

## What Is an Outline?

An outline is a way of organizing information. This is commonly done for two reasons:

- 1) To organize an article or essay before it is written.
- 2) To sort out important information from an article after it is written.

Outlines look quite simple, and they usually are! It's basically taking apart a paragraph or an idea and putting it into point-form. It might look like:

<p><b>Title:</b> Dinosaurs Were Bad News</p> <p><b>Topic/Theses:</b> It is a good thing dinosaurs are extinct.</p> <p>    <b>Main Idea:</b> Dinosaurs were very dangerous.</p> <p>        <b>Supporting Information:</b> They had pointy teeth.</p> <p>        <b>Supporting Information:</b> They ate each other.</p> <p>        <b>Supporting Information:</b> Many of them are big enough to crush me.</p> <p>    <b>Main Idea:</b> Dinosaurs smelled bad.</p> <p>        <b>Supporting Information:</b> There were no baths available at that time.</p> <p>        <b>Supporting Information:</b> They probably walked through swamps a lot.</p> <p>    .....</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> Dinosaurs were dangerous, smelly, and murderous cannibals, even though they were pretty cool. It is a good thing they are not around anymore.</p>
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Formatting an outline is fairly simple. It is good to use point form. You do not have to include the “Main Idea, Supporting Information, etc” – that is what the spacing is for! You do not always have to use complete sentences, but don't be lazy – make sure your ideas are clear! You can simply use the “Tab” button on your keyboard to make the indentations (sideways spacing).

### ASSIGNMENT: Go Do It!

Find an article you are interested in on the internet. It can be news, pop culture (music, TV, film, fashion, video games, etc.) and break down the information into an outline **OR** plan an article of your own on something you care about.

### Useful Links:

[How To Write an Outline](#) from WikiHow provides step-by-step instructions on how to write an outline.

[Basic Outlining](#) from JCJ displays a clear format for an outline as well as an example outline that is easy to follow.