



## Benefits of Making an Outline

- Organizing your ideas and making sure they flow logically
- Focusing your thesis on a specific problem or area of interest within a broader topic
- Defining boundaries for each section and paragraph within that section

### How to Start Your Outline

1. Identify your topic and write out your preliminary thesis / hypothesis / central idea.
2. Identify the main categories you need to discuss and/or the main points you will use to support your central idea.
3. Create sub-categories.

### Types of Outlines

- Topic outlines help us summarize, stay on point, and easily check the logical flow of our paper and make sure we have supported the topic and fulfilled the requirements of the assignment.
- Sentence outlines make sure we are specific and not too general.

### How to use an Outline when Writing

- The outline can help remind you of your purpose and re-motivate you if you stall when writing
- An outline makes it easier to jump from section to section and keep writing if you are getting stalled or burned out on another part of your paper

### TIPS

- An outline doesn't need to be made before you start your paper, especially if you are new to a topic and learning about it for the first time. An outline can evolve as you learn about a topic, and this approach may help you organize your ideas and double-check your understanding.
- An outline doesn't need to be rigid! You don't need a certain number of main points or sub-points (unless stated otherwise by your teacher for the assignment). Just make sure you have sufficiently and thoroughly supported your topic.
- An outline should follow the formatting required by your teacher if you need to turn it in. The three most common formats are alphanumeric (roman numerals/letters/numbers), numbered, and decimal.

## Practice topic outline worksheet

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(TITLE)

### I. INTRODUCTION

A. Motivation/Background: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Thesis/topic/purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

### II. MAIN POINT

1: \_\_\_\_\_

A. Sub-point

1: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Sub-point

2: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Sub-point

3: \_\_\_\_\_

### III. MAIN POINT

2: \_\_\_\_\_

A. Sub-point

1: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Sub-point

2: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Sub-point

3: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **IV. MAIN POINT**

3: \_\_\_\_\_

A. Sub-point 1: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Sub-point 2: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Sub-point 3: \_\_\_\_\_

V. CONCLUSION: \_\_\_\_\_

A. Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

i. Re-statement of thesis/topic/purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B. Application, importance, or future work: \_\_\_\_\_

*This Writing guide was written by Amanda Kis and updated by Jennifer Shaiman*