

# San Diego Miramar College Library / LRC

## WRITING AN OUTLINE

The purpose of outlining a research paper is to help you clarify your approach to the subject. Making an outline forces you to put your thoughts into a logical order, which will help you organize the paper. Certain rules should be observed when preparing an outline.

- I. There are two main types of outlines:
  - A. Topic outlines that give the major topics to be discussed in the paper.
    1. Only single words or short phrases are used in a topic outline.
    2. This type is easier to write but is sometimes less useful than a sentence outline.
  - B. Sentence outlines present a skeleton of the entire paper.
    1. Only complete sentences are used in a sentence outline.
    2. This type is easier to turn into a paper because thoughts are complete.
- II. Rules for outlining:
  - A. Use a consistent set of symbols, alternating letters and numbers.
  - B. Use subordination to show the logical relationship of ideas.
    1. The major ideas come first, numbered I, II, III, etc.
    2. Subtopics come next, lettered A, B, C, etc.
    3. Details or examples come next, numbered 1, 2, 3, etc.
    4. Further details comes next, lettered a, b, c, etc.
  - C. Use at least two items at each level of subordination.
    1. Each A must have a B.
    2. Each 1 must have a 2, and so forth.
  - D. Stick with the type of outline you have chosen.
    1. In a topic outline, use only single words or phrases.
    2. In a sentence outline, use only complete sentences.

**SEE OTHER SIDE FOR A SAMPLE SENTENCE OUTLINE**

## VEGETARIANISM: PRO AND CON

### THESIS

Increasing worldwide population and shrinking food supplies suggest that changes in food habits such as vegetarianism may be necessary for the survival of the human species. The advantages and disadvantages of a vegetarian diet will be considered in this paper.

- I. There are many advantages to a vegetarian diet.
  - A. Vegetarians ingest less fat and cholesterol and are therefore at less risk for heart disease.
  - B. Vegetarians eat mostly fresh vegetables and are therefore less likely to ingest cancerous agents such as preservatives.
  - C. Given sufficient space, vegetarians can grow much of their own food, which is both safer and cheaper than buying it.
  - D. Vegetarianism causes less damage to the environment.
    1. Vegetables require less fuel and water than cattle.
    2. Farmers could produce more food if they did not devote so much farmland to cattle.
    3. Vegetarians don't kill animals for food.
- II. There are also some disadvantages to a vegetarian diet.
  - A. Care is needed to avoid protein and vitamin deficiencies.
    1. Vegetarians may need vitamin supplements.
    2. Vegetarians are at more risk for anemia than meat eaters.
  - B. Vegetarian diets are not as varied as others.
    1. A complex combination of recipes is needed to keep the diet interesting.
    2. It is difficult to get much variety in textures and tastes.
  - C. It is difficult to be a vegetarian in a meat-eating society.
    1. Vegetarians are often looked upon as cultists.
    2. Vegetarians are sometimes thought to be self-righteous.