

# Topic 5

## How to Write an Outline for Research Paper

When you build a house you should have **a ground plan** first and **an outline** is your ground plan for “building” your research paper.

论文提纲的编写是论文写作过程中基本的十分重要的一步,是在论文写作之前对全文的**整体构思**,它帮助我们大致确定论文的基本结构和各部分之间的逻辑关系。因此,它是一种尝试性的**构建论文框架**的过程。

- I. The definition and function of an outline
- II. The procedure of preparing an outline
- III. The general contents of an outline
- IV. The principles for writing an outline

# What is an outline ?

An outline is **a basic writing plan** which consists of **a series of phrases or sentences** and shows the **main points** that the paper will cover and **the order** in which these points will be mentioned.

# What is the function of an outline ?

An outline gives the writer a specific guidance as to what kind of supporting details you should look for in your further research and where you can fit them into the context of your paper. The readers, on the other hand, benefit from the outline as a complete and detailed table of contents.

## II. The procedure of preparing an outline

- A. Having a satisfactory **thesis statement**;
- B. Reviewing all your **note cards** and bringing related materials together under some **general headings**;
- C. Arranging these headings according to the development of your thought;
- D. Forming a logical **preliminary outline**;
- E. Discussing your preliminary outline with your advisor.

# What is a thesis statement? (主题陈述)

- A thesis statement is usually a single sentence that will give you a central focus for organization of your paper.



- A thesis statement is usually put in front of your outline in a declarative form that summarizes the central idea of the paper you will write.

# Samples of thesis statement

## Sample 1

**Topic:** Pair work Design and Learners' Interest

**Thesis statement:**

Learners' interest in pair work is increased by well designed pair work exercises.

# Sample 2

**Topic** : Naturalism in Dreiser's Sister Carrie

**Thesis statement** :

Influenced by naturalism, Sister Carrie typically reflects Dreiser's view of nature and man in the social environment of his time.

# III. The general contents of an outline

A. Two major formats of outline;

B. Two major types of outline

# What are the two major formats of outline ?

- The standard outline system
- The decimal outline system

# Sample of the standard system

I. The two reasons for ...

A. The first reason...

1. The women...

a. They would...

(1)The time...

(a)The technology...

(b)The public...

(2)The place...

b. They could...

2. The men...

B. The second reason...

II. The reasons against...

# Sample of the decimal system

1.The two reasons for...

1.1 The first reason...

1.1.1 The women...

1.1.1.1 They would...

1.1.1.2 They could...

1.1.2 The men...

1.2 The second reason...

2.The reasons against...

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