

Essay Outline Template

A guide to building a paper that has a clear beginning, middle, and end instead of a draft that feels scattered or repetitive.

Build around a central purpose

- Before drafting, identify what the essay is actually trying to prove, explain, or analyze.
- A well-organized essay is not just a pile of points. Each section should move the reader toward the main purpose.
- Good organization usually means each paragraph has one clear role and one clear reason for being there.

Simple structure that works

- Introduction: establish context, define the focus, and present the thesis or main claim.
- Body paragraphs: develop one major point at a time with evidence, explanation, and connection back to the thesis.
- Conclusion: do more than repeat; show significance, insight, or the next logical takeaway.

Common organization problems

- Paragraphs that repeat the same point in slightly different words.
- Evidence dropped in without enough explanation.
- A conclusion that simply stops instead of closing the argument with purpose.
- Ideas presented in the order they were written rather than the order that makes sense to the reader.