# Synthesising information:

## Assessment Objective (A01):

**Select and synthesise evidence from different texts**.

**This question will be found in your Component 2 examination.**

## *Synthesis* questions aim to test a reader's ability to:

- show their understanding of key information, themes or ideas
- effectively collate key details from two texts
- identify common areas/ themes or ideas across two texts.

## Before answering:

1. Read the question carefully. It is vital that you understand what you are being asked to synthesise.
2. Think about the focus of the question by stepping back from the texts. Try to get a clear understanding of the texts and task before you start to write.
3. Underline a couple of relevant key words from each text as these will help you to remain focused.

## Definition:

Synthesis is the skill of bringing together materials from more than one text to create new material. The skill of summary is useful here as it encourages a brief and focused response.

## When synthesising two texts:

**consider the following:**

- Re-read the question.
- Look at the words or phrases you have highlighted.
- Consider how you will collate the ideas from across both texts (do any of the points link up or are the points all different?) How will you present your response?
- Always refer to both texts in your responses or you will *only* be awarded a mark in Band 1.
- Check the mark tariff – this question is worth 4 marks and will only need 4 brief points.

## Examples of previous synthesis questions:

The following questions all had the following introduction:
**To answer the following questions, you must use both texts**.

Using information from both texts, explain briefly in your own words what happened when news of the mining accidents became known. [4]

Using information from both texts, explain briefly in your own words what happened as a result of the volcanoes erupting in Anjer and Iceland. [4]

Using information from both texts, explain briefly in your own words, how the spectators reacted to Blondin and Wallenda. [4]

Using information from both texts, explain briefly in your own words how whales were hunted in 1850 and are now hunted in the Faroe Islands. [4]

## TOP TIP: things you NEVER do in a synthesis response:

- **Never** give extra details or reasons, a synthesis does not require you to include these.
- **Never** try to expand on the details you have been given from the text. This should be a brief and focused answer.
- Quotation is acceptable but you should **never** copy large, unselective chunks directly from the text.
- **Never** spend much more than around 5 minutes on this type of question.

## Checklist for improving your answers:

- A synthesis checks understanding – is your answer clear?
- Does your synthesis response reflect the focus of the question?
- Have you included sufficient different points to access ALL marks?
- While there is no preferred style when completing a synthesis, most candidates perform best when dealing with one text at a time.
- Have you made it clear which text you are referring to?