

Creating Outlines

After you have a working thesis, create a rough outline. An outline will help you structure your research and organize your notes and materials. Use your rough outline to organize your thoughts.

I. Introduction

A. Introduction

- i. Attention grabber (see handout over Interesting Introductions for more help).
- ii. Roadmap that introduces what you will be writing about (subject, opposing viewpoint, and reasons)
- iii. Working thesis (generally, the last sentence of the introduction)

II. Body paragraphs

A. Background information

- i. **Tell:** Main idea
- ii. **Show:** Supporting evidence one (quotes, examples, statistics, facts); include direct quotes here, paraphrase, or summarize information.
- iii. **Share:** Explanation statement

B. Counterargument

- i. **Tell:** Counterargument/Opposing view (topic sentence; begins with a transition)
- ii. **Show:** What do “they say” against your argument? (quote, example, statistic, fact)
- iii. **Share:** Explain the evidence and end with a summary sentence that shares what the reader needs to know about the opposition

C. Refutation

- i. **Tell:** Refutation (explains why the opposing view above is wrong, incomplete, or problematic; begins with a transition and an acknowledgement of the opposition)
- ii. **Show:** Supporting evidence to prove naysayer wrong (quotes, examples, statistics, facts)
- iii. **Share:** Answer the “So what? Who cares? Why does it matter?” questions and relate back to your thesis.

D. Supporting paragraph

- i. **Tell:** Reason 1 (topic sentence)
- ii. **Show:** Supporting evidence one (quotes, examples, statistics, facts); include direct quotes here, paraphrase, or summarize information).
- iii. **Share:** Answer the “So what? Who cares? Why does it matter?” questions and then relate back to your thesis.

E. Supporting paragraph

- i. **Tell:** Reason 2 (topic sentence)
- ii. **Show:** Supporting evidence two (quotes, examples, statistics, facts); include direct quotes here, paraphrase, or summarize information)

- iii. **Share:** Answer the “So what? Who cares? Why does it matter?” questions and then relate back to your thesis.

F. Supporting paragraph (strongest evidence goes here)

- i. **Tell:** Reason 3 (topic sentence)
- ii. **Show:** Supporting evidence three (quotes, examples, statistics, facts; include direct quotes here, paraphrase, or summarize information)
- iii. **Share:** Answer the “So what? Who cares? Why does it matter?” questions and then relate back to your thesis.

III. Conclusion

- A. Real world consequences, a call to action, a future issue, or a solution

Your outline doesn't have to be written in full sentences. It can be phrases or fragments that help you remember ideas.

When including quotes in your outline, don't forget to include the name of the article, the author, and the page number(s) where you found the quote.

Remember, this is just an example. You might have more reasons or more naysayers/counterarguments. Do not feel constrained or limited by a specific number of paragraphs. Use as many paragraphs as necessary to fully prove your claim.

Additionally, you might reorder your paragraphs differently from the example above. Begin the body of your paper with a strong reason and evidence. Place your weakest evidence in the middle. And finally, save your strongest argument for last. That way, you begin with a good argument but leave your reader with the most powerful piece of evidence. For example, if your naysayer isn't your strongest argument, don't place it last. Put it in the middle instead. Order your paragraphs according to the strength of their argument.

