

Creating an Outline

A proper outline can give your essay or research paper great organization. An outline allows the writer to establish topics that will be discussed, along with also incorporating sub-topics and other details.

Below are some details for constructing an outline. The four details were obtained from the University of Washington website:

(<http://web.psych.washington.edu/writingcenter/writingguides/pdf/outline.pdf>)

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.

For a sample outline, please visit the following link to Purdue University.

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20081113013048_544.pdf