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**Welcome
Spartan Students
to
NSU Writing Center**

Norfolk State University Writing Center

Outlining Methods



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What we will cover

-In this workshop session, you will learn the different types of outline methods you can use to organize your paper.



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Why use an outline?



It helps to organize your thoughts



It helps you recognize gaps in your essay



The most important reason: it makes it easier to write your paper!

Outlining Options



Alphanumeric



Full Sentence



Decimal



Reverse Outline

Alphanumeric Outline



An alphanumeric outline uses Roman numerals, capital letters, Arabic numerals and lowercase letters to organize the information. The outline uses short notes instead of full-sentences.

Example:

I. BODY PARAGRAPH 1

A. First point

1. Sub-point

a. Sub-point of sub-point 1

Image credit: Scribbr.com

Alphanumeric Example



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- I. Heavy use of social media can affect mental health
 - A. Depression is common
 - 1. It may occur because of unwarranted comparison
 - a. Teens are particularly susceptible

Full Sentence Outline



A full sentence outline follows the same organization as an alphanumeric outline but uses full sentences instead of short notes.

Example:

- I. First body paragraph of the research paper
 - A. First point of evidence to support the main argument
 - 1. Sub-point discussing evidence outlined in point A
 - a. Additional sub-point to conclude discussion of point of evidence introduced in point A

Image credit: Scribbr.com

Full Sentence Example



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- I. Heavy use of social media can affect mental health.
 - A. Depression is common among frequent users.
 - 1. Depression may occur because of unwarranted comparison
 - a. Teens are particularly susceptible to this effect.

Decimal Outline



A decimal outline uses numbers and short notes instead of full sentences.

Example:

1 Body paragraph one

1.1 First point

1.1.1 Sub-point of first point

1.1.2 Sub-point of first point

1.2 Second point

Image credit: Scribbr.com

Decimal Example



1 Body Paragraph One

Heavy use of social media can affect mental health

1.1 Depression is common

1.1.1 It may occur because of unwarranted comparison

1.1.2 Teens are particularly susceptible

Reverse Outline



A reverse outline begins with a draft first and then identifies the structure of the paper based on what is written.

Summarize the main idea of each paragraph

Identify if the progression of the ideas is logical

Ensure each paragraph relates to your thesis

Reverse Outline Exercise



Identify the main idea in this paragraph

People claim that the only way for children to gain full emotional and behavioral skills is to be raised by both a mother and a father. When a topic such as this one has a broad amount of variables it is impossible to simply link these problems to only having one parent. In the article, "Single-parent families cause juvenile crime", author Robert L. Maginnis states, "Children from single-parent families are more likely to have behavior problems because they tend to lack economic security and adequate time with parents". The simple statement that raw criminals are products of single-parent adolescence is absurd. What this writer must understand is that it can be extremely difficult for one parent to raise a child by themselves for many reasons. A single-parent must work full time to be able to afford to provide for themselves and their child. They must also be able to still have time to offer an exuberant amount of emotional time for the well being of their child. However, even though this may seem impossible, it can be done.

How do you choose?



These outlining methods are strategies: one is not better than another.



How detailed do you want to be?



Which works best for YOU?

Outlining Activity



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Your Road Map

Intro

Body Paragraphs

Conclusion

Spend 10-15 minutes creating an outline for your paper.

First, identify whether you will use an alphanumeric, full sentence, decimal, or reverse outline.

Discussion



- ? - Which outline method did you choose? Why?
- ? - Did this activity help you identify areas where you need more information?
- ? - What questions do you have about outlining?

Reflection



Please take a few minutes to complete the workshop evaluation form.

Workshop Evaluation for students



Workshop Evaluation for faculty

