

Materials Checklist:

- Script
- Reverse outline instructions
- Examples Handout

Reverse Outline Workshop -- **Script**

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**Introduce yourself, the APAC (location, hours, services), and the workshop:**

*(5 Minutes first 2 sections)*

*This is the Organization and Reverse Outlining Workshop. Its aim is to help you understand the importance of a well-organized paper. This workshop will show you structural elements of a well-organized paper and will also go over how to outline and reverse outline to make sure your paper flows logically and clearly.*

**Briefly Explain Reverse Outlining:**

*Reverse outlines are just as important to the revising process as outlining is to the pre-writing process. The idea of reverse-outlining is to take each paragraph already written and write the main idea of the paragraph, it should be similar to the topic sentence. Assess whether or not the paragraph is thorough enough, does it use sources properly? Explain how the paragraph relates to your thesis. Once you have completed this for every paragraph, consider the order of the paragraphs and the information you have written down. Does anything need to be changed?*

**Briefly Explain the Activity:** *(10 minutes)*

First, hand out the example sheet as well as the reverse outlining instructions sheet. They should follow along on the examples and the instructions while you explain the process of reverse outlining.

Explain that they should first examine the introduction and answer specific questions:

- Does the intro grab your attention?
- Does it sufficiently introduce you to the topic?

They should then identify and examine the thesis statement:

- Is it debatable, specific, and interesting?
- Does it answer the prompt?

After evaluating the intro and thesis they should then move on to the body paragraphs, examining them and answering specific questions:

Go over the example handout, briefly outlining the instructions.

**Instructions for Each Body Paragraph Are as Follows:**

For each body Paragraph do the following:

- A. Write down the main idea of the paragraph in a simple sentence. (Make sure there is only one main idea. If there are two or more significant ideas, use that second idea to create a new paragraph. Be wary of the word “and” in this sentence, because this often means that there is more than one idea present).
- B. Write one sentence explaining how your paragraph relates to your thesis. If you don't have such a sentence in your paragraph, consider adding one.



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- C. Write down your transition word or phrase. There are two styles: 1.) wrap up the idea of the paragraph and relate the idea back to your thesis. Begin the next paragraph with a key word to signal transition into the next idea with a topic sentence. 2.) End your paragraph with a segue to the next idea and begin the next paragraph with a topic sentence.

**Note:** ask the professor at this point which style they prefer:

For example, Winchester prefers #1

Then examine the conclusion, answering the following:

Did you restate your thesis or remind your reader of the major ideas of your argument?

Have you left your reader with something to think about or did you connect your argument to its broader implications?

Finally, examine the outline you've made (obviously, impossible for you to do a physical example of, but give them some idea of what they might say)

- Did you use an "and" in a way that requires two paragraphs because you were connecting separate ideas?
- Do you need to change the order of some of the paragraphs?
- Should you move sections around into a different order?
- If the logic or topic of one section includes information important to an earlier argument or concepts are used that are not defined/useful until later in the paper you may need to consider rearranging.

### **Activity:** (30 mins)

Set them to work.

- Tell them to raise their hand if they encounter an "and" and help them evaluate if it is connecting related ideas or ones that should be separate.
  - Peanut butter and jelly = okay
  - Cooking and fishing = not okay
- Walk around and help as necessary. Students often need a refresher on topic sentences, transitions, thesis, and logical paragraph order.
- Conclude with a discussion of how the different parts of this activity go toward helping your paper:
  - A: making sure you have topic sentences and that your paragraphs aren't including too many ideas
  - B: Making sure your paragraphs have a direct connection to your thesis
  - C: making sure you are transitioning effectively throughout the paper
  - Also making sure that things flow, information destined for certain paragraphs hasn't been jumbled around all together, and that there is logic behind how you position your information.

