves when an adult interferes.

Main Idea: Adult interference in children's playing is problematic.

Key Point 1: Adult interference can hurt children's creativity.

Key Point 2: Children need to develop positive peer role models which is done through playtime.

Key Point 3: Children need to learn to stand up for themselves.

Step 2: Below is important information from the reading passage above. After each sentence are two possible paraphrases of it. Choose the best paraphrase for each sentence.

A. Unstructured playtime allows children to make their own rules and share inventive fantasies, which helps them develop their creativity and imagination.

1. Children who have unstructured playtime have a chance to develop their fantasies.

2. Unstructured playtime gives children freedom that helps them develop many skills.

B. Adult interference can keep a child from forming skills that will help him or her relate to others.

1. Children might not learn social skills because of adult interference.

2. Forming skills as a child depends on how much he or she relates to others.

C. In the space below, write a paraphrase of the main idea of the reading passage.

There are three reasons why adult interference causes problems.

Step 3: Now read the following excerpt taken from a lecture by Prof. Lilly Kemmler related to the topic in Step 1. Fill in the blanks of the note diagram below with keywords or key phrases used in the lecture.

It is unfortunate that there are still people who believe that adult interference in children's playing can have harmful consequences. The truth is that adults need to monitor children's playing because play is so important to a child's development. Not doing so can have harmful effects on a child's development. First of all, adults need to carefully monitor children's unstructured playtime to make sure that it is positive. Just because children are allowed to structure their own playing does not mean they will do something positive. Many kids, left on their own, will get into trouble and in the worst cases, even get hurt. Others will waste their playtime sitting for hours in front of a TV eating junk food. They need adults to guide them to positive activities that help them develop their creativity during playtime. For example, um, adults can provide kids with stimulating toys and games and limit their time in front of the TV and playing video games. They can talk to their children about what they are playing and check in on them. This is not interference; it's careful monitoring. Second, children need adults, not peers, as role models. Too many children are not learning good behaviors from their peers. They learn these bad behaviors because adults don't monitor their playtime. In fact, it is dangerous to suggest that children should learn primarily from their peers. They need adults—parents, teachers—to teach them what is right and what is wrong. One way adults can do this is by monitoring who their children play with and what kinds of activities they engage in. Third, adults need to monitor their kids' play to protect them. Children can be very cruel to each other. They are still learning how to control themselves and don't always think about the consequences of their actions. Certainly, a child needs to learn how to defend him or herself. But children also need to be able to trust that their parents will help them if they are being hurt by another child. This is a very important lesson. Sometimes children need their parents to help them deal with their peers.

Main idea: Adults need to **monitor** children's playtime.

Key Point 1: Adults need to monitor playtime to make sure it is **positive** because many children will get into trouble otherwise.

Key point 2: Children need adults, not peers, as **role models** because children learn bad behavior from other children.

Key Point 3: Adults need to monitor children to **protect** them.

Step 4: Choose the sentences that best combine the main idea and key points from the reading passage and the lecture.

1. a. Though the reading discusses adult interference in children's playtime, the lecture disagrees by stating that it is good.
b. While the reading states that adult interference in children's playtime is problematic, the lecture says that adults need to interfere in playtime.
2. **a. While the author says that adult interference can hurt creativity, the lecturer thinks that adults should monitor playtime to make sure it is positive.**
b. Adult interference can hurt children's creativity, so adults need to monitor playtime to make sure it is positive.

3. **a. According to the author, children need to develop positive peer role models. However, the lecturer says that children need adults, not peers, as role models.**
 b. The author states that children need positive role models, while the lecturer does not believe that this is true.
4. a. The author of the passage discusses whether children should learn to stand up for themselves. The lecturer, though, discusses whether adults should monitor playtime.
b. The author states that children need to learn to stand up for themselves, while the lecturer states that adults need to monitor children to protect them.

Step 5

A. Changing Keywords

Below are four incomplete paraphrases of key information from the reading passage and the lecture. Fill in the missing parts with words or phrases from the box. These words and phrases are synonyms or are similar in meaning to the actual words used in the reading passage and lecture.

1. states / describes / implies / challenging / difficult / troublesome
2. change / harm / stop / look / see / watch
3. good / helpful / useful / require / want / ask
4. shelter / defend / raise / mothers / people / parents

1. While the reading **states** that adult interference in children's playtime is **troublesome** the lecture says that adults need to interfere in playtime.
2. While the author says that adult interference can **harm** creativity, the lecturer thinks that adults should **watch** playtime to make sure it is positive.
3. According to the author, children need to develop **good** peer role models. However, the lecturer says that children **require** adults, not peers, as role models.
4. The author states that children need to learn to **defend** themselves, while the lecture states that **parents** need to monitor children to protect them.

