**How to Make an Outline**

The Writing and Learning Studio Room 4301 Shoreline Community College

Outlines should show how ideas relate to each other. Therefore, use words of the same grammatical form to present ideas at the same level. This creates parallel construction.

1. Write your thesis statement at the top of the paper
2. Decide whether you will make a **TOPIC** **outline** (using only phrases) or a **SENTENCE** **outline** (using only sentences). Do **not** mix the styles.
3. Use the conventional system of Roman numerals, letters, and numbers to show the level of generality:

1. Major Point #1
   1. Subtopic
      1. Supporting detail for subtopic A
      2. Supporting detail for subtopic A
         1. Minor detail for I-A-1
         2. Minor detail for I-A-1
   2. Subtopic
      1. Supporting detail for subtopic B
      2. Supporting detail for subtopic B
         1. Minor detail for I-B—2
         2. Minor detail for I-B-2

II. Major Point #2

4. Never break down a category into only one sub-division.

**Topic Outline Example**

**Possible thesis sentence:**

When pets are allowed in nursing homes, the residents experience positive physical and emotional effects that outweigh the disadvantages of permitting pets in nursing homes.

One way this essay could be organized is to divide the information into the broad categories of advantages and disadvantages of allowing pets into nursing homes:

1. **Advantages of allowing pets into nursing home**
   1. Positive physical effects on residents
      1. Regular exercise
         1. Improves mobility
         2. Improves strength
      2. Relaxation
         1. Soothes anxiety
         2. Lowers blood pressure
   2. Positive emotional effects on residents
      1. Combats isolation and loneliness
      2. Non-judgmental acceptance
2. **Disadvantages of allowing pets into nursing homes**
   1. Negative physical effects on residents
      1. Allergies
      2. Parasites
   2. Negative emotional effects on residents
      1. Fear
      2. Loss and Grief

**Sentence Outline Example**

This example uses the same thesis and structure as in the topic outline example.

**Possible thesis sentence:**

When pets are allowed in nursing homes, the residents experience positive physical and emotional effects that outweigh the disadvantages of permitting pets in nursing homes

1. **Allowing pets into nursing homes has several advantages for nursing home residents.**
   1. Residents experience positive physical effects of having pets in the home.
      1. They exercise regularly.
         1. Regular exercise improves their mobility
         2. Regular exercise improves their strength
      2. They feel more relaxed.
         1. Their anxiety is calmed.
         2. Their blood pressure decreases.
   2. With pets in the nursing home, residents also experience positive emotional effects.
      1. Having a pet combats isolation and loneliness.
      2. Pets give non-judgmental love and acceptance.
2. **Nursing home residents might experience some disadvantages of having pets in the home.**
   1. Some residents may have negative physical effects.
      1. Residents may have allergies to pet fur or dander.
      2. Pets can bring fleas into the home.
   2. Some residents may have negative emotional effects.
      1. An animal can elicit fear in some people.
      2. If a pet dies, a resident could feel a deep sense of loss and grief.