

Outlines

Formal outlines follow this pattern:

Thesis statement:

- I. First main idea
 - A. First subdivision of the main idea
 - B. Second subdivision of the main idea
 - 1. First supporting detail
 - 2. Second supporting detail
 - a.
 - b.
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (a)
 - (b)
 - i.
 - ii.
- II.
- III.
- IV.
- V.

(Note the placement of the Roman numerals. The periods line up, while the Roman numerals extend to the left of each period. Also note how the first word of each subdivision lines up with the beginning letter of the line above it. See the red, blue, and pink entries above.)

Outlines include a title, main headings, and subheadings. The title is the subject about which you are writing. The main headings tell the main topics that will be talked about in the paper. The introduction, or thesis statement, appears before the first main heading; the conclusion appears after the last main heading. You need at least two main headings in between the introduction and the conclusion. Each main heading comes after a Roman numeral followed by a period. The subheadings are shown under the main headings. The first level of subheadings is shown by a capital letter followed by a period. The second level is shown by an Arabic numeral

followed by a period. See the above diagram for the remaining levels of subheadings.

In the outline, if you cannot divide a subcategory into at least two parts, then do not include that subdivision. With this in mind, if you use a Roman numeral I, you must also use II. Likewise, if you use an A, you must use a B; a 1 must be followed by a 2; etc. Only the first word plus proper nouns are capitalized in each entry. If the outline is a sentence outline, be sure each line entry is a complete sentence followed by a period. (The thesis statement and the conclusion are each always a complete sentence followed by a period.) In a topic outline, there is no end punctuation for the entries (except for the thesis statement and the conclusion).

Sample Sentence Outline

Genesis 1-2:3

Thesis statement: *God created the universe in six days, resting on the seventh day.*

- I. There was the first day of creation.
 - A. The earth was formless and void.
 - 1. There was darkness.
 - 2. There were waters.
 - B. God made light.
 - 1. God spoke light into being.
 - 2. God divided light from darkness.
 - 3. God called light Day and darkness Night.
- II. There was the second day of creation.
 - A. There were waters.
 - B. God made the sky.
 - 1. There were waters above.
 - 2. There were waters below.
 - 3. God made the sky (or Heaven, or firmament) to separate the waters above from the waters below.
- III. There was the third day of creation.
 - A. God gathered together the waters below.
 - B. God made the dry lands appear.
 - 1. God called the dry land Earth.
 - a. God called into being grass and herbs that yield seeds.
 - b. God called into being trees that yield fruit and seeds.
 - 2. God called the gathered waters that were below the Seas.
- IV. There was the fourth day of creation.
 - A. God made the night lights (moon and stars).
 - B. God made the day light (sun).
- V. There was the fifth day of creation.
 - A. God created sea creatures.
 - B. God created birds.
 - C. God told them to be fruitful and multiply.
- VI. There was the sixth day of creation.
 - A. God created land creatures.
 - B. God made man.
 - 1. God made man in His image.
 - 2. God gave man dominion over the earth and every fish, bird, and creeping thing.
 - 3. God told man and woman to be fruitful and multiply.
 - C. God gave plants for food.
 - 1. God gave plants for food to man.
 - 2. God gave plants for food to land animals and birds.
- VII. There was the seventh day.
 - A. Creation was finished and it was good.
 - B. God rested.
 - C. God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

Conclusion: *After creating the heavens and the earth in six days, God saw that His creation was good and rested on the seventh day, blessing it as a day of rest.*