The Thesis
and
The Sentence Outline

A Guide for Students in Writing Classes at
Georgia Perimeter College

Fourth Edition

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To the Instructor: This textbook supplement is not intended as a definitive guide to constructing thesis statements or outlines; it simply provides models for commonly used approaches to writing essays and research papers.

Student outlines and papers are used with permission.
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The Thesis

Any study of outlining must begin by looking at the thesis statement because it is the central idea that controls the paper.

A thesis may be defined as a statement of the writer’s opinion (or judgment) on a limited topic, a clearly stated view that can be supported by REASON and CONCRETE EVIDENCE.

The guidelines that follow will be useful in composing a workable thesis statement.

Guideline One: Keep It Focused

A thesis should be a single, declarative sentence containing only one main (or independent) clause. In other words, a thesis needs to be a simple or complex sentence: there is no point within that sentence where the writer could insert a period and create two separate sentences. The sentences that follow are poor thesis statements because they are compound—they express more than one idea:

Weak: Most commuter college students prefer the convenience of driving a car to campus; however, riding a bicycle to school is a more practical option.

Weak: Most commuter college students prefer the convenience of driving a car to campus, but riding a bicycle to school is a more practical option.

These thesis statements would produce a paper with a multiple focus—a problem that all skilled writers avoid. Nevertheless, these problem sentences can be restructured:

Better: The convenience of driving a car to campus makes it the transportation of choice for most commuter college students.

Better: For most commuter college students, riding a bicycle to campus is more practical than driving a car.

Either of these statements (simple sentences) can be developed into a unified essay. They can also be strengthened even more. Suppose the writer wants to argue BOTH sides of the argument in the paper—can the thesis be set up to allow for this? The answer is “yes”—as long as the writer expresses the proper relationship between the ideas by SUBORDINATING one of them in a dependent (or subordinate) clause:

Even Better: Even though driving a car to campus is convenient, riding a bicycle to school is a more practical option for most commuter college students.
This type of thesis is frequently referred to as an “although-because” thesis and uses a style of argument known as dialectic order. It is now a complex sentence, bringing in elements from both sides of the issue, but the writer’s opinion on the subject is very clear—there is still a single focus or point of view which is embodied in the main clause.

This thesis can be further enhanced by providing an answer to the question, “Why?”:

**BEST EXAMPLE:** Even though driving a car to campus is convenient, riding a bicycle to school is a more practical option for most commuter college students because of the financial and health benefits.

While this revised thesis may seem long, it still advocates only one point, which is expressed in the main clause. In this example, the categories of development (or “essay map” as author Jean Wyrick in *Steps to Writing Well* terms it) are expressed in a prepositional phrase, but they could also have been put in a separate sentence, keeping the actual thesis more concise.

**Guideline Two: Keep It Judgmental**

The thesis should always express a point of view (i.e. an argument, an attitude, an evaluation or judgment). It should have what author Sheridan Baker in *The Complete Stylist* calls an “argumentative edge.” The following example is weak because it does not express an opinion or a unique viewpoint. There is nothing that the writer can argue in the paper. It is simply a statement of fact:

**WEAK:** Some commuter college students prefer to drive a car to campus.

The thesis need not be controversial or inflammatory, but it must convey the idea that the writer has something precise to say, an agenda to promote. This is also the reason why a thesis should not be a question like the following example:

**WEAK:** Why do some commuter college students prefer to drive a car to campus?

An effective thesis provides an answer to a question, a response to a problem that a writer can discuss with specific examples.

**Guideline Three: Keep It Clear**

A thesis should always express a complete thought in clear, concise wording: the writer should avoid fragments and overused, figurative, or vague terms. Using first person pronouns is also inappropriate in a thesis because the focus is too restrictive. The statements that follow all fail to clearly express the writer’s viewpoint:
WEAK: Riding a bicycle to campus. [This fragment says nothing about the subject.]

WEAK: Riding a bicycle to school is like winning the Lucky Strike lottery. [Using a simile here may be creative and whimsical, but it does not clearly convey the writer’s point.]

WEAK: Riding a bicycle to campus is a really good thing to do. [Why is it good? How is it good? What exactly does the writer mean by “good”? This thesis is too vague.]

WEAK: I think riding a bicycle is the best way for a commuter college student to get to campus. [Is your opinion the only one that matters? Why should the reader care what you think? This sentence needs a broader audience appeal.]

Ideally, the thesis sentence should contain two or three precise KEY TERMS on which the writer will focus the argument of the paper. Moreover, key points should be expressed in parallel, grammatical structure. While the following sentence contains key concepts and expresses a judgment, it is weak because the elements are not expressed in equal terms (i.e. they are not parallel):

WEAK: For most commuter college students, riding a bicycle to campus is more practical than automobile transportation because of the financial benefits and it is healthy.

The problems with parallel structure have been corrected in the following example:

BETTER: For most commuter college students, riding a bicycle to campus is more practical than driving a car because of the financial and health benefits.

Guideline Four: Keep It Prominent

One final point about the thesis is that the IDEA of this sentence must appear in a prominent place in both the introduction and the conclusion of the paper. Although the thesis as it is stated in the outline need not appear word for word in these two places, at least a paraphrased or modified version of the original sentence is essential. In a standard essay, the thesis is usually the last sentence of the introductory paragraph; it is then restated (paraphrased) as the first sentence of the concluding paragraph.

In effect, in the thesis a writer must reach a conclusion—a carefully considered view, a focused idea—before launching into a defense of that view in an essay. Effective writers STOP AND THINK, and then defend their conclusion from the outset of the essay.
The Sentence Outline

For the beginning writer an outline is an indispensable tool. It is the blueprint for the paper, and as a building contractor would not dream of constructing a house without the blueprint or plan in hand, so the writer should not begin a paper without first writing the outline.

Some writers like to write a first draft of a paper without an outline, just letting the ideas flow onto the page. This is acceptable as long as the writer takes the second important step—constructing the outline to make sure that there are sufficient ideas to prove the thesis and adequate specific examples to support those ideas. The outline also insures that ideas logically relate to each other.

Writers should recognize that outlines are flexible. If ideas evolve in the writing process, then the outline should reflect the changes, giving the writer an opportunity to test the logical relationship of the new ideas against the thesis and the overall structure of the paper.

There are two types of formal outlines: topic outlines and sentence outlines. In the topic outline, each entry is written as a single word or short phrase; in the sentence outline, each entry is written (and punctuated) as a complete sentence. Taking one of the thesis statements developed earlier, a student could develop a topic outline for a short paper (five to seven hundred fifty words) like this:

**Cycling: The Commuter’s Choice**

Thesis: Even though driving a car to campus is convenient, riding a bicycle to school is a more practical option for most commuter college students because of the financial and health benefits.

I. Convenience of driving a car
   A. Easy transport
      1. For carrying multiple items like books
      2. For protecting driver and passengers from weather
   B. Reliable transport
      1. Can commute long distances without difficulty
      2. Can cover short distances quickly

II. Cost effectiveness of riding a bicycle
   A. Inexpensive to operate
      1. No license required
      2. No parking fees
   B. Inexpensive to maintain
      1. No expensive repair bills
      2. No gasoline
III. Health benefits of riding a bicycle
   A. Personal health
      1. Exercise
      2. Stress reduction
   B. Environmental health
      1. Reduces traffic congestion
      2. Eliminates toxic emissions

Here is the same thesis developed as a sentence outline:

**Cycling: The Commuter’s Choice**

Thesis: Even though driving a car to campus is convenient, riding a bicycle to school is a more practical option for most commuter college students because of the financial and health benefits.

I. Driving a car to campus is convenient.
   A. A car provides an easy way to carry things and people.
      1. It accommodates many items like books.
      2. It allows people to travel protected from the weather.
   B. A car provides a reliable form of transportation.
      1. Students can effectively commute long distances.
      2. Students can travel short distances quickly.

II. Riding a bicycle to school is cost effective.
   A. A bicycle is inexpensive to operate.
      1. A driver’s license is not required to operate a bicycle.
      2. Parking fees are not required for a bicycle.
   B. A bicycle is inexpensive to maintain.
      1. A bicycle does not incur expensive repair bills.
      2. A bicycle operates without gasoline.

III. Riding a bicycle to school promotes health.
   A. Riding a bicycle improves personal health.
      1. It is an excellent form of exercise.
      2. It reduces stress by eliminating driving and parking hassles.
   B. Riding a bicycle improves the health of the environment.
      1. It reduces traffic congestion.
      2. It eliminates toxic emissions into the atmosphere.

The topic and sentence outlines here develop the thesis in essentially the same way, but the sentence outline is more clear because the ideas are specified. Sentence outlines are, thus, preferable to topic outlines in composition classes because both the instructor and the student know what the paper will discuss: there are fewer misunderstandings. Furthermore, a sentence outline forces the writer to articulate ideas fully before developing them in the paper—a demanding but rewarding process. Once the sentence outline for a paper is complete, writing the actual composition is relatively easy.
The following guidelines (illustrated in the two outlines above) can serve as a checklist when writing an outline:

**Guideline One: Make Sure the Ideas Logically Relate**

Outlines are based on the principle of division: the Roman numerals are subdivisions of the thesis; the capital letters are subdivisions of the Roman numerals; the Arabic numbers are subdivisions of the capital letters, and so on. Thus, the progression of an outline is from general concepts to specific examples, all in logical relationship to each other. For example, in the above outline, not needing a driver’s license (II.A.1.) and the elimination of parking fees (II.A.2.) are two specific reasons why operating a bicycle is inexpensive (II.A). Being inexpensive to operate (II.A.) is one major reason why riding a bicycle is cost effective (II.) which, in turn, supports the assertion in the thesis that for most commuter college students, riding a bicycle to campus is more practical than driving a car. It is important that the logical relationship between ideas be clear in the outline (and, hence, the paper). Including key terms from the thesis in the outline divisions will promote logical relationships between ideas.

**Important Points to Remember:**

- The Roman numerals serve as valid premises (reasonable assumptions) supporting the writer’s conclusion (thesis); thus, if these premises are accepted as true, then the thesis is a logical conclusion.

- The order of the Roman numerals should reflect the most effective order for presenting the thesis. The best approach is to start with the weakest point or argument and work up to the strongest point.

- The introduction and conclusion of the paper are *not* included in the outline—the outline is a blueprint of the argument in the paper itself, not a diagram of the paper’s paragraphs.

- Outlines should be typed using double spacing; examples in this document are single spaced to conserve space and reduce printing costs. In addition, outlines are typically entitled “Outline”; examples in this document use the complete title of the essay for easier, specific reference.

**Guideline Two: Make Sure There Is Adequate Supporting Material**

Common sense dictates that nothing can be subdivided into less than two parts. Outlines, thus, need at least two divisions for each section: the thesis should be divided into at least two Roman numerals; each Roman numeral needs at least an A. and a B.; each A. and B. needs at least a 1. and a 2., etc. Additional elements (C.’s, D.’s, and E.’s or 3.’s, 4.’s and 5.’s) may be added as needed. The idea is to produce two or more subdivisions per point, not simply an even number of subdivisions.
A Note on Terminology:

Some instructors refer to each division as a “level”—in other words, a third-level outline has Roman numerals, capital letters, and Arabic numbers. Other instructors, including James Lester in *Writing Research Papers*, refer to the divisions as “degrees.” The terms are interchangeable.

Guideline Three: Make Sure the Symbols Are Correct

Outline symbols denote specific levels (or degrees); therefore, the writer should be very careful to use the proper form (I., A., 1., a., (1), etc.). It matters if the letter is capitalized or in lower case. Similarly, it is important to observe proper indentation because each indentation represents a more specific division of ideas. Formal outlines are usually labeled in the following descending order:

I.
   A.
      1.
         a.  
             (1)
                 (a)
                     (b)
             (2)
         b.
     2.
   B.

II.

Guideline Four: Make Sure the Elements Are Grammatically and Logically Parallel

In a topic outline, each level (or degree) should be consistent—all noun phrases, or gerund phrases, or infinitive phrases, etc. Complete sentences and phrases should not be mixed together. Likewise, in a sentence outline, each level (or degree) should have an equal grammatical structure. In the example sentence outline “Cycling: The Commuter’s Choice” on page five, I.A.1. and I.A.2. both begin with the same grammatical structure (“It accommodates” and “It allows”). These elements are said to be “parallel.” The pronoun “it” relates to the noun “car” in I.A. Thus, making the outline parallel helps prevent the writer from wandering away from the focus of the topic.

Parallel structure should not inhibit the expression of ideas—flexibility is important. A general rule to keep in mind is that similar levels (or degrees) should be grammatically parallel: Roman numerals should match each other, A.’s should match B.’s, 1.’s should match 2.’s, and so on.
Guideline Five: Make Sure the Sentences Use Direct Expression

Another aspect of form involves sentence structure. Writers should aim for simplicity and direct expression: they should use action verbs whenever possible and avoid wordiness and passive voice. For example, the statement “There were three men who were competing for her love” creates less interest than “Three men competed for her love.” Likewise, use of the passive voice in this sentence—“Her love was competed for by three men”—almost distorts the meaning of the sentence.

