

Generally speaking, any piece of writing is going to be made up of

- a) An introduction that prepares your reader for the main content,
- b) The body that contains all your main information, and
- c) A conclusion that ties everything together.

As you outline before writing, you'll want to focus on the basic framework of your essay's content. This will consist of

1. The thesis statement, which encompasses the main point you're making, and
2. The supporting points that prove your main point.

1. Thesis Statement

The thesis is your main point. It answers the prompt and summarizes the essay in one sentence.

Begin with a "working" thesis that tentatively states the main point, and keep in mind that it's flexible and will be edited as the essay takes shape.

2. Supporting Points

Collect the details that you're using to support your thesis. Group them into coherent points that can be stated in a single sentence each.

Example:

Seneca Falls Convention, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Declaration of Sentiments, Susan B. Anthony, Suffragettes—Women's Suffrage Movement

The Anti's Alphabet, The Woman's Protest newspaper, Josephine Jewell Dodge, National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, Catharine Beecher—Anti-Suffrage Movement

Each main point will become one section or paragraph. Don't try to cover too many ideas in a section or paragraph!

Generally speaking, an outline of your paper will look something like this:

Central Idea/Thesis

- » Main supporting point
 - o Details establishing this point
- » Next main supporting point
 - o Details
- » [As many supporting points as you need]
 - o [Details]

General Outlining Tips:

- » Think of the outline as taking a step back from your essay. It should give a big picture clearly, to keep you from straying from your main path.
- » An outline only needs to be as detailed as you want it to be. If your outline only needs the thesis and main points listed, that's all you need!
 - o You can include source references if you want to, but don't let your outline get too cluttered to use. It's just for your own use, to keep you on track.