

Outline Outline

- I. **Outlining is a valuable skill that is simple to learn.**
 - A. Outlines help you organize your thinking and writing.
 - B. There is a proper, yet simple, stylistic format for outlines.
 - C. An outline must contain a thesis, a section for each area of focus, and a conclusion.

- II. Outlines are organizational tools that help you get your thoughts in order before you write an essay, report, or research paper.
 - A. They promote good writing by helping you organize *before*, not *while*, you write.
 - B. Outlines require clear topic sentences, which are an important aspect of good writing.
 - C. Teachers and bosses know that a good outline is the sign of clear, logical thinking.

- III. The standard outline format is made up of a few simple steps.
 - A. Roman numerals are placed at the left margin, and they indicate the major ideas like thesis statements and main areas of focus.
 - B. Capital letters are indented five spaces (one tab), and they indicate the evidence that supports the major ideas. (The previous sentence is an example of such evidence.)
 - C. Regular numbers are indented ten spaces (two tabs), and they indicate the details that prove your supporting arguments. (These are not always included in simple outlines.)
 - D. Standard punctuation, capitalization, and spacing are used in outlines.
 1. All sentences must begin with a capital letter and contain end punctuation.
 2. Put only one space after commas and semicolons, just like I've done in this sentence; however, put two spaces after periods. See what I mean?
 3. Numerals and letters which denote new ideas must be followed by periods.

- IV. All outlines contain certain things.
 - A. The thesis comes first (often in boldface type), and clearly states what your entire research paper or essay is going to prove. It is your point in one clear sentence.
 - B. Clear topic sentences begin each section of the outline. (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, etc.)
 - C. Clear supporting sentences follow the topic sentences. (A, B, C, D, E, etc.)
 - D. Next comes detailed evidence--statistics, anecdotes, quotes. (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc.)
 - E. The conclusion section is a re-statement of the thesis, a summary of major arguments, and a powerful closing sentence that will stick in the reader's memory.

- V. It is not only easy, but extremely important to learn how to outline.
 - A. Outlines help you get organized.
 - B. There is a simple, standard format that is not hard to learn.
 - C. Outlines contain certain, specific information that makes writing your papers a snap.
 - D. Outlining is valuable, simple, and fun! Do it and succeed!