



**Getting Ready for your Research Paper
Step Five – Outlining**

The outline will help you **structure** the research paper and **stay focused** on developing the main idea of the paper. Start by writing a **working thesis statement**. Use this to guide the entire outline and paper.

INTRODUCTION

Identify the subject/explain the problem
Provide background information
Frame a thesis statement (main idea/purpose of the paper)

BODY

Analyze/Examine/Interpret the subject
Develop/Compare first, second, third major idea/issue/argument/etc.
SUPPORT main ideas (evidence, facts, examples, etc.)

Restate your thesis statement
Remind audience of your position
Provide solutions, answers, final opinions

CONCLUSION

Outlining Model **note: Ask your instructor about the format of the outline he/she wants you to use (i.e.; topic or sentence outline, formal or informal outline, etc.)*

If you're working on an argumentative paper, SEE ALSO Writing Center handouts "The Art of Argumentative Writing" and "How to Craft an Argumentative Thesis."

Lester, James D. and James D. Lester, Jr. Writing Research Papers; A Complete Guide. Tenth Edition. New York: Longman, 2002.