**Why and How to Create a Useful Outline**

Why create an outline? There are many reasons; but in general, it may be helpful to create an outline when you want to show the hierarchical relationship or logical ordering of information. For research papers, an outline may help you keep track of large amounts of information. For creative writing, an outline may help organize the various plot threads and help keep track of character traits. Many people find that organizing an oral report or presentation in outline form helps them speak more effectively in front of a crowd. Below are the primary reasons for creating an outline.

* Aids in the process of writing
* 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

How do I create an outline?

* 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.

Remember: creating an outline before writing your paper will make organizing your thoughts a lot easier. Whether you follow the suggested guidelines is up to you, but making any kind of outline (even just some jotting down some main ideas) will be beneficial to your writing process.

**Contributors:**Elyssa Tardiff, Allen Brizee.
**Summary:**

This resource describes why outlines are useful, what types of outlines exist, suggestions for developing effective outlines, and how outlines can be used as an invention strategy for writing.

Tardiff, E. & Brizee, A. (2014). Why and how to create a useful outline. *Purdue Owl.* Retrieved on November 7, 2014 from <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/544/02/>

Introduction

I. Topic Sentence

 A. Detail or support

 B. Detail or support

II. Topic Sentence

 A. Detail or support

 B. Detail or support

III. Conclusion

Your outline is the first step in the organization of the research you have already completed. For a paper of your length it should be several body paragraphs long – definitely more than 3.

This is what your outline should look like. Yes I want Roman Numerals and the indentation.

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

II. PREPARE APPLICATION

A. Write personal statement

1. Choose interesting topic

a. Describe an influential person in your life

(1) Favorite high school teacher

(2) Grandparent

b. Describe a challenging life event

2. Include important personal details

a. Volunteer work

b. Participation in varsity sports

B. Revise personal statement

III. COMPILE RÉSUMÉ

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