

A reverse outline can be used to check the organisation of a paper and the development of a thesis.

What can a reverse outline be used for?

- Ensuring all ideas are clear and organised
- Highlighting any gaps in the arguments being made
- Checking if the requirements of a task have been met

Creating a reverse outline

Step 1: Prepare a draft of your paper – this doesn't have to be the final version

Step 2: Write out your thesis statement

Step 3: Number each of the paragraphs

Step 4: Underneath the thesis, create a numbered list to match the number of paragraphs in your paper

Step 5: Go through each paragraph and write out the main idea(s) in the same order as they appear in your paper

Ask yourself...

1. Do the main ideas listed support the thesis?
2. Are the ideas organised coherently?
3. Do the main ideas flow logically throughout the paper?
4. Are any of the ideas repeated?
5. Are there any paragraphs which contain too many ideas?
 - Do these ideas need to be spilt up?
6. Are there any paragraphs that do not contain an idea?
7. Are there any gaps in the discussion?

Look for the following:

- Keywords used in the thesis that don't appear in the outline
- Points you wanted to discuss that are not on the list

Use the answers to the above questions to re-organise the paper as needed.

Over to you...

Thesis:

Paragraph 1:

Paragraph 2:

Paragraph 3:

Paragraph 4:

Paragraph 5:

Conclusion: