

# Outlines

## Instructions

### Outline Purpose

Outlines help students organize their larger writing assignments at the beginning of the writing process. While outlines are less formal than essays, they closely focus on claims (thesis statements and topic sentences) and evidence needed for essays. Outlines should follow the specific format detailed below.

### Format

The outline is a pre-writing assignment, and it does not follow MLA. Instead, use these rules:

1. Font: Times New Roman, 12 point font
2. Margins: 1 inch on all sides
3. Header: MLA header
4. Spacing: single spacing with a line break between each section
5. Length: there is not a minimum, but try to cover each claim planned for your essay

### Claims

Claims are a large part of this assignment. As students progress through the writing process, every element may be edited at each stage. For the outline, students should have a developed *working thesis* that may undergo further editing before the final version of the essay. *Topic sentences* should also be included in the outline, and they should be developed into claims or arguments instead of questions or fragments. They may also undergo further editing.

### Evidence

Evidence, whether quotations, observations, or other textual evidence, make up the rest of this assignment. Students do not have to write their evidence in complete sentences, as the outline should help organize and reveal strengths in research or observations. Citations are not required, but if students include them early in the writing process, they are less likely to make mistakes in the final essay or accidentally plagiarize.

Outlines follow brainstorming and prewriting in the writing process. Students may cover a wide variety of topics in brainstorming or prewriting, but not every idea needs to be represented in the outline. Students should only include what they plan to cover in their final essay.