

Title: Outlining and reverse outlining

Outlining and reverse outlining help you plan and revise your manuscript, essay, application, etc.

What is outlining? Outlining is planning what your manuscript or essay will be about, piece by piece. It is often done before writing.

How do I outline?

1. Consider the important topics you want to address.
2. List these topics out in any order.
3. Arrange the topics in an order that logically flows from one point to the next.
4. You might ask yourself, "what information does the reader need for this point?" and then include that information right before that topic.
5. Once you've arranged them in a logical order, start writing by filling in details to form sentences and paragraphs!

What is reverse outlining? Reverse outlining is a revision technique, reviewing what your manuscript or essay is about, piece by piece. It is done after writing.

How do I reverse outline?

1. Once you have a draft, go back and read it, identify each of the topics that you address in each paragraph.
2. I like to print the manuscript out and actually write each point in the margins.
3. Once you have listed out the topics you addressed, ignore the manuscript and read only the topics in the margin, in order.
4. Does your reverse outline make sense? Do the topics flow?
5. If your reverse outline doesn't match your outline, you may have gone off-topic, or your draft may have lacked clarity.
6. As long as your reverse outline makes sense, it doesn't have to match your outline.

Outlining and reverse outlining are often iterative: outline, then write, then reverse outline, then assess, then begin again at outline.