Tree Diagrams: An Alternate Approach

Some writers find it helpful to use a tree diagram prior to or instead of writing a topic outline. Tree diagrams look similar to the prewriting stage called “clustering” or “mapping” but are more like topic outlines because they help writers visualize the structure of the essay, whereas clustering or mapping emphasize generation of ideas more than organization of ideas.

Mapping the basic structure—moving from more general supporting points to more specific points and explanations—allows the writer to see which areas have satisfactory support and which need filling in. In this way tree diagrams, like topic outlines, help solidify a logical sequence that is necessary to produce a more developed, unified, and coherent draft as well as a complete sentence outline.

The topic outline “Cycling: The Commuter’s Choice,” illustrated on pages four and five of this document, shows the major and minor points for an essay comparing driving versus riding a bike to school. The same points arranged as a tree diagram would look like this (Figure 1):
Riding a bicycle to school is a more practical option than driving.

Convenience of driving
- Easy
  - Multiple Items
  - Weather Protection
- Reliable
  - Long Trips
  - Easy
- Operation
  - No License
  - No Parking Fees
- Maintenance
  - Inexpensive Repair Bills
- Personal
- Environmental
  - No

Cost effectiveness of biking
- Operation
  - No License
  - No Parking Fees
- Maintenance
  - Inexpensive Repair Bills
- Personal
- Environmental
  - No

Health benefits of biking
- Exercise
- Less Stress
- Less Traffic
- Emissions

Figure 1
A tree diagram is simply a horizontal, less formal version of a traditional topic outline. The main assertion (thesis) is at the top of the diagram, and the supporting material moves from the first subdivision of points (Level 1) to more specific subdivisions of supporting points (Levels Two and Three). Although the diagram is not a required step in outlining, some students may find it useful as a transition to the sentence outline.

**Developing a Topic into an Outline Using a Tree Diagram**

Some students may find it helpful to see more of the planning process with another topic: physical fitness. After choosing this general topic and prewriting (using any preferred method) to discover a more focused topic and supporting ideas, a student has developed a thesis and sketch outline for a model fitness regimen that includes cardiovascular conditioning, strength training, and yoga. Now the student is ready to do some preliminary planning. Here’s the thesis and most basic topic outline:

**Thesis:** A well-rounded model fitness program combines three complementary types of exercise: cardiovascular conditioning, weight lifting, and yoga.

1. cardiovascular conditioning
2. weight lifting
3. yoga

At this point the student could use a diagram to begin mapping the three components of the program and list supporting information taken from the prewriting:

**Model Fitness Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cardiovascular conditioning</th>
<th>Weight lifting</th>
<th>Yoga</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>three to four times/week</td>
<td>twice a week</td>
<td>once or twice a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>step class, treadmill</td>
<td>class/machines/home</td>
<td>class or DVD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lowers blood pressure</td>
<td>increases muscle mass</td>
<td>increases strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lowers heart rate</td>
<td>increases bone density</td>
<td>increases flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increases lung capacity</td>
<td>improves stamina</td>
<td>improves balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leads to weight loss</td>
<td>can reduce waist size</td>
<td>strengthens immune function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decreases stress hormones</td>
<td></td>
<td>decreases stress hormones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tree diagram above lists supporting details and examples that the student can use to begin drafting, allowing more details and examples to emerge, or the student could organize the listed items to work out the structure of the essay in mind more fully, moving from the most general level of supporting material to more specific levels.
In this type of essay, the student needs to answer questions such as the following:

Why are these three types of exercise necessary for a model fitness program?
How often should a person practice each type of exercise?
What specific exercises should a person do?

Knowledgeable about all three categories of exercise, the student can see from this preliminary work that cardiovascular exercise, weight training, and yoga have similar health benefits. Although a successful essay showing how these complementary types of exercise work together could be developed, the student prefers to focus on advocating the benefits of yoga and decides to narrow the focus of the essay for that purpose. Here is the revised, more focused thesis:

**Thesis: Yoga is an important part of any fitness program.**

Using the prewriting technique called “listing,” the student can discover elements that help create a narrowed thesis, as the following examples illustrate:

- develops balance
- improves flexibility
- ex. hip flexor stretches
- improves strength
- uses body’s own weight
- inexpensive equipment
- improves immune function
- helps with muscle imbalances
- helps with skeletal problems
- helps with anxiety, hyperactivity
- props for modification of poses

After listing or using another strategy to develop ideas for the paper, the student can use a tree diagram or a topic outline to shape the essay’s organization. The diagram can be expanded with more details, or the student may wish to begin a topic outline that will evolve into a sentence outline. The diagram below shows an evolving plan for the essay in which the previous list is organized under two main points:
Yoga is an important part of any fitness program.

Promotes balance, strength, and flexibility

Better coordination, improved circulation
Poses and sequences for each area
Poses can be modified to fit individual
Flexibility: forward and backward bends
Strength: chair, warrior poses
Balance: tree, half-moon poses

Reduces stress and promotes well-being

Breathwork: fuller lung capacity
Calms or stimulates body systems
Breathwork to help with
Sequences combine poses with
various conditions
Skeletal and muscle problems:
scoliosis
Psychological/emotional problems

At this point the student can move forward, branching the diagram into more specific levels of organization, as demonstrated in the following diagram (Figure 2):
Yoga is an important part of any fitness program.

Physical benefits
- Strength
  - Better Control
  - Chair Pose
  - Plank Pose
  - Increased Range of Motion; Fewer Injuries
- Flexibility
  - Forward folds
  - Back Bends
  - Plow
- Balance
  - Crow
  - Half-moon

Overall well-being
- Breathwork
  - Greater Lung Capacity
  - Alternate Nostril Breathing
- Sequences for Ailments
  - Immune & Nervous System
  - Musculoskeletal Conditions
  - Calming: Insomnia, Hyperactivity, Anxiety
  - Heat-producing: Allergies, Depression
  - Scoliosis, Overuse

Figure 2
Once the student organizes the ideas into a diagram, developing a topic outline is relatively easy, as the following topic outline shows:

**Get on the Mat: Yoga for Fitness**

Thesis: Yoga is an important part of any fitness program.

I. Better coordination and balance  
   A. Improves strength  
   B. Improves flexibility  
   C. Improves balance  

II. Breathing techniques and special sequences  
   A. Reduces stress  
      1. Greater lung capacity  
      2. Balances nervous system  
   B. Special sequences for ailments  
      1. Immune and nervous systems  
      2. Skeletal abnormalities and muscle imbalances

The student can then take the topic outline and further expand it into a more comprehensive sentence outline. The sentence outline below demonstrates the same structure as the tree diagram, but several adjustments have been made; the thesis, for example, has been revised for better focus.

**Get on the Mat: Yoga for Fitness**

Thesis: Because yoga encourages a balance between all the body’s systems, it is an important method for creating better health.

I. Yoga develops better coordination and balance by improving strength and flexibility.  
   A. Poses increase muscle strength using the body’s own weight.  
      1. Plank pose and variations strengthen the core, arm, and shoulder muscles.  
      2. Warrior and other poses strengthen the legs.  
   B. Flexibility poses help people with both tight or loose joints.  
      1. An increased range of motion helps less flexible individuals avoid injury.  
      2. Looser-jointed individuals develop greater control and stability to avoid injury.  
   C. Poses emphasizing balance improve concentration and build confidence.  
      1. Tree pose and other simpler standing poses emphasize basic balance.  
      2. Poses requiring greater strength and balance improve confidence.  

II. Breathing techniques and special sequences promote overall well being and alleviate various conditions.  
   A. Breathing techniques reduce stress and develop better body awareness.  
      1. Basic yoga breathing encourages use of the lungs’ full capacity.  
         a. Breathing from the upper chest, which is how most people breathe, uses only the upper part of the lungs.
b. Breathing from the diaphragm allows for greater exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide.

2. Alternate nostril breathing balances the nervous system to relieve tension or stimulate the body.

B. Sequences coordinated with breath and sound can improve various conditions and ailments.
   1. Conditions of the immune and nervous systems can be improved.
      a. Sequences that encourage stillness and calm can mitigate hyperactivity, insomnia, and anxiety.
      b. Sequences that increase the body’s movement and create heat can ease allergies and depression.
   2. Special sequences can ease the discomfort of skeletal abnormalities and muscle imbalances.
      a. Yoga sequences can help with exaggerated spinal curvature (scoliosis).
      b. Special sequences loosen and strengthen muscles weakened and tightened by improper positions such as sitting at a desk or driving.

The process that began with a simple list for a model fitness plan has culminated in a sentence outline on the health benefits of yoga. This example shows that diagramming can help clarify the essay’s content and organization, thus serving as an aid in creating a topic or a sentence outline, the latter being the most detailed blueprint for the essay.

**Example Outlines**

**Example Outlines: The Expository (or Process) Paper**

One type of paper (or “mode”) is the expository or process essay. The purpose of this type of essay is to explain a process or show the reader how to do something. The greatest challenge in writing an expository essay is constructing a thesis that expresses a definite attitude or judgment and then carrying that judgment throughout the outline. The following outline describing the process of constructing a small lake emphasizes (in bold type) the attitude expressed in two key terms from the thesis (“aesthetic” and “functional”) by using synonyms and related terms not only in the Roman numerals but also in second level (or degree) items.

**The Perfect Pond**

Thesis: Building a pond that is both aesthetic and functional requires suitable site selection, careful construction, and proper management.

I. Selecting a suitable site is crucial to both the beauty and function of the pond.
   A. The physical features of the pond must be pleasing and meet the owner’s needs.
      1. The shape of the pond may be geometric or freeform.
      2. The size of the pond should be adequate and cost-effective.
      3. The pond type should be harmonious with the topography.
         a. Ponds may be scooped out of flat terrain.
b. Ponds may be formed by placing a dam between hills to flood a ravine or valley.

B. The geologic features of the land must accommodate a pond.
   1. The lay of the land must be suitable.
   2. The soil and substrata must be capable of holding water to avoid percolation.

C. The water source for the pond must be adequate.
   1. Water may come from underground aquifers.
   2. Water may come from surface sources such as springs, streams, rainwater run-off, or a combination of these sources.

D. The project must meet the approval of the appropriate government agency in each state.
   1. Meeting the guidelines keeps the pond in compliance with the law.
   2. Meeting the guidelines protects the owner from liability should an accident, such as dam failure, occur.

II. Careful construction of the pond insures that it will be both beautiful and safe.
A. Professional planning insures the pond will be built correctly.
   1. A private engineer may be hired to draw up the plans.
   2. The Soil Conservation Service can supervise the construction more inexpensively than a private engineer.
   3. A local contractor should be hired to do the actual construction.

B. Actual construction of the pond requires skill and patience.
   1. The topsoil at the pond site must be removed and stored for later retrieval.
   2. The pond basin must be graded.
      a. Grading removes unwanted rock and soil types.
      b. Grading achieves the desired depth.
   3. The pond basin must be sealed.
      a. Clay must be spread over the basin so water does not leak through.
      b. Bentonite, a volcanic substance that seals when wet, may be substituted for clay.
   4. The dam must be built with care.
      a. Bulldozers dig out a T-shaped trench ten feet deeper than the pond basin.
      b. Clay or bentonite is layered and compacted into the trench.
      c. The spillways are installed.
         (1) The main spillway is put in when the dam is two-thirds finished.
         (2) An emergency spillway is built in case the main spillway gets clogged or overwhelmed.
      d. A toe drain, a length of perforated plastic pipe, is put in the back side of the dam to drain away excess moisture which could undermine the dam.
   5. The topsoil must be retrieved and spread back over the dam and shoreline areas.
   6. The area must be landscaped, restoring vegetation to prevent erosion and improve appearance.
   7. The owner must wait from two months to a year for the pond to fill.
III. Managing the pond properly is necessary to maintain a balanced and appealing water environment.

A. The dam should be mown periodically.
   1. Mowing prevents trees from growing and destroying the dam with their roots.
   2. Mowing removes brush that can harbor burrowing animals like muskrats that will undermine the dam.

B. The pond environment should be controlled and monitored.
   1. A balanced food chain must be established.
      a. The pond should be stocked with a variety of fish, avoiding undesirable species.
      b. Algae and plankton growth should be encouraged with pond fertilizer.
      c. Fish should be harvested periodically to prevent over-reproduction.
   2. Plant growth needs to be managed.
      a. Water plants should be encouraged to provide habitat for fish and other aquatic animals.
      b. Water plants should not be allowed to choke the pond.
   3. Levels of dissolved minerals and oxygen in the pond must be checked periodically to prevent fish kill.
      a. Underground water sources may contain high levels of nitrogen, carbon dioxide, and iron, thus poisoning the fish.
      b. Ice and snow in winter may block photosynthesis, thus suffocating the fish.

