

CUFE, Gen 600, 2014-2015

Outlining & Organizing Technical Texts

November 2014

Topic Outline

- Phrases, incomplete meaning
- A reminder of a thought
- Written hastily
- Require rephrasing → sentences.

Outlining Styles

"THE WORLD ALWAYS SEEMS
BRIGHTER WHEN YOU'VE
JUST MADE SOMETHING
THAT WASN'T THERE BEFORE."



Sentence Outline

- Complete sentences, complete meanings.
- Reminders of thoughts
- Need to be Written
- Do not require rephrasing.

Outlining is representing
ideas in short, general terms.

helps remember major ideas.

**helps organize thoughts and
writing plans.**

saves writer's time.

imposes control on writing.

Types of Outlines

Sentence outline (SO)

- ✓ In SO, ideas are complete sentences.
- ✓ SO formulates clear ideas.
- ✓ SO remains clear if left for a long time.
- ✓ SO may become cumbersome.

Topic outline (TO)

- ✓ Using phrases to express ideas

Advantages: shortness

Disadvantages: lack of clarity

Mixed outlining (MO)

For major topics, use sentence outline.

TO for *minor* topics.

Outline the following paragraph

- 1.** The two processes, speaking and writing, are not identical.
- 2.** Writing is not simply speech written down on paper. **3.** Learning to write is not just a natural extension of learning to speak a language.
- 4.** We learned to speak our first language at home without systematic instruction; whereas, most of us had to be taught in school how to write that same language.
- 5.** Many adult native speakers of a language find writing difficult.
- 6.** A speaker speaks to a listener who is right there, nodding or frowning, or interrupting or questioning.
- 7.** For the writer, the reader's response is either delayed or nonexistent.
- 8.** *When one looks at these differences – and there are few more – we can see that the students will not just pick-up writing as they learn other skills in classes.*
- 9.** *We have to teach them writing.*

Outline →

Write →

Reverse Outline.

Sentence Outline

Speaking and writing, are not identical.

- 1. Writing is not written speech on paper.**
- 2. Learning to write is not learning to speak.**
- 3. We learned to speak at home and to write in schools.**
- 4. Writing is difficult.**
- 5. The speakers and listeners are present.**
- 6. The reader's response is absent.**
- 7. The writer has one chance to hold the readers' attention.**
- 8. Students will not pick-up writing alone.**
- 9. We have to teach them writing.**

Topic Outline

Differences between speaking and writing

- ◆ Writing not speech on paper
- ◆ Different from learning
- ◆ Speaking at home
- ◆ Writing in school
- ◆ Difficulties of writing
- ◆ Presence of listeners feedback
- ◆ Absence of readers feedback
- ◆ Chance to hold readers' attention
- ◆ Need for learning how to write
- ◆ We have to teach students how to write (sentence outline, this is a main idea).

Organizing

Follows three orders

- ✓ **Natural**
- ✓ **Logical**
- ✓ **Psychological**

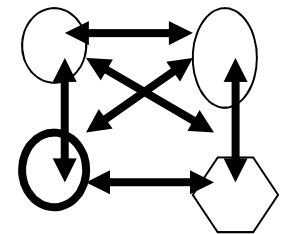
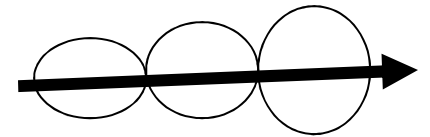
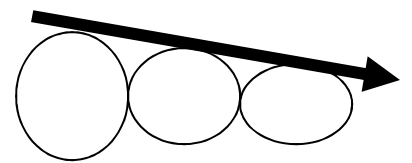
1. Natural Orders

- ✓ **Time and space (spatial order)**
- ✓ **Introduction, Body, & Conclusion**
- ✓ **Alphabetical Order**
- ✓ **Size, chronological**

Could be imposed by the subject

2. Logical Orders

- ✓ Climactic Order: interest ↗
- ✓ General-to-Specific Order
- ✓ Specific-to-General
- ✓ Cause-to-Effect Analysis
- ✓ Condition-Result
(Argument)



Other ways: familiarity, complexity, usefulness, utility, cost, impact, ...

3. Psychological Orders

To satisfy the reader using emotional reactions:

- ✓ Acceptability**
- ✓ Dominant impression**
- ✓ Fear**
- ✓ Anxiety**
- ✓ Hesitation**
- ✓**

Prevails in advertisements

Organizing Information in Reports

Ascending Emphasis

importance increases as reading advances.

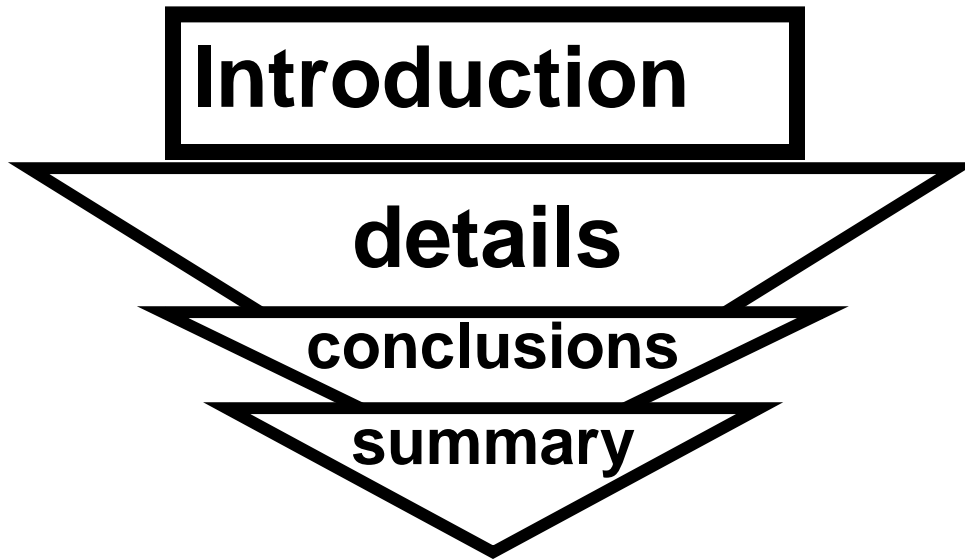
Reverse Climax

important ideas are placed at the beginning.

