

Developing an Outline

An outline is:

- A logical, general description
- A schematic summary
- An organizational pattern
- A visual and conceptual design of your writing

An outline reflects logical thinking and clear classification.

Purpose

General:

- Aids in the process of writing

Specific:

- Helps you organize your ideas
- Presents your material in a logical form
- Shows the relationships among ideas in your writing
- Constructs an ordered overview of your writing
- Defines boundaries and groups

Process

Before you begin:

- Determine the **purpose** of your paper.
- Determine the **audience** you are writing for.
- Develop the **thesis** of your paper.

Then:

- **Brainstorm:** List all the ideas that you want to include in your paper.
- **Organize:** Group related ideas together.
- **Order:** Arrange material in subsections from general to specific or from abstract to concrete.
- **Label:** Create main and sub headings.

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The following information must remain intact on every handout printed for distribution.

This page is located at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/general/gl_outlinS.htmls

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Coordination

In outlining, those items which are of equal significance have comparable numeral or letter designations; an A is equal to a B, a 1 to a 2, an a to a b, etc. Coordinates should be seen as having the same value. Coordination is a principle that enables a writer to maintain a coherent and consistent document.

Correct coordination

- A. Word processing programs
- B. Database programs
- C. Spreadsheet programs

Faulty coordination

- A. Word processing programs
- B. Microsoft Word
- C. Page Maker

Explanation: Word is a type of word processing program and should be treated as a subdivision. Page Maker is a type of desktop publishing program. One way to correct coordination would be:

- A. Types of programs
 - 1. Word processing
 - 2. Desktop publishing
- B. Evaluation of programs
 - 1. Word processing
 - a. Word
 - b. Word Perfect
 - 2. Desktop Publishing
 - a. Page Maker
 - b. Quark Express

Subordination

In order to indicate levels of significance, an outline uses major and minor headings. Thus in ordering ideas, you should organize it from general to specific or from abstract to concrete- the more general or abstract the term, the higher the level or rank in the outline. This principle allows your material to be ordered in terms of logic and requires a clear articulation of the relationship between component parts used in the outline. Subdivisions of each higher division should always have the same relationship to the whole.

Correct subordination

over →

- A. Word processing programs
 - 1. Microsoft Word
 - 2. Word Perfect
- B. Desktop publishing programs
 - 1. PageMaker
 - 2. Quark Express

Faulty subordination

- A. Word processing programs
 - 1. Word
 - 2. Useful
 - 3. Obsolete

Explanation: ~~There is an A without a B.~~ Also 1, 2, and 3 are not equal; Word is a type of word processing program, and *useful* and *obsolete* are qualities. One way to correct this faulty subordination is:

qualities ≠ type of program

- A. Word
 - 1. Positive features
 - 2. Negative features
- B. Word Perfect
 - 1. Positive features
 - 2. Negative features

Directions to making Microsoft Word work for you:

Double space so the outline is easy to read. Follow this chain in Microsoft word: Format,

Bulletins and numbering, outline numbered, choose a form:

- 1) Key in major heading
 - a) Tab over once for the next level of subheading
 - i) Tab again for the list of evidence you are providing
 - ii) Hit return for each parallel listing of points
 - iii) Until you have BRIEFLY list each example
- 2) Shift+Tab = the big secret of how to go from a subdivision to a major heading
 - a) See how I moved from iii) to 2) by using shift+tab

Where to go for help:

For detailed descriptions and directions of outlines refer to <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>. They emphasize the principles of parallelism, coordination, subordination, and division.

For IR Class we will only consider subordination and coordination





Sample Outline

Purpose: To show how programs written for microcomputers relate to the process of writing.

Thesis: Microcomputer programs can have a positive effect on students' writing if both the potentials and limitations of the programs are understood.

Audience: Current college and university students.

Microcomputer Programs and the Process of Writing

I. Major Steps in the Writing Process

- A. Organizing
- B. Writing the first draft
- C. Evaluating
- D. Revising

II. Writing Programs for the Microcomputer

A. Types of Programs and Their Relationship to the Writing Process

- 1. Thought
 - a. Use in organizing
 - b. Use in revising
- 2. Word Processors
 - a. Use in writing the first draft
 - b. Use in revising
- 3. Analytical programs: grammar, style, spelling
 - a. Use in evaluating
 - b. Use in revising

B. Positive and Negative Aspects of Computer Writing Programs.

- 1. Positive features
 - a. Less time spent on repetitive or mechanical writing tasks
 - b. Greater flexibility and versatility in writing process
 - c. Increased revision strategies
 - d. Specific learning possibilities
- 2. Negative features

- a. The increased time spent on learning software programs and computers
- b. The availability of hardware and software
- c. The unrealistic expectations of users
 - 1) A cure-all for writing problems
 - 2) A way to avoid learning correct grammar/syntax/spelling
 - 3) A method to reduce time spent on writing proficiently
 - 4) A simple process to learn and execute

C. Future Possibilities of Computer Programs for Writing

- 1. Rapid change
- 2. Improved programs
- 3. Increased use and availability
- 4. More realistic assessment of value - critical work