

Writing a Research Paper- **Beginning with an Outline**

- Before you can begin your outline, you need to review your research question or questions & decide what information you need to answer the question (s) thoroughly.
 - If your research question is about the effects of a disease, you will need to explain what the disease is first.
- Decide what questions need to be answered first and what the clearest way to answer them would be.
- Take a look at your notes & begin to organize what information you will use and in what order.
- Make an outline of the information to help you write the research paper.

What an Outline Should Include?

1. Introductory Paragraph
 - a. The first few sentences of the research paper give the reader a clear idea of what the research paper is going to be about.
 - b. The introductory paragraph should contain the thesis statement. This is usually towards the end of the paragraph.
 - i. The thesis will be the statement you are trying to prove. (Try making your research question into a statement to create your thesis.)
 - c. The introductory paragraph may also include the main ideas of your paper. These usually support your thesis statement.
2. Supporting Paragraphs make up the body of the research paper and they prove your thesis statement.
 - a. Each paragraph should develop one of the main ideas.
3. Concluding Paragraph
 - a. The concluding paragraph usually restates the thesis using different words.
 - b. The concluding paragraph often leaves the reader with something to consider....maybe a question or something that needs further research.

Important Note: Include your sources in your outline to make the writing process easier and to avoid plagiarism.

Sample Outline for a Research Paper

Research Question: Why is obesity on the rise among American children?

- I. Thesis statement: Obesity is on the rise among American children.
 - a. Increase in inactivity
 - b. Increase in high fat and sugary foods
 - c. Decrease in physical activity
- II. Increase in inactivity
 - a. Children are watching more television
 - i. Average American child watches 15 hours a week (Smith 15)
 - b. Children are playing more video games
 - i. One in three children plays more than 10 hours a week (Wordbook Online 2007)
- III. Increase in high fat and sugary foods
 - a. American children eat more processed foods (potatoe chips, cakes, etc.) than children in any other developed country (Schubert 25)
 - b. American children eat 50% more refined sugars than children in other countries (Smith 15)
- IV. Decrease in physical exercise
 - a. Children are spending more time watching television and playing video games
 - b. Children are confined to their homes due to unsafe neighborhoods
 - i. In a Newsweek article, Saunders writes, "Kids no longer play until dinner with their neighbors down the block. Parents often forbid children from playing outside because of the dangers they may encounter (2)."
- V. Child obesity is on the rise in our country because of the unhealthy diets and lack of exercise which has become all too common.
 - a. Some solutions for dealing with the problem
 - i. parents limit children's time in front of the television
 - ii. limit fast food to once a week
 - iii. Increase healthy foods like fruits and vegetables
 - iv. Parents take children to safe parks or enroll them in sports teams