

# OUTLINING

You will be required to create a formal outline for your senior thesis. Write your thesis at the top of the page, then show the progression of its argument in an outline.

## THE FOUR MAIN PRINCIPLES OF OUTLINING:

### 1. Parallelism

Whenever possible, coordinate headings should be expressed in “parallel” form. That is, nouns should be made parallel with nouns, verb forms with verb forms, adjectives with adjectives, and so on.

Example of parallel items:

- **Using Nouns:**

- A) Computers
- B) Programs
- C) Software

- **Using Verbs:**

- 1. to compute
- 2. to program
- 3. to use

- **Using Adjectives**

- a. home computers
- b. new programs
- c. experienced users

### Faulty Parallelism:

- A. IBM
- B. Apple
- C. Buying a computer
- D. Laptop computers

This is faulty because A and B are proper **nouns**, C is an **verb**, and D is a generic **noun**. These items are not at all expressed in parallel terms.

## 2. Coordination

In outlining, coordination is a principle that enables the writer to maintain a coherent and consistent document. Coordination means items of equal significance have comparable numeral or letter designations; an "A" is equal to a "B", a "1" to a "2", an "a" to a "b", etc.

In other words, **coordinates should be seen as "having the same importance."**

### Correct coordination

- A. Word processing programs
- B. Data base programs
- C. Spreadsheet programs

### Incorrect coordination

- A. Word processing programs
- B. *Word*
- C. *Excel*

The coordination above is incorrect for two reasons: (1) *Word Processing Programs* is far more important than either B or C, which are both types of programs.

One way to correct the coordination would be:

- A. Types of programs**
  - 1. *Word*
  - 2. *Excel*
- B. Evaluation of programs**
  - 1. *Word*
  - 2. *Excel*

Here the A and B are of equal importance, as are each of the subdivisions (1 and 2).

### 3. Subordination

In order to indicate relevance an outline uses major and minor headings. Thus, in ordering ideas you should organize material from general to specific. This principle creates a clear articulation of the relationship between parts in the outline.

**The more general the concept, the higher the level/rank in the outline.**

#### Correct subordination

- A. Word processing programs
  - 1. *Word*
  - 2. *WordPerfect*
- B. Presentation programs
  - 1. *MS Power Point*
  - 2. *Corel Presentations*

#### Faulty subordination

- A. *Word*
  - 1. *WordPerfect*
  - 2. *Useful*
  - 3. *Obsolete*

This is faulty because 1, 2, and 3 are written as if of equal relevance, when in fact 1 is more general and should be promoted to the left. In other words, *WordPerfect* appears as though it is a subordination of—a part of—*Word*, which is not true; *WordPerfect* is a completely different program.

(Did you also notice that it also shows poor coordination? *WordPerfect* is a **type** of word processing program, whereas *useful* and *obsolete* are **qualities** of programs.)

One simple way to correct the faulty subordination (& faulty coordination) is:

- A. ***Word***
- B. ***WordPerfect***
  - 1. ***Useful***
  - 2. ***Obsolete***

NOTE: A common outlining problem related to subordination is **lack of detail**. While an outline is just an overview of an essay, it should include enough subordinate detail to make its arguments and evidence clear to the reader!

## 4. Division

In an outline, every “level” needs at least two parts. In other words...

**There can never be an A without a B, a 1 without a 2, an “a” without a “b,” etc.**

### Example

- A. Computers
  - 1. Mainframe
  - 2. Micro
    - a. Floppy Disk
    - b. Hard disk
- B. Computer Uses
  - 1. Professional
  - 2. Personal

### Faulty Division:

- A. Computers
  - 1. History
- B. Computer Uses
  - 1. Word processing
  - 2. Information-gathering
    - a. Internet
  - 3. Recreation
    - a. Computer games

This shows faulty division because A.1. (*History*) has no A.2. In addition, two a’s do not have b’s.

To fix this, each subheading should either be **expanded** by inserting a companion subheading OR **eliminated** (perhaps by combining it with the level above it.)

One way to correct the faulty division is:

- A. Computer history
- B. Computer Uses
  - 1. Word processing
  - 2. Information-gathering
    - a. Internet
    - b. email
  - 3. Recreation
    - a. Computer games
    - b. Chat
    - c. Multimedia applications

# OUTLINE FORM

An outline can use **TOPIC structure** or **SENTENCE structure**, but the most important principle for an outline's form is **consistency**. DO NOT have most of your outline in one form, but occasionally use the other, too!

A **TOPIC** outline uses only words or phrases; it uses no punctuation after entries.

- *Advantages — presents a brief overview of work; is generally easier and faster to write than a sentence outline*

## I. Choose Desired Colleges

A. Visit and evaluate college campuses

B. Visit and evaluate college websites

1. Look for interesting classes

2. Note important statistics

a. Student/faculty ratio

b. Retention rate

## II. Prepare Application

A **SENTENCE** outline uses complete sentences for all entries; it uses correct punctuation.

- *Advantages — presents a more detailed overview of work including possible topic sentences; is easier and faster for writing the final paper.*

I. Man-made pollution is the primary cause of global warming.

a. Greenhouse gas emissions are widely identified by the scientific community to be harmful.

b. The burning of coal and fossil fuels are the primary releasers of hazardous greenhouse gases.

