

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLBUILDER

Synthesizing Information

Why Learn This Skill?

Consider what it would be like to get funding for a new after-school club. In order to present your case, you would need to talk to other students and to school administrators, and to read reports and articles. Once you had gathered all the information you needed, you would synthesize—or put together—the most important points that could help you achieve your objective.

Synthesizing information involves combining information from two or more sources. The ability to synthesize information is important because information gained from one source often sheds new light upon other information. It is like putting the pieces of a puzzle together to form a complete picture. Being able to synthesize information will help you read and write more effectively.

Learning the Skill

To write a research report, you study several sources—encyclopedias, books, and articles. Once you have gathered information, you synthesize it into a report.

Before synthesizing information, analyze each source separately. Determine the value and reliability of each source. Then, look for connections and relationships among the different sources.

Practicing the Skill

Study the passage and the photo on this page.

Bombing was used in World War II against a variety of targets, including military targets, enemy troops, and civilian populations. The bombing of civilians in World War II made the home front a dangerous place. A few bombing raids had been conducted in the last year of World War I. The bombings and the reaction to them had given rise to the argument that bombing civilian populations would be an effective way to force governments to make peace.

Beginning in early September 1940, the German air force bombed London and many other British cities



Scottish city bombed in 1941

and towns nightly. The Blitz, as the British called the German air raids, became a national experience. Londoners took the first heavy blows. Their ability to maintain their morale set the standard for the rest of the British population.

Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper.

1. What is the main idea of this passage?
2. What does the photo tell you about this topic?
3. By synthesizing (comparing and contrasting) the two sources, what information do you have about the bombing of Britain?