

Rules for Proper Outline Format

1. Capitalize and center your original title. Do not place quotation marks around it or underline it.
2. Type, double space, and left-justify alignment.
3. Write “Thesis Statement:” and follow it with your actual thesis.
4. Do not include “Introduction” and “Conclusion”—an outline details the body of the analysis with only the thesis to cover the points and details.
5. Capitalize the first word of each entry.
6. Denote the different levels of points and subpoints using the following order of numbers and letters:

I. Main point (directly supports thesis)

A. Subpoint of main point I (directly supports its main point)

1. Subpoint of A.

a. Specific detail to illustrate, support, prove Subpoint 1 above

b. Another specific supporting detail for Subpoint 1

c. Another specific supporting detail for Subpoint 1

2. Subpoint of A.

B. Subpoint of main point I

1. Subpoint of B

2. Subpoint of B

II. Next main point

(etc.)

Note how the periods of each level of points (all Roman numerals, all capital letters, etc.) line up vertically.

(Color coding for instructional purposes only)

7. Make each group of points grammatically parallel. All main points should be the same part of speech or grammatical phrase. Each grouping of subpoints needs to be parallel within its own group. Ex. Main points I, II, III, IV are all gerunds; subgroup A, B, C under main point I are all verb phrases; subgroup 1, 2, 3, 4 under A are all nouns.
8. Any group of points or subpoints must have at least two items in its group. You may have as many items as you need in one group as long as you have more than one. No A without at least a B; no 1 without at least a 2, etc.

The Topic Outline

(Sample outline #1)

How to Study

- I. The conditions for studying must be right.
 1. You should have enough time.
 2. Quiet Place
 3. Proper Equipment
 - a. textbooks
 - b. reference books
- II. The Techniques
 - A. Assignments that are mainly reading
 - a. How to take notes
 - b. Memorizing
 - B. Writing Assignments
 1. Term papers
- III. Conclusion

(Sample outline #2)

How to Study

Thesis statement: Good study habits can greatly enhance learning, especially with the best conditions and techniques.

- I. Conditions
 - A. Enough time
 - B. Quiet place
 - C. Proper equipment
 1. Textbooks
 2. Reference books
- II. Techniques
 - A. Reading assignments
 1. Notetaking
 2. Memorizing
 - B. Writing assignments
 1. Term papers
 2. Research papers

Instructions: Look carefully at the above outlines for the same topic; then make observations and—

1. Identify all inconsistencies in Sample Outline #1. Circle each and note the specific problem for each.
2. Make notes on Sample Outline #2 about each correction—what differentiates it from its version in Sample Outline #1?
3. Draw conclusions from your observations and notes above and then create a list of rules for proper outlining format on the back of this sheet.