INTERMEDIATE WRITING

OUTLINING

MEIYANTI NURCHAERANI S.S.,M.HUM

UNIVERSITAS ESA UNGGUL

JAKARTA

2018 – 2019

OUTLINING

by

Richard Nordquist

Updated October 22, 2018

An outline is a plan for or a summary of a writing project or speech.

An outline is usually in the form of a list divided into headings and subheadings that distinguish main points from supporting points. Most word processors contain an outlining feature that allows writers to format outlines automatically. An outline may be either informal or formal.

On Informal Outlines

"The working outline (or scratch outline or informal outline) is a private affair—fluid, subject to constant revision, made without attention to form, and destined for the wastebasket. But enough working outlines have been retrieved from wastebaskets that something can be said about them...A working outline usually begins with a few phrases and some descriptive details or examples. From them grow fragmentary statements, tentative generalizations, hypotheses. One or two of these take on prominence, shaping into the main ideas that seem worth developing. New examples bring to mind new ideas, and these find a place in the list of phrases, canceling out some of the original ones. The writer keeps adding and subtracting, juggling and shifting, until he has his key points in an order that makes sense to him. He scribbles a sentence, works in a transition, adds examples...By then, if he has kept expanding and correcting it, his outline comes close to being a rough summary of the essay itself." -Wilma R.

Ebbitt and David R. Ebbitt

On the Outline as Draft

"Outlining might not be very useful if writers are required to produce a rigid plan before actually writing. But when an outline is viewed as a kind of draft, subject to change, evolving as the actual writing takes place, then it can be a powerful tool for writing. Architects often produce multiple sketches of plans, trying out different approaches to a building, and they adapt their plans as a building goes up, sometimes substantially (it is fortunately much easier for writers to start over or make basic changes)." -Steven Lynn

On the Post-Draft Outline

"You might prefer...to construct an outline after, rather than before, writing a rough draft. This lets you create a draft without restricting the free flow of ideas and helps you rewrite by determining where you need to fill in, cut out, or reorganize. You may discover where your line of reasoning is not logical; you may also reconsider whether you should arrange your reasons from the most important to the least or vice versa in order to create a more persuasive effect. Ultimately, outlining after the first draft can prove useful in producing subsequent drafts and a polished final effort." -Gary Goshgarian

On Topic Outlines and Sentence Outlines

"Two types of outlines are most common: short topic outlines and lengthy sentence outlines. A topic outline consists of short phrases arranged to reflect your primary method of development. A topic outline is especially useful for short documents such as letters, e-mails, or memos...For a large writing project, create a topic outline first, and then use it as a basis for creating a sentence outline. A sentence outline summarizes each idea in a complete sentence that may become the topic sentence for a paragraph in the rough draft. If most of your notes can be shaped into topic sentences for paragraphs in the rough draft, you can be relatively sure that your document will be well organized." (Gerald J. Alred, et al., Handbook of Technical Writing, 8th ed. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006)

Formal Outlines

Some teachers ask students to submit formal outlines with their papers. Here is a common format used in constructing a formal outline.

Arrangement Of Letters And Numbers In A Formal Outline

I. (Main Topic)

A. (subtopics of I)

B.

1. (subtopics of B)

2.

a. (subtopics of 2)

b.

i. (subtopics of b)

ii.

Note that subtopics are indented so that all letters or numbers of the same kind appear directly under one another. Whether phrases (in a topic outline) or complete sentences (in a sentence outline) are used, topics and subtopics should be parallel in form. Make sure that all items have at least two subtopics or none at all.

Example Of Vertical Outline

"To outline your material vertically, write your thesis at the head of the page and then use headings and indented subheadings:

Thesis: Though many things make me want to score goals, I love scoring most of all because it momentarily gives me a sense of power.