B. Changing Sentence Structure

Complete the following paraphrases of the sentences from part A above.

1. **The author/Griffin states** that adult interference in children's playtime is troublesome, while **the lecturer/Kemmler says** that adults need to interfere in playtime.
2. While the author says that creativity can be **harmed by adult interference**, the lecturer thinks that playtime should be **monitored by adults** to make sure it is positive.
3. Children need to develop **good peer role models** according to the author. The lecturer, though, says that children require **adults, not peers** as role models.
4. The author states that children need to learn to **defend themselves**. **The lecturer states** that parents need to monitor children to protect them.

Step 6: Read the following sentences taken from the reading and the lecture. Create new sentences by combining the ideas in each pair of sentences.

1.
 - a. When adults interfere with children's playing, it can have the detrimental effect of stunting their creativity.
 - b. They need adults to guide them toward positive activities that help them develop their creativity during playtime.

In order to prevent stunting creativity through interference, adults should guide children toward positive activities that develop creativity.

2.
 - a. Children will never learn to resolve these situations themselves when an adult interferes.
 - b. Sometimes children need their parents to help them deal with their peers.

Children should learn how to deal with difficult situations on their own; however, at times a supportive parent is beneficial.

Step 7: Write two body paragraphs that develop the thesis given in the introduction.

ADULT INTERFERENCE IN CHILDREN'S PLAY

Every child's brain development is done through play. Play provides the building blocks that will the child will require throughout life. The way adults engage in children's play changes over time as a response to meeting the needs of the child. Still, it is a question of discussion whether a child actually needs adult interference or monitoring during play. In this context, psychologist Jessica Griffin and Prof. Lilly Kemmler have differing standpoints as to the extent adults should be involved in children's play.

Exercise 2

Step 1: Read the following text and answer the questions below.

Buzz Marketing

We have all played a marketing role at some point. When we rave about a new restaurant to a friend, we (perhaps *inadvertently*) drum up business for it. If we talk excitedly about a movie we just saw, we are encouraging others to go see it as well. Dining establishments, filmmakers, and all types of businesses benefit when people talk casually and positively about a product or service. Word-of-mouth between two people has a more credible effect than a print advertisement or TV commercial. We are more likely to try something new if a person we trust suggests we check *it* out. This "buzz" marketing is highly effective for spreading the word about a new product or service. Marketing professionals who focus on buzz marketing do what they can to encourage such talk. Their work investigates conversations between small groups of friends, as well as larger scale discussions through social-media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. They keep the conversations going by responding to consumers through these tools, and kick start that conversation by organizing events to gain attention. When introducing a new granola bar with honey, for example, a marketing team may bring bags of samples to a college campus and have students dressed in bear suits hand them out. The stunt will generate buzz and – if the snack is actually tasty – motivate students to suggest others try it. The most effective buzz marketing campaigns are initially targeted toward people who are considered influencers or early adopters of products. We all know these types of people; they tend to dominate their peer group and are eager to share their knowledge. They may have their own blog that is widely read and a Twitter account with thousands of followers. These are people whose opinions are noticed because of their personality and influence. If marketers have done their job right and these early adopters share their experience of a new product, ideally, the buzz about it will grow as more people hear about it.

1. What type of text is this?

- a) critical b) informative c) argumentative d) persuasive

2. Which option gives the main idea of the passage?

- a) Buzz marketing is an effective strategy for promoting a new product or service.
b) In certain situations, buzz marketing can bring more harm than benefit.
c) Buzz marketing is not only the most popular but also the strongest strategy today.
d) The most successful buzz marketing campaigns are first targeted toward influencers.

