FORMAL SENTENCE OUTLINE FORMAT

Student’s Name:

Date:

Topic: Key statement that describes the topic of your essay

Purpose: Your specific purpose identifies the attitude or behavior you want to change.

Thesis: Make sure you have thought this through. Not many thesis statements remain unrevised between the proposal and the research segment of a true research project. (It’s a HUGE mistake to feel married to a preliminary thesis. It demonstrates a lack of insight created by inferior research.)

Credibility Statement: What personally connects you to this topic? What type of research have you done to establish credibility?

I. Introduction

A. Lead: It’s really helpful to a reader if you contextualize your topic in the introduction. Put your topic into perspective. Why is it important? Why does it matter? What makes it exigent? Weaving this into narration is an excellent way to make a connection with your audience. (People *like* stories.)

B. Reason to Listen: Establish a reason for why an audience should listen to you? What is their stake in this issue? Make it personal to as many of them as possible.

C. Thesis Statement: Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose? If your thesis simply states facts that no one would, or even could, disagree with, it’s possible that you are simply providing a summary, rather than making an argument. Does my thesis pass the “So what?” test? If a reader’s first response is, “So what?” then you need to clarify, to forge a relationship, or to connect to a larger issue. Does my thesis pass the “how and why?” test? If a reader’s first response is “how?” or “why?” your thesis may be too open-ended and lack guidance for the reader. See what you can add to give the reader a better take on your position right from the beginning.

GUIDE TO FORMAL OUTLINING

I. The outline should be in sentence form.

A. That means that each section of the outline must be a complete sentence

B. Each part may only have one sentence in it.

II. Each Roman numeral should be a main section of the speech.

A. Capital letters are main points of the thesis.

1. Numbers are sub-points under the capital letters.

2. Little letters are sub-points under the numbers.

B. Sub-points need to correspond with the idea it is under.

1. This means that capital letters refer to the idea in roman numerals.

2. This means that numbers refer to the idea in the capital letter.

III. All sub-points should be indented the same.

A. This means that all of the capital letters are indented the same.

B. All numbers are indented the same.

IV. No sub-point stands alone.

A. Every A must have a B.

B. Every 1 must have a 2.

C. You don’t need to have a C or a 3, but you can.

D. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Your essay outline should look something like the one in the sample.

Your outline will also include the full sentence details of your essay, including source citations.

The number of sub-points will differ in each essay and for each main idea.

**GUIDE TO ORGANIZING A 6-PART ORATION**

I. Introduction

A. Lead

B. Reason

C. Thesis

II. Minor claim (topic sentence) that supports thesis

1. Evidence from source

1. Commentary

2. Commentary

B. Evidence from different source

1. Commentary

2. Commentary

C. Concession (what might others say about my claim?)

D. Counter argument with evidence from yet another source

1. Commentary

2. Commentary

III. Any number of minor claims may be made and evidence, commentary, concession, and counterargument will follow this same format.

IV. Conclusion

1. Ties back to hook
2. Is Universal
3. Addresses the so what? Who cares? Questions
4. Suggests real-world applications for your thesis