

Outlining: The Basics

Outlining is a great technique to help ensure that you can follow your train of thought when writing an essay, discussing main points of readings and identify important details or evidence. When outlining, make sure to take notes in *your own, abbreviated words*. It will help you understand and retain the information.

- **Step 1:** Recognize main ideas.
 - When reading, use the title of the reading, introduction, conclusion, headings and subheadings to get a sense of the main ideas.
 - When listening to a lecture, pay attention to points your professor emphasizes or writes on the board.
- **Step 2:** Identify the supporting details/evidence that relate to a main idea.
- **Step 3:** Structure your outline similar to the right.

I. First main idea under major topic

- A. 1st detail(s) related to main idea I.
- B. 2nd detail(s) related to main idea I.
 - 1. 1st detail(s) related to B.
 - 2. 2nd detail(s) related to B.

II. Second main idea under major topic.

- A. 1st detail(s) related to main idea II.
 - 1. 1st detail(s) related to A.
- B. 2nd detail(s) related to main idea II.
- C. 3rd detail(s) related to main idea II.
 - 2. 1st detail(s) related to C.
 - 3. 2nd detail(s) related to C.

Don't forget to use your resources! <http://www.brynmawr.edu/academicsupport/StudentSupportServices.html>

Created in collaboration by the Bryn Mawr College Undergraduate Dean's Office, The Teaching Learning Initiative & Peer Mentoring Services. References: Bi-Co Professors and students, University of Florida, Student Academic Resource Center: "Refining Outlining Skills"