

From Notes to Outline

Some people find outlining tedious, while others find it an important way to organize ideas and notes. Like any form of note taking, research, or writing for school, it is up to you to determine if outlining works for you.

Tips for Writing a Good Outline

- Keep it simple. Capture the idea or point you want to make; don't include unnecessary information.
- Write your thesis at the top of the outline to maintain focus throughout the outline.
- Leave space for including questions and comments later.
- Use Roman numerals and letters. Each Roman numeral should mark the beginning of a new paragraph or section, and the letters should be subjects addressed in that paragraph or section.

An example of a good, basic outline:

- I. Introduction
 - A. Introduction to topic
 - B. Thesis statement
- II. Body Paragraph 1.
 - A. Supporting fact 1
 - B. Supporting fact 2
 - C. Supporting fact 3
 - i. Sub fact
 - ii. Sub fact
- III. Body Paragraph 2.
 - A. Supporting fact 1
 - B. Counter argument
 - C. Refuting fact
- IV. Conclusion

Idea Map Outline

Visual learners might prefer a pictorial or horizontal depiction of outlines, instead of a vertical, numerical view. Beginning with a main theme at the center, then branching out of it with secondary words or phrases, can help with brainstorming and outlining a research project.

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