

Essay Outlining

Before writing an essay, it is always a good idea to outline what you want to say in the essay. This allows you to write your paper in an organized way, and the paper's transition will be a lot smoother.

There are usually four main parts to an essay: **Introduction, Body, Thesis, and Conclusion.** It is always good to organize these parts before actually writing your paper.

Thesis: The thesis statement is a sentence or two in which your entire paper is focused around. The thesis statement summarizes exactly what the paper is going to reveal. It usually comes at the end of the Introduction.

(A good way to write a thesis statement is to write, "This paper shows that..." and then finish the sentence.)

Introduction: The introduction introduces the thesis statement and also introduces the main topic to the reading audience.

Body: The body of the paper consists of all of the supporting points of the thesis statement.

Conclusion: At the end of the essay, the conclusion concludes all of the supporting points of which the Body has stated. It usually starts with restating the thesis statement.

Thus, an outline can be as follows:

- I. Introduction**
 - a. Introduce the topic (usually 1-2 paragraphs, but can be more)
 - b. **Thesis Statement** (usually 1-2 sentences)
- II. Body**
 - a. First Main Point
 - i. Supporting material
 - ii. Supporting material
 - iii. Etc...
 - b. Second Main Point
 - i. Supporting material
 - ii. Supporting material
 - iii. And so on...
 - c. And so on...
- III. Conclusion**
 - a. **Restate the Thesis Statement**
 - b. Conclude idea of the essay and thesis statement

How to Make and Use an Essay Outline

An essay outline is probably the most important friend you will have while writing your essay. It is the scaffolding of your paper and the skeleton of your ideas. It is the framework by which you will write a killer essay. And frankly, it is difficult to write one without an outline.

When you begin writing an essay outline, use the following model as a guide:

I. INTRODUCTION:

- Thesis: _____

II. BODY PARAGRAPH I:

- Opening Sentence: _____
- Detail 1: _____
- Detail 2: _____
- Detail 3: _____

III. BODY PARAGRAPH II:

- Transition/Opening Sentence: _____
- Detail 1: _____
- Detail 2: _____
- Detail 3: _____

IV. BODY PARAGRAPH III:

- Transition/Opening Sentence: _____
- Detail 1: _____
- Detail 2: _____
- Detail 3: _____

VI. CONCLUSION:

- Reconfirmed Thesis: _____

Think through your topic carefully and organize it logically before you start writing. A good outline is the most important step in writing a good paper. Check your outline to make sure that the points covered flow logically from one to the other. Include in your outline an INTRODUCTION, a BODY, and a CONCLUSION. Make the first outline tentative.