Synthesis Outline

Working thesis: Though some scholars do not agree on the degree of influence that media has on children, many of them do agree that media impacts children in a negative way.

I. Main idea #1: The media can affect children’s education by focusing on entertainment.
   a. Postman: Postman explains that education is no longer education but more so simple, non-complex, entertainment. Postman describes this by stating: “The name we may properly give to an education without prerequisites, perplexity, and exposition is entertainment” (425).
   b. Hade: The books were intended to motivated children, specifically girls, to learn about their history, however, due to the nonfactual content, the books are more for entertainment than learning. According to Hade, there are several instances in which the books could have better explained history. She talks about misspelled names, misleading statements, and inaccurate maps, all of which would have been great learning points for the children but were simply overlooked to ensure simplicity (567).

Transition: Along with educational items for children, there is a huge market for children’s, well, everything.

II. Main idea #2: Companies target children with their marketing
a. Buckingham: According to David Buckingham, corporations work together to ensure the crazes are advertised on all forms of media from television shows, to computer games, to trading cards, to clothing lines and toys. This type of marketing is known as horizontal integration (595).

b. Schlosser: As said by Schlosser, television takes up the majority of children’s advertisement. An average child in the United States currently spends about twenty-one hours each week viewing television (523).

Transition: Not only does the market rely heavily on television promotions, but clubs are often very popular.

III. Main idea #3: Companies target children through clubs

a. Hade: Hade describes that “American Girl clubs meet regularly across the country, usually in bookstores, where scores of girls, each clutching her own American Girl doll meet to hear stories, make crafts, and learn about new products the Pleasant Company is developing.” (565).

b. Schlosser: Eric Schlosser agrees that clubs fuel the market and also create a sense of belonging for children. Schlosser, in his essay “Kid Kustomers,” discusses “Children’s clubs have for years been considered an effective means of targeting ads and collecting demographic information; the clubs appeal to a child’s fundamental need for status and belonging” (522).

Transition: Exposing children to media not only keeps the market growing, but it also shows children some of the unfortunate truths of American society. In children’s books and movies racial and sexual inequalities are depicted.
IV. **Main idea #4:** Media often portrays inequities.

a. **Hade:** American Girls books are supposed to be aimed at young girls who can relate to the girls in the books. But who is really an American Girl? Hade brings up this point in her essay, she states “[a]ccording the Pleasant Company, the few privileged girls such as Samantha are American Girls, but the poor, such as Nellie, are not.” (571).

b. **Sturjeon:** She states that “[o]ne of the best illustrations of this figure is the character Scar, the evil uncle in *The Lion King*, voiced by Jeremy Irons, who depends on his past history of playing sexually perverse, socially dangerous characters to animate his depiction of Scar.” (580). This, along with many other examples, such as the evil man in *Pocahontas* “who is more concerned about the state of his hair than the people he callously orders to kill as ‘savages,’” shows that children are truly exposed to sexual inequalities and discriminations (581).