

What is an Outline?

An outline is a plan of action or a “roadmap” for a written essay. Typically, it looks like a list organized into various headings and subheadings for key points, supporting examples, or information related to your thesis. **Before you start writing, draw your roadmap!**

A typical outline follows this structure:

1. The Introduction

- a. What is the **topic** of this essay?
- b. What supporting tools or ideas are going to be used?
- c. What is your thesis statement?

Repeat for each main idea that supports your thesis statement!

2. Body Paragraph

- a. **Topic sentence:** What is the *main idea* of this paragraph?
 - i. Examples/details/explanations.
 - ii. Examples/details/explanations.
 - iii. Examples/details/explanations.
- b. **Transition sentence:** How does this main idea relate to the next main idea?

3. Conclusion

- a. Remind your reader of your thesis.
- b. How do the topics of your body paragraphs connect to your thesis?
- c. Answer the question, “so what?”

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INTRODUCTION (topic + thesis statement):	
MAIN IDEA #1 _____	
Detail	
MAIN IDEA #2 _____	
Detail	
MAIN IDEA #3 _____	
Detail	
CONCLUSION:	