I. Common reasons for wanting to score goals

A. Help team

B. Gain glory

C. Hear cheers of crowd

II. My reasons for wanting to score goals

A. Feel relaxed

1. Know I'm going to score a goal

2. Move smoothly, not awkwardly

3. Get relief from pressure to do well

B. See world in freeze-frame

1. See puck going into goal

2. See other players and crowd

C. Feel momentary sense of power

1. Do better than goalie

2. Take ultimate mind trip

3. Conquer anxiety

4. Return to earth after a moment

Besides listing points in order of rising importance, this outline groups them under headings that show their relation to each other and to the thesis."Besides listing points in order of rising importance, this outline groups them under headings that show their relation to each other and to the thesis." -James A.W. Heffernan and John E. Lincoln

Sources

Wilma R. Ebbitt and David R. Ebbitt, Writer's Guide and Index to English, 6th ed. Scott. Foresman and Company, 1978

Steven Lynn, Rhetoric and Composition: An Introduction. Cambridge University Press, 2010

Gary Goshgarian, et al., An Argument Rhetoric and Reader. Addison-Wesley, 2003

Gerald J. Alred, et al., Handbook of Technical Writing, 8th ed. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006

James A.W. Heffernan and John E. Lincoln, Writing: A College Handbook, 3rd ed. W.W. Norton, 1990

https://www.thoughtco.com/outline-composition-term-1691364

Writing papers in college requires you to come up with sophisticated, complex, and sometimes very creative ways of structuring your ideas. Taking the time to draft an outline can help you determine if your ideas connect to each other, what order of ideas works best, where gaps in your thinking may exist, or whether you have sufficient evidence to support each of your points. It is also an effective way to think about the time you will need to complete each part of your paper before you begin writing.

A good outline is important because:

- You will be **much less likely to get writer's block**. An outline will show where you're going and how to get there. Use the outline to set goals for completing each section of your paper.
- It will help you **stay organized and focused** throughout the writing process and **help ensure proper coherence** [flow of ideas] in your final paper. However, the outline should be viewed as a guide, not a straitjacket. As you review the literature or gather data, the organization of your paper may change; adjust your outline accordingly.
- A clear, detailed outline **ensures that you always have something to help re-calibrate your writing** should you feel yourself drifting into subject areas unrelated to the research problem. Use your outline to set boundaries around what you will investigate.
- **The outline can be key to staying motivated**. You can put together an outline when you're excited about the project and everything is clicking; making an outline is never as overwhelming as sitting down and beginning to write a twenty page paper without any sense of where it is going.

- **An outline helps you organize multiple ideas about a topic**. Most research problems can be analyzed from a variety of perspectives; an outline can help you sort out which modes of analysis are most appropriate to ensure the most robust findings are discovered.
- An outline not only helps you organize your thoughts, but it can also **serve as a schedule for when certain aspects of your writing should be accomplished**. Review the assignment and highlight the due dates of specific tasks and integrate these into your outline. If your professor has not created specific deadlines, create your own deadlines by thinking about your own writing style and the need to manage your time around other course assignments.

How to Make an Outline

What is an Outline?

An outline is a formal system used to think about and organize your paper. For example, you can use it to

see whether your ideas connect to each other, what order of ideas works best, or whether you have

sufficient evidence to support each of your points. Outlines can be useful for any paper to help you see

the overall picture.

There are two kinds of outlines: the topic outline and the sentence outline.

• The topic outline consists of short phrases. It is particularly useful when you are dealing with a

number of different issues that could be arranged in a variety of ways in your paper.

• The sentence outline is done in full sentences. It is normally used when your paper focuses on

complex details. The sentence outline is especially useful for this kind of paper because sentences

themselves have many of the details in them. A sentence outline also allows you to include those

details in the sentences instead of having to create an outline of many short phrases that goes on page

after page.

Both topic and sentence outlines follow rigid formats, using Roman and Arabic numerals along with

capital and small letters of the alphabet. This helps both you and anyone who reads your outline to follow

your organization easily. This is the kind of outline most commonly used for classroom papers and

speeches (see the example at the end of this paper). There is no rule for which type of outline is best.

Choose the one that you think works best for your paper.

Make the Outline

1. Identify the topic. The topic of your paper is important. Try to sum up the point of your paper in one

sentence or phrase. This will help your paper stay focused on the main point.

2. Identify the main categories. What main points will you cover? The introduction usually introduces

all of your main points, then the rest of paper can be spent developing those points.

3. Create the first category. What is the first point you want to cover? If the paper centers around a

complicated term, a definition is often a good place to start. For a paper about a particular theory,

giving the general background on the theory can be a good place to begin.

4. Create subcategories. After you have the main point, create points under it that provide support for

the main point. The number of categories that you use depends on the amount of information that you

are going to cover; there is no right or wrong number to use.