3. What does 'it' refer to in line 6?

- a) word-of-mouth
b) print advertisement
c) TV commercial
d) something new

4. Which of the following is closest in meaning to the word *inadvertently* in line 2?

- a) deliberately b) unknowingly c) forcefully d) kindly

Step 2: Read the following two texts and write two body paragraphs developing the thesis statement given in the introduction. (You can make use of the outline given)

Reading by David Card, an economist

Buzz marketing is a type of advertising used to generate a high level of interest in a product. It gets people to spread the word about a product just by talking about it. The goal is to encourage regular people to generate excitement or "buzz" about a product and spread that positive word of mouth throughout their social networks. **A main advantage of buzz marketing is that the message spreads quickly and easily.** A marketing team just has to design the message they want to send and get that message out to the public. A well-crafted buzz marketing campaign will then take on a life of its own. Members of the target audience will discuss the product and generate excitement among their families, friends, and acquaintances. **A second advantage of buzz marketing is that people trust information gained through buzz marketing more than through traditional marketing.** This is because buzz marketing is seen simply as sharing information between friends; therefore, it is far more comfortable and believable than other marketing methods. With buzz marketing, people learn about products from someone they trust. As a result, that information is taken very seriously. **Finally, buzz marketing is an inexpensive way to make any traditional marketing campaign more effective.** Companies that have added a buzz marketing component to their traditional marketing strategy have reached more consumers at a lower cost than those that rely on traditional marketing alone.

Lecture by Economics Professor Mahmoud El-Gamal

Now, we've been talking about marketing. Today, I want to discuss one popular marketing strategy called buzz marketing. Many of the so-called advantages of buzz marketing are also its disadvantages. **First of all, buzz marketing is fast and easy, which means it spreads negative information quickly and easily, too.** If you want to get people interested in your product, so they buy it, you might choose to use buzz marketing, right? People learn about it quickly and tell all their friends. Great, right? Not always. Unless you have good testing and know that your product can live up to its claims, you should be cautious about buzz marketing. Bad information flows just as quickly and easily as good information. If there is a problem with your product and you have relied on social networks to generate positive buzz, well, um, you'll have to deal with the negative buzz that results when people find out about that problem. That can hurt your company's reputation. **Second, if you have bad buzz, people will take it more seriously if they hear it from their friends. And that is harder to counter with additional marketing.** Buzz marketing gains its credibility from word of mouth. One person tells another person, and since they know each other, they trust the information. This works fine if you have a product that lives up to its claims. But if your product has flaws, the buzz can turn negative and that can damage your company's image for a long time. When people hear bad news about a product from a competitor, they might ignore it. When they hear it from a friend or acquaintance, they take that news more seriously. **Third, buzz marketing can end up being a lot more expensive than traditional marketing, especially if you start to generate bad buzz.** Just think of this: a company starts a buzz campaign, and their product starts getting bad buzz. How does a company fix this? Well, honestly, they have to start a new advertising campaign just to counter the bad buzz. And this means a lot more money. So, if this happens, it would have been cheaper to just go with traditional advertising in the first place. So I hope you can see that buzz marketing isn't nearly as good as some people think it is. It can fail too easily.

Introduction
Main topic: _____ Main idea of the reading passage: _____ Main idea of the lecture: _____
Body
Key point 1: _____ Relevant information from the reading passage: _____ Contrary/overlapping information from the lecture: _____
Key point 2: _____ Relevant information from the reading passage: _____ Contrary/overlapping information from the lecture: _____

BUZZ MARKETING

Over the past decade, buzz marketing has become a special service for marketing professionals. Those who are skilled in the concept continually ask: how can we get our consumers to keep talking about our products? Most popularly, marketers make use of social media and get help from outside bloggers and influencers in their efforts to promote their products. Despite its popularity among marketers, there are differing viewpoints on the merits and flaws of buzz marketing as discussed by David Card and Prof. Mahmoud El-Gamal.

Extra Exercise

Urban Planning

Step 1: Read the following passage. Then look at the note diagram and fill in the missing information.

Many metropolises today face a severe problem in terms of air pollution and overcrowded streets, roadways, and bridges. One powerful public policy tool that can remedy this problem is called congestion pricing. In short, congestion pricing is a system by which motorists pay a fee to use certain roads, bridges, and tunnels during peak times of the day. In other words, a motorist who wants to use a busy street during rush hour will now have to pay a fee to do so. **There are three advantages to this policy.** First, congestion pricing **gets more people to use public transportation.** By raising the cost of using the roadways, individuals are encouraged not to drive. Instead, they are encouraged to find alternative means of transportation such as mass transit (trains, buses, subways), biking, and walking. Getting more individuals to give up driving and start using public transportation will thereby reduce air pollution from vehicle emissions. Second, congestion pricing, by taking more cars off the roadways, **means faster commuting times for everyone.** Drivers that decide to pay for the right to drive during peak periods will face less traffic and can reduce the time spent in their daily commute. Similarly, with less overall congestion, buses will also be able to reach their destinations more quickly. Third, congestion pricing **is essentially an equitable solution that will benefit the majority.** This policy will only punish those who choose to pollute the air. By increasing the cost to pollute, more people will choose not to; therefore, everyone will benefit with cleaner air.

