

Outlining

APSU Writing Center Handout

Benefits of an Outline

An outline is a planning tool that helps you organize your thoughts before you start writing your essay. It acts like a roadmap, guiding your ideas in a clear, logical order so you can write more confidently and stay on topic.

Why Create an Outline

- Keeps your essay organized and planned in a logical order.
- Collect and connect your ideas before writing.
- Ensure each paragraph supports your thesis statement.
- Reduces writer's block and saves time, making the writing process easier.
- Helps prevent mistakes by revealing gaps in reasoning or missing evidence.

When Should I Write an Outline?

- Create an outline before you begin researching or drafting.
- Outlining early helps you organize your ideas, focus your research, and gather strong supporting evidence efficiently.

How to Create an Outline

- Choose a topic that interests you.
- Create a thesis statement that serves as your main idea or argument.
- List your main points that will support your thesis.

- Add supporting evidence such as facts, quotations, or examples.
 - Cite your sources.
- Organize your ideas by arranging your points in an order that makes the most sense.
- Create strong transition sentences that connect smoothly to the next paragraph and tie back to your thesis statement.

Introduction

1. Essay Topic:
2. Main Points to Consider:
3. Thesis Statement:

Body Paragraph (Repeat until paper is complete)

4. Topic Sentence:
5. Supporting Evidence:
6. Analysis:
7. Transition Sentence:

Conclusion

8. Restate Thesis In New Way:
9. Reflection/Call to Action:

References

Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Kathleen Jones White Writing Center. (2025). Creating an Outline. <https://www.iup.edu/writingcenter/writing-resources/organization-and-structure/creating-an-outline.html>

University of Oklahoma Writing Center. (2022). A guide to outlining (B. Washington, Graduate Writing Consultant) [PDF]. <https://www.ou.edu/content/dam/writingcenter/docs/writing-guides/guide-to-outlining.pdf>

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