Moving from Outline to Essay

The outline is the blueprint for the BODY of the paper (the introduction and conclusion must be developed separately). While the outline is flexible and can be modified to accommodate changes as the paper evolves, it is important to maintain a direct relationship between the development in the paper and the outline. In other words, the writer should follow the order set up in the outline, using it as a guide to development.

The idea from each outline level (or degree) should be directly stated in the paper; the writer can then add specific examples or further elaborate points as needed. Third and fourth level (or degree) elements may be combined so that sentences in the paper avoid repetition or choppiness. It is important to maintain fluency in the paper—ideas should flow smoothly from one to another. Writers accomplish this by using transitions, (words, phrases, or sentences that “hook” ideas together). Repeating key terms from the thesis is another effective way to achieve coherence.

The outline can also serve as a guide to paragraph divisions in the paper. In a short essay, Roman numeral I., I.A., and I.A.1. and I.A.2. might go together as one paragraph, while I.B., I.B.1. and I.B.2. could make another. In a longer, research-based paper, the writer may make a paragraph from Roman numeral one alone, then another paragraph from I.A., I.A.1. and an entire paragraph for I.A.2. Essentially, paragraphs are distinct units of
meaning, so writers should use their judgment on paragraph division, keeping related ideas and their examples together.

The following passage demonstrates the development of the III.B./III.B.1. section of the outline “The Perfect Pond.” Note the use of transitions and the way the development follows the order of the outline, with digressions to provide specific examples.

Transition from III.A. to III.B., Referring to main idea in III.

Besides caring for the dam, another important aspect of pond management is making sure both fish and plants thrive in a balanced eco-system. Establishing this type of environment requires careful control and monitoring of the pond. At the outset it is essential to establish a balanced food chain by stocking the pond with a variety of fish. Appropriate choices include largemouth bass, bluegills, and channel catfish, with the ratio being about one bass to five pan fish per surface acre of water.

Undesirable species, such as white or black crappies or northern pike, should not be introduced into the pond to prevent future problems.

Transition to III.B.1.b

The cornerstone of any food chain rests on healthy plants; the pond is no exception. Algae and plankton feed tiny insects and other creatures such as crustaceans and minnows, which serve as food for larger fish. Therefore, pond fertilizer should be applied to encourage the growth of algae and plankton.

Transition and III.B.1.c. stated

One additional aspect of keeping the food chain in balance is the need for periodic harvesting of some of the fish. While both bass and pan fish should be caught and removed, it is crucial that pan fish be controlled because they multiply so rapidly. Over-population will create food shortages and, in consequence, reduce
the size and quality of the fish in the pond.

Because this section of the paper has so many specific details, it is appropriate to create separate paragraphs for each fourth level (or degree) item. It would also be acceptable—though unwieldy—to include all of this information in one long paragraph.

**Expository Outlines from Student Papers**

Uchechi Nwaozuzu wrote the following outline for an expository essay that effectively describes the complex process that a Nigerian couple of the Igbo tribe must undertake to be properly married.

**The Traditional Marriage in Igbo Culture**

Thesis: Before two people from the Igbo tribe in southeastern Nigeria can live together as man and wife, their families must successfully complete three stages: the investigation, the introduction (i ku aka), and the traditional marriage ceremony (i gba nkwu).

I. The families must investigate each other.
   A. Each family must find out the medical history of the other family.
      1. They must find out if the other has a history of barrenness.
      2. They must find out if the other has a history of madness.
      3. They must find out if the other has a history of unnatural deaths.
   B. Each family must find out the social standing of the other family.
      1. They must find out if the other family has a good reputation in their society.
      2. They must find out if the other family is outcast from their society.

II. The families must complete the formal introduction ceremony (i ku aka).
   A. The man’s family must travel to the woman’s family house for the first time.
      1. The man’s family must state their intentions.
         a. They must introduce themselves.
         b. They must declare their reasons for coming.
         c. They must present the woman’s family with wine.
      2. The woman’s family must provide a warm reception.
         a. They must accept the proposal of the man’s family.
         b. They must provide abundant food and drinks.
         c. They must provide the family of the man with a list of demands, also known as the “bride price.”
   B. The man’s family must make a return trip to the woman’s family.
      1. They must negotiate the list of demands previously presented.
      2. They must provide the items on the list or a cash equivalent.
      3. They must agree on a date for the traditional marriage ceremony.

III. The families must complete the traditional marriage ceremony (i gba nkwu).
   A. The families must spend time together before the bride and groom are wedded.
1. The groom and his family must travel to the bride’s paternal village for the ceremony.
2. The bride must remain hidden and dressed in traditional attire.
3. The bride’s parents must present *kola* to their in-laws, pray over it, and take the first bite.
4. The bride must come out briefly to greet the members of the groom’s family.

B. The bride and groom must be officially wedded.
   1. The bride must positively identify the groom.
      a. The bride must be given a cup of palm wine.
      b. The bride must locate the groom in the audience.
      c. The bride must kneel and present the cup to the groom, who drinks from it.
   2. The couple must receive words of advice, instructions, and prayers from their families.

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Music inspired Taylor Satchell to write this next outline for an expository essay.

**Making an Entertaining Hip-Hop Instrumental**

**Thesis:** Well-organized percussion instruments, a flowing baseline, and a rhythmic melody are all necessary components in making an entertaining hip-hop instrumental.

I. Organized percussion instruments are important in establishing the foundation of the instrumental.
   A. The kick drum is essential for establishing the tempo.
      1. The closer each note of a kick drum is, the faster the tempo.
      2. The further away each note of a kick drum is, the slower the tempo.
   B. The hi-hats, which are a type of cymbal, are significant for livening up the sound of a hip-hop instrumental.
      1. Hi-hats within a hip-hop instrumental usually consist of multiple notes spaced very close together to create rhythm.
      2. Hi-hats change the pace of the slower kick drums within the instrumental.
      3. Hi-hats are especially useful in slower instrumentals to prevent the constant drag of a slower tempo.
   C. Other percussion instruments (such as snare drums, shakers, handclaps, etc.) are useful for establishing a rhythm.
      1. These instruments establish a rhythm that usually places notes in between the notes of the kick drums.
      2. These instruments give a fuller sound to the percussion section of the instrumental.

II. A fluid baseline is vital to making a melodic hip-hop instrumental.
   A. The baseline must stay smooth at all times.
      1. Rough and choppy baselines distort the sound of the entire instrumental.
      2. A smooth baseline is easier to balance than an uneven baseline.
B. The baseline should have minimal breaks and pauses within the rhythm.
   1. It should not contain multiple stops in the rhythm to prevent it from sounding too mechanical and dismal.
   2. It should only contain a pause for a rhythmic or melodic effect.

III. A rhythmic melody establishes the identity of any hip-hop instrumental.
   A. The melody consists of intricate rhythms that are substantially different for all instrumentals.
      1. The vast amount of notes and pitches available make it almost certain that each melody will be unique from all other instrumentals.
      2. The large number of notes which the musician can place within the rhythm of the melody helps in securing the identity of the instrumental.
   B. The melody can be layered with multiple instruments (each with individual or shared rhythms), thus creating different blends for each instrumental.
      1. The use of instruments, such as brass, strings, woodwinds, synthesizers and keyboards, makes each individual instrumental sound unique.
      2. The endless combination of instruments and rhythms makes it easy to create a distinctive melody.

Example Outlines: The Comparison/Contrast Essay

When writing an essay using the comparison or contrast mode, which is a specialized type of exposition, it is most important to make sure the thesis expresses some type of judgment about the topic or works under consideration: it is NOT enough to simply say that “A is like B” or “A is different from B.” The writer needs to consider the implications of such similarities or differences, to draw some conclusion about them, or to recommend one over the other in order to persuade readers to make a choice and not leave them feeling they have wasted their valuable time reading a pointless paper.

Comparison/contrast essays may use one or a combination of organizing principles: block (subject by subject), point-by-point, or a modification of both. Whatever style the writer chooses, it is more expedient to either compare OR contrast the subjects rather than to attempt to address BOTH comparisons and contrasts in the same essay. It is possible, however, to structure a thesis (and, consequently, a paper) using dialectic order (“although . . . because”) which will allow the writer to consider both, placing emphasis or preference on the part listed in the main (or independent) clause. In the essay, each part needs equal development, with as many vivid details and examples as possible to illustrate the points. Transitions are another important element because they help the paper flow smoothly from one subject to another or from one point to the next.

The following outline considers two professional essays, using dialectic order to present both similarities and differences between two women who were influential in the authors’ lives. A note on verb tense: while essays based on literary works are normally written in present tense, the context of these essays justifies using past tense.
Making a Difference

Thesis: Even though they used an entirely different approach, both Miss Hurd, in Nicholas Gage’s “The Teacher Who Changed My Life,” and Mrs. Flowers, in Maya Angelou’s “Sister Flowers,” had a profound effect on the young authors’ lives.

I. Both Miss Hurd and Mrs. Flowers differ in the way they handled the traumatized children.
   A. Miss Hurd was abrasive.
      1. She ridiculed Gage and other students for being lazy.
      2. She threatened Gage and other students with hard work.
   B. Mrs. Flowers was understanding.
      1. She praised Angelou for her accomplishments before suggesting improvements.
      2. She made cookies and lemonade just for Angelou.
      3. She treated Angelou with respect.

II. Both women positively influenced the authors’ professional lives.
   A. Miss Hurd introduced Gage to journalism, his eventual career.
      1. She taught and encouraged him to develop his writing skills.
      2. She taught him how to put out a school newspaper.
      3. She was instrumental in Gage’s first recognition as a writer.
         a. She had one of his essays published in the school newspaper.
         b. She submitted one of his essays to a contest which he won.
   B. Mrs. Flowers instilled a love of language and literature into Angelou, who is a renowned writer and teacher.
      1. She promoted Angelou’s speaking ability by talking to her and expecting an answer.
      2. She modeled effective reading skills by dramatizing passages from classic authors.
      3. She encouraged Angelou’s language skills by asking her to memorize and recite poetry.
      4. She taught Angelou to appreciate great works of literature.

III. Both women helped shape the authors’ sense of self-worth.
   A. Miss Hurd helped Gage feel proud of his background.
      1. She introduced him to the literature of his homeland, Greece, and to inspirational stories of everyday heroes.
      2. She made him realize that his personal experiences were worth writing about.
   B. Mrs. Flowers helped develop Angelou’s self-confidence.
      1. She awakened Angelou’s selflessness.
      2. She made Angelou feel special.

Comparison/Contrast Outlines from Student Papers

After comparing the movie version of Jurassic Park with the book, Nicholas Luttrell believes that both are equally impressive works.
The Jurassic Park Masterpieces

Thesis: Although Jurassic Park the movie does not completely follow Jurassic Park the book, Steven Spielberg’s movie successfully maintains the same plot and themes as Michael Crichton’s book, making the movie just as brilliant.

I. Spielberg makes several respectable modifications to the book.
   A. Spielberg changes some of the action in the book to better fit on screen.
      1. He takes away unnecessary action scenes that do not further the plot.
         a. He takes away the pterosaur scene.
         b. He takes away all the river scenes.
      2. He modifies the dinosaurs from acting like animals to acting like actual characters.
         a. He modifies the velociraptor’s behaviors.
         b. He modifies the kitchen scene.
         c. He modifies the underground basement scene.
   B. Spielberg creates a more efficient ending than the book.
      1. He adds a surprise hero at the end.
         a. He turns the tyrannosaurus into a hero.
         b. He creates a more exciting ending than the book.
      2. He creates a more resourceful ending.
         a. Spielberg ends the movie neatly with the characters escaping in the helicopter.
         b. Crichton continues on with the hunt for the velociraptor nests.

II. Spielberg is able to successfully follow the same plot from Crichton’s book even without all the details.
   A. He makes a wise choice to have the movie take place in the same setting as Crichton’s book.
      1. To keep the essence of the book, Spielberg has the movie take place in the same park, Jurassic Park.
      2. To stay true to the book, Spielberg has the movie take place in Isla Nublar, an island off the coast of Costa Rica.
   B. He recreates the most memorable key events from Michael Crichton’s book.
      1. Spielberg successfully introduces the dinosaurs in the same way as Crichton does in the book.
      2. Spielberg and Crichton both explore the mystical contours of Jurassic Park.
      3. Spielberg effectively recreates the most iconic scene in Crichton’s book.
         a. Spielberg captures the same epic entrance of the tyrannosaurus.
         b. Spielberg makes the scene just as powerful as Crichton’s scene in the book.

III. Spielberg utilizes the same remarkable themes that make Crichton’s book famous.
   A. It is important that Spielberg explore the implications of cloning dinosaurs, as Crichton does in the book.
      1. Both Spielberg and Crichton discuss the responsibility that comes with the power of cloning.
         a. Both debate whether or not cloning is acceptable.
b. Both question the cloning of animals that have become extinct due to human interference.