## OUTLINE FORM

*The following is the correct MLA format for an outline; copy this style for yours.*

Knowitall 1

Ida Knowitall

Humanities 1

Mrs. Bob

April 1, 2008

### Women Rule, Men Drool in the Pende Tribe

Thesis: Anthropologists, through the study of African art, have learned that women were the dominate gender in the tribal government as well as the labor force.

#### I. Introduction

- A. Definition of tribe ("Intuitive Internet")
- B. General preview government and labor force
- C. Thesis statement presentation

#### II. Government

- A. Tribal council
  1. Maternal uncle ("Tribal Internet")
  2. Laws ("Tribal Internet")
    - a. Family of origin
    - b. Extended family (Smith 67)
- B. Regional Justice

***This is an incomplete example, but it demonstrates the correct format:***

- ***A "professional" font (usually Times New Roman, Arial, etc.)***
- ***Double spaced***
- ***Correct heading (name, class, title, thesis, pg. #, etc.)***
- ***Research used in entries (Not all outlines need this, but for this assignment yours does)***
- ***Capitalization is normal (only 1<sup>st</sup> words or proper nouns)***
- ***Regularly write into the third level (1, 2, etc.) & occasionally go into the fourth level (a, b, etc.)***

SOURCE: <http://blogs.cdnby.k12.or.us/uploads/stewartc/researchformatAfrica.pdf>

SAMPLE OUTLINES:

<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/rules6e/latest/lmcontent/ch07/PDF/Hacker-Levi-MLA-Out.pdf>

<http://papvr.com/hypertextbooks/comp1/sampout.htm>

Original source for most outlining material: Kies, Daniel. "Developing an Outline." English Composition 1. 26 December 2010. <http://papvr.com/hypertextbooks/comp1/outline.htm>.

# SENIOR THESIS OUTLINE

	<b>EXCELLENT 10</b>	<b>GOOD 8 - 9</b>	<b>AVERAGE 6 - 7</b>	<b>FAIR 4 - 5</b>	<b>LACKING 2 - 3</b>	<b>POOR 1 - 0</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Thesis Statement</b>	Argumentative, precisely worded, and focused upon a single, manageable point	Argumentative, well worded, and focused upon a single point	Takes a stand, but is imprecisely worded &/OR could be difficult to argue against	Does not take a strong stand (“wishy-washy”) &/OR is vaguely worded &/OR slightly confusing	Thesis is a fact rather than an argument &/OR is worded confusingly	Thesis is missing OR so confusing the reader is unsure of what will be argued	
<b>Development</b>	Proofs flow well from one to the next, each building upon the others to create a powerful, logical argument.	Proofs flow from one to the next, building to create a logical argument.	Proofs generally flow well, although some may seem isolated, be disconnected or go unexplained; the argument is basically clear, but needs refinement, focus, etc	Some proofs disconnected or isolated, &/OR focus upon the thesis argument is at times unclear, &/OR entire essay only vaguely builds an argument	Many proofs disconnected, &/OR the argument is not developed (ex: large sections are “facts” vs. “proofs”) &/OR entire argument is overly simplistic.	Many/all proofs border upon random &/OR no argument is proven	
<b>Research</b>	Abundant evidence (facts/quotes/data) is used to support each and every point in the argument	Clear evidence is used to support every point in the argument	Evidence is used to basically support the main points of the argument	Evidence is used to support some of the argument &/OR the entire argument relies upon insufficient research	Many points are unsupported, &/OR the entire argument seriously lacks quality and/or amount of research	Very little (or no) evidence is used to support the argument	
<b>PERSONAL EXPRESSION GRADE:</b>							

	<b>EXCELLENT 10</b>	<b>GOOD 8 - 9</b>	<b>AVERAGE 6 - 7</b>	<b>FAIR 4 - 5</b>	<b>LACKING 2 - 3</b>	<b>POOR 1 - 0</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Outline Form</b>	Format flawlessly follows MLA rules (indentation, double space, order of items [I, A, 1, a, etc.])	Format follows MLA rules, with 1 or 2 minor errors or inconsistencies	Format follows basic MLA rules, with 3 or 4 minor errors OR 1 major error	Format follows basic MLA rules, with 5 or more minor errors OR 2 - 3 major errors &/OR is not consistent in form	Format only vaguely follows MLA rules: many minor errors &/OR major errors	The outline format is inconsistent or unclear	
<b>Outline Principles</b>	Perfect use of outline principles (subordination, coordination, division, & parallelism)	Outline principles followed, with only a small number of minor errors (ex: items lacking clear parallelism)	Outline principles mainly followed, with a number of minor errors &/OR one error repeated throughout	1 or 2 outline principles followed, but 1 or 2 consistently broken; outline still clear and carefully created	1 outline principle followed, but serious errors throughout (ex: division constantly wrong [a's without b's, 1s without 2s, etc.])	All outline principles broken &/OR enough serious errors in a handful to limit understanding of the argument	
<b>Mechanics</b>	Fewer than two grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	Between three to five grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	Six to eight grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	Nine to twelve grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	Over twelve grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	Grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors interfere with reading	
<b>CORRECT LANGUAGE USE GRADE:</b>							