
The Outline

outlining:

If you dedicate enough time to prewriting, the outlining stage is made more easy to tackle, which, in turn, makes writing the essay even easier too since it is in outlining where you will build the skeleton of your essay.

- Start with a rough, *working thesis statement* written out before actually beginning the outline. Some like to have their information organized first, then tailor a thesis statement to that draft. Again, different minds work in different ways; use what works best for you.
- You'll figure out what main points you want to use in your essay from the pool of information gathered in prewriting. You'll then figure out when to incorporate these main points (supporting paragraphs) in a logical manner. This is often the best time to begin writing the *topic sentences* you'll use to open these paragraphs.

This is the stage when the information you've gathered begins to take the form of an outline. Perhaps the easiest outline to use is one which begins with a method of introduction to be employed followed by the working thesis statement.

From there, use numbers, Roman numerals, numbers, bullet points, (whatever you'd like) to list each unit of supporting information (body paragraph) beginning with a working topic sentence, then several supporting details.

Finally, list the *method of conclusion* you might use. After you've finished, go back and review the entire thing to get a feel for how the essay might flow. In this layout, you'll get a better feel for the unity and development as well as you can see the specific topic sentences and support you'll be using in very close proximity to each other.

note: Be aware that this is a work in progress from here on out.

Don't consider any part of your outline to be set in stone. Be flexible. Expect your thesis, topic sentences, even structure to change throughout the drafting process. It is very common for the final version of the essay to be different from the outline.

sample outline:

Eurotripping

method of intro: describe a scene/apparently contradictory statement: There I stood, at the foot of the Eiffel Tower with a baguette, a bottle of wine, and less than four euros left for my whole trip, but even though I barely had any money left, I've never felt richer in my life.

working thesis statement: My first trip to Europe was, by far, the most fun I have had so far in my life, and, at the same time, it was one of the best educations too.

I. Visiting more than four countries in just two months really opened my eyes to how sheltered I have been here at home. (topic sentence)

- I went to Germany, England, Greece, and France. (supporting detail)
- Even though I met all these people from all these different places, most of them reminded me of my friends back home. Some were nice and friendly, and some were downright mean, but all of them were people just like you and me. (supporting detail)
- They didn't seem like "foreigners" anymore -- I was the "foreigner." (supporting detail)

II. By staying in hostels the whole time, I got to meet so many different people and I made a lot of new friends. (topic sentence)

- It was mainly young people who were staying in the hostels, travelers like me, from all different parts of Europe. (supporting detail)
- they made me feel like less of a tourist because they were tourists too (supporting detail)
- playing cards with the Austrian kids and showing them how to play Uno (supporting detail)
- the cool couple from Amsterdam and that night at the club with Dieter (supporting detail)

III. Visiting monuments like the Acropolis and the Parthenon really made me understand how short life really is. (topic sentence)

- These buildings have been around for more than two thousand years. That's a lot longer than the Statue of Liberty or the Liberty Bell. (supporting detail)
- Looking at all the reconstruction going on made me feel sad. The guide told me that there's been more damage from acid rain in the last fifty years, than in the last fifteen hundred. (supporting detail)

IV. Even though I had already been in college for three years, I still feel like this was the best education I've gotten yet. (topic sentence)

- Seeing monuments in a book or online can't compare with standing in front of them. (supporting detail)
- Hearing other people talk about my country was an eye-opening experience like no other. (supporting detail)

method of conclusion: rephrase thesis: The trip ended, just like my money ended, in Paris. I had spent everything that I worked so hard to save for three years, but it was worth every last cent. What I learned in these two months about humanity, about the world around me, and about myself was worth far more than the few thousand I had spent so quickly. Luckily I was smart enough to buy my plane ticket home ahead of time, or I might still be there right now.