2. Both Spielberg and Crichton talk about the dangers of cloning.
   a. Crichton displays a cloned elephant that is the size of a cat.
   b. Spielberg has several scenes where people argue over the hazards of cloning.

B. It is vital that Spielberg express the most significant and central theme as Crichton does in the book: the impossibility of controlling nature.
   1. Both Spielberg and Crichton mention the chaos theory.
      a. The dinosaurs are able to change gender with the frog DNA that scientists use to create them.
      b. The book reveals how ignorant the geneticists are.
   2. Both Spielberg and Crichton show the lack of control the park has over the dinosaurs.
      a. The dinosaurs still become ill.
      b. The dinosaurs will not operate on the park’s schedule.
      c. The dinosaurs break free from their cages.

Example Outlines: The Argumentative Essay

Because all thesis statements require a judgment or “argumentative edge,” in a sense, all papers can be considered argumentative. Nevertheless, when a topic allows the writer to assume a definite “pro” or “con” stance, especially on a controversial subject, the paper is clearly classified as argumentative.

As with comparison/contrast papers, argumentative essays are most successful when they promote a single viewpoint, in other words, the “pro” or the “con” of the issue. Nevertheless, if the writer chooses not to use dialectic order, the psychology of argument dictates that the opposing viewpoints be acknowledged somewhere in the paper, formally or informally, to establish credibility with the readers. No reader will believe a writer who seems ill informed or biased about the subject.

Dialectic order allows the writer to devote the first part of the essay exclusively to the opposition (stated in the dependent clause, the “although” part of the thesis), pointing out its strengths, so that it can be deposed in favor of the central arguments the writer wishes to promote in the bulk of the paper (stated in the main clause of the thesis). This approach is a concise way to handle opposing viewpoints, but it is also an effective technique for a writer who sees merit in both sides of the issue but still favors one side.

Using dialectic order, the writer needs to keep a couple of strategies in mind. First, the arguments need to be structured from the weakest to the strongest point. Once again using human psychology, it is crucial to state the most important point last because readers best remember what they read last. And like a fireworks display on July 4th, who wants to watch the grand finale at the beginning of the show, only to end with the
insignificant sparks and pops usually reserved for the opening? The second strategy the writer needs to employ is keeping the thesis in focus. As the Roman numeral one section is devoted to the opposition, the thesis needs to be stated once again as a transition into Roman numeral two; otherwise, readers will perceive a total inconsistency in logic as the paper abruptly shifts from one viewpoint to the opposite side of the argument.

Another consideration with all argumentative papers—whether they employ dialectic order or just straightforward argument—is that to be really convincing, the writer needs to use supporting facts, details, and ethical/moral arguments from authorities in the field. That requires adequate research and proper documentation of all material taken from an outside source. Writers need to avoid using quotations (except key terms) in an outline, saving quotes for the actual essay itself where they should be correctly documented. Nevertheless, when the writer uses specific information from a critic or source directly in the outline, the reference can be paraphrased and credited to the source.

All argumentative papers need to clearly state the writer’s opinion about the topic, but the strongest argumentative papers are “prescriptive”; in other words, they do more than just destroy the opposition: they also promote an alternative. In advocating the rather radical viewpoint that all herbicides should be eliminated, the following outline mitigates the writer’s stance by advocating eco-friendly substitutes and “green” methods. Also notice that in Roman numerals one and two, the writer borrows a technique from the comparison/contrast paper, juxtaposing the opposing view (in the A. section) against the view she wishes to promote (in the B. section), devoting the entire Roman numeral three to the strongest argument: her proposed alternative to herbicides.

**Herbicides: Friend or Foe?**

Thesis: Despite their effectiveness in controlled situations, herbicides should be banned not only because they are hazardous to the environment and human health but because better alternatives are available.

I. Despite their effectiveness, herbicides should be banned because they harm the environment.
   A. Herbicides effectively control unwanted plant growth.
      1. They can control weeds in flower and vegetable gardens.
      2. They can control weeds in lawns.
      3. They can control undergrowth along roads and railways.
      4. They can control brush in public recreation areas.
   B. Herbicides should be banned because they pose a threat to the environment.
      1. They contaminate water supplies.
         a. They can pollute streams from run-off.
         b. They can pollute wells from seepage.
      2. They contaminate soil.
         a. They severely contaminate clay.
         b. They remain in the soil indefinitely.

II. Despite guidelines for their use, herbicides should be banned because they are hazardous to human health.
A. Herbicides are strictly regulated.
   1. Strong herbicides can be applied only by a licensed professional.
   2. Common herbicides must be applied according to specific label directions.

B. Herbicides should be banned because exposure to them can cause severe health problems.
   1. They can damage the respiratory tract.
      a. Paraquat causes pulmonary fibrosis.
      b. Paraquat causes lesions on the lungs.
   2. They are dangerous to an unborn fetus.
      a. Agent Orange can kill or deform a fetus.
      b. Dioxin can kill or deform a fetus.

III. Herbicides should be banned because better alternatives are available.
A. Unwanted plant growth in gardens can be controlled using an organic approach.
   1. Gardens can be tilled or hoed to remove weeds.
   2. Gardens can be heavily mulched to block out weeds.

B. Unwanted plant growth in large areas can be controlled using traditional landscaping methods.
   1. Lawns may be mown closer and more frequently to prevent weed growth and reseeding.
   2. Areas under trees may be landscaped to prevent weed growth.
      a. The areas may be planted with a groundcover.
      b. The areas may be planted with shrubs like azaleas and then heavily mulched.

Argumentative Outlines and Papers from Students

Oluwagbenga Elijah Idowu decided to take a straightforward argumentative approach in his essay addressing the reluctance of young African-American mothers to breastfeed their infants, whether it be for personal reasons or social pressure. This outline does not provide a formal presentation of opposing arguments (they can be addressed in the introduction of the paper or in transitions between points or at the beginning of paragraphs). The thesis presents three reasons that support one major premise; the Roman numerals are taken directly from the thesis and are then broken down into specific detail.

Breastfeeding: Nature’s Selective Gift to Mothers

Thesis: African-American women should be strongly encouraged to breastfeed their children because breastfeeding offers huge nutritive and health benefits, reduces the risk of illnesses in both the child and the mother, and establishes a vital mother-child bond.

I. Breastfeeding offers enormous nutritive and health benefits to the child.
   A. Breast milk is richer in certain nutrients than cow’s milk.
      1. It is rich in long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids which are beneficial for neural development.
      2. It is rich in fats and iron that are more easily absorbed than those in cow’s milk.
B. Breast milk offers important health benefits to the child.
   1. It provides important immunologic factors that help fight off pathogens.
   2. It very rarely induces allergic reactions in the baby compared to cow’s milk.
C. Breastfeeding provides the earliest medium for learning proper eating habits.
   1. A breastfeeding child is in complete control of how much he eats.
   2. A breastfed child tends to grow up to trust his body signals about how much he needs to eat.

II. Breastfeeding reduces the risk of illnesses in both the child and the mother.
   A. Breastfeeding reduces the risk of certain childhood illnesses.
      1. It provides antibodies that prevent gastroenteritis.
      2. It increases immunity against respiratory infections.
   B. Breastfeeding reduces the risk of illnesses in the mother.
      1. It decreases the risk of breast cancer.
      2. It reduces the risk of uterine cancer.

III. Breastfeeding establishes a vital mother-child bond.
   A. Breastfeeding connects the mother and the child in physiological ways.
      1. The infant’s sucking action of the mother’s nipple stimulates the production of prolactin by the mother.
      2. The infant’s sucking action stimulates the release of oxytocin that helps restore the uterus back to its pre-pregnancy size.
   B. Breastfeeding connects the mother and the child in some intense and ineffable emotional ways.
      1. Mothers tell how happy they are every time they breastfeed their children.
      2. Babies often pause during sessions of breastfeeding to observe their mothers’ facial expressions.

In order to put her argument in center stage and underscore the urgency of her concern, Elizabeth Lamoureux chose to use direct arguments emphasizing the need for technical high schools in Georgia as her researched essay (which follows) illustrates. Notice how she follows the order of her outline, using concrete examples from her own knowledge and from outside sources to support her points. Also note her use of transitional elements to emphasize her points and bridge ideas so they flow smoothly from one to another.
The Value of Technical High Schools in Georgia’s Business Marketplace

by

Elizabeth Lamoureux

English 1101 Honors

Dr. Rosemary D. Cox

April 25, 2012
Outline

Thesis: Technical high schools should be established in every county in Georgia because they can provide the technical training that companies need, can get young people into the workforce earlier, and can reduce the number of drop outs.

I. Technical high schools can provide the technical training that companies in Georgia need.
   
   A. Businesses can provide input regarding jobs needed in specific technical fields.
      
      1. Education can focus on these specific technical fields.
      2. Education can work with business to fill these positions.
   
   B. Businesses can provide apprenticeship programs.
      
      1. Apprenticeship programs can be a vital part of a student’s education.
      2. Apprenticeship programs are integral to Germany’s educational program, providing a realistic model for technical high schools in Georgia.

II. Technical high schools can prepare students to enter the workforce earlier.

   A. Students not interested in college can enter the workforce upon high school graduation.
      
      1. Students train during their high school years for their chosen profession.
      2. Students begin to work in a profession or trade where there is a need.
   
   B. Students can begin to earn a living upon graduation.
      
      1. Students will become independent and self-supporting at the age of eighteen when many of their peers are still dependent upon their parents.
      2. Students can make more money over the course of their lifetimes.
III. Technical high schools can reduce the number of drop outs.

A. Students would stay in school because they take courses that they enjoy.
   1. Students are more motivated to take courses in which they have an interest.
   2. Students will find both core and specialized classes more interesting and valuable when they can see the practical application of the subjects.

B. Students would no longer need to drop out to support their families.
   1. Students would be able to earn a living wage while still taking classes that would eventually lead to full-time employment.
   2. Students would learn financial skills through experience with money management.
The Value of Technical High Schools in Georgia’s Business Marketplace

Businesses need specialized workers; young people need jobs. It seems like this would be an easy problem to solve. However, business and education are not communicating with each other. To add to this dilemma, emphasis is still put on a college education for everyone. Samuel Halperin, study director of the Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship for the W. T. Grant Foundation, co-authored two reports: “The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America” and “The Forgotten Half: Pathways to Success for America’s Youth and Young Families.” Halperin states: “While the attention of the nation was focused on kids going to college . . . the truth is that 70 percent of our adults never earn a college degree” (qtd. in Rogers). According to an article in Issues in Science and Technology, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that there will be more need for skills obtained through “community colleges, occupational training, and work experience” (Lerman). As Anne C. Lewis points out, although the poor job situation is recognized as detrimental to American youth, President Bush tried to get rid of career and technical education (CTE) and “promote strictly academic programs.” Luckily, Congress did not support it (Lewis 5). The figure for U.S. teen joblessness in October 2009 was 27.6 percent, the highest since World War II (Karaim). According to Thomas E. Persing, Americans are “disregarding the 50 percent who enter college and fail to graduate. . . .” Since everyone does not want or need to go to college, young people need an alternative choice, namely, technical high schools. Technical high schools should be established in every county in Georgia because they can provide the technical training that companies need, can get young people into the work force earlier, and can reduce the number of drop outs.
Technical high schools provide students with the technical training that companies need. By getting input from businesses on exactly what their specialized needs are, school systems could adapt their curricula to accommodate the needs of businesses. According to an article in *Issues in Science and Technology*, “employers report difficulty in recruiting workers with adequate skills.” The article goes on to say that “the shortage of available skills is affecting their ability to serve customers, and 84% of the firms say that the K-12 school system is not doing a good job preparing students for the workplace” (Lerman). Education *can* work with businesses to provide them with the workforce they need, and students can learn the skills they need through apprenticeship programs.

Business can be further involved by providing these apprenticeship programs, which can be a vital part of a student’s education. Currently, Robert Reich, economist and former Secretary of Labor, and Richard Riley, Secretary of Education, have spoken up for apprenticeship programs (Persing). In these programs, not only do students learn job-specific skills, but they also learn other skills for success in the work place, such as “communication, responsibility, teamwork, allocating resources, problem-solving, and finding information” (Lerman). Businesses complain that the current educational system is failing in this regard and that students enter the workforce without these skills.

The United States could learn from other countries. Apprenticeship programs are integral to Germany’s educational program, for example. Because such large numbers of students in a wide array of fields take advantage of these programs, the stigma of not attending college is reduced. Timothy Taylor, the Conversable Economist, explains that most German students complete this program and still have the option to pursue a postsecondary degree. Many occupations are represented in this program, including
engineering, nursing, and teaching. Apprenticeship programs can last from one to six years and provide students with a wage for learning. This allows both business and student to compete in the market place. According to Julie Rawe, “under Germany’s earn-while-you-learn system, companies are paying 1.6 million young adults to train for about 350 types of jobs. . . .”