By convention, each category consists of a minimum of two entries. If your first category is Roman

numeral I, your outline must also have a category labeled roman numeral II; if you have a capital

letter A under category I, you must also have a capital letter B. Whether you then go on to have

capital letters C, D, E, etc., is up to you, depending on the amount of material you are going to cover.

You are required to have only two of each numbered or lettered category.

University of Washington

Psychology Writing Center

http://www.psych.uw.edu/psych.php#p=339

Box 351525

psywc@uw.edu

(206) 685-8278

The completed outline could look like this:

Television and Children's Violence

I. Introduction

A. Does television cause violence?

1. Brief mention of previous areas of research

2. Identify causation dilemma

B. Present studies on both sides

1. Some studies are "for"

2. Some studies are "against"

C. After weighing evidence it appears that TV does not cause violence

II. Research "For"

A. First study "for"

1. Method

2. Results

3. Analysis of their conclusions

a. insufficient sample size

b. but representative sample

B. Second study "for"

1. Method

2. Results

3. Analysis of their conclusions

a. faulty instructions

b. poor control group

III. Research "Against"

University of Washington

Psychology Writing Center

http://www.psych.uw.edu/psych.php#p=339

Box 351525

psywc@uw.edu

(206) 685-8278

A. Study "against"

1. Method

2. Results

3. Analysis of their conclusions

a. Perfect controls

b. No unwarranted generalizations

B. Second study "against"

1. Method

2. Results

3. Analysis of their conclusions

a. Large sample size

b. Real world setting

c. But typical problems with external validity

IV. Conclusion

A. Studies "for" all have poor methodology

B. Studies "against" all have good methodology

C. Research doesn't support that TV causes violence

D. More research needed

Keep Your Outline Flexible

Although the format of an outline is rigid, it shouldn't make you inflexible about how to write your paper.

Often when you start writing, especially about a subject that you don't know well, the paper takes new

directions. If your paper changes direction, or you add new sections, then feel free to change the outline--

just as you would make corrections on a crude map as you become more familiar with the terrain you are

exploring. Major reorganizations are not uncommon; your outline will help you stay organized and

focused.

However, when your paper diverges from your outline, it can also mean that you have lost your focus,

and hence the structure of your paper. How do you know whether to change the paper to fit the outline or

change the outline to fit the paper? A good way to check yourself is to use the paper to recreate the

University of Washington

Psychology Writing Center

http://www.psych.uw.edu/psych.php#p=339

Box 351525

psywc@uw.edu

(206) 685-8278

outline. This is extremely useful for checking the organization of the paper. If the resulting outline says

what you want it to say in an order that is easy to follow, the organization of your paper has been

successful. If you discover that it's difficult to create an outline from what you have written, then you

need to revise the paper. Your outline can help you with this, because the problems in the outline will

show you where the paper has become disorganized.

An outline is a tool used to organize written ideas about a topic or thesis into a logical order. Outlines arrange major topics, subtopics, and supporting details. Writers use outlines when writing their papers in order to know which topic to cover in what order. Outlines for

papers can be very general or very detailed. Check with your instructor to know which is expected of you. Here are some examples of different outlines. You can also learn more by watching the short video below.

The most common type of outline is an alphanumeric outline, or an outline that uses letters and numbers in the following order:

I.   Roman Numerals

A.   I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, etc.

B.   Represent main ideas to be covered in the paper in the order they will be presented

II.   Uppercase Letters

A.   A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, etc.

B.   Represent subtopics within each main idea

III.   Arabic Numbers

   A.   1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, etc.

   B.   Represent details or subdivisions within subtopics

IV.   Lowercase Letters

   A.   a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, l, m, etc.

   B.   Represent details within subdivisions

Outline with main ideas, subtopics, subdivisions and details:

Thesis: Drugs should be legalized.

