

Outlines are one of the many tools available to writers that aid them in the construction of a focused and strong paper by helping to arrange and organize ideas. Outlines . . .

- Free the writer from an essay-like format. (Sometimes, ridding the paper of “clutter” and miscellaneous sentences is a welcome change of pace.)
- Require less time and save time in the long-run (if an outline is strong and adheres to the assignment goals, the same is usually true of the paper itself).
- Act as a kind of blueprint and preview what the paper will look like.
- Help the writer maintain focus.

The parts and their order (in a very basic, playful example) are detailed below:

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*Thesis:* Playing Black Ops II at length is ill advised because it is harmful to one’s health and grades.

I. Black Ops II makes a person “that guy” with the 1000-yard stare and the dirt under his fingernails.

A. Black Ops II players are known to shower less.

1. Playing “just one more round” is a lie not even the player believes.
2. Study X shows that 243 of 300 participants said they would give up showering if it meant playing Black Ops II more.

B. Black Ops II is known to cause eyestrain, bad eating habits, and loss of romantic dates.

1. Sitting two feet from a flat-screen TV in a room darker than Gollum’s cave won’t get a person out of Lens Crafters.
2. In the 3:25 it takes to finish that CTF round, one could have been brushing those pearly whites.
3. Women run fast in heels when a date says that he had nothing but Mountain Dew and Doritos for the past three days.

a) No, Taco Bell is not a good substitute here.

b) Yes, heels are very hard to run in.

II. Black Ops II tears a person away from schoolwork.

A. With three separate game modes, Black Ops II sucks more life out of a person than any in-law.

1. In Study Y, 47 of 100 participants said they would fail a paper if it meant having an extra night to play the zombie mode.
2. People who play Black Ops II are known to have shorter attention spans.

B. The promise of “something new,” when in fact it’s just Black Ops 1.5, is a lie many of us fall for, therefore leaving our lonely, dusty assignment sheets in the darkest corner of our dorms.

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Be sure to remember a few things while creating your outline:

- Read and reread your assignment sheet and review notes while forming an outline.
- If you are quoting sources, select specific passages and organize how you will use them in your outline.
- Make sure your sub-points support your main points and that those main points support your thesis.
- By writing complete sentences, you’re one step closer to forming an essay.