Mixed order

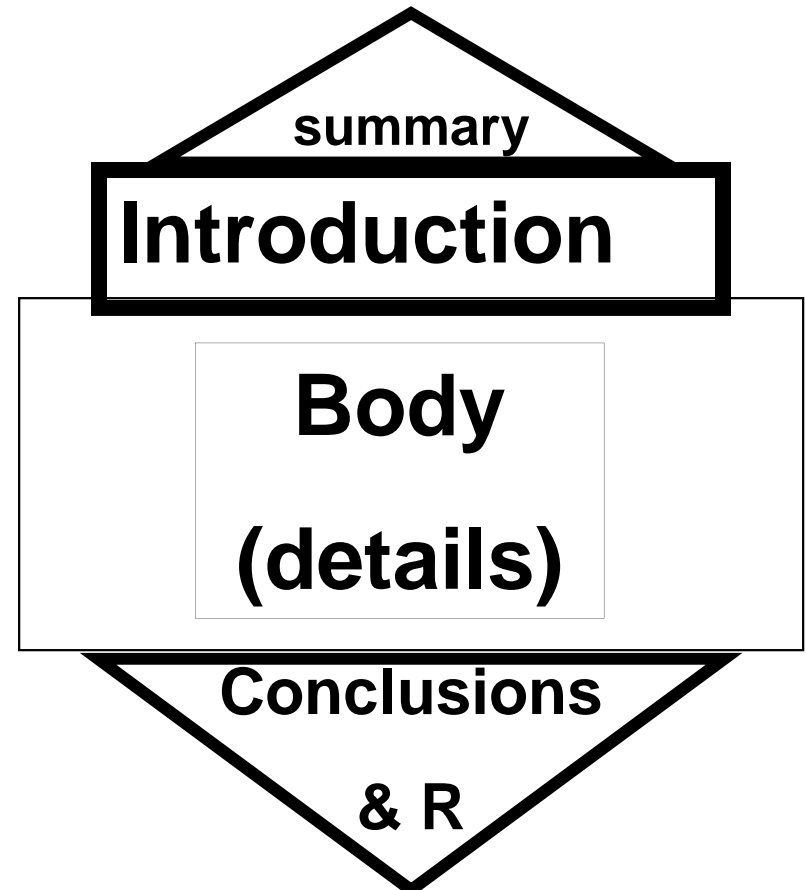
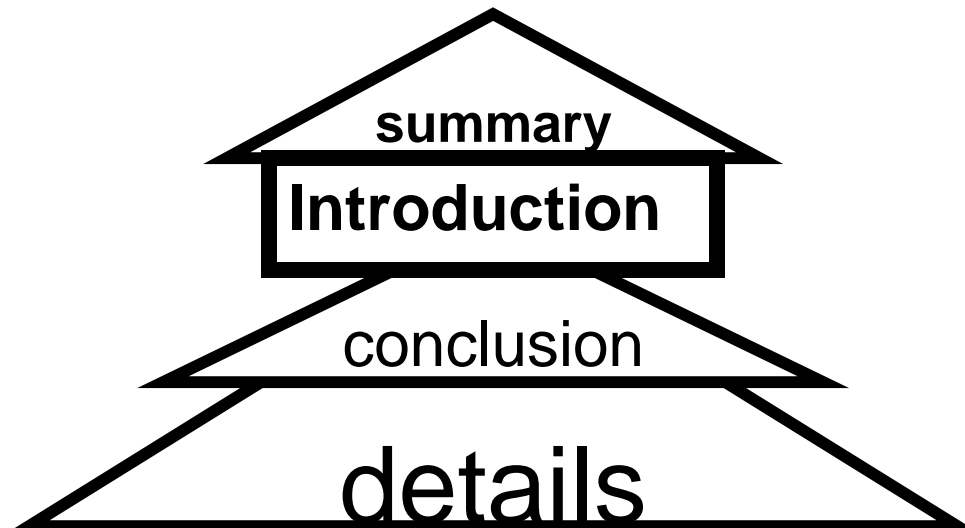
- **summary + introduction + the body (details) + conclusions.**
- ✓ **Summary is descriptive If integrated with the text .**
- ✓ **If summary is independent, it is informative.**

Three Ways for Organizing Texts



Emphatic Style

Reverse Emphasis



Mixed Style

Sample of an Organized Outline

I. Major Steps in the Writing Process

A. Outlining/Organizing

B. Writing

C. Evaluating

D. Revising

II. Use of Word Processors

A. Programs & Relationship to Writing

1. Handling Thought

2. Word Processors

a. Use in writing b. Use in revising

B. Pros & Cons of Word Processors

1. Positive features

a. Less time spent b. Greater flexibility,

2. Negative features