

## Conventions/Rules to follow in constructing an Outline

In constructing a formal outline, keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. Put the thesis at the top.
2. Use parallel grammatical structure for ideas at the same level of generality. (See E1.)
3. Use sentences unless phrases are clear.
4. Use the conventional system of numbers and letters for the levels of generality:

- I.
  - A.
  - B.
    - 1.
    2.
      - a.
      - b.
        - (1)
        - (2)
          - (a)
          - (b)

### II.

5. Always use at least two subdivisions for a category.
6. Limit the number of major sections in the outline; if the list of roman numerals grows too long, find some way of clustering the items into a few major categories with more subcategories.
7. Be flexible. Treat your outline as a tentative plan that may need to be adjusted as your drafts evolve.

## Model for a Formal Outline

### Outline Title

Thesis: Write the complete thesis statement sentence

- I. Introduction
  - A. Hook/Attention-getter
  - B. Background information connecting the listener to the subject
  - C. Thesis Statement
- II. First Body ¶: statement of idea for developing first main point from thesis. Do not use a source.
  - A. Supporting evidence—quote, paraphrase, statistic, or detail (cite source)
  - B. Another piece of supporting evidence (same as above)
  - C. Another piece of supporting evidence (same as above)
- III. Second Body ¶: statement of idea for developing second main point from thesis. Do not use a source.
  - A. Supporting evidence—quote, paraphrase, statistic, or detail (cite source)
  - B. Another piece of supporting evidence (same as above)
  - C. Another piece of supporting evidence (same as above)
- IV. Third Body ¶: statement of idea for developing third main point from thesis. Do not use a source.
  - A. Supporting evidence—quote, paraphrase, statistic, or detail (cite source)
  - B. Another piece of supporting evidence (same as above)
  - C. Another piece of supporting evidence (same as above)
- V. Conclusion
  - A. Restate Thesis
  - B. Review of Main Points
    1. Restate your first main point
    2. Restate your second main point
    3. Restate your third main point
  - C. Return to hook for closure