

How to Write a Good Outline

A good outline will include what the paper is about, a title, different section(s), 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 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.

What should be in the outline:

- Title or Subject of the paper you are going to write.
- It is a good idea to label big sections as separate structures in the paper, e.g. 1. Introduction, 2. Statement of problem... etc. Breaking up the paper into a few sections will make it easier for the reader to follow the paper. However, since this is a short paper, do not use more than three sections. You may also use only one section, but make sure to use separate paragraphs to separate discussion of different subject matter or relevant points. In the outline list the main section(s) that you intend to use for the paper, and list under each section the main points for that section.
- In the actual paper, do not add large empty spaces between paragraphs or sections. Just use a short indent for the first line of each paragraph.

Remember to try and keep the outline short, you aren't writing the paper yet. One page is more than enough 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! Keep track of the references you use and include them right away in the paper and outline. You should have at least two ready for the outline, but at least three for the actual paper.