

OUTLINE

DEVELOPMENT

1. WHAT IS an outline?

- 1.1. A logical, general description
- 1.2. A schematic summary
- 1.3. An organizational pattern
- 1.4. A visual and conceptual design of your writing

2. What does an outline REFLECT?

Logical thinking and clear classification

3. What is the PURPOSE of an outline?

- 3.1. General purpose: aids in the process of writing
- 3.2. Specific purposes:
 - 3.2.1. Helps you organize your ideas
 - 3.2.2. Presents your material in a logical form
 - 3.2.3. Shows the relationships among ideas in your writing
 - 3.2.4. Constructs an ordered overview of your writing
 - 3.2.5. Defines boundaries and groups

4. What is the PROCESS of writing an outline like?

- 4.1. Before you begin:
 - 4.1.1. Determine the **purpose** of your paper
 - 4.1.2. Determine the **audience** you are writing for
 - 4.1.3. Develop the **thesis** of your paper

4.2. Then:

4.2.1. List all the ideas that you want to include in your paper
(**BRAINSTORM**)

4.2.2. Group related ideas together (**ORGANIZE**)

4.2.3. Arrange material in subsections from general to specific
or from abstract to concrete (**ORDER**)

4.2.4. Create main and sub headings (**LABEL**)

5. General characteristics

An outline MUST have a balanced structure based on the following principles: **parallelism, coordination, subordination, and division**

PARALLELISM

Coordinate heads expressed in parallel form. Each heading and subheading should preserve parallel structure. If the first heading is a noun, the second heading should be a noun.

Examples:

- I. Choose desired colleges
 - II. Prepare application
- ("Choose" and "Prepare" are both verbs.)

Nouns: *computers, programs, users*

Verbs: *to compute, to program, to use*

Adjectives: *home computers, new programs, experienced users*

COORDINATION

- Items of equal significance have comparable numeral or letter designations.

An A = a B

a 1 = a 2

an a = a b

...

- All the information contained in Heading 1 should have the same significance as the information contained in Heading 2. The same goes for the subheadings (which should be less significant than the headings). Example:

I. Visit and evaluate college campuses.

II. Visit and evaluate college websites.

A. Note important statistics.

B. Look for interesting classes.

(Campus and websites visits are equally significant, as are statistics and classes found on college websites.)

EXERCISE 1: Which coordination is correct and which is faulty?

COORDINATION "A"	COORDINATION "B"
<p>A. Word processing programs</p> <p>B. Database programs</p> <p>C. Spreadsheet programs</p>	<p>A. Word processing programs</p> <p>B. Microsoft Word</p> <p>C. Page Maker</p>

EXERCISE 2: What could be a correct way of coordinating the elements in “B” above?

- 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

- Major and minor headings to indicate levels of significance: 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.
- Subdivisions of each higher division should always have the same relationship to the whole.
- The information in the headings should be more general, while the information in the subheadings should be more specific.

Example:

- I. Describe an influential person in your life
 - A. favorite high school teacher
 - B. grandparent

(A favorite teacher and grandparent are specific examples of influential people.)

EXERCISE 3: Which subordination is correct and which is faulty?

SUBORDINATION "A"	SUBORDINATION "B"
A. Word processing programs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Word 2. Useful 3. Obsolete 	A. Word processing programs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Microsoft Word 2. Word Perfect B. Desktop publishing programs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PageMaker 2. Quark Express

EXERCISE 4: What could be a correct way of subordinating the elements in "A" above?

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

DIVISION

- In order to divide, at least two parts are absolutely necessary (never an *A* without a *B*, a *1* without a *2*, an *a* without a *b*, etc.).
- More than one way to divide parts; however, use only one basis of division at each rank.

Example:

I. Compile resume

- A. List relevant coursework
- B. List work experience
- C. List volunteer experience

(The heading "Compile resume" is divided into 3 parts.)

6. Format

The most important rule for outlining form is ... to be **CONSISTENT!**

1. **Structure: Topic** or **sentence**

1.1. **Topic** outline

- 1.1.1. words or phrases for all entries
- 1.1.2. no punctuation after entries
- 1.1.3. advantages

- 1.1.3.1. brief overview of work
- 1.1.3.2. easier and faster to write

1.2. **Sentence** outline

- 1.2.1. complete sentences for all entries
- 1.2.2. correct punctuation
- 1.2.3. advantages

- 1.2.3.1 more detailed overview of work, including possible topic sentences
- 1.2.3.2. easier and faster for writing final paper

2. **Roman** numerals/letters or **decimal** form

2.1. **Roman** numerals/letters

- I.
- A.
- B.
- 1.
- 2.
- a.
- b.

2.2. **Decimal**

- 1.0
- 1.1
- 1.2
- 1.2.1
- 1.2.2
- 1.2.2.1
- 1.2.2.2

7. Outline samples

7.1. Proposed outline for an essay about the effects of El Niño:

- I. Disastrous weather effects
 - A. December ice storm in ME
 - 1. huge power outage
 - 2. schools out 2 wks
 - 3. jobs lost
 - 4. cost in trees
 - 5. replacing power poles, etc.
 - B. Rains in CA
 - 1. mudslides
 - 2. highways ripped apart
 - 3. expensive homes in ocean
 - 4. insurance costs
 - C. Weather in FL
 - 1. killer tornadoes
 - 2. freeze in March
 - a. dead oranges
 - b. costs of other fruits
 - D. Other disasters
 - 1. Flash floods in AZ
 - 2. ???
- II. Not so bad effects
 - A. Mild winter in New England
 - B. Flowers in Death Valley Desert
 - C. Skiing conditions in CO
 - D. Mild winter in upper plains
- III. Long-term effects
 - A. Power lines go underground
 - B. Landscape
 - 1. trees
 - 2. ???
- IV. Really important effects
 - A. Sense of powerlessness
 - B. Fear of next winter

http://ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/brainstorm_outline.htm

7. 2. Outline for an essay written by a high school student applying to college.

The College Application Process

I. Choose Desired Colleges

A. Visit and evaluate college campuses

B. Visit and evaluate college websites

1. look for interesting classes
2. note important statistics
 - a. student/faculty ratio
 - b. retention rate

II. Prepare Application

A. Write Personal Statement

1. Choose interesting topic
 - a. Describe an influential person in your life
 - i. favorite high school teacher
 - ii. grandparent
 - b. ...
2. Include important personal details
 - a. volunteer work
 - b. participation in varsity sports

III. Compile resume

A. List relevant coursework

B. List work experience

C. List volunteer experience

1. tutor at foreign language summer camp
2. counselor for suicide prevention hotline

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/544/03/>