Getting Ready for your Research Paper
Step Five – Outlining

The outline will help you structure the research paper and stay focused on developing the main idea of the paper. Start by writing a working thesis statement. Use this to guide the entire outline and paper.

**INTRODUCTION**

Identify the subject/explain the problem  
Provide background information 
Frame a thesis statement (main idea/purpose of the paper)

**BODY**

Analyze/Examine/Interpret the subject  
Develop/Compare first, second, third major idea/issue/argument/etc. 
SUPPORT main ideas (evidence, facts, examples, etc.)

Restate your thesis statement  
Remind audience of your position  
Provide solutions, answers, final opinions

**CONCLUSION**

Outlining Model *note: Ask your instructor about the format of the outline he/she wants you to use (i.e.; topic or sentence outline, formal or informal outline, etc.)*

If you’re working on an argumentative paper, SEE ALSO Writing Center handouts “The Art of Argumentative Writing” and “How to Craft an Argumentative Thesis.”