

Easy 8 step plan for writing an outline for your amazing essay.

Before using these steps, you should create a blank outline that has each of the main sections of an essay labeled with space available to enter in your information as you follow the steps below.

Thinking Step 0. What is the prompt/ question you are trying to answer?

Thinking Step 1. Answer that question/prompt (be sure your answer explains why you think it as well) You answer should be one sentence that summarizes your answer.

Writing Step 1: Write that answer down on your outline beneath “Thesis/Argument”

Thinking Step 2. Ask yourself, what are three specific parts of the book that make me think this? Or you can ask yourself, where are three places in the story where having my opinion make sense?

(Remember: “opinion” = thesis = Your answer to the prompt = argument.)

Writing Step 2: Each of those specific parts is a citation; so write one of them in the space for “Quote/Citation” for Body Paragraph 1, 2, and 3.

Thinking Step 3. Think about how you would explain to someone how the parts of the story that you chose lead you to believe your opinion.

Writing Step 3: Write down your explanation for each of the parts of the story that you chose in the space titled “Relate Quote to Argument” beneath each of your “Quote/Citation” entries.

Thinking Step 4. Try to summarize what each of your body paragraphs are talking about. This summary should be something general¹ and not too specific.² This summary should be about everything that your entries for “Quote/Citation” and “Relate Quote to Argument” say.

Writing Step 4: Write down that summary (should be one sentence) in the three places for “Topic Sentence.”

Thinking Step 5. Think about your argument and the things you wrote down for your body paragraph. If someone had never read these stories, what in your thesis/opinion/argument sentence would they not know?

Writing Step 5: Write an explanation of those things and the title/author in the space for “Background Info”

Thinking Step 6. Look at your thesis and think about how you can say the same idea in a new and different way.

Writing Step 6: Write down that new and different way under the place labeled, “Restate Thesis”

Thinking Step 7. Take all three things you wrote under the place for “Relate Quote to Argument” and try to summarize them in two or so sentences.

Writing Step 7: Write that summary down in the place titled, “Restate Proof of Thesis/Argument.”

Thinking Step 8. Find anything in your outline that is interesting or odd.

Writing Step 8: Write down that odd/interesting piece of info in the place titled, “Grabber.”

¹ An example that is general is “People often see things the way that they want to.”

² An example that is too specific is “The mother only likes crabs that are dying”

The Parts of an Essay (Outline Format)

I. Introduction

A. Grabber

1. Interesting part or your idea and argument.
2. Outside of the text or argument

B. Background info

1. Only the information that the reader needs in order to understand what you are talking about in your thesis/ argument

C. Thesis/ Argument

1. Answer to the prompt question.
2. This is what you are going to convince the reader is true.

II. Body Paragraphs³

A. Topic Sentence

1. This is what this paragraph is going to talk about
 - a) Basically saying what the thing is (part of the book) that you will use to prove your argument

B. Quote/Citation

1. This is the part of the book that made you think the thing that you think.
 - a) OR This is one of the reasons that your argument will make sense
2. “Quote Quote Quote” (Page #)

C. Relate Quote/ Citation to Argument

1. Explain why and how the citation leads you to believe that the topic of this sentence proofs part of your argument (thesis)

III. Body Paragraph 2

IV. Body Paragraph 3

V. Conclusion

A. Restate Thesis/ Argument

1. Rewrite your thesis in a new way that reminds the reader of what you are trying to convince them to think (Argument/ Thesis)

B. Restate Proof of Thesis/ Argument

1. Summarize for the reader why they should believe the thing you are trying to convince them of (argument/thesis)

C. Possible Extension of Topic

1. Challenge the reader
2. Consider the future

³ There will be three separate body paragraphs in your full outline, each with Topic/Quote/Relate. This outline shows only one in order to save space.