How to Create an Outline

CHOOSE A WORKING THESIS

• Once you have done some research and thought about your ideas, formulate a working thesis; this will be the overarching “point” of your paper.
• As you develop your ideas, you can change your thesis to better reflect the purpose of your essay.

MAKE AN OUTLINE

• Tie everything back to your thesis. If a section doesn’t directly relate to your thesis, you probably shouldn’t include it.
• The process of researching, brainstorming, and making a detailed outline may take ½ to ¾ of the total time you spend working on an essay. Good organization is crucial, and takes time!
• The outline should include most of the information that will eventually go in your essay.

• Your essay may include:

1) An Introduction
   • Provide a brief introduction to the topic in general
   • Define any key terms that you will be using
   • State your thesis, and briefly mention the arguments that you will be using to back it up

2) Body Paragraphs
   • Each body paragraph needs a topic sentence. The topic sentence should be directly related to your thesis.
   • List evidence that you will use within that paragraph. Make notes of sources or statistics that you will use.

3) A Conclusion:
   • Restate your thesis and briefly summarize your main points
   • What does this mean for your field of study or for your practice?

QUICK TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR WRITING

✔ Keep your calendar updated: If you see deadlines approaching, you are more likely to prepare in advance versus pulling all-nighters; give yourself “soft” deadlines for completing various sections of your assignment.

✔ Give yourself breaks: If you are feeling overwhelmed, it is important to give yourself a break by going for a walk, taking a nap, or having some leisure time; taking a break allows you an opportunity to generate ideas and return to your work in a more critical way.

Try to avoid distractions while you write: Social media, TV, phone, pets, etc.