

Outlining Techniques & Templates

Outlining is one of the most important writing skills. As Professor Umberto Eco writes about its power and beauty; having a plan allows you research and draft out of order yet still move a project forward coherently.

Skills practiced through conducting an academic research project

- Identifying a topic precisely
- Collecting relevant documents
- Ordering these documents
- Reading the documents analytically
- Reassessing the topic in relation to these documents
- Organizing this work into an organic form
- Communicating findings from all this work
- Providing documentation so others can reexamine the topic through the sources presented in your work

Steps for creating a useful outline

1. Identify a topic and a research question or problem
2. Develop a working hypothesis/thesis
3. Create logical sections based in the topic, question and thesis

No section or subsection should be less than a paragraph

Be very committed to the outline

Be equally prepared to revise it

Based in *How to Write a Thesis* by Umberto Eco, pp. 109-115

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Working Outline Template

Research Question - lay out the main investigation

Working Thesis - a tentative answer to the research question

Working Title - a pre-view of the main consideration

Introduction use this section to:

- Engage reader
- Explain purpose
- State main point (Thesis)

Topic Background/History - multiple sections, use to:

- Explain who, what, when
- Explain why
- Explain how

Claims/Main points - multiple sections, use to:

- Discuss how or why
- Support claims
- Discuss how claims relate to each other

Conclusion use this section to:

- Consolidate key points
- Discuss wider significance and implications
- Offer proposals and/or questions for future study

References/Works Cited/ Bibliography

A formulaic list of all sources quoted or referred to in the paper
The style for entries (APA, MLA, ASA, Chicago) must match the style used for in-text citations

Introduction & Conclusion Paragraph Outlines

Introduction Paragraph

Write one or two sentences for each point

- Opening Statement or Attention Getter
An interesting fact, a quote, example, why you are writing
- Topic Explanation
Who, what, when, where; the purpose for the essay;
preview of the main points
- Thesis
The main opinion or argument considered stated as
concisely as possible

Conclusion Paragraph

Write one or two sentences for each point

- Synthesis/Summary
Refer back to strongest points; summarize the argument
- Discuss Significance
Set your consideration in context; explain why it is important
- Proposals & Further Questions
Suggest an action; point out future research needed; explain
how others might use your work

Working Outline for Literary Analysis[#]

A basic template to make observations and provide textual evidence to support claims about a piece of literature.

Introduction use this section to:

- Catch the reader's attention
- Introduce the author and title of the work(s) you are analyzing
- State short plot summary
- State your main point/argument (thesis statement)

Claims/Main points use multiple sections/paragraphs to present your argument:

- Write topic sentence, state what the paragraph is about / how it relates to the thesis
- Provide context for your quote: explain who, what, and why
- Quote from the text
- Analyze quote: show how it supports your thesis
- Write a closing sentence and transition to the next paragraph

Conclusion use this section to:

- Summarize the key points of your observations
- Extend your argument: point to its broader significance
- Explain why the text is important

Based in University of the District of Columbia. *Outline Structure for Literary Analysis Essay*.
http://files-do-not-link.udc.edu/docs/asc/Outline_Structure_for_Literary_Analysis_Essay_HATMAT.pdf.
Accessed 20 Feb 2019.

Background & Discussion Outline Template

I. Introduction/Background

- A. The State of the Issue/Topic/Subject
- B. The Previous Research

II. Discussion

- A. Your Hypothesis
 - 1. Your Support/Data/Evidence
- B. Your Analysis of the Support/Data/Evidence

III. Conclusion/Proposal

- A. The Demonstration of Your Hypothesis
- B. Your Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

Central Question Outline Template

1. Central Question

1.1 Sub-questions

- 1.1.1 Main Sub-question
- 1.1.2 Secondary Sub-question

1.2 Development of Central Question

- 1.2.1 First Ramification
- 1.2.2 Second Ramification

Storyboard Style Outline Template

Flexibly order sections

Topic	Main Point	Key Point	Sub-Point	Support	Detail