

Writing an Outline

An outline is a way of organizing information. It uses key words or word groups to show main topics, subtopics, details, etc.

Sample Outline Format:

TITLE OF OUTLINE

I. Main topic
 A. Important subtopic
 B. Important subtopic
 1. Detail
 a. Sub-detail
 b. Sub-detail
 c. Sub-detail
 2. Detail
 3. Detail
 a. Sub-detail
 b. Sub-detail

II. Main topic
 A. Important subtopic
 B. Important subtopic
 1. Detail
 2. Detail

Helpful Hints - Follow these guidelines to complete your outline:

1. Title your outline - write the title of your paper at the top of the page.
2. Follow the sample outline format for numbering and lettering. Main ideas are chief points. Label them I, II, III, etc. Each main topic must include at least two subtopics.
3. Subtopics for each main topic are labeled A, B, C, etc.
4. Details for subtopics are labeled 1, 2, 3, etc.
5. Sub-details or examples for details are labeled a, b, c, etc. or use a period after each division letter or number.
6. Do not place periods after topics or sub-topics not stated in the form of a sentence.
7. Begin the main topic, subtopics, and details with capital letters.
8. Maintain a parallel structure throughout the outline; if you start with phrases, don't switch to sentences.
9. Indent as shown in the example. You should be able to draw a line through all the periods after Roman numerals, another through all the periods after capital letters, etc.