A second important reason technical high schools should be promoted in Georgia is that they prepare students to enter the work force earlier. Students not interested in college enter the work force upon high school graduation or sooner if they have participated in an apprenticeship or other cooperative program with a business. Students train during their high school years for their chosen profession and often work for the company where they trained. This ensures that students begin to work in a profession or trade where there is a need.

Another positive factor is that jobs allow students to earn a living upon graduation or before. Even though students are considered adults at eighteen, many cannot support themselves. The jobs available to young people are primarily minimum wage jobs which do not provide them with enough resources to live independently. One recent study indicates that the income gap is widening for young people, and “In March 1997, more than one-fourth of out-of-school young adults who were working full-time were earning less than the poverty line income standard of just over $16,000 annually for a family of four” (“The Forgotten Half Revisited”). Conversely, by entering the work force earlier with the skills businesses need, young people make more money over their lifetimes. Robert I. Lerman considers the advantages:
Studies generally find that education programs with close links to the world of work improve earnings. The earnings gains are especially solid for students unlikely to attend or complete college. Cooperative education, school enterprises, and internship or apprenticeship increased employment and lowered the share of young men who are idle after high school.

Young people can obviously profit from entering the work force earlier.

One of the major benefits of promoting technical high schools in Georgia is that they reduce the number of dropouts. According to an article in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the figure for dropouts for the Atlanta metro area is about thirty-four percent (McCaffrey and Badertscher A16). The statistic for Germany’s dropout rate is less than nine percent (Rawe). As Rawe maintains, students stay in school because they cannot get the job if they do not have the diploma. Beyond the strong incentive of a job, students are more motivated to take courses in which they have an interest. In addition to the specialized career classes, students are still required to take core classes required by traditional high schools. However, practical application of these subjects makes them more interesting and more valuable to the students.

Another reason students drop out is to support their families. By participating in a program in which they are paid a wage and then entering that job full time, they no longer need to drop out for this reason. It is necessary for many students to contribute financially to the family: by getting a job earlier, they can do this. Joining the work force early also provides students with financial skills gained through experience with money management.
The belief of most Americans that everyone needs to have a college education is outdated. The United States needs skilled employees at all levels, from the highly technical to the practical day to day services society needs to sustain its current standard of living. Germany is doing this through its apprenticeship programs which have proven to be economically successful for both businesses and workers. If the State of Georgia put technical high schools in every county, businesses would get employees with the skills they need; young people would get into good paying jobs earlier, and schools would have fewer dropouts.
Works Cited


The Literary Thesis and Outline

The thesis for a literary paper is simply a variation of the thesis for any other type of essay: all the guidelines relative to writing a good thesis statement still apply to the literary thesis. As with any thesis, reason must be the basis for the judgment, but in this case the necessary supporting evidence is drawn from the literary work and, when appropriate, from works of literary criticism. Though many variations are possible, essentially, literary thesis statements fall into two categories.

Category One: Theme

The thesis may be an exploration of the literary work’s theme or sub-theme as the following examples illustrate:

Thesis: In T.S. Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” Prufrock’s alienation stems from his rejection of the restrictions of time, his misinterpretation of the way others perceive him, and his inability to accept himself.

Thesis: Edna Pontellier, in Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening*, cannot realize her potential as an individual because of the restrictions of Creole society, her family, and her own mind.

Thesis: Although the Duke of Ferrara, in Robert Browning’s “My Last Duchess,” is a successful entrepreneur, his possessive and ruthless nature prohibit him from having a meaningful relationship in a marriage.

Thesis: In Margaret Atwood’s “Rape Fantasies,” Estelle is a sympathetic character because the reader associates with the human qualities she displays through her sense of humor, her sensitivity to others’ feelings, and, above all, her need for companionship.

Thesis: In Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll House*, although in the beginning Nora acts very immature, her confrontations with Krogstad and Torvald force her to realize that she must become an independent woman.

Thesis: In Alice Walker’s “Everyday Use,” even though Maggie and Dee have different personalities and opposing views of heritage, their confrontation over the quilts causes them both to learn valuable lessons about who they are.


Category Two: Technique

The thesis may be an analysis of an artistic technique such as imagery, symbolism, or point of view as the following examples illustrate:
Thesis: Through images of nature, death, and time, the speaker in Andrew Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress” uses an argument based on carpe diem in his attempt to seduce his lover.

Thesis: At the end of James Dickey’s “The Celebration,” images of lights and circles become symbols of the young narrator’s expanded vision of life.

Thesis: The holiday season, lamp and fire light, and clothing style all represent Nora Helmer’s transformation from naïve “doll” wife to independent woman in Henrik Ibsen’s A Doll House.

Thesis: In The Piano Lesson, by August Wilson, the piano functions as a strong representation of the family’s heritage by the lessons it teaches through its haunted spirit, historical carvings, and meaningful music.

Thesis: The use of objective point of view in Ernest Hemingway’s “Hills Like White Elephants” forces readers to focus on their own attitudes towards responsibility in relationships.

Points to Remember:

- A literary thesis does NOT simply retell the plot of the story, play or poem. The writer assumes that readers are already familiar with the literary work; the essay is the writer’s interpretation of events or elements in the literary work. For example, in an essay based on Nathaniel Hawthorne’s story “Young Goodman Brown,” to say that Goodman Brown walks through the forest to keep an appointment with the devil is simply a rehash of the events of the narrative. The thesis must interpret the plot at a more universal or abstract level.

- When analyzing a technique such as imagery or symbolism in a literary paper, it is important to show the effect of that technique. In the thesis it is not enough to simply say that a particular literary work contains images, or that certain elements function as symbols. The writer must show what those images or symbols actually do in the work.

- Any discussion of a literary work should use present tense: Huckleberry Finn floats (NOT floated) down the Mississippi River on a raft.

Example Outlines: The Literary Essay

The following outline would be appropriate for a literary research paper on Kate Chopin’s novel, The Awakening. In this outline, as with outlines for all literary papers, the first and second level items refer to concepts or judgments from the thesis; specific examples to prove those concepts are reserved for third, fourth, and fifth level items. Also note that there are no extensive quotations in this outline: only one key term—“mother-
woman”—is quoted. The number in parentheses refers to the page in the novel where this term first appears.

**Trapped: Edna Pontellier’s Dilemma in Chopin’s *The Awakening***

Thesis: Edna Pontellier cannot realize her potential as an individual because of the restrictions of Creole society, her family, and her own mind.

I. Edna Pontellier feels that Creole society inhibits her individual expression.
   A. She believes she must sacrifice her own desires in order to live up to her image of Creole society.
      1. She must maintain her social position.
         a. She entertains her husband’s associates at lavish dinner parties.
         b. She receives visitors during appropriate hours.
      2. She must uphold the expectations of a Creole wife.
         a. Her husband expects her to bear and raise children.
         b. Society expects her to focus on domestic affairs.
            (1) Like Madame Ratignolle, she should enjoy sewing baby clothes.
            (2) Like Madame Ratignolle, she should make her husband’s happiness her primary concern.
   B. She feels her personal needs are overshadowed by the duties expected of Creole women.
      1. Her household duties take valuable time away from her artistic pursuits.
      2. Her social obligations bore her.

II. Edna Pontellier feels trapped by the restrictions of her family.
   A. She feels stifled by the meaningless relationship she has with her husband.
      1. Léonce neglects her.
      2. Léonce treats her as a possession.
   B. She struggles with the guilt of neglecting her children.
      1. She knows she cannot be a “mother-woman” (10).
         a. She cannot preoccupy herself with the particulars of her sons’ care.
         b. She is relieved her sons are independent by nature.
      2. She maintains that she cannot live only for her children.

III. Edna Pontellier thwarts her individual potential with her own delusions about life.
   A. She cannot live up to her over-idealization of love.
      1. She is disappointed in her marriage to a man she does not love.
      2. She realizes that she can never love any man.
         a. Her affair with Alcée Arobin is a scandalous disaster.
         b. Her relationship with Robert Lebrun ends in hopeless despair.
   B. She is defeated by her feelings of inadequacy as an artist.
      1. She acknowledges the reality that she will never develop her ability as a painter.
      2. She believes she is incapable of achieving artistic perfection like Mademoiselle Reisz.
   C. She ultimately decides that suicide is the only solution to her problems.
      1. She plans her final trip to Grand Isle.
      2. She allows herself to be embraced by the freedom of the sea.
Depending on the depth of the discussion, the next outline could be developed into an essay or a research paper on Hawthorne’s short story. Notice how the Roman numerals reflect Brown’s growing disillusionment through the use of terms that show the progression of his emotions: “reluctant,” “shocked,” and “loses all hope.”

**The Road to Disillusionment**

Thesis: In “Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Brown becomes increasingly disillusioned by the realization that his ancestors, members of the community, and his wife are hypocrites.

I. Brown is reluctant to accept the idea that his ancestors were acquainted with evil.
   A. Brown initially praises his ancestors.
      1. He claims that neither his father nor his grandfather would have gone into the woods on an errand such as his.
      2. He states that his ancestors had always been honest, Christian people.
   B. Brown does not want to believe the traveler’s accusations.
      1. The traveler says he helped Brown’s grandfather whip a Quaker woman.
      2. The traveler says he helped Brown’s father burn down an Indian village.

II. Brown is shocked by the knowledge that people he has always admired are really wicked.
   A. Brown must acknowledge that clergymen of his church do Satan’s work.
      1. The traveler laughs when Brown suggest the minister of his church is pious.
      2. The minister and Deacon Gookin are on their way to Satan’s meeting in the woods.
   B. Brown is astonished to learn that Goody Cloyse, the woman who taught him his catechism, is evil.
      1. Goody Cloyse recognizes the traveler as Satan.
      2. Goody Cloyse is a witch.
         a. She refers to her lost broomstick.
         b. She describes satanic rituals she performs.
      3. Goody Cloyse is on her way to Satan’s meeting in the woods.

III. Brown loses all hope when he learns that Faith also partakes of evil.
   A. Brown no longer resists evil.
      1. He continues on his journey with renewed effort when he learns Faith is on her way to Satan’s meeting.
      2. He gives up his faith.
      3. He recognizes that the world belongs to the devil.
   B. Brown becomes embittered.
      1. Even though he wakes as if from a dream, he despises the townspeople.
      2. Even though he and his wife have a family, he cannot love or relate to them.
      3. Even though he lives a long life, he dies in misery.
The next outline focuses on the use of imagery in a poem by Andrew Marvell. Even though the writer lists the three elements that function as images in the poem—nature, death, and time—the thesis takes the concept one step further by stating that these images illustrate the theme of *carpe diem*, a clever seduction strategy in this situation.

**The Art of Seduction:**

**Marvell’s Use of Imagery in “To His Coy Mistress”**

Thesis: Through images of nature, death, and time, the speaker in Andrew Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress” uses an argument based on *carpe diem* in his attempt to seduce his lover.

I. Marvell uses images of nature to show that because everything changes, nothing lasts forever.
   A. “Vegetable love” (line 11) is constantly growing.
      1. It grows “vaster than empires” (line 12).
      2. It grows very slowly.
   B. The sun is in perpetual motion.
      1. The lovers cannot stop the sun from moving.
      2. The lovers can only make the sun “run” (line 46).

II. Marvell uses images of death to show that lovemaking should not be postponed.
   A. Death is not favorable to love.
      1. It is like an eternal desert.
      2. It will destroy the mistress’ beauty.
   B. The grave is devoid of desire.
      1. After death, the speaker will no longer want sex.
         a. His “echoing song” (line 27) will be silent.
         b. His lust will be turned to ashes.
      2. After death, the mistress will no longer want to remain chaste.
         a. Her virginity will be destroyed by worms.
         b. Her honor will change to dust.

III. Marvell uses images of time to emphasize that the lovers should “seize the day.”
   A. The lovers should enjoy sex while they still have time.
      1. The mistress’ skin is full of youth.
      2. The mistress’ soul is burning with passion.
   B. The lovers should not allow themselves to waste away in the slow jaws of time.
      1. They should “devour” (line 39) time like birds of prey.
      2. They should “tear” (line 43) the joys of love.
Armand Aubigny: A Victim of His Times

Thesis: Although Armand Aubigny, in Kate Chopin’s “Désirée’s Baby,” initially suppresses the hate he holds for himself, the circumstances he lives in force that hate to the surface, which he in turn projects onto those around him.

I. Armand Aubigny initially suppresses the hate he holds for himself.
   A. He hates himself because of his racial identity.
      1. He has known all along of his mother’s miscegenation.
      2. He keeps his true identity a secret at whatever cost necessary.
   B. He suppresses his self hate by marrying Désirée.
      1. He does not care that she is an orphan.
      2. He maintains superiority by marrying Désirée.

