

Tip Sheet – Writing an Outline

How Outlines Help: An Outline on Outlines:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Logic
 - a. Subtopics in order
 - b. Transitions clarified
 - c. Omissions discovered
- 3) Evidence
 - a. All relevant facts accounted for
 - b. Irrelevant facts revealed and omitted
- 4) Elimination of distraction
 - a. No hunting for stray evidence
 - i. Outline tells you what's going where
 - ii. Label locates evidence in your notes
 - b. No need to think about logical thread
 - c. Concentrate on one idea at a time
- 5) Conclusion

A sentence outline helps to clarify the details of what you're writing. It also helps to check the flow of logic. If you read the sentences in the outline you should 'hear' a paragraph that makes sense. Also, if you're dreading the moment when you actually have to sit down and write the paper, this will make that stage a little easier when you get there.

The outline below is slightly more relevant to your paper topic – each section should be about a sentence long.

- 1) Introduction
 - a. Outline thesis statement
 - b. Outline what your paper will cover
- 2) Theory: Literature Review
 - a. Outline the general topic
 - b. Review available evidence (local/international)
- 3) Practice: Interview/Case Study
 - a. Detail findings from interview
 - b. Compare and contrast theory and practice
- 4) Recommendations
 - a. What can we learn from your research?
 - b. Recommendations for theory, practice, industry, funding, government, community, individuals, law etc
- 5) Conclusion
 - a. Wrap up your argument (no new information!)
 - b. Revisit the thesis statement (support or disprove?)
 - c. Concluding remarks

Outline Checklist:

- Does the title of the outline reflect the contents of the paper?
- Does the outline begin with a good introduction to your topic?
- Do the subtopics represent the major points of your argument or survey?
- Do the subtopics support your thesis?
- Are the subtopics in logical order?
- Can you identify transitions between subtopics?
- Have you included all the relevant points within each subtopic?
- Can you identify any gaps in the logical thread?
- Do any points lead you off topic?
- Does the outline end with an appropriate conclusion?