Creating an Outline

--In the early stages of the writing process, outlining is both a way of planning and a means of inventing. An outline may be used to organize an essay. It may also serve to stimulate the writing process by allowing the writer to see new possibilities in his/her subject, discover new ways to divide or organize information and see where additional information is needed to develop ideas.

--In later stages of the writing process, outlining is an excellent revision tool. Outlining gives the writer an opportunity to step back and re-think the organizational structure of a written project. A detailed outline of a first draft will help the writer to identify content omissions, connections (or lack of connections) between paragraphs, and content that is irrelevant to the writer's thesis. The writer can then use this information in the construction of the next draft.

What follows is the basic format for a Sentence Outline. In this type of outline each item is a complete sentence, so the first word should be capitalized and the last word should be followed by a period.

Title

I. Introduction: State your thesis. You may want to write a few sentences to explain and narrow the thesis statement.

II. Body of Paper

A. First main point

1. Sub point or supporting material of A.
2. Sub point or supporting material of A.
3. Sub point or supporting material of A.

B. Second main point

1. Sub point or supporting material of B.
2. Sub point or supporting material of B.

C. Third main point

1. Sub point or supporting material of C.
2. Sub point or supporting material of C.
3. Sub point or supporting material of C.
4. Sub point or supporting material of C.

III. Conclusion: Summary statement and concluding remarks