I. Legalization of drugs would reduce crime rates

A. Prohibition

1. Before Prohibition, crime rate related to alcohol were low-to-medium

2. During Prohibition, crime rates related to alcohol were high

a. Arrests for drunkenness and disorderly conduct increase 41%

b. Federal prison population increased 366%

3. After Prohibition, crime rates related to alcohol were very low

B. Amsterdam/Netherlands

1. Before Amsterdam had legalized marijuana, drug-related crime rates were high

2. After Amsterdam had legalized marijuana, drug-related crime rates dropped

II. Legalization of drugs would benefit the economy

A. Taxes

1. Local taxes

2. State taxes

3. Federal taxes

B. Business Owners

1. Drug production

2. Drug quality testing

3. Drug sales

III. Legalization of drugs would benefit public health

A. Quality of drugs would increase

1. Fake/dangerous drugs eliminated

2. Fake/placebo drugs eliminated

3. Amount of active ingredient standardized and stabilized

B. Drug users with addiction issues would get more help

1. Hospitals

2. Clinics

3. Public health clinics

C. Your people would be less likely to start drugs

Full-sentence outline:

- **Each roman numeral (I, II, III, IV…) indicates the start of a new paragraph. So I. is the first sentence of the introduction, II. is the first sentence of the first paragraph of the body, III. is the first sentence of the second paragraph of the body, and so on.**
- **Each capital letter (A, B, C, D…) indicates a main point within the structure of the paragraph. So in our introduction, A. is the attention getter, B. is another attention getter, C. describes a point that makes the topic personal, and D. is the thesis statement.**
- **Each Arabic numeral (1, 2, 3, 4…) indicates a sentence or piece of supporting evidence for each main point. So in the first body paragraph (II.), point A. is a general statement that needs some additional support, so 1. provides a supporting statement of fact and the citation of where that information came from. 2. provides another sentence with supporting evidence, as does 3.**

Example of a full-sentence outline:

Warming Our World and Chilling Our Future

Thesis Statement: Today I want to share what I have learned about global warming and its causes.

I. Global warming is alive and well and thriving in Antarctica.

A. In winter 1995, an iceberg the size of Rhode Island broke off.

B. In October 1998, an iceberg the size of Delaware broke off.

C. All of us have a lot at stake.

1. Now, I am what you call a "country mouse."

2. I love the outdoors.

3. You can be a "city mouse," and like clean air, good water, and not having to worry about sun.

D. Today I want to share what I have learned about global warming and its causes.

II. Global warming is a gradual warming of the Earth from human activities (citation).

A. It is characterized by a high concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

    1. Each year five tons of CO2 are pumped into the atmosphere (citation).

    2. The carbon dioxide traps heat.

    3. 1998 set temperature records (citation).

B. Carbon pollutants also eat a hole in the ozone layer (citation).

    1. In 1998 this hole set a size record.

    2. This allows more ultraviolet radiation to reach Earth.

C. If this problem is not corrected; we may see disastrous results (citation).

    1. There could be dramatic climate changes.

        a. There could be drought in the middle of continents.

        b. There could be many severe storms.

        c. There could be rising sea levels that would destroy coastal areas.

    2. There could be serious health problems.

        a. There could be an increase in skin cancer.

        b. There could be an increase in cataracts.

        c. There could be damaged immune systems.

D. Now that you understand what global warming is and why it is important, let's examine its major causes.

III. The loss of woodlands adds to global warming (citation).
    …..

IV. Industrial emissions accelerate global warming (citation).
    …..

V. Personal energy consumption magnifies global warming (citation).
    …..

VI. In conclusion, if you want to know why we have global warming, listen for the falling trees, watch the industrial smokestacks darkening the sky, and smell the exhaust fumes we are pumping into the air.

A. Gore told a story on how global warming can sneak up on us.

B. Addressing the National Academy of Sciences, the vice president said, "If dropped into a pot of boiling water…."

C. The more we know about global warming, the more likely we are to jump and the less likely we are to be cooked.

http://rasmussen.libanswers.com/faq/32339

ABSTRACT

Definition

An abstract summarizes, usually in one paragraph of 300 words or less, the major aspects of the entire paper in a prescribed sequence that includes: 1) the overall purpose of the study and the research problem(s) you investigated; 2) the basic design of the study; 3) major findings or trends found as a result of your analysis; and, 4) a brief summary of your interpretations and conclusions.

Importance of a Good Abstract

Sometimes your professor will ask you to include an abstract, or general summary of your work, with your research paper. **The abstract allows you to elaborate upon each major aspect of the paper and helps readers decide whether they want to read the rest of the paper.** Therefore, enough key information [e.g., summary results, observations, trends, etc.] must be included to make the abstract useful to someone who may want to examine your work.

