

Using Outlines for Success

Why outline a chapter or article you have read?

Outlining helps you become a better reader and student. Creating an outline will help you organize your thoughts, remember what you have read, and show what you have learned.

If you have used graphic organizers, you have already learned some of the steps in making an outline. To fill out an organizer, you had to figure out main points and some supporting details. As you saw how each detail supported the main points, you got a “big picture” view. Outlining can help you in the same way.

But **how** do you create an outline? Making an outline is like doing a jigsaw puzzle. You have to figure out how each piece fits together with the whole. To make an outline, first decide what are the main points. Then figure out the supporting points. When you create an outline, you do not need to write in complete sentences. This illustration shows how an outline is structured.

If you are outlining a chapter or article, the author may give you clues about what is important. The first paragraph usually introduces what the chapter is about, or what the author is going to prove. The text may have **bold** headings. This lets you know what a particular section is about. The author may give examples, facts, or statistics to support these points. The last section usually summarizes the main points and lets the reader know that the chapter or article is over.

When might you want to create an outline? Outlines can help you study, especially when the topic is complicated. Creating an outline is also a great way to prepare to write a report or essay. When your ideas are organized, your writing will be too!

Title

I. First Main Point

A. Supporting Point

B. Supporting Point

II. Second Main Point

A. Supporting Point

B. Supporting Point

III. Third Main Point

A. Supporting Point

B. Supporting Point

IV. Conclusion

A. Supporting Point

B. Supporting Point