

Outline Format

An outline helps the writer organize the notes taken in his research by listing both the main points and the supporting ideas. A good outline forms a frame for the paper by showing how the topics and facts fit together. There are two major types of outlines. Your teacher may prefer a topic outline (which uses short phrases) or a sentence outline (which uses complete sentences). The Roman numerals identify the main points while the capital letters identify the details that support the main points. Each section of the outline should have a minimum of two divisions. For example, if there is a I, there must be a II; if there is an A, there must be a B, and so on. If there is not enough material for a second division, list only the main division.

Sample Format

Title of Paper

Thesis statement:

I. Main point

A. Supporting idea

1. Detail

2. Detail

B. Supporting idea

1. Detail

2. Detail

3. Detail

a.

b.

II. Main point

Be sure that the topic sentence for each of the main divisions (I, II, etc.) in the paper supports or proves your thesis. The facts, examples, etc. given in the supporting details (A, B, C, etc.) must support the topic sentence. No Introduction or Conclusion is listed in the outline. Remember to double space the entire outline.