

Planning the Paper: Making an Outline

Making an outline facilitates writing, as it is a first attempt at structuring your paper. If your ideas are organized in a clear and coherent way, a detailed outline can act as a first draft that is not only less time-consuming to write, but also easier to restructure.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming helps to collect information and organize ideas at each step of the writing process. As you make an outline, group similar ideas, eliminate irrelevant ideas, and identify the main and supporting ideas in order to transform your arguments into a structured paper. Always keep the thesis in mind. Try the following strategies:

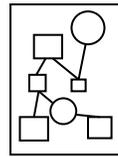
Bulleted Lists



Highlighted Words



Mind Maps



Sticky Notes



Organizing Your Ideas

The outline is the framework for the paper. In point form or in complete sentences, it lists your main and supporting ideas as well as your evidence or examples in the order in which they will appear in the body. Organize your ideas before writing your paper in order to have a clear and coherent overview of each of its sections.

The **introduction** constitutes the first 10% of a paper and consists of three sections:

- The context gives background information or important details about the topic.
- The thesis is the clear formulation of the central idea.
- The outline briefly presents the main ideas.

The **body** constitutes 80% of a paper. It has an equivalent number of sections and main ideas. The main ideas are the backbone of the argumentation; the supporting ideas are the more focused arguments that bolster the main ideas; and the evidence or examples are the words, ideas, and facts borrowed from other sources in order to strengthen the arguments in a more concrete way.

The **conclusion** constitutes the last 10% of a paper and consists of two sections:

- The summary clearly restates the main ideas in relation to the thesis.
- The final thought shows the significance of the thesis within the field of study.

Use critical thinking to structure the content of your paper in a coherent way.

- Is your thesis clear and easy to find? Is it well supported?
- Do your ideas support the thesis? How are they connected?

To know more, see the *Purdue OWL*, *SPARK*, *Infosphère*, or similar writing centre websites.

Making an Outline

- Thesis:** As opposed to shyness (a common personality trait), social anxiety disorder has a significant detrimental effect on social, occupational and other important areas of functioning.
- Introduction:**
- a. Shyness
 - b. What is social anxiety disorder (SAD)?
 - c. Characteristics, assessment, and treatment
- Body:**
1. SAD is characterized by a persistent avoidance of social situations despite its limiting and sometimes debilitating personal costs.
 - 1.1. Diagnostic features and associated features (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)
 - 1.2. Comorbidity and functional consequences (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)
 2. Given the wide range of social anxieties experienced by individuals, a combination of tools should be used for a comprehensive assessment of SAD.
 - 2.1. Cognitive assessment: clinical interviews, self-report inventories, and diaries (Beidel & Turner, 2007; Velting, Setzer & Albano, 2004)
 - 2.2. Behavioral assessment and psychophysiological assessment (Beidel & Turner, 2007)
 3. Two equally effective methods of treatment can be used to reduce the anxieties and fears that motivate SAD behaviors.
 - 3.1. Psychosocial treatments: cognitive behavioral therapy (Hofmann & DiBartolo, 2014; Velting, Setzer & Albano, 2004)
 - 3.2. Pharmacological treatments: medications (Hofmann & DiBartolo, 2014)
- Conclusion:**
- a. Characteristics, assessment, and treatment
 - b. Fears

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