CREATING AN OUTLINE

An outline breaks down the parts of your thesis in a clear, hierarchical manner. Creating an outline before you begin writing your paper helps organize your thoughts and will help make the writing process easier. The more detailed your outline is, the easier it is to write your paper. Include complete sentences, sources, and quotes.

To create an outline, consider the following:

1. The purpose of the paper: Why would a reader be interested in your paper? Why are you writing?
2. The audience: What are your instructor’s expectations? What does your audience most likely already know about the topic?
3. The thesis: What do you want the main point to be? What are you trying to prove? If you could sum the paper up in one sentence, what would it be?

Next:

• Start with an introduction; state your thesis at the end of the introduction.
• List all of your ideas.
• Group the related ideas together.
• Organize the ideas into key points and subheadings.
• End with a conclusion. The conclusion should contain your thesis in some form.

Think of your outline as a “road map” of your journey toward making a final product.

Example Outline:

1. Introduction: Competitive swimming is an ideal sport for kids
2. Competitive swimming provides same benefits as other sports
   a. It is good exercise and builds muscular strength
   b. It promotes cooperation among team members, especially in relays
3. Competitive swimming provides some additional benefits
   a. Swimming is an important skill that can be used forever
   b. There is a reduced risk of injury
   c. Each swimmer can easily chart his or her own progress
4. My personal experience as a competitive swimmer
   a. I enjoy working with my coach
   b. I’ve made a lot of friends on the swim team
5. Conclusion: Competitive swimming provides many benefits for kids