How to Write a Good Outline

A good outline will include what the paper is about, a title, main points for each section, and a thesis statement. For the outline, you will not need to write complete sentences, just the main point(s) for each section followed by some additional comments about each point. The outline may be take more time than the actual paper, because you do much of your thinking about the paper when developing the outline. The actual paper will then just require you to connect your thoughts together in writing.

Put a lot effort into making your outline. A good outline is easy to turn into a full length paper. You will need to find the resources to use prior to making the outline and include them where they would help.

How to keep your outline brief:

• It is a good idea to label sections as separate structures in the paper, e.g. 1. Introduction, 2. Statement of problem... etc. Breaking up the paper into clearly labeled sections will make it easier for the reader to follow the paper.
• List the main points for each section or paragraph in the paper
• Add items below the main point(s) that you intend to discuss in that section.
• A paper of this length will probably have several sections (e.g. introduction, discussion of problem(s), possible solutions, summary) with each section having several paragraphs.

Remember to try and keep the outline short, you aren't writing the paper yet. One page is likely sufficient for the outline. The more effort you put into your outline, the easier it will be to write your paper, so save yourself some trouble later and make a strong outline with good key points.

Don't forget to include your references at the end! You don't need citations for your own thoughts, but you will need to keep track of them for quotations and supporting evidence. You should have at least two ready for the outline, but at least three for the actual paper.