II. The circumstances Armand lives in cause the projection of his hate.
   A. Post bellum Louisiana forces Armand to keep his racial identity a secret.
      1. His mother and father lived in France because of his and his mother’s ancestry.
      2. He passes himself as white so he will not have to live with the hardship of being a mulatto slave.
   B. Post bellum Louisiana forces Armand to keep his son’s racial identity a secret.
      1. His community does not approve of his son’s heritage.
      2. He distances himself from his wife and child.

III. Armand projects his self hate onto those around him.
   A. He lets Désirée believe she is the reason their son is black.
      1. He exiles both his wife and child.
      2. He discards the evidence that proves his true racial identity.
   B. He is a harsh slave owner, especially in comparison to his father.
      1. He is stricter than a white slave owner because historically black slave owners like himself were harsher than their white counterparts.
      2. He has an affair and children with La Blanche.

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The Murder of a Soul

by

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English 1101 Honors

Dr. Rosemary D. Cox

March 29, 2012
Outline

Thesis: In Susan Glaspell’s “A Jury of Her Peers,” Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters use their innate feminine intuition to reach a just verdict by relating to Minnie, finding unexpected clues that point to the motive, and comparing the murder of Mr. Wright to the murder of Minnie’s bird.

I. The women’s feminine intuition allows them to relate to Minnie.

   A. Mrs. Hale relates to the fact that Minnie had left things half done around the house, knowing that means that something interrupted Minnie.
      1. Minnie had a half full bucket of sugar.
      2. Minnie had a half done quilt.

   B. The women relate to Minnie losing heart.
      1. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters empathize with Minnie having to function in the unacceptable conditions of her kitchen.
      2. Mrs. Hale feels guilty for never visiting Minnie, believing that she let Minnie die emotionally.
      3. Mrs. Peters remembers her own anger, loneliness and despair after her kitten was killed and after her first baby died, allowing her to sympathize with Minnie.

   C. The women relate to Minnie losing a part of her identity after marrying John Wright.
      1. The women notice the differences between Minnie’s personality before and after marrying Mr. Wright.
a. Minnie used to carry herself in a livelier manner and wear pretty clothes before she married.

b. Minnie used to sing in the choir before she married.

2. The women start to notice where they are losing a part of their identities to their husbands, allowing them to sympathize with Minnie.

a. Mrs. Hale implies that all three of the women have something in common: losing a part of themselves after getting married.

b. Mrs. Peters loses her own identity to fit the persona of a sheriff’s wife.

c. Mrs. Peters follows the pattern of the constant patronizing from the men when she reasons that the men would laugh at the women getting worked up over a dead canary.

d. Mrs. Peters gains her identity and dignity back at the end of the story when the men joke about her marriage to the law which she delicately refutes.

II. The women’s feminine intuition helps them to interpret the unexpected clues that point to the motive of the murder.

A. The women seem to notice a ghost-like presence of Minnie in the house.

1. Mrs. Hale cannot sit down in Minnie’s rocker because she somehow still can see Minnie sitting there.

2. Susan Glaspell states that it seems like Minnie Foster’s spirit is present in the house, almost as if it directs the women towards finding the clues to the murder of Minnie’s soul.

B. The women use their intuition to discover Minnie’s dead canary.
1. The women find an abandoned birdcage.

2. The women notice that the door of the birdcage has been broken, a sign of foul play.

3. The women find a beautiful box that contains the dead canary with a broken neck.

III. The women’s feminine intuition helps them to validate the murder of Mr. Wright.

A. Mrs. Hale notices Minnie’s similarities to the bird.
   1. Mrs. Hale implies that Minnie used to sing like a bird.
   2. Mrs. Hale states that Minnie was afraid of cats, which is a common fear of birds.
   3. Mrs. Hale realizes that having a canary around may have brought life to Minnie’s soul.

B. The women compare the murder of Mr. Wright to the murder of Minnie’s canary.
   1. Mrs. Hale alludes to the question of which murder is worse: the murder of a man or the murder of the bird—Minnie’s soul.
   2. Mrs. Peters is disturbed when the men joke about Minnie not waking up as her husband was murdered, knowing that Minnie may not have considered herself awake because her soul was murdered with the bird.
   3. Mrs. Hale realizes that Mr. Wright probably killed the bird that sang for the same reason that he might have killed Minnie’s singing.
The Murder of a Soul

In Susan Glaspell’s “A Jury of Her Peers,” two couples and a district attorney search the house of Minnie and John Wright for clues to determine who had murdered Mr. Wright the day before. Mr. Hale, Mr. Peters (the sheriff), and Mr. Henderson (the district attorney) tear through the house to search for evidence to prove that Minnie Wright killed her husband, while Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters navigate the house for clues to understand the reason for the murder. While the male characters only see superficial clues regarding the murder of a man, the women get to the heart of the matter by personally relating to Minnie and ultimately discovering the murder of a soul. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters use their innate feminine intuition to reach a just verdict by relating to Minnie, finding unexpected clues that point to the motive, and comparing the murder of Mr. Wright to the murder of Minnie’s bird.

From the beginning of the story to the end, the women personally relate to Minnie through their feminine intuition. Martha Hale is sifting flour when the investigation team shows up at her house to pick up her husband. The sheriff’s wife, Mrs. Peters, asks for Martha to accompany her which interrupts Martha’s task. She is forced to leave her flour half sifted when in fact Glaspell notes that “she [hates] to see things half done . . .” (708). When the men and women arrive at the Wrights’ house, Martha Hale recognizes a peculiar pattern showing that something interrupted Minnie. Martha Hale relates to the fact that Minnie had left things half done around the house. Like Mrs. Hale leaving her flour half sifted, Minnie left a bag of sugar half poured into a wooden bucket. Additionally, the women stumble upon a quilt that Mrs. Wright was making before the tragedy. They notice that although half of the quilt is perfectly stitched, there is a patch of
the quilt that is sewn poorly. When Mrs. Peters asks, “What do you suppose she was so—
nervous about?” Mrs. Hale relates Minnie’s queer sewing to her own sewing when she
replies, “I don’t know as she was—nervous. I sew awful queer sometimes when I’m just
tired” (717).

As the women continue to search the house, they observe the condition of the
house and relate to Minnie losing heart. The women notice that Minnie’s kitchen is
dilapidated; her pans and towels are dirty, and her stove has a broken lining. Mrs. Peters’
comments, “A person gets discouraged—and loses heart” (716) when she scans the
kitchen and notices its unacceptable condition. This comment catches Mrs. Hale off
guard because Mrs. Peters normally defends the law and usually has no noticeable
empathy for Minnie. Unlike Mrs. Peters, Mrs. Hale repeatedly relates to Minnie and goes
to the extreme when she takes on guilt for never visiting Minnie and claims that she “let
[Minnie] die for lack of life,” which she believes “was a crime!” (721).

The women also relate to Minnie losing a part of her identity after marrying Mr.
Wright. They notice the difference between Minnie’s personality before and after
marriage. The women intuitively discover that after Minnie married Mr. Wright, she
slowly started losing herself and dying on the inside. Mrs. Hale describes that when
Minnie Wright was Minnie Foster, “She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively . . .”
(714), but after she married John Wright, she did not even dress like herself anymore,
wearing the color of death and mourning, “a shabby black skirt” (714). This really
bothers Mrs. Hale who knew Minnie as “one of the town girls” (715). Mrs. Hale further
explains to Mrs. Peters that before Minnie was married, she “stood up there in the choir
and sang” (721). Obviously after Minnie married Mr. Wright, she started to lose a part of her life—her soul.

In the same fashion in which the women notice that Minnie lost a part of who she was after marrying John Wright, they also start to become aware of the fact that they are losing a part of their identities to their husbands which helps them to understand Minnie even more. Mrs. Hale realizes that all three of the women have something in common when she exclaims, “We all go through the same things—it’s all just a different kind of the same thing!” (721). Although she never states those things specifically, they are implied throughout the entire story: all three of the women relinquished a part of themselves after getting married.

Mrs. Peters loses her own identity to fit the persona of a sheriff’s wife as she is “married to the law” (722). She continues to justify the ways of the men and even mechanically answers, “The law is the law . . .” (716), as a way of defending the men who are presumptuously searching the Wrights’ house to find evidence against Minnie. Mrs. Peters unconsciously manipulates her perspective to fit her husband’s and follows the pattern of the constant patronizing from the men when she reasons with herself that the men would probably laugh at the women “Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a—dead canary” (721). However, towards the end of the story, when the men joke about Mrs. Peters being “married to the law” (722), she gains her identity and dignity back by delicately refuting, “Not—just that way” (722).

As the women continue exploring the house, their intuition not only allows them to relate to Minnie, but it also helps them to interpret the unexpected clues that point to the motive of the murder. While the men boldly enter the house, the women seem to
notice a ghost-like presence of Minnie and find it difficult to move from the doorway. When the women are finally comfortable in the house, Mrs. Hale starts to sit down in Minnie’s rocker but is paranormally halted because she can still see “the woman who had sat there ‘pleatin’ at her apron’” (714). Susan Glaspell also alludes to the ghost-like presence in the Wrights’ house when she states that Minnie Foster’s spirit “had been there with them all through that hour” (722), almost as if it directs the women towards finding the clues to the murder of Minnie’s soul.

While the women’s feminine intuition helps them to notice the presence of paranormal activity in the Wright’s home, it also helps them to unexpectedly discover Minnie’s dead canary. As the women search the house, they stumble upon an abandoned birdcage and start to go off on a tangent about the possibility of Minnie having a bird and if so, where it could be. Mrs. Peters examines the birdcage and notices that the door of the birdcage has been broken. She says, “One hinge has been pulled apart” (718), which appears to be a sign of foul play. Furthermore, the women continue to explore the house as they analyze clues that point to the motive for the murder. While Mrs. Hale gleefully looks through Minnie’s sewing basket to find things to bring back to Minnie, who is incarcerated, she happens to find a beautiful box, but in that box she finds the canary: dead, with its neck broken. Finding this bird is the key that unlocks the mystery of the murder of Mr. Wright, bringing the women to the place of interpreting the motive which helps them to reach a just verdict.

After the women come to understand the motive for the murder of Mr. Wright, their female instincts help them to validate his murder. Mrs. Hale progressively notices the similarities between Minnie and the bird, which closely associates the physical death
of Minnie’s bird with the symbolic death of Minnie’s soul. While speaking to Mrs. Peters about Minnie possibly having a canary, Mrs. Hale relates Minnie to a canary by saying that she “used to sing real pretty herself” (717). Mrs. Hale also states that Minnie was afraid of cats, which is a common fear of birds. In essence, Mrs. Hale realizes that having the canary around may have brought life to Minnie’s soul because “she was kind of like a bird herself. Real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and—fluttery” (719), but after marrying Mr. Wright, her inner-bird was slowly choked away. Mrs. Hale grimly states that being with Mr. Wright was “Like a raw wind that gets to the bone” (718).

In light of the similarities between Minnie and her bird, the women justify the killing of Mr. Wright as they compare his murder to the murder of Minnie’s canary. For example, Mrs. Peters briefly comes back to her obligation of being “married to the law” (722) as she talks about how awful it is to kill a man in his sleep, “slipping a thing round his neck that choked the life out of him” (720). In defense, Mrs. Hale repeats, “His neck. Choked the life out of him” (720), as she reaches out to the birdcage, alluding to the question of which murder is worse: the murder of a man or the murder of the canary—a representation of the life and freedom of Minnie’s soul. In addition, Mrs. Peters is disturbed by the fact that the men make fun of Minnie when Minnie replied, “I didn’t wake up” (711) when she was lying in bed with her husband as he was strangled. In actuality, Minnie may not have considered herself as awake because her soul was murdered with the bird. After finding the dead bird, Mrs. Hale realizes why Mr. Wright would not like the canary, “a thing that sang” (720). Minnie used to sing before she married Mr. Wright, but Mrs. Hale realizes that Mr. Wright “killed that too” (720).
Meanwhile, the men come back from their inspection, and the county attorney says, “it’s all perfectly clear, except the reason for doing it” (721). This causes the women to glance briefly at each other as if they are sending telepathic signals to one another to keep the secret of the motive for the murder safe. At the same time as the men are searching for clues as to who the murderer of Mr. Wright may be, the women are using their feminine intuition to find out why the murder happened in the first place. The women intuitively find clear evidence of who the murderer was, but they mutually conceal their evidence because they ultimately discover that it was a double homicide. Therefore, the jury of Minnie Wright’s peers reaches their verdict in the tragic death of Mr. Wright: Mr. Wright killed Mrs. Wright’s soul by killing her canary, but he could ever be punished for it, so neither should she.
Works Cited


Example Outlines: The Interdisciplinary Paper

The example literary outlines in this document on Kate Chopin’s works—the novel *The Awakening* and the short story “Désirée’s Baby”—both touch on real-life elements outside the fictional plot. In the case of *The Awakening*, the writer briefly looks at the impact of Creole society on the protagonist, Edna Pontellier; in the paper on “Désirée’s Baby,” Gilbert-Toms discusses to some degree how the racial climate of post bellum Louisiana shapes the character of Armand Aubigny. Because of these factors, either one of these papers could easily be modified to take a clear, interdisciplinary approach to the topic.

