

HOW TO CREATE AN Effective Outline



WHAT

An outline is a system used to format and organize your work. It also serves as a visual and conceptual design of your communication project. Outlines don't need to have a certain number of sentences or paragraphs. Instead, outlines should prioritize an organization that matches the purpose of your writing. This way you can more easily draft your project.

WHY

Outlining is a way to see the bigger picture and to know where to go with your project. If you know where you are going, you can plan pit stops (transitions) and a celebration at the end (a mic drop moment).



WHERE/WHEN

Outlining happens when you have an idea of what your argument or focus is. It comes when you have things to say but don't know the best way to order those things.

WHO

In outlining, it is important to consider who you are and what type of learning style works for you. You might be the kind of person who would benefit from a visual outline like using PowerPoint or someone who prefers standard sequential outlines such as alphanumeric.



HOW

Once you have brainstormed or know what you are writing about, the outlining begins. You might start by listing out key points or sections in your outline. After that, add points or content that supports your key points. The amount of detail in your outline depends on you as an author. Find out what works for you and do that.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What are the expectations for each section?
- What does _____ section need to do?
- What does your audience need to know before you dive in?
- Do you have enough details to support your main idea?
- Are there assignment specifications that might impact your organization?
- Are there genre specifications that impact how you might organize your work?

