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| Writing an Outline |

An outline is a “blueprint” or “plan” for your paper.  It helps you to organize your thoughts and arguments. A good outline can make conducting research and then writing the paper very efficient.  Your outline page must include your:

* Paper Title
* Thesis statement
* Major points/arguments indicated by Roman numerals (i.e., I, II, III, IV, V, etc.)
* Support for your major points, indicated by capital Arabic numerals (i.e., A, B, C, D, E, etc.)

Roman numeral I should be your “Introduction”.  In the introduction portion of your paper, you’ll want to tell your reader what your paper is about and then tell what your paper hopes to prove (your thesis).  So an Introduction gives an overview of the topic and your thesis statement.

The final Roman numeral should be your “Conclusion”.  In the conclusion, you summarize what you have told your reader.

Following are 3 sample outlines, from actual student papers.  YOUR outline can be MORE detailed, or might be LESS detailed.  Remember that a good outline makes writing easier and more efficient.

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| **Sample Outline #1**      **Title: Frederick Douglass**  **Thesis**: Frederick Douglass played a crucial role in securing the abolition of slavery and equality of African-American rights through his actions, ideas, and efforts as a lecturer, author/publisher, and politician.                  I.     Introduction  A.    Thesis  B.    Roles/Arguments              II.     Douglass as Lecturer  A.    History as slave and acquisition of education  1)     He “experienced slavery”  2)     Literacy allowed expression  B.    Early lectures, including initial speech before Garrison  1)     Success of initial speech  2)     Goals for future speeches  C.    Effect of lectures on society  1)     Open eyes  2)     Encourage activism            III.     Douglass as Author/Publisher  A.    *Narrative*’s success and effect  1)     Springboard for paper  B.    Goals/hopes for paper  C.    Garrison set-back and significance  D.    Significance of Paper           IV.     Douglass as Politician  A.    Key trait for success  B.    Goal of political activism  C.    Efforts for Republican party  1)     Significance of efforts  D.    Black soldier enlistment crusade  E.     Joining of Republican party  1)     Significance of efforts             V.     Conclusion  A.    Summarize arguments and efforts |

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| **Sample Outline #2**    **Title:***The Federalist* *Papers’* Influence on the Ratification of the Constitution  **Thesis:***The Federalist Papers* influenced the ratification of the Constitution by making some of their most important arguments, including the importance of being in a Union by having a Constitution, answering to the objections made by the Anti-federalists about separation of powers, and defending opposing arguments made against the characteristics of the executive and judicial branch as provided in the Constitution.                  I.     Introduction  a.      Describe *The Federalist Papers* are and when they started  b.     Thesis*:  The Federalist* influenced the ratification of the Constitution by making some of their most important arguments, including the importance of being in a Union by having a Constitution, answering to the objections made by the Anti-federalists about separation of powers, and defending opposing arguments made against the characteristics of the executive and judicial branch as provided in the Constitution.            II.     Background  a.      State when *The Federalist* was printed and published.  b.     Discuss the intentions and purposes of *The Federalist.*          III.     Argument for the benefit of a Union  a.      A Union would guard against external dangers  b.     A Union would guard against internal dangers  A.    The “extended sphere” argument about how it will control factions. (Federalist 10)         IV.     Argument of the problem with complete separation of powers  a.      Anti-federalists wanted a complete separation of the judicial, executive, and legislative branches  b.     *The Federalist* said the maxim of complete separation of powers is misunderstood. (Montesquieu)  c.      The branches need some limited power of the other branches to protect themselves from encroachment of the other branches (Federalist 51)  A.    The branches need to have the interests of maintaining their powers, and not letting the other branches take that away.           V.     Argument for a single executive, and against a plural executive  a.      Anti-federalists didn’t want a single executive, too much like a monarch  b.     *The Federalist* need the executive to be “energetic” and a plural executive would make this impossible (Federalist 70)  A.    It would take too long for the people in the executive position to make decision in an emergency, because they might disagree.  B.    In a plural executive, it is hard to tell who is responsible for a wrongdoing because they can all blame each other, so a single executive would lead to more responsible behavior         VI.     Argument in favor of judicial review and terms of good behavior for judges  a.      Anti-federalists didn’t like judicial review and the term of good behavior  b.     The Federalist argued that judicial review was necessary to protect the judicial branch from the Legislature.  c.      A term of good behavior was necessary to get qualified people for the positions; it would also give them time to develop knowledge.       VII.     Conclusion  a.      Thesis  b.     The dates of the ratification of the Constitution by the States  c.      *The Federalist*’s influence beyond the ratification |

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| **Sample Outline #3**    **Title:***Common Sense* and Its Impact on American Political Thought  **Thesis:** Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* articulated the anti-British sentiments of the Colonies in a way so unprecedented that it permanently changed the face of political thought in America.      I.                 Intro:  A.    Thesis: Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* articulated the anti-British sentiments of the Colonies in a way so unprecedented that it permanently changed the face of political thought in America.    II.               What did *Common Sense* say that was so different?  A.    It denounced both the monarchy and the English Constitution, which had previously been looked upon as a brilliant political document. Americans realized the inherent fallacies of hereditary government (specifically monarchy) as well as the English Constitution which protected the monarchy.  B.    It called for Americans to disconnect themselves from the flawed British system and create a new one for themselves. C*ommon Sense* questioned the long-standing belief that residents of the colonies were inseparably connected to England. It gave them a new identity – Americans rather then Britons.  C.    It also outlined the benefits of a republican government, which would go on to influence the ideas of the Founding Fathers as they created a new government for their new country.    III.             What was *Common Sense*’s immediate effect on the Colonies?  A.    The debate in the American Colonies shifted from that of reconciliation with England to that of independence.  B.    It was read by an unprecedented number of colonists and united a great majority of them behind independence.  C.    It inspired American intellectuals with its call for independence, leading to the composition of the Declaration of Independence a mere six months later.    IV.            What were *Common Sense*’s long term effects?  A.    It changed the connotation of the word “revolution” to something that looked to the future. “Revolution” became a word of innovation rather than renovation.  B.    It permanently cemented the idea of a republican, non-hereditary government into the heads of Americans. *Common Sense*’s design for a republican government, and its basic principles were carried on to the Constitution.    V.              Conclusion  A.    *Common Sense*’s eloquent, articulate, and unprecedented arguments led to a permanent change in American political thought. |