

Organizing Your Paper

Making Use of Outlines

Outlining Workshop Goals

- Purpose
- Illustrate process using Food Exercise

Why Organize?

- Clear organization reflects **clear thinking**



Clear organization helps **clear communication**



Categorizing ideas clarifies how they are related

Watermelon

Orange

Strawberry

Blueberry

Raspberry

Banana

Cabbage

Peach

Cucumber

Pear

Apricot

Potato

Apple

Tomato

Honeydew

Avocado

Corn

Kiwi

Lettuce

Exercise:

Organize these food items into categories of your choice

What traits will you use to define your categories?

Examples:

Skin type	Number of seeds	Shape
Usage (how we prepare or eat them)	Color	Taste

**What traits will you use
to define your categories?**

(work in pairs or small groups)

Debate and discuss!

Create an outline based on your food categories definitions

Sample:

I. Major Category of food, or trait

A. Subcategory of food, trait

1. Item name
2. Item name

B. Subcategory of food, trait

1. Item name
2. Item name
3. Item name

II. Major Category of food, or trait

A. Subcategory of food, trait

1. Item name
2. Item name

B. Subcategory of food, trait

1. Item name
2. Item name

Alphanumeric

I. Major Category One

A. Subcategory One

B. Subcategory Two

1. Minor Category One

2. Minor Category Two

C. Subcategory Three

II. Major Category Two

A. Subcategory One

1. Minor Category One

2. Minor Category Two

B. Subcategory Two

Most commonly used for classroom papers and speeches

vs.

Decimal Outlines

1. Major Category One

1.1 Subcategory One

1.2 Subcategory Two

1.2.1 Minor Category One

1.2.2 Minor Category Two

1.3 Subcategory Three

2. Major Category Two

2.1 Subcategory One

2.1.1 Minor Category One

2.1.2 Minor Category Two

2.2 Subcategory Two

Most often used for technical reports in government or industry

Watermelon

Lemon

Orange

Strawberry

Blueberry

Eggplant

Raspberry

Banana

Cabbage

Peach

Cucumber

Pear

Apricot

Potato

Apple

Tomato

Honeydew

Avocado

Corn

Kiwi

Lettuce

Bell peppers

Share outline?

Categorizing your information can reveal deeper or surprising connections

Identifying the connections between ideas or things are often the basis of critical thinking and analysis

1. ANALYZING YOUR INFORMATION

Thesis, Purpose and Audience

**Of all the information you collected,
which ones best fits your goals?**

1. ANALYZING YOUR INFORMATION

Compare -find common traits or themes—look for underlying unifying ideas that might not be obvious

Contrast -find differences in traits or themes. Don't just note differences, ask yourself HOW or WHY are they different.

2. GROUPING INFORMATION INTO CATEGORIES

1. Based on common traits in items or general themes in ideas, group them into a category.
2. Label or name the category with a word/phrase/sentence

3. GROUPING INFORMATION INTO SUBCATEGORIES

3. Create subcategories as needed.
4. Modify all subcategories names on the same level to have “parallel structure.”
5. Modify all items under a category to reflect a “hierarchical structure.”

Parallel Structure in Outline

- I. Noun phrase
 - A. Verb Phrase
 - 1. Noun
 - 2. Noun
 - B. Verb Phrase
 - C. Verb Phrase
 - 1. Noun phrase
 - 2. Noun phrase

- II. Noun phrase
 - A. Noun Phrase
 - B. Noun Phrase
 - 1. Verb phrase
 - 2. Verb phrase
 - C. Noun Phrase
 - 1. Verb phrase
 - 2. Verb phrase
 - 3. Verb phrase

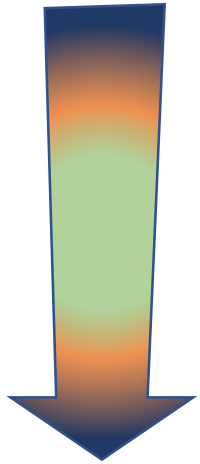
All categories on the same level

(I, II, III or A, B, C or 1, 2, 3)

have the same grammatical structure,
or type of information

Hierarchical Structure in Outlines

Greater importance



Lesser importance

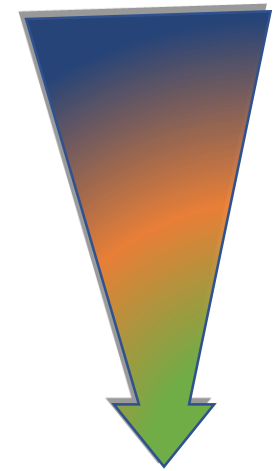
Major, General Category One

- A. Subcategory One
- B. Subcategory Two
 - 1. Minor, Specific Category One
 - 2. Minor Specific Category Two
- C. Subcategory Three

II. Major, General Category Two

- A. Subcategory One
 - 1. Minor, Specific Category One
 - 2. Minor, Specific Category Two
- B. Subcategory Two

More general



More specific

Example of Outline with Parallel Structure

4. REFINE CATEGORIES

1. Ask “How” or “Why” an item or idea fits (or doesn’t fit) in a particular category, move if necessary
2. Is the category name **broad** enough to fit all the items/ideas in a subcategory under it?
3. Is the category name **specific** enough to identify and differentiate it from other categories within the same level?

3. EVALUATE AND MODIFY CATEGORIES

1. Does a item/idea not fit into any category? Do you need to create new subcategories? Modify an existing category to fit the thing/idea within it?
2. If new (sub)categories were created or modified, re-evaluate all items/ideas for best fit and flow into modified categories.

4. Craft/Modify Thesis Statement

1. Look for broad themes to fit all ideas in major categories into a thesis statement.
2. Does the thesis statement have enough specificity to tell the reader the major ideas/themes in your paper?
3. Does the thesis statement hint at the flow or organization of your paper?

Type of Outline: Topical vs. Sentence

1. Topical
 - A. Consists of key phrases
 - B. Useful for complex material
 - C. Allows writer to expand in variety of directions

2. Sentence
 - A. Consists of complete sentences
 - B. Useful for focusing on details
 - C. Can contain many of the details of paper

Stay consistent—use either topical or sentence style throughout your outline

Organizing your first draft

Things to consider:

- Length of paper: 2-3 page essay or 10 page research paper?
- Number of major categories in your outline should reflect how complex and long your paper needs to be

Organizing your first draft

Parallel structure of outline helps you to find transition

words/phrases to show relationship to the paragraphs before or after it.

Hierarchical structure of outline can show the details that support a claim or how specific information relates to larger ideas.

Writing Lab Resource

- **Peer to peer tutoring**
- **Individualized, 35-40 minute tutoring sessions**
- **Can make appointments (at least one day prior to appt) or drop-in during open hours**
- **Hours of operation: M-Th 8am-8pm, F 8-3:30, Sat-Sun 11-4**
- **Up to three tutoring sessions per assignment**
- **One session per day**