How do you know when you have enough information in your abstract? A simple rule-of-thumb is to imagine that you are another researcher doing a similar study. Then ask yourself: if your abstract was the only part of the paper you could access, would you be happy with the

amount of information presented there? Does it tell the whole story about your study? If the answer is "no" then the abstract likely needs to be revised.

How to Write a Research Abstract. Office of Undergraduate Research. University of Kentucky; Staiger, David L. "What Today's Students Need to Know about Writing Abstracts." *International Journal of Business Communication* January 3 (1966): 29-33; Swales, John M. and Christine B. Feak. *Abstracts and the Writing of Abstracts*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2009.

Structure and Writing Style

I. Types of Abstracts

To begin, you need to determine which type of abstract you should include with your paper. There are four general types.

Critical Abstract
A critical abstract provides, in addition to describing main findings and information, a judgement or comment about the study's validity, reliability, or completeness. The researcher evaluates the paper and often compares it with other works on the same subject. Critical abstracts are generally 400-500 words in length due to the additional interpretive commentary. These types of abstracts are used infrequently.

Descriptive Abstract
A descriptive abstract indicates the type of information found in the work. It makes no judgments about the work, nor does it provide results or conclusions of the research. It does incorporate key words found in the text and may include the purpose, methods, and scope of the research. Essentially, the descriptive abstract only describes the work being summarized. Some researchers consider it an outline of the work, rather than a summary. Descriptive abstracts are usually very short, 100 words or less.

Informative Abstract
The majority of abstracts are informative. While they still do not critique or evaluate a work, they do more than describe it. A good informative abstract acts as a surrogate for the work itself. That is, the researcher presents and explains all the main arguments and the important results and evidence in the paper. An informative abstract includes the information that can be found in a descriptive abstract [purpose, methods, scope] but it also includes the results and conclusions of the research and the recommendations of the author. The length varies according to discipline, but an informative abstract is usually no more than 300 words in length.

Highlight Abstract

A highlight abstract is specifcally written to attract the reader's attention to the study. No pretence is made of there being either a balanced or complete picture of the paper and, in fact, incomplete and leading remarks may be used to spark the reader's interest. In that a highlight abstract cannot stand independent of its associated article, it is not a true abstract and, therefore, rarely used in academic writing.

II. Writing Style

Use the active voice when possible, but note that much of your abstract may require passive sentence constructions. Regardless, write your abstract using concise, but complete, sentences. Get to the point quickly and **always use the past tense** because you are reporting on a study that has been completed.

Although it is the first section of your paper, the abstract, by definition, should be written last since it will summarize the contents of your entire paper. To begin composing your abstract, take whole sentences or key phrases from each section and put them in a sequence that summarizes the paper. Then revise or add connecting phrases or words to make the narrative flow clearly and smoothly. Before handing in your final paper, check to make sure that the information in the abstract completely agrees with what you have written in the paper. Think of the abstract as describing the most information using the fewest necessary words in complete sentences.

The abstract SHOULD NOT contain:

- Lengthy background information,
- References to other literature [say something like, "current research shows that..." or "studies have indicated..."],
- Using ellipticals [i.e., ending with "..."] or incomplete sentences,
- Abbreviations, jargon, or terms that may be confusing to the reader, and
- Any sort of image, illustration, figure, or table, or references to them.

Abstract. Writing Center. University of Kansas; Abstract. The Structure, Format, Content, and Style of a Journal-Style Scientific Paper. Department of Biology. Bates College; Abstracts. The Writing Center. University of North Carolina; Borko, Harold and Seymour Chatman. "Criteria for Acceptable Abstracts: A Survey of Abstracters' Instructions." *American Documentation* 14 (April 1963): 149-160; Abstracts. The Writer's Handbook. Writing Center. University of Wisconsin, Madison; Hartley, James and Lucy Betts. "Common Weaknesses in Traditional Abstracts in hte Social

Sciences." *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 60 (October 2009): 2010-2018; Procter, Margaret. The Abstract. University College Writing Centre. University of Toronto; Writing Report Abstracts. The Writing Lab and The OWL. Purdue University; Writing Abstracts. Writing Tutorial Services, Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning. Indiana University; Koltay, Tibor. *Abstracts and Abstracting: A Genre and Set of Skills for the Twenty-First Century*. Oxford, UK: 2010