

# **Outlining**

## **From the Evanston Township High School (Evanston, IL) Manual of Form and Style.**

### **Purpose of Outlines**

An outline is a writer's or a speaker's plan. It shows the order in which topics will be or have been discussed, the relative importance of each, and the relationship among the various parts.

Outlines have several uses: (1) When studying a reading assignment, you may find the outlining method of notetaking helpful, for an outline can give you in a clear, concise form an overall view of a subject. (2) When preparing to write a paper or give a talk, you will find that an outline can help you to organize your material and to give you an overall view of your topic. (3) When you take notes in class or at a lecture, outline form is helpful.

### **Types of Outlines**

Two forms of outlines are standard: the topic outline and the sentence outline. In a topic outline, use words, phrases, or clauses rather than complete sentences. In the sentence outline, use complete sentences.

### **Rules of Outlining**

#### **1. Arrangement**

An outline, whether sentence or topic, is divided into points and subpoints. Subpoints always go under the main points of which they are a part and which they support. For example:

- I. Kinds of apples
  - A. Jonathan
  - B. Granny Smith
  - C. Macintosh

The divisions in any series should be of equal importance. That is, the heads numbered I, II, III, IV, etc., should be the main divisions of a paper; divisions lettered with capitals should be sub-divisions of heads and numbered with Roman numerals. For example:

<u>Improperly Divided</u>	<u>Properly Divided</u>
I. The executive branch	I. The executive branch
II. The President	A. The President
III. The Cabinet	B. The Cabinet
IV. The legislative branch	II. The legislative branch
V. The House	A. The House
VI. The Senate	B. The Senate
VII. The judicial branch	III. The judicial branch
VIII. The Supreme Court	A. The Supreme Court
IX. The lower courts	B. The lower courts

## 2. **Co-ordination**

Points of equal importance should be coordinated—that is, given an equal and parallel ranking. It would be illogical to outline our national defenses thus:

- I. The armed services
  - A. The Army
  - B. The Navy
  - C. The Marines
- II. The Air Force

The four divisions, being of equal importance, should be parallel:

- I. The armed services
  - A. The Army
  - B. The Navy
  - C. The Marines
  - D. The Air Force

## 3. **Overlapping**

Parallel points in an outline should not overlap, as they do, for example, in the following:

- I. American automobiles
- II. Ford

The following would be better:

- I. American automobiles
  - A. Ford
  - B. Chevrolet
- II. Foreign automobiles

#### 4. Single subpoint

**Do not use single subpoints in an outline.** When you divide anything, you always have at least two parts. Thus, if you have an A., you should have a B.; a 1. should be followed by a 2. If you think that you have only one subtopic, include it in the topic above. For example, instead of writing:

- I. Large, sparsely populated states are hard for salesmen to cover.
  - A. Montana is one of these states.

Write:

I. Large, sparsely populated states like Montana are hard for salespeople to cover.

#### 5. Parallelism

Points in an outline which are equal in importance should as nearly as possible be made parallel in form. If I. is a noun, II. should be a noun; if A. under I. is a prepositional phrase, B. under I. should also be a prepositional phrase.

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##### Unparallel Heads

##### Parallel Heads

The Art of Putting

- I. The stance is fundamental
- II. The grip
- III. Importance of back-swinging
- IV. The contact with the ball
- V. Follow through with care

The Art of Putting

- I. Stance
- II. Grip
- III. Back-swing
- IV. Contact with ball
- V. Follow-through

#### 6. Consistency

In a topic outline, all points and subpoints must be words, phrases, or clauses. In a sentence outline, all points must be sentences. In other words, do not mix topic and sentence outlines.

#### 7. Numbering and lettering

Main points are numbered with Roman numerals-I, II, III, etc. First division subpoints under each main point are lettered A, B, C in capital letters. If the outline were broken down further, the subpoints under A, B, C would be 1, 2, 3; subpoints under 1, 2, 3 would be a, b, c. Subpoints under a, b, c would be (1), (2), (3); subpoints under (1), (2), (3), would be (a), (b), (c). Periods, not dashes, should be placed after these figures and letters. See *Indentation*, below.

It is important to remember that the words "Introduction" and "Conclusion" are not given Roman numerals in an outline because those sections of a theme or report do not discuss main topics. Divisions of an outline should be only those sections that are actually discussed in the body of a theme or report. In teaching the outline, some teachers may wish to have you write in the words "Introduction" and "Conclusion" to indicate those sections will be included. If they are written in,

they should appear just above and below the first and last Roman numerals. For example:

Introduction  
I. The executive branch  
II. The judicial branch  
    A. The Supreme Court  
    B. The lower courts  
Conclusion

**8. Capitalization**

Capitalize the first word of every point and subpoint and only such other words as would naturally be capitalized.

**9. Punctuation**

Use a period after each number or letter indicating a point. Do not use a period at the end of a line unless the point or subpoint is a sentence.

**10. Indentation**

Indent equally headings of the same rank. Corresponding letters or numbers--I, II, III; A, B, C; 1, 2, 3--should be kept in vertical columns. If a subtopic is too long for one line, the second line should line up under the first word of the line above. Do not write directly under the symbol when a line runs over; i.e., use hanging indents.

I.  
  
    A.  
  
    B.  
        1.  
        2.  
II.

## Sample Topic Outline

### Comparative Utopias

Controlling Purpose: to compare the use of setting and characterization to create realism in Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's *1984*.

- I. Inevitability
  - A. *1984* written in 1949 as prediction of the future
  - B. *Brave New World* written in 1938 as projection of things to come
  
- II. Opposite settings
  - A. Constant watchfulness in *1984*
    - 1. "Big Brother"
    - 2. Punishment for slightest unorthodoxy
    - 3. Puritan Morals
  - B. False happiness and peace in *Brave New World*
    - 1. Satisfaction of desires
    - 2. Excellent living conditions
    - 3. Mild punishments, if any at all
  
- III. Similar philosophies
  - A. Freedom taken away from people
  - B. Totalitarian state formed
  
- IV. Characterization
  - A. John
    - 1. Refusal to become intimate
    - 2. Ideals considered old-fashioned
      - a. Sanctity of love
      - b. High value on body
  - B. Winston
    - 1. Tritely average
    - 2. Elizabethan
  - C. Lenina and Julia
    - 1. Stereotyped English girls
    - 2. Unorthodox behavior
      - a. Julia's lust for sex
      - b. Lenina's love for John
  - D. O'Brien and Mond
    - 1. Seem similar
    - 2. Appear intelligent and thoughtful at beginning
    - 3. Are greedy and unfeeling
      - a. Mond blindly follows Party
      - b. Neither shown in act of mercy
    - 4. Are dedicated to ideals of Party

- V. Pessimism
  - A. Presentation of “savior” to both societies
  - B. Rejection of “savior”
  - C. Death of any hope

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## Sample Sentence Outline

### Comparative Utopias

Controlling Purpose: to compare and contrast the use of setting and characterization to create realism in Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's *1984*.

- I. Both Orwell and Huxley seem convinced that the conditions in their novels are inevitable.
  - A. The novel *1984* was written in 1949 as a prediction of the future.
  - B. *Brave New World*, written in 1938, was a projection of the way the world would be many years in the future.

- II. The settings of the books appear, at first glance, to be opposite.
  - A. In *1984* there is a constant watch on the people.
    - 1. "Big Brother" is always watching.
    - 2. The slightest unorthodoxy is severely punished by imprisonment or death.
    - 3. The inhabitants have puritan morals.
  - B. The world presented in *Brave New World* seems happy and peaceful.
    - 1. The inhabitants are granted satisfaction of almost any desire they might have.
    - 2. The living conditions of the common man are excellent.
    - 3. Any unorthodoxy is met with mild punishment, if any is given at all.

- III. The philosophies of these two civilizations are the same.
  - A. The aim of the government is to take freedom away from the people.
  - B. The objective of the government is to produce totalitarianism.

- IV. The characters in the novels can be compared and contrasted.
  - A. John of *Brave New World* is referred to by Lenina as a "quaint freak."
    - 1. He refuses to become intimate with her.
    - 2. He loses his virginity while he is drugged.
    - 3. John is persecuted for ideals much like those of today.
      - a. He believes in the sanctity of love.
      - b. He places a high value on his body.
  - B. Winston of *1984* is almost tritely average.
    - 1. He possesses no outstanding characteristics except his overwhelming simplicity.
    - 2. Winston is an Elizabethan hero in that the seed of his destruction is within himself; this seed is his first fear of rats.
  - C. Lenina and Julia are so similar that they can be examined as one.
    - 1. Both are average English girls of the times (stereotypes).
    - 2. Both girls have obvious unorthodoxies.

- a. Julia's animal lust for sex is her flaw.
- b. Lenina's love for John is her "sin."

D. O'Brien of *1984* and Mond of *Brave New World* are the high rulers of their civilizations.

- 1. They also seem similar.
  - 2. Both appear, at the beginning of the novels, to be intelligent, thoughtful human beings.
  - 3. Both are discovered to be greedy and unfeeling.
    - a. Mond sacrifices his own ideals and blindly follows the Party.
    - b. Neither man is shown in an act of mercy.
  - 4. Both men are dedicated to the philosophy of their civilizations.

V. The authors of both books have a very pessimistic attitude towards the future.

A. Both societies were presented with a "savior."

B. Both societies rejected their last hope for freedom.

C. The authors offered these civilizations a ray of hope, and this ray was extinguished.

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