Seim

AP Government

Research Paper Outline

Outlines are helpful for when you want to show the hierarchical relationship or logical ordering of information. For research papers, an outline will help you keep track of large amounts of information. A well done outline helps in the writing process, organizes ideas and materials, defines boundaries and relationships between ideas, and constructs an ordered overview of your writing.

The simplest diagram of an outline looks like this:

**Introduction**

* Hook—some interesting story or point that will make the reader want to keep reading
* Context—introduce the topic, necessary terms and vocabulary, provide a overview of the topic in your countries
* Thesis statement. (take ownership of your thesis statement—Don’t say, “It appears that women’s rights in Russia are improving quicker than in Nigeria, possibly because of government capacity and culture.” Say, “Women’s rights in Russia are improving compared to women’s rights in Nigeria because of the Russian government’s greater capacity and cultural stereotypes that influence policy and public attitudes.”
* Often, it is better to outline the body of your paper first, then return to complete the introduction and conclusion. When you already know what you want to say, your introduction will be more focused and relevant.

**Body**

* An argument to support the thesis.
  + sub-point of the argument
    - example
      * related example impact
      * response to example, etc.
    - example
  + sub-point of the argument
    - example
    - example
    - example
* An argument to support the thesis.
* An argument to support the thesis.

The Body is the main part of the research paper outline you are writing. It has no volume limitation, as it is the biggest and main section of the paper. The quantity of paragraphs for this part depends on overall requested volume of the research paper: the more arguments you have to support the bigger Body section there should be.

All the evidence you have found during the research should go here. You state each idea and provide efficient evidence. Do not state something you have no ways of proving! Each statement you give has to be backed up with the proof. Each piece of evidence should be a point on the outline. Organizationally, you should arrange it so that you can clearly see what argument your evidence is supporting, as well as see how your evidence will allow for transitions between points or between arguments.

Do not forget about valid references and proper citation according to the paper format—you may use EITHER APA or MLA depending on what you feel most comfortable doing.

You can mention counterarguments to your thesis and provide evidence why they are not correct. Opposing facts prove your deep knowledge on the topic and that you have really conducted a thorough research. This will show your commitment to the challenging tasks and create quite an impressive academic reputation.

**Conclusion**

* Summary of arguments.
* Restatement of thesis and any lasting thoughts you want to leave with the reader

**Alphanumeric Outlines**

This is the most common type of outline and usually instantly recognizable to most people. This is what you are going to do in this class. The formatting follows these characters, in this order:

* Roman Numerals
* Capitalized Letters
* Arabic Numerals
* Lowercase Letters
* Lowercase Roman Numerals

All the information contained in Heading 1 should have the same significance as the information contained in Heading 2. The same goes for the subheadings (which should be less significant than the headings). Example:

1. VISIT AND EVALUATE COLLEGE CAMPUSES
2. VISIT AND EVALUATE COLLEGE WEBSITES
   1. Note important statistics
   2. Look for interesting classes

The information in the headings should be more general, while the information in the subheadings should be more specific. Example:

1. DESCRIBE AN INFLUENTIAL PERSON IN YOUR LIFE
   1. Favorite high school teacher
   2. Grandparent

If you create a subheading, you should create at least two subheadings. If you only need one subheadings, you should streamline by just include the relevant information in the heading.

Source: this handout contains some samples and quotes from Purdue OWL Writing Workshop and the University of Georgia writing center.

Following are two sample outlines. These are examples are NOT long enough or detailed enough to meet your requirement for this class. The expectation for this class is that your outlines will be at least twice as long/detailed. However, they are meant to show you the general structure, organization and formatting of an outline.

**Sample Outline #1**

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| --- |
| Thesis: Federal regulations need to foster laws that will help protect wetlands, restore those that have been destroyed, and take measures to improve the damage from overdevelopment.  I. Nature's ecosystem     A. Loss of wetlands nationally     B. Loss of wetlands in Illinois        1. More flooding and poorer water quality        2. Lost ability to prevent floods, clean water and store water  II. Dramatic floods     A, Cost in dollars and lives        1. 13 deaths between 1988 and 1998        2. Cost of $39 million per year     B. Great Midwestern Flood of 1993        1. Lost wetlands in IL        2. Devastation in some states     C. Flood Prevention        1. Plants and Soils        2. Floodplain overflow  III. Wetland laws     A. Inadequately informed legislators        1. Watersheds        2. Interconnections in natural water systems     B. Water purification  IV. Need to save wetlands     A. New federal definition     B. Re-education about interconnectedness        1. Ecology at every grade level        2. Education for politicians and developers        3. Choices in schools and people's lives |

**Sample Outline #2**

|  |
| --- |
| **Title:** *The Federalist* *Papers’* Influence on the Ratification of the Constitution  **Thesis:** *The Federalist Papers* influenced the ratification of the Constitution by making some of their most important arguments, including the importance of being in a Union by having a Constitution, answering to the objections made by the Anti-federalists about separation of powers, and defending opposing arguments made against the characteristics of the executive and judicial branch as provided in the Constitution.               I.     Introduction  a.      Describe *The Federalist Papers* are and when they started  b.     Thesis*: The Federalist* influenced the ratification of the Constitution by making some of their most important arguments, including the importance of being in a Union by having a Constitution, answering to the objections made by the Anti-federalists about separation of powers, and defending opposing arguments made against the characteristics of the executive and judicial branch as provided in the Constitution.            II.     Background  a.      State when *The Federalist* was printed and published.  b.     Discuss the intentions and purposes of *The Federalist.*          III.     Argument for the benefit of a Union  a.      A Union would guard against external dangers  b.     A Union would guard against internal dangers  A.    The “extended sphere” argument about how it will control factions. (Federalist 10)         IV.     Argument of the problem with complete separation of powers  a.      Anti-federalists wanted a complete separation of the judicial, executive, and legislative branches  b.     *The Federalist* said the maxim of complete separation of powers is misunderstood. (Montesquieu)  c.      The branches need some limited power of the other branches to protect themselves from encroachment of the other branches (Federalist 51)  A.    The branches need to have the interests of maintaining their powers, and not letting the other branches take that away.           V.     Argument for a single executive, and against a plural executive  a.      Anti-federalists didn’t want a single executive, too much like a monarch  b.     *The Federalist* need the executive to be “energetic” and a plural executive would make this impossible (Federalist 70)  A.    It would take too long for the people in the executive position to make decision in an emergency, because they might disagree.  B.    In a plural executive, it is hard to tell who is responsible for a wrongdoing because they can all blame each other, so a single executive would lead to more responsible behavior         VI.     Argument in favor of judicial review and terms of good behavior for judges  a.      Anti-federalists didn’t like judicial review and the term of good behavior  b.     The Federalist argued that judicial review was necessary to protect the judicial branch from the Legislature.  c.      A term of good behavior was necessary to get qualified people for the positions; it would also give them time to develop knowledge.       VII.     Conclusion  a.      Thesis  b.     The dates of the ratification of the Constitution by the States  c.      *The Federalist*’s influence beyond the ratification |