

OUTLINING

OUTLINES CAN HELP YOU ORGANIZE YOUR IDEAS. YOU MIGHT USE AN OUTLINE TO PLAN A SPEECH, COMPOSITION OR TERM PAPER. YOU ALSO MIGHT USE AN INFORMAL OUTLINE TO TAKE NOTES.

formal

A **formal outline** lists the main points of a topic and shows the relative importance of each and the order in which these points are presented. It also shows the relationships among them.

Formal Outline Format:

- I.
 - A.
 - B.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - a.
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (a)
 - (b)

II.

No new subdivision should be started unless there are at least two points to be listed in the new division. This means that each *I* must have a 2; each *a* must have a *b*. Formal outlines may be either a **sentence outline** or a **topic outline**.

A **sentence outline** uses a complete sentence for each point and subpoint. A **topic outline** uses words or phrases for each point and subpoint.

informal

Informal outlines use as few words as possible. Supporting details are written below each heading. Numerals, letters, or dashes may be used. Informal outlines are especially useful for taking notes.

→ Here is an example of a *informal outline*.

- I. How lightning occurs
 - cloud's particles collide and become electrically charged
 - positively and negatively charged particles separate
 - positively charged particles in cloud collide with negatively charged particles in ground
 - particles begin to glow
 - forked
 - streak
 - ribbon
 - bead or chain
 - ball

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School Datebooks



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→ Here is an example of a *topic outline*.

- Thesis or Introductory Statement
- I. Gasoline shortage
 - A. Long lines
 - B. Gas "rationing"
- II. Voluntary energy conservation
 - A. Gasoline
 - B. Electricity
 - C. Home heating fuel
- III. Forced energy conservation
 - A. Fuel allocation
 - B. Speed limit
 - C. Airline flights
 - D. Christmas lighting
- Conclusion

