

## Organization/Reverse Outline Workshop Handout

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Updated: 3 May 2016

Outlines or reverse outlines are useful tools for the writing process. They can help keep you on point when you are writing as well as help you organize your paper BEFORE you write it, in addition to diagnosing problems after a draft has been completed.

### Activity: Reverse Outline

Take a look at your most recent assignment. You are going to look closely at each paragraph to ensure clarity of content, logical flow, and presence of necessary elements. Answer these questions in order to evaluate this.

### For your introduction:

- Evaluate the introductory information: does it grab your attention  
Does it introduce you to the topic sufficiently?
- Identify your thesis: Does it answer the prompt?  
Is it specific, debatable, and interesting?

### 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, create a new paragraph. **Be wary of the word “and” in this sentence.** 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.
- C. Write down your transition word or phrase.  
Each paragraph should have a transition sentence. 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/phrase/concept 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.

### For Conclusion:

1. Do you **restate** your thesis (not copy and paste) and/or bring your reader back through your explanation/argument?
2. Are you left with something to think about/ did you connect the argument to the broader implications?

Consider the outline you made. Do you need to change the order of any paragraphs? Do you need to move any sections? If the logic or topic of one section includes information important to an earlier argument **or** concepts are used that are not defined until later in the paper, you may need to consider rearranging your paragraph order.

Evaluate Introduction:



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Thesis:

Body Paragraph 1:

A.

B.

C.

Body Paragraph 2:

A.

B.

C.

Body Paragraph 3:

A.


B.

C.

Conclusion:

Final Thoughts:



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