

OUTLINES

Values of using an outline:

1. To help arrange material
2. To condense material
3. To help judge the importance or value of various ideas
4. To test the logic of the arrangement

Three functions of the outline:

1. Although a writer does not draw up his outline until he has limited his subject, following an outline does help him hold to those limits. It helps him judge the time the writing will take and estimate the number of words it will produce. It also helps him avoid ideas and arguments that lure him away from the subject.
2. The outline helps the writer differentiate between main points and subordinate points. Confusing these points is one of the greatest weaknesses of both readers and writers. It causes poorly balanced development, weak arguments, and unnecessary repetition.
3. The outline helps the writer place his ideas in the most effective order. If he knows what his conclusion will be, he can build toward it instead of stumbling upon it.

A SAMPLE OUTLINE

Thesis: The following standards are useful in outlining.

- I. Observe the following items:
 - a. Before beginning your outline, express the central thought (thesis sentence) in your own words in a simple sentence.
 - b. Observe correct outlining form.
 - i. Have a B for every A, and 2 for every 1.
 - ii. Be consistent in punctuation and indentation.
 - iii. Use parallel wording to state points of equal importance.
 - iv. Never mix the topic outline or the sentence outline together.
 - c. Arrange the outline in a logical development of the idea.
 - i. Make each point broad enough to cover the subject but exclusive enough so that it can't be used again in the outline.