

Outline Checklist

- ⇒ Do you have a clear thesis that addresses the significance of your topic and answers “how/why”?
- ⇒ Do you have larger concepts that are clearly stated as topic sentences?
- ⇒ Do all of the topic sentences relate back to the thesis statement?
- ⇒ Do all of supporting ideas relate back to the topic sentence for that paragraph?
- ⇒ Do you incorporate transitions to move from one idea to the next?
- ⇒ Do you use complete sentences to express the thesis, the larger concepts, and the supporting ideas?

Hint: Using complete sentences for at least the thesis and larger concepts will make the paper come together more effectively when you are writing it.

Works Cited

“Creating Outlines.” *OWL: Roane State Community College*. 5 June 1995. Web. 23 June 2014.

“How to Create a Sentence Outline.” *AnthroNiche*. 2012. Web. 23 June 2014.

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Creating an Outline

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What is an outline?

An outline is one type of brainstorming tool that can be used to organize your writing. Using an outline before you start drafting your paper can be a great way to get started if you have writer's block.

Before you begin your paper, ask yourself the following questions...

- ◇ What do I want the reader to understand about this topic after he/she has finished this paper?

Hint: The answer to this question will help you to formulate a thesis statement.

- ◇ What are the larger concepts that will support my ideas about this topic?

Hint: Usually there will be 2-4 ideas, and these will be the main topics for your body paragraphs and should be articulated as topic sentences.

- ◇ Where do the rest of my ideas fit within these larger concepts that I've created?

Hint: These ideas will be the supporting sentences of your outline.

- ◇ Do I have any ideas that my instructor wanted me to convey or that I want to include that I haven't yet fit into one of my larger concepts?

Hint: If you have ideas that don't seem like they belong in one of the larger concepts, you may want to rethink those concepts.

What do all of these words mean?

Thesis Statement:

A thesis statement examines the significance or importance of the topic the author is writing about. It is usually located at the end of the introduction.

It also usually also briefly states the larger concepts the author intends to use to prove his/her point.

Topic Sentence:

The topic sentences clearly state each of the larger concepts one at a time. They are included at the beginning of each of the body paragraphs.

Think of a topic sentence as the thesis of each paragraph; however, your topic sentence is at the beginning of your paragraph.

Support Sentences:

These sentences offer support and evidence for your topic sentences.

Transitions:

When writing an essay, you want all of your ideas to flow together. Transitions help the writer to make connections from one idea to the next. Transitions are usually achieved through the use of transition words and can come at the end of a paragraph before a new idea or at the beginning of a new paragraph.

Here are some examples of transition words...

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| first | below | if |
| next | beside | therefore |
| then | in front | thus |
| before | behind | since |
| after | similarly | consequently |
| meanwhile | also | therefore |
| when | likewise | and |
| during | but | also |
| too | however | furthermore |
| nearby | Rather | in addition |
| above | instead | |

Sample Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Hook: Include some sort of attention grabber at the beginning of your paper.
- B. Content: Introduce your reader to the content in your paper.
- C. Thesis: Write your thesis statement, or at least a working thesis.

Transition: Lead into the next idea.

II. Topic Sentence: Using your first larger concept, write a topic sentence for the entire paragraph.

- A. Support sentence 1
- B. Support sentence 2
- C. Support sentence 3

Transition: Lead into the next idea.

III. Topic Sentence 2: Using your second larger concept, write a topic sentence for the entire paragraph.

- A. Support sentence 1
- B. Support sentence 2
- C. Support sentence 3

Transition: Lead into the next idea.

IV. Topic Sentence 3: Using your third larger concept, write a topic sentence for the entire paragraph.

- A. Support sentence 1
- B. Support sentence 2
- C. Support sentence 3

Transition: Lead into the conclusion.

V. Conclusion

- A. Restate your thesis and main points.
- B. Refer back to the Introduction and make connections for the reader.

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