

# Format for an essay outline

Basically you should follow the general format for the essay itself, i.e. you should have the 4 sections listed below. The exposition and criticism/evaluation sections will of course be much shorter than the real essay, but the thesis statement will be roughly the same. Don't bother with a conclusion section for the outline (as it will just repeat the thesis).

The whole outline should fit on one side of a sheet of paper, i.e. about 300 words or so.

You may use bullet-point lists, if it seems appropriate.

1. *Thesis statement* (introduction). This is a short paragraph where you state your thesis, i.e. the claim that you will defend in the essay. Do not argue for the thesis here!
2. *Exposition*. Indicate which views and arguments you plan to summarise in your essay. You don't have to actually *do* any exposition in the outline, unless it can be done extremely briefly.
3. *Criticism/Evaluation*. Outline how you plan to argue for your thesis. For example, you might list the objections against your thesis that you plan to criticize, and (if space allows) you might briefly indicate how you plan on dealing with them.
4. *Bibliography*. List all the texts that you plan on discussing in the essay, including any sections of the textbook or readings posted to my web site. I'll accept any standard academic format for citations, such as Chicago, APA, MLA, etc. However, philosophers almost always use an author-date style such as APA, Chicago or Turabian, so use such a style if possible.