Main idea: There are three advantages of using **congestion pricing** to control pollution and congestion.

Key point 1: It will make more people use **transportation** because they will not want to drive.

Key point 2: It will make **commuting** faster for everyone by taking cars off the road.

Key point 3: It will benefit **many people** because it only punishes people who **pollute the air.**

Step 2: Read the following excerpt taken from a lecture on the same topic. Fill in the blanks of the note diagram below with keywords or key phrases used in the lecture.

People talk about congestion pricing as the best solution to the problems of overcrowding and pollution in our cities. Well, while the policy has its advantages, by itself it is not the best solution and does not live up to its promises. Let me explain why. First of all, congestion pricing **will not necessarily encourage more people to use public transportation.** This is because, in many cities, the public transportation systems are not extensive enough to meet increased demand. In other words, buses and subways don't go to every neighborhood, and that means that even if you don't want to drive your car, you have no choice because there is no public transportation in your neighborhood. That's a problem. A second point I would like to make is that **congestion pricing will not automatically result in faster commutes like proponents say it will.** It doesn't mean that you can get to and from work in less time. This may be true for some people, but more than likely, once your city implements congestion pricing, you will actually spend more time going to and from work. Why? Well, because, as more people use public transportation, trains and buses get more crowded. That means you wait longer before you can even get on the bus or train. Third, **congestion pricing will not benefit everyone.** It's not that simple. Sure, some people will choose to drive to work because it is more convenient. And congestion pricing will certainly tax those individuals for driving. But what about the individuals who have no other choice? Many workers cannot afford to live in the city or near public transportation lines because

housing in those areas is too expensive. Those individuals must drive to work, and many of them are from poor neighborhoods and have low-paying jobs. Congestion pricing will penalize them—force them to pay a much larger part of their budget for transportation and pollution. That is simply not a fair policy, and it certainly doesn't benefit everyone. A better policy would be to expand public transportation, to build affordable housing closer to jobs, and to encourage businesses to allow more employees to work from home. Those are more effective long-term solutions that would get more cars off the streets and reduce pollution.

Main idea: Congestion pricing is not the best solution for reducing congestion and pollution.

Key Point 1: It may not make people use public transportation because many public transportation systems are not good enough.

Key Point 2: It will not result in faster commute times crowded because buses will be too crowded.

Key Point 3: It will not benefit everybody because many people do not have any other choice.

Step 3: Review your notes from both the reading and the lecture. Pay attention to the main ideas and supporting details. Using the information from your notes, complete the following outline.

Introduction

Main topic: Is congestion pricing a good way to reduce pollution and congestion?

Main idea of the reading passage: There are three advantages to using congestion pricing.

Main idea of the lecture: Congestion pricing is not the best solution.

Body

Key point 1: The impact of congestion pricing on public transportation.

Relevant information from the reading passage: More people will use public transportation as people will not want to drive.

Contrary/overlapping information from the lecture: It may not make more people use public transportation because many public transportation systems are not good enough.

Key point 2: The impact of congestion pricing on commuting times.

Relevant information from the reading passage: It will make commuting faster for everyone by taking more cars off the road.

Contrary/overlapping information from the lecture: It will not result in faster commuting times because buses will be too crowded.

Key point 3: The number of people who will benefit from congestion pricing.

Relevant information from the reading passage: It will benefit as many people as possible because it only punishes people who pollute the air.

Contrary/overlapping information from the lecture: It will not benefit everyone because many people do not have any other choice.

Conclusion

Summary: The reading says congestion pricing is good but the lecture disagrees.

Step 4

Use the main ideas and details from Steps 1, 2, and 3 to complete the passage. Include information from both the reading and the lecture.

The lecture and the passage both discuss congestion pricing, a policy that **charges** people for driving during busy times of the day. While the passage says that congestion pricing is **helpful** the lecturer argues that it is not a good idea.

According to the passage, the policy **encourages** people to use public transportation instead of cars, which will lead to less **pollution**. The lecturer points out that in some cities, buses do not go to all neighborhoods. As a result, many people will not be able to go around. Next, the passage claims that it makes travel **faster** because it **eliminates** traffic. However, the lecturer **predicts** that commute times will increase. Lastly, the passage states that congestion pricing is **fair** and beneficial to everybody. The lecturer shows that the policy puts additional **financial** stress on drivers who do not have a lot of extra money. There are many issues surrounding congestion pricing. The lecture and passage both **present** some of these issues.