

Scratch Outline Form for planning the paper

Topic—what is the subject matter of the paper?

Background—what does the reader need to know to understand this subject?

List points that support your opinion

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.

Add as many points as you need. You will group and organize them later. What kind of documentation will support these points? You can use both your own ideas and information from your research to fill out this preliminary outline.

List opposing points—if there are none, why are you writing this topic? Who cares?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Answer each opposing point with one of your points—or concede that the point is valid, and find another way to show that your points are more important, affect more people, or in some other way overshadow the opposing points.

Complete this section, using as many pages as necessary to think through your topic. Then proceed to the next page.

Thesis—a sentence that clearly states your considered opinion on your topic. You may want to use the form "Even though –state opposing opinion here--, -state your position here--."

Main points—Use the points you listed above and clump them into groups. List the supporting information that you may need to find.

- 1) Main point that supports thesis (section of paper)
 - a) Supporting point: example, story, argument, (paragraph)
 - i) Detail- fact, quote, example, etc.
 - ii) Detail- fact, quote, example, etc.
 - iii) Detail- fact, quote, example, etc.
 - b) Supporting point: (paragraph)
 - i) Detail- fact, quote, example, etc.
 - ii) Detail- fact, quote, example, etc.
 - c) Supporting point: (paragraph)
 - i) Detail- fact, quote, example, etc.
 - ii) Detail- fact, quote, example, etc.
- 2) Main point (section of paper)
 - a) Supporting point (paragraph)
 - b) Supporting point (paragraph)
 - c) Etc.

Prioritize the points—make your main case with your strongest material in the first and last discussion sections, with less important points in the middle.

Write a draft based on your outline, adding as necessary.

Conclusion: Often the rough draft conclusion has the actual thesis and point that the writer wants to make. If so, revise it to make it into an introduction, and write a new conclusion. Give the reader a take-away for thought—quote, question, story, along with your reasonable statement of the importance of seeing the topic from your perspective.

Introduction—write this after you write your draft and find out what you want to say. Include an attention getting sentence, 2-5 sentences of background information and a thesis statement of one sentence that states your position on this topic. Then write a transition sentence to the next subject, usually some background explanation.

Title—get attention for your article with an arresting title. Make it up after you write the article, and complete the revision.