

CREATING AN OUTLINE

Organize your ideas to improve the coherence of your writing

An outline is like the lines in a coloring book – once you have a well-organized outline, ‘coloring in’ becomes a piece of cake. Outlines are especially important and helpful when you are writing a long essay or composition.

NINE STEPS TO MAKING AN OUTLINE:

1. Read the **prompt** and make sure you understand it; look up words you don’t know
2. Underline key words, requirements, and important information in the **prompt**
3. Read relevant literature and brainstorm to come up with a solid **main idea** for your essay
4. Make sure your **main idea** matches up with the requirements in the **prompt**
5. List the major **points of support** for your **main idea** (and background information where appropriate)
6. For each **point of support**, list details and evidence to use when writing about that point
7. Make sure that all of your **points of support** are appropriate and match up with your **main idea** and with the requirements of the **prompt**
8. Use your **main idea** and major **points of support** to formulate a thesis statement (a clear, concise statement of your main argument or discussion. Your thesis will also serve as a roadmap for the rest of your essay, giving the reader a general idea of the path your argument or discussion will follow.)
9. Write your paper, paying close attention to (and following) your outline