

Checklist for Writing an Outline

ORGANIZATION

- Introduction:
 - ⇒ States the main topic or idea of the outline.
 - ⇒ Includes complete thesis statement (complete sentence).
- Each paragraph in your paper has a subtopic.
- Each subtopic describes the main idea for a paragraph.
- Supporting information and details for a subtopic are listed under the subtopic.
- Each piece of supporting information is listed separately.
- When supporting information is listed under a subtopic, there are at least two pieces of information in the list. If there is only one piece of information to support a subtopic, the information is included in the subtopic.
- Conclusion summarizes the main idea of the outline.

FORMAT : Either style below is fine, but *consistency is key*.

- For **sentence** outline: Each outline entry is a **complete sentence** with a period at end of sentence.
- For **topic** outline: Each outline entry (EXCEPT thesis and topic sentences) is a **phrase** with no punctuation at end of phrase. The phrases must be specific and relate to your point.
- Typed & Double-spaced using a clear, easy-to-read font, similar to this one.

SPELLING / PROOFREADING

- All words spelled correctly.
- All typing errors are corrected.

Helpful Websites:

- * http://www.crlsresearchguide.org/14_Making_An_Outline.asp
- http://www.jtasd.k12.pa.us/hs/curriculum/library/a_sample_outline.htm
- <http://www.geocities.com/athens/Oracle/4184/#outline>
- <http://depts.gallaudet.edu/englishworks/writing/process.html>
- <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/outlines.shtml>
- <http://www.ccc.comnet.edu/mla/outlines.shtml>
- <http://www.lamission.edu/english/orozco/termpaper.htm>

OUTLINE FOR RESEARCH PAPER

I. Introductory Paragraphs = 2–3 paragraphs

- A. Intro ¶ #1: Introduction (*Don't write this word. What your introduction is about in a word*)
 - 1. **Thesis statement**: COMPLETE statement with three main ideas, examples, points
 - 2. General information about topic: state the main topic or idea of outline
- B. Intro ¶ #2 (~5-7 sentences)
 - 1. Background information: “setting” of paper (time, place, important figures, events, etc.); provides context; “frames” the topic
- C. Intro ¶ #3 (~5-7 sentences)
 - 1. Continuation of background information, if necessary

II. Main Point #1 = 2–3 paragraphs

- A. 1st Body ¶: Topic sentence
 - 1. Subtopic
 - a) Supporting evidence: at least two pieces of information
- B. 2nd Body ¶: Topic sentence
 - 1. Subtopic
 - a) Supporting evidence: at least two pieces of information
- C. 3rd Body ¶: Topic sentence
 - 1. Subtopic
 - a) Supporting evidence: at least two pieces of information

III. Main Point #2 = 2–3 paragraphs

- A. 4th Body ¶: Topic sentence
 - 1. Subtopic
 - a) Supporting evidence: at least two pieces of information
- B. 5th Body ¶: Topic sentence
 - 1. Subtopic
 - a) Supporting evidence: at least two pieces of information
- C. 6th Body ¶: Topic sentence
 - 1. Subtopic
 - a) Supporting evidence: at least two pieces of information

IV. Main Point #3 = 2–3 paragraphs

- A. 7th Body ¶: Topic sentence
 - 1. Subtopic
 - a) Supporting evidence: at least two pieces of information
- B. 8th Body ¶: Topic sentence
 - 1. Subtopic
 - a) Supporting evidence: at least two pieces of information
- C. 9th Body ¶: Topic sentence
 - 1. Subtopic
 - a) Supporting evidence: at least two pieces of information

V. Conclusion/Concluding Paragraphs = 1-2 paragraphs

- A. Tie all your points together and make overall point
- B. Summarize main idea of paper/outline; NEVER introduce new material

**** Do NOT use:** “I,” or “I feel,” or “I think,” or as “I said.” Do NOT say “In conclusion,” or “as I have shown” or “as I have proven.”