

Requirements and Manuscript Form for an Outline

A Word About Outlines: The MLA Handbook (6th ed.) suggests that if your outline is required and needs to be submitted formally with your paper that you ask your instructor for the form of the outline you are to use. The two most common forms are the topic outline (which only uses short phrases) and the sentence outline (which requires the use of complete sentences throughout).

1. Type your last name and page number in the **upper right-hand** corner, one-half inch down from the top edge and flush with the 1" right margin. Do this on the first page as well as all subsequent pages of the outline.
2. Do not use the word "Outline" as the title of the outline. Use the title of your paper. Center this title one inch down from the top of the page. Put this title in caps and lower case—not all caps! Do **not** underline or bold your title or use a larger font than the rest of your text.
3. Always outline your Introduction and Conclusion with at least **two** major subdivisions (A, B).
4. Use Roman numerals for main topics. Minor topics are given capital letters. Sub-topics are given Arabic numbers. Then, detail is given in lower case letters.
5. There must be a II to complement every I, a B to complement every A, a 2 to complement every 1 and so forth. Just because you have an A, B, and a C. under section I doesn't mean you have to have an A, B, and a C under section II. However, you must always be under any topic at least 2 sub-topics.
6. The descending parts of an outline are normally labeled like this:

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

- II.**
7. For each number or letter, there **MUST** be a topic.

8. Begin each entry with a capital letter. Only capitalize the first word of each entry unless a proper noun appears in the entry.
9. A sub-topic must **belong** under the main topic beneath which it is placed. It must be closely related to the topic above it. Example: I. Dull board games
 - A. Bingo
 - B. Monopoly
 - C. Shuffleboard (Shuffleboard doesn't belong here; it's not a board game)
10. If you want to include **only one detail**, use a dash (--) beside the entry, and then write the detail. Do not space before or after the dash.
Example: I. Teachers Who Office in English department
 - A. English teachers
 1. Mr. Holm
 2. Ms. O'Brien
 3. Ms. Wallenberg
 4. Mr. Olson
 - B. Reading teacher—Ms. Sime
11. Indent all sub-topics. Indentions should be made so that all letters or numbers of the same kind will com directly under one another in a vertical line. **LINE UP ALL PERIODS!**
12. **Single space** within each major section of the outline. **Double space** between sections.

See the next page for a sample outline. →

Historical Significance of Beowulf

- I. Introduction
 - A. Attention-getter
 - B. Thesis statement

- II. Ideal hero standards
 - A. Courage
 - B. Heroic code
 - C. Death over dishonor
 - D. Avoidance of hubris

- III. Social structure
 - A. Historical background of origin of the tale
 - B. Explanation of the tribal system
 - C. Expectations
 - 1. King
 - 2. Nation
 - E. Role of women

- IV. Religious values
 - A. Existence of pagan and Christian beliefs
 - B. Relevant Christian beliefs in the tale
 - 1. Only went to battle with monsters
 - 2. Grendel's relation to Cain
 - 3. God as the final judge of eternal life
 - C. Prevalence of pagan beliefs
 - 1. Impossibility of the coexistence of heroic code and Christian beliefs
 - 2. The importance of fate
 - 3. Moral standards vs. religious guidelines
 - 4. Final important ideas

- V. Conclusion
 - A. Restatement of thesis and main ideas
 - B. Concluding observations

Heroism and Beowulf: A Definition or a Feeling?

- I. Introduction
 - A. Attention getter
 - B. Thesis statement
 - 1. Under Anglo-Saxon lens, Beowulf was a hero
 - 2. Under modern lens, Beowulf was not a hero
 - 3. Under personal lens, Beowulf was a hero
- II. Anglo-Saxon perception of what makes a hero
 - A. What hero has done
 - 1. Beowulf kills Grendel, Grendel's mother, and the dragon
 - 2. Helps society by killing these monsters
 - B. Physical prowess
 - C. Confidence
 - 1. Beowulf claims his strength matches Grendel's
 - 2. Beowulf defends his claim
- III. Modern perception of what makes a hero
 - A. Humility
 - 1. Not shown when Beowulf fights weaponless
 - 2. Not shown when Beowulf asks for tomb and tower in his honor
 - B. Leadership
 - 1. Beowulf is last survivor; his people don't care
 - 2. Gives up easily
 - a. Firefighters of World Trade Center attacks
 - b. Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - c. Ruben "The Hurricane" Carter
 - C. Celebrity status
 - 1. Constantly under the radar
 - 2. Weaknesses are noticed
- IV. Personal perception of what makes a hero
 - A. Contribution to society
 - B. Above and beyond normal human action
 - C. Positives versus negatives
- V. Conclusion
 - A. Restatement of thesis and ideas
 - B. Conclusion statement