

RESEARCH ESSAY OUTLINE

Outlines provide a visual representation of an essay's structural design. Organizing an essay well is crucial to the overall clarity of your argument. Outlines are an important step in writing because they:

1. Clearly show the relationships between ideas in your essay and provide a plan for writing.
2. Help you to consider your topic and to synthesize and reflect on your proposed plan.
3. Help you to determine whether you have researched a topic thoroughly enough.
4. Help you to determine whether the essay makes a convincing argument

Activities to Perform Before Outlining:

- Read extensively to ensure that you have researched the topic thoroughly.
- Take notes on important ideas (remember to record citations—you will need them later!).
- Group related ideas together, ordering groups from general to specific.

Research Essay Outline:

I. Introduction

- a. Motivation – Why is this topic important?
- b. Objectives – What are the goals of this essay?
- c. Thesis Statement – Overall claim the essay makes
 - An organizational overview of the essay (if appropriate)

II. Body

- a. Literature review
 - Synthesize, rather than summarize, your source material
 - Describe how your research will fit into the academic conversation presented
- b. Method and Analysis (What was done)
 - Description of the scope of the analysis
 - Methods used for first major task
 - Methods used for second major task
 - Methods used for third major task
- c. Results (What was found) [Note: Sometimes this section is combined with Discussion]
 - Results of first major task
 - Results of second major task
 - Results of third major task
- d. Discussion (How your results contribute to knowledge in the field)
 - Example: compare results to literature reviewed
 - Example: show how your contributions have impacted the field

III. Conclusion

- a. Summarize the objectives and approach of the essay
- b. What are the major findings?
- c. Important implications of the findings
- d. Describe future work needed in the field (if applicable)

I. Introduction

- a. Motivation for your audience:
- b. Essay goals:
- c. **Thesis Statement** (argumentative claim):

II. Body

- a. Literature Review
 - Source 1:
 - Main Point:
 - Source 2:
 - Main Point:
 - Source 3:
 - Main Point:
 - Ideas to Synthesize:
- b. Method and Analysis
 - Method(s) used:
 - Analysis of method(s):
- c. Results
 - Results of research conducted:
- d. Discussion
 - Impact of results and research to your overall study:
 - Impact to the field of study:

III. Conclusion

- a. Reworded Thesis:
- b. Findings, important implications, and final concluding statement: