

# OUTLINING

**Thesis: The outline has purpose and form.**

- 1) A formal outline has four uses:
  - a) It helps a writer to clarify his purpose and organize his material to achieve that purpose.
  - b) It offers a convenient way of testing the proposed organization of an essay.
  - c) It may occasionally serve as a complete communication in itself.
  - d) It may be used as an aid to efficient reading.
  
- 2) There are two kinds of outlines.
  - a) A topic outline is one in which the headings are single words or phrases--not complete sentences.
    - i) The topic outline is more often used for oral reports.
    - ii) The topic outline is the more convenient form to use when the purpose of the outline cannot be expressed as a thesis.
  - b) The sentence outline is made up entirely of complete sentences.
    - i) The sentence outline is better when there is a thesis sentence, since it provides a clearer and fuller plan of development.
    - ii) The sentence outline is usually more logical and precise.
  
- 3) A complete outline consists of three parts:
  - a) The title appears at the top of the page, centered properly.
  - b) The purpose statement (thesis) appears just under the title.
  - c) The body of the outline appears under purpose statement.
  
- 4) There are certain conventions that the outline requires.
  - a) All headings should be marked with an appropriate symbol and indented to show the degree of division.
  - b) A major or minor division should not be subdivided into fewer than two subdivisions.
  
- 5) A person preparing an outline should follow certain steps.
  - a) The major divisions should be completed first, and then the minor ones should be fleshed out.
  - b) The Roman numerals should be used for the main divisions, then the capitals, and finally the Arabic numerals for the subdivisions.
  
- 6) A person preparing an outline may test it by considering certain questions.
  - a) Is the thesis statement satisfactory?
  - b) Is there a logical and clear relationship between the purpose statement (thesis) and each main division, and between the main and minor entries.
  - c) Is the outline sufficiently developed to be thoroughly useful?
  - d) Can each entry be adequately developed in the final essay?