An interdisciplinary—or multidisciplinary—research paper should illustrate how a selected work or historical document embodies a particular aspect of history or some other co-discipline. Because it involves higher-level analytical skills and more in-depth research, an interdisciplinary paper is more challenging to write than one that has a single focus, but the rewards outweigh the frustrations when the writer sees how diverse elements converge, how cultural elements can influence literature, and how ideas in literature can shape society.

One of the most exciting features of the interdisciplinary paper is its flexibility. Typically, the writer has very few restrictions on the primary source for the paper: any genre of literature (novel, short story, poem, play, essay), film, historical document, etc. will work as long as it has some clear connection to the second discipline. Even though history is the most common co-discipline, others work just as well: psychology, religion, politics, even mathematics or music. The key is to find appropriate links between the primary source and the target co-discipline, and as with all papers, it is very important to have a thesis that expresses some type of judgment about the subject, one that comes to some sort of conclusion about the overlapping elements.

By way of example, an interdisciplinary paper on *The Canterbury Tales* could explain how characters such as the Friar, the Monk, and the Nun Prioress show the hypocrisy and corruption of the Church in Chaucer’s time. The paper would first discuss the principles, function and expectations of the medieval church and then demonstrate how each of these characters allows Chaucer to satirize and critique the institution. Using an example from a more modern context, an interdisciplinary paper on Ernest Gaines’s novel *A Lesson Before Dying* could show how even though both Grant Wiggins and Jefferson are victimized by racism in the 1940’s South, they are able to find meaning in their lives. The paper would provide historical information about how the judicial system in Louisiana worked in that time period then show how these characters react against it, finally overcoming the restrictions of society to verify their sense of who they are as individuals.

An Interdisciplinary Outline and Paper from a Student

An ardent advocate of women’s rights, Charlotte Perkins Gilman includes images in her short story “The Yellow Wall-Paper” that echo feminist sentiments, as Amy Gibbons explains in this analysis of the story’s symbolism in her research paper. Notice how both...
her extended introduction and her well developed conclusion put her thesis statement within the appropriate historical context and lend support to her overall argument in this discussion.
The Many Layers of “The Yellow Wallpaper”

by

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Outline

Thesis: In “The Yellow Wallpaper,” Charlotte Perkins Gilman uses the house, the wallpaper, and the woman to symbolize the daily struggles of women to obtain equal rights and free themselves of the restrictions of late nineteenth-century society.

I. Gilman uses the house as a symbol of the isolation of nineteenth-century women.
   A. The house is set apart from society.
      1. The house is set back from the road
      2. The house is a good distance away from the village.
      3. The upstairs room of the house that the couple takes has barred windows and a bed that is nailed to the floor.
   B. The house represents the isolation of nineteenth-century women.
      1. Women did not have the right to vote.
      2. Women had limited property rights.
         a. Women’s property rights were dependant on their marital status.
         b. Women’s inherited property legally belonged to their husbands when they married.
      3. Women had an expected role to fill.
         a. Women were expected to be good wives and mothers.
         b. Women’s work consisted of cleaning the home, tending to the children, and cooking for the family.
         c. Women were supposed to be presentable and well mannered.

II. Gilman uses the wallpaper as a symbol of how women felt trapped and confused.
   A. The bars on the wallpaper symbolize lack of freedom.
1. The narrator describes how she is forbidden to work.
   a. She is not allowed to express her creativity.
      (1) She has to hide her writing.
      (2) She feels like writing would do her good.
   b. She is advised to suppress her imagination so that she will not worsen her condition.
   c. She is well cared for by her husband, John, who is a well respected physician.
      (1) John sees to it that she is tended to each hour in the day, mainly by his sister Jennie.
      (2) John is a loving husband and truly wishes for his wife to be better.
      (3) John does not understand that the very thing that would make his wife well is to allow her to be her complete self.

2. The narrator has a special schedule for each hour in the day.
   a. She is allowed to have only two hours of intellectual stimulation per day.
      (1) Dr. S. Weir Mitchell’s rest cure treatment has specific guidelines to follow to overcome hysteria.
      (2) Dr. Mitchell’s rest cure treatment specifies that too much stimulation may result in a decline of the person’s recovery.
   b. She is instructed to rest for the majority of each day.
      (1) She develops new patterns of rest, mostly sleeping during the day.
      (2) She examines the wallpaper by moonlight.
(3) She views the wallpaper differently in different lights.

B. The wallpaper is a symbol of illness, confusion, and searching of self.
   1. The wallpaper is an unclean yellow color, which represents sickness.
   2. The wallpaper smells foul.
   3. The wallpaper is torn and tattered with a sub-pattern that is hard to follow but strangely enticing.
   4. The wallpaper’s allure actually helps the narrator escape.
      a. The narrator is so focused on the wallpaper that it allows her mind some freedom to explore and be stimulated.
      b. The narrator finds the wallpaper exciting.

C. The wallpaper symbolizes nineteenth-century women’s entrapment.
   1. Women were not able to have careers outside of the home.
   2. Women were dependant on men because they were not as educated.
   3. Women’s education during that time was limited to what would be useful to them as wives and mothers.

III. Gilman uses the woman in the story as a symbol of freedom.
   A. The woman trapped behind the wallpaper struggles to free herself.
      1. The front pattern of the wallpaper moves as the woman shakes and pulls at its bars to get out.
         a. She creeps ever so quietly throughout the pattern.
         b. She is looking for an escape route.
         c. She makes many attempts to secure her freedom.
2. The woman and the narrator identify with one another in their need for escape.
   a. The woman and the narrator assume the same behaviors, such as creeping around the estate.
   b. The woman eventually frees herself from the wallpaper.

B. The woman represents the desire of nineteenth-century women for freedom and equality.
   1. Women were not considered equal under the law.
   2. The National Women’s Party (NWP) and many other women’s organizations began the struggle for women’s rights.
      a. Lucy Stone and Alice Paul made history by being imprisoned for picketing a war-time President in front of the White House.
      b. They are called “Iron Jawed Angels” because they started a hunger strike.
   3. The Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in 1920 giving women the right to vote.
The Many Layers of “The Yellow Wallpaper”

It would be unimaginable for a woman in America today to be unable to vote, own her own property, or be able to receive a thorough education so that she could have a career outside of the home, but these human rights were not granted to women throughout history like they were for men. It was not until the mid-twentieth century that women gained the right to vote in elections for public officials. Up until that point, voting for public office was strictly for men, and the limited voting for school issues that women did have varied from state to state. The women’s movement started in about the late 1840’s, but women had been gathering and voicing their concerns for equality for some time. Women such as Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott were instrumental in starting the actual women’s rights movement. A two day convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York, which focused entirely on equality for women. Stanton wrote the Declaration of Sentiments, which was based on the ideals of the Declaration of Independence, and this document was signed by both women and men at the convention who declared that they would work together towards equality for all. The Declaration of Sentiments basically insisted that civil, social, educational, religious, and voting rights be legally the same for women as they were for men. This convention in turn led to the development of many women’s rights organizations and suffrage movements which were needed to help push forward in the fight for women’s rights. The women’s rights conventions that were held and suffrage movements that took place caused quite a stir at the time, and a lot of public attention, good and bad, came from it. Some people believed that women belonged in the home and should not be given the same rights as men. Others
strongly disagreed with those ideals, believing them to be human rights that by law should be recognized as equal for both sexes.

One of the positive aspects came from a woman named Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a writer and feminist, who also attracted a great deal of public attention around the same time with her powerful story, “The Yellow Wallpaper,” which is based on Gilman’s own life experiences as a woman in the nineteenth century. Gilman struggled with post-partum depression and was treated for hysteria by Doctor S. Weir Mitchell. Kathleen Wilson states:

“The Yellow Wallpaper” examines the role of women in the nineteenth century American society, including the relationship between husbands and wives, the economic and social dependence of women on men, and the repression of female individuality and sexuality. The Victorian Age had a profound impact on the social values in the United States. Victorian values stressed that women were to behave demurely and remain within the domestic sphere. (280)

As Joyce Moss and George Wilson describe it, hysteria was a common diagnosis given to women during the Victorian Age. “Hysteria” comes from the Greek word *hysteron*, which means “womb.” It was thought to be a condition that only women suffered from because women have a uterus and were thus considered susceptible to mental illness. Moss and Wilson point out that the Victorian Age has been called the “golden age of hysteria” because so many women at that time were diagnosed with hysteria. This mental illness was said to affect women due to their unstable emotional well-being and sensitivity. Moss and Wilson also say that women who were strong, confident, and
creative were more prone to hysteria (425). Gilman’s story was released at a time in history that was very beneficial to women. She was a strong, educated, and experienced woman that was able to offer her time and knowledge to the women’s movement. Women were gaining strength and numbers in the fight for equality, and the added publicity from her story pulled the attention of society towards the cause even more. In her story “The Yellow Wallpaper,” Gilman uses the house, the wallpaper, and the woman to symbolize the daily struggles of women to be recognized as equal to men in late nineteenth century society.

Gilman uses the house in the story to represent how isolated women felt in the nineteenth century. The house itself is a grand estate that sits back a good distance from the road and is about three miles from the nearest village. It has a lovely garden to stroll through with old worn-out greenhouses nearby on the land that are no longer in use, and beautiful hedge work that offers privacy and boundaries around the property. John and his wife (the narrator of the story) have traveled to the countryside and rented the mansion for the summer in hopes of a chance for her to rest and recover from her nervous condition. The couple takes the very large room on the top floor of the estate which used to be used as a nursery, evident from the pattern on the wallpaper. It has many windows which are covered by bars on the outside and a bed which is nailed down to the floor. John insists that the couple occupy this room, even though it is not what his wife would prefer. She likes the room downstairs that is more aesthetically pleasing. Nevertheless, the narrator must concede to her husband’s wishes, consistent with the role of the majority of women in the nineteenth century.
At that time in history, women felt very isolated in their own societies and homes. As mentioned, women were unable to vote in elections and were not even allowed inside the polling offices in some places. They had to remain outside while their husbands went inside and voted. Their rights to property were limited and also dependent on their marital status. A woman’s inherited property legally belonged to the husband when they married. Owning property was considered the man’s sphere. Women had an expected role to fulfill within the confines of the home. Of course they were to be present and well mannered for functions at which their husbands needed them to attend; otherwise they were at home tending to their duties as good wives and mothers. Women were expected to maintain the cleanliness of the home, tend to the needs of the children, and cook the family’s daily meals. It was also expected that wives be presentable and welcoming upon their husbands’ return home from the workplace. Rula Quawas states, “In the nineteenth century, women, as agents of moral influence, were expected to maintain the domestic sphere as a cheerful, pure haven for their husbands to return to each evening” (35). The narrator in the story, however, is unable to work, and she spends most of her time examining the wallpaper in the upstairs nursery.

Gilman uses the wallpaper in the story as a symbol of how women felt trapped and confused about their circumstances and how they fit into society. The narrator expresses to her husband, John, in the beginning of the story that she dislikes the room and its horrible yellow wallpaper, but he insists that they stay upstairs because there are more windows and the air would do her good. The pattern of the wallpaper has many layers to it, and in viewing it, the narrator sees bars in the pattern, which represent the lack of freedom that she most certainly feels. The narrator is forbidden to do any type of
work whether it be household responsibilities or work on pleasurable projects such as painting, writing, or drawing. She is not allowed to write or to be creative at all, and writing is something that she really loves to do. So she writes in secret, but it takes a lot of energy out of her to hide it from John and his sister, Jennie. The narrator feels writing would be good for her and helpful in her recovery process: “I think sometimes that if I were only well enough to write a little it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me” (309). Instead, she is told to suppress her imagination and not to give in to her imaginative power because that will only worsen her nervous condition. Her husband cares for her very well, but he is gone most of the day because he is a well-respected and busy physician that works in the nearby village. He is a loving husband, provides for his wife’s care and truly wishes for her to be well, but what John does not understand is that the very thing that would make his wife well would be to allow her to have her freedom. Instead, she has a special schedule for each hour in the day. Jennie cares for her while John is away seeing patients, and she tends to the household chores as well. The narrator is only allowed to have two hours of intellectual stimulation per day, and the majority of the time she is to rest. The narrator’s treatment plan follows Dr. S. Weir Mitchell’s rest-cure guidelines for hysteria to the letter. The most important element was to get plenty of rest and to avoid too much stimulation. So even though the narrator wishes to do more, to be able to write or enjoy a visit away with her cousins, John does not allow it because he thinks it will be too stimulating for her, and he does not want to have her condition worsen. With her active imagination, all this rest proves incredibly difficult for her. She occupies her time by lying in the nailed-down bed and following the patterns in the wallpaper.
John S. Bak states that the confinement methods used to contain the narrator in Gilman’s story are like those used throughout England to observe prisoners and mental patients. In England officials used what is called a panopticon, which is a type of prison building used to contain and observe prisoners without their knowledge of being watched. Jeremy Bentham created the idea and designed the structure, but it was actually built later by Michel Foucault. Bak goes on to describe the negative effects: “the panopticon developed into an unscrupulous method of inquisition that perpetuated fear and bred paranoia. Like the room that confines Gilman’s narrator, the panopticon proved not to be a utopia for prisoners and mental patients.” John is constantly observing the narrator when he is home, and Jennie does so when he is away. As time at the mansion goes by, she begins to develop new sleep patterns, mostly sleeping during the day. By night, she examines the wallpaper in many different lights: “At night in any kind of light, in twilight, candlelight, lamplight, and worst of all by moonlight, it becomes bars! The outside pattern I mean . . .” (313).

