

Outline Template for Research Paper Outline

<i><b>What is Important</b></i>	<i><b>What is not important</b></i>
<p>Include your Thesis (this can be multiple statements)</p> <p>Include complete TOPIC SENTENCES for ALL paragraphs and sections</p> <p>Organize your paragraphs in a way that answers your thesis</p> <p>Include introduction and conclusion</p> <p>Correct indentions and format</p> <p>Every piece of evidence must have a correct MLA parenthetical that matches your MLA works cited</p>	<p>Whether you use Roman Numerals or Arabic</p> <p>Whether you write or list the points for your introduction</p>

**Title/Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sections of Paper:**

- I. Introduction and Thesis
- II. Background- Historical descriptive information
- III. Defining the Problem
- IV. Causes of the Problem
  - A. Political
  - B. Social
  - C. Economic
  - D. Military
  - E. Etc.
- V. Positions/Perspectives
  - A. Overview
  - B. Position 1
  - C. Position 2
  - D. Position 3
  - E. Etc.
- VI. Solutions
  - A. Overview
  - B. Global-What is it? Does it work? Why/why not?
  - C. National- What is it? Does it work? Why/why not?
  - D. Local- What is it? Does it work? Why/why not?
  - E. Best option- evaluation/analysis
- VII. Conclusion and closing thoughts
  - A. Recap main points and ideas
  - B. What's next for this subject/issue-future projections, lessons learned, action needed unless?
  - C. What can your community do to remedy these issues or contribute to solving the problem?
  - D. Your personal analysis of the new global world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century

**I. Introduction and Thesis:** *Be sure to include all of the following. This may be listed or in complete sentences. I advise you complete this after you write your outline or at least after you have written all your topic sentences. The introduction to a paper is a very important section, in that it sets the expectations of the reader. While there is no one formula for a good introduction, in general, an introduction to a formal paper of this type should accomplish the following:*

**A. An introduction should attract the reader's attention.** Magazine and newspaper articles often accomplish this with brief but interesting anecdotes, questions that pique the reader's curiosity, something of personal relevance to the reader, or other apt quotations, provocative questions, or statements. While you shouldn't feel that you have to sensationalize, neither should you assume that the reader is interested in what you have to say by default. Very often just raising the interesting issue that your thesis explores is enough to pull your reader in.

**B. An introduction should tell the reader explicitly what the thesis (the point of the paper) is.** After having read the introduction, the reader should have no doubt about what the central point of your paper is.

**C. An introduction should establish the significance of your point to the reader.** You should convince your audience that it should care about what you have to say, though attention to relevance and significance is part of constructing a successful thesis.

**D. An introduction can give a preview of how you are going to demonstrate your thesis.** Writers often summarize in a brief list of three or so points how you are going to back up your thesis, so as to prepare the reader and improve the reader's recognition and retention of those points.

#### **HERE IS WHAT AN INTRODUCTION IS NOT:**

**A. An introduction is not the place to introduce background or factual information.** A common impulse is to start a paper with the story of when a person was born, or with some historical background. However, unless some brief information is necessary to understand the terms within or significance of the thesis, save the background for your next paragraph.

**B. An introduction should not be too long.** An introduction should be a single paragraph, at least for the length of papers for this class. A page-long intro is usually too long -- half a page or less is good. If your opening anecdote is a long one, you don't have to finish it in the introduction -- just introduce enough of it to get the reader's attention and establish the significance of your thesis. You can finish it in the body of the paper. (In fact, such a "teaser" is a common device of newspaper feature writers.)

**C. Don't start your introduction with a dictionary definition.** We're not interested in how Webster's defines "Postmodernism." We are interested in YOUR take on it.

**D. Don't start out with a grand generalization.** The cliché of the "pyramid form" introduction often leads to uninteresting sentences that begin with "Since the beginning of time..." or "Throughout history...". Showing the significance of your thesis does not mean that you have to demonstrate its importance in the history of art or tie it to some universal observation.

*(<http://www2.bmc.edu>)*

## STRUCTURE:

**For each section- Write an overarching topic sentence for each of your big sections and then write a topic sentence to introduce each paragraph within the section.**

### II. Background

#### A. Big topic sentence introducing you main ideas for the entire section.

- A. Topic sentence for first idea you will address in this section
  - 1. Detail/Fact that proves topic sentence-remember to cite it parenthetically
  - 2. Detail/Fact that proves topic sentence-remember to cite it parenthetically.
  - 3. Detail/Fact that proves topic sentence-remember to cite it parenthetically.
  
- B. Topic sentence for next idea you will address in this section
  - 1. Detail/Fact that proves topic sentence-remember to cite it parenthetically
  - 2. Detail/Fact that proves topic sentence-remember to cite it parenthetically.
  - 3. Detail/Fact that proves topic sentence-remember to cite it parenthetically.
  
- C. Topic sentence for next idea you will address in this section
  - 1. Detail/Fact that proves topic sentence-remember to cite it parenthetically
  - 2. Detail/Fact that proves topic sentence-remember to cite it parenthetically.
  - 3. Detail/Fact that proves topic sentence-remember to cite it parenthetically.

#### D. REPEAT....

Lastly... The Closing- This is the last section I read. Make it interesting and and intelleucally driven. This is where you demonstrate what you learned and how you can apply your knowledge to the present day/future-

- A. Recap main points and ideas; thesis restated and revisted
- B. What's next for this subject/issue-future projections, lessons learned, action needed unless?
- C. What can your community do to remedy these issues or contribute to solving the problem?
- D. Your personal analysis of the new global world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century