



Steps in Organizing Your Writing

The Rough Outline

Space
allocation
step

1. On the top of the page of a notepad, write down your audience, purpose, subject, format and thesis sentence. The thesis states what you are trying to show or prove in your writing. It should be placed near the beginning of your piece of writing, preferably as the last sentence of the first paragraph. It should be a complete sentence.
2. Write the key word from your thesis on top of one sheet of paper, if you don't need more than one page for supporting details. If, however, you need more than one page, and your key word is, for example, "reasons," put each of the reasons on a separate sheet of paper, one reason per page. Each reason will be included in the topic sentence that begins each paragraph.

The topic sentence is often the first sentence of each paragraph. It does two things:

- a) It states the one point that you will explain in the paragraph.
- b) It also contains a transition (or linking) word(s) to connect this paragraph to the previous one.

If you have more than one key word in your thesis, put each key word on top of a sheet of paper. This key word will represent either one paragraph or one section of your piece of writing.

3. On the page(s) you have allotted for each key word or specific example of it, jot down details that support or explain it. Write phrases, and don't worry about the order of the details. Write ideas down as fast as you can. This technique is similar to brainstorming or making a to-do list.

The Final Outline

4. Organize the rough outline into its final form by considering:
 - a) the order of the specific examples of your key word (i.e. problems, reasons, procedures, etc.)
 - b) the order of the supporting details
5. Eliminate ideas you don't need.
6. Write a final outline.

The First Draft

7. Write the piece using the final outline as an exact guide. Don't deviate from the outline when you are writing. If you are not satisfied with your outline, revise it before doing a first draft.