The yellow wallpaper very effectively symbolizes the narrator’s mental illness, confusion, and the search for self. In the story, the wallpaper is a good indicator in allowing the reader to see the narrator’s gradual decline. Her condition worsens, and she ultimately slips into insanity. The wallpaper is a repulsive yellow color; it is unclean, torn, tattered, and disturbing to the eye. The color yellow represents illness, and decorators often avoid using it in places such as hospitals, baby’s rooms, and doctor’s offices. Infants frequently cry in rooms painted yellow. And yellow is an indicator of illness: people with liver disease exhibit signs of jaundice where the whites of their eyes turn yellow, and they can have a yellow tint to their skin.
The wallpaper has a sub-pattern, but it is hard to follow because the paper is so torn and tattered. Nevertheless, it is curious and inviting enough to continue pulling the narrator in. Over time, it becomes more and more apparent that there is something to the wallpaper that makes it so captivating. It is actually the allure of the wallpaper that offers the narrator an escape from reality. She is extremely focused on following and interpreting the pattern which allows her mind the freedom to explore and be able to escape. Barbara Hochman says, “Like a reader absorbed in an exciting tale, the narrator ‘follow[s] that pattern about by the hour’ . . .” (90). She has to deal with so many restrictions, like being unable to write or visit family, that the wallpaper becomes a distraction that no one can take away. The only thing the narrator has control over are her thoughts, and no one can take them away either.

Like the wallpaper symbolizes the narrator’s imprisonment, it represents women’s entrapment in the nineteenth century. Women did not have careers outside the home, and if a woman did have outside work, she had to have the consent of her husband. Without his approval, she was legally not permitted to work. Education was also limited for women and focused on what would be beneficial for making good wives and mothers for society. It was rare for a woman to attend a university and achieve a higher education. For this reason and many more, women were dependent on men because they were not as educated and did not have a trade to be able to provide their own income. The husband provided the household income—a common society standard.

In Gilman’s story, the narrator expresses how she misses her work and the companionship it offers. She has a difficult time writing down her thoughts because she is sneaking to do so. It exhausts her and pushes her further into her depression. Even
though her husband thinks she is getting better, she is not. She knows this and makes many attempts to try to tell him, but he refuses to hear it. At one point in the story he seems to even get perturbed and tells her to trust in his abilities as a physician. So she listens and does not push the topic further; instead she returns to the wallpaper. She makes a shocking discovery by viewing the wallpaper in different lights: there is a woman trapped in the pattern behind the bars. She has noticed the figure before but has been unable to make out what it is until this moment. And it is clearly a woman that she sees—a woman that Gilman uses as a symbol of freedom.

As time goes by, the narrator realizes that the woman moves all over the place behind the pattern. She creeps and crawls behind the pattern, looking for a place to escape, but mostly at night because the narrator notices that during the day she is pretty quiet. She is most active at night as she attempts to free herself from the pattern, and that is not an easy task to complete. The narrator suspects that she is able to get out during the day because she thinks that she is able to see her creeping around the estate. The narrator and the woman behind the wallpaper assume the same behaviors, such as creeping about at night, being quiet and resting during the day, and ultimately looking for an escape. The wallpaper moves, intriguing the narrator even more, and she attempts to free the woman. She peels away at the many layers of the yellow wallpaper in hopes of freeing her. She become so obsessed with getting the paper off that it is all she thinks about. Her stay at the estate is about to come to an end, so she works frantically to remove the wallpaper. So that she is uninterrupted, she locks herself in the bedroom with just a rope so that she can capture the woman if she tries to escape from her. On her last night in the house she
must finish removing all of the paper, so she tears, pulls, and even bites at the wallpaper to get it off, and at last, she is freed. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar state:

Eventually it becomes obvious to both reader and narrator that the figure creeping through and behind the wallpaper is both the narrator and the narrator’s double. By the end of the story, moreover, the narrator has enabled this double to escape from her textual/architectural confinement.

(875)
The narrator says at the end of the story, “‘I’ve got out at last,’ said I, ‘in spite of you and Jane. And I’ve pulled off most of the paper, so you can’t put me back!’” (318). She has gone completely insane. Jane is apparently the narrator who retreats from reality in the end because she has been so controlled by society and her husband. Without an outlet she is unable to get well. Gilman’s story takes readers through the experiences of the narrator so well that it is as if they are there. Unfortunately, experiences as this one were not uncommon at that time due to the limitations and restrictions that were placed on women. Their strong desire for the same freedoms as men weighed hard on them.

The woman behind the wallpaper represents the desire of nineteenth century women to be considered equal in society. Women were commonly viewed as the weaker sex and were considered inferior to men. The law did not view women as equals, and organizations like the National Women’s Party (NWP) and many others began the struggle for women’s rights. Two prominent members of that organization, Lucy Burns and Alice Paul, made significant sacrifices for the cause. They and many other women from the NWP were arrested for picketing in front of the White House. At that time, Woodrow Wilson was President, and America was at war, so the women were taken into
custody for picketing a war-time President. At the trial that followed, the women were
sentenced for obstructing traffic and were incarcerated. During her prison stay, Alice Paul
started a hunger strike. The other women from the NWP followed suit, and they ended up
being force fed by the prison staff. They became known as the “Iron Jawed Angels,” and
as a result of their actions and many other women’s sacrifices for the cause, President
Wilson signed the Nineteenth Amendment, giving women the right to vote.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman may not have been an Iron Jawed Angel, but she is
definitely a hero and inspiration for her many contributions, namely the remarkable story
“The Yellow Wallpaper” in which she uses the house, wallpaper, and the woman to
symbolize the daily struggles of women to be recognized as equal to men in the late
nineteenth century. Gilman’s story had such an impact that it was able to help other
women going through similar struggles. In her essay “Why I Wrote ‘The Yellow
Wallpaper,’” Gilman says, “But the best result is this. Many years later I was told that the
great specialist [Dr. S. Weir Mitchell] had admitted to friends that he had altered his
treatment of neurasthenia since reading ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’” (879). Gilman
continued to write and is well-known not only for “The Yellow Wallpaper” but also for
“Women in Economics” and the monthly publication The Forerunner Magazine that ran
for about seven years. Women of the twenty-first century are the beneficiaries of all of
the sacrifices and hard work from the women of Gilman’s generation that had the courage
and strength to overcome the obstacles and move forward in attaining equality.
Notes

1. Doctor S. Weir Mitchell, born in Philadelphia, was a famous neurologist well-known for his rest-cure treatment which was used to treat neurasthenia, a nervous condition, also called hysteria. Gilman states that her treatment consisted of having to rest, following Dr. Mitchell’s prescription: “Live as domestic a life as possible. . . . Lie down an hour after each meal. Have but two hours’ intellectual life a day. And never touch pen, brush, or pencil as long as you live” (qtd. in “Undergoing” 876).
Works Cited


---. “Undergoing the Cure for Nervous Prostration.” *Charters* 876-78.


Exercises for Writing Effective Outlines

Exercise One: Outline Levels

Note: The following exercise is based on this thesis: “Although preparations for the 1996 Summer Olympics placed a financial burden on local residents, Atlanta benefited from the economic and aesthetic stimuli the Games brought to the city.”

Part One: Some of the following sentences represent first level (or degree) items; others represent second level (or degree). Put a 1 next to first-level sentences that could serve as Roman numerals in an outline, and put a 2 next to second-level sentences that could serve as capital letters (A’s, B’s, etc.) in an outline. Items are not in order.

_____  The Games cost the city millions of dollars in preparation.

_____  Despite the initial financial burden on Atlanta residents, the Olympics were an economic boon for the city.

_____  The Games ultimately increased the area’s revenues.

Part Two: Some of the following sentences represent second level (or degree) items, and others represent third level (or degree). Put a 2 next to the second-level sentences that could serve as capital letters (A’s, B’s, etc.) in an outline, and put a 3 next to the third-level sentences that could serve as Arabic numbers in an outline (1’s, 2’s, etc.) The first-level (Roman numeral) for this section is as follows: “Despite the pre-Olympic costs, the Games brought gains to Atlanta.” Items are not in order.

_____  Shopkeepers painted and remodeled their storefronts.

_____  Neighborhood groups collaborated to landscape their communities.

_____  The Games inspired businesses and private homeowners to refurbish their properties to impress visitors from all over the world.

_____  Homeowners remodeled to make their homes attractive to Olympic visitors wanting to leave temporary lodgings.

_____  The Games encouraged expansion and renovation of public facilities, making them more eye appealing.

_____  Unsightly downtown property was razed for what is now Centennial Olympic Park, a downtown focal point.

_____  City officials totally redesigned and expanded Woodruff Park, located in downtown Atlanta.
Landscapers planted hundreds of new trees and flowering shrubs all over the city.

**Exercise Two: Outline Levels**

The following items are part of a three-level (third degree) sentence outline. Put the appropriate outline symbol (i.e. I., A., 1., etc.) next to each sentence based on where it should go in the outline. All the items below are in the correct logical sequence.

Thesis: In most cases, final examination grades do not accurately measure a student’s knowledge of a fifteen-week term.

____  Although some instructors design excellent tests, most testing instruments are still flawed.

____  Because they are written within a strict time frame, essay exams rarely do more than “spot check” the students’ ability to conceptualize.

____  The students write for two hours.

____  A three-hour semester course requires students to spend forty-five hours in class and at least that many hours in out-of-class study.

____  Even though objective tests may adequately cover the facts of a fifteen-week course, they do not measure the students’ ability to conceptualize.

____  Most students memorize facts, definitions, and dates at the last minute, only to forget them after the term ends.

____  Many examinations do not test students on their ability to make sense of this information or to apply these definitions and data to solve problems.

____  Tests combining these two testing methods are even less comprehensive.

____  An objective section of an examination becomes merely a “spot check” since time constraints necessitate fewer questions.

____  The discussion section of an examination becomes even less comprehensive because fewer essays are possible.

____  Although some students do very well, testing situations unfairly penalize many students.

____  Not all students have the same preparation time.

____  Individual emergencies arise.

____  Not all exam schedules are ideal.
Highly nervous students do not perform well even though they may know the material.

They may become physically ill.

They may “freeze” on tests.

Exceptionally bright students may not function at their best on exams.

The students who know the material thoroughly may have problems managing the allotted time and completing the required number of essay questions.

The same students may find themselves dissatisfied with all of the possible responses to an objective test because they find the choices too simplistic.

**Exercise Three: Find the Problems**

The following outline has several problems with unity, logic, and support.

**Unity:** Put an X to the left of the sentences that do not provide adequate support for the heading listed directly above them.

**Logic:** Put a > to the left of the sentences that are simply restatements or repetitions of the headings listed directly above them.

**Support:** Put a + next to the sentences that do not have enough support or evidence (Remember that, in the previous steps, you may have eliminated irrelevant or illogical elements).

**Thesis:** The minimum driving age in Georgia should be raised to twenty-one to make the roads safer and to lower the cost of automobile insurance.

I. Many people under age twenty-one are good drivers.
   A. They are well trained.
      1. They may have had driver’s education in school.
      2. Their parents may have taught them how to drive.
   B. They are experienced.
      1. They are wiser than sixteen-year-olds.
      2. They have been driving for over five years.

II. The driving age should be raised to age twenty-one because drivers under twenty-one are a threat to others.
    A. Drivers under twenty-one are more likely to drive while drunk.
    B. Younger drivers take risks that older, more experienced drivers do not.
       1. Younger drivers often run red lights.
       2. Younger drivers often drive with too many passengers.
       3. Most speeders are under the age of twenty-one.
III. The driving age should be raised to twenty-one to lower the cost of automobile insurance.
   A. The cost of insurance is already high enough.
      1. A sports car may cost several thousand dollars per year to insure.
      2. Insuring an old station wagon may cost several hundred dollars, even without collision insurance.
   B. The recent increase in accidents involving younger drivers has caused auto insurance rates for older drivers to skyrocket.
      1. Collision insurance has increased 21% because of accidents involving young drivers.
      2. Liability insurance for young drivers has increased 10%.